



The Bulletin

May/June 2015



IN THIS ISSUE

Letter from the Editor.....	2	The Crescendo of Harmonies.....	10
Kindergarten Parent Goes to High School.....	3-4	The Rewards of Camp Hill.....	11
Spring Gala Recap	5	The Math Spiral Curriculum.....	12-13
Juniors Win Prestigious Honors.....	6	Parent Council.....	14
Our History Through Poetry Main Lesson....	7	Class of 2015 Matriculations.....	15
A Conversation with Greg Pardlo.....	8-9	Calendar of Events: June - September.....	16

Here's to a Very Good Summer

by Brian Kaplan / Director of Communications

As we say goodbye to another school year, the memories rush forward with a flood of thoughts. As always, the year passes by far too quickly.

I hope you will find a few minutes to enjoy an iced tea and read this issue of *The Bulletin*. There are several articles that simply jump off the page. I read Rebecca Dahele's piece, *A Kindergarten Parent Goes to High School*, many times. Rebecca captured the essence of the Steiner high school in such a poignant way. We highly recommend elementary school parents visiting high school classes in the fall. There is so much to experience.

"The sun with loving light makes bright for me each day, the soul with spirit power gives strength unto my limbs."

—RUDOLF STEINER

We were honored to speak with Greg Pardlo, the 2015 Pulitzer Prize winner for Poetry - and a Steiner parent of two girls. He is a fascinating and talented person, and as nice as they come. Discussing poetry with Greg was serendipitous because as we interviewed him for *The Bulletin*, we were informed that two juniors, Isaac Scheinfeld and Sasha Pinto, won the top honors in the New York Browning Society annual High School Poetry Competition. Isaac and Sasha provided us with details about this honor during a busy time for them - they were beginning challenging internships, but they were pleased to write for *The Bulletin*. We appreciate it.

Jeff Spade, Steiner's Lower School Music Director, gracefully placed his baton on the podium in place of a pencil, and recounted details of our Spring Music Concert. Such wonderful memories! Marina McGrew and Dan Marsch crafted meaningful articles about the 11th grade trip to the Camp Hill community in Kimberton, Pennsylvania, and the soul of our Math Spiral Curriculum, respectively. Plan to attend the Spiral evenings next year - they are worth it.

Please keep in touch over the summer. We need frequent stories for the [school blog](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), so keep us informed of what you and your children are involved in - trips, books, jobs, camps and internships.

This summer, we will redesign our website homepage, and introduce a new look for our e-mail templates. We will also continue sharing the beauty and magic of Waldorf education with other parents - also, look for new brochures in the fall.

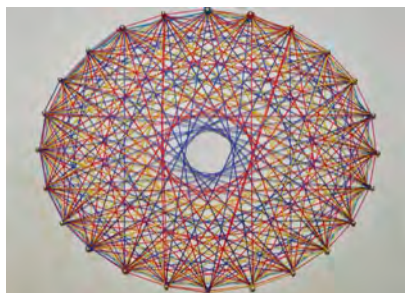
Thank you for all that you do for the Rudolf Steiner School. The commitment of our parent-body is simply spectacular, and that is why your children are developing so beautifully. I already feel confident in saying, "I can't wait to see you in September...try not to grow too much, kids!"

Have an exceptional summer!

Brian Kaplan
bkaplan@steiner.edu



Early Childhood Breadmaking



6th Grade Geometric Designs



12th Grade Perspective Drawing

A Kindergarten Parent Goes to High School

by Rebecca Dahele / Parent of children in Kindergarten & 2nd Grade

*I look into the world
In which the sun is shining
In which the stars are sparkling
In which the stones repose.*

*Where living plants are growing
Where sentient beasts are living
Where man, soul gifted
Gives the spirit a dwelling place.*

*I look into the soul,
That lives within my being
The World Creator moves
In sunlight and in soul light,*

*In wide world space without
In soul depths here within.
To Thee Creator Spirit
I will now turn my heart*

*To beg that strength and blessing
To learn and work may grow
Within my inmost being.*

Morning verse (spoken at the beginning of Main Lesson by high school students and their teacher to start the school day).

I had the opportunity to join the Steiner high school each Wednesday of the winter semester to experience first-hand the spirit, the practice and the fruits of the Waldorf education the school offers. I joined English, Chemistry, History through Art, History through Music and Atlantic History main lessons, as well as other classes on Biology, Social Studies, and Art. In Chorus, I sang with the high school too.

The experience made a big impression. I had a number of those rare, life-affirming moments when you feel you are seeing something important happening; that huge potential is being realized, with all the excitement and energy that that generates. What I felt most profoundly was that underlying the humanities, science, arts and music curriculum was a genuine search to connect with the essential questions of life – What makes us human? What makes our lives on this earth at this time meaningful and useful? How do we lead a good life? And I got an insight into how the education works to support students to develop the capabilities and will to grapple with these questions, and find their place in the world. Students were naturally engaged in their learning I think because they sensed that it was this fundamental quest that was ultimately at hand. So each class became much more than just an inquiry into a subject area; rather each subject became another lens through which to discover more about, reflect on and reveal the human condition, the state and relationships of the physical, natural and spiritual world.

You often hear about how the curriculum responds to the children's stages of development.

It was clear sitting in different classes from ninth to twelfth grade how students' preoccupations and mindset, capabilities and will, orientation to themselves and the world, change dramatically over the four years of high school. And what impressed me so deeply was how acutely aware teachers are of this in the way they engage with students in the different grades, how the curriculum and pedagogy responds to and extends the students as the years pass, and how the teacher-student relationship shifts over this time in a way that draws the qualities and capacities and interests and will of the students out – in keeping with the original meaning of the word "education:" to draw forth. Allied to this, I sensed the humanity and closeness of the high school community, the genuine care among the teachers and students for each other; the value of this in itself and in guiding and supporting the students on their path.

I witnessed many master classes in how powerful and exciting good teaching can be. The fact that the teachers themselves show such a passion for learning and present themselves to the students not as people who already know what needs to be known and imparted to the students, but as people still constantly striving and learning themselves, seemed to me key to their art. This importantly shifts the teacher-student relationship to a much more inspiring "we're in this together/this is a common effort to better comprehend our world and ourselves" than the more traditional "teacher knows/student needs to learn" relationship. I saw how powerful this former approach was in enlisting students to join the shared endeavor of learning and discovering, and exploring ideas and horizons. It was frankly exciting to witness.

[Continued on the next page]

A Kindergarten Parent Goes to High School

[Continued from previous page]

By the eleventh and twelfth grades what was most extraordinary was to see how students were so naturally able to call up and weave together in a very sophisticated way their learning from across math, the arts, the sciences, music and the humanities, and what they'd learnt across the years, to arrive at creative, original, exciting ways of understanding, perceiving and doing things – a Renaissance education. It was clear that by twelfth grade, students are very competent free thinkers, with inquiring minds, and a capacity to approach whatever they come at openly, creatively and flexibly, with a groundedness, resilience, sense of ethics and self-knowledge that will all be critical to thriving in a fast-changing world. Seniors exuded inner strength and quiet motivation and were articulate and compelling in their speech and thinking. Here my feeling is that the school understands deeply what are the capacities and will required to make a good life beyond school, and that students come away with strengths that other approaches to education may be relatively weaker in developing.

Being a parent at a school that offers an education that is not mainstream, where children start academic work later than in other schools, and which often has to defend itself against a simplistic portrayal of the curriculum as heavily arts-focused at the expense of other areas, you anticipate that you and other parents may experience anxieties about whether the education that is offered is going to prepare your child in the best way for the world they will live in beyond school, when they will need to thrive in the “mainstream,” and look to find a good life path. You often hear these anxieties aired; a strong consensus that the school is the best possible place for the early years giving way

to doubt about continuing into the lower school, only growing as children reach middle school and high school years.

What I saw in my few weeks at the high school was by no means the whole picture, and I don't have experience of other high schools in the city to compare it to. And I've emphasized here the positive impressions from my experience, because these were the most compelling, though it doesn't mean there aren't things that could be done better or differently. But, given all that, the experience certainly confirmed for me as a parent what a profound preparation for life the school provides. Indeed it left me seriously questioning the quality of my own education, which until now, I had always considered to be pretty good. ■



Spring Gala 2015



LAUGHING, CHATTING, JAZZ BAND PLAYING
CHEERS OF WONDER AND DELIGHT
THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE AND DANCING FEET
ALL ECHOED THROUGH THE NIGHT.

MUSIC! MAGIC! SLEIGHT OF HAND!
HOW'D HE DO THAT, WE CRIED?
PASHA AND DANIELLA
DRESSED ALL IN WHITE
RHUMBAED AS WE SIGHED.

AND LYDIA, GAVEL IN HAND,
ENCOURAGED THOSE PADDLES HIGH,
ARGENTINA! BIRTHDAYS! AND SWITZERLAND!
PARIS & YURMAN SOLD TWICE!

WHAT FUN WE HAD
THAT MAY 8TH NIGHT
SHARED WITH FRIENDS OLD AND NEW,
LAUGHING AND DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY
TO SUPPORT OUR BELOVED SCHOOL.

Thank you for coming to the Rudolf Steiner School Gala 2015.

It was a tremendous success, and the reason is because of you.

Have a lovely summer.

- The Faculty and Staff of the Rudolf Steiner School and the Spring Gala 2015 Team

Juniors Win Prestigious Honors

by Brian Kaplan / Director of Communications

Two Steiner high school students took the top-two honors at the annual High School Poetry Competition, which is sponsored by the [New York Browning Society](#) in celebration of April's Poetry Month. Winners were selected from numerous public, private and parochial schools.

Isaac Scheinfeld was selected as the Private School winner of the Original Poems category with his *Boardwalk Bench* (below and right), and his classmate, Sasha Pinto, placed first on the Shortlist in the same category, which translates as the first runner-up position.

"The contest specified a poem of no more than two pages in any form of the student's choosing with a minimum of 12 lines," said Carol Bartges, Humanities teacher in the high school. "Submissions were requested in two categories: poetry in the style of Robert Browning or original composition. I knew that the original poetry from students who have taken my 11th grade Romantic Poetry main lesson, either this year's juniors or seniors, would have the form and intention necessary to meet the criteria of a Robert Browning poetry competition."

Six winners received \$100, publication of their poem, and an invitation to the NYC Poetry Festival on Governor's Island. They were also invited to attend a luncheon and reception at the National Arts Club on Gramercy Park. ■

Boardwalk Bench

By Isaac Scheinfeld

Before me lies the sandy shore Beyond, the mystic sea
Whose resolute rock-rending roar Reverberates in me.

The shore and sea at night supine Beneath ascending sky
Whose hollow musings mirror mine, Of year and moon-bound tide.

The rising of the vital sphere Is heralded by rays;
Beneath the frigid dawn I greet The sun with genial gaze.

As slowly dawn matures to day The beach begins to fill,
And people of all ages slay
Those dreams which dawns instill.

Some revel in the scorching sun, Some wish for shady boughs,
While others flock t'wards littoral fun The beach with sport to rouse.

As noontime fever settles in A pair alights on me,
They prattle on about their kin And other lukewarm teas.

But soon they rise again to go The boardwalk long to stroll, And
many more on me repose To rest their frame or soul.

And those ungrateful for my pains Defile my cozy ledge,
They sully me with diverse stains And grody mucilage.

But, never free of warps and cracks, My slats endure the hours,
Though none bedeck my sunburned back Or shield it from cold showers.

The day is passed in romp and glee By all those passing through,
But as the sun drops t'wards the sea They pack and say adieu.

Thus endeth yet another day Of quiet observation;
The universe, as if a play of recapitulation,

For every day of every moon In each of seasons turning Brings
yet another lydian tune Of mystery and yearning.

Another day I've spent affixed At mercy of the crowds,
And of the rays and torrents which Rule sovereign from the clouds.

Our History Through Poetry Main Lesson

by Sasha Pinto / 11th Grade Student

In mid-April, when we learned about the [NY Browning Society](#) competition, there wasn't enough time to write new material, so I submitted a poem entitled "Survival," which I had composed in 10th grade for Ms. Bartges' "History Through Poetry" main lesson block. I also sent a piece of prose called, "Ode to a Memory of the Future," written for Ms. Bartges' 11th grade "Romantic Poetry" main lesson, and a tongue-in-cheek little ode composed for the school's literary magazine entitled, "Bring Back Boredom."

Many threads came together to weave the inspiration for this poem. Through a childhood of spending park time with my teachers and classmates in Central Park, to a lifetime of spending summers in the fragile ecosystem of the African savannahs, to my position as co-head of the Steiner Green Club, I've developed a deep connection to nature and concern for habitat and biodiversity loss. So when Ms. Bartges gave our class the assignment to write a poem from the perspective of an inanimate object, I immediately knew that I was going to speak for a grand old oak tree, mourning the loss of the surrounding forest to encroaching civilization. While "Survival" addresses the destruction of wilderness and man's insensitivity to nature, it concludes with hope for its renewal again through the love of a child for the old oak tree.

Ms. Bartges' "History Through Poetry" block explored how wonder, imagination, inspiration, intuition, and love of language come together within a person to produce great poetry; we were asked to look deep within ourselves and write about a moment when we experienced true wonder; we studied Aristotle's concept of how different vowel and consonant sounds represented air, earth, fire, and water, and tried our hand at writing poems using only the sounds of a single element. Ms. Bartges taught us how to understand and create metaphors, similes, analogies, and use personification for the maximum effect, and we learned to identify these techniques in the works of the great poets.

Ms. Bartges' poetry classes in both 10th and 11th grades led the class towards a new way of observing, thinking, and writing. She also assigned some of the most challenging homework of my high school career... which, however, brought out my very best work. "Survival" was the result. ■

Survival

Mighty and tall, with my brothers,
I see the world below me.
This land, this forest and others,
We rule by natural decree.

I am the tallest of the oak,
And the king of the wood:
Ancient forest of all hope--
I stand for everything that is good.

Hundreds of years, I've been passing
My brothers have been felled;
Invaded by machines, surpassing
The forests gone; our songs quelled.

Now in a garden I'm admired,
Pruned and trimmed to a perfect state;
Never wild, no less inspired;
Restrained inside by a metal gate--

I am welcome shade and autumn tones,
Amusements only for a privileged few;
Who rest below me and toss stones,
Carving initials, then saying adieu.

Many changes have struck my land,
Where once I stood a timeless wonder;
Within a wood so green and grand,
But it's gone, my forest asunder.

One day I spot new birds in flight,
And watch the setting sun;
I marvel at the children's delight
To stay with me when day is done.

Hope has sprung, and its face is this child,
Who loves my trunk, my leaves and boughs,
Scampering over my limbs so beguiled--
Yes, we'll survive, brothers, and I smiled.

Greg Pardlo: 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry

by Brian Kaplan / Director of Communications

Greg Pardlo, parent of two daughters in the first and fourth grades, was recently awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his book, “Digest,” his second volume of poetry. We spoke with [Mr. Pardlo](#) about winning his Pulitzer, writers that he appreciates, and of course, the wonders of a Waldorf education.

Brian Kaplan: When did you hear about winning your Pulitzer Prize?

Greg Pardlo: I heard it right outside of school at 3pm while waiting for my older daughter. I had already picked up my younger daughter, and we were standing in front of Steiner. I began receiving congratulatory e-mails, Facebook notices and text messages. It was very confusing because I wasn’t even aware that I was being considered for anything. One of the notes said ‘Pulitzer’ in it, and I just couldn’t believe my eyes. I may have believed if it said that I was invited to a Pulitzer dinner, but not as a recipient. I am a pretty ambitious person, but I had never considered winning a Pulitzer Prize before. It really threw me for a loop. I walked into school, and with absolute shock, told Ms. Davis at the front desk, ‘I think I just won a Pulitzer Prize!’ I promise I only screamed twice.

BK: What was your reaction?

GP: I think I made some kind of guttural sound – something undefined came out of me that even scared my daughter. I told her something really special had just happened for her dad.

BK: Do your daughters understand the magnitude of this prize?

GP: They’ve seen us win prizes in the past, but on a much smaller level, so I explained that this was a really big one. We went to the Society Library, and people were congratulating me when we walked in. Once my daughters understood that I didn’t know some of the people who were congratulating me, they appreciated how big it is.

BK: How familiar with this world are your daughters?

GP: Seeing their dad in the New York Times was an absolute realization for them. However, what they saw in the Society Library was an eye-opener for them. So, it’s become their world. Where I need to keep reminding myself is that the Times article, with their global reach, keeps getting disseminated, so the numbers are pretty staggering. It’s almost sublime; this overwhelming, unimaginable, populace that is out there.

BK: And, it didn’t even really dawn on you. It’s not as if you were pitching game seven of the World Series, and you knew what was on the line.

GP: No, completely blindsided, out of absolute nowhere.

BK: Do people say, “Here’s the criteria” to win this prize?

GP: The Pulitzer Prize committee said that my poetry was clear voiced. The exact criteria is online. The announcement was streamed live, and I watched the video that somebody posted. That was even more amazing because they describe the process of whittling down thousands of books from a long list to a short list, and down to three – somebody used the term, ‘eye of the needle.’ That put shivers down my spine.

BK: Do you have three books available?

GP: I have [two books of my own work](#), and one that I translated from a Danish poet.

BK: Does winning a Pulitzer Prize make you start to think about what’s next?

GP: I’ve been joking that it feels like I’ve been given a gold watch and a pension. Got the pat on the back, and now I get to lay on a beach somewhere. But, winning the Pulitzer is a huge pulpit. It is an opportunity to do things for poetry in general, and for other poets. And, hopefully make a difference with all of the activities that I’ve been struggling

Greg Pardlo (con't.)

with now that the work has a little more cache, I can bring a little more prestige and higher profile to teaching, and visiting schools; the workshops I teach, and the boards that I'm on, I can hopefully bring more visibility to the organizations I support. So, I will continue to write, but I hope to use this to make a difference in places that I think they should be made.

BK: Who are some of your favorite authors and poets?

GP: [Walt Whitman](#) is the hands down foundation. [Gerard Manley Hopkins](#) is an important influence as a late-19th Century/early-20th Century poet. From [Gwendolyn Brooks](#) on, I'm interested in pretty much everything that's written. From mid-20th Century on, I consider that all contemporary poetry, so it all has something to teach me. I do get really excited, in a geeky way, about the Swedish poet [Tomas Tranströmer](#). I agree with all of my professors that [Toni Morrison](#) has some chops (laughs). She might go somewhere one day. I've also been reading a lot of my contemporaries these days: the authors [Michelle Orange](#) and [Charles D'Ambrosio](#) – he has a collection of essays out now that I'm really excited about.

BK: What about poets?

GP: I would definitely suggest [Terrence Hayes](#). He is a superb poet.

BK: What do you tell young people when they ask you for recommendations on getting started and following their voice?

GP: First off, embrace the mistakes. That was one of the biggest things for me to learn. Very often, younger, novice poets want to write great poems, and you can't blame them of course, but writing a great poem can also create such anxiety, which can keep one from experimenting and exploring the mistakes and the errors where one learns. The mantra is always, write what you know, but increasingly, we're coming to understand that it should be more, write what you don't know because that's how you

expand – that's how you learn and grow as a writer and an author, particularly for younger writers.

BK: Are your daughters interested in writing?

GP: Sarah, my oldest daughter, and her friend Eliza are working on a novel together. Her dad is a novelist. They've been working on it, and all that matters is to just write. Every effort they make is really good.

BK: Is there a correlation to Waldorf education that you see in poetry?

GP: I do think that giving the child enough space for their imagination to grow organically, to develop on its own steam, will benefit their creative foundation. But since we are talking about using language as a material for art, if we are routinized in our patterns for thinking, we tend to string together patches of clichés. That's just how we signal personality and similarities, how we identify with one another. There's more to it than just the exchange of data. Being able to access these other registers of communication, the subtexts, this is where Waldorf is very strong in terms of literature. I'd like to see even more of that conversation in today's world. Perhaps I can do that now (laughs). Instead of wishing, let's start doing. That is a huge strength with Waldorf education – encouraging and allowing the possibility of thinking in a way that is not routinized, and culturally sanctioned and approved. I remember when Sarah started in the Kindergarten, and she would come home with sticks and twigs, and pockets full of stones – and I begged her to leave the Park where it is. Now I see her attention to detail and her imagination; she's making villages, and that is just super exciting. I can't wait to see how she continues to explore as she moves to middle school. ■

The Crescendo of Harmonies

by Jeff Spade / Elementary School Music Director

The weeks leading up to the [Spring Instrumental Music Concert](#) bring a different atmosphere to Band and Orchestra rehearsals each year. The intensity is almost palpable as students arrive for rehearsals, and begin to practice the more challenging passages of their music.

The day of the concert has an altogether different mood in the afternoon, as the middle school students line up outside the Lower School Building, and begin to board the buses that will transport them to the New York Society for Ethical Culture. After months of rehearsing, it's time for a run-through, and a sound check in the expansive wood-grained hall. The sound as the downbeat falls and the opening bars resound is both thrilling and overwhelming as students and conductor alike adjust to the new acoustic, and the feel of our music in this lovely space. A careful eye is kept on the clock, as the ensembles work out the timing, not only of the pieces, but also of getting on and off stage with grace.

For many of these children, it is their first time playing in the larger hall, and their enthusiasm erupts in a high energy run-through, with tempos flying seemingly out of control and conductors waving and shouting, “follow me,” and “watch the baton,” while assessing the best way to use the minutes that tick by ever so quickly in these precious moments.

The longest hour of the night is the hour preceding the concert. The high school ensembles have met and rehearsed by now, the elementary and middle school students begin to trickle in. The recorder ensemble is preparing to play in the lobby, and everybody feels the frenetic energy. Usually there are two or three mini crisis events – lost music, instruments left at school, and broken strings and reeds are among the issues that are generally resolved with lightning speed.

Before you know it, the lights go down and the crowd of students, parents, and friends settle into their seats and the power of the music begins to take, and everything comes alive. Crescendos swell and tempos flow evenly, as the pressure of the bows on the strings and the breath into the wind instruments, merge and come together to tell the story of each piece. Sections that struggled during rehearsal suddenly have unlimited power and become energized. This is the power of music; it brings together



the player and the listener in a harmonious way.

Every concert has its own special feel, often associated with an especially dynamic number from either the band or the orchestra, or perhaps the wailing horns and saxophones of the High School Jazz Band, which ring long after the concert concludes. This year's Instrumental Concert was no different, as we had an opportunity to recognize a great benefactor of the Steiner Music Department, the Laura Nadel Music and Art Fund, with the attendance of Dr. Warren Nadel and his wife Susie. This year, the entire concert was subsidized by this fund, in the year that Laura would have turned 50 years old. It was clear that Laura's presence was in the house this evening, as every one of the ensembles had moments of power, beauty, and artistry.

As the faculty gathers on stage for final bows, we not only receive accolades for work well done, but we also stand in awe and appreciation of a school where the power of music is not only valued, but nurtured in every single student. As families gather their children and their instruments and music folders and make their way home, the silence of the hall stands in contrast to the music that is still flowing in each of us, and continues to flow long after the baton is put away for the season. ■

The Rewards of Camp Hill

by Marina McGrew / High School Arts Teacher & Advisor

The junior class visited Kimberton Hills, Pennsylvania, a Camp Hill community of over 400-acres in May. Camp Hill is home to many adults with mental differences, referred to as villagers, and co-workers who care for them, as well as interns from various countries and volunteers.

The underlying organization and participation operate within the philosophical framework of Rudolf Steiner. The community includes a biodynamic farm and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), which provides food for 250 non-residential participants, each of whom pays for a share in the year's output. The farm also provides for the residents of the Camp Hill, although some of the homes have smaller gardens of their own. This community also includes a craft shop with handmade goods, a weavery, a pottery, an herb garden, a cafe for the public, a bakery with a wood burning oven, whose delicious cookies and breads can be found in local stores, a dairy, an orchard, bee boxes, a woodworking shop, a clinic, and a home for the oldest, who have greater caring needs.

The Steiner students are staying in cabins at French Creek State Park, where students take turns by cabin cooking the evening meal for each other. We depart at 7:45 each morning for the half hour drive to Kimberton Hills, and we spend the day working at various jobs alongside the residents. Students are placed all over the community, and they work a morning shift, followed by lunch in alternating houses, a little rest, and another working shift in the afternoon. At 5:00pm, we all pile into the rented vans for the ride back to the cabins.

"Grocery shopping was a wake up call as far as how to purchase more for less, to look for organic, and to work together on a menu and shopping list," said one 11th grade student.

Sasha Pinto, who will do an internship with a New York City beekeeper is working with Ralph, a German beekeeper, who has designed some special boxes based on the golden mean. Sasha worked with Ralph to release the new queen into each of three different boxes that had been placed in

various habitats across the property. Sasha was able to see how the combs varied from place-to-place, and how the queen was different from the other bees. Each queen stayed in her new box and quickly made friends.

The property is alive with signs of spring, flowers, birds and green abounding. The students feel proud of their work, and many realize what it takes to provide for a community, in labor and in care.

On Thursday evening, the juniors put on a performance for the whole village, singing, reciting poetry, and doing some eurythmy.

What an unbelievable experience for everybody involved on this journey! ■



The Math Spiral Curriculum

by Dan Marsch / High School Mathematics

Is there an approach to mathematics teaching and learning that is characteristic of Waldorf schools? My current attempt at a response runs something like this: as the study of mathematics requires precise equivalence between processes and objects (e.g. two divided by three is two-thirds), so also does Waldorf pedagogy demand free reciprocity between activities and forms (e.g. regarding an oak leaf is botany). Neither the quantitative “equivalence” nor the qualitative “reciprocity” implies exclusivity—one can calculate two-thirds in various ways, and botany is certainly not reducible to oak leaf observation—but they each imply the centrality of transformation, metamorphosis, and a network of interconnected associations; the idea of truth in mathematics depends on the nature of passages between (what is a proof, after all?), and a truthful development in education depends on the ethics and artistry of the cooperative endeavor (what is a project, after all?).

The mathematics that we do is inseparable from and, in subtle ways, indistinguishable from the mathematical things that we devise and discover. Counting to twelve is also the number twelve, comparing rise to run is the tangent of an angle, and summing all the terms in a sequence is a series. The parallel idea for Waldorf education is that every activity, regardless of where it leads, has intrinsic value and integrity—that everything undertaken is qualitatively, substantially something; consequently, nothing happens in Waldorf schools that is essentially for the sake of something else. Knitting a sock is an order of operations, singing one’s part is a coordinate logic, and taking the first step in Eurythmy is an instantaneous rate of change. (Of course these specifically mathematical interpretations of “is” need not be exhaustive to be valid; knitting a sock is also a story of yarn and a primer in anatomy.) Furthermore, counting to twelve is not a ladder that you kick away once you hit the number, and singing one’s part does not expire even when a harmony is sustained. Our electronic-litigious age provides innumerable colorless reminders of the properly beautiful fact in view: there is no result irrespective of its generation.

Perhaps the class teacher is the most distinctive example of activity as form: the same human being who accompanies

the class through the years is simultaneously a conscientious exercise in self-reinvention. When I ask students in middle school or high school how they learned to multiply, they tend to delight in recollecting what they and their class teachers did together, often recalling stories and pictures in quite some detail. Of course, at some point they also encountered a multiplication table and practiced rote drills, but these devices arrived as distillations from methodical practice rather than as ready-mades from the great shelf of learning accessories. The numbers twenty-three and twenty-four, for instance, have quite different qualities, and a careful pedagogy allows these to come to expression according to the right natural history of a class. As integers, these assuredly lie “next to” each other on a table, but as manifolds of activity—in themselves and in childhood experience—they live rather far apart; their families have different genealogies within the clan.

The class teacher idea provides the counterpoint to a mass production model: instead of mastering the introduction of a standard multiplication table year-after-year, a self-apprenticeship develops across the years as an individualized introduction becomes a shared frame of reference for class and teacher alike. For while there is only one true factorization, there are at least as many true multiplication tables as there are reflective teachers folding them into their endeavor. Moreover, in Waldorf schools, a “self-apprenticeship” never presupposes a standard self—from which it follows that teachers and students practice this together. ■

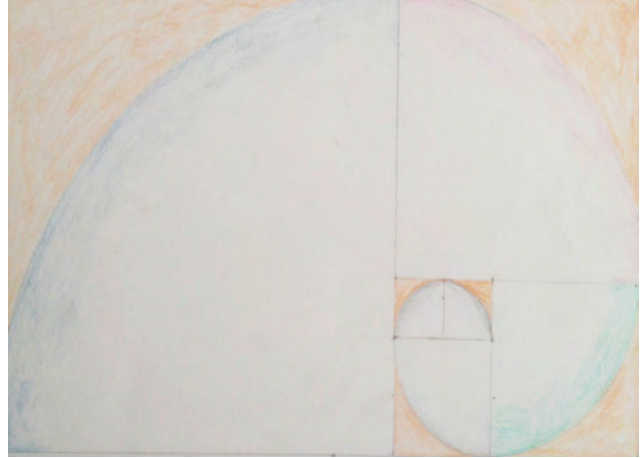


Drawing an example of an Archimedean spiral during the Math Spiral Curriculum evening

The Math Spiral Curriculum (con't.)

Some ideologues may already suggest that mathematical formulas should be installed in children to avoid the difficulties and discomforts of having to learn through living. Even an economy version might include $r=?$, the Archimedean spiral; in contradistinction to this transmission we might consider the Advent spiral in the Waldorf kindergarten—no less susceptible of formulation but redolent of evergreen on the edge of winter. Walking the form is realizing the formula, not in the sense of proof and derivation, but in the sense of logically animate exploration that fructifies proof and derivation down the line. Try to imagine a standardized test for Advent-spiral-walking, and it becomes easy to understand why this manner of mathematical activity is uncommon in schools. Then, try to imagine how each child explores the form, and $r=?$ may come back to life.

I recently finished helping third graders demarcate garden beds for carrots at the [Hawthorne Valley Farm](#). The productiveness of the beds is a logical consequence of their geometry; if you cannot distinguish bed from path, you neither know where to compost nor where to plant. How deliberately you shape things is what they are and who you are as well. ■



7th Grade drawing of Archimedean spiral



9th graders in math class



Elementary School parent participates in lesson during the Math Spiral Curriculum evening with Dan Marsch and Lucy Schneider

Parent Council: The Year in Review

by Sam Sutton / Parent Council President

Parent Council is nearing the end of another busy year for Parent Council. This year saw the implementation of a new structure with one Parent Council member for each grade. This has meant greater representation across the school allowing for an increased level of involvement from all age groups in our discussions and planning.

We started the year with our hugely popular annual apple-picking trip in September followed in October by our second annual Wine Tasting event. New and returning high school parents socialized and sampled an excellent selection of wines provided by Ecco Adler of [Moore Bros](#). As the colder weather approached we held our second Coat Drive - once again many of our families donated lightly used coats to [New York Cares](#).

In January we held our third annual Square Dance. This has become a favorite social event for many and this year was no exception. The event was held at Dinosaur Bar-B-Q in Harlem and dancing was lead by Pat Canon with a live band.

Sunday May 3rd was beautifully warm and sunny, the perfect day for our second annual May Day Celebration. This year we had worked hard to improve the pole (now in one sturdy section) and had a larger band including a couple of students. Many parents volunteered to help with the dance instruction and crown making. The children looked beautiful in their white clothes and floral garlands and many of them learned the tricky art of dancing round the pole with the ribbons. It was the perfect occasion for families to enjoy the onset of the warmer weather and take part in this traditional spring festival.

The Book Fair this year was on May 18 in the Lower School Assembly Room. It was well attended and well received. This is a great way to join in our celebration of storytelling and literacy at Steiner.

Parent Council elections took place in May. We have put together a new Parent Council Handbook, outlining the structure of the group and describing its role. This will be distributed to the entire parent body in the fall. We will be looking for new PC members in many of the classes so please consider nominating the most appropriate fellow parents.

As I will be stepping down as Chair, and also from the Council this year, I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I have enjoyed working with such an enthusiastic and dynamic group of parents over the past few years. I would especially like to thank this year's Parent Council members: Olga Berg, Elena Canon, Paulina Eisenbeis, Stacey Kelly, Dan Goldstein, Terri Gumula, Ellen Jacobson, Sara Madhu, Michele Melland, Jeannie O'Connor, Jim Salser, and Robert Strent. ■



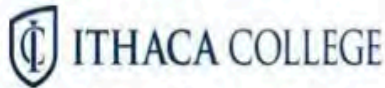
Class of 2015 Matriculations

The Rudolf Steiner School proudly congratulates the Class of 2015 for matriculating to the following colleges and universities.

The goal of our College Guidance Program is to inform and direct students toward the best programs for their interests and capacities.

Geri Perkal did a superb job in learning about and guiding our seniors to the most appropriate school for each student.

We look forward to celebrating their accomplishments at the Commencement exercises on Thursday, June 11, 2015.



VISIT STEINER.EDU/PUBLIC-CALENDAR

Rudolf Steiner School Calendar June - September 2015 for parents and students

JUNE

Friday, June 5		EC Afternoon Program Ends
Monday, June 8	4:00 - 5:30pm	Kindergarten into First Grade Bridge Ceremony - LSAR
Tuesday, June 9	Noon Dismissal	EC Closing Day and EC End-of-Year Picnic
Wednesday, June 10	4:00pm	Half School Day for 1st through 12th grades 8th Grade Moving Up Ceremony - Temple Israel, 112 E. 75th St (Reception to follow in LSAR & Upstairs Kindergarten at 5:30pm)
Thursday, June 11	10:30am - 12:00pm	All School Assembly and Rose Ceremony * Madison Ave. Presbyterian Church, 921 Madison Ave. at 74th St * Dismissal at church after ceremony
	2:00pm	Senior Graduation * Madison Ave. Presbyterian Church, 921 Madison Ave. at 74th St (Reception to follow in LSAR & Upstairs Kindergarten at 4:00pm)
Week of June 15		June Days Nursery, Kindergarten and Grades 1-4; June Days Music and Steiner Sustainability Camp
Week of June 22		June Days Nursery, Kindergarten and Grades 1-4; June Days Music and Steiner Sustainability Camp
Week of June 29		June Days Nursery, Kindergarten and Grades 1-4; Steiner Sustainability Camp

AUGUST

Week of August 31		Middle School and Varsity Seasons Start * Soccer, Volleyball, and Cross Country
-------------------	--	--

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday, September 8	5:00pm	EC New Parent Evening - LSAR
Wednesday, September 9	8:00/8:15am	First Day of School for Grades 1 - 12 * Noon Dismissal
	10:30am	* All School Assembly and Rose Ceremony * Madison Ave. Presbyterian Church, 921 Madison Ave. at 74th St
Thursday, September 10		EC Opening Day
Monday & Tuesday, September 14 - 15		Rosh Hashanah (School Closed)
Wednesday, September 23		Yom Kippur (School Closed)