
President's Report

For the Sensory Awareness Foundation, as for most of the world, 2008 has been a year of great change. Not only have we moved, have a new address and phone number, and redesigned our website, changed newsletter editors, found a new printer and mailing service, but most importantly this year we also completed our first strategic plan. As a result of going through the strategic planning process SAF's Board is now energized with a much more focused vision of how to best effectively promote Sensory Awareness to a wider realm of people who could benefit from it. As I did in my last Report I'd like to share some more of this vision with you.

In response to many members' expressed wish to have ongoing Sensory Awareness classes in the region where they live, the SAF will be exploring sponsoring classes in the San Francisco Bay Area where there is a large concentration of both members and leaders. Leaders' Guild members will be invited to participate in offering sessions, and the Foundation will be responsible for renting space and promoting what is offered. It is our intention that, this be an experimental trial program to test if this, could be workable and viable, so that it could someday be repeated in other areas as well where we have many leaders.

The Board believes that it is highly important for the future of Sensory Awareness that we find ways to bring more approved leaders together, in order to help promote more dialogue between them and help clarify how the future of the work can best be supported. To get more leaders together is in fact one of the main reasons we put on conferences. We want very much to encourage more leaders to come to our next conference and because of this we have decided to create a special transportation expense fund to help lessen costs for leaders who must travel long distances. The exact details have yet to be worked out, but the Board is committed to see that this happens and has already set aside some money for it. Of course any donations to this effort would be most helpful and gratefully appreciated. Please contact me or Sara Gordon if you would like to contribute.

Part of my job as president is to put the leaders' class and workshop schedule together for the Newsletter. I must say that it has been reassuring and

gratifying as I have worked on this issue to see how much this work has spread and is spreading into the world.

Please remember to renew your membership for the new year. Doing so will help us in our efforts to support the continuing growth of this valuable practice.

Hoping you are well,

Richard Lowe

Memorial for Charlotte and Charles



Reza Fahang, Anna Shemin, Norman Fischer & Kate Skinner
Photo by Lee Klinger Lesser

In August on a hill overlooking the Pacific ocean where Charlotte Selver and her husband Charles lived for many years and where their ashes had been scattered, a loving and moving memorial event was held honoring the fifth year anniversary of Charlotte's passing. This site was a special place where both of them often liked to go to watch the sunset and experience the beautiful view and wildness there.

For this memorial two large river stones had been set into the earth, one for Charlotte and one for Charles. Each of their stones is inscribed with a short quotation from that person. Both quotations were taken from Reclaiming Vitality and Presence.

On this cloudy and windy day About 20 warmly dressed friends and students met for food and drink at Charlotte and Charles' former house now owned by Kathy and Norman Fischer. As sundown approached the group headed up to the

hill in back of the house where the stones had been laid. There group members arranged colorful flowers around the stones and amongst the shrubs nearby. On top of Charlotte's stone was a smoothed out basin in which a fragrant gardenia was set floating in tiny pool of water.

After many minutes of standing without speaking and taking in the waves and wind and seagull cries below messages from others far away who could not attend were read aloud. After this the group shared in the reading of many poems and even in the signing of a song.

As billows of fog tumbled softly up the hill from the ocean the group came one by one single file to each stone. There to pour a ladle full of water over the stone and/or to bow or otherwise honor Charlotte and Charles, each in his or her own way. Then as darkness approached everyone made their way down the hill and back inside Kathy and Norman's house and were treated to tea.

Thank you to all who participated, and special thanks to Norman and Kathy.

Reflections:

Seeing without thought, without the word, without the response of memory, is wholly different from seeing with thought and feeling. What you see with thought is superficial; then seeing is only partial; this is not seeing at all. Seeing without thought is total seeing. Seeing a cloud over a mountain, without thought and its responses, is the miracle of the new; it's not "beautiful," it's explosive in its immensity; it is something that has never been and never will be. ... It is the totality of life and not the fragment of all thought. There is no beauty but only a cloud over the mountain; it is creation.

Krishnamurti From Journal of August 1961

Natural life is the nourishing soil of the soul.

C.G. Jung, Collected Works

Mindfulness is at the root of Buddhism, Taoism, and many Native-American traditions, not to mention yoga. It's why Thoreau went to Walden Pond; it's what Emerson and Whitman wrote about in their essays and poems.

"Everyone agrees it's important to live in the moment, but the problem is how," says Ellen Langer, a psychologist at Harvard and author of *Mindlessness*. 'When people are not in the moment, they're not there to know that they're not there.' Overriding the distraction reflex and awakening to the present takes intentionality and practice.

The Art of Now, Psychology Today.
December, 2008

It's very economical. We start with our own senses, it's a completely organic process and there's nothing to learn, no need for a mantra or some discipline imposed from outside. Parmenides and Empedocles* spoke abouts *metis*, a quality of very fluid awareness which we all possess and is aware of everything that's going on without any effort. And what we approach here is common sense the real common sense, where by being aware through all our senses together we merge with the infinite stillness all around us. If you start to use your senses consciously you will come to perceive stillness in the middle of movement. Not by turning away from movement, because even to turn away from movement creates movement, but if you are really in the now there is total stillness. And that stillness has to be realized through the senses.

Peter Kingsly, *Common Sense*,
Parabola, Spring 2006

* *Greek Philosophers*
who taught around 2,000 B.C.

SAF Newsletter

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