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A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

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Waldorf Alumni Forum

Jelena Jaehnig

DENVER WALDORF SCHOOL GRADUATE

Why I Became a Waldorf Teacher

Jelena Jaehnig was born in Stuttgart, Germany, and attended the original Waldorf school there for the first three grades. At age nine she moved to Denver with her family. Her father, a priest of the Christian Community, and her mother, a trained Waldorf class teacher, helped to start the Denver Waldorf School. Jelena attended the school through the eighth grade, and thus she experienced a very large, firmly established Waldorf school as well as one in its pioneer stages. Since the Denver school had no high school, she attended an academically rigorous, independent high school in the city.

Growing up with two brothers, and with parents busily involved in the early years of the Waldorf school and the Christian Community in Denver, Jelena lived in a busy household alive with many visitors and volunteers. Jelena went to college in Denver and Germany and completed a master's degree in history. After teaching at the Denver Waldorf School from 2002 to 2003, she moved to Oregon to teach at the Eugene Waldorf School. She spent the 2005–2006 academic year volunteering at the Waldorf school in Guanajuato, México, and learning Spanish. Jelena has taught high school German, music, and art and has been a class teacher for several years. Her current class is now in fourth grade. She lives with her husband, Chris Bianchi, and his two children, Maize, 11, and Rose, 8. Her hobbies include hiking, reading, practicing Spanish, and painting.

—R.E.K.

I was blessed to attend Waldorf schools from first through eighth grade. When I was in first grade I knew that I wanted to become a Waldorf teacher. My determination to pursue this vocation stayed with me as I grew up and was only strengthened as I realized how many wonderful activities I would be able to engage in by Waldorf teaching: telling many different stories and biographies, performing science experiments, experiencing the power and beauty of language, making music, doing drama, drawing, painting, and modeling clay, to name but a few. I wanted to work with children in all of these fields.

The basis of our work as Waldorf teachers is the acknowledgment that each child who comes to us is a unique individuality and that he or she has a destiny to fulfill. Our task is to help the child prepare for that life purpose. We seek to unravel the mystery of each child in our care and to learn, little by little, how best to help that child develop in a healthy manner and to acquire the skills, capacities, and knowledge needed to live well in the world. Among the things that we try to impart to each child are the following.

Flexibility in Thinking

Even an academic subject like mathematics can be taught in a way that cultivates mathematical ability but also something more. For example, in teaching addition, one can teach that $3+3+3 = 9$. This is true, of course, and the children can grasp the abstract



Waldorf graduate and Waldorf class teacher Jelena Jaehnig with two of her students

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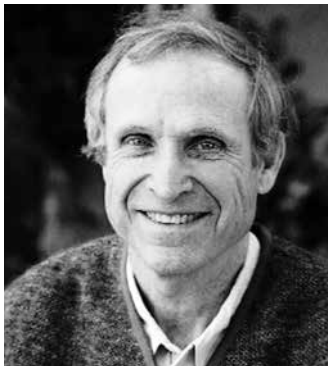
From the Editor

Making Music – It Is Never Too Late

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

One of the great joys of life is playing a musical instrument. In making music, we create something that, albeit invisible, is beautiful and uplifting.

Making music also engages and develops each of the soul's activities of thinking, willing, and feeling. To play a piece of music, we must be mentally clear, able to identify the notes to be played and the rhythm and tempo. We must also be alive in the will, able



to move the arms, hands, and fingers—and sometimes feet—to generate the proper notes on the instrument. And our feeling life must be engaged in order to project a composition's emotion and warmth.

Making music in a group helps develop sensitivity to others and the ability

to work together. We must play our part but at the same time be keenly aware of what our colleagues are doing. And playing music together creates a unique, positive bond among the musicians. It can even be socially healing. (In a California youth detention center where Waldorf methods are used, gang members have been known to overcome their mutual enmities by playing the recorder together.)

For these and other reasons, music is an intrinsic part of the Waldorf curriculum. Waldorf parents watch with pride as their children learn to play the C-flute, then the recorder and also a stringed instrument, and later as they perform individually, in ensembles, and in the school orchestra.

Many Waldorf parents play musical instruments themselves. But many do not. The percentage of adults in the United States and Canada who play an instrument has been dropping steadily for the last century. Piano sales reflect this. One hundred years ago, 360,545 new pianos were sold in the United States. In 2007, when the population was almost four times as great, only 62,536 were sold.

But it is never too late to learn. The recorder, also known as the “sweet flute,” is an ideal instrument for the adult beginner. It is relatively inexpensive and easy to play. There is an abundance of beautiful music for the instrument—including Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque ensemble pieces, as well as contemporary compositions and arrangements of folk songs from many cultures.

I teach recorder at Rudolf Steiner College to students planning to become Waldorf teachers. Some come with absolutely no musical education or training. But a student who is motivated and is willing to practice twenty or thirty minutes a day can, within a few weeks, master the basics of recorder playing and be able to play music with others.

Many of us Waldorf parents rue that we did not have the benefits of the education that our children are receiving. But education is a lifelong process, and the human organism is marvelously malleable and suited to evolution and refinement.

A hundred years ago, before television, DVDs, and computer games, parents and children making music together in the home was part of the cultural fabric of our society. This is a tradition we would do well to revive. ☺



Alto recorder

In the sculptural, pictorial realm we look at beauty, we live it, whereas in the musical realm we ourselves become beauty. In music man himself is creator. He creates something that does not come from what is already there, but lays a foundation and a firm ground for what is to arise in the future.

—Rudolf Steiner, *Practical Advice to Teachers*

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Remembering Martha Náñez, A Friend of the Association

Martha Náñez was a Waldorf class teacher and Spanish language teacher for many years at the Sacramento Waldorf School. For seven years, from about 1986 to 1993, she lived in México and helped the Waldorf school in Cuernavaca through its pioneer phase.

Martha Náñez was also a friend and supporter of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Martha owned a property in Fair Oaks, California, which abuts the campus of Rudolf Steiner College and which is just up the street from the Sacramento Waldorf School. The property includes a large house, a smaller cottage, and a large studio apartment. In the early 1990s, when the Association was looking for a home, Martha offered the cottage to the

Association at a rent far below market value. A few years later, the Association offices moved into the larger house on the property and remained there until 2006. In 1997 the studio apartment on Martha's property had become the editorial office for *Renewal* and is still the home of this magazine.



Martha Náñez
1938–2009

Martha Náñez—educator, musician, craftsperson, and dedicated friend of Waldorf Education—died suddenly in Ecuador on May 27, 2009. The Association and the staff of this magazine feel deep gratitude for her years of nurturing support.

Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education is published twice a year.

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Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America.

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Correction:

The Spring/Summer 2009 issue contained an article about a fledgling Waldorf school in Horodenka, Ukraine, called The Stork's Nest. In the article, the city of Odessa was referred to as being in Russia. Odessa is in fact in Ukraine. The error was made by the editor, not by the writer of the article.

Our sincere thanks to the following persons for help in gathering graphic material for this issue of *Renewal*: Christine Holmstrom; Jeanne DePrince and Arline Monks of Rudolf Steiner College; Gabriella Boehmer of the Institute of HeartMath; Kristin Lougheed-Constantine and Gabrielle Holly of the Lifeways Children's Center at Rudolf Steiner College; Calliope Landgraf; and Ai Hui Lai and her daughter, Claire Wu.

Thanks also to the three generations of the Peik clan, including Ruby, of Hollis, New Hampshire, for providing the editor with room, board, and invaluable technical assistance during a critical stage in the production process.

From the Association

More Help from the Other Side

BY PATRICE MAYNARD

Within the course of two days in July, news of the passing of two remarkable Waldorf teachers—Eva Gardiner and Ron Richardson—spread through the Waldorf world. Soon thereafter, a friend who is a member of the Association's board of trustees wrote to me:

Yet [more friends] to help us from the other side!
Surely the future looks bright for all of our work.



*Eva Gardiner
1923–2009*

Eva Gardiner had a long and productive life of dedicated service to Waldorf Education at the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York. She had been a handwork teacher, bookkeeper, envelope stuffer, housing-for-visitors hostess, and champion of teachers, as well as a Waldorf mother. An end-of-life illness rendered her passing a relief and blessing for her.

Ron Richardson was a successful and beloved class teacher in Chicago for twenty-two years. He had also long been a mentor to and trainer of Waldorf teachers. Six years ago, he began teaching at the Merriconeag Waldorf School in Freeport, Maine. Ron was an ardent supporter of our Association and saw, perhaps more clearly than most, the power in our motto, "Strength Through Collaboration."

In July, Ron was in Harlemville, New York, at a course being held at the Nature Institute. He was deepening his understanding and experience of observation-based science. Before going to a play with friends one evening, he sat down in a chair to rest. When the others came to fetch him, he was still sitting in the chair, dead of a heart attack. Ron was sixty-one years young, an enthusiastic, energetic, humble man with a laugh that bespoke a deep love of the world. His sudden passing shocked and saddened his many friends and colleagues.

It looked as if Ron had died "away from home." But Harlemville, about one hundred miles north of New York City, is a major center of Anthroposophy and

Waldorf Education in North America. Besides the Hawthorne Valley School, the area supports the Hawthorne Valley Farm, the Rudolf Steiner Library, a church of the Christian Community, and other related initiatives. Ron's wife, Barbara, realized that Ron had in fact died "at home." She decided to have Ron buried in the Harlemville cemetery.

People came from Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, Washington, DC, New York, and Pennsylvania to attend the funeral. The service was held by the graveside, in the wind and sun. The priest, Peter Skaller, described Ron's life as a journey from the industrial desert of Detroit, where he had been born, across unknown territory to the rich, green, promised land of Canaan. Unlike Moses, Ron was allowed to enter the land of milk and honey before he crossed the threshold.

The evening after Ron died, Barbara spoke of Ron's life to a small group of friends gathered at the church. Drafted into the army during the Viet Nam War, Ron walked away from boot camp, and later tried several times without success to turn himself in. When Ron finally did convince the army that he had deserted, he was put in a stockade for several months. During his detention, Ron had his first experiences of the opening of the door into the spiritual world, experiences that led him to Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education. Barbara spoke also of her and Ron's first meeting—under a photo of Rudolf Steiner in the home of Rudy Wilhelm in Detroit—of Ron's love of and dedication to the children he taught, and his commitment to the arts. Ron was a trained speech artist, with a rich, resonant voice.



*Ron Richardson
1948–2009*

Ron had spoken at a June meeting of dedicated Waldorf teachers and had chosen "light" as the

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Raising Healthy, Creative Children

BY JOSEPH CHILTON PEARCE

*Ever since the publication of his book *Magical Child* (1977), Joseph Chilton Pearce has been recognized as a leading authority on child development, childrearing practices, and education. He is particularly known for his ability to apply the results of the latest scientific research to the issues that confront parents and educators. Pearce is an ardent supporter of Waldorf Education, having realized that many recent scientific discoveries about brain development and child development were long ago incorporated into the Waldorf pedagogy and curriculum from its inception by Rudolf Steiner in 1919.*

In May 2009, Pearce gave a two-day workshop at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, on the theme “Raising Healthy, Creative Children.” The conference was cosponsored by Rudolf Steiner College and the Department of Education at the California State University at Sacramento. Renewal staff member, Anne Riegel, attended the workshop and took copious, mostly verbatim notes. The editor turned the notes into the following article that was reviewed, edited, and approved by Joseph Chilton Pearce.

—R. E. K.

We are not doing right by our children. In the last decade of the twentieth century, 50,000 children, more than the number of American soldiers who died in Viet Nam, were killed by other children. And suicide is the third leading cause of death among children.



Joseph Chilton Pearce

This inclination to violence is not a moral issue, but a biological one. It has to do with brain development and how children come into the world and how they experience the world in their first months and years of life.

The Tripartite Brain

The human brain consists of three major sections:

- **the reptilian hindbrain**, which consists of the brainstem and the cerebellum and which controls involuntary activities, as well as survival mechanisms;
- **the limbic system**, which includes the thalamus, hypothalamus, and several other brain centers, and deals with emotions, memory,

sexuality, and smell; and

- **the cerebral cortex** or neomammalian brain, which is involved in muscle control, the senses, and higher thought processes. The cerebral cortex has two hemispheres: the right one, associated with the perception of melody, emotion, and nonverbal visual patterns, and the left, associated with verbal skills and logical thought.

The cerebral cortex includes a prefrontal lobe. The prefrontal cortex is the governor of the entire brain system. Perhaps more important, it is also the seat of those capacities and activities that make human beings human—including thinking, compassion, empathy, altruism, love, and spiritual striving. It can be called “the angel lobe.” Our ability to concentrate on something, our decision-making capacity, and our creativity are determined by the prefrontal cortex as well.

The development of the prefrontal cortex is crucial. It undergoes some maturation during gestation but continues growing for nine months after birth. Its healthy growth depends largely on the environment in which the mother lives and on her emotional condition. If she is in a safe, protected, nurturing environment and can provide the same kind of environment to the child, then the prefrontal cortex will be large and healthy. The hindbrain, which governs reactions to threats and dangers, will be relatively small. If the mother’s environment and her emotional state

are imbued with anxiety and fear, then the hindbrain will develop more than the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex may even have lesions in it. People inclined to violent behavior have been found to have such damaged prefrontal cortices.

Modern medicine tends to see birth as a sickness. It prefers that birth take place in the stark environment of a hospital—a place for sick people—and is quick to resort to cesarean sections and other medical interventions that are traumatic for the newborn. Such experiences negatively affect the newborn child and the healthy development of his brain. The infant needs to feel “It’s a great and wonderful world into which I have come.”

Love and Breastfeeding

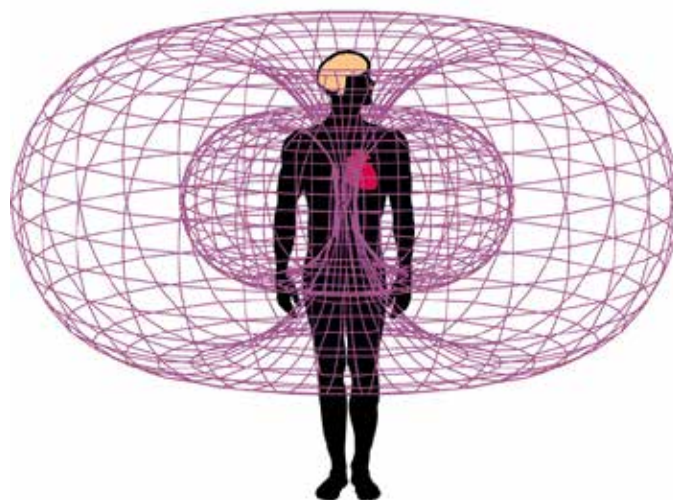
During the first nine months, contact with the mother and with her love is the most critical factor in the healthy development of the infant. In particular, the infant has to have communion with the mother’s heart and with the energy radiating from her heart.

Recent research shows that the human heart radiates electromagnetic energy. This energy forms curving patterns around the person, much like the patterns of the electromagnetic plasma that emanates from the Earth and Sun. Because of the intimate, reciprocal connection between the brain and the heart, a person’s thoughts as well as her feelings affect the pattern of energy. Negative thoughts and negative feelings cause the pattern to become irregular and chaotic.

One of the critical roles of breastfeeding is to bring the infant into intimate and regular connection with the mother’s heart and the energy emanating from it. The best way to soothe and comfort an infant is to hold it against one’s chest and to make eye contact and soothing sounds. Breastfeeding is important for the mother as well as the infant, since breastfeeding has been shown to correlate with the mother’s own well-being and continued good health.

The Explorer in Need of Approval

The toddler has two main concerns. He must, at all costs, maintain contact with his primary caregiver—that person from whom he experiences unconditional acceptance and love. He also needs to explore and experience every object in his environment with his senses.



The human heart radiates a field of electromagnetic energy that, because of the close connection between the heart and the brain, is strongly affected by what a person thinks.

It is important that the young child be allowed to explore her world with as much freedom as possible. If a child is told “No! Stop doing that,” she experiences an inner split between her need to explore and her need to remain one with her mother or caregiver. Repeated negative emotional experiences of this sort can disrupt the child’s immune system. It can take the parasympathetic nervous system up to six hours to restore the immune function after a harsh experience. Conversely, five minutes of love and care directed toward a child can materially strengthen the immune system.

Many indigenous peoples in South America and other parts of the world never reprimand a small child. They simply model the correct behavior for the child, and the child responds. In our culture, a young child receives a harsh reprimand on average every nine minutes. The more public the situation, the louder and harsher the correction, due mainly to the fact that the parent herself or himself feels embarrassed by the scrutiny and judgment of onlookers.

Television

Television can be a major, negative factor in a child’s development, even in utero. If a pregnant woman watches a violent program that induces a fearful, fight-or-flight response, that experience is transmitted to the fetus. It senses that the world is a dangerous place and will overdevelop its defensive hindbrain at the expense of its higher forebrain.

As the child develops after birth, he is likely to be exposed to great amounts of television. A 1995 study indicated that by age five the average

American child has watched 6000 hours of television. Today, the average toddler spends two hours daily in front of a television or computer screen. Even if the programs are of a benign, nonviolent nature, the experience of watching affects brain development.

Children often become catatonic in front of a television screen. Television producers thus have the challenge of keeping the little viewers “awake,” that is, attentive to the programs and especially to the advertisements. The producers know that sudden, jarring changes in sound and/or light intensity excite the startle reflex of our defensive hindbrain. The startle response brings to the brain a rush of the stress hormone cortisol, which arouses the child’s attention. Television programming for children—and increasingly all television programming—is filled with loud noises and rapidly changing, strong visual images. These keep the viewer’s hindbrain in a more or less constant state of arousal, preparing for dangers and emergencies that never materialize. With each apparent emergency, the brain immediately sends out new dendrites and axons, which are then pruned away by the parasympathetic system when no danger appears.

Researchers have found a significant difference in the brains of people raised before 1965 and those raised afterward. Members of the latter group, for whom television played a much more central role, have lost much of their ability to differentiate subtle changes in colors, as well as much of their ability to distinguish subtle sounds. They need extreme and constant sensory stimulation, as from television, computer games, loud music, and text messaging. Otherwise, they experience a form of sensory deprivation and a diminished sense of self.

The virtual realities created by television, computer games, and electronic communication—such as email and text messaging—are playing a role in the deterioration of perception. Young people are

becoming addicted to these virtual realities and are divorced from the present moment, from the real world of direct human interaction, and from nature. The healthy development of their brains is being compromised by virtual reality.

There are two forms of light—radiant and reflected. Radiant light is directly perceived light emanating from a source. Reflected light is light that has been reflected off a real object in space. Direct sun-

light and light from a fire are forms of radiant light. The light carrying the images from a television or computer screen is also radiant light, although much different in quality. Radiant light conveys only the fact that there is a source of light. It carries no information for the child’s sensory system to respond to, nothing to stimulate development of the nervous system and brain. Reflected light—light reflected off real objects—carries information that informs the child of the real-world-out-there and stimulates development. The child’s brain responds quite differently to radiant and reflected light. A child sitting in front of a television or computer screen, bathed in screen-radiant light, is being deprived of a stimulus it needs for healthy growth.

Young children do not have to be entertained all the time, but they do have to play. The researcher Burton White, author of *The First Three Years of Life*, looking for “happy and talented” children, found that only some three percent of all children fitted this description. He also discovered that these children share a significant characteristic: when not playing, they spend much of their time staring into space, open-eyed, and with a blank expression on their faces, apparently in a kind of semi-dream state.

Play, Crafts, Music, and Nature

Rather than needing television and computer games, young children need opportunities for imaginative play. On the development of the imagination at an early age depend the later concrete and formal types of operational thinking. In the years between seven



Entertainment designed to trigger the fight-or-flight reflex in young viewers may negatively affect brain development.

and eleven, children also need to sing and play music, do handcrafts, make things, and explore and experience nature.

At around age eleven, a massive “pruning” of brain cells takes place. If the brain cells that were meant to be used in musical, handcraft, and related activities have not been utilized, they are removed to make way for the vast changes of adolescence.

Adolescence

From about age eleven and on into adolescence, the child is looking for models of virtue and righteousness. Adolescents sense a hidden greatness within themselves and an anticipation of great changes and accomplishments. At the same time, they have a fresh desire—much like that of the toddler—to explore the world and experiment within it.

The education of adolescents should nourish and encourage this idealism and sense of potential and promise. It should also give them freedom to explore and experiment. There is a correlation between the degree of freedom allowed toddlers and teenagers in a society and the amount of violence in the society. The more freedom, the less violence.

With puberty, the whole body, including the brain, goes through major changes. The left brain develops and gives rise to a new way of thinking. Adolescents should be given opportunities to use this thinking capacity and to think for themselves.

Raising Healthy, Creative Children

Recent research, then, is quite clear about the factors that may help children become healthy and creative. They include:

- a safe and anxiety-free environment from the moment of conception
- a trauma-free, natural birth
- love and warmth from a reliable, devoted primary caregiver

- physical contact with the heart of the caregiver, as happens in breastfeeding
- the modeling of desired behaviors by adults, rather than constant harsh reprimands
- protection from sensory overstimulation from television, computers, and other electronic media
- opportunities for imaginative play, crafts, music, experiences of nature, and for just looking out into space

- freedom to explore and experiment, during adolescence as well as in early childhood



Children of every age need the freedom to explore and experience the world around them.

The Blessing of Plasticity

For decades, the accepted wisdom about the human brain was that at a certain age it loses the ability to grow and change. Recent studies indicate, however, that the brain retains its plasticity—its ability to become something new and different—at every stage of child development and throughout life, even into old age.

During childhood, particularly at the beginning of each stage of development, it is possible to undo the bad effects of past experiences and to establish the ground for future healthy development. This points to the therapeutic and transformational possibilities of an educational approach, such as that of

Waldorf, which provides the activities and types of learning appropriate to each stage of development.

The plasticity of the human brain, its capacity to grow and change throughout life, is also a basis for hope for adults. One is never too old to learn a new skill, master a new subject, change one's patterns of perception, thought, and behavior, or exchange old, dysfunctional habits for new, positive ones. We always have the possibilities of re-creating ourselves. And some or all of the above factors, supportive of children developing in a healthy and positive way, no doubt support our rejuvenescence as well. ☺

Let the Little Children Draw

Spontaneous Drawing and the Development of the Young Child

BY INGUN SCHNEIDER

A healthy, well-coordinated toddler is a being in motion. She runs around the room, climbs up on a chair, hides under a table or behind a sofa, clings to her mother's legs in order to get picked up for a snuggle, then slides down to continue her exploration of space around her.

When given a crayon or pencil, this young child will spontaneously draw scribbly, whirling, overlapping lines on paper or on any flat surface—including



The urge to draw is innate in every child from the time his or her hand can hold a crayon or a piece of chalk.

walls and floors! These quick back-and-forth, initially mostly straight, soon curved and round lines, go in large sweeps vertically, horizontally, and diagonally across the paper. The large drawing movements are initiated by the whole body or with

the whole arm moving freely from the shoulder. The toddler is not at all interested in depicting anything with this scribbling.

What the young child is showing with his drawing is what he experiences with his body in space. He is moving forward-back, up-down, left-right in space, just as the lines do in his drawings. With these scribbles he is saying, "Here I am down under the table—and here I am climbing up on the chair—and here I am running around the room!" Of course, this "statement" is and should be totally unconscious. The drawings are done spontaneously without any

intention of reproducing something that the young child has seen—something adults may find hard to understand. At this stage, the drawings show the child's developing relationship to three-dimensional space, that is, his spatial orientation.

In time, if the child is not instructed how to draw, her spontaneous efforts move naturally from the back-and-forth-scribbles stage to more whirling, circular shapes, including spirals. At about the time that the young child refers to herself as "I," these shapes turn into a closed circle, often with a cross or dot in the center. Around a child's third birthday, a physiological change is taking place in the bones of the skull, as the frontal or forehead bones become firmly fused. It is as if the three-year-old closes the circle to show that she is experiencing her separateness. The dot or cross represents the "I" of the child and indicates that she is beginning to experience herself as an independent being.

Gradually, over the next year, the drawn circle gets eyes, a mouth, maybe a nose and ears and, coming out of the sides, two arms and, down below, two legs. Later the arms receive hands, the legs feet. "This is me!" says the three-and-a-half to four-year-old with this drawing. "I am one unit with a face and four limbs." She is also saying, "I don't yet experience my trunk, chest, waist, neck, shoulders." When the child is about age four, the self-portrait receives not only a head, but a trunk—round/oval or triangular—and four limbs with hands and feet. There is still no waist or neck. The school-ready, six- to seven-year-old child finally draws a neck, arms coming out of shoulders, pants or a skirt starting at the waist, hair to complement the earlier facial features, hands holding/doing something, and feet. At each stage, the child is showing in her drawing of the person how she is experiencing her own body, that is, her body geography.

Around the age of four, the child also begins to draw objects in the environment, such as houses, trees,

and flowers. At first, these drawings are of generic or archetypal objects rather than real, particular ones. The children experience these archetypes both in the outside world and within themselves. When children are around six years old, they start to consciously draw what they see. They draw a particular house, a certain person, a specific tree or flower.

This development in drawing occurs in children in different parts of the world. It is remarkable that young children in Africa and Asia draw archetypal houses in much the same way that children in Europe and America do. Waldorf kindergarten teacher and author Inger Brochman, in her book of children's drawings, published in Danish, describes how the drawings of a Danish kindergarten class were entered in an international exhibition of children's drawings sponsored by UNICEF. The teacher of this class traveled to the city where this exhibition took place, went into the hall where the drawings covered the walls, looked around, and thought she spotted her own children's drawings. However, these were the drawings of a kindergarten class in another country. Because the various groups of drawings were so similar, she had to carefully go around the hall and read the labels before she found the drawings from her class.

Drawings as a Diagnostic Tool

A child's drawings may be used to discover difficulties in development. If, for example, a kindergarten-age child draws only scribbles, there is cause for concern. He may be showing us that he is still negotiating space and has not yet internalized his relationship to space. This unmastered step may hamper his further development, later affecting perhaps his ability to recognize which direction letters face in the two-dimensional space on a piece of paper. If a school-age child doesn't draw hands on a person, it may indicate he is having difficulty with fine motor coordination. The child may need help in learning to

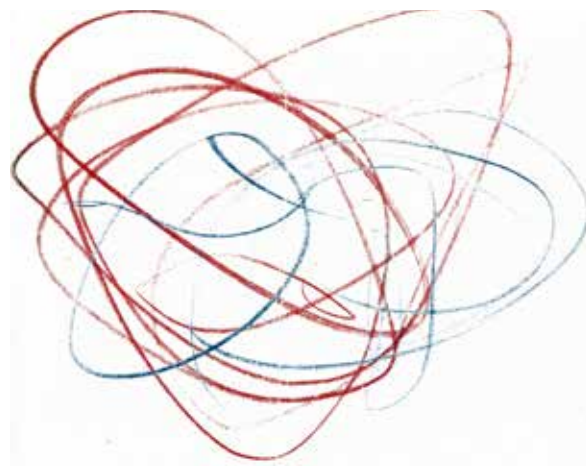
hold a pencil in a relaxed way and in doing activities such as knitting and whittling.

Drawings of the archetypal house show a child's relationship to her body's nervous system and sensory organs. The house's windows represent the senses, open to and experiencing the world. Windows with crosses show that the child takes in sensory impressions and, in a healthy manner, is able to screen out unwanted and irrelevant sensory input. If a child's drawing of a house has no windows or windows with no crosses, it may indicate a tendency to hyperactivity. Such a child may take in too many sense impressions, be unable to deal with them all, and find it hard to concentrate. A door with a door-knob allows the child to enter and leave the "house" freely—upon awakening and going to sleep. When there is no door or doorknob, the child may be having difficulty going to sleep and/or waking up.

The tree represents the child's breathing and rhythmic system; the lungs are structured like an upside-down tree. If a child has had breathing challenges, such as bronchitis, croup, or asthma, this may be seen in how the tree is drawn. The trunk may have a hole in it, or the trunk may end suddenly with the leaves appearing without any branches, or there may be no leaves.

The Role of Adults

Passing through the many stages in drawing is an important part of the young child's healthy development. Each stage of drawing represents a stage in the development of the child's nervous system and consciousness. Each stage is also a necessary precursor to the next level of activity.



The linear, back-and-forth scribbles of a child of one year and ten months give way to the circular, sometimes spiral lines of a child of two years and three months.

It is crucial, then, that the child be allowed to go through this development unhampered and unimpeded. Parents, teachers, and other caregivers can support this process by providing the necessary furniture and materials. (Please see sidebar.) They can also help by expressing appreciation for a child's drawing. When a child proudly shows a drawing, the adult might respond by saying, "I like this," or "I like your drawing!" or "Thank you, how nice!"

Beyond this, though, interference in the child's drawing activities is not necessary and may even be harmful. Questions to the child about his drawings—"Well, what is that?"—can introduce an intellectualizing that goes against the largely unconscious nature of the activity and often inhibits later impulses to draw.

Instructing a child in drawing—showing how to draw a house or dog or flower—also is neither necessary nor advisable. If, because of adult interference, a child passes through a stage of drawing too quickly or skips a stage altogether, this may upset the natural unfolding of capacities. The child may try to imitate or please the adult, tensing his body as he leans down over the paper trying to draw like the adult, skipping the use of large, free arm movements to create various lines across the page. Another danger is that the child will notice that he can't



In this drawing by a child of two years and one month, the elements of a human face are present.



This drawing by a child of four years and one month depicts recognizable—if legless—human forms.

reproduce what the adult is drawing, become self-conscious and inhibited, and give up drawing.

Drawing is one area where a laissez-faire policy on the part of parents and other caregivers is advisable. One need only provide space, proper equipment, and time for the child to draw freely, totally in her own way, without being asked what she is drawing. We need to respect the innate wisdom of the child and step back to observe and enjoy the powerful process of child development—keeping in mind that the young child's drawings show us how her development is proceeding. ☺



INGUN SCHNEIDER trained to be a physical therapist in her native Sweden in the 1960s. After working in this profession and then teaching Lamaze childbirth education, she became a Waldorf class teacher in the 1980s. As a widely recognized expert in *Extra Lesson*, an approach to remedial education based on the principles of Waldorf Education, Ingun Schneider travels widely to teach about child development and about *Extra Lesson* as a support for students with learning challenges. She lives in San Francisco and maintains an *Extra Lesson* private practice there. She is director of the Remedial Education Program at Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, California.

Recommended Books on Children's Drawings

Audrey McAllen, *Reading Children's Drawings: The Person, House, and Tree Motifs* (Fair Oaks, CA: Rudolf Steiner College Press, 2004).

Michaela Strauss, *Understanding Children's Drawings: Tracing the Path of Incarnation* (Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2007).

Rhoda Kellogg, *Analyzing Children's Art* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1970).

Inger Brochman, *Bornetegningernes hemmeligheder: Tydning af bornetegninger ud fra Rudolf Steiner-pædagogikken* (Hernovs Forlag, 1995).



Plants, trees, crosses, and a little girl populate this drawing by a child of four years and six months.

Drawing Materials for the Young Child

The following items should always be available to the young child, starting around the first birthday:

- beeswax stick crayons of all colors, including pink, violet, black, and brown
- large sheets of paper or a roll of paper such as butcher paper. The smallest paper appropriate for a preschooler is about 8 1/2" x 11"
- a table and chair sized for a child

The chair should allow the child's feet to rest on the floor or on a foot support. The height of the tabletop should allow the child to sit straight with forearms resting on the surface without having the shoulders pushed up. The toddler or preschooler may just stop by the table briefly to scribble a few lines while standing, before moving on again, so don't expect him to sit himself down comfortably.

The following items can be helpful but are optional:

- beeswax block crayons of all colors
- thick colored pencils
- colored construction paper
- watercolor paints in small amounts in wide jars with lids for storage
- wide paintbrushes with thick round handles; narrow brushes may cause the child to grasp the narrow handles with tension

Please note that it is important to teach the young child how to properly care for all these materials.

Please also note that stick beeswax crayons are preferred over block crayons for young children,

with the exception of the one- or two-year-old. The toddler holds objects including crayons with his whole hand, moving the arm at the shoulder to draw lines. For a five- or six-year-old, the block crayon's size makes him hold it like a younger child. This grip doesn't allow the child's ring finger and little finger to separate from the other fingers and rest on the paper, as occurs later when he holds a pencil to write. The hand thus lacks a stable support, and the child moves the crayon on the paper by moving his arm at the elbow and shoulder and/or by leaning or twisting his upper body from side to side.

[T]he typical forms drawn by young children are lines: at first scribbly lines, then "woolly balls," circles, spirals, triangles, squares. All these are more readily drawn with stick crayons than with blocks. The block crayon holds back the fine motor development of the hand, discourages the drawing of these archetypal forms of early childhood drawings, and causes many older children to hurriedly complete a picture as they cover the paper with quick, broad strokes. Many of today's kindergarten teachers who have stick crayons in their classrooms have noticed that the children draw more universal and age-typical pictures with more of the mentioned archetypes.

(This last paragraph is taken from an article by Ingun Schneider, "Children's Hands: What do we observe today?" published in the 2003 Newsletter of the Association for a Healing Education.)

Ziggy and the Wheelchair Project

A Seventh-Grade Class Experiences an Exercise in Empathy

BY MARK JOHN

As a social organism, the Waldorf elementary school class is quite unusual. Typically the children meet and form a group when they are six or seven years old. They remain together for the next eight years, spending nearly all of each school day together, doing the same activities at the same time. For the well-being of the class as a whole and of each child, it is important that every boy and girl be fully accepted and respected within the social unit.

The Waldorf curriculum in itself promotes this social integration. The children do a wide variety of activities—academic, artistic, musical, manual, and athletic—and the particular talents and strengths of each child have an opportunity to come to the fore. If there are social tensions in a group, the class teacher typically will initiate and lead a conversation among the children to resolve the problem. Waldorf Education is not only an education of the intellect, the artistic sensibility, and the hands. It is also an education—a “drawing out”—of the moral and social capacities of the child.

Sometimes a social issue in a class requires an imaginative and even daring initiative on the part of the teacher. Such was the case in Mark John’s seventh-grade class at the Minnesota Waldorf School three years ago.

—R. E. K.

Danzig “Ziggy” Norberg was born with spina bifida and has minimal use of his legs. He has used a wheelchair his whole life. Ziggy was a member of the class—which I took over in grade two—from the first through third grade. He was an exuberant student and fully accepted by the other children. In morning circle when the others were doing leaps, Ziggy did wheelies. Ziggy’s family moved out of state for a few years, but when the class was enter-

to explain to his classmates what the Cold War had been about.

Yet some issues began to surface that had not been there in the past. As the students were entering adolescence, they were more self-absorbed and less aware of Ziggy. When the class went outside to play or to a different part of the building, doors would slam in Ziggy’s face, or everyone would take off

As the students entered adolescence, they were more self-absorbed and less aware of Ziggy.

ing seventh grade, he returned and was enthusiastically welcomed back.

Ziggy’s exuberance was still there—his wheelies were now part of the movement class—and he was soon again a fully accepted member of the class. His enthusiasm was evident in his class participation as well. Academically, Ziggy was gifted, especially in history, geography, and social studies. His bedtime reading during the year was World War II history, and he was conversant enough with global politics

across the field, leaving Ziggy to wait on the sidewalk or to slowly work his way across the grass. In the classroom, chairs, book bags, and supplies would be left in the walkway. These things affected Ziggy, and his usual positive enthusiasm began to be dampened. What began discussions, though, were incidents that took place at the last of the three performances of our seventh-grade play. During the curtain calls, Ziggy, who was not on the stage, tried to get there but was forgotten by his classmates and his teacher. Even worse, when a parent later brought in a fruit

bouquet of chocolate-covered strawberries and skewered fruit, Ziggy was unable to reach it, and by the time he was noticed, there was very little left.

After some discussion, Karen Urman, Ziggy's mother, and I came up with the idea to have Ziggy's classmates each spend time in a wheelchair. Steve, a young man from the Courage Center—a group that works with individuals with disabilities—came and spoke to the class about his own experience in a wheelchair. His back had been broken when he was a teenager. Someone dove off a bridge into a river where he was swimming and landed on him. Steve has been a paraplegic ever since.

When Steve opened up the discussion for questions about himself, the class, just having finished their physiology block, was full of queries. One student asked if stem cell research could change his condition and if he would want that. Steve responded that he "couldn't go there," as he needs to live his life now and not be concerned about what might be. Others asked about his feelings and social experiences. Having an adult speak freely and frankly about his emotions, attitudes, and experiences created a strong foundation and framework for what the students would be embarking upon.

After Steve's presentation, Ziggy became the focus of discussion. It was interesting to see how much Ziggy's classmates did not know or had not noticed about Ziggy. For example, although Ziggy is not able to walk, he is able to stand as long as he is holding onto something. Not one of his classmates, even his closest friend, knew this. They all said simply, "Ziggy can't stand." After this comment, Ziggy stood up. The other students were also unaware that Ziggy has some use of his legs and is able to crawl. In the wheelchair project, the students chose to spend a school day, or twenty-four hours, or an entire weekend in a wheelchair. There was also a written component. They had to keep a journal of



Ziggy Norberg with classmate Maddy Wolfe in Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors. Ziggy is playing one of twin brothers—both named Dromio—each a bondman to one of another pair of twins, each named Antipholus.

their experiences in the wheelchair and also to answer two questions:

- How do you feel about having Ziggy in the class?
- How have your attitudes changed?

The students addressed the first question before spending time in the wheelchair. They tended to see Ziggy as just one of the group. A few mentioned that there were accommodations for him in games class and in some outside activities.

Ziggy is like a normal kid once you get to know him. I don't think that it affects me at all. I don't think anything different of him than Jessica or Avery.

Everybody in my class, including me, likes him as a classmate or even a friend, and there is no discrimination against him just because he's in a wheelchair.

The next part of the project involved the use of the wheelchair. There was an air of excitement in the classroom as the first student got into it. He and his family had opted for the entire weekend. On Monday morning he rolled into the classroom and with a sigh of relief got out of the chair. He reported that he had done pretty well, except that he had "cheated" to play a game of laser tag at a friend's birthday party.

Two different-sized chairs were available, and in the course of a month, all twenty of Ziggy's classmates spent time in one of them. In turn, each student got to use a wheelchair and to recount his or her experiences. One student abandoned the wheelchair after a half day because it was just too much work. Another was being pushed by a classmate and was taken through a "short cut," right through a mud puddle, and got dirty and stuck. Muddy tracks went all the way to the choir room, and the boys responsible had to clean the floor. Everyone tried to play games and engage in their usual outside activities. Several fell over backward while trying to play

4-square, basketball, or volleyball. What looked like an easy roll up the ramp proved to be almost impossible for many students. They found themselves asking for help. Ziggy's maneuvers—lifting his front wheels, staying balanced, and spinning gracefully—proved more difficult than they looked.

Those who kept the chair overnight or for the weekend wrote of the awkwardness of being stared at and of having people make comments behind their backs. They also noted the difficulty of navigating curbs without curb cuts.

When I was in the wheelchair I got some strange looks. It was either pity or looks like, "What the heck are you doing there?"

There were doors I couldn't get through, there were places I couldn't reach, so many things I couldn't do. I practically went insane.

My mom heard two college girls say, "Oh, it's so sad, she is so pretty but now she's stuck in that chair."

Students who spent just the school day in the wheelchair mostly commented about the difficulties in getting around and in playing. Arms and legs soon began to hurt.

I was in the wheelchair on Wednesday. I thought it was going to be fun and later learned it was not. By the end of first period, I had already fallen over

four times.

I felt kind of apologetic, rushed, and frustrated at the same time, because I felt like I was holding people up, which rushed me, and it is really hard to squeeze through that space! . . . (M)y body felt the physical consequences of being in a wheelchair. At the end of the day, my legs hurt like mad, my arms felt much stronger, and my toes fell asleep regularly.

As the project went on, the consciousness of the students and their behavior began to change. They were more aware and more considerate of Ziggy's situation. Chairs began to be pushed in so that Ziggy could get by, the classroom door was held open, and students remained with Ziggy while going out to the swings across the field.

The answers to the second question—about attitudinal changes coming from the experience—showed an increased awareness.

After my time in the wheelchair, I now see things differently. In the grocery store, everybody was staring at me. Little hills that I wouldn't have given a second thought to when I walked up them became a bit of a challenge. One day in the wheelchair didn't seem so bad, but there are people who can't just stand up and walk out, people who never have the chance to walk away from the chair. I now see what Ziggy and many others go through every day and hope that the world will sometime support them.

I respect how Ziggy might feel a lot more. I think it would be very hard to be a teenager in a wheelchair.

Another benefit of the project was that the bonding of the students moved to another, deeper level. The seventh grade is often a time of discord because of the changes that the students are experiencing—physical, social, emotional, and spiritual. The project involved a common experience for all. During this same time, the school was implementing a social inclusion policy. Our class, in part because of the wheelchair project, I believe, embraced this new policy with particular enthusiasm. Eighteen of our twenty-one students participated in the voluntary in-service part of that initiative.

The heightened social awareness carried over into the eighth-grade year, even though there was no specific reference back to the wheelchair project.



Ziggy with classmates Jim Lach and Asher Elmquist working on the eighth-grade class book



Ziggy and classmates at the May Day festival

Our work with social inclusion included recess duty with the lower grades, a presentation to the school on Martin Luther King Day, and a weekly meeting to deepen social understanding. I am sure the experience of the project, the cultivation of empathy, and bonding added depth and power to these experiences.

Ziggy is now attending a public high school where he plays adaptive soccer. He also plays on the Courage Center wheelchair basketball team, has become an outstanding player, and participates in tournaments all over the Midwest. His mother reports that he has become a “total jock” and is considering attending the University of Arizona for college because they have a wheelchair basketball program. ☺

MARK JOHN received a BA in anthropology from the University of Cincinnati in 1980 and an MA in geography from the University of Minnesota in 1995. He completed his Waldorf teacher training at Sunbridge College in Chestnut Ridge, New York, in 1999. He took a class from grade four through grade eight at the City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis and then another class from grade two through grade eight at the Minnesota Waldorf School in Maplewood. He is currently teaching second grade at the Haleakala Waldorf School in Kula, Maui, Hawai'i.



The Research Institute for Waldorf Education

Over thirteen years ago, the Research Institute for Waldorf Education was founded by Susan Howard, a leading Waldorf early childhood educator, and Douglas Sloan, a professor at Teachers College, Columbia University. David Mitchell and Douglas Gerwin are the current codirectors. They guide the Institute's research in education, engage in dialogue with the broader educational community, and collaborate with researchers worldwide in the attempt to improve the quality of Waldorf schools.

The Institute currently is supporting research projects on Waldorf graduates, Waldorf parents, and on the development of a sexuality curriculum for grades four through ten. It has reprinted electronically several out-of-print books related to Waldorf teacher education and has created a refresher course, “Teaching Sensible Science,” to promote the proper teaching of science through the phenomenological, or observation-based, method.

Over the years, the Institute has sponsored many conferences and colloquia. These include gatherings devoted to physics (2009), the power of grammar (2008), pathways to healthy child development (1998), and to the teaching of specific subjects, such as chemistry, life science, world history, and computers and information technology. These colloquia have brought together educators, psychologists, doctors, and social scientists and have culminated in published proceedings.

The Institute publishes books and articles online and also maintains a website of resources related to Waldorf Education—the On-line Waldorf Library or OWL. Twice a year, the Research Institute for Waldorf Education publishes its *Research Bulletin*.

The Research Institute is a subsidiary of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America but has its own board of trustees and fiscal management. It is funded by various Waldorf and anthroposophical funding organizations and by private donations as well. Information regarding individual or group subscriptions to the *Research Bulletin* is available at the Institute's website: www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org

Let There Be Music – Part Two

The Music Curriculum in the Waldorf School, Grades Five through Eight

BY ANDREA LYMAN

In the Spring/Summer 2009 issue of Renewal, part one of this article, dealing with the Waldorf music curriculum in grades one through four, appeared. In that piece, master music teacher Andrea Lyman emphasized that in each grade the musical activities of the children are appropriate to their stage of development and also that these activities support and are supported by the other elements of the curriculum. Those observations pertain as well to the music curriculum in the later elementary school years.

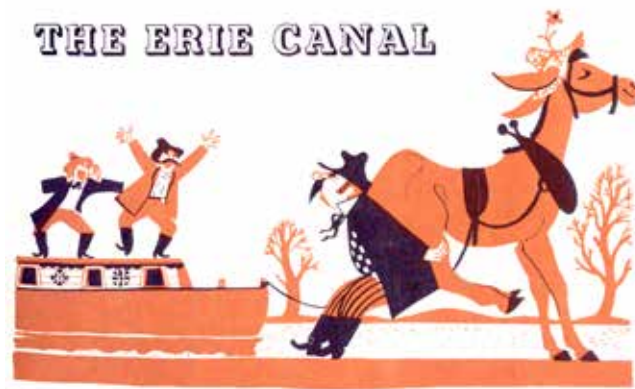
—R. E. K.

Grade Five

In Waldorf circles, grade five—the fulcrum point of the grade school years—is usually referred to as “the Golden Age of Childhood.” The children realize or approximate a certain harmony and balance in their physical and emotional development. In addition to the study of ancient India, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, the study of the magnificent and inspirational culture of ancient Greece and the Greek ideal of grace, beauty, and balance is at the heart of the fifth-grade curriculum. The children strive toward this harmony, and their musical activities reflect and support this. Appropriate songs—such as “Glorious Apollo,” “Fair Moon,” and “Iona Gloria”—are songs that bespeak harmony and balance in form.

In Waldorf schools in the United States, American geography is also an important study block in the fifth grade. The rich American folk music tradition provides many songs and accompanying song games that are suitable for grade five. Examples of such song games are “Alabama Gal,” “Shoo Fly,” and “Godling, Godling.” These can be sung in two or three parts, so that the children develop skill in

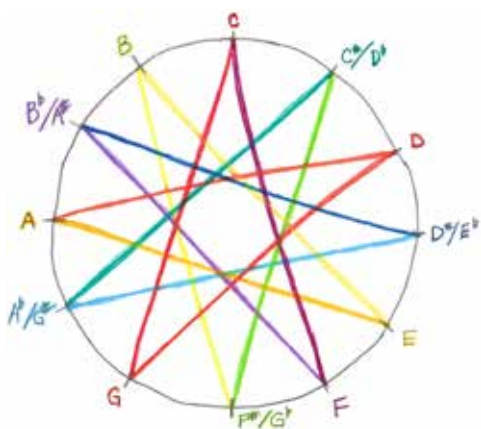
singing together in harmony. Many folk songs are either in the pentatonic scale or in one of the traditional modes. These tonalities are precursors to our more familiar major and minor scales and lend themselves well to improvisation.



Traditional American folk songs such as “The Erie Canal” are learned during the fifth-grade block on American geography.

The children also study the basic principles of composition, learning how to create a score using the traditional notation that was introduced in grade three. Scales, as well as modes, are studied, and the musical key signatures are explored more deeply. This study includes the Circle of Fifths, one of the theoretical wonders in music and a foundation for the study of relationships in music scale tonalities. (Please see sidebar.)

The Circle of Fifths is a basis for the study of music theory in the later grades. Rudolf Steiner suggested that purely conceptual music theory is best brought at around age sixteen or seventeen.* Thus, for the fifth grader the Circle of Fifths should be presented in an imaginative and artistic way. The freehand geometry block in grade five provides an excellent opportunity for such a presentation. One can have the children create beautiful forms within the Circle of Fifths, indicating the relationships of the intervals



The Circle of Fifths can be introduced in a graphically variant form that is the basis for an aesthetically pleasing exercise in geometric drawing.

and the key progressions.

The children may begin to study an orchestral instrument other than the violin or cello, such as the clarinet or flute. Or the string program can be expanded

to include the bass viol. String ensembles of varied skill levels are formed.

In many schools, the children continue work on the diatonic Choroï flute, and, in others, the recorder is introduced. Some music teachers bring the alto recorder first, since its range is more like that of the fifth grader's singing voice, and—because it is a new instrument with a new tuning and fingering—everyone can start afresh together, working from a common ground of experience. It is also possible to start with the soprano recorder only, or with both instruments.

Grade Six

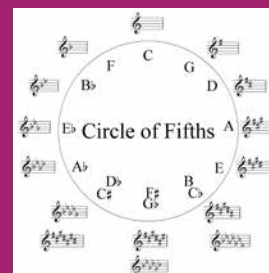
In grade six, the children study ancient Rome. Therefore, this is the time for them to experience the Latin language through the many wonderful Latin songs and rounds available. During this study of Rome, songs that lend themselves to marching are particularly well suited to the sixth grader. Marching patterns and forms can be created together by the students and teacher and carried out with precision and intention while singing. Creating these exact forms echoes what the children are doing in the grade six geometry block, where they are studying classical Euclidean geometry and using compasses and protractors.

The Middle Ages is another focus of study in the sixth-grade main lesson. The music curriculum can draw on the vast and rich repertoire from medieval music history. The voices of most of the children are still pure and unchanged, and singing plainchant or Gregorian chant is a form and style perfectly suited for them at this time. "Pange Lingua," "Ut Queant Laxis," and the Kyrie from the "Missa Cunctipotens Genitor Deus" are wonderful examples of

The Circle of Fifths

The Circle of Fifths is a geometrical diagram that shows the relationships among the twelve tones of the chromatic scale and the major and minor key associated with each tone. The tone C is at the 12 o'clock position in the circle, its major key having no sharps or flats. Its relative minor key—a—also has no accidentals. If one goes up a fifth from C (five steps on the diatonic scale), one arrives at the key of G, which is to the right of C at the 1 o'clock position in the circle. The key of G major has one sharp—F—and its relative minor is e. If one goes up another fifth, one reaches D, whose major key has two sharps—F and C. The pattern of increasing sharps holds true as one goes up by fifths.

Conversely, if one goes down a fifth from C, one is at F (at the 11 o'clock position in the circle), whose major key has a single flat—B. The relative minor key—d—also has that same single flat. Going down another fifth, one reaches B flat, whose major key has two flats (B and E) and whose relative minor—g—has the same two flats. One continues down by fifths until one reaches the six o'clock position, where G flat major and F sharp major, having five flats and five sharps respectively, are in effect the same key.



plainchant, a vocal musical form that expresses the important reverential aspect in medieval life.

If any children are experiencing the onset of the voice change of puberty, one can provide them with musical experiences in which they, too, feel successful and empowered. Girls' voices begin to change at this time, as well, but their vocal shift is not nearly as dramatic as that of the boys. The changing male voice is often very limited in its range. Creating drones or ostinatos for a song is a way to give the boys something they can successfully sing, which not only contributes greatly to the musical experience itself, but also is in keeping with the style and quality of medieval music. Other aspects of music important during the Middle Ages are covered, such as the relationship of text to music, the spread of music around Europe, and the beginnings of notation and its development.



Fifth graders experiment with musical rhythms on a version of the gamelon, a traditional musical instrument from Bali.

The sixth graders study acoustics as part of their physics block. This is a wonderful opportunity to integrate the music curriculum with the study of natural science by ex-

perimenting with and experiencing various aspects of sound and sound production. It could also be a time to explore creating new forms of notation for sound pieces composed in class. The students each bring in something that can make a sound, such as two rocks, pennies in a jar, waxed paper, or a lampshade, and the class creates a composition using these “soundmakers.” A form of notation is then created so that the composition can be expressed in written form and later replicated in performance. The symbols represent the duration, pitch (if applicable), dynamics, and any other musical nuances in the composition. This creative exploration can accompany the study of the development of traditional music notation from its origins in the Middle Ages.

The sixth grade is also an appropriate time to introduce the recorder, if it has not been introduced already in the fifth grade. The children can learn to play any of the four most commonly used recorders—soprano, alto, tenor—and, if their hands are large enough, the bass. The recorder appeared and came to prominence in the Middle Ages, and the medieval repertoire for the instrument is rich. There are many beautiful two-, three-, and four-part pieces that the class can now play.

In some schools, the recorder is presented in an earlier grade. But to introduce the instrument when the children are studying the historical period in which it gained popularity can be especially rewarding. The focused and overtone-rich tonal quality of a recorder is quite different from that of a Choroí flute and is more suited to the way the older child hears music and experiences tone. Thus the child’s aural development may be another reason to postpone the introduction of the recorders until sixth grade.

The recorder is a solo instrument and an instrument for consort playing, in which a small number of players play recorders of the various voices. A large

group of children playing recorders at the same time can sound strident and unpleasant. For classroom playing, it is important to have good quality instruments in the various voices and, as much as possible, to keep all the recorders in tune with each other. Recorders are made of wood or of plastic. Plastic recorders are generally inexpensive, a good quality soprano costing perhaps twenty dollars. Wooden recorders range in price from inexpensive (twenty to thirty dollars) to very expensive. A high quality rosewood soprano can cost four or five hundred dollars. The standard of excellence in recorders is one made of wood, and anyone serious about playing the recorder as a solo or ensemble instrument would choose a high quality (and therefore relatively expensive) wooden instrument. There are, though, excellent wooden sopranos that cost less than fifty dollars.

An inexpensive wooden recorder, while made from a natural material and having a certain visual, aesthetic appeal and warmth, may not always be consistent in tone. Thus, some teachers prefer plastic recorders for the children. Although less aesthetically pleasing to some, a plastic recorder may be more consistent in tone than a comparably priced wooden one. To bring the highest quality musical experiences to the children, it is better to have instruments that create beautiful tone and have the ability to withstand the rigors of frequent classroom use than to use inferior ones for the sake of appearance. Excellent wooden and plastic recorders are now available, and care should be taken to choose the best instruments for a given situation.

Grade Seven

A focus of study in grade seven is the Renaissance—a period of cultural rebirth, world exploration, and discoveries in science, astronomy, and other areas. The students experience the rich vocal and instrumental repertoire of the age. Since the recorder was an important instrument during the Renaissance, the seventh graders continue to play music for that instrument, with all four standard versions of the instrument—soprano, alto, tenor, bass—now having been introduced.

Many of the children, both boys and girls, experience the changing voice during this year. While their vocal instrument is delicate and fragile at this time, it is very important that they continue singing through the change. Much can be lost if the voice goes unexercised. The music teacher honors the process of change, explains it, assists it, and supports it by

providing music that the *cambiata* (changing voice) can successfully sing. Songs with a limited vocal range in the middle to lower parts serve this. As mentioned earlier, the use of ostinatos and drones can help these changing voices find their way in the choral setting and feel empowered in their contributions.

The study of physics in the seventh grade includes a block on the harmonic overtone series. This is an excellent complement to the deeper exploration of intervals and harmony in the music curriculum.

As the explorers of the Renaissance traveled the world, discovering things new and different, so, too, can the seventh grader experience other cultures through world music and the many wonderful folk songs from around the globe.

Grade Eight

The eighth grade is a year of challenges and changes. The students study the great revolutions—American, French, Russian, and Industrial—and the human striving after freedom and the realization of ideals. In their own development, the students are reaching the end of the seven-year cycle that began at age seven and are now entering adolescence.

The music during grade eight attempts to meet this turbulent, often disturbing, always inward, quality of the budding adolescent. It should reflect the profound changes that the student is going through in his experience of the world and of himself. Music with deep meaning and striving must be the basis of the musical experience during this special time. Ponderings about death, loss, and the struggle to know oneself can be brought in song to meet this inward process. “Ich Lebe Mein Leben,” “Immortal Bach,” and the “Winterreise” song cycle by Schubert all speak to these universal human questions. Songs about the ideals of freedom, equality, and brotherhood are inspiring and uplifting to the eighth grader. Some excellent examples are “Hearken All,” “Freedom Is Coming,” and “The British Grenadier.” Songs that include riddles, puzzles, or humor are also welcome as they lighten the sometimes grave mood of the eighth grader. Continued work with the changing voice takes place, as does more theory (still presented in an imaginative way), composition, and increasingly complex part-singing.

Ensemble work is important in the eighth grade. Students of similar skill levels can form string quartets and other smaller groups, including vocal

ensembles. In many schools, the students in the upper grades form an orchestra, which can undertake larger instrumental works. These various ensembles provide music for school festivals and special events throughout the year. They may also perform in the larger community, at a nursing home, for example, at community fairs, or at another school. Such performances give the students the experience of sharing their creative endeavors for the benefit of the larger whole. Sharing the gift of oneself in this way fosters a healthy sense of service to humanity. Also, ensemble work provides eighth graders practice in working with others to achieve a common goal.

Music in the Waldorf curriculum seeks to bring the living, healing presence of music into the life of the child and gives him an opportunity to experience both his own individuality and his relationship to community. It provides a chance for the expression of the soul, a discipline for achieving skills and goals, and contributes to the awareness of what it means to be truly human. ☺



Students from the Whidbey Island Waldorf School (Washington) played in a mixed ensemble at an outdoor Michaelmas celebration.



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* Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1996), 118–119. Lecture originally given in Dornach, April 1923.

Building a School with Soul

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

A school, like a human being, needs a physical body to do its work upon the Earth. Virtually all Waldorf schools begin life in a preexisting body—typically, a former public school building. Many, in time, have the resources to design and build a purpose-built campus. These schools are blessed with the opportunity to create a building and campus that are based on the philosophy and aesthetic from which Waldorf Education came and that will support the aims of the education.

Rudolf Steiner as Architect

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), the founder of Waldorf Education and the teacher of the worldview known as Anthroposophy, also inspired a new direction in architecture. Though not trained as an architect, Steiner designed seventeen buildings and gave more than seventy lectures on architecture. His most notable building was the first Goetheanum, a double-domed wooden structure built in Dornach, Switzerland, begun in 1912 and destroyed by arson on New Year's Eve, 1922/1923.

Some historians of architecture have categorized Steiner's approach as organic, although his buildings do not imitate actual plant forms as do those of other exponents of this school. Steiner's style also is sometimes termed expressionistic. However, his works, unlike typical buildings of this style, are not overtly emotional, individualistic, or symbolic. These terms do point to the fact that Steiner's buildings are sculptural, suggesting the forces and forms of nature but not imitating nature.

Steiner felt that a building should be in harmony with its natural environment, both in shape and in construction materials. Thus a building set among forested hills would be built of wood and in form

would reflect the undulations of the landscape. Steiner also favored a functional approach, believing that a building should reflect the purpose for which it was designed. The building should provide space for the various functions, but it should also address and support the “quality of aliveness” of the activity taking place within. For Steiner, a building has a

profound effect on the emotional, psychological, and even moral life of those who live, work, and learn inside it.

The architecture of a school building, in particular, is of great importance since it affects the rapidly growing and developing children who spend a substantial portion of their childhood and young adulthood within it.



The first Goetheanum, designed by Rudolf Steiner, constructed 1913–1922

Public School Architecture

Universal, compulsory public education began in North America in the mid-nineteenth century, just as the Industrial Revolution was transforming economic and social life. One of public education's implicit aims was to train the children of recent immigrants to be reliable factory workers. The typical public school was therefore a large, rectangular, brick structure closely resembling a factory or mill.

Even mainstream architects today are questioning the values and meaning communicated and even inculcated by “industrial” school buildings. They complain that schools are still being designed like factories and still support a factory model of education. In an essay entitled “School Architecture and Complexity,” Professor Rena Uptis of Queen's University in Ontario writes:

Put a homogeneous group of children in a confined space (called a classroom), process them for a year (fill them with knowledge), make sure they have

learned the set and predictable curriculum (test them according to established standards), move them to the next processing container (another classroom), and continue the cycle until they have reached the age at which they are deemed ready to leave (and enter the workplace).

While seemingly very efficient, such a model perpetuates inadequate, linear ways of thinking about complex subjects and fields of activity. Uptis feels that such an approach, as well as the buildings suited to it, favors the teaching of subjects like mathematics and language but negatively influences the teaching of subjects like art, music, and gardening. The former subjects focus on precision and logic, the latter on creativity and sensitivity.

Another architect, Adam Taylor, in Virginia, argues that

We expect schools to prepare children for being in a democratic society, yet we provide a learning environment that resembles a police state—hard, overly durable architecture, giant-link fences, locked gates. . . . Such architecture fails to encourage the sense of ownership, participation, or responsibility required for democracy.

Waldorf School Architecture

Using Rudolf Steiner's architectural ideas as a foundation, anthroposophical architects in North America and around the world have been designing buildings for Waldorf schools for decades. They

strive to create buildings that support the free unfolding of both a child's thinking and moral development. Not only the Waldorf curriculum but also the school as a structure and aggregate of spaces encourage the healthy unfolding of the human capacities of the child.

There is no fixed template for the design of a Waldorf school. Each architect calls on his or her individual creativity. There are, however, several guiding principles that architects sensitive to the aims and ideals of Waldorf Education strive to embody in their designs. These include the use of natural building materials and natural lighting, the avoidance of "the tyranny of the right angle," the application of the principle of metamorphosis, and an understanding of architecture as a synthesis of the arts.

Long before the current interest in "green" buildings, Waldorf communities were building schools that featured natural building materials, plant-based paints, natural light, and other "ecological" elements. In 1996 the Waldorf School on the Roaring Fork in Colorado built a green campus that incorporated straw bale construction with passive solar heating, natural lighting, and natural building materials. The recent construction of a classroom building at the Charlottesville (Virginia) Waldorf School included recycled newspaper used as soundproofing, high efficiency heat pumps for each classroom, paints with no or low volatile emissions, and many other green features. The school plans to have future buildings qualify for the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum certification.

School buildings designed according to Rudolf Steiner's architectural principles typically have few or even no right angles. For first-time visitors, this can be unsettling. In one lecture on architecture, Steiner describes how a person walking into a room is "poured" into the space, as if into a mold. From this point of view, a room's shape and the forms within it affect our thinking, our emotional life, and even our morality.

Most people notice the effect of being in a round room or interior space. Steiner held that a circular space brings one into a state of heightened sensitivity in the realm of feeling and spirituality. In many cultures, round spaces have been used for religious ritual or meditation. Some traditional peoples, like the Native Americans with their teepees and the Mongolians with their yurts, lived in round structures. These peoples, all the time, were aware



The West Wing of the Waldorf School on the Roaring Fork, Carbondale, Colorado, designed by architect Jeff Dickinson and constructed in 1997



Kindergarten room, Waldorf School of Mendocino County, California

of and experiencing the spiritual aspect of existence. In recent times, the round space has been co-opted by the state to promote an elevated regard for the body politic. Many government buildings feature a grand rotunda with a domed roof to impress the citizenry.

Rectangular spaces, by contrast, elicit little affect or sense of spirituality. Rather, they activate the thinking function and keep it on a straight and narrow path. They help us to be efficient, to make order, and to compartmentalize things. Steiner felt that rectangular spaces make our thinking rigid and linear.

Steiner sought a middle path between these two distinct capacities—thinking and feeling—and the architectural forms that support them. He felt that a building should enliven thinking with rich feeling and a sense of movement but at the same time support clarity and precision. The architectural forms of his buildings combine elements of the circle and the square. Curving lines and right angles that are “cut off” create asymmetrical forms suggestive of life and movement. To facilitate designing such buildings, Steiner sculpted the models out of clay instead of using rectilinear pieces of wood.

The classrooms in a typical, purpose-built Waldorf school are neither rectilinear nor symmetrical. The angles at which the walls meet may be greater or less than ninety degrees, and the ceiling is often not a simple horizontal plane. If we want our children to learn to think “outside the box,” it is important that we do not put them into boxes.

Steiner felt that a building should have a living, organic quality. He accomplished this goal not by imitating plant forms, like the noted Barcelona architect Antonio Gaudi. Rather, Steiner created his designs

by eschewing the right angle—a form very rare in nature—and by using life forms connected through the principle of metamorphosis.

Steiner was deeply influenced by the scientific work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe’s botanical studies led him to posit an archetypal or “Ur-plant” form. Seed, sprout, stem, leaf, and flower are each a metamorphosis or developed transformation of the previous stage. At each stage, the new manifestation can adapt to the surroundings. The stem can metamorphose into a leaf that is broad or small, watery or water-retentive, depending on the temperature, humidity, or amount of available sunlight in its location. Similarly, a flower can adopt the size and coloration that will attract or repel insects or best allow it to develop or broadcast its seed. Over time, a species of plant can metamorphose into the form that best allows it to flourish in the particular environment.

For Steiner, a building should be a harmonious society of rooms, all based on a theme, but each specialized to meet specific needs. In a school, the rooms for the various grades should be different, organically metamorphosing as the children themselves develop. The rooms for the kindergarten and early elementary grades should be soft, rounded, even womblike in form. Some Waldorf schools, using adobe or straw bale construction, have created embracing spaces that support this gesture for the early years very well. Others have used a barrel-vaulted or cathedral ceiling to realize this effect. In Waldorf schools limited by traditional construction, the space can be rounded out or formed by hanging silk cloths, by carving the window and door casings, or installing a round-topped wooden door. These measures all de-emphasize rectangularity.

As students advance through the years, the forms become firmer, less rounded, and more angular. As the child begins to develop the thinking faculty, the architecture is



School hallway, Waldorf School on the Roaring Fork

able to support this without abandoning the refinement of feeling.

Waldorf schools tend to emphasize natural materials and natural lighting. (Please see my article “Let the Sun Shine In” in the Spring/Summer 2001 issue of *Renewal*.) Many purpose-built Waldorf schools are made of wood rather than the usual cinder block. As mentioned earlier, some of the newer schools have featured rammed earth and straw bale construction. Wooden floors are most common, and many schools use ecological finishes to protect the wood. Nontoxic and plant-color paints are also widely used for finishing the walls.

These measures are taken because of several concerns. The natural materials are more aesthetically satisfying, more Earth-friendly, and less likely to cause health problems or allergic reactions in those who use the buildings.

Finally, this architectural impulse promotes a synthesis of the arts. While the entire building viewed from outside may be sculptural in quality, there are also, typically, sculpted elements within the school. Carefully formed friezes or columns are to be seen in some schools, and the sculpting of door and window frames is rather common. Many schools have freestanding sculptures within and/or outside the building. Some schools also have sculpted cascade-fountains, called flow forms. These present another way of bringing harmonious movement into the children’s everyday experience.

A universal phenomenon in the schools is the conscious use of color. The colors of the walls and ceilings—and sometimes even of the furniture—accompany and support the child’s developmental stages. In general, early childhood and kindergarten classrooms are painted in pink or magenta tones. The rooms for the early elementary grades range from warm red to orange, while those of the older children tend toward blues and the cooler end of the spectrum.

The colors are not just put on with a roller, straight out of the paint can. Rather, in a technique called *lazure painting*, they are applied in a series of transparent washes. The painters use broad brushes and a lemniscate or figure-eight motion. When done



A mural in the Waldorf School on the Roaring Fork, by artist Charles Andrade

properly, the technique creates a cloudlike effect that seems to dissolve the solidity of the walls. The sense of movement in the uneven laying down of color is stimulating, but in a harmonious manner. (Please see my article “Color Me Waldorf” in the Spring/Summer 2006 issue of *Renewal*.) In addition,

murals and wall painting in the classroom depict age-appropriate themes throughout the grades.

The Waldorf artistic curriculum is reflected in the architectural elements of the school building. The wet-on-wet painting the younger children are practicing is echoed in the color treatments on the classroom walls. The sculptural techniques that the children learn with beeswax, in woodcarving, and later in clay find their counterpart in the building’s sculptural details. The elements of harmony and rhythm that mark the children’s work in music, eurythmy, handwork, and form drawing find their reflection in the forms and shapes of their school building.

A complete artistic experience surrounds and embraces the child each day at a Waldorf school. That the building is in harmony with its surroundings supports this positive influence. A living and organic architecture, which in Steiner’s words “calls upon the soul to be active,” is another important aspect of this picture. If education is to stimulate imagination and creativity in students, in ways that factory-like buildings may hinder, surely it needs to bring into being buildings that manifest Steiner’s vision of a soul-imbued architecture. ☺

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The Human Being Thinks, Not the Brain

BY CHRISTIAN RITTELMAYER, PhD

The Research Bulletin of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, like Renewal, focuses on Waldorf Education and related issues. However, it has a different target audience. While this magazine is intended primarily for Waldorf parents, the Research Bulletin is meant for teachers, educators, and researchers.

The line between what belongs in Renewal and what is appropriate for the Research Bulletin is not absolute, however. We have published several pieces that first appeared in our sister publication.

The Spring 2009 Research Bulletin contains an article entitled “Advantages and Disadvantages of Brain Research for Education.” The writer, Dr. Christian Rittelmeyer, is a professor emeritus of educational science in the School of Education at the University of Göttingen in Germany.

At one point in the piece, Rittelmeyer addresses the question “Where does the function of thinking reside—solely in the brain or in the human body as a whole?” His answer to this query is relevant to two articles in this issue of Renewal—“Raising Healthy, Creative Children” by Joseph Chilton Pearce and “Building a School with Soul” by Thomas Poplawski.

—R. E. K.

Neurocentric Shortightedness

To answer this question [about the locus of thinking], I would like to present some findings of a significant research project on the effect of school architecture on adolescents.

The project addressed two questions, one particular and one general:

- How does perception of a school's facade or of an interior painted wall arise, and how does it lead to certain judgments about what is perceived?
- Is perception a process that takes place only in the brain?



The study shows that perception does not take place only in the brain. Every perception of a built environment incorporates the activity of the different senses. It may, for example, involve collaboration among the senses of vision, hearing, and balance. Perceptions simultaneously connect what we



Some school buildings are more welcoming and warming than others . . .

may call outer senses, such as vision and hearing, with inner senses, including the sense of movement and temperature. The cognition of architecture therefore involves the whole human body and demands a more detailed analysis of the collaboration of the different sense qualities—a synthesis—through which we (mostly consciously) perceive architectural structures.

Our research showed, for example, that some students reacted to an environment of “warm” colors—such as yellow and orange—with slightly increased skin temperature in the chest region and to “cool” colors—such as whitish blue—with a slightly lower temperature. These warmer or cooler qualities correspond to moods that are provoked, for example, by different colors and room temperatures. It appears that registration of a [perceived] color in the brain leads to an impulse within the periphery—the chest—that stimulates or inhibits blood flow. The change in temperature is transmitted by thermic receptors back to the brain and there connects to the actual sense impression of the object. The outer (visual) and the inner (thermic) response are joined to form a synesthetic impression of the quality of a building. This interaction between the inner and outer senses leads to a negative or positive judgment regarding the perceived architecture, such as “It leaves me cold,” “It gives me a warm feeling,” or “It depresses me.”

The senses of sight, movement, and balance work together every time we perceive a building, or in fact any object. When we look at something, we unconsciously take hold of it with rapid movements of the eye—the so-called saccadic movements. These movements can be tracked by instruments. When we look at a certain architectural form, for example, the eye moves in a certain way determined by the form. Proprioceptors in the muscles and tendons notify the brain of this muscle activity. The unconscious experience of movement within the body connects to the visual impression of the building. Thus, within the whole body of the observer the impression is created of a “lively” building or a “boring” structure.

Buildings shaped like a box are associated primarily with horizontal and vertical eye movement. They tend to be experienced as rigid, lifeless, and uninteresting. Judgments such as “This building looks dismal,” or “I feel I can really relax in this room” are not produced in the brain alone but are based on processes within the whole body. ☉

quality of teaching he wished to emphasize. He spoke with the humility and insight gained from many years of teaching children. None present suspected that this was the last time he would speak publicly to his colleagues. Ron used two verses in his presentation. One illuminated his own essence as a teacher and as a human being. The other was strangely prophetic of his passing.

The first was a version by Michael Wilson of the opening lines from the Gospel of John:

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him and without this was not anything made except through Him. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness, made transparent through the warmth of love, was able to comprehend.

The second was a verse by Rudolf Steiner:

I gaze into the darkness.
In it there arises Light—
Living Light.
Who is this Light in the darkness?
It is I myself in my reality.
This reality of the I
Enters not into my earthly life;
I am but a picture of it.
But I shall find it again
When with goodwill for the Spirit
I shall have passed through the Gate of Death.

Rudolf Steiner spoke of the dead as the “so-called dead.” He asserted that those who have passed over continue to be active in the work and affairs of the world, particularly when the living cultivate a relationship with them. In the ninety years of Waldorf Education, countless dedicated Waldorf teachers, now including Eva Gardiner and Ron Richardson, have crossed the threshold from the material to the spiritual world. They have gone before us, but now follow, accompany, and help us every day. Maintaining our connection to those who have crossed the threshold is crucial to our success, in our daily teaching and in the broader work for the renewal of education.

At each meeting of the schools’ delegates to the Association, we introduce ourselves and then name those who have passed on. There are many names, and the reading of them is very moving. With so many friends to help us from the other side, how can we but succeed in our work? ☉

Education, Instruction, and Assessment

How Can We Measure if We Are Effectively Educating Our Children?

BY DAVID MITCHELL, DOUGLAS GERWIN, AND OTHER WALDORF EDUCATORS

Recently, five noted Waldorf educators collaborated on an article entitled "Assessment without High-Stakes Testing: Protecting Childhood and the Purpose of School." The article was researched and drafted by David Mitchell, codirector of the Waldorf Research Institute. Mitchell then engaged in conversations with and solicited additional research from Douglas Gerwin, fellow codirector of the Waldorf Research Institute; Michael Mancini, a leader in assessment from Hawaii; and Ernst Schuberth and Hansjörg Hofrichter, both leading Waldorf educators in Germany. Mitchell and Gerwin then crafted the final version.

The article was submitted to the United States Congressional Committee on Education as part of the opposition to the No Child Left Behind Act itself and to the related policies promoted by subsequent legislation. A copy was sent to Valerie Jarrett, one of President Obama's chief advisors. Recognized widely as an important contribution in the field of assessment, it has been published in *Independent Teacher*, the e-journal for independent school educators, the *Journal for Waldorf Education* in Australia and New Zealand, and the *Pedagogical Journal* of Bashkortostan University in Ufa, Russia. It was also posted on several European websites.

In June 2009, David Mitchell was invited to Moscow to present the article to the editors of the Russian journal. Offered here in a condensed, somewhat reorganized form, the article lucidly presents the understanding of education that lives at the heart of Waldorf Education. It questions the efficacy of high-stakes testing and offers viable alternatives to assessing the development and learning of children.

—R. E. K.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002 has a noble intent—to provide every child in the nation with a quality education. However, it has proved to be both expensive and ineffective. The implementation of the law has cost the federal and state governments billions of dollars, and there is no evidence that NCLB has helped make children learn better or faster. One can in fact argue that NCLB is undermining the education of our children.



*Eenie, meenie, minie,
moe . . .*

High-stakes testing is an essential part of NCLB, used to evaluate student progress, determine the effectiveness of teachers, and apportion federal grant money. Standardized tests and preparation for those tests are found even in preschools and kindergartens.

Students at all levels are subjected to the stress of repeated testing. Teachers teach for the tests, and test results put children in an intellectual caste system, where their value and status are determined by their skills in test-taking. In addition, NCLB has

greatly increased the number of children who drop out of school, particularly among minority groups.

Diane Ravitch, former Secretary of Education, was one of the architects of the modern standards movement, embodied in NCLB. Ravitch asserts that just as standards in other domains improve the daily lives of Americans, so, too, will they improve the effectiveness of American education: "Standards can improve achievement by clearly defining what is to be taught and what kind of performance is expected" (Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education: A Citizen's Guide*, 1995).

Enforced standards, of course, are helpful, even necessary, in the realm of manufacturing and technology. They result in better, more reliable products. But children are not technological products to be measured against an arbitrary standard and then allowed to continue on the conveyor belt or be rejected and discarded. Children are human beings going through a complex developmental process toward adulthood and maturity. They are part of a social organism. They need other means of assessment than high-stakes, pencil-and-paper tests.

Education versus Instruction

We need here to consider what is the true aim of education. What is the teacher trying to do for and to the students in her care?

The word *education* comes from the Latin word *ducere*, meaning “to lead” and from the prefix “e,” meaning “out” or “forth.” True education, then, is a leading out, or drawing out, of the student’s capacities and talents. Education is different from “instruction.” *Instruction* comes from the Latin word for stones—*structus*—and meant originally to pour stones into an empty vessel.

Instruction is the pouring of facts and information into the students. Instruction is part of education but should not be its primary aim, and the retention of what the children receive as instruction should not be the only basis of their assessment. A true assessment should determine whether a teacher is drawing forth capacities from his students, activating all the resources of their full humanity.

Education as instruction is often justified on economic and political grounds. The purpose of education, however, is not to produce skilled competitors for the economic realm. Neither is it to produce “good citizens” who unquestioningly accept the values, beliefs, and norms of society.

The Founding Fathers of the United States saw education not as a process of acculturation but as a way to create freethinking and creative persons who could renew and improve society.

Thomas Jefferson, who never took a multiple-choice test, wrote:

These schools will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is free to combat it.

The Stages of Development

Children go through distinct stages of development, each lasting roughly seven years. Their schooling for each of these septenaries (ages one to seven, seven to fourteen, and fourteen to twenty-one) should be appropriate to the developmental process taking place.

Preschoolers are beings of will and action. They need opportunities for play—both free, imaginative

play and organized, structured play. They need also models to imitate—caring adults doing simple, everyday activities, in which the children can join. Children at this stage learn largely by imitation. Academic learning for children at this age is inappropriate, even harmful. Their play and activity is creating the basis for later, more conscious learning.

Children between the ages of seven and fourteen learn most readily when their imaginations and emotions are engaged. Academic learning is appropriate but should be within a context of storytelling, daily artistic activities, and the evoking of a sense of awe and wonder at the world.

Adolescents need continued strengthening of their will and imaginative life but also a challenge to their developing abstract and critical thinking. They also need to exercise their powers of discrimination and to have experiences that will give them a sense of confident participation in the world. It is important, too, that the adolescent’s yearning for ideals and for inspiring examples of human beings be supported.

Educational Assessment

In each phase, the overarching purpose of education is to assist the healthy unfolding of the many capacities that distinguish the human being—such as creativity, flexibility, empathy, and insight. The means of assessing the progress of students also needs to be appropriate. High-stakes, paper-and-pencil tests are irrelevant here, and there are many alternative methods of assessment that can measure a child’s progress and even his retention of subject matter. Most of these alternative methods improve retention, unlike standardized tests, which often are a “here today, gone tomorrow” experience.

Preschool and Kindergarten

To assess a child’s kinesthetic development during the preschool years, the teacher could observe the child and ask questions such as:

- Can he balance himself while walking on a balance beam or climbing a tree?



Preschool children need imaginative, free play rather than academic work, homework, and test preparation

- Can he skip properly?
- Can he walk backward in a straight line?

These physical indicators are essential to later artistic and academic learning.

The teacher can evaluate the child in other specific areas by asking and answering certain questions:

- Does he get along with the other children? (social skills)
- Is he able to create and enter into a world of make-believe? (imaginative play)
- Can he sit quietly while a story is being told? (self-control)

In recent years, child psychologists have been increasingly using a measure of cognitive growth called the EF (Executive Function) score to assess children. The EF score is fast replacing the traditional IQ (Intelligence Quotient) as a gauge of a child's intellectual abilities and as a predictor of later academic success. Research indicates that the skills measured by EF, rather than those measured by IQ, are critical in academic subjects such as grammar and arithmetic. Research also shows that the dramatic and imaginative play of young children raises their EF score.

Grades One through Eight

With the elementary age child, the teacher can assess her emotional and overall development by observation and by answering questions such as:

- How does the child greet and shake hands with the teacher each morning?
- Can she recapitulate the story told yesterday and recall the main points of the morning lesson?
- Can she remain interested and attentive through the whole lesson?
- Is she able to engage deeply in artistic work?
- Does she finish her projects?
- In drama, is she able to enter into the character she is portraying and to step in and out of the role with ease?

In grade five or six, the students can start to take



A "textbook" written and illustrated by the student can be an effective means of assessment.

tests on the subject matter they have studied. They are better served, though, by questions to which there is not a single fixed answer. Multiple-choice tests inculcate in students the assumption that there is one and only one correct answer to any given problem. Questions that require an "open answer" are preferable. Even in the first grade, for example, when the teacher asks: "What is 12?" and the children learn it is $6 + 6$, but also $4 + 8$, and also $4 + 6 + 2$, the children can get a sense that the world is a wonderful place and a question need not have only one answer.

In order to demonstrate and better retain what they have learned, students can write and illustrate notebooks, prepare portfolios, and make class presentations.

Each of these activities, besides showing what the students have learned, helps develop other skills—artistic, organizational, oratorical.

The High School

For high school students, the means of assessment used in the late elementary grades—tests with open-ended questions, illustrated notebooks, art portfolios, individual class presentations—still pertain. And the observations by teachers regarding an individual's social, emotional, and moral development remain relevant.

Other ways of measuring achievement and development that can now be used include:

- Team projects with class presentations
- Research papers and theses
- Oral exams
- Participation in science and history fairs in the larger community at which students present their work and answer questions
- Projects presented at a public gathering of parents, friends, and fellow students
- Performance in plays, which involves the remembering and recitation of lines and the ability to follow the suggestions of the director
- Performance in competitive sports, which involves physical skills—such as hand-eye coordination—and social skills.

For the adolescent, the development of thinking skills is critical. The teacher strives to help the students develop flexibility and rigor in their thinking and to master the various types of thinking such as cause and effect, analytical, and synthetic. Thus, in evaluating a student, the teacher should ask questions such as the following:

- Can the student follow a line of logical thought?
- Can she perceive cause and effect in phenomena?
- Is she able to link different fields of knowledge?
- Is she able to entertain a thought or an approach to a problem other than her own?
- Can she have an idea, devise a procedure to accomplish it, and carry it through to completion—in other words, bring together thinking and activity, thought and will?

The above approaches to assessment appropriate for preschool, elementary, and high school students have been used with success by Waldorf schools



Oral presentations of research projects give students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and provide evidence of student work and intellectual maturation.

ment.

These means of assessment are a viable alternative to the standardized, high-stakes testing that now preoccupies the mainstream educational world. These alternative, humane, nonstressful ways of evaluating a child's development—and our success in promoting that development—support rather than hinder the true education of our children. ☺

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Biography and Self-Discovery

The Twelfth-Grade Waldorf History Curriculum Meets the Adolescent's Quest for Identity

BY LAWRE STONE

The twelfth-grade student, seventeen or eighteen years of age, is deeply concerned with the question *Who?* On the verge of adulthood, about to step into the wider world of college or work, the twelfth grader asks the questions, *Who am I?* and *What will be the place of this "Who"—this unique, individual self or "Ego" in the world?*

The young person asks of history the same question, *Who? Who are the great persons of the past?* She

classroom. It concerns people, places, and events usually occurring long ago and often physically far away.

History also suffers from an excess of facts. With over 10,000 years of historical record and the current explosion of information, there is an overwhelming amount of historical data. No teacher can or perhaps should cover it all. The lists of dates, names, inventions, and battles that are to be

Historical biography is a means of portraying universal truths . . . and helping the adolescent form a positive imagination of how she wishes to live her own life.

is particularly interested in figures who pursued grand ideals, who set out to improve the world, who risked all for the sake of a belief.

The twelfth-grade Waldorf history curriculum helps the young person answer these questions. It deals primarily with modern world history, particularly the developments since 1945. Among the themes are colonialism, nationalism, the struggle for human and civil rights, international law, globalization, the role that the superpowers—particularly the United States—play in world affairs, and the place and significance of Islam. The study of the lives of notable people of the modern era—particularly those who sought to create positive change, individuals worthy of emulation, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi—is another important element. The students also examine the failures of the human endeavor—the wars, repression, inequalities, and injustices—that still beset the world, so that lessons for the future can be learned. Here, too, the study of biography is used.

The Challenge of Teaching History

History is a subject that cannot be present in the

remembered by students and later reproduced in tests and papers can only result in that glazed-over sensation that most adults today can recall from their own schooling. These facts give only a small part of the story. In an article entitled "History – A Dramatic Art," Henry Barnes, the dean of Waldorf history teachers, wrote:

Materialism has spread its pall over our understanding of history. A focus on tools, technology, and accomplishments diminishes the importance of the spiritual history of man.

The great German poet and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said of history that "the cult of facts meant nothing" to him. The mere events of history are uninteresting. What is interesting and significant are the individual human lives connected to those events. For Goethe, the human being breathes life into history, endowing it with the meaning of personal experience.

Accordingly, the Waldorf high school teacher tries to evoke in the classroom the living reality of the human beings who made history. Presenting an historical artifact—real Confederate script or a



Civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr., 1929–1968

fragment of the Berlin Wall, things made by human hands—can help bring to life an event or period. Photographs, newsreels, and recordings of speeches are also useful.

The study of primary source documents is important as well. These documents

give the students direct experiences of historical personages, something that a textbook account cannot do. I have my students read Pericles' "Funeral Oration," as recorded by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. In reading this speech, delivered to honor the fallen Greek warriors, the students experience Pericles' humanity, eloquence, and statesmanship. Use of primary sources, usually reserved for college study, is standard in Waldorf high schools.

In the twelfth grade, as in all the Waldorf grades, the presentation of the lives of outstanding persons is critical. By bringing with enthusiasm and personal interest the facts, but also the living reality of exemplary men and women, the teacher can make the study of history alive and relevant for the adolescent.

This biography work is important for the moral development of the young person. Rudolf Steiner maintained that historical biography is an effective means of portraying universal truths. The study of an individual evokes what Rudolf Steiner called the student's "vivid sympathy leading to the creation of living pictures expressing morality." Inspired by the example of others, the adolescent can form a positive imagination of how she wishes to live her own life.

This immersion in the life of another human being also helps the process of self-discovery. Adolescence is a time of change. The child physically is becoming an adult and experiencing new desires and urges. Study of another individual reveals the universal elements in our humanity, the remarkable, often hidden capacities of soul we share,

the challenges each human being faces. We discover ourselves in the mirror of the other. The reflected image the students derive from their biographical studies can inspire them, foster self-confidence, direct them on their life path, and spare them the cynicism of the age. In the Hawthorne Valley School (in upstate New York) each year, the twelfth-grade students have a very intense, personal experience of the role human individuals play in history. This takes place through the biography project. Their assignment—which generates excitement and dread in one glorious swoop—is to create an oral history of post-1945 America based on interviews the students conduct with adults from our community, their own families, and with persons outside the local community.

By the time the project is underway, the class has explored the biographies of well-known political leaders and social activists of the twentieth century, such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Robert F. Kennedy, and Rosa Parks. Now we broaden our scope and search out biographies of less famous, but also significant individuals who were part of the social, economic, and cultural transformation that occurred in post-World War II America. With a bit of brainstorming, a lesson on conducting an interview, and a few carefully placed tips in uncertain ears, the seniors embark on their endeavor to find a willing and fruitful subject.

Before the interview, students worry that the person they choose to interview won't be exciting enough. The instructions are only to find an adult with a clear memory, someone who can recall an incident or incidents in his life that are related to events of historical significance. The person might be a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, a



Chief Sequoyah, Cherokee leader, developer of a writing system for the Cherokee language, 1770–1843



*British Royal Air Force pilot,
World War II*

neighbor, or a teacher. The aim is not to find the most dramatic story, but to explore one person's individual experiences and the relationship of those experiences to world events.

Once the interview takes place, the assignment's true essence reveals itself. Through carefully crafted questions, artful conversation, and the accurate recording of

reflections, the twelfth graders begin to construct a picture of life in twentieth-century America. Each story brought by the students is unique. It may concern a great-grandfather's experience of World War II food rationing, a grandmother's childhood lived in segregated Mississippi, a neighbor's service in the Vietnam War, an uncle's job as a teacher in riot-torn Detroit, or a New Yorker's recollection of 9/11. The accounts are still filled with emotion but are tempered with the wisdom of hindsight. Americans living through major events carry awareness, direct experience, and, most importantly, a point of view. The twelfth graders soon realize that everyone's experiences are significant, relevant pieces in the puzzle of history. Acting locally can have global implications. The inspired actions of a single individual or the collective impulse of a large number of people can affect the course of history or inspire seismic shifts in human consciousness.

The day the papers are due, students read their work aloud with pride. Classmates listen attentively. The stories inspire sympathy, anger, applause, sadness, and hope. Thinking offers access to feeling. An impulse to solve the social and political ills of our own time emerges. It is common to hear remarks such as the following:

At first, I did not like the interview project. It seemed too hard. Now I realize that I learned more about racial issues in the 1950s from that one conversation than I could have ever learned in class.

and

It's not just the actions of the people who make it into the history books that matter. The actions

and thoughts of all people matter.

Clearly, the study of another individual's biography in relation to a moment in history has provided the students with a firsthand picture of how things were—revealed glimmers of universal truths—and has deeply affected the students' soul life. History has come alive, and their imaginations have been stimulated and their idealism inspired.

The success of the twelfth-grade oral history project is made possible by our natural human inclination, as Rudolf Steiner put it, "to know and to love our fellow human beings." The success also derives from the capacities and skills that the students have developed in the course of their Waldorf schooling. Advanced critical thinking, imaginative problem solving, and social and interpersonal skills each contribute to success in the interview work.

To these capacities, it is hoped, have been added a deepened moral sensibility and idealism, a new understanding of their humanity, and a clearer sense of self. Thus equipped, these young people will be ready in a few months to step out into the world and meet the challenges of adult life. ☺



*Wangari Maathai, Kenyan
environmental and political
activist, born 1940*



LAWRE STONE is an artist and educator who, after seventeen years of living in Brooklyn, followed her children to Harlemville, New York, and to the Hawthorne Valley School there. She has a BFA from

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High School, Take Two

BY CLARE O'CONNOR

Of the 150 or so Waldorf schools in North America, about forty include a high school. Many of these high schools, founded in the last ten or fifteen years, are small in terms of student number and modest in terms of facilities—science and computer labs, sports facilities, and libraries. Some Waldorf high schools, such as Sacramento, Toronto, Green Meadow, and Kimber-ton, founded decades ago, are well established and well equipped. But even these, in relation to large public and mainstream independent schools, can seem small and limited in resources. Thus the graduating eighth grader at a Waldorf school with a high school must choose between continuing in the “little pond” of the Waldorf world and going out upon the “big ocean.” Better facilities, more social options, a wider selection of courses, more competitive athletics, and other factors cause many to take the step into the mainstream educational world. Of these, many thrive in their new environment. My son chose a large public high school over a fledgling Waldorf high school and was happy with his choice. Some, though, discover, or rediscover, the uniqueness and value of Waldorf Education.

—R. E. K.

I attended the Seattle Waldorf School for kindergarten (three years) and for grades one through eight. I spent my early years there jumping over puddles, modeling woodland critters out of beeswax, and making porridge. I climbed trees, made crowns of daisies, and went on nature walks. I was nurtured at the school, and my childhood was carefree, prolonged, and rich in fantasy. I didn't learn how to read until second grade, but this didn't bother me a bit.



Clare O'Connor, at the end of her senior year at the Seattle Waldorf School

Later, unlike my conventionally schooled counterparts, who spent their nights doing

homework starting as early as the first grade, I spent my evenings learning the piano, attending ballet classes, being told stories by my parents, and creating artwork. I did not receive homework or grades until middle school. Individual handwritten accounts of each day's lesson, complete with illustrations and borders, substituted for textbooks. Television, movies, and other media were discouraged, particularly in the lower grades, and not once did I complete an assignment on the computer. I never took a standardized test. I spent eleven years immersed in a colorful, well-balanced education that aimed to support my personal, physical, emotional, and intellectual growth.

After graduating from eighth grade, I searched for a high school that would give me an entirely new experience. After such a long time at the Seattle Waldorf School, I wondered what else was out there.

With ninth-grade wisdom, I chose a local Catholic academy for its superior dessert selection at the open house, its beautiful architecture reminiscent of a fairytale castle, and, of course, its reputation as one of the most academically rigorous and challenging secondary schools in Seattle. This academy was high tech. It had a computer lab, SmartBoards installed in many classrooms, textbooks, and a cafeteria! Most importantly, perhaps, it was the polar opposite of my kindergarten and grade school.

I saw myself donning a professional-looking pantsuit each morning to attend my day at the Castle. I imagined classes filled with intellectually stimulating debate. I visualized myself spending lunch breaks in the lavish parlors on the second floor. “Sister Dorothy,” I would say, reclined on a vintage sofa, “Could you pass me another chocolate chip cookie?” She would oblige, and then we would analyze the thematic undercurrents of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in relation to my life as a teenager. I would excel in a challenging academic environment with enthusiastic peers while I developed myself on both intellectual and personal levels.

Unfortunately, there were no cookies, and the parlors were off-limits for students. Too sleep-

deprived to care, none of us dressed up for school. The food in the cafeteria was unjustifiably expensive. Most disappointing were the classes themselves.

In a daze I trudged beside my classmates up five flights of stairs each morning. The teacher would get the PowerPoint presentation rolling on the SmartBoard and then sit down to finish her coffee. There were too many people to have effective class discussions. We read *Romeo and Juliet*, but the extent of our analysis was a five-paragraph essay and three quizzes to test whether or not we had done the reading.

All six of my classes were filled with nightly worksheets and weekly quizzes. If I received a handout in class, my homework was essentially a time-consuming regurgitation of the material, achieved by filling in blanks. The classes were rigorous, and I completed several hours of homework each night, but I wasn't *learning* anything. Having proved to myself that I could keep up and earn straight A's in a normal school environment, I was ready to move on.

For my junior year, I was back home at the Seattle Waldorf High School. There were eight of us in the eleventh grade, and each day of every class was filled with exciting group discussion. We created sophisticated books, summarized lectures in our own words, and illustrated our work with detailed drawings. Our study of the Renaissance was topped off with a costumed potluck feast of period-appropriate food and a field trip to the Seattle Art Museum to see Lorenzo Ghiberti's sculpture *Gates of Paradise*. We went to Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo to get a closer look at the animals we had chosen for our individual research projects in zoology class. I took a block printing class as well as a class in traditional drumming. At the Seattle Waldorf High School, I rediscovered my active interest in learning, which had grown dormant at the academy.

Receiving an A at the Waldorf school really meant something to me. I wasn't filling out worksheets for hours each night. Instead, I was completing homework that required independent thinking and

creative problem solving. I was tested on the quality of my own ideas and my ability to support them, and not on my capacity for the repetitive memorization of someone else's opinions. I was surrounded by a vibrant faculty comprised of unique individuals who were truly passionate about what they were teaching.

My experience at the academy was an opportunity to test my ability to adapt and to compromise. I learned that I could handle a situation that was, by nature, an uncomfortable fit. More importantly, though, I learned that only I had the power to change the situation for myself. It took me two insufferable years to muster the courage to transfer back to the Waldorf school. Once

I did so, I found an education that was challenging and engaging in ways that the academy could never be. In choosing to return to the Waldorf school, I reclaimed a learning environment that promised growth for me as a person in every aspect of my life. In the spring of 2009, I completed a total of thirteen years at the Seattle Waldorf School. I'm deeply grateful for each day of those precious years. o



The 2009 senior class of the Seattle Waldorf School

CLARE O'CONNOR is now a first-year student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she is working toward a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis on writing.

Subscription Information

Subscriptions are \$13 for one year, \$24 for two years, and \$32 for three years. They can be purchased by contacting the *Renewal* business office in Ghent, NY. Foreign subscriptions are \$23. Bulk rates are available on request.

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Book Review

Hawthorne Valley Harvest A Collection of Plays for the Elementary Grades

COMPILED BY WILLIAM WARD
REVIEWED BY RONALD KOETZSCH

From grade one through grade twelve, the annual class play is an essential feature of the life of every Waldorf class. The play is often the defining event of the year, the event most clearly remembered and most often referred to, long after much else of what happened is lost to memory.

William Ward, a longtime class teacher at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, was an enthusiastic advocate of the Waldorf class play. Ward understood the importance of the class play for the children, their teacher, and for the broader community. He wrote many plays for his classes over the years.

In the months before his death in September 2008, William Ward prepared this collection of plays as an inspiration and resource for Waldorf class teachers. The book includes the scripts of twenty-four plays—several for each of the first six grades—written over the years by teachers at Hawthorne Valley and successfully presented by students there. The plays render into dramatic form the fairy tales, Biblical stories, tales of saints, and the myths, legends, and historical events that are featured in the Waldorf curriculum for the elementary grades. The list of titles includes “Snow White,” “Saint George and the Dragon,” “Joseph and his Brothers,” “The Death of Baldur,” and “The Epic of Gilgamesh.” There is also a model for a multicultural Michaelmas pageant suitable for grades five through eight.

In his introduction, entitled “Praise the Play,” William Ward strongly encourages teachers to write their own plays. He suggests using those in the book as an inspiration and model or, if necessary, as a template to be adapted to a particular class and the various individuals in it. For a teacher, writing a play for one’s class can be a transformative experience. It develops imagination and creativity, promotes an appreciation for and facility with “the living word as a bearer of beauty, the light of thinking, the warmth of idealism, and the clarion call to action.”

The class play is also crucial for the children, providing opportunities for individual growth and for growth of the

class as a whole. Students learn to work with each other and to appreciate each other’s hitherto unknown talents and skills. They learn and develop new capacities, not only in speech and acting, but also in music, costume design, sewing, set design and construction, and publicity. Theater calls on all the arts to bring a play to life. Also, the children must exercise their “playful intuitive power of imitation, empathy, and imagination to enter into the life and being of others.”

If the teacher does the casting with pedagogical intent, a child may, in the process of playing his role, overcome a dysfunctional aspect of temperament. For example, a shy student with a poor self-image might be assigned the lead role in the Native American story “Jumping Mouse.” Starting out as the timid and fearful Little Mouse, the hero makes his way across mighty rivers and towering mountains. Along the way, he bestows his sight upon a blind bison and his sense of smell upon a wolf deprived of its own. At the end of the journey, because of his courage, generosity, and hope, the mouse is transformed into a majestic eagle.

An appropriate play portrays inspiring heroes and heroines. These are incorporated into the soul life of the children and will remind them far into the future of what is noble, beautiful, true, and good. The tension, conflict, catharsis, loss, and resolution that children act out in the play expands their soul experience and prepares them for what life may bring them in the future. As William Ward observes, “Drama awakens the heart to an experience of new ideals and new worlds of experience.”

And plays, of course, are fun. They are “play”—a more mature version of the imaginative play of the toddler. Each student assumes a new identity and role. The pattern of daily habits and static responses to life is broken. The rehearsals, the memorization, the hard work, all culminate in a joyful and festive event that involves, entertains, unites, and enriches the whole community.



AWSNA Publications, Ghent, NY, 2009
242 pages • \$22.00

School Portrait

Ak Lu'um

A Waldorf School Carved out of the Yucatan Jungle

BY DAVID BARHAM

In the best of times and under the best of circumstances, Waldorf initiatives face daunting challenges. Working against the flow of the dominant culture, Waldorf educators strive to create something beautiful and full of healing that can nourish today's children and their families.

In the jungles of Playa del Carmen, México, Siobhan (pronounced she-bon) Bowers has taken on challenges far beyond those most Waldorf educators

meet. Just a few miles from one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Western Hemisphere, Siobhan and her teachers have literally carved a new Waldorf school out of the dense scrub jungle of the Yucatan Peninsula.



A classroom building at “the place of the turtle”

The school is called Ak Lu'um, which means in Mayan “the place of the turtle” or “our earth”). Keeping the scorpions, tarantulas, and poisonous snakes at bay, they have erected functional and attractive buildings using mainly human labor and very few machines. Construction in the humid tropics is done primarily with concrete, both to withstand mold, rot, and insect devastation, as well as the predictable yearly hurricanes. The school is not connected to the power grid. A few solar panels provide power for ceiling fans, used only on the most oppressive days. The office computer is a laptop running on rechargeable batteries and the

office phone a cell phone. The classrooms are lit by natural light. Built with an ecological consciousness, the school soon will collect all of its own water from the roofs of the buildings, which are especially designed for this purpose. Although the school is new, already there are plantings of papaya, mango, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Colorful wall paintings and tilework make the spaces bright and joyful. Ak Lu'um is becoming an oasis in the otherwise uniformly green and rather harsh jungle.

Playa del Carmen is a boomtown—or at least it was before the global economic downturn. But the money and the energy there go to real estate and pleasure, not education and other cultural pursuits. The salaries of the teachers at Ak Lu'um are incredibly low because, by American and Canadian standards, tuition is extraordinarily low. The teachers who work with Siobhan at Ak Lu'um are very dedicated, teaching at the school for less than they could make mixing margaritas at the local tourist bars.

Besides the challenges of geography and economy, Ak Lu'um must deal with a government that is strongly opposed to independence in education. The Mexican central government has authority over every aspect of Mexican public education. The annual school calendar, the curriculum, the textbooks, student assessment, the insistence on the Monday morning *Ceremonia de la bandera* (Flag Ceremony), and many other aspects of school life are rigidly controlled by the government. This much might be expected. What most parents and teachers from the United States and Canada find remarkable is that this level of control extends to private education as well. The government stranglehold over schools is so strong that it seems to have effectively silenced public debate on this issue.

Even private schools like Ak Lu'um are obliged by law to follow the dictates of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP). Besides the legal pressure

to conform, there is also parental pressure and concern. Each child must pass the ministry exams to progress to the next grade and eventually on to the affordable public universities. Thus, most families are loathe to step outside the SEP system.

A Waldorf school in México that tries to create an education based on the developmental insights of Rudolf Steiner and organized around the basic principles of the Threefold Social Order finds itself constantly working at cross-purposes with the SEP. There are few options open to these schools. They can water down the Waldorf curriculum and placate

the government officials. Or, they can spend lots of time and energy figuring out which state requirements they can meet and which need to be and can be surreptitiously ignored.



Ak Lu'um has international students, students with one Mexican parent, and students with two Mexican parents.

suited and gifted to bring the best that Waldorf Education has to offer to the students of her school, and together with Gaby Nuñez, cofounder and fountain of strength, keeps the SEP inspectors satisfied. She does this all with a sense of humor, a stiff British upper lip, and an ability to find perverse joy in going head-to-head with a government bureaucracy that can reduce a rational being to tears. Siobhan is also helping the school's parents see that the true needs of their children are being met and also that these children will get the credentials they need to continue in the Mexican system through high school and college.

At Ak Lu'um, a visitor from the United States must look with awe at the beautiful work going on in these simple but lively classrooms in the jungle. In the early childhood (*maternal* and *kinder*) classes, one experiences the warmth, love, and nurture of the Waldorf approach. In the grades (*primaria*) classes, all the essential Waldorf elements are there—the morning verse, recorder playing, move-

ment activities, recitation, singing, review/recapitulation of the previous day's lesson, presentation of new material in story form, and work time with beeswax crayons and colored pencils in main lesson books. Most impressively, the classes are conducted both in Spanish and English—with bits of Mayan thrown in as well. The school provides the children with healthy, simple, vegetarian meals each day. Much time is spent exploring the jungle and *cenotes* —underground rivers of fresh water.

Ak Lu'um was founded in 2006 and moved to its present location in 2008. There are now about forty students in four groups—nursery, kindergarten, a combined first/second grade and a combined third/fourth grade. Many of the children are from foreign families—American, Canadian, and European. Some have one Mexican and one foreign parent and some two Mexican parents. The faculty includes nine full-time teachers, including one being trained in curative pedagogy, and a part-time art teacher.

Siobhan is an extraordinary dynamo of energy. Raised by an English father and a Spanish mother, she lived in England, Spain, Brazil, California, and in Mexico City before settling in Playa. Siobhan is a true cosmopolitan with a deep feeling for the complex, interdependent, multilingual, multicultural world. She discovered Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy when working for a year at another of Mexico's Waldorf schools. Bringing a healthy British skepticism to her encounter, she quickly came to see that the compromises which that particular Waldorf school was willing to make to fulfill the SEP requirements were making a mockery of the core elements of Waldorf Education.

Through sheer will and determination, Siobhan overcame SEP's hurdles and secured the initial funding needed to get Ak Lu'um started. She gathered a small but devoted parent group who were willing to pay for an education that disdains the computers and the glitz that so characterizes the



School founder Siobhan Bowers playing finger games with pre-kindergarten children

town of Playa del Carmen (known by its nickname, Playa, the Spanish word for beach).

The school is working to secure two essential elements of a healthy Waldorf school—training for its teachers and an understanding and appreciation of Anthroposophy within the school community. Each summer the school's teachers attend the multiweek teacher training in Cuernavaca. Also, Siobhan brings visitors to the school to offer lectures, workshops, and discussion groups. Most of these events focus on curriculum and pedagogy, but some deal with the broader topic of Anthroposophy, which is little known in México, particularly on the Caribbean coast. Although books are expensive and hard to come by, Ak Lu'um is developing an impressive library of works by Steiner and others both in English and in Spanish. Many of these volumes have been brought by "mules"—visitors from the United States and Europe—who bring not only books but also crayons and other supplies in their luggage as gifts to the school.

I was invited by Siobhan to come and mentor the teachers during my February break in 2009. Each day after school for four days, we all worked together for two and a half hours on questions of curriculum, Steiner's insights into human development, and the larger social mission of Waldorf Education. On the final day, about thirty parents came for a talk on how Waldorf Education meets the needs of the child at all stages of development. I chose this topic because in México, as elsewhere, parents typically want their children to learn to read as early as possible. It is important to help the parents of Ak Lu'um understand the need to bring the right subjects at the right moment. The hope is that through intellectual understanding but, more importantly, through witnessing the growth and success of their own children, these parents will initiate the much-needed conversation to help free education from government control.

As with all initiatives in their early years, Ak Lu'um has a lot to do to achieve economic and pedagogical stability. But the boldness shown in starting such

a venture is already yielding (tropical) fruit. Siobhan and the teachers of Ak Lu'um have shown there is another way to live in this Caribbean paradise. The Ak Lu'um way involves healthy food, a loving connection to the land itself, and an education for the children (and their families), mainly free from the forces that would pave paradise and put up a parking lot or a five-star hotel! ☺



The faculty of Ak Lu'um, including visiting mentor David Barham—the only person in the photo with a beard

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Photos by David Barham

From Around the World

Waldorf Education in Asia

The Third Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference Quezon City, the Philippines, May 1–8, 2009

BY VAN JAMES

It was mango season in the Philippines and the monsoon had begun earlier than usual. The weather was hot and humid, as over three hundred Waldorf teachers from all over Asia—twenty countries in all—gathered in Quezon City in greater Manila. They were there to attend interwoven conferences on the shared theme, “Foundations of Human Experience and the Challenges of Modern Life for Children’s Development and Education.” Christof Wiechert, leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, was the keynote speaker.

The First Asia–Pacific Meetings and Conferences

In 1995 a handful of participants at that year’s Pacific Region Conference in Hawai’i saw the great potential for activity in the Asia–Pacific region, and they decided to call together a small gathering in Manila, the Philippines, for the following year, 1996. This meeting was the founding of the Asia–Pacific Anthroposophical Initiative Group. Over the next several years, Asia–Pacific Conferences were held annually in different Asian countries—India, Thailand, Taiwan, Nepal, and Japan.

These conferences focused on Waldorf Education and other practical applications of Anthroposophy, such as curative education, biodynamic farming and gardening, threefold social science, and the arts. The meetings strengthened these activities in the larger region and also brought together separate anthroposophical groups within the host countries. During this time, interest in Waldorf Education in Asia was growing rapidly, and Waldorf roundtables were arranged at the conferences to gain perspective on this growth. The sharing of ideas and practical approaches to a “truly human” worldview ultimately led to the organization of biannual Asian Waldorf Teachers’ Conferences (AWTC). The first was held in Taiwan in 2005, the second, in Thailand in 2007.

The Waldorf movement is expanding in Asia in five broad, cultural-geographic regions:

- the northern Pacific area, which is comprised, at this point, of Japan and Korea
- the People’s Republic of China and the island nation of Taiwan
- Southeast Asia, which includes Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines—although this mostly Christian, island nation can be said to be an independent region
- the Indian Subcontinent, which includes India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, and
- Central Asia, including Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and the other “-stans,” where activity is mostly in the curative educational field. (Few teachers from this region were able to attend the AWTC.)



Filipina Waldorf teachers and students at the Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference in Manila

Local, national, and regional activities—such as conferences, teacher trainings, and workshops with foreign master teachers—have begun to be organized. Often conducted in the language of the host country, these gatherings supplement the English-speaking, pan-Asian AWTC.

The Third Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference

The May 2009 meeting was held in conjunction with an Asia–Pacific Anthroposophical Conference. The

anthroposophical conference took place during the first three days, and on those days all participants attended the same morning lectures and evening presentations. For the rest of the week, there were separate seminars and workshops for each conference. The anthroposophical conference focused on



Chinese Waldorf teachers present a traditional shadow puppet show.

timely issues such as a new ecology, a new economy, and a new social organization. The teachers' conference, intended as teacher training for working Waldorf teachers, was primarily concerned with the development of the child and with an approach

to education based on a spiritual view of the human being. The Waldorf school morning verse was recited in English and in various Asian languages before each day's lectures and workshops.

Keynote speaker Christof Wiechert described the first six years of the original Waldorf school's development as it unfolded under the direction of Rudolf Steiner. Wiechert's lively and insightful presentation was a perfect artistic example of combining form and content—of how to teach as well as what to teach. Wiechert described the new and radical educational ideas that Rudolf Steiner presented at his meetings with the teachers of the first school. For example, Steiner told the teachers that a deep and sincere interest in their students was essential and that they, the teachers, were to be responsible for the administration and management of the school.

Wiechert also described the social role of the first Waldorf school and how, although it was established for the children of workers at the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory, it soon attracted other children from the local community. He spoke also of how, because of the government regulations and interference, the first school had to adapt its curriculum in several areas. Many surprising and humorous anecdotes punctuated this fascinating history of the first school.

This archetypal picture of a Waldorf school holds true to this day. The kinds of crises that occurred in the first school in Stuttgart, Germany, repeat themselves today, ninety years later, in twenty-first-century Waldorf schools.

Wiechert wove into his account references to recent scientific research that confirms the wisdom of many of Steiner's original suggestions. Recent studies of "resilience"—the ability to manage stress and to thrive and survive in difficult situations—have determined that certain factors help children to develop this quality. These elements include:

- having a "caretaker"—an adult on whom the child can rely—until age ten (Rudolf Steiner says until age twelve);
- having a loving but "authoritative" figure making important decisions for the child, particularly in the realm of education; and
- having as models of behavior adults who themselves possess resilience.

This last element is based on the fact that children learn by imitation. What the senses take in at an early age influences patterns of behavior in later life.

Wiechert also spoke with much humor about the various "Waldorf misunderstandings." At some point, Waldorf kindergarten teachers began to cut the corners off the painting paper the children were to use. This practice, never mentioned by Steiner, nevertheless has become a Waldorf tradition, firmly entrenched in many schools. Teaching form drawing as a main lesson block is another example of a mysteriously arisen "tradition."

The conference also included many practical/ pedagogical and artistic workshops. A number of these focused on the needs of high school teachers, since many Waldorf schools—in Japan, Taiwan, China, Thailand, and the Philippines—now have full or developing high schools. School reports in the afternoons and cultural presentations in the evenings brought the Philippines and other Asian countries to life. A familiar feature at all events was the quiet murmur of the Chinese translators. Forty-five Chinese and seventy-one Taiwanese attended, indicating the great interest in Waldorf Education in those countries. Break times were opportunities for us non-Asian participants to get to know colleagues from this friendly and spiritually charged segment of the worldwide Waldorf movement.

The prevailing mood of the conference was warm, friendly, easygoing, and celebratory, even with the hard work and study that was taking place. As Raphael Lazo, leader of the Anthroposophical Group in the Philippines, noted about his country, “Filipinos love a party!” There was a kind of geographic



Waldorf teachers from Malaysia

medicine and folk soul influence at work in sharing Waldorf pedagogical practices in this place. The human warmth and openheartedness that permeates Philippine culture helped participants to maintain the joyful spirit that should also inform our teaching.

Toward the end of the week, a typhoon threatened to cancel homebound flights. But on the final day, the weather broke, and the sun came out—a fitting conclusion to the week. The work together will bear fruit far and wide throughout Asia in the months and years to come. The next Asian Waldorf Teachers’ Conference will take place in Hyderabad, India, in 2011. ☉



VAN JAMES is a high school visual arts instructor at the Honolulu Waldorf School and chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai’i. He is involved in teacher training programs in Hawai’i, California, New Zealand, and

China, and is the author of several books on art and Hawaiian culture. He lives in Honolulu with his wife and has grandchildren who attend the Honolulu Waldorf School.

Books in Brief

Biographies for 8th Grade History Twenty Remarkable Men and Women

by Susan Cook

Storytelling is an important element in Waldorf Education, from the preschool and kindergarten through the end of high school. In the eighth grade, when the students study modern history—particularly its revolutions and its movements for social change—the life stories of notable men and woman, told by the class teacher, play a crucial role. The budding adolescent, trying to find his own identity and looking toward his life task, yearns for examples of human beings who have had a positive impact on history.

Susan Cook, a class teacher at the San Francisco Waldorf School, understands the importance of this oral tradition. In her introduction she writes:

[Storytelling] is a guaranteed method of imparting important pedagogical substance that touches the sympathies and antipathies of children. Through this engagement with the emotions, [stories elicit] a response in each student’s feeling life that rises into the cognitive sphere and becomes content, available for future ideas and concepts.

Cook also points out that the experienced teacher-storyteller can shape a biography so that it has a pedagogical impact on a particular student or students in the class. Clara Barton overcoming her shyness, Marie Curie turning her passion for science into benefit for humanity, Frederick Douglass surviving his mistreatment as a slave to become a crusader for equal rights—such stories can be told so that they speak with particular relevance for one student or another.

Meant as a resource for teachers and for home-schooling parents, this book includes biographies of a wide variety of notable persons, including Simón Bolívar, Helen Keller, César Chávez, and Chief Sequoyah. The life stories focus on the younger years of each figure and include at least one vivid, character-forming episode, an incident that will make a lasting impression on the students.

AWSNA Publications, Ghent, NY, 2009
166 pages • \$12.00

(Please see the article on page 32 about how biographies also play a role in the Waldorf high school history curriculum.)

Out of Anthroposophy

Ape and Man

Who Has Descended from Whom?

BY WOLFGANG SCHAD, PhD

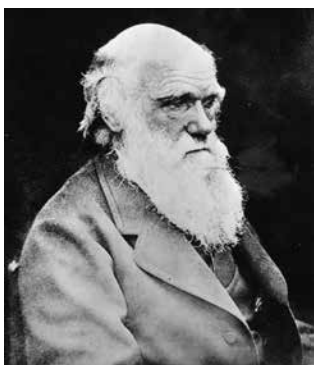
Anthroposophy (from anthropos—the human being, sophia—wisdom) is the worldview taught by Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education. When he founded the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919, Steiner clearly stipulated that Anthroposophy was not to be taught in the schools. However, the understanding of child development, of the nature and culture of the human being, and of the origin, structure, and processes of the natural world that are the basis of the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy come out of Anthroposophy. It is not possible to truly understand Waldorf Education without understanding this enriched anthropology.

Waldorf Education is only one of the practically oriented “daughter movements” that sprang from the “Mother Anthroposophy.” The others include biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophically extended medicine, the Camphill movement for the education and care of persons with special needs, organic architecture, and the threefold social order. In the future, Renewal will include in this “Out of Anthroposophy” section an article that focuses on Anthroposophy or on one of the daughter movements.

*2009 is the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin’s birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his book *Origin of Species*. Hence we present here an article on the topic of evolution. The article, entitled “Ape and Man,” is written by the distinguished scientist and researcher (also anthroposophist and Waldorf educator) Wolfgang Schad. It appeared first in the June 2009 issue of *Erziehungskunst* (The Art of Education), a monthly journal published by the Association of Free Waldorf Schools in Germany. The article was translated by Renewal’s editor.*

Charles Darwin hesitated in his main work of 1859 to expressly write about the descent of human beings from humanlike primates or apes. As an erst-while vicar of the Anglican church, he feared that he would attract too much criticism. Only in his later work of 1871, *The Descent of Man*, did he dare to address the issue.

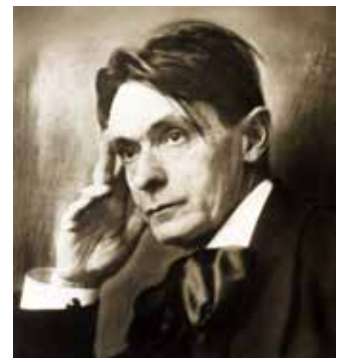
the apes—orangutan, chimpanzee, or gorilla—could be the actual ancestor of the human being. While many fossil remains of ancient primal hominids have been found since then, there are so few fossils of the ancestors of the apes that even today the existence of the assumed ape, as our ancestor, cannot be demonstrated.



Charles Darwin (1809–1882), originator of the theory of evolution

Already in 1863, however, the German zoologist, Ernst Haeckel—who became famous as the “Ape Professor”—speaking before a congress of German doctors and natural scientists in Stettin—extracted this consequence from Darwin’s first book. Despite all the physical similarities between primates and human beings, it was very clear to Haeckel that none of

Our European and Western culture is by no means the first to speculate about this question. For millennia the Chinese have had no problem allowing human beings to be descended from monkeys. Other peoples who have coexisted with primates have looked at the situation a bit differently. The Malays in Borneo and Sumatra have regarded the orangutan not at all as an animal



Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), founder of Anthroposophy



The archetypal male human form as depicted by Michelangelo in his statue of David, completed in 1504

but as a human being who has gone wild. *Utan* means “human being” in Malay, and *orang-utan* means “forest man.” The Malays even have a myth that the orangutans can speak but that they don’t show it, because they are afraid that they will be made to work. Those African peoples, long connected to the chimpanzees and gorillas with whom they share a common environment, hold these primates to be human beings who degenerated.

The two conflicting conclusions have always been there: The human being has descended from the ape. The apes have descended from human beings. Which is correct?

In 1700 in Cannstadt, near Stuttgart, Germany, a human skull from the Ice Age was found together with mammoth tusks. In 1820 stone tools from the early Neanderthal period, found near Weimar, came into Goethe’s hands. In 1829 a Belgian doctor found a Neanderthal child’s skull, and in 1848 the skull of an adult Neanderthal was found in southern Spain. But people couldn’t make any sense of what had been found. They didn’t know what they were holding in their hands.

In 1856 the first nearly complete skeleton of an Ice Age Neanderthal man was discovered. This discovery was joyfully received by Darwin and Haeckel, both searching for the “Ur-Mensch,” because the shape of the head was much closer to that of an ape than is the head of a modern human being. Since then, hundreds of fossils of human remains have come to light, very early ones in Spain and in various parts of south Asia. The oldest finds, dating from more than two million years ago—before the Ice Ages—have been made without exception in East and South Africa.

To date, the oldest proof of the existence of human beings was found by French researchers in the Sahel area of the southern Sahara near Lake Chad. Called

Sahelanthropus tchadensis, it is about seven million years old. It is a noticeably small skull, which no doubt belonged to a correspondingly small body. Because of the unexpected verticality of the front of the face, discoverers considered it to be a genuine hominid, or early human being. The placement of the spinal orifice bespeaks a relative upright holding of the head and thus an upright posture for the body.

The discovery was made public in the British journal *Nature*, and already in the next issue of the magazine a counterargument appeared, namely, that the small brain capacity, the lack of a forehead, and the protruding brow suggest rather an early ape—the pongids. The argument went back and forth, and, judging from all the points made, one can say that both sides were in part correct. The upright posture is enough ground to call *Sahelanthropus* a member of the human family. We are dealing here with a hybrid or mixed form. The real ancestor of the pongids and the hominids must have been even more of a mixture of both. One expects that such a being lived eight or nine million years ago in the Upper Tertiary period.

Already in 1908 Rudolf Steiner tried to make the emergence of the human being understandable, while fully recognizing the general theory of evolution. He used the following metaphor or picture-imagination:

Imagine that all the characteristics that are distributed throughout the animal kingdom were once

part of the human being. The human being purified himself of those characteristics and thereby was able to evolve to a higher level. If we have a cloudy liquid and we let the particles sink to the bottom as a sediment, the finer material remains above. Thus, in the forms of the animals, the less refined elements that



The orangutan or “forest man,” now extant only on Borneo and Sumatra, has prehensile hands and feet, eats mostly fruit, and spends most of its life in trees.



From left to right: the skull of a modern man in middle age; *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*; and an adult chimpanzee

the human being could not use in his current stage of development were taken out as a precipitate. Because man took the animal forms of his older brothers out of his line of evolution, he attained his current high stage.

Because the early apes increasingly lost their human characteristics, they became animals, although the most highly developed ones. Even now, the monkeys and apes, in their infancy and early years, with their upright forehead and sitting posture and their playful and curious behavior, show that their origin was close to that of human beings.

Moreover, primate researchers have shown that gorillas and chimpanzees, particularly the younger ones, have signs of a self-awareness. Mountain gorillas in East Africa, after a rainstorm, will observe themselves with amazement in the reflecting mirror of a water puddle. And in experiments using mirrors, chimpanzees are able to identify themselves. From

this evidence, a movement has arisen to give these close relatives human rights and to end their use as subjects in medical research.

We human beings still have unmastered drives and emotions in us, and if the process of cultural education does not succeed, we can easily degenerate and fall prey to them. Nevertheless, the human line of development increasingly has been able to leave behind its apelike characteristics.

We come, then, to the conclusion that our original question—*Who has descended from whom?*—presents a false choice. The human being has not descended from the apes. The apes have not descended from the human being. Rather, both come from a common mixed form, from which each went its own way, keeping some characteristics, discarding others. In this idea, we have a meeting of rigorous natural science and the spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner. ☉



Alumni Forum, continued

reality of 9 being the sum of three 3s. However, a Waldorf teacher is more likely to present the material in a manner like this:

A village baker has to send nine loaves of bread to a farmhouse in the mountains. He is too busy to go himself, so the job falls to his wife and their two sons. The wife is far along in a pregnancy, however, and one boy is seven years old and the other only four. Each person has a backpack. What do you think would be a fair way to divide up the loaves of bread between them? How many should each one carry?

The conversations among the children around such questions are wonderful. Different possibilities emerge. Nine is no longer just $3+3+3$. It can also be $2+4+3$ or $5+2+2$ or $0+5+4$. A math lesson becomes an exercise in flexible thinking.

A Sense of Fairness and Morality

This little story about the baker and his family also takes the mathematical exercise into another human realm. The children have to consider the human beings in question and to do so with empathy and understanding. They have to decide what is fair, what is safe, what is possible.

Clear Speech and Clear Thinking

In the language arts, the Waldorf teacher helps the children master grammar, proper usage, vocabulary, and punctuation. The aim is that the children become able to express themselves clearly and correctly in writing and in speech. Much emphasis is placed on enunciation, and the teacher strives to model clear, modulated speech that is pleasing to the ear.

Speech and thinking are two capacities that distinguish us as human beings. Both activities are directly connected to our Ego or higher self—our inner core of strength. Varied, rich, and intricate experiences in speech foster variety, richness, and intricacy in our thinking. A child who can clearly articulate a thought in a complex sentence will, as an adult, be able to follow the thoughts of others.

An Experience of the Beauty of Language

We also want the children to experience the endless possibilities and beauty of language. The children learn by heart many poems and verses and thus internalize the English language as it has expressed, with artistry and imagination, the most profound human emotions, insights, and wisdom.

A Sense of Wonder at the World and of Being at Home in It

Our aim in the teaching of science is to help children become adults who feel at home and confident in the world. To this end, we cultivate in the grade school years a sense of wonder and reverence for all natural phenomena. This begins in kindergarten and the early grades with nature stories that describe the myriad wonders of the natural world.

Starting in the third grade, the children experience individual phenomena in the context in which they exist, through observation and description. We do not take things away from their natural environment and cut them apart. Something dead and dissected does not give children a true experience of the phenomena. Yet a lively description of a plant or animal in its natural environment does. A child experiences only one aspect of a forest pond by looking at a single drop of pond water through a microscope and seeing the minute forms of life there. But a vivid description or, better yet, a field trip can bring to life the pond and all that exists within and around it. The children can see with their own eyes (inner and imaginative as well as physical) the murky water, the muddy bottom, the salamanders swimming among the algae, the dragonflies that hover above the surface, and the frogs that croak from under reeds at the edge and hop in with a plop when someone approaches. For a child, this experience is more meaningful than a view through a microscope. The full context of sights, sounds, smells, and sensations enhances and stimulates the child's sense of wonder and wholeness.

We do not burden children with the innumerable ecological concerns that exist today. They will learn of these soon enough. Finding out about them at too early an age can lead to a feeling of depression, helplessness, and resignation. Certainly it is essential to teach them to treat the Earth and life on it with respect, but they do not yet need to know about pollution and climate change and the extinction of species. That is not a state of mind that will enable them to help our planet as adults. One can only feel helpful and work for creative change if one feels empowered. Awe and wonder for the beauty of the natural world can bring this sense of empowerment.

Interest in Other Cultures and Peoples

The study of geography and foreign languages aims to awaken in children a sense for other parts of the world, a feeling for different cultures, and interest in

our fellow human beings who live elsewhere. Such interest will help them to live in the world fully engaged and with a deep awareness of shared humanity.

Grace and Consciousness in Movement

In eurythmy, a subject unique to Waldorf Education, the children learn to express in movement the invisible forces that give life, form, and beauty to the physical body. Since eurythmy for the children is a group activity, they also develop an awareness and sensitivity to others and a sense of space.

Manual Dexterity and a Connection to Objects

Among my favorite experiences as a Waldorf student were the craftwork and handwork. Over the years, I carved a spoon, made a wooden box and a chair, bound several books, sewed items of clothing, and helped make a thermometer and build an electric motor. Such work develops fine motor coordination—which in turn enhances mental capacities—and teaches practical skills. It also helps one feel connected to the world and the objects in it. When I see the things I made or similar objects, they are familiar and comprehensible to me, not alien things.

A Sense for Beauty

Every day, Waldorf students are involved in the fine arts and in the cultivation of aesthetic judgment. They must make artistic judgments involving color and form and the interaction between them. This helps cultivate a healthy sense for balance and harmony in all matters.

Respect for and the Ability to Work with Others

A Waldorf student typically remains with the same group of children throughout his schooling. This creates an intimate and intense social situation. Since each student participates in every aspect of the curriculum, the children become supportive of each other. They develop an awareness of each other's abilities and a tolerance for each other's challenges. An important part of the teacher's work is to develop the social skills of the children.

Today, as a Waldorf teacher, I am striving to give these gifts to my students so that they will become free, confident, well-balanced human beings who can find their place and destiny in the world. ☉

