

Renewal

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

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Light

The sunlight streams victoriously through all space
To bathe the earth in blessing after blessing;
At every moment living swathes of grace
Are woven into field and forest,
Dressing her stony nakedness in robes of green
Embroidered with a hem of lily flowers
And hung with pendants with the lustrous sheen
Of emerald-and-ruby orchard bowers.
Even at night the sunlight goes on streaming
Right to the center of the slumbering earth,
Where death and darkness only are a dreaming
Of life and light awaiting second birth.
Oh, incomprehensible ceaseless quickening
Of light that lives and moves in everything!

Rex Raab

Engelberg, Germany
2-5 March 1997

Rex Raab is an architect, born in England but for many years resident in Germany, who has designed many Waldorf schools and other buildings in Europe and around the world.

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

By Ronald E. Koetzsch



I hope that the special mental clarity that is one of the gifts of the winter season has not been completely dispelled by the exuberant energies of spring. The reason is that several very interesting but challenging pieces appear in this issue of *Renewal*. These articles—among them David Elkind's "Waldorf Education in the Postmodern World" and James Pewtherer's "Rudolf Steiner and Modernism"—require and deserve a careful and active reading. They deal with crucial issues in education generally and also in Waldorf Education.

Two of the pieces in this issue—Anne Riegel's interview with Jesaiah Ben Aharon and Astrid Schmitt-Stegmann's review of René Querido's book *The Esoteric Background of Waldorf Education*—touch on the question of religion and its relationship to Waldorf Education. This is a delicate and controversial topic. Now and again Waldorf Education has been accused of being religious and sectarian.

To begin to understand this matter, we must be aware of a few facts.

On the one hand:

- Rudolf Steiner is the founder of Waldorf Education. His writings and lectures on education remain the primary source of inspiration and direction for virtually all Waldorf educators. Rudolf Steiner's

worldview as expressed in Anthroposophy is essentially a Christ-centered one. But it expresses an esoteric or cosmic Christianity quite different from that of most Christian denominations. It includes, for example, the ideas of karma and reincarnation and stresses the potential of each human being to develop through self-striving the ability to perceive spiritual realities and to think and act in freedom.

- Steiner's Christian—in a broad sense—view of the world and of human nature and human destiny are part of the basis upon which he developed Waldorf Education

- There are certain elements in most Waldorf schools that bespeak a Christian perspective. These may include pictures of the Madonna in the kindergarten rooms and the observance of Advent and other festivals of the Christian year.

- Steiner suggested that teachers pursue a path of inner meditative practice, some of which is based on Christian concepts and images.

- Steiner—at the request of parents at the first Waldorf school—prepared courses in religion for Waldorf schools, and these courses are used in schools in Germany and in other countries where the study of religion are part of the standard curriculum of all public and private schools.

On the other hand:

- The Waldorf curriculum includes the study of the history and beliefs of all the major cultures of the world. Christianity (part of the sixth-grade curriculum) is studied as a cultural and historical phenomenon, as are

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News From AWSNA

By Dave Alsop, Chairman

We are often asked here at the AWSNA office if it is true that Waldorf Education is the fastest growing non-sectarian independent school movement in North America. Since there are no clear statistics from other similar school movements, it is impossible to say. However, Waldorf schools have doubled in number during each of the last three decades. This is truly remarkable, and there is no reason to expect this rate of growth to slow down anytime soon.

Of course, there are many challenges and opportunities that arise as the result of such vitality. Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the twenty-first birthday celebration for Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California. As one of the major Waldorf teacher training institutes in North America, the College will have its hands full in meeting and preparing the aspiring teachers for the existing schools and the numerous schools-to-be. This will require not only a strong sense of identity and mission (and what twenty-one-year-old isn't wrestling with his or her future?), but also the resources with which to meet the task.

Those resources that Rudolf Steiner College and in fact every teacher training institute and every Waldorf school needs to create to meet the growing demands include, of course, buildings, facilities, endowments, faculty, and so on. But just as significant for the future of the college are networks of persons interested in and



supportive of Waldorf Education. For it is because of the interest of individual human beings

that spiritual, social, and economic initiative is possible. Rudolf Steiner College was founded and has grown because of just such interest, and it was very special indeed to see the beautiful and profound results of twenty-one years of dedication and work.

For the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, too, the rate of growth of the Waldorf movement has profound implications. More resources are necessary to support even a minimal staff to work with the overarching issues and concerns of the schools. We are working to increase our efforts with respect to publications, conferences and workshops, school and teacher mentoring, inclusion of new school initiatives, fund-raising (through DANA—the Development and Administrators Network of AWSNA), school advising and consulting, and so on. And, consequently, we at AWSNA too are working to build a network of interested and supportive people in the larger community. Through our Annual Campaign, Alumni Campaign, and Donors Circle projects we intend to bridge the gap between the needs of the schools and our ability to meet those needs. Your interest is very welcome. ✱

PROFILE: HARRY KRETZ



Harry Kretz first learned of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education while a university student in Toronto in the 1950s.

After teaching in a public school in Canada, he trained to be a Waldorf teacher in New York City and in England. Harry was a class teacher at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City for twelve years, then taught at an environmental education center in New Hampshire for two years. Harry did another stint of Waldorf class teaching at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, and then taught in the high school there, specializing in mathematics.

"Retired" since 1992, Harry now travels a great deal as a master teacher and consultant. He teaches math and solid geometry blocks at various Waldorf schools around the country and at the Waldorf teacher training centers at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, at Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York, and at Arcturus in Chicago. Harry is an accomplished musician and also a much loved storyteller, who combines a deadpan delivery, a lively sense of the absurd, and a telling twinkle in the eye.

R.E.K.

We Heard Him for the Truth: A Reminiscence of Harry Kretz

By Tom Soybel

As a child one learns that there can be a number of reasons to say something and that "truth" is just one of many reasons. Children everywhere learn this, but in New York City—where I grew up—they learn this at a very young age. In a city of lawyers, politicians, and countless entrepreneurs, a child is exposed early and often to the idea that one can say something solely for effect. Call it being sophisticated, call it being jaded, but by age nine I had a vague sense that there were a number of reasons to want to be heard and that telling the truth was but one of them. At least that's how I thought it was in the world I inhabited.

Into this world strode Harry Kretz, who in 1967 became my fourth-grade class teacher in the New York Rudolf Steiner School. Harry was as different from the other men in my small world as he could be. Harry came not from the city (as did I and everyone else I knew), but from Saskatchewan, Canada, and occasionally he told us a bit about what growing up on the northern plains had been like. In his sober and serious tone, Harry brought to life a world we could barely even imagine: cold and snowy in the winter, few people around, a place where you meant what you said. It was a place where the cost of saying anything but the truth was so high that one wouldn't even consider it.

It didn't take long for me to get the feeling that what Harry told us was true, that he was not slanting facts or pursuing an agenda of his own. In our classroom, one said what was important to say, and what it took to help everyone master the lesson of the day. Anything else was not worthy of the effort.

One way to get a little insight into this structure was to misbehave, and I misbehaved plenty. I didn't undertake this as a research project. There was an undeniable charge that came from the feeling of getting away with something. But after the rush of having offended the order in the classroom had passed, there was an empty feeling of having missed something. Something important. Something I wanted to know.

Those of us who knew Harry as a summer counselor at Camp Glenbrook in New Hampshire got to see a lighter side of Harry and his slightly off-the-wall sense of humor. In New Hampshire I learned how to handle a canoe, play on a team, and square dance. I got a taste for literature—both from reading books on my own, and by hearing books read aloud. I also became familiar with the musical works of the great Italian composer "Broccoli Zucchini." Harry knew these works intimately and performed them for us from seed catalogues during Saturday Entertainment. I knew enough about music to be impressed that he could sight-read that stuff—wait! Well, I knew it was all a joke, really. At least I think I did, but it was definitely Harry's kind of joke.

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Waldorf Education in the Postmodern World

By David Elkind

Rudolf Steiner was a thoroughly modern educational theorist who was, at the same time, a very forward-looking, postmodern pedagogue. In this article I will try to make the case for this interesting contradiction and provide a possible explanation.

The Modern Worldview

Like most modern thinkers, Steiner was an idealist who took the Renaissance and Enlightenment beliefs in social progress, in universality, and in regularity as the unquestioned givens of the natural, human, and spiritual world. With regard to social progress, he believed that children advance physically, intellectually, and spiritually in ways that roughly parallel the evolution of Western societies. But this was not a naive recapitulation theory—to the effect that the child repeats, in his or her individual development, the developmental patterns of human history. Rather, Steiner argued that the child's developing needs and interests are the best guide to choosing curriculum materials for any given age period. It just so happens that the sequence of materials best suited to the child's developing needs and interests follows a roughly historical pattern.

An illustration of this parallelism is that third graders, who are beginning to move away from the family and into the real world of peers, have an affinity for Old Testament stories in which the leading characters take charge of their world and make it fruitful. Hearing and experiencing these stories provides reassurance to the child who is leaving the security of the family as well as support for his or her new feelings of independence. Later, between the ninth and tenth years, the child, however unconsciously, begins to question the authority and knowledge of parents and teachers. The child comes to understand cause and effect and develops an initial appreciation of a more scientific view of

the world. It is at this age that boys and girls welcome instruction in natural history, physics, and chemistry, instruction about the makeup of things. During the child's early years, the modes of thought and ideas from the ancient world are the most appropriate curriculum materials. Beginning in preadolescence, however, the modes of thinking and the content of the Renaissance and Enlightenment are better suited to the young person's expanding curiosity and passions.

Steiner also believed in human universals. He argued that the "life forces" of the human soul, of will, of feeling, and of thought, grow through the body and then leave it to become the human spirit.

And it is Anthroposophy that shows us that if we have a true knowledge of man, we see that the human being possesses three clearly distinguished members: the physical body, the soul, and the spirit. And we can only see the whole man if we have the wisdom and knowledge to recognize the soul in its true nature as clearly as we recognize the physical body, and further, if we are able to do so we are able to recognize the spirit in man as an independent being. (Steiner 1968, 13)

Clearly, for Steiner, if we take the proper

*David Elkind is a leading authority on child development, education, and family life. Currently Professor of Child Development at Tufts University, Dr. Elkind has written a number of influential books, including *The Hurried Child*, *All Grown Up* and *No Place to Go*, and *Miseducation*. His most recent books are *Ties That Stress: The New Family Imbalance* and *The Same and Different: Young Children in the Postmodern World*. Dr. Elkind lectures extensively in the United States, Canada, and abroad, has been featured in various magazines, and has appeared many times on television. Currently he is co-hosting the Lifetime Television series *Kids These Days*.*

perspective we will be able to observe these human universals. Steiner also believed that while animals typify specialized functions (the cow, digestion; the lion, heart and energy; and the bird, intellect and freedom) humans are total beings who incorporate all of these diverse potentials in harmonious ways. He believed, in other words, that while animals epitomize one or another trait, humans represent an equilibration of many different traits.

Finally, Steiner believed in regularity. He was persuaded that the human spirit evolves in a series of stages that are related to age and to physical growth. The first stage of life lasts until the appearance of the permanent teeth, and is a period during which the will is the overriding trait. While feeling and thinking are present, these are nonetheless dominated by the will. From the emergence of the permanent teeth to the age of puberty is the period of childhood proper, in which feeling is the child's stellar mode of interacting with the world. During this stage both will and thinking are subordinated to feeling. A third period of development emerges with the appearance of puberty and extends to the age of young adulthood. This developmental epoch is marked by the reign of intellect. In adolescence, feeling and will begin to be regulated by reason and logic.

In many ways, Steiner's theory of education, like the theories of other modern educators, also presupposed the modern nuclear family. The modern nuclear family with two parents—one parent staying home to rear the two or three children—was regarded as the end result of an evolutionary process. It was the ideal form for rearing children. It was also believed to be a universal, ideal kinship pattern toward which families, in all cultures, were evolving—if at different rates. And, finally, the modern family was believed to be "regular" in the sense of being the most normal, indeed, the most moral family arrangement. Any family that deviated from this form was less regular and, by extension, less moral than a family that conformed to the two-parent, one-parent-working-outside-the-home model.

Steiner took for granted that all children attending his school were from nuclear families. Such children did not have emotional problems, had not been abused, were well-fed and well-

clothed and had received adequate medical and dental care. They also had been at home until they entered the Waldorf school and had not spent any time in out-of-home, day care facilities. Likewise, he could also assume that all the children in the school spoke the same language and came from roughly similar social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. There were no provisions, in his educational theory, for children who did not come from culturally, socially, and economically homogeneous nuclear families.

Given these considerations, it is truly remarkable that the Waldorf system can be so readily adapted to heterogeneous children of the postmodern world such as those in the Milwaukee Urban Waldorf Program (Pratt 1994). But I get ahead of my story, and we need first to review some of the events that have propelled us into the postmodern era and that have forced us to modify our unquestioned beliefs in progress, universality, and regularity and to move away from the nuclear family ideal.

The Postmodern Perspective

In the present century, after two World Wars, the Holocaust, the atomic bomb, the degradation of the natural environment, and the depletion of our natural resources, it is hard to maintain a belief in unfettered social progress. Certainly progress occurs, as in medicine, science, and technology, but even in these domains the progress is not always beneficial. Modern weaponry is surely an advance over primitive tools of warfare, but it would be hard to argue that such weaponry furthers life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Politically, the ideological conflict between communism and capitalism has been replaced by an even more formidable conflict between economic and human values. We see this struggle everywhere: between logging interests and rain forest preservation, housing development and wetland protection, oil exploration and the safety of marine life. We recognize today that there are many kinds of progress, not all of which bode well for human life and well-being.

In the same way, we now appreciate that there are far fewer universals in the social sciences than there are in the physical sciences. For example, psychologists once believed that the laws of learning were universal and that they

held true for humans no less than they did for animals. For decades psychologists studied rats in the belief that the principles that governed rodent habit formation held for human learning as well. Today we know that each species has its own modes of learning and that even among individuals of the same species there are different learning styles. Likewise we recognize that many of the grand theories of social science, whether those of history (Marx and Engels) or of sociology (Weber) or of psychology (Freud), do not transcend time and space as they were once presumed to do. Rather we now appreciate that theories are reflective of, and limited to, the social/cultural discourses of the period when they were proposed. As humans, we can never completely escape the limits of the social and historical context in which we live.

Whereas postmodern schools are struggling to develop integrated curricula and are battling the identification of teachers with their disciplines, Waldorf teachers have always taught math, science, literature, and the arts as part of an organized whole.

Finally, we appreciate today that many irregular phenomena are genuine occurrences that are anomalous by nature. There are truly chaotic phenomena. Our weather is a good example: despite all our modern technology it still remains relatively unpredictable. Many human phenomena are also inherently chaotic. A classroom, for example, is a non-replicable experiment. Every time a class meets, the children are different than they were last time (they have had new and unique experiences), and the same is true of the teacher. The happenings that intervene between class meetings affect classroom interactions in unknown and unpredictable ways. This is not to say that classroom interactions cannot be studied. They can be, but not following the model that assumes identically occurring physical events.

Changes in the family came fast upon these changes in our fundamental ways of viewing the world. The modern nuclear family has given way to the postmodern "permeable" family (Elkind 1994). Permeable families include those conforming to the traditional nuclear kinship arrangement, but also families with the two-parent-working, single parent, remarried, adoptive and other non-nuclear child-rearing configurations. The nuclear family, if psychologically healthy, may be the least stressful grouping for child rearing, but other kinship patterns can be equally effective. Permeable families are thus no longer regarded as the end result of a progressive evolution, nor is one kinship form thought to be universal. Finally, there is an acceptance of many different, irregular family configurations, no one of which is morally superior to another.

It should be said that the postmodern, whether in the society or in the family, is not a revolt against the modern ideas, but rather a correction to them. Certainly there is progress in some domains, but not in all. Likewise, there are certainly universals in the physical world and some in the social world. In the social world, however, these universals—such as the moral rules shared by almost all religions—are arrived at by social consensus rather than by the intellectual genius of a particular moral philosopher. Likewise, there is irregularity in our universe as well as regularity. We just need to make room for chaos in our conception of reality.

Steiner, like the other grand theorists, was a man of his times, and, as we have seen, his educational theory reflected the foundation beliefs and the prevailing family form of the Victorian Era in which he lived. What is quite astounding is the fact that, while Steiner's theory was modern his pedagogy was postmodern.

To fully appreciate how innovative Steiner's educational practice was, we must first recall another facet of the modern, social science mindset. One of the tenets of modern social science was that of role differentiation. Presumably, as societies evolved, social roles became more and more differentiated, and this led to greater social, political, and economic efficiency. This applied to the social scientists as well, who struggled to differentiate their field of study

from philosophy and from the other social science disciplines. Anthropologists studied exotic cultures, in part at least, to distinguish themselves from urban sociologists, who, in turn, spared no effort to demonstrate how different their domain of inquiry was from the one explored by psychologists.

Applied to the family, role differentiation provided the scientific rationale for women staying at home and serving as homemakers and child rearers and for men fulfilling the role of breadwinners. In education, the doctrine of role differentiation dictated that there be a clear separation between the role of teacher and parent. Teachers were to teach only the three Rs, while parents were to inculcate in children manners and morals, but not academics. I recall in the early days of expanded day care, the heated arguments we had over whether or not the teacher should serve meals (a parental function). A similar commitment to role differentiation was to be found in the industrial arena. In our factories there was a clear separation between labor and management, between design, manufacturing, and sales, with each group protective of its own territory and prerogatives.

Today, of course, we acknowledge that one person can, and does, play many roles. It is now accepted that women can work and be good mothers at the same time and that fathers can parent. A similar deconstruction of role differentiation has occurred in our schools. The full-day kindergarten is a child-care, not an educational, initiative. Sex, drug, and character education, as well as before- and after-school programs, are further evidence of the schools taking over parental functions. In many industries, the boundaries between worker and management, as well as those between design, manufacturing, and sales have also been broken down. In such companies there are incentives for workers to contribute ideas, and they may rotate among different jobs. Likewise design, manufacturing, and sales personnel now work together and coordinate their efforts.

Steiner was quite postmodern in his recognition that teachers must play many different roles. Having a teacher stay with the students for many years—what might be called “extended” teaching—means that the teacher has to grow and learn with the children, but also that

he or she has to play many parental roles as well. Because of the attachment of children to teachers whom they have been with for many years, the teacher becomes a much more powerful role model than when the child only has the teacher for a year. The class also becomes more like a family as the children grow up learning and working together. Clearly, Steiner was not bothered by the modern dictates of role differentiation.

More importantly, the extended teacher-pupil relationship of the Waldorf school seems ideally suited to the needs of today's permeable family children. Although Steiner's pedagogy was premised upon the assumption that all children came from nuclear families, his pedagogical practice was flexible enough to accommodate children coming from permeable families. Indeed, although it was not designed with this type of family in mind, extended teaching can be a healthy antidote for the deprivations often experienced by children today in permeable families. In permeable families children often have little time with their parents, and many children have unhappy experiences in child care centers where there is frequently a rapid turnover of child care workers. School-age children need someone who knows them as totalities and who can reflect this wholeness back to them. Having the same teacher for a number of years is one of the best compensations for the often truncated interactions of postmodern, permeable family life.

The notion of role differentiation had another, but equally powerful, impact upon modern educational practice. It led to the tremendous emphasis, particularly at the secondary school level, laid on boundaries between academic disciplines. English, math, and science departments are often quite isolated from one another. Teachers at the secondary level often feel a stronger allegiance to their department and to their discipline than they do to the school or their students. We are increasingly coming to recognize, however, that the boundaries between disciplines are arbitrary at best. Literature, for example, is much better appreciated if the students understand the science and the social-political climate of the times in which the material was written. Dickens's stories are more meaningful when they are understood

within the context of late nineteenth-century English society, culture, and history.

In this regard, too, Steiner was very postmodern, particularly in his insistence upon what today is called the "integrated curriculum." The integrated curriculum acknowledges the artificial separation between the academic disciplines and argues that all are related in significant ways, inasmuch as they are derived from a particular worldview and within a particular language discourse. Today educators are trying to get teachers of math, science, and literature to focus their teaching around common themes, often with little success. Most teachers have been socialized within a discipline and have difficulty crossing discipline boundaries.

Yet the integrated curriculum is fundamental to Waldorf Education, wherein the arts and the sciences are taught together in a unified way. Steiner, despite being educated in the modern world, nonetheless saw knowledge growth and artistic development as a totality, and one that was not broken up by the artificial separation of the disciplines. Moreover, because Waldorf teachers and children create their own texts, they are not bound by the discipline boundaries of commercial materials. Whereas postmodern schools are struggling to develop integrated curricula and are battling the identification of teachers with their disciplines, Waldorf teachers have always taught math, science, literature, and the arts as part of an organized whole.

Another fundamental tenet of postmodernism, anticipated by Steiner, concerned the importance and the power of narrative in human affairs. Today we recognize that while reason and logic are significant, they can also be misleading and may be used for evil as well as for good. Moreover, it is now understood that we are a storytelling and a story-loving species. We learn best when material is presented in narrative form. Even scientific theories are now described as narratives. Steiner had great insight into the importance of the story in education and made lavish use of myth, fantasy, and autobiographical sketches as ways of both capturing the children's interest and firmly imbedding ideas into their understanding.

In short, with his introduction of extended teaching, the integrated curriculum, and the use of narrative, Steiner was far ahead of modern

pedagogy. In other words, what has been inherent in Waldorf Education from the outset is only now coming to be appreciated and introduced into postmodern public education.

Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to show how, while Rudolf Steiner was a modern theorist, he was nonetheless an innovative postmodern practitioner. What is the explanation? One possibility is that theory and practice may have different origins. For example, I am often impressed at scientific meetings when therapists with conflicting theoretical positions present their work with children. In practice they are much closer together than they are in theory. In other words, our practice—whether therapeutic or pedagogical—is guided much more by experience than it is by theory. Steiner worked with children and had a solid experiential basis for his understanding of their growth and development, of their needs and interests. I believe it was this classroom experience and his creative genius, and not his theory, that gave birth to his innovative pedagogy.

Please understand, I am in no way denying the importance of Steiner's theory and its moral, religious, and political implications. Yet the theory reflects the modern worldview and presupposes the prevalence of the nuclear family. In contrast, Steiner's pedagogy is extremely innovative and particularly well suited to the postmodern orientation and the permeable family. It remains for the rest of our society to discover this educational program that is so uniquely adapted to the needs and interests of children growing up in the postmodern world.✱

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Waldorf Education and Modernism

By James Pewtherer

If you discovered an education that was founded in Germany almost eighty years ago at the end of World War I, would you expect it to meet the needs of your child of age six or ten or sixteen in 1997? Probably not, given the differences between German and North American cultures, and given all the changes in the world since then. Yet Waldorf Education, established in Stuttgart in 1919 by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), seems to be meeting the needs of today's children. It has grown to number almost seven hundred schools worldwide, with over one hundred on this continent alone.

What is the key to its success? What did Rudolf Steiner know that allowed him to craft Waldorf Education so that it is especially able to meet the needs of the children of the twenty-first century? And where does this approach find its place in the reexamination of education going on today?

The key to the effectiveness of Waldorf Education is the result of Steiner's deep knowledge of the human being. He understood the human being in terms of the many potentials, needs, and longings that are a part of each of us even today. He designed the Waldorf school approach so that it would be relevant to the human condition in our postmodern world and far into the future. But Rudolf Steiner did not simply sit down and develop this education out of his intellectual ideas. Nor did he create it primarily out of a vast experience working with children. (He did do some tutoring as a student and worked with a hydrocephalic boy and his siblings—experiences that he says taught him much.) Steiner's success

can be attributed primarily to a thinking and a perceptiveness that were raised to an extraordinary level through conscious, systematic, meditative work.

Steiner's Sources

The physical, material world, because it is the only one we can perceive with our physical senses, is often believed to be the only "real" world. Because of a natural clairvoyant gift, Rudolf Steiner knew from an early age that the

physical world is not the only dimension of reality. There is also a spiritual world behind the physical world that ultimately is the source of all that exists in the physical world. Steiner developed a method of investigating this spiritual world and called it Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy. An important element of this approach is—paradoxically—schooling the outer senses through precise observation of the physical world. Steiner said that every person potentially

could develop this God-given ability to perceive the spiritual world. He held also that to do creative work in the world, especially work that concerns young human beings, one must have an understanding of the spiritual realities that stand behind the physical ones. Through his own spiritual scientific researches, Steiner came to understand what a young human being must do and learn if she/he is to realize a full, human potential. And he incorporated this knowledge into Waldorf Education.

Rudolf Steiner was in effect "written off" by the academic community when he started to



Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

speak publicly about the findings of his spiritual investigations. Steiner asked that his critics judge him by the results of his research rather than by their unexamined personal biases about his methods. Nevertheless, his espousal of ideas such as the existence of spiritual beings and of karma and reincarnation caused many to dismiss him out of hand. But the obvious efficacy of Steiner's approach after seventy-eight years now demands that we take a serious look at the methods and the premises, especially in light of the crisis in education and in society today.

Waldorf Education and Educational Reform

Can Waldorf Education play a part in the reform of education? The answer will depend upon the direction that this debate will take. In the many discussions about the need to improve North American schools, little thought has been given to the question of what exactly we are seeking to achieve in educating our children at the turn of the twenty-first century. Instead, much of the debate has centered around the issue of improving academic performance in order that our children will be able to compete in the "global marketplace." However important this goal may be, those who focus on it overlook several important facts:

- As a first step toward success in life, regardless of how exactly we define success, children need to develop their highest human capacities.
- The ability to think, which is one of these capacities, is particularly crucial to success in life.
- This very art of thinking, according to most teachers with long experience, has been seriously compromised in the second half of the twentieth century.

Without addressing the failure of our educational system to help children develop all their human capacities, our society will have little chance to solve its myriad problems. Nonetheless there seems to be an unspoken assumption that many of the aims, methods, and approaches that passed for good education in the 1950s and 1960s will suffice—albeit now with a technological overlay—for the children of today.

We make a serious mistake if we leave such a premise unexamined. The challenges

of education today are not merely a matter of academic performance. Rather they lie in the realm of those human capacities that include, among many, what we call morality, civility, brotherhood, and creativity. The need to focus on these areas of education, as well as the fostering of real thinking, creates an opportunity for the Waldorf school to significantly contribute to the development of better schools. But only if we can focus on root causes, not merely on symptoms.

In recent years many proposals have been put forth to remedy the crisis in education: clear standards of performance, outcomes-based evaluations, longer school days and longer school years, more computers in the classrooms, the enlistment of college students on work-study programs to teach reading to elementary school children, charter schools, universal access to the World Wide Web, and so on. These proposals do not go to the root of what ails our schools. Whatever merit they have, none represents the fundamental rethinking that is called for in our postmodern world.

The insights that informed Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf Education have a real part to play in the reform of education today. Steiner contended that today the human individual is the focus of everything we do. This is a positive development in that it creates the possibility for individual freedom of initiative and for individual creativity. On the other hand, each human being risks becoming lonely, isolated, and self-centered. The antidote offered by Waldorf Education is to help every individual learn to know both her/himself and the world. Thus each person can overcome egotism and develop

James Pewtherer was a founding teacher of the the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, and taught there for twenty-three years as a class teacher and high school teacher. He now lives in Amherst, Massachusetts. James has been a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Renewal since the magazine's founding, and is now Chairperson for the Eastern Region of AWSNA. In the latter capacity he consults with and advises schools on the many aspects of Waldorf Education. He is the only member of the Hague Circle—a distinguished international committee of Waldorf educators—who is also an ardent fan of the San Francisco Forty-Niners.

instead a sense of self. This strong and clear sense of self will lead to the recognition and fulfillment of each individual's responsibility to other persons and to the world. I do not suggest that Waldorf Education is the panacea for all the ills of education and society. It seems, though, uniquely able to bring about a healing of the individual and of society because it strives to help every child develop both individual freedom and social responsibility. It is an education that can give every child a deep sense of self-knowledge and a corresponding ability to think freely and creatively. At the same time, Waldorf Education provides a basis for a profound appreciation of the world, a recognition of each person's unique place in it and her/his responsibility to it. Isn't such a worldview a sorely needed major "outcome" of effective education, especially for what sometimes has been characterized as the "Me generation" of today?

Indeed, precisely because of the challenging times they face today, our children have the potential for personal growth and compassionate, effective action as never before. Faced with the scourges of drug addiction, poverty, homelessness, and acquisitiveness, young people can develop a feeling of inner obligation to overcome these illnesses of society. But their parents and teachers must give them the tools to transcend the materialism, the egotism, and other blights of the postmodern age. A common characteristic of young people educated in Waldorf schools is just this sense of obligation to heal society. This is in fact one of the aims of Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf Education.

The Waldorf Approach

How does Waldorf Education effect such an outcome? Why is it as effective and vital today as it was in the 1920s? Part of the answer can be seen in these glimpses of a few Waldorf classrooms. In Nairobi, Kenya, a fifth-grade class of children in the Rudolf Steiner School learn about the ancient civilization of India. In Tokyo, Japan, a fourth-grade class studies local geography and hears about the peoples who settled their land long ago. In São Paulo, Brazil, despite the squalor of the *favela* (a huge shantytown ghetto) in which this Waldorf program is located, nine-year-old children delight to learn about house-building and farming. In

the industrial Ruhr Valley in Germany, a college-bound high-school student learns to turn a piece of steel into a finely toleranced part for a new industrial tool. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the teachers in a public "school choice" program using Waldorf methods in the inner city, have watched each year as the first-graders learn with evident satisfaction to knit a single thread of yarn into a neckscarf that will be proudly worn for years to come.

Each element in the Waldorf curriculum aims to develop a strong sense of self as well as a knowledge of and connection to the outer world. The study of the entire panorama of history offers every young child an understanding of some of the developments in human culture, of where she/he comes from and of her/his place in time. The study of geography provides an ever-expanding knowledge of the child's place in space and of her/his home—the Earth. Learning about and doing house-building and farming create a sense of security based on knowing that food and shelter come from working on and with the earth. Knitting shows the child that something useful and beautiful can be made out of something as modest as a piece of yarn. The high-school student learns that the most complex technology can be studied, understood, and used in a productive way by people who are just like her/him.

Waldorf schools exist in a wide variety of cultural environments. The Waldorf curriculum can work for children anywhere because it recognizes and addresses how they experience the world and themselves at each of the various ages of childhood and youth. Rudolf Steiner called this the "general stream" of Waldorf Education. It aims to provide the child with the fully human basis to explore her/his tasks in life without unduly compromising the growing freedom that each healthy individual must develop today.

Waldorf Education works, because it starts where all good education begins, with an understanding of the human being. This was Rudolf Steiner's starting point. It is the basis for the continuing success of the Waldorf schools and for their bright future in meeting the needs of society today. It is a success that should inform the discussions about education for all the children across our continent and around the world. ❁

Drugs, Addiction, and Adolescents: The Curative Work of Felicitas Vogt

By William Ward

The World Health Organization, extrapolating from existing trends of drug use, predicts that by the year 2050 there will be more addicts worldwide than non-addicts. Alarms constantly raised in the media about the failure of the war on drugs and about the rising tide of substance abuse cause an anxiety that leads to paralysis and desensitization. The resulting wall of denial cracks when "the drug problem" comes home—when a child in our school, or our own child, is affected.

Can parents and teachers surrounding the young person bring a healthy alternative to drugs and help the young person develop the power to resist the temptations of drugs? Can we see beyond the provocative barriers erected by an alienated youth culture—the harsh music, the tattered clothes, the body piercings, the tattoos, the shaved heads? Can we keep in sight, faithfully and confidently, the core of the individual, that higher self, which desperately seeks recognition in an overwhelmingly materialistic culture? For those who live with the questions arising from our drug culture, the moral commitment and strength required to help those locked in the downward spiral

of addiction can only be expressed in the promise: "I will go through the eye of the needle with you."

No one describes "the eye of the needle"—the crisis of modern consciousness preparing to take a new step—more urgently than Felicitas Vogt. With the backing of the Medical and Pedagogical Sections of the School of Spiritual Science of the Anthroposophical Society based in Dornach, Switzerland, Ms. Vogt works with Waldorf communities around the world on the physical, soul, and spiritual issues surrounding drug use. Last fall Ms. Vogt was the featured speaker at a conference held at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York.

Entitled "Addiction in our Century: Youth in Search of Freedom," the two-day conference was one of four held last autumn in Waldorf school communities across the continent. It brought together teachers, doctors, therapists, and parents to gain insights into the phenomena of addiction and to summon the moral and practical resources to counter the soul-spiritual malaise expressed in the epidemic of drug use.

Ms. Vogt is not a lecturer in the conventional sense. Her ability to awaken us to the challenges of drug use extend beyond the research and strategies of the consulting expert. Her earnest will and direct connection with young people give fire to the question, "What



The West Coast Waldorf High School Music Festival. Individual and group artistic activities, such as the playing of music, help young people develop the inner resources for a healthy and balanced life.

ails thee, brother?" She inspires in others the dedicated moral energy needed to face, then counter, the addictions that attack the human spirit.

We must not be deluded that Waldorf Education immunizes our students against drug experimentation and use. No doubt many of our students do have inner resources that help them through the maze of temptations. But drugs are readily available everywhere, and the pressures to try them are immense. For readers of *Renewal*, these notes from our intensive work together during the Hawthorne Valley conference may encourage a deeper engagement with the dragon of drug use in our communities. The following is a distillation of the material Ms. Vogt presented at the conference.

Increasing drug use in our culture is symptomatic of an impoverishment of soul forces, which is the result of three attacks being made on us as human beings:

1. The attack on individuality, by means of standardized, mass-produced education and homogenization of information and judgment through the mass media.
2. The attack on our humanity, through the decline of moral values and moral education, the destruction of family life, and the dominance of egotism and materialism.
3. The attack on the immune system, through genetic manipulation, the AIDS epidemic, chronic fatigue syndrome, and toxins in food and the environment. Recent research, for instance, suggests that Ritalin, the widely-prescribed drug for

hyperactivity, suppresses the immune system as a side effect.

Eminent psychiatrist Viktor Frankl said that three destructive forces characterize twentieth century culture—depression, aggression, and addiction. How are young people to steer through the vortex formed by these forces? Much of youth culture rejects the past, sees no future, and longs to escape from the present. One young addict expressed this, saying: "I do not fear death; I fear only the life which is death."

In this context, the emotional warmth, the sense of being loved and of belonging, the sense of union that, for example, the designer drug "Ecstasy" offers, is almost irresistible. As one addict said, "[When I am on this drug] I am beloved by everything around me. I will not give it up."

Never before in history has the human ego been so lonely and isolated. In the past, the individual was embedded in the meaningful social-cultural-religious milieu of the folk, tribe, and clan. Religious ritual and festival life cultivated the harmonious interconnection between the human being and spiritual wisdom of the cosmos, the being and rhythms of nature, and oneness with the folk. The future was understood in terms of the meaning inherited from the past.

In the modern world, traditions of the past are broken. The self-directed individuality, the human "I," emerges to face the challenge of human freedom. As the embryonic ego awakes, it experiences the

pain of isolation, anxiety, loss of community, and powerlessness. If it fails to take the painful step of self-development—the step toward the discovery of the higher self—the ego is overwhelmed by chaotic forces that numb it or drag it down. At this crossing point—when one experiences "the eye of the needle," the deepest sense of isolation and uncertainty—the desire to dull or escape from the pain of self-consciousness is most intense. How do we cultivate the inner resources that can surmount these challenges?

For many young people, the moral skills developed in the heart of family life are a thing of the past. There is a generation of children emerging without God, without a father, without nature, without prospect of employment. The enticements of various means of escape—violence, media, cults, drugs—bombard the malnourished soul. Its hollow longing is excited or anesthetized by drugs that block the true birth of the independent ego.

Given this dark background, can we say Yes to the world with courage and conviction? Can we say: Thank God our time is now? Or is our own anxiety toward our time contagious? If we turn away from or fear the present, what moral and spiritual support are we for the young? They have chosen this present moment to incarnate. What we condemn and reject as evil—drugs—do have a meaning and a role for our time that we must understand.

We easily blame societal and cultural forces. It is easy to

project blame onto cultural-societal forces—the negative influences of rock music, video games, advertising, the entertainment industry—for their significant roles in programming consciousness. For many children, television is the teacher. The results are three-fold:

- a dead thinking characterized by clichés, dogmatism, and sectarianism;
- a deadened feeling-life characterized by a dulling of inner responsiveness and impoverished personal relationships;
- a laming of the will, manifested in apathy, boredom, lethargy, and conditioned behavior.

We must recognize our addictions as symptoms of dead thinking, feeling, and willing.

We understand the problem of addiction, not as something out there, but within us, when we examine our own habits (as I pour another cup of coffee). Another video anyone? Escape into one's work? Are Waldorf schools "addictive organizations," or is there hygienic balance in the work? Cigarettes? Food? Sex? Hedonism? Shop-till-you-drop consumerism? Cruising the Net—gateway to expanded consciousness or infinite distraction? Channel surfing? The "joy stick" of video games? Alcohol? Sweets? Tranquilizers? Addiction to criticizing? Attachment to habits of mind? Adrenaline addiction? The pattern emerges.

Broadly-defined, an addiction is: *an increasingly*

compulsive gesture toward outer stimulation to avoid conflict and enjoy oneself without inner activity. Why bestir the will toward the difficult steps of self-development, e.g., soul-spiritual exercises, when a lecture (lecture addiction?) temporarily pacifies the impulse toward self-transformation? Perhaps subliminal self-improvement tapes can take the place of meditation?

The picture emerging from Felicitas Vogt's courageous look at the current crisis of consciousness stirs the will. Clearly, nothing less than a re-enlivening of thinking, feeling, and willing will do! If parents, teachers, and therapists take steps toward their own self-transformation, they will demonstrate the forces our young people seek.

The human encounter must again become centrally important for genuine self-development to unfold. This will involve finding oneself through the other person, mutual recognition, compassionate interest, and genuine dialogue and questioning.

For children cut off from nature and real life, schools must change totally. They must become places where life forces are created, not drained. When learning is obligatory, standardized, and regimented, interest and thought die. Life must flow into the schools and the schools into life, allowing for movement, breathing, exploration, creative chaos, unanswered questions, and learning from mistakes with joy.

Felicitas Vogt also characterized how specific drugs

variously stimulated or anaesthetized soul capacities of thinking, feeling, and willing. For example, marijuana and hashish affect the senses and feeling-life, while drawing off life forces from the liver and laming the will. Drugs were also examined in their ritually prescribed use in the broad context of the evolution of consciousness.

Intense dialogue among the doctors, therapists, and teachers was stimulated by Ms Vogt's overview. Personal experiences, case histories, patterns, burning questions, failures, and successes were shared by those on the front lines in the war against drugs. Tantalizing issues were raised, including:

- the essential importance of enlivening the senses
- youth's longing for community and spiritual experience
- the imponderable effect of cultivating a spiritual connection to the child
- the role of physical and

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emotional warmth in early childhood

- the need to understand how the Waldorf curriculum can help growing children develop a vital sense-life as well as a strong sense of self

- the importance of the human connection between teachers and students

- the need to share medical and therapeutic expertise, school drug policies, and networks of support.

Ms. Vogt described firsthand the successful rehabilitation program for addicts pioneered by ARTA, a Dutch medical/therapeutic organization. Its rehabilitation program is based upon the same Anthroposophical understanding of the stages of human development that inspires Waldorf Education and the Camphill movement. Drugs arrest development at the stage where habitual use began. The addict who has bottomed out and is willing to undergo treatment can be supported through a year-and-a-half program of therapy that recapitulates uncompleted or bypassed stages of development.

The program begins by building up etheric forces through nutrition, farm work, massage, and proper rest in the natural setting. The daily rhythm of farm life in the media-free environment of such a therapeutic community becomes the basis for the possibility of transformation.

After some months, a second phase begins that includes extensive work in the arts, including eurythmy, drama, painting, and sculpture.

The former addict learns to transform substance, to imagine, to create, to change. Social encounters increase, skills of listening, speaking, receiving criticism without breaking down are fostered. A third stage involves intensive biographical work. This leads to the discovery of the crisis-moment of choice between dependency and conscious responsibility for one's destiny. This is the crossroad between addiction and self-development leading to freedom.

The conference held at Hawthorne Valley fulfilled its intention to serve as a first step toward building a forum in which to exchange experiences, questions, and ideas around the common concern of substance abuse. Out of the ferment of the exchange and the immediacy of the challenges we face, new connections and resolves have been born.

A decisive moment came when participant Dr. Anna Lups invited interested coworkers to take the work a step further. She asked, "Who among us would wish to explore the possibility of establishing a pioneer therapeutic center such as described by Felicitas Vogt here in Columbia County?" This seed idea has been with Dr. Lups for years. She would make land available if the therapeutic resolve and circle of support for this work could be formed. A profound and expectant silence filled our circle of doctors, teachers, and therapists as we took to heart the significance of this meeting together.

Living thinking, loving interest, active will must

awaken in us as we face the challenge of drug use in our children and our culture. We must summon the courage to step through the eye of the needle ourselves. ❀

We Heard Him for the Truth continued from page 4

It must have had a lot to do with Harry that I felt so comfortable in the late '80s giving up the life of the city to move to Hanover, New Hampshire, a little college town in a very beautiful but lonely corner of New England. Living there, I drew on myself in new ways. Though we had movies, TV, and a great college bookstore, what you ultimately did with yourself was very much your own affair, and I felt as close to being alone as I ever have. Harry may not have put anything in me that wasn't there to start with, but he certainly helped me to know there was something to reach for when I needed to.

If Harry taught me one thing, it was how to depend on myself. It's a lesson I keep on learning as the stages of life go past, but I learned it first in elementary school. ❀

Tom Soybel graduated with the class of 1975 from the Rudolf Steiner School of New York.

Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the other faiths. It is not taught as a set of beliefs to be accepted by students.

- Anthroposophy is not taught in any Waldorf school. Those teachers who are Anthroposophists certainly derive direction and strength in their work from their worldview and the practical disciplines it involves. But they do not teach it. A child in a Waldorf classroom is no more likely to become an Anthroposophist than a child in a public school class with a Mormon teacher is likely to become a Mormon.

- There is no religious condition for enrollment in a Waldorf school. There are many Waldorf families who are Jewish, Buddhist, Sufi, agnostic, atheistic, and so on. The vast majority feel totally at ease within the Waldorf community. Did they not feel at ease they would not be there. There are Waldorf schools in Israel, Japan, Egypt, and in other non-Christian environments.

- Many Waldorf schools celebrate holidays of non-Christian faiths and cultures, such as Chanukah, Kwanzaa, and the Hindu Feast of Lights.

- The religion courses that are used in many schools in Germany and other countries are not part of the Waldorf curriculum. Rudolf Steiner formulated them because parents at the first school requested a form of religious instruction with which they could feel comfortable. These courses are not meant to inculcate any particular belief system,

but to develop a sensitivity to the sacredness of life and of the world and a respect for the spiritual dimension of existence. They are not widely used in North America. I believe that only one Waldorf school in North America does offer them and on a purely elective basis.

- Ideally, according to leading Waldorf educators, every Waldorf teacher should also be an Anthroposophist. In fact, this is not yet the case. Consequently, there are different viewpoints within the Waldorf movement (often different viewpoints within a given school) about the relationship of Waldorf Education to Christianity and to Anthroposophy.

The term religion is derived from the Latin word *re-ligare*, "to connect something again." Religion has to do with reconnecting the human being with the transcendent or spiritual realm. Since Waldorf Education is indeed concerned with the connection between the human and the divine, as perhaps every approach to education should be, it can be called "religious."

The term "sectarian" implies adherence to a particular and narrow set of beliefs and the zealous and single-minded promulgation of those beliefs. Since Waldorf schools do not teach any particular belief system and do not seek to proselytize parents or children, they cannot be described as sectarian.

The issues raised by the frank and open discussion of Waldorf Education's relationship to religion and to Christianity may cause concern

to some parents, current and prospective. It may alienate some friends and supporters. But this open and free discussion can and should go on—in *Renewal* and in other places. Readers can expect to see more articles on this topic in coming issues of this journal. *

Waldorf Education in South Africa

Up until 1984, Waldorf Education in South Africa was primarily for white children. In that year, the Center for the Art of Living was founded to bridge the racial divide in the country. Its work helped make Waldorf Education available to black and colored (mixed heritage) children in townships and rural areas.

Today the five older Waldorf schools are all, to a greater or lesser degree, integrated. There are in addition some thirty Waldorf nursery/kindergartens and four elementary schools serving black and colored children in the townships and in the countryside. There are also several dynamic and comprehensive teacher training centers. The African National Congress, the country's ruling party, has taken note of Waldorf Education and invited Waldorf teachers to take part in the forums that are

please turn to page 23



From Coarse to Fine

By Michael Baker

Anyone who observes children for even a short time will notice how impressionable they are. Feelings, images, and life-lessons all sink in readily and deeply. However, it is easy to underestimate how even the most subtle experiences and impressions can shape and influence children long into their adult lives.

In Waldorf Education great attention is paid to each aspect of the child's experiences and environment. The form, content, and timing of the lessons—whether they concern fairy tales for first graders or principles of physics for eighth graders—are carefully planned to match the child's inner states of being. The color of each room, the plants, the minerals, and the artwork displayed in the room are selected to enrich the children in both obvious and subtle ways. One can say that Waldorf Education strives to meet the children fully, completely.

An aspect of this completeness in Waldorf school is the "Head-Heart-Hands" or "Thinking-Feeling-Willing" approach to educating the whole human being. The concept of educating the thinking and feeling seems fairly straightforward. We believe we understand these faculties

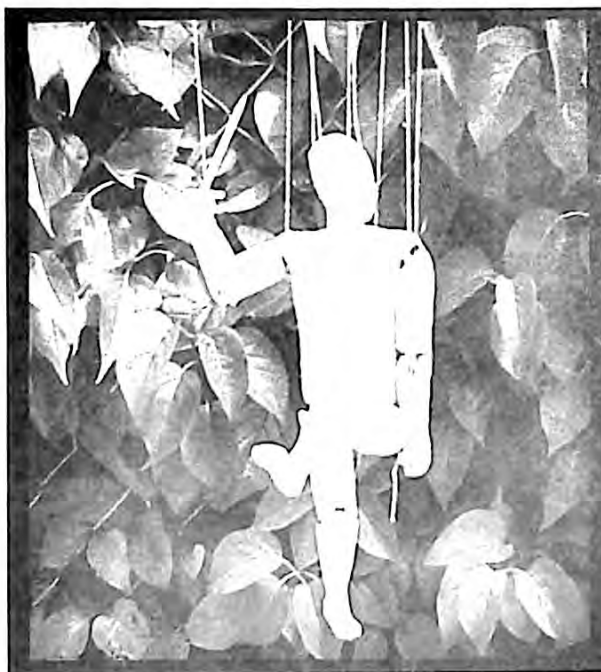
somewhat. But what is willing? How do we educate the will? And why?

As adults we daily meet challenges in our work, our relationships, and in our inner life that call for us to act in some way. Our thoughts and feelings may be clear and intense, but without the forces that enable us to act, we are ineffectual and helpless. Or we may have an abundance of these forces, but they are not balanced with our thought life and feeling life. In this case, they can become power without control or conscience. The will must be developed and schooled so that it is in harmony with our thinking and feeling.

Eurythmy, painting, gymnastics, handwork, and woodwork all address the education of the will. Exercise and experiences, ranging from "coarse to fine," are woven through the curriculum, not just to

strengthen the will forces but also to give these forces flexibility and focus.

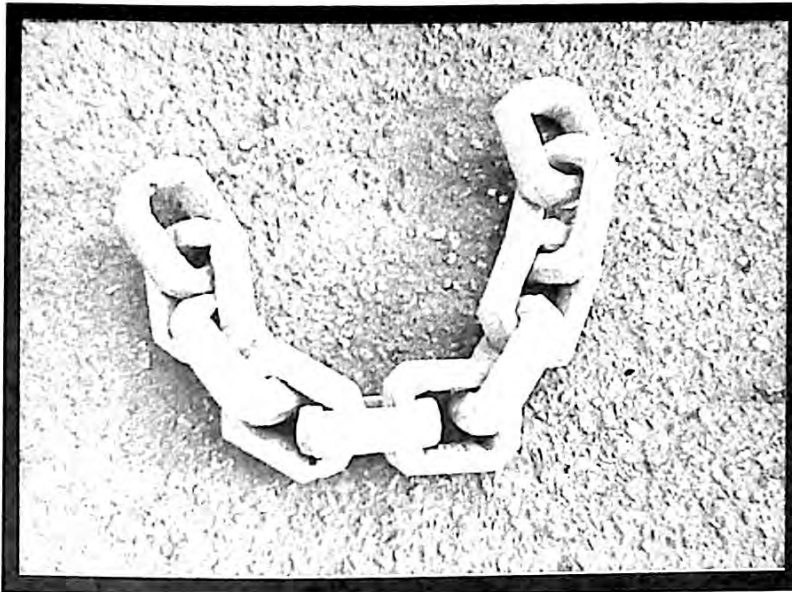
When children begin woodwork in the fifth grade, they have matured enough physically to grapple with the medium, and they relate to the outside world in ways that really call for this type of work



A wooden marionette carved by an eighth-grade student at the Denver Waldorf School

They desire challenge. They want to test their strength against the world. They need to wrestle with things outside themselves.

In my fifth-grade wood-working class, each student is given a two-foot piece of hickory log that is covered



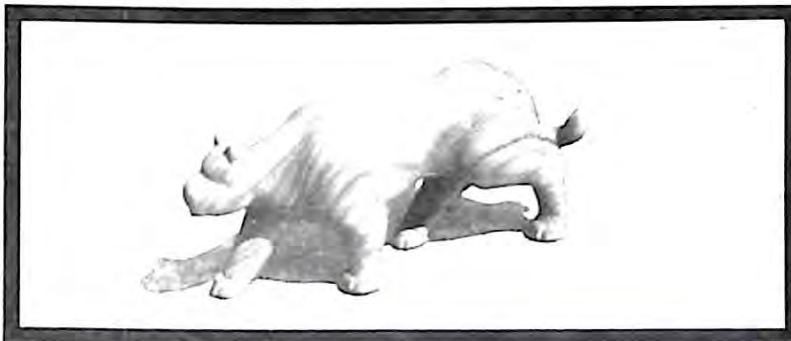
A chain whittled from a single block of wood by a seventh-grade student

with coarse, hard bark and that weighs as much as eight pounds. I tell the children that this log will become a finely formed and polished carver's mallet! With a saw they cut the "good" part out of the center of this length. They chisel off the bark and the excess wood around the handle, cutting through rock-hard knots and twisted wood grain. They rasp the head into a smooth cylinder and form the handle into a functional coke-bottle shape. They file away all lumps, dents, and tool marks until all that remains is a sculpted form with graceful curves. They polish this with two or three grades of sandpaper until it is as fine as glass. From coarse to fine, this

motif is present in each project they will complete over the coming years.

The will forces needed to persevere through even this first project are considerable. They often leave at the end of a lesson with labored breath, red faces, raw hands, and big smiles. Blisters are badges of honor!

But part of this first, and each following, project is the experience of bringing the will into check. Patience The chisel will split the handle into firewood with too deep a cut. The rasp will grind the handle down to a fragile stem. The gouge will cut right through the bottom of a spoon or bowl.



A leopard in walnut wood carved by an eighth-grade student

All the tools are sharp. Band-Aids happen. Patience.

When these projects are finished, the children hold something in their hands that is part of themselves. It is unique. It can be beautiful. Through the efforts of their wills they have transformed coarse matter into a fine form that reveals the head, heart, and hands of the worker. They feel pride.

Observing this progression of perseverance, patience, and pride repeated in children over the years in this class is deeply gratifying. That is the obvious, the Coarse. Knowing that someday as adults these human beings will meet the world in their thoughts and feelings and act out of power and grace is Fine. Very fine. ✱

Michael Baker learned carving, whittling, and woodworking in an in-service training program at the Denver Waldorf School fourteen years ago. Since then, he has been the woodworking teacher at the school. Until four years ago, he was the physical education teacher as well. Michael now also teaches carpentry in the recently established Denver Waldorf High School. Throughout Michael's career his students have been teaching him how to carve and to teach.

Width of the World, Depth of the Soul: Teaching Local History and Geography

By Arthur M. Pittis

Most people, upon first encountering Waldorf Education, are struck by the prominence of the metaphoric language used by Waldorf teachers in describing their pedagogical intents. Phrases like "soul breathing," "hardening forces," and "dreamy or nerve-sense children" can seem strange or anachronistic, even unscientific and fantastical, and many a newcomer ultimately asks: "What's going on here? Do these people know what they're talking about?"

With time, most newcomers learn that this imagistic language does have a substantive meaning and that the teachers who use such phrases thoughtfully are doing so with the intention of developing a new type of thinking. This type of thinking is as deeply rooted in and expressive of the feelings of the heart as our modern materialistic thinking is rooted in and expressive of the intellectual processes of the brain. When working with Waldorf Education, one must cross the river, so to speak, from the banks

of materialistic understanding to the opposite shore of spiritual understanding, where one seeks to view more clearly the essential nature of things.

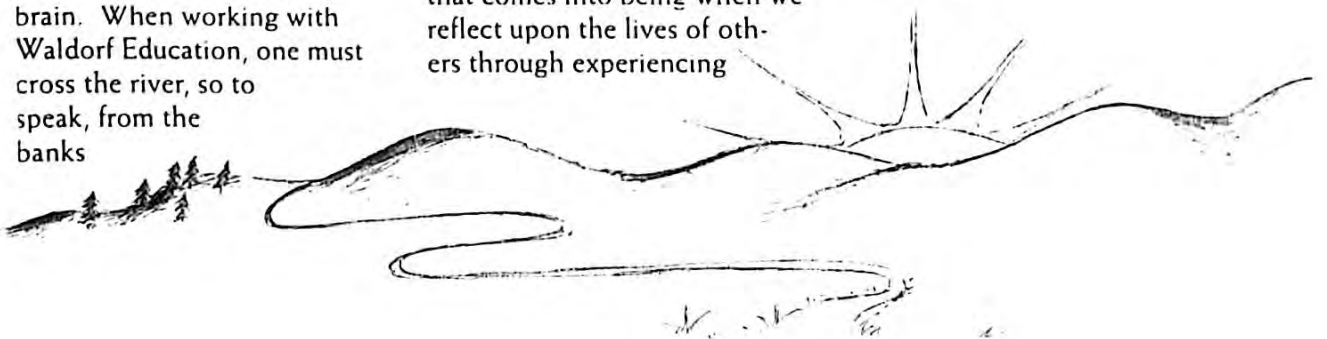
There is a verse by Rudolf Steiner that is often recited by students in Waldorf schools, called "The Ringing of the Bells." It concludes with the phrase "In the width of the world / In the depth of the soul." Several summers ago I was teaching a short course at Sunbridge College on the middle-school geography and history curricula. One day, as I was lecturing, that phrase rang in my thoughts. How perfectly it summarized the pedagogical reasons for teaching geography and history!

Upon further reflection, I saw that the phrase described the two great archetypal gestures of geography and history—the widening horizontal gesture that spreads outwardly from one's individual position to encompass the great, wide world; and the focusing, vertical gesture of introspection that comes into being when we reflect upon the lives of others through experiencing

their life stories. The study of geography and history can be a dynamic process, within which the horizontal and vertical gestures, the widening and deepening nature of each subject, is explored by the students

So with this new metaphoric tool in hand let us take a brief imaginative journey through one small part of the Waldorf geography and history curricula. Let us examine one way these subjects can be taught in fourth grade when they are first introduced, literally right beneath the children's feet, with a main lesson block on local geography and history.

Here in Baltimore we are particularly blessed that our school stands on top of a ridge offering a wonderful view of the city spread out below us. On an exceptionally clear night one can see the light-encrusted outline of our multiple harbors meandering southeastward to the bridge-strung darkness of the Chesapeake Bay



My job as a teacher is to figuratively—and literally where possible—take the class outdoors, climb to a high point, and, extending my arm in a sweeping gesture, declare:

This is where we live. Feel with your eyes the shape of the land. There it meets the water, and there it rises off into hills and eventually mountains. Come, let us go down and explore it. What is happening now, and what has happened here in the past?

Our city below us sits on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, astride a narrow strip of coastal plain where the bay makes its deepest penetration into the continental interior. Before the Europeans came, dense, towering forests covered the ridge where we now stand, and one could only pass through these dark woods by winding along narrow game trails, which only occasionally passed across naturally open land. Streams, running between the tangle of steep, green ridges of the Appalachian piedmont, laced this mighty forest, tumbling over great piles of ancient rocks, as they cut their ways through the land and toward the bay. Growing ever wider, these streams flowed into the narrow Jones Falls River which, after cascading over one final set of falls and rapids, exits from the piedmont and lazily spreads itself out into the swamplands that bound the harbor, and into the great tidewater bay.

It was not until about two hundred years ago, at the time of our nation's founding, that this swampy strip of land became a center of human activity. Before then, Indian life had focused on the bay. The various tribes harvested its abundant shell fisheries and lived in ever shifting agricultural and hunting communities along its numberless tidal inlets. Most

transportation was by water, the forest could only be entered safely by hunters and warriors, so the bay served as a great highway, transporting people and goods from one river system to the next.

Where our city now stands was too swampy and inhospitable for the Indians, as it also was for the first English colonists. It was almost 150 years before the English, who by then called themselves Americans, settled Baltimore. The



Industrial Revolution had begun and these settlers came to mine chrome and other minerals from the surrounding ridges, drain the bayside swamps for a modest farming and commercial district, dredge the inner harbor for oceangoing ships, and harness the waters of the Jones Falls River to power their mills and new factories.

But, before that, the first English colonists, like the Indians, followed the settlement and transportation patterns that the land dictated. They settled along the tidewater estuaries and cleared the adjacent forest with their steel tools for tobacco plantations. The shipping of tobacco allowed the English to prosper, and the richest plantations were the closest to the bay, having direct access to a pier and

harbor from which oceangoing ships could sail for England. Towns arose wherever a cluster of plantations encouraged the establishment of social and political life.

The least desirable land was that farthest from a harbor and, therefore, farthest from Europe, and which did not easily support the growing of tobacco. These inland areas, often a mile or so from the coast, were literally in the wilderness, and were settled by the poorest immigrants, who carved subsistence farms out of the dark, towering forest. Nevertheless, even a small clearing for tobacco, if properly managed, could fill a single barrel for export and thereby provide a family with its sole yearly source of cash needed to buy necessities imported from England.

This precious tobacco crop was transported to England in large barrels, and the standard means of transporting them to the docks was rolling them along the roads. A stout pole was pushed through the

Arthur M. Pittis, M.D.S., has been a Waldorf class teacher in Baltimore for the past sixteen years and a member of the Eastern Regional Committee of AWSNA for the past eight. With the graduation of his second class this June, he will be moving west to join the faculty of the Austin (Texas) Waldorf School. AWSNA has just published Arthur's original pedagogical research on drama with children, entitled *Pedagogical Theatre: Dramaturgy and Performance Practice for the Lower and Middle Grades*. The volume includes an essay on the titled subject, as well as a collection of plays. It is available from AWSNA Publications.

barrel, and two men, one on each side for steering, rolled the barrel over the barely passable roads that followed the ridge tops. Thus came into being the various Rolling Roads, so named to this day, that serve as major arteries between the suburban communities of Baltimore and the surrounding counties. It is interesting to note that even the modern Beltway parallels this ancient road system established three hundred years ago.

In such a way, the class teacher builds up a picture of the land in which the children live, a picture that spreads out horizontally, both into the physical breadth of the natural landscape as well as the breadth of human, historical time. Similarly, the children's feelings and thoughts have begun to take on a vertical and deepening quality as well, as they reflect upon the forces of nature and the people now long gone who once lived where they themselves now live their lives. Since in Waldorf Education we always work from the whole to the part, the general to the specific, let us now direct our imaginative focus on a specific biography in a specific place.

In 1685, fourteen-year-old Molly Walsh, a literate English dairymaid, was transported to the New World for the crime of spilling a pail of milk. She survived the long passage and was deposited on a plantation at the mouth of the Patapsco River [a narrow stream that forms the southern boundary of modern Baltimore County and one that every child in our fourth grade would have crossed hundreds of times in his or her life].

Conditions were appalling, less than twenty percent of those

arriving in Maryland lived through the first year. Molly, however, survived her seven years of indenture and, upon receiving her freedom, was given a small sum of money, some tools, and a cow. Land was free, so the twenty-one-year-old woman set out upriver into the wilderness [now a state park tucked along the river, amidst the suburban sprawl]. She cleared a patch of land on the river's bank for tobacco and built a cabin. The work was nearly impossible for one person, but neither hired help nor indentured servants were available, indenturing having since become illegal. Her only option, therefore, was to buy an African.



Her meager cash savings permitted only the purchase of someone unfit for plantation work, yet she was able to purchase two men. One was old but still sound, and the other, tall, young, and powerful, his body heavily scarred from the severe floggings he had recently endured for refusing to acknowledge to his captors that he was a slave. This man called himself Bannaky, and he was the son of a Senegalese tribal king. Molly promised these Africans their freedom if they would work for her and

not run away. They agreed, and she, true to her word, manumitted them.

But Bannaky, a king's son, refused to do field work. Being a skilled forest hunter from his homeland, he befriended the local Indians, assumed their manner of dress, and learned the ways of this new, great forest, providing fresh meat for the struggling homestead. In time Molly and Bannaky married, created for themselves the family name of Banneker and named their farmstead Bannaky Springs. Four daughters were born to this African-European couple, and for fifteen years they shared life together in the Maryland wilderness until Bannaky was killed by a tree felled by lightning. His body was found by Indian friends and returned to his family.

This story would have doubtless been lost to history if a grandson, named Benjamin, had not been born in 1731 to this family. Molly, who lived until 1736, taught the boy to read, and his parents, both free blacks, enrolled him in the local Quaker academy. There he proved himself an exceptional student, completing a full course of studies and graduating at the age of fifteen. Now a man, he settled down to the arduous work of tobacco farming. But in the evenings and on Sundays he continued his education privately, studying higher mathematics and the sciences with books borrowed from his Quaker neighbors.

At the age of twenty-nine Benjamin Banneker amazed his small rural community by building a clock—the first constructed completely from scratch in the colonies. He had apparently seen only one actual clock in operation, but with this observation and his extensive study of mechanics he was able to carve the intricate mechanisms

from wood and to set the instrument by the sun. The clock ran until Banneker's death in 1806.

Banneker's clockmaking and his scientific interests earned him the attention of local mill owners, the Ellicotts. Through this friendship he was introduced to the Quaker faith, the radical political fervor of the time, and astronomy. The astronomical observations he began at this time led to his publishing in 1792 the first American almanac and ephemeris, a work of singular accuracy.

In the late spring of 1776 Banneker traveled with Andrew Ellicott to Philadelphia, where he lobbied the delegates of the Second Continental Congress for the abolition of slavery in the nation that was being born. It is believed that his nephews accompanied him and enlisted in the Continental Army. Banneker retained his passion for radical political causes, especially the abolition of slavery, and later proposed in the second edition of his almanac that the new federal government abolish the cabinet position of Secretary of War and replace it with a Secretary of Peace.

But Banneker's most significant and lasting contribution to the new nation was as assistant to his friend Andrew Ellicott, who had been appointed surveyor for the District of Columbia by President Washington. Ellicott and the sixty-year-old Banneker had traversed the site with the French architect L'Enfant, who had drawn up preliminary sketches. But when L'Enfant suddenly and temperamentally departed for Europe, the young republic was left with nothing but rough drawings and international humiliation. Banneker's prodigious mathematical skills and photographic memory came to the nation's aid, and after two years of work he and Ellicott were able to

present President Washington with a complete set of detailed drawings for the layout of the new city.

Taken alone, any of these inspiring accomplishments should have been enough to place Benjamin Banneker in the pantheon of founding fathers. But his contributions have been relegated to footnote status and the stuff of regional children's literature. Only in the past ten years has Bannaky Springs been preserved from suburban sprawl and honored as a local historical site. It is inappropriate to belabor the children at this age with a polemic on the institutionalized racism that allowed this oversight, but it is more than fitting to point out how brilliant a life had to be to shine through the willful prejudice and ignorance of two centuries. The children themselves will recognize both the injustice and the greatness, and they will shape their own thoughts appropriately.

Through the use of these types of imaginative pictures, geography and history are made vivid, immediate, moral, and moving. The children experience these subjects in a way that expands their thinking beyond their own immediate individual existences and that allows them to develop moral, reflective imaginations within their souls of what it means to be a human being. This kind of instruction truly encompasses both the "... the width of the world ... the depth of the soul." ❁

Waldorf Education in South Africa continued from page 17

planning the future of education in South Africa.

Truus Geraets, one of the founders of the Center for the Art of Living, continues this work from her present home in Maine. At this time the Center has several programs through which Waldorf parents, teachers, and friends in North America can help Waldorf Education both in South Africa and in North America. The programs involve the following:

- The distribution and sale of dolls made by parents at the Inkanyezi Waldorf Center in Alexandra township
- The sending of eight African-Americans who want to become Waldorf kindergarten teachers to South Africa for training
- The bringing of two black Africans to North America for further Waldorf teacher training
- The "adoption," by North American Waldorf kindergartens and schools, of township and rural Waldorf kindergartens and schools in South Africa
- The sending of North American Waldorf teachers who are on sabbatical to South Africa to teach in teacher training centers
- The distribution of a specially designed multicultural experience in song that can be the basis of multicultural celebrations in Waldorf schools and in other communities.

For further information contact Truus Geraets at (207) 374-2405

Waldorf Education in North America: The Curriculum and the Folk Spirit

By Norman Davidson

On a cold morning in March 1996, I went out into my backyard at 4:30 under the clear, dark skies pinpricked with stars to see the comet Hyakutake. Binoculars revealed it glowing quietly in Libra. It is a strange experience for someone who knows the patterns of the stars to see such a ghostly patch of milky white adding itself to the familiar form of constellation. Here an unexpected visitor from beyond the planetary system. There was something universal about it, something beyond our personal sky. It was as if it hailed, perhaps, from the realm of the fabled Seraphim—from behind the stars themselves. These cometary phenomena announce themselves openly, even boldly, across our skies—yet physically they are of homeopathic proportion. They have but a small, hard core, and their glowing tails, while externally immense, are made up of tenuous, hardly-existent matter.

Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy, has some cometary qualities. Rather than arising out of a purely "natural" (or "matter of course") series of events, it arrives as an unexpected cultural visitor which points in the direction of the universal and the free, teaching something beyond the ordinary physical realm. Although it enters fully and dramatically onto the modern scene, it comes from afar and as a much-needed presence. Waldorf Education—an offspring of Spiritual Science—also is a kind of comet that has entered the "skies" of North American culture.

Rudolf Steiner gave to Ralph Courtney—one of the pioneers of Anthroposophy in North America—a verse that I believe was not just for

the early anthroposophical community in Spring Valley, New York, but was addressed to the American spirit in general. It speaks of the inward uniting of human beings, of support from the spiritual world in that striving, and makes a distinction between feelings and "heart." It goes like this:

May our feeling penetrate
Into the center of our heart,
And seek, in love, to unite itself
With the human beings seeking the same goal,
With the spirit beings, who, bearing grace,
Strengthening us from realms of light
And illuminating our love,
Are gazing down upon
Our earnest, heartfelt striving.

This thought of Steiner's seems an echo of what a Native American chief expressed in the last century about the emerging new America. In a speech or declaration made in Washington State to the Governor of Indian Affairs there, Chief Seattle said:

Your dead cease to love you and the homes of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb. They wander far off beyond the stars, are soon forgotten, and never return. Our dead never forget the beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its winding rivers, its great mountains and its sequestered vales, and they ever yearn in tenderest affection over the lonely-hearted living and often return to visit and comfort them. . . .

And when the last red man shall have perished from the earth and his memory among the white man shall have become a myth, these shores shall swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe. . . .

At night, when the streets of your cities and villages shall be silent, and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The white man will never be alone. Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not altogether powerless.

Rudolf Steiner is reported to have said that the intuitive ideas of the American Indian had been of great help to the white man in America, whereas the white man in Europe had been given no such help. (See bibliography: *American Indians and Our Way of Life* by Sylvester Morey.)

Steiner also spoke about the gift of the Anglo-American spirit for the development of a cosmogony—an understanding of the origins and development of evolution from a cosmic point of view. This is often misinterpreted today as being connected with some dubious aspects of star wisdom or astrology. But Steiner's lecture of October 10, 1919, in Dornach makes clear that he means something more in the direction of Goethean science and the principle of the metamorphosis of bodily forms from incarnation to incarnation. He is indicating the spiritual evolution of the human being, and continues.

Science must become cosmic, otherwise it is not science. It must have a cosmic character; it must be a cosmogony. Otherwise it does not give Man the inner impulses which carry him through life.

So too must our view of education and of a folk spirit emerge out of a cosmic, universal awareness. One can speak of the genius of an inclusive American "folk spirit" (rather than a "folk soul") that cuts across and unites races in a way that an ordinary multiculturalism cannot. I recall that Steiner also spoke of the eventual emergence of a North American spirit in which all races of the world would unite and no longer be distinguished from each other by color. This could render North America a true center for the universal human being. Waldorf Education can serve this ideal. The universal in the curriculum must be realized. Waldorf Education is sometimes seen as a European intrusion—like the comet—into North American culture. But, in fact, at a deeper level, Waldorf Education represents that which has been raised to the cosmic

and given to the whole planet—a universal human element.

The theme of a common North American spirit as distinct from a collection of separate cultures has been developed by the American historian Arthur Schlesinger in his book *The Disuniting of America*. He writes.

The historic idea of a unifying American identity is now in peril in many arenas—in our politics, our voluntary organizations, our churches, our language. And in no arena is the rejection of an overriding national identity more crucial than in our system of education. The debate about the curriculum is a debate about what it means to be an American.

The question of cosmogony or evolution in relation to American culture is an important one. Evolution is, in fact, well represented in the Waldorf curriculum but should be developed further. The genius of each culture and its part in extending the concept of what a human being is must be recognized. For example, the cultures of Africa, China, early Australia, early America, and others, need to be further researched for curricular purposes.

From one point of view, two different and opposite factors seem to have come together from among the many elements that contributed to the founding of North American society. One is the eighteenth-century Enlightenment in Europe with its intellectual, materialistic, and utilitarian approach to life. The other is a subtle, spiritual influence that came quietly through the Native North American. These two factors originally, it seems, touched hands and understood each other for a moment on an important social level. But on other levels they were far apart.

An example today of the persistent "enlightenment" element is provided by a 1981

Norman Davidson was born in Scotland, where, as a boy, he supported the cause of Hiawatha with a collie dog, bow and arrows, and numerous campfires in the woods fringing the Pentland Hills on the south side of Edinburgh. Later he fashioned his crow feather into a pen and became a journalist for ten years, then laid aside the pen for the spoken word when he taught in Waldorf schools for sixteen years. In 1986, the call of the land of Hiawatha came again, and he is now director of teacher training at Sunbridge College, Spring Valley, New York.

resolution of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. The Academy was founded in 1863 under the signature of Abraham Lincoln and is an official advisor to the Federal Government on any question of science or technology. The resolution states:

Religion and science are separate and mutually exclusive realms of human thought whose presentation in the same context leads to misunderstanding of both scientific theory and religious belief. (See bibliography: Preface to Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences.)

The Native American influence is quite different and much more important. When I was a boy I was familiar with the stories about Hiawatha. Later, when I came to America, I realized that they were not just "stories," but that Hiawatha was a chief of the Iroquois people who is thought to have lived in the sixteenth century. He was responsible for the republican constitution of the tribes within the Iroquois confederation, which extended over New York State and Canada. He united the five Indian "nations" within the group in a "silver chain" or "Grand Council" whose members succeeded each other in the female line of heredity.

The importance of the woman in society, it is interesting to note, has been a feature of North American society from earliest times to the present.

Some historians claim that Iroquois orators frequently spoke at colonial meetings and that they suggested that the colonies form a confederation like that of the Iroquois. It is thought that the republican spirit of the Iroquois helped to bring about the establishment of the thirteen original states and that it influenced Benjamin Franklin and, later, Thomas Jefferson in framing

the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

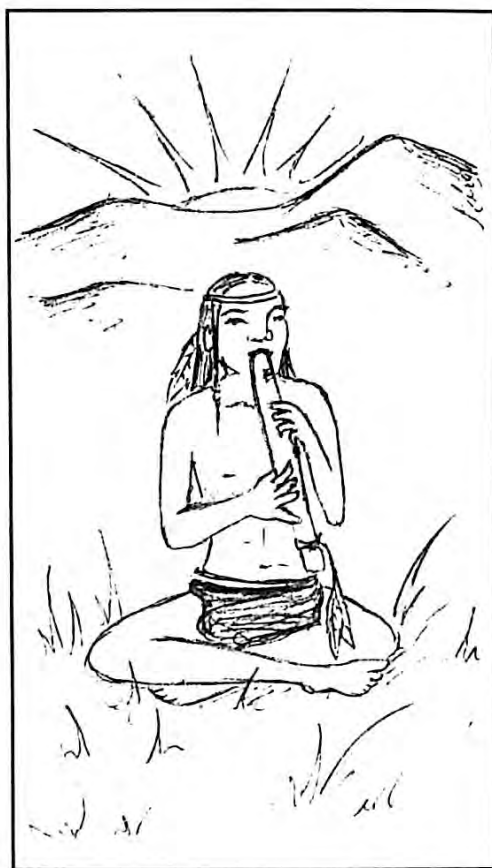
Hiawatha is also credited with a concept of universal brotherhood. I believe that this spirit of universal brotherhood in North America has as much to do with the future as with the past. One could say that the first college of teachers was formed here in North America among the Iroquois before Rudolf Steiner was born! Many aspects of a future way of working between people lie in the spirit of the invisible Indians in our midst. For example, since the Iroquois had no "little devils" on paper (i.e., no written language), the art of speech or oratory

was specially developed at meetings and discussions. One practice was that when a person rose to speak, he or she had to start by putting the original question and summarizing the previous speeches before giving his or her own contribution to the discussion. A valuable discipline! Even practiced only inwardly, this today is essential for creating form and unity in group work.

Another aspect of Native American culture was a concern for "what" one spoke out of, for the source of one's thoughts. When the psychologist Carl Jung went to New Mexico he talked with a Pueblo Indian chief who said that white people were all mad. When Jung asked why, the chief explained that the whites

said they thought with their heads. "What do you think with?" asked Jung. The chief replied, "We think here," indicating his heart.

The sense of brotherhood was strong in Native American culture. Another element was the striving for unanimity in meetings and debates. All this stands behind the natural tendency in North America to open to public discussion all matters, including the personal—a tendency that can astonish the European newcomer.



I experienced this open, discursive mood when teaching a course to the eleventh grade in the Detroit Waldorf School. After giving a presentation, I was plied with questions the next day. I soon realized that I had to change my lesson plan and allow things to grow in different directions. The mood was: "You've talked. Now we talk!"

All this has to do with how Waldorf Education will develop in North America. But a balance should be kept between feelings on the one hand and the "thinking heart" on the other. These two are not the same. When the heart thinks, it lives in clarity and perceptiveness, as well as in something deeply human. Clarity of thinking is our modern heritage today as much as our life of personal feeling is. Also, we shouldn't get lost in endless discussions. We must also let those who have had experience of something have their say and live with that for a while, even for weeks and months.

If we do revise the curriculum for our particular needs concerning culture and character, we should be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. For example, the Norse myths are there for a universal, not a racial, reason. Replacing them would require as much insight into human evolution as Steiner had when he put these particular myths into the curriculum in the first place. Yet replace them we can, and should, if it is considered necessary in relation to the environment. The curriculum of a Waldorf school in Japan, for example, must reflect the cultural environment in which it stands and not be an imported "little Stuttgart."

Concerning how lessons are taught, one notices a widespread tendency to start the day with a lengthy series of circle game activities. This obliterates one purpose of the main lesson—to carry over something inward in the students from the previous day. The carrying over of questions and feelings from the sleep life renders the first part of the main lesson time the "golden time" of the school day. The students can, after an introductory activity such as the saying of a verse, make the subject truly their own by calling up the content of the previous lesson and discussing it while they are still inwardly fresh. This carrying over, discussion, and development of the subject matter is a vital part of Steiner's method of teaching according to a

two-day rhythm. The structure of the main lesson can, in fact, be a picture of the incarnating process itself.

Another important curricular question concerns the computer. When and how something is taught is as important as what is taught. The latest technology must be taught in the Waldorf school. Certainly computer technology should be familiar to the high school student. There could be a main lesson block or course on the history of technology out of which such a study could arise. This could be followed by a course on the development and technical workings of the computer since the seventeenth century, and the invention and the principle of the binary system. If these things are taught with insight and imagination, then the student will be equipped inwardly to face the encounter with the keyboard and with the spider behind the invisible threads of the electronic World Wide Web.

Clarity of thinking is our modern heritage today as much as our life of personal feeling is.

The North American instinctively abhors the negative side of European culture—that is, — the intellectual side. But this intellectual element has sailed across the Atlantic along with the various other aspects of European culture. It is today clearly manifest in school programs that kill an alive education stone dead. This should be resisted openly and courageously by parents and teachers who have a feeling for their children's welfare and future. The child knows what is meant when you tell the story about how the Indians of long ago said that if you try to count the stars and don't finish counting, then you will die. Counting is intellectual, not pictorial. Culture dies when you try to count the stars. No one can count them, but to do so—metaphorically—is the basis of our modern culture.

Let's not count the stars in the Waldorf curriculum and fix them rigidly, but see them as

pictures of the human constellation, and render these pictures rightly within each culture. We must do research as to why something appears in the curriculum when it does, and work out of that—work out of what lies behind the curriculum. Whether we change externals in the subjects taught depends on individual cultures and schools working out of insight.

One star these nights is the comet. Let the children know its exact position and its physical constitution, but let them also see it with awe as an unexpected event in the sky coming from little-known universal regions. Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education also, in their way, come from little-known universal regions. May both of them shine on American culture in such a manner that the universal is understood and the American folk spirit understands itself. ✱

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Community Building Community: The Summerfield Waldorf School

By Steven J. Sheldon

In 1972 a group of twelve parents looking for an educational alternative for their children started Summerfield Waldorf School in Santa Rosa, California. Twenty-four years later, Summerfield has become one of the largest Waldorf schools in the United States with a current enrollment of 306 children in grades K-12. When I arrived on the scene eighteen years ago, the school consisted of grades K-6 and was renting classroom space in three different churches. Since then, the school has created 18,000 square feet of classroom space, all of it on a shoestring budget. The school community has contributed large amounts of volunteer labor and developed creative financing strategies to bring this about. Most of the buildings not only house the school functionally but also nurture and support the curriculum. How has this come about?

Building the physical reality of the school formed and strengthened the school community. In fact, the task demanded a strong, cohesive community. Every member had to reach into him- or herself to give what he or she could, knowing that without any one person it would not happen. Until recently, the school had no patron or donor to fund any building project.

All strategies depended on a little from a lot. As the school grew and matured, the strategies for financing and constructing buildings changed. With growth and increased financial abilities, new doors opened.

The Early Years

Summerfield began solving its housing needs by renting classroom space in the town of Sebastopol. Soon we found ourselves spread out, renting eight classrooms and office space in three different church Sunday schools. This decentralization made communication difficult. The image of the school as a totality was vague. Rent became a major expense, and the school was not deriving any long-term equity from this financial outlay.

A Home at Last

With six grades and two kindergartens (150 students), the time came to find a permanent facility for the school. The search covered more than one hundred properties that were not suitable for one reason or another—neighbors, government rules, size, location, and so on. Finally a thirty-two-acre pastoral site was located—a former thoroughbred horse ranch with a 3000-square-foot house, an older farmhouse, and several

barns. The site fit the school's need for kindergarten space, classrooms for grades one to twelve, and a biodynamic farm, and provided the bonus of a potential nature preserve. Neighbors opposed having a school located next to their houses. After many months of hotly contested government hearings, an approval was finally granted. The parents of the 150 students raised among themselves, relatives, and friends the \$100,000 needed for the down payment, and the property was purchased. Two years later the school formed a relationship with a foundation that agreed to donate \$50,000 (part of which was needed for a balloon payment) if the school would agree to put a portion of the thirty-two acres in a land trust permanently restricting future development of the site.

Steven J. Sheldon has been associated with Summerfield Waldorf School for the last eighteen years. Two of his children attended Summerfield from kindergarten through the twelfth grade (and are now in college). One child is now in the tenth grade and one is in kindergarten. Also, Steve has been the primary architect and builder for the school's facilities. Steve lives and has his architectural practice in Sebastopol, California.



A view of the lower school, Summerfield Waldorf School, Santa Rosa, California

The year 1981 brought the first building project that allowed part of the school to occupy the newly purchased property. The project was proceeding at a fairly slow pace when a crisis moved the school community into action. Because of a fire, the seventh and eighth grades were evicted from their rental space at the start of Christmas vacation. Plans were made, the community mobilized, and within four weeks during one of the rainiest winters in recent history the existing residence was transformed into three classrooms. The materials were paid for out of the previously mentioned foundation gift. There was a paid foreman, but otherwise this was a volunteer effort with teachers, parents, relatives, friends, and even monks from a local monastery coming day and night and working side by side to finish the job, so as little school as possible would be missed. Other parents helped in any way they could, bringing meals for the workers, doing

errands, calling and coordinating volunteers. Much of the labor was unskilled, making the supervision and organization a formidable task. On the one hand an acceptable level of quality had to be maintained, but on the other a certain flexibility was necessary in order to work with the available level of skill. The goodwill and generosity of those that volunteered continue to live within the finished building along with the craftsmanship, color of paint, architectural design, and other more palpable elements. The process of coming together to build something created strong ties between people, and the experience became a foundation for the building projects that were to follow. One felt that a building and a community were being built.

The community gathering to consecrate the building prior to the first day of school was a sacred experience. With three classes planted on the

school property, the school took root. Enrollment grew. The rest of the school was still renting space, though. The first project being now finished, planning for the next one began.

From the Ground Up

The next building had to be designed and built from scratch. This project was again conceived as a volunteer effort, and the architectural design had to be appropriate for this to work. In addition, approximately \$90,000 was needed for materials and a core professional labor force. Again every member of the school community needed to participate in some way to make it happen. The school developed a strategy whereby parents, relatives, and friends—through a combination of donations and loans (at zero percent or at very low rates of interest)—financed the project. The loans from parents were paid back out of the school's operating budget over a five-year period with funds that had been allocated for rent. This 3500-square-foot building was built during a three-month summer period. Work went on from dawn to dusk seven days a week. Volunteers came before and after their regular work, during vacations, and on days off. A joyous atmosphere prevailed throughout the project, and the completion was celebrated as the fall semester began. Completion of this building allowed grades one through eight to be on the school property, but the kindergartens were still renting space at a different location, and so planning for a third building began.

Time for the Professionals

The school had purchased the land and built the initial buildings using resources and talents primarily from within the community. This demonstrated a cohesiveness and financial stability that now opened the door to other financing possibilities. The tremendous time and energy that had been expended voluntarily on the first two projects did not seem to be there for the next. The school had grown much larger—to about 240 students. This increase in size, a decreased sense of urgency, and many cases of burnout created a somewhat less energetic community. Also, tuition had increased, changing the makeup of the parent body, and volunteers were harder to come by. At this point, as at every step along the way, it was important to hear the true heartbeat of the community and work with what actually existed.

This next building project and those that followed were built primarily by professional builders and were financed by donations from parents and loans from the Rudolf Steiner Foundation. The Steiner Foundation proposed several options for parent participation. One, a pledge community, allowed parents to make monthly donations over time based on a predetermined commitment. The Steiner Foundation loaned the money to the school, and the parents paid it back. There was also a guarantee community in which parents were signed on as guarantors either through directly depositing

money with the Rudolf Steiner Foundation or committing certain assets in an amount about twice that of the loan to the school. The next project—a 5000-square-foot lower-school classroom building—was financed this way. Volunteers helped with this project but to a much smaller degree than on the earlier projects, doing maybe twenty-five percent of the labor.

Yankee Ingenuity

The school's assembly/eurythmy space for the last ten years has been a converted metal barn. This project began one rainy winter when the gardening teacher, unable to have classes in the rain, had his class help build a wood floor in an 1100-square-foot metal barn. An indoor play area was thus created. With the floor as a start, the other improvements followed, many done by volunteers. Some years later, a German banker on a tour of the school campus commented that the

conversion of a metal barn to a eurythmy room was something that would be hard to imagine in Europe and was truly a product of American ingenuity.

Tale of the "Temps"

The combination of creative financing, active community participation, and adequate planning has allowed Summerfield not only to satisfy its basic housing needs but to create a beautiful campus that nurtures and supports the curriculum. Many new schools purchase prefabricated, temporary, modular buildings, believing them to be a quick and inexpensive solution to their building needs. We did this only once at Summerfield. It did not save the school money, compared to building from scratch; it saved only time. The prefabricated buildings were bought during a temporary case of poor-planning illness. They have many limitations, foremost of which is the quality of light. Perhaps the



The new high school building at Summerfield Waldorf School

single most important requirement in a classroom is the quality of light, both natural and artificial. All classrooms at Summerfield have been designed to function primarily by daylight. This is difficult to accomplish with portable buildings. These temporary buildings, after seven years, are looking very permanent. Since there are always new needs for space, it is very difficult to go back and redo an existing project.

Grace at Last

After paying its dues in the form of extremely hard work and dedication for many years, the school finally got a break in its most recent building project—a 5000-square-foot high-school building. One large donation, combined with a successful capital campaign and a loan from the Rudolf Steiner Foundation, allowed this building to be built in a conventional manner—conventional in that materials and labor were paid for. The scraping and scratching of those involved built a \$600,000 building for \$500,000. Members of the school community were hired when qualified. A thorough screening of subcontractors uncovered many who were sympathetic to the work of the school and gave us especially good prices. Parent volunteers were there at various stages to paint and do finish work, saving the school about ten percent of the labor cost.

A Lesson to be Learned

The story of the Summerfield school's building

program, when summarized in a few paragraphs, appears to be a trail of successes. But punctuating this journey have been some failures, failures that share some common elements. A positive attitude with regard to the ultimate success of a project is absolutely necessary, but not enough. Realistic and well-informed planning of a project are also critical. On several occasions, the architectural ideas and a "we can do it" attitude created aspirations that did not correspond to the school's actual capabilities. This led to a considerable waste of money and, even more significantly, to a feeling of disappointment and failure in the community. These major setbacks required a period of healing and regrouping before anything new could happen.

Each building project that is undertaken should be viewed as an organic entity. Each aspect of the project—financing, architecture, and construction—is important to the whole. The three must be developed in a balanced way. Work on one must be done with an awareness of the realities of the other two. Grandiose architectural plans, for example, made without taking into account financing and construction may prove to be a mirage.

To illustrate, the school spent substantial time and money developing an architectural design to convert a horse stable into a 10,000-square-foot building for classrooms for grades one through eight and for offices. The project had two problems. One was a preconception that recycling an existing building would save

money. Sometimes a conversion can be more costly than starting from scratch. The second problem concerned the scope of the project. The design was cost-effective only if the whole building were built at once. Such a project far exceeded the school's financial abilities. This scheme was later replaced with a design that was composed of several smaller buildings. The construction of the first building in this plan, though it stretched the resources of the community, was possible with the financial and volunteer-labor resources that existed. When completed, it created a momentum that carried the second phase forward.

A school must work very closely with its architect to ensure that the design solutions are in balance with its abilities to bring them into reality. Each school needs to evaluate its own micro-environment to find its own unique solution. This solution will change as the school grows and matures. People in a smaller school community have the opportunity of working together in ways that are very difficult in a large school. At Summerfield Waldorf School the early successes created a foundation and tradition that all later projects, in greater or lesser degree, shared. ❀

Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy in Israel: A Conversation with Jesaiah Ben Aharon

By Anne Riegel

In November 1996, Jesaiah Ben Aharon, a charismatic young Israeli author and spiritual adventurer, visited several centers of Waldorf Education and anthroposophical study in the United States. "Adventurer" seems an appropriate term, because Ben Aharon is no stranger to risk in his writing and in his work in the world. His two books—*The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century: An Imagination* and *The New Experience of the Supersensible*—deal with ultimate topics: the problem of evil in our time, humanity on the brink of an abyss, and the possibilities for human transformation and spiritual renewal. Ben Aharon is a founding member of an anthroposophical kibbutz, a founder of the first Waldorf school in Israel (a school that has both Jewish and Arab teachers), and a spokesman for Waldorf Education as it struggles to establish itself in the Jewish state.

During his visit to Harlemville, New York, Ben Aharon spoke about the Harduf kibbutz, its Waldorf school, and about the situation of Waldorf Education in Israel.

AR: How did Harduf get started?

JBA: The community began with a group of young people, all of whom were interested in

Anthroposophy. We had heard of Anthroposophy in our own country. Anthroposophy had come into Israel through Jewish emigrants from Middle Europe. These people had escaped Europe before or after World War II. They were



Jesaiah Ben Aharon

mainly isolated individuals here and there, most of whom spoke German. They began to translate some of Rudolf Steiner's works into Hebrew. *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* was translated in the 1960s. And then the Israeli-born, like me, began to hear about Anthroposophy and to become involved.

Many of the Israeli-born Anthroposophists, including myself, had grown up on kibbutzim. We knew the kibbutz experience had been something good in the '50s and '60s, and we wanted it for our own families. For children it was a

healthy, simple life: the community was like a big family. That was very positive for children. So when we became Anthroposophists we wanted to form our own community. It was the chance of a moment. The kibbutz movement is falling apart now. Today you couldn't even begin Harduf. New kibbutzim are not being built and the old ones are changing, becoming privatized. We were in fact the last kibbutz to be founded, about fifteen years ago.

We were able to get government recognition as a legitimate kibbutz initiative. The government supplied us with land, buildings, and means of production without impinging on our freedom, economically, socially, or spiritually. At first we were located in the mountains of Galilee. It was a very rocky place, with no water and just three oak trees. Our community is now located in the western part of Galilee, between Nazareth and Haifa. There are today about fifty families of coworkers (including many children) and initiatives in various fields of anthroposophical work.

We have tried to overcome the specialization that separates the various professions even within Anthroposophy: the farmer from the teacher,

the artist from the medical practitioner. For example, the teachers in the school who are also kibbutz members have, besides their responsibility for the school, also an equal responsibility for the community. It is quite a lot of work, but it is helpful for all aspects of the undertaking when people feel such a broad commitment. If the social, practical, and spiritual work are united, they very much fertilize one another, and both community and school are better served.

We are located near to an Arab village, and some Arabs, through contact with the community—not because of any evangelizing—have become Anthroposophists. But we do not have Arab members of the kibbutz. None have asked to join.

Of course in Harduf we wanted to have Waldorf Education for our children. The fact is, in the beginning of the kibbutz movement, education on the kibbutzim was influenced by Waldorf ideas, because some of the early leaders knew something about Waldorf Education from Vienna, Berlin, and other places. They adopted, for example, the idea of block education, of the main lesson. In my own grade school years we always had main lesson. This was taken from Waldorf Education, but the teachers of course didn't know it. Traces of Waldorf Education are still in the kindergartens and maybe in the first grades of many present-day kibbutzim. But if you were to come into one of the kibbutz kindergartens in the old days, you wouldn't have been able to differentiate it from a real Waldorf kindergarten. They were places of great beauty, even though the understanding of the teachers was of course different. Today a few

such kindergartens remain, but mostly the schools in the kibbutzim have become very academic, like the schools in the whole country, with computers everywhere. We have a prime minister who is American in all ways, and he has promised that every child will have a computer. He brought the idea from America.

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When we wanted to start our school, we already had the first two teachers, one of them had trained in England and one in Dornach (Switzerland). We went to the educational authority of the kibbutz movement. Then with their help we went to the State Ministry of Education and said, "This is Waldorf Education. We would like Harduf to be a state school." And they checked it out. They looked abroad a bit, read some books, and consulted the country's experts on education, and they said "Okay, let's try this." They agreed to support our school on a yearly basis as an experimental school.

They paid the salaries of the teachers, and then after four years they recognized it as a regular state

public school. So now the state is responsible for building the permanent buildings. Until now the eight grades have been in houses converted into classrooms. The government is currently building the first six permanent classrooms and should build the rest. We have to wait and see if they actually do this, as there are political changes in our country.

We continue every year to add a class. Now we have eight classes and are moving toward a high school. When we need the teachers for high school, the teachers will just come. That is how it has been in Harduf. We also have a Waldorf teacher training course, where I teach *The Study of Man* [by Rudolf Steiner]. This started from the request of various people, some of them parents. We have already finished the first seminar of three years. It is a part-time course, and we are now in our second cycle. We have gotten five or six teachers from this seminar.

We have two non-Jewish teachers. One is an Arab who teaches Arabic language. The other is a Bedouin, the son of a sheikh, who went to Germany to study Bothmer gymnastics, and is teaching that.

There are now two other Waldorf schools in Israel, still in early stages. The school in Jerusalem has four grades, and—this is the latest and hottest news—despite difficulties with the local municipality and with the new national administration, which is very conservative, and troubles with a particular conservative religious coalition, this school has been recognized as a state school.

We have been very concerned about this school. The Jerusalem school is not so secure as the one in Harduf. It has no protection whatsoever. It is not part of the kibbutz movement and is completely exposed and faces many difficulties. But since the state recognized the school in Harduf, they either had to take support away from us or else acknowledge the other one.

There is another small school with three grades in a village next to Harduf. In four or five years it will come up for state recognition, so we may have, if God wills, three Waldorf schools.

AR: What about the relationship of Waldorf Education to the culture in which it finds itself?

JBA This is a question that comes up strongly in America and has been asked of me especially by Anthroposophists and Waldorf parents with a Jewish background. In Baltimore, for example, I had a very interesting conversation with Jewish parents—not observant, not even traditional Jews—but Jews who were asking: How do we work with Jewish culture in the Waldorf school? In the United States, how does the great cultural diversity affect the curriculum and practices within the Waldorf school?

In Harduf we integrate Jewish culture and festivals into the life of the Waldorf school. At the moment we all share one culture, so there is no conflict. We don't have the privilege of having Muslim or Christian children, which would be very good. It will take some time before Arab parents would send their children to a

Waldorf school located on a Jewish kibbutz, because they generally keep to themselves. But it might happen, and then one day we will have Muslim Arabs, Christian Arabs, Jewish Israelis, and who knows who else, all mixed together in our school.

We can come as Anthroposophists to accept, admire, love, and understand the Christ without becoming part of the historical forms and the cultural tradition of Christianity.

Of course, we have to work with the Jewish festivals and traditions. It is a great tradition, full of great rhythm and great beauty. At Harduf we did not particularly intend to study Judaism. But, through Anthroposophy, we discovered the great richness of our tradition, and we celebrate what we want. We don't lose anything because we don't have the Christmas tree, for example, or other traditions from other cultures. We have our own beautiful traditions and symbols that are really equal.

Even some people who consider themselves Anthroposophists feel some confusion about how their particular religious background should fit into Anthroposophy. So then we have the question of the relationship between Anthroposophy and religion.

The question of what is Anthroposophy and what is religion—it's a basic question. We had to work it through. We had to become clear that Anthroposophy is not a religion, and that it is not Christianity—not in any sectarian sense. Only with this clear idea can we say strongly to the world: "The Waldorf school is not a Christian school. It is not a religious school." To call a Waldorf school a Christian school or a Jewish school would be a terrible thing, a misleading thing. It would confuse Anthroposophy with religion.

I think some Anthroposophists and Waldorf educators have not made this clear distinction between Anthroposophy and religion, between Anthroposophy and sectarian historical Christianity. We can come as Anthroposophists to accept, admire, love, and understand the Christ without becoming part of the historical forms and the cultural tradition of Christianity. If you make the distinction very clear between your own experience of the Christ and the historical traditions and forms—then, even though you come to love the Christ, you do not have to adhere to that old form. You don't have to become sectarian. Instead, you become a human being!

On this point, we will be attacked by every denomination,

Anne Riegel lives in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and works as a freelance copyeditor for the Anthroposophic Press and other publishers. She is an artist, a student of Anthroposophy, and the mother of two children. Both are former Waldorf students and are now in college.

both Jewish and Christian. Of course, if we find ourselves attacked, it will be a sign that we have become so big that we are worthy of their attention! This would be a compliment. So far, we are still too small, and nobody really notices.

AR: There is also the question of how teachers are able to work with the esoteric Christianity that is the foundation of Anthroposophy—is this any problem for the teachers in Harduf? Do they all accept this and learn to grow with it? [This question provokes loud laughter from Jesaiah.]

JBA: The teachers in Harduf are all Anthroposophists. They have all dealt with that question—before they became teachers. All of them. That might not be so in the other schools in Israel, but that's the case in Harduf. In other places we might have, as you have in this country—people who come as teachers to Waldorf Education and only then really discover Anthroposophy. In Harduf, generally speaking, we have people who came to Anthroposophy first. That's the way in Harduf: people come, whether young or old; they meet Anthroposophy, they meet the community as such, and then they choose the specialization they want to enter into. That is the whole idea of Harduf, to enable this. But specialization can occur in two ways: you can be a teacher coming to Anthroposophy or an Anthroposophist who goes into teaching.

AR: And then there are the parents, who bring their own religious biases and their questions too. Do you in Harduf ever have difficulties with your

school parents' religious issues?

JBA: No, everything in this regard has gone smoothly. They thank us for the beautiful Jewish festivals and for Waldorf Education too. They are amazed and say that Waldorf Education has made Judaism alive again for them.

AR: What do you understand as the great challenge of our times?

JBA: Humanity is on the brink of an abyss. Yet there are great possibilities for human transformation and spiritual renewal. We can bring ourselves back from the brink and continue our evolution through an experience available to everyone, no matter what his or her religious tradition may be. That experience is a modern-day meeting with the cosmic Christ. Today there is a dividing of the way. One path leads into the abyss and the other to development of true brotherhood. This brotherhood must become a new social instinct. The spiritual world approaches us first through each person we meet. If we avoid this challenge, we have no right to attempt to meet disembodied spiritual beings!

AR: Any final words for our readers?

JBA: Please tell them that we in Harduf are glad to share our story with them and would be happy to make connections with people in your country. Perhaps some from your schools would like to come visit us, and more of us could visit you. Perhaps we could establish a greater exchange. That would be good. *

Jesaiah Ben Aharon's books, published by Temple Lodge Press, London, are available through the Anthroposophic Press (518) 851 2054

The Adam Waldorf School in Jerusalem

According to a December 1996 article in *The Jerusalem Times*, the Adam Waldorf School in Jerusalem has been the object of opposition from an extremely conservative religious group. The group claimed that the school was a "missionary group" and a "cult," staged prayer vigils outside the school, harassed students, and petitioned officials to move or to close the school down.

But the mayor of Jerusalem, after reviewing the charges, wrote: "The Adam School functions in the spirit of Jewish values. To a great extent the school stresses Jewish studies more than regular (secular) schools." The dean of a teachers college in the city was quoted as saying that Waldorf Education is "very value-oriented and very ethical. They relate to children in a very humanitarian way. To call them missionaries is meaningless nonsense."

The article describes how in the third grade each child receives his or her own copy of the Torah and makes a decorated velvet bag to keep it in, how the Jewish Sabbath is marked with songs, the lighting of candles, and prayers, and how the verses and songs with which the children begin each day are full of Jewish content and images.

Despite the positive evaluations by officials and the press, the school did have to leave its building—in which it had invested a large amount of money—and move to another facility.

Rudolf Steiner College

By Ronald E. Koetzsch

It is 10:15 on a Monday morning in February, and, as the second class period of the day ends, students at Rudolf Steiner College emerge from classrooms to enjoy the mid-morning break. Most of the hundred or so students head to the dining hall to get a cup of tea or coffee and then gather in small groups outside to chat and relax. Some discuss points made in the class just ended. The weather is warm and sunny and the campus is abloom with spring. The scene—intimate, bucolic, and at once relaxed and purposeful—befits one of the major centers for anthroposophical studies and for Waldorf teacher training in North America and in the world.



Rudolf Steiner College teacher Cynthia Hoven (left) chatting with students

Rudolf Steiner College was founded in 1976 as the Sacramento Center for Anthroposophical Studies. Carl Stegmann, a Christian community priest from Germany who had a deep interest in the spiritual mission of America; his wife, Christine, a eurythmist; Betty Staley, a teacher at the Sacramento Waldorf school; Nancy Poer, a kindergarten teacher, painter, and dedicated Anthroposophist; and others were instrumental from the outset. In 1977 René Querido, an experienced Waldorf educator, became the full-time director, and in 1979 the name Rudolf Steiner College was adopted. The

college was founded as a center both for adult anthroposophical education and for the training of Waldorf teachers.

Rudolf Steiner College is located on a thirteen-acre site in Fair Oaks, California, a suburb of Sacramento. Adjacent to it is the campus of the Sacramento Waldorf School. About a half mile south of the college flows the beautiful, park-bounded American River—one of the cleanest major rivers in the nation. On the north is a river of another sort, the four-lane busy thoroughfare called Fair Oaks Boulevard. The original property, purchased in 1976, was a poorly maintained plot complete with rooting pigs and derelict buildings. The pigs are gone, and both the land and the buildings have been transformed. The campus today is beautiful and well kept, with a lush two-acre vegetable and herb garden and a seven-tiered water flowform at its center.

The college offers a variety of programs. Their aim, as expressed in the College's mission statement, is to

- awaken independent thinking and healthy judgment about the deepest issues of human life
- school powers of perception
- cultivate and enrich artistic faculties
- develop social sensitivity
- strengthen capacities for practical life.

Ronald E. Koetzsch, editor of Renewal, has spent most of this academic year in Fair Oaks, California, experiencing California's mild climate and wondering about the role of New England winters in his life. He has been teaching at Rudolf Steiner College, primarily in the Arts and Nature Program for Japanese Students, and has been trying to learn how to knit.

There are five full-year programs: the Foundation Year, the Teacher Training Program, Goethean Studies, The Arts Program, and the Nature and Arts Program for Japanese Students. These programs meet five days a week through the academic year and in a typical year have together over 120 students. There are also various part-time programs that enroll more than 200 additional students. The student body is heterogeneous. Students range in age from eighteen to close to sixty. Among them are former and current teachers, carpenters, business executives, social workers, and full-time parents. Students come from all over North America and from around the world—from Germany, Switzerland, France, Brazil, Japan, and other countries. Japanese are particularly numerous. While perhaps most of the College's students come intending to become Waldorf teachers, some come with other motivations and plans.

The Foundation Year, a prerequisite for the Teacher Training Year, is a one-year, full-time program. It includes an introduction to Anthroposophy through the study of Rudolf Steiner's works, plus blocks on diverse topics including astronomy, the evolution of consciousness, life cycles and biography. The program also has a strong artistic element. Students have classes in eurythmy, drawing and painting, speech, and other arts, and the class stages a year-end production of a Shakespeare play. The program aims both to facilitate a process of inner personal development and to educate students about Anthroposophy and related subjects. The director of the Foundation Year is Brian Gray.

The Foundation Year leads for most students to the Teacher Training Program. There, they do intensive course work in the general theory and practice of Waldorf Education and also continue their artistic activities such as eurythmy, speech, and music. They also do specific work in their intended field of specialization—early childhood, elementary, or high school teaching. Teacher trainees also spend two or more three-week periods observing and practice teaching in a Waldorf school. Graduates are certified to teach in Waldorf schools. Some students fulfill additional requirements and are awarded a Masters Degree in Waldorf Education. Astrid Schmitt-Stegmann, director of the Teacher Training and head of the class teacher course, says of the program:

Our students receive a very well-rounded training. They study child development and the Waldorf curriculum. But they learn not only the "when" and "what" of Waldorf Education but the "how" and the "why" as well. They learn that in presenting any subject matter they need to transform it with the help of "practical imagination" into descriptive, life-imbued pictures. This requires their own inner, artistic activity. They also study the reasons behind the Waldorf methods—for example, the two-day rhythm for subjects and activities in the lower grades and the three-day rhythm for history and science—and the consequences for the child's physical health and psychic and spiritual well-being. We emphasize too the importance of inner work for the teacher. This opens sources of strength and inspiration that will help him or her intuit what a particular group of children needs. Of course, this self-transformation is a lifelong process, but the training provides a valuable foundation for one's development as a person and as a teacher.

Janet Kellmann is director of the early childhood or kindergarten teacher training. Betty Staley heads the high school teacher training, which is the first such full-time training in the country.

Because of the shortage of Waldorf teachers and because of the excellent reputation of Rudolf Steiner College, graduates of the Teacher Training Program enter a strong seller's market. A bulletin board near the dining hall is covered with several-score blue cards, each advertising a teaching job. These cards announce positions not only in North America but in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and many other countries. It is not uncommon for a graduate to receive several job offers.

The College has several part-time programs related to teacher education. These include:

- a weekend Foundation Year Program, which covers the same ground as the full-time Foundation Year but does so in two years of weekend classes
- a weekend program in San Francisco, which offers a Foundation Year and Teacher Training course. Students meet weekends through the school year and then for a four-week arts intensive in the summer. The full program takes three years
- a remedial education program that deals with remedial education from the Waldorf view.



College faculty and visiting teachers singing during a Waldorf teachers conference held annually at the college

- a summer teacher training for persons already in the classroom, which involves four summers of course work plus independent study.
- a high school certificate program for experienced Waldorf teachers who want to add a high school specialization.
- a masters degree program for experienced teachers who want to go deeper into the field.
- a kindergarten associate program for in-service kindergarten teachers.

Of this last program Janet Kellman says:

The program is for people working in Waldorf early childhood education. The students come for three summer intensives. In each of the intervening academic years, they come for a one-week intensive in the fall and in the spring. On each visit, they do intensive work in Anthroposophy, the arts, child development, and practical methods. While the program helps people develop their teaching skills, it also provides an opportunity for personal development and self-transformation.

Explaining the plethora of part-time programs, college administrator Judy Blatchford says:

The current reality is that few people can afford, both in terms of time and money, to do a full-time program. So we are working to make it possible to do the same thing over a period of time.

While training Waldorf teachers is a major

focus of the College, many students come with no intention of becoming a teacher. Some do the Foundation Year (and a few the Teacher Training as well) for purposes of personal development alone. Afterward they return to their former careers or begin new ones, but do not enter Waldorf teaching. Many entering students take one of the three full-year programs that are not directly related to teacher preparation.

The Arts Program is a year-long morning course directed by Ted Mahle, a teacher at the College since 1982. It involves intensive work in watercolor veil painting and wet method painting, plus blocks in drawing, therapeutic painting, art history, and other related topics. Students also do elective courses, including music, eurythmy, speech, sculpture, and gardening. The Arts Program is open for part-time attendance and for participation in individual blocks.

Ted Mahle comments:

Rudolf Steiner's research in color, building on Goethe's color theory, offers the individual a way to penetrate the objective laws of color and of color perspective, to discover how form grows out of the dynamic interplay of colors. Within the polarity between these objective laws and personal creativity, the individual can find a dynamic balance that offers a healing path toward the future. Beginning and established artists as well as teachers—particularly Waldorf teachers on



Japanese students sketching on the college campus

sabbatical—have found the program an opportunity to develop technical skills, and also a source of renewal in their work and in their personal development.

The Goethean Studies Program is another full-year morning program, and this year has about thirty students. Founded five years ago, it is directed by Dennis Klocek—artist, gardener, student and observer of nature, and author of the books *Drawing From the Book of Nature*, *The Bio-Dynamic Book of Moons*, and *Weather and Cosmos*. Dennis Klocek describes the program:

The primary goal of the Goethean Studies Program is to enable students to bridge the study of nature and the study of the human being, to heal the split in modern consciousness. To this end, the program each day combines meditative exercises (in the first class period) with the study of the natural sciences and sacred mathematics and with phenomenological observation of nature (in the second class period). The goal is a rectified and objectified inner life and a working with the world that is in touch with the mood of the Divine. We can call this "the establishment of the soul in a moral landscape."

Artistic activities—painting, drawing, clay modeling, eurythmy, speech and movement—follow in

the third class period. These prevent self-absorption and allow the student to transform the pain of self-awareness into expressions of joy and gratitude and to develop aesthetic capacities. Thus the program helps students start on the path to self-knowledge and to meet other travelers on this path.

The Nature and Arts Program for Japanese Students is a full-time program. It is designed especially for persons from Japan and features nature observation and other aspects of Goethean science, meditative work, plus painting, eurythmy, clay modeling, drama, and other arts. The year culminates in a stage presentation, using narration, music, and movement, of a story from the *Kojiki*, the creation mythology of ancient Japan. The

program has brought many Japanese to the college, a number of whom have stayed to do other programs such as the Foundation Year and the Teacher Training.

Yuko Omura is the founder and director of the Japanese program. She says:

There is a great interest in Japan in Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education, and Rudolf Steiner College is in a unique position to foster and to meet this interest. The college can play an important role in the meeting of East and West, a meeting that will enrich both sides.

Besides these programs, the college offers a variety of summer courses, including a program for public school teachers who want to incorporate Waldorf methods into their teaching. The College also puts on public lectures and workshops throughout the year and runs a small press that publishes books on Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education. One recent publication is *The Other America* by Carl Stegmann, which treats a question that has from the outset been an important issue for Rudolf Steiner College: the spiritual destiny of America.

On February 22, 1997, the college celebrated

its twenty-first birthday. As it enters "adulthood," there are many plans for the future. New study programs are being considered. The master plan for the development of the campus includes a new classroom/dormitory building, a performing arts center, a child care facility, and a retirement community. The infrastructure for this project—approach roads, parking lot, utility connections, and so on—is already in place. Those many people who comprise the College—faculty, administrators, alumni, students, friends, and supporters—all feel that the College has an important mission well into the future.

The epilogue to *The Other America* perhaps indicates something about this mission. In it Carl Stegmann writes that a new way of thinking is needed in the universities and in society in general. The materialistic view of the world, the human being, nature, and society must give way to a way of thinking that is scientific but that fully acknowledges the invisible and the spiritual. This change is crucial since, as Rudolf Steiner held, only when humanity's way of thinking changes, will the world change. (Steiner predicted in 1918 that, if this change in thinking did not take place, Europe would be devastated within thirty years. And so it was, in the aftermath of the most destructive war the world has known.)

Stegmann then writes:

In the future, a fruitful understanding between Central Europe, America, and the Orient can result only through [a] changed thinking, motivated by a new spirituality in schools and universities. . . . Rudolf Steiner spoke of the building of bridges to the Orient, a process that is linked to the cooperation of Central European and American spirituality. [He said:]

"Only when . . . out of the European and American spirit together, people will produce something spiritual in the general worldview will the bridge across to the Orient be built." ❀

Book Reviews

HEAR THE VOICE OF THE GRIOT! *A Guide to African Geography, History,* *and Culture*

By Betty K. Staley

Rudolf Steiner College Press

(Fair Oaks, Calif.), 1996

400 pp., \$22.95

Reviewed by Anne Birchfield and Robert Kill



Hear the Voice of the Griot! is a resource guide that stands both apart from and above many other reference works. Not a collection of uninteresting facts, this exhaustively researched book is alive with fables

and myths told around smoking fires, with saints and holy figures far from the echoing cathedrals of Europe, and with ancestral voices that have passed down stories of the endless war between good and evil.

The real true strength of *Hear the Voice of the Griot!* is in its emphasis on the richness and diversity of African literary traditions. The carefully and sensitively selected examples of African poetry, for example, communicate Africans' deep spiritual connections to the land, their individual and familial values, and their metaphorical descriptions of the African terrain. The whispering echoes of the three-hundred-year nightmare of slavery, too, issue from entries such as "The African Chief" and "Western Civilization." Staley presents in many sections of the book the story of the twelve to thirteen million Africans enslaved by Europeans.

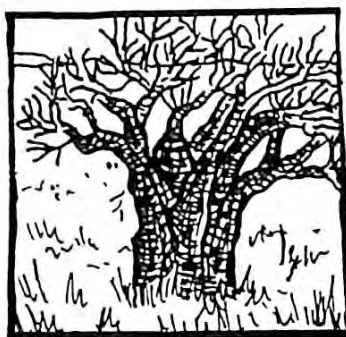
Africa's geography, history, and culture are described in rich detail. Staley wisely leaves an extensive examination of the African ecosystem to the scientific community, but she does offer compelling written sketches of the African landscape. Carefully chosen vignettes of the

natural world speak to the reader's imagination and frame this collection of beguiling tales.

In a world that has finally acknowledged the importance of interdependence and of an appreciation of diversity, schools and teachers have made an attempt to provide a meaningful presentation of the African experience. Often, this has been hindered by the absence of ready access to meaningful and age-appropriate content. Although this reference work clearly has broad appeal, it will be especially appreciated by teachers. Staley has made a special effort to support teachers by providing age guidelines, suggestions for utilizing and extending the material, and suggestions for meaningful curricular integration of the many developmentally appropriate activities. Recommended extensions address the needs of primary age children as well as young adults.

The collection is distinguished finally by the quality of references provided. Staley, a teacher of many years, knows that it is a sense of wonder that connects teaching and learning. Conscientious parents and teachers seek to nurture their charges but too often find themselves in need of sustenance. *Hear the Voice of the Griot!* inspires and sustains its readers. The reader who goes beyond the text, engaging as it is, and begins to consult Staley's recommended references will be richly rewarded on a personal and a professional level.

This is an outstanding teaching tool for teachers of all grades, from kindergarten through high school. Also, adult students of history, sociology, literature and folklore and those who love to hear and tell stories will want to read this book. *Hear the Voice of the Griot!* is a timely gift indeed! *



Anne Birchfield and Robert Kill both are teachers at the Orangevale Open Alternative School in San Juan Unified School District in Sacramento, California.

THE ESOTERIC BACKGROUND OF WALDORF EDUCATION

By René Querido

Rudolf Steiner College Press

(Fair Oaks, Calif.), 1997

105 pp., \$16.95

Reviewed by Astrid Schmitt-Stegmann

This book review (like the book itself) raises the issue of the relationship of Waldorf Education to religion in general and to Christianity in particular. The Editor's Column in this issue of *Renewal* tries to put this question into a broad context. Still, several points made in that column should be reiterated here.

- The Waldorf curriculum includes the history and beliefs of all major religious faiths. Waldorf teachers teach Christianity (part of the sixth-grade curriculum) as a historical and cultural phenomenon, just as they teach Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the other religions.

- Waldorf teachers do not teach Anthroposophy, the Christ-centered worldview that is the spiritual and philosophical foundation of Waldorf Education. Those Waldorf teachers who are Anthroposophists certainly find inspiration and direction for their teaching in their view of the world and in the inner, meditative work that issues from it. However, Anthroposophy is a worldview and a path of self-development for adults to be chosen in freedom and is not something to be taught to children.

- The religion lessons referred to in this review are not part of the standard Waldorf curriculum given by Rudolf Steiner to the first Waldorf school. He gave them only at the request of parents in the school who wanted a form of religious education with which they could be comfortable. At that time in Germany (as it is now), religious instruction in the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran faiths was part of all school programs. Today in North America only one Waldorf school offers the religious lessons, and it does so only to those children whose parents request it.

R E K

René Querido, former Waldorf teacher, greatly appreciated lecturer, and author of a number of books—including *Creativity in Education: The Waldorf Approach* and *The Mystery of the Holy Grail: A Modern Path of Initiation*—has given us the gift of another book. It will be of special interest to Waldorf teachers and to those who want to discover the deeper dimensions of the Waldorf curriculum. The basis for this book is five lectures that Mr. Querido gave at the Waldorf Teachers' Conference in Spring Valley, New York, in 1993, but the author has enlarged the content and, as he states, "totally recast" the material.

The book is clearly structured, leading the reader from an introduction to Rudolf Steiner's Christology (which, as is pointed out, is very different from traditional denominational views of the Christ), to an introduction to the Christ Impulse that works "through time, through transformation, and through evolution." If, as teachers, we look for this impulse in the works of poets and writers, and in the biographies of individuals, we find it expressed in themes of love, renewal, transformation, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

When the author then focuses on the curriculum, we can experience his deep and heartfelt concern to bring to light those levels of the pedagogy that are not so readily discovered but are really the source of the healing impulse that streams through Waldorf Education. The emphasis of the book is not on practical suggestions for the classroom, although Mr. Querido gives some examples of how several main lesson blocks can be approached from a deeper level. This book strives to awaken the Waldorf teacher to his or her responsibility to create an inner mood through conscientious work on self-development. The author speaks of the meditative path based on Anthroposophy, which Rudolf Steiner describes as "a middle path," a path that "relates equally to the mysteries of the earth and to those of the spiritual world." It is a Christ-centered path.

Part of the aim of the contemplative work of the teacher is gradually to break through to an inner perception of the different archetypal gestures that express themselves through the curriculum. René Querido sees underlying the curriculum the three gestures that Rudolf Steiner indicated for the syllabus of the religion lessons

that he gave for Waldorf schools. Grades one through four should be taught out of an understanding of the Father and Mother forces, grades five through eight out of an understanding of the Son forces, and the high school grades out of an understanding of the Holy Spirit.

René Querido helps us to understand what this means and how this can be applied in practice by the teacher. The Father forces can be apprehended by the child in an experience of God-filled Nature.

For the middle grades the suggestions are biographies of famous men and women that demonstrate the attributes of the Son: transformation, renewal, selfless love, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

By bringing before us the mood of Pentecost with a few strokes, Mr. Querido shows how the Holy Spirit "quickens the individual" and on the other hand leads to new community-forming. The drama work in the high school, drawing the students into individual struggle and culminating in the often miraculous experience of community at the time of the performance, shows the working of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Querido's presentation of the high-school years are especially vibrant with suggestions and insights for the teacher of that age group.

The Esoteric Background of Waldorf Education also provides the teacher with a rich selection of verses, poems, and meditations. This material underscores the great importance of the teacher's practice and path of inner development, an importance which is evident in every line of the book. The significance of this inner path is especially emphasized in the closing chapters. René Querido gives help and indications. However, the actual practice needs to be done by teachers themselves. This book can inspire and quicken the teacher to do that work.



Astrid Schmitt-Stegmann is director of the teacher training program at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, and also director of the class teacher training within that program.

High School Commencement Address

Delivered in June 1996 at the Washington Waldorf School

By Megan Shelley

Today, my class of 1996 is here in the culmination of our life experience at the Washington Waldorf School. Today, we are here to proclaim that "We are the New Day." We are a part of a community that values more than knowing the right answers on a test. We acknowledge that although there are significant differences between individuals, there are aspects of growing up that need to be respected, especially the need to let children be children; and we appreciate the importance of ritual and tradition in a young person's life. We are a part of a community that believes that education includes teaching the whole child—the heart, the will, as well as the mind, of the individual. This education, the education of the whole, has evolved in society since Rudolf Steiner's first school in 1919, and is something that can lead to a great social change.

But it is not just we, here in this room, who are a part of this great social change. It is Waldorf students all over the world. What a surprise it was to me to realize, after years of being a student in the Washington Waldorf School, that there were other schools very similar to mine throughout the world.

My first realization that Waldorf was bigger than our school was when I went on an exchange to Marburg, Germany, during the eleventh grade. One day, a few weeks after my arrival in Marburg, we were reciting the morning verse. I realized that we were saying the same verse to begin the school day there that I said at the beginning of the day with my class here. From this first conscious experience, I began to see that we shared many of the same things within the classroom and even outside of the classroom. For example, the eleventh-grade main lesson blocks covered the same subjects as our eleventh-grade blocks here. Teachers presented the subjects differently and at different times of the year, but the common curriculum was followed there as in Waldorf schools throughout the world.

Outside of the classroom, the similarities of the family life were apparent as well. Conversations about the inappropriateness of television were EXACTLY the same conversations I heard in my own home. Families ate natural foods and wore all-natural fibers, not to mention the Birkenstocks!

From the realization of the similarities of the verses through the sameness of the curriculum to the richness of

the homelife, I have come to the belief that the biggest thing we, as Waldorf students, have in common is a secure, safe, nurturing, homelike community.

During the senior conference at Green Meadow Waldorf School in Spring Valley, New York, in February, I was astonished at how easily we fell into conversations that no one else but a Waldorf student would understand. We talked, for example, about how arnica is the medication to heal sports injuries, and calendula is for cuts.

At the conference we began to speak about the future and what it was going to be like to leave our Waldorf schools. It was obvious that we had the same concerns about what life would be like as we stepped outside our school doors for the last time. Most of us have been with many of the same people for over twelve years. There was a universal feeling that we had come to depend on each other and that

Megan Shelley is now a freshman at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. This year she qualified for the NCAA Division 3 New England Swimming Championships in six events. She is considering majoring in psychology.



The Washington Waldorf School class of 1996 Megan Shelley is fourth from right

we knew one another almost as well as we knew ourselves. The answer is yet to come. The importance of the question is that it is being asked by hundreds of Waldorf graduates all over the world. We are not alone with these thoughts or these fears, just as we are not alone in the richness of the experience of Waldorf Education.

It used to be that when people asked me where I went to school, I would reply, a little quietly at first, "I go to the Washington Waldorf School." And their reaction was usually "Oh," or "Huh?" Then I would say, a little more boldly, "The Washington Waldorf School. It's in Bethesda." They'd usually reply, "Oh, I've never heard of that school." Then I'd say, "Well, it's a small school. My high school is only about sixty people."

But today, when asked where I go to school, I say with pride and appreciation, "I go to

the Washington Waldorf School, one of hundreds of Waldorf Schools found throughout the world. In fact, this year, there are hundreds of people graduating in this class of 1996." Indeed, those of us here today as well as those who have gone on before us, and those who will come after us, will be a part of the "New Day." This is "a day when education," as Henry Barnes says, "will leave our young student with her childhood powers intact, her sense of wonder untouched, her respect for and pursuit of excellence a permanent resource, and her moral fiber firm and free."

Have no doubt, we are the New Day. ❀

1997 International Youth Conference

This summer, the Anthroposophical Society in America and the School of Spiritual Science based at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, are sponsoring an international conference for persons between eighteen and thirty years of age.

The conference, called "Conversation, Consciousness, and Community. Where the Inner and Outer Worlds Touch," will be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, from August 1-7, 1997.

The conference will include:

- Lectures by noted anthroposophical teachers, including Gertrude Hughes, Dennis Kloeck, Nancy Poer, and Heinz Zimmermann
- Sessions of inner meditative work directed to developing clear consciousness and thinking
- Workshops on anthroposophical study, social and educational issues, and communication and technology
- Individual and group artistic activities
- Community service projects
- Social activities

The conference aims to help young people deal with such questions as

What are my talents? What can I create for the future?
How can I serve others?

How can I live more consciously?

For information:

Until May 31, call Tim Aldinger at 414-642-7153

After May 31, call Youth Section of A.S.A. toll free at 1-888-757-2742.