

The Ridgeleaf NOTES

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A Change of Seasons ... we are sad to share with you that Nancy Scheirer will be retiring from her regular position at Kirkridge on November 18. Nancy has worked at Kirkridge as a volunteer and paid staff person for over nine years. She has been our hostess extraordinaire, our poet in residence and the designer of our Constant Contacts and Kirkridge Reflections that many of you receive by e-mail. We are pleased to say some of this work Nancy is going to continue at home and she promises to come and visit often. If you would like to contact Nancy directly yourself to say a word of gratitude she can be reached at nancys@kirkridge.org.



From the Board of Kirkridge

The more time I make to reflect on my life, the more I come to see how it is that the many poets and theologians who share in the quest for a more just and compassionate world are connected by a desire to either find words that help reveal the ineffable, or failing that, to remember to honor silence.

I am excited by the place that is Kirkridge because I find there, especially in the retreat settings I have so treasured, a very profound sense of respect for both silence and language that is free of rhetorical clothing. And there is always that core feeling of an underlying urge for beauty, a respect for the dignity of each individual and an engagement in the long-term, unfinished work of humanity.

I have recently been reading some of the works of Charles Eisenstein (*The More Beautiful World our Hearts Know is Possible*) and Bill Thomas (*Second Wind*) and I am increasingly inspired by their notion of building alternative communities to help to free us from the various oppressions that wound so many of us in our daily lives.

To me, Kirkridge is one of those communities—a nurturing home on the Mountain, standing firm and shining its light toward alternative ways of thinking, being and experiencing the sacredness of the lives we have been afforded.

Kirkridge encourages me to be reflective, contemplative and attentive. It invites me to listen with soft eyes and caring ears to what others say and offer. It encourages me to pay attention to my inner voice.

Time on the Mountain—experiencing the fabric of Kirkridge's deep commitment to Radical Hospitality—helps me to become more compassionate and accepting. Kirkridge is a place where a belief in the worth of each individual is part of the fabric of the air we all breathe.

The Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano has said, "we are much more than we are told. We are much more." Kirkridge is a place which reminds us of that, over and over again. I know of no better environment in which to explore and grow toward our own fullest selves.

Gathered at the Table

"We need to be brave enough to invite our contradictions to the same party as our commitments."

Here at this table

*where intuition sits proudly beside logic
and scientific analysis has loosened its grip
on rigid exclusivity*

*here, where excitement of the unknown replaces fear,
as if at a dinner party, where we know that whatever is served
will warm its way into a paradigm that prefers
questions to explore more than answers that presume,*

*here where the mathematics of ideas
does not deny the interior of our lives,*

*here, at this table, we toast each other—
what is and what might be.*

Dr. Michael S. Glaser is a Professor Emeritus at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Poet Laureate of Maryland from 2004-2009, he has published 8 collections of his own poetry and edited three anthologies, the most recent being *The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton 1965-2010* (BOA, Inc. 2012). He recently became a member of the Kirkridge Board.



"Projects like this...don't just happen," according to Becky Bradley, executive director of LVPC ... "they are result of years, sometimes decades, of planning that often go unnoticed."

A great deal of gratitude goes to our partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the present and former Kirkridge board and staff to see this project through over the five years to its completion.

CONGRATULATIONS AGAPE!

Agape, under the vision and leadership of Neill Johnson and Grace Fala celebrated its 20th anniversary this year! Many GLBTQ young adults and allies have found critical support at Kirkridge and out of an annual retreat have formed life-long friendships. This year the group showed its appreciation by raising over \$2,100.00 for Kirkridge. Thank you Grace and Neill for your generosity and commitment all these years.



AND THE WINNER IS..."

Kirkridge received an award from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission for Collaborating to Protect Extraordinary Lands in Upper Mount Bethel Township! In a field of five nominations, Kirkridge was chosen to receive the inaugural open space project award.

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission was formed by Lehigh and Northampton counties in 1961 to guide the orderly growth and development of the two counties. Since its creation LVPC has been dedicated to providing the best planning possible to the counties and 62 municipalities in the Lehigh Valley.