



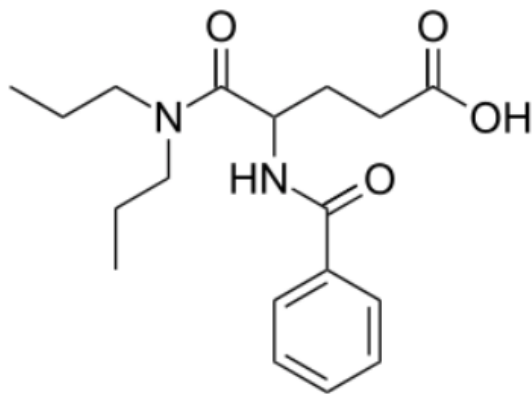
Anthroposophical Society PORTLAND BRANCH

Newsletter

April 2021

My Favorite Drug

By Walter Alexander



Editor's Note:

This essay first appeared in [The Southern Cross Review](#), a review of fiction, education, science, current events, essays, book reviews, poetry and Anthroposophy. We thank Walter for generously allowing us to reprint it here. A brief biography and information about his latest book follow the essay.

A 2019 Statista survey of nearly 2 thousand US voters found that only 72% agreed that vaccines should be mandated for children. A very similar percentage was announced in December 2020 in a KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor survey showing that 71% would "definitely or probably get a vaccine for COVID-19 if it was determined to be safe by scientists and available for free to everyone who wanted it." But surveying more recent reports online in 2021 quickly shows a range from 20% to nearly 50% for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. In the face of overwhelmingly unified statements in media stating that the scientific community unequivocally backs vaccine safety, what explains the substantial groups that remain as naysayers? A portion of these are minorities still stung by histories of having been abused, neglected or both by medical communities, but not all. Many are front-line workers in nursing homes and hospitals. The most recent poll, from early March 2021, found that more than 40% of Republicans were not planning on being vaccinated against COVID-19.

One standard answer: anti-vaxxer irrationality backed by shoddy research spread through social media by irresponsible, rogue scientists and others wishing to profit from creating public doubt. Again, why is it that whacky conspiracy theories and alternative universe pseudo-science are seducing people away from sane scientific certainty? Why are so many making or considering choices that threaten to block entrance to the promised land of herd immunity for the entire nation?

Our vaunted objective science, the one that has brought us countless marvels in medicine, industry, and technology, has roots in Sir Francis Bacon's (1561-1626) efforts to clean up the "quest for knowledge." His solution to the vulnerability of human thinking to error was to expunge unreliable elements. He rejected anything derived from past authorities (e.g., Galen, Aristotle), superstitions, and personal preferences, while voicing confidence only in that which can be measured and counted. John Locke (1632-1704), soon after, differentiated between an object's subjective qualities, those dependent on the senses of the person perceiving them (color, smell, taste and sound), and objective ones inherent to the object itself, (solidity, extension, motion, number and shape). Only the objective ones qualify for scientific inquiry.

The results were impressive, and the venture progressed rapidly along a path toward portraying all phenomena as interactions of particles and electro-chemical forces. It established a paradigm that depicted the human body as a very complicated machine. Last traces of Aristotle's assertion that a vital principle differentiated the living from the non-living persisted, before falling under the wheels of the juggernaut, late into the 19th century.

Watson and Crick's Nobel Prize winning identification of the DNA double-helix at the core of the living cell can be seen as an endpoint to this project. The genetic code in that spiraling DNA was billed as the master controller of biologic form and functioning. But Francis Crick didn't stop there, and he took, as his next grand project, the investigation of consciousness. His research led him to proclaim (condensed here): "You, your joys and sorrows...[and] your sense of personal identity are in fact no more than... a pack of neurons." He was, in essence, declaring "the self" to be nothing more than an epiphenomenon—a shadowy sideshow that appears on stage but does not really cause anything. The neurons, biological compound molecules, and their electro-chemical charges are what's real, and their configurations are the result of nature's random, natural selection processes. Crick's line of thought was carried further

by prominent German neurophysiologist, Wolf Singer (b. 1943) who declared emphatically that we humans should avoid talking about the virtues of personalities because "...We are determined by circuits" and should therefore rather celebrate "...cognitive achievements of human brains." This Crick-Wolf line of thought, one that has been taken up widely in the scientific community, says that matter and energy are everything.

Around 1610, when that line of thought was first getting up on legs, older lines were still quite strong for some, and poet (and later Anglican priest) John Donne described reason as "God's viceroy in us." Reason and faith had not yet fully gone their divergent ways. It may seem ironic that what started out as an effort to make thinking more rigorous and true in the service of science by casting out unreliable human tendencies--ended up trivializing the knowledge quest itself by calling it nothing more than an electro-chemical process impelled by survival-of-the-fittest à la Darwin.

So, the entire universe is just atomic particles and energy. But what if it isn't? What if throwing ourselves out the door is a sacrifice too far? In the Old Testament story, when Abraham, at God's command, is about to sacrifice Isaac, his first born, he is stopped by the angel of the Lord calling out his name and telling him to substitute a ram for Isaac. But who or what will stop this expulsion of our very selves from the prevailing conception of the universe—which is, after all, our home?

Here comes my favorite drug to the rescue—after a brief word about the one thing that neither Bacon nor Locke thought of excluding from the scientific pursuit of knowledge: cash. Everyone knows that it takes money to do science, and everyone knows about the corrupting influence of the promise of profit. In the 16-17th centuries, however, that hadn't surfaced as an issue. In our time, on the medical side of science, we have the NIH, the CDC and the FDA—all of which are charged with monitoring and protecting the population's health, and for keeping the data needed for addressing health challenges free of corrupting influences. No small feat given that a huge percentage of the clinical data used for evaluating drugs and medical devices is coming from a pharmaceutical industry led by CEOs who are, in turn, governed by a legally enshrined obligation to satisfy shareholders first and foremost.

Beyond whatever vigilance these federal agencies may maintain, there has been an organization that for the last 28 years has taken upon itself the task of rating the scientific validity of the clinical trials that guide drug approvals and healthcare advances. Originally known as the Cochrane Collaboration (now just as "Cochrane"), it is a non-profit corporation, self-described on its website by the statement: "...internationally recognized as the

benchmark for high-quality information about the effectiveness of health care." Its mission is "to promote evidence-informed health decision-making by producing high-quality, relevant, accessible systematic reviews..."

Are their systematic reviews inoculated against the corrupting influence of cash? The Cochrane policy on conflicts of interest, spelled out clearly in about three thousand words on their website, I found to be surprising. When I was doing background research for a piece on vaccine safety, I looked into the list of reviewers on a journal article (Drolet, et al., The Lancet 2019) assessing overall

HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccine efficacy in clinical trials. I did a quick count of the number of reviewers who had, as required, disclosed their potential conflicts of interest. Out of forty-six reviewers, twenty-three had declared conflicts of one kind or another— which led me to look into the Cochrane policy on review authors and found it to state: "there must be a majority of non-conflicted authors for any particular review." Pretty close. More recently, after I described this policy to a nephew who was trying to piece out

In the Old Testament story, when Abraham, at God's command, is about to sacrifice Isaac, his first born, he is stopped by the angel of the Lord calling out his name and telling him to substitute a ram for Isaac. But who or what will stop this expulsion of our very selves from the prevailing conception of the universe—which is, after all, our home?

mRNA vaccine safety for himself and his family, he did his own online research. He informed me of a recent change in Cochrane policy as of 2020 stated as follows: "The proportion of conflict free authors in a team will increase from a simple majority to a proportion of 66% or more." Only a third? How important is that 34% with conflicts of interest? Most of the conflicts are on the inconsequential side, trivial in the grand scheme of things. After all, to be invited as a reviewer of a particular clinical trial, you have to be a highly trained clinician or researcher with some expertise in the relevant field, no? Not some amateur easily swayed by subconscious motives.

And with subconscious motives, now we're really on the trail of my favorite drug—which necessitates a bit more history, this time on the placebo effect.

The initial work on placebos (pills containing only sugar or the like, or fake procedures) reflects a degree of embarrassment at the phenomenon. The expression "It's all in your head" captures the mood. Why? Because placebo effects were seen as implying mental weakness and suggestibility. Placebos were described in a Journal of the Medical Association article back in the mid-1950's as useful tools for "harassed doctors dealing with the neurotic patient." Not only were placebo effects found to be common in research experiments, they were strong, often in the 30% range—making it difficult for "real" drugs being compared to them to look good. Recent research at Harvard, one of the hubs of placebo research, showed that when patients were given a placebo and told that they were given a placebo with no real therapeutic value, they still reported feeling better than those getting nothing at all!

Only gradually with the appearance of natural medicine/natural food movements has the term “mind-body” overtaken dismissive characterizations. Placebo effects are now a respectable field of research. Their vast implications, however, which encompass everything from the physician’s tone of voice to the wallpaper in her/his office, are insufficiently taken into account. At the mega-multi-billion dollar banquets of clinical research and clinical practice, placebo effects still sit at the kid’s table.

The reason is clear: our scientific/medical model is a “reductionist” one. Crick’s “you’re only a pack of neurons,” along with the dissing of placebo effects, were both firmly in tune with that model. That model’s suggestion of strict genetic determinism hasn’t held up as well as expected. The Human Genome Project found 30,000 human genes, barely more than the 26,000 in worms, and paltry compared to the 39,000 in water fleas and 50,000 in rice. The notion of a typewriter-like conveying of instructions for assembling proteins upward from the DNA in the cell nucleus has been supplanted by a growing recognition of epigenetic factors (epigenetics: the study of the interplay between environment, behavior and gene expression) coming to the fore and revealing numerous complex interrelationships within the minute space of the cell nucleus. To the question “If genes aren’t the master controllers at the core of the cell, what the hell are they?” responses have included a range of metaphors from “database” to “tool shed” to “pantry” to “seeds,” with the processes and their interactions depicted sometimes as “a dance.” You would be fully justified to wonder, “Who, or what is doing all of this?”

So how would a new model look?

But first, as promised, our favorite drug: proglumide. Proglumide is an old drug first approved by the FDA around forty years ago. It still has a role with opioid analgesics, pain killers—with an extremely distinctive feature: it only works if you know you’ve gotten it. Let’s say you’ve undergone a surgical procedure and you’re in the recovery room with an intravenous (iv) line hooked up to a bag on a pole you can’t see. You rate your severe post-surgical pain high as an “8” out of a possible “10.” What would your likely pain rating be if the nurse secretly adds a bag of saline solution (a placebo) to your iv line? Or a bag with proglumide? The surprising answer: the same 8 for both; just as you’d expect with an unannounced placebo, also zilch with the secretly given drug. What if the nurse says “I’m giving you pain medicine”? You’re likely then to rate your pain with placebo at 6 (30% or so) and a much greater reduction, let’s say 2, with proglumide. What’s going on? Morphine works whether you know you’ve been given it or not and placebo effects have nothing to do with the substance you’re given. Proglumide, though, is a drug with specific effects

occurring through what’s termed “expectation pathways” in the brain. These are chemical effects on pain receptors that have to be stimulated by an event in consciousness with understanding. Someone tells you, you hear it and get what the words mean. That’s the really important, unique feature.

That understanding to Crick, theorizing out of the old model, was a nothing, an epiphenomenon, an insignificant brain fart—a byproduct of the functioning of the organism that’s noticeable but hardly noteworthy. Crick, I’d bet, didn’t know about proglumide.

There’s more. Einstein, too, was struck by this same understanding thingamabob. He wrote in *Physics and Reality*, “The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility.” His model, too, was one of matter and forces. And that led him to very serious

indigestion when other pioneering physicists, like Niels Bohr, brought another element into explanations for the mystifying features of quantum mechanics which was upsetting what we can call the classical Newtonian “billiard ball physics” of predictable interactions between matter and energy.

What was so unsettling? The discovery that light can manifest as both wave and particle, that in the atom, energy is distributed in a non-continuous “quantized” manner, and that in the quantum world, strange-seeming phenomena appear both theoretically and in actual repeatedly verified observations. For example, with quantum nonlocality and entanglement,

objects seem instantaneously to know about each other’s state, even when separated by large distances. Widely separated entangled photons, while rushing away from each other at light’s stupendous speed, remain connected so that a nudge to one is instantaneously mirrored by a change in the other. And, there’s Schrodinger’s theoretical cat in a box, both dead and alive until someone checks in on it—embodying the notion, so stupendously radical, that in the subatomic world, things may exist in many potential states at once. They only precipitate out as a specific one—when they are measured. This notion, articulated by Bohr, horrified Einstein (“You’re telling me that if I’m not looking at the moon, it isn’t there?”).

In many widely held interpretations of quantum reality, this is still central—the notion that conscious measurement locks the options of potential reality down to the specific world we experience. Measurement requires an understanding consciousness—a someone with an ability to hold the ruler and take a look and notice. A scientist, for example.

So, when a tree falls in the forest, is there a sound...? The old conundrum. True, there are processes that unfold in the forest without consciousness. But then (and here we ask Dr. Einstein to take a seat and listen), then there’s no there there. Animals

Placebo effects are now a respectable field of research. Their vast implications, however, which encompass everything from the physician’s tone of voice to the wallpaper in her/his office, are insufficiently taken into account. At the mega- multi-billion dollar banquets of clinical research and clinical practice, placebo effects still sit at the kid’s table.

surely have awareness and experiences. But when you point to something with your finger, your dog looks at your finger, not where you're pointing. For there to be a "there," you need a here with a someone with a particular kind of consciousness—one that recognizes concepts as concepts. Homo sapiens: wise human or rational human or thinking human. Yes, higher animals exhibit all kinds of marvelous understandings—but they don't constate things and publish, they don't hand out certificates, they don't require and issue licenses (or give out parking tickets).

And here we are, having been stuck with a science that has been, like a plane nosediving into the ocean, hellbent toward exterminating the basis for its own existence—the understanding capacity of the scientist, and the understanding, itself. The fool's errand of claiming that understanding is a mechanical process was a great gift, because it exposes the fallacy. Mechanical process? Ask any parent. Ask any teacher. The reality of experience defies "billiard ball" physics. You can't explain understanding without using it; you can't explain experience without using it. These are primary. They are not made of parts. You need certain parts to have them (a body, a brain, a mind), but understanding and experience—they aren't made of those parts. Abstract theories to the contrary dissolve in the fluid heat of honest thinking.

So, if we stop fighting this "right in front of your nose" fact, is that the end of science? Are we condemned to ouija boards and interpreting the form of sacrificed animal entrails to look for truth and make predictions? No. But science has to open its borders. It has to, in a sense--grow up.

Grow up? Yes. An analogous history can be traced in biology. After getting rid of the vital principle, the reductionists' next target was purpose. Soon, Darwin's random natural selection picture of evolution became entrenched and mandatory, and attributing purpose other than survival to beings or things in nature became a strictly enforced taboo. Those who strayed invited scathing accusations of anthropomorphizing, of projecting human subjective traits onto objective phenomena. Wouldn't a bright red cardinal have better survival odds with a camo pattern on its feathers? No, because then the less flamboyant female wouldn't be attracted to his blazing redness—and then he would perish without passing on his genes--or some such formulation. We have long been subjected to the contortions of biologists mashing and shoehorning all their observations toward the same dreary task: explain how this feature or that serves survival. Well, exasperation could dryly state that a stone perched out in infinite space survives just fine. Why bother with all this blooming diversity?

A different idea is, shall we say with hope, ascendant. Open

systems biology focuses on the interrelationships of organisms within their environment. Some open systems biologists are not hide-bound to a Lego science of parts and causation from below. They look at--well--at systems, and recognize a hierarchy of them in living organisms. You can pass across levels upward or downward, from atoms to molecules to macromolecules to organelles to cells to organs to organ systems and then to organisms. Interrelationships make systems more than the sum of their parts at each level. Also, as you ascend levels, you see that entirely new primary phenomena emerge, phenomena that are not in the least predictable from the assortment of parts in the level below. In going from the atomic level of elements where

you have hydrogen and oxygen as parts, there's no predicting water as a result of their combination. The parts, the two gases, disappear when the new phenomenon of water emerges. No one takes a sip and says, "this water is a little light on hydrogen." At the moment you die, your body descends from a level where laws pertaining to life processes and rhythms (respiration, circulation, digestion, reproduction, etc.) are operant and prevail, to one where mineral laws of chemical accretion and decomposition prevail. Each level has its own

features and laws, and while there are interactions within and between levels, the higher level organizes the lower, orders the interactions of the parts that it needs. Pioneering cell biologist Paul A. Weiss, PhD (d.1989), a recipient of the National Medal of Science who established principles of cellular self-organization, declared that in a biological system "the structure of the whole coordinates the play of the parts; in the machine the operation of the parts determine the outcome." But even if we look at our automobiles with their roughly 30,000 parts, we see that while the parts make up organ-like subsystems--the engine, the drive train, steering, braking, fueling, cooling, seating and so on--the principle that unites those subsystems and makes a whole out of them is the car concept, itself, and its utility. Yes, this sounds like a return to Aristotle's formal cause.

When Dr. Einstein complained about the moon's needing his consciousness to be there, he was speaking out of an ordinary picturing of the moon out in the space of a cosmos populated only by stuff and energy. But where was his genius? Not the primal relationships ($E=mc^2$), but his gift for grasping and communicating them? It was, for certain, nowhere to be found in the equation. That's the glory of our ability to think abstractly. Through it, we fulfill the Bacon/Locke aim of removing ourselves to achieve a purified and strengthened thinking. But in doing so we forget--forget the fact that it is we who are doing so, doing the thinking. It's the baby with the bathwater thing. And that's how we ended up being surprised by proglumide and by its clear message, and by the guy in a white coat who wants to celebrate "the achievements of human brains." While understanding has correlates in the brain that light up on PET scans, and what's

So, if we stop fighting this "right in front of your nose" fact, is that the end of science? Are we condemned to ouija boards and interpreting the form of sacrificed animal entrails to look for truth and make predictions? No. But science has to open its borders. It has to, in a sense--grow up.

going on in the brain can impact the body, the experience of understanding is at least as much a part of the world as the neurons, and has enormously greater power to affect the outer world. We noticed proglumide's little quirk and wrote it down in Wikipedia, but lost in our fascination with our multi-part cars and computers, drove right past its broad implication--that human consciousness and the drive toward understanding are fundamental to the world's and our own evolving.

Our arrival at the evolutionary stage where we gained the ability to think abstractly, to step outside the world for a moment and concoct theories, is a morally fraught one. It may be no coincidence that in the same era that we have begun to unleash the power of the atom, we are also gaining glimpses into the role that human relationships play in health and illness. That as we are just starting to unravel the complex codes of biological life, we're also confronted with the terrible cost to the earth and our human communities of uncontrolled technologies and short-sighted, short-term economic gain. Vandana Shiva, Indian physicist, multi-activist, feminist and vocal opponent of commercializing water and patenting of seeds, did her PhD thesis on quantum theory, on non-separability and on non-locality. She explained in a video interview (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fG17oEsQiEw>) with Bill Moyers: [condensed/paraphrased] "That basically means that everything is connected. The industrial revolution and the scientific revolution gave us a very mechanistic idea of the universe. First we are told that nature is dead...that everything is this hard matter. [That idea] ...is still guiding a lot of science. Genetic engineering is based on that hard matter, genes in isolation, genes determining everything. There's a master molecule that gives orders--old patriarchal stuff [Moyers laughs]. The real science is the science of interconnectedness, of non-separation, that everything is related." When Moyers challenged her saying that economic globalization is said to offer high levels of interconnectedness, she replied, "This is not interconnectedness at an ecological level. It's extremely artificial corporate rule on a planetary scale."

I was impressed, that like me, Dr. Shiva connects the dots, linking quantum phenomena to a needed revolution in thinking. "All that's flowing around is commodities that don't really have to be moving. You load the ships from China going here with cheap consumer products for Walmart made by slave labor. The transformation of the earth into commodities that flow leads to disconnection. This interconnectedness of the world through greed excludes people, kills their humanity, and leads to human divisions and a rise in conflict of every kind. What we see is a drop in the sense of common humanity and global consciousness. It's still the old billiard ball model of separate particles."

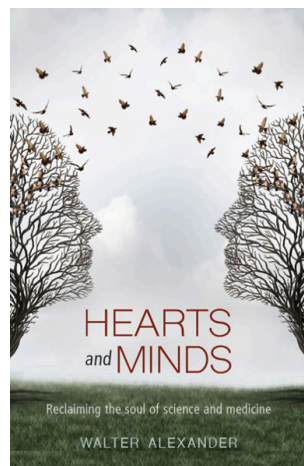
And there are more dots to connect--tying in our favorite drug that needs human understanding to be activated, and the systems biology of layered levels of laws, separate and interconnected, with the whole playing the tune so the parts can dance together.

Let's detour back to COVID-19 and those so-called vaccine-hesitant anti-science types. There's a natural conflict underlying the dilemma they pose. It's the conflict between the notion that public health messaging must be simple and consistent to be effective and the principle that the bedrock of real government credibility and public trust is open public debate. Have you noticed

the complete lack of public debate on the COVID-19 vaccines? Virologists who can speak ordinary language weighing the issues out in the open? Experts debating mRNA vaccine safety, frequency of side effects, rates of mortality and morbidity, testing and reporting reliability--with fact checkers on hand? Believe me, they're out there from all sides, dripping with MDs, PhDs, and MPHs. But the major media outlets and the powers behind them have made a firm decision, either tacitly and non-coordinated or outright conspiratorial, that "speaking openly equals death." And that justifies brutally assaulting the messengers before they can even open their mouths. You end up having warring cults, with reason a mere slave to ideology. Don't you know that the hordes charging up the Capitol steps thought they were saving the nation? How that detachment from fact occurred is the deeper challenge for the nation's healers at all levels. More people than you might think, whose lives and livelihoods have brought them into proximity with the wielders of outsized power, worry that despite the nice talking heads, objectivity in the media has been drained away. More people than you think, suspecting that the airwaves are owned by people selling a story, wish they had a place to turn to for unvarnished truth. The thought may well arise: Theoretically, it's possible that peak profitability and true compassion are flowing out of the same spigot, but it's also possible, when you follow the money, you'll see that it's insider trading on a massive scale, with saving the world as the sideshow. Whether those with the most control are deceivers or simply deluded hardly matters.

The dictum is: "Never waste a crisis." Who will this one end up serving? The messages here tear at the old firewalls between inner and outer worlds. In the public arena, the doors between fact and fiction have been blown off their hinges, while the pandemic still rages and the death toll mounts. Winning back shattered trust is a hard journey, but it's the good journey. Forget the old normal. We need a new one recentered on the kind of healthy understanding that replaces despoilers and opportunists with citizens and guardians.

The question sits out there with startling clarity: Does achieving herd immunity more quickly justify enforcing herd mentality? Recent events and knowing the mindset that got us here say no.



Walter Alexander's career path has led from writing fiction to teaching high school English (public and Waldorf) and then to a long stretch of freelance medical journalism. He has been an active member of ASNYC (the New York City branch of the Anthroposophical Society) for many years.

His book, *Hearts and Minds (Reclaiming the soul of science and medicine)* was published by

Lindisfarne Books late in 2019 (heartsmindsoul.com).

The Portland Branch Newsletter is published monthly to serve Branch members and friends. To learn more about the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society, contact Diane Ramage at 971-271-7479.

To submit an article or a calendar item email it to Christopher Guilfoil: c.guilfoil@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is the 20th of the month preceding publication. Items selected for publication may be edited for style, content and length.

To sign up for our newsletter/email list go to: www.portlandbranch.org and click on the button at the top of the right hand column on the home page.

Our current newsletter team: Editor, design, layout, and illustrations: Christopher Guilfoil; Proofreading: Valerie Hope, Wes Burch, Ellen Walljasper; Printing and distribution: Jerry Soloway; Webmaster Angelica Hesse; Treasurer: James Knight

The Portland Branch thanks the following Members & Friends for their Dues and Generous Donations in 2021:

Wendy Fisher, Rachel Masterson, Mihoko Lunsford, Diane Ramage, James Knight, Cheri Munske, Nancy Pierce, Walter Rice, Susan Rice, Virginia Berg, Kim Sinclair, Amanda Eastman, Cheryl Fisher, Mark Hope, Valerie Hope, Lois (Tish) Johnson, Robin Lieberman, Robin O'Brien, Diane Rowley, Jerome Soloway, Rebecca Soloway, Elizabeth Webber

Your 2021 dues will be gratefully received:

Thank you for helping to make our lively community life possible. A typical contribution is \$50, but no amount is too large or too small. You can send a check to The Portland Branch, c/o Valerie Hope 2606 SE 58th Ave., Portland, OR 97206. Or, until our new website is up, you can donate directly to our Paypal account:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=E2YN82E8RP4XG

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the following who generously provide spaces for our many activities: Dr. Joan and John Takacs for their long-standing donation of Bothmer Hall; the Portland Waldorf School; and the Cedarwood School.



Articles represent the views of the authors, not necessarily those of the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society.

Calendar of the Soul

Week 1 Easter Mood

When from the world's wide realms
The sun speaks to the human mind,
And joy from depths of soul
Unites with light in gazing,
Then thoughts from selfhood's sheath
Stream into far spread spaces,
And dimly bind
Man's being to the Spirit's life.

Week 2

Into the outer world of sense
Thought power its own nature loses;
Once again their offspring, man,
Who needs must find his source in them
Yet fruit of soul
Within himself.

Week 3

To the universal All there speaks,
Itself forgetting
And mindful of its primal state,
The growing I of man:
'In you my self releasing
From fetters of my selfhood
I find the ground of my true being'

Week 4

'I sense true being of my being',
So feeling speaks to me,
Which in the sun-illumin'd world
Unites with floods of light.
This feeling would give warmth
To thinking's clarity,
And firmly bind in one
Both man and world together.

From the Portland Branch Council



Our Story of Preparing More Space for Anthroposophy

Friends,

A feeling of deep gratitude for one another, and for all that each one has generously contributed has been warming both the space and our hearts! Teams of members have been hard at work since the middle of March, bringing their talents, with enthusiasm, grit and grace, to the work of preparing new space in the world for Anthroposophy. The church gave us the go-ahead to make it our own – and so we are!



Mark Hope has served as project manager, a big job in itself, and has also been involved with much of the work. One of his first acts was to install a keypad on the door leading into our space. Rick Knudson and Mark

worked long hours together to repair water damaged walls under windows, and walls from which they removed glued-on cork board.

Then began the priming and painting of the walls, while Lisa Jones was hard at work in the Hope's garage sanding, priming and painting cabinet doors and drawers.

Walter and Susan Rice joined the party, Lazure brushes and colors in hand, to transform the three prepared walls that don't have bookshelves on them.

Pablo Feliz generously shared his brief window of availability during spring break to remove the existing counter, bring it all up to adult height, and install a new sink and faucet.

Amazingly, Christine Badura offered her tiling artistry for creating the backsplash behind the new countertop. She and Walter and Susan have gone so far as to coordinate tile colors with Lazure colors.

Meanwhile James Knight, displaying a talent for procurement that we hadn't previously been aware of, scoured the internet to score, used and at a fraction of the retail price, the very bookshelves we had selected at Ikea.

Yesterday (the Saturday before Palm Sunday) the bookshelves went up, and major unboxing and organizing of the books began. The group made up of Sandra Burch, Lisa Jones, Donna Patterson-



Kellum and Pamela Rico were just the right people for the job. As we worked with the books we had an experience much like the one we had when surrounded with the books while entering them into the catalog. A kind of elevation, a joy

and enthusiasm infused our hearts as we read each intriguing title and description and moved it into its place.

And already yesterday Pamela Rico brought with her to the book organizing a set of glasses, dish towels, dish drainer, sponges, soap and a commitment to pick up and clean the towels. She even provided mesh bags to collect them in.

We are working toward a **GRAND OPENING** on **APRIL 24**, which will also serve as our Annual Gathering. A major focus will be to form small groups so that, while we are together in the space, we can envision how it can be used to serve Anthroposophy. It will be so good to be together in person again – "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20) Stay tuned for an email with more details.

On another front of newness, Sara Genta has been continuing her work building a new Branch website – as you may have previously read, our old one is not so functional any more, but if you go to www.portlandbranch.org you can get a last look. She is now aiming for the website grand opening in May.

Given the way the new site will work, the format for the newsletter will also change, becoming much like those sent out by the American Society, the Goetheanum and many other groups – with an image, brief lead-in, and click-through to the full essay or other information piece. This allows it to be read on cell phones, and if you are like me, able to be printed out - just exactly what you most want to read and take in deeply.

If you would like to offer 2021 Membership Dues, or donate to the Branch and the space, you can currently do so at https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=E2YN82E8RP4XG

Respectfully submitted for the Portland Branch Council,
Valerie Hope

Easter, The Festival of Resurrection

by Valerie Hope

Dear Friends,

Those of us who were surrounded by stacks of Anthroposophical books and journals as we entered titles into the catalog for the new library found ourselves enthusiastic, energized, and interested in what we were seeing! The challenge was to keep to the task at hand and not just dive into each piece we picked up.

Still, treasures were uncovered. I was particularly intrigued by an address¹ that had been given by Emil Bock, one of the priest founders of the Christian Community in 1921. In it he proposed that, *It is of spiritual-historical significance that in our circles the continuing remembrance of the dead finds a culmination in the days when we also recall the death of Christ on Golgotha.*

Since I have helped to organize the November All Souls observance in our community for several years, my curiosity, as you may imagine, was aroused. Why a *culmination* at Easter of the continuing remembrance of the dead?

As he concludes his address, Bock notes that Rudolf Steiner has on occasion taken a position against the old customs of memorial days for the dead, the commemoration in November of All Souls Day – as those who have died need the continuous companionship throughout the year of those of us here on the earth. Bock speculates that the old memorial days for the dead may be nothing more than remnants of the pre-Christian festival traditions. He suggests that there is a good reason to commemorate the Death of Christ and remember the dead in a special way during Holy Week. In doing so we could strive to experience a soul mood in which we could experience the death of Christ as *...an ever-present, vast universal mystery* – not just an event that took place more than 2,000 years ago.

In trying to penetrate Bock's meaning here I consulted with Rev.

Sanford Miller, to find out if there is any special activity at Easter relative to the dead in the Christian Community. He said that there is not, and suggested that I look at what Steiner had to say about what Christ accomplished for all of us – for all of creation – when he descended into hell on Holy Saturday, known as the harrowing of hell. With this an imagination began to percolate.

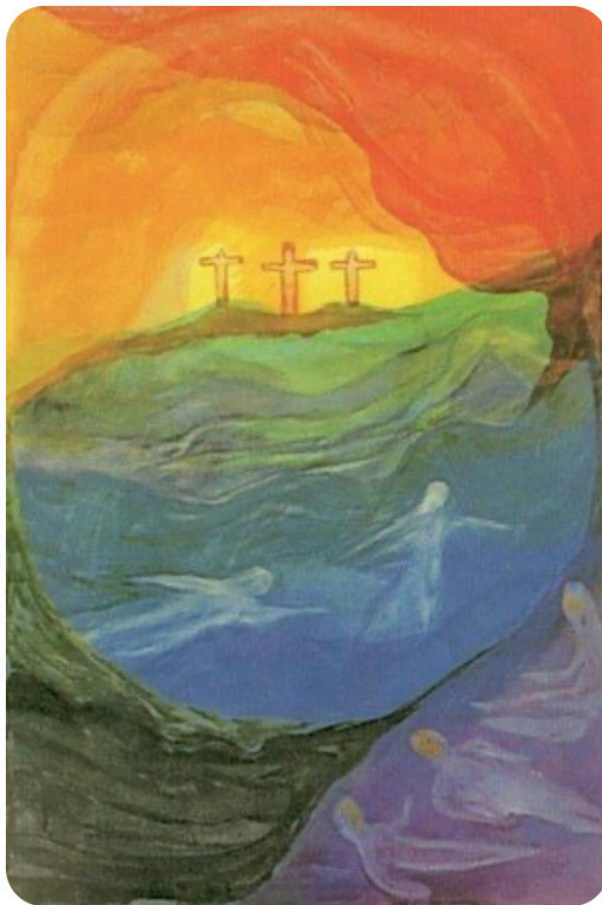
So I went exploring. Rudolf Steiner tells us that as ancient Atlanteans "we still entered the spiritual worlds with full consciousness at death, but this was gradually lost, until the Greeks were very afraid of the realm of the *shades*."² So this was our condition, our perspective before the deed of the Christ, the Mystery of Golgotha. Ergo the Greek saying, "Better to be a beggar in the upper world than a king in the realm of the shades."

Evelyn Francis Capel (the first woman in Britain to be ordained within the Christian Community) describes the change wrought by the Christ for us in this almost poetic way: *At the time when the Spirit of Christ passed into the region of death, the souls of men and women who had died had come into a tragic state. In the early ages of Mankind's history, when human souls were still so near to the Divine World that they could throughout their lifetime*

recollect their existence before birth, they had returned to their homeland of the Spirit at death. As the world of earth became in time much more separated from the Heavens and the souls forgot their place of origin, the return became more difficult. Instead of entering the community of the spiritual beings and dwelling in the many mansions of the starry spheres, they were imprisoned in the region where the pictures of the past life on earth surround those who have died. They found themselves in a land of shades, where they were aware of being only the shadows of their former selves. Hades, or Hell, was the old name for the realm of shadows where the souls met the tragic experience of death.

When Christ died, He came to the imprisoned souls of the dead and, having overthrown the prince of death, He wrought a transformation in their existence. He released them from the land of shades and gave them the strength to go on into the worlds of the Father. There they could

find the experience of the universe, out of which their being had been born at the beginning of creation, and the healing of the infirmities caused by the sickness of sin. Since then, Christ has become the guide of human souls on the journey between this and the other world. He takes them into His care and goes with them to the dark Gate of Death, showing them the light shining from the other side, leading them out into the eternal realms of



Easter Watercolor by Rudolf Steiner

*the Father...By His descent into Hell, Christ changed the destiny of the souls of the dead.*³

In an essay on Holy Saturday Bock describes the deed of the Christ in the underworld on our behalf in this way: *While on Earth the dark Sabbath of the grave prevails, in the realm of the dead the Sun rises. This is the meaning of Christ's Descent into Hell. In the kingdom of the departed a glimmer of hope lit up. The spell of death was loosened, and the prospect opened towards a future victory of the human soul over the spell of the underworld.*

While it was still Holy Saturday on Earth, it was already Easter in the Kingdom of the Dead.

Rudolf Steiner describes the results for us in this way: *A new substance was created through the Mystery of Golgotha that could give consciousness to men when they were in the spiritual world after death. This substance flowed out of the Mystery of Golgotha. A man can develop consciousness in the spiritual world after death through an immersion in this Christ substance. That's why every evening when we go to sleep and into the spiritual world we should remind ourselves of this and permeate ourselves with the feeling: We die in Christ. – For only the Christ impulse can keep us conscious in the spiritual world after death through its death- overcoming vital force.*⁴

Immersing myself in the richness of these ideas brought me to the point of wondering whether the 'so-called' dead, and maybe the angelic hierarchies, engage in a joyous celebration each Easter, one that we here on earth can join in with, celebrating this magnificent deed of the Christ which rescued us as spiritual beings. Could this be what Bock was pointing to? I am trying to pay attention, and to see how I might participate. As with many others over time, I am sure this is not the last that I have seen of this topic now that it has come to my attention.

(As an aside) Bock notes in his address that *It is not to be taken as something merely external that certain individuals have passed across the threshold in March, during the time of the approach of Good Friday.* He recounts that Rudolf Steiner had pointed to these relationships, certain personalities for whom it appears to be meaningful and willed by destiny that they died at this time of year. April 3 is the date of Jesus Christ's death; Raphael was born and died on Good Friday, and Thomas Aquinas, Goethe, Novalis, Beethoven and Steiner are among those who crossed in March.

¹ This address to members of the Society in Stuttgart was reprinted in News from Anthroposophical Work in Germany in 1964, and again where I found it in the Spring, 1983 Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in America. There is no indication of the date of the address by Bock.

² From the contents of *Esoteric Classes*, Rudolf Steiner

³ *The Christian Year* by Evelyn Francis Capel

⁴ From the contents of *Esoteric Classes*, Rudolf Steiner

In the Mood of Easter's Light...

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

~Henri Nouwen

Which musician, for example, would call himself a pianist, who does not know the piano and how to play it? He has to have a thorough command of his instrument in order to play it so that what he plays is really *music* and not merely technique. Thus one can develop science from an ability into an art when one does not only know the instrument with which one practices science, thinking, but also masters it. By 'mastering' is not meant 'controlling', but being able to play the instrument from the inside out and experiencing it thoroughly. Only then can science become more than technique and at the same time no unclear, mystical, unaware affair. We maintain our clear, scientific state of mind; indeed, it is precisely *that* which we employ to make what is unaware aware.

~ Dr. Mieke Mossmuller

Among the many tasks which Anthroposophy already has, this will be one of the most important: to help the time of transition to be passed quickly as possible, to bring to a good conclusion the age of a dying civilization and move toward the epoch of light that is striving to form itself anew.

~ Dr. Ita Wegman

Urban Biodynamic Gardening with Sandra Burch

Matter and Spirit

Here we are starting on the fourth month of the year - April. We have already welcomed Spring with the Equinox in March. A year ago we were getting used to saying the word coronavirus and wondering what the future would bring. Who would have thought that something invisible to the human eye, could change our lives so thoroughly?

What have I learned in this past year? Very small particles can have large effects. Very simple actions can bring balance back to the tilted, topsy turvy world. I can't count how many times going outside and looking up at the sky, breathing in the greenness of leaves, the generous flower colors, set me back on track.

As we enter the second year of covid (aack, you know how much I hate to have to write that!), what can we do? How about we set up a celebration of the ethereal, imperceptible world? Why should a virus get all the attention? Much that we do with biodynamic preps also comes under the category of unseen. Most of us do not have the instruments developed, yet, to perceive what exactly is going on when we stir and sprinkle a prep on our garden soil or in our yard.

We can throw a party! Outdoors, with a bucket of water, BD#500 and a long stick! Stirring and remembering that the invisible world is with us!

Dr. Steiner gave this verse to help us:

Apply the Ancient Principle:

Spirit never without matter,

Matter never without Spirit!

These words from Rudolf Steiner give us biodynamics in a nutshell. Hmm: where did the word Spirit come in? Another word for the unseen world, yup. Here is the fleshing out of those potent words:

Strive for the truly practical in material life.

But strive for it in a such a way,

that it does not dull your sensitivity

to the Spirit which is working within it.

Strive for the Spirit.

But strive for it not out of supersensible desire,

not out of supersensible egotism.

But strive for it because you wish to become selfless

in practical life,

in the material world.



The Cow Christopher Guilfoil

April is a great time to get BD#500 onto your garden soil. Or give your whole yard a boost with a sprinkling of BD#500. Remember you can order all the preps from the Oregon BD Group: <https://www.oregonbd.org/>. When we use BD#500 to enliven the soil organisms we are taking practical action to nurture the earth with a substance that involves unseen beings and processes. Biodynamics gives us the way to do both - live on the earth in a world of matter, while also remembering and engaging with the spiritual world. For sure a reason to have a party.



You radiance...

For Rudolf Steiner

by Daisy Alden

You radiance in wind, concentrically weaving in and out of window frames
in concrete and steel skeleton structures, whirl

toward my ruined orbit.
Help me to sprout coral branches of light
antennae of the Eternal, through the prison

of my skull. Lead my
resurrected INsight toward that mercurial
Sun-abysse where Archangels are holding council;

let me know those plans they're
concocting for us down here. Let the eyes in your
photograph pasted to my wall, transmute to mine,

balance between Here and There.
Sweep, golden-angel-winged, into my monotonous
opacity, and spark that luminous

region near my heart
which, you say, moves to understand the stars,
that I may perceive Man's spidery ties

to constellations:
And let my footsteps glide in tranquil three-time
pace, during the earthly sun-period of my brain;

for they are restless
as a broken radiator; and I am angry,
and gossip about my friends, and write popular songs.

Let the squealing tones
of my voice deepen, and my tongue learn the folly
of useless chatter. Make me wise to choose

to shun the Trap of Fame
whose prize is a great hunk of putrefacted cheese:
For I sniff at the plastic lures of the senses

and forget it is enough
for God to mouthe my name. Let Promethean fire
fill me, though chained to a rock; symmetry not entice,

nor the rectangles of Albers*.
Beholding, let me face the blind of back alleys:
And guide the words I write to join your beacon to the Gods!

(*a reference to the work of German-American artist-educator Josef Albers.)

First Class of the School of Spiritual Science

Sunday, April 11, 2021, 9:30am • Lesson VII • Contact: Diane Rumage, drumage@comcast.net;
Remember your Blue Card.

Portland Branch Council Meeting

Monday, April 12, 7pm • Contact Valerie Hope, valerieannhpx@aol.com

All Branch members are welcome to attend, and/or call us with agenda items, proposals, suggestions, or to observe. Please contact Valerie to let her know you'd like to attend. Meetings are normally held on the second Monday of the month.

Grand Opening and Annual Gathering of the Portland Branch's New Center and Library on April 24

Please contact Valerie Hope for more current information: valerieannhpx@aol.com

During this time of physical distancing, please contact the group organizer for each ongoing activity to confirm if the group is still meeting and what protocols they might require.

Ongoing Local Activities and Study**First Class of the School of Spiritual Science**

9:30am sharp • Blue card required.

Contact Diane Rumage for date and place: drumage@comcast.net,

Council Meetings of the Portland Branch • Second Monday of the month

7-9pm • 2606 SE 58th Ave., Portland • Contact Valerie Hope, valerieannhpx@aol.com

All Branch members are welcome to attend, and/or to call us with agenda items, proposals, suggestions, or to observe.

Manifestations of Karma Study Group • First Monday of the Month

7:45-9pm • Temporarily conducted via Zoom • Contact Jerry Soloway 503-908-7615, jrsoloway@hotmail.com

Please join us in lively discussions centered on Rudolf Steiner's *Manifestations of Karma*.

Eurythmy Community Classes "The gestures of the Zodiac" with Jolanda Frischknecht

Wednesdays 7:00-8:15 at Bothmer Hall, 5915 SE Division St. on 2/10, 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17

Saturdays, 9:00-10:15 at Lajja Space, 10815 SE Main St. Milwaukie on 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20

Please sign up at: jolandamf44@gmail.com Spaces are limited.

Pacific Eurythmy, Open Classes for the Community in Anthroposophy and the Arts: Monday Evenings

For details please see our website, www.PacificEurythmy.com or call Jolanda, 503-896-3345 or Carrie, 415-686-3791

Art as Spiritual Activity by Michael Howard • Friday Mornings

9:15-11am • Study group in NE Portland. The group starts each meeting with a short artistic activity and at this time we are singing led by Diane Rowley. All are welcome. • Contact Patricia Lynch at patriciahomanlynch@gmail.com

Speech Formation and Mystery Drama Group • Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday

7:30 - 9:00 p.m. at 8654 NE Boehmer St, Portland, OR 97220 Free. No experience necessary, just enthusiasm and a love of the Word. Now studying the 2nd Mystery Drama by Rudolf Steiner *The Soul's Probation*. Contact Diane Rumage drumage@comcast.net or 971 271-7479.

Beginning Astrosophy Class • First and Third Tuesday of the Month

7-8:30pm • 8654 NE Boehmer St, Portland, OR 97220 • Free. This class will introduce participants to the basic principles of Astrosophy in a study of the works of Willi Sucher and Diane Rumage's work with the stars, with indications that Rudolf Steiner gave for those interested in the cosmos. No previous knowledge necessary. Please bring blank paper and colored pencils to the class in case we need to use them. If you are just curious if you'd be interested, please feel free to come and check us out. • Contact Diane Rumage 971 271-7479 drumage@comcast.net

Friday Book Study in Corvallis

5:15-6:15pm at the home of Renate Joy • 1020 NW 25th Street, Corvallis • Our new study is Rudolf Steiner's "Occult Science: An Outline" (If you are planning to buy this book, we suggest the classic translation by George and Mary Adams.) This is a great way to study anthroposophy in community with others, where different perspectives are shared, and understanding can deepen.

Waldorf Education and Teacher Training Lectures and Courses

Conducted throughout the year by the Micha-el Institute. Contact Jen Davis, 503-449-7387 jennifer@micha-elinstitute.com


Waldorf Teacher Education, Eugene

Two and Three year Career Training and Artistic Development Learn more at www.WTEE.org or call (541) 514-7905

Robin Lieberman, MSW
 Licensed Clinical Social Worker

curative painting and collaborative psychotherapy
 youth, adults, & couples | workshops & retreats

503-222-1192 robinlieberman.net



Robin Lieberman
 artistic therapist | therapeutic artist

instagram.com/lieberman.robin
 robin-lieberman.square.site

503-222-1192 | robinlieberman.net



the new five collective
 MJ CONINORS DAVISON ROBIN LIEBERMAN PATRICIA HOMAN LYNCH JANNEBETH ROELL JENNY SIEGEL

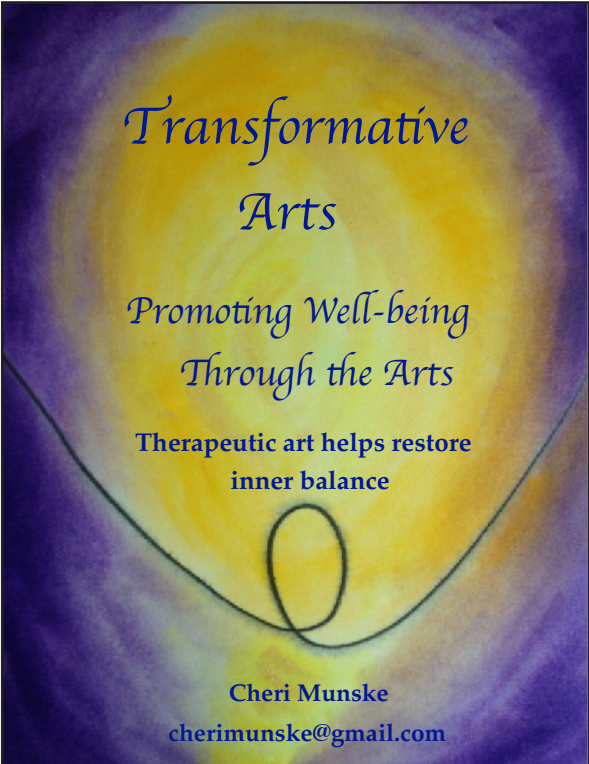
**FOR THE LOVE OF TREES
 AND OTHER WORKS OF ART**

Postponed until 2021 as we join our community
 in its broad-based efforts toward health

555 SE MLK Blvd., Portland, OR, 97214

A portion of all sales will be donated to Friends of Trees.
 Thank you to Beam Development.





*Transformative
 Arts*

*Promoting Well-being
 Through the Arts*

Therapeutic art helps restore
 inner balance

Cheri Munske
cherimunske@gmail.com

Physical Medicine & Injury Rehabilitation



Susan Schmitt, M.D.
Joan Takacs, D.O.
John Takacs, D.O.



The clinic offers alternatively extended medicine including Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Comprehensive Family Practice. The physicians utilize holistic principles that include the Anthroposophical world conception and its medical modalities, movement principles from Spacial Dynamics®, Feldenkrais®, Intermuscular Stimulation (IMS), Musculoskeletal Ultrasound and refined hands-on techniques to augment alternative and mainstream medical approaches in diagnosis, treatment and prevention of illness and injury including work related injuries, personal injuries, motor vehicle injuries and sports injuries.

5909 SE Division Street, Portland, OR 97206

www.anthroclinic.com 503-234-1531

Your Ad Here?

- Business Card: \$120/year
- 1/4 page: \$240/year
- One time full page flier: \$40

We can create your ad or flyer
Rates available

Contact: Editor c.guilfoil@gmail.com



Walter Rice, CTC
Travel Magician

5316 SE Sherman St.
Portland, OR 97215
800-328-7266
503-233-4053
fax: 503-232-7224

Incredible Journeys Since 1975

walter@waldorftravel.com



Primary Care Infused
with the Aloha Spirit
integrating
Anthroposophic Medicine.

Julie E. Foster, MSN, FNP

7477 SE 52nd Ave.
Portland, OR 97206

contact@pohalaclinic.com (503) 572-4196



Helping You
Navigate
the Medicare Maze
to find the
Right Options
for You



- Advantage Plans
- Supplement Plans
- Special Needs Plans
- Prescription Drug Plans
- Hospital Indemnity Plans

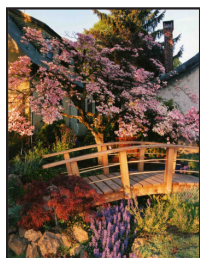
Cyndia Ashkar

503-810-2784 TTY 711

Licensed Insurance Broker/Owner
cyndia.cba@gmail.com

PO Box 1634, Clackamas, OR 97015

*There is Never any Cost
or Obligation whatsoever
for Any of My Services.*



HEALTHBRIDGE INC.

3046 NE 33RD AVE.

PORTLAND 97212

503-331-7393

donnapk@comcast.net

DONNA PATTERSON KELLUM LMT

"The possibility of illness is due to the possibility of becoming human beings..."--Rudolf Steiner

Donna provides adjunctive therapy for acute and chronic conditions including anxiety and depression, headache, TMJ and musculoskeletal problems related to trauma, also circulatory, respiratory, hormonal and digestive problems, diabetes, immune disorders and allergies. As a life-long learner with intense interest in the human body, soul and spirit, Donna has taken extensive professional continuing education courses over the past 30 years. She now integrates over a dozen manual therapies with emphasis on advanced craniosacral therapy, lymph drainage, and visceral massage, all of which is further informed by anthroposophic trainings in rhythmical massage, chirophonetics and psychology. While her interface is light with a strong energetic component, she does not consider this "energy work". Familiarity with anatomical details, bio-mechanics and physiology makes her work feel warm and nurturing in a way akin to what Steiner calls "re-membering" (umformung), awakening the body to its own restorative processes of rhythm and breathing, its inner kinship with the Light, and facilitating then its own healing powers which can be profoundly transformative.