The Threshing Floor

April 2021 | Newsletter of the Guild for Psychological Studies | Web site: www.guildsf.org

Phone: (415) 561-2385 | P.O. Box 178, Aptos, California 95001 | e-mail: office@guildsf.org

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.

JOHN CARLO PETRONI (1932-2021)

On Saturday, February 13, John Carlo Petroni passed away at the age of 88. Throughout his long life and career, John was many things. For the Guild, he began as a key member of the founding group of leaders, and later, played an important role when the Guild sought to restructure and reimagine itself. As a psychologist, he brought new approaches to thinking about the psyche and the development of consciousness through his leadership in Records and many other seminars. Encountering him as a therapist, mentor, or friend many of us experienced relationships that were intense, challenging, and always fruitful. In his personal life, John was a family man whose love embraced several generations, and a caring husband, father, neighbor, and citizen.

We have dedicated this issue of The Threshing Floor to your reflections on some of the many ways John touched our lives, as well as to beginning to suggest his manifold legacy. As part of that legacy, we are also dedicating our May 22 seminar "Thinking with Soul" to John, "who taught us how to think."

The Guild Board

JOHN CARLO PETRONI
December 4, 1932—February 13, 2021

By Manuel Costa

John C. Petroni was born on December 4, 1932 to Assunta Montemagni and Giovanni Petroni. Giovanni had emigrated from Lucca, Italy and Assunta from Bargecchia, a little town nearby. They met in San Francisco and married in 1929 at St Peter and Paul Church in North Beach.

Assunta was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1937 and hospitalized first at Agnew's State Hospital in Santa Clara, and then at Napa State Hospital in Napa, CA , where she remained until her death. Whenever John and I drove together to Four Springs in Middletown, he would suggest that we honor his mother by holding silence as we motored past the hospital just off highway 29. John was profoundly affected by the apparent meaninglessness imposed on his mother's life by her severe mental illness. He told Janet and me that in his psychological work with Elizabeth Howes, he came to see that he could use the lack of meaning in his mother's life as a push to forge meaning out of his own life.

John's Italian relatives on both sides helped his father to raise him, but none was more important to John's development than his Aunt Amalia Palla (who was like a mother to him) and his cousin Ada Palla Nicolopolos. Both John and Giovanni lived for a number of years with Ada, her husband Gus, and their three boys, Bob, Dick, and Russ. (John's son, Ian, named his daughter, Ada Jane, after her, and his son Carlo was given John's middle name).

After attending public elementary and high schools in South San Francisco, John went to Santa Clara University, where he graduated in accounting (Yep—that's right!) in 1953. He then decided to enter St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park and was ordained in June, 1959. He subsequently served as Assistant Pastor at St. William's Parish in Los Altos, St. Raphael's in San Rafael, St. Peter's and Sacred Heart in San Francisco, and was in residence at St. Bernard's in Oakland. While at St. Bernard's he decided to leave the institutional priesthood and marry Janet Thompson in November, 1975. He had met Janet through their mutual involvement in seminars and leadership training sponsored by The Guild for Psychological Studies. Son Ian came along in November 1979 and daughter Danielle in June 1984.

In 1978 John added to his academic achievements by getting a PhD in Psychology and Religion from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

John loved his Italian roots, visited his relatives in Italy several times, and thoroughly enjoyed tending his garden of flowers, vegetables, and fruit trees. Working in the earth like that helped to keep him grounded.

The other chief grounding influence in John's life was his relationship to Janet and the children. Dealing with the everyday challenges of family life provided for him a runway to land the plane of his ever-active intellect that loved the drama of leading seminars at Four Springs and reading the lofty, often difficult-to-understand works of Carl Jung and Wolfgang Giegerich.

On his 88th birthday last December, I asked John what good he felt he had done in his life. The first thing he said was marrying Janet and fathering Ian and Danielle. He then deflected the question back to me and asked what good I think that I have done in my life---typical John!

John was a very intense man. He was always on the cutting edge of things, always planning the next seminar before the current one was completed, always driving and pushing for more. At times that intensity would flash in a harsh way and John could be a pain in the butt. But even at those times he was standing up for an aspect of truth that we would do well to listen to.

A dream of his that he shared with me a long time ago may highlight the source of his intensity. The dream was that he was given an element called Petronium and his task was to explore its essence. John took that psychological exploration very seriously. He worked continually at becoming a more conscious person, one seeks to live from Soul, rather from Ego.

A concrete example of his intensity: about 20 years ago Janet, Elizabeth Naegle, my wife Mary, and I were waiting for him to come out of prostate surgery. As he was being wheeled on a gurney to the recovery room, he was awake enough to see us and ask for some paper and a pen so that he could write down a dream that he had while under the anesthesia! And a few days before his death, he told Janet that he had a dream about the "No-thing that wants to become Something." Afterward I said to him that this had always been his life's quest: to help the No-thing become Something.

John was a highly sought-after psychotherapist and an exquisitely - gifted seminar leader. He asked creative, probing, open-ended questions that challenged seminar participants to search their hearts and minds for inner truths about themselves that they did not realize that they knew. He was always flexible at these seminars, ready to let go of what had been previously planned in order to follow whatever insight came to him in the moment. If you were on the seminar staff with him, you had to be constantly "on your toes".

Despite being essentially an introvert, John enjoyed talking to and finding out about all sorts of people. He would initiate conversations not only with the waiters and waitresses at restaurants, but also with persons at nearby tables. When you visited him at the hospital, he would introduce you to his doctors and nurses, as well as to the workers who cleaned the room. He would tell you where they were from and a little bit about their families. He would make them and you feel special.

Above and beyond all else, John was a man who knew how to love. He spoke often, especially during his later years, about the value and mystery of friendship. At my wife Mary's 60th birthday party, he toasted her, saying that the people at her gathering embodied the kind of love we only talked about at our seminars.

It is the fact that John loved so well and so deeply that will keep his spirit alive in the minds and hearts of all who knew him. But I feel that it's also true that his spirit working through each of us will continue to touch the lives of many as yet unknown others. The long term effects of John's life and love will be like those of stars, long ago dead, whose light is just now reaching earth and continues to illuminate our world.

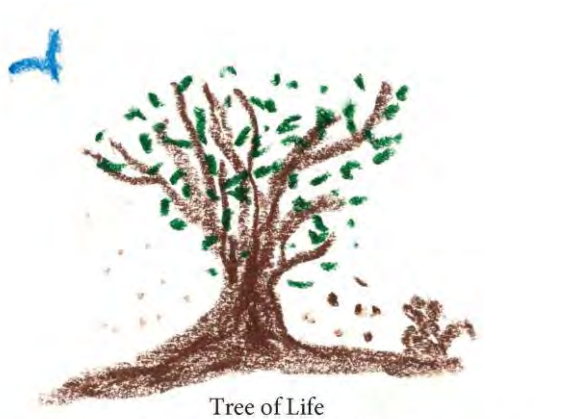
"Love is as strong as death." (Song of Solomon 8:6) THANK YOU, JOHN, FOR BRINGING THAT STRONG LOVE TO ALL OF US AND FOR HELPING US TO CARRY IT FORWARD!

John Petroni photo from Lisa Yount

From Marilyn Baldauf Cooney

John Petroni's Records leadership was deep and imaginative. Through the Guild process, he helped me transform many aspects of my life and deepen my connection with the Holy Other. Rest in Peace.

From Alice McHugh



Tree of Life
2-13-2021 Alice McHugh
In memory of John Petroni, a wise and loving man.

Tribute to the Seminars and, in Honor of John Petroni

By Dean Olson

I came to my first Records Seminar in the early 80s on recommendation from Walter Wink.

The Seminar was a charged, overwhelming, intense experience for me. Those who encouraged me to keep my feet on the ground, to take the next step ("what is this saying to you, evoking within you?") came from people leading the Seminar. John Petroni was one. He was one of the leaders leading the daily Records study, and he also was available to sit down and listen and ask, "How are you doing?"and suggest what I might do or try.

From then on, my experience was front and center on my mind. I eventually chose to move to the Bay Area because of my desire for further involvement in Guild events. And one of those became the opportunity to do counseling with John.

It was a hard transition for me to enter counseling. Four Springs events did not easily transition for me into seeing this as "a window of opportunity" of gaining a meaningful connection and sense of myself. At first, I did not experience being in counseling as finding the "buried treasure."

Sitting across from John, week after week, being invited to take myself seriously, to care about what came up… John offered me ways to do this.

He met me where I was and patiently allowed me to initiate what I chose to share. He encouraged me to "go in", to listen and be attentive and available and care about what was going on, and offered ways to do this. It was a whole new world, strange and unknown terrain I was being encouraged to give my time and attention to, no matter what came up.

Looking back at this, his presence, his way of being, provided a way within me from which I could begin to learn how to hold, to experience new ways of relating with what was coming up, constructive ways to work with what I was experiencing. He was relating with me as he was encouraging me to relate with what was coming up.

I recall, he often framed his responses in language I was familiar with but then would offer a different context – a different perspective - of what that meant. Like after I shared an experience, he said "This is GOOD! This is telling your soul is encountering creativity, and when creativity comes up, it splits." "Remember when Jesus was baptized....then he was driven into the wilderness, the other side, the split."

Another time, knowing my preoccupation with "the kingdom," he pointed out that "what is going on in you is included in the kingdom, the good, the bad, and the ugly." And he suggested a mantra, something I could tell myself several times during the day:

"I AM IN THE KINGDOM, ALL WITHIN ME AND WHAT I EXPERIENCE AS ME, A PART OF ME, WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT, VALUE IT OR NOT, IS ALSO IN THE KINGDOM, ALL OF ME IS HERE."

Other expressions of his were:

"ALWAYS THE OTHER SIDE WILL COME UP."

"This is the creative moment. It's both/and (not either/or)."

"LISTEN deeply to what each side has to tell you. Do it internally with the God within."

"Dialogue with the block, the resistance. Listen deeply to what it has to say. AND, be aware that it is blocking something, something that is on the other side of that block."

And in closing, "There is something more important at work than memory. We want to be attentive to soul: one way you know IT is soul at work, not mind. It's when a living idea penetrates you and keeps working you. It won't let you go.....THAT is where the important work is at."

And eventually it dawned on me, "Ah! The buried treasure!"

From Lisa Yount

I met John through my husband, Harry Henderson. I called him "The Old Coyote" because he loved to tease me, Trickster-style; I teased him right back. I loved both his humor and his wisdom.

From Rosemary Dickerson

In my last seminar at the Guild, when it came to closing time ..... we stood in a large circle outside and each spoke our goodbye as he/she wished at our last gathering. I spoke at a time in my life after a recent divorce, and a recent "not-young" birthday and not at all sure what my future held, but was feeling so "fed" and full after my ten days at the Guild. The last day was my birthday, so I spoke to that fact, and said, "so today I am ONE!!" NO, they all said, led by John, in immediate reaction: today you are NEWBORN. !!!!!!!!!!
I learned SO much in my time there, and truly have felt deeply grateful ever since. So glad for the "tempo" and understanding with all staff members. Was so glad to get back one more time in the next decade but now am in my 90's, and won't be traveling/attending like days of yore. (have had cochlear implant surgery and now can hear again which is great, but old age is definitely here)
Am delighted to enclose an envelope of contribution. You are a Wonderful Team! I so like your words and your understanding. Blessings and my deep wishes for the continuation of the great Guild work.

Soul Longs… from Faith Mason

From Sue Renfrew

No one could ever fill his place in the Guild nor can a Tribute celebrate all his gifts. He inspired and challenged and even teased because he cared so much that one lived one's life fully.

"Curious John"

By Harry Henderson

Out and about with John Petroni, the two of us consciousness trying to talk about itself, concepts like silver fishes in the sea of the mind, always seemingly just out of reach. John sees someone—maybe a guy he knows from the produce market, maybe a complete stranger. In a moment they are chatting, and I realize that John is just as present for him as he had been with me. He is genuinely interested. He treats every moment as of infinite value, consciousness meeting itself on the road of life, as Jung might have said.
In many a seminar or discussion, as we struggled with a mind tangle, John might begin "I am curious …" It could be an image, an emotion, a struggle. John invites us to hold it newly at hand, loosened from the grip of the ego. Or it could be a word that we use every day without much thought but freighted with a history and layers of meaning.
When I ask myself, what has John left us, how I will think of him, I will answer: "curiosity." In that moment where a phenomenon comes to hand, offering its richness, I will know that Curious John is with me.

Harry and John

For John Petroni

By Fred Davis 3.3.21

Greatness? No doesn't quite fit.
A mind, persistently grounded --yet
with wings sufficient for flight. Yes, better
a bit. Modest, ever. Sought God down
this road and that---yet each a bypass,
a white yacht on a darkening sea;
proof not quite able to be found.
Taught us things we didn't know
we didn't know, planted those seeds
of bountiful doubt, "ticklers" of Truth.
The best of men? Says it well enough.
To be with him, to learn, to grow--
grateful, gratitude…and that much more.

John Petroni

By Nina Joy Dodd Lawrence

When I heard about John Petroni's death, I called my sisters, Celeste, and Jeanie Dodd and found myself crying hard. They were both supportive and a bit puzzled about the strength of my emotions. As I sensed into what was going on for me I came to the feeling that John and Janet were such part of our parents' lives that they feel like family to me also! For Don and Ruth Alura Dodd, John, Janet, Ian and Danielle were chosen family.

I remember them sitting in Celeste's kitchen in Olympia, with Ruth Alura, going through one of mom's picture albums of a Guild trip, re-appreciating what they had experienced together. They visited mom and dad several times after they moved from the Bay Area to Olympia.

On the day of Ruth Alura's death, she was alert and able to let us know who she wanted to call to say goodbye. I rang up John and Janet on my cell phone. For mom to hear over the noise of the oxygen, I put it on speaker, so I got to hear John's words to her.

John: "You have made your footprint on the earth, Ruth Alura!"
Ruth Alura: " It's taken a long time for me to be me."
John: " You have always been you, and it has taken a long time."
Ruth Alura: " Yes."
John often gently and clearly spoke wisdom.
This picture is from Mom's Japanese theme birthday party.

This Time for John Petroni

By Nils Peterson

Losing someone who's been a great presence

It's as if in Nepal you left your house to see the mountains and Everest is gone – no – really, gone. Great clouds pass by wondering. No place to lean on there.

What's left is your memory of an immensity.
It stays with you, lives with you growing deeper,
stronger, taller, – at last as present as the mountain.

John Petroni

By Ed Cupman

Sharp as a Tack, Brave as a Samurai, Articulate as a Sage, and a few times, John Petroni even showed the Wisdom of an Oracle.

And while that is all fine and dandy, most important of all, what I will remember of John, and what I will take with me, is his KINDNESS!

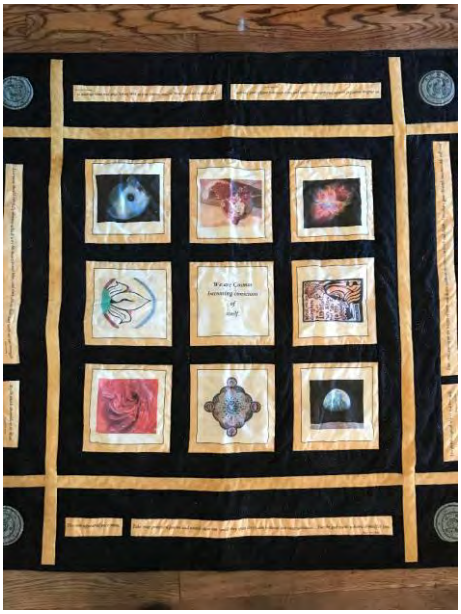
I don't know what in the hell happens when we kick the bucket, but I do know this...ain't no good thing ever, ever dies.

And John Petroni laid upon us some very good things! And without a doubt, I'm taking em with me. I'm taking em with me!

Godspeed old friend.

From Faith Mason

Quilt made for John a few years ago as an honoring of his contribution to the work.



April Birthdays

Gerhard Funk	Apr 5
Barbara Black	Apr 12
Barbara Jeskalian	Apr 12
Carla Gerber	Apr 14
Kay Young	Apr 16
William Dols	Apr 17
Gillian Sands	Apr 18
Marcia Burkart	Apr 20
Mary Moore Gaines	Apr 23
Judith Richardson	Apr 29

ARROGANCE

By Richard Naegle

As many of you may remember, John loved to push people on their responses. He always longed to get behind surface issues to deeper meanings. His Sagittarian fire often led him into frays.

Years ago, when John and I led a men's group at 4 Springs, one participant (our beloved friend, Jack Russell) objected to John's "arrogance" in the circle. John responded that the root of arrogance was the same as that for arrogate, i.e. "to claim for oneself." This led to a very creative discussion during which the circle was divided into those who supported the position exemplified by Jack and those who supported the position exemplified by John. (As I recall it was about 50/50 with a few on the fence.). The sides were not about personal support or judgment of either man, but an opportunity for the sides/the positions to cast challenges to and perceptions of each other—stepping towards, directness, speaking truth, creative judgment, vis-a-vis stepping back, empathy, consideration for others, softening/censoring one's honest reactions—pushiness, bluntness, superiority, courage vis-a-vis carefulness, sugar-coating, avoidance of conflict, self distrust. It was a rich and stimulating discussion, which I obviously still remember. And I believe the dialogue between these issues continues today in our psyches, in the Guild, and in our country.

I miss my arrogant Friend.

From Beth Jordan

Dear Guild members,
I took this photograph of John Petroni and Manuel Costa at a seminar at St. Angela's Center in Santa Rosa in around 2013 or so. John knew what friendship was, as is evidenced in this photo. Even though we may not have seen each other for years, perhaps decades, John remembered. His kindness, insights, personal work still make an impression on me. Rest peacefully John.
In gratitude for a life well-lived.

John Petroni and Manuel Costa

Tribute for John Petroni:

By Maris Pravata Helfrich, Galveston, TX

John and I had a working relationship as he was in charge of my internship/training at the Guild during the months of my sojourn in CA in 1981. I feel grateful for his dedication and his effective leadership for my process of learning the Guild seminar method as well as his guidance and challenging direction in my personal spiritual and psychological journey as my therapist.

I owe him a lot for my professional and personal growth during those months at the Guild and Four Springs. I always felt that he could be trusted in my training and in his personal interest in my well-being as a friend. His Catholic background as a former cleric was well-suited to mine as a former nun as we had similar and yet conflicting views and forms of reference that kept things interesting! We also shared an Italian heritage as "paisanos".

My heartfelt sentiments of condolence go to Janet and his family, as well as to the "family" of friends at the Guild.
R I P John. Respectfully

John Petroni remembrance

By Joe Wills

While my attraction to the Guild was gradual, I was drawn to John Petroni immediately. I attended every one of the seminars he led that I could, and later as a staff person I volunteered for seminars he led.
On the final day of one of these seminars, John took me aside, as he was wont to do with people, and had one of his characteristically flustering questions. "Why are you here?" he asked, with that honed-in gaze of his. "Because I'm scared to death of you," I said, without thinking. Instinctively, I knew it was true, and that he would understand. He smiled, and it was not the smile of dominance, or even mischievousness, which he was prone to; it was a knowing, compassionate smile.
Through all those many seminar days I avoided him, I criticized him, I admired him, I copied him, I steeled myself facing him yet took every arrow of his straight into the vital organs. And in the spare seminar moments, I began to work out my relationship with my real father. I took the shadow boxing with John into a new reckoning with my dad, including a father and son backpacking trip neither of us would have hitherto thought possible.
Thank you, John Petroni, for your valuing of hard and unwelcome things; for your magician's respect for intuitive knowledge and hazardous substances; and most of all for your forbearance to carry my projection, and then confidence in me that I might see it through.

To John Petroni
From Elli Norris

Dear John,

Guide to the underworld
And up again,
Mentor, guide, playful friend,
Still and always present.

With gratitude and love,
Elli

Oh how I want to honor you, John Petroni. My first reaction after learning of this opportunity to pay tribute to you in The Threshing Floor was to bring forth a more or less serious tribute. And I did. But the more I remembered you, the more memories of your playful side, the one that thought and played outside the box, sometimes to my consternation, popped into my mind. Here's an example from my journal:

Thursday, Sept. 2, 1993. The Ranch, 8:30 a.m.

> Wow!! John Petroni called last night and said, "Are you sitting down?" I just knew what he was going to propose, and I was right -- that the Isra-el seminar might be held here!! This one: *One Who Wrestles with God*, led by John and Clare Morris.

I remember the thrill of welcoming a Guild seminar to the Ranch, but also some trepidation as I imagined all the preparation's needed to welcome some 20 participants for an eight day seminar. But of course I said yes, and as I review my journal notes about it, what an amazing experience it was. John and Janet and Rich Watson came to check out the location on September 24 and found it good. On October 16 John and Clare arrived, and the next day the participants drove up the driveway to the main house. Yes, a thrill and an adventure. Thank you John.

And his "coyote" thinking contributed to my 70th birthday celebration, at which coyote played a central role. I don't know that I would've thought of it if John hadn't put it into my mind. Again, thank you John.

I expect the wonderful memories that we all have of John would fill a book. I look forward to reading some of them in this Threshing Floor tribute to him. Before I go, I want to bring one more expression of what John contributed to my life and I suspect the lives of many others.

> At times our light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.
>
> Albert Schweitzer

Yes.

My experience of John Petroni
By Patricia Calcagno Stenger

John had an intensity and an ability to focus his attention on the "movement" of what was in front of him.
His mind, it seemed, had one eye on the present while the other was making connections, asking questions, having feelings. He listened to imagination's thoughts and images. Being on staff with him could be a wild ride because ideas were constantly coming up even as he was tracking what was happening in the room. His constant flow of ideas and possibilities could be tough on the staff, who might find themselves switching gears in mid-stream.

At my first Basic Records, I was surprised at how often this powerful leader teared up as he was speaking. It must have surprised him too because he commented on the frequent visitation of his emotion.

At that same Records, I was called out on a decision I had made while swimming after the movement night. His comments cut me deeply and years later he told me that he had made the wrong choice in how he understood my own process during that evening. It was years later! I wouldn't have expected him to remember, but he did.

It made me wonder sometimes about just how heavy it was for him to experience the powerful assumptions many people had about him. He never mentioned this issue directly in my hearing, but he did say, occasionally, "That hurt my feelings."

More than once, on a day when a seminar was deep and provocative, he would be surprised by the number of participants who, in the afternoon, were out around the pool being social and goofing around. He did not speak critically of them, but I think he was disappointed. His hopes and expectations could be pretty high sometimes. Perhaps he wished for more time to delve into what was moving in himself at that time. He was a quintessential spiritual seeker pulled into some Unknown by a powerful fire.

In our relationship John taught me first hand about the reality of "blind spots" in a person's psyche. He and I were at a meeting with a few other folks one evening. We each spoke directly to him about a dynamic he had with us in the group. John said he had no awareness of this issue in himself. Still, he heard it and spoke to it, seeming to take it in. A few days later I mentioned the issue to him again. He had no recollection of the discussion from a few nights earlier. He looked perplexed, was quiet, then looked at me and said, "I clearly have a blind spot around this." I found, in our discussions, that John was willing and even eager to be open and vulnerable. It was very powerful to watch him lean into what was coming up in him that was new or counter to the image of the one who already knows… He was a model of a person who turned with curiosity toward questions and unpleasant experiences and behaviors.

As I write these memories I am aware also of how generous John was. When George's and my daughter was getting married, Manuel Costa was suddenly unable to give the time and work necessary to prepare the couple and also officiate at the wedding. John stepped in, meeting with our daughter and her beau a few times, discussing the wedding but also the challenges of married life. And he married them, being graceful, solemn and joyful for them during the service.

Similarly when a friend or family member was sick or dying, John would share a fullness of care and appreciation for the person and their life. If someone had been through something very difficult, his words and actions revealed a depth of feeling and concern.

When I was in Germany having a surgery that was still experimental in this country, John unexpectedly offered some financial support and also called me while I was still in the hospital in Germany.

When our son, who lived in Manhattan at the time, was really suffering, John offered to call him and speak with him several times.

About 16 years ago John had an idea about teaching the process of leading a Basic Records seminar - how the questions were designed, the flow of the 17 days, how to "help" if a participant's response wasn't answering the question being asked, what the primary themes of the seminar were and where they were highlighted or later built upon, what to watch for that might point to someone in the circle needing extra emotional support . He would press the students in the class to articulate what they thought the main idea was in a Records section, or how we thought some of the discrepancies in the text came to be. He invited an occasional guest speaker, e.g. Gail Priestly, who came in to speak to us about prayer and meditation. It was excellent, and it also made clear that John knew the Records like the back of his hand.

In spite of his image as a tall, thin, serious Italian Catholic priest, John was playful and often quite spontaneous. He loved to tease people he cared about. We shared a love of gardening. He would speak about the trees in his back yard, or certain flowers or vegetables. He loved peonies - a flower that doesn't grow well in El Cerrito. Peonies love the climate in Santa Rosa, if the heat doesn't hit too early in the Spring. I would often share my bounty with him. He would praise the beauty and then screw up his face at me and say, "I hate you!"

His love of his family and close friends was a thing of beauty. He might be saying something about Janet's wisdom with the kinder in the Waldorf school where she worked, or tell a story about how Danielle communicated to a classmate, using body language, the letter "B." I remember his commenting with joy about some of Ian's art pieces or the parade Ian helped put on in the Spring/Summer. Or he would be such a rascal teasing Manuel in ways that were full of affection and appreciation. After his diagnosis, he would openly weep remembering that the time was coming when he would not see these people he dearly loved ever again.

Who this man was and how he lived his Truth have affected my *Coming Home to Myself* profoundly, and for that there are few words - so I will end with two: Gratitude and Amazement.

Gratitude for John Petroni

By Elizabeth Bremer

I'm so grateful to have been a recipient of John's love through his teaching, his leadership in the Guild, through sharing times with his family, and especially through his many caring words. In a year of absences, to have John's absence become permanent is a deeper grief. Yet I know his passion as a teacher for helping us grow into our full selves, his relentless dedication to the clarity and expression of emotion and thought, and even his often-piercing humor and presence were gifts that enriched many lives in ways that will go on enriching our living and our giving to others. I wrote the poem below for John on his 75th birthday. It's as fitting to me today as a tribute to John's legacy of nourishment through love, friendship, leadership and education.

Full and Empty
- by Elizabeth Bremer
for John
2007 & 2021

Full
Tall stalks blow in the wind.
Ripe corn.
Each kernel a nourishment or a seed.

Empty
Bly writes, "One day I saw an empty corn cob on the ground, so beautiful, and where each kernel had been, there was a place to live".

Empty and Full
Those kernels find furrows on wing to a distant place or at the foot of the drying stalk; take root, grow, bloom, produce;
Or fill small dens, nests, grain bins and kitchen jars; available to be used when needed.

Full
Tall stalks, ripe corn, furrows, dens, nests, grain bins, kitchen jars.

Empty
Tall stalks, cobs, furrows, dens, nests, grain bins, kitchen jars.

Empty and Full
You are a tall stalk blowing in the wind.
ALIVE, ALIVE, ALIVE!

John Petroni – Memories

By Hugh Leonard

John lived on the mountain
He evoked the mountaintop
In those he enlivened
With his glad grace,
But, alas

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.

Coronach
by Sir Walter Scott

I miss John. I miss the strength of his person, unmistakably present to me, to everyone in the group and to those who knew him, far and wide. I miss the penetrating accuracy of his questioning, his searching for soul in our time and his appreciative acknowledgement of what life made available to us all. He was a penetrating seeker, listener and questioner.

I always felt cared for and understood, no matter whether I had weighty issues or not. He gave me many gifts but his most enduring one was when he would tell me that I was in the grip of something. That made me reflect on what was happening in me. He had that unerring insight into the human that made him a giant among spiritual directors, counselors, psychologists, therapists, no matter in what capacity he functioned, his was a healing touch.

He was able to reflect deeply on a wide range of subjects having to do with the human. In Harry's group, he always kept the discussion on the point and guided us back to reflections on the human. He gave us all the gift of himself and what a generous gift, a precious gift and an enlargement of what it means to be human.

I miss sitting with him while having breakfast at the Gilman Grill, as we did many times. The final time, due to Covid 19, was sitting outside, in the cold, on a hard bench but as usual he was his irrepressible self. While his body was failing him, the light of his spirit was not dimmed. His moments of glad grace burned even more brightly as we talked about his approaching end. He joked about him paying for this breakfast, because he wanted me to pay for the next one. He made me take his credit card to go inside and pay. I agreed to do so, but I paid with mine.

Accessibility was his image and reality. He was always available to respond via email or on the phone. It is with much gratitude that I remember the giant, John, who lived on the mountain, who was graciously present among us and even in his passing left us so much of himself.

To John!

By Jennie Mansfield

I was lucky enough to spend many hours one on one with John, as well as in various groups in the Guild, and a handful of other social occasions. So much could be said! But the most significant interactions were in Guild seminars at Four Springs.

As a leader, John was able to pick up on what was happening in the circle and move *with* it, applying this tool or that (art, body awareness, a seminal question), very often on the fly! In such moments, the seminar circle itself disappeared, and instead we were immersed in the performance of soul. Those experiences were often life-changing. Otherwise abstract concepts were brought into the embodied NOW. John was an exceptional leader.

I am grateful to have witnessed John living right at his edge, and to have been challenged/invited to do the same. I am grateful that he was willing to talk about his dying, once again modelling such full presence to what is.

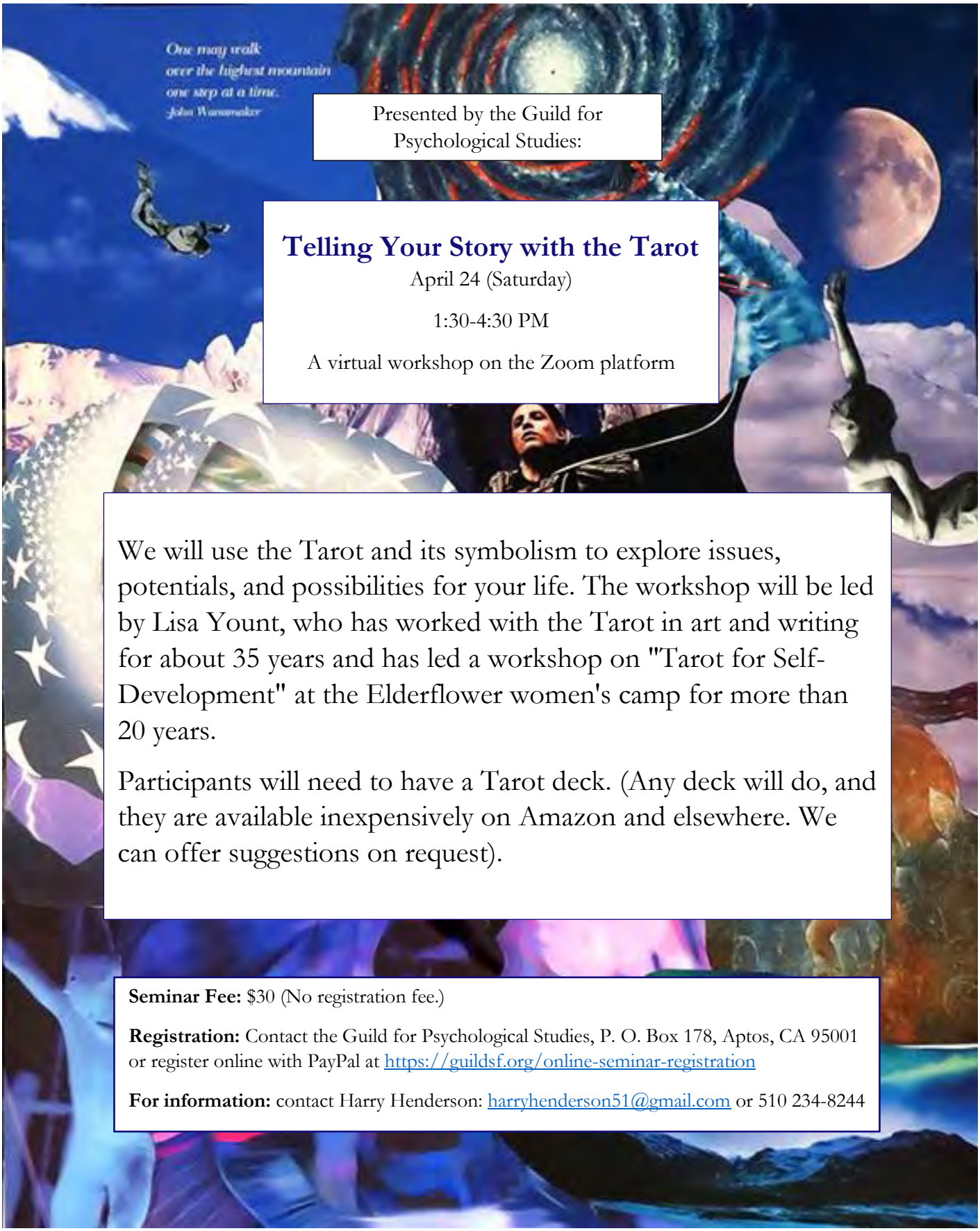
Long seminars at Four Springs always conclude with a banquet, and the festive tradition of toasting. In that spirit I raise my cup to you, John! My cup is SO much fuller for having known you!

I toast your driving curiosity,
Your love for Janet, your kids and family,
Your warm laugh and trickster glint of the eye,
And most of all, your stewarding of your own
Nature, and the reminder to each of us of the
urgency that is our own Soul Nature

I will remember John Petroni as the Wise Owl!

With Love, Wilene.

Nancy Russell Stone passed away March 24, 2021 😔



Presented by the Guild for Psychological Studies:

Telling Your Story with the Tarot

April 24 (Saturday)

1:30-4:30 PM

A virtual workshop on the Zoom platform

We will use the Tarot and its symbolism to explore issues, potentials, and possibilities for your life. The workshop will be led by Lisa Yount, who has worked with the Tarot in art and writing for about 35 years and has led a workshop on "Tarot for Self-Development" at the Elderflower women's camp for more than 20 years.

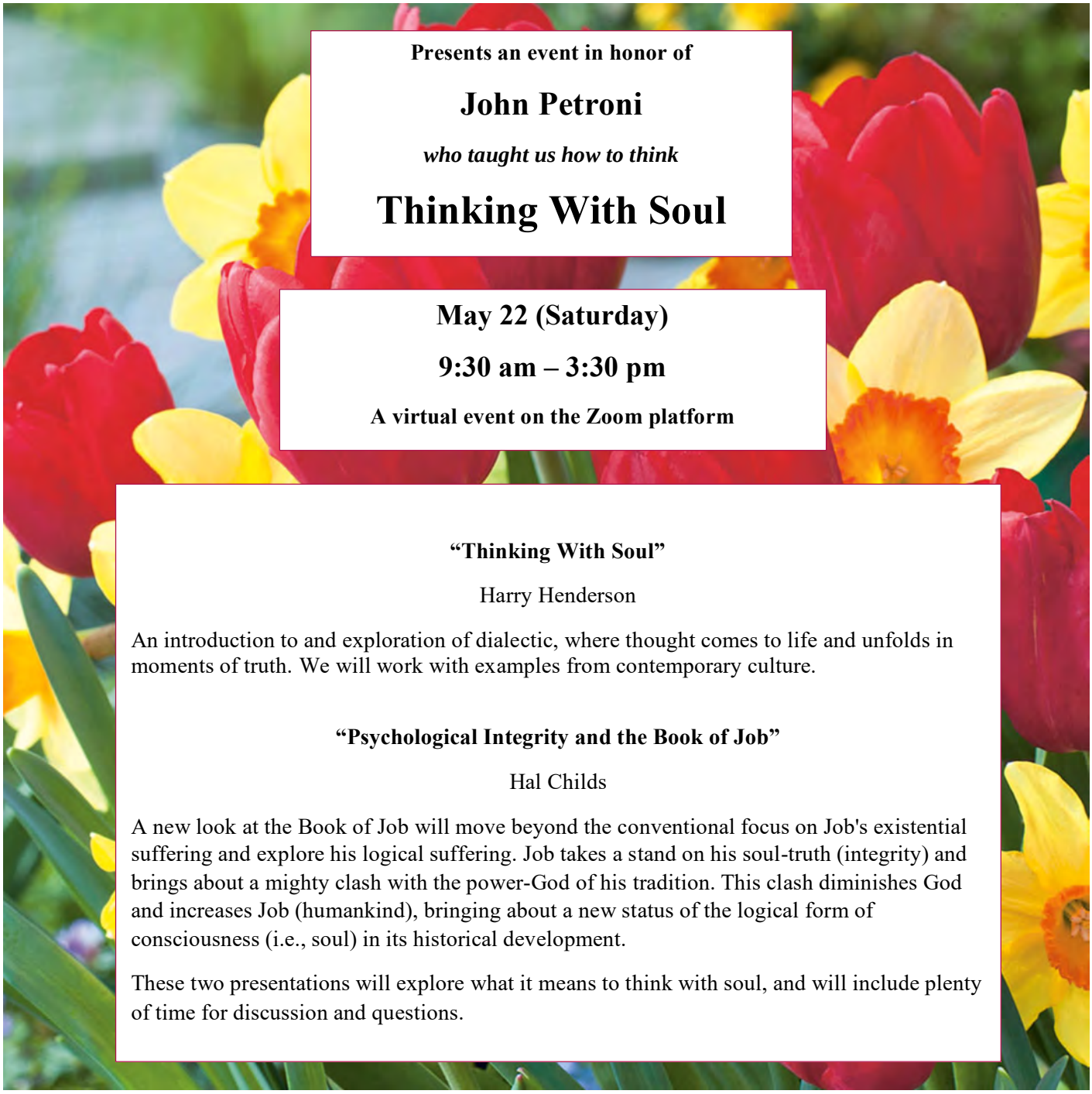
Participants will need to have a Tarot deck. (Any deck will do, and they are available inexpensively on Amazon and elsewhere. We can offer suggestions on request).

Seminar Fee: $30 (No registration fee.)

Registration: Contact the Guild for Psychological Studies, P. O. Box 178, Aptos, CA 95001 or register online with PayPal at https://guildsf.org/online-seminar-registration

For information: contact Harry Henderson: harryhenderson51@gmail.com or 510 234-8244

The Guild for Psychological Studies



Presents an event in honor of

John Petroni

who taught us how to think

Thinking With Soul

May 22 (Saturday)

9:30 am – 3:30 pm

A virtual event on the Zoom platform

"Thinking With Soul"

Harry Henderson

An introduction to and exploration of dialectic, where thought comes to life and unfolds in moments of truth. We will work with examples from contemporary culture.

"Psychological Integrity and the Book of Job"

Hal Childs

A new look at the Book of Job will move beyond the conventional focus on Job's existential suffering and explore his logical suffering. Job takes a stand on his soul-truth (integrity) and brings about a mighty clash with the power-God of his tradition. This clash diminishes God and increases Job (humankind), bringing about a new status of the logical form of consciousness (i.e., soul) in its historical development.

These two presentations will explore what it means to think with soul, and will include plenty of time for discussion and questions.

Seminar Fee: $50 (No registration fee)

Registration: Contact the Guild for Psychological Studies, P.O. Box 178, Aptos, CA 95001 or register online with PayPal at https://guildsf.org/online-seminar-registration.

For information contact Jennifer Morgan Mansfield: larson.jennie@gmail.com, or 408-828-7492

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 178
Aptos, CA95001

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 FacebookPage

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.

Production & Layout Editor: Wilene Chang
Content Editors: Sue Renfrew and Lisa Yount
Distribution: Bob Ridder

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 Ravely 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

Elizabeth Bremer, Secretary
Hal Childs, President
Denise Dinwiddie
Harry Henderson, Treasurer
Jennifer Morgan Mansfield, Vice President