

The Threshing Floor

March 2017

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.

Threshing Floor Special Issue

This is the fourth annual March "special issue" of the Threshing Floor. We take this opportunity to connect with those who don't regularly receive the Threshing Floor by mailing it to the Guild's full mailing list.

Each month, the newsletter may share information about upcoming events, reflections on recent events, short essays exploring new ideas, as well as poetry, stories, photos, and acknowledgements. You can submit an item for an upcoming issue by sending it to the Guild office. The Threshing Floor's volunteer editors work creatively to include as many contributions as possible each month.

If you know of others who might be interested in what the Guild's work offers, please share this TF with them.

The Board of Directors

Upcoming Seminars

For additional information and to register, please visit the Guild's web site at www.guildsf.org, or contact the Guild office. Limited scholarships and payment plans are available for all seminars. The non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of registration.

Nourishing the Soul XXII

April 3, 5:00 – April 6, 1:00

This year's "Nourishing the Soul" will talk again about story, the ones we're told and the ones we tell. It will be wide-ranging, from myth to Shakespeare, from Homer to Updike, from fairy tales to urban legend, and maybe most important, our own. We think storytelling is the most human of activities. It helps make us who we are, tells us where we are, and gives us some sense of where we want to be. Each night, the dreamer visits us with his wild tales. All our earthly stories are, in a way, a way of catching up with him/her.

Frank O'Connor takes a sentence from Gogol's "The Overcoat" to give an alternate description of the short story: "...and from that day forth, everything was as it were changed and appeared in a different light to him." All of us have had many such moments where there is a turning, a pushing in a new direction. The seminar will give us a chance to explore our own "turning moments" as well as those of others, real and fictional, in the context of story. We have planned, also, some wonderful art and music projects.

Place: Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg.

Leaders: Maureen Draper, Nils Peterson, and Sue Renfrew.

Fees: \$700, plus a non-refundable \$50 registration fee

Anxiety and Joy

June 27 – July 2, 2017

There seems to be an intensity in the air right now. Is it being fed by the flooding that has followed years of drought? Is it signs of global warming, the political situation, the closing in of death or loss? Or is it our response to these events that seems to feed anxiety and uncertainty?

The way we have collectively and individually perceived and understood the world around us has, perhaps, been badly shaken.

I frequently hear people vacillate between the urge to become more active in response to outer (and inner) events and dropping out even further, avoiding news papers, news programs. For some there is an aversion to silence and self reflection.

This time in history has been referred to as the Age of Anxiety. One way or another many of us are experiencing the truth of that label. For many the body itself is speaking up for anxiety: shoulders are tight, sleep is disturbed or our sense of humor seems to have taken a vacation.

What is possible if we choose to turn toward the anxiety that permeates so much of existence? What if this experience that hounds us has its own intention? We can learn how to do more than tolerate and ameliorate the symptoms of anxiety; we can turn the inner eye toward it and ask, "What are you and what do you want?" While we're at it, we can see what relationship anxiety has with joy.

Are you considering coming to this summer's seminar, Anxiety and Joy? The GFPS Board is interested in financially assisting anyone who is interested in coming, but hesitating because of the seminar fee.

If you recognize a Longing in you when you hear about the seminar, consider taking leap into What is possible. The Angela Center in Santa Rosa has comfortable lodgings and delicious healthy food. The seminar process itself will support exploration into anxiety and joy, personal reflection and insight, playfulness and bold discovery.

For more information email Patricia Calcagno Stenger at pstenger@comcast.net

Leaders: Manuel Costa, MA, MFT; Patricia Calcagno Stenger, MA, MFT and Jennifer Larson, MA.

Location: The Angela Center, Santa Rosa, CA

Fees: Before Feb 27: \$1,100, plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee; After Feb 27: \$1,200, plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee

Election 2016 and Beyond: Responses and Reflections

As we began to prepare our special March issue of the Threshing Floor, the disturbing and challenging events surrounding the 2016 presidential election and its aftermath were never far from our minds. We therefore decided to reach out to our readers, asking how you were responding to, coping with, and reflecting on these events. We also wanted to know how your experience of work with the Guild may help inform your response. We are gratified at the many responses we have received. We invite you to send your own reflections for possible inclusion in future issues of the Threshing Floor.

"Thinking the Unthinkable"

A Monthly Discussion Group

By Harry Henderson

Can what is shaping our consciousness *become* conscious through our practice of reflection? What is our role as human beings in a world where the very meaning of *humanity* is becoming molten, fluid ... the boundaries between mind and body, information and substance, logic and life, are dissolving. The consequences for economics, politics, and culture are profound.

On January 28 a small group met at my house to begin a series of discussions and experiments. Present were John Petroni, Hope Raymond, Anne Ogonowski, Hugh Leonard, Lisa Yount, and myself. We started with the phenomena underlying the recent election. My part dealt with the changing nature of "facts" and "truth" and that they are no longer "given" (from outside) but must be *created* through our thought and imagination, from a commitment of our whole being.

In February our second meeting (facilitated by John) will focus on "what it means to be human today." We hope to continue and that other interested persons will join us in the coming months. No particular background or expertise is required--just the willingness to engage in thought ... or better, to let thought engage us.

If this experience (and experiment) draws you, email me at harryhenderson51@gmail.com for more information.

Re-Visioning Our Country

By Hope Raymond

Just as Christianity was an aid to carry the values of Jesus until the time when humans could claim their own inner authority, our Constitution has carried the values of the United States until such time as citizens could claim their own inner authority. That time is beginning to emerge—in fact, erupt. The values of our Constitution remain valid, but they now need to sow themselves within individual lives.

Accordingly, we have seen individuals in the Women's March, and at the airports, claiming their own inner authority to speak/act out the values sown within them by the Constitution and our Judeo-Christian heritage. Furthering this powerful expression will be a struggle, not a given, but as evidenced in their alertness/readiness to act and speak, we humans are up to the task, if we remain open to embodying the power of the values struggling to inhabit us.

In order for citizens—and others within our country—to remain open, we must re-vision our country. We must see our country as one in which the people embody its values, allowing the Constitution and its three branches of government—as long as they last—to be porous, so that newness and fresh air can flow between its branches and the people, and its branches and the world.

It is a mammoth task, which may well mean breaking down before building up again—perhaps not even building up in a tangible sense, but in a consensual form of some kind. Whatever form it takes, it will surely be a difficult process, calling forth the innate sense of responsibility and authority within each of us, as carriers of the most developed level of consciousness of any species—at least as far as we know. We must find ourselves equal to the task in order to unite our individual lives, and our life as a nation in a world of many nations, with the evolutionary thrust of Life as it is

expressing itself today in our world, and in all creatures and things that inhabit it.

Reading as Subversive Act

By Hal Childs

One subversive thing to do in the face of our country's current political situation is to read. George Orwell's *1984* is popular again. Last December the Threshing Floor received a suggestion from Selina Sweet to publish a lengthy excerpt from the following book: *They Thought They Were Free: The Germans, 1933-1945*, by Milton Mayer. It was simply too long to include in our little newsletter. But the book, published in 1955, has been praised as a very thoughtful and readable book, a book that does not simply record a past history, but encourages deep self-reflection, now. Here is one paragraph from that excerpt, and the link to the full excerpt (and the book itself, published by University of Chicago Press):

"This separation of government from people, this widening of the gap, took place so gradually and so insensibly, each step disguised (perhaps not even intentionally) as a temporary emergency measure or associated with true patriotic allegiance or with real social purposes. And all the crises and reforms (real reforms, too) so occupied the people that they did not see the slow motion underneath, of the whole process of government growing remoter and remoter."

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/511928.html>

I am still in denial about the election, trying to come to terms with the unimaginable. Educating myself about social-political processes feels significant and necessary. In the face of revulsion and fear, action helps. Silence and passivity are not options. Reading is action, among, of course, many other actions. *They Thought They Were Free* calls me to its reading.

Responding to the Challenge

By Rev. Dr. Richard Lyon

The election of Donald Trump as President, along with his Alt-Right friends, cabinet and advisers, is a huge blow and defeat for our democracy. It challenges the orthodoxy and traditions of our most fundamental American and free-world beliefs. It is shocking and dangerous.

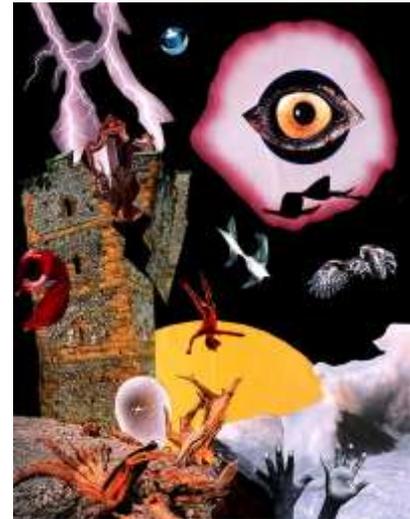
Having stated that, it is also the surging emergence of the negative masculine shadow in the consciousness of all of us. It needs to be met with a strong and loving and conscious healing with the positive masculine and feminine in all of us, as well.

Hameed Darweesh, from Iraq, provides a blazing and healing example. Darweesh was detained at the John F. Kennedy airport under Trump's seven country ban. For ten years, he had been an interpreter for the American

army in Iraq and himself had been targeted by terrorists. When he was released from detention and allowed into the US as a result of a federal judge's decision temporarily overturning the ban, he told reporters he did not have ill feelings about his detention. "America is the greatest nation, the greatest people in the world," Darweesh said.

Let embrace, strength, and love abide!

Rev. Dr. Richard Lyon



The Tower (Tarot Major Arcana XVI)

By Lisa Yount

The Tower is Disaster:
yes, that's the obvious meaning,
but the Tower is really Goddammit, pay atTENtion!
The Goddess of the Forgotten
has asked nicely, over and over;
now She gets out the two-by-four.
The lighting came as a surprise
because we were all in our nice safe living rooms,
roofs on, and windows closed,
and we didn't watch the clouds building up.
Now the building lies in ruins
all around us,
revealing the cracks and the earthquake fault
that were always there.
The shattered Tower is an open eye,
aqueous humor and vitreous humor
splattered everywhere like egg yolk,
but we're not laughing.

The Tower is an eye
open to the sky,
open to the depths
of the wailing earth.
Look.

What is Soul's Call?

By Denise Dinwiddie

What a singular place we are in with a new president who quite possibly is mentally unstable, who “won” the election while losing the popular vote by 2.9 million. What are we called to in this situation, or as I hear it in the language of some in the Guild: What is Soul calling for in us?

I wish I knew. My hope is that our own democratic processes will contain Donald Trump, and if necessary, remove him from office. On a personal level, I realize that I was complacent in the Obama years, confident that the country was in good hands. I am no more complacent and working harder to understand the issues, to be informed. I have tried to hear—and honor—the message sent by those living in the “red” parts of the country who have felt angry and left-out. I have faith in good journalism and believe I hope, not naively, that truth will prevail over falsehood and distortion. I have hope that the Trump shake-up could be the push needed for our legislators to move from a stance of governing by “no” to a stance of governing by collaboration and negotiation.

Oddly, for the first time in years, I think of myself as “American,” an appellation that I had largely ceded to the large swath of conservative and ultra-conservative voters across the country. So I am rethinking what it means to be an American and what it requires—more of me than I have given in the past eight years, and probably more than I have given in my lifetime.

From Understanding to Action

By Hugh Leonard

All throughout the campaign and election of Trump as President-elect, I have felt increasing anxiety about the state of the country and world. Facing those feared realities, I find myself reluctant to view the news and especially the speeches of Trump's associates in office. They appear to me to be sycophantic, calculating and insincere. I feel appalled by the opportunistic reactions of the Republicans and the Far Right, who seem to be grabbing everything that they can, as quick as they can. Consequently, the forthright, honest and inclusive dimensions of our culture appear to be diminishing, to the detriment of society. These reactions bode ill for those least able to defend themselves against the opportunists. The modeling of crassness, rapaciousness and bullying presented by Trump is gaining traction among his followers, all too quickly.

I find myself preoccupied with trying to understand what is going on below the surface of what is happening. I ask myself what are the patterns of behavior and activities that have led to the espousal of self-centered values in the Trump followers and indeed in society as a whole?

Regarding responses, I am much more committed to the constitutional protections of citizens. I look for areas where those protections are under attack. I am rallying my networks to oppose the dilution of the values of the systems that have been put in place for the benefit of all. demonstrate in my life style the kind of inclusiveness that I am looking for in society and communities of every kind.

I am grateful to the Guild for the thought-provoking articles that provoke deeper reflection in me. I appreciate the generous, positive and inclusive approaches that members express in their thinking and activities.

Little Boy

By Clare Morris

for Donald Trump

When you speak, I hear
the child in you demand:

*Make me a golden crown
Bring me a spotless mirror
Tell me I an the smartest
richest, most powerful
king ever. You like me
—don't you? Don't You?
Answer me.*

What is the story
of the sorrow I hear behind
the wall of your bravado?
Did no one welcome your birth?
Did no one notice the
miracle of you?

In your man's body, you are
a little boy, a child who fears
he will fail, who was not seen
or heard, whose gifts were
greeted with disdain.

I hold in my arms
the newborn you once were.
I want you to be cherished—
not for being the wealthiest,
cleverest winner, but for the wholly
human being you were created
to become

Thoughts and Feelings After Election Day

By Bob Ridder

Since the recent election, I feel disappointment in the American people for the choice that was made, but also compassion because the problems we face have reached the point where a choice like this is acceptable to so

many . The population is greatly divided on many issues. It seems that as people become afraid or confused, they stop listening to what others have to say, unless it reinforces what they already believe. There are no easy answers to the problems people are most worried about. Immigration (legal and illegal), religion, abortion, free trade, capitalism, communism, responding to terrorism, etc.... are all complicated, divisive issues. Nobody is going to get their way on all of these issues in a democracy.

Our election process is not perfect, but it is intended to ensure that those who have a right to vote, can vote and so that those who count. This recent presidential election was bizarre by almost everyone's standards. There were some good candidates and also some terrible ones. The end result took almost everyone by surprise. For those opposed to newly elected president's stated intentions, the reaction has been more fear. For those who agree with the new direction, there is a sense of hope.

I hope that the next four years are better than the majority of people in the U.S. are expecting them to be. I also hope that what has happened in this election has roused those who were complacent and possibly decided not to vote. From whatever party we choose a president, we need higher caliber candidates and an involved electorate so that we can have a president that we can all feel represents the values of our country and the country's people.

As I reflect on my reaction, I realize that I would have reacted quite differently before I was introduced to the Guild. My work with the Guild and the people I've met through the Guild has changed me fundamentally. Where in the past I would have reacted only from my ego and surface-level feelings, I now respond from a deeper level that allows me to accept that my perspective is not the same as everyone else's and it is important for me to try to understand those other perspectives so that my new, combined viewpoint can be much wider and, hopefully, more true to my Self.

Back (and Forward) to the Future

By Susan Hartz

Welcome back to the '50s! Life is good: there is a veneer of stability and prosperity, especially if you are a wealthy white male – you wield most of the power with benevolent paternalism. Women, people of color, foreigners – any minorities – are kept in their place in the hierarchy by laws and mainstream pressure. LBGTQ don't exist; if you are sexually different, you keep it well hidden – you could lose your reputation, livelihood, maybe even your life if revealed. Likewise, there is no such thing as sexual harassment, just “good ole boys” talking “locker-room talk” which a woman is expected to laugh off, or accused of inciting by her dress or behavior. There's more good news: there's no such thing as climate change, even though there is inkling that man-made pollution is impacting the environment in negative

ways. But regulations aren't necessary, industries will police themselves. Whatever is good for business is good for the nation.

The '50s saw hydrogen bomb tests, the Cold War, and McCarthyism, during which a senator spent four years accusing political opponents of being Communists. With thin evidence he managed to ruin reputations and make people distrustful of news media and government institutions by accusations often based on his own suspicions and later disproved.

If you don't relish going backwards, however, even then there were slivers of hope. That button-down culture would irrevocably evolve: Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat and Brown vs. Board of Education signaled the civil rights movement. DNA mapping, the microchip, and Elvis revolutionized our world. And don't forget frozen TV dinners.

Today I am especially grateful for my participation in Guild work which has encouraged me to seek treasure in whatever happens. Even when it's most difficult to believe.

Anxiety and Joy Post-Election

By Jennifer Larson

Disbelief, disorientation, shock. Fear alternates with denial at first –we won't let this happen – but it grips more firmly as thoughts come: “we” are not who I thought we were. Reality has changed. The ground is not solid. Anxiety rises.

I feel called to join the women's march. Earlier that week, I have dinner with my 79-year-old mother. Her bridge group is talking about pussy hats. Two nights later we sit again at my table sewing hats, 19 hats in all. Meanwhile neighbors down the street make signs. Over our handiwork, we discuss the values we will march for and text the neighbors what our signs should say.

The morning of the march, a group gathers in front of the bagel shop, then we make our way to city hall where the march begins. The streets fill with mothers, sisters, partners, husbands, brothers, neighbors. I see people from every community and time of my life: carpool kids grown into young women, men and women from the Unitarian church, the recovery community, local community groups and government, my chiropractor. I discover republicans marching alongside me. It is a river of community over-spilling into banks as love, justice, truth. It is *LOVE*, blossoming into *JOY*.

And it continues! I feel renewed clarity and commitment to the values I choose to serve. I am reminded that action is one antidote for anxiety. (For others so inclined, I recommend the weekly “Action Checklist for Americans of Conscience” from <https://jenniferhofmann.com/>)

Guild seminars continue to have a profound influence on my life, increasing my capacity for self-reflection and objectivity- so essential to finding one's "true ground" in times of upheaval (inner or outer). There is an opportunity for deep reflection and bringing consciousness to our experience in the upcoming seminar Anxiety and Joy. Consider whether it speaks to you.

On the Other Hand...

Hal Childs

Is Trump the great "Awakener?"
Is he an unwitting Lucifer?

I am stunned and heartened at the tremendous galvanizing effect the Trump presidency is having on Democrats, liberals and progressives, and naturally, on myself. As a shit disturber Trump draws attention and outrage, and as a consequence raises consciousness, in spite of himself.

Recently a Democratic club in Virginia Beach Virginia, that usually expects about thirty people at their meetings, had two hundred show up!

If you want guidance about how to take action here are a couple of links. The handbook, "Indivisible," is a practical guide for resisting the Trump agenda, put together by former congressional staffers who reveal best practices for making Congress listen: [Indivisible](#). The same group has a website that provides lots of useful information and a wonderful, positive attitude: [Crooked Media](#).

Alas!

by Nancy Anderson

Darkness once again covers our country.
We are overcome with dark emotions:
 Anger, fear, judgment.
Negativity and greed have won the day.
The voices of caring and inclusion
 have been stilled.

The time for mourning is come.
Sit still. Feel the pain, the loss.
Hold tightly to the tension
 between what is and what can be.
Stay until the polarities
 unite in the center and
Love emerges and can bless.

Status of the States: These Times

By Nancy Russell Stone

I compare DJT's pompous attitude with his hairstyle. In my opinion the man has no class, no sense of propriety, no ability to *distinguish the truth from fabrication*. I feel that DJT is himself, a fabrication with "advisors" feeding him required responses.

Considering "alternate facts" as stated by KAC: A fact is a fact. An alternative to a fact is something else. What would YOU call it?

These times have just begun; anything that I write will be speculation; perhaps based on a compilation of facts, perhaps based on my own personal opinion of the man. I have attempted to compile, for myself, a list of aspects of DJT's personality. I read about his journey from Queens, New York to the White House. Fact: The signature of DJT explains much about him. Check it out for yourself. Fact: Hilary Rodham Clinton received the majority of the popular vote. Fact: DJT now occupies the Oval Office which should have belonged to Ms. Clinton. Fact: Shocking though it is Ms. Clinton lost the election. Many people were unprepared for the results of the 2016 election. Were we (those who were disappointed in the results) complacent? Too self-assured? Somewhat smug? Or, all of the realities that have brought us to the question: NOW WHAT? Plans are not tumbling from a pile of possibilities. Some of us feel as if we are up against a wall, the egocentric wall of a madman. We're mad and we don't know where to take the anger or how to use it once it is unleashed. I confess I have not read about impeachment, but I am certain others know what is required to impeach. Then what? Pence?

P.S. Might it be that Donald Trump is playing (some of) the people as one might play a game at one of his casinos?

Inland from the Coastal Waters

By Jack Russell Stone

Though I agree with Nancy's thoughts on the deplorable personality that has become our new 'pre-cedent', we have discussed and agreed upon an image of how the soul of Adolf Hitler, who was born of a bastard father in Austria, and no longer welcome in Germany, might travel after his death in Berlin on 30 April 1945 to inhabit the sperm of [the] Donald's father Fred Trump, born of a German bastard father; thence to impregnate his Scottish wife sometime in September 1945. Hitler's alien soul would be welcome in the body of a good German born in Queens NY, undoubtedly imbued with the *völkisch* mysticism and exceptionalism of traditional Aryan folk ideology prevalent in his people of that era. It would complete a circuit for the wandering Nordic god, Wotan. With such parenting, the infant Donald came bouncing out of the womb in Queens NY, Flag Day 14 June 1946.

But, I just don't feel that Trump is the sole cause of our upheaval. The GOP has been trying to turn back the clock for decades, making slow progress. Trump is only their 'final solution'. Either through apathy or complicity, we are all at fault, so it is *we* who must change.

With that, I move to Jung's image of the Republican heartland: *"the inland dwellers, the inhabitants of the normal world who forgot the sea [(the Unconscious.)]"*; ¶287, CW10. *"... no flood however high reaches them, and the circumambient sea is so far away that they even deny its existence. Indeed, a person can be so identified with his ego that he loses the common bond of humanity and cuts himself off from all others. ... However, the standing rule is that it is never 'I' who must change, but always the other fellow."* ¶285, CW10

Fees, Scholarships, Payment Plans

Perhaps the value of stepping into a long residential seminar, such as this summer's *Anxiety and Joy* invites you to apply or to tell a friend. You look at arranging your schedule; your heart soars! You look at your budget; your heart sinks. Don't give up—chances are, there's a way. We keep seminar fees as low as possible, and offer financial assistance to those who need it. The advertised fee for each seminar is the amount that will cover the cost, based on the expected attendance. Costs include the facility, lodging, meals, materials, and stipends for leaders and staff. Those who can afford the full fee help support the Guild's ability to continue offering seminars. Anyone who cannot attend due to cost is encouraged to request financial assistance. The Guild does not want cost to be an obstacle to participation and is fortunate to be able to offer scholarships and payment plans.

Scholarships:

To request a scholarship, contact the Guild office. Your request will be forwarded to the staff of the seminar you wish to attend. Because scholarship funds are limited, it's important to make your request early, and to request the minimum support that you can manage. Scholarships may be combined with payment plans.

Payment Plans:

To arrange a payment plan, please contact the Guild office. With or without a scholarship, you can arrange to pay over time, with the final payment due by the end of the calendar year in which the seminar is attended.

All seminars, and the Guild's overall operations, are supported by donations. Gracious appreciation is extended to those who support the Guild's work—through attending seminars, through making tax-deductible contributions, or both!

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Mailing Address

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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>. 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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Distribution: Bob Ridder

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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; 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.

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