

First off, as you can guess from my name, I'm a long time member of the SRV family, my father is Jerry Nowell, my grandmother was Peg Nowell (who taught there in the early 60's?)...sisters Connie and Nancy, and my cousin Michael.

I've always said that if I hadn't gone to Rose Valley I would not have become an artist or art educator, and I credit Rose Valley with instilling in me the confidence to follow my dreams where ever they led me. After graduating from Penncrest High School, I attended Tyler School of Art and subsequently dropped out after 2 years. Citing my need to have some 'real life experiences' I headed west and hitchhiked my way around the western states for the next 3 years ('77-'79).

I'm including this back story because it is something I'm very proud of and I credit Rose Valley with giving me ability to trust myself, especially when doing something that goes against the grain and bucks societal expectations. After kicking around Eugene, Oregon for a few years, expressing my political and social feelings through a musical, comedy, art band, I headed back east to New York City where I worked as a bicycle messenger and got re-introduced to east coast history and culture ('84-'86).

Next stop San Francisco, California where I graduated to motorcycle messenger and struggling artist. This too I credit to my Rose Valley experience, because I made a conscious decision to give myself about 5 years to see if I could make the art thing a reality, with the understanding that I may have to come up with a plan B down the road.

One of my favorite memories of Rose Valley is from 1968. I was in 4th grade and was being impacted by world events. We had a teacher, Jean, who allowed us to create 2 'hippy pads' (one for the girls and one for the boys) where we could put up our Jimi Hendrix posters and burn incense. She allowed me to paint a life size image of Buddha on the big glass window.

During my time in SF I began a series of reverse painting-on-glass paintings of American prisons that I attribute, in part, to that early SRV life experience. Speed dial to the present...I now teach Art at a progressive public school in Manhattan where I have had the unbelievable pleasure of creating my own curriculum and being part of an educational community that, for the most part, shares my educational philosophy. I've been teaching at the Institute for Collaborative Education for the past 16 years and continue to make art and promote an artist centered world view.

Oh, I forgot, I was also diagnosed with Dyslexia in 1st grade and given the care and understanding that majorly contributed to my ability to learn and succeed in later educational settings.

I learned at Rose Valley that learning was cool and that you can learn stuff even when you're not at school (something I continually try to instill in my students) and that, especially in the current national, educational media crap-fest, (so-called debate), I'm so thankful that other SRV alumni are out there teaching.

Especially my cousin.

Thanks,

Paul Nowell