

The Online Waldorf Library's Story

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In the previous issue of the Research Bulletin, we misattributed the founding of the Online Waldorf Library. It was, of course, David Alsop who led this initiative. In order to set the story straight, and give full credit where credit is due, we present below a short history of the founding and nurturing of the Online Waldorf Library.

After twelve years of leadership in the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) Dave Alsop made the decision in 2001 to pass the baton to new leaders. His tenure at AWSNA added the broad view of Waldorf education in North America and throughout the world to Dave's experience as a class teacher and administrative chair at Sacramento Waldorf School in California.

Over the years in AWSNA, Dave forged a strong friendship with Robert Dulaney and the Norton Foundation in Louisville, KY. Both Dave and Robert shared an interest in providing high caliber resources to assist Waldorf teachers around the world. Upon leaving AWSNA, Dave was invited by Robert Dulaney to lead a project that had long been Robert's heartfelt dream: to take advantage of the burgeoning internet and create an online resource center—accessible to all and free of charge—for published books, research confirming Waldorf education, and monographs focused on authentic information about the anthroposophical view of child development and the Waldorf curriculum. Dave's technical savvy, combined with his varied years of experience at AWSNA and the Sacramento Waldorf School, was invaluable in the development of this resource. It was decided to call this website the "Online Waldorf Library," or OWL for short.

From its very beginnings, the OWL was affiliated closely with the Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE). Roberto Trostli served as an integral partner in the early work of establishing the OWL. David Mitchell, Director of Publications at AWSNA, offered books and materials from AWSNA's publications arm to the OWL and helped in soliciting publications from SteinerBooks and the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN). They were supported by Robert Dulaney, through his Waldorf Curriculum Fund, to fill up the "shelves" of this virtual library. This close

collaboration made it an easy error, published in the 2024 issue of RIWE's *Research Bulletin*, to name David Mitchell the founder of the OWL. In fact, the actual founders are David Alsop with help from Robert Dulaney.

Dave spent a year building the initial website and establishing important connections to professional website resources. The support of Dave Soltis and Brett Rademaker at *An Internet Store* was invaluable and continues to this day. In 2002, Marianne Alsop, for years the designer for *Renewal* (the AWSNA journal for Waldorf Education), and spouse to Dave, accepted responsibility for the development of the OWL and took over the position of curator of this remarkable resource. She has now held this post for 22 years. For the last five years and since his retirement, Dave, has served as a volunteer to support the OWL.

Over time, this resource has been built to a mighty collection of remarkably varied and rich selection of books, journals, articles, monographs, charts, research articles, and links, all helpful resources for Waldorf teachers, schools, students, and communities.

David Mitchell and Douglas Gerwin became co-directors of RIWE in 2004 and worked more closely with the OWL in this role. Upon David Mitchell's passing, in 2012, RIWE's focus expanded the readership of the OWL by launching a Spanish translations project. Douglas Gerwin offered this idea to Marianne and to the WCF. Some training done in conjunction with RIWE in México gave RIWE access to Waldorf teachers there. Susan Howard of WECAN suggested to Douglas a translation training center in Spain that further broadened this new idea. In the past decade, foreign-language resources on the OWL, with help also from individual translators in México and other parts of the Spanish speaking world, have grown with numerous articles and books translated into Spanish specifically for the OWL, making a new vista of helpful resources available.

Several books and articles translated into Mandarin have also been started as an additional resource center designed to make international materials possible. In 2014, a long-held wish for AWSNA's publications arm to join the OWL under the auspices of RIWE was realized

and it then became Waldorf Publications. This further enriched the partnership between RIWE and OWL.

During the past year, the OWL website underwent a remarkable transformation, made necessary by the overcrowding of the virtual shelves of the Library, to accommodate the continuing flow of valuable resources coming to the OWL. Without losing more than a few days of operational function, Marianne and Dave Alsop transformed the OWL into a larger, more capacious organ of research and resources, lavishly illuminated by Waldorf students' artwork. It is now as beautiful a collection as it is a priceless resource, which is still growing.

The celebration of the original brainchild and foresight of Robert Dulaney, realized through the dedication and commitment to Waldorf education by both Dave Alsop and Marianne Alsop, and made possible by Robert Dulaney's ongoing support, came from this opportunity to clarify and acknowledge the glory of what has been accomplished through and for the OWL.