From the Editor

Stephen Keith Sagarin

Clarity, depth, and perspective—attributes of sight—characterize the contents of this issue of the *Research Bulletin*. Reading the contents of this issue we can experience the clarity, depth of field, and perspectives these authors bring to their material. What will we do, however, with this clarity? How will we employ our new sense and knowledge? The articles collected here aim to affect the way we teach, the way we think about our students, and the way we live in the communities of our schools. Clear sight can lead to confident action.

The clear sight of some of our authors, however, reveals potentially controversial points of view. Judy Lubin, an economic theorist and Waldorf school parent, describes ways in which the U.S. economy is changing—has already changed—in ways that make Waldorf school students particularly well suited to success. This is not to say that Waldorf school students will become the wealthiest members of a ruling class, but that their creativity and flexibility of thinking will enable them to gain and retain employment more easily than someone educated better to fill a pigeonhole. Further, Lubin makes clear that Steiner's view of the appropriate role of a truly independent individual in a tripartite social organism is as an entrepreneur. Given cooperative, noncompetitive interpretations of Steiner's social work, it is refreshing to read Lubin's possibly controversial interpretation and realize that it is grounded firmly in Steiner's work.

Daniel Hindes, similarly, bases his look at teaching left-handed children on Steiner's words. Any Waldorf school teacher who believes that there is a pat "Waldorf" approach to left-handedness will find him- or herself confronting descriptions that are nuanced and that leave room for experimentation and engagement with actual students, not images of pathology.

When interpretations of Steiner's work are based clearly on his words and yet still strike us as controversial, assuming we are willing to think through what we believe we already know, we are bracingly drawn from our conventional thinking into a new engagement with Steiner's work. This can only renew us and our work.

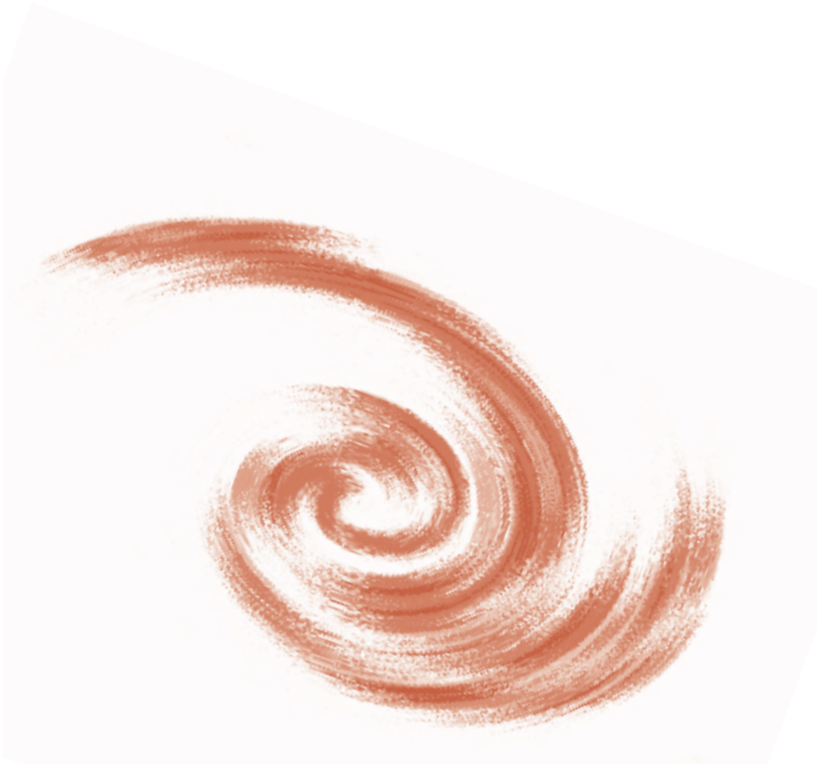
In his report on schools' festival lives, Eugene Schwartz tempts controversy by challenging us to reverse a trend toward inclusive festivals that are subsequently drained of real meaning. Can we recover the meaning of festivals without the risk of offending one or another group of parents or teachers? A question that he does not ask but that we pose here, possibly for future consideration, regards the appropriate role of festivals in Waldorf schools to begin with. Steiner wrote profoundly about education. He wrote profoundly about festivals and their meanings. But it is not clear that festivals necessarily or even appropriately need to find expression in Waldorf schools.

We invite readers to respond in writing to these or other views; conversation among readers can help to clarify our understanding of Steiner's work and its implementation in Waldorf schools.

Not all of the articles and reports here necessarily contain seeds of controversy. Arthur Auer beautifully limns the teaching of reading, deepening and grounding what many of us believe we know already, even if we do not know the why and how. Dorit Winter uses the polarity between objective love and subjective love to examine the sometimes difficult relationship between parents and teachers regarding their students and children. Susan Johnson offers a holistic look at the constitutional challenges that occupy many of our students. Jane Swain relates cognitive development to body and, especially, hand development in young children. Finally, Rudolf Steiner, in a previously unpublished excerpt from a book forthcoming in English, challenges us to understand and take seriously the idea of spiritual research.

The contents of this issue achieve more fully than usual our aim to speak in each issue to teachers of high school, elementary school, and early childhood. The articles examine and present much that we know is good and right about what happens in Waldorf schools. They also describe

ways in which we can do better by our students. We may have wondered how good we are—how close are we to fulfilling Steiner's view of good education? The answer, in part, is that we are very good at some things and virtually ignorant of others. Where controversy appears, we must acknowledge that we may have seen things incorrectly, and, consequently, we may need to change old habits and practices. And some perspectives—I'm thinking particularly of Dorit Winter's here—ask us to think in ways we may not have previously in order to find solutions to the challenges that face us.



The Research Institute is seeking financial support to undertake new research. If you wish to make a contribution or are aware of an individual or a Foundation that may be interested in supporting the research of Waldorf education, please contact David Mitchell or Douglas Gerwin at:

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