

Report from the Research Institute for Waldorf Education and Waldorf Publications

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The Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE) is sponsoring “September: Screens Off Because School’s On” Month — a screen-free month — in collaboration with the Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood as well as with Victoria Dunckley, M.D., Richard Freed, M.D., Red Hook Middle School, and others. Join us by simply emailing patrice@waldorf-research.org, and we will keep everyone posted on who will try this school-prep screen fast as teachers and students get to know each other in the new school year before inserting a screen between them.

Also underway is research on parents of Waldorf school students and graduates, following on the Survey of Waldorf High School Graduates, 1990-2017. The purpose of the parent survey is to discover how parents found Waldorf education and to give voice to their reflections on how Waldorf education influenced their style and practices. The survey is also intended to give parents a place to share their observations of their children’s learning practices in school and after graduation, as well as their recommendations for the future of Waldorf schools. The plan is to launch the parent survey once the results of the graduate survey are published.

This latter survey, based on responses from over a thousand Waldorf graduates spanning the most recent 25 years, is now in production and will appear shortly as we enter the hundredth year of Waldorf education. For the first time, analysis of these responses will be twinned with comparable statistics from other independent high schools, thanks to a newly-formed collaboration between RIWE and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Already we begin to see how Waldorf graduates line up with students from other American independent schools — and, perhaps more interestingly, where they diverge. Results of this latest survey will appear both in book form and on the websites of the Research Institute.

At this writing RIWE is preparing its fifth colloquium devoted to the investigation of technology and its rightful place in education. This year’s focus will be on the connection between technology and the world of nature — especially of animals. The recent publication of

Wolfgang Schad’s *Understanding Mammals*—a greatly expanded edition in English of his celebrated original, *Man and Mammal*, in the 1970s—and of Douglas Sloan’s masterful *The Redemption of the Animals*, sparked this focus. Craig and Henrike Holdrege from the Nature Institute will be our colloquium guides for this year’s efforts. RIWE’s international board will be enhanced with individuals connected to this topic.

From the busy offices of RIWE’s Waldorf Publications, Betty Staley’s new book *Tending the Spark: Lighting the Future for Middle School Students*, along with Frederick Amrine’s *Kicking Away the Ladder: The Philosophical Roots of Waldorf Education* and a new edition of *A Phenomena-Based Physics, Volume II, Grade 7*, will be on their way soon to AWSNA member schools. The next round of books will include several landmark additions to the Waldorf100 celebrations, including *Emil & Berta: The Origins of the Waldorf School Movement* by Sophia Christine Murphy; Nana Göbel’s monumental history of *The Waldorf Schools and Their People, Worldwide* being translated by Jan Kees Saltet; *Parsifal: A Forerunner of Modern Man*, by Sonia Setzer; and *Exploring Shapes Creatively through Pure Form Modeling* by Arthur Auer.

Douglas Gerwin, RIWE’s Executive Director, was the keynote speaker at a conference this spring on the future of Waldorf education sponsored by the Franz E. Winkler Center for Adult Learning in Garden City, NY, a RIWE supporting member. Later in the spring he was traveling to Edinburgh for the twice-yearly meeting of the International Forum for Waldorf/Steiner Education. Meanwhile, Patrice Maynard, RIWE’s Director of Publications and Development, flew to Shenzhen, China, to meet with AngelOnline, a company devoted to reaching as many as possible interested in new ideas for parenting and education. This collaboration will benefit both the Chinese offerings on RIWE’s Online Waldorf Library (OWL) and AngelOnline resources in China. This material joins a growing repertoire of materials available on the OWL in foreign languages, primarily in Spanish.