

Rosalie Allen Taylor

Post Office Box 27

Soquel, CA 95073

July 24, 2016

Dear Ralph Abraham,

Chances are that you're receiving many responses to Wallace Baine's feature article in Sunday's Sentinel, and I'm one of them – but I may be the only one responding who attended a chaos theory conference at Geneva Park in Orillia, Ontario in the 1990s. My home base at the time was London, Ontario, and I was probably interested in hearing Arthur Combs, whose textbook I had used in teaching a psychology course. I spent summers at my former home, Santa Cruz, where I never met you but did meet Paul Lee.

My reason for writing you now, however, has more to do with HIP SANTA CRUZ than chaos theory, although the latter interests me. I'm looking forward to reading your new book after checking out the table of contents on line, even though I'm sorry you left out the summer of 1967, the date of one of the most interesting educational events ever to take place on the UCSC campus. The name of the seven-week program at Cowell College was Methuselah I, and it was a total 1960s experience. Your colleague John Dizikes was a faculty member.

In January 1967 a friend took several of us to visit the UCSC campus, in particular Cowell College. As I walked down the steps and out to the deck, I thought what a privilege it would be to study in such an amazing setting. A month or two later, an announcement appeared in the Oakland Tribune (along with other papers across the country and select magazines) describing a unique educational opportunity for adults titled Methuselah. Admission would be by letter of intent giving reasons for interest. With my divorce to be final in early July, I applied and was accepted with a scholarship, with my 14-year-old son to join me in Adams dorm after the first two weeks. Children were welcome, with programming available.

With our applications approved, forty-seven of us ages 28 to 80(?) gathered on Sunday, July 27, to begin our adventure (see attached). In addition to our seminars with reading assignments and discussion but no papers or exams, we attended evening sessions for talks by a different

visiting lecturer each week, with the lecturer hanging out with students during the day. One guest was Leslie Fiedler, professor of English at SUNY-Buffalo, who at the time was being investigated by police for reports of pot and hash being found at his home and so endangering students. Fortunately the charges proved baseless, but so '60s!

Our list of participants included the book review editor of the SF Chronicle, the director of continuing education at Northeastern University, and a Spanish Civil War vet who was charming and a bit daft and who sometimes serenaded me from below my dorm window. Many of us were going through life transitions, which made for interesting social interactions. Such was the case for one married mother of six who was away from her family for the first time, quite high on the freedom. No wonder.

As for social activity, our afternoons included the pool and Natural Bridges, our week-ends visits to Bookshop Santa Cruz and on through the door to the old Catalyst, to movies at the old Capitola Theatre, and to other local sites and events. On weeknights after the lectures, a group of us often gathered for wine and discussion. Such a rich diet!

During the seventh week, representatives of Polaroid-Land, donors of the grant which funded our grand experiment, appeared on campus to evaluate the results of their gift. While as far as I know none of us scholars were included in the discussions, we heard rumors of some dissatisfaction that all of the grant had been spent in one summer. Unfortunately there was not to be a Methuselah II, and any attempt to repeat it now would be quite different. However, with Methuselah's 50th anniversary next summer I would welcome even a one week event on campus for a brief taste of a similar shared learning experience.

Looking forward to reading your book,

Rosalie Rosalie

rosalie.taylor@comcast.net

*Too late for HIP-
but hopefully of interest.*

Note: I'm 91 years old and attended my 70th reunion at Smith College in May, where all twenty of us, WWII class of 1946, and twenty-one daughters and granddaughters ("companions" required by the college because of our age and possible heart attacks?) gathered for a special three days.

(over)