

THE MESSENGER

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April 2001

A New Chapter Begins for Convention's Seminary

Kim Hinrichs

There we all were, milling about in a meeting room in the Napa Hills Retreat Center—faculty, staff and trustees of Pacific School of Religion, and the trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion. I was preparing to help lead the worship service when up came a call for the two chairs of the boards to sign the affiliation agreement which had been unanimously voted on by both parties earlier in the day. The group took their seats in a jovial spirit of anticipation as PSR president Bill McKinney, SSR board chair Jane

Siebert and PSR board chair Hubert Locke gave brief remarks about the schools' new partnership. And then, before my very eyes, Jane and Hubert took turns signing the document that represents a historic new direction for our seminary. Even though I had been a student in Bill McKinney's class when the affiliation idea was first floated, and even though I had carefully followed every part of the SSR board's decision process that had led us to that evening, I could not believe my eyes. Two of the most important institutions in my life—PSR, from which I recently received my Master of Divinity, and the Swedenborgian Church—are coming together in a new affiliation that holds

great promise for the future.

I believe that the newly incarnated Swedenborgian House of Studies will be a success for several reasons. First of all, we will be able to better train future leaders of the Swedenborgian Church, using all of the resources of the largest interdenominational seminary in North America, while still concentrating on providing a uniquely Swedenborgian education. In addition, the relationship with PSR promises to be mutually beneficial. The environment at PSR is interested and accepting. Most of the leaders and students come from the open and searching wings of the mainline denominations. Our spirituality is welcomed there, and both we and they are hoping that our

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HISTORIC AGREEMENT FOR SWEDENBORGIANS IN NORTH AMERICA

Robert Leas

During the evening of February 16, 2001, among the verdant, rolling hills of the Napa Valley near Berkeley, California, the Board of Trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion and the Pacific School of Religion signed an Agreement of Understanding by which SSR will be affiliated with the PSR and become a partner in the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. By unanimous vote of the Swedenborg School of Religion Board earlier in the afternoon, the affiliation was approved, linking SSR to one of the foremost centers of theological study in North America. The Agreement of Understanding was warmly welcomed by the board and faculty of the Pacific School of Religion.

Under the agreement our theological school will be known as the Swedenborgian House of Studies and will be located on the campus of the Pacific School of Religion, adjacent to the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. Our SHS library is being moved to that campus and students will not only have access to Swedenborgian resources, but also to the vast library holdings of the Graduate Theological Union.

Jane Siebert, Chair of the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees says: "The partnership provides a top-notch seminary education for the potential leaders of our church. The SHS will concentrate on providing courses unique to our denomination. In addition we will be reaching out with stimulating Swedenborgian courses to the entire Pacific School of Religion student body."

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Jane Siebert signs the Agreement of Understanding and Affiliation with PSR along with the Rev. Dr. William McKinney, president of the Pacific School of Religion. (The Rev. Hubert Locke, center.)

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❖ Wayfarers Visitors Center Pictorial

Who Was Listening?

Today, March 7, I called John Billings, pastor of our Kemper Road Center church in Cincinnati, to ask him how their just-completed weekend workshop on Community Building went. It was hugely successful, he reported, with 26 people attending from the area and several surrounding states, including nine persons from their Kemper Road congregation, and one minister and one lay person from the General Church in the Cincinnati area. John has promised to write in more detail later this month, so more will be forthcoming in the May issue. He spoke again—as he had five years before when his congregation was in trouble and they put together their first professionally facilitated community building workshop—of participants listening, accepting, coming to feel more deeply and compassionately about each other and about themselves, opening up to each other on a deep human basis, coming away with a whole new understanding of what's possible, what real community can mean. John hopes to arrange a workshop every year and get the word out to Convention's churches sooner so that people who would like to participate have more lead time to prepare and adjust their schedules.

I listened to John's description of community building with a sense of irony and sorrow. *A whole new understanding of what community is, and what's possible.* I was speaking with John only two days after the latest tragic school shooting, on March 5th, this one in Santee, at Santana High School, an hour's drive from where I live.

The 15-year-old charged with killing two of his fellow students and wounding 13 others was described variously as funny, sarcastic, outgoing, outspoken... and also as quiet, often bullied and tormented, the butt of mean jokes. An outsider who was trying to fit in, who began to speak of getting even. He had moved to California with his father last summer from a small town in Maryland, population 8,000, where he had played sports, made the honor roll, and impressed friends with his magnetism and charm—and his ability to be a good friend. But he didn't seem to adjust

after the move to California, and was described as someone kind of weird, had turned to alcohol and drugs and become a regular pot smoker. And he had mentioned to some friends three times last week that he was planning a mass shooting. They kept silent and didn't report his remarks, assuming he was joking. There was an unofficial report that he was seen in the school counselor's office for anger counseling on the morning before the shooting. The killing was done with a gun from his father's locked gun cabinet. Some of his friends took him seriously enough to covertly frisk him that morning as he entered school, but the gun was in his backpack.

Religion and Ethics Editor Sandi Dolbee of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* called the recent history of shootings, "an American journey of shame: Jonesboro, West Paducah, Springfield, Littleton, Santee. Bang, Bang, Bang. Again and again and again. Each time we are shocked. But should we be surprised?" Ms. Dolbee quotes Sarah Ingersoll, executive director of the National Campaign Against Youth Violence in Washington, D.C.: "Until we have programs and systems in place in our communities and schools that can better anticipate warning signs, that can prevent young people from being bullied and from getting access to guns, we're going to have these kinds of instances."

Dolbee says experts agree on four lessons, beginning with the (oft-repeated fact that) there are too many guns too readily available to kids. Second lesson, silence can be deadly. But the reluctance to tell authorities is understandable. In addition to not wanting to snitch on a peer, "There's a lot of gut-level resistance to thinking that someone you know may turn out to do something like his," says Lawrence Hinman, director of the Values Institute at U. of San Diego. "You really don't want to think your world is like that."

But our world is like that, says Dolbee. Therein lies lesson 3: Try to be a little kinder. On one level, the school's dead and wounded are not the only victims. So is the perpetrator. Something triggered this assault, pushing a boy to reload his handgun three times and keep shooting. Ron Lanoue, executive director of the local office of the National Con-

ference for Community and Justice, thinks we need to do a better job of listening to kids. "If the kid was picked on and persecuted, there should have been others, particularly adults, who saw that and could intervene in a positive way." Finally, Dolbee says, there is the lesson about the preciousness of life. Our lives can vanish in the time it takes to squeeze a trigger. "I would hope that it would help us to cherish the life we have and the people around us," says Hinman. And to realize, perhaps, Dolbee concludes, that some things are worth the effort to move us off this journey of shame toward a better destination.

We need to do a better job of listening to kids. We've heard that before, haven't we? Prevention is preferable to intervention. But we can't do a better job of listening to kids until we learn to listen to each other, to value each other, better. What if states and communities put some of the vast sums of money spent building more prisons into providing community-building workshops in schools? One for school personnel and one for kids? As a matter of course? Once every six months? To help kids build the kind of trust, esteem and

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Typesetting & Layout
Town & Country
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Patte LeVan, Editor

Editorial Address:

The Messenger
P.O. Box 985
Julian, CA 92036

TEL: (760) 765-2915
FAX: (760) 765-0218
E-MAIL: messenger@jinet.com

Business & Subscription Address:

Central Office
11 Highland Ave.
Newtonville, MA 02460

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A New Chapter Begins for Convention's Seminary

(Continued from cover)

tradition will enrich the spiritual resources for the whole community.

A particular strength of the educational environment at PSR is the practical approach to training clergy for today's world. The style of teaching is moving more into creative ways to engage the student with practical work as part of the learning experience. And the field education component is renowned. Our students will be able to explore their ministry training in a much wider array of settings than has been true in the past, while all of our Swedenborgian settings will remain potential field education sites.

Although some in our church may cringe at the prospect of partnership with the mainline Christian denominations, I believe that this kind of dialog will prove immensely fruitful for us. After all, it is in conversations like these that we will be able to more clearly ascertain who we are as a denomination, and who we are not. When we engage ourselves in the issues the mainline world is discussing, we give ourselves the opportunity to learn from them while at the same time identifying the gifts we may have to bring to the table. Scholarship is another area that promises to be exciting. When our students are able to bring Swedenborgian theology into dialog with mainline theological and pastoral concerns, and when PSR students start to ask questions about how Swedenborg can

help their theology, I believe sparks will fly! Simple exposure will be another benefit of the affiliation to our denomination. When you imagine the Swedenborgian House of Studies becoming familiar to the Graduate Theological Union's aggregate student body of approximately 1,200 students and 230 faculty members, it's easy to guess that "the Sweden-what??" will not be quite as common a question in dining hall chit-chat as it was in the past. The implications of hundreds of GTU-trained future church leaders going out into the world with a knowledge of Swedenborg is inspiring.

The Swedenborgian House of Studies program will begin this fall. From now on, our ordination-track students will be earning an accredited Master of Divinity degree from PSR, yet a major portion of their coursework will be taken from the faculty at SHS. SHS will exist on campus as a house with a student lounge and offices, as well as its own large library.

The new home for our library should prove to be one of the most productive features of the affiliation. While remaining a separate specialty collection on the PSR campus, we expect to electronically integrate our catalog with that of the GTU library. This will make our Swedenborgian resources accessible worldwide through an inter-library database of 50 million titles. The GTU library itself, which will be directly across the street, is the fourth largest theological library in North America.

In addition to the Master of Divinity degree, SHS and PSR will offer a Certificate of Theological Studies.

Separately from PSR, SHS also plans to continue to offer distance education and other programs for those unable to join us on campus in Berkeley. Applications are still being accepted for the fall term; I invite anyone interested in applying to contact me at khinrich@pacbell.net.



Jane Siebert, chair of the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees, shakes hands with the Rev. Hubert Locke, pastor in Seattle, Washington, and chair of the Board of the Pacific School of Religion. The signing took place February 16, 2001.

I feel that our school's trustees deserve our gratitude for their courage and hard work for creating a new home for our tradition—a home that not only offers tremendous support and benefits to our future students, but which also provides an opportunity for our tradition to share our spiritual heritage with a much larger audience. In addition, I would like to extend my appreciation to the faculty and staff of SSR currently in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. Their hard work and devotion is helping to make this transition possible. The trustees and the school need our prayers and support during this critical transition period.

May we trust that Providence is leading us exactly where we need to go, laying the groundwork for our denomination to grow with vigor and with hope for many generations to come.

Kim Hinrichs currently serves as Transition Coordinator for SSR/SHS. She lives in El Cerrito, California, and is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.



Members of the Board of Trustees stroll before the main classroom building at the Pacific School of Religion: (front, L-R counterclockwise) Rachel Rivers, George Sinclair, Jonathan Mitchell, Alan Thomsen, Robert McCluskey, (seated in back) Ron Brugler and Sue Burns.



SSR Library Closed to Researchers During Move to PSR

Due to the tremendous amount of work involved in moving the Swedenborg School of Religion Library and Archives to its new location at the Swedenborg House of Studies (SHS) at Pacific School of Religion (PSR), it has been closed to researchers at this time. Regular hours will be announced at the beginning of the next academic year in September 2001. In the meantime, questions may be referred to Alan Thomsen, chair of the Library and Archives Committee of the Board of Trustees. (thomsen@earthlink.net).

John Hawkins

Librarian/Archivist, SSR 

HISTORIC AGREEMENT FOR SWEDENBORGIANS IN NORTH AMERICA


(Continued from cover)

The move to California will take place in June. Courses will begin in September. There are currently five students seeking admission: two will be enrolled in the Master of Divinity program, two in the Certificate of Theological Studies, and one as a Special Student. Kim Hinrichs, a graduate of PSR and a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, is currently the Transition Coordinator working with the faculty and staff in Newton Centre to provide a smooth transition.

At the evening worship on the 16th of February, a gathering of friends from PSR and SHS was led in a worship of celebration by the Rev. Rachel Rivers, co-pastor of the San Francisco church,

Kim Hinrichs, and Kirsten Klepfer, a fourth year M. Div. student at the Pacific School of Religion. A spirit of cooperation and anticipation of our future affiliation was expressed by all participants.

Swedenborg wrote: "All knowledge and all life are emanations of the spiritual sun proceeding from God's wisdom and divine love." We celebrate this historic affiliation, calling upon the Lord's wisdom and love to guide us as we move ahead to fulfill the needs for leadership in the Swedenborgian Church.

Robert Leas, Clerk of the SHS Board of Directors, is an ordained Presbyterian minister currently working as a Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor at Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he lives with his wife Marjory (Hill), a lifetime Swedenborgian from Michigan. 

TEMENOS SPRING 2001 CALENDAR

M A R C H

- 3 Therapeutic Touch Training, Level 1, Part 2
- 4 Exploring the Mystical Traditions of Religion
- 6 Life and Death Issues: A Discussion Group
- 10 Reiki: Level II Training begins
- 11 Interfaith Worship Service
- 16 Vicarious Traumatization
- 18 Synchronicity: Meaningful Coincidence
- 24 Women, Money, and Spirituality
- 27 Life and Death Issues: A Discussion Group
- 28 Reiki Practitioner Support
- 31 Top Ten Pain Relievers
- 31 Trails Day

A P R I L

- 1 Yoga and Meditation: The Torah of the Body
- 1 Exploring the Mystical Traditions of Religion
- 6-7 Expressive Arts Training for Professionals
- 8 Chamber Music Concert
- 11 Meditation
- 25 Reiki Practitioner Support
- 27-29 Proprioceptive Writing®
- 29 Healing Grievs of Birthing


M A Y

- 4 Satir's Spirituality in Therapy
- 4-5 My Family, Myself
- 9 Meditation
- 23 Reiki Practitioner Support

Regular Temenos offerings include weekly yoga classes with Doreen Hardy, monthly meditation classes and monthly Reiki practitioner support with Nancy Matilda. The Rev. Susannah Currie, pastor of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos and director of the retreat center, is finishing up a four-class series on Life and Death Issues March 27.

April at Temenos features the popular proprioceptive writing workshop,

"Writing from Within," taught by Mary Bok, which you will hearing more about in May in connection with the COMSU writing scholarship.

For more information on Temenos programs or to make retreat reservations: Phone: (610) 696-8145 fax: (610) 696-7335 e-mail: website: www.temenosretreat.org 

Becoming Spring

Renee Billings-Machiniak

"To look at a thing, if you would know that thing, you must look at it long. To look at this green and say 'I have seen spring in these woods,' will not do—you must be the thing you see: you must be the dark stakes of stems and ferny plumes of leaves, you must enter in to the small silences between the leaves, you must take your time and touch the very peace they issue from." (John Moffitt, *The Earth Speaks*).

It takes time to know God. There are so many ways God comes to us, so many ways God speaks to our hearts and minds. We can know the Divine amidst the beauty and mystery of nature, music, the arts, science, our dream time. And now especially in the springtime, we become more acutely aware of God present as the Divine Human in the risen and glorified Lord. This resurrection brought new life and hope to our world in need and opened a new pathway for healing our wounds. And today this new Life beckons us—to come close and dwell for a time. As nature wakes out of the sleep of winter, new shoots are pushing up out of the ground, and returning birds are beginning to wake us in the morning—our hearts, too, become open to new

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Spiritual Direction and E-mailing God

Wilma Wake

I started e-mailing God last summer. It was a hot June day, and I found myself at the Trinitarian Monastery outside of Baltimore, realizing with some anxiety that I would be there for ten days as part of my training to become a spiritual director.

I sat down with my laptop and began an e-mail prayer. "Dear God: why am I here? I've given up part of my summer vacation, paid a lot of money to this Shalem Institute and just spent three hectic days getting ready to come. THIS HAD BETTER BE GOOD."

By the next day, I was certain that God was not up to my challenge. I wrote: "Dear God: HELP! I'm trapped in a monastery run by a religious order that does not believe in fresh fruits and vegetables. Could there be a theological reason for this? I realize that I've come to find you in fresh fruits and vegetables. Can I find you in iceberg lettuce and frozen peas? I worry that I can't. I'm scared here!"

By the time I left nine days later, I had explored many other ways to pray and was feeling closer to God than I had in a long time. The monks had responded admirably to our requests for fresh fruits and vegetables, and the program, in fact, had been really, really good. I didn't even mind the confirmation of my suspicion that God does not send e-mails; I was reassured that the Divine responds to any form of prayer in God's own special ways.

For years, I had resisted the concept of "spiritual direction" since it sounded authoritarian to me. I came to realize that a "spiritual director" is for helping us find our own direction with God. The Shalem Institute, where I am studying, often uses the term "spiritual guidance" rather than direction to make that point. This is what they say on their website:

Spiritual direction, sometimes referred to as spiritual guidance or spiritual friendship, is an ongoing relationship in which one person (the directee), desirous of being attentive to his or her spiritual life, meets with another person (the director) on a regular basis (approximately once a month), specifically for the purpose of becoming more attuned to God's Presence in order to respond more fully to that Presence in all of life.

The primary focus of the session is the directee's relationship with God as it is reflected and challenged by all aspects of that person's life. The directee assumes responsibility for his or her life with God. This means that the person coming for direction is trying to be serious about some form of intentional prayer and

reflection on the God-currents of one's every day life and prayer. During the meeting of about one hour, director and directee seek to enter a prayerful atmosphere where together they can be attentive to the Holy Spirit who is in fact the Real Director.

It should be noted that there are distinctions between spiritual direction and therapeutic relationships. In general it might be said that therapy and counseling deal primarily with problem areas of one's life and attempt to bring healthy resolution to issues. Spiritual direction is concerned with finding and responding to God {in the midst of pain or disorder as well as in the rest of life}. Problem/issue solving is not the primary focus of direction. [<http://www.shalem.org/sd.html>].

I chose to study spiritual direction through the Shalem Institute since I have long admired the spiritual writings of founder Tilden Edwards (an Episcopal priest) as well as the writings of one of the teachers, Gerald May (a psychiatrist). I learned more that weekend last June about how it all began.

Back in the early 1970s, Tilden Edwards began to feel that his Anglo-Catholic background, despite its rich spiritual tradition, was not completely fulfilling his spiritual needs. There was a gaping hole for him, so he started going to retreats with an Eastern focus. In the spring of 1973 he had a sabbatical and went on retreat with Buddhist lama Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche. He was overwhelmed by his experiences, and wanted to know if anything comparable existed in the Christian tradition. He went on from there to an Ignatian spiritual retreat (based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius) and began reading the Christian mystics. He found immediate parallels with the Eastern and Western contemplative traditions, but few guides to help him on his journey.

That fall, Edwards took his experiences to his work at the Metropolitan Ecumenical Training Center in D.C. and found that many others, both lay and clergy, were struggling to fill gaping holes in their own spiritual lives. He began a weekly prayer group to explore personal spirituality on a deeper level. The group grew rapidly, drawing many new seekers.

Roy Oswald (then on the METC staff but now with Alban Institute) introduced Edwards to a spiritually-oriented psychiatrist named Gerald May and the group grew even more rapidly with May's involvement. By 1975, they needed a name, so chose "Shalem," the Hebrew word for wholeness. The Lilly Endowment fund gave them a two-year grant to explore the state of spiritual development in the contemporary world, so they began talking to spiritual leaders all over the country.

Then another foundation funded an educational program for spiritual directors, and the first one began in September 1978. In the same year, Shalem decided to become an independent organization and split from METC (which later became the Interfaith Conference).

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I'm realizing how little we modern Western folks talk to each other about our lives with God, about our struggles to integrate the Divine into every aspect of earthly living. This movement in spiritual direction/guidance is helping people talk and listen to each other as a way of growing in relationship with God.

Spiritual Direction and E-mailing God

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Spiritual Direction is generally seen to have arisen in early Christianity, out of the Desert Fathers and the monasteries. The movement was deeply enriched by mystics such as Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Ignatius of Loyola. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions actively preserved spiritual direction, whereas Protestantism tended to downplay it. Because of the Protestant focus on the "priesthood of all believers" its spirituality centered on personal Bible reading, prayer, and connections with a faith community. Today, however, there is renewed interest from all Christian groups in a modern approach to spiritual direction.

Although direction as we know it grew out of the Christian tradition, many other faiths have their own forms of spiritual guidance, including Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Some directors today are encouraging us to explore what we can learn from each others' traditions to help us enrich our own.

I love my studies with Shalem Institute. I'm receiving spiritual direction as well as offering it in my community. I meet regularly with a peer supervision group of other directors. And I have a delightful pile of books and articles from the Institute to read. This summer, I'll go back for ten days to Maryland for my second and final residency before completing the program.

I'm realizing how little we modern Western folks talk to each other about our lives with God, about our struggles to integrate the Divine into every aspect of earthly living. This movement in spiritual direction/guidance is helping people talk and listen to each other as a way of growing in relationship with God.

As I explore this field, I grow in my appreciation of my own Swedenborgianism. I think we Swedenborgians are well-prepared to participate in this new resurgence of modern spirituality. Roy Oswald, trainer at the Alban Institute, has given a number of workshops for Swedenborgians, and I was particularly impressed by a statement he made to us at one of them several years ago. He said we Swedenborgians have some things about us that are unique, are our special gifts to the world. He felt that the more we proudly take this part of us into the world, the more we will be known and appreciated. Our gift, in his mind, is our understanding of spirituality and the spiritual journey grounded in daily life within community.

What makes us particularly suited to the new field of spiritual guidance? First, our own spiritual mentor, Emanuel Swedenborg, had a rich life with Spirit. He wrote out of his own experiences; not out of theory. Second, his writings focus on how to live in the world as people of faith. He gave us much material about uses and charity that help find a rooted spirituality in the physical world. His way of integrating love and wisdom, good and truth, teaches us how to integrate seeming opposites into a profound richness. Third, his writings give us a map of the spiritual journey. He called it regeneration, and his writing left us with many ways to apply this understanding to our lives. Swedenborg also gave us a powerful way to utilize one of our most important spiritual tools: The Word. In addition, Swedenborg helped us reinterpret our own

faith in a way that enhances our appreciation of all faiths.

These are some initial thoughts about how Swedenborgians might play a role in the blossoming world of spiritual guidance. I'm left with many questions, which I would love to explore with others:

- ❖ What might be unique about what our own tradition teaches on spiritual guidance?
- ❖ How can we best use these teachings in our own lives?
- ❖ How can we share them with others to enrich their lives within their own traditions?

OK, so God doesn't send e-mail to us. But the Divine is present in all those e-mails we send each other. Let's talk together through e-mails, letters, phone calls, articles and letters in *The Messenger*, and at Convention about these ideas. Let's share our thoughts with each other and then humbly offer our Swedenborgian insights to those who seek spiritual guidance for modern life!

The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is an associate professor at the Swedenborg School of Religion, and author of two recently published books available from the Swedenborg Foundation and J. Applesseed & Co.



(L-R) Jerry May, psychiatrist and one of the instructors, fellow student Martha-Marie Campbell, and Wilma Wake holding plastic artichoke at closing party. (She says plastic artichoke was used in a skit to represent layers of reality—or something).

CHURCH CALENDAR DATES

Apr. 5-8 EDSU @ Temenos	May 17-20 Wayfarers Chapel Board Meeting & Visitor Center Dedication
April 23-25 Mid-West Peer Supervision	
April 27-28 SSR Board Meeting, Newton, MA	June 23-July 1 Convention 2001, St. Thomas University, St. Paul, MN
May 5 Investment Committee Meeting, Newton, MA	October 25-28 General Council Meeting, Blairhaven, MA
May 16-17 COMSU @ Temenos	

We're Almost There!

Harvey Tafel

On Mother's Day, May 13, 1951, the Rev. Dr. Leonard Tafel, president of the Swedenborgian Church, led a procession of clergy into the newly constructed Wayfarers Chapel and dedicated the glass and redwood sanctuary to the glory of God and as a national memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg.

Fifty years later members of the Swedenborgian community and Chapel friends will gather on May 20, 2001 as the Rev. Ron Brugler, our current president, follows in those earlier footsteps to lead a special worship service rededicating the Chapel to serving spiritual wayfarers on life's path and to sharing the theological impact of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Since its opening, millions of visitors have come to enjoy the beauty of the gardens and grounds, to view the awe-inspiring panorama of the Pacific Ocean, and to meditate in the glass church, being renewed in mind and spirit. Best known for wedding celebrations, the Chapel offers a wide variety of special worship services, weekly Sunday services, baptisms and memorial services, as well as numerous community events and concerts. The Chapel complex of the glass and redwood sanctuary, tower, and visitors center was designed by Lloyd Wright and constructed over a period of years as funds became available. The "Hallelujah Tower," as Mr. Wright called it because it represented upraised arms with the cross held high, was built in 1954. The Colonnade and Visitors Center were completed in 1958. Because of extensive damage by the Abalone Cove landslide, the Visitors Center building had to be closed in the early 1980s and finally removed in 1995.

The loss of the Visitors Center severely impacted the outreach program because there now was no building where wayfarers could go to obtain information about the Chapel. To fill this void, a new Visitors Center,

designed by Eric Lloyd Wright, son of Lloyd Wright, and supervised by local architect Dean Andrews, is nearing completion. Strategically placed at the top of the driveway, the structure continues the tradition of Wrightian architecture, with stone, glass, and blue-tiled roof reflecting the Chapel architecture. The main feature of the 2,064 square foot building is a large exhibition room. The Center will also provide much-needed public restrooms.

Above all, the primary purpose of the new Visitors Center is to tell the story of the Wayfarers Chapel to the hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. To convey that story in the clearest possible way, *THINK Jacobson and Roth*, an outstanding museum and interpretive center display design firm, was hired to create and fabricate the displays for the exhibit room. Working closely with the Chapel's five-member committee, *THINK Jacobson and Roth* is in the final stages of fabricating the displays and will install them just before the new Center is opened. Three large four-sided diamond shaped pylons will be placed in the center of the room so visitors may walk around and view the displays on each side. There will also be three large wall displays along one wall. These displays will acquaint visitors with Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedenborgian Church, the magnificent architecture of Lloyd Wright, why there is a Wayfarers Chapel and how it came into being, the services the Chapel offers, including community and special events, and an introductory guide to the gardens and Chapel.

Visitors will also be able to view videos such as the Swedenborg Foundation's new *Splendors of the Spirit: Swedenborg's Quest for Insight*. An interactive computer display will allow people to view the Chapel's and various Swedenborgian churches' websites and explore pictures with writeups of Convention churches.

The Chapel will employ Visitors Center attendants who will welcome

visitors and respond to their questions and concerns. The Visitors Center will also contain a gift shop that will offer selected Swedenborgian books and pamphlets for sale as well as Chapel postcards, brochures, and remembrances.

The total cost of the building, including displays, is almost \$750,000. Funds come from members of the Swedenborgian Church, Chapel friends, and several organizations. In addition to providing Visitors Center staff salaries the Chapel has incurred over \$250,000 in loans to finance this outreach project. A special thank you goes to church members across the country and many wayfarers who have helped in the fundraising program. Special appreciation is extended to our sister Swedenborgian Church in Los Angeles, Convention, and the Pacific Coast Association for their generous financial support and enthusiasm. Donors will be recognized by inclusion in a unique glass Tree of Life donor wall featured at one end of the Visitors Center.

For information on how you can help, please contact the Chapel.

Rev. Harvey Tafel
5755 Palos Verdes Drive
South Rancho Palos Verdes
California 90275
310-377-1650



Building the Vision, New Visitors Center

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Finishing Up #12 - Drywall: The exhibit room, entrance lobby, staff office, reservations room, hallway, and restrooms all had drywall installed. (See progress pictorial, p 56.

As you read this article the

building will have been completed, displays installed and opened to the public. We would like to share with you in a future article the completion of the Visitors Center and our 50th Anniversary celebration.



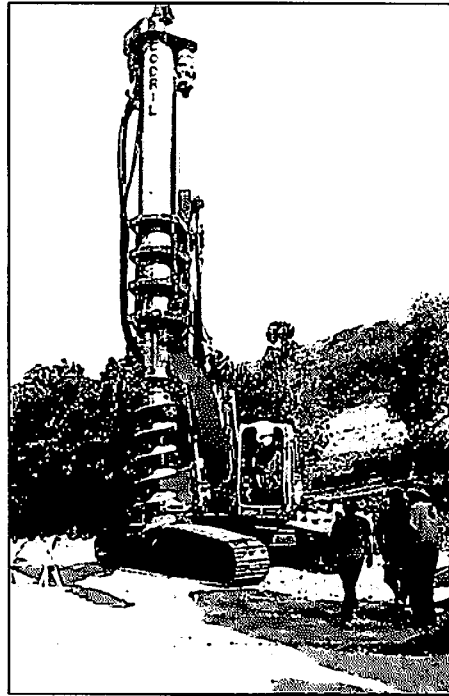
Building the Vision

Harvey Tafel

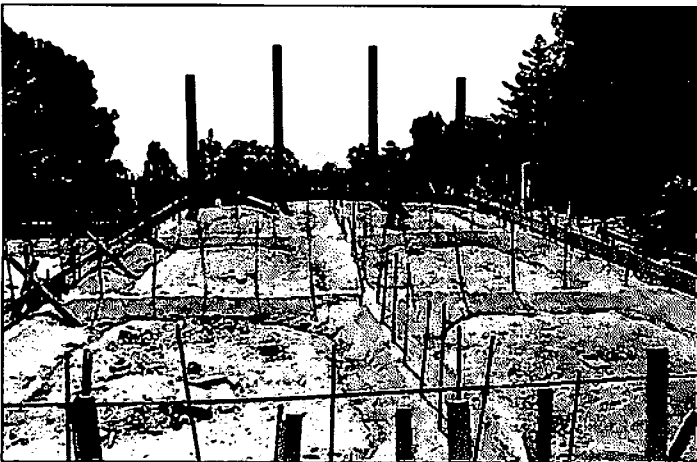
The new Visitors Center is nearing completion and will be dedicated as part of the Chapel's 50th Anniversary celebration on May 20th. We wanted to share with members of our church community our progress on the building.



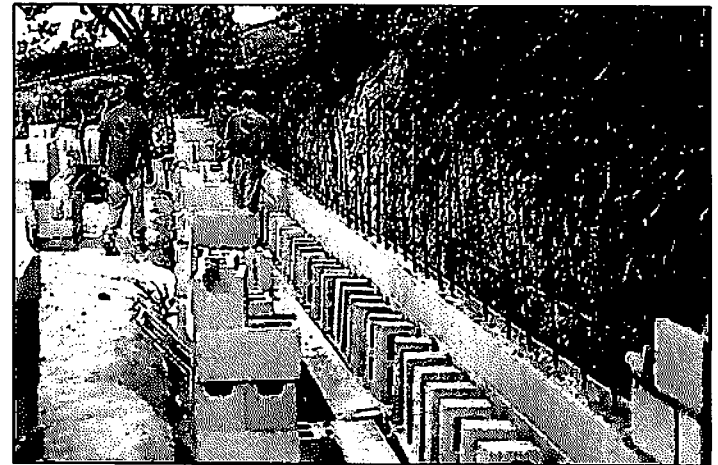
#1 - Site preparation: Located strategically at the head of the entrance driveway, the site was dedicated by Rev. Ron Brugler on June 26, 1999, as part of Convention's day at the Chapel. The next year was spent obtaining building permits and selecting a contractor. On July 10, 2000, site preparation began, and a vinyl-covered fence surrounding the site was erected.



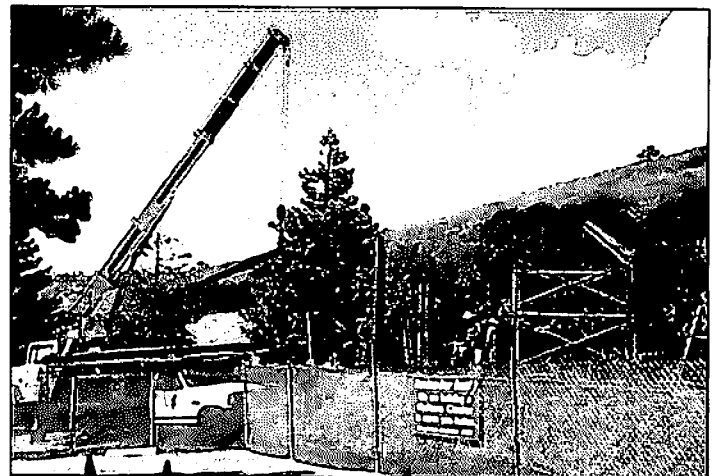
#2 - Drilling caisson holes: 18 caisson holes were drilled, some nearly 40 feet deep. The holes were filled with steel reinforced concrete.



#3 - Grade beams: (Above) Steel-reinforced concrete grade beams connected the 18 caissons. Then a concrete slab was poured on top. This method of construction allows for the strongest possible structure. Even if the soil were washed out from underneath the building it would still remain in place.

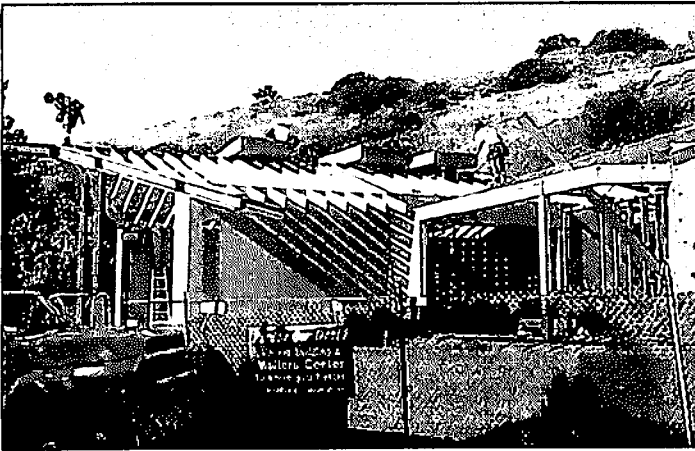


#4 - Retaining wall: A massive concrete block retaining wall with steel reinforcement was constructed between the building and hillside. The patio formed by the wall will be landscaped and become a garden.



#5 - Installing steel superstructure: (Right) A huge crane lifted steel I-beams into place and held them in position while they were welded together. The beams were then sheathed in wood except for the beams on either end of the exhibition room. These will form part of the window structure and will be painted gold to match the Chapel steelwork.

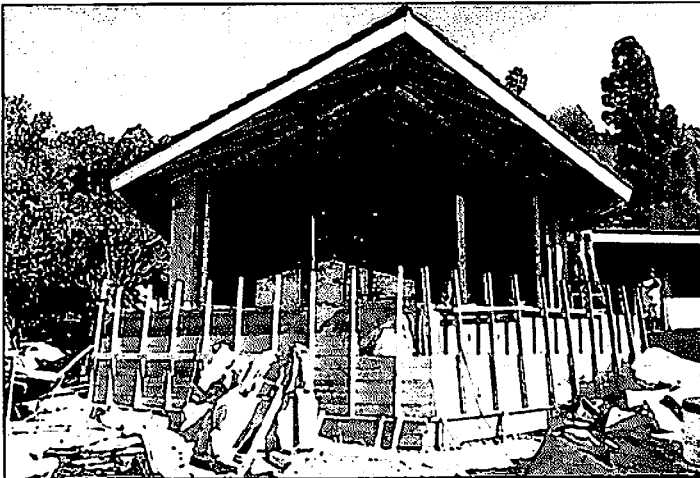
(Continued on page 57)



#6 - Up goes the framework: The wood framework for the walls and roof went up quickly, giving shape to the building.



#7 - Tile roof: Cement tiles were loaded on the roof to "set" the framework for several days. After installation they were painted blue to match the Chapel roof tile.



#8 - Stone walls: The Visitors Center reflects the Wrightian design of the Chapel. The walls were covered with Palos Verdes stone by employing a method similar to the one used in the Chapel. Wood forms were assembled, stone wired onto the inside of the forms, and cement poured. When the cement dried, the wires were cut and the forms were removed, exposing the new stone wall.



#9 - Wiring the rock: This close-up shows how the stone is wired to the form.



#11 - Lobby stone wall: The 12-foot high wall in the entrance lobby that will greet visitors is faced with stone. To complete the wall the cement had to be poured in from the top, a very difficult job. The stone mason found a piece of stone shaped like a heart that is now part of this wall.

#10 - (Right) Stone columns: Numerous stone pillars inside and out were faced with stone.



(#12 continued on page 55)

A Swedenborgian Odyssey

Many of you may be wondering whether or not you want to attend this year's Convention in St. Paul. I would like to personally urge you all to come to the University of St. Thomas for what promises to be a wonderful time. The campus facilities are superior. Two of the residences, Murray Hall and Morrison Hall, are air-conditioned. Morrison Hall features four lockable single bedrooms in an apartment setting with two bathrooms, a furnished living room and kitchenette. Morrison Hall also has 14 rooms with two beds per room available. In addition there is a laundry and stove area shared by four apartments. Murray Hall features double, triple and quad room units, with a bathroom per unit.

Also please note that St. Thomas has offered a family rate for parent(s) and their dependent children (under 18)! An apartment in Morrison Hall with 4 bedrooms will cost only \$125 per night for room and board for four people. The Murray Hall suite with 4 beds will cost \$100 per night for room and board.* This represents a cost savings for families which we hope will encourage more people to attend. If you see a registration form without these options please just change one of the room rates to match.

All of the buildings used by the Convention are within the area of approximately one square block with easy access to each other. Many are interconnected by walkways and all are handicapped accessible with elevators. The Convention area is like a mini-city with post office, barber/beauty shops, health area, computer room, and small store. In addition there is access to a pool and gym area within a short walk.

The Convention itself will host many activities, including the Pre-Convention workshop, Convention mini-courses and business meetings. Watch for a future listing in *The Messenger*. In addition there will be the traditional reception following the ordination as well as a ballroom dance. Saturday night there will be a dinner and cruise down the Mississippi followed by Dead Su (back by popular demand) in the ballroom. Plus of course the "Bruiser" Brugler versus Jesse Ventura cage match to attend (are we joking or will there really be a match? You'll have to come to find out)!

The area surrounding the campus provides many activities to meet almost everyone's wildest dreams. While the Twin Cities themselves do not contain all of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes there are many lakes and parks located within both cities. Como Park and Zoo, which is free, is a short distance away and contains a recently restored Victorian conservatory. Immediately adjacent to the campus is Summit Avenue which is the longest Avenue of historic Victorian homes left in the United States. To the west, Summit Avenue ends at the Mississippi River which features a wonderful trail for walking. Ten minutes east of the campus towards downtown St. Paul you can find the Science Museums of Minnesota, the Historical Society, and the Children's Museum. Ten minutes west of St. Paul in Minneapolis you can find The Institute of Arts, the Weisman Arts Gallery and the Walker Art Gallery. If you like theatre, there is a range from the traditional productions of the Guthrie to the avant-garde productions of the Theatre de la June Lune. If you like sports, the St. Paul Saints should be in full swing (so to speak). The Saints are a semi-pro team located in a stadium ten minutes north of the campus. Of course last, but not least, is the Mall of America, which has something to please everyone.

But social amenities are not the only reason to attend Convention this or any year. The theme of this year's Convention is "A Swedenborgian Odyssey." The journey to St. Paul is part of the trip, and as you travel, take time to enjoy the natural world that God has created for our use and enjoyment. Once here you can embark on a spiritual Odyssey by attending the services and workshops. Attending Convention sets aside time in our lives to grow and to work through questions we may have and to enjoy our faith with others who share the same journey, if not necessarily the same paths.

So come and join us. Convention offers us a time to bring together the physical and the spiritual into a union of good and truth which is of great importance to our own personal odyssey towards regeneration. I look forward to greeting you all this coming June.

Carla Abler-Erickson
Co-Chair 2001 Convention

*The Registration Form included in this issue has been updated to include this information.



Preview of Mini-courses at Convention

At this early date, we have received the following subjects and presenters for the mini-courses to be given at Convention 2001. Descriptions, exact titles, additions, deletions, and other details will be forthcoming in the May *Messenger*.

MINI-COURSE

1. The New Century Edition George Dole
2. Winnie the Pooh Rev. Susannah Currie and Jenn Tafel
3. Alternative Forms of Worship Rev. Eric Allison
4. The Church in the Community Rev. Dick Tafel
5. Sacred COW Website and how to use it Committee on Worship
6. A New Songbook for Convention Committee on Worship
7. Sacred Circle Dancing Catharine Maine
8. Marriage Rev. Renee and Joe Machiniak,
Rev. Paul and Pat Zacharias
9. Swedenborg House of Studies SSR/SHS
10. Ministry as a Career SSR/SHS
11. The National Council of Churches: Rev. Robert McCluskey
Challenge and Opportunity
12. Wayfarers Chapel & the New Visitors Center Rev. Marlene Laughlin

PRESENTER

CONVENTION 2001 REGISTRATION

St. Thomas University—St. Paul Minnesota "A Swedenborgian Odyssey" ~ June 27 to July 1

The 177th Convention of the Swedenborgian Church will be hosted jointly by the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church and the Illinois Association.

Transportation: Those flying to Convention will arrive at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Transportation from the airport to St. Thomas University is available for approximately \$15.00. Also note the AMTRAK station is also within a 10-minute cab ride to the campus. City bus service from the airport is available also. Please check your confirmation letter for additional transportation information.

Children's programming: We will provide separate care for children ages 0 to 4 and a more structured program for children from 5 to 12 during scheduled activities from Wednesday evening through Saturday morning.

Adult Social Events: Events will feature an Ordinand Dance and Reception including Big Band music and a dance on Friday evening, so bring your dance shoes (fancy dress is optional). A dinner cruise on the Mississippi is the Saturday night feature and optional Saturday venues include the Science Museum of Minnesota, the Children's Museum, the Como Zoo and Conservatory, and of course the Mall of America, Minnesota's monument to consumers. We do encourage you to either come one day early or stay one day late to take in the full experience of the Mall which includes Camp Snoopy, an underwater park and more shopping than anyone can handle. Early/late stays of one day are possible; please indicate that on your registration form below. Educational programs to be announced.

Payment: All registrations and payment must be received by June 1.

Accommodations: The weather in Minnesota during Convention may be anywhere from cool, to downright warm. St. Thomas offers a variety of accommodations. Morrison Hall contains mini-apartments with four single lockable bedrooms, two bathrooms, a furnished living area, and small kitchenette. Four apartments share a common laundry and cooking area. The John Paul II and Murray Residence dorm areas are available in single, double, and quad accommodations with bathrooms down the hall. The apartments and one set of dorms are air-conditioned. All accommodations are handicapped-accessible, parking is nearby, and there are no hills. Most of the buildings used by Convention are interconnected by underground access. St. Thomas campus has a small store, beauty/barber shop, exercise room, computer room, post office, bookstore, and many other amenities in close proximity to the areas we will be using for Convention.

(Detach here)

Names:

Names and ages of children accompanying you:

Street address: city and state: zip:

Phone: Arrival Departure No. of nights: email

Adult registration	@ \$ 65.00	x adults		= \$	
Teen registration (13-17)	@ \$ 35.00	x teens		= \$	
Child 3-12 registration	@ \$ 20.00	x children		= \$	
Registration family maximum	@ \$175.00			= \$	
Late fee if mailed after May 15	@ \$ 25.00	x adults		= \$	
Special Family Rate: Morrison Hall Apt.	@ \$125.00	4 people			
Murray Hall Suite	@ \$100.00	4 people			
Morrison Quad Suite: room & board, double	@ \$ 66.00	x persons	x nights	= \$	
Morrison Quad Suite: room & board, single	@ \$ 66.00	x persons	x nights	= \$	
Dorm: room & board, single	@ \$ 58.00	x persons	x nights	= \$	
Dorm: room & board, double	@ \$ 50.00	x persons	x nights	= \$	
Dorm: room & board, quad	@ \$ 43.00	x persons	x nights	= \$	
Day Commuters (room use and food)	@ \$ 30.00	x persons	x days	= \$	
Women's Alliance Luncheon	@ \$ 8.00	x persons		= \$	

Total \$

All charges are in US dollars. All bills must be paid in full by June 1. No registration refunds after June 1. Bills may be paid by VISA and MasterCard, Provide number and four-digit expiration date.

Make check payable to The Swedenborgian Church

Send Form with checks to: Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church, 11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460

Special needs: (dietary, handicapped access, roommate requests, etc.)

Please note, since food is served cafeteria style we may not be able to accommodate all dietary needs.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Carla Abler-Erickson at (651) 224-0223 (evenings) or via Internet at Honeybeads@aol.com.

CREATING SACRED INNER SPACE

PRE-CONVENTION CONFERENCE 2001
SUNDAY JUNE 24, 7:30 PM THROUGH JUNE 26, 2001

FACILITATORS

Lorraine Sando, psychotherapist, artist, trainer-consultant, writer, from Seattle, Washington
Laura Lawson Tucker, early childhood educator, group facilitator, and trainer of all ages, Guilford, Vermont

ALSO GUEST PRESENTERS

CONTENT:

- Find your sacred inner space as we connect and create sacred community
- Share, dialogue, and learn
- Make art, music, singing, drama, movement, and more
- Create rituals that deepen and celebrate our connections to the earth, to the heavens, and each other
- Bring: Favorite poems, quotes, objects, pictures
- Cost: \$75.00
- Who should come: Anyone interested in spiritual growth.
- *Minister's spouses are welcome. This workshop will take place at the same time as the Council of Ministers meeting*

REGISTRATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, PROVINCE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

REGISTRATION: \$75.00 Per Person (*by June 1*)

ROOM & BOARD: (*Please check one*)

- ☐ Dorm Single Occupancy \$58.00 ☐ Dorm Double Occupancy-2 people in a room \$50.00 per day per person
☐ Quad Suite Single or Double Occupancy \$66.00

ARRIVAL: I/we will be arriving by car _____, airplane (list dates, airline, and flight times)

(Please see CONVENTION REGISTRATION for more details)

SPECIAL NEEDS: (Please Specify) _____

 Please Note: This Workshop Will Be Taking Place at the Same Time as the Council of Ministers Meeting and Ministers' Spouses Meeting

Make checks payable to: THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

Send Form with
checks to:

Central Office
The Swedenborgian Church
11 Highland Avenue
Newtonville, MA 02460

CONNECTIONS

John Rogers

I have spent much of life in contemplation, the myriad questions always in play.

Why? If why, When? If when, Who? If who, How? If how, Why?

... *Ad infinitum*. I gave up on the church in general when I was nine years old, but I was gently forced to remain until confirmation at age 13 by my wonderful mother. It was an Episcopalian church, which for all intents and purposes is a Catholic church without the pope.

Amidst the beauty of the rituals, the wonder of the physical structure, the seeming grace of the mass hour, there was for me an underlying current of negative energy, rooted in the rigid dogma of the service. I was completely turned off by it. I was not inspired, uplifted, or encouraged. In fact, by the age of 19, I had swung 180° to a pursuit of existentialism as an ideal mode of thought. It all made perfect sense to me. I was reading Sartre, and Nietzsche, et al, and really getting into their work. I had designed a nice little logical scenario for myself based on this learning, and my perception of reality at the time. A bit of an angry young man.

I began to see the problem with my thinking later on in my college years. I was acutely aware of many feelings, which could not be explained within the confines of logic. I had sensitivity to energy that was not accounted for by these great thinkers. I realized that I had been living in active denial by association. I unpacked my "church bags" and separated my spiritually sensitive self from my experience in St. James Church, Glastonbury, Connecticut. I began my journey on a different path.

The journey began in a medium I was very comfortable with—music. I began to explore the spiritual experience through listening, learning, and performing music. My tastes went to jazz and its non-verbal communication,

which for me spoke volumes. I sought those that were "connected" to something I could not identify, but understood. I was intensely interested in the relationships of tones, harmonic structures, and rhythmic structures. Why a certain chord, or arpeggio, or scale would emote so specifically; would engender the same feelings every time. How rhythmic structures connected the sound with the natural silent rhythm of spiritual energy. Connected to something.

I turned my attention to eastern philosophies and religions and found so much to identify with, so much that connected to music, which as you know, was already connected to some unidentifiable source. Taoism was especially enlightening and it is still the center of many of my ideas. The Tao is one unifying relationship for all things,

My silent prayer last week as I joined hands in the circle, was that everyone connected through the circle, through the church in that moment, would take that energy out into the world and live in it for a little while longer each week, until it was no longer a state of physical connection each Sunday, but a metaphor for the timeless, wholeness of the One spirit in which we all live.

whole of the whole. A metaphor exists for all things, in harmony with the natural and spiritual worlds, that we are all made of the same energy and materials. There is no new water. Connected to something, again.

With this realization came the awareness of a responsibility to the ONE. I found it beginning to guide me in my everyday life. I began to feel that my everyday was accumulating, or more accurately opening, to accept more of the whole. I wasn't trying, or planning, I was just walking down a path that I felt was connected. Connected to something.

I came to the Portland Swedenborgian Church by way of Rachel Lyn Rumson. We met at a business meeting around nine months ago. I listened to her speak of her church in terms that I didn't identify with church; spirituality and openness, to name just two. I became intrigued and began to feel a desire to check it out for myself. It took me several weeks after that inkling to actually align my hectic schedule and finally attend a service. Rachel's last words to me the Friday before were, "be warned, there are no pews." My interest was piqued!

I arrived, not knowing a single face, but feeling an extreme sense of welcome in the room. People said hello, and I felt a warm acceptance, as everyone took their seats and the energy started to flow. What's this? I asked myself, as people began shouting out numbers from a songbook and the music began. Hmm, I am sensing a pattern, I thought. No pews, and no rigid structure, songs of love, and inspiration, and faith. This is not the church I remember.

All of this interaction, and the familiarity of the energy in the church, really allowed me to enjoy worship again, or rather for the first time, in a congregation. The prayer circle was the part of the service that really brought it all home. I heard personal testaments to faith, loved ones, family, nature, and all of it felt connected.

It was not only metaphorical, it was physical, holding hands in a circle, connected to each other, and testifying our connection to all things, both aloud and silently to ourselves. But silently, while physically and spiritually connected to the whole circle.

These are the moments that a church should expand to define itself. These moments when there is no anger or

(Continued on page 62)

Rocking the Ages:

(Continued from back)

And the grappling here can be of the microcosm to beyond the macrocosm. We learn in one essay that during the fetal state our perceptions are of two tempos—fast and slow. If the mother is stressed, her blood pulsates more forcibly than when she is calm. From these feelings of fast and slow grow anger and pain, on the one hand, and well-being, rest, and timelessness on the other: the precursors of anger, joy, sorrow, unrest. (Anders Hallengren's essay, *Rhythms of Repercussion*, further describes how music can help enrich emotional development.)

From the microcosm of the fetal world of feelings, we, with *Rocking the Ages* in hand, can leap to the macrocosmic, catapulting Copernicus from his own revolution. (The model of the holographic universe or the kaleido-

scopic viewpoint has, it appears, created its own Copernican revolution. See Sarah Voss's essay *Going Beyond Copernicus*.)

And there is much between the microcosm and macrocosm—too much to honor each writer individually in this brief review. To tempt the reader: you will find a "child's" allegory (Pamela Mayer's *When the Princess Died*) that dialogues with death; poetry that gathers us to our essence (the dialectic of life and death, the crisis of a near-death birth, the crisis of aging); art and photos that intrigue the reader to journey on; essays that delve deep into complexities; and short stories that soar into playful simplicity (we learn a lot about ourselves when we play). There are poignant family and generational remembrances that throw us back into our own reveries.

Perhaps the answer to "what is permanent in all this change, this

rocking of ages, the millennial passage" is as its editor states: "... what ultimately drives the writing and art of this Chrysalis Reader—a loving presence of heart and mind, the pulse of continuity and change—that renews our place in the coming and going forth of humanity."

Or, to quote Michael Nethercott's essay (*The Harvesters*), "... there is terror, indeed, in the wild realms of experience, but also there is true compassion. And the opportunity to purge the heart of its shame."

Rocking the Ages gives us this opportunity again and again.

Kathleen (Kayta) Curzie Gajdos, Ph.D., is a psychologist in private practice in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. She is also an adjunct professor for Vermont College's Long Distance Learning Program and is writing a book on the multi-generational impact of unaddressed grief and trauma.

To order *Rocking the Ages*, call 1-800-355-3222.



Becoming Spring

(Continued from page 52)

life. We awaken to God at a new level. And it is our *longing* through this time of spring and Lent that brings Easter morning to fullness within us. So let us take time—time for ourselves with the Lord. Let us "enter in to the small silences between the leaves" and welcome the Lord there. "To look at any thing, if you would know that thing, you must look at it long. . ."

We are free to know the Lord, and we are free to find Him in our way. It is in the journey itself, in our own everyday joy and pain, that we find Him. And when we do, with each moment of discovery, we see anew how much we are loved; how much we are cherished. The blueprint has been set: God opened a way for our humanness to be whole. And it takes time—to know what the Lord's life meant and means for us today. What does it mean to be born anew, and to suffer and to forgive the one(s) who hurt us? What does it mean to be free inside? Welcome the Lord to your heart and ask. He is gentle of spirit and ready to serve.

Happy Easter.

The Rev. Renee Billings-Machiniak is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan.

Reprinted from the April 2000 Church of the Holy City Newsletter.



CONNECTIONS

(Continued from page 61)

worry. When everyone is focused on a single wonderful energy, and channeling through that energy the breadth of their experiences, the pain of sickness, the joy of rainfall, the beauty of fall colors, the struggle of our daily lives, all channeled through a united feeling of connectedness. We joined in a circle, enhancing the beauty, and making bearable the grief of our everyday lives. Connected to something.

The challenge for anything small is to expand those moments. To make these connections in order to expand and accept the whole of life. To take that prayer circle feeling with us into the places and times when it is not so easy to see the connectedness of all things; when our personal agendas reassert themselves, and we find it harder to smile through the tribulations and to accept another's views. To channel the peace of the circle when we are not physically connected to one another should be our aim. We are always connected.

Through the Swedenborgian Church, I have found a place to openly express my

spirituality, a place that redefined the practice of religion for me and allowed me to put to rest my past judgments. It is a place where the spiritual connectedness of the universe is manifest physically for two hours every week.

My silent prayer last week, as I joined hands in the circle, was that everyone connected through the circle, through the church in that moment, would take that energy out into the world and live in it for a little while longer each week, until it was no longer a state of physical connection each Sunday, but a metaphor for the timeless, wholeness of the One spirit in which we all live. Connected to everything.

John Rogers is a newcomer to the Swedenborgian Church, a regular participant with the Portland congregation and a resident of South Portland, Maine. He is a network systems engineer and owner of iCORE Systems. John studied jazz at the Hartford Conservatory of Music and Dance. He writes music and poetry and "the odd essay, such as 'Connections.'"

Reprinted with author's permission from the Portland church newsletter, *The Appleseed*, January 2001.



TO THE EDITOR

Social Justice Commentary: *Disability Article Lauded*

Dear Editor:

I wish to commend Sharyl Webster on her piece about her nine months of disability (*Social Justice*, February 2001 *Messenger*, p. 27). I too have experienced this phenomenon and found it unnerving.

Ms. Webster states over and over in her article how lucky she was because she had family and friends to help her. Many of us live miles away from our families, and when your temporary disability goes on for more than a year, as it did in my case, friends become weary of helping. You don't blame them, as they have their own families and it takes precious time away from their own activities.

The one thing that Ms. Webster asks all of us to do is "PLEASE NOTICE." I can't say it any better. I have a 70-plus-year-old mother who was helping me at times, lifting my wheelchair in and out of the trunk of our car. Not once, during the many months that I was disabled, did anyone offer to help my mom do this. "PLEASE NOTICE." As they say, practice "random acts of kindness."

Also remember that just because a disability doesn't show, it doesn't mean someone doesn't have one. I get stares all the time when I now park in a handicapped zone. I have only one lung, don't use oxygen, and seem to get around just fine. The reason I do is because I park in handicapped zones and don't have to walk as far.

Sharon Saul
Salinas, California



Missing Messengers

The Central Office needs a complete set of Messengers for every year. We find that we are missing these copies: December, 1986; May 1989. Please call the Central Office @ (617) 969-4240 if you have copies of these that we could have.

PASSAGES

DEATHS

Courtney—Marion Courtney, longtime member of the Los Angeles Society, entered the spiritual world August 15, 2000, at the Burlington Convalescent Home following a long illness. The Rev. Harvey Tafel conducted a memorial tribute to Marion in the Wayfarers Chapel Garden November 5, 2000, attended by many of her old friends West Coast friends: Phyllis Bosley, Lorraine Sando from Seattle, Marion Howe from Oceanside, Pearl and Irving McCallum from LaJolla, Mareta Saul, Pat and Merle Lundberg, Marge Calby, Mareta Tafel, and brother Don Saul, Manon Washburn, Al and Jessie Rado and their son Don Rado.



Who Was Listening?

(Continued from page 50)

humane regard for one another that changes attitudes, that builds awareness and a sense of mutual support, so that cruelty and taunting and bullying and ostracism because someone is "different" are seen as unacceptable and not to be tolerated. So that real, open and honest channels of communication are built between adults and the kids who are in their care for eight hours a day, five days a week. Is that such a novel idea? Are there schools where this or similar programs are being implemented? There may be, and if there are, why aren't they featured on the news?

Community-building workshops as a part of church youth groups is likely a more attainable goal. As churches are honing in on issues that deeply concern young people and are developing ways to attract more youth, a strong core of young church members who bring their community values and community-building skills into their high schools could wield an enormous influence on their peers. Doesn't it go without saying that kids who feel heard, valued, connected, known, and loved don't shoot people? On the other hand, maybe it should be repeated until somebody is listening.

Meanwhile, until we are more spiritually evolved, it may be time we provide our schools with the same level of security measures provided at airports.

Patte LeVan



Lemee—Ruth E. (Anderson) Lemee, 77, longtime active member of the Bridgewater Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world February 10, 2001, following a long illness, at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. A memorial service was conducted February 13 at the Bridgewater church, the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. She is survived by her husband Bert Lemee and four children: David Lemee, Sharon Swan, Brian Lemee and Susan Lemee; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Turner—John Laureston Turner, 85, entered the spiritual world January 17, 2000 at Brooksville Health Care Center, Brooksville, Florida. A graveside service was conducted November 20, 2000 at the South Street Cemetery in Bridgewater, Mass., the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. Mr. Turner is survived by his wife of sixty years, Marion Washburn (Eaton) Turner, formerly of Brockton, Mass., now living in Staunton, Virginia. Marion is a former member of the New Jerusalem Church in Brockton, and a niece of the Rev. Russell Eaton, a former minister of the church. Mr. Turner is also survived by three sons: John L. Turner, Jr., Peter G. Turner, and Richard L. Turner; a daughter, Jane M. Pietrowski; two brothers; three sisters; eight grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mary Crenshaw has at last made it to California! Her new address is:

Mary Crenshaw
552 Canyon Rd.
Redwood City, CA 94062
(650) 701-1170

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

The Rev. Edwin and Esther Capon have a new email address:
enick@astound.net



Rocking the Ages: The Pulse of Continuity and Change

Edited by Carol S. Lawson and Robert F. Lawson.
192 pp. \$13.95, Chrysalis Reader 7. Swedenborg
Foundation, October 2000.

Reviewed by Kathleen Curzie Gajdos

I sit here at my daughter's last swim meet of her school career while reading *Rocking the Ages, The Pulse of Continuity and Change*, wistful (if not downright grieving) that Zofia did not qualify for the evening finals of this championship except to be honored as an outgoing senior swimmer at M.I.T. I remember her first swim event at the age of six: she was dog-paddling, coached to bark now and again, perhaps to distract her and her cohorts from the struggle it was for a little body to go the long length of the pool.

Immediately after that first swim meet Zofia, her five year-old brother Johnathan, my mother, and I drove the length of the state of Pennsylvania. We were leaving my children's birthplace and landing close to my own, due to my husband's finding a new job. I remember that June evening: it was still, a very fine mist of rain had begun as we left behind the peace of a little storybook stone house (rocks hewn and placed so carefully and lovingly, it seemed) on a hill surrounded by both woods and meadow. My mother was most likely thrilled—we would be only an hour from her house rather than almost seven. But it was a major life change for us, as moves always are.

So here I am witnessing another major life change. My six year old now twenty-one, swimming her last event with her college team. Another marker of "aging out."

"When the heart grieves for what it has lost, the soul rejoices in what it has found." An old proverb that I keep repeating to myself—a mantra to help me with the continual onslaught of change and loss. But then how dare I be so presumptuous to grieve at

these little deaths in life that challenge us to greater growth?

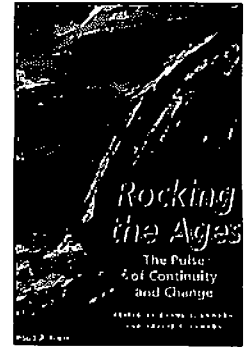
My friends who offer us their magnanimous hospitality whenever we journey to the Boston area have far more traumatic stories. What must it be like to flee, as a teenager, your home burning in the dead of night—mother having been smoking and drinking—and in a flash to have lost your home, your mother, and the family dog?

And so I sit here in the hothouse of this pool, trauma and loss and change and growth all germinating in a muddled matrix of thought, prompted by reading *Rocking the Ages* as well as by watching young swimmers, full of life and energy, marking their own times.

Rocking the Ages is a well-organized book of art, essays, short stories, and poetry regarding "our perceptions of time and place." Co-editor Robert Lawson alerts us to the book's overriding question: "in a world of which it is said 'the only constant is change,' what is permanent?"

In facing this question, *Rocking the Ages* is a rather amazing communion of diversity both in its art and its articles. Communion, in the way a large family reunion photograph joins together diversity into one place at one moment: all the ages, all the histories, all the geographies of individuals who constitute a group with a common heritage. *Rocking the Ages* is that kind of photograph—bringing unity of theme to a diversity of thought and image. The common heritage here is the existential fact of our humanity *in situ*, humanity grappling with change.

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Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.