

THE NEW YORK OPEN CENTER
PRESENTS

AN ESOTERIC QUEST FOR INNER AMERICA

EXPLORING THE HISTORY AND RENEWAL OF THE AMERICAN SOUL

AUGUST 24–28, 2009, PHOENICIA, NEW YORK,
JUST OUTSIDE OF WOODSTOCK

POST-CONFERENCE JOURNEY TO ESOTERIC UPSTATE
NEW YORK AND THE HUDSON VALLEY:

IROQUOIS NATIONS, FEMINISTS, UTOPIANS
AND 21ST CENTURY ESOTERICISTS

CO-SPONSORED WITH LAPIS MAGAZINE ONLINE AND THE LUMEN FOUNDATION
WWW.ESOTERICQUEST.ORG

JOIN US ON A QUEST

Join us for the Open Center's eighth Esoteric Quest, this time on the home soil of America. At this historic moment of American crisis and renewal, we stand before the prospect of a deeply moving rebirth of the authentic American spirit. What lies at the heart of this spirit, and how has it been expressed through the centuries? This conference aims to strengthen our ability to understand and love the Inner America of the indigenous peoples, the early colonists, the founding fathers, the Transcendentalists, and the Twentieth Century spiritual and esoteric thinkers, writers, and artists whose legacy continues to influence modern times.

Upstate New York is home to the **Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy**, whose deep attunement to the soul of the land and the laws of peace and governance impressed the writers of the Constitution. In the 19th century this area was a hotbed of spiritual innovation known as **The Burned Over District**. It was the birthplace of numerous forms of unorthodox inner inquiry including the early spiritualists and feminists, the **Oneida community**, and the **Hudson River** school of painters.

The Transcendentalism of **Emerson**, **Whitman**, and **Thoreau** uplifted the difficult and dangerous epoch of the Civil War. And remarkable figures emerged such as the African-American student of magic, **Paschal Beverly Randolph**, and later **Madame Blavatsky** herself founded the **Theosophical Society** in New York City in 1875. In the 20th century **Martin Luther King's** profound spirituality enhanced the great gift of the Black Church as a powerful generator of soul, courage, and compassion. And many American artists were influenced by spiritual and esoteric philosophy, from **Saul Bellow** to **Elvis**. The latter part of the century was filled with a mystical explosion as Buddhist, Sufi, Shamanic, and many other paths found common ground in a new, holistic culture.

This conference will examine and celebrate the life-enhancing spiritual impulses that emerge powerfully in America: the creative meeting of all cultures and spiritual paths; the natural American generosity of spirit; the "Yes We Can" attitude of optimism and self-belief; and the bedrock commitment to the virtue of equality. At a time when hope is high for a new American Renaissance, please join us for this exploration and celebration of the deepest and best in the soul of this country.

—Ralph White, New York Open Center, Conference Director

Biographies

Christopher Bamford is the editorial director of SteinerBooks and Lindisfarne Press. He is the author of *An Endless Trace: The Passionate Pursuit of Wisdom in the West*, and has written numerous introductions to the works of Rudolf Steiner. Most recently, he co-authored *Green Hermeticism: Alchemy and Ecology*.

Brian Cotnoir is an independent researcher. He has been studying and experimenting with alchemical procedures for 35 years. He is the author of *The Weiser's Concise Guide to Alchemy*.

John Patrick Deveney is the author of *Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth Century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian and Sex Magician* and, with Joscelyn Godwin and Christian Chanel, *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor*. He has published extensively on the early history of Madame Blavatsky's Theosophy.

Richard Geldard, Ph.D., is the author of nine books, including studies of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Greek philosophy and culture. These include *The Spiritual Teachings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* and *The Essential Transcendentalists*. In 2003, for the bi-centennial of Emerson's birth, he organized two programs at Faneuil Hall in Boston.

Joscelyn Godwin, Ph.D., was educated at Cambridge and Cornell Universities and has taught at Colgate University since 1971. He has written, edited and translated numerous books on music, esotericism and intellectual history including *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth* and *The Theosophical Enlightenment*.

Judy Gorman has performed in over ten countries and forty-eight of these United States at clubs, universities, festivals, and peace

and justice events here and abroad. She has recently released *The Rising of Us All* — 18 songs of peace and justice, work and women, struggle and celebration.

Mitch Horowitz is the editor-in-chief of Tarcher/Penguin in New York and the author of the forthcoming *Occult America: The Secret History of How Mysticism Shaped Our Nation* which has been called "a fascinating book" by Ken Burns and "a sparkling, down-to-earth, and often deeply touching account" by Jacob Needleman.

William Hunt is the author of two collections of poetry: *Of the Map that Changes and Oceans and Corridors of Orpheus*. His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *TriQuarterly*, *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *Paris Review*, *Salamagundi*, and elsewhere. He teaches English literature and creative writing, and lives in Western Massachusetts.

Freida Jacques is a former Onondaga clan mother who has been a leader in her community for more than 30 years. She serves as a bridge between her culture and educational institutions in central New York, and has written on the discipline and use of the 'Good Mind'.

Jay Kinney was formerly the publisher and editor in chief of *Gnosis: A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions*. He was the recipient of the 2005 Albert G. Mackey Award for Excellence in Masonic Research, conferred by the Scottish Rite Research Society. His forthcoming book is *The Masonic Enigma*.

Larry Mamiya, Ph.D., is the Paschall-Davis Professor of Religion and Africana Studies at Vassar College. He is the co-author with C. Eric Lincoln of the classic study *The*

Black Church in the African American Experience. A former community organizer in Harlem, he was a minister to young adults in San Francisco during the Haight-Ashbury counterculture.

Barbara Novak, Altschul Professor of Art History Emerita at Barnard College and Columbia University, is the author of the trilogy *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century*, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting from 1825-75*, and *Voyages of the Self: Pairs, Parallels and Patterns in American Art and Literature*.

Bruce Novak, Ph.D., has taught philosophy, humanities, and education at The University of Chicago and Northern Illinois University. He organized the recent conference "Reclaiming the Wisdom Tradition for Education" (www.aepl.org) and is currently working on two books: *Personal Studies: Literacy for Love and Wisdom*, and *The Opening of the American Heart*.

Nancy Jewel Poer is a co-founder of Rudolf Steiner College with Carl Stegmann, author of *The Other America*. She has developed the anthroposophical perspective on the spiritual mission of America for over 30 years. She is also a national consultant on death and dying.

Chanda Rule has sung along side acclaimed musicians Mino Cinelu, John Benitez, India. Arie, Angela Bofill, and has also opened for Amel Larrieux. She has toured Russia, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy singing and leading workshops on the African roots of Gospel. Her debut album, "like|water" was released in January 2005.

Louis Sahagun is the author of *Master of the Mysteries: The Life of Manly P. Hall*. He is a senior staff writer at the Los Angeles

Times where he covers religion, politics, the environment, law enforcement, and race relations. He is also current president of the L.A. chapter of Latino Journalists of California Association.

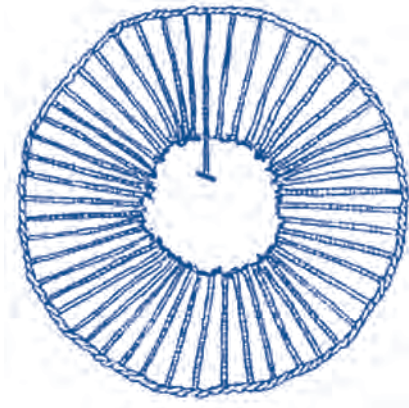
Robert A.F. Thurman, Ph.D., is Professor of Indo-Tibetan Studies at Columbia University, President of Tibet House US, a popular lecturer on Tibetan Buddhism, and translator of many philosophical treatises and sutras. He is also the author of numerous books including the national bestseller *Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Real Happiness*, and *Anger* (the fifth book from a series on the Seven Deadly Sins).

Gioia Timpanelli is one of the founders of the current world wide revival of the art of storytelling and was given the Women's National Book Award for her lifelong work in the oral tradition. She recently completed a novel on New York immigrant life in the early 20th century.

Arthur Versluis, Ph.D., is the author of *The Esoteric Foundations of the American Renaissance* and many other books including *Magic and Mysticism*. He is a professor in the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University and edited the online journal *Esoterica*.

Sally Roesch Wagner, Ph.D., is a feminist pioneer, activist and author of several books including *Sisters in Spirit: Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Influence on Early American Feminists*. She is a founder of one of the nation's first women's studies programs and appeared in Ken Burns' documentary *One Woman, One Vote*. She is executive director of the Matilda Joselyn Gage Foundation.

PLENARY SESSIONS



Wampum Circle

Three Iroquois Lessons Offered Toward Peace

Freida Jacques

The Onondaga are one of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois People whose land covers large areas of Upstate New York. In this talk, a former Turtle clan mother of the Onondaga Nation conveys important values from her culture that could benefit America at this point in time. Thanksgiving, respect for life, and carefully considering the lives of future generations on earth are among them.

Colonial America: Seeds of American Spirituality and Esotericism

Christopher Bamford

As the seed is, so is the tree. This talk will focus on the varied impulses, traditions, and currents at play in the Colonies. It will tell of a rich field formed by heterodox European religious traditions (Puritans, Anabaptists, Moravians, Huguenots, Quakers, and others), as well as esoteric groups and practitioners (alchemists, Hermeticists, Behmenists, Rosicrucians, and Freemasons). By focusing on certain key figures such as Roger Williams, John Woolman, and Johannes Kelpius, we will see how the seeds of a new esotericism and spirituality were planted.

Upstate Cauldron

Joscelyn Godwin, Ph.D.

During the first century of American independence, Upstate New York was a hotbed of spiritual and utopian movements. Freed from European tradition and New England rigidity, cult leaders and illuminates found fertile ground as the frontier moved westward. Out of this "Burned-Over District" came Mormonism, Spiritualism, and a host of ephemeral groups with odd beliefs and bizarre practices.

The All-Seeing Eye in America: Freemasonry's Role in American History

Jay Kinney

Several prominent Founding Fathers were Freemasons and the legend of a Masonic influence in America's origins is a popular belief. But how true is the legend? What role did Masonry really play in the American Revolution and how did Masonry impact the new republic as the 19th century progressed? Is there an esoteric core to "the Craft," as some allege? This talk will pay particular attention to the Freemasonic experience in America, where a unique set of circumstances have produced a most paradoxical result: a secret society for the common man.



Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Esoteric American Renaissance

Arthur Versluis, Ph.D.

Most people are familiar with the well-known names of the American Renaissance: Dickinson, Emerson, Hawthorne, Poe, and Thoreau, for instance. But few are aware of just how much these authors' works were infused by esoteric currents and practices. Alchemy, folklore, and Platonism all intermingled to create what we now know as the American Renaissance, but which really represents the first literary, philosophical, and religious flowering of the United States. Could such a time come again?



George Washington Brick Laying Ceremony

Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Seer of Concord and Father of Transcendentalism

Richard Geldard, Ph.D.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was one of America's founding thinkers. At a crucial time in our history, when the Puritan past lay in ruins and new religious movements were springing up like weeds in the wilderness, he taught us how to be strong spiritual individuals in this new America. His vision of personal self-recovery and self-reliance has helped to define the unique character of this country. He freed us from dying doctrines as well as from spiritual tyrannies of all kinds.

Dead Women Do Tell Tales

Sally Roesch Wagner, Ph.D.

What was in the water that made Upstate New York the hotbed of social justice and religious ferment in the country during the first half of the 19th century? A look at the childhood, religious background, and lifework of the triumvirate that led the radical wing of the woman's movement may provide some insights. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and the most visionary of all, the forgotten feminist Matilda Joslyn Gage who was deeply influenced by the Iroquois peoples, speak to us from the past.



Matilda Joslyn Gage

The Spiritual Mission of America

Nancy Jewel Poer

It is not hard to see America's will to empire and materialism. But her spiritual mission lies in the ideals of true freedom in her founding documents and those who have understood what it means to live them. The gathering of people in America is representative of the entire world in the centuries of scientific and social awakening and has high purposes. These are ultimately the recognition that, beyond narrow nationalism and the bondage of common blood, we are universal citizens, brothers and sisters in the spirit.

Master of the Mysteries: The Life of Manly P. Hall

Louis Sahagun

In 1919, a Canadian teenager with a sixth grade education arrived by train in the sleepy pueblo of Los Angeles. Manly Palmer Hall went on to become one of the 20th century's most prolific authors

and speakers on ancient philosophies, mysticism, and magic – and a confidant of entertainment and industry leaders. In this talk, we will explore the life and times of this esoteric figurehead, providing an inside view of the birth of a vibrant American subculture.

The Legacy of the Black Church and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Struggle for the Soul of America

Larry Mamiya, Ph.D.

The election of President Barack Obama presents an opportunity to examine the two major spiritual influences on him — the values of the Black Church and the social justice legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement. This talk considers why African Americans have higher levels of religiosity and commitment. It also explores the spiritual foundations of Dr. King's life: his relationship to Gandhi's nonviolence and his Christian realism. Implications will be drawn for the continuing struggle for America's soul.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Pursuit of Real Happiness:

The Soul of America and the Buddha Dharma

Robert Thurman, Ph.D.

In *Inner Revolution*, Robert Thurman argues that America, in its soul, ideals, and dreams (now being resuscitated by President Obama), beautifully interweaves with the socially revolutionary movement that arose in Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment and came down to us through history in the enlightenments of millions of Buddhists. In this talk, he expands on how the pursuit of real happiness could manifest in America in this century.



Manly Palmer Hall

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES



The Zen Mountain Monastery

Each afternoon we will have the opportunity to visit nearby places of spiritual significance. Located on 230 acres of forest preserve, the Zen Mountain Monastery, the main house of the Mountains and Rivers Order, is one of the West's most respected Zen Buddhist monasteries and training centers. Since its inception in 1980, Zen Mountain Monastery has provided a place of serenity, beauty and profound teachings.

The Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Monastery

Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Monastery was built through the blessings and inspiration of His Holiness, The Dalai Lama, in response to the supplication of students in the West who yearned for an authentic place for study and practice. Here, the teachings and practices of the "whispered lineage" are preserved in their purity and made available to Western students who wish to learn about and practice Tibetan Buddhism.

Visit to Woodstock

The town of Woodstock is famous for lending its name to the Woodstock Festival, actually held at Yasgur's dairy farm in Bethel, New York. The town itself remains one of the most engaging centers of alternative culture in America, filled with appealing cafes, bookstores, and art galleries, and an atmosphere of mellow, imaginative charm. Its many spiritually conscious inhabitants always make a visit to Woodstock a memorable and sweet experience.

Afternoons at Menla

The Menla Mountain Retreat Center is located in a beautiful, secluded, wooded valley permeated by tranquility. Each afternoon there will be time to relax and enjoy nature. There are also opportunities to experience bodywork, practice meditation, swim, hike, or deepen connections with Quest participants.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Sophia and the Mysteries of Community in 19th Century America

Christopher Bamford

Perhaps America's most revolutionary contribution to esotericism came through the communitarian movement, which drew upon many spiritual currents – Christianity, Transcendentalism, Swedenborgianism, Fourierism, Spiritualism to name only a few – to create a new Sophianic understanding of both the divine and what it means to be human. This workshop will examine many different manifestations including Mother Anne Lee and the Shakers, Robert Owen and New Harmony, John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Community, and Thomas Lake Harris and his community at Wassaic.



Oneida Community

Immigrants All

Joscelyn Godwin, Ph.D.

Joscelyn Godwin, himself an immigrant, invites participants to describe and discuss their own relationship to the worlds of their ancestors. What are they glad that they or their families brought from there, and glad to be free from? Does America offer spiritual possibilities of its own, or is it a political and sentimental mirage, cut off from Tradition? What inherited assumptions affect the way we answer these questions?

The Doctor, The Adept, and the Quest for the Philosopher's Stone

Brian Cotnoir

In the 1660's, word spread through London that an adept, Eirenaeus Philalethes, had made the philosopher's stone. The publication describing this work, *Secrets Revealed: An Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King*, was handled by a young Harvard educated doctor from New England – George Starkey. When Dr Starkey came to England, he became Robert Boyle's teacher in the "chymical arts." Only recently was it discovered that the adept and the doctor were one and the same. This workshop will trace this

remarkable man's life, the reasons for his double life, as well as examine and decipher parts of his *Secrets Revealed*.

Transcendentalism, Silence, and Sublimity in American Landscape Painting 1825-75

The Spiritual Context

Barbara Novak

This workshop examines the search for God in nature and ideas of silence and sublimity as seen in the paintings of the Hudson River School. It will deal primarily with Thomas Cole and Frederick Church who lived and worked in the Catskills, but will also include two other key Hudson River artists and the New England Luminists. The landscapes of the period will be considered in the spiritual context of the age as they connect to the thinking of Emerson and Thoreau and to American Indian and East Indian concepts.

Walt Whitman's Democratic Vistas and the Creation of a Spiritual Democracy

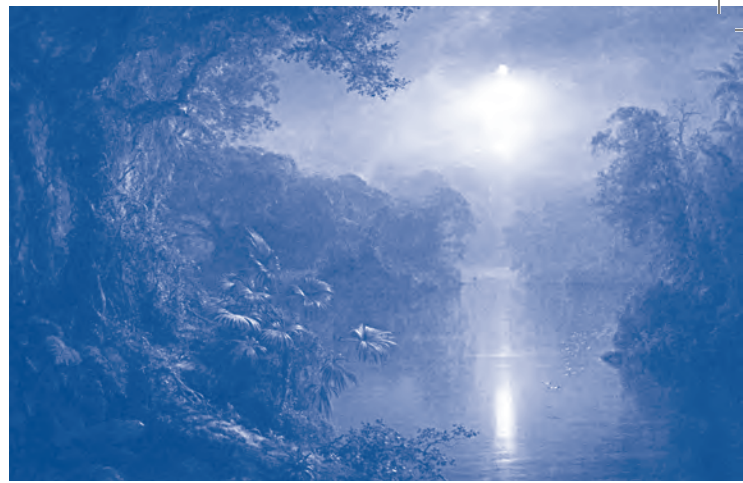
Bruce Novak, Ph.D.

Cornel West has called Walt Whitman's 1871 treatise *Democratic Vistas* a greater work than his epic *Leaves of Grass*. We will explore together why this is so by tracing the development of the democratic idea, as Whitman did, from a stage of "political foundation rights," through a stage of "material prosperity," leading up to its true founding in "a sublime and serious Religious Democracy," the advent of which we may right now be witnessing.

Paschal Beverly Randolph: A 19th Century African American Esotericist

John Patrick Deveney

Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825-1875) was a 19th century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian, and sex magician. It is a revelation to realize the poverty of what preceded Randolph and his monumental achievement in transforming occultism and spiritualism from antiquarian bookishness to the pursuit of individual spiritual growth here and now through practical spiritual techniques. The history of western and especially American spirituality since Randolph's death might be seen as the working out of his ideas on realizing our own divine nature.



"Morning in the Tropics", Frederick Church, 1877

In Blavatsky's Shadow: America's Unsung Mages

Jay Kinney

The prominent role played by Madame Blavatsky in the occult revival of the late 19th century has tended to obscure the significant contributions made by lesser known figures. We will take a good look at two such people, the esoteric Masons Albert Pike and Albert G. Mackey, whose work in Masonic circles helped lay the groundwork for the spread of esotericism and the perennial philosophy.

Reading Esoteric Dimensions of American Literature

Arthur Versluis, Ph.D.

We will work through some esoteric dimensions of major literary works – in particular, writings by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Emily Dickinson, but also a few others. Clearly, one can read such works on a surface level, but one soon discovers that they have multiple levels. At the same time, it is not uncommon for these authors to offer us an "open esotericism," in which the more esoteric dimensions of their work are hidden in plain sight.



Paschal Beverly Randolph



Saul Bellow

The Spiritual Background of Saul Bellow's Writing

William Hunt

The work of Saul Bellow is often noted for inventive narratives that range over the American scene and character. However, a paucity

of published critical attention has been directed to reckoning the depth of Bellow's involvement with the spiritual lives of urban Americans. Poet William Hunt, who was a friend and participant with Bellow in the study of Rudolf Steiner's work for twenty years, will discuss how Bellow's late fiction mirrors the esoteric issues of morality raised by both Anthroposophy and Bellow's own background as a student of Kabbalah.

Esoteric Los Angeles

Louis Sahagun

The turn of the last century in Los Angeles was a time when many civic and business leaders, judges, architects, and entertainment industry figures were members of Masonic lodges or esoteric

schools whose Neoclassical temples were among the most imposing buildings on the Southern California landscape. In the 1950s and 60s, Manly P. Hall's Hollywood compound, among others, attracted a new generation of seekers from surprisingly diverse fields including the actor Burl Ives, California Governor Goodwin Knight, and the one and only Elvis.

Occult America: The Secret History of How Mysticism Shaped Our Nation

Mitch Horowitz

America possesses an esoteric tradition that is largely unknown yet permeates our culture. Beginning in the late 17th century, influences from Spiritualism, Freemasonry, New Thought, Transcendentalism, Mesmerism, and a host of philosophies and occult traditions have shaped America in unexpected ways. Drawing on his forthcoming book, *Occult America*, Mitch Horowitz reveals the metaphysical influences beneath our national life, exploring figures ranging from Mary Todd Lincoln to Henry A. Wallace, Frederick Douglass to Marcus Garvey, Joseph Smith to Colonel Henry Steel Olcott.

The America Story

Nancy Jewel Poer

Our vast and beautiful land is peopled with diverse, innovative citizens with inherent vitality and good will. But we need a greater awareness of the responsibilities that go with great freedom. This visual presentation includes a broad view of turning points in American history and the nation's many heroic individuals as they shine with inspiring light while facing the nation's powerful darkness.



Henry A. Wallace and Pete Seeger

Note: Inner America is a theme bursting with vitality so please see: www.EsotericQuest.org for updates



EVENING ACTIVITIES

Wade in the Water

An Evening of Gospel Music performed by Chanda Rule

Led by singer/songwriter and international performer Chanda Rule, *Wade in the Water* melds spirituals, blues, and gospel, taking listeners on a musical journey from the southern-most parts of Mississippi to the slick streets of Northern urban metros, and back again. The songs, lyrics, and arrangements connect the dots of the history of African American spiritual music, drawing a smooth line from early Negro Spirituals to contemporary gospel.

Blessings at the Threshold, Elizabeth Street, New York City, 1905

An Evening of Stories told by Gioia Timpanelli

This is an evening of stories and back stories of Sicilian and Jewish Immigrants working in the garment industry in New York City in 1905. Coming out of great necessity, the immigrants from Sicily and Russia in 1905 came with few material goods but with their cultures intact. This evening will include some folk tales and spiritual stories about Saints and Holy Fools.

The Songs of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger

An Evening of Folk Music performed by Judy Gorman

As America reawakens to social justice and equality as core values, its great folk music tradition conveys countless stories of struggle and triumph in this cause. Woody Guthrie may be our greatest songwriter of the people's America and Pete Seeger is his worthy heir. This rousing evening takes us into the heart and soul of the America of the common man and woman.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Conference Fee

Course Code: 09SQUEST

Registration by May 21: \$895

July 1: \$1095

August 3: \$1295

The conference fee includes the full conference program, afternoon activities and evening performances.

Accommodations and Meals Fee

Accommodations and meals are provided from dinner on Monday, August 24th, through lunch on Friday, August 28th, at the Menla Mountain Retreat Center in Phoenicia, New York.

Queen bed with private bath:

\$675 (single) / \$565 per person (couple)

Double (twin beds) with private bath: \$570 per person

Double (twin beds) with shared bath: \$520 per person

Triple with en-suite bath: \$480 per person

Dormitory Houses: \$455 per person

Camping: \$330 per person

For double and triple accommodations, please specify whether you will be sharing a room with friends, or wish to have a roommate arranged for you by the Open Center (pending availability).

Meals at Menla Mountain Retreat Center are vegetarian. If you would like to add a meat (chicken and fish only) supplement for all four dinners, the cost is \$40.

Commuter fee: \$290 per person (includes meals)

Registration

The Open Center invites you to register on our website at www.EsotericQuest.org, where you will find our complete registration information and payment form. Payment is required to secure your registration.

Payment

All payment is in US dollars. Please pay by credit card, international money order or personal check (US bank accounts only). Prices do not include travel to and from Phoenicia, New York. An affordable payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101, or at quest@opencenter.org for details.

Travel Arrangements

Participants must make their own travel arrangements to and from Phoenicia, New York. Both main and post-conferences conclude at the Menla Mountain Retreat Center in Phoenicia, although post-conference participants will also have the opportunity to connect with Amtrak trains leaving Hudson, New York, on the afternoon of Tuesday, September 1st.

Arrival in Phoenicia, New York

Trailways offers bus service directly into the town of Phoenicia; shuttle service is available between the bus station and Menla. Amtrak also runs train service to nearby Rhinecliff, NY, where taxis are available for the drive to Menla. For those of us flying to New York State, Stewart Airport in Newburgh, NY, and Albany International Airport are closest to Menla (each about 1¼ hours taxi

ride), although more flight options will be available through NYC area airports (JFK, LaGuardia and Newark). Ground transport connects these major airports to NYC's Penn Station for Amtrak trains, and to Port Authority Bus Terminal for Trailways buses to Menla. Complete travel information can be found at www.esotericquest.org.

About the Conference

The conference will begin on the evening of August 24th as we meet for an orientation and dinner. Each day of the conference will begin with morning plenary sessions followed by lunch. There will be an afternoon break, allowing participants to enjoy Menla's hiking trails, Sanctuary, pool, or wellness services, or to take part in an afternoon activity. Later in the afternoon there will be a choice of workshops to attend, followed by dinner. After dinner we gather for an evening of cultural events and celebration. The conference will end after lunch on Friday, August 28th.

Refunds

A full refund, less a \$200 processing fee, will be offered for cancellations made by May 23, 2009. Travel insurance is **strongly recommended** in the event of unexpectedly having to cancel or change your travel plans either before or during the conference, losing your luggage, needing medical assistance, or if the program is affected by circumstances beyond our control.

Scholarships

A limited number of partial scholarships are available. A scholarship application can be found on our website at www.esotericquest.org.

POST-CONFERENCE JOURNEY

Esoteric Upstate New York and the Hudson Valley: Iroquois Nations, Feminists, Utopians and 21st Century Esotericists

Upstate New York, to many people's amazement, is filled with fascinating sites of deep spiritual and esoteric significance. The ancient land of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, its reputation in the 19th Century as the Burned Over District derived from the waves of evangelical fervor that swept across the state. It was also the birthplace of American Feminism, Spiritualism, and the utopian Oneida Community. Today it is still home to alternative communities and to biodynamic farms and centers of holistic learning, and is a vast, beautiful, and culturally vital part of America.

We begin our journey by visiting Bethel Woods Cultural Center, site of the legendary Woodstock Festival in 1969 that captured the love-centered spirit of a generation. From there we travel to Ithaca to the Moosewood Café, a seminal force in the world of natural foods. We will spend the night near Seneca Falls where the first Women's Rights Convention met in 1848 and Marjorie Roth will speak to us on the intertwined stories of Spiritualism and early Feminism. The next morning we will gather at the former home of Matilda Gage, and Jeanne Shenandoah of the Onondaga Nation and Sally Roesch Wagner will speak on the influence of the Iroquois culture on the pioneering feminists. We go on to the Oneida Community where utopian free love and gender equality flourished in the mid-19th Century. Our last two nights will be spent at a Theosophical Retreat Center, from which we will journey to the enchanting Hawthorne Valley where we will learn how the legacy of the great esoteric philosopher Rudolf Steiner lives on in a vibrant biodynamic farm, Waldorf school, research center and nearby Camphill Village. On our last full day we travel to the Abode of the Message, the Sufi community in New Lebanon where Pir Zia Inayat Khan will speak to us on his sense of Inner America. Our final morning concludes at Olana, exquisite home of the Hudson River painter Frederick Church. The sublime and epic vista that unfolds before us as the Valley stretches toward the Catskills provides a perfect spot to conclude our Quest.

Price: \$985 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$1095 for a single room. This cost includes accommodations for the nights of August 28–31, all meals, travel in a luxury coach and entrance fees to sites.

People not attending the conference at Menla are welcome to join us for this post-conference journey. Please see www.EsotericQuest.org or call Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101 for more details.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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Dead Women Do Tell Tales

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The Legacy of the Black Church and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Struggle for the Soul of America

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The Pursuit of Real Happiness:

**The Soul of America and the
Buddha Dharma**

Robert Thurman, Ph.D.

Evenings of Gospel, The Songs of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, and Stories from Elizabeth Street, New York City, 1905

*Plus a Post-Conference Journey: Esoteric Upstate New York and the Hudson Valley:
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83 Spring Street
New York, NY 10012

AN ESOTERIC QUEST FOR INNER AMERICA

*Exploring the History and
Renewal of the American Soul*

**August 24–28, 2009, Phoenicia,
New York, just outside of Woodstock**

www.EsotericQuest.org

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