

Village eView

August 16, 2019

Marjenta Gray, Guest Editor

Being in Heaven After a Short Visit to Hell

Marjenta Gray

Around 45 people followed a carefully-laid road map to a heavenly state of mind at last week's 50th annual Human Relations Lab at Sahale Learning Center. There was a short detour to Hell, but that stop made the final destination even more significant.

The week began with leaders greeting participants on Sunday, August 4th, showing them the way to their lodging and introducing them to their small

groups. The small groups are like a temporary family, where deep sharing and personal work occur in a supportive, confidential, safe space. Small groups are facilitated by trained co-leaders who have deeply engaged their own growth, and fully participate in the Lab program.

Monday was about being present, practicing mindfulness, beginning to notice our communication and thought patterns. The day started with a humorous skit, illustrating how not to behave in a small group. Small groups read and discussed small group norms and agreements, enabling the work of the week being held in a consensual culture of listening without cross-talk, judging, or fixing. The curriculum of the day was to experience the connectedness of Heaven, while noticing thoughts, feelings, and actions that obstructed that peaceful state. The Lab workbook presented helpful tools: right speech, speaking and listening from the heart, developing empathy and compassion, and cultivating willingness to know the facts of our inner and outer worlds.

Tuesday featured a descent into Hell. That may seem contrary to the theme of "Heaven" but in actuality, being present in a peaceful, loving state of mind requires awareness of egoic, distracting thoughts and feelings that can be the signposts to hell. Phillip Moffitt says, in his book, *Dancing with Life*, "Like

On-Line News of the Goodenough Community System

The American Association for the Furtherance of Community

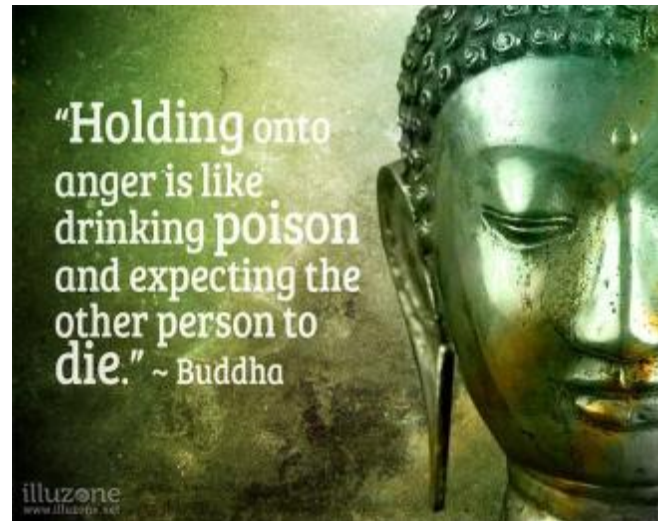
Convocation: A Church and Ministry

Mandala Resources, Inc.

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The EcoVillage at Sahale

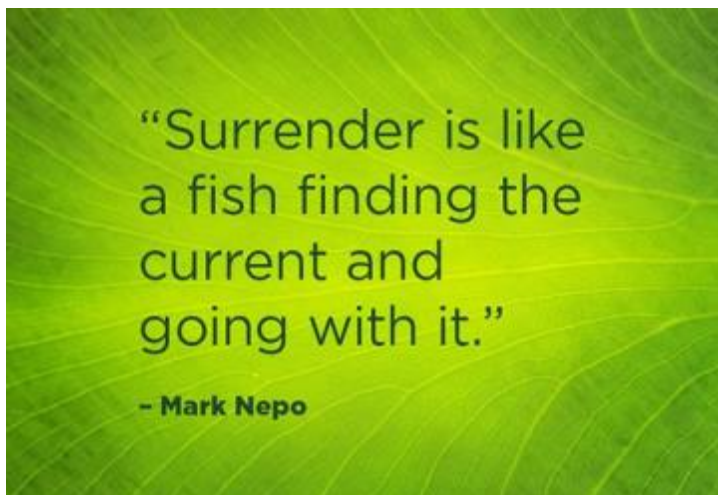
everyone else you do what you can to try to prolong, enhance, and increase the number of pleasurable moments in your life, but nothing consistently works. There is always the next moment of the dance. No matter how much you attempt to distract yourself (and you may be one of those people who are great at creating distractions), your nervous system still perceives the changing dance, even when you are not aware of it, and it suffers, oftentimes even more so because you are trying to ignore it.” The workbook states, “Misery, agony, separation, pain, anguish, torment, woe, torture are all aspects of Hell. The root word, of Germanic origin, means to cover or hide.”



Tuesday's morning plenary session began with another skit, where the Leadership Players enacted several hellish scenarios, with the finale being a game show called, "What Pisses You Off the Most?" The poor contestant had to choose between 3 doors, behind which lurked Arrogance, Anxiety, and Anger, who taunted her until she was "distraught as hell". The skit introduced the "3 A's" which we studied for the day, trying on which suited us the most. Each small group member received feedback from the other members about how their ego functioned. This may sound frightening, but was not, for most. The truth can be liberating, and in my small group, all feedback was conveyed with sensitivity and compassion.

The focus on Wednesday was Acceptance. We were asked if we could accept ourselves and each other, even if we did have some annoying or painful qualities. We focused on antidotes for the 3 A's; humility for arrogance, patience to counter anger, and mindfulness as an alternative to anxiety.

Fleet Maul says, "Compassion is the willingness to be with suffering – our own and that of others – without resentment, blame, or other fear-based, reactive, survival-mode behaviors that will just make the situation worse. Acceptance is the key to embracing suffering, our own and others. The power of acceptance can't be overestimated. Accepting the basic fact of suffering and pain we witness, and remaining willing to experience it, is what allows us to access our inner innate capacities for compassion".



Surrender was the focus on Thursday. "Surrender is the simple but profound wisdom of yielding to rather than opposing the flow of life," writes Eckhart Tolle in *The Power of Now*. "Surrender is giving up the illusion that you can control what is or what will be. The only place where you can experience the flow of life is the Now, so to surrender is to accept the present moment unconditionally and without reservation. It is to relinquish inner resistance to what *is*." A step beyond acceptance, surrender involves

letting go of what was formerly believed to be true and surrendering to ways that may be unfamiliar. In my small group on Thursday, we joined in an exercise where each person in turn lay on a massage table, and instructed the others how to give them nurturing touch, and say positive messages to them. They were often the counter messages to negative ones that had plagued us for many years. One person chose not to receive, but was active in giving. That was fine; it was all by choice, nothing imposed. It was a short experience of heaven, and giving, for me, was as touching as receiving.

I offered a Conscious Movement session during free time in the afternoon. The movement, starting slow and meditative and increasing to high energy, then dipping back to quietness was good for me and others, grounding the intense emotional work in our bodies.

Friday, the last full day of Lab, was about living fully into “Heaven.” Gratitude was lifted as a quality that enhances the experience of “heaven.” Dyanne Harshman led us in a powerful ritual, where each person walked alone from the tent to the path to the Cedar Grove, Sahale’s sacred circle spot, dedicated to native shaman, Beaver chief, who passed away just before the Sahale land was purchased. At the first threshold to the Cedar Grove path, we were smudged with sage smoke, as purification. At the second threshold, Dyanne encouraged each person to make a sound to acknowledge our entering a new place in our development. Sitting quietly in the Cedar Grove, most of us put a few words to what we claimed as our new reality after the transformational week.

In small groups, we talked about incorporating practices in our lives that will help us on our paths of awareness and “heaven,” accepting the moments of “hell.”

I loved playing with mono-printing in the afternoon, even if the results weren’t exactly what I’d hoped.

The evening was a celebration in Sahale’s pub, *The Swamp*. Beautiful music, creative poetry, and dancing on a very uneven floor were some of the highlights.

Every day at Lab started with an optional stretching and meditation session, led by Bruce Perler and Bill Scott. Rose Buchmeier led chakra toning in the tent at the beginning of each morning plenary session in the tent. Dyanne Harshman led chants and simple group dances on most days, which enhanced the days’ teachings.

I live with the week in Heaven, and short trip to Hell, within me, reminding me of the importance of Being in the Now, and observing and not magnifying the side-trips into hell that do occur from time to time, as conditions of life.





What is Heaven?

In the middle of the Lab week, Colette Hoff asked the large group gathered in the large tent, “What are you noticing about Heaven?” Here are some of the answers that were spoken:

- Heaven is not all happiness. There are bumps in Heaven, just as here on earth. Recovery is quicker in Heaven.
- The 3As (Anxiety, Anger, and Arrogance) do not dominate in Heaven, even though they are present.
- It is easier to find Heaven when I am with my friends who are seeking Heaven, too.
- You are helping me get to Heaven.
- The community of Lab is family: close and loving.
- We are making Heaven together.
- Watch out! Heaven is as easy to reject as Hell.
- If I stay present, I do not have the pain of nostalgia. I can remember this experience without any pain.
- The Swamp experience is Heaven: expression and conversation.
- Engaging service is Heaven.
- Flow. The right people show up at the right time.
- The small group is Heaven: being held, sharing.
- Heaven came when I started accepting everything.
- To be trusted, to be witnessing, to feel the Oneness is palpable: This is Heaven.
- To feel safe, supported, loved through and over thresholds is Heaven.
- To come to Lab not knowing anyone, and feeling so welcomed, included, appreciated, and finding that so many people want to be my friend: This is Heaven.
- A phone call from a friend in need, even in the middle of the night, is an invitation back to Heaven.

Art at Lab

Deborah Cornett and Kirsten Rohde facilitated art at Lab, as they have for the past few years. This year, there was a new art experience, mono-printing. The process involved spreading acrylic paint on a plastic plate, then applying a blank sheet of paper, with or without leaves or other materials on top of, or under the paint. It was a very experimental process with unpredictable results, sometimes surprisingly beautiful, some disappointing, and some “interesting.”

Here are images of a few of the prints:



Poetry Overheard at the Swamp

Sahale Beat Poets' Society Offerings

At the HRL, 2019

All set to music from the Beat era, generously played by the Sahale Live Band, with some tongue in cheek

Orientation!

Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson

Orientation-Chah!

What is it?

Spell it!

Want it?

Is it an English Train, traveling to India, seeking some kind, of Jungian archetypal noodle?

Is it part, of the Miso, movement? Seeking, a Chinese red sled named....Rosebud?

But, I digress...

Carl Elizabeth Jung says, "Orientation, begins, when disorientation, ends."

Chah!

Heaven

Pamela Jarrett-Jefferson

If you go too fast

You gotta go slow.

If you know it all

You're gonna grow small.

If you're angry as shit

You're gonna eat it.

If you've got some fear

Give heaven a cheer.

Willin' it

Bringin' it

Tonin' it

Dancin' it

Singin' it

Drummin' it

Speakin' it

Feelin' it

Acceptin' it

Healin' it

Real in it

Livin' it

Lovin' it

Flowin' it

Joinin' it

Swampin' it

Threshold

Steve Ghan

Approaching the threshold, I am of
two minds

One pulls me forward, the other
behind

Which voice to follow is all up to me

One will enslave me, the next set me
free

I cross the threshold and step down to
hell,

To deal with my issues, my story to
tell

My group sees my confusion and
comes to my side

They give me feedback and offer
insight

Without their perspective I'd still be
stuck

But I see my path forward through my
deep muck.

From Josh DeMers

My arrogance hides like a child
I want to find it
And surprise myself
'cause I'm blind, if
I ever took the time to
Go inside and drive down
Deep what would I see?
Preventing me from the
Opportunity to be connected
To the one I'd like to be
It's you and me – that's right; it's us.

I'd like to trust
That if I let go
Of this control
This need to know of
Everything that's going on
Nothing'd go wrong
Not even if
I set aside
My silly pride
Perfectionism – all this ambition
It's like a prison
Preventing me from carrying out my mission

You know my mom thought I was perfect
Not that I worked hard to become this
Genius kid with all the answers
And now my pain is like a cancer
Cause I only show the fancy,
Prim and proper, well-contained me
While I'm judging (5x) oh so harshly
Vulnerability trumps inadequacy
Yeah intimacy trumps inadequacy

Don't hide your mistakes, and you will see
That the people you love will love you anyway.

More next week!

From Norm Peck

I'm driving down DeWatto Road, headed for the shore
My head's abuzz and full of fuzz at what THEY did adhere.
When I arrive I'll stop and park, then find a place to sit
To see if I can figure out what they mean by "split."
How dare they call me arrogant just because I know it all
And they say I'm angry 'cause I said they're full of IT.
I'm pretty sure that mine don't stink, unlike the septic truck
Then when they called me anxious, I only said, "so what?"

To start I left my small group to take a potty break
But while I sat upon the throne, I thought, That's it, I'm
quitting."
They're probably just gossiping because they say I'm splitting.

So maybe I'll just change my mind
Turn and then head back
Do a drive by, give 'em a moon,
See if light shines through that crack!



Pictures from Lab's 50th Anniversary Celebration



Lovely Poems Shared by Joan Valles

The Four Best Thoughts

May all the people and tigers and turtles be happy and kind.

May all the people, the bears, and the bugs be safe and not mean.

May all the people, the nice ones or not, have fun and good things.

May all the people, the birds, and the fish be peaceful, be friendly, and share.

--A prayer for children composed by Tenzin Jesse, Bodhiheart Sangha, Seattle

Shantideva, Chapter 6, 'Patience,' Verse 14

There is nothing that won't become easier

Through becoming more familiar.

Thus, by meeting small upsets well, time and again,

Great suffering will become bearable.

-- Translated from the Tibetan by Tenzin Jesse, Bodhiheart Sangha, Seattle



Our Friend Claudia Fitch at Greg Kucera Gallery

July 18 - August 24



Greg Kucera Gallery
212 3rd Ave, Seattle 98104





Mindful Mike's Blog: Road to Heaven



What to say about the 50th Human Relations Lab? A lot happened. Oh yes. You should have seen me get peeled away layer by layer. I realized early on my communications skills could use a lot of improvement. Of course this did not make me feel good at all.

The feedback I got from my small group friends was just what I needed. But it sure did give me the experience of hell. I felt much smaller as a result of it. I admire Max Fain and Marjenta Gray for taking on the difficult task of leading us there.

My most difficult challenge was accepting and loving me for just as I am. That's the place for me to start.

In this Lab I finally understood what a group leader had to do. The expectations are similar to those for professionals yet they are all volunteers.

I remember that both John and Colette Hoff were trained as Pastors. In addition John got additional experience with the National Training Laboratories which made extensive use of small groups in their work. It made me think of M. Scott Peck and his work with T-groups.

Back in the 1960s and the early 70's Human Relations Laboratories were happening all over the country as a result of the human potential movement. I wonder if they had the same focus on spirituality we do?

This is where John Hoff's experience with the Tlingits in the Yukon was important. Those 7 years spent in the Yukon gave him the vision he needed to do his work.

I have to admit in my case I had no such vision. I simply reacted to the expectations of others. That didn't work out well for me. But John's road was not an easy one. I think this is true for every great visionary. Am I willing to take risks that I won't be accepted? That's what it takes to do something different.

A church doesn't draw me out. We have services and maybe Bible study and that pretty much is it. It is hard to see how genuine community can develop here. My challenges get papered over with the salvation message. Nobody cares to hear my story.

I notice I still have relational challenges with those around me. I tend to tell stuff over and over again and have to be reminded not to. Lab does not mean my work is finished. In fact my work has just begun.

One of the most helpful things I can do for myself and our community is this blog. This is where I get to tell where I am going in my life.

For me part of going to Heaven is understanding why I am here on this Earth to begin with. The whole process of birth and death is a mystery to me. Children are born and old people die.

If I don't know where to find Heaven then I will never find it. I got lead to it in the 2019 HRL and learned to love myself and others in spite of our shortcomings.

What's Heaven? Heaven is letting go. Ahh!



Paused at a rest stop whose location was named by Lewis and Clark after they camped here by the Columbia River during a storm. We're now in Seaside, staying in a condo.



You Are Invited!

60th birthday party for Kathy Rado

Saturday, August 17, from 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Hosted by Kathy's family

Where: home of Tom George

8708 182nd Place SW, Edmonds, WA 98026

Please rsvp to Kathy at sugarbeartreasures@gmail.com

907 723 9113

Or Tom George – thomasageorge@live.com



At the same time that this Lab is celebrating its 50th anniversary, it is commemorating 20 years since I was called away on the first day of Lab to Sam's bedside at the Harborview ER. Who would have thought that we would be celebrating 20 years of living well with GBM! And, here we are. Plus, Cancerversary is on August 17, which is the day Sam had his brain surgery.

Hollis Guill Ryan

Here is Sam's invitation to Cancerversary:

Y'all,

The twentieth celebration of, um, well, as Mark Twain once phrased it, "The rumors of my death are greatly exaggerated."

Yeah, twenty years on, I'm still kicking. And drinking. And giving the docs a hard time.

Combining all this together into one package we get Cancerversary XX.

To join in the merriment all you've gotta do is RSVP then show up sometime between noon and ten o'clock at night on Saturday, August 17, 2019.

Bring some BEvERages to share plus some food to share. Foodwise, bring enough for you and your immediate group plus a little more. This saves us from having ten years of mac salad leftovers (although I love mac salad, eating mac salad every day until it goes off gets old). Keep in mind we're providing some meats in tube form (hot dogs, kielbasa, random sausages, and bratwurst), chicken, and hamburgers, too. We'll even ante up some soft drinks (beyond tap water – from a garden hose).

As for where to show up, head here:

16132 SE 42nd Pl.
Bellevue, WA 98006

I'd give you directions, but since I still get lost around here it's best I let Mapquest, Google Maps, or Apple Maps steer you in. Remember, it's SE 42nd Pl., not SE 42nd. St; this still trips me up.

Sam

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Editor's note: This event is open to anyone interested and is being held at Sahale!



5 pm on Wednesday Aug 28th, to 2 pm on Sunday Sept 1st.

Would you love to have more close, connected, juicy relationships?

Need some inspiration and renewal?

This 4-day festival offers conscious movement, ceremony, respectful touch, relationship and communication skills, and tantric meditations all in a lovely rural wooded retreat center near Seattle.

Step into an open, caring community of like-minded souls, and come play with us!

These events are potent moments for increasing hope, vitality and joy, carrying us all forward on our paths.

Our Workshops will focus on

- Tantric Arts
- Communication
- Personal & Spiritual Development
- Movement Meditations
- Aware Touch and Consent

Note: Goodenough Community friends and members will not have to pay room and board. Contact Colette at hoff@goodenough.org

Go to www.cascadiatantrafest.com/



At the “OUR” Ecovillage – in
British Columbia

September 13 - 15

Friday 2:00pm - Sunday 5:00pm

<https://ourecovillage.org/5th-annual-west-coast-communities-conference/>

This conference is an intentional experience of community. Whether you live in an intentional community / ecovillage / co-housing and are interested in joining or starting one, are a networker or organizer, or are new to intentional communities, this conference will have something for you. Come learn about the intentional communities of western North America, gain skills and understanding for living in and developing intentional communities, and find mutual support and camaraderie with others involved with intentional community. Come celebrate the diverse types of community that exist, expand the potential of increased inclusiveness, and explore Intentional Communities and Ecovillages and Co-Housing as a model for impacting wider social change. The Goodenough Community is a sponsor for this event!

Spatialist for Hire

Pam Jefferson



Do you need help with organizing a room for more efficient storage and use of the space? Do you need help sorting and organizing your stuff? I can do all of it for you or just give you some ideas for you to work with. My hourly rate is \$25.00. You can reach me at **206 372 9801**.



Programs and Events of the Goodenough Community

What makes community meaningful and fun? The richness of life in community comes in many ways – getting together informally over a meal ... celebrating a significant birthday with long- time and newfound friends ... working together in a creative endeavor ... collaborating in a work party ... thinking deeply with others about what it means to be fully alive and connected with ourselves, each other, and Spirit ... and more.

In the Goodenough Community, we recognize such ways to connect as expressions of living life fully and in communities of all kinds. Throughout the year we offer programs that help you participate in your own development, learn about relating well with others, and discover your potential to have a good time in life and with others.

We welcome your interest and your participation, and hope that you will join us at any – or many! – of this year’s events. More information about programs and upcoming events can be found on our website: www.goodenough.org



The **General Circle** meets Monday evening for light dinner & business at hand. Fall schedule to be announced.

The Women’s Program is a long-established and ever-growing way for women to enjoy each other’s company, learn about themselves as women, and even perhaps to experience the Divine Feminine. For more information, contact Hollis Guill Ryan, hollisr@comcast.net



The Third Age - Those age 60 and older have been gathering every other month, Friday evenings in Seattle. Stay tuned for the fall schedule! Contact Kirsten Rohde for more information: krohde14@outlook.com

The Men’s Program

Our **Men’s Circle** is an expression of brotherhood and practice with wisdom, gathered from own lives, other men’s work advocates and the founders of this circle.

For more information, contact: bruce_perler@hotmail.com





Pathwork, a Program of Convocation: A Church and Ministry On alternate Sunday evenings an interfaith circle of practice meets between 7:00 and 9:30 PM under the leadership of Colette Hoff. This is a time to learn together about our personal development, to talk out our chosen practices for the development of a spirit filled life, and to learn the skills of joining with others in service. **Gatherings are in Seattle.** Contact Colette Hoff for more information: hoff@goodenough.org

Summer Camp for Youth

New dates for Summer Camp 2020 will be announced. Summer Camp is a wonderful opportunity for children 9 to 12 to have a full camp experience in a beautiful setting with loving leadership.

Contact: Irene Perler, Irene_Perler@hotmail.com



Human Relations Laboratory, August 4 to 10, 2019

This intense and joyous week-long event is a communal experience of personal growth and relational development within a rich culture with art, music dance, song, drama and more. This summer we will celebrate 50 years! Contact: Colette Hoff, hoff@goodenough.org

True Holidays Celebration, Saturday, December 7, 2019

Be part of this fun-filled family-oriented evening and prepare yourself for the winter season (whatever faith tradition you follow) that fills your heart. Contact Elizabeth for more information.



Work and Play Parties throughout the Year

Traditionally, the Goodenough Community sponsors work parties over **Memorial Day weekend** as well as other times throughout the year, to express gratitude for the presence of our beloved retreat center, Sahale, and to experience the satisfaction of playing and working together. Please email hoff@goodenough.org with information about what may be coming up. It is a great time to bring friends to share Sahale!



Quest: A Counseling and Healing Center

Our belief is that mental and emotional health is a prerequisite for spiritual well-being, collaboration, and the expression of compassion. Quest's counseling and education programs, open to all interested individuals, focus on empowering individuals, couples, and family groups to be happier and more effective in relationships. Call Colette (206-755 8404) to make arrangements.