



Millers River Educational Cooperative

March 2009

Gurdjieff Bennett 2009 Practicum News and Event Announcements

In This Issue

Practicum News

Concert and Lecture

Quick Links

www.campcaravan.org

www.villageschool.to

www.gurdjieffbennettpracticum.org

Subscribe to Our Newsletter!

Dear friends

Six months from now, with your help, the 2009 Gurdjieff Bennett Practicum begins at Camp Caravan, in Royalston, Massachusetts. We're writing to ask for your referrals to "new" people who may be looking for a live-in program, and to invite your participation in two public events in Massachusetts this week, including a concert and lecture.

See you there!

Concert and Lecture this Week



This Thursday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. Elan Sicroff performs a piano concert of Gurdjieff and de

Hartmann music: *A Journey to Inaccessible Places*.

Friday, March 27, at 7:30 p.m. Ben Bennett delivers a talk on *Gurdjieff: Creating the Future*.

Both events take place at Clark University, the Fuller Music Room, Estabrook Hall, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA. View complete details at the [Camp Caravan website](#). As some of you may remember, more than thirty years ago, J.G. Bennett visited Clark University to deliver a talk announcing the opportunity to attend Sherborne House, and many of you first heard about the Work at that event.

Please share this announcement with all who may be interested.

Gurdjieff Bennett Practicum 2009 Updates

The 2009 Practicum runs September 5 through Dec 1, 2009. Full information is available at [the Gurdjieff Bennett Practicum website](#). Additional updates may be found at the new [Camp Caravan website](#). If you would like to recommend someone for the program, please get in touch with [Ben Bennett](#), the Practicum Registrar.

Consider linking both of these sites to your own, and note that the new Camp Caravan site is in testing phase and we would appreciate your comments and corrections. Images and more content are still being added, so check back often.

Practicum News

From George Bennett

Preparations for the practicum are moving into higher gear, and the event itself is pulling us towards it. We have sent formal applications to six candidates and a dozen others have made initial inquiries. Emails have gone to nearly a thousand people letting them know that the practicum is available. As we talk to people around the world it is clear that there are very few opportunities for people to work together for an extended period. Those of us who are more closely involved in this event feel it is a necessary task and we hope that you are able to support in any way you can.

Camp Caravan Building News

"We're exactly where we ought to be", says Walt Thornton, group member who oversees the building projects. This is not to say that completing the project seems to be truly possible, but we move forward with hope and faith, "as if". The three cottages are ready to house seminar and practicum attendees, and rough wiring and plumbing in the "Girls Dorm" is complete, and ready for insulation and sheetrock installation. This project will take us through Practical Work on the buildings over the spring and summer. The main house kitchen and pantry projects are complete and ready for the seminar and practicum.

Thank you to all who provided good will, labor and financial help to make it possible to reach this stage. Your contributions are very much appreciated, and needed to complete essential major projects, such as the installation of the septic system.

Our new website has an online donation function and as always, your contributions are fully tax-deductible. Please consider visiting and helping with the preparation of Camp Caravan for the 2009 practicum. It would be wonderful to have you join us.

Millers River Educational Cooperative Event Schedule



Please note NEW TIMES and schedule for Work events

As always, the weekend group meetings at Camp Caravan begin at 7:30 a.m. and generally go until about 12:30. WORK DAYS usually end at about 5:00 p.m.

A new monthly meeting takes place Tuesday, April 7 at 7:30 p.m.

Please check each month for the WORK DAY schedule, which generally takes place on the second Saturday of each month, but moves to the third Saturday for the month of April

In addition, for those interested in a Morris Dance team for young and old, practices take place on Wednesday evenings, 5:30 p.m. at the North Orange Church. Contact [Rick Walton](#) for details.

March/April Schedule

Wed, Mar 25, M.I.T. Group meeting

Wed, Mar 25, Morris Dance practice

Thur, Mar 26 Journey to Inaccessible Places, piano concert at Clark U.

Fri, Mar 27 Gurdieff: Creating the Future, lecture at Clark U.

Sun, Mar 29 Weekly group meeting

Wed, Apr 1, M.I.T. group meeting

Wed, Apr 1 Morris Dance practice

Thur, Apr 2, Warwick group meeting

Tues, Apr 7, Monthly group meeting, 7:30 p.m.
Wed Apr 8, M.I.T. Group meeting
Wed, Apr 8, Morris Dance practice
Thur, Apr 9, Warwick Group meeting
Sun, Apr 12 NO MEETINGS
Wed, Apr 15 M.I.T. group meeting
Wed, Apr 15 Morris Dance practice
Thurs, Apr 16, Warwick group meeting
Sat, Apr 18 WORK DAY (moved to third weekend to accomodate Easter)

Save the Dates

Sun, May 10 Concert of Gurdjieff Music by Elan Sicroff at Warwick Town Hall, Warwick MA, 4 p.m.
Sat, June 20-Sun June 28 SUMMER SEMINAR, Camp Caravan
Sat Aug 15-Sun Aug 23 EUROPEAN SEMINAR at Stackpole in Wales. Contact [Anne Hildyard](#) for information
Sat, Sept 5 GURDJIEFF BENNETT 2009 PRACTICUM begins

In closing, we share a piece written by one of our group members, Pierce Butler.

Saint Pierce

My wife and I were having a familiar argument: she was singing her Needy song, I my Angry song. Suddenly I was aware that she had simply dropped it: she wasn't singing any more. "Are you still angry?" she said to me. "No," I muttered, through clenched teeth. She began to laugh; she could see very clearly what was going on with me. "Why don't you just-stop pretending?" she said. So I did. I told her just what I thought of her Needy song and what I thought of her dropping it like that and what I thought of the cool, calm, and collected look on her face. And as I yelled, I began to hear the sound of my own voice, the voice of a bad actor, reaching for an emotion that wasn't his, struggling to take himself seriously. Once I saw this, my Angry song fell to the ground. I burst out laughing. We both had a good laugh, and that was the end of the argument.

But the real punch line came a few seconds after I'd wiped the tears from my eyes and taken a deep breath. I suppose I was congratulating myself. I'd managed-with a little help from Susan-to experience my anger and not to take it so seriously. But in the next instant that anger was beside the point. I saw that I was really identified with the tight-lipped saint my wife had teased, the person who said he wasn't angry. That was the person I believed myself to be, the person I had to be at all costs-cool, calm, and collected, in spite of all the indications to the contrary-and it was terrifying to see, if only for an instant, that it was a lie. I felt that my world, my conception of myself, had been turned upside down. I had gone forth to encounter the demon Anger and to wrestle it to the ground if I could. But the real enemy, the pretender, the liar-was St. Pierce.

I struggled for years to separate myself from negative emotions like anger by opposing them with an

effort of attention. I hoped that something new would enter to resolve this opposition, a sense of freedom or detachment that I called separation. The alternative was that the emotion would eat me up alive, that I would be nothing but emotion, completely identified. But then I saw that instead of working with emotion, I was just trying to keep it down, that my attempt at separation was really a kind of repression—a refusal to acknowledge the presence of unwelcome feeling in myself. As long as repression masqueraded as work, there was no hope of seeing what was in me, no hope of real separation.

Once I realized this, I tried to encourage emotion to come forth from its hiding place, and my work was to feel it, to accept it, to be present to it with as much force as I could muster. This is the essential foundation for my work. But the true beginning came when I saw the persona that controlled the mechanism, the 'I' that tried to be above feeling—the plaster saint.

A paradox: You can't separate from emotion if you're determined to keep it at arms' length.

Thank you for all your good wishes. We hope to see you at the upcoming events.

With love,

Debra Strick
And the folks at Millers River Educational Cooperative