

**You are invited to a Branch meeting of the
Rudolf Steiner Branch (NC)
Saturday February 20, 2016
3-5:30 PM
Brown Wing at EWS**

Agenda

**Commemoration of the 155th Birthday of Rudolf Steiner
Review the Year 1916 in Steiner's Life – (100 years Ago)
Break for Birthday Cake and Light Refreshments
A Discussion on the Future of the Anthroposophical Society
and our own Branch**

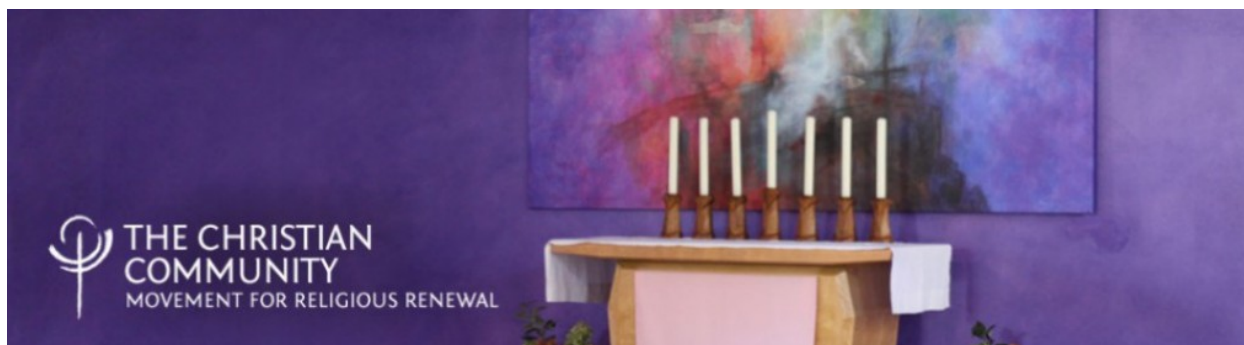
This meeting first of all hopes to revive a tradition our branch had many years ago, in which each year around Steiner's birthday we would have a commemoration of a year in Steiner's life. It seems most appropriate to review the year 100 years ago – 1916 - and then in the coming years, have a countdown to the end of his life – thus in 2025 we will commemorate 1925. Most likely 2023 will be a great year of celebration because of the 100th anniversary of the Re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society.

The year 1916 was an important one, in that it marks the beginning of a new 7-year cycle in the life of Rudolf Steiner. It has been called the cycle of his "Will activities" (the first seven years were the "Thinking" activities when he laid down the essential Philosophy of Anthroposophy and wrote most of his 5 basic books; joined the Theosophical Society and became leader of its German section; the second 7 year cycle was the "Feeling" or artistic phase of his life's work. He introduced many art forms and began construction of the Goetheanum.) Kathleen Wright will give the presentation on Steiner's life.



We shall then observe – Now that we are at the culmination (i.e. the 100th anniversary of that phase), how have the seeds Steiner planted in 1916 come to fruition? What more can we do to revitalize those impulses? After a short break for birthday cake and socializing, we will come back to ask some serious questions:

What is the state of our Society in America today (especially with regard to the financial crisis and the aging population of its members). What would life be like with No Anthroposophical Society? What would become of the Movement? How would anthroposophists find each other? How do we envision the future of our own branch? Where will our branch be in 10 years when the majority of members will be 70-90 years old? What changes do we wish to see in our branch and how can we achieve our vision with so many in declining health and so few to take our place? No doubt an hour's discussion will be far too short to tackle all these issues, but it will start a discussion that needs to happen and hopefully will continue for several more branch meetings.



Rev. Richard Dancey to Visit January 30-31

We are delighted to announce that Rev. Richard Dancey, the priest who helped our community found the Christian Community in NC will be returning this coming weekend - January 30 and 31.

On Saturday evening, Richard will be giving a Talk: "The Future of the Family" in the Brown Room at the Emerson Waldorf School from 7:30-9 PM.

On Sunday morning Rev. Dancey will perform the Act of Consecration of Man in the Brown Wing at EWS. The schedule will be as follows:

9:30 AM Children's Story
 10:00 AM Children's service
 10:30 – Act of Consecration of Ma
 12:00 Circle Time and Snacks

Child Care is available but must be arranged in advance. Please contact Diana Haynes at 919-768-3969

Next Priest Visit: March 19-20 with Rev. Carol Kelly

The Seminary of the Christian Community in Spring Valley, NY Announces an Open Course:

"The Second Coming of Christ "

February 8 - Feb 12th 2016

With Reverend Bastiaan Baan and

Reverend Patrick Kennedy

Suggested Donation: \$150; Register

at info@christiancommunityseminary.org

or call (845) 356-0972 for more information including assistance regarding accommodation and travel to and from the airport if needed.

Please note: The Open Course fee includes breakfast at the seminary and all evening lectures. Visit our website at: www.christiancommunityseminary.org



SAVE THE DATE!

3 PM SATURDAY. APRIL 23, 2016:

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RUDOLF STEINER BRANCH

AGENDA WILL INCLUDE:

REPORTS FROM INITIATIVES AND COMMITTEES

ELECTIONS OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

VOTING ON CHANGES IN BY-LAWS (These are currently being worked on and will be presented to the members at least a month prior to the AGM and will be open for discussion prior to the AGM)

Please let the Board know if you would like to run for election to the Board. Please submit your name and a brief biography of yourself and say why you would like to be on the Board. Please send to this to Robert Mays at least one month prior to the AGM.

Musings on the Holy Nights

At the December 28 Holy Night celebrating Aries and its virtue “devotion becomes the Power of Self-sacrifice”, **Mindy Kash** was inspired to write the following poem during the Journal writing part of the evening:

“As we suffer, our wounds become luminous,
The Luminous Wound.
Suffering is an activity - the Refiner's Fire...
Honed to only what is essential;
Devotion is born.
Let us meet one another in this place
Where head and heart unite – Wisdom and Love abide.
Oh joy! When two or more are gathered in
My name; there am I among them.”



Tatiana Zybin sent this in:

I felt privileged to have attended most of the 12 Holy Nights offered so generously by the various hosts--hostesses. Each offering was very special and well thought out. Having shared these offerings with so many of our Society members was a truly bonding experience. THANK YOU ALL--BOTH HOSTS AND PRIVILEGED ATTENDANTS. A wonderful way to spend the Holy Nights!!!

Tatiana

EURYTHMY CLASSES FOR ADULTS RESUME IN MARCH



Wednesdays 5:45-7:15 PM

EWS Eurythmy Room

March 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th

April 6th (NO CLASS April 13th) 20th and 27th.

8 classes @ \$20 = \$160 for the session.

Payment in full for the session is required unless other arrangements are made. As always, barter is an option. Please do not stay away for financial reasons.

For the weekends of April 9th and 23rd the Brown Room has been reserved for a potential sharing of our work, by those who wish.

(Please note no one is required to share; you can just come to the classes and enjoy it) Along with this sharing, we hope to present a small Eurythmy performance and festival. Details to follow in the

next issue of the newsletter. **Contact Christina Beck for more information at: cbeck.river@gmail.com**

EURYTHMY WORKSHOP

on the Soul Balancing Exercises

Saturday, April 2nd. 10 -12 am.

\$35. OPEN TO ALL (more details in our next issue)

An intensive course will start in January on Friday afternoons. If you are interested in this contact me to schedule a talk about the requirements. Participation will be based on various criteria.

Singing Class with Joanna Carey

Wednesdays: February 10th to March 2nd.).

Group class for 4 – 10 participants.

Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 PM

Cost is \$20 per class. \$80 for the entire course.

We will work with the one book that Valborg Swardstrom Werbeck wrote many years after her own teaching/therapeutic work through the School for Uncovering the Voice.

Valborg was a student and colleague of Rudolf Steiner who supported her in bringing the new singing work into the world through Anthroposophy. We will study the book for a short time during each class.

We will then learn the basic exercises and principles of the school and work together on these.

We will also be learning and singing songs, of course! This will be fun as well as a great learning experience.

All levels of singing ability is welcome. It's your desire to sing and to improve your singing and voice that is important.

Please register by February 7th.

It is my hope that people will take the opportunity to find out what this singing work is about and take the step to improve the voice through wonderful, healing exercises that build strength and vitality, joy and confidence in singing and living.

Your voice is important in the world.

Contact Joanna Carey to register at 919-885-7569

You are invited to a Sophia Grail Circle on



*The Virgin Mary by Hubert Eyck 1432
From the Ghent Altarpiece*

The Rose of the World

Saturday, February 27, 2016

7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

8407 Pickards Meadow Road

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

With pianist Deborah Hollis

Let it be known:

*Today the Eternal Feminine
in an incorruptible body*

*is descending to Earth. In the unfading light of
the new Goddess*

Heaven has become one with the depths.

- Vladimir Solovyov

The vision of the Rose of the World is a world community of humanity as one great family. We all have the same source of origin – the Divine. Within the vision of humanity as one great family, we can see how different world religions bring us different aspects of the being of Sophia. Her wisdom has been revealed through the founders of different world religions. Each holds an aspect of her universal wisdom. Our task is to differentiate while simultaneously holding an overview of the synthesis, the universality, of wisdom, the transcendental unity of all religions.

The Rose of the World celebration honors five stages of humanity's spiritual history, beginning with the proclamation of the coming of the Redeemer by John the Baptist and culminating with the arising of a new world culture—the Rose of the World—a culture based on Love and Wisdom.

THE ETERNAL FEMININE

I am the crown of manifold births and deaths: I am the interpreter of mysteries and the enlightener of souls.

- ANNA KINGSFORD

Please join us and invite your friends!. For further information contact Karen Rivers: 919-942-2465
karen@karenrivers.info



CLASSES WITH KAREN RIVERS



"The Journey Between Death and Rebirth"

10 weeks January 12- March 29, 2016

Tuesdays 10 am- 12 noon

No classes February 16 and March 8

Parenting for a New Paradigm: Envisioning a future of Hope for Parents of Children of all Ages"

10 weeks January 11- March 28

No classes February 15 and March 7

"The Future Destiny of Humanity Envisioned in East and West:

Goethe's *GreenSnake and the Beautiful Lily* and Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*"

A 10 week course via Skype or audio recording

Fridays 10 am-12 noon

No classes Feb. 19, March 2 and 25th

Fee for each course: \$200.

Venue: 8407 Pickards Meadow Rd.

Chapel Hill, NC

Call to register: 919-942-2465 or email Karen@karenrivers.info

The Holy Land: the Heart Chakra of the Earth A Pilgrimage with Robert Powell, Karen Rivers, & Estelle Isaacson APRIL 14—MAY 2, 2016



The Sophia Foundation is hosting a pilgrimage to Israel in the spring of 2016, in collaboration with Sophia Services. During this pilgrimage we will explore the life and teachings of Christ Jesus through the experience of walking upon the Earth where the events of His life took place two thousand years ago. We hope to experience a communion with Christ as we seek to deepen our understanding of His work in our time at sites sacred to Him—through celebrations and devotional practices such as prayers with movement and sacred gestures and song.

Check out the website www.sophiafoundation.org to view the beautiful brochure and detailed itinerary, plus registration forms

Contact information: Kim Marie—Administrator of the Sophia Foundation 4500 19th Street, #369

Boulder, CO 80304 (303) 242-5388 sophia@sophiafoundation.org

EWS High School Students Paint Mural on Arts Building

For the first time at the Waldorf high school, a Fine Arts elective in Mural Painting has been offered and it is taught by Corey Hicks. Mrs. Hicks has a group of 10 students from all four grades, they just completed a semester-long endeavor of creating a giant mural on the end of the Practical Arts building. Corey tells us that "I've had this image living in me for almost 10 years, for this big, blank, pentagonal-shaped architecture, that faces the rest of the campus. "

"I told these teenage students that we are painting an image of their bright future.. So the mural is entitled, *The Road to Our Bright Future*. We have been using ladders and scaffolding to paint an enormous North Carolina sunrise over the horizon of hills. The image is informed by the lines in Edna St. Vincent Millay's 1917 poem, *Renascence*:

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,—
No higher than the soul is high."

Corey invites everyone to come by to see--and feel--this warm and beautiful addition to the Waldorf school! The kids are so proud of their work! Below are some photos of their work:



STUDY GROUPS AND WORKING GROUPS

Christian Community Study Group, reading *The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric*; meets Sundays 4-5:30; meets at the home of Kathleen Wright, 4615 Greenglen Drive, Durham, NC; call 919-309-9622 for more information.

Cultural Group meets every other Thursday at 3:30 PM at the home of Joanna Carey to plan festivals and events; all interested persons are welcome to attend; RSVP joannapcarey@gmail.com

IANDS (International Association of Near Death Experiences)

Dates for meetings for the rest of 2016 are: February 18, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17 and December 15; meetings are at 7 PM at the Rhine Center, 2741 Campus Walk Ave., Building 500, Durham, NC 27705. We will be having guest speakers present their experiences and insights from their NDEs. Contact Robert Mays for more information at 919-929-1073 or email at mays@ieeee.org

Reading For the Dead Group- reading: *The Inner Nature of Man and the Life Between Death and Rebirth* (Vienna April 9th-14th, 1914) by Rudolf Steiner; meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month: February 11th and February 25th. at the home of Joanna Carey 4207 Neal Road, Durham, NC from 7 PM- 9 PM every other Thursday; RSVP joannapcarey@gmail.com

Rose Cross Study Group meets Wednesdays, 7:30-9:30 PM; reading: *The Book of Revelation and the Work of the Priest*; at the home of Judy Frey, 55207 Broughton, Chapel Hill; RSVP 919-928-8749 or email: damaris12@nc.rr.com

Threshold Care Group usually meets once a month on Mondays at the home of Jenny Bingham; call Jenny for more information at 919-241-4304 or email her at jennybingham7@gmail.com

Other Groups in North Carolina

Asheville has two study groups:

First and Third **Thursday nights** from 7-8:30 PM pm. Reading: *The Christ Impulse and the Development of Consciousness*. This is a committed group with lively discussions on how Steiner books are applicable to our lives today. Reading in advance is preferred. Contact: Marie Davis [\(828\) 273-5647](tel:8282735647)
Email: md79397@yahoo.com

First Sunday of the month Study Group. Meets 3-6pm. Focus is on the Threefold Social Order. Currently reading *Spiritual Science as a Foundation of Social Forms*; First hour: reading. Second hour: discussion third hour: a Pot luck dinner. contact: Marie Davis [\(828\) 273-5647](tel:8282735647)

Boone Study Group – meets Monday afternoons from 4-6PM, studying *How to Know Higher Worlds*; most members of this group are Biodynamic students of Hugh Courtney; group is led by Cindy Mahoney; contact her at bt13flyer@gmail.com or call her at 919-602-3358 or 828-297-3080

Clemmons (near Winston-Salem) has four Steiner/Anthroposophy Study Groups led by Sarah Putnam; contact Sarah for more information at 336-972-8243 or email her at sputnam01@att.net

-- STEINERBOOKS SPIRITUAL RESEARCH SEMINAR 2016 Presents:



Engaging the Heart

March 18–19, 2016
Kimmel Center
New York University
60 Washington Square South
New York City

The human heart is the brain of the future. This year's seminar will feature professionals engaged in the world developing new heart forces in social life, law, medicine, and education. **Aonghus Gordon** ("Our Relationship to the Earth, Inspiring New Treatments with Autism and Other Problems of Our Time"); **Peter Gruenewald MD** (Building New Sources of Resilience in Hearts for the Future"); **Maureen Curran** ("New Experiences in Movement and Education to Cope with Contemporary Problems"); and **William Manning** ("Nelson Mandela as an Example of the New Heart Forces").

Together, we will explore contemporary problems and new models and paradigms to find creative solutions and opportunities for building a more human future. In addition to talks by our speakers, this seminar features a clay workshop with Aonghus Gordon.

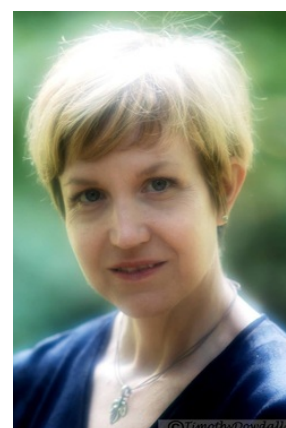
CONFERENCE FEE: sliding scale \$200 > \$75 includes full conference, Friday reception, Saturday breakfast and lunch. To register or for information, email seminar@steinerbooks.org or phone (413) 528-8233 ext. 1.

Flow Salon

Have an artist do your hair! Support an EWS family and get expert hair color and cuts by artist/hairdresser Nancy Moore. Beautiful hair for the whole family! Call for appointment:

[919-260-2495](tel:919-260-2495) or make your own at
www.nancyannmoore.com

Email: nancythehairartist@gmail.com.





Left to Right: Barbara Richardson, Marke Levene, Charlie Burkam, Matthijs Dykstra, Adrian Locher, Michael Burton, Patrice Maynard, Gabrielle Armenier, Marion Leon, Peter Jackson, Barbara Renold, Henric Lowengard, Brian Wolff, Nicolaia Marston, Duncan Macintosh, (missing Kim Snyder-Vine) unable to attend Penelope Snowdon-Lait, Beth Dunn-Fox, Jim Freeman, Ken Ingham.

LEMNISCATE ARTS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL TOUR

We have taken a significant forward step in the development of our planned Festival Tour. A group of 16 of us met in Ann Arbor, MI at the administrative office building of the Anthroposophical Society in the USA for 4+ days.

The New Mystery Drama: We read through the sixth edition of *The Working of the Spirit* and came away with the agreement that, as written, the play is the basis of our next steps. We recognize that it will go through a further tightening both as preparation for publication and with reworking for stage presentation.

Shakespeare Decision: After serious consideration and discussion about which Shakespeare play will serve our Vision and Mission statements, which were reconfirmed in the meeting, we have arrived at a decision. A *Midsummer Night's Dream* will be the production, along with a Symphonic Eurythmy program and *The Working of the Spirit*, that form the heart of our Festival Tour.

Directors: We have created a short list of potential theater artistic directors and will begin to contact individuals that we hope might be interested in that aspect of the project.

Michael Burton's U.S. Tour: Michael is now in Chicago, heading to Milwaukee, WI, Chapel Hill, NC, Asheville, NC, Princeton, NJ, New York, NY, Austin, TX, Phoenix, AZ, Tucson, AZ, and Los Angeles, before he returns to Australia. He will be back in May for the Readers' Theater and will perform again as is possible. His one man Shakespeare performance has been very well received.

Readers' Theater: The play will have its first public reading at Whitsun in Fountain Hall, Camphill Copake, New York. This will take place on Saturday, May 14. This will be followed by subsequent readings in Chicago (May 21 or 22) and on the west coast May 28 or 29. It is our hope that these events will give us an opportunity to meet new actors who might be interested in the project. We will have some of those who have been part of our work in the past, either from days of Portal Productions or from the work last year in Spring Valley with all four of Rudolf Steiner's Mystery Dramas, travelling to each location but the process of expanding the company of stage artists in anticipation of the tour will be started.

We anticipate something similar happening in Europe, probably in England, in the summer and in the southern hemisphere some time after that.

Eurythmy: I expect that a similar type of announcement will be made soon about how the Eurythmy constellation will be developed. The directors of the symphonic eurythmy production will be Benedict Zweifel and Carina Schmidt.

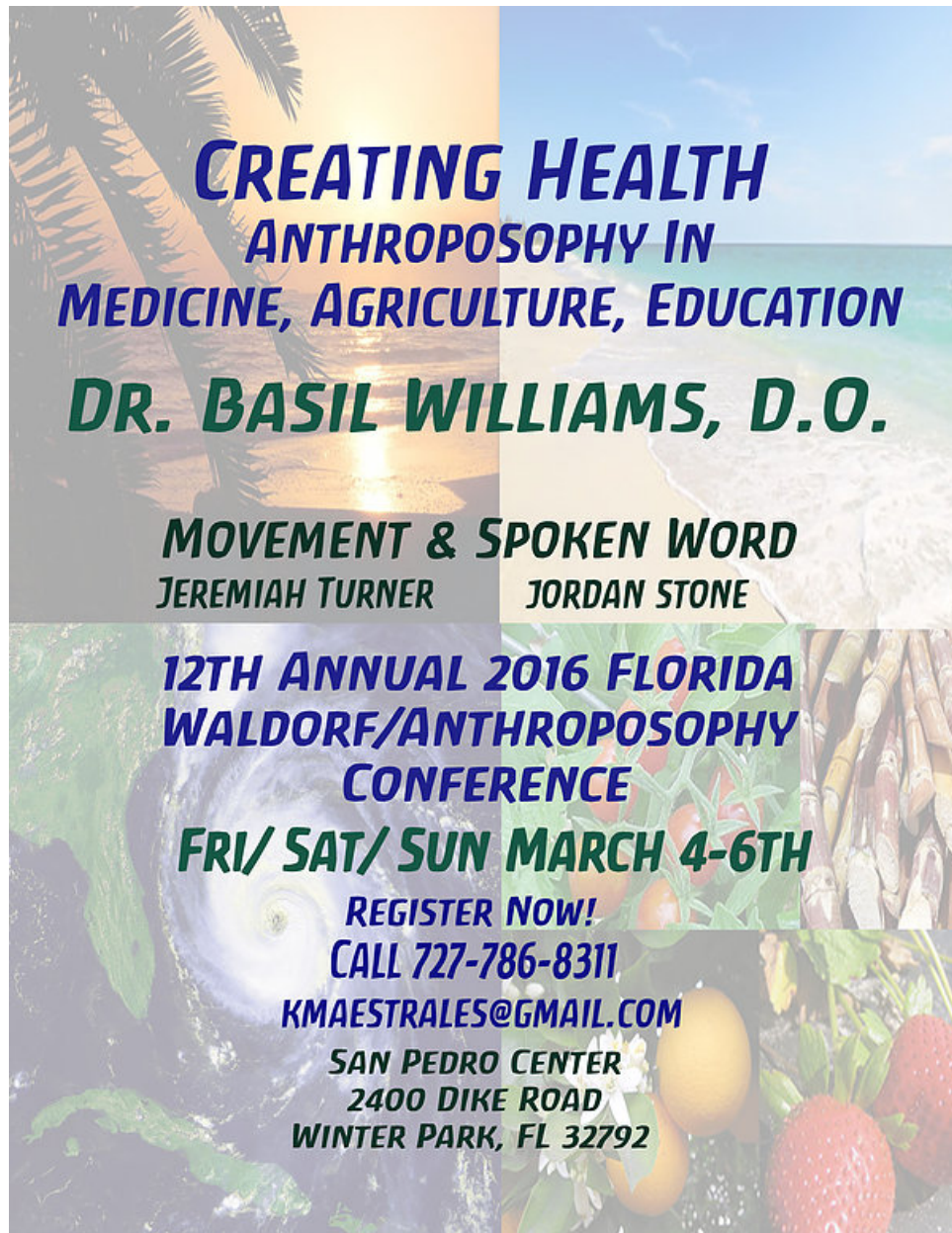
Finances: We had new members who work on the financial side of the process with us for this meeting and a further refinement is underway in the overall financial planning and communication. Work is underway towards the sources of larger funding organizations and individuals but it is the combination of multiple sources that give us the hope that we will be successful.

Gift Tickets: On the financial side we have had an idea for some time now but have only begun to open it up now in coordination with Michael Burton's one-man Shakespeare performances. This new idea is in the form of a Contribution/Ticket. As I am sure you will understand we need substantial funds to get to the opening of the tour and as part of that we have developed our own "crowd funding" concept. In principle the idea is that if we sell enough tickets, the project will work well financially. We are asking people to make a donation of \$100 now, knowing that there is no guarantee that we will actually get the full funding necessary to bring the tour into being. We are hopeful, but it is a big project. If we succeed in accomplishing the tour, then the numbered card that has been issued can be redeemed anywhere in the world, for one ticket of value up to \$100. In essence we gift the funds back to you. We have been surprised at the very positive response that this has generated and funds have begun to flow to keep us going.

Do you want to help? If you are interested in this idea at the moment you can make a contribution on the web site and put in a note that it is for a contribution/ticket. We will send you the document. Eventually we will have this available fully electronically. Having discovered that it works we are just beginning to add this mechanism into our work.

The mood is a very positive one for those who have been working on this for the past three years.

All the best in your work,
Marke Levene



We received the flyer above from our friends in Florida. This conference has a limit of 60 participants and spaces are filling up fast, so if you are interested please call right away!

- Editor



**Conference for North American First Class Members:
 “Encountering Our Humanity:
 From Knowledge to Conscious Action”:
 Free Renderings of lessons 11-19
 August 7-14
 Ottawa, Canada**

For more than a century anthroposophy has been active in many fields of life. The spiritual knowledge of the human being according to Rudolf Steiner has made it possible to enrich and recreate one's relationship to oneself, to society and to the world. With this conference it is our intention to explore the observations, results, and questions pertaining to the various fields of life where anthroposophy is at work.

On the one hand we will explore the world of the soul, including biography, inner development and education. On the other hand we will look at our connection with the outer world, including concerns for the health of the Earth, medicine, and questions in the economic and social realms. The importance of artistic activities and Goethean observation as a means of creating a relation between the inner and outer world will be addressed through lectures, conversations, workshops and artistic presentations. Speakers include Paul Mackay, Bodo von Plato, Seija Zimmermann, Marianne Schubert, Joan Sleight, Constanza Kaliks, Douglas Cardinal, Arie van Ameringen and many others.

A key focus of the conference will be to create space to hear from participants. Time will be included in the conference schedule so individuals and groups can share their own initiatives, research questions, experiences, and artistic projects.

Location & Accommodation

The conference will take place at **La Cité collégiale**, 801 Promenade de l'Aviation, Ottawa.

The college sits on **60 acres** of land, and is easily accessible by air, train, or car.

Accommodation will be offered in the **student residence**, a modern four-storey building that is on-site, and also in **nearby hotels**.

For more information, go to: www.encounteringourhumanity.ca

**Reimagining America:
A Threefold Working Conference
July 8-10 2016
Kimberton, PA
Co-sponsored by the Social Sciences Section
And Council for Anthroposophic Organizations**

In the coming year, we arrive at a significant moment in the spiritual history of America in the light of anthroposophy. This time offers an opportunity for rebirth, and we hope you will join us as we work toward the renewal of American society in the light of social threefolding.

The summer of 2016 marks the approach of the 30th anniversary of the Chicago conference with Manfred Schmidt-Brabandt which initiated the Social Sciences Section work in North America. On July 12, we have the 199th birthday of Henry David Thoreau, deeply connected to the spiritual biography of our country.

Further consider that we are approaching the time that 99 years will have passed since Rudolf Steiner's initial presentations on the threefold nature of our society. From seed to thought or deed takes 33 years; intensity takes another 33 years; and completeness takes a further 33 years. Then it is time for the seed to be resurrected and transfigured. One hundred years bring a certain completion, and it is time to create a new impulse.

Now that 99 years will have elapsed, new opportunities may be arising to bring these thoughts into action on a broader and more public scale. What needs to remain to maintain integrity and what needs to grow and develop? Issues such as immigration, education, agriculture, income equality, and health care are all in the public discourse. What can a threefold, spiritual perspective offer the issues of our time? Can we meet these challenges by turning them to the good, bringing forth a re-imagination of America?

Where in our society do we see the practical initiatives which tend toward a strengthening of a threefold impulse which is slumbering in our hearts and in the American Soul? The old established order is based on the dominance of economic interests which have captured politics and culture through an ideology of materialism and power. Yet there is a new order emerging—one that is based on a spiritual understanding of the human being and of society.

We invite participants who are ready to co-create in the spirit of renewal. A prior understanding of the concepts of social threefolding will be necessary. We will be working together in small groups and sessions not to debate our various understandings, but to formulate responses to the burning questions of our time in the United States. We will be joined by Gerald Häfner, co-leader of the Section for Social Sciences at the Goetheanum and former member of the European Parliament.

Co-sponsored by the Social Sciences Section in North America and the Council of Anthroposophic Organizations

For more information please contact Claus Sproll claus@sproll.net or Chris Schaefer: christopherschaefer7@gmail.com

Cost: \$100 – \$200. Average contribution needed per person is \$150, includes dinner on July 8, and lunch and dinner on July 9.

Italy Odyssey

June 27- July 12, 2016

With Margot Amrine and Gillian Schoemaker



Come with us as we explore Renaissance Italy and its exoteric and esoteric roots.

Visit glorious Venice, Ravenna, Verona, Orvieto and Florence.

Explore all the riches of Art and Architecture, gardens, music and opera.

With Singing and Eurythmy

For details and registration contact

Gillian Schoemaker at gillianschoemaker@gmail.com or call 610-469-0864

A Kenyan Eco-Safari...Through the Eyes of Goethe

Patterns of Nature in East Africa: A Holistic View

August 4-20 2016

With Mark Riegner Anthony Mwaura and Sarnia Guiton



Join Prescott College environmental studies professor and naturalist Mark Riegner, Ph.D., local naturalist, safari manager and guide Anthony Mwaura, and group leader Sarnia Guiton, on a 16-day Safari in Kenya. This is an exciting opportunity to not only experience wildlife on safari in the East African environment but also to study it in depth. We will be focusing on the study of form, pattern and ecology especially of mammals, birds and plants, applying the methods developed by Goethe, the great poet and scientist. Cost: \$7,150 with 19 participants; \$7750 with 12 participants

For more information go to www.sophiaservices.ca or write to sarnia@sophiaservices.ca or phone 604-740-0676

How a Waldorf Teacher Changed “Luke Starkiller” into “Luke Skywalker” and Transformed an Ahrimanic Robot Tale into An anthroposophical Fairy Tale!

(We received the following fascinating article from a friend on Facebook. We hope that you will enjoy reading it... KW, editor)

Source of the Force SECRET BEHIND STAR WARS INSPIRATION

Douglas Gabriel | @2016 | All Rights Reserved

I would like to share with you my personal experience of collaborating for three days in the early 70's with Marcia Lucas and a small team of Anthroposophy scholars on the script of Star Wars and my recent discoveries about how that foundational work affected the writing, editing and expansions of the original Trilogy.

First of all, it seems fitting that my first encounter with the origins of Star Wars – a modern fairy tale ultimately about the return to spirit – would happen at Christmas time, a season in which humanity recalls its sense of spirit and hope.

I was a student at the Waldorf Institute at the time, and remember the day that I first met the characters of Luke Skywalker, R2D2, C3PO, and the entire Star Wars entourage. Yet, when I first encountered them, they were more like two-dimensional paper-dolls in an unfinished script, before their true meaning had been breathed into them. For example, Luke Starkiller as I met him was a far cry from the Skywalker he turned out to be. You may be surprised to learn that the story in its early form was depicted through the machinist eyes of two robots, not yet the familiar, crowd-pleasing epic that would become one of the most famous and endearing movies in the world.

That is, of course, before I and colleagues from the Waldorf Institute would spend three days as part of a think-tank working session with George Lucas' talented wife and professional film editor, Marcia Lucas (née Marcia Griffin), to transform a story that was originally based on two robots into a sweeping modern fairy-tale that even today still evokes a timeless sense of human destiny.

Meeting Marcia

At that time, like the characters, I was in development, too, as are all earnest students. In addition to being a student of Anthroposophy – a discipline of knowledge developed by Rudolph Steiner concerned with all aspects of human life, spirituality and future evolution – I also managed the Waldorf bookstore, which was a treasure trove of spiritual knowledge.

That Christmas season had been busy, and I was just locking up the store and ready to head home when my teacher, Werner Glas, approached me.

Born in Austria, Werner was a beloved instructor at the Waldorf Institute and inarguably the most prominent Anthroposophist scholar in America. I can only say today that it was a great honor to be his student. That day, there was a glint of lighthearted cheer in his eyes. Thinking that he was simply going to wish me a merry holiday, I was surprised when he asked me to follow him.

“Where?” I said, blindly following him like a faithful puppy.

Without answering, he led me into one of the more spacious classrooms, where four other students were already seated around a table, talking with the Institute's co-director, Hans Gebert. A

woman I did not recognize seemed to be at the center of the conversation – a pleasant-looking brunette with a friendly, yet sophisticated, air.

When everyone saw Werner in the doorway, they looked up with a sense of expectation, as most students typically did when Werner walked into a room. He was like a father to us all. He motioned me to take a seat, then sat down and began to explain the situation.

“I’m very pleased to introduce you all to Marcia Lucas,” he said. “Her husband is a well-known movie director who is working on a screenplay for a science fiction film – a space opera of sorts – and they would like our Waldorf perspective. I don’t know if you have heard of George Lucas?” This was the first time I had ever heard George Lucas’ name. I certainly hadn’t seen his critically-acclaimed and commercially successful American Graffiti. I also didn’t know that his wife, Marcia, was an accomplished film editor in her own right.

“Well, Marcia is familiar with Anthroposophy and the work of Rudolph Steiner, and she needs our help with the script, to make it more Waldorf-inspired so it will have good merit as both a movie and a spiritual story.”

Marcia nodded and offered more context. She said that the “big screen” should be used to deliver important messages to audiences and tell a more spiritual story, one that has a good foundation in the truth, not just another director’s dream.

This began to inspire me, as story-telling is at the center of our teaching curriculum in Waldorf schools. Movies are mass exposure to stories. Stories, like fairy tales, help inspire the psyche of those who witness them, similar to shared dreams. At the Waldorf school, the teacher will tell a story to the children, who learn it by heart and recite it back in class the next day. Once memorized, the stories are further interpreted through music, dance, drawing, painting, and any number of other creative responses.

Marcia needed our input, she told us, because the script was entering its third draft and lacked an element of spirituality. I could see that she was problem-solving, earnestly searching for a way to make the screenplay work.

“I’m sure we’re up to the task,” Werner said, looking at me. For the past few minutes, I had been sitting there wondering, “Why am I here? No one had even told me about this meeting.” Then, I looked around and realized that I was the most experienced student there. The others were too young, less studied in Anthroposophy and certainly not up to this level of work. I was immensely relieved that Werner would be there to lead us through the session, and sat back, relaxed.

The dialogue is a bit lacking,” Werner said. “I told Marcia we could help with that as well.” With that, Werner rose from his seat and said, “Well, then. My family is waiting at home and I must be off.”

None of us could believe it. America’s leading Anthroposophist was going to leave this important project in our hands?

Werner added, “Douglas is my right hand, and I will check in on your work throughout the next few days.”

He then welcomed Marcia to the resources and hospitality of the Institute and politely left. With Werner gone, we all looked at the Institute’s co-director, Hans, to lead the session. Hans stood up.

“Well, I must admit that science and mathematics are my true specialty,” Hans said, in his characteristic fashion. “So, I am afraid I will not be of much assistance to this group.” He politely bid us all adieu, then left.

At this point, I became a bit panicked. My leaders had left me in a great unknown!

Marcia Lucas, who I did not know at the time was one of the greatest film editors in the world, was looking expectantly at me.

I suddenly got the feeling Werner had said something to her about me, akin to his comment about me being his “right hand.” I had a vague realization that both she and I were here solely because of Werner. Having been a brilliant actor at the London School of Theater, Werner had been the primary Anthroposophist from the Waldorf school in North Hollywood in dealing with actors, directors and producers. She was here because of him and I was here because he had brought a promising student to the table for this specialized project. Surely, he knew what he was doing, so I decided to trust it.

“Well, then, let’s get started,” I said. “Tell us the story, Marcia.”

As she spoke, I got up and went over to the classroom blackboard. Marcia had trouble articulating the story; it didn’t flow easily. In colored chalk, I began to sketch out the story- board.

“It’s a story of two robots, you see – the movie is seen through their eyes,” she said. “The robots are key elements of the story. They must be kept.”

I understood that the robots were non-negotiable. We must somehow work with them.

“Ok,” I said. “Can you please read us the starting dialogue?”

She began. It was difficult for us to listen to. As an experienced editor, Marcia knew this. The characters didn’t work. They weren’t alive. She sincerely wanted to rewrite her husband’s movie script to its full potential, but at this moment, it was stilted. Only later would I learn more about the context of their partnership – how George was a genius concerned with the theme of machines and technology, and Marcia was the humanistic side, focused on telling a meaningful story that would resonate with the audience. I did not know it then, but she was here, basically, trying to save the script.

I decided to be frank with her.

“First, the story is not archetypal,” I said. “The author doesn’t know the true nature and value of the characters he is set on gluing together.”

Marcia began writing down notes quickly in her notebook.

“The dialogue is unreal and trite. It serves only one purpose – to move to the next scene. So, the message of the story happens in the action between scenes.”

She nodded, writing.

I continued. “There is no character development. No one will identify with these characters.”

Then, on a positive note, I said, “However, your husband has tapped into the true spiritual reality of our time. His obsession to see the world through the eyes of two robots is genius, but a little confused. We can work with that.”

Since everyone there, including Marcia, was a student of Anthroposophy, I began to do what Werner knew would come naturally to me as both a teacher and a student – apply the principles that I had studied to our current problem with the script.

“George has described the challenge of our times,” I said, “The war with machines, symbolized in the two robot playmates of Luke Starkiller.”

Now, an interesting side note about the names. Like Luke Starkiller, none of the character’s names that Marcia read to us were in their final form. In fact, I later recommended that the hero, Luke Starkiller, be changed to “Luke Skywalker,” from American Indian and Tibetan traditions. Then, since Lucas is the name for “light,” I also had the concept of a light saber, a weapon that both defends as a shield and attacks as a formidable force. (In Anthroposophist terms, the light saber represents the human spinal column.)

Those details would come later. Now, we had to focus on shaping the story itself.

“I think it needs to go back to the concept of a fairy tale,” I said, explaining that all fairy tales begin with a reference of the story being outside of time and space and end with some reference to their own continuance. “I think what you may want is an adult science-fiction fairy tale that is spiritually accurate, yet engrossing and interesting.”

Marcia agreed.

With her input, we decided to begin with Luke Starkiller. We tried to describe his character development in terms of the polarity that every person has in their soul – the left and right-hand paths of evil. In the end, it is the middle path, “the Force,” that the Jedi warrior should choose. Yet, without exploring both the left and right paths, the Jedi is weakened by not knowing his enemy. “So, each movie goer will be faced with making the same decision, no matter what their life is like?” said one of the students.

“Yes, that’s the path of most fairy tales,” I said. The question is: “Which of the three paths will you choose?”

Here again, I was impressed with George Lucas’ brilliance. His obsession with machines underscored the biggest challenge of our age – the right-hand path of mechanical occultism as described by Rudolph Steiner and the left-hand path of thinking that has turned evil. Had I seen his first film, THX-1138, I would have recognized this even more clearly.

“The two robots can represent thinking and willing,” I proposed. As the heroes of George’s original story, both C3PO and R2D2 enable the audience to “see through the eyes of machines.” In his relationship and interactions with them, Luke uses his robots to enhance his thinking (C3PO) and willing (R2D2) in an age of machines, but finally finds the middle path – of feeling. “Let’s explore the two extremes: the left-hand path of thinking and the right-hand path of willing,” I said.

We spent time talking it through. Both C3PO and the Evil Emperor are on the left-hand path of “thinking” that has turned evil. For example, C3PO can think but cannot act, and the Emperor needs Darth Vader to carry out his desired actions. In contrast, R2D2 and Darth Vader are on the right-hand path of “willing.” Having the capacity to will, they still must be told what to do. “Darth Vader is the being we know as Ahriman,” I added. “He represents the composite cleverness of all machines, incarnated into a human being.”

“So, what about a middle path? Is there one?” one of the students asked. “Excellent question,” I said. “The middle path is what both the right-hand and left-hand paths miss. Unable to understand the middle path, both sides seek to destroy it. The Jedi masters such as Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda have developed themselves on the middle path, having already mastered the other two paths. They represent the desired balanced center between the two extremes.” Indeed, this dynamic of two poles of evil is the central motif of the first Star Wars trilogy.

Master of the machines

Once we understood the story in context of this Anthroposophical framework, the next step was to focus further on Luke’s character.

“I think that Luke needs to develop his character by interacting with the two robots, both the left and the right hand,” I said.

We then discussed each robot.

As a robot on the “thinking” side, C3PO can speak many languages and is programmed for etiquette and translating, a truly inspired use for machines that we seldom see. He represents an evil that has been around as long as languages in every culture since the beginning of human intellectual development – the being named Lucifer, who incarnated in a physical body in China in 2000 BC. As the “left-hand path of evil,” Lucifer is a Promethean archetype who brings fire, language, philosophy, writing and culture to humanity. Chained to a mountain, he suffered each day as a vulture ate out his liver until rescued by Heracles. By representing Lucifer/Prometheus, C3PO would serve as a counter-pole for the incarnation four thousand years later in 2000 AD of Ahriman, the king of machines, otherwise known as Darth Vader.

Luke, who models the original Heracles or the hero in all of us, eventually breaks the chains to free Prometheus, the fire-bringer, who is on the left-hand path. So, too, the Evil Emperor in Star Wars

represents the power of fire (demonstrated as lightning from his hands and the evil wisdom of the Sith) that increasingly consumes him as he misuses it.

“Luke is situated between the two robots, between the two paths, like his twin sister. His lost spirituality is drawing him upward into spirit,” I said.

All Jedi warriors have transformed blood, what was later called “midi-chlorians” in the blood. As they balance the forces of the left and right paths, they raise their consciousness, which then increases spiritual potential in the blood, a process that Steiner calls the “etherization of the blood.” As Steiner taught, spiritual people charge their blood with a consciousness that connects them to spirit (the Force). However, unlike the movie, the ability to access spirit or the Force isn’t passed along through heredity. So, after discussing all of these concepts and laying the groundwork for common understanding, here is the story of Star Wars that we mapped out:

Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away, Luke Skywalker (the archetypal human) finds his life embroiled, if not consumed, by machines. Luke is the master of those machines, because he has consciousness and, therefore, is pulled by the left and right. He is an orphan, as all modern humans find themselves, and knows that something great lives inside of him. He has hope in a hopeless world. Luke’s father has fallen prey to the evil right-hand path of machines that has transformed him into a part-man – part machine abomination who wars against his own spirit and wishes to dominate the world, even if it means killing his son.

The left-hand path of personal black magic lives in the Evil Emperor who also wishes to kill all Jedi and, most especially, the son of Darth Vader.

Luke is protected by the humble Jedi, Obi-Wan Kenobi. Eventually, this Jedi leads him to his teacher of the “middle way” (the Force) and sacrifices himself so that he can help him from the spiritual world. This middle path is like the path to the Higher Self.

On the path, just like Dorothy on the Yellow Brick Road, Luke gains some traveling companions. Just as the Wizard of Oz was a distillation of Masonic initiation rituals, Star Wars introduces the audience to parts of the soul. This is necessary to make the story archetypal, so that it will always be fresh. For example, Obi-One Kenobi represents the highest of the three parts of the soul, the consciousness soul, which merges spirit with matter just as his Jedi powers give him the power of mind over matter. Chewbacca represents the lower soul, the sentient or astral soul that must turn the animal in us into a human with spiritual characteristics.

Han Solo represents the intellectual soul that first begins to awaken to higher thinking. Although clever, Hans lacks the ability to see the big picture like Obi-One.

Between Luke’s three companions, much like the Lion, Tin Man, and Scarecrow, each contributes a special quality to Luke along the way. Steiner calls these soul qualities “thinking, feeling and willing.” At the center of the story, Luke represents the ego, or the thinking human being, and must master the three steps of the development of the soul.

A Return to Spirit

Now that we had built the underlying framework, which was the most Herculean part of our task, it was clear to me that we needed to develop these characters into archetypes. Knowing now what motivated each character, we could easily hear the words that each would naturally say and even envision their realistic reactions to the unfolding plot.

In doing so, we kept in mind a fundamental truth: good and evil are choices. The Evil Emperor and Darth Vader were not born evil; they chose their own paths. Luke, the archetypal human, also must make his choices and live with the good or evil that results.

Still, after all of this work we had done, one thing was missing.

“We still have one problem,” I reminded Marcia. “Where is Luke going in the story?”

Sorely missing in the original version of the story, this issue had to be resolved so that everything else would make sense.

“Isn’t Luke, essentially, the prodigal son?” I said. Others agreed that Luke was separated from his parent’s home and longing to return. This is a universal element with which everyone could identify. Like Luke, each of us has our particular destiny. In our life, we embark on the search to find it and return to our kingdom in the spirit.

We further developed Luke’s direction and role in the story as follows: Luke knows he is special but doesn’t know why. Throughout the story, he must evolve into his mission of facing his true identity as Darth Vader’s son, accept it, and decide what to do with it. Ultimately, Luke denies the power of the machines that try to gain control over him. Instead of the cold-hearted machine-human hybrids, Luke chooses love. He must come to this awakening only after receiving help from his companions.

His sister Leia (who I suggested should be called Maya) represents his spiritual self. Although first drawn to her through physical desire, Luke transforms this attraction into spiritual love and links his destiny to hers, as the soul links to the spirit.

More sure about herself, Leia has been treated like the Princess she is. Luke has struggled to “catch up” to where she was, but in the end, their destinies are permanently entwined. Because he is on the spiritual path of self- development versus the physical path of earthly gratification, Luke doesn’t “win the girl” – that part of the story is left to another character, Han Solo.

As part of his journey, Luke uses the middle path of the Force to conquer both the Evil Emperor and Darth Vader. The more the left and right-hand paths try to win Luke, the more they fall prey to the side effects of using evil for personal gain.

As the modern human, Luke conquers the evil machine- like foes with help from his companions and develops two powerful “forces” that the machines cannot control: human freedom and love. In this way, Luke learns to “see through the eyes of machines.” He even sacrifices his human hand for denying his father’s attempt to win him over to the Dark Side of the machines.

In the end, Luke loves his father and witnesses the death of Darth Vader, Ahriman, before his very eyes. This is the same modern challenge that each of us faces: Who is your parent?

What do you choose: the physical world of machines or the middle path of the spirit, the Force?

A Beautiful Fairy Tale

Over the next two days, we built on our initial framework and polished the ideas to represent every possible perspective in our archetype science-fiction, prodigal-son story. The script was turning into a beautiful fairy tale that I was certain had merit, whether or not it ever made it to the “big screen.” I was very happy to work through these concepts, because I could see my own path to the spirit unfolding in the story. (Of course, Werner had known this would be part of my involvement!)

I also appreciated Marcia’s priority of effective story-telling. In our modern times, I have seen a decline of storytelling in our culture. This is dangerous, for as archetypal stories vanish, our imagination weakens as the source of inner nourishment and soul inspiration. Movies have taken the place of storytelling and actors have taken the place of the heroes and heroines found in all archetypal stories, whether myth, religion, legend, fairy tale, fable, or any other transcendental source. Yet, as we learned in developing Star Wars, if a story is not archetypal, it will not last the test of time. Successful to this day, a full 40 years after it was released, Star Wars has proven that to be true.

After our work was completed, I said good-bye to Marcia and wished her well with the movie. She thanked me and everyone else who had contributed their ideas to our marvelous fairy tale. I heard nothing more until 1977, when the movie was about to launch and generating a frenzied buildup of media attention.

I was working in the bookstore when Werner came in to tell me the news: Marcia and George Lucas were so happy with our help that they were offering all Waldorf schools in the U.S. a chance to show an advanced screening of the movie as a local fundraiser. This was a thrilling offer, because I knew

that a good deal of money could be raised. Yet, staying true to its practice of opposing TV, movies and technology in general, the Waldorf Institute politely declined the offer, to my deep disappointment. I finally saw the Trilogy, after waiting impatiently for all three installments, and was happy that it stayed true to the fairy-tale idea we had developed in our Waldorf think tank.

As I watched the movies, I realized that Star Wars had affected the paths of those of us involved in the project. Just as we had mapped out a path for Luke, we were all on a journey to our own destinies. The archetypes we built had done their work!

For example, by working through the philosophical concepts, I saw my own path to the spirit reflected in the story, as Werner knew it would – the process had further emboldened my own understanding of the study of Anthroposophy. Also, I remembered that Werner, who was like a scholarly father, had introduced me to Marcia as his “right hand,” while Luke Skywalker had sacrificed his own right hand in the battle with his father – both situations connected to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. As a “right hand” substitute for Werner in the project with Marcia, I grew into my leadership role as a teacher. So, too, with the substitution of his right hand, Luke acquired more masterful poise as a Jedi warrior who had successfully denied the Dark Side and became more in touch with the Force. George Lucas himself was on the path for his genius to be recognized with commercial and critical success. He would later open his famous Skywalker Ranch, which I think is a much better name than “Starkiller” Ranch, don’t you?

Yet, when his own right hand, Marcia Lucas, was symbolically severed in their 1983 divorce, he lost a part of the humanity that had been evident in the earlier movies, and some say lacking in the later versions of the Star Wars series.

For her part, Marcia Lucas would stand on stage to be ceremoniously honored, just like the characters in the ending of Star Wars. Looking tasteful and quietly elegant next to a glittery-gold presenter Farrah Fawcett at the 1977 Academy Awards, Marcia accepted an Oscar for best editing of a film that had started off as an unknown space opera and become a household name. At that ceremony, one of her editor colleagues would speak for her, and she would not have an opportunity to thank anyone publically, not even her husband. Had they given her a chance at the microphone, I imagine that Marcia perhaps might have thanked the Waldorf Institute, although the process of being involved in this influential project was, for me, its own reward.

In fact, later, when working with Producer Kathleen Kennedy during the writing of the Indiana Jones movies, I was quite aware of my participation in shaping small moments in the movies where true wisdom and light shine through the story. This is what I have tried to do in all of my writings: share the love for spirit that I try to live each day and to bring that spirit into the souls of everyone I have the privilege to meet or touch in some small way – even through a simple story that is the ubiquitous retelling of the original story, the return to spirit.

Just a few days ago, with all of the resurgence of Star Wars memories and the recent release of the latest installment in the series, I googled Marcia Lucas’ name and discovered that she and George had divorced in 1983. She had returned to using her maiden name, Marcia Griffin. When I had worked with her, I had no idea that she was one of the greatest film editors in the world, her skills having been regularly in demand by the top directors, including Scorsese and Coppola. I was delighted to learn about her Academy Award and believe she is an unsung heroine in the history of Star Wars.

After all, how often does a mortal human being create something eternal – a story that lasts forever? I leave you with a link to an article about Marcia Griffin that gives a beautiful picture of her contributions to the making of Star Wars:

<http://fd.noneinc.com/secrethistoryofstarwarscom/secrethistoryofstarwars.com/marcialucas.html>

Enjoy, and may the Force be with you!

Douglas and Tyla Gabriel are delighted to share this story with you as a part of the Our Spirit project, which is a new Inspiration and Imagination of Anthroposophy in our times. If you received this PDF from

a friend, thank them and return the blessing by freely sharing this paper with your spiritual friends and colleagues and Star Wars fans. These materials are available to readers who receive our newsletter from www.ourspirit.com.

The website includes video lectures on a variety of topics, including one from Douglas on the making of Star Wars, but more prominent in our works is the unveiling of Sophia. Video talks can be found in the section entitled [Our Spirit Talks](#).

We would also like to acknowledge our editor, Karen Dell Kinnison, who lovingly pours over our manuscripts, making sure that readers have a pleasurable experience reading what we write.

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February

He who walked the paths of Galilee
And the streets of Jerusalem
Is now among men
Over all the earth.
Though our eyes may not see Him,
He shares man's grief;
He suffers man's conflict,
He breathes man's Hope.
He seeks Disciples
Who trust what can be seen
When the Heart's Light opens.
May we receive from Him
The Life that sustains
Grace in the Soul.
May He speak in our consciousness
When we take up our work.
May He be our Shepherd
When in the hours of sleep
We move in the Spirit.

- **Adam Bittleston**



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