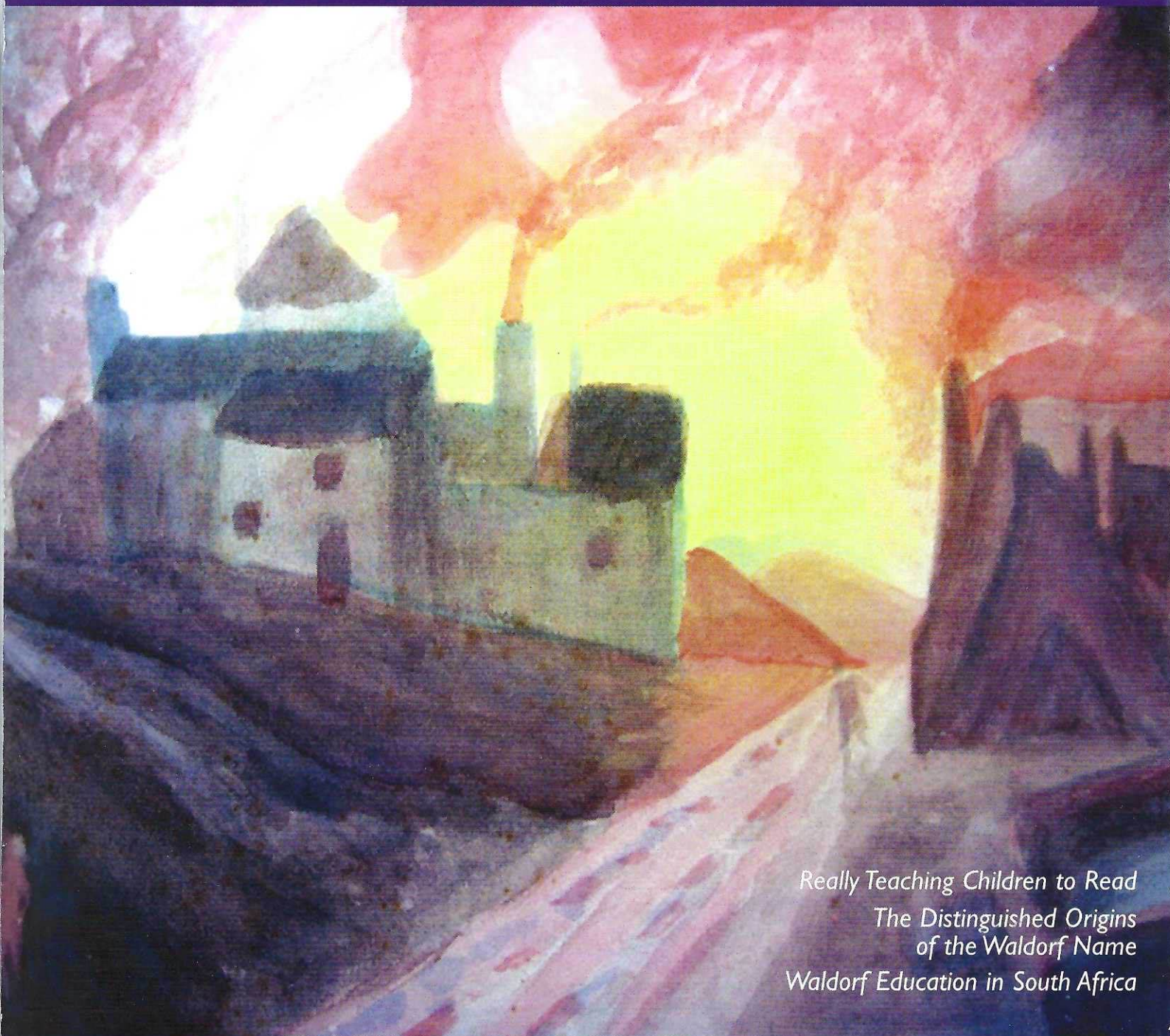


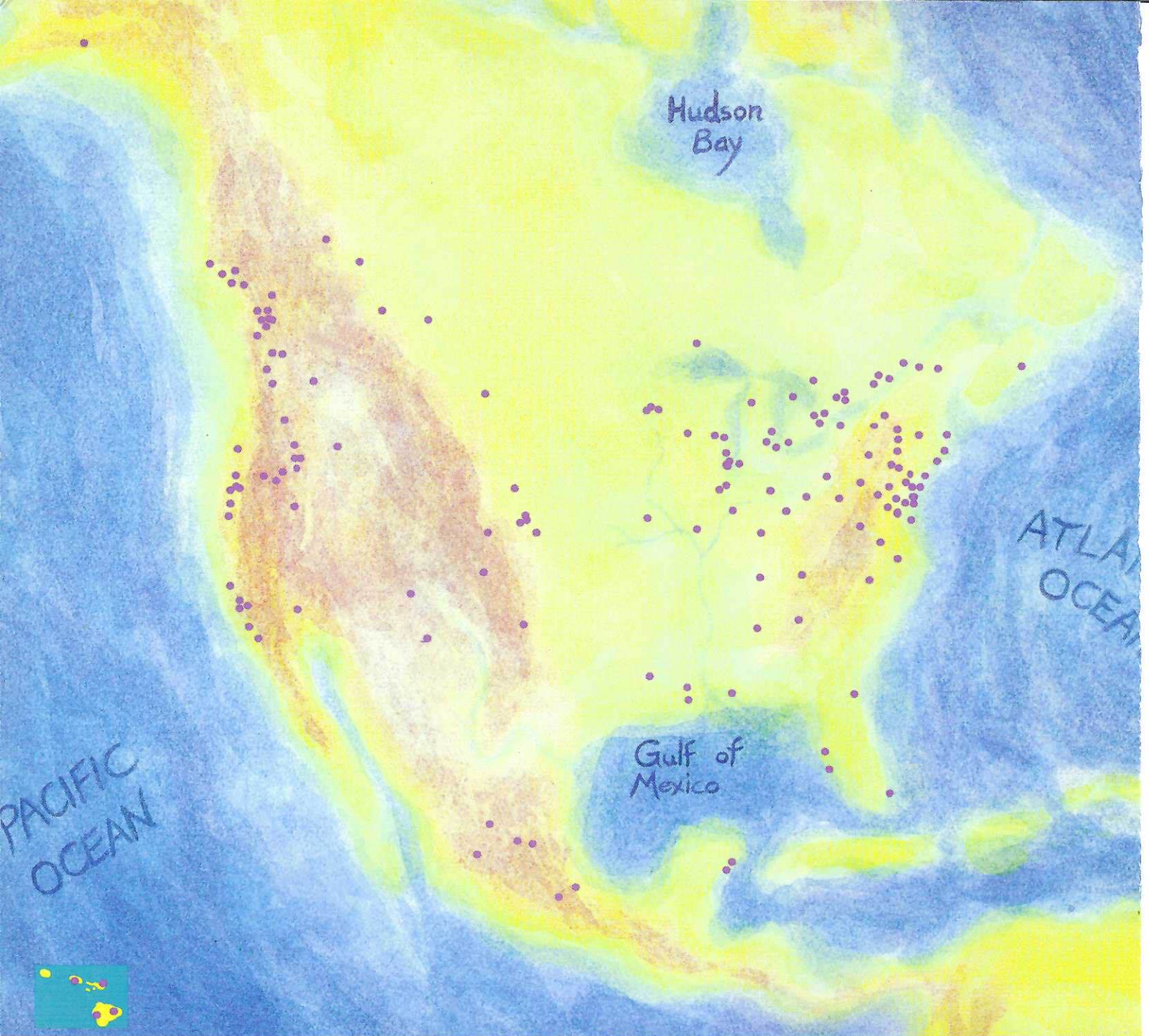
Renewal

FALL/WINTER 2006 - VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2



Really Teaching Children to Read
The Distinguished Origins
of the Waldorf Name
Waldorf Education in South Africa

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION



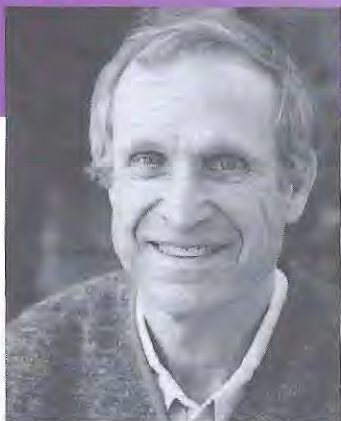
AWSNA

ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICA

Connecting the dots from school to school, from heart to heart, across the continent

There are over 200 independent Waldorf schools and Early Childhood programs in North America. Internationally, there are 900 Waldorf schools in more than 80 countries. The first Waldorf school was founded in Germany in 1919, based on the teachings of Austrian scientist, philosopher, and spiritual teacher Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925). *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education* is a publication of AWSNA.

COVER ART: A watercolor painting entitled Coalbrook, England: The Industrial Revolution by Lindsey Kasperwicz, grade eight, student of Van James, Honolulu Waldorf School.



From the Editor

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

In addition to being editor of *Renewal*, I have a career as a professional stand-up comedian. I have been doing stand-up since I was in graduate school many years ago, but in the past seven or eight years I have specialized in humor related to Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education.

Given the underlying seriousness of these movements ("Without us, humanity will disappear into the bottomless abyss of materialism!"), anthroposophical or Waldorf humor can be perceived as an oxymoron. To be sure, the field is not crowded, and being a Waldorf comedian is something like being a Rastafarian barber or an Amish electrician.

Nevertheless, I have built up a little cottage industry giving shows and workshops at schools and conferences. During the past summer, this work took me to, among other places, Santa Rosa, California, and Sydney, Australia. In both venues, I did a one-man show and gave my workshop on humor, "You are Funnier than You Look." Each place bestowed inspiring lessons.

The event in Santa Rosa was a youth conference attended by about 120 young women and men. Almost all of them are Waldorf graduates and all are interested in applying the essence of Anthroposophy and of Waldorf Education—a spiritual understanding of the human being and of the world—into work in the larger society. Some of these young people will become Waldorf teachers, some biodynamic gardeners, some eurythmists, and some entrepreneurs with an enlightened way of looking at business and money. While in many Waldorf schools and anthroposophical institutions there is a distinct "graying" of teachers and coworkers, there are today young people—idealistic, dedicated, optimistic, who, in spite of the world's travail—will carry on the work.

The Sydney conference was one of seven regional Kolisko conferences held this year around the world. Eugen Kolisko was the pioneering school physician at the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart. These conferences,

organized by the Medical Section of the Anthroposophical Society in Dornach, Switzerland, focus on the therapeutic side of education. In Sydney, about two hundred physicians, nurses, therapists of various sorts (eurythmy, art, massage), and Waldorf teachers gathered. They explored how educators can work together with people in the healing arts to deal with the condition of today's children and young people. The organizers (to their credit) realized that humor, too, can be a potent therapeutic tool.

Even though this was just a regional conference, it attested to the international nature of the Waldorf and anthroposophical movements. While many participants were from Australia and New Zealand, conferees also came from Thailand, Taiwan, China, Viet Nam, India, Korea, Japan, and Sri Lanka. These Asian persons come from ancient and high cultures far removed from the Central Europe of the early twentieth century where Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education were born. Nevertheless, they have all found something universal, compelling, and relevant in the work of Rudolf Steiner. All share a vocabulary, a set of concepts, a way of looking at the world that allows them to communicate and to work together on a very deep level.

After the conference, I drove with Peter Glasby, a leader of Waldorf Education in Australia, his Swiss-born wife, Rosemary, and Li Zhang and Harry Wong—founders of the first Waldorf school in China—across southern Australia to Mount Barker, near Adelaide. It was a memorable drive. We saw kangaroos, wombats, bush fires, and in an astounding star-carpeted, full-moon sky, the magnificent Southern Cross. At a dinner stop next to a river, we were warned about the Australian crocodile, capable of outrunning a man over a short distance and of biting off a leg with one chomp. This was a warning that did not require repetition.

For the first day of travel, Jayeesh, an Indian man engaged in setting up a residential Waldorf high school outside Hyderabad, was also with us. That evening we stopped

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AWSNA Update

BY PATRICE MAYNARD, MEd

*Leader for Outreach and Development
Association of Waldorf Schools of North America*

How Goes Our Association? It Goes Well

There is always a miracle inherent in the process of human beings associating. In our contentious world, simply beginning to speak with one another can be the most difficult challenge. However, once conversation is begun in earnest, the gentle wind of humanity blows through our interactions, and solutions find us that otherwise remain elusive. As Goethe observed, conversation is more precious than gold.

In 2003, delegates from the Waldorf schools elected a committee to propose a new organizational structure for the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, to "reimagine how good AWSNA can be." The resulting inspired and inspiring picture of our Waldorf schools finding a new commitment through energetic communication and cooperation has shaped our work for the past two years.

Three separate bodies now guide and govern the Association. The eight-member board of trustees, consisting of "disinterested" persons, not employed by the Association, is largely concerned with long-range and budgetary issues. The three-member executive committee is composed of leaders for administration (Frances Kane), development and outreach (Patrice Maynard), and programs and activities (Michael Soulé). This group handles the day-to-day operation of the organization and "carries the continent." The leadership council includes representatives of the eight school regions in North America as well as of other groups, such as early childhood

educators and those involved in Waldorf teacher training. One of its principal tasks is to bring the concerns, ideas, energies, and talents of those constituencies into the life of the Association. In each of these groups, and in the Association as a whole, the emphasis is on collaborative leadership, consensus decision making, and horizontal rather than hierarchic relationships.

The question *What does it mean to educate a child?* has become the most pressing issue in education, not just

nationally but globally. Above the steady throb of accountability / testing / data-based analysis / technology and *No Child Left Behind*, parents, teachers, and children are asking insightful questions about independence in education over against corporate and government influence, cooperation instead of competition in the classroom, and wisdom and the development of creative human capacities instead of mere information as the true goal of schooling.

Through the Association's active participation in advocacy groups for independence in education, such as the Council for American Private Education, the National Council for Private School Accreditation,

the National Association of Independent Schools, and the Right to Play, we are involved in a significant shift in focus and in the voicing of a "new" point of view. Waldorf Education has much to offer to this discussion and is already doing so.

This past August, the Association's board of trustees, the leadership council, and the school delegates held meetings



Clockwise from top left: The driving range at the beautiful Garden City Country Club allowed golfers practice time before the round. Golfers receive last-minute pointers from PGA touring golf professional, Duffy Waldorf. The Garden City Country Club's sand traps were no match for the Waldorf golfers who came out on June 26th to support Waldorf Education. Duffy Waldorf and Eric Utne, emcee for the "Winning with Waldorf" golf benefit.

Waldorf

What's in a Name?

The Fascinating Story of How Rudolf Steiner's Educational Approach Came to Share a Name with a Hotel, a Salad, and a Cigarette

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

Mercurius International is a company, based in the Netherlands, that distributes supplies for arts education in Waldorf schools and Waldorf kindergartens—high quality colored pencils, crayons, watercolor paints, paint brushes, art paper, colored beeswax for modeling, wooden flutes and recorders, and eurythmy shoes. Several years ago, Mercurius funded the writing and publication of a booklet entitled Waldorf: The Story behind the Name by Hansjörg Hofrichter. The booklet is intended for use by Waldorf schools in community outreach and can be ordered from AWSNA Books. It is the source for many of the facts in the following article.

The tendrils of cause and effect in human history extend widely through time and space. In 1778 a fifteen-year-old boy left his home village in central Germany to seek his fortune in the wide world. One result of



Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York,
from a 1915 postcard book

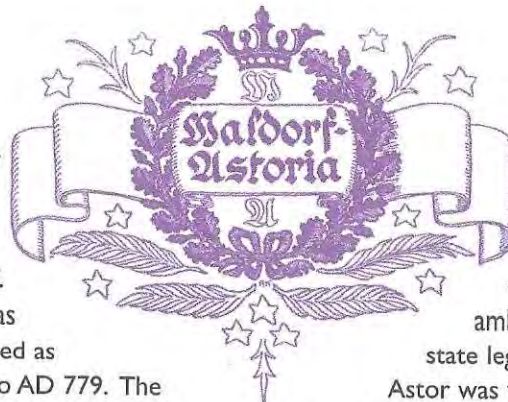
that event is that today, 230 years later, the worldwide educational movement founded by Rudolf Steiner carries the name *Waldorf*.

The boy was Johann Jakob Astor, son of a butcher in the village of Walldorf. The village had been settled as early as the eighth century AD, being mentioned as Waltdorf in a manuscript that dates to AD 779. The original meaning of the name is not certain. *Dorf* in German means village, but *Walt* has several possible meanings. *Waltdorf* might have connoted a village surrounded by a forest, or by an earthen wall, or by an area of turf or swamp.

The young Astor went first to London, where he learned the craft of making musical instruments. Five years later, in 1783, he emigrated to New York City in the newly independent American colonies. Astor earned enough money as a streetsweeper and street peddler to open his own instrument shop. When that business failed in about 1786, he turned to trading in the precious furs that were coming in from the Great Lakes and other wilderness areas of North America. By the turn of the century, Astor had become a leading dealer in furs, and between 1800 and 1817 he extended his activities as far as China. Astor also invested heavily in real estate in New York City, which became the basis of the family fortune.

Johann Jakob Astor died in 1848, and his son William Backhouse Astor (1792–1875) followed in his entrepreneurial footsteps. William Astor expanded the family's real estate holdings, building more than 700 stores, homes, and apartment houses in New York City. He also founded the Astor Library as a public library in New York, which later became the New York Public Library. When this second American Astor died, he was the wealthiest man in the nation.

William's son, John Jacob Astor (1822–1890), carried on the family tradition of accumulating wealth. But he was also an active philanthropist, contributing to the



Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, as well as the Astor Library.

William Waldorf Astor (1848–1919), the original Astor's great-grandson, plays an important role in our story of intersecting destinies. Politically ambitious, he served in the New York state legislature. In 1891 William Waldorf

Astor was visiting Philadelphia with his wife. He tried to get a room at a small hotel, but the proprietor told him that none was available.

Then the man, unwilling to turn away a middle-aged couple into the rain at one o'clock in the morning, offered them his own room, saying, "It's not exactly a suite, but under the circumstances it'll do for one night. Don't worry about me. I'll manage somehow for the night."

The next morning, William Astor thanked the man, saying, "You are just the manager to be put in charge of the best hotel in the United States. I might even build one for you."

Two years later, the Philadelphian received a letter from William Waldorf Astor inviting him to New York City. The two men met at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 34th Street in front of a new, magnificent thirteen-story building of reddish stone. "This is the hotel I've had built for you," Astor said. Thus, the well-meaning small-hotel proprietor from Philadelphia, George C. Boldt, became the manager of the luxurious Waldorf Hotel in New York City. Four years later, William Astor's cousin, yet another John Jacob Astor, built the Astoria Hotel right next door; and when in time the two establishments were united, the first Waldorf-Astoria Hotel came into existence.

In 1896 *The Cookbook of "Oscar of the Waldorf"* was published, presenting recipes created by Oscar Tschirky, the Waldorf's maître d'hôtel. The book introduced the Waldorf salad, still popular today, which features lettuce garnished with raisins, walnuts, apples, celery, lemon juice, and mayonnaise.



The Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory



The workforce of the factory

A minor cultural icon, the Waldorf salad is mentioned in a Cole Porter song from the musical *Anything Goes*: "You're the top, you're a Waldorf salad." In a 1979 episode of the British television comedy series, *Fawlty Towers*, an ill-tempered American guest grows increasingly frustrated at the hotelier's incompetence, which culminates in his inability to produce a Waldorf salad. Finally, Fawlty declares, "I think we are just out of Waldorf. What is Waldorf, anyway—a walnut that has gone off?"

In the late 1800s, the Astor family had branched out into the tobacco trade, buying from tobacco farmers in Virginia and manufacturing cigarettes under the brand name "Waldorf-Astoria." The name, then as now, bore the connotation of quality, affluence, and style.

In the early 1900s, local businessmen in Stuttgart, Germany, built a factory to produce Waldorf-Astoria cigarettes. The company was the official purveyor of cigarettes to the courts of the kings of Greece and of Württemberg. It is here that the story of the Astor family intersects with that of Rudolf Steiner and his educational impulse.

When World War I ended, in November 1918, a man named Emil Molt was the manager and part owner of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company in Stuttgart. A native of southern Germany and an orphan, Molt, like the first Johann Jakob Astor, had through hard work gained success in business. Molt was also a student of Rudolf Steiner and of Anthroposophy, the spiritual worldview that Steiner taught. He had first heard Steiner speak in 1904, and, in the years following, was a serious student and supporter of Steiner's work.

Molt was a progressive manager, concerned about the welfare of his workers. When, at the end of the war, he had too many employees—because of workers returning from military service—Molt kept everyone on the payroll and had them work half-days. Also, he offered his workers afternoon adult education courses in history,

geography, papermaking, and literature and paid them to attend. In time, these cultural offerings became financially impossible.

Molt had to cut and then eliminate the subsidy, and the program ended.

He then turned to education for children as a hope for the future.

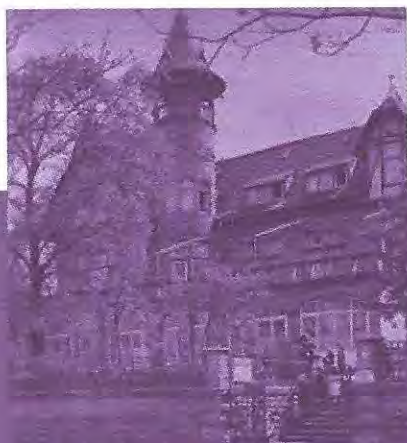
In April 1919, Molt approached Rudolf Steiner and asked him if there were an approach to education that could create human beings incapable of making war; and, if so, would Steiner work with him to create such a school. Steiner answered in the affirmative to both queries. Six months later, a school opened on the grounds of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company with some three hundred students.

The school bore the hallmarks that distinguish Waldorf schools today:

- the aim of educating the whole child—head, heart, and hands—through an emphasis on the arts, crafts, and practical skills, as well as on academic subjects
- a curriculum based on the natural stages of the child's development
- a relationship between class teacher and class that extends through the eight years of elementary schooling
- school governance by the teachers, free from outside influence

Steiner's vision was that this and other schools like it would be totally independent of government control and instead would be financially supported by the business community. It is not surprising, then, that the name *Waldorf* was chosen for the school. During its first year, the Waldorf School was wholly supported by the company. Most of the students were children of the employees, and the teachers were paid as employees of the company.

In 1920 the Waldorf School in Stuttgart separated from the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company, although the



The first Waldorf school, now called the Uhlandshöhe Waldorf School, in Stuttgart



Children at the first Waldorf school playing music and doing eurythmy



company continued to pay the tuition of the children of its workers. Many new children joined the school, and a charitable foundation was founded to own and manage it. The school prospered, and by 1924 it had over 1000 students.

Meanwhile, the fortunes of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company declined in the chaotic financial situation of postwar Germany. Emil Molt bought out his partners to become sole owner. Inspired by Steiner's vision of the business sector supporting the work of the cultural sphere, Molt joined with several other Stuttgart-based anthroposophists. These men pooled their businesses into a shareholder corporation called *Die Kommende Tag* (The Coming Day). This soon collapsed, however, and Molt's company was sold to a group of banks, which kept Molt on as a hired manager.

In 1928 the banks sold the firm to the Reemtsma Company, then, as also today, the major cigarette manufacturer in Germany. The Waldorf-Astoria factory was closed, and Emil Molt, having already lost his investment, also lost his job. Reemtsma, however, agreed to support the Waldorf School by donating 4000



Deutschmarks annually for the next ten years. Today the company still manufactures and sells a cigarette under the Waldorf-Astoria brand name.

When Emil Molt died in 1936, the first Waldorf school was slowly being strangled by the Nazi regime in Germany. The fascists were concerned about its avowed aim of educating children to be free and independent thinkers.

At the present time, there are Waldorf-Astoria hotels in many countries, and the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City is still one of the most prestigious hotels in the world. And around the world, over 900 Waldorf schools are educating children in more than eighty countries. So it could happen, perhaps, that a Waldorf teacher or graduate stays at a Waldorf-Astoria hotel, has a Waldorf salad at dinner, and maybe even recklessly enjoys a Waldorf-Astoria cigarette, thus bringing together the

Through its relationship to the Astor family, Waldorf Education is connected to one of the most famous ripostes in the history of polite—and impolite—conversation.

William Waldorf Astor, founder of the Waldorf Hotel in New York, moved from America to England around 1898 and became a British citizen and the First Viscount Astor, of Haver Castle. His son, Waldorf Astor (1879–1952), married American-born Nancy Langhorne (1879–1964), who, as Lady Astor, became in 1919 the first woman to be elected to the British House of Commons. She served there until 1945.

Known for her energy and wit, Lady Astor is especially remembered for her exchange of compliments with political rival Sir Winston Churchill. "Sir, if I were your wife, I would put poison in your tea," Lady Astor is reported to have said to Sir Winston. To which he replied, "Madame, if I were your husband, I would drink it!"

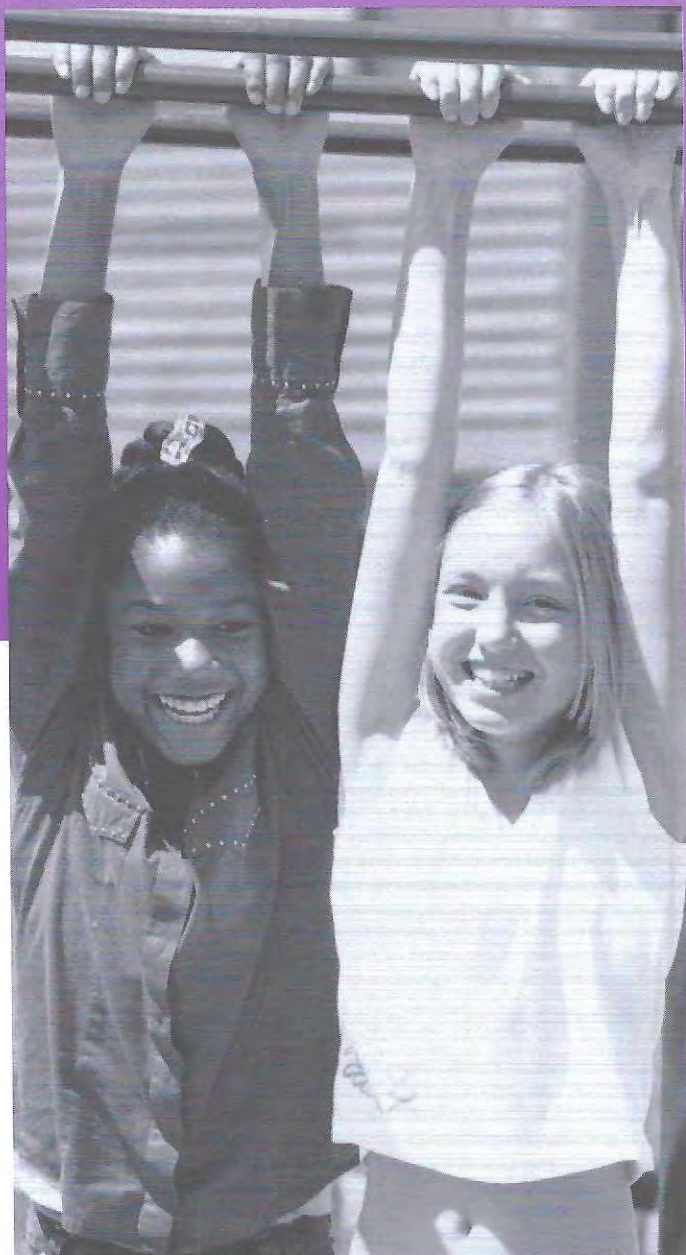
diverse cultural and economic institutions connected by the name Waldorf.



Boys in the original Waldorf school learning to knit, something previously unknown in German education



Class 1 pupils in 1920



BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

Rhythm

and the Healthy Development of the Child

Roughly stated, we can say that children cannot yet of themselves breathe properly, and that education consists in teaching "proper breathing."

—Rudolf Steiner
The Study of Man®

These words, spoken in the 1919 training course for teachers in the first Waldorf school, must be understood in the context of Rudolf Steiner's view of the structure of the human being. According to Steiner, the human body has three principal systems, each controlling one type of activity. The nerve-sense system, comprised of the brain, sense organs, and the central nervous system, is the seat of sensation and thinking. The metabolic-limb system, consisting of the digestive, eliminative, and sexual organs as well as the limbs, is the seat of the will and of action. It is a polar balance to the nerve-sense system. The rhythmic system, including the heart and lungs, is related to the life of feeling, functions according to specific rhythmic patterns, and harmonizes and balances the other two systems.

In Waldorf Education, Rudolf Steiner created a schooling that helps each of these areas develop in a healthy and balanced way. The Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy develop the intellect of the child as well as the child's ability to move and to act in the world. The curriculum and way of teaching also support the central, mediating, rhythmic realm of feeling and the soul life. For the child to harmonize the thinking and willing poles, to be able to learn, and to develop in a healthy way, this middle system must be functioning well. Because the fit between the incarnating individuality and the body into which it is born is never perfect, proper rhythmic breathing has to be developed later. This right breathing enables learning, proper sleep, healthy development, and the discovery of the child's true self.

Teaching the child to breathe properly is an intrinsic part of Waldorf

Education, a main focus of the class teachers and of the specialty teachers. It is not that they teach the children to breathe in a certain way. Rather, they create an environment in which rhythm and regularity dominate. They design lessons that engage thinking and willing but also the feeling life of the child. And they present a curriculum in which the children often experience polar opposites mediated and balanced by a central element. These influences work on the etheric or life-force bodies of the children, which in turn affect the functioning of the physical heart and lungs. Parents can also contribute to this process, essential to the healthy development and education of the child, primarily by establishing regular, predictable rhythms in the child's life at home.

The Preschool and Kindergarten Years

Young children are beings of the Earth but they are in part still beings of Heaven, or the spiritual world, as well. As a result, they need to "breathe," that is, to alternate between being quietly inside themselves and being out in the world. In the Waldorf preschool and kindergarten, the children are helped to move between these two states on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis. This alternating movement establishes a foundation for the

rhythm work that will occur later through all the following years in school.

Each day at school has an established, familiar pattern, and the resulting regularity gives the child a feeling of safety and security. In the morning after the children have settled in from their journey to school, they are typically told a nature story or fairy tale. This listening requires a certain concentration and inwardness. A period of more outward, free play activity follows. Then the group is brought together again for circle time, which may involve verses, rhymes, songs, and finger games. Rhythm and movement are strong elements in all the circle activities. Another period of less structured time follows, with more free play, outdoors if possible. At snack time, everyone is brought together again, although the emphasis is now on sharing and etiquette in a social situation.

Thus, in the course of the day, the children move back and forth between more inward, quiet activities and those that are more active and outward-oriented. The activities that take place within this rhythm are often themselves of a rhythmical nature. The free play may include physical activities such as jumping rope, and the teacher often leads the children in clapping and stepping games. At other times, the teacher will engage in adult rhythmic work such as sweeping, grinding grain, or stirring porridge, and the children will imitate or assist.

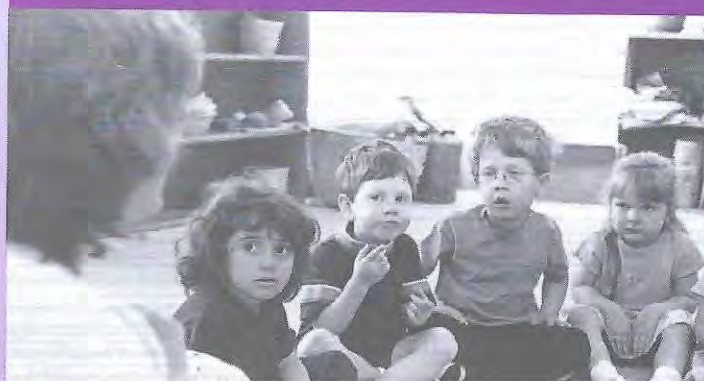
This daily schedule and the activities that fill it are guided by the Waldorf kindergarten teacher. Creating a smooth transition between one type of activity and mood and the next is an acquired art and important to the child's developing proper breathing. Some children, particularly those with special needs occasioned by conditions such as ADD and ADHD, can have difficulty in moving through the day's changes. However, the gentle yet insistent quality of the rhythm work slowly helps them to greater flexibility and self-assurance.

The daily rhythm—which can vary slightly in Waldorf



Daily participation in simple household chores is part of the Waldorf kindergarten curriculum.

In the daily rhythm of the kindergarten, the children sit quietly and listen to a story told by the teacher.





On the weekly kindergarten day for painting, the children use watercolor paints freely on a premoistened sheet of paper.

preschool programs—is contained within a weekly rhythm that the children come to know, to expect, and to love. There is typically a day for baking, a day for painting, and one for the eurythmy “visitor” who moves with the children and tells them stories that go along with the movements.

The daily snack also follows a rhythmic pattern. According to Steiner, certain foods, particularly cereal grains, are appropriate to particular days of the week. Hence on Monday (Moon-day), which has a watery, lunar quality, the children will have brown rice, the grain sharing this lunar connection. And on the more fiery Tuesday (Mars-day), the snack will be a stimulating oat or barley porridge.

A seasonal rhythm holds these shorter rhythms within its embrace. Harvest songs and activities, such as the gathering of nuts and berries, mark the autumn season, and in the spring there is the planting of bulbs and the tapping of the maple trees. These annual projects help the children experience the changing moods of nature through the year. Festivals from various religious and ethnic traditions—All Souls’ Day, Advent, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and so on—also mark the passage of the year.

These gentle, predictable rhythms can help smooth the child’s rough pathway into school life. They give self-confidence in a new social realm and enable the child to meet the challenges of elementary school.

The Elementary School Years

Rudolf Steiner describes the first seven years of life as a time when the forces of growth primarily work to shape and develop the physical body. In the elementary school years—from age seven to fourteen—these forces work more in the soul or feeling life of the child, which is intimately related to the rhythm of the heart and lungs. Breathing and pulse become noticeably stronger after age seven, and the child wants to experience this rhythm and beat in his own body. Children of this age live in the musical element, a fact that their education and upbringing need to reflect. Working with the inner musician in the child is the challenge for adults in these second seven years. This musical encouragement should happen in a subdued, harmonious way. Loud drumming and the rhythms of popular music should be postponed until adolescence.

In the Waldorf elementary school, the school day is based on a harmonious alternation between inwardness and outwardness, just as in the kindergarten. In the past, before driving children to school became the norm, children would typically begin the day with a long walk to school and would arrive wide awake and ready for the school day. Today, when this healthful stimulation is absent, most Waldorf schools start the day with rhythmic and often vigorous movement activities as part of

the morning circle. These help the child wake up and settle down for a period of more focused concentration during the main lesson.

The Waldorf main lesson, typically lasting about ninety minutes, appeals to and stimulates the child's intellectual powers but also addresses the feeling life and the will/movement life. The various main lesson subjects are given in blocks, so that one subject—such as grammar, mythology, or botany—will be the focus of the main lesson for three to six weeks. The history curriculum, for example, might be presented in three or four blocks over the course of the year, with other subjects given in between.

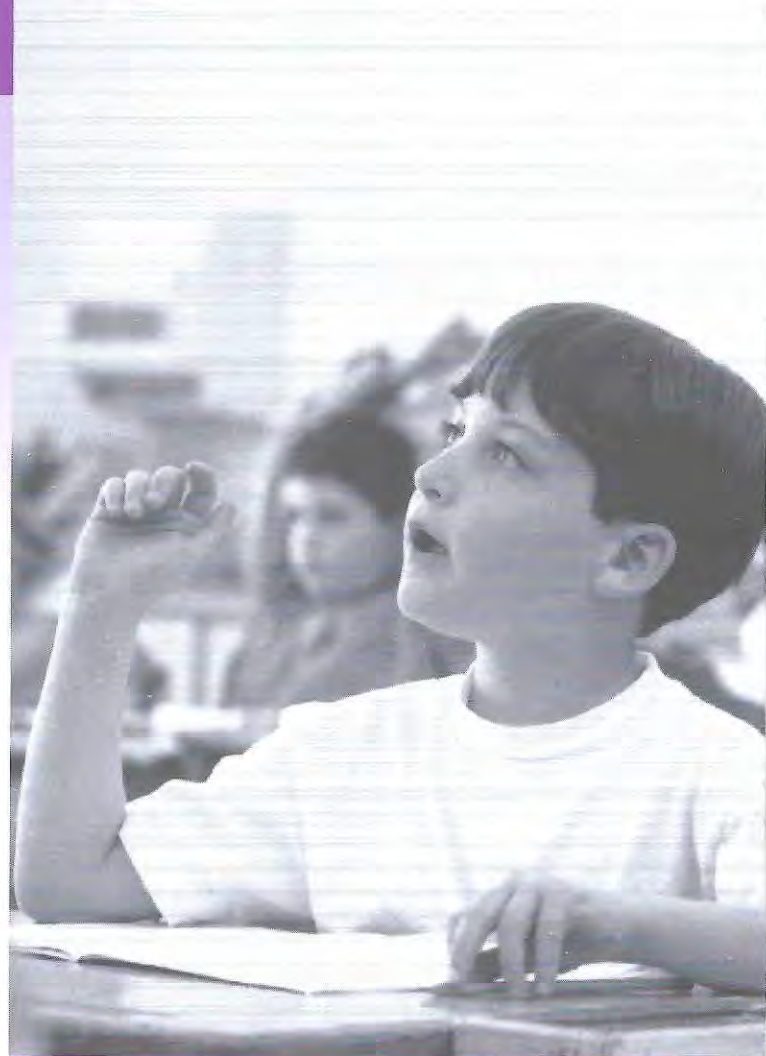
Some public schools have tried to use this model, especially with older students. What is crucial, though, is the way the longer time period is spent. A lecture format augmented only by teacher-directed discussion will be too head-oriented for many students. Elements that appeal to and activate other ways of learning are essential. Waldorf teachers are trained to design main lessons that engage the children in various ways and thus keep this longer period alive and effective.

The entire Waldorf school day is characterized by the alternation of periods of concentration and release. After the main lesson, there is typically a recess period when, preferably, the children play outdoors. Intellectual or “head” classes, such as foreign language, English, and mathematics, are usually scheduled in the morning when the child is fresh and awake and the thinking powers most acute. Artistic, craft, music, and movement classes typically are scheduled for the afternoon. All these subjects—painting, drawing, form drawing, handwork, singing, eurythmy, and so on—are taught so that the children experience the element of rhythm. In each, the harmonious, archetypal alternation of opposites—of light and dark, expansion and contraction, movement and rest—is stressed.

Movement games and other physical activities, such as dancing, provide a balance to intellectual activities.



Within the main lesson, there is a shorter two- to three-day cycle. This rhythm is based on Rudolf Steiner's idea that if a child (or adult) learns something, has a night to sleep on it, and then reviews it the following day, retention and integration of the material greatly increases.



Listening to and absorbing the class teacher's presentation of the main lesson material requires mental concentration.

(This insight of ninety years ago has been corroborated by recent scientific research on the role of sleep in memory.) Thus, on the first day of this mini-cycle, the teacher presents new material to the class. At the end of the lesson, she reviews what was covered, attempting to stir the child's feeling of enthusiasm. The following day, the children review and discuss the material, bringing analytical thinking to bear on material that initially they had experienced more emotionally. On the third day, the children write about the material or through some other activity engage their wills and initiative in the learning process. Since the stages are meant to overlap, by that third day the teacher is again presenting new material. This three-day pattern allows the cool and sober reflection of the intellect, the enthusiasm of the heart, as well as the activity of the hands and will, to be involved in the learning process.

This rhythm of studying something, and then letting it rest or germinate, manifests in the larger scheduling of the blocks. After a three-week main lesson block in history, for example, there will be a hiatus of a month or two before the next history block.

The weaving together of educational rhythms from kindergarten through high school is an important and unique aspect of Waldorf Education. However, this attention to rhythm in the school needs to be supported by the child's home life. For the child to learn to breathe, both in a physical and in a soul sense, his experiences outside of school should also be informed by rhythm—by the consistent repetition of events and by smooth transitions between different types of activity.

The Rhythms of Home Life

For an adult, a daily life of erratic and rushed mealtimes, unpredictable and varied times of going to bed and getting up, and too many scheduled and unscheduled activities with no time in between can be very wearing. For a child, such an irregular lifestyle is even more disruptive. The home life of the Waldorf student needs to support the school's work to provide rhythmic and healthy patterns.

In modern times, life has become "anti-rhythm." For parents today to create a sanctuary of rhythm for their children adds to their list of battles against aspects of mainstream culture: the sugared cereal battle, the television battle, the white bread and pasta battle, the Internet battle, the foul language battle, the candy battle, the battle against the latest toy craze, the radio-content battle, and so on. The rhythm battle is crucial since it has important long- and short-term implications, both for the child and for the parents.

The first pillar of a rhythmic home life is a sleep schedule that includes fixed times of going to bed and of getting up and that allows for sufficient sleep. Recent studies of family schedules all indicate that both adults and children today get too little sleep. Surveys show that between twenty and twenty-five percent of American elementary school children are tired when they are at school.

There are a number of factors causing this epidemic condition. In many families, both parents work and get

home relatively late in the day. This makes for a late dinner and, because the evening is the only time to spend time with the children, a late bedtime. Over-scheduling is another cause. Parents and children have so much to do in the course of the day that sleep becomes a maintenance activity of secondary importance, to be squeezed in after everything else has been done. Also, children's bedrooms have become places of entertainment and stimulation—with televisions, stereos, computers, and telephones—rather than places of rest.

For children, the repercussions range from irritability to poor learning, poor growth, and poor health. More and more studies point to insufficient sleep and unrecognized sleep disorders as the cause of behavioral problems in children. Children diagnosed with ADHD often are suffering only from inadequate sleep. Other

studies show that children who get adequate sleep are more receptive to their teachers, more motivated at school, less bored, and better able to control aggression.

How much sleep then does a child need? The Sleep Medicine and Research Center in Chesterfield, Missouri, has provided some basic guidelines for the **minimum** amount of necessary sleep.

For a six- or seven-year-old, it is eleven hours; for a nine-year-old, ten and one-third; and for children ages ten to thirteen, at least ten hours. For adults, the recommended amount is eight and one-quarter hours.

Parents should take these figures as a starting point in determining a child's individual need. One can discover a child's real sleep requirement by putting him to bed early and letting him sleep until he wakes up on his own. If this is done for several nights, one will get a good idea of how much sleep the child needs. After that, it is important to have the child go to bed early enough that he can sleep himself out and wake up naturally in time to get to school. In the morning, the child should have time after waking to lie in bed for a few minutes and slowly come to himself.

In her book *7 O'Clock Bedtime*, Inda Schaenen describes how an early bedtime for her three children has allowed



A deep, restful, and full night's sleep, framed by an early and predictable bedtime and regular time of rising, is one key to a child's healthy development.

them to thrive and allowed for the author and her husband to have much-needed time and space for themselves. (This is the promised short-term payoff!) She has maintained this bedtime through the years, although she does allow her ten-year-old to read quietly in bed for a while past seven o'clock. Schaenen feels that an early bedtime should be consistently and firmly observed but notes that, for such a schedule to work, the entire after-school schedule must be planned accordingly. She thinks that grade school children do not need extra activities—music lessons, dance lessons, sports—more than once a week. Schaenen's observation of her own and other families has convinced her that children flourish when they are free of time pressures and are left to themselves. And although she is neither Amish nor Waldorfian, her children entertain themselves without the benefit of a television or computer.

The other pillar of a rhythmic family life is regular mealtimes. More than any other activity, the shared meal knits together a family and is an opportunity for positive interaction. The ideal is that the family sit down and eat a nutritious meal together five or six times a week. Given the pressures of modern life, this model needs to be consciously striven for.

In Inda Schaenen's home, the family has dinner together at five and spends a long time at the table together in conversation. After cleanup, there is some free time before preparation for bedtime begins. The evening meal for some families may have to begin later, but the essential element is the same: the entire family together around the table with time to enjoy the meal and each other's company. Research has shown that this practice is important for children through the teenage years. Teenagers who eat supper with their families six days a week are less likely to have problems with smoking, drinking, and drug use.

Rhythm is the core of life. A rhythmical lifestyle strengthens and supports the functioning of the rhythmic system of the body and the life of feeling that it controls. A healthy rhythmic system also balances and harmonizes the life of the intellect and of the will. The net effect is to make us stronger, healthier, more focused, and even more happy.

Waldorf teachers work consciously and intentionally to foster healthy rhythmic functioning in their students. Parents who set a nonnegotiable bedtime for their children—one that allows them to get enough sleep—and who allow sufficient time for an unhurried family supper, followed by cleanup, playtime, and a bedtime ritual, create an evening rhythm that promotes the health and well-being of the entire family.

Creating healthy rhythms at home complements and potentizes the work with rhythm at school. As the song says, "I got rhythm, who could ask for anything more . . ."

(*Now published as *The Foundations of Human Experience*)



THOMAS POPLAWSKI is a trained eurythmist and is also a psychotherapist. His wife, Valerie, also a trained eurythmist, is a kindergarten teacher at the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, Massachusetts. Thomas and Valerie have two young sons, both students at the Hartsbrook School. As staff writer for *Renewal*, Thomas in recent years has written twenty-three feature-length articles for the magazine, each of them very popular with our readers. Thomas's book *Eurythmy: Rhythm, Dance and Soul* was published in 1998 by The Anthroposophic Press in the United States and Floris Books in the United Kingdom.

CREDIT: Photos on pages 9–12 by Larry Canner from the Waldorf School of Baltimore.

AWSNA Update, continued

at the Merriconeag Waldorf School in Freeport, Maine. This was followed by the North American Teachers' Conference, attended by some three hundred persons. Keynote speaker Christof Wiechert, head of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum in Switzerland, spoke of taking an "Idea to the Ideal" and the necessity of this being at the heart of our work in our Waldorf schools. Besides the lectures and workshops, there was entertainment and socializing in the evenings. Each morning began with comedian Ronald Koetzsch's humorous "announcements" and his commentary on the previous day's activities, including clarifications of and "improvements" upon Christof's lectures. The warmth and harmony of that week in Maine bespeaks the cohesion and vitality of the Association.

Last and hardly least, there was "Winning with Waldorf," a golf tournament with Duffy Waldorf (his real name), a professional golfer (and Waldorf parent), held in Garden City, New York, in June. It was a splendid day. We tried a new type of fund-raising and outreach event, spoke to the business world in a new way, played good golf, and we did it collaboratively. The Waldorf Schools Fund, the Waldorf School of Garden City, the Highland Hall Waldorf School, and your Association all worked together to make this national event possible. This was never done be-FORE! And it brought us a fare-way forward!

So keep your collaborative sensibilities high, because your Association is working to develop your ideas into living ideals and, also, thanks you for your support.



Speech

Its Importance in the Life of the Young Child

BY HELEN LUBIN

The early childhood years are years of movement. This is the child's main activity and way of discovering and befriending the world. There are corresponding aspects of movement in speech that support and further healthy development at this tender age.

Much of daily life and practically all of teaching takes place via the spoken word. For the listener, especially for the young child, the *how* of what is spoken is part of the *what*. The various qualities of the vowels and consonants, the rising and falling rhythms, the "sound-pictures" (the picture-gesture quality of the sounds themselves), plus the inner imaginations and other inner activity of the speaker all are part of how spoken language *moves*. These aspects of language sustain and foster the young child's connection to the world and are therefore part of early childhood education.

Speech in the environment of the young child is one of the most prominent and formative sense impressions. As Dr. Jane Healy reminds us in her book *Endangered Minds: Why Children Can't Think and What We Can Do About It*, referring to research carried out by Priscilla Vail: "Most learning disabilities are related to underlying language problems, yet increasing numbers of youngsters are permitted to be 'linguistically malnourished.'"

BOOKS

in Brief

Geron and Virtus

A Fateful Encounter of Two Youths
A German and a Roman

BY JAKOB STREIT

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

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One day, about two thousand years ago, two Roman soldiers and the son of a Roman general are hunting near the Rhine River, the boundary which at that time divided the Romans from the Germanic tribes. The three are attacked by German hunters, and the youth, Virtus, is taken as a slave by the ill-tempered Wugo.

Geron is a German youth living with his family near Wugo's farm. He is moved by the plight of the Roman boy, who is beaten daily and forced to work wearing heavy leg irons. Geron decides to try to free Virtus and to bring him back to his family and people.

At one level, this is a coming-of-age story. And it is a moving story of friendship and the transcending of the ties of blood and tribe. But *Geron and Virtus* is also an informative and interesting portrait of two contrasting cultures that in their later amalgamation formed the basis of Western European civilization.

The Germanic tribes at that time lived very close to nature—hunting deer, elk, and bear, keeping sheep and horses, and cultivating oats, barley, and vegetables. Describing the building of a log house in the forest, a bear hunt, the festivals presided over by Druid priests, the council of justice, and other events, the book paints a living picture of this preliterate but wisdom-imbued culture.

Geron and Virtus gives a picture also of the relatively “civilized” life of the Romans, who, gathered into cities, read, wrote, used money, built houses and temples of stone, created statues, murals, and mosaics, wore metal armor, and rode horses with the help of a bridle and saddle.

The Swiss musician, choir director, and writer of children's books, Jakob Streit (born in 1910), was influenced by the work of Rudolf Steiner. *Geron and Virtus* is especially appropriate for sixth-grade Waldorf students and will enrich their study of ancient Rome and of medieval Europe. Also, the telling of several central Germanic/Norse myths, such as the death of Baldur, as stories within the story, gives the children an opportunity to reexperience the myths and stories they heard first as fourth graders.

Geron and Virtus is a well-told story founded on an optimistic and spiritual view of the human being and will appeal to the youthful reader of any age.

These important sense impressions come to the child via the sense of hearing, which is under tremendous assault today—for example, through the many forms of noise pollution. High decibel levels and excessive electronic auditory input also undermine the sense of hearing and impede language perception and appreciation.

At stake here is the development of the sense through which we cultivate *awareness of—and connection to—our surroundings*. Also at stake is the development of an “inner ear” for our own *conscience*. Both are essential social capacities, and it is therefore of paramount importance that we sensitize and cultivate the sense of hearing.

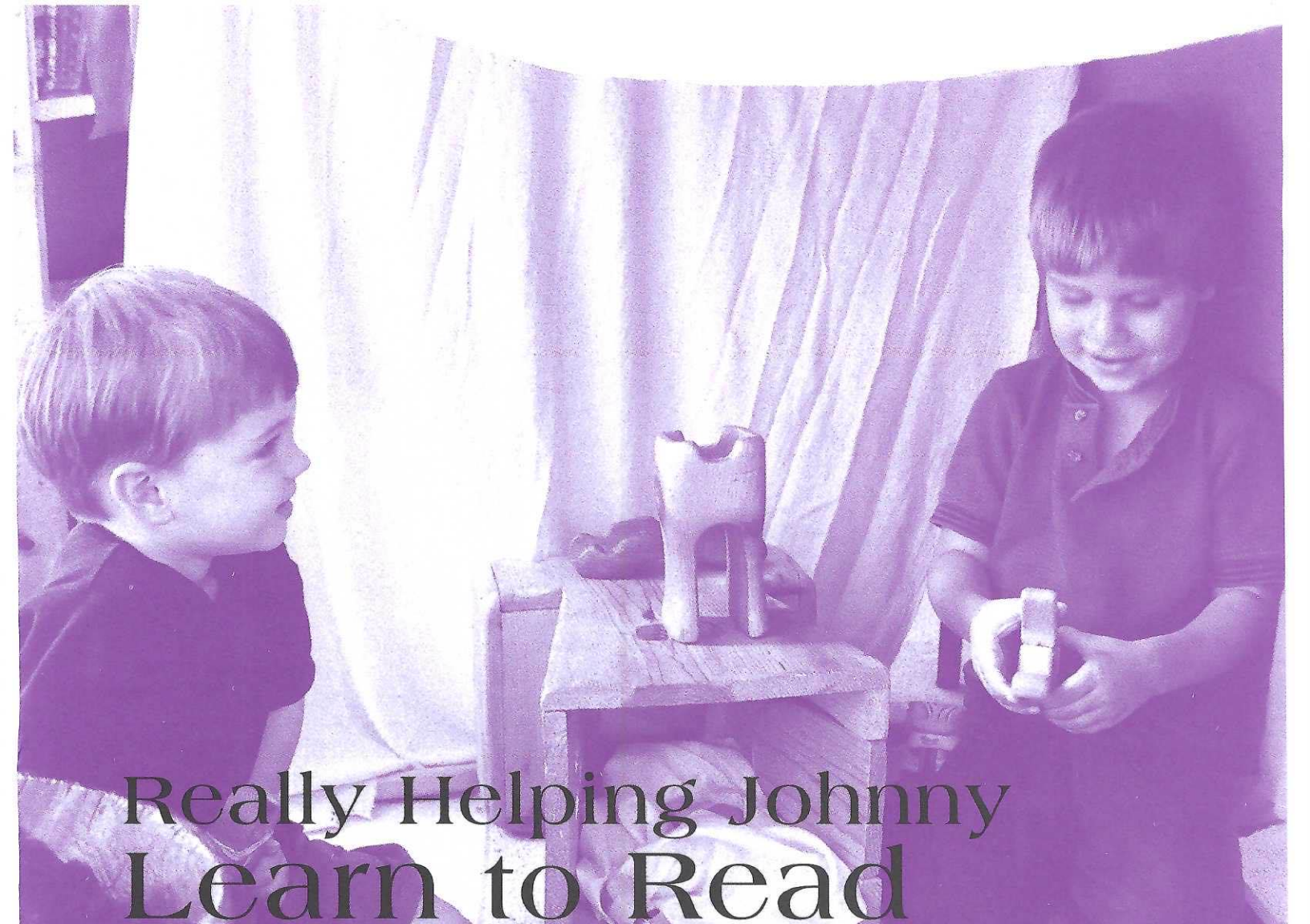
Parents telling or reading bedtime stories to children can best support their child's development by being fully present and, besides, speaking well: clearly, with purpose, mindful of the listener, and really following the story and its unfolding pictures. Because children's stories are written simply, the temptation is great for a busy parent to think about other things while reading. This, however, leaves the child with the mere acoustic aspect of speech, while the core of it remains empty. This is an enormous deprivation to a child. The health-bestowing factor of the parent's full presence is important for both parent and child. In this way, language and speaking become a source of nourishment, as well as a practice of attention and focus.

In our interactions with young children—talking about an upcoming activity, giving instructions, and particularly in answering questions about the world—we need to take care not to be overly wordy or informative. Giving too much information undermines the child's calm security and trust in the given, created world. This is a foundation for the child's later health and inner development. Too much content precipitates precocious reflection and discernment. This “witness-consciousness” belongs to a later stage of development. The early years of childhood are best supported and furthered when our speaking connects the child with life through the warmth and presence of our inner engagement.

HELEN LUBIN is a pedagogical and therapeutic speech artist working with Waldorf schools and teacher education programs as well as in private practice.

CREDITS: Illustration by Anne Riegel-Koetzsch.

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Really Helping Johnny Learn to Read

How Waldorf Early Childhood Education Supports the Development of Reading

BY BETSI McGUIGAN

Raising a child today can be a complex and often bewildering challenge. Parents have to make decisions about a host of issues such as discipline, exposure to the media, diet, and so on. Meanwhile, self-styled experts and marketers of all kinds give contradictory advice about almost every aspect of parenting. The resulting anxiety about doing the “right thing” can lead parents to overschedule and oversupervise their children. Also, societal trends—from consumerism to early academics—are pushing children toward a troubling precociousness. Within this pressured and distressing milieu, however, Waldorf Education can help parents develop a commonsense, practical approach to parenting, one based on the natural stages of childhood—which, after all, have not changed very much—and on the real needs of the developing child.

I am a Waldorf early childhood teacher, and parents new to our way of working with young children often ask, “Where are the books?” This question often is posed tentatively, as if it were not quite appropriate, but it is a wonderful question

and raises some important issues: *What is reading?* and *How do Waldorf nursery and kindergarten programs support the child's emerging reading ability without using books?*

Reading is the process of deriving meaning from print.

Reading has many subskills. One allows me to look at a printed symbol—an **M**, for example—and know that it is associated with a particular sound. When I see this symbol in combination with other symbols (letters)—for instance, in the word **MAT**—I can decode these sounds and say a word. But to read that word, to know what it means, I need a context for the word that I am able to pronounce. **MAT** needs to mean something to me, needs to relate to my prior life experience.

Unfortunately, too many people—parents, teachers, school boards, and politicians—confuse decoding with reading. During my career in early childhood education, the teaching of decoding has moved from first grade to kindergarten and now even into preschool. Reading, however, is a developmental skill—as are walking and talking—and most children, with some instruction and with exposure to appropriate readers and other print materials, will begin reading more or less easily by age seven or eight. A few children will spontaneously read earlier and a few later. Some will need help in overcoming hindrances to develop skills associated with reading.

There is no evidence that ever earlier instruction in decoding helps children to become better readers. In fact, many educators, including Kathleen Roscoe and Susan Neumann—authors of an article entitled “Whatever Happened to Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Literacy?”—believe that, on the contrary,

this type of instruction may consign children to a narrow, limited view of reading that is antithetical to their long-term success not only in school, but throughout their lifetimes. In other words . . . such instruction might actually undermine, rather than promote, literacy learning.*

For children to become skilled readers, they need to know that symbols (letters) represent sounds and that clusters of those symbols represent words. But they also need the following:

1. a rich and varied experience of language
2. a large vocabulary
3. a broad conceptual knowledge based on varied life experiences
4. verbal reasoning skills

The children in a Waldorf kindergarten spend a good portion of every day in free or creative play. Using simple materials such as wooden blocks and pieces of fabric, they create and act out fantasy situations—going to the store, riding on a bus, going to the moon. Their activities are spontaneous, self-directed, and constantly changing. The children also have many opportunities for artistic and craft activities, such as painting, drawing, finger-knitting, and modeling with beeswax. They play finger games and crawling games. Each day includes practical tasks, such as grinding grain, kneading bread, raking leaves, shoveling mulch, washing laundry on a washboard, sanding wood, harvesting the garden, or shoveling snow. We sit together daily for a shared snack and conversation, and the children have an opportunity to practice both listening and speaking in a group. We say verses accompanied by movements, sing songs, and play games. The children spend time outdoors, both in the play yard and in the woods. Every day the children listen to a story told—not read—by the teacher. Often

puppet or marionette plays accompany the stories.

Little or none of all this seems directly related to the learning of reading. Actually, however, the child in the Waldorf kindergarten is acquiring the very capacities that will help him in time to become a skilled reader.

The stories, verses, songs, and conversations give the children a varied experience of language and help them develop a large vocabulary. I always recall with fondness the day I was trying to get a five-year-old to do something, and he cried out, “Get away from me, you odious frog!”—using a line from one of the fairy tales that he had heard earlier in the year.

The free play—in which the children create, learn from each other, negotiate, and problem solve—the stories, conversations, practical work, and outings into nature all contribute to a broad experience of the world and of life. They help create a “store of conscious content knowledge,”

In time, a relatively small “tool kit of procedural skills” will allow the children to decode print. But the foundation for deriving meaning is built in the early childhood years.

and, according to Roscoe and Neumann, [it is these] “higher-order thinking skills, knowledge, and dispositional capabilities, encouraging children to question, discover, evaluate, and invent new ideas that enable them to become successful readers.” In time, a relatively small “tool kit of procedural skills” will allow the children to decode print. But the foundation for deriving meaning is built in the early childhood years.

Through finger games, the listening to stories, and the predictable, habit-imbued life of the Waldorf early childhood classroom, the child develops a deep, even intrinsic, bodily sense for sequencing. This is the ability to carry out a certain sequence of movements or mental processes. Reading—as also writing, doing mathematics, and thinking abstractly—requires the proper sequencing of related movements and thoughts. The skilled reader has to be able to follow “a line of thoughts.”

The Waldorf early childhood teacher is trained to speak clearly and slowly. The children imitate this—as they imitate an adult’s ways of moving, and also even of feeling and thinking—and develop (it is hoped) proper enunciation in their own speech. Later, when they learn to associate certain sounds with certain letters, this clear speech will help both with spelling and decoding.

The factors that contribute to reading ability are all intellectual capacities and must be supported by proper brain development and function. Recent research indicates that sensory experience and physical movement are crucial to the full and healthy development of the brain during the early years.

The Waldorf kindergarten provides many and varied opportunities for sensory stimulation and physical movement. Except during the times for snack, story, and nap, the children are in almost constant motion—running, skipping, jumping, swinging, sweeping, crawling, and so on. They engage also in many small-movement activities as well, such as sewing, chopping foods, finger-knitting, and modeling. The movements of the hands, feet, and body contribute to an optimal development of the brain and of the mental capacities that will later enable reading and other intellectual activities.

**Recent research
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We ask parents of children in the Waldorf early childhood programs that they not supplement our carefully designed work with an educational program at home that teaches reading, writing, or math skills. The magic of early childhood lasts a short time, and, in their first seven years, the children need to be actively engaged in experiencing the world. We ask parents to trust that each child will unfold according to the patterns of nature and the child’s own individuality.

The strongest indicator that a child will become a lifelong reader is that the parents value reading and that they themselves read for pleasure. So the best way for a parent to encourage a child’s reading is simply to read.

Education can be understood in one of two ways. The child can be seen as an empty vessel waiting to be filled. Thus, as educators, we need to pour the knowledge in. Or the child can be seen as a seed to be nurtured. In that case, we provide the correct environment, and the mystery of life and learning unfolds wonderfully before us. In Waldorf Education, we look at the child as a seed. We try in every way to create a wholesome, rich, and stimulating educational environment in which children can grow in manifold ways.

*Susan Neuman and Kathleen Roscoe, “Whatever Happened to Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Literacy?” *Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*, July 2005.

BETSI McGUIGAN has been involved in early childhood education since 1980, working first in Project Head Start and in day care and, for the past twenty years, in Waldorf schools. She is currently an early childhood teacher at the Monadnock Waldorf School in Keene, New Hampshire. Betsi also has long been active in adult education, providing workshops and classes for non-Waldorf early childhood educators and training day care providers for the state of New Hampshire. She is currently an adjunct professor at Antioch University New England, teaching graduate students in the Education Department. Betsi lives in Keene with her husband, Kevin, a Waldorf class teacher.

CREDIT: Photo by Larry Canner from the Waldorf School of Baltimore.

Waldorf Education

A Mother's Experience of the First Four Years

BY CINDI HUGHES



Victoria's watercolor painting of Moses, Old Testament main lesson block, grade 3

When our daughter, Victoria, entered first grade, I did not know much about Waldorf Education. All I knew was that I was drawn to the nurturing environment of our local Waldorf school and that I liked Victoria's teacher. I did not know then what experiences lay ahead, but the journey has been remarkable, and I would like to share it.

First grade was truly inspiring both for my daughter and for myself. The teacher presented the numbers and letters in a beautiful, living way, using fairy tales and artistic activities, and Victoria learned very quickly. Knitting improved her eye-hand coordination. Watercolor painting, drawing, and form drawing cultivated her artistic abilities. Through singing and playing the pentatonic flute, she experienced the joy of making music. Her hands learned to form figures of people and animals out of beeswax, and on the weekly nature walks she learned to observe the changing seasons. Verses spoken with childhood delight filled our home daily. Victoria's enthusiasm for

learning astounded me. How lucky our child was to experience education in this way. I felt somehow cheated. I remembered my own childhood experience of school as quite different. Throughout the summer, the gifts of that first year lived on in our home as Victoria sang songs and recited verses learned at school, practiced her knitting, and demonstrated her awareness of and delight in the beauty of the natural world.

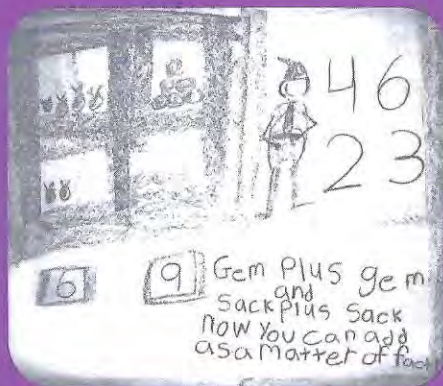
Second grade filled my daughter with wonder. Victoria increased her vocabulary in English and began to learn

straw bale house. The project was a lesson both in construction and in working together.

Reading became a focus, and parents were invited to come to provide encouragement and reading support. The children took great pride in their progress. There was a farming block, and our daughter delighted in tending the land and caring for the farm animals. The block culminated with a weeklong stay on a Quaker farm. In the handwork projects, the children experienced the entire process—the shearing of the sheep, the



Letter D, grade 1



Mathematics, grade 2



Music (depicting a song), grade 3

French and German. She grasped the four basic processes of math by using colorful gems and through games of rhythm and movement. Good manners and basic human virtues were taught through the fables and stories of the saints. She experienced clear and articulate speech in her teacher's main lesson presentations and in the reading of the afternoon story. Copying important main lesson information from the board and supplementing it with drawing, she created beautiful main lesson books. Victoria seemed an aspiring artist, enjoying every moment of watercolor painting and the other artistic activities. At home she spent her free time knitting, crocheting, reciting the verses, and singing the songs she had learned in school. Our home became a haven for baskets of yarn and wooden toys. Through the summer, we all looked forward to third grade.

The third-grade curriculum was filled with opportunities for learning and accomplishment appropriate to Victoria's stage of development. The stories of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament were a focus of several main lesson blocks. Our daughter's math skills flourished that year. She delighted in reciting the times tables and learned to tell time. After learning about measurement, Victoria put this to practical use by building a birdhouse, constructing a sundial, and finally by taking part in the class "house-building" project. The children, class parents, and teacher together constructed a small

dying of the wool, the spinning of the yarn, even the knitting of that yarn—of creating something useful and beautiful out of wool. In music, each child chose a stringed instrument and began lessons. Victoria was thrilled to have her very own violin. The year passed quickly and was so full of activities that we were a little tired by the end. But we were filled with the sense of accomplishment. The summer was a time of rest, regeneration, and anticipation.

In fourth grade, our daughter began to explore the world outside herself. The children studied local geography and history and map making. The class took field trips to local geographical landmarks such as the Susquehanna River and nearby places of historical interest. The Norse myths were a main lesson focus, with their mighty gods and goddesses, including the troublemaker Loki, who mirrors the children's mischievous side that can emerge at around age nine. More involved math skills were introduced, and our daughter easily mastered each new concept. Form drawings artistically taught the concepts of geometric drawing. Clay modeling was introduced. Victoria learned to create something of beauty from a formless lump of clay. She developed a great appreciation for music, learning to sing in rounds, playing the recorder, taking private violin lessons, and playing in the orchestra. Through music, she experienced harmony or the lack of it.

Fourth grade brought the first formal science block—zoology. With the third-grade farming block as a helpful foundation, the children studied the interconnection between animals and the human being. Each child chose an animal to research. By this time, I knew all the children well, and it was interesting to see which animals they chose. Victoria is small for her age and chose the giraffe! Each child gave a formal oral presentation of the research, which, for some, was their first experience of public speaking. Victoria created a detailed diorama as a

second-grade play, and the life of Moses, with his struggles and accomplishments, and the Norse story of Iduna and the golden apple. Each of these resides within our daughter's soul.

The first four years have been a remarkable learning experience for my husband and myself, as well as for our daughter. We have experienced the importance of educating the head, heart, and hands and applied this in our everyday life. Having participated in the beauty,



House-building, grade 3



Zoology, grade 4



Norse Myths, grade 4

visual aid. Although this project involved many emotional dramas in our home, it stretched her, and she emerged with pride and a sense of great achievement. The class ended the year and the zoology block with a wonderful day at the zoo, their enthusiasm for exploring the animal kingdom undampened by the day's heavy rain.

In our daughter's room and throughout our home are many mementos of the past four years—knitted and crocheted items of various colors, shapes, and sizes, embroidery and cross-stitch projects and quilt samples, with the pièce de résistance being a beautifully knitted squirrel with an acorn in his paws, an item at which even the handwork teacher marveled. Clay sculptures sit proudly upon our bookshelves, and we have stacks of main lesson books and watercolor paintings. From time to time, we look at these and marvel at the progress Victoria has made. Most important to her is the wool hat she designed and made and which she still proudly wears. These items and many more represent learning that occurred during the first four years of school.

Other experiences have left nothing tangible behind and exist only within Victoria's memory. There is the fairy tale, "The Nixie in the Millpond," which was her first play and in the second grade became her first reader. There is also the story of St. Francis, depicted in the

wonder, exploration, and accomplishments of the first years of Waldorf schooling, we share our daughter's love of learning.

Raising a child today is a challenging task. But in the last four years, we have developed confidence that, working together with the school and with Victoria's class teacher, we will be able to guide her through the next four years and through her adolescence. We have reason to believe that we can help our daughter become a well-rounded, spiritual person, capable of being an independent thinker, and able to contribute something of meaning to society.



CINDI HUGHES lives on an eight-acre farm in Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Ed, and her children, Victoria and Chandler. Their family farm is called Ananda Acres, which means "Blissful Acres" in Sanskrit. Cindi

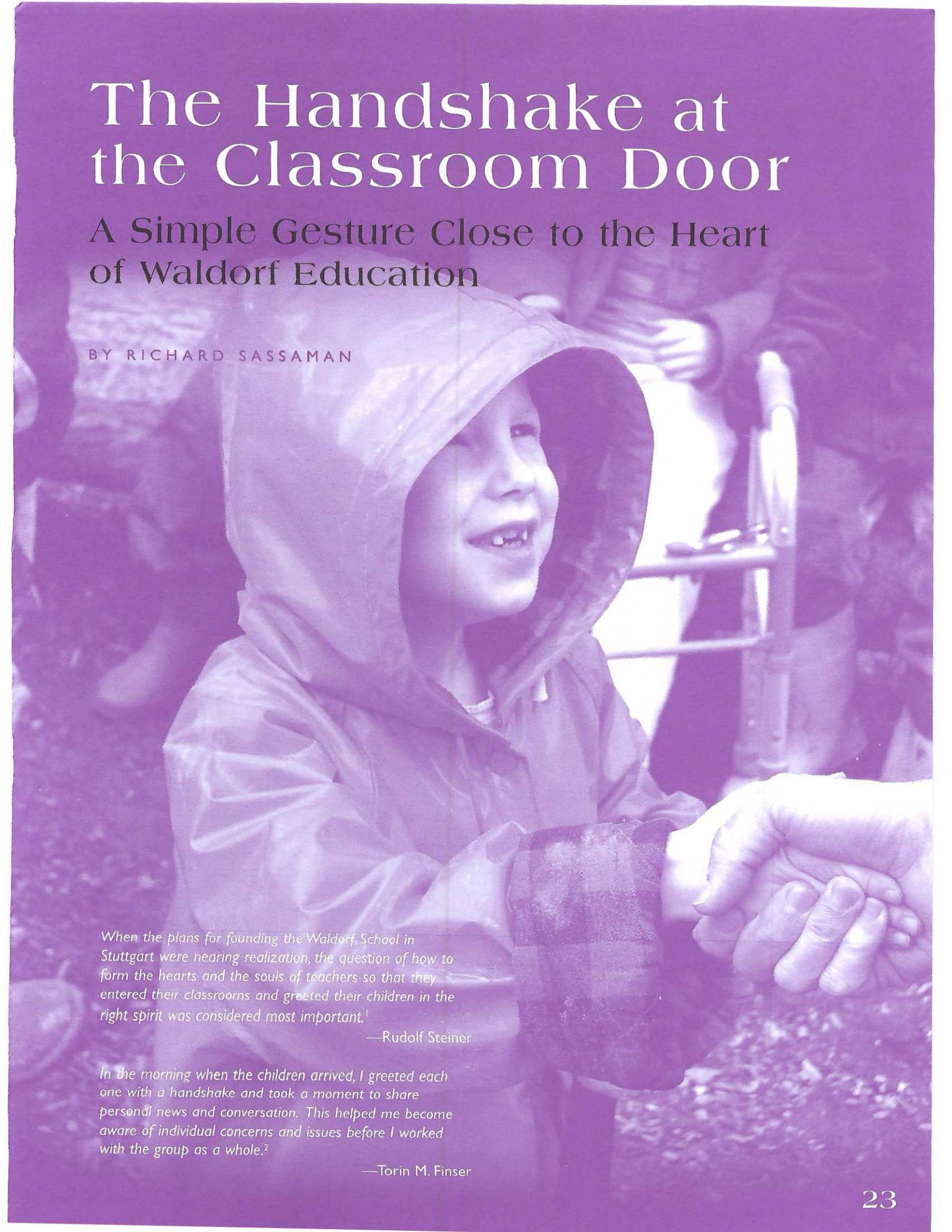
enjoys reading, writing, organic gardening, permaculture, yoga, and Eastern studies. Her children attend the Susquehanna Waldorf School in the small river town of Marietta, Pennsylvania. Cindi currently serves as the Parents' Association chair.

CREDITS: All artwork by Victoria Hughes.

The Handshake at the Classroom Door

A Simple Gesture Close to the Heart of Waldorf Education

BY RICHARD SASSAMAN



When the plans for founding the Waldorf School in Stuttgart were nearing realization, the question of how to form the hearts and the souls of teachers so that they entered their classrooms and greeted their children in the right spirit was considered most important.¹

—Rudolf Steiner

In the morning when the children arrived, I greeted each one with a handshake and took a moment to share personal news and conversation. This helped me become aware of individual concerns and issues before I worked with the group as a whole.²

—Torin M. Finser



Books describing Waldorf Education often include a sentence like "The school day begins with a long, uninterrupted lesson." When my son, Ezra, goes to Meredith Markow's sixth-grade class at the Lake Champlain Waldorf School (LCWS), though, his day doesn't start with main lesson. It begins, as Ezra knows, when he formally acknowledges his teacher and shakes her hand.

The handshake, according to legend, originated when a medieval warrior extended his empty right hand to show another person that he held no weapon. The gesture means much more to a Waldorf teacher.

"I've been shaking a lot of hands," Markow says, smiling, about her seventeen years of working in Waldorf schools in Germany, Slovakia, and now Vermont.

Every day [the teacher and the children] begin school with a strong, vigorous handshake over the heart region, which invigorates the rhythmic system and, in turn, ignites that feeling life where grade school children live. It is a meeting of two upright individuals, in which they acknowledge each other's identity.

In Waldorf Education, we consider that there are twelve senses, not five. The twelfth ... is the sense of the other, which mirrors the first, the sense of touch.

Through touch, you experience the boundary between yourself and the other [person]. It's very important to make eye

contact when you shake hands, because you are meeting the ego [higher self] of that individual. It's not only eye contact, it's also 'I' contact.

This form of greeting is also practical, explains LCWS teacher Karen White.

The morning handshake gives you information. How does the child's hand feel? Is it dry? Moist? Does it feel as it usually does? Is the child really in her body, all the way down to her fingertips? Is she alert, making eye contact?

In the morning, the children are coming out of their sleep realm, and you want to know how they're greeting the day. You want them alert enough to be active, but not so wild that they become silly.

"[The handshake] is a barometer for the teacher," Meredith Markow says.

I can tell what kind of morning each member of the class has already had. The Waldorf day is going to be filled with activity, and different children each day will be calling on a teacher's resources.

Jennifer Bergfeldt, now a Waldorf teacher in Alberta, Canada, first taught in the public school system in Saskatchewan. She says:

Like most public school teachers, I started my day in a frenzy of last-minute preparations as my students entered the classroom. Until the bell rang and I stepped in front of them, we were separate entities. My mind was cluttered with the responsibilities of the day, and I was thinking about my lessons and their impact on the class. I was not seeing the children themselves.

Bergfeldt says that her handshake greetings each morning are ...

a simple yet beautiful gem in my day. Waiting by the classroom door to greet the students, I have time to breathe out, get centered, and quiet my mind to the day's events. I am now in the right frame of mind to really see each child and soak up, on a personal level, the information they give me. One simple handshake tells me if a child is overtired, stressed out, joyous, or anxious; it enables me to better communicate and interact with that student throughout the day. I also treasure how the handshake creates an opportunity to find out more about my students' lives outside school.

Torin Finser, while teaching at the Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School in Massachusetts, found that for his youngest classes, this private information often involved the "change of teeth":

We would exchange a few words, and these precious moments became a regular one-on-one 'safe' time when personal news could be shared. In first and second grades, the big news first thing in the morning was often a wiggly or lost tooth. Without sitting them all down as a group to take my "inventory," I was able to do the survey informally over several days.³

The handshake is important for the child as well. Retired Waldorf teacher Marjorie Spock writes,

The child knows without being told how his teacher feels about him. He can tell it by the welcoming smile and the unhurried handshake given him...⁴

The handshake also has pedagogical value. In an age when manners and etiquette are in decline, the handshake teaches the child how to formally acknowledge and respectfully greet an adult.

The morning handshake is a part of life in virtually every Waldorf lower school and in many Waldorf high schools, as well. Meredith Markow observes:

In the younger grades, the children stand so eagerly in that line, waiting for you. As they get older and reach puberty, they retreat further into their inner lives. That is why, in my opinion, it's equally important to keep making that connection. Some children will boldly greet a teacher, and others you have to draw out of themselves.

For Bergfeldt,

[The morning handshake] makes each student feel important and cared for. I have worked mainly with adolescents who, although they would never admit it, do appreciate adults who take an interest in their lives. This handshake is a connection to their world. It brings consistency and rhythm to their day and is something they can depend on. That means a lot to teenagers.

In many Waldorf schools, the day ends with the teacher shaking the hand of each student in farewell. The artist and writer M.C. Richards recalled a visit to a Waldorf third-grade class:

The young man teacher stood at the door at the end of the day and shook each child's hand, said goodbye to the child by name, and the child, clasping the hand, said the farewell... A moment's pause at the doorway. A contact, a greeting, an affirmation of identity and affectionate respect; an acknowledgment of meaningful time spent together. I was touched by it.⁵

Meredith Markow observes:

The handshake at the end of the day is a revisiting of what took place in the morning. It allows the teacher and student to bring the day to a respectful close, no matter what took place during the day.

Karen White adds:

I don't want the students to leave exhausted or drained. They should be nourished and enriched. The momentary meeting of two hands and four eyes encourages this process.

The handshake between teacher and student is an intrinsic part of Waldorf Education. However, it seems that in his many lectures and writings on education, Rudolf Steiner never mentioned or explicitly prescribed it. He did observe that the limbs are a key to a person's personality, once noting that "in every movement of the fingers there lie wonderful revelations of man's inner

nature."⁶ This insight, coupled with Steiner's assertion that the key to good teaching is a deep knowledge of the student's true being, indicates he would approve of the handshake as a way for the teacher to greet and appraise each child each morning.

Accounts of Rudolf Steiner's life indicate that he liked shaking hands and saw it as a unique and valuable form of human interaction. The parents of the musician Maria Renold were close friends of Steiner, and he often visited the home when Maria was a child. According to Renold, after greeting and shaking hands with the adults present, Steiner would always lean down and shake hands with the children as well.⁷ Renold didn't know who he was but recalls, "It was so special.

When he shook
my hand, it was as
though he had
known me forever.
And he deeply
appreciated that,
even as a child,
I was a person."

A well-known anecdote about Rudolf Steiner comes from a contemporary who lived in Dornach, Switzerland, and who daily took a walk to the Goetheanum. One day the man encountered Dr. Steiner, and Herr Doktor introduced himself and shook the man's hand. Thereafter they often crossed paths, and, each time, Rudolf Steiner shook the man's hand and said, "How are you?" Finally the man asked, "Why do you always shake my hand, as though we've newly met?" Steiner replied:

Because every time one human being meets and shakes hands with another, they dispel the influence of Ahriman. This is the ancient Persian name for what we call the Devil or Satan. Ahriman is the malignant being that brings distrust and fear into the world. So by meeting and touching, shaking hands and greeting one another, we acknowledge each other as unique human individuals, and it helps to dispel fear and distrust.

In an address at the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Steiner several times referred to the gesture. He started by saying, "First of all, I would like to shake hands with Herr Molt and Frau Molt for having created this Waldorf School for us..." Then, Steiner spoke to the faculty, "You, dear Waldorf teachers, let me warmly shake your hands," and finished by telling the students, "Out of the spirit of the Waldorf School, shake your teachers' hands..."⁸

In Central Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the handshake was an important part even of daily family life. Emil Molt, the founder of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, recalled that, in his home, parents and children greeted each other in the morning and said goodnight with handshakes.⁹ Today, the handshake is typically reserved for the first-time meeting of people who do not know each other and for the reunion of friends and colleagues who have not seen each other for a long time. But used as it is in the Waldorf schools, as a daily gesture between teacher and students—and also often between teacher and teacher and teacher and parent—the handshake has the potential to deepen and enrich our educational and social lives.

(All unnumbered block quotations are from conversations with the author.)



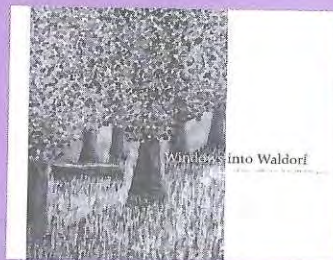
RICHARD SASSAMAN
is a freelance writer and

photographer whose previous article for *Renewal*, "9/11 and Afterward at a Maine Waldorf School," appeared in the Spring/Summer 2002 issue. His work has appeared in dozens of national magazines from *Air & Space/Smithsonian* to *Yankee*. Richard's Web site is <http://leilo.wordpress.com>. Richard's son, Ezra, attends the Lake Champlain Waldorf School in Shelburne, Vermont, and his wife, Susan, runs the Star Garden preschool program there and works in the kindergarten.

Notes

1. Rudolf Steiner, *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy*, Volume I, Public Lectures 1921–22 (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995), 170, lecture of November 23, 1921.
2. Torin M. Finser, *School as a Journey* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995), 19.
3. Ibid. 32–33.
4. Marjorie Spock, *Teaching as a Lively Art* (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1978), 13.
5. M. C. Richards, *Toward Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1980), 51.
6. Rudolf Steiner, *Man as Symphony of the Creative Word* (London, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1978), 215, lecture 12 of November 11, 1923.
7. Maria Renold related these reminiscences to LCWS teacher Karen Hesse when Renold was in her eighties.
8. Richard Blunt, *Waldorf Education: Theory and Practice* (Cape Town, South Africa: Novalis Press, 1995), 106 + 109.
9. Emil Molt, *Sketches from an Autobiography* (Edinburgh, UK: Floris Books, 1991), 20 + 28–29.

A Glimpse into the Teaching of Science in the Waldorf Middle School



The following is an excerpt from *Windows into Waldorf: An Introduction to Waldorf Education* published this year by the Association of Waldorf Schools. This beautiful, lavishly illustrated, forty-eight-page booklet provides an excellent introduction to Waldorf Education. It is meant to be used for outreach by Waldorf schools and others interested in Waldorf Education.

Waldorf teachers begin with a phenomenon that the students observe. The students then take their observations into inner contemplation and then describe in writing what they saw. The class discusses the observations, thinks about them, wrestles with them, perhaps repeats the experiment, and then strives to arrive at a conclusion. Again and again they ask, "Why did such and such happen?" In this process the students' thinking is active. They arrive at the concepts through their own inner thought activity and worked-at judgment. They rediscover what Cavendish or Priestley is credited with discovering, but they "own" the experience of finding it themselves, they own the concept they have derived. Later in life, whether they continue to study science or not, this habit of active thinking will be useful to them when encountering problems requiring discrimination.

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Theft of Fire (Prometheus stealing fire from Zeus),
by Christian Griepenkerl (1839-1916)

Frankenstein and Eighth-Grade Students

BY VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT

The novel Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus, by Mary Shelley, set in the 1790s in Switzerland, is a complex and tragic tale. Victor Frankenstein, a young student of the occult, fabricates a human-like being out of parts of corpses and, using the newly discovered phenomenon of electricity, imbues it with life. Frankenstein, however, finds his creation hideous, neglects the monster—who never receives a name—and refuses to create a mate for him. The monster, horribly ugly yet remarkably strong, is at first gentle and childlike and desperate for love and companionship. He is hardened, though, by harsh encounters with human beings and by Frankenstein's refusal to supply him with a companion. The monster takes revenge on Victor by killing

According to Greek mythology, Prometheus ("the Forethinker") was a great benefactor of humankind. After Zeus, in anger, deprived humankind of fire, Prometheus stole it back. He was punished by being chained to a rock and having his liver eaten every day by an eagle. In the end, he was saved by Heracles. He is often considered a symbol of the human being who, in playing with primal forces, dangerously overreaches himself.



his wife and others dear to him. Frankenstein pursues the monster to the Arctic, planning to destroy him and then to die there to escape the remorse and pain he feels at having created that unnamed being. The story ends with Frankenstein dying on a ship and the monster walking north to a solitary death in the icy wastes.

—R. E. K.

It all began innocently enough: five friends, vacationing in the Alps and kept indoors by miserable weather, decide to write ghost stories for one another to pass the time. That evening, nineteen-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin had listened to a discussion between Percy Shelley and Lord Byron about the recent work of Luigi Galvani. “Perhaps a corpse would be reanimated,” Mary later wrote in her author’s preface. “Perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.”

These disturbing thoughts did not leave her when she retired for the night. “When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me. . . . I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life.” Mary soon married Percy Shelley and, beginning to write in May 1816, had by June 1817 turned the imaginations of that night into a full-length novel.



At that time, the first phase of the Industrial Revolution was in full flower, and the English countryside was rapidly giving way to cotton mills, iron works, and coal mines. Although the average personal income had tripled between 1700 and 1815, industrialization had also brought urbanization—and urban poverty. The ranks of the workers were filled with women and children, who worked for lower wages than men. Hours were long, houses were poorly constructed, sanitation was marginal, and disease was rampant.

This period of history speaks strongly to eighth-grade students. They are aware of the far-reaching changes that have occurred in the past two centuries—and that

continue today—and their emerging critical faculties and nascent idealism cause them to ask basic questions about those changes. Were people better off in an agrarian society? Were the industrialists bad men? Was humanity truly advanced by industrialization? Are scientific discoveries always beneficial? Do the positive effects of scientific advancement outweigh the possible risks? Do questions of morality and ethics belong in a conversation about science? How does one balance a responsibility to oneself with one’s responsibility to society? What is a “monster”?

The first time I taught eighth grade, I seriously questioned the appropriateness of *Frankenstein* for my students. Would they have the vocabulary to understand what was happening in the book? Would they have the patience to endure the melodrama of the characters’ overwrought emotions? Would this novel hold any meaning for them beyond being just another assignment?

I took a risk and assigned the book. Much to my delight, the students met the challenges of the Gothic prose and sentiment, and the book proved to be an excellent basis for classroom discussion and written assignments. The students responded with insight and maturity to the questions the novel raises. What they spoke and wrote indicates that they were stimulated to serious thought and that important lessons were being learned.

For example, in considering the two main characters, the students wrote:

I think Victor, although he is very smart, often fails to think things through. . . . Also, he allows himself to wallow in his own self-pity and often manages to escape from having to do anything about it. Although he may mean well, he seems to often cause more pain and suffering for his loved ones.

In the beginning, the monster was not a monster at all. He was very sensitive and yearned for some kind of compassion. . . . He only became a monster when Victor broke his promise [to give him a companion]. He was then overcome by so many emotions that he could not control his actions. In some ways I think Victor Frankenstein and the monster were alike.

The monster changed because of “the hatred the people gave him. . . . It was cruel and uncalled for.” Victor, on the other hand, “was his own downfall. When Victor was making the monster he didn’t think . . . of the consequences. He was his [own] greatest enemy.”



Prometheus and Athena (Prometheus watches as Athena ensouls his clay creation—man).

Frankenstein is full of the darker emotions—remorse, sadness, anger, fear, depression, cruelty, and revenge. Eighth graders understand revenge, and they see that revenge—“almost always the wrong choice” and a response that “almost always causes harm”—drives the action of the novel. It is a tragic story “because it is true. People treat [others] and are treated like this every day.” “There is just so much grief. One [person] cannot have love, and the other [person] loses love. What’s worse than that?”

The students are very aware of current scientific controversies. Cloning, in particular, always comes up during conversations about *Frankenstein*. Victor himself writes,

Learn from me . . . how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.

This statement called forth a more passionate response than any other in the book:

I think it means to not learn too much. . . . I agree with this statement because knowledge is useful, but dangerous.

I think that this statement says that it is better for people to live in humble, contented ignorance than to become ambitious and knowledgeable. I partially agree with this.

There is an invisible boundary that we are not supposed to cross. . . . He was too experienced, and he’s saying that he would rather have been the most inexperienced person in the world. He learned this at a great cost.

I think too much knowledge will corrupt and too little knowledge will make a person’s life miserable.

Knowledge is not bad; it is how you use it and what you try to accomplish with it.

I think he is wrong when he says acquiring knowledge is dangerous. I think only certain knowledge is dangerous. I think people could try to learn without going too far like [Victor].

By trying new things and learning new things, you do run the risk of making yourself or those around [you] unhappy, but what is life if not a huge risk in itself? I

think that true happiness can only be found if you are willing to search for it, and therefore I do not agree with Frankenstein’s statement.

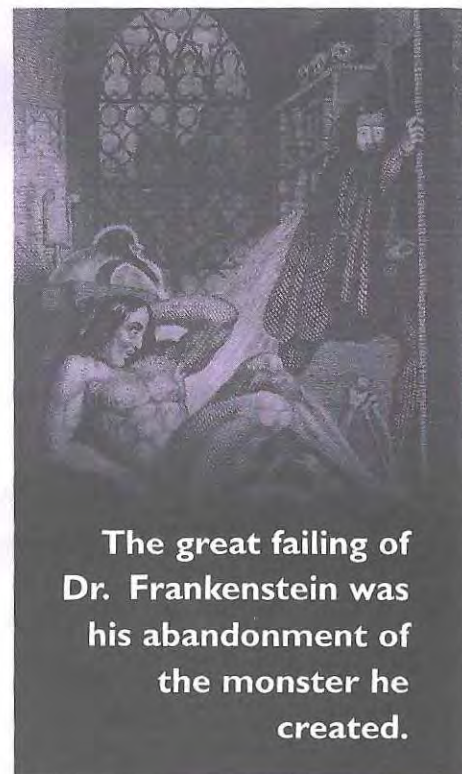
Because of its florid style, *Frankenstein* can be a challenge for today’s reader. I have been unable, however, to find another novel that so vividly portrays the conflict between the romantic, conservative worldview and the more radical, future-oriented approach. We often take technology and scientific advances for granted. *Frankenstein* gives us the opportunity to reflect upon the direction in which our actions seem to be taking us.

In the students’ words, *Frankenstein* was assigned because “. . . the Industrial Revolution shows that we are not supposed to be God making something that ends up destroying our lives.” “[The book] shows the horrors of technology if exploited to the wrong end.” “The monster was the Industrial Revolution if it had gone wrong.”

It is important for students to ask these questions and think these thoughts. To the eighth graders, *Frankenstein* is still relevant. As they themselves observed, Mary Shelley presents “an exaggerated [but accurate] version of our lives.” She reminds us “not to judge people by how they look. *Frankenstein* shows what can happen when you go too far with something, and when you have to start dealing with obsession.” “Morals should not be forsaken in the pursuit of science.”

These statements show that the students became involved in the complex questions raised by the novel and that “*Frankenstein* . . . teaches important lessons in responsibility and compassion, which are applicable to any age.”

VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT is a class teacher at the Charlottesville Waldorf School in Virginia. Vivian has just graduated her second class. Vivian has served *Renewal* as a member of its editorial advisory board for the past six years.



The great failing of Dr. Frankenstein was his abandonment of the monster he created.



***Frankenstein* gives us the opportunity to reflect upon the direction in which our actions seem to be taking us.**

Teaching the *Odyssey* in the iPod Era

Homer's Life Lessons for Today's Tenth Graders

BY DAVID SLOAN



Athena—the Greek goddess of war, as well as of arts, crafts, and wisdom—favored the Greeks and was Odysseus' benefactor and protector in the war against the Trojans

As you set out for Ithaka,
 hope the journey may be long,
 full of adventure, full of discovery.
 Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
 Angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them . . .
 You won't encounter them
 unless you bring them along inside your soul,
 unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

—Constantine Cavafy, Greek poet (1863–1933),
 from his poem “Ithaka”

What can twenty-first-century teenagers—for whom life before cell phones is but a dim memory—learn from the nearly three-thousand-year-old epic journey described in Homer's *Odyssey*? Rudolf Steiner suggested that the Waldorf school curriculum should address the needs of the developing child, in the high school just as in the kindergarten and the elementary school. What adolescent need can be met by transporting tenth graders back into an ancient world teeming with mythological rather than technological marvels: man-eating monsters, ship-swallowing whirlpools, raging sea gods, and lethal enchantresses?

The *Odyssey* has long been a staple of high school classrooms. Generations of students have studied this sequel to the *Iliad* as a window into Homeric Greece, as a banquet of Jungian archetypal psychological motifs, as a classic tale of loss, longing, and reunion. The epic poem has gracefully borne these interpretations and many others, but, at its core, the *Odyssey* depicts the birth pangs of a new stage in human development.

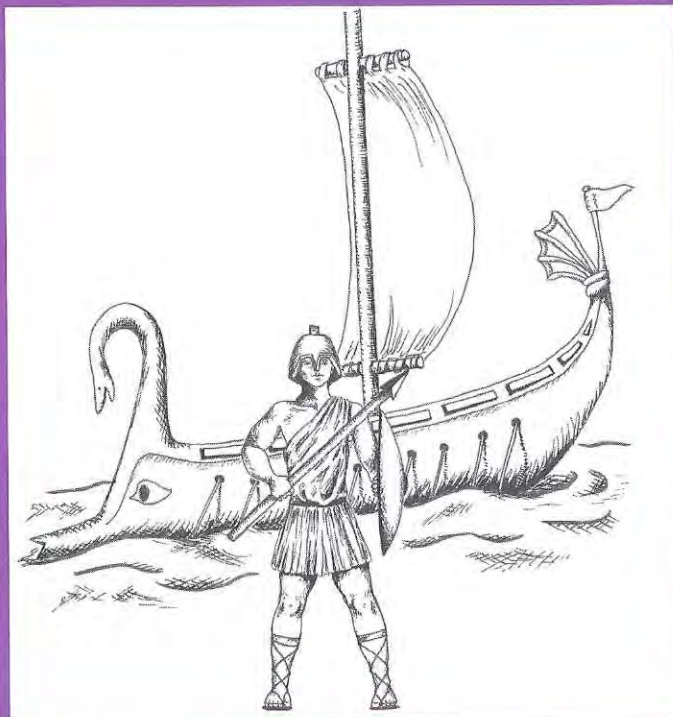
We can recognize in Odysseus the strivings not only of a single human being, but also of an entire age. As a representative of humanity, he presages the dawning of a vital emerging culture founded upon a new rationality and investigative spirit, a culture that would culminate in the Golden Age of Greece. As an individual, Odysseus

embodies the first stirrings of the intellectually vigorous, ego-directed self.

This evolutionary change in human consciousness takes place on an individual level at about age fifteen. Thus tenth graders are awakening to their own fledgling intellectual capacities and often are intoxicated with the power of their incipient egos. They see in Odysseus a reflection of themselves.

We teachers in the Green Meadow Waldorf High School have long noted the dramatic transformation that students undergo between the ninth and tenth grades. As freshmen, the students usually are eager to move beyond the sheltering walls of the middle school. They earnestly desire to take up the challenges of high school life, but they often become distracted by the upheavals issuing from their own deepening inner lives. They live in a world of emotional extremes, swinging from giddy elation to abject despair and from acute self-

consciousness to obliviousness in a matter of seconds. Ninth graders want to think ever more penetratingly, but their minds can get clouded by their inner agitation. Asking them to think an idea through clearly is like suggesting they wade into a clear pond and bring back some clean drinking water. Their own movements stir up the bottom and muddy the very water they're trying to collect.



Odysseus, the Greek hero of the twelfth century BC,
 and the ship that carried him from his home city,
 Ithaka, to the shores of Troy



Most ninth graders have much more in common with Achilles than with Odysseus. Considered by many to be the noblest Greek warrior, Achilles is peerless in battle. Only a vulnerable heel keeps him from being one of the Immortals. Yet his pouting over the loss of a female “trophy” is the real focus of the *Iliad*. For all of his prowess in combat, Achilles is in the thrall of his own emotions, veering from envy to loathing and from grief to rage. This final fury boils up in him as he discovers that his best friend, after donning Achilles’ armor, has been slain in battle. Although Achilles avenges his friend’s death by killing the great Trojan hero Hector, this deed only hastens his own demise. From the ramparts of Troy, Hector’s brother Paris shoots the arrow that pierces mortal Achilles’ heel and kills him.

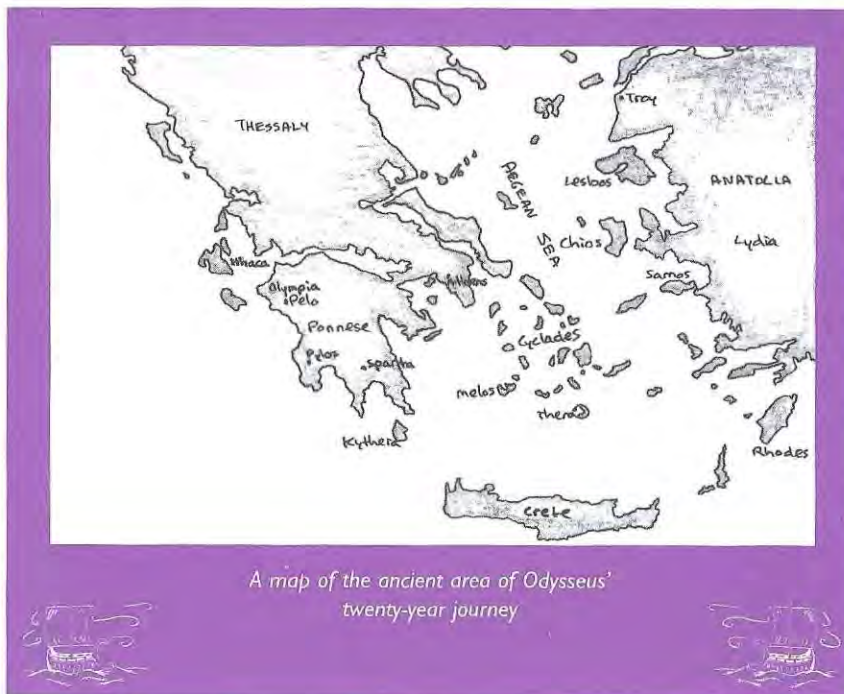
Ultimately, Achilles’ story has little more to teach adolescents beyond a cautionary, “Don’t let your emotions control you!” They see his petulance for what it is—the childish display of a man who has little control over his impulses. His story lacks an ingredient essential to virtually all of the literature we choose to explore with high school students—the possibility of self-transformation, or at least of self-knowledge. Blinded by emotional outbursts and lacking an enlightened intellect, Achilles represents an outmoded form of consciousness—albeit one that stubbornly persists into this century—that perpetuates, and then falls victim to, a seemingly endless cycle of vengeance and violence.

Wily Odysseus, however, is a more modern and complex character, whose craftiness strongly appeals to tenth graders’ own sharpening intellects. Sophomores often return to school in the autumn much fuller of themselves than they were as humbler ninth graders. No longer flailing about in the freshman pond, they

might be portrayed as the self-assured crew members of a sleek, Greek sailing ship, leaving the protective home harbor, setting out for open water. They seem more comfortable with themselves, clearer in their thinking, and more confident than ever of their cognitive abilities.

Yet, over the years, we teachers have noticed another pattern that often emerges during tenth grade. Perhaps it can be traced to this newfound confidence that can border on brazenness. Whatever the reason, many

sophomores will go “overboard.” Sometime during the year, they will get into some kind of trouble—with drugs, sex, stealing, some form of dishonesty. In other words, many tenth graders succumb to one or another of the myriad temptations the world has to offer. Is this true for all sophomores? Of course not. Some children “fall” as early as the sixth or seventh grade, some after the



sophomore year. However, the “rightful” time frame for this almost inevitable aspect of growing up is in the sophomore year.

The tenth graders’ tendency to fall prey to temptation is one reason we have them study the *Odyssey*. The story of Odysseus’ journey has something to offer them—a metaphorical reflection of their own struggles. On a fundamental level, Homer’s epic is a story about how a man and his crew deal with one temptation after another.

When Odysseus triumphantly sets out from Troy, he has every reason to believe that he will soon be back in his native Ithaca with his beloved wife, Penelope, and young son, Telemakhos. After all, it was his brilliant idea to construct the wooden horse that led to the Greeks’ final victory. In addition, Odysseus has become Athena’s favorite mortal, so enamored is she of his “bottomless

bag of tricks." Surely a man with such cunning could surmount any obstacles on his return voyage. Yet along the way, Odysseus encounters twelve perils that reveal his weaknesses and test his reserves of guile, endurance, and resistance to temptation. Like Hercules' twelve labors, these challenges act as crucibles that both cause Odysseus enormous suffering and define his greatness. Ultimately, the anguish he experiences transforms and ennobles Odysseus, making him worthy of reuniting with the pure-hearted Penelope.

On his journey home, Odysseus must grapple with the same archetypal enticements that entrap today's adolescents. He encounters and must overcome Circe, the sorceress, who, promising to satisfy a man's every desire, instead transforms him into a pig. Even after Odysseus has rescued his men from their animal state, he himself falls prey to Circe's potent charms. He shares her "flawless bed" for almost a year before he realizes that her enchantments have diverted him from returning to his true soul mate.

On another island, Odysseus must wrest his men away from the

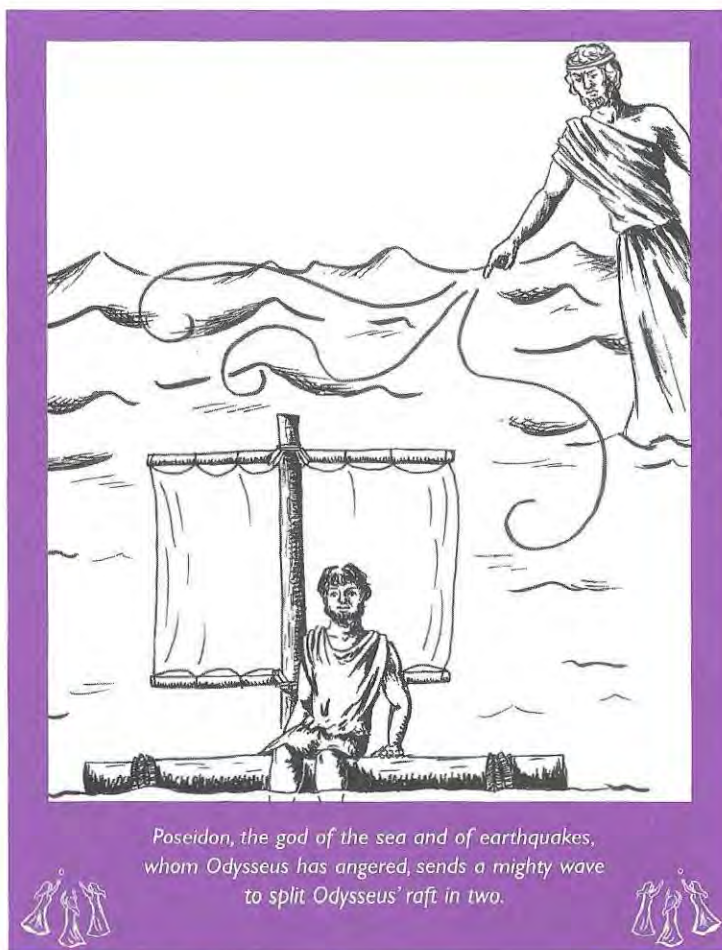
Lotos Eaters, who offer his crew members days passed in a dreamy, narcotic stupor. Still later, he manages to save his men from the Sirens, those irresistible nymphs whose music is so alluring that sailors will wreck their ships on the jagged rocks just to get closer to its source.

When tenth graders realize that they are not the first to meet the allure and risk of "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll," they become very interested in how Odysseus copes with these temptations. And they find a man who is much like they are. Odysseus has greatness within

him and a burning desire to test his mettle, but he also struggles with a lack of self-restraint and a lack of humility. These two powers of the human soul—self-restraint and humility—are just what he needs to develop in order to win his way back home.

Early in the voyage, Odysseus and his crew find themselves in the land of the Cyclops, where they experience perhaps the best-known of their adventures.

Trapped with his men in the cave of Polyphemus the Cyclops, Odysseus devises a crafty breakout plan—blinding the giant and then having the men cling to the underbellies of sheep to avoid detection as they leave the cave. All lovers of the *Odyssey* recall this daring escape. Fewer perhaps remember Odysseus' exceedingly poor judgment and display of arrogance at a later critical moment. Though he has secured his anonymity by telling Polyphemus that his name is "Nobody," Odysseus lets his pride and impetuosity take over. He cannot refrain from crowing about his own cleverness. From the deck of the departing ship, Odysseus calls back to the blinded giant:



Poseidon, the god of the sea and of earthquakes, whom Odysseus has angered, sends a mighty wave to split Odysseus' raft in two.

Cyclops, if ever mortal man inquire
how you were put to shame and blinded, tell him
Odysseus, raider of cities, took your eye . . .

(The Odyssey, tr. Fitzgerald, Book IX, ll. 473–75)

Here, perhaps more than at any other moment in the story, tenth graders recognize in Odysseus their own hubris, their own lack of self-restraint. Just as Odysseus' egotistical indiscretion causes the sea god Poseidon, father of Polyphemus, to raise a ship-shattering tempest that delays Odysseus' homecoming by a decade, so adolescent impetuosity can cause "shipwrecks." Yet, for

all the damage they can inflict, experiences brought about by thoughtlessness can also give young people opportunities for what the Greeks termed *anagnorisis*—recognition that can lead to individual growth.

It takes a decade of ordeals for Odysseus to achieve a measure of mastery over himself. Winning one's way to selfhood rarely comes without a high price. At the beginning of his voyage home, Odysseus possesses all the trappings worthy of the king of Ithaka—ships laden with the spoils of war, a reputation for valor and cunning, a proud crew, a magnificent queen. By the time he drags himself to the shore of yet another strange island, he has lost nearly everything—his ships, the spoils, his entire crew, even his clothing. Naked, shivering, half-drowned, Odysseus has nothing he can call his own except the inextinguishable image of Penelope and whatever inner resources he can summon to face the next trial.

Here again, sophomores can relate to Odysseus' plight. As they teeter between the stages of childhood and adulthood, they have already experienced the dropping away of certain gifts that the kingdom of childhood bestowed upon them: a feeling of oneness with their surroundings, a liberating lack of self-consciousness, an obliviousness to the passing of time, a rich and fertile imagination that allowed them to play for endless hours. The gradual loss of these natural attributes of the child leaves teenagers feeling as abandoned and as vulnerable as Odysseus when he awakens in a remote cove of his native land.

What am I in for now?
Whose country have I come to this time?
Where shall I take . . . myself,
With no guide, no directions? . . ."
And then he wept

Despairing, for his own land, trudging down
Beside the endless wash of the wide, wide sea
Weary and desolate as the sea.

(Book XIII, ll. 200-05, 246-49)

This experience is absolutely essential, though, if—like Odysseus—teenagers are to complete the voyage “home,” that is, to find their way to healthy selfhood. They must leave behind the gifts and glories of childhood and—largely on their own—forge new capacities

that will help them to confront the world's challenges as well as to tame their own inner storms.

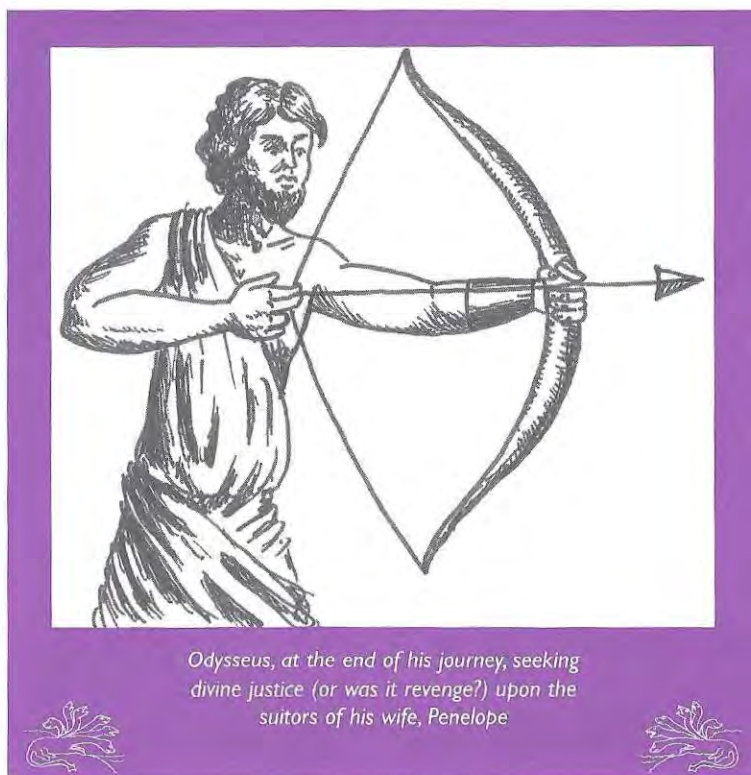
Also essential to Odysseus' survival and his return home is the inner image of his pure and steadfast wife, Penelope. In the same way, young people in their most despairing moments need a constant, guiding presence, a vision of their own purer, higher selves—their own steadfast Penelope. She waits with outstretched arms for the Odysseus in every wayfaring individual. Her welcoming embrace is both an inspiration

during the long and arduous journey and a priceless treasure at the journey's end.



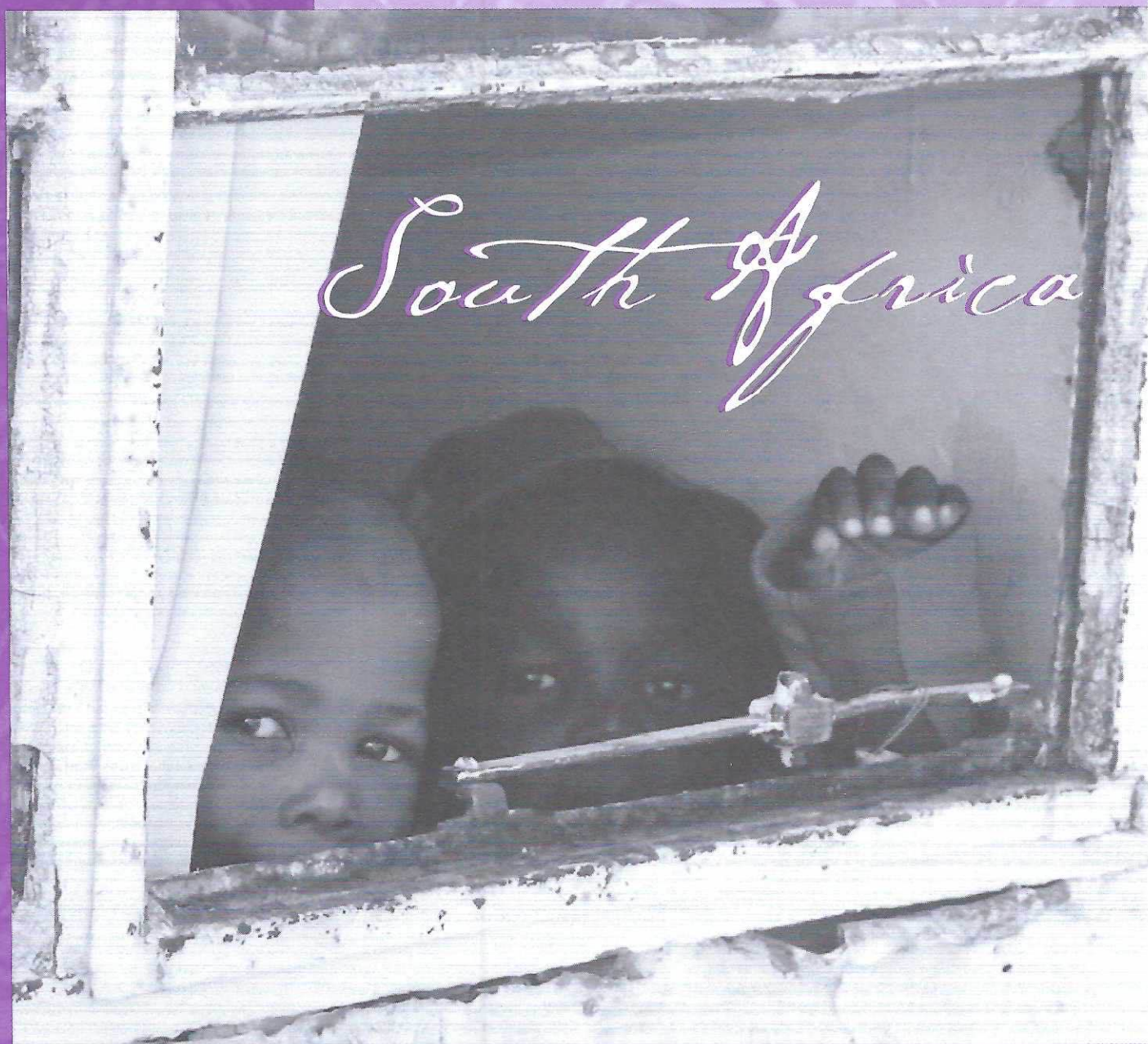
DAVID SLOAN, after teaching English and drama at the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York, for more than twenty-five years, has recently moved to Maine to help the Merriconeag Waldorf School launch a high school. In his free time, he will pursue an MFA in poetry at the University of Southern Maine. A father of four Waldorf graduates, Sloan is also the author of *Stages of Imagination: Working Dramatically with Adolescents*, and has contributed several articles to *Renewal*.

CREDITS: Drawings by Jirina Garbish, when she was a tenth-grade student of Eric Müller at the Hawthorne Valley School, Harlemville, New York



Odysseus, at the end of his journey, seeking divine justice (or was it revenge?) upon the suitors of his wife, Penelope

Waldorf Education in



BY JAMES PEWOTHERER

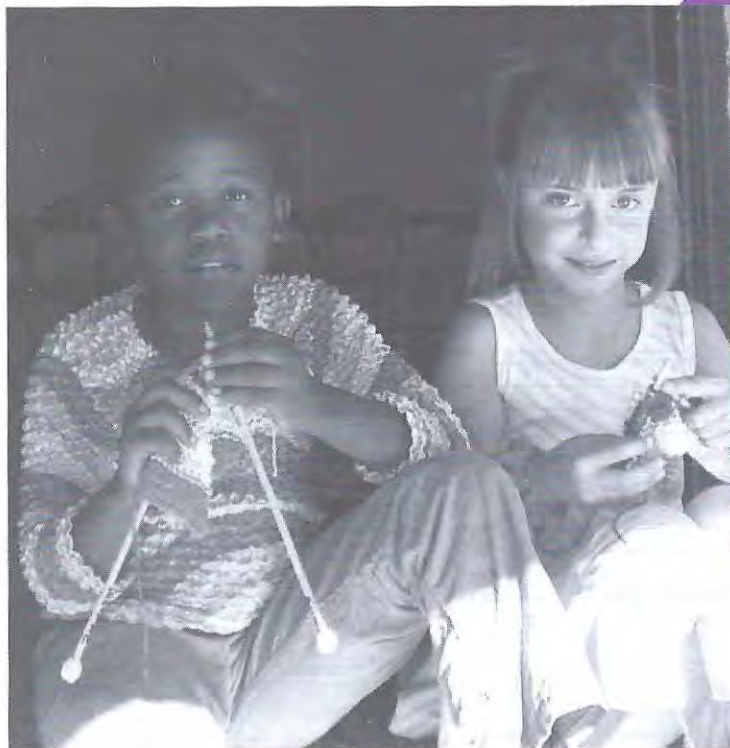
The Hague Circle is a group of twenty-five Waldorf educators from around the world. The members meet twice a year to discuss the practical and spiritual needs of the international Waldorf movement and to focus on the needs of children and the life in some of the 924 schools worldwide. In May 2005, for the first time since its founding in 1970, the group met outside Europe. Twenty members traveled to South Africa. In the course of ten days, they met with leaders of Waldorf Education in South Africa, conferred with the assistant director of the government's Ministry of Education, took part in conferences for Waldorf school communities and for Waldorf teachers, and had their semiannual discussions, this time focusing on the situation of Waldorf Education in South Africa. The group also split up to visit and work in the seventeen Waldorf schools in the country and to observe some of the numerous Waldorf child care centers in the townships.

James Pewtherer, formerly a class and high school teacher at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, and currently teaching in the high school of the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, Massachusetts, is the North American representative to the Hague Circle. The following article is based on the report that James wrote about this visit to South Africa.
—R. E. K.

That South Africa would be beautiful, I had no doubt. But the stunning beauty of its hills, mountains, valleys, and sea coast was beyond anything I had imagined.

South Africa is remarkable also because of its people and its recent history. Among its almost forty-five million citizens, about four million are white, thirty-five million are black, and six million are "colored," or mixed race. There are eleven official languages. For over forty years, the white Afrikaans minority ruled with the

oppressive and racist policy of apartheid or "separateness." In 1994, however, in an election in which all citizens were able to vote, the Afrikaners were voted out of power, and apartheid was ended. So that the dark past could be laid to rest, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission invited people to confess and apologize for their politically motivated crimes and granted clemency



There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbrooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa.

—Alan Paton
Cry, the Beloved Country

for these crimes. The newly elected president Nelson Mandela insisted that the national anthem include the music and words of the Afrikaner anthem of the former oppressive regime. And, when the national rugby team, the Springboks—a symbol of apartheid to many—won the rugby World Cup in 1995, Nelson Mandela, in presenting the cup, wore a Springboks jersey over his suit and praised the team as a team that is "for all South Africans." In recent years, some 600,000 simple new houses have been built and sold at affordable prices to families in the vast townships or shantytowns that lie near the major cities.

Nearly every person we met—white, black, colored, the affluent, and those struggling to rise from poverty into the middle class—was hopeful that South Africa will become a nation unique in the world. Every conversation we had inevitably made reference to the 1994 election as the turning point toward what South Africa is to become. Numerous times we heard the statement, "Everyone who lives here is a South African."

Poverty and crime are still serious problems. Unemployment is about forty percent, and some nine million adults have had little or no schooling. Millions still live in the “informal housing” of the sprawling shantytowns. Crimes of property are of epidemic proportion in some areas. Many homes of the white minority are surrounded by walls or spiked fences topped with razor wire. Laws that aim to wrest economic control from rich whites have led to the flight of many white professionals who can no longer find work. HIV/AIDS is ravaging the poor, black communities. Twenty-five percent of the black teachers and thirty percent of black mothers in maternity wards are HIV positive. During our visit we discussed the HIV/AIDS epidemic with the daughter-in-law of the late African National Congress leader Walter Sisulu. She is a Waldorf parent and an AIDS specialist in southern Africa for the UN.

Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy have been present in South Africa for decades. Of the seventeen Waldorf schools in the country, five are well-established, predominantly white schools, founded during the apartheid era. These schools managed to survive those years despite admitting some children of color. The other schools are newer, many located in or near the townships where poverty and crime are rampant. There are also many child care centers around the country based on Rudolf Steiner’s understanding of child development.

To the Western visitor, South Africa is a land of first-world amenities but also of third-world challenges. In the gleaming metropolises of Johannesburg and Cape Town, crime, particularly crime against property, is epidemic.

Public education in South Africa also manifests this paradox. Basic elements of first-world education such as a national curriculum and high-stakes testing have been laid upon a third-world infrastructure. The result is poorly trained and poorly paid teachers—some of whom cannot pass a fourth-grade literacy and numeracy test—teaching classes of 130 children and trying to prepare these students for standardized exams that will decide their future.

In 1994 the newly elected black government sent forty teams around the world to find an educational approach that suited South Africa. The commission that evaluated the team reports chose Waldorf Education, but the government felt that it could not finance Waldorf schools for the entire country. Instead, it chose, as the second-best option, what it sees as a “child-centered, outcomes-based” method for its 27,000 public schools. Thus, the Waldorf schools are at best a small but inspirational presence in South African education.

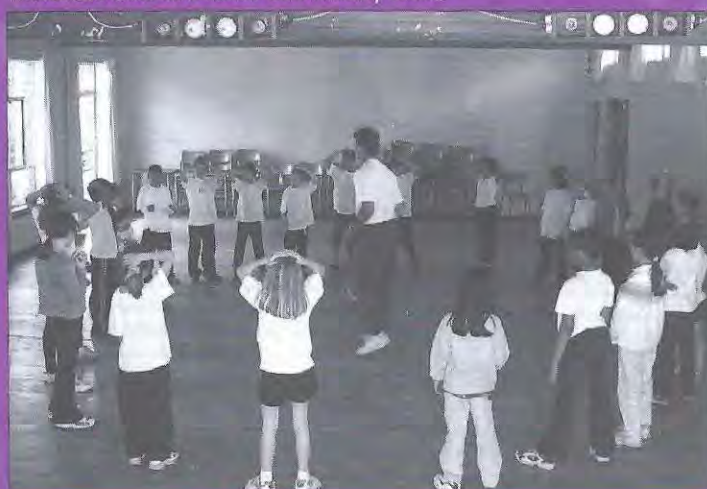
Vignettes of Three Waldorf Schools

The Lesedi Waldorf School is a K–7 school; all elementary schools in South Africa end with the seventh grade. It is located in a remote region about three hours’ drive—much of it on dirt roads—northeast of

Primary school playground at Michael Oak Waldorf School in Cape Town



Movement class at Michael Oak Waldorf School



A classroom at the Khanyisa Waldorf School in Cape Town



Johannesburg on the high plateau in the north of the country. The residents of the traditional village of Lesedi are all black. The people are enthralled with their Waldorf school. After the villagers performed a traditional Xhosa dance in costume and sang a song of welcome, the visitors from the Hague Circle were greeted by the local dignitaries.

The schoolchildren there are warm and affectionate with each other and with their teachers. That day, the

fourth graders had a eurythmy class with the kindergarten children and the visitors observing. The older children led the kindergartners into the eurythmy room with a gentle and touching protectiveness. The younger children sat against the walls, attentive and in absolute silence, as the fourth graders did eurythmy. At the end of the class, each of the fourth graders spontaneously took a younger child under his care and led him out to the teacher in the yard.

The Inkanyesi Waldorf School is in Alexandra Township, an all-black area of a very different nature outside of Johannesburg. Here, the school began in a rough barrack-like building, which has gradually been supplemented by brick buildings in the fenced compound. A guard is posted at the rolling iron-picket gate. The classes have between fifteen and twenty-five students, and the teachers are confident in their work with their children. Each Thursday morning, they conduct a non-denominational chapel service (the Free Religious Service for Children originally given by Rudolf Steiner), attended by the children from all classes in the school. The fourth-grade Man and Animal block here includes vibrant presentations of the children's favorite, sometimes local, animals.

The teachers are very poorly paid, because the government subsidies are small and parents can pay but little to supplement the public funds. Contributions from Europe make up some of the financial shortfall. Government money brings inspections, however, and sometimes there are confrontations with low-level civil servants over whether what is done in the school fulfills the national curriculum. Absenteeism is usually due to the life struggles of the parents, and the children are sorry to miss a day of school.

Roseway Waldorf School, a K-13 school, is near Durban in the east on the Indian Ocean in the province of Kwazulu-Natal. It is in the "Valley of a Thousand Hills" where morning mists often fill the valley floor, leaving only the hilltops visible. Here, Zulu is the main language of the native black people. While there are some students of color in the school, most are white. All seem to be devoted to the school. Roseway has benefited from the gift of a lovely hilltop farm overlooking one of the many valleys of the region, and some charming buildings have been erected on the land. The climate is mild with warm days and cool nights in the late fall and winter, often with morning mists. The teachers engage the students with lively teaching. Some classes take place in the grassy courtyard with the children sitting in a circle.

The younger children and the high school students have a warm and friendly attitude. The high school parents are worried about their children's fitness for the job market. Nevertheless, the school is growing. Though

The Roseway Waldorf School in Hillcrest, near Durban



A mathematics class at the Zenzeleni Waldorf School, in Cape Town



A festival at the Michael Oak Waldorf School





The Spring Festival at the Michael Oak Waldorf School

employment prospects are rather dim, optimism and patience for what is possible shine through.

Challenges

Those involved with Waldorf Education in South Africa are very committed to it. The all-South African conference held in Cape Town for teachers, child care providers, parents, and board members opened with an "African welcome." This was a performance by some twenty-five mostly black teachers wearing the richly colored robes of their tribes. With their singing and dancing, they showed the inspiring music and harmony that lives in this culture and the vitality and the joy in life that they as teachers bring to their work with the children. Afterward, some spoke about what Waldorf Education is doing for the children in their care. They can see that this education works and are dedicated to it.

Yet this is non-Western culture, as is evident even in the way people think. For instance, the grammar of the Xhosa language does not separate the pronoun "I" from the verb. The very form of the first person singular changes when the deed is done. A willed act is intimately and openly part of the "do-er," and the act clearly affects the one doing it. Once I've done something, I am not the same "I" that I was before. This, it seems, is much more evident to the Xhosa people than it usually is to us.

This different worldview and experience of life has implications for the training of teachers. A young woman here may feel that Waldorf Education benefits the children in her care, but she may not be easily engaged by the often lifeless intellectual concepts that

characterize the Western life of the mind. Delving into the intricate constructs of Rudolf Steiner's *The Foundations of Human Experience* (formerly known as *The Study of Man*)—a book essential to the Waldorf teacher—may not be easily achieved. Rudolf Steiner's ideas must be brought in a living way that speaks to the African soul.

The problems that face Waldorf educators in South Africa are similar to those confronting the movement in North America:

- They must learn how to operate free, independent schools without these being perceived as elitist "segregation academies."
- They have to prepare their students for the world of testing and for the real world of jobs without compromising the Waldorf curriculum, particularly those subjects that lead to lifelong human capacities.
- They have to develop effective methods to train teachers from different cultural backgrounds and with varied learning styles.

Waldorf Education came into being at a particular time and in a particular cultural milieu—Central Europe in 1919—and still bears some of the characteristics of that time and place. Yet close to ninety years later, in far-flung parts of the world and in varied cultures, it continues to resonate with parents, teachers, and children.

CREDITS: *Freunde der Erziehungskunst* for the photo from Cape Town Educare on page 35, the Dassenberg Waldorf School photo on page 36, the photo at the bottom of page 37, and the center photo on page 38; Michael Oak Waldorf School for the top and center photos on page 37, the bottom photo on page 38, and the photo on page 39.





Looking Beyond Our Garden Gate

Successful Community Outreach in a Waldorf School

BY DIANE KASTNER

Starting a Waldorf school can be a consuming task. But even when the pioneer phase of a school's history is over, the continuing operation of the school requires a huge expenditure of time and energy, as well as money. Teachers, parents, and administrators have to work hard to make ends meet, to build a school community, to attract and hold competent teachers, and to maintain a high level of education for the children.

While this inward focus allows Waldorf schools to survive, it can also create an insularity, a separation between the school and the larger community within which it resides. This insularity can prevent a school from truly prospering. It is the broader community from which will come the students, the families, the gifted teachers, and the financial support that a healthy school requires. Hence an active and effective community outreach is essential to every Waldorf school.

There are a number of steps a Waldorf school can take to build bridges to the larger community. These measures help the school to share the richness of its life and also to attract important friends, interest, and support. To accomplish these goals a school may:

- Bring on a part-time director of community outreach with professional experience. There is a time in a school's life when it can function with well-meaning volunteers. There is a time when a trained and experienced professional is needed, a person who can give the task undivided attention and who will help to open the school to what is beyond its garden gates.
- Define its public image, preferably one that is unique in the local community. Create a brief but compelling mission statement, a tag line (e.g., "The Meadowlark Waldorf School: Schooling the Head, Hands, and Heart"), and an attractive logo. Make sure that all the school's promotional literature and correspondence conveys this image and carries the consistent look.
- Create an attractive promotional packet that includes a brochure about the school and a few professional articles about Waldorf Education. A hodgepodge of xeroxed materials will not do. Gather promotional materials from other independent schools in the area. The promotional packet should excel in terms of content, design, and color. Waldorf Education is, after all, an arts-based education.
- Study the Web sites of independent schools in the area and of other Waldorf schools. The Internet has become an important means for prospective parents and others to find out about schools. The school's Web site should be outstanding. There are certainly school parents with the professional skills to create a first-class presence on the Internet.
- Make sure the school is "tour-ready" at all times, with a warm and friendly front-office staff, a clean and well-kept campus, and halls and classrooms adorned with colorful artwork by the students. First impressions are very important.
- Establish contact with educators and business, cultural, and political leaders in the community. These should include:
 - directors and staff of local preschools and kindergartens. Invite them to tour the school and attend kindergarten-related events. This is best done on a Saturday or on a weekday evening. These persons can become a tremendous source for new parent referrals.
 - the principals, headmasters, and teachers at local public and independent schools. Host an on-campus "Open House for Educators" when other

schools are on break or in the late afternoon. Serve refreshments. Present a gallery of work from each class to show the progression of the curriculum. Have teachers give brief talks and be available to answer questions.

- the heads of the local departments of education and of fine arts at local colleges and universities. Educators should know about Waldorf Education just as they know about Montessori and other educational methods. Some Waldorf schools have been asked to give presentations to students in teacher education programs at nearby universities and colleges.
- the presidents of the local and county chambers of commerce and the officers in local service organizations such as Rotary and the Elks. These people are interested in what is going on in the community and can help to build long-lasting relationships. Invite them to the school for a tour and for special events such as performances and fairs. Consider joining the local chamber of commerce and establishing a presence in voluntary organizations. A school should be seen as a contributing partner in community life.
- mayors, members of town councils, and other local dignitaries. These individuals know everyone in the community and can shape public opinion. Their understanding can be important should there be any controversy involving the school or when campus expansion or new construction is proposed.
- the education directors and curators at local art museums and art galleries. Partner with them by having hands-on art booths at their youth events and by providing youth artwork to exhibit.
- directors of local playhouses and performing arts centers. Invite these people to the eighth-grade play or some other event. Ask to advertise in their playbill at nonprofit rates.
- Establish contact with the editors, publishers, and reporters of local newspapers and magazines. Send them news releases when something noteworthy occurs at the school. Invite them for a tour followed by a social tea with teachers and administrators. Refreshments are a warm gesture that expresses gratitude as guests come to visit. These contacts with the media may lead to the possibility of an article about the school. This can be tricky. A positive article in a local publication can be a great boon to a school. But the reporter assigned to the task may go in a direction that does more harm than good to the school. Some Waldorf schools have been very adversely affected by articles that give a distorted and negative view of Waldorf Education. Before granting interviews and access to the school, make every effort to clearly explain the tenets of Waldorf Education so that things can not be misconstrued or taken out of context. Ask to

review the piece before it goes into print. A well-intentioned journalist will be willing to agree to that.

- Locate the organization Imagination Celebration on the Internet and get in touch with its local office. When arts funding was cut in the public schools, this program was created to bring the arts and culture to school-age children. The philanthropists supporting Imagination Celebration are ardent supporters of the arts and education and have been eager and delighted to hear about Waldorf Education. Your school can become an Imagination Celebration partner and have its fairs and festivals listed on Imagination Celebration seasonal calendars of events. This is an excellent way to invite the larger community to the campus.

- Advertise in local newspapers and parenting magazines.
- Have a few toll-free 800 numbers to handle enrollment and other inquiries. Assign one number to each advertising vehicle to determine how many calls each vehicle generates. This will enable efficient advertising and a wise use of the advertising budget.
- Create a bumper sticker to advertise the school. Seeing a bumper sticker is often the first experience people have of Waldorf Education, and their sale can be part of a class fund-raiser.

These strategies can be carried out with very little expenditure of funds. But they will help the school to become known in the community, to have a clear identity, to be seen as a serious and special educational institution, and to be welcomed as an active,

contributing member in the life of the larger community. They will in the end increase parent interest, attract new enrollment and prospective teachers, and promote a healthy school.

Such a community outreach program can also be the groundwork for fund-raising outside the school. In every outer community there are persons who have the financial means to help what they see as worthy

projects. Some specialize in supporting education and/or the arts. Getting name recognition among these philanthropists may mean—in addition to all the measures taken above—taking out a series of advertisements in local publications. When these individuals are solicited for support, you want them to reply, “I have heard of Waldorf. Tell me more,” rather than “Waldorf what?”

“Friend-building” can then begin. This process might include “Breakfast at Waldorf,” “Morning Tea at Waldorf,” or a “VIP Walk through the Grades.” Invite these new friends for a smaller group tour of the school, including the garden, farm, woodworking shop, and so on, followed by a brief orientation talk and a question-and-answer session. Those who seem interested in the school can go on a “Friends List.” These persons might receive a Waldorf calendar in December, seasonal cards, and other tokens throughout the year. And they may, in time, when approached for a donation, be willing to support the school.

Thus an active program for community outreach is essential for every Waldorf school. We cannot afford to be a jewel waiting to be discovered. This concern for outreach is consistent with Rudolf Steiner’s vision of Waldorf Education. The Waldorf school exists not to serve just its own children, parents, and teachers, but to be a center of cultural renewal for the broader community.



DIANE KASTNER was formerly the director of community outreach at the Waldorf School of Orange County in southern California. She was involved in the school’s outreach and publicity work for nearly twelve years, both as volunteer and as employee. Diane assisted the school in implementing an extensive community outreach program that enhanced the school’s position in the larger Orange County community. Diane has a son and daughter, both graduates of the Waldorf School of Orange County.

Book Review

The Challenge of Childhood Diabetes Family Strategies for Raising a Healthy Child

BY LAURA PLUNKETT WITH LINDA WELTNER

REVIEWED BY PATRICE MAYNARD

145 pages • \$15.95

We have traded the acute inflammatory illnesses of the first half of the twentieth century—measles, pertussis, and polio, to name a few—for chronic, noninflammatory illnesses such as asthma, chronic fatigue syndrome, and juvenile diabetes. The desire to eliminate symptoms as quickly as possible, however, still dominates mainstream medicine. To question physicians about alternative approaches that may take effect more slowly than symptom-destroying medicines but that perhaps touch the underlying causes of illness takes courage and determination, as does implementing an alternative approach.

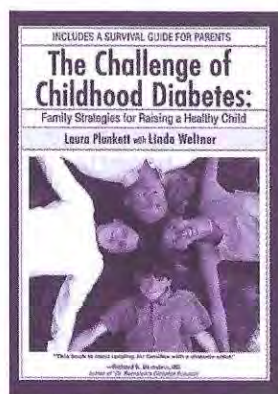
Laura Plunkett is a psychotherapist living in Marblehead, Massachusetts. When her son, Danny, was seven years old and a first grader at the Cape Ann Waldorf School in Beverly, MA, he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. This is a life-threatening chronic illness that is increasing all over the world. In her book *The Challenge of Childhood Diabetes: Family Strategies for Raising a Healthy Child*, written with her mother, former *Boston Globe* columnist Linda Weltner, Plunkett chronicles her own and her extended family's courageous, determined, and ultimately successful attempts to deal with her son's illness in a holistic manner.

There was, of course, the shock and heartbreak caused by the diagnosis. This was followed by the transformation of family life. Activities alien to normal home life—giving shots, administering urine tests, calculating carbohydrates and ketones in foods, and watching vigilantly for symptoms of low and high blood sugar levels in an active little boy—became part of the daily routine.

Throughout the process, Plunkett, goaded by her intuition, asked questions:

- Why is eating junk food considered normal for a child in our culture?

- Why, in a critical moment, do physicians simply increase the dose of insulin rather than try to improve the overall well-being of the child?
- Why is a holistic approach difficult to implement with juvenile diabetes?



Plunkett describes how she, along with other members of her family, did research, made the family diet more healthful, found help in alternative modes of treatment, made exercise fun, educated Danny's teachers about his condition and his needs, and made and shared valuable discoveries in the process of adjusting to her son's illness. Her insights led her family down an unconventional path, one which perhaps many Waldorf parents will find interesting and understandable.

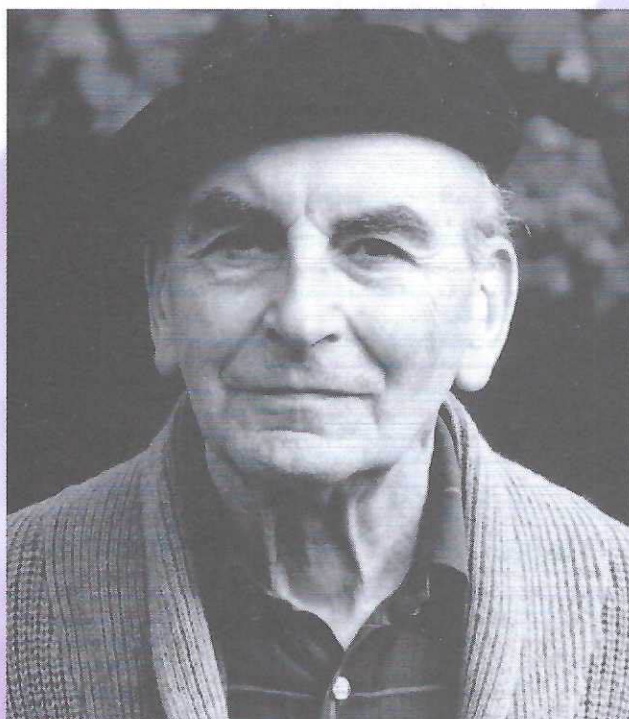
Ultimately, the gift of Plunkett's book is to lessen the loneliness of other parents who have a child with diabetes. To read this book is to understand that, in such a situation, feelings such as denial, resentment, anger, fear, and alienation are natural and universal. To read this book is to find a friend who offers comfort by sharing her family's experiences of intimacy, support, friendship, and gratitude.

The Challenge of Childhood Diabetes makes the case that even dark events have gifts to give and that diabetes is not an exception. Indeed, Plunkett's reactions and suggestions seem applicable to all families caring for a child with a chronic illness. Parents will find it worthwhile to share this book with others involved in their child's care. After all, a child is raised by the whole community as well as by a particular family. *The Challenge of Childhood Diabetes* encourages readers to participate actively in deciding how to care for a child with a chronic illness, keeping in mind the deep, loving attention every child needs.

The Challenge of Childhood Diabetes can be ordered from www.challengeofdiabetes.com. It is also available as a downloadable e-book for \$6.00.

In Memoriam

Rudolf Gapple



(1908-2006)

Paragon of and
Advocate for Rhythm

BY PATRICE MAYNARD

*I*t could be that Rudolf Copple played the piano every day for forty-five minutes or more throughout his adult life because he never practiced when, during his childhood, his mother provided lessons for him and his twin sister. The time that Rudolf spent at the piano over his long life, though, more than balanced what he neglected to do as a child, and he was always ready to play for visitors, right up to his passing in January of this year at the age of ninety-seven.

Rudolf loved good music and lived his life in rhythm: following the seasons with attention to the festivals, preparing his own meals three times each day, walking regularly, playing the piano daily, studying Anthroposophy daily, and meditating regularly. In an interview with Anne Riegel for *Renewal* in 1996, Rudolf emphasized the importance of rhythm in teaching children. He knew it as a key component in Waldorf Education and described it as a powerful strengthening agent in a child's healthy development.

As a mentor to new teachers, he was emphatic, even demanding, about this foundational element in good Waldorf teaching. He often lamented the lack of an innate sense of rhythm in many American teachers. Life in the United States especially, he observed, is not embedded in rhythm. His many little verses, designed to help a child build rhythmic stamina, were passed around through Waldorf teachers' circles and sometimes would appear in a classroom where Rudolf was observing. "They get the rhythm all wrong," he would sigh in exasperation. "One has to do it again and again with them until they get a feeling for it. Rhythm is not

something to see once and comprehend. It has to be in the breath. You Americans see something once and think it's understood. Repetition is the key to comprehension. That's how human beings make things their own. Rhythmic repetition!"

Born and raised in Bretten, Germany, one of four children of a successful businessman active in the hatmaking and men's clothing fields, Rudolf spent his first years in the relative quiet before the outbreak of World War I. Regularity of schedule and events was embedded in his life before the Great War brought chaos into modern life.

Rudolf learned about Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophy, and Waldorf Education through his older sister. One day early in 1925, she came home and simply and sadly stated: "The Master [Steiner] is dead." Rudolf Copple was always grateful to her for introducing him to his life's path and work.

Rudolf Copple spent World War II in German-occupied France. By that time, he had mastered French and English and prided himself on having no German accent in French. This was a necessary tool for survival. As a German Jew, employed by the haute couture in Paris, he needed to appear to be genuinely French. He succeeded.

While in Paris, Rudolf studied eurythmy at the French eurythmy school and, around 1948, was the school's first graduate. When he died, there was among his papers his graduation certificate and a letter celebrating him as the first to finish the training.

In the United States, Rudolf first taught eurythmy at the Kimberton Waldorf School in Pennsylvania. Then at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York, he started out as a language teacher. His competence inspired Henry Barnes—America's first formally trained Waldorf teacher—to urge Rudolf into class teaching. Rudolf's training was "on the job," with Henry and others mentoring him, and he soon became widely known and respected as a Waldorf class teacher. Rudolf finished his career at the Hawthorne Valley School in upstate New York. After his retirement, he influenced many other Waldorf schools through his mentoring and coaching of class teachers and language teachers. The Green Meadow Waldorf School and the Ann Arbor Waldorf School are two schools in which Rudolf played an important, formative role.



Rudolf loved the music and the rhythm of different languages.

These always caught his attention. In his last days, it was difficult to get Rudolf to rest quietly when friends read to him from the Bible. Whether the reading was in English or in

German, Rudolf would correct the pronunciation and phrasing of all who read, so intent was he on the music of the languages he knew and loved. When a French-speaking friend came into his room, Rudolf sat up and recited to her a French poem that tells the story of the fable "The Fox and the Crow," from the second-grade curriculum.

Through this work, Rudolf Copple will continue to live. Those of us who were lucky enough to have him as mentor know, deep in our bones and our heartbeats, the power of teaching with rhythm and the importance of striving to achieve it. There is a depth of complete comprehension possible for children when it comes in the pulsing of the cerebrospinal fluids—as Rudolf Steiner describes in the lectures to the first Waldorf teachers. This kind of comprehension, rhythmically engendered, and touched with the power of the will, has more potential for fulfillment in the future than intellectual thinking. It is this that Rudolf Copple knew so well.

Both Rudolfs, first Steiner and then Copple as his student, were correct in emphasizing the importance of rhythm. As the modern world grows increasingly accelerated and electronic, the appreciation and experience of rhythm—in poetry, in language, in breathing, in conscious movement, in the pondering of life's mysteries over time—become ever more elusive and ever more difficult to instill in the young. Enabling the children entrusted to our care in Waldorf schools everywhere to internalize these uniquely human qualities becomes all the more important.

There is a wonderful twinkle that is evident, not only in the eye but also in the body and soul, that is full of delight and that children show when rhythmic comprehension arrives in a lesson, carried on the wings of the breath. It is much like the twinkle Rudolf Copple had when he recited a poem or watched a well-done lesson. With our students, as with Rudolf, that twinkle tells the teacher that things are right!

PATRICE MAYNARD, MEd, *is an anthroposophist and the mother of three Waldorf graduates. She was a class teacher and music teacher at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, for thirteen years, enjoying throughout that time and even afterward the guidance and mentorship of her friend Rudolf Copple. Patrice is currently the leader for outreach and development of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America.*



From the Editor, continued

at Wara, a therapeutic community for developmentally challenged children and adults, founded twenty years ago by German anthroposophists. We took one of the coworkers at Wara, a young woman from India, out to dinner. There we were—an Australian, a Swiss, two Chinese, two Indians, and an American—a microcosm of diverse global humanity, but totally at ease with each other, as if we were brothers and sisters.

The worldwide Waldorf movement comprises today over nine hundred schools in over eighty countries. Yet even with the thousands of other initiatives—farms, hospitals, art schools, curative homes—that are also part of the broader anthroposophical movement, we can perhaps be seen as a very small dot on the map of world culture. And amid the colossal suffering that besets humankind today, the work we do can seem a well-intended but inadequate gesture.

But we, along with others who share our spiritual view of the human being, may have something important, even indispensable, to offer the future: the idea that we human beings can transcend all the factors that separate us—nation, culture, class, gender, religion—and are able to look into the eyes of any other human being and see the sacred, shared, eternal Self that dwells there.

Book Review

New Trends Publishing, Inc.
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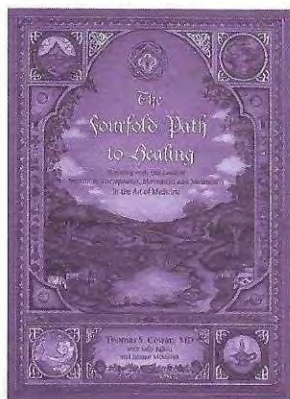
The Fourfold Path to Healing

BY THOMAS S. COWAN, MD

WITH SALLY FALLON AND JAIMEN McMILLAN

REVIEWED BY KATE WALTER

The Fourfold Path to Healing is a guide to conscious and healthful living. Its subtitle, *Working with the Laws of Nutrition, Therapeutics, Movement, and Meditation in the Art of Medicine*, summarizes Dr. Thomas Cowan's approach to health. Cowan, a physician in family practice, employs nutrition, herbal extracts, homeopathic medicines, anthroposophical remedies and therapies, movement, and meditation in working with his patients.



in grains. To digest and assimilate sugar and white flour, the body must draw on its own reserves of vitamins and minerals, leading to depletion and deficiencies. In addition, sugar and white flour cause glucose to enter the bloodstream very quickly. When the body tries to compensate for this rapid rise in blood sugar, diabetes, hypoglycemia and adrenal insufficiency can result. These conditions open a veritable Pandora's box of unpleasant conditions—from allergies to depression.

Fallon describes how food as a physical substance relates to the human physical body, and she offers very interesting information about the physical effects of what we eat. She presents the larger picture, as well, recog-

Dr. Cowan's approach is based on Rudolf Steiner's fourfold understanding of the human being: physical body, life force or etheric body, astral body or soul, and spirit. Cowan uses the terms "emotional body" and "mental body" for the two higher members and describes his approach as:

Right diet for healing the physical body; beneficial medicines or therapies for the life-force body; healing movement and exercise for the emotional body; and effective thinking activity for the mental body, activity that moves the human spirit forward in its evolution toward meaning, service and health.

Part I of the book comprises four introductory chapters. The first, written by coauthor Sally Fallon, focuses on nutrition and physical health. Fallon, author of the influential book *Nourishing Traditions*, draws on the work of early nutritional researcher Weston Price (1870–1925). She finds wisdom in traditional diets and sees modern, processed foods as a major cause of disease.

The degradation of (our) ... food supply ... — from factory farming to industrial processing—is so pervasive that it requires some effort to find good quality foods, and the same effort must be applied to avoiding foods that are overly harmful. This list of harmful foods begins with refined sugars and white flour, which provide plenty of calories but which have been shorn of the nutrients that naturally occur in sweet foods and

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nizing that all aspects of our being need to be nourished.

The challenge to modern men and women involves melding a certain amount of time for food preparation and meals into a busy lifestyle along with recognition that the way we cook and eat has a profound effect on the quality of our life, our state of health and the nourishment of the mind and soul.

A later section offers recipes and practical cooking suggestions.

In chapter 2, Cowan, referring to the medical work of Rudolf Steiner, Edgar Cayce, and Samuel Hahnemann (founder of homeopathy), discusses the healing of the invisible, life-force body through homeopathic remedies, herbal extracts, and other substances.

Chapter 3, written by Jaimen McMillan, focuses on the relationship between movement and the health of the emotional body. McMillan is the creator of Spacial Dynamics®, an approach to movement education that has been adopted by many Waldorf schools in North America and around the world. Here and in a later practical section, McMillan, with the aid of many helpful illustrations, provides many movement exercises and

visualizations that contribute to a healthy sense of being and moving in space and to an upright and flexible bearing.

In the fourth introductory chapter, Cowan discusses meditative techniques that involve active thinking as a way of objectifying our lives and reducing the emotional and other stress with which we deal. He draws here from Rudolf Steiner's teachings on the inner, meditative path as well as from his own experiences.

Part 2 of the book is titled "The Art of Medicine." Here Cowan writes about fourteen major areas of disease in human beings—among them cancer, chronic fatigue, and depression—and for each suggests dietary measures, remedies, and changes in lifestyle. Cowan demonstrates a deep and reverent understanding of the functioning of the human body and its relation to the universe. He also shares his rich experience in healing in many illuminating anecdotes. Cowan writes with humility, frequently reminding the reader that, for all we know, in the end we do not know, and life and health are a mystery. In spite of this caveat, the reader can gain confidence that life, however mysterious and challenging, can be lived in a balanced and harmonious fashion.

Ultimately, Thomas Cowan stresses the "inner physician" who resides in each human being and the importance of our accessing that source of wisdom:

The purpose of this book is to provide, for each of the four realms of the human being, rules and guidelines that work; and to stimulate the mental body, dwelling place of the human spirit, to become its own wise physician through the exercise of that activity that makes the human being uniquely human—focused meditation, which is deliberate and objective thought. . . .

Many years of practice have taught me that I have no cures for any disease, and neither does any form of medicine. What I strive for is the ability to listen and unlock the wisdom and magic of each person's inner healer. This means listening without interference, without judgment and without preconceptions. In other words, listening with love. I invite all to join me in this quest to remold the practice of medicine into an image of compassion, an image of true healing.

The Fourfold Path to Healing should be in every Waldorf household.

KATE WALTER teaches gardening at the Toronto Waldorf School, Toronto, Canada.

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Book Review

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230 pages • \$24.95

Adolescence: The Sacred Passage Inspired by the Legend of Parzival

BY BETTY STALEY

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

Betty Staley has been teaching and counseling adolescents for over forty years. As a teacher at the Sacramento Waldorf School and a mentor at many other Waldorf high schools, she has helped countless teenagers, parents, and fellow Waldorf high school teachers deal with the challenges that arise when a child at age twelve or so enters the process that leads to adulthood.

For these many years, Staley has also been a student of the legend of Parzival. This story, as found in the verse epic of the thirteenth-century German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, recounts the adventures of a boy becoming a man in the chivalric world of medieval Europe. Parzival leaves home against his mother's wishes and blunders his way through the world, causing much mayhem and suffering. Fortunately, he meets along the way the teachers and friends and experiences that he needs in order to grow into a mature human being. At the end of the tale, the brash, impulsive, insensitive child-man has become an adult with compassion for others and with understanding of himself, worthy finally to become King of the Grail Castle, entrusted with the Holy Grail.

In *Adolescence: The Sacred Passage*, Staley examines the experience of adolescence today. She does so, using the story of Parzival as a metaphor, seeing the fledgling knight as the archetype of the adolescent and the many characters whom he encounters as aids in understanding aspects of the rite of adolescence.

The basic challenges of adolescence are much the same as they were eight hundred years ago. The teenager needs to overcome the natural egoism of childhood, to become sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, to learn to control impulses and emotions, to function within the rules and strictures of family and society

while exploring life's possibilities, and to discover his or her true identity and path in life.

Betty Staley is keenly aware that today these tasks are made more difficult by a mass culture characterized by consumerism, casual sexuality, drug and alcohol use, an obsession with appearance and superficial "coolness," and diminishing real interaction between parents and children. She is also keenly aware that the challenges and pressures boys and girls are subject to are in some degree different.

Drawing on her vast personal experience with young people and their parents and referring to the events and characters of *Parzival*, Staley gives a penetrating analysis of adolescence today. It is an analysis that parents, high school teachers, and even teenage boys and girls will find illuminating.

She also gives much excellent practical advice on how adults can help children through this stage of life. She counsels, for example, that parents, in setting rules for their teenage children, find a balance between laxness and the overprotectiveness of the "helicopter" parent. Also, she advises that when a teenage boy or girl has been guilty of major misbehavior that parents, rather than trying to trivialize and gloss it over, help the child own up to the act and face the consequences. Teenagers have to wake up to the fact that acts have repercussions, often serious ones.

This is a rich and useful book. It is based on the encouraging view that the process of adolescence, however challenging, is a healthy and sacred one and that, if parents, teachers, and the young person work together, it can be the birth process of a mature, compassionate, moral, conscientious, and spiritually aware adult human being.

