

# News from the Institute

## Events

■ During his fellowship at the institute in late 2023, Stefan Ambrose studied the geology of our region, focusing on **clay soils in the Hudson River Valley**. Collecting samples from a variety of local eco-systems, Stefan processed each one to explore its constituent silt, sand, stone and especially its clay. He then shaped test bars with the purified clay that will next be fired at 14 temperatures ranging from 1607 °F to 2350 °F. His work seeks to reveal the unique and varying characteristics of local clay embedded in the landscape.



■ At the end of 2023, Jon McAlice and Henrike Holdrege hosted a series of four interactive online demonstrations for the Anthroposophical Society of America. Each 75-minute live session used phenomena to address the topic of **“Engaging in Goethean Practice: From Transformation to Metamorphosis.”**

■ Henrike and Craig Holdrege taught a three-day workshop in December near São Paolo for students enrolled in **Escola Schumacher Brasil**, introducing them to Goethean practice.



■ In February, Craig Holdrege facilitated an online colloquium for the **World Goetheanum Association**, whose aim is to provide an overview of current Goethean research and its approaches. The association also supports interdisciplinary exchange and promotes meaningful collaborations. Its current focus explores how Goetheanism can transform the challenge of our ecological crisis.

■ We held our second **Climate Change Colloquium** at the institute on February 23-25, bringing together educators and others



to explore how climate change can best be taught in school curricula for grades 7-12. The group conducted various experiments related to topics central to understanding climate and life processes.

■ By request, this past winter Craig Holdrege gave an online presentation, “An Introduction to Goethean Phenomenology,” for health professionals enrolled in a program called Whole Health at **Oswaldo Cruz German Hospital** in São Paolo.

■ Australian poet, author, and philosopher Luke Fischer gave a public talk on February 28 at the institute, sharing **“A Poetic Vision of Nature.”** His work explores how poetry and Goethean science can transform our experience and understanding of the natural world.



■ In early March, The Nature Institute held a colloquium on the **Forms of Meaning in Living Beings**, exploring ways of connecting Goethean practices in observation and exact imagination with the insights of an alternative holistic approach called biosemiotics (bio= life, semiotics = meaning). Our staff was joined by Australian poet and philosopher Luke Fischer and English paleontologist Judyth Sassoon.

■ Henrike Holdrege gave a slide presentation in March at the **Bombay Beach Biennale 2024** in California. Her topic, “To the Infinite and Back Again: What Can Projective Geometry Teach Us (even if we’re not mathematically inclined)?”, highlighted the value of projective geometry in contemporary thought and life.

■ A cohort of 22 participants from around the world began our 15-month **Foundation Course in Goethean Science** this spring with assigned readings and online meetings.



■ Henrike Holdrege and Marisha Plotnik recently led our 2024 **Math Alive!** professional development workshop for middle school teachers and homeschool educators. They addressed topics such as the Pentagon, Pentagram, and the Golden Mean, and created a forum for collegial exchange.

- Our series of “**Drawing into Nature**” workshops with artist-educator Ella Lapointe resumes this spring with six outdoor afternoon sessions from May through June. The course is designed for individuals who want to develop a regular drawing practice while appreciating the beauty, rhythms, and changes of spring and early summer.

- Jon McAlice has been involved with schools in America and Europe developing phenomenological approaches to collaborative leadership and curriculum development. In April, he hosted a workshop on Goethean practice at the **International Teacher Education Conference** at the Goetheanum.

- On April 22, Craig Holdrege gave a public talk at the institute on the wisdom of plants in honor of **Earth Day**. A recording of this talk will be shared this summer through our podcast, *In Dialogue With Nature*.

- At the end of May, institute educator Ryan Shea will travel to the Netherlands to present at the **Coworkers Gathering**, a week-long initiative of the Youth Section of the Goetheanum that aims to help young adults connect their university studies with anthroposophy and explore various vocations that can be fully engaging.

- John Gouldthorpe will offer an online exploration this spring of Thomas Fuchs’ essay, “**The Brain — A Mediating Organ**,” for those who have completed our Foundation Course.

- Those who have completed our Foundation Course have been invited to participate in four days of collaborative advanced study on “**Plant Observation and the Living World**” this summer.

This offering is in response to requests we’ve received to further develop the practices we have introduced in our other education programs.



## Recent Podcast Episodes

You can find our podcast on the institute’s website ([natureinstitute.org/podcast/in-dialogue-with-nature](https://natureinstitute.org/podcast/in-dialogue-with-nature)) or wherever you access podcasts.

- Last November, Ryan Shea gave a talk at the institute on “**Living in the Present: Practices for Being In and With Nature**,” that is now available at our podcast.

By working through several concrete practices, Ryan explores ways in which nature might help us develop the capacity to be fully present. His focus gives attention to the difference in lessons from plant and animal teachers.

- In a rare interview with Henrike and Craig Holdrege, filmed in Brazil in 2019, they speak of their transformative work and the Goethean

perspective that has long inspired it. A video of the interview, “**On Goethe and His Science**,”



can be found at our YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/DJFHitAUxI> or you can listen to an audio recording of the interview at our podcast.

## Staff Changes

- After five years of ably managing our office affairs, **Kristy King** left her position in March to work closer to home. We thank her and wish her well! Taking up responsibilities in the office, **Jill Jakimetz** joined our staff in April. She brings a background in environmental studies and experience in biodynamic farming.

## From Our Mailbox

*Dear Craig,*

*I’ve never written a message to a stranger before but after reading your “Story of an Organism: Common Milkweed” I really needed to tell you what an exceptional job I thought you did in explaining the biology of this plant. The science was complete without being overwhelming and I was so grateful for the accompanying photos. I could clearly understand what you were saying by seeing the actual plant and it’s relevant parts. I found your article while searching for an aerodynamic explanation of how milkweed seeds float and disperse. Although I wasn’t able to find anything on milkweed specifically, I did find a fascinating explanation of dandelion seed vortexes. I’m grateful to have found The Nature Institute on this trip down the “Google hole” and have added my name to your mailing list. Thank you for your thoughtful work.*

— Franki Brinkman