

# E-Correspondence

From the Central Regional Council of the  
Anthroposophical Society in America  
May, 2013



## Communication Support:

If you are receiving this email as a leader in your area, **please forward it on** to all the members in your group, branch or initiative. We want to ensure that all our members in the region remain connected. If you prefer that another member of your group be responsible for receiving and passing this on, please let us know. **We need your help and thank you.**

## Reports from:

The Central Region Group, Branch and Initiative Annual Meeting

## *Social Imagination: Weaving Past and Future through Presencing*

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School ~ Viroqua, WI ~ May 3 - 5, 2013

There were 32+ members in attendance at this year's gathering in Viroqua. A few reports from attendees follow. We are grateful for their thoughts and effort to capture this memorable event into words. Photos also tell a story and there are several included which help tell our story.

### *Viroqua welcomes the CRC!*

I know I am in company when I send out a huge Thank You! not only the CRC, but also to our hosts in Viroqua and Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. Driving into this 'driftless' region, many of us were welcomed with heavy rain and storms - even delayed flights. Coming into western Wisconsin on the highway, I personally enjoyed glimpses of the rolling green hills, spotted with horses, cows and family farms through my active windshield wipers. Luckily, the sun decided to join us for Saturday's Songtrail outdoors and for Sunday as well.



PRWS - GYM; Friday Potluck

The Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School, located a few blocks from Main Street - the major artery of the town of Viroqua, was our stomping grounds for the delicious food cooked for us by a lovely couple. The chefs harvested local and fresh dandelion greens for our salad, which accompanied a scrumptious local turkey and a nettle soup. Snacks, tea and fresh milk were plentiful... We all felt so well cared for!

Our singing, eurythmy, activities and presentations took place around the corner at the school's Old Main building. Lazed in a peachy orange, Old Main was the first Waldorf one-room schoolhouse in Viroqua. Prior to that, it was the meeting place of Viroqua's Independent Order of Odd Fellows; a legacy of personal and professional development and service lives within the walls of the Old Main.

One of our weekend highlights was a Songtrail around the land near a particular park, close to downtown (more on that below). It was walking to and from the Songtrail that I stopped into Ewetopia, a fiber shop managed by a Pleasant Ridge graduate. Being a Waldorf early childhood teacher, it was a good thing I only had 15 minutes to browse and buy before our next conference activity! I also had the chance to check out Viroqua's cooperative grocery, and was intrigued to hear that Wisconsin has the largest number of counties with family owned, organic farms in the country. Lodging was so



Old Main - Brian Wickert & Mary Christenson

well organized and accommodating. I felt very grateful to be located within minutes of the school and with such a generous Pleasant Ridge-alumni family

Of course, aside from walking the land or shopping the shops, the best way to get a pulse on a community is to talk with those who live within it. I thoroughly enjoyed my time speaking with Viroqua residents connected to the school and to anthroposophy. I got the sense that Pleasant Ridge has contributed greatly to the economy, the culture, and the diversity of Viroqua's community. I found Viroqua to be scenically beautiful and its unique un-glaciated land such a source of identity that unites the community.



Brian, Hazel & David

As well as experiencing this slice of Wisconsin country, the Central Region gathering began and ended with a palpable enthusiasm. The warmth and excitement of kindred spirits reuniting was held by the collective efforts of so many. Thank you for this true Whitsun experience.

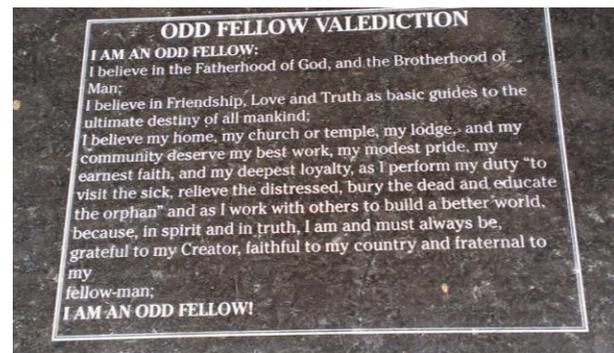
### Driftless Songtrail



David, Alberto, Jacob, Marianne, Betty  
- Driftless Songtrail in Eckhardt Park

Marianne Fieber led our group of 30 or so on a multi-sensory adventure, connecting us to the land and to each other. We waked leisurely around Eckhardt Park, the Vernon County Courthouse, Park Bowl (home to the baseball field, created due to the absence of glaciers in this region) and along paved trails that spoke to Viroqua's history and unique 'driftless' geography. Accompanied by Jacob Hundt, a former Pleasant Ridge student and current teacher at the Youth Initiative High School, Marianne took us on a journey through stories, history, songs, poems, quotes and drumming. Our expedition began with honoring the four directions through a Tewa prayer. It ended with thoughtful quotations honoring the four elements and a lively Russian Hymn to the Earth.

Each historical landmark and aspect of natural environment was paid homage through our collective intention to honor its place in history or its contribution to this land. A strong thread of indigenous chants and songs was woven from site to site, as we learned about the native plants, the origin of Viroqua's name, underground caves, and the silica and limestone of its crags.



At one point, we gathered at a site in the park to see the Odd Fellows plaque. We were surprised to learn that an Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) existed in

Viroqua in the 1830's. Birthed in Europe, this group of 'odd' individuals created a fraternity of Friendship, Love and Truth - helping members of community when help was needed. How odd to do such a thing?! The Viroqua fraternity would meet in what is now Pleasant Ridge's Old Main building. The knowledge that these ancestors planted the first seeds of service and selflessness in Viroqua warmed our hearts.



Top of the crag - Eckhardt Park

I hope to go on many more Songtrails around the country, inspired by Marianne's initiative to unite and heal the human being and Mother Earth. Thank you!

~Lauren Struckmeyer, Iowa City, IA

## Reflections on our theme:

### Spirit Remembering

Your own I  
In the I of God  
Comes into being

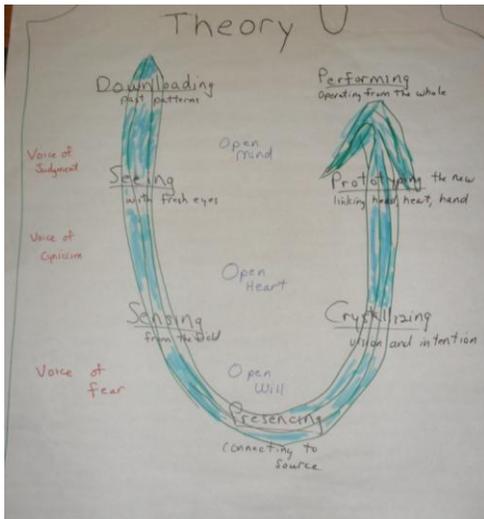
### Spirit Sensing

Unite your own I  
With the I of the world

### Spirit Beholding

Bestow on your own I  
For free and active willing

How we can participate in the spiritualizing of the “human social sphere?” That was one of the questions posed to us in the materials we all received before coming to Viroqua. It is a task which we as anthroposophists recognize to be intimately bound up with the inspiration that can arise from our own work with the rhythms of the Foundation Stone Meditation. It was appropriate, therefore, that our evening began with a recitation of the rhythm of the first day, the Wednesday rhythm.



But how do we build on this foundational work in such a way, to quote the introductory materials, as “to cultivate social impulses to balance the naturally occurring anti-social ones?” In his talk Friday evening Albert Linderman provided one approach to this by describing the work of Otto Scharmer, the founder of Theory U. Scharmer, we learned, points to a very recognizable trait of modern listening: the tendency to merely hear what reconfirms our own inner opinions and biases, the habitual way we judge any situation. This he calls “downloading.” The challenge is to move instead along a path that begins with “seeing,” that is, opening our eyes to seeing the facts before us afresh. From there we continue along the path by “sensing,” an empathetic listening to what another is bringing to us. If the first stage is one of “open mind,” then this second stage is that of the “open heart.” But how do we go forward from here, toward bringing something new and healthful into the situation? Here we must find our way to a “presencing” that can connect us to what Scharmer refers to as “source.” This is a listening that is

“generative,” where we can feel ourselves connecting to our real self—and thereby to the world of “future possibility.” Here we have moved beyond “open heart” to reach “open will,” from which point we can now begin the ascent up the right side of the “U” towards a crystallizing of vision and a “prototyping” of future action. As Albert put it, “Becoming aware of the inner realm, the gateway for the future is presenced.”

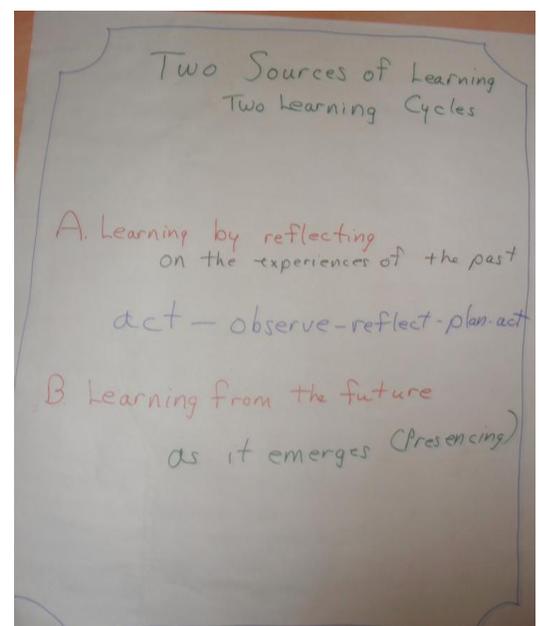
Toward the end of his talk he brought us back to our work with anthroposophy, reminding us that we all have experiences of letting our own ego go and feeling the higher enter. This can take a variety of forms: meditation, art, music, eurythmy, community-building activities. As we approach Whitsun we are especially aware of the challenge to allow the highest to enter into me but not for me. He asked us to consider how Theory U can be a useful tool in our efforts

in community life, as Otto Scharmer puts it, “to allow the inner knowing to emerge” and “connect to the source of inspiration and common will.”

– Karl Fredrickson,  
Northfield, MN

Victorious Spirit!  
Flame through the impotence  
Of irresolute souls  
Burn out the egoism  
Ignite the compassion  
That selflessness  
The life stream of humankind  
Wells up  
As the source of spirit rebirth.

– Rudolf Steiner





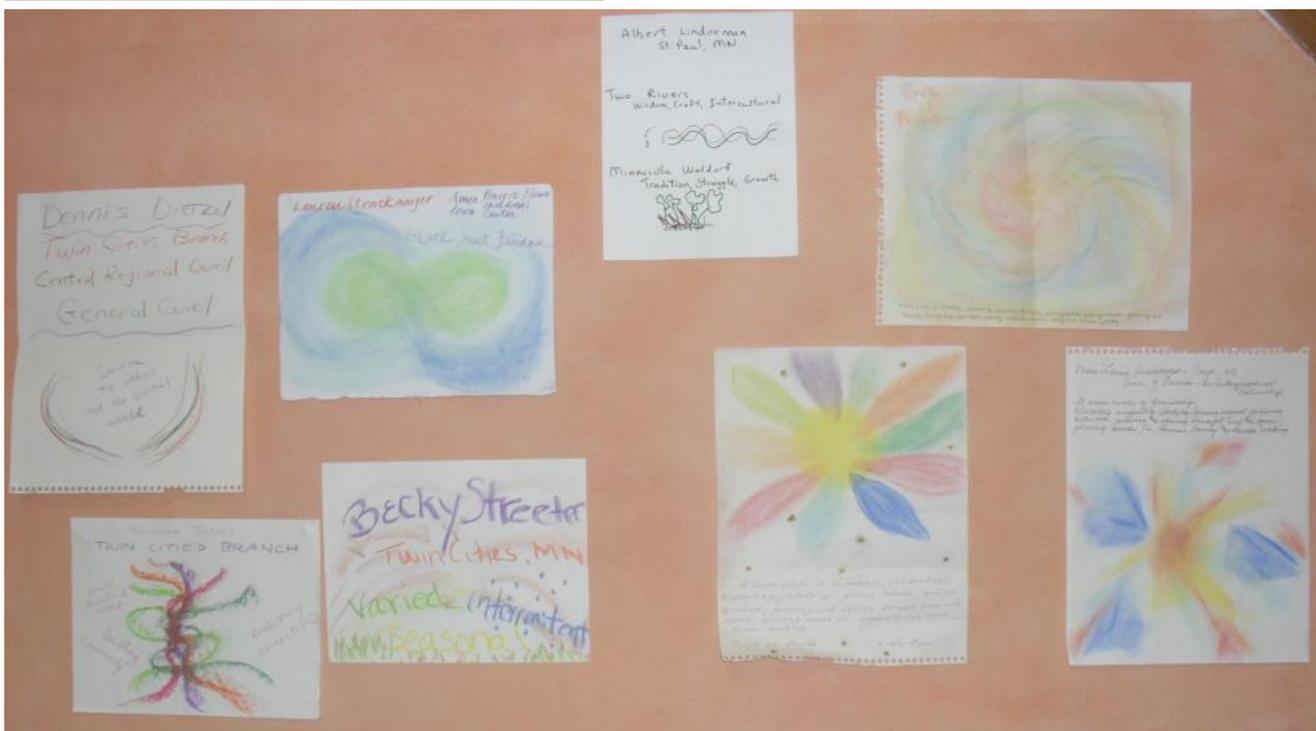
## INTRODUCING OUR GROUPS: TELL & SHOW

During our opening circle on Saturday morning, we met the attending groups, branches and initiatives in a living way.

**TELL:** Each was invited to offer their name and the name of the group they represented along with three phrases or sentences to characterize their group.

**SHOW:** The essence of the phrases or words was enhanced by a color gesture or picture on paper, and a physical, body gesture or sculpture.

Here are a few of the images made by those attending our gathering.



Primarily from around the upper mid-west, members from around our region joined us for our weekend.



Gold stars were placed on our watershed map. Our quilt of stars served as a center piece as well to remind us of those friends and co-workers unable to be with us. We hope our Central Region Star Quilt continues to grow.



**Iowa:** Iowa City, **Illinois:** Chicago, **Michigan:** Ann Arbor, **Minnesota:** Brainerd, Little Falls, Milaca, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Moorhead, Northfield, St. Cloud, Winona, **Missouri:** Maplewood, **North Dakota:** Fargo, **Texas:** Houston, **Wisconsin:** Madison, Mukwonago, Racine, Readstown, Viroqua.

**We wish to thank our special guest:** Albert Linderman for sharing his experience and work with Theory U with us and guiding our “hands-on” practice through case studies wherein members brought forth questions from their local areas for a council of colleagues to hear and presence. This was a dynamic process. Six groups were actively engaged in deep listening, body sculpturing and presencing. Look for future reports on some of experiences around this work.

During our Sunday annual meeting, Albert led the gathered group in a case clinic on behalf of the CRC. Our own reports were given around our year of activity. We then opened up to comments from the group. Following a few moments of silence we opened up to images that wanted to emerge. The CRC will be processing these images and provide a report on them later in the summer.

**We wish to thank our Viroqua hosts from The Turning Place:** Mary Christenson, Brian Wickert, Sarah Caldwell and Richard Grams for many logistical details and arrangements. Annette Conlon, eurythmist supported our moving artistic activities and laid the ground work for our “folk eurythmy”. Local chefs extraordinaire, Michela and Colin, created sumptuous meals throughout the weekend with a dedication to local and organic principles. Jacob Hundt supported the Driftless Songtrail with wonderful stories, history and geologic insights! The collaboration leading up to and during the event was a remarkable example of each individual bringing their gifts and capacities to co-create a rich community event.

**Check out our Central Region webpage for conference materials and additional reports.**  
[Anthroposophical Society in America: Central Region](#)

## Other Happenings in our Region:

**Evolution of Joy** with Reverend Richard Dancey, Christian Community Priest weekend themes will explore “The Creation of Joy” and “Joy of Creation” as it relates to the suffering and joy of the earth. Friday, May 31, 7:30 pm - Sunday, June 2, 2013 at the Madison Waldorf School, Madison WI. Contact: Jacqueline Beecher - [jebeecher@charter.net](mailto:jebeecher@charter.net)

**The Spiritual Scientific Tasks of 2013** with Yeshayahu Ben-Aharon, Ph.D.  
June 8-9, 2013 in Fargo, ND - COST: \$50 - most meals included  
Registration deadline ~ May 29<sup>th</sup>  
Event info Contact: Mary Louise Hershberger at marigold@i29.net



If you have any suggestions or contributions for upcoming issues, please send them to Marianne Fieber at [marianne.fieber@yahoo.com](mailto:marianne.fieber@yahoo.com). In the subject line, indicate that they are for the e-correspondence. We hope this format will help us reach members in a timely way with information that is of interest.

Some simple guidelines for submissions:

Deadline: 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month

Electronic submissions only to [marianne.fieber@yahoo.com](mailto:marianne.fieber@yahoo.com)

Activities taking place within the Central Region

Activities which are led and/or developed by members living within the Central Region

Note: We reserve the right to edit contributions as needed

**The Central Regional Council is:**

Dennis Dietzel, Roseville, MN  
Marianne Fieber, Viroqua, WI  
Mary Louise Hershberger, Fargo, ND  
Alberto Loya, Ann Arbor, MI