

Elan Leibner

Dear Readers:

This is the first issue of the *Research Bulletin* since the passing of David Mitchell, Co-Director of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, colleague, mentor, friend, and a general inspiration to so many of us. David's ardent wish was that the *Bulletin* be a place where practicing teachers as well as a wide circle of readers interested in Waldorf education would find content and inspiration in a language adequate to current standards of research and discourse. He did not want "Waldorf navel-gazing," as he called it, nor a dry academic journal, but rather a bridge that would facilitate the movement of ideas back and forth between academia and the Waldorf classroom.

We hope that this issue may please him. The articles, coming mostly from educators working in accredited academic settings, address both the internal aspects of Waldorf pedagogy and its broader philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. David's memory is also tastefully commemorated in brief tributes by his fellow Co-Director, Douglas Gerwin, and by Patrice Maynard of AWSNA.

Betty Staley contributes an essay discussing the three castles of Arthurian lore as metaphors for the spiritual tasks of Waldorf teachers. This work arose out of a study undertaken by the Pedagogical Section Council on the theme of the College of Teachers, to which the most recent issue of the *Bulletin* (Vol. XVII, No. 1) was devoted. Bringing her many years of practice and reflection to bear on some of the thorniest challenges facing individuals and faculties in Waldorf schools, Staley offers insights and inspiration towards a culture of inner and outer knighthood.

Florian Osswald, Co-Leader of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual

Science, Goetheanum, Dornach, gave the keynote lectures at last summer's AWSNA conference. In an article originally written for our sister publication in New Zealand and Australia, Osswald covers much the same content of his lectures at the conference. Through this article, readers will gain a sense of Osswald's lively and thoroughly humane presence. While he has already spent the last academic year in his new post, his many years of high school teaching math and science continue to shine through his way of speaking and writing.

Frederick Amrine and Jost Schieren, both newly appointed trustees of the Research Institute, discuss from different perspectives the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of Waldorf education. Amrine's contribution—the first in a planned series covering the philosophical roots of Waldorf education—begins with a discussion of Kant and Goethe, describing two concentric revolutions in the history of Western philosophy. Readers who might otherwise feel impatience with philosophic disquisitions are advised that, from Amrine's pen, philosophy flows like a compelling adventure novel. Schieren's article, on the concept of learning in Waldorf education, is a useful treatment of a core question in current educational discussions in that he relates Waldorf practices to contemporary thinkers' writings. Those readers concerned with explaining (or understanding) Waldorf education within an academic framework will find Schieren's work especially relevant and clear.

Arthur Auer, a frequent contributor over the years, returns to the pages of the *Bulletin* to offer further thoughts about clay modeling with children. Part of his mission is to debunk

the notion that clay modeling is somehow unsuitable for young children, but his article goes well beyond this issue to raise valuable questions about a range of modeling-related topics. Like Osswald, Auer has children very much present in his discourse. His treatment of questions such as warming beeswax for children with cold hands reveals his eminently practical and classroom-based life experience.

From Irene Jung, a German colleague, comes an intriguing description of an action research project in Hamburg. She relates how a class teacher who allowed his class to spend the first part of every morning lesson outdoors saw a significant reduction in problematic behavior and learning difficulties. Mentors of new teachers, as well as teachers working with the younger grades, would do well to give the possibilities raised in this short article serious consideration.

From the other end of the life of the mind, Michael D'Aleo discusses the Higgs Field and Boson and how one might begin to think about

them. His article, adapted from a book he has been publishing online one chapter at a time, addresses in a timely and insightful manner the complex issues that came to the fore with the announcement a few months ago of the discovery of the “Higgs-like” particle. D'Aleo depicts the history of the concept of the atom, arriving at a contemplation of the difference between “things” and “relationships” as core concepts underlying experience.¹

In all, this is a meaty and diverse issue. Happy Reading!

1. Readers interested in science, the teaching of science, and D'Aleo's work in general will be happy to know that he and his colleagues will once again be offering the Teaching Sensible Science course in two locations: beginning February 2013 in Baltimore, MD, and April 2013 in Seattle, WA. All relevant information, as well as testimonials from participants in prior courses and registration forms, can be found at the end of this issue.