



# Center Community News

Newsletter of the Center for Sacred Sciences

## Fall 2014 Retreat: "Be still and know that I am God"

It seems as if every time I hear Joel talk about it, the percentage changes. First it was, "90% of mysticism isn't all that mystical." Now I think we're up to 99%! I attribute this to the fantastic, and systematic, teachings we continue to be presented with, as well as the great sangha receiving them. Whatever the reason, almost three dozen of us enjoyed an amazing nine-day retreat.

Smattered throughout this edition are expressions of spiritual charity from some of the retreatants, humbly offerered for your... Enlightenment. Enjoy!

— Mark Hurwit, Editor

~ Barbara Dewey shares a Joel inspiration ~  
*Practice does not lead to Enlightenment. Practice leads to Stillness, in which Enlightenment can arise.*



**Back row:** Steve Cummings, Bob Carnes, Mike Pooler, Ben Moltman, Jim Zajac

**4th row:** Shirley Chase, Bob Cowart, Marijke McCandless, Laura Betty, Clivonne Corbett, Sharry Lachman, Rich Marlatt

**3rd row:** Beverly Forster, Eugene Gibbs, Jay McCandless, Mora Fields, Mike Barkhuff, Amos Burr, Betty Vail, Mark Hurwit

**2nd row:** Trudy Naylor, Barbara Goldberg, Shannon Wylie, Tamara Cohn, Loraine Baker, Sally Snyder, Barbara Dewey, Becky Lipton

**Front row:** Linda Wylie, Darla Heil, Joel, Matt Sieradski, Jack Yousey

*Not Shown:* Deste Campbell, Fred Chambers, Jim Patterson

## THANKS for an Awesome Library!

After a lot of help, it looks/sounds fantastic in the library. Thank you, Alpha Wilson, for saying, "Bad Feng Shui doo-doo right here," Mike Strasburger for the sound, Matthew P. Sieradski for pushing things around, David S. Mason for cutting things down to size, Michael Augden for perfecting the counter tops, and Mark Hurwit and Tom McFarlane for some technical assistance. To the awesome cleaning team: Sharry Lachman and Wesley R. Lachman, Mora Thistle Fields, Robin Bundy, Anna Lankutis, Mona Bronson, Amos Burr, James Joseph, Barbara Goldberg, Barbara Dewey, Barbara Perrin... many, many thanks!

# Mother Sends Her Love

by Judith Hasbrouck

Mother died yesterday — Monday, November 10th — so peacefully.

My sisters and I have been here with her, in her home, caring for her with the help of the angelic team at PeaceHealth Hospice of Sacred Heart. But November 10th needed to be the last day, as my eldest sister, Jan, could no longer cancel or reschedule her professional obligations. We'd long planned to have a ceremony around her hospital bed in the living room Monday evening to signal an end to what I'd called the sacred dance of the three of us caring for Mother (and each other).

Then on Thursday, after my exuberant middle sister, Karen, went home to Portland for a brief respite, Mother began to let go. First, her daily crossword puzzle, then her daily glass of wine, then her nightly news. Jan and I began playing CDs of harp music continually. Karen came back on Saturday. When I looked at Mother from outside her window, I saw she had sunglasses on. Karen reported that Mother had said, "I am the Mediterranean Sea. The sky is so blue and the sun is so bright. Please give me my sunglasses... ah, that's better!" Jan reported that she also whispered, "It is so so beautiful and I am so happy."



Barbara Hasbrouck (1929-2014) was a member of CSS for over fourteen years.

On Sunday morning, Mother said softly, "I am so grateful for my three girls, their arms around each other." And then she fell into a coma from which she never emerged again.

On Monday morning, the hospice nurses came and made her very comfortable. (We overheard one nurse say to the other: "This is how I want to arrange my own death, at home with my family.) At 1 pm, per our request, Sara Vonn, from Strings of Compassion, came and played her harp, singing ethereally, all the while watching Mother. Although comatose, Mother was obviously responding to the music, her breathing quickening or easing accordingly. The music also cracked open her daughters' hearts — after 35 days of quiet stoicism, we all three wept in grief, poignancy and awe.

At 3:30 pm Monday, I was sitting in a chair by Mother's bedside, just watching her breath and being a loving presence, while my sisters were nearby. Deep breath... long stillness... deep breath... long stillness... and then continued stillness. I called to Jan — who confirmed Mother had finally let go — and we called to Karen. As Mother had wished, each of us picked up our copies of *Through Death's Gate*, bookmarked for a passage at the end, intended to guide her through death stages 5-8, after the heart has stopped. For the next 20 minutes, each of us took turns reading the passage to Mother, hoping to help her to Gnosis. After the 20 minutes were over, we let our sister Karen perform a ceremony she had wanted to do, ringing a bell around Mother's body.

And then we three erupted with sheer joy: SHE DID IT!!!! Exactly as she had wanted. And WE DID IT!!!! We'd managed to give her the environment she had wanted so much. Group hugs....

This captures the final days, but we have a record of so many amazing, excruciating, frustrating, and so so beautiful moments from these 35 days, which we hope to write up to share with others, who may also want to choose their own manner of dying (and, like Mother, free of the "nursing home/hospital industrial complex).

Mother sends her love....

Judith

# Practicing View, Meditation and Action

by Andrea Pucci



Some days we want enlightenment, feeling that we are here to awaken from our ignorance. Some days we just want to be ‘right’ (in relation to another’s ‘wrong’) and have our own way, remain in control of the show, and don’t give much thought to waking up in the midst of the practice of our attachments, as attention gives way to identifying with the rants and raves of ego. ‘Ego’ as used here, is referring not to an existent entity, but to unconscious conditioned repetitive habit thoughts and reactions. Unless we set our day into motion with Aspiration and Prayers to awaken for the benefit of all beings, (ourselves included), we will be easily pulled away from moment to moment practice, as our attention is continually distracted and waylaid by unconscious conditioned habit mind, exerting its influence in every moment.

A day will arrive when we need enlightenment like our next breath, and then every moment will serve awakening. We’ll practice like our hair is on fire and not let it just burn with the passions of ignorance. Then, as phenomena appear (in our mind or ‘out there’) and as our reactions of aversion or grasping to these appearances arise, we’ll remain attentive to what is going on, rather than be lost in it. The Practice of exposing habit mind becomes an ongoing opportunity to awaken from our sleep and dreaming.

We remember our Aspiration to Awaken and commit to consciously direct attention to the Real. It’s called “practice” because it is just that, and there may be many hours in a day when we are deceived, lose our way, and identify with sham ego’s processes. Attention becomes engulfed in the desire to be right, to be in charge, to direct the show, to push away what it doesn’t want, and to grab at what it wants to keep the selfing process going, reacting and creating more suffering. May our suffering be great, and may we become conscious of how it all works, so that we don’t need to keep on suffering in ignorance, and instead wake up and realize the possibility of moment to moment liberation from this suffering.

When our sense of being is continually identified with nonexistent but troublesome ego mind of ignorance, instead of resting in clear open Awareness throughout what is happening in that mind, our life force is instead taken over by the process of false ego selfing, as attention identifies with the contents of that habituated confused process.

With our daily aspiration and prayers to practice, we become more familiar with these patterns of distraction in the momentary magic shows of endless big bang creations of separate isolated ego thoughts. The incessant mental struggle to create separations from oneness, with habituated, conflated ideas and dreamt up distinctions, becomes more and more obvious, as our practice informs us. We can feel the subtle energetics and breathing in our body, as these mental states arise, and attention recognizes these confused thought processes. Our aspiration and prayers remind us to rest our attention in what is here now, in the sense of Being that is immovable and unchanging, as all else arises and dissolves. We can remain at home, Awake in Awareness, Awake in Presence, moment by moment.

We need to do formal daily practice, if only for a few minutes, to remind us of why we are alive and breathing, and to set our aspirations and intentions for our day. We need to make daily Aspiration and Prayers to free us from habituated, conditioned activities of thinking and doing. We need to be inspired by daily aspiration, prayers and formal practice, *no matter what sham ego has to say about it!* We commit to do our daily practice to dissolve our identification with sham ego. Practice liberates attention away from identifying with sham ego narratives. Practice liberates attention into the Clear Emptiness Space of Awareness Luminous Awake Consciousness. There is no narrative necessary there, only immediate direct knowing through all arisings of thoughts, feelings, forms, states of mind, appearances, etc.

Without the daily Aspiration ‘May I tame my mind today by remembering the correct View, Meditation and Right Action’ first thing every morning, then ego will just give you its version of what enlightenment is once in awhile, and fool you into believing that you are on a spiritual path, while your life force is drained away, all worked up and lost in ignorance over and over. Sham ego loves to run the show with its random bullying and endless distractions and fixations from one object, experience or state of mind to another.

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*View, Meditation, Action — continued from page 3*

Sham ego ignorance endlessly tries to convince us with its stories - the inner narratives about appearances - to makes those phenomenal appearances seem real and solid and separate from a 'you', a 'perceiver', who is real and solid and separate from appearances. It keeps doing this with incessant inner narrative for every appearance, then another, and another, and another - ceaselessly on and on and on it goes, re convincing us that there is a separate existent I, who perceives a separate existent world of experience out there. Attention is often lost in the endless habit of the dualistic conditioning of the ego directing attention, fixating on one illusory object, then another as a real, solid, and separate object out there, with "me" a separate subject in here (ego cocoon) which is none other than 'yours truly' (sham ego here) directing its created show (out there).

***Retreat Haiku***

*From formless to form  
searching for my true nature  
can i surrender?*

*imagine eagle  
plucking me up in the sky  
and i surrender*

*imagine eagle  
plucking you up in the sky  
and you surrender...*

*imagine as form  
dissolving in formlessness  
we are surrendered...*

— **Betty Vail**

Our precious human life becomes just a puppet for the action or the process of selfing of sham ego to play with, draining the life-force until this puppet unit dies. Instead of this dire scenario, we can commit to awaken and claim our birthright, discover and abide in our true nature, and in so doing realize the same true nature of all beings and all phenomenal appearances.

One of sham egos favorite attacks is to create self doubt by comparing its ideas of 'us' to its ideas of 'others'. If you think 'others' are happy and there is just something wrong with 'you', you have been hoodwinked. I read somewhere that one of the greatest errors plaguing us in modern times of social media, is that most of us compare our behind the scenes experiences of self doubt, inadequacy, unworthiness, distrust, and isolation - with others' movie highlights, which they have glossed up on their social network page, or in a superficial conversation, trying to convince themselves and another of how wonderful deluded life is. Sham ego loves to compare its/our behind the scenes movie mishaps with others movie highlights. Its also good for the economy, as we rush to the stores to buy something to make us feel somewhat consoled in our misery.

So what then is the correct View, Meditation, and Action on a Spiritual Path of Awakening? These three terms are the ground of Buddhist teachings in the various schools of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana schools. What follows here is a very basic and simple presentation of a topic well deserving of your committed time and interest.

**VIEW**

The view is an understanding that ripens through study, contemplation and meditation, culminating in the realization of the true nature of all appearances as Emptiness. Emptiness here is simply referring to the notion that appearance could be infinitely interpreted or known by different perceivers, as anything - appearing differently or somewhat similar for everyone. The View knows that appearances are dependent on the awareness and presence or absence of obscuring perceptions, colored by immeasurable causes and conditions involved in the emergence of those appearances for the perceiver.

These causes and conditions are the beginningless mysterious universal forces put into motion that interact enough to produce the illusion of an event or state of consciousness. The view is the knowing that these appearances are illusion like, and not what they appear to be (real, solid, separate, independent, out there 'things' that are separate from our awareness in which 'they' arise). The view knows that the 'perceiver' is also just an appearance based on the habit process of identification with the knowing of objects 'out there'. The view sees that our interpretations of appearances arise from what is commonly known as karma, or past moments of experience and conditioning, reactions and habitual ways of fixating our attention. This process further causes and conditions our future moments of interpretation of appearances. On and on it all goes, and where it stops nobody knows.

The most crucial cause and condition affecting our present moment's view of experience is the presence or lack of awareness of where our attention is. Is attention distracted out of Aware Presence by the appearances, and lost in its stories; or is attention resting in the Open Spacious Luminous Awareness simultaneously, as all appearances and states of mind arise and dissolve. Since there is nothing truly existent anywhere to begin with, which can be found or

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### *View, Meditation, Action — continued from page 4*

isolated to be a thing separate from everything else, we can never find the original cause of any event that we think has happened. However, ignorance keeps us forever distracted in its' game of conceptualizing and manipulating its fabrications of what it thinks are isolated causes and conditions. Ignorant sham ego's agenda is to control and create what it thinks will be circumstances conducive to what it thinks should be happening. Attention subservient to ignorant ego sham activity, looks to blame and reward circumstances and people for everything that it made up, and then tries to convince us is really happening out there. This conceptual quest for the origin of all our problems, keeps us very busy feeling angry, victimized, powerless and despondent.

Just like in a dream, in which all the characters appear to be out there to the dreamer, when we awaken from the dream, we know that we dreamt up all the characters in the dream, and were ignorantly having the seemingly real experience of enjoying or fearing them. These appearances in the dream, these characters and situations in the dream were not real, but illusory creations appearing as real, causing all kinds of emotional reactions in the mind and body of the dreamer. The View is an ongoing remembrance that our dreaming is based on a habit mind process of causes and conditions, as all things out there and in our own state of mind and moods continue to arise and dissolve. Our attention, informed by the correct View, increasingly remains familiar with, and is conditioned by the knowing that appearances have the nature of Emptiness. Attention recognizes and sees through the fathom like, ephemeral mirrors of our past mind moments of ignorance, delusions, fixations, reactions and conclusions. This understanding informs and accompanies our interpretation of our present experience as appearances arise in the present.

The View knows and sees through the multi colored conditioned system of ignorance, knowing it to be but an unexamined and unrecognized operation, apprehending appearances as real, solid, separate objects - based on a foundation of unexamined habitual repeated perceptions, habits of thought, reactions, and fixations of deluded attention. There is no independent thing really there, outside of our own mind processes of habituated perception. Sometimes our habituation is consensual or similar enough that we hang out together and reflect that our views and opinions are based on fact, not relative perspective.

The View recognizes the ongoing process by which ignorance weaves a trance, a spell, a delusion - moment by moment, distracting us like a well practiced magician from the truth and power of our being. Right View knows when ego's creations are playing out like a child having a tantrum, wanting all of our attention to become lost in its game of creation and story telling. Right View sees through sham ego's immanent capture of attention away from Clear Awareness, instead directing attention to fixate upon the contents or changing appearances within that Awareness. Sham ego is nothing but the habitual distraction of attention out of the knowing that Clear Presence of Awareness remains the very source, core, true nature and life blood of that or any other appearance as it is being experienced. Fixated attention is a lapse in consciousness.

### **MEDITATION**

The Meditation is the immediate, ongoing, ever-present, undistracted recognition or Awareness that sees through all appearances of mind, remaining undistracted in the immovable and unchanging creative space that is simultaneously hosting all of the changing appearances arising and dissolving within it. Direct seeing or bare attention is a force that is not mistaken, because attention never separates from, or loses the context in which, appearances arise. Meditative Attention rests in a knowing wordless immediate Presence of Itself. Meditative Attention rests in an unmediated direct Knowing/Being of a spacious, clear, awareness that is the source of, the main ingredient of, all the phenomenal appearances arising in and of it.

#### ***Welcoming the Work***

Author: One so empty,  
she's become Anonymous!

*Glorious retreat! All hard work on  
the path is well worth it.  
Rumi says it so well:*

*“This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.....*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent as a  
guide from beyond.”*

*Ginormous Gratitude to Everyone!*

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*Thanks for all that you do!!!*

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## **Fostering a New Worldview**

In October 2014, scientists and nondual teachers gathered again in San Jose, California for the annual SCIENCE AND NONDUALITY CONFERENCE. Tom McFarlane from CSS presented a talk entitled *Interdependence and Entanglement in Classical and Quantum Physics*. Tom gave a similar talk at CSS several months earlier, which is available online at <http://vimeo.com/70387348>.

Tom also delivered the keynote presentation in August at the 2014 FRANKLIN MERRELL-WOLFF CONFERENCE in Lone Pine, California. His talk, entitled *The Philosophy of Science Without An Object*, discussed the various problems with physical realism, and then drew upon Wolff's philosophy to explore how we can understand science from a nondual perspective. A summary of his talk is expected to appear in a forthcoming issue of *Sangha: The Franklin Merrell-Wolff Newsletter*. A more extensive paper by Tom on this topic, entitled *The Non-dual Root of Science and Religion*, appeared recently in the ROSE-CROIX JOURNAL, a peer-reviewed online journal published by the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC. The article is available at [http://www.rosecroixjournal.org/issues/2014/articles/vol10\\_41\\_59\\_mcfarlane.pdf](http://www.rosecroixjournal.org/issues/2014/articles/vol10_41_59_mcfarlane.pdf).

## **Darla's Encounter with Stillness**

*Gratitude is the word that first comes up when I think of the CSS 2014 Fall Retreat on the banks of the McKenzie River next to the enchanted forest of Saint Benedict's. Gratitude for Joel, a compassionate, loving master at a pinnacle of enormous power and skill, who orchestrated a masterpiece in this retreat. And gratitude for Matt, with his energy work and Qigong practice, and ready, generous knowledge and spirit. Together they were magnificent; I celebrate my great good fortune in being there to receive their teachings and blessings. Coupled with that is my gratitude for the CSS Sangha, the open-hearted, brave sharing of their insights, their willingness to be vulnerable and compassionate and generous and kind. Thank you all.*

*Joel pointed out stillness that, when experienced, was vast and rich and beautiful beyond words. Staying with the stillness revealed so much — states of unspeakable beauty, love, and peace; experiences of powerful emotions and energies arising and dissolving... rollercoastering into and out of form; dreams of powerlessness and stymied action; deep insights resulting from direct experiences that Joel's teachings pointed at; and finally, surrender of effort.*

*Then there was the river — the sacred McKenzie River — and the rainforest that embraces it. Here's a story for you about curiosity and stillness: One afternoon, during a short lessening of the rain, I was sitting in the solitude chair on the river bank practicing Spacious Awareness and scanning the river. I saw a dark head poking out of the water, swimming upstream to my right. I sat still and watched as the creature looked at me, then dove. Suddenly up she popped again, now much closer to me.*

*Staying still inside and out, I looked — our eyes met and held... hers full of lively curiosity, mine with still awareness. We gazed directly into each other's eyes. She dove again, and I thought for sure she was gone. But then the dark head appeared again, briefly now, upstream from me to my left, before diving again out of sight.*

*I refocused attention on Spacious Awareness, again thinking the creature was gone, and gazed at the river in front of me, only to have the river otter reappear. She hauled herself up fully out of the water onto a rock jutting out of the middle of the stream, showing herself completely to me, then turning and again looking directly into my eyes with great curiosity, before disappearing into the river.*

*So very many blessings, curiosity and stillness. This heart is full.*

## **Knowing & Loving**

*I LOVED, LOVED, LOVED the retreat and am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be there. I loved the teachings, the setting, the meals, Chi Gong in the morning, Joel's quotes, fall colors and falling leaves, and especially the ever-present roaring, rushing, powerful McKenzie river.*

*While chanting with my mala, this came...*

**Bead by Bead, breath by breath,  
Where do we find consciousness,  
Looking for it in between, all around, and  
in the unseen.**

**Bead by bead, breath by breath,  
Where do we find emptiness,  
Looking IN, further In,  
'Til we are nothingness.**

**Son Clear Light meets Mother  
Clear Light  
Somewhere in the field with delight,**

**Awareness seeks, Awareness finds,  
Somewhere in the play of the Divine,**

**Dharma wheel turns, We dance  
and we play,  
Practicing, Practicing for the day  
We recognize our own True Light.**

**SHHH.....  
BE STILL, BE STILL, BE STILL.....  
And Know... I AM GOD**

**— Bev Forster**

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### **Retreat Theme**

Zen koan/solution by Steve Cummings

**Mantra: shhh...**

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### **Tamara's Gratitude**

*Teacher, teachings, delectable food, Oregon rain & falling leaves, rich, fecund smells, beautiful fellow retreatants and the ever present sound of the river secured a place in my memory and heart, though its exact flavor is as impermanent as the taste of even the perfect brownie on the tongue. Thank you all.*

The practice of Attention remaining undistracted in the Clarity and Spacious Presence in the Emptiness Nature of all appearances is the Meditation. Meditation is a practice of becoming familiar with the ground of our being which is Emptiness, as all appearances come and go. Because it is a practice, then the more we aspire and engage in it, the more the familiarity and Presence of Being becomes stronger and brighter in our attention. Attention resting in Awareness eventually remains at home wherever it goes, but it takes practice of bringing the View into our immediate experience, or of enlightening our immediate experience with the View.

Remaining undisturbed and at rest in the space in which all appearances and states of mind arise and dissolve, is the Meditation. Remaining in the Meditation of Emptiness/ Clarity/Awareness/Openness/Compassion is the greatest purification of karma, habitual tendencies and the causes and conditions that are bringing about our present moments experience. Attention on Clear Presence of Awareness is the greatest opportunity to burn away the seeds of our karmic ignorance, right in the moment that the ignorance is arising, trying to exert its influence on our perception of what is happening. Ignorance dissolves in Awareness. Karma which is fueled by ignorance is exhausted in the fire of Awareness.

### ***The Other Shore***

The author of this piece is a retreatant who disappeared entirely into the foam...

**With the river pointing to  
the underlying ever-present  
it's faithful guide, Joel, led us  
to the other shore  
coaxing us to abandon  
all our possessions  
and go forth nakedly  
into the unknown**

We sit in formal meditation and rest attention in stillness and non action to settle our crazy wind energy of the mind that is pulling us here and there. We commit to precious moments of sacred pausing. Meditation on the breath allows the gross energies of crazy mind to settle, and the subtle wisdom energies to be felt in body/ mind. Sitting meditation allows concentration to develop enough to directly perceive the truth of the impermanence of all of our experience. With this unmediated direct insight of impermanence, we are certain, and there is no need for further narratives about what we directly know. Concepts are silenced in the brilliance of direct knowing. There is no longer the fearful or desirous need to control our experience, as impermanence and what is constantly changing is revealed in our Changeless Presence. The Presence that is changelessly there before, during and after changing appearances come and go, becomes brighter and brighter as attention rests there throughout all impermanent experience.

Meditation is the ongoing familiarizing with the empty nature of mind and appearances, again and again and again, Shining a light in the darkness of ego ignorance that would have us believe in itself and its creations. Clarity in Meditation sees through sham ego's creations, that act like a child having tantrums, always trying to capture attention away from the real to the false, stealing away our life force if we would allow it.

Sitting meditation allows us to feel the spaciousness of moments free of torture, and get used to that vast infinite spaciousness of sheer knowing. Sitting meditation helps us to bring our meditation off the cushion and into every moment of awareness and appearance. We need to gradually get used to the truth that is everywhere, birthing all appearances and the true nature of all those appearances. Sitting meditation is practice for developing ongoing undistracted meditation that becomes ever present, as attention is no longer distracted away from the Real.

### **ACTION**

Right Action is the ability to respond in any moment that we are awake, with whatever action is in accord with a great and magnificent dance of Love and Universal Unity. Right action arises out of the practice of selflessness, as ignorance and the delusions of a separate self are continually burned away, by attention resting in union with, its True Nature in the Light of a Clear Undistracted Awareness. Developing Trust in the Emptiness Nature of our mind, instead of being distracted in its endless contents is our Inner Guru/Teacher which then spontaneously guides us in appropriate to the moment Right Action. This is the unceasing expression of awakened heart and mind amidst unceasing appearances.

When we “stop, drop and breathe”, “be kind and rewind”, “breathe and rest in a sacred pause”, interrupt the process of selfing - we can then respond with compassion for all sentient beings (starting with yourself) This compassion is a direct sensation, a direct feeling of spaciousness and fearlessness, that comes from the unceasing practice of letting



*View, Meditation, Action — continued from page 8*

go of grasping and aversion moment by moment, as attention no longer identifies with the grasping and fear and aversion appearances of our mind.

A genuine Outer Guru/Teacher points you to this - to your Inner Guru/Teacher, to the Emptiness Nature of Mind that never forgets the Emptiness Nature of all Appearances of Mind, ever reminding you, that all that is appearing, is arising out of previous causes and conditions of karma and habit that have not yet been exposed and revealed to your understanding of the process of how ignorance works to constantly delude us. An authentic path exposes this ego for what it is (isn't) so that we become blessedly unidentified with it, no longer thinking it is who we are. The path reveals the True Nature of Being as Emptiness Clarity Openness Compassionate Presence.

It is crucial to awaken each morning and remember our Aspirations and Prayers for all beings in this world of suffering. We need a daily formal practice, come hell or high water of egos rants and raves. No matter what, you will not let sham ego get in the way of your daily practice that reminds you of Right View, Meditation and Action. Either we are practicing a path of awakening or we are causing more suffering. When we commit to a daily practice, ignorance dissolves in

true understanding, delusions melt on an authentic path of Practice into Compassionate Brilliant Being.

As our practice deepens and expands, fake sham ego can't steal attention away from the authentic inner guru/teacher and teaching - which is simply every moment of Awake Awareness in the View, Meditation and Action. Appearances in Awareness become transparent energies flowing out of itself into itself. Blissful skillful energy emerges spontaneously, as we rest in Compassionate Spacious Presence, while all appearances are 'happening'. Awareness hosts and remains the stuff of whatever arises. Attention does not get lost in grasping and fixating on changing appearances, obscuring the simultaneous awareness of the reality and direct experience of the True Nature of those appearances.

If attention is momentarily distracted it is not for very long, as the light of undistracted awareness burns brighter and brighter as it is fueled by the offerings of ignorance on the Altar of our Aspirations and Prayers. We become fearless in the direct experience of the impermanence of all conditioned phenomena. We experience the fire of awareness burning through all of our conditioned hopes and fears. More and more through all experience, we learn to relax, open and breathe in the great infinite space of possibility and love. We stay at home for everything and allow life to surprise us over and over with its brilliance, love and healing. ☞

## **The Real Work**

by Wendell Berry

*It may be that when we no longer know what to do  
we have come to our real work,*

*and that when we no longer know which way to go  
we have come to our real journey.*

*The mind that is not baffled is not employed.  
The impeded stream is the one that sings.*

### **Bob Cowart Commends the Fall Retreat**

I drove all the way from the SF Bay Area with my friend, Steve, to attend this Fall retreat. Why go all that way? In a word: Joel. I found him inspiring, clever, funny, and deep. I've been to many retreats with other teachers over the years. Often, they are very uptight, and fraught with myriad rules and regulations. Although there were certainly rules here (about meeting times, keeping silence, etc.), this was not fascistic. There was room for being human. I appreciated that a lot.

The location on the McKenzie River was beautiful. What a wonderful reminder of the flow of nature, the eternal Now (even though we deconstructed Now on the retreat!). There were plenty of places to mosey about during free time, or just sit by the river. The library there is also a nice, quiet space to escape to. We had yoga class in there. Matt's Qigong class was good, too. The food was excellent. Kudos to the chef!

The weather was colder and wetter than the SF area, but I was never cold in the meditation/meeting space or my bedroom. Overall, it was probably the best retreat I've had in several decades. Lots of laughter, spiritual 'experiments' as Joel called them, and very little dogma. Though not a local member of CSS, I felt very welcomed.

# *A Special Thanks to the Center's Supporters*

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# {{{ Enlightenment Day “Ensparklement” }}}}



*He who binds to himself a joy  
Doth the winged life destroy,  
But he who kisses joy as it flies  
Lives in Eternity's sunrise.*

— William Blake

*God is trying to sell you something,  
but you don't want to buy.  
That is what your suffering is:  
Your fantastic haggling, your  
manic screaming over the price.*

— Hafiz

## CONTACT THE CENTER

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## MISSIONS AND PROGRAMS

The CENTER FOR SACRED SCIENCES is dedicated to the study, practice, and dissemination of the spiritual teachings of the mystics, saints, and sages of the major religious traditions. The Center endeavors to present these teachings in forms appropriate to our contemporary scientific culture. The Center also works to create and disseminate a sacred worldview which expresses the compatibility between universal mystical truths and the evidence of modern science.

Among the Center's ongoing events are Sunday public services, with meditations and talks given by the Center's spiritual teachers; monthly Sunday video presentations; and — for committed spiritual seekers — weekly practitioners' groups, and monthly and semi-annual meditation retreats.

The Center also maintains an extensive lending library of

books, audios, videos, and periodicals covering spiritual, psychological, philosophical, and scientific subjects. In addition, the Center provides a website containing a great deal of information and resources related to the teachings of the world's mystics, the universality of mystical truth, and the relationship between science and mysticism. The Center publishes this newsletter providing community news, upcoming programs, book reviews, and other contributions and resources related to the Center's mission.

The CENTER FOR SACRED SCIENCES is a non-profit, tax-exempt church based in Eugene, Oregon, USA. We rely chiefly on volunteer labor to support our programs, and on public donations and membership pledges to meet our operating expenses. Our spiritual teachers give their teachings freely as a labor of love, and receive no financial compensation from the Center.

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# CSS Calendar: January – May 2015

Please check the website for the most updated schedule information:  
<http://centerforsacredsciences.org/calendar.htm>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Public Talk 11 am–1 pm  Video on 1 <sup>st</sup> Sundays  Library open 1–3:30 pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays  1–2:00 pm 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sundays	Practitioner’s Group (Matt) 7–8:30 pm at his home	Practitioner’s Group (Todd) 7–8:30 pm  Library open 7:00–9:00 pm	Practitioner’s Group (Todd) 3–4:30 pm  Foundation Studies (Fred & Annie) 7–8:30 pm  Community Nights Jan. 28 & April 1	Book Club 1st Thursdays 2:30–3:30 pm  Hunyuan Taiji & Chan Si Qigong, with Luke 6:00–8:00 pm (2nd & 4th Thursdays)  Drop-in class for all experience levels. Great for meditators.		Full-day Meditation 10 am–4 pm  January 10 (Tom) February 7 (Todd) March 7 (Fred) April 4 (Annie) May 9 (Matt)  Holiday Party December 13

## Schedule Notes

- All classes and meetings to be held at the Saratoga address unless otherwise specified.
- There are no regular classes on the weeks of Community nights: January 28 and April 1.
- All CSS activities will be suspended during the spring break, March 23–29, and the Spring Retreat, April 26 – May 1
- Library closed Tuesday, January 6 for staff training.
- The January 8th Book Club meeting will meet a half hour early, from 2–3 pm.

## Sunday Videos planned for this calendar period:

### January 4 — *Beads of Faith*

This stunningly photographed video chronicles how prayer beads are used by a variety of spiritual traditions, in conjunction with the repetition of a Divine Name or mantra, to activate the heart and awaken devotion. [dvd-0232, 35 min.]

### February 1 — *Rumi and the Sufi Path of Love*

Contemporary experts Kabir Helminski and Parsi Soltani explore the beautiful poetry and profound teachings of the famed 13<sup>th</sup> century Sufi master, Jalaluddin Rumi, whose influence is still felt today by seekers of many faiths and traditions. [dvd-0907, 54 min.]

### MARCH 1 — *Honest to God: The Universe of Faith*

A recording of Diana Eck, Harvard professor of Comparative Religion, presenting at the

*God at 2000* Symposium, where she discusses both the rich rewards and real difficulties that arise in modern interfaith encounters. [dvd-0286, 60 min. approx.]

### APRIL 5 — *Hero’s Journey: A Biography of Joseph Campbell*

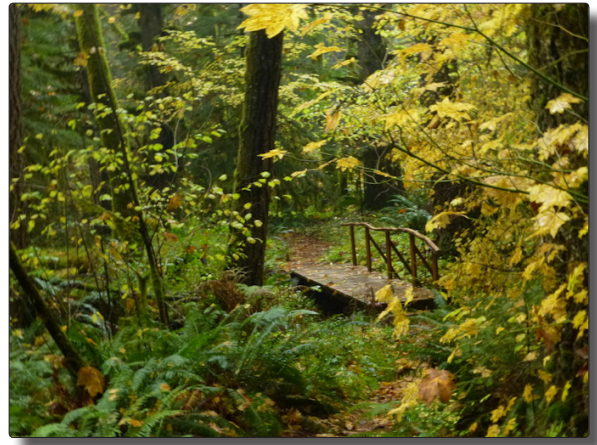
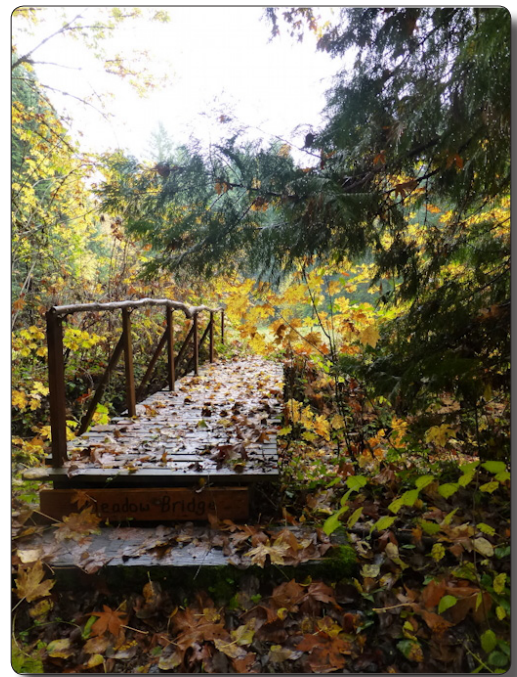
This video biography tells how the world’s great mythologist, Joseph Campbell, discovered the power myths have to transform lives, spending the rest of his long, rich career revealing the relevance of these ancient stories to our contemporary lives. [dvd-0161, 58 min.]

### MAY 3 — *Zen Journey: A Visit with Susan Postal*

In this video documentary, ordained Zen priest Susan Postal describes her 35-year study and practice of Buddhism. Her highly personal account is intercut with scenes of various forms of Zen practice— meditation, chanting, and tea ceremony. [dvd-0047, 57 min.]

# Two Pages of Retreat Images

selected from over 400, by Betty Vail





2014 Winter Retreat  
Images by Betty Vail

