

Atlantic University Convocation Was Great Fun!

Last Saturday, November 17, 2007, six graduating A.U. students, seven faculty members and an audience of over fifty folks (including A.U. students who wanted to see how the process worked, and many friends of the university) attended our latest convocation.

Office staff, including Susan Foley, Mary Warren Pinnell and Herk Stokely, arranged and decorated the A.R.E. main auditorium to make the affair special, and treats were on hand the entire day.

Mark Thurston introduced the audience to the process. We were to have one hour segments. The student presented for 15 minutes.

Then the faculty, seated in the front row, were invited to have a “conversation” with the student presenter, asking questions or making comments. Mark made clear this was not a “defense” of the student’s culminating project, but rather a celebration. The next 15 minutes was devoted to the audience, seated in the second row and beyond, who may wish to engage the presenting student in conversation. The final 15 minutes was for us to take a break and dig into the treats.

The first presenter was Nancy Privett. She told us about her project setting up a peace prayer group and weekly meeting in her home town. She described how she got the idea from talking to folks who wished there was something they could do about the state of the world. She described her research into prayer and



Mark Emceeing

the effect of large numbers of folks praying for something, as in the “Marjarishi Effectt,” whereby a large group of meditators helped bring down the crime in a town when they gathered to meditate. She also talked about how to “pray peace,” as an affirmation about the essential reality of peace, rather than praying “for peace,” as if peace were not a reality. During the conversation with the audience, Nancy decribed examples that made her feel as if her group was being effective. It was clear that many folks thought her manual for how to create a peace prayer group was something that should be shared widely. When her culminating project is posted our our CP website, hopefully we can publish her manual on our webazine.

The second presenter was by Debbie Edgerton, whose culminating project explored the concept that children come here with an innate wisdom that naturally leads to wholeness and that it is cultural conditioning that leads to separation of body, mind, and spirit. Her project looks at current literature in the areas of holistic education



Amy Betit introducing student



Tom Curely introduces Debbie

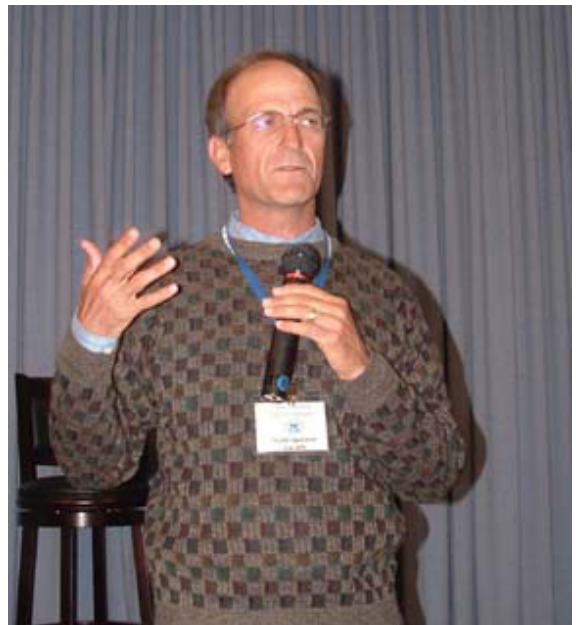
and parenting with respect to the relationship of holistic education to growth in human consciousness, the fundamental assumptions underlying holistic education, and the underlying principles and



Student presenters Jeanette, Allyson, Louis & Debbie

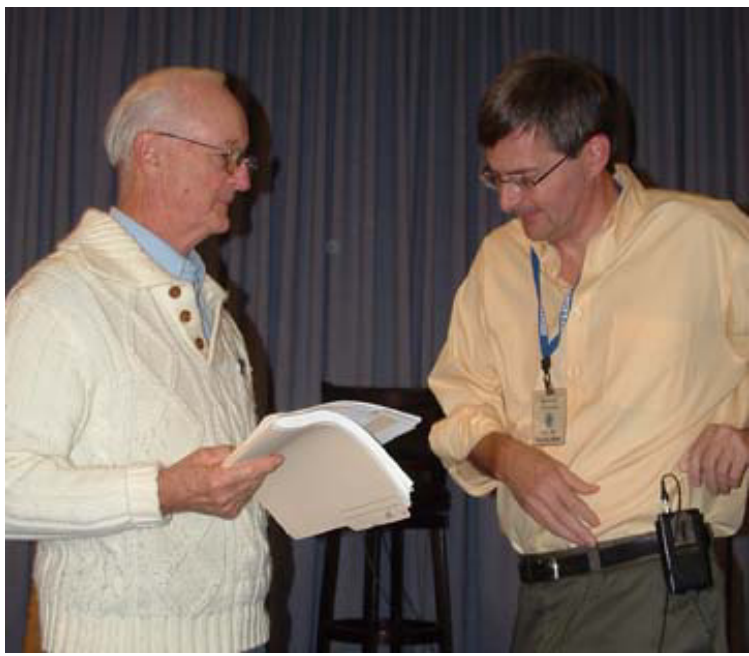
practices that foster holism. During conversations with Debbie there was surprise that such an approach was not more common. Her presentation confirmed interest in A.U. developing a master's degree in holistic parenting and early childhood education. You can see her entire CP at <http://creativespirit.net/learners/AUCulminatingProjects/cp-edgerton.pdf>

The third presenter was Jeanette Riverwind. Her project involved working with a group of women to explore alternative images of womanhood and femininity. She offered a powerpoint presentation on her project that showed the work of these women, who created artwork to express their vision of what it meant to be a woman—both before and after they read one of the books exploring alternative histories of the status, roles, and images of women throughout history. It was clear that their



Scott Sparrow introduces Louis

reading such books as *The Chalice and the Blade*, opened and improved the women's view of their gender. Understandably, her project created a lot of comments during the conversation stage. One line of discussion was about the role of story and artwork in inspiring new images and new concepts of various population groups. An

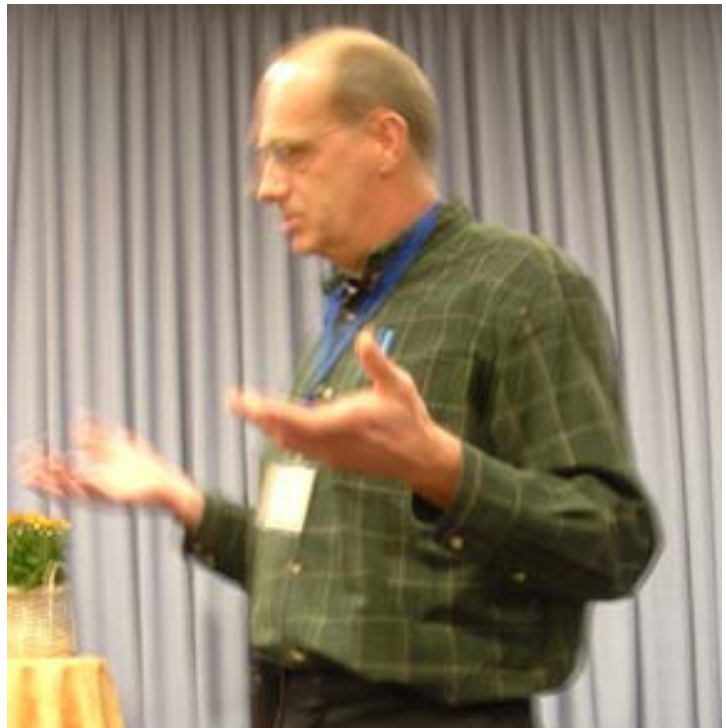


Herk Stokely helps Louis turn on mike

engaging story, one we can identify with, goes a long way toward changing our perceptions. Her culminating project will be available on our website soon, with the URL of <http://creativespirit.net/learners/AUCulminatingProjects/cp-riverwind.pdf>

The fourth presenter was Louis Tetu. His project involved developing a questionnaire that would enable him and his clients to understand better what blocks the client may have to prosperity. Louis works as a lifecoach and prosperity issues come up often. He proposed that people, knowingly or not, seek money to fulfill 7 fundamental human and spiritual needs. He hypothesized that prosperity comes from within in the form of spiritual energy. This energy splits itself between our 7 chakras to address our 7 levels of need in a normally ascending order. Following spiritual ideals allows these energies to meet our needs and manifest the corresponding dimensions of prosperity. However, deviating from such ideals may create inner blocks that limit the satisfaction of our needs and our experience of abundance. Accordingly, Louis developed a test to assist clients

in a coaching process to identify the needs they want to address through money and where they may experience blocks. Conversations that followed focused on his questionnaire and his very unique approach to assessing openness to prosperity. The full text of his CP is available at <http://creativespirit.net/learners/AUCulminatingProjects/cp-tetu.pdf>



Jan gesticulating during his talk

Jan Kruyff was the fifth presenter. His topic was “Spirituality versus Science: Finding their common values.” Jan gave a spirited presentation on his research into the spiritual origin of our scientific foundation. He described the spiritual work of Leonardo da Vinci and Rene Descartes, two men who had a lot to do with shaping science. He described to an attentive audience how various physical laws had their spiritual counterparts. The conversations that followed wondered about the extensions of his work into other areas, and what the unifying of the two realms might mean for our civilization. Jan was quite enthusiastic about his discoveries and has been searching for a publisher for his book.

The sixth presentation had several of the audience members, not to mention the presenter, in tears. The presenter was Allyson Rea, who worked in a mortuary as a counselor as part of her CP project. She was interested in seeing if her mortuary clients would report any transpersonal experiences connected with the

death of their loved ones. In a touching moment, she read off the names of each of the people who died during her time at the mortuary, and the cause of death. She then went on to describe the experiences folks had. The most frequent was a family member noticing a “sign” that they took to be a form of



Allyson presenting

communication from the deceased. It was surprising to learn that almost every client had some story to tell that had connections with transpersonal experiences. During the ensuing conversation, it was mentioned that A.U. might do well to have a degree program in thanatology.

Afterwards, the audience remained to enjoy a catered dinner served on the spot. The A.R.E. and A.U. board of directors, who were meeting in a room next door, joined the A.U. gathering for this dinner so they could enjoy visiting with the proud students and faculty. It was clear from the presentations that these graduating students had made a difference in the life of their community by their work on their culminating projects. They clearly were all sincere, dedicated and had grown from their work on these projects. Students who have yet to begin their culminating projects can assume that they will receive many unexpected benefits from their work.