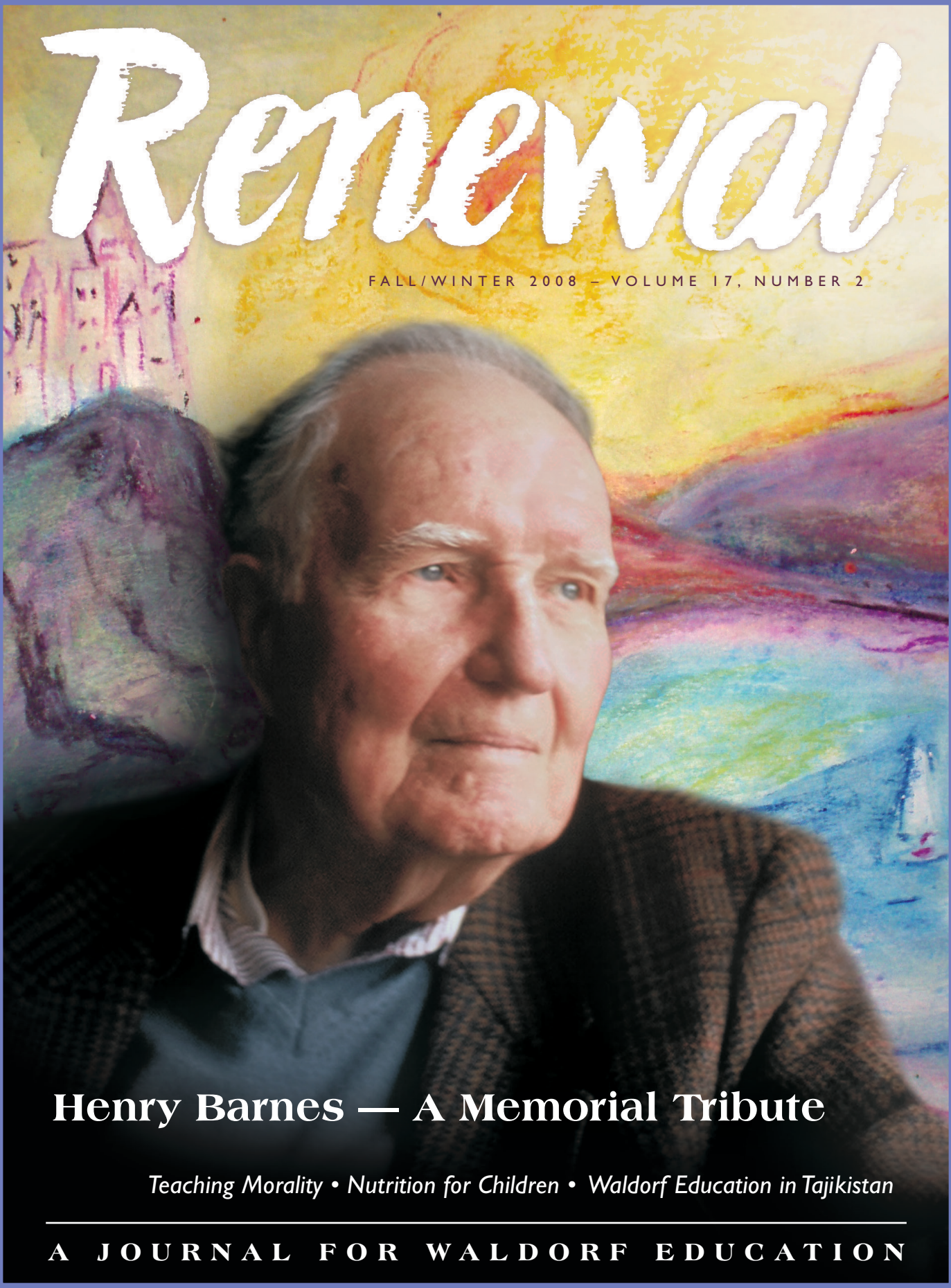


Renewal



FALL/WINTER 2008 — VOLUME 17, NUMBER 2

Henry Barnes — A Memorial Tribute

Teaching Morality • Nutrition for Children • Waldorf Education in Tajikistan

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

Waldorf Alumni Forum

Ariel Salzer

CEDAR SPRINGS WALDORF SCHOOL GRADUATE



Ariel Salzer

Multiple times since leaving Cedar Springs, I have experienced how what I received there distinguishes me from my colleagues, both in academic and professional settings. During orientation for law school, for example, a professor was lecturing on the importance of preparing for courtroom litigation. He asked us incoming students, “Have any of you had experi-

ence in public speaking?” Quite a few of us raised our hands. He then asked, “What about acting on stage?” A smaller number of us raised our hands. He went on: “Dancing on stage? Playing a musical instrument? Singing? Reciting poetry?” His point was well-taken: If you’re going to be a successful litigator, you can’t get stage fright.

After the presentation the professor approached me. He said, “I don’t know if you noticed, but you were the only student who raised a hand for every single activity I called out.” I hadn’t noticed. “You must have had a pretty incredible childhood to have experience in all of those things,” he continued. I smiled. I couldn’t help but fondly recall Cedar Springs Waldorf School and the education that gave me the opportunity to experience all those activities, and more. I found myself explaining to him that the Waldorf curriculum is diverse and well-rounded, rich not only in the arts, but in science, mathematics, history, literature, and language as well.

When I was an undergraduate at the University of California San Diego, I majored in linguistics and focused on international relations. I was one of the few students in my program who had actual experience in the languages we analyzed. During my Waldorf years I studied French, but also had exposure to Japanese, Latin, Hebrew, and Spanish. In linguistics, we learned that if a child is exposed to native speakers of a foreign language on a weekly basis, the chance of achieving fluency in that

language increases exponentially. Once again, I thought back to my Waldorf education.

My experience with French, which began in the sixth grade, included singing, learning phonetic exercises, listening to and retelling French stories, as well as studying grammar and vocabulary. Only after living in France for a semester during college did I realize how well this early language study prepared me. I was able to become fluent in French far more readily than most of my fellow American students. Early exposure to one foreign language seems to make it easier to learn a second one, and I experienced this firsthand when I later studied Arabic in Egypt.

My Waldorf education has also prepared me to function socially and professionally in the “real world.” There were twelve students in my class at Cedar Springs, and whenever a problem arose among us, the class teacher, Tim Connolly, called a group meeting to discuss and resolve the issues. My classmates and I learned, at a young age, to speak honestly and sincerely, to stand up for our rights, and to listen to others and respect diverse opinions, all in a caring and supportive environment. I doubt that most schoolchildren today have such an opportunity. The abilities to effectively and compassionately communicate with any audience, and to navigate difficult social situations, are important skills, and I am ever thankful for my Waldorf background when faced with social challenges at school or at work.

The Waldorf curriculum also provides a direct and unbiased exposure to many different cultures and religions. As a Waldorf student, I studied the history, culture, and customs of India, China, Africa, the Middle East, and many other places. I learned to appreciate and embrace individual and cultural differences. This prepared me as an adult to experience and respect cultures and mores other than my own. When I lived and studied in Egypt for six months after college, I discovered that I was easily able to adapt to the way of life there and to wholeheartedly participate in it without judgment or reservation. This was a direct result of my Waldorf schooling.

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From the Editor

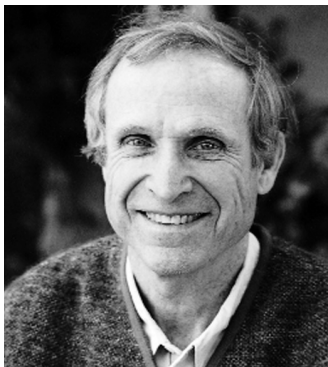
Life, Death, and the Morning Verse

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

One frigid winter evening early in 1991, I received a phone call in my office in Amherst, Massachusetts. In sonorous and measured tones, Henry Barnes introduced himself as representing the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and asked me if I were interested in becoming the founding editor of a magazine about Waldorf Education.

I was in fact not particularly interested, being by training and disposition a writer rather than editor. Within a few minutes, though, Henry gently but resolutely convinced me that the task might be interesting and worthwhile. That phone call was the moment of conception for this magazine and the beginning of my relationship with Henry Barnes, one of the most remarkable men I have known.

For the next decade, Henry, then in his eighties, served on *Renewal's* editorial advisory board. He read and helped decide on all submissions, wrote articles himself, suggested themes, and found new contributors. As the first American to receive a formal Waldorf teacher training, an experienced class and high school teacher, and for decades the chair of the council of teachers of the Rudolf Steiner School of New York, Henry was an invaluable resource. After he retired from the board, Henry remained a stalwart and enthusiastic supporter and friend of this magazine.



Henry Barnes died on September 18, 2008, in Spring Valley, New York, at the age of ninety-six. This issue of *Renewal* is dedicated to Henry and contains not only a memorial tribute but also an article he wrote many years ago—and still very pertinent—as well as a review of his final book.

A few weeks after Henry's death, *Renewal* lost another friend and contributor with the passing of William Ward. William was a master Waldorf

teacher, poet, humorist, and eminently decent human being. It was in William's second-grade classroom at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, that, back around 1980, I had (as a visiting journalist) my first experience of Waldorf pedagogy. I can still feel the atmosphere of warmth and joy that this kind, good-hearted, and wise man was able to create with his students. William died at age sixty-two after a three-year dialogue with cancer, a dialogue that he chronicled in a memoir, *Traveling Light*. The Spring/Summer issue of *Renewal* will contain an excerpt of the book.

Yet another passing touched this issue of *Renewal*. For the first time in thirteen years, my wife, Anne, and I worked on the magazine without the support of Felicity, our feline companion. Felicity died suddenly during the summer. Her favorite place for rest and meditation was on my office desk. There she alternated between napping, peering wisely into space, and sitting up to gaze attentively and critically at the articles being edited. At every moment, Felicity exuded and shared a serenity and an appreciative acceptance of life and its vicissitudes—invaluable attributes for those producing a magazine.



*Felicity (1995–2008)
taking a break from
her editorial duties*

Each of these deaths occasioned tears, but they were as much tears of gratitude and awe as of sadness and loss. When Anne and I first learned of Henry's imminent passing, we sat on the couch, our eyes welling up. One of us said what we both were feeling: "It's not just that he is leaving us, but also that his life was so noble and rich and full of meaning, and that he has such a great adventure ahead of him." A similar emotion and thought pertained to William, and even to our kitty. The mystery of death evokes the miracle and beauty of life.

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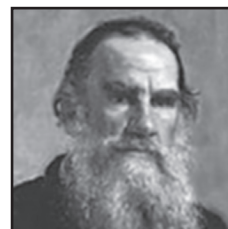
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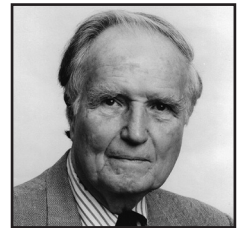
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A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

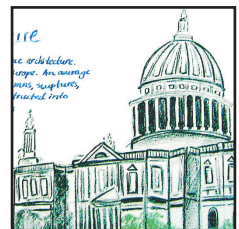
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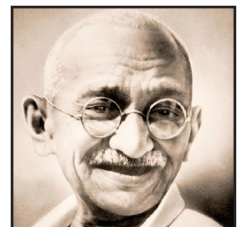


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Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education is published by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Founded in 1991, the magazine is intended primarily as a resource for Waldorf parents and teachers. It features articles about child development,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

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From the Association

Recent developments in the North American and world economies are a reminder of the inevitability of change in every realm of human life. Early in the twentieth century, Rudolf Steiner presented a view of cultural change as a manifestation of spiritual—not just emotional and intellectual—activity. With this view comes inspiration for creating cultural forms that help us develop as individuals and that also promote the healthy evolution of society.

Working together in Waldorf Education—based on the work of Rudolf Steiner—we Waldorf parents, teachers, and administrators have the opportunity to experiment with and benefit from Steiner's view of change.

Some years ago, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) recognized the need for a new organizational form. The existing form, which concentrated authority in a single person, had been useful in its time but did not seem to speak to the future. A task force was formed to create a new vision for the Association.

The resulting plan, implemented in 2004, featured collaborative rather than hierarchical leadership. Three leaders were chosen—instead of one CEO—each to oversee a particular part of the Association's activities. In making the decisions that affect the whole organization and their particular areas of responsibility, these three leaders work on the consensus model. All decisions must be supported by all members of the executive team. The board of trustees is also involved in many decisions, as are representatives of the eight school regions and four constituent groups. In these larger groups as well, collaboration and consensus are the norm.

Collaborative leadership is based on the idea that the decisions of a group of individuals working cooperatively are more likely to draw on a higher wisdom than the decisions

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Selected articles from past issues of *Renewal* appear on the Association website: www.WhyWaldorfWorks.org

A Memorial Tribute

Henry Barnes

August 12, 1912–September 18, 2008

BY ANNE RIEGEL-KOETZSCH AND RONALD KOETZSCH

Henry Barnes was a guiding light of Waldorf Education in North America. The first American to receive a Waldorf teacher training, a Waldorf teacher for over four decades, an indefatigable writer and lecturer, Henry probably did more than any other person to spread Waldorf Education on this side of the Atlantic. It was Henry who in 1990 had the idea that there should be a journal devoted to Waldorf Education published in North America. His idea led directly to the creation of *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education*. Henry treasured this magazine and ardently supported its work.

Henry Barnes was born into an old, respected, and well-to-do New York family. Among his forebears were Aaron Burr and Washington Irving. Henry's early life was a charmed and happy one, divided between New York City and a farm in Stonington, Connecticut. He entered Harvard College in 1929 and majored in history.

One tragic event marred Henry's life just as he entered young adulthood. At Harvard, Henry roomed with Peter Stockton, his closest friend since childhood. One Friday in January 1932, Peter suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. He was found days later in a room in a country inn on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where he had committed suicide. Henry of course was devastated, shocked into confronting the basic questions about the meaning of life.

In the summer of 1933, just after his graduation, Henry was invited by Peter Stockton's mother to attend a conference in Spring Valley, New York. The gathering was the first major conference in North America focusing on the work of Rudolf Steiner. Henry attended and there first learned about Steiner, Anthroposophy, and Waldorf Education. He realized immediately that he had found his destiny

and his vocation and within weeks was on a steamer to Europe. Henry went to Stuttgart, Germany, the home of the first Waldorf school, enrolled in the Waldorf teacher training there, and completed the course in the following year.

Henry also visited and spent time in Dornach, Switzerland, the center of the anthroposophi-

cal movement, on the first visit bicycling the roughly 150 miles from Stuttgart. Henry then taught several years at the New School, later to be called Michael Hall, the first Waldorf school in England. In 1939 in Dornach he married Christy MacKaye, daughter of the noted poet and playwright Percy MacKaye. The following year, Henry and Christy returned to the United States, just as the chaos of World War II was about to engulf Europe.

Henry and Christy settled in New York, and both began to teach at the Rudolf Steiner School, which—founded in 1928—was the first Waldorf school in North America. Henry taught there for thirty-seven



Henry with his first-grade class at the New School in London, the first Waldorf school in the English-speaking world, circa 1935

years, first as a class teacher and then as a history teacher in the high school. For many years he served as the chair of the school's council of teachers, which was the governing body of the school.

Henry was also active in the broader Waldorf movement, traveling and lecturing widely. In 1974 he was invited to serve as general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America, a post he was to hold until 1991.

In 1977 Henry “retired,” and he and Christy moved to Hillsdale, New York, a village about ninety miles north of New York City. There Henry was instrumental in the founding of the Hawthorne Valley School in nearby Harlemville and also the large biodynamic farm associated with the school. Henry continued to write and lecture about both Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy. He had the ability to make both subjects understandable to people who had little or no prior knowledge of them.

In 1990 Henry had the idea that the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America should sponsor a magazine about Waldorf Education and was the key person in the founding of *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education*. Henry served on *Renewal*'s editorial advisory board for over ten years and was a tireless and dedicated participant in the life of the magazine. A number of Henry's pieces were published in *Renewal*, and he was always brimming with new ideas for articles.



Henry teaching geology, usually a sixth-grade block, at the Rudolf Steiner School of New York, the first Waldorf school in North America, circa 1950

In his latter years, Henry focused on several major writing projects. He published *A Life for the Spirit*, a study of the life and thought of Rudolf Steiner (1997); *Percy MacKaye: Poet of Old Worlds and New* (2000); and *Into the Heart's Land*, a history of Anthroposophy in North America (2005). This last work, almost 700 pages, Henry researched and wrote (on his trusty Underwood manual typewriter) between the ages of 90 and 93!

In the last year of his life, Henry wrote a memoir: *Henry Barnes – A Constellation of Human Destinies* describing his own life's journey and those of Christy and of her sister, Arvia MacKaye Ege, also an important pioneer of Anthroposophy in America. The final proofs for the book arrived just a short time before Henry died, and he realized his hope of seeing this work completed.

Christy Barnes died in December 2002 at the Fellowship Community, an intergenerational facility for the care of the elderly in Spring Valley, New York. Henry, who had moved into the Fellowship Community several months before Christy's passing, remained there. Henry continued sound of body, mind, and spirit beyond his ninety-sixth birthday. Early this past September, Henry's body began to fail and he became bedridden. Nursed by his son, John, and his daughter, Marion, and by co-workers of the Fellowship Community, he slowly and consciously approached death over a two-week period. He crossed the threshold into the spiritual world

on Thursday, September 18, 2008, at 10:15 PM. Henry's passing took place a stone's throw from where, almost exactly seventy-five years before, he had first encountered Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education, and the remarkable work of Rudolf Steiner.

Henry Barnes was a big man, over six feet tall, with an impressive stature and a noble mien. He moved and spoke with slowness and deliberateness. Henry had a deep, resonant voice and elegant diction, and in conversation as well as in lecture, he expressed his thoughts clearly and eloquently, in sculpted

sentences. Henry loved to garden and to take walks in nature. He was something of a workaholic, but his life's work—promoting Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy in the world—was something that he loved deeply.

Henry was a gentleman, both in dress and behavior. He favored tweed suits and sport jackets and classic ties. When once asked how he, on a Waldorf teacher's salary, could afford such quality clothing, Henry smiled and replied: "I am a perfect size 42, and there are a number of high-end thrift shops on the Upper East Side near the school."

Henry was a person of refinement and graciousness. He had impeccable manners informed by a true warmth of heart and a sincere concern for every individual whom he encountered. When he met and greeted a person, he always looked into that person's eyes with compassion and interest. He treated everyone with the same high regard—students, parents, colleagues, the school janitor, care providers, as well as service people such as the young woman who waited on him at the dry cleaners.

Henry was a good listener who could hear another person's ideas and opinions with openness and without prejudgment. He was at heart a mediator and conciliator who was able to deal with the many problems and conflicts that arise in the life of a school.

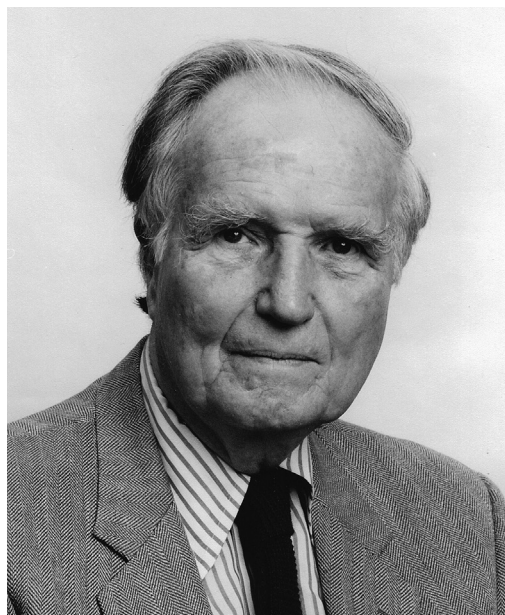
Henry never lost his enthusiasm for life or his love of learning. A short time before his death he observed, "It is never too late to learn, never too late to change, to develop, never too late to learn to love." Henry once said, "Anthroposophical ideas keep one young." His enduring physical and mental vigor, his openness to new ideas, and his unflagging interest in the world testify to the truth of that insight.

Henry Barnes was an anthroposophist all his adult life. Through Anthroposophy he understood that the death of the physical body is a birth into the spiritual world and that the spiritual aspects of the human being continue to exist and to develop. Shortly before his wife, Christy, died, Henry sat at her bedside, took her hand, and said, "Christy, the best is yet to come!"

Henry approached his own death consciously and without fear, taking leave of each of the many family members, friends, and colleagues who came to

visit him in his last days. In his dying, as in his long, productive life, he was a noble and inspiring example. One of the hundreds of Waldorf teachers and students whom Henry deeply influenced recalls: "Henry told me something once that I have used in every class I have ever taught. He said, 'The teacher should be like a sun shining in the front of the room, radiating light, warmth, love, and goodness upon all of the children sitting before him.'"

Henry Barnes, in every domain of his life, was just such a benevolent, radiant sun. His warmth, compassion, generosity, and wisdom touched, enriched, and changed the lives of many. We at *Renewal* are deeply grateful for his encouragement, help, and inspiration. ☺



Henry Barnes in the 1980s, shortly after his "retirement"

Our thanks to John Michael Barnes and Marion MacKaye Barnes Ober for providing photographs and facts pertaining to their father.

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The Winged Horse

An Essay on the Art of Reading

BY HENRY BARNES

The following is a slightly shortened version of an article that first appeared in Education as an Art, a magazine about Waldorf Education published for some years by the Rudolf Steiner School of New York. The original piece was reprinted in a collection of articles published in 2003 on the occasion of the school's seventy-fifth anniversary. Dating probably from the 1980s, the article is as relevant and inspiring now as it no doubt was then.

—R. E. K.



Pegasus, the winged horse, symbol of the human imagination, which can soar into the heavens or visit in a moment any place upon the Earth

Yes, there Bellerophon sat, on the back of Pegasus, the winged horse. But what a bound did Pegasus make, when for the first time he felt the weight of a mortal man upon his loins. A bound, indeed. Before he had time to draw a breath, Bellerophon found himself five hundred feet aloft, and still shooting upward, while the winged horse snorted and trembled with terror and anger. Upward he went, up, up, up until he plunged into the cold, misty bosom of a cloud, at which, only a little while before, Bellerophon had been gazing and fancying it a very pleasant spot. Then again out of the cloud, Pegasus shot down like a thunderbolt, as if he meant to dash both himself and his rider headlong against a rock. Then he went through about a thousand of the wildest caprioles that had ever been performed either by a bird or a horse.

Grandfather paused in his reading. The young boy let out a long breath and laughed out loud. What a ride! The old man read on, and the boy's eyes shone as he soared in his imagination on the back

of the winged horse. His heart beat in rhythm with the powerful sweep of the language, and his eyes followed each change of expression on his grandfather's face. The boy watched the old man's hands twist and flutter and dive as he showed how Pegasus soared and plunged on the wild flight.

The boy was just six years old, and he was hearing for the first time Nathaniel Hawthorne's wonderful retelling of the story of Pegasus and Bellerophon. He asked for the story many times again and often gazed intently at the picture of the winged steed and his young master on the cover of the book.

When the boy first heard the story, he had not yet entered the first grade nor could he write his own name. The black printed marks on the white page were mysterious and enchanted forms for him, meaningless and uninteresting in themselves, but from which grownups freed the magic pictures that captured his imagination. And this hidden art the grown-ups called "reading."

Each time the story was read aloud, the little boy entered into it as though he were hearing it for the first time. Pegasus became a familiar companion to him. He saw him rearing in the clouds, and when the sunlight caught the gleaming silver wing of an airplane far up in the blue sky, he cried, "See, there's Pegasus."

A few years later came the great moment when he again discovered the copy of Hawthorne's *Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales for Boys and Girls* and curled up to read about his beloved Pegasus for the first time himself. And as he read, he once again waited with Bellerophon at the spring and saw

Pegasus descend in gleaming spirals from the blue sky and alight on the green grass by the fountain. He did not see the **O**s and **S**s and **B**s that his eyes read, for he was far away on the slopes of Mount Helicon. The long words of Latin origin and the difficult Greek names did not impede his progress; they were already familiar to his ear and he skimmed over them, savoring their exotic quality, at the same time relishing the more familiar words whose meaning he knew.

When had this boy first started to learn to read? It was not in his reading lessons in school, when he first struggled to spell out words, but rather when he listened to the stories that were told and read aloud to him and into which he entered with his whole being. For reading is an art—the art of entering with one’s whole soul into an experience outside oneself. It is a gleaning of the sunlight hidden in the hard kernel of the printed word.

In its widest meaning, the term “reading” is not bound to the printed page. We speak of “reading” a map, the stars, another person’s mind and facial expression. Reading is always an intuitive divining of a meaning that can be expressed in many ways. It is always an inner, creative process. The art of deciphering words printed on a page is a specialized form of reading that should no more be confused with the art of reading than the technique of raising and lowering fingers should be confused with the art of the pianist.

Today in educational circles, when reading is usually identified with the mechanics of deciphering, it is well to remember that many profound thinkers have been poor readers, typically learning to read very late. Many great creative writers have been poor spellers, and some of the greatest “readers of life” would do poorly on current reading comprehension tests.

Much research has been done on the technique of reading, but the essence of how we learn to read remains, I believe, a mystery. It is a living process, like learning to swim or play the violin, which can only be grasped by doing it, and can never be fully analyzed or reduced to mechanical principles. The key to success is the enjoyment and love of the great stories and poems that are the element in which the reader swims. Before a child ever opens a printed reader, we teachers and parents must have done everything in our power to strengthen the inner muscles of the imagination and to awaken a

love and enthusiasm for the living literature that the child is to read.

For this reason, in a Waldorf school, the children begin to read only after the letters of the alphabet have been developed out of imaginative pictures and after the young students have been steeped in the hearing, retelling, and acting out of the stories that they will later read.

Toward the end of the first grade, two or three favorite stories that have been told by the teacher are condensed into a few short sentences. The children copy these, and thus each child has made her own first reader. Only then does she meet these same stories in a printed book.

The children learn new words, learn to sound out difficult words, and practice spelling, but this necessary work is in special sessions that parallel the reading lessons. It is not allowed to destroy the germinating, imaginative process of the reading itself.

What then makes a good reader for young children? Is it the scientifically streamlined text that tells a simple and obvious story in words of one syllable, adding a measured dose of new words in each chapter? Is this the way life chooses? If so, we should speak a “graded speech” in the presence of the young. No! We should expose them to the full richness of adult language, which is the matrix out of which, by imitation, their individual language grows.

Nathaniel Hawthorne never taught school but wrote some of the living stories that educated generations of Americans. In 1851 in his *Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales for Boys and Girls*, this great American educator wrote:

In performing this pleasant task,—for it has been really a task fit for hot weather, and one of the



Henry Barnes at around age four, perhaps enjoying for the first time on his own evocative illustrations of Pegasus and Bellerophon

most agreeable, of literary kind, which he ever undertook,—the author has not always thought it necessary to write downward in order to meet the comprehension of children. He has generally suffered the theme to soar, whenever such was its tendency, and when he himself was buoyant enough to follow without effort. Children possess an unestimated sensibility to whatever is deep or high, in imagination or feeling, so long as it is simple, likewise. It is only the artificial and the complex that bewilders them.

It is not the poverty-stricken rendering of obvious and ordinary events that we should give children as their first experiences of reading. Let us have the courage to do what our forefathers did when they gave us fairy tales, myths, legends, and sagas told by masters of language. Let us avoid what is artificial and complex. If the imagination that created the pictures of the fairy tales and other great stories of the past is deep and pure, and if the thought underlying them is clear and true, then with the right guidance, the difficulties of vocabulary will prove no stumbling block and the beauty of the language will itself prove a most potent educational force.

Let us have confidence in the buoyancy of language, as we do in that of water, for language is one of the great creative powers of the race. And let us not fail to value the educative power of what is half understood in what the children read. This strange word, often beautiful in its sounds, placed like an emerald in its native rock, stirs the imagination and allows the child's soul to surmise a shadowy world that he will one day understand but that now is veiled in

mystery. Isn't this reaching out to grasp what cannot yet be fully understood an important part of all growth?

The question may very naturally arise: Should children read and hear stories and poems that tell of tragedy or present some gruesome and fearful incident? Is the death of Jesus on the Cross or the devouring of Little Red Riding Hood's

grandmother by the wolf a fit matter for a child of five, six, seven, or eight? The answer depends on how the incident is depicted. The event can be presented physically, realistically, in its bloody detail. Or it can be presented artistically so that it is a fact grasped by the imagination, like a picture in a dream. Experience usually shows that it is the realistic fact that shocks and frightens a child. But if an incident is described in the spirit of a fairy tale, as something happening in a special time and place, the same boy or girl will not be troubled at all. And life is, in fact, woven of good and evil, of love and hate. Life should be allowed to speak to the child. It is life alone that can educate for life.

A child cannot understand the meaning of the Crucifixion. But when he hears or reads the quaint old folk legend of Robin Redbreast, which tells how a little bird sat on the edge of its nest, grieving, as it watched the bowed head of Jesus on the Cross, a picture is planted like a seed in his heart that will grow as the child grows. With the little bird, the child says, "No one comes to soothe His pain, so I will comfort Him." And whenever the child watches a fat robin plucking at insects in the grass, he will remember how the legend tells how the little bird flew to the Cross and was able to pull a thorn out of the Savior's head, and how at the same time a drop of blood fell upon the bird's breast. And Jesus' words, "As an eternal reminder, dear Bird, thou and thy family will carry this red spot on your breast and men shall call thee Robin Redbreast," will echo in the child's heart with a tender joy. Understanding for the event on Golgotha will blossom later, but it will be nourished from the half-remembered soil of



Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), a writer who recognized the potential of children to grasp whatever is rich in feeling and imagination



Waldorf first graders learn the letters of the alphabet as imaginative pictures connected to a story.

this early experience. And a whole lifetime is not too long to understand life's central mysteries.

Since the beginning of written language, reading has never been the problem that it is considered to be today. It will not cease to be a problem so long as the technique of reading is regarded as an end and not a means. Reading is the instrument of a great art, of which the reading of the printed word is one specialized and highly abstract part. Let us have the courage to teach the art, and we will find that the nightmare of "reading difficulties" and its attendant train of "remedial reading" practices



*Robin Redbreast, who
can leave the seed of
compassion in a child's
heart*

are not as inevitable and frightening as they appear to be. Our children's bodies will grow strong if we feed them natural, healthy foods. Their souls will grow strong on a diet of the truly great, imaginative literature of the human race.

Phonetics, word associations, sentence structure, and all the techniques of good reading must be taught and drilled, but do not let us confuse these with reading. As teachers, let us prepare our reading lessons so that they serve to stir and strengthen the wings of the imagination, which may help our children to read the reality of life when they enter it as adult human beings. ☉

From the Association, continued

made by a single person or by members of a group contending with each other. Collaborative leadership requires that we respect the opinion of every individual and look for the wisdom in it; that we listen without bias to opinions that differ from our own; that we can compromise on our own views and needs; and that we are willing to unite in service to a shared ideal. If we don't already have these capacities, collaborative leadership and consensus decision-making will help us develop them.

Collaborative leadership is part of the social and cultural renewal that Rudolf Steiner envisioned as part of the healthy evolution of human society. Each Waldorf school community, as well as the Association, is a place where this work of the future can begin. Each Waldorf school is an experiment not only in the educational realm but also in the social and organizational domains. Collaborative, consensus-based decision-making can seem inefficient compared to the leadership models that dominate our economic and political life. But it is the next necessary step to creating a society that is based on a spiritual view of the human being.

In practicing and acquiring the skills necessary to this way of working together, we can be an example to the world outside. Also, we can provide an inspirational model to our children to bring with them into a future we will not see. ☉

—Patrice Maynard, Leader for
Outreach and Development

From the Editor, continued

Today the image of the human being—and of all life, including that of a cat—found in mainstream education and in the media is a materialistic and mechanistic one: we are biological machines; our thoughts and emotions are the result of chemical reactions in the brain and body; when the physical body dies and decomposes, the individual being also disappears.

Waldorf Education does not promote or teach any particular religious doctrine. But underlying the education and its curriculum is a certain view of the world and the human being that differs from that of materialism. This perspective holds that there is a spiritual dimension in every human being that survives and transcends physical death.

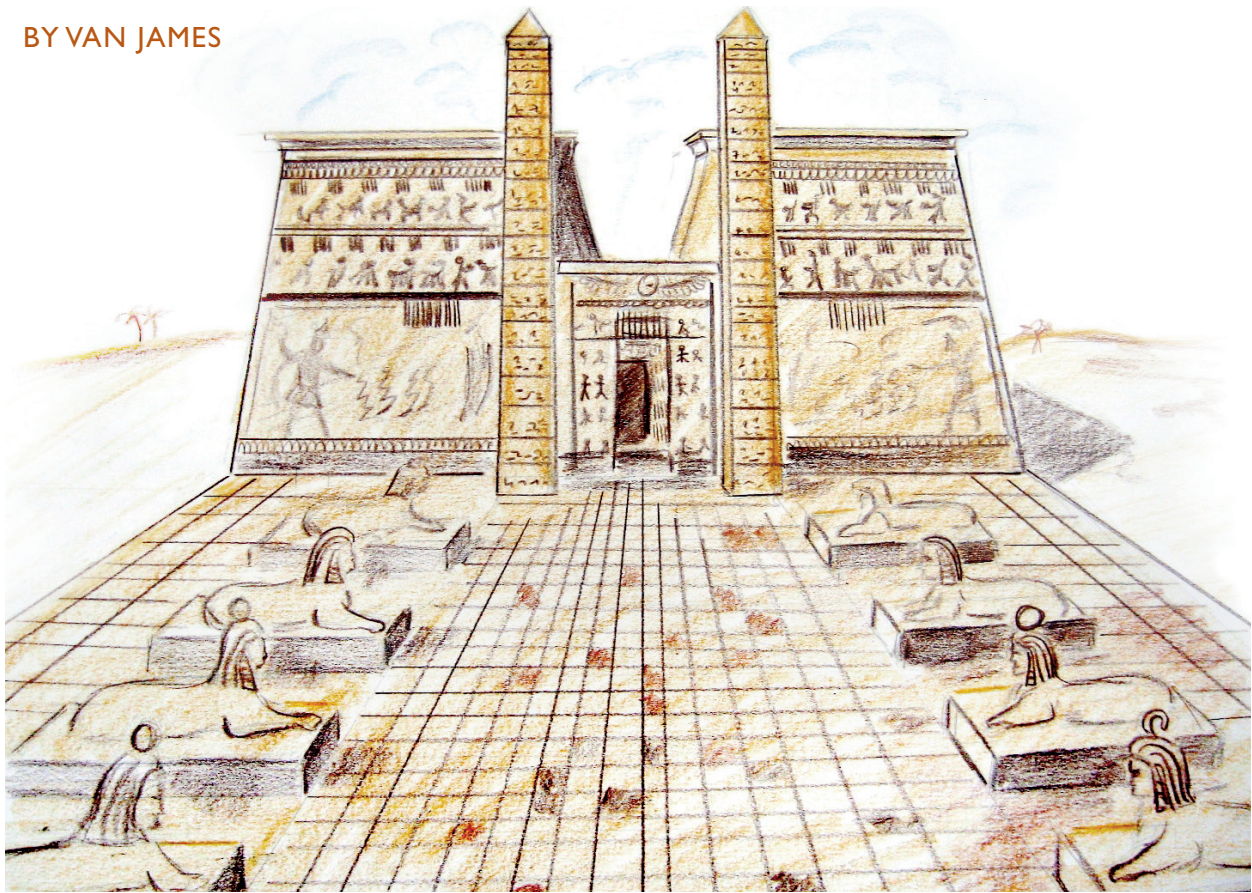
The children in a Waldorf school recite each morning a verse that affirms the goodness of the world and the reality of spirit. They study the great religions of the world and the lives of the moral and spiritual heroes of different cultures. Through their daily involvement with music, painting, drawing, and poetry, they have access to the experiences of transcendence that the arts provide. And they study the various kingdoms of nature with an approach that seeks to inspire awe, wonder, and reverence.

Through these activities, Waldorf Education may awaken in children and young people the seed of a sense of the eternal nature of life and consciousness. If it does so, that may be the greatest gift it has to offer. ☉

Education as Architecture

Building From the Ground Up

BY VAN JAMES



A twelfth grader's rendering of an Egyptian pylon temple

At least three times in her Waldorf schooling, a Waldorf student is involved in the building arts. In the kindergarten, it is a make-believe house that she constructs together with her playmates out of the materials at hand. In the third grade, it is a real structure—perhaps an actual playhouse that will serve the school for years to come. In the twelfth grade, during the block on architecture, the building is most likely an envisioned one, perhaps the student's ideal, future home for which she makes an architectural plan and model. In this article, artist and master Waldorf teacher Van James looks at these three experiences of building as exemplifying the three types of learning and of knowing that a child needs to develop during the school years.

—R. E. K.

The construction of a building is like the education of a child. The structure must include a solid foundation, load-bearing supports, and a protective, roof-like enclosure. The walls and roof of a building cannot be put into place before the foundation is laid, and, if the structure is to stand the test of time, the foundation, supports, and load must be strong and enduring. This process of creating a building is a good metaphor for the education of a child.

The foundation of early childhood education is the young child's learning through imitation of the adults in her environment and through active, joyful, imaginative play. The young child needs direct, hands-on learning, which leads to what Jane Healy—well-known writer on child development and education—calls concrete knowing. Howard Gardner, originator of the theory of the “seven intelligences,” refers to this capacity as intuitive knowing. Healthy

daily rhythms, wholesome nourishment, and patient, loving guidance from adults further strengthen the child's capacity for practical, intuitive learning and concrete knowing. Television, video, and computer games cannot provide this type of learning and, in fact, undermine it.

In a Waldorf kindergarten there is a curious piece of wooden furniture whose purpose is to encourage imaginative play. It looks like a bench with side panels and a rail over its top. These "playstands" can be placed together and draped with cloth by the children to create indoor dwellings or temporary playhouses. They are especially designed for open-ended, creative play. The children spend hours arranging and rearranging the playstands, making "houses," "castles," and "forts" and enacting their own imagined dramas of life in them. The kindergarten is clearly a builder, and learns basic mechanics, physics, engineering, architecture, social science, and design principles from real, direct, experiences. These experiences translate into a concrete knowing, free of abstract theory.

In the elementary school years, the walls and columns of the child's education are erected. These supportive structures involve a different form of learning, called by Healy symbolic knowing. Gardner refers to it as notational knowledge. Symbolic knowing is acquired through active participation in the arts. Tones, colors, forms, words, and gestures



Kindergarten children use a playstand, silk cloths, and giant wooden clothespins to create a home to play in.



A playhouse at the Honolulu Waldorf School constructed by students and adults as part of a third-grade main-lesson block on building

are all symbolic language tools that allow the child to communicate at deeper levels of cognition than words alone permit. The children experience and know more than they can express verbally, and the arts allow them to do so.

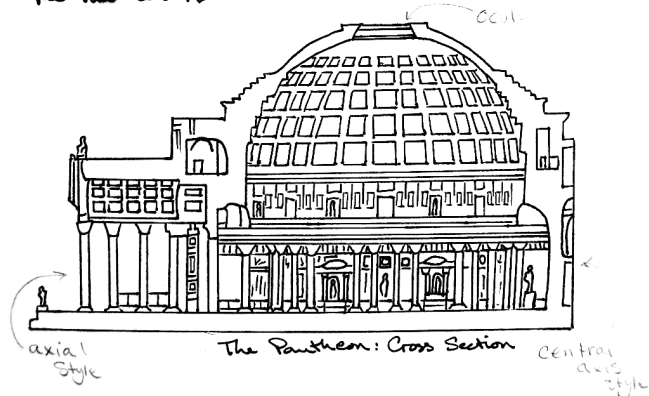
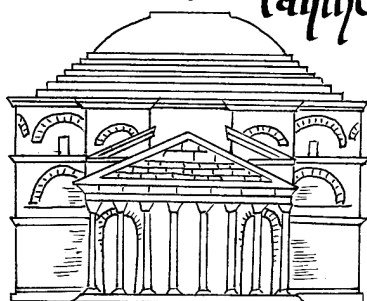
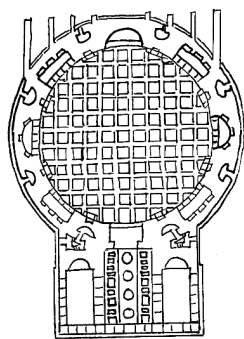
Using the arts as a pedagogical tool also affects the moral development of the child. Working with the expressive language of sharp and flat, warm and cool, light and dark, concave and convex, curved and straight, slow and fast, the child learns to balance extremes, to harmonize opposites, and to perceive the moment when beauty and goodness are fully manifested. Also, the imaginative faculty, strengthened through the arts, becomes in the moral realm the ability to see in advance the effects of one's deeds.

Another sine qua non of the moral life is a loving interest in the world. Working with the materials with which one can bring something of beauty into the world—the paint, clay, paper, the flute—helps the student develop this positive relation to what is outside himself.

The Waldorf class teacher seeks to integrate art into the study of each academic subject, be it math or English, astronomy or history. Each Waldorf lesson, presenting some academic subject, includes an artistic activity that allows the students to experience the content in an active and aesthetic way. In addition, the children have classes devoted to singing, playing musical instruments, handwork, modeling clay, drawing, and painting on a regular, even daily, basis.

Roman Architecture

The Pantheon



Main-lesson book drawings of the Roman Pantheon from the twelfth-grade block on architecture

The Waldorf curriculum for the third grade, while rich in the arts, at the same time contains much that is practical and concrete. The third graders study farming, gardening, food, shelter, tools, clothing, and other mundane matters. They learn about the different kinds of dwellings from around the world and how these are suited to local geography, climate, and materials. Models of buildings are often created by the students.

Working with their teacher and with parents who have building skills and experience, the third graders usually do a larger building project for the school or community. It may be a playhouse for the kindergarten or grade school play area, a brick wall around the school garden, or a greenhouse, but it is always a useful construction, one that needs to be planned well in advance, drawn up, and organized down to every little detail. The teacher sees to it that every child in the class participates actively. In all these practical projects, the children are called to make artistic and aesthetic judgments—to engage their cognitive feeling or emotional intelligence.

While the project issues in a concrete result—a real and useful structure—it involves countless artistic decisions and much aesthetically demanding work. Not only in the third grade, but throughout the eight years of the Waldorf elementary school, the students experience both the concrete and the aesthetic, or symbolic, in the process of learning. Thus the foundation of the edifice of the child's education is strengthened and the supporting members added.

In the Waldorf high school, the structure of the young person's education receives a capping, protective ceiling as well as an element of the load of self-responsibility. This load is what Healy calls abstract knowing, and it comes with an increased awakening of critical thinking capacities. Gardner calls it formal conceptual knowledge. With this soul capacity of abstract, analytical thinking, the young person is now able, to a greater degree, to take on her own further education and to determine through informed decisions the course and direction of her life.

The twelfth-grade class of a Waldorf school has a main-lesson block that deals with the history and appreciation of architecture. It covers the evolution of architecture, its importance in human culture, and the principles of design and construction. Students study various building techniques and materials and do research projects that culminate in oral and written reports. They go on field trips, construct models of historic or student-designed buildings, and give reports on modern and contemporary architects and on recent developments in the field, such as the trend toward ecologically friendly and energy-saving architecture. Some may do a brief internship in the office of a professional architect.

In this way the twelfth grader engages concrete, symbolic, and abstract knowing in the rigorous study of the subject. In the other study blocks in the Waldorf high school as well, this cultivation of the adolescent's newly emerging capacity for abstract, analytical thinking takes place along with the continued development of hands-on and aesthetic learning. The practical and artistic forms of learning ground and bolster the abstract knowledge that is pursued in the upper grades and into adult life. In the process, these other ways of knowing are deepened and strengthened. Maintenance, renovation, and upgrading are essential to every long-term building project.

The three architectural elements of foundation, support, and load are manifest in the developmental

stages of the child, as understood by Rudolf Steiner. First there is learning through doing and becoming grounded in the real world through concrete knowledge. This is the “playhouse” stage in the kindergarten. Steiner points to *imitation* as the key faculty that makes this kind of knowing possible. Then there is learning enhanced by feeling and aesthetic experience and the grasping of the relationship between the real and the symbolic. The third graders constructing a building that is of use to the school exemplifies this stage. According to Steiner, the *authority* of a parent, teacher, or guide who serves as a model for the child is important at this stage. Finally there is conceptual

and abstract learning with its clarity and precision of understanding. For Steiner, this is the *judgment-forming* phase of knowing. The high school students studying the history and principles of architecture are involved in this type of learning.

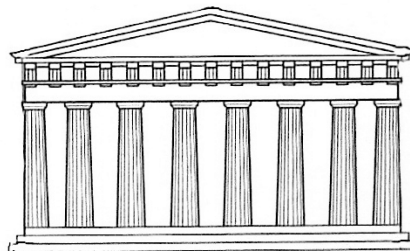
As Jane Healy points out, we know water concretely by bathing in it, drinking it, and playing in it (foundation). We know water symbolically by singing about it, painting it, telling and writing stories about it (support). We know water abstractly by calculating its properties (H_2O) and collecting data about it (load). To know water only in a scientific, formulaic way is certainly not to grasp its essence. We need to experience each type of knowing about water in order to fully understand it. This applies to all phenomena in the world.

Just as it is important to build a building “from the ground up,” it is important that the child develop these types of learning skills in their proper order—concrete foundation, symbolic support, and abstract load. A roof added before a building has adequate foundation and support compromises the entire structure. A premature focus on intellectual learning may bring apparent, striking short-term results, but may be problematic in the long run. Healy holds that burdening the young child with intense academic learning early on can in the long term compromise the healthy and full development of his intellectual capacity and quality of life.

LOAD
HIGH SCHOOL

SUPPORT
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOUNDATION
KINDERGARTEN



ABSTRACT KNOWING

SYMBOLIC KNOWING

CONCRETE KNOWING

If the three types of knowing are encouraged at the appropriate times in a child's schooling, a balanced and harmonious capacity for learning develops.

Education, like the construction of a building, should be concerned with enduring consequences. Waldorf Education does not look for short-term results—a high grade on this or that achievement test—but seeks to provide the basis for a lifetime of learning. Therefore, Waldorf can seem out of step with the mainstream education of today that emphasizes

early academics, high-stakes testing, and competitive learning. The latter, however, is an educational “A-frame”—almost all load and roof with little foundation or support. In contrast, Waldorf Education focuses on laying a firm foundation in early childhood, adding supportive pillars in the elementary

and middle school years, and only then developing the culminating intellectual capacities during the high school years. This is the architecture of an education that prepares the child, from the ground up, for a full and rich life of creative discovery and practical service. ☺

Resources

Howard Gardner, *Art and Human Development* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1990).

Jane Healy, *Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

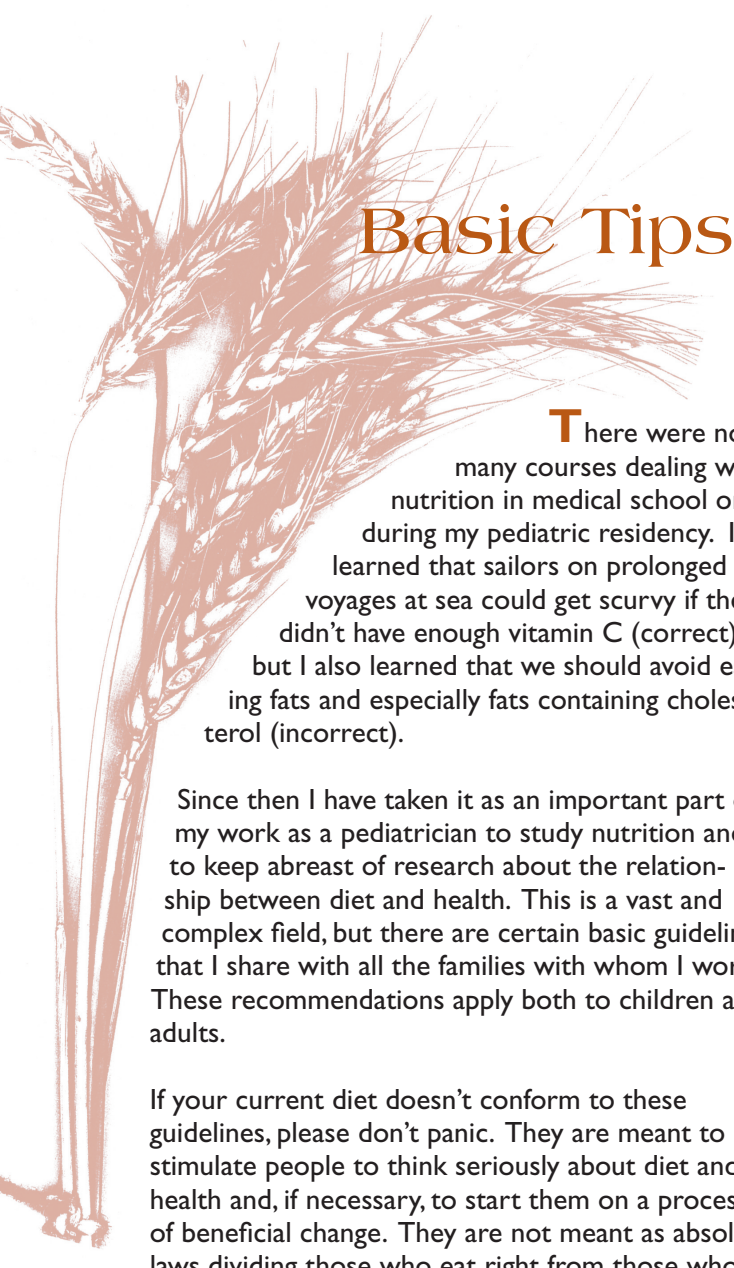
Rudolf Steiner, *The Spirit of the Waldorf School* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1999).



VAN JAMES is a teaching artist at the Honolulu Waldorf High School and a guest instructor at Rudolf Steiner College in California and at Taruna College in New Zealand. He is chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawaii and travels widely as an arts advocate, especially in Asia. He is the author of several books on art and archaeology, and he has two grandsons attending the Honolulu Waldorf School.

Basic Tips for a Healthful Diet

BY SUSAN R. JOHNSON, MD



There were not many courses dealing with nutrition in medical school or during my pediatric residency. I learned that sailors on prolonged voyages at sea could get scurvy if they didn't have enough vitamin C (correct), but I also learned that we should avoid eating fats and especially fats containing cholesterol (incorrect).

Since then I have taken it as an important part of my work as a pediatrician to study nutrition and to keep abreast of research about the relationship between diet and health. This is a vast and complex field, but there are certain basic guidelines that I share with all the families with whom I work. These recommendations apply both to children and adults.

If your current diet doesn't conform to these guidelines, please don't panic. They are meant to stimulate people to think seriously about diet and health and, if necessary, to start them on a process of beneficial change. They are not meant as absolute laws dividing those who eat right from those who do not.

Reduce or eliminate white sugar and white flour from your diet

Sugar and white flour products are refined carbohydrates that require enzymes to be processed. Because these substances contain few or no minerals, vitamins, or enzymes of their own, they continually deplete our body's supplies. Our digestive organs do not function well without a good supply of vitamins, enzymes, and minerals, and therefore our digestion is weakened by such refined products.

Consuming sugary foods, especially in the absence of proteins and fats, stimulates the pancreas to oversecrete insulin. This response causes a rapid drop in the blood sugar level—hypoglycemia—which can lead to irritability and erratic behavior. Hypoglycemia also triggers the release of stress

hormones that suppress the immune system. A sugar-rich diet that overstimulates the pancreas may be a cause of the rise of type II diabetes among adolescents. Caffeine also stimulates insulin release from the pancreas, which is why one craves carbohydrates or sweets after drinking a can of diet soda or cup of coffee.

Many nutritionists believe that too much sugar in the diet can cause an overgrowth of candida (a form of yeast) in the gastrointestinal tract and may lead to "leaky gut" syndrome. In this condition, the lining of the intestines becomes inflamed and allows food particles to be passed into the bloodstream before being properly broken down. The immune system overreacts to these partially digested food particles, and allergies and food sensitivities result. There are also direct toxic effects from the by-products secreted by the yeast and from other "unhealthy" bacteria that thrive in our intestines when we consume too much sugar.

Instead of drinking sugar-sweetened fruit drinks and sodas, choose filtered or other good quality water, herbal teas, and 100 percent fruit juice diluted with tea or sparkling water. Avoid full-strength fruit juices. They may contain as much sugar in the form of fructose as a candy bar and can cause a



The industrious honeybee transforms plant nectar gathered from flowers into a natural sweetener rich in minerals and vitamins.

similar reaction. Avoid artificial sweeteners such as NutraSweet™ and aspartame commonly found in diet drinks.

These sweeteners mimic neurotransmitters in the brain and have been associated with neurological symptoms in children (and adults), such as headaches, dizziness, fatigue, and anxiety. Instead of white sugar and artificial sweeteners, use raw honey (for children older than two years) or Grade B maple syrup, in moderation.

Eat foods that contain beneficial intestinal microorganisms like bifidobacterium and lactobacillus

Homemade yogurt and kefir as well as fermented cabbage and beets are rich in these good bacteria. Please see Sally Fallon's book *Nourishing Traditions* for recipes and more information.

If they have taken an antibiotic recently, children and adults should take a good quality probiotic—a supplement containing these beneficial microorganisms—at bedtime for four months. Antibiotics destroy all the helpful intestinal bacteria and promote the growth of yeast and parasites in the intestines.

Eat whole grains as a dietary staple

Whole grains provide a balance of carbohydrates, protein, fats, minerals, and vitamins. Nearly every traditional culture has had one or more of the whole grains—wheat, rye, oats, millet, rice, corn, barley—as a primary source of nutrition. Whole grains can be eaten in the form of bread, pasta, or as a cooked cereal. Some nutritionists, including Sally Fallon, recommend soaking and fermenting whole grains before cooking them. The outer layer of whole grains contains phytic acid, which can combine with calcium, magnesium, copper, iron, and zinc in the intestinal tract and block absorption of these minerals.

Fallon believes that eating a lot of unfermented whole grains can lead to mineral deficiency and bone loss. When grains are soaked and allowed to ferment, enzymes from lactobacilli and other microorganisms break down and neutralize the phytic acid. Soaking and fermenting also start to break down gluten and other hard-to-digest proteins found in oats, wheat, rye, and barley. Brown rice and whole millet do not contain gluten and have lower amounts of phytic acid, and so it is less crucial to soak them.



The sugar maple (acer saccharum) produces a sweet sap that when boiled down into maple syrup is a wholesome, natural substitute for white sugar.

Use good quality fats and oils

For many years after medical school I did not eat butter and drank only nonfat milk. But good quality fats and oils are important for our health. Infants and children, especially, need fats and their accompanying vitamins and minerals for the myelination of their nervous systems. Myelin is the protective sheath that surrounds and protects nerve fibers.

Research indicates that omega-3 fatty acids are critical for brain growth, myelination, and the health of the immune system and the heart. Pharmaceutical grade cod liver oil is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, as is expeller-pressed organic flaxseed oil. Flaxseed oil can be used to dress a salad or mixed with other uncooked foods. It is important to note that children and adults eating a high sugar/pasta diet are often depleted of the vitamins and minerals that the body uses to convert flaxseed oil to a fat that the brain can utilize. Extra virgin olive oil has a high enzyme content and is rich in antioxidants. It is also good in salads.

Butter, ghee, coconut oil, and olive oil are good for cooking and baking. Avoid cooking with corn,



These healthy looking carrots, leeks, and beets are obviously organically grown, without chemical fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides.

sunflower, soybean, safflower, and cottonseed oils. High heat causes these unsaturated oils to change their form and become toxic to our bodies. Peanut oil and sesame oil are more stable for frying, but they both contain high percentages of omega-6 fats. Diets high in omega-6 fats relative to omega-3 fats promote inflammation in the body.

Organic butter from pasture-fed (rather than soy- or cottonseed-fed) cows is an excellent source of fat. Organic butter is rich in the fat-soluble vitamins (especially A and D) and contains Activator X, which helps the body absorb and utilize both common and trace minerals.

Canola oil now found widely even in natural food stores and products is best avoided. Derived from rapeseed, it easily becomes rancid, and its omega-3 fatty acids are transformed into more harmful fatty acids—similar to those in margarine—during processing. There is a concern that consumption of canola oil can actually cause a deficiency of vitamin E.

Margarine is among the worst foods for our body. This partially hydrogenated fat is thought to block utilization of essential fatty acids and thereby impair the immune system. Consumption of hydrogenated fats is associated with many serious diseases including cancer, arteriosclerosis, diabetes, obesity, bone and joint problems, and immune system dysfunction.

Use whole, organic, nonpasteurized milk and milk products

I learned during my training in Switzerland that nonorganic, ultrapasteurized, homogenized milk is not a healthful food. Pasteurization destroys most of the enzymes found in milk. These enzymes help predigest the lactose sugar and help in mineral absorption. The heating of the milk in pasteurization also destroys vitamins B-6 and B-12. B-12 is essential to the health of the nervous system, and a B-12 deficiency can lead to serious behavioral problems such as irrational rage.

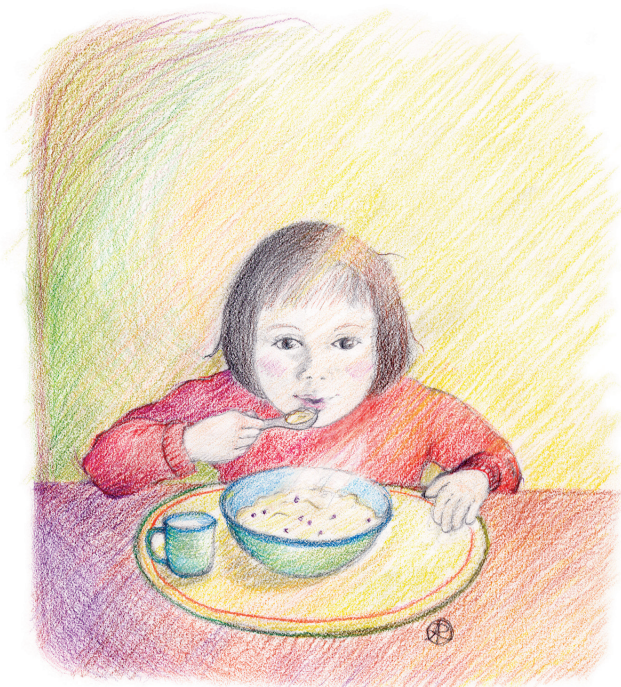
Organic, whole, raw milk from pasture-fed cows is an excellent food. This milk, as well as butter, kefir, cheese, yogurt, sour cream, and quark made from it are good sources of high-quality fat, vitamins, and minerals. While some children are allergic to milk, they usually can tolerate kefir, yogurt, butter, and cream. The fermentation process used to make homemade yogurt and kefir converts the double sugar of lactose to the single sugar galactose, which is much easier to digest. The fermentation process also breaks down the milk protein casein, so that it is more easily digested.

Use biodynamic or organic vegetables and fruits

Biodynamic agriculture is a type of organic farming that was developed by Rudolf Steiner, the founder



Raphael Garden at Rudolf Steiner College, in Fair Oaks, California, is a biodynamic farm. It employs organic methods but also uses potentized, natural preparations on the soil to produce especially nutritious crops.



A warm breakfast of oatmeal is an auspicious start to the day for a child or for an adult.

of Waldorf Education. Biodynamic products, like other organic products, contain higher amounts of enzymes, vitamins, and minerals. Commercially farmed soils have become depleted of minerals and cannot produce nutritious foods. Some commercial oranges do not contain any vitamin C. A healthful diet includes large amounts of fresh vegetables and fruits, both cooked and raw. Cooking vegetables with lemon juice helps to preserve their vitamin content. Fermented vegetables, like sauerkraut, pickled carrots, cucumbers, and beets, are good sources of enzymes. Grapes, figs, avocados, dates, bananas, papayas, pineapples, kiwis, and mangoes are fruits with a high enzyme content.

Create a positive atmosphere around meal-times

Certain less tangible elements also belong to nutrition. It is important at mealtimes to create a space free of the hurry and tensions of the day. To light a candle at mealtimes and to sing or say a blessing to express thankfulness brings a mood of quiet and reminds us to be grateful of the gift of food about to be shared.

Digestion occurs best and nutrition is optimized when our mealtimes are taken in a calm, warm, and loving social atmosphere. ☺

SUSAN R. JOHNSON is a pediatrician specializing in developmental and behavioral problems in children. She has a private practice in Colfax, California, and is consulting physician to a number of Waldorf schools. Her website www.YouAndYourChildsHealth.org contains much useful information for parents.

A Healthy Breakfast

Most ready-to-eat, boxed breakfast cereals are made by the extrusion process in which flakes are formed under high temperature and pressure. This destroys many valuable nutrients and makes certain proteins toxic. Some breakfast-cereal makers are using genetically modified grains to make their products. In the making of granola, the grains are cooked by dry heat and are therefore not easily digestible.

Here is an easy recipe for oatmeal. You will need some whey for the recipe. To obtain it, scoop out a couple of tablespoons from a container of organic, whole milk yogurt. In a few hours a clear liquid will have filled in the scooped-out area. This is whey.

In the evening heat a cup of water in a saucepan until it is warm. Add a half-cup of organic oat flakes—also called rolled oats—as well as two tablespoons of whey. Lemon juice or vinegar can substitute for the whey.

Cover the pan and let the oats soak overnight. In the morning, add another cup of water to the oats, plus one-half teaspoon of sea salt, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for three to five minutes. One to two tablespoons of ground flaxseeds can be stirred in, along with coconut flakes, almonds that have been soaked and slow-roasted, and biodynamic or organic raisins. The oatmeal is creamy and tastes great plain or with applesauce, butter, maple syrup, or raw honey.

The Blessing of Play

How Children and Adults Benefit from Apparently Purposeless Amusements

BY JULIANNA LICHATZ

Play is the necessary basis for the healthy physical, psychological, social, and cognitive development of the child. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other professional health organizations have recently drawn attention to this fact. Rudolf Steiner, who called play “the work of children,” understood its importance a century ago. In a conference with the teachers of the first Waldorf school on June 14, 1920, Steiner said: “A child who is slow in his play will be slow also in his thinking, in everything that is usually summed up as life experience. The same seriousness engendered in play will reappear in adult life as work.”

In much of mainstream education, play is disappearing. Even kindergarten children now sit at desks and

do academic work—and then go home to do homework—rather than engage in free, imaginative play. In many schools, recess periods that provide the opportunity for outdoor play and games have been eliminated to allow for more classroom time. In Waldorf schools, however, play is still valued. Indeed, Waldorf kindergartens organize their day around the importance of play. For the older students, as well, play, besides filling recess time, is integrated into many classroom activities.

Play takes various forms, each of which has a different quality and encourages a particular kind of growth. Play can be separated into three categories: physical play, creative play, and intellectual play. Physical play involves the archetypal movements: running, skipping, jumping, climbing, throwing, catching, and wrestling. Such play can occur anywhere, from open lots and fields to daycare centers and bedrooms. Children will climb trees as readily as they climb a pile of cushions in the family room. Traditional playground equipment—swings, seesaws, slides—are all designed to accommodate specific, predictable movements. Physical play also takes place in games and sports, such as tag, dodgeball, baseball, and soccer. All physical play, spontaneous and free or organized into games, helps develop young bodies by stretching and strengthening muscles, developing heart and lung capacity, and building neural connections in the brain and nervous system.

Creative play falls into two types, structural and dramatic. In structural play, children build or construct something out of the materials at hand. Structural play can take place in a sandbox, in a yard filled with scraps of wood and bricks, or in any place near water. “Adventure playgrounds,” common in Europe, encourage children to construct forts and other structures out of scrap materials. In structural play, the artistic/sculptural abilities of the child are developed.



Follow-the-leader is a form of physical play that develops coordination and attentiveness.



These children are making up and acting out a story—engaging in dramatic creative play.

In dramatic creative play, a story line or drama is acted out. Some excellent games for the early grades combine this dramatic play with chasing and tagging. One game features the hungry fox who asks Mrs. Hen for colored eggs, another the dead “Old Roger,” who lies under the apple tree and scares the old woman who has come to harvest the apples.

Dramatic play can also involve the children dressing up, imitating those around them, and acting out scenes from real life. Sometimes children will replicate in play an event that occurred earlier in the day. If children are given time to play on their own, they have an opportunity to work out scenarios that may have left them feeling uneasy. Dramatic, creative play helps develop emotional, social, and psychological strengths in a child. It allows children the space for inner counsel and, after the nine-year change, when they begin to relate to the outside world in a new way, for self-reflection.

In intellectual play, either the right, intuitive side of the brain or the left, analytical side dominates. The more intuitive play, which may overlap with creative play, encompasses artistic activities like painting, drawing, singing, or playing an instrument, and also brainstorming—the “playing” with ideas. Intuitive play may lead to the solutions of problems not easily solved by other means.

Intellectual play involving left-brain activity is more linear and logical, and often takes the form of games where consciously wrought strategy is important. Card games like Hearts or Uno and board games like chess or Mancala are traditional examples of this. Today, however, this type of intellectual play

more often takes place in video games involving patterning strategies in pursuit of a goal.

The three categories of play—physical, creative, and intellectual—involve respectively the “hands” (i.e., the physical body), the “heart” (the imagination and artistic sense), and the “head” (the thinking capacity). At each stage of child development, children are likely to engage in one form of play more than another. Young children specialize in physical and creative play. Adolescents are more drawn to intellectual play. But, ideally, in the course of the day, children will experience each of these forms of play. Many activities and games—creating and acting a fantasy trip to the Moon, learning to play the recorder, hopscotch—involve elements of each category of play. This is “wholesome play,” play that engages the entire being—head, heart, and hands.

Play, even simple physical play, is rapidly disappearing from our culture. Today children are more likely to sit playing a video game than to be outside playing. Studies show that children participate in 75 percent less physical activity than they did a century ago. Many researchers suggest that this epidemic inactivity is related to the increase in physical clumsiness among children and to learning disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Jaak Panskepp, a behavioral neuroscientist at Washington State University, has indicated a connection between the amount of play experienced, especially during a child’s early development, and ADHD.

Much of the physical activity and play that children do get is in the form of organized competitive sports, in baseball and soccer leagues, and the like. Organized sports, while sharing some attributes with play, are actually more like work, adult work. Sports



In building something—or perhaps here taking it apart—these girls are engaged in structural creative play.



For adolescents and adults—but not for young children—organized team sports can be a form of true play.

are goal-oriented: “Win the game!” They are highly organized, with coaches, fixed teams, and strict rules. Organized sports allow no downtime; children are always under the eagle eye of coach and parents. There is no opportunity for creative enterprises like construction. Children can’t dig in the dugout!

Athletics can provide an excellent opportunity for teenagers and adults to stay fit and to enjoy themselves with others. But what younger children need is wholesome, noncompetitive activities that allow them to develop healthy bodies so that later on, as adolescents and grownups, they can play sports. Organized sports for young children often have a result opposite from what is intended.

Real play, be it physical, creative, or intellectual, must be spontaneous and frivolous. It must be its own goal and justification.

A large percentage of child athletes get burned out because of premature strenuous training and intense competition. They drop out at age twelve or thirteen just when they are ready to engage in organized sports and to develop lifelong healthy athletic interests.

Real play, be it physical, creative, or intellectual, must be spontaneous and frivolous. It must be its own goal and justification. Play is based on one’s own rules; it is generated from within. Children play, and it is the process itself that captivates them, not the outcome or product.

In *The Child’s Changing Consciousness* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1996, p. 70), Rudolf Steiner says:

The difference between a child’s play and an adult’s work is that an adult’s contribution to society is governed by a sense of purpose and has to fit into outer demands, whereas the child wants to be active simply out of an inborn and natural impulse. Play activity streams outward from within. Adult work takes the opposite direction, namely inward from the periphery.

In a Waldorf kindergarten, the children may paint—engage in creative play—with the same color, red for example, week after week before moving on to another primary color. They enjoy the movement of gliding a brush over the paper; they are nourished by the color as it speaks to them and informs their movement. They are in the moment. This is play—feeling the whole being immersed in the activity, not focused on the finished product and material gain.

We adults typically have a different approach. Some years ago I was in a clay modeling class in Sweden. I was very excited about creating something and was looking forward, as I had experienced in my previous schooling, to firing the work, glazing it, firing it again, and taking home the finished product.

However, the class was based on Rudolf Steiner’s approach to art as an educational tool. For Steiner, in an educational setting, the process of artistic creation and its effect on the development of the

individual is very important. The finished product can sometimes be considered incidental. Hence, we were told that our work would be recycled and put back into the clay barrel. At first, I was surprised and a bit annoyed. Soon, I realized that the gift I took away from that class was intangible and much more valuable than something I could display on my mantelpiece.

The magical experience of play, necessary to the child’s healthy development, may also benefit us adults. Waldorf educator John Gardner writes in his essay “Pressure and the Spirit of Play” (in *Waldorf*

Schools, vol. I, ed. Ruth Pusch, Spring Valley, NY: Mercury Press, 1993, pp. 46–47):

We know that play characterizes childhood. Less often do we think of it as also being the signature of maturity. Yet Christ was speaking of the mature human being when he said, “Except . . . ye become again as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Reflection upon this saying can bring one to the thought that Christ’s admonition might be paraphrased: “Except in the spirit of play we will not realize the divine in ourselves, find the divine in the world, or participate worthily in the divine work of creation.”

The play of adults is called “recreation” or “re-creation.” It is the opportunity to renew ourselves, to seek what makes us whole. Architect Richard Dattner in his book *Design for Play* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969, p. 7) writes:

Like work, [play] is a necessity, but one we require of ourselves to maintain a healthy balance and perspective in our lives. All work and no play not only makes Jack a dull boy but deprives him of that full expression of personal freedom which makes him uniquely human.

In his essay, John Gardner makes a similar point by referring to Friedrich Schiller’s *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of the Human Being*. In 1794 the German poet and dramatist wrote: “Man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays.”

According to Gardner:

Schiller saw the thinking man bewitched by logic, the feeling man tossed by passion, the working man chained to fact. All these functions must be performed by man, but they are not exercised freely until the spirit of play finds its way into them. Play transforms the logical faculty into creative imagination. Play takes deadening work and makes it into enlivening art. Play sets aside the storm and stress of passion for the quiet sense of freedom in which love unfolds.

Our children need play, at school and at home. The wholesome, spontaneous play that they experience throughout their Waldorf schooling helps develop them into individuals able to freely give purpose and direction to their lives and communities.

We adults also need play. In a recent article in the *New York Times* (“Taking Play Seriously,” February 17, 2008), Robin Henig surveyed studies of the benefits of play and the problems that may result from its disappearance in our society. She concluded that, regardless of the scientific data, play is necessary, even if it is simply to bring joy, optimism and goodness to one’s life. The physical activity, the exercise of creativity, the activation of both intuitive and analytical faculties that are involved in true play nourish us in body, heart, and head, and make us more fully human. ○



Intellectual play—as well as other types of play—can provide stimulation, challenge, and camaraderie throughout life.



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Can Morality be Taught?

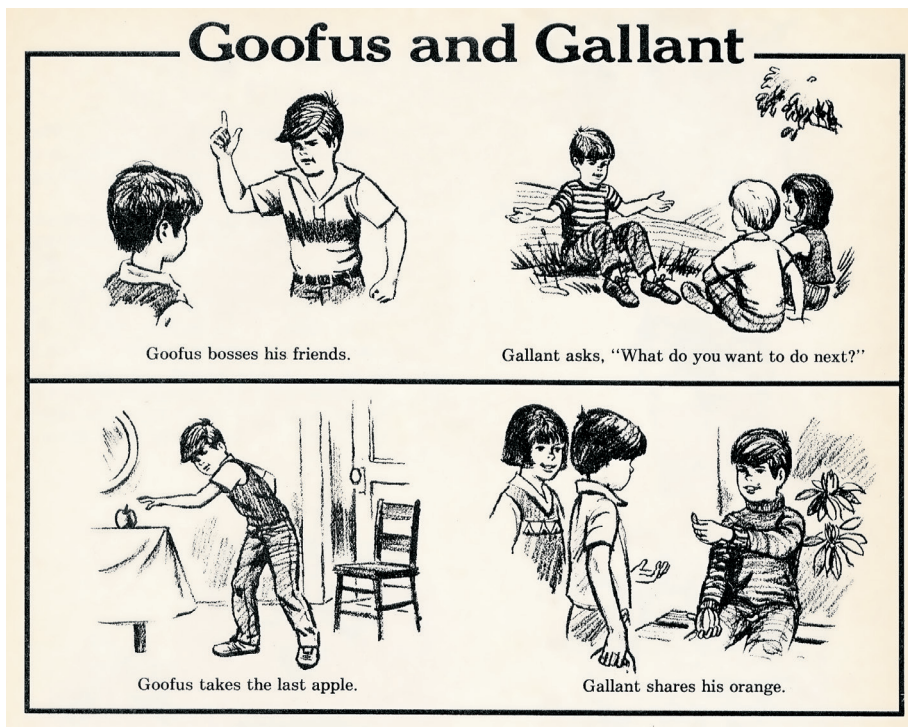
Awakening the Still, Small Voice Within

BY PATRICE MAYNARD

A generation ago, the children's magazine *Highlights for Children* had in every issue, in addition to stories, activities, and crafts, a regular section called "Goofus and Gallant." The names of these two brothers always proved prophetic. Goofus consistently did the impolite, uncivil, "wrong" thing, while Gallant always did the kind, considerate, "right" thing. While Goofus slammed the door on those coming behind him, Gallant gallantly held it open. This section was one of my favorites. I found the vignettes quite funny, but I also found them, in terms of their obvious intent, not especially convincing. A well-meaning editor at *Highlights for Children* felt that "Goofus and Gallant" was an effective way to teach morality. But it was clear to me, even at the age of nine, that, if a young reader were as insensitive to act as Goofus did, he or she was very unlikely to change behavior from reading "Goofus

and Gallant." Like every child, I had an innate sense of rightness, and I knew that this heavy-handed way of trying to show and teach morality is not likely to be effective.

My reaction as a nine-year-old to "Goofus and Gallant" can be termed "youthful cynicism." Cynicism results whenever the teaching of right and wrong behavior is abstract and overdone. Any seventh-grade teacher who has lectured her students about the wrongness of this or that type of behavior is aware of this. Preaching incites cynicism. Every child, every human being, has within his heart and soul a "still, small voice" that knows what goodness is and constantly is reminding us and urging us to follow that path. To lecture to this innate sense of moral truth is to insult the child and to make him or her feel untrusted and unrecognized.



Goofus and Gallant epitomize the didactic approach to teaching moral behavior.

In contrast, when with respect and trust we seek to evoke this "still, small voice within," the child responds with relief and joy. This is especially true for the young child, for whom the teacher is a beloved authority figure. The child realizes that she is being recognized as innately moral and as possessing this divine, still voice of truth within.

In Waldorf schools, the teachers every day consciously appeal to the conscience of the child, to this emerging, innate sense of moral right and wrong. There are at least three tools they use to build moral awareness and develop positive habits of behavior.

Effective Tool #1: The Story

The telling of stories is an essential part of Waldorf pedagogy, and the curriculum from the kindergarten through the twelfth grade is

filled with stories. Through the grades, Waldorf students hear fairy tales, Aesop's fables, the Norse, Greek, and Roman myths, tales of the lives of great men and women, stories of alchemists who initiated the science of chemistry, and stories of the Earth and its mountains and waterways. Waldorf teachers search for appropriate stories in the literature of many cultures. They also make up stories that fit the stage of development of their children. Teachers learn these stories "by heart" so that they can tell rather than read them and thus bring the story to the children and young people with a living consciousness.

In fairy tales, as in all true stories, there is a critical moment when the hero or heroine faces a decision. Often the decision, wrongly made, causes everything to go terribly wrong. Children sense these moments. A classroom of fidgeting first graders will become absolutely quiet when, for example, in the Grimm's tale "The Nixie of the Mill Pond," the nixie guarantees to make the miller, whose prosperity has dwindled, "richer and happier than [he] was ever before." The miller need only promise "what has been just born in [his] house." At this point the children collectively hold their breath and inwardly exclaim, "No! Don't do it! There's something wrong with a bargain like that."

The children are right, of course. Desperate for wealth, the miller speculates that it will be nothing more than a kitten or a puppy. He agrees to the nixie's plan, but then finds, on returning home, that he has promised the nixie his newborn son. A mixture of anxiety and hope then rises as a mood in the class from the thinking hearts of the children. How will the miller redeem what he has done?

Such a moment and such a story provide moral lessons in living pictures to the children. Greed dims clear thinking. A rash deed can have dire consequences. Bargaining with living things is not a good idea. One should be wary of the power of temptation.

In the tale of the nixie, the miller's son, as a young man, is indeed taken by the water sprite into the depths of the mill pond. The son's wife, however, through brave and devoted actions, brings about his release and their eventual reunion. In the story, the wrong is made right; there is a transformation brought about by good and courageous acts.



In a moment of moral decision, the miller ponders if he should accept the nixie's offer of boundless wealth in exchange for an unknown consequence.

"The Nixie of the Mill Pond," like all good stories, demonstrates to the child that we have the capacity to choose the path that the still, small voice would have us choose—to choose the right over the wrong—and also that we human beings have the ability and strength to redeem a wrong decision. Every time a child listens to a story, the capacity to think clearly about rightness and wrongness is exercised, and these truths about human morality are reaffirmed.

All children love stories. The most rambunctious children will sit quietly in the hope of hearing a story. They know that stories are a nourishment for their souls. The moments of transformation—when the swans return to their human form, when the youngest (virtuous) brother wins the beautiful maiden, when the princess is awakened from her deathlike sleep—lift up their hearts and offer instruction and inspiration to seek the good, to change, and to correct the thing that has gone awry.



The ability to perceive harmony, beauty, and “rightness”—which the arts develop in the child—translates into the ability to discern the right or good deed.

Children grow strong in moral judgment when they are called upon to discern what is right and wrong. Stories offer abundant opportunities for this. The countless stories that Waldorf students experience in their passage through the grades are opportunities to exercise and strengthen their moral sense.

Effective Tool #2: Artistic Activity

In Waldorf schools, children paint, draw, sing, play musical instruments, knit, sew, embroider, sculpt, carve, weave, work metal, and strive for grace in athletics and dance. They do not do this to become artists, as some people who do not understand Waldorf Education believe. There are many reasons why art is so deeply interwoven into the Waldorf curriculum. One of them is to strengthen the moral intuition of the developing child.

In artistic work, there are no formulas that lead to the creation of something beautiful. The one engaged in the artistic activity, whatever it may be, must work, strive, even struggle until the moment when the piece in question seems “right” or “complete.” The members of a choir rehearsing a piece of music, a painter seeking to create a harmony of color on his canvas, a sculptor trying to release the form concealed within the block of wood, all need to recognize when they have finished their task. Often this can involve an experience of transcendence, a passing beyond the confines of space and time.

This constant struggle in the soul to perceive when something is right in an aesthetic or artistic sense

is transferable to the moral sphere. It can be applied to decisions in life about friends, family, the less fortunate in society, and to any situation holding a moral dilemma. In choosing to act or not to act in a certain way, the person is exercising the sense for truth and rightness. He asks himself consciously or unconsciously: “Is this act good and beautiful?”

The student, in doing artistic work, is cultivating a moral sensibility, an ability to perceive what is correct and true. She is also experiencing the truth and beauty inherent in each artistic medium. She works with color, tone, the block of grained wood, the skein of wool, her own body in movement, and discovers the possibilities and limitations in each. She finds the essence

of the medium, palpable or impalpable, and transforms it into something beautiful. A reality beyond the artist is created. Out of this experience grows a deep respect for the materials used to create beauty, a selfless love for the world, and the desire to enrich the world through the beauty one can bring into it.

Again, these attitudes are transferable to real-life situations. A student with artistic capacities built through daily practice has acquired not only artistic skills but a new means of comprehending and relating to the world. In all situations in life, he will work to grasp the truth of things, will look beyond himself, and seek to make the world as beautiful and good as he can. The impulses developed in artistic activity apply to the moral life.

Effective Tool #3: Models Worthy of Emulation

Providing models worthy of emulation is the most effective tool for calling children to moral activity. Parents, of course, have the central role as such models. But teachers also greatly influence the moral development of children. Most educational thought today is focused on content and testing. There is little or no concern with the value of moral example in shaping children and their future lives.

In Waldorf Education, however, the character of the teacher is considered a major concern. Each Waldorf teacher is or should be actively involved in self-development. The inner transformation of the teacher, through daily meditative work and striving, into a fully conscious, moral, free, and loving human being is a factor not only in shaping an effective main



Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) applied the principle of ahimsa, or nonviolence, to the political realm and helped India win independence from the British.

lesson, but in positively influencing the children in their moral development. Discipline is most effective in the presence of the self-disciplined. Children who work, play, and live around adults who consciously and assiduously seek to develop themselves will inwardly imitate them and will likewise aspire to become better human beings.

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education, told the teachers in the first school: “It is not so much what you teach but who you are that matters.”

In an educational culture obsessed with tangible proof of the achievement of learning goals, the role of the teacher as a striving human being is easily forgotten or dismissed. Content and the results



Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), in his humility, simplicity of life, and loving devotion to the welfare of all human beings and lesser creatures as well, has been a model of the moral life for centuries.

of testing usurp the attention of teachers whose true calling is to encourage children to love the world and to participate in it. Young people need adults to forge the way for them on the path of life. Teachers give children models of self-discipline and the practice of truth.

Throughout the Waldorf curriculum, the children are also presented with human beings of other times and places who are

worthy of admiration and emulation. In the eight years of the lower school and in the high school as well, the students encounter Saint Francis of Assisi, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and many other moral heroes and heroines.

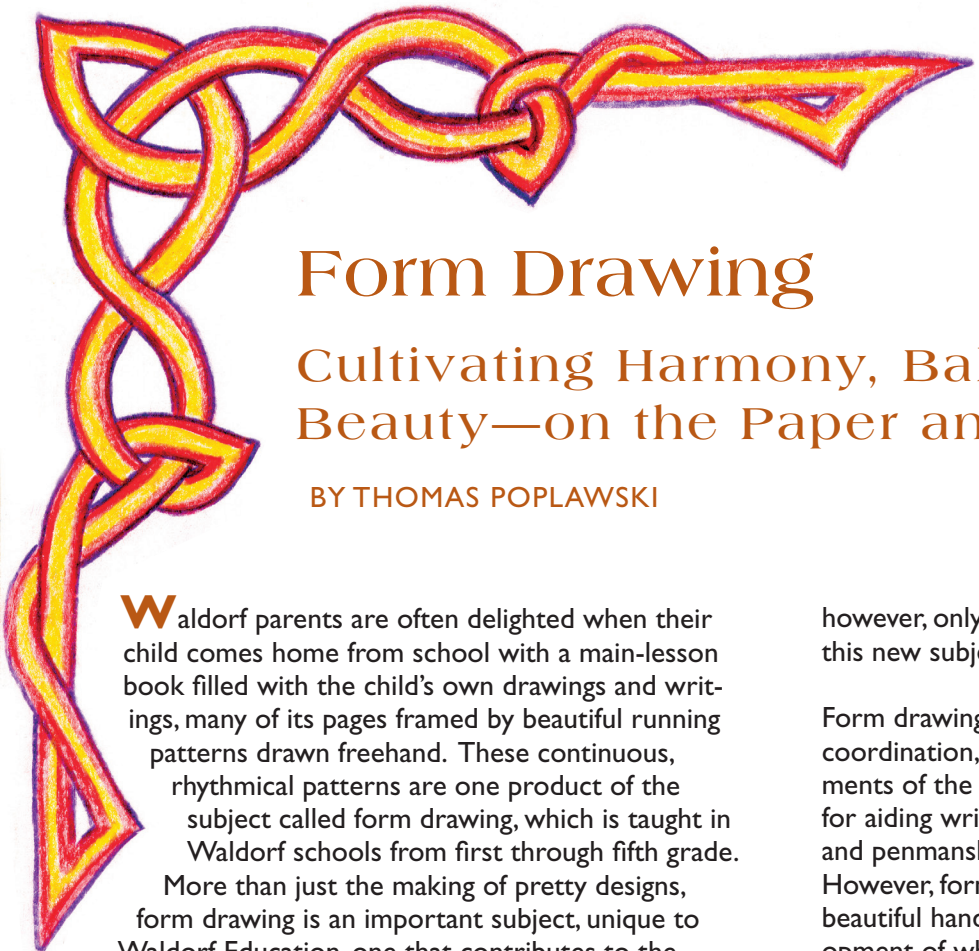
Teaching morality is possible but not in the ways commonly thought. Stories full of powerful, beautiful images enrich the imagination and assure children of the inherent goodness of the world and of their ability to participate in that goodness. Artistic practice gives them the capacity to judge when an act—as well as a painting or sculpture—is beautiful and good. It also inspires children to want to make the world better and more beautiful. Moral adults, who strive for inner strength and calm, give children examples of self-discipline and self-development to follow. Calling to the child’s heart in these ways allows the inner voice, so tender and quiet, to speak to his natural sense of virtue and to be heard. The child is inspired to realize his innate goodness, and he and the world are the better for it. ☺



Sojourner Truth (1797–1883) was a freed slave who crusaded fearlessly on behalf of abolition and of equal rights for women in a time when those causes were not very popular



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Form Drawing

Cultivating Harmony, Balance, and Beauty—on the Paper and in the Soul

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

Waldorf parents are often delighted when their child comes home from school with a main-lesson book filled with the child's own drawings and writings, many of its pages framed by beautiful running patterns drawn freehand. These continuous, rhythmical patterns are one product of the subject called form drawing, which is taught in Waldorf schools from first through fifth grade.

More than just the making of pretty designs, form drawing is an important subject, unique to Waldorf Education, one that contributes to the healthy development of the child.

On the very first day of first grade, the Waldorf class teacher asks each child in turn to come to the blackboard and draw a straight line and a curved line. This is an archetypal moment for the child: she stands alone before the new teacher and the new class and creates and experiences first the straight line and then the curved. These two manifestations of line, which together are the source of all the shapes and forms that exist in the world, are polar opposites.

The first requires of the child a thoughtful concentration so that she can move her hand in a very precise manner. The other asks for an act of will to allow the chalk to move freely in an arc. During the next years, the child will continue to explore this polarity between thoughtful consideration and active volition, between thinking and doing, and will develop, it is hoped, facility in each and flexibility in moving sensitively between the two.

Form drawing thus is one of the elements in the Waldorf curriculum that seeks to develop the child's capacity to think and then to do. This dual goal is,

however, only one reason why Rudolf Steiner added this new subject to the curriculum.

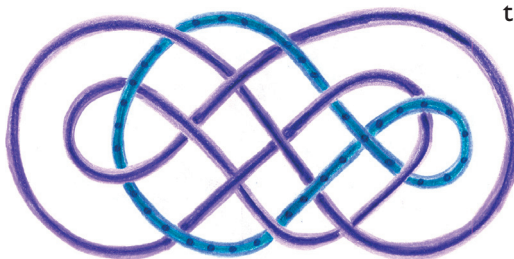
Form drawing helps the child to develop fine motor coordination, to gain better control of the movements of the hand. This makes it an ideal means for aiding writing readiness. In fact, form drawing and penmanship can be considered first cousins. However, form drawing does more than promote beautiful handwriting. It helps the child in the development of what Steiner termed the "lower senses."

Rudolf Steiner held that, in addition to the five commonly recognized senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch (including sensitivity to temperature/warmth), there are seven other important human senses. These include four

that he referred to as "lower" or "physical" senses: touch (having to do with pressure and texture); balance; self-movement (experiencing our bodies in movement); and the "life sense" (by which we discern if something we encounter in our environment has life, flexibility, and energy).

The lower senses relate to our feeling alive and comfortable in our bodies and in each of our physical activities, be it running, drawing, throwing a ball, or dancing.

The lower senses should all develop naturally through the child's playful interaction with and activity in the environment. However, even ninety years ago when Steiner was creating the Waldorf curriculum, the lives of children were such that this natural development did not always occur. Today, our way of life inhibits the unfolding of these capacities even more. Children spend many hours



in front of television and computer screens, almost without moving their bodies. At the same time, their physical senses are being overstimulated by the rush of powerful visual images and sounds. Many children do not fully develop a healthy sense of balance, movement, touch, or life. They do not acquire a healthy experience of being at home and comfortable in the physical body or the feeling of self-confidence and well-being that accompanies it. The impairment of the healthy unfolding of the lower senses is a major factor in the burgeoning problem of learning disabilities in children.

Even a brief experience of form drawing can convey how this activity awakens certain sensing capacities. Take a crayon and a large piece of paper—a piece of chalk and blackboard will also do—and render one of the forms that Waldorf students do in form drawing. As you draw one of the continuous, undulating forms of waves, be aware of what you are experiencing. At first, you may feel a cramping anxiety, a feeling of inadequacy, perhaps, and the thought—“This is more difficult than it looks.”

But with a bit of practice you will be able to draw a balanced, harmonious line. Creating a balanced, regular form requires an awareness and control of body position and arm and hand movements. It also requires just the right amount of hand pressure on the chalk and on the paper. The crayon acts as an extension of the hand, allowing you to feel the surface of the paper as you “massage” the form-creating line onto it. The activity elicits also a rhythmic “breathing” so that the movement is neither too fast nor too slow. When the initial shock of performance anxiety is past, form drawing can bring a new, revelatory experience of the body, its movements, and its interaction with the environment.

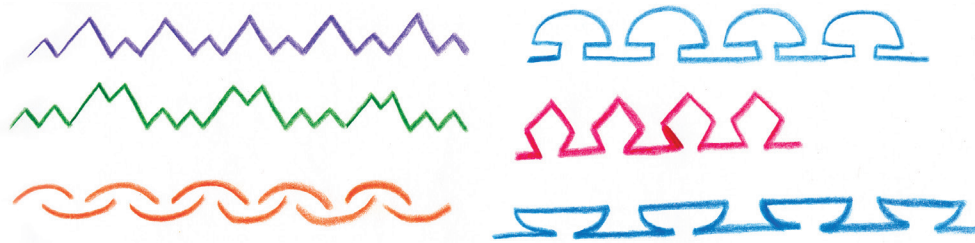
Integrating Head and Hand

When the young child renders a flowing line in a form drawing—and later in cursive writing—he is required to work with his will in a sensitive as well as a precise way. He must translate an intention into controlled physical movement. Other subjects in the Waldorf school also demand this artistic self-direction of will. In eurythmy, for example, the children must move in lines of symmetrical patterns,

and in handwork, they manipulate yarn or thread in knitting, crocheting, and weaving. This “will-work” in the elementary school years is one of Waldorf Education’s unique, significant aspects, seldom found in the wider educational world.

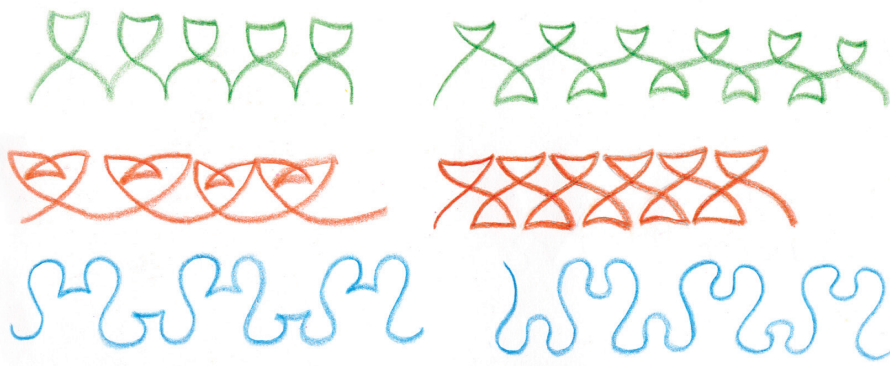
Another special characteristic of Waldorf Education is the integration of “doing” or will-based activities and academic or “thinking” subjects. For example, while studying arithmetic in the main lesson, the children bring number into immediate physical experience through walking to spoken or musical rhythms. This direct experience of number occurs in eurythmy class as well, when the children clap and also gently toss copper rods to each other in intricate rhythmic patterns. Handwork class requires counting stitches, both in the design patterns and in the actual work, and also involves working rhythmically with fingers, hands, and arms. Form drawing too involves rhythmical working, which helps mathematical principles to become experienced truths, not merely abstractions that need to be memorized.

Form drawing is especially helpful in awakening an enthusiasm for the study of geometry. In the early grades, the drawings consist mainly of running line patterns, but later on, closed patterns and forms are



Form-drawing patterns used in the first grade—some based on the straight line, some on the curved line, and some a combination of the two

introduced. These forms include mirror images in two and four parts. In one standard exercise, a child comes to the blackboard and takes a piece of chalk in each hand. She is then directed to draw a large circle, drawing half with each hand. Next, the child copies a more complicated mirror-image figure that the teacher has demonstrated, again drawing simultaneously with her two hands. Lastly, she creates a symmetrical mirror-image figure of her own design. Later, the students replicate this exercise at their desks, drawing with one hand and using crayon and paper. In time, the children graduate to doing the more complex, four-part mirrored reflections.



Second-grade patterns are slightly more complex.

Through such exercises, the child experiences not only straight and curved lines but many of the myriad forms these lines engender, including angles, triangles, squares, ellipses, and circles. This familiarity with a variety of two-dimensional forms prepares the child for the abstract world of geometry, with its mathematical laws and formulae. The child is able to experience that world intellectually and abstractly but also emotionally and aesthetically. Each mode of knowing enhances the others.

Form Drawing and the Study of History

Form drawing also makes an important contribution to the child's study of history. Many cultures of the world use the patterns of form drawing in their pottery, jewelry, clothing, and architecture. As the children learn about past and distant civilizations, they study and replicate the cultural variants of the spiral, the circle, and other archetypal forms. They master the "key" pattern of ancient Greek pottery and the Celtic and Scandinavian knotwork patterns. These ancient forms hold a religious or spiritual meaning, and working with them supplements the stories of each culture told by the teacher with an immediate and living experience.

The Art of Penmanship

Form drawing has a practical cousin in the art of penmanship. In our keyboard-dominated era, though, some educators believe that cursive writing may be headed toward extinction, and they question the importance of more than cursory attention to the subject.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Zauer-Brock Company, a publisher of penmanship curricula, recommended forty-five minutes a day of instruction in cursive writing. Today the actual average instruction time has dwindled to ten minutes, and very few teachers have had any coursework on how to go about teaching the subject. It is no wonder that educators have noted a general decline in the quality of

student handwriting and an increase in the number of letter reversals—not mind-ing one's p's and q's. According to Emily Knapton, director of program development of the popular "Handwriting without Tears" curriculum, if a child struggles with handwriting, the difficulty permeates all his academic work. He has difficulty in spelling, and in math he is likely to reverse numbers.

A recent study by Vanderbilt University professor Steve Graham indicates that most primary school teachers believe that students with good cursive handwriting produce written assignments superior in quality and quantity and thus receive higher grades. This idea seems confirmed by the results of the new SAT handwritten essay. Only 15 percent of the 1.5 million students who took the exam wrote in cursive handwriting. The others printed or wrote in capital letters. The cursive writers were better at expressing their thoughts, did so more quickly, and got higher scores. Graham's work has shown that from kindergarten to fourth grade, children think and write at the same time. Form drawing is a natural aid toward attaining a facility in cursive writing during these formative years.

Form Drawing and the Soul

Our handwriting is a reflection of ourselves as human beings. A perceptive and intuitive handwriting



Running curved-line forms are a helpful preparation for cursive writing.

analyst can, using only a handwriting sample, accurately describe our personality and character. But, the relationship between handwriting and personality is reciprocal. Changing one's handwriting can bring about changes in personality and behavior. The habitual patterns manifest in a person's handwriting are enmeshed with emotional habits. Thus, positive characteristics can be cultivated and undesirable traits can be eliminated by altering the way in which a person writes. "Handwriting therapy," focusing on having a person consciously change his handwriting and thereby change his personality, is well-known and widely practiced in Europe and increasingly in North America. As an archetypal precursor of handwriting, form drawing also works upon the personality and soul life. By giving the child an experience of harmony, balance, and beauty, it encourages the development of positive characteristics.

Form drawing also can be a powerful diagnostic and therapeutic tool. A trained expert can use a child's form drawing to identify, for example, a constriction and rigidity in the child's inner life. Special form-drawing exercises can then be used to ameliorate the tendency. Form drawing can address intimate, core issues in a direct manner and bring movement and life to areas of the soul that have become hardened, constricted, and lifeless. Children, because their negative tendencies have not yet become fixed, can readily benefit from the therapeutic power of form drawing. But adults who are willing to put in

the effort and time can also successfully work with undesirable traits in this way.

In the first training course for Waldorf teachers, Rudolf Steiner demonstrated (as recorded in *A Practical Course for Teachers*) the use of colors and forms to help specific children balance exaggerated qualities stemming from their inherent temperaments. For example, the hyperactive, even aggressive tendencies of an overly choleric child might be tempered by an undulating, peaceful form-drawing exercise. In like manner, a sanguine child's excessive flightiness, a phlegmatic's disconcerting laziness, or a melancholic's overdone perfectionism can all be helped by the insightful use of form drawing. The Waldorf class teacher, while presenting general patterns to be learned by the entire class, can also give individual students special assignments to help them deal with personality tendencies that are hampering their progress. Such an approach to addressing a child's individual needs can be quite effective in dealing with problems before they become too set.

The teaching of form drawing contributes to the healthy development of the whole child—the head (intellect), the hand (the body), and the mediating heart (emotional and aesthetic sense)—and is a resource for helping the child with special needs. Over the years, a number of the unique aspects of Waldorf Education have found their way into the broader educational realm. For example, at the time of the founding of the first Waldorf school, having boys and girls in the same class was in Germany a radical innovation. More recently, teaching subjects in blocks and offering handwork classes have found some acceptance outside the Waldorf world. Likewise, form drawing could be a valuable addition to mainstream education and to the homeschooling community. ☺



The form-drawing patterns can also help with printing.



THOMAS POPLAWSKI, Renewal's staff writer, is a social worker, working with persons with mental illness. Thomas lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, and his two sons attend the Hartsbrook School in nearby Hadley. His wife, Valerie, is a kindergarten teacher at the school. Thomas's book of essays on parenting and educational issues, *Completing the Circle*, is available from AWSNA Publications.

Most importantly, my Waldorf education has given me a love of learning that I know will last my entire life. At Cedar Springs we studied not to master material just long enough to regurgitate it on an exam. We learned for the joy of learning and were graded only against our own potential. I have discovered that my chief competitor is myself and that, both in school and in life, my only option is to perform to the best of my abilities.

My relationship with my class teacher is also something for which I am truly grateful. I frequently call Mr. Connolly for guidance and encouragement, and he continues to offer me the same caring advice that can only come from someone who knows me better than I know myself.

My Waldorf education continues to be a source of pride. The more I mature, the more I understand and am grateful for the sacrifices my parents made to send me to Cedar Springs. Waldorf Education protects and nurtures the child and allows him or her to truly experience the simplicity of youth. At the same time, however, it prepares the child for the rigors of adult life. If I ever have a child of my own, I will be extremely eager to send him or her off with a little lunch basket and galoshes to a Waldorf school.

I know that I speak for our entire Class of 1998 when I say that, if given the opportunity to do it over again, I would not hesitate to relive the invaluable experience I had at Cedar Springs Waldorf School. ☺

Ariel Kennedy Salzer was a student at the Cedar Springs Waldorf School in Placerville, California, from the first through the eighth grade. She graduated in 1998, a member of the school's first graduating class. She attended Union Mine High School and then the University of California at San Diego.

Ariel completed her undergraduate degree in three years, spending one semester in France, studying at the Université de Lyon Deux. In France, she wrote a thesis on the controversy about religious attire in the workplace, an issue primarily affecting Muslim and Jewish immigrants and citizens in Europe at the time.

After graduation Ariel went to Egypt, where she studied Arabic and also tutored kindergarten through sixth-grade children in English as a second language, math, science, and French.

Ariel is currently in her second year at the Law School of the University of San Francisco. She has received two "Awards for Excellence" for having the highest grade in her classes in "Legal Research and Writing" and "Law and Literature." Last summer Ariel was a judicial extern for the Honorable Judge William Dorsey at the U.S. Department of Labor. She is a member of the Women's Law Association and the Public Interest Law Foundation.

Ariel enjoys backpacking and international travel, musical theater and opera, yoga, reading, cooking, and salsa dancing. She will graduate from law school in 2010, having focused on public interest law. Ariel hopes to practice international law and continue to travel abroad and study foreign languages. As her essay indicates, she has deep appreciation of what she received from her Waldorf schooling.

—R. E. K.



Making Waldorf Education “Accessible to All”

Finding the Balance Point between Idealism and Reality

BY VIVIAN JONES-
SCHMIDT



When Rudolf Steiner founded the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919, he hoped that the education it offered would be accessible to every child, regardless of the financial situation of that child's family. Today there are over 1000 Waldorf schools in eighty-five countries, including about 130 schools in North America, and the movement continues to grow. Yet the ideal of having a Waldorf schooling accessible to every child has not, in general, been realized, particularly in North America.

Almost all independent Waldorf schools here survive on parent-paid tuitions and fees, which range from about \$6,000 a year to \$15,000 or more. While all schools attempt with tuition assistance to accommodate students from less affluent families, this aid is often not sufficient, and a child who would like to attend a Waldorf school cannot do so. This situation is clearly a major and pressing challenge for the Waldorf movement.

Bob Monsen is a successful businessman and organizational consultant long associated with the Waldorf School of the Peninsula in Los Altos, California. Mary Roscoe is a founding parent of the Peninsula school and was the school's administrator for over twelve years. In 1993 the two collaborated in devising a plan whereby Waldorf Education would be accessible to all children. Their aim was that every child who wished to go to the school would be able to, regardless of family financial circumstances. They called their plan "Accessible to All" (ATA).

Over the past fifteen years, the Waldorf School of the Peninsula has used this plan with success. (Mary Roscoe is still active in the program as a "conversationalist" conducting ATA interviews with parents.) A number of other Waldorf schools in the United States have tried the plan. Of these, some have found that ATA works well for them. Some have chosen to modify the "pure" ATA protocols by, for example, placing a cap on the amount of adjustment any one family can expect or by not using it with families with children in preschool and kindergarten. The following account, written by the enrollment coordinator of the Charlottesville Waldorf School, tells the story of that school's recent and generally positive implementation of the "Accessible to All" plan.

—R. E. K.

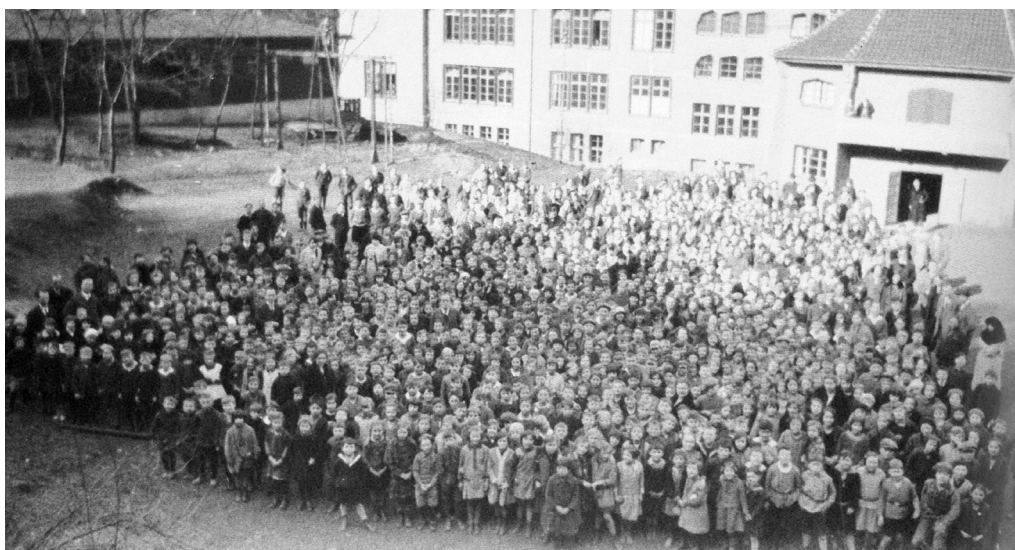
In the fall of 2005, the board of trustees of the Charlottesville Waldorf School (CWS) adopted the "Accessible to All" tuition adjustment plan developed by Bob Monsen and Mary Roscoe. At the time, twelve schools on the West Coast had adopted the program. Our school was one of the first East Coast schools to do so.

In the ATA process, each family applying for tuition adjustment must complete a financial disclosure

form. The family must list all income, savings, assets, and debts, as well as provide copies of its federal income tax returns. The worksheet has the family itemize all of its expenses in a number of categories such as housing, food, and recreation. Often this analysis is very helpful for families because they have never looked at their household expenses in such a way. Families are sometimes surprised to see how much money they spend in certain nonessential areas. The worksheet also asks the family to

estimate how much it can contribute to the school for its child's—or children's—education. In some cases, the budget exercise helps the family realize that they can and want to contribute more than they previously had thought.

The next major step is a conversation between the applicant family and a team of two trained interviewers or "conversationalists" from the school. These conversationalists are school parents, board members, or administrative staff. No faculty members participate



Students and teachers of the original Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, circa 1927. Many of the students were children of factory workers.

as conversationalists because of the extremely personal and confidential nature of the discussions.

In preparing for an ATA conversation, the interviewers each study the family's financial packet and then go over it together before the conversation takes place. They meditate on the upcoming meeting and on the information they have received, striving to be able to deal with each family and their circumstances without prejudice. Each conversationalist invests substantial time preparing for the meeting with the family.

ATA is grounded in Rudolf Steiner's vision of economic relationships as providing the possibility for the development of true understanding and respect between human beings. The interview is seen as a rare and valuable opportunity for individuals to meet and come to know each other's dreams, hopes, needs, and resources.

The conversation is based on two assumptions: the child will be enrolled in the school and the family will help support the school according to its ability. A third assumption is that both parties—the school and the family—will stretch to meet the needs of the other. In the conversation, the school's representatives present the school's budget, operating costs, priorities, and plans for the future. They ask about the parents' values, their aspirations for their children, their feelings toward the school, and possible ways of contributing to the life of the school.

In the interview, the school's representatives tell the family what the suggested tuition is. Both



Students and teacher at the Charlottesville Waldorf School, 2008. In the background is the new school building, which qualifies for the LEED standard as an ecologically efficient building.

Only families asking for tuition adjustment go through the ATA process. But all families in the school are informed about ATA and how it works. Families with substantial resources may offer to pay more than the suggested tuition through annual giving.

At the Charlottesville Waldorf School, the decision to explore the ATA program was made in the fall of 2004. Alice Gore, a longtime parent and board member, had researched the plan and brought it to the board for consideration. Understanding that such a plan could be effective only with the full support of the school community, the board decided to bring Bob Monsen to Virginia in the spring of 2005. Many school parents and faculty members attended his presentations. During his second visit, Monsen started a training session for the conversationalists

The conversation is based on two assumptions: the child will be enrolled in the school and the family will help support the school according to its ability.

parties try to reach a consensus on the family's tuition contribution, based on the family's resources and the needs of the school. Though finances will not prevent participation in the school, each family should contribute as much as they can to the school's operating costs. Some families contribute the suggested amount, some less, some more. The conversations and their outcomes are strictly confidential.

and also held another introductory presentation that was attended by more parents from the school. In the end, twelve persons actually went through the training.

Bob Monsen was impressed that a school with only about 110 families could yield twelve volunteers willing to do the training and take on the responsibilities of participating in conversations with families. After the first year of the program at the school, eight more volunteers became conversationalists.

*The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection,
And when in the community
The virtue of each individual is living.*

—Rudolf Steiner, “Motto of the Social Ethic”

The training is a rigorous one. The volunteer conversationalists work together extensively to prepare for the coming conversations. They are given written material to study, including sample worksheets showing a fictional family’s financial situation. They do role-playing together, taking turns pretending to be members of the interviewing team and interviewed parents. This process involves exploring the various attitudes and emotions that parents bring to conversations that concern their children’s education and their family finances. Then the volunteers attend actual conversations led by an experienced team. Finally they are paired with veteran conversationalists in actual interviews with parents.

“Bob doesn’t give black and white answers [in the training]. He stresses that there are no cookbook recipes for this type of work,” says Lisa Torres, a school parent, member of the board, and chairperson of the school’s ATA committee. Torres describes the training as learning to engage in a conversation out of one’s “higher self.” The conversation itself is an opportunity to help guide families to an understanding both of the needs of the school and of the social impulse of the ATA program. It is also a chance for the conversationalists and family to get to know one another, share their love for the children, and express gratitude to the school.

In the spring of 2006, the first volunteer teams at our school were ready. Their intention was to have an ATA conversation with each family applying for a tuition adjustment and a conversation regarding development—as part of the annual giving campaign—with all of the school’s families. In this initial year, however, they focused on meeting with the families that had applied for tuition adjustment.

During the 2006–2007 school year, the conversationalists did meet with some full-paying families, since it is important that all families in the school

feel that they are part of the ATA program. Meeting with these families has allowed the conversationalists to present the current situation of the school, specifically its budget and finances. It has also been an opportunity to create and to strengthen community. Many families heard, for the first time, details of the school’s financial situation.

The ATA program has definitely been a success in terms of the school’s finances. In the almost three years the school has used this approach, the average contribution per family for tuition and fees has increased appreciably.

The ATA program has also been, in some respects, a “social success.” During its first year of implementation, a more positive and relaxed atmosphere was palpable at the school. More volunteers came forward with smiling faces and a strong willingness to help with the myriad tasks of school life, such as serving as class parents, driving children on class outings, and taking roles of responsibility in the school fair and the annual fund drive.

At the same time, there have been some rough spots. Despite the enthusiasm of the ATA volunteers and the efforts to educate the school community about the program, some basic misunderstandings arose and circulated. One myth was that “accessible to all” means that it is possible to enroll a child and not pay anything. This, in fact, is not possible, since every family must contribute something to the finances of the school. Another misconception was that to enroll an additional child in the school involves no additional cost to the family. Every effort is made to accommodate families with more than one child in the school, but this accommodation requires even greater commitment and additional sacrifice on both sides.

The interview/conversation process itself involved challenges. On the one hand, the conversations were very rewarding for the individuals involved and helpful for the social relations within the school. As one volunteer reflected, “Of all the things I’ve done for the school, this has been the most meaningful. I am constantly amazed and humbled by the fact that we can sit down and have conscious, insightful, and meaningful conversations about one of the hardest things to talk about in our society—money.” However, the conversations typically last between an hour and an hour and a half and involve an offering

of energy and time from both the applicant family and the interviewers.

The CWS board initially committed the school to a three-year trial with the “Accessible to All” program. At that time, no one could foresee whether or not the program would work and what effect it would have on the school. But there have been definite benefits. Most importantly, every child who has wanted to enroll in the school has been able to do so. The 2008–2009 school year is the third year of that commitment, and everyone acknowledges that there is work to do if the ATA program is to be continued beyond the end of the year. A committee has been formed to review the process from its inception to its current implementation at the school.

It is already clear that there needs to be ongoing and clear education about the program in the school community. To this end, articles about ATA appear regularly in the school newsletter, and the ATA committee periodically holds educational evenings. Those parents who understand the program, who support the social impulse behind ATA, and know how it works in practice are engaged in an informal, “parking lot” campaign to counteract misunderstandings and to highlight mutual benefits to the school and its families. In addition, the CWS board of trustees brought Bob Monsen back to the school in the spring of 2008 for additional community education and training of conversationalists.

It is important that everyone knows the financial realities of the school and is committed to working together to make the ATA program work. As Lisa Torres expressed it: “It is now time to reevaluate the presentation of the budget and the way it is explained to parents. The school has been carrying a deficit for the past couple of years. We need to acknowledge this as a real concern and a challenge and make sure we don’t sugarcoat it. We need to allow everyone [in the school] to own this deficit. We’re all responsible for holding the school. . . . We need to emphasize what each one of us can do.”

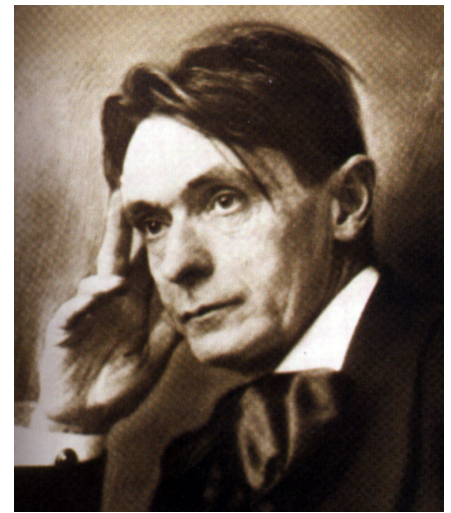
In the future, discussions of the school budget with parents will include a full explanation of the varied and demanding work of the teachers and of the real cost per child of running the school. ATA will be presented not only as a tuition program but as an opportunity for community-building. In their annual conversation with the school, parents will be asked to consider, for example, what they and their children gained from their previous year’s experience.

It is hoped that an awareness of the value of what the school brings will motivate families to support the school, financially and in other ways, as much as they can.

One particularly difficult challenge is with families who may be able to contribute more to the school than they do, either from their own income or from other sources of funding.

In such cases, the conversationalists have to exercise a refined capacity to discern when a family is truly giving as much as possible. The challenge of motivating and inspiring families to give to their capacity is relevant both to families with limited resources and families who could easily contribute more through annual giving. The conversationalists know that ultimately they may have to risk turning away families.

The ATA program creates a unique social experiment. It gives individuals an opportunity to rise above egotism and self-interest, to distinguish between needs and desires, to view the common good—mutual reciprocity—as primary, and to create a genuine “shared world,” a true community. ☺



Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) envisioned the Waldorf school as a place where new, cooperative patterns of social and economic organization would be developed.

VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT was led to Waldorf Education when she wandered into the Charlottesville (Virginia) Waldorf School many years ago trying to find the owner of a pair of mittens. That child was never found, but a new career was launched, and Vivian has been involved in Waldorf Education since 1985. She has taken two classes from grades one through eight, has taught handwork and chorus, and has been very active in the administration of the school. Vivian currently is the enrollment coordinator for the Charlottesville school. She is a longtime member of the editorial advisory board of *Renewal*.

The High School

Splinters of the Sun

Teaching Russian Literature to High School Students

BY BETTY KLETSKY STALEY — A NEW BOOK REVIEWED BY JOHN WULSIN



Maslenitsa, a 1919 painting by Boris Kustodiev, depicting “Pancake Week,” the festive week before Lent that celebrates the end of the long Russian winter

Betty Staley has been a Waldorf high school teacher for some forty years. Also a well-known lecturer and writer, Staley explores in this new book one of her passions—Russian literature and how it relates to the development of the teenagers of today.

Staley makes clear that the study of literature, like every subject, must be interdisciplinary. To understand the great Russian writers, one must understand the nation’s land, history, and broader culture. Staley evokes the geography of this huge—covering eleven time zones!—and frigid country with its countless lakes, great inland seas, and its 150,000 rivers, most of which do not flow into an outer body of water. She describes Russia’s vast forests whose giant trees, when they die, decay internally but, because of the moss and grass growing on the

bark, preserve their external appearance for a long time. It is a world that inspires the imagination and fantasy, a world filled with goblins, wood sprites, and other elemental beings.

Staley’s excellent account of Russian history focuses on crucial moments of decision that shaped the nation. In the tenth century, for example, Czar Vladimir struggled to choose between pagan nature worship, Islam, German Roman Catholicism, and Eastern Christianity. Settling on this last, he brought into Russia a faith and church that remains an essential element of national life to the present day, despite over seven decades of recent rule by an atheistic, communist regime.

Betty Staley also looks to the future.

The chapter “Russia’s Mission of Universal Brotherhood and Its Relationship to Christ and the Grail” articulates the spiritual mission of the Russian folk.

Rudolf Steiner, along with Russian writers such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–1881) and Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900), suggested that the Russian people have had, and will have in the future, the special task of fostering the brotherhood of all humanity. They will help to bring to all human beings the idea and experience that our common humanity transcends all national and cultural differences and that we must relate to each person we encounter as a unique, divinely created individual. This idea is found, implicitly and explicitly, in many of the classics of Russian literature. Much of the value of the study of Russian literature by high school students lies in their experiencing this universalist perspective.

Splinters of the Sun contains carefully chosen, representative excerpts from the writings of the giants of Russian literature—Pushkin, Tolstoy, and



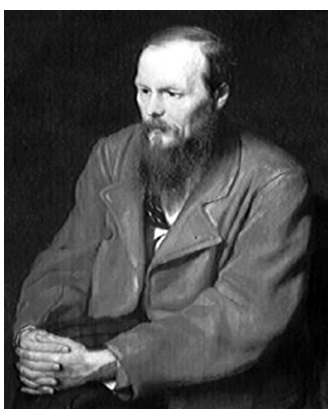
Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), a believer in the divine inner light, founded schools that sought to develop children’s moral and spiritual capacities.

Dostoyevsky in the nineteenth century, Pasternak, Akhmatova, Solzhenitsyn, and Sakharov in the twentieth century—as well as lesser-known writers such as Mandelstam, Tsvetayeva, and Brodsky. There are biographical sketches for each writer. These life stories are important and instructive for the teenage reader. Each depicts the difficulty and the unpredictability of discovering one’s path in life, of becoming oneself in the world. Each holds some

lesson for the young people who are involved in this same, challenging process. Staley also includes moving examples of students’ written work describing their experience with the various writers.

Splinters of the Sun is an excellent practical guide for teachers. It includes concrete suggestions for syllabus construction and lesson planning, as well as an excellent bibliography for further research and reading.

The book also embodies teaching a subject, any subject, in a way that brings it alive and that engages the adolescent mind. Staley points to the importance of deep personal interest in whatever subject that one is called upon to bring to young people.



Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–1881) explored the depths of the human soul and also the heights of its moral and spiritual aspirations.

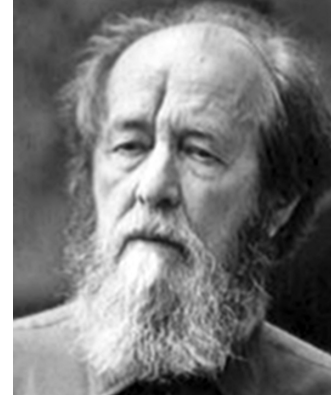
She herself, of Russian Jewish heritage, is deeply interested in Russia, has visited the country several times, and has been reading Russian literature for decades. Staley describes also the process of exploring material in a systematic way, of developing a curriculum over time that meets the needs of students. She also reminds us of the importance of carefully watching and listening to students to discern how they are affected in their development by this short story or that poem. Such careful observation is a

help in creating a relevant curriculum.

The cultures of North America, particularly the United States, and of Russia present strong contrasts. During the Cold War of the second half of the twentieth century, this polarity was clear, and there was a strong motivation to study the history and culture of our opponent on the world stage. Today Russia is somewhat eclipsed as an international power. But it is still vitally important for young people in North America to understand this great nation. Russia will play a significant, even central, role in the development of the whole world.

In recent years, the study of Russian literature in Waldorf high schools has faded into the background. Betty Staley knows that, in a dynamic polarity, each pole needs the other to achieve balance and wholeness. The American emphasis on individuality and self-reliance can lead to arrogance and alienation, and the Russian impulse to brotherhood can overwhelm concern for the freedom and dignity of the individual. Each needs the other for a healthy wholeness. American teenagers benefit greatly from their experience of the Russian folk soul and of the ideal of universal brotherhood. *Splinters of the Sun* is the best resource I know for introducing young people—and older readers as well—to Russian literature and culture.

Someone said long ago that trying to understand the enigma of Russia is like trying to hug a huge bear. Betty Staley’s book hugs the bear and dances with it, with awe and respect. And it invites us to join the dance. *Splinters of the Sun* is an enlightening, readable, and valuable book for teachers, students, and for the general reader. ☉



Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008) exposed the great suffering of the Russian people during the Stalin era.

AWSNA Publications, 2008 • 240 pages • \$19.95

JOHN WULSIN *has been a teacher of English at the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York, for the past twenty-seven years. His book The Spirit of the English Language has just been published by Lindisfarne Press.*

From Around the World

Waldorf Education in Tajikistan

BY AISLING GROGAN



Aisling Grogan graduated from the twelfth grade of the Austin Waldorf School in June 2007. Although admitted to Wellesley, Aisling decided to wait a year before beginning college. Having heard of and being intrigued by the Khujand Waldorf School in Khujand, Tajikistan, Aisling traveled there in September 2007, hoping to learn something about the world and about herself.

—R. E. K.

Tajikistan is located in the mountains of Central Asia. A former Soviet republic with a population of seven million, it is about the size of New York State and borders Afghanistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Its culture is rich, but its people poor. And alas, unlike the other Central Asian countries, Tajikistan has no oil, just field after field of cotton. Tajikistan is a Muslim country with a secular

government. Though influenced by the new capitalism and consumerism emanating from Russia, Tajikistan is essentially conservative, yet the country is home to the only Waldorf school in Central Asia, the Khujand Waldorf School, founded seven years ago in a run-down Soviet-era kindergarten.

In May 2007, Tahmina Djumaboeva—an English teacher from the Khujand Waldorf School who was on a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Texas at Austin—visited the Austin Waldorf School. Tahmina told stories of an exotic country whose culture is a fusion of old Persia, Islam, and communism, where people speak three languages from different linguistic families—Russian, Tajik (which is essentially the Iranian language Farsi), and Uzbek (which is closely related to Turkish)—and sometimes English besides,

where parents arrange their children's marriages, and where the people look back with longing to the better times of the Soviet Union. And she told of the sad parts: that the country is ruled today by an elite, whose members drive around the capital, Dushanbe, in the most luxurious and expensive cars in the world, while common people die of cold and starvation.

It might have been the country's name that snatched my hand and pulled me along or it could have been the idea of going to a little-known place close to the countries in the news every day. In any case, I was intrigued and decided to visit Tajikistan during my interim year. Four months later, I found myself with my good friend and high school classmate, Canyon Darcy, walking in the dusty streets of Khujand. Khujand is the second-largest city in Tajikistan

with about 149,000 inhabitants and is located near the border of Uzbekistan.

The history of the school is a sweet and simple one. It was founded in 2000 by Rano Ahunova, a native Tajik, who encountered and became interested in Waldorf Education in her years studying German at a local university in Khujand. Rano traveled to Germany several times to see how Waldorf Education had manifested in the West, all the while dreaming of starting her own school in her own city. This was very difficult because of strict governmental laws and the challenging social and economic conditions. Rano did everything in the founding process herself: finding the building, hiring the teachers, attracting the parents and students, underwriting the costs with her own meager savings, and putting her own resolute soul into every step. She still struggles, most acutely with finances and shortages of school materials. Rano welcomes volunteers like Canyon and myself and any outside assistance.

The purpose of our trip was to aid the school in any way we could and to learn about a foreign, Muslim, and developing nation. The gifts we had brought with us—of chalk, knitting needles, and

embroidery floss—were gratefully received, but we soon learned that to be of real help beyond that was a challenge. Most of the teachers did not speak a word of English, and our knowledge of Russian—the language used in the school—was scant to nonexistent. Though my high school German allowed me to speak a bit with the teachers who had done training



Rano Ahunova, founder of the Khujand school and class teacher



Sixth-grade students at the Khujand Waldorf School

courses in Stuttgart, Germany, communication was still difficult.

Canyon and I did, however, find small ways to offer help in activities such as drawing, gym, eurythmy, and especially music. And our presence alone was enough to excite the students, who hugged us endlessly and sometimes fought over the privilege of holding our hands. They are exceptionally eager, rowdy, happy children, full of love and innocent boisterousness.

The school building is typical of structures of the former USSR—concrete, colorless, and full of harsh right angles unpleasant to the eye. It is in dire need of repair, has inadequate plumbing and toilet facilities, and is poorly heated. Red, green, and white Tajik national flags as well as posters of President Emomali Rachmon are reminders that the school is largely under the control of the government. The grounds are bleak—bare and dusty with no grass and few trees. Just outside the school wall is a huge pile of *mycop* (moo'-ser, meaning "trash")—a city dump that smells horrible and attracts foraging animals. In general, the environment seems to receive little care in Tajikistan.

One surprising element does break the unsightliness, though. Three, almost perfectly "Waldorfian" mosaics of dragons and bears, a legacy of the Soviet-era kindergarten, are set into the downstairs walls of the school. But that is all.

The school has grades one through six, with a total of about one hundred students and ten teachers.



The Khujand school building in midwinter

The building also houses a non-Waldorf kindergarten, a kitchen that provides lunch for the students, as well as the offices of the government director who oversees all decisions and activities of the school. Despite its somber and lifeless outer mien, the school is full of life and activity. The liveliness and interest of the children overcome the stark surroundings. The building and grounds are never quiet—always there are children playing soccer, yelling at each other, or running and screaming just for fun. The teachers are endlessly trying to control the noise and commotion so that they can teach their classes. Nevertheless the students somehow manage to learn.

The school offers typical academic courses in math, history, Russian literature, Tajik literature, English, and German, as well as the standard elements of the Waldorf curriculum, including painting, drawing, handwork, gardening, and music. Yet the shortage of basic school materials and books and of standard Waldorf supplies, such as beeswax crayons, wooden C-flutes, and silks, added to the barren and impoverished surroundings and resulted in a school quite different from my own Waldorf school in Austin and others I have visited in the United States and Europe.

After a couple of weeks, Canyon and I got settled in Khujand, made friends, and started realizing how our help could be used in the school. In addition to our work at the school, we started an English club and led discussions in the US Embassy-funded room in the library called “The American Corner.”

Also, I played violin with a local music group that performed both ethnic Tajik music—fun, though it was difficult for me to pick up the Arabic-sounding Tajik tones and rhythms—as well as the traditional classical repertoire. The seven weeks of our planned visit went by quickly, and because the school was on break for two of those weeks, I personally was very dissatisfied. I knew that I could have accomplished more. Besides, we hardly had had time to travel outside the city and learn about a region rich in history: Alexander the Great built a wall near Khujand, and the great Muslim poets Rumi and Hafiz composed their poetry in the Tajik language. So I decided that, after visiting my family for Christmas in Austin, I would return to Khujand, study Russian, and continue my work in the school.

I arrived back in Khujand in February 2008, having missed most of the hardest winter in Tajik history. The temperatures were consistently around -20° Celsius (-4° Fahrenheit) and, as usual, the Tajik government could not afford to provide heat and electricity, even to important buildings in the cities. When I first arrived, I thought I would freeze to death in the unheated apartment where my host family lived. The kitchen was warmed by a gas heater, but all the other rooms were as cold as the outdoors. We crowded into and lived in that kitchen except when we were sleeping, and hardly had the courage to bathe or even to change our clothes. I could scarcely believe the strength and calm placidity of my Tajik hosts. They smiled and accepted their fate without protest. I survived only with the idea that I was challenging myself to live creatively and that it would not last forever. The school was helped by donations of coal and wood from families, and life and learning went on.

For the next months, I was the music teacher at the Waldorf school, going there every weekday to teach recorder and singing to the children in grades two through six. My Russian improved through daily practice and private lessons so that, to my great relief, I was able to communicate effectively with my students. They remained a challenge, though, since they were extremely animated and often overexcited. But it was all very rewarding. In time the sixth-grade students were able to play a canon and the fourth-grade children were able to sing in tune. Before I left, most had reached a new level of musicianship. The third graders came to be able to deal with the complexity of a two-part round, and the fifth graders learned to hold a steady beat and to sing with beautiful tone. I was finally satisfied

that I had done everything in my power to give the students of this school something for themselves.

Most of the boys and girls whom I taught live in extreme poverty and will grow up to a difficult and hardening life of work. Yet I have never seen students so willing and excited to help and to do whatever is needed. It was a joy to watch them playing their recorders, trying to learn the notes to play a tune correctly. For them, music and the other arts they learn and practice in the Waldorf school are ways to leave behind the challenges of everyday life, the worry about water, food, gas, and electricity, and to enter a world of imagination and creativity. The school really has a profound effect on them and their lives, and I am grateful I had the

opportunity to help to bring some life to a deficient and gray place.

After seeing the challenges of life in Tajikistan and learning the mentality of the people, I have a very deep respect for Rano Ahunova. She had the courage to start a Waldorf school where there is a very strong traditional culture, where people are used to accepting life, difficult as it is, and where few

individuals step out of the ordinary. Despite its challenges, the school grows in size and reputation each year. It took me a while to understand this, but Rano and the other teachers have created a place of learning where, most importantly, children can begin to think for themselves. This is a capacity that was not encouraged in Tajikistan during the Soviet era and is not encouraged by the current Tajik government. It is something for a new generation and perhaps part of a new hope for Tajikistan's future. ☉



Aisling Grogan and her Tajik host-family "sister"

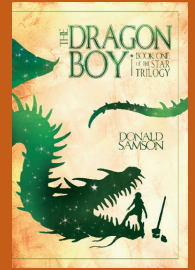
Photos provided by Aisling Grogan

Books in Brief

The Dragon Boy

Book One of the Star Trilogy

by Donald Samson



Children at the cusp of puberty—and perhaps some of us children far beyond that time of life—need stories of adventure. Childhood is ending, and young adolescents are getting ready to leave its protective cocoon for the wide world and its dimly perceived perils, risks, and rewards. Stories that feature a believable hero, confrontations that challenge and educate but do not overwhelm, and clear role models who exemplify courage and moral right are food for the young adolescent's soul.

The Dragon Boy, written by Donald Samson, a class teacher at the Shining Mountain Waldorf School in Boulder, Colorado, is just such a story of adventure. The central character, named simply Boy, is of mysterious origin. Orphaned twice by the time he is nine, he finds himself alone on the streets without even a proper name. He is taken into a walled compound and given the task of caring for a large and beautiful dragon. Star turns out to be a beneficent "Luck Dragon" who becomes Boy's friend and mentor. From him Boy learns patience, respect, and how to do real work, as well as the skills he will need to become a true knight. He learns also about many of the mysteries of life, and takes the name Straw.

Toward the end of the book, a threat emerges that will challenge both Straw and Star. A dark warrior appears with an army and wants to fight Star to the death.

Since this is only volume one of a projected trilogy, readers will have to wait for volume two to see how this challenge is resolved. The coming stage of the story will reveal as well what exactly Straw has been trained to do, and why it was essential that he had this training from a dragon.

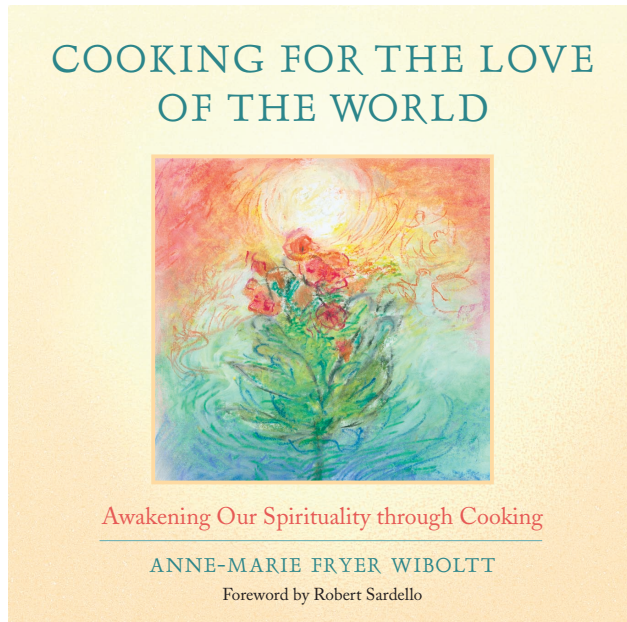
The Dragon Boy has been highly praised by Waldorf and mainstream teachers, reading experts, bookstore managers, and young readers. It is a compelling story for young and old.

AWSNA Publications, Ghent, NY, 2007
247 pages • \$16.95

Book Review

Cooking for the Love of the World Awakening Our Spirituality through Cooking

BY ANNE-MARIE FRYER WIBOLTT – REVIEWED BY RONALD KOETZSCH



Anne-Marie Fryer Wiboltt is a Waldorf class and kindergarten teacher, biodynamic farmer, natural health counselor, and the author of more than ten natural foods cookbooks. Trained as a macrobiotic cooking teacher, she also has studied the dietary theories of Weston Price and the nutritional approach put forth by Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf Education.

In this new book, enhanced by many illustrations by the author, Anne-Marie Fryer Wiboltt brings together the practical wisdom of these three approaches in the light of her own twenty-five years

One of the author's themes is that we should choose our food according to the seasons of the year. This practice promotes our health and well-being by bringing us in harmony with the cycle of the year and with nature. Thus the 140-page recipe section of the book is divided into four seasonal parts, each with recipes for the early, late, and "celebration" times of summer, autumn, winter, and spring.

The "Early Spring Menu," for example, includes a recipe for "Sautéed Radishes and Greens with Sesame Seeds"; the "Celebration of Spring Menu" features "Paprika Eggs with Scallions and Miso Mayonnaise," and the "Late Spring Menu" tells how to prepare "Green Arugula Salad with Sweet Vinegar Miso Dressing." The author offers a wide variety of imaginative and appealing recipes for soups, salads, vegetable dishes, whole grains and pastas, baked goods, and desserts for each time of year.

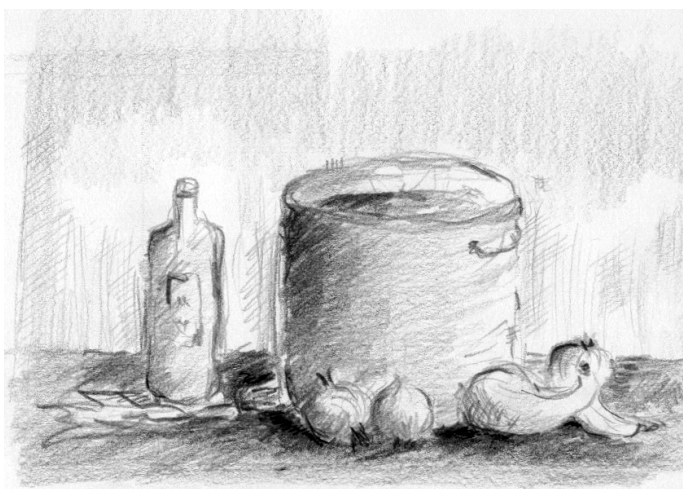
Cooking for the Love of the World is not merely a cookbook, however. It is also an insightful and inspiring commentary on cooking, food, health, nature, and on our relationship with the natural world. The first third of the book includes chapters on such topics as "A Wisdom-Filled World," "The Cycle and Rhythms of the Plant," "Cooking as a Living Art," and "Creating Balanced Meals."

Anne-Marie Fryer Wiboltt wants first to awaken in the reader a sense of wonder, awe, and reverence for the beauty and order of nature and for the miracle of food itself—what in nature we can consume for our nourishment. She suggests simple observation

When we cook and eat reverently, we renew not only ourselves but also the Earth.

of professional experience. The result is a treasury of inspiring wisdom and practical advice about food that can benefit ourselves and our children.

exercises to help us become deeply aware of the growth forces that live in the plants and of the colors, shapes, distinct energies, and "personalities" of the various foods we eat.



The basic tools of the artist-cook

The author also wants to inspire us to bring consciousness and appreciation into every phase of our relationship with food. How we cultivate our food and how we choose, cook, prepare, present, and eat it are all important. Each activity in relation to food impacts every aspect of our being—emotional, psychological, and spiritual—and our whole life. For Wiboltt, cooking is a high art and should be done with reverence, joy, and a keen awareness of its import. It is part of a spiritual path. The way we cook and eat can help us find our place in the cosmos.

The author's thoughtful and sensitive writing is seasoned with much sound, practical advice. For example:

- Use fresh, local, organic, or biodynamic vegetables and other foods
- Avoid canned, frozen, and processed foods
- Adjust food choices and cooking styles to the season
- Eat a balanced diet based on whole grains; they have a harmonious mixture of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, and vitamins
- Eat a wide variety of vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and fruits
- Make animal foods a relatively small part of your daily diet
- Avoid white sugar; it can be the cause of a host of problems. Use honey, maple syrup, and other natural sweeteners instead
- Use particular foods for a specific effect. For example, root vegetables can ground and clarify our thinking.
- Give cooking the time and attention it deserves. It is a living, life-creating art
- Cook only when feeling peaceful and joyful. If you

don't feel that way, do something to improve your mood

- Make eating a ritual, filled with reverence, gratitude, and joy
- Eat slowly and chew each mouthful well

Rudolf Steiner was emphatic that the deterministic idea that "We are what we eat" is a false and dangerous one. There are many other factors that influence the quality of our lives and our destiny. But Steiner also said that food impacts all aspects of our being and that proper diet is necessary to spiritual development. Anne-Marie Fryer Wiboltt's beautiful and useful book gives us many tools to approach food and cooking with new eyes and to improve the quality of our children's and our own lives. ☺



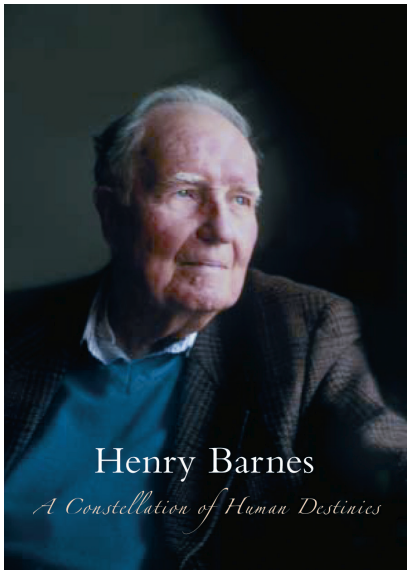
The onion, like other vegetables, is a visible manifestation of invisible, etheric forces.

Goldenstone Press, Benson, NC, 2008
201 pages • \$22.95

Book Review

Henry Barnes A Constellation of Human Destinies

EDITED BY JOHN MICHAEL BARNES – REVIEWED BY RONALD KOETZSCH



Henry Barnes (1912–2008) was probably the single most important person in the development of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education in the United States during the twentieth century. Teacher, writer, lecturer, and general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America, he devoted the seventy-five years of his

adult life to the spiritual understanding of the human being and to the practical application of that view in education. (Please see “Henry Barnes – A Memorial Tribute” on page 5 of this issue of *Renewal*.)

In the last years of his long life, Henry worked on his autobiography. This past autumn, a week before he died, Henry held the printer’s proof of the resulting book in his hands. However, *Henry Barnes – A Constellation of Human Destinies* is only in part about Henry’s life. It also tells the life stories of two remarkable sisters—poet, sculptor, and visual artist Arvia MacKaye Ege and poet and speech artist Christy MacKaye Barnes. Their father, Percy MacKaye, was a leading American poet and dramatist in the early part of the last century,

The narrative of these three (as well as other) intertwining destinies includes many evocative and memorable stories—among them:

Arvia MacKaye arriving in Dornach, Switzerland, in 1923, hearing Rudolf Steiner lecture, and having a personal interview with him;
The death by suicide of Henry’s closest friend,

Peter Stockton, an event that led to Henry’s first learning of the work of Rudolf Steiner;
Christy MacKaye studying speech and drama with Marie Steiner in Dornach in the late 1930s;
Henry and Christy meeting in Dornach, falling in love, and marrying;
The two sisters, Henry, and Arvia’s husband, Karl Ege, working for years to build up the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City into a flagship school of Waldorf Education in North America; and
The founding of the Hawthorne Valley School and Farm in Harlemville, New York, in the late 1970s.

A Constellation of Human Destinies also contains reminiscences about Henry from family, friends, and former students. There are several accounts of how, as a teacher of history in the high school, Henry was able to enter into and bring alive a famous personage, event, or era and to stimulate the imaginative capacity of his students so that the past became for them a living reality. *A Constellation of*



Henry Barnes and Christy MacKaye on the terrace of the second Goetheanum, Easter, 1939

Human Destinies is also about effective teaching and the role of the teacher.

This is a charming, readable, and attractive book. It evokes through its text and many photos a noble



Arvia MacKaye Ege teaching handwork at the Rudolf Steiner School of New York, circa 1965

and dedicated human being, those who filled his personal and professional life, and the long and productive careers of a remarkable group of individuals. The book is an excellent resource for persons interested in a deeper understanding of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education. ☉



Christy MacKaye Barnes listening to a student in her high school literature class, circa 1970

Adonis Press, Hillsdale, NY, 2008
127 pages • \$17.50

Photos from the book

Somebody Up There Liked Him

BY MICHAEL RONALL

Reading the newspaper this fall, I was reminded of a story told by the late Werner Glas, a founder of the Waldorf Institute and Sunbridge College, to serve as a cautionary tale about the dangers of the cultural insularity that can sometimes be found in the Waldorf community.

It seems an admissions officer at a Waldorf school was approached by a parent seeking to enroll his children. Asked at the initial interview what type of work he engaged in, the father cited various jobs as an actor. The admissions officer responded by volunteering her disapproval of his chosen vocation and suggested the man seek a more stable means of earning his livelihood, the better to ensure his children's well-being.

But the applicant must have succeeded in assuring the Waldorf community of his day that, despite precarious employment prospects, he possessed the ability to serve as a worthy role model to his offspring as well as satisfy his creditors. He might even have been excused for finding the advice amusing, given that his name was Paul Newman.

Acclaimed actor and philanthropist Paul Newman died on September 26, 2008, at the age of 83, father and grandfather to Waldorf alumni. ☉

MICHAEL RONALL writes and teaches in Spring Valley, New York.

BOOKS FOR ENRICHING FAMILY AND SCHOOL LIFE

Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour**SUSAN PERROW**

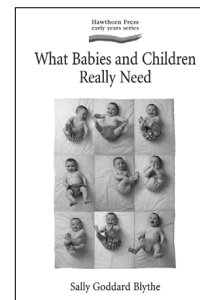
Working with original stories and traditional folk tales, Susan Perrow offers an imaginative approach to transforming a wide range of behaviours and situations affecting young children aged from around three to eight years. The collection of stories is divided into categories covering behaviours such as dishonesty, laziness, teasing and bullying, and challenging situations such as moving house, new baby or illness and grieving. Each story has brief notes with an age guide, and suggestions for use. There is also a story-making model for readers wishing to create their own stories.

**What Babies and Children Really Need****SALLY GODDARD BLYTHE**

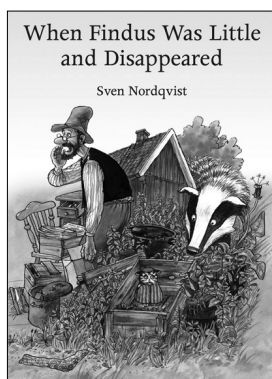
Parental time, love and attention are the key to healthy and happy children, says Sally Goddard Blythe. Her book shows how a baby's relationship with its mother, beginning at conception, has a lasting and fundamental impact which continues into adulthood. It calls for a new Charter for Childhood in which nutrition, play, affection and discipline are valued as the basic building blocks for meeting children's needs.

'This comprehensive book provides parents with the information they need to raise healthy, balanced resilient children.'

Sue Palmer, author of
Toxic Childhood

**When Findus Was Little and Disappeared****SVEN NORDQVIST**

Farmer Pettson sat doing the crossword, with Findus the cat on his knee. 'Tell me about when I disappeared,' said Findus. 'You haven't disappeared' said Pettson, 'you're sitting right here.' 'Yes, but – when I was little.' Oh, then ... But you've heard the story so often before.' 'But tell it to me anyway!' So here is the story of when Findus was little and disappeared.



'It's not often that we come across books with such immediate and lasting appeal as Sven Nordqvist's 'Findus' series. The stories are ingenious, the characters are quirky and original, and the illustrations are absolutely delightful ... I can't recommend them highly enough.'

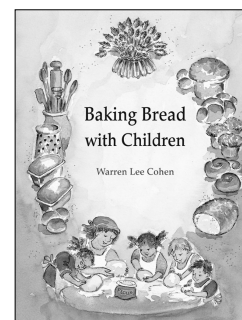
Philip Pullman

Baking Bread with Children**WARREN LEE COHEN**

Here is everything you need to share the magic of baking with children of all ages. The techniques and recipes are cleverly seasoned with stories, songs and poems to make the whole process really enjoyable for everyone. There are also instructions for building and using a bread oven, baking projects for kindergarten and school, and useful nutritional information.

'Baking bread at home with children is a wonderful thing to do. This delightful book provides the ideal guidelines and inspiration. I strongly recommend it!'

Mollie Katzen, author of *The Moosewood Cookbook*

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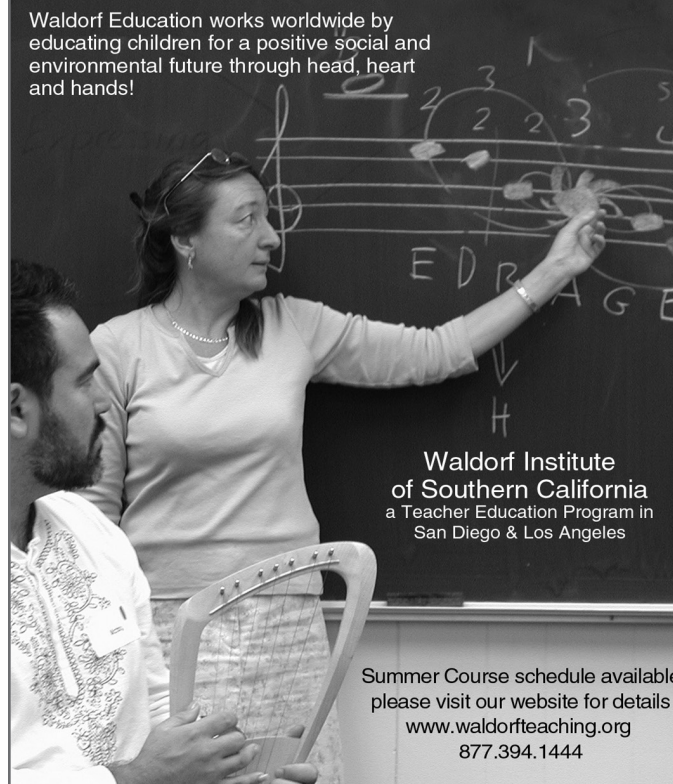
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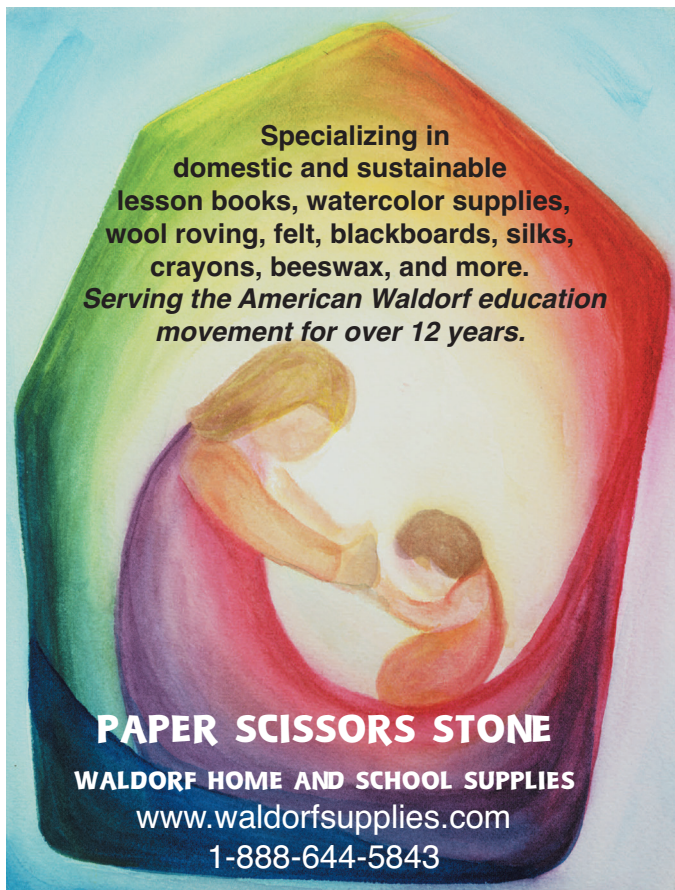
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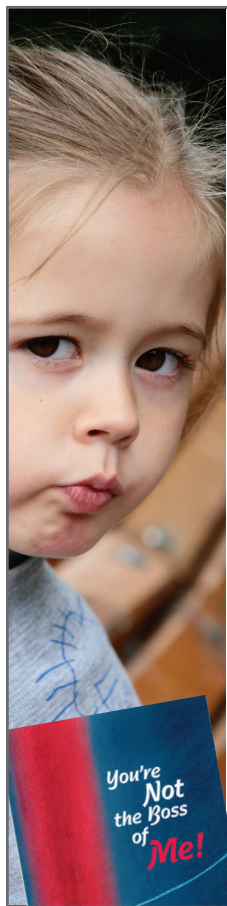
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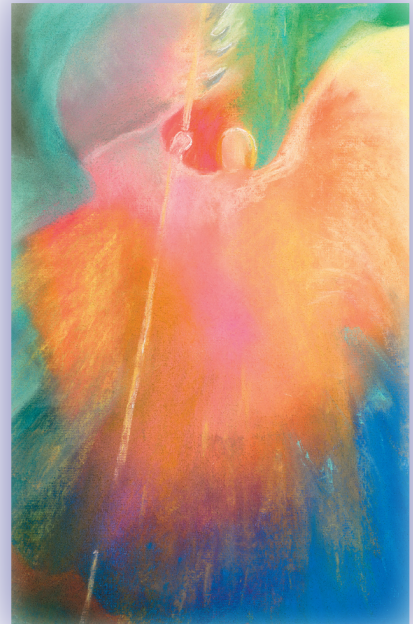
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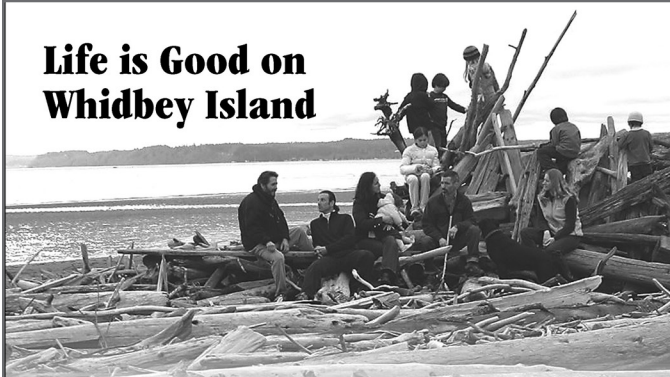
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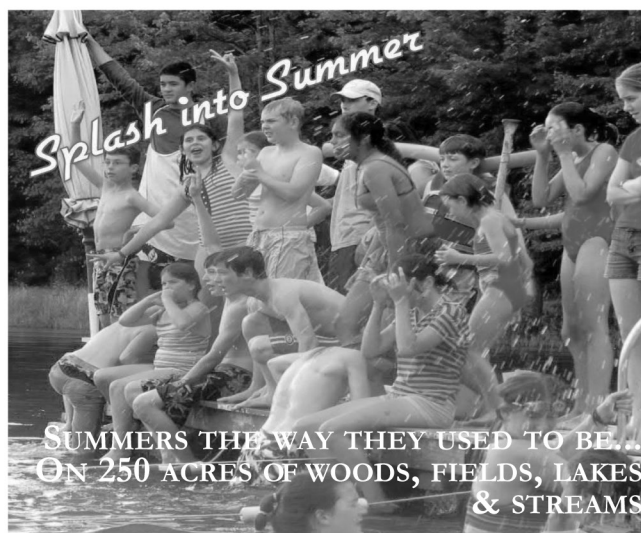
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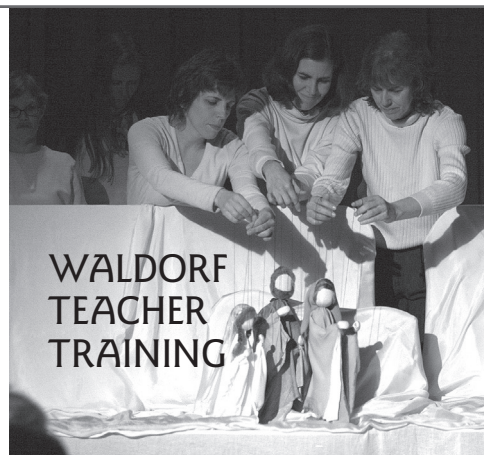


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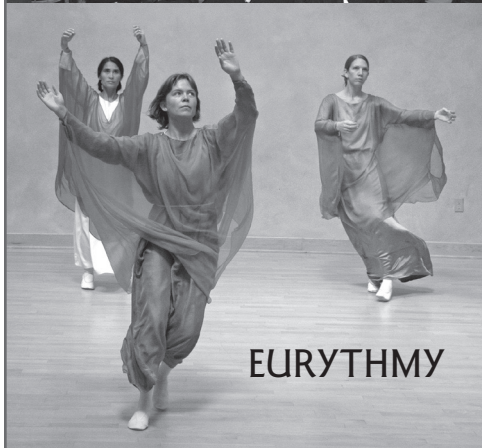
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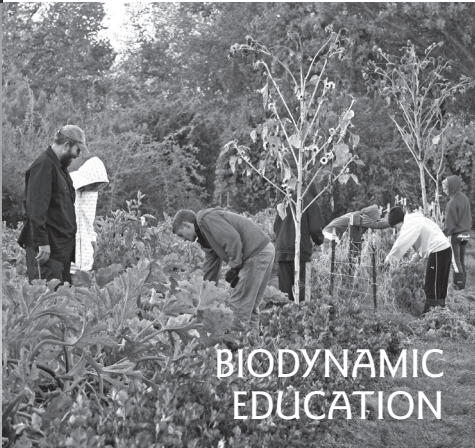
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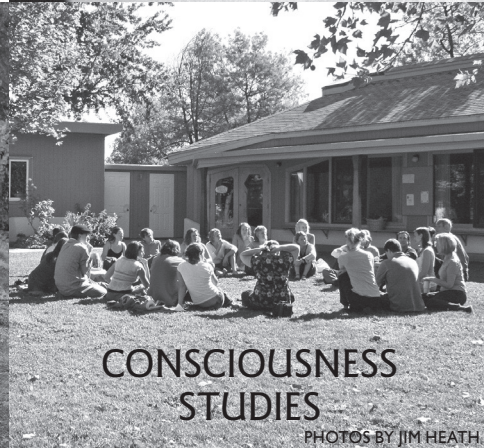
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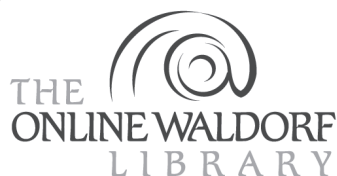
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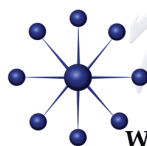


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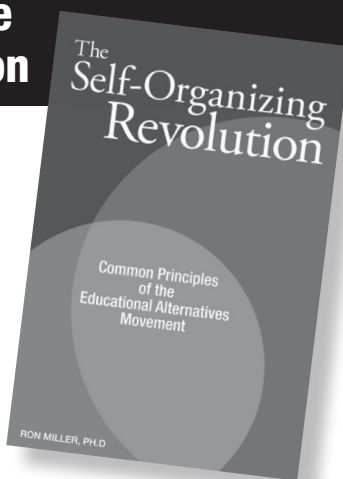
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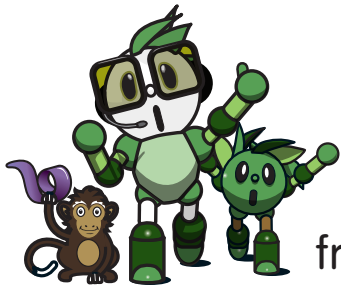
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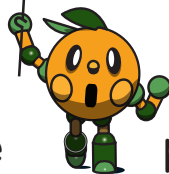
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