

VISIONARY



Volume 3, Number 1

March, 1997

ELDER'S PERCH

Thanks for your patience, again, with the lateness of this newsletter. Growth periods are tough times for any organization, and Gay Spirit Visions is no exception. We called last year a "practice" year, giving ourselves permission to try lots of things, and we did. The metaphor we came up with at our February meeting is of **digesting last year's growth**, of chewing really well all the stuff we bit off last year. Whatever the metaphor, pulling together all of our individual visions of what GSV should be and then finding the energy to make it happen seems to be our current challenge.

There's a passel of good news to report, starting with **our lease**. We are now renting part-time office space at the **Atlanta Friends Meeting House**, effective March 1, 1997. This will enable us to pull all of our treasures together in one place and to more professionalize our ways of interacting with you throughout the year. We are especially pleased to be working

more closely with the Atlanta Friends Meeting -- they are an open-hearted group with many of the same goals as us, and a similarity of process that mirrors our own in many interesting and challenging ways. We look forward to a long and mutually productive relationship.

Our January planning meeting evidenced the first official transition of power on The Council of Trusted Elders. I surrendered my seat to have more time to work other projects. The Council then met and chose new officers — **new Presiding Elder is Dandelion Bruce Tidwell; new Recording Elder is Bernhard Zinkgraf; new Bursar is Treewalker Martin Isganitis; and the "floating" elders are David "The Wanton Cub" Salyer and Joe Chancey**. Others who offered written evidence of their intention to work on the GSV planning committee this year, in addition to the Council, are myself, **Jonathan Lerner, King Thackston, Jeff Glauser, Dancing Dolphin, John Stowe, Magic Boy and Bruce Parrish**. These are the men who comprise GSV as 1997 begins.

Committee goals remain much the same as last year — **Program**, with Dandelion as chair, intends to produce regular local events in Atlanta; **Communications**, with me as chair, aims to continue the newsletter and e-mail reflector projects and to soon roll out a website; **Outreach**, with Jonathan as chair, is still looking for networking opportunities. We formed an **Office Committee** to figure out how we need to set up, furnish, and staff our new space.

And elsewhere in this newsletter, you can read at length about our newest project, **Ongoing Meetings** (no chair so far), which grew from discussions at our well-attended November meeting. Everybody that day seemed to be asking, "How can we get together more often?" so we've decided to create more oppor-

DATES TO REMEMBER

Weekend of March 1: GSV moves into first office, 701 W. Howard St., Decatur, GA (call 404/292-8567 to offer furnishings, supplies, or "sweat support")

March 8: GSV Monthly Planning Meeting*

March 15: Tree Planting

March 22-23: John Stowe's Two Spirit Warrior workshop (call 373-0111 for details)

April 12: GSV Monthly Planning Meeting*

May 3: Spring Thing -- details to come*

May 10: GSV Monthly Planning Meeting*

May 31 (tentative): GSV's Beltane Cake Walk & Talent Show, a fundraiser for GSV's Pride Effort (details to come)

June 14: GSV Monthly Planning Meeting*

June 29: Atlanta Pride (details to come)

*At Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse, 701 W. Howard St., Decatur, GA

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tunities in smaller, ongoing groups. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for an article proposing the first **GSV Foyer groups**, where people are randomly grouped together in order to dine with each other once a month. Or how about a **GSV Salon** — What would we discuss? How often would we meet? How many of us could fit in Cal Gough's living room? And now that we have a place to meet, we are discussing what other uses we might make of it, especially on our scheduled nights of Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 6PM til 10PM. One suggestion is **monthly Heart Circles**. Randy Taylor is working to pull the first of those together for Monday, March 17 at 7:30pm at the new office. if you are interested in joining one of the "Coming In" sessions give

Randy a call at 404/627-2707.

Al Cotton

Retiring Elder Δ

OUR PRESIDING ELDER SPEAKS

I feel very honored at having been chosen for a second term in the Council of Trusted Elders, as well as to be chosen to be Presiding Elder for 1997. I am excited to have the chance to serve during such an exciting time for our organization. I'm very much in favor of the growth that continues to take place, but I am also committed to guide this growth in a way that is measured and responsible. I don't want to see GSV failing to have the courage to fully address the spiritual needs of our tribe, or the Gay Community, but we must also be careful to not overextend ourselves emotionally, physically, or financially in a headlong rush into the wide breadth of possibility that unfolds before us. Now more than ever before it is necessary for the members of our tribe to let the Planning Committee and Circle of Trusted Elders know what is most needed and most important so that we can direct our resources in the best way

Dandelion

RESOLUTIONS

by John R. Stowe

"I will clean off my desk each day."
"I'll work out at the gym 5 days a week, no matter what." "I'll only eat half a gallon of ice cream before bed instead of two." "I

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Volume 3, Number 1
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Gay Spirit Visions, Inc.
P.O. Box 339
Decatur, Georgia 30031-0339

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won't leave sex toys in the bathtub when my roommate's parents are visiting."

New Year's Resolutions. Only a month or two into the year, do you remember yours? Or have they already slipped into that half-guilty, half-defiant limbo where unrealized intentions usually end up? For most of us, making resolutions is a chance for a bit of self-flagellation and some feel-good absolution that costs nothing more than a few easy promises. What's wrong with that? Nothing, except that it misses the point. Which is ... what? To understand the point of resolutions, let's look at the deeper meanings of the season.

Have you ever taken part in a ritual to honor the energies of life? At GSV, we honor them each time we begin a gathering by calling in the directions. For many of us, this ritual has become a touchstone. In fact, it is part of the spiritual practice of many, diverse peoples. It's also one of the simplest and most efficient ways to remember our place within the wholeness of being. Each direction embodies specific, universal qualities. Though the details vary from one tradition to another, they generally follow a rough correlation with other cyclic phenomena like the round of seasons or the daily progression of the sun.

The first three directions are about focusing outward and taking action in the world. To me, these have always seemed pretty straightforward. Starting in the East, we call on the energies of springtime, sunrise, and new beginnings. East embodies the potential inherent in the planting of seeds, the fiery optimism of birthing a new activity, and the clear vision and intent necessary to set a strong course of action.

South is related to summer, midday, and growth of the seeds we planted earlier. Through the South, we celebrate the qualities of nurturance, play, love, and connection with other people. In this season, we watch our activities deepen and mature, and our efforts bring forth results not only for ourselves, but also for family, community, and tribe.

West is correlated with Fall, sunset, and the full maturity of our endeavors. Paradoxically, as our efforts come to final fruition, we move beyond them and our attention turns back inward. West carries the energy of introspection, transformation, and letting go all that

has outlived its purpose. Moving through west, we move from the realm of action into the realm of reflection.

Which brings us to North, the place of winter, night, and resting. For a long time, I thought of North as a sort of "filler" direction, something to complete the circle by giving lip service to the energies of stillness and dormancy. Focused on activity, I had a hard time seeing much value in the quiet time. Today, riding my bicycle through the gray winter mist, observing trees that just a month ago were ablaze with color - and which now sport fat, silent buds - I wonder. Surely, all directions, all ways of being, are equal. What, then, is the worth of Winter?

In simpler times, winter was a season when life slowed down. People had time to reflect, to regroup, change gears, clean and repair tools, and rest the body. Winter was a time to review the events of the past year and to analyze the results of your just-completed efforts. It was time for hunters to chip flints and make sure the arrows they headed would fly straight and true. It was time to sort seeds, so that you planted only your very best. It was a time before the frenzied activity of springtime to hone vision and set goals to direct the course of your entire next cycle.

Making New Year's resolutions is one of the few ways our over-mechanized, hyper-productive society still recognizes the natural functions of North and winter. Resolutions are statements of formalized intention that will carry us into the coming year. Instead of tossing them off as jokes, you could make resolutions into a powerful tool - not only at New Years, but all year long, any time you'd like to begin a new endeavor.

Intentions carry energy. Energy attracts form. The clearer your intentions, the more effective you are in actually manifesting your goals. For that reason, take time to set goals that really mean something. Is the ice cream thing really your core issue? Or is there something deeper, perhaps the fact that you're lonely and have nothing better to do? Do you really want to work out at the gym every day, or is there a better way to relieve your stress? Instead of jumping directly into action, take time to consult your inner guidance, to get very clear on what it is you really want.

Time spent clarifying your vision will pay you back hundredfold. When you make your plans, choose goals that are re-

alistic. Nothing is more disempowering or disheartening than making your goals impossibly large or vague. Break big goals down into small, tangible steps you have a reasonable chance of completing. Sure you want a new career, but instead of flying off half-cocked, take the time to map out a plan for getting there. Gather information. Research your options. Find out where you could receive training, get financial assistance, and find out what jobs are actually available. Once you have a strategy in hand, you'll be able to act much more effectively.

What would you like to accomplish this year? Think about it. Even though freezing temps and gray weather may make it seem endless, this time of quiet is in fact all too short. Hone your vision now, while you can. Set your sights on whatever calls you. Aim carefully. Spring will be here before you know it!▲

REFORMING GLOBAL HEALTH THROUGH ENERGETIC HEALING AND THE HARA LINE MEDITATION

**by Gerry Mitchell
AKA Dancing Dolphin**

Reforming Global Health is an awesome task unless we are willing to begin with our own little piece of the global picture. Global health must begin with our personal health. It is important for us to stay centered to make healthy choices for our own right living. There are many techniques available to center us in our connection with our physical manifestation and also with the divine. There is one energetic technique that connects us on our line of intentionality between the physical and the divine. Our actions in the world are based in our intention. This Barbara Brennen technique taught in the Healing Touch Program is the Hara Line Meditation. The Hara Line is part of the energetic anatomy and exists on a level deeper than the auric field. It's this line that connects us to our true harmonious life path that defines who we are in this lifetime. This alignment is the true self, the divine self which enables us to make moment life choices with clear intention. This line resonates our lives with the om of the earth. By bringing our lives in line with our divine intention while resonating

with the earth we can return to health and harmony that heals not only the self but also the planet. Centered in our own personal true intention we have a personal expression of health based in right choices that have a global impact.

This is the single most important aspect of my work in the world. — to practice this meditation for myself and to teach it to others. I believe our true vision as we might take our work globally has to come from this place. I do this technique as part of my daily practice and would like to share this meditation with you to bring you to your true self in this moment. Centered in the moment, we hear our brothers from our true intentionality and thus will be allowed to hear what they share as it pertains to our own personal story, hearing your own personal message as it pertains to your work.

Hara Line Meditation

**Based on work of
Barbara Brennen**

Sit with your feet flat on the floor sitting high on your tail bone, back tall and erect. Place your hands down on your legs grounding through your thighs. With your eyes cast slightly down, close your eyes. Only ever so slightly dropping your chin, look down which supports the grounding process.

Allow yourself to connect into the essence of who you are at a place we call the Core Star an inch and a half above the navel. Go deeply into your being and connect with yourself. Allow that energy to expand out into your hara line. First into your Tan Tien, the energy point the martial artist use, an inch and a half below your naval in the center of the pelvis. Allow that ball of energy about the size of a golf ball to begin connecting down to the central core of the earth. We do this energetically, dropping this energetic shaft down from our Tan Tien through the many layers below us. Down through your pelvis, through your clothes, through the chair, the air beneath your chair, the floor, the foundation, and into the earth, and continuing down through all the layers between us and the earth's core. Continue dropping this line of energy and as you do this, you might take notice of the fluctuations going on within your body as you realign. Allow this to happen.

As you reach the center core, we will connect with the pink red crystal

that is there. Allow the energy from that crystal to come up that line, pulling it to you like we are sucking it up a straw. Feel the line of light energy come back up to the Tan Tien.

Then begin to connect this energy up from your Tan Tien through the center of your body. This shaft of energy is now about the size of a pencil connecting up to the second point called Soul Seat, the point just below where your collar bones come together. Allow these two points to connect. As you reach this second point, you might ask yourself what is it you most deeply long for, in this life time. What is your heart's desire?

Then begin to connect this second point, the soul seat up through your neck, and head and above your head. Connecting the Soul Seat up to a third point about three and half feet above you head, called the ID point, the point of individuation — the place where you come out of the spiritual plane and incarnate, manifesting in the physical.

While we are here in this Hara alignment, at a level of intention, let us each set our intention, for what it is you wish to accomplish, for what it is you need help with.

Then I would like to suggest that we also set our intention to work as a group of light workers, in harmony, in whatever way we are working.

Then let us invoke Archangel Metatron at the top of Hara Line, for assistance in what is needed in each of our own particular Hara Lines, in each of our own particular life tasks. For whatever assistance is needed at this time, so that we are in alignment with divine will.

Let's invoke Archangel Sandalphon at the bottom of the Hara Line, at the earth's center core, the archangel who grounds all this tremendous spiritual energy into the physical plane. To help us to be grounded in our bodies, grounding our spiritual selves.

Let's invoke archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel and all the other archangels, and helpers coming in to assist us in this point in history. To help us come together as a group. To help us with our intentions, conscious and unconscious, to heal that part of ourselves that is ready. To help us heal our deep core issues at this time. Let's invoke Source energy, the highest possible energy into this process to make this personal healing be accomplished with joy. To take the suffer-

ing and struggle out of this, to transmute these issues, that we might reach our next level of being and service, with the greatest ease and joy.

Now leave your hara line in place.

Again feel your feet against the floor connecting with the earth. Allow the energy of the earth to flow with perfect ease up through your legs and into your first Chakra, at the base of your trunk between your legs. Feeling it spin clockwise as you breathe in and out the color red. With the intention to energize, clear and charge breathe brilliant red light into your root chakra. While doing this ask that any first chakra issues that are ready to be healed to come forward and be healed with the greatest love and ease through grace. Strengthening your willingness to be in a physical body, and your commitment to have come here. Letting go of fear. The area of the body governed is the spinal cord and kidneys. Flush these areas with revitalizing light.

As you take your next breath feel the energy move up into your second chakra, the area just above your pubis. The area is associated with your sexual organs, your immune system and your inner child feelings. Allow the energy to charge and clear with the orange color of the second chakra. You might ask that any issues concerning your second chakra that are ready to heal come forward and be transmuted in the light of your intention. To embrace the aspects of desire and pleasure that are healthy and release those that create imbalance. The area of the body governed is the reproductive system. Breathe healing light into this area.

Then with your next breath raise the energy up to your third chakra, the area centered over your diaphragm below your ribs, breathing lemon yellow into this center. You might ask that whatever issues that are ready to heal be brought forward into your consciousness and be healed in the easiest way. That you will know your place in the universe how to care for yourself in the best way for you, in your own self interest while balancing issues around ego and power. The area of the body governed is the stomach, liver, gall bladder and nervous system. Breathe sunlight into your center, clearing and energizing this area.

With your next inward breath follow your energy up into the heart where the frequency turns to a grass green color, allow the energy of the Christ heart of un-

conditional love to embrace you and fill you. The heart energy is also frequently seen as pink. Through this center we are able to express and receive love and compassion as we create awareness of our soul. The area of the body governed is the heart, blood and circulatory system and vagus nerve. Allow this healthy green light to hold your heart and the color pink course through your circulatory system washing through clear paths for our life blood.

And then follow the energy up into your throat where the energy turns to sky blue and allow the wisdom of your heart to be spoken with clarity. The spiritual house from which we express higher intelligence and the world of thought. The area of the body governed are the bronchial and vocal apparatus, lungs and ears. Breathe in sky blue and let it enfold this area while clearing, energizing and revitalizing.

Follow the energy of the indigo frequency up into your forehead to your third eye and you might ask what ever your next lesson with respect to development of high sense perception come to you, that this be received with grace and with ease. Allow us to nurture the seat of the mind, blessing our intuition with compassion wisdom and love. Breathe indigo into the lower brain, nose and left eye, clearing and charging.

Then move up to the top of your head breathing in the color white or purple while at the same time looking down, check back to the energy of the first chakra to remain grounded. Maintain yourself in the physical body, we do not want to go out on the seventh. Hear the om of your life resonating with the pulse of the earth. Here, the seat of the soul, higher will or knowing is where we know our bliss. The upper brain and right eye are associated with this area. Breathe in the white light and let it flow.

Leave the chakras spinning, cleared and balanced and bring your attention back to your Core Star. Return your focus to your Core Star where we began at that point an inch and a half above your naval and the furthest place into your physical being and expand that healing energy out through every cell of your physical body. Allow it to permeate the cellular memory. Allowing it to facilitate any change in your physical self that needs to occur. Allow it to prepare

your body for a change in physical form. Clearing any debris out of the cell that may be causing confusion or heaviness in your system.

Then expand the Core Star energy out through the first layer, the etheric layer. Allow it to balance and change any aspect of the etheric that needs to be upgraded and balanced to support this new form and body.

Expand the energy out through the emotional layer. Balancing and healing any emotions that are out of balance, emotions that no longer serve you. Transmute anything that needs to go and ask that this might happen quickly and easily.

Expand it out through the mental body, allowing the energy to balance, to kick out, to upgrade your belief system to accommodate the form you are becoming. Letting go of old beliefs that no longer express your divine intention.

Expand it out through the fourth layer, the astral layer. Allow it to release any forms your thoughts have created that no longer serve you, that may hold you in limitation, allowing it to heal any relationships that might require healing at this time. Forgiving yourself and others for not being what you want them to be.

Allow it to expand out through the fifth layer, etheric template layer, allowing the energy to bring this layer into perfect alignment with divine will, and perfect form, that we might be aligned as a group and individually.

Expand it out through the sixth layer of unconditional love, the Celestial Body. Allow this energy of unconditional love to flow back through all the layers of your entire field in brilliant light.

Expand out through the seventh layer, the Ketheric Template, the layer where you meet your higher self, where you hold all your core beliefs systems and all your past life memories. Accepting your healing, allow the energy to transmute those deep core issues that have surfaced now for healing with Source energy in the quickest and easiest way.

Now leaving your expansion in place come back to a place in the room where you feel present and comfortable. Δ

GETTING TO KNOW US

by Gary Kaupman & Treewalker

A small and completely anti-scientific poll of folks at the Fall Conference showed some interest in a program that would al-

low some of us the ability to get to know each other better.

Don't worry, we're not proposing merging a Heart Circle and "Twenty Questions." Or integrating Drumming and "To Tell the Truth." What we are suggesting is some variation on the Foyer Group, a process that has been used successfully by groups as disparate as the Episcopal Church and The Atlanta Executive Network.

Foyer comes from the French and before it came to describe an "entry hall" or "anteroom" it referred to the fireplace or hearth. Which — before the advent of swimming pools, decks and hot tubs — was the heart of most homes.

Here's how it works: Everyone interested in participating puts their name in a hat. Names are drawn in groups of six and folks in each of the groups agree to get together for a simple meal at each person's home once a month for six months. While each group may decide on an agenda or subject of discussion, the process seems to work best when people simply share food and unstructured discussion.

The only agenda is that we get to know, understand and appreciate each other more fully.

We can, of course, modify the idea however we wish. Meals could be covered dish, rather than prepared by the host(s). Groups could be larger and meet for a longer period of time, or smaller and shorter. Spouses, housemates, neighbors and friends who have not been to GSV could be included, or not. We could meet and eat at a restaurant or take a picnic to a park, though we believe that breaking bread with someone in their home is important to the process as we understand it.

If you are interested in knowing more, or putting your name in the hat, please contact Martin Isganitis (404/377-5933) or Gary Kaupman (404/373-0426, Gkaupman@aol.com). Groups will start forming in April or May. Calls between 8a.m. and 9p.m. are most likely to meet with a charming response. Messages spoken slowly are most likely to receive a return call. Δ

WHAT IS A SALON?

By Cal Gough & Al Cotton

What is a salon? *Utne Reader*, which introduced the concept in its March/April 1991 issue in an article entitled "Salons: How to Revive the Art of Conversation

and Start a Revolution in Your Living Room," calls the salon "an information discussion group, an intellectual jam session, a thought-traders' rendezvous." As of 1995, their Neighborhood Salon Association has over 16,000 members, and there were 250 salons operating around North America.

Cal Gough and Al Cotton want to know if there's any interest in creating a GSV Salon. Cal has agreed to provide a meeting space for the organizational meeting on the 16th of March from 8-10pm at his and Larry's house at 1576 McLendon. Please call 377-0476 before the 16th to let them know if you plan to come.

If you are helping create a GSV salon, please think about these questions before the organizational meeting:

- What kind of focus and format would you prefer? A group that discusses a book the group has chosen and read beforehand? A series of sessions where each attendee is invited to share with the others short reading(s) of/from an essay, book, poem, quotation, etc. that has enriched his own spiritual journey? A group that alternates between these two formats, either within each session or from one session to the next? Something else altogether?

- What kinds of content, format, process, or direction are you definitely not interested in trying out?

- Should we aim for a commitment of attendance (for, say, once a month for the next six months) from each person interested, or simply schedule the first salon and see who shows up? Should we schedule a separate time and place for evaluating the experiment and/or making process and format suggestions after a reasonable trial period?

- Should we settle in advance how long each session will last, and when it will start, and encourage each other to respect -these agreements?

- What's a good size for the kind of group that would presumably encourage participation, intimacy, and continuity? Should the group be limited in size to a certain number of people (six? eight?) so we can all gather comfortably in an average-sized living room? If more than six or eight are interested, shall we start two parallel salons of roughly equal size instead of trying to conduct one largish salon?

- Should we experiment first with

a two-hour session? a three-hour session? Some other chunk of time?

- Should the sessions be open to anyone any group member might choose to invite, or should the group remain "closed" for the duration of the original commitment, then open up again for "re-subscribers" and/or new people?

- How shall meeting-places be decided, and would designating a facilitator for each session be useful?

- What agreements could we come to about the logistics of providing what the ladies call "refreshments"?

- What's the best day of the week for you to meet? What's the best time of day or night for you to meet? Are there other times than the best ones for you that you'd be able and willing to consider? Δ

ANATOMY OF THE SPIRIT

By Caroline Myss, Ph.D.

A Review

by Al Cotton

The book I read on my flight to Seattle last month — my first full book since giving up my book review column in *Southern Voice* — is Caroline Myss' *Anatomy of the Spirit: The Seven Stages of Power and Healing* (\$25.00, Harmony Books). Myss, a medical intuitive, tells us that, health-wise, "biology is biography." Her gift is to be able to take the name and birth date of someone willing to be "read," even from a great distance away, and tell them exactly what their medical problem is and what aspect of their history caused it. Her colleague, Dr. Norman Shealy, has documented her accuracy at 93%.

Myss says her goal is to give us the knowledge she's gained from using her gift, and increase our ability to diagnose and heal ourselves. To that end, she has conceived an intricate system of interrelations among established spiritual traditions — the seven chakras of Hindu spirituality, the seven sacraments of Catholic Christianity, and the ten sefirot of the Tree of Life in the Jewish Kaballah. By connecting the universal aspects of these energies from different spiritual systems, Myss derives the what she calls "the Seven Sacred Truths" of our existence. As an example, the First or Tribal Chakra, tells us "All is One." It correlates to the sacrament of Baptism, and the sefirot of

Shekhinah, representing the mystic community of Israel and the concept of Gaia.

My personal test of how this information works was pretty remarkable. One of my ongoing issues is how to deal with my parents in relation to claiming power in my life. I knew that my mother would become upset if she learned I was considering a move to Seattle, so I avoided discussing it at all until she called the weekend before I was to leave. When I did, I got a major dose of her typically negative and fearful way of living — dire warnings of bad Seattle weather, of the dangers flying over the Rockies in January, even of the “worse than I realized” state of my father’s health. And 48 hours later, I started coming down one of the flu bugs that was roaming Atlanta last month.

Congestion, Myss tells us, is a Fifth Chakra issue, where the Sacred Truth is “Surrender Personal Will to Divine Will.” (The pertinent sacrament here is, appropriately enough, Confession; the paired sefirot, Hesed and Gevurah, represent God’s mercy and judgment.) Myss says: “We fear having no authority or power of choice within our own lives, first within our tribes, then within our personal and professional relationships. And then we fear having no authority with ourselves, being out of control when it comes to our responses to substances, to money, to power, to another person’s emotional control over our well-being. And finally, we fear the will of God.” When we have trouble making choices that reflect our wills, one expression of blocked Fifth Chakra energy is a cold.

I personally was never able to take seriously Louise Hay’s discussion of how we create our illnesses, but Myss works for me. *Anatomy of the Spirit* seems to me to be a level above Hay’s work, far more subtle and intellectually rigorous. Where Hay seemed to offer everyone the chance to heal, Myss points out that healing doesn’t always occur, that what people learn from her is often what it takes to die well. And her diagnosis of the modern relational malady of “woundology,” where people enter into relationships from their wounds instead of their strengths, is breathtakingly clear headed. Myss feels a bit like the New Age healing movement’s version of Dr. Laura Schlessinger, the tough radio psychologist, who I also admire — both women call it like they see it and pull few punches. This analogy may make some of you want to read this book, and cause oth-

ers to run for the hills away from it.

When I got to Seattle, the person I was staying with, a man with whom I celebrated a magical birthday back in May, seemed to be coming down with a cold himself. I started feeling guilty, thinking I had brought it with me, but he insisted he had started feeling stuffy about six hours before my plane landed. The timing should have tipped me off, but it wasn’t until the next day, when I met the new boyfriend he hadn’t mentioned, that the picture came into focus — his ability to speak hard truths to me, it seems, is no stronger than mine with my mother. Maybe that’s why Myss’s book felt especially resonant to me. Whatever reason, I highly recommend it — its structure is vibrant, its tone tough-minded and unflinching, and its heart full and beautiful and ferociously human. Δ

GUARDIANS OF THE TREES...

by Andrew Ramer

[From Andrew’s keynote at the First Celebrating Gay Spirit Visions Conference, November 1990]

I grew up in Orange County, California, where it wasn’t even safe to be Jewish so there was no way that I was going to come out. But I knew all kinds of things about who I was, and I think we all did because it is out there in the collective unconscious. So we have several jobs, and Harry spoke about them last night. One of the jobs that human beings have as an incarnate species is that most other life forms are horizontal; Birds are sort of oblique, but most other life forms are aligned with the planet itself. We are vertical, not all the time, but a good deal of the time. So what we are doing is not just drawing energy up from the planet, but drawing energy down from the heavens and up from the planet, and weaving it together. All human beings are weavers. But the frequency that men who love men weave together is even more purely vertical, phallic, aligned. That is a frequency which we share with one other major life form on this planet, which is the standing people, the trees.

One of our most ancient jobs was that we were considered the guardians of the trees at the end of the Ice Ages. We were the ones that could go into a

community and say, “You can cut these trees, you can’t cut those, you can use this wood, you can’t use that.” We didn’t do this from an intellectual sense, we did it because we dialogued with the trees. We dialogued with the tree spirits and this I think is perfectly clear in our history now, whether we are conscious of it or not. You can go to any city on the planet earth and where will you find other Gay men? In a park. It is not just because it is dark and secluded. Some of it has to do with the trees themselves and our relationship to the trees. This goes back to Lesbians and goats. Women who loved women were the guardians of the animals, not the trees. They had a different job.

So this was a big part of our job, that we talked to the trees. We made remedies from flowers, from plants, we were the ones that began to carve things, and much of the art that we still work with comes from this ancient capacity to use the trees. Paint was made out of tree products, plant products. So who painted the cave paintings during the Ice Ages? Who went to Lascaux? I think it was the men who were not out killing each other, out hunting. It was the men who stayed home. Although I think there were also Gay warriors and always will be. But our job now is to become more involved as a community in working with our brothers the trees—planting trees, working politically, ecologically, whatever ways we find resonate with our energy, because we are still the guardians of the trees and no one else is. The Sierra Club does great work, but it is our job and we have to own it again. Δ

PLANT TREES WITH GSV

by John Stowe

Several times over the past few years, I’ve spent Saturday mornings as a volunteer for Trees Atlanta. The work involves showing up early, then driving to some site in the city where we dig holes in the Earth and fill them with small, carefully potted trees. Mostly, we plant oaks, 4 to 7 feet tall. Twice we were in schoolyards, and other times along busy streets in not-so-pretty parts of town. Once we planted 20 oaks along a new entrance to I-20. Another time, my neighbor and I planted 400 tiny crepe myrtles along the Marta tracks on DeKalb Ave. The work isn’t hard, and the people are interesting. I get home af-

ter noon - tired, muddy, and very satisfied.

The real satisfaction comes later. For four years now, I've watched the surviving crepe myrtles bloom each spring. I see the row of oaks along I-20 beginning to screen an industrial waste center with green leaves. The trees along North Avenue have doubled in size, even the two we place in the middle of a concrete parking lot. Each time I pass those trees, I smile. Not all of them have made it, but enough have survived to make a difference. They're there, doing their thing, years after the tiny effort of planting them.

Join us on Saturday, March 15, when GSV members will plant trees with Trees Atlanta. We need about 20 men to commit 3 or 4 hours in the morning. It will be fun, satisfying, and I guarantee you'll feel good about the results for years to come. We need your commitment by March 1, so Trees Atlanta knows how many trees to order and how much help to expect. If you can join us, please call John Stowe at (404) 373-0111 as soon as you can to put your name on the list. You'll be glad you did. Δ

PRIDE SOLICITATIONS

BROTHER'S TAKE A BREATH....
It's Magic boy here, hoping for peace and harmony in all my brothers' lives in this new year 1997. HO! Now that Groundhog's Day has past and the shadow of this great animal didn't appear, spring will soon be here and the seeds we all have planted this season will sprout into beautiful blossoms of color.

Knowing that time is of the essence and that blooms don't always last forever, I would like to put a bug in all your ears and update all of you on the progress of Gay Spirit Visions' participation in the annual Atlanta Gay Pride Festival June 27-29. We hope to spread our tribal magic throughout the festival in much the same way as last year, with a little heat added to it. As it looks at press time, we will be sponsoring a booth (slightly different than last year), a float in the parade (crowd pleaser with all the drums), and (oh please great spirit), a ritual fire on the festival grounds. Please send along your prayers and spiritual gifts to us as we our waiting approval for the fire from city hall. Everything looks like it's a go though we'll know March 1.

So Brothers and Sisters, tap into what sounds good to you and call me at

404/378-1180. The fire will need Fire Keepers, as well as attendants, on a round the clock basis from Friday June 27 through Sunday June 29th. The booth will need staffing throughout that time. The float will need some fabulous fairies to continue the grand tradition started last year. Plus there are a hundred and one other little jobs to be done that don't take much time. So please give the Brothers of Gay Spirit Vision your special gift for Atlanta Gay Pride 1997. The amount of love you receive will be worth every moment you share with us.

I would also like to encourage our out of town brothers to participate as well. This is not only a celebration for Atlanta Brothers, it's for all beings who want to celebrate the Gay Spirit that lies within them. Let us know of your interest in coming for the weekend. Everyone is welcome. We will try to help accommodate everyone with their special needs.

Before I sign off, I would like to thank everyone for their help in the last year with all the programs. Your love and energy helped make this a flawless year for me. Let me encourage you once again to GET INVOLVED. Dandelion is the new Director of Programs and the committee would love and appreciate all your help and ideas, so we can continue to spread the Gay Spirit magic throughout the world. Peace, joy, love, and light to all.

In Gay Spirit,

Todd Magic boy Kinney Δ

COMBINATION COMMITTEE SHORT NOTES

by Al Cotton

Cyber-Visions

Harry Rezzamini, who has just started a graduate program in Library Science at Georgia Tech, chose GSV as Fall Quarter project, to create a website, showing how he could master a group's body of text and creatively use HTML language to communicate their mission. He got A's from both his instructor and the Cyber-Arm of the Communications Committee — it looks *marvelous*.

We hope to eventually have regularly updated schedule info., conference history, excerpts from keynotes and scanned photos, and links that will help

us network with other similar groups. Harry has also set up a place for profiles, where any GSV-er can place a photo, a bio, a personal statement and his own links for others to find.

As soon as we have found a place to house it, GSV will have a web-site. And we will need someone with HTML skills to update it and create new profiles? Do you have any leads for a web-home or any technical capabilities to help us? Call Al at 404/292-8567 or e-mail to GSVGSA@AOL.COM. Major doses of thankful gratitude to Harry for choosing us, and so carefully and lovingly crafting a cyber-home for GSV. Δ

PROGRAM COMMITTEE SHORT NOTES

by Dandelion

Spring Thing: Two Spirit Warriors

This year the Spring Thing will take place May 3, two days after Beltane. This year's theme is "Two Spirit Warriors" featuring a morning presentation by John Stowe, who has been developing rituals and exercises around this archetype (see his ad elsewhere in this newsletter). The day's events will begin at 10:00 AM and include a Beltane ritual, Heart Circle, catered lunch, and afternoon workshops. There are still spaces available if you would like to facilitate a workshop. Send a short description of your proposed presentation, along with pertinent personal information to the GSV PO Box, as soon as possible. Priority will be given to those ideas which address the theme, and then to those received first. Watch for a registration card to be mailed around the middle of March with more specific details.

GSV Cake Walk & Talent Night

Some of you may remember the Cake Walk held several years ago. We have decided it's once again time to share the amazing talent seen every year at the Fall Conference talent show with the rest of the world. We are tentatively planning on the last Saturday evening in May as the date for a Cake Walk & Talent Showcase to raise money for GSV's Pride Festival Activities. Watch for more information on this event and come out for a fun evening supporting a good cause. If you would be

interesting in performing that evening call Dandelion at (770) 972-8028.

GSV at Atlanta Pride

Though we were not given official recognition, the GSV float was widely said to be one of the highlights of the 1996 pride festival, and our booth generated a great amount of interest and significantly increased our presence in the Atlanta Gay Community. This year we have even bigger things planned! Magic Boy Todd Kinney is facilitating our Pride activities — see his article elsewhere in this newsletter for how to get involved

Summer-Fall-Winter

We are already thinking about what we will be doing for the rest of the year. If you have suggestions, desires, ideas for activities after June, call Dandelion. There are also many opportunities for volunteer efforts associated with all of the program committee activities, as well as room for additional full time help on the committee. If you would like to volunteer, help out occasionally on an event without making a full commitment, or to be notified of the next Program Committee meeting, call Dandelion (770) 972-8028. Δ

QUILT

Men in the prime of life, men with fire in their breath

Will sing and plant gardens. Only the old and the weak

will stop to count the colored shrouds of death.

Autumn comes to the valley. Sunroot blossoms spread

Their golden petals on the peat.

Men in the prime of life, men with fire in their breath

Will gather melons, pull weeds, plant wintercress.

Birds on withered poke, with berries in their beaks,

will stop to count the colored shrouds of death.

Frost is on the meadow. Sheep and goats protest

Their hunger, chickens cluck, stallions stamp their feet.

Men in the prime of life, men with fire in their breath

Will roll in the hay, sow oats, entice chickens with fresh

cracked corn. They will prance through naked meadows to the trees,

will stop to count the colored shrouds

of death

And make love beneath the maples.

Joy and viral death

will pass among them. Some will bear cloth witness to the east.

Men in the prime of life, men with fire in their breath

Will come to count the colored shrouds of death.

Cassandra

[written when i couldn't go to DC and see the quilt because i hurt my foot at the short mountain gathering.] Δ

CONFERENCE MANUAL

by Al Cotton

One of the projects I hope to spend time on this year is the conference organizational manual that Andrew charged us with. The conference manual will be, in GSV tradition, a communal effort that I will assemble. I will be in touch with some of you directly, asking you to write something for it, and will provide opportunities for any one who has a piece he feels needs to be it. We want to put down in print as much of our collective wisdom about how to create the magic we experience each September. Δ

TAKING ACTION IN THE WORLD

Taking Action is a new section in the newsletter where we tell you all the ways we know of that GSV-ers are implementing last year's conference theme. Send us info about what you're doing in the world and other announcements for listing in future issues of *Visionary*.

David Salyer took his stand-up comedy routine on the road, specifically to Atlanta's Punchline for "Laughter Is The Best Medicine," which raised over \$8,000 for two local AIDS service organizations. He tells us that stand-up comedy is a piece of cake compared to hosting an entire Talent Show. "It was a dream come true for me and I'd have never done it if the men of Gay Spirit Visions hadn't been so encouraging and supportive. After the benefit I felt a little like Sally Field: 'You like me! You really like me!'" Wait — hasn't he used that line on us already? Congrats,

David.

John Stowe continues his work on his book and related workshop. **Two Spirit Warrior: Empowering Men Who Love Men** will be offered the weekends of March 22-23, April 19-20, and May 11-12 in Atlanta, and in other cities later in the year. See John's ad elsewhere in this newsletter.

Al Cotton's Whole Life Expo talk was well-attended — on the opening Friday night he drew about 30 very interested people. He is working on creating an article, perhaps a book, out of assembled materials. It was also taped by Harry Rezzamini for possible inclusion on the GSV website — that is, if Al can bring himself to watch it.

Dancing Dolphin is back in Atlanta after a month in South Pacific, where he delivered a keynote address at the Australian Holistic Nurse's Conference and presented a workshop on Healing Touch techniques. His description of his dolphin swim while in New Zealand was a high point from the ongoing dialogue on the GSV e-mail reflector. Welcome back, Gerry!

Green Man returned to his birth place — Greenville, SC, of course — to appear at his first cocktail party. His appearance fee was a request for a donation to Trees Atlanta, which was tripled by the gracious host. The reception ranged, predictably, from delight ("Get that plant a drink!") to incomprehension ("Shoot the bastard!") Green Man's next scheduled appearance is at garden tour in Asheville, NC on Father's Day -- look for his picture in the published promotional materials.

Keynote updates:

First year keynote Harry Hay has sold his papers to the San Francisco Public Library, relieving Harry and partner John Burnside of the financial burden caused by the burning of their house several years ago.

Second year keynote James Broughton had a light stroke toward the end of last year. Word is, James is recovering nicely, and all GSV-ers send their love and energy in his direction.

First- and third-year keynote Franklin Abbot's 1993 book **Boyhood: Growing Up Male** is being reprinted by the Univ. of Wisconsin Press. Look for it in some time in the fall.

Thanks to Randy Taylor, who gifted us with a large box of GSV and other personal materials from Raven Wolfdancer's

estate. We've got some early photos, some of Raven's original art work and a good many, previously-thought-lost videotapes from the first few conferences.

And finally, a correction: Among the many places that you may have seen a quote that purported to come from Nelson Mandela's Inauguration speech ("Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure...") was our 1995 Fall Conference brochure. Well, it seems that that quote actually came from Marianne Williamson's book "A Return to Love," and its misattribution has become something of an urban legend. Who first misquoted it, we don't know; we're just glad to be able to set the record straight. One of the pitfalls of taking action in the world, perhaps....Δ

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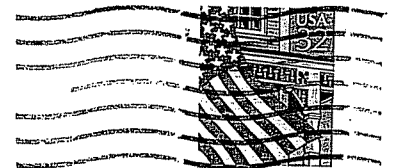
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Vo. 3, # 1, March, 1997
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