

**APRIL 2006 UPDATE  
FROM  
THE WILHELM REICH INFANT TRUST  
& THE WILHELM REICH MUSEUM**

The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust and The Wilhelm Reich Museum 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](http://www.wilhelmreichmuseum.org).

**2006 SUMMER CONFERENCE**

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

As The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust moves forward into the next half-century of safeguarding Reich's legacy, this year's Summer Conference will focus on current work and works-in-progress here in America *and* in Europe. Please join us for what promises to be an exciting week of discussion and good company as we look ahead to the future. Click below for a detailed schedule of events from our March 2006 Update:

[http://www.wilhelmreichmuseum.org/06\\_03\\_update.html#2006](http://www.wilhelmreichmuseum.org/06_03_update.html#2006)

**ACCESS TO THE REICH ARCHIVES**

We always appreciate thoughtful and intelligent inquiries about Reich's life and legacy, and about the activities of the Trust and the Museum. We've also been pleased with what we consider a number of serious inquiries regarding Reich's Archives and their access to scholars and researchers starting in November 2007. And when we respond that we are now developing procedures and protocols for granting access, our replies and our efforts have been respectfully acknowledged.

Regrettably, however, the Reich Archives and the much-anticipated access to them in 2007 have always been flashpoints for irrational and often aberrant ideas and behaviors. We see in many people what can only be described as an unhealthy obsession about these currently

unavailable materials, despite the availability of literally thousands of pages of Reich's writings: 21 books, six volumes of "***Orgonomic Functionalism***," bulletins, journals, etc. Sadly this fixation on what is inaccessible precludes any genuine appreciation of Reich's legacy.

We can't help but feel that for many people it's not intellectually vigorous curiosity or understanding about Reich's work that draws their attention to the Archives. But rather an inordinate need for drama and an inflated fascination for what they perceive as forbidden knowledge and great withheld secrets.

It has also been our experience that those who are largely unfamiliar with Reich's publications and who have little to offer in terms of credible, pragmatic support for his legacy are often promulgating some of the most outlandish notions and expectations about the Archives.

At this point, what we can tell you is this: starting in September 2007, a committee set up by the Trust will begin reviewing applications for access to the Archives. Over the next year, more details about this process will be forthcoming. Including a discussion about the Archives at our upcoming 2006 Summer Conference, and a presentation about our finalized procedures at the ***2007 International Conference on Orgonomy*** at Saddleback Mountain Lodge here in Rangeley.

## **MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE REICH ARCHIVES**

Over the years we've tried to maintain a sense of humor as we've fielded some rather outrageous misconceptions about what is often called "the opening of the Archives." For example, people commonly refer to the day when "the vault will be opened." Exactly what kind of vault people have in their mind's eye, we're not sure. For us, this idea always conjures up images of Geraldo Rivera's televised fiasco about the opening of Al Capone's Secret Vault.

Our favorite is an inquiry from someone interested in the Archives who wanted to know "when Reich's tomb was going to be opened." And if she could be there to videotape the ceremony. In addition to evoking images of an Egyptian pharaoh buried with all manner of scrolls, vases and cats, suggestions such as this make it clear that many people obsessing over the Archives have had no experience with bonafide archival research.

Generally, access policies and procedures for any archive (i.e. corporate, government, individual, organizational, etc.) reflect the preferences of the donors of the archival materials *and* the venues in which these materials are deposited. Such is the case with the "Archives of the Orgone Institute" (the official name of what we commonly refer to as "The Reich Archives")

which, in 1973, were donated by The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust to the Rare Books and Special Collections at the Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University in Boston, one of the world's premier medical libraries. The Rare Books and Special Collections recently changed its name to "The Center for the History of Medicine."

Scholars and researchers who are granted access will select the materials they wish to study from a catalogue of the Archive's contents. A staff member of the library will bring these materials from the collection itself to a study room, where an individual will conduct his or her research. And as we've said, more details will be forthcoming.

## **MONDAY – NOVEMBER 5, 2007**

Wilhelm Reich passed away on November 3, 1957 at the age of sixty in the Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary in Pennsylvania. November 3, 2007—the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death—falls on a Saturday, when the Countway's Center for the History of Medicine is closed. Therefore Monday, November 5, 2007 will mark the first day of access to "The Archives of the Orgone Institute."

Implicit in the many misconceptions of this day are notions of a grand media event, crowds of people, speeches, and photo-ops. We're sure that some people are probably envisioning something like a ribbon-cutting, followed by the "vault" doors being thrown open at the appointed hour, and then a rush into the library—perhaps into the collection itself—for a spectacle not unlike TV's old "Supermarket Sweepstakes."

All of which would be totally inappropriate, considering the seriousness of Reich's work and the function of the Countway Library of Medicine. Again, more details will be forthcoming.

## **2006 NATURAL SCIENCE PROGRAM**

In 1989 we began a Natural Science Program, funded largely by grants. Programs and activities related to nature and the environment are offered free to the public year-round, attracting hundreds of people to our 175-acre property.

One of the most popular programs takes place each Sunday afternoon during July and August when people gather at our Outdoor Sheltered Classroom to learn in a practical, experiential way about subjects pertaining to the natural world and to the environment at Orgonon. Below is the schedule for this year's Sunday Programs at Orgonon from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**July 9**

**“A Nature Walk”**

Warren Balgooyen

**July 16**

**“Observe Nature from Your Bike Seat”**

Bonnie Clark

**July 23**

**“Learn About Our Wild Birds”**

Jennifer Perry

**July 30**

**“Nature Photography”**

George Adams

**August 6**

**“Medicinal Plants”**

Corinne Martin

**August 13**

**“Mushrooming”**

Michaeline Mulvey

**August 20**

**“Small Woodland Animals”**

Russ Brooks

**August 27**

**“Rocks & The Story of Mining  
at Orgonon”**

Jerome Guevremont

**ORGONON PRESENTATION TO THE  
RANGELEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

On February 1, 2006, the Rangeley Chamber of Commerce invited speakers from each of Rangeley’s three museums to address its annual Winter Dinner. Which was a welcome opportunity to acknowledge and deepen our significant ties to the community.

Shirley Adams represented the Rangeley Lakes Historical Society. Rodney Richard (a.k.a. “The Mad Whittler”) spoke on behalf of the Rangeley Lakes Region Logging Museum. And Kevin Hinchey delivered the following remarks about The Wilhelm Reich Museum:

## KEVIN HINCHEY'S REMARKS AT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DINNER

I was an 18-year old college student when I first visited the Wilhelm Reich Museum in the 1970s. I knew absolutely nothing about Wilhelm Reich, his name meant nothing to me. The only reason I went to Orgonon was because it was located in Rangeley and was obviously *some* part of its local history.

And because I'd been coming to Rangeley since I was a child—staying out at Rangeley Manor when Curt and Alice Mercer owned it—I was fascinated by everything about Rangeley: its two railroads...the sporting camps and hotels...the logging industry...and the colorful personalities who were part of this history. And to this day I see Wilhelm Reich and Orgonon as distinct and valuable pieces of that same rich heritage.

So this evening I'd like to briefly discuss the Museum as both a unique tourist attraction *and* as a neighbor, very much involved in the life and the fabric of the Rangeley community.

“Orgonon” was the name of the home, laboratory, and research center of Wilhelm Reich, M.D., an Austrian physician, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and scientist who had studied with Freud in the 1920s.

In the 1930s and 40s, Reich discovered a powerful, new biological energy in living matter *and* in the atmosphere, which he called “Orgone Energy,” and devoted his life to the exploration of its properties and uses, including medical research, motor power, and weather experimentation.

In the 1950s, the United States government *banned and burned* Reich's books and publications, with burnings at Orgonon and New York City. Reich died in 1957 in a Federal prison and is buried at Orgonon.

Since 1960 the property he called Orgonon has been open as The Wilhelm Reich Museum. It comprises 175-acres of fields, forests and trails open daily to the public...*and* the Orgone Energy Observatory, one of four buildings in Rangeley listed in the National Register of Historic Places and open for tours in the summer and by special arrangement throughout the year. This tour includes a half-hour documentary about Reich... exhibits...Reich's inventions and scientific apparatus...his library and study...and personal memorabilia.

We also have a Bookstore, which carries the widest selection of Reich's publications anywhere in the world. And a Conference Building in what was originally Reich's “Student Laboratory.” Annual Summer Conferences are held here on various aspects of Reich's work and their significance for current social, medical and scientific issues. And we have two rental cottages

on Dodge Pond—where Reich and his family lived—which are now important sources of income for us.

Our property and facilities are also a venue for numerous social, educational, and recreational activities *not* specific to Reich’s work, but rather as expressions of our roots in the Rangeley and Maine communities.

For example, our Natural Science Program—now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year—brings people to our property on Sunday afternoons in July and August to learn in a practical, experiential way about our wildlife, our fields and forests, and waterfront. Our Conference Building is the site of our Evenings of Music, educational and historical lectures, our Santa’s Breakfast and Winter Carnival, and many other community events.

And for eight weeks every summer since 1989, we donate free-of-charge the larger of our two cottages to an Adoptive and Foster Family program. Which has made it possible for dozens of families—who could not otherwise afford such a vacation—to spend a week in the Rangeley area with their own private dock on Dodge Pond.

We also give out three individual \$300 scholarships to Rangeley High School seniors going on to college: the Barbara Bruce Scholarship...the Russ Wilkinson Scholarship...and the Wilhelm Reich Museum Scholarship. Now we know that this amount barely puts a dent in the overall price of higher education today. But it’s our way of honoring—within *our* financial constraints—the achievements and aspirations of our young people in the community.

But when all is said and done, we are, in fact, a *rural* museum in Maine. And subject to the same challenges, tourism patterns, and economic indicators as the Rangeley Historical Society and the Rangeley Logging Museum.

But perhaps with one promising difference. Every year, without exception, people from across the country and around the world travel to Rangeley specifically to visit Orgonon. And to effectively reach out to this potential market, fourteen months ago we launched our new website, which includes more content about Reich, about the Museum, and about Rangeley.

Today when someone Google-Searches the words “Wilhelm Reich” on the Internet, *we* are the first result that comes up out of literally hundreds. And as of 4:30 this afternoon [February 1, 2006] our website visitor-counter over fourteen months showed 37,157 hits—an average of 85 hits per day.

Now obviously those numbers are significant to *us* in terms of Online Bookstore sales, future membership and financial support. And in terms of our plans for an International Conference on Reich which we’ve already announced for July 2007 at Saddleback Mountain. But I also believe those numbers may be relevant to *many* of us here because they represent *potential* future visitors to Orgonon and to Rangeley.

So our priority at the Museum is to make *ourselves* more attractive as a destination for this potential market, and to expand as best we can *every* visitor's experience at Orgonon into a broader experience out into the Rangeley community and our natural surroundings.

People who come to Rangeley—or are planning to come—specifically to visit us seldom have any idea what to do beyond the confines of Orgonon. So we make a point of finding out what their preferences might be in terms of recreation, dining, shopping, or entertainment. We always urge participants at our Summer Conferences to come a couple days early or stay a few days later. And we design our Conferences with ample free-time so people can enjoy what Rangeley has to offer. This is simply good business for us...and good business for you.

Finally, on a personal note: One of my great pleasures is drawing upon *my* knowledge of Rangeley whenever I come in contact with people who are unfamiliar with this area. I've been coming here since the 1950s, I owned a camp here for many years, I've hiked all of the mountains in the area and canoed, explored, and fished all of the waters from Little Kennebago and Little Boy Falls down to Umbagog, and everything in between. So I know what this area has to offer and I love to see people enjoy the Rangeley Lakes area as I have since I was a kid.

If you have any questions about anything that we do, our director Mary Higgins, our administrative assistant Mary Henderson, and I are always happy to help. So give us a call, or better yet, come on out and visit. And thank you to the Chamber for this opportunity.

## **UNTIL NEXT MONTH**

Please share this Update—especially our 2006 Summer Conference announcement—with colleagues, friends and family 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.







