

RETREATS

To arrange a private or group retreat, call 763-689-3540.

Office hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

e-mail: office@arc retreat.org

Web-site: www.arc retreat.org

COSTS

24-hr retreat (Sun-Thurs).....\$75

24-hr weekend retreat (Fri-Sat)..\$80 (individual), \$90 (groups)

Weekend retreat (Fri eve-Sun aft).....\$160

Day retreat (9-4).....\$25 Weekdays, \$30 Weekends

ARC-led retreatsadd \$10/day

Hermitage (24 hrs).....\$75 Weekdays, \$80 Weekends

Cottage.....Call/e-mail for rates

Spiritual companioning.....sliding scale, \$40-\$60

Ask about scholarships as well as special rates for clergy and spouses. Stays of five days or longer are also discounted.

(Rates are slightly higher for profit-making organizations.)

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ARC NEEDS (and desires) LIST

- Massage table
- Nipco heater
- Contractor’s portable air compressor
- Gently used books for library or Booknook
- Firewood - downed trees or cut wood, especially oak; tax credit given.
- Woodcutters on our volunteer wood days: February 9, March 1, April 5 and 26.

LOST AND FOUND: Sometimes precious objects and articles of clothing get left behind and we have no way of identifying the owners. If you are missing something, check our lost and found department!



*ARC Retreats...
time apart,
rest,
and spiritual
renewal*



Ecumenical Retreat Community
NEWSLETTER
January 2008 VOL. XXIX NO. 1

The Subversive Sabbath

*Do you have the patience to wait
till your mud settles and the water is clear?
Can you remain unmoving
till the right action arises by itself?*

—Tao Te Ching

suggests a more helpful balance, between activity and receptivity. Work is not just about tasks completed, and rest is more than a numbing encounter with the television screen. Walter Brueggemann goes even farther and declares that true Sabbath practice is resistance to an overwhelming culture of anxiety. I like that idea.

I confess, I am a convert. I am utterly persuaded: the lifestyle I have embraced, along with countless millions of other Americans, is harmful to human health and toxic to the earth. I refer to the life of dis-ease, un-rest, and peace-lessness that passes for normal behavior. I am a convert to the idea of Sabbath, the idea that God had in mind something besides a good football game and a few beers when the seventh day came along. I have come to trust that regular and intentional periods of bodily rest and spiritual renewal are as necessary to life as air and water.

I like the idea of resistance to practices that do not merit my allegiance. In fact, an 18th century Quaker named John Woolman is even edging out Robin Hood as my personal hero (for more on Woolman, see also p. 4). Robin Hood merely stole from the rich to give to the poor. Woolman gave up his own business because it was too successful. He wanted to spend more time alone with God. During his searching, silent prayers he became a devout and passionate abolitionist—resisting the sin of slavery, culturally acceptable in those days, 100 years before the Civil War. Silence, solitude, Sabbath time did that for him.

Ultimately, we have just one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and reflect it towards others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will also be in our troubled world.

—Etty Hillesum

How did we miss this essential truth? Is any commandment more regularly broken, and with more self-righteous justification, than “Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy”? When did 24/7 become a hot marketing slogan, dispelling any vestige of sacred time? How did we come to value multi-tasking over concentrated effort? What does it mean that we make busy-ness a virtue, and productivity a proof of character?

Not until we, too, risk standing outside our own lives do we truly see their trivialities as well as their truths. Not until we take time to let our mud settle can we see what really needs to be done. We are addicted to movement; how rarely do we follow the advice of the Tao and remain unmoving until the right action arises. God waits for us in silence; in silence we hear God’s voice.

I think it means that we confuse action for fruitfulness and escape for rest. Tilden Edwards

And I’m not saying this just because I happen to live in a retreat center, either. I am, I repeat, a *Sabbath, continued on page 5*

Have you moved—or moved on? Let us know.
To receive the newsletter electronically, change your mailing address, or request to be removed from our mailing list for newsletters and appeals, contact us via email (arc retreat.hotmail.com) or the enclosed response form. You can also visit our website for the latest news at www.arc retreat.org

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ARC partners with Third Act Ministry

For the past thirty years ARC has served individuals and communities that have sought quiet respite from the distractions of urban life. ARC has provided a place apart for people to reflect and rest so that they can engage thoughtfully in the challenges and opportunities daily life presents. Now, ARC is partnering with a Twin Cities based ministry to offer this spiritual experience in our increasingly fragmented and chaotic world.

Third Act Ministry, a new venture begun in 2007 by Pastors Ruth Frost and Richard Andersen, facilitates small group experiences that powerfully connect people who seek to live their lives purposefully and intentionally. Third Act helps people identify their gifts, their core values and their spiritual calling in life so that daily living can become an opportunity to use the heartaches and the joys of life as a means of grace for themselves and a contribution in every life circumstance.

Together, ARC and Third Act are providing a way in which people may deepen their experiences of themselves and of one another, and their sense of purpose in the world around them. Third Act Ministry has developed a full program of small group experiences for 2008 that may serve as a catalyst for purposeful living. In addition, Third Act will customize programs for communities, congregations or groups of friends and family members to meet their specific needs.

Besides the Saturday through Sunday retreats at ARC, programs will be available as a series of meetings in the Twin Cities. In either case, the intention is to provide an intimate, informal environment for groups of 8-12 people to come together. Listed below are two ARC offerings; the third is a series for the city. Check the website for details on other programs: www.thirdactministry.org.

Discovering Your Spiritual Calling In Life: Identify our gifts, our core values and our spiritual purpose in life to focus on making a contribution in any life circumstance and resource for good the whole of our experience with all its challenges and joys.

Saturday, February 16, 9 am-Sunday, February 17, noon

Creating Spiritual Home Makeovers: Crafting home spaces that enhance the activities, interests and relationships that take place in them. We will explore how we are connected to our past relationships through our homes and how they influence our present relationships. We will look at how our homes support our spiritual practice, our values, the legacy we wish to leave, and our vision for the future.

Saturday, April 12, 9 am-Sunday, April 13, noon

Living A Joyful Life: Practicing Gratitude As a Habit of Being: This offering is the first of a five part series in the Joyful Life Program. In this first three weeks we will look at how to reduce anxiety and dissolve resentments by putting into practice a daily discipline of gratitude. Watch how the daily practice of gratitude can change your heart, your relationships and how you view life. Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, February 7, 21 and 28.

Call 612.810.0530 to register for any of the programs.



Richard Andersen and Ruth Frost, founders of Third Act Ministry



Area musicians lend their talents to benefit ARC Sacred Voice to perform on Friday, May 2, 7:30 pm in Columbia Heights

Once again this year, ARC is the happy recipient of a benefit concert performance by the *a cappella* singing group Sacred Voice, whose 2008 concert season is entitled, "Where there is charity and love, God is there."

Both charity and love abound in this small community of singers whose passion for producing beautiful sound is equaled by their dedication to raising funds for non-profits. First Lutheran Church in Columbia Heights, where the concert will be held, is well-known for its superb acoustics and hosts a diverse array of concerts each year.

Tickets are \$15/person, or \$10 for students or seniors and may be reserved by calling or emailing ARC at 763-689-3540 or arcetreat@hotmail.com. You can learn more about Sacred Voice at their website, www.sacredvoice.org.

Brazilian recorder player Clea Galhano is blessing the partnership of ARC and Third Act Ministry (see article p. 2) with a benefit concert this fall. The date is still to be determined. Galhano specializes in early and Baroque music, and has appeared as a soloist with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. She is on the faculty of Macalester College and the St. Paul Conservatory of Music, and also teaches at Festival de Musica Antiga in Rio de Janeiro. Watch future newsletters and the ARC website for details!

Ginger Almond Cookies—Unbelievably good for you

Simple old-fashioned ginger tops the list of healthful items on your spice shelf. Not only is it full of flavor, it is used to prevent and relieve nausea, indigestion, heart rhythm irregularities, inflammation and arthritic pain. It is also reported to lower cholesterol levels, and help prevent the formation of blood clots. And ginger is said to possess strong antioxidant properties. With all of that, how can you go wrong?*

This recipe is a favorite since the dough is frozen and the cookies can be baked just before serving.

1 1/2 c. shortening (we use butter)	1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 c. sugar	1 T. + 1 tsp. ginger*
3/4 c. molasses	1 T. cinnamon
4 c. flour	1 T. cloves
1 1/2 tsp. baking soda	1 1/2 c. almonds, chopped fine

Cream shortening and sugar until fluffy. Add other ingredients and mix well. Shape into two rolls about two inches in diameter. Wrap in waxed paper, then in plastic bag. Place in freezer for later use or chill in refrigerator for about three hours. Slice into 1/4 inch slices and place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes. Yield: 7 1/2 dozen. Bake a little longer for a crisp cookie, a little less for a soft one. (Wendy's secret for tender cookies is a crust of bread stored in the cookie tin.) From the *ARC Cookbook*—naturally! Available by mail order for \$14.95 plus tax and shipping—see the enclosed order form.

*Ginger health tips thanks to *Wikipedia*, which also informs us that "fresh ginger can be successfully substituted for ground ginger and should be done at a ratio of 6 parts fresh for 1 part ground." We haven't tried it in this recipe yet—let us know if it works for you!

The all-true adventures of Ann Richards

Some people dream big. Some dream long. Ann Richards does both. At 63, she is fulfilling two significant life-long dreams: to walk the Appalachian Trail and to join the Peace Corps.

The solitary pilgrimage along the lush Trail from Pennsylvania to Tennessee happened last summer following her early retirement. Small but sturdy, Ann spent eight weeks walking six hundred miles with a 40-pound pack on her back and sleeping alone under a tarp or in open shelters with other hikers.

For the past two months, though, Ann has exercised her considerable energies within the community at ARC, performing the multitude of tasks that fill our days: cooking, cleaning, hefting firewood. Over Christmas, she deep-cleaned the entire house tuned in to her Walkman, pumping not music but the Romanian language into her ears—because in February Ann is off to the Peace Corps to share her business expertise with Romanian entrepreneurs.



She has a lot to share! She has worked in a variety of business settings, notably Fingerhut, Dex, the Sportsman's Guide, and the Minnesota Women's Press. With her husband she owned a used bookstore for many years—a sideline that complemented her own avid interest in books and knowledge of all kinds. A quilting artist, she also traveled over the road selling supplies to quilt stores. That was the job she left to follow her dreams. Typically, she says, "I am going to get old no matter what; why not grow older gaining a new perspective by experiencing new things and being able to contribute?"

As a two-month volunteer at ARC, Ann has already made a contribution that will not be forgotten, with her lively well-informed mind, her sensitivity to the needs around her, and her readiness to perform any task efficiently and well. This is part of the beauty of ARC—how quickly one can become integral to the life of the community.

The Sabbatical Option—Is it an idea whose time has come for you?

More and more, we are seeing the value of short-term volunteers—those who join the community for one to three months as part of sabbatical leave or during times of transition or discernment. Pat Hinker, for example, is a Methodist pastor who transformed the Booknook on her sabbatical here last May. Steve Janusz, a young retired IT expert, straightened out our phones and computers during his stay in the spring of 2006. Eric Betthausen, formerly the countertenor with the Rose Ensemble, brought a whole new dimension to singing grace before meals in January of 2007. Nathan Peterson, whose resume included volunteer stints at Holden Village and a canoe camp on Lake Vermilion, washed dishes and folded laundry with precision and grace through the month of September.

If you are looking for a place to go for the between-times in your life, if you'd like to balance your head-work with work of heart and hands for a time, if you've been dreaming of life in community and would like to give it a try, why not contact us? Or if you know of someone else in that position, send them our way. It's never too late to make your dreams come true!

ARC is currently inviting applications for short-term volunteers as well as long-term community members. Room and board are offered for stays up to three months; stipend and health insurance for longer commitments. Call Jan at 763-689-3540 or email janwiersma@msn.com.

ARC Spring and Summer Retreats 2008

Journey-Work of the Stars—Religion, science and poetry. In 1855 the poet Walt Whitman wrote, "*I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars.*" Now some of our best religious and scientific thinkers agree. Drawing on what cosmologists call "the Universe Story" and the Biblical story, evolutionary spirituality and poetry, Steve and Anita Beste guide the conversation and contemplation as we ponder such beauty, meaning and mystery together. Steve Beste teaches Poetry at Anoka-Ramsey Community College; Anita Beste is a pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Roseville, Mn.

Friday evening, April 18--Sunday afternoon, April 20

Cost: \$175. Meals and accommodation included.

Council of All Beings—Thinking like a tree. Based on the work of Joanna Macy, a feminist Buddhist ecologist, and John Seed, this process "carries participants from an intellectual understanding that we humans are inseparable from Nature into a deep knowing of our vital connection with Nature through our hearts and bodies." The retreat is composed of meditation, movement, mask-making and the final council where participants speak for creation's diverse beings. Led by Kaia Syien, MS, a mindfulness meditation instructor, spiritual mentor, and community organizer, and Jan Bucher, M.Div., therapist and spiritual director.

Friday evening, May 9—Saturday evening, May 10

Cost: \$120. Meals and accommodation included.

Body and Soul—Blending physical and spiritual wisdom for healing and renewal. Learn to use yoga, (beginning or intermediate levels), Qigong, guided meditation, Thai yoga massage for your own well-being; participants may also choose to receive a reiki or therapeutic massage treatment. Heidi Wagner, yoga instructor, teams with the Cambridge Willowbridge Center for Healthy Living to offer a lively spectrum of options for a deeper connection between healing body and soul.

Friday evening, May 16—Sunday afternoon, May 18

Cost: \$175. Meals and accommodation included. Extra fee for reiki or massage treatment

Also offered as a one day option, Tuesday May 20, 9-4:30.

Cost: \$60. Lunch and tea included. Extra fee for reiki or massage treatment

Life Transitions—Engaging the adventure of transformation The restlessness and longing that characterized adolescence are often present in mid-life or at times of great transition, not as signs of decay but of growth and expansion, says Anne Morrow Lindbergh. Explore the changes that accompany retirement or other significant shifts as opportunities for revitalization and transformation with Donna McNear and Kathryn Grafsgaard, both gifted educators nearing retirement.

Friday evening, June 13—Sunday afternoon, June 15

Cost: \$175. Meals and accommodation included.

Educators' Retreat—Time apart for reflection and renewal A time to remember our purposes as educators and renew our commitments to those we teach. This is the third year ARC is sponsoring a retreat for educators, designed for people who teach in all contexts and at all levels. Facilitated by Donna McNear, teacher, and life-long learner in the art of reflective teaching. Scholarships available with priority given to teachers of special needs children in urban schools.

Monday, August 18, 10:30 am—Wednesday, August 20, 10:30 am

Cost: \$175. Meals and accommodation included.

Living in the Light at the Divine Center: A Quaker speaks of peace beyond contentment

There is an inner peace that is deeper than the sense that all is well. It is the peace that transforms people, that allows people to be joyful while suffering, to sing hymns while in prison, to do what seems extraordinary.



Photo by Kenata Johnson Seyenkulo.

Within everyone is a Divine Center, a Holy Self. It is where the Inner Light, the God Within, lives in us. It is where our humanity and divinity meet. It is where the holiness of being is known. When we are quiet and still we can return to this Center and be guided by the Divine Within. Thomas Kelley, in *A Testament of Devotion*, describes living from the Center: “Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. And it makes our life programs new and overcoming.

There is an inner peace that is deeper than the sense that all is well.

“It is at this Center that God calls us. When that call comes in the silence, fainter though it be than the faintest whisper, unheard by even the nearest and dearest sitting by, there is a clearness and insistency about it that cannot be mistaken.... It is just that: a personal knowledge that issues in obedience.” The call may pull us out of our contentment, comfort, and maybe even out of our safety. We may be asked to make significant life changes.

The 18th century Quaker John Woolman left his family for months at a time, traveling on foot to speak of the evils of slavery. Etty Hillesum did not flee Amsterdam to safety but stayed with her fellow Dutch Jews, keeping a meticulous diary until her death at Auschwitz. Tom Fox, working as part of a Christian Peacemaking Team, gave his life in pursuit of peace in the Middle East.

“When that call comes, the doubts, the questions, even the agony...are all swallowed up in an overwhelming joy.” It is the deep joy and peace that comes from living life from the Center, in partnership with God, that gives us the ability and power to bring change and peace to the world around us.

—Community Member and Quaker Bob Hoxie

Quotations from Thomas Kelley come courtesy of L. Violet Hodgkin, from the pamphlet *The Surrender of Silence*, published by the Yorkshire Quaker Meeting.

The Sequoia Promise: a gift for future generations

Years ago, ARC’s leadership used the sequoia as a symbol of enduring vitality and growth. After all, when one plants a sequoia, one doesn’t expect maturity in a moment or even a lifetime. One plants for the seventh generation to come. The Sequoia Promise is for the future.

The Endowment and Planned Giving Committee, current stewards of ARC’s financial future, can help friends of ARC create a living legacy through a variety of planned gifts. For example, life insurance may allow you to make a significantly larger charitable gift than might be possible using your current assets.

- ◇ By making a Foundation the owner and beneficiary of the life insurance contract, you can take a deduction for the ongoing premium payments as you make them.
- ◇ Either cash or publicly traded securities may be used to make premium payments.
- ◇ You can also receive tax benefits if you make a gift of a paid-up life insurance contract.
- ◇ Alternatively, you can remain the owner of a contract and name a Foundation as partial, sole or contingent beneficiary of the life insurance death benefit. No income tax deduction will result, but the gift will create a charitable deduction for your estate.

One Donor’s Story Richard Andersen is committed to supporting the on-going ministry of ARC. He does not have a large estate, but he has the ability to make gifts for insurance premiums now to create a larger gift in the future. Richard made the Lutheran Community Foundation owner and beneficiary of a life insurance contract, which makes his annual premium payments tax deductible. After his death, a fund will be created by the Foundation to benefit the on-going ministry of the ARC Retreat Center.

Sabbath, continued from p. 1

convert to the *idea* of Sabbath. Sadly, I am not yet a convert to the *practice*. Not quite. But I am trying. When Scout & Morgan, our gem of a local bookstore, invited me to lead a spiritually oriented book discussion, my first choice for a universally helpful book was unequivocal: *Sabbath*, by Wayne Muller.

Muller invites us to relax into a world fed by the best of many faith traditions for rest and renewal—and delight! True Sabbath is an embodiment of joy, a sensual feast, an act of courage that strengthens the heart. It is a dance that re-unites us with the sweeping rhythms of the stars, and draws our gaze to the small and tender things in life. It is a wholly tempting invitation! Would that more of us would learn to accept it with grace. —Jan Wiersma



Quotations from Etty Hillesum and the Tao Te Ching were borrowed from Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives*, Bantam Books, 1999. The Spiritual Journeys Book Group will be hosted by Scout & Morgan the first Thursday of each month beginning February 7, at 7:30.