

**OCTOBER 2005 UPDATE
FROM
THE WILHELM REICH MUSEUM**

Hello.

The Wilhelm Reich Museum and The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust thank you for your interest and support. For those of you new to this list, we assure you that none of the names on this e-mail list—nor the names of Museum visitors, conference attendees, or bookstore customers—are shared with any other individuals or organizations. If at any time you wish to be removed from this list, please let us know.

All of our previous Updates, dating from March 2004, are archived on our website at www.wilhelmreichmuseum.org.

**SUMMER CONFERENCE
JULY 17 – 21, 2006**

**THE LEGACY OF WILHELM REICH:
NEW SCHOLARSHIP, PROJECTS, AND DIRECTIONS**

We are putting together next summer's conference that, in keeping with our emphasis on moving forward, will focus on current research, scholarship and practical applications of Reich's work. Presenters will include:

- Birgit Johler
Assistant Curator - Freud Museum, Vienna
- Elizabeth Ann Danto, Ph.D.
Author of *Freud's Free Clinics*
- Mary Boyd Higgins
Director – Wilhelm Reich Museum
- Conny Huthsteiner, M.D.
Psychiatrist and Orgone Therapist
- Jorgos Kavouras, M.D.
Physician and author of *Heilen Mit Orgonenergie*
[Healing with Orgone Energy]
- Ronald Maio, D.O.
Director – University of Michigan Injury Research Center
- Stephan Simonian, M.D.
Psychiatrist and Orgone Therapist

- James Strick, Ph.D – author of *Sparks of Life: Darwinism and the Victorian Debates Over Spontaneous Generation*, and co-author of *The Living Universe: NASA and the Development of Astrobiology*.

REICH EXHIBIT IN VIENNA – OCTOBER 2007

In our next Update, we'll have more details about an exciting project that The Wilhelm Reich Museum, the Freud Museum of Vienna, and the Jewish Museum Vienna (www.jmw.at) are involved in: a major Exhibit about Wilhelm Reich on the occasion of the 50th year since his death. The Jewish Museum Vienna (www.jmw.at) is the official organizer of this event, and will provide the funding and the venue for the Exhibit which will open in October 2007. More next month.

INSTALLING THE NEW FURNACE

This week our new furnace for the Orgone Energy Observatory is being installed, to replace the original one from 1948. And not a moment too soon. We've already been hit with winter-like weather: snow, cold temperatures, and icy winds.

Once again, we'd like to thank our friends and supporters who responded so promptly and generously to our solicitation for the necessary funds to purchase and install a new heating system. Our gratitude also for the kind words and expressions of support for the Trust and the Museum which many of you sent along with your financial contributions. That the efforts of the Trust and the Museum have affected so many of you means a lot to us.

And special thanks to a generous anonymous donor who was contacted by the Maine Community Foundation (MCF) in response to our MCF grant application. Our thanks, of course, to MCF, as well.

But whatever the amount of your contribution, be assured that *any* donation to *any* of our needs is truly a donation to *everything* that we do.

STATISTICS FROM THE MUSEUM

- Our Museum website (www.wilhelmreichmuseum.org) averages between 83 and 84 hits per day.
- The Orgone Energy Observatory is open for public tours approximately 50 days a year (July, August, September) with special tours year-round by appointment.
- 2005 summer tourism in Rangeley was down by about 25%.

- 2003 number of Orgone Energy Observatory visitors: 1082
- 2004 number of Orgone Energy Observatory visitors: 857
- 2005 number of Orgone Energy Observatory visitors: 638

- 2003 income from tours & Museum Bookstore sales: \$10,307
- 2004 income from tours & Museum Bookstore sales: \$ 9,003
- 2005 income from tours & Museum Bookstore sales: \$ 7,494

BACK IN PRINT: THE BION EXPERIMENTS

For years *The Bion Experiments – On the Origin of Life* has been out of print, and available in the Museum bookstore only in bound xerox copies. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of our publisher Farrar Straus & Giroux, and Lightning Source—a books-on-demand publishing house—it will soon be available in paperback.

This book represents a cornerstone in Reich's scientific development. It documents a series of experiments conducted in Oslo in 1936-37 in which Reich applied the formula of tension-charge-discharge-relaxation, derived from his research on the orgasm function, to the microscopic biological world, thereby opening a route to an understanding of the origin of life. This work is divided into two parts: the first, a detailed report on the experiments; the second, Reich's conclusions and an exposition of his research method.

In the past few years the partnership of Farrar, Straus & Giroux and Lightning Source has brought the following titles back into print:

- *The Bio-electrical Investigation of Sexuality and Anxiety*
- *The Cancer Biopathy*
- *Children of the Future*
- *Ether, God and Devil/Cosmic Superimposition*
- *The Murder of Christ*
- *People in Trouble*
- *Reich Speaks of Freud*
- *Selected Writings: An Introduction to Orgonomy*
- *The Sexual Revolution*

REICH, THE MOVIEGOER

Reich enjoyed the movies and, like many who emigrated to America, the films he saw influenced his vision of American culture. This short-list of some of his favorites provides a fascinating insight into the different themes and plots that Reich found particularly relevant to his life and work:

- Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955)
- Children of Love*
- The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell* (1955)

A Day of Happiness
The Day of Triumph (1953)
The Day The Earth Stood Still (1951)
Executive Suite (1954)
From Here to Eternity (1953)
High Noon (1951)
Martin Luther (1953)
Miss Sadie Thompson (1953)
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)
Roman Holiday (1953)
The Story of Louis Pasteur (1936)
Walk East on Beacon (1952)
War of the Worlds (1953)
Westward the Women (1951)
You Can't Take It With You (1938)

Bad Day at Black Rock, *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell*, *High Noon*, *Martin Luther*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, and *The Story of Louis Pasteur* all share a similar theme of a single individual standing up for truth against the complacency and corruption of communities and institutions. It's rather haunting to think of Reich watching *Bad Day at Black Rock* and *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell* in 1955 in the midst of his escalating legal problems with the U.S. government.

The Day of Triumph is a feature film about the last days of Jesus Christ.

The Day the Earth Stood Still and *The War of the Worlds* depict two different visions of extraterrestrials landing on earth. One offers a hopeful interaction, while the other presents a war with malignant forces from outer space. Reich specifically references *The Day the Earth Stood Still* in his book *Contact With Space*.

Executive Suite is about the politics of a corporate power struggle. And perhaps resonated for Reich because of its portrayal of individual ambition and armored character structure thwarting any chance for true work democracy.

From Here to Eternity, *Miss Sadie Thompson*, *Roman Holiday*, and *Westward the Women* all deal with the powerful instinct and struggle for genuine emotional and sexual contact, and the consequences of the repression and frustration of that instinct.

Walk East on Beacon was one of many anti-Communist films produced in the 1950s, depicting an FBI agent fighting Soviet espionage in Boston. It most likely reflected Reich's concerns about Communist influence here in America.

You Can't Take It With You, the Oscar-winning film adaptation of the Kaufman & Hart play, brims with optimism and family life and love at its most spontaneous and unarmored. How refreshing that it was one of Reich's favorites.

Unfortunately, we're unsure about the titles *Children of Love* and *A Day of Happiness*. *Children of Love* might be an obscure foreign film of that name from 1953, or possibly the more well-known French film *The Children of Paradise* [*Les Enfants du Paradise*] from 1946. And the only movie title we can find that approximates *A Day of Happiness* is the Jacques Tati small town comedy *Jour de Fete*.

SAYING “THANK-YOU” TO MARY HIGGINS FOR A LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO THE WILHELM REICH INFANT TRUST

On October 21st, approximately fifty friends and supporters of the Museum and Trust gathered at The Williams Club in New York City to celebrate Mary Higgins' 80th birthday and express a long overdue “Thank-you” for her nearly half-century of dedication and service to the Trust.

Speakers included Trust attorney Len Kolleeny; Bob Pawlowski, former publisher and editor of the *Rangeley* [Maine] *Highlander*; educators Wilbur and Rachel Rippey of the Board of Directors of The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust; and Kevin Hinchey, Associate Director of The Wilhelm Reich Museum. With music provided by jazz pianist Andy Kahn.

The following is the text of Mr. Hinchey's introductory remarks:

Introductory Remarks Williams Club – October 21, 2005

Good evening, everyone, and welcome. Thank you all so much for coming. This—the formal presentation of the evening—will be brief, and will comprise remarks from several individuals...followed by a musical selection by our good friend, jazz pianist Andy Kahn, featuring songs chosen especially for this occasion.

We're here tonight, quite simply, to say a long overdue “thank-you” to a unique and remarkable woman who—since 1959, as the Trustee of The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust—has shouldered the awesome responsibility of administering the Estate of Dr. Reich according to the wishes of his Last Will and Testament.

For years, many of us—who are friends and supporters of the Museum and the Trust—have conferred among ourselves, expressing interest in an occasion such as this...an occasion where, in some small way, we might convey our gratitude to Mary Higgins for all that she has done for nearly five decades to honestly and pragmatically preserve the legacy of Dr. Reich for future generations.

And whatever gratitude we articulate here this evening will be small indeed when compared with the magnitude of Mary's accomplishments...when compared with the enormity of a task undertaken in 1959 by a young woman, barely 33-years old.

Regrettably, history is replete with stories of great leaders passing away and leaving an aftermath of confusion, uncertainty, fear, and acrimony. Pioneers in industry, politics, religion, social movements, and science...family patriarchs and matriarchs whose legacies become weakened and vulnerable, whose final wishes are compromised by those after them. And so it was when Reich died in November 1957 in the Lewisburg Penitentiary at the age of sixty.

It's not our purpose here tonight to revisit the explicit difficulties and conflicts following Reich's death. After all, if things *had* gone differently, if people *had* been guided by their better instincts, perhaps that would've been the exception rather than the rule. And perhaps *that* would've been too much to hope for.

But what does it say about both human frailty and human ambition that no one among Reich's associates and colleagues stepped forward to assume the mantle of the Trusteeship and carry out the specifics of his Last Will and Testament?

What does it say about the ephemeral nature of human bonds and human relationships that no cohesive group assembled following Reich's death to categorically insure the fulfillment of his final wishes?

And what does it say about the fragile quality of happenstance and sheer luck that an individual who never met Reich nor worked with him...who was not a physician, psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, or scientist—merely a young woman for whom Reich's work resonated personally and deeply—that such a person would emerge and offer to take on the burden of the Trusteeship for the simple reason *that no one else would?* And this young woman reasoned that if no one else would, then Reich's legacy might well be sacrificed forever.

No one today should ever look back from the vantage of 2005 and dare to diminish or misrepresent the dire situation as it was in 1957, 1958, and 1959:

Reich tragically persecuted...and then suddenly gone.

His books *banned* by order of a United States federal court.

Three tons of his books *burned* in New York City by court order.

Several boxes of his publications burned outside his laboratory in Maine... much of his legacy literally consigned to ashes.

The chilling effect of a court Injunction essentially silencing much of Reich's work, including the continuation of his promising medical research here in America.

In rural Rangeley, Maine, his 200-plus acre property of Orgonon abandoned... overgrown and choked with weeds. We have black and white photographs that document how bleak the situation was.

The Orgone Energy Observatory was boarded up, frequently vandalized, *all* of its locks broken by unknown intruders. The entire property and all of its buildings on the way to irreparable decay...unattended and unprotected against the harsh New England elements.

And what of Reich's Archives, which he had stored in a photographic darkroom on the first-floor of the Observatory *and* in a large closet in his second-floor study?

When Mary first visited the Observatory, she discovered the Archives were gone. Removed illegally by Aurora Karrer—the last woman in Reich's life—who had disappeared with them in the summer of 1958.

What a sad and tragic irony, that Wilhelm Reich—truly one of the most original thinkers of the 20th century, or any century—should have his legacy and his wishes so disrespected...so diminished...and so pitifully neglected.

And when his Last Will and Testament was finally probated, and all specific personal bequests were fulfilled, \$823 was all that was left for Mary Higgins to carry out the major precepts of the Will. Which Reich had enumerated quite clearly. He wrote:

"I made the consideration of secure transmission to future generations of a vast empire of scientific accomplishments the guide in my last dispositions. To my mind, the foremost task to be fulfilled was to safeguard the truth about my life and work against distortion and slander after my death."

A few paragraphs later, Reich stipulated that the Trust shall:

"... operate and maintain the property at Orgonon under the name and style of The Wilhelm Reich Museum...The grounds should be kept neat and clean, and repairs should not be neglected."

And regarding his Archives, Reich directed: *"that they should be put away and stored for 50 years to secure their safety from destruction and falsification by anyone interested in the falsification and destruction of historical truth."*

\$823 to do all of this.

Today, that would translate into approximately \$5,675. And whenever I look at those black and white photos of Orgonon back in 1958, I think what a paltry figure that would be today: less than \$6,000 to transform Orgonon from the ruin that it was...to the beautiful and vibrant property and Museum that it is today.

But that's exactly what Mary Higgins did.

Not to mention, recovering the stolen Archives, which Mary also succeeded in doing. So that today they are safe and secure—unchanged, unaltered,

and well-preserved—and currently being prepared for access to researchers and scholars for generations to come.

And Reich's banned and burned literature: starting in 1960, Mary arranged with Farrar Straus & Giroux—which would become one of the most reputable publishers in the world—to publish Reich's books...his old titles as well as some new ones.

Today, 21 books are available...Reich's work is represented in over 21 languages throughout the world...and additional materials are available exclusively in the Museum Bookstore.

The fact is, thanks to Mary, *all* of Reich's books, bulletins, and journals that were destroyed in the 1950s, are available today in some format: hardcover, paperback, xerox, or microfilm.

But this isn't a story that often gets told, is it? Over the years, it's a story that seems to have been lost and distorted. And for decades, Mary refused to write or speak publicly about the difficulties, challenges, achievements, and triumphs of her tenure as Trustee and Museum Director...refused to consciously draw any spotlight to herself out of both genuine modesty and—more importantly—her commitment to maintaining the focus of the Trust where it belonged: on the truth and the legacy of Wilhelm Reich.

In fact, it wasn't until two years ago—in this very room and at my urging—that Mary would even speak publicly about her experiences over the past four decades. And you should also know this: when I first broached the idea of this evening, Mary was adamantly opposed to it, as I knew she would be. Only when I persisted, at the behest of numerous friends and supporters, did Mary finally and reluctantly agree.

But I think it is fitting and proper that we assess the legacy of Mary Higgins. And so from the vantage of 2005, we should all pause and ask ourselves: “What if?” Like the George Bailey character in the film *It's a Wonderful Life*, we should ask ourselves, “*What if there had been no Mary Higgins?*” Or “*What if Mary's journey in life had taken her elsewhere, so that she never encountered the work of Wilhelm Reich?*” What if?

What would've happened to Orgonon, Reich's abandoned home and research center? Well, I've been going to Rangeley since I was a child, since the 1950s...and I have no doubt that Orgonon would've been sold...eventually developed into private homes...and forgotten.

And the Archives? From all I know of the situation, it's highly unlikely that these materials would've ever found the care, protection, and organization that Mary provided. It is more probable that these materials would've been distributed to various locations and into various private hands...which has happened with other Reich memorabilia.

As for the books: it's likely some of the titles would have been published anyway, as we know some were. But certainly not 21 titles...probably not in 21 languages ...and probably not from a publisher with the reputation and distribution capacity of Farrar Straus & Giroux.

I once asked Mary if, in hindsight, she had any regrets about her decision to become the Trustee. Her response was immediate: "No, I've never regretted it," she told me.

And so for *that* decision—and for the joy that Mary has taken in it—we should all be grateful.

Finally, on a personal note:

For the past few years, it has been a privilege and a pleasure and an intellectual challenge to be working so closely with Mary Higgins on all manner of issues regarding the Museum and the Trust. I look forward to many more years of our working together.

I am constantly inspired by Mary's wisdom, her diligence, her intellectual honesty and vitality...by her acuity of thought and her precise vision.

Not to mention Mary's physical vigor: I consider myself an excellent hiker, but when Mary and I are walking some of the more strenuous trails at Orgonon, it's usually Mary setting the pace and *me* keeping up with *her*.

But what I value most is the personal trust and friendship of such a unique and remarkable woman.

Thank you, Mary, for everything. And Happy Birthday.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH

Your feedback and involvement are important to us, and we eagerly solicit your response to our news and your participation in our activities and initiatives.

Please share this Update with any friends, families, or colleagues who may be interested in the life and legacy of Wilhelm Reich and the good works of the Museum and The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust.

Thank you again for your friendship and support.