FALL/WINTER 2013 – VOLUME 22, NUMBER 2

Renewal

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

Fifty Years of Waldorf Education for Children with Special Needs • Tweeting Waldorf • Current Research Supports Waldorf Methods • The Modern Lyre in the Classroom

Charles Rose
Waldorf School of Garden City, Class of 1978

Charles Rose was born in New York City in 1960 and grew up in Garden City, Long Island. He attended the Waldorf School of Garden City (founded 1947) from preschool through twelfth grade. During Charles's time at the school, his father, George Rose, was the music teacher. After Charles graduated, his mother, Faith Rose, became one of the school's class teachers. Charles attended Princeton University, intending to study physics but, in the end, majored in architecture, graduating in 1983. In 1987 he received his MA in architecture from Harvard and soon after began his first project: The Hartsbrook School, a Waldorf school in Hadley, Massachusetts. For the next decade, Charles pursued both the practice and the teaching of architecture, the latter at MIT, Harvard, Rice University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Virginia. He gave up teaching and in recent years has established an international reputation as a designer of homes as well as of buildings for schools, universities, corporations, federal and state agencies, and art institutions. His firm, Charles Rose Architects, is located in Somerville, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. Charles lives in Belmont, Massachusetts.

Charles Rose

For the first eighteen years of my life I was deeply influenced by my Waldorf education and community. I was fortunate to have Susl Berlin as my class teacher and learned much from her with respect to both intellectual expression and the pursuit of excellence. She was at once kind and demanding and had a keen understanding of a broad range of disciplines. She also, through the pedagogy, taught me a great deal about process—lessons I still use on a daily basis.

Michael S. Currier Performing Arts Center
The Putney School, Putney, Vermont

I was deeply embedded in the school: My four siblings also were "lifers," and my father, George Rose, was a beloved teacher and a pillar of the school community. He understood artistic expression and nurtured the artist within each student. From him, we learned to trust our sense of the intuitive—a critical aspect of my formal design work today. Having my father on the school's faculty was, of course, a mixed blessing: I dreaded Thursday evenings, when after faculty meetings, he would come home shaking his head after having heard tales from other teachers about my exploits during the preceding week.

I have often said that the best training for an architect is a Waldorf education. Architecture requires a broad range of interests and abilities, and the Waldorf curriculum strengthens all of the required attributes. Spatial aptitude and understanding is very hard to teach and yet critical for an architect. While I never was the model eurythmy student, in retrospect, I realize that I gained much from Leonore Russell's eurythmy classes. We often misbehaved in class—especially when the copper rods were involved! Occasionally, when we were supposed

Background photo by John Linden: Muenster University Center, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD; photo at lower left by Greg Premru

COVER PHOTO: *Music therapist Elsbeth Sunstein and a fifth-grade student at Camphill Special School, Glenmoore, PA, during a therapeutic session with the kinderlyre. Photo by Emma Peabody*

toss the copper eurythmy rods to each other, we would toss them all at Leonore! No wonder I often had to stay after school for extra eurythmy. But it all did sink in, really! And eurythmy has influenced my architecture. Like eurythmy, much of my firm's work celebrates movement in space and is a composition of (architectural) gestures that relate to the human being. Some people experience them as unfolding in space. Besides, it may not be a coincidence that many of my buildings are constructed of copper. From veil painting, I understood the power and subtlety of color; I am very aware of color and light in my work.

Landscape architecture, sustainability, and alternative energy are all interests of mine. I try to design buildings that resonate, that fit in with the natural environment. I guess I have a strong sense of stewardship—of being responsible for the natural world and wanting to care for it. This attitude was probably inevitable, given the amount of time we spent gardening and building compost piles at school. The Waldorf approach to natural science also played a role. Our study of plants, animals, and of the natural world was based on observation and the cultivation of a deep appreciation and reverence for nature. I found a totally different approach when I went to Princeton. Instead of observing and experiencing nature, we plowed through textbooks and abstractions. That helped propel me out of physics into my architecture major. My minor at Princeton was "watching television," as I tried to make up in four years what I had missed throughout my childhood!

Chilmark Guest House
Chilmark, Cape Cod, Massachusetts

In architecture, one can design a building that blends in with the surroundings, either in a city or in a natural setting. Or one can design a building that stands out and says, "Hey, look at me. I am different!" Sometimes a building is meant to complement another nearby building. Sometimes a building is meant to make a statement, to be a rallying point, an iconic symbol for a school or organization. So I work with those polarities, depending on the situation and the requests of the client. It requires a certain flexibility of imagination that the Waldorf curriculum is meant to develop.

John T. Olver Transportation Center, Greenfield, Massachusetts, a "netzero energy" building that, in the course of a year, produces as much energy as it consumes

The work that my firm does is highly collaborative. I have fifteen other architects in my firm and typically work with one of them on a given project. We spend a lot of time consulting with the client, brainstorming, sketching, and exchanging ideas until we have something that everyone is happy with. The social skills I and my Waldorf classmates had to develop during our years together may not be irrelevant here.

Waldorf didn't prepare me for everything, however. Several years ago, I was driving with my son and received a phone call from rap star Kanye West. He said he was interested in commissioning us for a project. I said his name out loud and then asked what he did—since I had never heard of him. My young son reached over from the passenger seat and punched me hard on the shoulder. "It's Kanye West! He's famous!"

A Waldorf education may be the best preparation for becoming an architect, but it doesn't prepare you for becoming an expert on pop culture. ʘ

The New York City penthouse of violinist Joshua Bell—an all-Waldorf project. Designer: Charles Rose, Waldorf School of Garden City, Class of 1978. Builder: Elliot Berkowitz, Green Meadow Waldorf School, Spring Valley, New York, Class of 1992.

Photo at left by Bruce Martin; photo at upper right by Peter Vanderwarker; photo at lower right by Chuck Choi

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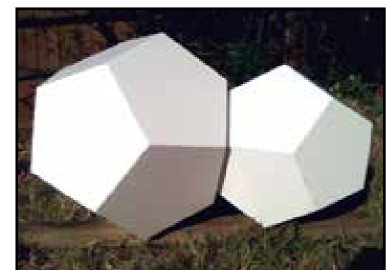

Ronald E. Koetzsch

Model of the Goetheanum Foundation Stone, made by Brian Gray

Jill Miller

Holding the speaking ball in a Restorative Practices discussion

From the Editor

Camphill Copake, Waldorf Education, and *Homo tweetus*

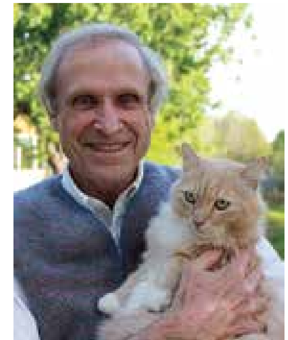
BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

In the spring of 1970, I traveled from Cambridge, Massachusetts, where I was in graduate school, to Camphill Village Copake, near Albany, New York. I went to visit a friend who was working there. I knew nothing about the community or what lay behind it, but that brief visit changed the course of my life.

At that time, Camphill Village Copake consisted of about 150 people. There were perhaps sixty adults (villagers) with various developmental disabilities, including Down syndrome and autism. There were also about that number of co-workers, plus their children. The villagers, the co-workers, and the children lived together in large houses. In each house, two co-workers, typically a married couple, served as house parents to perhaps five to seven villagers. The residents of each house lived and ate together as a family. The village was in a beautiful country setting, surrounded by woods and fields. It included a working farm with cows and other animals as well as extensive vegetable gardens and an orchard. There were several workshops, including a woodshop and a weavery. The villagers worked alongside co-workers in the shops, producing items including wooden toys and woven products, for sale in the village store. There was also a bakery making various whole grain breads for sale and for consumption in the village.

Carlo Pietzner (1915–1986), pioneer of the Camphill movement in North America, founder of Camphill Village Copake and Camphill Special School

I still remember clearly many things from that visit: the beauty and peacefulness of the landscape, the light- and color-filled houses, the delicious bread, the prayer of gratitude spoken before each meal, the apple trees coming into bud, and the cows grazing in a meadow among spring flowers. But what impressed me most then was the mutual love and respect that existed between the villagers and the co-workers. A palpable, emotional warmth permeated the whole community. That warmth was especially evident in the person of Carlo Pietzner, then director of the village. Carlo was the first anthroposophist whom I ever met.



On the way home, I resolved to find out more about the village and what lay behind it. That research soon led me to Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy and in time to Waldorf Education, biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophically extended medicine, and the other practical applications that were initiated by Steiner. It puzzled me (and still does) that, in my four years of study of religion and philosophy in college and my years of graduate work in world religions, Rudolf Steiner, his worldview, and his practical legacy in the world were never mentioned.

In time, I also discovered Camphill Special School, a Waldorf school in Pennsylvania that serves students with developmental challenges and special needs. The school was founded in 1963. For five decades it has demonstrated how the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy can be powerful therapeutic tools, encouraging healthy development in children who must struggle with the basic activities of daily life. Today, when the challenges of daily life are increasing for every human being, Camphill Special School's healing educational work has something of value for all of us.

As noted in at least two of the articles in this issue of *Renewal*, the digital revolution is effecting basic changes in how we live—how we relate to the natural world, to each other, and to ourselves. A

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Taking Our Own Path and Flourishing

BY BEVERLY AMICO, Leader for Outreach and Development, AWSNA

The educational world today is awash with achievement-oriented programs and with systems to measure student achievement and school success. Anyone interested in education is familiar with No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, Common Core Standards, and PISA—the Program for International Student Assessment. Mainstream education is dominated by early academics, rigid curricula, high-stakes testing, computers in the classroom, and the idea that the earlier one can get e-tablets in the hands of children, the better.

In the face of this, we in Waldorf Education allow young children to play and to live in the kingdom of childhood, honor the development of the child through the grades, emphasize human face-to-face relationships, and put off computers and tests until children are ready for them. And although we are a (very small) David, standing before a (very large) Goliath, we are flourishing.

Beverly Amico

The percentage of students attending independent schools in North America has declined, over the past several years. This is in part due to the recent economic recession in the United States. Nevertheless, Waldorf Education remains strong. There are about 150 independent Waldorf schools in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. And, as Waldorf principles and practices become increasingly part of the collective consciousness, other schools, including public magnet and charter schools, are adopting aspects of our Waldorf approach. The movement is growing globally, especially in South America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. Today, there are more than 1000 Waldorf schools in about sixty countries.

There are several reasons for this. Our independence is of enormous benefit. Independent Waldorf schools are not subject to government and bureaucratic interference. They are able, therefore, to implement the Waldorf educational philosophy and method, which has a record of success of almost a century.

Waldorf Education's integrated approach to learning builds capacities and skills essential for success in a career and in life: critical thinking, creative sensitivity, the ability to synthesize divergent perspectives and influences, appreciation of varied viewpoints, and respect for individual experience. Professors in various academic disciplines and in a wide range of colleges and universities who have had Waldorf graduates as students corroborate this. They note that Waldorf graduates have the ability to integrate and assimilate information (as opposed to memorizing isolated facts), are willing to take intellectual risks, and are leaders who take initiative.

Despite our relatively small size, Waldorf Education has gained prominence in the general discourse on education. High-profile media coverage and positive public response have increased public recognition and interest. This interest has been enhanced by recent and ongoing research that supports Waldorf pedagogy. Studies have found positive correlations between mainstays of a Waldorf schooling—focused academic blocks, the arts, music, and handcrafts—with intelligence, memory, and academic success. [Please see page 38 of this issue.]

Another factor in our ongoing strength and growth is the success of thousands of graduates of Waldorf schools in the United States, Canada, and Mexico in meeting the challenges of modern life. The vast majority of Waldorf graduates go to college, and a high percentage of those go on to graduate or professional school. They are educators, health professionals, entrepreneurs, social workers, lawyers, architects, artists, engineers, and farmers, and are often innovators and pioneers in their fields. Surveys indicate that Waldorf alumni value service and lasting human relationships, and practice lifelong learning. They are active participants in community and civic life and carry high ethical principles into their chosen professions.

We in Waldorf Education have something essential and important to contribute to the ongoing basic discussions in education. An essential part of our task here at the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America is to make our voice heard.

Camphill Special School

Fifty Years of Serving Children with Special Needs

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

It is just before 9:00 a.m. on a brisk school day morning in October. Children are arriving at a large school building surrounded by woods ablaze with autumn color and by the meadows and fields of an adjacent farm. Some of the children have walked from nearby residential homes, and some, who live in the area, are dropped off by parents or arrive by bus. They are about to begin a typical Waldorf school day in lazured classrooms. They will have a main lesson—with the first graders perhaps being told a fairy tale and with the fifth graders learning something about ancient Greece. Their day will also include eurythmy, singing, handwork, painting, and other standard Waldorf classes and activities.

Classroom building, Camphill Special School, Glenmoore, Pennsylvania, constructed in 1975

The school is a Waldorf school and the children are bona fide Waldorf students, but this school is unique in North America. The Camphill Special School in Glenmoore, Pennsylvania, is the only Waldorf school on the continent dedicated to the education of children with special needs. Its student body includes children and adolescents with Down syndrome, autism, ADHD, and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Although the school was founded in 1963, its roots are farther in the past. In the years before his death in 1925, when he was creating the template for Waldorf Education at the first school in Stuttgart, Germany, Rudolf Steiner was also giving indications on ways to care for and to educate what he called "children in need of special soul care." Several small initiatives were begun in Germany, and then a home for such children, Sonnenhof, was founded in Arlesheim, Switzerland, right next to Dornach, the seat of Steiner's anthroposophical movement. Sonnenhof is still in operation.

Steiner had a number of remarkable insights about persons "in need of special soul care." He held that they are fully endowed with the four aspects of the human being—a physical body, an etheric or life-formative body, an astral body, and a higher spiritual self, or Ego. Thus, they are potentially capable of exercising the soul activities of thinking, feeling, and willing in a normal way, as well as directing their lives from their higher self. However, some problem or dysfunction in the physical and/or the etheric body does not allow the higher functions to manifest fully and unimpeded. Therapies that impact the physical and etheric bodies can result in change and improvement. Steiner also said that being born with such a compromised condition is not the result of "bad karma" from a former human incarnation. Rather, it is done as a free, self-sacrificial act of the individuality, with the aim of teaching others the true meaning of love.

Karl Koenig (1902–1966), founder of the international Camphill movement

The most fruitful impetus in this work came a few years later from an Austrian pediatrician named Karl Koenig. Although a serious student of Anthroposophy, Koenig never met Steiner. He was deeply affected, though, by Steiner's teaching about "special children." Koenig once attended an Advent Garden at the Sonnenhof clinic in Arlesheim. The Advent Garden is a Christmastime event in which each child walks a candlelit spiral of evergreen boughs and then lights and places his or her own candle. As Koenig watched the children walking the spiral, he decided to dedicate his life to working with children with special needs. At that time, the idea that "handicapped" children

Many thanks to Margo Ketchum and to Ginny Thimme for help with the text and photos for this article

Eighth graders in costume for The Merchant of Venice

could be educated and should go to school was virtually unknown. In the United States, it was only in 1975 that the right of such children to be educated was recognized by federal law.

Koenig gathered a small group of idealistic young people around him in Vienna and began the work on a modest scale. By this time, it was the late 1930s, and the dark clouds of fascism were covering Central Europe. Koenig and most of his co-workers left Austria and emigrated to Scotland with the express intention of establishing their work there. On March 30, 1939, they moved into Kirkton House near Aberdeen with a handful of "special children," and Camphill was born. The initiative faced considerable difficulties during the war. All the men were interned as potential enemies of Great Britain, and the women had to run the school alone. After the war, though, Camphill schools and adult communities were established elsewhere in Great Britain and on the Continent.

The forerunner for Camphill Special School was a small school in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, founded in the late 1950s and run by anthroposophists Gladys and Bill Hahn. Koenig visited the United States and Canada in 1960, giving lectures and meeting parents of children with special needs. Then he sent one of his co-workers, Carlo Pietzner, to expand the work. By 1962, there were two houses, the one in Downingtown and one in nearby Donegal Springs, but they were bursting at the seams. By 1963, a new site—the present one in Glenmoore—had been found and on December 9, 1963, the fifteen children from Downingtown, the Pietzner family, and the co-workers moved in. Until more structures were built, including the schoolhouse (1975), everyone ate, slept, went to school, had therapies, and celebrated festivals in the one main house.

Today, Camphill Special School has 107 children in grades one through twelve. Sixty-seven of the children live in eleven residential homes, eight of which are on the school campus and three on the nearby farm that is now part of the school. The forty day-students live in the area with their families. Many of the families have relocated from other parts of the country so that their child can attend Camphill Special School. Some have come from abroad, including from Nigeria, Jamaica, Europe, and the United Arab Emirates. There is also a small "integrated" kindergarten, which includes children of staff and local children, as well as children with special needs.

High school students learn about money and making and taking change.

The residential homes function as extended families. In each house, there is typically a couple who serve as house parents, plus their own children, plus a number of the students. The day-students are assigned to a home, where they take their lunch each school day. Some of the house parents also serve as teachers in the schools. Some have other roles within the community. The school campus, much of which is wooded, comprises eighty-two acres. The school's adjacent working farm is fifty acres, with cows, pigs, sheep, and other animals, plus vegetable gardens, an orchard, fields, meadows, and woods.

In the school, the classes are small, usually with between six and eight students in the lower grades and eight to twelve students in the middle and high school grades. The level of functioning of the students describes a broad spectrum. However, regardless of their condition, children are in classes with children of their own age. There is no grouping according to ability.

Handcrafts, including woodworking, are an important part of the curriculum through the grades.

In the elementary school, the children receive the standard Waldorf curriculum. As third-grade teacher Ginny Thimme relates, however: "I have to go fairly slowly. I

have to pick out the archetypal element from each block and work with it until the children really can absorb it. For example, while in a regular Waldorf first grade the children typically work with a fairy tale for three days, here it might occupy us for three weeks." Ginny Thimme continues: "Math tends to fall out a bit. Generally, the lower school children have to work long and hard to grasp the four basic math operations, plus money and time. But they get all the academic subjects, reading and writing, history, and geography, plus music, singing, orchestra, eurythmy, painting, and drawing. Each class also puts on a play each year, with the eighth grade sometimes doing Shakespeare."

In addition, the students receive physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. Further, they have the range of anthroposophical therapies, including music therapy, oil-dispersion baths, colored light therapy, and therapeutic eurythmy. The individual sessions, which last between twenty and thirty minutes, often require that the student leave the class. Ginny Thimme notes: "It makes it a bit challenging to have the students popping in and out of the classroom during a lesson." Each year every student is assessed by the teachers and by an MD trained in anthroposophical medicine and is prescribed an individual treatment plan.

State funding for special-needs children ends when they reach twenty-one. Thus, when the students enter high school, attention is paid to their eventual need to make their way in the world. In the high school, their academic studies and artistic work continue, but the students also learn woodworking, weaving, pottery, baking, and other skills that may in time provide meaningful work. They also have "life skills" training, learning how to go shopping, negotiate public transport, and the like. The twelfth grade culminates, as in most other Waldorf schools, with a major dramatic production, such as *Faust*, *Parzival*, or the Gilgamesh epic.

Learning to weave has a therapeutic value as well as a possible vocational one. Some of the students will in time move to an adult Camphill community where woven products are made.

A teacher and a high school student toss a beanbag to increase eye-hand coordination, while Mephistopheles and Goethe's Faust look on.

Recently, Camphill Special School began a transition program for young people who have graduated from high school but have not yet reached their crucial twenty-first birthday. Those in the program work on the school's farm, but also receive job- and life-coaching to help them and their families decide on their next step in life.

On December 9, 2013, Camphill Special School celebrates its fiftieth birthday. Part of the celebration will be a telling of Oscar Wilde's beautiful children's story *The Selfish Giant*. In the story, a giant who once selfishly kept his beautiful garden to himself, chasing away the children, is transformed by compassion and love, and has a glimpse before his death of the cosmic Being of Love. All the children in the school will take part. For a community founded on compassion and selfless love, the story is most appropriate.

The school has a working farm, where the students acquire the skills of farming, including the care of the animals.

RONALD E. KOETZSCH, *editor of* Renewal, *is a graduate of Princeton University (BA) and Harvard University (MA and PhD in World Religions). Ronald currently is dean of students and a member of the faculty at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California.*

Photo at lower left and photo at lower right by Kristin Chalmers

Media Overload, Continuous Partial Attention, and Three-Day Oatmeal

A Special Education Teacher Reflects on a New Acronym

BY GINNY THIMME, MA

In the world of special education, we are used to acronyms. Our students are diagnosed with ADD (attention deficit disorder) or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) or OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder). They are prescribed PT (physical therapy) or OT (occupational therapy) or a TSS (therapeutic staff support). As part of their IEP (individualized education program), they might need a BIP (behavior intervention plan). The students probably have SDI (specially designed instruction), and it is hoped they qualify for ESY (extended school year) or an AAC (augmented and alternative communication) device. They are, after all, living in a country called the USA!

A relatively new acronym on the scene is CPA—continuous partial attention syndrome. The term was first used in 1998 by Microsoft researcher Linda Stone. Today, all of us—children, teens, and adults—are constantly bombarded with information, most of it digital in nature. One way we cope with this is by multitasking. Preteens and teens, having grown up in this electronic world, are especially skilled—simultaneously doing their homework, listening to music, texting on their phone, and updating their Facebook page. Multitasking helps us develop the ability to pay (partial) attention to several things at the same time. However, it undermines the ability to focus on one thing for any length of time.

We and our children are getting skilled at doing many things at the same time, but perhaps none of them very well.

The writer and a student use a hand mill to turn whole oat grains into oat flakes.

Educators today are finding that children are very skilled at manipulating their electronic gadgets and accessing copious amounts of information, but they are not so good at comprehending that information and reflecting upon it, synthesizing it, applying it to new situations, or relating it to past experiences. In essence, they are not digesting what they are taking in, they are not fully engaged, and they are not making connections. The growing incidence of CPA syndrome may explain the ever-growing numbers of children diagnosed with attention deficit disorder.

Students in Waldorf schools are more fortunate in this regard than most of their peers. Their classrooms are free of electronic paraphernalia. Most subjects are taught in blocks, so that for two or three weeks the students have an extended morning class (main lesson) focusing on a single topic. In addition, the students do eurythmy, paint, sing, play musical instruments, do handcrafts, work in a garden—each of which requires and develops the ability to focus and to hold focus.

Further, lessons are structured into a three-day rhythm. On the first day, the students hear new content; on the second day (after sleeping on the new content), they recall and review that content; and, on the third day, when they have truly digested

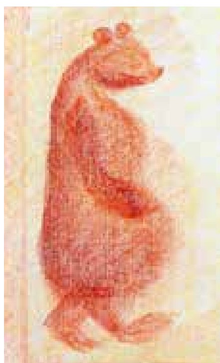
Photos courtesy of Ginny Thimme and Camphill Special School

everything, they are asked to write or draw something connected to the content of the lesson. The structure of the main lesson blocks and the three-day rhythm help students concentrate on a particular subject for an extended period of time. They also strengthen powers of reflection and the assimilation of knowledge.

In my first-grade class at Camphill Special School, we worked with the story "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." On the first day, I told them the story with puppets and using three beds, three chairs, and three bowls made out of beeswax. On the second day, the children helped to retell the story by showing me what happened next in the story with words, signs, gestures, pictures, and symbols, and by moving the puppets. Then, on the third, day we drew bears and the letter "B" in our books. We also flaked whole oat grains, soaked them overnight, and made oat porridge.

From the story of Goldilocks, the Mama Bear, Papa Bear, Baby Bear, and their three empty porridge bowls

After telling the story to the children, and sleeping and reflecting on it, I realized that Mother Bear makes the porridge, but because it is too hot to eat, the three bears go for a walk first. I imagined Baby Bear walking in the woods dreaming about the porridge that was waiting for him at home, and I thought: That's probably why he gets so upset when he discovers that Goldilocks has eaten up his breakfast. He has already imagined himself eating it!



The body profile, including ample tummy, of a well-fed bear prepare the children to learn the letter B

This little revelation about the story led me to think: Why not make a three-day rhythm with food? Many children and adults these days have problems not only taking in information, understanding it, and making good use of it, they also have difficulty digesting and making good use of food. So much food today is "fast food," prepared and eaten in a hurry.

So in my first-grade class we developed a three-day rhythm with our porridge. On Tuesdays we flake the oat grains, using a special German hand mill with two circular stone rollers. On Wednesdays we soak our flaked oats in water with a little salt and leave them overnight. And on Thursdays we cook up the oats into porridge and eat it with a little coconut milk and some agave syrup. Yum! Yum! Before I began this three-day rhythm, some of the students in the class simply wouldn't eat their porridge, but now everyone eats it up, and most children ask for more.

Before morning snack in the first grade, teachers and students join hands and say a blessing.

Now as I watch over my students, I make sure that they are eating up their lessons in the same way that they are eating up their porridge: not too fast and not too slow, and with plenty of time to sleep in between and digest what has been taught and look forward to what is to come. Continuous partial attention (CPA) syndrome may be endemic in today's culture, but with even small gestures we can help our children live balanced, unhurried lives. ⊙

GINNY THIMME, *a native of England, has been a class teacher at Camphill Special School in Glenmoore, Pennsylvania, for thirteen years. She has a BA in English Literature, an MA in Waldorf Education, and is a certified Special Educator. Camphill Special School, the only Waldorf School in North America exclusively serving students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, celebrates its fiftieth birthday this year on December 9, 2013.*

In the Footsteps of Orpheus

The Modern Lyre

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI, MA

A modern soprano lyre made by Anton Rostislav, Czech Republic

The children chatter away as they sit with their parents, everyone crowded near the stage, awaiting the start of the holiday fair puppet show. Suddenly, the sound of a stringed instrument brings a halt to all activity. The children shush each other, bringing a stillness to the darkened space. In a few moments, the stroking of the strings of the lyre has transformed the mood from one of raucous excitement to one of both peace and wonder. One little girl whispers to her mother, "Mommy, it's magic!"

The lyre is usually pictured as an instrument of the distant past or as the signature instrument of angels, nymphs, and cupids. But a modern incarnation of the instrument exists and plays an important role in Waldorf schools and elsewhere. In fact, the story of the revival of this ancient instrument is one that is intertwined with the development of Waldorf Education.

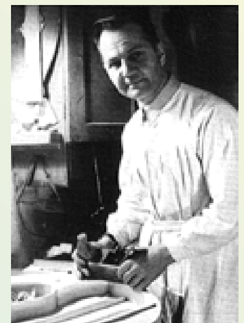
Apollo, as leader of the nine Muses, was the special patron of music and art.

Historical references to the stringed instrument that resembles a bow date back to ancient Egypt around 4000 BC. The first archeological remains of the lyre come from Ur in Mesopotamia circa 2500 BC. However, in the popular imagination, the lyre is most closely associated with ancient Greece. The invention of the lyre is usually attributed to Apollo, but sometimes to his younger brother Hermes. However, Apollo as god of music, prophecy, and wisdom is most closely connected to the instrument. The hero Orpheus, who braved the Underworld to rescue his lover Eurydice, was known for his skill on the lyre. As Shakespeare wrote, using his contemporary term "lute" to denote the ancient lyre:

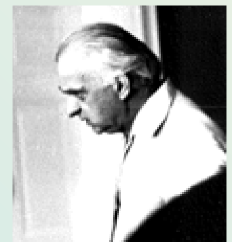
> Orpheus with his lute made trees
> And the mountain tops that freeze
> Bow themselves when he did sing …

Steinway & Sons, founded in New York in 1853, and one of the leading makers of pianos in the world, places the image of the ancient lyre on each of its instruments.

The lyre continued to have an important role in Western music into the Middle Ages. But the development of the harp and other instruments such as the gitarra led to its decline. In a lyre, the strings run parallel to the sounding board—usually a tortoise shell in the ancient examples. The strings are attached to the board at two more points. In the harp, the strings are perpendicular to the soundboard and come directly out of it. This arrangement produces a louder sound and for certain purposes and for a time made the harp a more attractive instrument. Versions of the lyre have continued among the folk musicians of the Middle East, Ethiopia, and Uganda, relics of the instrument's introduction from Egypt long ago. By modern times, however, the lyre had virtually disappeared in the West, surviving primarily as an icon rather than as an instrument that is commonly seen or played. Its image is seen decorating classical music halls and, notably, remains the signature logo that appears on all Steinway & Sons pianos.



Lothar Gärtner, sculptor and instrument maker, (1902–1979)



Edmund Pracht, musician and instrument maker, (1898–1974)

Thanks to Christof-Andreas Lindenberg, composer, lyrist, music therapist, and teacher, for the photos of Pracht and Gärtner and for other help with this article.

In 1912, Rudolf Steiner pointed to the need to create new musical instruments to reflect the changing consciousness of the modern human being. After Steiner's death in 1925, interest in reinventing the lyre was sparked in two of his students, Edmund Pracht, a musician, and Lothar Gärtner, a sculptor. Both in their twenties, the two men developed a prototype for a new, simple, chromatic, stringed instrument. While Pracht and Gärtner used the name of the ancient lyre, what they developed was not just a modern replica but something truly new. The new lyre soon went into production with four different models—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The soprano was and remains the most popular version. Since then, a large and ever-growing body of music has been written specifically for the lyre and includes compositions for both solo and ensemble playing. Pracht and Gärtner envisioned that the lyre would become the preferred instrument for music to accompany eurythmy, the new art of movement developed by Steiner. The lyre is used today for that purpose, but it is appreciated and used today in other contexts as well.

The position of the strings in relation to the soundboard is one basic difference between the lyre and the harp. But there are others. Although there are small lap harps, most harps are too large to hold and typically stand on the ground. While there are very large lyres, the great majority are small enough to be held on the lap and be supported by one hand. A harp may have metal, gut, or nylon strings. Lyres today always have metal strings, which are needed to produce an adequate volume. The harp's strings are plucked with curled fingers in order to produce the tone. With the lyre, the fingers are mostly straight and the strings are stroked, the tone being created when the fingertips gently release the strings.

Orpheus received his lyre as a gift from Apollo, who also taught him to play.

The sound of the harp can be similar to that of the lyre, but, in general, its tone is more brilliant. The sound of the lyre is lighter and more modest. As such, the lyre does not demand the attention of the

A Waldorf kindergarten teacher accompanies the telling of a story with the sweet tones of a kinderlyre.

listener as do many other instruments. Its sounds are soft and gentle and pleasantly envelop or wash over the listener. The tone quality is pure and inviting. A music therapist in Germany, Suzanne Reinhold, describes the lyre's sounding as "both liberating and furthering a more inward experience."

The "Mood of the Fifth"

According to the legends of the ancient Greeks, the poet and seer Orpheus, who had received his lyre as a gift from Apollo, was able to calm the wild beasts with his mournful playing. In the Bible story, David was said to soothe Saul with his playing "whenever the evil was upon him."

Today, particularly in Waldorf preschools and kindergartens, the lyre is used as an effective means to help children calm down and relax and to regain focus. At naptime, the music of the instrument can help the children make the transition from boisterous activity to rest and to sleep. Many mothers in Waldorf circles have taken up the "kinderharp" or "kinderlyre." The kinderharp is a small, inexpensive lyre without a sounding board, which, when gently stroked, can help an infant or small child fall asleep.

Part of the reason for the kinderlyre's marvelous effect on the young child is that this small lyre is tuned to the pentatonic scale. The pentatonic scale has five notes rather than the seven of the diatonic scale. It was used in many ancient cultures, including in Egypt and Greece, and continues in modern times in various folk music traditions and in Western children's songs. A pentatonic scale is derived from ascending fifths—or five steps up the scale. The interval of the fifth has a harmonious sound with an extremely open quality, which speaks directly to the heart.

The commonly used pentatonic scale, DEGABDE, weaves around the central note A. The sequence of

Photo at upper right by Barbara Holloway and courtesy of Emerson Waldorf School

A fourth-grade class at the Emerson Waldorf School in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, learning to play the lyre.

fifths in this scale begins with the note G. The note D is a fifth above G, and the intervals from D to A, from A to E, and from E to B are also ascending fifths. Thus the pentatonic scale is characterized by what Rudolf Steiner called the "mood of the fifth," which has an ancient and dreamlike quality.

One can improvise a tune using the five notes of a pentatonic scale and there will never be a wrong-sounding note. Nor is there a note that resolves the tune or brings it to a conclusive end. The melodies can go on and on and then just fade away into quiet. The effect is one of never quite being pulled to Earth, of always just floating. Rudolf Steiner felt that for the child before third grade, songs and melodies using the pentatonic scale, rather than the major and minor scales, encourage and enable young children to remain in the dreamy state that is natural and appropriate for them at their stage of development.

In the preschool, kindergarten, and early grades of a Waldorf school, maintaining this "mood of the fifth" is considered very important. It allows the child's life forces and energy to be used in building strong internal organs and a healthy physical body. It keeps those forces and energy from being diverted too early into premature intellectual development. Surrounding the child with melodies in the mood of the fifth helps to keep a child as a child until he or she is ready for the next developmental stage.

In view of the effect that music has on young children, parents must deal with the question: Should I expose my child to mainstream music and songs (even children's songs) that are certainly not in the "mood of the fifth"? Besides the fact that this sort of sheltering is practically impossible today, one would not want to deprive the choleric child from being allowed to bang on a percussive instrument, nor to miss out on the family singing of favorite children's songs that are not pentatonic. One can, though, create experiences with live music in the family and as much as possible avoid recorded music with infants and young children.

Having a small pentatonic kinderharp in the home can be helpful. Gently sweeping across the strings with the fingertips creates a pleasing wave of sound. And since it is impossible to play a wrong note, a parent can easily improvise a soothing melody. The lyre can be used to settle a child at bedtime, to comfort a distressed or sick child, or simply to create a peaceful shared moment for parents and child. It also helps the child to be creative and centered.

The lyre is also an excellent instrument for a child to learn to play. Young children can improvise on the pentatonic lyre. Older children—from the fourth grade—can learn to play pieces on the diatonic lyre. In North America, most Waldorf schools teach the recorder as a first musical instrument. In many European Waldorf schools, however, the children have the lyre as their first instrument. For example, since receiving a gift set of lyres from the Bochum School in Germany some years ago, the Holywood Steiner School outside of Belfast in Northern Ireland has maintained a tradition of lyre playing in their classes. An increasing number of schools in North America, including the Emerson Waldorf School in North Carolina, have their children learn both the lyre and the recorder in the early grades.

A variety of suitable school lyres are currently available from several makers. The Gärtner lyre company in Germany makes a ten-string kantele lyre designed by its founder. This lyre can function as a pentatonic instrument for the younger child, but, with the exchanging of three strings, becomes an instrument able to play music on a diatonic major scale. The Choroi company in the Netherlands also makes a range of lyres for students.

The lyre has also developed as a therapeutic tool. Early in the last century, students of Rudolf Steiner established residential curative homes for the persons "disturbed in soul," and used the lyre in their therapeutic programs. Later, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Camphill movement began, taking up the care and education of children with mental illness and/or developmental delays as its special task. In the Camphill schools—which use a modified Waldorf curriculum—the children both are helped to

Photo by Barbara Holloway and courtesy of Emerson Waldorf School

play the instrument and are exposed to its soothing tones. The lyre is also today popular in the Camphill Villages for adults, which were founded later. In both types of community, the instrument is used in specific therapies for certain conditions. Playing the lyre and listening to its music is also just part of the daily life, promoting the well-being of the staff and the children and adults whom they serve. Oliver Wendell Holmes summarized the rationale for this use of the lyre, saying, "Take a music bath once or twice a week, and you will find that it is to the soul what the water bath is to the body."

In recent years, the playing of music to help persons in the last stage of life has received much attention. This art is sometimes called "music thanatology," after Thanatos, the Greek god of death. Theresa Schroeder-Sheker, a pioneer in the field who coined the term, describes her work as "a contemplative practice with clinical applications, and a sub-specialty of palliative medicine." In this context, the music is not intended to entertain or distract the patient. Instead, the music is meant to help the patient to enter into the process of leaving this world and crossing the threshold of death in his or her own personal way. While Schroeder-Sheker uses the harp, many other musicians are working with the gentle, ethereal tones of the lyre to assist persons in nursing homes and in hospice situations.

The modern lyre comes in various shapes and sizes and in various woods, including maple, linden, and cherry.

The lyre is also used to provide music in the services of the Christian Community. The Christian Community is an international religious movement founded in 1922 by Protestant clergymen with the help of Rudolf Steiner. The German pastors had asked Steiner for guidance in renewing and re-enlivening communal religious life. The gentle, inward quality of the music of the lyre is well suited to the Act of Consecration of Man, the principal sacrament of the Christian Community, as well as to its funeral, baptism, and other services.

Teachers at Camphill Special School (for children with special needs) practice the lyre. The lyre is widely used for therapeutic purposes.

The lyre can also be used as a concert instrument, although it is best suited to modest rather than large spaces. Some musicians, like the Englishman John Billing, have adapted pieces of the classical repertoire to the lyre. Since the early compositions specifically for the lyre by Edmund Pracht, many other composers have created music for the lyre. Some lyre concerts feature one or two musicians, but there are also a number of lyre "choirs" in Europe and the United States.

Professional quality lyres continue to be produced by the Gärtner firm and other notable makers in Germany—Horst Nieder, for example—but there are also excellent makers in North America and in other parts of the world, including Australia and Eastern Europe. In the United States, Patrick Thilmany in upstate New York and Alan Thewless in Pennsylvania produce high quality instruments. The website of the Lyre Association of North America, lyreamerica.net, is a resource for finding both lyres and lyre teachers.

An ancient instrument, reincarnated in modern times, the lyre is indeed a magical instrument. It can be found today in homes and in Waldorf schools, anthroposophical curative homes for children and adults, in hospitals and hospices, in churches, and in concert venues. It soothes the restless infant, helps the kindergartner abide in the kingdom of childhood, provides healing to the troubled child and adult, comforts the sick, and aids the dying in crossing the final earthly threshold. The lyre today is a companion that brings beauty, harmony, and peace to every stage of life. ʘ

THOMAS POPLAWSKI, *Renewal's staff writer, lives in Northampton Massachusetts and is a psychotherapist working with persons with disabilities. Thomas is a trained eurythmist. His wife, Valerie, also a eurythmist, teaches kindergarten at the Hartsbrook Waldorf School in Hadley, Massachusetts. Their two sons are both Waldorf graduates.*

Photo at upper right courtesy of Camphill Special School

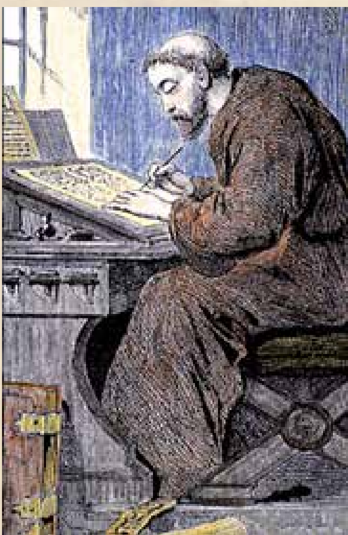
Teaching Calligraphy in the Computer Age

BY JACK PETRASH

I admit it:

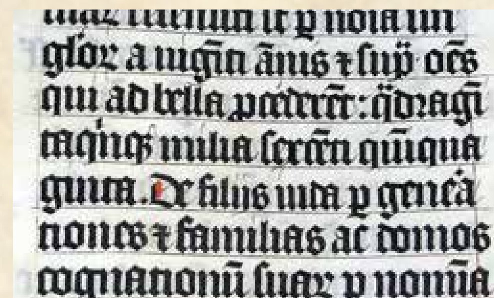
I am fussy about handwriting. It all started in my Waldorf teacher training forty years ago. We were gathering for a seminar, and I was standing behind one of my fellow students when I happened to glance down at the table where he was writing. He wasn't writing on the customary white paper in blue ink, rather on sheets of tan paper in sepia colored ink. Yet it wasn't the paper or the ink that amazed me. It was his handwriting, which was truly exquisite, and I asked him, "How did you learn to write like that?" He replied simply, "I taught myself." "How?" I asked. "From a book on italic writing," he responded. So I took the book out of the library and bought a calligraphy fountain pen like his, and my journey began.

Writing by hand is really like playing music. It requires a tempo, a discipline, a certain posture and hand position, and, if you really want to get better at it, a good teacher. My new handwriting didn't arrive until I took an adult education calligraphy course at one of our local high schools. That was where I became enamored with the Celtic alphabet. It is a handwriting that evokes the mysterious culture of the ancient Druids. As I worked on those extraordinary letters, I realized how they are the antithesis of the Roman alphabet, which I also love. While the Roman letters are straight, tall, lawful, and chiseled in stone, the Celtic letters are broad, curved, and spontaneous. It also helped that some of the most beautiful handwritten books in the world, including the *Book of Kells* and the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, were written and illuminated in the Celtic hand. I thought to myself that one day when I teach sixth-grade history, I am going to teach my students calligraphy. I have done that ever since.



Calligraphy or "beautiful writing" (kallos, *beauty +* graphein, *to write) was a valued skill from ancient times, particularly during the Middle Ages when monastic scribes copied sacred and secular literary treasures.*

I like to plan ahead, so I usually begin my covert calligraphy instruction in second grade with italic handwriting. I hadn't planned to do this initially, but I noticed that in the latter half of my initial second-grade class my students started to embellish their printing with little curls and flourishes at the end of their *a*'s, *h*'s and *n*'s. All of their writing was becoming more flowing and fancy. I had been taught that teachers should "read" their students, and I was sure that the children were telling me that they were longing to write in a more elaborate manner. As a result, when we began our new main lesson block in the spring of that year and heard the second-grade story of Saint Jerome and the Lion, the children started their writing with an illuminated letter and wrote their text in italic with colored pencils. The second graders were delighted, and from then on we never looked back.



This passage from the Malmesbury Bible, handwritten in Belgium in 1407, is in the ancient Roman script—straight, vertical, and largely free of curves. The Bible is now in Malmesbury Abbey, Wiltshire, England.

In third grade, I noticed that as the children became more adept with the new handwriting, some bad habits developed. So I began one main lesson block with a daily handwriting assignment—"penmanship" we used to call it. I collected the papers and checked the students' work and wrote them little notes, which they loved, pointing out which word or letter of theirs I liked the best and reminding them, when necessary, that there are three basic characteristics that are essential to good handwriting: consistent slant, consistent size, and consistent

Photos by Bonnie McClelland and courtesy of Washington Waldorf School

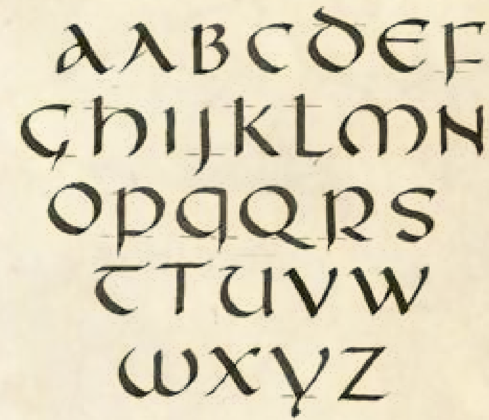
letter shape. I often have people tell me that they don't like their handwriting. When I look closely at their writing, I usually find that at least one of these elements is missing.

However, children are attracted to the conventional, and most of the students I have taught want to learn cursive handwriting even though they write nicely in italic. It doesn't matter to them that there are places in the world where the italic handwriting is preferred to cursive. They see the cursive handwriting as a rite of passage. I usually teach cursive toward the end of third grade. In fourth grade, I ask the children to write in cursive and, since for that year I use cursive in my writing on the blackboard, to read it as well. But, in fifth grade, I let the students choose between cursive and italic. I ask only that they write neatly and carefully.

By fifth grade, we do a good deal of lettering. The main lesson book format gives us many opportunities to write titles beautifully. We work often with Roman versals (grades five and six) and Lombardic versals (grade six). A versal is a large letter, usually colored and elaborated, that begins a title, verse, or paragraph. I try to make my children aware of centering their titles and of spacing. We often look for the middle letter of a word to insure that our work is centered. Yes, I admit it: I am on a subversive mission to make my students conscious of their lettering.

The Lindisfarne Gospels *is an illuminated manuscript created around 700 AD in a monastery on a tidal island off the coast of northeast England. It is written in Celtic script, also known as Gaelic or insular script.*

In sixth grade, I begin to formally teach calligraphy. I do this in conjunction with our study of history. We begin with Roman capitals to coincide with our study of ancient Rome, and when we study Latin, the students write in Roman capitals. After several weeks of hand-drawn Roman letters, we begin to work on the Celtic handwriting. To do this work we need to use calligraphy pens. Over the years, I have tried many possibilities with the students. We have used steel nib dip pens with ink (spills can be disastrous), broad nib cartridge pens (cleaner, but expensive), and 5 mm felt-tip pens (not bad). Last year I purchased 5 mm felt-tip pens for our initial instruction and then 3.5 mm pens so that the students could write their titles slightly smaller in their main lesson books. Both of these worked surprisingly well.



The uncial alphabet is a majuscule (capital-letters-only) alphabet, developed before uppercase and lowercase letters came into existence. It was used mainly from the fourth through eighth centuries in the copying of Scripture.

By the middle of the school year, the sixth graders have usually mastered the use of the pens and the necessary pen angle and are ready to move on to the medieval Gothic alphabet, which is usually their favorite. The different alphabets that we have learned provide many opportunities to work artistically. What always strikes me, and confirms for me the value of calligraphy, is the quiet that settles upon the sixth-grade room when the students write. The quiet comes from within them, not from me, and it is very similar to what happens when they do geometric drawing. It is a sign that the students are completely engaged.

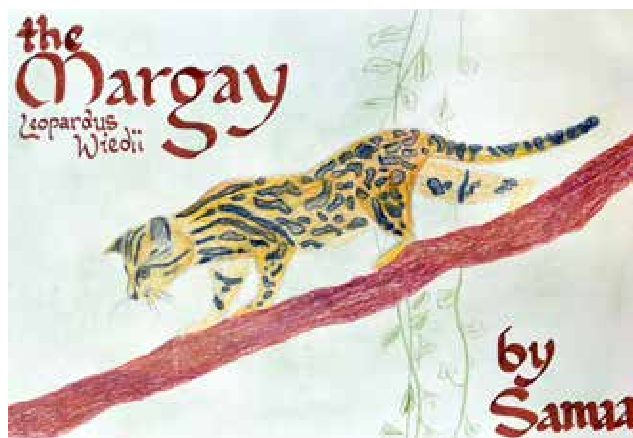
This past spring, my sixth graders did research reports on animals in the Amazon rain forest in connection with our geography study of South America. When they designed the covers for their reports, I was pleased to see how many of the students used their newly developed lettering skills. I saw writing in the Gothic, uncial, italic, and Roman styles. The work was striking and artistic, but what pleased me most was that the students had the confidence to use their newly found ability on the titles of their reports. This confident application of their new skills convinced me that they will continue to use calligraphy in their main lesson books in middle school and high school and that they have developed a capacity that will stay with them for years.

The calligrapher-in-chief and his attentive students of "beautiful writing" consider a Latin salutation that begins "O noble Rome, circle and ruler of all cities …"

Having written all this, I must admit that one day most of what my students will write will be done on a computer.[1] And yes, I am mindful of the fact that Rudolf Steiner said that the spiritual world has little interest in human convention and that writing is an intellectual and social convention, something human beings have created and agreed upon. But I believe that the inner effort that is required to develop the habit of good handwriting has significant value. And Rudolf Steiner maintained that if you want to change yourself, you should change your handwriting.

Further, I know that studies support the value of teaching handwriting. In a 2010 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, "How Handwriting Trains the Brain," Gwendolyn Bounds writes:

> Recent research illustrates how writing by hand engages the brain in learning… According to Karin Harman James, assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at Indiana University, who led the study, "It seems there is something really important about manually manipulating and drawing out two-dimensional things we see all the time."… Pictures of the brain have illustrated that sequential finger movements activate massive regions of the brain involved in thinking, language, and working memory—the system for temporarily storing and managing information. And one recent study demonstrated that in grades two, four, and six, children wrote more words faster and expressed more ideas, when writing essays by hand versus with a keyboard.[2]



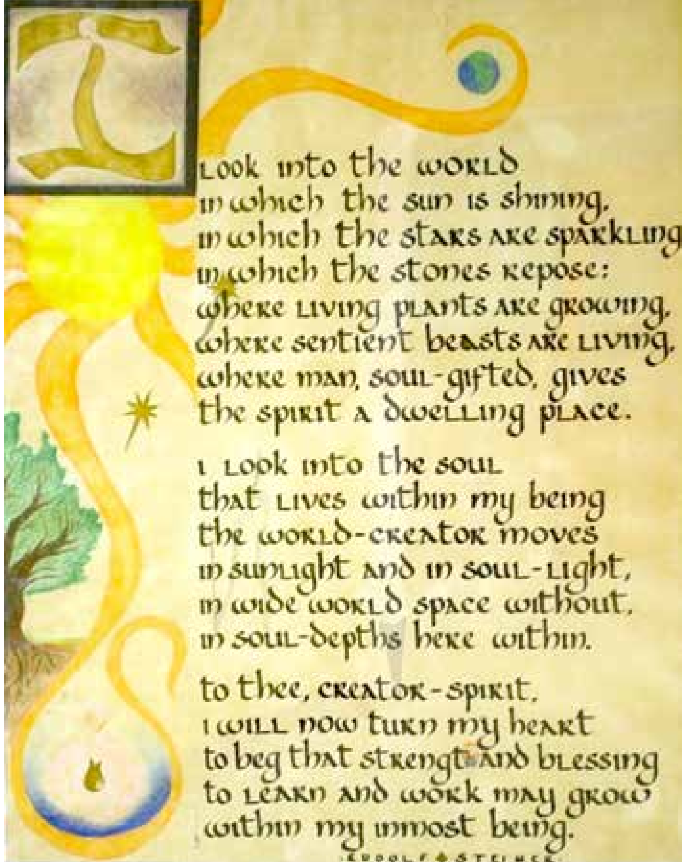
Calligraphic writing can be used to embellish and make beautiful many things, such as this cover of a research report on animals in the Amazon rainforest, part of a study of South American geography.

It should be noted here that the Waldorf curriculum includes, in addition to handwriting, many other activities that involve sequential finger movements. These are mostly craft and artistic activities and include knitting, sewing, playing a musical instrument, and modeling with beeswax and clay.

But the benefits of teaching handwriting go even deeper than this. A number of years ago, I advised one of our twelfth graders on her senior project. The student, whose name was Elenia, was planning to do an illuminated text of the Waldorf morning verse. I arranged for her to study gold-leaf lettering with an icon artist at a local seminary, and then she set to work to do a lovely rendering of the verse.

If simply writing by hand has been shown to improve mental function, what positive effects on body and soul may be discovered for training in calligraphy?

When she brought in her finished project, we looked at it together and it was beautiful. Then we noticed an error. Elenia had left out a letter in a word—the *h* in strength, and she was crestfallen. She did not know how to fix this project that had taken her weeks to do. I told her that the monks used to smile at their mistakes because they reminded them that to err is human and that only God is perfect. I also pointed out how in the Middle Ages the monks would draw small, whimsical figures

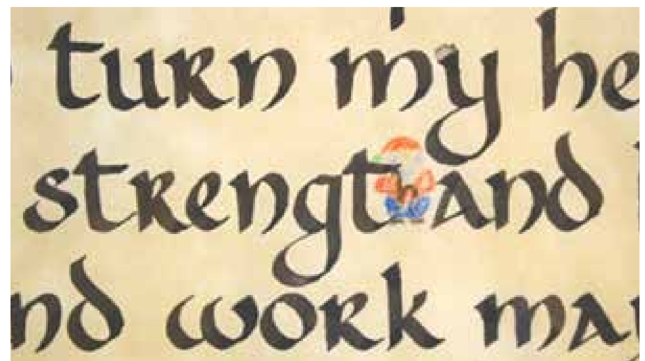


This illuminated copy of a verse by Rudolf Steiner, commonly recited in Waldorf high schools, was one letter short of perfection but…

to draw attention to their errors. I asked Elenia to think about her mistake, and assured her that we would figure this out.

When she came in the next morning, she stopped by my room and she was glowing. "I figured it out," she said. And then she showed me her work. She had drawn a charming little gnome in colored pencil next to the error. In his hands he held a gold-leaf letter *h* to correct the spelling. Her work was even more beautiful now.

Like the slightly asymmetrical pearl inside an oyster or a Japanese bowl with gold-filled crack, Elenia's piece was exquisitely imperfect. Her calligraphy hangs in our high school hallway, and teachers often show their students the gnome to remind them that our mistakes are opportunities to make our work even more beautiful. ⊙

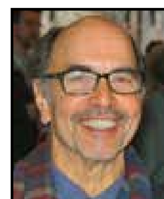


…was rendered more than perfect by the addition of a little gnome returning with the missing letter, which he had perhaps carried off in the first place.

Notes

1. Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Computer, attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon. After he dropped out, Jobs stayed on campus and dropped into the classes that interested him. Calligraphy was one of those classes. Reed College had one of the country's foremost calligraphers, Lloyd Reynolds, on the faculty. Lloyd Reynolds's influence at Reed College was considerable, and his influence on Steve Jobs caused the earliest Mac computers to come with a full complement of fonts. Microsoft recognized a good idea and simply followed Steve Jobs's lead. This anecdote appears in the 2011 biography *Steve Jobs*, by Walter Isaacson, pp. 40-41.

2. Gwendolyn Bounds, "How Handwriting Trains the Brain: Forming Letters is Key to Learning, Memory, and Ideas," *Wall Street Journal*, October 5, 2010.



JACK PETRASH *is a class teacher at the Washington Waldorf School where he is currently teaching grade seven. He is founder and director of the Nova Institute, an organization that works to build a bridge between mainstream education and Waldorf Education. He is the author of* Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out*;* Covering Home: Lessons on Fathering from the Game of Baseball*; and* Navigating the Terrain of Childhood: A Guide to Meaningful Parenting and Heartfelt Discipline. *Jack Petrash's recent TEDx talk, "Preparing Children for the Journey," has been seen by many parents and teachers in Waldorf communities in North America. In addition, he has been active in parent education, particularly with fathers. His commentaties have appeared in the* Washington Post *and on* National Public Radio.

Images courtesy of Washington Waldorf School

LIVING HOMEWORK

The Many Faces of Out-of-School Learning

BY NANCY KRESIN-PRICE, PhD

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

—William Butler Yeats

One of the characteristics of Waldorf Education that surprises newcomers is that the children, particularly in the early grades, do not have homework. Often this is incorrectly perceived as a lack of seriousness regarding academics. Usually, from the fifth or sixth grade, students are assigned work at home.

In the Waldorf high school, the students do get substantial homework assignments probably comparable in amount to what students in public high schools have. By that time, however, according to most Waldorf high school teachers, their love of learning is such that the homework is generally done with enthusiasm. It helps, no doubt, that the teachers strive to provide opportunities for creativity and learning, not just busywork. In any case, Rudolf Steiner's injunction against homework, mentioned below, was given before the first Waldorf high school was founded.

Here, class teacher Nancy Kresin-Price, focusing on the lower grades, expands the meaning of homework and maintains that school-related work can and should be imbued with enthusiasm and discovery.

—R. E. K.

Waldorf students in the early grades do not get homework, or at least what is usually considered to be homework—exercises in arithmetic, spelling words to memorize. Ironically, they sometimes envy their friends in mainstream schools—public and private—who do get homework and may not be happy about it. Waldorf children in the early grades often ask, "When will we get some homework?" They do not realize that with such eagerness to learn, they are, in fact, already engaged in real homework.

Shouldn't this young man be in bed sleeping?

The Wisdom of the Night

In a night's sleep, preferably begun early rather than late in the evening, children—and adults—internalize and integrate the learning and experiences of the previous day.

Waldorf teachers understand that, during the night's sleep, students digest the material from the lessons of the day. Thus, each day the teacher asks the children to remember and review the material of the preceding day. The time of sleeping and forgetting is a necessary part of the rhythm that helps the children internalize and retain what they have learned.

After a day has passed by, after a night of sleep has been experienced, after the children's inner forces have worked on the material, the children come back with new questions and ideas. They may bring insights beyond what the teacher alone could provide. A child may come back with a vivid dream about some aspect of the topic. A child who could

In fifth grade, a student became engrossed in the story of the Greek hero Theseus, protagonist of the class play, and at home drew this portrait of the Greek hero.

not grasp the lesson the day before may, after sleeping on it, clearly understand the content. A child may give an example, propose a metaphor, or ask a question that helps others in the class awake to a new aspect of the content. Sleep is a crucial element in a child's process of learning and retention. One might say that sleep, especially deep, restful sleep that begins at an early hour, is a type of homework.

Living Homework

Every time a child finds a picture, a book, a song, or a poem related to a topic of study in school and takes in information about it, he or she is engaging in homework. When the stories from the day are recounted to younger siblings in the evening, or when parents are quizzed on a math trick or a science fact, children are working on questions put to them from the day's work. Each time a child brings an item of interest from home that is related to the lesson content in order to share it with the class or teacher, this is homework. Each time a child draws a picture at home from a school lesson or asks for yarn and needles for knitting, he or she is engaged in the learning process that is the nature of true homework. True homework lives and breathes within the student, and he or she cannot help but take it up. Busywork-homework is drudgery. It has been proven to turn children off to learning and has not been shown to be effective in solidifying skills or imparting new knowledge—even in mainstream studies.

In fifth grade, a boy curious about Pangaea created a paper representation of the ancient supercontinent as a voluntary, out-of school project.

While studying North American geography, the students decided to make a map of the lower forty-eight states out of frosted and labeled cookies. The making and baking of the cookies was done at home, as was eventually the eating.

Several years ago, the faculty of Tamarack Waldorf School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, considered the issue of homework in depth. As is well known, Rudolf Steiner, in founding the first Waldorf school, advised that the children learn everything in school, that no homework be given. Steiner also said that a teacher who does assign homework should create tasks that so excite the interest and enthusiasm of the children that they look forward to doing their homework.

The study of ecology led the students to initiate a project that included on-site study of water quality in the Milwaukee River. Sometimes education is *filling a pail with water.*

The Tamarack faculty concluded that they, as teachers, need to ignite in their students such a deep enthusiasm for their studies that, out of their own interest in the topics studied at school, the students engage freely in some activity or research to deepen their understanding.

My own students showed me how powerful this way of working can be, when, in the third grade, they could hardly wait for me to give them instructions on how to proceed with a report on house-building. In fourth grade, they had the same enthusiastic

All photos by Nancy Kresin-Price and courtesy of Tamarack Waldorf School

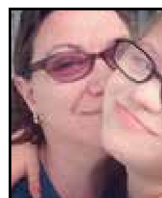
anticipation for their research about animals. In grade five, they waited impatiently for the North American geography assignment. This year, even as seventh graders, they have retained their enthusiasm. Recently, the students have been looking forward to a project on biography and one on Africa. They couldn't wait to be told which country they were to research. When I announced that the assignments were imminent, they actually clapped and bounced in their seats. There are, in addition to these independent projects, other formal assignments such as preparing a book-sharing presentation for the class or memorizing lines for the annual class play. However, true homework does not have to be assigned and monitored by the teacher. Sometimes a student's desire to learn more can be fired by a little rock examined in the class on mineralogy.

The children in my class sometimes do still leave school with homework. Sometimes I give in to a child who has relentlessly begged for a math sheet. On other days, a child will take home her main lesson work to finish a drawing or complete a final draft. Students are often asked to read the next chapter in a novel we are studying in class. But were I to assign lots of homework each evening, the children would gradually—or suddenly—lose their love of learning. Children are perceptive, they know when something has been assigned or must be completed for a good reason, and they know when something is given as busywork.

These twelve patterns were chosen to make three sets of four coasters that might be sold.

I don't always succeed as well as I would like in igniting interest in the children for their subjects of study. But, when I see the smiles and hear the laughter, listen to their stories, and marvel at the items they have brought from home to share, when a seventh grader says, "I am actually really excited about this project," I know that they are open, that I have reached them on some *real* level, and that they are actually doing their homework. ⊙

The study of geometry in sixth grade inspired the students to create original circular geometric designs based on the four seasons and the four elements and to make coasters out of them. Here the students are making the coasters using special cutting equipment.



NANCY KRESIN-PRICE *was the founding administrator of Tamarack Waldorf School. As a class teacher, she is nearing the end of her second cycle and has a creative and lively seventh-grade class. She is currently helping to shepherd the opening of a high school, scheduled for the fall of 2014. Nancy is director of teacher development at the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute and is available for consulting and mentoring. Nancy's book,* Social Sculpture: New Eyes for the World*, is available on Amazon. She and her husband, John, live outside of Milwaukee "in-the-middle-of-nowhere" and have five Waldorf children aged eleven to twenty-seven. The older ones live and work all over the world. Nancy is pictured here with her daughter Sophia, a fourth grader at Tamarack Waldorf School, who has blessed her family with Down syndrome, and all those who meet her with immeasurable love and joy!!*

Learning to Move in Space

Healthy Movement Education for Children

BY JAIMEN McMILLAN

One day near the end of my college fencing career, when I was practicing lunges over and over again in slow motion, something extraordinary happened. I felt my intention precede my hand like a sword of light. This flow of intention drew my arm, shoulder, back, and hip after it. My body was extended in sequence into one timeless, soundless, effortless lunge. This light-filled "pre-movement" was not physical, yet it had guided my body flawlessly as it enlivened the space around me. I resolved to develop ways to replicate this experience of joy and freedom in movement and of connection to surrounding space, and I resolved to share my discoveries with others.

Some years later, I met Maureen Curran, a former Olympic gymnast. Maureen, like me, was interested in teaching children how to move in a healthy way. At the time, there were two points of view in North American Waldorf schools about physical education. One held that the schools should provide a traditional program of competitive sports—including soccer, basketball, and tennis—even from the early grades. The other asserted that mainstream physical education is contradictory to Waldorf principles.

Despite growing concern about concussions, hundreds of thousands of boys, ages five to sixteen, participate in youth football in the United States.

Children and Early Sports

Maureen and I shared our experiences about movement, and we embarked on developing a curriculum that supports the healthy development of the child as understood in Waldorf Education. We looked at children's games and at the various individual and team sports. We considered what movements the children learn in each and what physical and emotional demands are placed on the children by each. We asked at what age is it appropriate to place those demands on a child.

For example, while some track-and-field activities are appropriate for the nine- or ten-year-old child, the shot put is not. The weight of the shot places strain on the developing muscles and ligaments of the child. Besides, children at that age should be experiencing the lightness of being, not the weight of the world. However, by the time a child is thirteen or fourteen, the body is able to deal with the weight. In fact, the experience of exploring one's own strength in relation to weight is a positive and necessary one.

There is a danger in young children engaging in demanding, organized, competitive sports at too early an age. Sports training demands excessive, repetitive drills that use, overuse, and misuse the same muscles and joints. For example, children who play competitive soccer at a young age are more likely to experience structural damage to the growth plates of the tibia and a lifelong weakness in the knees and ankles than children who wait to engage in rigorous training until their bodies mature.

Preteen and adolescent girls who play soccer are especially prone to injuries of the knee, ankle, and lower leg.

Games and free play are nature's way for children to develop healthy muscles that are capable of a wide variety of movements. Such unencumbered activities also develop balance, coordination, and a sense of self-movement, a sense of place, and a sense for space.

The basic assumptions of competitive sports—that there is a "we" and there is a "they," and that these sides are opponents engaged in a battle, that "we" must defeat "them," and that there must be winners and losers—are alien to the world of the young

Jaimen McMillan instructs a student in the ancient art of "spinning a plate."

child. The young child does not experience the world around him as entirely separate. It is in a sense still a part of himself. Assigning to other children the role of opponents violates this consciousness and may make the young child insensitive to other children. Cooperative play and noncompetitive games are appropriate for the young child. These activities develop social skills, the ability to work together, and the capacity for empathy. Childhood is a time of fantasy and imagination. Children who are brought too early into competitive sports and the rigorous, focused training they usually involve may lose those capacities, may be cut off too early from the kingdom of childhood.

One argument for early sports is that an early start will help the child develop into an outstanding athlete later on. Parents fear that if their child doesn't get early training, she will never catch up. A caterpillar is destined to be a butterfly. But we would never tie a caterpillar to a kite in order to give it early aerial experience so that it will fly better later on. A caterpillar takes its time—crawls, rests, and transforms—so that it will be able to fly at the right time. Studies indicate that children who begin sports at an early age often burn out and lose interest by the time they are teenagers. Children who are given the opportunity to "caterpillar" in free play in their early years are very likely to find their own athletic wings later on and to remain active and self-motivated into adult life.

Poised in space—a girl at the Monadnock Waldorf School in Keene, New Hampshire, uses a ribbon to show the dynamic grace of the spiral.

Spacial Dynamics® in Schools and Other Places

The approach to movement education developed through these efforts is called Spacial Dynamics. The Spacial Dynamics curriculum is now used by several hundred Waldorf schools in more than thirty countries. It includes traditional and new cooperative, noncompetitive games. "Space Ball," for example, is based on the age-old game of "Keep Away" and the German game "Zehnerball." In "Space Ball," which is appropriate for adults as well as children, the space around each player is considered part of the person. The players, in their attempts to gain possession of the ball, cannot intrude into each other's space.

Besides games, the Spacial Dynamics curriculum also includes exercises and activities done in the classroom, tumbling and acrobatics, stave fencing, circus arts, Greek pentathlon, track and field, and dance. In each of these activities, an awareness of space and the body's movement through space is cultivated. So is the social art of cooperation. In circus arts, for example, pyramid building, group choreography, partner juggling, and partner acrobatics all absolutely require sensitivity to others. Recent studies show that the circus arts also enhance both inner and outer balance, directed awareness, and healthy brain and neurological development. In Waldorf schools, the Spacial Dynamics curriculum is taught by movement educators who have completed the Spacial Dynamics training.

Jaimen McMillan and Spacial Dynamics students help a child from the Mechanicville (NY) Community Center fly in "The Eagle." The Spacial Dynamics Institute puts on circuses for underserved children in upstate New York.

In many Waldorf schools, eurythmy and Bothmer® Gymnastics are also part of the movement curriculum. Eurythmy harmonizes the child's movements with the invisible forces behind speech and music and also develops the sense for ensouled movement. Bothmer Gymnastics was created by Fritz Graf von Bothmer (1883–1941), a teacher at the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany. The Bothmer exercises primarily use the planar, constructive forces and typically involve right-left, forward-and-back, and up-and-down movements—movements that help a child

Photos at upper left and lower left courtesy of Spacial Dynamics Institute; photo at right by Karen Alexandre

Throwing the javelin, one of the events of the ancient Greek pentathlon, develops coordination, grace, and focus.

balance within the coordinates of space. Spacial Dynamics supports both of these disciplines in the Waldorf curriculum by adding exercises that tap the formative forces of the spirals and vortex, and thus involve circular and curvilinear movements. Using techniques that have been used with Olympic level athletes, Spacial Dynamics is able to impart to children at each stage of development a sense of space and an ability to move fluidly within space. Thus, a child of any age and of any level of athletic ability can enter into her own "moment of mastery."

Spacial Dynamics is also used effectively in therapeutic situations with children and adults. Postural problems, scoliosis, poor body image, ADHD, sensory integration dysfunction, dyslexia, autism, problems in reflex integration, and various emotional issues such as anger, aggression, and depression have been successfully addressed through work with principles of Spacial Dynamics.

Spacial Dynamics is able to help Waldorf class and subject teachers as well. It enables them to make their own patterns of movement more fluid and more efficient, to increase their awareness of space, and thus have more energy and focus. The teachers become better role models and also can relate more sensitively to their students. Teachers with an understanding of Spacial Dynamics can help students with their movement challenges. Fonda Black, a handwork teacher at the Austin Waldorf School, has found that her work with Spacial Dynamics allows her to effectively assist her students master the "hand gymnastics" of knitting.

Spacial Dynamics is used as well in business and leadership—to decrease stress, foster communication, build teamwork, enhance creativity, and improve individual and group performance. Games and movement activities that work with communication and body language reveal, in a playful setting, hidden and negative interpersonal dynamics and set the stage for positive change. Meanwhile, successful patterns that are already established can be recognized and strengthened. In factories, Spacial Dynamics can reduce physical stress, increase efficiency, and improve safety. Dancers and other performers, doctors, chiropractors, massage therapists, and other bodyworkers also benefit from using Spacial Dynamics to learn to move in an efficient, aware, and fluid manner.

In "Space Ball," a version of "Keep Away," these high school students at the Austin Waldorf School are learning to experience and respect their own space and the space of others.

Each of us is able to learn to fully inhabit this physical body that exists in and moves through space. If we learn to move consciously and joyfully through the enlivened space around us, then we will more easily connect with others and with our surroundings and better realize our intentions. If in our schools we start our children on the path to healthy movement, we will be giving them a great gift on their way—toward becoming active, caring, and free human beings. ⊙

JAIMEN McMILLAN was born in Michigan in 1950, the second of seventeen children. He founded the discipline of Spacial Dynamics in 1985 and travels internationally as a teacher, therapist, lecturer, business/leadership coach, author, and champion of youth circuses. He conducts trainings in seven different countries for Spacial Dynamics movement education teachers and movement educational therapists for Waldorf schools. With Waldorf teacher Thom Schaefer, Jaimen created the fifth-grade pentathlon model used in Waldorf schools all over the world, as well as the Hands-in-Peace festivals. These athletic festivals bring together young people of different communities and backgrounds, often in defiance of current political conditions. All of Jaimen's six children attended Waldorf school, kindergarten through high school. Please visit www.spacialdynamics.com *and* www.handsinpeace.org

Photo at upper left by Benno Klandt; photo at right courtesy of Spacial Dynamics Institute

The Day I Left My Cell Phone at Home

A Waldorf Mother Realizes That One of Those Quirky Waldorf Ideas Is Not So Quirky After All

BY NORA ROZELL

On a beautiful, autumn Saturday morning, our family set out on foot for our school's annual Michaelmas festival. My two oldest boys were working and all the other children were with me. I realized I probably would not need to use my cell phone so I left it behind. It wasn't until we approached the event, with the incredible sight of the whole school gathering on the field, that I felt the familiar itch to grab my phone and snap a picture. I remembered with a sinking feeling of disappointment that my phone was on my kitchen counter. Since my phone is how I now take my pictures, we would have no Michaelmas photos this year.

We found our place on the lawn, and soon the excitement began. By the time the dragon headed down the hill, I realized that a new emotion had settled in me—relief. I didn't have to get that perfect picture. The perfect picture was right in front of me, alive and real, and all I had to do was sit back, relax, and soak it in.

The writer's daughter Grethe enjoys a snack at the Michaelmas Fair. This photo is the only photo of the writer's family that day, but is supplemented by many memories that live in her imagination.

When we first came to the Waldorf school, I was a bit taken aback by the media policy. My son's kindergarten teacher gently suggested that a camera would not be welcome in the classroom. The same applied in the elementary grades—in the classroom, but also at the class plays, concerts, and other events. I wondered, can they really dictate when I could or could not take a photo of my own child? When I asked why such a "suggestion" was in place, my child's wise teacher shared the deep meaning behind it. The explanation was that the children are living completely in their experience and the presence of cameras lures them away from that. In the moment of performance, every part of their being is that prince, that maiden, or that humble villager. So parents are asked to wait to take photographs until after the performances to protect those magical moments of childhood.

When I heard the reason behind the suggestion, a picture immediately came into my mind: It is Christmas Eve and I am eight years old. My older sister and I are in our matching pink lace nightgowns and we have just unwrapped our beloved angel chime carousel. We are presenting it to our cherubic, little two-year-old brother for the first time. We have placed the carousel on the heater grate on the floor so he could watch it spin. I remember the moment so clearly! I felt so beautiful with my long blond hair falling gently off my shoulders and blowing in the air, my lace sleeves billowing as the the chimes tinkled and my little brother laughed.

Weeks later, the film came back from Fotomat—remember those days? Among the photos were the pictures of Christmas Eve and of the moment that is burned into my memory. I look at the photo of us watching the carousel, but, instead of the princess in lace that I imagined, a much different reality assaults me. I don't look beautiful at all. My hair falls from my shoulders in stringy clumps and my lace sleeves, which were indeed billowing, are gray, dingy, and frayed. My little angel of a brother stands in a sagging diaper and a stained T-shirt, with chocolate rimming his mouth.

Of course, there was no ill intent on my parents' part. They just wanted to document a sweet moment with their children, and I do not doubt that the charm of the scene was indeed captured for them. But that photo changed a little piece of me. The second I saw that picture, my beautiful, imaginative world was abruptly replaced by glaring reality. Suddenly, I was no longer a princess; I was an ordinary, skinny, eight-year-old girl.

We Waldorf parents want our children to live in a wonderful, safe haven for as long as possible. We want them immersed in beauty on a daily basis. I

Photo by Courtney Fugere; background photo of faculty play by Martha Behrens-Temple

100 Years Ago

The Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Goetheanum

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), the founder of Waldorf Education, began his career as a public lecturer in 1902. For the next decade, while serving as director of the German branch of the Theosophical Society, he lectured and wrote primarily on spiritual and esoteric topics. In 1912, Steiner left the Theosophical Society and in the following year founded the Anthroposophical Society. On September 20, 1913, Steiner presided at a ceremony in Dornach, Switzerland, during which the foundation stone of a new building was laid. The building was to stand on a hill overlooking the valley of the Birs River and was to be a sacred theater and artistic center as well as the headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society.

The Goetheanum (1913–1922). While World War I raged in Europe, volunteers from many nations worked together to complete the building in Dornach, Switzerland.

At around 7:00 p.m. on September 20, 1913, under threatening skies, Dr. Steiner and a small group of close associates gathered on the Dornach hill. A large hole, with steps leading down into it and perhaps ten feet deep, had been dug to receive the foundation stone. Steiner and the others descended the steps and stood in a circle. Steiner spoke a dedication, calling on the spiritual beings of the celestial hierarchies to be present and to protect and guard the deed being performed. He described the foundation stone—two copper dodecahedrons (twelve-sided figures) of unequal size joined together and about a yard long—as an image of the striving human soul. The human being, as a microcosm, lives within the macrocosm, is confined within the sense world but aspires to connect to the world of the spirit. Steiner then referred to the foundation stone as a symbol, a token, and finally as a sheath. This object—to be laid in the earth—was to be ultimately a protective sheath for humanity's striving for the knowledge, active will, and love needed to bring about the right evolution of humankind.

The foundation stone was carried down, set in place, and bedecked with thirteen roses, twelve red and one white. Steiner then gave a brief address. Calling those present "My dear Brothers and Sisters," he spoke of the building to be erected upon the newly laid foundation stone as the emblem of a new spiritual age. Steiner urged his listeners to take up the work of creating a human society based on a spiritual understanding of the human being and of the world. "Let us try to lift our souls to the great plans, the great purposes, and the mission of human activity on Earth, not in pride and vainglory, but in humility, devotion, and readiness for sacrifice." Just as Steiner

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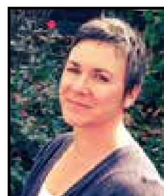
think this is a major reason why we choose to place our children in a Waldorf school. We trust the wisdom of the education and the educators who make it come alive to guide us through.

Someone was kind enough to send me a picture of my daughter at this year's Michaelmas festival. I'm going to have to trust that this one, lovely picture will be enough to trigger all of my memories of that spectacular fall day—a day that still lives completely and magically in my, and in my children's, imagination.



NORA ROZELL *is the mother of six children, all students at the Monadnock Waldorf School in Keene, New Hampshire. She blogs at* belliesbabiesandbalance.com

Messages for a Digital Age

Waldorf in 140 Characters or Less

BY LIZ BEAVEN, EdD

We live in an age marked by rapid, disruptive change. Technology has developed at such breakneck speed that we are able to access information and to communicate in ways that were unimaginable as recently as five years ago. It is becoming more and more apparent that this is a time of revolution—one that can be likened to the invention of the printing press and the explosion of knowledge that ensued.

The marvels of modern technology have touched all of our lives in countless ways, bringing new blessings and gifts. Those of us who have Skyped or iChatted with distant loved ones know the joy and feeling of immediacy this technology can bring; it truly bridges distance in a simple, immediate, and inexpensive way. We are able to connect and see one another, regardless of constraints of time and space. Cell phones have brought connectedness and a feeling of security. Just ask any parent of a teenager who is venturing out into a new phase of independence and autonomy for confirmation of the peace of mind granted by this boon.

Less positively as part of this explosion of technology, many of us are experiencing communication overwhelm. We are subjected to a relentless onslaught of flashing billboards, instant "breaking news"—that may or may not reflect reality—and more information and data than we can possibly take in, digest, or put to use. It is quite remarkable to note that every day, over 200 million active users of Twitter generate over 400 million tweets; we send over 144 billion e-mails per day; and there are 4.5 billion Facebook "likes" per day—statistics that have significantly increased over the past year. Along with our emerging technologies, we have acquired a new vocabulary of terms and words such as "search engines" and "Googling," and we are all grappling with the concept of information overload or "infobesity." When in 1970 Alvin Toffler wrote about the coming information explosion in his prophetic book *Future Shock*, he could have had only a dim vision of our current state of affairs.

We adults are told that our children are "digital natives" with instinctive capacities for technology and, in this strange new digital land, we, their parents and teachers, are "digital immigrants," grappling with a language and landscape that is foreign and unknown. This changing landscape can cause Waldorf educators to feel, perhaps more than ever before, that Waldorf Education is valiantly swimming against a cultural tide that threatens to engulf us—parents, teachers, and children alike. Instead of promoting the latest software for infants, Waldorf continues to promote a slow, gentle start to education with emphasis on the importance of language, the preservation of the oral tradition through storytelling, and the central, irreplaceable role of human presence and relationship. The cultural deck seems stacked against us even before we consider our attitude toward screens for young children and our desire to hold off introducing computers and media until children are developmentally ready.

There is no question that, as Waldorf educators and parents, we need to be aware of the radical changes in communication and of their impact on the lives of children and on education in general. The established model of education, firmly in place for hundreds of years and often

The rotary telephone, introduced into the Bell system in 1919, began to be supplanted by the touchtone phone in the 1960s, is now an antique, but is still available on Amazon for $80.00!

depicted as a "sage on a stage," saw the transmission of knowledge or content as its key task. However, as we look to the future, the ability to discern, discriminate, sort, synthesize, and critique information and experiences will be much more important than absorbing and regurgitating content. We are charged with preparing our children for a future that is more unpredictable than at any previous point in human history. Our young people, those digital natives, are able to swiftly access knowledge through new technology and demonstrate much greater technological aptitude than most of their parents or teachers, requiring that we reassess what is essential and nonessential. The older the child, the less need to simply transmit knowledge content. Once we have established an essential "common pool of knowledge" in our younger children, rote transmission of knowledge is out and the development of creativity and imagination as a source of independent and original thinking is in.

Before I go any further with these reflections, probably some self-disclosure would be helpful. I have lived through a great deal of this communication revolution. I fondly recall clunky transistor radios and LP records playing scratchily on turntables. I remember large, heavy black phones anchored in place by a thick cord. (Actually, I remember not having a phone in our home at all, but I did grow up in remote New Zealand.) I came to the world of the PC relatively late. I was slow to acquire a cell phone and my much-depended-on phone is "dumb" rather than "smart." (I confess, though, that I love and am seldom far from my iPad!) Graduate school a few years ago was a whole new experience as I sat at home at my desk late at night and accessed libraries from around the world. I am a relatively recent texter and am somewhat slow and awkward. My lack of experience and love of language combine, so that I still spell out words, unable to bring myself to use LOL or CUL8ER. Until recently, for me, tweeting belonged to the birds and was a wonderful sign that spring was in the air!

"I fully understand that we (Waldorf educators) must strive to be current and in touch with the broader culture … to be able to deliver a relevant accessible message."

However, I fully understand that we must strive to be current and in touch with the broader culture. I passionately believe that Waldorf Education has much to offer this world and our children, possibly more now than at any time in its almost 100-year history; so we need to be able to deliver a relevant, accessible message. We know that the majority of contemporary messages are brief and instant; we live in a world of elevator pitches and short sound bites. With that in mind—and with tongue more than a little in cheek—I began to wonder what we could communicate about the essence of Waldorf Education within the boundaries of tweets—short statements of no more than 140 characters. The results follow, with a couple dozen messages, each pared down to comply with the limitation of the tweet. Please note that these are not in fact real tweets—no hashtag or cross-referencing has been included.

Twitter was founded in 2006. According to a recent book about the company, the original idea came because one of the founders felt—in spite of all the social media already then available—"lonely and unconnected."

Beyond an entertaining exercise [Do note that several "tweets" came in at exactly 140 characters—very satisfying!], what did this effort at reduction achieve for the author? If Marshall McLuhan's insight back in 1964 that "the medium is the message" is true, then our worldview is impacted by the way we communicate, and the brevity demanded by Twitter and other media starts to shape content. In reducing core "Waldorf principles" to a series of short sound bites, I was forced to ask what is essential and true.

My list emerged and holds no surprises: We must stand for the sanctity of childhood in a time when it is under siege. A kindergarten that emphasizes play and provides a slow, gentle start is a gift for lifelong learning—an insight well supported by cutting-edge

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Tweeting Waldorf

Why do Silicon Valley leaders send their children to Waldorf schools? Technology changes quickly; new design demands boundless creativity.

Waldorf Education = fast-growing, international, healing, diverse, adaptable, proven, successful.

Knitting = more than just fun. Think eye-hand coordination, physical integration, problem solving, and focused attention.

Einstein and Waldorf educators agree: Imagination is more important than knowledge!

Thinking, feeling, willing: Head, hands, and heart are education for the whole child, an authentic basis for 21st-century skills.

Why do we educate? Toward freedom, responsibility, creativity, and heart-connected, independent thinking.

Playtime is not waste time; play is the essential realm of the child.

Nature deficit = incompatible with Waldorf schools. A science, ecology, and environmental awareness curriculum has roots in the kindergarten.

Slow, gentle beginnings allow for strong roots and foundations. Let young children be young children—childhood deserves our protection!

Each child has unique talents and challenges. Our task is to help with the unfolding, provide support—and at times to get out of the way.

Rhythm replaces strength. Predictable routines allow children to develop attention and the freedom to dream, think, create, and do.

Imagine a nation in which every child starts the school day with a handshake and eye contact with a caring adult. Impact on budget = none.

Chemistry, physics, math, language arts, botany, ecology, sociology, social science—delivered with love and play in Waldorf kindergartens!

Harvard study connects children's involvement in music to improved motor and auditory skills. Every child deserves the gift of music!

We are charged with preparing our youth for an unknown future. Knowledge changes. They will need creativity, imagination, faith, and heart.

The arts: teaching discrimination, judgment, aesthetics, skill, engagement, perseverance, self-expression; expanding minds for a lifetime.

Waldorf Education: fully supporting the modern 3 R's of education—rigor, relevance, relationships.

Steiner's advice to teachers (also for parents!): "Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, send them forth in freedom."

A story told is more precious than gold. Take your child on your lap and share your life and family stories!

Beaven, continued from page 27

brain research. It is not the act of negligence or indifference we are sometimes led to feel, but a sign of deep understanding and trust in the wisdom of the developing child. Our new age calls for a range of skills not recognized in traditional schooling. These include collaboration, empathy, creativity, imagination, use of story, connection to nature, and the ability to dream and innovate—widely recognized as "twenty-first century skills." These are some of the non-negotiable foundation stones upon which Waldorf Education is built, through story, music, the arts, and the many and varied manifestations of human culture and destiny.

So, let's continue to spread the good word on behalf of children everywhere, by means of methods both old and new. Tweet it out! In the course of their lives, our children will likely use tools and technologies beyond our wildest imagination. We hope and trust that these tools and technologies, combined with our children's individual gifts and talents, fostered within the loving embrace of a creative education, will allow them to relate, create, and innovate for a lifetime and for the good of humanity. ʘ

LIZ BEAVEN *was born and raised in New Zealand. She has been involved in Waldorf Education in the United States for over twenty-five years—as a class teacher, school administrator, board member, adult educator, AWSNA delegate, and parent. She researches, writes, and lectures on a range of topics related to Waldorf Education—usually in considerably more than 140 characters, but, it is hoped, concisely nevertheless. Liz is currently the Dean of Academic Development at Rudolf Steiner College, in Fair Oaks, California.*

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new archetype of the human being, *Homo tweetus*, is emerging. *Homo tweetus* spends eight to ten hours a day looking at a screen of some sort and has immediate, 24/7 access to an infinite universe of entertainment, information, and communication. He can share every event in his life with the world via Facebook or YouTube and record and broadcast every thought, impression, and feeling, however trivial, via Twitter.

However, *Homo tweetus* may be slowly—or rapidly—losing some basic human attributes and capacities: the ability to be alone and silent with his own thoughts and feelings; the ability to have an eye-to-eye, face-to-face conversation with another human being; the ability to focus on one thing at one time and to penetrate it deeply; the patience to observe and appreciate a phenomenon in nature; and the ability to experience something as real or important that he has not shared with the world. *Homo tweetus* may also be losing his ability to live without an electronic device. He very likely sleeps with his smartphone under his pillow.

Today, almost every one of us is, in some degree, *Homo tweetus*. The lifestyle of *Homo tweetus* is becoming the norm—for children, young people, and adults. In such a world, Waldorf Education, as a therapeutic, healing education that helps one retain and/or regain one's full humanity, becomes ever more relevant. The Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy clearly serve "normal" children. As Camphill Special School demonstrates, they can also serve children with special needs. And some adaptation of Waldorf Education can no doubt serve young people and adults who find themselves uncomfortably close to the *Homo tweetus* archetype. The essential elements of the Waldorf experience—the study of the panorama of human history and culture; creative experiences in the arts, music, drama, and handcrafts; the inspiring biographies of the great heroes and leaders of humanity; the wonder-filled direct study of the natural world; and long-term human relationships characterized by mutual care, respect, and love—these can help us keep and develop the positive aspects of our humanness, whatever our age and situation.

I hope and suspect that, increasingly, elements of Waldorf Education will find their way into prisons, rehabilitation centers, mental health institutions, and hospitals, as well as into the homes of those of us just struggling to survive in a digital age. ʘ

The King and I

A Courageous Student, a Caring Teacher, and a Last-Minute Metamorphosis

BY KELLY LACY

Damon is a big kid, linebacker big, although there is not an athletic bone in his body. Instead, he writes stories—magical stories with teddy bears or wolves as their main characters. Damon is very open about the fact that these animal characters, alternatively sweet and fierce, are actually him. When reading one of his stories aloud, he shakes his head frequently, letting his audience know that he sees the irony of being portrayed as a teddy bear. His head is huge. Once, while attempting to fit him with a turban, I teased him about it and he said, "It's the hair," and in fact his head is padded round with layers of thick dreadlocks. His expression is a little sad and, also, very sweet. Damon himself is lost somewhere in all that flesh, and he has yet to really inhabit his body. One can see that he's trying to be more comfortable, in general, but his timing is always off somehow, his gestures a beat too late.

King Shahryar, embittered because of an unfaithful wife, looks upon the world with a baleful eye.

Every year the senior class puts on a play, and in this class of forty, Damon was the obvious choice to cast as Shahryar, the betrayed Persian king in *Arabian Nights*. It's a big role and it needed a larger-than-life presence. Plus, you can't ask someone of Damon's stature to play the cuckolded jester; no one would buy it.

As we rehearsed, I watched Damon slowly try on the role of the King. He had great presence—that was undeniable—and when his lines were succinct—"Begin at once!" for example—he was convincing. When it came to the longer sections of dialogue, he stumbled and restarted time and time again, sometimes stopping himself out of habit even when he hadn't stumbled at all. It was painful to witness. Even worse was the fact that much of what he did manage to say was unintelligible. Damon speaks very, very quickly, so as to avoid actually being understood. The co-director, Joan Caldarera, and I had both worked with him individually. He could do it if he really focused and slowed down, but it didn't come naturally, and it was nearly impossible when he was nervous, which was almost all the time, onstage or not.

Our first performance was a matinée and poorly attended. It felt more like a dress rehearsal, and we probably should've just called it such, thereby lowering any expectations, but we needed to be able to charge admission. The show went pretty well, no major catastrophes, nothing the students couldn't recover from. They all did well, except the King. Damon had stammered and backtracked through every speech he gave. In between attempts, he would smile in utter embarrassment and look out into the audience for me. When he caught my eye—which was always focused intently on him in an attempt to telepathically pull him through unscathed—he would shrug apologetically, shake his head in dismay, and carry on in such a way as to announce his mistakes, in the event we hadn't noticed them already. Still, the fact that he looked very impressive up there on the stage in his blue and gold lamé robe, a gold cloth wound about his dreads accentuated with a feather—we never did find a turban to fit him—made up for much. Of course, the fact that the audience was filled with supportive friends and family members didn't hurt either.

All photos by Cory Powers

The King and his court. Each night, Shahryar takes a new lover and then has her executed in the morning, until Scheherazade appears and beguiles him with stories that at dawn are still unfinished.

The second show was even worse. At one point, midway through a short speech about the ridiculousness of one of Scheherazade's stories, he just stopped, gave up, and pointed at Scheherazade, indicating that she should just begin her next line.

That evening, I thought about how best to proceed. Had I set Damon up for failure? Had I asked him to stretch too far? I had always had a soft spot for this boy, and I didn't want his first and only experience in a play and his whole high school career to end on a low note. I'd given him an opportunity, but now I questioned the fairness of the offer. Was it possible, in just a couple of weeks, to transform a lifetime habit of unintelligible mumbling? I could easily edit his longer speeches down to a line or so apiece. He could go into the final show with peace of mind and confidence. I decided to offer this to him as an option. It would be his choice.

Friday morning, we crossed paths in the hallway.

"Hey, Ms. Lacy."

"Hey, Damon."

"How are you?" I continued, "How are you feeling about tonight's show?"

He hesitated, "All right. It's cool."

We looked at each other. I took a deep breath.

"Damon, I can cut some of those lines. Would you like me to do that? I support you either way, but it needs to be your choice."

He considered the offer for a moment, staring down at the cement floor. He closed his hands into fists of determination and shook his head.

"Ms. Lacy, I can do it. I'll never learn to do it if I don't just do it. I got this."

He put his big hand on my shoulder, gave it a quick squeeze, and ambled down the stairs, leaving me in awe of his courage. His willingness to "learn" in front of hundreds of people was counter to every actor's instinct I'd ever had myself. Of course, actors make discoveries in performance all the time, but the basics of performing, especially something as fundamental as speaking one's lines, are perfected long before the audience has paid for their tickets. This reminder that Damon was a student, through and through, was humbling.

Because of his parents' work situation, Damon's day began very early and with a long commute to school. And when he got home from school, he was responsible for his two younger sisters. These circumstances exacerbated his strong and overt phlegmatic tendencies. Throughout Damon's high school career, many conversations had taken place among the faculty regarding the difficulty of getting

him to turn in assignments. He was usually tired in school, slept through many classes, and was a frequent visitor to the couch in the upstairs hallway. Over the years, we made allowances, granted extension upon extension, and, in general, did our best to help this young man make it through. Now here he was, weeks away from graduating, and I'd given him one more hoop to jump through—one more task he wouldn't complete in time.

The King forces Scheherazade to continue a story. Damon, in fact very concerned about his heroine, played this moment very gently and carefully.

Friday evening was our last performance. I walked through the dressing room, offering last-minute notes and reminders and helping the actors to find costume pieces and to pin on their veils. I was distracted, though, thinking about Damon and whether or not I'd made the right decision in offering to cut his lines. Theater holds out the opportunity for growth, for transformation, but what happens if the offer isn't met, or, if it is reached for, but not grasped? Was it better, safer, not to risk it? "No pain, no gain" is perhaps true, but this was not an athlete training for an Olympic event. Damon had experienced enough pain in his life. When casting a show, the most important thing is to gauge the potential of the student, and challenge him, while keeping success within reach. Had I misjudged this situation? In less than a week, Damon would graduate. What he would take from this experience, I would most likely never know.

"Friend, trust not at all in women, but smile at their promising." Damon stopped, took a deep breath and continued his opening monologue, his right hand clutching the velvet-sheathed knife and beating out the rhythm of his words against his thigh, a habit he had formed while memorizing his lines. In the audience, where I sat alone, I squeezed my hands together, holding my breath while silently urging him to slow down. He finished the passage, knife-beat accompanying his every word, and took his seat. He met my eye and allowed himself a small, satisfied smile at my expression. He had done it. He sailed through every subsequent speech, growing visibly, at least to me, more confident with each one he could check off his list. We were both breathing.

Four days after the show closed, I saw him again for the first time. The entire senior class had come over to the grade school campus for a final "walk through," a chance to reflect, remember, and say goodbye to each grade as they came to the end of their senior year. Some of the students, Damon among them, had not attended that particular grade school, but it didn't really matter—they could still share in the experience.

As I led a group of students through each classroom, beginning in kindergarten, I found myself wishing that Damon could have experienced the particular warmth present in all Waldorf kindergartens. The first time I entered that charming room, on a tour for my own daughter's admission, I wanted everyone else to leave so I could take a nap on the soft rug, bathed in the beautiful pink glow from the walls.

Seeing Damon in the kindergarten, appearing even larger and more imposing in all that soft smallness, I thought that of all the students there, he would relate to my own feeling about the place. I felt sure that, if left alone, he would kneel down on the rug and nap, or even play. Maybe he would put on a silk cape, take hold of a wooden sword, and vanquish his invisible enemies, or conjure up a magical story with

The story has a happy ending, with Shahryar falling in love with Scheherazade and making her his queen. Etching by T. S. Engleheart (1803–1879) from a German version of 1001 Nights.

a wolf and a teddy bear as heroes. In many ways, Damon is still a little boy, a boy who in ninth grade used to wear an alligator head on his hand. It would peek out of the sleeve of his black hoodie, and when I noticed it, I always jumped a bit. He would smile so sweetly and look so pleased with himself that I could never get mad at him. It was his protection and he needed it.

On this day of the visit, Damon needs no reptilian protection. He is a young man who wears his dreadlocks held back with a band, allowing his face to be seen. He speaks in every classroom we visit, sharing his own experiences from grade school. He speaks of his place within his class with confidence and sure knowledge of acceptance. Of course, the play is just one of many experiences that helped bring him to this point, but it's one of the clearest and most contained experiences that can be observed. Theater is very gratifying in that way; the "results" are often immediately visible.

The graduation ceremony, which took place a few days later, was held in the same place where the play was performed, in the Scottish Rite Masonic Center around the corner from the high school. Oddly enough, Damon's seat in the row of students is almost exactly where his "throne" had sat just a week ago. The space holds no Persian rugs, no tasseled pillows, just two rows of chairs and a table holding the diplomas. I look at him up there, in his starched, white dress shirt, leis of candy and gum around his neck, a patterned cloth holding his hair back. He sits up straight and tall, looking out over the crowd of over six hundred people, looking for all the world like a king gazing out over his subjects.

The King, in street clothes, with the writer. Damon is currently attending college in San Francisco and is a very frequent visitor to the Waldorf high school, where he helps out as a tutor.

KELLY LACY *is a native of San Francisco. After graduating from college with a degree in theater arts, she moved to New York City and put her degree to good use, pursuing a career in acting. She moved back to the Bay Area, got married, and had a daughter, now in the fourth grade at the San Francisco Waldorf School. In 2008 Kelly graduated from the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training. She is in her seventh year at the San Francisco Waldorf High School, where she teaches both humanities and theater arts.*

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finished, a thunderstorm with lightning and rain swept across the hill.

Over the next ten years, the Goetheanum was built at that spot on the Dornach Hill. It was a magnificent, double-domed structure of wood, with carved pillars, painted cupolas, and etched, colored glass windows. The building was an attempt to make manifest the beauty and wisdom of the spiritual world in the material realm. It was destroyed by arson on New Year's Eve, 1922–1923. Within the next decade, a second Goetheanum had been built.

In the years following 1913, until his death in 1925, Steiner applied a spiritual understanding of the human being to many areas, including architecture, the arts, medicine, social organization, and agriculture. In 1919, under his guidance, the first Waldorf school was founded in Stuttgart, Germany. The curriculum and the pedagogy Steiner created for that school has been the basis of the international Waldorf movement for nearly a century.

Waldorf Education came into being as a result of the dedication of Rudolf Steiner and others to the high mission of humanity on Earth. Thus, while the laying of the foundation stone of the Goetheanum on that windy hill in Dornach a century ago seems distant in time and space, in fact, a fine thread of destiny extends from that moment into every Waldorf classroom in the world today.

Photo at upper right by Max Rico

Restorative Practices

One Waldorf School's Positive Experience with Conflict Resolution

BY ESTHER CENTERS

A second-grade girl is being excluded by her classmates. She tries to take the loving advice of her parents to "just ignore it," but that doesn't help. She becomes more and more socially withdrawn. She plays alone, apart from the other girls, and her once positive and cheerful demeanor turns sour.

Two fourth-grade boys don't get along. Their ongoing conflicts in the playground—before school, during recess, in After Care—have teachers throwing their hands up in despair. Play dates help, but when the boys are at school, they resume their arguing. The sense of competition is uncontrollable. Tempers flare, and in the end they resort to fistfighting.

A seventh grader rolls her eyes and sarcastically whispers under her breath while the teacher is attempting a chemistry experiment. Some of the students go along with her. Some want to speak up against her attitude and behavior but don't know how. Over time, the sense of emotional safety in the class is severely compromised, and the teacher eventually resigns.

Little brother and big sister battle for their mother's attention from breakfast to bedtime. When she praises one, the other pouts. When she helps her daughter with her knitting, the brother pops between them with his painting set. Who got me into this mess, she wonders?

Boys (young and old), and girls (young and old), will inevitably, occasionally, have a strong difference of opinion.

These scenarios or versions of them are not uncommon in our schools and homes. And they are troubling. As teachers and parents, we strive to create environments where everyone feels a blanket of trust, security, and emotional connection. We want our children to be inspired, to be fully engaged, and to participate freely from the heart. When everyone is happy and feeling connected with each other on a social level, life in school and at home can sparkle with joy.

Today, phrases such as "values education" and "character education" are commonly used in mainstream educational circles. These terms reflect goals and ideals that have been part of Waldorf Education since its inception. When Rudolf Steiner, a century ago, spoke of "educating the whole child," he was speaking of the unfolding of the moral and social character of the child, as well as of the intellectual, artistic, and other capacities. One might argue that the entire Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy is designed to foster compassion, consideration, truthfulness, empathy, and respect for others.

Besides, there are resources within the Waldorf context for dealing with difficult children and with difficult situations. The faculty might do a "child study," in which the entire faculty focuses on a single child, and brings together its wisdom and experience to try to help that child. An anthroposophically trained physician might be consulted and might prescribe remedies or specific therapies through eurythmy, painting, or music. Teachers can, through their own meditative life, seek inspiration on how to help a child or heal a particular situation. An understanding of the four temperaments—choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholic—and of the ways to moderate the negative aspects of each can be helpful. For example, one can provide a disruptive choleric child with a useful activity that involves movement—perhaps sweeping the room—that allows him or her to breathe and to calm down.

In the thirty-year history of Santa Cruz Waldorf School, teachers have used the above-mentioned Waldorf approaches, as well as others. We have organized discussions and attended workshops on classroom management. We have created various

In this circle of students and teacher, only the person holding the copper ball is allowed to speak. The rule eliminates interruptions and over-talking.

policies for cultivating respect and maintaining agreements and have provided documents to help community members stand for a bullying-free environment. But we had trouble finding a single, effective approach to which everyone could commit. Intractable situations and conflicts kept arising. So we were faced with the question: What do we do when, despite our best efforts, our "whole" Waldorf child seems to have broken into pieces? How do we help the second-grade girl who gets left out (and her classmates who do the excluding), the fourth-grade boy who wants to be at the top of the pecking order, the confrontational seventh grader, or siblings vying for their mother's attention? How can behavioral problems be transformed into emotional growth?

Four years ago, Santa Cruz Waldorf School began to implement a Restorative Justice (RJ) system called Restorative Practices (RP). The implementation was done with the assistance of Christine King and Todd Phillips, founders of Restorative Resources Santa Cruz. Even those at the school with training or successful experience in other communication styles and approaches to conflict resolution have found benefit in working with RP. As we enter our fifth year of implementation, we are so encouraged with this approach that we want to share our experience with other Waldorf schools.

Dominic Barter, who developed a Restorative Practice we use at the school called Restorative Circles, views conflict as something to engage with and fully express, rather than "resolve." He writes:

> I view conflict as a message, and really the choice is to either receive the message or ignore it. If we label conflict or violence as bad, then politically that is so handy because what we do is condemn the frustrated expressions of anger and powerlessness by those who are most marginalized.

In the city of Santa Cruz, Restorative Justice is being used for victim–offender mediation. In Hull, England, Restorative Justice is being used to deal with a broad range of problems, including graffiti and youth gangs, thus creating a safer environment and an improved quality of life for all. A 2011 Colorado law gives offenders and victims the option to participate in RJ circles. The assumption is that people convicted of crimes should be given a chance to make amends for their wrongdoing, instead of being sent to juvenile hall or prison.

Traditional school discipline usually consists of the teacher or school authority asking, "Who did it?"

Reflective listening requires that one is able to mirror back to a person what he or she has just said. The designated speaker in this fifth-grade circle is holding a small stick.

and "What should the punishment be?" It is typically a top-down, judgmental process. In contrast, Restorative Practices are collective and collaborative. They include, to the extent possible, all those who are involved in a specific situation or offense. Those persons together ask, "What harm was caused by this incident, and how do we heal the harm?" They identify the harm done and the needs and obligations of those involved. Once the harm, needs, and obligations have been made explicit, a way is sought to heal the situation. There are three crucial aims of the process:

- to restore relationships;
- to arouse in members of the community a renewed sense of empathy for one another;
- to stimulate everyone to work together to create a climate of mutual respect and understanding.

Photo at top left by Jill Miller; photo at right courtesy of Santa Cruz Waldorf School

Having quiet time alone to reflect on oneself and one's interactions with others is a necessary complement to conflict resolution processes.

The process is especially helpful and instructive for children and young people. It gives them an opportunity to be honest and open and to express their feelings, opinions, and needs without fear of shame or retribution. It helps them realize that their behavior has a greater impact on others than they can imagine, but that there are ways to set things straight. It gives them a sense of empowerment and teaches them to work collaboratively. Rather than receiving a top-down edict and judgment, the young people involved work together to understand and to heal a situation.

An important element in the process is Reflective Listening. During the circle process, the persons listening are given the opportunity to tell the speaker what she or he has just said, in their own words. This encourages attentiveness and empathy and also validates the importance of what each person speaks.

Restorative Practices has a five-stage continuum, each stage having a more formal level of application of the principles and practices. The first and second levels involve "affective statements" and "affective questions," which have to do with feelings. An affective statement ("I feel concerned when I hear you use that loud tone with Jack. Please lower your voice.") expresses the speaker's feeling. An affective question ("Are you upset because you wanted to play with him?") asks about another person's feelings. Such statements and questions are appropriate with children in the kindergarten and the lower grades. They do not call strongly on the child's ego forces, something more appropriately done at a later age.

The third level, the Sharing Circle, is a proactive and useful tool. Of course, holding circles is a universal Waldorf practice, particularly in the kindergarten and early grades. In RP, the Circle is a storytelling event. Every person has a story and every story has a lesson to offer. In my class, I have witnessed the understanding of one child for another deepening each time we took time for a Circle. Topics can be as simple as "share one thing you remember about the lesson," as quick as "the thing I like to do the most out at recess is __________," or as intimate as "one thing positive about me is __________." Sharing Circles can become a valuable and regular part of class life.

Micro Circles, the next level, occur mostly at recess time and might go something like this:

An upper-grade student facilitator or teacher notices a conflict between students, brings them together, and says, "This is what I just observed: __________." (He describes the incident objectively.) "I'd like to support you in solving this. Would you be willing to share what is going on for you?"

If willing, the children each describe what happened, and each child is given an opportunity to tell the other student what they want them to know. This is "reflected back" by the listener. After all parties have spoken and been heard, the children are asked to brainstorm possible solutions that work for both of them. Often just being heard is enough for the children to feel satisfied. We discovered that, after a while, children were able to initiate and have such conversations independently and were able to address their problems together in a nonthreatening way. Teachers have been amazed at how the level of compassion and empathy has increased throughout the school.

Little interpersonal storms often occur during recess. Here upper-grade girls use the Restorative skills they have acquired to quiet one such storm.

Photos courtesy of Santa Cruz Waldorf School

At the end of the RP continuum is Restorative Circles, used with older students and adults to bring healing to a particular problematic situation, when an action or something spoken has resulted in a loss of connection, trust, or safety. One Circle involved fourth-grade girls who were struggling with teasing one another. In the end, the girls were able to share the pain they felt and to make agreements about how they could support each other with more care and kindness. Because the girls truly heard one another and took self-responsibility in the situation, their agreements lasted. Since we started calling Circles, there is an overall feeling that Reflective Listening among our community members has improved. There's a sense of security that a sacred place is being held for conflicts to be dealt with in a conscious way.

In a Restorative Justice Circle we strive to step out of the triangle of "Villain/Victim/Hero" and allow each participant to speak to three questions:

1) "What were you wanting when you acted?"
2) "Who was affected by your action, and how?"
3) "What needs to happen now to make it right?"

It is essential that the Circle Keeper reflect back to each speaker what she/he heard them say. Both teachers and students become skilled at listening and reflecting.

ESTHER CENTERS *grew up in Seattle. She attended Western Washington University, where she studied child development. Esther earned her Waldorf teaching certificate from Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, and Mercy College of Detroit. In 1983, she was a founding class teacher at the Portland Waldorf School. From 1989-2000, Esther was a specialty teacher at the Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor. Her two children are RSSAA graduates. Esther is currently a class teacher at the Santa Cruz Waldorf School in California and this year is teaching fifth grade. She's married to fellow class teacher Scott Olmsted. Esther Centers teaches, facilitates RJ circles, chairs many committees, plays violin, practices Reiki, and follows her bliss in Santa Cruz.*

Photo at top right by Synergia Learning Ventures

Having returned from a wilderness canoe trip, eighth graders stand in a circle connected by a rope, which each one holds, and take a retrospective look at their experience.

Adopting Restorative Practices has had a profound effect on the faculty and staff of Santa Cruz Waldorf School. We use RP to deal with the conflicts and difficult situations that arise among us. We have learned that to change patterns in our school community, we must, as individuals, transform ourselves. And we have learned tha,t by working together, we can create a community environment based on empathy, collaboration, respect, and a heartfelt concern for the well-being of one another. ʘ

Resources

Santa Cruz Restorative Resources
www.nvcsantacruz.org/rr/

Dominic Barter, founder of Restorative Circles
www.restorativecircles.org

International Institute for Restorative Practices
www.iirp.edu

Blog by Howard Zehr, professor at Eastern Mennonite University
emu.edu/now/restorative-justice

For those who like Wikipedia definitions
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restorative_justice

Article in Good Times
www.goodtimessantacruz.com/good-times-cover-stories/1462-restorative-justice.html

Elaine Shpungin, PhD. highlights ways to help transform sibling rivalry
www.improvecommunication.net

Recent Educational Research Tells Waldorf: "You Have Got it Right!"

BY ROBERT C. OELHAF, PhD

For almost a century, Waldorf schools have been using the curriculum and pedagogy set forth by Rudolf Steiner when he founded the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919. Only in the past few decades, however, has physiological and pedagogical scientific research confirmed the validity of Waldorf Education in a clear and compelling way.

Although students are usually quite happy attending Waldorf schools, parents often have questions about an educational approach that differs in many ways from conventional, mainstream education. This article, which includes many references and citations, brings together recent scientific research that supports the principles and practices of Waldorf Education and will, it is hoped, allay parental anxiety and doubts. The references in parentheses refer to published sources listed at the end of the article.

—R. E. K.

Building Brain Cells

As children grow, their brain grows along with the rest of their body. The larger the brain, the greater is the capacity to register and process information. Research has shown that there are five ways to increase the number of brain cells and also the number of neural connections in children (Begley 1996; Hancock 1996; Chugani 2011; Sylvester 1995). These ways are engaging in music, art, handwork, and movement, and forming personal connections to adults. Each is an key element in Waldorf Education.

Music

We all know that Albert Einstein played the violin. We don't know, though, whether his musical activity influenced his intelligence. However, several research projects have shown the positive influence of musical experience on learning. Musical training stimulates brain development (*Science News* 2006; Kingsbury 2012; Overy 1998; Woo 2005). Comparison studies in schools have demonstrated that students who have music classes do better in math than those who do not, even if the music classes replace some of the math classes. The students who have music classes also score better in foreign languages and are noticeably more socially conscious (Stokes 2002; Uhlig 1999).

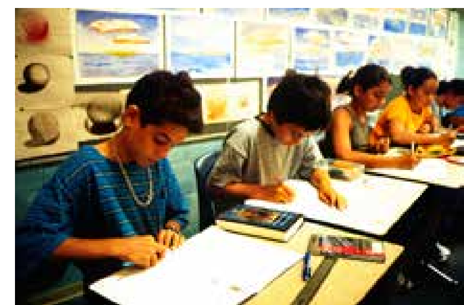
Almost every Waldorf student learns to play a stringed instrument and to play in an orchestra.

Music plays a significant role in Waldorf schools, from kindergarten through high school. All students learn to play recorder in first grade and usually in the third grade or fourth grade are encouraged to take up an orchestral instrument, usually the violin or cello. Students in neighboring classes play together in orchestras. Vocal music is also introduced in the first grade, with the complexity of choral and solo material increasing by age level. By high school, students are typically presenting musical dramas, from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* to modern musicals. Monthly or bimonthly assemblies for parents give students opportunities to perform for parents and peers. There may also be evening recitals.

Art

Specific pedagogical studies have verified the positive relationship between art and academic achievement (Gardiner et al. 1996).

In Waldorf schools, there is a strong presence of the visual arts—painting, drawing, and sculpture. In



Drawing and painting are a daily activity for Waldorf students, in dedicated art classes but also as an integral part of the study of literature, history, and science.

All photos by ©Aliki Sapountzi

first grade, students are introduced to watercolors and use them in both abstract and representational exercises. From the early grades, students use crayons and colored pencils to create their own main lesson books, in which they depict and describe the main stories or concepts of the content of the main lesson blocks. Sculpture is also part of the curriculum, beginning with modeling with beeswax and clay in the early grades and culminating in stone carving in the twelfth grade. These artistic activities are integrated with the academic work, and an artistic approach to all subjects, including mathematics, helps to connect the intellectual work with the realm of feeling and beauty.

Waldorf students learn to knit in the first grade and, by eighth grade, they are using sewing machines to make their own clothes.

Handwork

Fine motor movements are now recognized as contributing to intelligence and to school success (Gardiner et al. 1996; Auer 2001; Wang 2009).

Handwork begins in first grade in Waldorf schools and continues through high school, with ever more challenging projects. First graders crochet or knit recorder cases for their first musical instruments. Later, they learn to weave, make yarn from raw wool, and then design and make their own clothing. There is also handwork in other media, including woodwork and metal work. As children grow, projects become more complex and demanding. As eighth graders and then again as twelfth graders, students carry out independent projects, which might involve making an item of clothing, a piece of jewelry, a musical instrument, or a piece of electronic equipment. Individual projects for other subjects, including science, literature, and history, typically include artistic elements.

Movement

The image of the dimwitted athlete is hard to dispel, and head injuries and early dementia are in the news. Nevertheless, aside from such head-bashing sports as boxing, football, and soccer, athletics generally have a good reputation as far as cultivating intelligence goes. After all, sports require mental focus and strategic thinking as well as physical skills (Zauer 2010). In a Waldorf school, competitive team sports, such as baseball, volleyball, and basketball, begin in the fifth or sixth grade and continue through high school. There is, however, no Waldorf high school with a football team!

Movement is an important element in the Waldorf curriculum. In the kindergarten, children are in almost constant movement, involved in free play, circle games, housekeeping chores, and outdoor exploration and walks. In the early grades, students stamp or clap out their times tables as they march around the classroom. This activity is especially important for little boys, allowing them to make noise and stomp around, pleasing, rather than irritating, the teacher. Eurythmy, a form of artistic movement done to the spoken word or to music, is introduced from the first grade. It continues as a regular activity through all the grades, including more complex individual and group movements as the students develop. In most schools, games, social dancing, gymnastics, and often also circus arts are introduced to foster coordination, a sense of balance, and a sense for orientation in space. Dramatic productions involve much out-of-the-classroom activity and movement. Waldorf children have their first experience putting on a play or recitation in the first grade, and every year each class stages a dramatic production. This progression in the theater arts culminates in the lower school with a Shakespeare production in eighth grade and with a more complex modern drama or musical in twelfth grade.

A (copper) rod-tossing exercise in eurythmy class develops eye-hand coordination and a sense of rhythm.

Personal Connections to Adults

The trend in mainstream public and private education today is to increase computer instruction in school and hence to decrease the students' contact and interaction with teachers. In Waldorf schools, computers play a very minor role and then only in the high school, and ongoing, direct relationships between teachers and students are greatly valued. As a result, in the area of students' personal connections to adults, Waldorf schools differ radically from most mainstream schools (Richtel 2011).

In general, in the Waldorf lower school, one teacher, the class teacher, stays with a class from first

A student's relationship with the class teacher usually begins in grade one and continues through the eight years of his or her elementary schooling.

through eighth grade. The teacher comes to know each child personally and, through class meetings, parent conferences, and home visits, becomes very familiar with the entire family and its circumstances. Teachers can be sensitive to the developmental stage of each individual student, recognizing those who are able to push ahead to advanced work and giving special attention to those needing more time. Each student can be recognized for his or her positive contribution to the class. Through class projects, plays, outings, and camping trips, teachers and children interact and get to know each other in various contexts.

Waldorf schools generally introduce computers in high school, and the students learn to use them as tools for research and learning. However, as in dealing with other aspects of modern technology, the schools strive to give the students an understanding of the inner workings of the machine, its historical development, and its effect on society. In any case, computers are not allowed to displace live teachers and live teaching.

Other Positive Factors

Thus, by emphasizing music, art, and handwork, by providing many opportunities for physical movement in the course of the day, and by encouraging long-term, meaningful relationships with adults, Waldorf schools are creating an ideal situation for the healthy brain development of their students. Other aspects of Waldorf Education, likewise corroborated by current research, provide children with meaningful benefits. They include the following.

Early Foreign Language Study

Children find it easy to assimilate a foreign language during the first seven years of life. At that point, the language window begins to close, but children are still able to learn fairly easily through the lower school years (Hancock 1996). This language window is recognized and made use of by Waldorf schools, which may be the only schools to teach foreign languages from grade one. Generally, two foreign languages, including German, Spanish, or Chinese, are introduced in first grade.

The first lessons involve simple songs and poems that develop a feel for the foreign sounds and rhythms. Later, conversation, culture, vocabulary, and grammar are introduced as appropriate. In high school, through the worldwide network of hundreds of Waldorf schools, students may arrange to attend schools in foreign countries or participate in an exchange with a student in a sister school, for example, in Germany, Spain, France, or Colombia. Waldorf students from abroad also come as exchange or regular students to Waldorf schools in North America. Recently, one school in the United States was hosting visiting students from England, Germany, Afghanistan, and China.

In-depth Extended Study

Success in life requires more than the ability to assimilate facts and to pass exams. It requires the ability to focus on a particular subject or task for an extended period of time (Tough 2012). Waldorf schools develop this ability through the main lesson system and through the de-emphasis on memorizing facts just for tests.

The cover of a ninth grader's main lesson book. The book is the fruit of a three-week intensive study block focusing on ancient mythology.

Each morning, the school day starts with the main lesson. This is a double period of ninety minutes or longer in which one subject, such as English grammar, mathematics, physics, or geography, is the main focus for a block of three or four weeks. The longer time gives the teacher opportunity to develop a topic thoroughly. Students write reports, often carry out individual or class projects, and create their own main lesson books. These include daily essays and drawings or pictures illustrating the material. Starting in the fifth or sixth grade, the students will take a review test at the end of the block, but class participation and the written record are equally or more important in evaluating a student's performance. In the Waldorf elementary school, teachers write a personal evaluation of each student in each subject, rather than give a letter or number grade. Usually, these reports are done at the end of each term. In the high school, written personal evaluations of each student in each

Main lesson book cover illustration by Phillipe Holmstrom

class continue. The students also receive a letter grade, based on all aspects of the course, not just test results.

Artistic Teaching

Students absorb and retain content best when their aesthetic and feeling capacities are engaged (Foer 2011). Waldorf teachers design their lessons with the intention of appealing to the feelings and artistic sensibilities of their students as well as to their intellects. Science classes seek to awaken wonder at the beauty and complexity of the natural world. History classes, often including the stories of inspiring historical figures, seek to bring to life the struggles and triumphs of humanity. Teachers, free to present the curriculum in a creative way, are able to design lesson plans to appeal to their particular class.

A Waldorf teacher's chalkboard drawing of the Irish folktale, "The King of Ireland's Son," an example of artistic teaching that reaches the soul life of the students, not just their intellect.

Each classroom is meant to be beautiful, to stimulate the aesthetic sensibility. Classroom walls are painted with translucent colors, desks and furniture are made of wood rather than metal or plastic, and organic, nonrectilinear architectural forms encourage imaginative, "outside-the-box" thinking.

Breaks between Classes

Controlled studies of university students have demonstrated that taking a break after a learning session, prior to going on to new material, significantly improves retention of what was learned.

In Waldorf schools, following the first (double) period of the day, the main lesson, there is a long break of generally a half hour. Then there are three classes, each about forty-five minutes long, prior to lunch. While there may not be breaks between these classes, one class, often the middle one, is nonacademic, such as chorus, orchestra, eurythmy, or gymnastics. Thus there is typically a substantial break between all academic classes. The afternoon classes that follow lunch are usually mostly nonacademic, including art, handwork, and music.

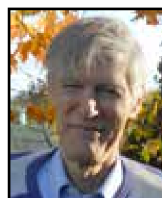
Waldorf Graduates and How They Fare

In the last decade, two detailed surveys of Waldorf school graduates have been carried out. One was done in Germany several years ago (Barz and Randoll 2007). The general finding was that graduates at first found it more difficult to orient themselves in the higher academic world. However, once they had made the transition, they were better able than their peers to set a course and pursue goals successfully. The other survey was done in North America by Waldorf educators David Mitchell and Douglas Gerwin and is available on the AWSNA website whywaldorfworks.org. According to this study of almost 600 Waldorf graduates, 94% went to college (most to elite, selective institutions), 88% graduated from college, and over 50% had or were planning to do graduate work. Waldorf graduates were recognized by their college professors for their self-directedness, love of learning, initiative, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and social awareness.

A professor at Prescott College in Arizona described one Waldorf alumna as follows:

> … very self-directed. She took responsibility for her education—she turned things in on time—but more importantly, she did not simply do the minimum. She was clearly interested in learning. She had a great sense of humor and had excellent interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. She was a great knitter! She was without question one of the most outstanding students I have had the good fortune to mentor.

As the centenary of Waldorf Education approaches, current scientific research indicates the validity of Rudolf Steiner's prescient insights in creating the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy. This curriculum and pedagogy well serve the children and young people of today.



ROBERT OELHAF *was a founding teacher of Hawthorne Valley High School. He has taught high school science and mathematics at three American Waldorf schools and English at the Waldorf school in Flensburg, Germany. He is the author of* Organic Agriculture: Economic and Ecological Comparisons with Conventional Methods. *Oelhaf's four children attended Waldorf schools from kindergarten through the twelfth grade.*

References *on page 45*

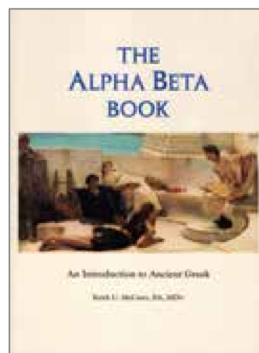
Book Review

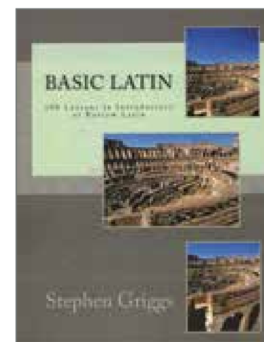
The Alpha Beta Book
An Introduction to Ancient Greek

BY KEITH U. McCRARY, BA, MDiv

Basic Latin
100 Lessons in Introductory or Review Latin

BY STEPHEN GRIGGS





The study of Greek and Latin and the ancient literature written in those languages has been a fundamental pillar of education in Western culture for centuries. Even today, in Germany and other European countries, university-bound students study the classical languages.

There are strong arguments in favor of the study of the classical tongues. Ancient Greek is the source of many words in modern English [*eulogy*, for example, from *eu*- 'good' and *logos* 'word']. Besides, the epics and philosophical writings of the ancient Greeks—the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer, the works of Plato and Aristotle—have helped shape the course of Western culture and history. Latin, the language of ancient Rome, has provided about half of the words—from *wine* to *equanimity*—in the English language. Also, proponents of Latin point out that, as a language, Latin is systematic, rigorous, and analytical and that its study develops mental discipline in students.

Few, if any, Waldorf schools in North America offer Greek or Latin as a foreign language taught through the grades. In the Waldorf fifth grade, though, classical Greece is studied, and in sixth grade ancient Rome is studied in depth. In those years, many class teachers take the opportunity to introduce the languages of those ancient cultures. *The Alpha Beta Book* by Keith McCrary and *Basic Latin* by Stephen Griggs are excellent resources in providing students with an interesting and meaningful experience of Greek and Latin. Both Keith McCrary and Stephen Griggs are longtime Waldorf educators and both engage and stimulate their readers/students in the best tradition of Waldorf pedagogy.

In *The Alpha Beta Book*, McCrary introduces the letters of the Greek alphabet in brief, humorous essays, and gives a long list of key English words taken from the Greek. An accompanying CD supplements the written text.

Basic Latin is a textbook/workbook that can be used to introduce students to Latin or to help students in their first or second year review what they have learned. Each chapter starts out with a grammar and vocabulary section and then has three or more stories that illustrate the points made. The stories deal with the daily life of the Romans and their servants. The book includes many Latin-to-English crossword puzzles, lists of English and Latin words to be matched, and numerous evocative line drawings of life in ancient Rome.

These two books are important resources for the Waldorf class teacher, particularly in grades five and six, and for any persons interested in deepening their understanding of Western culture.

—R. E. K.

The Alpha Beta Book: AWSNA Publications, Chatham, NY, 2013 • 64 pages + CD • $18.00

Basic Latin: Self-published, 2013 (available at amazon. com) • 199 pages • $13.00

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Book Review

The Storyteller's Way

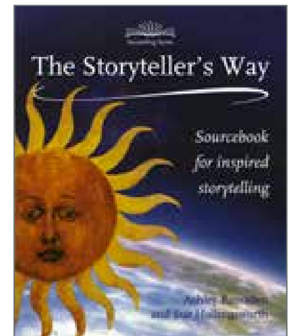
BY ASHLEY RAMSDEN AND SUE HOLLINGSWORTH

For millennia, the telling of stories has been an essential element of human culture. Through stories—through myths, legends, fables, epics, and tales—a culture transmits to each new generation its history, values, morality, its understanding of what is real, what is good, and how life should be lived.

In modern culture, the telling of stories has been co-opted by giant corporations that produce and market books, movies, video games, and television shows. Each of us, child and adult, is under a constant barrage of stories. Facebook posts and Twitter tweets are in fact ways someone is trying to tell us his story, whether we are interested or not.

Is there still a place in the world for the telling of a story, for one person—teacher, parent, family relation, friend—to sit down with children (and/or adults) and, with the living word in real time, to relate a tale or a fable that entertains, beguiles, and instructs? For Waldorf educators, of course, the answer is yes. The entire Waldorf curriculum, from kindergarten through twelfth grade, is permeated with stories, from the fairy tales and fables of the early grades to the inspiring biographies of explorers and reformers told to high school students.

For Ashley Ramsden and Sue Hollingsworth, authors of *The Storyteller's Way*, the answer also is yes, emphatically so. Both are teachers at the International School of Storytelling, founded in 1994 and based at Emerson College (an anthroposophical educational center) in England. Their book, subtitled *Sourcebook for inspired storytelling*, provides a step-by-step guide to developing skill as a storyteller. It is meant for anyone who would like to be able to tell a story well, for beginners as well as those with some experience in the art.



The book offers sound and practical advice on a host of topics, including: developing an engaging speaking voice; using physical gesture and expression of emotion; pacing one's narrative; utilizing moments of silence; employing different levels of language, including ritual, courtly, and jargon; shifting time and place in a narrative; maintaining the interest of the audience; appealing to all the senses; and even tailoring one's delivery and one's story to the four temperaments. The book contains exercises relevant to each of these topics. For example, to help improve articulation, the authors suggest the "chopstick exercise"—reciting a difficult passage out loud once and then reciting it again with a pair of chopsticks held crossways in one's mouth.

The Storyteller's Way also contains a number of charming stories, such as "Kisa Gotami" (about a grieving woman's encounter with the Buddha), and "Olga the Cockroach" (about a young "lady" who discovers that true beauty is the beauty of the heart). With these stories, the beginner storyteller can test out and hone the skills developed with the guidance of this excellent book.

—R. E. K.

Hawthorn Press, Stroud, England, 2013 • 234 pages • $35.00

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Book Review

Drawing with Hand, Head, and Heart

A Natural Approach to Learning the Art of Drawing

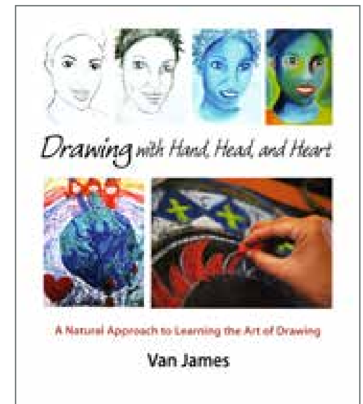
BY VAN JAMES

The impulse to draw, to depict on a two-dimensional surface some aspect of the three-dimensional world, seems to be a basic, universal, human instinct. The act of drawing is somehow immensely satisfying, putting us in contact, even communion, with something outside ourselves and allowing us to create a new object of beauty. Drawing engages and develops the three soul activities of thinking, feeling, and willing.

In Waldorf schools, the children start to draw in preschool and kindergarten, and drawing remains a crucial part of the curriculum through the twelfth grade. The students have many opportunities to develop their drawing ability, and many produce beautiful works of art. Unfortunately, not all of us have had such an opportunity. In *Drawing with Hand, Head, and Heart*, Van James, artist and art teacher with many years of Waldorf classroom experience, provides a comprehensive and practical, step-by-step guide to the art of drawing. With almost 600 color and black-and-white illustrations of examples and exercises, the book provides parents, teachers, and others the chance to develop their drawing skill in a way based on the wisdom of the Waldorf curriculum.

An eleventh-grade girl draws a self-portrait in the expressionist style with pastels.

The introduction cites current research on brain development and points out that the process of drawing, or "picture making," contributes to the development of visual thinking. This ability to create internal visual images is a crucial part of our full, human intelligence.



In part one, "Drawing for Teachers of School-Age Children," Van James describes in detail the Waldorf drawing curriculum. With many striking illustrations, he explains how age-appropriate drawing exercises engage and encourage visual intelligence as well as the ability to render on paper aspects of the external world. With some basic art materials, the adult reader can do the exercises and follow this path freely and at his own pace.

Part two, "Drawing for Students / Artists of All Ages," includes three chapters. The first focuses on form drawing—the "language of line and pattern"—another subject taught in all the grades. The second explores portraiture and the depiction of the human form and personality, including the self-portrait. The final chapter is about "drawing as the art and science of seeing," and points out that the line, usually a basic element of drawing, does not actually exist in the real world. Visual experience consists of mass and color, not line, and there are ways of drawing that can mirror that reality.

The book also includes examples of remarkable blackboard drawings by teachers, main lesson book pages by students, an appendix on therapeutic drawing, a bibliography of resources, and an index. *Drawing with Hand, Head, and Heart* is an invaluable resource for those engaged in teaching others to draw and for those who would like to develop their own drawing skills.

—R. E. K.

SteinerBooks, Great Barrington, MA, 2013 • 311 pages • $30.00

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Oelhaf, *continued from page 41*

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