

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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Michaelmas 2004



Daniel's Vision by the River Ulai by Rembrandt

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACT OF CONSECRATION OF MAN

Rev. Michael Kientzler
Vancouver

The importance of the fact that the Act of Consecration of man is celebrated around the world should not be underestimated. We are a tiny group of people supporting a deed which adds a different kind of light – the light of Christ – to the light of the sun. We on the west coast are the last ones doing so before the day vanishes in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Rather than ask ourselves whether it is we who need the service, perhaps we should be asking whether the earth, whether all of humanity, whether the spiritual world needs it. Our deed becomes one of the main doorways for the angels to intercede for mankind. Because we live in the age of freedom, they will leave us alone until we knock and then open the door into their world. Our service could also be called the Act of Cooperation with Spiritual Beings. The fact that this deed is done regularly here is vital, even for those things happening around the world over which we feel powerless.

CRUSHING GRAPES

Rev. Cynthia Hindes
Los Angeles

In order to make wine, the grapes have to be crushed. All the long nurturing and tending seems to be turned into its opposite—the grapes are destroyed. Why? Ironically, to preserve them. They undergo a change of form, so that they can continue to exist on a different level as wine.

Our lives also have their harvest times. There are periods when all we have worked for seems to undergo a change, transformed by something that feels to us wrathful and destructive.

But we must realize that all forms of life are subject, fortunately, to transformation. Indeed, if this were not so, life could not continue. Old forms need to be destroyed, broken down, so that new forms can arise. Breaking down ultimately serves the ongoing evolution of life itself.

We can be comforted when we realize that the treading of the winepress of change that may appear to destroy our efforts is driven by the Creating One of God, the White Rider, described in Revelations 19, 11-16, who came to earth to clothe himself within our human blood.

He is faithful, loyal, not only to God his Father, but also to those of us who feel ourselves trodden upon by

life's burdens. For he requires nothing of us which he himself has not been subject to. He allowed himself to be crushed, so that the wine of his redeeming blood could flow.

And he is true, right, completely in order and at one with the great moral order that underlies true justice. Our apparent destruction, his striking, his shepherding us toward the winepress, his treading the winepress of our lives serves a higher order and purpose. It serves to create a higher kind of life out of what we have so far created and tended. The juice of our lives becomes wine, his wine, so that the true value of our lives is preserved. He begets timeless existence, so that the true good of our lives may endure.

SEMINARY NEWS

Rev. Gisela Wielki
Chicago

The seminary in Chicago is well and alive. On the weekend of October 2/3 we celebrated our first birthday. Our three founding students, Asharaine Machala, USA, Matthew Mazzoli, USA/Norway, Sophia Pan, Australia, have inwardly stretched and enriched returned into their previous lives. We think of them and their sincere and earnest engagement with profound gratitude. They deserve to go down in history as slightly larger than life and for opening wide the gate for a new group of students.

Our second year opened with eleven students in the first semester. The youngest is 23; the oldest, 63, is a guest student from Norway. Eight students are from the US and two students are transfers from the Hamburg seminary for one or two semesters. This is an exciting development, as we had hoped from the beginning that there would be exchanges between the seminaries. In the coming academic year we look forward to the visits of two seminary directors, Christward Kroener from Hamburg, and Michael Debus from Stuttgart. Each will teach a course. Some of the younger students still burdened by previous student loans, but in search of a vocation, not just a job, dare to begin another training. Others have left behind secure positions in life. All are willing to embark on a journey into the unknown. All wish to experience in a deeper, more existential way the meaning of the word *walking with Christ* in the Act of Consecration of Man.

Over the summer, when many seek a respite in the outdoors, we were busy with the interior renovations of the seminary building. With limited means we have managed to create simple but welcoming living quarters for the students, as well as a classroom and library

space. It will suffice for now. But with the office given very little room, we do hope that in the future we can convert the basement into a real office, another classroom and a faculty guest room. For now this has to wait as well as the exterior building repairs, except for the windows, which were all replaced to keep us warm for less in winter. Garden care and everyday house maintenance is carried by the students. The grill and a spacious porch encourage a lively social life. Across the street is the basketball court of the Baptist church for interdenominational workouts.

The Open Course brochures have gone out to members and friends in North America with the invitation to come for a retreat and join us for one of the weeklong courses. It was a joy to welcome "visiting students" throughout the year. We can feel how much they have helped in making the seminary known in a real and living way in other parts of the continent.

Heartfelt thanks also to all who have helped us financially in the course of our first year. It is very encouraging to see the growing circle of our friends and supporters.

If you would like more information, please call the seminary at 773-907-2270 or email giselawielki@earthlink.net

WAKING UP: CHOOSING TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT OF DAY

Review of a conference for young adults in Chicago,
June 20-25th, 2004

It was a fitting time of year to focus on light; The dawn of Christian Community summer conferences for young adults in Chicago this past June coincided with the longest day of the year. Indeed, the solstice sun permeated every aspect of our sense experiences throughout the week, from a breathtaking, skyline-adorning sunset at the lake on our first evening together, to an unlikely (albeit eagerly anticipated) rainy afternoon emergence during our "St. John's Happening" day trip into downtown Chicago on one of our last days. Similarly, the long days served to illuminate our inner work with the theme, dramatically increasing our ability to dive headfirst into Waking Up: Choosing to Live in the Light of Day. And in addition to the time of year, several other significant factors contributed to the amazing intensity of what many of us decided was one of the most in depth and concentrated conferences we'd ever attended.

First, this was the first ever young adult conference in Chicago. The excitement emanating from the

seminary was palpable from the moment we arrived, with exponential growth in class size for its second year this fall, and a new dormitory to boot. And the uniqueness of the city itself provided an incredible backdrop and a significant presence. But the geographic and seasonal shift from the Spring-Valley-in-winter precedent set over the past three years of young adult conferences, coupled with scheduling conflicts due to the work and travel that often interferes for this age group, yielded a very intimately sized group.

Yes, in the weeks building up to the conference, some of us had concerns about whether or not such a serious dearth in registrations could transform into something even resembling a conference. But our fears were allayed almost immediately upon sitting down together that first night. With a seventeen year old from L.A., a 33 year old heading to the Chicago seminary in the fall, two until-recently-Waldorf-teachers leaving for the seminary in Germany (one of whom somehow found it within himself to take time out from his report writing and intersperse it with conference participation because he so wanted to attend), a recent college grad who attended the day events while preparing herself for Med school by studying on her own each night, and only two people from the usually ubiquitous Spring Valley crowd among us, we knew from the start that this conference would be different. Sure enough, the comparatively small group felt like more than enough as soon as things got rolling. Sitting down to such a modest circle facilitated the involvement of every participant in a powerful and ultimately valuable way (and gave a whole new meaning to small discussion groups).

Second, an increased amount of content compounded our ability to create immense energy as a small unit. Our catalyst in this respect was Arthur Zajonc, physics professor at Amherst College. Art expertly lead us through many perspectives surrounding our theme; In exploring such diverse topics as Goethean color studies and sense exercises, the writings of Thoreau and Rilke, and the nature of love and one's role in the world, he awakened us all. We thank him immensely for his presence and contribution. The priests involved also played a major role in providing content to work with; Revs. Gisela Wielki, Richard Dancey and Oliver Steinruck informed our discussions with a timely examination of the life of St. John, some grappling with the Christian Community Creed and Steiner's Creed and the idea of "my creed," and plenty of their usual and much appreciated wisdom.

Third, the priest's contributions, while quite significant, did not extend as fully into the conference planning realm as in times past, because a small group of participants became the impulse and force behind

the carrying out of the young adult conference this time around. Not unexpectedly, taking the reins meant a couple of slightly wrong turns, but to us this increased involvement was just one of several indicators that these young adult conferences are indeed quite different than the youth conferences for teenagers. We found that meeting together upon arrival to discuss the schedule of the week, as well as communicating for months about the theme, allowed us to feel as though the conference was alive for all of us, priest and young adult alike, instead of produced by priests for us to consume. As part of that change, we also found that we tackled more explicitly religious material than before, though always in a Christian Community manner that respected individual beliefs and made no attempt to convert or condemn. Of course, we all know that the overtly religious aspects of these conferences do not speak to everyone, but our feeling was that, in the most inclusive way possible, this new “young adult” nature of these conferences can allow us to speak about and live with this potentially tricky subject, bringing forth a new and evolving understanding of it for oneself, whether Christian or not.

So, as one might imagine, such a significant change to self-leadership was extremely instructive for all involved. At times we learned about what might work simply by realizing that the option we went for was perhaps not the ideal one (mental note: planning every detail over e-mail can become slightly problematic at times!) but the experience gave many of us a very solid grasp of what is needed in the present, and what is possible for the future. And we are plowing ahead, riding the momentum from this past June in a continuing dialogue aimed towards planning Spring Valley winter conferences, Chicago summer conferences, and even an international conference in Chicago in June 2006! We are eager to include anyone interested in planning, participating, attending or otherwise contributing to any of these initiatives, so please contact myself (switri@wheatonma.edu) or Seth Jordan (stjor@conncoll.edu) with questions, ideas or anything else you've got.

REVELATION AND GLADNESS: THE BONAVENTURE RIVER CANOE TRIP

Sara Ciborski
Temple, New Hampshire

This past summer, Heimdall-By-Canoe offered its first ever whitewater canoeing trip for adults. It appealed to me at once as one of those “things I've always wanted to do.” Never mind that I was inexperienced at both canoeing and camping, sixty-one years old and doubtful

about my stamina. Peter Skaller, Christian Community priest from the Taconic Berkshire region, assured me—“If I can do it, you can do it!”

The river chosen for this trip, the Bonaventure, flows from north to south in the middle of the Gasp Peninsula, the part of Quebec just north of Nova Scotia, known for its varied ecosystems and depressed economy. Its source is Lac Bonaventure in the Chic Choc Mountains, which are the northernmost extension of the Appalachian range. It is 127 kilometers long and empties into the Baie des Chaleurs (effectively, the Atlantic Ocean) at the village of Bonaventure.

My first challenge was to assemble the stuff on the impressively detailed “Gear List” that Peter sent to participants. It itemized everything from underwear to life vest, from the ordinary (knife and fork) to the specialized (water bottle with built-in filter). Written in Peter's best and tersest prose (not unlike his sermons), the list serves as a primer of camping comfort, etiquette and safety: “In the last analysis, the only effective, safe insect repellents are light-colored clothing, a good head net or bug-shirt, socks and gloves. Those work for sure!” and “No one is to go barefoot at any time!”

When I arrived in Burlington (where I joined Peter and others for the drive north), I discovered that my packing concerns were trifling in comparison with the organizational challenge of the trip itself, laid out on Bill Warnock's driveway. Nine canoes require a trailer. They also require 27 paddles (one extra per canoe), 18 flotation bags, 18 plastic bailers, a multitude of ropes and straps and other miscellaneous equipment. Food, cooking equipment and first aid supplies for 19 people for a week meant a dozen large heavy-duty plastic waterproof crates and barrels. Each person also brought or was loaned an enormous, unwieldy waterproof dry-bag.

Responsibility for all this gear, indeed for the planning and execution of all Heimdall's trips, rests on the shoulders of three stalwart men: Peter, Bill, and Willem Joubert (of Montreal). With twelve years of trips behind them, they take all this in stride. As a newcomer, I was and I remain awed by their logistical mastery.

The Bonaventure River is far away. We drove two hours from Burlington, met the Canadian contingent (with more gear, including a kayak for Willem's son Guillaume), drove ten more hours, spent a short night at a motel and drove three hours more to Bonaventure. From there we were driven in an ancient bus for another four hours (we had a flat tire and made several wrong turns on a maze of logging roads) until finally, in the pouring rain, we reached the lake.

Our utter remoteness from the safety and comforts of civilization struck me forcefully when our driver and his two helpers drove off, leaving us on the soggy, wild

shore amid heaps of wet gear, chilled in our raincoats and wet shoes.

But this was what we wanted: to be inaccessible, isolated, dependent only on our canoes, our wits and our endurance and each other. We were eight Americans and eleven Canadians ranging in age from 15 to 62 (in two distinct age clusters: 15 to 22 and over 46) and including two married couples. Eight of us had never paddled a whitewater canoe.

For its first 15 kilometers the Bonaventure is an obstacle course of perilous rocks in shallow water. The first time my canoe banged into a rock I suppressed a shriek, certain that it would burst asunder with the impact. No one told me, I thought later, how magnificent these boats are, constructed to withstand just this treatment.

Banging and scraping, we got out and in dozens of times to dislodge the canoes, scrabbling over slippery rocks in the freezing cold water. It was grueling and not fun; even our seasoned paddlers complained. We were frequently swept toward strainers (fallen trees that let water, but not people or canoes, pass underneath); giving thanks for my helmet, I often didn't know until the last instant whether to duck or grab on and jump over.

The Bonaventure also presented us, in those early kilometers, with a series of logjams. We bypassed one by dragging the canoes through a stretch of muddy canals, another by portaging across a densely-thicketed island. The final one looked impossible to me: how do you get nine heavily loaded canoes over one 6-foot-high logjam? Easy. A few strong people lifted each canoe and passed it up to another strong few standing on the logjam, who slid it over. It was accomplished in a matter of minutes, while I stood in my wet shoes perfectly useless and transfixed with admiration.

What makes these trips successful, I could see, aside from the dedication of our three leaders, was the energy and good will of young Heimdall veterans, in this case Guillaume, Marie-Astrid, Ruby, Frances and Laura. Canadians all, they were proficient and indefatigable paddlers, reliable support for the novices, intrepid in the rapids, and a constant source of amusement around the campfire.

Toward the end of the second day the river flowed more swiftly and deeply; around every bend were rapids and more rapids. My aching legs and arms, numbed knees, waterlogged feet, the uncomfortable strictures of helmet and life vest—all were obliterated by the transcendent joy of moving with the river. The Bonaventure's rapids are mostly R-1 and R-2, that is, not particularly difficult, but there were several sections of R-3 and at least one dangerously steep shelf. Whatever their classification, that ominous whooshing

sound of upcoming rapids never failed to give me a shiver of apprehension.

I paddled in the bow, of course, and I learned to draw, cross draw and pry, the strokes needed for avoiding rocks. Willem, who was my stern most days, entrusted me with some of the decisions—constant vigilance, quick judgments, unwavering concentration are essential on the river—and I sometimes, happily, judged right. But in the thick of rapids I depended on his directions. "Draw, please," he would call out. "Draw hard. Now forward, Draw, draw, Good. Oops. Miss one, hit one. Keep paddling. Strong now, strong. We can get through. Keep the momentum. Ouch. Cross draw quick. Good. Now head for the left there. See where the current is." And so on and on until we would find respite in a stretch of clear, quiet water.

Camping was another eye-opener. Thanks to food organizers Ruby and Astrid, we ate delicious vegetarian meals like couscous and peas and grilled cheese sandwiches. As usual, I was delighted and amazed at the way everything worked, including my own growing competence. I became adept at dragging my dry-bag across rocks, setting up my tent, sorting my clothes by degree of wetness. Every morning I got more efficient at re-stuffing the dry-bag (with sleeping mat, sleeping bag, tent, backpack) and squashing it with all my weight to make it fit between the thwarts of the canoe.

The most potent revelation was the river itself. It is extraordinarily beautiful. Excepting the first 20 kilometers, where we passed through an area devastated by forest fires, we enjoyed glorious scenery with dramatic canyons, magnificent soaring spruce forests, and an incredible variety of beautiful rocks and rock formations.

The Bonaventure is a river of surpassing purity. We dispensed with our filters from the outset, drinking directly from bottles or hands. I had never seen nor hope to see such crystal clear, such vital water. It was alive with rippling surfaces, sinuous curves, deep and enchanting rock-strewn pools. And always the water danced with the light.

Once, late in the day, Willem and I rounded a sharp bend on the outside, slightly angled (as was best) toward the inside of the curve. The light of the westward sun disported on the shallow pebbled surface of the broad, upward slope of the water and set it alight with an infinite shimmer of sparkles. As we swept around the bend, born on the crests of gentle rapids, paddles lifted and ready, it seemed to me a living light full of love and the gladness of being.

We approached the end, and I mourned the loss of remoteness. We began to pass fishermen standing in the water—the rivers of the Gasp are world renowned for salmon fishing. We heard an occasional truck and

passed cottages and cabins perched above the banks. Finally, on the last afternoon we paddled under a highway bridge and into the broad inlet of the town.

Elated, weary, we had paddled the entire length of the river. I was of course absolutely exhilarated to have indeed “done it.” But the Bonaventure experience has left me with something more than self-satisfaction. Its legacies are that anomalous feeling of responsibility that always comes with an awakening, and an overflowing gladness that lives on.

ALTAR PICTURE CONFERENCE IN HILLSDALE, NY, AUGUST 2004 Report by Rev. Hartmut Junge

Seven artists, among them two students from the Stuttgart Seminary, and three priests attended. It is good to know that two of our NA artists participated in last year’s altar picture conference in Stuttgart. We are staying connected. Pictures are before our inner eye. How can we make them visible? The first morning we did Black and White exercises. Can we also show the crucifix light and the sphere of the Risen One dark? This should not sound too strange to the priests! We also drew gestures and tried a figure in motion. Can we bring a sequence in time into a static picture? The second day we worked on color shades and started larger pictures. Several of us were to work on the same picture. Collaging was part of the technique and process. Then the picture has layers and its ‘history’. The question of holding back and slowing down also was considered so that we can receive the picture instead of making or even forcing it. We listened to Novalis’ story of Eros and Fabel, summarized by a participant, and also had a talk on the two painters J. Beuys and J. Schnabel. Laura Summer was our host, our teacher, our meal prepared and our time keeper, and still smiling at the end! We should not pile all this on her again. Where could we go with our next conference in 2005?

BLUE HELMETS IN CALI

Rev. Emilia Hosmann
June 14, 2004

Our construction has already reached the beams which are the foundation for the second floor. This will be the last week when we will be able to see scattered about, in every corner and nook, blue helmets working together with yellow helmets. As of next week, the workers will be many fewer! The blue helmets are the skilled workmen, the “officers”; the yellow helmets are

unskilled, they are learning their job. Here one learns this way; someone teaches the job working together, like mules in a team, pulling and sweating it out together. Each blue helmet has one or two learners or helpers. They work together minimum 8 hours a day, sometimes more, when a job cannot be interrupted. These men, supervised by an orange helmet, already mentioned in a previous article, the “master” Eli-el (twice God), are leaving their etheric juices behind: their sweat and sometimes blood, which has flowed into the structure, walls and beams of this building. They are of different ages: some are incredibly young (though already with large scars in arms and hands), some are middle aged and some are even older. They are of mixed races: mestizos, Indian, afro-american, white. Many arrive pedaling their bikes so as to save bus fare; many pedal an hour to get here. The blue helmets, the “officers” know how to work; they are the Master’s trustworthy men. It is not necessary in this construction to have a person to watch over the tools. Each officer is completely responsible for the tools entrusted to his care and nothing gets lost. These people, which we had the opportunity to meet personally as we celebrated the construction of the first cement plate which was also the ceiling of the basement and ground floor of the church, have left their substance engraved in the building and in our hearts. Their photos will be on the walls of the basement.

But how much does a blue helmet earn? It is really ridiculous, considering all the hard and rough work: 250 dollars a month. If that is what a blue helmet earns, who is a skilled worker, how much, then, a yellow helmet? 50 dollars less. This is not because we are bad employers. On the contrary, the men are happy to work for us because of the just treatment, the medical service and the retirement pension which they receive. There is so much unemployment that many offer much less and they take it. But so are the labor laws: manual labor is grossly underpaid.

For these people also, to elevate their condition, to help change the consciousness of the social and labor laws, to offer to whomever wants and searches for a radical change in their lives, do we build the church of the Community of Christians which will also provide a center for anthroposophic activities. We are also a team of mules working together, helping each other to offer all those silent social workers a religious service that is alive and a spiritual orientation where they can recharge their batteries and understand what it is they are doing. Many suffer from burnout because of a lack of spiritual nourishment. This beautiful and wounded land needs and deserves all the help it can get!

For those who would like to help finish the building (we cannot do this on our own), please contact Arie

Boogert, 20 Lake Street, Arlington, MA 02474 (Phone/
Fax 781-646-4644; e-mail: arieboogert@hotmail.com)
. He knows how to send us your contribution. With many
thanks for your attention and good will!

SUMMER CONFERENCE 2005 IN NEW YORK

July 23-29 on the campus of Wagner College
on Staten Island

**To Know Christ in Freedom:
The individual self and the power that unites**

Save the Dates!!

UPCOMING RETREAT, JANUARY 28 – 30, 2005

**The Element Air:
in Nature, in the Gospel, in the Sacraments**

One of a series of Christian Community
retreats on the four elements.
January 28th to the 30th, 2005, in Wernersville, PA

The theme will be approached in presentations by
Daniel Hafner, and in painting led by Mimi Coleman,
Spatial Dynamics led by Zoe Workman, and eurythmy
led by Gillian Shoemaker.

Each day will begin with the act of consecration of
man and end with a vesper service.

For a detailed flyer and application form, call 610
293 6484.

Deadline for deposit: November 24, 2004

New Church to be Built

The Taconic Berkshire Congregation is building a new
Church

Our expanding congregation makes a larger space
necessary. At present \$295,000 have been raised yet
\$120,000 more is needed by November 1 for
construction to start in the Spring of 2005. Local
resources have been squeezed to the limit and now
help is needed from people around the country who
want to help create a new space for the Act of
Consecration of Man here on earth. You can send your
gift or pledge to the Treasurer, The Christian
Community, 10 Green River Lane, NY 12529.

Rev. Julia Polter newly assigned to work in Boston

On Sunday, August 29, 2004 Rev. Polter was
officially inducted into the Boston Congregation. This

is a permanent assignment. Julia Polter has previously
worked in congregations in Germany. We welcome her
into the work of The Christian Community here in North
America.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA As of September 2004

On the Web: www.thechristiancommunity.org

Seminary of The Christian Community

P.O. Box 25603, Chicago, IL 60625
Rev. Gisela Wielki (773) 472-7041

Lenker: Rev. Oliver Steinrueck,
Chicago

(773) 989-8558

Boston USA

366 Washington Street, Brookline, MA 02445
Rev. Julia Polter, 781-648-1214

(617) 277-6266

Chicago USA

2135 West Wilson, Chicago, IL 60625
Rev. Richard Dancey

(773) 506-0963

Denver USA

2180 South Madison Street, Denver, CO 80210
Rev. James Hindes

(303) 282-6424

Detroit USA

1320 Camden at Wanda, Ferndale, MI 48220
Rev. Hartmut Junge, Rev. Robert Patterson

(248) 546-3611

Los Angeles USA

11030 LaMaida Street, North Hollywood, CA 91601
Rev. Cynthia Hindes

(818) 762-2251

New York USA

309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023
Rev. Erk Ludwig

(212) 877-3577

Philadelphia USA

212 Old Lancaster Road, Devon, PA 19333
Rev. Daniel Hafner
Rev. Nadine Hafner

(610) 293-6484 or 647-6869

Sacramento USA

3506 Eisenhower Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826
Rev. Franziska Hesse, Rev. Sanford Miller

(916) 965-9112 or 366-9545

San Francisco USA

906 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94115
Contact Melissa Kay (415) 469-0705, or contact
Rev. Sanford Miller in Sacramento (916) 965-9112

(415) 928-1715

Spring Valley USA (845) 426-3144

15 Margetts Rd, Spring Valley, NY 10977
Rev. Carol Kelly

Taconic-Berkshire Region USA

(518) 325-9293 or (413)274-6032

10 Green River Lane, Hillsdale, NY 12529
Rev. Michael Brewer , Rev. Peter Skaller

Toronto CANADA (905) 709-4544

901 Rutherford Road, Vaughan, Ontario L6A 1S2
Rev. Susan Locey

Vancouver CANADA (604) 215-9767

5050 East Hastings Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5B 1P6
Rev. Michael Kientzler

GROUPS AFFILIATED WITH CONGREGATIONS
(* Not now regularly visited by a priest)

Burlington, Vermont USA Contact Bill and Michelle Warnock
(802) 862-7001 (Or contact Taconic-Berkshire Region)

Camphill Minnesota USA Contact Chicago

Camphill Nottawasaga, Ontario CANADA Contact Edi Holzer (705) 424-2409 (Or contact Toronto)

Chapel Hill, North Carolina USA Contact Buddy Smiley (919) 933-5925 or Margit Gratzl (919) 467-9447 (Or contact Philadelphia)

Copake Camphill Village, New York USA Contact Corinna Komenda (518) 329-1140 (Or Contact Taconic-Berkshire Region)

Duncan, British Columbia CANADA Contact Michael Balcomb (250) 701-0005 (Or contact Vancouver)

Durham Area, Ontario CANADA Contact Fritz and Hilde Stutzki (519) 369-6011 (Or contact Detroit)

East Troy, Wisconsin USA Contact Chicago

***Honolulu, Hawaii USA**
Contact Bill and Genie Sakaguchi
(808) 738-5534 (Or contact Los Angeles)

Camphill Village, Kimberton Hills, Pennsylvania USA Contact Philadelphia

London, Ontario CANADA Contact Herbert and Agnes Schneeberg (519) 641-2431 or Carol Lewis (519) 433-0090
(Or contact Detroit)

Maine (Southern) Contact Tade and Nancy Mahoney (207) 865-4482 (Or Contact Boston)

Minneapolis, Minnesota USA Contact Chicago

Montreal, Quebec CANADA
Contact Johanna Boelsterli
(514) 289-9473 or Scotty Simons (514) 935-9074 (Or Contact Taconic-Berkshire Region)

Nelson, British Columbia CANADA Contact Helen Bischof (250) 352-5727 (Or contact Vancouver)

New Hampshire (Southern) USA
Contact Hanspeter and Susan Weber (603) 352-7370 (Or contact Boston)

Ottawa, Ontario CANADA Contact Brenda St. Jean (613) 729-5328 (Or contact Toronto)

Pioneer Valley, Massachusetts USA
Contact Eileen Noonan
(860) 956-8799 (Or contact Taconic-Berkshire Region)

Santa Cruz, California USA Contact Susan and Bruce Bischof (831) 423-4025 (Or contact San Francisco)

Santa Fe, New Mexico USA Contact Denver

Santa Rosa, California USA Contact Elinor Biller (707) 542-5733 (Or contact San Francisco)

Seattle, Washington USA Contact Christina Lee (206) 459-5374 (Or contact Vancouver)

Viroqua, Wisconsin USA Contact Chicago

Washington DC – Baltimore area USA
Contact Rudolf Heirman 301-593-0712.