

f r i e n d s o f
Esalen
n e w s l e t t e r

Esalen Institute Turns Forty

It was in the fall of 1962 that Michael Murphy and Dick Price founded Esalen as an alternative educational center devoted to the exploration of what Aldous Huxley called the "human potential," the world of unrealized human capacities that lies beyond the imagination. Those of us who have felt transformed by our experiences at Esalen are grateful for Michael and Dick's vision turned reality.

Esalen's setting is magnificent —27 acres nestled between the Santa Lucia Mountains and the Pacific Ocean; a crystal-clear mountain stream tumbling down a redwood canyon and over a waterfall before plunging into the sea; mineral springs gushing

up from deep within the earth at a temperature of 119-122 degrees.

The history of the land is peppered with stories of Native Americans called the Esselen who lived on the land long ago. It was to honor this people's memory that the institute was given its name. The hot springs were well known for their relaxing and healing qualities by the Esselen and centuries of other visitors who made a pilgrimage to these shores.

When Esalen opened, Michael and Dick began inviting eminent speakers to Esalen: British historian Arnold Toynbee; double Nobel prize-winner Linus Pauling;

continued...



Simon and Garfunkel performing at Esalen in the late 60's.



The first Esalen staff in 1962 included (from left to right): Bob Beckenbridge, Dick Price, Bob Nash, Alice Sellers, Jim Sellers and Michael Murphy

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Michael Murphy Book
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Harvard behaviorist B.F. Skinner; distinguished psychologists Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, and Claudio Naranjo; pioneering parapsychologist J.B. Rhine; theologian Paul Tillich; Bishop John Robinson; authors Aldous Huxley, Alan Watts, and Carlos Castaneda; family therapy innovator Virginia Satir; creativity researcher Frank Baron; general semanticist S.I. Hayakawa; mythologist Joseph Campbell; psychedelic researcher Stan Grof; research psychologist Julian Silverman; and anthropologist and philosopher Gregory Bateson. All these and many more came, sometimes traveling over great distances to an unknown institute that offered the most modest of fees.

Soon a more experiential kind of program evolved. Instead of simply listening, participants in Esalen workshops were offered an opportunity to experience new ways of relating to one another and to the divine, of expressing their feelings, of joining mind, body, heart, and soul. The work of experiential teachers such as Fritz Perls (Gestalt Awareness Training), Will Schutz (Open Encounter), Charlotte Selver (Sensory Awareness), Moshe Feldenkrais (Awareness through Movement), and Ida Rolf (Structural Integration) became

known throughout the world largely through their residencies at Esalen.

Starting in the mid-seventies, an innovative work-study program made it possible for people from many walks of life to split their time between working with Esalen's permanent staff and attending specially designed programs. Special invitational conferences brought together experts in many fields—education, religion, philosophy, somatics, medicine, physics, Soviet-American relations—often seeking answers to questions that traditional universities were unlikely to ask.

Throughout its rich history Esalen's most fundamental aim has been to promote both individual and social transformation. It has never been captured by any "ism" or dogma.

Esalen has sought to build bridges, to seek alliances where others see irreconcilable differences — between mind and body, East and West, science and religion, the US and the USSR. It has introduced numerous teachers and practitioners who have gone on to achieve public renown. Its initiatives have created or strongly influenced many fields: education, alternative medicine, citizen diplomacy, sport psychology, humanistic



Joyce Lyjke

Dick and Chris Price in 1981

and transpersonal psychology, transformative practices, psi and subtle energy research, somatics, ecological awareness and action.

The devastation left from the El Niño storms of 1998 almost permanently closed Esalen. The institute, however, decided to "take the hit as a gift" and began a bold Long Term Development Program currently in process to rebuild aging and damaged facilities, re-establish a vision, and renew every aspect of the institute's operations and programs.

Now, at 40, Esalen continues to encourage positive human change in body, mind, heart, and soul. Every year nearly 10,000 people from around the world make the pilgrimage to Esalen — to learn, stretch, grow, relax, seek, wonder, sit, dance, inquire, process or simply be.



Paul Herbert

A view of the main property in 1965. Notice cars where the green grass oval is today and a barren treeless area in front of the lodge..



Kathy Carr

Joseph Campbell and Sam Keen at Esalen in 1984

Esalen Forges New Ground With Alliance Program

Esalen is exploring innovative ways to advance its work and its influence on society through the new Esalen Alliance Program (EAP).

The focus of the EAP is to facilitate mutually beneficial, collaborative relationships with corporations and organizations whose core vision and practices are in alignment with Esalen's. The program will:

- Provide capital and in-kind support for the Long Term Development Plan, programming, research, operations, and maintenance.
- Establish new sources of ongoing revenue for long-term sustainability.
- Increase the relevance and reach of Esalen and Esalen-based programs.
- Advance Esalen's mission and further establish Esalen's position as a world leader in the evolution of human consciousness and fulfillment of human potential.

The EAP was conceived and developed for Esalen by Kevin Bartram and Jeff Klein of Social Alliance Marketing (SAM) whose efforts are dedicated to building relationships that authentically

address social issues and genuinely benefit society.

"Esalen is a perfect forum for our work, as it has consistently established new ways of thinking and acting in the world since its inception in 1962. With the vision, direction, and energy embodied by Esalen leadership, we are confident that the EAP will set a new standard for corporate-community relationships," remarks Kevin Bartram.

Kevin and Jeff work closely with the Capital Campaign staff, and their efforts will support Esalen's long term goals in creative new ways. Esalen Executive Director Andy Nusbaum feels this program will "provide opportunities for Esalen to take its work out into the world and to extend its reach and impact. We see the EAP as an opportunity to 'Esalenize' corporations, rather than to corporatize Esalen. We are excited that companies are attracted to Esalen's 40-year history in the human development field, and are approaching us to help them with their management and staff development issues."

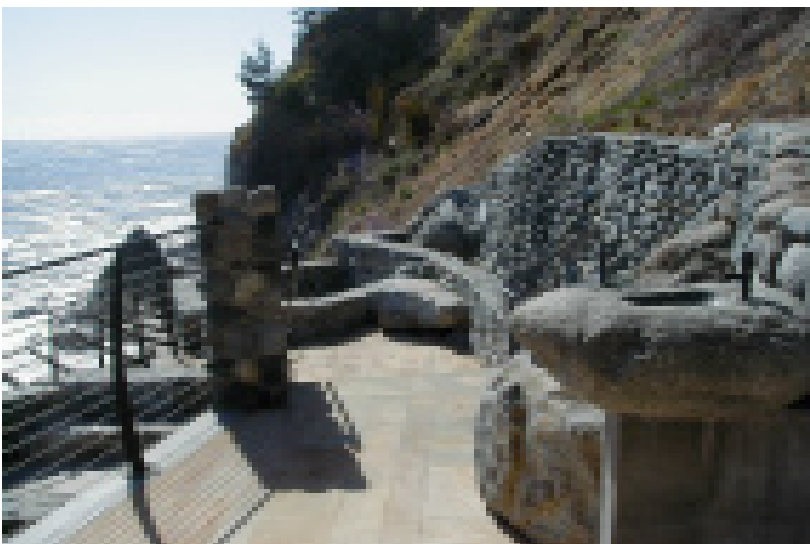
Fair Trade Coffee Now Being Served

Esalen is now proudly serving fair trade, organic, shade-grown coffee as part of our efforts to move toward sustainable practices in all areas of the institute. The new "Esalen Blend" comes from The Santa Cruz Coffee Roasting Company in Santa Cruz, California.

Shade-grown coffee is just that – coffee grown by small producers in a more traditional manner under the shade of the forest rather than on large plantations made by destroying tropical rainforests. Growing coffee in the shade prevents soil erosion and preserves the natural habitat of a wide variety of plants and animals, including several species of migratory birds.

Fair trade coffee is coffee purchased directly from small farmer cooperatives at a fair price that assures farmers a minimum of \$1.26/pound. This compares with recent market prices of as low as \$.78/pound, of which the farmers normally receive about \$.30/pound. Have a taste the next time you are here.

Bath Construction Finishing Up



Daniel Bianchi

OK, so when are the baths going to be finished? If all goes as planned, water will be in the tubs by the time this newsletter reaches you! We are that close.

We expect to have a period of time where we will need to get the kinks out and make sure all systems are go before we open officially to the public sometime this summer.

It has been a long and involved process but with spectacular results. Thanks to all of you who have given generously to make this project happen. Donations continue to be welcomed, needed, and appreciated.

Esalen Catalog Programs - A Unique Balance

by K Mello

Esalen Institute's first catalog was a small brochure that bore the name of Big Sur Hot Springs rather than Esalen. It was issued in the fall of 1962 offering 5 different one- or two-day seminars. Those first workshop titles included *Individual Cultural Definitions of Rationality*; *The Expanding Vision*; and *Drug-Induced Mysticism*.

Today after 40 years, Esalen offers about 450 workshops, seminars, and conferences per year ranging from 3- to 28-day residential programs. From the beginning Esalen's philosophy has been never to align with any specific teaching or viewpoint, but to offer a broad array of programs that would allow participants to choose their own area of interest. In fact, co-founders Michael Murphy and Dick Price purposefully created a supportive environment for new and exciting teachings, such as integrative approaches to mind/body/spirit issues, Gestalt, Feldenkrais, Rolfing and other somatic practices, as well as science and spiritual perspectives, community, politics, and the arts. At the time, there were no venues for such explorations. This rich variety of subjects and perspectives has been the backbone of Esalen's legacy and has helped it to thrive.

Nancy Lunney-Wheeler is Esalen's long time Director of Programming, responsible for booking all the programs that take place here. When Nancy first came to Esalen in the summer of 1972 for a Gestalt workshop with Dick Price, she discovered herself in "foreign territory." The encounter came with a whole new vocabulary and gave her a fresh perspective on herself and the world. Nancy describes it as terrifying and fascinating.

While taking various workshops and being a work scholar, Nancy felt the community would benefit from a form of creative release. An accomplished pianist and accompanist, she helped organize a staff-wide talent show that was called the "staff re-

view" and assisted participants with their musical creations. The review was a huge success and remains today as an Esalen tradition. Nancy was then invited back to work vocally with the staff a month at a time. After she got her master's degree in psychology in 1976, she returned to live, teach, and experiment with combining music and the practice of Gestalt. She soon ended up in working in Esalen's administration, was hired to edit the catalog, and later became Director of Programming. Nancy still offers her unique Singing Gestalt catalog workshops twice a year.

There are two quite different sides to Nancy's job as Director of Programming. One is the complex and often obsessional art of fitting 450 programs a year into the Esalen catalog – each one in relation to all the others, to space and size constraints at Esalen, to market appeal, and to the constant quest to keep Esalen at the cutting edge. Programming workshops at Esalen is like doing a giant jigsaw puzzle whose pieces don't

always fit at first as there are five meeting rooms with varying sizes and amenities. While enrollment numbers for a previously offered workshop can be a loose guide, it is impossible to predict future enrollment. With a limited number of beds, it becomes a creative and intuitive process.

The other part of Nancy's job involves regular travel, reading, research, keeping up with the culture, being out in the world and actively networking to identify, locate, and contact the most exciting teachers. Then she must persuade them to share their creativity at Esalen, often at a substantial financial sacrifice to them.

Nancy emphasizes the importance of balance in Esalen's programming between the proven and the unproven teachers and subjects. This has been the basis of Esalen's philosophy throughout its long history. "Esalen strives to be a pioneer in its programming while still reliably filling the beds to remain financially sustainable. Of course we must care



Workshop leader, George Leonard, teaching principles of aikido.

Esalen archives



Nancy Lunney-Wheeler

about financial factors, but it's not entirely money-driven. Some newer

ideas or practices may not be popular for quite a while, and it may mean scheduling and rescheduling a leader until his or her workshop catches on." Many ideas now held as truth were once unpopular or adamantly rejected.

Esalen pays all leaders the same per participant compensation regardless of their fame or background. But with the lure of our spectacular setting, and with Nancy's active recruiting and teacher cultivation, we are blessed with an abundance of talented leaders, and many more applications to give workshops than we have catalog space to accommodate.

Nancy summed it up well, "Esalen has never been just an island – and must never become one! Our mission has always been about making a creative difference in the larger world. We've been doing that to great effect for forty years. We have to build on that now, and be all the more focused on that mission, for the next forty!"

K Mello serves as assistant to the Friends of Esalen and the Work Study Program.

"While the workshop was outstanding as I had expected, I was not prepared for Esalen's beauty. The combination - the quality of the workshop and the beauty of Esalen came together as a powerful experience."

Campaign Update

by *Serena D'Arcy-Fisher*

Esalen's Campaign for the Future has been concentrating on raising funds to complete the Baths Restoration Project. Our heartfelt thanks go to an anonymous friend who gave a gift of \$100,000 in the name of Anumotana and to Andrew Hixon and Michelle Martinez Hixon for their pledge of \$100,000 for the baths. Many thanks also to David Lustig and Roy Schwartz who are leading the volunteer team to raise these funds.

The Campaign is delighted to announce that Cherie Arnold has joined the Campaign staff part time as Senior Advisor of Major Gifts. In this position, Cherie is working closely with Ann Downing (Chair of Major Gifts), volunteers and alumni of Esalen, and the development staff for the campaign office to position the fundraising efforts within affiliated interest groups into a sustainable donors network. As these groups expand by interest, they will simultaneously create architecture for an alumni network which will sustain and coordinate all efforts for future development for Esalen.



Cherie is has considerable expertise in the emerging \$230 billion, Lifestyles of Health & Sustainability (LOHAS) industry, as both an entrepreneur and former Executive Director of Investors Circle, which mobilized over \$60 million for early-stage LOHAS businesses. During her tenure as a socially-responsible business activist and as a non-profit venture philanthropist, she has been a major fundraiser for several philanthropic global organizations and is passionate about supporting entrepreneurship, education, wellness, and the arts.

Esalen's Campaign for the Future had two successful events in Los Angeles in June. On June 6th, Esalen volunteer Joyce Rey graciously offered her home in Bel Air to co-host a very special evening: "Esalen's Mission and Plans for the Future," with Esalen co-founder and Chairman of the Board Michael Murphy, Esalen's Executive Director, Andy Nusbaum, and special guest, Esalen alumnus, "Age Wave" guru, and author, Dr. Ken Dychtwald.

The event was attended by over 85 Esalen supporters in the Bel Air, Beverly Hills, Studio City and Santa Monica areas. Joyce Rey is very supportive of a variety of social and political causes in L.A. We are grateful to Joyce and her staff, Lainie Gelber, Heather Shahan, and Evelyn Franco, for all their support in making this a successful and enjoyable evening.

On June 13th, at the Electric Lodge in Santa Monica, Esalen President George Leonard, and long time Esalen community member and media coordinator Daniel Bianchetta, presented to a lively group of about 70 Esalen alumni. Campaign volunteer Maria Starow conceived the idea as a way to bring together the many Esalen supporters living in the Santa Monica, Brentwood, Venice, and Marina del Rey areas. Our thanks to Maria for all her support in making this event a success, and to Dr. Joel Shapiro, owner of the Electric Lodge.

For information on Esalen's Campaign for the Future call Julie Block at (415) 884-4307 or visit our website at www.esalencampaign.org.

"The experience here is authentic. It feels like a true institute for learning vs. a nice place to hang out and socialize with groovy people. I respect that a lot."
Esalen Seminarian

Book Review

Reviewed by Gordon Wheeler

God and the Evolving Universe: The Next Step in Personal Evolution

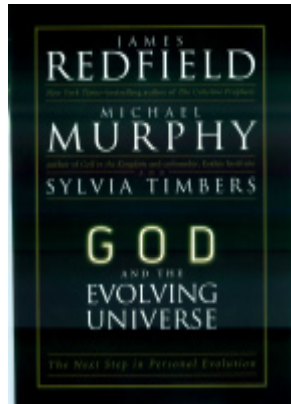
by James Redfield, Michael Murphy, and Sylvia Timbers

Does evolution — the response of living organisms to a changing environment — have a purpose (a *telos*, as the philosophers say)? Even more than this, does the evolution of *consciousness* provide us with the motive force and the key to the meaning of the universe, and our lives in it? It's important to note that there is nothing in science to contradict this possibility — and much that suggests it (science is ultimately agnostic on questions like this). In the new sciences of chaos and complexity theory, for instance, biologists like Stuart Kauffman are arguing freely that the emergence of *order*, under certain conditions, is inherent in the universe. The universe is biased toward self-organization, out of randomness. From there to saying the universe has an inherent direction toward complexity, even consciousness, may seem only a small step — and a far cry from the mostly sterile debate currently going on between (some) religious Creationists, and certain (by no means all) scientists.

Now comes author and Esalen co-founder Michael Murphy (*Golf in the Kingdom*, *Future of the Body*, and [with George Leonard] *The Life We are Given*), teamed up with James Redfield (*The Celestine Prophecy*) and documentary filmmaker Sylvia Timbers, to tell us the story of the long and intimate association between spiritual/philosophical traditions and evolutionary thinking. Not only are we heirs and (as far as we know) the most complexly organized products of billions of years of evolution,

but we stand poised, the authors argue, on the threshold of a new evolutionary leap in the universe, and a giant new step in human capacities and human self-understanding.

To make this argument, they draw on one of Murphy's distinct contributions to our understanding of "human potential" in an evolutionary context: the insight that the exceptional abilities and paranormal events reported — often very reliably — by many athletes, yogis and mystics, people under stress or emergency, and numerous others are all continuous extensions of normal, evolved human capacities. In other



words, they are *emergent adaptations* — the signs and instances of a new "great leap forward" analogous to the critical, discontinuous advance in human societies some 50,000 years ago, much studied by cultural and evolutionary anthropologists.

In this vision, we are now living the dawn of a great new age of human evolution. When we pursue practices that explore and extend our own capacities for greater achievement, discipline and learning, deep understanding, spiritual and relational experience, and love, we are doing something more than just "self-development:" we are participating in and contributing to a collective expansion in the capacities of the species. This radical leap in cultural evolution now promises to reorganize not just our thinking and feeling, our relationships, and our social and political worlds, but the actual neural patterning of our brains. For forty years now the Esalen Institute, developed under the creative leadership of Michael Murphy, Dick Price, George Leonard and many others, has been exploring and pursuing

this vision. Now entering its fifth decade, this remarkable place has been an important force in shaping a crucial advance in consciousness, providing a forum and an impetus for the cross-fertilization and integration of currents and institutions that have long been opposed like feudal fiefdoms in the culture: mind and body, heart and brain, East and West, self and soul, ethics and business, psychology and politics, traditional and alternative medicine — and above all, science and spirit. Today, as Esalen marks the fortieth anniversary of this creative mission, many of these "conversations" have entered and transformed mainstream culture; others are still embryonic. To see what that animating vision has been all about, there is no better place for the reader to start than with this ambitious and sweeping new book.

Esalen trustee and workshop leader Gordon Wheeler is author of over a dozen books on relationship, development, the Gestalt model, and the Western tradition of individualism.

The Friends of Esalen Newsletter is published three times per year by Esalen Institute as an informational vehicle for our supporters.

Esalen Institute was founded in 1962 as an alternative educational center devoted to the exploration of the human potential.

Founders:
Michael Murphy & Dick Price

Esalen Board of Trustees:
Lawrence Downing, Mary Ellen Klee, George Leonard, Nancy Lunney-Wheeler, Michael Murphy, Marilyn Schlitz, Jeremy Tarcher, Keith Thompson, Gordon Wheeler

Executive Director:
Andy Nusbaum

Newsletter Editor & Friends of Esalen Coordinator:
Nancy Worcester

Support for Today • Building for the Future

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the many wonderful Friends of Esalen who generously support our operations and special projects. The following is a list of friends who have given over \$500 from 1/1/2002-6/07/2002. We couldn't be here without you!

Italics below indicate a lifetime donation giving commitment and/or a donation pledge of \$100,000 or more

CENTURY CIRCLE - gifts of \$10,000 or more

Anonymous in the name of Anumotana • Lawrence M. Gelb Foundation, Inc. (Richard and Tana Gelb) • *Global Business Network* • Andrew Hixon and Michelle Martinez-Hixon • Charly and Lisa Kleissner • Social Alliance Marketing (Kevin Bartram and Jeff Klein)

FOUNDERS CIRCLE - gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999

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• Michaele Cassou by Sally Pierone • Deborah Kilpatrick & Kacey Fitzpatrick by Signe Varner • Bill Herr by Mary Robinson • Valerie Lowe by The Monterey Fund • Jen Russell by Bernadette Viespi • Jeremy Tarcher by Paul Brenner • Zero Balancing Association by John and Sharon Franklin

Did You Know....

- You can leave your legacy to Esalen and help ensure Esalen's future by making a bequest to Esalen in your will or trust.
- You can now make donations online by going to www.esalen.org

- When you give a gift of appreciated stock to Esalen (rather than selling the stock and giving cash) you avoid paying capital gains taxes, and you may deduct the full fair market value of the stock from your current year's taxable income, regardless of what you initially paid for the stock.

- You can designate Esalen Institute as a recipient of your donations through your workplace or United Way Campaign. You will not see Esalen's name listed as a United Way agency, so simply write in Esalen's name and Tax ID # 94-611235 on the form provided by your company.

For more information, please call Nancy Worcester at (831) 667-3032 or email nancy.worcester@esalen.org.

Reflections on Bread

Workshop leader, Jerome Front, of Studio City, California, shares excerpts from his journal during a seminar at Esalen:

“Anytime of day or night, there are always a few people at the lodge dining hall — someone silently reflecting, or a small group here and there — each drawn by a sense of welcome or maybe a serving of conversation. The availability of homemade, fresh bread and hot tea 24 hours a day brings a vivid hospitality to this communal space. Time for appreciating small gifts... as I am drawn first to the bread: A deliberate pause, noticing grateful feelings arising as I wonder: Whose care provided our bread today? grew and harvested this wheat? ground this flour? attended the oven? and served these jellies? *thank you!* Forming an intention to let the rever-

ence that I bring to having this bread and tea be my nighttime prayers. Watching...soft crumbs falling away as I slice... Just a plain loaf, yet nothing short of extraordinary in that it calls me to *slow down...* Will I listen? Hot water added to the tea bag, steam rising, and the tea itself slowly surrendering its essence to make the flavor and color that is swirling in this cup. And as I sit with these gifts in front of me now, I wonder ...by what miracle are hot water and this bread *transformed* into my reverie on

the fragrance of steeping tea and the aroma of toasting bread? Quietly smiling as a little peanut butter melts down into a thin slice ...*already* a mouth-watering feast for the senses and soul! Then curling up in a restful corner with a soft blanket and my nighttime snack.

I am feeling so aware of how many things have come together to make this moment in Big Sur possible. Sometimes, even in the light and warmth of being here in the lodge, I can taste how close I am to the ocean and feel how clear the stars are outside. Sometimes, for fleeting moments, I feel my eyes opening — or maybe it’s my heart that’s opening — and I recognize how “our daily bread” is always arriving in so many ways. Each precious moment being too good to miss. But now, coming back and noticing what’s right in front of me,...slowing way down for each savory taste ...and feeling a secret peacefulness in being *here...*in being alive...”



David Bamoheta

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