# From the Editor

Ilan Safit

It is with great pleasure that I am introducing here the current issue of the *Research Bulletin*, the first for me as incoming editor. As a former Waldorf high school English teacher, who proceeded to teach philosophy and literature at the college level, I have never lost my connection with Waldorf education and anthroposophy, so I am delighted to resume more formal ties through the post of editor of the *Bulletin*. I would like to extend my gratitude to the outgoing editor, Elan Leibner, and to Douglas Gerwin, for doing much of the preparation work for the current issue, as well as to Patrice Maynard and Ann Erwin, who helped initiate me into this new role.

This issue continues, though by no means concludes, the ongoing conversation regarding the theme of technology, around which the previous two issues were centered, as well. In this context, several of the articles published here are final installments of three-part essays launched in the Autumn/Winter 2016 issue of the *Bulletin* (Vol. 21-2).

The current issue opens with a transcription of the keynote speech that the chairperson of the Pedagogical Section Council of North America, Elan Leibner, recently gave at the 2017 AWSNA Teachers Conference in Portland, OR. Asked to talk about AWSNA's Core Principle #7, which calls for cultivating an anthroposophical understanding of social interactions in the self-administration of Waldorf schools, Leibner begins by reflecting on the nature of "an anthroposophical understanding" of the social and practical interactions of a faculty meeting. Leibner's important insight is that "*spiritual beings interpose themselves between us as we meet*." He continues his reflection through dialogue with Rudolf Steiner's designations of the evolution of the human Self, reaching, finally, the archetype of the human capacity for love. This Love Impulse Leibner names AHAVA, the acronym for "Archetype of Human Amity, Verity, and Altruism" and also the Hebrew word for *love*. The article concludes with practical suggestions for employing AHAVA, or the Love Impulse, in Waldorf schools, in both the classroom and the self-administration of the school.

Jason Yates offers the third and final installment of his exploration of a digital mode of thinking, or a "digital gesture," as that which gives rise to technological invention. Proceeding further from the roots of technological invention to its production and transmission of images, Yates asks, What is an image? and follows the thought of French philosopher and theorist, Jean Baudrillard, who provocatively claimed that the real has been dissolved under the weight of the images that replaced it in the late 20th century. In order to recover a sense of reality, Yates recruits the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, whose approach was characterized by an endeavor to allow the truth of being to reveal itself from underneath practical aspects, such as the ones of technology, that tend to "enframe" reality in their own practical terms and thus conceal its original and enduring meaning.

Gopi Krishna Vijaya concludes his three-part investigation into the historical split between human thought and the mathematical-mechanical model of thinking that gave rise to computer "intelligence." Vijaya's exploration, which began with the emergence of Western logic, mathematics, and geometry in ancient Greece, shows how, with the modern era's developments that have produced the computer, a logical-mechanical model of thinking threatens to overtake the wider, richer, creative aspects of human thought. Vijaya's conclusion is worth

quoting here: "When it is accepted that this form of machine-logic is a small subset of the full range of capacities of the thought process, then it would be possible to prevent harm and actually use it for relieving the mind of rote repetitive work."

Harlan Gilbert, who published his reflections on computers and intelligence in the previous issue of the *Research Bulletin*, teamed up with Jennifer Mankoff, a Waldorf-educated professor of computer science at Carnegie Mellon University. The two authors offer here outlines and a wealth of resources for 5th through 8th grade lesson plans designed for exploring conceptual and practical aspects of computer programming and use.

Charles Weems follows up his article on introducing computer science in the Waldorf high school (*Research Bulletin* 22-1, Spring/Summer 2017) with this helpful elaboration of a CS course for 11th graders. Shot through with practical examples of classroom assignments and explanations about how some aspects of the internet work, Weems' article follows Steiner's dictum about the need to understand fully our interactions with the technology that takes an increasing role in our daily lives.

Helen-Ann Ireland offers an illuminating discovery in her article. She shows how a current leading pedagogical theory, devised by Professor Howard Gardner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, neatly corresponds to what Waldorf teachers have been doing in their classrooms for decades.

The articles section of this issue concludes with an expanded version of a talk I gave last spring at the Green Meadow Waldorf School. This talk was about the future of Waldorf schools in terms of the two great challenges that are already upon us in the present: namely, coming to terms with the ubiquity of modern technology and addressing the ongoing and anticipated environmental transformations that are set to change both physical and social living conditions on the planet. A future-oriented education system such as Waldorf, I conclude, should prepare its students for their future challenge of securing livable conditions for an ethically committed society in a transformed world. Such a challenge would necessarily involve a thoughtful engagement with advanced technology by directing its tools toward preservation and protection in order to reverse the harmful effects of the thoughtless use of technology that has brought us to this point.

With this final article, we wish to continue the discussion of technology by channeling it further into the question of environmental or ecological transformation in the context of Waldorf education. For this purpose, we would welcome submissions of articles and book reviews that address this theme.

As always, we conclude with reports from the world of Waldorf Publications and from the Online Waldorf Library offered by Patrice Maynard and Marianne Alsop, respectively.

I trust and hope that many Waldorf educators and other interested parties will find both reflective and practical uses for the articles collected in this technology-themed issue, the impulse for which can be found, perhaps retroactively, in Steiner's lecture on aesthetic education:

> Anyone who uses products of modern technology without having any knowledge of how they work or of how they were made is like a person in a prison cell without a window through which he would at least be able to look out into nature and to freedom.
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> – Rudolf Steiner, *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education,* CW 303, "Esthetic Education," Lecture 14, January 5, 1922 (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1986, 243).