

Knights Templars Inter-branch Festival & Conference, St. John's Tide 2008, Stonehaven Farm (Founded 1737), Hershey, Penna. USA

Dear Friend of the Susquehanna Corps de Michael--*Anthroposophical Society in Hershey,*

Building on the success of the Fall 2007 Knights Templars International Conference, over 33 souls recently convened in Hershey to celebrate the **Templar Initiative for community, group, and branch renewal**. Community life, a foremost international conference theme, rose to the level of experience when nearly 150 souls gathered last Fall at Camphill Soltane (near Philadelphia). In the spirit of a knightly quest we came together to discover the lasting meaning and significance of the Templars' Sacrifice--A Destiny of Courage: Today's Michaelic Call!

Monica Gallardo, a member of the Anthroposophical Society on Long Island, NY, experienced a warmth of community life pervading the international conference at Soltane. To connect again with this enlivened community, Monica recently journeyed to Stonehaven--home of The Corps de Michael in Hershey, PA--and participated in this year's Knights Templars Festival & Conference at St. John's Tide. Monica, along with representatives of six groups and branches of the Anthroposophical Society, was not disappointed by her community experience in the *sweetest place on earth*.*

The Knights Templars Inter-branch Festival & Conference convened on the last Saturday of June 2008 in the serene splendor of the Hershey countryside. The original Templar Knights held their largest annual gatherings at St. John's Tide. On these festive occasions new knights were inducted into the brotherhood! Surrounded by meadows, streams, woods, fields, and the stone facade of a former colonial mansion house, we warmly welcomed members of the Albert Steffen Group (Pittsburgh), Aurora Group (Buffalo), Anthroposophy New York City Branch, Anthroposophical Society of Long Island (NY), and Southeastern Pennsylvania Branch (Kimberton). Friends and members of the Susquehanna Corps de Michael--*Anthroposophical Society in Hershey* arrived at Stonehaven from six counties of the vast Susquehanna Valley, heart of William Penn's *Holy Experiment (spirit-seed of American Freedom and New World cosmopolitanism)*. Dorothea Davis represented Camphill Soltane while current students and one alumnus represented both the Susquehanna Waldorf School, and The Waldorf School of Garden City (NY). We were also joined by two board members of a spiritual center north of Harrisburg, the Amethyst Foundation. Most participants were veterans of the Knights Templars International Conference (Fall 2007) co-sponsored by The Corps de Michael, Camphill Soltane, additional anthroposophical communities, and The Christian Community.

The festival & conference served as a reunion of international conference participants residing in the Northeast USA, occasion to recall the conference's consecration at Stonehaven in the white flames of last year's Inter-branch St. John's Bonfire, and the welling-up of soul and community forces as spirit-seed of a potential 2nd Knights Templars International Conference.

The Stonehaven festival and conference included a community potluck on the West Lawn, keynote address by Scott Hicks, "Category and Cosmic Script: the Ars Magna of Raimon Llull," community singing led by Lisa Hildreth and Lynn Charlton, a gargantuan record-breaking bonfire-on-the-meadow, and Arthurian Legends as told by Franklin LaVoie, the Bard of Basswood (near Buffalo). Bluemchen Frey of The Corps de Michael displayed the inspired anthroposophical art of Ymelda Hamann Mentelberg (a personal pupil of Rudolf Steiner) in the Rose Room. She also offered prints and cards of Ymelda's artwork for sale. Jennifer Lopez of the Long Island Group and Jason Cohen of Garden City Waldorf, both acclaimed the Stonehaven Templar Bonfire to be "**by far the most spectacular bonfire we have ever experienced!**"

In the bonfire we could experience the fiery Cosmic Word--the Logos--which opens St. John's Gospel, all four elements, and the warm enthusiasm of spiritual science as transmuted astral passion. The raging 20 to thirty foot flames were fanned by winds which changed directions several times. The flames were also accompanied by high-flying sparks/cinders and towards the end, droplets of rain. Following this awe-inspiring experience, we convened again in the Michael Room to inwardly center and hear Arthurian Legends told by Bard Franklin. These magical tales concluded with a closing circle wherein all recited together the last two panels of the Foundation Stone Meditation... and then, the words of group-life consecration, "**Community above us, Christ within us!**" (*Rudolf Steiner, Preparing for the Sixth Epoch*)

As continued confirmation of this living Templar Initiative for the renewal of group life, at least thirteen participants gathered Sunday morning at a Hershey diner for a follow-up breakfast. Representatives of five anthroposophical groups, as well as the Garden City Waldorf School, enjoyed strawberry-almond pancakes, omelettes, hashbrowns, eggs benedict, toast, coffee, and, of course, a specialty of Milton Hershey's threefolded utopian town: chocolate chip pancakes.

Many heartfelt thanks to Jennifer Lopez of Long Island, who provided the following pictures:



St. John's Templar Bonfire at Stonehaven



**Dorothea and David
representing international conference co-sponsors**



Bard Franklin tells Arthurian tales in the Michael Room

With heartfelt thanks to all representatives who contributed time, talent, home-made food and/or enlivened the inter-branch festival conference with their presence and participation, and on behalf of the sweetest Michaelites on earth, we close with the Templar anthem that opened both Soltane and Stonehaven conferences:

NON NOBIS DOMINE NON NOBIS, SED NOMINE TUO DA GLORIAM
Not for us, O Lord, not for us, but to Thy Name give the glory!

David Lenker
(for the)
Susquehanna Corps de Michael

**In 1903 American philanthropist and industrialist, Milton S. Hershey, broke*

ground for the world's largest chocolate factory. Simultaneous to construction, he laid out a model utopian town known today as Hershey, PA. In 1909 the 'chocolate king' founded a school for orphan boys on a 12,000 acre farm campus surrounding the town and effectively completing a threefold commonwealth as Rudolf Steiner understood the free beneficent working of the economic, political, and cultural spheres. In 1918, just one year prior to Steiner's publication of "The Threefold Commonwealth," Hershey donated his entire personal fortune and controlling chocolate company stock to three community trusts. The largest of these was earmarked for the orphans' school which continues today (funded by both the Trust and Hershey Chocolate profits) as America's largest residential school for disadvantaged youth.