

ABOUT CSEE

The Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education supports the moral and spiritual development of young people through offering resources and educational opportunities to elementary, middle, and secondary schools. See more about our work at www.csee.org

Contact us at:

CSEE Phone: 800.298.4599
P. O. Box 19807 Fax: 678.623.5634
Portland, OR 97280 E-mail: info@csee.org

David Streight
Executive Director
503.679.2584 (direct)
ds@csee.org

Annie Warner Beth Sandlin
Assistant Director Business Manager
anniewarner@csee.org bethsandlin@csee.org

John Roberts
Editor
johnroberts@csee.org

IN THIS ISSUE:

Getting the Whole Story	1
CSEE News	2
Literature in Review	3
Educating for Character Development	4
Spiritual Directions	5
In the Web	6
CSEE Curriculum Spotlight	6
Religious Holidays and Observances	7
Experts Join CSEE	9
Programs & Services	10
From the Executive Director	11

GETTING THE WHOLE STORY

BY FRANCES CHAMBERLAIN

I can remember getting my hands on a copy of *Mad* magazine when I was about eight years old. This particular publication, along with comic books, wasn't allowed in my parents' house. As I was trying to figure out exactly what was funny, and why I wasn't allowed to read it, my mother came up behind me and snatched the copy right out of my hands. There went my chance for uncensored reading until I was older, wiser, and able to get my own reading material outside of the house.

I also remember being curled up with a copy of *Little Women* when one of my mother's friends came to visit, and asked me if I had gotten to the point where Amy dies. Well, I was far enough along to know that Amy was the absolute best heroine I'd ever discovered in a book, and that there weren't enough pages left for her

Children have been likened to sponges, just soaking things up. It seems to me that we can put lots of things in their paths—good books, music, and movies—that will help them develop a taste for quality. A too-constant diet of the vulgar and obscene doesn't help them develop good taste. But refusing access to anything that we don't like could backfire.

to die. I burst into tears and my mother's kindly friend explained the concept of "abridged" to me right then and there.

In all those years since I have watched my own children grow and mature

and have noted with interest how their reading interests developed. I cautioned them early on about "abridged" novels, in case they got caught in the same trap as I did. And I've been particularly wary about censoring things I didn't think they should read.

My reasons for this are that I think when something becomes forbidden—a book, song lyrics, a movie, etc.—then it becomes all that more tantalizing. At the same time, I think it is scary to see what children today are exposed to—on an hourly basis. On a recent trip with some teenagers, one thirteen-year-old girl began singing

the lyrics to a popular song that were so raunchy I was incredulous. I'm not even sure she was mature enough to understand what she was singing. The incident made me re-think my position on censorship.

Once, when my children were little, I was asked, as an author, to read banned books at a local bookstore. The event made note of many, many books that have been banned in schools and libraries throughout the country—and those of us who participated read passages out loud as people came and went in the store. The list was shocking. Books that my children had loved and enjoyed, books that I read as a teenager and young adult—all had been banned at some point. We talked about it over the dinner table and we marveled that anyone could find something offensive in some of their favorite stories.

Still, I hesitate. I think about the young girl singing obscene lyrics. I think about teenagers that I know with lyrics written on their notebooks and backpacks. I think about how much is available to kids and wonder how they sort out what is reasonable and what is truly offensive.

Today I work as a newspaper editor and I constantly deal with issues of freedom of speech. I read voraciously (but selectively). My children and grandchildren read voraciously and we all talk about what we're reading. We also talk about movies, song lyrics, advertising, and the constant onslaught of media influences. Everyone has a different theory about censorship and freedom of speech. I cringe at some things that the average teenager takes for granted. And yet I've never been able to bring myself to keep a book away from a child. A movie, a song, maybe—but not a book. How else do we learn how to make good choices? Can we go through life letting someone else tell us what to read?

Children have been likened to sponges, just soaking things up. It seems to me that we can put lots of things in their paths—good books, music, and movies—that will help them develop a taste for quality. A too-constant diet of the vulgar and obscene doesn't help them develop good taste. But refusing access to anything that we don't like could backfire.

In my mind, still, the elusive copy of Mad magazine, the abridged novel, and the long, long list of banned books are lumped

In the end, I believe, the best course is to talk about everything children are seeing, hearing, and reading. Share your views with them and encourage them to do the same. If something is so bad they don't want to talk about it with you—well, then, there's a clue that you need to find out more. In the meantime, everyone likes to have choices.

together. If, as a seven-year-old, I could be so dismayed that I was getting only part of a story, then how must kids feel today when things are withheld? And how successful is any parent in withholding different media that

they don't consider appropriate? Far better is the policy of nurturing open-mindedness and discernment.

In the end, I believe, the best course is to talk about everything children are seeing, hearing, and reading. Share your views with them and encourage them to do the same. If something is so bad they don't want to talk about it with you—well, then, there's a clue that you need to find out more. In the meantime, everyone likes to have choices. ✨

Professional writer Frances Chamberlain has penned a number of articles for CSEE parents. In recent years we have made some of them available to member schools for parent newsletters or parent sections on school Web sites. We are pleased to offer here her first article expressly for Connections readers.

CSEE NEWS

A Note to Advisors

CSEE is attempting to develop a list of individuals in schools who are coordinators of advisory systems. Given the tremendous importance of advisors in schools, we want to be resources to them, through occasional suggestions for activities and other updates. Advisory coordinators: let us know who you are! Send us your name, school name, and best email address for contact, at <info@csee.org>

Sharon Daloz Parks to speak at Summer Ethics Institute

Former CRIS Executive Director Daniel Heischman has engaged Sharon Daloz Parks to be guest lecturer at CSEE's Summer Ethics Institute for Adults in July 2007, on Whidbey Island in Washington State's Puget Sound. Sharon Daloz Parks is the author of *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World* and *The Critical Years: Young Adults and the Search for Meaning, Faith, and Commitment*, and co-author of *Common Fire: Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* and *Can Ethics Be Taught? Perspectives, Challenges and Approaches at the Harvard Business School*. ✨

RABBI PAUL: AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY*Bruce Chilton*

NEW YORK: DOUBLEDAY, 2004

BY RICHARD BARBIERI

Early in his book, Bruce Chilton describes Paul as “the thinker who has given us so much of what is most beautiful and most troublesome in Christian faith.” Chilton’s version of Paul shares in this duality, being at once fascinating and provoking, as if to match its protagonist.

Chilton places Paul in space and time, describing “the environment of apocalyptic zeal, intense mysticism, and incipient violence that characterized first-century Judaism and Christianity.” He reveals in their specificity towns whose names we know best from the Epistles and Acts, and whose nature we know hardly at all: Tarsus, the site of Cleopatra’s famous barge ride, governed for two years by Cicero himself; Corinth, “as free, loose, and uncontrollable a place as existed in the Mediterranean”; or Antioch, which “housed differing factions of Judaism the way nineteenth century Paris accommodated variants of socialism.”

His picture of Paul is equally vivid, and not always flattering: “short, bowlegged, and a little thick around the middle,” bald, afflicted with lifelong visual problems. Paul was not born to greatness, though he either found it thrust upon him or thrust it upon himself, depending on one’s theology. Chilton’s lack of reverence for his subject is sweeping. During Paul’s life, he says, Peter and James were far more impressive and successful leaders, partly because Paul, though “an intuitive, brilliant thinker,” was also “a dreadful judge of people and situations.” At the moment when he meets with Peter’s followers in Jerusalem, Paul is an “aspiring Pharisee turned grubby tentmaker and wannabe apostle.”

Chilton’s intellectual biography focuses on three themes: Paul’s expansion of the Jesus Movement to Gentiles, his vision of resurrection, and the power of his personal testimony. On one of the great Pauline debates, Chilton says simply, “To him ‘faith’ and ‘works’

were part of a single, seamless action because he did not conceive of human beings as isolated units, with intentions inside their hearts and activities outside their bodies.”

Of these topics, Paul’s “conviction that belief in God alone, without any recourse to the Torah or to the genealogy of the patriarchs or circumcision, makes a person into Abraham’s child” takes disproportionate space, because it dominated Paul’s struggles during his lifetime. Paul’s frequent beatings and imprisonments, his conflict with Peter, and his wanderings were mostly due to the fact that “he managed to scandalize both Jews and Gentiles with exactly the same message.”

Chilton’s admiration comes when he examines the other two themes. On Christology, he says, “Paul is proof that you don’t have to be a genius all your life to break through and discover an idea of genius. His teaching in regard to resurrection, expressed in *I Corinthians*, gave Christianity the engine that powers its hope.”

But his highest praise is reserved for Paul’s personal testimony: “Paul’s preferred approach became his own narrative of Jesus’ impact on him....his technique of conveying the exposure of the divine son within became the most powerful instrument of Christian success in the Greco-Roman world.” As wryly as he portrayed the young Saul, Chilton’s conclusion exalts the late Paul: “Better than any other teacher in the New Testament, Jesus included, he drew others into this vision of the Spirit’s fire.” This fiery book, though it may be too iconoclastic for some, draws us into a distinctive vision of the self-proclaimed Apostle to the Gentiles. ✚

Richard Barbieri is Interim Head of School at Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, Maryland

SIX KEY STEPS TOWARD CHARACTER IN THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

“Character” is a set of feelings, understandings, and skills,
plus a disposition to use them for the good of others

1. THE HEAD OF SCHOOL PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE

- School staff members look for what key administrators consider is important
- The head’s written and oral communications to staff, students, and parents set the tone
- School heads and top administrators are best positioned to work with occasional resistance
- The head’s actions add to the way character is both felt and understood at school

2. INSURE THAT THE FACULTY AND STAFF SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

- Faculty and Staff should play a key role in deciding what aspects of “character” the school works toward
- Having staff play a major role in defining what the school’s character should look like honors and respects them
- Staff ownership—in part from the respect they are shown, and show one another—greatly insures success

3. GIVE FACULTY AND STAFF APPROPRIATE TRAINING

- They must feel comfortable teaching, modeling, and disciplining around the skills they want students to learn
- In-service training is crucial, but chances to discuss and fine-tune at regular intervals is also important
- Training strengthens a school’s understanding about character; staff comfort adds to the their own—and thus the students’—disposition to use character skills for the good of others

4. STUDENTS MUST BE INVOLVED

- Students must have meaningful opportunities to practice the skills we want them to learn
- Giving students ownership for decisions (even some rules) inculcates respect and ownership
- The respect we show toward students is the greatest step toward their disposition to use character skills

5. INTEGRATE CHARACTER INTO THE CURRICULUM

- Moral reasoning skills can be taught, effectively, via the way class discussions take place
- History, literature, health, religion, and other courses offer tremendous opportunities for teaching key elements of moral development, like perspective taking, model behaviors, and important principles

6. EVALUATE, DISCUSS, FINE TUNE

- Evaluation is an added opportunity for faculty and staff to work together toward their goals
- Evaluation and fine tuning helps all to realize where progress is being made

And bear three other points in mind:

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER IS SUCCESSFUL WHEN CAREFULLY IMPLEMENTED

- Numerous studies bear out the fact that schools can make a difference

SCHOOLS THAT FOCUS ENERGY ON SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL/MORAL/CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT TEND TO GAIN GROUND IN ACADEMIC AREAS

- Less time is spent on discipline, fewer instances occur of resistance to school programs, the climate is better in all respects

RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED SCHOOLS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPERCHARGE MORAL EDUCATION THROUGH THE RICH FABRIC OF THEIR TRADITIONS

- Ethics infused with both spirit and intellect is the highest goal to which our schools can aspire ✨

BE OPENED

“We stand on this perilous edge of the present, between that past and the future to be, and we face all manner of perils. And the greatest peril is sometimes the lack of faith which comes to us, the sense of frustration that comes to us, the sinking of the heart and of the spirit that comes to us when we see ideals go overboard, when we see the great things that we talked about somehow pass into empty words, and life taking a different course. Yet I do believe that perhaps this period will pass soon enough.”—Indian Prime Minister Nehru at Ghandi’s funeral, 1948

Years ago, I spent time hiking on the Appalachian Trail. In Maine, I climbed Mt. Katadhin, where the “Knife’s Edge” can be crossed only on calm days. Physically, that was the closest I have come to the perilous edge of the present. Spiritually, our world has been edging ever closer in recent years. Nehru’s words are eerily resonant.

When hiking, you need good shoes, a friend’s guidance, and the assurance of a well-worn path. Mountain hiking is a journey, hard, but usually well worth it at the end—that moment at the summit, when you feel the wind on your face, look out across the bird’s-eye view of the world, and perhaps recapture the mystery: the vastness of the world, the freedom of the individual, the miracle of existence.

Our schools should be places where no matter how rocky the path, no matter how treacherous the climb, we will come together to see things more clearly from the mountaintop: to see the interconnectedness of life, to glimpse the mystery, to have a religious experience. Sadly, this is not the view of life or religion that the world presents. Instead, we might conjure up images of terrorism, or scenes of faithlessness, or the hypocrisy of those who profess to know God. The extremist, the radical, the far-right politicized religion, may come to mind in the popular imagination. The religion the media presents most often is not the religion of love. Instead, we hear about a religion that has been hijacked from the prophets of peace. It’s politicized, it’s radi-

cal, but it’s not the radical love and hospitality at the heart of the world’s religions. True religion begins and maintains the open question and never rests with the righteous answer. Openness is paramount in the religious experience of God’s unfolding mystery.

There is a wonderful story in the Gospel of Mark (7:31-37). Jesus heals a man with a speech impediment by putting his fingers in his ears, spitting, and touching his tongue. Jesus sighs and says, *“Ephphatha.”* Be opened. The man’s ears are opened, his tongue released, and he speaks plainly.

As the spiritual hikers and guides in our schools, often we are the ones leading the hike, and along the way we must cultivate openness—openness to listening, to speaking the truth with love, to new perspectives, to hearing things differently, to seeing the world differently. In the words of an old prayer: “The world now is too dangerous for anything but Truth, and too small for anything but Love.”

The first Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire, John Dallas, spent a considerable amount of time early in his career working as a school chaplain. Years later, he wrote these words:

A good school shows the world what goodness is. Is it founded on respect for authority? Yes, but it must be the authority of working together for something bigger and better than oneself.... The soul of a school is more than cheering at a ball game. It has a holy purpose for truth and for honesty, for helping people.

At the perilous edge of the present, I hope we might consider nurturing the soul, reclaiming religion, committing ourselves to truth, honesty, service to others. Be opened. ✨

Michael Spencer is chaplain, head of the Humanities Department, and head coach for girls varsity crew at the Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut. He is an ordained Episcopal priest.

IN THE WEB

Public Broadcasting Uses CSEE Resources

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/teachers/index.html>

We mentioned the CSEE/PBS connection in this column during the last school year. At present, we want to highlight a number of lesson plans added in the late spring or early summer.

Topics for all but one of these new lessons were suggested by members of CSEE's National Resource Panels for Ethics and World Religions. The lessons contain great resources, and all can be fine-tuned by creative teachers who only need a starting point. Most new lessons are written for middle school and secondary school students.

However, for elementary and middle school teachers, before we list new lesson plans, we need to call readers' attention to the tremendous resources the New York PBS affiliate (WNET) offers on Islam. "Access Islam" is linked on the PBS page noted above, but in case it gets parked somewhere else, it can be found at: <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/accessislam/>

The lesson plan list augmented by CSEE teachers is found at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/teachers/plans.html>

Middle School lessons
resistance to parents
dishonesty

High School lessons
rites of passage
death and dying
evolution vs. intelligent design
Internet and right to privacy issues
branding and marketing religion
ethical issues concerning cell phone use
living the good life

religion and immigration: Muslims in the United States and Europe
religion and peace
trafficking in humans ✨

CSEE CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT

Compendium of Readings in World Religions

by Jane Baron Rechtman and Terry Ward

CSEE, 2006

Regular price: \$54

CSEE member price: \$45

Authors Jane Baron Rechtman and Terry Ward have just updated and revised their *Compendium of Readings in World Religions*. The 340-page volume is a stellar collection of readings for the world-religions classroom selected specifically for use in independent schools.

The great difference between the *Compendium* and the other collections we have seen is that these readings were both selected and test run in independent-school classrooms, since the authors are seasoned independent-school teachers who have used them with students for years.

The *Compendium* begins with units on "Religious Experiences" and "Symbols, Myths, and Rituals," and then offers seven sets of readings for individual traditions. We are particularly pleased with some of the recent additions to this revision.

For example, in the section of readings on Islam, the selection from the Islamic Society of North America "Against Terrorism and Religious Extremism: Muslim Positions and Responsibilities" helps students understand—from a Muslim point of view—some of what they do not often enough get from the media. ✨

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES

DECEMBER 2006

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

See additional details, including the holy days for the month of November, at www.csee.org



December 3, 10, 17, 24 Advent (Christianity)

Advent marks the beginning of the Christian liturgical calendar. It begins with the Sunday closest to November 30, and ends on December 24. Christians often display wreaths and light candles during this season. Advent looks forward both to the Birth of Christ and to Jesus' Second Coming.

December 8 Bodhi Day (Buddhism)

After leaving his wealth and family behind in order to search for the answers to the world's great questions, prince Siddhartha Gautama spent years engaged in spiritual practices, and then sat down under a tree, vowing not to get up again until he understood. On the eighth day, the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism came to him. Bodhi Day, which means "enlightenment day," commemorates this important event and is usually considered to be the most important of the three traditional Buddhist holy days. Bodhi Day is celebrated in a variety of ways; one American religious community suggests a breakfast of rice and milk, to further enlightenment, since after his fast and enlightenment Sujata offered the new Buddha a meal of rice and milk.

December 8 Immaculate Conception (Roman Catholic Christianity)

The Immaculate Conception commemorates the Virgin Mary's being born free from the taint of original sin. Roman Catholics are required to attend Mass on this holy day.

December 12 Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Roman Catholicism)

This is an official holiday in Mexico. Tradition holds that Juan Diego saw visions of the Virgin Mary on December 12, 1531. Mary instructed Juan Diego to ask church officials to build a basilica in her honor in Mexico City. Juan Diego requested a sign, so she placed roses in a blanket. Upon arrival in Mexico City, Juan Diego unrolled the blanket to find that an image of Mary was imprinted on the cloth. Today, thousands of devout Catholics make pilgrimages to the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and festivals, dances, and special masses are held throughout Mexico.

Sundown on December 15-24 Hannukah (Judaism)

Hannukah is an eight-day Jewish holiday that commemorates Judah Maccabee's rededication of the temple in 164 BCE. After 70 CE, rabbis began to emphasize the miracle of oil. When Judah entered the temple, there was only enough oil to keep the menorah lit for one day, yet it lasted the entire eight days. Today, a nine-branched candelabrum is used, with one candle, the *shammash* (servant), being used to light the other eight candles, one on each night. Children receive gifts on each of the eight nights.

December 25 Birth of Mithra (Zoroastrianism)

Mithra is a Persian god who is also worshipped in Hinduism and—at least in earlier times—in Manicheism and in the Mithraic cults in the Roman Empire that were followed by a great number of Roman soldiers. Of

all the celestial beings ruling over the earth, Mithra was considered to be “the strongest of the strong” and the most intelligent of the deities. It was he who made the waters flow, and who decided whether there would be war or peace. Mithra inspired in his followers discipline and an ascetic life.

December 25

Birth of Jesus—Christmas (Christianity)

From the time of the very early Christian Church, December 25 has been assigned to commemorate the birth of Jesus. It is celebrated by Christians throughout the world, although the way it is celebrated has varied from place to place, and from Christian sect to Christian sect. Most Christians attend church services and celebrate with prayer and song on this day.

December 25

Feast of the Nativity (Orthodox Christianity)

Like Pascha, the Feast of the Nativity is preceded by a forty-day fast, which is, however, not as strict as that of Lent. In the Nativity fast, fish is allowed on most weekends, and also on some weekdays, and there are more days when wine and oil are allowed.

December 26-January 1

Kwanzaa (Interfaith Holiday)

While Kwanzaa is not considered a religious holiday, one of its key features is expressing reverence for the creator and creation. The name *Kwanzaa* is derived from a Swahili phrase that means “first fruits.” The seven-day festival celebrates African-American heritage, family, culture, and community. Maulana Karenga, an African-American scholar and activist, started this modern holiday in 1966. It is celebrated in a variety of ways, with lighting candles, remembering important values, and partaking of special foods.

December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents (Christianity)

On this day, the Christian church celebrates the memory of the children killed by Herod in his attempt to eliminate his perceived enemy, the infant Jesus (Matthew 2:16-17). The martyred children are referred to

as the Holy Innocents. This feast day inspires modern Christians both to consider and to help eliminate the suffering of children throughout the world.

December 29

Hajj begins (Islam)

The Hajj—one of the five pillars of Islam—is a required pilgrimage for Muslims, who must make the Hajj to the holy city of Mecca at least once during their lifetime. However, only Muslims who are financially and physically able are obligated to make the journey. Hajj occurs in the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar and lasts for five days (this year, December 29, 2006-January 2, 2007). One of several components of Hajj is Waqf al Arafat (this year, December 30), a period of time when pilgrims stay awake at night to pray on the hill of Arafat, the traditional site where Muhammad delivered his last sermon to his community.

December 31

Id al Adha (Islam)

Id al-Adha is a feast that brings the Hajj to a conclusion. It is the most important feast in the Islamic calendar. Those who are in Mecca symbolically reunite with those who could not make the pilgrimage physically. Muslims who are at home traditionally gather in a communal place for prayer, and then slaughter an animal for those who are in Mecca. The sacrifice of an animal commemorates Abraham’s sacrifice of a ram when God released him from the intended sacrifice of his son.

December 31

Watch Night (Christianity)

Historically, Watch Night has been celebrated in some places by Christians who gathered on December 31 to thank God for helping them make it through another year. In African-American communities, the day gained special importance, because on New Year’s Day in 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation heralded the end of slavery in the United States. Slaves gathered together in churches or other meeting places to celebrate together. Such gatherings often take place in churches today, with celebrations including songs and speeches. ✨

EXPERTS JOIN CSEE ADVISORY BOARD, MORAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Over the past several months of working with some of the best-known moral development researchers in North America, CSEE has developed valued relationships with experts who know and appreciate our work. In order to help us keep independent schools up to date, a number of these experts have consented to work with CSEE in an advisory capacity. Their commitment is to be available to the CSEE Moral Development Team on a consulting basis, and to make recommendations on research findings and practices relevant to top-quality character education practices.

CSEE Advisory Board on Moral Education

Marvin W. Berkowitz
Sanford N. McDonnell Professor of
Character Education
Center for Character and Citizenship
University of Missouri-St. Louis
Co-author, *What Works in Character Education?*

Matthew Davidson
Research Director, Center for the 4th and 5th Rs
State University of New York (Cortland)
Co-author, *Character Education Evaluation Toolkit* and
Smart and Good High Schools

Thomas Lickona
Director, Center for the 4th and 5th Rs
State University of New York (Cortland)
Author, *Educating for Character*

Larry Nucci
Director, Office for Studies in Moral Development
and Education
University of Illinois (Chicago)
Author, *Education in the Moral Domain*

Judith Smetana
Professor of Psychology
University of Rochester
Co-editor, *Handbook of Moral Development*

Elliot Turiel
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
University of California (Berkeley)
Author, *The Development of Social Knowledge: Morality
and Convention* and *The Culture of Morality*

Marilyn Watson
Past Director, Child Development Project
Author, *Learning to Trust*

CSEE Moral Development Team

Bett Alter, The Gunnery
Susan Bauska, Annie Wright School
Michael Cerkonvik, Mary Institute and St. Louis
Country Day School
Elizabeth Corrie, The Lovett School
Scott Gartlan, The Cannon School
Monica Lisa Mills, Brooklyn Friends School
Adriana Murphy, Green Acres School
Mike Pardee, Kinkaid School
Danny Penengo, Miami Country Day School
Jonathan Rosenshine, The Buckley School
Juliane Stevens, CSEE Trustee
Annie Warner, CSEE ✨

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

DECEMBER 2006

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

New England Independent School Spiritual Council

(First annual meeting of chaplains and spiritual directors for New England schools)

Co-sponsored by CSEE
Deerfield Academy
Deerfield, Massachusetts
November 3-4, 2006

Secondary School Teachers of Religion at American Academy of Religion

(Co-sponsored with the Program in Religion and Secondary Education at Harvard Divinity School and Religious Studies in Secondary Schools)

Washington, D.C.
November 17, 2006

Comprehensive Moral Development: Focus on Parent Practices

(For all school staff members, grades 5-12, but especially those whose duties entail moral development/character education)

With Judith Smetana, Ph.D.
Miami, Florida
January 27-28, 2007

Teaching the World's Religions: Texts and Traditions

With Vasudha Narayan and the faculty of University of Florida at Gainesville
Gainesville, Florida
February 3-4, 2007

Chaplains

(A conference to enrich and renew those working as chaplains and spiritual directors in schools; co-sponsored by CSEE and National Association of Episcopal Schools)

With Rev. Robert Thompson, Phillips Exeter Academy
Austin, Texas
February 9-11, 2007

Advisors and Advisory Systems

With Barb Dixon Ackerman and LouAnne Smith
Greenhill School
Addison (Dallas), Texas
March 30-31, 2007

Resources for Spiritual Development

(For chaplains, religion teachers, spiritual directors, grades 4-12)

With Thomas Coburn, Ph.D, and colleagues at Naropa Institute
Boulder, Colorado
April 16-18, 2007

Community Service/Service Learning

With Mary Pashley and Ann Saylor
Washington, D.C.
April 20-21, 2007

How We Become Moral, and Activities for Moral Growth

(For school staff, grades K-12)

With Michael Schulman, Ph.D.
The Garrison Institute, New York, NY
April 21-22, 2007

2007 Institute on Teaching the World's Religions

San Francisco, California
With Jeffrey Brodd, Ph.D., and others
June dates TBA

Summer Ethics Institute for Adults

(For school administrators, trustees, and staff: opportunity to discuss significant pieces of literature and to discuss ethical cases that have faced independent schools—all in a beautiful and relaxed setting)

With Daniel Heischman and Sharon Daloz Parks
Whidbey Island, Washington, in the Puget Sound
July 14-20, 2007 ✨

JANUARY 2007

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY 2007

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

MARCH 2007

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

TOWARD A NEW MATHEMATICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Too often are numbers from the world of economics pushed at us when they do not belong. One such case pertains to the ethical choices we face in the tricky domain of environmental stewardship, where issues are not always right versus wrong and, too easily, we are sucked into the world of mathematics.

When our choices involve financing, for example, the pushers of such numbers imply that if the dollar figure in one column rises above the figure in the next column, then the ethics of environmentalism decrease in importance.

We see an example of this in articles about hybrid automobiles. Number crunchers explain that if we spend X dollars for a Toyota Prius that gets A miles per gallon, and figure the gas savings over a comparable vehicle with a conventional engine, it takes Y months, or years, for our purchase to pay for itself. The Honda Civic, at a cost of X plus or minus N dollars and with A plus or minus B miles per gallon, will take Y plus or minus N years to pay for itself; and so on with an increasing slate of hybrid possibilities.

Comparable calculations raise their ugly heads when a homeowner considers solar heating or photovoltaic panels. So goes the mentality: if my lowered energy use cuts X amount from my energy bills, my ecological investment will take Y to pay off. Hmm, should I, or should I not? Such reasoning disregards our obligations to reduce the carbon monoxide we send into the air and the amount of fossil fuel we consume. The mathematical effect of this reasoning encourages us to believe that a certain course of action is correct provided that the benefits accrue, within a certain period of time, to *me*: “what do I get out of it?”

What is wrong with such calculations is that nearly everyone thinks more altruistically in areas of behavior other than environmentally related expenses. Should I help the victims of recent hurricanes or tsunamis? Or even should I chaperone the dance next Friday?

Or should I pick up that candy wrapper littering the hallway? These are rarely tempered by “what will accrue to me from this?”

One reason may be that we have more control over the size of donations to disaster victims than over these other expenses. Nevertheless, modifications to the mathematics of ethical decision making are in order.

Assuming that our finances would allow—and could allow, if we wanted them to—a certain ecological course of action, and assuming that we must use mathematics in such calculations (at times, we must) I would prefer one additional factor in the equation. The result of this factor may end up severely diminishing the amount of time required to “pay off” an investment. Mathematically, should we not divide the time period—or modify the equation otherwise—by some number greater than 2, that figure being in direct proportion to our responsibility to others and to our commitment to benefits that might accrue to them? We might call it the “doing the right thing factor.” It is a measure of our commitment to the common good, of our commitment to others who, in nearly all cases, we do not even know and will never know.

If our campus needs a new building, and dollars are influencing the amount of insulation or kinds of windows or lighting systems, let us add what increased value we can to factors that consider the co-sharers of our planet and our responsibilities to them.

We would never ask our students to make ethical decisions mathematically. We would not say “tell the truth unless it’s X hard,” or “reach out to others unless it takes Y time.” In addition to being the right thing to do, our choices—and the explanations for our choices—can be powerful examples for others. Our choices and explanations might help to modify the formulas others use in *their* ethical calculations. ✨

David Streight