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## WHAT IS SENSRI

### I DEVELOPING PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODS AND PLACING THEM IN SERVICE TO THE WORLD

2 While the roots of SENSRI, the *Saratoga Experiential Natural Science Research Institute*, can be traced back a number of years and through many events and people, the formal founding of SENSRI occurred in the summer of 1999. In August of that year, Stephen Edelglass, Michael D'Aleo and Kim Klopstock filed the papers to create SENSRI, a 501 (c) 3 research organization founded to further the principles of phenomenological science.

4 SENSRI's aim is to study, develop and cultivate an approach to science that recognizes that the foundation for human knowledge is fundamentally based on the *relationship* that exists between a perceiving human being and the natural world. This knowing has its origin in the rich sensory impressions that are available to a healthy individual as well as the conceptual relationships that can be discovered between phenomena and impressions. With such an approach to science, the actual observation of phenomena is paramount to developing an understanding of the world. The practice of this form of science naturally results in a deeper connection being experienced between each human being and his or her surrounding.

By focusing on this connection, there arises a greater awareness of the human individuality as well as a stronger appreciation for the subtleties of the phenomena of the natural world. A phenomenological approach to science is neither subjective nor objective, but instead acknowledges that both the perceiving human being and the outer world both arise as concepts from the same experiential event. As a result, the activities of perceiving and conceptualization become key processes necessary to awaken to, before any investigation can begin into the nature of either an 'inner world' or 'outer world'.

Because of its emphasis on experience, phenomena-based science resists the formations of theories that try to 'explain' what is happening beyond experiences. In the case of atoms, for example, people often impose a conceptual framework appropriate for the macroscopic world and inappropriately impose it on the microscopic world. It is not a question of accepting or rejecting phenomenal experiences, but instead, rigorously insisting that the conceptual framework for thinking about a particular phenomenon be one that is true to the experience.

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**Researchers:** Michael D'Aleo, Tim Scherbatskoy Ph.D.

**Affiliate Researchers:** Georg Maier Ph.D., Ron Brady (2003)

**Board of Directors:**

Michael D'Aleo, Georgiana Ducas, Hanna Edelglass, Kim Klopstock, Tim Scherbatskoy Ph.D, Stephen Edelglass (2000)

# WATER RESEARCH

## PERCEIVING WATER'S ACTIVITIES AND WAYS OF BEING

Water. We can't go a day without it. All life depends on the water which continually circulates in the atmosphere, plants, earth, water-bodies and our societies. Water also is a sensitive environmental issue. Increasingly, water is bought and sold as a commodity. There is not enough of it in some places, it's not clean enough in others, and it's now recognized as a critical factor in global climate change problems, both as a greenhouse gas (water vapor) and as an element of weather. Economic, political and environmental considerations are rapidly changing our relationship to water. Fortunately, new ways of thinking are also allowing us to change our understanding of water.

While we are commonly aware of water's physical forms (rain, ice, rivers, tap water, etc.) many of the subtler activities of water are often less noticed. As a material substance water has dozens of unexpected physical and chemical properties, many of which are associated with its unique life-giving activity. When understood holistically, water transcends materialistic viewpoints as commodity, environmental issue, or chemical substance. When we experience water directly with attentive perception and begin to notice its activity and ways of being, we discover qualities that stimulate our thinking and create possibilities of new relationships with it and the natural world.

Water studies at SENSRI are devoted to finding these new relationships through a research program known as the Living Waters Project. Our research takes a phenomena-centered approach to understanding water in the life activities of plants, animals and Earth. Many researchers have noted water's almost life-like behaviors, but only a few have undertaken water research from a phenomena-centered approach, developing knowledge about water from careful empirical observation of its behavior. This approach is needed in order to see beyond its material substance and to more deeply understand the activity that arises when water interacts with forms and forces around it.

Our water research addresses three questions: Can we develop new approaches to perceiving the activity of water? Do the movements of fluids in streams, springs, trees and blood vessels show us new explanations of water's activity? Can a new understanding of the nature of water lead to new solutions to global problems (such as adequate clean water)? Two senior SENSRI researchers, Michael D'Aleo and Tim Scherbatskoy, have recently received initial support in the form of a matching grant from the Nordlys Foundation and an individual donor to begin to actively investigate these questions.

One of the broad goals of SENSRI's work is to develop phenomena-centered approaches to the study of nature. Following techniques similar to those expressed by Goethe, the idea in this is to allow a subject to speak for itself, without application of preconceived theories and concepts, and to be receptive to its language. Michael D'Aleo has recently been developing methods along these lines to observe different aspects of water's movement than are commonly experienced, addressing the first research question. This technique requires the observer to use a more peripheral gaze, one that is similar to certain meditative exercises in the Zen tradition. In this technique, in a stream for example, new patterns of movement are observed that are not tied to the water's motion down the stream, but instead, can only be described as similar to watching an animal breathe. From this work, new relationships have been found between water behavior, some novel water technologies of Viktor Schaubberger (early 1900's) and the existing laws of mechanics. Some of this work has already been applied in a high school senior elective class titled "Dynamic Process and Form".

This research will also include two new projects for SENSRI, one involving high school student interns. Monitoring of several artesian springs in the Saratoga Springs area will be initiated this summer in order to understand the natural variability in these waters' properties, and their response to climate and astronomical conditions. This will help us understand some of the subtle behaviors of these unique waters. A review of the current controversies in water transport in large trees will also be undertaken in order to further understand fluid movement in living systems and to investigate the unique water/mineral separation phenomena in plant transport systems.

This integrated research program continues to deepen our knowledge of water's fundamental nature, and convinces us that understanding water's living properties may provide the key to many new technologies. A key aspect of our current work, addressing the third research question, is aimed at the restoration and rejuvenation of water. We are developing methods for achieving this with simple, inexpensive technology that can provide water purification suitable for broad application throughout the world. Building on ideas developed in the early 20th century, our research follows some novel approaches to working with water, leading to a paradigm that could potentially revolutionize not only humankind's use of water, but our fundamental relationship with the natural world. Given the challenging state of global water supplies, this is an urgent priority.

SENSRI has also been active in promoting phenomena-centered water studies. In November 2002, SENSRI sponsored and hosted a three day conference on Water. Participants from across the U.S. shared their own research on water issues. An overview of this conference was presented in the Winter 2003 SENSRI Newsletter. Last year Michael D'Aleo successfully built a system to recreate the Lord Kelvin "Thunderstorm" demonstration. This device created a high voltage electric field that results purely from the falling of water through a specific geometrical copper structure. This unusual effect, found in the natural world, is believed to be an important component of the movement and circulation of water in the air. Michael also had the good fortune to visit an exhibit of the water work of Viktor Schauberg, Hans Jenny, and Theodore Schwenk at the Grossglockner in Austria. This exhibit included a display of equipment and devices built by Schauberg. The presentation of this work in such a public, well-attended venue suggests that the new paradigm related to human understanding of nature's processes, and water's activity in particular, is emerging and gaining acceptance.

- Tim Scherbatskoy



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### ONGOING PROJECTS

Research at SENSRI is focused on developing a clearer picture of the relationship between human experience and the natural world. This has manifested in the publication of the book *The Marriage of Sense and Thought*, by Edelglass, Maier et al, and a working manuscript in progress entitled *Being on Earth*, By Maier, Brady and Edelglass. (See page 4)

SENSRI is developing educational methods designed to help individuals experience both themselves and the world more deeply. Present projects range from hosting a High School Chemistry Conference, developing a one year part-time training program for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Waldorf class teachers, to the *ONE WORLD* experiential course being developed for adolescents and adults. (See page 6)

SENSRI is engaged in the study of natural phenomena. Using a sense-based approach, a deeper understanding of the natural world is being developed. Currently, SENSRI has begun research focused on the movement of fluids in nature. This broadly based project is looking at patterns of fluid movement in water in streams and the springs of Saratoga, the movement of fluids in trees, and the movement of animals such as the trout .

- Michael D'Aleo

The current SENSRI research team in Saratoga Springs NY is led by the following two scientists :

*Michael D'Aleo, Director of Research, brings experience from the fields of physics and engineering. He spent a number of years in the electronics industry where among other activities, he experimented with thermal forces and used natural free-convection currents to cool electronic systems. He is listed as an inventor on 16 U.S. patents. Currently, Michael is engaged in research related to the movement of water and has been investigating this field for the last 4 years. He also regularly collaborates with researchers in other organizations, including the Nature Institute in Harlemville.*

*Tim Scherbatskoy, Principal Researcher, holds a Ph.D. in plant physiology from the University of Vermont where he was director of the Vermont Monitoring Cooperative, an environmental ecological research center. He has published a dozen papers related to the effects and behavior of environmental pollutants in plants and forest ecosystems. His current interests include monitoring water quality in subterranean and surface waters, the transport mechanisms for water in trees, and environmental botany.*

SENSRI's research team is presently joined by a scientist in Switzerland :

*Georg Maier, Associate Researcher, holds a Ph.D. in physics from Germany. From 1961 to 1969, he researched solid state structures by means of neutron optics. Since then he has been a co-worker at the Research Institute at the Goetheanum, mainly engaged in the development of physics on the basis of sense experience. He is co-author of 'The Marriage of Sense and Thought' and 'Optik der Bilder'.*

# HOW “*BEING ON EARTH*” EVOLVED

AN UPDATE ON THE MANUSCRIPT

Stephen Edelglass first got me involved in a book, eventually to be published in 1992, and then to have the title “Matter and Mind”. He had been working on this with John Davy and Hans Gebert, but John Davy had died in 1984 and for some time the manuscript had been resting in a drawer. “*The Marriage of Sense and Thought*” was published in 1997 as its second edition. Here Stephen remarked in the preface: “While the first edition was well received, readers did not always notice that a truly phenomena-based science has radical implications for understanding sense experience and the world of phenomena. The present revised edition is an attempt to remedy that situation.”

To state these “radical implications” much more explicitly was what Stephen had in mind when he already envisaged writing a totally new, next book. And Ron Brady was obviously the person to be asked to cooperate in his new project. We knew that he had found a much more precise and deeper understanding of sense experience. Some tentative titles may illustrate what we



were aiming at, such as: “*Doing without Metaphysics*” and “*Modern Esoteric Practice*”. These are to be found as headings from an outline made in 1997. From then on the three authors began to write. Stephen aimed at applying the phenomena-based approach in education. Ron was writing up all his work on intentionality. Georg had been trying to write about the meaning of the “esoteric”, but that turned out to be much too historical and was scrapped; just a chapter on after-images and allied effects was kept.

In July 2000 the authors –reinforced by Hanna Edelglass, Michael D’Aleo and Johannes Kuhl– discussed the project at a meeting in Saratoga, at the end of which the themes to be worked on by the authors were fixed anew. The tentative title now read: “*For the Time Being*”. It was decided that each author should introduce his approach with a biographical essay, as Ron had done. Stephen became ill in the fall of that year and died on November 17th, 2000.

Thanks to the encouragement of the supporting group, Ron and Georg could continue their work and Michael took over managing the project. All (now also with Ellen Dolgin and Christa Maier) met in 2001 in Saratoga. There a new outline was created, with chapters by Ron and Georg, alternating with chapters already written by Stephen. This was followed by a meeting in 2002 in Arosa, Switzerland, where the target for completion was fixed for August 15th, 2003. Hanna had formulated the current title “*Being on Earth*”; Ron was coming to see Georg in March to complete the outline and work. But then, on March 27, 2003, Ron suddenly died Dornach, Switzerland, in the Goetheanum at the University for Spiritual Science. He was there to give a talk on some of the themes he had been working on for the manuscript.

In keeping with the target date, the manuscript was put together with Michael’s help in the beginning of August 2003 in Saratoga. The manuscript could now be read by those interested in it. Michael had been intensively looking for an editor, but no one had agreed. Moreover, the book was now an orphan, being an American book without a living American author. It was really in need of being adopted. With this in mind, Hanna, Michael, Christa and I went to visit Henrike and Craig Holdredge, and Steve Talbott at the Nature Institute in Hawthorne Valley, NY, on August 7th, 2003. To our surprise, Steve Talbott volunteered to work through the manuscript with people at the Institute. Since then a lively and productive correspondence has occurred. One must know that Steve Talbott had for a long time been Stephen Edelglass’ top choice as the editor of the manuscript. We are grateful for Steve’s willingness to take this project on.

- Georg Maier

# CHERISHING THE APPEARANCES

A REMEMBRANCE OF SENSRI AFFILIATE RESEARCHER RON BRADY

One of the many insights Ron gave to me was the recognition that our best and worst qualities coexist to remind us that our view of the world needs to be grounded in something beyond ourselves. He used much of this time on Earth to explore untapped potential in ideas, in his teaching and writing, and in his personal relationships. Ron's presence, even now, brims with the fullness of life: a potent reminder to incorporate what we already know and have in preparation for what is to come. The very mystery surrounding the unknown enchanted him. He loved sublimity in all its forms.

The brilliant, vital mind and intellectual energy that Ron nurtured in himself and others are perhaps his best-known side. But I'd like to share its twin: the man of sensitivity, wit, and laughter. In Ron's view, embracing the life of the mind had to include concrete experiences alongside the abstractions that were his stock and trade. Therefore, on any given day, a



decision to take a walk to test a notion of perception he had spent the morning writing (and revising, and revising, and revising) could also include an impromptu picnic, if he wanted more than one pair of eyes to see the appearances over an extended period of time. If the work involved science and art, we would drive into New York and choose a museum. Time was not apportioned to work or play; the combination was automatic. Rushing through things was seldom the case. Even the most mundane errands would be fit in, all finding their place in the "couple of hours" that would stretch as we needed them to. A meal afterward, focusing on

the discoveries and/or frustrations of the day's work, as well as the quality of the food and wine, was essential. Only when a vanishing point of sorts had been reached would he turn to other things. And then the same irrepressible personality would turn its attention to film, music, or lounging.

Ron was born on April 5, 1937, the only child of Ruth and Harold Brady. His childhood was spent in Yonkers, NY, in a house they shared with his maternal grandparents and uncles. Both of his parents were athletic and enjoyed outdoor pleasures, from camping to ice skating, to observing storms and the stars. Ron's enthusiasm for these values balanced his studies, and often gave him the multi-faceted approach to concepts that helped him break new ground in philosophy of science.

A daring child and adolescent, Ron and his friends became famous for their experiments in rocketry that sometimes barely escaped police notice. He was often lost in thought, although, he told me, not necessarily on the topic of his teachers. It was not until he went to Columbia University that his full potential began to emerge. Yet, Ron also said that he decided in the seventh grade to be an intellectual; he just did not know exactly what that meant at the time. This same reckless side, together with his meticulous thought processes, gave him what he needed to push the envelope: thus my opening remark.

No one I have ever known taught the range of subjects he did: philosophy, literature, American Studies, and Business Ethics courses were continually rotated in the thirty years he taught at Ramapo College of New Jersey. His astonishing ability to lecture without notes (or even marginalia in many of the books he used) added to his allure as an instructor, as well as his reputation for going all over the place in his talk, and then (magically) providing the clues and the context for it all. His students and colleagues at the college are trying to keep his legacy alive. Not all people could or would do their part to keep up with Ron Brady in conversation; only those of us who fancied the excursion and also tried to win a few arguments along the way reaped the riches of those hours. Life was an adventure to him, and anyone who spent time with him knows that.

- Ellen Dolgin

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## ONE WORLD

For ages, adventurous men and women have sought out the beauty and isolation of the great mountain ranges of the world. Seeking to explore the outer landscape, many of them have also had deep inner experiences often captured in journals, on canvases, or as poetry. A common theme that runs through these accounts is a sense of unity of the inner and the outer world, or 'ONE WORLD'.

For the last three winters, Michael D'Aleo and Stephen Balmer, a Humanities teacher at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs, have run a unique program exploring this theme with high school students. There are now plans to offer this experience for adolescents and adults who are interested in exploring this theme both through their own individual experiences in the natural world and the writings of others. Participants will spend 5 days in the Adirondack Mountains visiting unusual places under unusual circumstances. For example, one night will be spent hiking a mountain under a full moon to encounter directly the beauty of the world under this seldom experienced quality of light. Often written about in poetry, the subtlety of these conditions not only affects the appearance of the surrounding landscape, it also calls forth a different mood within the individual. Other varied and rich opportunities will occur throughout the five days.

The intention of this week is neither that of conquering nature or simply learning to name and classify experiences into different species or types. Instead, each individual will be led to find the conditions that allow him or her to 'see' beyond what occurs in more habitual circumstances.

Participants will be expected to be in good physical condition and be willing to work with situations that are dependent upon the changes of weather and other conditions. Each participant is also assumed to have an interest in reading literature and poetry, and keeping a journal. Additionally, they should also be comfortable spending time alone as well as interacting in a social community.

SENSRI recently received a matching grant from the Wieland Family Trust to develop the program for adults as well as a summer adolescent course. The first programs are expected to begin in early 2005. For more information or advanced notice of the 'ONE WORLD' program, please contact us.

- Michael D'Aleo

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