



The Threshing Floor

July 2014

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.

Final Call for Nominations - Due by July 20th - for the Board of Directors

You, or someone you know, could make a meaningful contribution! Participating as a board member offers a way of personal transformation through the work of nourishing the Guild's organizational home, in order to continue to bring the gifts of the Guild's work to the world.

We invite your contribution to our leadership team by offering your own insights and creativity or by suggesting another nominee. Individuals who are not compensated for any work in the Guild during their board service must comprise more than half of the directors. Candidates with experience in organizational structures and program development are especially sought. Please contact the Guild office or any current board member if you would like more information, or to discuss your interest. Our annual election for open positions will take place in August.

By July 20th, potential candidates must confirm their willingness to run and have the official nomination of a voting member in good standing (voting members may nominate themselves). Nominations are due by 5:00 pm Pacific Daylight Time, Sunday, July 20, 2014.

Along with their confirmation, candidates are asked to provide a brief statement of interest and qualifications to be included with ballots (150 words max.). Ballots will be mailed to Guild voting members on August 1st.

The August election will provide for up to four directors to be elected to two-year terms. Current directors completing their two-year terms are: Hal Childs and Harry Henderson. They are eligible to run again if they wish. There are two vacant positions. Other directors are: Jennifer Larson, who is at mid-term, and Elizabeth Bremer and Rita McGowan, who are currently

completing terms but have been appointed to complete open terms through September 2015 in order provide for staggered terms per the by-laws.

*Elizabeth Bremer, Secretary of the Board
(Lbremer4@aol.com)*

Up In Smoke!

The following remarks were made at the May 31 dedication of the new lodge at Four Springs. These comments convey my personal response to the fiery destruction of the former lodge at Four Springs and do not necessarily speak for the Guild for Psychological Studies.

The new lodge is complete (well, almost complete), and we are deeply grateful for this new building, and grateful to be up and running again at Four Springs, a place that is "ground to experience the sacred." The Guild will have its first long seminar since the fire back here at Four Springs this June.

It is obvious that the new lodge is nothing like the old lodge. This observation is not criticism; it is not nostalgia; but rather it is the realization that the old lodge and what it symbolized went up in smoke. It is gone and cannot be replaced. I take the word "nothing" seriously, and it does not refer to the material building, but to the historical meaning of the former lodge. Historical meaning is intangible, and in that sense it is no-thing, and the historical meaning of the lodge had vaporized, had dissolved, before the fire.

The lodge carried the heart and soul of the work of the Guild for Psychological Studies for over fifty years. It embodied an outlook on life that reflected the disquiet and confusion of modernity by trying to combine

theological, historical and psychological points of view that were fading, were running out of time, and perhaps had already run out of their time.

Over a hundred and fifty years ago Karl Marx had noted: "All that is solid melts into air." And we all know of Nietzsche's lament at the end of the nineteenth century that "God is dead." Both of these men were intellectuals sensitive to the profound metaphysical changes that were altering western civilization. What had once been certain and absolute universal truths had disappeared, had, as it were, gone up in smoke. The consciousness that was the truth of Christian Europe was forever altered and had become another kind of consciousness identified with science. But science was itself a closed belief system, preoccupied with hard facts, a materialistic worldview and a dualistic approach to reality.

Some examples of the transformation of what was solid melting into air include the contemporary shift by many people away from institutional religion and churches to an open spirituality; religion represents what was solid, and spirit is air. Another is how the place of the earth in our consciousness has changed over the last several hundred years. At first it was the unquestioned solid and unmovable center of the universe, around which everything else revolved. Today, we look down on the earth from outer space ourselves, and from the perspective of the total cosmos, the earth becomes a mere dot, and then disappears itself among billions of possible life bearing planets.

One last example is to notice how the world is becoming digital, computerized, virtual, and how our common shared culture, our collective meaning, is dominated by media, always changing images. Not only has our historical metaphysical ground completely changed and vaporized, but also our lived in social world is becoming air, fleeting, always changing before we can catch our breath.

Along came Carl Jung and told us that science too was its own myth. And with psychology we begin to glimpse that consciousness itself is a new emergent property of the cosmos. We began to see that religion and science were not absolute truths in themselves but particular forms of consciousness. The cosmologist Carl Sagan told us, "Man is the matter of the cosmos contemplating itself." We see that consciousness has become aware of itself. The circle of meaning is closing, coming full circle, and humankind is tasked in this post-modern, psychological world with creating its own meaning in the face of a seemingly meaningless universe. And a further challenge is that meaning takes on new forms that are hard to recognize, meaning is more fluid, ambiguous, fleeting and difficult to discern than it was in the past.

For me, the historical worldview that the former lodge embodied has gone up in smoke. The lodge fire is the outer manifestation of the transformation of meaning that had already occurred. One of Jesus' wisdom sayings states: "Leave the dead to bury their own dead."

So, while the old lodge has died, a new lodge is built. I salute the resilience and determination of Four Springs in its response to what I might call the "lodge impulse." This impulse is to shelter the work of consciousness. And now the lodge impulse appears in a completely new form. I appreciate its green color, the color of life. At this time the new form of lodge has no history, it has no stories, no pain and suffering, no laughter and joy. It is barely born. It is up to us to fill it with meaning and purpose through our living fully in its shelter.

Hal Childs

Native American Psalm

Do not stand at my grave and weep. I am not there. I do not sleep. I am a thousand winds that blow. I am the diamond glint on snow. I am the sunlight on ripened grain. I am the autumn rain. When you wake in the morning hush, I am the swift, uplifting rush of quiet birds in circling flight. I am the soft starlight at night. Do not stand at my grave and weep. I am not there. I do not sleep. ("I am in the tears you cry at my passing away into everything." *Last line added by Hal*).

Four Springs' New Lodge Dedication and Celebration

A gracious and auspicious good morning to you all.

I should like to join our executive director, Tim Locke, and Judith Peterson, as well as the other respective Guild members and my fellow board members, past and present, in welcoming you all here today, for this vital and extraordinary occasion.

Today we add our work, patience, understanding, and LOVE to the legacy of this very special and spiritually grounded place.

We join YOU, in hoping that this work and love will sustain and help add to the ontological and psychological health of the many, who, like us (at one time or another), were...are...or forever, on the path—for that Layer under the "Dorado" of the spirit, and our own truth of life.

One of the aspects of the beauty of life IS that there ARE many truths and unique paths.

This never-ending number of ripples and their circles move from concentric to intersecting, to orbiting the outer reaches of understanding; and then echo and return to play "Bumper-Car-Circles" with one another. At all these stages, each universal circle or cell has a nucleus - a CENTER - and as these cells come into the

world, they/we all form structures which help form our lives and cultures...yet, in the larger truth of our world, are made more understandable by historic teachers like Ueshiba and Buddha, who all said, in one form or another, what Black Elk said:

"The Center IS everywhere, and the Circumference nowhere."

Bringing us to the beauty of the realization of our own wonderful unique gifts, through our own work, is what Four Springs has been, and is, about.

There is a wonderful quote from the "psychedelic philosopher," Terence McKenna, which speaks to this:

"Nature loves courage. You make the commitment and nature will respond to that commitment by removing impossible obstacles. Dream the impossible dream and the world will not grind you under, it will lift you up. This is the trick. This is what all these teachers and philosophers who really counted, who really touched the alchemical gold, this is what they understood. This is the shamanic dance in the waterfall. This is how magic is done. By hurling yourself into the abyss and discovering it's a feather bed."

"Our world is in crisis because of the absence of consciousness. And so to whatever degree any one of us can bring back a small piece of the picture and contribute it to the building of the new paradigm, THEN we participate in the redemption of the human spirit, and, after all, that IS what it's really all about."
And to this end I should like to offer a poem in closing;

THE LODGE

The Lodge has gone away;
Away to its better place, away to its heaven.
To the place where
"The" ladies needed a warm hearth, a great kitchen and sacred napkin rings, a place where a cat from the myths of yesterday guards its comfortable circle of couches and chairs...for the times when *Records* are shared from heart to spirit;
and form a mirror for those, who missed them.

The Lodge has gone away; to a time before cell service,
Before the homeland needed more securing than 3 oz.
liquids in your toilet kit could provide.

The Lodge has gone away.
It needed a retreat;
and performed its own cleansing ritual.
A cleansing of the broken parts, of those who meant well, yet hung on too tightly to allow it to breath.

The Lodge has gone away;
And met someone and found true love,
and they are very happy together.
And expecting their first born soon.

The Lodge has gone away,
And yet she gives us, her daughter/or son,
(so as not to miss, the really important point here IS),
that she trusts US,
with her only child, and...
We are responsible for Her child's growth.

The Lodge has gone away,
but that doesn't mean she's forgotten
those--whom she left behind.

I Bid you all PEACE AND WELCOME.

Highest Regards,
to all at the Guild.

Richard Squeri
Four Springs Board Chair
& Gogy of Flowing Dragon Swords

New Lodge Celebration Welcoming Remarks

I want to share with you briefly about the fire and rebuilding, have time for others to share about Four Springs, and then introduce the workshop leaders before we have lunch.

Some of you were here 8 years ago when we celebrated the renovation of the old lodge and 50 years of seminars at Four Springs.

We hoped at that time the lodge was ready for the next 50 years. Yet just 5 years later, through an almost unbelievable chain of events, there was a terrible fire.

The wonderful old lodge that had been home to many of us for years was suddenly a pile of ashes, charred timbers, twisted metal, cracked stone and concrete.

That event left us reeling, and friends of Four Springs grieved the loss. For those on the Four Springs board, we soon discovered that our Odyssey had just begun

After the Fire: the *insurance company*. Then the first architect (an evil wizard who nearly did us in). Then more terrifying adventures with the insurance company, which continue, by the way.

There was the county planning division with its many fire-breathing heads. There was the environmental health department (which no one will argue has an admirable mission, though the devil is in the details. Truly).

Occasionally the fire marshal descended from on high with new commandments. And there was the swarm of

contractors with their needs and proposals, and their *sometimes*-lovable eccentricities.

Mistakes were made, from the ashes in the garbage, to which way the kitchen door swings and where the light switches go.

Like much spiritual development, it turns out that building a lodge is a process of recovery from mistakes, a process of missing the mark and then going deeper.

I cannot say the words “going deeper” without thinking of founder Elizabeth Howes. Of hundreds of stories about the fire and rebuilding, there is one I want to share that includes the founders, Elizabeth, Sheila and Luella.

During the designing part of the process, the idea of a Feng Shui consultation came up and seemed like a great idea to all of us. We contacted Liu Ming, of Da Yuan Circle in Oakland, who came to visit. He loved the design for the building, made helpful suggestions, and told us he would like to hold his own retreats here when the building is finished. I told him about Four Springs, its history, a little about the founders. Almost as an afterthought, I mentioned that their ashes are buried here.

He told me then that a large percentage of Feng Shui in Asia has to do with where things are placed in relation to the ancestors. He suggested we clear the blackberries a bit so they might visit, but not so much that they would take up residence. As we walked back across the meadow, Liu Ming said, with a twinkle in his eye, “I wonder if those ladies had something to do with the fire?”

I don’t know if that’s true, but there has been something of a cleansing and renewal process, and along with mistakes, many beautiful things have happened along the way.

To name just two, the wood paneling on the ceilings and eaves was milled from trees here at Four Springs. And we recovered timbers from the old redwood water tank as we worked on piping for the new fire hydrant, and some of this gorgeous wood will also be used in the gathering space.

It seems fitting that you should see this building, which was scheduled for completion in April, while it is still unfinished. It is a building in process. We have built the beginning of a stone fireplace. We have framed in the wall a future opening to a balcony for the gathering space. We have built the shell of two bedrooms that will be finished later, and we have built with construction of additional bedrooms in mind.

This has truly been a group effort, an expression of a We that is very broad, yet carried through thick and thin by a small and dedicated board of directors. Board

members Lisa Beerntsen, Jo Chew and Karen Petty could not be here today, but they were here through all of the creative brainstorming and tough choice-making.

With us today are board members Dan Davis and Richard Squeri, our president. Pati Wilson and Russ Moy also served on the board at the time of the fire and have participated in the recovery. Andy Kille, a former board member who helped guide us through the renovation, is also here today.

I also want to acknowledge the Guild for Psychological Studies, who built much of Four Springs, managed it for many years, and whose seminars have made Four Springs a sacred place for many people around the world. The Guild board is working with the Four Springs board, helping to finance a portion of the construction, and we are working together on a new project of stewardship of the forest at Four Springs. Several Guild leaders are here today to help us with workshops this afternoon.

As I think of workshops and seminars at Four Springs, it reminds me of why do we do this, why it is important to rebuild a gathering space in spite of a devastating fire. We will have some time now to share about that.

I want to begin by saying it was essential to the women who founded Four Springs, Elizabeth Howes, Sheila Moon and Luella Sibbald, to bring attention to our interior life. They each did that with different strengths, Elizabeth through psychology and dream analysis, Sheila through Navajo wisdom and her poetry, Luella through art and astrology, to be very brief and over simplified.

Together they worked with psychologist Fritz Kunkel, and later with Carl Jung and his circle, and together they found tremendous value in working experientially with sayings from Jesus. Through Elizabeth’s work with Henry Burton Sharman, they refined a creative way to dig beneath centuries of Christian theology and encounter the teacher Jesus with more curiosity and less dogma.

They knew that no one can be aware of your interior life for you. They found creative tools to assist others in doing that work, of balancing attention to our exterior life and our interior life. They knew that the interior life is always active, and that awareness of it is necessary to a fully human life. They knew that what a more fully alive human being can bring to his or her community is life giving to that community.

So we need a place to do that, even if ashes sometimes get into the garbage.

~*Tim Locke*, Executive Director, Four Springs

Remembering Nancy Heron

I first met Nancy when I gave her a ride to Four Springs about eight years ago. We found we had both been children in San Francisco at about the same time. We shared some of our memories and felt a connection. On other shared car trips, Nancy talked about her love of genealogy. She would come to life talking about her searches. I enjoyed her descriptions of her work and came to appreciate how deeply she valued following her family lineage further and further into the past. We began getting together from time to time.

Nancy spent her early years in San Francisco and then attended a convent boarding school. She spoke fondly of some of the Sisters and her boarding school experience. She felt loved while she was there, and mentioned, with a sparkle in her eye, that she sometimes got in trouble for being too chatty in class. As she moved toward adulthood, one of the nuns shared with her that she thought Nancy might choose to become part of their community, entering their order and living the life of a nun. She had considered it, she said, but was drawn toward having a family.

Her father was in the Navy and Nancy lived for some of her growing-up years in Pulau, where he was stationed. We shared the experience of having lived for several years in the tropics.

When Nancy returned to the US, she enrolled at UC Berkeley, where she received a degree in early childhood education. Years later she worked at a nursery school and continued to develop her gifts of working with children. Her years as a preschool teacher were very important for her.

She married, had two girls and two boys, and lived in Livermore while she and her husband raised their family. Eventually the marriage ended in divorce and Nancy moved back to Berkeley.

Nancy then attended JFK Univ, where she received an MA in Holistic Counseling. She passed her exams and got her MFT license. She worked at Family Paths, where Elizabeth Bremmer also worked. After much urging from Elizabeth, Nancy attended her first "Records" seminar at Four Springs. It was a deeply moving experience and Nancy continued her involvement with the Guild for many years. This included participating in "Casting Seeds" and being a member of the Guild Board of Directors as well as continuing to attend seminars.

Because of her adult macular degeneration, Nancy gradually lost her ability to drive. She was creative and adaptable in her ability to get around and maintained an active lifestyle for as long as she could.

In the last years, I became increasingly aware of Nancy's aging and wondered what would happen when she was no longer able to care for herself. She lived in a community house in Berkeley and I knew that others in the house were helping her out. But how far could that go? The last time I saw Nancy was right after Christmas. I had no idea that it would be the last time we would be together. I knew that she had spent Christmas with her family and that she was going to be staying in Santa Rosa with her daughter Libby for a while. Libby called me about a week later to say that Nancy was becoming increasingly disoriented and that they were looking for a care facility for her. They did find a hospital that offered Nancy the support and care she needed, with a staff that enjoyed her friendly and interested-in-others presence.

During her last months, Nancy struggled to let go of this life, to let go of a future still filled with the times she so enjoyed and loved - times with her family and friends. Finding her own way, she did come to accept whatever it was that was calling her forward toward the unknown. Her daughter Libby was present at her bedside when she died.

Nancy's sister, Coleen, wrote the following to everyone in Nancy's email address book:

Nancy Heron passed away peacefully on Wednesday May 28th in Santa Rosa, where she was in a hospice care.

A Celebration service will most likely be held on Wednesday, July 16th at Montclair Presbyterian church between 11 and 2. The address is 5701 Thornhill Drive, Oakland CA 94611.

God's Peace.

Steve Toby

July Birthdays

Sonya Milton	Jul 5
Regine Wilson	Jul 7
Dennis Serdahl	Jul 8
Fay Kilgore	Jul 9
Louise Frank	Jul 13
Dudley Pace	Jul 13
Donna Sachs	Jul 14
April Barrett	Jul 20
Ruth O'Day	Jul 26
Lisa Yount	Jul 28
Terry Dowdy	Jul 29

Donations

The Guild is a nonprofit group, with 501(c)(3) status, and so your donations are tax deductible.

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Please note: 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.

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.

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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.

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