

anthroposophy.org

being human

personal and cultural renewal in the 21st century

a quarterly publication of the Anthroposophical Society in America – summer issue 2013

Creating a House for Peace

To Enkindle the Soul of Another

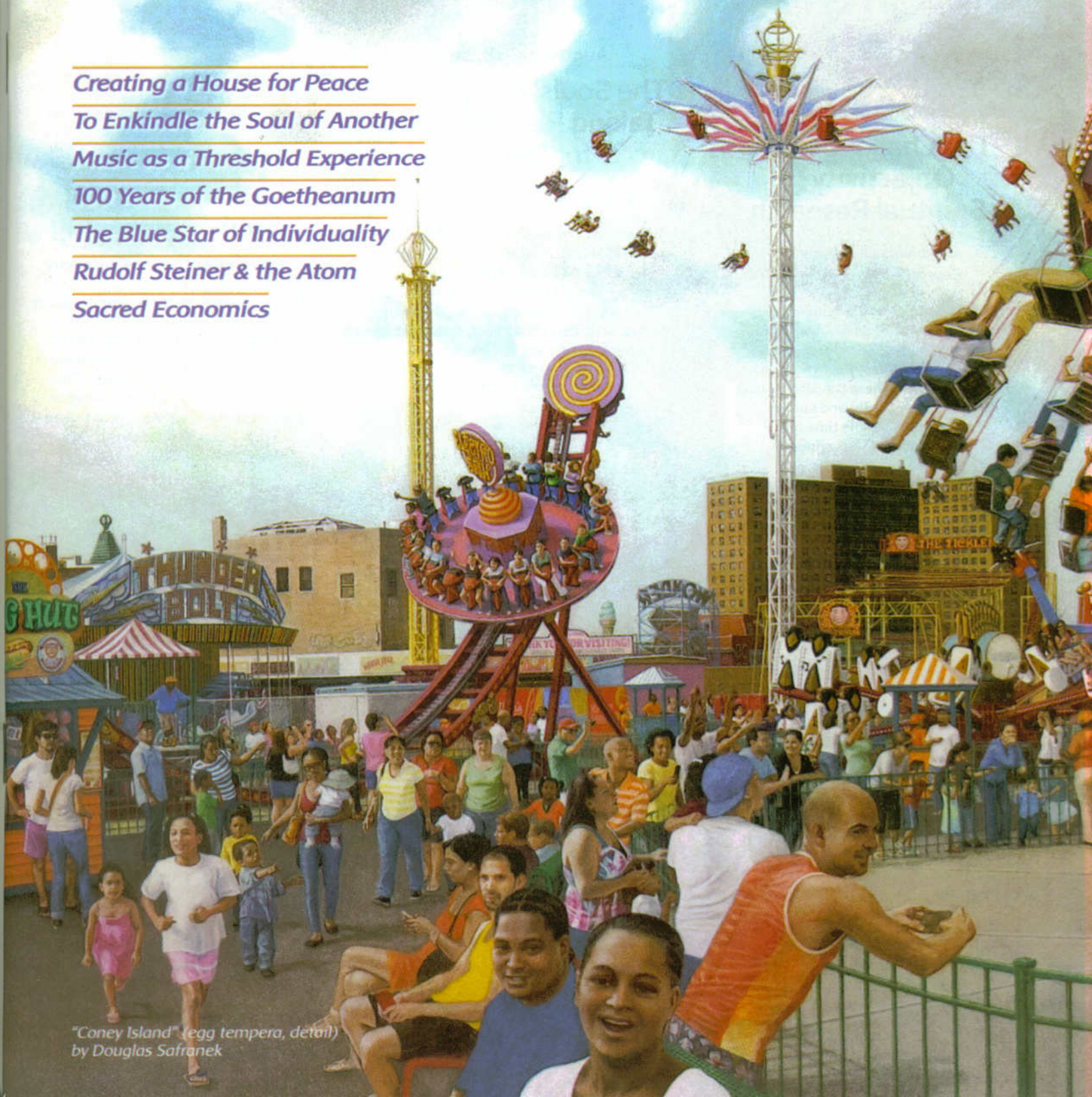
Music as a Threshold Experience

100 Years of the Goetheanum

The Blue Star of Individuality

Rudolf Steiner & the Atom

Sacred Economics



"Coney Island" (egg tempera, detail)
by Douglas Safranek

Creating a House for Peace

by Lori Barian

Number One High Street, Ipswich, Massachusetts, manifests the reality of its name—The House of Peace—in manifold healing relationships. By bringing together refugees, individuals with developmental disabilities, veterans, social activists, anthroposophists and spiritual seekers of many faiths and beliefs in one home, founders Carrie and John Schuchardt create the opportunity for *knowing* to overcome *fear* and to become *love*, daily.

The House of Peace “is a therapeutic community serving victims of war in companionship with adults with disabilities, and offering education for peace and moral awakening.” Since it opened its doors in 1990, 23 years ago, hundreds of survivors of war have found refuge there for days, weeks, months and some for years. For all, there has been continuing presence and support for the painful challenges of recovering from violence and unspeakable loss.

Two grand white pillars flank the House of Peace entranceway, symbols, say John and Carrie, of the essential supporting pillars of the work: Trust and Gratitude. Others, including neighbors, the Anthroposophical Society of Cape Ann, the Christian Community, Waldorf school communities, Veterans for Peace, the North Shore Coalition for Peace and Justice, and monks of the Nipponzan Myohoji Japanese Buddhist order dedicated to nuclear abolition, may think of John and Carrie as the real pillars of this house that has a place for them all.

Truly, trust and gratitude have contributed much to this initiative’s ability to come into being and to serve so many so well. And just as truly, a rather magical coming together of Carrie and John, Camphill, and movements for peace and justice led to this unique healing community.

Carrie, who grew up outside of Boston, was greatly influenced by having an older sister with special needs. Then, in her teenage years, she found inspiration in the movement for social justice. After undergraduate and graduate degrees preparing her to work with those with disabilities, she and her husband at that time, George Riley, joined Camphill Glencairg in County Down, Northern Ireland in 1971-72, during the height of The Troubles. “I was living in a war zone,” Carrie said. “I experienced what it was like to be among people who live in fear. I heard bombs, witnessed carnage, saw the profound imprint of the violence on human beings—how fear takes hold.” In 1975, they joined Camphill Kimberton Hills in Pennsylvania with their little son, Colum. They had two more children: Kieran, and later a daughter, Ethna.



John grew up in rural Illinois, graduated from a Quaker college and University of Chicago Law School, and then, while on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps, resigned his commission in 1965 when the U.S. began the unprecedented bombing and destruction of the defenseless agricultural societies of North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. As an attorney, John recognized that this aggression was a violation of the Nuremburg Principles. John then served as Director of Orientation for The Experiment and its School for International Training, and later practiced law as the first public defender of Windham County, Vermont. Continuing a spiritual quest, John joined the Bruderhof community in Rifton, New York, in 1975. This confirmed his belief



that he must take personal responsibility in confronting the genocidal technologies of the escalating nuclear arms race. In 1976 he joined Jonah House, a community committed to nonviolent resistance to illegal weapons and wars of aggression. On September 9, 1980, he and five men and two women courageously entered General Electric Plant #9 in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania to “beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.” They

poured their own blood on blueprints and files and used hammers to render harmless two Mark 12A nuclear warhead components, which were thus never to be used on Minuteman ICBM missiles. All 8 were imprisoned for long terms, including internationally known and revered Catholic priests, Revs. Philip and Daniel Berrigan. “We were focused on the reality of impending nuclear catastrophe,” John said. “We went in to disarm these horrendous technologies to awaken conscience.”

Carrie had met and been inspired by Daniel Berrigan, so when the Plowshares, as they were known, appeared in court, she was there as a citizen supporting the deed. She met John and John’s sister Ada Lorette for the first time then. During the course of those next 10 years, John and Ada visited Camphill occasionally. It was through Camphill that John first met and was deeply moved by

anthroposophy and Waldorf education.

The year 1980 was pivotal. “I became aware of a real call to welcome victims of war into my own family,” Carrie said. “The deeds



and mantle of motherhood needed to stretch out over the globe.” Two Vietnamese boys, “boat refugees”, arrived in June 1980 and were foster sons through high school at Kimberton Waldorf School. Two brothers and a sister of one of them joined their family in 1986. She saw magic happen as adults in need of special care welcomed and cared for spiritually wounded and traumatized refugees. It was through these intimate experiences of motherhood, lived in a socially therapeutic community, that Carrie became convinced that “it is war that is the ultimate handicapping condition and that people, so often labeled handicapped, hold the key to healing.”

This led to the vision in 1989 to offer shelter to refugees and people with special needs: the vision for the House of Peace.

Carrie went in search of the right place for this to happen and found the historical Rogers Manse for sale in Ipswich, Massachusetts. After her first visit to this house, she called one of her friends and mentors at Kimberton Hills, Helen Zipperlen, who with her husband Hubert was one of the founders of Camphill Kimberton. She described to Helen this perfect site: The home was built in 1727 by the minister of the First Church of Ipswich for people fleeing religious persecution. Transcendentalists including Thoreau and Hawthorne had spent time there. It is





located an hour north of Boston, near the coast and the healing forces of the ocean, with 10 bedrooms, 5 baths, 4 acres of land, gardens, nature, a convenient walk to downtown, a room for a chapel, and a hall for festivals and lectures. "It was totally clear and totally im-

possible," Helen said, because there was no money to buy it. Helen helped galvanize support from friends of the Camphill community. "I sent letters to everyone I could think of: 'Send me \$5; send anything you would like.'" And support came, Helen said. "Everyone who knew her knew that if Carrie was doing it, it was going to be unconventional, possibly dangerous, but it was certainly right and needed doing."

On Veterans Day, November 11, 1990, John and Carrie joined thousands in the streets of Boston in an outcry against the impending bombing of Iraq. The next morning they were married in the House of Peace chapel. Once settled in, with two companions from Camphill, her two foster sons Hue and Xia, and Colum, Kieran, and Ethna, other human and financial support came.

The first eight years, Carrie and John worked with local agencies following UNHCR (the United Nations Refugee Agency) protocol to provide a temporary home to unaccompanied refugee minors, mostly boys, some of whom had seen parents assassinated. They came from Haiti, El Salvador, Vietnam, Cuba, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Later the House of Peace helped families from all factions of former Yugoslavia resettle in America, and then families from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and the Congo.

The most recent phase has been working in partnership with the Iraqi Children's Project and Shriners Hospital in Boston, housing children and their parents while the children undergo surgery for burns and other severe injuries that have occurred as "collateral damage" from the U.S. invasion and pacification operation.

At the heart of this work with refugees is "the deep

companionship of friends with disabilities," Carrie said. "We see that people in need of special care have the gift and responsibility to give special care." She shared the story of Joseph, a beloved member of the household who recently passed away. Joseph was blind, mute, and brain injured at birth, yet refugees and guests gravitated to his warm heart forces; free of all antipathies, Joseph communicated trust and security to those most violated by violence. "The so-called handicapped are the hearth that the refugees go to first."

This work housing and caring for refugees and living in companionship with people with developmental disabilities is embedded in a full anthroposophical community life and public social activism. From the beginning, Carrie and John have held an every-other-week study group at the Cape Ann Waldorf School working with Rudolf Steiner's "basic books" and significant courses and lectures. In collaboration with the Anthroposophical Society of Cape Ann and the Cape Ann Waldorf School, many vibrant seasonal festivals are held and celebrated at the House of Peace and a summer lecture series is offered. Retreats for Christian Community confirmands, priests, and guest speakers have been part of the integration with the wider communities.

Joyce Reilly, who met Carrie in 1980 at a conference, has been on the House of Peace board for 20 years. Joyce described Carrie and John's approach to life as a graceful balance of idealism and practicality, of seriousness and humor, of depth of study and intimacy of human relationships. "This balance keeps them so effective with people and accepting of themselves," she said. "They are aware of and embracing of human frailty and seek creative ways to healing.

"John can talk to senators, make headlines, and build a chicken house in the driveway," she said. "Carrie has an amazing ability to speak extemporaneously and an extraordinary sense of humor. She sees the beauty and holiness of things as well as the often inevitable humor. She's down to earth."

Dave Mansur, who serves as treasurer of the House of Peace Board and as a leader in the Anthroposophical Society of Cape Ann, remarked about anthro-



posophy being at the core of John and Carrie's initiative. "We like anthroposophy because it is practical. This is a shining example of that practicality. For it to work, one needs that fundamental understanding of the human being as a noble individual. All this service becomes almost ordinary in that light. 'Of course that's how you would treat another *human being!*'"

In September of 2001, for example, Carrie and John had been negotiating for the children of a refugee family from Afghanistan, living at the House of Peace, to attend the Cape Ann Waldorf School, explained Dave, who was serving on the school's board at the time. Then September



11 happened. "There was a lot of fear," Dave said. "Carrie and John stood by their principles, saying 'they have been victims of violence and cruelty and we can help.' The children were enrolled in the school and their family has been contributing positively to the community ever since. It turned the experience of 9/11 into something with a thread of hope. This is what they do."

The Cape Ann Waldorf School graciously welcomes children of refugee families as

students from time to time, for the most part with full scholarship, said Jenny Helmick, who has had many roles at the school over the years. "It has been a wonderfully enriching experience. For the children to hear stories and learn to interact with each other is remarkable."

Carrie and John's willingness to fully immerse themselves in the physical demands and the sorrows and joys of the people they serve arises in part from a serious sense of urgency about the times we live in.

"Rudolf Steiner understood the catastrophe of war and he was passionately, urgently seeking to awaken human capacities to avoid the blind materialistic path heading to destruction," said John. "Yet, this fervent plea Steiner is making to humanity has almost faded in people's consciousness. Things have gotten worse and worse. Nuclear weapons are on alert every moment in seven nations, in all the most distrustful, conflicted regions."

John also spoke of the karma of untruthfulness and the critical need for human beings to pursue truth in our time. "When assaulted by untruth from persons in author-

ity, our human capacity to think becomes dulled," he warned. "In reality, we can see all around where Steiner's contingent prophecy



has become true: people have actually lost their capacity to think. Notice how many times you hear people say regarding uncomfortable untruths, 'I don't want to think about that.' Rudolf Steiner saw outward events as symptoms. We need to understand the spiritual forces of untruthfulness and of karma holding us paralyzed and seemingly incapable of a full human response to the forces destructively at work!"

Untruth also divides us while truth unites us. Carrie shared that on Good Friday of this year, as the House of Peace presented "The Angel that Troubled the Waters" by Thornton Wilder, a play which refers to a scene in the St. John's Gospel, Chapter 5, verses 12-14. In the play, a man with a palsied hand and a doctor with an inner wound both come to the well for healing. The angel troubles the water and the man with the ill hand is healed. The doctor asks for healing, but the angel says to him "Without your wound, where would your power be?"

Carrie said that there was a Muslim man from Iraq with them that night who saw the play. "There was truth in that," he said to Carrie.

"That binds us together—the universality of truth," she said. "It overcomes all things that divide us... Oneness does emerge."

To help the next generation learn more about the needs and tasks of our time, the House of Peace also welcomes and offers experiential learning opportunities to young people involved in youth groups, fulfilling practicum requirements, working on master's degrees, etc. "These are catastrophic times," Carrie said. "Steiner has made very clear that we're meant to be preparing the next epoch. We need to translate fear into hope."

The Boston Marathon bombings created such an opportunity. At their regular study group gathering, they chose, said Carrie, to revisit the verse that has these words: "We must tear up by the roots—fear. It is essential to do what is right in the moment and leave the rest to the spiritual world."

She went on to say, "We really work with people to understand that within each of us there slumber capaci-



ties to really make peace, and be at peace, and to create a culture of peace. We work at weaning people off of the media hype that fans the flames of fearfulness. We have people work to understand what their inner and outer environment really is. We speak about it in depth. Almost everyone who needs the House of Peace has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We'll never remove the wounds of terrifying events or deaths or shrapnel, but we can become stronger to bear that pain. When the circle is formed and people can share their pain and suffering with each other, they gain a sense of how truth and goodness are bigger than all that."

Dave Mansur shared this story illustrating Carrie's words. On the day after the Boston Marathon bombings, a little boy, who had lived for many months with his father at the House of Peace while being treated at a hospital for terrible burns all over his face and body, called the House of Peace from Iraq to ask with his little voice, "Is Carrie all right?" And then he asked about each one in the house by name to be sure that they, too, were all right.

As Karl Pulkkinen, vice president of the House of Peace Board, said of the work: "We can help undo some of the damage done in this world and literally make the world a better place." Karl wanted readers to know that financial donations and volunteer and practical support are always appreciated. Contact John or Carrie for more information and to get on the newsletter mailing list: 978-356-9395 or thehouseofpeace@yahoo.com. Ask for past newsletters, too. They are filled with stories and photos of beautiful lives touched and healed, wise words from the founders, inspirational quotes from others, and more.

Lori Barian is Director of Administration & Adult Enrichment at the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute. She has BS and MA degrees in English, and a certificate in Waldorf education. A member of the Emmaus Branch, she served on the Anthroposophical Society in America's General Council representing the Central Region.

*We must tear up by the roots
fear and shrinking
in the face of what the future
threatens to bring to man.*

*The whole feeling we have about
the future must be pervaded
with calm and confidence.*

*Absolute equanimity in the face
of whatever the future may
bring—that is what man has
to acquire, knowing as he does that
everything that happens, happens
under an all-wise cosmic guidance.
Our part is to do, in each moment
as it comes, what is right—
and to leave the rest to the future.
That is indeed the lesson we have
to learn in this time:*

*to base our life on simple trust,
without any security of existence,
to have trust in the ever-present
help of the spiritual world.*

*That is the only way for us, if our
courage is not to fail...*

—Rudolf Steiner