

Elan Leibner

Dear Readers,

This issue of the *Research Bulletin* marks the beginning of the publication's twentieth year! I open this editorial with an appreciative nod toward my predecessors and, just as importantly, toward my successors. Though I have no immediate plans to vacate this post, those engaged in Waldorf pedagogy know that the work we do is in some measure a place-holder, a bridge between the giving of the impulse and a time in the fairly distant future when it will be possible to realize it fully.

The *Research Bulletin* has always had two goals: to reach out to those beyond the Waldorf community—especially in academia and the wider educational world to find common ground and substance for dialogue—and to publish research, essays, and polemics intended to deepen the work of those active within that community. In a sense these twin gestures, horizontally (to and from the periphery) and vertically (from above downward) are the cross of true North for both the Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE) and its *Bulletin*. As I noted earlier, the time quality of the past connecting with the future through our deeds in the present is another axis we have to keep in mind. It is gratifying that schools, foundations, and individuals have found the *Bulletin* sufficiently worthwhile to support, advertising-free, for this long. Thank you all!

This issue leads off with a remarkable essay by Frederick Amrine. Written originally as an introduction to an as-yet-to-be-published Steiner book about eurythmy, Amrine presents, with customary scholarship, the surprising (to us) roots of eurythmy in the work of three American dance pioneers: Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan,

and Ruth St. Denis. Showing eurythmy to be the rightful culmination and fulfillment of these trailblazers' spiritual and artistic impulses, Amrine presents an artistic context for eurythmy's appearance on the world stage, and he does so in a new and more thorough and insightful manner than has ever been done before. There are many fascinating details in his narrative, and anyone who cares about eurythmy is warmly invited to discover heretofore hidden aspects of its origins. Those who follow Amrine's comment about a YouTube video will be treated to an astonishing piece of early videography.

Jaap van der Wal is a Dutch physician and researcher working in the field of embryology. His article, reprinted from the book *Trailing Clouds of Glory* recently published by Waldorf Publications, is a thought-provoking meditation on the essential mysteries of conception and embryological development. Wal is an original and penetrating voice, and those not familiar with his work will find a rich source of inspiration both in the content of his ideas and in the mood with which he approaches these eternal riddles of birth and rebirth. His website contains a multitude of additional material for those whose interest is piqued by this article.

Forest kindergartens have been sprouting recently like mushrooms after steady rain, and Heidi Drexel set out to enquire how they work, what benefits they offer, and what challenges they face. Rather than arguing for or against these programs, she interviewed practitioners, colleagues, and early childhood leaders, seeking to inform and focus the conversation. Her contribution is a sound piece of background and state-of-the-experiment update for schools and individuals who are considering the outdoor

program possibility. She ends her article with a sound reminder that, in the end, it is the pedagogical wisdom of the teacher, not the format of the program, that will determine how successful it is.

Gary Lamb offers an informative and even-handed description of the charter school movement with a section detailing specifically its ramifications for independent Waldorf schools. His article provides a helpful history of the idea of charters, as well as a description of current practices, essential players in the field, and some of the ideas that inform the spread of this particular version of educational reform. Lamb is not a supporter of charters, but he avoids arguing against them. Instead, he presents the costs and benefits, leaving the reader free to assess the merits of their existence. He points out that this phenomenon is part and parcel of a larger development in the United States, one that should be fully comprehended for its enormous potential impact.

In a paper for an international conference of early childhood educators, Ruth Ker gathered a

wealth of current research on the value of play-centered early childhood programs as opposed to programs that focus on early academic instruction. Her contribution, reprinted here from the kindergarten journal *Gateways*, offers many studies that support the learning-by-doing-and-playing approach of the Waldorf nursery-kindergarten.

Our series of contributions in support of the study of the Pedagogical Section Council's Core Principles of Waldorf Education continues with two articles discussing the principle of Developmental Curriculum. James Pewtherer writes about the grade school years, and Douglas Gerwin about the high school.

After reports from Waldorf Publications and the Online Waldorf Library, we have a new feature: a listing of current research projects that teachers are invited to join. Two projects are on this inaugural list, and people are invited to send us short descriptions of their research if they wish to have it on future lists.

From all of us at the *Research Bulletin* team:
Happy Reading!

Authors who wish to have articles considered for publication in the *Research Bulletin* should submit them directly to the Editor at: waldorfresearchbulletin@gmail.com.