



VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2015

Coming Events

LIGHT is pleased to announce these events for February to May 2015.

There is *no admission charge* for any of these events, but donations are gratefully accepted.

LIGHT Lecture Series

The talks will be held on Tuesday evenings. Attendees are invited to a buffet starting at 6:00 p.m., with the talk to follow at 7:00.

Location: Charisma Restaurant
83D Sherbrook St.

Tuesday, February 17

Deborah Judith: "A Lifetime Moving Along"

Deborah will weave images of a soul-altering trip to/within India of gathered experiences over decades of living this opportunity we call human life. The events, challenges, understandings and transformative breakthroughs - grown with time, effort, practice and simply living her life - have nurtured and strengthened a deeply rooted optimism. She will include some observations about spiritual life in general from her own perspective.

Deborah Judith is a musician, recording artist, healer and teacher.

Tuesday, March 3

John Tozeland: "Hallways of Your Mind"

The work of Drs. Jane Simington, Deepak Chopra and Bruce Lipton, to name a few, have pointed the way to the power of our Unconscious Mind in aiding our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. Travel with John Tozeland to the Hallways of Your Mind to explore the power of healing through metaphor and symbols.

John Tozeland has been an international speaker and trainer in the fields of Hypnotherapy, Neurolinguistic Programming and personal growth since 1985.

Tuesday, April 7

Manny Matas: "Spirit in the Sky: Spirituality and Popular Culture"

Spirituality has penetrated almost every aspect of popular culture to an extent that is both surprising and often subliminal. It is reflected in our language, our entertainment, and on the Internet. Through a review of spiritual outcroppings in movies, television, books and art, we will examine the ubiquitous manifestations of spirituality in our daily lives.

Dr. Manuel Matas is a retired psychiatrist with a long-standing interest in spirituality. He received his medical degree from the University of Manitoba and his Diploma in Psychiatry from McGill University. (See the interview with Manny Matas starting on page 2.)

The presentation will be preceded by a brief Annual General Meeting of LIGHT.

Tuesday, May 5

Ian Whicher: "The Yoga of Intelligence and the Liberation of Individuality"

This talk will focus on the deeper dimension of Yoga as the transcendent and immanent unity or wholeness of Life, where the mind and individuality are liberated from ignorance and affliction.

Such realization, or Yoga of Intelligence, dissolves a dysfunctional or immature dualism of self and world. One is no longer in the universe but *is* the universe and functions in the light of an integrated whole, charged in the power of consciousness or seeing-insight. Individuality, liberated from the confines of separate selfhood, has discovered its right place and engages life in a non-afflicted manner, making one truly responsible because one truly sees.

A long-time Yoga practitioner, Dr. Ian Whicher is a Professor and Head of the Department of Religion at the University of Manitoba.

(More events on page 2)



LIGHT Special Events

Wednesday, March 18 - 7:00 p.m.

Jules and Margaret Lavallee:
"The Butterfly Teaching"

The Butterfly teaching uses the life cycle of the butterfly from egg to adult as a metaphor for teaching about human transformation. The power of the Butterfly is the power of the mind; it can give clarity to your mental process, help you organize the project you are undertaking, and assist you in finding the next step for your personal life or career.

Jules Lavallee has taught courses through the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba, and currently works as an Elder for Red River College and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. He and his wife Margaret founded the Red Willow Lodge healing centre east of Anola.

LOCATION:

Harrow United Church - Lower Hall
955 Mulvey Ave. (at Harrow)

Tuesday, April 21 - 7:00 p.m.

RonaLynn Fitzpatrick:
"Come on a Sound Journey"

Increase your inner peace and tranquility by immersing yourself in the healing sounds of the gong, Himalayan and crystal bowls, chimes, drums and voice. Sound Energy Healing is an existential experience that affects your whole being, and invites you to shift your consciousness and be transformed through it, positively affecting your overall health and wellness.

RonaLynn Fitzpatrick was introduced to Sound Energy Healing in New Zealand and began training in 2009. She is also a certified Matrix Energy practitioner. By integrating loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity as vibration, she helps people transcend their current state of being by shifting their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual awareness.

LOCATION:

Harrow United Church - Lower Hall
955 Mulvey Ave. (at Harrow)

LIGHT Interview:

Manny Matas

Dr. Manuel (Manny) Matas was born and raised in Winnipeg. He attended the University of Manitoba, where he was enrolled in Honours English before attending medical school. After receiving his medical degree, he moved to Montreal, where he received his Diploma in Psychiatry from McGill University. Upon graduation, he worked at Toronto's Queen Street Mental Health Centre as a staff psychiatrist and subsequently as a consultant psychiatrist for the Scarborough Board of Education. He moved back to Winnipeg with his family, and for the next 20 years he was the Medical Director of Adult Outpatient Psychiatry at St. Boniface General Hospital before going into private practice. He worked as a physician for 42 years prior to his retirement.

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In Memoriam: Margaret Tobin

LIGHT would like to acknowledge the untimely death of Margaret Tobin, who passed away peacefully at Riverview Health Centre on December 21, 2014. For over three decades Margaret worked as a social worker and Associate Professor/Counsellor at the University of Manitoba. She co-created a powerful eight-week program entitled "Explorations of the Self," which she ran 23 times before her retirement in 2005.

In 2000 Margaret co-founded Spirit's Call Choir, recently renamed Margaret's Choir. What started in a workshop of a small group of people who had come to believe that they couldn't sing, flourished into a non-audition community choir of 160-plus voices raising money for worthy causes by performing two benefit concerts each year to sold-out houses.

Margaret savoured every aspect and season of her life, facing her long struggle with cancer with amazing courage and grace. By her wide and diverse circle of friends, Margaret will be remembered for her boundless energy, her unbridled enthusiasm, and the depths of her loving and generous spirit. She was actively involved in the LIGHT community for many years; she will be missed.

LIGHT Lending Library

LIGHT has recently added many new titles to the Advaita Vedanta, Mindfulness and Presence, Gurdjieff and the Fourth Way, Taoism, Tibetan Buddhism, Poetry of the Spirit, Sacred Gardens, Sacred Earth, Sacred Geometry, Spiritual Biographies and Autobiographies, and Spiritual Films and Videos sections of our Lending Library.

Some recent acquisitions of special note:

- Chögyam Trungpa's trilogy of the essential teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma*
- William Patterson's recent insightful biography, *Georgi Ivanovitch Gurdjieff: The Man, The Teaching and His Mission*
- the DVD of the acclaimed film *Inner Worlds, Outer Worlds*.

The Library catalogue can be accessed on LIGHT's website.



Technology, the Brain and Human Development

Since the beginning of the twentieth century our scientific understanding of the universe has been revolutionized by relativity theory, subatomic particle research and quantum mechanics, leading to culturally-transforming technological advances and practical applications which are reordering and redefining the way we live. Radio, television, weather satellites, CT and MRI scans, nuclear fission, computers, the internet and mapping of the human genome are all offspring of humanity's ability to penetrate and modify the invisible electronic world in this digital age. However, the consequences of this technological explosion are far-reaching and little understood. Dr. Keith Buzzell, a physician and student of Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teachings, sounds a warning note:

There are in excess of three billion cell phones in use and the life of the Earth is exposed to a trillion times more electromagnetic radiation than life was a hundred and fifty years ago. The biological consequences of these developments are only fragmentarily known . . . Events taking place ten thousand miles away now influence stock market prices within minutes. Tragedies occurring on the other side of the Earth (over which we have no control) can impact, in minutes, our personal emotional world and dramatically affect our family relationships. Where mountains and oceans once separated us in time and space, we now live in a world of near instantaneous 'times,' within 'spaces' that provide little, if any, separation. Our biologically determined triune brain functions have become even more unable to reconcile these disparities.

Children and adolescents, whose brains are still maturing and developing, may be especially vulnerable to the myriad influences of our electronic, technological world. Human development from infancy to childhood through adolescence follows a progressive sequence which reflects the evolution of the brain. Neuroscience has revealed that the human brain has evolved through three successive stages of refinement during our long history on earth:



- First brain (core, reptilian)
 - awareness of the external world, governing sensations and bodily movement
- Second brain (limbic, mammalian)
 - awareness of our inner world, governing emotions and a sense of self/other
- Third brain (neocortex)
 - awareness of the abstract world, governing thinking and conceptualization.

First brain behaviours such as self-feeding, voluntary elimination, crawling and walking develop first, followed by the acquisition of language skills and expanded interpersonal interactions (second brain) and eventually higher intellectual abilities (third brain). The natural harmonious development of the three brains and their corresponding functions can be impeded or delayed by many factors (disease, poor nutrition, environmental toxins, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, lack of intellectual stimulation). To this list can be added the effects of electronic technology.

In the course of human evolution the capacity of the brain to form real and accurate images or representations of the external world through the senses has had great survival value. With the development of the phonograph, radio, movies and television, for the first time in evolutionary history a moving and pre-created image in sound, vision, or both could be projected into the brain as if it were actually real. Dr. Buzzell reflects on the implications of such a truly revolutionary phenomenon: "Our brain has evolved within a constant environment of images of real events, with our sensory-motor systems honed by real survival. To plunge our brains into a sea of unreal, titillating and unprocessed images opens ourselves to manipulation and even brainwashing by those who would profit by such artificial image production."

Current neuro-physiological research indicates that television, computers and video games in particular significantly impact the viewer of these electronic devices in a variety of ways:

- Creating non-flicker-based seizure disorders in children
- Reducing eye scanning and pupillary-change alerting reflexes
- Activating metabolic change (heart and respiration rate, hormonal release, blood flow) even when there is no actual physical activity, only passive observation.

The infusion of electronic technologies in our modern world has interfered with the natural, biologically-determined timing of brain maturation. Rather than a measured, progressive development of the brain and its functions, there is a forced, pre-determined constellation of influences whose effect is instantaneous. Processing, integration, exploration and reflection are replaced by mindless and passive acceptance and instant sensory gratification. In the light of this technological onslaught we are losing many qualities that make us truly human.

Technology is simultaneously a marvel and a blessing, a danger and a curse. Many of the global challenges facing humanity (climate change, ocean dead zones, animal extinction, pandemic diseases, cyber attacks and nuclear nightmares) are the direct or indirect consequence of the emergence of the technological world. At the same time, technology may play a critical role in solving these problems. But if we don't learn to control it, it will control us. In the words of author William Patterson:

To control it we must understand it. Technology is not different from us, something alien. It is our rational part - the logical part of our power of reasoning - developed to an extraordinary binary degree. As it is part of us, to understand it we must first understand ourselves. We must seek to know our own essence, our true purpose and meaning. Technology faces us with the urgent call to explore anew the primordial question - Who am I?



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Manny Matas interview
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Q: Why did you decide to pursue a career in psychiatry and what was your approach and philosophy in treating those with mental health problems?

Both my father and uncle were physicians and in a certain sense served as role models. I was also fascinated by how the human body/mind worked and had a strong desire to help people with mental health challenges. I took a holistic approach to treatment which considered each individual's unique biological, psychological, social, and cultural background. I was open to patients talking about spirituality if they wanted to but I didn't introduce the subject.

Q: Now that you are retired, could you share some thoughts on the challenges and benefits of retirement?

I always loved my work and felt a deep bond with my patients. Initially I found the transition difficult, as so much of my personal identity and sense of value to the community was wrapped up in my professional role as a psychiatrist. But now I am very happy being retired as I have been able to develop many of my interests and talents such as photography, drawing, painting and writing. I have had more time to travel and spend quality time with my friends and family, including two wonderful grandchildren. I am writing a book on psychiatry and the paranormal. My spiritual interests have also been sharpened as the retirement years remind us of our own mortality and focus the mind on what is truly important in life.

Q: Could you tell us about your own spiritual path and some of the most significant influences on your inner life?

Perhaps the strongest influence is my own personal experience with pre-cognitive dreams, visions, intuitions, synchronistic events, spiritual ideas and values, and the challenges of everyday



life. I have learned a great deal by reading books by spiritual teachers such as Thich Nhat Hanh, Eckhart Tolle, Pema Chödrön and Ram Dass, as well as by certain gifted psychics and healers. Over the years I have attended numerous conferences, workshops and presentations related to personal growth and healing. I am grateful for many remarkable teachers who have encouraged and shaped my spiritual life: Drs. Bennet Wong and Jock McKeen, Virginia Satir, Maria Gomori, Marilyn Rossner, Cathy Holmes and Rabbi Alan Green.

Q: What is your attitude toward so-called paranormal events and have you ever had such experiences?

I strongly believe that many people have had authentic experiences of transpersonal realms of reality such as out-of-body and near-death experiences, telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and other psychic phenomena. In my own life two experiences stand out. When I was a student in medical school I had a precognitive dream in which I saw the questions on an exam I was to take the next day. I was amazed to see that indeed the first question on the exam was the same as the first question in my dream. Many years later, at my father's funeral, I saw two beautiful angels. They reminded me of the angels in the biblical story of Jacob's Ladder.