

Theosophy

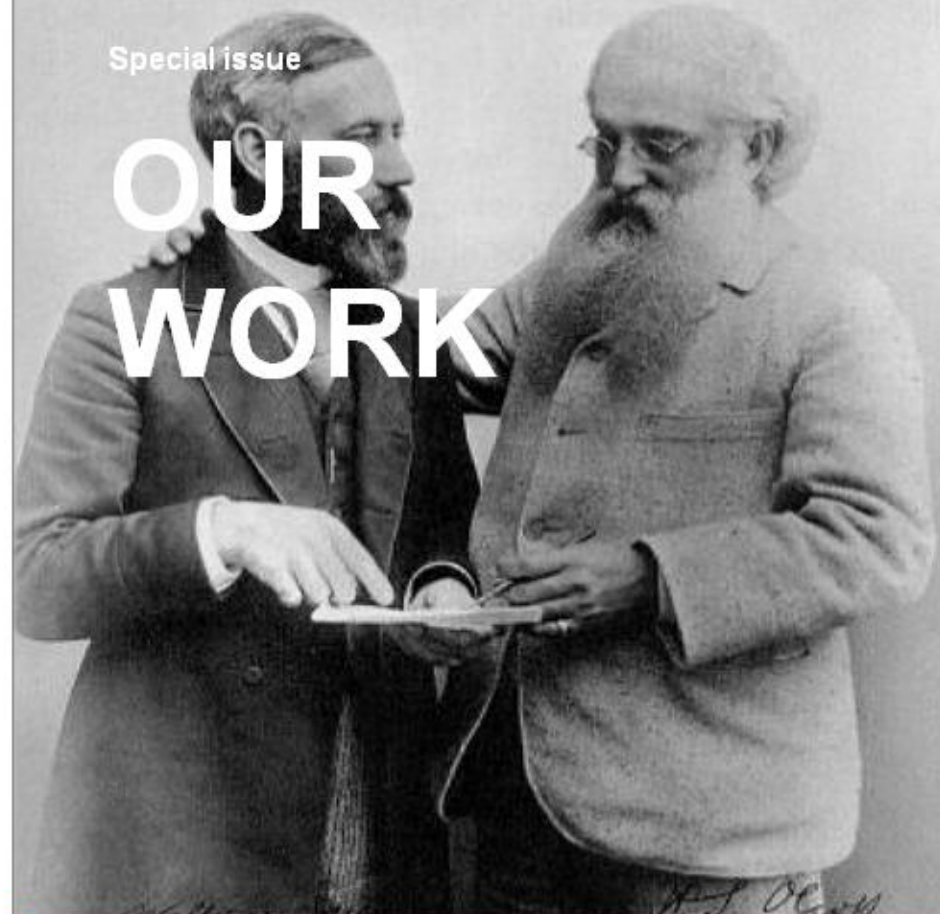
Moving
ahead in

Forward

the 21st
century

Special issue

OUR WORK



Our Work

A compilation of articles

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Our Work

A compilation of articles

Foreword

In 2012/13, Theosophy Forward the magazine, presented a series of articles entitled "Our Work." The series highlighted activities by individuals, sections, lodges, study or discussion groups in the various Theosophical traditions. It very clearly showed that the outer form is just a vehicle by which Theosophical ideas can be passed on to others. But any vehicle, no matter how respectable, is subject to the changes of time and therefore can easily and rapidly lose its significance. That is why the essential work remains so indispensable. "Our Work" is now available as an e-book.

Want to thank all contributors, more than 30 in total, and especially Anton Rozman in Slovenia for his craftsmanship and unswerving dedication by producing another Theosophy Forward highlight.

Jan Nicolaas Kind – Brazil

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Our Work

by James and Sally Colbert - USA

[Sally and James Colbert are working together with those chemically addicted in their home/office in Julian, California. Dr. Colbert, a clinical psychologist, has consulted with hospital programs for alcohol addiction recovery programs. Both Sally and Jim were raised in Theosophical families. Sally continues as President and James as Treasurer of International Theosophy Conferences, Inc.]



Sally Colbert



James Colbert

In the last seven years International Theosophy Conferences, Inc. has occupied center stage - you might say "our work." The motivation was straightforward. To us, it was not complicated. The first object of the Theosophical Movement is to "form a

nucleus of universal brotherhood." The elephant in the living room has multitudinous divisions and "splits" throughout our history. It was like Theosophists believed in universal brotherhood, but not for each other. The King and the Queen had no clothes.

Needed, we felt, was something outside of traditional Theosophy and an opportunity came. An informal group had been meeting on the USA West coast annually. The founder died. Although it lasted for a few years thereafter a conference organizer did not appear - except us. For some reason, Theosophists of several traditions had been coming to these meetings, and they had been held on a beautiful beachfront along the Oregon coast. And, we felt it had everything. It was not affiliated with any Theosophical tradition yet could stand for all traditions.

Another stirring haunted us. Theosophy was presented for the world. The world was in trouble. Even though many of the participants yearned for the informality found in the Oregon coast meetings, we knew more formality, despite its trappings, was needed. That is, if Theosophy was ever to take its place on the world stage. So, along with others we began an organization. We called it International Theosophy Conferences, Inc. From this we established an online magazine, "International Theosophy Magazine." ITC has as its primary purpose the intercommunication between all Theosophical traditions. Intercommunication can be a start towards the nucleus of universal brotherhood.

The conference for this year (all have been held on or near the date of HPB's birth) will be at the Theosophical Society in America headquarters in Wheaton Illinois. Last year it was sponsored mostly by members of the United Lodge of

Theosophists. The year before it was held at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society of Point Loma in the Netherlands.

There are others now taking the lead in the furtherance of this work. Our work has shifted. It is to address what we see as another need in the Theosophical work. Both of us had the opportunity of growing up and having Theosophy as a continuing part of our lives. We have experienced the traumas involved in our own lives, our families and those that have been close to us. One of us is a psychologist with over 35 years of private practice. A number of Theosophists who wanted psychological help knew of this background and he was contacted on a professional basis. The other of us helped run treatment organizations for children and delights in editing and writing what we do. She is the editor of International Theosophy Magazine.

We both sensed compassion and understanding could be found in the Theosophical literature for those encountering trauma. But there was a need to present this in a way that might reach the heart of victims and their families.

Not too long ago, we were approached by a Theosophist in Europe. It was said, "We have in our group a member who has a family member with severe mental illness. He wants understanding from a Theosophical view. Would you consider writing this? It struck a chord. It also reminded us of others who experienced the great difficulties of life within their families. Tremendous pain can be experienced in Theosophical families too. Maybe even more, as the journey has begun. The Buddhists do not have a monopoly on dukkha and the First Noble Truth.

We are now giving attention, based on Theosophical teachings, to what we see as the need to offer understanding and

compassion towards those who have experienced major life traumas. Further, we plan, as well, to review current ideas offered in the psychological and psychiatric literature. To this date, we have offered, "Theosophy, Alcoholics Anonymous, and God," and "Schizophrenia and the Search for the Soul." We will soon have an article called "Suicide and Theosophy." This work has necessitated extensive reviews of books and current research articles of our time. The rewards of "our work" are enormous. Our only regret is that we so wished we had done this much earlier in our life journey.



Teotl Lodge - one hundred years active

TEOTL lodge San Salvador

by Rafael Arévalo

El Salvador, a small country in Central America, was at first affiliated Theosophically with Cuba. In those days, an Irish citizen named Patrick Brannon came to El Salvador; he had been hired by the company constructing the first railroad for the western part of the country. After the railroad enterprise concluded, Brannon stayed and married Carmen Vega, a Salvadorian who became the mother of Carmen Brannon, a poet and Theosophist with the pen name Claudia Lars.

In December 1878, Brannon went to New York because he wanted to consult HPB about a supernatural experience he had had. After first visiting some relatives who lived in NY, on December 16th he attempted to meet Madame Blavatsky, but was unable to do so because, unfortunately for him, she and H. S. Olcott were preparing to depart on December 17th for London, en route to India.

Upset by his inability to meet HPB in New York, Brannon met a friend who needed an expert to go to London to purchase some rails for a railroad construction in Peru. So he undertook that mission, which also permitted him to visit HPB, who was the guest of Dr. and Mrs. D. H. J. Billing at Northwood Park.

He announced himself at the door of the Billing house and asked to meet Madame Blavastky. HPB immediately accepted his visit with the words "let the cowboy in." Brannon was trying to explain

his experience to her when suddenly HPB stated, "I know you." Madame Blavatsky advised him and gave him a ring, which he returned after three days as agreed to do, as well as a package containing two portraits of the Masters, several Theosophical books, and a congratulation card signed by her to be delivered to the founders of Teotl Lodge, the first Theosophical Lodge in El Salvador. This information is based on the account in a history book about the Salvadoran Lodge, where the portraits of the Masters and the card are still kept.

Today, 102 years after its foundation, the Salvadoran Lodge Teotl has fifteen members, who meet each Saturday afternoon for a study session, consisting of both visitors and members committed to investigating Theosophical topics. Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (1882-1966), the President of El Salvador from 1931 to 1944, was an active member of the Theosophical Society and for a time President of the Teotl Lodge.



Meeting Teotl Lodge

Our Work

by Chris Bolger - USA

Working at the AV and IT departments at the national headquarters for the Theosophical Society in America has given me the unique opportunity to help focus the direction of our internet development with wide reaching potentials. The TSA website development has been the focus of my work over the last two years.

Now that we have transitioned our website to an open-source software (OSS) content management system (Joomla!) we are in a good position to keep up with the quickly changing technology online and adding more functionality to the website. Open-source philosophy is one of truth, communal development, and the freedom to make necessary changes, and I consider it to be in line with the theosophical world-view, so I try to incorporate using OSS whenever practical. Many times this software is free to use, so this helps us spend money where we can get the most impact with it. In the near future we will be compiling a list of recommended software for lodges or groups to use so they don't have to redo all the research we did to find it!

In addition to website development, I am also involved in the the Audio/Video department. We have a huge inventory of audio and video programs built up over the past 30+ years and much of it has not seen the light of day since it was recorded. This amount of material has been slowly transferred to digital format over the

past 7 years and a small percentage has been available online.

We are now beginning a major project to get all AV content uploaded to a new media library, which we hope to get online in 2012. With this migration we want give members and the public access to a vast range of resources to further their own path of studies. In addition to the upcoming media library, we have continued to expand our online live programs through the webcast lectures and more interactive virtual classroom webinars. Offering these programs online is one of the best ways we can reach a worldwide audience, often times doubling the number of attendance here at our national headquarters. As more people around the world get access to the internet, we will be in a strong position to reach a much wider audience than traditional forms of media.



Chris at the mixing panel

Our Work

by members of Theosophical Society in East & Central Africa

Theosophy first came to the East African shores in 1905. Over the 107 years The Theosophical Society in our Section has seen many ups and down in its work of spreading the message of Theosophy. Our East & Central African Section (which consists of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) was formed in 1947. At its height, in seventies, the number of lodges reached a respectable figure of 60 lodges. The number of lodges and members has since then been decreasing steadily.

To-day Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania) lodges are active in dissemination of Theosophy as well as TOS (Theosophical Order of Service) work.

Over the years Nairobi Lodge has organized regular weekly meetings in English and Gujarati. Its programmes are varied in order to cater for the beginners and older members. It has kept pace with the changing times and has formulated its programmes which not only gives room to the established speakers but also trains new and upcoming (as well as shy) members. The programmes include book studies, theme based series on philosophy and religion, general subjects where the speakers present subjects of their own choice, inter-active and group discussions, seminars, programme of devotional songs, video presentations and holding public talks to attract new members. All our programmes are free and open to non members.

The lodge has organized youth meetings and seminars to attract younger members of the society. Healing sessions, Meditation and 'members only' meetings were organized in the past but have been discontinued due to fall in attendance.

TOS activities have been carried out since 1965. Nairobi Lodge has been regularly donating to the human, animal and plant kingdoms - Human Kingdom: needy homes - Home for the Aged, Orphans, HIV Babies, Cancer patients, Education fees, water well and food donations for people in the drier regions of Kenya, etc. The Animal Kingdom: donations have been to the David Sheldrick Home for the baby elephants and the Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (KSPCA). The Plant Kingdom - here, tree planting, is done regularly.



A food donation in progress

The latest TOS project of donating food to 55 families for 6 months in Kitui area of Kenya has been very successful. Nairobi Lodge received donations from TOS groups in USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, England, France, Germany,

Italy, Spain, etc. who responded to the plight of Somali refugees as well as those in Kenya.

Our Section Convention used to be held every year and more recently every 2 years. During these Conventions we invite International TS personalities as Guest Speakers and we have been fortunate to have been blessed by the visits of many International TS personalities and also 3 International Presidents. Nairobi Lodge, the premier lodge in our Section, also hosted the 7th World Congress in 1982, where over 1200 delegates had registered.

This short article does not allow us to write in detail many other activities that have been carried out by a small band of active and dedicated members. But we take pride in saying that the message of Theosophy has reached many through its regular meetings and TOS activities.



After the food donation

Our Work

by Richard Hiltner - USA



Richard Hiltner

This new project in your magazine sounds like another step forward. I am happy to share the material of the study groups.

1] One Study Group on G de Purucker's Esoteric Tradition Vol.1 occurs every first Saturday at my office in Ojai, California. A few topics of interest in these two volumes include:

- Many commentaries on the Secret Doctrine.
- The Fifteen Anathemas of the Christian Church Father Origen in 538 stating that "the soul of Christ pre-existed like the souls of all men," etc.
- NO THOUGHT WAS EVER CREATED IN A HUMAN BRAIN.
- OUR ENTIRE CONSTITUTIONAL BEING ... IS LIKE AN IMMENSELY SENSITIVE PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM CONSTANTLY RENEWED AND CONSTANTLY RECEIVING AND RETAINING IMPRESSIONS.

- Expounding on the differences of the Monad, Ego and Soul.
- Humanity in Evolution. Anatomy of the embryo gives evidence of human existence before the apes.
- Heavens and Hells.
- Great Seers versus Visionaries
- Tatwas/Lokas-Talas; Akasa and Ether.
- Radioactive Elements.

2] Another Study Group in Woodland Hills, California occurs every 2nd and 4th Sunday on the Secret Doctrine. This is just starting. For any information on either Study Group one could contact me at: rhiltner@sbcglobal.net or call 805.646.1495.



Our Study Group

Our Work

by Garrett Riegg - USA
Science and Spirit - The Electric Universe and your Body



*Garrett Riegg
giving a talk in The Netherlands*

For the past four years I have led an internet group called the Oakland Consciousness Meet-Up group. Eight to twenty people meet monthly in my home. Our focus is on science and the paranormal. We also delve into Kabala, I-Ching, prayer healing, reincarnation, mental telepathy, Near-Death Experiences, etc. Most meetings include light refreshments and meditation.

This is a way to encourage spiritual pursuits and to introduce people to Theosophy and the Occult. Several MeetUp members now study *The Secret Doctrine* with our lodge. The following are notes from our most recent MeetUp on "The Electric Universe and Your Body":

Nine of us gathered to study the nature of the universe and how our bodies relate to "strange forces" which are largely ignored by our popular culture.

Our knowledge of the universe is comparable to Columbus

discovering America before he realized that it was a new and different continent. Science has lots of data but it is searching for a comprehensive and consistent picture of the universe that would include quantum mechanics, Einstein's relativity and new evidence of psychic and spiritual realities.



MeetUp members gather

The End of Materialism

Garrett passed out excerpts from *The Bond* by Lynn McTaggart. Quantum mechanics has liberated all of the other sciences, including psychology, to look again at what used to be considered impossible events such as mental telepathy, heart waves, faith healing, and remote viewing. Physics now provides a theoretical model in the subatomic realm where probability, waves and energy govern.

In line with Einstein's famous equation ($E=MC^2$), many physicists now think of matter as condensed energy. Others see energy itself as an expression of Consciousness related to the Akashic Field. Sometimes this invisible field is referred to as the Living Matrix (as in the film) or the morphic field, particularly as coined by Rupert Sheldrake.

Geomagnetism and Healing

We discussed some promising studies of earth's electromagnetic field and how it interacts with human beings. Random event generators (REG) around the world reliably register emotional events affecting millions of people such as a Royal Wedding, the 9-11 destruction and New Year's Eve celebrations.

The eleven-year cycle of sunspots and occasional solar storms is well known to disrupt earth's atmosphere and potentially destroy electrical and electronic systems, including computers. 2012 is a prime year for solar storms. Did the Mayans foresee this, too?

We are grateful that science is beginning to study telepathy, meditation, Reiki and similar "non-physical" modalities. Since 1970, a German physicist, Fritz Popp, and others have measured bio-photons or small particles of light given off by your fingertips and other parts of the body. (*The Bond*, page sixty three) He and his colleagues have discovered that we all have photons streaming from our hands but healers have many more photons coming out of their hands and particularly the dominant hand when they are doing healings. There is also considerable light coming out of the belly which is what would be predicted by Qigong, which refers to that area as the dan tien.

These photon emissions have patterns of activity matching sunspots and other solar influences.

Other studies cited by McTaggart show that healers dramatically change the electromagnetic field around their bellies during healings. The question is, is it the electromagnetism or the light, or what, that is actually transmitting the healing? Or are these other things just side effects that go along with healing? Theosophy would say that there is something even deeper than electromagnetism and physical light. Ancient wisdom called it the akasha or the astral.

HeartMath

We briefly reviewed the findings of HeartMath with regard to how heart rate variability becomes very smooth and steady when we have thoughts of appreciation, kindness or love. Otherwise the space between our heartbeats is totally variable or volatile like the stock market.

HeartMath described the unconscious impact we have on each other where our heart waves influence the brain waves of those around us up to at least twelve feet. We can also measure the correlation of brain waves between people who hold hands or even touch their legs together. This kind of entrainment is the same way that the heart gets all the other organs in the body to be in rhythm, so to speak, when we are in a good mood.

In our brains, mirror neurons experience and act out whatever we see is happening to other people around us. It is as if our brain is experiencing the same feelings or activities, even though we do not move and may not even be aware of our own feelings. According to the researchers, these effects are automatic and

cannot be stopped. But most of them are in our subconscious (*ibid.*, page sixty).

Electric Bodies

We watched several of the videos from the *Theosophy Watch* web article on "The Astral Virgin." The first one dealt with random event generators and was moderated by Dean Raden. Another one involved an electric man in Serbia who could handle six hundred volts which is normally fatal. Putting a rod near him would produce a large spark. He demonstrated how he could light fluorescent tubes just by holding them. These anomalies are unexplained by current scientific ideas.

S. shared an experience that moved her deeply. She awoke one night after a vivid dream. She felt totally energized. She woke up her partner, telling her that she felt like she could do anything now. She looked around the room and spotted a small space heater. Without much thought she began concentrating on the heater and it suddenly surprised them both by levitating about two feet in the air and turning itself on. After a few seconds she realized what was happening, felt a twinge of concern and at that moment the heater fell back down to the floor. The experience was quite unnerving for her and she has not had a similar experience of psychokinesis.

Kirlian Photography

We were most fascinated by two videos on kirlian photography showing auras of different colors around people's fingers and other body parts. The colors of the auras would change with the emotions of the person being photographed. This kind of photography has been used by psychologists to determine the state

of the client's emotions and the reaction of a couple to their therapy. It has also been used in matchmaking to determine a couple's compatibility.

One of the most striking things about kirlian photography is how it will continue to photograph an aura even after a portion of a leaf or flower has been cut off. There is something still there even when the physical body has been partially dismembered. This may also be true of amputees and may explain why amputees often feel the missing limb for days or weeks after it has been amputated.

Some members shared their own experiences with kirlian photography. Alia's son, when he was in grade school, actually experimented with a camera that was able to produce kirlian-type photographs. Sue and Akash had also studied this type of photography and passed around an excellent book on the subject.

Healing by Intention

It is becoming well known that lifestyle and emotions have an impact on our bodies. Fifty years ago most doctors and scientists felt that the body was an independent physical organism that was not affected by emotions or thoughts. Now even the "main stream" knows better. For example, most heart doctors and big hospitals like Kaiser are touting attitudinal and lifestyle changes for health.

In our discussion of Reiki healing Cathy shared about an urgent healing during a backwoods hike when medical care was far away. The healing was probably the most dramatic we had ever heard of, involving the closure of a gaping wound. She felt the

support of the group all around her and did it with another healer. Group intention can be very strong.

In speaking about Reiki healings we contrasted that with a secular approach to hands-on healing that was developed by a psychic and then tested by William Bengston.

Although he has his Ph.D. in sociology or a similar field he worked with many doctors and hospitals to test his system of healing.

His primary experiment has been done over ten times with consistent success. He has twelve mice injected with a form of breast cancer which is always fatal within twenty eight days. No mouse was ever known to survive longer.

He trained four students, most of whom were skeptical and unbelieving, to learn to concentrate on imagining positive, happy outcomes to twenty different life goals chosen by each one. They learned to review these like a slide show in their minds as they held their hands around the cage of six of the mice. They did this for one hour each day.

At the end of two or three weeks the mice had developed huge cancerous ulcers but then the ulcers turned black and were sucked back into the body. Suddenly all six mice were completely free of cancer. Even if they were injected with more deadly cancer cells, they had immunity for their entire two-year lifespan. The control group all died with a few telling exceptions.

We explored other ramifications of this experiment. The first tests were done with coordination of the biology department at St. Joseph College in New York. Similar tests were done at ten other institutions. All were successful!

It appears that even non-believing humans have the ability to heal other living beings, provided their minds have a positive outlook.

Another experiment at the Institute of HeartMath showed that a group trained to bring up positive images were able to use their own mental intention to tell DNA in a separate control room to wind up tighter. This simple test is easy to run and quite reliable in its results. The experiment was written up in a peer reviewed Scientific Journal.

Social Consciousness and Health

Our discussion also went back to page seventy six of *The Bond* to consider how stress and Western ideas of ambition and success can be very hard on the body. Studies of Japanese men who have migrated to California show that what they ate did not apparently increase their rate of heart disease but their change in lifestyle with fewer friends, family and community was a huge factor in their lifespan.

On the next page she mentions a study in Alameda County showing that those who felt lonely or socially isolated were two or three times more likely to die from heart disease and other causes than those who felt more connected. The biological fight or flight mechanism is subdued when we have a companion present or when we even think about someone else who we believe would support us emotionally. Having a pet gives a similar protection and often results in lower blood pressure.

The best way that has been demonstrated to prevent negative thoughts and influences coming to us from others (voodoo) is to focus on your own path or higher goals in your life. By tuning into

your own gifts and what you can do for your community, you somehow become immune to the negativity around you.

Akash compared this effect to the way that doctors can treat hundreds of sick patients during an epidemic and yet they do not get sick themselves. Perhaps their immune system works better because they are caring and giving to others. On that high note we ended the meeting.

To see our past class notes (51) and learn about MeetUps, here is the link: <http://www.meetup.com/consciousness-125/>



ULT building in Bangalore

Our Work

by Ramprakash - India (ULT Bangalore)

Thank you very much for your mail intimating us of your Theosophical initiative to spread broadcast the philosophy. Every effort to disseminate Theosophical ideas is good and will be fruitful, and as such we much appreciate your initiative.

Bangalore U.L.T. was founded in 1942 and it has been active since then till date, though in terms of number of people attending ULT meetings has dwindled. Nevertheless, we few are maintaining vigorous study and dissemination.



Meeting hall - ULT building

So far as our programs and activities are concerned, we post our quarterly program soft copies on our website. So do the students of the Mumbai Lodge. Some of the recorded lectures delivered here in Bangalore ULT and Mumbai ULT are hosted on the website for free audition. Our monthly magazine *The Theosophical Movement* are also hosted on the website - both the latest and the back issues. Feb. 2012 issue has just been uploaded.

We hold our regular public meetings and study classes. Our Sunday morning study class (*study of Isis Unveiled*) is open to internet participation via Skype, as mentioned on the home page of our website. Click here ...

We are aware of the ITC initiative and much appreciates the effort. We are not able to attend the same because of high cost of travel and stay, but we are in perfect sympathy with you.

* * * * *

Popularizing Theosophy in 2012 and Beyond

by Kathy Gann - USA

Carrying on the work of several Theosophical Societies that have called Denver, Colorado, home, the Denver Theosophical Society is a study center of the Theosophical Society in America-Adyar, chartered by Dorothy Abbenhouse in 1992.

When leadership of the group passed to me from Olivia Hansen, a seasoned group leader whose humor and gracious eloquence served the group beautifully, I had some big shoes to fill.

First among my plans was to publish a website. When I joined the TS in 1996, I found the group in the phone book. These days, we turn to the internet, so I felt a web presence was necessary. With no budget at my disposal, I purchased inexpensive software and sat down to design our website ... hours later, I had the beginnings of an arguably pitiful-looking website. Surrendering, I went to bed. Just before falling asleep, the colors and design for our website popped into my mind, whole and complete. It felt solidly "right," so I implemented the design the next morning. Admittedly not the most sophisticated site on the web, it nevertheless serves its purpose, and you're invited to visit at www.DenverTS.org.

Like most groups, our membership has waxed and waned, but has recently grown to nineteen. Many of our regular attendees

are non-members. Most meetings are open to the public, the exceptions being two members' meetings per year. Our openness to the public expresses our vision of making wisdom teachings available to anyone who wants them, at low or no cost. Our task today, as for early Theosophists, still involves "popularizing a knowledge of Theosophy," and there is much to be done.

A typical month involves two programs, with a break over the summer. One program per month is a study and discussion of courses prepared by TSA so we can easily offer core theosophical teachings to the public at no cost. We "set out the buffet" of teachings, and visitors are free to graze or feast as their appetite dictates.

Our second program each month often involves a guest speaker or film screening. We've toured a Buddhist temple, held a healing fair, and have taken children into nature to build fairy houses. Click to see our fairy house video. That was the day I discovered that to be led from the unreal to the real, we need only get into nature, preferably with children. We enjoy a holiday party/program each December and a "wisdom walk" at the Denver Botanic Gardens in May. As we stroll the gardens' beauty, we ponder a brief wisdom teaching, then share our insights on the deck near a lily pond.

Since 1997, our group has offered a healing meditation service, linked in recent years to the Theosophical Order of Service. Another TOS project involves recycling batteries. We have diverted 208 pounds (and counting) of batteries from the landfills, thanks to TOS Liaison Doug Fisichella.

Doug's wife, Louise, has undertaken the role of librarian, and our sizeable (thanks to kind donations) library is beautifully displayed

in their home. At a recent library open house, the books nearly glowed as visitors browsed the rows of treasures old and new. Doug, a second-generation theosophist who writes and lectures on Theosophy, loves having a Theosophical library so handy.



Denver TS group at Denver Botanic Gardens, May, 2009

We spread the word of upcoming events by a growing email list. Recipients get an email reminder of each program two days in advance, each featuring the most beautiful nature photography I can find. Pretty pictures may not increase attendance, but as one recipient commented, "they get the email opened." I use iContact software to turn each reminder into a micro-newsletter,

offering free resources and tidbits of interest from the theosophical world and beyond. For larger programs, we use free advertising such as Craigslist.org and online community event calendars. Occasionally, we co-sponsor programs with other groups to increase attendance.

Outside our TS group lies a world of opportunity to offer theosophical ideas in attractive ways: blogging, online discussion sites, even a YouTube channel (visit ours here) to name a few, though nothing beats heart-to-heart conversation. How about sharing your favorite theosophical quote on Facebook? Our challenges today in sharing Theosophical ideas differ from those faced by early Theosophists, but our opportunities are made exponentially greater by today's technology. Never have theosophists enjoyed so many opportunities to popularize a knowledge of Theosophy, ease suffering, and offer a vision of wholeness to the world.

Our Work

by Herman C. Vermeulen - The Netherlands

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

The power of working together

Theosophy teaches us the essential unity of all that lives. Everything is connected with everything else and all beings work together for the common goal of Spiritual Growth. This principle is so simple and logical, that in fact it is hard to understand why there are people who believe they can do better on their own. We need each other to grow and everyone knows synergy through working together produces better results than can be obtained individually.

Consequently Universal Brotherhood is a fact of Nature and it is the duty of all Theosophists not only to promote this fact by sharing knowledge with the public but perhaps more important than that by example. That is the reason why members of the Theosophical Society Point Loma - Blavatskyhouse put so much emphasis on working together when preparing public lectures, conducting courses, writing articles for the Lucifer Magazine, publishing books, etc.

A perfect example of the teamwork within the TS is the annual Symposium organized in May each year. Since 2011 this is an international two-day event where Theosophical ideas are shared with the public through lectures and workshops, with an English - Dutch translation service available. All lectures are recorded and a number of them are posted online for free

watching. (See website www.blavatskyhouse.org)

The Symposium is a joint effort from a large number of TS volunteers / members.

They work together intensively all year around spending many hours in selecting the themes, preparing lectures, arranging accommodation, meals & drinks, designing and printing PR materials, website, audio & video and much more.

All lectures and workshops are prepared by a different team of TS members every year. The team includes fresh members as well as members with many years of experience in studying Theosophy. They form together a cohesive discussion group which weekly meet, for the first time some six months prior to the event.

For preparing and structuring the program of lectures and workshops the esoteric approach is adopted. At first the team builds up together a global vision on the theme selected for the event and what message it wishes to get across to the public. Next, via a meticulous process of studying and sharing views and opinions the team breaks down that picture in main subjects and subsequently into details per subject. Eventually the entire program for the symposium emerges in a natural sequence of lectures and workshops. Only at the final moment it is decided who will deliver which speech!

This unique approach The Theosophical Society Point Loma - Blavatskyhouse has adopted for the organization of its annual symposium proofs the power of working together to be superior to working independently. Because as the ancients Greeks already taught us: " The whole is greater than the sum of its parts".

Our Work

by Diana Chapotin - France
From the Theosophical Order of Service

As private citizens, Theosophists are very active in humanitarian service work. The role of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) is to provide a framework in which they can undertake projects in each other's company, where individual initiatives can be strengthened by collaborative action and advocacy. The TOS provides a forum where Theosophists can seek the light that theosophical principles shed on issues of contemporary concern. It is a place where social action as spiritual practice is valued and nurtured. All students of Theosophy are welcome to participate in its projects, whether they are members of a Theosophical organisation or not.

Founded in 1908, the TOS is active today, to varying degrees, in 30 countries. Anyone who reads the TOS's electronic newsletter will have noticed the wide variety of service projects engaged in. For example, through more than 100 groups spread across India, the TOS runs schools, coaching classes, pre-primary learning centres, adult literacy classes, boarding establishments for the blind, for orphans and the aged, vocational training centres for women, free medical dispensaries and eye treatment as well as naturopathy, acupressure, ayurvedic treatment and yoga therapy centres.

The TOS's humanitarian projects are developed with an eye to the long term autonomy and well-being of those helped. For example, the TOS in the Philippines has adopted entire villages,

helping them toward self-sufficiency through livelihood training, interest free loans, health, nutrition and medical intervention, parenting skills and values programmes.



In line with the TOS's policy of helping needy communities towards autonomy, the TOS in Hungary has adopted a northern village with a large contingent of Roms. Members visit the village as often as possible, camping there each summer. They are collaborating with the town's social workers to help the Roms with clothing, child care material, employment opportunities and so on.

There is no proselytizing of Theosophical doctrine in the Theosophical Order of Service's work but members recognize

the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of children's growth in the educational programs offered.



As a response to the current famine in the Horn of Africa, the TOS in Kenya adopted a village in August 2011, providing staple food items for six months. With the support of TOS groups around the world, a bore hole has been constructed to provide water. Seedlings and fruit trees are being given. The next step is to provide the villagers with solar lighting.

TOS educational programs attempt to increase awareness of global issues.



TOS groups are free to select their own projects.



Brisbane TOS help transform industrial waste land into a park.



In the past few years, the TOS in Chennai has facilitated free eye checks for over 10,000 underprivileged children and adults.



Tertiary level classes have been started in a slum area in the Philippines where formal courses in Theosophy are offered.



Members in the USA attend a workshop on dealing with the difficult changes life brings with courage and openness, moving from a "curing" mode to a "healing" mode.



Many dozens of groups around the world perform the TOS's healing ritual. This is one of the TOS's most widespread activities.

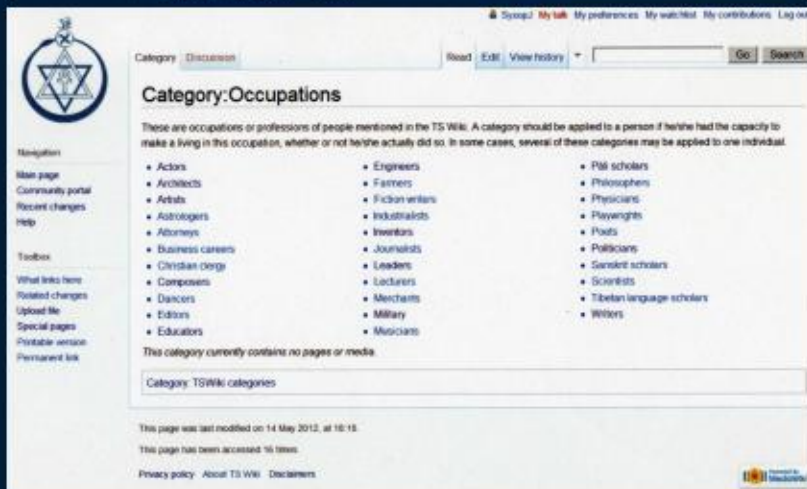
As mentioned above, there is an international newsletter online. It is full of information about the TOS and about Theosophists associated with it. If you would like to receive this on-line newsletter automatically, all you need to do is this: Send a message telling which country you live in to: tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Subscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.

On the TOS's website, there is a "start-up kit" for those interested in forming a new TOS group: [click here!](#)

The website contains resource material (articles, interviews, inspiring quotations ...) freely available for use in TS magazines and at branch meetings.

If you would like to join us in our attempts to make theosophical teachings of transformative value in the world, you are most welcome!





Images 1 and 2

Our Work

by Janet Kerschner and Pablo Sender - USA

The Theosophical Society in America is about to unveil the **TS Wiki**, or **Theosophical Society Wiki**, a collaborative encyclopedia for theosophists everywhere. We are using the name Theosophical Society in the broadest sense possible. All groups and individuals who respect the work of TS Founder Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and her associates are invited to participate in building this wiki into a base of research for serious students around the globe. Our aim is to provide a platform for people interested in Theosophy to collaborate in assembling information that is accurate, well-documented, and helpful.

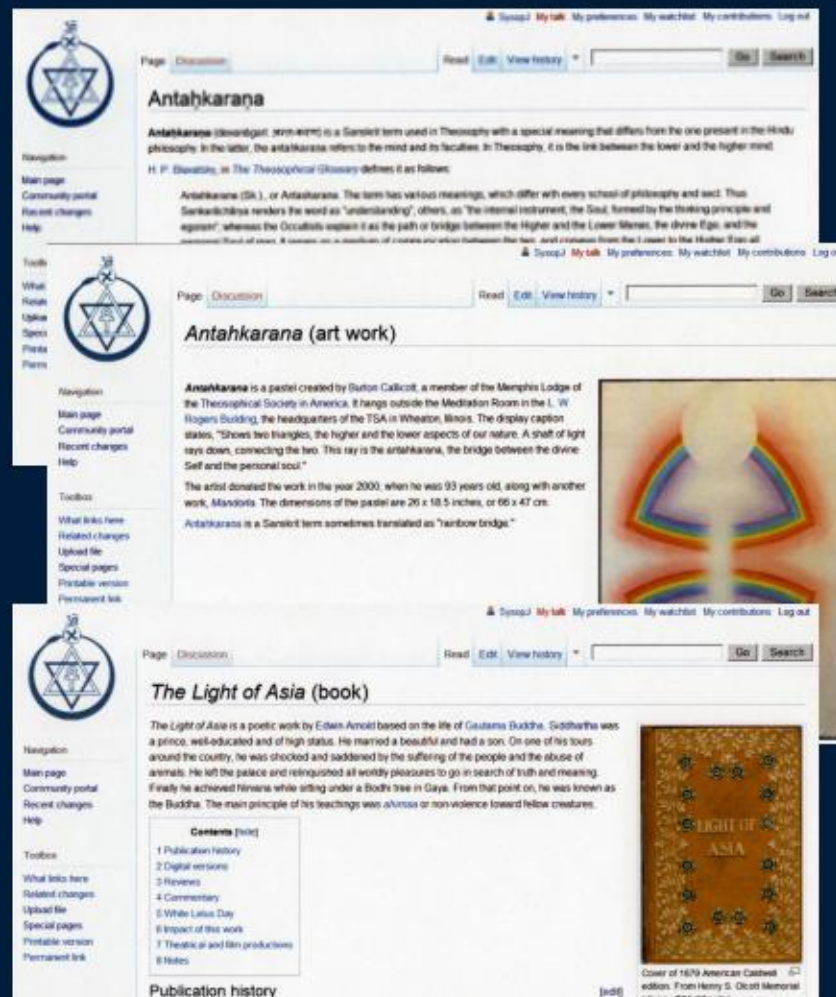
People who use Wikipedia will be comfortable with TS Wiki, because it is based on the same software. That said, this is not Wikipedia with its edit wars and sometimes spurious information. Quotations and facts must be attributed to sources, and opinions must be clearly identified as such. The wiki will be open for reading by anyone, but editing will be limited to people who are willing to identify themselves and to abide by policies that emphasize openness, brotherliness, scholarship, and civility. Readers should find useful information, and editors treat each other with respect.

Some sample pages of the wiki accompany this article. The **main page** initially has four sections leading to the Mahatma Letters, H. P. Blavatsky, categories of wiki pages, and a history calendar. [**image 1**] Each blue phrase in the wiki text is a link to

more information. The categories help to organize articles. One example is the page of "**occupations**," each of which leads to a list of people in the wiki who are associated with that occupation. **[image 2]** Wiki pages are being established for people like **H. S. Olcott**; concepts like **Antahkarana**; art works like the pastel **Antahkarana**; books like **The Light of Asia**; organizations; places; and events. **[image 3-6]** Each article about a theosophical concept, for example, typically begins with a quotation from HPB's writings or a first-generation theosophist such as Subba Row. Clearly labeled sections of the article might present the ways that the term is applied in Hinduism or Buddhism; how is it interpreted by people like G. de Purucker, Annie Besant, and Robert Crosbie; or its usage in popular culture.



Images 3 - 6 >



A special feature of the TS Wiki will be a portal into *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. George Linton, coauthor of *Readers Guide to the Mahatma Letters*, purchased a set of color slides of the letters for the TSA in the 1983. Few theosophical libraries own the slides, so Janet had arranged for them to be scanned as a preservation measure. When we saw the vibrancy of the digital color images, we realized that the best way to share this uniquely valuable resource would be through the wiki. We have created a wiki article for each of the Mahatma Letters showing images of all the letter's pages, with transcriptions and notes. The words of the Mahatmas seem to leap off the screen, as the images bring a great sense of immediacy. Theosophical terms and names within the letters are linked to other wiki articles. The three-column format was a suggestion of Vic Hao Chin, Jr., editor of the chronological edition of the Mahatma Letters. [image 7-8] We are also building tools such as cross-references between the Barker numbering and the chronological edition. [image 9]

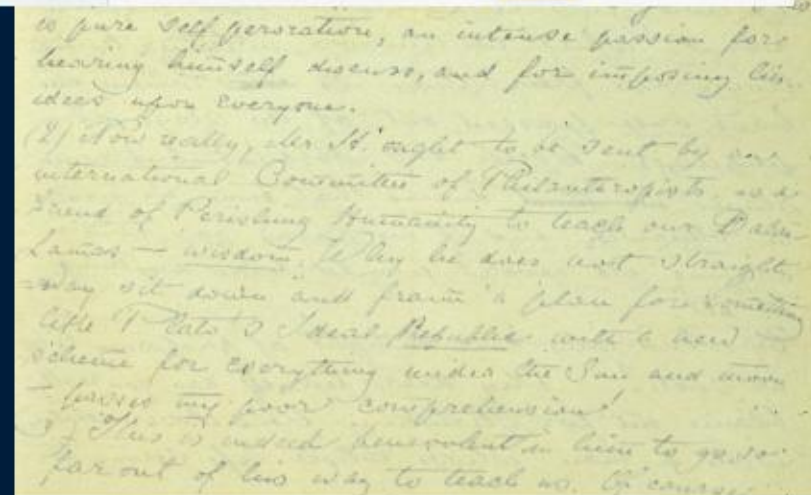


Chronological to Barker Cross-reference

The table cross-references the numbers of the Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett in the chronological sequence of Vic Hao Chin, Jr. to the corresponding numbers of Barker's topical editions.

Chronological number	Barker number	Chronological number	Barker number	Chronological number	Barker number	Chronological number	Barker number	Chronological number	Barker number
1	1	29	29	40	76	88	10	117	93
2	2	30	134	41	17	89	48	118	96
3a	3a	31	40	42	19	90	22	119	99
3b	3b	32	114	43	66	91	110	120	86
3c	3c	33	38	44	131	92	84	121	84
4	143	34	39	45	11	93a	23a	122	87
5	4	35	41	46	14	93b	23b	123	88
6	128	36	36	47	16	94	117	124	94
7	106	37	37	48	16	95	73	125	81
8	95	38	90	49	69	96	92	126	82

Image 9



Images 7 - 8

Vic has been putting articles from the *Theosophical Encyclopedia* into a wiki called **Theosopedia**. We determined that the two wikis are complementary rather than competitive. Theosopedia is superb source for articles written by specialist scholars in a traditional encyclopedia format. TS Wiki, on the other hand, is intended to be collaborative and dynamic, with images of original documents, audiovisual materials, scholarly footnotes, and multiple viewpoints. TS Wiki pages refer the reader to Theosopedia articles wherever possible, but the TS Wiki also includes a great deal of internal linking, plus external links to a huge variety of resources. It should also be possible in the future to use the TS Wiki platform in multiple languages, with inter-language linking.

The infrastructure of the wiki is still being put in place - policies, categories, "Help" articles, Creative Commons licensing, and much more. We have made use of materials from the Blavatsky Trust, Blavatsky Study Center, Theosophical University Press Online, Canadian Theosophical Federation, and many more websites that are maintained with great dedication. We especially appreciate the efforts of **Theosophy Forward** and the **International Theosophical Conferences** in collaborative publishing. Let's take all our complementary skills and interests, and build the wiki into a tool for the 21st century.

The URL for the wiki will be www.tswiki.net, set to be available in July. Watch the theosophical discussion groups, TSA's e-newsletter, and www.theosophical.org for the announcement.

The Paracelsian Order and Its Theosophical Work

by John H. Drais - USA



John H. Drais

Just 20 years ago I published an article in *Theosophical History: A Quarterly Journal of Research* on The Paracelsian Order and why we consider ourselves a theosophical organization. [1] This same article, "The Paracelsian Order is a Theosophical Organization" is available on the front page of the website of The Paracelsian Order (<http://www.madregrande.org>). You are cordially invited to download, translate, and disseminate it as you will. For further information on our founding, please see "The Roots of Madre Grande", in the Hall of Learning on the same web site. Reading all three of these articles will give a much clearer picture of our Theosophical work.

Establishing a theosophical, religious organization is admittedly controversial, however, it is the express intent of the Mahatma KH and the Maha Chohan that their labors should result in a "...needed universal religious philosophy" [2] and be "...the

cornerstone, the foundation of the future religion of humanity." [3] It was with the hope for their sanction and spiritual support that this endeavor was and is attempted. While freely admitting our own inadequacy for this task, it is by such humble beginnings that all great edifices are grown. We are but a seed that has barely begun to sprout. Nonetheless, there are signs that this seed is viable and its roots are starting to spread. We are now forming our second monastic, theosophical community in Central California.

Believing, along with Maimonides, that life must be simplified to allow more useful time for inner work [4], a community of like-minded seekers was gathered together to share the worldly burden as well as to lend support to one another's individual search. A piece of land large enough to provide the basis for life, livelihood and education was secured in 1975. Our utopian plans, along the lines suggested in a letter to Emerson by Ripley in 1840, [5] allows some personal property in an open government run by consensus. This was achieved by using a monastic model, even though the image conjured by the word "monastery" envisions a bunch of similarly attired monks all believing and acting the same. But that is not the essence of monastery. The *monas* or unity in "monastery" is the key. A group of leaders all working together, like strings on a *vina*, [6] is what is needed. Brotherhood is a necessity. Since there is no body that claims to have divine authority, there can be no dogma, and every member is freed from having to believe what is mandated by the group to which he belongs.

Every religious, cultural expression has to be allowed as does each Theosophical tradition. We see this as true Theosophy. The leaders, even though they be Mahatmas are not infallible. [7]

So we read the literature of all theosophical groups, religions, and more modern writings for their Theosophical content. The goal, of course, is to make Theosophy practical and "to find objective expression in an all embracing code of life." [8] One that guides each of us in our personal spiritual search for positive perfection.

Over the past 36 years, we have introduced thousands of visitors to our theosophical way of thinking and proven that theosophy can be practical and is not just an extreme eye doctrine.

Although we teach Theosophy as originally presented in the *Mahatma Letters*, *The Secret Doctrine* and in commentaries thereon from volumes published by all theosophical organizations, our emphasis is on the heart doctrine. The Chohan clearly expressed to Hume and Sinnett that "... absolute self-sacrifice ... philanthropy, divine kindness, as all the highest virtues" [9] is the true essence of Theosophy. Our "religious" practice consists of Loving-Kindness All-the-Time and Mindfulness in daily living. We have on-going courses to spread these practices and teach them in retreats and over the phone to groups and individuals. Please visit the Hall of Teaching on our web site. The point is to get our psychic brain into a state of silence to allow the heart to rule. [10] We feel, as in *The Voice of the Silence*, that we must ignite "the light of daring, burning in the heart" for "... that alone can guide." [11]

Our "religious" festivals are the solstice and equinoxes and we read *The Four Sacred Seasons* [12] and *In the Temple* [13] as they did at The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society in Pt Loma, California [14] for many years at these significant turning points of the year.

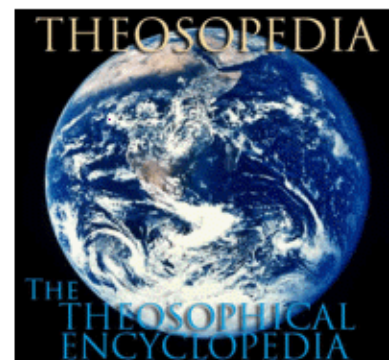
Footnotes:

1. Vol. 3, No. 6, April 1991.
2. Margaret Conger, *Combined Chronology for Use with The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett and The Letters to H.P. Blavatsky* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973), 38.
3. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Original Programme of the Theosophical Society*, (Adyar, Madras, India: The Theosophical Society, 1966), 44.
4. Moses Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*. Translated by M. Friedlander (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., n.d.), 126.
5. J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* (Gale research, Inc, 3rd edition, 1989), 102.
6. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, (Pt Loma, California: Theosophical University Press, 1936), 51.
7. *The Original Programme*, 4-6.
8. *The Original Programme*, 45.
9. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, First Series*. Translated and compiled by C. Jinarajadasa, "Letter 1 from the Maha Chohan to A.P. Sinnett." (Adyar, Madras, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), 8.
10. *The Inner Group Teachings of H.P. Blavatsky*. Compiled and annotated by H.J. Spierenburg (Pt. Loma Publications, 1995), 171-3.
11. *The Voice of the Silence*, 54.
12. G. de Purucker, *The Four Sacred Seasons*, (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1979).
13. G. de Purucker, *In The Temple*, (Pt Loma: Pt Loma Publications, 1994).
14. Emmett A. Greenwalt, *A California Utopia: Point Loma: 1897-1942*. (Pt Loma: Pt Loma Publications, 1978).

Theosophy in Manifold Ways

by John Algeo - USA

I work on (and I hope for) Theosophy in a variety of ways, such as contributing to *Theosophy Forward* with both articles and editing.



For a while, I was also working on a new, revised, and online version of the 2006 hard-back paper edition of the *Theosophical Encyclopedia* as its General Editor, alongside Vicente Hao Chin Jr. as Associate Editor, and Robert Ellwood as Consulting Editor. That proved to be more than I could handle, so I resigned from the formal position, but I still contribute to the project, which will cover subjects treated by any of the societies historically connected with Theosophy and will draw no distinctions of value

among them. Strict neutrality is observed with respect to all variations within the tradition. As the character named Sgt. Joe Friday on the TV program *Dragnet* frequently said: "Just the facts, ma'am."

Others can also help with this project in a number of ways: (1) If you think of topics not covered in the print edition of the *Theosophical Encyclopedia*, that should be in the online edition, let us know what they are. (2) If you are knowledgeable about some topics being worked on and are willing to help us by reading them and making suggestions for correcting, expanding, or up-dating them, let us know what they are. (3) If you have any suggestion on the content or style of the *Theosophical Encyclopedia on the Web*, please pass them on; we want this to be a work that is maximally helpful to both Theosophists and interested or curious non-Theosophists. (4) You can pass on this message to others who might find it of interest and tell them to get in touch with me.

This is a major project, and we'd like to involve in it as many willing workers as are able to contribute. Remember: Each one of us knows something that few others do, and there is an old definition of an "expert authority" as a damned fool a thousand miles from home. All of us are more distant than that from our true Devachanic home, so none of us should claim the role of "expert authority," but we can each contribute to Theosophical work in our own inimitable way.

Yours fraternally in the great work, John Algeo - jalgeo@uga.edu

Our Work

by Anton Rozman - Slovenia

Today's modern technology and the internet allow the individual Theosophical worker to act in the spirit of the Mahachohan's letter: "... For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize knowledge of Theosophy. ... the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbor, to cause to benefit by it as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can, which constitutes the true Theosophist."

Throughout my life experiences I have been constantly wondered whether it is possible to turn the world into "a better place to live," whether it is possible for human relationships to become more respectful and loving. This constant questioning and my attempts to contribute a little to make this happen with my limited strength and voluntary work, finally led me to Theosophy and the Theosophical Society.

I started to study and learn, and unfortunately discovered that the Theosophical Society, as an organization, does not always work everywhere in accordance with Olcott's words: "... the Society ... platform is so drafted as to exclude all dogmas, all social contests, all causes of strife and dissension such as are begotten of questions of sex, color, religion, and fortune, and make altruism, tolerance, peace and brotherliness the cornerstones upon which it rests."

However, the objects of the Theosophical Society continue to inspire many individuals, who have dedicated themselves to serve and to come to the aid where and when it is needed. So, in my translation work I could always rely on the support and encouragement of Anton Jesse, I could learn the first steps in web design from George Duguay, I could enter the online Theosophical community with the help of Erica Georgiades and exchange views and experiences with many other dedicated theosophical workers from various Theosophical traditions.

Convinced as Thomas Jefferson put it: "... religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God, ... [that] he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship. ... [and that] Moral attitudes should remain in the realm of an individual's free choice," I was trying to work in a sense to prepare to interested readers as much as possible "coated Theosophical table" from which they can freely choose that spiritual food they need most at a given time.

My work for the online magazine *Theosophy Forward*, which is trying in the background to develop some practical application of the first object of the Theosophical Society - creation of the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, therefore represents in my eyes a synthesis of my previous work, which is hopefully bringing some tangible results.



Anton Rozman in his home office in beautiful Koper - Slovenia, making Theosophy Forward truly an international undertaking

Our Work

by Gilson Moraes Lara - Brazil

Hi there, my name is Gilson and I'm a military officer in the Brazilian army. I am not a member of the Theosophical Society but due to the fact that I need to read a lot of the material published on *Theosophy Forward* I have become very interested in what Theosophy has to offer.

I work in an IT unit, developing WebPages. Some years ago colleague of mine told me that I should participate in a project concerning the development of the on-line magazine *Theosophy Forward*. This would offer me a unique opportunity to help with the set-up of the first version of this independent magazine in 2009, thus increasing the magazine's outreach on the worldwide internet.

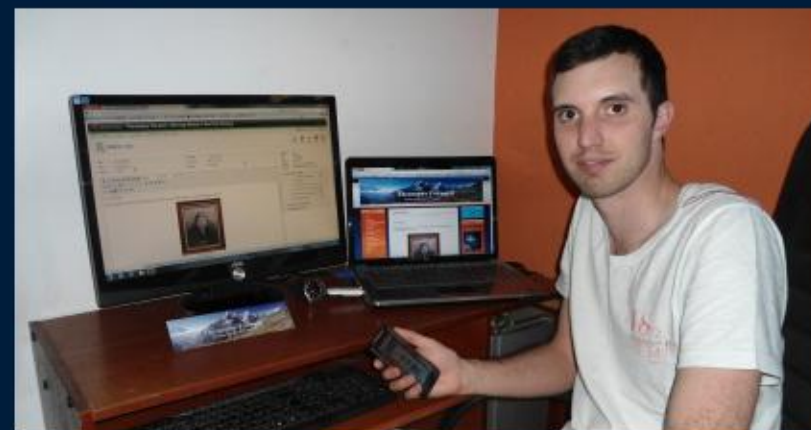
Theosophy Forward first went on the air in 2009 and it makes use of an open software source (OSS) applying "content management system" (CMS) Joomla, where one has the freedom to easily change the contents at any moment without having to depend on a technical or specialized administrator.

Theosophy Forward, for its development uses all the facilities Joomla offers and it has become my main venture over the past three years. The idea of using open or free software is fully in accordance with the main philosophy behind the magazine, which is fully dedicated to **freedom of thought**. The software gives readers worldwide access to all on-line articles which are collected by the magazine's compilers from all corners of the globe.

Open source software in general offers many possibilities and these are expanding and improving steadily. The magazine *Theosophy Forward* follows this trend and this is translated into an always contemporary and accessible language, pleasing many around the world.

I work closely with the magazine's editor Jan Nicolaas Kind, a Dutchman who lives in Brasilia, and I must admit that he is quite inspirational when it comes to Theosophy. According to him we all are interconnected on this planet of ours and I believe he's right. He has told me also that he will ultimately convince me to become a vegetarian but to be honest I don't think he will succeed.

Working for *Theosophy Forward* is quite a challenge, consuming much of my free time, but when I see the results and statistics I realize that this magazine is trying hard and succeeding bringing people together.



Gilson Moraes Lara at the control panel of Theosophy Forward

Our Work

by Gary Kidgell - Scotland

The Scottish Section of the Theosophical Society is currently striving towards enhancing the vitality and the visibility of our organization as a means of pursuing its primary objective of Universal Brotherhood. The concept of Universal Brotherhood is, of course, based upon the realization that creation is infused by the One Divine Life which seeks, via its constituent parts- the monads, development and expression of its hitherto latent qualities through the experience of physical form.

The pursuit of the second and third objects of our society, the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science and the investigation of nature's unexplained laws and the powers latent in Man lead one to an understanding of the nature and the purpose of their spiritual essence, the monad or divine spark, which is engaged upon a long evolutionary journey as part of a divine plan.

It is my opinion, and that of my fellow Theosophists in Scotland, that one begins to embrace the classical teachings of Ancient Wisdom as they experience 'divine unrest' whereby the transient affairs of the material world and its associated maya, no longer satisfy them nor hold them in thrall. This of course relates to what we in Theosophy often refer to as the 'pull of the monad' when the spiritual path beckons.

The Scottish Section endeavours continuously towards promulgating the wisdom teachings whilst conveying to its

membership the reality of the spiritual path and of the challenges and rewards associated with this as conveyed by the wisdom teachings. On this basis members can both share their understanding whilst also inspiring each other in their efforts towards realising the society's objects as they tread the path. We in Scotland have been greatly assisted in this respect through the introduction of the one year study course entitled the Diploma in Theosophy in 2010. This is offered by the English Section and is the brainchild of their president Eric McGough. The Diploma addresses the key concepts which underlie the wisdom teachings thereby serving as a basis towards the understanding and application of the timeless truths contained therein. It provides students with a solid foundation towards deeper levels of study and spiritual practice in relation to the occult classics.



Scottish members at work

The year 2010 witnessed the introduction of the Diploma with 16 Scottish students successfully completing the course the following year. Students commented upon the remarkable depth and application of the teachings of Theosophy and of the need for these teachings to be promulgated so that they permeate the human condition as a means of assisting towards the realization of Universal Brotherhood.

The course addresses Theosophical concepts including those of universal laws; involution and evolution; hierarchies of life; the human constitution in accordance with the wisdom teachings; reincarnation and karma; cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis.

It has been a wonderful experience to witness students display both wonder and joy as they embrace the core teachings of Theosophy whilst experiencing the 'pull of the monad' calling them back to their source of origin. Course participants have remarked upon the new understanding and inspiration which they have experienced through embracing the concepts outlined on the course. They have outlined how the contents of the course have offered them a framework towards understanding the process of life in both the outer and the inner worlds and of the way in which the core teachings of Theosophy provide answers to questions which are fundamental to human existence and yet which remained unaddressed in the contemporary halls of learning within our world. Questions such as *Who are we? Where do we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go to from here?*

In 2012 another group of 16 students have enrolled for the Diploma displaying similar levels of enthusiasm and application to their predecessors. As in 2011, our students follow a modular form of study assisted by four seminars where they may attend

both as a means of enhancing their understanding of course contents and to meet their fellow students. These meetings have been most enjoyable and particularly inspiring to all concerned as the participants discover the timeless truths contained within the wisdom teachings which can assist them in treading the spiritual path which leads to the source of their being, and in doing so contribute towards the evolution of humanity and our planet in general.



Scottish members

The revival of the Theosophical Lodge of The Hague

by Wim Leys - The Netherlands



Drawing of the Building in The Hague

In 1897, thirteen Theosophists started the first lodge in The Netherlands, in The Hague. Within that year six other lodges in different Dutch cities were founded, and the Theosophical Society of The Netherlands was a fact. On May 14, 1897 the charter was signed by H.S. Olcott.

The number of members grew rapidly in the first decennium of the 20th century, and in The Hague the building which was purchased in 1905 soon had become too small and in 1916 an enlargement was realized, directed by the Theosophical architect Karel De Bazel. This remained to be the location till 1991, when due to rising costs of maintenance, another building was purchased.

After World War II the archipelago of the Dutch Indies in the Indian Ocean, which had been colonised by the Dutch for three and a half centuries, became the independent Republic Indonesia. The revolution caused thousands of civilians to flee to The Netherlands, of whom many settled in The Hague. A large number of these had been members of the Theosophical Society in the Dutch Indies, and now joined the Lodge in The Hague, which became the largest lodge in the country. However, as we are all mortal, the ageing of the members and their passing out of physical life caused the membership to decline rapidly in the eighties and nineties.

In the beginning of the 21st century the number of members was heading under 20, with an all time low of 12.

If nothing would turn the tide it was clear that this lodge, the oldest and at one time largest of The Netherlands would come to an end soon. So a plan for revival was made. Public relations, the improvement of the public lectures, an introductory course to Theosophy for newcomers, more study groups, our own website www.den Haag.theosofie.nl. These were considered to be the means by which to accomplish a revival.

Financial means however were limited, so advertising in newspapers and other periodicals was too expensive. But distributing the booklet with the yearly program to much more places, like public library's, bookshops, vegetarian restaurants, health food stores etc., cost nothing, only took some time of the volunteers who did it. Like in nature, plants living on earth and creatures living in the oceans release billions of seeds for a few plants and creatures to spring up, and even less to survive, so does successful advertising work. This is often overlooked, and too little is done, but it is of tremendous significance, especially

in big cities, where thousands of activities are trying to draw the attention of the public. Also, although ones financial means are small, one needs to invest in order to be able to get results. And once having become enthusiastic, members are willing to donate, each to his or her ability.

As for the public lectures on Monday evenings, at the lowest point, just about seven years ago approximately only eight people attended them on average. Now, after having improved the quality *and* quantity from (ten to twenty lectures a year) the average attendance is approximately twenty.

Since the word 'Lodge' actually means 'workplace' it was thought desirable to have more activities in this sense, not only passive listening to lectures given by experts. At this moment in 2012 we have six study groups working in our lodge, in chronological order of starting date:

- 2004 - Study group Secret Doctrine on Saturday;
- 2007 - First annually held introductory course on Saturday, 15 students;
- 2008 - Meditation course based on HPB's meditation diagram on Saturday;
- 2009 - Annual study group following the introductory course on Saturday;
- 2011 - A second study group Secret Doctrine 'for beginners', 17 students, the one on Saturdays having become 'for advanced students';
- 2012 - Study group on Saturday "Apocalypse unsealed" by James M. Pryse.

One can imagine that, looking from a higher plane to the city of The Hague, one can see at night the lights of spiritual work of

different groups and institutions in this still materialistic age, and see how one light, which was so bright a hundred years ago but was almost extinguished, has flared up again in the 21st century.

I hope this short article will stimulate and give hope to Theosophists in other lodges, centres and countries who find themselves in the same situation. We owe it to the founders to continue the work for which they sacrificed so much.



A square in the center of the Hague

Children's Programs at Olcott

by Lily Boyd - USA

It all began in the winter of 2011 when I moved onto the grounds of the Theosophical Society in America (TSA). While I was walking on the grounds, where a statue of Mother Mary is located and the labyrinth, I had a vision to have a children's program. It was a dream to see parents and children come and visit the TSA and see how welcoming and friendly we are. I also wanted people to be exposed to our beautiful library.



Bed time stories at the Olcott Library, Lily Boyd on the far right

While making plans Theosofest, our annual open house that attracts over 1,000 people, was approaching. I decided to have a

"Kids' Korner" booth and started to get some of the ladies to help. They, too, believed in the vision for the kids. Kids' Korner was a success.

While still thinking about a regular children's program - bedtime stories - my husband Tim (Tim Boyd, TSA president) told me that in January we were to have a children's school on campus. It gave me a chill. I felt it was mother nature, the powerful grounds, Mother Mary ... everyone heard my prayers, and now we were going to hear children's screams, running, and singing. It was wonderful. The bedtime stories began in the spring.

The school children are so happy with the storytelling, and we are happy to see the kids happy. The help from a wonderful group of friends has made the dream come true.

Thanks to all of them.



Pay attention ... in pyjamas



What a beauty ...

Our Work

by Halldór Haraldsson - Iceland

Our Theosophical work in Iceland has in recent years probably been on a par with that of other countries in Europe: lectures, discussions, courses in meditation etc. during the winter months and Summer School in the summer.

As it may be of help to all of us to share information on the work we do in each country I venture to give a few points from our work.

For one thing in recent years we have been widening the topics of the lectures and their sources. The fact is that there are so many fine authors nowadays who may not be members of the TS but are writing remarkable books on similar subjects and in the same spirit which we welcome. By doing this we are not undermining the value of our fine TS writers, we are only updating and making an important addition.

As to the selection of lecturers and topics, besides our members we have got very fine lecturers from outside the TS, e.g. from our universities or other institutions presenting valuable subjects thus widening our horizons. Sticking mostly to the same TS authors could give the impression of a religious sect, which the TS is not. We make of course sure that the topics are related to the aims of the TS. As in other countries new technical means are used such as power-point presentations. We also have lectures without technical means, nowadays usually given without papers. Much appreciated are lectures by artists presenting their own art works with projectors and comments. Also lectures on the music of inspired composers

with examples from their works together with some guidance on the art of listening are also very popular.

One of our lodges deals especially with ancient traditions regarding proportions in architecture, how lands in ancient times were settled according to certain traditional customs. In fact the very first lecture at Blavatsky's flat in New York in September 1875 was given by the architect Mr. Felt on "The Lost Canon of Proportions of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans." Some members of this Icelandic lodge have been studying along these lines and done a remarkable job, publishing a few books, lectures on DVD etc. This work has brought in studies on measurement-proportions on land, origin of language, ancient symbols and has opened new views on the origin of the Icelandic nation. Most of this has its basis in Nordic mythology and the Icelandic Eddas.

For many years we have provided courses in meditation free of charge. Beside the practical instructions we have also given discourses on the philosophical background of meditation practices. Recently members have had the opportunity to try a new computer technique where a computer-program can be directly influenced by the mind, in which you get a feed-back of how well you can concentrate. The idea with this technique is to enable you to improve your concentration.

During our *Summer School* or *Summer Retreat* as it is now called, we have cut down the number of lectures and put instead:

1) Discussions and 2) Contributions from the members.

The discussions are sometimes linked with a DVD. What has also proved effective is when two members have a dialogue in front of an audience and at first not being in agreement on the

subject. The audience can then also take part as the two members go on discussing. Changes will of course occur in the process but they have to do their best to stick to their subject. In this manner the discussion can go into uncertain fields and if we are lucky we may see the subject in a new light or even discover something entirely new.

Last year we asked for contributions from the members in general and were surprised how many came forward with interesting subjects. This year we increased the time allotted for this program, which really made the high point of the Summer Retreat.

After all, whether by new or old methods, good results rest on our sincerity and how deeply we are involved. Even if a brilliant lecturer is not deeply interested and involved in his topic, do what he will, he will leave his audience dull and disinterested.

Finally. In all our work it is important to keep the fire of our old legacy alive and at the same time be aware of new developments in various fields.



Laugarvatn, where the TS in Iceland has held various summer retreats



Scarves and hats for homeless children and adults

Ignorance is Our True and Only Prison

by Danelys Valcarcel Cuellar - USA

Serving humanity through the Theosophical Society is one of the noblest and most uplifting paths one can ever tread. There are many ways of service, myriad forms of Life in this Cosmos. There are many great causes worthwhile to fight for. I would like to share with you a life lesson, and a most inspiring life changing experience I have had while serving at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in America.

For the last year and a half it has been my duty to work in collaboration with our Department of Education, as a Theosophical mentor in the Prison Program. Words fail to describe the great impact the Divine Wisdom can work in the heart of a "fallen man." It only takes one second of disconnection for a man to fall into darkness; a second that changes his life forever.

I remember one of my dearest teachers once said to me that there were three things that happened to a man in prison: *Either he loses his mind, loses his life, or he finds God.* These powerful words resonated in my mind for a long time until I myself witnessed them to be true. More powerful yet has been to patiently witness the extraordinary regenerative effect of Theosophical education on many of these brothers and sisters to the point of healing their minds, restoring their lives, and helping them reconnect with their Divine Source.

Mentoring prisoners is an enlightening experience. It certainly brings one down from the pedestal of teaching to the earthly ground of true learning, and one begins to observe life from a completely different perspective. Questions like -What is the true purpose of Education? What are those fundamental things that need to be taught? What is to be learned till the end of our lives? come to mind. The fact of corresponding anonymously with these men and women, "looking into their personal hand writing," their hearts and minds is a most humbling thing. One can not help but surrender with impersonal love to help these souls through their arduous karmic walk.

A prison cell does not limit a man or woman from serving the Divine Plan once their soul has awakened. As Madame Blavatsky shares with us in *Practical Occultism*: "One could be confined in a prison cell and yet be a worker for the cause." And sure enough, many of these fellows have found the most creative and inspiring ways to serve the Theosophical cause: through writing articles for our Quest magazine, hospice service in prison, mentoring others, reading to the elders who are almost blind, forming Theosophical study and mediation groups within their prisons, engaging in artistic activities like knitting scarves and hats for homeless children and adults, making peace sign and dream catcher necklaces for our little friends of the "Prairie School", etc. Who would have thought? Once more our dear H. P. B was right!

The above words are a call to service; a call to all those visible helpers working under the Theosophical Society, to take action in this altruistic cause. For those within the USA who would be interested in becoming a Theosophical mentor for our Prison Program, don't hesitate to contact our National Secretary and

head of the Education Department, Mr. David Bruce at education@theosophical.org. There is a long waiting list of earnest students eagerly waiting for a helping hand to begin their Theosophical journey. There are at this point, a total of 58 prisoners who are official members of the Theosophical Society in America, and hundreds more sincerely interested in Theosophy, but can not afford to pay for membership at the moment, whom we called "members at heart." We assist the latter group by answering their letters, offering correspondence courses, and free Theosophical books published by the TPH.

To those outside of the USA, who wonder how to contribute to this particular program, there is a very effective way you could join this cause, beyond time and space, and that is through your daily meditations. If you will, dedicate a few minutes of your day to consciously send brotherly thoughts of peace, light, and understanding to all those suffering souls in need of healing behind the mayavic bars of ignorance. This is the great life lesson I would like to share: *Ignorance, of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity and the Oneness of All Life, is our true and only prison.*



Abel

Our Work

by Marijn Gijsbers - The Netherlands

Let's start by introducing you to Abel, 22 years old, who lives in the slums of Lima, Peru:

"I belong to the millions of poor people, who have to leave their homes every day looking for a way to survive in this world of opportunities and frustration. The times we live in I can best describe as a period in which the government has forgotten us and we live in the margin of society.

There are not many people who think differently, like the founders of Cadena de Talentos (Chain of Talents), a foundation that is run by youngsters. It is the home where I develop myself, professionally and personally, into a person who loves his fellow man and desire to offer opportunities to children and youngsters in this forgotten part of society.

My goal in life is to fight poverty, a disease that takes away all hope from children and brings development to a standstill. Curing this disease is not easy, but it is not impossible either."

Together with twenty-three others Abel forms a 'chain of talent', a small scale project with large ambitions: sustainable development through investment in talented young people from the slums.

How does this 'chain of talent' work?

1. Cadena de Talentos invests in young, underprivileged talent

that has the capacity to bring about change in an environment that desperately needs it. Every year, ten youngsters between the ages of 15 and 18 get the chance to further their education after high school. They are selected on three criteria: talent, perseverance and a social character.



Chain of Talents

2. In addition to continuing their education this they gain skills to contribute to development through workshops, local foundation meetings and a yearly summer university.

3. Already during their studies they form a think-tank that starts projects and organizes education and training for children.

4. From the outset all students take on the moral obligation to apply their talent again in the slums where they are from.

Besides this they will also make a part of their future income available to other young, talented people, who can then become educated as well. In this way the foundation will become self-sustainable.

What has been achieved?

- A precedent has been set: the first young talents have proven it is possible with their background to study at a university. They will graduate in 2013.
- Several students are top of their faculty for their year at the university and considered leaders in their classes.
- An enormous social cohesion: they set up activities regularly and they study together all the time so that they can now heavily rely on each other. As an example: a new member who was suffering health issues and was ordered by the doctor to start exercising, was picked up by six other students to go running at 7 AM for three months.
- A daily board consisting of students (together with a representative from the Dutch board in a supervisory capacity) operates independently, starts up initiatives and runs activities and small projects through committees.
- And Abel? Abel was asked by his community to lead a program to further the development and education of about 200 children. Of course he could count on the help of his friends from Cadena de Talentos in running programs about which he says: 'the kids are doing great! They all have their dreams and talents. I can see them grow from day to day. It is wonderful to have the capacity to help them and even, in some way, be an example to them.'

Compassion in action?

As one of the founders of Cadena de Talentos, I am also an active member of the Theosophical Society, Point Loma in The Netherlands.

Applying universal principles and seeing them work for a greater good is fantastic. We of course built a strong shared vision when starting this foundation. When new youngsters become a member, we ask them not only to visualize their own dreams, but also to work together on a vision on what the slum they come from could become if a group of young, perseverant and well-educated professionals would set their minds to changing the status quo.

And now Abel is doing the same with the children in his community...

Like Abel says:

"It takes a bit of effort, but God will illuminate our hearts so that we can firmly continue on this path, spreading hope while we awaken our sense of living."

Our Work

by Sally Colbert

Introduction by Jan Nicolaas Kind

Our dear friend and co-worker Sally passed away last February. I was actually editing her article for the OUR WORK series when I received the news. Sally was a stalwart worker for Theosophy all her life, and as its President supported the initiatives taken by International Theosophy Conferences to bring Unity about among all Theosophical traditions. She and her husband Jim had many plans still. Sally was a remarkable, loveable, no-nonsense woman who devoted her very last moments to the Cause. She was and is shining example for all of us; an inspiration to continue with the work that needs to be done. After consulting with Jim we have decided to honor Sally by publishing her contribution in full.

We, my husband Jim and I, are feeling the energy of union with all Theosophical traditions and are putting this into practice. Although I have a United Lodge of Theosophists background I now feel a kinship with all Theosophists. I was involved in bringing greater life into International Theosophy Conferences, Inc. and was its President for a number of years. My intention was to give this organization a primary focus for Theosophical unity. There is a statement in the teachings the Masters cannot help unless there is unity among Theosophists. I discovered there have been hundreds of Theosophists over the years working towards unity who have not been recognized and given the prominence they so deserve. We have felt so honored to be a part of this.

One concrete result of unity among Theosophical traditions is that it opens the door to a vast storehouse of Theosophical writings and wonderful people wanting to help making this available. Particularly, those doing research. With this realization, Jim and I decided it was possible to bring Theosophical ideas into the modern mainstream. Particularly, where there is hardship in the path of so many. We began a website: www.beyond-the-gates.com and have written articles on schizophrenia, suicide, Theosophical psychotherapy, and we are about to publish an article called: Abortion, and the Reincarnation of the Soul. With the internet making it possible to find quickly the latest research, current thinking, in books and articles, plus the help we have received from around the world from so many Theosophists we feel this is an incredible time for this work. The site name, Beyond The Gates, is taken from the life of the Buddha where the young prince was warned about going beyond the gates of the protected kingdom where he would find the four sufferings of birth, disability, old age and death.

We intend to do a special article on the many libraries containing the Theosophical writings and giving attention to where there is on line access. We have also found that some of these libraries will scan and email you articles that you would like. Think of that. How grateful we are.

I have been challenged to learn computer software skills which I never thought possible. But, we will soon be able to have the latest Adobe Dreamweaver website developer connected to the CMS Wordpress software. My grandson, truly a gamer with outstanding computer skills, considers me in his league. Never thought it would happen.



Sally and Jim Colbert



At work in the library of the ITC in Naarden

Work at the ITC in Naarden

by Arend Heijbroek - The Netherlands

When compared to the past, the work at the ITC has changed a lot. What remained is a combination of practical and spiritual work in an increasingly complex environment.

One of the official statements of the ITC says "Any stay at the Centre is meant to promote quietness of mind, peace and a harmonious life". This statement seems quite contradictory to the day to day experience of the workers. Life and work on the ITC often seems like a dynamic boiling pot. At the same time we aim to be true to our principles. A TS centre is Theosophy in action, learning from apparent paradoxes. An overview of our work.

The three residents of St. Michael's house - the main mansion at the ITC - need to be constantly available. Painters and contractors collect keys and need to be informed about specifics of the work to be done. A range of meetings take place at the house, while workers / visitors may stay overnight.

Tenants, both groups and individuals, come to collect the keys of the buildings they rented for their activities. Clear appointments with these tenants need to be made in advance, while they get an invoice afterwards according to the use of rooms etc. The buildings need to be checked frequently to see whether they are cleaned and otherwise ready to receive the groups. In our climate that includes timely activating the central heating. New groups go through a careful scrutiny to see

whether their work is along the spiritual lines of the ITC. This alone is the work of several volunteers.

Then there is a group of workers in the library, where after internal renovation most of the over 5000 books are now computerized. The library will play an important role in the future of the ITC as study and retreat center and thus needs more volunteers to expand the opening hours.

The wood and garden group is a small team working hard one weekend a month for much needed maintenance, such as clearing the roads and removal of dead trees, as well as making improvements when possible. Visitors enjoy the fruits of their work. Maintenance of the buildings absorbs a lot of our time, energy and financial resources. Working on a spiritual center often means working on many odd jobs.

Considering the long list of work to be done one may easily overlook the lodge work and other spiritual activities at the ITC, including those organized by the ITC itself. This is done by a small team, in cooperation with the Dutch section. This resulted in the need to modernize our publicity, so a range of new leaflets has been published and a new website has been developed.

All together the ITC is grateful to be supported by some twenty volunteers for all the work to be done. Such team work can only be done effectively if there is a clear understanding where we are and where we want to go to. All this work is coordinated and stimulated by the Council (eighteen persons) and the Executive Committee (five persons) on a day to day basis, including chairman, secretary and treasurer. More information on the ITC and its activities can be found on www.itc-naarden.org.

Read more about the Centre's history. Click here:



Radha Burnier visiting the ITC- Naarden in 2012, surrounded by residents and workers

Describing the work

by Joma Sipe - Portugal



In general, I do not have any specific training in the arts. The Portuguese art classes I took were basically about visual experiences and drawing, without training in arts with some specific school. I am a civil engineer in my "working hours" during a part of my day, working with Autocad (computer assisted drawing program), drawing and projecting new houses and roads projects. I think my skills as a civil engineer helped me with the geometrical and accurate form of drawing, trying to be as "perfect" as possible with the lines. I am essentially self-educated in the drawing process and art. Since my early years, I was always interested in art, drawing and painting as a hobby.

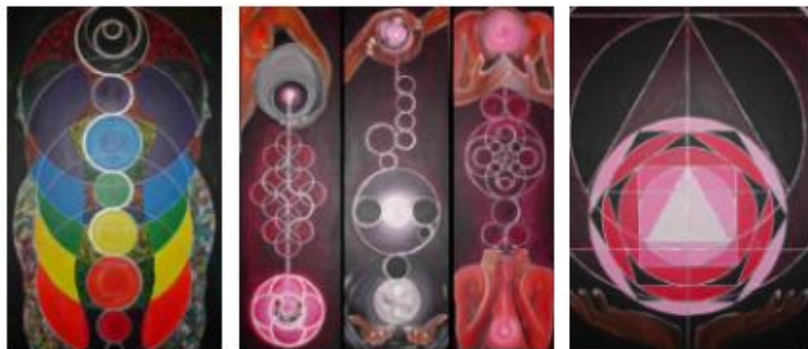
My interest in art is related to subjects like Symbolism, and the Symbolist Movement of the late XIX century. I am also very interested in the Pré-Raphaelite Movement, English and French Symbolist painters like Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon, William Blake, Walter Crane, Watts, Gustave Moreau, the Belgian painter Jean Delville, Fernand Khnopff, Arnold Böcklin, among many others. In the XX century, especially the artists Johfra Bosschart and Diana Vandenberg.

My interest is about the subjects they used in their paintings, especially the Mythology and Visionary landscapes that are part of their work. I feel my paintings express something of that Visionary style. They are more related to the energy felt in visualizing the paintings and not in the style itself, as my

geometric paintings are not in a style related to these artists, not even the materials used.

I started by drawing and painting forms that can be seen in the period 2000-2005. I was inspired by esoteric and mythological subjects, and drawing the forms as good as possible being a self-trained artist.

Since late 2004 my inspiration changed, because of the inner changes in my life. This made me change the way that I understood the manner I was using to express myself and my inner "visions". I started to paint in oils and acrylics on canvas but now inserting some geometrical theme, like on the 2004/2005 paintings:



These began as a way to express part of my inner changing period. The colors were becoming darker and the thin lines with silver were introduced among the oils and acrylic colored paintings.

In 2006 I started with my first completely geometrical work, "The Key of Life":



And have continued in this style since.

I receive also inspiration through my own poetry and write poetry for the paintings. I also am deeply inspired by esoteric and mystical themes. These are present in Theosophy (especially Blavatsky writings), Kabalah, Hindu culture, Sacred Mandalas, Zodiac, Constellations, "A Course In Miracles", and many many others. I have been in several esoteric schools and attended many conferences about Theosophy. I read a lot on these subjects.

It works this way: I use different materials to work and usually use cotton based canvas, high quality black paper and card. I generally paint a white canvas with black acrylic based paint in order to achieve the correct basis. Usually the paper and the card are originally black, so I can use it as is. I work different ways, sometimes I draw intuitively using silver or gold based ink pens, very thin, like 0,5mm, directly on the black canvas or paper.

Other times I use the computer to help me draw symmetrical forms. I then print them, and transfer them using white chemical transfer paper. Then I trace again above the lines using the silver or gold pens.

To draw I use compass, rulers, triangles and the silver or gold pens mentioned earlier:



When I finish the drawings or paintings with the pens I then place the crystals, using special glue, in the intersection points

of the lines and geometrical forms. I do this intuitively and use as many as I can and "feel" should be placed in a specific intersection. The crystals generally are white/transparent or aurora boreal crystals (all colors), in different shapes and sizes. The simple white crystals reflect only the white/transparent light, the aurora boreal crystals reflects every color of light that exists. I call them "aurora boreal" because of the Trade Mark that commercializes them, that is Swarovski.

The light changes reflect changes in the refraction and reflex of light in the art work. They usually become "illuminated" by light and changes in many different ways as the different angles that light shines in them. It is a wonderful spectacle to see, when there are a lot of different lights shining on them from different angles. Then the major work is done. I worked only with this process until 2010.

Original works on exhibition:



The "reflection/refraction" of light by the crystals:



In 2010 I tried something different and started working on other idea.

Since the "original" paintings are all black, becoming "colored" only when the light shines on them, so why not try to "bring" the light to the paintings?

I then had the idea of adding colored computer effects to photographs of the paintings.

These effects are not on the "original" art works, they can only be achieved on the photographs of the "original" works. So actually they do not exist, but can be garnered by printing them on a poster, book or magazine.

These works are the ones my Quest Book, *Soul of Light: Works of Illumination*, is about.

All the images are photographs of the "original" works on the black canvas or paper, silver or gold pens and crystals, using colored computer light effects that give them the idea of light that shines in different ethereal ways and colors:



I have no specific category to "insert" my work. It can be called "visionary", "symbolic", "geometrical", "mystical", etc. It is all that, but I feel it is beyond that. For me it captures the essence of the human soul, the "anima" of the individual, and reflects somehow the inner structure of the universe inside each human being.

Some works that I do represent, my way of thinking and interpreting the real structure of the energy that supports the universe, that's how I represent it. I call It Energy, Light or Love.

I make with all the geometrical patterns and drawings a kind of inner code that can only be understood by the ones that are connected with it and remember it.

For Joma Sipe's remarkable book on Twelve Upanishads click here:



[Link to All Ireland Website: click here:](#)

The Theosophic Life, To Live To Serve

by Marie Harkness - Northern Ireland

According to H. P. B., every true Theosophist, worthy of the name, should be a '*beneficent force of nature*.' This could be interpreted as possessing a selfless, kindly energy and capacity which can, through example, influence for the better all life, but particularly the mind and behaviour of others.

To totally understand and to be able to share with, in an intelligent way, we must love others unconditionally so as to be able to empathise with them at all levels. To perceive truly, we must see the whole situation with spiritual eyes and be non-judgemental. Where there is empathy, we can intimately sense, intuit the thoughts, feelings and motives of others. The capacity to do so is a sacred gift which must never be abused, but ever provides an opportunity to help, to bless, to heal. Often understanding comes about when we have had a shared experience, such as the bereavement of a loved one. Although, through our Theosophical study, we may have more understanding of the process of death, that it is only a stage on a long journey, we can from our hearts support and greatly help another, as it is sensed that there is a sharing, a oneness at a deeper level.

N. Sri Ram, a former International President said: "We have to learn to give from our hearts. When we help from the very soul

of ourselves, there can be no consciousness of a helper separate from the one who is being helped."

We can give of ourselves at many levels. Physically we can give practical help where needed, give a donation or a gift with love or spend time with someone in need. True giving is done with the heart, as a spontaneous gesture with no strings attached or expectation of return, otherwise it is not giving but calculated trading. We can give emotional support by a ready smile with a blessing, a comforting hand on the shoulder or by just being in companionable silence. It is also possible to greatly help others by consciously using our minds for higher purpose. There are numerous opportunities throughout the day (and night) to serve, to radiate blessings, goodwill, helpful thoughts and love to all beings. This can be done while taking a morning shower, travelling to and from work, doing housework, out walking, in town, when shopping, at train stations, airports, when writing letters and sending out messages on the internet. We can consciously project light ahead of us in all these situations and especially before visiting people in their homes or in public places. Thus in this way our minds are focussed not on the negative, but on helping others by loving, helping and healing. Even a spontaneous genuine smile can uplift someone bowed down with troubles. We can also project powerful healing thoughts and energy worldwide in our daily meditations and tune-ins.

The Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hahn's wise words are encouraging and reassuring: "Every word, every look, every action, and every smile can bring happiness to others".

We are all on this earth plane, this school, to garner experience and in so doing, to become better beings, more perfect and

increasingly more conscious of and identified with our God Selves, of 'the Inner Ruler Immortal'. The only exceptions are those great Masters, our Elder Brethren, who having earned ascension, have chosen to remain on earth. Their combined presence, with many other enlightened Beings, form a wall of light around this planet thus protecting mankind and preventing many potential catastrophes. Their real purpose is to aid, to awaken humanity to realising its innate greatness. The chosen Path of perfection is not an easy route, nor is it suited to all as it has been referred to as 'razor-edged', but all in time will eventually get there, by the slower, more conventional way. This Path is dedicated wholly to the welfare and upliftment spiritually, of the human and non-human kingdoms alike. Selfishness, in any form, has no place on this journey and only serves to hinder all development.

In the *Voice of the Silence* we find: "To live to benefit mankind is the first step." In *Light on the Path* we are advised to grow as the flower grows "unconsciously but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air." Also 'press forward to open your souls to the Eternal. But it must be the Eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth." His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written: "The closer one gets to being motivated by altruism, the more fearless one becomes in the face of even extremely anxiety-provoking circumstances' and 'selfishness of mind causes ignorance, anger and passion which are at the root of all the troubles of the world." He states: "If there is love, there is hope to have real families, real brotherhood, real equanimity, real peace." We realise that if the love within our minds disappears "the result is suffering and confusion."

To truly live as Theosophists, we must share and empathise in

every sense with our fellow men. For example, money, on which there is so much reliance and emphasis in today's world, is said to be the root of all evil but it is a great force with enormous potential. It must flow, be shared and used rightly to benefit all, not the few. We arrive into this world and leave it with absolutely no material acquisitions. Money, all our possessions, even our children are not ours. They are on loan to us, to quote Kahlil Gibran on this subject: "They come through you but not from you. And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you. You give them your love but not your thoughts." It is essential that children are surrounded by loving kindness, understanding and beauty and are taught to share with others from an early age.

In order to tread the Path safely and steadfastly, we need inspiration and the wisdom to intuit how to think, speak and act wisely, and how and when to help without interference. The Paramatman light is needed to illumine our minds and the road ahead of us. In *Light on the Path* it is written: "For within you is the light of the world, the only light that can be shed on the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. It is beyond you because when you have reached it you have lost yourself." The small, petty ego has to go, to die, for us to selflessly and effectively serve the whole.

In the *Mahatma Letters*, the Master KH tells us: "The first object of the TS is philanthropy. The true Theosophist is a philanthropist - not for himself but for the world he lives." And again we are instructed: "Forget self in working for others and the task will become an easy and a light one for you."

Every one of us the Gods, the Masters of Compassion and the various grades of Angelic Beings are ever-becoming, are en

route to perfection. We may enter the light, which ever recedes, but we will never touch the flame. We each have a nucleus, a burgeoning light within us. The acorn holds within it the potential for a mighty oak tree. We are told that it is this growing light alone which attracts the attention of the Holy Ones.

Understanding others, knowing how to share and love in a higher sense, must become an intrinsic part of our nature, a way of life.

What is the future that may lie ahead of us? In the *Voice of the Silence* we are told: "When once thou hast become like the fix'd star in the highest heaven, that bright celestial orb must shine from out the spatial depths for all - save for itself; give light to all, but take from none."

And finally this beautiful and haunting verse by his Holiness, the Dalai Lama, will strike a chord with all those determined to follow in the Masters' footsteps.

Are we ready to make such a commitment?

"For as long as space endures, And for as long as living beings remain until then may I, too, abide, to dispel the misery of the world."

The Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library

by Dan Smolla - USA



What a wonderful and inspiring place to be ...

The essence of what we are doing at the Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library at the Theosophical Society in America is combining new technology and programs with "classic" Theosophy. Most of what we do in this fashion is captured on the "Library News" portion of our website:

<http://www.theosophical.org/library/library-home/library-news>

At the Library News section there is a video called "What's New at the Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library?" which gives a video summary addressing the activities of the library. Also on this page is a video, "Take a Lively Tour of the Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library!" which gives a detailed yet humorous summary of what our library can offer to patrons.

As well, on the "Library News" portion of the website is a section called "Library Video Interviews." Each month, the library will be featuring two different online video segments. In *How I Became a Theosophist*, librarian Dan Smolla talks with Theosophists about their early experiences with Theosophy and various Theosophical concepts. In *Featured Favorites* from the library, Theosophists discuss some of their favorite books from our library's catalog.

Our Work

by a student



Entrance of the building of Santa Barbara Lodge

The Santa Barbara United Lodge of Theosophists (California - USA) currently offers a year-round Sunday evening lectures. Two speakers each talk on a theme for 15 or 20 minutes, and then take up questions from the hall. The last meeting of each month is a short talk followed by questions submitted during the month.

There is a Wednesday evening Study Class during the school year (October through June) which takes up a book or article by H. P. Blavatsky, William Quan Judge or Robert Crosbie.

The topics for both evenings are posted on the SB Lodge website: <http://www.theosophysb.org>

The Lodge also publishes *Vidya*, a quarterly journal containing articles from H.P.B., W.Q.J, and R.C., as well as written by or transcribed from talks given by Santa Barbara students, and includes poems, quotations and stories, all around a general theme.

Tips

How to take full advantage of this electronic book?

This electronic edition of *Theosophy Forward* has a number of integrated features. They give you to a great extent, the possibility to customize the appearance of this e-magazine to your liking and to highlight the text or insert your notes and share them with your friends.

To access these features you have to click your mouse on MENU icon at the bottom of the e-magazine and a pop-up menu window will appear. You will see that by placing your cursor and clicking with your mouse on a definite individual feature you can customize the e-magazine Turn Mode, Page Turn Speed, eliminate its default background, change Book Shadow and Book Color, i.e. color of text background.

But what you will probably appreciate most is the possibility to highlight a portion of text you like and/or to insert your personal notes which will remain, if saved, in your own e-magazine copy.

To highlight the text just click on Highlights in the menu window and choose Add new highlight. An arrow with a pencil will replace your usual cursor which you have to lead with your mouse to the chosen text and by clicking to place your highlight. Once your highlight is placed you can change its size and position and even its opacity and color if you right click your

mouse with your cursor placed in the highlight and a small new menu window will appear. In that window you can also choose to lock your created highlight or to delete it.

In a similar way you can place your own personal note. Instead of Highlights, choose Notes and Add new note and an arrow with a cup will replace your usual cursor which you have to lead with your mouse to the position where you would like to have your note placed. Just click the mouse and the note window will appear. Insert your text in the window and, when finished, close the window, and you will see that your note icon remains in the chosen position. By rightclicking on the icon a new small window appears in which you can choose to open the note or to delete it. While by clicking on the Options in the note window you can choose your note icon type, define the subject of your note, insert your name and change your note and text color.

But this is not all. You can share your highlights and notes with your friends who possess a copy of the same *Theosophy Forward* issue. Namely, by choosing the feature Export highlights/notes to DNN file or Send highlights/notes by email, you can create a file which you can attach to an e-mail you are sending to your friend or directly place it in an e-mail to your friend. On receiving your email your friend can then place your highlights/notes in her/his own *Theosophy Forward* copy by choosing Import highlights/notes from DNN file. In that way you can transform your *Theosophy Forward* copy in an interaction media for your creativity and study.

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