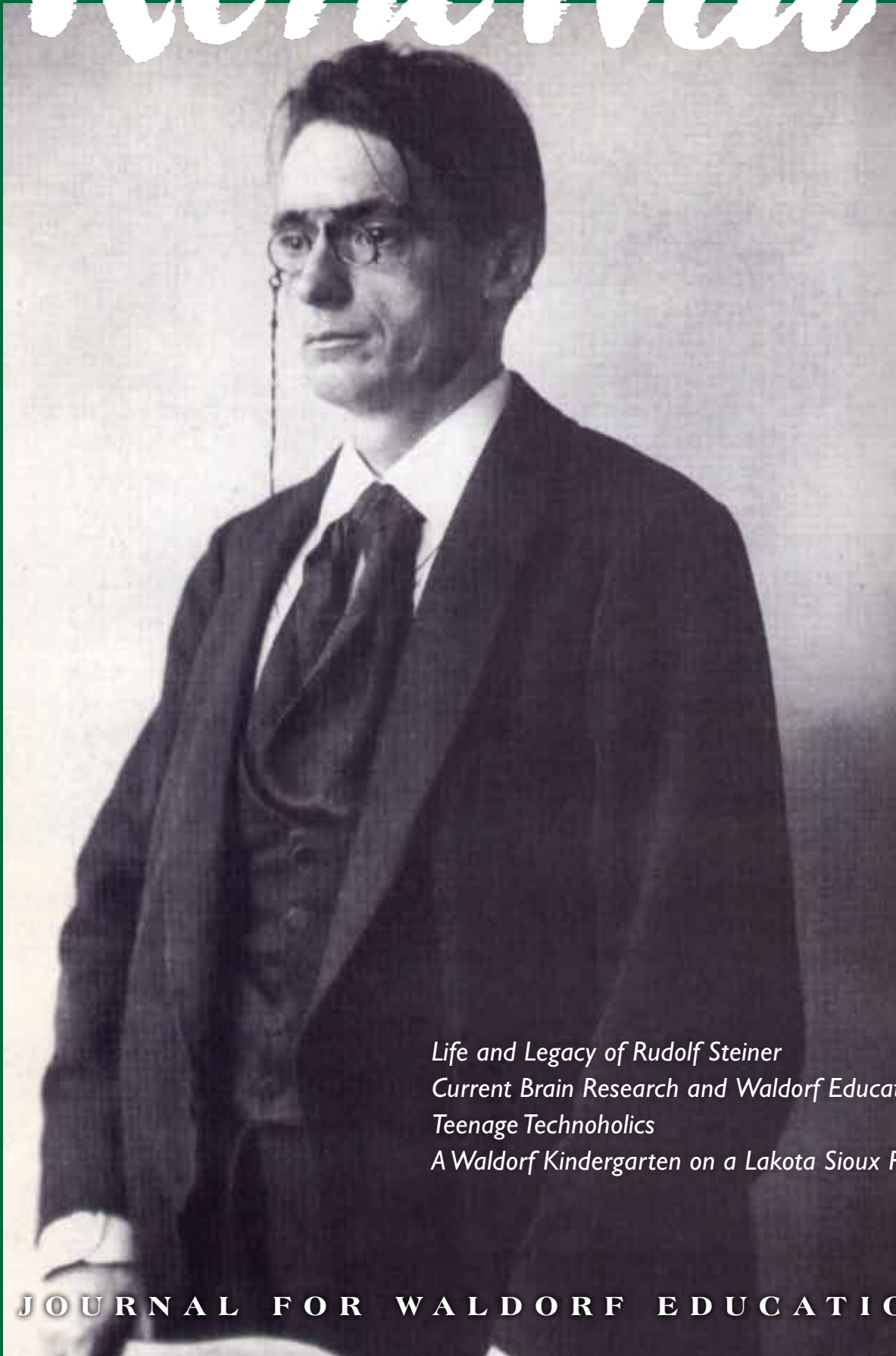


SPRING/SUMMER 2011 – VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

Renewal



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Current Brain Research and Waldorf Education
Teenage Technoholics
A Waldorf Kindergarten on a Lakota Sioux Reservation

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

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Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education is published by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Founded in 1991, the magazine is intended primarily as a resource for Waldorf parents and teachers. It features articles about child development, parenting, children's health, the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy, current research in education, and Waldorf Education in other parts of the world. *Renewal* is distributed throughout North America and around the world.

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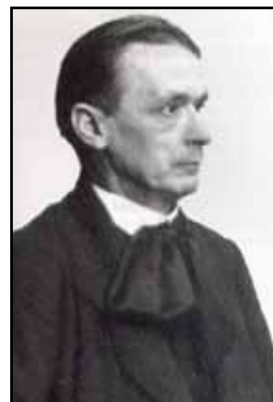
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Editorial offices: 3911 Bannister Road, Fair Oaks, CA 95628 • e-mail: rkoetzsch@awsna.org

Business office for subscriptions and advertising:

AWSNA Office for Outreach and Development, 65-2 Fern Hill Road, Ghent, NY 12075

e-mail: subs_adsrenewal@awsna.org • 518-672-7878

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Waldorf Alumni Forum

Joshua Milowe, Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs, 2004

Joshua Milowe grew up in Saratoga Springs, New York, and from preschool through eighth grade attended what was then called Spring Hill Waldorf School. In 2000 he moved with his family to Malden, Massachusetts, and attended the public high school there. Joshua went to Emerson College in Boston in 2004 and studied visual media arts, photography, and entrepreneurship, receiving a BA in 2008. While at Emerson, he won the E3 entrepreneurial award for a business plan for a clothing and accessory company. For the past three years, Joshua has been living and working in New York City.

Joshua's entrepreneurial activities began in high school when he started a business as a disk jockey working at local Boston clubs, college parties, and other events. While still in college, he founded a clothing company—Sunie Clothing and Goods—designing and producing tee shirts, hooded sweat-shirts, and other items. In September 2009, Joshua founded Wealthy Pictures, a media production company, specializing in music videos, commercials, photography, and graphic design (www.wealthypictures.com). Since moving to New York, he has worked with a design firm and two clothing companies. Joshua currently works for Damon Dash's record label and media collective DD172. (Damon Dash, for the uninitiated among our readers, is one of the major figures in the hip-hop recording industry.)

As he mentions below, Joshua had an early interest in electronics and media. The artistic and creative capacities developed in part through his Waldorf schooling have helped him parlay his aptitude with technology into a multifaceted career in media production, advertising, and fashion design.

—R. E. K.

We had a television while I was growing up, but I watched mostly programs on the PBS station. I wasn't drowning in television. But ever since I can remember, I was fascinated by electronics and would push every button and button combination until I fully understood the device, whatever it was—digital clock, computer, or cell phone.

In the Waldorf school, though, I was immersed in the arts. The arts were a focus and were often tied into the subject matter we were covering. I remember history classes coupled with painting and drawing, in which we were instructed to illustrate a given moment described in the lesson. I remember creating origami in my Japanese class and speaking my lines in a German play. Over the years I spent countless hours drawing, painting, singing, playing the cello, sewing, sculpting, and woodworking.

I feel that my years in the Waldorf environment helped me develop a natural inclination toward creativity and art. I began to develop a certain aesthetic sensibility as well as a practical, hands-on

ability to actually create something. In high school I discovered my love for film, which led me to Emerson College and to my present work. And during the past three years I've spent living in New York City, I have been creating on many levels. This creativity shows in my design, fashion, and film work.

I feel that I can accomplish and create whatever I choose. I am not often overwhelmed by challenges and limitations, but rather



Joshua Milowe

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From the Editor

Serenity, Cheerfulness, and Humor

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

There are many photographs of Rudolf Steiner. In a few, one can detect a very gentle smile, but most give the impression that Dr. Steiner was an extremely serious, even humorless, person.



The editor at work, trying—with moderate success—to exude those cheerful vibes

The reality was quite the opposite. According to the many anecdotes and reminiscences of those who knew and worked closely with him, Rudolf Steiner was an unfailingly cheerful person, with a ready smile and a keen sense of humor and irony.

In 1985 a book was published in German entitled *Humor und Heiterkeit im Leben und Werk Rudolf Steiners* (*Humor and*

Cheerfulness in the Life and Work of Rudolf Steiner). The author, Heinrich Eppinger, an anthroposophist and a Waldorf teacher, recounts and celebrates this often neglected aspect of Dr. Steiner.

Steiner experienced many difficulties and hardships in his career as a spiritual teacher. There were the early bitter disagreements with the leaders of the Theosophical Society that led to the formation of the Anthroposophical Society. Later there was strong opposition from certain political and religious groups and the tragedy of the burning of the first Goetheanum. Strife among his co-workers and students in the Society also caused him great distress. And there were the daily, colossal demands on his time and energy that allowed Steiner little privacy or rest.

Yet through all this, Rudolf Steiner maintained his *Heiterkeit*. The word in German connotes both an inner serenity and an outer cheerfulness. One close associate of Steiner recalls an acrimonious meeting in Dornach when the factions in the Society threatened to tear it apart. Steiner sat through the gathering grimfaced. A short time later, back in his home, however, Steiner was cheerful and lighthearted,

offering his guest coffee and a comfortable chair, as if the meeting had never happened. Despite the trials of the moment, his inner serenity was not disturbed and it manifested in his amiable mood.

Steiner often chided those among his students who were too serious. Having “a long face that reaches down to one’s stomach,” he would point out, is not appropriate demeanor for a person who truly understands the worldview of Anthroposophy.

Indeed, if one grasps some of the basic ideas of Anthroposophy, there are abiding grounds for being serene and cheerful:

- The world and the human being have been created through the wisdom and love of the spiritual world.
- Each human being has an eternal, spiritual essence that is not subject to the death of the body.
- Each individual and the human race as a whole is evolving toward higher and higher levels of consciousness and being.
- All human experience, including suffering, has purpose and meaning. There are no accidents. Everything works to an ultimate good.

As Eppinger points out, for Steiner, our mood is not a private affair. If we can perceive and experience the world as being in harmony, if we can be inwardly satisfied with the world, and if we can manifest cheerfulness and serenity in our behavior and speech, this is a gift and blessing for those around us. Steiner even said that a warm, loving, and joyful mood frees spiritual beings who are bound to the material world, while ill humor and moroseness further binds them.

It makes a difference, then, how we greet someone. A grumbled “G’morning” has one effect, a cheerful

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“Cosmic Humor” gazing down on the drama of human evolution

inspired to find creative solutions. I feel that I am often a very resourceful person.

Of course my parents, friends, my high school and college experiences have all helped to shape me. But my inclination toward creativity was first influenced by my years at Waldorf school.

Though many years have passed since I left Spring Hill, at heart I am still a student eager to pick up where I left off, in many ways much more eager than I ever was before. I hope that my life will allow me opportunity to continue my studies of music, art, and language. ☺



Joshua Milowe in a tee shirt of his own design



A hoodie designed and sewn by Joshua

From the Editor, continued

“Good morning, how are you?” accompanied by a smile and a look in the eye, has quite another.

Humor, that which causes the human being to exercise a unique capacity—the ability to laugh—was also very important to Rudolf Steiner. He is reported to have said (and I must admit this is without reference) that only where humor lives can there be true spiritual activity and development. Steiner also said that humor is essential to the health of the Anthroposophical Society and its “daughter” movements—which include the Waldorf schools. Steiner said we must learn to (lovingly) satirize ourselves and colleagues. If we can laugh at ourselves, the adversarial beings who would hinder our work and development cannot get hold of us.

For Steiner, humor was essential to the educational process. He told the teachers in the first Waldorf school that they should strive to make the students laugh at least once during each class. (He also said that the students should occasionally be brought to the verge of tears, crying being the opposite and complement of laughing.)

At the end of his life, Steiner, working with British sculptress Edith Maryon, created a remarkable

wooden sculpture called *The Representative of Humanity*. (Please see photo on inside front cover.) The thirty-three-foot-tall work is actually a group of figures. In the center is a majestic figure standing with one arm raised, the other stretched downward. Below and at his feet are two sclerotic, twisted beings representing the forces that would bind humanity to the material world. Above the central figure are two expanding, flamboyant beings depicting the forces that would divert humankind from its task of transforming the world through love. The central figure, the “Cosmic Christ”—the ideal toward which humanity is evolving—holds the two opposing forces in balance.

There is yet another presence. At the very top left, a little winged figure looks down on the scene below with a wry smile. Steiner identified this being as “Cosmic Humor.” The five main figures depict the whole drama of human evolution and history and all the struggles, conflicts, and suffering. And Humor, looking down upon this scene with a gentle, ironic smile, reminds us that the divine pageant in which we are all participating is in the end a comedy rather than a tragedy and that if we do our work in the world, “all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well.” ☺

From the Association

Waldorf Really Does Work

BY PATRICE MAYNARD

One week back in February, I attended two events involving Waldorf high school students. On a Wednesday evening, I watched the boys' varsity basketball team of the Hawthorne Valley School in rural Ghent, New York, play in a sectional playoff. A few days later, I watched students of the Great Barrington (Massachusetts) Waldorf High School perform *The Taming of the Shrew*. These were to me two stunning examples of the efficacy of a Waldorf Education.



Patrice Maynard

The Hawthorne Valley boys were up against a good team with an airtight defense. Their response was to use their significant passing and movement skills to “dance” their way together through the tight defense to score. While there were one or two high scorers, there were no superstars, but rather an effective collaboration of individuals with varying skills and with an obvious

appreciation of each other. By contrast, the other team, strong and skilled as well, did not collaborate very much. Little passing went on, and individual player after individual player stormed the net to shoot. Collaboration prevailed in the end, and Hawthorne Valley won by a large margin. The game showed a subtle but distinct difference in style, capacity, and endurance.

Some of the seniors on the Hawthorne Valley team were my students in first through fifth grades, when I was their lucky class teacher. When I congratulated one of my former students, he told me he had not played his best game, that he did not make all the baskets he attempted. What he might not have realized—because he is so accustomed to it—is that he was a solid anchor and a thoughtful team member (as he has been since third grade), who created opportunities for others to score. Although he felt he was not “on” in this game, the team could not have won without him.

On Friday night, I saw a student from that same class in a very fine production of *The Taming of the*

Shrew. Oliver Kress, as Petruccio, had the male lead role. Many of the children in that class, including Oliver, started their Waldorf schooling with significant challenges—cross-dominance problems, anxiety, and learning difficulties. Our Petruccio was not able to read until the end of fifth grade. Yet there he stood, tall and handsome, in command not only of himself, but also of the language of Shakespeare, and of the audience. There was no obstacle to his speaking clearly and with an obvious comprehension of every word. Oliver's academic record is strong enough and his overall profile accomplished enough that he is being courted for college by the likes of Harvard and St. John's. Bravo!

Years before, all these young men had had a team of teachers who were committed to the efficacy of Waldorf Education and who were willing to give them time. Time is a rare gift these days. As children, they had time to master skills at their own pace, time to figure out the physical and emotional challenges they had brought with them, time to develop compassion and to form high expectations, time to let us teachers help them realize their highest potential.

When they were students in the early grades, therapeutic activities were woven into every day. We did speech exercises, coordination games, spatial orientation games, extraordinary practice in reading and math, extra dramatic work, therapeutic horseback riding, and sensory integration activities. And today they excel in sports and in drama, with a grace and self-confidence that only comes from correct practice and time to practice. They are and will be able in the future to manifest their bright idealism.



Oliver Kress

My heart is full and humbled at how Waldorf Education works, over time and for life. The world is better for these young people in it. ◊

Rudolf Steiner's Life and Legacy

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

One hundred fifty years ago, on February 27, 1861, Rudolf Steiner was born in Kraljevec, Croatia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He



Rudolf Steiner in Berlin in 1906

died sixty-four years later on March 31, 1925, in Dornach, Switzerland. Steiner was a scientist, a researcher into the seen and unseen worlds, a philosopher, an artist and architect, and a social and cultural reformer. Today, Steiner's worldview, his innovations in the arts, and the practical initiatives he inspired in agriculture, medicine, education, care of those with developmental challenges, business, religious life, and other fields

profoundly affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of people all over the world.

Rudolf Steiner was of humble birth, his father having been a game warden before taking a position as stationmaster on the newly built national railway. As a boy, Steiner had an inborn clairvoyance and was able to perceive the invisible energies and beings that lie behind phenomena in the physical world. In his autobiography, he recounts how at age nine, the disembodied spirit of a recently deceased (by suicide) relation appeared to him as he sat in the waiting room of his father's railway station.

A shy, bookish child, Steiner kept his inner life to himself until at age eighteen he met Felix Koguzki, an herb gatherer, who also had the ability to perceive the imperceptible. Koguzki introduced Steiner to a spiritual initiate whom Steiner identifies only as "M." M. told Steiner that his task in life was to battle against the "dragon of materialism" and to

"take the bull of public opinion by the horns." In other words, Steiner was to offer an alternative to the materialistic worldview that was then gaining ascendancy in Western culture and to bring this spiritual worldview into the public arena.

Steiner attended the Technical University in Vienna (the MIT of Austria at the time) and received a firm grounding in the scientific method and the various scientific disciplines. He became particularly interested in the scientific work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who had developed a research approach based on a close and empathetic observation of natural phenomena. From 1890 to 1897, Steiner lived in Weimar, Germany, editing Goethe's scientific corpus for publication.

In 1897 Steiner moved to Berlin to take over a literary magazine. For several years there he taught in an evening school for members of the working class. Steiner also gave lectures at meetings of the local Theosophical Society. This group, which included members of the Berlin social and economic elite, was interested in bringing Eastern (primarily Indian) religious ideas and practices into Western culture. Late in 1902, Steiner assumed leadership of the German Section of the Theosophical Society. His move stunned and alienated many in the intellectual and scientific circles in Berlin.

But for Steiner it was a natural step. Over the years, he had developed his natural clairvoyance so that he could enter into and perceive the world of invisible realities at will. He had a message to bring to the world that he felt was sorely needed, and the Theosophical Society provided a sympathetic venue. Steiner remained with the Theosophical Society until 1912, when he formed the Anthroposophical Society and began to refer to his worldview as *Anthroposophy*



Rudolf Steiner at age eighteen

(“knowledge of the true nature of the human being”). At the same time, he moved to Dornach, Switzerland. There Steiner designed and directed the construction of the first Goetheanum, a monumental double-domed, wooden structure, which he intended as an earthly manifestation of the spiritual world. The building was also to serve as a theater to present a series of esoteric mystery dramas written by Steiner. Steiner retained Dornach as the center of his activities until the end of his life but also traveled often and far to deliver courses of lectures all over western Europe. His last years were marked by the destruction by arson of the just-completed Goetheanum on New Year’s Eve, 1922/23. Steiner gave his last lecture on September 28, 1924, in Dornach and was bedridden until his death six months later.



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), a major influence on Rudolf Steiner

In the roughly twenty-five years of his standing in the public arena as a spiritual teacher, Steiner published some thirty books. He also gave about 6000 lectures, most of which were stenographically recorded, transcribed, and published in book form. In his writings and lectures, Steiner dealt with virtually every area of human speculation and research: the nature, origin, and destiny of the human being; the origin and nature of the created world; cosmic and human history; the evolution of human consciousness; philosophy, the natural sciences, and mathematics; the religions of the world—particularly Christianity—and their relationship with one another; and individual meditative and spiritual practice. He also spoke and wrote in a practical and prescriptive way about art, architecture, music, painting, speech, drama, medicine, education, agriculture, nutrition, religious

life, and social organization. Steiner’s collected works total over 350 volumes.

In all his work, Steiner sought to offer an alternative to modern materialism. Materialism is the belief that matter (what is visible, palpable, can be weighed and measured) is the primary reality and that all impalpable phenomena (the human soul, thoughts, feelings) are epiphenomena of matter. Steiner held that materialism is an inadequate basis for understanding the human being and the world. For Steiner, the human being is comprised of body, soul, and spirit, and it is the spirit that is primary and preexistent. In the world of nature, this primacy of spirit pertains. Spiritual realities stand behind and imbue every perceptible phenomenon. We live in a conscious universe.



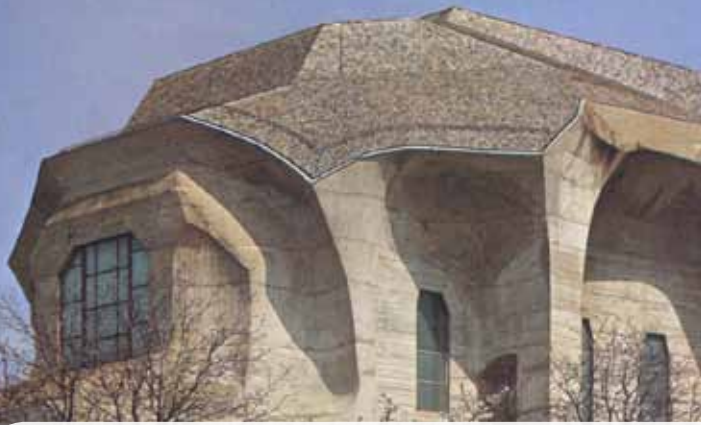
The first Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, built 1913–1922, destroyed by arson New Year’s Eve, 1922/23

At a time when materialism dominated the intellectual landscape, Steiner maintained that the invisible, impalpable world of the spirit is as real and important as the world of matter. In addition, he asserted that the search for truth must concern itself with this invisible realm and should be carried out with the same rigor and precision as the search for truth in the world of matter.

After Steiner’s death, the Anthroposophical Society continued, disseminating his teachings and promoting the practical and artistic application of his ideas. The Society is still active today, with about 50,000 members in eighty countries. There are branches of the Society all around the world. There are also thousands of enterprises seeking to implement Steiner’s suggestions in various areas of life. These include schools; farms; clinics and hospitals; communities caring for people with disabilities



Cutaway model of the interior of the first Goetheanum



The second Goetheanum, designed by Rudolf Steiner and built after his death—home of the General Anthroposophical Society

and the elderly; architectural firms; schools of painting, sculpture, and drama; financial institutions; churches; and centers of scientific research.

Objectively considered, Rudolf Steiner is a unique and important figure in modern cultural history. He presented a comprehensive and integrated spiritual worldview. He also provided a practical blueprint for transforming human culture. And through the work of thousands of people inspired by him, Steiner's vision for a renewal of individual and collective life is being implemented all over the world. The teachings and the impulses that Steiner brought into the world have at least as much relevance and vitality today as they had a century ago. Steiner's life and thought, and the work of the anthroposophical movement, are significant elements in the contemporary world.

Steiner referred to his teachings both as Anthroposophy and as Spiritual Science, a science in that it seeks to possess the same objectivity and rigor that characterizes modern natural science. He also characterized Anthroposophy as a path by which the spirit in the individual human being can find its way to the spirit in the cosmos.

Today, Anthroposophy's "daughter" movements, founded by Steiner on the principles of Spiritual Science, continue to demonstrate how a spiritual view of the human being can be applied in a practical way in various areas of life. These practical applications include the following.

Personal Inner Development

One of Steiner's early and seminal works is entitled *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and How to Attain It*. On the first page of this work, Steiner asserts that there sleeps within every human being the

capacity to perceive the invisible, spiritual dimension of reality. He then describes a series of meditative exercises involving thinking, feeling, and willing and asserts that in time these will lead to the development of new, spiritual organs of perception. Steiner said that such inner work is incumbent on each spiritually striving person, not to reap any personal benefit but to be better able to serve humanity.

Waldorf Education

The first Waldorf school was founded by Steiner in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919. Today there are over 1000 Waldorf schools in some 90 countries, including about 150 in the United States, twenty-five in Canada, and five in Mexico.

The Waldorf schools seek to educate the whole child, developing the intellectual capacities, and the artistic, practical, moral, social, and spiritual as well. Each child learns to read, write, and do math, but also to sing, play a musical instrument, paint, draw, recite poetry, act in a play, knit, sew, model with clay, carve wood, and so on. Academic skills are allowed to develop slowly and are not pushed in the early grades. Tests and grades are used only after the sixth grade, and then sparingly. Teachers stay with a group of children for the eight years of elementary schooling. Ideally, the schools are free of all state control.



The first Waldorf school, Stuttgart, Germany, founded 1919

In Waldorf high schools, students continue their artistic activities but also study the various academic disciplines in depth with subject teachers. The Waldorf high school seeks consciously to nurture the idealism of adolescence, to help students see the meaning and beauty in the world, and to help them find their life path.

Biodynamic® Agriculture

In June 1924, Rudolf Steiner gave a series of lectures on agriculture, presenting a vision of agriculture as

not only a means to produce healthful food, but as a way to maintain balance in the natural environment and to heal the earth. The resulting method of farming—Biodynamics®—is a form of organic agriculture in that it does not use chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. It relies on the composting of animal manure and vegetable matter for fertilizer. Biodynamic agriculture uses preparations made from natural materials—certain herbs, minerals, animal organs—to increase soil fertility and to control weeds and insect pests. Ideally, the biodynamic farm is a self-contained, independent organism producing various grains, vegetables, and fruits and having livestock such as cows, sheep, and chickens. Steiner also considered beekeeping an important part of farming.

Today there are hundreds of biodynamic farms and commercial gardens around the world. In Europe the movement is especially well developed and markets its products under the “Demeter” quality label. In North America, many biodynamic initiatives are community supported, having members in the community who pay a set annual fee and in exchange receive weekly shares of produce during the growing season. Many vineyards in North America and Europe, having discovered that biodynamically raised grapes produce a superior quality wine, have adopted biodynamic techniques.

Anthroposophically Extended Medicine

In the last five years of his life, Rudolf Steiner worked closely with a Dutch physician, Ita Wegman, in developing a new approach to medicine. Steiner held that the four “bodies” that comprise the human being—physical, etheric, astral, and Ego—are intimately interrelated. What manifests in the physical body as a physical illness may be caused by problems elsewhere. Steiner asserted that, in fact, most physical ailments have their origin in problems in the astral body, in emotional and personal tensions and conflicts. Thus, in anthroposophically oriented medicine, diagnosis and treatment involve all the aspects of the human being.

All anthroposophical physicians are fully trained doctors of medicine who supplement their regular medical trainings with the study of anthroposophical medicine. They utilize a variety of therapeutic approaches, including diet, changes in lifestyle, therapeutic baths, massage, music therapy, art therapy, and curative eurythmy. They also prescribe remedies made from various herbs, flowers, and minerals. Anthroposophical doctors are trained in standard



Raphael Garden, a biodynamic garden/farm at Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, California

allopathic medications and procedures and do use them as necessary.

Ultimately, anthroposophical medicine is a salutogenic approach, focusing on the factors that promote health and prevent disease rather than on the diagnosis and treatment of sickness. Thus the healthy person is encouraged to use diet, exercise, artistic activity, and an understanding of nature’s rhythms to build immunity and maintain health.

Anthroposophical medicine is practiced by several thousand physicians around the world. There are a number of hospitals and large clinics, many of them in Europe, that provide in-patient care. There are also psychiatric hospitals that are based on anthroposophical principles.

A number of companies in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, produce and distribute anthroposophical remedies. Some firms also make and market a variety of bodycare products. These toothpastes, face and body lotions, soaps, shampoos, oils, and other products are made from natural ingredients and are based on an anthroposophical understanding of the human being and of plant and mineral substances.

Care of the Developmentally Challenged

As a young man, Rudolf Steiner was employed as a tutor in a wealthy family in Vienna. One of the children entrusted to his care was a boy with developmental difficulties. Steiner painstakingly devised ways to work with and to teach the child, so that in time the difficulties were overcome, and the boy was able to pursue a normal course of education.

Years later, in developing anthroposophically extended medicine, Steiner spoke often about “persons in need of special soul care” and how to



Residents of Kimberton Hills, a Camphill community in Kimberton, Pennsylvania

help them. A curative home was established near the Goetheanum. After Steiner's death, this work was taken up by Karl König, an Austrian physician and anthroposophist. In the late 1930s, König established in Scotland the first "Camphill Village," a residential and therapeutic community for children with special needs.

Today there are 119 Camphill villages—for adults as well as children—in twenty-one countries around the world. Each community consists of "villagers"—those with special needs—and "co-workers" and their families. All live together in group houses. The villagers receive ongoing therapeutic care and, as they are able, participate in the work of the community. Typically, a Camphill village includes a working farm with livestock and workshops for producing items such as handwoven textiles, candles, and wooden toys.

For Further Information

The Anthroposophical Society in America
www.anthroposophy.org
information@anthroposophy.org
 734-662-9355

The Anthroposophical Society in Canada
www.anthroposophy.ca
headoffice@colosseum.com
 416-488-2886

The General Anthroposophical Society
 (Dornach, Switzerland)
www.goetheanum.ch
sekretariat@goetheanum.ch
 (41) 61-706-4242

In addition to the above, there are initiatives that are carrying on—and developing by ongoing research—Steiner's work in a number of other fields:

- social and community organization—"the Threefold Social Order"
- finance—"socially responsible investing" and "associative economics"
- scientific research—"phenomenological" science, applied for example to water quality and hydrology
- diet and nutrition
- the relation between the human being and the stars and celestial bodies—"astrosophy"
- architecture—"organic-functional design"
- eurythmy—the art of movement developed by Steiner, having pedagogical, artistic, and therapeutic applications
- speech and drama
- mental and soul health—"psychosophy"
- individual and community religious life—the Movement for Religious Renewal (also known as The Christian Community)



Eurythmy, an art that makes speech and music visible

These various anthroposophical movements, practical, active, and growing in the world, are part of the legacy of Rudolf Steiner. His vision of a universe that is conscious and permeated by love, and his view of the mission of humanity as manifesting selfless love in freedom are also part of that legacy. ☉

RONALD KOETZSCH holds degrees from Princeton University (BA in Religion) and from Harvard University (MA, PhD in the Study of World Religions). He has taught at Boston University and Hampden-Sydney College of Virginia. He was for many years an instructor at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School and also a writer for East West Journal. He is currently dean of students and a faculty member at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, and is editor of *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education*.

The Relevance of Waldorf Education Today

BY PETER SELG, MD

Peter Selg is a psychiatrist and the head of the Ita Wegman Institute for Basic Research into Anthroposophy, Arlesheim, Switzerland. A prolific and widely respected author and lecturer, Dr. Selg has a new book entitled The Essence of Waldorf Education, published by SteinerBooks, Great Barrington, MA, in 2011. The following is the introduction to the book, which is available at www.steinerbooks.org

—R. E. K.

The horrific shooting of March 11, 2009, at a secondary school in Winnenden, southern Germany, by a seventeen-year-old who had graduated the year before, sparked public demands in Germany for reform of the Firearms Act and a ban on violent computer games. In a more restrained response, there were renewed discussions about schools and the educational system. Airport-style weapons searches at school gates were demanded, but questions were also asked about the image of humanity cultivated at these places of education, and about their nurturing of social and peacemaking skills.

Schools are not—even to begin with—only institutions for efficient transfer of knowledge. They are essentially places where children and adolescents spend usually more than a decade of their lives gaining experiences on which they will build their future biography. The Winnenden student who

took the lives of fellow students and adults was initially described as “inconspicuous” and “of average ability.” This says very little about him as a person, about his upbringing and character, or the image he had of himself and the world. We must ask to what extent the knowledge and development of what is essentially human still count in a school routine that is dominated by attainment targets, performance tests, “information processing,” and self-assertion in the social struggle for survival.

We know about the emptiness [in mainstream education]; it has often been described. Starting with the bleak architecture of the functional buildings, it then finds expression in lessons and subjects, in the competitiveness that is being encouraged, in grades and reports, in the outer atmosphere of the schools. The vacuity of encounters can be denied only by those who lack firsthand experience of the situation.

Schools, we could say, reflect the state of our society. Restricted as they are by curricula, they themselves are helpless. They must deal with children and adolescents whose familial, social, and psychological background “is what it is” in a world of declining values and “virtual reality,” where real educational influences are few and far between. Despite the boom in spiritual interest, the paradigm of technological materialism still has the upper hand. Very little room is left for the human soul of the student, except perhaps in the last refuge of psychotherapy, whose failings were also thrashed out in the Winnenden newspaper reports. The paltriness and shortsightedness of this approach to education are obvious, but alternatives do not seem to exist in the larger society.



A public high school building near Chicago, Illinois. Rudolf Steiner said that architecture has a profound effect on the moral life of human beings.

The Waldorf school made possible by Rudolf Steiner in 1919 was conceived precisely as the answer to the state of affairs described above, because the tendencies that would lead to this state were already discernible at the beginning of the twentieth century. Right from the start, the Waldorf schools introduced a genuine art of education that has at its very heart the child's or adolescent's maturing personality. This art seeks to develop individual skills and abilities through the humanities, sciences, and arts, their content filled with new life to provide an appropriate field of experience for the developing soul.

Much that is relevant for society as a whole has been achieved in the nine decades of the Waldorf school movement's existence and growth—especially in social terms, as a model for a real community. Yet it rarely attracts the interest of the wider public, or, if it does, it is through the work of critics who describe Waldorf Education as an attempt to escape from modern reality and its achievements.

Even those supportive of Waldorf Education advise Waldorf schools to leave Rudolf Steiner and his spiritual work behind, to simply hold on to a few elements of reform in his approach and catch up with the times. For some Waldorf schools, that may well be an option, not necessarily because they have consciously chosen that path, but because of



The kindergarten building at the Waldorf school in Stavanger, Norway

of the school's spiritual core. This core is sometimes seen as something historical or traditional, and more often than not it is rejected as a nostalgic whim that needs to be overcome, or as a turning away from the "real world" in the pursuit of an unrealistic ideal.

But Rudolf Steiner did not conceive the first Waldorf school, in Stuttgart, Germany (Die Freie Waldorfschule, or Free Waldorf School), as a place of the past or of weakness. He placed it fully into the scientific stream and into the destiny of the twentieth century and beyond, providing a distinct pedagogical method based on an insight into human nature gained from Anthroposophy that is more differen-

Rudolf Steiner did not conceive the first Waldorf school to be a place of the past or of weakness. He placed it fully into the scientific stream and into the destiny of the twentieth century and beyond. . . .

the difficulties they are faced with. Leaving the path of mainstream education with its various trends and enticements in order to practice a high-standard education that is rooted in Spiritual Science [Anthroposophy] demands courage and insight.

The Waldorf schools therefore remain on the fringe at a time when they are needed more than ever. Internal problems tend to aggravate the situation: the chronic shortness of money; struggles with structure and administration; a tradition that is no longer understood; the absence of knowledge of the foundations from which the teachers are to work, of Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy, and

tiated than any other theoretical or practical approach in developmental physiology and psychology.

The Stuttgart school, under Rudolf Steiner's direction, was intended to face up to the times and make a very special contribution to the future of the individual and of the community. This special contribution, the unique substance, mission, and intention of the independent Waldorf school, is the spiritual-scientific view of human nature and of the world, the pedagogical relationship, and the pedagogical approach and its goals that Rudolf Steiner distinctly expressed and lived, in a clear, future-oriented gesture.

It certainly is possible that the Waldorf schools will, gradually or suddenly, distance themselves from this substance, because they increasingly fail to understand it, and because they are influenced by the criticism imposed from outside that overtly or covertly encourages this alienation. Yet, the weakening and fading away of the innovative, independent Waldorf schools would be disastrous. The crises and inconsistencies of the conventional educational system that Rudolf Steiner described continue to exist, as do the intentions of the Free Waldorf School that were conceived out of the future. These crises are an opportunity, a question, and a call—to the culture, to the public and education, and to the Waldorf schools themselves.

In recent years, as the head of the Ita Wegman Institute for Basic Research into Anthroposophy, Arlesheim (Switzerland), I have been repeatedly invited by parents and teachers to speak about the substance of Waldorf Education, and about Rudolf Steiner, who in many places is not very well known. The Ita Wegman Institute endeavors to create well-researched monographs on specific topics such as anthroposophical anthropology, medicine, education, and curative education, as well as the biography of Rudolf Steiner's work. With a healing intention, these monographs explore the ideas of Anthroposophy, their roots in Rudolf Steiner's

spiritual-scientific work, and their realization in the various practical aspects of life.

As a child and youth psychiatrist and psychotherapist, I feel that I am sufficiently familiar with the challenges that the schools currently must meet. Waldorf schools do have a clear therapeutic mission—not only regarding the need of individual pupils for learning support and the need for prevention and correction of one-sided tendencies, but far beyond that, right up to the development of skills needed for the future, including social skills. The relevance and significance of independent Waldorf schools in our times must be clearly understood. They do not need a new “mission statement.” They are an integral part of a future educational and social order—and offer far more than what is usually referred to as “educational reform.” ☉



PETER SELG is a well-known lecturer and author. His books include *The Child with Special Needs*; *Rudolf Steiner as a Spiritual Teacher*; and *The Therapeutic Eye: How Rudolf Steiner Observed Children*, all available at steinerbooks.org

The following are excerpts from the main text of *The Essence of Waldorf Education*. They are not necessarily in the order in which they appear in the book.

Education—which includes the development of social and peacemaking skills—involves more than knowledge acquisition and adaptation to existing curricula and efficiency strategies.

Waldorf Education was begun . . . as a healing impulse: as a healing initiative not only for the individual child but for all children, as the essence, hope, and reality of a future society of peace.

The success of Waldorf Education, Rudolf Steiner said, can be measured in the life force attained. Not acquisition of knowledge and qualifications, but the life force is the ultimate goal of this schooling. What is this life force? According to Rudolf Steiner it is nothing biological; it is the force of the incarnated individuality. It includes the capacities of courage and hope—so that the young people who

graduate from a Waldorf school have the confidence that they will cope with their future, that they are ready to take hold of their life. They can say: I can rely on myself and the world; I can rely on myself in this world, which also means—I have ideals; I have my own personal goals that I want to realize; I go into the future.

The Waldorf schools, with their specific approach that is primarily dedicated to the developing human being—not to a society permeated by economic and technological interests—are, as truly independent schools, needed more than ever.

Rudolf Steiner proposed that an education that is appropriate for children and suitable for the future can arise only out of a genuine insight into the human being, especially the developing human being.

A Day in a Waldorf Kindergarten

BY AMY LEWIS MARQUIS

Each school day the kindergarten children at the Waldorf School of New Orleans walk into a magical environment. Colored silks drape from the ceiling, and sunlight streams through the windows. The walls are painted in soft shades of pink. The tables and chairs are natural, unpainted wood, just the right size for the children. In one corner, crystals and beautiful stones on the nature table catch the light, flowers and greenery of the season arranged artfully among them. The fragrance of lavender and the aroma of baking bread are in the air. The surroundings have been created with care so that the senses are awakened and an experience of beauty greets all who enter.

The children remove their “outside shoes” and put on “inside shoes,” slippers that cradle their feet and keep them warm. They wash their hands in lavender-scented water, then sit down quietly on the floor. Meanwhile, one of the children plays a pleasantly wandering, tinkling melody on a set of chimes



Circle time often includes finger games.

that we adults call the glockenspiel. The children know them as “fairy bells.”

This routine signifies an important transition to the children, letting them know it’s time to focus. When everyone in the class has arrived and has gone through the morning ritual, circle time begins. The teacher leads the class in a softly sung version of the morning verse:

Good morning, dear Earth,
Good morning, dear Sun,
Good morning, dear trees and stones every one,
Good morning, dear beasts and birds in the tree
Good morning to you and good morning to me!

After morning circle, the class moves on to free play. The children take beautiful heirloom toys from the shelves. A boy handles a sturdy wooden bowl filled with smooth river rocks, which serve as pretend food and also make great counting objects. A girl finds her favorite handmade doll and strokes its tight, woolly curls. The doll is simple; just a hint of facial features allows imagination to fill in the details. Another child makes his way to the sewing table, where he will work patiently on stitching a felt jack-o’-lantern that he will hang proudly at home. The meticulous work of sewing the pumpkin’s eyes, nose, and mouth challenges his fingers to gain control over the details. He doesn’t know it, but he is practicing the skills he’ll need when he learns how to write.

Monday is “Laundry Day” in this kindergarten. Two lucky children are chosen to help fold clean washcloths and dishtowels so the classroom is fully stocked for the week. They work together, feeling pride and satisfaction in making a contribution. They and all the children look forward to Wednesday, “Bread Day,” when they’ll each take a turn kneading dough for the homemade bread they’ll enjoy together at snack time, and to Thursday, “Soup Day,” when they will each get a chance to chop the vegetables that make up the day’s treat.

Snack time is a highlight. The food is always healthful and nutritious—no animal crackers and sugary juice here. The children derive a sense of accomplishment



In each season, the nature table brings the beauty of nature into the kindergarten room.

from helping to prepare the food and from setting the table. And they sit at the table as though the class were a family sitting down to a meal. When all are seated, teachers and children say a blessing in unison:

Welcome, welcome, welcome to our table.
Quiet, quiet, we all join hands together.
Blessings on the blossom,
Blessings on the root,
Blessings on the leaves and stems,
Blessings on the fruit.

Then the children are served by the teacher. But, just as in a family, courtesy is the focus. No one eats until everyone is served. And, like at home, they are offered seconds, so their stomachs are comfortably full, enabling them to concentrate on their work of imaginative play rather than yearn for lunch. The children are encouraged to listen to each other and talk in turn. And when the meal is over, each takes his dish to the sink.

Outside play is next. And outside play is always outside, even when it's raining. On a rainy day the children might walk around the block to see what the world looks like when it's soaked and bloated and peppered with puddles. And when it's not raining, they spend their time on the playground doing what children love to do: running, climbing, swinging, and sliding. They will also get a chance to tend the organic vegetable garden that produces a bounty that tastes so good in the soup that the children enjoy on Thursdays.

The children head back inside for story time, a treasured part of the day. They sit on the floor in

a circle with their teacher, who doesn't put herself in a chair on a different level. Rather, she nestles onto the soft rug alongside her students and tells the children a fairy tale from memory. She doesn't read from a book. Without this encumbrance, she's able to look at the children as she speaks, making eye contact with each of them. She engages them actively, inviting them into the world of once-upon-a-time.

As the teacher relates the story, the children join her eagerly in this world of fantasy. But they also absorb the new words and phrases that the teacher weaves into the telling. During story time the children learn to sit patiently and listen. And with this stretching of the attention span, they are being prepared for the academic work they will encounter in first grade and beyond.

Each fairy tale carries a truth about the world and about human nature. The class will hear the same fairy tale, told and retold, for a full week. The following week they will act out the story, first with hand puppets, then acting out the roles themselves. This process allows the children to absorb the tale even more deeply. They may also paint a scene from the story or take much time and care to illustrate a book that tells the tale. The children are learning something that can't be explained. They are learning how to learn.

Here, as in every aspect of life in the Waldorf kindergarten, the teacher has expended much time, energy, and care in preparation. In the Waldorf kindergarten, stories come to life; the room is always clean and radiant; the free-play space is equipped with



On "Bread Day," everyone participates in the kneading of the dough.



The school garden provides beet greens for the day's soup.

blocks, play silks, and other necessities; art materials are set out as if dropped down by fairy friends; seasonal festivals are celebrated, marking the cycle of the year and teaching the children about the passage of time. While the Waldorf kindergarten teacher makes all this look effortless, her vocation requires training and hard work. It is a gift to her students that is designed to address their stage in life, to make each day a joyous journey toward the next stage.

Today's joyous journey must come to a close. Tomorrow the children will again come to the same

beautiful world. They may enjoy some new activities but most will be familiar. The daily and weekly rhythms are comforting and allow the children to focus on learning new skills. The children know what to expect, and they look forward to each day with its familiar activity, naming the days: "Rice Day," "Bread Day," "Soup Day."

The children have spent their morning in a magical place—a place where imagination is honored; a place that protects their precious innocence (as something that will be lost too soon); a place that nourishes their bodies, minds, souls, and spirits.

It's time to say goodbye.

Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye we say.

Tomorrow, tomorrow again we will play. ☺



AMY LEWIS MARQUIS is a freelance writer and mother of a second grader and a toddler. She's a native New Orleanian who never accepts the status quo.

The Waldorf School of New Orleans was established in 2000 and was nearly destroyed when Hurricane Katrina struck the city. Today its small but committed community is still going strong. More information is available at waldorfnola.org

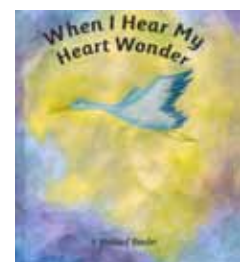
Waldorf Readers in a New Edition

In 2005 AWSNA Publications published a five-book series of readers intended to complement the Waldorf language arts curriculum in the early grades. The readers have just appeared in a new edition.

In each of the roughly 125 stories in the series, new and progressively challenging vocabulary words are introduced. Also, the sentence structure becomes more complex. This progression occurs from story to story and from book to book. Most of the stories are short, between two and five pages, which allows for a reading at one sitting.

The subject matter of the stories in each reader recapitulates the main lesson topics of the previous year. Thus, *When I Hear My Heart Wonder*, a third-grade reader, contains fables and stories of saints. The stories in the series are drawn from many cultural and religious traditions including Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Islamic, Indian, American, and Russian.

The books have beautiful covers and evocative illustrations, but text dominates so that the child's ability to form inner pictures is encouraged. Waldorf master teacher Arthur Pittis is the author. Waldorf alumna Ausa Peacock is the illustrator. The books are in hardcover and are available from AWSNA Publications at whywaldorfworks.org. The five-volume series is now on sale for \$47.25.



Unspoiling Your Child—Fast

BY RICHARD BROMFIELD, PhD

*Richard Bromfield is a psychologist at Harvard Medical School, specializing in children and family life. In his book *How to Unspoil Your Child Fast*, he deals with the problem of the overindulged child and provides a step-by-step, practical approach for parents to change a spoiled child into an unspoiled one. The book is well written, easy to understand, and very engaging.*

In the introduction, Bromfield observes that today nearly 95 percent of parents think that their own children are overindulged. He then goes on to describe several not uncommon examples of spoiled children:



This young man has gotten what he wants—at considerable expense to his parents—and . . .

- the six-year-old boy who is saving his “own” money to buy a Playmobil collector’s set that costs hundreds of dollars
- an eleven-year-old girl who insists on designer outfits that include matching shoes, jewelry, and even make-up
- the bright kindergarten girl who, through her constant demands and tantrums, has her disheartened parents surrendering to her every whim and wish
- the third-grade boy who insists not only on what he wants but on what others should want, and gives a running critique of his parents’ decisions and behavior.

Are we raising a generation of children who will go into the world ego-centric, overindulged, and used to getting their own way all the time? Is this what our society and the world need?

Below, Bromfield describes ten key steps to unspoiling a child. These represent but a part of the practical wisdom for parents contained in his book.

—R.E.K.

Today the forces of consumerism and the media are like a tidal wave against which children and their parents must swim. It is not the fault of parents that these influences prevail and lead to overindulgence of children. Spoiled children are a symptom of our times, not necessarily the result of bad parenting. But parents can do something about it. It is never too late to unspoil a child, and unspoiling can be done fairly quickly.

1. Commit to unspoiling

The surer your lead is, the quicker your children will follow. They will see through tepid and weak gestures to unspoil. Unspoiling can go quickly, but requires resolve and patience.

2. State your case clearly

Tell your children what you expect of them in no uncertain terms. Speak in specifics, and follow through.

3. Create a bribe-free home

Bribes may work in the moment, but parents (and children) pay a high price for bribery in the long run. Stop bribing your children. Otherwise, you may have to pay for every bit of cooperation in the future.

4. Avoid dealmaking

Negotiations have their place—in the courtroom or car dealership—but not in the home between parents and children on every matter, large and small. Explain to your child that every issue and wish does not involve a deal that requires wrangling and arguing until midnight.



. . . this young lady apparently has not gotten what she wants (yet).

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Study Reveals Need for Safety Equipment in Eurythmy Classes

A Waldorf School at the Cutting Edge of Risk Assessment

BY LAURA CRANDALL

Administrators and teachers at the Brightwater Waldorf School in Seattle have taken an important step in securing the health and safety of their students. The following text and photo appeared in the school newsletter of April 1, 2011. We hope that other Waldorf schools will follow in Brightwater's (threefold) steps and institute similar policies.

—R. E. K.

Each year, we take a look at potential safety risks at Brightwater Waldorf School and address them with our insurer. While there are some obvious hazards involved in running a school, there are other, less readily apparent dangers that only come to our attention after an incident has taken place. There are also some potential dangers that are apparent if we look hard enough.

During our annual safety review in the fall, the faculty identified eurythmy as a potentially hazardous



The school will work to ensure that the helmet colors are pedagogically correct and, if possible, are coordinated with the color of the students' eurythmy gowns.



Putting on the helmets will improve fine motor skills.

activity. Faculty members voiced concern over the grade four grammar exercises, in which a fast-moving verb could easily collide with a slower-moving noun. Also a danger: the Sword Dance performed by grade eight as a part of the May Faire. But perhaps most in need of safety precautions are the copper rod exercises.

The faculty spent a fair amount of time trying to resolve the problems around these inherently dangerous eurythmy activities. A number of suggestions were put forth. The final decision—which we hope parents will support—is that all students in grades one through eight will wear a bicycle helmet at all times during eurythmy class. Our insurer was consulted and agrees that this solution is the best



Mr. Burns too will now be safe, protected from an errant airborne copper rod or an overenthusiastic backward moving AH.



Seventh-grade students demonstrate the eurythmic EE. EE is for the emergency call that, because of our new helmet rule, we won't have to make.



In the highly dangerous copper rod exercises, students pass and toss rods to each other.

possible, the only alternative being to eliminate the hazardous exercises altogether.

The school has a number of bicycle helmets available but is looking for a donation of twenty more. Worried about lice? Don't be! We'll have disposable paper hats for each student to wear under his or her helmet.

Thank you for your support as we make our school a safer place! ☺

Safety maven LAURA CRANDALL is administrator of the Brightwater Waldorf School in Seattle.

Not So Strange, After All

Neuroscience Catches Up with Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf Education

BY DOUGLAS GERWIN, PhD, AND PATRICE MAYNARD

In November 2010, a conference entitled “Convergence: Neuroscience and Waldorf Education” was held at the Toronto Waldorf School. The conference explored the relationship of recent discoveries in neuroscience (the study of the brain and nervous system) and child development to the theory and practice of Waldorf Education. Douglas Gerwin and Patrice Maynard were the keynote speakers. Here they share the main themes and points of information at the conference.

—R. E. K.

When Rudolf Steiner created Waldorf Education almost a century ago, several assumptions about child development were implicit or explicit in its curriculum and pedagogy:

1. The child matures gradually, going through discrete stages of development, and reaches full maturity only at age twenty-one or older.
2. The way the child uses his brain affects the child’s development.
3. Free play is crucial for the healthy development of the young child and for the development of later capacities.
4. Art is vital to the healthy development of the child.
5. Sleep is an integral part of the learning process.



The fMRI or functional magnetic resonance imaging machine detects which areas of the brain are engaged during various activities.

In Steiner’s time and afterward, these ideas received little acceptance in mainstream psychology. The prevailing view long has been (and still is) that the brain is “hard-wired” through heredity and very early experience; that children are basically just miniature adults; and that play and the arts are

of secondary importance in education—activities to be sacrificed in the interest of earlier and earlier intense academic training.

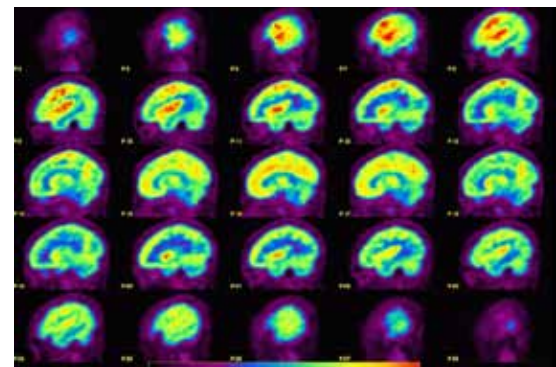
A part of this view also is that the brain is little more than a biological computer

and that education is mainly a matter of uploading data. This view is captured in a cartoon sequence in the movie *Waiting for Superman*, in which a cartoon teacher walks into a classroom, opens the hinged head of a cartoon student, and pours into the child’s head the contents—a mix of numbers, letters, and fluid—of a big measuring cup.

These views were around in Steiner’s time. He predicted, however, that one day science would corroborate the ideas he was using in the creation of Waldorf Education. Today that prediction is coming true.

Brain Development

Since the 1990s, new technologies, in particular functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), have permitted researchers to follow the electromagnetic patterns in the brain as a person is engaged



These digital images show how different activities cause changes in the locus and intensity of brain function.

in various activities. A growing body of research on the working of the brain has overturned conventional ideas of how the brain develops and functions—ideas that have guided professionals in child psychiatry, education, and the treatment of those who are brain damaged.

Recent studies using fMRI have determined that our brain does not complete its maturation until we are in our early twenties. The research of Dr. Regalia Melrose, a well-known child psychologist based in Long Beach, California, indicates that the brain gradually matures from more primitive to higher cognitive lobes. Over time, with use and experience and the building of neural pathways, the undeveloped areas of the brain achieve higher stages of development.

At birth, the human baby uses little more than its brain stem, which understands only the language of sensation. By approximately three months, the infant begins to make more use of the developing limbic system, which processes sensations through feeling. Only by about nine months has the neo-cortex developed so that language can be comprehended as such.

This hierarchic maturation of the brain in the first nine months, from willing to feeling and then to thinking, is mirrored in the later hierarchic brain development during the first two decades of life. In the early years, the function of will, of movement, of doing, is primary. In the preadolescent period (eight through fourteen), the life of feeling dominates. From age fifteen to twenty-one, the intellectual function of the brain becomes most active. The



In the first months of life, an infant experiences the world primarily through touch and the other physical senses.

correspondence of these stages of brain development to the Waldorf curriculum is striking. Just as the brain develops in three phases, so also are there three distinctive phases of child development that unfold as the child learns primarily through willing, then feeling, and then thinking.

One insight resulting from this view of the brain is that we cannot treat or speak to children as if they were little adults, with fully developed rational faculties, just because they can talk back to us in a seemingly adult way. We need to be aware that the maturation to adulthood takes time. Dr. Jay Geidd, a child psychiatrist, made the discovery about the late-maturing brain. During the 2009 conference at which he announced the discovery, Geidd remarked that for many years an entire field of scientific inquiry has been based on a false premise. He observed: “You can’t rent a car until you are twenty-five. In terms of brain anatomy, the only ones who have had it right are the car rental companies!”

Recent research also indicates that our brains are constantly rejuvenating themselves by making new pathways that, in turn, make new levels of comprehension possible. The idea that the brain stays the way it initially developed—is “hard-wired”—no longer pertains. How a child—and an adult—uses his brain significantly alters his brain’s neural structure and its development.

Play

Recent neuroscientific research confirms an essential principle of Waldorf early childhood education: free play is essential to the development of the child. Children’s play promotes the healthy development of the whole brain. Play activates the entire brain, including the frontal lobes, and also results in the building of new neural pathways. Play stimulates myelination of the neural pathways in the brain. Myelination is the process by which neural pathways and connections are made permanent by being coated with myelin, a fatty substance. Myelination is an important process in brain maturation.

Free play also engages and develops the imagination and decision-making capacities of the child: “You be the mommy and I’ll be the daddy. And this is the living room and these are our children and we will build a play castle for them and I’ll go to work and when I come home we will have supper, and then . . .”



More astute about human development than all those scientists, car rental companies won’t rent to anyone under twenty-five.



For the healthy development of the young child, free imaginative play in nature has no equal.

Furthermore—and this has been a surprise to many mainstream experts—research indicates that free, self-directed play in the very young child most effectively cultivates executive function (EF). Executive function enables a person to formulate a plan, set goals, make decisions, adjust to changing goals, and evaluate whether or not these goals have been met.

Art

In 2008 the Dana Foundation announced the results of a three-year study of four- to seven-year-olds. The research showed that artistic activity—in music, the visual arts of drawing and painting, drama, and dance—“lights up” the entire brain, including, most importantly, the prefrontal lobes. The prefrontal lobes are the royal chambers where creativity, thinking “out of the box,” and executive function are cultivated. Also indicated was that artistic activity and contact with nature stimulate the high levels of myelination necessary for the healthy development of the brain. It is striking that the whole brain is developed *only* when the arts are incorporated heavily into all aspects of education. Parts of the brain light up under the effects of common academic activities, but these activities never engage the all-important prefrontal lobes or frontal cortex.

It has also been shown that imaginative activity is a “whole brain” stimulator that builds neural pathways in all parts of the brain through practice. For maximum development of neural pathways in all the parts of the brain, artistic and imaginative work must be included in learning.

According to the research of Dr. Elizabeth Spelke, a cognitive psychologist at Harvard, children who play a musical instrument are more capable of comprehending and applying complex mathematical concepts than those children who do not. Dr. Spelke commented, at a 2009 conference on brain and child

development, that, in light of this research, she wondered if it had been wise to abandon the old idea of a well-rounded liberal education that includes the arts in favor of a narrowly intellectual one.

Sleep

Research also confirms that most of the maturing activity of the brain occurs during sleep. Children become educated during sleep through the “digestion” of learning, not during the learning itself. Sleeping promotes the growth of neural pathways, including those pathways used for thinking and memory. In sleep, the brain prunes those pathways that are not being used. Sleep also allows for the building of myelin, the substance that establishes the interconnecting neural pathways, and thus matures the brain.

While we Waldorf educators can be buoyed by these findings and may feel that we are, at last, being vindicated, the world outside Waldorf Education may not understand the evidence in the same way. A couple of years ago, National Public Radio (NPR) did a story on the relationship between free play and executive function. In the first segment, Dr. Barry Chudakov, author of *The History of Play in America*, said that before 1953, when Disney began advertising toys for children on its *Mouseketeers* television program, play was independent, free activity. From that point onward, play became something to do with a toy, a contrived object that determines the nature of the play. Dr. Chudakov lamented this shift and pointed to toy-free play as the most effective activity for cultivating EF and flexible intelligence in a child. The NPR program then interviewed a researcher who corroborated this hypothesis and who spoke of the importance of free



The playing of music, like all artistic activity, engages the entire brain.

play in the development of EF in young children. The last few minutes of the program were spent interviewing a curriculum developer who was hard at work inventing curricula that would teach children to develop executive function through free play. Thus the idea of leaving the child *alone* in his own free and imaginative play was buried alive by the habit of thinking that insists that a child must be taught how to do everything. The idea that children, if left to their own devices without distracting toys and instruction from adults, can play in such a way that will best serve their own development is hard for some professional educators to grasp.

Long-established ways of thinking are hard to change. To do so, we Waldorf educators must develop bridges from that older way of thinking to a newer way, using the available research to illuminate a path toward the Waldorf approach. The Waldorf pedagogy and curriculum can then be seen as supporting child development in a way consonant with current research.

Rudolf Steiner described the brain as an “over-rated” organ. It is designed, he said, to be an organ of reflection. Not much original work comes directly from the brain. When it is well developed through experiences and activities that create complex neural pathways and is balanced during sleep, the brain becomes a sophisticated organ of “mental digestion.” It processes our daily

experiences and learning and reflects these back to us in an available form for deeper understanding.

To the contemporary psychologist or neuroscience researcher, this idea of the brain as primarily a reflective organ may seem improbable. But perhaps someday neuroscience will validate this concept as it has already validated many basic ideas of Waldorf Education. ☺



PATRICE MAYNARD, MEd, is leader for outreach and development of AWSNA. Previously, she was a Waldorf class teacher and music teacher, taking one

class through eighth grade and another through fifth grade at the Hawthorne Valley School in Ghent, New York. She is a published poet and a quilter. Her three children are all Waldorf graduates.

DOUGLAS GERWIN, PhD, is director of the Center for Anthroposophy in Wilton, New Hampshire, chair of its Waldorf High School Teacher Education Program, and codirector of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education. Himself a Waldorf graduate, Dr. Gerwin has taught for thirty years at both the university and high school levels subjects ranging from biology and history to German and music.

Waldorf Community in Service to New Orleans

On the long weekend of April 7–10, 2011, sixty volunteers from Waldorf communities all over the continent gathered in New Orleans for a community service project. The group included Waldorf alumni, Waldorf parents, past and present, grandparents, and current students. Two eighth-grade classes—from the Hartsbrook School in Massachusetts and from the Cincinnati Waldorf School—came as part of their class trip. A group of high school students from Virginia were also there.

The little Waldorf School of New Orleans, founded in 2000, lost its building during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, as well as 75 percent of its enrollment in the aftermath of the disaster. The main focus of the volunteers was the school, where they lazured bare walls with bright watercolor paint (donated by Mercurius), dug up and relocated gardens, dug out and mulched an area for swings, laid bricks for a playhouse porch, and repaired broken cement in the walkways.

Some volunteers went to help at the St. Bernard’s project in one of the hardest-hit districts in the city, cleaning up and repairing damaged homes. In the ninety-degree heat of the New Orleans spring, the work was intense and the results transformative. The school staff, parents, and children were amazed and appreciative.

Many hands do indeed make light work!

The weekend concluded with a crawfish and shrimp celebration at the home of a school board member. Ellen Hazeur, City Clerk of New Orleans, attended and awarded proclamations to the school and to the two eighth grades.

“... to have faith is to love; to love is to serve; to serve is to feel satisfied.”

—Mother Teresa

Fire, Action, Creativity

Bringing out the Best in the Choleric Child

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

In the previous issue of Renewal, staff writer, psychotherapist, and Waldorf parent Thomas Poplawski considered the melancholic temperament and how parents and teachers can work effectively with melancholic children. Here Thomas describes the temperament at the other end of the personality spectrum—the active, fiery, pioneering choleric. Still to come in later issues are insights about the airy, optimistic sanguine and the languid, amiable phlegmatic.

—R. E. K.

Saint Paul, Napoleon, Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, Arnold Schwarzenegger, football coach Vince Lombardi, and singer Bette Midler—according to the science of psychological types, these notable figures are all examples of the choleric temperament.

While introspective and exacting melancholics populate the libraries and research facilities of the world, the active and extroverted choleric is at home in the public arena. Politicians, leaders in industry, finance and labor, lawyers, successful athletes, and arch competitors of all sorts tend to be of the choleric persuasion.

Outgoing, confident, focused, and energetic—this boy manifests positive characteristics of the choleric temperament.

The Physiology of Temperament

The first step in working with temperament is to identify the principal temperamental inclination. Each human being is a mixture of two or more temperaments, although one always dominates. Physical build is a clear indicator of the primary temperament. The sanguine physique for example, is harmonious and balanced—not too skinny, not too fat, with limbs proportional to the torso. Sanguines

are also balanced in their social interactions. Thus, many attractive and popular persons—movie stars and other celebrities—are sanguines.

If we “inflate” the balanced body build by putting on weight, we have the rounded, phlegmatic type. Socially, the phlegmatic is also balanced, but in all things is a little heavier, slower, more lugubrious, patient, and perhaps more self-indulgent. While the eyes of the sanguine are alive and sparkling, the gaze of the phlegmatic is softer, even sleepy. Temperament shows itself in every aspect of the individual.

In the melancholic, the harmonious proportions are stretched out, pulled out like taffy. The body is longer and thinner, as are also the face, limbs, fingers, and toes. This stretching creates a certain tension. The melancholic is “stretched thin” and may typically exhibit anxiety. The eyes can have an expression of pain or suffering. The extenuation, the thinness, applies, in both a literal and a metaphorical sense, to the skin. Melancholics can be thin-skinned—extremely sensitive to sensory and social stimuli. The melancholic is often shy and may have a hard time with casual social interactions.

The choleric is the polar opposite of the melancholic. While physically the melancholic is stretched, the choleric is squashed or compressed. The head and face are typically square and broad, and the fingers and toes short and stubby. The primary development is in the torso. The classic adult choleric has a barrel chest that projects power and dominance, with the limbs seeming a mere afterthought. In a choleric child, however, the thickening is mostly in the musculature of the neck, shoulders, and upper back. From the front, two skinny children

may look alike. But the additional musculature of the choleric will be obvious when you turn them around.

This intensity and condensation seen in the musculature of choleric manifest also in their response to external stimuli. The “pressing-in” tends to make them thick-skinned, that is, not very sensitive to their immediate surroundings or, in like manner, to what others are doing and feeling and thinking. Rudolf Steiner compared the sensibility of choleric to an india rubber ball. New situations and experiences bounce off them, leaving little or no impression.

The psychologist Jerome Kagan found that the choleric reacts to stress much less acutely than do the other temperaments. The mobilization of the sympathetic nervous system—including the increase in heartbeat, diastolic blood pressure, and dilation of the pupils—occurs very slowly. This allows the choleric to encounter new and even dangerous situations without hesitation or fear. One choleric told me that he could not remember having experienced fear in his life, despite having spent time in a concentration camp as a child. For the choleric, this fearlessness is not the result of conscious striving or moral training. It comes out of his psychophysical constitution.

The relative lack of sensitivity to what is occurring around one can have a negative side. While we appreciate the choleric who starts a company or founds a school, once things are established, we may resent the “bull-in-a-china-shop” insensitivity and the focus on the achievement, sometimes at the expense of people’s feelings. While other temperaments may stop to smell the flowers, the choleric is charging

During World War II, archcholeric Winston Churchill epitomized the resolve and courage of which the choleric is capable. During the bombing blitz of London, he declared to his countrymen: “[We will] never give in, never, never, never, never.” And in another talk he said: “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.”



Napoleon Bonaparte, emperor of France from 1804 to 1815, has been described as “a risk-taking gambler, a workaholic genius, and an impatient short-term planner,” i.e., a card-carrying choleric.

ahead to realize his perceived immediate or long-term goal.

The choleric, then, is a being of energy and will. Hippocrates, founder of Western medicine, from whom we have the first systematic description of the temperaments, said that the choleric is associated with the element of fire. The choleric’s impulse is to act, to do, to accomplish something. He is a creator, a pioneer, a natural leader, and a relentless hard worker, who is quick and efficient. The choleric also has by nature a sense of fairness and justice.

However, the choleric can be stubborn, aggressive, insensitive to others, too centered on the external, and out of touch with his own feelings and thoughts. He may be impatient and incapable of attention to detail.

The Choleric Child

These inherent characteristics manifest in the choleric child. Most young children have a choleric streak, but in the true choleric the fiery tendencies are especially strong and dominant. There are choleric girls and choleric boys, but research indicates that most choleric are male.



While most choleric children are boys, there are plenty of girls who crave adventure and challenging situations.

The choleric child loves action, needs to be in movement. He seldom just quietly enters a room. He is likely to “bustle” into class, creating an air of commotion. Or he may race in at top speed, fleeing the classmate whom he has just poked or pushed. Because of his energy and initiative and taste for adventure, the choleric is fun to be around. There is always “something happening” in the choleric’s vicinity, and he often becomes the popular and respected leader in a class. The choleric child is focused—this is apparent in his steady gaze—and sociable enough to charm others. If a teacher has a task that needs to be carried out immediately and efficiently, she does well to call on a choleric.

The choleric child can be aggressive and insensitive to the discomfiture or pain experienced by others. Because of this and because of his exuberance and forcefulness, he can be easily and perhaps unfairly labeled as a bully. The current nationwide concern about bullying has exacerbated this likelihood. Often the choleric is just being his overbearing self and slowly learning to interact harmoniously with others. Also, the choleric child, perhaps from the moment he has entered the classroom on the first day of school, can be perceived by his teacher as a “problem child.”

Each of the temperaments in its extreme manifestation is a challenge to parents and teachers.

However, the particular characteristics of the choleric child require an especially energetic and strong response.

It is crucial that parents and teachers consciously work to cultivate the positive side of the choleric temperament. The stakes are high. The halls of Congress, the boardrooms of large corporations, and professional sports teams are filled with choleric children. The choleric can be a creative and enterprising presence in any group, organization, or initiative. But the choleric temperament gone bad can lead to behavior that is personally and socially destructive. Youth detention centers and prisons also serve as collection points for choleric children.

In the choleric child’s early life, it is the adults who must contain and moderate his more extreme tendencies. Usually only in his teenage years does the choleric’s neurological and moral development catch up with his dominating will forces and foster self-control and a sensitivity to the feelings of others. The adolescent choleric will begin to seek balance but needs help, both before and after that seeking begins, to be able to modify his own behavior.

Meeting Fire with Fire

Parents and teachers who themselves are choleric children are well equipped to deal with the choleric child. They understand and can effectively meet and contain the child’s fiery energy and behavior. My younger son, Byron, a spirited choleric, on his first day with his new main lesson science teacher, began misbehaving with his classmates. The teacher, himself a choleric, pulled Byron aside, looked him straight in the eye, and said, “If I need to speak to you one more time, you are out of my class for the rest of the term.” Byron never needed to be spoken to again in that class and gave his best in trying to do good work. Other teachers, for whom Byron continued to be a minor irritation, marveled at this master teacher’s accomplishment. The mastery, however, was in the choleric adult knowing just how to meet one of his own kind.

For those of us with a less forceful temperament, working with a choleric child is more of a trial. We need to center ourselves and mobilize our energy to have the strong presence required to meet the choleric youngster. We need to be clear and direct in communicating to the choleric child what we want of him, when we want it, and how we want it. Subtle hints about proper and improper behavior, wishful thoughts that the young choleric will change

his ways, do not work. One has to look the choleric child in the eye and “lay down the law.”

Parents and teachers need to give the choleric child plenty of opportunities for physical activity, for being outdoors, for “wrestling with life” and with other children. Competition is important and enjoyable for the choleric child. He will probably find noncompetitive games boring. He wants to test himself against others and to overwhelm his opponents.

Rudolf Steiner understood the challenge of the choleric child and the great potential that lies within the temperament. He suggested various means to help the young choleric become self-aware, to moderate his temperament’s more extreme tendencies, and to develop its positive aspects.

These pedagogical strategies maximize the choleric child’s experience of choleric energy and, it is hoped, cause him to achieve a more balanced state. A teacher, Steiner advised, should have all the choleric sit together in the classroom. The choleric child will find himself mirrored in his fellow beings of fire, perhaps grow bored with the choleric patterns, and try out some different behaviors. In the class play, the teacher should assign the most choleric role to a choleric child, and then coach him to act the role with particular force and verve. In telling stories and in relating historical events, the teacher should graphically include elements that appeal to the choleric interest: the medieval knights engaged in battle, whalers harpooning their prey, kings and generals fighting the great battles of history. These pedagogical interventions engage the choleric. They also awaken him to his temperament and bring to consciousness tendencies of which he has been unaware.

Psychologist Helen Fisher has done research on how persons of the different temperaments use online dating services such as Match.com. The choleric’s quest for balance and moderation is evident in their choice of dating partners. Unlike the sanguines and phlegmatics, who prefer those of their own temperament, the choleric and the melancholic, representing the poles of the personality continuum, typically seek out each other.

In meeting the choleric child, we are likely meeting a future pioneer, leader, innovator. This thought may not be a solace to an adult dealing with a five-year-old girl who absolutely refuses to put on a coat or with a young boy who has just kicked a classmate.

Waldorf educators are sensi-

tive to the special needs and abilities of all four main temperamental styles. With the choleric, as with the sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholic, the goal of Waldorf teachers is to help the child develop an awareness of his temperament and to find a way to moderate any extreme, negative tendencies. As the choleric child becomes increasingly balanced in expressing his basic temperament, focused through his own individuality, we can celebrate all the wonderful gifts that this active, fiery being has to offer. ☺



Because of the expanding role of women in our society, women with a strong choleric temperament, like Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, have been able to rise to prominence in the world of politics.



Renewal staff writer THOMAS POPLAWSKI is a trained eurythmist and also a psychotherapist. He is the author of *Eurythmy: Rhythm, Dance, and Soul* and *Completing the Circle*, the latter a collection of some of his

many articles on parenting and education that have appeared in *Renewal*. Thomas lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, with his wife, Valerie, a kindergarten teacher at the Hartsbrook School, and their two sons.

The Journey In, the Journey Out

The Waldorf Elementary and High School Curricula

BY CAROL BÄRTGES

The Waldorf elementary or lower school (grades one through eight) and the Waldorf high school (grades nine through twelve) comprise an organic whole. The curricula of the lower school and of the high school work together to foster the healthy development of the student through adolescence.

Carol Bärtges has had an unusually varied experience of the Waldorf curriculum. She was a Waldorf student from kindergarten through twelfth grade, has served as a class teacher, middle school English teacher, and, currently, a high school English and drama teacher—all in her long career at the Rudolf Steiner School of New York.

In this article Carol describes the relationship between the lower school and high school curricula and urges her fellow Waldorf teachers—class and high school—to be informed about what is happening on the other side of the great eighth-grade divide.

—R. E. K.

“**W**hat have they been doing in the elementary school?”

Sometimes when we Waldorf high school teachers talk about the lower school, we ask the right question but use the wrong intonation. We can sound impatient or skeptical. But we can ask this question another way, and our disposition then becomes one of curiosity and reverence. The Waldorf curriculum of the lower grades plants in the children capacities that are like a golden seed. These capacities germinate during the lower school years, and then the high school curriculum, with the teachers’ guidance and nurture, brings them to maturity and fruition.

Noted Waldorf educator Douglas Gerwin has depicted the two curricula graphically as interlocking spirals, one red, one blue, moving in opposition from different, initial starting points. The red spiral is the path from kindergarten to the eighth grade, from the higher world of spirit from which the child descends, into the world of matter. It culminates at about the age of fourteen, when the eighth-grade student is most deeply connected to the physical world and his or her physical body. The contracting center of the red spiral symbolizes the place of greatest density, where the budding adolescent is

eagerly (and noisily) immersed in matter, in the contemporary world of the here and now. This center point is the culmination of the first eight years of elementary school life. From this point, the blue spiral of the high school curriculum moves outward into the broader world.

The Waldorf elementary school curriculum, leading the child ever more deeply into an active engagement with the material world, guides the physical and emotional development of the student to reach this center moment in eighth grade. For example, the major narratives of the elementary school humanities curriculum can all be found along the inwardly circling, red spiral. At its outermost edge are the stories told in kindergarten and the early grades, stories of no time or place, which connect the child to eternal truths that exist beyond him/her and which gently lead the child into the world of causality. In the early grades these include the fairy tales, myths, and fables from around the world. In the third grade come the epic Old Testament stories and Native American creation myths, the last moment in which the mood of unquestioned divine authority reigns. In fourth grade, however, comes a change: with the Norse myths, portraits of unredeemable deceit and disappointment begin to appear.

The change in the curriculum matches what is happening in the child's developing psyche and soul. It confirms what the child is unconsciously realizing at this time—that life seems neither fair nor consistently joyful. We humans often act in our own worst self-interest precisely because we strive to establish our freedom and independence. In the Norse myth “The Death of Baldur,” there is an example of such behavior in the mischievous god, Loki. Through Loki's intentions, Baldur, the most perfect of the gods, is killed. There is no particular reason for Loki's willful spite, but his impulsive behavior destroys the harmony and grace of the gods forever. Yet the children sense that there is something authentic in this terrible action—that human beings assert their authority and individuality in ways that can be shocking and hurtful.

A new awareness of an inner life with its attendant loss of trust in a purely benevolent world now begins for the nine-year-old. How appropriate then that at just this point the students begin formal woodworking. As the children chisel and hammer away at the wooden mallets they are making—in honor, perhaps, of the thunder god, Thor—they feel that the steadfast human will can also fashion a productive outcome. Although the “fall from grace” is inevitable for the growing child, the loss can be transformed through this and other artistic and handwork activities. The children develop capacities that will serve them in the future—an active inner awareness, an ability to carry out self-directed work, and an unconscious trust in transformation.

The blue spiral that begins in the ninth grade moves in an outward direction—out from the center of the spiral, back into the world. The destination,



The red spiral leads the young child into a deep experience of himself and the physical world, while the blue spiral guides the adolescent into adulthood with a higher perspective.

though, is not back to the infinite spaces of the young child's original spiritual home, but the world of contemporary human experience.

That the blue spiral takes off from the culminating point of the red spiral suggests that the high school curriculum is an evolution of the elementary school curriculum. Here lies the intimate relationship between the eighth- and ninth-grade years. Students in both grades are closely connected in their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. In the ninth grade an intentional mirroring of topics and themes pursued just the year before in the eighth grade is indicated

by Rudolf Steiner. The challenge for the high school teacher is to make the ninth-grade work feel new. If the high school curriculum is experienced as mere review, the students will grow bored and resentful.

In the eighth grade, students have already encountered the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century revolutions, but primarily through the biographies of representative individuals whose lives were impacted by the world events. The eighth-grade study of the French Revolution, for example, might consider the life of Napoleon and the effect of his individual actions on the destiny of the European nations. In ninth grade, however, the review of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, or the Civil War eras will have a greater emphasis on the universal perspectives and outcomes of these events. The students get a bird's-eye view of history rather than the close-up.

Human physiology is also taught in both eighth and ninth grades. In eighth grade the students observe and study the external structures of the body, shaped in part by the skeletal system. In class nine the focus is on internal structure and processes, the internal organs, and embryology. Black and white



In third grade, while the experience of divine authority and benevolence still prevails, the children learn about Old Testament heroes. Here David encounters and slays the giant, Goliath.

drawing is also a common shared experience for both eighth and ninth grades. The eighth-grade students might survey the landscape of the self through self-portraiture, while in ninth grade, black and white studies of forms ask for greater attention to perspective, chiaroscuro, and point of view.

At this moment in ninth grade, when adolescents have reached the stage of greatest “materiality,” of greatest self-absorption, the curriculum now urges them to direct their gaze outward, to experience the reality of the physical world. In their science studies, ninth-grade students are asked to observe phenomena carefully and objectively and to record what they experience. What they frequently encounter are polarities—heat and cold in the physics main lesson, but also tragedy and comedy in the literature block, black and white in the drawing block. The work with these polarities helps to balance and moderate the sometimes overwhelming feeling life that typically characterizes young high school students.

In tenth grade, students are encouraged to develop the capacity to compare and contrast disparate phenomena, to establish connections, to make analogies. The history curriculum returns to the ancient cultures studied in fifth and sixth grades—India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome—focusing now on the differences and similarities of these civilizations and how they influenced each other. The students compare the epics of ancient Greece and

Rome to the Norse sagas. In the study of the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*, the students compare the separate worlds of white and black South Africans. In the poetry block, they compare epic, lyric, and dramatic forms and learn how each one “sings.”

The theme of transformation, of death and resurrection, is central in the eleventh-grade curriculum. Class eleven students study botany utilizing the principles in Goethe’s *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. They read the Arthurian legend of *Parzival*, a tale of profound self-metamorphosis. In history, students revisit the seventh-grade topic of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, but now from the perspective of the profound transformation that occurs in all three spheres of human existence: the cultural sphere, the economic sphere, and the rights sphere.

The nine-year-old experiences the awakening of an individual consciousness that separates the self from the world. For the sixteen- or seventeen-year-old, this soul experience of separation is repeated. Profound inner and outer questions arise. For both the elementary and the high school student, Rudolf Steiner suggests that there is an inner “crisis” or gap that must be overcome as the individual moves forward in meeting his/her destiny. In the sixteen-year-old, this crisis can manifest as self-doubt, a retreat from old friends, a questioning of values and routines held by family and teachers, disenchantment, or a loss of ambition and energy. But the crisis has a positive side: the students realize that the answer to life’s deepest questions cannot



In fifth grade, the children broaden their historical and cultural horizons by studying the myths and stories of ancient civilizations. This is a student painting of the Himalayas.

be found in scrambling for good grades and SAT scores, in cultivating a superficial image for the sake of popularity, or in seeking the easy escape of drugs.

While the tenth-grade students have read about enterprising, convivial epic heroes such as Odysseus and Beowulf, now they encounter protagonists whose journeys reflect the modern crisis of identity. The iconic representatives of the eleventh-grade curriculum—Hamlet, Parzival, William Blake, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Dante, Conrad's Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*—all travel their paths alone. These characters signify the inward, solitary journey shared by young people who are on a quest to uncover life's meaning. The figure of action in the tenth-grade epic becomes in the eleventh grade the man of feeling and thought. Just as the nine-year-old suddenly realizes that with life come struggle and injustice, the sixteen-year-old confronts the fact that new inner convictions and values must be won through hard and sometimes painful personal experience, not through simply following the example or taking the advice of family and friends. The eleventh-grade Waldorf curriculum thus meets the need of the adolescent to create an authentic identity. Aware of this crisis and working consciously with the curriculum of both past and present, the high school teacher can help the student to cross these thresholds, to have the courage to say "Yes" to the future.

In the twelfth-grade year, the blue spiral is almost at an end. The students now work with material that can be fully grasped only in the realm of thought. In the ninth-grade science blocks, the students



In eighth grade, students explore human personality through black and white portraits and self-portraits in charcoal.

observed and described outer phenomena. In contrast, the twelfth-grade optics block asks the students to encounter the *invisible* nature of light. In literature, students usually read the American Transcendentalists, who champion the reality and even the priority of spiritual activity. Emerson wrote: "Great men are they who see the spiritual is stronger than material force; that thoughts rule the world." In coming to



Ninth graders are asked to do black and white studies of external forms, emphasizing light and shadow, as well as perspective.

this last moment in their education, students return to a world beyond time and space, to a world they experienced through myth and fairy tale, but now at the level of alive and active thinking.

The high school curriculum thus represents a movement from perception to insight, just as the elementary school curriculum represents a movement from inner dreaminess to complete incarnation. Knowing what has come before aids the high school teacher in avoiding the tendency to rush to concepts and facts in isolation from the students' active feeling life. Although we work with the emerging intellectual capacities of the students, high school teachers must continue to cultivate those experiences of the soul that build the very foundation of memory and thought life for later years. As Rudolf Steiner points out:

The whole of the processes which eventually lead to memory takes place in the same region of the soul in which the life of feeling is present. The life of feeling with its joys and pains, its pleasures and discomforts, its tensions and relaxations, is the bearer of what is permanent in the conceptual life.

For the Waldorf high school student, the loving authority of the class teacher is no longer present. Instead, the student now encounters a chorus of voices that seek to inspire: areas of study, artistic activities, as well as individual teachers. For some students, the great poets will sing most compellingly; for others, science and mathematics will engage their deep interest. In the art studio, in the orchestra, in drama club, and in the science lab, the students have the opportunity to develop their unique skills and gifts in individual and in collegial activity.



The story of Parzival, the bumbling fool who becomes in the end the Grail King, is a tale of personal transformation that speaks to the eleventh grader.

One final aim of the Waldorf high school curriculum is to nurture individuals who both *feel* and *know* that true thoughts can have a profound and critical effect on the world: that *thoughts* can become *deeds*.

Another goal is to awaken individual judgment and thinking that is alive and free. By the time they are seniors, the students have, it is hoped, the confi-

dence and authority to walk beyond the blue spiral out into the world on their own, filled with enthusiastic admiration for the potential of true ideas to become realities.

“What have they been doing in the elementary school?” The answer is “A great deal, and there is more to come in the high school.” When the work

of the high school can be experienced as an organic outgrowth of the grades years, the whole community witnesses in our students the rich harvest of sweetest flower and fruit. ☉



In the high school botany block, students closely observe and draw plants and flowers in color.



CAROL BÄRTGES currently teaches English in the high school of the Rudolf Steiner School of New York. She also serves on the AWSNA Leadership Council as the Mid-Atlantic regional representative. Carol is finishing a PhD in comparative literature at the

Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her two children, Max and Sarah, are graduates of the Rudolf Steiner School.

Waldorf One World

Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners (Friends of Rudolf Steiner’s Art of Education) is an organization based in Germany that promotes Waldorf Education around the world, particularly in less developed countries. For the past sixteen years, the organization has sponsored and organized an annual Waldorf One World (WOW) Day to raise funds for Waldorf schools in Asia, Africa, South America, and elsewhere.

On WOW Day, students in Waldorf schools raise money in various ways for initiatives in less privileged areas. In 2010 students at 150 schools in Europe raised about 300,000 Euros (\$450,000). WOW benefits the recipient Waldorf schools, which typically are serving underprivileged children. It also benefits the donor schools by raising the social awareness of the students and the school community.

The nurturing of a social conscience and developing the habit of community service are basic aims

of Waldorf Education. Most, probably all, Waldorf schools in North America are already involved in some kind of community service and sharing of resources. Many have sister schools in far away places and regularly send support to them. The visit this April of two Waldorf eighth-grade classes to the New Orleans school to do volunteer work (please see page 23) is typical.

Waldorf One World offers an opportunity for Waldorf schools in North America to take part in a worldwide movement and to experience the synergy of hundreds of schools and thousands of students working together for the benefit of others. Hence, a group of Waldorf educators is urging and organizing participation by North American schools in the 2011 WOW Day. The scheduled date is Thursday, September 29, 2011. Waldorf students, parents, and teachers who are interested in their school taking part in Waldorf One World, 2011 should contact: Leslie Loy and Truus Geraets at na.wowday@gmail.com

Teenage Technoholics

The Digital Revolution, Its Effect on Our Children, and What Parents Can Do

BY DAVID SLOAN

... the concrete reality is that the intellectual thoughts evolved inwardly by men today will in time to come creep over the earth **like a spider's web** wherein human beings will be enmeshed, if they will not reach out to a world lying beyond and above their shadowy thoughts and concepts.

—Rudolf Steiner, “A Picture of Earth-Evolution in the Future,”
a lecture delivered in Dornach, Switzerland, May 13, 1921

Rudolf Steiner’s prediction, given in a lecture ninety years ago, has come to pass with astonishing accuracy. In less than two decades, the World Wide Web has revolutionized information sharing. It is hard to remember a time before the advent of the Internet, before the proliferation of mobile computers transformed our daily lives, altered the way we communicate, do business, conduct classes, entertain ourselves. Yet with this brave, new world of electronic wizardry comes an evermore insistent question: What is the human cost, especially for young people?



Younger and younger. Is prenatal access to the Web on the horizon?

In the Waldorf world, we have come a long way from the mid-1980s when, as the story goes, a Waldorf high school received an unsolicited donation of computers. Clueless about what to do with them, the teachers stored the machines in the basement and covered them with eurythmy veils, presumably to

neutralize any adverse effects that unplugged computers might be emitting.

Around that same time, in 1985, Waldorf educators organized a conference on computers at High Mowing School in New Hampshire. The featured speaker was Joseph Weizenbaum, MIT professor and one of the early pioneers of computer programming. Weizenbaum cautioned participants about relying too heavily on technology in the classroom. In those days, he couldn’t substantiate his concerns with hard, scientific evidence, but he did observe that mechanical thinking is too much with us today. The child possesses a rich and fertile imagination, but society works hard to destroy it. Early exposure to the computer seems to accelerate and legitimize the process of devitalizing the imagination.¹

In the ensuing twenty-five years, Weizenbaum’s admonitions have gone largely unheeded. We live in a “Wi-Fi world.” Almost every segment of our lives has been affected by the computer and related devices. As computers have become miniaturized, they are available everywhere, anytime—in our homes, our automobiles, our pockets. As Nicholas Carr states in *The Shallows*, his recent book exploring how the Internet is changing the way we think:

I use my browser to pay my bills, schedule my appointments, book flights and hotel rooms, renew my driver’s license, send invitations and greeting cards. Even when I’m not working, I’m as likely as not to be foraging in the Web’s data thickets—reading and writing e-mails, scanning headlines and blog posts, following Facebook updates, watching video streams, downloading music or just tripping lightly from link to link to link.²



Simultaneous use of two or more electronic devices has become a way of life for millions of teenagers and adults.

This reliance on technology is not limited to adults. With the dramatic increase in cell phone use and the rapid expansion of social networking sites, young people today spend astonishing amounts of time in front of one screen or another. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation national survey found that children between the ages of eight and eighteen now use electronic media more than seven and a half hours per day—about half their waking hours and the equivalent of more than two full days per week! However, because of the “media multitasking” that many young people enjoy—going online while watching television, listening to music while playing video games—that figure jumps to over ten hours and forty-five minutes of daily media content jammed into their typical day!³



Over twenty-five years ago, MIT professor Joseph Weizenbaum had misgivings about the use of computers in education

Yet perhaps the most stunning revelation regarding the survey was that it does NOT include the growing texting mania as part of its total media exposure figures. Seventh through twelfth graders report averaging another hour and a half per day sending or receiving text messages.

This precipitous increase in the time children spend in the clutches of one electronic device or another is a source of growing unease for many parents,

educators, and health counselors. They point to the alarming results of recent studies measuring the effects of this pervasive technology. The dramatic increases in obesity, attention-deficit disorders, sleep deprivation, depression, and a spate of other psychological problems have been traced, at least in part, to our children’s growing dependence upon digital devices.

As a longtime Waldorf high school teacher, I confess I harbor feelings of ambivalence about the exponential increase in the presence of computers and their “progeny” in our daily lives. On the one hand, I am grateful to live in an era where various technological advances have made my teaching and research much more efficient and convenient. I am not nostalgic for that bygone era of the hand-cranked mimeograph machine, of hours spent poring through card catalogs at the library, of weeks waiting for replies to handwritten letters. I rely as heavily as most upon my computer and cell phone and copier, although as of this writing I have resisted the pressure to join the hundreds of millions with Facebook accounts.

On the other hand, I have witnessed a transformation in the lives of my students over the past ten years, and it is not entirely a positive one. My concerns have crystallized into three vexing questions:

- 1) How is the reliance upon digital gadgetry affecting young people’s ability to think? This question has particular significance for Waldorf high school teachers whose mission it is to teach teenagers not *what* to think, but *how* to think.
- 2) What impact does the social media’s instant and limitless connectivity have on young people’s ability to develop and sustain human relationships?
- 3) What can teachers and parents—who are often less technologically savvy than their own children—do to guide young people into a healthy use of the technology that both enhances and clutters their lives?

A great deal of research has been undertaken in the past decade to address the first question, much of it cited in Carr’s book *The Shallows*. The book’s title hints at one of Carr’s key assertions: While the Internet presents us with extraordinarily powerful tools for accessing information, entertaining ourselves, and communicating with others, it also has the effect of encouraging “cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning.”⁴

The sharp increase in digital use suggests that most young people prefer the interactive enticements of online browsing to old-fashioned reading. This is not surprising for an age group readily attracted to the edgy, the excessive, and the titillating. As economist Tyler Cowen says, “When access to information is easy, we tend to favor the short, the sweet, and the bitty [i.e., made up of bits, not cohesive or flowing].”⁵ This trend toward the superficial and the abbreviated, fostered by the inherently beguiling nature of handheld devices, poses a real threat to the mission of Waldorf teachers—to help young people learn how to think.

At the core of Waldorf Education is a belief in the value of each individual’s inner activity. Through sustained nurturing of imaginative and cognitive faculties, elementary and high school teachers strive to cultivate what Ralph Waldo Emerson referred to as “the active soul.” Such inner activity requires focused awareness. Unless young people shut out, at least to some degree, the outer stimuli that surround them and that are constantly vying for their attention, they have little chance of experiencing true introspection.

Yet we only have to witness how electronic devices increasingly fill the leisure time that teens enjoy—in the school lunchroom, in a café, at a sporting event, and certainly in their own bedrooms—to see what an appealing alternative these gadgets offer to true inner activity. Study . . . or surf the net? Engage a friend in meaningful conversation . . . or “friend” a number of new acquaintances on Facebook? Read a



*Invented in 1870, and used by Mark Twain to write *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* a few years later, the manual typewriter has become a dinosaur among devices to record thoughts and to transfer information.*

textbook . . . or text any number of friends from the comfort of home? Faced with these choices, young people are constantly being lured away from undistracted quiet, away from contemplative moments. Many spend their days dipping their toes into the seemingly endless river of information available on the

Internet, a river that has become a mile wide and an inch deep. While young people splash in these “shallows,” they run the risk of becoming ever more shallow themselves.

In the past, we could dismiss such teenage behavior as a passing phase and assume that eventually, as grownups, individuals would develop the inner resources to impart meaning and direction to their lives. However, in the past, it was fast cars, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, and sex that tempted and distracted young people. Those allurements are still around, but electronic media appear to have surpassed them all, at least in terms of time spent in their pursuit. What’s new is the danger such digital use poses to the fundamental way we think.

Carr’s most insistent point is that the more we rely upon electronic media to mediate our experience of the world, the greater we risk permanently altering our very nature—particularly how our brains function.

Thanks to the plasticity of our neural pathways, the more we use the Web, the more we train our brain to be distracted—to process information very quickly and very efficiently but without sustained attention.⁶

This is a perfect example of Marshall McLuhan’s observation (made decades ago): “We shape our tools, and thereafter they shape us.”

In defense of digital media, one might say that the technology was never intended to optimize learning. However, that view is not shared by the legions of school administrators who have filled classrooms with more and more computer technology, in the hope that it will somehow make learning more efficient. The problem is that while the Internet presents us with a veritable torrent of information at lightning speed, it does so indiscriminately. Uninformed users cannot distinguish between the pertinent and the irrelevant, between objective and biased sites. For high school students, learning to differentiate between the essential and inessential is one of the greatest capacities they can acquire. Such a facility requires discernment, an inner sense of judgment that Internet use does not encourage.



Most cell phones now have instant access to the vast world of the Internet.



WHAT THE
INTERNET
IS DOING TO
OUR BRAINS
THE SHALLOWS
Nicholas Carr
AUTHOR OF THE BLUE BRICKS

Nicholas Carr's book asserting that the Internet is changing the way human beings think is a best seller and has found an international audience.

Indeed, electronic media in general seem to value capriciousness over thoughtful discourse, speed over carefully considered ideas, and sensory stimulation over critical thinking skills.

In the arena of my second concern—that of social relationships—surely we have benefited from the revolution in communications technology. It is today remarkably easy to instantaneously connect to—and interact with—a virtual global community. As Carr says,

The interactivity of the medium has turned it into the world's meetinghouse, where people gather to chat, gossip, argue, show off and flirt. . . .⁷

While the scope and swiftness of social networking has inarguably created new opportunities for rediscovering old friends and widening our current contacts, it has also given rise to a new wave of narcissism and voyeurism. For teenagers who already feel themselves to be the center of their universe, digital media offer an egoist's paradise. In the past, celebrity was reserved for a chosen few—movie stars, sports heroes, political leaders. Now everyone can star in his or her own Facebook page, attract a Twitter following, or upload a YouTube video of himself that goes “viral.”

Exhibitionism needs an audience. The technology that enables young people to broadcast themselves worldwide also panders to their voyeuristic impulses. Not surprisingly, a generation of children raised by a generation of parents raised on television craves the constant, vicarious amusement of viewing what other people post or text.

The other new dimension that has made this social networking so enticing is its “now-ness.”

By turning intimate messages—once the realm of the letter, the phone call, the whisper—into fodder for a new form of mass media, the social networks have given people a compelling way to socialize and stay in touch. They've also placed a whole new emphasis on immediacy.⁸

Social media sites have made it easier for us to share our lives, but this urgent need for up-to-the-minute news, for “what's-happening-right-now” updates, appears addictive. One high school student, quoted in a recent *New York Times* article, confesses:

I'm doing Facebook, YouTube, having a conversation with a friend or two, listening to music at the same time. I'm doing a million things at once, like a lot of people my age. . . . Sometimes I'll say: I need to stop this and do my schoolwork, but I can't.⁹

Any teenager without access to this buzzing beehive of streaming information runs the risk of being out of the loop, or worse, being considered a social pariah. In this regard, the shadow side of these social networks really emerges. Cyberbullying has become an epidemic among adolescents. Teenagers in every era have demonstrated a capacity for vicious gossip, but social media have raised the stakes through the sheer scope, rapidity, and—most significantly—the anonymity that digital communication makes possible. As reported in another, recent *New York Times* article on cyberbullying:

The lawlessness of the Internet, its potential for casual, breathtaking cruelty, and its capacity to cloak a bully's identity all present slippery new challenges to this transitional generation of analog parents.¹⁰

This leads us to my third concern: What can parents and teachers do to help young people of the digital age? If our children are Waldorf students, that is already an advantage, and not just because for decades most Waldorf elementary educators have advocated extreme caution about premature media exposure for young children. Another, subtler reason has to do with the emphasis on the arts that enriches the life of every Waldorf student.

Rudolf Steiner foresaw how pervasively technology would transform contemporary culture. He never suggested that we shun such advances; on many occasions he exhorted people to embrace modern life. However, he also asserted that the central role of the arts in the Waldorf curriculum is one of the healing correctives for our increasing entanglement in the “web” created by technology. “Whatever works upon man in the form of art leads him out of the material into the spiritual.”¹¹ Art requires inner effort; surely that inner activity serves as an antidote to the mesmerizing outer stimuli of digital media.

As for ways we parents can support our preteen and teenage children in terms of using electronic media, surely a first step would be to become

better informed about the nature and extent of their electronic involvement. That might mean supervising their online activity, familiarizing ourselves with the digital devices themselves as well as the various parental controls at our disposal. It might mean conversing with our children, showing a willingness to learn from them if they are more skilled than we are with electronic media.

Of course, taking such action assumes that we stop buying into the widespread myth that our children's online or cell phone use implies some inviolate "right to privacy." On the contrary, just as in the past parents monitored their children's television-watching or movie choices, the times they went out, and the people they went out with, so we need to extend our parental responsibilities into the digital domain. As one Waldorf teacher put it, "Parents should still be asking the perennial questions, but with updated meaning:

- 1) 'Where are you going?' i.e., 'What sites are you visiting?'
- 2) 'What are you wearing?' i.e., 'What are you putting online for everyone to see?'
- 3) 'How long will you be gone?' i.e., 'How much time are you spending online?'"

The strategies that parents employ might be guided by the commonsense, developmental approach that has informed the Waldorf curriculum since its inception. It is ironic that well-intentioned, caring parents, acting as devoted "gatekeepers" to protect their children from unhealthy cultural influences, do not think twice about giving their thirteen-year-old son or daughter a sophisticated cell phone. In most cases, that seemingly innocuous device is a powerful, portable computer, the portal to an enticing cyberuniverse, where both wonders await and predators lurk. Do we imagine that thirteen-year-olds have developed sufficient powers of discernment to navigate those alluring, perilous waters alone, any more than they have demonstrated the judgment to drink responsibly or drive a car safely?

In the end, coping with today's technology isn't just a teenage problem. We all have to come to grips with the degree to which we will shape—or be shaped by—these potent tools. Repeatedly we might ask ourselves: When does the convenience of using digital devices outweigh the psychic and emotional and physical costs, and when do we draw the line to protect our—and our children's—inner selves?

In this regard, we might heed Joseph Weizenbaum's admonition: "What makes us most human is what is least computable about us. . . ." ¹² He foresaw that in our increasing reliance upon computers, we could "begin to lose our humanness, to sacrifice the very qualities that separate us from machines." ¹³ We may need to regularly remind ourselves that, for all their programmed cleverness, machines lack the souls we possess, both the wellspring of our independent inner activity and one of our most human capacities. ☺



DAVID SLOAN has been a Waldorf high school teacher for over three decades. He taught for many years at the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Spring Valley, New York, and has helped to launch two high schools: Shining Mountain Waldorf

High School in Boulder, Colorado, and Merriconeag Waldorf High School in New Gloucester, Maine, where he currently teaches. He is the author of two books—*Stages of Imagination: Working Dramatically with Adolescents* and *Life Lessons: Reaching Teenagers through Literature*—and has had several articles published in *Renewal*. He has recently had a number of poems appear in national literary journals.

Notes

1. Arthur Fink, David Mitchell, and David Sloan, *Computers in Education* (Wilton, NH: AWSNA Publications, 1985), p. 10.
2. Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows* (New York City: W.W. Norton and Co., 2010), p. 6.
3. Kaiser Family Foundation Study, <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia012010nr.cfm> (January 10, 2010).
4. Carr, *Shallows*, p. 116. 5. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 194. 7. *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 85. 8. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
9. NYTimes.com, "Your Brain on Computers: Growing Up Digital, Wired for Distraction" (November 21, 2010).
10. NYTimes.com, "As Bullies Go Digital, Parents Play Catch-Up" (December 5, 2010).
11. Rudolf Steiner, "Technology and Art: Their Bearing on Modern Culture" (lecture in Dornach, Switzerland, December 28, 1914), in *Art as Seen in the Light of Mystery Wisdom* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1984).
12. Carr, *Shallows*, p. 207. 13. *Ibid.*

Helping the Dyslexic Child

An Interview with Dyslexia Expert Susan Barton

BY STUART DEMMY

Dyslexia is a common problem in all schools, including Waldorf schools. Current research shows that about one in five children has some form of what might be termed dyslexia.

Some of the elements in the standard Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy are very helpful in developing sound and letter awareness and can be adapted further as specific helps for students with dyslexia. Stuart Demmy, former Waldorf class teacher and the interviewer here, lists these strategies as: “using poems, tongue twisters, and other speech work in the early grades to heighten awareness of all the individual sounds or phonemes in a word; using such exercises plus singing to develop strong awareness of rhyming; using clapping and walking games to develop awareness of syllables within words; using imaginative drawings of letters (as is done in grade one) to strengthen the visual connection between sound and symbol.”

Former class teacher Patrice Maynard, now an Association leader, observes: “In addition to the approaches inherent in Waldorf Education, teachers in Waldorf schools use a variety of approaches, mainstream and alternative, to meet an individual child or a whole class struggling with problems in reading, math, or physical orientation. Rather than attaching a label or diagnosis to a child, Waldorf teachers prefer to focus on the specific manifestations of the difficulty and on what exercise, song, poem, game, or movement repetition might help a child.”

Much research has been done about dyslexia, and various remedial approaches have been developed. One of these is the Barton Reading and Spelling System created by dyslexia expert Susan Barton. Tesa Briles, a Waldorf remedial education teacher, encountered this system several years ago and began using it in her individual work with students. She found it to be a very effective complement to Waldorf classroom pedagogy. What follows is a conversation between Susan Barton and Tesa’s husband, Stuart Demmy, who also has used the Barton system with his students.

—R. E. K.



Unable to understand a textbook or what is written on the board, the dyslexic child can easily become an inattentive student.

Stuart Demmy: *What is dyslexia?*

Susan Barton: There are so many opinions about dyslexia, about what it is or isn't. Many school administrators don't know what it is, and often tell teachers, "Don't use that word, don't suggest that term; if you do, then the parents will think that we have to fix it." So, it is a word that has been kept in the closet, and it needs to be brought out. Dyslexia is the most common reason that a bright child struggles first with spelling, then with written expression, and then eventually hits the wall in his reading development.

Dyslexia is an inherited condition that makes reading by sounding out extremely difficult. One of the warning signs is having difficulty reading, though not every child who has trouble reading is dyslexic. The

The Kiss the Cat Spelling Rule

Use a **K** for the sound ‘**K**’ when it is followed by an **i**, **e**, or **y**. Otherwise, use a **C**.

dyslexia will manifest in other areas, particularly spelling. About 20 percent of children today are dyslexic. That statistic is pretty stable.

The biggest warning sign of dyslexia is in spelling. The dyslexic has difficulty retaining spelling words from one week to the next and spelling accurately when writing sentences, despite being plenty smart, plenty motivated, and exposed to all kinds of reading instruction. Dyslexic students invest many hours trying to memorize words for a test and yet can’t retain them. When writing sentences, they can’t even spell the high frequency words like *because*, *friend*, and *does*. They also can’t seem to remember that a sentence has to start with a capital letter and that there has to be punctuation. And although they can read, they have enormous difficulty sounding out an unknown word, despite being taught phonics. In fact, phonics is not going to solve this problem.

SD: *What is your approach to dyslexia? Your system seems to be phonetically based.*

SB: My approach actually begins with *phonemic awareness* skills. No phonic system will work if the child lacks phonemic awareness. [A phoneme is the smallest meaningful unit of sound.] The research-based definition of a dyslexic child is a child who lacks age-appropriate phonemic awareness. This is an auditory issue. To a child with no phonemic awareness, a syllable is a single undifferentiated sound. He can’t hear the sounds within the syllable. That’s why he doesn’t understand why a word is composed of certain letters. Without this awareness, a child will fail at reading. If you want to catch them before they fail, and prevent the failure, check your incoming first graders for phonemic awareness. A child can seem to read for a while but, without phonemic awareness, he is forced to read in a way that will only work until about third grade.

SD: *How does one assess phonemic awareness?*

SB: There are formal phonemic awareness tests, but one of the simplest things that a teacher or parent can do is to see if the child can create words that rhyme. Rhyming is one of the seven essential phonemic awareness tasks. If you ask a

four-year-old what rhymes with *meat*, he should be able to come up with words such as *beat*, *feet*, *seat*. A child with dyslexia will say *steak*, *hamburger*, *McDonald’s!* To know that two words rhyme, you have to be aware that a syllable is more than one sound.

SD: *What comes after determining phonemic awareness?*

SB: Phonemic awareness is the first skill that must be taught to a child who is struggling with dyslexia, but it can’t be the only one. To teach a dyslexic child, you have to teach him that reading and spelling are the same subject. That’s why, in the Barton lessons, we teach the child to read by teaching him how to spell. Many children “read” words that they can’t spell. They may be getting clues from the context, looking at pictures on the page, and guessing a lot. They’re not really looking at the letters, because the letters just confuse them.

SD: *So spelling is really the more basic skill, the stronger skill?*

SB: Oh, yes. You spell by sounding out and then by knowing the reliable spelling rules. In the Orton-Gillingham spelling system—which is the basis of the Barton system—85 percent of the words follow rules for both reading and spelling. In traditional phonic systems, only 40 percent of the words follow the rules.

SD: *Can a teacher do much for the dyslexic children in the classroom?*

SB: There are three things that a child with dyslexia needs:

1. The child needs to be identified, either by informal observation or by formal testing. Teachers can learn enough to do that part.

A Dyslexic Child and Reading

Actual Text

Mary was on her way to school
She came to the corner.

She saw a red light.
Then she saw a green light.
Then she went on to school.

What the Child Reads

Millie was on her way to school.
She could go to the church.

She saw a red all.
Then her science saw, said ... God! ... all.
Then she was on to school.

2. The child needs to be taught spelling, reading, and writing, using an Orton-Gillingham system, such as the Barton Reading & Spelling System. I don't expect teachers to be able to do that. The teacher's job is to teach all the thirty or so children in the class, not just the five or six who need extra help. Someone else can do that: a parent, a tutor, or a reading specialist.
3. The dyslexic child also needs a few simple classroom accommodations. First, the teacher should not inadvertently embarrass the child in front of the class. In other words, don't ask him to read out loud in class; don't force him to participate in a spelling bee; do grade his written papers on content rather than spelling. These measures will avoid damage to his self-esteem.

Also, the teacher should offer the dyslexic student a way to learn the lesson content and to demonstrate this understanding, even though he is not yet reading or writing at grade level. Provide him books on audio. Do oral testing. If you want to find out what a dyslexic child really knows, let him tell you out loud. At homework time, parents should read the chapter out loud, ask their child questions, and then let the child answer out loud. Parents can write down the answers for him. The student is still doing the same assignment, but he is doing it without print, because print is his weakness.

Some teachers say, "Oh, those accommodations are a crutch! If we do that for them, they'll never learn." But accommodations and the right kind of tutor will work together. I'm not saying to use

accommodations *instead of* tutoring; I'm saying to use accommodations *and* tutoring. The gap will close, but it will take time to close.

SD: *As a class teacher, I started using some of the spelling rules with my third-grade class, and they just soaked it up. Can one teach the rules to all the children?*

SB: Yes, do teach the spelling rules in class! The Barton sequence for spelling gradually increases in difficulty. It starts with phonetic words using short vowels only, then goes on to open syllables and long vowels, and then into vowel teams. You can teach these rules to all the children, but the dyslexic children will still need extra, one-on-one help. I hope we can increase awareness about dyslexia and the therapeutic measures available in all schools, including Waldorf schools. ☺



SUSAN BARTON spent the first twenty years of her professional life in the computer field, but then changed careers in order to help her dyslexic nephew. She trained in various Orton-Gillingham-based teaching systems and worked for years with dyslexic adults and children. In 1998 Barton founded Bright Solutions for Dyslexia to educate parents and teachers about the causes, symptoms, and research-based solutions for children and adults with dyslexia. Her website, www.BrightSolutions.us, offers free information, videos, and research links about all aspects of dyslexia.

STUART DEMMY can be contacted at sddemmy@yahoo.com

TESA BRILES can be contacted at tlbriles@yahoo.com

Waldorf Kindergarten in Nova Scotia "Stars" in Film

The South Shore Waldorf School community in Blockhouse, Nova Scotia, plays an important role in *A Stone's Throw*, a movie produced in Canada in 2006. The feature-length film received favorable reviews, was widely distributed, and won several awards. The film was written and directed by South Shore Waldorf School parent Camelia Frieberg and co-written by Garfield Lindsay Miller, a graduate of the Vancouver Waldorf School.

The central figure is Jack Turner, an American photo-journalist, who visits his sister Olivia, who lives in nearby Mahone Bay. Jack meets and falls in love with Olivia's

best friend, Lia, a single mother and kindergarten teacher at the Waldorf school. Many of the scenes take place in or just outside the school. There are many heartwarming (to Waldorfians, in any case) shots of puppets, angels of wool roving, and other Waldorf accoutrements. Meanwhile, Jack is discovering that the local mining operation is polluting the environment and endangering the health of the people in the town. This leads to various complications and the bittersweet, unexpected denouement. *A Stone's Throw* is available on DVD. The South Shore Waldorf School is the only Waldorf School in Canada's Atlantic Provinces: waldorfns.org

The Lakota Waldorf School

Mitakuye oyasin—“We are all related”

BY LAURIE CLARK AND PATRICE MAYNARD

The Pine Ridge Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota, home to about 30,000 members of the Lakota Sioux tribe, is one of the largest reservations in the United States. It is larger than the states of Rhode Island and Delaware combined. It is also one of the most impoverished areas in the United States. The unemployment rate is around 85 percent; infant mortality is three times higher than the U.S. average; and the average life expectancy is the shortest for any community in the Western Hemisphere outside of Haiti. Schools on the reservation are in the bottom 10 percent in terms of funding by the U.S. Department of Education, and the high school dropout rate is 70 percent, compared to a national average of 11 percent. Perhaps the most saddening statistic is the teen suicide rate—one and a half times the national average.

In 1992 several Lakota elders and parents joined together to bring a new impulse in education to improve the life of the community and create hope for the future. Isabel Stadnick, the Swiss-born wife of Lakota elder Bob Stadnick, had attended the Waldorf school in Basel, Switzerland, and described the education she had received there. Traditional Lakotan education is experiential, and the telling of stories plays a central role in it. Hearing Isabel's accounts of her Waldorf years, the group felt that Waldorf Education might be the nurturing education the Lakota children needed. They wondered, though, if it would be possible to combine Waldorf Education with the Lakota language and culture.

Several members of the group went to Dornach, Switzerland, and met with Dr. Heinz Zimmermann, Isabel Stadnick's former class teacher in Basel and, at the time of the visit, head of the international Waldorf movement. Replying to their concerns, Zimmermann said, “It would not be a Waldorf school without including the language and culture of your people.” Soon thereafter the Walakota (“harmony of the Lakota way”) Waldorf Society was founded with the intent to start a Waldorf school on the reservation.

In 1994 a kindergarten was built. Various Waldorf early childhood and early grade Waldorf teachers from around the country and the world came and taught at the school over the next decade. The school closed in 2004 but reopened in 2007. In 2009 the original intention of the school became



Teacher and students from the Lakota school stand on a windswept hill above the building.

a reality, as two Lakota persons—fluent Lakota speakers and steeped in the culture—became the teachers. One of them, Tabor White Buffalo, is now the lead teacher responsible for the twenty children, ages three to six.

In 2008 the Mid-States Shared Gifting Group, a foundation supporting Waldorf Education, gave the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America funds to support two visits by Waldorf educators to the reservation. The visits were to determine the status and the level of sustainability of this school and to find support for its future development.

In October 2009, Laurie Clark and Tom Clark, longtime teachers at the Denver Waldorf School, and Patrice Maynard, a former class teacher and now leader for outreach and development of the

Association, made two three-day visits to the school. Laurie, an early childhood specialist, worked with Verola Spider—at that time the lead teacher—to beautify the classroom and make it more inviting. Laurie mentored Verola in various aspects of life in a Waldorf kindergarten, including circle time, coloring with crayons, beeswax modeling, story time, and cooking with the children. The children are given a hot breakfast and lunch and a snack before they go home at 3:00 pm, so Laurie and Verola did a lot of cooking and baking together. Meanwhile, Patrice and Tom began to explore ways to strengthen the school's organization, finances, and support system.

The three visitors marveled at the strength and energy of the children despite the destitution, the disruption, and the want that are part of all the children's lives at Pine Ridge. They are unusually beautiful children—open, and unburdened by material possessions.

grandmother. One focus then was to find ways to incorporate the Lakota language into the everyday life of the kindergarten. The wool grandmother (*umchee*, in Lakota) puppet sang a lullaby in Lakota as she rocked her baby to sleep and told Lakota stories.

A parent evening and a community dinner for all of the families was organized. The children helped to prepare the meal during the kindergarten morning, peeling and chopping



This little girl and her classmates typically travel fifteen miles or more to get to school.

“It would not be a Waldorf school without including the language and culture of your people.”

In December 2009, Patrice, Laurie, and Tom visited again. In the meantime, while attending a LifeWays early childhood training in Denver, Verola had made a wool puppet in the dress and form of a Lakota



The school is located on a mostly treeless prairie. Winters are long and cold, the temperature with wind chill reaching minus 50 degrees, and the summers are hot and dry.

the vegetables for the gigantic pot of soup. The Denver Waldorf School community had donated food, winter outerwear of various sizes, blankets, and toys for the children. Each family received a package. The children were most delighted with the hula hoops and the warm mittens they received. One little girl whose hands had chilblains because she had no gloves was so happy with her mittens that she ate dinner with them on. There was much laughter, goodwill, and fun that evening, and both the young and the middle-aged enjoyed the hula hoops. The Lakota hosts performed a beautiful, traditional Lakota honoring ceremony for the three guests.

While Laurie Clark spent each day in the classroom, Patrice Maynard and Tom Clark spent many hours with Isabel Stadnick, who is now the school's development coordinator. When her husband died in 1997, Isabel had to return to Europe but was able to come back to the reservation and school in the spring of 2009 with her three children, all tribal members. Even while in Europe, Isabel had been an enthusiastic and effective advocate and fund-raiser for the school.

Isabel, Patrice, and Tom discussed the procedures for managing the school, bookkeeping and

accounting, fund-raising, budgeting, and hiring practices. The financial records and practices were reviewed in detail. Tom and Patrice also spent time with the members of the school's board of trustees, discussing the history of the school, a master plan for future development, and how the school is managed. The original 1992 intention of the initiative—to have a true Lakota school, a Waldorf school with the Lakota culture and language at its heart—was reaffirmed.

After this second visit, Patrice helped the school apply for foundation support in North America. This has resulted in grants from, among others, the First Nations Foundation, RSF Social Finance, the Morris Foundation, and High Mowing Seeds for teacher education, a biodynamic garden, teachers' salaries, and a new school bus.

Tom and Patrice also visited nearby Oglala Lakota College (OLC) and met with the education department chair, Tom Raymond. Raymond recognized that Waldorf Education, as an experiential education with a spiritual basis, is in harmony with Lakota tradition.

As a result of these conversations, a two-week introductory course in Waldorf Education was held at OLC in September 2010. The course was funded by a foundation that chooses to remain anonymous. The ten participants included teachers and board members of the Lakota Waldorf School as well as homeschool teachers and tribal members. The group studied the philosophy behind the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy and took part in artistic, movement, and scientific activities. They did eurythmy, painted, drew with crayons, modeled cows, buffalo, and rabbits out of clay, played Choroí flutes, wove crowns of sage and wildflowers, and carried out electrical and chemical experiments from the upper grades scientific curriculum. The students also learned a traditional Lakota hand game.

Six persons from this group, all of them fluent in Lakota and immersed in Lakota culture, have expressed a desire to do a full Waldorf teacher training. The Association is working with Oglala Lakota College to create a viable Waldorf teacher education program that will provide the Lakota school with the teachers it needs. The college has recognized the Lakota Waldorf School as part of its language immersion program. This brings the



On “yellow” painting day, the children apply broad swaths of watercolor to moistened paper, as do children in Waldorf kindergartens all over the world.

school into a broader community of support as well as assistance with food and transportation.

Waldorf Education began in central Europe almost a century ago. At first glance, it can seem Eurocentric, even Germanocentric. But Waldorf Education is based on universal truths about human nature, human development, and human destiny. It flourishes today in more than ninety different countries and cultures. The existence of the Lakota Waldorf School and the enthusiasm with which Waldorf Education is being embraced by the people in the Lakota community are evidence of the universal nature of Waldorf Education and of the philosophy that lies behind it.

Toksa (pronounced “dokshah”) is the word the Lakota Native Americans use when they part. It means “See you again.” There is no word in Lakota for “goodbye.” We will all meet again.
TOKSA! ☺



LAURIE CLARK and PATRICE MAYNARD on a windy day on the reservation.

Home Sweet Home

The Cape Ann Waldorf School's Twenty-Year Search for a Permanent Site

BY JENNIFER HELMICK

Finding a suitable permanent site is one of the primary challenges for every Waldorf school. The following is the inspiring story of one school's long, but ultimately successful, quest.

—R. E. K.

The Cape Ann Waldorf School is located in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, a small coastal community north of Boston. Founded in 1987, the school, early in its history, expressed its intention regarding a campus:

The school will create a campus to support our vision of a fully enrolled preschool through eighth grade, offering a full Waldorf curriculum with high academic standards. Our new campus will be located in a setting that is generous and tranquil while allowing visibility and interaction with the surrounding community.

This vision proved difficult to manifest. In its first two years, the school was located in the beautiful oceanfront home of the school's founding benefactors. It then moved to a church adjacent to Moraine Farm, a 175-acre farm/park, where teachers often took their classes for walks on nature trails. Three years later, in 1991, the school rented a former parochial school building seven miles away.

For almost twenty years, the school remained in that location. The building possessed certain advantages, including high ceilings and abundant natural light, but could not accommodate all the classes and activities that belong to a full Waldorf program. Perhaps its greatest limitation was a lack of outdoor space, so that the older children had to use an asphalt playground for recess and gym. Nevertheless, teachers, children, and parents were able to imbue the building with that intangible "Waldorf magic." Prospective parents often remarked, "Something special is happening here."

Still, the impulse to obtain a permanent home was alive. The school actively sought properties that might be appropriate. Each time something promising was found, developers outbid the school in the "hot" real estate market that prevailed until 2007.

Then in January 2010, the school considered an opportunity to purchase a building and land from Project Adventure, a well-established outdoor education program based on Moraine Farm. The school's board of trustees wondered if enough money could be raised in time. The Cape Ann Waldorf School, like many independent Waldorf schools, had been hit hard by the recession. Families were struggling to stay in the school and the school budget was pared to the bone. But the trustees recognized the



For twenty years, the Cape Ann school community celebrated May Day and other outdoor festivals on the school's asphalt playground.

opportunity as the school's best chance for growth and sustainability, and decided to seize the moment. A small group of volunteers and staff with expertise and passion for various aspects of the project—architecture, law, fund-raising, finances, administration—stepped forward to shepherd the project through.

In March 2010, the board called a meeting of community members who had indicated a willingness to make major donations for a new campus in the past. The response was swift and generous. These individuals saw the possibilities in Moraine Farm and committed their financial support. A full capital campaign was launched in April, and hundreds of donations poured in—from six-figure sums to a jar of pennies collected by an enterprising younger student. Alumni families sent checks with notes expressing gratitude for the education received many years before. A prospective parent learned about the effort and directed to the campaign a \$200,000 matching grant from the Ibrahim El-Hefni Technical Training Foundation. In four months, the school achieved its initial goal, raising over \$1 million toward the purchase and initial renovation of the property.

But the work had just begun. There were negotiations to conclude, bank financing to obtain, a building addition to be designed and built, press releases to write, ceremonies to hold, a move to plan. The site team worked nonstop on these and countless other tasks, backed by the resources and will of the school community, and, in September 2010, the school finalized the purchase of its new home.

A beautiful new wing was added to the building over the next six months, so that the site could accommodate the school's full program offerings—parent and child classes, a full nursery program, two kindergarten classes, and grades



Pioneer landscape architect F. L. Olmsted understood the close relationship between the human being and the natural environment.



On “We Did It” Day, the school community celebrated the successful fund-raising campaign that made the purchase of the new school home possible.

one through eight. This project was accomplished on time and on budget, thanks to a top-notch design and construction team and the continuing generosity of donors. The school moved to Moraine Farm on April 15, 2011, and the opening day in its new home was April 25.

Among the factors that helped make the acquisition possible:

- The real estate market had cooled, and a conservation restriction meant that the property could be used only for educational purposes or a private residence.
- Earlier planning (and frustrations) had prepared the school for the opportunity. The school knew what it was looking for and was ready to act quickly when the property presented itself.
- The school had recently gone through a professionalization process—a restructuring in administration, personnel, finances, and communications—that was in effect a movement from a pioneer school to a mature, professional institution.
- The school entrusted a highly skilled site team to lead the effort. The parents, faculty, and administrators involved were willing to selflessly devote time, energy, and expertise.

Olmsted and Steiner: Complementary Visions

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) designed Moraine Farm. Olmsted, the founder of landscape architecture in the United States, spent his life creating means for translating humane, democratic



The purchased building. A new wing has been added to provide adequate space for the school.

ideals into environmental forms. He believed that parks and landscapes—“free air, space, and abundant vegetation”—provide a necessary respite from the harshness of urban life and that active recreation was key to individual creativity and productivity.¹ Olmsted created dozens of historically significant parks, country estates, and government buildings, including Stanford University, the grounds of the U.S. Capitol Building, Yosemite National Park, Boston’s “Emerald Necklace” of parks, and New York City’s Central Park.

Olmsted’s designs reflect his understanding of the powerful relationship between the human organism and the natural world. He made sure that his creations harmonized, rather than clashed, with the landscape. He avoided straight lines and sharp edges, which do not conform to how people actually move. Instead, he favored gradual transitions and gentle, almost imperceptible curves to guide movement through a landscape. Moraine Farm embodies Olmsted’s approach to design, with gentle transitions from forest to field and back again, an informal layout of buildings, and a conception of the property as serving both public and private purposes. Forestry work and research farming take place on the farm, and there is a private residence as well.

One might say that Olmsted’s work in landscape architecture parallels the work in architecture of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), the founder of Waldorf Education. Steiner believed that a building should present “an environment that will express the human being’s inner being in forms.”² Rounded forms, rather than right angles, are typical in Steiner’s architecture. He believed that buildings should be harmoniously adapted to the natural environment around them, should reflect the functions for which

they are intended, and should recognize the effects of color, forms, and spaces on the soul of the human being.

For the design of a new wing and other renovations, the school selected Flansburgh Architects of Boston, a firm that had worked with Waldorf schools and understood the potential synergies between Steiner and Olmsted. One of the firm’s architects spent time with teachers, students, and parents to learn what was important to the community in its current building and what it hoped for in a new home.

Among the things students mentioned was the school’s wide main hallway—how it is alive with laughter and activity and lets them sense what all the other students are doing. They loved how sunlight pours through the big windows, changing the classrooms over the course of the school day. And they said that their new school, like the old one, should have spaces to do serious work, to play, and to daydream. Parents expressed their own priorities, describing the value of both formal and informal meeting spaces for building community. The architects found that the school community prized “interstitial spaces”—the spaces in between the formal rooms—because they allow for the flow of activity and human interactions that are the lifeblood of the school.

The architects incorporated into their design the priorities and values they heard into their design. They also worked to bring the building into greater



Students, parents, teachers, staff, and friends of the school gathered on Groundbreaking Day.

harmony with Olmsted’s vision—for example, by setting the new wing at an angle, rather than orthogonally, to the existing building. Later planned phases of campus development will feature Olmsted’s and Steiner’s design principles—such as a gently curved entrance pathway, a fluid connection between outdoors and indoors, and integration of the planted landscape with the buildings—even more prominently.

A new part of the school’s mission is to be a steward for the farm. In this it will work with Project Adventure, which has been on the farm since 1999; the Essex County Greenbelt Organization, which oversees the farm’s conservation restrictions; the Batchelder Trust, which owns more than sixty acres of the farm and is committed to preserving the beauty and historic fabric of the property; and the Trustees of Reservations, the oldest land trust in Massachusetts, which will begin a community supported agriculture initiative on the farm in the 2011 growing season.

Acquiring a new home is not the end of a process; rather, it has brought the school to a new threshold. The Cape Ann Waldorf School’s responsibilities and partnerships at Moraine Farm are something new for a small school that has focused on its own development for a long time. The school now has the opportunity to more fully realize Waldorf Education, while working with its partners and the wider community in environmental education, recreation, festival life, conservation, historic preservation, and community supported agriculture. In this intersection of the school and the wider community lie countless possibilities, and challenges, as the school learns to work in new, collaborative ways, while striving to uphold the integrity of Waldorf Education and Olmsted’s vision for the land.



Historic Moraine Farm is the home not only of the school but of other organizations with like aspirations to serve children, the natural environment, and society.

For a longer version of this article and photos of the school’s expanded campus, visit capeannwaldorf.org



JENNIFER HELMICK came to the Cape Ann Waldorf School in 1992 as a parent and has volunteered and taught there ever since. She has also worked in environmental consulting for twenty-five years.

She studied the Waldorf approach to science as part of the first high school teacher training group at the Center for Anthroposophy in Wilton, New Hampshire. Jennifer is starting work on a nature study curriculum based on the treasures of Moraine Farm.

Notes

1. Albert Fen, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1972).
2. Rudolf Steiner, *Ways to a New Style in Architecture* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1927).

It’s Cool in the Furnace by Jackson Ruiz

Jackson Ruiz is a fifth grader in the Minneapolis City of Lakes Waldorf School. Last year, wanting to make a Valentine’s Day gift for his classmates, he recalled the class’s third-grade play, *It’s Cool in the Furnace*. The play is based on the story of the Israelite hero Daniel and the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Jackson, who loves drawing, turned the play into a graphic novel and, as he notes on the back cover, “changed [it] around a bit (not too much though).” His classmates loved Jackson’s rendering of the story, and Jackson and his family published it with a nice, glossy cover. *It’s Cool in the Furnace* is available from www.authorhouse.com (888-519-5121)—ISBN 978-1-4520-2634-3—for \$9.60.



5. Be the boss

The boss meant here is not the cruel, tyrannical boot camp officer kind of boss. Rather it is the boss who understands and is comfortable with the leadership and the authoritative role of a parent. “Because I say so” is not a good mantram for all parenting and home situations, but it definitely has its place at times.

6. Buy less for the children

This is as difficult as it is obviously true. For one week keep track of how much you spend on the children—including toys, books, school supplies, clothing, snacks, treats, sports equipment, entertainment, learning enrichment, music lessons. The total may surprise (and motivate) you.

7. Buy less for yourself as well

Some parents roll their eyes at their children’s appetite for stuff and the latest fad item. Meanwhile, they themselves are ardent shoppers and consumers and lament that they do not have bigger homes, better cars, and more exotic vacations. Parents are the most significant role models for children. A child will notice if a parent is always browsing the Internet for a good buy.

8. Reward sincere effort

The self-esteem movement was a failure. Children do not gain self-confidence from shallow flattery and from trophies for accomplishing little or nothing. Encourage your child in his striving to meet the challenges he encounters. Acknowledge and praise the effort, even if it may fall short.

9. Invest time in your children

Engage in family activities and seek experiences that, rather than costing money, involve time: bike riding, hiking, gardening, building a birdhouse, working on projects around the home, or doing volunteer work in the community. We perhaps should be spending less time at the mall and more in the woods or at the park.

10. Persist

Children will inevitably protest and resist the unspooling process. Be prepared to stand up against the easy tears and earthshaking tantrums. Helping your child to be less self-centered, to be satisfied with little rather than dissatisfied with much, to accede when appropriate to the will of a caring adult, is a different kind of gift that will last a lifetime.

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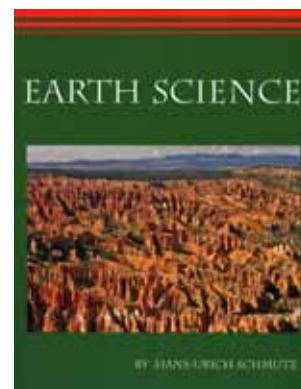
Book Review

Earth Science

BY HANS-ULRICH SCHMUTZ, PhD

REVIEWED BY RONALD KOETZSCH

Many Waldorf parents and Waldorf teachers regret that they themselves did not receive a Waldorf education. But parts of the Waldorf curriculum can be studied and experienced at any age. *Earth Science*, by Hans-Ulrich Schmutz, although meant as a guide for Waldorf high school science teachers, gives any rueful adult the opportunity to work through the rich Waldorf earth science curriculum for grades nine through twelve.



Schmutz studied geology at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and later taught geography and technology for eighteen years at a Waldorf school near Zurich. In *Earth Science* he has distilled his knowledge and experience and provided a step-by-step guide for covering the various earth science topics in the high school.

The book contains informative and interesting sections on geology; “the earth in motion”—the circulation of water and wind and plate tectonics; crystallography and the seven crystal system; surveying; astronomy; the economy of energy—renewable and nonrenewable sources; paleontology, anthropology, and evolution; and nutrition in the world economy.

Although the subject matter is often technical in nature, the writing is clear and understandable. Schmutz’s treatment of these topics is rigorous and scientific but consistently points to the living relationship between Earth and the human being. It is also imbued with a sense of wonder and gratitude at the marvelous, beautiful, and complex planet on which we human beings live.

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