



# Institute of World Culture

## IWC November 2007 Newsletter

*"The Way of the Creative works through change and transformation, so that each thing receives its true nature and destiny and comes into permanent accord with the Great Harmony."*  
I Ching

### **Transforming Environmental Policy: Carl Pope Speaks at IWC**

Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, is skiing an avalanche. In an address to the Institute of World Culture, he invited the rest of us to strap on our skis, because the avalanche is coming whether we are ready or not.

The Institute of World Culture was fortunate to host an evening with Mr. Pope, Wednesday, October 24, on the theme of *Transforming Environmental Policy: Private Conscience and Public Choice*. Mr. Pope has been active in the environmental movement since its inception in the early 1970's. After the oil spill in the Santa Barbara Channel, the demise of the brown pelican, and other alarming indicators of the destructive power of modern industrial life, concerned individuals like Mr. Pope united and launched a movement to educate, explore and reform our treatment of the natural environment. Unsure at first as to what was to be done and how, the movement eventually settled, by 1975 according to Mr. Pope, into a predictable *modus operandi*. The job of 20<sup>th</sup> century environmentalism *was to constrain and clean-up after an existing 20<sup>th</sup> Century economic order*. To that end, the movement can celebrate its successes: no repeat of the oil spill in Santa Barbara Channel; the come-back of the brown pelican; improvement in urban air quality; the reduction of lead in the bodies of children in Oakland, etc. *(Continued below.)*

## **COMING EVENTS**



### **Fearlessness on the Path of Nonviolence**

**Film Screening: Saturday, November 10, 2007**

**7:30 – 9:00 pm**

**Concord House, 1407 Chapala Street**

A digital recording will be shown of the January 2007 keynote lecture given by Professor Nandini Iyer in observance of the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Discussion will follow.



## **Reflections on Transformation: What Have We Learned?**

**Seminar: Saturday, November 17, 2007**

**2:00 – 5:00 pm**

**Concord House, 1407 Chapala Street**

Join members and guests in a roundtable discussion of what we have learned from various programs on this year's theme, *Fearless Transformation for the Future*.

Thoughtful contributions on all types and levels of

transformation are welcome to supplement the three lead-

off presentations. For information, please contact Carolyn Dorrance at 805/ 967-1005 or [Carolyn@worldculture.org](mailto:Carolyn@worldculture.org).

### ***Planning Ahead - Save the Date:***

**Lecture: Porphyry's View of the Ascent of the Soul**

**December 1, 2007, 7:30 – 9:15 pm**

**Speaker: Judy Saltzman, Ph.D.**

For the Neo-Platonists Plotinus and Porphyry, philosophy was a spiritual discipline and religion was symbolic of a higher reality. In the descent into matter, the soul has lost its connection to the Gods. Porphyry in his *Letter To His Wife Marcella* clearly explains the ethical and contemplative virtues required for ascent, reconnection and transformation of the human soul. Dr. Saltzman will explain why Neo-Platonism is still a relevant teaching in the 21st Century.

### **Study Groups**

**8:00 – 9:30 pm, Concord House**

**1407 Chapala St., Santa Barbara**

### **Stories and Poems of Transformations**

**Thursday, November 8**

**Rumi's Poetry**

Celebration of the 800<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the Sufi poet, Jelaluddin Rumi, will continue with poetry readings and conversation. Contact Joseph Miller at 967-7263 or [daylight3@cox.net](mailto:daylight3@cox.net) for more information.

## Inspirational Themes in Contemporary Music

Thursday, November 29

### Cat Stevens on the Spiritual Path

Dialogue and live musical interpretations explore the theme of the spiritual path in the work of singer-songwriter, Cat Stevens. Contact Gerry Kiffe at 499-9689 or [gerry@gardensoft.com](mailto:gerry@gardensoft.com) for more information.

For more information, please see the IWC webpage:

<http://worldculture.org>.

### ***Transforming Environmental Policy: Carl Pope Speaks at IWC***

*(cont.)*

The problem, Mr. Pope told a capacity audience on Wednesday night, is that this form of environmentalism is insufficient to the needs of tomorrow. *Constrain and clean-up* did not *reform* the economic order to exemplify more sustainable policies and practices. The way we do things now is basically the same as it was 30 years ago. That is a failing we must all now face. While veteran environmentalists have witnessed this steady state of damage control for 30 years, future environmentalists will not have that luxury of incremental progress. One thing we can be sure of, said Mr. Pope, is that the economic order of 2037 will look nothing like today's order. He gave three reasons.

First, growth in material consumption. In the past, only a minority of the planet's population had mastered "the trick of indefinitely sustained growth." Within a decade, one-half to two-thirds of the earth's human inhabitants will be attempting to live a modern life of high consumption, and thereby will contribute to an unprecedented and unsustainable level of material consumption.

Second, there are no remaining biological or ecological frontiers to exploit for this sustained growth.

Third, climate instability and unpredictability. We can no longer assume that "climates and places have fixed relationships." Going to New York in the fall? Thinking of packing a sweater? Not this year – bring a swim suit suggested Mr. Pope.

The environmental movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century kept problems at bay as if a finger in a dyke could prevent environmental disasters. The problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require a total rethinking of environmental policy. "We have to rethink the way we think about our problems, not just how we solve them – and, frankly, that is hard to do," Mr. Pope predicted. In the past, environmental policy was used to slow down bad things; now that focus must be to speed up good things. One thing is for sure, a new order is coming. "It may be much worse, or

much better; I don't know how it will look," he admitted. Rejecting a wait and see what to do approach, Mr. Pope warned that it would be grossly insufficient just to let 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial practices die a slow death, for industrialized economies are like a "very dangerous thrashing beast" that can take most communities and ecological systems to a common grave.

Four guiding principles of basic environmentalism were offered as a foundation of a New Economic Order:

First: Own what you sell. Somewhere between 15 and 50 % of what we purchase is not owned by those selling it. Putting an end to this theft would be an excellent first step. Government needs to enforce the rules.

Second: Pay for what you take. For example if an industry wants to dump mercury waste in a body of water, they should pay for that opportunity and all that it entails.

Third: Insist on choosing what you purchase. Excessive regulation by government and lending institutions prevents the market from offering the consumer more sustainable, eco-friendly choices.

Fourth: The continued privatization of the "commons" should not be allowed.

The challenge today is to stimulate creativity and harness practice "in directions we don't understand, in ways we haven't explored, toward goals we very dimly see" and to do so quickly. This prospect has led Mr. Pope to a disarming confession. "I'm 62 years old, and I no longer know what I'm doing." Thus the metaphor of skiing an avalanche describes the present challenge. Changes are about to occur, with the precipitous thunder of tons of displaced snow down a mountainside. We are all on top of the mountain. It is a time of terror and exhilaration, a time to get buried, or a time for the most extraordinary ride imaginable.

Perhaps Mr. Pope is not entirely correct about such a ride being unprecedented. We might recall that John Muir, the first President of the Sierra Club, survived just such a ride on an avalanche. Muir wrote that "When the avalanche swaged and came to rest, I found myself on top of the crumpled pile without a bruise or scar. ...This flight in what might be called a milky way of snow-stars was the most spiritual and exhilarating of all the modes of motion I have ever experienced." Muir went on to accomplish remarkable success in establishing National Parks and wilderness areas. If we survive without injury and with such exhilaration it will be due in no small part to the hard work and intelligence of the Sierra Club, with extraordinary leadership from John Muir to Carl Pope and beyond.

Joseph Miller with contributions from Kirk Gradin

## In November

### Anniversaries

- 1<sup>st</sup> Benvenuto Cellini 1500
- 2<sup>nd</sup> George Boole 1815
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Vilhjalmur Stefanson 1879
- 4<sup>th</sup> Will Rogers 1879
- 6<sup>th</sup> Emperor Julian 331
- 8<sup>th</sup> John D. Scotus d. 1308  
Edmund Haley 1656
- 10<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther 1483  
Johann Schiller 1759
- 11<sup>th</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky 1821  
Maulana Azad 1888
- 12<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815  
August Rodin 1840
- 14<sup>th</sup> Albertus Magnus 1193  
Charles Lyell 1797  
Jawaharlal Nehru 1889
- 15<sup>th</sup> William Herschel 1738
- 17<sup>th</sup> Birth of Jesus acc. Clement of Alexandria  
Pico della Mirandola d. 1494
- 18<sup>th</sup> Jacob Boehme 1595
- 24<sup>th</sup> Benedict Spinoza 1632
- 28<sup>th</sup> William Blake 1757
- 30<sup>th</sup> Sir Philip Sidney 1554  
Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) 1835

### Observances

#### November

- 1<sup>st</sup> All Saints' Day  
Ancient Roman festival honoring Nike
- 2<sup>nd</sup> All Souls' Day
- 7<sup>th</sup> Observation of Mercury crossing the sun 1631
- 9<sup>th</sup> Deepavali (Hindu)
- 10<sup>th</sup> Invention of analytic geometry (Descartes) 1619
- 11<sup>th</sup> Discovery of cosmic rays
- 17<sup>th</sup> Suez Canal opened
- 19<sup>th</sup> Gettysburg Address (Lincoln)
- 20<sup>th</sup> Universal Children's Day

22<sup>nd</sup> Thanksgiving  
24th Guru Nanak's Birthday (Sikh)  
28th First meeting of Royal Society 1660

## **General Information**

### **Website**

Please check the Institute website for more information on the year's programs: <http://www.worldculture.org>

### **PRISM Online Community Calendar**

PRISM lists member-recommended community events of interest on the IWC website. If you wish to contribute a listing for a local or regional community event of interest, please e-mail [donna@worldculture.org](mailto:donna@worldculture.org) so it can be considered for inclusion in PRISM.

### **eNewsletter**

If you'd like to contribute to the eNewsletter, please send your ideas to [gerry@worldculture.org](mailto:gerry@worldculture.org) for consideration.

### **Membership and Donation Information**

Individual Membership \$35  
Individual Student Membership \$15  
Individual Supporting Membership \$70  
Individual Sustaining Membership \$350

To join the Institute, please e-mail [memberships@worldculture.org](mailto:memberships@worldculture.org).  
The Institute of World Culture is a non-profit 501(c)3 educational organization dedicated to the principles of universal fellowship and life-long learning. It relies solely on the support of its members. Donations to the Institute of World Culture are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible.

### **Volunteer Efforts**

The Institute offers its programs by means of voluntary efforts. Please contact [carolyn@worldculture.org](mailto:carolyn@worldculture.org) if you'd like to volunteer.

### **Institute of World Culture**

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