



# Taos Institute News

January 2008

## Social Construction: Orienting Principles

Thoughts from Kenneth J. Gergen

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What does it mean to carry out work in a social constructionist frame? This is a topic of broad discussion, and it is important to resist the temptation of a conclusion. However, I thought it would be useful for these discussions to develop more systematically some of the views that lie somewhere toward the center of what we do. I invite others to elaborate, amend, or question:

**We live in worlds of meaning.** We understand and value the world and ourselves in ways that emerge from our personal history and shared culture.

**Worlds of meaning are intimately related to action.** We act largely in terms of what we interpret to be real, rational, satisfying, and good. Without meaning there would be little worth doing.

**Worlds of meaning are constructed within relationships.** What we take to be real and rational is given birth in relationships. Without relationship there would be little of meaning.

**New worlds of meaning are possible.** We are not possessed or determined by the past. We may abandon or dissolve dysfunctional ways of life, and together create alternatives.

**To sustain what is valuable, or to create new futures, requires participation in relationships.** If we damage or destroy relations, we lose the capacity to sustain a way of life, and to create new futures.

**When worlds of meaning intersect, creative outcomes may occur.** New forms of relating, new realities, and new possibilities may all emerge.

**When worlds of meaning conflict, they may lead to alienation and aggression, thus undermining relations and their creative potential.**

**Through creative care for relationships, the destructive potentials of conflict may be reduced, or transformed.**

**The preceding understandings do not constitute beliefs.** They are neither true nor false. They are ways of approaching life that, for many, hold great promise.

*As we generate meaning together we create the future.*

Join us in beautiful Sarasota, Florida as *The Taos Institute* presents a conference:

**Dialogues that Deliver:**  
Generative Practices in Collaboration, Conflict and Community

Mark your calendars for:  
Sept 25 – 28, 2008

## Transformative Dialogues: A Summer Workshop Institute, June 2007



The 2007 Summer Workshop Institute, held from June 24th - June 29th at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, New Hampshire, was a resounding success. Over 100 academic leaders and outstanding practitioners in diverse professional fields from 17 different countries participated in the Workshop Institute. Eight 10-hour workshops were presented during the five days. The organizing theme of the Institute was *Transformative Dialogues* and, increasingly during our week together, transformative dialogues occurred not only within the workshops but also within many informal gatherings, large and small, that the Institute format clearly promoted.

The workshops addressed a number of meaningful issues, including relational theory and practice, constructionist inquiry and research,

collaborative coaching, positive living, unlimited options for Appreciative Inquiry, appreciative leadership, improvisation in organizations and everyday life, Buddhism and social constructionism, and relational practices in education and training. The workshops were led by Taos Board members and Associates.

There were also 6 plenary pres-

and conversation that resulted in transformative dialogues.

Participants commented on the warm, relaxed and welcoming atmosphere of the Institute and on the engaged workshop leaders and the rich blend of participants from everywhere. They found the learning community supportive and positive. Participants acquired a deeper and more profound understanding of



entations, lunchtime topical tables, and several showcase presentations by Taos Associates. Frank Barrett's unique presentation on social construction and jazz improvisation was especially timely and exciting. These learning activities effectively supplemented the workshop experiences and generated more opportunity for the thinking, relating

social construction and relational approaches to living, learning, working and leading. In summary, the Summer Institute was a powerful and fulfilling learning experience for all.

We hope you will plan to join us for our next conference, September 25-28, 2008 in Sarasota Florida. See last page of this newsletter for details.

**Taos Institute Web-page Featuring the Associates** — Taos Institute Associates are colleagues who have supported the work of the Taos Institute and continue to promote and work with social constructionist thought, practice and theory in their own work. We hope you will take some time to visit the Taos Institute website page which features our colleagues who are Taos Associates.

**<http://www.taosinstitute.net/about/instituteassociates.html>**



# Taos Institute Board of Directors and Founders in Action Around the World

**The Board of Directors and the Founders of the Taos Institute** have been carrying out the work of the Institute over the past 12 months with enthusiasm and commitment. You will see in the following article how each of the board members has influenced the world around them through the generation of new ideas, new relationships, awards, speaking engagements, teaching engagements, writing and much more.

**Harlene Anderson**— Harlene launched two books in 2007: *Collaborative Practices: Relationships and Conversations that Make a Difference* with co-editor Taos Associate Diane Gehart and *Innovations in the Reflecting Process: The Inspiration of Tom Anderson* with co-editor Per Jensen (see [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). Harlene is pleased to announce a new online journal *International Journal of Collaborative Practices*. The *Journal* will be a space for collaborative practitioners to share their work and be part of a growing international community. ([admin@talkhgi.org](mailto:admin@talkhgi.org)). Teaching around the world included stops in 12 countries and included workshops at the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana Medellin, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Tongji University Shanghai, Universidad del Mayab, and Iona College. Join Harlene on the Mexican Riviera in June 2008 for the Annual International Summer Institute and Pre-Institute workshops. [www.harleneanderson.org](http://www.harleneanderson.org)

**David Cooperrider**—David is bringing social constructionism into the mainstream of business and management education through his work. David continues to teach and speak throughout the world and heads up the Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit at Case Western Reserve University leading positive change in businesses and business schools across the globe:

<http://worldbenefit.case.edu/>.

David has earned multiple awards this

year:

\* Distinguished Teacher of the Year 2007 at the Academy of Management Division of Organizational Development—August 2007

\* Fairmount Mineral's Endowed Professorship in Social Entrepreneurship at CWRU—September 2007

\* Aspen Institute's Faculty Pioneer Award for biggest impact in the field for Business and Society Sustainability - November 2007.

**Robert Cottor**—Bob retired in June from his forensic and clinical child and family psychiatric practice after 41 years of practice in Minnesota, California and Arizona. He and his wife, **Sharon Cottor**, who have shared an office since moving to Arizona in 1971, closed their Scottsdale office in June. Bob is continuing with his family business consulting as well as with his role on the Taos Board of Directors. Bob also is committed to working with Ryan House, a non-profit pediatric facility that will provide respite and palliative care for children with life limiting conditions. Ryan House is named for their six-year-old grandson, Ryan, who was diagnosed as an infant with spinal muscular atrophy, a progressive genetic neuromuscular disorder for which there is no treatment or cure. For more information on Ryan House visit:

<http://www.ryanhouse.org>

**Kenneth Gergen**—We are pleased to announce that Ken Gergen received the National Communication Association's Distinguished Scholar award, and received an honorary doctorate at Athens University, Greece in 2007. Ken is in conversation with individuals on every continent of the world regarding Taos Institute initiatives. He is just completing a book for Oxford University Press, entitled *Relational Being*, a book that is intended both for scholars and practitioners. An article attempting to move beyond relativism in moral conflict was published in *Common Knowledge* (and may be found at the Taos Institute website). During the year Ken was invited to



Left to right: Taos Board of Directors  
Bob Cottor, Jane Watkins, Sheila McNamee, Sally St. George, Dan Wulff, Harlene Anderson, Ken Gergen, and Mary Gergen

address audiences of organizational scholars, family therapists, psychologists, educators, inter-cultural relations scholars, gerontologists, psychiatrists, marketing analysts, psychotherapists, and literary scholars, among others, throughout the world.

**Mary Gergen**—This past year has been a busy year for Mary as she has taught and spoken to groups all over the world. She taught at Autonomia University of Barcelona in October, a class on social constructionism, with Ken. One of the exciting moments for Mary in 2007 was to meet two authors in Copenhagen, one from South Africa and one from Germany, who have created a written work on dialogic practices. While meeting with the authors, arrangements were made to publish a wonderful book: *Mapping Dialogue*, with the support of the Taos Institute and a grant to advance dialogic practices from the Whitman Foundation. This is currently a web-based publication. Mary and Ken Gergen continue to create the Positive Aging Newsletter bi-monthly. (You can email Mary if you want to subscribe at [gv4@psu.edu](mailto:gv4@psu.edu)).

The newsletter is archived on the Taos Institute website. Mary also was instrumental in editing the revised edition of *The Appreciative Organization*, written by the board members. Check out the Taos Institute website for more details and pg. 10 of this newsletter.

**Sheila McNamee**—Sheila's work has taken her around the world many times this year. Sheila is currently a visiting Professor at the School of Public Health, University of Sao Paulo, Ribeirao Preto, Brazil. She worked with Ph.D. students and faculty, teach-

## Taos Board and Founders continued .....

ing seminars focused (continued—) on dialogic practices in the Brazilian healthcare context. In addition, she is currently visiting Professor at the School of Governance at Utrecht University. This is an on-going position that allows Sheila to work with Ph.D. students and faculty creating programs focused on constructionist theory and practice. Sheila presented at the AI conference in September with Tojo Thatchenkery. Their workshop was on Appreciative Intelligence and social construction. Sheila presented at the International Critical Health Psychology biennial conference where her workshop was on dialogic practices in healthcare. She is a co-PI (principle investigator) on a national NSF grant designed to examine the use and adoption of nanotechnology. Her involvement is to design and create dialogue groups to learn about, examine and give voice to the adoption of this innovation. Sheila is the recipient of the Lindberg Award for Outstanding Scholar/Teacher at the University of New Hampshire (the highest honor within the College of Liberal Arts at UNH). See this story at: <http://unh.edu/news/campusjournal/2007/Feb/28award.cfm>

Sally St. George and Dan Wulff —

Sally and Dan have left the University of Louisville, School of Social Work and have relocated to Calgary, Canada. They teach in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary and also work as family therapists and clinical supervisors in the Calgary Family Therapy Centre. This move has enhanced their time and abilities to further research interdisciplinary work. Dan and Sally are developing coursework and mentoring practices specifically addressing the needs of graduate students to develop their research abilities/skills, especially in the qualitative arena. They co-sponsored a conference in Vancouver (November 27-29) with Chris Kinman called "Generation-al Dialogue" with principal participants, Harlene Anderson and Lynn Hoffman. It was a deliberately small gathering, designed to stimulate conversation.

**Jane Magruder Watkins**—This year Jane added Chile to the 75 countries where she has worked for 40 years as an Organization Development practitioner. She joined Taos associates Dora Schnitman and Tojo Thatchenkery to present a seminar at the Ibañez University in Santiago. Other globetrotting included Manitoba, Al-

berta and Ontario in Canada; teaching AI Foundations and an AI Retreat for practitioners in the UK; two trips to Monterrey, Mexico, teaching for Pepperdine's MSOD and Ed.D programs. She is working on expanding the Appreciative Inquiry Certificate Program (offered by NTL Institute in partnership with Case University's School of Organization Behavior). Participants in the Certificate program include practitioners from Kuwait, India, Holland, England, New Zealand, Canada, and throughout the US. Jane is "Steward" of NTL's new AI Community of Practice. Her major commitment to the field of OD is to offer and support the best possible training for AI practitioners and OD professionals. She believes that excellent training is essential as AI is spanning the globe in an amazing expansion of ways to apply AI in every type of human system.

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The founders and board member work everyday to bring the ideas of social construction to the forefront of practices that deal with bringing about positive change. It is the relationship at the center of everything.

## Diana Whitney Leaves Taos, NM and Moves to North Carolina



Diana Whitney, our Taos Institute founder who lived in Taos, New Mexico for 18 years and hosted some of our most generative gatherings there, has moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Diana was quickly welcomed into the Duke University and University of North Carolina communities. She is coaching and conducting team building sessions for executives from the World Bank, Habitat for Humanity and other organizations as part of a collaborative team from Duke and UNC.

Diana's consulting group Corporation for Positive Change co-sponsored along with The Children's Foundation

in Vancouver a highly successful conference: *Appreciative Inquiry, Creating Dynamic Destinies*. Diana and Taos Institute Associates Amanda Trosten-Bloom, Jim Ludema and Jackie Stavros contributed to the conference's success with keynote speeches and workshops.

Along with her consulting to businesses and non-profits, Diana introduced Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Change to thousands of people this year as a keynote speaker for organizations such as The Institute for Management Studies, Unity International, and The Partnership.

Diana's teaching took her to Japan where she facilitated an Appreciative Leadership Development Program for a group of 40 Japanese executives from businesses and non profits. Human Value, Diana's host organization

in Japan, has translated *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry* into Japanese.

Diana's writing agenda for the year included work on Appreciative Organization Design and a soon to be published book with Dawn Dole, Ada Jo Mann and Jen Silbert entitled *Bringing Out the Best in your Family: An Encyclopedia of Positive Questions for Families*.

And of course, Diana has established Chapel Hill as a new center for Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Change workshops. She hosted Being AI: A Spiritual Retreat to Change Agents in May and then the Advances in Appreciative Inquiry Workshop in October. Diana is planning many more reasons for you to visit Chapel Hill in 2008.

# Taos Institute—Tilburg University PhD Program in Social Sciences



Myra Virgil (center) Taos-Tilburg PhD Graduate- Spring 2006

**The Taos Institute in conjunction with Tilburg University**, offers a program of study leading to a PhD in Social Science. The degree is awarded through Tilburg University, in the Netherlands. This program is designed for mature professionals who wish to pursue a line of inquiry that will enrich their endeavors and speak to the concerns of a broader audience of scholars and practitioners.

Participants in the program must enter with a Masters degree along with substantial experience in practice. The program of study is built around a thesis project, with readings and preparations designed to facilitate the achievement of a successful dissertation. Dissertations have thus far been concerned with educational practices, organizational development, therapeutic change, and community building. Other topics are possible. The

program stresses a social constructionist orientation toward theory, research and practice.

The faculty for this program includes outstanding scholars from universities both in Europe and the U.S. Each student in the program works closely with one of these scholars. The assigned advisor provides guidance and support from the early stages of planning to the final completion of the dissertation. In some cases, depending on geography and/or special needs, a secondary advisor is assigned to assist the student. Success in the program is vitally dependent on the "self-starting" capacities of the student.

There are no formal courses or classes in this program. The program is built on the European model that presumes a student entering with a Masters degree has broad preparation in the social sciences. Thus, all study within the program will link existing knowledge bases to the individual's particular focus of study.

We are pleased to announce the awarding of the Doctorate in Social Sciences to Sandra Cottingham which took place in April 2007 at the University of Tilburg. Mary Gergen, was her advisor. Sandra's dissertation applied the principles of social constructionist theory and Appreciative Inquiry to the complex issue of integrating special needs students into mainstream



Leisbeth Gerritsen (center) Taos-Tilburg PhD Graduate- Spring 2006

classrooms. Her project involved interviewing diverse stakeholders with various concerns and interests in order to formulate programmatic possibilities for these educational institutions. .

Doug Shadel and Karla Pak received their doctorate degrees in December 2007, with John Rijsman as their advisor. Their study focused on financial exploitation of older consumers through the lens of social construction by scrutinizing the relationship between the sender of the message (con man) and the receiver of the message (victim) and by studying the differences between victims and non-victims.

For more information on this program and the various topics of study visit the program's web page at:

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/tilburg/tilburg.html>

## Completed Dissertations

The Taos Institute-Tilburg University students who have completed the program share their dissertations on the Taos Institute website. Please visit this page: [www.taosinstitute.net/tilburg/tilburgdissertations.html](http://www.taosinstitute.net/tilburg/tilburgdissertations.html) to view any of these dissertations.

## Noteworthy Dissertations

The Taos Institute is collecting dissertations from around the world which are related to social construction research, theory and practice. Visit [www.taosinstitute.net/resources/dissertations.html](http://www.taosinstitute.net/resources/dissertations.html). Many new scholars are finding intriguing and innovative ways to employ social constructionism as the substantive focus of their work, as a guide to methodological designs, or as an organizing framework for the entire dissertation/thesis enterprise. We hope these "noteworthy dissertations" will stimulate networking conversations among all who read them. Authors of these dissertations have granted the Taos Institute non-exclusive rights to post their dissertations on its website in a PDF format. Please use correct citation when quoting from any of these documents.



Sandra Cottingham (above-center) with her family- Spring 2007



**New Associates in 2007**—We are pleased to introduce the following colleagues as Associates of the Taos Institute. They were invited to participate in this capacity for their outstanding work in their field related to social construction and its applications to academics, professional practice, organizational and community development. We invite you to get to know them.

Visit our webpage for pictures and bios:  
[www.taosinstitute.net/about/instituteassociates.html](http://www.taosinstitute.net/about/instituteassociates.html)

Seth Kahan, Performance Development Group, Inc.,  
Glen Echo, Maryland, [Seth@SethKahan.com](mailto:Seth@SethKahan.com)

Edgardo Morales, San Juan, Puerto Rico,  
[emora\\_pr@hotmail.com](mailto:emora_pr@hotmail.com)

Carsten Hornstrup, Consultant, MacMann Berg, Denmark,  
[ch@macmannberg.dk](mailto:ch@macmannberg.dk)

Ilene C. Wasserman, ICW Consulting, Columbia University, and St. Joseph's Univ., Pennsylvania,  
[iwasserman@icwconsulting.com](mailto:iwasserman@icwconsulting.com)

Gertina Johanna Van Schalkwyk, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, University of Macau, Taipa, MACAU, [gjvs@umac.mo](mailto:gjvs@umac.mo)

Arlene Katz, Harvard University School of Medical, Cambridge, Massachusetts,  
[arlene\\_katz@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:arlene_katz@hms.harvard.edu)

Marjorie C. Roberts, Salem Center for Therapy, Training & Research, Massachusetts, [mcfroberts@aol.com](mailto:mcfroberts@aol.com)

Jen Hetzel Silbert, Innovations Partners, Rhode Island  
[jen@innovationpartners.com](mailto:jen@innovationpartners.com)

Tony Silbert, Innovation Partners, Rhode Island  
[tsilbert@innovationpartners.com](mailto:tsilbert@innovationpartners.com)

Yvonne Bonner, Health Unit of Reggio Emilia, Italy,  
[y.bonner@re.nettuno.it](mailto:y.bonner@re.nettuno.it)

Myra Virgil, The Commission for Unity and Racial Equality (CURE), Bahamas, [marcandmyra@ibl.bm](mailto:marcandmyra@ibl.bm)

Sandra Cottingham, School District 36 and U. of British Columbia, British Columbia, [scottingham@dccnet.com](mailto:scottingham@dccnet.com)

Marie Hoskins, School of Child and Youth Care, Univ. of Victoria, [mhoskins@uvic.ca](mailto:mhoskins@uvic.ca)

Dan Saint, Jefferson Wells, Michigan,  
[dansaint@ceoexpress.com](mailto:dansaint@ceoexpress.com)

Anne Morrison, Kent State University, College of Education, Ohio, [amorriso@kent.edu](mailto:amorriso@kent.edu)

Jakob Norlem, Consultant, Attractor, Denmark,  
[jn@attractor.dk](mailto:jn@attractor.dk)

The new associates pictures and short bios will be available on the Taos Institute website soon.

## In Memorium:

**The Taos Institute** remembers colleagues who have contributed to the field of dialogue, narrative scholarship, and social construction. It is with sadness that we share with you the news of the loss of three highly esteemed Taos Associates.



**Tom Andersen** was Professor of Social Psychiatry at the Institute of Community Medicine, University of Tromsø, Norway, and was the initiator of Reflective Processes in therapeutic practices. He is the author of *The Reflecting Team: Dialogues and Dialogues about Dialogues*, 1991, and *Death Talk: Conversations with Children and Families*, 1997. Tom died in the spring of 2007. He will be missed.

**Ted Sarbin**, At the age of 94, Honorary Associate, Ted Sarbin passed away after a lengthy illness. His contributions to narrative scholarship were enormous, and they will remain with us for years to come. Ted was also a dear friend to many of us; Frank Barrett was with him when he died. Also see: [web.lemoyne.edu/~hevern/nrtheorists/sarbin\\_theodore\\_r.html](http://web.lemoyne.edu/~hevern/nrtheorists/sarbin_theodore_r.html)



On May 31, 2006, we lost **Michael Mahoney**. Michael was the editor of *Constructivism in the Human Sciences*, and a major force for innovation and integration in his writings on psychotherapy. During his final years he was working diligently to bring together social construction and cognitive constructivist ideas and practices. Also see: [www.constructivist.net/mahoney/home.htm](http://www.constructivist.net/mahoney/home.htm)

## TI Associates in Action



A sustaining vision of the Taos Institute is that of an umbrella under which a network of highly talented people might find opportunities for innovation and productive action. Over the past year we have partnered with many of our Taos Associates who have realized the potentials of this vision.

Last June in New Hampshire at the Taos Summer Workshop Series, Transformative Dialogues, many Associates gave workshops, made showcase presentations, and lead round-table discussions. The following Taos Associates and Advisors were integral to the success of the workshop program: **Frank Barrett, Sharon Cottor, Dian Marie Hosking, Jim Ludema, Ralph Kelly, Sylvia London, Marge Schiller, Peggy Penn, Judith Levin, Madelyn Blair, John Rijsman, Dora Fried Schnitman, Chris Blanter, and Murray Anderson-Wallace.**

Further, workshops were offered throughout 2007 by Taos Associates: **Jim Ludema, Frank Barrett, Amanda Trosten-Bloom, Madelyn Blair, Paul Costello, Ralph Kelly, Bernard Mohr, Maureen McKenna, and Anne Radford.**

**Christine Meier**, a Taos Associate, collaborated with the Taos Institute to offer a conference in Lugano, Switzerland - May 2007 titled: *Social Construction and Caring Relationships: Moving beyond diagnosis and medication in therapeutic practices*. Board members, Kenneth Gergen and Harlene Anderson, were joined on the program by Taos Asso-

ciates, **Tom Strong and Imelda McCarthy.**

We continue to acknowledge the voluntary efforts of Taos Associates, **Jane Seiling and Jackie Stavros**, who work with authors in developing proposals and editing books for the Focus Books se-

ries. We all owe to **Alain Robiolio** a debt of gratitude for his voluntary efforts in translating into French the Taos Focus books *Dynamic Relationships*, by **Jackie Stavros** and Cheri Torres, and *Appreciative Inquiry*, by **Frank Barrett and Ron Fry**. Alain also translated the Taos Professional book—*Experiential Learning Exercises in Social Construction*, by Cottor and associates. Alain continues to translate into French the Positive Aging Newsletter.

Associates are also currently writing books for the Focus Book series. **Bernard Mohr** is teaming up with Mette Jacobsgaard on a book entitled, *Appreciative Evaluation*. **Bliss Brown** is currently completing a major work which tells the story of her *Imagine Chicago* initiative. **Ada Jo Mann, Jen Hetzel Silbert**, Diana Whitney and Dawn Dole are working on a book of positive questions for families.

In the education sector, **John Rijsman** continues to play the pivotal role in sustaining the PhD program at Tilburg University. Not only does he direct dissertations, but organizes all matriculation into the university and the final oral examinations. Other Associates now directing PhD dissertations include **Dian Marie Hosking, Imelda McCarthy, Tom Strong, Marge Schiller, and Sallyann Roth**. Honorary Associate, **Peggy Penn** is working to complete her dissertation. **Madelyn Blair**, Associate and **Jane Seiling**, TI Advisor/Associate have completed their PhDs through the Taos-Tilburg program.

In Argentina, **Dora Fried Schnitman** is spearheading a major effort to develop two MA programs in Innovation. These programs, largely based on a distance learning model, are

being developed in collaboration with Ibanez University in Santiago, Chile, and Barcelona University. Other collaborative educational opportunities are being explored by **Sylvia London and Tom Strong.**

In Denmark, **Carston Hornstrup** of MacMann-Berg Consulting, is working toward a collaborative conference, *Constructing Worlds, Language, Learning and Leading*, scheduled for 2009. The conference would bring together scholars and practitioners from wide-ranging backgrounds.

A collaborative group of Taos Associates including **Marge Schiller, Maureen McKenna, Anne Morrison, and Jackie Stavros** is working with Dawn Dole to spearhead a conference in June 2009 focused on *Appreciative Inquiry in Education*.

This is truly a stunning array of activities, and all of us should be proud for the association we share. Perhaps these initiatives will also serve as an invitation for others to dream, design and deliver within the Taos umbrella. There is talent galore, a chorus of supportive voices, and the institutional structure available to make things happen!

Contact Dawn Dole at [info@taosinstitute.net](mailto:info@taosinstitute.net) or Ken Gergen at [kgergen1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:kgergen1@swarthmore.edu) to share your ideas for collaborations and initiatives.

“Relationships are just like organisms... you starve them and they die.”  
- Jerry Seinfeld  
Comedian

## Generous Grants Allow the Institute to Develop New Programs and Offer Scholarships

The Taos Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. As such, we rely on the generous support of individuals and foundations to operate.

In 2007, the Institute was the grateful recipient of a \$25,000 grant from the Whitman Foundation. This grant allowed us to hold our first Summer Workshop Institute and begin to develop new programs in collaboration with several South American Universities to offer a joint masters degree program. These S. American programs are still in development and we are thrilled with the progress to date. The Whitman grant also provided 15 scholarships throughout the year to worthy students to attend the various work-

shops offered through the Taos Institute. The grant also enabled us to develop plans for redesigning our website—which sees over 90,000 visitors each month and is our main source of communication throughout the world. A portion of this grant also went towards the ongoing publishing of the Positive Aging Newsletter in Spanish. We are pleased to announce that the Whitman Foundation will again support the work of the Taos Institute in 2008 through another \$25,000 grant.

With the assistance of Kuo Yu, a former student of Kenneth Gergen at Swarthmore College, a \$5,000 grant was secured in 2007 which supports the Dharma Scholarship Fund. Sev-

eral students benefited from this grant support to further their doctoral education and attend Taos workshops.

Individual donations have come to the Taos Institute throughout the year from many generous donors. We send a huge thank you and a grateful smile to those who have provided such support for the ongoing efforts of the Institute. If you would like to support the work of the Taos Institute please visit the “giving” page of our website for more information.

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/about/donate.html>

**Conferences over the Years:** Take a look at all the conferences we've held over the past 15 years. The first Taos Institute conference was in April 1993 with over 130 participants from around the world.

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/about/previousconferences.html>

It is exciting to see the growth and YOU have been an important part of making this happen.



## Dialogues that Deliver: Generative Practices in Collaboration, Conflict and Community

**A Taos Institute Conference, September 25-28, 2008**

**Mark your calendars now and plan to attend.**

Join the Taos Institute Founders and Board Members as we explore Dialogic Practices that bring about positive, affirmative, appreciative and collaborative change in families, organizations, communities, businesses, and therapy. Hear stories and examples of dialogic practices and participate in dialogue as it comes alive for everyone at the conference.

Come explore, share and learn together. **Details and registration information to come.**



# Workshops in 2008

## The Taos Institute

### Workshop Series

These workshops are all fully sponsored by The Taos Institute. Questions regarding content, registration, and fees for a particular workshop may be directed to the presenter of the workshop or to the Taos Institute office— [info@taosinstitute.net](mailto:info@taosinstitute.net).

**For information and details visit:**

[www.taosinstitute.net/upcoming/workshops\\_taos.php](http://www.taosinstitute.net/upcoming/workshops_taos.php)

- **Social Construction, Relational Theory and Change Practice**, May 9—11, with Ken and Mary Gergen, Wallingford PA, email: [gv4@psu.edu](mailto:gv4@psu.edu)
- **Social Constructionist Inquiry** workshop, May 14-17, Sheila McNamee, Dan Wulff, Sally St. George, in Calgary, Canada — Doing research from a social construction framework. Email: [calgary\\_home@shaw.ca](mailto:calgary_home@shaw.ca)
- **Social Construction, Relational Theory and Change Practice**—June 4-6, with Sheila McNamee and Dian Marie Hosking, Utrecht University, The Netherlands. Email: [sheila.mcnamee@unh.edu](mailto:sheila.mcnamee@unh.edu)
- **An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination** with Jane Watkins and Ralph Kelly— Dates to be determined. Reduced fee for students. Email: [jane@appreciativeinquiryunlimited.com](mailto:jane@appreciativeinquiryunlimited.com)
- **Social Construction, Relational Theory and Change Practice**—Fall 2008 with Sheila McNamee and Harlene Anderson —Details to be determined. Email: [sheila.mcnamee@unh.edu](mailto:sheila.mcnamee@unh.edu)

## Friends of the Taos

### Institute Workshops/Conferences

The Taos Institute offers this workshop listing opportunity as a service to our associates and friends to share their great work. The Taos Institute is not responsible for the content or management of these workshops. Questions regarding registration and content should be directed to the workshop presenters. **For details visit:**

[www.taosinstitute.net/upcoming/workshops\\_friends.php](http://www.taosinstitute.net/upcoming/workshops_friends.php)

- **Foundations and Practice of AI**, Feb 5-8, with Sallie Lee, Colette Herrick, Salt Lake City, UT , [sallie@innovationpartners.com](mailto:sallie@innovationpartners.com)
- **2008 Quest Workshop: AI and Contribution**, Feb 11—14, with Jim Lord, Little Rock, AR, [www.whatkindofworld.com](http://www.whatkindofworld.com)
- **Appreciative Leadership Development**, Feb 20-23, with Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom, Chapel Hill, NC, [office@positivechange.org](mailto:office@positivechange.org)
- **Appreciative Inquiry Foundations Workshop: Igniting and Sustaining Positive Change in Organizations and Communities**, March 31—April 3, with Joanne Daykin and Catherine McKenna, Ottawa, Canada, [jdaykin@innovationpartners.com](mailto:jdaykin@innovationpartners.com)
- **Collaborative Practices in Communities, Organizations, Education, Research, and Therapy with Harlene Anderson—A Summer Institute**, June 15-20, Playa del Carmen, Mexico  
[www.harleneanderson.org/ISI2005/isi2007announcement.htm](http://www.harleneanderson.org/ISI2005/isi2007announcement.htm)
- **Collaborative Practices across Cultures with International Presenters**—Pre-Institute Workshops, June 14-15, Playa del Carmen, Mexico, see above url link.
- **Constructivist Psychology Conference**, June 18-22, with keynotes by Ken and Mary Gergen, Victoria, British Columbia, see: <http://web.uvic.ca/~cpnc2008/>, [mhoskins@uvic.ca](mailto:mhoskins@uvic.ca)
- **Foundations and Practice of AI**, July 22-25, Bernard Mohr and Sallie Lee, Portland, OR, [bjmohr@innovationpartners.com](mailto:bjmohr@innovationpartners.com)

**Positive Aging Newsletter:** The Taos Institute is pleased to offer an electronic newsletter, *Positive Aging*. The newsletter brings to light resources—from scientific research on aging, gerontology practices, and daily life—that contribute to an **appreciation of the aging process**. Challenging the longstanding view of aging as decline, this newsletter provides resources for understanding aging as an **unprecedented period of human development**.

[www.taosinstitute.net/resources/pa/](http://www.taosinstitute.net/resources/pa/)

**Free Articles and Papers:** We invite you to take a look at the articles on this web page of the Taos Institute website. Perhaps there is a paper or article which you have not read yet.....

[www.taosinstitute.net/manuscripts/manuscripts.html](http://www.taosinstitute.net/manuscripts/manuscripts.html)

On this page we want to list **“Books of Interest”**. If you know of a book that has been of interest to you, related to social construction, let us know. We can post the book cover, title and ISBN.

[www.taosinstitute.net/resources/](http://www.taosinstitute.net/resources/)



Announcing the new **Revised Edition** of the first  
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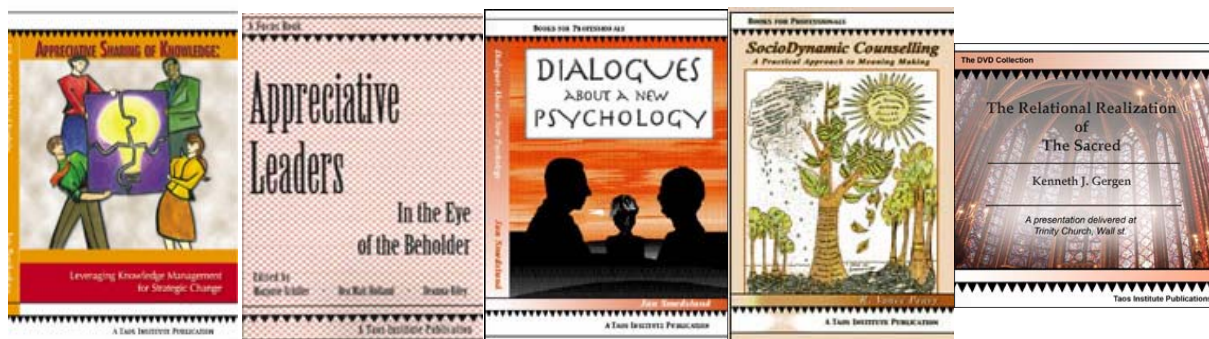
## The Appreciative Organization

The Focus Books Series began in 2001 with a small book written by Taos Founders: Harlene Anderson, David Cooperrider, Kenneth Gergen, Mary Gergen, Sheila McNamee, and Diana Whitney. The founders came together with their own visions of what makes up the *Appreciative Organization*. Today, the revised edition of the book builds upon the ideas, concepts and characteristics of the Appreciative Organization. Now included in the book is a section on helpful resources, a chapter on “valuation”, and much more. You will want to add this new “gem” to your personal library.

Order online at [www.taosinstitute.com/publications](http://www.taosinstitute.com/publications)

## Taos Institute Publications

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for books, videos, books on CD-ROM, and more.



“Organizations are, first and foremost, centers of human relatedness. Relationships come alive where there is an appreciative eye, when people see the best in one another and the whole, when they share their dreams and ultimate concerns in affirming ways, and when they are connected in full voice to create not just new worlds, but better world. *Taken from the new Revised Appreciative Organization*”



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## **Conversations in Social Construction A Video Series**

Thanks to Andrews and Clark Explorations, a significant body of constructionist thought is captured on videos that feature many of the founders, board members and associates of the Taos Institute. The growing series, "[Conversations in Social Construction](#)" now includes:

- *Foundational Ideas in Social Construction* with Ken Gergen
  - *Social Constructionist Ideas about Psychotherapy* with Harlene Anderson
  - *Generating Research* with Mary Gergen
  - *Relational Responsibility* with Sheila McNamee
  - *The Social Construction of Spirituality* with Diana Whitney
  - *Imagine Chicago* with Bliss Browne
  - *About Writing: Creating Multiple Voices* with Peggy Penn
  - *The Social Construction of Morality* with James Day
  - *Social Constructionist Ideas about Research* with Sheila McNamee
  - *Narrative and Collaborative Therapies: Blurring the Boundaries or Integrating Practices* with David Pare
  - *Performative Psychology: The Embodiment of Emotions* with Kenneth and Mary Gergen
- For more information and to purchase videos in the series go to: [Masterswork Productions](#), ([http://masterswork.com/shopsite\\_sc/store/html/conversation.html](http://masterswork.com/shopsite_sc/store/html/conversation.html)) or email [jenandrews@aol.com](mailto:jenandrews@aol.com) or call toll-free: 1-800-476-1619.

**Mark your calendars now and plan to attend!**

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