

Renewal

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

SPRING/SUMMER 1996



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Spring/Summer 1996

Dear Readers,

Our previous issue, because of space considerations, had no "Letter from the Editor." Frankly, I did not think that anyone would notice or mind. I was wrong. A number of people (none of them, surprisingly, members of my immediate family) expressed disappointment. For them, the editor's letter is a greeting and welcoming and also a reassurance that there is a perspective and point of view that has brought the various articles together. Assuming that the few have in some degree spoken for the many, I reinstate the letter.

Several of our articles deal with issues that are controversial in the Waldorf world. One of these issues concerns school governance, particularly the role of the faculty and the College of Teachers (both obviously comprised of teachers) and the role of the Board of Trustees (which typically includes parents and other friends of the school). In our last issue, Siegfried Finser argued for a central role of the Board in articulating and carrying out the full (not just financial and legal) vision of the school. In this issue, David Adams holds that the main responsibility should rest with the College of Teachers and that the College should, in fact, be the Board.

Another issue concerns how teachers (and others) in the Waldorf school deal with interpersonal conflicts. Some schools use outside consultants skilled in conflict resolution and/or conflict resolution protocols. In our next issue we will have a report from the Lexington school which has recently instituted such a protocol. In this issue, though, Norman Davidson argues that it is the inner work of the teachers and of others involved – the self-examination and self-development based on meditation – that is the *sine qua non* of resolving conflict situations.

A third question concerns the best way to open the school day. The morning circle, in which the children stand in a circle, recite poems, sing songs, and do various physical exercises, is an important part of life in all Waldorf schools. Jack Petrash's article is really about the importance of the freedom and creativity of the teacher in shaping the life of the class. But in making that point he suggests that there are other, perhaps equally effective, ways of conducting the opening exercises than morning circle. Eurythmist and retired class teacher Rudolf Copple, while also stressing the creativity and freedom of the teacher, argues that the morning circle should indeed be "circular" and involve movement through space. Interviewer Anne Riegel, in recording Rudolf Copple's views on this and other topics, paints a delightful and inspiring picture of a remarkable human being.

I hope that you find these and our other articles informative and stimulating.

Sincerely,

Ronald E. Kotzsch

Ronald E. Kotzsch, Ph.D.

Editor



News from AWSNA

by David Alsop, Chairman

I would like to give readers of *Renewal* a picture of the ongoing activities and concerns of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, with the hope that this somewhat broad outlook will help to establish a context for other material in this issue, and indeed in each issue of *Renewal*. Perhaps there is no better phrase to characterize the current situation in which we find ourselves than "we are working to make the invisible visible, to make the esoteric exoteric, to make the inner outer." What does this mean?

In the first instance, there continues to be a very serious teacher shortage within the Waldorf school movement, and the keen desire of parents and friends to found new schools in numerous locations is only serving to exacerbate the problem. One estimate is that for every two teaching positions open, there is only one "teacher-in-training" becoming available. How can we increase the visibility of Waldorf teaching as a profession? What are the appropriate forms for teacher preparation programs – full-time, summers, evenings, and weekends – that will enable the potential teacher to enroll and to achieve success? What opportunities can be created to assist practicing teachers in their ongoing professional development? AWSNA's Teacher Education Committee has been wrestling with these and other questions.

Secondly, we are experiencing strongly the need to do research within Waldorf Education, to bring out, on the basis of current activity and current thought, in contemporary language, the deeper aspects of that which is actually taking place within the classrooms of our schools. This translation of the esoteric into the exoteric is a great challenge, yet it is essential if the Waldorf schools are to take their rightful place within the larger educational community. The Waldorf Research Institute at Sunbridge College is a focal point for this activity, and the first *Research Bulletin* is already in print.

Finally, the work with school organization and school funding is becoming more important every year. How do we translate our inner realities into outer forms? What forms create a social environment worthy of all the individuals in the school community? Can we actually arrive at the experience of freedom, equality, and brotherhood in our work together? Can an independent, free Waldorf school reflect the diversity of our local communities? How can we address the questions of tuitions and salaries so that students and teachers alike are able to participate in Waldorf Education, without being tempted to give it all over to the State? How can appropriate and sustaining physical facilities be financed and maintained? Such committees as the Public School Task Force, the Economic Committee, and the Independence in Education Initiative have been addressing these issues, and conferences and workshops aplenty are in the works.

The Association is actively engaged with these issues, and we would encourage all members of the larger Waldorf school community to be a part of the conversation.

The Essentials of a Waldorf Kindergarten

by Nancy Foster

A year or so ago, when I was giving a talk at one of our information evenings for prospective parents, a listener posed an interesting question: Is there any room in Waldorf Education for a teacher's individual creativity, or has everything been handed down from Rudolf Steiner exactly as it is to be carried out?

My response was more or less as follows: In his lectures on education Rudolf Steiner spoke at length about the principles underlying Waldorf Education. He did indeed give teachers some specific examples, but to a great extent he left the working out of details, of how to bring the principles into practice, to the individual teacher. In fact, he stated that if he were to visit a school in which there were two first grade classes and he found both teachers presenting lessons in the same way, he would be disappointed.

Regarding nursery and kindergarten, there are actually few specific indications given by Rudolf Steiner. For this reason, much of what is done in the Waldorf kindergarten is the result of the study and work in Waldorf Education of teachers around the world. Initially, of course, most of this work came out of western Europe, where the movement began. Now, however, insights and ideas of value arise from many sources and are shared through books and articles, lectures, workshops, and conferences. The work is constantly being enriched anew. Waldorf Education should therefore be considered an approach or philosophy, rather than a method.

In the many years since I began teaching at Acorn Hill Children's Center, a Waldorf preschool, I have seen and taken part in great changes, as we have worked continually to deepen and broaden our understanding of the Waldorf philosophy, and as we have participated in Waldorf courses, conferences, and other forms of teacher education and exchange.

Some of the additions since I began teaching are: the observance of children's birthdays with the parents present; celebration of the seasonal festivals; lazured walls (i.e., walls painted with transparent washes, usually of pastel colors); the use of table puppets and silk marionettes; and circle time with the children experiencing music and verse in movement and gesture rather than while sitting in chairs.



A quiet moment in a Waldorf kindergarten as the teacher plays her lyre.

As time goes on, there will doubtless be a continuing development in the application of the Waldorf philosophy to the education of the young child. Without such evolution, Waldorf Education would cease to be a living process and would become instead a fossilized cultural curiosity of limited relevance in today's world.

The prospective parent who asked the question quoted above was wary of the idea of a static educational system. A different question – in a sense, a mirror image of the first – sometimes arises when parents, accustomed to their child's particular classroom experiences, discover that in another classroom, or at another Waldorf school, some things are different.

For example, one teacher lights a candle at the beginning of circle time, and a parent is surprised to find that another lights a candle at story time instead, while still another lights a candle only on birthdays or festival days. Or in one Waldorf school the children hear a fairy tale for a period of time, then see it as a marionette play for a week or so, and then act it out during circle time. In another school, the children experience a story as something told, or as a marionette play, but never as both. Or in one school, the kindergarten classroom is lazured in warm peach tones, while in another it is a rosy pink. In some schools, the teacher is addressed by his or her first name, in others as Mrs., Miss, Ms., or Mr. ---. Parents who learn of such differences, large and small, may wonder: Is one way "right" and another "wrong?" Or are they simply "different" and equally appropriate in a Waldorf kindergarten?

The issue underlying these different though related questions is how one knows whether a classroom or school is really true to the Waldorf philosophy. Are there certain activities or practices that *must* be there? Was Acorn Hill in its earlier days, for example, really based on Waldorf principles, even though there were many



The quiet corner of a kindergarten classroom where the dolls live.

things we had not yet learned? What, in short, are the essentials of Waldorf Education?

At least a partial answer to these questions can arise from the effort to understand the nature and the needs of young children. In observing them, we can see that they love to be active, and they are most happy and healthy when they are able to take part wholeheartedly in all that is around them. They are open to their entire environment, including not only the physical surroundings but also the behavior, feelings, and thoughts of those persons with whom they have contact, especially their caregivers. With a natural empathy, young children imitate all that is in their immediate environment, and although this imitation is not always visible, we can be sure it is taking place inwardly. This principle, of which Rudolf Steiner speaks at length, is the basis of all

our work with young children. It requires that in a Waldorf kindergarten we strive to surround the children with all that is worthy of imitation and that allows them, in a protected and nurturing setting, to live in wholehearted participation. (Here it should be noted that no adult can presume to be perfectly worthy of imitation. But an adult's striving, the conscious effort to *become* worthy, is what is necessary for the young child.)

In reflecting on this principle of imitation, I realized that there are "Three R's" in the Waldorf kindergarten. These are not the traditional "Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic," to be sure. Rather they are "Reverence, Rhythm, and Repetition." If these three R's are present in a classroom – in the environment to be taken up through imitation rather than as instruction or admonition – then surely the Waldorf philosophy is at work in that classroom.

The quality of reverence can be found in the beauty and simplicity of the classroom and the care for all that it contains. Everything has its place, and, no matter how things have been moved about in the creative vigor of playtime, all is put back in order with care when playtime is over. Reverence may also be seen in the verse before snack, expressing gratitude to earth and sun. Equally important, reverence can be sensed in the attitude of the teacher toward the children entrusted to his or her care.

Rhythm occurs in the daily flow of activities in the classroom, as the children are carried along, seemingly without "orders," from active to more quiet times, and from individual play to group activities. There is a cyclic breathing-in and breathing-out in this process.

Repetition is found in the experience of songs, verses, and stories over a period of time, allowing the children the joy of familiarity and of full participation. It also appears in the recurrence of weekly events: Monday is baking day, Tuesday is walk day, and so on. These are just a few examples of the three R's, which give the children a sense of security and meet their need to imitate and participate wholeheartedly in the life around them.

Thus, when parents or other visitors encounter differences from teacher to teacher, or school to school, they need not be concerned whether a procedure is right or wrong, in accordance or not with some absolute Waldorf recipe. Rather, they might look or ask for the reason for the different approach. And they might observe the effect on the children. Do they appear happily absorbed in activity? Do they seem secure in the rhythm of the day? Do they seem to have confidence in teachers and playmates? Observers need also to keep distinct their own preferences from the needs of the particular group in a particular situation.

This is not to say that "anything goes" but to recognize that genuine, unsentimental reverence may be manifested in many ways, that a breathing rhythm may involve a different order of specific components, and that repetition too may show itself in more than one way. For example, one teacher may tell the same story every day for a week, and then again later in the year; another may tell a story three days a week for two or three weeks, with another story interspersed.

In summary, then, in looking at the practices of a particular classroom, we keep in mind the basic needs of the young child; realize that the age and nature of the children in the group are influencing the teacher's way of working with them; and seek the three R's of reverence, rhythm, and repetition. Above all, we should appreciate the living quality of Waldorf Education, which calls forth such creative variety in the application of its ideals.

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Nancy Foster has been a teacher since 1973 at Acorn Hill Children's Center, a Waldorf preschool in Silver Spring, Maryland. After many years of working with mixed-age groups, she has recently begun teaching parent/child and nursery classes. She offers workshops for teachers at Waldorf kindergarten conferences in the United States and abroad, serves as a mentor for new teachers, and is on the visiting faculty of Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York. She and her husband, a professional musician, encountered Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy while seeking a school for their two sons, now grown.

Morning Circle: Prelude to an Important Question

by Jack Petrash

The school year was not yet a month old and already I had received calls from three class teachers concerned about morning circle. These were new teachers. Each felt that his or her class suffered when the day began with the forming of a circle for opening activities. They found that the children's attention diminished during circle and that participation became sporadic and in some instances minimal. Rather than beginning with strength and unity, the day – these teachers felt – was starting in the wrong way.

These teachers' concerns closely echoed my own. I didn't mind saying that when I start with a new class I rarely do an opening circle. I too have found that focus and participation are difficult to achieve, especially in a large class, when opening exercises are done in a circle. The mere fact that I can not look directly at all the children is problematic. We teachers say so much with our eyes, and with a variety of facial expressions, that we are able to save our words for when they're really needed. Our direct gaze brings us conscious awareness of what is going on in the class. This is especially important for a new teacher who has not yet developed other organs of perception, such as eyes in the back of his or her head.

Circle time is especially difficult for social children. For sanguine children – and in a first grade that is often a sizable portion of the class – the close proximity of a friend during circle time can be almost too much to bear. I have seen children who seem ready to jump out of their skins for sheer joy from having a friend next to them. In such a situation, the children become distracted and main lesson activities become secondary. This is unfortunate because, if there is total participation, opening exercises can have a magical effect. They can give the class unity and strength of purpose. In a large class the resulting sense of

working together can be especially pronounced, which is why Waldorf teachers like large classes. It is important then that the day start with a positive experience of working together. The teachers who called me, though, were experiencing something quite different when their day began amid the clatter and confusion of moving desks and chairs.

If a main lesson can begin with the children in a circle, all fully participating, and with their attention focused, then the children are well served. The circle has engendered an experience of oneness. Certainly, there are teachers who start the day having the children move a roomful of desks in a most quiet and graceful way, and their children benefit greatly from that experience. However, I could not do that in the same way, especially at the beginning of grade one. So I chose to start the day in a different and yet, I believe, a pedagogically sound way.

Such a decision must rest freely with each teacher. New teachers, trained and untrained, should know that it is possible to do pedagogically appropriate opening exercises without a circle. When I became a Waldorf teacher, my first classroom was twelve feet wide and about forty feet long. This room had originally been three dormitory rooms in a boarding school. With the intervening walls removed, the room was large enough for a class of twenty-four children, but never large enough for a circle with that many children. Out of necessity, I had to develop a wide variety of rhythmic activities (clapping, stamping, stepping, chanting, and the like) that children could do standing behind their desks. It became clear over the years that the type of opening activities that I wanted the children to do could take place just as well behind their desks. If we are trying to teach the children to breathe properly, activities that help this – activities that

contrast loud and soft, large and small, fast and slow, active and restful, expansive and contractive – can be done effectively without a circle.

With opening exercises it is essential that teachers be both sanguine and phlegmatic. A class teacher should be sanguine in that he or she regularly introduces new elements into the opening exercises. The opening exercises can change with the year, with each new season, or with the start of a new main lesson block. They can even be different on different days of the week.

In our class we have rhythmic exercises which we do each Monday because they are simple and assist "re-entry." We have other exercises which we do each Tuesday because they are more elaborate, more challenging, and require more interaction between the children. I find that my children interact more with each other on a Tuesday. Rather than resist this tendency, I incorporate it into the opening exercises and in other parts of my Tuesday main lesson.

The class teacher must also be phlegmatic in that he or she repeats certain activities daily over a period of weeks, months, and even years. There are poems and action verses which I taught my class in grade one which they still enjoyed doing on a daily basis in grade three. These exercises became the backbone of our opening activities. They were done daily and often at the same point in the opening exercises.

With my current class, for example, I decided in grade one to use a poem entitled "Awake, Awake, the Sun is Shining Bright" to start each day. With the help of our school eurythmist I made up gestures to accompany the poem. Each morning we stood and began our day by reciting the poem and doing the gestures. This always directly preceded our morning verse. I hoped that with such a beginning the

children would be able to stand up nicely and to say their morning verse with more vitality and less yawning and slouching. This worked remarkably well until the end of third grade when the nine-year change had begun to have a pronounced effect on my class. I started to see in the children's eyes something that conveyed that they thought this verse was "babyish." For fourth grade, I introduced a new poem entitled "Straight and Firm on Earth I Stand." This poem also has movements, but these gestures are more emphatic and suit older children. My students now recite this poem immediately after the opening verse, and I imagine that they will do this for some time to come.

Having activity in the beginning of each main lesson is always beneficial. However, it is much easier to incorporate activity into a lesson for young children. As classes progress through the grades, opening exercises change dramatically and often focus more on speech and less on movement. Still, it is possible with imagination and forethought to metamorphose certain exercises from the early grades into appropriate activities for grades four, five, and six. I have seen teachers modify rhythmic stepping and clapping exercises by using long wooden dowels three feet in length and three-quarters of an inch in diameter. With the use of these dowels, a simple verse such as



Third-graders use hand gestures to emphasize a poem they are learning during morning circle.

"Brave and True, I Will Be" can become a rod-passing exercise. This immediately addresses the older students' growing need for social interaction by having them work with partners. It also meets the need for more challenging physical activity by requiring the simultaneous tossing and catching of the rods.

Such an exercise involving twenty or more fourth- or fifth-graders in extended rhythmic activity, done with a partner as well as in unison with the entire class, fosters the social cohesiveness that we seek when we use a circle to begin our lesson. Classes who do such exercises clearly enjoy them. When students' needs are met, there is an immediate enthusiastic response.

I am not saying that the morning circle should not be used. Rather, I am saying that if a teacher feels that it is pedagogically sound to have students do their opening exercises behind their desks, then that teacher should be left free to make this decision out of his or her own intuitive sense. My concern in this matter grew when I heard from the three new teachers that they felt pressure from more experienced teachers to use the circle at the beginning of their main lesson, in spite of their own sense that it was not desirable.

We speak of the class teacher time – grades one through eight – as "the age of authority." Too often, this phrase leads only into discussions of discipline. It should also lead us into a discussion of originality, creativity, and responsiveness. We class teachers are called on to be the authors of the work done with our children. This work should rise out of our deep commitment and concern for the specific children in our care. This response must come from our understanding of the children. If we are to be authorities in the true sense, this response must be authentically ours, not someone else's.

To meet the specific demands of the situations in which we as Waldorf teachers find ourselves, we must trust ourselves to develop an intuitive sense of what is needed. Out of this inner sense the art of Waldorf Education is created anew, with freshness. This inner sense is crucial. It is based on and requires the spiritual activity of the teacher.

To develop self-trust is an important first step for any teacher. What, then, is the second step? It is inner work. When children and parents trust in us and we must trust in ourselves, we have a big responsibility. It calls for an appropriate response – an inner dedication to work on ourselves ever more deeply and to call forth that part of us which is our true Self.

As Waldorf teachers, our task is to work in such a way that that part of us which is most deeply spiritual and light-filled, grows continuously. This spiritually based Self, Rudolf Steiner said, is the transformative element in our lives. It can transform us as individuals, change our teaching, and enable the children whom we teach to change as well. Consequently, our most serious task is to work inwardly – through study, through meditation, and through prayer – to sharpen our spiritual focus and allow our spiritual Self to take root deeply in our teaching and in our lives. We can then hope that this Self will become a well-spring that will flow with imagination, with growing intuitive awareness, and with inspiration, so that we will receive the guidance that we really need.

Clearly, the question of whether or not to form a circle with our grade school children in main lesson is secondary and perhaps minor. However, the question of whether or not we teachers should be allowed to follow the prompting of our own inner sense is primary. We Waldorf teachers should be encouraged to trust ourselves deeply and then to work inwardly on ourselves to be sure that the Self which we are trusting is indeed that which is most open to the spiritual world. For with deep inner work, our next step, taken with self-trust, will be even more emphatic, more authentic, and more truly our own.

Jack Petrash has been a class teacher at the Washington Waldorf School for twenty-one years, where he has taken two classes through grade eight and where he is currently teaching fifth grade. Jack writes and lectures on Waldorf Education and advises Waldorf school initiatives. He is on the Editorial Board of *Holistic Education Review* and on the faculty of the Rudolf Steiner Institute.

Rudolf Copple on Rhyme, Rhythm, and the Growing Child:

Insights of a Master Teacher

by Anne Riegel

Rudolf Copple, class teacher emeritus and former teacher of French and German at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City, is a living example of the creativity that must be called up by the process of taking a class through the eight grades of a Waldorf school. Still doing some consulting, sharing his wealth of experience, Mr. Copple lives in Harlemville (Ghent), New York, near the Hawthorne Valley School.

Recently, Mr. Copple shared a lively afternoon with visitors. He gave an energetic demonstration of ways in which he conducted morning circle; he recited poems and tongue twisters with drama and humor, enlivening the verse with movements informed by eurythmy; he outlined the pedagogical and spiritual philosophy that supported his creative decisions during his years of teaching; and he recounted with warmth and affection experiences with former students now in their thirties, forties, and beyond – adults who can no doubt attest to the positive influence of a committed teacher.

Rudolf Copple was born in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1908, but it is hard to believe that he is nearly a nonagenarian. To watch him march and leap around his living room while rhythmically clapping his hands in counterpoint to an animated chant of "We are robbers bold and burly . . ." is like witnessing an ageless elf cavorting in an open field. Not only does he move with an agility that belies his years but also he looks at one out of a countenance surprisingly unlined and full of enthusiasm. He seems to be a testament to his message: that teachers need to incorporate what they teach and always create it anew – and that rhythm carried by music, movement, and the spoken word contains the pulse of life itself.

The following is a compilation of Rudolf Copple's answers to various questions and of his elaborating comments and explanations. It is, in effect, a discourse on the content and meaning of morning circle.

* * * * *

Rudolf Copple began: Rudolf Steiner said that rhythm is life.

Morning exercises have to do with rhythm. Rhythm is the main thing to emphasize. Between the ages of seven and fourteen, the child is already musical in his or her deepest self. But everything works *bodily* in the child, and so our approach in teaching must be rhythmically to draw out and strengthen those inborn forces. And then the next goal is to encourage what begins to emerge as the child's own individual being. You see, at the change of teeth, something in the child becomes freed up so that he or she is no longer so subject to hereditary forces but gradually, slowly, can manifest his or her distinct "I-ness." That invisible thing is what you have to nurture and build. Really, you as a teacher are helping to form the *humanity* of the child. If true humanity doesn't come into the child between seven and fourteen, it is difficult to instill later. The child is *so open* in those early years.



Rudolf Copple

The role of rhythm in helping to form the child's humanity is this: through rhythm we can help to build a bridge between the will and the developing thinking of the child. That bridge is, of course, the heart. Physically, the beating of the heart and the breathing of the lungs – together, the rhythmic system, or "middleman," of the body – mediates between the two poles of the metabolic system (which includes the digestive organs and the limbs) and the nervous system. Rudolf Steiner has described for us at length how the metabolic system carries the forces of the will and the nervous system reflects the capacity for thinking. These two systems are harmonized by the rhythmic system, which carries our capacity for feeling. It goes without saying that, as we enhance our capacity for feeling, we enhance our humanity.

Rhythm in the classroom clearly strengthens and supports the growing child. Beginning the day with rhythmic exercises insures that the heart and breath are really activated and that the growth forces are well channeled. Rhythm used pedagogically, you have to understand, is *not* simply repetition, certainly not repetition in a mechanical way. Repetition has its place as a teaching tool, yes, but every repetition must be *fired by* rhythm – for example, by speaking the repeated element first softly, then loudly, then with other variations as appropriate. Further, I see rhythm itself as going beyond repetition, in that rhythm incorporates *evolution* and development. Just experience the rhythm of classical music or poetry: it has an aliveness, with fluctuations according to mood. This creates tremendous effects within us. This helps us to see the responsibility upon the shoulders of the teacher: a teacher must be constantly creative and yet must always know the effect upon the child of his or her improvisations. The teacher's choices of verse, song, and movement in morning circle, for example, must come out of a deep understanding of the developmental stages of the child and an insight into the needs of the particular children at the moment.

Of course, maintaining a daily rhythm in all activities at home is as important as anything the teacher does in the classroom! And yet, incorporating rhythm into life is hard for families and even teachers today. Children are starved for

rhythm. I have observed that even today's generation of teachers often seem to have less feeling for rhythm than did those who went before. Teachers too, not only the children, have suffered from the modern world. Many influences around now are cruder. For example, we can hear that in modern music there is only a strong, simple beat without the subtleties and variations of earlier compositions. Other influences over the last few decades, such as television and drugs, have impaired people's forces. The result today is less resistance, more fatigue, and either simplistic or scattered thinking. We can recover ourselves and both strengthen and elevate our children's capacities if we can consciously develop our sense for rhythm. Think of the Greeks. They had twenty-four different rhythms in their poetry!

Morning exercises have a manifold purpose for the class. Beyond what I have already mentioned, we are building intelligence, developing the heart, and strengthening the will. We are awakening the children if they are sleepy, quieting them if they are restless, helping them to focus if they are distracted. We are instilling a love for language and a sense for the relationships of number. We may stimulate memory and prepare the way for flexible, creative thinking. Of course, the child begins to become truly a thinker of its own only after puberty. We aim for the exercises to unify the class and to remedy any difficult experiences that have worked upon the children before they have come to school. Especially in an urban environment, a child will have encountered many harsh influences that require harmonizing before he or she can be ready to learn. For the teacher, there exists no exact prescription; Rudolf Steiner wanted every teacher to be creative. But there are guidelines for what is appropriate based upon the objective developmental stages of the child.

Rhythm – as exemplified by our breathing and heartbeat – includes contraction and expansion. To experience these forces, which helps concentration, children need to *move* to the spoken verses. Flowing movement is necessary – but not stamping! I recommend maintaining a circle for these exercises, even if the classroom seems unwieldy or unsuited. The children need to be covering ground, moving from point A to point B – and together. Standing in place, even while

making arm movements, is too static for really incorporating the gifts of rhythm. I studied eurhythm in France and in this country before beginning to teach in 1951, and undoubtedly that contributes to my preference for coordinated group movement. One can develop contrasting patterns of movement between hands and feet – contrasts sometimes so complex that untrained adults can hardly follow, but by and large the children imitate naturally and easily. How can such patterns be fully experienced without moving across space? Exercises such as these promote both concentration and a flexibility of the whole person. That is what one aims for. The whole child must be activated; especially the "middle-man" in him must come to life. The growth forces are tremendous, and you want to channel them but not just toward developing the intellect – instead, in a rhythmic way that encompasses and balances the whole being.

Some teachers have a hard time introducing the exercises. The most effective way is first to demonstrate them and then to choose one child who can really follow (preferably one who volunteers), then three, then five children to demonstrate after you. Make the others *eager* to join. If you try to throw something new on a whole class all at once, they won't be able to do it, and you will have bedlam. It may take a few days before the entire group can actually walk the exercise as a rhythm. Of course, for such things as tongue twisters, the children can stand in place or sit. The teacher needs to know what is appropriate, and when.

Different poetic meters have different effects upon the child. The quintessential rhythm of childhood is anapest, the metrical poetic foot of three syllables, the first two short (or unaccented) and the last one long (or accented). A simple example of this rhythm is a poem for the smallest children which begins: "At the spring / Birds do sing." Here is another example of a poem in anapest that is suitable for first-graders; you can picture how the children can march along swinging their arms *up* on the accented syllables. This is the "Song of the Saracens":

We are **they** / who are **fa-** / ster than **Fate!**
 We are **they** / who run **ear-** / ly and **late.**
 We do **storm** / at your **i-** / vo-ry **gates.**
 O pale **kings** / of the **sun-** / set be-ware!

One caution: please do not take the movement indicated above for anapest as a universal or fixed formula. You see, if the verse were in a different rhythm, such as dactyl, we would be likely to emphasize the accented syllables with *downward* movement. One has to discern these differences.

Rudolf Steiner spoke about the significance too of hexameter, how its rhythm is truly human. Hexameter is appropriate to introduce in the fifth grade – but not before. Hexameter (which has six metrical feet and begins with a dactylic beat of long/short/short syllables) can be experienced as built on the relationship between the rhythms of our breathing and our heartbeat. (The rate is one breath to four heartbeats.) The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were written in that meter. Another example of it, loved by the children, is Longfellow's familiar "This is the / forest pri- / meval. The / murmuring / pines and the / hemlocks." To make it of full value to the children, one's recitation of such poetry must emphasize precisely the length of each syllable – not simply the general rhythm of the extended line – and observe also the caesura in the middle of the line. You will find that such a poem, joined to the appropriate movement, will work upon the children to harmonize them.

There are so many matters to take into account in choosing material; one, of course, as alluded to already, is the age of the class. In the fourth grade, for instance, alliterative speech is especially important. Why? In that year, we study the Norse myths, which are full of alliteration but not rhyme. Incidentally, the alliterative syllables should be walked with a heavy step, but not stamped. Here is a great alliterative poem that appeals to children coming to that threshold, that new consciousness of standing more separately and firmly in the world that occurs at about this time:

One morning the mighty Mjolnir* was missing;
Wild on waking was thunderer Thor!
He bristled his beard; his breath was bursting,
And his face a fierce frown wore.

[Thor's hammer]

And don't forget the tongue twisters. Such things help to influence a child's feeling for the creative expressiveness of language. They love to make them up themselves, as in "Plodding Pat pleasingly packed packaged paper picture pages" and "Brown Bruin's black back bruises burn bitterly." We are not giving speech lessons. We simply show the children, and they learn by example. Alliterative tongue twisters are also good for introducing letter-sounds in the first grade, as in "Deep down in the dark dwell the diligent dwarves" or "Four fearful fairies fanned flickering flames."

Children amaze one with their ability to learn by heart. They learn so quickly that soon they know a poem as well as you. Then you can ask them to recite it backwards! They can even walk it backwards, which brings about a different consciousness – a good concentration exercise. Here is a palindrome that has meaning even if recited backwards, line by line, rather than word by word. Try it yourself!

What is done
Has been done.
What's to do,
Do it now.
Show your strength
In the deed.
Let the act
Be supreme
Over thought,
Over dream.

In reverse, this begins "Over dream, over thought, . . ."

Ultimately, every teacher must find his or her own way. But if anyone would like to ask my advice on a particular matter, I am happy to be called. I still try to help, although I don't travel so much anymore. The fact is, not everyone can stand me, as I am too blunt and direct. But I can summarize what I feel are the most important

requirements for a teacher: his or her own internal discipline and, above all, love. Everything depends on the development and refinement of these capacities. A teacher's outlook must also be that, in spite of experience, everything is always new. I am still trying to live with that attitude. Once each week I am taking a watercolor painting class, even now.

* * * * *

Mr. Copple had recited another example of anapestic verse suitable for first-graders and suitable, it seemed, to describe the atmosphere of meeting with this apparently ageless, nimble man:

*In the dew of the dusk
In the mist by the stream
Fireflies spark and flit
To and fro in their sport
While the elves hold their court.*

Courtly he is, as well as something of a natural wonder; and seeing from his perspective can take one's own view beyond the mundane and into the world of unseen forces.

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Rudolf Copple spent his childhood in Germany and learned of Anthroposophy from his older sister. As a young man, he went to France and began his study of eurythmy. When the Second World War broke out, he was still in France and was interned in a prison camp for being a German citizen. When the German army entered the country, Mr. Copple was freed but declined to return to his homeland. In 1947 he emigrated to the United States. He continued his eurythmy studies there with Ilse von Baravalle Kimball. At the age of forty-two, Rudolf Copple started his career as a teacher, teaching eurythmy and painting at the Waldorf school in Kimber-ton, Pennsylvania. He took his first class at age fifty in New York City.

Anne Riegel is a professional copyeditor, a painter, and a student of Anthroposophy. Her daughter and her son, now young adults, were students in the Rudolf Steiner Schools of New York City and of Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

Approaching Reading

by Bill Toole

This article first appeared in Gateways, the newsletter of the Austin Waldorf School.

Our Language Heritage

Reading is one of those activities to which we do not often give much thought. It has been so thoroughly woven into our lives that we take it for granted. Yet it was not long ago in human history that the ability to read belonged to a privileged few. The peoples of ancient Sumeria first pressed into clay, pictures that gradually became less representational and more symbolic. Spreading through much of the world, this writing became in time nothing more than meaningless scratches to all but the initiated.

During this same period, all men and women participated wholeheartedly in the daily use of a speech filled with life, music, and imagination. Everyone was a storyteller, and whole epics and scriptures lived in the memory and flowed from the lips of the populace. The scribe, however, performed both a highly sacred and a highly practical function in society and was accorded great status and respect.

In many ways young children stand in the same relation to the written word as did the average individual of old. Their speech is full of vitality, poetry, and an inventiveness that is natural and naive, yet often quite profound. Meaningful experience is all around them in this new and fascinating world, and it is this world that they are busy "reading" and trying to understand during the early years.

The language experience of young children is an oral and an aural one, rich with meaning. This meaning is conveyed not only by the meanings of the words but also through the tone, the rhythm, the feeling, and through the myriad other subtleties involved when one human being speaks to another. Grasping the meanings of speech in the broadest sense is part of the important work of early childhood, and the adults surrounding a child can encourage and advance this work by taking great care with their own speech. Adult speech that is clear, rich in vocabulary, and – particularly for young ones – pictorial in nature helps to build a strong foundation for all future language skills.

A Context for Reading

It is important to consider reading in the greater context of language experience as a whole and to consider language experience in the even greater context of human life. Here, our particular focus is on childhood and youth and on the development that occurs within this period. In the first

The Waldorf approach to reading (as all of Waldorf pedagogy) tries to give the child a sense that all learning is profoundly connected to life and to the inner landscape of the soul.

several years of life, long before reading begins, adult speech in the environment is the basis for the child's developing language abilities. The indomitable yet unconscious impulse to imitate drives this development of language skills. The child relentlessly seeks and absorbs the speech of grown-ups. How curious, then, that we often speak baby talk to the infant or young child. One wonders if the one-year-old, in the depths of its organism, ever asks, "Is this really what I am supposed to learn? Is this truly grown-up language?"

R

ROUND THE ROSEBUSH
RAN THE RAVENS;
ROUND THE ROSES
RUN, RUN, RUN.

A tongue twister written by a Waldorf first-grader.

Some baby-talk words, actually adult imitations of a toddler's effort to say a word, have become permanently incorporated into our speech. "Tummy," a corruption of "stomach," can be found in the dictionary. "Booboo" is there too, as are many others. I would not suggest that we never use a childlike word with children; but if we are to meet the young child's yearning for something beyond its own language-groping, we should offer worthy examples. Obviously, the quality of the adults' speech is crucial, and we do well to speak with a vocabulary that is bit beyond the child's years. If we do this, the child will continually be inspired to try to speak as an adult speaks.

Children have for generations delighted in the spirited play of words to be found in nursery rhymes and stories. These have rhythm, rhyme, imagery, and a playfulness that keep young children asking to hear them again and again. In the later phase of early childhood, from about the age of four, fairy tales and poetry proper can be introduced. If in the first seven years the child hears proper adult speech and is exposed to nursery rhymes, stories, fairy tales, and poems, profoundly important seeds will be planted in the young soul, and little else will be needed to foster a strong and deep relationship to language.

Lively Beginnings in Grade One

The second great phase of life begins when the child enters first grade. A student in a Waldorf school will not have had reading instruction before this time. Now, in first grade, this process begins. The Waldorf teacher's approach is based on a knowledge of the soul character of the age and of the inner timetable of childhood.

In grade one the teacher tells a story one morning. On the next day the children contribute to a retelling of the same story. Then they have an opportunity to draw a colorful picture of a scene from the tale – perhaps the tossing waves from the story of a fisherman. Later, they draw just the shape of a couple of these dancing waves.

The children witness and participate in the organic evolution of the letter W as they practice drawing and writing the form of the letter in many ways. Over time, the teacher introduces more letters in a similar manner.

The first writing that the children read in the formal context of school is their own writing and that of the adult who stands before them as a trusted guide. Writing precedes reading. Movement and outer activity are native to childhood, and the act of writing involves the children's natural desire to move and to be active. Then, once something that is intimately connected to the children's immediate experience has been written, they read it. The children first read what the teacher has written and what they themselves have written. Eventually the moment arrives when they take up a printed reading book.

This process is a concentrated recapitulation of the historical development of language from oral experience, to drawing, to a kind of drawing/writing, to writing proper, and only then to reading. All along the way, in some form or other, the connection to the wholeness and vitality of language is carefully preserved. The early lessons can be enhanced with little alliterative verses that bring out the "character" of a letter.

Words starting with the letter *R* are a good example. Words such as *run*, *rush*, *race*, *ramble*, *rip*, *ripple*, *round*, or *ring* demonstrate a certain quality inherent in this sound, from which a rhyme can be fashioned:

Raven, raven, ride the sky.
Ramble round and round so high.
Rush to roost up in the tree,
And rattle your rough notes,
One, two, three.

Such a verse is a playful vehicle through which a first-grader can experience one facet of the genius of language. It works with rhythm and rhyme and is a beginning encounter with phonics. Yet the "mechanics" involved in this learning are not divorced from meaningful experience. Since writing and movement are so closely related, students may walk large versions of a letter on the floor, trace it in the air or on each other's back and write it on the blackboard. Some teachers even have the children place a crayon between their toes and form the letter on a paper on the floor!

Besides the letter verses, other poetry may be recited in chorus to help sharpen the ear and the sense for fine language. Our age has developed a lopsided preoccupation with the visual dimension of language and pays little regard to the oral and aural. Rarely do we cultivate and appreciate beautiful speech in children. Yet, they take great joy in reciting good poetry. There is no reason to keep the truly great poets from young children. Countless pieces by Shakespeare, Blake, Dickinson, Spender, the Romantic poets, and others are appropriate for the age. A poem for the young child, though, must have rhythm and rhyme. Free verse made its appearance very recently in human history and is appropriate for children at a later developmental stage.

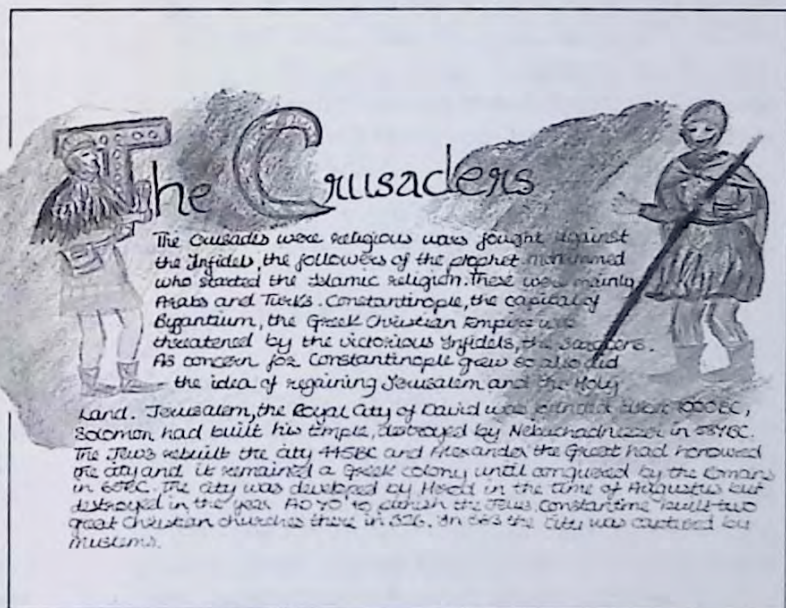
The stories, the poetry, and even the teacher's speech need also to have a strong pictorial element. This quality in language awakens the imagination, engages the feelings, and draws the child into the power and beauty of language. Enthusiasm builds as the foundation for reading is being laid. Reading becomes a key with

which to unlock great treasures. The imagination is not merely a tool for the child's entertainment. Rather, imagination stimulates what will evolve during the years of growing-up into a thinking that is both creative and practical. Cultivating imagination in language fosters not only the measurable skill of reading but also the healthy inner life of the young beings in our charge.

Reading Lights Up

Taken as a whole, these early lessons in language arts immerse the children in an imaginative, multidimensional, and highly active experience of "the Word." The student lives and moves in a warm, stimulating language environment where the skill of reading, which we adults anxiously await from the sidelines, is one day born. From the first drawing/writing of letters, the class, with the teacher's close guidance, goes on to write little summaries of familiar stories. Well-loved poems or verses may also be written down. With crayons the children illustrate the text and create their own readers. They enthusiastically read and reread these books. The content is already known to them so that a warm glow and a sense of security are felt.

Sometime in second grade the class formally takes up printed books, although most of



All Waldorf students write and illustrate their own main lesson books.

the children will already have begun to seek out books on their own. At first, reading may be more a matter of remembering familiar passages. But the moment arrives when a shift occurs, and the child has a sense that "Now I am really reading!" Long prepared for, this exciting shift continues to be supported by the many ongoing language and language-related activities.

An observant teacher of beginning readers in any school will be familiar with the experience of watching reading "light up" in one child after another. It is a remarkable event, inspiring awe each time it occurs. The wonder of it raises the question, "Do we, in fact, actually teach reading?" In a Waldorf school, the teacher brings the gift of language to the child who takes it in deeply; the inborn ability to read awakens at the moment that is right for that particular child.

Waldorf teachers build upon the children's motivation to unlock the mysteries behind written letters and words. The pupil's enthusiasm for inner pictures, experienced in story and poetry, draws them forward. This approach stands in contrast to the teaching of phonics-systems through which the children learn to put sounds together. We do not organize symbols in order to build up visually the words which the children are already familiar with orally. Instead of starting with these parts and building toward the whole, we start with the child's native experience of the whole. Thus, learning to read does not at first come as an exercise in mechanics, although later phonics are taught to support both reading and spelling. The use of story and lively images actively engages the first-grader's own thought processes on a pictorial level. It is this "picture thinking" that is native to this age.

Rhythms in Learning: A Unique Timetable

Each child is unique, and the awakening to reading occurs at a different time for each one. For every individual there is an inner timetable that wants to be honored and respected. However, it is a mistake to believe, what one sometimes hears, that Waldorf schools do not teach reading before the third grade. From day one of grade one,

the basis for reading – and for a lifelong relationship to language – is being formed in a very methodical yet unique, holistic manner. Without a doubt, reading can in many cases be taught sooner and more quickly. Yet if this is our desire, a few questions want answering.

First of all, it is worth asking: What is the early reader NOT doing when he or she is reading? The first years of life (roughly the first seven) are a time for learning predominantly from direct interaction with the world – the world of nature, of peers, of physical and practical activity, and of a small circle of grown-ups. The children need to ingest and digest such primary experiences as are found in the sandbox, on the swing, in the rain, even in a mud puddle. Sitting in one place for a long time is alien to their nature. "Activity" is a byword for the child at this age.

Our age has developed a lopsided preoccupation with the visual dimension of language and pays little regard to the oral and aural. Rarely do we cultivate and appreciate beautiful speech in children.

Secondly, what is the price of shortening an organically determined phase of development? What is the long-term effect of hurrying children into an adult, intellectual mode before they have had an opportunity to finish the truly profound work of the young child? We may have our adult priorities, but they have their inner priorities. The fact that we can thrust them into the next phase prematurely is not a sufficient rationale to do so. Also, while reading is a pleasure from which we adults derive so much relaxation, it can be extremely tiring for a child. For a personal experience of this, try reading a challenging text when you are tired. How much do you remember the next time? Magnify this several times to get a feeling of what it is like for a child who is pushed into reading too early.

Thirdly, are there any physical ramifications to starting early? At about the ninth year, a

maturational shift occurs in the eye. The development of foveal vision accelerates. Before this time, visual experience is more connected with peripheral vision, which takes in a scene as a whole continuum. It is foveal vision that is used extensively in reading. This change reflects the general inner progression from an experience of the whole to the parts.

What about the youngster who is clamoring to read early? Since young children are in a stage of imitation, we can expect them to want to do all the things they see adults doing. If the environment includes opportunities for a variety of healthy age-appropriate activities, the young child will find many other satisfying outlets for his or her interests.

Lastly, we need to ask ourselves why we feel such a strong impulse to rush our children into reading. We have grown accustomed to thinking of reading as a kind of race, in which whoever starts sooner is likely to finish first. Yet, while this is a widely held belief, Waldorf educators are not the only ones calling it into question. The following passage is taken from an article entitled "How Kids Learn," which appeared in the April 17, 1989, issue of *Newsweek*.

Between the ages of five and nine, there's a wide range of development for children of normal intelligence. "What's appropriate for one child may not be appropriate for another," says Dr. Perry Dyke, a member of the California State Board of Education. "... A child's pace is almost impossible to predict beforehand. But by the beginning of the fourth grade, children with very different histories often read on the same level."

Many current educational psychologists, such as Jane Healey, Ph. D., support these findings. We can certainly apply the concluding assertion of the passage to the majority of students in the Waldorf school. Unless there are students with learning differences who require special help, the reading level of fourth-graders in a Waldorf school is on a par with that of students taught to read earlier. Furthermore, the enthusiasm and passion with which they approach reading is a pleasure to behold.

Reading for Deeper Meaning

What matters most, after all, is the big picture. We do not need yet another methodology. But we do need a deeper and broader understanding of the developmental patterns manifesting in these beings we seek to teach. While the child is striving to read words, we should be striving to "read" the child. This involves asking basic questions such as:

How do the immediate gains coming from early acquisition of "word attack" skills compare in ultimate importance to the ability to derive a lifetime of satisfaction from reading?

The Waldorf approach to reading (as all of Waldorf pedagogy) tries to give the child a sense that all learning is profoundly connected to life and to the inner landscape of the soul. A child who acquires this attitude and inner sense moves toward adulthood equipped with a fundamental tool needed to read from the book of life and to find meaning within it.

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For Further Reading

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Bill Toole has taken one class from first through eighth grade at the Austin Waldorf School. He is currently in the sixth grade nearing the end of his second class-teaching cycle.

The Farm Experience

by Nancy Dill and Charlie Mayer

Hawthorne Valley Farm is a four-hundred-acre Biodynamic farm in Harlemville (Ghent), New York. The farm grows grains and vegetables and has a dairy herd of about fifty cows. It was founded in 1972 and is part of the Rudolf Steiner Educational and Farming Association. The farm has a Visiting Students Program through which elementary school classes spend a week on the farm, and also a summer camp for children up to age twelve. The following pieces, one by the former director of the Visiting Students Program and one by a former visiting student and camper, were published first in the farm's newsletter.

From the Farm

by Nancy Dill



Those of us who live close to the land know of its powers to teach and to heal. Farmers and gardeners have an awareness of the daily, deeply felt effects of working with the land through the seasons. This awareness, for the vast majority of people today, grows dimmer and dimmer. Meanwhile, the earth increasingly recoils at our ignorance and treatment of her. We need to find ways to reunite the earth with her people. It is especially important for children to find a meaningful relationship with the earth and her creatures, to experience directly the rhythms of life.

For more than twenty years, the Hawthorne Valley Farm and its surrounding lands have been a place where children can have an active, living experience of life on a working farm and of the rhythms of nature. The Visiting Students Program and the summer camps have carried the ideals and curriculum of Waldorf Education from the classroom out onto the earth. There, learning can arise out of the daily experiences of life and work, be it cleaning the cow barn, feeding the chickens, digging the garden, or collecting sap in the spring to boil for maple syrup. In close association with the animals, the gardens, the weather, and their classmates and friends, children stretch their boundaries and realize new capacities in themselves. The simple pleasures and daily strivings, deeply shared, become a reward in themselves, to be held and treasured for a lifetime.

During twelve and a half years of directing the Visiting Students Program and summer camps, I have met about five thousand children of all ages and backgrounds. These were children from Waldorf schools, other independent schools, and from public schools as well. Virtually all responded to the challenges and promises of Hawthorne Valley, regardless of the season and the weather. Many of the children longed to return right from the moment they left after a week on the farm with their class. And many of them did return, often for camp, as long as they were within the age limit.

One of these children made such a connection that he was not content unless he returned to the farm each year. He became an adopted son to us all, and we watched him grow through his high school years and on into college. For Charlie – and that's his real name – the farm held, as you will see, opportunities for a kind of learning that

he did not find elsewhere. It is the kind of learning and life experience longed for by today's young people. As educators and parents, we must try to provide it, or something close to it, for other children. There is an essential and vital life element available on a farm that can be found in few other places.

We asked Charlie to put into words what it has meant to him, as he was growing up, to spend some time each year at the farm. He was kind enough to do so. When we read what he had to say, we wanted to share it with the Waldorf community as a tribute to the real learning which we as teachers strive to create.

Life on a Farm and the Growth of a Young Person

by Charlie Mayer

In the spring of 1985 I found myself on a working farm for the first time in my life. The Hawthorne Valley Visiting Students Program (VSP) had brought my third-grade class from Washington, D.C. for a week of farming and outdoors activity in Harlemville.

That first week on the farm set a foundation for experiences that would continue during the next ten years and beyond. As a visiting student, summer camper, kitchen helper, apprentice farm worker, and summer manager of the farm's New York City Green Market operation, I learned about the rhythms of agricultural life and the value of honest work, and I have acquired a sense of responsibility.

Almost ten years after my class's trip to Harlemville, I'm unable to recall a lot of my first experiences on the farm. However, two memories of the trip stay with me. The first memory is of people explaining and showing us the farm. The

second and more clear memory is of my ongoing conflict with a European VSP intern. My morning chore was to sweep out the mud room, and, no matter how I did it, this intern always made me do it again until the mud room was perfectly clean. That was my first exposure to the Hawthorne Valley work ethic.

Following our farm trip, I associated Hawthorne Valley with hard work. For my two years as a summer camper, I not only went about the normal camp activities with my group but also worked during my spare time in the camp kitchen, chopping vegetables and washing dishes. Just recently I ran into a fellow camper at the New York City Green Market in downtown Manhattan who said to me, "I just remember you working that dishwasher." I couldn't get enough of the dining hall as a camper and returned as a kitchen helper when I became too old for the camp. As a thirteen- and fourteen-year-old, I was given specific responsibilities in the dining hall – it was my first real job.

During my second summer at the dining hall I couldn't stay away from farm work. That summer, I rose with the farmers before 5:00 a.m. to bring in the cows. Once the cows were in the barn and being milked, I went to the garden for harvesting until it was time to report to the dining hall to wash the camp's breakfast dishes.

Every summer since, I've worked on the farm. Farm manager Steffen Schneider and others



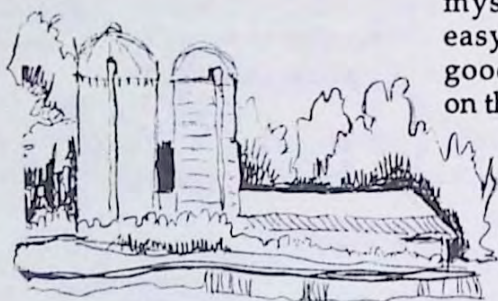
The Hawthorne Valley School and Farm community.

have taught me how to milk the cows, drive tractors, and do almost all of the other farm jobs.

Something about the atmosphere in Hawthorne Valley attracts me. Throughout the year I look forward to rising every day with the sun, stacking hay, and harvesting vegetables. When I'm on the farm I have no doubt that what I am doing is both honest and useful. I realize that others count on me to complete tasks, and I take satisfaction in knowing that I do my part. Every summer, after a couple of days on the farm, I am not a visitor from the city but, rather, a member of the farm community.

Financial compensation has not been an important part of my work experience in Harlemlville, though I was paid for working in the dining hall. The farm has its own way of appreciating labor, its own way of returning what I put into it. Hard work all day is rewarded with a good supper, a long night's sleep, and a feeling of renewed energy in the morning. I don't know much about spirituality, but this feeling of strength from work is perhaps the most spiritual thing that I have felt. The opportunity to live simply makes it easy for

me to be pleased with myself. It's easy to be a good person on the farm.



It's hard to know if others would benefit from the farm as I have. In the last three years, I have invited two friends to the farm for a few days of work. I promised that they would find the work invigorating and enjoyable, but each of them ended up despising the farm. One simply lacked the physical strength. The other friend (a Russian guest) could not get past the idea that the farm work would make him dirty. This demonstrates that farm work is not for everyone. For those who can accept farm life, the work will offer endless benefits. For less hearty individuals, it might be a waste of time to introduce them to the farm. In a

way, I discovered the farm on my own. Others brought me to the Valley, but I decided independently that I was going to pursue this work. Students and other visitors will not enjoy the farm if you just give them a scraper and tell them to muck out the barn; they must choose to do the work.

When I first sat down to write this, I thought that it would be easy to describe the most important aspects of my life in Hawthorne Valley. Now that I've tried to identify them, these points seem more elusive than ever. In a broad sense, my association with Hawthorne Valley has allowed me to develop a connection to the land and a physical and emotional ability to do hard work. The greatest sense of worth and self-esteem comes after you realize how much you can accomplish on your own. The farm has facilitated this realization for me.

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Nancy Dill was a teacher of natural science in the high school of the Kimberton Waldorf School for eighteen years. She was also treasurer of the Waldorf Schools Association, the precursor of AWSNA. Each of Nancy's four children received a Waldorf education, and one is now a teacher of science at the Kimberton high school. For many years director of the Visiting Schools Program at the Hawthorne Valley Farm, Nancy is now working in the field of young adult and adult education.

Charlie Mayer attended the Washington Waldorf School and the Edmund Burke College Preparatory School. He is now a student at Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Charlie still returns to the Hawthorne Valley Farm for about two weeks each year and has an ongoing interest in the farm's development.

Leaving the Garden: Preparing Waldorf Students for the Educational World Beyond

by Chapman Hood Frazier and Deborah Carrington-Frazier

Every group of kids is going to take advantage of the system at some level, but at the Waldorf school there just wasn't a consciousness of trying to get around the work and all. In public school, you try to get around as much as you can.

This comment was made by a high school student who had been enrolled in the public school system for two years after spending most of her elementary school years in a Waldorf school. It points to one difference, among many, between life in a Waldorf school and life in a typical public school, at least as the two are experienced and perceived by students.

There are about one hundred Waldorf schools in North America. Of these only about a dozen have a high school. Hence, the great majority of children who graduate from a Waldorf elementary school continue their education in a public middle school or high school or in a traditionally oriented private school. They enter an educational world that is larger and more complex than that of the Waldorf school, and where the curriculum, the pedagogy, and methods of assessment are quite different from what they are used to.

Just before the beginning of the 1990-91 school year, the combined sixth/seventh grade at the Crossroads Waldorf School in Charlottesville, Virginia, was disbanded. Several families withdrew their children and the class did not have a critical mass. Four students who were expecting to be at Crossroads suddenly found themselves going to a public middle school.

For the next two years I followed the school career of these children, interviewing them and their parents at regular intervals. During this

difficult time, each student was trying to make sense of where they were and where they had been. They were very insightful about the strengths and weaknesses of the two educational systems they knew. Their insights can, I believe, help us as parents and educators address the difficulties inherent in such a transition.

Neither the children nor their families were prepared for this unexpected development. The children were excited and understandably nervous. One boy, named Jesse, who had been in the Waldorf school since kindergarten, commented:

I didn't know a thing about the system [public school] or anything. I thought it was going to be a major change, a lot different from the Waldorf school, and I didn't know if I was going to be able to survive.

Jesse found his first days in the public school difficult and confusing. At one point, he actually broke down in tears and was unable to find his morning class. "When I first got here [to public school], I didn't understand the rules, so I ended up going to four classes I wasn't supposed to be in. . . ." The other three children all had come to Crossroads after and because of negative experiences in the public schools. For these students, the first days were less traumatic.

Early on, impressed by the size of the classes and the buildings, the children enjoyed the novelty of the environment. They also liked their significantly expanded social world, something very important to adolescents.

In the first interview, which was conducted after the first semester, the students viewed their Waldorf schooling from a new

perspective, that of one who now knows "the real world." For the most part, the students were critical of their previous schooling, viewing it as something more appropriate for "younger" children. Yet, once they had adjusted to middle school life, they were much more appreciative of their Waldorf education, their teachers, and the special characteristics of the Waldorf school.

Each of the students, Liza, Nash, Raoul, and Jesse, experienced marked differences between the Waldorf and the public schools in a number of areas, among them homework, teaching method, evaluation, and the role of the arts. The students agreed that there was more homework in public school (where they got as much as two hours a night) than in the Waldorf school. Yet, as Liza pointed out, most of it was boring and repetitious, consisting largely of skill drill exercises and of questions to be answered at the end of the chapter in a textbook.

In the Waldorf school, the students did homework when the classwork was not completed or if there was a special project in which they were engaged. Often, the students were emotionally invested in their projects and were inspired to want to complete their work at home.

In his book *School as a Journey*, Torin Finser writes that homework in a Waldorf school is designed for skill building and for completing work that was not finished during school. It is not necessarily only academic in nature but can include music practice, project work, and memorizing lines for a play. By the eighth grade, students are doing about two hours of homework four nights a week. Finser writes: "[As a Waldorf class teacher,] I saved new learning for the school day, when children are most alert and energetic."

It is interesting that some educational reformers such as William Glasser hold that homework should be reduced and that classwork should be emphasized. Glasser claims that mandatory homework actually reduces learning.

The students also spoke critically of their teachers and their teaching methods. Jesse initially stated that his public school middle school

teachers were better than his teacher in the Waldorf school because they had to prepare for just one subject rather than many different ones. Yet, in his final interview, he said that his best teachers were those who had high expectations for him and that his Waldorf class teacher was such a teacher.

Nash, Raoul, and Liza also commented on the qualities of a good teacher. They agreed that a good teacher uses both imaginative and personal stories in teaching; cares about the students; relates to them as individuals; takes time to build relationships with them; and maintains a sense of humor. The children agreed that both systems had teachers who met these criteria.

Liza mentioned that "the Steiner teachers really cared how you succeeded and expected that you would do your best work." She said that some of her public school teachers encouraged students to do just enough to get by, and that some students would only "work to the lowest common denominator."

Most of the children preferred the holistic, integrated approach that dominates Waldorf pedagogy to the content and quiz format usually found in a mainstream public school.

Liza commented:

I liked the teaching at the Waldorf school better. . . . It was more interesting. It wasn't like just bare facts. There was something behind it. . . . This year [in public middle school] it's you just do your work, get points, and take a test. It is what you get on the test that is important, that's it.

At one point, Raoul looked back somewhat nostalgically to the projects done at the Waldorf school: a collection of creative writing pieces; a topographical map of the United States made out of plaster of paris constructed by the class, and a dramatic production put on for the school. He said he enjoyed doing such project work more than taking quizzes and tests.

In a Waldorf school tests and grades play a minor role. In the early grades they are absent. In the upper grades children may take tests. They

may receive grades based on the evaluation by the teacher of their quizzes, tests, projects, and main lesson books. Generally, Waldorf students do not receive grades in each content area.

In the public school tests and grades are very important. They tell parents and others (including the students) just how they are doing. They also provide a motivation and reward for student work. Nash initially preferred getting grades because they told him where he stood in class. But Liza said:

Grades are not fun. They are like a weight you carry. I hate getting my report card even if I know I'll make good grades. I can't see how to do it [schooling and evaluation], though, without grades.

Another difference lies in two distinct views of the arts. In the Waldorf school, the children had been engaged daily in the appreciation and creation of art. They missed this in public school. Jesse commented on his public school peers' view of art:

I find that many in our community, kids in general, don't have much respect for art. They always say that it is awful without ever thinking about it.

Because of these and other important differences between a Waldorf school and a mainstream public school, the transition from one to the other can be very difficult. It is possible, though, for parents and teachers to facilitate this transition. Following are some practical suggestions:

- Educate educators from public school and from private schools about Waldorf Education. This can be done by sending them literature on Waldorf Education and by inviting officials from other schools to Waldorf school events. The more they know about Waldorf Education, the more understanding and appreciative they will be later on in dealing with our students.
- Educate Waldorf students and parents about the public and private schools in your area. A "school fair" can be helpful. Representatives from schools come on a given evening, make short presentations about their schools, and then answer questions from the seventh- and eighth-grade Waldorf

students and their parents. Visits to schools are also useful. Students (and parents) might go to a musical performance, science fair, sports event, educational presentation, an orientation program, or even visit classes for a day.

- Be an advocate for your child. Parents should meet individually with teachers and with the public school personnel involved with incoming students. They should explain the holistic nature of Waldorf schooling, articulate its curriculum and assessment procedures, and present a portfolio of their child's work. Parents should inquire about tracking and ability grouping and make sure that their child, coming from the culturally rich Waldorf environment, be placed in the more challenging situations. Parents should stay actively involved in their children's high school experience.

Some may argue that a Waldorf education in itself is the best preparation for life, as well as for a new school setting. Nevertheless, it is possible to prepare students for what they will encounter in their next school without compromising the integrity of the Waldorf pedagogy. Some more practical suggestions follow:

- Integrate printed text materials into the curriculum. At the middle school level, many teachers begin to use, on a limited basis, some textbooks, workbooks, and supplemental print materials that are not teacher-designed. These materials are usually incorporated into the math and language-arts skills classes, and they acquaint students with the type of educational materials they will probably use in high school.
- Provide study-skills coaching. From the sixth grade or so, Waldorf teachers can coach students about how to manage study time, do homework, prepare for a test, carry out a research assignment, and write a paper.
- Give opportunity for practice test-taking. In the eighth grade teachers can plan a main lesson block about test-taking and introduce students to the various kinds of tests: timed and untimed, multiple choice, essay, teacher-designed and standardized. Some Waldorf schools administer standardized tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills during the eighth grade. Some do this in

sixth and seventh grade as well. Thus the students experience the means by which their performance will be measured in high school. Naturally, there will be some anxiety in students (and parents) about test-taking, scores, and grades. If the teacher is well informed, and has a straightforward and caring attitude, this anxiety can be allayed.

- Brief students and parents on grades and their meaning. Students and their parents should understand how evaluation and assessment differ in Waldorf and the public schools. Students should learn how they will be evaluated, how grades are given, and what they mean. Students also need to know that their self-worth is not determined by scores on standardized tests and by grades. Waldorf parents need to understand the systems of assessment that are based on competition and the potential for failure.

It is important that students who have had an enriched Waldorf environment be readied for the transition to public high school. These general recommendations for parents and teachers can be applied to specific school contexts.

As Henry Barnes maintains in his article, "An Introduction to Waldorf Education":

A natural weaning process takes place as the student approaches puberty and the ninth-grader is ready to say good-bye to his class teacher and to accept a class adviser and the various specialists who teach him out of their particular fields.

Students graduating from a Waldorf elementary school probably would benefit most from attending a Waldorf high school. If they go instead to a public school or to another, more typical, private school, it is the responsibility of parents and teachers to prepare students for this major transition.

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Deborah Carrington-Frazier is a former class teacher who recently graduated the first eighth grade at the Crossroads Waldorf School. She is on sabbatical this year from teaching. Deborah is an artist specializing in drawing and printmaking and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Virginia.



"Pondering", by Jayan Berman, a senior at the Sacramento Waldorf High School.

Teacher-to-Teacher Relationships in the Waldorf School

By Norman Davidson

The following is taken from a lecture by the author on January 26th, 1996, at the Young Schools Conference held at Sunbridge College, Spring Valley, New York.

Recently I received a parcel from the company which manufactured my car. A letter inside asked me to take out the enclosed vehicle part, replace the one in my car, and send the old part back. It was being recalled because of a fault in manufacture.

Let me suggest that Waldorf Education has a built-in problem inside it and often we feel like sending the problem back to the original Waldorf designers in Stuttgart and getting a replacement. The built-in problem, however, is quite deliberate and is an essential part of the vehicle.

Briefly the problem is this: How can a group of people of different ages, nationality, experience, and so forth, run a school together, agreeing upon everything amongst themselves as equals without the authority of a head teacher to do it for them? How can this be achieved with a group of genuine individuals who may well disagree over details of how Rudolf Steiner's teachings should be interpreted? How can they make real, collegial decisions concerning the school's life under these circumstances?

The question is basic to Waldorf Education and also to human society in general. It is a question of our time, and Steiner's teachings are very much of the future in facing it openly.

Of course, we can send the Waldorf vehicle part back to the factory and ask for a new social form outwardly, a different technique than that of trust between human beings and the need to eventually harmonize with each other in agreement. But the only genuine answer is to recognize that the problem is really caused by ourselves and not

the vehicle, and that it can only be solved by the self-development or inner development of the individual.

I am assisted in understanding this principle myself by my own students in our college teacher training program. I remember one student who loved printed handouts and any external teaching techniques she could lay her hands on. When I met her years later and asked how she was getting on, she said the handouts had been discarded and the thing which most sustained her as a teacher was the spiritual foundation of the work she had done at the college, and the task of taking it further out of her own initiative. She herself was now the source of any techniques she used in the classroom and they did not originate from someone else.

In this context, I would like to refer to a lecture by Rudolf Steiner in Dornach, Switzerland, on August 4th, 1924. He says of those who follow spiritual science that they should pay heed to one condition of their destiny, "a condition that is sure to be present in him or her to a high degree." The condition is that there is an especially strong demand on "inner initiative of soul." One says to oneself:

There will emerge the necessity for me to find inner initiative in life – initiative of soul which will enable me to undertake something or to make some judgment or decision, out of my own inmost being.

Exhorting his listeners, Steiner says:

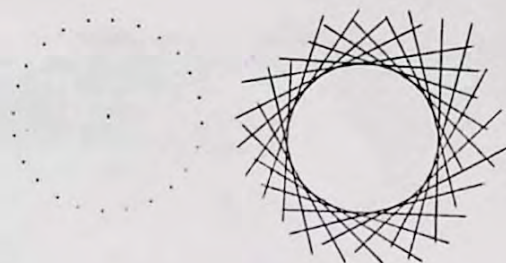
Observe that in your life all joy and sorrow, all happiness and pain, will depend on the finding or not finding of your own individual initiative.

This should "stand written as though in golden letters, constantly before the soul. . . ."

The relationship problems within the Waldorf school can only be solved by the Waldorf teacher – and by the inner initiative of that teacher. These problems cannot be solved by external programs. Any external social forms must arise from within the hearts and minds of the teachers—even obvious forms like the delegation of responsibility to individuals and groups or the working together of democratic relationships between all teachers on the one hand and the assumption of leadership by a few on the other hand. Such social forms are as old as the Waldorf school itself and have been part of its organization from the beginning. The Waldorf school was founded as an essentially republican organization (involving the delegation of tasks to groups and individuals), and because of this the individuality and inner development of the teacher must be stronger than would otherwise be necessary. In fact, new forms and reorganization are useless without individual inner development, and reorganization isn't always necessary for change to take place.

An essential part of self-development is self-knowledge – particularly knowledge of one's lesser self. It is uncomfortable to recognize and bring to light inwardly one's own pride, egotism, prejudice, or one-sidedness. It is only out of self-knowledge and balance of soul that the teacher can meet fellow teachers in a truly human way. Basic working material for this balance can be found, for example, in Steiner's book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, which should be the well-worn pocket book of the Waldorf teacher. There we can find treasure like the six fundamental inner exercises, or indications of three trials on the spiritual path – those of fire, water, and air.

With the fire trial, outer circumstances are mastered; with the water trial, outer supports melt away; and, with the air trial, one has to act only directly out of oneself. Echoes of this live in every striving Waldorf teacher, and particularly when the water and air trials are reached, consciously or unconsciously, the cries for external help usually begin – the desire to send the problem part back to the factory or to have it fixed by consultation with organizations outside the Waldorf movement.



But the solution lies within the teachers themselves as they sit in this or that circle of colleagues in the school. One can illustrate this by borrowing something from projective geometry. In a circle of individual points (see drawing), the points are essentially separate and have a separate point as their center. This is a traditional circle. A metamorphosis of this is a circle created by lines in a projective plane – a plane which includes infinity. All the lines extend to infinity and every one intersects (meets) every other somewhere. The center of the circle of points is a finite point. But the center of the circle of lines is the polar opposite – a line, the line at infinity. Through the Waldorf teacher's being connected with infinity, he or she meets every other teacher. This is a circle of inner movement (a line is a movement), a circle of initiative.

I would like to quote a few words from two of Steiner's lectures dealing with this question of individual inner development on the one hand and the relationship between individuals on the other. In lecture two of *The Inner Aspect of the Social Question* (Zurich, February 11, 1919), he says:

Instead of taking an interest merely in my own way of thinking, and in what I consider right, I must develop a selfless interest in every opinion I encounter, however strongly I may hold it to be mistaken.

Then in his lecture of July 4, 1909, in Cassel, Steiner states that:

Human beings cannot avert from themselves the war of opinions, feelings, and actions in the outer world of sense, unless they combat in themselves and settle inwardly the antagonism which would otherwise flow into the outer world. . . . The point is that the combat is diverted from the outside world to Man's inner being. . . . Suppose I am willing to entertain another's opinion and endeavor to establish harmony

within myself; my attitude towards my fellow human being would be quite different, for I would begin to understand him. We might even describe the progress of human evolution as the diversion of the strife in the outside world to the work of harmonizing the inner forces of Man.

The arena for battle must become the inner life of the individual in reconciling his or her antipathies and sympathies, while outer life and the other human being must become the place for exercising understanding. The modern person usually does the opposite – battling with outer circumstances and being passive regarding his or her inner preferences.

It is not a question of not disagreeing with others in a working group or of not having a judgment or an opinion, but of how one handles oneself in the situation. People with different opinions but who have a common ground in spiritual self-development can, with effort, come to agreement. This is difficult, and it may take time. But it is an art, a social art, which lies at the foundation of the structure of the Waldorf school. The Waldorf school pioneered this art and, although it stumbles from time to time in practicing it, must now develop it more strongly and more consciously. Teachers can and must do this out of themselves. From it the right social forms, perhaps different in their emphases for different schools, will arise.

Then the vehicle part will not be sent back to the factory or to an external mechanic employed from another firm, but the solution to teacher-to-teacher relationships will be seen as essentially relying on individual initiative and be written as though in golden letters as a condition of being a Waldorf teacher.

Norman Davidson is director of Teacher Training at Sunbridge College, Spring Valley, New York. Formerly a Fleet Street journalist, he later trained as a Waldorf teacher at Emerson College, England. For sixteen years he taught various subjects, including literature, history, geometry, and astronomy, in the lower and high school classes. He also took an active part in school organization and administration, being chairman of Michael Hall, in England, before emigrating to the United States in 1988.

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What is a School, Really?

by Henry Barnes

What is a school, really? Is it an institution for the dissemination of knowledge, information, skills, or is it a community of human beings, through which many lives and destinies flow, intermingle, and change? It is of course both, but behind and below the life of the classroom run the deep waters of human meetings, of struggle, learning, growing – of love and pain. And the community reaches further than we often realize; it is widened by births and deepened by unexpected, tragic death. A death can test the very fabric of a school, but it can also open up undiscovered sources of spiritual help and strength.

It was in August 1995 that a child, who had just passed her seventh birthday, returned with her father and older brother from a camping trip in the Adirondack Mountains. It had been a long, strenuous day's hike, and it was already late evening when they reached the road where their car was parked to take them home, several hours away. They had just crossed the road, when for some unaccountable reason, Geneve, the little girl, turned and ran back, was struck by a car and was instantly killed.

Shattered, her mother turned in her grief to the Sufi spiritual community from which she as an adult drew strength and healing and asked that the funeral service be held at "The Abode." But then she realized that for Geneve it was not this adult community but that of the school – of the Hawthorne Valley School where she had spent three happy years in Nursery and Kindergarten – that was, in fact, her own closest community. The

mother asked if the service might be in the school's hall.

The morning of the service came. The hall was filled to the last space; family, parents and children from the school, members of the Sufi community, faculty, and friends from near and far were present. Lyre music wove a delicate, transparent, inward mood. The pastor of The Abode conducted the service with simple dignity. Geneve's father spoke and, with a friend, played and sang a song which Geneve had especially loved. The faculty chorus sang *Locus Iste* by Anton Bruckner. A Sufi prayer was recited by the many friends from The Abode. The midwife who had assisted at Geneve's birth spoke, as did several others. Led by Geneve's teachers, the whole audience joined in singing and doing the gestures of a "rainbow song" which children and teachers in the kindergarten had sung together many times. Within this setting, Geneve's teacher, Janene Ping, spoke the words which follow here, bringing the child alive in the hearts and minds of all present.

* * * * *

With Love For Geneve

The last time I saw Geneve was here in this hall. It was late June at an evening concert. She stood there, on the bench, poised and quietly watching the people, listening to the music, nestling in her arms the little flannel baby doll she had sewn so proudly in kindergarten – like most of the children going to first grade. The picture of her



standing there remains with me – such a beautiful image of childhood – the taking in of quiet wonder, the tender holding amidst the turning of larger and noisier spheres.

Geneve graced our kindergarten at the Hawthorne Valley School for three years. What a blessing for us all to have shared that time with her. Sunny and bright, fairy light, Geneve was agile and graceful in her beautiful, upright being, a most amazing jump-roper, able to master skills quickly.

From the beginning, Geneve showed a social ease that was striking. I remember three years ago at the snack table – those big six-and-a-half-year-old boys were quite taken aback when this tiny nursery girl would happily unpack her snack beside them and begin her cheerful conversation. But they were quickly won over. She held their interest with stories of her summer in the Arizona desert and with speculations about travels to the moon.

Over the years her social gifts strengthened. She made friends easily with all of the children and was able to communicate with great clarity. Creative in play, generous with her love, kind and patient with the younger children, Geneve shared the skills of her nimble fingers as well as her simple knowing in her sensible words with us all.

She brought many things to share with us. We wondered over the postcards from exotic corners of the world where her mother sometimes traveled. We tasted the sweet nectar of the grapes from her yard that we pressed into juice. We all delighted in her sweet little baby bunnies who came to teach us their soft and gentle ways.

Geneve had a power of reasoning very strong for a child her age. There lived with her an inner need to make sense of the world, and I often overheard her logically working through the issues of fairness, and musing over earth and heaven, angels, birth and death.

We spent these kindergarten years, dancing through the seasons, walking in wonder,

learning the secrets of the hidden worlds, singing to the flame of life.

One "bread day" last year, I got up from my chair to check on the loaves in the oven, and when I came back to the table – there was Geneve, sitting in my chair, an impish twinkle in her eye, smiling at me amidst the laughter as if to say, "Now it's my turn to be the teacher."

There are many ways in which our children are our teachers. The lessons come strongly.

So beautifully did this little star child shine!

So radiant was her joy, complete in each moment, the memory of the brightness of her being lives on in us – ever present and in all places.

* * * * *

As the small casket of light-colored wood was carried from the candlelit, flower-filled space in the front of the hall, no one in that crowded room was left unmoved – neither child nor adult. One was touched by the reality and the mystery of death, and one felt that one could turn with renewed confidence and understanding to words such as those of Rudolf Steiner about the relationship between the living and the so-called dead. And, at such a moment of truly festive celebration, one could experience the presence and blessing of the community of the school.



The following words of Rudolf Steiner give an inspiring and instructive perspective with which we may understand events such as the death of Geneve. They appeared originally in a book in German called *Lebendige Wechselwirkung Zwischen Lebendigen und Toten* (The Living Interaction between the Living and the Dead); this English version is taken from *The Up-Rising in*

Dying, edited by Christy Barnes and published in 1990 by Adonis Press, Harlemlville, New York.

The Needs and Tasks of Those Who Have Died

In earlier times the relationship between the living and the so-called dead was, in a natural, although not a fully conscious way, a much closer one than it is today. The influence of materialism has been to weaken and gradually to sever this bond. But in the future a bridge will be built once again to those who have died, but this time quite consciously. For those who have passed through death need and long for the love and the thoughts of those who were close to them on earth. Although they find themselves surrounded by the light of the spirit, they also need what the living can give them. Yet materialistic thoughts have little reality for them and so do not reach them. Loving, life-filled spiritual thoughts, on the other hand, are like nourishment for them, without which they go hungry. And there is often much hunger of this kind today among those who are experiencing life after death.

Thus we here can help and work not only for those who live on earth, but also for the dead through the life-filled, spirit-filled thoughts which we bring to them.

And on the other hand this relationship is by no means one-sided, and those who have died can in turn be of very real help to the living.

One part of the task of those who have died is that their gaze, their spiritual gaze, now turns to those who still live upon the earth, so that the souls living upon the earth are perceived by the souls who have died. And through spiritual science men will learn the meaning of such words as these: "Those who have passed through the portal of death gaze upon me, they imbue me with life, they are with me; their forces stream down upon me." And men will learn to speak of the dead ones as ones who live, as spiritual living ones.

Through spiritual science we learn to feel responsible for all that we do in relationship to the dead, but we learn to know also the deep feeling of blessing when we can say to ourselves: "At this moment you are doing one thing or another; but as you do so, one or the other who has died beholds you with his active powers, his forces grow together with your own." Not that the dead give us the forces; these we must develop

ourselves. The one who has died, who is between death and a new birth, does not give us our talents: we must have these. But he is a very real and active help, as if he stood there behind us. And indeed he does really stand there behind us. I may be doing this or that, but as I am doing it, one or the other who has died beholds me with his active powers, his forces grow together with my own, streaming into me as a very real and active help, as if he stood there behind me.

And indeed we can become aware that the dead are in reality constantly there, about and behind us.

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Henry Barnes has been involved in Waldorf Education since 1934. He has been a class teacher, a teacher of history, and a school administrator. For many years the General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America, Henry is at present a member of the Board of Directors of AWSNA and of the Advisory Board of *Renewal*.

Does a Faculty-Run School Need a Board of Trustees?

by David Adams

The article in the Fall/Winter 1995 issue of *Renewal* by Siegfried Finser titled "The Organization of the Waldorf School" presented a quite accurate picture of the roles of the various organs in the bodies of most American Waldorf schools. The article raised three questions for me. Are these *all* of the organs of a Waldorf school? Are these all *necessary* organs of a Waldorf school? Are these the *ideal* organs of a Waldorf school?

Without, perhaps, directly trying to answer each of these questions, I will discuss several aspects of Waldorf school life not touched upon in Mr. Finser's article and will describe an alternative school organization that should indicate some possible answers to my questions. I am particularly concerned about three elements in the organizational life of a Waldorf school. When taken into consideration these create a somewhat different picture, one more similar to certain challenges I have often experienced as a teacher and administrator in North American Waldorf schools.

The first of these elements is the school parent organization or parent association. Most Waldorf schools try to encourage parent participation in school life and dialogue between staff and parents. They offer various opportunities for parent involvement: in orientation meetings, presentations on Waldorf Education by teachers or by visitors, study groups, a lending library, school assemblies, class parent evenings, field trips on which parents can act as chaperons, festival celebrations, craft circles, writing for a school newsletter, committee or Board work, all-school meetings, fund-raising, and other activities. Yet often parents feel the need to create their own

school organ, a parent association. This, too, is generally welcomed and encouraged by the school faculty, administration, and Board. A healthy parent organization can surround the educational work with warmth and with loving support.

However, I have seen many instances where such parent organizations were not able to sustain themselves for more than a few years. The causes are probably manifold; membership turnover and the pull of other commitments are important factors. But frequently the reason lies in parent frustration over the lack of an effective and acknowledged role in school life for the parent

organization. For their very survival Waldorf schools depend on a certain level of volunteer parent involvement and on parent contributions of many sorts. Yet the school is often unsure what role a parent body should play in the administration and

governance of the school. If parents feel they are given no real or significant function in school life or feel their ideas are not really listened to by the faculty and staff, their enthusiasm for the parent organization (if not for the school itself) can easily wane. The role of the parent organization within the structure of the Waldorf school is an issue not yet resolved within our movement, I would say.

The second phenomenon I want to point to is the occurrence of conflicts within the Board of Trustees (or sometimes within the organizational life of the school in general). These conflicts arise because the members of the faculty and the College of Teachers have backgrounds, preparations for their roles, and understandings of Waldorf Education that are different from those of the typical members of a Board of Trustees.

I have never heard or read anywhere that Rudolf Steiner included a Board as one of the necessary governing organs in a Waldorf school.

Waldorf Education arose in close connection with the Anthroposophical efforts to develop and promote Steiner's picture of an ideal threefold organization of society. If we have the idea that the social, economic, and organizational principles of that threefold vision of the social organism are also to live in the Waldorf school, then this implies ways of handling finances, social relations, and governance that are rather different from those to which our society is accustomed. For one thing, it implies that a school cannot divorce the handling of finances and of practical administration from a spiritual understanding and practice. In the past, schools in the Waldorf movement have tended to do just this. However, for the same spirituality to flow through both pedagogy and administration, the Board, parents, and administrative personnel involved must be as knowledgeable about Anthroposophical work in these areas as the teachers are about education.

Mr. Finser's article is correct in recognizing the spiritual energy involved in tasks undertaken by Boards, but it overlooks the potential problem of the *different* understandings of spirituality that may be – and often are – living in Board members and faculty within a Waldorf school. It overlooks as well the numerous conflicts that have developed within schools as a result of these differences – conflicts which can involve faculty, Board members, and parents, and which have led to teachers burning out and leaving schools; to parents or Board members doing the same; and even to schools closing. Of course, faculty and Board members always try to work together amicably, and quite often they succeed. However, this depends too much on the qualities of the particular individuals on the Board at a given time.

If faculty members or other Anthroposophists involved in Board affairs are not clear and confident enough in their knowledge of Anthroposophical principles in areas of economics, social life, and administrative structure and procedure, it is all too easy for parents or Board members with conventional training and life experience in these areas to assert themselves and to promote other ways of doing things. Sometimes these conventional approaches work fine in meeting specific

situations, though they always cost something spiritually in the life of the school. Other times they create either covert or overt conflicts within the faculty.

How is the Board, whose legal, financial, and administrative business overlaps that of the College of Teachers, also to be inspired by the "spirit of the school?"¹ This, too, it seems to me, presents a recurring but unsolved difficulty in the organizational life of our schools.

My final consideration involves Rudolf Steiner's original intention that Waldorf schools be faculty-run institutions. He expressed this in 1920 as follows:

"The administration of education, from which all culture develops, must be turned over to the educators. . . . Each teacher should arrange his or her time so that he can also be an administrator in his field. He should be just as much at home attending to administrative matters as he is in the classroom. No one should make decisions who is not directly engaged in the educational process. . . . What is experienced in the teaching process would then flow naturally into the administration. By its very nature, such a system would engender competence and objectivity."²

I would propose that a school that has not realized this original ideal cannot yet be considered a complete Waldorf school. Steiner clearly did not mean the usual American Waldorf school pattern in which teachers are fully responsible for the educational aspects of their relationships with students and parents but not responsible for decisions regarding other areas of school life.

From a certain commonsense perspective, it seems only natural that those who are directly engaged in the educational process should be the ones who make the necessary decisions about how it is organized and carried out. A couple of years ago the *AWSNA Newsletter* reprinted an article from the September 9, 1993, *San Diego Union-Tribune* by former Waldorf graduate, teacher, administrator, and trustee Richard Rettig, titled "Start Treating Teachers as Professionals." Rettig pointed out that other

professionals in private practice in our society – doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, and architects – have full control over their practices, but teachers are obliged to submit to certain kinds of control by the nonteachers who serve on both public and private school boards. These other professionals are rarely themselves experts in areas such as accounting, law, management, or marketing, but they engage experts and advisers in these fields to help carry out their practice. The experts and advisers report to the professionals who hire them, not the reverse. Why shouldn't teachers likewise hire professionals who help them carry out their work and who are accountable to them?

The chief governing organ of a mature, faculty-run Waldorf school is the College of Teachers. Yet the College can arise only out of inner realities, not out of a need to conform to external demands or to preconceived forms. This is in direct contrast to Boards of Directors and Boards of Trustees, which are established only because of external necessity. They are created because of the governmental law requiring tax-exempt corporations to be governed by a Board, which holds final fiscal and legal authority for the school. I have never heard or read anywhere that Rudolf Steiner included a Board as one of the necessary governing organs in a Waldorf school. This organizational element has been imposed on American and Canadian Waldorf schools by governmental decree. It is my experience that the need to come to terms with this "foreign element" within the school organism often has created unnecessary burdens and tensions for the faculty of our schools. Furthermore, it has reinforced the social stereotype of teachers as helpless and incompetent to grasp the business end of education.

Certainly, it would be too much to expect Waldorf teachers, already fully engaged in their classrooms, also to handle the daily administration of their schools. This is particularly true in American and Canadian schools, where class teachers typically have only one or two periods a week during which they are not actively engaged with students. An administrative staff as well as legal, financial, and marketing expertise are certainly necessities for a healthy school.

But why couldn't a school simply be incorporated so that the College (or, perhaps, the faculty if no College has yet been formed) is legally designated as the Board? The College Board or Faculty Board could then take charge of *supervising and maintaining an overview* of administrative functions of the school. There could be a nonlegal, volunteer "Advisory Board" providing needed legal, financial or other expertise in the form of advice, expert opinions, and review. Members of this "Advisory Board" could also take part in school committees and could help carry out agreed-upon policies.

Such a social structure would keep the College from being unduly burdened by the more mundane tasks involved in providing the physical basis for the school. It would be created to serve the College rather than in any way to direct or control it.

While serving as Administrator at the Kimberton Waldorf School last year, I experienced there an operating school governance system that was, in fact, quite similar to the approach I am proposing here. This experience has suggested to me further practicalities of the way a "College Board" structure might function. I would like to conclude these reflections by describing in more detail one possible, hypothetical school structure centered around a College of Teachers functioning as the school's legal Board.

I have come to recognize that the spiritual community of the College of Teachers is the new social form that Rudolf Steiner created to be the governing body of the Waldorf school. The College is based on an effort by each member to relate to the higher being of all the other members. This allows the College to form an inner community working out of consensus and meditative practice toward insights that will align it with the spiritual individuality of the school. The College bears the central responsibility for shaping and carrying the specific vision behind the school and for providing the guidance and decision-making necessary to put that vision into practice.

In the common American and Canadian school model, in which the financial management function is independent of educational or curricular administration, a separation can develop

between the spiritual and the material reality of the school. This may lead to problems in the life of the school such as conflict, lack of clarity about responsibilities, inaction, and inefficiency. Furthermore, the same Anthroposophical ideals behind the pedagogy practiced in the classroom can (and should, I would say) be applied to the way the school understands and handles such areas as finances, development, and social and governmental relationships. When this is done, a certain harmony of principle and practice can be created between the administrative and pedagogical areas of the school. When the College is given full decision-making authority to govern all areas of school life in harmony with the mission of the school, we would expect to see a new striving to incorporate the insights of Anthroposophy into every aspect of school life.

Yet the College is not meant to be a hierarchical, top-down form of administration. I picture this school structure as a wheel with the College as the hub, the various committees and administrative functions as spokes, and the school families as the rim.

How can the vision of the College be transmitted effectively to all the various areas of practical school activity and administration? I want to suggest several specific ways this might occur. Each of the numerous school committees can be chaired by a member of the College, who functions as a representative of the ongoing vision and policies of the College. Each committee and school body can, as a matter of course, share its minutes with the other committees, the faculty, the parent association, and the Advisory Board, so that communication is as thorough as possible. To handle lesser, everyday issues, or to meet the occasional need for rapid decisions within the guidelines of established policies, the College might have an "Executive Committee" or a school "Administrative Committee" composed of such figures as the College Chair, Faculty Chair, and School Administrator. Personnel in the school administration can also join the College and may be actively encouraged to do so. Many links between the College and the other organs in the school can be created by such means. In these ways, the responsibility for the daily administration of the school is delegated in trust to both

individuals and groups, all ultimately responsible to the College.

Each school must find its own way to the school organization that works best for its particular situation. But, in our efforts, let us not forget Rudolf Steiner's original idea of the faculty-governed school, and let us exercise our Waldorf creativity to find new and workable ways to express this ideal in a North American context.³

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Notes

1 I am aware that faculty members often undertake to educate Board members about principles of Waldorf Education, Anthroposophy, and the threefold social organism. With the relatively frequent turnover of volunteer Board members and the limited time available to teachers, it is extremely difficult to keep up with the level of education needed by both continuing and new Board members. It is true that creative social tension and differing viewpoints can be helpful to a school if properly appreciated and actively worked with. Steiner indicated there are twelve archetypal points of view (and seven psychological "attitudes") for any issue, with many combinations and shades between. However, there is usually enough variety and tension within the average faculty in this way of working without adding other personalities relatively unfamiliar with Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy.

2 Rudolf Steiner, *Towards Social Renewal*, trans. F. T. Smith (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1977), p. 12. It is most helpful to read the entire section from which this quotation is lifted.

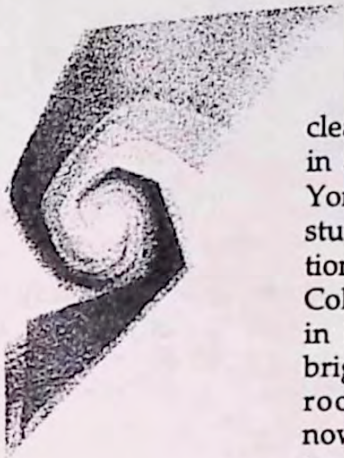
3 If the independent Waldorf schools were clearer in principle and practice regarding Steiner's idea of faculty governance, it would be less easy to mistake state school Waldorf-inspired programs for full-fledged Waldorf schools.

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Sunbridge College

by Ronald Kotzsch



It is a cold but clear February morning in Spring Valley, New York. About 8:15 the students in the Orientation Year of Sunbridge College start to gather in Brookside, a large, bright, pleasant classroom overlooking a now frozen brook. The twenty-five or so students range in age from the early twenties through the early thirties. The group has more women than men and includes three Japanese students, as well as several students from eastern Europe.

This class is the first in a block called "Social Issues," and the students sit in a large circle with teacher Dr. Chris Schaefer. He is a consultant on questions of organizational development to corporations, Waldorf schools, and other organizations and introduces the topic. Schaefer describes how today each human being is primarily an individual, rather than the member of a family, village, tribe or other social unit, and that we have lost the natural social instincts that allow us to communicate and to get along well with others. He says:

Today, we have to develop these skills consciously. Several things are necessary for this. We need new social forms that cause us to truly meet and interact as equals working for a common goal. We need to pursue a path of inner development and overcome the egotism that prevents us from seeing ourselves and others clearly. And we need consciously to develop our ability to listen, to express ourselves, to empathize with and to truly enter into the being of the other person, and to care for him or her.

The students ask questions and a lively discussion ensues. Then they pair off to discuss

what "conversation" is and to have a two-person conversation. At 9:35 there is a break, and the group goes to the nearby dining hall for bagels, juice, and coffee.

At 10:00 the students return to Brookside for a music class with teacher Fabian Lochner. The class reviews the various time signatures – 2/2, 3/4, 4/4, and the like – and expresses the various resultant rhythms with exercises involving finger snapping, foot tapping, and other movements. Lochner then goes over the text and melody of a Greek hymn used at the ancient mystery center of Eleusis, and the class sings it together.

The final class of the morning is Projective Geometry. As teacher Norman Davidson explains, projective geometry was at the turn of the century part of the standard curriculum in many colleges and universities. It is a branch of mathematics that develops the imagination of the student while bringing will into the student's thinking. The practical drawing exercises of projective geometry require particular inner activity on the part of the student. Waldorf high schools are among the few places where it is taught today, especially with its qualitative aspects taken into consideration.

The class begins with a review of the three types of curve that can be formed by intersecting a cone – the ellipse, the parabola, and the hyperbola. These are then shown to be connected with the threefold nature of the human and the activities of thinking, feeling, and willing.

Then Davidson presents the Theorem of Pascal, which states that any six points on a conic curve form a hexagon whose opposite sides always intersect on a straight line. Using this property, Davidson then establishes an even more astonishing fact – that, in general, any five points

in a plane lie on a conic curve, and, reciprocally, any five lines in a plane are tangents to a conic curve. One application of Pascal's theorem lies in predicting the paths of comets. Working with compasses, set squares, and rulers, the students make diagrams that demonstrate these fascinating principles. The mood is one of intense concentration.

On the same day, another group of about twenty students enrolled in the Teacher Training Program is having a similarly varied, challenging, and interesting series of classes. They begin with half an hour of eurythmy, then have a ninety-minute session on "Science and Culture" with Dr. Stephen Edelglass, in which the central topic is the materialistic worldview and its effect on modern consciousness. Then, while part of the group has classes in speech and painting, the other has eurythmy and handwork. The afternoon concludes with a ninety-minute class on history taught by Eugene Schwartz.

Parallel with the Teacher Training course is an Early Childhood Education program whose director is Susan Howard, chairperson of Sunbridge College. This program prepares students for kindergarten teaching. Students attend some courses with the Teacher Training group, including "Child Development and Learning," "Remedial Education," "School Organization," as well as art courses. But they also have classes that come within their particular focus, such as "Music and the Young Child," "Fairy Tales and Early Language," "Marionettes," "Rhythmic Circle Games," and "Gardening."

Susan Howard also directs a highly respected Associate Program in Early Childhood Education. This offers a part-time teacher education for practicing kindergarten teachers in Waldorf schools throughout North America.

Sunbridge College is a full-time college offering academic year, evening, and summer



Students at a Sunbridge College event cross the brook which runs alongside college buildings.

programs, and a variety of ongoing lectures, workshops, and conferences. It is a major center for Anthroposophical and Waldorf Education in North America and in the world, with one of its important tasks being the training of Waldorf teachers. The roots of Sunbridge College go back to 1967 when the Waldorf Institute was founded in Detroit by Dr. Werner Glas. In 1986, the Institute moved to the premises of the Threefold Educational Foundation in Spring Valley, a major and well-established center for Anthroposophical organizations and initiatives. There the Institute changed its name to Sunbridge College and won state certification and entitlement to award a Master of Science in Waldorf Education. The Sunbridge Master's Degree is the only graduate degree in Waldorf Education in the English-speaking world that is conferred by an institution certified by the government. Director of the Sunbridge Master's Program is Douglas Sloan, Ph.D., Professor of History and Education at Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York.

Norman Davidson, director of Teacher Training, discusses Sunbridge and its programs.

The Orientation Year is our basic foundation course. Students spend a full academic year studying a wide spectrum of subjects including philosophy and Anthroposophy, human development, evolution, science, mathematics, literature, and the arts. Their work is rigorous inwardly, but also practical and experiential. The students spend a lot of time involved in the arts – painting, doing eurythmy, singing, working with clay, doing crafts, speech and drama, and so on. Compared to a typical university program, this is a lot of artistic activity, but in fact it is restoring a balance; it is helping develop a whole human being. What we are offering is really a personal transformative experience. The student studies the world and human life fundamentally from an Anthroposophical point of view. He or she learns to experience things from a spiritual-scientific approach. At the same time, he or she is given the opportunities for artistic and practical activity that help effect an inner spiritual development.

The Orientation year can be an end in itself. Some people come and do it and then go back to their former work and role in the world. But for many it is the necessary foundation for the

second-year Waldorf program. This is a full-time program designed for someone wanting to become a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, class teacher, or high school teacher. The participants study child development, the Waldorf curriculum, pedagogical theory and practice, and the like. They also continue with courses in the arts. They may eventually teach some of these arts, such as painting, but the growth of their own creativity is essential to their being good teachers. During the fall semester students spend two weeks observing in Waldorf and non-Waldorf classrooms. In spring they do a five-week teaching internship in a Waldorf school.

All those who successfully complete the early Early Childhood Education or the Teacher Training years receive a Waldorf certificate. Students can go on for a Master of Science in Waldorf Education (Early Childhood or Elementary). This involves some additional courses as well as a Master's Research Project.

Full-time enrollment at Sunbridge is usually between sixty and eighty students. Some of the students at Sunbridge enroll just after or soon after completing a bachelor's degree. Others complete a degree after enrollment because Empire State College in New York gives credit for Sunbridge courses. Many students have long been out of college, already have had a career, and are indeed looking for a reorientation both in life and in career. At present, full-time and part-time programs involve over one hundred fifty students, and this number will certainly increase with the development of new programs this year and next.

One of the chief attractions of the Sunbridge program is its intensive and comprehensive nature. One student told me:

The program here is totally involving. We have classes from early morning through late afternoon, and sometimes in the evening as well. We are really immersed in Anthroposophy and in Waldorf Education and have opportunities through the day to apply them to our lives. I was involved in a part-time teacher training but didn't find there the continuity and intensity that I wanted. Sunbridge has given me the experience I was hoping for.

Another student observed the benefits of being in a varied and active Anthroposophical community. She explained:

Sunbridge is just part of what is going on here. There is the eurythmy school, which offers the only full-time eurythmy training in North America. Many of its students live in Holder House which is the dormitory where many Sunbridge students also live. Within walking distance is the Green Meadow Waldorf School, which goes from kindergarten through grade twelve and is a great resource. There is also the Fellowship Community, which has gardens and workshops and which is dedicated to looking after senior citizens. Then there is the Weleda pharmacy and a food coop. There are many people and initiatives working to apply Anthroposophy to practical matters. It's very inspiring.

Regarding Sunbridge College's future, Norman Davidson says:

I think that our primary goals will remain to offer a liberal education in its true sense, an education that will help a person become a free, informed, and conscious human being, and also to train people to pursue a vocation in which they can apply a spiritual/scientific view of the world – for example, the education of children in a Waldorf setting.

We do have several new and planned programs consistent with these goals. We are just starting a three-year, part-time Waldorf teacher education program for persons who can't manage two years of full-time study. Eugene Schwartz is the director. We are also establishing a program for handwork and crafts teachers that will meet in the summer and for periods during the school year, and we are looking ahead to a program in Biodynamic gardening and environmental studies. In addition to all this, our already established programs include "Non-Profit Administration and Community Development" (two year part-time); "Art of the Actor" (one year, in New York City); and evening programs in general studies and in preparation for Waldorf Education.

One of the great needs of the Waldorf movement is for trained teachers. Sunbridge College prepares Waldorf teachers for their vocation according to the highest standards. It is thereby performing a great service to the Waldorf

movement and to the cause of quality education in North America.

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Waldorf Education in the Ukraine

There is an intense and growing interest in Waldorf Education throughout Eastern Europe and in countries of the former Soviet Union.

The Ukraine is a country about the size of Texas, and borders Poland, Hungary and Romania to the west, Russia to the north and east, and the Black Sea to the south. It has a distinctive language, heritage and culture and a population of about sixty million. Since the collapse of communism, more than a dozen Waldorf schools have been started in Ukraine, and there are many school initiatives. Ukrainian Waldorf educators are working to incorporate Ukrainian music into the Waldorf curriculum.

In August, 1995, the initial session of the first official Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar was held in Odessa on the Black Sea. Over ninety participants from all over the country took part. Lecturers came from various European countries and from the United States. Zwiensylava Nykorak Hayda, former director of the Waldorf Kinder Haus in Michigan (a Waldorf preschool and kindergarten) lectured on early childhood training. The seminar will meet periodically over three years.

Anyone interested in more information about Waldorf education in Ukraine can call Ms. Hayda at 810-268-4792.

A School Portrait: The Austin Waldorf School

by Carol Toole

As a New Englander visiting Austin and the two-year-old Austin Waldorf School for the first time fourteen years ago, I was struck by two things. One was the warmth, not just of the climate, but of the people – "Texas friendly," they say. I was also struck by the stern beauty of the natural environment in the heart of Texas: vast fields overrun by a throng of determined bluebonnets, hills that rolled along as far as the eye could see, carefully sculpted clouds presiding over an enormous sky. I could easily be pulled out of myself here, lulled to sleep in the warmth and light and distance.

On closer inspection, I saw how much the plant life had to struggle to grow. In places, roots of trees stretched over limestone ledges to find even a bit of soil; wildflowers seemed to grow right out of rock. Clearly, it would take boldness and courage to bring to life this lone Waldorf School in the Lone Star State. Time has proven that the maturity we now feel in our sixteenth year, the sense of an inner core we have established, and our current burgeoning growth have not come without struggle and a striving to keep awake.

Fortunately, bold and determined individuals had clustered around Helen Steele, one of the founders of our school. Helen, a former teacher at the Highland Hall Waldorf School, had moved to Texas in 1973. After five years of lecturing and giving workshops, Helen was finally able to begin steering a group toward the opening of a school. Though by this time her health was seriously failing, she seemed resolved to witness the school's opening in 1980 and to see the first children journey through grade one.

By the school's second year, Helen Steele had passed away, leaving her vision and inspiration. She left as well an endowment and warm

connections with René Querido, Henry Barnes, and especially Werner Glas. The school benefited greatly from this wisdom coming to us from the West Coast, the East Coast, and from the country's center. Werner Glas, founder of Sunbridge College (formerly the Waldorf Institute of Detroit), became our first Board president.

This pioneering phase was a time of striving to establish a firm foundation. We had several challenges to face. One was isolation. The nearest Waldorf school was, and still is, a sixteen-hour drive away. Where would a model or day-to-day guidance come from? We were pioneers – young, inexperienced, and on our own. An old pioneer song captured the way we often felt:

*Pickin' up bones to keep from starving,
Pickin' up chips to keep from freezing,
Pickin' up courage to keep from leaving,
Way out West in No Man's Land.*

Also, as the faculty grew in numbers, we had to go through that well-known transition from a Board-run to a faculty-run school. Instilling in the Board confidence in the faculty was a central concern for the next several years. Lastly, we had, in typical Texas style, grown too big, too fast. We started in 1980 with a first grade and eleven children. In the second year a kindergarten, second, and fourth grades were added, and there were sixty children. We more than doubled enrollment in our third year, and by our sixth year we were an eight-grade school with two kindergartens. As a young school, we were unprepared to face the demands of upper grade parents, students, and teaching. And we had the challenge of finding trained Waldorf teachers.

During this time of internal struggles, a search for a permanent home was underway. This meant hard work, decision-making, and

sometimes disagreement. Where should we locate our school? The city's phenomenal growth centered around the high-tech ventures in the north. Yet many of our families lived in the southern part of the city. Should we be a downtown school with high visibility or a school in the outskirts where children could experience quiet, space, and a connection to nature?

At last, eleven acres on the southwest edge of the city were purchased with the generous help of one of our founding families. These eleven acres opened to the beautiful Texas hill country and the smaller bedroom communities to the southwest, which would soon prove an area of high population growth. We had a summer to build new buildings, to refurbish old ones on the property, and to move our whole school. Once again that Texas determination served us well. Hammers and nail guns rang out through the summer heat, transforming a homestead, complete with a roping arena and horse barns, into a school. By September, the ringing of our old-time school bell joined the sound of buzzing saws. Though our campus is still being shaped, its beauty has always been an initial point of attraction for many families.

Even today, visitors to our campus often comment on how like a quaint village it is. Driving into the school grounds, visitors first see the administration building. A stroll down the path, past our Arts Studio and Eurythmy Hall, leads to the elementary school area, where each class has its own free-standing building and garden. These buildings are clustered in a spiral form around a courtyard, where the mild climate often allows the children to eat their lunches. A covered boardwalk connects each classroom. The kindergartens, nestled in their own corner of the land, occupy a stone house, one of the original homes on the property, with a landscaped yard perfect for creative play.

Entering our seventh year in our new home was a time of excitement in more ways than one. Crises flared up like prairie wildfire, calling on capacities of wakefulness and diligence. The move, economic collapse in Austin, and challenges arising in the classroom had affected our enrollment. We had to fight a reputation of being "laid back," as though the roots of Waldorf Education reached back only as far as the sixties.

Questions regarding collegial relationships begged to be answered. How do young teachers who are all peers look beyond their own classroom to each other's? How do they give advice or criticism to colleagues when they feel, "Who am I to speak? Am I doing all I should be doing for my own class?" How do we hold each other in a supportive way and maintain high standards while giving fellow teachers space to find their own ways and the freedom to develop their own styles? How can we balance the demands of teaching a grade for the first time and handling administrative duties?



The Austin Waldorf School.

Attrition was the alarm that called us to a vigorous effort to find answers.

Increasingly, energy was required to extinguish other fires of discontent. Parents, rightly, weren't sure if a cohesive force existed at the helm. "Teachers can't do it all" was a common refrain; it seemed time for the school's trustees and parents to assume a more active role. An effort to "get our internal organization together" was formally launched. The result, however, was a dispersal farther from that strong inner core we so sorely needed. With fresh energy and the best of intentions, parents and Board members, along with the faculty, established a swarm of committees, and the school hummed like a veritable beehive. In the end, there was overlapping of efforts, confusion about who was doing what and why, and burn-out. The teachers reacted. The expansion that the school experienced precipitated a period of contraction, of focused inner examination, that was to bring consciousness and form to all areas of the school's life. We were now rising from the ashes.

The first task was to examine our upper grades. Did we have the strength and knowledge required to serve the needs of the students at this challenging age? We had to admit our unreadiness to handle the broad range of pedagogical tasks presented by an eight-grade school. After many difficult faculty discussions and many, often painful, meetings with parents, the faculty decided to cut back to a six-grade school. We could then concentrate our energies on fine-tuning the lower grades, reorganizing our internal structure of administration, and on studying adolescence. When the time was right to spring forward once again, we would be prepared. We would have the force of maturity behind us, for our current resolve was a giant step toward growing up.

We also began to develop a thorough Teacher Evaluation and Support Process that included active mentoring as well as regular self-evaluation. This depended largely on clear, honest communication. Setting school standards regarding, for example, the level of academic achievement and quality of book work, went hand-in-hand with this. We had to determine, in broad strokes, what we hoped our school style

would become and ensure that each class would have the same quality of teaching in every area. Teachers even began proofing each other's student reports. We believe this has in no way hampered each teacher's individuality but rather has given each one support and a framework in which to exercise his or her freedom.

Then there was the great puzzle of administration. We scrutinized the many pieces, shifted them around, and discovered new ones. Every school will have an administrative picture that works for it, given its stage of development and the constellation of individuals that has gathered there. The picture that eventually emerged for us has helped immensely to keep details from falling through the cracks. New roles and areas of responsibility were established for the College of Teachers, the faculty and the Board. New staff positions were created. We are grateful to the Waldorf schools that served as models for these changes.

Shortly after our move, Werner Glas and Henry Barnes had helped the school establish its College of Teachers with a few of the long-standing teachers who would hold the school meditatively through their study and inner commitment. The College's establishing itself as a guiding force in the school – a leader in setting policy, providing direction, and ensuring standards – was a crucial step in the school's finding its center. The College has become a forum where matters can be discussed with clarity and purpose, and then brought to the full faculty once the issues have been worked through. The College can also design a process by which to discuss a large or controversial issue, thus facilitating the faculty's work. Delicate and important issues, such as hiring of staff or dealing with a crisis in the life of a teacher can be held more intimately by this inner circle.

Next, a group of three teachers, known as the Steering Committee, was formed. This group functions much like the hub of a wheel; it is the central point where administrative tasks are first handled. All requests, complaints and day-to-day policies collect here. They are then channeled to the appropriate individuals, groups, or committees for discussion, decision, or action. This

keeps our agenda for the weekly faculty meetings from becoming clogged or bogged down. The whole faculty does not need to discuss what kind of soap dispenser should be installed in the rest rooms! More time is available for pedagogical, artistic, and child studies. Of course, reports and announcements keep the faculty abreast of the issues at hand, and items that require full faculty discussion are taken up. The Steering Committee has kept the wheel turning smoothly for us. Perhaps it has helped that this triumvirate currently has three temperaments represented, bringing a good balance of soul forces: introspection, initiative, and empathy with others.

In this way, all areas of the school life began to be tended with more consciousness than ever before. Likewise, a position was created for an enrollment officer to take charge of publicity and outreach and to carry each inquiring family in a conscientious way up to or eventually through the door of actual enrollment. Such important areas as enrollment and teacher recruitment could no longer be left to those already overextended or to those who lacked the interest or talent for a given task.

Meanwhile, our studies and visits from Master teachers continued to focus on the adolescent. We were committed to move forward into seventh and eighth grades with knowledge and the programs, buildings, and equipment that they require. For example, the expansion of our gym and our music and arts programs began. We also made two pivotal decisions. First, we decided to hire an upper-grades consultant who could assist and help strengthen our math and science offerings. Second, we knew the addition of a third kindergarten would ensure consistently full enrollment throughout the grades. This brought up, however, the old chicken and the egg question. Can we justify funding new positions and programs until we have the income from fuller enrollment? Yet without improvements will our enrollment increase? These projects would require funding and, therefore, full support from our school Board. But we were finding ourselves in a tug of war.

In the efforts to tighten up, the faculty had retreated too far into their own realm. Now

bridges had to be built that reached out to include the Board and parents. The faculty's newfound strength allowed for this opening, sharing, and relating on new levels. An Executive Committee of the Board began to meet regularly with the College of Teachers. A Long-Range Planning Committee and a Site Committee, each including both faculty and Board members, formed to play important roles in information gathering. Again, open communication was the cornerstone for a completely new structure; the building-up of community had begun.

Reaching out to the larger Texas community was equally important. Lectures and our annual Learning Fair, a one-day conference on Waldorf Education presented by our faculty and a guest lecturer, are ways we share what is experienced in the classroom. A prospective parent attending a recent Observation Day commented, "Y'all are a school like other schools, and yet a warmth and peace radiates from each building. The children look so happy. Here there is something special." We smile, knowing that what he feels was won by hard, hard work. The work is ongoing to keep the education alive, the communication open, and the organizational form from becoming static and cumbersome. Now with three full kindergartens, concerns center around waiting lists and a large first grade for next year. New buildings are needed as our seventh grade leads us to becoming a full eight-grade school once again. These are welcome challenges we face with confidence.

Such confidence and enthusiasm are reflected in the faculty's recent decision to create the first Waldorf high school in Texas, scheduled to open in 1998 with ninth and tenth grades. Setting this challenge before us will assure that we do not go to sleep in our successes!

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Report from the Toronto Waldorf School

by Edward Edelstein and
Anne Greer

Last June we at the Toronto Waldorf School sent out a somewhat desperate appeal for help in our struggle to resist the increasing demand by the Ontario Provincial government for standardized testing and outcomes-based education. We felt as if we were casting a bottle with a message into the ocean. We have been moved and encouraged by the support that has come to us, and we have been surprised to learn that many others are experiencing similar pressures and have similar concerns.

Recently, at the suggestion of James Pewtherer, who had carried our plea to the Hague Circle, we sent a letter to the delegates at the AWSNA January meeting in New York City. We raised three issues for consideration.

First, because Waldorf schools share a common philosophy and a common image in the public eye, and are members of an Association, we proposed that the Waldorf movement consider developing its own evaluation process. For one school to free itself from government regulation, we all need to be responsible for our schools. Second, we proposed that Waldorf schools in North America begin establishing direct links with colleges, universities, and businesses so that our graduates can be accepted, hired, and apprenticed on the basis of a Waldorf diploma or teacher referral, as is the case in Denmark and Sweden. Third, given the rapid growth of our movement, and the intensifying demand for standardization, we suggested that the movement prepare itself collectively for continuing court challenges.

At the AWSNA Central Regional Conference held at the Toronto Waldorf School in February, ASWNA chair Dave Alsop said that there had

been strong support from the delegates for us and for our suggestions. He said that the Toronto school might be used as a pilot school in the development of evaluation procedures for member schools. There were assurances of help, including for funds for legal costs.

With the election of a new government in Ontario, there has been some re-shuffling within the Ministry of Education. There are to be no tests this year, and the Common Curriculum does not become law until September 1996. However, a February curriculum conference made clear that this government, like the last, is committed to "benchmark" tests which will be "deeply embedded in the core curriculum." One such test for next year is labeled a Grade Three "Census Reading Test." It was clear that plans for a major overhaul of secondary education do not include consultation with independent schools.

On the bright side, the Ontario Council of Independent Schools, which came into existence less than a year ago, largely through the initiative of the Toronto Waldorf School, has become a strong and accepted representative of the 80,000 children in independent schools in the Province. Also, our lawyer in last year's action is still deeply interested in the issue and has received a grant to do legal research for a constitutional court challenge.

In the next months we will articulate and submit to the Ministry our Waldorf curriculum as a substitute for the standard curriculum. We will continue to challenge the assumption that it is the role of the state to define and shape school curricula and accreditation. We have moved from reaction to action and see the possibility of gaining government recognition and acceptance of our long-proven educational model.

Anne Greer has been a teacher of English at the Toronto Waldorf School for nineteen years. Edward Edelstein has been a teacher of biology and of wood-working at the Toronto Waldorf School for sixteen years.

Book Review:

The Future Does Not Compute: Transcending the Machines In Our Midst

by Stephen L. Talbott

Published by O'Reilly and Associates, 103 Morris Street,
Suite A, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Reviewed by David Schlesinger

The Internet, having existed in progressively more sophisticated and wide-ranging forms for over two decades, has at last sprung into the public's consciousness. Perhaps more significant than the appearance of "Cyberspace" on the cover of *Time* magazine are its now regular appearances in the "Letters" column, where electronic mail addresses are used almost as frequently as addresses with cities and states. People are "getting connected" at a dizzying and accelerating rate, using "e-mail," reading "news-groups," and accessing the "World Wide Web."

This great expansion of use has had the effect of making the Internet big business as well. A major on-line service provider has just announced that it has added 600,000 new subscribers in the past year alone. Another company producing Internet software, having sold under a million dollars' worth of its product, has gone public and been capitalized for over two billion dollars. Clearly, computers, and particularly their ability to communicate, have never been more in the public mind.

We are spending more and more time with computers. We are working with computers, writing with computers, communicating with and via computers, and of course entertaining and informing ourselves with them. The Internet is fast becoming an important element of our culture. It's difficult to think of a technology that has had as wide-ranging an impact and has gained prominence as rapidly. In a series of postings on

the Internet, there has been a discussion of the networked terminals that are being installed in a local coffeehouse in our semirural community, months after such things had become unremarkable in San Francisco. One message suggests: "Connect [the coffeehouse] and any other outlet you can find. Interconnection needs to become free and common."

The widely held assumption is that computers and networking offer us unprecedented access to information and to other persons. But there are, or should be, serious concerns. The ability to communicate instantaneously and around the world affects us both as individuals and as persons in relationships with others. It cannot be taken for granted that access to the Internet expands, rather than reduces, our freedom. Are computers becoming more like us, as the artificial-intelligence researchers claim, or are we becoming more like them?

In *The Future Does Not Compute*, Stephen Talbott takes a harsh but revealing look at how computers are affecting us. He is well qualified to do this, being an editor for one of the most influential publishers of books relating to the Internet. His conclusions, in contrast with mainstream views, are in general starkly pessimistic.

Computers, with their rapidly growing interconnectivity, Talbott claims, are impoverishing us in many ways without our even realizing that we are losing something. For example, in normal human intercourse the right to privacy is made possible by the mutual respect individuals feel for each other. One human being perceives in another human being the need for privacy and intimacy and on that basis does not intrude into that person's life and affairs. On the Internet the issue of privacy is obviously an important one. But as Talbott notes, advocates of the right to privacy on the Internet claim that universal access to effectively unbreakable encryption (encoding) capabilities has solved the problem. In other words, the issue of privacy has been solved by a purely technological capability, not by human beings developing and acting according to their higher moral capacities, such as those of respect and intimacy.

Talbott writes that:

The alternative to intimate respect . . . is to isolate ourselves even more from each other, taking refuge behind uncertain, shifting personas, remote forms of communication, and anonymous transactions, which we then call "human freedom."

Thus, in the end, real intimacy, mutual respect, and real human communication are sacrificed.

Nor can it be assumed, as many claim, that this newfound ability to communicate will result in better understanding between people. Talbott points out that while third-world villages offer direct and unmediated access between people, this has failed to make those villages into utopias. There is no certainty that a high school student with an electronic mail pen pal in Malaysia is, as a result of that connection, more likely to have a conversation with the student at the next locker.

We tend to project our highest ideals as well as our deepest fears onto the Protean mirror of cyberspace, Talbott says. On the one hand, there is the hope that easy communication and the exchange of massive amounts of information will help us solve our personal and societal problems. On the other, there is the growing concern about the Internet's becoming a medium for pornography, the activities of hate groups, censorship, and even totalitarian government.

Talbott offers not so much an argument as a series of related observations regarding the effects of this latest technology on us. His concerns are multiple:

- Computers encourage us to "run on automatic," making us more predictable and less free.
- If we use technology in a less than conscious way, the technology will end up reflecting unconscious drives over which we have virtually no control.
- We are taking yet another step in the progression away from oral speech, distancing us more and more from our own words.

Talbott criticizes his own book, noting that it itself is a symptom of the times. The search for a simple and global solution represents, he notes, the kind of thinking that arises out of the computational paradigm. And he writes: "I would indict the book on two counts: it does not lead over into a strongly positive vision . . . and it does not adequately depict the desperation of our current circumstances."

Talbott shares Jacques Ellul's concern that, rather than our culture assimilating technology, technology is taking over culture. Talbott's analyses deal with a variety of topics, from modern physics to Brunelleschi's demonstration of linear perspective to Owen Barfield's examination of meaning. His work brings into a clearer light many relevant concerns and forces us to examine from new points of view how we are affected by technology. Anyone who uses computers, or who wonders about the less positive effects of the widely hyped "Internet revolution" will get much to consider from *The Future Does Not Compute*.

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