



# The Montessori OBSERVER

Independence

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Children working with sensorial apparatus at the Montessori Children's House of West Bend, Wisconsin.

## New Texas Society Sponsors Conference

The Texas Montessori Society, recently founded by Sharon Dwyer (Corpus Christi, Texas), is sponsoring a conference to initiate its work on behalf of Montessori education in that state. Set for August 16-17, 1986 in Corpus Christi, Texas, this first "Texas Montessori Conference" will be conducted by Lee Havis, executive director of the International Montessori Society, and will feature a presentation and consideration of "Managing Misbehavior, Applying Montessori Principles."

A recent graduate of the International Montessori Society's Montessori teacher training program, Sharon Dwyer is the owner and director of the Southside Montessori School (Corpus Christi, Texas). Ms. Dwyer founded the new Texas Montessori Society "to support communication, harmony and the effective interrelated functioning of the Montessori community throughout the state of Texas." She believes that Montessori schools and others in Texas can benefit from the type of seminars, conferences and other joint efforts the Society can provide on behalf of Montessori education in that state.

To join the Texas Montessori Society or to participate in its first Montessori conference in Corpus Christi, Texas on August 16-17, 1986, contact: Sharon Dwyer, Texas Montessori Society, 4209 Boros, Corpus Christi, Texas 78413.

## Montessori in West Bend, Wisconsin

The Montessori Children's House of West Bend, Wisconsin was organized in 1976 as a non-profit corporation under the authority of a parent-run board of directors. Since 1976, this Society member Montessori school has gradually expanded to its present enrollment of some 80 children aged 2 to 6. Two morning sessions are conducted for children aged 3 to 6. In addition, an afternoon session, extended day and toddler program (2-3) is also provided.

In 1983, the school moved to its present location - a new building specifically designed for its use as a Montessori school. This building includes a lower level which is entirely open for free movement among the 40-50 children attending during the morning sessions.

One member of the teaching staff, Kathy Strobel, is presently completing the final portion of the Society's 22-lesson Montessori teacher training program which she began in April, 1985. Ms. Strobel has been with the school for the past eight years and is presently directing one of the morning sessions.

The school's beautiful outdoor environment includes a natural creek surrounded by a grassy marsh which attracts many small animals and birds, such as ducks, rabbits, grass snakes,

squirrels and other native wildlife common to the area. Ms. Strobel states that the children find a considerable interest in their exploration and discovery of nature in this unique outdoor setting.

Parent education at the Children's House includes regular monthly meetings under the guidance and direction of the teaching staff. These meetings provide such activities as discussion and role-playing to help the parents learn and share about their children's work at the school. In addition, parents are invited to share their special skills and interests at the school with children whenever possible.

For further information, contact: Montessori Children's House of West Bend, 2361 West Washington St., West Bend, Wisconsin 53095, Tel. (414) 334-5300.

## Petition to "Legalize" Freedom Denied

*"The true concept of liberty is practically unknown to professional educators . . . Anyone who would claim that the principle of liberty in education is active in schools today would make us smile . . . A principle of repression that amounts at times to slavery has a firm grip on both schools and education."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.9-10

On March 24, 1986, the Society's five-year federal litigation to operate its Montessori teacher training program in Maryland came to an end when the U.S. Supreme Court denied the Society's petition for writ of certiorari to review a lower court dismissal of its complaint. This litigation, described by one panel of the Fourth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals as a "broad ranging and intricate" constitutional challenge to the state laws of Maryland over private education, sought an injunction against government officials in that state to deter their further prohibitory interference with the Society's operation of a private postsecondary institution in that state.

In general, the Society's complaint alleged that state governmental agencies such as the Maryland State Board for Higher Education employed prohibitory licensing laws to conduct unconstitutional censorship of the Society's Montessori educational curriculum in prejudicial cooperation with the Society's adversaries in the field of education under the guise of "regulation". Ultimately, such prohibitory censorship was found constitutional in a rather


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## Reflections . . .

by Jude McAlevy

One transcendental experience comes to mind. I was the teacher/care-giver in a small, somewhat Montessorian pre-school a few years ago. I had taken the children for a walk along a creek nearby. One of the kids spotted a creature crawling out of the water onto a rock, and he called me over. I recognized it as a dragonfly nymph; their cast-off shells were visible on all the rocks along the water's edge; and I knew a dragonfly was about to emerge.

Six or eight kids quickly gathered round, and they shifted effortlessly into an attentive, rapt, almost unmoving mode of pure attention. They watched, and I observed them watching, as the nymph's body split open along its back, and slowly a folded, damp dragonfly emerged. It stretched, lengthened visibly, passed a single, glistening drop of pee, and proceeded to open and dry its wings. After perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, it lifted off into the sunny air. An "oooooh" of pure joy came from the children's lips as the miracle completed itself in that flight of blue life. Then another pause, and an explosion into voice and motion.



# Independence

by Lee Haviv

*"The child who was born normally and is growing normally, goes toward independence."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 92

Independence is the path followed by the normal child. Despite the newborn infant's initial helpless condition and total dependence on adult support for physical survival and basic human needs, an instinct towards complete independence is nonetheless apparent from birth. Such independence soon becomes evident in the young child's efforts to carry out a wide range of activities in its environment entirely by itself.

## Instinct Towards Independence

*"The child's first instinct is to carry out his actions by himself, without anyone helping him . . ."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 90-91

Weak and dependent, the infant nonetheless seeks to control its own body to assure a complete independent functioning in the world. Mastery of physical movement and coordination—reaching, crawling, standing and finally walking—accompanies a similar mental conquest of such skills as speaking and understanding language. In general, the child's instinctive growth towards full independence is unconsciously deterred by many countervailing demands and obstacles in the child's surroundings. The dominant adult environment presents a most imposing barrier to the child's growth towards true independence. Therefore, despite its natural instincts towards independent functioning, the typical child is gradually rendered rather resigned and discouraged in its self-constructive efforts to fully develop itself through environmental experience.

## Adult Society

*"An adult environment is not a suitable environment for children, but rather an aggregate of obstacles that strengthen their defenses, warp their attitudes, and expose them to adult suggestion."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 109

Unthinking parents and teachers tend to engender an environment for children which reflects the common prejudices and limitations of adult society—i.e., the child is assumed to be generally weak, dependent and lazy; spontaneous feelings are repressed under the guise of "good manners" and "politeness"; basic biological needs are postponed or substantially denied by impatient adult schedules, values and priorities. Lacking experience and unable to defend itself from such adult influences, the average child intimately integrates these hostile adult influences within itself as "personality" according to the unique nature of its "absorbent mind". Such impositions are ordinarily accepted by the child without question as one might regard the mandate of divinity itself.

## Adult Divinity

*" . . . an adult to a child is divinity itself. He is simply beyond discussion. Rather than disobey, a child must keep silent and adjust himself to everything."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 152

The child's "absorbent mind" compels its adjustment to that which is in harmony with its environment. Children thus readily conform to adult demands which unwittingly reinforce the adult's image as "good parent" or "good teacher". Traditional "teaching" and "helping" thus result in the emergency of children as "weak and dependent"—an image which is intimately incorporated within the child's personality to instill a pattern of considerable "dependency" on others.

## Dependency

*"children attach themselves to an older person who tends to substitute his own activity for theirs and they thus become extremely dependent upon him."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 161

Defenseless and impressionable, the young child is compelled to rely on teachers and parents who unconsciously define and limit its opportunity for full being and expression in the world. Gradually, the child's personality comes to acquire the customary dependency and weakness of the average adult—subject to approval of others, conforming to the dominant economic and political institutions, and generally enslaved to the tyranny of vague external forces outside oneself.

## Master of All

*"The master of all is a mysterious entity. The tyrant is all powerful, like a god. It is the environment that swallows up and crushes the man."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p. 7

The child's early repressive experiences become intimately incorporated into the child as "personality". Later, such repressive early childhood experiences become evident in one's relationship with the vague tyrannical forces of adult society. As the child creates its "personality" in early childhood to reflect the repressive tyranny of its parents, so too does adult society emerge as a similar creative expression in one's adult life—a continuing drama of struggle with vague tyrannical forces outside oneself. In general, the institution of "government" plays the same role as that of parental authority during infancy—to perpetuate the early childhood struggle against vague external forces with which one's being must invariably contend in society. The underlying truth of this environmental tyranny is well-hidden—subtly camouflaged by the typical illusion of one's "freedom and independence" in the world.

## Independence of Humanity

*"It is strikingly impressive that humanity despite its nameless slavery forms a kind of stereotyped chorus crying out that it is free and independent. These miserable and degraded people proclaim their own sovereignty."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p. 16-17

The illusion of one's freedom and independence in the world is particularly well-hidden in so-called "Democratic" countries where government emerges from "voting" in the electoral process. However, such "voting" is generally compromised by the limited knowledge of others, dominated by prevailing political and economic forces and ultimately held captive by the overriding prejudices of "popular opinion". Whatever "independence" may be reflected within such "popular opinion" is therefore quite limited to say the least. True individual independence transcends the bounds of "popular opinion" to emerge as a creative process entirely within oneself. Standing alone, one must ultimately face the "moment of peril" to courageously contend with all the weight of countervailing political forces and popular opinion.

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Look for the

# September Observer

featuring

# Harmony

**The Montessori Observer**

published by  
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY  
912 Thayer Ave.  
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(301) 589-1127  
Lee Haviv, Executive Director

The *Montessori Observer* is mailed six times each year to Society members throughout the world. The *Observer* is sent during the months of January, March, May, September, October and November. The purpose of this publication is to provide news and information about the development of Montessori education to extend awareness of Montessori principles and to promote harmony within the Montessori community

**INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY**  
The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, U.S.A. The Society's purpose is to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world.

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## LETTERS TO IMS

April 19, 1986

Dear Mr. Havis,

... Your story on the Philippine Revolution published in the *Observer Vol. VII, No. 2* has recognized I think, a certain readiness in the Filipino people to now forge a free nation, a "prepared environment" where the Child can now breakthrough and unfold. (One of the first tasks our new Minister of Tourism acted on was the problem of child prostitution in our country.)

We have a Mother in our new President, Cory Aquino. She is a free soul, a good listener and observer, firm and integral. I think the Philippines is now ready to take a more responsible and mature role among the Third World nations.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. More power to IMS.

Respectfully yours,

Antonio S. Rodriguez  
Camelot Montessori School  
Manila, Philippines

*Ed. Note: Mr. Rodriguez has just formed The Society for Montessori Study as a non-profit, non-stock foundation in the Philippines to expand the work of creating the "new education" in that country.*

April 11, 1986

Dear Lee:

Henry Martin, a little four year old black boy afflicted with Cerebral Palsy, has been our scholarship student for the past year. He is a smart, joyous young man with full mental capacities, who has gained impressively from our sensorial environment and, in return, has greatly enriched our well-students with his presence, his humor and perseverance. Everybody loves him. It is a most rewarding experience for all concerned.

There are many thousands of children like Henry who are deprived of the company and role-modeling of well children and an environment which would stimulate their perfectly healthy minds. I write to you, Lee, to invite all Montessori schools of your readership to offer one scholarship each to a child afflicted with Cerebral Palsy. As you know, we bring Educator for Peace into our classrooms by introducing our students to Peoples of the World who are different from us. Well, let's live Education for Peace by inviting into our midst a child who is different from us because of a physical disability. Cooperation, collaboration and compassion will become concrete experiences inherent in the process.

Applications can be made to the local United Cerebral Palsy Association, or write to: Dexter Lane, United Cerebral Palsy Association, 25 Taylor, San Francisco, California 94102. Dexter will gladly coordinate the school's offer with available students.

Sincerely,

Ursula Thrush  
San Francisco, California

March 31, 1986

To IMS:

I am a subscriber to the "*Montessori Observer*"... and I really enjoy reading your paper and getting new ideas as well as news...

Last spring when I was working in the garden with the children, we picked some forsythias and colorful azeleas and discovered that it could be a wonderful exercise for practical life for making fresh flower garlands. The children could wear them around their neck as a necklace or as a hairpiece or as a bracelet...

The children seemed so interested and excited and had a great deal of fun while working with this exercise. We were very successful at taking care of this delicate material...

Sincerely yours,

Anjana Das  
Avenal, New Jersey

*Ed. Note: Contact Anjana Das for details of presentation and experience with this material: 702 Murray St., Avenal, New Jersey 07001, Tel. (201) 381-4560.*

## "Legalize" Freedom

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

superficially reasoned magistrate's opinion which was then adopted word-for-word by a Federal District Judge and later endorsed by a second three-judge panel of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals (Richmond, Virginia) in their terse *per curiam* decision.

The Supreme Court's recent denial of the Society's petition for review of the lower court's dismissal reflects that court's exercise of discretion to refuse to further consider the prior judicial proceedings. Criteria employed to determine such "discretion" include the relative "importance" of the case. Since there were no *amicus* briefs filed in the case, the Supreme Court may well have concluded a relatively low level of public "importance", thus declining its substantive review. Notably, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education specifically refused the Society's request to submit briefs in the case prior to the Supreme Court's review decision.

Despite the Supreme Court's ultimate failure to substantively consider the vital issues of freedom and discrimination in private education raised by the Society's petition, this constitutional challenge to government oppression

Maryland did contribute to the larger judicial consciousness of the pertinent fundamental issues involved. For example, judicial consideration in this case included a definitive and well-reasoned published opinion by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals concerning the "abstention" doctrine which vindicated a clear federal court jurisdiction for private education involving such constitutional claims as "academic content censorship" and discriminatory enforcement of government restrictions based on religion. See *Educational Services, Inc. et al. v. Maryland St. Bd. for Higher Ed., et al* 710 F2d 170 (4 Cir. 1983). In addition, the Society's petition presents a well-reasoned and insightful legal argument on behalf of freedom in private education which other litigants may now constructively employ to guide their own further court challenges to irrational and repressive government interference in the field of private education.

Of course, the Society will continue to assert and pursue its constitutional claims to full and complete "liberty" as against tyrannical government imposition on its work of creating the "new education" wherever and whenever the occasion arises. In Maryland, Lee Havis, the Society's executive director, has offered an appropriate legislative remedy to resolve the matter and he will continue to pursue its passage by the Maryland legislature in cooperation with others interested in true freedom for private education in that state.

The Society appreciates the encouragement, support and contribution of all those persons who participated in any way with its efforts on behalf of the transcendent principle of liberty for true Montessori education in the state of Maryland. For a copy of the Society's petition or to inquire further into the legal issues of freedom in private education, contact: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.

Positions  
& Placements

**Montessori Teacher:** (2-6) Private schools seeking certified Montessori Primary Directresses to start September, 1986. Benefits include medical insurance and possible housing. If interested in relocating to sunny south Florida send resume to: Summit Private Schools, 1725 Davie Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33312, Tel. 1-305-523-9489.

**Montessori Teacher:** (2-6) For September, 1986 - June, 1987. To teach two classes, morning and afternoon sessions. Salary \$10,500-\$13,000 per year (dependent on experience and education). School was established in 1978 and is located in Napa Valley, one hour's drive north of San Francisco. Send resume to: Sunrise Montessori, P.O. Box 4077, Napa, California 94558, Attn.: Bonnie Sauer.

**Montessori Teacher:** (2.9-6), well established school in Greater Hartford Area. Position available in Aug., 1986. Salary according to background and experience. Full or part-time position. Can call collect (203) 646-5727 or write: H.C.A.M.S., P.O. Box 9218, Bolton, Connecticut 06040.

**Montessori Teachers:** (6-9 and 9-12). For September, 1986. Large school (205 students) with specialized classes in Art, Music, French, and Physical Education. Willing to sponsor elementary training for qualified individuals. Salary is negotiable. Contact: Nancy R. Cole, Creative Montessori Center, 15500 Howard, Southgate, Michigan 48195, Tel. (313) 284-8377.

## Independence

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## Moment of Peril

*"It is primarily necessary to depend on oneself, because in the moment of peril we are alone."*

Maria Montessori

from *Spontaneous Act in Ed.*, p.183

True Montessori teaching reflects a complete independence from detrimental influences in society—a standing alone in the "moment of peril" to create a totally new reality. Such Montessori teaching is most accurately represented as commitment to three fundamental principles of nature, the directionality of which is given by the following phrases: (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". One's conscious awareness of these principles in the present moment is the true "being" of a Montessori teacher—a complete support for the child's independent functioning, to free the child from all direct adult influence and dependency which otherwise ordinarily emerge under the guise of "help" or "teaching".

## Teaching Independence

*"If teaching is to be effective with young children, it must assist them to advance on the way to independence."*

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.57

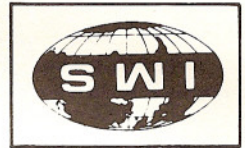
Effective Montessori teaching consistently directs children towards their own independent functioning with other children and concentrated work with the physical objects. The teacher's role is therefore rather modest and indirect, ultimately withdrawing one's "personality" from the child's environment. Whatever "help" the Montessori teacher offers the

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## Independence

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child is in the nature of encouragement directed to its own independent interests and freely chosen activity—a serving of the child's spirit.

## Spiritual Embryo

*"The child becoming incarnate is a spiritual embryo which needs its own special environment . . . the spiritual embryo needs to be protected by an external environment that is warm with love and rich in nourishment, where everything is disposed to welcome, and nothing to harm it."*

Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.34

The child's growing spirit is at times most effectively supported in its path towards independence by a warm and comforting environment. Ordinarily weak and dependent children thereby gain the confidence to gradually choose their own work and independent activity—i.e. to become "normal". Thus "normalized" the child begins to reflect its inherent growth towards independence to fulfill the ultimate purpose of the true Montessori teacher.

## Path Towards Independence

*"Blessed are the teachers who have brought their class to the stage where they can say, 'Whether I am present or not, the class carries on. The group has achieved independence'. To arrive at this mark of success, there is a path to follow for the teacher's development."*

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.88

Montessori teaching, as "commitment to Montessori principles", gradually leads to true independence for the children under one's supervision. In time, such children will come to be reflected in a new and stronger humanity—free of those detrimental influences in today's society which tend to so degrade and repress man's true spirit of confident mastery over the environment. Montessori teaching thus reveals itself as a path toward true independence for all mankind.



Children at Smaller Scholars School (Copperas Cove, Texas) prepare for a train ride.

## Smaller Scholars

Copperas Cove, Texas

The Academy of Smaller Scholars is a complex of three schools located in Copperas Cove, Texas, some 175 miles south of Dallas. Established in 1981 by Deborah McDonough, this Society member Montessori school has a total enrollment of 250 children aged 2 to 6.

Ms. McDonough, the Academy's director, has an extensive background in elementary and early childhood education. She has taught in both public and private school situations, and received her first early childhood experience when she directed a school in Schweinfurt, Germany. Ms. McDonough is presently enrolled in the Society's Independent Study Course to extend her preparation for Montessori teaching.

The school program includes half and full day sessions with transportation provided to and from Copperas Cove and Fort Hood, a nearby Army base. A summer program features swimming lessons and field trips all over Central Texas. Each year the children tour the pioneer and railroad museum and take a ride on an Amtrak train.

Ms. McDonough welcomes visitors to her school. She states that the Academy's aim is to "to aid in the emergence of the normalized child." Future plans include a fourth school location in the fall that will increase the enrollment to 310.

For further information, contact: Deborah McDonough, Academy of Smaller Scholars, 413 Allen St., Copperas Cove, Texas 76522, Tel. (817) 547-1375.

## Announcements

The Texas Montessori Society will sponsor a Montessori conference on August 16-17, 1986 at the Corpus Christi Hilton Inn (Corpus Christi, Texas). The conference will be conducted by Lee Havis, executive director of the International Montessori Society and will consider the topic: "Managing Misbehavior, Applying Montessori Principles". Fee is \$60 (\$50 for members of the Texas Montessori Society). Saturday evening dinner is \$10 extra. To register or inquire further, contact: Sharon Dwyer, Texas Montessori Society, 4209 Boros, Corpus Christi, Texas 78413.

## Marketplace

**Montessori Equipment:** excellent quality at moderate prices. Made by: Educational Aids, Ltd. Stock on hand for prompt shipment. For free brochure and price list, write: CABDEV, Incorporated, 1183A Finch Ave. W, Unit 3, Downsview, Ontario M3J 2G2 Canada, Tel. (416) 665-8310. (Exclusive agents and distributors, U.S.A. and Canada. Montessori distributors since 1972)

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## History of Civilization

*"All forms of slavery tend little by little to weaken and disappear. The history of civilization is a history of conquest and of liberation."*

Maria Montessori

from *Montessori Method*, p.22