

# THE MESSENGER

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## A Professor and a Librarian Join Ranks at the Swedenborgian House of Studies

Jim Lawrence

March 14th was a red-letter day for the Swedenborgian House of Studies. By two o'clock that afternoon our small professional community had grown by two, as both Gregory Johnson, Ph.D., and Michael Yockey tendered their official acceptance of term positions for Assistant Professor and for Library Director, respectively.

Gregory Johnson, who has been our spring 2002 visiting professor at SHS, accepted a one-year term position as Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Swedenborgian Studies. We've so thoroughly enjoyed his strengths and gifts as a teacher that we have invited Greg back for another year while we continue to explore all our possibilities for rebuilding our faculty. Greg grew up in Montana, far removed from any awareness of Swedenborg or Swedenborgianism. After earning a B.A. in philosophy from Oregon State University, his interests in philosophy as a way of living spiritually and ethically continued to grow and he now considers himself a spiritually committed professional philosopher.

During his studies on Kant, he became fascinated by Swedenborg's impact on Kant and then more directly by the spirituality of Swedenborg in general. Soon, articles of striking quality began to appear under his byline in the mid-nineties in *The New Philosophy*, *Studia Swedenborgiana* and other such publications. Many of us in Swedenborgian publishing began to ask, "Who is this guy?"

The mystery writer turned out to be a fairly young doctoral student at Catholic University of America whose dissertation was on Swedenborg and Kant, entitled, "A Commentary on Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*." *Dreams* is the work in which Kant assassinated Swedenborg's credibility for the next two centuries in Germany. But Greg Johnson's careful scholarship began to reveal a thesis long suspected by some: that Kant had been deeply influenced by Swedenborg, and his disingenuous attack on Swedenborg appears motivated by a need to dissociate himself from such a controversial figure.

Today, Greg is well-known to the scholars working on the New Century Edition of Swedenborg's writings published by the Swedenborg Foundation. He has written the lengthy introductory articles for George Dole's translations of

*Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence*, and the editors of the NCE, Drs. Jonathan Rose and Stuart Shotwell, have asked him to handle the *Arcana* volumes also (to be issued under the title *Heavenly Secrets*). Dr. Shotwell says of him: "Greg is a scholar with a very powerful intellect, eminently capable of illuminating for others the rich complexities of Swedenborg's philosophy and theology. He also possesses a deep sympathy with Swedenborg's thought. Furthermore, he is a very good writer, which is a rarity, I think, among scholars of his intensity...[he is] a rising superstar in Swedenborgian scholarship."

In addition to his work with the Swedenborg Foundation, he has also published articles in our school's scholarly journal, *Studia Swedenborgiana*, and has forthcoming articles in scholarly publications of both the General Church and General Conference.

Greg's current areas of teaching competence are Swedenborgian philosophy, philosophy of religion, moral and political philosophy, philosophy and literature, Kant and German idealism, American philosophy, contemporary continental philosophy, and ancient philosophy. Over the past several years he has taught numerous courses at Georgia State University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and his own adult education organization, The Invisible College. As if that were not more than enough for a graduate student finishing his doctoral dissertation (which he successfully defended just this past



Gregory Johnson, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Swedenborgian Studies.

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## We Are Sorry...

Fran, my close neighbor and friend, is the manager of a small store in Julian that sells imported clothing and gift items. I was trying on clothes there recently, not finding anything that looked right and feeling generally irritated, thinking I should be doing something more useful and stimulating, but lacking the energy and inspiration. No one else was in the store at the moment, and Fran and I began a friendly griping session, each of us griping about various situations and sympathizing in turn, a thoroughly mundane and pleasant exchange between two old friends who honor each other's need to vent.

Then a young woman entered with two little boys. The children's piping voices and questions broke into our litany, an ordinary interruption which we took in stride. But then one of the little boys threw back the curtain of my dressing room and stood beaming at me as though he'd discovered the Wizard of Oz. "No," his mother admonished him nicely, "don't do that when someone's in there." She steered him away, and I rearranged the curtain back into place, but then he came back and pulled it open once more. "No, Jed," his mother said again, "now that is rude, someone's *in there*."

"Well, what's she *doing* in there?" he persisted reasonably. "Why *can't* I see what she's *doing*?"

His mother continued to be patient. "When the curtain is closed, you mustn't go in," she explained. "People don't want to be disturbed when the curtain is closed." I hoped that would end the matter, but no, relentless, he returned and pulled it open again. I scowled fiercely at him and said "Please stop opening this curtain *right now*!" He backed off, wide-eyed, as though a monster had materialized out of the wall. I heard the woman saying in extreme embarrassment, "I'm really sorry." "It's okay," I muttered. I heard Fran at the front of the store engaging the woman and the little boys in pleasant conversation. Then I heard

the woman say that she was a new member of the neighborhood church where I sing in the choir. Then Fran told her I sing in the choir there. By the time I got dressed and emerged, the woman and her children had departed, and Fran was finishing her belated lunch of diet coke and a wilted sandwich. I had a mammoth headache.

"I know I sounded like the crabbiest woman in town," I said, "but I just wasn't in any mood to be hassled. Then you have to spill it that I'm a choir member—her kid probably thinks I'm the wicked witch of Julian and he'll be afraid to go to church." Fran looked so baffled I realized she must have moved up by the cash register and likely hadn't been aware of the dressing room drama. Before I could explain, more customers came in. "I baked a carrot cake last night," Fran said soothingly to me, "I'll give you some when I get home."

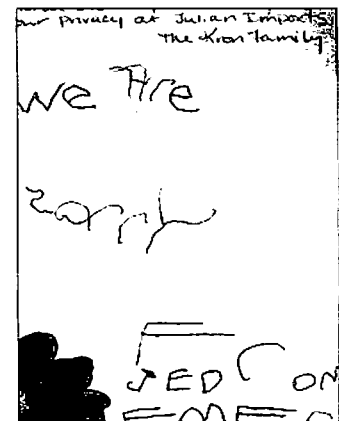
What a grouch I am, I thought. I could have been more gracious, I didn't have to bark at that child, he was just a normally curious, active little kid. It further occurred to me that if I hadn't discovered that the woman was a part of our community, I would probably have continued feeling justified in my attitude, thinking she was just another tourist with an unruly kid. All of that got me ruminating on, "Who is the Neighbor?"

That Sunday after our choir had sung the anthem and the service was over, a young woman came up to me in the church aisle and asked, "Were you shopping the other day at Julian Imports?"

"Yes," I confessed. I looked into the earnest face of a young mother, then down at the smiling blond imp at her side, beaming up at me with the shining innocence of a five-year-old supremely hopeful of forgiveness. "Well, hello again," I smiled back at him.

"We're really sorry for invading your privacy," the mother said, pressing an envelope into my hand. "I almost never take the boys with me to dress shops, and he just doesn't know about dressing rooms...and I want you to know how much we enjoy the choir, it's wonderful."

"Thank you," I told her. "I'm sorry too, I was under the weather that day and really in a grumpy mood." When I got home, I opened the envelope and saw this note.



I think I need to frame it and put it in a very visible place as a reminder of what's really important in this short life we all share.

Happy Mother's Day to all the struggling mothers, young and old and in between.

Patte LeVan



## THE MESSENGER

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## The Mystic Heart of Justice: Restoring Wholeness in a Broken World

by Denise Breton and Stephen Lehman

Rev. Robert McCluskey has raised many profound questions about justice in his review of our book [April 2002 *Messenger*], and we are grateful for the depth of thought he has given its subject. We are especially appreciative of his focus on asking "the right questions" because, we utterly agree, there are no fixed or final answers, at least not coming from our neck of the woods.

There are a few specific points that Rev. McCluskey raises that we are grateful for the opportunity to clarify. Our book is admittedly an ambitious one, tackling as it does our entire cultural concept of justice and taking a shot at rethinking it from the ground up. With that aim in view, we easily could have been unclear. And as he most kindly says, one book can cover only so much.

About our mixed-bag treatment of religions and cultures, it's true that we resonate with some aspects and take issue with others. We don't know of any religion or culture that we feel completely at one with. We tend to be eclectic, taking what seems helpful for what we're trying to work out, while also expressing our concerns about aspects that seem downright unhelpful, though they may have been positive in other circumstances or contexts. Sometimes, for example, we're hopping mad at Christianity, which encompasses so many views, and other times we're feeling inspired by its insights into the nature of Christ, grace, or the universe as a manifestation of something higher and whole. Although we're not Swedenborgians, it is our recollection that Swedenborg himself had some sharp words for Christianity, or at least the Christian church, as Christians did about him and his revelations.

This also is our response to Plato's *Republic*. We take what we have found in that work to be a springboard for rethinking justice. But the specific utopia that Socrates and Plato trotted out by no means captures our sense of justice, however much it aids us in thinking about it. After all, Socrates suggests that the ideal state described in the *Republic* might best serve as a metaphor for the soul's self-

government, which is the real basis of justice and shouldn't be taken too literally. As a result, we respond to the *Republic* more as a wandering philosophical exploration and less as a conclusive political or sociological blueprint for a good society, though the work certainly generates lively debates on those levels as well. But tackling these complexities was beyond the scope of our book, and not our interest either, really. We had our hands full tracking a concept, an idea, a core sense of what justice may mean. We borrowed insights from the *Republic* that aided our specific purpose and let the rest go, especially since so many critiques from a modern perspective of the 2,500-year-old *Republic* already exist.

About human nature, we are concerned that we may not have been clear, for we by no means adopt the view of humans as having an angelic nature. It is hard to imagine that anyone today could, given not just the daily news but more the history of genocides that have happened over at least the last 400 years. No, our sense is that human nature

spans a spectrum, from the worst imaginable to the best—from moral monster to saint or angel, or at least angel-in-the-making.

The challenge, then, is to choose which potentials along the spectrum of human nature we develop. We believe that we can make this choice both individually and collectively: individually in our personal lives and development; collectively through the shared systems we either create, tolerate, or strive to change.

Individually, we share the experience of free will: it seems as if we humans have the capacity to make choices about our lives. In that, we agree with many teachings, including Swedenborg's. Freedom is essential to learning and developing, but it also means we're able to make mistakes along the way. This is

where the issue of "akrasia," also rendered as "weakness of will," comes in: we don't always choose as we would hope, and sometimes our choices hurt ourselves and others. Yet we always have the option to learn and grow from our choices, one way or the other.

Naturally, who wouldn't prefer to choose perfectly or ideally (whatever that may mean) in all situations? Yet who can do this? Moreover, in the thick of life's complexities, who knows what's perfect or ideal? Sometimes it's obvious, and we still choose badly, that is, in ways that cause hurt. But even good, courageous choices (by shared standards and values) can cause hurt, so choosing well, wisely, and compassionately is by no means clear-cut.

We're wondering if perhaps theological discussions of "sin" put too much emphasis on the unfortunate choice (called "sin") as a fixed fact or discrete event and not enough

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emphasis on the learning and growth that can come from hurtful choices—that is, on the soul-expanding processes that carry the potential to heal hurts, make things right (whatever that may mean in a situation), and restore us to our best selves, our higher potentials. Relative to the difference between retributive and restorative justice, retributive justice focuses on the choice per se (was it good or bad, righteous or “sinful”), whereas restorative justice focuses on the possibilities for growth or healing that can be made of the experience, however painful it may have been. The latter response to the problem of akrasia seems practical, since we all find ourselves “missing the mark” in who we aspire to be rather regularly.

Although the issue of how we choose individually which of our potentials to develop is never far from any consideration of justice, it was not the focus of our book. Rev. McCluskey is entirely right that free will and individual choice are essential to the issue, and we sense that they will play an important role in a follow-up book on justice that we are currently planning, tentatively titled, *Creating Justice From the Inside Out*. But in our own free wills, we chose not to tackle the individual side of choosing, not at least in this first go at justice.

In *The Mystic Heart of Justice*, we focused instead on our collective choice, expressed in our cultural model of justice. For us, the idea that the problem lies in a narrow, divisive model of consciousness about justice, and not in reality itself, brings hope. We can’t change reality’s order, but we can change our models—our ways of interacting with reality. We know about paradigm shifts. They take time, and they can seem cataclysmic to those vested in the established paradigm, but they do happen, especially when the established paradigm fails to give us what we need and ask of it.

That’s where we stand as a culture around justice, as far as we can tell. Our current paradigm fails too often to create the justice we seek. The justice we get doesn’t prove satisfying—not to victims, offenders, or communities; not to workers and employees in a world of downsizing and Enron, “winner take all”; and not to students in “zero tolerance” schools. Too many people have grown jaded and cynical about justice—personally, socially, racially, economically, politically, and internationally. Both in its occurrence and in our response, September 11th focuses our cultural crisis around justice. What is justice? How do we create it on all the levels of our lives? How can we respond to hurts most constructively? What brings the greatest possibilities for healing and for preventing similar hurts in the future?

Here is where we have choice. We can choose which models of justice channel our thoughts and energies as a

people and culture. The problem with the currently dominant paradigm of justice, we believe, is that it assumes that we’re monsters and not much more—that inwardly we’re a sinful mess and that we need to be controlled from without by parents, teachers, bosses, or religion through rewards and punishments. But this agenda becomes self-fulfilling. By replacing internal with external motivation, the reward-punishment model causes us to lose touch with our inner guides: our values, our conscience, and our compassion. We become externally motivated: seeking the rewards and avoiding the blame and punishment. Before we know it, we’re acting from our lowest potentials. Controlled by the reward-punishment model of justice, we don’t move beyond it. “What’s in it for me?” outweighs “How can we create

something good for all of us together?” Management consultant Peter Senge says, “Structures of which we’re unaware hold us prisoner.” (*The Fifth Discipline*, p. 94) In *The Mystic Heart of Justice*, we express our concern that our cultural model of justice is holding us prisoner at the low end of our nature.

When we contrast starkly—point for point, feature for feature—the current retributive model with an alternative, restorative one, our intention is not to set up a rigid dualism, or worse, an “either/or” proposition, though we can certainly understand how it could seem that way, and we’re grateful for the opportunity to clarify our own intentions around this. Like Rev. McCluskey, we find both dualisms and “either/or” propositions unhelpful. Several thoughts come to mind. First, contrasting two different models is a teaching device. It’s a way to learn about something new. Second, it’s useful as such because the current model of justice is so ingrained in us that it has become invisible, like glasses on our face. It’s hard to imagine thinking about justice any other way. We use the striking differences both to call the model we’ve all taken for granted into focus and then into question and then to further show that there is an alternative. Until we ourselves started thinking about justice four years ago, we couldn’t imagine an alternative model either.

How then do we see the two models relating? External controls—whether through detainment and incarceration or through the incentives of rewards and punishments—seem to be useful and sometimes necessary at certain stages of human development or at the lower end of the spectrum of human potentials. People who are so damaged that they cannot interact positively with others must be kept apart from society. Public safety requires it. And for those who are either so programmed by rewards and punishments that they have no connection to their conscience, or for those too young to have yet developed a conscience, rewards and restraints (of some respectful,

*If we shift our disagreements from arguing positions to exploring interests, we discover more options for working out mutually acceptable solutions than debating fixed positions would allow. And if we push ourselves to investigate our interests more deeply, we arrive at the question of our values.*

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humane, compassionate sort) seem necessary.

In other words, if managed with openness, honesty, fairness, integrity, flexibility, and compassion, external controls can provide a constructive model of self-guidance which very young children can internalize. And for adults so conditioned on a reward-punishment model, a rigorously ethical, skillful, and compassionate use of rewards and restraints (instead of punishments, which only compound hurt) could gradually help people reconnect with their own inner compass. Again, we would seek to define "punishments" not as "inflicting shame or harm" but as confronting the consequences of hurt and intervening (whenever necessary) on low-end behavior. For that matter, we would also seek to define "rewards" not as carrots but as opportunities for exercising greater freedom and autonomy wisely.

The trick is to not lock people in to being externally controlled. Somewhere along the line, we need models of justice that help us cultivate our powers to be inwardly guided. We need to pound out for ourselves values that are reliable in creating happiness and peace among us, and these must draw strength from within us. As we feel more inwardly grounded in values that reflect our souls, we also need to experience the challenges and complexities of acting from these values. We need the experience of being inwardly motivated and guided, instead of being caught up in chasing externals. This is the aim of restorative justice, not to impose a fixed model of what justice should be in every situation (the way, for example, our courts currently do in passing judgments, rulings, and sentences), but in creating a space for us to act more from what's inside us, and through this process, from our better or higher selves.

This aim of restorative justice speaks to the very important issues of tolerance and subjectivity that Rev. McCluskey raises. Wrestling with these issues, we've found help in the famous book on conflict resolution by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes*. They make a distinction between positions and interests. Positions are what we argue for and tend to fight over. They're our stance: "I want this done!" Interests, by contrast, are why we arrive at those positions, and they include, above all, our values. We want something done because of the values we hold. Fisher, Ury, and Patton explain that our interests can be served not by one but by many positions. If we shift our disagreements from arguing positions to exploring interests, we discover more options for working out mutually acceptable solutions than debating fixed positions would allow. And if we push ourselves to investigate our interests more deeply, we arrive at the question of our values.

Kay Pranis, the Restorative Justice Planner for the Minnesota Department of Corrections, has been working in restorative justice for thirteen years and has encountered many cases of severe, violent crimes and the struggles of victims and offenders to deal with what has happened. She has conducted restorative justice training among the elite of

society as well as in prisons, among the poor and with immigrant populations. She has found that, while people's positions about an event may vary widely, their values for how they would like to see the situation worked out are largely held in common. Faced with some deep disagreement, hurt, or conflict of interest, she has found that most people want things worked out with values of "honesty, humility, sharing, courage, inclusivity, empathy, trust, forgiveness, love, and respect." (Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, and Mark Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles: Using Conflict as an Opportunity to Build Community*, Living Justice Press, forthcoming) No matter who Kay Pranis works with—across age and culture, gender and race, economic status and religion—she finds that these values keep coming up when she asks people how they can best work out their differences.

Relative to our understanding of justice, these values work because they create a space where we can be most true to who we are and can act from our whole selves, not only the external side of us. If we've found ourselves stuck at the low end of our nature in the mad dash for rewards (e.g., money, security, status), these values can help us get unstuck and move toward who we can be from our wholeness, which includes more than the self-only, outer-driven pole. This is what we mean with the phrase we've borrowed from the *Republic* of "doing what's ours to do." Ultimately, what's ours to do is to be who we are. In this, we do assume that we are of the whole and so bear a sacredness to our being, even though it's a struggle in life to find our sacredness, connect with it, and live from it. Yet we believe it's the call of justice to do this—to do justice to ourselves and from there to gain the sensitivity we need to do justice to others.

By contrast, if we structure society in ways that thwart people's efforts to be true to themselves—if we're all told from the get-go that we can't be who we are but must become what others say we must be, namely, those who hold the rewards and punishments (and these may not be people with our best interests in mind)—is not this a formula for great frustration and unhappiness? Is it not intolerance of our very being? As intolerance goes, that's hard to top.

As to whether we're tolerant of the intolerant, yes, that's a tough one, and given the news, it's no abstraction either. Should we be tolerant of Hitler, of concentration camps, of genocide against First Nations as well as Jews, of war that kills innocents (which war always does), of slavery? We've recently been reading *Lincoln's Virtues* by William Lee Miller. He has a section called "How to Make a Strong Moral Argument Without Being Moralistic." In it, we read of Lincoln's struggles to practice restorative justice around precisely this question. Lincoln said the southerners shouldn't be blamed for the war or for defending slavery. If northerners had been born and raised in the south, they would have acted the same way. Instead, Lincoln focuses on slavery itself as the issue: is it right? Lincoln wrote, "If slavery is not wrong, then nothing is wrong." He shifted the focus from blaming people to confronting the rightness or wrongness of actions, institutions, and systems. If we seek insight from his approach, we could say that we tolerate the

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people, the fellow human beings, but we do not have to tolerate actions that cause hurt.

This in fact is the argument made by John Braithewaite, another leader in restorative justice. He argues that we should shame the act but not the actor. Murder is a shameful act and should not be tolerated, but the murderer is more than his or her actions, and it would be wrong of us to shame his or her whole being because of his or her shameful actions. Naturally, not all cases are as clear as murder. For the gray areas, we simply have to work this out together, whether at home, at work, or in Congress. We can say that if we bring our best values to the process, we have a better chance of working things out in a good way. One thing we ourselves have learned from hanging around people who have spent years in restorative justice: humans possess immense powers of understanding and compassion, if given a forum to let these powers come out and find expression. The stories telling of what happens in restorative justice processes have amazed us. Again, that's the limit of our current win/lose, adversarial model of justice: it simply does not invite our higher, whole, self-transcending nature into the process.

We resonate with Swedenborg's view of human nature as "a recipient vessel," which is precisely how Herbert Fingarette and Tu Wei Ming describe the Confucian notion of the human self. If justice is, as we've argued, being who we are and doing what's ours to do, and if doing what's ours to do is being some kind of open vessel, then restorative justice fits this agenda nicely. Restorative justice does not impose a doctrine of what justice should be or, for that matter, who we should be, either. It does not say we should all be the same or all think alike. It does not require agreement or conformity. Quite the opposite. Restorative justice exists precisely because people are so different, and we obviously need help in valuing our differences instead of fighting over them.

Restorative justice creates a space where we can work out and come to value our differences in a good way by being more true to who we are, inner and outer, mindful of how different we all can be. After all, our differences make life rich and interesting. Restorative justice helps us move beneath appearances to our deeper values, thereby making it easier for us to celebrate our differences instead of feeling threatened by them. It invites us to interact more as whole beings, which means bringing more of ourselves to the table than only our hurts and desires for revenge. From our wholeness, we have a better chance of working out our differences constructively than if we dig in our heels and do battle, as the current system would have us do. It's not a question of "who tells whom to think what" but more in the apostle Paul's vein of "Come let us reason together" on the basis of shared values and a shared desire to work things out in a good way.

Finally, about "utopian thinking," we've never thought of utopias as fixed models or ideas to be imposed on human beings or on human society. Most utopias, including Plato's, Thomas More's, and Gene Roddenberry's, are written with a heavy dose of critique of their existing cultures. They seem

intended to stretch thought and imagination beyond existing norms, which otherwise function like blinders, rendering us unable to imagine anything else. As philosophers and writers, we value utopian ideas more as a shake-up or wake-up call to think "outside the box," to imagine how we could be together not by prescribing one way but by jolting us into realizing that the current way need not be the only way—that alternatives could exist, if we could but imagine them.

Naturally, we know that utopian ideas are not always used this way. The Third Reich actively imposed its utopian ideas on Europe, and we all know how that went. Closer to home, in *Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World*, Professor John C. Mohawk, a Turtle Clan member of the Seneca Nation, traces how Christian ideas of utopia justified the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Native Americans. Clearly, utopian thinking can inspire self-righteousness, fanaticism, cruelty, and mass criminality.

Yet does this mean we must accept the current cultural paradigm as our only option, to exist uncriticized and unchanged? Does aspiring to a better way of being together and of resolving differences necessarily entail these extremes? To argue so would justify the established order continuing "as is" and unquestioned. We obviously believe it is a worthwhile endeavor to question cultural models and to seek to change them when we can envision an alternative that holds the promise of working better.

In this endeavor, one safety check is to be sure that means accord with ends, something glaringly missing in utopian excesses. Destroying others cannot be a way to create a perfect society or a safe one—a safety check that can apply today in our efforts to create a world free from terrorism. Quoting a French pacifist in W.W.II, A. J. Muste said, "There is no way to peace; peace is the way." The means we use must be of the same nature as the ends we seek. For restorative justice, these means and ends are equally informed by values: again, values of mutual respect, honesty, compassion, inclusivity, a commitment to building trust through integrity, sharing, and a deep honoring of the sacredness of life. We cannot create relationships or a society alive with these values by using the opposite of those values to get there. It won't happen, and that's the message of restorative justice.

As a system of justice, rewards and punishments do not imbibe these values. Instead, they teach the values of fighting, defeating the competition, and "winning at all costs." Deception is essential to winning the reward and avoiding the punishment, as is excluding "the other," regarding the other as less worthy to receive the reward. These values become both means and end, and then we wonder why Enron happens or why racism exists still. These are logical extensions of our cultural philosophy of justice. Currently, rewards and punishments dominate virtually every aspect of life: relationships, child-rearing, schooling, business, work, religion, politics and government, and certainly our court systems. The weight of this model is staggering. If its effects on our inner well-being as well as our society are less

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than benign, how do we make a shift not only theoretically but also practically to a different paradigm of justice?

This is where starkly sketched alternatives, ideals, utopian images, and philosophy in general can come in handy—not to be imposed as a fixed end but to inform our means. To borrow an image from Lecomte du Nuoy, the author of *Human Destiny*, these tools of the mind serve as a star to guide a ship through the night—precisely to help us choose means that reflect our ends. We're not actually planning to land on the star, but we need it to help us find our way from where we are to where we long to be—someplace where our differences don't divide us, where hurts aren't forever but can heal, where we can be more wholly, authentically who we are together, where we can live from our souls and do what feels like ours to do, and in so doing where we can open our hearts to each other in ways we don't now find easy. These are ideals and hopes. They're values. They're stars to aim for. Can we get closer to them? Probably. Can we "arrive there"? That's not ours to say, much less to mastermind, but not for that reason should we stop using these values to critique our current system and to work for change. It's better to aim for the far shore and not make it in the measure we might hope, we believe, than not to aim for it at all.



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- energy and enthusiasm and vision

As this is a new post, your initial role will be the evaluation of current practice leading to the creation and implementation of a strategic plan for educational development. This will include the development and piloting of activities and resources relevant to the spiritual needs of people, particularly those outside our present organization today. You will be required to liaise with other educational bodies both within and outside the organisation. Initially, this is a 3-year appointment, based possibly in the Manchester area. The level of remuneration will be discussed at interview and will depend on experience and qualifications.

For further details, including a fuller job description, contact the RENEW Implementation Manager, Alan Misson by email: [alanmisson@btinternet.com](mailto:alanmisson@btinternet.com) or by post: 27 Woodland Way, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7UB, England

Closing date for applications is 21<sup>st</sup> June 2002.



## A Professor and a Librarian Join Ranks at the Swedenborgian House of Studies

(Continued from cover)

summer), Greg has published an astonishing fifty articles, book chapters, comments, and short book reviews during the past several years.

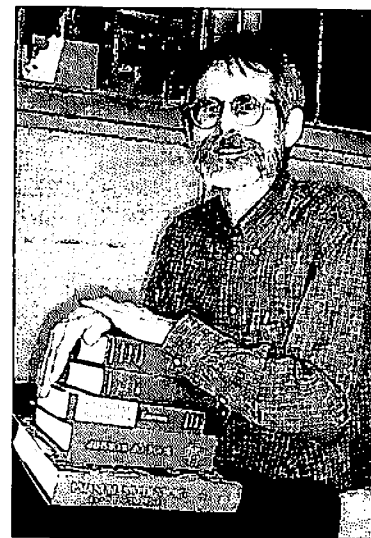
In addition to his scholarly prowess, however, Greg's qualities as a person are considerable and highly valued by those of us here in our community. We are, indeed, very pleased to have Greg with us.

Michael Yockey accepted a two-year term position as Library Director. Coming to us as a talented and experienced librarian in academic settings, Michael served nearly ten years as librarian at San Francisco's New College of California after completing his masters degree in library and information sciences from the University of California at Berkeley. A specialist in technical library services, Michael nevertheless worked in all phases of library services at New College, including four years as library co-director. Desiring a new challenge, Michael spent a year with the EPA Superfund Records Center in San Francisco and was with the law library at Golden Gate University when a former colleague alerted him to our position. The need for an overall director combined with the special requirements in cataloging seemed tailor-made for him. After our search committee interviewed him, we agreed.

With the hiring of Michael Yockey, we concluded a seven-month quest to find the right person for our distinctive needs at this time. The first two priorities are: establishing basic operational policies as the library again becomes one that is open daily, and launching the

retrospective conversion project (more on that shortly). Three further priorities are: developing and beginning an affordable long-term conservation plan for a largely antique collection; further organizing our trove of archival material, much of which is poorly cataloged or uncataloged; and designing and implementing "scholarly outreach" to Swedenborg studies around the world via the school's upcoming website and other venues of communication.

A native Californian, Michael Yockey was born and raised in Manhattan Beach, a coastal city in the Los Angeles area. After graduating high school, he earned a B.A. in philosophy and an M.A. in humanities at California State University at Dominguez Hills. His academic pursuits were interspersed with numerous extended travels around the world. On a trip to India in 1985, Michael met his future wife, Lynn Schroeder, and they were wed the following year. Lynn



*Michael Yockey, Library Director*

(Continued on page 72)



## A Professor and a Librarian Join Ranks at the Swedenborgian House of Studies

(Continued from page 71)

is a psychiatrist with the University of California, San Francisco. Michael and Lynn are practicing Buddhists, and they still enjoy world traveling, especially in the Far East.

As Michael joins our school staff, we now move into the ambitious project funded by the Teagle Foundation (who is funding this position and another full-time assistant, whom Michael will now hire, for a period of two years). The purpose of the Teagle grant is to support our integration into the theological environment of the Graduate Theological Union, whose own library is the largest theological library west of the Mississippi. Since our collection "features" remnants of four cataloging systems, we need to re-catalog our 27,000-volume collection according to Library of Congress standards. As we go along, each record will become cross-cataloged into one of the premier theological research centers in the world. When the project is completed, not only will our library be more visible to (and usable by) the world through the large window of one of the world's most active religion databases, but our own physical library will be much easier to use and to track. As we embark upon our big adventure, we are thrilled to have Michael's skillful hands on the wheel.

*The Rev. Dr. James Lawrence is Acting Dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.*

### Mite Box Alert!

Our 2002 Alliance Mite Box will go to Pavel Heger, our minister in the Czech Republic, who has an outreach ministry and is translating the works of Swedenborg into the Czech language.

Please send all monies by May 30<sup>th</sup> to Alliance Treasurer Margaret Kraus, 229 S. Park Ave. Box 264, Pretty Prairie, KS 67570.

## Living for Peace

June 29 to July 3, 2002

University of Southern Maine  
Gorham, Maine

**Hosted by the Maine Association:** Portland, Fryeburg and Concord, New Hampshire

**Transportation:** The nearest airport is Portland. Transportation from the airport to USM is not provided but Central Office can match arriving delegates with one another to share a cab. Amtrak now has service to Portland, as well.

**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 Saturday

evening through Wednesday morning.

**Social Events:** There will be a traditional Maine lobster bake on Tuesday night. Special opportunities for outings to Portland and various outdoor activities are planned. The Women's Alliance lunch will be on Monday. Watch your *Messenger* for more plans!

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

**Accommodations:** The weather in Maine during Convention may be anywhere from cool, to downright warm. Come prepared for both. All dorm rooms are double with bathrooms on each floor. Buildings are handicapped accessible. There are several pleasant motels near the Portland Airport for those who wish more private accommodations. For more information visit Portland church website: [www.theportlandchurch.org](http://www.theportlandchurch.org)

..... (Detach here) .....

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of children accompanying you: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_ city and state: \_\_\_\_\_ zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival \_\_\_\_\_ Departure \_\_\_\_\_

No. of nights: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Church (for your name tag) \_\_\_\_\_

For transportation match-ups, please tell us when you will arrive at the airport and on which flight:

Adult registration	@ \$75.00	x adults	_____	=	\$ _____
Child 3-12 registration	@ \$35.00	x children	_____	=	\$ _____
Registration family maximum	@ \$175.00			=	\$ _____
Late fee if mailed after May 15	@ \$35.00	x adults	_____	=	\$ _____
Room & Board: double	@ \$55.00	x persons	_____ x nights _____	=	\$ _____
Room & Board: single	@ \$75.00	x persons	_____ x nights _____	=	\$ _____
Day Commuters (facilities use and meals)	@ \$35.00	x persons	_____ x days _____	=	\$ _____
Women's Alliance Luncheon	@ \$ 8.00	x persons	_____	=	\$ _____

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.

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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.) \_\_\_\_\_

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Central Office at 617-969-4240.  
Email: [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org)



# You Have to Boil the Tea Water

(Continued from back page)

I had the privilege of being the guest presenter for this year's Winter School and thoroughly enjoyed about five days with around twenty students from all over the world!. It was a lively group and an opportunity for me to learn much more than I taught.

The desire to provide Swedenborgian educational materials is one of the goals we share in common. We have developed some different formats for doing that. We have our Swedenborgian House of Studies on the Pacific School of Religion campus in Berkeley where students can come to study and obtain an M.Div. degree. New Church College has developed dispersed learning for students preparing for ordination, as well as lay people studying various aspects of Swedenborg. We have much to share with each other about our styles of teaching and the resources we have developed.

Another area of commonality is in terms of our interests in the future of our churches. Conference has instituted a bold new program called "Renew" to explore a range of future options. Their plan has these components:

- **Education.** They will explore the educational offerings in many centers and then find the best programs of workshops and retreats to be made available to others. "The goal and focus ..... is to provide teaching and learning experiences which empower people in their spiritual and inner philosophy of life." They will collect and develop materials that appeal to spiritual seekers beyond Swedenborgians.

- **New Church Centre Growth Trial.** They will have a particular center serve as a site for exploring many options for growth. "It will reach out with a programme designed to attract those for whom traditional Sunday worship has little relevance but nevertheless want to become involved with a 'spiritual centre' of some sort. The Centre will also look at ways of breathing new life into what might be called traditional activities."



*NCC Principal John Presland in school cafeteria with some of the students at Winter School.*

- **Residential Centre Trial.** They will examine what is currently offered in residential settings for workshops, retreats, etc., and consider expanding and improving such programs "The overall objective of the Trial therefore is to determine where and how residential activity can be run effectively on an ongoing basis that will not be a drain on scarce resources."

- **Communications .** A communications manager will be appointed to "provide the co-ordination, direction, and support needed for effective communications within and without the organization."

- **Web Development.** There will be someone in charge of developing a web site to attract "seekers, learners, and followers."

The British Church is taking some

exciting new steps in moving towards the future. They are seeing that this could be the time for significant changes and are exploring a range of what that will involve. This seems to be a particularly important time for us to maintain our close contact with Conference and to have an ongoing dialogue about the challenges faced by churches on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as sharing our successes.

I was fortunate while in England to be able to preach in a number of their churches, and found it an experience of being received warmly and both feeling at home as well being aware of our differences. I especially valued meeting so many fellow Swedenborgians from another culture. It was sad to leave after my time there, and I left with many new friends and with old friendships renewed. I left with increased enthusiasm for all that we have in common to be shared, and our differences to be savored. The more we can engage in dialogue, the more it will help all of us Swedenborgians in Conference and Convention.

However, if we are to invite them to talk with us over a nice pot of tea, we had better be sure we boil the water!

*The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is a Professor of Practical Theology with the Swedenborgian House of Studies, providing online courses. She lives in W. Franklin, New Hampshire, and is currently on half-time sabbatical.* ✚



*NCC Winter School students doing a small group exercise in the lecture hall.*

# Is This Goodbye to Stonehouse?

Eric Allison

The Pacific Coast Association is putting to a vote the sale of their property in which Stonehouse Bookstore and Growth center is located. If everything goes right, PCA will get \$236,000 and avert going under financially. Currently they are paying out about \$10,000 each month and only have about \$140,000 in their coffers. While the Stonehouse Bookstore is ahead of schedule in its five-year plan to operate at a self-sufficient level the PCA board feels that the risk is too great to offer further financial support. This is partly due to unforeseen expenses and partly due to a \$240,000 loss in the stock market, and the PCA board simply does not have the confidence that the store and the Puget Sound church can together raise enough money to buy the property or stop the current rate of expenditure. I don't blame the PCA. I do wish that we had a bit more time to see if we could raise the money. We already raised \$34,000 in just a few weeks and have just started to write for large

grants from outside sources.

The ministry here of the Stonehouse and the Church is a real treasure. The building will probably be sold and we will move to a new location along with all the holistic practitioners and start again—because the Stonehouse is not a location, it is a concept. In my mind it is a "New Church." It is an alternative spiritual center for those seeking the healing of body, mind and spirit. This is something which can easily slip away from us. If we Swedenborgians don't continue to pioneer this dynamic spiritual frontier, someone else will. Together, the church and the store affect thousands of people every year. We have no window to the world quite like it. I hate to see our opportunity to make a unique contribution to the spiritual evolution of North America drop into the hands of someone else. At this point in the history of our small "New Church" denomination, let us all hope and pray that we don't lose this ministry because there just wasn't enough money.

If you want to help, please know that every little bit makes a difference. Checks can be written to the Stonehouse Bookstore and Growth Center, 12600 NE 85th St., Kirkland WA 98033.



## TO THE EDITOR

### Kudos for "Breaking New Ground"

Dear Editor,

I very much appreciated Eric Allison's article in the March issue of *The Messenger*, "Breaking New Ground at the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound," for the concrete information he provides about developing a growing congregation at Puget Sound. In the past *The Messenger* has run informational articles on church growth offering theory and analysis about how to build a successful congregation, and about community-building in general. Eric's own ideas for church growth as a pastoral ministries consultant have been included amongst these. But this article is striking for its absence of argument for or against specific ways of doing things. Eric is also speaking here, as he states, from the perspective of being "back in the soup" as pastor of a congregation, not as a consultant. Here he simply lays out for us what has been done with Puget Sound, and how well it appears to be working, including specific descriptions of worship methods, song lyrics, and liturgy. I came away from reading "Breaking New Ground" with some essential information.

One thing I learned which Eric doesn't specifically articulate, but puts forth via description, is that the work of a successful congregation is like that of a successful marriage, involving a continual process of renewal—trying new things, taking some risks—then "adjusting, adapting, improving." Like a marriage, church gets old if it is not revitalized through variety and a bit of adventure in worship, music, and fellowship activity. Eric acknowledges, "Even when we got a format that was working, we had to change after a while because people got bored with it."

Second, the spirit of a congregation can be revitalized through participatory worship. When as many as six lay-

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## Parents Choice Award Goes to Puget Sound Church Musicians

Linda Sebenius and Lisa Cole, members and music-makers of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound, are winners of the 2002 Parents Choice Award.

This is no small achievement! They produced Children's CDs using members of the Seattle Symphony and the Canadian Brass as backup for their original scores. They won a gold medal over such competitors as Raffi. Geared for the tiny tot audience, the recording *Symphony Shine Time* introduces children to music in a delightfully entertaining story format. The CDs are available for purchase through their website: [www.identicalharmony.com](http://www.identicalharmony.com) (For those of you who haven't met these lovely young women, Lisa and Linda are identical twins.)



## VICE-PRESIDENT 1-year term

**Chris Laitner**  
*Michigan Association*

This is the fourth year that I have served as the vice-president of our denomination, and, as in the previous three years, I am honored to be participating in the ongoing work of the denomination. During my participation in the September meeting of the Ministries Support Unit, I tripped on a stair step and managed to break enough parts of what makes up my right ankle to effectively (very) keep me out of circulation for four-plus months. However, I did participate in both the September Cabinet and October General Council meetings via email and phone, as well as staying in contact with other centers and individuals throughout the denomination, and, by mid-January, was able to begin traveling for Convention again.

Currently, through the office of vice-president, I am serving as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Church in Washington, DC; attending the Board of Trustees of Urbana University, as the representative of the president of Convention; traveling to church centers to visit (Urbana, Pretty Prairie, and the annual meeting of the Western Canada Conference); working on various boards and committees as mandated by our Constitution; participating in the sessions of the General Council; setting

up the preliminary framework for Convention to host an international gathering of young adults in 2003; working as part of the executive committee of Convention; and generally being involved in the life of the Church. During each of the four years I've served in this position, I've tried to broaden my involvement with the Church, and it's an ongoing pleasure! We have some pretty terrific people and ministries throughout North America, and I can truly say that it's a wonderful place to be, and I'm enjoying it!

It's a privilege to serve the Swedenborgian Church in the capacity of vice-president, and I would be honored to serve another term.

## SECRETARY

**Gloria Toot**  
*Ohio Association*

I have been a member of Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church in Cincinnati for 30 years and have served on Kemper Road's board of directors many times, as well as being active in the Ohio Association. I have been privileged to serve as Secretary on General Council for about six years and would like to serve another term in this position. I think that clear communication is one of the most important aspects of working towards a common goal. I also feel I get along well with people and that I still have some energy for this job.

myself off from the information which could make the church what they wanted it to be. It's not my church; I need to respond to what people tell me they need, and if I can't, it's time to pack my bags."

Every church has to make choices about what will work for their particular situation. I know that my own congregation in New York does not favor as 'Unitarian' a slant to worship content as Puget Sound is presently cultivating. However, the context is different. As Eric openly acknowledges, the inflow of interest in his congregation generates most often from the Stonehouse Bookstore and Growth Center.

Again, much gratitude for the inspiration your work at Puget Sound is providing to everyone.

**Mona Conner**  
*New York New Church*

## TREASURER 1-year term

**Lawrence Conant**  
*Massachusetts Association*

I am seeking my third year as our denomination's treasurer. Over the last two years I have worked with Central Office to move to quarterly closings of the books and a simplification of the budget presentation. Additionally, I have helped the Stonehouse Spiritual Growth Center and Wayfarers Chapel address cash flow and growth concerns.

I am a lifelong member of the Bridge-water, Massachusetts Society. I currently serve as treasurer of that society, and the Temenos Retreat and Conference Center in West Chester, Pennsylvania. I am the president of the Massachusetts New Church Union and chair of the Blairhaven Retreat Center Board. I believe these positions combined with my business experience provide a unique opportunity to be of use to the greater denomination.

## GENERAL COUNCIL

2 lay, 1 minister for 3-year terms

**Pamela Selensky**  
*New York Association*

I was raised in the Swedenborgian Church. I am a member of the New York New Church where I have been serving as president of the board of directors for the past six years. I had served as Secretary of our board for five years prior to that and am currently the Secretary of the New York Association. I was Womens' Alliance Mite Box chair for three years and I am currently on their Nominating Committee.

I have a BA from Brooklyn College and an MA from New York University. At the end of June I will be retiring from a thirty-two year teaching career in the New York City School System.

My interests include theater, photography, and the fine arts. I am also a Reiki healer. I would be honored to serve as a member of the General Council

**John T. Smailer**  
*Mid-Atlantic Association*

I am a lifetime member of the Swedenborgian Society of Philadelphia and the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, and a graduate of Millersville University. I'm a retired teacher from Penncrest Senior High School, with thirty years as industrial arts instructor, engineering and architectural drafting, metalworking, and woodworking.

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## Kudos for "Breaking New Ground"

(Continued from page 74)

people are helping to lead worship, rotating different leaders every Sunday, everyone's energy becomes actively engaged and the group as a whole is empowered by the collective exchange of energy. Here, "where two or three are gathered in His Name" takes on a new level of meaning. And when people are personally invested in the worship service, the very heart of the congregation's activities, hopefully they will also feel more invested in serving the church at other levels.

Finally, I heard affirmed in the most unapologetic terms to date, where a pastor's responsibility lies in churches with a congregational (thus democratic) style of governance: "If a church isn't growing, the responsibility rests primarily upon the minister...I learned that if I didn't put my ego aside and earnestly seek feedback, I was cutting



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As a teacher, I developed and directed an Outward Bound Program of 4-Day Wilderness Experiences such as backpacking, canoeing cross-country skiing, rock climbing, and spelunking. I served in the US Army Guided Missiles Division and worked as merchant seaman for Sun Oil Company on oil tankers. Summer employments included working as security guard for Brandywine Raceway for eight years, home improvements and construction contractor.

My interests include the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos: fishing, stamp collecting, cooking, outdoor activities, family. My church and Temenos background consists of: past-president of our Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, chair the of Long-range Planning Committee, member of the Property Management Committee and Worship Committee, past-chair of Temenos Board of Directors.

**Rev. Ken Turley**  
*Maine Association*

I grew up in the New Church, the eldest son of the Rev. Dr. Calvin and Marilyn Turley. I remember church life in both the Portland, Oregon and Bellevue, Washington societies and was active in the Youth League. After graduating from high school in 1969 I left home and the church to explore the world. I served in several social service organizations, including work with handicapped and incarcerated youth, and pursued music. In the early seventies I went back to school and received an undergraduate degree in music. A few years later, I moved from the West Coast to the East Coast and enrolled at SSR intending to be a church musician. In 1985 I graduated and was ordained as a minister.

My first position was half-time as Director of the newly revived Blairhaven Retreat Center and Summer Camp and half-time minister of the Elmwood New Church. During this time I served on the Committee On Worship under the Council of Ministers. I also composed and performed several works of original liturgical music in contemporary style and organized a composer's workshop held at SSR.

In 1989 I accepted a call to the Swedenborgian church in Portland, Maine, where I served for seven years. That church became and continues to be an example of a congregational-led society that has developed an innovative style of worship and church polity and has produced several New Church ministers. During this time I served several terms on MINSU.

In 1996 I accepted a call to the Fryeburg New Church, where I am currently serving as full-time pastor. I am involved in the local community serving on the Emergency Response Team of the local school system, providing regular worship services at two nursing homes, coaching elementary and middle school sports and working with a group of young people learning to play jazz. I recently took a three-month sabbatical which has resulted in three musical plays for church performance which are being made available through the website at [www.jappleseed.org](http://www.jappleseed.org).

Within Convention, I am currently serving on the Committee On Worship where we are developing and producing new worship materials and music of which "Songs for the Journey" is our most recent example (soon to be available at this year's convention and [www.jappleseed.org](http://www.jappleseed.org)). I am completing my first term on General Council where I have been directly involved in developing the youth ministry within Convention. It is my hope to continue to help further the growth and development of Convention in its efforts to serve the spiritual needs of people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has been and continues to be my focus to pursue innovation while honoring tradition in all areas of church life.

## COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT UNIT (COMSU)

**Carol Lawson**  
*Mid-Atlantic Association*

I began a publishing career as associate editor of *The Messenger*, next becoming managing editor for a Harper & Row medical journal. I moved to Washington, D.C., as a publications officer for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency where I finished my government career as the public information officer in charge of the Hazardous Waste Information Program.

From 1985 to the present, I have served the Swedenborg Foundation as editor of its trade journals, *Chrysalis*, and the *Chrysalis Reader*. From 1989 to 2000, I was executive editor of *Birding* magazine. I am presently a director of the Foundation and the art director for the quarterly journal, *NeedleArts*. I am a member of the Washington church and hold an MFA in writing from Bennington College.

## EDUCATION SUPPORT UNIT (All support units are 3-year terms) (EDSU)

**Melissa Sommer**  
*Ohio Association*

I have been a lifelong member of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church and have attended many youth and NCYL activities at the Almont New Church Assembly, Conventions, and other retreat centers. As an adult, I have staffed many SCYL retreats during the past ten years, taught Sunday School, been active in Transitions, and coordinated Convention programs for kids. I currently teach elementary-aged students with specific learning disabilities or developmental handicaps.

Throughout my many experiences in youth programming, I have been consistently amazed by the love and creative energies put forth by so many of the members of our church. We have so many gifts to share with both our young people and with each other. I would like to see us harness these gifts, putting them into forms more accessible to everyone seeking to build spiritual community or to pass on the wisdom of our church's teachings. With my background in the study of literature, peace and conflict studies, and education, as well as my experience teaching learners with special needs, I have the skills necessary to be a steward for our denomination's educational programs. I would be happy to serve the church as a member of EDSU.

## FINANCIAL & PHYSICAL RESOURCES SUPPORT UNIT (FPRSU)

**Merle Lundberg**  
*Pacific Coast Association*

I graduated from University of California, Berkeley, with a business administration degree, majoring in accounting. I served as chief financial officer for Southern California Water company, controller for the city of Beverly Hills, finance director of the Irvine Water District, and finance director of the City of Manhattan Beach. I'm a retired CPA. I was leader of the Berkeley (now El Cerrito) youth group, leader of the Los Angeles youth group, western vice-president of the New Church Youth League, and director of Split Mountain Camp. I've served as treasurer and later chair of the Los Angeles church. Before term limits I served as treasurer and later chair of the Wayfarers Chapel for a total of twenty years. I was treasurer of the Pacific Coast Association and co-chair of the local convention committee when the convention was held in Malibu, California in 1999. Currently, I'm treasurer of the Wayfarers chapel and secretary/treasurer of the Los Angeles church.

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SUPPORT UNIT (IMSU)

**Philip Bae**

Philip has been working for a Stoneham, Massachusetts based company called Skyworld Interactive, Inc. (<http://www.skyworld.com>) for more than three years, from building web applications to managing an entire fleet of web servers. His current title is Senior Web Application Developer. His primary job is designing/creating web applications that fit clients' needs and budgets and exploring new technologies to bring the company and clients up-to-date. Currently, he works from his home in Bayside, New York. His recent involvement with Bayside Church (<http://www.baysidechurch.org>) includes putting the entire Studia Swedenborgiana online.

## MINISTRIES SUPPORT UNIT (MINSU) (two to be elected)

**Barbara Halle**  
*Illinois Association*

I have served on MINSU for almost four years, the first year fulfilling an unexpired term. This past year I have been chair of MINSU and am very grateful for the guidance and support from all on this support unit as well as from other Convention friends.

The opportunity to serve Convention in this useful way has been rewarding and challenging. If elected to serve a second term, I will look forward to helping oversee and implement new projects that MINSU has begun as well as finding new ways that we can connect with and serve our individual ministries.

**Rev. John Maine**  
*Western Canada Conference*

Our Nominating Committee has asked me to serve on MINSU, and I would be honored to do so. My record of service with our church has been fairly brief but intensive. I have been a member of the church for approximately ten years during which time, as a lay person, I served in nearly every possible capacity at the Kitchener, Ontario church: as a board member, Sunday School teacher, event coordinator, men's group leader, fund raiser, pastoral care worker and worship leader. In 1996 I began seminary studies part-time while continuing to pursue my career in community social services. The following year I became the first student at

SSR to take degree-credit courses via the Internet as part of my master's degree in theology at a seminary located much closer to home (Waterloo Lutheran Seminary at WLU, in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario). In 1999 I was consecrated for service as a Lay Leader and in the following year I completed a unit of training in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and was subsequently hired as an on-call chaplain for St. Mary's Hospital in Kitchener. In 2001 I graduated from seminary, receiving the university's Gold Medal for Theology. In the meantime, I had received a call to pastor our church in Edmonton, Alberta, and, in fact, on the day of my graduation, my wife Catherine and I got a flight out to that city and the next day bought a house there! This past year I have served at the Edmonton church where I continue to learn far more than I ever had done at seminary about ordained ministry and church growth! It has been a very enriching year, serving wonderful people, and I continue to be deeply engaged by the challenges of growing the church and discovering what it means to be a Swedenborgian in the present cultural context.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

**Nancy Freestone**  
*Pacific Coast Association*

Having been a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church for 25 years, I am deeply honored to have been selected as a nominee to the Nominating Committee. The critical function of the Nominating Committee is to search out, recognize, and recruit the most qualified people to serve our denomination in a variety of interesting and important jobs. This requires a number of years of not only serving on boards and support units, but also having perfected the art of "schmoozing." On the practical side, I've served on my local church board a number of times, am currently a board member of the Pacific Coast Association, am secretary of the National Alliance and served a partial term on General Council. As for "schmoozing," that is where I truly excel! I'd be delighted to receive your vote of confidence when we convene in the beautiful state of Maine. Thank you, everyone.

**Laurie Turley**  
*Maine Association*

I have been employed for the past ten years as a music teacher. I have taught on the elementary, junior high and high school levels, and am currently teaching

elementary school music full time in Conway, New Hampshire, just over the border from Fryeburg, Maine. For the majority of my 16 years as a member of the Swedenborgian Church, I have focused most of my attention on the youth and the music of the church, feeling that my strengths are best offered there. I have served as the youth choir director at three churches and as the music director at two. I was the music director at three national conventions and am currently serving the Fryeburg New Church as the adult and youth choir director, as well as the youth group leader. I am currently serving as secretary of SSA, a term which will end this year. I have attended all but two of the national conventions that have been held since I joined the church 16 years ago, and have served as a delegate at all that I attended. During all this time, I believe I have formed friendly, honest relationships with a wide range of the members and clergy of our church.

I would be honored to serve the national church as a member of the nominating committee, and would do my very utmost to serve the church with integrity.

## SWEDENBORGIAN HOUSE OF STUDIES (SHS) BOARD

**Rev. Andy Stinson**  
*2-year unexpired term*  
*Mass. Association*

I grew up in Maine and have deep roots there. I joined the Army Reserves at the age of 17 and have served for several years. Presently I am a chaplain in the Army Reserves. I have a BA in history and a BA in geography from the University of Southern Maine. I was a commercial diver for four years before going to the Swedenborg School of Religion. From there I completed a Masters of Divinity from Andover-Newton Theological School as well as the Program at the Swedenborg School of Religion. I was ordained in 1999, receiving a call from the Elmwood New Church in Elmwood Massachusetts where I am presently serving. I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the board of the Swedenborg House of Studies. I feel my recent experience gives me a vital and useful perspective on theological education. Personally, what I am most interested in is ensuring that qualified candidates for ministry are set up for success in their initial call.

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# Convention 2002 Schedule

(See [www.theportlandchurch.org](http://www.theportlandchurch.org) for detailed Convention information.)

## Living For Peace

**Tuesday, June 25:**  
COM Executive Committee

**Wednesday, June 26:**  
COM Arrivals  
Pre Convention Arrivals  
4:30 Choir Rehearsal  
5:30 Dinner  
(First meal provided)  
7:30 COM Reception

**Thursday, June 27:**  
7:30 Breakfast  
9:00 COM Meeting #1  
12:00 Lunch  
1:30 COM Meeting #2  
4:30 Choir Rehearsal  
5:30 Dinner  
7:00 COM Meeting #3

**Friday, June 28:**  
7:30 Breakfast  
9:00 COM Meeting #4  
12:00 Lunch  
1:30 COM Meeting #5  
4:30 Choir Rehearsal  
5:30 Dinner  
7:00 COM Meeting #6  
(if necessary)  
General Council  
Arrivals

**Saturday, June 29:**  
7:30 Breakfast  
9:00 General Council  
Meeting  
National Church  
Trustees Meeting  
Delegates Arrive  
12:00 Lunch  
Free Time  
4:30 Choir practice  
5:30 Dinner  
6:30 Preparation for  
Worship  
7:00 Maine Association  
Opening Worship  
8:00 Opening of  
Convention  
Article IV  
Words of Welcome  
President's Address  
9:00 President's Reception

**Sunday, June 30:**  
7:30 Breakfast  
8:30 Worship Preparation  
9:00 Choir Rehearsal  
10:00 Convention Worship  
Communion Service  
Theme of "Peace"  
SSA Banner  
Processional  
12:00 Lunch  
1:30 Business Session

3:00 Free Time: Volley  
Ball, Frisbee, Trips,  
Socializing  
5:30 Dinner  
7:30 Opening Music and  
Singing  
Keynote Speaker:  
Cathy Whitmire,  
Quaker  
9:00 Reception

**Monday, July 1**  
7:30 Breakfast  
8:30 Opening Worship  
9:00 Business Session  
10:15 Break  
10:30 Mini courses  
12:00 Lunch  
Women's Alliance  
Luncheon  
2:00 Johnny Appleseed  
Play (preceded by  
SSA meeting)  
3:30 Business Session  
5:30 Dinner  
7:00 SHS Corporation  
Meeting and  
Worship Experience  
8:00 Reception  
9:00 DeadSU Dance:  
Featuring:  
"The Participants"

**Tuesday, July 2**  
7:30 Breakfast  
8:00 Memorial  
Communion Worship

9:00 Break  
9:30 Business Session  
(elections)  
10:30 Mini courses  
12:00 Afternoon Outings  
w/Box Lunches  
Buses to New Church  
Assembly in Fryeburg  
Self Organized trips  
to area sites  
4:30 Last Bus to Fryeburg  
5:30 Talent Show  
6:30 Lobster Supper at  
Fryeburg  
7:30 More Talent Show  
8:30 2 Buses back to  
Gorham  
9:00 Last Bus back to  
Gorham

**Wednesday, July 3**  
7:30 Breakfast  
8:30 Youth League  
Worship Service  
9:00 Business Session  
(elections)  
Youth League  
Presentation  
11:00 Closing Worship  
12:00 Lunch  
General Council  
(Lunch provided)

(Schedule revised by Committee  
on Worship (COW) 3/29/02)



## MEET THE NOMINEES FOR 2002

(Continued from page 77)

**Rev. Jonathan Mitchell**  
Mid-Atlantic Association

It has been exciting to serve on the Board over the last three years, which saw our reconfiguration as a "House of Studies" affiliated with the Pacific School of Religion. I come to this position with a background in philosophy, comparative religion, and Swedenborgian theology. I hold a Ph.D. in Linguistics from UMass Amherst, and an M.A. in Swedenborgian Studies. I have been an active Swedenborgian for about 15 years, serving as an officer of the Elmwood, Mass. church, a member of the Executive Committee of the Mass. Association, and as a member of the Blairhaven Committee. Since my ordination in 1997, I have served as pastor of the Washington D.C. Society. It would be my pleasure to serve another term on the SHS Board, to provide continuity at a time when we are still building, and to bring a working pastor's point of view to the work of the Board.

**John Titus**  
Ohio Association

I am currently serving on the SHS Board and finishing my second term. Many changes have taken place during my tenure on the Board. As with any new endeavor, it takes time to fully comprehend the complexities that are involved in truly serving the needs of students, faculty, and administration relative to the needs of the church. I conscientiously undertake this monumental task and am seeking another term.

I do offer a unique perspective and try to utilize my experience, my skills, and my heartfelt caring, which are necessary in making decisions that are going to impact people's lives. I am a person who is continuously regenerating, as is our theological school and our church. I have experiences from life, work, and in the church that lend themselves to serving on the SHS Board.

A brief summary of some of these experiences includes the following:

- Sixteen years as an administrator/

student advocate in higher education

- Nine years working in mental health facilities in a counseling capacity with troubled youth.
- A Bachelor's degree in Social Services from Urbana University.
- A Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling from Wright State University.
- Professionally licensed as an LPCC (Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor).
- Experience serving on a number of boards, e.g. Montessori school, credit union, advisory boards, General Council, etc.
- Extensive committee work and professional affiliations.
- A genuine sense of caring and a joie de vivre.

I've been married for 29 years to my best friend, Bev, and have been blessed with four wonderful children and a grandson, who have helped me tremendously in prioritizing my life and in developing a deeper sense of meaning. Since the tragic loss of my daughter, Alicia, I have devoted

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## BAPTISM

**Wiberg**—Brenda Wiberg was baptized into the Christian faith March 31, 2002, at the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem, Cambridge, Mass., the Rev. Sarah Buteux officiating. Brenda is the grown daughter of Betty and Lars Wiberg (president of the Cambridge church). Water from the Jordan which had been given to the Wibergs for their baptism by the late Rev. Wilfred Rice, was also used this time. A festive meal followed.

## DEATHS



**Anderson**—Betty Maxine Anderson, born January 1, 1936, in Greenville, Michigan, daughter to Robert and Maxine Van Horn, entered the spiritual world March 13, 2002, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her memorial service was held in her home church, the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Kit Billings officiating. She was a beloved friend and mother and was lovingly committed to her life-partner, Greg Foley. She embodied the Lord's compassion and was very dedicated to the poor and needy.

**Bradshaw**—Naida Wilson Bradshaw, born April 8, 1927, entered the spiritual world March 11, 2002. Her resurrection service was held at her home church, Church of The Open Word in St. Louis, on Sunday, March 17, followed by her memorial service at the same church, the Rev. Kit Billings officiating at both. Naida grew up in the General Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, and had a very deep and special love of New Church theology. She was a member of her home church and served it in many capacities for over 50 years. She was organist, held every office at least once, and was the wedding ministry director. She will be missed dearly.

**Dennis**—Harold Dennis, Jr., longtime member of the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, entered the spiritual world March 22, 2002, following a long illness. His wife Pat was with him. Their daughter, the Rev. Judith Dennis, recently moved back home to Huron, and was able to visit her father regularly. Harold's body has been donated to the Case Western Reserve Medical School. The Memorial service is scheduled for April 28, 2002.



## Change of Address:

**Rev. Kit Billings**  
1735 Goldenhorn Ct.  
St. Louis, MO 63043  
(H) 314-439-9431  
Email: pastor@openwordchurch.org

**The Rev. Lee Woofenden's** new e-mail address is:  
leewoof@leewoof.net

**Manon Washburn**  
34 Avenida Corona  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275  
(310) 831-1815

Manon is to be united in marriage with Lee McGee, a retired maritime surveyor and marine consultant, on May 4, 2002, at the Unitarian church in Palos Verdes, California. (Wayfarers Chapel can't accommodate the number of people attending.) Manon and Lee met at an opera support function a year and a half ago in the Rodeo Room at the Beverly Hills Hotel and have been a harmonious duet ever since. Congratulations to both!



## MEET THE NOMINEES FOR 2002

(Continued from page 78)

my life to helping bring about peace in this world. I am currently working on a book in Alicia's memory that will promote this message. I love to run, bike, hike, and play in the woods. People, travel, music, reading, and constant learning are my interests. Daily, I am discovering how I can better manifest my "use" to serve my community. Serving on the SSR Board is an important way for me to be of use.

## COMMITTEE ON ADMISSION TO THE MINISTRY (CAM)

**Rev. Marlene Laughlin**  
*Pacific Coast Association*

**M**inistering at Wayfarers Chapel is providing an expanded ministerial experience that I wish to share with the students. The attendance at worship continues to grow, and in the future Wayfarers may become a field training site. This will be my last year to candidate for CAM. I believe that new members on boards is as important as continuity. My opportunity to be involved in this transition period has been very important

to me and beneficial to CAM and the church. I believe that another year of continuity is important at this time for the SHS students who will receive input from a minister who has attended three different seminaries and taught at the graduate level.

**Pat Tukos**  
*Lay Member*  
*Illinois Association*

**F**or the past five years I have had the privilege to serve as the denomination's lay member on CAM. I am hoping that you will allow me to continue in this position for at least a couple more years; I would like to see the SHS students (who began in the fall of 2001) through to graduation/ordination.

I am a longtime member of LaPorte New Church (Indiana). Through decades of active involvement on the local level I have witnessed the ever changing rolls of, and increased demands on, our ministers. As part of the SHS/CAM team, I am committed to doing all I can to help provide the Swedenborgian Church with successful ministries. If re-elected, I will fulfill my CAM duties to the best of my abilities.

## Cleveland Update

**J**ean Bestor reports, "On March 17, 2002, we had a joint service at the Swedenborg Chapel with General Church members. Their minister, the Rev. Garry Walsh, assisted by the Rev. Junchol Lee, gave the sermon and also a memorial tribute to Frank Theriault, who died February 27<sup>th</sup> after a long illness. Frank was a longtime member dedicated to Swedenborg's writings. As always, it was a delight to hear so many voices, and the repast following the service was much appreciated. Jean Alden had decorated the chancel beautifully with lilies and cyclamen. Because of Peter Synnestvedt's illness, Jean also stepped in to play the piano for us.

"The Rev. Junchol Lee is looking forward to having a protracted visit from his mother and a niece from Korea. We have already met Mrs. Lee; this time she will have more time to see many of the places of interest in Greater Cleveland."





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.

## You Have to Boil the Tea Water

Wilma Wake

Of all the things I learned on my recent visit to our Swedenborgian seminary in Manchester, England, the most important is how to boil water properly for tea. John Presland, the principal of the school, gave me a tutorial in the college kitchen. First you have to warm the pot. Then you add the leaves or bags. Now, leaves are quite the traditional mode in Lancashire, England, and I did want to be proper. You must have the pot with leaves waiting beside the kettle for the exact moment a roaring boil is reached and then immediately pour on the water. To even move the kettle to another part of the kitchen to get to the teapot can ruin the effect of the full boil.

Then, of course, it must sit, or steep, for a few minutes; the exact number seeming to be a rather intuitive knowing in the British soul. To be really correct, of course, you use bone china cups. And you pour the milk into the cup before you pour the tea. Then you drink. Ahhhhh. The best tea of my life! Everywhere I went, I found myself in tea heaven. And the British Swedenborgians were quite clear about a major difference between them and us. They ALWAYS boil that water properly for tea. Many shuddered at the memory of tea they had been given by North Americans that was made with tepid water.

My life has once again changed; I returned to New Hampshire with another suitcase full of tea [mostly leaves], and I watch ever so carefully for the exact moment of that boil! I'm sharing this insight with N. Americans I meet. I give out a handful of tea leaves and then reveal the esoteric Secret of the Boiling Water. I think magical things can happen over a good pot of tea. One of my

goals is for Convention and Conference members to share many fine pots of tea [in person and at a distance over email and telephone calls] as we work to deepen the relationship between us.



Glenyce Eckersley, part of the NCC team, and author of four successful books on angel and near-death experiences.

During my six weeks in England, I had an incredible opportunity to see some of what N. American and United Kingdom Swedenborgians have in common and how we can share our differences. I was working for New Church College during my time there, teaching in their Winter School and exploring with them different ways we have of approaching the teaching of spirituality. They use what they call a "dispersed model" of education. It is similar to what we might consider "distance education" in that packets of material are sent out to students all over the United Kingdom and the world, with one in the Czech Republic and one in Moscow. However, it differs from most distance education in N. America in that most students have a local tutor available to work with them on the lessons, which gives them the local contact not usually available in distance education. All students are invited to the College for the Winter and Summer School where there are several intensive days of classes and opportunities for tutorials, especially for those who live at a distance.

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