

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar

Spring newsletter 2009

We welcome everyone back to fourth term. We hope you have enjoyed the break and are ready to get back into the rhythm of things in our final busy term for 2009.

Tutor Profile: Anne-Marie Ezergailis

In term four we will continue our study of 'Special Needs in the Classroom' with Anne-Marie Ezergailis. Anne-Marie has been involved in Steiner education with a focus on the Extra Lesson for many years. She completed the Seminar course in 1997. Anne-Marie talked to us about her work.



"I first came into contact with Steiner Education through my own school teacher, who had four children at a Steiner School. In this sense our introduction to Steiner education was not through the philosophy but by meeting the children. We met the children and liked what we saw. The teacher started talking about Steiner Education; this was well before I had my own children.

On my husband's side, he was also influenced by some people who had been deeply involved in Steiner education. His school teacher was a product of a Steiner school. His teacher's father was an Anthroposophical sculptor and his teacher's mother was involved with the Basel school, and *her* mother had been an Eurythmist who had actually worked with Steiner himself. We played in musical concerts at Anthroposophical Clinics.

When I came to Australia, I met Margaret Piper, who was an Anthroposophical Infant Welfare Nurse. We went to see her with our first child. From there, I worked with Margaret to establish the Carnegie Steiner Playgroup, which then led into the creation of the kindergarten. We also established the Moorabbin Steiner School. At this stage I was teaching French at Sophia Mundi.

I was working at Monash University Crèche, teaching music. I saw that in order to get a child to pay attention, I had to do a lot of crawling and rolling around. Then I saw an advertisement by Margaret Wilson, about Extra Lesson and Movement. That word 'Movement' got me in – I was hooked! I studied with her and also in Sydney.

I have worked at Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School, at Collingwood College and at Sophia Mundi Steiner School as an Extra Lesson Therapist. I also worked at East Bentleigh for seven years, and at Moorabbin. Currently I am seeing families at home.

As an example of how Extra Lesson helps children, I am working with two boys just now, aged six and four, both of whom have been diagnosed as having Aspergers Syndrome. I am working more closely with the older boy.

When I first met them, their little bodies were so tight! What I want to see over time is a better balance between their left and right hemispheres. I want to see them becoming more comfortable in their bodies, to be able to look at and meet another person's ego. We have met for five sessions so far- which is really only just getting started. Today the child came bounding into the room, very relaxed, telling stories about his week, the painting he had done. Then he said to me "Thank you, we have had so much fun here today." Previously this boy could not have communicated like this. He looked me in the eye and spoke. He will continue to make gains."

New art and sculpture room

Plans have been drawn up for a dedicated art and sculpture room, to be built in the space under the Movement room. Architect Gregory Burgess has presented plans which make the best use of the space, and which are sympathetic to the rest of the Michael Centre buildings. This new room will provide an appropriate place for students and tutors to undertake artistic work. We hope to see this work completed by mid 2010.

Expanded car park

Plans are also underway for the creation of a new carpark to accommodate twenty cars. We expect this to be built mid 2010.

Extract from the *Courier Mail*, 8 August 2009.

The 'Courier Mail' (Brisbane) reported in August on data from the Queensland Governments NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) report. Of particular interest and significance was the finding relating to Samford Valley Steiner School.

"Of the schools which had all their results published, only six had 100 per cent of students above the National Minimum Standard in every year and every category. Four were too small to include in the top ten: the Agnew schools at Wakerley and Nambour, **the Samford Valley Steiner School** and the School of Total Distance Education at Warwick. ...

Samford Valley Steiner School facilitator Wendy Butler said its philosophy of education did not place a great value on artificial testing.

Despite that the school was one of only four to lift all of their year 9 students above the national minimum standards in last year's exams.

"What we are working within Steiner education is to develop capacities . . . and that sort of paper multiple-choice artificial environment isn't a true reflection of capacity," she said.

Interview with Gabrielle Stokes

The Seminar enjoys keeping up with past students, following the paths they have taken after completing their studies here. We spoke with Gabrielle Stokes, who teaches in the Steiner stream at Thornbury Primary School.

I am currently teaching eighteen children in Class Two at Thornbury. Previously I had worked as a librarian, and also in a second hand bookshop in Elwood. I had also been involved teaching literacy to high school students and to people of non-English speaking backgrounds.

My son was attending Sophia Mundi Steiner School.

I considered getting qualifications in teaching literacy, and in the process of seeking out information about my options, I attended an information night about the teaching training course at the Seminar. I was completely drawn to the sculpture; I had always done a bit, and seeing this component of the course really attracted me.

I was at a point in my life when I needed to do something. While I was at the information night, I had one of “those” moments, where I said “I want to be a primary school teacher.” Our own family had grown up and I felt I was free to follow my own wishes.

The course was big! I hadn't done personal development, hadn't been to any courses. The whole course opened things up for me. The creative side was very good: I had closed doors on myself previously. The craft, the clay, painting and recorder, these activities opened something within me.

The biography work was very confronting, but ultimately good for me. I enjoyed everything: the philosophy, using the library. I liked the variety of teaching styles, and the teaching rounds were a gift! To observe the class teacher in action was wonderful. It was very generous of those teachers to have us in the room observing. When I did my rounds during my study at Deakin, I was comfortable because I drew on my previous observations.

As far as my ongoing professional development goes, I am doing the biography course with Karl Heinzfinke, and I attend Anthroposophical events to widen my knowledge and experience.

The Seminar course opened up new areas for me. I learned that there are thresholds that you just have to go through, things that you find difficult. For example, when I first had to tell a story to the whole school, I found that difficult. I know now that I'll be fine- I keep coming to these thresholds and I have to cross them. The course set this in motion. I was determined to go through them.

After completing the course at the Seminar, I did a Diploma of Education at Deakin University, two years full time. The first year was for primary school, the second year focused on high school.

I am really enjoying teaching this year. In the first year [Class 1] I was a bit nervous. There is a nice atmosphere at the school. The Principal directs things; issues are discussed collaboratively. Good skills are being modelled.”

❖ *Past students are warmly invited to drop in and say hello anytime.*

Students in the Diploma course made a three dimensional felt animal and also a circular woven piece, completed on a frame made from a jasmine vine, as part of their Craft module. The work they produced was beautiful, and the individuality of each student's piece was striking.



Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar – enrol now for courses in 2010

Full time programs- Monday to Thursday during school term, 9.00 a.m-2.30 p.m.

- Diploma of Anthroposophical Studies (course code 91319 NSW) first year
- Advanced Diploma in Rudolf Steiner Education (course code 91119NSW) – second year

Part-time programs - every Wednesday evening from 7.00 p.m.-10.00 p.m.

- Certificate in Rudolf Steiner Education (3 years) and
- Certificate in Rudolf Steiner High School Education (one year).

All programs are offered at the Michael Centre, 37A Wellington Park Drive, Warranwood, 3134.

The Michael Centre is located less than 15 minutes from the Ringwood exit of the Eastern Freeway.

Introductory Evening Wednesday 25th November, 2009 8:00pm

**For further information: Sandra Paulka, tel. 9876-5199 or visit our website:
www.steinerseminar.com**

Upcoming events.

There are many wonderful events to attend between now and Christmas, and beyond.

The Michael Centre, 37A Wellington Park Drive, Warranwood, tel. (03) 9876 5199

- **Wednesday 25 November**, *Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Introductory evening*, 8.00 p.m.
- **Friday 20th November**, Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar, *Presentation evening of Diploma and Advanced Diploma certificates*.
- **Friday 18th December**: Robert Powell - '*What does the year 2010 have in store?*', 7.30 p.m.
- **Sunday 20th December**: Robert Powell - *Christmas Fundraising Candlelight Concert*, 7.30 p.m.
- **Thursday 24th December**, Michael Group - '*Adam and Eve's Day Breakfast*', where we read the Paradise Play together, 7.30 a.m.
- **Thursday 24th December**, Michael Group gathering for the '*Twelve holy nights meditation*', 10.30 p.m. (* note: the times change for this on subsequent nights. See as follows)
- **Friday 25th December – 1st January**, Michael Group, *Holy nights* gathering each evening from 9.00 p.m.
- **Saturday 2nd – Tuesday 5th January**, Michael Group, *Holy nights* gathering from 7.00 p.m.
- **Wednesday 6th January**, Michael Group, *Epiphany Breakfast*, 7.30 a.m.

The Steiner Store, 9 Strathalbyn Street, East Kew, information and bookings: tel. 9857 0111, each Saturday.

- **7th Nov-** Craft '*Making Mary*' from the Nativity scene. Cost \$30/\$10 materials, (Bookings required), 2.00 p.m
- **14th Nov-** '*Pregnancy, Child birth and Parenting*' with Bettye Palmer, 2.00 p.m
- **21st Nov-** '*Advent and Christmas*' with Gianna Mazzone, 2.00 p.m
- **28th Nov-** '*Children's Literature 0-7*' with Helen Andalis, 2.00 pm

Gabriel Talks

- **Thursday 26th November** from 8.00 p.m, the 2009 Christmas Talk, '*Advent and the Twelve Days of Christmas*', will be given by Marcus Cox, followed by a *Christmas Puppet Play*, performed by Leesa Kerr and Jane Evans. Entry is free. This event is not suitable for children. Kew Library, Phyllis Hore Room, Corner Cotham Road and Civic Drive, Kew.
Enquiries: Jacinta Walker, tel. 9725 8879.

Steiner School Open Days.

Many of Victoria's Steiner Schools are open during October and November. These Open Days represent a wonderful opportunity to see the work of teachers and students and the school community, to ask questions and find out more about Steiner education.

- **Saturday 7 November**, Castlemaine Steiner School:
- **Sunday 8 November**, Sophia Mundi Rudolf Steiner School:
- **Saturday 14 November**, Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School:
- **Sunday 22 November**, Ghilgai Steiner School: