

FALL/WINTER 2017 – VOLUME 26, NUMBER 2

Renewal



*Multiculturalism and the Waldorf Curriculum • The Parent–Teacher Relationship
Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy • The Power of the Morning Verse
Computer Science in the Tenth Grade • The Senior Project as Transformative Experience*

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

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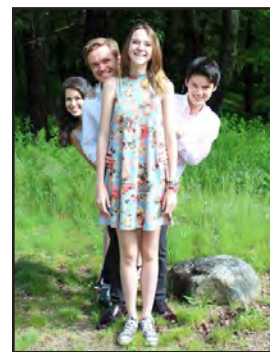


Green Meadow Waldorf School

*"Stronger Together"
Student facilitators at an
intercultural community-
building event*



*On a beach in Maine,
but thinking about the
world*



Courtesy of Monadnock Waldorf High School

*Monadnock Waldorf High
School, Class of 2017*

COVER PHOTO

First-grade students at the annual beginning-of-year Rose Ceremony at Green Meadow Waldorf School; photo by Fernando Lopez

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Courtesy of Vancouver Waldorf School

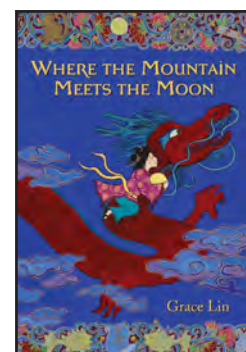
Acrophobic Waldorf class teacher high among the treetops



Thunderbird, a spiritual being and a symbol of power and transformation for Native Americans



Playwright Nancy Poer with the student who played Jingohasse, Mother of Nations



A folklore-based fantasy novel by a Chinese American writer

From the Association

BY MELANIE REISER, PhD

Executive Director, Membership

Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA)

In June 2017, the Association member schools and institutes adopted updated membership criteria. One opening statement of the new agreements explains:

The role of any association is to inspire and support collaboration and to leverage member collaboration for the purpose of strengthening each member as well as the vision and mission of the association. Since the first gathering of Waldorf schools in North America in 1965, Waldorf schools and institutes have been working together to strengthen and nurture Waldorf Education. The current associative work of AWSNA, of facilitating collaboration and leveraging the benefits of such collaboration, benefits all members.



Melanie Reiser

The new agreements focus on responsible self-reflection and on collaboration.

For the Association, responsible self-reflection means each school or institute actively engages in a self-reflective process. This includes an opportunity for peer input and—it is hoped—affirmation that the member is headed in a positive direction. Henceforth, associate member schools and institutes will receive an annual support visit that includes a review of progress on the priorities that develop from the self-reflection process. The updated membership agreements have aligned the criteria for associate members so that, from the beginning of membership, the schools and institutes are striving toward realizing the principles and practices required for full membership.

Full-member schools and institutes engage in a longer and more rigorous process, usually in the form of accreditation. Accreditation involves a

seven-year cycle of self-study and peer review. The basis of the self-reflection process is the *AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools* (see page 9) or the similar *AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Institutes*, along with demonstration of good independent school policies and practices. In assessing themselves in terms of the principles, member schools and institutes address three questions: how are the principles living, what challenges exist in implementing the principles, and how are they a source of innovation?

Collaboration, as the other aspect of the updated membership agreements, refers to the schools' support for the broader Waldorf Education movement, beyond their immediate school environments. Representatives of full-member schools and institutes meet three times a year to share news of the regional schools and institutes, to identify support needs for regional members, and to engage with the national, continental, and international movements. Associate member schools and institutes are generally invited to participate in these conversations. Recently, there has been a significant continental collaboration—involving schools from Mexico, Canada, and the United States—as we worked together on the *AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools* and the updated membership criteria. Now, as we head toward the hundred-year anniversary of Waldorf Education in the 2019–2020 school year, the focus will be on the international movement.

I feel heartened as I reflect on the intense collaborative work of the members of our Association. Collaboration takes work and time, and the value is not always immediately apparent. It can seem much easier to focus only on one's own pressing needs. Faculty and staff in member schools and institutes are busy. They are dedicated to making Waldorf Education available in their respective communities—which is more than a full-time activity! And yet they take time to engage in the collaborative work.

Through this work we can deepen our understanding of our educational movement and be more clear about our shared values. Also, we can agree on those areas in which each member of our Association has the freedom to provide Waldorf Education in the way most appropriate for its particular community. In time, these efforts deepen the work that is happening within each school and institute.

continued on page 9

Preparing for the Multicultural Present

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

In the weeks before we began to prepare this issue of *Renewal*, four submissions came in “over the transom,” all with a common theme. Each article had to do, in some way, with multiculturalism. Each suggested that the Waldorf curriculum can be enriched through the increased integration of the histories and cultures of the nondominant groups in our society. Behind each article was the idea that the experience and understanding of the past and present of Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Muslim Americans, et al., and, of course, their counterparts in Canada and Mexico, are today essential for all children, regardless of their own race or heritage.

It seemed as if an invisible angelic hand had dropped these four pieces on my editor’s desk and said, “Deal with this.” And the articles do appear in this issue, in sequence, beginning on page 13.

This angelic visitation was not an accident. It speaks to our time—and is particularly relevant given the current acrimonious political climate and the tensions and antagonisms between different racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

We are entering an era in which cultural diversity and cultural mixing are the norm. And for years in North America, Waldorf schools and Waldorf teachers have been responding to that reality. Schools have been trying to attract students from minority populations, and teachers in those schools have been trying to enrich the Waldorf curriculum with elements from the culture and history of those populations. The growth in the number of public charter schools inspired by Waldorf Education has greatly aided the effort to make Waldorf Education accessible to and relevant for children not of the dominant culture. But, as sincere and energetic as these efforts have been, we still have a long way to go.

In her article on culturally responsive pedagogy, Vicki Larson rhetorically urges white teachers to ask themselves, “Do I really know what it is like to be Black or Native American, to have English

as a second language, or to be poor and to live in substandard housing?” I suspect that most of us Waldorf educators and parents today would have to answer “No” to that question.

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), the founder of Waldorf Education, held that the human race is entering an epoch in which the ties of blood, tribe, and race are giving way to a consciousness of universal brotherhood and sisterhood. In this epoch, when we meet a person we will not see a person of our own or another race. We will not say, “I am meeting a Jew” or an Arab or a Chinese or even “I am meeting a man” or a woman. We will look that person in the eyes and see the divine, spiritual individuality that exists behind and beyond the physical manifestation, an individuality whose source we share.



To get to that point of being able to meet each fellow human being as a human being requires effort and work. It starts with deep and genuine interest in the other person. It continues with learning about the history, life, faith, and

challenges of the other. From this inquiry, one can develop empathy, compassion, and even love.

Today, the world is awash with floods of migrations of people from their native lands to strange lands. Virtually every nation in the world is in the process of becoming a multicultural society, in which people of different races, faiths, history, and cultures live side by side. In this era, our task and challenge as human beings is to learn about, appreciate, understand, and live in harmony with those who are not like us.

Most of us adults, no doubt, in my generation and in younger cohorts, are only partway along this path. But as we ourselves progress, we, as educators and parents, should ensure that our children develop a deep and enthusiastic interest in the other. And we should give our children many opportunities to study and experience the innumerable, diverse ways that human beings have chosen and choose to live. ☺



An eighth-grade student, wisely wearing a helmet and on belay, perches on a 30-foot-high stump and contemplates a next move.

Whatever moral feeling was established between the seventh and fourteenth years takes the form of will impulses in the seventeenth–eighteenth year, provided there has been present in the child's life an individual whose own enthusiasm for moral ideals, for beautiful human ideals, served as a guiding light.

—Rudolf Steiner

In 2003, when I became the class teacher of a third-grade class that had had five class teachers in their first two years of school, it was with a mixture of great anticipation and fear. I felt a personal mandate to turn around thirty nine-year-olds who already had self-identified as the bad apples of the school. Sadly, this perception was being echoed by others in the school community. How could it be that these young children already had such a reputation, I wondered?

Not surprisingly, the “weather-makers” of the class ensured that the group lived up to its raucous and hard-to-handle reputation. Several of the students were brash and, initially, not easy to love. At the same time, many of the others met me with goodwill, openness, and joy, perhaps in the hope that I could do *something*.

Moment of Truth

Witnessing the Essence of Waldorf Education

BY PHIL FERTEY, MBA

Drawing on the Arts

In those early days, we took sufficient time from our lessons to diligently prepare our artistic presentations for assemblies and festivals. It was essential that the children not be placed in front of an audience unless they were truly ready; “Waldorf” and “lackluster” don’t belong together! As a result, the class’s singing was joyful, earnest, and unified, and the poems they recited, strong and ennobling. However, it was their eurythmy presentation and their class play that really showcased a new sense of *caring about the quality of their work*.

By the end of fourth grade, the class had a reputation for its fine presentations, and from then on families from other classes looked forward to and consistently attended our class plays. The arts were the catalyst for change, helping to transform how the children thought of themselves as a group and also how others perceived them. People began to say of them, “What a shining group!”

Despite their progress, as the children turned twelve and entered sixth grade, the imprint of the younger years, though softened, seemed to reassert itself. Dealing with disciplinary incidents became routine, and some of the students grumbled about a variety of things. One such point of resistance was reciting the morning verse, for which the students are expected to stand upright and speak clearly. This ritual is, for me, a nonnegotiable, as it ensures that we as a class begin every school day in uprightness, speaking clearly our intention. It also unites us with Waldorf students all



The author's class in their fourth-grade year, dressed as humble villagers, await the Michaelmas-festival confrontation between Saint Michael and the Dragon.

over the world who recite the same verse every morning. Many times we had to interrupt the morning verse partway through and start again in order to say the complete verse properly. Nevertheless, we marched on through the mud of sixth grade and successfully navigated the turbulent waters of seventh grade.

And now eighth grade had finally arrived.

Moment of Truth

To launch the year, I had organized a class trip to a challenge ropes course. The high elements consisted of beams, cables, and platforms set up in trees, thirty to fifty feet above the ground.

The first element of the course was a cable walk thirty feet in the air with ropes on either side for support. One by one, my students said, “Yes!” to the challenge-by-choice mantra of the facilitators, successfully climbed to the little platform, and crossed the divide by walking on the cable to the opposing tree.

I am afraid of heights, but I figured I would somehow find a way to deal with the vertigo when the time came. As the number of students ahead of me dwindled, my mouth became parched. I began to take deep breaths. The slow, painful inevitability of soon being next was intolerable.

“Phil, your turn!” commanded the facilitator, snapping me into the present moment. The students, always amused at hearing “Phil” and not “Mr. Fertey,” chuckled.

Helmet, check. Harness, check. Belay team, check.

“Phil, do you accept this challenge?”

“Yes, I do.” (Is there really any other answer?)

“Alright, buddy...go for it!”

There was something about this protocol and language that I didn’t like, but that quickly receded from my mind as I approached the towering, mature Douglas fir and stood inches from the massive trunk and its thick, deeply furrowed bark. In that moment, how I respected that noble tree!

I grasped the first “staple” and began climbing. Three steps up, I paused to collect myself, wondering why I had thought this would be a good idea. With eyes closed and with white knuckles, I continued on, feeling

increasingly afraid. The space around me opened up. The previously still air was now a gentle breeze. It stirred the treetops, while stirring up dread and self-doubt in me.

The students below were jostling, joking, and some—I sensed—were fooling around.

“Quiet! Quiet, everyone!” bellowed the facilitator. “We support each other until it’s *over*!”

“Over”—I felt like it was already over as I finally made it to the platform. The surface couldn’t have been bigger than two music stands, and climbing onto it necessitated the most awkward, undignified maneuvering. I must have made it look *very difficult*. The real ordeal, however, was still ahead.

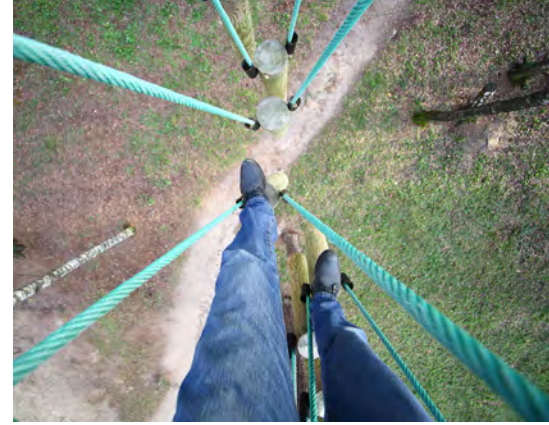
There I was, clutching my perch: fair-weather clouds above, the Cascade Mountains visible straight ahead—framed by endless treetops—and the cheerful call of the chickadees carried by the breeze. The serenity and splendor of a late summer day belied what I felt inside: sheer fright and anxiety. As I stood up, the talking below continued. My pulse sped up. I felt my face blanch, and light-headedness overtook me.

“You’re good to go, Phil. Start walking!”

I took two steps off the platform onto the metal cable—and froze. The very thought of proceeding forward was unfathomable. Yet turning back was not an option. I was stuck.

In those interminable moments, the students below quieted to a hush, as they realized I was in trouble. The facilitator coached me, this time with a softer voice. “It’s OK, nothing’s gonna happen. Just put one foot in front of the other.”

But I could not move. I tried to draw on my past experiences—of having been in difficult situations and always finding a way out—but it only led me to thinking



While standing among the treetops on small supports, looking down to check one’s shoes is not recommended.

that I had pushed my luck and that this was perhaps one time too many. I was stuck, with no way out.

As I became overwhelmed with emotion, hitting the wall of despair and fighting pain, I heard a single voice rise from below—a child's voice:

I look into the world,

Then other voices joined in...

In which the sun is shining,

And still more voices...

*In which the stars are sparkling,
In which the stones repose.*

Gradually, a chorus welled up as the class recited the morning verse to its final line.

*The living plants are growing,
The feeling beasts are living,
And human beings, ensouled,
Give dwelling to the spirit.
I look into the soul,
That lives within my being.
The World-Creator weaves
In sunlight and in soul-light,
In heights of worlds without,
In depths of soul within.
To Thee, Creator-Spirit,
I turn in earnest seeking,
That blessing and that strength
For learning and for work
In me may live and grow.*

By the time the verse was over, I had crossed to the other side. Cheers broke out from all the children. It was an astonishing moment.

After I made my way back down, the course facilitator exclaimed with bewilderment, "I've never seen anything like it—that is quite a group you have!" At that point, Elsa, the student who had initiated the recitation, stepped forward and proclaimed, "Oh, we're just Waldorf kids!"

Postscript

In the eight years since this event took place, I have come to see how this story exemplifies the essence of Waldorf Education as a *moral education*. Much has been said—and misunderstood—in this regard, because moral is a loaded word that can conjure a feeling of teaching through empty "thou-shalts" and, taken to its logical conclusion, can be equated with indoctrination.

This couldn't be farther from the truth.

Rudolf Steiner urged that, rather than teach abstract moral concepts, "We should strive towards a knowledge of how we, as teachers and educators, should conduct ourselves. . . . The real issue is what the teacher can be for the children as an individual with a particular stance in the world."[†]

Thus, the teacher's moral stance—whether it be toward sweeping the floor, lighting a candle, dealing with a challenging situation, greeting a fellow human being, having interest in the running of the school, or speaking the morning verse—penetrates deeply into the soul of the child.

When received in this way, this content of soul later transforms into will-impulses for moral strength, courage, and character. These capacities, when awakened

between the ages of seven and fourteen, point to the highest aim of Waldorf Education, namely to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The importance of human relationships in this work, between the younger generation and the adult world, between a class of students and their teacher, is one of the great imponderables of Waldorf Education. o



While Rudolf Steiner's inspiring words rise from below, the author completes a step on his journey.

Reference

[†]Rudolf Steiner, *Education, Teaching, and Practical Life*, lectures given in 1921.



PHIL FERTEY was born in Switzerland and grew up in France, Australia, Turkey, Canada, and the United States. He holds a BA from Northwood University in Michigan and an MBA from York University in Toronto, and completed his Waldorf training at the Rudolf Steiner Centre in Ontario. He has been a Waldorf class teacher for twelve years and currently teaches at the Vancouver Waldorf School and at the West Coast Institute teacher training center.

Heart-to-Heart

Parent–Teacher Relationships in a Waldorf School

BY JENNIFER SPARKS

At a parents’ evening on June 22, 1923, at the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, Rudolf Steiner described the parent–teacher relationship as one of mutual understanding and expressed the hope that an “...intimate relationship of friendship between parents and teachers, a relationship based on the matter at hand...” would develop.[†] Steiner described this intimate relationship between parents and teachers as “...not dependent on details, but rather on a heart-to-heart relationship between school and home.”^{††} Thus, in Waldorf schools, the parent–teacher relationship, the relationship between home and school, ideally is based on sincere and meaningful personal engagement.

How can parents and teachers foster such a relationship? Here are five suggestions that may be helpful in creating a heart-to-heart relationship between home and school.

1. Prepare for the home–school relationship.

Preparing for a heart-to-heart parent and teacher relationship means first resolving to act out of selflessness and a genuine desire to help the other person in the shared task of supporting the student on his or her path of learning. In doing so, both parents and teachers can reduce feelings of anxiety and self-doubt, as well as concerns about criticism and judgment. They can become more open to sincere and meaningful engagement between home and school.

Helpful, preparatory activities include—but are not limited to—meditative inner work, writing down specific intentions for the relationship, and reflecting on what has worked well and what has not worked well in previous home–school experiences. Each parent–teacher relationship is unique, and the preparatory strategies should reflect the needs of the particular home–school relationship.

2. Receive the other with reverence.

In any healthy relationship, each person must receive the other with reverence. In the context of

the home–school relationship, receiving the other with reverence can be as simple as the conscious acknowledgment of the special role that both parents and teachers play in the life of each student, and the acknowledgment of the home–school relationship as being an interconnected partnership. Receiving the other with reverence is also an act of mutual acceptance between parents and teachers—acceptance of the fact that, regardless of our own efforts as parents or as teachers, the efforts of the



The writer greets a parent at afternoon pickup, a good time for parents and teachers to meet and to catch up.

other will also have a significant influence on the student.

Receiving the other with reverence can be expressed in a variety of ways, in even simple, apparently trivial, gestures. For example, a brief phone call from home to school or from school to home—just to say hello—can serve as an acknowledgment of the important role both parents and teachers play in the lives of students. Even friendly greetings exchanged between parents and teachers during student drop-off/pickup or at a school event can help nurture a positive home–school partnership.

3. Learn from one another.

The acceptance by both parent and teacher that each has much to learn from, and to give to, the other is essential to a fruitful parent–teacher relationship. In the home–school relationship, the teacher typically provides expertise regarding the education of the students, and the parent provides insights into the student as an individual. Together, parents and teachers can combine their knowledge to decide how best to support student development. Parents and teachers have been brought together not only to assist the student, but also to help each other deepen their understanding. This coming together and learning from what each brings to the parent–teacher relationship is what Steiner intended when he referred to the home–school relationship as a heart-to-heart relationship.

This heart-to-heart relationship is often visible in school festivals and celebrations organized in partnership between parents, teachers, students, and community members. During the planning and execution of school events, there are many opportunities for coming together and learning from one another, as each party contributes what they can, in complement to the contributions of others.

4. Meet challenges with optimism.

Although the parent–teacher relationship is a coming together with the same goal—to support the student—it is also a coming together of diverse perspectives, personalities, and expectations. Even with good intentions and much hard work, the home–school relationship may falter at times. If parents and teachers are to seek a heart-to-heart relationship based on sincere and meaningful engagement between home and school, then bumps in the road must be approached with optimism. Specifically, when addressing challenges, both parents and teachers should remember to celebrate the fact that all have students’ best interests at heart and are striving to do the best they can. The home–school relationship can transcend adversity, and, as a result of facing challenges with optimism, the parent–teacher relationship can become stronger.

If there has been a challenging situation or an uncomfortable conversation, both parties should take an opportunity to process and reflect. Afterwards, a meeting and “debriefing”—a frank and open conversation about what has transpired—can be helpful in restoring optimism and positive

feelings. Then parents and teachers can reconnect and refocus the home–school relationship toward the common goal.

5. Strive for continual engagement.

The home–school relationship is an ever-evolving relationship. Parents and teachers cannot rely on the relationship to maintain itself or to be static. In order to flourish, the home–school relationship needs to be cultivated and refreshed.

Both parents and teachers should use opportunities for engagement throughout the school year at teacher–parent conferences, information evenings, assemblies, school fairs, and in chance school-yard meetings to meet and interact in a positive way.

One need not rely on what has been done in the past, however. New opportunities for engagement will arise—perhaps in a shared experience of chaperoning a class trip or school dance.

Even exchanging notes or having a phone conversation to celebrate a student’s success can be an important interaction. It may be initiated by either party, is appreciated by all, and is a simple form of sincere and meaningful engagement.

Furthermore, the responsibility of maintaining the home–school relationship should not become one-sided. Continual engagement between home and school may seem daunting. However, parents and teachers are not alone in this task. The home–school relationship can include both parents and other family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings), and even family friends, as well as teachers other than the class teacher. The task of



A community meal brings together teachers, parents, staff, and students in a relaxed, social setting.

maintaining a heart-to-heart relationship between home and school can be extended to all those who wish to support students on their journey of learning and development.

As parents and teachers strive for sincere and meaningful engagement between home and school, all should remember to consciously meet with shared love for the student and also with love for each other as human beings. Ultimately, it is through this personal connection that parents and teachers will best support students and fulfill Steiner's intentions for a heart-to-heart relationship between home and school. ☺

References

[†]Rudolf Steiner, *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School: Lectures and addresses to children, parents, and teachers 1919–1924* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1996), 197.

^{††}Ibid., 200.



JENNIFER SPARKS *was introduced to Waldorf Education when her children attended the Toronto Waldorf School. Since then, she has taught at the Halton Waldorf School and taken the Professional*

Development for Waldorf Early Childhood Teachers program at the Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto. Jennifer is currently a PhD student at the University of Toronto, where she is researching parental involvement in education. She would be pleased to hear about “best practices” for fostering engagement between home and school. Jennifer can be reached at jennifer.sparks@mail.utoronto.ca

From the Association, continued from page 2

Engaging in collaborative work is especially meaningful right now. It has a substantial, positive impact on each member of our Association and on the international Waldorf Education movement. ☺

AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools

1. The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school.
2. Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating capacities in service to the individual and society.
3. The anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program.
4. Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school's shared agreements.
5. The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health.
6. Spiritual development in support of professional growth is an ongoing activity for the faculty, staff, and board of trustees.
7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.

Perspectives on Vaccination

In the Spring/Summer 2017 issue of *Renewal*, an article titled “Children's Vaccinations—An Anthroposophical Medical Perspective” appeared. In it, Peter Hinderberger, MD, questions the necessity and advisability of the full protocol of childhood vaccinations that are currently recommended. In response, at least five Waldorf parents who are also physicians or medical professionals wrote letters objecting to the publication of the letter and criticizing Dr. Hinderberger's views. The letters were forwarded to Dr. Hinderberger, and he wrote a letter in response. The original letters and the author's rejoinder are available at the following links:

https://waldorfeducation.org/news_resources/waldorf_books_resources

(This link is to the page on which the letters are posted—Waldorf Books & More.)

<http://ow.ly/wAeW30g7Qti>

(This is a direct link to the letters in PDF form.)

Meeting All Our Students as They Need to Be Met

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Waldorf Education

BY VICKI LARSON

In Waldorf Education, the teacher seeks to meet the needs of each child in a sensitive and caring way. The curriculum for each grade is appropriate to the stage of development of the children in the class. In addition, the teacher strives to know each child as a unique individual, apprising him/herself of the particular circumstances of each child's life—the circumstances of the child's birth, the child's life outside of school, the family situation, relationships with siblings, the child's special interests, and learning style. To support this, the teacher maintains an ongoing relationship with the child's parents, visits the home, and, ideally, meditates daily on the child and on what is needed for the child's development.

When teacher and student share an ethnic, social, religious, or cultural background, this task can be relatively uncomplicated. However, when a student is of a different color, social class, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ethnic or linguistic background from the teacher, the task can be more difficult. In North American schools working with the principles of Waldorf and Public Waldorf Education (both independent and public), the student population is increasingly heterogeneous. A not-uncommon situation is a white, middle-class Waldorf teacher standing before a group of children that includes, in addition to a white majority, children from African American, Latinx, Asian, Muslim, and/or other backgrounds, some perhaps from marginalized families. ["Latinx," pronounced la-teen-ex, is a non-gendered plural currently often used rather than Latino or Latina.] There may also be students who identify as LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, intersex, asexual) or gender-fluid.

Thus, Waldorf teachers today are teaching students who are different from themselves, who have backgrounds and experiences that are much different from their own. Waldorf teachers need to ask themselves, "Do I know, as a white person, what it's like to walk in the world as an African American or Latinx person? Do I understand what it means for a family to be living in poverty or surviving paycheck

to paycheck? Do I know what books my students are reading outside of school and what music they are listening to? Can I understand, as an English speaker, what it means to have parents or grandparents who speak another language at home? Do I know if any students are questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation and even what language they are using to describe these facets of themselves? Should I be grouping children by gender, when I may have a student who is gender-fluid?"

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

In meeting this critical challenge, Waldorf educators may have a significant resource in "culturally responsive pedagogy" or CRP. In 1992, Gloria Ladson-Billings, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, coined this term to describe "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes." Also called "culturally congruent," "culturally compatible," or "culturally appropriate" pedagogy, this approach requires that the teacher, while meeting curricular requirements, create a bridge between the lives of the students at home and in school. Culturally relevant teaching utilizes the backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences of the students to inform the teacher's lessons and methodology. CRP is, in effect, a perfect fit with Waldorf pedagogy.



Gloria Ladson-Billings, originator of the concept of "culturally responsible pedagogy"

The Teacher with Lotion on the Desk

Dr. Randolph Carter, an educational consultant, has been working with Green Meadow Waldorf

School for several years. On one visit, after talking to the faculty about the importance of being a teacher who “gets it” when it comes to students of color, he asked, “So who is the teacher with lotion on the desk?”

Several of us in the room immediately understood the question, because of our personal experience in mixed-race families. There was silence for a moment or two, and Randolph asked if someone could help out the faculty who didn’t understand the question. A teacher’s assistant—who is white and from a mixed-race family—said, “When African American people’s skin gets dry, it gets ‘ashy.’ A teacher who understands that will have lotion on the desk.”

A white teacher who has had little or no contact with African American culture will be unaware of

the significance of ashy skin or the need for lotion on his/her desk. But, from the perspective of culturally responsive pedagogy, it is the teacher’s responsibility to have that awareness and (literally and metaphorically) have lotion on their desk.

This responsibility rests also with a heterosexual or cisgendered teacher who has LGBTQIA or gender-fluid

students. It is true also for monolingual teachers teaching multilingual students, middle-class teachers teaching poor and working-class students, and teachers who learn in a neurotypical (i.e., not autistic) way teaching students who learn differently. Waldorf teachers strive to understand each child who stands in front of them. However, with many children, particularly for those from different backgrounds, crucial aspects remain unknown to the teacher.

How Waldorf Teachers Can Better Serve All Students

For the Waldorf teacher seeking to meet the needs of all children, there are several things of which to be aware. “Code-switching,” a term in linguistics, refers to the changes in spoken language, body language, and other modes of communication that shift when a person moves from one social/cultural context to another. We all code-switch when we go from a conversation with a friend to a conversation with a parent or our boss or a stranger. We adapt our speech and behavior to conform to the new social situation and to help the people around us understand us better. In school, the scholarship student, the working-class or poor student, the exchange student, the student of color, the LG-BTQIA or gender-fluid student—each is speaking, communicating, and behaving at home and in his/her/their neighborhood in a different way than at school. Hence, they need to code-switch more often and more profoundly than majority-group students. This double or triple life can be very stressful, and the teacher should be aware of it.

In the book *Nurture Shock* by journalists Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman, in a chapter called “Why White Parents Don’t Talk about Race,” the authors assert that white people and African American people go through different processes in forming racial identity. The authors’ premise is that, in growing up, white people are taught to be color-blind when it comes to race. They are told to ignore race and treat everyone the same. Race and racism become taboo topics and white people (including white Waldorf teachers) become unsure about how to relate to people of color and unable to talk about race and color. They may become defensive and feel guilty when racism is raised as a topic. On the other hand, families of color talk openly about race and racism. White reticence on these topics indicates that people of color, as human beings, and their experiences are invisible to whites. For the white Waldorf teacher, it is important to examine his/her own attitudes toward race and racism and to develop a willingness and ability to deal with these issues openly.

There are various strategies that will help the white Waldorf teacher understand all students and meet their needs in a culturally responsive way. The teacher must make a conscious effort to learn more about the students’ home culture. For example, the teacher working with African American children might read African American magazines and



A high school senior at the Green Meadow Waldorf School—a school working conscientiously with CRP—accompanies a first grader in the annual beginning-of-year Rose Ceremony.

books by African American authors and watch films or television shows that depict African American life. Studying the effects on African American families of historical enslavement and persistent racism might also provide useful insights. The teacher might also put extra time and effort into developing a positive relationship with the students' parents and family and pay attention to the way that white privilege plays out in white people's relationships with people of color.



Possible resources for teachers in culturally diverse schools

In the classroom, elements of the different cultures represented can be integrated into the curriculum. These may include study of the history and geography of the home culture, artistic and craft activities, celebration of culturally specific holidays and festivals, the reading and study of books by African American (or Asian or Latinx) authors, opportunities for children to present to the class and to the school aspects of

their culture, and, in the upper grades, candid discussions of race and racism. This broadening of the curriculum is important also for white students. It will help them understand other cultures and their classmates of those other cultures. It can also make them aware of the distinctive qualities of their own culture, its privileged status, and the ways that whiteness is made the norm in our society.

This work of teachers in the classroom can and should be supported by the school. Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York, is one school that has taken seriously the challenge of culturally responsive pedagogy. Green Meadow is a nursery-through-twelfth-grade school located twenty miles outside New York City. Founded in 1950 and currently serving about 320 students, Green Meadow is one of the oldest and largest

Waldorf schools in North America. For years, the faculty and staff wondered why there wasn't more racial and cultural diversity at the school. Everyone did their best to be open and welcoming, but with little result. About a decade ago, we realized we had to work consciously and proactively to confront racism and other biases in ourselves, our curriculum, and our community. Over the past five to eight years, the diversity and inclusion work has taken root as we have acknowledged the need to change the way we think about diversity and the way we recruit and serve all students and their families. The school is currently about 64% white, 17% multi-racial, 9% Asian, 6% Middle Eastern, 2% Hispanic or Latinx, and 2% African American.

The strategies the school adopted to support the inclusion work include:

- Writing a diversity and inclusion statement that affirms and honors the diversity that we acknowledge in the world and want to see in our community, and using this statement as a guiding star in our day-to-day work;
- Committing to supporting and empowering a Diversity and Inclusion Committee that is representative of the diversity in our school;
- Working with experts in the field of bias and inclusivity, including Dr. Randolph Carter, mentioned earlier in the article, Joel Baum from Gender Spectrum, and staff from the Gender and Family Project at the Ackerman Institute for the Family. This work began in 2012–13;
- Mandating, in 2016, that all faculty and staff take the Undoing Racism training offered by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (based in New Orleans) by spring 2019, paid for by the school;
- Offering support on questions of diversity, inclusion, social justice, and bias to AWSNA, Sunbridge Institute, other Waldorf and Waldorf-inspired schools, and teacher training institutes.

The work of having Waldorf Education effectively serve all children—regardless of race, ethnicity, faith tradition, socioeconomic status, and gender and sexual identity—is going on all over North America and in other parts of the world.

Community School for Creative Education

The Community School for Creative Education (CSCE) is a free, TK (transitional kindergarten)-through-eighth-grade, public charter school in

Oakland, California, working out of the principles of Public Waldorf Education. The school's curriculum overview states, "Our curriculum respects diverse ethnicities, cultures, languages, and religions. Our instructional program is grounded in the principles of [Public] Waldorf Education, an art-infused education."

According to founder and executive director Ida Oberman, culturally responsive pedagogy is not merely aligned with Waldorf pedagogical indications, it is the foundation of Waldorf pedagogy.

CRP manifests in various ways in the school's life. Teachers and staff work closely with parents and grandparents, most of whom were involved in the founding of the school seven years ago. The design of the school environment, as well as the stories, rituals, songs, circles, and festivals, are drawn from

the diverse traditions represented in the school. Since more than fifty percent of the students have a home language other than English—languages in the community include Vietnamese, Cantonese, Spanish, English, and Arabic—school meetings include simultaneous translation available on headsets. Also, interpreters are ready so that those people who prefer to speak in their native tongue can do so. In addition, the school cooperates with various community organizations in improving all aspects of the lives of the children. Staff and faculty are urged to consciously examine their values and attitudes toward cultures other than their own, and, if they are white, confront the reality of white privilege.

It is encouraging that the move of applying culturally responsive pedagogy is taking place both in independent Waldorf schools and in schools inspired by the principles of Public Waldorf Education. Pioneering work is underway elsewhere in the world, including in Germany, where



Ida Oberman, founder and executive director of CSCE, and school principal Monique Brinson

Photo by Ida Oberman



Students at the culturally diverse CSCE

the Intercultural Waldorf School Mannheim and nearby Alanus University (a center for Waldorf teacher education) have developed a research and practice program in Waldorf Intercultural Pedagogy. Under the guidance of Professors Jost Schieren and Albert Schmelzer, Waldorf teachers and researchers can focus on this theme in their training and research study. Dr. Schmelzer writes that Waldorf multicultural pedagogy focuses on "our capacity to meet each other across different cultures."

This process of becoming culturally responsive to all our students is essential to the continued growth of Waldorf Education in North America and around the world. It is our moral responsibility as human beings and as educators to meet the needs of all our students. ☉



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Vicki has a BA in English from the University of Florida and a certificate in Spanish–English translation and interpretation from Hunter College, New York. Vicki joined the staff at Green Meadow Waldorf School in December 2007. Vicki is director of communications and marketing at Green Meadow, serves on the school's Collegium, is co-chair of the diversity and inclusion committee, and also teaches practical math to twelfth graders. Her daughter is a student at Green Meadow.

Indigenous Cultures and the Waldorf Curriculum

Suggestions for Grades One through Eight

BY ADAM JACOBS AND RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

Waldorf Education was founded in Central Europe, and the basic curriculum that has guided teachers and the schools for the past century has reflected these origins. The grade one through eight Waldorf curriculum predominately covers Western history, culture, literature, and perspectives. In first grade, fairy tales, usually those of the Brothers Grimm, are central; in second grade, fables (Aesop's and others); in third, Biblical stories; in fourth, local history; in fifth, the history, culture, and myths of Ancient Greece; in sixth, that of ancient Rome and the Middle Ages; in seventh, "The Age of Exploration and Discovery," the Renaissance, and the Protestant Reformation; and in eighth grade, revolutions and modern history—such as both World Wars, the rise of Communism, and the Cold War.

Along the way, the children also learn about American Indian stories in third grade; the myths of ancient India,

Persia, and Mesopotamia in fifth grade; and the life of Muhammad and the development of Islam in sixth grade. Moreover, the Waldorf Curriculum Overview Chart (2004 version) indicates that seventh and eighth grade can include stories about indigenous cultures and the folklore and poetry of "different peoples of the world." Of course, these are only guidelines and class teachers are free to introduce material they find valuable for the students. In fact, in Waldorf schools in North America and all over the world, teachers have been and are working to broaden the content of the Waldorf curriculum.

There are now about 150 independent Waldorf schools in North America. There are, in addition, more than forty public and charter schools that are Waldorf-inspired. The children in these schools come from various economic, ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. A typical class may contain, in addition to Euro-American students, African American, Latino, Asian, and Middle Eastern students. As

Vicki Larson points out in her companion article (pp. 10–13), it is essential that every child, regardless of her background, has an understanding and appreciation of cultures other than her own. Therefore, it is crucial to integrate various multicultural elements, including those that are Native American, into the Waldorf curriculum today.

In the spring of 2016, Rudolf Steiner College hosted the California Indian Curriculum and Stories Conference. Professors and scholars of indigenous pedagogy, philosophy, and history gave lectures and led discussions on the Nisenan Nation (the original inhabitants of present-day Sacramento), California Indian nations, and American Indian history in general. The conference focused on the congruence

between indigenous frameworks and Waldorf Education but also on possible points of friction. The following suggestions for

incorporating elements of American Indian culture into the Waldorf curriculum come from the work of this conference.

Grade One

American Indian stories are increasingly included in first-grade Waldorf classrooms. However, for non-Native teachers presenting indigenous stories, there are challenges. As Debbie Reese (Nambe Owingeh), an editor and scholar, writes: "Children need books that are realistic in their presentation of Native peoples, as well as factually, historically, and culturally accurate."

Non-Native authors who render stories by Native authors are liable to change the style and tone, insert Euro-American cultural conceptions, and modify the culturally specific meanings and purposes of the story. Rose Borunda (Purépecha), Professor at Sacramento State, maintains that teachers should "ascertain that information (stories, etc...) are what

"Children need books that are realistic in their presentation of Native peoples, as well as factually, historically, and culturally accurate."

Original Nations have offered rather than what others have appropriated.” To this point, Reese recommends *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children*, edited by Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin (2005), and Reese’s own website, *American Indians in Children’s Literature*.

Grade Two

Every religious tradition has its saints, the special holy people who have exemplified in deeds the ideals of the faith. Likewise, stories about Saint Francis and Saint Martin—which inspire the second graders and provide living pictures of the good and the moral—can also be supplemented by tales of spiritual leaders from various American Indian religious traditions, such as Deganawi:da (Iroquois), Black Elk (Oglala Lakota), and Wovoka (Northern Paiute).

Moreover, when American Indian animal stories are told in grade two, it is important to recognize that there are distinctions between indigenous and Western conceptions of animals. Vine Deloria, Jr. (Lakota), a scholar and activist, observes that Native American cultures tend to have a position of “humility” in relationship

to animals and to view them as models of behavior to be observed and integrated. Conversely, in Western culture, animals are typically seen as less developed than and inferior to the human being, who is seen as the apex of creation. The philosopher Descartes, for example, held that animals are merely living “machines” without consciousness. When integrating Native American stories,

it is important for the second-grade teacher to acknowledge these other frameworks that are part of the stories she is including.

Grade Three

It is important that all children know the creation stories of the Native inhabitants of the land which

they are currently occupying. Deloria states that, for American Indians, creation is a constant and present activity, in which the community is continually navigating its relationships with the wider world. Rather than having an almighty anthropomorphic Deity as the agent of creation, many American Indian creation stories depict animals as crucial to creation, specifically, certain “trickster” animals. The trickster figure appears in other cultures as well, as Hermes, Puck, Reynard the Fox, Lucifer, and Loki. The trickster has a highly ambivalent and amorphous character in various stories. Lewis Hyde, Professor at Kenyon College, notes that the trickster helps to both create and define certain cultural boundaries (such as between good and evil, heaven and earth), while simultaneously crossing and transcending them. This ambiguous character can be relevant for the fourth grader who is passing through the nine-year change and coming to terms with the distinctions between her inner self and the outer culture.

Grade Four

In fourth grade, students learn about the local history and geography of their school’s region. Thus, it is appropriate to study the pre-Columbian histories of specific American Indian nations as well as the subjugation, suppression, and scattering that took place with colonialism. Rudolf Steiner suggested teaching history through biographies. Hence, the inspiring life stories of great Native leaders who grappled with colonialism such as Chief Joseph (Nez Perce), Nanyehi (Cherokee), and Po’pay (Pueblo)

can be told. The book *American Indian Myths and Legends* (compiled and edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonzo Ortiz) includes many myths and stories about colonial encounters, displacement, war, and loss. There are also excellent children’s books that deal with these topics, such as Thomas King’s *A Coyote Columbus Story*.



Black Elk (1863–1950), medicine man and holy man of the Oglala Lakota, author of the book Black Elk Speaks



Coyote as Trickster plays an important role in many Native American myths and legends.

Grade Five

There are at least three major cradles of civilization that are not usually emphasized in Waldorf schools—the North China Valley, the Andean area, and Mesoamerica. While the study of Chinese mythology and history (and even language) are increasingly present in Waldorf schools, the Andean and Mesoamerican areas are, relatively speaking, neglected. Both deserve a significant place in the Waldorf curriculum.



Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce resisted the intrusion of white settlers but, in the end, vowed, "I will fight no more, forever."

accomplishments are comparable to those of Eurasian cultures. The book *The Legacy of Mesoamerica* (edited by Robert M. Carmack, Janine L. Gasco, and Gary H. Gossen) describes how the Mayans had "sophisticated calendrical, mathematical, and astronomical systems." To this end, they utilized place numerations and had discovered the number zero. Moreover, their temples were a "dwelling place of the spirit," as per Steiner's indications about Grecian temples. Heather McKillop, professor at Louisiana University, writes how Mayan temples—magnificent, four-sided pyramids—were seen as places of access



The massive step pyramid in the ancient Mayan city of Chichen Itza in the Yucatan in Mexico was built over one thousand years ago.

to the sacred worlds, the ancestors, and the gods. Moreover, the construction of the temples around the cardinal directions is relevant to the harmonious integration that occurs in maturing fifth graders.

Grade Six

In a year when the children study the Roman Republic as a political model, the establishment and history of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) Confederacy also deserves a place. The Confederacy was founded by the prophet Deganawida. The Great Law of Peace given by Deganawida prescribed a democratic form of government with a bicameral council, checks and balances, referendums, and veto protocols, among various provisions. This system allowed the six member nations of the Iroquois to live in a mutually beneficial polity for centuries. The founding fathers of the United States were deeply influenced by this system of governance, as noted below.

Grade Seven

The very terms "Age of Discovery" and "The Age of Exploration" belie a Eurocentric perspective. While the Spanish, English, Dutch, French, and other Europeans believed they "discovered" and "explored" much of the rest of the world, most of the lands that they encountered were already inhabited and explored by indigenous peoples.

Moreover, individuals from non-Western cultures also accomplished great travels. For example, Ibn Battuta of Morocco (1304–1369) visited most of the Islamic polities at the time as well as West Africa, India, China, and Central and South Asia. According to the *Oxford Atlas of Exploration*, he covered a total of about 75,000 miles in a thirty-year period! The Chinese Muslim navigator Zheng He (1371–1433) led seven expeditions during the Ming Dynasty, visiting south, southeast, and western Asia and East Africa. Polynesian peoples, originating in the far western Pacific Ocean, were able to navigate vast stretches of open ocean to discover and settle islands all over the Pacific. The book *Polynesians in America: Pre-Columbian Contacts with the New World* discusses the possibility that the Polynesians may have reached and traded with the western coast of South America. All these explorers merit attention.

In *Comparing Empires*, author Jonathan Hart describes how European exploration during the premodern era went hand-in-hand with colonialism as the new European nation-states established transoceanic empires. The indigenous peoples they encountered were subjugated, their resources

exploited, and their lands appropriated. None of this was inevitable nor part of a larger “spiritual destiny” for the Americas. Moreover, without Native expertise in navigation, agriculture, and diplomacy, the Europeans would not have been able to colonize the Americas. Therefore, instead of the Age of Exploration, it is more accurate to call this time period the Age of Colonialism.

Grade Eight

One study block in eighth grade deals with the American Revolution and the establishment of the United States as an independent nation. The suppression and subjugation of Native Americans and the genocide carried out against them is part of this story. Ironically, indigenous cultures also helped shape the new nation. The Founding Fathers were



An Onandago sachem addressing the Founding Fathers in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, on June 11, 1776

familiar with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the “Great Law of Peace.” In *Exemplar of Liberty*, Donald Grinde Jr. and Bruce Johansen argue that the Confederacy’s values of equal rights, religious tolerance, and government by consent influenced Enlightenment theorists in Europe, such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The authors even show that The Great Law of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy was the political model for the Albany Plan of Union, the Articles of Confederation, and the United States Constitution.

The great arc of Waldorf Education, and what all of child development is supposedly cohering toward, is the ideal of *ethical individuality*. Douglas Cardinal (Blackfoot), a Canadian architect, observes that it was the First Nations, indeed, especially the Anishinaabe, who “developed this whole concept

of freedom of the individual” within which everything one does “is a spiritual act and is one of responsibility.” This concept, according to Cardinal, was then passed on to the Iroquois in their Great Law of Peace.

Conclusion

There is currently great potential for a fruitful interaction between American Indian perspectives and Waldorf Education. Among many initiatives are the Lakota Waldorf School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and the Everlasting Tree School on the Six Nations of the Grand River Reservation. The newly incorporated Douglas Cardinal Foundation for Indigenous Waldorf Education in Canada supports indigenous language and epistemologies through Waldorf Education. We hope that this article has offered useful ideas on how to effectively and respectfully incorporate indigenous materials into the Waldorf curriculum. ☺

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The Great Peacemaker of the Iroquois

A Story for Our Time

BY NANCY JEWEL POER

When Rudolf Steiner College was founded in 1976, I was there, and what an exciting time it was! Carl and Christine Stegmann had just come from Germany. Carl was a Christian Community priest who had been in the first priest course with Rudolf Steiner in 1924. He came with a deep interest in the spiritual destiny of the United States, gifting us with fifty years of dedicated research contained in his book *The Other America*. For the next decades, I had the privilege of teaching the course called The Spiritual Mission of America to students in the College's Waldorf Teacher Education Program. As soon as I discovered the ancient, sacred Iroquois legend of the Great Peacemaker, I began every course with this remarkable story, which is possibly the oldest story in America.

I was inspired by how modern and relevant this story is and by the fact that it is true. There really was a great Peacemaker who founded a peaceful democracy that lasted nearly a thousand years—almost unheard of in world history. The Peacemaker was a godlike hero, a savior who appeared when native tribes had been warring to near extinction, degraded even to cannibalism. He brought the message of peace that had the power to transform the violence and create the invincible Iroquois confederacy with its enlightened democratic governance. His was a stunning deed, his story a mighty story.

All the characters of great drama are there in this sublime legend:

- Jingoshasse, the brave and beautiful Mother of Nations, representing the Eternal Feminine, who would hold the message of peace in her heart

- Tadodaho, the ahrimanic wicked sorcerer, crooked in his body as well as in his twisted, clever mind
- Hiawatha, the good man driven to madness and depravity by the persecution of the sorcerer
- the Peacemaker, the Great Hero, with his universal message of peace, whose healing power redeems Hiawatha

This is a tale of death and resurrection, of unspeakable suffering and grief, of profound healing of that suffering, of gratitude, sacrifice, the establishment of sound democratic governance, and of the oneness of life. The rituals it portrays—of forgiveness, condolence, thanksgiving, and transformation—are still at the center of the Iroquois ceremonial life today. It is a story for our time.

This treasured legacy of America should be the birthright of every young person in the country, nay, of every citizen. As I lived deeply into this story I realized it is the Grail Legend for this land, our King Arthur story. I committed to retelling it and making it into a play for Waldorf schools. After a year of research in university historical documents and in books such as *The White Roots*

of Peace by Paul A. Wallace and *The Great Peacemaker* by Jean Houston, I found the story remarkably similar in all its versions. It was written down in the early 1900s as told by the last tribal keepers of the oral tradition, and the basic events and speeches are the same. I endeavored to remain as close to the originals as possible in retelling the story and writing the play. I am grateful to my Native American friends who have given their support.

Class teacher Amy Elder, of Cedar Springs Waldorf

School, deeply carried the contemporary significance of this story and gave it to her class for their eighth-grade play in 2012. She believes, as I do, that every young person should be strengthened for life through having this amazing story living in



The extent of the Iroquois Confederacy in the late 1700s in what is now upper New York State

his or her heart. The themes are intense, powerful, and deeply and inspiring human for older grades as well.

Amy's class rose to the challenge of depicting a serious, true story of life, death, and the redemption of evil. They responded with awe and respect as a Native American artist, Stan Padilla, helped them craft the sacred antler crown; they were intrigued with the technology of the shadow play and projected backgrounds; and they enjoyed the dancing for the ceremonies. The young man playing the Peacemaker profoundly grasped the significance of his noble role. The wicked Tadodaho bellowed his imprecations with convincing wickedness. The beautiful Jingoshasse, the tallest girl in the class, was awesomely majestic, and a sensitive young man earnestly carried the challenging role of Hiawatha.

For us today, living in a troubled world, it is comforting and healing to imagine the confidence given to the tribal children by this story through all those peaceful centuries. One can imagine an evening in the longhouse, lit by the fires of many families—the sparks flying into the night through the smoke holes in the high roof, the smell of the evening meal lingering on the air, and the clan preparing for nightfall with quiet family talk. The children on their bearskin rugs, their dark eyes shining with expectation, wait to hear from the lips of an elder the story of the Great Peacemaker. They hear again that he was born of a virgin who



Interior of a traditional Iroquois longhouse

was ostracized by her tribe and forced to live alone with her grandmother in the dark forest, that her baby grew into a strong, beautiful child, and that he grew up away from the tribe and was shunned

for his peaceful ways. They hear too that the young Peacemaker was beloved by all the animals, that he could speak with them all, and that birds would alight on his open hands. They hear also the adventures of the Peacemaker and his companion, Hiawatha, as they face the most evil adversary, the wicked sorcerer, and transform him through the power

of the Great Spirit, the higher power of peace. They hear also of the gentle Jingoshasse, the Mother of Nations, holding the great peace message deep in her heart, faithfully and bravely caring for the fallen warriors, caring for all the people.

The image of the great Tree of Peace was also no doubt a source of security for a child living where peace was the law of the land. "Ohdehrakenrahgowah" was a great white pine, with four mighty roots, stretching to the four directions—to all children, everywhere. The strength of all the tribes was brought together in the mighty trunk that reached skyward to the sun, reaching the very stars. There, on top of the tree, was the eagle with his majestic gaze extending to the far horizons, ever watchful, ever guarding against those that would threaten the Great Peace, and ever aware of the might of the ancestors spreading protection over the tribe like a mantle of stars. How comforting it must have been to know all the weapons of war and destruction were buried safely and deeply under the roots of this sacred tree in the Mother Earth.

Surely those bright-eyed Indian children would snuggle more happily into the warm animal skins and the arms of loved ones and, in such safety, feel the presence of parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, kin by blood and kin by clan, close by, and journey across to the land of dreams with hearts full of gratitude. They might feel the greatest sense of peace possible in this life on the earth—that of being held in the Eternal Good. The Peacemaker had made their lives safe. They could go into sleep with



The Great Tree of Peace

the wonderful knowledge that “the Earth is our Mother, the Sky is our Father, the world is good, the world is beautiful, the world is true.”

Here are a few key excerpts from the play. When the Peacemaker first meets Jingoshasse, he tells her of the threefold government that shall be the foundation of the society, based on Health, Righteousness, and Power. Then he says to her:

Under the Law of Peace there will be no meetings without songs and prayers of Thanksgiving beforehand, so when decisions are made they are rightly made with spiritual guidance. In all things will truth be spoken. All decisions shall consider the welfare of all the people unto seven generations.

She replies enthusiastically: *That is indeed a good message—I take hold of it. I embrace it.*

In another intense scene, the Peacemaker meets Hiawatha, who has sunk to the depths of depravity and cannibalism after the Wicked Sorcerer has killed his wife and daughters. As Hiawatha is bringing home human remains to cook in his cauldron, the Peacemaker is on the roof looking down through the smoke hole. The Peacemaker’s face is reflected in the water and Hiawatha, thinking it is his own face, cries out.

How can this be me? This a noble and powerful face, a face of goodness. This is the True Face—radiant with wisdom and light. With such a face I can no longer do these evil deeds!

Hiawatha and the Peacemaker share in ceremonies of healing and redemption, in which the Peacemaker gently cares for his despairing friend broken by unbearable grief. He speaks these words:

When a person has suffered a great loss caused by death and is grieving, tears blind his eyes so that he cannot see. With these words, with the white fawn skin of Compassion, I wipe away the tears from your face so that now you may see clearly. I make it daylight for you. I beautify the sky. Now you shall do your thinking in peace when your eyes rest upon the sky that the Creator of All Things intended to be a source of happiness to human beings.

This true story is a story for our time. How amazing that, exactly thirty-two years to the day

before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, on July 4, 1744, the Iroquois chief, Canasatego, in a meeting with the colonists, told them:

We have one thing further to say, and that is we heartily recommend Union and a Good agreement between you, our Brethren. Never disagree, but preserve a strict Friendship for one another, and thereby you as well as we will become the Stronger. Our wise Forefathers established Union and Amity between the Five Nations; this has made us formidable. This has given us great weight and Authority with our Neighboring Nations. We are a Powerful confederacy, and by your observing the Same Methods our wise Forefathers have taken, you will acquire fresh Strength and Power; therefore, whatever befalls you, never fall out with one another.



The 2012 eighth-grade class at Cedar Springs Waldorf School after their presentation of The Great Peacemaker

Benjamin Franklin and other founders of the United States were there and had the wisdom to adapt some of the forms and checks and balances of that amazing democracy. Unfortunately, they overlooked some key factors that gave the confederacy sustainability. One was that peace was the law. The other was the role of women in tribal governance. The women nominated and chose the chiefs of the fifty-member ruling council and had the power to depose the chiefs when they didn’t serve the welfare of all the people!

One great lesson of the Peacemaker for us and for our time is that a world of peace and universal

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Books for a Multicultural Classroom

BY CLAUDIA REINHARDT



Recent events in the United States have shown us once again that we have a long way to go to reach genuine brotherhood and sisterhood. As we travel this path, fostering a sense of empathy and compassion for all is a task that needs to be on the forefront of our minds as educators and parents. But empathy and compassion can only arise if we know “the other.” And we can only come to know the other if we show interest in our fellow human beings.

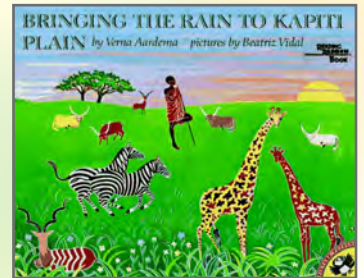
I have been a Waldorf parent for over twenty years and a Waldorf teacher for fifteen. Waldorf classrooms radiate an incredible beauty, and Waldorf Education offers a rich curriculum to our children. But, as a parent to two children of color, I found that my sons’ Waldorf classrooms often lacked reading material featuring nondominant-culture main characters and authors. This is problematic not only for nonwhite students who cannot see themselves reflected in the reading material provided, but also for white students who would benefit from a diverse library that offers them a window into the experience of others.

As Waldorf educators and parents, we hold high standards for the books we provide our children. Illustrations should be beautiful and artistic, the stories captivating and age-appropriate. Below are described some books that have become part of my classroom and home libraries over the years. They meet these high standards *and* they feature nonwhite main characters, authors, and illustrators. I hope teachers and parents will be inspired to add some of these books to their libraries as well.

For early childhood, my daughter’s favorites include *Peter’s Chair*, *Whistle for Willie*, and *The Snowy Day*, all by Ezra Jack Keats. The stories are simple and sweet. *The Moon Over Star* by Dianna Hutts Aston features award-winning illustrations by Jerry Pinkney and tells the story of the 1969 moon landing through the eyes of a little girl. *Last Stop*

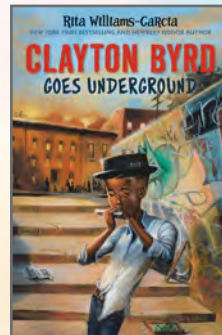
on Market Street by Matt de la Peña is the endearing story of a boy who takes a city bus ride with his grandmother.

Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by Verna Aardema has been a longtime favorite in our family. Last year, the students in my combined second/third-grade class at Orchard Valley Waldorf School enjoyed memorizing, illustrating, and reciting this cumulative Nandi poem from East Africa.



Award-winning author Grace Lin has created a magical trilogy with *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, *Starry River of the Sky*, and *When the Sea Turned to Silver*. These books are wonderful to read aloud to children in the lower elementary grades, and most students can read them on their own starting in about fourth grade. *The Year of the Dog*, *The Year of the Rat*, and *Dumpling Days* are entertaining yet profound books by the same author.

One Crazy Summer, *P.S. Be Eleven*, and *Gone Crazy in Alabama* is a trilogy by a favorite author of mine, Rita Williams-Garcia. The books are thoughtful, powerful, and full of humor, and I would recommend the series for fourth grade and up. The books are all recipients of the Coretta Scott King Award. This award list is a great place to consult when looking for books by nonwhite authors. *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground* is Williams-Garcia’s latest book. It’s a warmhearted story filled with the “blues.”



Having recently relocated to Vermont, I was glad to find books by Julia Alvarez, who is a local writer. Her Tía Lola series of four books tells the story of an eccentric aunt who comes from the Dominican Republic to help her family in Vermont. Fourth and

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A Letter to the Shepherds

BY DAVID BARHAM, MEd

The town of Oberufier is located in Austria on an island in the Danube River. For centuries, each year at Christmastime, the townspeople gathered to perform and enjoy three short dramas related to the season. One of the plays, The Shepherds Play, depicts the events described in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke—the appearance of an Angel to simple shepherds, the proclamation that the Messiah has been born, and the visit of the shepherds to the stable where the Christ child lay in the manger. Rudolf Steiner believed that The Shepherds Play conveyed an important and profound message for children and for all humanity. He recommended that it be performed in Waldorf schools each year as a gift from the teachers to the children and parents of the school. This tradition is continued in many, perhaps most, independent Waldorf schools in North America.

Before the Maine Coast Waldorf School in Freeport, Maine, had a high school, its teachers staged The Shepherds Play each year during Advent. Now students from all grades in the high school work together to present the play for the entire school. In the following letter, high school teacher and play director David Barham offers advice and encouragement to the young men and women playing the shepherds. David's warmhearted and insightful letter makes clear that, although the play is rooted in Christianity



Huckle, Muckle, and Gallus gaze in wonder at what has been revealed to them.

and in European culture, its true meaning and message are universal and relate to all human beings, regardless of faith or race.

—R.E.K.

Dearest Huckle, Muckle, Gallus, and Crispin,

As your director, there is much I can do to help you bring to life a wondrous, funny, warm, and meaningful performance as the shepherds. I can help you with the singing and the blocking and a more effective way to say your lines. I can help you find your character in the way you move your feet, sit on the bench, or listen when others speak.

But there is one crucial thing I cannot do for you and that one thing will make all the difference in the world on Friday, December 19. This deceptively simple script actually is speaking to the greatest of all Mysteries—and it is your task as the shepherds to communicate to the audience the profundity of that Mystery.

The first part of the shepherds' scene is meant to warm up the audience to you. You are funny; you are goofy; you are warmhearted. You bicker with one another like old friends, which is actually endearing.

But then...the shepherds have a revelation. You can say an Angel comes to them in their sleep. But what does that mean? It means that these simple, uneducated people of the Earth are among the first to understand the true meaning of being human. You shepherds, as "men of good will," are the true teachers and leaders of humanity.

And what are you leading us toward?

Love. Kindness. Seeing the true worth of all people regardless of their station in life. Fulfillment of the secret, unutterable aspirations we have for our lives, for all humankind, and for the planet.



The full, mixed-grades cast of high school students in The Shepherds Play, Maine Coast Waldorf School

Substitute for the Christ Child in the manger a world free of lies and deceptions, free of all that separates one from another—a world that is true and noble—a world where you love and are loved, where there is no holding back.

The feeling you should all have at the crib should just about bring tears to your eyes. In fact, tears would be fine. The audience already loves you and will follow you as you reveal the true meaning of life: Everything is possible; we don't need to protect ourselves from a cruel and cynical world—it is love from top to bottom! The real meaning of Advent, Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, the winter solstice, and life itself is that we descend into the darkness and we ascend into the light at the same time, and we are never again the same!

When you are working to transform yourselves into shepherds, hold these thoughts and feelings near and dear so they flow through you and the words you speak. Your real job as shepherds is to communicate this to an audience of all ages. They all want to be moved and filled with hope. Your job is to give them that experience. You can only provide that for the audience if it first becomes real for you.

This is your true work over these next weeks: don't just learn your lines (though that is important!)—transform yourselves inwardly. When you peer into that cradle and see (truly see—even though there is no baby there), we, the audience, need to see, feel, and sense that transformation in your entire bodies and beings.

In that baby's eyes, you need to see the world as it ought to be, as it could be, as it needs to be, rather than as it is. Then you will be transformed, made new and whole. And then you can offer that experience as a true gift of measureless worth to your audience. Only these shepherds, whom the audience has already loved and laughed at and with, can offer such a gift.

If you do this inner work over these next weeks, you will communicate this to the audience and we will have done something priceless for the world. I will accompany you every step of the way, but you have to go deep.

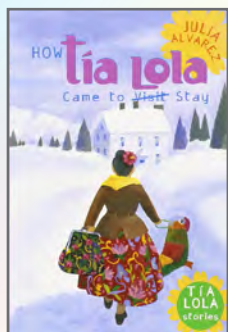


I am laying down the glove here. Are you up for the challenge?

Love,

David Barham ☉

Reinhardt, continued



fifth graders will enjoy reading these stories. *Return to Sender*, also by Julia Alvarez and recipient of the Pura Belpré Award, is a book that explores undocumented immigration in a tender way. I recommend it for middle schoolers.

I think it is important that children experience nonwhite characters in everyday stories. The story content should not be limited to the context of slavery, segregation, or immigration. However, students in upper middle school and high school will be ready for books that explore these topics. *As Brave As You* by Jason Reynolds, *Stella by Starlight* by Sharon M. Draper, and *Come August, Come Freedom: The Bellows, the Gallows, and the Black General Gabriel* by Gigi Amateau are intense stories of courage that consider these issues with honesty and grace.

In a diverse nation, it is crucial to have the ability to grasp the perspectives of people who do not look

like us. Diversifying our bookshelves serves nonwhite and white students alike. For nonwhite students, it is a wonderful way to provide them with a mirror in a society that rarely offers one. For white students, it provides a window into the experience of others, which ultimately leads to fostering empathy. Making our classroom libraries multicultural is a step toward the brotherhood and sisterhood our nation so desperately needs. ☉



CLAUDIA REINHARDT is the fourth/fifth-grade teacher at Orchard Valley Waldorf School in East Montpelier, Vermont. She previously took a class from first to eighth grade at the Richmond Waldorf School in Virginia.

Claudia has two adult sons, both Waldorf graduates, and a daughter who just started first grade. Good literature and knitting with heirloom yarns sustain her through the Vermont winters. The following link is to the writer's longer list of recommended books.
<http://ow.ly/nj2q30g7RHA>

Book Review

Train a Dog, but Raise the Child *A practical primer*

220 pages • \$12.95 • Available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

BY DORIT WINTER Reviewed by Ronald E. Koetzsch

Dorit Winter has had a long and distinguished career as a Waldorf teacher and educator of teachers. She was the founder and, for many years, the director of the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training. Though Winter retired in 2014, she is still active as a teacher, mentor, speaker, workshop leader, and writer. In 2017, she published two books, one meant for parents and teachers on raising and educating children and one on teaching children the art of writing—meant primarily for teachers.

Winter's *Train a Dog, but Raise the Child* in part deals with her relationship with Scamp, her beloved pet dog, and with her attempts to train Scamp to behave in a socially acceptable, nondisruptive manner. Scamp is part Vizsla, a Hungarian hunting dog, and the many anecdotes Winter shares are both amusing and instructive. The other focus of the memoir is the drawing of lessons about the rearing and teaching of children from Winter's experiences with Scamp.

The given “raw material” for both the young canine and the human infant/child is not dissimilar. Both are strong-willed, self-centered beings, focused on meeting their own needs, acting out of their own instincts, and doing whatever they can to meet their needs. In dealing with each, Winter cites the importance for the trainer, parent, and educator of being a figure of strong yet loving authority. The class teacher, she points out, must be a strong captain of the “ship” of the early childhood classroom. But this authority cannot be harsh or heavy-handed. Children, like puppies, respond to “firmness, fairness, and consistency.”

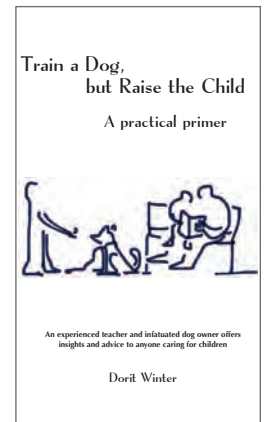
Winter also cites the importance of “repetition,” of the inculcation of acceptable behaviors by practicing them. She describes how in an early-grade classroom, the children can acquire the habit of raising their hands to be called on, by rehearsing that behavior in practice sessions. Winter also mentions the crucial role of clearly defined rules, of predictable and appropriate consequences when the line of good behavior is crossed, and of rewards for good behavior when they are truly deserved. For Winter, the establishment in the home and in the classroom of a daily schedule, characterized by “regularity, repetition, and routine,” is also essential.

Of course, the ultimate goals in training a dog and raising a child are different. The dog trainer wants a well-behaved, obedient dog. The parent and teacher hope that the child will develop into a compassionate, empathetic, and moral person who is able to decide out of freedom how to behave in the world. In the final chapter of the book, Winter writes passionately about what she sees as the primary, current threat to the development of children into free, compassionate, and moral human beings. It is the erosion of the human capacity for “attention,” occasioned by the kidnapping of consciousness by modern technology.

Chapter nineteen is titled “The Habit of Distraction, the Loss of Mindfulness, and the Impact on Our Children.” Here, Winter points out that, because of the daily deluge of data from our smart phones with their myriad apps, our tablets, and our other gadgets, we and our children are losing the ability to concentrate and pay attention to any one thing for more than a few seconds. We have become addicted, literally and physically, to “distraction.” As a result, we are less able to be aware of other people, of their emotional and mental states and of their needs. Also, we are less able to have face-to-face conversations with each other. Hence, the capacities for compassion, empathy, and sympathy, and thus for moral action, are diminished. The lesson for adults is clear—protect children from social media and the internet as much and as long as possible—and as a role model, examine one's own relationship with this attack on our humanity.

Dorit Winter's book offers much practical advice and food for thought for parents, teachers, and—for dog owners.

Winter's other book that was published this year, *Fire the Imagination—Write On*, is a valuable manual on the essentials of good writing and on the effective teaching of writing to children. The book is especially useful for Waldorf class teachers. It is published by Waldorf Publications, Chatham, NY, is 200 pages long, and costs \$18.00.



Computer Science in a Waldorf Tenth Grade

BY CHARLES WEEMS, PhD

In previous articles, we saw that Rudolf Steiner advocated for Waldorf schools to educate adolescents about the technologies of their times, and that a ninth-grade computer science class could provide an understanding of what a computer is and an understanding of the fundamental differences between it and the human being. Here we consider an example of a tenth-grade course that builds upon the ninth-grade experience.

It is important to note that specific content derives from each teacher's knowledge of the subject and of Anthroposophy—Rudolf Steiner's understanding of the world and of the human being, which is the foundation of Waldorf Education. The course described here should thus be seen as one example of how computer science can be approached, based on my experience. I teach this material in two forty-five-minute periods per week, over a trimester, and it is a required class.

In tenth grade, students are more open to gradations within phenomena, and their interests shift to the “how” questions, such as, “How does it work” or “How is it built?” Through answering these questions, the course aims to dispel the air of mystery and magic that surrounds the technology. In the end, students should see the computer as just another tool that can be used in the service of humanity, and they should feel that its operation is something they can grasp.

We begin by revisiting the CARDIAC cardboard computer simulation to recall how a computer executes its instructions, and by reviewing other topics from ninth grade, including binary arithmetic (see

previous article for details), and how the logical operations of AND, OR, and NOT can be built with simple arrangements of switches (Figure 1).

We repeat the experience of using a combination of these switches to mimic the pattern of 1s and 0s in adding two binary (base 2) values, as summarized in the following table for adding X and Y, each of which can be 0 or 1:

X	Y	
0	0	= 0 with 0 carry
0	1	= 1 with 0 carry
1	0	= 1 with 0 carry
1	1	= 0 with 1 carry

The carry to the next place is 1 only when X and Y are both 1. The series switches can thus be used to mimic this pattern with electricity. The sum of X + Y is similar to the OR (when either X or Y is 1, the sum is 1), except that when X and Y are both 1, the sum is 0. We can describe this pattern as X OR Y AND NOT X AND Y. It takes one set of parallel (OR) switches, two sets of series (AND) switches, and one normally closed (NOT) switch to build this circuit.

Now we take the next step toward building the arithmetic unit of a computer, by seeing how logical operations can be further combined to produce the sum and carry when adding two-digit numbers. Note that teaching the formalism of Boolean algebra is not our goal. In these simple cases, we can do what we just did: describe the operations with a table listing all of the possible values of the operands and the corresponding results. Then we find a way to describe the table in English, using the AND, OR, NOT, and exclusive OR (one or the other and not both) terms.

In the past, other authors have reported on building logic circuits using electromagnetic relays, but my experience has been that seeing a relay work is such a novel experience that it becomes a distraction. Yet, going straight to working with logic chips is too great a leap of abstraction and leaves the students feeling lost. There is a need for a step that bridges from physical push buttons to digital logic.

Of course, modern students are used to manipulating symbols on screens, and thus I've had success using a logic simulator to abstract the switches

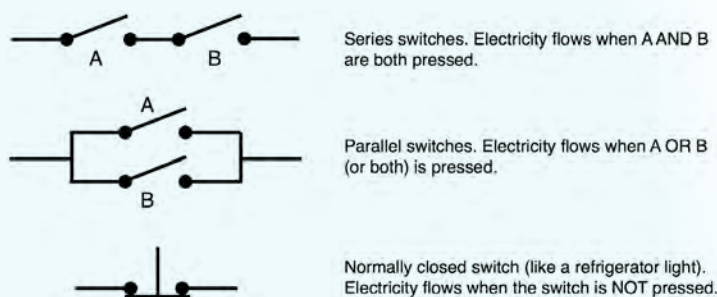


Figure 1. *Switches for circuits in which electricity flows, corresponding to logical AND, OR, and NOT*

into circuit symbols for logical operations. Once students start playing with the simulation—wiring up circuits and seeing how they operate—the logic functions take on a more concrete meaning. That makes it easy to extend addition to include a carry

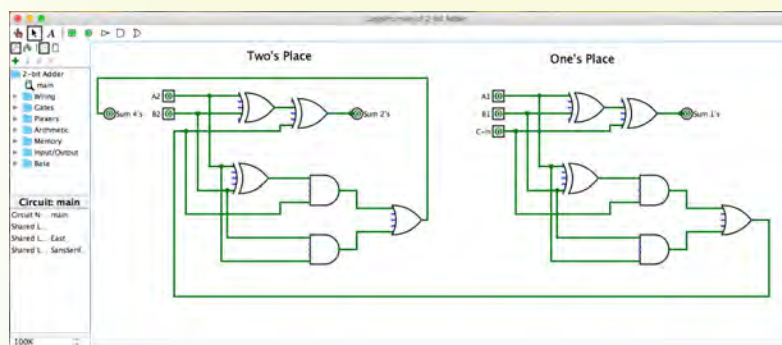


Figure 2. *A circuit that adds two binary digits, in the Logisim simulator*

that passes from one digit to the next (Figure 2). We use prototyping boards to build the circuits, and then students join their boards together to construct a multi-digit adder (Figure 3). A little more work leads to building a simple memory



Figure 3. *Students wiring up a six-bit adder with prototyping boards*

circuit—first in simulation, then on the boards. At this point, the students have seen all of the basic circuits needed to make a computer. Building the unit that directs the circuitry to get an instruction from memory and then to carry it out would involve creating a very big table of operands and results. That would be a lot of work to write and then construct, and it doesn't add new concepts, so we just briefly look at what it involves.

Occasionally, students will independently continue to work with the simulator to finish designing a computer, but most are satisfied that they understand what goes into building one. Remarkably, it's actually a simple machine. Its apparent power stems from being able to do very simple operations at an incredible rate: billions per second. At this point, some of the magic has been dispelled. Computers are just switches that anyone could assemble, if they really want to take the time to figure out all the details.

Around this time, students often want to know how the circuits are made, so we digress into a discussion of transistors and chip fabrication. Transistors are just switches that are turned on and off by electrical signals. A transistor is constructed on chips by laying down a strip of one kind of material and then laying down a strip of another kind of material that crosses it perpendicularly. The presence or absence of an electrical charge on the upper strip enables or blocks the flow of electricity in the strip underneath.

The laying-down process is similar to old-fashioned darkroom photography. The chip is painted all over with the first material and then with a photosensitive coating. An image of the desired shape is projected onto the coating, like a photo negative in an enlarger, except that in this case the enlarger is like a reverse microscope. It shrinks the image to very tiny proportions.

When the photosensitive coating is developed, the exposed areas remain and the unexposed areas are washed away. An acid is then applied to etch away the material that isn't protected by the remaining areas of coating. The process is repeated for the second material, and for additional layers of insulation and wiring that connect the transistors together. Having some wafers and bare chips to examine through a microscope helps keep the concepts concrete. A wafer is a slice of silicon crystal on which many integrated circuits are fabricated at the same time. After manufacturing, it is cut into separate chips (Figure 4).

When there is time in the trimester, a tiny microprocessor is introduced that has external connections for controlling lights, motors, and other devices (Figure 5). The students enter a provided program that uses instructions (called assembly language), which is similar to what they saw in the CARDIAC. The program simply stores a value of

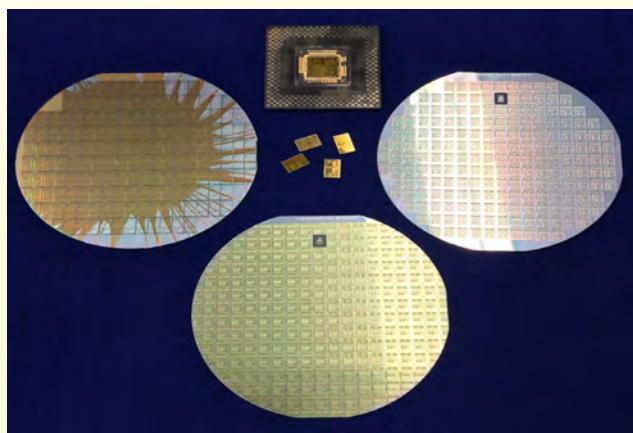


Figure 4. *Two wafers (bottom and right), at different stages of manufacturing, with the different colors being different layers of material that have been added. A wafer (left), where a new material has been incompletely applied due to a manufacturing error. Four individual chips (center), after their wafer has been cut up. A chip (top), mounted in a housing that enables it to be plugged into a computer.*

1 into a memory cell that is connected to a wire that goes to a light. When the 1 is stored, the light turns on. Thus, the students experience how a program can have a physical effect, and they see clearly that, in the computer, a 1 is represented by a circuit that is turned on, whereas a circuit that is off represents a 0.

Often, this calls forth a question about how a screen works. Since changing the color of a pixel on the screen involves a similar series of instructions, we can calculate how many instructions it takes to move a window with some number of pixels from one place to another. The idea that dragging a window around a screen is forcing the



Figure 5. *Students programming a tiny microprocessor (or microcontroller)*

computer to do billions of operations is so amazing that some students immediately have to get out their laptops and try it, as this familiar experience has suddenly taken on new meaning.

Having seen how the elements of a computer are built up, we then experience the reverse by disassembling discarded computers (Figure 6). As they are taken apart (often with great enthusiasm), there are opportunities to answer questions about what the different parts are and how they work.

Once the computers are dissected, we divide the scraps into piles: processors, memory, input and output devices, and supporting hardware. Students are often shocked to see that the processor is such a tiny portion and that most of the computer is intended to make it usable by people.



Figure 6. *Students disassembling discarded computers to see what they are made of*

Getting to freely dismantle a machine that is often viewed as both precious and fragile is very empowering. Knowing that we can quickly reduce a computer to a pile of parts adds to the feeling of mastery over it. Standing among these computers that have been reduced to rubble by their own hands, students gain a sense that the mystery has been dispelled. Computers are the result of the work of many people over many years, but ultimately they are just tools that are well within our capacities to comprehend.

In this course, part of the grade is allocated to a self-defined project so that each student can find their own way toward deepening their connection to the subject. Whereas, in ninth grade, many were interested in biographies of computing pioneers or the history of particular computers, in tenth grade, popular projects include developing a website or learning a programming language.

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The Waldorf High School Senior Project

BY JOHN WULSIN and PATRICE MAYNARD, MEd

Most of us have a dream—an interest we would like to pursue, a skill we would like to develop, a creation or project we would like to manifest in the world. We may not be even fully aware of it. Imagine, though, being able to devote a year to such a dream. Most Waldorf high school seniors have just that opportunity.

Students who go through the full twelve years of a Waldorf schooling traverse a rich, carefully orchestrated, and varied curriculum. The Waldorf curriculum requires every student to experience about 120 different main lesson blocks (covering all the main academic subjects), plus two foreign languages, as well as knitting, crocheting, sewing, recorder, an orchestral instrument, chorus, class plays, eurythmy, Bothmer gymnastics, drawing, painting, clay sculpture, wood carving, stone carving, jewelry making, copper craft, ironwork, bookbinding, gardening, and, in all four years of high school, biology, physics, and chemistry. It also includes individual and team athletics, community service, and, for many students, a time at a Waldorf school in a foreign country.

In addition, each student is required to carry out an individual, original project during the senior year. The student decides on the project in the spring of junior year and begins work on it during the summer. During the following year, the student does regular weekly work under the guidance of a mentor outside the school. The project requires individual initiative and faithful, long-term perseverance. It culminates in a presentation to the whole school community at the end of the year, in which the student shares a distilled cross section of the whole experience.

The choice of the project does not have to do with impressing colleges nor of doing one's parents' bidding. It is rather a process of trying to listen to one's inner signals, to discern what one feels called to devote oneself to. This may lead to something that one has naturally avoided out of fear or weakness, or a familiar activity that invites deepening, or something that involves a healthy leap beyond one's normal strengths. The senior initiates and sustains his or her own senior project, as something separate from the

standard Waldorf curriculum.

Senior projects can focus (and indeed have focused) on a virtually limitless range of activities. These include dance, singing, fiction, martial arts, silk acrobatics, automobile rebuilding, robot design, computer programming, fire department volunteering, emergency medical training, building a musical instrument, fashion design, cooking, musical composition, musical performance and recording, solo plays, poetry, poem memorization and recitation, sports journalism, creating a new language, film, obtaining a pilot's license, skydiving, herbal medicine, chiropractic, training predator birds, horse training, veterinary medicine, lobster fishing, starting a business, building a treehouse, building a pond, rock climbing, and so on, more or less ad infinitum. Sometimes the choice of project is prescient and ends up having an unforeseen connection to a student's future studies and work.



A senior project presentation on Japanese swordsmanship, or kendo...



...on sign language...

The public part of the senior project experience is often the most stressful. To display publicly what has been an intensely private experience, often done with a strongly bonded friendship with a mentor, a professional, is a high risk. The exposure is a lot for a young person to experience, even for Waldorf students who have performed onstage for many years. The youngster knows that the project offers a profile of personality and capacity and will be assessed by the whole community. The community in turn looks forward to the senior projects each year for that very reason: the students are so interesting and their choices are so instructive that it is an experience to be cherished by all. Living the dream of pursuing something in-depth is a rare opportunity, and it inspires everyone to see the results.

One girl trained raptors—owls, hawks, and eagles—to fly, to hunt, and to return. She later became a veterinarian. One boy built two ten-by-ten-foot boxes, one room with chicken-wire human figures entering and leaving through the walls, the other room with images reflected infinitely through mirrors. Each person in the audience was guided individually through the double-chamber experience, while Gregorian chants played in the background.

Some senior projects can strike one as being on the “light” side—a photo essay of a family trip to an exotic place, for example. Occasionally, a project is not completed by the “deadline,” and the public presentation is of an unfinished work. However, even in these rare cases, it is easy to perceive the learning involved as all the projects appear, one after the other, in their contrasting depth and infinite variety.

And then there are senior projects that demonstrate miracles.

Some years ago, a student at a Waldorf school on the East Coast developed a severe case of Tourette syndrome in the third and fourth grades. As a child, the difficulties he had with language and with body control made him annoying to other children and hard to bring along with his class. His family lived in a

Camphill Village, and his parents were distraught at the struggle the boy was facing. They were horrified as they watched, helpless, as the syndrome worsened. At one point, medical professionals recommended the boy be heavily medicated and placed in a special school. The class teacher enlisted the support of the child’s classmates, and a community (children and parents) agreement was made to support his continuing in the class. The boy, without medication, was able to stay with his class all the way through high school, and eventually there he was, faced with the task of a senior project.



The young man chose to travel to Europe to study with a professional maker of

...making a musical instrument

stringed musical instruments. There he built a chrotta, an elegant and sophisticated medieval instrument, predecessor to the cello. Normally that would suffice for a project. However, the young man continued the work when he returned home. He took the instrument to his Camphill Village, chose two villagers (persons with special needs) who were his close friends there, and systematically engaged them in tone therapy using his chrotta. He reported on the improvements he tracked as, week after week, they proceeded with the therapy under the tutelage of a trained, experienced music therapist at Camphill.

At his presentation, the young man spoke about the process and demands of making such a magnificent wooden stringed instrument and about the therapeutic use of the chrotta. The most astonishing thing about the presentation was the young man’s simple, clear, direct speech and the absence of any of the inhibiting mannerisms that had troubled him for years. Those in the audience who knew the young man’s history listened in amazement, and some were moved to tears. The senior project had helped him complete the process of overcoming Tourette syndrome. His own transformation was perhaps the most compelling result of the project. After the



...high performance motorcycle racing, and on...

presentation, his mother commented, “Yes. It is because he was allowed to stay in his class and in this school.”

One could say that every senior project involves a personal transformation. The focused, in-depth involvement with a single topic or activity, the preparation for and the accomplishment of a public report, and the inevitable realization that fulfilling a dream requires hard work, engender a transformation for every young person who goes through the process. The senior project helps the students step into adult life ready and able to meet its challenges and to realize their dreams and ambitions. Waldorf schools are devoted to nourishing the healthy development of the unfolding individuality in appropriate ways at appropriate ages. The senior project serves a quintessential, culminating role in quickening the emerging of the individuality. The entire twelve-year Waldorf curriculum is designed to create a well-informed, well-rounded human being who is able and motivated to explore the world, to create a meaningful life, and to make a contribution to humanity. In that context, the senior project is a final parting gift of Waldorf Education to its students. ☉



JOHN WULSIN *taught high school English and drama for thirty-five years at Green Meadow Waldorf School. He has written three books on language, edited The Riddle of America, and coedited Books for the Journey. In 2015, he retired with his wife, Jane, to the Texas hill country outside Austin. He enjoys mentoring new teachers at the Austin Waldorf School. He is currently pursuing his own secret senior project and serves on the editorial board of Renewal.*



PATRICE MAYNARD, *in her long career in Waldorf Education, has been a school founder, class teacher, music teacher, teacher of teachers, and AWSNA Leader for Outreach and Development. She is currently Director of Publications and Development at the Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE). Patrice also currently helps train teachers at several Waldorf teacher preparation institutes in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Beijing, China, as an adjunct faculty member.*

Weems, continued from page 27

In tenth grade, we also have a computer skills course that meets once a week for a trimester. We start with how to distinguish reliable online information sources, and we see that such discernment relies on becoming connected with a scholarly network of trust. Then we see how to use a word processor, eventually employing it to artistically format a poem. Next, we learn the basic concepts of a spreadsheet with graphing capability, and each student looks for a place where they can apply it to something that interests them.

Finally, we consider a presentation package, starting from examples in which slides diminish the effectiveness of communication, instead of enhancing it, and students see how excessive use of features can distract from the message. Students prepare short presentations of subjects they have chosen, to demonstrate what they have learned. As with the computer science course, the students define a project of their own, and many choose to learn touch typing with an online program, while some want to explore additional software packages.

It should be clear that our goal in tenth grade is not to train programmers but to give students a deeper sense

of mastery over technology, so they can live freer lives in a world that is heavily dependent upon it. Although a few of the students may choose to major in computer science, there are more who enter other fields and later discover a need that prompts them to develop the necessary skills. Why shouldn't they? They know there's no magic in the machine. To them, it's been exposed as a straightforward tool that anyone can understand and learn to use as needed. ☉



CHARLES (CHIP) WEEMS *is an associate professor in the College of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a teacher of earth science and computer science at the Hartsbrook (Waldorf) High School. He has been teaching at the college level for thirty-nine years and at the high school since it began fifteen years ago. Chip is a member of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the Anthroposophical Society, and the Pedagogical Section of the School for Spiritual Science.*

Waldorf Alumni Forum

Collecting and Sharing Stories of the Worldwide Waldorf Class of 2016

BY PHOEBE DOLAN, Maine Coast Waldorf School, Class of 2016

Phoebe Dolan is from York, Maine. She started her Waldorf journey at Seacoast Waldorf School in Eliot, Maine, and in fourth grade she began attending Maine Coast Waldorf School in Freeport, Maine. She graduated in 2016 and is now a sophomore at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, studying environmental studies as well as social justice studies. Phoebe loves spending time outdoors, adventuring with friends, and playing or singing almost any kind of music. In her senior year, she did an independent project that she called “Words of Waldorks,” to connect Waldorf seniors around the world and to preserve their comments on their Waldorf experience. Following is Phoebe’s account of her project. She can be contacted at wordsofwaldorks@gmail.com or on Facebook at wordsofwaldorks.

—R.E.K.

“Everything imaginable is connected in some way, however small or inconsequential. There is value in finding those connections.”

— Emily ’16, Washington Waldorf School,
Bethesda, Maryland

A Waldorf education provides a particular, unique experience to its students. That experience is shared by students in Waldorf schools all over the country—in New York, Georgia, and California—and all over the world—in Peru, Tajikistan, and China. Thus, Waldorf schooling is a shared journey, and every Waldorf student is connected invisibly to thousands of other students.

In the fall of 2015, I was a senior at Maine Coast Waldorf School, and I thought a lot about my journey and how I had come to be there. During the summer before the start of twelfth grade, my class of six students was asked to think about beginning our senior projects. These projects would be yearlong endeavors that would require a long-term vision and plan. Almost all Waldorf twelfth-grade students all over the world take on a senior project toward the end of their Waldorf journey. I began to think and consider possibilities. The idea behind my project, which in time became a blog, time capsule, and Facebook page, came out of my love of hearing collections of stories and interviews. I loved the podcast *Story Corps* and the way in which it pulls the truth and meaning out of seven-minute conversations between two individuals. I wanted to do the same for Waldorf students, specifically Waldorf seniors graduating in 2016.

I found throughout my fourteen years as a Waldorf student that it was fascinating to connect with other Waldorf students and talk about virtually anything. During high school, there is an emphasis on the importance of these connections. Many Waldorf high schoolers go on an exchange program and attend a Waldorf school in another country. The connections made during such an exchange, or at a multi-school dance or athletic competition, or when performing a play or eurythmy at another Waldorf school, help create a vital, larger community. This connection between Waldorf students is founded on our shared experiences in Waldorf school. I wanted that connection to be saved and understood. I wanted to show that Waldorf Education is a special experience that changes us in ways that shape the outcome of who we are for the rest of our lives. With that intention, I began my senior project—a blog that served as a story collection and sharing site, called *Words of Waldorks*.



Phoebe Dolan

The site was to be the place where all the interviews I gathered, from other Waldorf high school seniors graduating in 2016, would be saved. The title, *Words of Waldorks*, came from my long history as a Waldorf student. Although the word

“dork” can have a negative connotation, the term for me lovingly represents a person who goes or went to a Waldorf school. “Waldork” speaks to the shared experiences, skills, and capacities that a student acquires by going to a Waldorf school. Knowing that the color between red and orange is called vermilion, being able to unicycle and knit by fourth grade, knowing the magic a golden walnut holds, and fearing the smell of Prussian blue paint—these are things shared and understood by most Waldorks.

I began my project by creating eight interview questions to ask any twelfth-grade Waldorf student I could find. My eight-question method made it possible for me to communicate easily with people in person, by Facebook messaging, or by email over the internet.

My project officially began on Hermit Island, Maine, in September 2015. The well-known marine science trip that many Waldorf high school seniors from all over the country participate in each year seemed to be the perfect place to launch my project. Around the campfire one night, I stood up in front of 150 other seniors and asked for their stories and participation in my project. After that night, I gathered over thirty email addresses of interested students. My project had begun. I designed my blog with a photo of the coast at Hermit Island to create a shared reference point for students.

I worked hard to make the eight interview questions cover different elements that soon-to-graduate Waldorf students would be able to reflect on. I was guided by my amazing mentor, Heidi Drexel, a support person at the lower school and the main point person for our entire school’s blog. She helped me figure out how best to approach my audience and reach as many people as possible. I created questions I believed students would want to answer. Some questions were fun and light, some were more thought-provoking, and some required a bit of narrative. I wanted *Words of Waldorks* to be a place for storytelling. The questions included the following:

- What does the morning verse make you think about?
- Looking back, what advice would you give your ninth-grade self?

- When did you feel the most pride during Waldorf high school?
- When did you feel the most challenged during Waldorf high school?
- What is one truth about life that you were given or discovered at Waldorf school that you will hold as an adult?

Armed with these and other questions, I began to search for students to answer them. I created a

Facebook page in February of 2016 and posted every week about my project, my plan, and the fact that I needed people to answer my questions. My first post, in the middle of February, consisted of stories from the entire, six-member class at my own high school. After those were posted, I had a better idea of what I was looking for in responses and how to categorize the answers as they came in. My goal was to post three stories every Saturday morning until my graduation in June.

I reached out to one of the co-creators of the very successful

Facebook page *Best of Waldorf Art*, Matteo Scher, an alumnus of Green Meadow Waldorf High School in Chestnut Ridge, New York. Matteo gave me a crash course on where to post information about my blog and about which pages and groups were good to join. I began to reach out to big Waldorf web pages such as those of The Center for Anthroposophy and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. I also contacted the sites of Waldorf schools whose students had sent in responses to my questions. Every time I added a story, I also would post it in no fewer than twelve international Waldorf groups. Through all this outreach, I began to gather eight-answer stories. It was exciting to begin looking through them.

Stories came in from all over the country, including from Pennsylvania, Hawaii, Washington, Maryland, and New Hampshire. They related interesting, provoking, and hilarious moments and memories. A student from Hawaii wrote about the pride she felt when her class saved a whale beached right next to their classroom. Another wrote about pulling up next to another car on the road and doing eurythmy through the window at another Waldorf student and her friends. Stories came from peers in other



The writer with other Waldorf seniors, Hermit Island, Maine

countries—from France, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. The stories, showing the universal connections between Waldorks, were easy to relate to.

My project went coast to coast and gained “shares” and “reposts” on Facebook from people as near as my own high school and as far away as Cyprus. By the time summer rolled around, my site had over 1,300 visitors and my Facebook page had 220 likes along with hundreds of views and comments. Toward the end of the summer, I successfully had the term “Waldork” added to the online resource for new words, Urban Dictionary. By the numbers I saw, the project was clearly a success.

The purpose of *Words of Waldorks* was more and more fulfilled with each response story I collected. I had created a place where the stories of my Waldorf generation would be heard and saved forever. It is a massive reflection of what it means to have a Waldorf education, to be a part of a community greater than just the people you see every day. I heard, read, and shared stories that tell more than just what happened over the past decade in Waldorf Education. These stories display what was important and valued by all these students all over the world. *Words of Waldorks* turned out to be a great repository of important information for this generation and for future generations of Waldorf students. To learn more about *Words of Waldorks* and the worldwide Waldorf class of 2016, visit waldorfhighschool.wordpress.com. ☺

What does the “Morning Verse” make you think about?

[Please see page 6 of this issue for the full text of the verse.]

I think that the morning verse is something good because it reminds me that I go to Waldorf school, and that it’s an awesome school! Also, it helps me be more concentrated in class. I can’t really explain why, but it works, and this is awesome.

—Gwenaël, École Waldorf Steiner de Sorgues en région d’Avignon, Sorgues, France

The morning verse makes me think about being present throughout the day and connecting the inner self with the outer world.

—Sophie, Maine Coast Waldorf School, Freeport, Maine

The morning verse gives me the feeling that we are all in this together.

—Laura-Fiona, Freie Waldorfschule, Frankfurt, Germany

To look within ourselves and see the greater good, the greater versions of ourselves. That we are connected and interrelated to nature, we are a part of nature and nature is a part of us.

—Jordan, Samford Valley Steiner School, Brisbane, Australia

Normally I just say it without much thought (it is 7:55 in the morning, after all). But I guess when I do think about the morning verse, it gives me a sense of community.

—Silvia, Chicago Waldorf School, Chicago, Illinois

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good is possible, and we need only to think and to act with that possibility in mind. The Standing Rock peaceful protest in 2016 to defend water, earth, and humanity was a remarkable spiritual event that manifested a universal awakened consciousness. The outer, apparent prevalence of the pipeline project cannot diminish the spiritual deed that occurred as Native Americans and indigenous people and supporters came from all over the world to defend life on the planet. The seeds of that spiritual truth will travel far and wide. The awe-inspiring, peaceful, undisrupted Women’s March in January 2017, the largest mobilization in our nation’s history, was another manifestation of an inspired “new mind.” As we move into the future, the story of the Peacemaker,

a story of great loss, great wisdom, great transformation, and great hope, can be an inspiration. ☺



NANCY JEWEL POER—*activist, artist, and author—was the founding teacher of Cedar Springs Waldorf School in Placerville, California, and also a founder of Rudolf Steiner College, where for many years*

she taught the spiritual mission of America, early childhood education, women’s issues, and threshold work. Nancy is a national consultant on home death. Her books, her documentary film on home death, and The Great Peacemaker story and play are available on her website, www.nancyjewelpoer.com.

Looking Back at the Waldorf High School Experience

Four Voices of the Class of 2017

On June 10, 2017, the four students comprising the senior class of the Monadnock Waldorf High School in Keene, New Hampshire, said goodbye to each other as classmates, to their teachers, and to their school. At the commencement event, the two young women and the two young men each spoke about her/his experiences as a Waldorf student. Following are representative excerpts from the four talks. The photos of the students (with friends) were taken during their visit to a school in Haiti.

—R.E.K.

Leydi Walle

What makes a Waldorf school a Waldorf school? The well-rounded curriculum and the creative students, of course, but I think what makes a Waldorf school a Waldorf school are the teachers. Our teachers slave away making main lesson plans, memorizing songs and poems, planning field trips, and grading papers—a lot of papers because they ask us to write a lot here. They give their heart and soul to enrich our school lives as much as possible. Their day job may be from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., but in reality it's much longer because a Waldorf teacher is deeply invested in every student. That could not be more true for our teachers here at MWHS.

Teachers here do not just spout information for students to memorize, they really try to give students the tools they need to face whatever challenging circumstances life may bring. Our teachers push us when we need to be pushed. They give us a break when we need one. They are always ready to give us help and support, but only just enough so that we can still learn on our own. How are they able to do these things? For one, they work to bring the curriculum at the right moment in time to make the most powerful impact on the student's life. For another, they don't just teach the student of age fifteen or eighteen but who that person will be at twenty-eight or forty-eight. In other words, they try to teach the person who we will become. And the teachers try hard to have a keen awareness of every student in front of them, to know exactly who that student is in the best part of themselves and to figure out ways to support them to do their best, most thoughtful work.



Leydi Walle is now at the Parsons School of Design at the New School in New York City studying photojournalism.

But what really sold me on MWHS four years ago was its emphasis on art. From chorus with Maria Belva or Ms. Weiner, pop/folk ensemble with Mr. Koerber, painting with Ms. Murray, drawing and ceramics with Mrs. Powers, hours and hours of color gradating with Mr. Powers, and hours and hours and hours of stone carving, rain, sun, or snow, with Mr. O'Connors—without these classes my high school experience would have been sorely lacking. And with our plays, Mr. Schurman took me to places I didn't believe I could go: a psychiatrist who knew how to stand her ground; a wildly extravagant madwoman; a domineering mother; a vengeful, scorned wife; and a repressed dog lover. He brought our class together in ways more intimate than we might have wanted—but that perhaps we needed.

Because of my artistic endeavors I feel like a more complete person. And I know I can draw upon these experiences to improve my future work. With such talented teachers, I know making it as an artist is possible. Besides, nothing surpasses art for unlocking intelligence or increasing understanding. Art at a Waldorf school is not extracurricular. First of all, working in the artistic realm makes it possible to learn and to better understand all the other realms. Secondly, it helps us live life artistically.



Self-portrait in oil paints

Waldorf teachers, and in fact any good teacher, know that to reach a student they have to see them from all sides and be able to work with them wherever they are, whoever they are. I feel prepared and inspired to bring out of this school and into the world the insights that were fostered in me here. Because, although I do not know everything, I feel confident that this Waldorf school has given me the tools to learn just about anything I put my mind to. To a very large part, I have these teachers to thank for that.

Skylar Watson

Skylar spoke about the challenges and rewards of being in a small class, studying and working each day with just three other students. When she had asked her classmates what they wanted her to include in her talk, they all agreed that she had to stress that “We don’t like each other, we love each other.” Skylar concluded her talk with the following:



This school and my class have shown me that differences can be overlooked, and challenges within relationships can be overcome, that transformation is possible. They’ve shown me that no matter how different we all are, at the end of the day nothing matters besides

each other’s love and support—it’s all about relationships. I will carry this lesson with me throughout the rest of my life and put it to use wherever I can. If everyone could have the same experience that the four of us have had—and make it through alive, as we have—the world would be a

much better place. I think that the way we live, we often think that differences can’t be overcome, obstacles can’t be tackled, but the truth is they can. It’s easy to disregard or cast someone aside simply based on differences, to form our relationships out of judgments.



Skylar Watson is now at the University of New Hampshire studying psychology.

It’s really hard to develop the capacity to work through those natural tendencies. Our instinct is to flee—after all, that seems so much easier. But this group of people has taught me not to flee, how to stick and stay and work things through. It’s messy and it’s not easy, but I can’t thank them—and this school—enough for that.

Tyler Bell

Tyler spoke with deep appreciation of the outside-of-school class trips the group had taken and of the experiences and insights each had provided. In addition to the two trips described below, Tyler talked about his class’s trip to Port-au-Prince and Torbec, Haiti; a camping adventure in the White Mountains, during which the teachers slipped away one morning and left the students on their own to find their way back to civilization; and a visit to Heartbeet, a Campbell community for persons with special needs.

For the first block of ninth grade, we joined the tenth to study geology by going on a weeklong caving and rock-climbing trip. At one point, we had all descended into a large cavern somewhere in upstate New York. A few of us continued on, worming through extremely tight passages on our stomachs in search of another cavern. We eventually hit a dead end in a space too small to stand up and almost too small for all of us to fit into.

As panic began to set in and I began to discover my hidden fear of tight spaces, out of nowhere the gentle sound of singing brought me to my senses and calmed me down. We in the small space all looked at each other puzzled, because none of us was singing. Without realizing it, we had come full circle in our efforts to find another cavern and were sitting in our cramped space mere feet from the large cavern where the rest of the group was. Because in Waldorf education we can’t go a day without singing something,



Tyler Bell is now at Keene State College, part of the New Hampshire State University System, with a focus on flight training.

the group in the cavern had struck up a song, “Waves A-Comin’ In,” which we could hear through the cracks in the rock. I went from panicked to confused to relaxed in a matter of seconds, as we all sat silent in the pure darkness, under untold tons of rock, listening to our new classmates and friends sing. Despite having known my schoolmates for only a few weeks, I found comfort in their singing and was able to find the courage to inch my way back to the large cavern.



While I certainly learned a lot about minerals and erosion on that trip, it also became one of the first bricks in the path to discovering and creating myself and who I am as a person. I learned about my personal limits and how to begin to exercise courage and self-control.

As a part of our civil liberties class in tenth grade, we took a journey to a medium-

security prison in Massachusetts. We were told that we would be having a one-hour interview with several men convicted of second- and third-degree murder. We were also handed a long list of rules and a strict dress code to follow. As we showed our IDs, got patted down and searched by guards, and buzzed through several thick metal doors and twenty-foot fences topped with razor wire, it was pretty hard not to feel apprehensive about the whole thing.

We were greeted by an inmate who gave us a short tour and then showed us to our seats. We all sat down opposite nine empty chairs, with nothing but air separating us from them. One by one the inmates filed in and sat down. What started out as an hour-long awkward chat between guilty and innocent, shackled and free, convicted and unconvicted, became a three-and-a-half-hour conversation filled with laughter and tears, between two groups of human beings, equal, together, with only circumstance and luck separating those in prison uniforms and those not.

The men that sat in front of us that day were defined and labeled by society for their actions and mistakes, all of which, when put into context and circumstance, seemed to have been their only option in the moment. To this day, it still saddens me that the actions taken by those men can’t be seen as mistakes they made, instead of who they are as people.

Each of these trips has taken something we’ve been learning about, removed the classroom’s four walls, and given an up-close, hands-on, real-world experience of the subject. Not only did we become more knowledgeable about the subject we were studying, but we became much more knowledgeable about ourselves. We gained valuable life lessons. We will hold these lessons for the rest of our lives.

Tucker Haddock

Classes at MWHS are a multidisciplinary experience, whether we’re bursting into another classroom to perform an Italian opera excerpt at 10:00 in the morning for History through Music, or using “Good & Plenty” candies to represent the distribution of alleles in a random population for a genetics block, or even recreating a jousting scene from the literary epic *Parzifal* using wooden shields and swords, bikes, and even pool-noodle spears. Blocks at MWHS are rife with individual projects that give us the opportunity to become more creative thinkers and doers. They allow for moments of self-discovery to pursue that which we are truly passionate about.

Waldorf Education is more than listening to rigid lectures and thumbing through six-hundred-page textbooks. Here, where they know us well, our teachers have the creative license to craft classes that are dynamic and that engage us in the material rather than just present a list of facts and figures that we can spit out for the next few weeks, and then forget.

In one of Mrs. Gerwin’s ninth-grade math classes, we spent the entire hour-long session deriving the quadratic formula starting from the algebraic basis of a trinomial equation. I remember being frustrated at the time, having to do work that my peers at Keene High certainly were not doing, but I also remember being determined to do the work because Mrs. Gerwin had promised us carrot cake if we completed the task.



Tucker Haddock is now at Grinnell College in Iowa studying cognitive science.



Reflecting back, I see this moment as a perfect example of how this school sets itself apart from the others by preparing us for learning beyond the classroom. Waldorf didn't just simply hand us the answer—as so many institutions of secondary education do. Rather, it launched us into uncomfortable situations armed with imagination, critical thought, and the

tools to make our way out. That moment with Mrs. Gerwin has always stuck with me, knowing that our teacher had the faith that we were intelligent enough to do the hard work ourselves, and having the realization that learning was about self-driven discovery.

What about the future? Have all these years of Waldorf Education prepared me to be an adult? How has this school given me the tools to navigate the world?

Will six blocks on Greco-Roman antiquity help me to succeed in my dream job? Probably not. So what has it given me? Well, an ability to work well with others; knowing how and when to listen, and when to compromise; the ability and, more importantly, the enthusiasm to observe with a critical eye, to explore the depths of any subject set before me; and, finally, a fearlessness to pursue an interest no matter how far off the beaten path it may be. So when I think of all that I have taken from these years and all that this school has granted me, I know I will be just fine. ☺



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Patti deeply enjoyed her post-retirement career as a mentor. She often spoke of her experiences in the schools, of how much the teachers need support, and of how the simplest affirmation from her could bring a smile of confidence and hope to a young teacher's face.

In 1979, when the Rudolf Steiner School of New York City celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, Patti, then faculty chair, wrote in the school newsletter:

One should be all-wise, but since one isn't, there are new challenges and opportunities for growth and learning. My life at Rudolf Steiner [School] has always been active and deeply satisfying. It continues to be a life of constant striving and transformation.

Patti was capable of great understanding, compassion, and sensitivity. I believe her deep understanding and acceptance of human life as a path of inner development was one reason that she was so effective as a teacher—of children, of teachers, and of friends—of anyone, in fact, who knew her and was open to the possibilities of self-transformation.

I can't think of Patti without thinking of the things

she loved: her life in New York City, jazz, Irish folk songs, Broadway hits, the color and form of modern art, Irish history and daydreaming about the long-lost family estate in Ireland, her work as a founding member of the *Renewal* editorial board, her garden, long walks, sunflowers, the Sunday *New York Times*, the food co-op, her children and grandchildren, playing remembered music on her mother's piano, butternut squash, Ben & Jerry's ice cream, the opera, the *New Yorker*, public radio, everything about her amazing family (past and present), and, of course, her collection of scarves. She was full of appreciation for and delight at the small things that informed her days.

Toward the end of her life, after all that she had suffered and survived in her personal life, Patti could still advise: "Everything happens for a reason. There are no accidents. Drop the regret—regret is self-indulgence."

Patti lived a full, rich life. I can say with confidence that if she had any regrets they were minor. May we all be so fortunate. We will miss Patti, but her gracious presence, courage, determination, sense of humor, and wisdom will continue to encourage all who knew her and to brighten our lives. ☺

Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education

Questions Parents Ask or Would Like to Ask

BY TORIN FINSER, PhD

Anthroposophy is the comprehensive view of the world and of the human being taught by Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education. In effect, it is the philosophy on which Waldorf Education is based. Rudolf Steiner held that the study of and an understanding of Anthroposophy is essential for the Waldorf teacher. Yet Steiner explicitly stated that Waldorf teachers should not teach Anthroposophy in the school.[†] Because of this, Anthroposophy typically is (to use a wildly inappropriate metaphor) the nine-hundred-pound gorilla in a Waldorf school—something of which everyone is aware but something no one talks about much.

Torin Finser, PhD—a former Waldorf class teacher—was the director of the Waldorf Teacher Education Program and is now the department chair at Antioch University New England. He also served as General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America and is the author of books on Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education, and leadership. Finser believes that the relationship between Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education needs to be addressed in the context of 2017 and that questions from parents in particular deserve attention and conversation. Here Finser poses a series of questions about Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education that parents have asked him and responds with candor and open-mindedness.

—R.E.K.

What is Anthroposophy? A short answer please!

Sophia is the Greek goddess of wisdom. “Anthropos” refers to the human being, “the one being who ‘looks up.’” Thus, “Anthroposophy” is the “study of the wisdom of and about the human being.” Rudolf Steiner applied this term to his all-encompassing philosophy and view of the world. Yet Steiner did not want people to blindly accept his views. He encouraged his students to question and to test his ideas on the basis of their own experience. Thus, Anthroposophy is not a fixed set of ideas. It is as much a path of inquiry into life’s greatest riddles, including human development, evolution, cosmic and earthly laws, the arts, human health, and sustainable agriculture. Anthroposophy is not a belief structure but rather an approach to life that is intended to be taken up in freedom by those who seek deeper meaning. In a modern world of sound bites and rampant materialism, Anthroposophy provides spiritual insights for those who have a thirst for greater knowledge, aspire to personal growth, and have hope for a better future. Of the purpose of Anthroposophy, Steiner said it is “to connect the spiritual in the human being with the spiritual in the universe.”

Why do Waldorf teachers study Anthroposophy?

Waldorf pedagogy is based on a carefully articulated view of the essential nature of the human

being and of the stages of child development. The curriculum used in Waldorf schools is intended to respond to the needs of children at each stage of development. Teachers strive to understand their students through the insights and concepts available in Anthroposophy, including the development of the human being in seven-year periods; the threefold nature of the human being—body, soul, and spirit; the three soul capacities—thinking, feeling, and willing; the four temperaments—choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholic—and their corresponding learning styles; and the importance of daily rhythm and healthy sleep. Anthroposophy is a key resource for Waldorf teachers who want to successfully meet the needs of their students.

How can I as a parent be assured that the teachers do not teach Anthroposophy? Usually people like to share what they consider important.

It is natural to share valued experiences with others, and



Rudolf Steiner, founder of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education, 1861–1925

Waldorf teachers meet regularly with colleagues to share insights, study Anthroposophy as it relates to pedagogy, and do artistic work as a group. And when parents have questions or express an interest in a particular aspect of Anthroposophy, most Waldorf teachers willingly share their knowledge. But when it comes to the children, the concepts contained in Anthroposophy are not shared. Presenting anthroposophical concepts to children would be inappropriate and would compromise the very developmental insights teachers have worked hard to acquire. Besides, it would be abstract and meaningless to the children. In the very few instances in which a teacher has done this, it has backfired. Children have many ways of telling us what works and what does not, and teaching Anthroposophy in a classroom of children cannot and does not succeed. Children are simply not interested.

Yet in a world that often demands simplistic yes or no answers, we have to look at multiple perspectives of most issues. Having stated that Waldorf teachers do not teach Anthroposophy, I would like to seemingly contradict myself and say: and yet teachers work out of anthroposophical insights. For example, when trying to understand a particular boy from Latin America who had just joined my class, I read some of Rudolf Steiner's lectures on adolescence and even did an evening meditation with that boy in mind. Inspirations were more likely to flow when I was inwardly active with anthroposophical content. I never told the boy how I struggled to understand him, but thanks to this inner work—as well as the remarkable Waldorf curriculum for the seventh and eighth grades—we made significant progress in the two years we worked together. I did not teach Anthroposophy, but it fed my search for insight and understanding.

If Waldorf teachers work out of Anthroposophy as just described, is there a push to conformity within the faculty? What if a teacher does not like this approach?

That sometimes happens, and occasionally a teacher will leave the school as a result. More typically the reasons a teacher resigns have to do with classroom management, parent relations, and other issues. Very rarely is a departure due to the study of Anthroposophy. Teachers change jobs just as in any other profession. One of the many reasons we have teacher education institutes is to give those seeking a career in Waldorf Education an opportunity

to “try things on” before taking a job in a Waldorf school. Unfortunately, some schools hire teachers before they have completed their Waldorf teacher training, and it is those individuals who understandably are most likely to struggle. If a newly hired teacher has not had ample opportunity to study Anthroposophy, child development, curriculum methods, and the arts in a teacher education program, much that goes on in the school will appear strange to them. A sense of estrangement from the school and colleagues can easily arise. Parents can support the quality of the education by encouraging their school to hire those who have graduated from or are at least enrolled in a teacher education institute approved by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Waldorf teaching is a profession, and as in other professions, credentials help guarantee quality.

Is there a risk of dogmatism in Anthroposophy?

Dogmatism, the rigid and exclusionary attachment to particular ideas and practices, is a common, even



Torin Finser with students at the Antioch University Waldorf Teacher Education Program

universal phenomenon. Often those who discover something new and valuable in their lives allow their enthusiasm and gratitude to metamorphose into dogmatism. This can happen with anthroposophists as it can happen with any person who has a strong attachment to a particular political, religious, or other perspective. So, yes, there is dogmatism in Anthroposophy. However, it goes against the essence of Anthroposophy, which includes humility, ongoing research and questioning, and looking at things from many perspectives. Also, since the freedom of the individual is very important, trying

actively to “convert” another person to Anthroposophy is definitely not anthroposophical.

If the curriculum follows the evolution of consciousness as described by Rudolf Steiner, is that not de facto “teaching” Anthroposophy?

In Waldorf teacher education programs, future teachers are introduced to the sweeping overview of evolution and history presented by Rudolf Steiner in his lectures and writings. A core principle of Waldorf pedagogy is that child development mirrors the development of humanity as a whole. Thus, as in the early stages of human history, the young children live in a “picture consciousness.” As they mature, their thinking becomes more conceptual and abstract and mirrors our modern consciousness. This insight influences not only the teaching of history but also the other subjects, including science and literature. The idea that the evolution of human consciousness corresponds to child development actually makes the curriculum come alive. The experiments and demonstrations used in teaching physics in the sixth grade captivate the students who want to see causal relationships. As first graders they would not have been so interested.

One might argue that the teacher should discuss the basis of the pedagogy with the students, and with older students this can be appropriate. High school teachers should be forthright when asked for the sources for certain teaching methods and the reasons for using them.

For parents it is important to ask questions and do preliminary reading as part of the enrollment process. The key is for parents to feel comfortable with the basic orientation of a Waldorf school and the integrity, knowledge, and sincere striving of their child’s teachers.

Our children are taught many wonderful subjects, but in some cases what is taught runs counter to commonly accepted scientific knowledge, the only validation being recommendations of Rudolf Steiner.

This is true, and examples are the block on animals and humans in the fourth grade, sacred geometry (the Platonic Solids) in the eighth grade, and the study of the “twelve senses” in the seventh and eighth grades. Schools should be open with parents about which subjects are based on commonly accepted research and which are primarily developed out of anthroposophical insights.



Chalkboard drawing of the Platonic Solids, which appear in the Waldorf curriculum in the eighth grade

Ideally, this information should be available to parents—on the school website and/or in mandatory parent-orientation sessions—when they are first considering the school. Then parents are free to decide if such a school is right for their family.

In my forty years in Waldorf Education, I have found that, more and more, Waldorf principles and practices (such as the importance of free play in early childhood) have been confirmed by researchers other than Rudolf Steiner, and what is conventionally “accepted” in science has changed markedly over time. Today many scientists posit “senses” beyond the five standard senses. Steiner himself was deeply interested in the latest research of his time, and we need to be as well.

Some Waldorf school meetings of the PTO or Board open and close with a verse by Rudolf Steiner. Some even do a study of a text by Steiner or by an anthroposophical writer. Do such practices send a message that Anthroposophy should be practiced by all those involved in a Waldorf school?

Because teachers in a Waldorf school use Anthroposophy to understand child development and foundational aspects of the curriculum, it is important that they engage in ongoing study and exploration, both as individuals and as members of a group, i.e., the faculty. In applying for a position in a Waldorf school, they have exercised their freedom and made a choice. But for parents it is different. Some are simply seeking the best possible education for their children in an environment that is safe and joyful. Many are content if their

children are thriving, learning, and developing. There is no requirement that parents do more than honor their agreed-upon obligations to the school. Other parents are active as volunteers—driving for field trips, supporting school events, and serving on committees. And often there are parents who want to find answers to life questions and seek out and study spiritual perspectives to benefit their own growth and development. Waldorf schools usually have parents in all three categories: the quiet supporters, the doers, and the seekers.

Many of the festivals celebrated in Waldorf schools are festivals of the Christian year, and “cosmic Christianity” is a part of Steiner’s teaching. If a family is Jewish, Muslim, or atheist, will their children fit in?

This is often a struggle for parents and even teachers, especially initially. It is ever so important that this topic come into the conversation in the application process, as needed, and in subsequent parent meetings. Waldorf schools want all children to feel welcome. If one visits Waldorf schools in Kathmandu, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Oslo, and other places around the world (as I have), one soon realizes that Waldorf methods apply to children everywhere, even as the curriculum is adapted to meet the cultural and geographic location of a particular school. And that is the key: flexibility in adaptation while benefiting from the archetypes in the pedagogy that are universally true. In Waldorf Education, all races, cultures, and faiths are acknowledged as valuable expressions of the human spirit. There is no place in a Waldorf school for racism or discrimination of any kind.

Waldorf Education originated in central Europe, and some of the festivals and traditions still reflect that heritage. Some schools have done more than others to adapt to their particular location. I recently visited Waldorf schools in New Zealand and experienced their wonderful indigenous Maori curriculum! Parents can play a vital role in offering presentations from their own heritage or experience, since no one teacher can be equally conversant in all world traditions. Rather than limit children’s experiences so as not to offend anyone, as is often the approach in public schools, Waldorf teachers seek to expose their students to many perspectives and cultures.

Rudolf Steiner did write and lecture extensively on the gospels, Christianity (including its “esoteric” form), and what he called the Mystery of

Golgotha. Those sources are available to anyone seeking further understanding. Steiner was adamant that there should no longer be any “secrets” and that an important task of Anthroposophy is to reveal to all what was once restricted to a select few.

However, even the most experienced Waldorf teachers struggle to understand many aspects of Anthroposophy, so it is usually a source of ongoing exploration with colleagues and interested parents. Parents who have been connected to a Waldorf school usually affirm that their freedom as individuals was always respected and that their children were allowed to experience many different cultural and historical perspectives while enrolled in the school. Rather than eliminate material for fear of offending someone, Waldorf teachers know that freedom comes from conscious engagement with rich content, which enables informed choices later in life.

What do Waldorf alumni say of their educational experience on the subject of Anthroposophy?

Interviews with Waldorf alumni have consistently affirmed that the broad Waldorf curriculum and their relationship to their teachers have given them a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, inner nourishment, willingness to work with others, and confidence in their own ability to master new subjects and career challenges. They almost never mention Anthroposophy or give any indication that they knew much about it. But alumni love to share their many fond recollections of particular teachers, and some of them are quite amusing. It turns out students notice more than we realize!

Waldorf teacher education programs such as those at Antioch University and the Center for Anthroposophy require foundation studies in Anthroposophy and the arts before admittance. Does this make an interest in and connection to Anthroposophy a presorting factor and reduce diversity in Waldorf school faculties?



The Representative of Humanity, carved by Rudolf Steiner as the archetypal manifestation of freedom and selfless love toward which humanity is evolving

Not at all. At Antioch, we have had engineers, lawyers, public school teachers, artists, entrepreneurs, and those in business from countries all over the world. We ask for preliminary work to be sure that, before students give of their time and resources in Waldorf teacher education, they know something about what they are getting into. Backgrounds vary considerably, also in regard to Anthroposophy, but that is also good for our Antioch classroom discussions and the open-mindedness we all strive for as teachers.

What is the Anthroposophical Society, and are Waldorf teachers expected to join such an organization?

The General Anthroposophical Society was formed in 1922/23. Today, to become a member, one need only acknowledge that Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner's rich and disciplined inquiry into the origin, nature, and destiny of the human being, has a right to exist. The international center of the

society is the Goetheanum, located in Dornach, Switzerland. There are national societies in many countries around the world, including the United States, and worldwide membership is about 44,000. The Anthroposophical Society in America is based in Ann

Arbor, Michigan. Many areas in the United States support local "branches" of the national society as well as "study groups," which meet regularly to deepen their understanding of Anthroposophy. The national society publishes a quarterly magazine called *Being Human*, sponsors conferences, and supports the practical and artistic applications of Anthroposophy—including Waldorf Education, biodynamic farming, therapeutic education (the Camphill movement), anthroposophically oriented medicine, social finance, eurythmy, and organic architecture.

Joining the society is a free deed. No one, including a Waldorf teacher, can be made to join. There

are persons who have taught in Waldorf schools for decades but have not joined the society.

Anthroposophy and its "sister" practical initiatives originated over a century ago. Are they still relevant today?

More than ever! The holistic approach to education manifested in Waldorf schools is sorely needed in a society fixated on testing and "accountability." Camphill Beaver Run, a Waldorf school for children with special needs, is being used as a model by public school districts for work with their own special-needs students. Biodynamic agriculture is helping to reestablish the health of the earth and is producing healthy food—and wine! Doctors and therapists working out of Steiner's medical indications are in tremendous demand. The insights of Anthroposophy are at the foundation of all this and much more good work.

All things change with time. In nature, things are either evolving, growing, or dying. Nothing living can stay the same even for a few seconds! As Waldorf Education approaches its centennial in 2019, teachers and parents need to clarify the essentials, renew our schools with new impulses, and let go of that which no longer serves our children. The core principles of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education are sound. They do not need to be changed. But our practices, our applications of those core principles need to be continually reexamined and to evolve. In Waldorf Education, we always need to be asking: What are the needs of our children today? How can we meet those needs? And how can parents and teachers collaborate to create vibrant communities that stand as examples of the way we wish the rest of the world would work? In this way, Waldorf schools can be a beacon of hope in the endeavor to make the world a better place. o



The Second Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, center of the worldwide anthroposophical movement

Reference

†Rudolf Steiner, *Soul Economy*, 128.



TORIN FINSLER, *Waldorf class teacher and educator of Waldorf teachers, has written a number of books on education, community, and leadership. His latest book is Education for Nonviolence—The Waldorf Way.*

Donald Joseph Bufano – In Memoriam

March 19, 1950 – March 29, 2017

BY JACK PETRASH

A remarkable teacher and true human being passed away this spring. His gifts were many, varied, and pronounced. They were evident in the classroom, in gatherings, and always in friendly conversation. Describing all that made Donald Bufano very special is not possible. What follows is just a glimpse.

Donald's teaching journey began at the University of Maryland when, as a student there, he took a class with Clopper Almon. In that course, Donald encountered both Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy, and these gave purpose and direction to his life. Soon thereafter, Donald met Lynn Cookson, who became his wife. They moved together to Detroit and the Waldorf Institute, where Donald completed his teacher training. Donald and Lynn's son, Nathan, was born in Detroit. The family then moved back to Maryland, where Donald took a first grade at the Washington Waldorf School. Donald and Lynn's daughter, Mikaela, was born in Maryland in 1979.



During his more than twenty years at the Washington Waldorf School, Donald helped grow and strengthen the school. He served in many different capacities—as a class teacher taking two groups of students from grades one to eight, as board and college chair, as development director, and even as the school bus driver. Donald later

went on to help found the high school at the Waldorf School of Baltimore, to serve as the chair of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, and to teach many middle school students in Washington and Baltimore and at the Garden City (NY) school, shepherding classes through the challenging years of middle school. Waldorf Education was his life's calling. What was always clear was that Donald loved teaching, and he loved children and young people.

Donald was always interested in people and enjoyed meeting teachers and anthroposophists from all over the world. This served him well in his other important work at the Rudolf Steiner Institute, an annual summer program offering courses in Anthroposophy and

related practical and artistic disciplines. Donald's first Steiner Institute was in 1975. He rode his bicycle from Maryland to Pennsylvania to attend. The Institute was the Bufano's summer family for over thirty years, and their involvement was legendary. For years, the Bufanos would arrive in Waterville, Maine, before classes started to transform Thomas College into a vibrant adult learning community replete with art, music, extraordinary courses, good food, and double rainbows.

What mattered most for Donald was the Institute's coursework, which brought together individuals from as far away as Israel, Mexico, Germany, and England to speak about their work that had grown out of the insights of Steiner. This was what Donald valued most.

When the institute concluded at the end of each July, Donald returned to his primary role of being a class teacher. He and Lynn would remain in Maine to "breathe out." But one could always tell what grade Donald was going to teach in the coming school year by the books that rested on the arm of his Adirondack chair. Summer conversations often revolved around the Waldorf curriculum. Donald was well versed in both science and history. The vastness of his knowledge was surprising to anyone, except those who were foolish enough to play Trivial Pursuit with him!

One of Donald's great loves was sailing, and any day on the water was a good day. His hand itched to be on the rudder, and he was always ready to grab a line and take down a sail. Spending time with Donald in Maine made it easy to see his unwavering love for his wife, Lynn, and their two children. This was especially apparent in the summer of 2016 as the shadow of Donald's returning illness began to darken the horizon. The embraces were sweeter, and the roses that arrived, as usual, for Lynn's August birthday much more poignant.

There are many things that can be learned from friends and with Donald these lessons were pronounced. Donald enjoyed life fully. He was generous, humorous, and largehearted in the true sense of the word. He never responded to disappointments with smallness. He was routinely gracious and grateful. It is no wonder that he deeply touched the lives of so many people. ☺

Patricia Zay Livingston – In Memoriam

March 16, 1924 – March 31, 2017

BY VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT

Patricia Zay Livingston was born in New York City into an anthroposophical family in the middle of the Roaring Twenties. She was a student in one of the first kindergartens at the Rudolf Steiner School of New York City—founded in 1929. Years later, when her own



children entered the Rudolf Steiner School, Patti became the handwork teacher there, a vocation that she fulfilled with distinction for over three decades. Patti was instrumental in the founding of *Renewal* and served on its editorial board from the journal's inception in 1992. Although she retired from classroom teaching in 1983, Patti continued to work as a mentor in schools and

served on the boards of the Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School, the Hartsbrook School, and others. Waldorf Education was a central theme of her life.

Patti's parents met in London, where her mother, Eileen Horner, and her grandmother—who had attended Steiner's lectures there—were studying Anthroposophy and her father, W. Henri Zay, an American émigré from Ohio, was a vocal coach. Patti's mother became one of her father's students and introduced him to Anthroposophy. When World War I started, Mr. Zay, as a resident alien, was required to return to New York. Patti's mother soon boarded what turned out to be the last ship out for civilians and followed him, abandoning her aristocratic family as well as her fiancé!

As newlyweds in Manhattan, the Zays quickly established themselves in the budding anthroposophical community. The first North American productions of the Oberufer Christmas plays took place in their townhouse. Patti was only three when her father died unexpectedly, leaving her mother with four young children—Patti; Willibus, later known in Waldorf circles as the eurythmist Sabina Nordoff; Eileen; and one-year-old Thorn. Patti was named after the famous soprano Adelina Patti, in recognition of her lung power as a baby. Patti and her younger brother Thorn

attended, on scholarship, the Birch Wathen School, a private school on New York's Upper East Side. Patti met Ted Livingston at the school, and they later married.

As a young married couple, the Livingstons delighted in taking long car trips. One outing took them to the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts, where they found a traditional New England farmhouse for sale at a price they could afford. They often commuted back and forth on weekends, even after Ted contracted multiple sclerosis. Ted died of the disease in 1973. Patti moved to the farmhouse full-time when she retired from teaching ten years later.

Patti was an excellent teacher of handwork. She understood how important the activity is for the development of the child. The clarity of her understanding is evident in her writing:

Through beauty, color, and form, handwork and crafts help to lead the children from play to imaginative thinking as adults, forming a kind of bridge between the two.

Patti taught hundreds of children before retiring from the classroom. Though those children today might not remember how to crochet, they do, no doubt, remember the calm, orderly, and intelligent presence of their teacher.

Patti also wrote:

Handwork should be relaxing and fun, and at the same time productive. Nothing happens if you don't use your hands and get to work! Working to transform the materials of the earth fosters inner growth and a sense of well-being in the children.

Once, when I asked her about a particular child who was struggling, her response went straight to the heart of the child:

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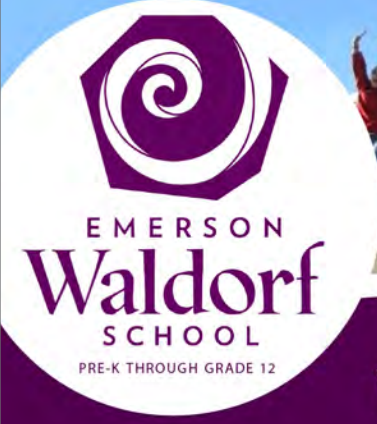
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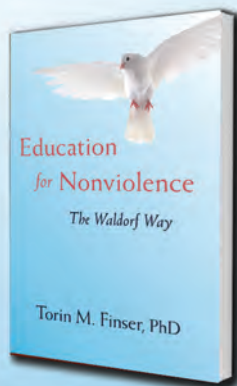
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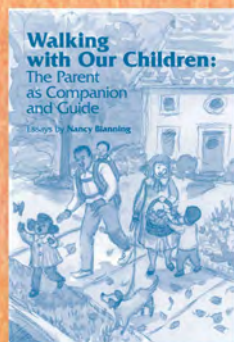


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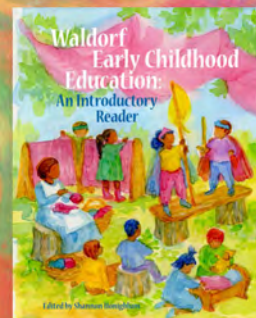
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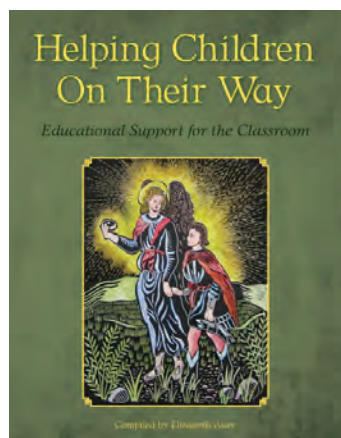
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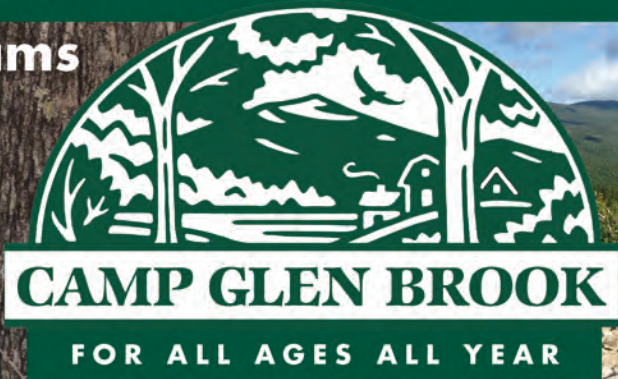
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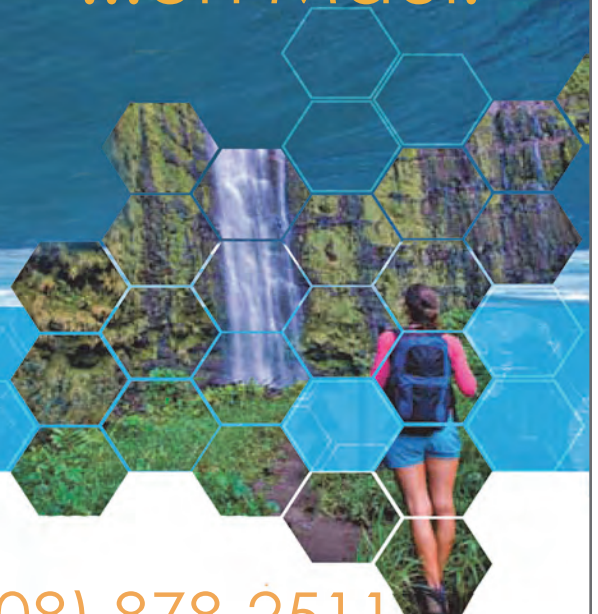
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