

Here Come the Holy Nights

By Tom Klein, Portland, OR (Portland Branch Chair)

The time for The Holy Nights' Readings is fast approaching and it is time to put in your request to host an evening. For those who have never attended, the readings are every evening during the twelve nights of Christmas. They begin on December 26th and continue until January 6th. Each evening we read from a lecture series from 7:30 to about 9:00 and then have some time to socialize and partake of the refreshments provided by our hosts and others. This type of event happens in many anthroposophic communities and has been celebrated here for about twenty years. Last year there were about 20 people each evening and 49 people attended at least one reading. It is a unique experience to attend an event like this over twelve nights at this time of the year. There are often special events on some of the evenings including dropping lead on New Year's Eve. This is an old ritual where people drop molten lead into water and try to see the coming year in the resulting structures.

This year we will be reading *The Apocalypse of St John* lecture series which we last read in 2000.

Please call me at 503-777-3176 and reserve an evening to host. I will give priority to people who hosted last year if you reserve by November 25th. After the 25th I will give out dates on a first come first serve basis. I look forward to seeing you all during the holy nights' readings. Portland Branch Holy Nights' Readings

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| 1988 | <i>St Matthew Gospel</i> |
| 1997 | <i>St Luke Gospel</i> |
| 1998 | <i>The Gospel of St John in Relationship to the other Gospels</i> |
| 1999 | <i>St Luke Gospel</i> |
| 2000 | <i>The Apocalypse of St John</i> |
| 2001 | <i>St Mark Gospel</i> |
| 2002 | <i>St John Gospel</i> |
| 2003 | <i>The Fifth Gospel</i> |
| 2004 | <i>St Matthew Gospel</i> |
| 2005 | <i>The Gospel of St John in Relationship to the other Gospels</i> |
| 2006 | <i>St Luke Gospel</i> |
| 2007 | <i>The Apocalypse of St John</i> |

Austin AGM Conference Musings

By James Lee, Portland, Oregon

The Novalis Branch hosted this year's annual general meeting and conference in Austin, Texas. I recommend that you remember both of these names because they are warm places to visit and all the folks there know how to welcome their friends to anthroposophy and a good time. This year's AGM conference was all about the historical personality Novalis and the karmic connections he had to the eternal individuality of Elijah. During the course of several lectures on the subject we were reminded that the task of all of this individuality's incarnations was to help the evolution of humanity move forward. Is this an idea we have the persistence to support with our own inner work and outer deeds?

A participant at the conference wanted to understand the meaning of spiritual scientific research, a term used by speakers who did not provide further definition. Spiritual scientific research has been a topic of interest at numerous Anthroposophical Society gatherings and I believe an open dialogue on this subject will prove beneficial. A person interested in doing research can start by becoming intimately familiar with the knowledge available in the world about the subject of their interest. The next step, that can be concurrent with the first, has the researcher looking into the world to understand what the knowledge is saying while seeking insights that are not clearly documented in the worldly knowledge base. The spiritual scientific researcher develops the additional capacity to become the instrument of the research itself, which is a distinction from research methods that utilize more removed methods to collect and analyze data. Results of spiritual scientific research could be experienced at the Austin AGM conference through the talks of Don Meltzer on Novalis and MariJo Rogers on John the Baptist. What

CALLING ALL ARTISTS AND ANTHROPOSOPHISTS!

We are launching a LOGO COMPETITION at the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society.

See page 10 of the newsletter for details

they brought was not just a compilation of facts woven together to create a story. They also brought an atmosphere into the room that was full of insight based on personal experience. Spiritual scientific research is a big subject and perhaps it can become the theme for a future AGM conference.

A couple of participants at the conference considered passé the words of Rudolf Steiner because they were

spoken or written by him almost a hundred years ago. This got me to think about a time some years ago when I was working on a project to translate a book. I heard (no reference to offer here, but it makes sense) that Rudolf Steiner explained to someone how best to translate his works. According to what I heard, the best way to translate Rudolf Steiner's works is to take in the concepts, understand them, make them your own, and then give them out again in your own words. In translation, the concepts to be translated must jump across an abyss to the new language, and ideally retain the original meaning and intent through the new words. Thinking on this I realize that we make current those concepts and ideas we take in and internalize regardless when they were first communicated. This process is comparable to digestion where we take in food that has its own worldly identity when we consume it. Through the digestion process nutrition from the transformed substance, which no longer has its original worldly identity, is assimilated and made part of the body. Likewise, concepts and thoughts, no matter when they were originally communicated, become enlivened and spiritualized through inner work. Those concepts we have fully digested and understood become fresh and full of spirit and life through this effort.

Someone remarked enthusiastically "If what is happening here is what an AGM is about then you can count on me to make a habit of going to future AGMs." My thoughts, exactly! Overall, I was appreciative of the positive and stimulating environment resulting from the many gatherings with friends, the depth of the lectures, conversation and sharing, and the amazing stage performances by actors, musicians, speech artists and eurythmists. Scenes 1, 5 and 10 from the Soul's Probation were unexpectedly moving and the presentations demonstrated what a local group with the will to achieve excellence can do with practice and good guidance. Scott Legg blew away the audience with his rendering of Capesius, no doubt honed during weekly rehearsals and, according to a friend of his, daily practice. It took many people and a community effort to bring this drama together. Woven in-between the scenes were the wistful sounds of the Vielle-A-Roue played by Theo Bick, providing a real segue from one mood to another. Many thanks to all you all! We can only hope that this kind of stage performance by local groups will be seen in 2010 at a planned conference in Dornach on the Mystery Dramas, at future AGMs, and perhaps at a North American conference on the subject.

Imagine my appreciation for the Austin Eurythmy Ensemble when they added yet another outstanding

If you are interested to learn more about the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society, please call Diane Rumage at (360) 241-7854.

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The *Portland Anthroposophic Times* is published twelve times a year by the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society in America to serve members and friends in the wider anthroposophical community. Printed copies of the newsletter are available at the Steiner Storehouse, Portland Waldorf School, Cedarwood Waldorf School, Shining Star and Swallowtail School. The newsletter and calendar are also posted on the Portland Branch website at www.portlandbranch.com.

Questions, suggestions and submissions may be sent by e-mail to anthroposophy@earthlink.net. Items selected for publication in the Portland Anthroposophic Times may be edited for style, content and length. The deadline for submissions to the *Portland Anthroposophic Times* is the first day of each month for publication in that month's edition. Submit calendar items to branchcalendar@mindspring.com no later than the first of each month for publication in the next edition.

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presentation to the conference. The weaving of highly skilled music with speech and leading edge eurythmy made for a moving and entertaining program they called "Touched Twice". According to me, their performance was unquestionably eurythmy conceived of outside the box. Yes, there were elements of classical eurythmy to be experienced, but the group brought forward new and unexpected views of the art. For example, the angles of presentation were innovative and, at times, I was amazed to see the usually rare view of the performers back sides for lengthy intervals. The pace was lively and the skill and finesse of the artists superb. I could see this show running on Broadway or in any city where art is supported and appreciated: it was truly a mainstream act.

There were workshops to attend and the one I choose was about Raphael, Renaissance Art and Esotericism. To prepare for the workshop, Kathy McElveen, the facilitator, worked with a book on the subject by Giorgio Spadaro titled *The Esoteric Meaning in Raphael's Paintings: The Philosophy of Composition in the Disputa, the School of Athens, The Transfiguration*. Through this work Kathy met the author and invited him to participate in the workshop. Giorgio came and was filled with the subject, he had obviously lived with the works of Raphael in a very intimate way and presented his profound insights as if he was sharing a dear friend with us. I walked away from this workshop with a greater sense about the depths of Raphael's works and enough information to begin appreciating and working with them myself.

During the AGM, Margaret Shipman reported on her work as the volunteer director of the Anthroposophical Society's Traveling Speakers Program. This is a program that assists smaller groups and branches in bringing speakers to their area by providing contacts, organizing expertise, financial underwriting and stimulating interaction. The speakers are chosen by the carriers of the local groups wanting an event based on their own interests. Typically a traveling speaker event takes place over a long weekend and includes lectures, a workshop, and opportunities for discussion. In the past two years speakers have gone to Kansas City, Atlanta, Albuquerque, St. Cloud, Minnesota and Sagle, Idaho, among others. Besides bringing topics of interest to the locality and underwriting the events with fiscal guarantees, this Anthroposophical Society program has as its goal the funding of future traveling speaker programs with the revenue brought in by current programs. So far the revenue stream has come close to equaling expenses, and most of this revenue comes from

gifts given by grateful participants. This is an exciting program. If you would be interested to host a traveling speaker program in your community, give Margaret a call at (323) 462-7703 or e-mail her at shipman2005@sbcglobal.net.

Complementing the entire conference was the presence of five current and former Anthroposophical Society General Secretaries. MariJo Rogers and Torin Finser with Joan Almon from the U.S. were joined by Octavio Reyes from Mexico and Philip Martyn from Great Britain. This conference truly presented many opportunities to weave relationship and hear about experiences in other countries. I was especially moved by the openness, accessibility and gentle strength exhibited by Octavio Reyes, who warmed our hearts with stories about how much difference the will can make when applied by members concerning themselves with anthroposophical initiatives in Mexico. Philip Martyn made more than a few of us in the audience want to visit Urbino on our next trip to Italy, because he so appealingly described the court there at the time of Raphael as one of the most cultured and wisely governed of its time. Also noteworthy about Raphael was Philip's saying that whenever artists worked with him, harmony prevailed.

I would like to offer one final note on the conference preparations. From the time we arrived at the AGM conference at a welcoming reception until we left for the airport when it was over, with a bag lunch in our hands, we were nourished by an abundance of delicious organic food and drink that never diminished. These conferences are a lot of work to carry and experience. The proper nourishment made it possible for participants to take in all the great offerings, and our rich nightly reviews were not so readily interrupted by exhaustion because of the Novalis Branch's attention to nourishing meals and regular breaks. Future AGM conference planners, give this group a call: they have the right recipe for success.

The Significance of Novalis

A presentation by Donald Melcer, Ph.D., at the Annual General Meeting of the Anthroposophical Society in America at Austin, Texas, October 5, 2007

Good evening everyone. I would like to add my welcome to all of you to Texas, Austin and the Novalis Branch - especially to all of our guests from out-of-state and out-of-the-country. I hope you will experience something of the spirit of Texas while you are here these

few days. Here are a few facts about Texas that may help you get oriented:

Texas is BIG. If you travel East to West from Savannah, Georgia on the Atlantic coast to San Diego, California on the Pacific, when you reach the Texas border at Texarkana, you have completed 1/3 of your journey. When you exit Texas at El Paso, you will have completed 2/3 of your journey. Then you traverse New Mexico, Arizona, and California, and you arrive in San Diego.

If you travel from Brownsville, Texas -- down at the southern tip of the state -- to the Canadian border in North Dakota, when you reach the Texas border just north of Amarillo border you are almost half-way there.

Texas is the only state that was an independent nation. Then, back in 1845, Texas and the United States decided to join up. Texas left for awhile during the Civil War, and reunited in 1866. Texas is the only state that is allowed to fly its flag at the same height as the U.S. flag. All other states have to fly their flag below the U.S. flag.

Texas has five well-known state songs. (There are 45 published songs about Texas.) The official State Song is "Texas our Texas." Our little family lived in Michigan for 30 years, and our youngest three children grew up there. One winter afternoon I was at home reminiscing about Texas and humming the State Song to myself when the kids came home from school. Out of curiosity I asked them: "Can you sing the Michigan state song to me?" They looked at me blankly, and said, "What do you mean." I replied, "You know, the state song - don't you sing it at school." They shrugged and said, "We don't know any state song," and went on their way. Well, it turns out that Michigan has no state song. And that's also true for about five other states.

Just so you'll know how modest we Texans are, here are some of the lines of four of the songs: I'll just recite them - you would not want to hear me sing them.

Texas our Texas (official state song)

"Texas our Texas all hail the mighty state. Texas our Texas so wonderful and so great...."

Texas the Beautiful

"Oh Beautiful, beautiful Texas, the most beautiful state that I know...(and it ends with these lines)... whether you live on the plains or the mountains, or down where the sea breezes blow, you're still in beautiful Texas, The most beautiful state that I know."

(Some fellow from Virginia heard this song and remarked, "Texans must not travel out of state much.")

Deep in the Heart of Texas

"The stars at night are big and bright, deep in the heart of Texas. The sage in bloom is like perfume, deep in the heart of Texas."

And lastly, the song everybody knows so well:

"The eyes of Texas are upon you, all the live long day. The eyes of Texas are upon you, you cannot get away..." (did you know this song was so popular in the late 1800's that a musician took the melody and wrote a song about some guy working on the railroad. "I've been working on the railroad ... all the livelong day...")

Well, as you can see, Texans love Texas. Obviously we have a strong Archangel. Bold, expansive, great sense of humor, brash, friendly, hard working, cooperative.

The capital of Texas is Austin. We Austinites consider our city the Crown Jewel of Texas. O. Henry, the great poet of the late 19th century lived here, and he called Austin the "City of The Violet Crown." On a cool clear winter evening you can look toward the city and see this beautiful violet halo reaching up to the sky. It isn't the effect of the bright city lights as some have speculated, because there were none when O. Henry wrote about this phenomenon back in 1894.

For those of you who are interested in spiritual geography, geologically we are on a thick bed of limestone similar to that found under the Chartres Cathedral, and also the Goetheanum. We live on a great skeleton of ancient ocean life. Sixty miles west of here is a great granite upthrust. The capital of Texas is built half of limestone and half of red granite.

And finally, the official motto of Austin is: Keep Austin Weird. People have a lot of fun here.

Just over 10 years ago a group of people who were studying anthroposophy together decided to form a branch of the Society and began selecting a name. Many names were suggested. One of them was Novalis. Many in the group didn't know much about him so they decided to conduct a study. But information about Novalis was scarce. As luck would have it, the Half-Price Book Store had recently received a huge shipment of anthroposophical books. Not knowing what these strange books were about or who would buy them, they

put them on the ultra-discount shelf. Among the books were many copies of Prokofieff's excellent book on Novalis: "Eternal Individuality". It's a \$55.00 book but Half-Price offered it for an affordable \$7.00 or thereabouts. Members bought the book, studied it carefully and felt that Austin reflected the spirit of Novalis. Austin is open to new ideas. It is open to new people from around the U.S. and around the world. And, as you can tell, the name Novalis has something to do with "newness." Novalis himself chose it because it means "new man." Another meaning is "one who clears new land." Austin has been clearing new land for development for over a quarter of a century as one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. There is the spirit of newness and accomplishment here. Austin was becoming the center for anthroposophy in Texas. So, when the vote was taken for the name of the branch, Novalis was the winner. (Until recently, I did not know how prominently the Half- Price Book Store figured into the destiny of our branch.)

We lovingly dedicate this Annual General Meeting to our namesake, Novalis.

Who is Novalis? Rudolf Steiner called him "the precursor of anthroposophy." Yet, I'd venture to say that few anthroposophists know much about him. The connection of Novalis with anthroposophy is not obvious. We hope that the presentations you will experience during this conference will give everyone a clearer picture of this high initiate who will become ever more important to mankind in the future.

Novalis was born Friedrich von Hardenberg, May 2, 1772 in the family manor in the Hartz mountains of Germany. He was a descendant of Low German nobility. His parents had become Pietists, that great mystical movement within German Protestantism. Home life was puritanical.

Young Friedrich was a delicate and somewhat sickly child who was a poor learner. In his ninth year he had a major bout of dysentery and was expected to die. But he managed to survive. As he recovered, he had a mental awakening, and soon excelled at learning.

At age 17 he was sent to live with his uncle at Lucklum near Hanover. The contrast between his parents' rather rigid and formal household and his uncle's estate could not have been greater. Friedrich was thrust into a world of elegance, fashion, and intellectual discourse. His thirst for knowledge became unquenchable. He met Schiller, and quickly became a dedicated adherent of

Schiller's ideas and philosophy. He immersed himself in the study of history and philosophy. Nevertheless, deep into his 23rd year, nothing he produced revealed the stamp of genius that was to come.

He studied the rapidly emerging sciences of that day: math, chemistry, biology, physics. He had been in the company of many of the leading German intellectual figures, all of whom recognized his brilliant mind. Novalis had done some writing, but it mostly reflected the ideas of his teachers: Schiller, Kant, Fichte, Schlegel, Goethe. Yet in just six years he would die an early death and soon be recognized as the greatest of the early German romantic poets.

Let's turn for a moment to some of the comments Rudolf Steiner made about Novalis. One of the most striking – you have heard this already – was that Novalis was the precursor of anthroposophy. This would imply that Novalis was a high initiate, one who was a major leader of humanity. Then we notice that Steiner said more about the incarnations of Novalis than any other person. He explained that Novalis in prior incarnations had been none other than the first man with a developed ego: Adam. Then he returned as Phinehas, preserver of the sanctity of the Jewish race, then Elijah the prophet, then John the Baptist, then Raphael, the great painter.

Here we must digress for a moment for the benefit of those in the audience who have not become familiar with the idea of reincarnation, especially since the theme of this conference is "Reincarnation and Karma." For most of us who grew up in this materialistic age, the idea of reincarnation, when we first heard it, seemed absurd. If we had heard any thing at all, it was about those people who lived on the other side of the world in India, and who believed that people die and then are reborn again.

I first heard about the idea of reincarnation as a teenager. Typical reactions of my young friends were: "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard of. "Whadaya mean, like I'll be reborn as a Blue Bonnet (state flower), or maybe a Mockingbird (state bird), or even maybe an Armadillo (state small animal)?" "Who are you trying to kid anyway?" "When you're gone, you're gone. That's it." Some years ago there was a bumper sticker around here that I called the "Six word philosophy of life." It read "you're born, stuff happens, you die." Substitute a four letter word for STUFF that also begins with an "S," and there you have it.

The idea of reincarnation that existed in all religions in earlier times, has been completely squeezed out of Western thinking and religious beliefs. It has never faded away in Eastern religions. It remained even within Christianity for several centuries after the life of Christ. But as external materialism invaded the religions of the Western world, the notion of repeated earth lives faded away.

What is the prevailing belief about life and death in the Western world? In a nutshell, we are told that the cosmos began about 14.6 billion years ago, give or take 500 million years, with an event called the Big Bang. Of course there was no bang at all, for there were no ears to hear and nothing to make or carry sound. The universe began from a tiny point, smaller than a pin head, of almost infinite energy and began spreading in all directions. Time and Space were born. Fast forward 10 billion years and the Earth formed out of gas and dust that had precipitated out of the original energy. Then, about 3.6 billion years ago life began as a simple single cell that had the ability to reproduce itself (to this day nobody knows how.) After a long while, vegetation appeared. The fishes evolved. Mammals came along. Life got more complex, millions of years went by, "Natural Selection" did its thing, and lo and behold, here we all are together this evening.

Your life began as a statistical improbability. One little sperm cell (with your name on it) out of thousands that were competing to fertilize the ovum of your mother penetrated the ovum wall and your life was underway. The embryo grew and about nine months later you were born. We humans in developed countries presently live an average of 70 years, almost double the average of just a few hundred years ago. Then we die.

For atheists, that's all there is. For religious people who believe in some sort of a life after death, only two things can happen. Those who have been "Good" -- which means that they have been helpful to old folks, donated to the Red Cross, not told lies, and were generally nice people -- go to a place not-of-this-earth to live in eternal bliss that is portrayed as being much like life on Earth without pain and travail, and without the illnesses, injuries and losses we suffer in life. This is heaven.

Those who have not been good go down to that eternal barbecue pit where they roast over the flames in pain and damnation forever. This is hell.

One short life, judgment, heaven or hell, or just nothing at all.

This scenario just doesn't correlate with what we can observe about life around us. Life on earth goes in cycles. Life begins with a tiny seed, grows through stages to maturity, then begins a decline and finally dies. Growth and flourishing, withering and dying -- and then the cycle begins all over again. Could this cycle be true for human beings in a somewhat different form?

Regarding reincarnation, Micheal Shermer, a scientist who writes the monthly article "Skeptic" in the magazine Scientific American takes the standpoint of "I don't know and you don't either," because there is no way to prove it by accepted scientific methods. He admits that if we knew for certain that we would reincarnate, we would not fear death, nor mourn with such intensity for loved ones who die. As Woody Allen, that droll comedian, said of death: "I'm not afraid of it -- I just don't want to be there when it happens." On reincarnation, Woody said: "If I had life to live over, I'd live over a delicatessen." And there was a fellow named Steven Wright who thought he had a solution for the problem of death when he said: "I intend to live forever." A friend questioned him. "Are you kidding? Why do you think you would be the first person never to die?" "Well," said Steven, "so far -- so good!!"

Of course we can never "prove" by conventional science whether or not reincarnation happens for anyone. Some people point to "near death" experiences as proof of life after death. However, as interesting as some of these stories are, the persons involved are not dead. So their experiences are not proof, no matter how similar their stories may be, like moving through a tunnel of light; seeing loved ones who have died; feeling bathed in warm, loving light. These could just be normal experiences of altered brain functions that accompany near death states.

Nevertheless, certain case histories are compelling. These involve children who asserted to their parents that they had been alive a few years ago and died in childhood accidents. They were able to give details of their former lives that were later confirmed, such as: where they lived, descriptions of the houses they lived in, even the names of family members. In all cases the children were so young that there was no possibility of them having learned the reported facts in the present life. Still, these stories are not proof by accepted standards of scientific inquiry.

Knowing these objections well, Rudolf Steiner simply asked his audiences to leave open the possibility of

reincarnation. Although it is not possible to prove reincarnation scientifically, it is also not possible to disprove it either.

The notion of Karma is more difficult.

Karma is about events in our lives that seemingly "had" to happen. Yet if this is true, it violates the supposition of freedom of choice and becomes synonymous with predestination.

One way of describing Karma is to acknowledge the key events that radically affected the course of our lives, but which, at the time they happened, seemed to be purely chance events. Yet, years afterward when we look at our life in retrospect, important events that seemed to occur purely by chance now appear to have been essential to the unfolding of our lives.

Permit me to give a personal example. Back in the late 1960's when I had finished my degree here at the University of Texas I was looking for a job. I was hoping for something close to Ann Arbor, Michigan so I could attend meetings of the anthroposophical study group led by Dr. Ernst Katz, a professor of physics. I had learned about the group from another graduate student who was at the University of Michigan, Allen Cottrell. There were no openings in my field at the University of Michigan. However, I had a friend at Michigan State University which was just a 55 minute drive from Ann Arbor. There was a position open in his department, and he asked me to send a letter of application. I carefully prepared the letter and put it in the mail. Several weeks went by, but no response. Then one day the phone rang - it was my friend. He said "How soon can you get up here for an interview?" I said "I'll be there yesterday." "Seriously, tomorrow if that will help." It was late in the hiring season, and I had two other possible jobs waiting. I hopped on a plane, did a whirlwind interview, was offered the job at Michigan State, accepted it, and spent my academic career there.

After I was hired, my friend told me the whole story. When he first told me about the job, they already had a candidate they wanted very much, and thought he was sure to accept the position. About a week later he accepted. Had my letter arrived when it should have, the chair of the department would have written me along with all the other applicants saying that the position had been filled. However, my letter was lost in the mail for two weeks. By the time it arrived the candidate had changed his mind and rejected the offer. Now the position was not only open, it had to be filled

immediately. I was the only candidate. That was how I got to Michigan and was able to study anthroposophy with Ernst Katz's group. Ironically, the candidate Michigan State wanted took a job with the department at the University of Texas that I had recently graduated from. This is the only time in my life that an important document was "lost in the mail" for a period of time and then was delivered just at the opportune moment.

Anyone could say "You were lucky, chance was on your side." But I could tell you many more similar stories about my life. Were they all simply happenings of random chance, or was some sort of intelligent pattern unfolding here? You can look back on your life and see similar things, for it happens to all of us.

Such occurrences can be better comprehended if we think about the kinds of **time** that affect our lives. We live in several kinds of time simultaneously. The one best known to most of us is elapsed time or linear time. It has a beginning and an end with equal intervals in between: seconds, minutes, hours, days and so on. The ancient Greeks called it Chronos. Your wrist watch measures linear time. It is also called a chronograph. Interestingly, it gained dominance in our awareness rather late in history. Not until the mechanical clock was invented could time be calculated in very small increments. The sundial, the instrument used to tell time for thousands of years could be constructed to measure time to the hour fairly accurately. But for very small intervals it could not. In today's fast world, we literally live by the minute. Our vast world of electronic technology functions in tiny fractions of a second.

We also live in cyclical time -- time that repeats itself: day and night, the seasons of the year, the orbits of planets around the sun, reproductive periods of plants, animals and humans. For ages this was the most important kind of time for everyday life, and for farmers, still is.

Then there is the kind of time I first spoke about. The Ancient Greeks called it Kairos time, or God's time. We can also call it Karma time. In conjunction with reincarnation it works like this. When we are preparing for a new incarnation, we have a period before birth when we plan what we need for our further development in the coming life. What we are able to plan is dependent on what we have accomplished in prior incarnations. Some of the things we need to do is to correct mistakes we have made in the past in relation to other people. Other things we need to do is further our development based on where we left off in the past

life. So we set goals for ourself: re-balancing errors of the past and developing new capacities. Certain circumstances must come about in our coming life to create the opportunities we need to carry out our plans. Then we are born into this current life, and all memory of pre-earthly existence is forgotten. Thus, when one of the opportunities we need comes along, it seems like a chance happening. We are free to respond to the opportunity or let it go by. Nothing compels us to act, except for the feeling that it is the right thing to do, no matter how inconvenient or distasteful it may be. The end goal, after many incarnations, is the achievement of complete self-knowledge - becoming all that a human can be through the perfection of thinking, feeling, and willing.

Here is a story of one person who completed the task, as told by Sogyal Rinpoche:

“Over 2,500 years ago, a man who had been searching for the truth for many, many lifetimes came to a quiet place in northern India and, with immense resolve, sat down under the tree and vowed not to get up until he had found the truth. At dusk, it is said, he conquered all the dark forces of delusion; and early the next morning, as the star Venus broke in the dawn sky, the man was rewarded for his age-long patience, discipline, and flawless concentration by achieving the final goal of human existence, enlightenment. At that sacred moment, the earth itself shuddered, as if 'drunk with bliss,' and no one anywhere was angry, ill, or sad; no one did evil, none was proud; the world became quiet, as though it had reached full perfection. This man became known as the Buddha.

What the Buddha saw was that ignorance of our true nature is the root of all torment of the soul, and the root of ignorance itself is our mind's habitual tendency to distraction. To end the mind's distraction, he realized, is to bring the mind home to its true nature, through the practice of meditation. For it is only through meditation that you can undertake the journey to discover your true nature, and so find the stability and confidence you will need to live, and die, well.”

Now we return to the life of Novalis. We left him at a stage in life where he was already recognized by a number of the leading intellectuals of his time as a brilliant young man. But, as yet, his life and work had no focus. That was soon to change dramatically.

He finished his studies and passed his law exam (by his own admission, by cramming), giving him a legitimate

profession. He took a job as a law clerk in the little town of Tennstedt on October 25, 1794. He was a hard worker and quickly earned the praise of his supervisor.

On November 17, he went on an official journey with his senior associate. Their destination was the nearby Grüningen Castle, the estate of Calvary Captain von Rockenthien. Their mission was to levy taxes. There he saw Sophia von Kühn, stepdaughter of the Captain. The hour of destiny had struck.

A relationship developed between Friedrich and Sophia that we people of the present time can hardly comprehend. Hardenberg decided in 15 minutes that this young maiden was the love of his life. Sophia was not yet thirteen years old. She was a school girl who had difficulty with her spelling, and was described by one author as a rather plain and simple girl. She had grown up among military people with blustering hunting parties and drinking bouts given by her stepfather. On her thirteenth birthday Friedrich and Sophia became secretly engaged. This was a high point in Friedrich's life.

Picture such a relationship in our present society. A 23 year old man falls completely in love with a 12 year old girl. He would not be considered normal. If he were a school teacher and she was a student in his classroom, he might lose his job, and even go to jail for corrupting a minor. If it were here in Texas, the sheriff might send a deputy to check his computer's hard drive to see if there was anything suspicious stored there. So, we must consider this relationship in a different light.

To begin with, it was not based on sexual attraction. In the late 1700's on through the 19th century, puberty for women did not occur until age 16 or 17. Early in the 20th Century, however, an odd change began. By mid-century the age of puberty in females had gone down about 6 months every decade. By the 1960's, it was common to see pubescent twelve year old girls, and once in awhile, even eleven year olds.

The relationship of Friedrich and Sophia was more like Romeo and Juliet. It was a spiritual relationship. Hardenberg idolized his Sophia as the incarnation of the highest ideals a human can attain, while she wrote him pleasant little notes, and twice asked for a lock of his hair. Their interactions remained quite formal for a long while.

Sophia fell ill with tuberculosis and a liver ailment less than a year after their secret engagement. It required

two painful operations. She recovered sufficiently for the couple to announce their engagement on her 14th birthday. His love and devotion was redoubled. Sadly the tuberculosis returned and Sophia began wasting away. Hardenberg's love deepened into ecstasy.

Within a week of her fifteenth birthday, Sophia died at Easter, 1797. Her death became the rebirth of his spirit. He wrote to a friend his feeling that "Sophia is one of the noblest, idealist figures to ever walk the earth." Frederick Hiebel expressed the effect of Sophia's death upon Hardenberg in these words:

"His being found its focus. The earthly name of the departed bride fused with the symbol of the heavenly Sophia, and gave birth to the mystery of love by which Friedrich von Hardenberg became the poet Novalis."

After a great ordeal of the soul, Novalis was able -- at length -- to visit the grave of Sophia six weeks after her death. There he had an experience of spiritual transformation. What was the nature of this dramatic change that came over Novalis? During the inner struggle for understanding the meaning of life after the death of Sophia, Novalis became aware of his past, his present, and his future. He now could remember his past incarnations, especially his most recent one as Raphael. He saw the image of the future *aeon of evolution* where mankind has the opportunity to create an earthly life based on the themes of compassion, wonder, and brotherhood, with the Christ as the leading example. He saw that his task in life was to present a picture of this new exalted society through poetry and song. From this time on, Novalis was equally at home in the spiritual world as he was in the physical world.

With new determination he returned to school and studied at the mining academy at Freiburg. He made the acquaintance of a wider circle of intellectuals. He met and became engaged to Julie von Charpentier, daughter of the Inspector of Mines. His love for Sophia posed no conflict for this new relationship. Sophia was his heavenly muse; Julie was to become his earthly wife and companion.

Within 18 months he wrote his first purely creative work, "The Novices at Sais", which included the now famous fairy tale, "Hyacinth and Rose Blossom." Yet it was a novel of fragments.

In the summer of 1799 his creative genius emerged. He had before him just one year of incredibly productive work before he fell ill with tuberculosis that soon took

his life. He died in the morning of March 25, 1801, quietly slipping away while his brother played the piano for him. He was 28 years old. His published works, in addition to the "Novices at Sais" were his poems: "Hymns to the Night", and "Spiritual Songs." Another collection is titled "Pollen and Fragments." His unfinished novel "Henry von Oftendingen" is probably his best known work.

His vision of the future of mankind was represented in his imagination as a magnificent Blue Flower. He called his new vision "magical idealism." Prokofieff wrote, "This prophetic premonition of a 'golden age,' of the future mystic land of Shambhala blossoms like a 'blue flower' in the soul of Novalis and is then poured forth in his entire creative work, filling it with the special 'aroma' of the future." "The motif of the Blue Flower," said Frederick Hiebel, "slumbers as a seed within the early writings of fragmentary thought; it blossoms within the tales, hymns and songs, and ultimately matures as fruit in Heinrich von Ofterdingen."

We asked artist Charles Andrade to attempt the impossible task of representing Novalis' Blue Flower in a painting. Here is his admirable result -- a painting representing the beauty of the spiritual world, the wonder of the wisdom of the heavenly Sophia, the magic of life and growth, and the peace of thoughtful contemplation. (The painting was on display during the conference.)

From an esoteric perspective, Novalis shows the heavenly vision of the coming era of humanity, what mankind has the potential of evolving: a new Earth. Sergei Prokofieff described him as the herald of Spiritual Christianity.

Novalis is the herald of the coming Sixth Post-Atlantean epoch where love, understanding, compassion and peace can prevail. Anthroposophy offers the means whereby any person of goodwill can develop these capacities to a higher level. We have reached the time in evolution where each person must become the creator of his or her own development; where each person must give birth to his or her imaginative consciousness to create the Spirit-Self.

Novalis accomplished this great transformation for himself through the struggles and triumph of his short life. Novalis is the prophet of the coming age. As if by design, he gave us a fragmentary picture of the future. In his earlier incarnation as Raphael he painted a complete picture of the coming of the Christ Being. As John the Baptist he ushered the Christ Being into Earthly

life. As Elijah, the Prophet, he proclaimed the coming of the Messiah. Prokofieff said that the motif of Novalis' life was "uniting the beginning and the end of the Earth aeon through the Christ impulse."

Novalis left his fragments for us to ponder and complete. Left them to help us give spiritual direction for building a human community based on mutual respect, mutual love, mutual understanding and support, out of our own freely acquired impulses of faith, reverence, and wonder. I would like to close with one of his poems.

Know Yourself

There is only one, which people of all times have sought in vain, everywhere - now in the heights, now in the very depths of the world -

But under diverse names, it concealed itself - always;

Always one sensed it further, never quite able to grasp it.

Long ago lived a man who revealed to children in familiar myths, Way and Key to the hidden Palace.

Though few discerned that simple cryptic watchword,

Those who did became the Masters of the Way.

Ages passed - the error sharpened our sense -- Till the myth no longer obscured Reality.

Fortunate is the one who becomes wise, who no more broods upon the world.

Who longs for the Stone of Eternal Knowledge within.

Only the discerning one is the true adept -- he changes All into Life and Gold - needing Elixirs no more.

In him arises the vapor of the holy Alembic - the King is in him -- Delphi too, and he finally grasps this:

Know Your Self.

Such is the significance of Novalis

CALLING ALL ARTISTS AND ANTHROPOSOPHISTS!

By John Miles – vice-president for the Council of the Portland Branch, Happy Valley, OR

We are launching a LOGO COMPETITION at the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society. If you have ideas for an anthroposophical logo to enhance and embrace the title:

PORTLAND BRANCH OF THE ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Please draw it or sketch it out on a piece of letter size paper.

An 'Anthroposophical Logo' would be one based on the indications of Rudolf Steiner that encourages and welcomes the reader to read on, to discover what is being said or signified.

The indications for Titles and Book-covers were mostly conversational and not in lectures, but some were collected by Hedwig Hauck and put as illustrations in her book on teaching handwork in Waldorf Schools called - "Handarbeit und Kunstgewerbe". The indications Rudolf Steiner gives are threefold:

1. The "Logo" should be truly representative of the subject [branch] that it is representing.
2. It should welcome the reader and encourage and beckon the reader to read on. This is done by starting at the top left of the page and not closing anything off. When someone made a similar title for a book cover, but it also ran along the bottom of the page Dr. Steiner stated that that encouraged the reader to keep the book shut.
3. It must be "Artistic" and drawn with true feeling.

There is also an example of this concept in metamorphosis in the Chalkboard Drawings of Rudolf Steiner pp 148-9 - "Tafelzeichnungen Entwuerfe Architektur".

Such a logo would usually cover the top side and the left side of a title and could be extended or shortened depending on the particular style and arrangement. It should signify or relate to a deeper soul or spiritual connection with the purpose of the title or piece, but not be purely symbolic. The final font may or may not be in Colonna MT which is the font above that says Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society.

Do not put any other markings on the letter size piece of paper, but write it on another piece of paper with your name, address, telephone and email address [if you have one] and place it unfolded inside a sealed letter-sized envelope. Your entry will be anonymous until a decision is reached. Once completed please hand in or mail it to John Miles, 12160 SE Mt Scott Blvd, Portland OR 97086 on or before January 7th, 2008.

We aim to announce the result and launch the logo in February, 2008. If you have questions or comments please call 503 774-4946 or email johncmiles@usa.net.

THE FOUR POINTS: Where are they today?

By Linda Connell, Los Angeles, California

The Four Points have been a method of organizing new projects for the Anthroposophical Society and its members for the last three or four years. These four task forces have been chaired by General Council members who have often used member volunteers for special projects. It is not surprising that it was time to give the points a facelift and some new life. General Council members have changed since the projects first began and we have a new co-General Secretary, Torin Finser working with MariJo Rogers. General Council members have felt a shift in priorities and so have the members. For these reasons the Four Points have been rearranged, some expanded, some combined with other points because they worked naturally together. Here is where they are today.

1. **MEMBERS' SERVICES:** Members have always been the General Council's first priority. Recently, the Members' Services task force (originally the Membership Enrichment task force) has been expanded by adding to it the Inner Development task force. Conferences and lectures about meditation, the School of Spiritual Science, and the path of spiritual development all come together as topics that are of special interest to members. One of the most successful projects under the Members' Services task force, the Traveling Speakers project, is an outcome of the work of the Membership Enrichment task force. Also, local conferences on the Foundation Stone Meditation and the training of eurythmists to do the verse belong naturally to this grouping. MariJo Rogers and James Lee chair this task force, together with Marian Leon. They will now be joined by Douglas Miller.

2. **GOVERNANCE:** This task force has been preparing to take up a revision of the Bylaws, a major project. Also planned is collecting of policies and procedures in one place (no more looking through years of old minutes to find an answer.) Marsha Post is the chair of this task force, and Gordon Edwards and Douglas Miller will undertake working on the Bylaw revisions. The General Council has worked with John Bloom of RSF Social Finance on the General Council's mission, values and board requirements at several retreats during the past two years.

3. **DEVELOPMENT:** This new task force will combine the development work done under the old Finance and Governance task force with the former Collaboration task force. This fourth point will strive to increase friends and resources for Society projects. It addresses the questions from members: Is there a plan to cope with the deficit? Do we keep track of testamentary gifts? Which are the organizations we should partner with? These questions are mirrored in concerns of the national General Council. The results of an earlier four points project was a financial report which showed it was not a matter of cutting expenses, but increasing income to make our Society healthy. One of the earlier development projects was the instituting of donor meetings at conferences and annual general meetings. This task force is chaired by Linda Connell and will soon have a panel of experienced fundraisers to assist it.

4. **FINANCE:** This task force will be headed by our Treasurer, Gordon Edwards.

Members of the General Council include: Lori Barian, Linda Connell, Gordon Edwards, Torin Finser, Anne Finucane, James Lee, Douglas Miller, Marsha Post, and MariJo Rogers. Please feel free to contact any of the chairs of these Four Points with your offers of help and your questions. They can be reached through the Society office in Ann Arbor by e-mail at marian@anthroposophy.org.

Submit Your Newsletter Articles
by the First of Each Month to:

anthroposophy@earthlink.net

Portland Anthroposophical Society Calendar - November 2007

Ongoing Events and Study Groups

African Drumming Circle

Each first Monday of the month that school is in session, at Cedarwood School, 3030 SW 2nd Avenue, downstairs in the kindergarten room (you'll hear us). No experience necessary. Bring your own percussion instrument and inspire and be inspired by your fellow drummers. Nov 5 2007, Dec , 2007, Jan 7, 2008, Feb 4, Mar 3, Apr 7, May 5, Jun 2. \$5 donation suggested - more info: Marion Van Namen 503-956-4046.

Anthroposophical Medicine Study Group

Once a month Monday 7-8:30 PM . Please contact John Takacs at johntakacsdo@hotmail.com or Kevin Kane at drkev@involved.com.

Biodynamic Agriculture Reading Group

The biodynamic study group meets once a month on the second Saturday. Please contact Sharon Parker at 503-777-9086 or by email at sharon.parker@providence.org if interested in attending.

Curative Education

Second and fourth Friday 7.30 PM - 9PM study of Rudolf Steiner's Education for Special Needs. Call Betty Baldwin for information 503-747-6367.

Eurythmy

Training offered by Portland Eurythmy on weekends and evenings. Please contact Natasha Moss at 503 233-0663.

Karmic Relationships

Working through Rudolf Steiner's Karmic Relationships Cycle of lectures. Call James Lee for information 503 249-3804.

Mystery Dramas, with Warm-Up Speech-Formation Exercises

Two Wednesdays a month, 7:30 - 9:00 PM in NE Portland. Currently working with Rudolf Steiner's *Portal of Initiation* and the *Genesis* lectures. No acting experience necessary, just a love of the Word. Call Diane Ramage at 360 241-7854 for information.

Occult Physiology

A weekly study group meets Tuesdays, 7:30-9:00 PM. A series of eight lectures given in Prague between 20 and 28 March, 1911. We are just finishing our second pass

through this book. Please join us. Contact Diane Ramage at 360 241-7854 for information.

Portland Youth Discussion Group

The Portland Youth Discussion Group, a group of people youthful in mind, body and spirit, gathers to discuss questions of how Anthroposophy compares and relates to other ideas in the realms of philosophy, spirituality, religion, economics, social activism, individual and social development, and relationships. We welcome new people who are open to exploring Spiritual Science and conducting their own research to join us. For more information, please contact Leslie Loy at (503) 819-3399 or leslielal@yahoo.com.

Portland Waldorf School Community Choir

Every Friday morning from 8:45 - 10:00 am (at the Portland Waldorf School, 2300 SE Harrison Street, Milwaukie) in the music room of the high school building, whenever school is in session. Anyone in- and outside the PWS community who enjoys singing songs through the seasons, across the centuries and around the world is very welcome, including drop ins. This event is free and a community builder. More information: Marion Van Namen (503)956-4046.

Spinning and Spiritual Science

Gathering on the first Saturday of each month, 3 PM to 5PM, to study Art as Spiritual Activity, lectures by Rudolf Steiner 1888-1923. We work with the fiber arts and spinning wheels. Call Marsha Johnson 503- 309-4223 to sign up.

Waldorf Education and Teacher Training

Lectures and courses conducted throughout the year by the Micha-el Institute. Contact John Miles at 503/774-4946. johncmiles@usa.net

Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER 8 - DECEMBER 6

Micha-el Institute -Introductory Course 'Story-telling and Festivals'

11/8 How to tell Stories; 11/15 Stories to tell and when to tell them; 11/29 Curative Stories and Language; 12/6 Practical Story-Telling; held in the Music Room at Portland Waldorf School, 2300 SE Harrison, Milwaukie. Contact 503 774-4946 or email johncmiles@usa.net.

Sunday, NOVEMBER 11**First Class of the School of Spiritual Science**

Bothmer Hall, Blue card required - Discussion at 8:30 AM, class at 9:30 AM sharp. Please contact Jannebeth Röell 503/249-3807.

Saturday, NOVEMBER 17**Eurythmy Spring Valley**

10 AM till noon interactive public workshop on themes of Mac Beth. High school students are welcome. Fee \$20.00

8 PM Public Performance (recommended for ages 12 and above) at Bothmer Hall, 5915 Division, Portland OR. Fee \$10. Contact Natasha Moss 503-758-4614.

Wednesday, NOVEMBER 28**Portland Branch Council meeting**

7 PM at the home of Tom Klein and Ruth Klein, 3609 SE Center, Portland OR 97202, phone: 503-777-3176. All Branch members are welcome to attend.

Thursday NOVEMBER 29**The Human Musical Being**

Marion Van Namen will do various musical exercises with the audience to discover how music affects us and the developing child. Marion Van Namen is a certified Waldorf Teacher and Music Therapist with a private practice in Portland, working mostly with children with learning and developmental challenges. The evening will give an insight into the Waldorf music curriculum and how your child can benefit from music lessons and therapy. 7:00 - 8:30 PM Portland Village School, 7654 N Delaware Avenue Portland, OR 97217. For further information or any questions, you can reach Marion at 503-956-4046 or marion@octavemusictherapy.com

Sunday, DECEMBER 9**First Class of the School of Spiritual Science**

Bothmer Hall, Blue card required - Discussion at 8:30 AM, class at 9:30 AM sharp. Please contact Jannebeth Röell 503/249-3807.

DECEMBER 15**Tales of Wonder**

Wool Horse Puppet Theater presents seasonal Tales of Wonder in puppetry and storytelling. Sat, December 15, 11:00am and 1:00pm; Bothmer Hall, 5915 SE Division St. \$5.00 donation requested. Contact 503 772-2632 or woolhorse@earthlink.net.

JANUARY 7**Logo Portland Branch**

Today is the last day to enter your logo for the Portland Branch. Please send it to John Miles 12160 SE Mt Scott Blvd, Portland OR 97086

JANUARY 16-24**Micha-el Institute -Introductory Course "Community Building: The Social Impulse of the Waldorf School"**

1/16 [Wednesday] The Social Evolution of the World; 1/17 [Thursday] The Threefold Social Order for today and its future development; 1/23 [Wednesday] The Waldorf School as an expression of the Threefold Social Order; 1/24 [Thursday] The Social Tasks for Humanity - now and in the coming age; held in the Music Room at Portland Waldorf School, 2300 SE Harrison, Milwaukie. Contact 503 774-4946 or email johncmiles@usa.net.

Wednesday, JANUARY 23**Portland Branch Council meeting**

7 PM at the home of Tom Klein and Ruth Klein, 3609 SE Center, Portland OR 97202, phone: 503-777-3176. All Branch members are welcome to attend.

FEBRUARY 7-29**Micha-el Institute -Introductory Course "Eurythmy"**

2/7 Kindergarten to Grade 5; 2/14 Middle and High School Eurythmy; 2/21 Therapeutic Eurythmy and Movement; 2/29 Eurythmy as a Performing Art; held in the Music Room at Portland Waldorf School, 2300 SE Harrison, Milwaukie. Contact 503 774-4946 or email johncmiles@usa.net.

Sunday, FEBRUARY 10**First Class of the School of Spiritual Science**

Bothmer Hall, Blue card required - Discussion at 8:30 AM, class at 9:30 AM sharp. Please contact Jannebeth Röell 503/249-3807.

Send Your Calendar Announcements to

BranchCalendar@mindspring.com

By the first of each month

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Wege
zu einem
neuen Baustil

Rudolf Steiner

19



21



Ludwig Polzer-Hoditz
Der Kampf
gegen den Geist
und das Testament
Peter des Grossen

INTERNATIONALE BÜCHEREI
FÜR SPIEL- UND GEFÄHRLICHE WERKZEUGE

22



Anthroposophie
Oesterreichischer Bote
von Menschengest
zu Menschengest

Nr. 3

23

Goetheum
Dienstag
(5. Juni)

Dienstag, den 12. Juni 1924

Einladung
am
Sonntag, 23. Juni 1924, vormittags 10 Uhr,
im Schreier-Saal in Dornach

I. zur alten ordentlichen Generalversammlung

Tagungsort:
1. Bericht des Vorstandes
2. Kassabericht
3. Bericht der Rechnungsrevisoren
4. Einklagen-Erklärung
5. Anträge
6. Verschiedenes

II. zur dritten außerordentlich Generalversammlung
Die Tagesordnung dieser Versammlung wird im Laufe der Generalversammlung bekanntgegeben.

Tagungsort:
Stabskammer des Vorstandes
am
Freitag, den 14. Juni 1924

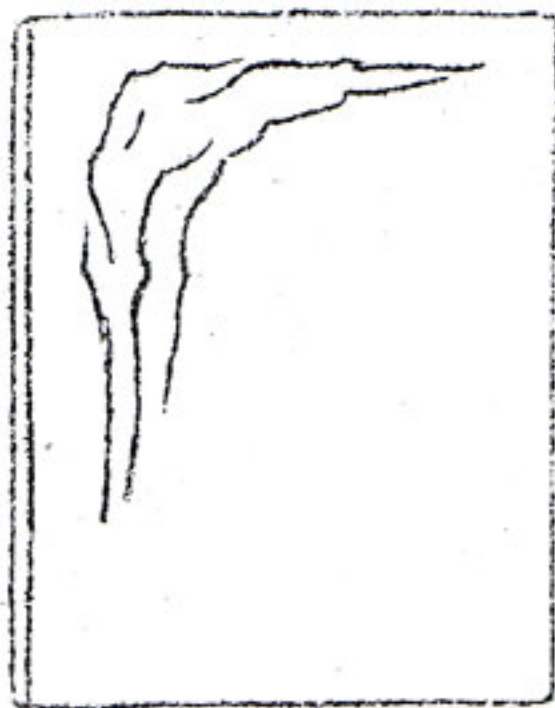
24



17.



12.



10.

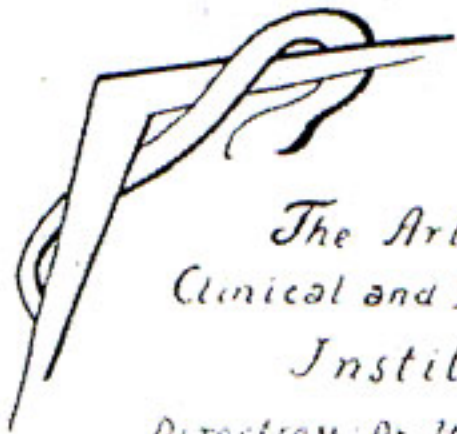
Der Kommende Tag

Aktiengesellschaft zur Förderung wirtschaftlicher
und geistiger Werte, Stuttgart.

Leugendanken aus dem I. Prospekt (März 1926)

Die Gesellschaft wird sich von den gewöhnlichen Bankverhältnissen abheben, indem sie den Mitgliedern die Möglichkeit bietet, durch die Anschaffung von Aktien an der Förderung wirtschaftlicher und geistiger Werte teilzunehmen. Es wird dabei vor allem darauf abgesehen, dass die Aktien im Falle der Liquidation der Gesellschaft den Mitgliedern die Möglichkeit bieten, die Investitionskosten zu erlangen. Die Aktien werden im Falle der Liquidation der Gesellschaft den Mitgliedern in der Reihenfolge der Einzahlung der Aktien zur Verfügung gestellt. Die Aktien werden im Falle der Liquidation der Gesellschaft den Mitgliedern in der Reihenfolge der Einzahlung der Aktien zur Verfügung gestellt.

Es wird sich dabei hauptsächlich um die Förderung geistiger Unternehmungen handeln, die durch die wirtschaftliche Arbeit der Mitglieder ermöglicht werden. Die Aktien werden im Falle der Liquidation der Gesellschaft den Mitgliedern in der Reihenfolge der Einzahlung der Aktien zur Verfügung gestellt. Die Aktien werden im Falle der Liquidation der Gesellschaft den Mitgliedern in der Reihenfolge der Einzahlung der Aktien zur Verfügung gestellt.



The Arlesheim Clinical and Therapeutical Institute

Directress: Dr. Ita Wegman

The Arlesheim Clinical and Therapeutical Institute is a private institution for the treatment of nervous and mental diseases. It is situated in the beautiful landscape of the Arlesheim estate near Zurich. The Institute is directed by Dr. Ita Wegman, who has spent many years in the study of the treatment of nervous and mental diseases. The Institute is equipped with the latest scientific apparatus and offers the most modern methods of treatment. The Institute is open to patients of all nationalities and religions. The fees are moderate and the treatment is given free of charge to indigent patients. The Institute is a member of the Swiss Society for the Study of Nervous and Mental Diseases.



*... and
listens at the shores of the
great silence.*

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and

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Saturday, November 17th

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Performance 8:00 p.m. Recommended for ages 12 and above.

Bothmer Hall, 5915 SE Division, Portland, OR

\$30 Workshop and Performance / \$10 Performance only

For information contact Natasha Moss at 503-758-4614 or moss.nat@gmail.com

Eurythmy Spring Valley