

# THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

December 2003

## PREPARATION for the SPIRITUAL WORLD

Wilson Van Dusen

As we become older we may go through a spontaneous preparation for entering the spiritual world. It is as though the Lord foresees our dying and the considerable transition this involves. Out of great love He begins to prepare us while in this life for the spiritual life to come. While nearing 80 years old both my wife and I have observed these changes in ourselves. We have talked of them and even joked about them.

What are these spontaneous internal preparations for the next world? It is as though countless things of great moment to others in the common culture no longer matter. This includes the popular entertainment world: who is in, who is now a star, the latest shows, etc. There is talk of some new and famous stars, and we are amused that we have never heard of them. We can't keep up on, and don't want to keep up on, the latest fashions. Another subject for jokes is concern about the longterm future. A gentle reminder that we won't still be in this world settles that. Some are concerned about how flashy their cars are. We are only concerned that it still runs. In a word, worldly and material concerns fall away as no longer of real consequence.

At the same time the human and spiritual aspects of existence become more important. Even with failing health we both want to remain useful. We work together as volunteers putting away books in the Children's Room of the public library. Without us, or people like us, this well-used facility would close. We become concerned about the quality of lives of others. It is painful to watch others harming their lives. We might well say something diplomatic to them. The quality of lives becomes prominent. We see others on different paths and have some sense of how much satisfaction they find on their unique path. It is as though all people become equal. We have found what is meaningful to us and are pleased to meet others on paths meaningful to them. The real parameters of our world have become spiritual.

My wife and I are also sensitive to people we meet who already seem to be angels. And this cuts across all lives. One

was a roofer who had a dog who climbed the ladder to the roof to be with his master. We met an abbot of a small monastery who seemed to have angels about him. These angelic people seem unfailingly kind and gentle. They notice beauty so well and beautify the world by their presence. They are totally unpretentious, considerate, honest, and ready to help out. One must be careful not to ask too much of them.

The total effect of this development is that one feels in heaven part of the time. It is the third or celestial heaven that Swedenborg describes. This development doesn't come about through church or spiritual study. It just slowly takes place with aging. Both my wife and I face increasing physical limitations. It is as though I am being forced to participate in this world less and to spend more time just observing and reflecting. Without reading Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* this slow change might not be recognizable. But with *Heaven and Hell* it is quite recognizable. It is toward the third or celestial heaven, the world of love, feeling, and affections.

This development is spontaneous, given by the Lord. It is probably given to many, but those who know little of the spiritual world may not recognize it. This is a surprising confirmation of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*. For some years I was aware *Heaven and Hell* was not describing some Never-Never Land we reach some day. Rather it is partly describing the real internal aspects of this world. And the better we see them here, the better off we will be in the world to come.

Some people react against the view of the writings that we are merely recipient vessels. The implication is that God is real Life, and we are just recipients of life.

Some people object to being just recipients. My reaction is the opposite. What an honor to receive Life, all there is! That is plenty. When I learn I am being prepared for death I am pleased and honored. How considerate the Lord is.

I searched Swedenborg's writings, asking if they spoke of this preparation for dying. I found no direct, clear reference to it. But if you search for everything of preparation in the writings there is a good deal. You

(Continued on page 156)

*In effect, the whole of our life, even in its tiniest aspects, is a preparation for our spiritual destiny.*

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Julian Diary: Firestorm 2003 • Review: Eternal Wellness • Awakening the Inner Warrior  
• Parish News: Cambridge, Southwest Florida

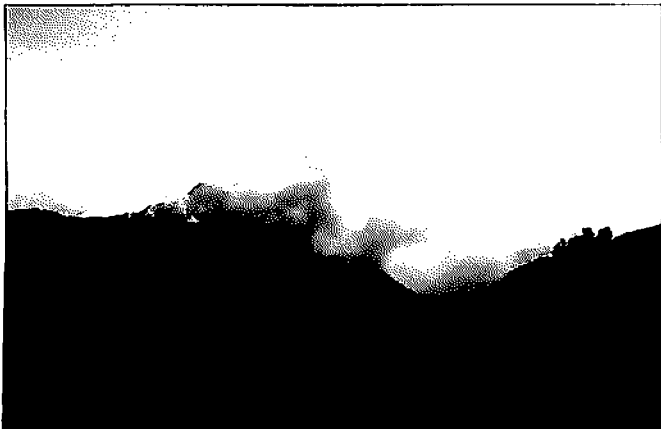
December 2003

# Julian Diary

## Firestorm 2003

October 26:

Vicious Santa Ana winds wake us, leaves and small branches being ripped off trees, hitting the house and littering the deck. The cats are nervous. A black cloud with fingers of orange far on the west horizon in an otherwise brilliant blue sky. Our clothes are whipped around our bodies as we step out the door. An air of apprehension at the community church where Steve and I sing in the choir. Many of the members were evacuated in the 2002 fire, and they're edgy. "This could get ugly," a choir member murmurs during the service. What is she talking about—it's so far away. We get home and turn on the news. Large parts of San Diego are on fire, and the fires are out of control, and ours, the one they call the Cedar Fire, apparently started somewhere between Julian and Ramona when a lost hunter sent up a flare in that part of the Cleveland National Forest. Then the winds drove it 30 miles west in two hours. But the winds are changing. And there's no air support, and the CDF resources are stretched thin. Half of Southern California is on fire. Steve drives to a lookout point to take a picture. But it appears most people in Julian don't feel threatened. That night, the electricity goes off for a few seconds and is back on again. Then off, then on. Disconnect the computers.



*The beginning. (More photos on pages 155, 160, 166.)*

October 27, 7:30 a.m.

The electricity is off. I call Kristi, Linda, Jack's Market. It's off all over town. Some of us, luckily, have one old-fashioned phone that isn't dependent on electricity.

We discover the D batteries are all too old to work in the radio. At 9:30 a.m. we drive up to the hardware store and step into gloom. Hey, Sherrie, I joke, why's it so dark in here? "The next person who asks me that is going to get a slap alongside the head," she laughs. We buy six D batteries, then go to the corner market to get some cheese, because Jack's market has closed temporarily so that owners Michael and Tammy can make sure their house is ok. Lines already 10 deep in the market, people are buying bread and deli and beer and soda to stock their Rvs to wait it out in Borrego Springs, in the desert 30 miles northeast down Banner Grade. They can't do anything here with the electricity off. We can't either. I buy some deli meat and salad fixings when Jack's reopens. Tammy guesses at the weight of the meat and undercharges me. They're putting blocks of ice in their coolers to keep things from spoiling. I go home and try to make some calls outside the area, with no success. We're listening to 600 on the radio. The electricity is cut off to save power in some areas, is the vague explanation. Some people in Ramona, 25 miles west, have been evacuated to Julian High School. Late in the afternoon I get through to our friend Fran in Hemet, 70 miles north of Julian.

"Come stay here," she says. "I tried to call you and couldn't get through." Ironically, we had discussed our visiting her soon. It's going to be sooner than we'd planned. The local gas station can't pump gas without electricity. Steve has only a quarter tank in his car. If we leave, we have to go

through Santa Ysabel and hope for gas in Warner Springs, we can't go through Borrego, we'll get stuck there. Maybe we can make it to Temecula, we know we can get gas there, and drive on to Hemet.

It's two hours before dark. We begin packing some things in the car. We might as well go to Hemet, our food will spoil, we can't work or cook or take showers, so we should probably leave. There's no indication that the electricity is going to be turned back on. I call Kristi and Jeff, our friends who stayed with us during last year's fires when they were evacuated. "We're packin' again," Jeff says. It would be another two weeks before I'm in contact with them. I call an old friend who moved to Temecula two years ago, a contractor who has done most of the work on my house. He says he's been trying to call me. "Leave now, we've got airbeds here, stay with us and go to Hemet in the morning, don't take a chance." He gives me directions again—I was only there once, and the thought of driving to his house in the dark is daunting. I can't reach Fran

*(Continued on page 155)*

### THE MESSENGER

Publisher: The Communications Support Unit  
Published monthly, except July and August, by the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

December 2003  
Volume 224 No. 10  
Whole Number 5285

Typesetting & Layout  
Town & Country  
Press, Plymouth, IN

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@julianweb.com

Business & Subscription Address:

Central Office  
11 Highland Ave.  
Newtonville, MA 02460  
E-Mail: manager@swedenborg.org

The opinions of the contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the church. Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$12.00 a year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscription from a member, \$5.00 a year; single copies \$1.00.

Deadline for material: Six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

## Julian Diary Firestorm 2003

(Continued from page 154)

again. Linda, my neighbor across the road, is housing the Pine Hills Theater director and his wife and a van load of theater props and sets. Pine Hills is only five miles away. But she's confident we're ok. I ask her if we can boil some eggs for breakfast. She has propane and a gas stove. She boils the eggs and brings them over.

Candles lit at 4:30 p.m., all over the house, upstairs and downstairs. When my younger daughter was in her candle-making phase she gave me scented candles for every holiday. They were so beautiful, I didn't use them, but now I haul them out of the cupboards and shelves and light them, hey, Kelly, I'm burning your candles. *Thank you.* We blow them out at 10:30 p.m. and go to bed. I actually sleep, probably from exhaustion. It's the last sound sleep I will have for a month.

### Morning, October 28

Still no electricity. I try to call Fran and tell her we're on our way to Hemet in a few hours. I can't get through. I suddenly get through to my son in Morro Bay, on the midcoast of California. "We're evacuating today, let everybody know, here's the contact number at Fran's. They haven't said we have to evacuate, but we're going because the electricity's been off for over 24 hours and there's nothing we can do here." "Tell me when you get there," he says. "Don't fool around, leave now, the wind could change."

"We're ok, no need to unduly alarm anybody." I look around my home.



Free emergency supplies in town hall.

Small steel file, Walter and Silky in one cat carrier, the hissing has stopped, they're in too close quarters to fight. Clothes—has Steve taken his good sweaters? If we go on to Berkeley to the COMSU meeting, it will be cold. My computer. Some family photos in a frame on the wall. Pull it off the wall and put it in the car. An album. My collection of writings in notebooks, but wait, there's more in the storage cottage, no time to go through that...Steve's computer, food in the coolers, current bills, financial records, insurance policy, Messenger files, December issue stuff that isn't in the computer. We'll be back soon, no point in throwing everything in the cars only to spend three days unpacking when it's all clear. But—well, I dump my autographed copies of Jack Smith and Betty MacDonald's books into a plastic bag. I get through on the phone to Carol Lawson in Virginia. "We're evacuating," I tell her. "Here's the contact number."

"Make sure you take your vitamins with you," she says. I head downstairs, get a plastic bag and shovel my vitamin containers into it, throw the bag in the car. Keep jamming vitamin C and stay ahead of the stress. A numbness, I can't think anymore, if my house burns, 40 years of collected books, a library. Should I take my reference books. Stop the dithering. Leave. Let go.

### Noon October 28

We should leave now. Somebody in town said Santa Ysabel was open this morning, but they may not let us through if we don't leave now.

Wait, Steve says. He's watering all the plants. "I'm not through watering yet."

"Try to wrap it up, we need to go."

We start down the hill at noon. After only a mile, smoke obscures most of the view on either side of us. At the Williams Ranch entrance, a man and a woman stand very still at the edge of the road with their two horses, waiting. The air doesn't

clear until past Mesa Grande. Twenty minutes later we pull into Warner Springs' only gas station. They have gas. Cars lined up five deep. I buy two Ben and Jerry's ice cream bars, look up and there's Eric, owner of The Warm Hearth in Julian. What's happening, any news? "Julian's been officially evacuated." His face is expressionless. "We got through Santa Ysabel, but everybody's being routed to Borrego now, they evacuated the evacuation center at Julian High."

Ok. This is one of those long, drawn out dreams you wake up from and cry, thankful it wasn't real. Yeah. We reach Fran's home in Hemet in mid-afternoon and get settled. Unpack. Cats contained in the master bedroom, where we're housed. Keep the door shut. What for dinner. We're settling in as though we're there for an ordinary visit. Chat. Try to get news. But the news is mostly about the fire destroying Lake Arrowhead, because now we're closer to Los Angeles than San Diego. Fran's tenant lives in her old house that is across the road from my house, but we don't call him because he's a volunteer fireman. Not yet. Wait. Go to the movies and see *Runaway Jury* to get our minds off it. Wake at 4:00 a.m. in a state of panic.

### October 29

*Family members calling in offering housing in case we are burned out. I call Martha in Central Office to tell her we're ok, don't know about the house, but tell everybody The Messenger will be late. Don't even think about The Messenger, she says, so glad to hear from you, will get the word out, everybody's just concerned that you're ok.*

Outlying areas around Julian are on fire, firefighters are trying to get it under control. On the news, three firefighters in the area of Julian have been killed trying to keep the Paradise Fire and the Cedar Fire from joining. Then the report is two. Then one killed and two severely injured. Reporters are jumping on each others' reports, without being able to check out facts.

(Continued on page 166)

## PREPARATION for the SPIRITUAL WORLD

(Continued from Cover)

gradually come to the conclusion that everything of this life is preparation. So this preparation in old age is simply one more aspect of a life of preparation. Let us review all the various aspects of preparation:

- a) Being born and the long slow discovery of one's body and what it can do.
- b) The complex social discovery that one is a person among others.
- c) Hopefully the discovery of our unique love of the life and our ideal and most useful role (*Heavenly Doctrine* 54-56).
- d) We live our whole life with two angels of heaven and two demons of hell who play some role in our discovery of the

potentials of good and evil (*Heaven and Hell* 295).

e) We receive influx of the Lord our whole life because the Lord is our innermost (*Arcana Coelestia* 1999.3).

f) The structure of our mind is the same as that of the spiritual world's (*Heaven and Hell* 38-40).

g) Much of this active role of the spiritual in our life is unconscious (*Divine Providence* 120).

h) Our love of the life and our moral development prepares us for a specific community in heaven with which we are associated even in this life (*Heaven and Hell* 438).

i) Within seconds of the heart stopping we enter the spiritual world where we are prepared for the spiritual destiny the quality of our life has prepared us for (*Heaven and Hell* 421-527).

In effect, the whole of our life, even in its tiniest aspects, is a preparation for our spiritual destiny. In view of all this it is no real surprise that some aging persons may become aware of internal changes that prepare us for the transition into the spiritual world. I feel that Swedenborgians have an unusual advantage in having reliable information on the life to come. To my knowledge, Swedenborg's direct experience over some 27 years of the world to come is unique. This is in great contrast to the gross misinformation of some religions. The near-death experience shows that within seconds of the heart stopping we awaken in our spiritual body, as Swedenborg indicated. Yet it is still being taught that we wait eons to rejoin our material body. This is based on the materialistic idea that we could not possibly live without a material body. These people had not experienced that we already have an excellent spiritual body.

I am pleased to find that we are prepared in this life for the life to come. I am sure many have noticed this and perhaps describing this will help others to notice it.

*Wilson Van Dusen is an author, retired clinical psychologist, mystic, and Swedenborgian scholar. He lives in Ukiah, California.*



## Point of Light

Rachel Rivers

The Christian story originates in a point of light: A light that is so small that there is nowhere that it cannot enter, and so powerful that nothing can extinguish it. All of the powers of darkness fight to enslave this light, to stifle it, to control it, to force it to surrender, to destroy it. Yet to no avail. The purity of the light remains. In fact, as the light is welcomed into each new mind and heart, it grows in beauty and splendor.

The presence of this light changes everything. It doesn't magically transport us out of a world of struggle and challenge, but it gives us all of the resources we need to make the journey. It gives us the resilience to see the possibilities of hope, where without it we might only see despair. It gives us the insight to see new directions, where without it we might only see dead ends. When we are frightened by the dangers before us, it gives us the strength and courage to persevere. When we suffer loss, large and small,

it provides us comfort that in time melts away the pain and leaves us the love. When we are living lives far off course from what we are capable of and what we really believe in, it whispers to us that there is another way.

This light is inviting each one of us to take the moments of our days and make them matter. It seeks to help us see the truth of when we need to be strict and hard, and when we need to be soft and yielding. It is inviting us to see past our judgments and limitations—of how we see others and how we see ourselves—and to realize the good deeds we are capable of, and to do them.

This light is God incarnate: Love itself manifest in a human life that we might as a human race recognize the image in which we are created and raise ourselves into its light.

May the true joy and peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

*The Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers is pastor of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.*

Reprinted from the Christmas 2002 San Francisco church newsletter.



## IMPORTANT CHURCH DATES

January 8-11, 2004—

Wayfarers Chapel Board,  
Palos Verdes, CA

January 23-25, 2004—

FPRSU, Newton, MA

February 12-15, 2004—

MINSU, Ft Myers, FL

March 26-29, 2004—

SHS Board, Berkeley, CA

July 7-14—

General Convention  
Kitchener, Ontario Canada

August 26-29, 2004—

MINSU, St. Louis, MO

Nov 4-7, 2004—

General Council, Wayfarers Chapel



# Awakening the Inner Warrior

John Rogers

*Author's Note: The following article was adapted for The Apple Seed from a ritual-based sermon I delivered in April, 2003. It was entirely done in meditation, with members of the congregation actively participating by doing readings I had prepared from many faith traditions and spiritual paths.*

In our modern age we equate the warrior with war and violence and the worst qualities of men. We look to our leaders and the most successful businessmen and see them display the ugliest masculine energy, which is really the shadow of the warrior expressed only in the unhealthiest ways. Even women who expect to do business in this world must adopt this unhealthy male energy. In this false expression of the warrior, the real warrior has been lost and its power stripped away by "new age" softness, which is a response to the unhealthy expression of shadow in a cycle that goes round and round. Today we will honor the authentic warrior in all of us as the energy which embraces life, celebrating its entire flavor, fearlessly engaged in the action of living.

Can you imagine a time or event in your life where you ignored the warrior voice inside you? Imagine a time when you let someone cross your boundaries, or you walked away from a fight you knew was right, watched passively as injustice was done to another, settled for less than was due you, let yourself be talked into doing something you didn't want to do, or any other similar time or circumstance, including staying in an unfulfilling place out of fear of change and challenge.

We all have several such stories to tell, as the warrior is the most ignored and misunderstood voice of our time; and in *thinking* of our own time of not paying heed to the warrior within, we may connect to it again, and engage the voice of the warrior to embrace and actively respond to life.

Imagine that we have all made a choice, to take a conscious journey to a

place where there is no veil between what we show to the outside world and our inner world where we feel protected. Be sure everyone, the warrior is here within all of us. It is that part of ourselves that protects emotional boundaries and asserts our needs in the world.

In this place, death is not even on the list of the worst things that can happen to us. In this place, the worst thing that we can do is attempt to restore the veil of fear that separates us from each other and our most creative expression in this world. As Don Miguel Ruiz says, "Death is not the biggest fear we have; our biggest fear is taking the risk to be alive and express what we really are."

The warrior uses fear as an engine, not as a brake. In this place, we can cry out, we can sing, we can laugh with sheer madness, or we can sit in silence and everyone will know why we cry, why we sing, why we laugh and why we are silent. Starhawk expressed our desire for commonly held experiences in this quote, "We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been, a place half-remembered and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time." Community. Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done; arms to hold us when we falter; a circle of healing; a circle of friends; someplace where we can be free. Sound familiar? Does it resonate with some distant voice vibrating from deep inside, or do we really experience this already?

In this place, we don't look back at how we may have failed; we only see all that we have learned on our journey, and we only seek to keep walking on our path drawing out what next we will encounter that will enrich our lives and give us wisdom. The warrior energy in-

side all of us moves us forward if we allow it, and we can use it to find the courage to change. Allen Cohen says it well in this quote, "It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power."

Here we love deeply, we share freely, and we are not concerned with correcting each other or overtly trying to teach each other. Here we know that all of us are teachers and students in the same breath. Here we do not concern ourselves with complaining about what we have been given, we do not compare ourselves with others. Here we know our strengths and our weaknesses are not opposites, but complementary energies which allow us to be both teacher and student in the same breath. The warrior does not need to boast, for this energy is always seeking growth. In humbleness comes the ability to accept lessons from many divergent sources. When we encounter people who make a show of themselves, we know there is something hidden. Behind aggression there is fear, and behind brazen independence, a fear of loneliness is lurking. The warrior in us is not afraid to look into the mirrors of other people's expression.

Here we do not see the world in dualistic terms, we do not see good and evil, we do not see mind, body and spirit. Here we see all of these convenient labels as traps for our ego and we know in our deepest selves that we have all the energies of the universe in us and the only distinction we make between them is the proper expression at the proper time. Here is one, there is no there, there is no then, there is no them.

Our egos are very eager to reduce the world into sets of opposites that can easily be understood and categorized. This view has cheapened our experience and robbed us of true understanding. It allows us to separate ourselves from the shadow, to exile parts of us that we don't want to own,

*(Continued on page 158)*

## Awakening the Inner Warrior

(Continued from page 157)

and in doing so the shadow is expressed in ways we cannot control or understand. Until we learn to embrace the shadow as a part of us and God, we will continue to be at war with ourselves. Until we can see God at war, we will continue to petition some "other" to save us. We will continue to deny that we are one with those that seek war and violence, and we will never be able to rise above this conflict within us.

Here we know that masculine and feminine are not dualities, but energies that are whole in every man and woman. Only those who feel disconnected feel the need to see these complementary energies as separate in male and female. Here we know men can nurture, and women can protect and fight. When Rosa Parks got on that bus, it was the warrior in her that sat in the front, it was the warrior that drove Joan of Arc, the warrior that moved the feet of Mary to Bethlehem, the warrior that led Jesus to the temple, and the warrior that stays the hand of aggression in the midst of conflict and danger.

In this place, we are connected to all that is, all that was, and every possibility of what may come. We flow like rivers, we explode like stars, and we gently wave in the breeze like tall grass. Rabindranath Tagore says it perfectly here, "The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures. It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers. It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow. I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment."

We accept that life and death are happening all around us and we know neither is beginning nor end.

No one can invade this place because everyone is welcome here. We see ourselves in everything and everyone. We welcome with joy the ones who seem

most different, and soon we see the oneness we have *with* that expression of ourself. We replace the "them" with a new awareness of our wholeness. We always win when we seek to embrace, and the warrior is the energy that we can tap into when it seems hard to embrace an enemy. We win with love. Says Edwin Markham so eloquently, "He

*Community means  
strength that joins our  
strength to do the work  
that needs to be done;  
arms to hold us when  
we falter; a circle of  
healing; a circle of  
friends; someplace  
where we can be free.*

drew a circle that shut me out. Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout; but love and I had the wit to win. We drew a circle that took him in."

Also, Eugene V. Debs draws a connection in this quote, "Years ago I recognized my kinship with all living things, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on the earth. I said then and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free."

Here we know we will turn in circles, encountering the same energy and situations over and over again. How we deal with these each time marks the direction upward or downward of our spiral through life. I found the perfect expression of this energy in a book called *Warrior of the Light*, by Paulo Coelho, "A warrior of light knows that certain moments repeat themselves. He often finds himself faced by the same problems and situations, and seeing these difficult situations return, he grows depressed, thinking that he is in-

capable of making any progress in life.

"I've been through all this before," he says to his heart.

"Yes, you have been through all this before," replies his heart. "But you have never been beyond it."

Then the warrior realizes that these repeated experiences have but one aim: to teach him what he does not want to learn.

Here we understand that the pacifist and the war-monger are the same, each out of balance and expressing the false duality of good and evil. Here we know that peace accepts conflict in the spirit of growth, and here we don't confuse peace with quiet. As Spinoza so wisely explains, "Peace is not the absence of war; it is a virtue; a state of mind; a disposition for benevolence; confidence; and justice."

Here we fight for each other, we support each other, we take up arms for each other, and we do not fear, because fear is always what we are fighting. We know we are here to teach God as we are taught by God, and we acknowledge that our wish for safety here is a denial of the eternal; our wish to be safe in this temporal world is our unwitting denial of our place in the everlasting. A boat tied to a dock is safe from the ocean's violence, but boats were not created to be tied to docks.

Here we are not afraid to draw our boundaries. We know we will be loved for who we are, and we boldly act on our inner voice when it tells us to walk away from danger. We know that not all battles should be fought, and we recognize those who simply challenge us to cover their own fear of life.

Here we do not measure our experience in possessions; we do not count our conquests. We do not fight to destroy, we do not battle to win, we compete to learn, we gain wisdom from each struggle, and we love our opponents as ourselves.

Again from Paulo Coelho: "The warrior knows that the gazelle's power lies in its strong legs, the power of the seagull lies in the accuracy with which it can spear a fish. He has learned that the reason the tiger does not fear the hyena is because he is aware of his

(Continued on page 159)

## Awakening the Inner Warrior

(Continued from page 158)

own strength."

He tries to establish what he can truly rely on. And he always checks that he carries three things with him: Faith, hope, and love.

If these three things are there he does not hesitate to go forward. Here we do not hide our fears, we do not boast our strength and we do not point fingers at the fears of others nor celebrate their strengths.

Here we don't judge ourselves when we fail or go astray from our path. We understand that life is not full of certainties, and we overcome each obstacle by accepting it as a lesson. Paulo Coelho is heard from again, "Everything is concrete and everything is meaningful. The warrior does not sit comfortably in his dwelling, observing what is going on in the world around him. He accepts each challenge as an opportunity to transform himself. As some of his companions spend their lives moaning about their lack of choice or passing judgment on others' decisions, the warrior transforms his thought into action. Sometimes he chooses the wrong goal and pays the price for his mistake without complaint. Sometimes, he swerves from the path and spends a great deal of time only to end up back where he started. But the warrior never allows himself to be discouraged."

Here we seek to be a good meal for the universe which feeds us all our lives. When we are still, we are ever ready to be engaged again and do not allow ourselves to ever feel bored. The warrior calls this "the peace of the cemetery." He remembers a passage from Revelation: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

Here we honor all the myriad expressions of the one mystery of life as equal, and every conflict as an opportunity to gain wisdom on the journey. We do not need to prove someone else's path is wrong to have faith in our own.

Here we do not judge our neighbors

as evil, but that does not mean we stand by while people are murdered, mistreated, and oppressed. Our leaders have become so caught up in a righteous fervor to declare others evil, they not only immerse themselves in false duality, they forget the teachings of their faith, and the energy of the authentic warrior seems to be lost on them. Once more from Paulo Coelho: "A warrior knows that all are one and that each individual action affects everyone on the planet. That is why, when confronted by the suffering of others, he uses his sword to restore order."

But even though he fights against oppression, at no point does he attempt to judge the oppressor. Each person will answer for his actions before God and so, once the warrior has completed his task, he makes no further comment. A warrior is in the world in order to help his fellow man, not to condemn his neighbor.

We see ourselves often waiting for the perfect moment to improve our lives, looking off into some distant future where things will suddenly improve and we know in our hearts that our now is being forsaken while we wait for that future or labor on about our past. If we continue to wait for the perfect, ideal moment we will never set off on our journey. We all require a touch of madness to take the next step.

We can use that touch of madness, for it is impossible to foresee every circumstance we will encounter in our lives. When we realize that there are difficulties which we had not reckoned with in advance, we must fill our hearts with determination, sharpen our warrior swords and seek alternative paths with courage to meet the challenge with joy.

We have lived Good Friday; we have let ourselves die, we have left our ego's chatter and clutter in the earth, in a tomb. We can hear the warrior voice speaking to us from on the wind and from deep in ourselves. It awakens us from our regenerating sleep. We can now respond with joy to life in all of its forms, all of its moments without the ego's judgments and let the fullness of the spirit erase the line between Darkness and Light.

I would close with a wonderful quote from Henry David Thoreau, who said, "We must reawaken and keep ourselves awake, by an infinite expectation of the dawn."

*John Rogers is a member of the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church.*

Reprinted from the Portland newsletter, *The Apple Seed*, October 2003.



## Enterprising Angels

Please CHECK YOUR ATTICS!

As *Messenger* readers may have learned over the past several years, I have been engaged in writing a book about the golden age of Swedenborgianism at the turn of the last century. The book is called "Enterprising Angels." Many New-Church groups have been, and are, helping me, and I feel so grateful for their support.

Now I am looking in particular for album entries, memoirs, photographs, etc., related to 1892, 1893, and 1894

showing which Swedenborgians attended the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition and World Parliament of Religions, which closed the Fair. Any additional help will be greatly appreciated.

—Carol Lawson  
West Farm, Rte 1  
Box 4510  
Dillwyn, VA 23936  
email: [chrysalis@hovac.com](mailto:chrysalis@hovac.com)  
Phone: (434) 983-3021





# TO THE EDITOR

## The Crisis of Islam

Dear Editor,

I was pleased to read Stephen Koke's review of *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* by Bernard Lewis (October 2003 *Messenger*). I must admit that these days when I look through the catalogues I receive from a variety of Christian bookshops and see titles such as this one I shudder. So much of what Christianity has to say about Islam seems overwhelmingly negative—if I read Mr Koke's review correctly, this may well provide a more balanced approach.

Stephen's final thought is to "... wonder if the Qur'an has been taken too externally in violation of some internal sense it was supposed to awaken." I attended a dialogue group of Christians and Muslims some time ago in which the topic of Jihad was discussed. Quite apart from its common translation of 'fighting,' the word Jihad may also be translated 'striving,' and has

very much in common with Swedenborg's commentary on the various wars in the Old Testament. The highest form of Jihad is an internal striving, an eradication of evil from within the individual. Lower forms are limited with careful rules, as Messers Lewis and Koke noted—somewhat like the limits placed upon revenge in the Old Testament ('eye for eye, tooth for tooth' Exodus 20:23 & 24).

In the last few years I have developed a great love and respect for the Muslims I have met. I find we have a great deal of common ground—concerns, fears, understandings, loves. I listen to their occasional angry rhetoric and hear their frustrations with the West and its religion. For example, one Muslim spoke to me about the way Christian aid agencies sometimes force the Bible upon Muslims in need. He points out, quite rightly, that this is not charity, it is bribery. I believe it is high time that all thoughtful Christians (Swedenborgians in particular) stood up to some of the fundamentalist hype floating around the Christian media. We need to put in a bit of striving ourselves.

Rev David A Moffat  
New Spirit  
PO Box 934  
WODEN ACT 2606  
Australia



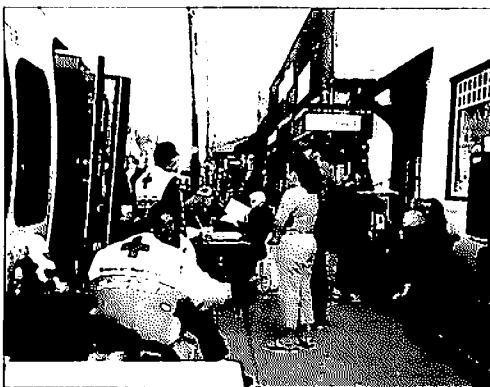
## Julian Diary: Firestorm 2003 (Photos continued)



A boy waits with his dog.



Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation gives aid.



Left: Red Cross Disaster Relief outside Town Hall. Above: Buddhist monk comforts child.



Photo by Carolyn Cole, Los Angeles Times

## AFTER THE WAR

As a cloud of haze lingers on  
my mind looks to Babylon,  
a city of war that was recently put upon.  
A city so old where civilizations grew  
and now in its grasp,  
a witches brew.

An Iraqi boy bathes in a mist-filled canal.  
Nearby that ancient city of bacchanal  
where old Nebuchadnezzar once stood,  
and mighty rivers once did flood,  
now mired in controversy and more mud.  
We will change you! Democracy embrace!  
As for ancient Babylon, not a trace.

Our leaders want your oil.  
Our leaders want your cubits  
and your soil.

Seek the ancient city.  
The hanging gardens and its history  
for without, reduced, and lost its sense  
of mystery.

After the war, the young boy bathes  
after the war the dawn's still rays.  
Comfort me and whisper now that  
Old Nebuchadnezzar  
will have his ways.

Ancient city of Daniel  
look upon the blue-glazed spandrel gate  
of something more than mud-brick glaze  
and hate.

In the water of Iraqi haze  
a young boy meditates on earlier days.

Upon great ziggurats  
and ancient gardens high  
of the fertile crescent and centuries gone by.  
America is not to change your ways!  
Eternal culture below our waves!  
A mighty kingdom once did come  
of beautiful gates that did succumb.  
But be not afraid, old city of sand  
for the boy still bathes and wonders grand.

—Jeff Holt

Jeff Holt is a history teacher at Ramona High School. "After the War" is his first published poem.





## Update on the Cambridge Chapel Purchase

Sarah Buteux

On October 19<sup>th</sup> 2003, The Massachusetts Association held its annual fall meeting at the Newtonville Church. After a time of worship, our new president, Dr. Eugene Taylor, opened the proceedings with a keynote address on what it means to be a Swedenborgian. As part of his talk, Dr. Taylor provided an opportunity for members to share their thoughts about what drew them to Swedenborg as well as their favorite quotes from the writings. Dr. Taylor's remarks and the reflections of those assembled set a positive tone for the remainder of the meeting, which was limited to the presentation of the Cambridge Planning Committee's plan for the purchase of Swedenborg Chapel. Lars Wiberg and I had the opportunity to present the plan and speak about the many and varied ministries operating through the chapel. Following is an outline of the proposal:

1. The Massachusetts New Church Union (the Union) will purchase a 50% interest in the Cambridge Chapel property for \$2 million. It will then co-hold the deed to the Cambridge Chapel property with the Cambridge Society, which will own the other 50% interest in the property. The \$2 million will be used to pay off the mortgage held by Swedenborgian House of Studies.
2. The Cambridge Society will have the right to full use of the Chapel and grounds.
3. The Cambridge Society will bear the responsibility of day to day maintenance costs, but will split the cost of all capital maintenance projects with the Union.
4. The Cambridge Society will earn an additional 25% interest in the property when Sunday attendance in the months September through June exceeds 65 on average for a period of five consecutive years.
5. The Cambridge Society will be obli-

## Parish

gated to purchase another 25% interest in the property for \$400,000. No interest will be charged for the first ten years. After ten years, the Society will take out a direct 30 year mortgage with the Union at 4% interest for any amount remaining.

6. If the Cambridge Society should fall below a regular Sunday attendance of 25 in the months of September through June for a period of five consecutive years, the Union shall have the right to sell the property~ at which time the Union and Society will split the proceeds of the sale.

7. If the Cambridge Society is ever dissolved, the property and its proceeds will revert to the Union.



A question-and-answer period followed. After everyone had had a chance to speak, the Rev. Lee Woofenden announced that the Union has set a date for a special meeting at which the full membership would be called upon to accept or reject the planning committee's proposal. The meeting is being held on November 16,\* 2003, at 2:00 PM at the Elmwood New Church. All members are encouraged to attend.

As the pastor of the Cambridge Society and as a member of the planning committee, I am genuinely excited about this proposal. Not only will this plan preserve the chapel and its ministries by finally bringing about a resolution to the issue of ownership, it

will also enable the Cambridge Society to function as an equal partner with the Union and provide us with a strong incentive to continue our efforts toward growth and financial self-sufficiency.

Herb Ziegler spoke eloquently toward the conclusion of the proceedings about how grateful the Cambridge Society is to its fellow churches in the Association for their willingness to consider this plan, and how this resolution will represent a positive gain for the Cambridge Society, the Massachusetts Association, the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and by extension our whole denomination. We ask for your prayers, and thank you for your support.

*\*Editor's Note: The Rev. Sarah Buteux emailed me as of this writing, November 17, that the proposal passed in the meeting of the Mass. New Church Union's full membership that took place November 16.*

## The New Church of Southwest Florida Fall/Winter Update

Good things continue to happen here in the New Church of Southwest Florida. The Rev. Nadine Cotton-Durgin and her husband Jeff arrived August 30<sup>th</sup>. After a day and a half for R&R, Nadine was busy with the Kids' VIP After School Program, "Walking amongst the people" in the byways and back alleys meeting one person after another, and delivering free bread. Our ministry has not missed a beat.

The Rev. Dick Tafel officially retired September 30<sup>th</sup>, and Linda retired from the library August 28<sup>th</sup>. Dick now works as a volunteer for Nadine, giving a helping hand wherever she needs it. A surprise retirement celebration was held by the church for Dick and Linda on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Church people, as well as many community friends and families were present. Linda was given a lovely sculptured angel which will adorn the entrance to their new home in North Fort Myers. Dick was given a sterling silver symbol of the church's

*(Continued on page 162)*

# Parish

## The New Church of Southwest Florida Fall/Winter Update

(Continued from page 161)

emblem, depicting the linking together of God, people, and the world, complete with necklace chain. They thank the church and all their friends. Dick shared with the crowd that he enjoyed every minute of his ministry in founding The New Church of Southwest Florida.

Keep asking and eventually someone will say Yes. Starting October 5th, our church has a wonderful new location for our Sunday morning worship services, at the Southwest Florida Marine Institute. Five years ago, Dick taught a values class there and the Kids' VIP After School Program was held there that year. The director said as part of the use agreement that he would like Nadine to teach a Bible class to his students. He's not concerned about the supposed separation of church and state because the Institute is a private school. The Marine Institute contracts with the Lee County School District and the Lee County Juvenile Justice System for teenagers in trouble with the law. Education and discipline are the keys to this successful program. Rev. Nadine will add a lot with her Bible and values class.

This past summer our church took ten kids to Almont Camp in Michigan. This required two vans, both of which were donated for the two weeks. Joyce Fekete donated her van as she did last year. We were able to raise the necessary funds for travel, food, motel, and all camp fees for five kids, just as we did last year. However, more kids wanted to go. Word of mouth had spread about the wonderful time the kids had last year. So, we were faced with saying "no" to five more kids. Instead of that, we sent word throughout the community for a fifteen passenger van. No luck. We then offered to swap for two weeks Dick's convertible for a van. A most remarkable story then unfolded.

The day before Dick and Linda left to drive to Convention a woman, whom Patty (our thrift store manager) and Dick had never met before, came into the church thrift shop and church office and asked about our church services and community-focused ministries. Her name is Teresa, and she told Dick and Patty that she had been following what our church was doing in the community for some time, through the weekly "New Church News" stories in the local newspaper. Teresa asked if we had gotten a fifteen-passenger van, or if someone had agreed to swap vehicles with Rev. Dick for a second minivan, both of which were answered in the negative. She then said that she would consider swapping her van for Dick's convertible for the two weeks so that we could get all the kids to camp. The agreement was finalized after Convention, and we used Teresa's van as well as Joyce's to take ten kids to Almont.

But the story is not finished yet. Teresa, her husband John and daughter Wendy, are interested in an ongoing relationship with the New Church of Southwest Florida. They came to the August and September pool and cookout church socials. Teresa, her daughter Wendy and her sister Gabriela and 7-year-old nephew Daniel, also attended Rev. Nadine's opening worship service in our new location. Daniel is enrolled in the Kids' VIP After-School Program; and daughter

Wendy became a mentor for that program on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We thought you would enjoy hearing "the rest of the story."

Rev. Nadine reports a registration in the low twenties for the Kids' Vision, Intervention, and Prevention (VIP) After School Program. Not every child comes every day, but our daily average is in the high teens. We have worked hard to get three mentors for each day. Besides the director, Rev. Nadine, our church volunteers are Joyce, Wendy, and Dick. Parent and community volunteers are Tabby, Ed, Tammy, Sandy, and Lois. We continue to seek for more help as the kids really look forward to one-on-one time with an adult. We continue to have a good working relationship with the Beach Elementary School. For the second year in a row, we use their facilities for the After-School Program. Working closely with the teachers, we complement what they are teaching by making sure homework gets done and tutoring is supplied where needed.

The work with middle schoolers continues to show promise in our prevention outreach in the community. The same can be said for our interfacing with teens and Juvenile Justice. Although we didn't have to go to court, we were part of a successful action in transferring a teen from the court's jurisdiction here to one in Georgia, where his mother lives, resulting in probation instead of residential boot camp incarceration here in Fort Myers.

The fifth and last piece of the Kids' Vision, Intervention, and Prevention Programs is family interventions. With situations arising out of our After-School Program, middle schoolers, teens, and Juvenile Justice, we have our hands full. Issues ranging from single parenting, domestic violence, drugs and alcohol abuse, and teen runaways, to financial difficulties, keep us busy interfacing and interacting with families and appropriate outside agencies. "Comforting the afflicted" is a daily mission.

Our motto is "We walk amongst the people." Our free daily bread distribu-



Rev. Nadine Cotton-Pargin and husband Jeff.

(Continued on page 163)

# Parish

## The New Church of Southwest Florida Fall/Winter Update

(Continued from page 162)

tion program helps us in this walk and gives new meaning to "Give us this day our daily bread" Through constant daily contact, caring, counseling, weddings, baptisms, memorial services, and promoting the dignity and worth of people, our ministry touches the lives of hundreds of people every day who have no spiritual connection. Simple things, like providing emergency clothing, handing out free blankets during our occasional cold spells in winter, and food from our emergency food pantry, have shown many of the people that our ministries are committed to reaching out and helping those who may need a little lift along life's journey.

The Church's thrift store is open twelve hours a day, seven days a week, because of the dedication and commitment of our volunteer store manager, Patty. This storefront location continues to serve well as our window to the public. Interfacing with visitors, shoppers, community friends, and those just wanting to visit and talk, affords us many opportunities to tell our church's story. But actions speak louder than words. Through our emergency food pantry (kept stocked partially by an anonymous Catholic benefactor), we are able to help feed the hungry; through clothes donated to the thrift store, we are able to clothe the naked; and through a listening and caring ear, we seek to comfort the afflicted. All the merchandise in the store has been donated by Beach people. The same is true of the emergency food pantry. Money raised from store sales helps defray the cost of the storefront church office and public gathering place.

It appears that we will be able to balance our 2003 operating budget. This would not be possible without the financial support of our denomination, which

has been simply outstanding. And so we say "thank you" to the boards and committees who administer the financial resources, and to everyone who has contributed to this new start-up church.

As you may recall, we are on a sunset plan, which calls for a major reduction of support each year. We also want to thank the denomination for its financial assistance in helping us get the extra five kids to summer camp at Almont this summer. Our camp program expenses were almost doubled because of this, and without a little help from the denomination we would be in the red. Restricted funds, particularly for "new facilities" and "church youth" for this fiscal year, should show a gain over the \$11,600 gained in 2002.

But there is still one big negative hovering over us. We need to find our own facilities. Yes, our new worship space for Sunday mornings is nice. Yes, the storefront provides space for a church office as well as a meeting place to interface with the public and to sell donated items to make some money for the church, even if it is bursting at the seams. And yes, the facilities at the Beach School are fine for the After School Program. But, we need more space and our own space. Our limited space means we are limited in what we can do and what we can offer. Thus, we are actively searching for a commercial building that we can remodel (in stages) and which will be able to house all our ministries under one roof. Ideally, we would like a building with extra square footage over and above our needs to rent out and provide a steady stream of income.

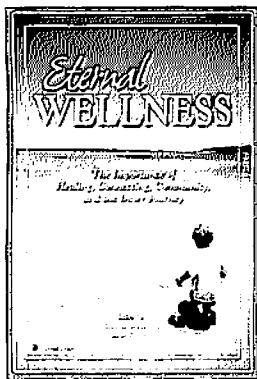
We need at least three times the space that we have with our present store front (presently 800 square feet). More space is needed to house and display a bigger sales inventory; for storage of goods; for a coffee klatch corner so visitors may be able to sit down, visit, read some of our literature, and talk with us about the church; to add fruits and vegetables to go with the free daily bread; for our emergency food pantry. Our postage size church

office (presently less than 80 square feet) needs to be expanded to include space for a pastor's office with room for counseling and small meetings, a work station, a finance corner, and storage space. A multi-purpose room for Sunday morning worship, weddings, and community meetings needs to be provided. Classrooms for Sunday School and Kids' VIP with computer set-ups are part of our space needs. Rental space to provide a steady stream of income will be needed. Our space needs listed here do not account for any new programs which may arise. Several have already surfaced: space and facilities for a summer day camp; and, space for seniors to gather.

We are mindful that a big building could become an albatross around our neck. But at the same time, we do want ample space for our programs which have been time tested and accepted by the folks on Fort Myers Beach. Money for meeting people's needs is still our first and foremost priority. However, lack of space, especially in one central location, is a big handicap and impedes our ministry. So, we will be doing our best to get "that" building which meets "most" of our needs without compromising our programs of meeting people's needs. Our best requires us to aggressively pursue funds for our new facility. We are looking at raising upwards of \$100,000 to go with the \$85,000 we have already raised. Big gifts, small gifts, ongoing gifts, one time gifts, pledges, matching funds, challenge gifts, grants, gifts of stock and property, bequests, and inclusion in wills, are some of the many ways we plan to raise these capital funds and possible ways you may be able to help us. A charitable gift may save you and your estate money. We will be pleased and honored to work with you as we continue the message and ministry of the New Church of Southwest Florida. Our new mailing address is: 2801 Estero Blvd., Unit N, Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931.

Dick and Linda Tafel

(Parish News continued on page 167)



## *Eternal Wellness:*

**The Importance of Healing, Connecting, Community, and the Inner Journey**

The Chrysalis Reader, edited by Carol S. Lawson & Robert F. Lawson

The Swedenborg Foundation, 2003.

*Reviewed by Rebecca Eliot*

The tenth year of the Chrysalis Reader is a good one—an inspiring anthology of essays, stories, and poems. Each speaks of the author's journey within to spirit, or as an expression of Spirit's touch.

I knew I was in for an eclectic yet spiritual path from the editor's first remarks: "... searches for the source of spiritual well-being following interior passageways ... a map that includes heart and feeling." These pieces certainly do include heart and feeling, as well as invoke reflection and consideration of some new perspectives.

I greatly enjoyed the book. It has been an honor to read and receive its gifts, along with a chance to share my impressions. The Reader begins with a quote from Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*: "At every step of our journey, divine providence focuses on our eternal state. . . Thus, due to the nature of the divine, it follows that some-thing eternal is in everything it does, overall and in detail."

"The Old Priest," by Paul Gordon, sweetly tugged at me on all levels because of the priest's struggle to make sense of the Divine and its ways, when one's basic tenets of religious beliefs are being called into question. That which has made everything in one's life make sense is now being deleted. For me, this story compassionately reminded me of the age-old struggle between ego in its comfort zone, *vs.* the nudging to growth by the divine self. "You may not like it, but it tells us who we are and why things are as they are. It tells us what matter and why we matter. Take that away, and what would we be?" 'Free?' the child offered."

In a piece by Lani Wright, I found the words of encouragement I've been seeking in my own journey when I sometimes feel like a desert wanderer. "If one can still experience awe, maybe faith is recoverable too, though perhaps not instantaneously. . . Faith is the hard and endless work of constant re-orientation from choices made in fear to choices made from love. . ."

This collection of stories, poems and essays winds to the center and back out again in a journey ending, as always, in "TRUST," a graceful poem by Thomas B. Smith.

The editors have done a wonderful job in gathering together this collection. I know anyone would feel loved and grateful to receive *Eternal Wellness* for the holidays, or even just as a way to say, "I walk with you on this journey, Friend."

*Rebecca Eliot is a member of the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church.*

To order, call (800)355-3222.



## Discussion Questions for *Eternal Wellness*

*Wilma Wake*

Here is a range of questions on some of the stories and poems in this Chrysalis Reader. Pick the ones that appeal to you most individually for journaling or jotting notes on, before your group meets. During the group, you may want to decide together which questions to focus on. You may also have questions to add—especially from those selections that aren't represented here.

**Group Discussion:** You might like to have a facilitator for each discussion [either having one person always facilitate, or take turns]. The facilitator can make certain that everyone has opportunities to share in the group, and that the focus stays on issues related to that book [unless the group decides to go in another direction.]

**A possible format is:**

1. A few minutes for gathering, greeting, getting settled. Agree on a time for ending, any break time.
2. Facilitator offers a short prayer or meditation.
3. Facilitator goes around to each member, giving each a few minutes [perhaps timed] to share their overall reactions to the book and to list particular questions they would like to have discussed.
4. Facilitator takes notes on the preferred discussion questions, and then takes a few minutes with group to pick the top few questions, or to list them in order of preference for discussion. There might be a starting idea of how much time to spend on each question.
5. Any one question could get the group to think of more aspects to the question and to keep going deeper. The facilitator could stop discussion at the end of the agreed upon time for a given question and ask the group: "Do you want to stay longer on this question, or move on to the next one?" It's OK however you do it—even if you don't get beyond one question. What matters is that everyone in the group has some say on how the group uses its time.
6. If some people are talking much more than others, the facilitator could stop periodically and check in with those not saying much. Or there could be a limit on how long anyone can speak at a time. Or on a given question, each person could have a couple minutes to give a personal response before a discussion begins.
7. The facilitator might remind the group if the time is getting short. You might want to end discussion ten minutes early for a "check out" from everyone as to how this was for them, and what they might want different the next time.
8. The facilitator should end the group on time, reminding

*(Continued on page 165)*

## Discussion Questions for *Eternal Wellness*

(Continued from page 164)

members that discussion can continue informally among group members in the weeks ahead. A short prayer could be said at the end.

### Some possible discussion questions:

1. What readings appealed to you most? Did you read all of them? If not, which ones did you choose to read? Why? [you might want to start with each person taking a few minutes to talk about what reading or readings particularly drew her/him, and share why with the group].
2. What do you think of Carol Lawson's questions in the introduction [p.XI]: "...which practices are for us, which ones to trust? Is it possible that one size fits all?...Can one overdose on too much of a good thing?" What are your thoughts on this after reading the book? Carol Lawson says that if you persevere, answers will come from inside. Are you finding answers inside for you? Did any answers change from anything you read in this book? Can you share them with the group?
3. In *Values in Tension*, John Hitchcock talks about the value tensions of a culture. He ends by saying [on page 12], "But if we recognize and look beyond the fears that are symbolized in all the apparent upheaval, we may become quiet and hear a new inner voice. And what that voice will convey to us is the strength to endure and to work with values in tension." Are there ways in your own life in which this seems to be true? Compare what Hitchcock is saying with the Swedenborgian quote on page 53. Does Hitchcock seem to say something similar when he writes on page 9: "Once we accept the deep need for values in tension as a means of moving forward in the evolutionary process, it is then necessary to discover how to handle that tension nonexplosively. . . . We need to look newly toward the wholeness of reality; wholeness is precisely the holding or honoring of both values coming to tension in any given situation."
4. How did you react to Barbi Schulick's, "The Awakening"? Have you ever become intensely involved with something that you later regretted?
5. What was your reaction to Dorothea Harvey's story of her life's mythology? You may want to write a mythology of your life to share with your discussion group. Share what you learned from writing it.
6. How did you respond to Van Dusen's story of healing from his cancer? What do you think about this statement he makes on p. 59: "I am in accord with the Eastern Orthodox saints who viewed both bodily symptoms and outer difficulties as from God. It is just a shift in focus. Both are coming from God to present a lesson to you." Do you find this true in your own life? How? What is your response to people who say that illness is not

"from" God, but that God is present in the healing? Rabbi Kirshner's book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* seems to take a perspective different from Van Dusen's.

7. Did you enjoy the cartoons in the Rose/Taylor article? Did they help you understand Swedenborg's concept of freedom in a different way? How does that concept impact your sense of freedom in your own life?
8. What is your response to Asher Pucciarello's poem on page 77? What feelings does it evoke in you?
9. Did you relate to the experiences of Jean Arnold in "Cooking as Meditation"? What, if anything, touched your own feelings about cooking and meditation?
10. How did you like Bernie Segal's article on laughter? What do you think of his sense of humor? How do you use or avoid humor in your own life – especially in relation to health? Do you agree with his statement on p. 93: "Through love and laughter, one maintains a sense of connection, despite the difficulties of life." How is this true or not true in your life?
11. Did you enjoy reading "The Manifold Manifestations"? What meaning does it have for you and for your life?
12. What reactions do you have to the poem by Carol Lem on pages 127-28? Does it evoke memories of any time in which you were listening to music? Are there times when music has served to connect you with God? Can you share this?
13. What was evoked in you by reading "In the Blink of an Eye"? Did it remind you of feelings you had about 9-11? How did you feel connected with/disconnected from God on that day? What do you think of the author's use of the "blink of God's eye" to describe his spiritual life? Are there ways that this could describe anything in your spiritual life?
14. What was evoked in you when reading "The Exit Tamer"? Did it connect with any experiences of loss in your life? How did you feel God present/absent for you in those times?
15. What was your reaction to "Quaker Peace Vigil"? What did the print at the front of the article evoke in you? How do you relate to the author's statement on page 159, "With my many everyday commitments, it's a hard struggle to stay within that stillness." How do you feel about his thoughts on how Quakers handle this? Did you hear Cathy Whitmire's talk at Convention of 2002 or read it in the November 2002 *Messenger*? Does what Gary Sandman says remind you of what Quaker Cathy Whitmire said then on Quaker simplicity? Are these ideas part of your own approach to spirituality? Why or why not?

*The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is Spiritual Ministries Consultant and part-time minister to the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church.*



## Business Manager Wanted

*If you are looking for  
A PART-TIME CHURCH-  
RELATED JOB . . .*

*Your church's  
outreach publishing program*

**J. APPLESEED & CO.**

*is looking for  
a new business manager*

For particulars e-mail resume to  
The Communications Support  
Unit at [chrysalis@hovac.com](mailto:chrysalis@hovac.com) and  
we will get in touch with you.

## Julian Diary: Firestorm 2003

*(Continued from page 155)*

I start thinking of how we're to carry on if we're burned out. Four a.m. I'm awake reading my insurance policy. I see a light in the living room and wander out. Fran is sitting on the couch with the TV on mute. We know we won't get any concrete news about our houses until somebody tells us who is in our neighborhood, and, of course, nobody's there. We sit on the couch with tears running down our faces.

## October 30

**I**t rages on, Julian is ringed with fire, we start to hear that Cuyamaca is devastated, Harrison Park is gone, huge losses in Pine Hills. Our fire-fighters are taking their stand to save the town. From all we can get on the news and the internet, they've circled the historic district of the town to save it.



*Cuyamaca: pieces of a life.*

## October 31

**W**e get word from Fran's tenant, and another neighbor, that our houses are still standing, and the fire is being contained. The wind changed. It didn't jump the highway. Nothing much changed over the weekend, but the electricity is still off. The weekend is filled with talk to relatives, Yeah, I think it's ok, yeah, we're ok.

## November 3

**S**teve and I and Fran drive back to Julian, to see what's actually happened. Gary and Debbie's house; our cat boarder; the organic farm; Lori; Paddy; Joanne; Kristi and Jeff. All ok! Up to Pine Hills. Dorsa's house is ringed with burned brush and trees, but her house is still standing. Up another mile to Forrest and Dolo's. Nothing left but a chimney. The house where I practiced solos with Dolo, the church organist at our community church. They lived here for 30 years. "It's good, kid," she'd say when I got it right. "We can bottle that one." She was close to 80, but she delivered Meals on Wheels to seniors who were homebound, and played piano for the yearly melodrama for over 20 years. Gone. We go to the post office. "Hi, Amy," I greet a post office worker and member of the Julian community church. "How are you?" Her face is the color of putty. "Oh, we lost everything." They're staying with their children in Escondido. We hug, and she carries on with her job. At Town Hall, we learn that Vee, who has organized and directed charitable donations in the town for years, has lost her home and all her cats. She is still there, helping people who need help.

## November 5

**I**n town, the Red Cross, Allstate Insurance vans. Tables set up. FEMA. Town Hall converted to a relief center with free clothes and goods. Buddhists giving \$500 to every person whose home burned. American Legion serving free food for a week. I take some soup to a friend who broke her arm during evacuation. She's back in her house, but she can't cook. People hugging and leaving messages on a board



in front of Town Hall so they can find each other. I see Margaret and Ted Elmgren. Everything ok? *No. We lost our house. We're living in our trailer.* They're nearly 80. I hug Margaret. Her arms are around me and her hand is trembling on my back. "We're ok. We're alive, we have each other and we love each other very much, and we'll be fine. We just need a few things for now." They're putting donated basic necessities into their van. Lost everything. I think about Lost Everything. I realize I've been thinking about it for days. People sifting through rubble, for one small remnant of a lost life. It could be us, and somehow, we were spared.

We leave for the COMSU meeting in Berkeley on November 6. When we return, we'll go back to our house. In the Shattuck Hotel in Berkeley, I wake in a panic sometime in the night, not knowing where I am. I sit on the side of the bed and get oriented. It's ok, it's ok.

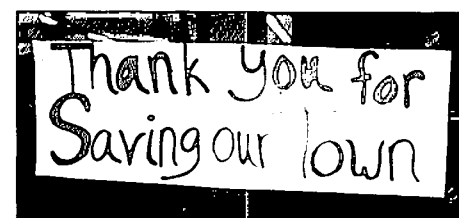
When we finally get back into our house, our part of the neighborhood looks as if nothing ever happened. The outlying areas look, as one fireman described it, like a nuclear winter. Over 600 homes destroyed in a population of 2000 plus.

Kitty and Carl, our car mechanic and his wife in Harrison Park, are on their burned out property in a trailer. "We're going to rebuild." They're helping provide meals for others who have lost their homes.

The rains have come, and already the greening, the healing, has begun.



—Patte LeVan



# Parish

(Continued from page 163)

## New York

On October 1, the Rev. Steve Shannon arrived at the New York New Church to begin his work as their interim minister. The Rev. Robert McCluskey resigned last spring, after 15 years of service at the New York church. Steve Shannon's denominational affiliation is with the United Church of Christ. He comes from Northfield, Minnesota. The New York Church congregation officially welcomed him with a luncheon after the service on October 19<sup>th</sup>. They were joined by the Rev. Ronald Brugler, president of our denomination, who participated in the worship and communion service.

## Cleveland KeyCorp Employees Clean up the Swedenborg Chapel

Lois K. Krebs

KeyCorp is a large regional financial services firm headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, which annually facilitates a nationwide program called Neighbors Make the Difference Day. The program gives interested employees the afternoon off, to get out of the office and do some hands-on volunteering in their communities. This year, about 8,000 Key employees nationwide lent a hand in the 2003 Neighbors Day, representing about \$1 million in salary dollars donated to community projects. Key employees were in their 13th year of making a difference for thousands of nonprofit organizations across the country.

As an employee of KeyCorp, I am privileged to be able to participate in Neighbors Day, which is actually a half-day of volunteer activities throughout the markets where Key has offices. Since I am also the secretary for the Cleveland Swedenborg Chapel, I had mentioned this annual event in a council meeting earlier this year, and council decided to list the Chapel among the projects for which

KeyCorp employees could do their Neighbors Day service this year.

Neighbors Make the Difference Day is one of the largest structured corporate volunteerism programs in the country. The event is held in September, and this year it occurred on Tuesday, September 9, 2003. Most KeyCenters in our area usually close at noon on Neighbors Day so that employees can participate in community service projects such as this. God gave us beautiful, warm weather for our afternoon, and five of my co-workers and I set to work shortly after arriving. The minister of our Chapel, Rev. Junchol Lee, had prepared a list of tasks for us to tackle, both indoors and out, in case of rain. He had also assembled a variety of hand tools and cleaning supplies.

We decided to take advantage of the sunshine and see how much we could accomplish outdoors. We split into small teams of 2-4 people, and weeded the flower beds at the perimeter of the Chapel, trimmed a huge lilac bush, tidied the children's garden, picked up debris, and dramatically cut back several trees in the front yard that were obscuring our signs. The most noticeable tidying was in the back lot, however, where we cleared out years of trimmings and brush dumped there during previous yard-work sessions. At 4:30 PM, some of us had to resume our second jobs of taking care of our families, so we called it a day—a great and productive day. We had filled 21 of the tall paper bags commonly used to collect brush trimmings, plus created a 4x5x6 foot pile of scrub to be hauled away. All told, we contributed 24 person hours of manual labor. We were all hot, tired and dirty when we departed, but pleased—our efforts were quite an improvement, according to Junchol and the congregation. We didn't have time to start the indoor work, but there's always next year!

If you would like your church (or any other community organization) to benefit from the 2004 NMTDD at KeyCorp, feel free to e-mail me, at [lkrebs@mcinvest.com](mailto:lkrebs@mcinvest.com). You'll need to have your project entered into the national database by mid-June, so start thinking soon about how you'd like KeyCorp to help you next September.



## PASSAGES

### BIRTH

Cuggino—Kate and Guy Cuggino are happy to announce the arrival of Christian Thomas Cuggino October 1, by caesarean section. Kate is assistant manager in the Central Office. Congratulations, Kate and Guy!

### CONFIRMATIONS

Foster, Johnson, Lee—Dawn Foster, John Johnson, and Patricia Lee were confirmed into the faith and life of the Swedenborgian Church November 2, 2003, at the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating.

Holbrooke, Moffatt, Smalridge—Errol Holbrooke, Adele Moffatt, Diane Smalridge and Grant Smalridge were confirmed into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church June 8, 2003, at the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, the Rev. John Maine officiating.

### MARRIAGE

Pevgonen and Beougher—Elena Aleksandrovna Pevgonen and Duane Beougher were united in marriage October 2, 2003, at the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. Kit Billings officiating.

### DEATHS

Barnitz—Rai Boericke Barnitz, sister of Betty Imhoff, and member of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, entered the spiritual world October 13, 2003. Rai was a lifelong, fourth generation Swedenborgian and a member of the Philadelphia Society.

Locke—Wilfred C. Locke, a lifelong member of the Church of the Holy City in Michigan, entered the spiritual world October 26th, at the age of 92. A funeral was held for him in Port Huron, Michigan, October 30th. The Rev. Renee Machiniak, pastor of the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, and Rev. Don Doerzbacher from the Lutheran Church in Port Huron, officiated. Our prayers are with his two children, Bob and Carol, and their extended family.





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.



## GATHERING LEAVES

is a special event for women with an interest in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Women associated with various Swedenborgian organizations around the world are gathering for a retreat to acknowledge and explore their common heritage and varieties of faith experience.

**WHEN:** Friday through Sunday, May 7 - 9, 2004

**WHERE:** Temenos Retreat Center, West Chester, Pennsylvania

## EVENTS

Scheduled events at Gathering Leaves include:

- Friday and Saturday panel discussions, speakers, and workshops
- Saturday evening dinner at The Lord's New Church in Bryn Athyn
- Sunday morning church services at the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, the General Church in Bryn Athyn, or The Lord's New Church in Bryn Athyn
- Sunday afternoon tours of the General Church's Cathedral and Glencairn Museum, including a Mother's Day tea
- Time for renewing old friendships and making new ones

## GOALS

The goals of Gathering Leaves are to:

- Acknowledge our common beliefs
- Explore our differences
- Develop a respect for one another's contributions
- Create an atmosphere for healing
- Celebrate our spiritual sisterhood

**WORKSHOPS:** If you have an idea for a creative way to bring these goals to life in a workshop, please e-mail Liz Heinrichs at [history@sentex.net](mailto:history@sentex.net), phone 519-748-5643, or send it to Liz Heinrichs, 25 Stafford Lane, Kitchener, Ontario N2R 1P2, Canada before December 15, 2003.

**REGISTRATION:** If you are interested in receiving registration information for Gathering Leaves, please e-mail [information@temenosretreat.org](mailto:information@temenosretreat.org) or phone 610-696-8145 before December 15, 2003. (Registration is extended to January 15, 2004 for those receiving late notification.)

**HELP:** If you would like to help with this event in any way, please e-mail Jody Hyatt at [jodyhyatt@bluechen.udel.edu](mailto:jodyhyatt@bluechen.udel.edu) or phone 215-947-3209.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT:** If you would like to offer financial support to reduce the cost of the conference to the participants, please send your contribution to Jane Siebert, 21007 South Whiteside Road, Pretty Prairie, KS 67570.

**OTHER INFORMATION:** If you would like further information, please e-mail Jody Hyatt at [jodyhyatt@bluechen.udel.edu](mailto:jodyhyatt@bluechen.udel.edu) or phone 215-947-3209.



The Swedenborgian Church  
of North America  
*The Messenger*  
11 Highland Ave.  
Newtonville, MA 02460

Address Service  
Requested

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Plymouth, IN  
Permit No. 105

\*\*\*\*\*E0RLO1\*\*C-043

CENTRAL OFFICE  
11 HIGHLAND AVE  
NEWTONVILLE MA 02460-1852

