



FROM THE EDITOR:

Ever since I began to wonder what the next issue of PATTERNS would be about, Carl Sandberg's words from his poem, "The People, Yes!" have been ringing in my head like a giant bell. Now that I begin this issue, the image of the cracked Liberty Bell sitting silently in Independence Hall in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA comes to mind.

Today, with the flip of a finger we can google information and learn that the Pennsylvania Assembly ordered the Bell in 1751 to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges, Pennsylvania's original Constitution. It speaks of the rights and freedoms valued by people the world over; people who are struggling to define themselves in relation to the social constructs within which they live. "Particularly forward thinking were Penn's ideas on religious freedom, his liberal stance on Native American rights, and his inclusion of citizens in enacting laws."

We also learn that the bell summoned citizens of Philadelphia to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 but it wasn't until the mid 1800's that abolitionists, in their efforts to put an end to slavery throughout the United States adopted the bell as their symbol for the actions of groups of ordinary citizens seeking to bring about positive social change.

It all makes sense when we see the Liberty Bell as a symbol announcing the actions, such as the Charters, Constitutions and Declarations made by the few, become a symbol announcing action and commitment for social change made by the many. We are a species who use historical symbols to give us a sense of continuity and coherence and the Liberty Bell, though silent today, still carries that energy for us. (continued on next page)

How Can We Trust Each Other?

Changing the Terms for Public Trust of People, Corporations and the State

The Fifth International Workshop of Foundation 2020 was held on Brioni Islands, Croatia, May 20-23, 2004. It demonstrated what cybernetics offers for creating trust in leading, governing, and in doing business.

Social trust today is giving way to distrust. Trusted institutions are proving not to be trustworthy and reestablishing and sustaining trust calls for selecting and applying the ideas that offer promise and that turn out to do what they promise to do.

The workshop in Croatia was organized around three key conversations on the public trust.

- A conversation of national presidents led by the President of Croatia, M. Stjepan Mesic, about the meaning of trust in governing a nation in today's world.
- A conversation among foreign ministers on what trust means in relationships between states.
- A conversation on the need for restoring trust in world business featured a distinguished panel of corporate leaders.

The conversations were enlarged through small group discussions, breakout groups and other panels with additional leaders from government and business, joined by scientists and practitioners from several disciplines.

The participants noted that during the past fifty years many of Gregory Bateson's ideas have shaped global, political, business and scientific discussions. Commenting on their consideration of "a few of Bateson's promising ideas that have not yet caught on but which we believe will bring significant changes for the better when they are applied," they note that "many of these ideas, in some way, touch on the concept of trust.

Bateson's lecture, *From Versailles to Cybernetics*, given April 21, 1966 to the "Two World's Symposium" at Sacramento State College, provided the ground for this workshop on trust.

As starting points for conversation, they noted that Bateson's reflection on major events during the first half of the twentieth century led him to ask what were the significant historical moments when people's attitudes changed. They used Bateson's identification of the Treaty of Versailles as having a disastrous effect upon attitudes and the development of cybernetics as having the potential for correcting them.

The Versailles Treaty was deliberately designed to keep Germany from again becoming a threat to Europe. Bateson (continued on next page)

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As Humberto Maturana might say, “We evolve by conserving that which gives us pleasure.”

This issue of PATTERNS looks at patterns of ideas and actions that are preparing the environment within which the development of a new, truly democratic, global society of self-organizing people is taking place. Without the revolutionary shift in our communication technology, made possible through the originating ideas of Cybernetics, such crucial evolutionary awareness and action would not be a part of our everyday lives. The increasing awareness that we are, each of us, responsible for the social world we live in *and* the larger planet we inhabit is bringing us together even as the regressive negative ideology of competing economies, divisive politics and global wars are tearing us apart.

We seem to be experiencing another “medieval dark age” where wars, plagues, change and turmoil in attitudes created the environment in which creativity, like seeds germinating in ever fertile ground, brought about the glories of the Renaissance. There are numerous examples of groups of diverse people, world-wide, working full time on the internet to communicate changes in our social fabric. Each involved in their own particular concern, they work to recreate the patterns that will emerge in the new social tapestry. For example, a message from the Director of the PolicyLink Center for Health and Place/PolicyLink’s, Mildred Thompson announces a new PBS documentary “*Unnatural Causes – Is Inequality Making us Sick?*” The timing could not be better for the launch of the landmark PBS documentary. The opening episode of the four-part series, “In Sickness and in Wealth,” sheds light on the critical importance of economics, race, and class on health outcomes. This powerful and vital message is at the heart of the series and helped spur the creation of the PolicyLink Center for Health and Place. (<http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/?msource=EBUNCPBS>) Harvard Sociologist David R. Williams noted in the documentary’s opening segment, “Economic policy is health policy.” The connection is that clear and strong. The next question is pivotal. He asks

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suggests that the replacement of U.S. President Wilson’s Fourteen Points by the treaty of Versailles is an instance in history of a major deception that led “to the total demoralization of German politics.” He writes; “*This was one of the great sellouts in the history of our civilization. A most extraordinary event which led fairly directly and inevitably into World War II. It also led (and this is perhaps more interesting) to the total demoralization of German politics. If you promise your boy something, and renege on him, framing the whole thing on a high ethical plane, you will probably find that not only is he very angry with you, but that his moral attitudes deteriorate as long as he feels the unfair whiplash of what you are doing to him. It’s not only that World War II was the appropriate response of a nation which has been treated in this particular way; what is more important is the fact that the demoralization of that nation was expectable from this sort of treatment. From the demoralization of Germany, we, too, became demoralized. This is why I say that the Treaty of Versailles was an attitudinal turning point.*” (Steps To An Ecology Of Mind. University of Chicago Press edition 2000 p.480. Original work published in 1972)

The other moment in the last century that created the potential for attitudes to change, as Bateson saw things, was the emergence of cybernetics. Cybernetics supplied a way to think about such basic things as what an attitude is, of patterns of interaction, communication, systems and ecology. Bateson pointed out that we care about patterns of our relationships. We want to know where “we stand in love, hate, respect, dependency, trust” in relation to somebody else, a group, a company, or a nation state. *If we trust and find that that which we have trusted was untrustworthy; or if we distrust, and find that that which we distrusted was in fact trustworthy, we feel bad. The pain that human beings can suffer from this type of error is extreme.* This brings Bateson to define the significant moments in history as those points “when attitudes were changed. These are the moments when people are hurt because of their former ‘values.’”

Cybernetics is a change in the understanding of what an attitude is.

Cybernetics offers insight in understanding our responsibility for our own attitudes and attitudinal changes and for acting to increase flexibility and choices. Bateson notes the special responsibility of leaders for changing attitudes and for the attitudes that emerge from their actions and policies, hence the importance of the Treaty of Versailles to remind us that governments and corporations (as well as groups and families) cannot operate in the long term on deception.

This 2004 Workshop for world leaders served to emphasize that when citizens are informed they can act and can take responsibility. “For citizens, employees and others to be informed, the rules that have become set, making people and systems rigid, have to be changed.” Speaking of Democracy as a new concept of what it is to be human beings, they point out that this “does not yield to inhuman authority and the only authority it recognizes is freely achieved consensus among human beings. Through it a more evolved form of humanity will come into existence.”

This workshop appears pivotal in our understanding of not only the responsibility of leaders but of all people as we strive to create a world democracy. Bateson suggests that the epistemology proposed by cybernetics offers useful tools for talking about our ways of knowing, thinking, and deciding. He also urges that “my” epistemology (knowing, thinking and deciding) is my responsibility. I am the one who thinks. “*My observations require someone who can see. I am that observer. I am part of what I observe; I am not separate from the observations I make so therefore I am responsible for them as my constructions. There is nothing to hide behind.* Our institutions, companies and nation states (as well as our global organizations) are also our human constructions. They are always becoming what we humans make them. In turn, these bodies and systems also shape us, folding back to make us what we are. This is a basic insight coming out of cybernetics.”

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Building on Bateson's insights this workshop also looked at the way systems are coupled and embedded within each other. They point out that "if public communications undermine trust this will affect relationships within families, and vice versa. Human misperceptions of the environment lead to actions that damage the environment. Violence in the streets can resonate in the form of international violence. So our responsibility is never exclusively local."

I wonder if the participants in the workshop have found that these ideas of Bateson's are turning out to do what they promise to do.

This new knowledge has created a very complex world to live in. In the past we were able to enjoy a more comfortable philosophy which accepted that a little hypocrisy and a little compromise oiled the wheels of social life. But after the great deception, Bateson points out, this philosophy is untenable. He writes, "You are perfectly correct that something is wrong; and that something wrong is of the nature of a deceit and a hypocrisy. You live in the midst of corruption." The response is an "extreme Puritanism and this ends up as a reduction of life to little pieces. It is the big integrated structures of life that seem to have carried the lunacy and so you try to focus down on the smallest things." Bateson quotes the admonition, "He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars. General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, and flatterer."

Worth thinking about is the question he raises. "Was the fate of Hiroshima determined by Versailles?" He suggests that the excuse for dumping the Fourteen Points was "for the common good" and this was the attitudinal change that has since, brought us the pain of former "values." He writes; "It is possible that that little operation saved a few thousand American lives in 1918. I don't know how many it cost in World War II, and since in Korea and Vietnam. I recall that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were justified by the general good and saving American lives. There was a lot of talk about "unconditional surrender," perhaps because we could not trust ourselves to honor a conditional armistice."

Bateson writes: I included cybernetics as the second historic event of importance in my lifetime because I have at least a dim hope that we can bring ourselves to use this new understanding with some honesty. If we understand a little bit of what we're doing, maybe it will help us to find our way out of the maze of hallucinations that we have created around ourselves.

"Cybernetics is, at any rate, a contribution to change, not simply a change in attitude, but even a change in the understanding of what an attitude is... These are thoughts shaped by events from 1946 and after.

I think that cybernetics is the biggest bite out of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge that mankind has taken in the last 2000 years. But most of such bites out of the apple have proved to be rather indigestible, usually for cybernetic reasons.

"Cybernetics has integrity within itself, to help us to not be seduced by it into more lunacy, but we cannot trust it to keep us from sin.

For example, the state departments of several nations are today using games theory, backed up by computers, as a way of deciding international policy. They identify first what seem to be the rules of the game of international interaction; they then consider the distribution of strength, weapons, strategic points, grievances, etc., over the geography and the identified nations. They then ask the computers to compute what should be our next move to minimize the chances of our losing the game. The computer then cranks and heaves and gives an answer, and there is some temptation to obey the computer. After all, if you follow the computer you are a little less responsible than if you made up your own mind.

"But if you do what the computer advises, you assert by that move that you support the rules of the game which you fed into the computer. You have affirmed the rules of that game.

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what can each of us do to work towards changing some of these policies? What can we do in our organizations to change institutional practices to promote better health? How do we engage in meaningful dialogue with each other to share differences, yet find common ground? Do we dare change some of our perceptions, thinking and behaviors?

The next step is to widen the sharing of ideas and connections that can lead to action in all sorts of ways. People are invited to "Visit EquityBlog.org to share their ideas for building healthy communities. This is just a sample of the creative potential of our times.

One other example of our changing awareness of the responsibility of individuals in designing our social environment is Avaaz.org, an independent, not-for-profit global campaigning organization that works to ensure that the views and values of the world's people inform global decision-making. (Avaaz means "voice" in many languages.) Avaaz receives no money from governments or corporations, and is staffed by a global team based in London, Rio de Janeiro, New York, Paris, Washington DC, and Geneva. See (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Avaaz/8340223883>) and (<http://www.myspace.com/avaazorg>)

I'm reminded of the metaphor of the seeding process in Rev. Deborah L. Johnson's conversation in the last issue of PATTERNS (Winter2008) <http://www.ascybernetics.org/newsletter.htm>

Rev. Johnson continues our conversation begun in the last issue of PATTERNS. (see page 5) We challenge the reader to connect the dots; to create your own patterns of understanding which will undoubtedly be different from ours but, hopefully, close enough so that we can make sense together. Connecting the dots is what we are all doing anyway in what we call "society" without actually thinking about it.

In this issue we explore the way a lecture by Gregory Bateson given in April, 1966, titled *From Versailles to Cybernetics* is being used by international leaders. He asks the question; "What is going to count as important in the history of the last sixty years?" and answers, at his age of 62, that he

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had seen only two moments, from an anthropologist's point of view, that would rate as really important. "One was the events leading up to the Treaty of Versailles and the other was the cybernetic breakthrough."

His criterion for historical importance, he points out, is that "*Mammals in general, and we among them, care extremely, not about episodes, but about the patterns of their relationships; with where they stand in love, hate, respect, dependency, trust, and similar abstractions.*"

Bateson asks, "*if we really want to know what are the significant points in history, we have to ask which are the moments in history when attitudes were changed, these are the moments when people are hurt because of their former "values."*

We believe that we are living in such "interesting times" at present and have been since the 1960's.

We describe Bateson's ideas through a description of the Fifth International Workshop of Foundation 2020 held in Croatia in May, 2004. Titled, "***How Can We Trust Each Other: Changing the Terms for Public Trust of People, Corporations and the State?***" The meeting of world leaders was concerned with what cybernetics offers for creating new perspectives that are more useful in making viable changes.

In the Spring 2008 issue of "*Notes from the Field*," a newsletter published by the Institute for Intercultural Studies, founded by Margaret Mead in 1944, Mary Catherine Bateson, President of the Institute, comments on the "interesting year politically, with themes connected to the work of both my parents." (See p. 4) For information on current projects, books, resources and archival materials managed by the Institute, visit www.interculturalstudies.org

We also report on an exhibition of experimental and contemporary art and design growing out of Gordon Pask's cybernetic theories and practice. Titled: "Pask Present," it was held in Vienna, Austria where the work of Pask and also the work of von Foerster is archived.

The American Society for Cybernetics 2007 Conference in Vienna is reviewed by Lucas Pawlik on page 6. He also provides a taste of the innovative think-

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"No doubt nations of the other side also have computers and are playing similar games and are affirming the rules of the game that they were feeding to their computers. The result is a system in which the rules of international interaction become more and more rigid.

"I submit to you that what is wrong with the international field is that the rules need changing. The question is not what is the best thing to do within the rules as they are at the moment. The question is how can we get away from the rules within which we have been operating for the last ten or twenty years, or since the Treaty of Versailles. The problem is to change the rules, and insofar as we let our cybernetic inventions—the computers—lead us into more and more rigid situations, we shall in fact be maltreating and abusing the first hopeful advance since 1918.

"And, of course, there are other dangers latent in cybernetics and many of these are still unidentified. We do not know, for example, what effects may follow from the computerization of all government dossiers.

"But this much is sure, that there is also latent in cybernetics the means of changing our philosophy of control and a means of seeing our own follies in wider perspective."

Ed.Note: "From Versailles to Cybernetics," is particularly relevant today. Find in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, University of Chicago Press edition 2000 (P. 477)

What's On My Mind

By Mary Catherine Bateson

Some clues about making democracy work from Mead and Bateson

This has been an interesting year politically, with themes connected to the work of both my parents. My mother, as many of you know, was patriotic in ways that were hard for my own generation to understand. She was a lifelong Democrat, yet she believed that for our kind of democracy to function it was important that the citizens believe that whichever party won they would govern in acceptable ways. She would have been grieved at the increasing bitterness and demonization between the two major parties.

Gregory was almost totally uninterested in electoral politics, but he wrote an essay about Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points and the treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I that seems relevant. Deception is appropriate, he said, as a strategy within the context of war, but fatal to future trust in the process of making peace – a typical Gregory "logical type" argument that seems to apply to one of the dilemmas that has been worrying in the context of elections, the probable loss of trust in the process from using voting machines that can be manipulated.

At the same time, the usefulness of science in providing trustworthy information, something that both Margaret and Gregory cared about, has been under renewed attack. Those who deny that species, including our own, have evolved over time are not simply arguing against a particular theory about something that occurred in the past, which is useful and often productive, they are also arguing against the very process whereby scientific findings are compared and verified – a process that we need to be able to trust if we are to make realistic decisions in the face of climate change and other issues that lie ahead.

It is interesting that these toxic trends seem to have developed and converged in the same decade.

(Visit www.marycatherinebateson.com to read what's currently on her mind.)

Embodying Change: Moving to Oneness

This is the second part of a Conversation with the Reverend Deborah L. Johnson (See Science and Spirituality, PATTERNS Winter 2008)

Barbara: In our last conversation you were talking about the evolutionary idea of spiritual consciousness as a cyclic process using the germinating seed producing the fruit as a model. You emphasized the importance of understanding the pattern looping around but always going in a certain direction and never reversing itself. I had the feeling that you were suggesting that love was the motivating force just as Humberto Maturana suggests.

Deborah: Well, that Love would be another name for the Oneness. That love is the vibration that heals the sense of separation. I firmly believe (and the Letters from the Infinite Series reinforce) that the only thing that ever needs to be healed is our sense of separation because, according to our spiritual DNA patterns, we're already perfect, whole and complete. So the love acts like a de-coder. It's like putting on glasses that help you to see the goodness at hand; it helps you to perceive the Oneness; it helps you to feel connected. I love the way that George Washington Carter put it – "Whatever you love enough reveals its secrets to you."

B: In the very beginning of our conversation (see *PATTERNS Winter 2008*) you pointed out the fact that we do not see ourselves as Life. Life is something we do. So it brings us back to that circularity of the need to love ourselves in order to love Life.

D: I think the spiritual world is ultimately about perception. There are umpteen things out there but what do we focus on? And what meanings do we give to what, in fact, has our attention? So we go back to this idea of Love as my starting point for unitary wholeness. If I start with that energy first and foremost, love is going to create a completely different view of what's going on. And I mean that at the most dramatic level. We can even take something like 9-11. Seen separately, what a great tragedy that was! But if I step back and realize that there's really only one of us here, then that was some part of me flying those planes. That was some part of me as a passenger on the plane, some part of me hit by the plane, some part of the one collective mind grieving.

Then we stop and ask ourselves. "What was that all about? What was that pain and what was trying to be said?" These were not places that were pulled out of the yellow pages. We had very specific targets; The World Trade Center, the Whitehouse, the Pentagon, the, "United" and the "American" Airlines. If we talk about interconnectedness we must stop for a second and ask, "What is the relationship between the Pentagon, the Whitehouse, the World Trade Center and what was it that people felt so passionately to bring world attention to? What was this sacrifice, both willing and unwilling, about?" I find it extremely disheartening that here we are years later and so few people have even bothered to ask themselves the question of what was the interconnectedness of those targets and what is the underlying message that was trying, in fact, to be said?

B: Again, if we really love life and ourselves as being life, we would ask that question.

D: If we're really a global community we would ask, "Why is some of my community in such pain that they would do a thing like that?" It's not good enough to just label people as "bad" people. There's always a motive for anything. We would know that at the most basic level if we were to stop labeling people as their actions; if we were to stop just looking at the net results and ask what are the underlying patterns? What are the assumptions? What are they using as the constant in the equation? If we would just stop for a moment and look back with quiet eyes we would find that there are patterns to things.

B: And those patterns always include ourselves.

D: Right, and the dis-connect comes from our unwillingness to live in the place of Oneness. If we did that, Oneness would make us level. Part of how I get my identity is that I'm not you; I'm separate from you. We are judging each other by our actions and determining our worth and value by our actions. I'm not seeing you as a spiritual being anymore. Here's the clincher. It goes back to the superior thing again. I get to be better than you. I don't want to be one with you because somehow that would drag me down.

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ing that goes on at the ASC conferences with a brief description of a "Bedtime Story of the Second Order" that will be presented by Pawlik and Thomas Cook at the up-coming 2008 ASC Conference in Urbana at the University of Illinois, May 11-15.

Lucas is currently working as an author, artist, and teacher in the field of science and the arts in Vienna and Thomas Cook, a Juilliard-trained actor, is currently teaching yoga, tai chi, and movement for actors while nurturing a growing Alexander Technique practice also in Vienna.

This Urbana conference is unique and there's still time to sign on to it. The Conference is reflective, emphasizing the variety and individualized perceptions of what it is to be "a cybernetician."

The ASC Conference coincides with the 8th Understanding Complex Systems (UCS) Symposium on the topic "Informatics, Energy and others." See <http://www.how-why.com/ucs2008/> for more information. Registration for the ASC "My Cybernetics" conference also includes registration for the UCS Symposium and these two events will jointly celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Biological Computer Laboratory created by Heinz von Foerster, a seminal thinker who founded Second Order Cybernetics.

We invite new readers to get familiar with this timely pivotal way of seeing and being in the world by going to the ASC website listed on page..... where we have more information and announcements.

As we can see by reviewing past ASC conferences, the variety and the scope of presentations demonstrates that Cybernetics and Systemics is not a discipline in and of itself. For those who are concerned about the state of our planet we suggest visiting our various sites on the internet. Membership in the ASC is open to all who want to explore this pivotal epistemology.

Finally, please note the quotes from Mary Parker Follett on pp. 9 and 12.

The New State was written in 1918 presenting ideas remarkably in agreement with current systemic and cybernetic thinking.

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Heinz the Third: Through the Eyes of a Participating Observer

*A report on the third Heinz Von
Foerster conference held in Vienna.*

By Lucas Pawlik, PhD.

I am just coming home from the follow-up of the third Heinz von Foerster conference: A wonderful little workshop with Pille Bunnell and Klaus Krippendorf about language and accountability, which ended with a passionate plea that we (cyberneticists) should hold ourselves accountable for strengthening the cybernetic discourse by creating space for others to participate. Having merely stumbled into cybernetics due to my passion for Heinz von Foerster's thinking, but also having presented a brief theatrical play as presentation at this very conference, it left me wondering, was I one of those who should invite or one of those who should be invited? Conversing with some of the other new speakers from a variety of fields, we seemed to have a shared confusion on this question.

Such a confusion will most likely only be cleared up through acting and working together.

What became obvious during the conference is that so many disciplines and languages can't be held together with a label. Throughout the weekend various hints were given as to how this might actually be done.

Our hosts Karl and Albert Mueller had carefully staged the sequence of events in the Viennese dining and conversation culture of cafes, "Heurigen," and the impressive halls of the old Viennese university. Their excellent coordinators gave an exemplary performance in making people feel very welcome. Louis Kaufmann's profound lecture on Eigenforms gave the strong impression that if we could apply what he demonstrated on a formal and geometrical level to the organization of our own gatherings, our diversities would indeed not be a problem, but an incredible advantage.

Ranulph Glanville's and Paul Pangero's presentations gave a heartfelt portrayal of Gordon Pask's heritage,

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B: Can you connect that to the way we teach our children when they enter public school? They are tested and categorized and in the process are reinforced in feeling separate from each other.

D: What's interesting about that is its ethnocentrism. There's a value system that's there. I want to be very specific about that. I grew up in Los Angeles and during my earliest years I was in a private school. It was essentially like a Montessori for African-American kids. Then I went to public school from the third grade through high school and during that time I was in very integrated environments and I lived in the part of town where many Japanese-Americans lived. When I was going to junior high and high school I was in the college prep advanced classes and the majority of my classmates were Japanese. I was a minority in those classes even though by my Senior year the school was 75% African-Americans and 25% Japanese. By that time there were only 6 black kids in the advanced academic program but ALL of the Japanese kids were in them. I'm bringing this up now, not so much as a commentary on the obvious race issue, but because the Japanese had a very different approach to learning and I actually learned under the Japanese system.

B: And what's the difference?

D: At the beginning of each semester, the Japanese kids would do the same negotiations in every single class with every single teacher. The things they had to bargain for were very instructive. The first thing they bargained for was no bell curve because the bell curve, in and of itself, would make the assumption that some kids were going to get it and some weren't. The second thing was to grade by straight percentage because they knew that in the final analysis there wouldn't be ten points between any of us. And number three was that everybody who earns an A gets an A.

Do you know how difficult those things were to negotiate in our American system? If an instructor gives all A's there is an assumption that the Instructor must have been wrong or too easy and they are penalized. There is no expectation that every single person in the classroom was going to succeed. The Japanese kids didn't believe that. They believed we were all going to succeed and we helped and pulled each other through. We worked in teams every single time. In Chemistry, for example, at the beginning of the school year we would divide up the experiments to be done over the whole year. Teams would be assigned in advance so you knew this is your experiment. We would perform the experiment ahead of time, master it, and teach the rest of us. If I missed any class on any subject, somebody delivered the work to me before the end of the day. It was a completely different way of being in the world. It was a very different assumption; that from a teamwork standpoint, we were all going to succeed. Taking away the bell curve, letting everyone get a straight percentage, stopped the competition among us. There was room enough for everyone to get an A.

I'm being very specific about this. We haven't developed a system that either anticipates, expects, or rewards everyone for, "getting it." In the Japanese system, because we knew we were all going to make it, there's a built-in competition which in and of itself wasn't bad. We would compete with each other but we were competing against our own personal best. That's different from a reward system that has winners and losers.

B: I'm wondering if the Asian culture as a wholistic culture and the Western culture based on duality plays a part.

D: I'm not saying we need to go to that extreme. In Japan you have systems that are so rigid and expectations so high that if someone doesn't perform at a certain level you have suicides and such. But what I am saying as a contrast is that I had a chance to grow up to know what it was like to do my serious academic training with instructors and co-students who were on a Oneness model.

*“The
spiritual
world is
ultimately
about
perception.”*

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B: A system that was not destroying you but was supporting you?

D: It had its limits. As a black kid growing up I knew I wasn't going to be invited inside my Japanese friends' houses. But in terms of this being able to work together, support each other and come from a position of Oneness, there are possibilities.

B: That's the advantage of being able to see the patterns that are destructive and how they can be rearranged in different harmonies. It really boils down to shifting perspective.

D: When we pose the question as, "How do we undo systems that don't work well?," I think this question keeps us in the paradigm that we are trying to get out of. Part of the difficulty here is the English language and this is something that comes up in my books, *The Sacred Yes and Your Deepest Intent*. We use the same word to describe the end result as well as the activity. For example, take the word "building." Building can either be the end result or it can be the process of doing it, both the noun and the verb. And sometimes the emphasis needs to be on the process but we have the emphasis on the end result.

Take, for example, in Greek the word "do." How do we "undo?" There's a word in Greek, *peieo*, that means "the end result." Not the process, but the act, what's done, that takes on a life of its own. It would be like if I were to say to you in exasperation, "What have you done?" When I say that to you I'm not really asking you to explain to me how you got there. The Greek word is more like talking about the rippling effect. This is the type of "do" that Jesus is said to have used on the cross, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." This is the "do" where something is set into motion.

But there's another word, *prasso*, which doesn't refer to the end result but to the activity and the process of bringing something into fruition. And that's where we have to put our attention in social change because we cannot "undo." What's done is done. But when we recognize that, in every moment of the day, things are creating themselves anew, we have the ability to intervene at any moment in time. Not to undo the past but to start to do something else. The difference in that is extraordinary. It raises the question, "Is my charge to undo what we've been doing or is my charge to start to do something else?"

This is not just semantics. It is a possibility. I tell people, for example, you can create a new past and they look at me as if I were crazy. Today becomes yesterday tomorrow. You can start a whole new past by what you do today.

I'm a Diversity Trainer so I'm acutely aware of this especially when people get so overwhelmed with all the legacies of sexism and racism and ask "How can I undo all that?" But you can't worry about undoing all that; what we have to be aware of is to not be consciously repeating it. And that becomes choice. That's when we become aware. We ask, "What can I do differently now?" This is very, very different energetically.

If you think of it like a family situation, you can't undo what you did with your spouse. All you can do is start where you are and start to set something else into motion that brings about both the transformation and the healing. That's a very interesting link within this interconnectedness thing. Trying to undo it is one thing. However, if I start moving in alignment with spiritual principles, then the energy that was underneath, what was there before shifts. It's like taking heat away from fire.

B: It's like, instead of solving problems, it's dis-solving problems.

D: Yes, You rob it of its energy. It's a perceptual shift. Pain pushes until vision pulls. It's not to be pushed by what I don't want anymore. It will put my attention on where I want to go.

B: You mentioned that your book is not only transformational in this way but is also revolutionary.

D: Oh yes. (laughs)

B: How would you define "revolutionary" in this same way?

D: I would go back to the discussion we were having about the algebraic equation. (PATTERNS, Winter2008) What is the constant in the equation? A revolution, technically speaking, is just that. It's the revolving around something. When you change the center of what your world revolves around, that creates a revolution. If we move from a

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showing there is still passion in the cybernetics movement. And while some speakers seemed to be misled by the notion that power point presentations would do the communicating with the audience for them, Pille's visual feast magically supported and beautifully corresponded with her talk.

Overall there was a general sense of disparateness, a lack of courage to act differently and strive for a common matrix, *Systemics*, which this conference should have been about. These failings became obvious when Peter Krieg gave us the privilege of watching another, and until then, unpublished interview with Heinz von Foerster. Heinz's quality of being able to give a seemingly effortless and humorous overview of what the fundamentals of observing and circular thinking could be, had, in my opinion, not been reached through our common endeavors at the conference. While the gap, which his death and the deaths of many others of the great figures who have left, most probably can be closed through a consciousness of acting and thinking together, we have not achieved it yet. But another beginning step has been taken and, thinking of Heinz, it's probably fitting to quote the I Ching in this respect: "*Persistence furthers.*"

Looking forward to the next Heinz von Foerster conference.

Lucas Pawlik was born in Vienna in 1975. His Magister thesis at the Vienna Institute for Philosophy of Science explored the self-reference of knowledge forms questioning logic, language, identity, and their relation to the sacred (1999). From this, a working relationship with Heinz von Foerster arose, in which Pawlik assisted in the making of Foerster's last book, "eil der Welt," and which led to the forthcoming of Pawlik's book, "AuVerstehen Verstehen Nicht-Verstehen Verstehen," finally published in 2005. In 2006, he finished his doctorate at the Vienna University of Fine Arts. His dissertation, "Patterns of Regeneration," further develops Heinz von Foerster's notion of systemics as a unity of art and science, through which the mortal human being can understand its embeddedness in the universe it creates.

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Eminent scientist inspires art and design that has a mind of its own.

Dancing robots, singing sculptures and growing metal tentacles were just some of the bizarre exhibits that were featured in an exhibition of work inspired by eccentric scientist Gordon Pask, one of the forefathers of cybernetics, in Vienna.

Gordon Pask (1928-1996) was a British scientist and artist, whose work was key to the development of cybernetics – the study of systems of communication, control mechanisms and feedback. He worked in academia, the arts and industry, producing poetry, plays, interactive sculptures and teaching machines.

The ‘Pask Present’ exhibition follows the ‘Maverick Machines’, held at the University of Edinburgh last year, the first exhibition of art-work inspired by Gordon Pask. It was held at Atelier Färbergasse, Färbergasse 6, A-1010 Vienna, from 26th March to 4th April, open daily from 13:00 to 21:00.

Focused on the influence of Gordon Pask today, the exhibition’s works ranged from the practical to the bizarre and included pieces by established artists, architects, designers, academics and students. Work has been inspired by many aspects of Gordon Pask’s work, including his interest in analogue computing and his experiments with electrochemistry.

Many of the exhibits appeared to have a mind of their own, such as dancing robots which interpreted viewers’ expressions to decide on the most amusing routine, ‘singing’ sculptures which changed the noises they produce depending on other sounds in the area around them and giant metal tentacles growing in electrified liquid.

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dualistic construct to a Oneness paradigm, then our whole attention is going to revolve around a Oneness.

On a social change level it’s consciousness that is underneath everything, including all of our institutions and ways of being in the world, which become the foundation. As we start getting into a oneness paradigm, it cracks the foundation of duality. You can’t keep building on top of it. In order to build you have to retro-fit or change the foundation and then you can build again.

The same process happens in our individual lives. This would be like the parable that Jesus talks about of the foolish man who builds his house upon the sand. Individually or collectively, every time we come to that place where we realize we have built our house on shaky ground there appears to be a revolution in our lives.

This is a piece I think, in my personal opinion, that spiritual communities need to take great ownership of. There’s a letter in *Your Deepest Intent* called “Love the Vineyard,” where it talks about the biblical parable that you can’t put new wine into old skins because the wine is effervescent and expands. You have to have new skins. The letter said to the metaphysical community (more specifically the New Thought Movement that I am a part of) that we are getting people intoxicated on the new wine but offering them little when their skins break. I see this happening all the time. You grow and you heal and you transform. It’s the same thing when you talked about the justice system in PATTERNS.(Winter2007) We can do all this rehabilitation but if we release people back to their same ghetto, same barrios, same dilapidated economic systems, what happens when people start to grow, start to heal, start to get into the Oneness? They begin to realize that all through their lives their approaches have been built on something other than Oneness and all of the rehabilitation starts to get shaky. This happens to everyone on the Oneness journey.

I feel, as spiritual revolutionaries, that we have a responsibility to understand that if people buy into these values of Oneness, it’s going to mean change and that it is our job to help shepherd people through the change. Mandela didn’t just take over South Africa; he ushered people through the reconciliation process, through the change. In the feminist movement, we didn’t just ask for equality; we had to work it out with the men.

B: We learned through each other. Through women support systems.

D: Yes, that’s what I mean. The diversity training in the corporate environment is where we’re trying to help people adjust to the shift and the change. We’re saying, “Yes, it’s going to change and it’s going to be alright.” It’s going to be for the better. I don’t believe that the spiritual communities that are putting forth the paradigm of the Oneness are stepping up to the plate. We say we want to be involved, but are not ushering in the change, not doing the messy work of societal transformation.

B: I feel the same way about the academic community. We can talk about the change but it’s in the process of supporting each other that society changes. We have to be involved in the action of change in ourselves to be living the change. Here again, the Urobouros, the medieval symbol of the snake eating its tail, is such an appropriate symbol for the “new science” of Second Order Cybernetics which offers that change. We can’t make the change in thinking without embodying that thinking.

D: We can’t just talk concepts. We have to demonstrate principles in action. We need to provide the support systems to really think through the implications of this. How would education change? We must engage in the process.

B: I fully resonate with this and appreciate the opportunity to talk with you. Speaking of building on new foundations of oneness, I think, is particularly relevant to the science of systemics and cybernetics based as it is on the understanding of wholism in nature.

For me, this is the foundation of why we publish PATTERNS, not only for the academic community but for the general population as well. We no longer can afford this habitual sense of separation from nature and from each other.

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Empowered dialog can bring wisdom to democracy

Reprinted with permission from *The Global Intelligencer*

An emerging form of democracy offers hope for generating the wisdom our cultures need to survive the 21st century and co-evolve into higher levels of awareness and aliveness.

The new democracy is grounded in the power of true dialogue among diverse people to help the People (as a whole) transcend the limits of personal perspectives and resonate with each other and the world through the fact of their interconnectedness, revealing bigger pictures and deeper wisdom than any individual or group could find alone, making it possible to create together solutions, visions, communities and societies that make sense and serve Life now and for generations to come.

Thousands of people have experienced this sort of powerful “generative dialogue” in personal conversations, workshops, and spiritual communities. Some tribal societies have grounded their communal life for centuries in such conversations. But only recently has a movement emerged to bring the living power of generative dialogue into the very structures and processes of modern politics and government. Some efforts involve helping existing officials and institutions use generative dialogue. Others involve creating entirely new institutions which place generative citizen and stakeholder deliberations at the center of social decision-making. People like the Dalai Lama advocate creating an entire “culture of dialogue and nonviolence” capable of generating democratic wisdom.

It is already happening. There is much reason for hope -- and for hard work. Let’s look at some of the fascinating news and possibilities.

In 1991 the leading Canadian newsweekly, Maclean’s, sponsored a dialogue about the future of Canada among twelve ordinary Canadians carefully selected for their differences. They were nurses, lawyers, teachers, musicians, company workers. They were White, Black, Native, male, female, from across Canada. Right from the start, they were passionately divided about minority rights and Quebec independence. They’d never seen the world through each other’s eyes. They were arrogant, hurt, compassionate, intense. Maclean’s brought them all together for three days of conversation facilitated by a team from the Harvard Negotiation Project, led by Getting to Yes co-author Roger Fisher.

After two days of ideological battles and emotional upheavals, a breakthrough happened. A peacemaking woman from Ontario listened with real compassion to a very upset woman from Quebec, and they bonded. The next morning the Quebec woman, in turn, deeply heard the Native woman. A spirit of partnership blossomed and by the end of the last day, the group had agreed on a vision for Canada that advocated more mutual awareness, connectedness, and collaborative activity. Their agreement fills five of the (amazing) thirty-nine pages of coverage provided by Maclean’s in their July 1, 1991 issue, entitled “The People’s Verdict.” The event was also covered by an hour-long Canadian TV documentary.

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“Our government forms cannot be fossils from a dead age, but must be sensitive, mobile channels for the quick and quickening soul of the individual to flow to those larger confluences which finally bring forth the state. Thus every man is the state at every moment, whether in daily toil or social intercourse, and thus the state itself, leading a myriad-membered life, is expressing itself as truly in its humblest citizen as in its supreme assembly.”

“The group organization movement means the substitution of intention for accident, of organized purpose for scattered desire. It rests on the solid assumption that this is a man-made not a machine-made world, that men and women are capable of constructing their own life, and that not upon socialism or any rule or any order or any plan or any utopia can we rest our hearts, but only on the force of a united and creative citizenship.”

The New State, by Mary Parker Follett. Originally published in 1918

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Co-curator Richard Brown, research artist in residence at the University of Edinburgh’s School of Informatics, said: “In many ways Gordon Pask was too far ahead of his time – many of his ideas about cybernetics are only just coming into fashion now. Most computer scientists have a different way of thinking compared with him and don’t necessarily understand his ideas – they tend to see computers as machines which are told what to do, whereas Pask was much more interested in having a conversation with the computer.”

“Pask Present” was curated by Richard Brown, Stephen Gage, Professor of Innovative Technology and Dr Ranulph Glanville, President elect of the American Society for Cybernetics and Professor of Architecture and Cybernetics. Both Ranulph Glanville and Stephen Gage are at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL

The exhibition was sponsored by the Austrian Minister of Science and Research, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, American Society for Cybernetics, Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, The Bartlett, University College London, The School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh, BLAHA office furniture, Gordon Pask archive at the Dept. of Contemporary History of the University of Vienna. The Heinz von Foerster Society, Vienna, acted as a local organiser.

Running concurrently with the exhibition was the 19th EMSCR Conference (European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research at the University of Vienna) where many of the exhibitors were giving papers. Additionally there were two presentations at the Universität für Angewandte Kunst (University of Applied Arts, Vienna). On 31st March there was a presentation of work from final diploma year and Masters students from the Interactive Architecture Workshop at the Bartlett School of Architecture. On 8th April at 1900 h Professor Glanville gave a lecture titled, “Cybernetics for Architects.”

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More details on the exhibition can be found at www.paskpresent.com

On the occasion of the exhibition a catalogue will be published: Pask Present. An exhibition of art and design inspired by the work of Gordon Pask (28 June 1928 to 28 March 1996), cybernetician and artist, eds Ranulph Glanville and Albert Müller, Vienna 2008 (edition echoraum)

Another publication deals with Gordon Pask's importance as a scientist: *Gordon Pask, Philosopher Mechanic An Introduction to the Cybernetician's Cybernetician*, eds Ranulph Glanville and Karl H. Müller, Vienna 2007 (edition echoraum)

For further information, contact:

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"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

Martin Luther King

Systemic Thinking: A Bedtime Story of the Second Order

A Description of a presentation to be made at the ASC Conference in Urbana, Illinois May 11-15, 2008

Like Humberto Maturana expressed it in, *"An Unfinished Revolution? Heinz von Foerster and the Biological Computer Laboratory,"* Albert Mueller and Karl Mueller [eds] (p. 47, 2005), *"I understand Heinz von Foerster as the crossing centre through which all ideas of the BCL traveled. His common interest way of speaking united the various groups of the BCL having their own quite diverse specialized interests and concepts."* It is therefore appropriate for me to direct the attention of my contribution for a 50-year BCL anniversary to Heinz von Foerster as a narrator, a speaker, and a listener. In creating such a common language, I want to further explore the capacity of systemic thinking, draw people into dialogue, into participating in a common story and the sense of a common history using a language so self-explaining that it can create a unified understanding amongst the diverse people attending the conference.

Following Heinz von Foerster's refrain concerning the use of causal means, pure logical arguments, or the use of quoting historical incidence as an aim to win a debate through the preference of the use of metaphor and storytelling for the contextual embedment of what is to be expressed, this contribution presents systemic thinking in action as well as the notion of Second Order and circular closing via telling a story about storytelling. In this telling a story about telling a story and listening, becoming transformed through listening and realizing yourself again as a narrator through this transformation, traveling this strange topology as presented through the Klein bottle will be incorporated in this contribution as well. The focusing on Heinz hermeneutic imperative, *"The listener not the speaker defines the meaning of an utterance,"* will be understood as the central axis for this investigation of this process, out of which the main notions of Second Order, such as self-reference and knowing of the not-knowing, will be developed. The well-known gap between acting cybernetically and speaking about cybernetics will be bridged by acting cybernetically through speaking cybernetically. Abstaining from any jargon, this whole story will be designed as one pattern of recurring feedback loops held together by what they represent: "systemic thinking."

For the creation of a context which does not seduce listeners into an academic debate, and being in accordance with the thinking and personal style of Heinz von Foerster, the contribution will be presented as a performance, as the reading of a bedtime story in which the notion of arguing truth is replaced by the notion of investigating the eigen-behavior, the eigen-dynamics of a pattern, a way of thinking and a form of living, while this pattern is at the same time developed through this very investigation.

After the presentation, an open dialogue as an additional feedback loop is desired, in which systemic patterns and thoughts which were aroused through the performance, as well as Pawlik's notion of "Wissenschaftspoese," as re-generation of systemic philosophical thought through the creation of new styles of presentations, which provides the context of this performance, can be discussed.

Lucas Pawlik Lucas@regenerationlounge.com

Thomas Cook onenglen@gmail.com

Lucas Pawlik was born in Vienna in 1975. His Magister thesis at the Vienna Institute for Philosophy of Science explored the self-reference of knowledge forms questioning logic, language, identity, and their relation to the sacred (1999). From this, a working relationship with Heinz von Foerster arose, in which Pawlik assisted in the making of Foerster's last book, "Teil der Welt," and which led to the forthcoming of Pawlik's book, "ÄuVerstehen Verstehen Nicht-Verstehen Verstehen," finally published in 2005. In these years, Pawlik also published various articles concerning self-reference and Second Order Cybernetics in magazines and journals such as, "Patterns," "Kybernetes," and "Lernende Organisationen," and taught Tai Ji Chuan and various forms of trance and meditation. In 2006, he finished his doctorate at the Vienna University of Fine Arts, "Patterns of Re-generation," which further develops Heinz von Foerster's notion of systemics as a unity of art and science, through which the mortal human being can understand its embeddedness in the universe it creates.

Thomas Cook is a Juilliard-trained actor and certified teacher of the Alexander Technique currently living in Vienna.

Through extensive cooperation, Lucas and Thomas have developed a working relationship in which they explore the means and possibilities of circularity and unknowing. Their aim is to make these notions of philosophy, science, and art further accessible to a wider public via the creation of new hybrid forms of presentation uniting form and meaning in the lived experience.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CYBERNETICS NEWS

The new ASC Executive will be taking office October, 2008. Please join us in welcoming and congratulating:

Ranulph Glanville, President
Elizabeth Simpson, Vice President
Christina Waters, Secretary
Thomas Fischer, Treasurer
Philip Guddemi as Membership Chair
Randy Whitaker continues on as our Webmaster

The present and soon-to-be ASC Executive thank you for making this election a success.
Thank you everyone for taking the time to cast your votes.

Meet the next ASC Executive Board:

President: Ranulph Glanville ranulph@mac.com

Ranulph Glanville: studied architecture (AA Dipl), cybernetics (PhD), human learning (PhD), recently awarded DSc for outstanding work in cybernetics and design. Professor of architecture and cybernetics, UCL, London; architectural research, St Lucas, Brussels; research in design, RCA, London; research through design and practice, RMIT, Melbourne. More than 300 papers published mainly on cybernetics and associated areas. Editorial Board of 8 journals, chair of many conferences, regular paper referee for conferences and journals.

Fellow of the Cybernetic Society, the American Society for Cybernetics and the Royal Society for the Arts. Member and officer of several societies. Consulting from hospitals to the military, education to banking.

Has been working on second order cybernetics since the very beginning, with a PhD in 1975 (supervisor Pask, examiner von Foerster). Main interest is exploring the consequences of cybernetic concepts considered cybernetically. Also composes music and creates installations. Was instrumental in the installation of the Pask Archive in Vienna.

On/off association with ASC since 1980; Vice President since 2005.

As vice president I have worked to increase the range of offerings the society makes to its members: our conferences are now back on a steady schedule; the full range of membership grades have been implemented for the first time; our awards and medals have been re-activated, with nomination open to ASC members; Patterns is firmly established in its new electronic format; and elections are, for the first time, being held on time and according to the constitution.

At the same time, I have been working towards an international extension of the ASC in the form of what I call the "cybernetic coalition". This project is in early stages, but I will bring news to our membership when it begins to take form, through the newsletter I have instigated.

My connections with design and the arts will help re-open and extend the ASC's traditional connection with these areas, and I am currently working on several schemes that will interest ASC members, including a new Cybernetic Serendipity Exhibition. If elected president I will pay careful attention to other areas of cybernetic interest; and will endeavour to facilitate member participation in the affairs of the society.

Vice President: Elizabeth Simpson elizacorps@yahoo.com

Elizabeth Simpson describes her experience of living as "Finding out what it's like to be alive." Engaging in this quest has brought her to explore and reflect on, not only her lived experience, but how the sum of individual actions in daily life manifest the dynamics of social systems and their histories. Through this look Elizabeth engages in various forms of social justice work, always striving to act in awareness of the rich intersections of personal, social, present, and historic domains of human living, particularly attending to whether the behaviors she chooses support, oppose, or offer alternatives to oppressive dynamics.

Elizabeth uses this exploration as input to her professional work doing interpersonal and intra-group consulting, which she has been doing since 1995. In this work she specializes in conflict resolution and creative problem-solving. Elizabeth serves as Peer

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Mediation Program Coordinator at Urbana Middle School and teaches the dialog course 'Being White in a Multiracial Society' at UIUC. She has been a student, organizer, and teacher at the School for Designing a Society, and continues to organize Design Intensives rooted in the fundamentals of Herbert Brun. Elizabeth studies Theater of the Oppressed and has created more puppet shows and street theater performances than make sense to mention here. In 2006 she was an Activist in Residence at Goddard College.

Elizabeth Simpson has been involved with the ASC since 2002 when she enthusiastically attended and performed at her first conference. In 2003 She won the Heinz von Foerster Student Prize for her presentation, "Punishment and Threat," helped organize the 2007 ASC conference, and is collaborating with others to coordinate the 2008 ASC conference in conjunction with the anniversary of the Biological Computer Laboratory. Elizabeth feels that Second Order Cybernetics offers powerful tools to reckon with the experience of living, personally and socially, not only in academic environments, but in daily life. Fortunately for both Second Order Cybernetics and its people, the ASC offers a unique, living, forum for continued conversations and explorations.

As Vice President Elizabeth intends to vigorously promote the ASC among both academic and community populations, using her organizing skills to stimulate a sustainable, rippling interest in this valuable and enjoyable way of seeing.

Secretary: Christina Waters *xtina@ucsc.edu*

My desire to serve as an office of the ASC stems from my interest in and past engagement with the organization (I co-organized an ASC conference at the University of California, Santa Cruz in Spring 1998), as well as from my interviews and visits with the late Heinz von Foerster. It is to his memory that I intend to dedicate my anticipated work with the ASC.

My own research activities, teaching in Philosophy, as well as my University of California appointment as research analyst provide the perfect background skills and experience to enable me to undertake compiling and updating a narrative history of ASC origins, achievements and history.

I would consider it an important and substantive contribution to the organization to help assemble, edit, refine and/or update ASC documents, including oral histories - leaving a more complete record of ASC accomplishments, goals and legacy for other scholars, researchers and cyberneticians - at the end of my term.

I would hope to attend at least one ASC meeting annually, as well as be available for phone and email input, consultation and organizational administration.

Treasurer: Thomas Fischer *sdtom@polyu.edu.hk*

I was introduced to (first-order) cybernetics studying at an electrical engineering high school. Later I studied education and currently I am teaching at the School of Design at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. In the design context, I was introduced to second-order cybernetics by Ranulph Glanville, who supported me with his advice generously during my recent studies at RMIT University. My interest in ASC, for now, is to listen and learn. My interest in cybernetics is naturally general while my particular fascination with it relates to knowledge construction and creative innovation. I undertake most of my research in the computer-aided architectural design field and intend to further introduce second-order thinking into this field in the coming years.

As treasurer for the society I hope to get a chance to help promote second-order ways of thinking as well as to support others in doing so.

Membership Chair: Phillip Guddemi *pguddemi@well.com*

Since the fall of 1973 when I enrolled in a course at U.C. Santa Cruz entitled "The Ecology of Mind" taught by Gregory Bateson, I have been interested in anthropology as a subject and in cybernetics as a theory. For a number of years I pursued the former more than the latter, though all who knew me knew of my interest in Bateson's ideas (and perhaps it is no coincidence that I did fieldwork in the same province of Papua New Guinea where he had once worked). Since the late 1990s I have studied and pursued cybernetics intensively as theory and epistemology, using Bateson's ideas as a touchstone but also pursuing those of others (most notably Maturana). This has resulted in a number of conference papers and published articles. I am currently the Managing Editor and Book Editor of the journal *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*.

I retain Bateson's faith that the ideas of cybernetics are needed in the world and I feel that the American Society for Cybernetics could serve as a wellspring of the field's revival in this country. I want to work with membership in order to promote that goal.

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"Much interweaving of thought will be necessary before the form of the new state appears to us. The principle of modern politics, the principle of creative citizenship, must predominately and preeminently body itself and be acknowledged by every human being. Then will "practical politics" be for the first time practical."

The New State, by Mary Parker Follett. Originally published in 1918

Republished by the Interntional Systems Institute, Carmel, California, 1996

American Society for Cybernetics 2008 Conference

Our Cybernetics

2008 sees the 50th anniversary of the Biological Computer Laboratory (BCL), founded by Heinz von Foerster, at the University of Illinois, Champagne/Urban.

The BCL, a cauldron of cybernetics and the home of second order cybernetics, featured a star-studded cast of members and visitors. Heinz was also one of the founders of the ASC, which has provided a spiritual home for second order cybernetics since its origination.

Our conference will celebrate this remarkable laboratory in joint festival with the Department of Electrical Engineering at UICU, which was the umbrella under which the BCL was sheltered. While maintaining separate conferences, our two conferences will mingle, and those attending one will be free also to attend the other at

141 Loomis Lab (Green St. and Goodwin Ave)
Urbana, Illinois 61801 United States
Start Date: May 11, 2008
End Date: May 15, 2008
Registration Open On: February 28, 2008
Registration Closed On: May 13, 2008

Call for Proposals: ASC 2008 Conference

The 2008 ASC Conference invites a variety of contributions including and not limited to: papers, performances, displays, symposia, workshops, panels and hosted conversations relating to the conference as described or to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Biological Computer Laboratory.

Please submit proposals to:

Elizabeth Simpson elizacorp @ yahoo.com
Louis H. Kauffman Kauffman @ uic.edu

We are not setting a deadline at this time, however space is limited to create room for conversation.

During this conference we anticipate hearing many voices and ways of being, and the opportunity to observe the observing system we constitute.

In creating papers and presentations for the conference, we ask participants to tip their hat to our theme of "Our cybernetics." In addition to your own content, please include an extra loop of observation that examines your work in the context of cybernetics at large. Also, when you participate in the conference, continue to examine the nature of cybernetics in relation to your own activity and the activity of others inside and outside cybernetics. In the view of the organizers, cybernetics is like a Klein Bottle. Its inside is its outside. The process of traveling that strange topology/geography is the process of cybernetics herself.

Registration:

To register for this ASC Conference go to the conference page at: <http://www.asc-cybernetics.org/2008/index.htm> and click the registration link, or to register without further ado go to:

https://www.sporg.com/registration?form_id=103916

Note: As an ASC member you receive a substantial discount on this and other conference fees. ASC Membership is \$35. Not a member? Join now:

<http://www.asc-cybernetics.org/organization/membership.htm>

Persons registering for the ASC conference will be able to move freely between this conference and the UCS conference.

For more information on the UCS conference, visit <http://www.how-why.com/ucs2008/>

Questions or comments can be directed to our administrative contact:

Contact Name: **Rebecca Hibit**
E-mail Address: rhibit@mac.com
Phone Number: **916-928-1524**

A Sampling of Cybernetics:

In the public eye cybernetics is often linked with origins in the design of automated systems and the consequences of interactions of women/men and machines. Contemporary cybernetics began as an interdisciplinary study connecting the fields of control systems, electrical network theory, mathematical logic, stability in biological and engineering systems and neuroscience. In the 1940's. Cybernetics expanded through the Macy conferences and other outlets to embrace social systems, anthropology, general systems theory, psychology, architecture and design. Under the influence of Margaret Mead and Heinz von Foerster, cybernetics turned its light upon itself and became the cybernetics of cybernetics, the cybernetics of observing systems.

As we move back to specific cybernetic societies we find different lines of thought and exploration:

The American Society for Cybernetics, closely allied with Heinz von Foerster and the Biological Computer Laboratory has been concerned with the role of the observer in systems and the understanding of observing systems.

Complex Systems Theory groups have emphasized the roles of mathematical modeling and the notion of emergent properties of systems in the presence of process, recursion, and feedback. There are many other viewpoints in this complex adventure in science and epistemology.

Many other groups study cybernetics in their own way around the world.

For more information: <http://www.asc-cybernetics.org/>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybernetics>
<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/CYBSYSTH.html>