



Photo: Rebecca (Becky/Bex)

The Village eView

July 27, 2016

Kirsten Rohde, guest editor

***On-Line News of the Goodenough
Community System:***

Calendar of Events:

H R L 2016 – August 7 to 13

September:

Pathwork – Sunday, September 13

Council – Monday, September 12

Utterly Humbled by Mystery

RICHARD ROHR



Richard Rohr is founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, N.M. He took his Franciscan vows in 1961, and was ordained as a priest in 1970. Rohr is a frequent speaker and writer on issues of community building, peace and justice.

Center for Action and Contemplation

I believe in mystery and multiplicity. To religious believers this may sound almost pagan. But I don't think so. My very belief and experience of a loving and endlessly creative God has led me to trust in both.

I've had the good fortune of teaching and preaching across much of the globe, while also struggling to make sense of my experience in my own tiny world. This life journey has led me to love mystery and not feel the need to change it or make it un-mysterious. This has put me at odds with many other believers I know who seem to need explanations for everything.

***On-Line News of the Goodenough Community System:
The American Association for the Furtherance of Community
Convocation: A Church and Ministry
Mandala Resource, Inc.
Sahale Learning Center
The EcoVillage at Sahale***

Religious belief has made me comfortable with ambiguity. "Hints and guesses," as T.S. Eliot would say. I often spend the season of Lent in a hermitage, where I live alone for the whole 40 days. The more I am alone with the Alone, the more I surrender to ambivalence, to happy contradictions and seeming inconsistencies in myself and almost everything else, including God. Paradoxes don't scare me anymore.

When I was young, I couldn't tolerate such ambiguity. My education had trained me to have a lust for answers and explanations. Now, at age 63, it's all quite different. I no longer believe this is a quid pro quo universe — I've counseled too many prisoners, worked with too many failed marriages, faced my own dilemmas too many times and been loved gratuitously after too many failures.

Whenever I think there's a perfect pattern, further reading and study reveal an exception. Whenever I want to say "only" or "always," someone or something proves me wrong. My scientist friends have come up with things like "principles of uncertainty" and dark holes. They're willing to live inside imagined hypotheses and theories. But many religious folks insist on *answers* that are *always* true. We love closure, resolution and clarity, while thinking that we are people of "faith"! How strange that the very word "faith" has come to mean its exact opposite.

People who have really met the Holy are always humble. It's the people who don't know who usually pretend that they do. People who've had any genuine spiritual experience always know they *don't know*. They are utterly humbled before mystery. They are in awe before the abyss of it all, in wonder at eternity and depth, and a Love, which is incomprehensible to the mind. It is a litmus test for authentic God experience, and is — quite sadly — absent from much of our religious conversation today. My belief and comfort is in the depths of Mystery, which should be the very task of religion.

Reprinted from NPR, "this I believe" series, December 18, 2006

Mystery

Kirsten Rohde

This week's theme is "mystery." I remember John talking about the order of the questions and the last question is "why?" And the best answer being "because." I've learned that why questions don't lead me anywhere; I'm asking "why" because I want a solution to something that is, well, a mystery.

When I tried to look up a definition of mystery I found more about the words mystic, mysterious, and mystery novels. I don't think mysterious or mystic quite describes the idea of mystery. I personally like mystery novels but they usually have an ending with a solution. I'm learning that the mysteries of life aren't to be "solved."

The article by Richard Rohr "Humbled by Mystery" speaks to this perspective. Also John tells a story about being lost as a child and learning about mystery. As I was working on this

eView two songs came to mind: “Oh Mystery” sung by Susan Osborne and “Fall down as the rain” by Joe Crookston. Josh DeMers article about Lab is repeated in case you haven’t read it yet.

*God writes spiritual Mysteries
on our heart, where they wait
silently for discovery.*

~ Rumi

A Childhood Experience of Mystery

John Hoff

Mystery has something to do with not understanding. And then understanding but differently that we expect. Not understanding is a kind of lostness, understanding is a point of assurance. You don’t have to understand everything with your mind. There are some things that are not understandable in a rational way.

I was lost one time, when I was about I suppose ten, in the Yukon. I realized that I didn’t know which way to go, and that it was serious – I was in trouble. I had gone through a process of reasoning – detecting the shady side of a tree to find north, knowing when I was heading south because the sun was coming from the south. I was frightened by being lost and then a sort of peace came over me as I realized that I was safe and I would probably get out of this fine. Then all of a sudden I just knew which way to go and it turned out to be exactly the right way.

I go back to that memory as a feeling of mystery because something assured me and something guided me. I stayed steady and I was, I supposed you could say, guided back on my way.

I talked to my Dad about the feeling that I would come out all right. He told me a story about having something like that in his own life and that it meant a lot to him as he lived on in life. The same is true for me. It is a mystery to me that I felt OK about being lost and knew to not be overcome by fear.

Oh Mystery

Jeremy Geffen

It lives in the sea or a tree as it grows.
You can hear it, if you listen, to the wind
as it blows.
It's there in a river as it flows into the
sea.
It's the sound in the soul of someone
becoming free
And it lives in the laughter of children at
play
And in the blazing sun that gives light to
the day.
It moves the planets and all the stars
that shine.
It's been the mover of mountains, since
the beginning of time.

Oh Mystery you are alive; I feel you all
around.
You are the fire in my heart; you are the
holy sound,
You are all of life; it is to you that I sing.
Grant that I may feel you, always in
everything.

And it lives in the waves as they crash
upon the beach.
I have seen it in the goals that we have
tried to reach.
I feel it in the light and I know it means
so much.
I know it in your smile, my love, when
our hearts do touch.
But when I listen deep inside, I feel best
of all,
Like a moon that's glowing white and I
listen to your call
And I know you will carry me, I feel like
the tide
Rushing through the ocean, and my
heart is open wide.

Oh Mystery you are alive, I feel you all
around.
You are the fire in my heart; you are
the holy sound.
You are all of life; it is to you that I
sing.
Grant that I may feel you, always in
everything.

A bit of exercise for the writing muscles, mostly.

Josh DeMers, 2015

The recent (late 17th century) etymological roots of attitude have to do with the positioning or posture of figures in art. I was just remembering that, of the seldom times in my life that I've experienced a profoundly straight-backed posture filled with bliss, two have been substance-free. One of these was HR Lab 2011, and as I've been thinking about the upcoming HR Lab 2015, I've been wondering what it was about that particular week that it induced what could be called a very nearly religious experience in myself; and more importantly, might it be reproducible?

The moment in question was Friday at dinnertime. After grace, with everyone lining up for dinner, I took a moment by myself behind Mamook. I was having a conversation with my Self, saying essentially, "Self, I'm going to project you onto this John character pretty soon here, " because I had agreed within my small group to have a conversation with John (which would have been our first), "and this is what I'm going to say, 'John, I get it now. I can't do this alone.'"

The response from my Self was immediate and unequivocal, "You are never alone." At this point I started sobbing uncontrollably. I was worried the dinner crowd might hear me but nonetheless, I let myself just let it out. And after some minutes the tears turned to laughter - the laughter which a good psychedelic trip can engender, where everything seems so trivial and feels so light - and I just let it go on for a good 45 minutes. Following this

experience, I found (and even reported to the large group later, though admittedly not the whole story), that my posture was naturally upright and relaxed, and that I felt filled with an attitude of love and joy and peace. Most of all it felt familiar, as if that was my original nature.

So what was it about Lab that brought this experience out of me? Was it the compassion and acceptance of a group of strangers creating an environment which melted away guilt and shame in me? Because that was certainly true. Embarrassment, guilt and shame are my enemies, and yet I felt great making a complete fool of myself in front of Swamp audiences and White Tent circles alike, that year. And in small group, I felt uninhibited in a different way - more serious and conversational, but equally unabashed in a new and unfamiliar way, thanks to the particular, compassionate attention paid to me (and to all) during our times together in Kopet Wawa.

So perhaps that's the aspect of the experience that's most reproducible - that is, creating a loving environment conducive to change, similar to the therapeutic method of Carl Rogers, on the part of the whole. And on the part of the individual, well, for myself, I came into that Lab firstly needing a change, secondly believing in the process, having seen what it could do to effect change, and finally choosing to really go for it, to give it all I could.

This year, I find myself in a similar situation, with a similar need, and a similar belief, but (I'm almost ashamed to admit) still working on that choice to give it my all. Yet I trust that the attitudes of compassion and acceptance I experienced then will be present at HR Lab 2015 (as they are at Sahale day-to-day), and I intend to help create that supportive environment for others as much as I am able. Not expecting a repeat of that experience which shook me to the core, but when I shared some of this story earlier tonight at dinner, the response I heard was something like, "Yup, that'll happen."

The Human Relations Laboratory

August 7 to 13, 2016

*Transformation Happens
Here*

**Seven rich days of experiential learning and social creativity
within a community setting**

Transformation: *Change in form, appearance, nature, or character*

Transformation involves a complete change. The Human Relations Laboratory has been promoting change and transformation for 47 years! This year the leadership is choosing to highlight:

- Increasing one's maturity
- The conscious intention for dealing with mental health
- Becoming an active force in your own life
- Applying creativity to all areas of life including relationships and work life.

*Maturity + Sanity +
Proactivity + Creativity =
Transformation*

Prepare for Lab with Curiosity

Colette Hoff

It turns out that curiosity is good for us! Lab is a place to let our curious natures loose. Asking good questions of each other, getting past shyness to extend a conversation, showing curiosity without assumptions are important to the process of the Lab as well as a gift to each person. The Design Team (Kirsten, Bruce, Hollis, Colette and John) are challenging Lab participants to come to Lab with curiosity.

If you have wondered about what a Lab is anyway, consider being curious and find out. To tease your curiosity, included in this issue is an article written by Josh DeMers about an experience he had at the 2011 HRL. Consider asking him questions about the experience.



Why choose Lab

John L. Hoff

Whenever I am asked about the magic that explains how the annual Human Relations Laboratory has been chosen by so many people over a 47-year period, I point to a commitment among friends who value integrity and good communication. Lab is a place to work out challenges encountered on the *road less traveled*. I am just one of the members of a core group that plans this event every year. We begin by recognizing the importance of being supported by friends on this journey. What people refer to as magic is actually a sweet reward for being open with each other.

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*Wisdom requires not only the
investigation of many things,
but contemplation of the
mystery.*

~Jeremy Narby



The deAnguera Blog: Mystery



Why was I born and why will I die? Why is there a Swamp – a new Swamp? The movie of my life going through the projector of my imagination. Why do I have an ego? The ego is my chosen character role in this lifetime. Have I had other lifetimes? Probably? Do I care? No. Every lifetime is a complete story so all I have to worry about is this lifetime.

The thing I think about the most is the Swamp. It is a gift to all of us from Pam and Elizabeth Jarrett Jefferson. The scene on the left shows the structure in process. The right hand photo shows the nighttime magic with lighting and people. My new camera does not have a flash but uses ambient light so the photo was an experiment.

The Swamp arose out of the creative imaginations of Pam and Elizabeth. I have written about the Swamp before but now there is roof overhead whereas before it was just tarps and bungee cords. We love the Swamp and decided to give it a new roof. I think of all the hard work Josh DeMers and his father Doug as well as others have put into raising the roof trusses. Everything had to be just right. We are moving beyond bungee cords.

Maybe the challenge of my lifetime is to see just what I can create. I have let others direct my life for so long that I have given myself away. My creative powers are what make my life worth living. Where Lab has been most valuable for me is encouraging me to develop my creative powers.

John Hoff has spent a lot of time talking about creativity. In fact Sahale resulted from the creative pooling of our resources together. I remember long ago when John invited us all to put our credit cards and cash on a round table and he mixed it all together. That illustrated the power of sharing to me for the first time. In that lies the power of fellowship for it enables us to access the Divine energies embodied in all of us.

Almost all of life is a mystery to me. My body is made up of the same elements as the soil. The being that animates that body is a mystery – the mystery of me. Science can't explain that mystery. All it can do is analyze the biochemical components of my body. It can't tell me what makes me me.

Who am I? I am the Divine playing the character roll of Michael deAnguera. That's who I am. God is not separate from me. I am convinced of that now. There is no place where

Mike ends and God begins. It's all Mike and yet at the same time it's all God. Take away my ego, the stamp of my identity and all you have left is God.

God creates through Mike, one of billions of creatures serving as vehicles for God's energy. What does God create? Well, through characters such as John and Colette, the Goodenough Community. Then through Goodenough members such as Pam and Elizabeth, the Swamp.



What's Cody doing?
Praying? Since I don't
know what he is thinking
it's a mystery.

Fall Down as the Rain

Joe Crookston 2004

When my life is over
And I have gone away
I'm gonna leave this big ole' world
And the trouble and the pain
And if I get to heaven
I will not stay
I'll turn myself around again
And fall down as the rain

Fall Down as the rain
Fall Down as the rain

And when I finally reach the ground
I'll soak into the sod
I'll turn myself around again
Come up as goldenrod

Come up as goldenrod
Come up as goldenrod

And then when I turn dry and
brown
I'll lay me down to rest
I'll turn myself around again
As part of an eagles nest
Part of an eagles nest
Part of an eagles nest

And when that eagle learns to fly
I'll flutter from that tree
I'll turn myself around again
As part of the mystery

Part of the mystery
Part of the mystery
Turn myself around again
As part of the mystery

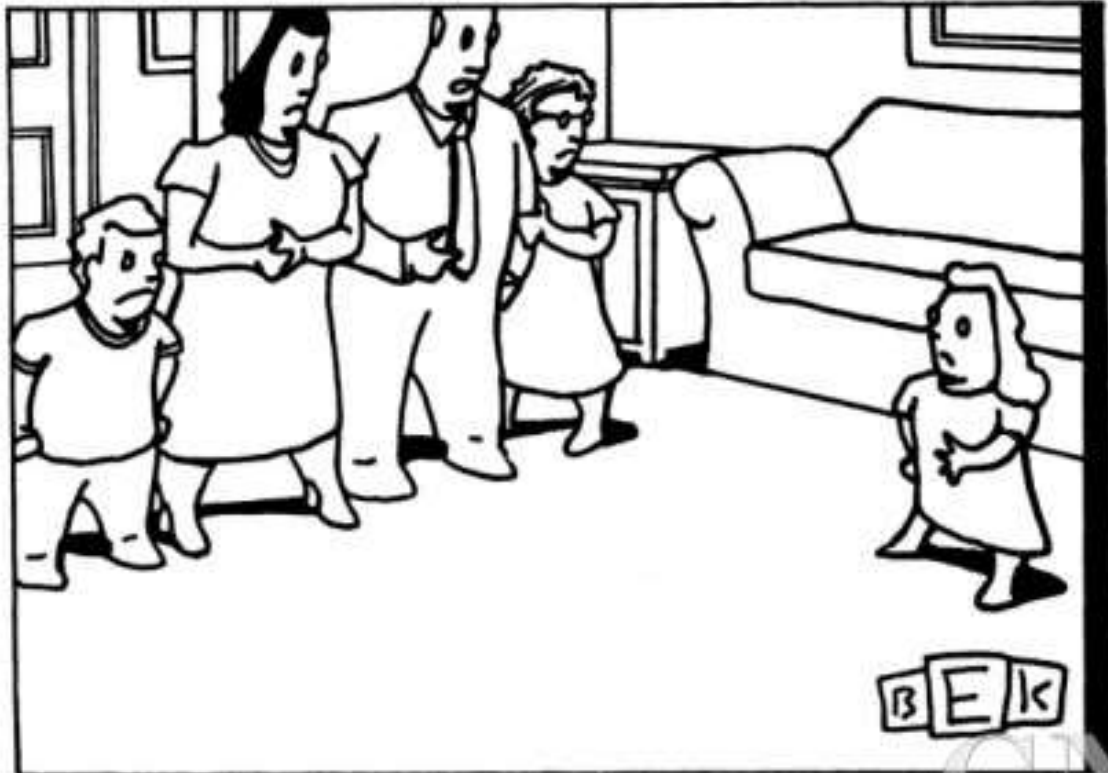
Community News

By Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson



Birthdays and Anniversaries

- **Happy birthday, Gabe Harshman, August 2**



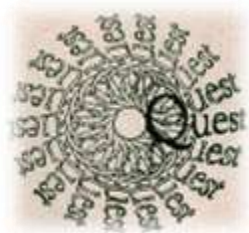
"Bad news—we're all out of our minds. You're going to have to be the lone healthy person in this family."

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COLLECTION

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Cultural Programs & Events in 2016

Watch for new dates for the cultural programs coming soon!



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 be more effective in relationships.

Call John or Colette (206-755 8404) or Colette and John at Sahale – 360 275-3957. In Seattle, John and Colette meet with clients at the community center, 3610 SW Barton Street, Seattle 98106, as well as at Sahale.

A day spent without the sight or sound of beauty, the contemplation of mystery, or the search of truth or perfection is a poverty-stricken day; and a succession of such days is fatal to human life.

Lewis Mumford