Check inside to see what’s happening at Naropa now!

Official Opening of the Joanna Macy Center

“How to Face the Mess We’re In Without Going Crazy”

Naropa University celebrated the official opening of the Joanna Macy Center on October 30 and 31, 2015. Dr. Joanna Macy gave a keynote talk and led an intensive titled “How to Face the Mess We’re In Without Going Crazy.” Alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends came together to awaken courage and creativity in order to act on behalf of our world with renewed vision, energy, and compassion, and gain a diverse community of support in action. The Joanna Macy Center at Naropa (JMC@N) seeks to advance the vision and legacy of Dr. Joanna Macy’s work in order to empower present and future generations in building a more resilient world that works for all. Learn more here: naropa.edu/academics/jmc

Dr. Joanna Macy spoke at the 2-day opening event for the center at Naropa
Reflecting on The Naropa Event

By Chuck Lief, Naropa University President

Naropa University celebrated our scholarship fundraising event, The Naropa Event, on November 14, 2015. We are grateful to the many Naropa supporters who made the evening so successful. The proceeds from The Naropa Event benefit student scholarships, which are critical to supporting our students. Higher Education opportunities are becoming more and more the privilege of fewer and fewer. Yet innate wisdom and desire to serve is not measured by economic means or good fortune. Our students are the leaders so needed today and tomorrow. Contributions in support of Naropa’s student scholarships help to create an accessible and affordable environment, one in which engagement and dedication are far more important than financial means.

We dedicated the evening of The Naropa Event to the life’s work of Pamela Krasney, who passed away in June. Pamela was a Naropa alumna with an MA in Contemplative Psychology, a longtime member of the Naropa Board of Trustees, and an extraordinarily generous donor. Pamela was never embarrassed about her material good fortune. Indeed, she celebrated it for offering her the means by which to practice personal philanthropy and to playfully (but seriously) teach all who had the good fortune to know her how we too could be generous even when we felt otherwise. At her core, Pamela was concerned about our students. Whether manifesting in a small but essential gift to assist a student with food or housing, or through a major gift to fund scholarships or a student-centered building, Pamela never wavered in her commitment to the welfare of our students. She inspired the Naropa community for almost forty years and left an indelible mark. No one laughed like Pamela. No one gave like Pamela. We miss her greatly. We plan a celebration of the life of our remarkable Pamela, with her husband Marty, daughter Samantha and son Parker, early next year, but it was inconceivable to hold The Naropa Event without honoring her.

Our previous scholarship fundraiser came at the beginning of a year-long commemoration of Naropa’s 40th anniversary. It was a year of celebrating Naropa’s founding in 1974, the remarkable impact we have had on the Boulder community, and the thousands of alumni across the globe who are so positively impacting the world. As important as it is to honor our lineage, we are equally excited about Naropa’s future. Our mission is to continue to serve a passionate, motivated, and increasingly diverse student body eager to learn and to serve with skill and compassion. And to support a brilliant faculty who are leaders in delivering education built upon a foundation of contemplative pedagogy and compassionate action.

Naropa was the birthplace of the mindfulness movement in higher education. Contemplative Education is found across our curriculum, where it is a powerful component for students in any discipline. It is transformative to students training to be counseling psychologists, teachers, chaplains, writers, performing artists, social innovators and entrepreneurs, and environmental leaders. We’re delighted to collaborate with institutions worldwide as the mindfulness revolution takes hold.

I am honored to serve as the president of Naropa. It is a joy to work in a place so committed to creating a better future, not just for our immediate community, but for the world. I think back to the words of our founder, who would tell us to aspire first to become less of a nuisance to others, then with diligence and taking advantage of good fortune, find the means to be helpful, first from honest witnessing and then by compassionate and skillful action.
Creating a Cohesive School of the Arts

This semester saw the merging of the School of the Arts with the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics. Dean Sue Hammond West is excited about this community-building initiative. “We’re coming together as artists; together we’ll strengthen the arts at Naropa.” While the Summer Writing Program will remain at the Arapahoe Campus, JKS faculty and staff will be housed at Nalanda, making this the go-to venue for music, theatre, dance, visual and literary arts.

There are lots of plans in the works for cross-curricular pollination and collaboration, including initiatives aimed at preparing graduates for sustainable lives as artists. Assistant Professor Paul Fowler is looking at how to utilize Naropa’s new Digital Media Lab to encourage digital literacy across majors. Other developments include the addition of four GA position in the MFA Theatre program, where students will be studying pedagogy, conducting research, and teaching in the BFA Performance program.

Investing in Our Local Community

Naropa’s Community Counseling Center

Joy Redstone, Director of the Naropa Counseling Center, is passionate about the modalities of healing taught in Naropa’s Graduate School of Counseling and Psychology. With Naropa Counseling Center now open and serving clients, she’s especially excited about how Naropa is living out its values of healing and joining with the Boulder community in a concrete and practical way.

“I really love the Naropa model of working with people’s strengths and with the deeper part of the self, but in the past it’s been something that’s more limited to people of higher socio-economic status,” she explains. “It’s exciting to me to be able to bring these really beautiful transformative approaches to people without a lot of resources.”

Though Boulder is often considered an affluent town, there is significant poverty and income inequity. Redstone especially sees this in the helper community. “Lots of people in our community who are nurses, police officers, child protective workers, human service workers are dedicating their lives to helping other people but not making a lot of money. They’re really on the front lines of witnessing and experiencing a lot of trauma. They’re facing hard economic choices. I would love NCC to be a resource for them,” she adds.

Redstone and the NCC Student Interns are committed to creating a culturally open and sensitive environment. NCC’s location in South Boulder is convenient to lower-income families; individual, group, and family therapy are available in Spanish and English.

Engaging with Career and Community

Under the direction of Sarah Steward, Career and Community Engagement (CCE) continues to support students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community partners through various services and programs. CCE offers career counseling and advising for students and alumni, support for faculty to integrate experiential learning in the classroom, and partnership development in the broader community for experiential learning and community engagement initiatives. This year’s co-curricular programs and academic courses supported through CCE are the Sophomore Shadow Program (a job shadow program that matches students with alumni professionals), the 100-hour Volunteer Program, the Alternative Break Course, and the undergraduate Internship Course. CCE will also be hosting special event workshops as well as career and volunteer fairs.

Extending the Reach of Contemplative Counseling

An Update from the Graduate School of Counseling and Psychology

The opening of Naropa Counseling Center is not only a boon for Boulder residents, it’s also the fruition of a long-term goal for GSCP faculty. Dean Deborah Bowman reports, “Many faculty, staff, and board members have helped bring this dream to fruition. We look forward to fulfilling our goal to make our efforts sustainable and building a center where contemplative, somatic, and transpersonal research and learning can flourish.”

Faculty have also been busy presenting at national and international conferences. Professor Christine Caldwell recently conducted a workshop on “Bodyfulness” and Trauma Recovery at the WINGS Foundation Conference in Denver. This summer, Professor Michael Franklin traveled to Colombia to present on “Befriending Inner Diversity: Mapping the Layers of Our Interiorized Communities.” Associate Professor Tina Fields was a guest speaker for The Shift Network, discussing interspecies communication and kinship; and Adjunct Faculty Jessica Whitesel presented on working with trauma and dissociation at the American Art Therapy Conference.
“Between the Lines” with Jane Dalrymple-Hollo

An Interview by Reed Bye

Artist Jane Dalrymple-Hollo has been a part of the Naropa community since moving to Boulder in 1985 with her husband, the late Anselm Hollo, a beloved poet and faculty member of the Jack Kerouac School. Jane is a long-term volunteer advisor and advocate for Naropa University’s audio and institutional archives, as well as a generous donor to Naropa. Reed Bye, former Professor of Creative Writing, interviewed Jane on her recent exhibit “Between the Lines” in Naropa University’s Lincoln Gallery. Visit naropablog.com to read the full interview.

RB: You have written of your artistic process, “I divide the picture plane with lines, angles, and curves according to my subjective experience of ‘juxtapositional tension’ between the lines.” Can you say more about this experience of entering into the tension, and, I would add, sparking conversation, between lines, angles, and curves in your drawing and painting as it goes along? And, as a second part, I’d be interested to hear how the experience of different degrees and ambiguities of depth develop within the picture plane.

JDH: Years ago, a teacher at Anderson Ranch Art Center, Gregory Botts, asked me to describe the “generative principle” of my drawings and paintings. I replied that I tend to approach the paper or canvas with no preconceived subject or plan. Usually beginning with a pencil and using the edges as benchmarks, I set out lines, angles, and curves, positioning each in relation to the whole, with the goal of creating a “tension” or “vibe” (something akin to a tone generated by a guitar or violin string) between the individual parts as well as between the parts and the whole. Gregory paused for a long moment and replied, “Oh, Juxtaposition as Content.” Later, after reading Frank Stella’s 1983 Norton Lectures at Harvard, published as a treatise called Working Space, I became interested in the idea of adding the illusion of “foreground, middle ground, background” to my primarily flat linear compositions. I couldn’t articulate it at the time, but I was looking for another level of interaction between the divided spaces, something suggesting depth. I floundered around with this idea for a long time before finding a “key,” through, oddly enough, a disciple of Frank Stella.

I grew up in rural Mississippi, but my family often visited my grandmother in the state capital, so I took a sentimental journey back to Jackson last fall (2014) with a stop at the Mississippi Museum of Art. As I walked through the excellent permanent collection of “Mississippi Artists,” I was thrilled to find myself standing in front of a very large painting (8’ tall and 10’ wide, titled “Arcola”) by Valerie Jaudon, a New York artist who grew up in Mississippi, whose work I have long admired. Her paintings are often compared to Stella’s early black and white paintings, and as I walked up close to examine this huge but subtle, flat, yet almost architectural—as in cathedral-like—painting, I noticed something it shares with Frank Stella’s early works. The pencil lines upon which the “content” is built are still visible on the raw canvas, like the middle line of a country highway, in between the “positive-space” expanses of color on either side. And I suddenly thought, “I don’t have to efface the lines!” I had always known that my work was based on line, but, in the “Between the Lines” series, I turned the lines into a matrix, like an overlay, calling attention to the flatness of the surface, but also suggesting depth through the devices of layering, perspective, and/or a horizon. This was a big leap, and allowing the lines, rather than the colors, to “tell the story” was amazingly liberating.

However, this exciting “solution” also led to a paradox. The strategies I used to indicate depth—layering, perspective, and/or adding a horizon line—led me inexorably into a space that was intended to be abstract, but it feels like a “human” space. A friend who visited my studio shortly before “Between the Lines” was hung surprisingly, but astutely, compared my work to that of Giorgio de Chirico, who has never crossed my mind as an inspiration, or even an influence. But I have to admit that this work appears to have transported me into a domain that could be described as a “personal surrealism.”

“A Secret” Acrylic on hard board. 38” x 24”.

A New Era for Naropa College

Carole Clements, Dean of Naropa College, is excited about recent changes in undergraduate education at Naropa. Over the last five years, a Title III “Strengthening Undergraduate Institutions” grant has enabled Naropa to create a cohesive and rigorous undergraduate experience. With September 30 marking the end of the grant, Clements reports, “Naropa College is poised to build upon the critical work of Title III to manifest an even more robust and comprehensive vision of a four-year undergraduate degree in contemplative education.”

Cynthia Drake and Ramon Parish, who have served as adjunct faculty for the First Year Seminar: Self and Community in a Complex World, recently joined ranked faculty in Interdisciplinary Studies. Their appointments mark the first instance of a dedicated faculty to the Core Curriculum. Other game-changing developments include the promotion of Lily Board to the newly created position of Associate Dean of Naropa College and the addition of Jamila Ajanku-Willie in the role of Academic Administrator. Naropa College looks forward to moving into a dedicated space in January 2016, creating a more unified, physical presence on the Arapahoe Campus.

New student orientation, 2015