



NAMC News

FALL 2005



SHARING INFORMATION AND IDEAS AMONG OUR SCHOOLS, STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

Message from Dale Gausman

Welcome to the first edition of NAMC News! We're very pleased to offer this new publication in an effort to maintain the important relationships that we have established with our students worldwide. Our goal is to share information and ideas among our schools, students, graduates and Montessorians around the world.

The lead article for our first issue is written by Dr. Gary Pennington, Ed.D., M.Sc., B.A. (cum laude). Dr. Pennington's 40-year career in education encompasses a long list of achievements in education and community development, with a strong emphasis on recreation and physical education. As a senior member of the NAMC faculty (team), Gary has valuable insight, experience, and practical ideas for incorporating recreation into any youth curriculum. His philosophy has always been that of a true Montessorian, and he is a strong advocate for youth. Once you read his story, I'm sure you will come away with a renewed enthusiasm for including recreational play in your Montessori curriculum. We look forward to subsequent contributions from Dr. Pennington, and many other members of the Montessori community.

There are many exciting developments on the horizon at NAMC. Our very successful Preschool/Kindergarten Diploma Program has received enhancements that raise the bar once again for quality distance education and benefit our students as they embark on their Montessori journey.

We attribute our success to our students. Our strong commitment to quality means that listening to what our students need is the most important job we have as an education provider. Without your valuable input and encouragement, we would not have the information and tools to grow and improve our programs in a manner that has meaning to the people who rely on us. Out of that important communication come many great stories of success in the Montessori community.

So read on, friends, and if you have something to share with us, let us know!



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Young and Old at the pool

A STORY WELL WORTH REVIEWING

Dateline Adelaide, South Australia, Jan. 26, 2005, Australia Day. Last night at the end of a 37 degree day, three boys just into their teens and one older dad went for a swim at the large outdoor pool in Burnside, a suburb of Adelaide. The first thing on the agenda was madcap swimming races between the boys who represented Canada, Bosnia and Australia by country of origin in their contests. The level of swimming style was naive by any standard, but the boys contested their skills with much abandon. An idea of the lack of experience of the kids was seen in their reluctance to dive or even jump in from the racing boxes at the end of the pool. In the informal races, each country won honours in a different stroke although Australia gave the others a handicapped start in freestyle for reasons obvious to the boys. Animated discussion and many laughs followed each race. Next came a game of tag, this time involving the aging dad as well as the three boys. Many futile attempts at subterfuge, deception, and hiding were made. The dad thought that he had found new safety underwater at the end of the pool only to have his hands seen hanging on to the edge by his hawk-eyed son. The game continued until all gave up in temporary exhaustion.

A small aquatic football then emerged from the athletic bag brought to the pool. Several games of "Yards" were played as were some amateurish attempts at jumping for the ball in the manner of Australian Rules Football, or "Footy", as it is affectionately known. The dad then suggested a game of American Football, known as "Gridiron" in these parts. This was a two on two bizarre game where the rules evolved over the course of many unsuccessful plays and alterations to make the game work in the aquatic setting. When a ball went over into the lanes reserved for serious swimming, neither the boys or the dad were keen to retrieve it. The dad, using good discretionary skills, asked a young Australian boy who had been watching the game with his three mates, if he might get

the ball. The lad gladly agreed to do so and retrieved the ball with far more ease and grace than would have been the case if the old fellow had attempted the retrieval. On his way back to the safe, more playful side of the pool the dad had the good sense to ask the boy if he and his friends would like to join in the game. After one initial verbal decline, the new group of four youngsters overcame their shyness and did elect to play. This was when the real fun began. The critical mass for a good game of touch

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football had been achieved, and the game was on. Huge amounts of energy, many laughs, great efforts, even a couple of touchdowns and some skill emerged over the course of an hour. Lifeguards and many onlookers watched in what could only be described as a form of awe at the unusual antics of the boys and dad. Seldom, if ever, had the pool been graced with such a spectacle. It rivalled more conventional aquatic pursuits for the attention of those watching in and out of the pool. A nice feature was that this new game did not seem to intrude upon the free play of other people in the pool.

A meaningful aside occurred during the match, at least meaningful to the aging dad. Several teenage girls watched the game with obvious interest. When invited to join in they declined, but asked where the dad and one of the boys came from. The dad replied that they were from Canada. A girl said that she loved their accent. Funny, how the words of a young girl can make one's day.

After much ado about nothing except joy and intergenerational play, the local boys who had joined-in latterly had to go home.



Pool time had just about run out and moms and dads were calling kids home just as in the old days. Words of thanks and salutations were made on all sides with promises to do it again another night. Now, to this participant observer there are a number of important elements in this little enterprise that certainly wasn't scripted in advance. Here are some:

1. It was a form of intergenerational, extemporaneous play that is becoming far too infrequent today.
2. Inclusion was fostered and this inclusion resulted in a better game for all.
3. Rules were made-up by the players to suit their needs, ability levels and the environment.
4. Much communication and good will was evident throughout the play with an absence of any negativity.
5. Everyone had their turn at key positions and in leadership roles
6. And, most importantly, there was a rekindling of trust and appreciation between young and old.

In all, this was one of those all-too-rare times in life where we regained what Rachel Carson described as our, "Sense of Awe and Wonder." It is reminiscent of a much earlier time when I had the good

sense to ask young passers-by to join in the fun of a local game of sandlot scrub. Those kids became life-long friends of our family. It is kind of like an "Open Door" policy for sport and play with enormous benefits to all. In fact, it could be called just that, "Sport for All".

The late, great English School Headmaster, A.S. Neill, said that one of the true evils of civilization is that no child had ever had enough time for play. Many other great thinkers of this era and earlier times have also testified to what they see as a profound truth. It was the anthropologist, Ashley Montague, who claimed that we don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing. He also said that the sign of real maturity in life is our ability to remain playful. I hope this account of our little venture in the Burnside Swimming Pool on a very hot summer night is in aid of what these philosophers espouse.

William Shakespeare wrote the following that adorns the sculpture entitled, "The Skater", at the entrance to the Burnside Library. I believe his words apply well to these kinds of life experiences:

Youth is full of sport -
 Youth I do adore thee.
 Oh my love, my love is young!
 Age, I do defy thee.

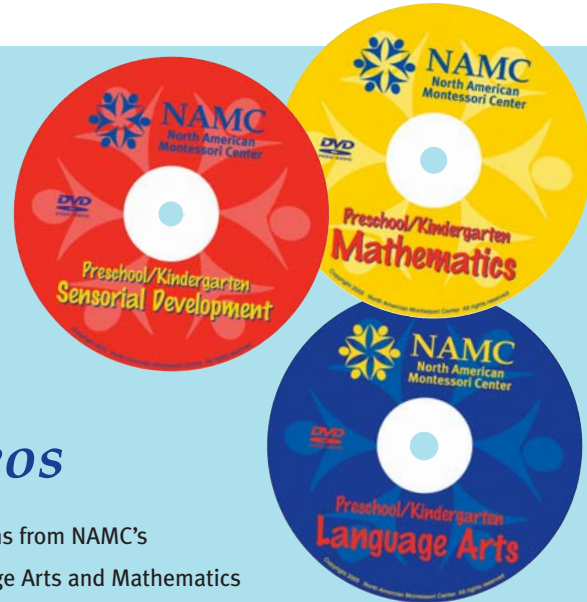
I want to thank Ryan, Ivan, Nick and the other new boys who played with us for making this a joyful experience for me. Their acceptance and the invitation to be with them in a spirit of play is much valued. I am sure that what we did together in such a simple way one night at the Burnside Pool will help bring out in me what they call in new age circles, "My Inner Child".

Lastly, some wise person has said that our job in life with one another is to create special moments that may last for a life time, and that we are often unaware when we do this. Certainly, last evening was one of those special moments that may well go down in my personal archives as truly memorable over the decades.

Dr. Gary Pennington
 The Older Dad
 NAMC Faculty

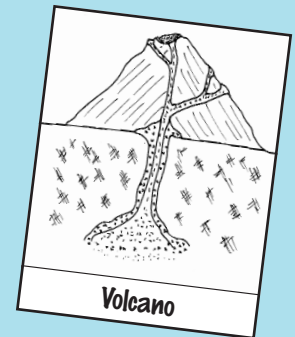
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MATERIALS

- An apron or painter's smock
- A jug filled with water
- Three popsicle sticks
- A pair of tongs
- An 8.5 x 11-inch sheet of blank, white paper
- Three small cans of oil-based paint (different colors)
- A roll of paper towel
- A shallow, rectangular baking dish
- A small bottle of turpentine (paint thinner)

Marble Design Paper

PRESENTATION

- This experiment can be performed to a small group of children, or with the entire class sitting in a circle.
- Place all the necessary materials on a table.
- Explain to the children that this experiment will demonstrate how oil floats on water and how we can use that information to make beautiful art. Instruct the children on the safe handling and use of turpentine (paint thinner).
- Put on the apron or painter's smock to protect your clothes.
- Remove several sections of paper towel from the roll and lay them out overlapping one another on the table.
- Place the baking dish in the middle of the paper towel sections laid out on the table.
- Using the jug of water, fill the baking dish with water. Do not overfill the dish.
- Choose and open one of the colors of paint and dip one of the popsicle sticks in it.
- Make a pattern by dripping the paint from the popsicle stick onto the water.
- Place the popsicle stick on a section of paper towel after you've made your desired pattern.
- Repeat the same process with the other two colors of paint.
- Place the white sheet of paper on the top of the paint and water.
- Remove the paper using the tongs immediately after placing it in the baking dish.
- Place the newly decorated paper on the laid out paper towel with the wet paint side facing upwards.
- Allow the paper to dry before handling it.
- Encourage the children to record their findings and observations.

FINDINGS

- This beautiful piece of art was created because oil floats on water and does not mix with it.
- The paint remains on top of the water, enabling us to use it in a unique way to paint.

NOTE

- For easy clean-up, place a few paper towel sections on top of the paint in the baking dish. After soaking up the paint with the paper towel sections, simply pour out the water.



We are pleased to welcome Lisha Hardy to the NAMC team. Lisha's experience as a Montessori teacher and adult education professional is a great benefit to our students. Her responsibilities encompass program instruction and curriculum development. In addition to her work with our distance education programs, Lisha teaches our local part-time students from September to May. Many of you will have the opportunity to become acquainted with Lisha as you move through your programs. Welcome, Lisha!

