

The Threshing Floor

December 2015

Newsletter of the Guild for Psychological Studies

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Guild Vision: The Guild envisions a world in which the significance of each person's truth, authority, and inspired purpose finds fulfillment in life and community.

Guild Mission: Guild seminars offer a way of psychological and spiritual transformation that inspires individuals to live their purpose, expand consciousness, and discover and create meaning in their lives and community.

Reflections on Annual Meeting

By Sue Renfrew

This is a brief impression of the Annual Members' Meeting of the Guild on Saturday, November 9, and an expression of gratitude for all those who help the Guild continue to be a living presence. First, just to say, several had driven at least two hours to attend: Ellie Norris from Davis, Tim Locke from Napa, Jennie Larson from San Jose, Hal Childs from Vallejo, Elizabeth Bremer from Lafayette, Dennie Dinwiddle from Oakland, Bob Ridder from Los Altos, Rita McGowen from Santa Rosa, and Harry Henderson from El Cerrito, while Jean Gansa, Janet Boeth Jones, Fay Kilgore, and I were from San Francisco. Unlike many annual meetings of other organizations, where business concerns are the primary topic, this one focused for almost three hours on our personal responses to two of Hal's questions about the Records: "What comes to you about your first experience at a Records seminar," and "Where do you find you are today?" For me, hearing what each person said with such depth and honesty captured the magic that continues to make the Guild's way so valuable and, as Ellie said, so rare today. Where can we say what we think or feel and not be countered, judged, or put down?

For many, what happened at the seminar was a sudden awareness of a change, not only intellectually, but physically, that has affected their lives from that point on, even though they might not have been aware of it at the time. They were beginning to discover who they were and what path lay ahead of them. And this led us to the beginning of a discussion exploring what the role of the Records could be now, in this time, which is so different from that early awakening.

The business part of the meeting included a beautiful tribute to the two significant members who died this

year, Judith Sweet and Norman McMullen, and a thank you for all those who continued to serve in so many ways. This includes the Board, which meets five times a year and deals with all the issues that arise and decisions that need to be made. Hal spoke of the seminars that were given this year and ones planned for in the future. Bob gave an extensive report on the financial business, with the expenses and income from last year listed beside those of this year. In the question-and-answer period, we learned the reasons for the decision to have a timber management company look at the forests on the Four Springs property to determine the health of the trees and to remove those that are not, and that this process has been held back until they discover where the nests of the Spotted Owls are, so that they can protect the area around them. When this is finished, we will realize a financial gain from the lumber. To accomplish this project we have loaned Four Spring \$100,000. On another note, because of new restrictions, we can no longer offer CEUs, which were an enticement for attending seminars. The meeting ended with a time for being together and the arrival of warm, fragrant, delicious pizzas and a feeling of gratitude for this unique, evolving Guild and all it has to offer.

December Birthdays

Barbara Barnard	Dec 3
John Petroni	Dec 4
Hope Raymond	Dec 11
Dorinda Hawk	Dec 14
Carina Ravelly	Dec 16
Jennifer Larson	Dec 17
Angie Papastefan	Dec 17
Linda Missouri	Dec 19
Elizabeth Chandler	Dec 20
Fran Sheridan	Dec 23
Elizabeth Bremer	Dec 31

We Live, We Love, We Remember...

(Roadside shrine - New Mexico)



(Roadside shrine – New Mexico)

"We Live, We love, We Remember"

By Ruth McMullen

I'd like to say THANK YOU to the Board and all those who have been in touch with me, for the thought-full messages of love and support, following Norman's 'Walk in the Woods.'

I was – and still am – deeply touched.

There was a short, untraditional cremation service, during which a 'letter from Norman' was read, explaining his journey and his chosen style of funeral. We then moved to a village venue for his Homecoming Circle Gathering. The hall overlooked fields and there was the most magnificent sunset.....

It was all beautifully facilitated by Chris, an Independent Celebrant with the Interfaith Foundation, who is also a friend. Norman had planned and requested much of the content himself. The circle was, in various ways, a familiar one!

We had a central candle and a small altar of items representing something of the 'essence of Norman.' We had songs and poetry. Chris played the haunting chakra overtone drum, he spoke sensitively and eloquently of Norman, and there was chance for others to speak, too, and/or place something on the altar.

We concluded with some of his favourite refreshments – cheese, biscuits, wine and chocolate!

Ronald Norman McMullen
13th May 1936 – 4th September 2015



'That which is you dwells above the mountain and roves with the wind.'

(Kahlil Gibran)

Christmas Mysteries

by Nils Peterson

Christmas morning. I wake early to a strange noise from below, and, in my footed pajamas, holding on to the railing, I creep down the shadowy stairs leading from the chauffeur's flat to the workroom below. Of all things, there's my father bending over an electric train whizzing round and round an oval track nailed to a piece of plywood. He doesn't see me, but I watch him caught as he is in the mystery of train lights, ruby and white, circling in the half-darkness. For awhile I don't make a sound, but watch him, wondering about his strange smile.

All these years later, I tiptoe down the stairs again, now understanding the poverty of his childhood and the jobless years of the Depression, and I watch him and imagine him thinking – I am able

to give to my children,
for Christmas,
this wonder.

A Fantasy Memoir

By Jack Russell Stone

In our memoir writing class the other day we were asked to compose a memoir in 30 minutes using present tense. Following was the result (please forgive recognizable embellishments):

Well, here it is, I've signed up for another long weekend at Four Springs---Friday evening through Sunday noon. Because I'm on staff, I need to be there on Thursday evening so we can get ready for the weekend. The leaders, of course, have already spent hours preparing their questions. Questions are the meat of our seminars; questions that will cause participants to dig deeply into their psyches in order for each to find their own meaning in the topic of the seminar. The topics usually revolve around a story, either from the so-called Christian gospels purporting to be the story of Jesus' life, or about some other mythical character like Moby Dick or a writer like Kazantzakis, or similar. No matter, the seminars are always enlightening and sometimes fun.

So, I am eager to volunteer to go, and now that I know my way around our retreat center so well, I can be a real help in getting the place ready: sweeping litter off the paths, setting fires in the fireplaces, walking the Big Circle trail to check for fallen trees or other hazards, and checking all the cabins to see they have been left tidy by the last group---it's just a matter of housekeeping. I've done all this so many times, I could even train a new man in the protocol, if there were any new men willing to volunteer or even to do this "mind" work at all. Otherwise there are just two or three regulars of us older guys who carry the load, lovingly.

So, with that prologue then, what is it, every time, just as I prepare to load the car and drive over Mt. St. Helena, rain or shine, I say to myself or my friend, "I don't want to go, I'm sorry I agreed to do this again"? There is some sort of dread that I can't describe. It's not that I'll meet strangers; that's been a regular part of my life. It's not the possibility of some participant having a breakdown---at least one of the leaders will be a psychotherapist. I love the place, could walk the trails by moonlight without a torch, though I will not advise it for anyone else, as there have been mountain lions and bears reported in the forest, but rarely. I'm not much afraid of making mistakes or being criticized by a leader, that's their problem and I can handle it, like the time a cook told me I was putting too much butter on the toast, so I handed her the knife and left the kitchen. I have a sense of what is needed; it's my job. I'm there for the people. I'm not afraid of the questions; I don't have to answer or be more personal than I want to.

Over the years, it's never changed. When it's time to go over the hill, the dread comes up again: "I don't want to go." But I am committed. I follow through. So I will go. Somewhere after Calistoga (unless I take the Ida Clayton Road from Geyserville), the feeling begins to leave me, almost. Not until I arrive and am greeted by another staff person on the porch or in the kitchen, does the feeling really leave. (You'd think it was a deep dark cave!)

Then: "I am home again. I'll light a fire in the library to welcome the next ones. Home again! *Our* home for the weekend." "Welcome."

El Dia de los Muertos

By Selena Sweet

Editor's Note: The author wrote from Oaxaca that one night, as part of the festivities for El Dia de los Muertos there, she visited a couple of cemeteries in outlying pueblo and wrote this to a friend.

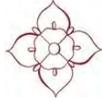
Candle lit gardens of gold chrysanthemums, fragrant white lilies, guitars strumming, voices singing, beer drinking, families huddling close side by side before earth mounded graves, laughing, grieving, decorating under a half wafer moon plump side down hung from a silver edged blue black cloud unmoving in a star spangled pitch black sky.

Across in the distance - from this walled place of the buried dead for this night only rising out of earth to partake and celebrate La Vida now and then, soft gold dots of city home lights quietly glowing living harbors punctuating a seeming dark silence of absence.

Solitude Still Wild

By Patricia Calcagno Stenger

Solitude invites me in—
Closer. Closer.
I hardly know what to say,
Or is silence the response?
Wildly circling around itself,
a single point of infinity
diving
into
itself.
a fullness,
an unrestrained breath.
Solitude, do you embrace
or accuse?
It seems,
it only seems,
you want me
as much as I want you.
A recognition alights, I Am.



Guild for Psychological Studies

*From winter depths...
...spring emerges...
tend your rich and wild ground...*

A Day of Exploration through Images and Dialogue: Discover SoulCollage®

Saturday, March 5, 2016
10:00am-4:30pm
Lafayette, CA



Join us and spend a day in playful but profound dialogue with your soul. You will learn the basics of the SoulCollage® method and invite your own imagination and intuition to guide your creativity.

In Guild seminars, creative expression enriches our experience by facilitating access to deeper aspects of personality, experience and meaning, and promotes awareness and integration.

SoulCollage® is a method of personally creating and working with collage-image cards that bring our heart, mind, soul, experience and environment alive for exploration and sharing. The method provides a way of organizing and giving voice to these personal images facilitating on-going connection, integration and transformation.

Creating image cards evokes a sense of play, reduces stress and uses both left and right brain functions. SoulCollage® has both personal and interpersonal applications.

Rooted in Jungian analytic and transpersonal psychology, Gestalt and Psychosynthesis, SoulCollage® was developed by Seena Frost, MFT. The method has continued its development and grown through worldwide use for nearly 30 years (www.SoulCollage.com).

Our presenter, Mariabruna Sirabella, has practiced and taught SoulCollage® worldwide for nearly 20 years, and trains SoulCollage® facilitators. Mariabruna was introduced to us by a Guild participant who, after attending a SoulCollage® retreat with her, felt it to be an excellent fit for the Guild's work.

Presenter: Mariabruna Sirabella, MS, LMFT, SCT

Location: Elizabeth Bremer's home in Lafayette, CA (rides can be arranged from Lafayette BART)

Fee: Register by Feb. 5th: \$65 / after Feb. 5th: \$75.

An additional non-refundable registration fee of \$15 is due with all registrations. The workshop fee includes SoulCollage® materials. Limited scholarships and payment plans are available.

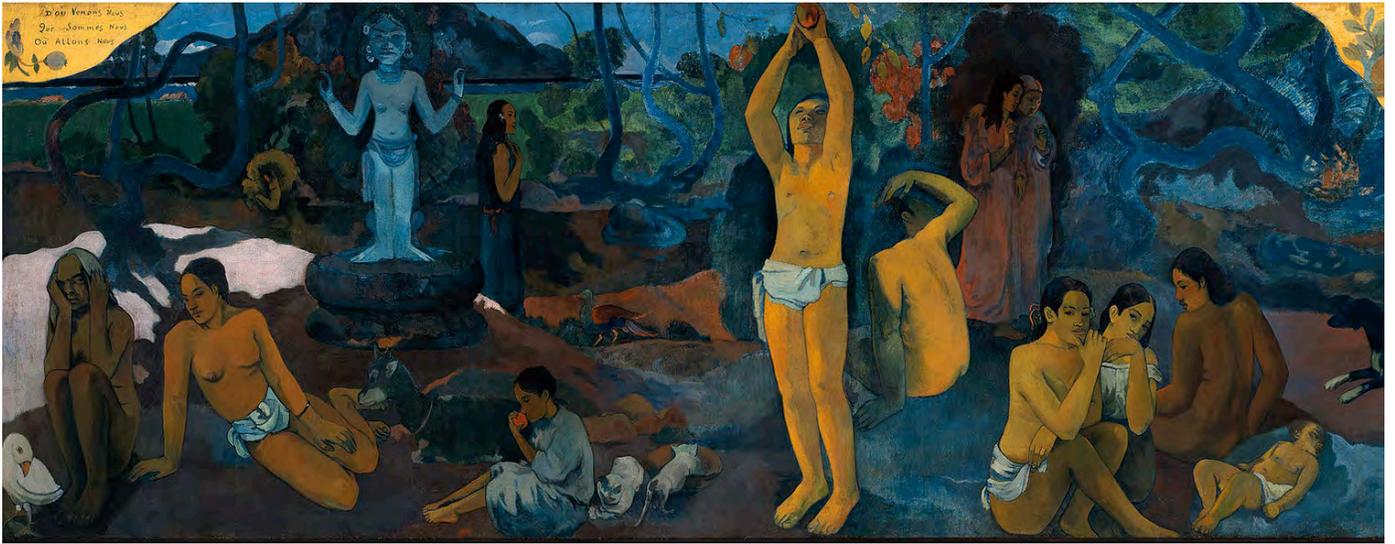
Register at: www.guildsf.org/seminar-registration

This workshop meets the qualifications for 5.5 hours of continuing education credit for LMFTs, LPCCs, LEPs, and/or LCSWs as required by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. Approved provider #PCE 1829. Please include an additional \$15 for the CEU certificate. Participants will:

- Learn the structure of the SoulCollage® method of inquiry.
- Explore how the SoulCollage® process offers a way to access and integrate information from both the conscious and unconscious mind by engaging both sides of the brain and by offering a way to consciously consult and organize this information.
- Practice using creative expression and imagination as ways to dialogue with energies present in the self and in the world.

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Gauguin: Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?

The Guild for Transformational Studies
2016 Summer Guild Retreat -- July 16–24, 2016
Flame and Flower: Encountering the Living Questions

Join a circle of seekers for a nine-day retreat at Shepherd's Spring in Maryland to explore your living questions and come to a fuller expression of your own truth. Questions, intensely asked and heard, can set the course of a life, drawing us from birth to birth, dissolving and transforming ourselves as the very journey of life. No matter where we are in our life's journey, at the beginning, middle or end, questions work away on us, disturbing complacency and awakening consciousness. What are the burning and urgent questions you are wrestling with? In each inviting question, what is the bud yearning to become a flower? In this seminar we will explore how to live in relation to our living questions. We will seek to know the questions that have been guiding our lives, and to discover the new questions that are emerging right now.

The seminar process uses a modified Socratic method to guide group discussion. We honor the dignity of each individual to express their truth and move at their own pace. Mutual respect will support us in our quest to discover the gifts within our depths. Our work will be enriched by the use of non-verbal approaches: meditation, expressive arts, music, body movement and awareness, drama, and silence. All applicants new to the Guild are asked to accompany their application with a letter stating why they wish to attend and any pertinent information about prior study and experience around spiritual issues.

For a registration form and additional information, please contact Susan Thompson at susanthompson045@yahoo.com. We will keep the circle small, so sign up early!

Partial scholarships are available. Please apply with your request to Susan Thompson.

Date & Time: Saturday, July 16 to Sunday, July 24, 2016.
Leaders: Hal Childs, PhD, M.Div, MFT and Patricia Stenger, MFT
Location: Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center, Sharpsburg, MD
Fee: \$1,800 (this includes ALL expenses for a double room, board, art materials, and leader fees for 9 days) (\$200 per day). Extra fee charged for single room.

Stay Connected

Bob Ridder, Administrative Coordinator, is available for all inquiries by phone at (415) 561-2385, or by email at office@guildsf.org.

Send your email address to office@guildsf.org so that we can keep you connected and up-to-date on Guild events. Also be sure that we have your current mailing address so that we are able to send you this yearly edition of the newsletter. Please keep us updated with your address changes.

Mailing Address

Guild for Psychological Studies
P.O. Box 29385
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Guild Website

Visit www.guildsf.org for information about seminars and events, and to register for seminars. The website also has general information about the Guild, past issues of the Threshing Floor, relevant news, and links to resources. If you would like to post information of interest to the Guild community, please email harryhenderson51@gmail.com, our web administrator.

Guild Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/guildsf>, launched in January! If you haven't yet, please "friend" and "like" us!

Newsletter

To receive 12 issues of *The Threshing Floor* a year, please contact the Guild office. There is no charge for an e-mail subscription. For a print subscription, please send a check for \$25 to the Guild office.

Items for inclusion in the Threshing Floor should be mailed to the Guild Office, Attn. Threshing Floor Editor, or emailed to office@guildsf.org. The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the month. Items received after that date will be published the following month.

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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter (by contributors other than staff and directors) are the writers' and not necessarily an official position of the Guild.

Publishing House sales – books and CDs

Order publications on the Guild website, or contact Carina Ravelly at guildpublishing@yahoo.com.

Donations

Many thanks to our donors! Your financial support in any amount helps the Guild with seminars and other events, with the training of leaders, with outreach, and with other new and ongoing efforts. Because the Guild is a registered nonprofit organization, with 501(c)(3) status, your contribution may be tax deductible. Donations should be directed to the Guild office address, or you may donate online using the PayPal link you'll find by selecting the Make a Donation link on the main page of our website.

Volunteers

There are several people who fill necessary volunteer roles in the Guild. If you would like to be a Guild volunteer, please contact the Guild office at office@guildsf.org and let us know particular volunteer roles that appeal to you. Currently volunteers are members of the editorial staff for the Threshing Floor; members of the Board of Directors; serve as continuing education coordinator; train to serve as seminar coordinator, committee person or cook; provide transportation to/from seminars for attendees; help to catalog or research Guild archive materials; write reviews for Guild books and other publications; etc.

Friends and Members

Friends of the Guild are donors and others interested in receiving Guild information who are not Voting Members. Voting membership requires active participation in some form of leadership or committee role, or other volunteer effort, and the payment of annual dues. Voting members may receive a print subscription to the Threshing Floor upon request.

Board of Directors

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Harry Henderson, Treasurer
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