From the Editor

Stephen Keith Sagarin

Reflection will show that consciousness is not a thing, not a configuration of neurons or electrochemical activity—although it may require these for its manifestation in us. Consciousness can most clearly be conceived, I believe, according to the polarities favored by the Greeks, and, more recently, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Rudolf Steiner, and Owen Barfield, among many others.

The Greek view of courage provides a good example. For the Greeks, courage wasn't a thing, wasn't a hormone level, for example. It was that which mediated the polarity of fear and foolhardiness. A coward, through fear, will not act when he might. A fool, through foolhardiness, will act rashly when reflection might save his life. A courageous person balances the tug of fear and the force of foolhardiness to find a middle way.

Of what is consciousness the mediator? Well, it is clear that we may perceive the world and that we may think about the world. (Even those who deny the existence of consciousness do not deny the thinking that goes into their books and the perceptions of those who read them.) Perception and conception form the polarity that consciousness mediates. This is clear enough as a thought, and it was Owen Barfield, I believe, who first put it this way. For Rudolf Steiner, we may call consciousness the spirit. From at least one point of view, consciousness and spirit are one and the same.

Consciousness, after all this, is one thread common to almost every article in this issue, consciousness and the call to responsibility that consciousness entails. These are shown here with regard to school administration and governance and our work together in them, particularly in contemplative inquiry and professional development; in recognizing the social, political, and cultural contexts in which we form our schools, here and abroad; in the way we regard our own development as teachers and the development of our students; in taking responsibility for social-emotional education and health of our students; in taking responsibility for the conduct of our research; and in thinking about the very way we live on our planet.

Without planning a theme, we nonetheless received several articles all at once that examine ideas around school governance, administration, and the function of faculty meetings and the so-called college of teachers. Christopher Schaefer discusses seven dimensions or aspects of social work in the conscious creation of a Waldorf school community. Grounded in Steiner's work and representing years of thinking and working with these ideas, Schaefer's thought-provoking article nudges us in the direction of accepting our responsibilities as members of Waldorf school communities not to shirk the hard work of fulfilling Steiner's vision.

Tackling a similar theme, Jon McAlice discusses the organizational structure, governance, and unifying forces of Waldorf school leadership. He finds these in three principles—creativity, sustainability, and accountability. Like Schaefer, he calls us to take up consciously the challenges of school governance and administration.

Continuing this theme, but from the point of view specifically of the work of teachers collectively, Kevin Avison uses the model of organic coherence to discuss the meditative life of teachers in a Waldorf school and how this provides the center from which healthful education grows. He provides a brief and mundane but illustrative case study of a college of teachers at work, and ends by elucidating a "flow chart" to demonstrate the recursive process by which meditative work may occur in a healthy school.

Similarly, Laura Birdsall and Thomas Patteson report on a professional development model, based on clear protocols, that serves to reinforce both the social mission described in Schaefer's and McAlice's articles and the meditative work described in Avison's. A similarity among all these pieces is recognition of the necessity for ongoing evaluation and assessment of all aspects of work in a school. Meditation—contemplative inquiry, we might say—is a necessary component of such

work (more on that from Martyn Rawson in the next issue of the *Bulletin*), but, without discourse among colleagues and without assessment of its effectiveness, it may serve to further isolate one teacher from another, to reinforce convention, rather than open new avenues for teaching and learning.

This issue also contains Part II of Renate Long-Breipohl's article on the simultaneous development of teachers and young children. Taking the zodiac as her guide, she examines profound symbols and metaphors for self-development and work in the classroom. Speaking personally, as someone somewhat baffled by—and not all that interested in—the zodiac, I find her elucidation of these symbols heartwarming, clear, and true.

This issue also brings two articles from Russia. The first is David Mitchell's report on his visit to Russia following reprinting of the *Research Bulletin's* "High Stakes Testing" in a Russian educational journal. Mitchell shows, against the backdrop of Russian history and culture, how standardized testing poses a unique challenge to students and, especially, to Waldorf schools.

The second is Cassandra Hartblay's report on a women's collective in Siberia that, using Waldorf education methods, has started a small school for disabled children. Despite poverty, bureaucracy, and Russian attitudes toward the disabled that, by Western standards, are far from enlightened, these women are growing their small school. A brief talk by Peter Guttenhöfer at a South African Waldorf education conference reinforces the idea that small schools can succeed—he proposes the conscious creation of small schools for young children based on Waldorf education methods to serve communities that cannot support a large Waldorf school. His idea also incorporates the informality and flexibility that characterize what we have come to call homeschooling.

For high school and upper grade school teachers, this issue includes David Mitchell's article on a social-emotional curriculum for adolescents. Social-emotional education has been a hot topic for several years, and it's not a topic Waldorf schools can ignore. Mitchell's argument—that emotions can be educated, and that they shouldn't be educated "by the way," but deliberately—is clear and succinct. The article ends with a table demonstrating a sample social-emotional education curriculum for high schools.

Rounding out the issue are Douglas Gerwin's report on two conferences he attended this spring, Michael D'Aleo's description of insights gained while teaching a youth group in Sweden, and Richard House's article on television and children. Gerwin describes the all-too-common way in which even like-minded, thoughtful, and well-meaning persons talk past each other at conferences, and draws the conclusion that we cannot simply rely on statistics and presentations in our research; we must deliberately take into account both the evidence and the logic we use in reaching our conclusions. D'Aleo, based on a simple calculation, unfolds the ramifications we may recognize in the face of growing population and a finite globe with which to sustain it. He concludes with lessons we may draw from tribal peoples who live simple, meaningful, beautiful, and sustainable lives. We come across many articles addressing the dangers of television for children but we don't find many that add much to what we already know. We believe Richard House's article, a summary of findings on "technological toxicity" and children, is noteworthy for its scope and brevity.

After a truly rainy beginning to the summer, the past days have been blistering and humid. Consciousness tends to want no more than a porch swing, some light reading, and a glass of lemonade; both thinking and perceiving dim, on hiatus. Instead, our new publication schedule calls for reading and editing the contents you now hold.

Corrections

In our last issue, the correct title of the article entitled "Crises in the Kindergarten" should have been "Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in School." We also neglected to include Ed Miller's name as co-author, with Joan Almon, of this article. We regret these errors and are pleased to correct them here.