



## Newsletter of the Center for Sacred Sciences

### 2016 Fall Retreat: Uncovering the Sun



**4th row:** Mike Craven, Marijke McCandless, Carla Crow, Robin Bundy, Linda Wylie, Bev Forster, Trudy Naylor, Sally Snyder, Shirley Chase, Vip Short, Mark Hurwit

**3rd row:** Rick Ahrens, Betty Vail, Sharry Lachman, Joel, Sheila Craven, Katherine Hamer, Ellie Parsons

**2nd row:** Bob Cowart, Sue Esch, Jim Zajac, Sandy Itzkowitz, Rich Marlatt, Mora Fields, Britt Martin, Bill Hamann, Darla Heil

**Front row:** Jay McCandless, Hal Dillon, Ben Moltman, Jim Patterson, Tom Hopkins, Fred Chambers

(not shown: Hiromi Sieradski)

#### **Mark Hurwit recollects...**

This was truly an amazing retreat. Yes, I know, we always say that, but it *was* especially true for this one; just ask any of those who attended. — We've heard so many times how we don't need to acquire anything... that we have (and, actually, *are*) all that we need. It is like the sun shining down upon the earth all the time, but the clouds prevent us from seeing it. An oft used metaphor... those dang clouds.

So in this retreat, diving into the Dzogchen practice of rigpa (*Great Perfection*), Joel led our group towards Primordial Awareness through a deep-relaxation *non*-meditation practice. Strangely though, we did not all experience deep, spontaneous, perfect realizations. So we spent almost nine days in deep inquiry, attempting to answer the simple question, "Why not?" In the West, the greatest impediments center on our attachments and beliefs around: the body, emotions, thoughts, and (by far the greatest challenge for most people) our identification with a Do-er or Decider. This inquiry provided for a very full exploration into the many facets of our lives highlighted by those "clouds" obscuring our naked, sunny awareness. But the continual return to deep, complete relaxation (using a body-scanning meditation adapted from a Tibetan practice), paired with our ongoing settling into undistractedness, made for a very rich and intimate retreat, full of surrender and love.

Isn't it weird how it just keeps getting better? — Watch for some Fall retreat *charity* later in this issue.

# 2016 Lone Pine Retreat

## Love and Death: The Mystery of Identity

Recollection by Susan Stumpf




**Standing:** *Clivonne Corbett, Vip Short, Susan Colson, Susan Stumpf, Michael Rolph, Michael Kilgroe, Jack Yousey, Jay McCandless, Jim Zajac, Darla Heil, Marijke McCandless*

**Seated:** *Tamara Cohn, Sally Snyder, Hiromi Sieradski, Matt Sieradski, Patricia Burbank, Linda Wylie*

We had another terrific retreat at the Great Space Center—the creation and home of Franklin Merrell-Wolff— outside of Lone Pine, California. Matthew Sieradski led the retreat, Hiromi was our coordinator, and Linda Wylie our chef. They each brought their love and amazing skills to their tasks. The retreat topic was Love and Death: The Mystery of Identity. We delved deeply into death and impermanence, and how they are actually *love*. Matt led us generously through a number of difficult exercises to get to the heart of the matter (quite literally).

These meditations helped us tune into the universality of our feelings and experiences, through opportunities to observe the non-duality of our experience. The retreat helped several people have really heart-opening, life-changing shifts in their practice, and I've felt a deepening in my own. I have so much gratitude for our sangha, those who went on retreat, and those who supported our undertaking, and would highly encourage you to join us on the next retreat to Dr. Wolff's.

After the retreat, six of us hiked in the Eastern Sierras just outside of Bishop. Our original plan was to attempt Mt. Langley this year, but it was just not to be. But we were successful at obtaining permits to hike up to Bishop Pass, and started this journey on Saturday, July 30. For four days and three nights, we enjoyed glacial-fed lakes, bountiful wildflowers and the precious company of our dharma family, along with a few mosquitoes (not seemingly so precious). The weather was much more cooperative than last year (no hail or much rain), and there were thankfully no mishaps. We were even visited by some of our southern sangha members.

The effort required for us to get to the Great Space Center heightened our sense of pilgrimage. The location of the retreat center, and the Ashrama that Dr. Wolff and others built, are both very powerful places, energetically. To the east are the jagged Sierras, including Mt. Whitney, the tallest peak in the lower 48; below is Owens Valley; and on the other side are the older, weathered White Mountains. If you didn't see this [documentary](#) (shared on the *Friends of CSS* Facebook page) that we viewed on Sunday, December 4, I'd encourage you to. It discusses Dr. Wolff's life, the building of the Ashrama and the whole area. And definitely make your way to the Great Space Center (preferably on retreat)! 

---

## Notice: Upcoming (non-CSS) Retreat with Matt

Matt will be teaching a (non-CSS sponsored) meditation retreat February 2–7, at his Taoist teacher's enchanting 33-acre retreat center in Snohomish, WA. The structure will be similar to CSS retreats, but will also include qigong training and practice. Linda Wylie will be our cook. Lodging is limited—a \$100 deposit to hold your space is due by January 4th. Full retreat amount of \$400 is due by January 25th. Download retreat invitation [here](#), and registration form [here](#).



# The Gray Door of Awareness

by Mike Craven

## Background

I found the fall retreat, Uncovering the Sun, to be an unusual and interesting one for several reasons. First, it was exceptionally calm and smooth; with few exceptions, I experienced almost no grasping or pushing away even at subtle levels. This allowed me to be much more present and effective in my practice, and the calmness within was in significant contrast to my early retreat experiences over the past twenty years.

What amazes me about this calmness is that I am the poster boy for how not to practice. I used to meditate daily for eighteen years, and had attended most of the CSS retreats from 1996 to 2004. But in the past eleven years, after moving to Vancouver, Washington, I have not meditated at all, with the exception of two retreats and occasional visits to the Center. My explanation for this calm, detached state of mind during this retreat is that:

*First we do the practice, then the practice does us.*

The second thing about my experience is that a couple of weeks before the retreat I clearly realized something which I had subtly known for many years — that I do not *want* to be enlightened, and I don't *not* want to be enlightened. Therefore, it's confusing as to why I am still on the path and attending retreats. My recent life has been mostly one of contentment; ending suffering is no longer motivating my quest. I've concluded that the reason I continue is simply *curiosity*, and I have no expectation or attachment to it being fulfilled.

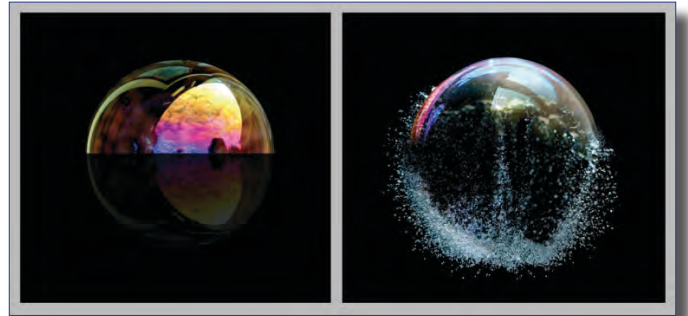
I believe that my earlier desire to be enlightened and end suffering was one of those sticks Joel refers to... used to stir the fire, and the last thing we throw into the fire. I share all this to set the context for my retreat experience regarding awareness of awareness.

## Experiencing Awareness of Awareness

During the final meditation on the third evening, I found that I'd arrived at, and maintained, a long period of stillness in which very few distractions arose. Since I meditate with my eyes closed, all I perceived in my mind's eye was a field of gray.



Over the next several hours, very few distractions arose. Occasionally I would see thought start to bubble up to the surface of awareness. As soon as my attention was gently turned to it by the subtle act of noticing, the thought would self-liberate with no further effort on my part. I even had a sense of what the thought was going to be about, but it disappeared before it became fully defined.



Quite frankly, this long process of maintaining attention on this dull gray awareness became boring. Nothing was happening— no-thing was arising. Sometimes I blinked my eyes open to stimulate my visual sense, but this induced-distraction would immediately disappear without further analysis or commentary. From time to time, I intentionally generated a thought and followed it, and then removed my attention and let it dissolve.

## Significance of the Gray Door

The nature of awareness of awareness was discussed during the teaching session the following evening. Joel referred to this condition as the *gray door of awareness*, and said that awakening was just on the other side of the door: when the door in front of us opened, we would become self-realized. He then fine-tuned his statement to say that the door itself was realization; we just had to see it. It is a Gestalt view similar to that optical illusion of the old hag and the young woman— we can learn to see them as one and the same.



This is in keeping with Joel's frequent statement that we are already enlightened, we just have to *see* it.

— continued on page 4

# Awakened Musings

by Matt Lowes

(The author is a friend of the editor;  
permission to print has been granted.)

## Wrestling with the Universe

*There it is!*

*Grasp its tail and it sprouts ten-thousand tails.*

*Grab its arm and it grows ten-thousand arms.*

*Fix its gaze and it opens ten-thousand eyes.*

*Charge at it and it will recede from you.*

*Run away and it will follow.*

*You cannot escape it.*

*You cannot master it.*

*What more can you do?*



*Yesterday, I walked deep into heaven ...  
How astonishing!  
That these bones can be so light.*

—*Grey Door, continued from page 3*

Also, I see a parallel between awareness of awareness and Joel's oft-repeated comment that if you want to be hit by a truck, don't just sit in your living room. I consider sitting at the gray door of awareness equivalent to sitting in the truck lane of the freeway at night wearing dark clothes. Nothing to do but await being struck by grace.

### Shortcutting the Process

Our practice is usually one of becoming quiet and following our breath (or other object of concentration) to a state of calmness. When distractions arise as we proceed, we can go back to our breath to continue moving to a quieter place. If and when we achieve a deeper, abiding calmness, awareness of awareness can be one of the results. But this process sounds easier than it is, and I have rarely been able to reach and maintain this peaceful state for very long. Prior to this retreat, it has been many years since I've been able to be aware of awareness itself, and then only for a short time.

But for the remainder of this retreat and a few weeks thereafter, I was able reach that state of awareness by using a shortcut. Anytime I closed my eyes with *intention*, I noticed the field of grayness appearing in my mind's eye as awareness itself. If I was already calm, I could maintain that state for a while; when I was not as calm, I followed my breath down to a quieter place while maintaining my recognition of the grayness as awareness.

I presume that when most of us close our eyes we see gray. For this practice to work, you must choose to identify the gray as the stage of awareness upon which the actors of distraction come and go. When such distractions arise, we can gently shift our focus to the gray stage on which

they appear; they then dissolve when no longer fed by the energy of our attention. This is all very subtle.



But even when distractions are amplified and fill the field of awareness, we may still be able to notice a small remaining piece of the gray stage itself.



I realize that this shortcut can depend on where each of us is on our individual paths, and recommend trying this to see how it works for you. ♦

## What Remains

by Bev Forster

*Thoughts arise and pass away  
“self liberate without a trace”*

*Disappearing into the ocean of consciousness  
Alas, just the moment Now remains  
“And Now...and Now... and Now...”*



*The gong resounds.....*

*Listen as the sound fades into nothingness  
And what remains... expanded open spaciousness  
In which the mind can finally rest....  
Until the next thought takes its place.*

*Golden leaves suffice to say  
Impermanence is here at play  
All phenomenon fall away,  
But Who is looking? Who is telling?  
And what remains?  
That which never changes.*

*Clouds depart, sun is shining,  
Sitting in vast emptiness....  
No Self shows Itself to No Self.  
and then... only One remains.*

*Ramana Maharshi:  
Let what comes... come  
Let what goes... go  
Find out what remains.*

## Mora's Retreat Recollections of the Lighter Side of the Abyss

Joel (talking about the impermanence of thoughts):  
Now think of the name of the president of the United States. [waits]. OK, now how long did that last?

Voice from the other side of the room: Eight years.

---

Joel (talking about whether there actually is a “do-er” or “decider,” and asking us to raise/lower our hands on command): Now, if you think YOU can make a choice here, you’re free to make whatever choice you want. We’re all 21 here.

Mike C, groaning: I wish...

---

Mora's summary of the retreat:  
Joel did a lot of talking about nothing.

---

Rick A: After listening to all this talk for several days, I've decided I'm a Bhakta.

---

Joel: Hindus do it with their eyes closed.

---

Mark H... on doing cleaning tasks at the retreat center in the absence of a do-er: OMG, I've got minions.

---

Sharry L... on doing retreat cleaning tasks in the absence of the do-er: I'd not realized God was so anal.

---

Joel's assessment of his own teachings:  
Like the gunfighter says in the old Western, *Shane*...  
“It's good as any, and better 'n most.”

---

Joel: If you feel God is making the decisions for you, I recommend you find out who God is.

Jay M: I think it would be better to wake up first and then find that out.

---

Joel in his youth, on waking up from a dream about being in the army and not knowing who/where he was:

“I heard the clank of metal, my hand felt the scratchy, rough texture of the blanket, I seemed to be lying on a very narrow bed. As I emerged into waking consciousness, the narrow, slatted shapes took form in front of me— they were bars on a jail cell. ‘Thank God,’ I said, ‘I thought I was back in the army!’”



## A Fond Farewell

Friends, for those of you not aware of it, this edition of the CSS newsletter will be the last one I create... at least for the foreseeable future. Beginning in February, I'll be moving to the east coast to engage in a long-ish personal retreat. (My parents have a summer home there which we anticipate will not be used by them again.) Anyone interested can read more about my plans [here](#).

As for the newsletter, we are expecting a highly awesome person to take over for me beginning with the spring/summer edition —possibly even more than one person!— so don't y'all start fretting just yet; I expect things are going to turn out just fine. And, since I may not be maintaining 100% noble silence, or making every bathroom visit a "pee meditation" (though you never know), I will keep in touch as best I can. Maybe I'll even send newsletter missives from "the other side."



Anyway, I wanted to say what a pleasure and honor it's been filling this community role for the last four years. I hope it's been both a worthy read and a terrific place for sharing the spiritual wealth we have to offer each other. (And what heartier a welcome could you gift the incoming editor with than to exercise your precept of Charity?) Since the email stays with the position, his or her address will also be: [newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org](mailto:newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org).

Namasté, my friends. I wish you all a wonderful 2017.

Mark

---

## Introceptualism

The following quote is from Franklin Merrell-Wolff's *Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object* (Volume 2, chapter 7). It is included at the end of an 8-page memoir written by **Andrea Pucci**, taken from the Fall 2016 edition of the FRANKLIN MERRELL-WOLFF FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER, wherein she writes at length about her time spent at the side of "Yogi" towards the end of his life. It is a personal and loving account (unlike the technically philosophical observations below), and many will likely find value in her descriptions of the qualities and glowing presence of our teacher's teacher. You can read it on the CSS website or download the PDF [here](#).

*But even though we knew the last word which could be butted with respect to method, we would then be placed in control of only one side of the problem. The other part of the arousing process is autonomous or spontaneous, and is thus something which no man can command by his consciously willed efforts alone. To use a figure in the Oriental spirit, the individual through his faithful employment of method merely prepares a cup which is filled when something other, and quite beyond his control, acts on its own initiative.... So the conscious employment of method is neither an absolute essential nor does it provide a positive assurance of success within a prescribed time. But the consensus of Oriental experience abundantly confirms the view that the application of appropriate method vastly increases the probability of success, so that work in this direction is well justified.*

*Back in the days when I was a university student, this problem came to my attention and so largely challenged my interest that it ultimately came to occupy a central place. I finally*

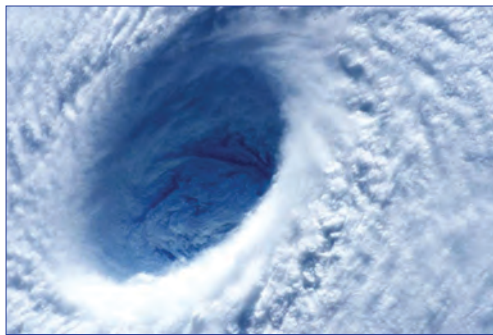
*proved that the discovery and use of the appropriate method could eventuate in a successful outcome, though success was not attained until after more than twenty years. And, yet, today though I am aware of the office of method and the meaning of what it can achieve, I still find it impossible to define the crucial step. In the end everything hung upon a subtle psychical adjustment that is truly inexpressible, since the very act of expression gives it a false appearance of an objective character which is not at all true to the real meaning. I found that the key consisted in attaining a moment within which there is a thoroughgoing detachment from the object and from the activist attitude of ordinary consciousness. The simplicity of this statement hides its real difficulty, as it implies an uprooting of very deep-seated habits. There is a sense in which we may say that the thoroughgoing breaking of the dependence upon the object and of the activist attitude is like a conscious dying, and long-established psychical habits tenaciously resist this. It may take a lot of work to attain the critical state. ❖*

# The "I" of the Hurricane

by Mike Craven

One of the constant companions accompanying me on my path has been my conditioned view of self. At times I can philosophically attempt to examine my self as other than my body, thoughts, experiences, emotions, memories and personality (etc.), but deep down I feel I am just kidding myself. In the real world, my rational mind still believes that the above mentioned list of attributes inextricably belong to and are me.

At the recent fall retreat, during a chat with Joel, he mentioned how storm chasers can fly into the eye of a hurricane and find that everything is perfectly calm. I can imagine this to be a wonderful analogy to being enlightened where you see everything swirling around you, yet remain calmly untouched in the center.

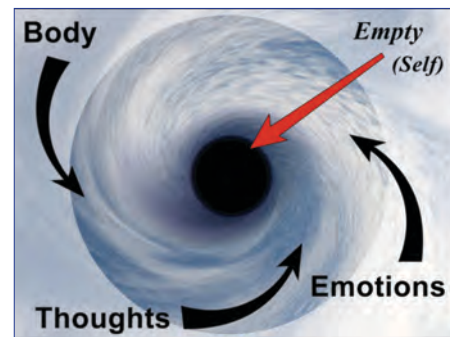


I suddenly realized another aspect of the eye of the hurricane - that in reality it is not a thing in and of itself but is clearly defined only by all that swirls around it. This eye does not take any action by itself, but is moved

in the direction taken by the spinning moisture-laden winds defining it.



Now, when I ponder the confusing claim of the mystics that our self does not exist, I look to this parallel example in nature. I am in the process of reconditioning my rational mind to see my self as empty, defined only by all that swirls around me - my body, thoughts, experiences, emotions, memories and personality. The "I" of the hurricane.



---

## Excerpt from Wallace Stevens' **Landscape with Boat**

*He brushed away the thunder,  
then the clouds. Then the  
colossal illusion of heaven.  
Yet still the sky was blue.  
He wanted imperceptible air.  
He wanted to see. He wanted the eye  
to see and not be touched by blue...  
...Had he been better able to suppose:*

*he might sit on a sofa on a balcony  
above the Mediterranean, emerald  
becoming emeralds. He might watch  
the palms flap green ears in the heat.  
He might observe a yellow line and  
follow a steamer's track and say,  
"The thing I hum appears to be the  
rhythm of this celestial pantomime."*





## **Make Bibs, Not War** by Megan Greiner

*CSS Centerites and residents of the West Town Apartments have been meeting once a month to make one-of-a-kind clothing protectors, to give away to memory care residents.*

*I sort of inherited all this fabric from my mom, who was a prolific quilter. I didn't know what to do with it all.*

*The project evolved organically. A few of us bring sewing machines, but there's really no experience needed to help out. Each bib is different in size, color, and ornamentation, according to the whims of the maker. We had a guy one time who hadn't touched a sewing machine since he was in the 8th grade. That was fun.*

*We had a thought to make prayer flags for the home-made items table at the CSS Light of Love celebration, but not enough Center members have participated, yet. It would be great to make that a reality.*

---

'Nuff said. Sounds like charitable fun. Contact Megan ([megan@efn.org](mailto:megan@efn.org)) if you'd like to join in. One can't have enough prayer flags! — Editor





# Meditation from the Heart of Judaism

by R. Laibl Wolf

Excerpt from Avram Davis' *Meditation and the Art of Growing your Neshamah*

[Minor notes and translations provided by the editor]

The 613 *mitzvot* [good deeds] are points of connection to the *Ein Sof* [endlessness], the Infinite Godhead. Through the practice of a *mitzvah*, our *neshamah*, or "soul," is raised to a higher awareness of itself, and realizes its intimacy with *Hashem* [literally, "The Name"; used instead of attempting to actually place a name or limiting description on God]. A sustained practice of *mitzvot* [plural of *mitzvah*] will heighten our inner awareness. Such mindfulness will create true awareness of the infinite

cause and effect our behavior produces.

This description of *mitzvot* may seem almost Buddhist-like. Some might even think that I deliberately couched the description in Eastern terms to attract your attention. If were not for the literally hundreds of ancient Jewish texts that speak in the same terms, there might be justification for such suspicions. The practice of *mitzvot* unites the inner self with the cosmic self.

---

## The Wisdom of the Rambam

In the introduction to his book, *The Allepo Codex*, Matti Friedman writes of the Jewish elders' pursuit of True Knowledge in the Torah, quoting the revered 12<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and physician, Moses Maimonides:

“ You should not think that these great secrets are fully and completely known to anyone among us. They are not. But sometimes truth flashes out to us so that we think that it is day; and then matter and habit in their various forms conceal it, so that we find ourselves again in an obscure night, almost as we were at first. We are like someone in a very dark night, over whom lightening flashes time and time again. ”

---

## All is One

Excerpt from Arthur Green's  
*Seek My Face: A Jewish Mystical Theology*

If all is One, then each of us is not really a separate being. "Self" becomes something of an illusion. Our most basic understanding of who we are is called into question. The great mystics in all traditions, including the masters of Jewish secret lore, have always known this to be the case. They have also understood that we spend most of our lives in flight from such insights. The acceptance of Oneness means that each of us is but a part of a greater

whole, a specification of the unity that embraces us.

Our religious task is to see through the oneness of these two truths, to recognize that the one beyond and the one within are the same One. We are then charged to create a human community that lives and witnesses an ongoing response to that insight. This is what it means to be a Jew. Nothing less.

---

## God

by Henry David Thoreau (excerpt from *Walden*)

“ As I stand over the insect crawling amid the pine needles on the forest floor, endeavoring to conceal itself from my sight, and ask myself why it will cherish those humble thoughts and hide its head from me who might, perhaps, be its benefactor, and impart to its race some cheering information, I'm reminded of the greater Benefactor and Intelligence that stands over me, the human insect. ”

## Chuang-tzu Feels the Weight of the World

by Adam Horvath

*It was peach blossom time  
and Chuang-tzu knew he ought to be composing poems  
in praise of the silvery moon  
as the peach blossom petals slipped from their branches  
and floated down the stream  
like haiku written on scraps of paper.*

*Instead, he had spent the entire morning  
watching the news on television  
which he knew was a very bad decision  
and eating Cocoa-puffs straight from the box  
with a soup spoon  
which he knew was another very bad decision,  
but he just couldn't help himself.*

*Now he felt the weight of the world upon him.  
Why so much tsuris, hazerai, and mishegas  
on our poor little planet?  
he kept asking himself.*

*Chuang-tzu inverted the nearly empty cereal box and gave it a shake.  
The last handful of Cocoa-puffs tumbled out onto the table top.  
He arranged them into half a dozen little hexagrams,  
or at least what looked like might be hexagrams...  
An ad hoc Cocoa-puff I-Ching!  
Chuang-tzu peered at the Cocoa-puffs, trying to discern a pattern  
— some kind of message that would mitigate  
all of that tsuris, hazerai, and mishegas.*

*What have we got here?  
It looks like water, mountain, wind, mutability, abyss, and thirst.  
He squinted and peered at the hexagrams again.  
They had wiggled around a bit.  
Now they looked like fire, meadow, thunder, shadow, obedience, and mirth.  
Chuang-tzu was sure there must be some hidden significance...  
but try as he would, he couldn't make heads or tails of it.  
He sank into gloom.  
If only he hadn't eaten so many Cocoa-puffs!*

*There was only one thing to be done. After all, it was peach blossom time.  
"I shall write a haiku in praise of the silvery moon,"  
Chuang-tzu resolved, "and set it free to float down the stream.  
Perhaps someone will find it and read it  
and find some relief from the world's misery in it.*

*Or perhaps not."*

© 2016 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

(The author is a friend of the editor; permission to print has been granted.)



## Gift from Afar

by Judith Pothier



Inspired after receiving a call about an available California apartment, but also sad at the prospect of leaving our Center (where she found “sincere love, compassion and acceptance”), Judith started writing. Bypassing her thought process spontaneously, she feels the words could apply to many situations and people, and hopes they’ll provide hope and encouragement to others, even as they did her.

### Oh My Soul

Why are you sad and afflicted, Oh My Soul?  
This is a time for rejoicing... not sadness.

Why are tears falling like the flood gates  
of the dam have broken, when you  
should be full of laughter and joy?

Why, Oh My Soul, are you grieving and  
suffering so? Love and Compassion are  
not bound or loss by borders.

The heart within you “hungers and thirsts” for  
more of the spiritual manna and that it not end.

Do you not know, Oh My Soul, that  
things of the Spirit are not limited  
by distance or physical boundaries?

Do not be in anguish, Oh My Soul, for showers  
of light encircle you wherever you are... even in  
the darkness and shadows of the slumbering hours.

Hold on, Oh My Soul, for there is always a lifeline  
just around the corner...let the energy flow  
throughout your body and give you hope  
in the moment, in the “Right Now”!

---

Judith is doing Distant Studies with Matt, misses everyone here, and would love to hear from folks. Namaste!

• [japothier@outlook.com](mailto:japothier@outlook.com) • (541) 335-9967 • 585 Sacramento St. (Apt 309), Auburn, CA 95603 •

---

## We Really Don't Know. No... Really!

by Mark Hurwit

*Here is a tale of real magic—that happened to yours truly—strange but true.*

I do martial arts four days a week, and always take off my wedding ring before training. And because I've misplaced it a few times, I've developed a system so that I don't lose it. It is always in one of three places (my gym bag, next to the bathroom sink, or on a reserved place on my bureau). Always.

Several months ago, noticing after a few days that it wasn't attached to my finger, I checked all my usual places but it wasn't in any of them. Hmm? So I started looking more extensively... and then VERY extensively. I searched at the dojo, checked under the seats of my car with a hanger, looked in every shirt, jacket, pair of shoes, pockets, then around house... *everywhere!* Finally, concluding sadly that it was just lost, I started looking for another one to purchase.

Then one day, going out to my car to retrieve a parcel I'd left there, I opened the door to find my ring, gold on black, sitting right in the center of the driver's seat. It had been three weeks since I'd last seen it.

I sat right down on the pavement, and thought and thought and thought... how could that ring have *possibly* ended up there? I could come up with no explanation, not even at a stretch. There's just NO WAY that thing could've appeared there, other than by magic or mystical intervention. For sure.

I haven't taken the ring off since that day. Every time I look at it, I feel once again disabused of the notion that I know a gol'derned thing. (Or, as Tom McFarlane had to blow into my head: there are “multiple infinities.”) During the last retreat, Joel reminded the men in the circle, in no uncertain terms, that our best and highest guru is our spouse. (Ladies, this probably applies to you, too.)

Sheesh, the wedding ring! Right again, Joel, right again.

---

## LIBRARY CORNER

Please note the **NEW Library hours!**  
2nd & 4th Sundays: 1-3:30 pm  
Tuesdays: 6-8 pm

### Samples from our many great offerings!

---

#### Franklin Merrell-Wolff Interview, DVD by Joel Morwood

Readers of *Naked Through the Gate* know that during the final months of Joel's path, he took to the road, visiting spiritual communities and teachers to record the video magazine, *THE HERE AND NOW NEWS SERVICE*.

Meeting Franklin Merrell-Wolff, Joel recognized he was "someone special" and opted for a longer interview. This is a fascinating document for those familiar with Dr. Wolff's work, or are interested in the formation of Joel's teachings.

---

#### Calming the Fearful Mind: A Zen Response to Terrorism by Thich Nhat Hanh

Terrorism is not something that exists outside of ourselves: it cannot be located and then eradicated. It arises from the anger, fear, misunderstandings and cravings in the mind. Nhat Hanh looks closely at relevant aspects of war, torture and terrorism, and offers thought-provoking insights based on his own life experience. He then offers practical steps we can learn to communicate, even with our enemies, in ways that open up understanding and healing. As Nhat Hanh points out, we can't really be safe unless we care for the safety and well-being of everyone.

---

#### America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story by Bruce Feiler

The story of Moses is the story of the hero. He is weak. He's fleeing his past. He can't speak well. Yet he becomes the greatest leader in the history of the Jewish people. If you look at any narrative—in film, theater—there's an element of Moses in it. It's the ultimate journey. The hero starts out doubting himself. "I can't do it. I can't be a leader." Yet he rises to the occasion and saves the day."

Moses is the enemy of caution, which is one reason he has inspired so many visionaries— Christopher Columbus, William Bradford, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King. And these people were not born to greatness; they became great by tapping into the anger and hope within themselves. The moral of their lives, like that of Moses, is that each of us must become our own agitator, our own entrepreneur, our own freedom fighter... our own Moses.

---

## LIBRARY BLOG

Up-to-date and archived reviews of CSS library books  
<http://centerforsacredscienceslibrary.blogspot.com>

*Friendly Review-writing Instructions*  
and link to submission form [here](#).

---

#### Nurturing Spirituality in Children by Peggy Joy Jenkins

A goal of this book is to help young people start believing the things that are true about themselves as children of the Creator. When they know these truths, fantastic things begin to happen to them and to their world. The principles children learn from this book will help prepare them for whatever they may encounter, because they will understand that theirs is a mental and spiritual world; whatever is in their lives is the material expression of their beliefs.

---

#### Painting Heaven: Polishing the Mirror of the Heart Original work by Al-Ghazali, excerpts retold by Coleman Barks, illustrated by Demi

In al-Ghazali's work *The Revival of Religious Science: Book XXI - The Marvels of the Heart*, he tells a story about polishing one's own heart. It is retold here by Coleman Barks, paired with Demi's marvelous, detailed illustrations. Highly recommended as a fun and instructive book for adults and older children.

---

#### Outpouring of the Soul

by Rabbi Nachman (translated by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan)

A rebbe advises that we take the hammer of words to our heavy stone hearts and break them into small enough pieces to lift to heaven. Perhaps the heavy stone is our protective shield, which we have built up in a vain attempt to shield the "self" against the hostile world. — When the words of our teachers help us abandon the entire enterprise of shielding, then the light of the true heart can shine forth, and it is the same heart for each of us.

---

#### Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief — by Huston Smith

With his inspired and lucid style, the modern master of world religions exposes the cause of our global crisis: the modern worldview of scientism which marginalizes the religious dimensions of reality. Drawing from a lifetime of interactions with leading religious, philosophical, and scientific thinkers, Smith's book provides us with clear guidance for responding to the challenges of our times based on a deep understanding of why religion matters.

---



# Special Thanks to the Center's Supporters

Statements of the Center's financial summaries are available [here](#).

---

Abdullah Al Zammom  
Ahrens Foundation  
Aileen McNamara  
Allen Lowe  
Aloha Heart  
AmazonSmile Foundation  
Anette Gurdjian  
Anita Runyan  
Anna Lankutis  
Annie O'Shea  
Ashish Venugopal  
Barbara Dewey  
Barbara Goldberg  
Barbara Perrin  
Barbara Richmond  
Bearfoot Investments LLC  
Ben Moltman  
Betty Dahnke  
Betty Vail  
Bev Forster  
Bill Hamann  
Bob Carnes  
Bob Cowart  
Bob Quinn  
Brit Martin  
Bruno Kamps  
Camilla Bayliss  
Carla Crow  
Carol Lynn Blackwell  
Catherine Harris  
Cathryn Cardellino  
Cathy Jonas  
Cathy Forde  
Christina Maks  
Cindy Zarzycki  
Clivonne Corbett  
Dagmar Maston  
Darla Heil  
David Bove  
David Cunningham  
David Mason  
Deanna Cordes  
Donna Atkinson  
Earl Strumpell  
Edith Roberts  
Eleanor Parsons  
Elizabeth Midwinter  
Fred Chambers  
Gene Gibbs  
Hal Dillon  
Heather Halpern  
Heather Howard  
Hiromi Sieradski  
Holly Saunders  
Jake Walsh  
James Joseph Franzo  
Jane Harrison  
Jay McCandles  
Jennifer Knight  
Jennifer Sachs  
Jim Patterson  
Jim Ropkey  
Jim Zajac  
Joel DeVore  
Joel Morwood  
John Yousey  
Joyce Settelmeyer  
Judith Hasbrouck  
Judith Pothier  
Karen Gatton  
Karen Wesson  
Katherine Hamer  
Kathleen Daniel  
Katie Geiser  
Ken Paul  
Kenny Perrine  
Kevin Higgins  
Kris Lewis  
Kristy Murray  
Laura Betty  
Laurina Peters  
Lee Cozzens  
Liba Stafl  
Linda Hunt  
Lori Cunningham  
Lorraine Boose  
Lucy Johnson  
Luke Weiss  
Mark Hurwit  
Mary Kathleen Huse  
Lesley McCandles  
Matt Sieradski  
Matthew Thursfield  
Meg Jefferson  
Meg Stewart-Smith  
Megan Greiner  
Melissa Kaspar  
Merilee Refvem  
Merry Song  
Michael Augden  
Michael Glinsky  
Michael Rolph  
Michael Williams  
Mike Barkhuff  
Mike Craven  
Mike Strasburger  
Mo Moscovitz  
Mona Bronson  
Mora Fields  
Nancy Miller  
Nancy Milo  
Nathan Howard  
Niraja Cheryl Lorenz  
Oriana Khan Hurwit  
Parantap Lahiri  
Pat Munden  
Patricia Burbank  
Peggy Prentice  
Rauf Sheikh  
Raymond Blalock  
Rebecca Lipton  
Rich Holloway  
Rich Marlatt  
Richard Ahrens  
Richard Pomper  
Robert Refvem  
Robert Hoitt  
Robert Power  
Robin Bundy  
Robin Retherford  
Roslyn Riley  
Sally Snyder  
Sandy Itzkowitz  
Sasha Chernoff  
Sean Hahn  
Shannon Wylie  
Sharry Lachman  
Sheila Craven  
Shirley Chase  
Sophia Malkasian  
Steve Cummings  
Steve Gunn  
Steve Jonas  
Steve Longacher  
Steven Pologe  
Sue Hopkins  
Sue Esch  
Susan Stumpf  
Suzanne Kelley  
Tamara Cohn  
Terry Caron-Long  
Todd Corbett  
Tom Hopkins  
Tom McFarlane  
Tom Rundle  
Trish DeVore  
Vip Short  
Wesley Lachman

## Fred (Chambers) Speaks

Poems from the Heart

### Men

*Boys will be boys,  
Drums will be drums,  
Looking with love,  
All things are one.*

### Melting

*The body is laid upon the pyre,  
My heart is melted in the fire,  
There's no thing left to call my own,  
I AM is found in the sacred OM.*



## Board of Directors & Active Staff

[www.centerforsacredsciences.org/index.php/about/staff.htm](http://www.centerforsacredsciences.org/index.php/about/staff.htm)

### *Thanks for all that you do!*

#### **Board of Directors**

Joel Morwood  
*Spiritual Director & President*

Jennifer W. Knight  
*Library Director & Treasurer*

Barbara Dewey  
*Fundraising Director & Secretary*

Fred Chambers  
*Activities Director*

Todd Corbett  
*Special Projects Director*

Thomas J. McFarlane  
*Publications Director*

Michael Strasburger  
*Facilities Director*

**Spiritual Director**  
Joel Morwood

**Spiritual Teachers**  
Fred Chambers  
Todd Corbett  
Thomas J. McFarlane  
Annie O'Shea  
Matt Sieradski

**Distance Studies Course Mentors**  
Fred Chambers  
Todd Corbett  
Thomas J. McFarlane  
Annie O'Shea  
Vip Short

**Library Director**  
Jennifer W. Knight

**Senior Library Assistants**  
Camilla Bayliss  
Shirley Chase  
Barbara Dewey  
Wesley Lachman  
Peggy Prentice  
Sally Snyder  
Jack Yousey

**Library Assistants**  
Mona Bronson  
Mora Fields  
Barbara Goldberg  
Oriana Kahn Hurwit  
Sharry Lachman  
Nancy Miller

**Library Carpenter**  
Michael Augden

**Audio-Video Engineers**  
Damien Pierce  
Mark Hurwit

**Publications Director**  
Thomas J. McFarlane

**Newsletter Editor**  
Mark Hurwit

**Proofreading**  
Karen Fierman  
Sheila Craven

**Website and Holos Editor**  
Thomas J. McFarlane

**Special Projects Director**  
Todd Corbett

**Sunday Introductions**  
Cathryn Cardellino  
Barbara Dewey  
Mark Hurwit  
Aileen McNamara  
David Mason

**Activities Director**  
Fred Chambers

**Retreat Coordinator**  
Laura Betty

**Event Coordinator**  
Hiromi Sieradski

**Publicity**  
Mora Fields

**Facilities Director**  
Michael Strasburger

**Facilities Engineers**  
Eugene Gibbs  
Michael Augden  
Steve Jonas  
Deanna Cordes

**HVAC Engineer**  
Jack Yousey

**Fundraising Director**  
Barbara Dewey

**Fundraising Assistants**  
Hiromi Sieradski  
Mora Fields



# CSS Calendar: January 2017 – May 2017

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		Practitioners Group (Todd) 3–4:30 pm  Practitioners Group (Fred) 7–8:30 pm  Library open 6:00–8:00 pm	Foundation Studies (Matt) 7–8:30 pm  Community Nights January 25, March 22 and May 24	Book Club 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursdays 2:30–3:30 pm		Full-day Meditation 10:00 am – 2:30 pm 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm  January 7 (Tom) February 4 (Fred) March 4 (Annie) April 8 (Rich) May 13 (Todd)

## Schedule Notes

- There are no regular practitioner group classes on the weeks of Community nights: January 25, March 22 and May 24.
- All CSS activities will be suspended from March 27–April 2 for the Spring break, and from April 30–May 5 for the Spring retreat.
- All classes and meetings to be held at the Saratoga address unless otherwise specified.

## Sunday Videos planned for this calendar period:

### **JANUARY 8** — *Sacred Sleep (Vol 1 of “The Power of Dreams”)*

This video explores how dreams are viewed in three different religious traditions, and includes a fascinating conversation with Tibetan Rinpoche, Tenzin Wyangal, on Bon/Buddhist dream yoga. [dvd-0978, 60 min]

### **FEBRUARY 5** — *Pema Chödrön & Alice Walker in conversation*

In this video Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön and best-selling author Alice Walker engage in a personal conversation that demonstrates how two hearts and minds, forged in very different cultures, can still be deeply joined in the simple practice of compassion. [dvd-1030, 60 min]

### **MARCH 5** — *The Peyote Road*

This widely acclaimed, landmark documentary was instrumental in the campaign

to have Congress overturn the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1990 “Smith” decision, which denied the protection of the First Amendment to the traditional sacramental use of peyote by Indian people. [dvd-2008, 59 min]

### **APRIL 9** — *Timeless Wisdom*

This video records a joint talk given by Ven. Thubten Chodron, an American nun in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and Ven. Ajahn Amaro, a British monk in the Forest Theravadin Buddhist tradition on Being the Knowing. [dvd-1004, 60 min]

### **MAY 7** — *Habiba a Sufi saint from Uzbekistan*

This fascinating documentary follows Habiba, a Sufi teacher and healer in Uzbekistan, as she shares her wisdom and performs indigenous healing rituals. [dvd-1005, 30 min]

# *Love is not taught, it's caught.*

*You don't need to leave your room,  
Remain sitting at your table and listen.*

*Don't even listen, simply wait.*

*Don't even wait,*

*Be quite still and solitary.*

*The world will freely offer itself to you.*

*To be unmasked, it has no choice.*

*It will roll in its ecstasy at your feet.*

~ Kafka ~

*I need you some,*

*I hate you some,*

*I love you some.*

*Oh, I love you,  
when I forget about me.*

~ Joni Mitchell (from *Blue*) ~

*The only way to deal with  
an unfree world is to  
become so absolutely free  
that your very existence  
is an act of rebellion.*

~ Camus ~

*It's not what  
you look at  
that matters,  
it's what you see.*

~ Henry David Thoreau ~

*Love of God is pure when  
joy and suffering inspire  
an equal degree of gratitude.*

~ Simone Weil ~

Let me respectfully remind you that  
Life and Death are of supreme importance.  
Time swiftly passes by and opportunity is lost.  
Let us strive to awaken. Awaken!  
Take heed... do not squander your life.

~ traditional Buddhist evening gatha

## **CONTACT THE CENTER**

Phone #: (541) 345-0102

Website: [www.CenterForSacredSciences.org](http://www.CenterForSacredSciences.org)

Mailing Address: 1430 Willamette St., #164  
Eugene, OR 97401-4049

Meeting Address: 5440 Saratoga St.  
Eugene, OR 97405

## **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.

*CENTER COMMUNITY NEWS* is published three times a year. Submissions, comments, and inquiries should be sent to: [newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org](mailto:newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org), or mailed to CENTER FOR SACRED SCIENCES, Attn: Newsletter Editor, 1430 Willamette St., #164, Eugene, OR 97401-4049. To update or change your subscription preferences, please visit our website and select the subscription form under the Publications Menu.