
Eastern Region Report

March 31, 2020



Dear Members in the Eastern Region,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to give a brief report on the most recent in-person meeting of the General Council, held from February 6-9 at the Los Angeles Branch Headquarters in Pasadena, California. It all seems another world away at this point. When I traveled there back in February, the first cases of coronavirus were popping up at airports, including LAX. Looking back, I remember that already I was looking at people coughing with a different, curious eye. I also took note of several people wearing surgical masks in the airport. The first shoots of an altered way of life were beginning to show. Since then I've had conversations with many members, all of whom acknowledge an

inner reservoir of calm that we can attribute to the practical exercises we have incorporated into our lives as students of anthroposophy. I am grateful for this and for the sense of invisible connection that we share with each other.

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Turning now to the General Council Meeting, here is a brief summary of what was a very full agenda. Complete minutes from this meeting, as well as all General Council Meetings since January 2018, are available in the members section at anthroposophy.org (login required). And, of course, I am always available should you have questions regarding the work of your General Council.

Study and Appreciation

The General Council always includes anthroposophical study in its meeting. In Pasadena, concluded our study of *Karmic Relationships Volume 1* by Rudolf Steiner with a parallel focus on white privilege as it affects our work. The GC also took time to remember and honor deceased member Erika von Asten who recently gifted the society a generous bequest.

ASA Strategic Priorities 2019 – 2023

The Leadership Team (LT) presented their review and update of the Anthroposophical Society in America (ASA) strategic priorities for the next five years. This comes out of the ongoing work of the General Council around mission, vision and high level goals for the organization.

The key pillars of the five-year plan are:

1. Strengthen the movement
2. Membership growth
3. Next stage communications
4. Generate and attract abundant resources to allow ASA to achieve its mission
5. Connect, serve, strengthen groups, branches, regions, and the School for Spiritual Science

More details, as well as opportunities for questions and comments will be coming soon.

ASA 2020 Budget

The GC reviewed the financial history of the ASA as it pertains to the budget process. In the past, the intention was to budget prudently so as not to run out of money. As bequests have started coming in this has shifted to an intention toward the prudent creation of unbalanced budgets to spend the excess in ways that support the strategic priorities put forth by the LT. A bequest policy was adopted which assures in essence that each new budget may add only 12% from bequest reserves from the end of the previous year. Such a policy will take away the fear of spending down reserves leading to a financial crisis again. The GC approved a 2020 operating budget that is in keeping with the bequest policy and which reflects ASA strategic priorities.

Leadership Team Reports

Director of Programs Presentation – Laura Scappaticci

Laura spoke of the path toward 2023 and beyond, with leading ideals of visibility, accessibility, community, service, and a flourishing organization. A regional theme for the next three annual conferences was formalized. In 2020, the annual national conference will be hosted by Western region, and the Regional Councils will be invited to attend; in 2021, the annual national conference will be hosted by the Central Region, and the circle of Class Holders will be invited to attend; in 2022 the annual national conference will be hosted by Eastern Region with Sections and CAO invited to attend.

Director of Development Presentation – Deb Abrahams-Dematte

Deb spoke of the large view of the development mission which includes gathering of resources and the forging of genuine relationships throughout the movement, and the ASA's continued work toward developing an environment of healthy unrestricted giving through vehicles such as the Michael Support Circle and the Legacy Circle. Deb led a discussion of ways in which the GC can support the development effort through awareness raising, gratitude expression and stewardship.

Director of Operations Presentation – Katherine Thivierge

Katherine presented the council website that she has created and is keeping up to date and gave an overview of the activity ongoing in the Ann Arbor office. Katherine also updated the Council on the status of the annual financial audit and on the maintenance needs of the Steiner House headquarters in Ann Arbor.

Director of Communication Presentation – John Beck

John presented a vision for how the ASA can position itself in the ongoing cultural debate of our time, making the point that, if we meet the world with appropriate enthusiasm and impact, the time is ripe for the message that anthroposophy has to offer. John gave an overview of the membership communication process, including the process used to communicate with lapsed members.

Regional Reports

Dave Mansur (Eastern Region), Marianne Fieber (Central Region) and Micky Leach (Western Region) presented updates.

Collaboration Across the Movement – John Bloom

ASA general Secretary, John Bloom offered his insights regarding collaboration across the movement. There has been some progress in connecting together the School for Spiritual Science, the broader Society and the initiatives. This can be characterized as power with each other instead of over each other. This has been influential for the general world society. Recently the initiative character of the Council of Anthroposophical Organizations (CAO) has been re-awakened with growing membership. Significant work is being done to clarify the imagination of the School, the General Section and the other Sections. This includes the lines of communication between ASA and members of School for Spiritual Science. Members of the School for Spiritual Science might be asked to support and step into work with the Society.

Update on Anthroposophical Prison Outreach Program

The APO advisory group has been working very hard to increase and innovate fundraising, and the development director has supported these efforts. APO ended with a positive net income, largely due to a grant from the Rudolf Steiner Charitable Trust this year. Income has gone up each year since the large donor stepped back five years ago. The Society covers salary, rent, utilities and other costs associated with running this important program.

Evening Meeting with the LA Community

As is our custom, the GC held an evening meeting with the local membership. Around 30 people attended an evening event that included a pot-luck dinner, live classical music, a group biographical exercise, and an open conversation.

New Council Member Exploration

In anticipation of the end of several GC members' terms, a strategy for approaching nominations was adopted that involves consultation with existing groups, streams and affiliations.


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In these times of social distancing, it is increasingly important to nurture spiritual connections. I am grateful to the society membership for the abundant opportunities for connection that have been presented in various conference calls, zoom meetings, email messages and silent meditation. There is a growing sense that the current pandemic is a turning point event – that we will view our history as before and after the pandemic. In

these times it is good to call to mind the words Rudolf Steiner gave Ita Wegman: *The human being is a bridge, between the past and future existence.*

May your days be filled with courage and health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dave Mansur". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the middle of the name.

Dave Mansur
Eastern Region Representative to the General Council
Anthroposophical Society in America