



The Retreat Network

Winter 2000

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"Only with a ripening fullness of such experience will we begin to leaven the great teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation."

The Importance of ... "Retreat Work"

By Gard Jameson

There is a deep significance to the work of a Retreat Network. Our community is very young and our experience with the spirit is even younger. Only with a ripening fullness of such experience will we begin to leaven the great teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

There is in our spiritual experience a deepening infusion of the values of spirit by which we are given the opportunity to serve as a leaven to all traditions, to all the peoples of this planet.

Richard Foster, a Quaker, wrote in his book on spiritual discipline that we suffer from superficiality. I believe this is true of our community. There is a great deal of woundedness and anger within many souls in our community that can **only** be healed by the spirit.

We are given a powerful insight in Paper 170, on page 1862, that there are "no less than five phases, or epochs, of the kingdom." The first phase has to do with the "**personal and inward experience** of the spiritual life of the fellowship of the individual believer with God the Father."

There is a gracious manner in which *The Urantia Book* invites us to inward experience without commanding us to it. In our ministry, we should be so gracious.

I would recommend that we as Urantia book reader/believers consider the model of a "Retreat Network."

As a Network, our service would consist of:

- 1) Keeping in constant touch with one another, learning from one another and encouraging each other,
- 2) Generating a newsletter periodically that would serve to notify the Network of our retreat schedule,
- 3) Sharing information of our retreat activities via our community's web sites, and
- 4) Widening the circle of our Network by encouraging a dedication to the exploration of "personal and inward experience."

Our mission would be to inaugurate more fully the first phase of the kingdom within our community by fostering the desire to "live as if in the presence of God," calling people to a deep commitment to this initial phase of the kingdom.

Said our Master, "I want them all to be one, even as you and I are one if they love one another as I have loved them, all men will then believe that I came forth from you and be willing to receive the revelation of truth and glory which I have made." pg. 1964

May we all come to experience the real unity, joy and peace that arises from our deep inward contact with God's indwelling spirit. ■

RETREAT NETWORK INAUGURAL MEETING

The weekend of November 5-7 was a very special one in Oklahoma. The weather was unusually mild, as if summer refused to relinquish its warm sunshine and clear days. For twenty Urantians an additional blessing was about to unfold - this group of twenty souls had gathered to embark on a brave new service adventure. They came from coast to coast and neighboring Canada for the sole purpose of forming a network to foster and support spiritual retreats.

This gathering of spiritual seekers grew out of a shared sentiment that the time had come for an expansion of the retreat experience of contemplatively seeking the inner voice. As the idea unfolded soon it was evident that there truly was a kindred spirit, a zeitgeist of interest, in this important facet of our spiritual lives. Someone suggested that it would be a good idea to organize a meeting to explore the idea of forming a "network" of those interested in retreat work. Eventually, a time and place was selected and interested parties gathered to commune with the *Spirit* and foster the birth of an idea - for many - a dream.

The result of this remarkable weekend - beyond the forging of lasting friendships - was the creation of **The Retreat Network**. This network was established as a means to connect individuals and groups that are planning spiritual retreats, and to gather and disseminate useful information on retreats. It is not intended to be another social organization, but rather a true networking of individuals and groups committed to fostering the growth of the inner spiritual life.

One of the important outcomes of the weekend was the drafting of a mission statement. It reads: **"To support one another in facilitating and enhancing the individual's relationship with the indwelling spirit through the retreat experience, that all may be better equipped to serve the family of human kind."** This statement provides a centering framework wherein all involved may pursue their own unique retreat projects. It was clear that unity of spiritual purpose, not uniformity of retreat structure, was of primary importance.

The planning group agreed on three other key projects: a newsletter, a website, and the continuation of the retreat network internet bulletin board. The newsletter will be published either annually or biannually, and will include articles on retreat topics as well as a calendar with the time and location of retreats around the country. The website, at www.retreatnetwork.org, includes the newsletter, but will also be a resource for retreat organizers. Those who have been active in retreat work have developed and compiled excellent information and material that will be of great value to others in their work. The retreat network list will continue to serve as an immediate means of connection, and as an avenue for disseminating relevant information.



The Planning Group

The weekend culminated with a worship service on Sunday morning. The depth of spiritual unity and worship experienced by all present made the importance of the work we had undertaken self-evident. If only more souls on our planet could experience such supernal spiritual joy their appetite for spiritual food would surely be reawakened. In our Urantia community we have made great strides in the arena of mind. Now the time is ripe for our community of believers to more fully discover what Jesus called the first phase of the kingdom, *"The personal and inward experience of the spiritual life of the fellowship of the individual believer with God the Father."* (P.1862)

Mission Statement

"To support one another in facilitating and enhancing the individual's relationship with the indwelling spirit through the retreat experience, that all may be better equipped to serve the family of human kind."

Retreat Schedule

April

The Golden Gate Circle Society

invites you to join them at their Spring Retreat: **"REVEALING TRUTH"**

DATE: April 14 through April 16, 2000
LOCATION: The Bishop's Ranch, Healdsburg, CA
COST: \$95 (includes 5 meals and shared room)
RSVP: Dolores Nice (650) 369-6803
e-mail: dlnice@worldnet.att.net

The Bishop's Ranch is a beautiful retreat and conference center in the California wine country. We usually carpool from the Bay Area and meet for dinner in the town of Healdsburg on Friday. You can mail deposit to Dolores Nice at 3638 Farm Hill Blvd., Redwood City, CA 94061. Space is limited, so it will be on a first come first served basis.

"You are not given truth to crystalize into settled, safe, and honored forms. Your revelation of truth must be so enhanced by passing through your personal experience that new beauty and actual spiritual gains will be disclosed to all who behold your spiritual fruits and in consequence thereof are led to glorify the Father who is in heaven." Pg. 176:3

Adventures in Spiritual Living Retreat in Colorado

with

Carol & Skip Weatherford

and

Kaye & Bill Cooper

We will explore techniques to see ourselves in a new light, to listen spiritually and build friendships, and to develop several effective and enjoyable prayer techniques.

- ☆ Enjoy inspiring stories from the life of Jesus
- ☆ Feel spiritual power in a group prayer for healing
- ☆ Initiate worship through creative expression

These techniques can be used again and again to foster spiritual growth

DATE: April 29 through April 30, 2000 (Sat. noon to Sun. noon)
LOCATION: Wondervu Retreat Center (45 min. southeast of Boulder)
COST: \$55 per adult & teens 12 and over (includes overnight lodging & 3 meals)
Early registration \$45 (before April 1)
REGISTER: Make check out to RMSF and send to:
Joan Biek-Evans, 1715 Garland Lane, Boulder, CO 80304-2201
For more information call Joan (303)448-1708



Come and enjoy the pleasure of God's presence with devoted Urantia brothers and sisters

Women's Retreat

"Women In Transition"

The only constant in life is change. In this experiential retreat, we will explore the impact of how we engage with the transitions of our life, and how to partner with our highest values and spiritual helpers to use change as a catalyst to express more deeply, who we really are.

Come for a weekend of special time with your sisters as we celebrate together our Urantia community "Woman'spirit."



- DATE:** May 5 through May 7, 2000
- LOCATION:** Namaste Retreat & Conference Center
29500 SW Grahams Ferry Rd.
Wilsonville, OR (near Portland)
- COST:** \$130 (includes 2 night's lodging, 6 meals and workshops)
- RSVP:** Francyl Gawryn (206) 232-1158 or Nancy Votrain
(541) 745-5568 by April 1.

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RETREAT

May 6-7, 2000
Orkney Springs, VA

Contact Barbara or
Jim Lee

(540) 477-3342

jimlee@shentel.net

or

Virginia Brown

(703) 222-5048

vabrown606@aol.com

Adventures in Spiritual Living Retreat in Oklahoma City

with Carol & Skip Weatherford
and Kaye & Bill Cooper

- DATE:** May 6 through May 7, 2000 (9 A.M. Sat. - 1 P.M. Sun.)
- LOCATION:** The home of Harry McMullan
6912 N.W. Grand Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
(Saturday child care location will be sent to registrants.)
- COST:** \$20 per adult & teens 12 and over (\$20 per child up to 2 children, 3 or more no additional charge.)
Fee includes meals from breakfast Sat. through lunch on Sun., and child care on Saturday. Housing is not provided.
- REGISTER:** Make check out to First Urantia Society of Oklahoma and
send to: Charlene Morrow, 13517 McRaines, Edmond, OK 73013
For more information call Charlene (nights) (405) 478-0211 or Waldeen Stump (405) 946-1123

We will explore techniques to enhance individual and group worship, to listen spiritually and build friendships, and to develop several effective and enjoyable prayer techniques.

- ☆ Enjoy inspiring stories from the life of Jesus
- ☆ Experience a meditative approach to reading *The Urantia Book*
- ☆ Initiate worship through creative expression

Come and enjoy the pleasure of God's presence with devoted Urantia brothers and sisters. The Saturday program is designed to meet the needs of adults and interested teens. Sunday morning will provide an opportunity for adults to share worship and celebration with the children.

Experiencing the Presence of God

By Adventures in Spiritual Living

(Kaye & Bill Cooper, Sharon & Ted Lanier and Carol & Skip Weatherford)

"An experience of the presence of God" - that was the answer to the question we asked ourselves: "What do we want people to get from the program we are planning?"

"The Urantia Book Readers" who later became "Adventures in Spiritual Living" had gathered to plan a three-day program. We tossed around ideas until we realized that our goal was to give participants an experience of the presence of God, an experience that would excite them spiritually and help to fuel the growth of their relationship with God.

We eventually decided that our program would not be a conference with the customary activities of speeches, discussion groups, and study groups. Instead we evolved a focus and a process. Our focus would be on spiritual techniques which came out of our own experience. Our process in the program would be to describe a technique, ask participants to try the technique, and then invite everyone to share from their experience the insights, feelings, thoughts and truths they choose to share. We decided to categorize the type of program we were planning as a retreat, to distinguish it from a conference.

Over the next year our group traveled from around the state to spend the weekend together about once a month. We tested a number of techniques. Selecting the

most successful, we put on the first "Adventures in Spiritual Living" retreat at Mo Ranch in the hill country of Texas in 1989. After the retreat was over and the participants had all left, we gathered close together and came to some realizations:

- 1) *we loved doing the retreat,*
- 2) *the results were better than we had ever expected, and*
- 3) *we very much wanted to do more retreats.*

After reflection, we also realized that the retreat with its focus on sharing our spiritual lives had achieved the atmosphere of communion described in

The Urantia Book, going well beyond the social setting of most conferences. The atmosphere of communion bonds people and empowers them spiritually.

The techniques we use in "Adventures in Spiritual Living" retreats are chosen for their ability to make us more aware of God and God's will for us. Many of them, such as *Seeing with God's Eyes* and *Prayer in the Moment*, are very basic and practical techniques which bring God into our everyday lives.

They can be used by a group or by an individual. Our retreat planning also offers precious opportunities for us to experiment with creative art forms, such as writing visualizations, telling stories, selecting spiritually evocative pictures and music, and planning group celebrations and worships. Imagination is important to us as planners and to the participants. The creative imagination is an excellent pathway to the superconscious.

Variety is a useful trait for any group retreat. Each person has characteristic preferences for individual activities vs. group activities, structured events vs.

those that are relaxed and flexible, thinking vs. feeling and sensory experience vs. intuition. It is beneficial to offer a variety of activities in order to appeal to various preferences.

One of the most liberating things we have learned over the years is that we who plan the retreat are in reality only the human side of the team - and the junior staff! All we have to do is set up an environment in which the spirit can do its own work - we are just the helpers, not the responsible ones. Experiencing the presence of

God depends as much on the openness and expectancy of the participant as it does the nature of the exercise. The spirit can use all sorts of activities to reach into the hearts, minds and souls of those who attend a retreat. The spirit eagerly awaits the smallest invitation into our inner lives. ■

HEAVEN

Heaven isn't far away,
Close your eyes, stretch forth your fingers,
But as close as close can be,
Waiting just outside your door.

Heaven isn't far away,
You can be there any moment,
Sometimes when you'd least expect it,
You are standing on her shore.

Heaven isn't distant, hiding,
Cold, aloof, remote uncaring,
Living in another world,
Laughing as we "fail" once more.

Rather is she always present,
Ever with her arms to comfort,
Rather does she gather mere us,
Rather does her heart implore,

Heaven isn't distant, dancing,
Wond'ring if we'll ever join her,
Rather does she wait within your heart -
Unlock the door!

By Francyl Garwin

**Teaching
Mission
National
Conference**

**at
Fountainhead
Resort
Lake Eufola, OK**

June 23-25, 2000

Contact

Jim Foster

jfoster@intellex.com

August

**Spiritfest
2000**

**Teaching
Mission
Conference**

**at
Pema Osel
Ling
Buddhist
Center,
Watsonville,
CA**

August 3-5, 2000

Contact

**Karen Roberts
karenr@mcn.org**

The Value of Retreats

By Sue Tennant

Some people have the idea that retreats are self-serving havens for like-minded types. This is not my experience. I once hosted a Urantia retreat where two new readers clashed so badly the first day we almost had a war. The group reckoned that if we couldn't get along on a spiritual retreat, there wasn't much hope for our world, so we'd better try harder. For five days our better selves prevailed, and thanks to our unseen helpers and a very talented life-skills facilitator, we learned new ways to communicate respectfully and no one left in a huff. Human differences surface quickly in small groups and when our tolerance level is challenged, it becomes necessary to stretch and grow in understanding and appreciating others. This is a benefit that lingers long after a retreat has ended.

Retreats don't replace much needed study groups, conferences, and/or service projects, but they can provide an additional learning option for Urantia book readers. On page 196, a Universal Censor points out that we mortals develop self-consciousness as "communal consciousness" and that we seek out this understanding of ourselves and others on four levels:

- 1) *the quest to know the facts,*
- 2) *the quest to understand our duty,*
- 3) *the quest to experience God firsthand, and*
- 4) *the quest to recognize our relationship with God and each other as part of the Father's personality circuit.*

Retreats tend to emphasize self-conscious realization on the last two levels - enhanced personal religious experience and the discovery of personality values in others. This focus on relationship and personality is joyful because it has no other agenda, no ulterior motive. I believe that retreats offer apolitical time-outs which can enlarge our capacity to live together compassionately across deep differences.

I've hosted or attended many retreats and each one was significant for its lessons in self-awareness, personality appreciation, and group harmony. Here are a few observations:

... Retreats attract people, from all organizations and none, who yearn for a larger spiritual community.

... Trained facilitators are invaluable. Facilitators are mainly interested in helping us discern divinity in our lives.

... A retreat is not a place for debate or to exercise the need to be "right". The "Spirit of Truth" works to curb aggressive or assertive thinking and behavior.

... The best retreats last at least two days and two nights and take place in a personal place, preferably someone's home.

... The more time together the better the chance to develop confidentiality, trust, honesty, and group loyalty.

... Sharing thoughts and feelings is encouraged but individual privacy is honored; people participate only when they are ready.

... Prayer and worship are the spiritual fulcrums of life-changing insights and perspectives.

... Shared goals and group worship lead to group harmony.

... Retreats are a practice arena for learning skills such as listening for understanding, recapitulation, celebrating differences, honoring the person as a potential manifestation of some part of the Father's personality, giving and receiving feedback, suspending judgement, and acknowledging our limited viewpoints.

... Retreats allow for giving and receiving God's love among those who might otherwise seem like strangers.

... During a retreat, some feel God's presence in themselves and others in such perfect alignment with the Father's personality circuit, that Divine love floods their souls and some even experience the personal presence of the Son.

... Retreats spawn an increased yield of the fruits of the spirit in the lives of retreaters.

... Retreats can give a glimpse now of what light and life will some day be. ■



gust - continued

Silver Springs Retreat Center

Location:

Throughout the year, Silver Springs is a culinary retreat offering cooking vacations with celebrity chefs. Located an hour and a half north of Toronto, in the heart of Ontario's finest outdoor recreation, it is steeped in the tranquility of 140 acres of spring-fed ponds, streams and waterfalls. During the month of August, Silver Springs, in association with Northern Light Urantia Association of Canada (NLUAC), welcomes Urantia book readers worldwide for nonprofit Urantia retreat and training programs. Experienced facilitators, warm hospitality (great food!) and an inspiring natural setting combine to make Silver Springs an ideal spot for a Urantia book "learning vacation."

Philosophy:

We believe spiritual truth should be freely shared to serve the family of humankind and we think small group learning is ideal. In order to make retreat training affordable for small groups, Silver Springs subsidizes costs and faculty from across North America generously volunteer their time and talents as a loving service.

Mission:

We wholly subscribe to the mission of **The Retreat Network** which is "to support one another in facilitating and enhancing the individual's relationship with the indwelling spirit through the retreat experience, that we may all be better equipped to serve the family of humankind."

Brochures and video are available upon request.

Hosts: Sue and Derek Tennant
RR#4 Flesherton, ON
Canada N0C 1E0

To register call toll free: 1-800-5465601

Fax: (519) 922-1136

E-mail: stennant@georgian.net

Internet: silverspringsretreat.com



Silver Springs Schedule

Note: Rates quoted are all-inclusive and based on double occupancy. A \$50 deposit, made payable to "Silver Springs Retreat" will confirm registration. US and Canadian funds accepted at par.

August 5-11, 2000

"Cultivating the Soil" - Spiritual Parenting Leadership Training

"The people of another age will better understand the gospel of the kingdom when it is presented in terms expressive of the family relationships" (1603:05)

This program aims to train participants to present the timeless gospel of the "Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man" in modern terms. Participants will learn the principles of spiritual parenting and how they synthesize with the best of the culture and research, and how to present these principles to others, both inside and outside the Urantia readership. The program will also deepen the experience of being parented by our spiritual Father and will help establish the foundation of an ongoing support network. Suitable for the general readership. Limit - 12 participants. Cost \$280/person. Facilitators: Sara Blackstock and Robert Burns. Sara is Director of school-age day care center in the San Francisco Bay area. She has 30 years experience as a teacher and is coordinator of the Fellowship's Family Life program. Robert is the owner of a health club in Los Angeles, is on the Fellowship's General Council, and has partnered with Sara in presenting this topic in workshops at several Urantia conferences.

August 12-18

Spiritual Retreat Leadership Seminar

This is a timely seminar for those who may be asked to provide leadership in a spiritual retreat. Retreats which explore ways to live closer to God and incorporate the teachings of *The Urantia Book* in daily life are becoming more popular. Through theory, modeling and practice, a long list of techniques will be learned suitable for retreat activities which emphasize living the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and feeling the presence of God. Logistics and other practical concerns will also be explored. This training is suitable for anyone who is comfortable speaking before small groups, leading discussion, sharing thoughts and feelings and has an authentic spiritual life of one's own. Limit - 12 participants. Cost \$280/person.

Adventures in Spiritual Living (ASL) Team Leaders: Bill and Kaye Cooper, Ted and Sharon Lanier, and Skip and Carol Weatherford. ASL has been leading retreats for Urantia and church groups since 1989. Their years of experience will provide both spiritual insight and practical knowledge into the process of retreat leading.

August - continued

Silver Springs Schedule - continued

August 19-25

Camp Nebadon

This program will inform both adults and children about the universe of Nebadon through the model of summer camp. Fun-filled outdoor recreational experiences and creative projects will be facilitated by camp counselors and counselors in training. A special celebration will be incorporated into the program on August 21st in conjunction with local Urantia Book readers. Cost is \$100/adult camper; \$35/child (camping with adult); \$280/person (with room).

Program Directors: Cynthia Mantel and Serge Bisson. Serge is an engineer living with his wife Cynthia, an actress/writer, in Puerto Rico. They are both accomplished athletes - very energetic, creative and fun-loving - with 6 children between them.

August 26-31

Young Adult Readers Retreat

This program is being developed by Michael McIssac at hmq438t@trinet.se or contact Gabe at: higabe@hotmail.com. For up-to-date details, please refer to the Young Readers website at: www.x-hi.com/ubyouth.

September

"HEALING THE HEART" RETREAT

FACILITATED BY THE PLANNERS OF **THE RETREAT NETWORK**

We have opened a door for deepening our experience of the Father's love by creating a time and place to gather. The setting for this year's annual retreat of **The Retreat Network** is in the beautiful Olympic Peninsula. The Seabeck Christian Retreat Center just outside Seattle, Washington has room to accommodate 80 participants.

DATE: August 31 through September 3, 2000 (Thurs. eve. to Sun. noon)

LOCATION: Seabeck Christian Retreat Center (Near Seattle, WA.)

COST: \$195 (includes meals & lodging, 2 persons per room plus bath)
or \$155 (includes all of the above except bath is down the hall)

QUESTIONS: Contact Bruce Porter at (503) 704-5233 or
Jeanette Schafer at (541) 754-0385;
e-mail: jeanetts@proaxis.com

Retreat Theme:

*"Healing the Heart -
Deepening Our Experience
of the Father's Love"*

REGISTRATION FORM



Name of Participant(s): _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____ Suite-mate Request: _____

\$195 (room w/bath) \$155 (room w/o bath) Total: _____ Check payable to: The Retreat Network

Charge Card Account Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Visa Master Card Cardholder Name: _____ Authorized Signature: _____

Send registration form with payment to: Jeanette Schafer, 3570 NW Tanager Dr, Corvallis, OR 97330

Resting at St. Dorothy's

By Bob Fontana

November 1999 was retreat time for about 20 hungry souls in the San Francisco Bay area. St. Dorothy's Rest was the site for the Golden Gate Circle Society's fall retreat where many readers haven't seen each other since the last retreat. It was a full house, replete with study, music, worship, free-time activities, resting and eating. The format for this retreat is home cooking, where all who attend are divided into cooking groups, and each group is responsible for preparing one of the meals for the whole gathering, resulting in a festival of feasts!

The retreat theme was the "Spirit of Truth." From our study, there was a general attitude amongst us of gratitude for the actions taken by the apostles after Pentecost, as well as an appreciation for the completion that the "Spirit of Truth" provided to the spiritual circuitry that is now available to everyone. We found it difficult to imagine what it must have been like to live spiritually in the world prior to the bestowal of the "Spirit of Truth."

Needless to say, the retreat experience was a greatly needed and memorable time for all who attended. ■

**"One day the sun
admitted,
I am just a shadow.
I wish I could show you
The Infinite Incandescence
That has cast my brilliant
image!**

**I wish I could show you,
When you are lonely or in
darkness,
The Astonishing Light
Of your own Being!"**

Hafiz

EXCERPTS FROM RETREATS HELD IN FEBRUARY

I so much enjoyed our retreat time together, and was impressed by a number of things which I would like to relate.

** That each person, in any community setting (and a retreat is a small community setting) contributes enormously. First, just by being there, and secondly, by what they bring to the experience in gifts or expertise. But the first gift is their presence.*

** That the experience of hearing and witnessing who and what others honor, pray for, and fear helps me to understand, and love them more, and to understand myself better too.*

** That our exploration into retreating is, for me, a very different experience than that of a conference in that my expressed purpose is to gather primarily for being together in God's presence, rather than to study, party, socialize, or work. Those things may happen too, but first and foremost for me is the purpose of just being together with my brothers and sisters in the presence of God, and acknowledging that.*

... no words can express the spiritual bonding that took place within us and between us.

Besides being a blessed respite from my daily routine, it was a way to catch glimpses of God in each human being as if my capacity were heightened; a way for the soul to heal and find safe haven to express a bit more of its unique divinity with other souls.

I am stronger this week by having come together with a group of beings who have vision and purpose in their lives. I came away feeling we are clearly about the Father's business when we seek to deepen relationships and worship the Divine together, bringing this power back into our lives.

Being consciously part of God's flow of living love IS the greatest service I know for us, for everyone, and for the future of this world!

No matter the overall tone or personality of the group of people getting together, a gathering is a "retreat" if the intent of the individuals choosing to come together is to find and to know God experientially (personally), or to grow further in their direct experiencing of God.

We are all better when we are together in the purpose of finding our Father.

For me, participation by all is very important ... the more I see each individual encouraged and enabled to be fully participating, not just sitting in the audience and getting mentally stimulated, the closer we come to reality.



ANNUAL RETREAT NETWORK GATHERING
Olympic Peninsula
August 31 - September 3, 2000
(see page 8)

RETREAT:

A

period

of

group

withdrawal

for

prayer,

meditation,

study

and

instruction

The Retreat Network

Jeanette Schafer
3570 NW Tanager Dr.
Corvallis, OR 97330
(e-mail: jeanetts@proaxis.com)



Larry Geis
390 Page Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

