

February 2008

CIRCLE SEEKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE

GREATER LAKE MICHIGAN URANTIA ASSOCIATION

DECISION 2008 - GLMUA Elections & Membership Meeting Saturday, March 15th at 12pm - 533 W. Diversey Pky., Chicago, IL 60614

This is an exciting election year for all Americans and I dare say we appreciate and enjoy the freedom to express our opinions through our vote for the best candidates to serve and represent us.

Greater Lake Michigan Urantia Association is no different in some regards, as we hope to elect competent leaders who are drawn to service and dedicated to our principals and goals. Every vote counts and a lively GLMUA election with choices would be encouraging indeed, as it would bear testimony to the many individuals who consider it an honor to serve.

This spring, the terms expire for the positions of President and Treasurer. Our current President, Benet Rutenberg, has served for two terms and will rotate off of the governing board for the period of one year according to bylaws. Benet has expressed the desire to stay involved as co-chair of our conference committee. Please read Benet's farewell further on in the newsletter, and I would like to express thanks to Benet for being such a great catalyst for the recent growth and direction of our association. We may be proud to be among a handful of the most active and organized associations in the USA. Many of us remember GLMUA's humble beginnings back in the early 1990's. I know we may have struggled and made mistakes along the way, but we're still going strong, and hoping you'll fill out and return the enclosed membership application or 2008 renewal.

We have one nominee for the office of President, Rick Lyon, who has served our association tirelessly in the past as Vice President and Secretary as well as the editor of the "Circle Seeker".

We also have the office of Treasurer up for election, and our current Treasurer, Tamara Wood, having done an excellent job, has graciously accepted a nomination for a second two year term.

The governing board would like to encourage nominations from the readership of any active members in good standing, who would like to serve. Please be sure the candidate will accept the nomination and that all parties are present for the membership meeting where the vote will be held.

Please RSVP if you plan to attend the study / membership meeting so that we may order refreshments.

We are still deciding the planned study theme, but you can count on a study session of about two hours and business meeting to follow. If you have any new business that you would like to be included in the agenda, please advise Benet Rutenberg at rutabl@aol.com as far in advance of the meeting date as possible.

It seems like everything I have read this week has been centered around a theme of how God understands all of our human weaknesses, along with the ebb and flow of our lives. I love the age old quote "to everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven". It doesn't matter if you haven't been to one of our events or meetings since 1993, we need you among us. I often think of our group as a relay team, some rest while others serve. I see this pattern continually renewing itself. I encourage many of the charter members of the association to engage in activities once again and you will be thrilled to become acquainted with some of the most steadfast and loyal folks who are lately serving our beloved GLMUA.

On March 15th I'm hoping to see faces that I have not seen in years! May God Bless and keep all of you....

"What is loyalty? It is the fruit of an intelligent appreciation of universe brotherhood; one could not take so much and give nothing." The URANTIA Book, page 435, par. 4

"Just think, you're here not by chance, but by God's choosing. His hand formed you and made you the person you are. He compares you to no one else... you are one of a kind. You lack nothing that His grace can't give you. He has allowed you to be here at this time in history to fulfill His special purpose for this generation." Roy Lessin

by Susan Grzeskowiak / suddenlysusan99@hotmail.com

Message From The President, Benet Rutenberg

#2

Dear Members and Friends in GLMUA. It gives me great pleasure to invite you all to our upcoming meeting in Chicago on March 15, 2008 to be held at Urantia Foundation in the Forum Room. The meeting will begin at 1230PM and close not later than 500PM.

As has become our custom, a Study Session will be first and last about 2.5 hours. The business meeting will follow. Our statement of purpose has become, Joyful Active Participation.

This is our membership participation meeting and includes the election of two of our officers. We encourage everyone who is receiving this newsletter to make plans to attend. All students of the Urantia Book are welcome. Please bring some snacks if able and GLMUA will also provide some food and beverages. We will discuss the calendar for the upcoming year and provide information on conferences. There will be time for socializing at the conclusion of the meeting and those who stay on usually join together for dinner at one of the local restaurants found nearby.

It has been my privilege to be part of GLMUA since the mid 1990's. Much has happened in that time and most of it is very good. In the summer of 2001 GLMUA volunteered, by unanimous vote of the then present members, to host the 2004 UAI International Conference. We were awarded that honor and immediately began our labor of love. James Woodward was nominated to the Conference Chair. We were blessed to have many serving on that committee, all with diverse backgrounds and capabilities. We met every two months for a time, then every month and the last 5 months we met every 2-3 weeks. With seed money from UAUS and one most generous anonymous person, we were able to produce an excellent experience for most all of our attendees. In the fall of 2003 as the US Copyright decision was being handed down, GLMUA experienced two difficult events. Our president and vice president resigned leaving the secretary and treasurer; and the venue for the conference decided to renovate some of the facilities we planned to use. Our agreement was cancelled. Rick Lyon and I were asked to complete those terms of office and we all scrambled to find a venue. Dominican University proved to be our last...and best choice. What an experience for our association and ultimately a wonderful conference for our international association.

In the aftermath of the conference GLMUA was confronted with the question of how to offer more to its members and friends. In the past, there had been the meeting in March and the Picnic in August. The Governing Board determined that we would offer a fall study session as well as be involved in other relevant events. We organized a booth for the Body, Mind and Spirit Fair and partnered with First Society for a retreat in Racine, Wisconsin. Some of our members worked to produce the 50th Anniversary of the publication of our Revelation. In 2007, we hosted our first annual Fall Study Session. We hope to make this a tradition and build it into a strong regional conference for those who are unable to attend the national or international conferences as they occur. I can only encourage, without reservation, anyone who has not attended a conference sponsored by a UAI Association to make the decision to do so. It is in attending conferences that we gain an understanding growth which gives greater relevance to our local meetings. We encourage anyone who is not attending a study group to do so. If one is not available we have resources to help you get started.

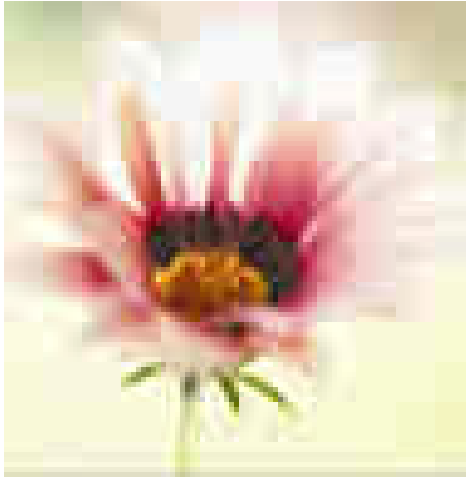
Lastly you may be wondering why I am giving the brief history of GLMUA for recent times. Since being asked to fill this office four and a half years ago, I have had the honor, the privilege, the blessing and the charge to lead this effort as your president. Anyone who has taken on a responsibility such as this will tell you that a leader is worth as much as the people who volunteer to help and not one ounce more. OK, I will tell you that. I cannot say that I have done everything well or that mistakes were not made. That is true for all of us. As a dedicated team of volunteers working together, this experience has been the most important fulfilling time of my life. Any and all successes that were achieved during this time are in large part due to those I am about to name. In no particular order, I give my fullest gratitude, appreciation and love to: Tonia and Steve Baney, Sheila Schneider, Susan Grzeskowiak, Debbie Moss, Mark Kurtz, Bob Solone, Mindy Williams, Barb Newsome, Bill Martin, Chris Wood, Lee Armstrong, Eddie King, Travis Binion, Jay Peregrine, Tamara Wood, Victor Garcia-Bory, Danny Casco, Michael Tanesky, Richard Keeler, Gaetan Charland, Rick Lyon for always being there and doing more and James Woodward for having the tough but always rewarding conversations, for asking and answering the real questions and providing a place to lay my head.

It remains a pleasure to serve GLMUA and that will continue as a member and Fall Study Session Co-Chair.

With Warmest Regards,

Benet Rutenberg, GLMUA President

Are you ready for spring?
Enjoy a blessed Easter!



Crystal Beads

Gazing out through my window pane,
I notice crystal beads of frozen rain
Trimming the trees sorely laden,
A lonely bobwhite calls.

Fine lacy work of ice and snow,
Wavers with winds soft, chill blow,
Hare bounds toward awaiting burrow,
Leaving tracks behind.

The day grows so very long,
And silent evening hastens on
To breathe a sleep upon everyone,
Dawn rises glittering.

Seraphim

Faithful, you are near,
Guiding me along
With a vision so clear,
And ears full of song.
Hearts brimming with cheer;
Affection so strong,
Seraphim my dear.

Angel on high,
Truly pure and holy
Is drawing nigh,
Recording my story;
Until I die
And rise to glory,
By and by.

Thank you dear ones,
Guardians and friends;
More devoted none,
On you I depend
For work loyally done;
Unto my end,
And still beyond.

dedicated to the loyal guardians
of my earthly sojourn...

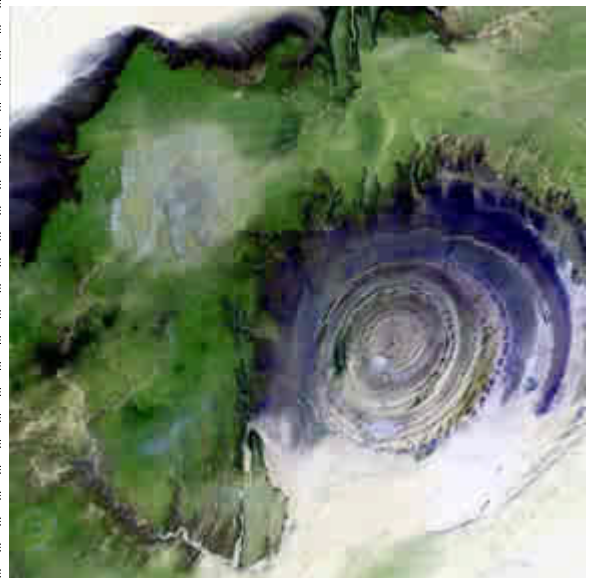
9-05-82

by Susan Grzeskowiak

11-21-81
by Susan Grzeskowiak

Do you have any stories, cool websites or
poetry that you would like to share with
other readers?

This is a NASA photo of a crater!



Christmas 2007 at the Foundation

by Susan Grzeskowiak

4

On December 8th, 2007 we were once again delighted to be a part of such a lovely evening at 533 W. Diversey Pky. in Chicago, as we have in so many past years. Our thanks go out to Jay Peregrine and the Foundation staff who all worked very hard to host and plan the entire event this year. All of the loyal attendees from GLMUA and First Society who had always volunteered to help with the event in past years, enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere where all were free to take the time to mingle as guests, and have the opportunity to get to know one another. There were comments among the guests that the food was the best there had ever been... the decor was festive and beautiful and we were treated to the talented performances of James Woodward on guitar and Bob Solone on piano, which is always a treat, for these gentlemen put on quite a show. First time guests, who are originally from South America, mentioned that they were surprised and touched by the warm sense of family that they felt as everyone joined together to sing Christmas carols. This is an annual event where everyone could bring a new guest and feel sure they would have a good time! Great job Jay, Tamara & Bill and thanks for all of your efforts!

- 2008 Calendar of Events -

Please watch for further information in the mail!

March 15 - Elections - Membership Mtg.

533 W. Diversey Pky. Chicago Illinois

April 6 - Spring Social Event

Rieth Center, Goshen Indiana

August 24 - Jesus Birthday Picnic

Indiana Dunes, Chesterton, Indiana

September 21- Fall Study Seminar

Hilton Garden Inn, Chesterton, Indiana

December date - Christmas Party

533 W. Diversey Pky. Chicago Illinois

Definite date to be announced at a later time.

WEBSITES:

UAUS / GLMUA: www.urantiausa.com

UAI: www.urantia-uai.org

FOUNDATION: www.urantia.org

Circle Seeker Study Luncheons...

all welcome to study The Urantia Book

Old Country Buffet Restaurant
Corner of Grape Road & Indian Ridge Road
(Wilshire Plaza) Mishawaka, IN

Please join us Saturday, March 29th, 2008
(and the last Saturday of every month)

Gather: 12 pm noon
Complete Buffet - \$7.80 + tax

RSVP (574) 259-6641 or email
suddenlysusan99@hotmail.com

If you would like information about study groups in your area!

2008 Membership Renewal (Please return to GLMUA, PO Box 483, Mishawaka, IN 46544)

NAME: _____

PHONE: (____) _____ CELL PHONE: (____) _____

ADDRESS: _____ APT: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

DUES: Regular Member \$40.00 _____ Associate Member \$20.00 _____

Centering - A Method of Divine Embrace by Daryl Berry

#5

The greatest teachers of all religions encourage us to reach for a new way of life. They promise us that we can enjoy the kind of intimate, loving relationship with God that they themselves have experienced. They teach us that the “pearl of great price” can best be found within, that as God’s beloved children, we can receive the inner nurture and companionship which our divine Parent provides in every passing moment.

However, while we might *know* of their promise and *believe* it to varying degrees, how often do we actually *feel the presence of God*? Can we experience the utter peace of resting in God’s nourishing embrace, like a satisfied infant nestled in its mother’s arms? Is such intimacy with God really available to us, perhaps even on a daily basis?

For centuries the great teachers of spirituality have sought to develop contemplative methods, practices designed to aid in the approach to loving union with God. Thirty years ago a group of Trappist monks, inspired by Thomas Merton, began to recover the work of the great monastic contemplatives of the Middle Ages. They combined these methods and elements of eastern meditation into a simple discipline that any of us can practice in the midst of our busy lives. This silent practice of Centering is a deeply restful techniques of opening to God’s presence and action in the innermost recesses of our being.

The description of Centering which follows is adapted from the book, *Open Mind, Open Heart*, by Thomas Keating, Abbot of the Trappist Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado.

Centering is the opening of mind and heart - our whole being - to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. We open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing - closer than consciousness itself. Centering is a process of interior purification leading, if we consent, to divine union. During the time of centering, we consent to God’s presence and action within. At other times our attention moves outward to discover God’s presence everywhere.

The Method of Centering

- I. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.
- II. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.
- III. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
- IV. At the end of the Centering period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes

Centering Guidelines

I. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.

1. The sacred word expresses our intention to be in God’s presence and to yield to the divine action
2. The sacred word can be chosen during a brief period of prayer asking the Spirit to inspire us with one that is especially suitable for us. Some examples are: Jesus, Abba, Father, Mother, Love, Peace, Shalom.
3. Having chosen a sacred word, we do not change it during the Centering period, for that would be to start thinking again.
4. A simple inward gaze upon God may be more suitable for some persons than the sacred word. In this case, one consents to God’s presence and action by turning inwardly toward God as if gazing upon him. The same guidelines apply to the sacred gaze as to the sacred word.

II. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.

1. By “sitting comfortably” is meant relatively comfortably; not so comfortably that we encourage sleep, but sitting comfortably enough to avoid thinking about the discomfort of our bodies during this time of Centering. Whatever sitting position we choose, we keep the back straight.

3. Centering in this way after a main meal may encourage drowsiness. It is better to wait at least an hour before Centering. Also, Centering just before retiring may disturb one's sleep pattern.

4. We close our eyes to let go of what is going on around and within us.

5. We introduce the sacred word inwardly and as gently as laying a feather on a piece of absorbent cotton.

III. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.

1. "Thoughts" is an umbrella term for every perception including sense perceptions, feelings, images, memories, reflections, and commentaries.

2. Thoughts are a normal part of Centering and occur often during the process.

3. By "returning ever-so-gently to the sacred word" a minimum of effort is indicated. This is the only activity we initiate during the time of Centering. During the course of Centering, the sacred word may become vague or even disappear.

IV. At the end of the Centering period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

1. The additional 2 or 3 minutes give the psyche time to readjust to the external senses and enable us to bring the atmosphere of silence into daily life.

Some Practical Points

* The minimum time for Centering is twenty minutes. Two periods are recommended each day, one first thing in the morning, and one in the afternoon or early evening.

* The end of the Centering period can be indicated by a timer, providing it does not have an audible tick or loud sound when it goes off.

* The principal effects of Centering are experienced in daily life, not in the period of Centering itself.

* We may notice slight pains or twitches in various parts of the body or a generalized restlessness. We may also notice heaviness or lightness in the extremities. This is usually due to a deep level of spiritual attentiveness. In either case, we pay no attention or we allow the mind to rest briefly in the sensation, and then return to the sacred word.

Points for Further Development

1. During Centering, we avoid analyzing our experience, harboring expectations or aiming at some specific goal such as:
 - a. Repeating a sacred word continuously.
 - b. Having no thoughts.
 - c. Making the mind a blank.
 - d. Feeling peaceful or consoled.
 - e. Achieving a spiritual experience.
2. What Centering is not:
 - a. It is not a relaxation exercise.
 - b. It is not a form of self-hypnosis.
 - c. It is not limited to the "felt" presence of God.
3. What Centering is:
 - a. It is at the same time a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.
 - b. It is an exercise of faith, hope, and love.
 - c. It habituates us to the language of God, which is silence.

Circle Seeker is the newsletter of Greater Lake Michigan Urantia Association, a not for profit philosophical service organization.

GLMUA

PO Box 483, Mishawaka, Indiana 46544

We welcome articles and contributions, please submit for publication to:

Editor: Susan Grzeskowiak - suddenlysusan99@hotmail.com

You may contact the editor or any other officer of GLMUA at their emails which are listed below:

Benet Rutenberg - rutabl@aol.com Michael Tanesky - tanesky@comcast.net Tamara Wood - tamara@urantia.org