

Winter 2002 A Journal of Men's Wellness XV Number 4

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Freedom Rides the Rules Into Wide Open Spaces

Patrick J. Sauer

GHOST RANCH, NM – I am doing what I have seldom done, which is to get myself to a keyboard while the energy of a men's wellness conference is still surging in my heart and brain. That the fall 2002 conference was unique, there is no doubt, and in more ways than one. I know that September 26-29 made this one of the earliest fall conferences ever held. But it was, thanks to the vision and perseverance of conference leader Stephen Feher, absolutely the first to give men the trust and the responsibility—call it the freedom—to create a major portion of the agenda virtually on the fly.

The conference theme, Freedom Rules, posited two ends of a spectrum. The world of rules was dramatized Thursday night, leading to affinity group identification and self-selection. An opening session in sociometrics was conducted Friday morning in which every man responded to multiple choice questions of life experience by moving to a designated answer location. The size, composition, and migration of each group through the sequence of questions gave each man the opportunity to both reveal and discover his place in the spectrum. The rest of the day consisted of several excellent prepared workshops and activities, along with affinity group discussions, and unassigned time.

Introducing the "open space" technique Saturday morning, Steve invited anyone to lead a session on any subject he chose, and interested men could sign up. Attendance was open and voluntary. Indoor meeting space and time were allocated, negotiated, and assigned. Outdoor meetings convened all around the Ghost Ranch campus. According to a key organizer, it had to work; there was no Plan B., as those present will attest, the rush of men to the center of the circle to post their sessions was immediate and energetic. It took 30–40 minutes to sort out, combine, recast, and schedule the numerous programs. The evaluation sheets have not been tabulated as of this writing, but few discouraging words regarding the open format were heard in the circle by close of conference. Next year's leader Barry McIntosh indicated there may be some continuity in format for 2003. He has chosen Howard Kaplan, a true mensch in Men's Wellness, as his co-leader.

Register NOW for the

**MEN'S CROSS-COUNTRY SKI
WEEKEND**

FEBRUARY 20-24, 2003 See Page 5

2003 SPRING RETREAT

APRIL 4 – 6, 2003 See page 12
registration form on the back cover

*Pictures from the Fall Conference
on Page 9*

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Man, Alive! is a journal of men sharing from the heart the joys and issues of being male.

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Submission Deadlines

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May 25, 2003

August 25, 2003

November 25, 2003

Submission Formats and Requirements

Paper is okay, but please send submissions as a text file via e-mail if at all possible, to save us having to type your words into the computer.

Photographs should be in .jpg format. We'll be happy to help you do this. Please keep submissions below 1500 words.

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NEW

Summer Gathering 2002: An Unvarnished Perspective

David Johnson

A green man emerged from a distant clump of trees and moved towards a circle of seated men in an isolated piece of woods southeast of Cuba, New Mexico. His skin and clothes were green, and green ribbons flowed from his scanty clothes. Entering the circle, he crouched and looked in all directions, as if he were searching for something. He seemed wary, testing the air for safety and receptivity. Halfway around, he arrived at a small cavity in the earth, about 10 inches wide, and several pots of earth. He knelt and patted the edges of the hole. Satisfied, he beckoned in the direction of the same clump of trees from which he had emerged.

Out came four more green men who carried an eight-foot pole, slowly and solemnly, towards us. The pole had a rosy, red tip on the front end and colorful ribbons fluttering from the back. It was carried around the circle and the firepit. They stopped where the first green man waited for them. In an atmosphere of anticipation, the green men swung the sturdy pole into an upright position and gently inserted the red tip into the dark hole. They packed earth around it, using dirt from the pots. Then each of the men took one of ribbons--red, blue, green, or yellow, now hanging from the top of the pole, and, walking in opposite directions, wove the ribbons into a rainbow garment that clung like a tight skirt. The whole ceremony was so lovely, so quiet. The greenness of plant life after a recent rain, the air clean and pungent.

The tree from the earth and into it

the pole into the hole

the penis into the vagina

the spark of maleness into the female ground of being

The same ground we were sitting on, the same energy we yearned to discover and contemplate in our own loins.

The first Greenman then talked about the Maypoles of his childhood, how, as kids in a secular world, they didn't really understand the earthy, sexual underpinnings of May Day rituals, but now he did. And so did we, who witnessed this opening ceremony, who chose to attend the Men's Summer Conference on the theme of male sexuality.

The first talking circle was introduced by the Leo Klinker, the conference director, who, with simple honesty, vulnerability, and brevity, explained the importance of the theme in his life. He showed the rest of us how to speak from the heart. The first man to pick up the talking stick followed Leo's lead and spoke about an abusive sexual experience from his youth, emotional scar tissue that had affected him for the rest of his life. Such openness and such pain. Then another story and another. At first, mostly stories from the past about sexual wounding. Those times of vulnerability when something powerfully exciting and beautiful was poisoned by acts of cruelty and predation. The circle of thirty men provided a crucible of confidence, a safe arena for profoundly personal experience. Several years before at a summer conference, Cliff had announced that he wanted to go deeper. Well, this conference went deeper, from the very beginning. No bullshit, no wandering in the intellectual cosmos of the male mind. Just life stories.

Continued on Page 15

Open Letter to NM Men's Wellness

Luděk Pešek

Bob McMains and René Dominguez were introduced to Luděk Pešek from the Czech Republic Men's Group in September of 2002. This is the letter from him regarding his visit to the Jemez Valley, and meeting René and Bob. The letter was edited just slightly.

Prague, September 30, 2002

Dear Rene,

After all my duties I can fulfill my promise that I will write you few lines about my stay in US and our meeting in Jemez Springs.

At first, I shortly recall how I got to the Jemez Springs. As I mentioned you in Bodhi Center I am a member of Czech men's group that was initiated by few men, me included, in our country more than one and half year ago. The motivation of our meetings was first of all to find opportunity how to be together among us men where we could pray and talk about our lives, their problems, worries, joys, spiritual questions etc.. We believed that it could help not only us but also our families, parishes, relations, society, simple all around us. We started to discover more about men archetypes and spirituality through reading literature, lectures given us by invited speakers. One of the first books, which we read at the beginning, was a book with title "Wild man journey" from Richard Rohr. We did not know much about the author. But the book addressed us so much, that one of us decided to contact Richard and invited him to our country to meet him personally. As the guy decided he did and, to our great surprise, Richard's response to his offer was very positive. We have found out that he besides men's work he leads Men's rites once a year in the Ghost Ranch, NM.

Even before Richard's visit in Prague in the last autumn three our men took part in the Initiation rites in New Mexico. They were very impressed by it and encouraged others to take this opportunity in the next year. So I decided to go. Since the rites take just four days and I wanted to "digest" all my new experiences aside from my usual business and, off course, voyage is very expensive, I wanted to spend more time in the place. I asked for the opportunity to stay longer Richard and the people from his Center of Action and Contemplation (CAC), Albuquerque. They gave me reference to Redondo Retreat Center that dwells in Jemez Springs. Lovely woman Sharon

Palma leads this center and here I found really new home.

It was also her thanks that I met Rene and Bob. It was in Bodhi center on the Sai Baba Retreat. When Sharon told me that she made me a date with the men who are involved in men's activities I could not believe. At first, the village Jemez Springs seemed to me as the beautiful end of the earth suitable for traveling and individual meditation but not for meetings. But now I could recognize that in this villages there are several retreat

centers and many very interesting people are coming, even working with men. It could not be by chance. I enjoyed the meeting with Rene and Bob very much. I admired their passion with that they talked about men's work which they do, about newsletter "Man, Alive!", the concept of men's work such as leading them to sharing their experiences,

discovering emotions, public beneficial activities. I was only pity that I would miss the men's conference that they prepared to the end of September in Albuquerque. But we, Czechs, do not want to stay aside and we also face a big national meeting, which will be hold in our country from October 3 to 6. We have about 100 applications and we look forward to it very much. The topic will be Men's archetypes.

I wish you all good luck and I hope that we will be in a touch from now on. It is very encouraging to know that the men are alive also on the other side of our earth!



René, Luděk and Bob at Bodhi Center

Check It Out

MEN'S CROSS-COUNTRY SKI WEEKEND

See page 5

The Fall Conference

Manuel Tafoya

As I'm writing this, I'm picturing beautiful Ghost Ranch with its sunny fall weather; its cottonwoods in full autumn changing colors, and the conference with its laid-back friendly atmosphere. Needless to say I enjoyed myself immensely. What's more, even with my many years of Life Experience, I was still able to learn tons of things about myself, about life, and how to live and enjoy life. It was also very nice seeing so many old friends, as well as making new ones.

On Sunday morning at the Closing Talking Circle I did want to get up and acknowledge my Men's Group for I think they are terrific. Unfortunately time ran out before I could grab the "Talking Stick" so I'll do my bragging here. This was what I was going to say:

"We all know how good it makes us feel when the sport team we like or are affiliated with, is one of the best. That's the way I feel about my Men's Group. I think this Men's Group is one of the best in New Mexico. It is also one of the oldest. Our Group will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year.

When I say it is one of the best men's groups I do not think I am not exaggerating. Let's look at some facts. Out of the nine members in our group seven of us came to the conference. Of the other two, Woody Rosenblatt, was unable to go because he was at a potter's workshop in Colorado, while Todd Tibbals was unable to go because he was on a back-packing outing with the Sierra Club, in Utah.

As for the group members attending the conference, two of our members, Mike Milstein and Gary Carlson were on the Planning Committee. I heard that these same two guys gave a terrific class on Aging and Saging. Four of our members Lawrence Cook, Will Scofield, Mike Milstein and Gary Carlson were mentors for newly initiated elders. Two of our members, Manuel Tafoya and Phil Green performed on Saturday Night Live, Manuel with Keith's Freedom Rules Choir and Arnold Schwarzenegger's Alien skit while Phil was "The King alive and well at 67". One of our members, Mike Milstein, presented a terrific closing activity involving our affinity groups that was both powerful and practical, while two of our members went on serious hikes. Bill Davey went on a ten mile hike on a long forgotten trail shown only on an 1890 map. Lawrence Cook, while on his hike, got, or should have gotten, the Purple Heart for having hurt his gluteus maximus."

I thank the organizers and planners for a most enjoyable conference.

Calling All Highwaymen!

**Adopt-A-Highway Clean-up Day:
Saturday, March 8, 2003**

Join us for this community service project of New Mexico Men's Wellness. **We've been assigned a new section of I-25, between mile markers 233 and 234.** Meet at Exit 234, I-25 and Tramway, at 9:15 a.m. Parking will be on northwest corner of that intersection,

across from the Phillips 66 station. Come take a walk, picking up trash as we go and finishing by about noon. Bring work gloves, hat, long pants and shirt, sturdy boots/shoes, and water. Safety vests and instructions will be provided. To RSVP and for further information contact Uncle Bob (505) 248-1001 or



David Johnson (505) 266-9960.

A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey, they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, he wrote in the sand:

"Today my best friend slapped me in the face."

They kept on walking, until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but his friend saved him. "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand, and now, you write on a stone. Why?" The other friend replied: "When someone hurts us, we should write it down in the sand, where the winds of forgiveness can erase it away, but when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone, where no wind can erase it."

Anonymous
Sent by Jennie Herrington

MAN, ALIVE!

Now on the Internet at:

www.nmmenwellness.org/

SCOTT DOW MOVES ON!

Scott Dow

*Editor's Note: All of us at Man Alive are going to miss Scott, and his many contributions to New Mexico Men's Wellness. We wish him and his family the best as they embark on another of life's adventures. The following email was received from Scott on November 27, 2002 and we felt that you should be informed by the MAN HIMSELF. To be sure we will **NEVER UNDERSTIMATE SCOTT'S VALUE.** We look forward to working with Bill Jones.*

I am relocating to MAUI and will be gone by December 8th. Bill Jones has volunteered to take over the accounting, bank account, some check writing from me and we will accomplish the switch over next week if possible. I will need to cancel my p. o. Box 23346 so please make the necessary changes in the next Man Alive for a return address, and then of course send the invoices for reimbursement to Bill. He and I can also set up a budget for you and Man Alive for the 2003 year and we will send you a copy for your comments.

SCOTT DOW THE C P A
Never Underestimate The Value

Letter To My Son Ray Ortiz

I was ecstatic the day you were born.
You struggled to come into this world,
holding back as if to prepare me
for immense joy.
The doctor finally cut things short
by cutting you out in a C-Section
to save your life and my own.
If you had died that day,
a part of me, or all of me,
would have followed you
as your companion.

Instead, your birth gave me
new and abundant life.
When the nurse brought you
through the operating room door
and into my arms, you were
the color of sandstone in early light.
I tenderly embraced you
and as I kissed you for the first time
you breathed delicate air
across my grateful face
and deep into my heart.

When you looked at me
for the first time, I saw
the gray eyes of my father
and a life filled with grace.

© Ray Ortiz

MEN'S CROSS-COUNTRY SKI WEEKEND FEBRUARY 20-24, 2003

Lawrence Cook

Natural beauty, camaraderie, sharing, solitude, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, merry making, reflection, companionship in a safe, supportive men's environment

Join us at COOKS' CABIN in the Blanco Basin in Southwest Colorado for the 12th Annual Gathering

Our 3500 sq. ft. log home with spa can accommodate twenty or so. **The cost is \$20 per person per night.** Please pay at the weekend.

The essence of the weekend is in the spirit of camaraderie. We continually enjoy proffering to others the opportunities to be at peace in the blanketed Blanco Basin. Please bring what you wish to share via poetry, songs, stories, queries, games, talking sticks, drums and other musical instruments. **The time can be as laid back or structured as you wish to make it.**

For further information, contact **Lawrence Cook** at **1503 Lucyle Pl. N.W., Albuquerque, N.M. 87114-8819** or **(505) 898-2206** or rlcook@rt66.com.

VETERAN'S reflections

Colorful Junks

Joseph Woods

Based on a true story.

The warm tropical sun felt good on my back. I sat on the main deck winding shot line into an orange cone. Looking up I could see the deep green shore and little houses and tiny people on the beach. Colorful little junks bobbed on the turquoise water between the shore and us. All was calm for the moment.

My Viet Nam experience had been a nightmare. I was trained as a gunner, a machine gunner and six months ago I had been ordered to this ammunition ship. We worked long, hard hours handling ammunition of all types. The smell of death was always present and I lived in fear of leading the landing party of which I would be in charge. If we were ever called to help someone on shore, I was to man a small boat with five other sailors and go charging in at a top speed of three knots. We would be setting ducks.

I thought I heard the bow watch say something about a boat coming along side. I stood up to walk to the side. In those six steps to the railing of the ship my life would change forever. Below me, thirty feet below, a small colorful junk kept pace with our huge ship just inches from our hull. "What a tiny boat in a big sea," I thought.

My eyes quickly followed the lines of the beautiful boat until I caught sight of a man standing on the stern with a wooden tiller in his hands. Our eyes met. He had the look of hate in his eyes! His cold stare sent cold chills down my spine, and then I saw it. He had an automatic weapon under his open shirt!

I spun around and walked into a dream. I found myself running towards the hatch that led to the main passageway of the ship. I had to get to the small arms locker as fast as my feet would carry me, no time to explain, no time to think, just keep running. Down the ladder to the next level, past the galley and down another ladder. I do not remember my

feet touching the rungs. My left boot caught on the bottom lip of the hatch as I ran to the small arms locker. I hit hard on my chest and slid half way to the hatch. Damn, the door was locked. I lost precious seconds fumbling for my keys. As the lock fell away I rushed through the hatch and grabbed an M-16 and two clips. I opened the large top drawer, grabbed a loaded 45, and stuck in my pocket as I turned to run the return course to the main deck. I ran through the passageways like a man possessed. I shouted, "Make a hole, make a hole," as I ran by several confused sailors with a gun in my hand.

I entered the main deck to the sound of small arms fire. Bullets were hitting and ricocheting all through the steel rigging above me. I knew the angry man below me on the junk was firing on our ship. What the hell is going on?" I asked myself. The



decks were empty and the only return fire from our ship was our old XO who was shooting into the water with

his little 22 rifle, which he had brought from home. The junk was too close to our ship so he did not have a chance of hitting anything. I could tell that the man below was about fifty feet forward of where I stood. With my heart pounding in my throat I quickly moved forward and climbed a ladder to the O1 level. I was about eight feet from the side of the ship and there was only a chain railing there with no protection. I knew I was directly above the little boat and the mad man. Almost to prove a point, a bullet struck the overhead above me and ricocheted off the bulkhead, just missing me.

I knew what I had to do. It seemed to take a lifetime for me to crawl the short distance to the side. I loaded my weapon and set it for auto fire. In one quick movement I pulled myself over the side just enough to be able to point my M-16 straight down. I remember seeing the beautiful little boat directly below me. I did not really aim. I just pointed down and pulled the trigger. I followed the line of bullets splintering the painted wood of the junk from bow to stern. The man fell or jumped into the sea and disappeared into the clear water. Then all was quiet.

Continued on Page 7

Colorful Junks**cont'd from page 6**

The big diesel engines of our ship stopped and I could hear someone shouting, "Hold your fire, hold your fire!"

The junk turned slowly away in a big circle as our big war ship slowly glided to a stop. An order was given to lower a boat over the side. I jumped in the boat just as it went over the railing. My heart pounding in my chest was all I heard until our open boat hit the water. A boson quickly started the engine and set a course directly at the colorful junk at three knots. The men all began to ask questions at once. "What the hell was that? Who is on that boat? When do we fire? Why would anyone attack a big warship in a tiny junk?"

We all pointed our guns at the little colorful boat in a turquoise sea. "Hold your fire, Hold your fire," was all that was spoken aboard. The boat moved slowly in a big circle as we slowly approached. My dream continued as we came along side. I could hear a woman crying, no, wailing. "Hold your fire." Several of us jumped aboard without a word. The woman's cries were unreal. Was this really happening? I pulled back a drape and discovered to my horror a young woman holding a lifeless baby. The woman's white blouse was covered with red blood. Seeing me she hid her head and began to scream even louder. In that instant, I realized that this was my doing. I had fired the bullets that ripped through the boat and into this little baby. "Oh my God!"

Two sailors pushed by me and grabbed the woman and her dead child. She made sounds that could not be made by a human being - sounds that haunt me to this day. One of the sailors carried her into our boat while she held on to her little child. He screamed at her, "Shut up you fucking Gook!" The other sailors tore the boat apart and found a huge stash of weapons and crates with Chinese characters.

The young woman cried all the way back to our ship. I saw our ship through her eyes, a huge gray monster trespassing in her beautiful blue water. The deck crew had lowered a big ladder with a floating platform by the time we were along side. The woman was carried up the ladder kicking and screaming. I never saw her again. Once on board I was ordered to general quarters, which meant that I manned one of our three-inch guns. We got underway and moved off about five hundred yards from the beautiful, little painted junk. We were ordered to blow it out of the water. After several misses, we hit the little boat with a direct hit and it disappeared in a great fireball.

I was an art student when I was called away to that terrible war. My biggest fear was not that I would be killed but that I might kill someone else.

The Viet Cong were not my enemies. I cannot erase the image of that young woman holding her dead child in her arms from my mind. I hear her screams to this day. Her little baby comes to me in my dreams and comforts me and I am attempting to find a deeper meaning to what happened in hopes that I might heal the wound of the colorful painted junk.

Gather All Of Yourself

Ray Ortiz

You have crossed great waters
searching for frontiers up ahead,
longing for truth in the mists.

Once on land, you walked for years
across landscapes of loss and hope,
tapestries woven by darkness and light.

The colors of your dreams
have banded together into a rainbow,
into a diploma of light waiting for you.

So pause and gather all of yourself
before kissing the sweet stone of faith
at the shrine on top of the hill.

You are on the holy ground of happiness;
soft, grateful, whispering greetings
in quiet celebration of your arrival.

© May 2001
Ray Ortiz
Rocky Mountains

Check It Out
The New Mexico Men's Wellness
2003 Spring Retreat
See page 12

Freedom Rides the Rules Into Wide Open Spaces

cont'd from Page 1

What else was unique? Well, Howard was announced as Fall 2003 co-leader only a few minutes after the talking stick (for leading the Summer Gathering) was gathered up by Charles Fisher. Sir Charles was unable to attend the wilderness weekend in July and, except for a tentative, conditional pick up by a summer attendee (agreeably relinquished), the summer stick was announced free for the claiming by 2002 leader Leo Klinker. Charles, whose interest had been hinted, did not hesitate.

More uniqueness? In order for the open schedule to work without the constraints of the ranch's inflexible meal times, men prepared their own brown bag lunches after breakfast, leaving them unimpeded to construct their day from nearly 20 newly-minted activities between about 10:45 am and 4 PM. Another long-standing tradition went down for lack of a champion: the Saturday banquet – complete with Men's Wellness food and cooks, the rounds of toasts, the Sword Ceremony, and the Friar's Club-style banter that lubricated the lungs for Saturday Night Live – devolved to spaghetti and sauce, yesterday's green beans almondine, and the company of strangers.

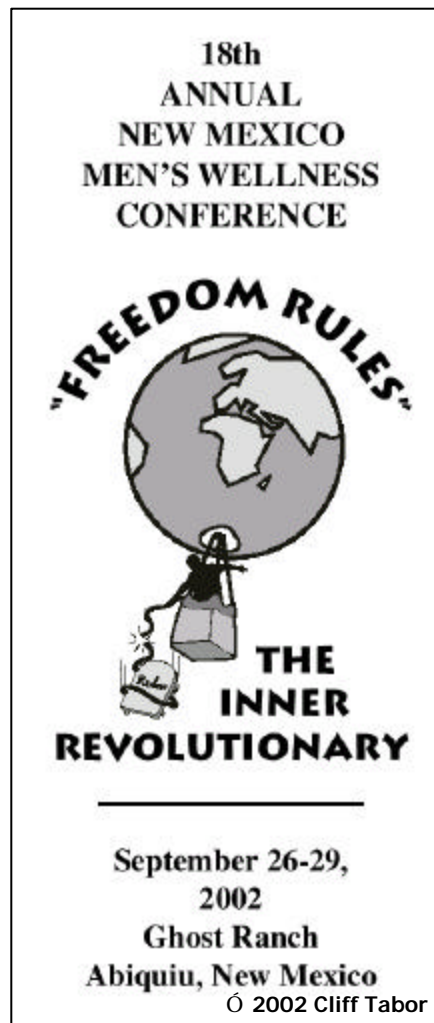
And, while controversy still reigns, the Passing of the Sword was held as a separate event at the New Arts patio several minutes up the path from the dining hall. It was the most fully realized and intelligible ceremony for the Sword I have seen, created out of the stewardship narratives of six of its eight keepers, from Gordon Mustain, who presented it as a ritual object of Warrior spirit to Victor LaCerva, through Kurt Faust, who has now passed it on to Lon Rankin. (In between were keepers Michael Hopp, Manish Gaur, Benjamin Miller, David Beckley and Larry Donohue. Benjamin and Larry were not present.) Many accounts were fascinating, but regardless of its mixed reviews as a symbol, I would suggest you seek out Michael Hopp's poignant yet nearly hilarious tale of re-encounter with the Sword while under Kurt's keeping.

Another element missing this year was the ritual hike to Box Canyon for closing ceremonies. Due to threatening weather, closing ceremonies were held in lower pavilion. From a practical standpoint, there was a lot more time to conduct the ceremony and no long walk back. For esthetic purposes, it could have been moved out of doors close to the shelter of the pavilion. No one, I included, suggested that. The threat ultimately did not produce rain at the pavilion, but

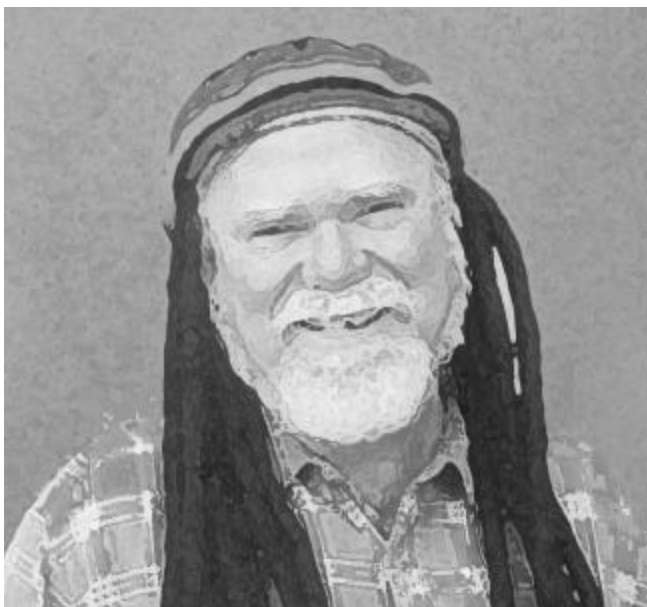
earlier fronts had washed out a dawn sweat lodge and had seriously dampened the gathering for the Sword the night before.

The ceremonies included presentation of a new talking stick, said to be richly fueled with feminine energy, crafted by Ross LewAllen (Santa Fe based Shaman and artist), and a southern migration of the refurbished Wellness Conference Drum to Bob Hollingworth's group in Albuquerque. Earlier in the conference, Sword keeper Kurt Faust gave the conference a talking stick, which he had made. Counting the brief appearance of the summer stick, four talking sticks were wielded in this year's circle. Add to that a walking stick, which was presented as a gift to Steve from Barry (who called it a "stahf" to the general amusement of the differently accented) and the potential ratio of walk to talk may have been skewed irreparably. Also present were 13 former conference leaders who blessed the Singing Bowl on its way to Barry McIntosh. Each shared an aspect of the Bowl relevant to the conference he had led, weaving a marvelous tapestry of the uniqueness, continuity, and evolution of this event.

This overview in no way captures the scope, spirit, and energy brought this early fall to Ghost Ranch. The conference was rich in the kinds of moments that can only occur in the circle of men who gather there. And, for me, it delivered courageously on the promise of its theme in an experiential way that was spontaneous, creative, transformative, and fun.



2002 Fall Conference Pictures



Photographs courtesy of Joseph Woods © 2002 Joseph Woods

Brain Surgery, The Bad, Good, and Ugly

René Dominguez

As some of you may know, I had the opportunity to spend a few days in University of New Mexico Hospital having my skull opened.

A week or so before the Memorial Day Weekend this year I had a fall between two mobile containers used for recycling here in the Jemez Mountains. I didn't think it was a big deal, a little blood from a few scratches, and bruises. Little did I know that I also must have hit my head. That ended up being the start of a very unusual episode in my life.

First the "BAD". A few weeks after the "recycling fall", I started to fall down and became increasingly unable to right myself. My wife Bernadette became concerned and took me to The University Hospital's Emergency Room. I recall giving her some grief for dropping me off outside of the Hospital and asking me to wait until she parked the car and got a wheelchair. A wheelchair, what was going on? That is about when my memory stopped. I vaguely recall being taken to X-Ray wondering where I was being taken and why was I being shoved here and there. Well, best as I have been able to reconstruct, I was taken to have a cat scan and as a result it was determined that I had a sub-dural hemotoma and needed surgery to relieve the pressure on my brain. As this was the Memorial Day weekend, there was a lot of activity at the hospital including the landing of helicopters coming in with trauma cases. My surgery was delayed as a result of holiday accidents. I understand that I finally got into surgery around 7:00 PM. The neurosurgeon opened up my skull, relieved the pressure, put a drain in place, and sewed me back up. The next I recall was waking up in Neurosurgical Intensive Care.

The "GOOD" came in many forms, my wife, Bernadette was supported by our friends in the Jemez and friends from NM Men's Wellness making the waiting for surgery tolerable. Bernadette received calls of support from friends in the Jemez as well as visits from them. Similarly, there were members of the NM Men's Wellness community who stayed with my wife as I was in surgery. All of our children flew in from around the country providing comfort to Bernadette and me. After awakening from surgery, I saw one of the members of our Wellness community waiting to see how I was doing. This was a surprise, as I did not expect to see him there, what a wonderful gift! There was a lot of support from Men's Wellness that has substantiated my belief that this is one of the best support systems men have here in New Mexico. My family is my best support system and one I can always call and depend upon. The prayers and good thoughts sent my way during this time, I believe enabled me to make a speedy recovery. I thank all of you who provided this wonderful support. In thinking about NM Men's Wellness, I was struck by Mike Milstein's words in a previous issue of Man Alive, **"What the New Mexico Men's Wellness movement has done over the years, without much conscious intent, is to provide its members and their loved ones with an alternative and extremely effective community of support. Imagine what we can do if we become more conscious and purposeful about the power and potential of our community?"**

Now for the "UGLY". Brain Surgery, in New Mexico is only done in one place as there are only three Neurosurgeons in all of New Mexico (FACT). The University of New Mexico Hospital is the only place where Neurosurgeons operate, so I was very fortunate that my wife (by the way she has a background in nursing) knew that something was amiss and took me to the right place. Working on the brain is a unique experience. When I came out of surgery and was somewhat coherent, I started to have some very interesting hallucinations and some rather bizarre ones. As I alluded to earlier, Bernadette had let our children know what was happening and, they were there almost immediately. That was not a hallucination, but believing that one of our dogs was there and that my grandson was there were hallucinations. As my family arrived, I cautioned them to get into the Jemez (where we lived) because it was safer there than where I was in the hospital in Albuquerque. Then the real bizarre. The ICU room somehow became a room in a person's home at night, in fact a room in one of the nurse's home where she and her family were tutoring one of her children. Wait it gets better. After I was moved to another unit in the hospital, the nighttime converted this ward into a video store where all sorts of activity took place to include numbers booking. WOW, I was glad to get out of there. I made record time in recovering being in the hospital only four days and had the burning desire to get back to the Jemez. The most wonderful experiences while in the hospital were having my family there and having many visits from members of the NM Men's Wellness community and the visits, concern and prayers of many others in the Jemez and around the country.

Continued on Page 11

Brain Surgery, The Bad, Good and Ugly**cont'd from Page 10**

My recovery was fast from a physical standpoint and my energy level has now returned. Most importantly it has taught me a lesson. A wise person once said that we are given lessons to learn in this lifetime and they are presented in the form of a knife. It is our option to take the knife (lesson) using the handle or the blade. This experience was definitely one that I took with the blade. The lesson I have to learn, by the way, is one of learning to balance my life. A lesson that I have been working on for what seems like forever. As some of you may know I am a type "A" person that is going, going, going all the time. This experience has made me slow down a bit and smell the flowers of life. The other experience that I had from the NM Men's Wellness is the REAL SENSE OF COMMUNITY that we have in this Men's Group. As is said in Men's Wellness, **Personal Growth and Development is something you have to do yourself but you don't have to do it alone.** Many thanks to my family and to the NM Men's Wellness Community.

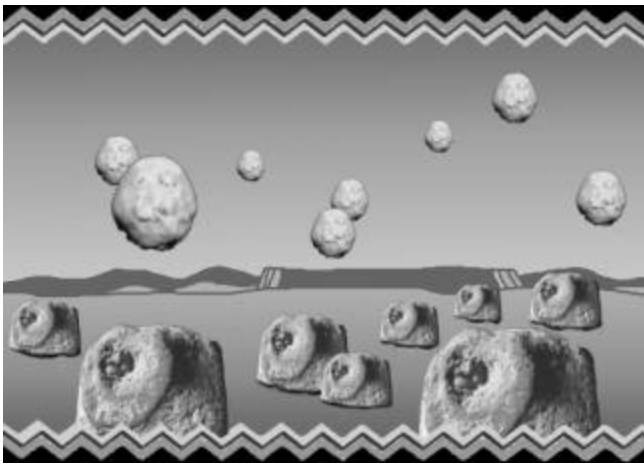
The Bounty of Place and Attentive Intention

Lawrence Cook

**"I am here and so are you.
Come to me with open heart and soul;
I will present you with yet another sign –
The bounty of place & attentive attention."**

A bulging disc signaled HALT in August of '99.
Come conference time, walking haltingly, but walking
with will and staff,
An intention surfaced to be guided blindfolded.
Come Saturday afternoon, Casey and Avi called to do
just that.

Our group assembled under that wonderful
spreading tree
And processed to the arroyo across the field --
To prepare ourselves to follow the beat of the drum
Without sight, but with internal and external guidance
Of pulsing sound and moving touch
of my probing cane.
Brush and sand, air and hand responding
to the resounding resolve of "I can do this!"
And I did!



© 2002 Joseph Woods

An accomplishment of heart pounding acclimation
Was certified by the presentation of a most astounding
heart rock.

The rock was "just there" (as was the experience).
As I prepared to re-dress, this openness appeared,
Accepting my request to join me on my journey.
And she has!

In September of the year of '02,
I and that Rock returned to that Arroyo
Ready to give and receive once again.

In an affinity group, yearning for contact with Ghost
Ranch power,
We took ourselves, the "Vulva Rock"
(as she has become to be known)
And intentions to reconnect with Spirit,
As the drum beat once again pronounced the heartfelt
sound of,

**"I am here and so are you.
Come to me with open heart and soul;
I will present you with yet another sign --
The bounty of place and attentive intention."**

This time, it was not I who initially received the Gift,
But group member, Don Mac
Who presented me with an "egg rock"
Formed by forces of water and earth.

Fertile fixation on presence and present
Produced once again a manifestation of beautiful
bounty;

For those who come and seek,
Indeed, they will find and be found!
Follow the sound of heart and seed; they will produce!
And they do!

Back To Life

Ray Ortiz

A young woman falls by the road
in a lonely accident
at night, in winter.
Her heart is still,
her breath frozen
as the snow on which she lays.
An angel comes to her,
dressed as a passerby,
borrows a breath from God
and blows it lovingly
onto the brightening embers of her life.
Her grateful eyes open
to the still darkness
which eventually gives way
to the gentle light of dawn.

A man walks aimlessly in a forest
even though he is almost dead.
He heads towards an array of cliffs,
invisible to him in his obsessions.
He cannot smell the arrival of the sea,
is unable to feel the ebb of his heart,
is deaf to the pleas of his soul.
He stops, lays down to rest,
his own tiredness saving him
by bringing him his dreams.
There he sees God
as a generous stranger
who asks discerning questions
which are answered by his own light
as it illuminates the cliffs along his way.

© Ray Ortiz

2003 Spring Retreat Taking, Giving and Receiving

René Dominguez

The **2003 Spring Retreat's** theme is Taking, Giving, and Receiving. The retreat will be held at the Hummingbird Music Camp just north of Jemez Springs, in the heart of the Jemez Valley. This year's retreat will be experiential with a focus as identified above. Bring your ideas on how to focus or not to focus on this topic. The retreat will start promptly at 4PM Friday April 4th and continue through Sunday April 6th until 4PM. For additional information contact René Dominguez (505) 834-9802 renedom@aol.com or Bob McMain (505) 248-1001 rdrunr@zianet.com or Cliff Taber (505) 281-1166 clifftaber@aol.com.

Fear of Freedom

Philip Green

*I am adrift in this beleaguered body
With wringing hands, questioning,
Wondering what is happening to me
Knowing all along I am the happening.*

*But what I know is not enough
To ease the angst, calm the chaos
Running rampant in my huge head,
Wrapped round a thinking machine, full throttle,*

*Serving a master hiding deep, below
Not seen and only slightly known,
Composed of shards from broken dreams,
The slimy pitch of people who put me down.*

*Why can't I quiet this ugly beast?
Charge forward, shoulders back, head high?
Still the mad thinking machine,
Soak in the immaculate beauty of my life?*

*What do I know of my emotional machinations?
Faint glimpses, narrow views, just over my horizon,
Hint of one who fears the risk of being free
Yet bemoaning the baggage that bounds me.*

*The "Aha!" is this. My baggage is my buoyancy.
Without it I fear the free fall that follows,
Stripped of my bundles of justifications, rationalizations,
Through a wide open space of new beginnings.*

*I have prided myself in setting a course,
making it happen.
I do what I want to do,.....and am doing it now.
Just what I want, ...to wallow and wane.
My true "want" shrouded in fear of freedom.*

*Let the peeling begin. Grant me the strength
To shed my ruddy and ruckled, but comfortable shell
You can help, ...and you,and you, fellow travelers.
Help me mold majestic wings
from my timid new intentions.*

© September 2002, Philip Green

We Need YOU

The Summer Gathering 2003 is calling
See page 13

Open Letter 2002 Fall Conference

Harold Littlebird

Few words can accurately and sufficiently describe the feelings I came away with from this year's conference at Ghost Ranch. I was feeling exhausted, rattled, alone, and scared on Thursday afternoon when I first arrived. Then trusting that it would change, I began to feel recharged with hugs and smiles. I was overwhelmingly gifted, lifted and thoroughly blessed from the deep eyes of caring men throughout the entire weekend, until when my son and I left, literally, floating on love, on Sunday. I hope these words of simple gratitude find places in your loving hearts.

To the men who participated in the early morning sweat lodge on Friday – blessings and thank you for your encouraging prayers.

To everyone who helped support my desperate financial situation, thank you sincerely for your love, generosity, and care.

For those of you who helped my cause with your purchase of my work – thank you for listening to my stories in clay and may your purchases bring you delight for years.

Being an artist for as long as I can remember brings an overflow of gratitude into my life and offers me a place of devoted reflection, and of course a certain sadness, as I learn to “let go” of my work and craft that has sustained, nourished and in countless ways blessed me and my families for over thirty years. These hands of mine, that have creatively known clay for so long, have a hard time wanting to do anything else. Consequently, I am researching acupuncture and other possibilities to relieve the constant aching of arthritis that's beginning to take away my ability to work with clay, especially, in this fast approaching cold winter season.

One thing remains constant, even from my often times, treacherous assent from the depths of my sorrow, ebb and flow fear, and nagging doubts of myself. I know I can always ask for help and it will come. Any of us can and should. Our Lord and keeper is merciful, with open arms always extended. I said in the talking circle on Saturday morning, “We are in the proper place in the proper time, and we have the will to ask for help, especially, when it feels most devastating and unreachable.” I asked and gratefully received more than I could possibly have imagined.

I thank you all most humbly for helping me accept this breakthrough, and set my mind and heart soaring again into a wider expanding heart-opening. May our Creator find and bless each one of you along the Path!

Gracious blessings and peace, Harold Littlebird



THE SUMMER GATHERING 2003 NEEDS

YOU

Charles Fisher

Only from the alliance of the one, working with and through the other[s], are great things born.

Antoine Saint-Exupery

As you probably know, determining who will be responsible for coordinating the NMMW Summer Gathering bears no resemblance to the orderly succession of leadership of the Fall Conference. One of several processes has been self-selection. But the 2002 Gathering ended without *anyone* picking up the talking stick.

In case you have not heard, giddy with the encouragement (or perhaps siren songs) of my distinguished brethren, I picked up the talking stick at the recent Fall Conference. So I now have the privilege and honor of coordinating the Summer Gathering in 2003.

But I cannot, and do not want to, do it alone. As Mark Twain said: ***“To get the full value of joy you must have somebody to divide it with.”*** The theme will be announced later. But, in the meantime, I need and welcome your support on the Organizing Committee, which will start meeting in about March. Remember this is YOUR Gathering.

I want to thank the many who indicated their willingness to help at the Fall Conference. And I want to invite anyone else who is interested in helping, in any way, to please contact me:

CHARLES FISHER

505 247 4872 (o)

505 292 6829 (h)

cfisher@abqadvocates.com

DIRECTORY OF CONTACTS FOR MEN'S GROUPS IN NEW MEXICO

(This directory is a work in progress. Please send corrections, additions and subtractions to GaryMcFar@aol.com. Let's get *every* men's group in New Mexico represented on this list. It will provide a rapid means of disseminating information pertinent to Men's Wellness among groups. Also, if you are interested in joining a group, you can use this list to find a group in your area and then contact the representative to find out if the group is open or not, it's exact meeting place and if it meets your needs. Gary McFarland.)

Northern Region

Max August -- Santa Fe -- 820-1248
maxaugust@earthlink.net Intergenerational group and the "Wounded and Clueless" group

Rob Hawley -- Taos -- 758-8176
rob@taosherb.com -- New Warriors group

Victor LaCerva -- Santa Fe -- 983-4233
victorl@doh.state.nm.us

Robert Spitz -- Santa Fe -- 988-3541
robtspitz@aol.com -- Wednesday Lunch Group

Paul Zelizer -- Taos -- 758-9066
mrc@laplaza.org -- Men's Resource Center of Northern New Mexico

Central Region

Dave Breault -- Albuquerque -- 266-9233
dbreault@lobo.net

David Cain -- Albuquerque -- 346-8157
wcain@email.usps.gov

Michael Hamilton -- Sandia Park
eagle_call@msn.com

Bob Hollingsworth -- Albuquerque -- 294-4908
hollingsbooks@thuntek.net
Writer's group and a regular group

Gary McFarland -- Sandia Park -- 281-9477
garymcfar@aol.com

Tim Murphy -- Mountainair -- 847-1850

David Robertson -- Albuquerque -- 345-0457
secretgardensdkr@aol.com

Pat Sauer -- Albuquerque -- 299-6749
psauer@accessinn.com

René Dominguez -- NW Albuquerque -- 834-9802
renedom@aol.com

Central Region (cont'd)

Sal Treppiedi -- Albuquerque -- 275-7258
salteaches@yahoo.com

Hartley Wess -- Albuquerque -- 243-6888
hartwess@excite.com

Southern Region

Neal Apple -- Silver City
apple-allen@gilanet.com

Tony Harris -- Las Cruces -- 524-1899
antix@zianet.com



Websites of interest to Men:

www.menshealthnetwork.org
www.malemenopause.com
www.vix.com/menmag
www.menstuff.org
www.themenscenter.com
www.menalive.com
www.nmmenswellness.org
communities.msn.com/nmmenswellness

NM Men's Wellness

Calendar of Events

Brown Bag Lunch – Santa Fe: Wednesdays noon – 1:30 p.m. at the Men's Center (541/2 E. San Francisco 2nd floor (just off the plaza, enter the door to the right of the Hagen-Daz store). The "**BROWN BAG LUNCH**" is a "come one, come all" men's lunch group that has been meeting in Santa Fe for the past eleven years. A place to share from the heart and be listened to from the heart.

Men's Lunch Group - Albuquerque: Fridays 11:45 -12:45 p.m., at the Father and Family Center, 3214 Purdue Pl., N.E. (one block north of Central, west off Wellesley). A drop-in men's support group for men to talk about concerns and issues in their lives. Contact **Dave Breault** (505) 266-9233.

Men's Cross-Country Ski Weekend: Thursday February 20 through Monday February 24. Contact: **Lawrence Cook** 1503 Lucyle Pl. N.W., Albuquerque. N.M. 87114-8819; Telephone:(505) 898-2206 email: rlcook@rt66.com.

Men's Wellness Adopt-A-Highway Project: Saturday, March 8, 2003. Meet at Exit 234, I25 and Tramway, at 9:15 a.m. park on northwest corner, across from the Phillips 66 station. Contact: **Bob McMain** at 248-1001 OR **David Johnson** at 266-9960, or to be added to the project email list email rdrunr@zianet.com

New Mexico Men's Wellness Spring Retreat: Friday April 4th 4PM through Sunday April 6th 4PM - Hummingbird Music Camp; Jemez Springs, NM; Theme: "**TAKING, GIVING AND RECEIVING**"; Contact: **René Dominguez** (505) 834-9802 email: renedom@aol.com; OR **Bob Mc Main** (505) 248-1001 email; rdrunr@zianet.com ; OR **Cliff Taber** (505) (505) 281-1166 / email: clifftaber@aol.com.

New Mexico Men's Wellness 2003 Summer Gathering: Dates and Topic TBD. Organizing meeting starts in March. Contact: **Charles Fisher** (505) 247-4872 (office) or (505) 292-6829 (home) email: cfisher@abqadvocates.com.

New Mexico Men's Wellness 2003 Fall Conference: Starting @ 7 PM Thursday, October 2nd ending @ 12 noon to 1 PM Sunday, October 5, 2003. - Ghost Ranch; Abiquiu, NM; Theme: TBA; Contact: **Barry McIntosh** (505) 474-5579 email: kamac@cybermesa.com OR **Howard Kaplan** (505) 856-7185.

Summer Conference 2002 cont'd from Page 2

It took courage and imagination for Leo to pick up the reigns of leadership at the 2001 Summer Conference and to choose sexuality for the theme of the next conference. Despite its core influence on human behavior, sex had never been the major focus of a Men's Wellness Conference in New Mexico. Of course the topic had been touched upon at various conference workshops-how could it not be? In fact, it is the major role of retired, former conference directors-other than the ceremonial opening of men's centers around the state--to see to it that sex, in some mode or fashion, is included in the program of every conference. A lesson was learned years ago when a fall conference actually left sex out of the agenda. On the second day of this conference, shortly after Rick Grimes mooned the entire gathering while calling us a bunch of assholes-an annual performance for Rick who was working on relationship issues-the conference exploded with pent-up libido like a steam radiator splitting its sides. One fellow, for example, proclaimed his serious disappointment, said that he had come to the conference in order to get beyond typical male smut and locker-room humor. Some of us were surprised, and even pleased, that the usual harangue of jokes and wise-quacks had even risen to the rather high standard of locker-rooms. Nevertheless, it took an unscheduled, special session after dinner and an appearance by Harold Littlebird as Coyote performing the time-honored Banana Ceremony to restore peace and harmony. A cautionary tale for the future.

Despite the fact that the exploration of the mysterious core and the ragged fringes of male sexuality at the Summer Conference 2002 led to pledges of complete celibacy, cold showers, and monastic retreats, the multiple petals of passion were unfolded in various workshops. Eventually men shared the wondrous and spiritual dimensions of sexuality in addition to the scars and wounds. One man torched envy in us all as he described flagrant love-making on the afternoon of his leave-taking for the conference. Another, who evidently embraced the Freudian idea of polymorphous sexuality, spoke about making love to his companion as they walked hand-in-hand along the Oregon seacoast. There were tantric testimonials, accolades for lust, confessions of confusion and addiction, and the curious identification of orgasm with mystical ecstasy and god or God. It beats [sic] a higher power in the clouds somewhere. And over all, guiding this powerful conference, was the patient and flexible spirit of its leader, Leo Klinker.

TAKING, GIVING AND RECEIVING

2nd Annual New Mexico Men's Wellness Spring Retreat
April 4th through April 6th, 2003
Hummingbird Music Camp; Jemez Springs, NM

REGISTRATION FORM

(Please Print Legibly)

Name _____ Day Phone () - _____

Address _____ Evening Phone () - _____

City/ST/Zip _____ e-mail address _____

Please Print e-mail address Carefully & Legibly

PLAN

Registration fee*:

\$ 125

Scholarship Requested \$65 (please include written request) ()

Scholarship Donation (please be generous!) _____

Total Enclosed = \$ _____

NOW

[] *Check here if this is your first time at this retreat.*

*Registration fee of \$125 includes retreat, room & board, and subscription to Man, Alive!

Please register early! Cancellations by March 1 receive a full refund. By March 15, \$65; after that no refunds.

Send registration and check to New Mexico Men's Wellness, P.O. Box 4732, Santa Fe, NM 87502.

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Santa Fe, NM 87502

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