

E-Correspondence

from the Central Regional Council
of the Anthroposophical Society in America

November, 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.**

REFLECTIONS on *THE INDIVIDUAL ENCOUNTER and the PATH to COMMUNITY* ~ AGM & conference at Monadnock Waldorf School in Keene, NH October 11-13, 2013

From Mary Lee Plumb-Menjes, Austin, TX

I met Anthroposophy right after I left home at 18; I became a member of the Society a few years later to keep up my connections to the vibrant moments I'd experienced in certain communities based on Steiner's work (Camphill Village and Emerson College). As I became a carrier, I noted how often folks who clearly valued the warmth and values of our Waldorf school community and studies felt no impulse to join the larger Anthroposophical Society and sometimes how Society meetings were heavy on truths revealed by Anthroposophy and lacking much life or lively encounter with individuals. Thus, it was truly heartening to attend this conference/AGM and experience our capacities to engage in "The Individual Encounter and the Path to Community," the theme of the gathering.

Torin Finser opened our gathering Friday evening noting that spiritual beings are all around us, eager to work with us, waiting for our questions forged in fire and ice (ref. a poem by Gordon Walmsley, for only those can they hear. Robert Karp, the panel moderator, stated we are not here to simply talk about human encounter/community, we are here to practice it. He asked us how willing are we to be pushed out of our comfort zones, to bring our struggles and questions. The panel surprised and delighted us by dispensing with impressing us with their roles, but instead were so funny and heartening, describing how they each met Anthroposophy. I felt very interested, proud to know, and engaged by each panelist. I felt stirred too with questions that awoke in me as a listener in response to their sharing.

We need to feel gratitude for being allowed to participate in being human: making choices, making mistakes; these are things that the angels and elementals can't do.

~ AGM Participant

The next highlight for me was the Saturday morning talk by Constanza Kaliks, the leader of the Youth Section. All through the gathering I had reason to believe that we do care about the concerns of young people and aren't just worried whether anyone will replace us old people in the Society and that the young present played key roles in the gathering and shared how great they are.

The opportunities to experience scenes of the Mystery dramas brought to us by Barbara Renold, director, and acted by Glenn Williamson and Laurie Portocarrero, as Johannes and Maria through several epochs, were incredible in how we became engaged in the emotions of each encounter. It was so different from how the Mystery Dramas can sometimes seem so remote and obscure, so separate from our own experiences of life.

It's not the great things we do, but the small things we do in great love. Having the courage to forgive demonstrates the incredible flexibility of the soul.

When you are sure you know, there may be rigidity.

Rudolf Steiner failed a lot, but he didn't stop!

~ AGM Participant

From Dennis Dietzel

As the CRC representative on the General Council, one of the perks is that I get to go to the Society's annual meeting. This is my fourth year going and it is quite a treat to meet old and new friends. The annual meeting moves one from region to the next from year to year. Last year it was in Ann Arbor, the year before in Portland, and next year it will be in Denver.

There are three experiences that stand out for me from this year's gathering which had the theme, "Individual Encounter and the Path to Community".

"Soft" is the adjective I'd use to describe Waldorf education, meaning "flexible, sensitive, gentle, well-rounded;" this occurs when Anthroposophy saturates the experience. These qualities are associated with human health, with the humility necessary for the encounter with the Christ and the "I." When Anthroposophy does not saturate the experience, then so-called Waldorf education can be "rotten, unreliable, sloppy." Anthroposophy makes the softness "living, quickening, making alive." Our current times prefer "hard:" hard facts, hard reality; from the material point of view hardness is good, but in matters of the spirit, we work through the malleable and undefined. How can we bring soft gestures into hard times?

Words from Douglas Gerwin

1. On the first evening we heard six different people speak briefly on encounters that led them to their life's work. It was extraordinary to hear individuals from all walks of life speak of deep, heart-felt experiences that connected their destiny with anthroposophy.
2. In both of the presentations we heard both Constanza Kaliks (leader of the Youth Section) and Torin Finser (General Secretary of the American Society) refer to our encounters with each other and the world as an "I and Thou" relationship. It has been many years since I read Martin Buber's book of the same name, but the concept of embracing the world and the other as part of myself rather than an "it" outside of myself resonates with me as I seek the path to community.
3. There were many younger (< 40) folks at the conference. The presence of young people gave a vibrancy to the meetings that was refreshing. I did hear some feedback after the conference that some of those younger in years felt lumped together, as if the youth speak with one voice. We were reminded that every human being is individual, regardless of age and other outer differences, and must be listened to and allowed to spread free of bias.

From Mary Louise Hershberger

My resistance to traveling to another conference and the challenge of being open & present to human encounters softened as I dropped out of the sky into the warm embrace of a New England Fall. Peak leaf color, rolling landscapes and the charm of small New Hampshire communities worked its magic!

The Society is in movement, releasing old patterns and dead forms, as we metamorphose into a living organization that is both pro-active and responsive to the challenges of contemporary life. The leadership recognizes that there are many members who are fearful of change and asks that we members and friends create a nurturing, supportive space for change, for becoming ... to have the courage to be vulnerable, to forgive, to be open and flexible, and to be open to the possibility of failure as we continue to find our way together.

Can we find the right partners and questions, be learners vs. teachers, embrace vs. resist, ask vs. tell, celebrate vs. criticize and like Rudolf Steiner, be risk takers?

Torin Finser, the General Secretary, said that according to some who read what is written in the stars, we are now beginning a five-year window (2013-2018) of opportunity that carries the possibility for a second founding of the Anthroposophical Society. Robert Karp added that the re-founding is there in spirit. We can make it real! We need to be open to change.

Torin, in seeking pathways for meeting change and challenges, referenced Martin Buber and suggested that the Anthroposophical Society shift from an “I-It” (object) to “I-Thou” (relationship) orientation.

Human life has recently entered a stage that repeatedly allows the antisocial element to emerge from social arrangements and establishments, and this antisocial element will always have to be tackled anew ... Just as there is no nourishment that satiates permanently, there is no universal remedy that can ensure lasting order in social conditions. Nonetheless, human beings can establish communities in which the living interactions of individuals can repeatedly steer their existence in a social direction.

Rudolf Steiner ~ as quoted in the conference flyer

- ~ Rather than being bound to a specific place, the **Society is wherever there is spirited conversation.**
- ~ Dues becomes **ongoing financial participation**
- ~ Headquarters vs. **sponsoring activities in various areas**
- ~ personality-driven leadership becomes **collaborative leadership teams**
- ~ focus on books becomes **research**
- ~ reactive vs. pro-active re: **sponsoring initiatives**

Some of the challenges Torin noted are:

- ~ egotism, self-centeredness, me first, rather than approaching spiritual truths out of our higher nature
- ~ the need for levity
- ~ the need for self-development

A healing and connecting moment for me was to hear it acknowledged out loud, by the leadership, at this national meeting, that there are members and friends who are struggling, wounded and burned-out. We need to talk openly about this and the Society needs to find a way to offer a support system.

Seth Jordan of the Youth Section said he and other youth who have been out in the world have the experience that, “It’s dark out there!” and suggested that a school be created to train us to confront the darkness in the world. The youth are looking for adult mentors in the movement and Society.

The weekend was filled with much more...Eurythmy performances, scenes from the Mystery Dramas, a talk by the leader of the Youth Section, a lively panel conversation led by Robert Karp with individuals who spoke about the encounters that led them to their life’s work, workshops, clowns, dancing and many meaningful encounters with our brothers and sisters. I’ll share one of mine.

On Sunday I connected with a gentleman I'd met briefly, years ago. Stuart Weeks is a native son of New England who is dedicated to awakening us to deep significance of the Transcendentalists, whom he believes laid the groundwork for an American Anthroposophy. He reminded us that we were actually meeting on Columbus Day, which is related to Columbia, the Spirit of America. I said "yes!" when he offered to travel 90 minutes to Concord, MA, to give me a tour of the homes (and gravesites) of Thoreau, Alcott, Emerson and Hawthorne, the town square, the Old North Bridge where the "shot heard 'round the world" was fired, and finally, at sunset, Walden Pond. I couldn't have had a more enlivening introduction to this chapter in our history!

In closing, I remember that Torin wrote, in preparation for this conference, that the Society has done well in communicating the truths of Anthroposophy and now we need to attend to the life ...the social question! I couldn't agree more. Can we be the change that we want to see in the Society...in the world?

ONWARD!

From Marianne Fieber

On Sunday, prior to the AGM proper, Torin Finser offered a few thoughts out of the weekend and posed some questions to consider. Regarding questions themselves, he quoted a writer who characterized real questions as those formed in fire and heat for the angels to hear. The angels must respond to real questions such as those formed through fire and heat. Are these the kind of questions we ask? How can we strengthen our questions so that the angels are interested and once asked, are we prepared to receive their response even if it is different than the one we hope for?

One question posed had to do with our Branches of the Anthroposophical Society. Why does it seem "initiatives" receive more attention than our general Anthroposophical work? Torin suggested that it is because initiatives have a project – a focus to their work. Waldorf Schools have the education of the child, Camphills have the care for individuals with special needs, biodynamic farmers tend the soil and their farm communities. Can we pose the question: What are the projects we might take up in our Branch work that go beyond the conversation stage?

Another question challenges how we apply anthroposophy in our lives by supporting a fellow human being in their struggles. When someone is calling for help either through word or deed, how do we respond? This is often where our anthroposophy is tested – to remain truly human and present to the other.

The event was rich and alive – I am grateful to have gone and to be living at this time.

*Of love and hate
Do not wait
For in these is sealed our fate*

*She spoke to me an inner voice,
telling me of cosmic choice.
Teaching of will and desire.
Entwined like flames of fire.
Of being drawn down into the dark mire,
or actively striving to rise higher and higher.*

*For if I judge the world around
and make it dance to my own sound.
For if I crown myself the king
and sit above most everything.
For if down I look on all I see.
Alone, I have destined myself to be.
Reverently upward I must look,
to find the divinity within me that I forsook.*

With love, David Howerton,
member of the Anthroposophical Circle of St. Louis

Walk a Mile in my Shoes - Anthroposophical Prison Outreach - Walk-A-Thon

APO is launching their first Walk-A-Thon on the weekend of **November 1-3, 2013**. Because members and friends are spread around the world, the APO has organized a “**walk where you are**” walk-a-thon instead of a specific route with a beginning and end point.

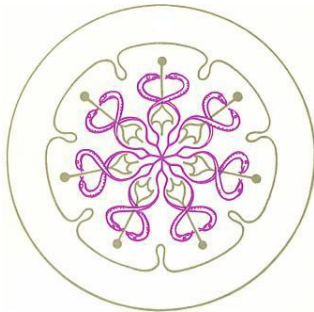
If you would like to donate – it is never too late, contact Kathy Serafin at prisonoutreach@anthroposophy.org

Did any of our Central Region members walk? Tell us about it – where did you walk? What did you do?



What's going on in our Region?

Principles and Practice of Anthroposophic Medicine



Saturday November 9, 2013 - A Saturday workshop

The Greater Detroit Branch & The Great Lakes Branch of the Anthroposophical Society of America & True Botanica

Location: The Oakland Steiner School,
3976 S. Livernois, Rochester Hills, Mi. 48307

Conferences Fees:

Saturday Workshop \$40

Saturday Night Talk \$15

Workshop & Lecture \$45

Sat. workshop includes vegetarian, gluten free lunch.

For more information on the conference:

Victoria Chehade 248-396-6596

For information on the topic: www.truebotanica.com

Cosmic Cycles, Earthly Rhythms ~ Our Speaking to the Stars

November 15-16, 2013

a stellar weekend event in preparation for the Holy Nights in Viroqua, WI –

with **Mary Stewart Adams** and Eurythmy with **Lynn Stull**

sponsored by The Turning Place – Viroqua's Anthroposophical Group

Friday evening lecture ~ **What Man Speaks to the Stars?** 7:00 pm

Saturday Holy Night Journal-making workshop ~ 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Saturday evening **The Art of Social Astronomy Festival** ~ 7:00– 8:30 pm

Weekend fee ~ \$60-- Friday and Saturday evenings only ~ \$20

Workshop space will be limited – For a complete brochure, contact Marianne Fieber – marianne.fieber@yahoo.com



Rudolf Steiner's Lectures on Karmic Relationships

A systematic overview of Steiner's 82 lectures on reincarnation and karma of 1924

November 23-24, 2013 and January 18-19, 2014

Two Seminars with Frederick Amrine and Ted Roszell

Rudolf Steiner Branch, 4249 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago

Admission restricted to members of the Anthroposophical Society and their invited guests

November 23rd: Contexts and Principles

- Towards a Goethean Phenomenology of Reincarnation and Karma
- Rudolf Steiner and Thomas Aquinas
- Karmic Research in Light of the Christmas Conference
- Karma and the Principle of Spiritual Economy
- Francis Bacon and J. A. Comenius
- Friedrich Nietzsche
- Historiography in Light of Reincarnation and Karma
- Wilhelm Rath

November 24th: Methods and Results of Karmic Research

- Steiner's Karma Exercises
- Elijah and John the Baptist
- Rudolf Steiner's Final Address; Novalis and Raphael
- Rudolf Steiner's Final Address; Novalis and Raphael

January 18th: Methods and Results of Karmic Research

- Steiner's Early Essay on Haeckel and Reincarnation
- G. E. Lessing's Education of the Human Race
- Franz Schubert
- Ovid
- Spiritual Schools
- Reincarnation and Karma in Steiner's Mystery Dramas
- The School of Chartres
- Contemporary Research on Reincarnation and Karma

January 19th: The Karma of the Anthroposophical Movement

- Platonists and Aristotelians, Shepherds and Kings (FA and TR)
- Concluding Group Discussion on the Future Karma of the Anthroposophical Movement
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Background materials will be provided to those registering prior to the seminar, and further guides to study and research will be made available on the day of each session.

Price is \$40 Saturday, \$20 Sunday: \$ 60 total. Lunch and Sunday snack are included.

Please RSVP at rudolfsteinerbranch@yahoo.com for lodging - please contact hazel@shedrums.com

Welcome our new Central Region Members:

Fleur	Scheepens	Chicago	IL
David	Howerton	Maplewood	MO
Cheryl	Lawler	Saint Louis	MO
Michaela	Esselman	Milaca	MN
Jill	Welch	Elk River	MN
MaryAnn	Skillman	Fountain Run	KY
Tracy	Pierce	Hampshire	IL
Robert	Lanier	Louisville	KY
Chris	DeRusse	Fort Worth	TX
Calisa	Tucker	Dexter	MI
Mark	Notzon	Decatur	MI
Susan	Das	Austin	TX
John	Price	Dexter	MI
Warren	Hunt	Lambertville	MI
Anne	Macias	Menasha	WI
H. Holmes	Hendricks	Galveston	TX
Sandra	Greenstone	Ann Arbor	MI



If you have any suggestions or contributions for upcoming issues, please send them to Marianne Fieber at 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: 3rd Saturday of the month
- * Electronic submissions only to marianne.fieber@yahoo.com
- * Poetry or thoughts coming out of your work with anthroposophical ideas
- * Activities taking place within the Central Region
- * Reports and photos from anthroposophical events offered by Groups, Branches or Initiatives
- * 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