



A.L.L.

March 2010

Newsletter from the Association for Light and Life

Florida Retreat

One of the goals set up by the ALL council this past year was to create opportunities for members to come together by facilitating two gatherings each year, one in the Fall and the other in the Spring. Our most recent gathering was held in September in Taos, New Mexico, and the Spring one will be in Ellenton, Florida, near Tampa, at the Day Spring Conference Center.

(www.dayspringfla.org)

The theme is Wholeness Through Healing, and we will use as the focus the quote from the Urantia Book, “**I would desire to see my children made whole.**”(p.1633)

The retreat will include presentations, quiet reflection time, small group sharing, fellowship, music, and will end with a Worship Service/Remembrance Supper on Sunday morning.

Dates: May 21-23, 2010

Cost: \$200 for a shared room (this includes all meals, Friday dinner through Sunday lunch). Space is limited and will be made on a first come, first serve basis. Please send in your \$50. Deposit, made out to Association of Light and Life, by April 15 to: Rick Giles 2582 E. Hudlow Rd.; Hayden, Idaho, 83835

Contact Dolores Nice, dlnice@att.net if you have any questions.

Send news items to ALL Newsletter Editor Gerdean O'Dell: www.Gerdean@cableone.net

Featuring

An All Interview With

RUSS GUSTAFSON

ALL: Thank you, Russ, for agreeing to be interviewed for the March 2010 issue of the Association for Light and Life Newsletter.

Russ: No problem.

ALL: I'd first like to thank you, on behalf of the Association for Light and Life, for the service you provided as an ALL Councilor, and also for providing us with this cyber-space venue.

With that as a foundation – along with our heartfelt appreciation – I'm sure we would all like to know more about you personally because for all you do for us, it seems we know very little about you.

For starters, where do you come from? What part of the country?

Russ: Actually my mom is a second generation San Franciscan. She was from an Irish Italian family. And she married my dad there. He was a pilot, based in San Francisco.

ALL: It's hard to imagine you as an Italian. I think of Italians as talking with their hands and you seem very self-contained.

Russ: Well, Gustafson is Swedish.

ALL: So were you born in San Francisco?

Russ: No. My parents moved to Los Angeles, where I was born, and when I was three, we returned to San Francisco and I have been living there ever since.

ALL: What part of the City are you in?

Russ: On the Peninsula, in Redwood City. The mid peninsula.

ALL: I know so little about that area.

Russ: It's not far from Half Moon Bay, and near the National Wildlife Refuge.

ALL: Well, we now know a little bit about your parents. Do you have any siblings?

Russ: I have seven siblings. We were four boys and four girls

ALL: Big family! And where do you fit into that mix?

Russ: There's an elder sister, then me, so I am the eldest son.

ALL: Are they all still in that area?

Russ: No. I have one brother here and three sisters, but the others have moved away: one to Washington, one elsewhere in California, and one in LA.

ALL: I understand you are married, is that right? To whom? For how long?

Russ: Next week, on March 8, I will have been married for 35 years to Margie Fama Gustafson, who came from an Irish Italian family from San Francisco. Here is a picture of Margie and me reading to two of our granddaughters Ali and Aba. The other granddaughter, Anna, is not pictured; and another is due around May 1.



Russ, Margie, Ali and Aba

ALL: If you have grandchildren; you must have children. Tell us about them.

Russ: We had two children, a boy and a girl. Russ Jr., 31, is an accountant here in Redwood City, and Rossanna, 30, lives in Boston. These are her kids.

ALL: What do you do for a living? I heard you taught school. Is that right?

Russ: No, that's not correct. I have always been a programmer.

ALL: That would explain your fascination with computers. Have you ever taught computer classes?

Russ: No.

ALL: Do you work independently?

Russ: Right now I am pretty much retired.

ALL: What about your wife? Did she have a career? Or is she also retired?

Russ: Margie is a hard-working lady. She is the Comptroller for the County Education Office. She has worked for the County for quite a while, but she is not ready to retire yet.

ALL: I'd like to come back to computers, but meantime I want to ask you about your

religious background. What is your religious training? What has been your spiritual path?

Russ: Well, being Irish Italian, I was raised Catholic; my wife, too. I went to Catholic grammar and high school; then I graduated from UC Berkeley in 1970, a liberal college. We were all searching, asking the existential questions “Who Am I?” and “What am I doing here?” After I graduated, my father brought home the Urantia Book, thinking I

might like it. I read it from beginning to end. It took a couple of months.

ALL: When was that?

Russ: That would have been 1971.

ALL: Tell us about the study group here.

Russ: Well, for a long time I was not in a group, although I had on and off contact with various readers. Then I found the UB group, which was 15 or more years ago.



ALL's Dolores Nice, third from left, standing; Russ Gustafson, seated, far right

Then, at a Urantia Book Conference, I got hold of the Graceland Tapes by Joe Pope; They were a revelation to me. Then later, there was a talk by Bob Slagle in San Francisco that I went to. It was geared to the public at large, to UB readers, and it was about the Teaching Mission. I was hooked.

Several times I drove the 70 miles or so to Bob's house in Sebastopol. A woman there was transmitting Jared. Then in the early

1990's Susan Kimsey began T/Ring in Half Moon Bay.

ALL: So besides computers, what other interests do you have? Music? Travel?

Russ: Actually, these days I try to stay away from computers. Having retired, I am not interested any more. I like to spend time on other things, like making music. I play - for myself only - the piano and violin.

ALL: Classical music?

Russ: No, I guess you could say I play the fiddle! So it's more like Bluegrass. As for the piano, I play just regular piano music, maybe a little honky tonk.

Another interest I have is to exercise. I'm into the Triathlon. Running, biking and swimming. It keeps me in pretty good shape.

ALL: How old are you?

Russ: I'm 62. I was born September 21, 1947.

ALL: That's a Virgo and Libra cusp?

Russ: More Virgo. You believe in that?

ALL: I can't say I *believe* in it, but I do find it interesting.

Let me ask: How did you like being on the ALL Council? You were only there for one term. You didn't run for another term.

Russ: I just had a feeling that it was time to go.

ALL: Do you have any tips for members who might aspire to serve on the Council someday?

Russ: Having no expectations would help. Let me just say that ALL is not a one person show. It is a community. You have to pick up input from everyone on what to do. ALL needs more than strong leadership; it needs strong participation from its members.

ALL: Let's talk about service. Naturally ALL wants you to talk about your service work in your own words and in your own good time, but Russ, it would be accurate to say that we would not even be having this interview -- or the Association for Light and

Life venue itself -- without the service you provide. In fact, we would not have a venue for Harp of God dot org, Light and Life dot com, TML, TMTalk, and who knows how many other venues without your generosity. Do you consider this your primary service?

Russ: As I see it, primary service is loving your neighbor as you pass by. My interest in computers is just something that is of benefit because it is what I did for a living.

ALL: So, you just bought a chunk of cyber space real estate when it was still cheap?

Russ: No, you have a misperception. Cyber space is free. The Internet is free. You just have to know how to use it. And I know how to use it, so I help people. It's not a big deal. I don't build websites. I just consult and help people do their work. I don't want to do their work for them.

ALL: How long have you been a computer buff? How extensive is your training?

Russ: I got started in ... probably in the mid '70's. Before that, I scrounged around doing odd jobs. Audio stereo installer.

ALL: You were mechanical? Electrical?

Russ: I enjoyed programming. Through the years, I worked with IBM, HP, Ampex

ALL: When did you acquire teamcircuits?

Russ: At the end of 1998. Michael Million was the original person that had TML but he gave it up.

Russ: To Thea and Jesse?

Russ: And Scott Forester was in there somewhere too. I used to have all the TML

files but because of one computer glitch or another, I've lost a few.

ALL: Did you anticipate the growth of the Teaching Mission movement?

Russ: I have always had more ideas and projects than anybody wants to put energy into, so I have a hard time. Computers can do a lot, but it depends on people who will do it.

ALL: What would you like to see evolve or develop – either with ALL or Teamcircuits?

Russ: Teamcircuits is a repository. It is an archive. It's a mechanical place for the original version, a serial number, a reference point. It allows for integrity to be built into the system. The rest will come (1) if others have an aptitude to do something; (2) if they are looking for a job; or (3) they could even do music with it.

That's what initially appealed to me and it turned out to be true. The Internet is *great* for music. Another thing is you could network people with it and that was very appealing to me. And there are people I have yet to embrace that I might meet on the Internet.

Another thing was -- before TML there was Bulletin Boards, computer bulletin boards, where you could download bulletins. I had a bulletin called Spiritual World with spiritual thoughts. I used to do that even before the Internet.

ALL: Along those lines, I understand the Council is contacting Jena Pittmon to help re-build the ALL site using the Drupal program. Is there anything we can do to help that process along? Is there anything the ALL Newsletter can do?

Russ: Sure! I think it would be great to have people talk about what they want the website to look like, what they want it to feature, and complain about it, and suggest things. What can they have? Ask questions.

ALL: I feel sure this issue will spawn more discussion. Hopefully it will be productive.

Before we close the interview here, Russ, it seems apparent that your providing us with teamcircuits is your most obvious service, but that may not be what YOU consider your service work. What do YOU consider your service work, and is there anything we can do to support your efforts?

Russ: A service project that I'm starting to work on is along the lines of The Eden Project, in the sense that I have a piece of timberland property that I want to rejuvenate and I was thinking it would be fun to have an Eden project ... one that was distributed at different points across the country.

If people had land they were trying to conserve and bring them all together as ... people with land.

ALL: Sounds to me like you're talking about a Zooid Mission, Russ, where there is a conglomeration of a lot of groups.

Russ: Well, more than one Garden. It's a conservation project, actually, to preserve and cultivate for many years to come, and future generations. I'd like to make "old growth forests" -- old trees on the property.

I'd like to cultivate some big old trees that lasted through the whole Correcting Time, that were enduring, that you can pass on from yourself to your kids and conserve.

ALL: How big is it? Your timberland?

Russ: 320 acres. It's beautiful, rugged land. I call it "Trinity Rock" There's a stream.



Trinity Rock

ALL: I've seen pictures. It's pretty remote.

Russ: Well it's not close to civilization but it's not impossible. It's 8 miles off Hwy 80 between Reno, Nevada, and San Francisco; 1.5 hours to Sacramento, one hour to Reno and 45 minutes to Lake Tahoe or Nevada City.

ALL: I wish you well with that venture. And finally, Russ, what did I forget to ask you, that you would like to add?

Russ: We've covered everything, pretty much. Everything is unfolding as it should. I have no questions, no further comments. I wish I had more time to do everything but

when you retire, strange things happen to time.

ALL: Indeed, it does. Russ, thank you for taking the time to visit with us and to fill in some of the blanks, and to plant some seeds for future developments.

Russ: You are very welcome. Thank you for your energy.

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When the Earth is sick,
And the animals are disappearing
A tribe will arrive
With people from all cultures
Who will believe in deeds
And not in words,
And they will help to restore
The ancient beauty of the Earth,
They will be known as:
The Rainbow Warriors...

Ancient Hopi Indian prophecy

CELESTIAL SONGBOOK 2

New!

Celestial Songbook 2 by Jim Cleveland continues the stream of poetry and lyric from the first volume, with three sections devoted to spiritual verse, romance and folk tales. It joins Jim's collection of 7 books at Author House, Amazon, and most other booksellers. Check them out at

www.authorhouse.com.

