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MARCH 20, 2004
SPRING EQUINOX

Books for Young Spirits

LIGHT will be sponsoring the second event in our 'Young Spirits' project in conjunction with the Winnipeg Public Library on Saturday, March 20 from 1 to 4 p.m. at Cornish Library, 20 West Gate.

We are pleased to have local author and storyteller Joe McLellan present a public reading of some of his spiritual books for children and a workshop on the art of story-telling. Joe participated in the first public event sponsored by LIGHT in September 2003 at the Cornish library and, along with local authors Carol Matas and Sheldon Oberman, provided a memorable afternoon of reading and storytelling that enthralled all who were present.

On March 20, LIGHT will make the first of two donations of books for children and young adults with spiritual content to the Winnipeg Public Library. Our goal is to eventually donate between 300 and 400 books to the 20 public libraries in the greater Winnipeg area. A large proportion of the books will be those of prominent Manitoba authors including Carol Matas, Joe McLellan and Sheldon Oberman. Other books will be by acclaimed international authors

such as Ann Tampert and Idries Shah. Support for the project will come from the estate of William Staley, local foundations and private donors.

The books that LIGHT proposes to donate will feature spiritual content and themes in the broadest sense, intended to promote greater inter-faith and cross-cultural understanding and a more peaceful community. The premise is that there is a rich human heritage of fairy tales, fables, myths and teaching stories drawn from the many different cultures and traditions of the world that can impact the inner psyche and essential being of children and adults. Research has demonstrated that this type of literature can enhance the functioning of the right brain hemisphere and develop intuition, creativity and lateral thinking processes.

In choosing the books for donation, LIGHT has drawn from the growing literature of books with spiritual content and ideas addressed specifically to children and young adults. These stories and tales act as templates or patterns which mirror psychological processes and ways of thinking/feeling

which children can easily relate to. For instance, some stories have themes which show how fears can be faced and overcome with knowledge and understanding. Other stories feature the acceptance of others who may be different in appearance or behaviour. The material has the potential to promote among young people greater self-awareness, sensitivity, compassion and cross-cultural understanding.

LIGHT is proud to help the children and young adults of Winnipeg further their spiritual development and understanding of themselves. Hopefully the books that we donate will have a lasting impact on the lives of those 'young spirits' who represent our hopes and dreams for the future.



Joe McLellan

Coming Events

LIGHT Lecture Series

The lectures, with discussion following, will be held on the following dates (all Tuesdays), starting at 7:00 p.m.:

March 30, April 27, May 18, June 15
(see our website for further details)

Location: Charisma Restaurant,
83D Sherbrook St. (close to Westminster)

The Spiritual Dimensions of Astrology

There will be a public lecture on this subject, co-sponsored by LIGHT and the Manitoba Astrology Association.

When: Saturday, May 29
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Where: Place Louis Riel
190 Smith St.

The Wolseley Labyrinth

Recently LIGHT interviewed Ervin Bartha, a writer, photographer, web designer, artist, sound engineer/producer and labyrinth designer. Ervin lives in Wolseley with his wife Deborah and children Harmony and Heart. He is something of a “renaissance man,” with interests in sacred art, architecture and music, spiritual transformation, symbolism and thanatology.

We talked with Ervin at his home on Lenore Street, where we were surrounded by his stunning photographic images of the great cathedrals of Europe. Ervin’s interest in sacred art was first awakened when he was exposed to sacred music as a young child in Hungary. Even at an early age he was aware of the power of art to transform human consciousness, alter perception and challenge our fundamental identity.

Many years later his interest in sacred architecture led to trips to Europe, Asia and Central America where he photographed many of the world’s sacred sites. Ervin recalled how he was powerfully influenced by the beautiful stained glass designs

and architectural magnificence of the great cathedrals of Europe, such as Chartres and Notre-Dame. Many of his photographs are available on his website at www.simurgh.net, and are a feast for the eyes and heart.

During his photographic odyssey, Ervin was deeply inspired by many of the labyrinths that were associated with sacred sites. He studied and photographed the major types and designs of labyrinths and subsequently studied their history and metaphysical meaning. According to Ervin, “The labyrinth is a symbol of our spiritual journey and a



Courtesy of Ervin Bartha

guide to transformation and awakening.” The process of walking the labyrinth serves as a mirror for our unconscious psychological habits and tendencies, reflecting how we respond to situations, challenges and other people. In this sense it is a powerful teaching instrument and gateway to the development of higher perceptions and consciousness.

A few years ago Ervin noticed a small park at the corner of Wolseley and Lenore, called Nellie McClung Park; he sensed that it was underutilized and unappreciated by the community. The idea of creating a labyrinth in the park germinated in Ervin’s mind and was reinforced when he discovered that Nellie McClung was his wife’s great-great-great aunt! Ervin set in motion a plan to actually build a labyrinth in the park and approached the Parks Board for consultation. His proposal became part of the “Wolseley Building Communities Program,” whose mandate is to enhance the Wolseley neighbourhood with

(Continued on page 3)

The Dalai Lama Visits Canada

For a three-week period in April and May, three Canadian cities will be included in a world-wide tour by one of the most extraordinary beings on the planet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be visiting the following cities:

- Vancouver, April 18th to 20th
- Ottawa, April 21st to 24th
- Toronto, April 24th to May 5th

In all three cities, His Holiness will be participating in a large number of public events, and meeting with many representatives of academic, arts and government organizations. He will also be receiving honorary degrees from University of British Columbia

and University of Toronto. In Toronto, he will be giving a public talk at Sky-Dome on Sunday April 25 and an interfaith service at the National Trade Centre on Saturday May 1.

His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso was born in 1935 into a peasant family in Amdo, eastern Tibet and was recognized at the age of two by a government search party and eminent lamas as the fourteenth in the line of Dalai Lamas. At the age of four he was taken to Lhasa, capital of Tibet, and officially installed as the Dalai Lama.

Following the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet in 1949 and the subsequent large-scale popular up-

rising against the Chinese invaders in 1959, the Dalai Lama along with 80,000 Tibetan refugees fled across the Himalayas to India and other neighbouring countries. In India he issued a democratic constitution and formed a Tibetan government-in-exile, which he heads. His efforts in support of the cause of Tibet and a life philosophy founded upon the concept of universal responsibility and reverence for all living beings have won him great acclaim world-wide. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

A LIGHT Gathering

Members and friends of LIGHT had their first chance to get together and exchange ideas on the evening of Sunday, February 22nd at the Robert A. Steen Community Centre in Wolseley. About 25 interested people from Winnipeg and neighbouring communities shared tea, punch, snacks and conversation near a cheerful fire in the comfort of the Fireside Room.

The evening commenced with a showing of the wonderfully animated, Academy Award-winning film *The Man Who Planted Trees* by the Québécois animator Frédéric Back. All present were enchanted by the beautiful visuals and deeply spiritual theme.

Following the film, Board members of LIGHT briefly outlined future activities planned by the organization. They received

positive response and many helpful ideas and suggestions. LIGHT's '**Enhancing the Urban Landscape**' project received particular interest.

The LIGHT Gathering was so enjoyable that LIGHT is planning to hold another in the very near future. Stay tuned for future notices.



The Wolseley Labyrinth

(Continued from page 2)

local community-based projects. At the present time the project is working its way through the bureaucratic stream and is awaiting funding approval.

LIGHT is very interested in supporting Ervin in his project and has offered assistance in constructing and completing the labyrinth. Although the wheels of formal bureaucracy move slowly, there is hope that the labyrinth project will actually get off the ground this year. LIGHT invites anyone who is interested in participating in this important project to contact us for further information.



I asked for strength and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for wisdom and God gave me problems to learn to solve.

I asked for prosperity and God gave me a brain and brawn to work.

I asked for courage and God gave me dangers to overcome.

I asked for love and God gave me people to help.

I asked for favours and God gave me opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted. I received everything I needed.

- Hazrat Inayat Khan



L I G H T

**LEARNING INSTITUTE FOR
GROWTH, HEALING AND
TRANSFORMATION**

980 Dorchester Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3M 0S1

Phone: (204) 287-2087

Fax: (204) 452-8090

E-mail: info@lightinc.org

Executive Director:

Judy Slivinski

LIGHT Website: www.lightinc.org

LIGHT is proud to announce the opening of our new website.

For the past six months, members of LIGHT have been working with local graphic designer Bobby Stahr and web host Michael Zajac to develop our website, devoted to informing the community—both local and world-wide—about LIGHT.

The development of this website has been an adventure and a learning opportunity for all involved, and we are very pleased with the results. Many different members of LIGHT have contributed to the creation of our website—this is reflected in the diversity of content, style and thematic interests.

The website contains a number of sections informing the public about various aspects of our organization and reflecting our mandate to encourage spirituality in the local community and in the wider world:

- **ABOUT US** - a description of our organization (mission, profile, Board member biographies and membership information)
- **EVENTS** - a calendar of upcoming events, including both those sponsored by LIGHT and by other groups and organizations with a spiritual focus. Information and updates on current projects sponsored by LIGHT (Children's Spiritual Books, Labyrinths and Enhancing the Urban Landscape, Lecture Series and Film and Video Series)
- **ARTICLES** - contributions by members and the general public (short stories, poetry, aphorisms and articles). This section also contains our current LIGHT newsletter and archives of all our past newsletters
- **SACRED ART** - a gallery featuring the works of local and international visual artists with a spiritual content. Some of the images in the gallery are stunning and a feast for the eye and heart
- **LINKS** - connections to other organizations and websites with compatible interests and a spiritual focus, grouped to reflect our four main project areas (Children's Spirituality, Enhancing the Urban Landscape, Lecture Series, Film and Video Series)

**Meet our Board
of Directors**

Back row (left to right): Sharon Wisemyn, Douglas Staley (Founding Director), Rosemary Miguez

Front row (left to right): Jane Casey, Ernie Strauss

Sharon Wisemyn

Sharon Wisemyn is a Professional Astrologer with 20 years social work experience. She has been involved in personal growth and social change groups since her college days. She is a long-time member of Kebzeh, a spiritual organization.

Douglas Staley

Douglas is a medical researcher and statistician with a Master's degree in Psychology, currently employed at St. Boniface General Hospital. For many years he has studied and participated in a wide range of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions.

Rosemary Miguez

Rosemary is a Volunteer/Client Services Coordinator at Kali-Shiva AIDS Services. She holds a degree in Women's Studies and History. Her spiritual path is Aboriginal, and she is involved in womyn's Moon Ceremonies.

Note: Incorrect information appeared in our previous issue.

Jane Casey

Jane is a writing instructor with the Inner City Social Work Program. Her Master's thesis was on the poetry of Margaret Avison. Since her work on Avison, Jane has spent the last 20 years exploring Christian, Sufi and Buddhist traditions.

Ernie Strauss

Ernie has been involved with many different spiritual traditions and practices over the past 30 years, including Jewish, Sufi, Taoist and Buddhist. He has an M.A. in Philosophy of Science from University of Toronto, and works in Winnipeg as a technical writer.

