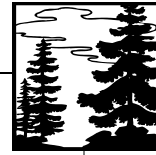




ARC Retreats...time apart, rest and spiritual renewal



MAKING ROOM AND PROVIDING LIGHT FOR THE ESSENTIAL

by Jan Wiersma, Director

Along the road and up the drive leading you home to ARC, a host of fluffy green seedlings crowds the ground beneath the tall Norway pines. The Norway or red pine, Minnesota's state tree, were planted half a century ago by a crew of Boy Scout volunteers intent on some laudable but long forgotten conservation project.

Beautiful and useful as they are, red pine are not native to our particular area. White pine are. They are the oldest and most majestic of the trees that lend ARC its unique character. Prior to the logging activity of the late 1800s and early 1900s, white pine covered vast tracts of land in eastern Minnesota. I learned that the Grandy Pines area, of which ARC is a part, is a small surviving remnant of that tremendous, ravaged forest, once thought to be inexhaustible. So it was with some surprise and great delight that I identified the enthusiastic newcomers as white pine, reasserting their presence once more.

Years ago, ARC's founders Ruth and Loren Halvorson were advised by a wise DNR forester that the best forest management was to "find out what the forest is trying to do—and

Find out what the forest is trying to do—and join it!

join it." Clearly, the white pines are trying to return. It also became clear that the red pines had reached an age that gave them market value. Thinning them would not only provide ARC with a small

profit, but would allow the resources of sun and soil nutrients to reach the white pines, enabling them to grow to maturity as well.

The selective harvest was accomplished in the snow just before Christmas. Though the huge piles of timber along the driveway may have startled guests, the absence of the trees is barely noticeable thanks to the skill and discretion of the loggers. The difference will be felt by the white pines, though, as they begin to reach for the sky. Only a few of the thousands that have taken root will actually survive, but it will be enough to offer future generations of ARC guests the same protective beauty we appreciate today.

ARC's past strength and future vision owe a great deal to the wisdom of the forester who counseled trust in a force of nature that is deeper, older, and more encompassing than our own limited imaginations can conceive. We look to a greater Source than ourselves for guidance as we seek to envision the next thirty years—and beyond. What is God trying to do in the world? How can ARC, in its own inimitable way, assist in this work?

In a sense, the same principle defines the reason for retreat itself. As one regular guest told me, "I need to come to the hermitage to *not do*. Doing is easy for me. I'm good at action. But it's only when I take time to *not do* anything that the distractions are cleared away and I can grasp the bigger picture of my life." I am reminded of Parker Palmer's counsel to discern "the life that is trying to live itself in you." We need to clear away the self-imposed busy-ness to realize that larger dream of God that is seeking expression in our lives, just as we needed to remove the artificially introduced red pines to let the forest return to its native state.

Ruth and Loren Halvorson incorporated the principle of attention to a larger whole when they first imagined ARC. Respect for "what the forest is trying to do" provided the resilient flexibility that is the legacy we inherit.

THE SELECTIVE HARVEST



Saying goodbye to a few of our friends, the red pines.



Encouraging new life for our native white pines.



THANK YOU, WISH LIST DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS!

Since our last newsletter, many wishes from our wish list have been granted:

Kitchen Aid mixer: Linda Ji

Immersion blender: Richelle Pearl-Koller

Butter dishes: Barb Neils

Wood donors: John Schlagel, Rod Hanson, and others who prefer to remain unnamed.

Many others give the most precious commodity available: their time as volunteers. In recent months, we have welcomed the cheerful presence of these friends who have worked, laughed, and prayed with us: Todd and Tracy Gulliver, Wendy Wiegmann, Kim Larson, Ginger Fish, Catherine Cowley, Carol Johnson, Steve Strickler, Kate Weinbender, Jackie Rolfs, Anne Picard, Jan Dehler, Debra Ricci, Dwight Haberman, Annie Schmidt, Carolyn Bornhauser, Julie Redpath.

Others who have helped stock the woodshed for next season's interior warmth include: Dave Lang, Mike Mueller, Joe Crocker, Mike Tessneer, Lisa Negstad, Ann Ruhlig, Jeff Tidball, Dave Tidball, Barbara Budd, Todd Gulliver, and other volunteers.

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THE PASSING OF A PROPHET: A TRIBUTE TO LOREN HALVORSON

As this newsletter was prepared for publication, we at ARC watched and waited as Loren moved toward what he called his "final homecoming." Since Loren entered hospice care on October 30, Ruth, Loren, and other family members have posted daily entries on a CaringBridge site (caringbridge.org/visit/lorenhalvorson). These entries provide a glimpse of the remarkable family that conceived and built ARC as a place where "Action, Reflection, and Celebration" are equally part of a full and fruitful life. They gave ARC permission to share their thoughts:



Loren and Ruth Halvorson,
ARC Founders

November 14: This journey into death means moving even more deeply into life. Life is now more tangible and real. The mystery is becoming familiar. Time is moving more slowly, it is weighted with joy and deep meaning. There is no need to rush, to go someplace else. Eternity is now. Heaven and earth are intertwined.

December 15: What is most amazing is how active, productive and articulate Loren's mind still is. He still has plans for how some good might be brought to the world.

December 20: "I am suspended in grace, and dependent on love."

As the mysterious process of dying stretched into 2010, Loren wondered why, when he was so ready, the final step would be postponed. What was left for him to do?

Our hope lies in spreading God's unconditional love.

January 8: The thought occurred to Loren that this might be the moment, the opportunity for him to make a bold statement regarding the issue [of ordination of partnered GLBT persons in the ELCA]. God is an inclusive God, a God of unconditional love, a God of abundant grace. Loren, and we his family, believe that the same generosity of unconditional love and grace that he/we have experienced is there for all of God's children, especially in this instance, the GLBT people who have often been judged and targeted so shamefully by the church and society and who have waited so long for justice. Our hope lies in spreading God's unconditional love and refusing the path of violence, judgment or indifference.

January 20: What we thought was death turns out to be life and what we thought was the end turns out to be the beginning. This is God's magnificent gift when we come to the last Word! It is life giving, life renewing, life restoring.



Loren, Bridge Builder

January 8: The thought occurred to Loren that this might be the moment, the opportunity for him to make a bold statement regarding the issue [of ordination of partnered GLBT persons in the ELCA].

January 25: His questions cover such expansive and boundless subject matter. It does feel like Loren will be challenging us to consider ways to better this world and the life of the people in it until his last moment.

January 29: In the midst of sharing stories Loren exclaimed, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could die while telling the story of my hopes for the future?"

Wonderful, indeed!

Loren, we have heard your hopes and they will sing in our hearts and fuel our vision and our actions for long years to come. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

COMMUNITY NEWS

SAVE THE WHITE PINES AND TAKE HOME A LIVING LEGACY

Wouldn't you love to have a piece of ARC growing in your backyard? This spring, we are offering for sale some of the white pine seedlings from the multitude in our woods: not all of them could survive to maturity. We will dig and pot the white pines for you before the end of May if we receive your advance order (\$15 each; see response form).

CALLING VOLUNTEERS TO GO DEEP!

We will be having a deep cleaning day at ARC on Saturday, June 19, 2010. We need both men and women who can do tasks like turning mattresses, washing walls and ceilings and, yes, those who do windows! You will need to bring your own bucket and gloves. We will provide a noon meal. Come to have fun with others while helping deep clean ARC. The fun/work will run from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please RSVP via email or at 763.689.3540 two weeks in advance. Thank you!

ARC'S INTERNS

In addition to those dedicated individuals who have committed a year or more to the ministry of hospitality at ARC, many volunteers have joined us for shorter full time stays. Since last fall, four individuals have lent their energies in this way. **Barbara ("Bunyan") Budd** returned in late 2009 for the second year in a row. This multi-talented friend is best known for her gentle teasing and her prowess in the woodshed! **Nathan Peterson** was also a returning volunteer who likes to tend to the small but significant details: the well-fed birds love him, and so do we. **Morgan Larson**, a young woman on her own quest for understanding and purpose, initiated a depth of conversation that enriched us all. And **Mel Reeves**, journalist, political organizer and civil rights activist, reminds us that justice has always been and must remain an essential ingredient in ARC's continuing story.



Morgan



Mel

The invaluable contributions of these short-term helpers has prompted us to think of offering a more formal internship program for others. If the idea of spending a month or two at ARC speaks to you, please speak to us!

IS ARC YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME?

By Sherry Gaugler, Board Member

It's Valentine's Day weekend. I'm staying in the cottage with my fiancé. We are planning our wedding ceremony and vows. When my fiancé proposed, he told me he wanted to marry me in the location where he feels closest to God—Pagosa Springs, Colorado. It only made sense that we would plan our wedding at the place where I feel closest...ARC.

Given my experience of ARC, I was not surprised that in the first of ARC's visioning summits, a recurring theme was discussed by those who came together seeking guidance for ARC's Next 30 Years: ARC as a "Spiritual Home." This phrase resonates with me; when I come here, my spirit is fed, I am rejuvenated, I feel connected. I know that I am not alone in this experience of ARC. A participant on one of the retreats I've led has called his time at ARC his "Spiritual New Year." Journal entries in each room echo this. Space for spiritual growth and deepening is cultivated here.

Do you experience ARC in a similar way? If so, we'd love to have you be a part of our "Spiritual Home" visioning retreat to be held July 16 and 17. Please call or email ARC if you are interested in attending. Your generosity of spirit will help us to discern our direction for the future sustainability of ARC, ensuring that for years to come, retreatants are met by the ARC staff's greeting of "Welcome Home!"

ARC Wish List

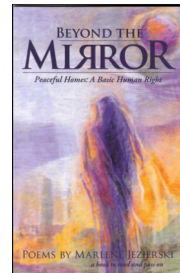
- ☞ 10 C Serving Tea Pot (cool handle)
- ☞ Vacuum cleaner (canister style)
- ☞ Well-seasoned wood for burning (especially oak, tax credit given)
- ☞ Flat screen computer monitor
- ☞ Large stove-top or electric stainless steel tea kettle
- ☞ New or used cordless handsets for our Panasonic phone system (KX-TGA400B)

BOOK REVIEW: BOOKS BY ARC FRIENDS

Beyond the Mirror is a book of poems by Marlene Jezierski, written to raise awareness of the devastating effects of emotional abuse. Jezierski, an emergency room nurse, has long been an educator and activist against family violence. Written to help communities understand that one need not be hit to be hurt, the poems also assure victims of domestic abuse that they are not alone in their suffering.

Jezierski writes:

"Everyone deserves a peaceful life, free of emotional pain and a damaged psyche. The societal problem of violence in the home must be dealt with collaboratively by family, friends, health care professionals, the community, and advocates. After reading this book, you are challenged to be a part of the solution for this tangled societal ill. Change can happen with an aware, responsive community."

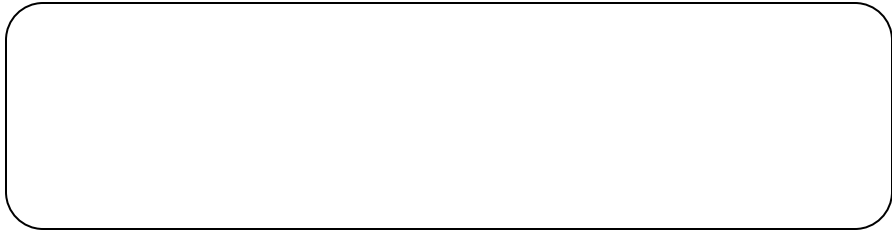


Thanks to a special grant, the book is provided at no cost. We try to keep it in stock at the ARC BookNook, and Jezierski is interested in finding other outlets to get the book and its inspiring message to those who need it. More information and a text of the book can be found at: www.beyond-the-mirror.org.

FROM **LIVING THE SIMPLE LIFE**

By Elaine St. James

"...maintaining a complicated life is... one of the best ways we have to avoid looking at some of the larger questions."



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Our 3rd floor library: Thanks to donations, ARC's library continues to grow and is a quiet treasure.

ARC UPCOMING GUIDED RETREATS AND OTHER EVENTS

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT arcretreat.org FOR COMPLETE DETAILS.
OR CALL 763.689.3540

3 R's Retreat: Rest, Revive, Re-Create - June 20-25 (3 or 6 Days)

Renew your spirit through guided meditation, prayer, nature, music, and art. Rejuvenate physically through restorative yoga, dance, drumming, and body work. Join in group creativities, or just relax and take your own soul's rest.
Sunday, June 20, 5 pm-Tuesday, June 22, 2 pm. \$250.
Wednesday, June 23, 5 pm-Friday, June 25, 2 pm. \$250.
Sunday, June 20, 5 pm-Friday, June 25, 2 pm. \$500.

3rd Step Retreat - July 23-25

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God." Open to members of all 12-step programs, this spiritual journey will be led by a facilitator experienced in recovery work. Confidentiality is a priority.
Friday evening, July 23, 7 pm - Sunday afternoon, July 25, 2 pm. \$200

**Writing Journey, Sacred Journey: Writing as a Spiritual Practice
July 30-August 1**

Spend a weekend exploring how writing well can become a spiritual commitment—to uncovering and witnessing the truth, to opening your heart to the reader, and to a creative engagement with the larger world. Join in writing exercises, converse about the process, and study examples from master writers. Any level of experience. Led by Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew, author of *Swinging on the Garden Gate* and other memoirs.
Friday evening, July 30, 7 pm - Sunday afternoon, August 1, 2 pm. \$200

4th and 5th Step Retreat - August 20-22.

Members of all 12-step programs are welcomed to this healing, contemplative environment, offering private time for reflection as well as thoughtful group discussion. Experienced facilitators will be on hand to support and listen to your 5th step. Confidentiality is a priority.
Friday evening, August 20, 7 pm - Sunday afternoon, August 22, 2 pm.

ABOUT RESERVATIONS

To arrange a private or group retreat please call 763.689.3540 between the hours of 9am to 4 pm OR email us at arcretreat@hotmail.com.

ABOUT OUR RATES

Please see our rates at our website, arcretreat.org.

ABOUT ARC MAILINGS

If you are moving, or do not wish to receive our mailings, or you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please contact us at arcretreat@hotmail.com, or return the attached response form. Thank you!