

WALDORF CLEARING HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Winter 1971-72

GENERAL NEWS

From The Sacramento Waldorf School -

The faculty is working hard on plans for the move to the new school land. It now seems to be a real possibility that the move will be effected before September, 1971. A land planner from San Francisco has been hired, and together with the faculty he is drawing up the master plan for the school land. This will be a multi-stage plan to be executed over a number of years, as finances will allow. Parents have helped with photography and a topographical survey.

We have already begun to use the land. Sherry Slatoroff, our biodynamic gardener, has also doubled as caretaker, fencebuilder, and public relations person (all unintended). The garden is a pentagon with beds and pathways radiating out. This covers about one acre and can be extended further. Orchard, grazing land, melon and pumpkin patch, tool shed, cow and horse sheds will fill out the garden area of roughly ten acres. Already with the help of friends and the upper grades two afternoons a week, Sherry has brought the garden to fruition. Parsley, radishes, turnips, and beans have been harvested. Calendulas will bloom in the winter. Lettuce, carrots, cabbage, leeks, peas, and other delicious greens are growing beautifully. The students have helped dig garden beds and build compost heaps.

We are glad to say that a very comfortable mobile home arrived the day I sent this letter. Sherry will not have to face the winter rains in a tent.

This pioneering venture is taking place on a bluff along the river. One of the classes has enjoyed picking the wild grapes and has made over 50 jars of "Waldorf New Land Jelly."

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One of the 7th graders was runner-up in an art contest sponsored by a life insurance company for its calendar. He was one of 12 winners in the country.

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Nursery school children made beautiful miniature gardens out of bark, seeds, and pods which they had gathered when visiting our second Kindergarten. At the second Kindergarten - or Four Gables as the house was originally named about 75 years ago - the accent is on caring for goats, horses, and cats.

From Kimberton Farms School -

On a recent Parents' Evening, teachers arranged classes representative of the school day. Third grade parents mastered third grade math. Kindergarten parents painted as their children would on a typical day. Twelfth grade parents joined in saying the morning verse and then were presented with a view of the curriculum that looked back over the twelve years of school.

The parents had a chance to meet the special teachers as well as the main lesson teachers. All felt the experience was very workable. Coffee and refreshments were served in our lunch room. The Mothers' Club sponsored the whole evening.

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Our Ecology group continues to be very active. We are composting our lunch scraps. We are collecting glass and paper for recycling. We are trying to use paper wisely within our school day. The club is broadening the field of its interests to include new technological advances.

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The faculty is now conducting workshops two afternoons a week. One group is reading The Study of Man and the other is reading The Roots of Education. A third workshop is planned and will meet at night for the benefit of those who cannot attend in the afternoon.

From The Toronto Waldorf School -

Owing to the generosity of one of our friends, a 25 minute color and sound film of the school is in production. It will be used for publicity and fund-raising purposes, but its general character will make it suitable for illustrating Waldorf education. We are trying to illustrate imitation, imagination

and thinking judgment in the child. The film will be entirely under our control, direction and subsequent distribution, so that if, as we hope, we can make a good job of it, possibly it will be of interest to other Waldorf schools too.

From Norway -

The Rudolf Steiner School in Bergen, Norway has used natural plant colors to paint the classrooms of its new school buildings. Natural plant colors for painting pictures, from the Pflanzen Farben Werkstatt in Dornach, can be ordered from

Mrs. Lotte Emde
2478 N. 47th Street
Milwaukee, Wisc. 53210

From Rudolf Steiner School -

The members of the English Department are meeting once a week to read and discuss Owen Barfield's Romanticism Comes of Age. (Now in paperback: London, Rudolf Steiner Press)

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A Michaelmas Festival, celebrated by the whole school together, included eurythmy and singing, a talk on Jacques Lusseyrand and the quality of light in and around him, and a scene by the High School seniors of Socrates' death (Maxwell Anderson's Barefoot in Athens.) The festival began and ended with a newly composed Michaelmas song by Danilla Rettig, which every class had learned (and the faculty had carefully practiced during and after faculty meetings!) It was simple enough for the small children and interesting enough for the big ones: an activity of feeling and will that was able to weld us closely and harmoniously together. (A few copies of the song are available.)

(Ruth Pusch)

From High Mowing -

We are running the greenhouse all winter and raising lettuce for the school.

From Mexico -

On October 18, 1971, a government school in Mexico City opened its doors to eight classes of first-graders whose teachers, mostly experienced public school teachers, had during the past three years attended a series of courses, lectures, and workshops on Waldorf pedagogy. These courses were given by a variety of visiting teachers, artists, and lecturers at the invitation of Juan Berlin.

Thus the curriculum for some 240 Mexican first-graders now contains such subjects as eurythmy, recorder-playing, watercolor painting, crafts, and English; their school day starts with a main lesson; and their teachers are putting into practice much of what they have studied with growing enthusiasm and earnestness.

(Susl Berlin)

From The Waldorf School -

In past seasons the Waldorf School has held a toy assembly shortly before Christmas to which the children brought loved toys to be distributed to needy children. This season the students and faculty are busy making gifts for many of the less fortunate. These gifts will replace the more prosaic toys and presents of the past.

Mrs. Morrow, lower school art teacher, delegated by the faculty to locate the needy, found that there is a large number of homes and agencies eager to receive the gifts and suggests that this will be true in almost any area of the country.

A list of the presents various grades are preparing:

- 2nd: cardboard tree ornaments
- 3rd: paintings which will be matted
- 4th: ditty bags
- 5th: rooted plants and wooden planters
- 6th: wooden tops, knitted caps, and knitted teddy bears
- 7th: framed mountain watercolor paintings
- 8th: frog bean bags, wooden trains, knitted bears, bed socks

9th: rooted bulbs, wooden toys

10th: ditty bags; also will sing old-time songs at a home for the elderly

Faculty: bed socks; mimeographed songbook containing the songs to be sung by the 10th grade, and covered with drawings from the lower grades - to be given to the home for the elderly.

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For the last thirteen minutes of each school day, the entire high school student body reports to assigned areas throughout most of the school to do most of the work the custodians used to do: sweep, dust, wash, scrub. During the work time, several adults circulate from room to room teaching how to do the jobs properly. At the end of the day, custodians inspect the rooms and rate the jobs good, fair, or poor.

The students have greeted this program with an astonishing amount of good will. The leader of each work group of three members was at first an upperclassman, but gradually those who have the best ability to lead others in work are moving into the positions of leadership.

Since everyone works at once (about ninety students), much extra equipment was purchased: mops, brooms, sponges, etc. However, the equipment is kept simple, for the attempt is to do the cleaning without machines. The noise of the machine is directly counter to the mood for work which we want to establish.

The short period of time is an asset, I believe. It demands efficiency and swiftness, and leads to an air of excitement and adventure.

(Al Tomlinson)

The first Thursday evening of every month during the school year, the Waldorf School holds a meeting for the parents. About fifteen minutes are devoted to the business of the representatives of each class; they help coordinate the parents' participation in the life of the school. The main body of the meeting, usually an hour and a half in length, is open to everyone. Often a member of the faculty speaks on some aspect of the curriculum; occasionally a book is introduced for study. One year, for example, the school made available to the parents copies of The Spiritual Ground of Education. Faculty chairman, John Gardner, and a number of teachers led

discussions of the book at each meeting.

This year we are holding a series of four discussions on the theme "Practical Imagination in Family Living." Teachers have noticed in the past that students often return from Christmas vacation in a somewhat fractured state, and our original thought was to offer suggestions as to how parents might better prepare for and celebrate the festivals of the year. We were not long in seeing, however, that the subject could profitably be enlarged. Clearly it is not just the special dangers of Christmas as it is now widely celebrated - such as the over-emphasis on presents - that account for the poor condition of many students in January. During a holiday, the school no longer provides the structure of the day for them, and many parents are hard-pressed to create on their own a necessary routine, rhythm, and harmony. Then, too, if they are not to abdicate to the movies and television, they have to be unusually inventive in providing better forms of recreation. Our goal in this series of meetings, we decided, would be to help imagine practical ways which might enable parents to give family life some of the quality of a daily festival.

At the November meeting, the faculty chairman and a panel of faculty parents led an exchange of experiences and ideas on the question of how best to begin and end the day with children, and on the related (omni-present) question of homework. Some of the other topics chosen by the parents for future meetings were: mealtimes, manners, chores and work around the house, discipline, toys, parties and games, the social life of boys and girls in the junior high and high school years, coping with the media, and celebrating the festivals.

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The Advisory Council of the Waldorf School, Garden City, is similar to a Board of Trustees. The Council meets monthly during the school year. One of its primary functions concerns Annual Giving, a school tradition.

About three years ago, in an effort to have 100% parent participation and to meet the ever-increasing dollar goal of Annual Giving, the Council initiated a series of meetings with the school's fathers. At that time, the emphasis was on the need for Annual Giving and the need to increase the size of the parents' gifts.

Each year we have continued to hold these meetings and at the present time all fathers who have been in the school for more than a year have been invited to attend. The meetings are an opportunity for the fathers to ask questions about the history and philosophy of the school, as well as to become acquainted with its financial needs. It is also an opportunity for the Advisory Council to be active in the school in a constructive way and to meet the new families.

(Julie Wachsmann)

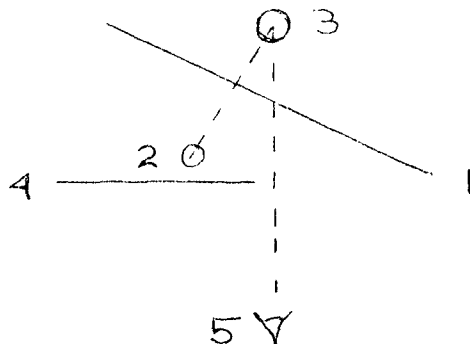
TEACHING IDEAS

To introduce the Industrial Revolution, a hand-turned flour mill (such as the Corona Grain Mill of the Quaker City Mill) was brought into the class with a bag of whole grains (wheat). Each child sorted a handful or two of grain, eliminating any foreign matter; each then had a turn grinding the flour. We tried to establish a rather quiet, meditative mood, so that the children could be brought to an appreciation of the importance of the miller in earlier periods of history. The experience gave them a chance to see the purpose of using the steam engine and other power sources to replace manual labor. A discussion of the pros and cons of the Industrial Revolution and its side effects followed. The collected flour was given to the Kindergarten for the baking of bread - a treat for all.

(Ed Hill, Kimberton)

Tricks with mirrors:

a) A glass pane (1), a candle (2), and a glass of water can be arranged so that the candle seems to burn inside the glass of water. (Of course it is the mirror image which performs the feat). If the real candle is hidden by a shield of cardboard, a door, or something similar (4) from the viewer (5), the sense of magic is further enhanced. Have some lights on in the room so that the light of the original candle behind the shield is not noticed.



b) Two mirrors are taped together on one edge. Place them in front of you on a table, adjusting their angle to each other to 90° . Sit with your nose right in front of the right angle. You will now see your face the way others see it, not as you are used to seeing it in a mirror. If you blink your left eye, you will see this act performed by the eye on the opposite side of the mirror. It is not hard, even for 6th grade students, to understand and explain how the image of the left side of your face is reflected onto the second mirror and only then comes back to you, now on the right side.

(Gerhard Bedding)

RECOMMENDED TEACHING MATERIALS

Some of the books being used as class readers - a partial list selected by the teachers of each class.

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| 2nd Grade | <u>Once a Mouse</u>
<u>Rabbit and the Turnip</u> |
| 3rd Grade | <u>In My Mother's House</u> - Ann Nolan Clark
<u>And It Came to Pass</u> |
| 4th Grade | <u>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</u> - C.S. Lewis
<u>Children of Odin</u> - Padraic Colum
<u>Dream of King Alfdan</u> |
| 5th Grade | <u>Gilgamesh</u> - B. Bryson
<u>Adventures of Rama</u> |
| 6th Grade | <u>Swords, Spears and Sandals</u> - R. Suskind
<u>Caesar's Gallic War</u> - J. Pearl
<u>Imperial Rome</u> - Mellush
<u>Roman Republic</u> - Mellush |
| 7th Grade | <u>Crystal Cave</u> - Mary Stewart
<u>The Pearl</u> - J. Steinbeck
<u>The Good Earth</u> - P. Buck |

8th Grade Johnny Tremain - Esther Forbes
 The Good Earth - Pearl Buck
 Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

(Sacramento Waldorf School)

Editors' Note: Some authors and all publishers names unavailable. Apply to Sacramento for further information.

8th Grade
 History

A very readable, interesting text for American History: America - Its People and Values, by Wood and Gabriel (Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, 1971)

It is hard to beat Genevieve Foster's books for reading by teachers or students. She gives colorful pictures and amusing biographical sketches. The reader is given an overall world picture during specific periods of history in each book. The titles include:

Augustus Caesar's World
George Washington's World
Abraham Lincoln's World

(Ed Hill, Kimberton Farms School)

8th Grade Climatology, weather. Issue # 10 of "The Mother Earth News" has some excellent suggestions, possibly a total course of study. It mixes practical science with old lore and is easy to understand. Each issue of this magazine (6 per year) could be valuable. Subscription rates: \$6 per year, \$11 for two years. The Mother Earth News, P.O. Box 38, Madison, Ohio 44057

(Ed Hill)

For those teachers interested in Indian stories for the elementary grades, the Platt and Munk Co., New York, N.Y., 10010, publishes My Indian Tale Library which consists of eight illustrated story books each telling the story of a boy from a particular Indian tribe. The stories are colorful and, as far as I can tell, accurate. Price: \$1.50.

(C. Brosenne, Kimberton Farms School)

Editors' Note: Not immediately apparent whether these are for teachers only, or also for children.

A charming and beautiful book, Indian Miniatures, printed in Switzerland, containing Arnold's translation of the Bhagavad Gita (\$2.25). Available from Anthroposophic Press. Also available there and at St. George Book Service: Zarathustra, by van Bemmelen, in English (2 vols. paper-bound \$4.50).

(Ekkehard Piening, Rudolf Steiner School)

Valuable and enlightening: Alexander Heide, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels. Published by Phoenix paper-bound University of Chicago Press. 1967

(John Root, Rudolf Steiner School)

For History of the Middle Ages: Schoyer Brooks and Ziusser Walworth, The World of Walls, J.B. Lippincott, 1966

(Miriam Spiegel, Rudolf Steiner School)

For 5th Grade Botany: Alice Upham Smith, Trees in a Winter Landscape, N.Y. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969

Dr. Julia Bort, Heileurythmie; Arlesheim, Natura Verlag, 1958
For teachers who can read German, a fine chapter on "Die Sprache der Bäume".

(Rudolf Copple, Rudolf Steiner School)