

Theta Alpha Journal



November 2016

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Theta Alpha
"Daughters of the Academy"
☩

Named From the Greek :
Θυγατηρες Ακαδεμειας
Thugateres Akademeias

Founded in 1904 by graduates of the Academy of the New Church, Theta Alpha exists to provide a forum for women for the advancement and support of New Church education in its many forms, and to support each other in our personal spiritual growth. Membership is open to interested women aged eighteen and older.

Non Nobis Solum ~ Not for Ourselves Alone

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Membership Dues

Please remember that your membership dues support all of Theta Alpha International's programs, including this *Journal!*

Dues are \$15 (US)

For new and renewing members,
please either remit payment to:

Theta Alpha International
P.O. Box 154
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

OR

Pay online at:

<http://bit.ly/taijournal>

*You can join any time!
If you are renewing, dues are "due" by July 1st of each year.*



This is a tear-out page to send in with your dues: just fill in the information on the back and send in with your dues, or sign up online.

I want to be a member of Theta Alpha International!

- I am renewing my membership
- I am a new member

Name: _____

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Phone Number: _____

I have enclosed \$15 dues for the 2016-2017 year

I'm also including an additional donation of \$_____ to support Theta Alpha International

Please enclose a \$15 (US) check for the annual dues made out to **Theta Alpha International** and mail to:

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Editorial

Helen Kennedy

As we go through life, our spirituality at times becomes elusive. Acknowledging the Lord intellectually is not the same as feeling the Lord's presence in our life. In this issue Kris Earle tells us of an ongoing question she had in her adult life and the way in which the Lord unexpectedly answered it.

More women than I had expected told me that poems are the first thing they look for when opening the *Journal* to see its contents. This issue has two, each unexpectedly arriving in my inbox, sent by women expressing their deeper perceptions in this interesting form that marries rhythm with writing.

Mary Margaret Zathey-Agboga reaches out to us through the pages of the *Journal*, telling us of the social difficulties women live with daily as wives of ministers in Christian churches in her country of Ghana. Mary Margaret, a warm, loving, outgoing woman, is married to Rev. Godwin Agboga. This may be the first time the wife of an African minister has written an article for the *Journal*. Some readers with long memories may correct me.

Making clothing, along with spinning and weaving, are some of the first work women did, and evidence of it goes back over 20,000 years in the archaeological record. There are women today who love continuing in the ways of their ancestors. In this issue we have interviews with women who love designing clothing, making it, laundering it, handling materials and fabric, wearing clothing made in an artistic way, and even copying fine art in materials. In addition, women modeled clothing designed by Heather Cha at the Theta Alpha luncheon last October. Heather is a recent graduate of the Academy high school, and examples of her work can be seen in the photographs on two of the pages of the *Journal*.

I had an idea to search through old copies of the Journal for articles that would be relevant and interesting to our readers today, then ask the person who wrote each article to spend some time thinking on how she feels about the topic today. If inspired, she could then write a little something to go along with the original article. I thought it might be a good chronicler of how our states of mind change over the course of our lifetime. In getting lost in those old articles, one of the things striking me was that many of the women have moved on to their heavenly homes. Our readers could give us a list of names of their friends who have. Since it's not possible to ask anything of these women who now live in a distant land, it occurred to me to see if our favorite seer says anything illustrating how a person's thinking changes when she or he goes into the next life. Swedenborg does, and his thoughts are sprinkled here and there throughout his many books, but mainly in *Heaven and Hell*. The best thing is that he assures us that the good things we love about our friends won't have changed, for he says, "I have been allowed to talk with people who lived more than seventeen centuries ago, people whose lives are known from the literature of their own times; and I have become convinced that the same love they had then is still sustaining them now." (HH 363)

A few more things I've garnered are that the wisdom we will be in forever is according to "whatever level of desire for what is good and true we had when we left this world" (DP 334). A joyful passage is that while living in the natural world "our spiritual minds are being filled with thousands of hidden treasures of wisdom, and with thousands of love's joys as gifts from the Lord "(DLW 252). What are they? Well, the "only way we can recognize them in this earthly world is by a pleasure of love in our outer thought processes" (DP 233).

All natural things serve the Divine as means. Our "love of riches, or the uses of riches, remains with everyone to eternity, and is exactly the same as the love acquired in the world" (HH 363). The difference is, of course, whether we are using them to serve heaven, or continually serving ourselves with them. This passage from *Messages From Beyond* shows that there is no

need, though, to be anxious about the things we've done wrong because "The Lord will not permit anything that cannot be turned into good in some way and at some time. It is a wonderful vision that shows this great truth to the mind and makes it content with its mistakes" (p. 186).

Helen Kennedy can be contacted at hmkennedy98@gmail.com.

Attention parents:

The next issue will include an article by Peter Buss, Jr., with suggestions on teaching your children about the ways the Lord loves them, opening their eyes to spiritual realities, and helping them become loving, wise and useful human beings. With it we are planning to include responses from parents in various church societies in the United States and abroad, garnered from experiences in guiding their children along these lines. If you would like to read the article ahead of time and share some of your insights, please contact the editor for a copy. The email address is hmkennedy98@gmail.com.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

We would love to publish selected responses to articles, poems and stories in the Journal.

Tell us what you think!



I Know My Shepherd's Voice

I know my Shepherd's voice,

It is quiet and sure, in my mind.

When I cry, "Lord I can go no further! Don't leave me behind!!"

He comes back for me. Me, this useless old sheep.

He carries me. His strong arms hold me against his chest.

My face looks up to His Face.

He will not leave me or forsake me.

He won't let the devil take me.

He says: "Beloved, be not anxious. I have seen and know all that you need. I will provide. Trust me.

Feel my love. Feel my joy. Feel my peace. Rejoice.

(HALLELUJAH!)

All that is not of me, cast out.

Prepare your heart and mind and soul as a dwelling place for me.

Keep my commandments.

That is how you love Me.

My way is perfect.

I will give you strength.

You will make it.

You are beautiful in My eyes. I see the final result. So lovely. A unique use. My joy.

Sandy Abele

President's Message

I love fall! For me, fall carries with it a feeling of new beginnings and renewal at least equal to, if not more than, spring. I guess that partly comes from being in education, as well as the relief from the very hot, humid weather of summer here in Bryn Athyn. It is hard to believe that it has been two years since we voted to continue Theta Alpha on a probationary basis. It is now time to evaluate how far we've come, and if we've come far enough. We have filled all positions on the Executive Committee (with the exception of Secretary), and we are once again publishing two Journals per year (thanks to the hard work of Helen Kennedy and her team!). We launched our new scholarship program this year, helping female students who are attending Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. This is all very encouraging.

On the more concerning side, our dues/contributions are down significantly. We did not send out a separate dues notice this year, and this may have left some of our membership questioning whether or not they have paid for 2016-2017. If you're not sure you've paid for this year, just shoot us an e-mail (ancdaughters@gmail.com) or send a note to Box 154, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009, and we will check. Also, feel free to call me, if that is easier, at 215-962-6999. Though you no longer need to be a paid member in order to receive the Journal, you do need to have paid dues in order to vote on any issues, such as those that come up each year at the Charter Day Annual Meeting. Our dues are still only \$15 U.S. for the year. However, dues alone are not enough to support our many uses—especially the Journal and scholarships. For these we rely heavily on contributions. And, as noted earlier, both dues and contributions are down.

In addition to monetary contributions, we are also looking at personal involvement as a factor in our evaluation of the viability of continuing as an organization. We really need to see, in tangible ways, the importance of the organization to those we serve. There are many ways to get involved, even if you don't live

in Bryn Athyn—with today’s technology, we’re closer than ever. In looking for a reading for our first Executive Committee meeting this year, I came across the following number. I see in this description a vision of what Theta Alpha can be.

To one human thought, thousands, in fact a myriad, of spirits and angels contribute, all of whom God the Messiah arranges in order and governs.

This cannot but appear as a paradox to a person on earth, who supposes that a thought is a simple unit, and not formed from tens of thousands of components. But even though it can be demonstrated by very many things in nature—that in one action, thousands in fact myriads of muscles, as well as the tiniest fibres all the way from the brain to the action, contribute. . . . Still it appears as a paradox that something similar applies to a person's thoughts, and feelings, because the operation and influence of spirits and angels upon human minds has not been attested by experience.

From experience, through the mercy of God the Messiah, I am able to say that thousands of spirits and angels contribute, **even though only a few are very close by.**

SE 254

We live in a rapidly changing, technology-driven world, whether we like it or not. This got me to thinking about change and the value of traditions. How do you balance these two things? It's not easy. I found another quote that I like, this time from the Internet. I think it might help to reconcile what look to be complete opposites.

“Tradition is not to preserve the ashes. But to pass on the flame.” (Gustav Mahler)

I hope to speak more on this at the Charter Day Annual Meeting. In the meantime, I invite your thoughts about how we can change and grow, while carrying on the traditions that mean so much to us and have helped to define who we are.

Sincerely,

Melodie

Scholarships Available!

Theta Alpha International Education Scholarship

Two education scholarships will be offered for the 2017-2018 school year. This annual award is for the purpose of supporting women attending the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church who desire to become New Church teachers and declare education as a major or minor (or Interdisciplinary Degree). The annual scholarship award amount is \$2,100 (\$700 paid directly to the college at the beginning of each trimester), for up to 2 recipients. One award is for an incoming freshman, and one award is for a current Bryn Athyn College of the New Church education student. These funds may be used toward tuition, fees, and/or books.

Theta Alpha International Scholarship

Three scholarships are available to women students of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church who have a 3.0 GPA or higher and are studying **Religion** (major, minor, ID) **or MARS** program or are **international** students. There are (2) \$2,000 and (1) \$1,000 scholarships awarded to eligible recipients who exemplify the teachings of the New Church. These are annual merit-based scholarships that can be used for tuition, college fees, books or supplies.

Applications are due February 1, 2017.

To apply: email ancdaughters@gmail.com or call Sarah Wong at BAC 267-502-6085 or see BAC website.

Midwinter Hymn

In winter's chill and winter's dark,
A plea for ember, prayer for spark.
The golden shimmer of the spring
Is almost a forgotten thing.

Too long the hours of the night,
Too brief the dream of something bright,
Its image faint and far too weak
To bear a dawn so cold and bleak.

And yet in winter's clutching fist
Was placed a Treasure, heaven kissed.
It was the shadowed, black night sky
That welcomed first the holy cry.

So at the core of human heart
Where faith grows dim, hope falls apart,
And in our season of despair
The Morning Star is rising there.

The grieving soul, the heart that breaks
The infant Savior's cradle makes.
So bless the darkest winter night
Whose depths embrace Eternal Light.

Nadine Rogers

Profile of a Husband "Himself"

An early riser you, Walt

I picture you at breakfast with your cadre of good old friends.

One tips his hat "good morning"

Another one nods over his cup of coffee

Sometimes quick unceremonious handshakes are given all round.

The composition of this group has changed little over the years.

There is an easy give and take of conversation.

When one holds forth, they all listen, but comment is not foreign or uninvited.

Sometimes there is news to be reported. Most days it is life as usual.

I see you, Walt, chatting easily with them at the things you know so well.

With these men you are in your element. They share your steadfastness of principle and their animated faces bespeak of the wisdom of lives well lived.

Walter, you are a man here, an individual in their midst, and yet part of a brotherhood you have long cherished.

Clarinda Alden Koenig

Note: When I am describing "his cadre of old friends" I am referring to his actual friends "in trade." In other words, those men who understood each other, sharing their knowledge, humor, and camaraderie at breakfast before beginning their work day.

I Know You're There, But I Don't *Feel* You

Kris Heinrichs Earle

Just as many other *Theta Alpha* readers are, I was raised knowing the Ten Commandments and the Two Great Commandments. As a child I was taught to memorize them. Later in adulthood these important passages became the yardstick for my conduct. I was the rich young ruler: "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up" (Mark 10:20). During my forties my family and I lived in Oklahoma for ten years, right in the middle of the Bible Belt. In many ways I felt very much at home in this overtly religious culture where one of the first questions you're asked as a newcomer is, "What church do you belong to?" My husband was raised Methodist and it made this an easy choice for us in a town where the nearest New Church was far away.

As we settled into our lives in Oklahoma I was repeatedly baffled when someone would claim a personal, intimate relationship with God in conversation. What was this relationship? I had wonderful relationships in my life, but an intimate relationship with the Lord? Earlier in my thirties dutifully I had created a "devotional time" in the morning, before the household was up, to read the Word and pray, and I became even more dedicated to this practice in Oklahoma. I was determined to find what others were claiming. As the years progressed I had many questions about this personal relationship people spoke about. Intellectually I acknowledged the Lord on many levels, but what did it feel like to have a personal relationship with the Lord? Were people imagining these feelings? How does the Lord talk to us? I listened as people made a variety of claims and I still was not experiencing what others claimed. I felt like the little boy in Hans Christian Anderson's "The Emperor's New Clothes." Are these people expressing what they think they're supposed to feel? Were they fabricating these experiences due to the surrounding culture? Or, perhaps, am I lacking in some way?

Still my Oklahoma years were rich in many ways: my husband and I were raising three children, I loved my work, I had very good friends, and we eventually moved to my dream farm with horses. Of course we had our ups and downs, but life was so very good in so many ways. One of the many gifts I received there was working with a Japanese school exchange. I helped organize the families who hosted the Japanese students who came to our school, and then reciprocally chaperoned two separate groups that went to Japan. It was during my second trip over to Japan that I formed a mission for myself: I wanted to observe how a culture that lacked monotheism, a clear picture of God, functioned. Having been to Japan before, I had already observed that the Japanese practiced “loving the neighbor” in ways I had not experienced in my home culture. So why is a personal relationship with God so important if seemingly the Japanese did so very well without this?

My question led me on several interesting paths, but my question was in part answered in a Japanese Catholic church with a priest from New York. How did I even get there? Let's just call it Providence. My son, Colin, and I were brought to this church because I expressed an interest in going to a Christian service (in a country where 2.3 % of the population is Christian). Surprisingly enough, this was not just an ordinary Mass, it was this priest's golden jubilee—fifty years as a priest. He had family visiting from the U.S., so there were several easy conversations before the service started.

Mass is Mass wherever you are in the world. This is one of the things I admire about the Catholic Church. During this celebratory service I was enthralled with how beautifully bilingual this man was who kept his parishioners with him throughout his message. The priest seamlessly switched between Japanese and English, communicating with his flock in a loving, humorous, open-hearted manner. As the time for Holy Eucharist (Communion) approached I was ready to stay in my place. I knew better than take Communion in a Catholic church as I was obviously not Catholic. People were lining up when my host came over and urged me in his broken English, “Benediction,

benediction!" Benediction? I didn't understand, but I obediently went to the altar with my arms crossed over my chest as a sign that I would not take the Host.

I approached the rail expecting the perfunctory blessing, and as I looked up at the priest, he took my face in his hands and blessed me while his clear blue eyes looked into mine. I cannot describe in words the wave of love that enveloped me. His touch, his sincerity, his love of service . . . Divine Love flowing through this man.

Later upon reflection I realized that my own deep, personal question (not the one about how do the Japanese blend culture and monotheism), was beginning to be answered. Part of this personal relationship with the Lord is in open-hearted giving to others. The Lord works through us and we experience His Love through them.

What makes the partnership mutual [with God] is that we love God and we act on what we receive from God, doing so as if we were on our own but trusting that we have God's help. How could we live to eternity if we had no partnership with the eternal God? How then would we be human if that likeness were not in us? (TCR 48).

It's easy for me to see now that it will take the rest of my earthly and all of my heavenly life to discover the beauty in this promised relationship, but my heart fills with wonder at how amazing this process is! And as I go back to the Word and explore the story of the rich young ruler, I am touched by how Jesus responds to him, "Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me" (Mark 10:21).

Today I choose to follow Him!

Kris Earle can be contacted at madameahs@gmail.com.

Representations

There is a responsiveness between the things in the inner person and those in the outer, so that things from either side appear in a different guise on the other side - so different that they cannot be identified without a knowledge of correspondences.

HH 356:15



A thin cloud of dust scattered on the air.

Good spirits gave this image to Swedenborg and said “our own prudence is like that dust in relation to the entire atmosphere; it is nothing by comparison, and what is more, it falls down” (SH 6485).



A left hand detached from a body. It stretched upwards and then the right hand detached.

It was said to Swedenborg if the hands do not come back & return to the body, it is futile, for the person still trusts in his own power, in his own strength (SE 1373¹/₂).



A tenuous white ray resembling a flash of lightning, also a small band of bright little stars.

Tenuous white ray: the slightest disagreement among spirits from Jupiter.

Small band of bright little stars: “there is disagreement but still it is speedily adjusted” (SE 614).



A brilliance produced by flashes of light as from a diamond, remaining for quite a long time. There was a flashing brilliance in every tiniest facet.

Persons who have been led away from material into spiritual ideas perceive things of a worldly and bodily kind as being beneath and far away. The spiritual things are likened to the flashing brilliance in the diamond (SH 1526).

Laws of Life Essay Contest

All High School Sophomore (or 15-16 year old) Swedenborgian girls world-wide are eligible to enter this contest. This essay is an opportunity to write about what YOU think is important in life. This is your chance to be heard—to write from the heart about one, or more, of your personal laws of life. Essays are to be in English (Google Translate can be used for this purpose). No name or identification can be on the paper itself to allow impartial judging, but have your name and address in the envelope or email.

Winners receive a certificate and a check:

1st Place: \$100 USD, 2nd Place \$75 USD, 3rd Place \$50 USD.

Essays are printed in the *Journal* with writers' permission and as room permits.

The essay guidelines are:

“The Laws of Life” are a set of rules, ideals or principles by which one should live:

-What do you value most in life?

-What is important to you?

-What ideals do you hold deep in your heart?

Think about the people and experiences that have helped you form these laws...

Pick a topic to write about:

-a personal experience/lesson learned that affects how you live/view your life now.

-a quote or an aphorism that inspires or guides you.

You can use an analogy, a quotation, a story, or a parable.

(No personal romantic relationships!!)

Submissions are to be sent to:

Theta Alpha International, PO Box 511, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009, USA

Or email to: ANCdaughters@gmail.com

Entries must be received by March 1, 2017.

The Wonderful Experience of Failure

Victoria Kline

Have you ever attempted something when you knew you were going to fail? I have. First comes the anticipation. Then comes the panic, when the hopes that have been built up start to fade. The thoughts of “Maybe I have a chance!” change to “Why am I even doing this?” Doubt seeps in through my eyes and ears and my toes. It worms its way through my mind, gnawing on all of my dreams and aspirations and turning them to dread. “Why am I doing this?” I ask myself, again. Well, I’ll tell you. It’s for the experience.

When I face an audition or performance, or even a test in school, I get nervous, especially when it’s something that I feel unprepared for. Preparing for something like this can seem like quite an ordeal. I play the trumpet, and I recently tried out for a spot in a band. I had just started up taking lessons again a few months before my audition, and I was not as prepared as I would have liked. When I got to the school where the auditions were being held, my expectations were jolted. There was an enormous amount of people there. My registration slip was number 2010, and out of the sixty or more trumpets, they were only accepting around twelve. All of the winds were ushered into a huge auditorium, where we practiced our various instruments, pieces and scales simultaneously. To say it was loud would have been an understatement, and a big one at that. During this time, my anticipation acted like a tide. It was like a dancer emulating one of the great forces of nature. It rose, dramatically, and with flair, I suppose expecting praise, and it dejectedly (but to my delight) ebbed back to its proper place. And the time went by, as I waited to be called to the audition room.

I’m not always nervous when I perform or when I audition. It’s when I feel unprepared or unsure to perform that I get shaky. Sometimes I’m so shaky that when I leave the stage or room my legs feel weak and tremble, probably still wearing off

the emotional trauma they suffered, maybe so my mind doesn't have to do it alone. But I've found that if I can stay calm and collected for the period of anticipation that precedes the performance, I'll be able to really do my best, and feel more confident. If I can stop running through worst-case-scenarios, and stressing about scales (shudder), then I can focus on what I need to. And this proves more and more true every time.

But why do I put myself through these emotional struggles if it doesn't even yield anything? That's just it. Although it can be hard to see it at the time, it does yield something useful, and it's well worth all of the trouble that went into it. It gives me experience that I can use to try again. The phrase "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" used to annoy me. I don't like the ideal of failing, or at least of not doing as well as I'd like, over and over again. I suppose one win could be worth it, but think of all of those misses for one hit! This is how life goes, though. And it's not all as black and white as it seems because, although I may have done poorly on my audition, now I know what auditioning is like. I know how it feels to stand in a room and play what I've been preparing for months, and I know how much to warm up the morning before the audition. I know how to calm my incredibly tense nerves, maybe not all the way, but it's a start. I can try again next year, better prepared and more confident than I was this year.

But wait, that's not all! Yes, I gained experience from my ordeal. Yes, I learned from it. But I also grew in the process. When I first decided to audition, I was nowhere near where I am today. I had never seriously attempted a two-octave scale. I looked at the piece and thought, "Wow. That looks difficult. How are those runs even possible?" And do you know what? It was difficult. But I did it anyway. I learned to play it, albeit not perfectly, and at a slower tempo than a professional, but I'm a better trumpet player because of it.

Everyone knows it is hard to fail. No one likes the sinking feeling of defeat. I know I certainly don't. But failure and mistakes, although painful, help us to grow. And failure is

inevitable, in this big and unpredictable world that we have. If I live my life not knowing what it's like to make mistakes or to fail, then what will I do with the lemons life throws at me? I'll just stare at them, without the knowledge of how to make lemonade. And they won't taste sweet. It's only when I learn to accept these disappointments for what they are that I can learn to put them to good use, and do better the next time I'm faced with something new. And they'll help me to welcome new things with open arms, even if they may not turn out how I expect them.

This essay placed third in the Theta Alpha Laws of Life Essay Contest for Sophomore girls in the spring of 2016.

Call for Art Submissions!



As you can see from the beautiful cover art, we are hoping that the *Journal* can present some of the visual art that Swedenborgians around the world are creating.

Please send us images you would like to share with *Journal* readers and feel free to write a few sentences about what you send in!

Thought Spaces and Early Learning

Linda Simonetti Odhner

Although I learned to read competently in first grade, I didn't really become a reader until I was almost nine.

It happened quite suddenly one day when my mother handed me her old copy of Louisa May Alcott's Little Men, and I soon found myself in Plumfield with the boys at the Bhaers' boarding school. I passed through a literary doorway into a new state of consciousness, and never looked back. At school we read Burnett's The Secret Garden and Kate Seredy's The Good Master. From my parents' bookshelves I sampled books about math, science, and human development: reading Holt's How Children Fail and de Charms' Growth of the Mind, I found that I identified more with the adult authors' viewpoints than with the children being described. I took on a borrowed state of advanced thinking that wasn't yet fully mine but felt like coming home: I knew it as my birthright. A little adult thinker lying asleep inside me had wakened to the kiss of Prince Reading.

From then on I heard a voice in my mind narrating my life, and my level of introspection deepened. I looked back at my unreflective eight-year-old self almost as a different person. I sometimes wonder why that shift happened so suddenly. Perhaps the picture books read to me in my younger years stirred me visually and poetically more than narratively. I do remember bringing home and plowing through a terribly dull storybook in second grade. It must have been quite bad to have done nothing to quicken the reader in me. I had no idea, or I would have ditched it and tried something else. But that was only a temporary setback, a postponing of the inevitable.

Three Kinds of Thought Space

Many of us love to become absorbed in the pages of a book and let it carry us away to another place, true or feigned; to allow our physical surroundings to melt away, and even to forget that we are reading; to laugh and cry and sympathize with story

characters that seem to live and breathe. The presentation of ideas and arguments, of thoughtful attempts to make sense of the world, can be equally enthralling. Reading is a passport into **literary space**, with **narrative space** considered as a subset thereof, and I have described my initiation into it above.

In a two-level decoding process, the reader translates the symbols on the page into words and sentences, which in turn become transparent to the meaning they convey, like a window opening onto an alternate reality. The whole apparatus of written language—the look of words on the page, their grammar and syntax, the sound of them spoken aloud—recedes into the background of focus. (Michael Polanyi calls this a “from/at” distinction, using the example of reading a letter and later being unable to recall what language it was written in. He looked AT the meaning of the letter FROM his knowledge of the language, and the language receded into the background of his attention.)

After many years of reading silently, reading aloud, and being read to, for myself I find that the solitary act of reading print lends itself most effectively to full immersion in literary space.

The visual arts accomplish something quite similar. Representative drawing and painting can create a convincing illusion of three-dimensional space; the picture plane becomes a window transparent to an imaginary place, perhaps a landscape or interior. To make this happen, artists employ linear perspective, with vanishing points and foreshortening; they render objects by means of light and shade and texture, and bring anatomical accuracy to the depiction of human and animal figures. All of these techniques contribute to the sense of solid, palpable reality that characterizes **pictorial space**. In contrast, abstract patterns and stylized pictures occupy the surface of the picture plane, or at most a shallow extension of it like a sculptural relief. M. C. Escher, in his mathematically-themed art prints, liked to play with this illusion and this contrast, creating and deliberately distorting pictorial spaces, or showing two or more incompatible spatial illusions in a single picture.

(Long before the invention of photography, painters like Jan Vermeer were making use of its precursor, the *camera obscura*, a simple box or chamber that admits light through a small hole and projects a scene from outside onto the opposite wall, but upside down. The *camera obscura*, like photographic cameras, replicates the way light enters our eyes and projects images onto our retinas, and gives us another avenue into pictorial space.)

As a child I stared in awe at the photographic realism of Andrew Wyeth's finished paintings, yet I found his pencil and watercolor studies even more engrossing, with their fully rendered spaces popping out of the flat white page while still visibly composed of pencil lines, brush strokes and washes of pigment. Likewise, Michelangelo's drawings filled me with wonder that red chalk marks on paper could convey the subtly modeled musculature of leg and torso. At the Natural History Museum I marveled at the way the mockups in the dioramas blended almost seamlessly into the background paintings. And like many children I imagined mirror reflections as parts of a magical parallel universe where everything (as Alice noticed) "goes the other way."

As with words and pictures, the sound of classical music can also communicate a strong sense of three-dimensional space. Music scholar Donald Tovey speaks of the tritone, or diminished-fifth interval, as "the kink in musical space" because of its unresolved ambiguity, and he even compares Renaissance harmony to the relatively primitive perspective in medieval paintings. (Western music lagged about 200 years behind the pictorial arts in this respect.) The three-dimensional feel of classical harmony comes from the key-sense, or tonic center, with its reliance on triad chords. Modulation to a different key takes us on a journey to a different place, musically speaking. Music is often compared to architecture, not just structurally, but also because of the space it creates, which I call **harmonic space**. J. S. Bach plays with harmonic space in his music much the way Escher plays with pictorial space.

Each of these three examples starts with a set of sensory data which generates thought space only when the data are decoded and interpreted in the mind. The canvas or printed page is flat, and music, even when performed and heard, is merely a sequence of sounds. The vehicle itself becomes transparent and essentially disappears, to some extent, from conscious view.

More About Thought Spaces

Communication through spoken language gives rise to **linguistic space**, and adds a layer of reflection and abstraction to the kind of direct and relatively unfiltered experience that we have in infancy. Written language, which transcends space and time, adds still another layer. The invention of printing enabled many more people to share the same literary space. Watching a play or movie takes us into **dramatic space**. Today's electronic media have introduced **cyberspace**, a network which allows us to transmit images and videos as well as words.

Metric space, as I define it, is an idealized concept of space that can be formally measured and manipulated. Points with no magnitude, lines and planes with no thickness that are perfectly straight and perfectly flat, do not exist in the natural world, but we make a mental place for them in metric space, part of the Platonic realm of ideal forms, and we can approximate them well enough by drawing with compass and straightedge and constructing models with physical materials. Whole numbers, fractions, irrational numbers, and negative numbers all fit on a single infinite number line, and the square roots of negative numbers find their place on an "imaginary" number line perpendicular to the "real" one. Analytic geometry enables us to graph algebraic equations in metric space, in a marriage of number and form. Naming metric space is only a first step in discovering the astounding variety of mathematical spaces.

All of these and other thought spaces come together into **cultural space**, or the **noosphere**. A century ago the French priest-philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin used the term "noosphere" for the world of human thought, in contrast to the

physiosphere, the world of matter, and the biosphere, the world of living things. We may think of the noosphere as being mediated by spirits. A teacher friend of mine introduced me to Lev Vygotsky's theory of "distributed cognitions," the idea that the things we learn aren't just inside of us, but "out there" in the physical and cultural worlds. Distributed cognitions are not only cognitive entities, like tools, books, symbols, and metaphors, but also cognitive spaces.

Human beings can inhabit these thought spaces in part because we are all born into material bodies that inhabit **physical space**. That concrete experience forms a basis for all the spaces into which our minds can expand, a matrix in which the higher levels of thought are ripened and brought to birth. The illusion of space created by a picture, for example, draws its power from our experience of physical space. The exercise of imaginative thought happens in these inner spaces. They are transformative; spending time in them changes us. Learning is at least as much a matter of navigating **thought spaces** as it is about committing facts to memory. Helen Keller's sensory deficits barred her from the experience of pictorial and harmonic space; but she could pause in the reading of a Braille book to exclaim, "I have been in Athens!"

Infant and Child Savants

I use the term "infant savant" to refer to a child who has reached an advanced understanding in some area by the age of four or five, and "child savant" for one who is notably precocious at age nine or ten. These are common ages for quantum leaps in cognitive ability, which often occur in response to a specific stimulus to which the growing child becomes attuned, as can happen with reading. I am not here referring to child prodigies, whose abilities present as radically unusual, but to the many children who learn more quickly and independently than the average.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee describes Scout Finch's first day of school, where, as her brother explains, first

grade is now being taught according to the "Dewey Decimal System." Trouble begins when the teacher finds out that Scout can already read and concludes that her father has been teaching her, though Scout denies it. The teacher admonishes, " 'Now you tell your father not to teach you anymore. It's best to begin reading with a fresh mind. You tell him I'll take over from here and try to undo the damage—' " Scout sits down in dismay and tries to recall how she came to be "wallowing illicitly in the daily papers." "I could not remember when the lines above Atticus' moving finger separated into words, but I had stared at them all the evenings of my memory, listening to the news of the day, [...] —anything Atticus happened to be reading when I crawled into his lap every night" (pp. 20-21).

Scout Finch is an infant savant in reading, and such children are by no means rare. I have a brother and at least one niece who picked up reading on their own as preschoolers; I easily taught my four-year-old sister the basics of reading, as I learned them in first grade, when I was six. Scout's teacher has no way of accounting for this phenomenon, so she labels it wrong and unnatural. In the past, literate kindergarteners were sometimes discouraged from reading; primary schoolers were told they couldn't have read a certain book because it was "too hard." Perhaps the educators who found it necessary to suppress and deny the fact of early reading believed that it would harm children to read at too young an age. But the genie can't so easily be put back in the bottle; the child can't simply be kicked out of literary space. When early reading happens naturally, who is to say that it is not an integral and harmonious part of the child's overall development?

Young children learn a great deal by means of imitation. They take adult models and ring variations on them. The pictures they draw and the stories and music that they write and perform may be quite sophisticated, yet that sophistication is borrowed, not fully their own, not fully digested and assimilated. A child savant in writing may produce very adult-sounding prose, as if the child had swallowed a thick book with fine print. Victorian children who grew up surrounded by extensive libraries were

exposed to a lot of verbiage. It took C. S. Lewis many years of refining his writing to arrive at the charming simplicity of style he employed in the Narnia books, written by an adult to appeal to the child in all of us, while his earliest tales were written by a child aspiring to be grown up.

A heavy emphasis on the evils of plagiarism at too young an age can short-circuit this fertile natural process. The concept of individual intellectual property is comparatively new; composers stole musical ideas from each other without a second thought until a few hundred years ago. While it is important to give due credit for sources in published work, and not to claim credit for originating what is copied, it is equally important to encourage the spontaneous response of imitation and elaboration that the love of stories often inspires. "I didn't like that ending; I'm going to write a better one," or "I want to know what happened after the book ended," are common reactions to passionate reading. Tapping this energy can be a sound teaching technique, as long as it is not forced.

I can't remember not knowing how to reproduce the world I saw around me in my drawing; I rendered pictorial space instinctively, inspired by many examples. As preschoolers, my sister and I drew pictures together by the hour. Over and over, I drew copies of book illustrations and one particular *Swan Lake* record jacket. The lovely drawings and paintings of Gustav Tenggren, Beatrix Potter, Ernest Shepard, Robert McCloskey and other illustrators informed my budding artistic sense.

The positive effect that listening to classical music at an early age can have on mathematical understanding in later years has been called the Mozart Effect. I sense that it has to do with the child's consciousness spending time inhabiting harmonic space, which unconsciously prepares the mind to feel at home in metric space.

In an article about child prodigies which appeared a few years ago in the *New York Times Magazine* ("Would You Wish This On Your Child?" 10/31/12), Andrew Solomon writes:

“Prodigiousness manifests most often in athletics, mathematics, chess and music. A child may have a brain that processes chess moves or mathematical equations like some dream computer, which is its own mystery, but how can the mature emotional insight that is necessary to musicianship emerge from someone who is immature? ‘Young people like romance stories and war stories and good-and-evil stories and old movies because their emotional life mostly is and should be fantasy,” says Ken Noda, a great piano prodigy in his day who gave up public performance and now works at the Metropolitan Opera. ‘They put that fantasized emotion into their playing, and it is very convincing. I had an amazing capacity for imagining these feelings, and that’s part of what talent is. But it dries up, in everyone. That’s why so many prodigies have midlife crises in their late teens and early 20s. If our imagination is not replenished with experience, the ability to reproduce these feelings in one’s playing gradually diminishes.’”

The emotional maturity in the playing of child prodigies, as well as more normally gifted musical child savants, is another example of a borrowed state. Children with musical talent inhabit not only harmonic space, but also the emotional resonance of stories and mythologies shared in literary and dramatic space. Ken Noda's observation that the child's fantasized emotion dries up with maturity raises the critical question: how is a child's imagination “replenished with experience”? How does, or could, education promote the development of emotional maturity?

Observing the ways infant and child savants learn can shed light on human learning in general. After all, in terms of spoken language, in a sense nearly all of us are infant savants; we are initiated into linguistic space without conscious effort. And maybe if it is normal to learn things more quickly than the average, it is also normal to learn things more slowly. Many early readers were late talkers. My brother and I were late talkers.

I was all of forty-five before I began to grasp the concept

of harmonic space in a conscious way, even though I had been soaked in it all my life. I had sung in choral groups with great pleasure, and spent many happy hours at the piano with Bach, who taught me a great deal. I knew that his music had more to tell me about what made it so different, not just from any other music, but from all other music.

Then in 2004 I read a Bach biography that didn't tell me what I wanted to know, but did light a fire under me. For weeks I read about music history, harmonic theory, and acoustic science, listened to medieval and Renaissance music, and grew more fascinated and more confused. One day (as with reading, it was quite sudden), I took a book to the piano, played an example of "harmonic sequencing," and sat for a full minute with my mouth open as tectonic plates shifted inside my head and flat factual knowledge sprang into full three-dimensional life like the pages of a pop-up book. I finally understood what the authors I had been reading meant by "tonality" and "key-sense," things I had known all along without knowing that I knew.

After that day, everything I learned fell into place with relative ease. Working out how to communicate my insights to others continued to challenge me.

In this article I've laid the groundwork for what I'd like to say about academic learning in my next article, "The Awkward Reach for Academic Standards," which is planned for the issue in Fall 2017. In the meantime, I invite readers to think about and share their own experiences of thought spaces and observations about early learning.

Linda Simonetti Ochner has always taken an interest in human growth processes and in the three-dimensionality of things. The comparison of thought spaces is essentially her own formulation. Her husband Dewey has plenty to say about the variety of metric and mathematical spaces.

Donald Tovey's discussion of harmonic space can be found in the article on harmony in the 1960 Encyclopedia Britannica.

Recommended Google Imaging: *camera obscura*.

Recommended Reading:

Edwin A. Abbott. *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*. A square who lives in a planar universe strives to think in a three-dimensional way.

Douglas R. Hofstadter. *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*.

Robert MacNeil. *Wordstruck*. A memoir about the author's love of the English language.

Robert M. Pirsig. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: an Inquiry into Values*.

Virginia Euwer Wolff. *The Mozart Season*. A story about a twelve-year-old violinist preparing a Mozart concerto for a performance competition.

(Yes, these books are all rather old.)

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Why? As more people contribute poems
and articles, the Journal becomes more
interesting.***

The Minister's Wife

Mary Margaret Zatthey-Agboga

Mamma or "Osofomami" is the popular name given to a pastor's or a minister's wife in Ghana. Everybody will agree with me that mamma means "Mother," and "Osofomami" simply means pastor/minister's wife.

In Ghana, women married to ministers need to play a motherhood role in their church by getting close to the people, listening to their problems and giving them words of inspiration. Other roles are organizing Bible classes, social programs for the older women, young ladies, youth and children. Also she must learn to preach the gospel. An Osofomami has to be effective in these roles. She needs to uphold the traditional values of Ghanaian life, and to blend in other values confirmed by the Christian faith. When the traditional values are added to the spiritual ones, it makes a joyous life.

The wife of a minister must play these key roles to support her husband in the Church. Some women, like myself, even abandon their professions, and concentrate on the work in their husbands' church only. I was a trained pastor in the Assemblies of God church, and have a degree in Theology. When Godwin came back from the United States as a minister, I lost my work as a pastor because we moved from Accra, the capital, to the Ho District in the eastern part of Ghana. That is one of the aspects of being a minister's wife in my part of the world—the two of you can't go to separate churches.

It is very common in Ghana to see a minister's wife as: co-minister, Gospel singer, Praise and Worship leader, Sunday school teacher, marriage counselor, Women & Youth leader, etc. So you can see that in these roles the wives of ministers become very active participants in the life of the church.

As long as a woman is called Mamma or “Osofomami” and remains one, people will run to her for all kinds of help anytime they are in crisis—be it marital, spiritual, emotional, or health-related. Let’s not talk about the financial help because that one is a headache! Even strangers can easily be directed to a minister’s house for help. Sometimes, we have to give our last food or money and sleep on an empty stomach in order to help a person; people may even go to the extreme of bringing sick people to your house to beg for money to take them to hospital.

Additionally, a minister's wife must be a woman of prayer because day in and day out, she will pray for a lot of people in their distresses. In Africa the churches are likened to hospitals, so every problem is being brought to the church for a solution.

A Sweet-Sounding Name With a Huge Task

It sounds good to be called a minister’s wife but it is very difficult to be one in my part of the world, though I do not know how it is in your country. Before accepting a marriage proposal from a minister, a woman must first of all think deeply and ask herself so many questions, trying to see if she can meet the demands of both the church and the outsider. Her lifestyle is always in the limelight: what she wears, how she talks, who she talks to, who her friends are, where she goes, etc. So you see, she must live her life according to the perceived standard of other people.

My people have a tradition of using physical things to measure spiritual capabilities, which makes God’s work very difficult in this part of the world. The Ghanaian belief system is based on tradition instead of the Word of God. We allowed our tradition to supersede the Word of God. This is due to the fact that there is a lot of confusion in the Body of Christ today as to who is right and who is wrong in the Christian religion.

Our belief system makes things hard, too. A person can easily

judge a minister. If he does not have the prophetic gift of foretelling the immediate future for people, he is deemed as a powerless minister.

Other beliefs are hard, too. Can you imagine—it is a belief in my country that women who wear trousers, shorts, mini-skirts, etc., will not go to heaven because trousers and shorts are men’s clothing? And if women do not cover their heads before praying, then God will not listen to them? Ministers’ wives who do not live up to all these perceived standards suffer a lot of criticism.

It is expected for a minister’s wife to be gentle and tolerant. For example, a person can stop coming to church just because a minister’s wife had an argument with another person either in the church or outside the church. So you see, ministers’ wives have no freedom in my country and we go through a whole lot of things. Even if we are not fine, we must pretend to be fine and put on a smiling face while dying inside. We can’t complain to anyone. If we do then we will be judged as not praying enough, and told to “do fasting and pray harder, and then things will be alright.”

Lifestyles and Fashion

Fashion in the world is dynamic and is a very big issue in Ghana as well. To my people a minister’s wife must not follow fashion at all. Just imagine those of us who love beautiful things and use them in moderation, and yet are not approved of. You can see the struggling we go through each day to satisfy the perceived standard of appearance of a minister’s wife. It is a headache!

About makeup—it is considered an influence of marine spirits in my country. Thus a minister’s wife or a good Christian must not wear makeup, and if she does, she can be called an agent of

marine spirits.¹

A very good friend of mine who is a pastor's wife wore jeans shorts above her knee level with a beautiful polo shirt to market one day. A woman greeted her from behind by saying, "Osofomami, good morning," then other women around started saying, "What do you say, Osofomami, how can a pastor's wife wear shorts?" "As for me, I will never attend her husband's church!" "She is the agent of marine gods!" "A Pastor's wife wearing a long wave-on and a hair-extension?" "Even her nails are artificial and long; she is winning church members for Satan!"

It was like hell for my friend to hear all these things being said to her. So you see, religious fundamentalism as practiced by the Puritans some centuries back is very rife in our part of the Christian world, and I often ask myself whether being married to a minister is a blessing or a burden.

In all these challenges, I'm proud to tell you that ministers wives are doing marvelously well in the Christian churches and they are making a great impact on the lives of so many people. They (and I) are very happy working in God's vineyard.

As stated in her article, Mary Margaret has a degree in theology and is a trained pastor in the Assemblies of God church in Ghana. She is married to Rev. Godwin Zattey-Agboga.

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1. "Marine Spirits" are derived from African Traditional religion. It is believed they inhabit major river bodies, including the sea or ocean. The female spirits are human in their upper portion and fish in their lower, and have long trailing hair. They are the source of women's makeup, and have the power of influence in the use of them in the natural realm. Rev. Godwin Zattey-Agboga relates that "this is strange, but it is a perception or fanatic belief in the Pentecostal community" in Ghana.

Interviews

By Helen Kennedy

Sonia Doering: As a girl growing up I loved designing and making clothes for my dolls. My mother would try to teach me, but I told her, “No, I want to do it myself.” That shows how much I’ve always been interested in making clothes.

During college in Bryn Athyn I did a lot of sewing for myself and others. I made the Senior Ball dress for my friend, Missy Holmes (Kira Schadegg’s mother). I did it by designing it on her body. She and I stood in a bathroom for hours in front of a mirror while I pinned the material, etc., and it took so long that eventually we became punchy, laughing so hard that our sides hurt. But the dress turned out beautifully. When she was getting married, I added a train to the dress and she wore it for her wedding. It had a third life, too, when Missy’s youngest daughter, Kamie, was married and wore it for her wedding.

My mother suggested I go to the Ray-Vogue school where her sister had gone. So, after one year of college, I changed over, taking courses in design, sewing, tailoring and pattern-making. During that first year I won an award for a maternity suit designed for a friend. Sometimes during the school year a person would call and ask for girls to come and put on a fashion show. That was where I got the idea to have a fashion show when I was teaching. I designed my wedding dress in 1956 out of silk tulle, starting it three weeks before the wedding. Fortunately, my mother was in Europe until shortly before the wedding.

After graduating and marrying my husband, Dale, I needed a job. So Dale called up one of the area newspapers, the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, and asked the fashion editor where his wife could get a job. She suggested the only fashion house in the city, L’Aiglon. I called and got an interview. The owner, a very grouchy-looking man, said he didn’t need any designers, but could I sketch because they needed a sketcher? I said, “Yes,” and

he told me to sketch a dress that was hanging limply on a wall on a hanger. I did it, and worked there for over two years until I had children. During my time at L'Aiglon, I decided that I wouldn't be afraid of the owner, even to the point of willingly admitting a mistake I made that resulted in the wrong material being purchased.

Here are two sketches done by Sonia Doering when she worked for L'Aiglon, a fashion house in Philadelphia, after graduating from the Ray-Vogue School in Chicago:



Drawing by Sonia Doering



Drawing by Sonia Doering

For the Church I was asked to design new chancel robes for the girls because the old ones had a band joining the front embroidered tabard to the back embroidered one. When the girls raised their arms, the underdress would puff out over the band. I did design new ones, and they were used for many years. Later, I was asked to make robes for the ministers. At the time they had only one size to fit all the ministers. I bought the pattern of a choir robe and adapted it to fit the design of the minister's robes, then made patterns in various sizes. For forty years I made the robes, but now have handed that work over to Sheila Needle, who was a top sewing student.

In 1972 I started teaching at the high school, and got to design my own sewing course. The first couple years I had big classes—twelve students. I easily adjusted to teaching and loved doing it. I loved the idea of teaching the girls, and felt like they were my own girls. I taught for twenty-four years, and in the last five years the classes became co-ed. The first year I had four boys and one girl. I didn't know that boys could be so funny to teach. The next year I had six boys because word got out that it was fun.

I was asked by Bea Herder to help put on a fashion show for a Women's Guild meeting. Several ladies (including myself) bought clothing at the rummage sale and re-made the clothes into something else. Bea had us photographed by her son in the "before" outfit. At the meeting, those "before" pictures were shown on a screen, and as they were, we walked out in the newly-designed garments.

For the 100th anniversary of the Academy high school in Bryn Athyn, there was a special luncheon at the Glencairn Museum, and I put on a fashion show of graduation dresses. The oldest dress was Kinky Hyatt's graduation dress from 1904, and then we went up to recent times. Bishop and Mrs. Williard Pendleton were special invited guests and they loved the show.

After twenty-four years of teaching I retired, because it's one thing to be the age of the kids' parents and another to be the age of their grandparents.

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Judy Merrell: I love everything about fabric – the feel and smell, I love to wash, iron, fold, cut, stitch, dye and tear it. I've had a love affair with fabric since I was very young. At around 5 or 6 years old I started learning how to hand sew and made clothes for my Barbie doll. My sister showed me how to make darts so the clothes fit better. There was a store called Variety Fabrics in Southampton that I went to with my mother and sisters.

The first time I went in there was just wonderfully overwhelming with the sights, smells, colors, textures and variety of all the fabrics—all the possibilities! Mom let me pick a spool of thread from all the different colors and I chose the perfect shade of purple after a lot of deliberating. Another thing I remember was watching my grandmother's laundry woman do the ironing at my house and I loved how expert she was at it and the smell of the fresh table linens and how flat and smooth it all looked after she was done.

When I was about 14 years old I bought my first pattern and taught myself how to sew. I was about 16 years old when I made my first costume. That came about because I volunteered to help with the costumes for the high school play, and Pam Rydstrom Latta gave me a stack of fabric, saying she needed 6 jackets made out of it. I was too embarrassed to say I couldn't sew very well, so I just agonized my way through it. And guess what, those jackets are still in the costume collection at the high school today.

I work mostly with costumes now, but combining my own hand-dyed fabric with machine and hand stitching are always in my heart and I want to be doing them. I teach costuming for two classes a week at the high school, and am glad to get some of that type of handwork back into the school because all the skills classes like sewing, cooking and wood-working have been eliminated. When I was in high school I wasn't an academic student and always looked forward to my sewing classes with Sonia Doering and learned so much from her.

Colors, texture and pattern—I love all that. In theater camp this past summer we had 50 kids on the stage. Each one had to be dressed like a French peasant. It was thrilling to see all those kids on stage all dressed in a riot of color and pattern and texture. They looked adorable!

Another thing I love about fabric is dyeing it. There are so many different dyeing techniques and it is an art form just on its own.

I don't think of myself as a designer but rather a constructor. When I'm not working anymore, I'd like to take classes in couture level clothing and theatrical costume construction just for fun.

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Eva Mergen: When I was about 5 or 6 years old, my mom had already taught me how to sew on a sewing machine. At that time I was very focused and made clothes for my baby sister and me. They were atrocious. I thought white fabric with red zigzag stitching at the edges was the height of fashion.

I was high school age when I learned how to spin and got a spinning wheel. It was just me and the wheel; there was no instruction manual with it. There was lots of trial and error, and error, and error, and error.

I love the process of spinning on a wheel, and of weaving. Both are meditative activities, very regular and rhythmic. When at the wheel or the loom, I have the feeling I'm doing something very old, something women have been doing over a very long time.

I've always been interested in clothes from the past, especially historical clothing. I love making Reproduction Clothing, and feel differently when I'm wearing a Viking gown from when I'm wearing a Colonial dress. Both are entry points into the lives of the people who made and wore them. I make them as part of the spinning and weaving demonstrations that I give. A piece of textile history might catch my eye and I want to learn more about it, or maybe a piece of equipment, like a tapestry loom or a time period, i.e., the Vikings. I have Reproduction Clothing from Ancient Israel, Greece & Rome, the Viking era, Medieval Times, Tudor, Colonial and the Ohio Frontier.

I work at the Glencairn Museum and Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation in Ridley Creek State Park. In the summer I'm

especially busy because the Plantation runs history themed summer camps for kids. Right now I'm focused on what motivated people in the past to make clothing the way they did. We have lots of leisure time now, but back then it took a lot of work and time to make yarn, and then cloth, and then the clothing. What drove the people back then to do more? To make clothing more decorative and beautiful? Beauty has no intrinsic value other than the people wanting to create clothing and other things in that way. Human beings crave beauty. We need beauty. But a person has to experience it. Through beauty we can intuitively experience truths without thinking about it, and experience the thought that went into making the clothing. All this comes out when we are dressing ourselves. We are sending messages out about ourselves and our lives when we create beautiful clothes to wear.

Eva Mergen can be contacted at creative_fibers@verizon.net.

Beryl Simonetti: My mother was an expert hat maker in London. In Bryn Athyn she made ministers' robes, and also crocheted the girdles for them. I learned a lot while watching her work. In eighth grade I was encouraged to get a standard pattern and just follow the directions. It took me a while to learn which patterns were suitable for which materials, and I don't think my mother helped me all that much. Since then I've made most of my clothes. At that time it cost about one-half as much to make my clothes as to buy them, and back then the clothes weren't made all that well. Also, I re-used patterns. When my girls were growing up, I made most of their dresses. One good thing is that I can adjust the patterns to make something smaller where needed in one place, and larger in another. Currently I make myself a swim suit when needed that can be made to fit with lots of extra fabric so I can bend over and not show anything. There again, making my own suit costs a lot less because swim suits are going for \$100 now.

When I was in 8th grade I went through a stringed marionette phase, which shows I was more of a craft person than a clothes

designer. This transferred into other things I did. When my kids were young I could visualize a stuffed animal and then make it for them. I've made dolls, and also dolls for doll houses, some furniture for them, and accessories like place settings, little wooden serving spoons, bowls with nuts, Boston ferns, and even tiny little toothbrushes using Velcro for the brushes. I've done miniature flower arrangements from natural dried flowers and leaves. At one time, too, I made miniature replicas of the stone altar at Laurel summer camp with flowers and candles on it. I'm a nitpicker, and so loved doing miniature things. I had lots of fun doing them.

Back to fabric. When I was pregnant with my son in 1967, the church wanted a screen to use in the small gym of the Assembly Hall as a backdrop for the worship at Friday Class. For that I made a four-panel screen of linen with fall wildflowers embroidered on it. The last I knew it was still being used occasionally at the church in Ivyland when they are doing a performance and don't want the worship area visible. I've made other things from fabric, too. In our kitchen-dining area is a replica of a painting by Paul Klee called *Landscape with Yellow Birds* that I made in 1980. It's about three by four feet, and made of fabric, suede cloth, felt and wool. For my 50th class reunion in 2002 we were encouraged to make some form of art. So now hanging in my living room I have a six by six foot replica of Picasso's *Three Musicians* that I made at the time.

One of the good things I can do is mending that you don't notice. That made it OK to buy things at the rummage sale that needed a button or a seam repaired.

Other things I've done include reupholstering my living room couch two times; creative maintenance, like fixing stuffed animals; and repairing upholstery for other people—things they would throw out if there wasn't a way to mend them.

My favorite of the many part-time jobs I have had in my lifetime is scheduling classes for the Academy in Bryn Athyn. Some teachers taught in both the high school and the college,

which made the work quite difficult. To visualize the problem, I made a flannel board to represent a week of classes, and placed pieces of felt labeled with information about the classes on it. As I worked with this system, it became more and more abstract, and eventually the information was all carried in the sizes, shapes and colors of the pieces of felt. Then I could have fun arranging the felt in a balanced way, making sure that all the pieces were included, and avoiding empty spaces. A good finished schedule would always be a work of art.

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Page Morahan: I have collected wearable art since I was a beginning academic. I joined the Williamsburg Junior Women's Club [in Virginia] and we put on a craft event every year. So I came to love the clothes. They're unique. Often one of a kind and can't be found anywhere else. Another good thing is they don't go out of style.

I collect mainly serviceable wearable art. There are some artists who do beautiful work on silk, but I tend to be messy and so need to clean the clothing often! The materials I tend to collect are raw silk, woven or knitted fabric, and things that are textured. Another genre I like is reversible clothing because it is good for traveling. The reason I like knitted and woven fabrics is because they don't wrinkle easily.

I love craft art because it is art *and* it is functional. An example is an antique fabric from my family that I've had made into a pillow cover, tying yarn around it to hold it together. Also, I've had doilies from my mother that I've had framed and made into wall art.

I really admire people who can work with fabric because I do not have talent that way! I can barely sew a button on. Also I feel that buying from fabric artists is buying closer to the source. I liken it to buying food from the Bryn Athyn Bounty [farmer's market]. Wearable art does cost more but I view it as an investment. I can wear the clothing for years and I look at the

cost over the lifetime of the garment, and also the cost per wearing. If you can wear a piece for years and don't have to send a piece to the cleaners every time, it's economical. There again, knitted, woven and raw fabrics tend to be more economical. Women in France tend to buy high quality clothes that cost more but last much longer.

Most of my wearable art I've had for 20 – 40 years. There is careful workmanship in wearable art, so I don't need to have the seams reinforced like sometimes I've needed to do with ready-made clothes. In working with an artist, she will measure me and make the clothing to fit me. I buy much less now but have needed to have the clothing adjusted when my body changes!

I respect people who do fabric art and I do think collecting wearable art is economical over the long run. Also I can express my individuality. It's fun to have a unique style. My mother was known for her hats. Some women are known for their shoes. I'm known for my wearable art. Often I put things together from various artists. Just what I'm wearing today is a blouse from Brazil with multi-colored lace, patchwork pants by Anna Polan who is a Pennsylvania artist, socks that were hand-painted by a friend, and earrings from a gallery on Ocracoke Island in North Carolina. In the end I can say it's a conscious decision of mine to support artists who make wearable clothing.

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If you enjoy reading the Journal, please remember to renew your membership! We count on your support! ~Thank you!

Life in Nepal

Nadine Rogers

Of all the everyday tasks that must be done, the one I've always enjoyed most is doing the laundry. I'm sure part of this is the relative ease of the job, since we do have an automatic washing machine. However, the greater part of it is the pleasure of being immersed in the clothes which are representative of the children who wear them. The children's personalities are expressed in their clothes, and as I sort them, rub at stains in them, or hang them to dry in the sun, it gives me a chance to think about and appreciate the wearers. Perhaps I see Jitendra's favorite sports shirt, sent by his sponsors in America. Maybe I see the sparkly, ornate clothes favored by Bina who loves singing, dancing and all things entertaining. Maybe it's a pass-me-down shirt from Rajendra, given to and altered to fit Rajan, who happily wears it as a gift from the adoptive father he admires. Or maybe it's part of the suit Suman's first father passed down to him, lovingly kept as a memory of his original family. Here are the black and white checkered chef pants from Jonathan's first job as a cook. There is the top given to Sangita by her sister before she went to work abroad. Sometimes the laundry is an emblem of annual rituals and events, such as the color-splashed clothes following the celebration of Holi, in which children and adults alike douse each other with water and pigments. Every year there is a week or so when the boys' clothes are caked with mud as the monsoon begins, but they have not yet given up as hopeless their neighborhood games of soccer in the empty fields. Then there are the special occasion loads—chlorine-smelling bathing suits and towels after a trip to a swimming pool, river soaked clothes after a rafting trip, burr-infested socks after an autumn hike, all bringing back the laughter and conversations of those events. All of these clothes are reminders of the people in our home and the lives they lead.

These days, more and more of the kids do their own laundry, which is indicative of their increasing independence and maturity

as they move towards adulthood. Sometimes it seems incredible that it has already been eight years since I first was washing and hanging up the few emergency clothes we bought when they arrived with nothing at our home, or their first sets of school uniforms when they entered the education system, shy and bewildered. How different their lives are now, how much they have grown and changed, and yet I can barely believe so many years have gone by. The years have been filled with so much emotion. Living in a house with such a large family sometimes feels like when the laundry piles up in great mounds, untidy, overwhelming, and confusing. However, most of the time it is like the lines of clothes flapping in a row in the sunshine—bright and colorful, a display of variety and individuality, like a multitude of little flags waving side by side.

Reprinted from the September 2014 LAMPPost, the newsletter for the Loving Arms Mission in Nepal.

Nadine Rogers can be contacted at nrogersmd@gmail.com.



Would you like to see your art here?

We would love to have people send in line art that we can use to fill empty spaces like these! Do you or your children draw cartoons, sketches or other work that can be easily printed in black and white? If it works with the subject matter for a given edition you may see your work in print! The address for submissions is:

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Interview with Heather Cha

by Janet Krettek

Who is Heather Cha?

I have lived in Southampton (Pennsylvania) my whole life and am an only child, so it is quiet at home. Both my parents are Korean and we speak Korean at home. As a child, on Saturdays I went to Korean school. I am interested in my background and can read and write in Korean, but slowly. I didn't do well in school, even though I like to think a lot. I am more of an art person and enjoy drawing, and also listening to books.

What is the first thing you ever designed? I don't remember.

The first dress I made was in third grade, and it was a long gown of a tacky green-blue fabric.

Why did you create it? I had asked my parents to buy fabric for me by combining my birthday and Christmas present. Before that, I used my father's t-shirts. They were really expensive, but my parents were supportive and tolerant. I was making dolls' clothes then.

What kinds of clothing do you like to design? I am more of an artist-designer, and want my clothes to tell a story. I like for a person to see a piece of clothing and be reminded of something. It's a way to communicate with others and I cannot put it into words. I just have to get it out, and if others do not understand, it is OK. Also, I enjoy sewing the clothing.

What inspires you? Any special events or feelings, something that I want to share with people, meaningful things. I want my clothes to connect with people in a deep way.

How do you start? With a color? With a style? With an object, like a flower? When I get inspired, I see an image of how I want the particular piece of clothing to be. It's in my head already, and I just have to get it into a style; style is first.

Is there a spiritual aspect to your work? Not religious, but yes, spiritual. I like it to connect with the wearer's deep self. I enjoy when someone tells me how they feel about my dresses and I want the person to tell me if the dress made her feel sad or happy.

Why do you create? I use it as a door to my feelings. I am an over-thinker, so I use creating as a runway. It directs me and makes unhappy feelings turn into something beautiful. Designing keeps me going.

What does clothing mean to you? Clothes can make me feel good. Or, in an artistic way, clothes are trying to tell a story. Sometimes it is like a statement as who you are. A piece of clothing can look different on different people. Clothes can change the image of a person; they don't define you, but are an accessory of you.

Where do you want to go with your designs? Do you have a goal? I attended Bucks Community College. I am taking my designs to Moore [College of Art and Design] next and would like to graduate from Parsons [School of Design] in New York. One day I would like to own my own boutique. I think I need to be something more than I am now to do that. Maybe be a creative designer first. I want to share my creations with everyone, and hear what others think the clothing looks and feels like. I also want to have fashion shows and a clothing line. Even if I have a family I can still design.

Do you see any obstacles in the way of what you want to do? Yes, a lot—having the skills, for one. I have difficulty drawing images. They never come out how I want. Fashion is a competitive major, and I'm a little afraid I'll be mixed up and hidden in the crowd because I like to be different and stand out in a crowd. When I buy clothes, I like to change them and make them into my own image. Right now I'm afraid I may get caught up in the trends, and I'd like to have my own style and not do that.



Design by Heather Cha

Do you have a mentor or a role model? I have mentors for different aspects. Hannah Lee owns her own online shop. She designs and makes dresses out of her home and has a nice family. This feels so nice and is what I want to do. I feel she understands me. She and I share a lot of the same stresses. She always wants me to do well. Uncle, I don't know his real name as he is a longtime family friend, always tells me that I can do well even if I don't do well in school, that I can still be successful. He gives me meaningful tips and advice, not just in

design. He is a carpenter and has been through similar things. He pushes me to go harder and harder. Another lady I met who is a Parsons grad works as a missionary and gives talks to people. She did fashion design, but now travels and tells people about the Lord. I love how open minded she is. She seems free and without any troubles, though I am sure she has them. I look up to her. She can see things in me that others don't, including the troubles I am going through. I don't like to bring others down so I act cheerful all the time.

Who would you like to create something for? Someone who is a leader; someone who works to make a change or make the world a better place. I like people like that and think that they make a real statement. People pay attention to them and they have such passion. I appreciate that.

What is your favorite or best creation so far? It is a tie between my graduation dress and my final piece from my Korean fashion show. My final design has so much emotion in it. It holds a lot of meaning for me and also is something I created to give to other people. I made it about Korea and the Korean War. Maya Synnestvedt modeled it. It was in the traditional Korean dress shape, but the top is the Korean flag when Maya held her arms out. The bottom is a complete ombre effect—black with glitter that fades to plain black. The plain black has grey and black gems in it symbolizing all of the fallen American soldiers. It wasn't even their country and they gave their lives. It was my big thank you to them for giving their lives to my country. I wanted it to be seen as very beautiful, strong and graceful. Maya did a good job of showing a proud strong girl in the dress. The way she walked made it a great way of expressing the emotions I wanted to express. If you look at her from far it looks like the soldiers are holding up the flag. And during the show Maya bowed in the traditional Korean bow.



Heather Cha, designer, and Maya Synnestvedt who models the dress, part of a collection that Heather designed for her Senior Project at ANC.

When you look at someone else's designs what do you see? At first I look at what the other designer was trying to do, or feel. At the same time I look at my feelings. Then I start to get ideas, and can begin dissecting it. It is all a puzzle and is fun. My parents are artistic. My mother designed purses and wallets and my dad always had creative jobs. Dad was an architect, and also had ideas for inventions. They have both supported me in the things I do, and believe I can be successful. They didn't get angry as much as other parents, especially when comparing them to other Korean parents. One reason they moved here is that they believe in education, but that it is not everything. They like my creativity. Experiencing is learning. I am grateful for

ANC. I realized that not all people are as friendly and nice to each other as they are at the Academy of the New Church. There are fewer cliques. All my extended family is in Korea. So I have made a lot of family for myself here, Grandpas and Grandmas. I like to be around older people and hear of their experiences.

What is your latest design? I'm getting ready for a fashion gallery or show. I'm also working on another project—my story, my timeline of the important events in my life. It is more of a storytelling, a way to share what I did. There are a lot of emotions going into it, like fear. It will show my childhood in a fun way, like my first time falling in love and my first day of school. There will be twelve designs. I've always designed from my emotions, but this is different. It reflects more of my thinking or experience. It will be harder. And a lot of fun.

Janet Krettek can be contacted at jmkrettekdo@gmail.com.



Scholarships for Women Planning to Become New Church Teachers

Theta Alpha is offering two Education Scholarships for the 2017-2018 school year. This annual award is for the purpose of supporting women attending the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church who desire to become New Church teachers and declare education as a major or minor (or Interdisciplinary Degree.)

One award is for an incoming freshman, and one award is for a current Bryn Athyn College of the New Church education student.

The annual scholarship award amount is \$2,100 (\$700 paid directly to the college at the beginning of each trimester), for up to 2 recipients. May be used toward tuition, fees, and/or books.

Please see page eleven for application information.

April 27, 2016

Dear Editor,

When I received the *Theta Alpha Journal* last November, I was in rehab recovering from a car accident. The *Journal* was an amazing perk—sort of therapeutic food for mind, hope, and mending.

Re-reading that issue, I think it is a remarkable New Church document. I found the whole issue a most heartening collection from contemporary women in the Church, writing from their experiences with thoughtful and spiritual insights. Your selections covered a wondrous range of topics and ages.

Especially I enjoyed Anna Woofenden's "The Compost Heap and the Church," for our church in Cincinnati had recently hosted Anna as a visiting minister. We listened to her tell of the courageous venture she has undertaken as "gardener" pastor of the Garden Church in San Pedro, California. In her article Anna made reference to her inheritance from her forefathers—all prominent New Church scholars—and this was the brilliant "compost" analogy. It has surely affected her present calling! May her work grow into a productive garden on the natural plane with meaningful results for evangelization on both sides of New Church parentage. How do we pay our legacy forward? Here is food for thought indeed.

One could comment happily about every article. I shall touch on just a few.

The prize-winning stories by the high school students were very moving and very well told. The poem "Monday," about a heron observed, is a stunning and exquisite piece of writing.

The one masculine entry by the Rev. Solomon Keal, "We Are Mary," made a lovely pre-Christmas study, a new idea to contemplate and, it was fresh from Heaven!

All the artist interviews made fascinating reading. How unique was each one's response to the same questions. And that lovely photograph of Bryn Athyn Cathedral on the cover was a special joy. So, thank you for this excellent collection of New Church feminine thought, writing and scene.

Sincerely,
Helene Howard

Carmel New Church Theta Alpha Guild Annual Report 2015 - 2016

The ladies of Theta Alpha Guild had a fun and rewarding year under the leadership of our President, Jan Hill. We continue to alternate our meetings with a potluck supper or potluck dessert. During our first meeting of the year we discussed possible ways to raise funds and what activities we would like to do at our meetings.

In October, Linda and Katie Taylor gave a very interesting talk while showing pictures of their recent trip to Israel and Palestine. Laura Hill held craft evenings in her home and we worked on the Christmas Gifts to give the children at our Christmas Eve service. We held a Cookie Walk and Bake Sale in December. We also spent time volunteering for Operation Christmas Child. For that we packed shoe boxes with little gifts and they were sent to children worldwide. We ended the year with our Christmas Party, a Gift Exchange, and the singing of Christmas Carols. We also took donations for the Loving Arms Mission in Nepal at this event.

In January we enjoyed snacks while watching the movie "Mom's Night Out." At our February meeting Denise Hasen made a presentation on True Colors—understanding who we are and the differences in other people. For Easter, we spent an evening decorating Easter Cookies which were sold at a Bake Sale after Church. Much to the delight of the children a Family Fun Night was held, and although we do not raise a lot of funds the children always have a great time. In the spring we visited a Garden Center where we learned how to make Fairy Gardens. For our final meeting of the year we had a barbecue, with election of officers, and a shower for Jessica Bellinger who will be off to Bryn Athyn next year.

Respectfully submitted,
Gloria Stumpf
Secretary
Kitchener TAG

The Washington New Church Theta Alpha Guild (TAG)

Our chapter, as is our custom, held four meetings in the past year, in September, November, January and April. The average attendance was eight ladies.

Becca Synnestvedt Smith continues as our very efficient president. Wystan Gladish Simons is our new vice president. Kathy Cooper Johns stays on as treasurer, and Mary Sandstrom Cooper as secretary.

Some of the special events we supported were: A Washington New Church School (WNCS) Alumni Weekend last September, a fun event attended by many alumni, featuring tours, entertainment and a BBQ dinner.

Our annual TAG Banquet was held in April, with Dylan Odhner as our speaker.

Other uses supported by our chapter included several other WNCS events, with refreshments, such as: Back-to-School-Night in September, welcoming students and parents to the school, and introducing some of our programs there. Several new families from the surrounding communities have joined our school "family" in recent years; a school open house in March, welcoming prospective new families; a Valentine's Day Luncheon for the school staff, and a Swedenborg's Birthday lunch for the entire school.

We also provide support for Teachers Professional Development; Teachers' coffee; Meals on Wheels; Children's New Church Day gifts; The Society Healthy Church Match; Welcome baskets for new families or individuals; "Sunshine" support for those in need of some cheer; Collecting contributions for gifts of appreciation to our ministers, teachers, and organists, and farewell gifts for new Bryn Athyn bound students.

Our primary source of funds, in addition to dues, are an annual Bake Sale and Raffle in November, and “Souper Sundays”, when homemade soups and breads are sold after church, TAG retaining half of the proceeds, and the Society operating fund getting the other half.

We now look forward to another productive year ahead, and we send warm greetings to our TA sisters throughout the Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Cooper, secretary

Scholarships for Religion Students
and/or International Students
Attending Bryn Athyn College of the New Church

Theta Alpha International is offering three scholarships for the 2017-2018 school year to be awarded to women students of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church who have a 3.0 GPA and are:

studying *Religion as a major, minor, or interdisciplinary degree*
OR

who are enrolled in the *Masters of Religion (MARS) program*

OR

who are *international students (students from countries other than the United States)*.

There are (2) \$2,000 and (1) \$1,000 scholarship awarded to eligible recipients who exemplify the teachings of the New Church. These are annual merit based scholarships that can be used for tuition, college fees, books or supplies.

Please see page eleven for application information.

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