

# Editor's Letter

*"Cycles are circles that travel in straight lines. The seasons come in cycles, yet each season marks the passage of another year. We receive our names, plant, harvest, marry, dance, sing, and are buried in concert with the cycles." —Here, Now & Always, Museum of Indian Arts & Culture*

*Here, Now & Always* is a moving, comprehensive exhibit at the Museum of Native American Art and Culture in Santa Fe, New Mexico that tells the stories of Native American Southwest peoples in their own words.

I was particularly drawn this past summer to the section called, "Cycles" which depicts the stages of life from child to elder through cradleboards and toys, clothing, celebrations, and ceremonies. Another section, "Plants and Animals," included the seasonal cycles of seed to harvest—very important to people who live close to the land.

The exhibit was particularly meaningful for me because I had just witnessed a Corn Dance at Cochiti Pueblo in New Mexico and a Deer Dance two weeks before in Iwate, Japan. Both dances were connected to the seasons, utilized special costumes, involved dancing and drumming, and have been continuously performed by Native Peoples for a very long time. They both are part of a year-round, continuing cycle of ceremony through which people show their respect for the forces of nature and the spirits that control them.

In *Education in a Multicultural World*, Ernest Boyer proposed that there are eight universal cultural concepts shared by people throughout the world; one of them is that "all of us experience the cycles of life." These cycles include the broad themes of birth, growth, and death, and their human expression in rituals and ceremonies both small and monumental.

Since the expression of such concepts is often visual, the artroom seems the most appropriate venue or central point (such as in a school-wide thematic investigation) for the exploration of cycles of life and other human commonalities. I am continually impressed by the caliber of the concepts and lessons *SchoolArts* receives from art teachers who teach with broad themes such as the human commonalities. We couldn't do this without you.

*Nancy Walker*



*In the Earthship Community, a group of passive solar homes made of natural and recycled materials outside Taos, New Mexico, the cycle of the ever-changing seasons is always readily apparent.*

## **Boyer's Human Commonalities**

All of us:

1. experience the cycles of life.
2. develop symbols.
3. respond to the aesthetic.
4. have the capacity to recall the past and anticipate the future.
5. develop some forms of social bonding.
6. are connected to the ecology of the planet.
7. produce and consume.
8. seek meaning and purpose.