

Editorial

It is our great pleasure to bring to you the first bulletin of 2007, a very special year marking the 100th anniversary of the opening of the first Casa dei Bambini.

In this issue, you will enjoy seeing exciting visual coverage of the Centenary Conference, held in Rome on January 6-7, with 1200 people from over 45 countries. My only regret is that even our dedicated newsletter team could not possibly convey to you the beautiful sounds of the seven syllables "Ma-ri-a Mon-tes-so-ri" in the opera "Montessoriana", performed on the last day of the conference. The children's voices were unforgettable.

But don't worry if you missed Rome! It was a prelude to many more exciting Centenary events & Refresher courses around the world and I hope you will visit them and feel part of the global connections of the Montessori movement.

We are also very happy to start the Parents section corner in this bulletin and we welcome more stories, questions, comments, experiences from parents all over the world. The submission of articles should go to Charlotte Elliott by June 1 for the next issue.

Lastly, we hope to see many of you at this year's AGM on April 14 and please see the agenda and information about the lunch and dinner. Bring your friends and share your thoughts for the way forward, beyond 2007!

Looking forward to seeing you in Amsterdam!

深津 高子
Takako Fukatsu

1907 – 2007

Montessori Centenary Conference January 6 – 7

article: Elisabeth Houweling

photos: Elisabeth Houweling, Rita Zener, Studio Maggi/Moreno Maggi, Rome, Patricia Wallner and AMI

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Each time I walked into the Auditorium of the Montessori Centenary Conference 2007, in Rome, these words struck me: "Events take time – Events take place – Events take space". We Montessorians were part of that Time, Place and Space during the two-day conference in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the "Casa dei Bambini", started in San Lorenzo, Rome. The event was co-hosted by the Opera Nazionale Montessori, Rome and Association Montessori Internationale, Amsterdam.

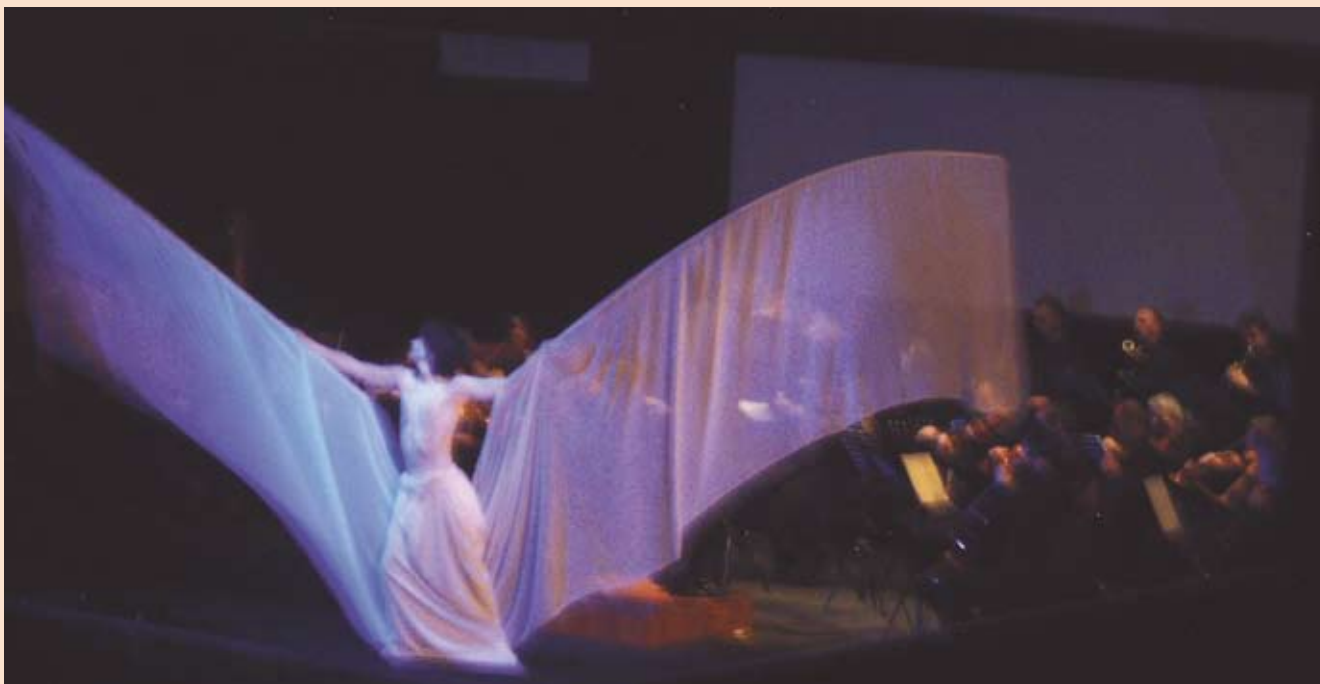


Photo: Studio Maggi

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Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrein, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States

1200 participants from 45 countries



Photo: Studio Maggi

AMI's President André Roberfroid opened the celebrations together with Pietro De Santis, president of Opera Nazionale Montessori. Mr Roberfroid stressed that Montessori's vision is taken up all over the world, and that we need to bring Montessori to more people, which means: more teachers, more courses, and basically more teacher trainers. 'Being part of a Montessori Movement means accepting a mission'!

Pietro De Santis emphasized that 'today the best way to remember Maria Montessori is to continue in her footsteps.'

We were fortunate that Renilde Montessori, the youngest granddaughter, could be present to share the joy of this year. She talked about "The miracle children", leading us to *The Secret of Childhood*, where Montessori argues that 'During a psychic development a child makes truly miraculous conquests, and it is only our being accustomed to seeing this miracle under our eyes that makes us indifferent spectators. How does a child, starting with nothing, orient himself in this complicated world?' Renilde talked about *The miracle of San Lorenzo* and emphasized the importance of knowledgeable observation of the child, and stressed that the environment of the child is first of all in the home. *The Secret of Childhood* also stresses that the love of work is of fundamental importance, 'a child is also a worker and a producer. Although he cannot share in the work of adults, he has his own difficult and important task to perform, that of producing a man.' Renilde conveyed a sense of urgency, that 'there is much to do' and considered this conference a fitting start for the future of 'sensible education.'



A highlight was the visit on January 5 to the first Casa dei Bambini, on Via dei Marsi 58, in the San Lorenzo district. It is still a Montessori school and the school's brass door-plate was the subject of many a photograph. The historic feeling of being in the first Children's House was thrilling. Maria Montessori had started the first Montessori school on this very spot in Rome, Italy. At present this Casa is run by the State. During a visit to the Opera Nazionale Montessori, I was told that they try to help, support and

ensure that this historic place survives. The teaching staff of the Casa gave us snippets of history and we were fortunate to be able to click our own memories of the school with our cameras. There was a small classroom, a little Practical Life area, spacious, well-maintained gardens and a dining room for the children.

(More details about the first Children's House and the gardens can be found in the new book *Rome, 1907 – The First Children's House of Maria Montessori* edited by Opera Nazionale Montessori in 2006.)

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Paola Trabalzini, lecturer of Aspects of Education History of Rome's "La Sapienza" University showed how Maria Montessori had developed her philosophy and work in the Casa dei Bambini. She also demonstrated how this was linked to Montessori's social commitment, e.g. by making pregnant women aware of the importance of hygiene, and the fact that improved personal hygiene would improve the health of their children.



The manufacturers Gonzagareddi, Matsumoto and Nienhuis were present with a display of the ever shining and striking Montessori materials.

The AMI & ONM desks were also close to the auditorium and their staff members had a busy time. At the AMI desk there was a short, well-attended signing session for Angeline Stoll Lillard, whose outstanding book *Montessori – The Science behind the Genius* (Oxford University Press 2007) is receiving rave reviews. Angeline is a lecturer of Psychology and in her talk she referred to her research recently published in *Science*. Angeline stressed that 'cognition and movement are connected.' The audience readily shared her observation that 'it takes a long time in training courses before we understand that children think differently than adults.'



At the end of the first day six students received an Award for the best university degree thesis on Maria Montessori's thoughts and works.

Unfortunately, not all lectures can be done justice here. Alberto Olivero, a lecturer of Psychobiology, talked about "The acting mind. The role of motricity in mental representation processes", referring to *The Absorbent Mind* (1967) and drawing particular attention to Montessori's argument that the child creates his own mental muscles, using for this what he finds in the world about him. This type of mentality is what we call *The Absorbent Mind* (p. 26). Movement helps the development of the mind, and this finds renewed expression in further movement and activity. The muscles directed by the brain are called voluntary muscles, meaning that they are the control of the will, and will power is one of the highest expressions of the mind. The muscles which are the flesh of the body, make up the greater part of it.' (p. 142)

Mr Olivero also compared the phenomena of mental representation to a "Swiss Knife", which has different blades and tools and which – with its unity and patterns – enable a mental strategy.

Both Annette Haines and Franco Cambi talked about Peace, one of Montessori's major subjects. Annette impressed us with her affirmation of our work being a study of peace. We don't need a peace curriculum, she said, only to continue guiding children through peaceful years of their lives. Her presentation was supported by the use of powerful visuals, and she ended by playing a song about peace by John Denver "It's about time" a message perfectly understood by the audience.

Mr Cambi, lecturer of Education Philosophy, University of Florence also referred to Montessori's *The Absorbent Mind*. He stated that 'In addition to the real child we have to consider the ideal child.' Children are children of peace and they need peace. In the 20th century Maria Montessori had recognized this deeply felt need.

Representatives from many different countries recounted some high points of the Montessori message in their daily life and work.

The mayor of Rome Mr Walter Veltroni was given an award by the President of Opera Nazionale Montessori for educational work in Africa and he gratefully received the International Award, "Education and Peace".

Baiba Krumins Grazzini first thanked her great teacher, Camillo Grazzini, and then spoke about "The Child and Society". In relation to human society, she spoke about the special characteristics that have made human beings "the greatest learning creature of all time"; characteristics which have permitted them to build a supranature and such a vast social organisation that Dr Montessori speaks of the single nation of humanity. In relation to the child, Baiba emphasised the power of the young child's absorbent mind, a mental power which enables him to embody the present stage of an evolving society. However, the manner in which Western society has been evolving leads to bettering conditions for the adult whilst conditions of life for the child are always worsening. Baiba's talk was very clear and although she had to cut her talk short because of lack of time, she received a warm applause.



In his closing remarks, André Roberfroid expressed a feeling of happiness because this centenary celebration had been so memorable. He emphasized that Montessori research work is important and that Montessori's vision is an instrument of peace. He went on to stress our responsibility, a daunting task, but he felt strongly about the fact that we will have to commit ourselves—simply because we don't have an excuse not to. We are obliged to spread the Montessori philosophy and accept the reality of this responsibility.

His third consideration concerned our mindset:

1. A permanent search for *excellence* is necessary since the children need the best; we should never compromise and permanently strive for the perfection of Montessori's work.
2. A divided movement is a weak movement; therefore we must fight division.
3. Fighting division does not mean creating uniformity. Diversity is an asset; we must learn to build on it.

In his closing words, Pietro De Santis referred to the vitality of Montessori's ideas. 'Now we can all go back to our work and Montessori's thinking: it is up to you now.'

'The Montessoriana Concert, Cantata for Soprano, Reciting Voice and Children's Choir was the impressive close to the Conference, an outstanding concert in which the Timeline of Maria Montessori was intertwined with music, a cantata for soprano, children's voices and verses and texts about Montessori's life and work. The cantata, *Montessoriana*, should be translated into other languages and presented around the world. What a brilliant idea to use her name for the melodic theme. The combination of speaking, singing, and dance was very powerful.

Indeed being part of this Montessori Centenary event in the great city of Rome may not easily be forgotten. It was an excellent occasion to meet Montessori friends, to create new links, and to continue spreading the Montessori message.

Arrivederci Roma!



Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place on Saturday, April 14, 2007 at 14.00 hrs. at the Industriele Groote Club, 27 Dam Square, Amsterdam. Membership fees can be paid at the door.

Please note that in the morning of April 14, there will be an Open Forum (see page 7). Registration for both meetings, lunch and the Get-Together after the AGM is required. Please notify the AMI secretariat of your plans at info@montessori-ami.org (also see separate notice below).

Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of April 22, 2006 (published as a separate report and sent together with AMI bulletin 2, 2006)
- 4 Matters arising out of these minutes
- 5 Amendments to the By-laws (see the separate enclosure with this bulletin)
- 6 Election of Board Members

Seven Board members are due to come up for rotation: Mr E. Cuevas, Dr S. Dubovoy, Ms M Hayes, Ms S Imtiaz, Mr M. Kenison, Mrs L. Lawrence and Mrs M. O'Shaughnessy. These are standing for re-nomination, except Mr Cuevas.

Thus there are seven positions to be filled. In view of the present Board composition, at least four of the positions must be filled by AMI diploma holders (to reach 14 among 21) (By-law 13b).

Nominations in writing will also be accepted from the membership up to March 31, 2007. Each such nomination shall be supported by at least one legal person or 25 individual members in good standing (By-law 13c). Nominations received by the Executive Committee will be confirmed by the Board in its meeting on April 13, 2007 and presented to the Annual General Meeting for election.

- 7 a AMI Annual Report
- b Financial Statements
- c Summary of discussions held at the Open Meeting
- 8 Matters referred by the Board
- 9 Foundation MM75 Fund
- 10 Any Other Business-points to be submitted to the Chairperson in writing up to the beginning of the meeting
- 11 Date, place and time of the next Annual General Meeting

Break (tea and coffee)

Talk by Dr Steve Hughes, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, and Director of Research for the TOVA Company, and a Montessori parent himself!

Dr Hughes will provide a functional tour of the brain, with an emphasis on regions implicated in the demonstration of executive functions. He will conclude with a discussion of the role that the Montessori educational environmental plays in supporting the "highest-order" executive functions: High Level Competencies. His message provides a compelling case for Montessori education through the high school years, and gives direction to a new generation of research on Montessori education outcomes.

Get-Together

A Get-Together is planned after the Annual General Meeting at the same venue, providing an opportunity for members to meet informally.

Registration for meetings & meals

Please contact the AMI secretariat before April 4 at info@montessori-ami.org to sign up for:

- 1 Open Forum (see page 7): 10.00-12.00: no charge
- 2 Lunch at the venue: 12.30-13.30: Euro 10
- 3 Annual General Meeting: 14.00-17.30: no charge
- 4 Get-Together with buffet dinner: 18.30-22.00: Euro 20

It would be very helpful if you could make advance payment by credit card. If you do, please do not email those details, but send them by phone, fax or letter to the secretariat. This is for reasons of security. Credit card and cash payments can also be made on the day itself.

Travel into Amsterdam

If your flight gets in at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, there is a less expensive way of getting into the city than by taxi. The bus company Connexxion runs a shuttle service from the airport to more than 100 hotels in the city of Amsterdam between 06.00 a.m. and 21.00 p.m. Please check www.schipholhotelshuttle.nl for details on the hotels serviced, fares, times, a map of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and more.

The site carries information in five languages.

Publicity

The Centenary year is receiving wide and positive coverage all around the world. If you want to read some of the news stories, we have collected a selection (with hyperlinks) on www.montessoricentenary.org.

Calendar of Events

Plans to celebrate this year are made everywhere. If you want to have a look and find out what event might interest you, please visit www.montessoricentenary.org where a calendar of events for the whole year can be found. You can also let us know what you have planned: contact montessoricentenary@bigpond.com.

AMI Open Forum

Over the last year and a half AMI has been working to make the most of the Centenary of the Montessori Movement. Simultaneously AMI has also been undergoing an extensive strategic planning process and has begun to implement structural changes. The aim is to fulfil Montessori's mission 'to place all the children in our world at the centre of society and to assist them in becoming the transforming elements leading to a harmonious and peaceful humanity' and to organize and mobilize the Montessori Movement to this end.

Momentum is building and great progress has been made. We want to focus on how this momentum can be sustained. We therefore plan an Open Forum to be held in conjunction with the Amsterdam Centenary and Affiliates meetings, on the following dates:

Thursday, 12 April 2007, 10.00-18.00
Centenary Meeting / AMI Open Forum.

Friday, 13 April 2007, 10.00-18.00
The Open Forum discussions will continue to further work on some of the ideas and strategies discussed on Thursday.

Saturday, 14 April 2007, 10:00-12.00
AMI Affiliates Meeting / AMI Open Forum (continued).

AMI affiliates, training centres, material manufacturers, staff, board members, schools, teachers, students and parents - please come. We want you there! All are welcome.

Purpose of the meeting will be to:

- seek input from all AMI's constituents
- strengthen communication and harness the capacity of all the constituents of AMI
- continue the work of the Centenary
- explore ways the momentum can be sustained into the future
- explore ways and means for the Parent Support Initiative
- identify ways in which connections between AMI and the grassroots can be strengthened
- Identify specific aims, objectives and targets for the next 10 years
- Identify strategies to fulfill these aims, objectives and targets

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100 Steps for Montessori

To Celebrate the Global Nature of Montessori in the Centenary Year

We are very pleased to announce the launch of a global initiative open to all the children in Montessori schools around the world. A '100 steps for Montessori' is a sponsored walk to raise awareness of Montessori during the Centenary year. If lots of children from around the world participate perhaps their little footsteps will be able to walk the equivalent of all the way around the equator!

The walk can be done anytime during the Centenary year – anywhere you decide – on the way to school – in the park or even on the beach! Anyone can take part – even adults if they want to – the aim is just to get as many people as possible walking for Montessori.

You can sign up to take part by visiting the Centenary website. We will then send you everything you need: a sample letter to send to parents explaining what it is all about, a poster to advertise your own particular event, sponsorship forms, certificates of participation and a sample press release. The only thing we ask for in return is that you tell us how many steps the children have walked so that we can register them on the web site – in this way everyone will be able to track the children's passage around the world and perhaps the media will find this exciting enough to talk about!

We are also trying to raise funds for the Parent Support Initiative, the Centenary campaign being launched this year to assist parents with information about the developmental needs of children and practical ways to support this development. If you would like to help us to do this there is an opportunity to donate some of your sponsorship money via the web site. Then we will really be walking to make a 'concrete difference in the lives of children.'

Louise Livingston
On behalf of the Centenary Committee



Montessori Parents

Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of “Montessori Parents” – a section dedicated to you, the parent of a child in Montessori education. It is our aim to make this section an informative, supportive and inspirational resource for you as you progress with your child through the Montessori years.

To ensure this section is relevant to all parents, the AMI bulletin welcomes your contributions. We would like to hear about your experiences as a Montessori parent, such as:

- Your “Top 10 Tips” on how you made your home a Montessori environment for your child
- Establishing good habits (sleeping, eating, reading, exploring)
- How your own attitudes or habits changed to enrich your relationship with your child
- Why you chose a Montessori education for your child.
- Something special that occurred for you or your child at school
- A question that you have or a point you would like clarified

Alternatively, if you would like to be involved in a “Parent’s Panel”, assisting with the development of this section, then please get in touch. Send your comments and contributions to Charlotte Elliott via email: cmelliott@planet.nl. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Being a Montessori Parent – Rising to the Challenge

‘Do-you-think-I’m-stupid?’, was the first, stumbling, direct speech the child made. I had been working with a 4-year-old boy in a mainstream classroom, who until that point had only babbled incoherently. Indeed, the school psychologist had diagnosed that his troubles lay in delayed speech and an inability to express himself adequately. His very pointed question took me totally by surprise and made me look at him with new eyes. Did I interact with him as if he was stupid? Did the other teachers and adults in the classroom treat him in a like manner? The more I looked at myself and observed the conduct of the other adults, the more I could only, regrettably, answer, ‘yes’. I went home and asked my 8-year-old son if I treated him ‘as if he was stupid.’ With affection and a little uneasiness, he answered, ‘Yes, you do Mum, sometimes – but I still love you!’

Dr Maria Montessori often talks about the “adult prejudice against the child” and it can be very difficult to understand what she means as it requires taking a hard, honest look at oneself, other adults and Society at large – with new eyes. If you look closely enough, you will see that as parents (or teachers) we inadvertently take the high road, as part of our responsibility of *care* for our child. We assume the child knows little and take control of the situation, dictating what needs to be done, how, when and where. We often do

not allow time for the child, expecting them to fit into our adult schedules. With great love in our minds, we carelessly overlook and override the child as we get on with our (adult) agenda, claiming we are doing our job – and doing it well! We quite often show little respect for the child as an individual and rarely contemplate the possibility that we might not ‘know best.’

In her book, *The Secret of Childhood* (a book for all parents and teachers!), Dr Montessori challenges her readers with an “Accusation”; a chapter that intends to provoke, sting, unsettle and positively chastise you (the adult) into reconsidering your relationship, not only to your own child, but to children in general and society at large. No soft touch – she hits hard and continues to berate the adult throughout the rest of the book. Such is the deep-rooted nature of this unconscious “prejudice”, it has to be pointed out time and time again. For very good reason, because from this prejudice, or more simply, lack of respect, flows many (if not all) of the ills of society!

That’s a profound statement, and difficult to accept until you undertake a review of current research findings across the fields of human activity: physical and mental health, education, law, justice, parenting, citizenship, employment, economics, environmental stewardship, etc. They all point to the quality of a child’s early care as the key factor in how the child individually, and collectively as Society, will respond in the future. We often hear someone complaining, ‘The youth of today have no respect ...’ But how does a group act with respect if they were never shown or given any? Montessori rightly urges us (the adults) to seriously reconsider our position as the guardians and guides of this future.

She doesn’t leave us there though – she goes on to explain in great detail what we need to do (as adults) to amend our relationship to children. It takes time to understand the reasoning behind her thinking, but it is a highly rewarding pursuit – not just as a parent, but as an individual too. It leads the reader to view the child with much greater respect and from that point, we are able to interact with children in a more mutually beneficial way. Instead of dictating, we begin to guide them. Instead of hindering development, we become an “aid to life”. It is not so difficult, but it does take commitment to get it right. And you will know when you have got it right – the children will tell you!

In the end, my little student started to communicate in bucket-loads, often showing a clear and deeply insightful intellect. We shared a very special time together and the light of joy that came into his eyes was unforgettable. His image remains with me today as a reminder not to be “stupid”. And when I am – my son tells me so, with great love and, fortunately, respect!

Charlotte Elliott

Question and Answer #1

Question: Should I leave my infant to cry himself to sleep at night?

Answer: Different cultural norms abound on this topic and there is no definitive “right answer”. To better understand a Montessorian perspective though, let’s break down the question and check our understanding of “infant”, “to cry” and “sleep at night”.

Firstly, consider the “infant” from the point of his abilities and needs. He is not a “passive” being with little intelligence, requiring just physical care (food, warmth, shelter). At birth, the infant has a far more developed and active intelligence than most people give him credit for and a strong desire to explore his new environment with all of his senses. The infant intelligence craves more experience, physical and mental, to help develop its potential. For this to occur though, the infant also needs an adult to give him appropriate physical and mental care and to provide an environment that offers experiences that will stimulate his physical and mental growth. Dr Silvana Montanaro advises us, ‘to recognize our profound lack of comprehension for the capacities of the infant’, because from this ‘stems our lack of faith in them, which impedes their development.’ * By accepting that the infant has a robust intelligence, with a knowledge of what he needs to develop, and that he is capable of communicating his needs to us, we are in a better position to aid this development.

Infants have a range of communication tools to help them interact with their environment and thereby gain the experiences they need to grow. These tools include body movement, looking, smiling and “crying”! Crying not only signifies physical discomfort or mental distress, but bore-

dom as well. Maria Montessori perceived the child’s cry as meaning, “Help me to do it myself!” It is a significant communication tool, well tuned to attract the adult’s attention. If we were to respect the infant’s choice in using this particular tool for communication, then our natural inclination would be to respond accordingly. Furthermore, when an infant’s cry is responded to in a positive manner with positive outcomes, the infant “learns” that he has a voice that others are willing to listen to. This understanding develops into a “basic trust” in the world around him, which remains with him for the rest of his life, greatly assisting the future adult in developing valuable, positive relationships with others. Believe it or not, if the infant cry is responded to in a respectful manner, he will use this form of communication only when it becomes necessary.

Sleeping patterns differ from child to child depending on the quality of their pre-natal life and their post-natal environment. Much depends on the mother’s physical and mental well-being, as well as the organization of the daily routines. Some infants adjust quickly to our solar schedule, others take their time as they become more familiar with and secure in their new environment. This process cannot be rushed, but it can be facilitated by offering the child consistent daily routines, loving care and respect.

Finally, consider the question from another point of view and ask yourself, ‘What do I expect to happen when I make a request?’ ‘How would I feel if I asked for something and everyone around ignored me?’

**Pg 114. For more detailed explanations of infant capabilities, communication tools and waking/sleeping patterns, please refer to Dr Silvana Quattrocchi Montanaro’s excellent book “Understanding the Human Being – The Importance of the First Three Years of Life” (ISBN: 1-879341-00-X, Pub: 1991 by Nienhuis Montessori USA).*

Centenary Stamp

The special Montessori centenary stamp launched at the Rome Conference certainly made its mark. The attractive stamp, and postcards to match, were in great demand. If you would like to order more (for yourself or friends) please contact the Italian Post Office direct with any orders for the Montessori centenary stamps at: <http://e-filatelìa.poste.it/?lingua=english>. This page carries philatelic sections, and is in English. Purchases can be made via the shopping cart and credit card payments are accepted.



Montessoriana Music Opera CD

Judged by many to be a fitting and moving finale to the Rome Conference, the Opera Montessoriana was a unique experience. If you wish, you can relive the event and emotion by ordering a CD from the Centro Studi Casa Natale of Chiaravalle (Maria Montessori’s birthplace) info@mariamontessori.it

Remembering: Jan Henny

On December 4, 2006 Mr Jan Henny passed away at the age of 92. He served as Treasurer to Association Montessori Internationale from 1956 to 1979, when he retired.

For more than seventeen years it was my privilege as a member and chairman of the AMI Executive Committee to work with Jan Henny. I often wondered how he, a banker by profession, looked at AMI's financial problems: many years showing a deficit, few years showing a profit. The year 1963 was memorable – with AMI's capital having shrunk to 128.31 guilders. In hindsight not surprising, for the number of members was also very modest at that time: 325. When Jan Henny retired, the membership stood at a more healthy 1550.

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To ensure a sounder financial basis for AMI, Mario Montessori Senior pledged (in 1967) that the contribution of training courses and the royalties of books would be transferred to AMI as long as he lived.

Looking back nowadays makes one realize how much of a 'family business' the Association Montessori Internationale actually was in those days. Jan Henny knew how – in this group – to say no to expensive plans and ideas for which the funding was lacking. I admired him for his skilful policy to keep the AMI ship afloat.



Upon his retirement he and his wife moved to the south of France, where they enjoyed nature and exploited an olive vineyard.

Bob Portielje

The photo shows Jan Henny with his wife to whom he was married for over 60 years.

Remembering: Arnavaz Dinshaw

Arnavaz Murzban Dinshaw, President of the Pakistan Montessori Association (PMA), Karachi passed away on 21 September 2006 after a brief illness. She was a multi-faceted personality who will be missed by all those who knew her and all those whose life she touched as an educator.

She earned the AMI Diploma in 1972 and worked for one year under the guidance of Gool K. Minwalla. The following year she started her own school Markaz-e-Montessori, which she managed till the last moments of her life.

She joined the PMA Managing Committee in 1976 and in the ensuing thirty years her immense contribution took on many roles –she served as Vice President (1990-2002) and succeeded PMA founder Gool Minwalla in 2002. As the President, she infused a vigorous spirit in all the programmes organized by PMA.

She organized the International Montessori Congress (1985) in Karachi. She also led many workshops for Montessorians on diverse subjects like language acquisition, religion and geography, but Mrs Dinshaw's first love was

mathematics. The numerous interactive workshops conducted by her reflected her sense of perfection, creativity and planning skills. She developed a mathematics textbook for Class One in partnership with the Teachers' Resource Centre.

In addition to her professional and academic records, she had a variety of qualifications to her credit, e.g. she passed with honours the course of violin playing from Trinity College London.

Mrs Dinshaw was also the proud mother of daughters Farishta and Diana who are both Montessorians as well and have followed in their mother's dynamic footsteps to be active members of the Pakistan Montessori Association.

Pakistan Montessori Association

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING CENTRES

Germany

Montessori Internationales Ausbildungszentrum e.V.: It is the centre's young, but worthwhile tradition to organise a conference during the first weekend of January. In 2007 it coincided beautifully with the actual centenary weekend, and the centenary received special focus. At the Pelham venue, the organisers, headed by Maria Roth, greeted more than sixty participants, who greatly enjoyed the event.

United States

New email address for the Montessori Training Center of Northern California: montessori-training@comcast.net

September 8-22, Washington: The Montessori exhibit will be at the Pope John Paul Cultural Center in Washington, DC. Loyola College and local schools are underwriting the cost of the exhibit. There will be a Montessori conference in connection with the exhibit on September 15. The local community, especially parents, will also be invited.

New courses

What used to be Terra Incognita

Sydney, Australia saw the start of a new Primary course on February 7, with Pamela Nunn as AMI Director of Training. This is a special and joyful moment, as the course with an Australian trainer at the helm underscores our presence 'Down Under'. Pamela and Amy Kirkham have led the way by becoming the first Australian trainers to follow in the footsteps of Patricia Hilson. Next year Amy will open a Primary Course in Melbourne. Good luck to you both!



Primary course Sydney

Terra Incognita Nova

Thanks to the pioneering efforts of many, new training courses will be starting up in places hitherto "untouched" by AMI:

Belgium, Brussels

To start in the first week of July 2007, a summer Primary course over two summers, with blocks of study in intermediate holiday periods, is being offered in Belgium.

Hosted by Montessori Tervuren, the course will be given by Patricia Spinelli, AMI Director of Training at the Institut Supérieure Maria Montessori, of Paris. The lecture language is French, with simultaneous translation into English. Info French: ISMM@montessori-france.asso.fr
Info English: montessori-tervuren@online.be

India, Chennai

India has a very strong tradition in offering AMI Primary courses, but an Elementary course was long on its shopping list... and it is about to happen! Sponsored by the Navadisha Montessori Institute, in Chennai, and directed by Dr Jean Miller, the course will open its doors in October 2007. A Foundation Course will be held one month earlier for those students who do not hold an AMI Primary credential. info@navadisha.org

New Zealand, Auckland

Oceania can't stop expanding! New Zealand, already a hospitable country to Montessori education, will be offering its first AMI Primary course, in Auckland, from February to November 2008. Cheryl Ferreira will direct the course. For more information contact the Maria Montessori Education Foundation at mmef@ihug.co.nz or <http://mmef.org.nz>

China, Hangzhou

Looking further ahead, 18 months from now China will launch the first ever AMI Primary teacher training course. Given over three summers (2008-2010), the course location is Hangzhou, in Zhejiang Province, with Shannon Helfrich as the Director of Training. Lecture language is English, with translation into Mandarin. The organizing body is the International Training Center of Montessori Education of China, info@china-montessori.com

Refreshers & Conferences 2007

March 23-24

Geneva, Switzerland

Conference Centenaire

"De l'enfant d'aujourd'hui à l'homme de demain" [From today's child to tomorrow's man] venue: Centre General de conferences de Genève. (montessori-ch@bluewin.ch)

March 30-31

Zagreb, Croatia

Centenary Conference

(languages English and German) organized by the Elementary Montessori School "Baroness Dedee Vraniczany" (aambuc@isp.hr)

April 20-21

Stockholm, Sweden

Centenary Conference

"The impact of Montessori education in Perspective", "The importance of Montessori today" and "The expectations of Montessori tomorrow". (language English) Speakers: Hildegard Solzbacher, Judi Orion and Carla Foster. Venue: Montessorischool Castello, Nacka. Information and booking Barbra Waller: e-mail: barbrawaller@telia.com fax +46 8 5569 8930 phone +46 643 6670 or +46 70 664 6670

June 8

Manly Beach, Australia

Centenary Conference

"The Universal Child—A Timeless Revelation" (<http://montessori.org.au>)

June 9-10

Manly Beach, Australia

Whole School Refresher Course

(<http://montessori.org.au>)

July 12-18

Juneau, Alaska

AMI-EAA Summer Conference 2007

The Centenary year's summer conference for AMI-trained elementary guides will be held at the Shrine of St. Therese (patron saint of Alaska) Retreat Center, 23 miles from downtown Juneau, Alaska. Activities will include a welcome dance performed by a native group, story telling by Tlingit performers, a haiku study, math extensions and more. (www.ami-eaa.org.)

July 14

London, U.K.

One-day conference

following the 2007 themes. To Honour the Past: Monte Kenison, "What Happened in San Lorenzo to Inspire a Worldwide Movement" and Lynne Lawrence, "The Universal Child". To Celebrate the Present: Baiba Krumins Grazzini, "The Montessori Continuum" and Irene Fafalios, "Montessori Today". To Create the Future David Kahn, "The Child as an Agent for Change" and André Roberfroid, "A Call to Action".

info@mariamontessori.org or +44 207 435 3646

August 20-31

Karachi, Pakistan

An 11-day workshop (afternoons only on weekdays) on Mathematics organized by the Montessori Teachers Training Centre, Karachi. Open to AMI diploma holders that graduated before 1998. On the concluding day, there will be a special celebration to commemorate Dr Montessori's birthday. (mttc@cyber.net.pk)

September 29

Dublin, Ireland

Open Seminar

With Mary Hayes as the keynote speaker, this will be a full-day event featuring many outstanding speakers who will address the theme of the Centenary. (mm100@eircom.net)

Early October

Paris, France

Centenary Celebration Conference

Association Montessori de France is hosting this event at the Sorbonne, open to all. There will be three speakers, including André Roberfroid and André Jacquard. The main objective is to celebrate, so children from Montessori schools (and a couple of renowned French Singers/Artists whose names we shall not reveal as yet) will be singing and dancing! The definite programme for this event will be available on the AMF website: www.montessori-france.asso.fr

October 13

London, U.K.

Centenary Autumn Conference

Today cutting edge research confirms the radical discoveries of Maria Montessori, through observation, all those years ago. Three pioneers in their fields will discuss this 21st Century re-discovery of the child. Angeline Stoll Lillard, author of *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*, Stephen Rose, one of Britain's leading neuroscientists and author of *Lifelines* and *The 21st Century Brain* and Sue Palmer, author and speaker about children in society today. Her most recent book is *Toxic Childhood*. This event, together with the July conference can be booked at a special price. Booking ahead will also get you a reduced price. info@mariamontessori.org or +44 207 435 3646

October 27

Karachi, Pakistan

A seminar with in the periphery an exhibition of photographs, is being organized by the Montessori Teachers Training Centre, Karachi. This event is open to all. Especially parents and all those working with children are welcome. (mttc@cyber.net.pk)

January 9-11, 2008

Nara, Japan

101 years of Montessori Congress, Public Hall situated in Nara Deer Park (the same venue as the 1991 International Montessori Congress).

January 5-8, 2009

Chennai, India

AMI Congress

Venue: Kalakshetra Foundation. Theme: Sadhana: Reflective Practice – Spontaneous Living

AMI Trainers meet in Rome

It was with great delight that 52 AMI trainers and 5 AMI staff members met in Rome, on January 8, 9 and 10 for a Trainers Meeting. AMI Trainers Meetings are always lively affairs with much discussion and dialogue, both in the meetings and outside of them. Obviously a major item for discussion centred around new ways of ensuring an increase in the number of qualified AMI trainers both for our existing centres and to meet the current demand to open new centres worldwide. On the practical side of matters, the group enjoyed presentations and discussions on the Roman Arch (where else but in Rome could one do this!).

We all came away with new thoughts and ideas on the work we are doing, preparing the future generations of AMI diploma holders to collaborate with the children of the world in developing the human potential.



News from the Sponsoring Committee

The Sponsoring Committee is pleased to announce that Elizabeth (Liz) Hall from Denver, Colorado, AMI Primary trainer of many years experience, has added another age level to her bow; she is now an Assistants to Infancy Auxiliary Trainer.

We wish to congratulate Liz on her achievement and wish her well in her new role.



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Message by Sonia Gandhi:

On the auspicious occasion of the Centenary of the Montessori Movement, I send my warm felicitations to all Montessori Institutes and teachers in India.

Few jobs can be more challenging and rewarding than to guide children in their most formative years, and help them fulfil their potential. The Montessori method, based on its deep understanding of the true nature of childhood, does this with remarkable sensitivity and skill, enabling children to let their innate creativity, talent, curiosity and joie de vivre flower.

We are fortunate to have a long tradition of Montessori institutes in India, established by Maria Montessori herself in the years she spent in Chennai during the second World War. That tradition has been carried forward with great dedication by Montessori teachers throughout the country, who have helped shape thousands of children under their care into responsible, caring and creative adults.

I wish the Montessori institutes and teachers all success in the future.



Publications

French: Maria Montessori, *L'enfant dans la famille*, Desclée de Brouwer, first edition, carrying the AMI logo, 2007

German: Maria Montessori, *Kosmische Erziehung*, Verlag Herder, 8th edition, 2007

Portuguese: Maria Montessori, *Da Infancia à Adolescência*, Apoio Meimei Escola Montessoriana, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2006

Slovenian: Maria Montessori, *Srkajoci um* (The Absorbent Mind), The Ursuline Convent, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2006

Clio Series: please note that ABC Clio have discontinued the distribution of their English language Montessori books.

For orders please contact am.henny12@worldonline.nl

A full list of Montessori's books currently in print can be downloaded from www.montessori-ami.org

Unesco World Heritage Sites & Montessori World Heritage Sites



‘Memory is the basis of the individual personality, as tradition is the basis of the common personality or culture of a people. We live in and by what we remember, and our spiritual life is in essence the effort we make to ensure that our memories live on and become hope, hope for our past to become future.’

Miguel de Unamuno, Spanish writer (1864 - 1936)

Together with the Mayors of Rome and Naples, over one thousand Montessorians remembered the creation of the first Casa dei Bambini for young children in San Lorenzo, Rome on January 6, 1907 at the first Montessori Centenary event just celebrated in Rome. For the elementary children, however, Montessori stressed the importance of “going out” to explore the world. The classroom alone is too small, she said, for the 6-12 year old children’s imagination, upon which they construct their understanding of the world through their ‘intellectual love of the world’.

This reality holds true for adults, particularly those working with and for children. “Going out” to places is a unique way to grasp reality more fully. Fernand Braudel, the famous French historian, encouraged scholars to go to places to better understand how peoples are influenced by their environment, how geography, history, economics and culture interact in unique, organic ways.

The Australians organized a Montessori Study Tour to “go out” together in Italy to visit historic Montessori sites in Rome, Chiaravalle, Città di Castello, Gonzaga, and Bergamo. Together the international participants found that these unforgettable “Montessori world historic sites” are still alive with Montessori’s message, thanks to multiple efforts of municipalities, committed individuals and their love for these places. Montessori’s birthplace is now a museum/study centre supported by the municipality, that also has a municipal creche and Children’s House. Other sites also have museums and study centres where Montessori’s message linking the child’s harmonious development to world peace through education for life is shared widely.

On the international scene, in the fall of 1972, a landmark decision was reached when UN member governments decided at the UNESCO General Conference to adopt the World Heritage Convention. This Convention provides a legal framework that signatory countries are using to recognize and protect mankind’s heritage. Threats to natural and cultural treasures include war, but also mass tourism, deforestation, sprawling urbanization and pollution.

As Francesco Bandarin, Director UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, explains, ‘Young, dynamic, creative and open-minded people are needed to play a significant role

in the preservation of our world’s heritage. You can learn about different cultures and societies; create networks among your peers throughout the world, and put into practice mutual respect and tolerance. By learning to recognize the value of our common heritage, you can also help to protect these sites and make them known to others. If you like to dream about exploring unknown places and would like to help save them from disappearing, then ...[the UNESCO book, *Tell Me About World Heritage*] will tell you how.’(*)

Montessorians know that children are true partners in creating a peaceful world, if they are treated with respect and understanding of their developmental needs. Montessorians also know that children learn about the world more effectively by working with their hands and minds together, linking learning to concrete actions. UNESCO’s World Heritage Program is a special opportunity for Montessori children to join with others in learning together about world heritage sites, both in their own countries and elsewhere.

Let us hope that the *Second Montessori Centenary* will reveal the elementary children and adolescents’ role in transforming the world, through love of their environment, through intellectual work spontaneously chosen and accomplished in partnership with other children. Youth are assuming leadership roles in new and exciting ways, using their cultural heritage as springboards for dialogue among cultures for peace. Perhaps one day some Montessori historic sites will be named as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, who knows?

Victoria S. Barres

The UNESCO World Heritage Programme is one of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network’s landmark programmes.

For more information, go to www.unesco.org/asp (Also see *Communications* and *AMI Bulletin* 3, 2006.)

The World Heritage Emblem, designed by Michel Olyff, symbolizes the interdependence of natural and cultural treasures: the central square is a geometric shape, typically created by humanity, while the circle represents nature. The emblem is round like the Earth, but it also symbolizes protection.

* Lopez, Jean, *Tell Me About World Heritage*, UNESCO Publishing, 2002, Paris, France. Translated from the French: *Raconte-moi le Patrimoine Mondial*. Also available in Spanish and Arabic.

Membership Fees 2007*

As of 2007, our membership fees have gone up as follows:

Annual individual membership	Euro 40
Life membership	Euro 1,100
Annual collective membership (for groups of more than 15 in one region)	Euro 30 per person

This is the first increase in many years; AMI felt it was, however, reasonable to raise the fee: not only have our costs gone up to keep pace with inflation, but the number of

publications we send out to the membership has also gone up considerably – thereby taking a big chunk out of our budget.

We count on your understanding, and thank you for your continued support.

* Members whose membership is administered through AMI/USA will be informed separately.

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- NGO represented at the United Nations (since 1985)
- NGO in operational relations with UNESCO (since 1962)

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The AMI Bulletin contains information and articles written for and by our members. The contents do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AMI.

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