

CONTENTS

- 1 Editorial
- 2 Silvia Carbone Singh
- 3 Berlin: new o-3
- 3 AMI Notice Board
- 3 Event Highlights
- 3 AGM and Open Forum
- 4 Montessori Summer Seminar
- 5 Theme:
Darwin, Nurture and Nature
 - Homo Sapiens 2.0
 - Respect Life
 - A Montessori Journey: Darwin and Beyond
 - Unesco and Darwin's Bicentenary
 - Other sites of interest related to Darwin
 - "Beagle: on the future of species"
- 11 Parent Section
- 12 Student Corner
- 13 News from the Training Group
- 13 News from the Training Centres
- 17 Susan Stephenson alights in Albania
- 17 Nawantale, Uganda Project
- 18 The Comenius Museum
- 19 Peace Corner
 - Japan, Hiroshima
 - The Peace Boat in Copenhagen
 - Copenhagen and Montessori's Peace
 - Vancouver Peace Summit
- 22 Montessori Events Worldwide
- 22 Theme for next issue

Editorial

With a new season in Nature on the horizon, it is time to start sharing news and stories again. We hope that these past few months you will all have had time to recharge and imbibe new inspiration for a fresh start. And yet ... many Montessorians appear to work on continual shifts. Time off is spent engaging in refreshers, workshops, professional development programmes, or summer courses. Aren't we proving Maria Montessori right when she said in *From Childhood to Adolescence* that the children really did not need vacation, that a rest from one subject would automatically create energy for a new subject? Indeed, new, challenging projects seem to be the necessary nourishment for our everyday responsibilities. We come back to these with more creativity, more commitment, reaffirmed in our core values.

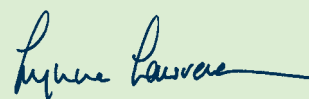
In this issue you will find proof of the dedication of many—from young students, young graduates and seasoned teachers, but whatever their experience, all are just as much involved in the Montessori adventure. They see how the proverbial seeds are being sown, and wait with patience and grace for them to germinate.

Montessori has always been an exciting adventure, breaking ground: it does not only enable children to educate themselves, and explore their potential, it also empowers parents to let their children be masters of their own learning. Never a follower of fashion, the Montessori approach is timeless;

minding that slogan, is there better evidence that Montessori by definition is today's and tomorrow's best educational option?

Charles Darwin is credited with having said 'How paramount the future is to the present when one is surrounded by children' which justifies that this issue's theme invited contributions on Nature and Biology—in connection with Darwin's bicentenary.

Both Darwin and Montessori are giants in their own right, bringers of revolutionary ideas – that were both embraced and rejected offhand at the time, but whose influence in their respective fields is now undisputed. Darwin and Montessori share precise observation skills and innovative thinking that helped them draw conclusions that they did not set out to find. They were not trying to prove a theory, the theory found them. And when Darwin writes 'there is grandeur in this view of life... from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.' Does that not resonate with Montessori's cosmic vision?



Lynne Lawrence
Executive Director



Practical life at Pebble Creek
High Montessori School



Silvia Carbone-Singh (1942-2009)

2

Silvia was born in Italy, and during her childhood and young adulthood she lived in Rome. Gianna Gobbi, who had worked personally with Maria Montessori, was a very close friend of her family, and that is how Silvia met “Montessori” at a very young age.

Gianna was able to observe a very special gift in Silvia: the way in which she communicated with very young children. When Silvia had to decide which career she should be following, Gianna Gobbi talked to her about the Montessori course for working with children under 3 years, a course given by Adele Costa Gnocchi.

Silvia got very interested in the development of very young children and her love for the children, and this particular age group, would accompany her throughout her life.

After working with young children in Italy, she moved to New York, USA where she got married and had her first child; due to the work of Silvia’s husband they moved to Mexico City.

Once Silvia was established in Mexico, she heard that there was a Montessori Centre in the city and decided to visit. Mrs Cato Hanrath, who was the AMI trainer in charge of the centre in Mexico at that time, was the one who gave to Silvia information about the Montessori movement in Mexico and invited her to share with the students in the centre her knowledge about children under three years of age.

Silvia fell in love with Mexico and its children; this love was to guide all of her work for many years.

Silvia was an Assistants to Infancy AMI trainer for more than 20 years; she was one of the pioneers in this field and she shared her knowledge with students of three different continents with passion.

Silvia always looked at life in a very positive way, taking each day as a special moment that she loved to share with her family, especially with her grandson. During the time of her illness she was an example of fortitude and dignity for all the people who were around her.

On Sunday 27th September 2009, Silvia passed away in her beloved Mexico surrounded by her family and close friends.

Silvia had a beautiful ceremony full of flowers of many colours, attended by family, friends, colleagues and many of her former students. Silvia’s passing is a real loss for Mexico and the Montessori Community.

Her life, work and knowledge will always be connected to the Assistants to Infancy level of training. We will continue to think of Silvia with respect and great appreciation. Thank you Silvia, We will miss you.

Maria Teresa Vidales

Berlin: The Birth of a 0-3 Course

Patricia Wallner, AMI 0-3 trainer, will be giving a course in Berlin. This is a much awaited course, offered in English (German translation will be offered if necessary) to meet requests from many students that have shown interest in the 0-3 (or Assistants to Infancy) format.

The course will consist of four modules to be offered over a 2-year period. There are a few places left, so avail yourself of this wonderful opportunity and contact:

For info in German: Sister Petra Stelzner
sr.petra.stelzner@gmx.de.
also see the German site:
<http://www.montessori-seminar.de/kurs/ami-diplom-kurs-0-3.php>

For information in English, send off an email to Patricia Wallner pjwallner@gmail.com

Apply now, it will be January before you know it.

AMI Notice Board!

AMI is often approached by individuals and organizations requesting assistance and guidance in establishing Montessori programmes and projects around the world. To assist these endeavours, and facilitate an exchange of information, AMI has set up a Notice Board where details can be posted. Please note that AMI is providing this space as a service only and is not involved in any other way.

If you would like to post a notice please contact AMI on info@montessori-ami.org.

Event Highlights

The Event Highlights Tab is another addition to the AMI website. Here we will post reports and photos of events from around the Montessori community, with contributions from you and us. Have a look, we already have a few posts on.

Block Your Diary April 10 & 11, 2010 !

Come to Amsterdam for the 2010 Annual General Meeting and Open Forum. The April 10/11 weekend has lots of exciting events and speakers on offer.

Guest speaker: Adele Diamond

We are thrilled to announce that Professor Adele Diamond will be our guest speaker at the AGM (April 10), Prof Diamond is both a psychologist and a neuroscientist. One of the pioneers in the field of “developmental cognitive neuroscience,” her specialty is the study in very young children of cognitive functions that depend on prefrontal cortex (PFC), collectively called “executive functions (EF),” “self-regulation” or “cognitive control.” She combines that with study of neuroanatomical, genetic, and neurochemical mechanisms that make those functions possible.

These cognitive abilities include reasoning, working memory, self-control (inhibition), cognitive flexibility, and problem-solving. Deficits in one or more of these abilities are seen in many mental disorders (including ADHD, schizophrenia, autism, and depression).

For more information

<http://www.devcogneuro.com/People/AdeleDiamond.html> or http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/BDL_subpages/organizers.html

This will be a wonderful opportunity to hear one of the world's leading researchers in this field.

The Open Forum on April 11 is on Outreach to Parents. The programme is still being developed, but will offer a wide variety of speakers, topics and tips — followed by an interactive session.

Montessori Summer Format – The Sun Was Shining!

Participants from across Europe and North America flocked to sample this novel format.

From August 23 to August 29, the Montessori Summer Seminar offered a most interesting mix: in depth lectures on neuroscience, current research, outreach projects and Montessori history, inter-spersed with workshops requiring active participation. There was ample opportunity for observation at a selection of Montessori schools spanning the age ranges 0-18, and there were no less than four cultural and historical walks with expert guides.

Not only did the seminar participants travel across different areas of study, this week required them to go to various locations in the Netherlands and Germany—so physical and intellectual movement went hand in hand. It was a well-rounded week, synthesizing many aspects of Montessori. Words like absorption, activity, inspiration, reflection and enthusiasm sum up the experiences of the participants.

The seminar was funded by the European Platform, allowing for an interesting reduction on the original fees. The seminar's listing on the Comenius* site proved to be



an excellent tool to alert people that something special was on offer. (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/trainingdatabase>) The seminar was offered by AMI, in close collaboration with the University of Muenster, Germany and Hogeschool Edith Stein, Netherlands.

Next year the three partners will organize a similar seminar, also to be held in the last week of August. So start checking if your diary is free for that time of year!

* The European Comenius programmes are generally aimed at staff involved in school or further education to attend programmes focusing on continuing professional development. Participants may also be eligible for individual funding through the Comenius programme.

4

Darwin, Nurture and Nature Theme stories

Charles Darwin



The discussions on nature and nurture take place at many different levels: this bulletin also will offer you a mix. Mark Berger kicks off this theme section with some contemplative, philosophical observations on Montessori and Darwin. His contribution is followed by a very concrete story in which Charlene Trochta makes a strong plea for respecting nature and how that can be embedded in the home and school environment for the Casa age children. In "A Montessori Journey: Darwin and Beyond" Helen Scott recounts the initial exploits of her class into biology and biochemistry, culminating in 11 students from her school undertaking a 4-hour journey to join an evolutionary geneticist, who led a class of senior elementary and middle school students through a college level biochemistry laboratory.

And finally, Victoria Barrès, in her traditional Unesco-related article, highlights some of the Unesco events or sponsorships in connection with the Darwin year.

Some Internet Resources and links you might like to explore follow the Unesco article.

Next theme

The theme of our next bulletin will be "Reading in the Montessori classroom and at home."

We already have a great article lined up about reading in the home. Let us have your ideas, stories, photos, and favourite books.



*Sitting quietly,
doing nothing,
spring comes,
and the grass
grows by itself*

Homo Sapiens 2.0

Mark Berger

Maria Montessori and Charles Darwin both began their professional careers studying medicine. Charles Darwin went on to outline an explanation for how life evolves and Maria Montessori went on to outline an explanation for how the human individual develops and how the human species can reach its optimal form.

Darwin showed us the mechanism of change in living things. He presented the idea that random variations occur in the process of biological growth, and he argued that nature “selects” those variations that prove to be beneficial. Darwin’s first point, that random variations occur in the first place, was a significant step in a different direction for biologists. The prevailing understanding was something called “preformation”, which viewed the development of a living thing as simply being the growth of pre-existing structures. In this view, all is present from the start of an organism’s life; it just grows and gets bigger. There is no room for variation to occur in this view.

Darwin brought us back to the tradition that began with Aristotle, that of “epigenesis”, which states that novel structures occur during development—making random variation possible.

Along the way, a debate had emerged in the field of human development that came to be known as the nature-nurture issue. The principal issue was whether nature (via genes) was the director of development or whether the environment in which the living organism lived and developed was the director (nurturing certain characteristics). Today we have resolved this false dichotomy by understanding that both genes and environmental factors play a role.

It is the fact that “nurture” plays a role that Maria Montessori’s ideas are possible. If nature directed our development and ‘that’s all there is to it’, then there would be no need to provide “prepared environments” to allow for optimal human development: we’d all become what our genes were programmed to produce, automatically. Human consciousness plays a key role here, allowing us to be active in our interactions with our environment.

Montessori’s ideas about human development draw on the tradition of epigenesis*. Her work has served to illuminate what the internal “active” role of the individual amounts to as well as how this role relates to the interaction of the individual with her external environment. This insight has the potential to show humanity how to better lead itself down a developmentally appropriate path.

Maria Montessori showed us that that by understanding both the laws of the universe (nature) and our own identity, we can make of ourselves a species that will be “of the universe”. That evolution has created consciousness and free will opens the door to wondering what will come next. Montessori has suggested, I believe, that humanity can direct itself to become a species that belongs to the world, by being a species “of” the world.

Darwin himself had similar ideas, presented in his *Descent of Man*: ‘Selfish and contentious people will not cohere and without coherence nothing can be effected....’ (p. 176) and ‘As man advances in civilization ...the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation...’ (p. 166) Here Darwin speaks of humanity’s “coherence” and its coming to understand its interdependency, much the way Montessori did.

Maria Montessori spoke of the emergence, one day, of a “new man”, one being capable of living in harmony both with his environment and with himself. She saw that this called for a high degree of self-reflection, of humanity’s coming to understand itself and its place in the universe.

What is required is to first understand what “nature” is and that it is an integrated and harmonious whole; and then use this understanding to help us in guiding our own development, to help us to know what nature “wants”. When humanity is able to be sufficiently aware of itself and of the mechanism of evolutionary change, it can take control of what lies ahead, as far as human evolution is concerned.

* Montessori was familiar with the work of those who moved this view forward during the 19th century: William Preyer and James Mark Baldwin (both are mentioned in *The Montessori Method*). Preyer advanced the view that the organism played an active role in its development, and Baldwin argued that this active role worked within a specific environment. Baldwin’s view also served to shape the ideas of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky in the 20th century.

Respect life

Charlene S. Trochta

A few years ago, the children were lining up to go out onto the playground. Someone spied a shivering bundle walking on the garden tiles near the small playground. Children quickly tiptoed to look, and as they came near, their voices lowered to whispers and soft tones. There under the steps to the slide, shaking with fright, was a baby possum. How had it got there? Maybe it had become separated from its mother in the rainstorm the night before.

The children were very concerned for the little animal, and wanted to know how to get it back to its mommy. But she was nowhere in sight. What to do? One of the older children said, 'I bet Dr Spitz (the vet living next door) would know what to do!' Whereupon a small box was obtained and placed on the ground. The little possum quickly crawled into this dark place of safety. Soon, with an escort of teacher and several children, the orphaned possum was on its way to Dr Spitz' office. We received a call later in the day reporting that the little critter was old enough to be weaned, was taking nourishment, and when strong enough would be taken to a wildlife safe haven and set free.

Awareness, sensitivity, empathy, concern and compassion—these are all character traits that we hope our children will develop and carry into adulthood. To respect life in all forms, whether plant, animal or human, at whatever level of development, from earliest potential to maturity to death, this is the highest principle that identifies us as humans. In the Montessori environment, the first lesson in the natural sciences is: everything is either living or non-living. The child begins to sort objects indoors and outdoors. Living things can grow. Living things require food, air and water to exist. Living things respond to the world around them.

Anything that is alive needs nurturing, care and sustenance. Nowhere can that important lesson be made more clear to children than in their daily life routines in the home. For, who feeds the pets in your home? Takes the dog out for a walk? Cleans the hamster's cage? Who helps weed the flowerbeds, water the plants? Who prepares the meals?

How each member of a family meets his/her needs as well as being aware of the needs of other family members is the first step in developing the ability to live in community, in society. The simplest tasks of caring for pets, plants, preparing meals are all opportunities to learn of what meeting needs is all about. Sometimes family members may involve themselves so deeply in solving the problems of society and the world, they forget to first pay attention to the basic needs and rights of life right in their own home.



Baby possum

photo: courtesy of David Seeveld <http://www.aaanimalcontrol.com>

Much of what is basic to the Montessori philosophy in the prepared environment about respect for life is easily adapted for application in the home. First and foremost, are grace and courtesy lessons. To be polite shows respect for self, as well as for others. 'Please' and 'thank you' are so easy to say, take only a moment, change feelings of 'have to' into 'want to'. It is much easier to form positive habits from the early years than to have to unlearn negative habits later on in life. Kind words and gentle actions nurture kind and gentle persons. Kind and gentle persons have an instinctive and natural respect for life.

Pets in the home provide companionship and entertainment. More importantly, however, is the life lesson to be learnt from having a living entity dependent on you for the continuation of its life. A pet needs food and material sustenance as well as emotional nurturing. From their earliest years, children can participate in providing this sustenance and accepting responsibility for it in small, successive steps. When they forget or balk at carrying out their responsibility, one need give only a gentle reminder, 'What if we forgot to give you lunch?' 'What if we didn't feel like taking you to the doctor when you are sick?' Every privilege carries a responsibility. To have a living thing dependent on you is a great responsibility. A pet is not a toy that can be mistreated or discarded when not wanted. Children can be taught to treat pets with care and gentleness.

Watching the cycle of seasons in your outdoor environment prepares a child for beginnings and endings—birth, life, death, rebirth. It isn't necessary to offer intellectual explanations to children to help them apprehend these great mysteries of life. Watching leaves bud out, live, change colour, dry up, fall, only to see new leaves reappear next spring is a perfect example of birth, life, death, rebirth. We cannot know how, but when a child is made aware of these processes, the apprehension, the unconscious preparation for later conscious understanding takes place.

We are never as fully alive as when we are children. When we respect our children, we respect life. When we respect life, we teach our children to respect life. If we all could learn to respect life in the words of John Lennon, just 'imagine.'

A Montessori Journey: Darwin and Beyond

Text: Helen Scott
Photos: Lara Pullen

Helen Scott reports on how her class first saw Darwin's *Origin of Species* as a platform for creation. She passed out a copy of a page from this science classic to each one of her senior elementary students last year. While acknowledging that Darwin's writing was complicated, the students were directed to choose one phrase that they understood, highlight it, and then explain that principle using art. They pulled from their original Great Lesson of "God with No Hands" and all of the subsequent Great Lessons to create an altered book for their school auction. The book was beautiful, impressed the Keystone community, and sold for \$500.

Jerica Tan (age 10) chose a phrase from page 211: the mid-styled form of *Lythrum salicaria* was illegitimately fertilized with the greatest ease by pollen...' She illustrated the page with colourful drawings of many different types of flowering plants and flying insects.

Jorge (Junior) Martinez (age 9) chose a phrase from page 223: 'the slow rate at which the land is worn away...' He chose to illustrate his page with blue water colour lapping up on a beach of sand rising into small pebbles.

Joe Dempsey (age 9) chose a phrase from page 244: 'on extinction.' He filled the page with a colourful drawing of fighting dinosaurs. The tail of the victorious dinosaur extended far outside the page of the book.

Keturah Jackson (age 10) chose a phrase from page 45: 'one who has tried knows how troublesome it is to get seed from a few wheat' and illustrated the page with dried plants and seeds chosen to represent wheat and grains of wheat.

What is Biochemistry?

Like most great Montessori experiences, this first introduction to the work of Darwin was left to rest in the young and active minds. A year later, Jerica and Junior happened to be at my desk together when they decided that they needed to learn more about biochemistry. They researched the word and their question prompted me to teach the class the periodic table of elements. Each student chose an element and made an acrostic poem. Jerica and Junior also decided to create a game out of the periodic table. As they worked, they realized that they were learning chemistry, but not biochemistry.

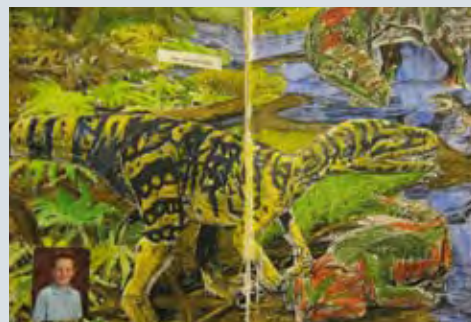
Keystone Montessori (IL) is lucky to have a vibrant community of talented parents. One such parent is a science writer (and former Montessori student) with a PhD in the life sciences. She also happens to have written a scientific curriculum called *Scientific Explosions*. This science curriculum was originally written ten years ago for gifted



Growth and reproduction are illustrated in Jerica's page from the altered book.



The role of geology on natural selection is hinted at in Junior's page from the altered book.



Joe illustrated natural selection with his colourful pictures of dinosaurs.



Keturah illustrated growth and reproduction and the struggle for existence.

High School students in the Northeast Metro 916 School District in Minnesota.



Science is a Way of Thinking

Dr Lara Pullen agreed to bring the curriculum into the classroom and adapt it to the background and questions of senior elementary and middle school students. The curriculum was primarily developed to support inquiry and an understanding of science within the context of society. The goal of *Scientific Explosions* is to educate a generation of young people to be informed and competent consumers of scientific information.

Dr Pullen began the course in our Montessori classroom by describing science as a way of thinking and the scientific method as a way of organizing those thoughts. Then the students were re-introduced to Darwin. They now learnt that Darwin's theory of evolution forced a reassessment of the concept of change and an understanding of how changes manifest themselves in the world. The students described the world as it existed when Darwin was a young man. They discovered how Darwin was raised, how he was educated, and what he observed while travelling on the HMS Beagle.

At this point in our journey, I decided that we should go see the new Disney "Earth" movie on Earth Day. This resulted in a very spontaneous field trip where the students watched beautiful images of the natural world whilst looking for examples of Darwin's four natural laws:

- 1 growth and reproduction
- 2 inheritance
- 3 variability
- 4 natural selection

From our discussion of the natural world, we began a discussion of the effect of Darwin on society. The students watched the movie "Inherit the Wind" and learnt about the Scope monkey trial and censorship. We discussed the importance of freedom of thought and whether that freedom was worth fighting for.

Beyond Darwin

If Darwin was the father of modern biology, then who were the children? Well, in our class we followed our studies of Darwin with discussions of Gregor Mendel, James Watson, Francis Crick, Barbara McClintock, and Rita Levi-Montalcini.

Scientific Explosions Curriculum		
Unit 1	Introduction to Scientific Inquiry	Science as a way of thinking
Unit 2	Charles Darwin	Birth of modern biology
Unit 3	Gregor Mendel	Father of genetics
Unit 4	James Watson and Francis Crick	Biochemical nature of inheritance
Unit 5	Barbara McClintock	Jumping genes as creators of variation
Unit 6	Rita Levi-Montalcini	Nervous system adapting to environment (post-Darwin thinking)

In each case, we introduced the students to the science and social climate that surrounded these creative individuals

and, in each case we discussed the intellectual leap that allowed them to transform existing science into a new understanding of the world.

We discussed how Mendelian genetics appeared at first to stand in marked contrast to the theory of evolution. How could Mendel observe traits that were passed from generation to generation in a fixed way? Didn't Darwin insist upon variability? We found the answer in McClintock and her jumping genes as she tracked mutations in the kernels of corn which showed us Darwin's third law at work.

Biochemistry at Last

The children were now prepared to learn about biochemistry. They understood Darwin and how his four laws permeate every question and observation in biology. They also now understood why James Watson decided that the most important problem in biology was the structure and chemical nature of genes.

The class followed the adventures of Watson and Crick as these two scientists described how helical chains made of sugar and phosphates are held together by purines and pyrimidines. The students learnt the importance of how each chain must pair adenine to thymine and guanine to cytosine. They read Watson and Crick's famous *Nature* paper wherein the authors postulated the biochemical nature of the inheritable material that had been described by Darwin 100 years earlier. They also learnt from the famous paper that the biochemical structure of DNA would open the door to many more questions of biology: 'It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material.'

Meeting a Real Research Scientist

The class also became intrigued with the characters of Watson and Crick. After they read and discussed Watson's *Double Helix*, an opportunity presented itself to meet a real molecular geneticist in a seminar in downtown Chicago. A second spontaneous field trip took us to a presentation led by Mike Miller, Associate Professor of Art, and Dr James Bonacum, Assistant Professor of Genetics and Molecular Biology, both from the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS). The professors discussed the historical role that science has played in quantifying differences in the human species. Our students were the only students attending this intimate seminar.

Our Montessori students were able to test their new knowledge of biology out in the real world. They watched with surprise, and then pride, as a professor of genetics had to continually "raise his game" as he sought out their level of knowledge. Dr Bonacum began with meiosis/mitosis, moved swiftly to chromosomes/genes, and onto transcription/translation before finally determining that the students did not know about introns and exons and he could begin his presentation there.

He commented that our Montessori students were not only knowledgeable but also extraordinarily engaged in learning. He followed this compliment with an invitation

for our students to join him in his laboratory in Springfield to do a DNA experiment. He noted that while our students were too young to be choosing a college, the admissions department of UIS would be impressed enough by their qualifications to call the visit recruitment and fund the experiment that the students would perform.

Isolating DNA at the University of Illinois

On the first day of summer vacation, 11 students from our class eagerly drove the 4 hours down to join Dr Bonacum, an evolutionary geneticist, as he led our class of senior elementary and middle school students through a college level biochemistry laboratory, generously paid for by UIS.



Keystone students prepare to isolate DNA.

Dr Bonacum was an intelligent, engaging, and welcoming host. The day was long, but by the end, the students had isolated their own DNA, performed a PCR reaction, and run the resulting amplified DNA on a gel to see if they were homozygous or heterozygous for jumping genes, a concept that the students first learnt about in the discussion of Barbara McClintock.



Jerica loads her DNA sample in the gel.

Dr Bonacum also gave the children one of the highest compliments you can pay a Montessori student: ‘Your students were refreshingly free of the worries about grading and how it would affect their futures. They were a joy to meet and a privilege to work with. And they came because they wanted to, not because they had to! Students like this give me hope for the future.’

9

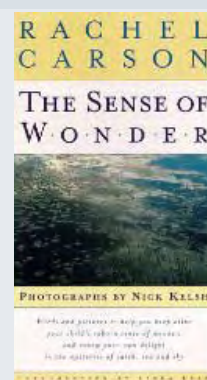
Unesco and Darwin’s Bicentenary

Victoria Barrès

Some children are lucky to be with adults who help nurture what Montessori called the “love of the environment.” In *The Sense of Wonder*, Rachel Carson shares her young nephew Roger’s intense love of the Maine woods, in their walks together from the age of 20 months until 4.5 years. He absorbed her love of plants and nature, including their names, without her awareness of any conscious effort on his part.

Other children, like Darwin, discover this love mostly on their own, when allowed time and freedom to explore their “wilderness.” Charles Darwin collected a wide variety of bugs and other creatures. His mother died when he was nine, his emotional energies were directed to nature, which allowed him to engage in the world, perhaps even contribute to his inner healing and lay the foundation for his life’s work.

Early on, Darwin realized the importance of asking his own “great” questions and persevered his entire life. Although Darwin thought school dry and uninteresting, he continued to observe and explore nature. Years later, after unsuccessfully attempting to study medicine, Darwin studied theology at Cambridge University, again to please his father. There he met famous naturalists who encouraged him and invited him to their meetings and homes. The captain of the “Beagle” sought a young



naturalist for its scientific voyage and Darwin's name was suggested. At age 22, Darwin left on a five years' journey around the world, including the Galapagos islands. He collected thousands of specimens, and discovered that turtles and finches from different islands had evolved in varying ways. He then spent the rest of his life trying to formulate the theory of evolution by natural selection and adaptation. His life incarnates Montessori's description of the patient scientist, motivated to use his intelligence and energies to try and understand the world, one that he began to discover and love in early childhood.

Darwin's landscape laboratory was proposed to UNESCO as the UK's World Heritage site nomination.

'It demonstrates how the Cudham and Downe valleys, woods, meadows, high ground, bogs, garden and greenhouse at Down House provided the raw resources for Darwin's observations and scientific experiments'.

For more information: www.english-heritage.org.uk/

To celebrate Darwin's 200th anniversary in 2009 and the impact of Darwin's ideas on current scientific knowledge, UNESCO and The International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) have organized the "Darwin 200 Symposia". On five continents, various symposia and satellite meetings will address seven themes, including biological consequences of global change, biodiversity and biological resources and human evolution.

www.iubs.org for more information.

Another scientific voyage has just begun, this time to study the oceans, so crucial in our lives and so little understood. On September 5, 2009, the scientifically equipped 36-meter schooner, "Tara", left the port of Lorient, France. Over the next three years, revolving teams of scientists will collect data to study the interaction of the oceans' flora and fauna, as well as man's influence on this key resource so little studied and understood. Stories, photos and films will be shared on the Internet and on a weekly French television programme, *Thalassa*.

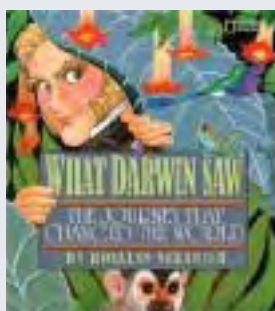
'Club Tara Junior' is open to all children, aged 6-18 years.

It's a fascinating way to learn French by exploring the interconnectedness of the ocean life, the air we breathe and the marine life. It might even spark new interests and future careers, after sharing photos & videos of this extraordinary adventure. When fatigue sets in, team member Colomban de Vargas, specialist in biodiversity and evolution, loves to look at the computer images of the beautiful unicellular animals. Contemplating their beauty and extraordinary design gives him energy to pursue his life's work. To follow this voyage,

Tara's website is <http://oceans.taraexpeditions.org>.



Club Tara Junior



Two books about Darwin for children.



Other sites of interest

- Charles Darwin <http://www.darwin200.org/> for celebrations, events, and information on the Darwin year.
- <http://darwin-online.org.uk/>
- <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/>
- <http://www.darwin200.org/image-resources.html> (also has section for schools)

“Beagle: On the future of species”



<http://beagle.vpro.nl/#/page/item/12> is a multilingual site that charts the unfolding of an ambitious project: “Beagle: On the future of species.” The project will reconstruct Darwin’s 5-year long voyage on the “HMS Beagle” in the course of one year, and make an attempt to assess where the world stands today in light of Darwin’s evolution theory. Dutch and Belgian television cooperate in covering the voyage. There is lots of information also in Spanish, Portuguese, and English on the site.

As Charles Darwin pondered on the origin of species, the project’s focus will be on the future. On board is Sarah Darwin, great-great-granddaughter, botanist and biologist. Being one of the principal figures in the television series, she will trace Charles Darwin’s footsteps, read from his travel diary, sketch the historical context of his work, and connect his observations with present knowledge and personal considerations. Four young students will join the trip for a month from Rio de Janeiro to Montevideo and will report on their findings.

Beagle on Facebook provides you with the most recent updates on the project in English. You can become a member and follow the Beagle’s discoveries. More photos of the project can be found on [Flickr](#).

11

Parent Section

Staying with the subject of Darwin and science, especially in the field of the whys and hows to do with the natural sciences and our natural environment, we can easily be “outquestioned” by children. You, as parents, probably also realize that sometimes special resources to help your answers would be just the thing you are looking for.

<http://sciencesowhat.direct.gov.uk/QuestionsKidsAsk.aspx> is a site that does just that. It was especially developed to help ‘arm parents of young children with the science facts

they need to answer their children’s tricky questions. There are also ideas for days out across the country and different activities families can do, to help both children and their parents to understand more about the science behind the way things work.’

If you know of similar initiatives, please share them with us (publications@montessori-ami.org), and we will include references and links in a future edition. Thanks.



Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents

Maren Schmidt, Montessori teacher, parent, and author has published *Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents*.

The book hopes to provide parents with a good understanding of how Montessori sees the stages of development in childhood, and how each one is catered for very specifically. The book also helps put right some of the

many (often perpetuated) misconceptions about what Montessori is and isn’t. Some Montessori principles are highlighted all testifying to the fact that the approach is much more than teaching. Topics such as the environment, the absence of grading, homework, etc. are addressed.

A checklist of questions to ask during school orientation visits is included, serving as helpful guidelines to assist parents when choosing a school, both at the primary and the elementary level. And a great help for parents will be the list of Montessori terms explained in “ordinary” English - included in the final chapter of the book.

Although written specifically for the North American Montessori school landscape, this title can be a useful addition to the Montessori library of parents anywhere.

<https://www.search-it-buy-it.com/sibi/BuyBook.aspx?Id=007&sku=1598589741>

Graduation Speech

Hadrien Roche

Hadrien Roche was a recent student of Ann Dunne's. Ann, AMI Elementary Trainer, based in Ireland, has just spent three summers in London taking charge of the special Elementary Course given at the Maria Montessori Institute. On the graduation day Hadrien, from France, gave this inspired speech on behalf of the new graduates.

In a time when sneers are more valued than smiles, where indifference prevails and commitment is suspicious, where to dream and to hope is to be naive and a fool, children have a lot to teach us.

When you work with children, you feel yourselves changing, reverting back to a more innocent stage; your hard rind cracks, your cynicism dissolves, and once again you can see the world as a place of wonder, full of marvels to discover, of joy and laughter.

We lose so much as we grow up. Somebody breaks our heart, and we stop believing in love. We're faced with an unfair world, and we stop believing in justice. Our ideals are mocked and scorned and we stop dreaming. We see evil prevails, and we stop hoping. But truly, which is foolish? To resign or to fight back?

If there is one lesson to be learnt from history, it is that change never simply "happens". What may look like an unstoppable wave, a continuous evolution is really the sum of all the individuals acting, deciding, pushing in one direction, until, all together, they become a force, and things become different.

Brecht said 'change the World, it needs it.' It is pointless to just wish that all the bad things in our world would go away. It is up to us to change it. And for that, during these three years, we've been given two special powers.

We talked a lot this year about imagination and reasoning, but we should never forget their close relatives: dream and hope. If I had to say in two words what Montessori is about, what a Montessori course gave me, it's the two words I would choose: dream and hope.

For we are dreamers. Our dream is one of a united world, where the children from our classrooms have become enlightened adults who lead the world towards peace. Our dream is that trust and love in children are stronger than authority and anger. Our dream is that children need to be guided and not shepherded, that they should cooperate and not compete, that our expectations should be a bar to reach and not the bars of a cage.

People, people who know better, will tell you that this is all a dream. And they're right. It is a dream, but there is nothing wrong with that.

If humans never dreamt, we would still be in caves, complaining that it's really cold and dark in here. And then

someone dreamt that they could domesticate fire. He was probably laughed at and mocked. But he was right.

Our dream is now a little more than a hundred years old. It was the dream of a woman, a scientifically-minded, no nonsense kind of woman. It is still relevant, it is still worth dreaming, it's a standard that one can be proud to hold.

Hope is the wind that blows in mankind's sails. Hope is: believing that tomorrow will be better than today; that things do get better, and will continue to do so, as long as we don't despair.

From the very beginning, when the first humans decided not to eat all their grains, and to sow it, that was an act of hope. The hope that today's efforts will secure a better future. And the plentiful reaping proved them right.

When mankind hopes, nothing can stop it. When it stops, it is doomed.

Our adventure here lasted for three summers, for three years. We arrived from all corners of the world, all so different, all so diverse, and yet united. There is a reason why this group was so special, so close-knit. We all shared a common sense of purpose, seekers and travellers, here to learn, here to make a difference.

Most came from afar, some halfway across the globe. Even our trainers were wanderers, wise women coming to give us gifts of knowledge. Well... gifts might be a bit too nice a way to put it.

As all the spouses and families here well know, there is nothing easy about a Montessori course. It has been hard, it has been intense. There was joy, and there was anger, there were tears and there was laughter, there was mumbling and muttering, there was awe and rejoicing. We all made sacrifices to be here, to come all this way. Some couldn't finish, some had to take more time. There is no doubt that there was a cost. There is also no doubt that we're all so much richer now: rich with friends, rich with knowledge, rich with dreams and hopes.

For all that we owe a great debt to Ann, Jackie, Carol, Diane, Carla, Kyla and Melinda, for their passion and dedication. And we all owe each other a huge debt of gratitude, for making these three summers so special, for making them possible, for making them a treasured memory I will cherish precious.



During these three years, we also talked about planting seeds a lot. We can see it in two ways: In one way, we are the fertile fields in which our trainers precious deposited seeds of knowledge that will grow and grow as we work with children. In another, the world is the land. And we are the seeds. Each seed is a promise, an old pact with the Earth. And after this training, each one of us is a gift that

Ann and Jackie are offering to the world. A gift to children everywhere. A promise, a hope that now lives in us, the power to change the world, to make a better future happen.

So now, three years have gone by. The seeds have been planted. The course is over. Let the harvest begin.



Montessori Movers

Indeed, we are concurring with Professor Steven Hughes when he states that 'Montessori children are good at doing things', and what's more good at doing things together.

This photo was sent by Merry Hadden. It shows some of the children helping her school—Montessori at Roseborough—move to its new location in Mount Dora, Florida.

13

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING GROUP

The enthusiasm with which the Seminar Format at the Primary level has been received prompts the extension of this format to the training of trainers at the Elementary level. The plans are:

- Six two-week seminars, over a three year period
- Commencing in October 2012 and ending in March 2015
- Two full course cycles for practical training, within those three years

Requirements for prospective students:

- An AMI Elementary diploma
- An AMI Primary diploma*
- Five years of teaching experience, three of which are consecutive, in an Elementary class
- A university degree

If you are interested in knowing more about the Elementary Seminar Format, please contact the Training Group at: brenda@montessori-ami.org.

More specific details on venue, costs, etc. will be announced as soon as they are available.

* A tuition free place on an AMI Primary course can be offered to a candidate for the Seminar Format at the Elementary level who has already been through the application process and been provisionally accepted for training. Prospective candidates are requested to contact the Training Group direct for further information about this offer.

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING CENTRES

Dublin

Nikki Hughes Leaves Dublin Post

Nikki Hughes has recently retired as Director of Primary training in Dublin after many years of loyal service. On Saturday 13 June Nikki, surrounded and applauded by her last batch of graduating students was thanked by Ann Dunne, Head of the Montessori College in Dublin. Nikki's stint in Dublin ran for no less than twelve years, during which she did fantastic work on the Primary course.

Nikki's crossing and re-crossing of the Atlantic, the commuting between home in the USA and work in Ireland, was surely the ultimate expression of her belief in Montessori education; of an evergreen sense of adventure and

Nikki Hughes



of a love of new undertakings. As a Board member Nikki gave serious consideration to all the Centre's concerns and generously shared the fruits of her experience.

Ann Dunne expressed her conviction that every Montessori course must be of the highest calibre if children are to get the teachers they so deserve; Dublin had been blessed with Nikki as Director of Training, and would continue to benefit from her work in the future. Many aspects of the course bear witness to Nikki's capacity to give and build.

To students she gave a model type of leadership that impressed the importance of high standards, leaving them with the most valuable foundation for their teaching careers.

It's not goodbye to Nikki, it's au revoir, as she will continue to speak at Montessori events and act as an AMI Examiner.

Argentina

AMI Primary Course off to an Excellent Start

Astrid Steverlynck

The first AMI Primary Course is now underway in Buenos Aires. It started 10 August and will be completed by August 2010. This is a historical event since it is the first AMI course to be offered in South America.

Although Maria Montessori paid a visit to Argentina in 1926, and her assistant Giuliana Sorge gave training sessions, in the following year, the method led a life on the periphery in the region mainly due to lack of training.

We are delighted that we finally can offer sound Montessori training and a better education for all the children in South America. The course is organized by the Fundación Argentina María Montessori (FAMM) together with the Montessori Institute of San Diego (MISD), and is directed by Dr Silvia C. Dubovoy.

We have 27 students from five different countries (Peru, Guatemala, France, Argentina and Switzerland), all committed to the future of children in their own countries and with many projects to start Montessori experiences in different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

Dr Dubovoy also gave four well-attended talks in three universities, contributing to our efforts to make



Montessori education better known among the academic community and the general public. We are already planning the next courses for 2010 in Buenos Aires, another Primary Programme (3-6), and an Assistants to Infancy Programme (0-3).

France, Paris

Institut Supérieur Maria Montessori

As of September the Institut Supérieur Maria Montessori has moved into new premises.
13 rue de la Grange Bateliere, Paris.

Japan

Japan Elementary

"Two good to be true" — Co-directors Baiba Krumins Grazzini, and Greg McDonald have started the first AMI Elementary Course in Japan!

After many years of waiting, the training centre in Yokohama threw its doors wide open to a group of eager students who had enrolled on the Elementary course. The course could not have happened without the dedication of its gracious sponsors, Mr and Mrs Takane.

Baiba's and Greg's collaboration is substantiated by including no less than two photos that show students and staff working on the course (including Jakky Sangster who was helping for two weeks) and Mr and Mrs Takane.



New Zealand

Pioneering 3-6 Course

The Maria Montessori Education Foundation (MMEF) in New Zealand is excited to host its first ever AMI primary course. Cheryl Ferreira is pioneering this course, whose modular build-up is also a first. Cheryl follows in the footsteps of other AMI trainers that have travelled around the world to help establish permanent AMI training.

The AMI primary course consists of 7 contact modules in 2009 and 2010. These will average 4 weeks in duration scheduled within the New Zealand school holidays and a week on either side. Students will return to their own schools in between contact modules to put into practice what they have learnt.

Plans are already underway for the next course to commence in 2011, and MMEF is now considering locations for the next 3-6 training course. They would love to hear from you! Please take a moment to answer these 4 questions and email the answers to mmef@ihug.co.nz

- 1 If the next training course is in Wellington, I will seriously consider enrolling in the next modular format 3-6 course.
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 If the training course is in Auckland, I will seriously consider enrolling in the next modular format 3-6 course.
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 If the training course is in Dunedin, I will seriously consider enrolling in the next modular format 3-6 course.
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 If the training course is in Christchurch, I will seriously consider enrolling in the next modular format 3-6 course.
☐ Yes ☐ No

Visit www.mmef.org.nz for more information.



Participants and staff of the Auckland Primary Course
Front Row: Left to Right: Rebecca Muller, Joy Jordan, Rhea Melina Dorsey, Ellie Eng, Teresa Durant.
Back Row - Left to Right: Markus Stauf, Tomomi Ohashi, Ellen McCarthy, Pamela Cussack, Cheryl Ferreira, Julie Owen, Vicky Lumsden, Leif Hanson, Carol Potts

Sweden

Bilingual Summer Course

Ulla Wikefeldt

In the southern tip of Sweden, just outside our oldest university town Lund, the first bilingual course (3-6) started in June this year. The students are from different countries in Europe, Asia and South America.

The training centre is located in a wonderful Montessori preschool in the middle of the countryside with a view of lush greenery and open landscape. Our girl from Singapore found the greenery very intense and our student from Brazil discovered wild strawberries and blueberries in the forest close by. In this peaceful setting we covered lectures, practical life, sensorial and the first part of the language programme this summer, accompanied by the murmuring sounds of a small group of toddlers outside the windows now and then. My impression is that the students have started a beautiful process in their endeavours to become Montessori directors and directresses.



This first summer will be followed by 12 days in October/November, 12 days in February next year and seven weeks next summer ending with the final oral exams in early August.

Right now the students are back in their respective countries and schools. Essays and presentations keep coming into my mailbox, so the training keeps going back home. Four weeks of observation are required during the autumn and four weeks of school practice during spring next year.

Madlena Ulrich, who is in the Training of Trainers Programme, is a very important person in this course. She has done one year of her training in St Paul's, Michigan, US, and was now lecturing, giving presentations and involved in all parts of the course. Norway will be very privileged to have her as their first Primary trainer in their first Training Centre in a near future. She has been doing a great job this summer.

When the colours turn into yellow and red, it is time for our next session and I can't wait to meet them all again.



USA

AMI Returns to Miami

It had been a bit of a wait for the state of Florida: but the summer of 2009 saw the realization of a new AMI primary course. Its geographical location meant that the course was bilingual (English/Spanish) and there was a fair contingent of students with a Latin background. The course is being given as a summer course, under the auspices of the Montessori Institute of San Diego, and hosted by the Montessori Institute of Broward.



From left to right, back row: Tania Dogaru (Rumania), Martyna Baginska (Poland), Kareem Amaya (Colombia), Mariana Gutierrez (Spain), Andrea Cristobal (Argentina), Christina Thuman (USA), Eduardo Cuevas, Guest Trainer, Graciela Aguado (Mexico), Course Assistant & student on the Training of Trainers Programme.

From left to right, front row: Bertha Briseño - Course Assistant & Album Reader, Lina Maria Londono (Colombia), Claudia Gleicher (Brazil).

Missing: Silvia Dubovoy - D of T, Gilda Bonnet - Guest lecturer, Candice Mandac - Album Reader

San Diego



3-6 course

Students, Examiners, and Trainers of the MISD 3-6 course were all smiles at the graduation of the last San Diego 3-6 course. Thirty-three students, including 14 from Taiwan and others from Argentina, Canada, Iran, the Philippines, Russia and the United States accepted their diplomas at a ceremony at the University of San Diego on July 6. For the

last three years, The University of San Diego's School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) has hosted the classes for the Montessori Institute of San Diego (MISD).

The partnership has been so successful that this fall, SOLES and the institute will begin offering a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Teaching with a specialization in Montessori education.

Loyola Launches Lead School of Education

At Loyola, where the Washington Montessori Institute has its home, the Division of Education at Loyola University Maryland has become the formal School of Education. This milestone will become official with an exciting fall event—an inaugural convocation.

The convocation takes place on Wednesday, 14 October and will feature an introduction by Rev. Brian F. Linnane, S.J., Ph.D., president of Loyola University Maryland, followed by the invocation by Sister Delia Dowling, SSND, president of Sisters Academy of Baltimore. The opening remarks will be made by Nancy S. Grasmick, Ph.D., Maryland State superintendent of schools. Dr Peter Murrell, the founding Dean of the School of Education, will deliver the inaugural address.

The launch of the School of Education represents Loyola's chance to lead the community of higher education on a path toward positive change in urban schooling. The School of Education at Loyola University Maryland will be the only one in the state with a dedicated focus on the advancement of achievement and development of city children and youth that is based on an analytical framework of identity, race, social capital, and culture. We are also excited by the prospect of playing a critical role in shaping the type of professional training, scholarly preparation, and spiritual leadership needed for the new generation of urban educators to meet the challenges and opportunities they will face in city schools.

One of the highlights of the SOE's Strategic Plan is to develop a Montessori Community Lab School to serve the urban children of Baltimore in the York Road Corridor. The faculty of the Washington Montessori Institute will be leading this effort.

To underscore the importance AMI attaches to this new development, André Roberfroid, AMI's president, will be present at the convocation.

Susan Stephenson Alights in Albania

Two years ago Susan Stephenson met Lani in Beijing, the woman who dreamt of bringing Montessori to Albania. And in 2008 Susan gave the first public lectures on Montessori Education in Tirana, Albania. There were parents, businesspeople, journalists, civil servants, educators, but also influential officials from government and the educational sector. Susan shared the history of Montessori education, an overview of Montessori 0-3, 3-6, and 6-12 programmes, and pictures of classes at all three levels. There was a lovely reception after the talk and people stayed much longer than usual carrying out very interesting conversations.

Mirlinda Celmeta, the head of the new Montessori school in Tirana, acted as translator for the presentation. Susan promised to return in August 2009 to help with the next stage of the school's development. She made good on her promise and here we quote from an email that Susan has recently sent out to friends.

'The first day was wonderful! I spent the last two days preparing the assistants and the teachers, in great detail, for the first hour, hours, days, of a new class. The two 3-6 teachers are teaching today for the first time ever. The 0-3 teacher has completed only her first summer of training.

It was fantastic! The first hour was confusing as new children are entering the same time as the returning children and parents coming into the classes, then it settled down to what looks, in all cases, like classes that have been operating for several months.'



A traditional market in the ancient town of Kruja



Susan playing piano before the start of the school

'There was a different 3-6 teacher here for the last 1.5 years, who has now gone back to the USA. Her name was Annie. One of the new teachers is also named Annie. So one little boy who was in last year's class burst into tears saying 'Annie, why did you change your face? Why did you change your body!' Sobbing! Then sobbed to the assistant who was holding and trying to calm him (she was the assistant in the class last year) 'Ardita, are YOU still going to be my friend?'

'It is so great that this child is verbal enough to be able to tell us exactly what is bothering him. And just think, it may be that he thinks, in his continual discovery of the reality of the world, that someone actually removed the old Annie's face and replaced it with a new one!'

In an hour I am meeting herein the large office with all the staff to have cake, to sing happy birthday to Maria Montessori, whose birthday was yesterday, and to celebrate the beginning of the year. Then I will meet with the teachers and assistants to discuss their day and questions, and to begin their next stage of record keeping.

This has been an amazingly full and fulfilling three days so far.'

Susan will be writing at greater length about her Albanian exploits in the next issue of this bulletin.

17

Uganda, Nawantale School Project

In Communications 1/2009 Kay Grosso and Eva Shaw reported on their involvement in the Nawantale School Project. They told the moving story of how a few years ago a simple request for mosquito nets from a village in Uganda evolved into a serious commitment to bring education to Nawantale, a village far away from Kampala, the capital of Uganda. Kay and Eva, mother and daughter, wrote companion articles: one on a personal level, the other providing all the objective statistics. Their articles were of particular interest to those interested in social reform in the Montessori movement.

Kay Grosso is now reporting that the Uganda School

Project has 30 acres of land ready to begin the exciting phase of building schools. They have begun their global fundraiser "Rock the Equator". Kay promises that this fundraiser is fun, interactive, educational, and creative. If you wish to participate or spread the word, more can be found on

<http://www.nawantale.org/Rock%205K%20Event.html>



The Comenius Museum

Fred Kelpin

Who was Comenius? Jan Amos Komensk (1592-1670). Comenius is the Latinized form. Born in Moravia, Comenius was a philosopher, a theologian and a pedagogue. Religious conflicts forced him to roam from country to country. In 1656 he obtained asylum in Amsterdam, a city that welcomed refugees persecuted for their religious beliefs. Comenius was buried in Naarden, the Netherlands, in a big mausoleum, which today is part of a museum. I received an invitation to attend the opening of an exhibition in June.

Commonalities

Comenius shares three main pedagogical ideas with Dr Montessori: he argued that children must be taught to be keen observers. Therefore, the senses must be trained. And concepts that have been observed must be laid down in language.

It is necessary for a child to be able to read in order to explore the world. For this purpose Comenius combines a picture with the sound of a letter and with the symbol itself. For instance, there is a picture of a crow with the text: 'The crow caws.' Next to this little sentence the sound is laid down as 'á á'. Then follow the letters A a. Next to descriptions in the child's own language he puts a translation into Latin. The language of science in those days. Comenius believed that this way the child would learn Latin without effort.

Finally, he presented the world to the child by means of a book that combined text with pictures. These pictures were wood engravings that gave a detailed picture of what the world was about. Montessorians would call these 'Prepared Paths to Culture'. This book is called 'Orbis Sensualium Pictus' [The World in Pictures].

The exhibition in the Museum was dedicated to this book, and was opened by Dr Jan Terlouw, a wellknown Dutch



scientist, and children's book writer (in addition he is a former politician and minister). The National Museum for Education in Rotterdam had assisted the museum in getting this exhibition together.

Montessori Materials

The similarities in the ideas of Comenius and Montessori were demonstrated by displaying Montessori materials. Sandpaper letters were on display in order to show the connection between sound and sign. Although there is nothing wrong with that approach, I wondered why they had chosen to show these letters in print whereas Dr Montessori advises script? Moreover, the letters showed arrows indicating in which direction to trace them, very much in contrast to AMI's blueprints of materials.

The dressing frames were shown as materials that train movement. But the sensorial materials, meant for the education and the organization of sensorial impressions in the mind, were hardly displayed, although they are of paramount importance to this development. Moreover, not all the materials, supplied by the National Museum for Education, were Montessori materials. Symbolizing the world by a puzzle map is a good idea, of course. But why not the World Map or the Globe, indicating the Parts of the World, instead of the map of Europe? Indeed: in the eyes of a Montessorian the materials are not something to be trifled with!

From Childhood to Adolescence

In her book *From Childhood to Adolescence* Dr Montessori mentions the *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* as a revolution in the transfer of knowledge. In this book the word is combined with a picture for the first time, resulting in an enormous enrichment of knowledge.

Dr Montessori wanted to go beyond this level. The child must be put in contact with the real world directly and not only via a picture. When studying the development of a particular plant, for instance, from seed to plant, we can imagine that some other plants follow the same cycle.

All in all, an interesting and very enjoyable day, with a few critical observations.

The exhibition runs until November 22.

www.comeniusmuseum.nl/index.php?lang=english



Vrána kráká
Die Krähe krächzt
The crow caws
De kraai kragt

} á á A a



A galley (rowing boat)¹ has one or two benches² on which oarsmen³ sit at the ship's beam ends⁴ rowing⁵ by striking the water with oars.
The shipmaster⁶ standing in the fore castle and the helmsman⁷ sitting in the stern and holding the rudder⁸ steer the vessel.

De galei¹ heeft een of twee banken², waarop de roeiers³ zitten aan de zijkanen⁴ van het schip en in het water slaande roeien ze met roeispanen⁵.
Het schip wordt bestuurd door de kapitein⁶, die vooraan staat, en de stuurman⁷, die achteraan zit en het roer⁸ vast houdt.

Japan, Hiroshima

Father Klaus Luhmer (92) is a Jesuit and a Montessorian. He recently sent out a letter to his friends of the Jesuit Mission in Japan. He kindly granted us permission to quote here a few very pertinent lines. A firsthand witness of the bombings on Hiroshima, he knows like no other the horrors of war, and the value of peace.

'We are approaching the end of summer on the northern part of the globe. I hope you survived the hot season in good health. The month of August includes some important memorial days. First of all August 6, I remember the dropping of the first atom bomb on Hiroshima, which I witnessed personally. That day took the lives of thirty-two of my personal friends. This year a ray of hope appeared on the horizon: the President of the USA promised a future of a mankind free of nuclear weapons. We pray that this promise will be followed by effective action!'

The Peace Boat in Copenhagen

Dinny Rebild

In our previous two bulletins the Peace Boat has already sailed past, with its fascinating history of trying to bring peace by travelling the world seas and docking at harbours both well known and exotic, and opening up dialogue between various peoples.

Takako Fukatsu has been involved with the Peace Boat for many years. This year she was asked to set up the first ever Floating Montessori School on the Peace Boat, and she contacted me as the boat would be calling at Copenhagen on 10 June. I immediately was inspired to link the visit of the Peace Boat to the 6th International Montessori Congress, held in Copenhagen in August 1937. But more of that later.

Together with Michael Ehrenfels of the refugee Centre Kongelund, Copenhagen, Susan Reid of The Little Montessori School and Ai Onodera from the Peace Boat we had put together a programme. The boat had already called in Stockholm and Helsinki, where it was also met by Montessori people.

I picked up 34 participants (including four children) from the Peace Boat and we drove out to the refugee Centre

Kongelund where we were treated to a lovely lunch. Originally, refugees would prepare our lunch, but unfortunately they left the centre to seek refuge in a church as the Danish government had decided that it was now safe for refugees from Iraq to return home. So one of the staff kindly offered to make the food. Michael held a very informative talk about the Centre and the problems that refugees have to contend with during their flight from their home land, while waiting for their case to be handled, sometimes even when asylum has been granted. We were then invited to walk around the grounds and the Centre itself.



One of the children from the Floating Montessori School with her mother in the garden of Project Small Children at Risk at Refugee Centre Kongelund

Meanwhile one of the children from the Peace Boat, a little girl of about four years, had formed one of these fantastic friendships with a little boy from the Centre, that come about in a few minutes between children, even though they cannot speak the same language. She and her father were invited into his and his parents' room.

As we were walking around the Centre, we met a refugee from Africa, a lady who spoke Japanese; she invited all 34 (both men and women) to see her room. We also visited the teenage group who had an immediate rapport with the young people from the Peace Boat.

We then drove to The Little Montessori School where Susan Reid and her staff showed the guests around the school. The Little Montessori School is a small international Montessori school for children from 2- to 6 years.

The last part of the day was when the children from the refugee Centre were invited on board the Peace Boat; they were given a tour of the whole ship and then Ai gave a talk about the boat and its call of ports. She told the children how the Peace Boat invited on board young people from different nations, even ones whose countries were at war with each other, and how they eventually became friends,





The first ever Floating Montessori School

when they found the others not to be so different from themselves. Ai spoke of how the ship had called in Aqaba and how they had visited Palestinian refugee camps. The response from the children was extremely interesting: here were people who were not afraid to talk about camps, traumas and experiences that were similar to their own. There were many questions from the children about the Peace Boat: 'Who can participate? And how old do you have to be before you can travel on the boat without an adult?'

One very moving moment was when Takako took the Globe of Land and Water saying that this was her very favourite Montessori material, because it shows us that we are all Citizens together in a World without Borders. Our refugee children looked and listened intently, then reached out and gently touched the Globe.

Ai gave her talk in the floating Montessori School which she and Takako had set up in a room facing a deck on the port side of the ship; it was a lovely big room with plenty of materials that had been sponsored by different Montessori Schools in Japan; they had no money for the project so they had made all their own Practical Life Materials and as there were not so many shelves, chairs could also be used to display the materials. Of course the outdoor environment had to be inside too, but there was



The little girl chose a cutting exercise

plenty of room in the big area they had been given. They used the ship's many stairs when they went for a walk on board with the children.

It was also immensely touching and rewarding to see how children are drawn to Montessori Materials no matter where they are or what time it is. A little girl of maybe 2.5-3 immediately went to the Practical Life area, chose the material she wanted, went to her little table and settled down as if to a good meal. It was around seven in the evening after she had been on the day's trip with us. The older refugee children who had never seen Montessori materials before were very interested in the puzzles of the continents and worked with them with just as much appetite. In my experience, children who are away from their home or children like our refugee children with no home are always especially drawn to the Geography Materials.

It was a day I think many of us will never forget, and I look forward to welcoming the Peace Boat to Copenhagen in 2010.

20

Copenhagen and Montessori's Peace

I have just received the Journal of the 26th International Montessori Congress, bringing back the days at the Kalakshetra foundation in Chennai; I remember Silvana Montanaro's talk "Education and Peace." The 6th International Montessori Congress in 1937, in Copenhagen was entitled "Educate for Peace." Maria Montessori spoke often of peace so many decades ago, when times were troubled between the First and the Second World War and she feared what was coming.

The Congress was held in Christiansborg, the building of the Danish Parliament; the two leading Danish daily newspapers wrote about the Congress every day, and reported there were about 200 delegates from 21 countries.

The Congress was opened by Dr Montessori and the Danish Minister of Education; their speeches broadcast by the Danish State Radio. Unfortunately, they did not keep copies of direct transmissions at that time. A choir sang the Danish National Anthem and a song called "The Child's Anthem"—a song especially written for the Congress by Johannes V. Jensen, a Danish poet and author, and the 1944 laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature.

One newspaper wrote that Edward Smart gave a showing of a new Montessori film, made in England, showing children working independently, which was such a success that it had to be shown again the next evening. The paper wrote that everyone worked hard the whole week during the day even though the weather was very hot, and that Dr Montessori herself had given talks every evening.



Takako Fukatsu and Dinny Rebuild in front of the Peace Boat at the end of a fantastic day

Dr Montessori was also invited to visit the Town hall of Copenhagen, where the refreshment, still famous today and given to all celebrities, was Town Hall Pancakes. There was an exhibition of Montessori Materials every day from 9am to 8pm, an exhibition of children's work from all over the world and a Montessori school run during the Congress.

The newspaper reporter was especially impressed by children's work with the Metal Insets, finding the Dutch absolute works of art, the Danish light in colour, the Swedish bright while the Lithuanian were strong and daring in their composition.

The talks Dr Montessori gave are still so central to us and to all those who envision a lasting Peace that my talk to the people from the Peace Boat ended up being mostly quotes from the speeches Dr Montessori gave in August 1937. I will end this Peace Offering with what I find are her most fundamental worlds regarding Peace:

‘When we speak of peace, we do not mean a partial truce between separate nations, but a permanent way of life for all mankind. This goal cannot be attained through the signing of treaties by individual nations. The problem for us does not lie in the political action to save one nation or another; our efforts must be devoted, rather, to solving a psychological problem involving all mankind, and as a consequence acquiring a clear conception of the kind of morality necessary to defend humanity as a whole. For today it is not just one nation that is threatened with destruction, but all mankind from one end of the earth to the other, with all its various peoples at different stages of civilization.

21

References:

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Margot Waltuch's Web Site | Images
- Politikken from 1-10 August 1937
- Berlingske Tidende from 1-10 August 1937
- Johannes V. Jensen, Samlede Digte, Bind 2
- Maria Montessori, Education and Peace
- Part II: "Educate for Peace, Sixth International Montessori Congress," p. 60

Vancouver Peace Summit 2009

September 27, 2009 - 09:00 - Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Nobel Laureates in Dialogue

His Holiness the Dalai Lama was one of the main guests at the Vancouver Peace Summit: "Nobel Laureates in Dialogue". Other guests were Nobel Laureates Jody Williams, Mairead Maguire, Betty Williams and Murray Gell-Mann, as well as a number of respected international leaders from the realms of education, the arts, business, politics and social transformation. The focus of these dialogues included the themes of peace, education and women and peace-building.

The Summit featured four webcast dialogues: World Peace through Personal Peace, Nobel Laureates in Dialogue: Connecting for Peace, Educating the Heart, and Women and Peace-building. You can find them in the CTV.ca archives.

<http://watch.ctv.ca/2009-peace-summit/vancouver/2009-peace-summit---vancouver---sunday-september-27th-2009/#clip217278>

Efforts were made to seek Montessori representation at the table for these important discussions. We presented the case that these issues of educating for peace were at the heart of every Montessorian's work. The importance of cognitive development as well as the full and harmonious development of the full potential of every unique individual was of primary concern to Dr Montessori. Unfortunately, the dialogue sessions were full, but we will continue to lobby for attendance at such forums to continue the work of Social Reform for Peace through Education.

Montessori Events Worldwide

October 15-18

Baltimore, MD, USA

"The Essential Montessori Language: Whole-School Implementation"

<http://www.montessori-namta.org/NAMTA/conferences>

October 16-18

Poland, Cracow

Montessori Europe

Every Child is Special: Montessori and Inclusion

www.montessori-europe.com

October 26-November 26

USA

Peter Hesse of the Solidarity Foundation is touring the United States to promote how Montessori outreach projects can be realized. Peter draws on his successful Haiti Montessori project and introduces key messages of his book VISION WORKS. From vision to action. From Haiti to ONE world in diversity. Wake-up calls for change. Several speaking and media engagements, for calendar see <http://www.solidarity.org/en/news.html>

November 6-7

Switzerland, Zürich

Schweizer Montessori Tage at Montessori-Schule d'Insel

www.dinsle.ch

November 12-15

Minneapolis, MN, USA

"Montessori and Special Education: Converging Practice"

<http://www.montessori-namta.org/NAMTA/conferences>

November 14

London, UK

Professional Development day at the Maria Montessori Institute, London. The title is 'Journey through the Planes - Geometry from 3-12'. The seminar will be led by elementary trainer Ann Dunne, and is suitable for teachers trained at any of the three levels.

www.mariamontessori.org

November 28

Paris, France

"Le Développement de l'enfant de 0 à 6 ans." Speakers: Mme Athanassiou-Popesco, psychoanalyst, Patricia Spinelli and Isabelle Séchaud.

Organisers: Association Montessori de France.

<http://www.montessori-france.asso.fr>

January 21-24, 2010

Dallas, TX, USA

"The Essential Montessori Mathematics: Whole-School Implementation"

<http://www.montessori-namta.org/NAMTA/conferences>

Theme for Next Issue

The theme of our next bulletin will be "Reading in the Montessori classroom and at home." We already have a wonderful contribution lined up for parents, written by Joen Bettman.

Get writing — your deadline this time around is December 6.

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