



VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2

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Coming Events

LIGHT is pleased to announce our upcoming events for the Fall season.

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

LIGHT Lecture Series

The talks will be held on the first or second Tuesday of the month in September, October, November and December. Attendees are invited to a buffet starting at 6:30 p.m., with the talk to follow at 7:00.

Location: Charisma Restaurant
83D Sherbrook St.

Tuesday, September 16

Doug Staley: "Exploring Sacred Art"
Sacred or spiritual art has been created in virtually every culture of the world from early prehistoric times to the present day. The presentation, featuring beautiful images from the diverse spiritual traditions of the world, will explore the fundamental principles and underlying themes of sacred art.

Doug Staley is the President of LIGHT and has avidly studied sacred geometry, architecture and art for many years.

Tuesday, October 7

Victor Popow and Lisa Thibeault:
"The Mystery and Spirituality of Chartres Cathedral"

In spring 2008 Victor and Lisa toured the magnificent Chartres cathedral in France. They will share their impressions of the visit and present an acclaimed documentary film, *Chartres Cathedral: A Sacred Geometry*, which features inspiring images and beautiful sacred music, and advances challenging theories and discoveries by leading experts in sacred architecture.

Victor Popow has served as the Grand Librarian of the Freemasons Grand Lodge of Manitoba, is

currently the National Chairman of the Masonic Rosicrucians of Canada, and has spent a lifetime studying sacred architecture and spirituality. Lisa Thibeault, BSc is a respiratory therapist at Concordia Hospital and is a student of initiatory societies and ancient history.

Tuesday, November 4

Anna Olson: "On the Nature of Life After Death"

A presentation on how we interact with the spirit level from this side, the importance of preparing for death, and clues about what it's like on the "other side."

Anna Olson is editor of The Aquarian, Winnipeg's alternative spirituality, holistic health and environmental concerns newsmagazine. She has been exploring different levels of awareness for over 20 years.

Tuesday, December 2

Marianne Johnson: "Glimpses Into the Beyond"

When accompanying people who are dying, whether as family, friend or end-of-life practitioner, one is very close to the mystery of what happens after death. The stories, dreams and visions of individuals who are dying or have experienced the loss of a loved one offer us glimpses, often reassuring, into the beyond.

Dr. Marianne Johnson is a clinical psychologist in private practice. She is also currently a student in the end-of-life care practitioner training program, which honors the spiritual dimensions of dying, with the Metta Institute of California. She has been involved in end-of-life care (also called hospice or palliative care) since 1999 and brings a Jungian perspective to her presentation. (See page 4 for Marianne Johnson interview.)

LIGHT Film Series

LIGHT will be presenting two films on sacred art and spirituality in October and November.

Location: Robert A. Steen C. C.
980 Palmerston Ave. - Fireside Room
(side entrance off the parking lot)

Dates:

Sunday, October 19 - 7:00 p.m.

The Healing Power of Sacred Art

Acclaimed visionary artist Alex Grey discusses the power of sacred art for bringing us into contact with a divine reality, and how these works of art can be used to heal the human spirit. After describing the life experiences, sacred teachings and painters who have inspired his own artistic vision, he takes us on a tour of sacred art from spiritual traditions around the world.

Sunday, November 23 - 7:00 p.m.

Ashes and Snow

Gregory Colbert's film is part of an ongoing multimedia project that explores the poetic sensibilities of all animals and the shared language between animals and humans. A hypnotic world music soundtrack accompanies the haunting images of the film, which include elephants, sperm whales, eagles and leopards.

Charisma restaurant has expanded! - see page 3

LIGHT and the Winnipeg International Storytelling Festival

On May 10 **LIGHT** presented a storytelling event at the Millennium Library as part of the third annual Winnipeg International Storytelling Festival. The event was supported by the Winnipeg Public Library and received financial assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Writers' Union of Canada. The setting was the 'Reading in the Round' area of the Millennium Library and the event attracted a large audience of children, adults and storytellers. The featured storyteller was Toronto author and storyteller Aubrey Davis, who first discovered traditional folktales and the art of storytelling while travelling through Europe and North Africa. For over 25 years he has told stories and conducted storytelling workshops in Canada and the U.S.

Aubrey presented "If You Have No Troubles, Buy a Goat: Jokes and Wisdom of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin." Aubrey related that Mulla Nasrudin was the world's wisest fool and funniest jokester and that the timeless wisdom hidden in the wacky jokes of this mysterious character can help us understand ourselves and our world. Aubrey is a consummate storyteller and his telling of classic Mulla Nasrudin stories was magical and enchanting. He was both comical and serious as he acted out many of the tales with animated expression and hilarious sound effects. Aubrey also provided background on the source, purpose and effects of the Nasrudin stories and skillfully answered questions from the audience. Everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed the day's proceedings and left with smiling faces and happy hearts.

Aubrey donated his storytelling fee to the Institute for Cross-cultural Exchange (ICE), a Canadian charitable organization that donates books to Canadian literacy programs and disadvantaged children nation-wide. **LIGHT** was pleased to match Aubrey's donation to ICE as part of our ongoing efforts to make children's spiritual books available to the community.

The Mulla was made a magistrate. During the first case the plaintiff argued so persuasively that he exclaimed:

"I believe that you are right!"

The clerk of the court begged him to restrain himself, for the defendant had not been heard yet.

Nasrudin was so carried away by the eloquence of the defendant that he cried out as soon as the man had finished his evidence:

"I believe that you are right!"

The clerk of the court could not allow this.

"Your honour, they cannot *both* be right."

"I believe that you are right!" said Nasrudin.



LIGHT Website Update

During the summer we made many changes and updates to our website. The **Projects** section of **About Us** has been completely revamped, with a much more detailed description of **LIGHT**'s four major initiatives: Young Spirits, Storytelling, Lecture Series and Film Series.

We are also pleased to announce the addition of an important new section of

the Lending Library: **Death and Dying**. The books feature classic guides to understanding the spiritual nature of death and dying, and explore many questions surrounding the mystery of death and life after death. The availability of these helpful books in the library fortuitously coincides with two presentations on the topic of death and dying for our Fall Lecture Series:

Tuesday November 4 - Anna Olson: "On the Nature of Life After Death"

Tuesday December 2 - Marianne Johnson: "Glimpses Into the Beyond"

We welcome all those interested in exploring the process of death and dying from a spiritual perspective to attend these presentations. The Lending Library catalogue can be accessed through our website (www.lightwinnipeg.org).

Book Donation to the Winnipeg Public Library

Concurrent with the May 10 storytelling event at the Millennium Library, **LIGHT** donated the complete series of Mulla Nasrudin books by Afghan author and Sufi teacher Idries Shah to the 20 branches of the Winnipeg Public Library. The donated titles were: *The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin*, *The Subtleties of the Inimitable Mulla Nasrudin*, *The Exploits of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin* and *The World of Nasrudin*. Karin Borland, Administrative Coordinator of Youth Services, thanked **LIGHT** for the gift, which is our fourth donation of spiritual books to the Winnipeg Public Library. Karin indicated that the previous titles have been very well received by library patrons and have circulated at a robust rate.

Our previous donations, as well as the present gift of Mulla Nasrudin titles, have focused on spiritual teaching stories,

myths and fables suitable for children, young adults and older readers. Teaching stories and tales are found in virtually all of the world's spiritual traditions and constitute a rich heritage of wisdom, humour and knowledge. The best teaching stories are constructed with great skill and artistry.

Research suggests that repeated reading of these stories may help to coordinate the left (linear, analytical) hemisphere with the right (non-linear, holistic) hemisphere of the brain. Psychologist Robert Ornstein and associates obtained empirical data supporting this hypothesis by comparing the EEG responses of subjects given Sufi stories to read with their responses to reading a technical report. They found significantly more right-hemisphere involvement in reading the stories than in reading the technical material. They

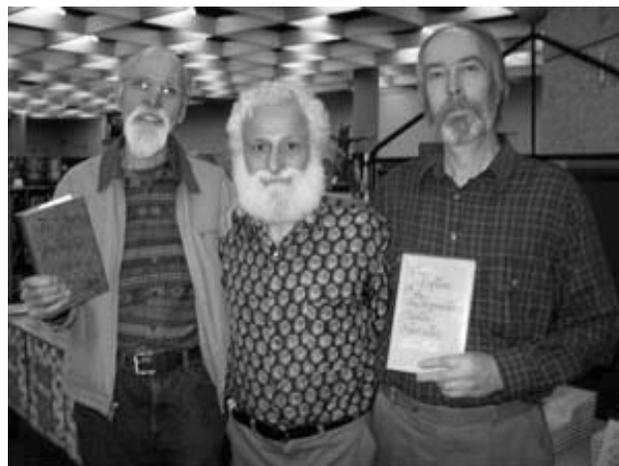
suggest that the multilevel structure of teaching stories activates the non-linear, symbolic right hemisphere and also enables the left hemisphere to make better use of the right hemisphere mode. In other words, reading teaching stories allows both brain hemispheres to complement each other.

Recently educators and psychologists have begun to acknowledge the effectiveness of teaching stories in developing finer perceptions and thinking skills in children. For instance, teaching stories help children to deal with difficult situations, overcome irrational fears and develop qualities such as self-reliance. They also enable people of all ages to become more flexible and understand more about their lives. Recognizing the importance of these books, **LIGHT** plans to make further donations of teaching stories and tales to the Winnipeg Public Library in the coming years.

"There are some things," said Nasrudin, "that you positively know, inwardly, must be untrue."

"Can I have an example?" asked someone who was always looking for evidence of the supernatural.

"Certainly. For instance, the other day when I was walking along, I overheard a rumour that I was dead."



Richard Bredsteen, Aubrey Davis and Doug Staley showcase the LIGHT donation

Charisma Restaurant Has Expanded

Charisma restaurant, location of the **LIGHT** Lecture Series, has recently expanded, doubling its floor space and increasing its seating capacity to 140 seats. Owner Mitesh (pronounced "miteesh") Triveda has invested significant capital in renovating his establishment, including new wash-rooms, flooring, ceilings and general decor. A pull-down screen and mounted

multimedia projector with DVD/computer inputs are also fresh additions to the restaurant. And Mitesh has also added a number of new dishes to the sumptuous buffet table. He has created an environment and atmosphere that is ideal for special events such as weddings, birthdays, book and CD launches, film presentations, fundraising events and, of course, talks and lectures.

LIGHT has been presenting events at Charisma for the past four years and we

are extremely pleased with the new expanded premises. During the last year attendance at our Lecture Series has reached the maximum seating capacity, so the larger venue is most welcome. We would like to thank Mitesh and his excellent staff for their kind support of our organization, warm hospitality and great East Indian food.



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LIGHT Interview: Marianne Johnson

How did you first become interested in end-of-life care?

In 1994 when I was training at the Jung Institute in Switzerland, I read the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (trans. by Thurman) with an intuitive sense that this book was very important. This led me to the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria, where my sabbatical project was a Jungian perspective on some of the symbolism in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. From both a Jungian and a Buddhist perspective, experience is essential and so I became a volunteer with Victoria Hospice. The experience was life-changing.

Can you tell us about your experience in the training program of the Metta Institute of California?

I have been seeking professional training in end-of-life care since 1999. Last year I attended the end-of-life conference at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, in part because presenters were from different training programs. When I heard the presentation by Frank Ostaseski, co-director of the Metta Institute and former director of the Zen Hospice Project, I knew "this was it!" When I looked at the website (www.mettainstitute.org), I was amazed at the faculty, which includes Ram Dass and Dr. Rachel Remen (an internationally known palliative care physician). The program is for people with experience in end-of-life care and a committed spiritual practice who will take the knowledge and skills back to their workplaces and communities. The training program is remarkable, experiential and very much based on mindfulness, with goals of developing the capacity to be present with people who are dying, the ability to be attuned to the sacred dimensions of this time, and to serve as a 'midwife' to the dying. Students (nursing, chaplaincy, social work, medicine, massage therapy and psychology), are from all over the States; I am the Canadian representative this year.

Death is an inevitability for each of us. How does this reality illuminate our personal spiritual journey?

Death is inevitable, but the denial of death is profound. Working in end-of-life care keeps me aware of the reality of my own death as well as that of others. As a result, I am more deeply committed to my personal path and to quality of life. My experiences have also deepened my spiritual connection and practice, as well as my belief that we are "spiritual beings having a human experience."

How have your Jungian studies shaped your approach to death and dying?

Life, death and rebirth are archetypal experiences which each of us experience in our own way. In addition, I honour the importance of dreams in preparing for death—as a transition rather than an ending—and in providing opportunities to meet again with loved ones who have passed on. My presentation will include Jung's and von Franz's insights into these kind of dreams.

What do you hope to convey and share with the audience at your December 2 presentation?

In my reflections on my experiences in end-of-life care in combination with stories others have shared with me and relevant readings, I hope that this presentation will provide reassurance that there is something more than our physical bodies, that we are each a part of a great Mystery (called by a variety of names—spirit, soul—in different religious traditions) that continues on after death. My hope is that these 'glimpses' will be a source of reassurance for each of us in regard to our own death and for those who have lost loved ones.



LIGHT's membership year begins on September 1

To become a member:

- Fill in a membership form
- Attach \$20 (cash/cheque)
- Leave it at any LIGHT event or mail it to the address at the bottom of the form