



The door closes and latches. I am happy to be home, tired but enriched from the weekend I've just shared. Men and women sitting in a little Bavarian chalet deep in the piney woods: a beautiful place, a sacred place. We were there to be connected, to share, to grow; to take a leap of faith in order to become stronger. Our annual Karen Casey Writers' Workshop had begun.

Many familiar faces were there as well as dear new faces. All of them were turned to our facilitator, the gifted author, Karen Casey.

Just her presence begins to set the tone. Her words of welcome and inspiring aura immediately make the writers feel more at ease. Their decision to participate in this opportunity is re-affirmed. They remembered the blessings of past years and/or looked forward to what they may experience this year. People expressed gratitude for this annual event that continues to provide peace and greater serenity for all who attend.

Some participants had been in attendance for all or many of the previous workshops and reflected on the profound differences they had made in their lives. Those weekends had consistently provided spiritual and emotional nurturing. The little chalet and its grounds contributed to this with its safe and comfortable ambience; it is described as "Nurture by Nature." Participants are inspired to share as well as receive sharing from others in ways that deepen their own quality of life.

Karen Casey spoke about the importance of uncovering parts of ourselves heretofore unappreciated: "It is an opportunity to affirm who we are and from whence we came. We are spiritual beings and we can help each other to recognize, validate and nurture that spirit within. We are here to strengthen our brother- and sisterhood by being honest, open, and willing to share ourselves and our reflections."

Each member of the group then shared highlights (and some lowlights, too) of the

past year. There was lots of laughter and some tears, too.

We are especially fortunate to have the founders of F.R.E.S.H., Cheryl and Dick McKinley, as regular participants of the workshop. They provide continuity and inspiration. Their reflections and suggestions complement those of Dr. Casey so we feel surrounded by love, experience and expertise.

As the weekend progressed and bonding became stronger, people were more willing to take risks in their level of honesty. Strong connections were made with other group members. Each of us left with a self-constructed meditation to repeat daily and follow-up with journal reflections throughout the coming year. We look forward to sharing these at our workshop next year.

For a little flavor of the event, here are some quotations of reflections shared:

"Experience the hearts of one another."
"The more you give, the more God gives you."

"We are not the people we were as recently as yesterday."

It erodes serenity to quibble or argue. Instead say, "If that's how it works for you, I can make it work for me." Mulford Sibley

"Truth can open many doors to the heart that would otherwise remain closed."

'Already Gone' by The Eagles

"Most truths are inherently unretainable."

"Seeds have been planted in me."

"So much has melted away in my heart."

"All things are possible if I let inspiration flow."

"You are all 'my heroes'; I enjoy being with each of you."

"We are all instruments (in the music of life)." Karen Casey

We welcome fellow seekers of deeper spiritual insight to join us. Next year's retreat will be held in Augusta from September 7-9. Plan to be there!



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**F.R.E.S.H.:
What Does It
Mean?**

Fellowship

Renewing

Experience

Strength

Hope

**For further
information or
to pre-register
for any event,
please contact
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UPCOMING EVENTS

COMING SOON... The late afternoon of **December 4, 2011** is the date for our annual Candlelight Ceremony Potluck to be held, as always, at the Church of the Master in Florissant. It is a time for fellowship and giving thanks for all we have.

We will have a turkey dinner with all the trimmings followed by a speaker and sharing session. Please plan to join us at what has always proven to be a spiritually rewarding event.

COMING NEXT APRIL... On **April 14, 2012**, F.R.E.S.H. will be hosting our annual speaker event. This event features a locally or nationally known figure who has made a significant impact on the wellness community.

DELICIOUS NEW FOOD

Chicken Spinach Feta Sausage, Pork Polish Sausage, Smoked Mozzarella Pasta, Swordfish, Spinach Dal (spiced spinach with yellow lentils over an organic rice medley, fresh organic salad ----- This is what we have eaten the last two nights after using our \$50.00 gift certificate from Whole Foods and there is more in the refrigerator and pantry. And where did we get this wonderful gift you might ask? At the FRESH picnic in June. My husband Paul and I bought chances and when our number was called this is what we chose ----I had had my eye on this donated gift certificate. It was a beautiful day in Augusta at the FRESH chalet. This day will always hold special memories for both of us with treasured friends celebrating FRESH's 25th Anniversary.

Jackie Endraske

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BOARD - JERRY BOWEN

Jerry exemplifies the spirit of F.R.E.S.H. He has been an extremely active volunteer for our organization since 1995 and has been a Board member since 2000.

A close friend of our founders, Cheryl and Dick McKinley, Jerry has contributed much time and energy to keeping F.R.E.S.H. a strong presence. Much of the plantings, construction, and maintenance of the facility in Augusta has been due to Jerry's generosity and time.

Most recently, he spent an enormous amount of creative energy on planning and constructing a complete renovation of the campgrounds' firepit by the pond. This little area has played a pivotal role in renewal weekends over the years. It is a gathering and sharing place for both beginnings and endings of retreats. It is also a wonderful spot for meditation, contemplation, and prayer. Previously simplistic and rudimentary, the firepit now is in

keeping with the beauty and sacred atmosphere of the pond.

Jerry has traditionally been the man in charge of provision and preparation of the burgers and brats served at our annual picnic as well as readying the grounds and chalet for "company." He assumes these extra responsibilities as he does everything else: with grace and generosity of spirit. He can always be counted on to help straighten out last minute problems or unexpected "surprises." Certainly we could not function as efficiently without our Jerry!

Jerry is now retired after over 30 years in the automobile industry. As well a volunteering so much of his time to F.R.E.S.H., one of Jerry's main joys is his 7-year-old granddaughter. His eyes always light up whenever he shares his thoughts about his beloved son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter.