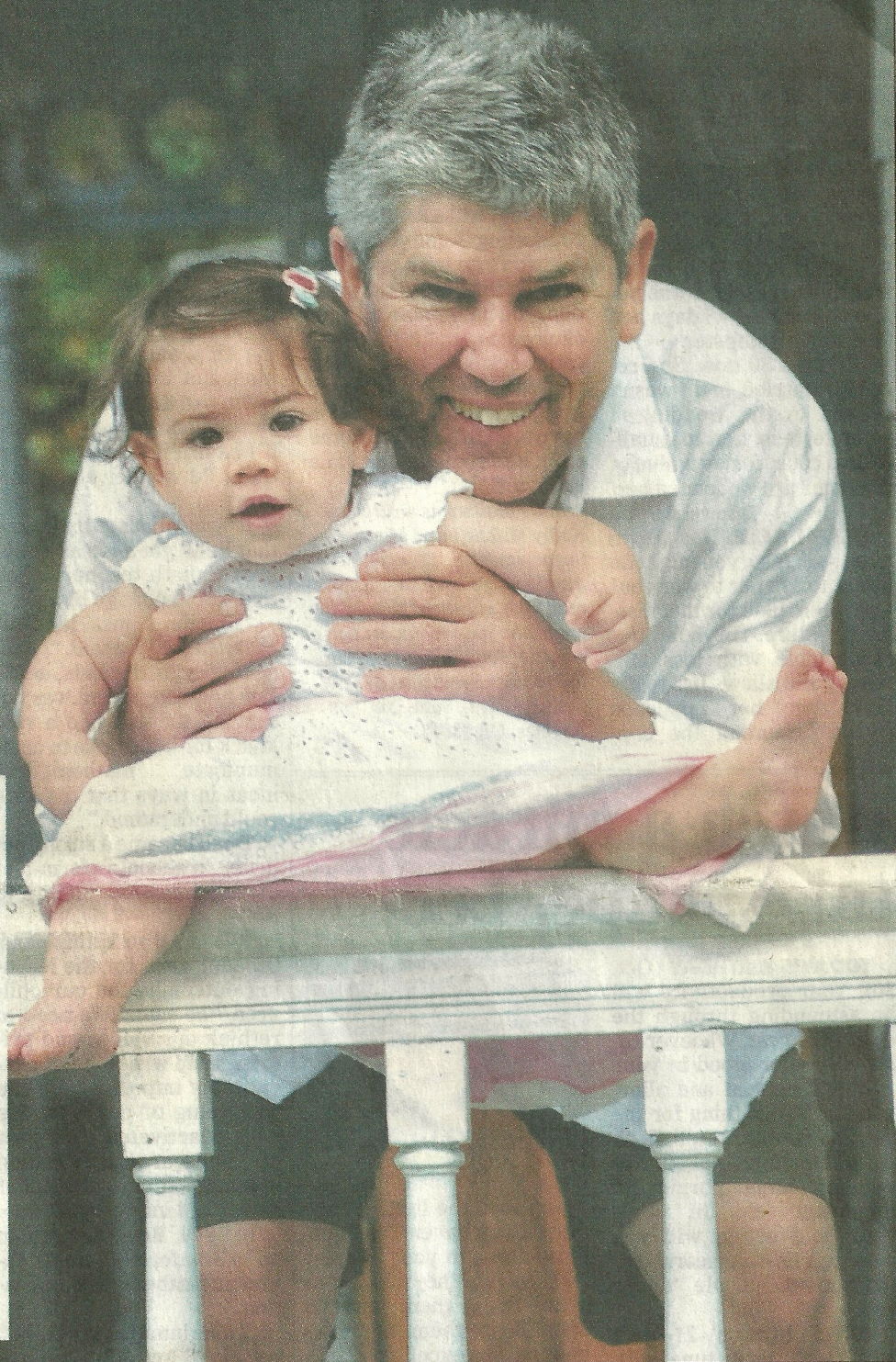


He puts a steep value on **ENRICHMENT**



BABY BOOMER PROFILES

Part of an
ongoing series

Boomer Profiles run periodically in Smart Life, focusing on the lives and achievements of local baby boomers. Do you have someone you'd like to see profiled? Please contact Smart Life Editor Dugan Radwin at dradwin@poughkeepsiejournal.com or 845-437-4841 or send your suggestions to her at P.O. Box 1231, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602.

Scott Beall holds his daughter, Meka, at his Beacon home. SUE MONROE

By Lauren Yanks

For The Poughkeepsie Journal

HOROSCOPES 2G | PUZZLES 4G

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SmartLife

For and About Baby Boomers

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Teacher Scott Beall draws on life experiences to expand young minds

At 57, Scott Beall has lived many lives, and he's far from finished. Born in San Francisco in 1954, Beall recalls growing up in the heart of the counterculture movement.

"I was a freshman in high school during the summer of love," he said. "It was a wonderful time, and I was profoundly influenced by the shifting beliefs of the day. In high school we were all doing transcendental meditation and campaigning for McGovern."

Beall had other interests as well and was a very good student.

"I loved science and designing, and from a very early age got seriously into music," he said. "I

See BEALL, 2G

BEALL: Teacher sees the big picture

Continued from 1G

played the guitar and was really steeped in that emerging music scene that was happening in San Francisco. Santana was recording right down the street from our house.”

Although passionate about music, Beall went to the California Polytechnic State University to study architecture and engineering after high school.

“It seemed like the safer option,” he said. “I liked design and learned a lot about math, but at the time my heart was always with music. I left after a year and went to San Francisco State to get a music degree.”

Beall became trained in classical and jazz, and had a background in rock. He played in a number of bands and decided to go for his music career full-force.

“I got very close to a major recording contract with CBS, but it didn’t work out,” he said. “I ended up forming a band that played at lots of corporate events.”

By his late 30s, Beall started to get antsy and says he felt a certain hollowness about his life. He describes it as a time of great personal growth.

“I was in a dark place at the time,” he said. “My mom died, I had no money and a lot of my friends were having kids, and I just felt behind. But I don’t regret following my heart and going for a music career, because if I hadn’t, it would be something I’d wonder about forever.”



“We need to rethink our broader aims for the learning outcomes for our children,” said Scott Beall, 57, seen holding his daughter, Meka. SUE MONROE

RESOURCES

For more information or to purchase a CD: Call 845-831-6663 or visit www.scottbeall.com and www.dorightenterprises.org.

It was during this time that Beall got a job as a substitute math teacher; a job that would change his life.

“Teaching just kind of grabbed me,” he said. “I connected with the kids, and I saw how the system was not serving them. I had a real knack for being able to communicate mathematical ideas in ways that the kids could understand.”

Beall became a strong believer in school reform and began dedicating his life to it.

“We need to rethink our broader aims for the learning outcomes for our children,” he said. “We need to rethink our values and priorities and what kind of education is important for the well-being of our kids. We have deactivated a big part of the learner, including imagination, curiosity, belief in self and innovation.”

In 1994, Beall decided to go to Stanford to get his degree in mathematical education.

“I tore into that program,” he said. “I loved it. I had this intellectual capacity that I had left dormant for some time. The program changed me at a core cellular level.”

Some of the research

Beall did at Stanford was to explore the connection between music and mathematics — research that later turned into a book, “Functional Melodies” (Key Curriculum Press, 2000).

“It was a supplemental curricular guide to teach mathematical principles and skills through the context of music,” he said.

Beall moved to Beacon in 1999 and has been living there since. He got a job teaching a class he created called “Enrichment” in the Brewster school district in Putnam County, for grades four to eight.

“In Enrichment, I teach all the subject areas focusing on critical thinking and self-actualization,” he said. “A huge part of the class focuses on sustainability and empowering students to be active problem-solvers. The student is the driver of their education and an active participant in the decision-making process. We work on the relationship between environmental well-being, economic well-being and social well-being. These three domains are inextricably entwined.”

Beall speaks at a variety of conferences and workshops to share his vision and curriculum with others. One of his former students, Eric Ficinus, also wants to get Beall’s curriculum out to the world. Ficinus took Beall’s enrichment class from fourth to eighth grade.

“It opened up our minds to what the world could be,” he said. “At first I was a goof-off — I was still young and immature — but then around seventh grade I really started paying attention. The class totally changed me and became my life’s passion. There’s no other course like it. Something like this should be taught at every school. Mr. Beall is part of the foundation of who I am. He’s a life teacher for me, not just a teacher from school.”

At 18, Ficinus plans to dedicate his life to the principles he learned in Beall’s class.

“I am starting an internship in January in New Mexico,” he said. “I’ll be living in a sustainable community. I want to learn how to build sustainable housing from recycled materials.”

Ficinus was also involved with another creation of

Beall’s called DoRight Leadership Corps, a sustainability consulting firm run by his students. DoRight offers free advice to local businesses to help them reduce their environmental footprint.

“Every natural system of the planet is currently under stress,” Beall said. “The kids contact businesses and help them find more sustainable practices. People listen to kids because they know it’s the truth. We’ve worked with over 70 companies throughout the years and created a lot of positive change.”

Melissa Everett is the executive director of Sustainable Hudson Valley, an organization based in Kingston that helps communities speed up their responses to climate change.

“Scott and I were introduced by a colleague of his,” she said. “When I learned about his program, I found it fascinating and his commitment very solid. He’s spoken at a few conferences I’ve put together, and he’s brought these really poised students with him. It’s really impressive.”

Beall still loves to play music in his spare time. He’s just come out with a new CD of his own compositions, titled “Out to Play.”

“It’s a fusion of jazz, rock and blues,” he said. “A lot of amazing musicians collaborated with me.”

Beall’s love for music and education has only heightened since his life took a dramatic turn over the past year. In September 2010, Beall’s partner gave birth to his daughter, Meka. Sadly, this wonderful moment was marked with deep grief — his partner died during childbirth. While Beall says it’s been very challenging, he believes that the experience has helped him grow immensely and has strengthened his resolve.

“The whole experience has really raised my capacity for compassion,” he said. “Being a father is exceptionally inspiring. It has given me a deeper imperative and motivation for my work. I am more dedicated than ever to help the next generation live in a more conscious manner. I feel very lucky to do all that I do and to have lived the life that I have.”

Lauren Yanks writes about healthy living for a number of publications and teaches English at SUNY New Paltz. She can be reached at laurenynks@aol.com.