

JUST AN ADVERTISER OR A FOUNDER ?

Adding Insult to Injury: A Statement by Jearld Moldenhauer on the Founding of the University of Toronto Homophile Association (UTHA), Canada's First Gay Student Organization

Introduction

There may be few people out there seriously interested in knowing how the Toronto modern gay movement came into being. But it is a story worth being told - accurately - and, as the founder of the University of Toronto Homophile Association (UTHA), I am particularly well informed to do so.

If a Torontonians, or any other Canadian for that matter, had been able to establish the details of a factual and politically objective history, at some point during the last 41 years since the founding of the UTHA (in 1970), there would be no need for me to write this. But alas, this has not happened.

Large urban cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia have all had hefty tomes about their local gay history published over the past several years. For example, San Francisco has had many books and films centered on the life and death of Harvey Milk. It also has a Gay Museum. Even Buffalo has a book chronicling its lesbian history. There are now also

several volumes exploring the gay history of Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Italy and Australia. I start by mentioning these efforts only to put into perspective the shortfall in documentation about the gay movement in Toronto and in Canada generally.

This lack of any seriously researched information on the earliest post-Stonewall event in modern gay Canadian history made it necessary for the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) to conduct its own research into the founding of the UTHA. Amanda Robinson, a history graduate student at York University, was hired by the OHT to carry this out. However, by the time the U of T and the Ontario Heritage Trust had finally decided on a plaque as a way of commemorating the founding of the UTHA, there had already been a number of misleading pieces of journalism written that attempted to tell the same story. The latest of these appeared in the University of Toronto Alumnae Magazine in June, 2009.

On a more positive note, Canada has at least three decent gay and lesbian archival projects of which I am aware. An example of one, online, is Rick Bébout's website, which is still the only serious attempt to capture Toronto's gay history, starting in 1970.

In addition, during the past year (2011) or so, a few university students have published research papers on some of the historical aspects of *The Body Politic*. (Personally, I have long lamented the apparent

disinterest in a broad-based oral history project which recorded the lives and social dynamic of the homosexual working class, the class which seemed to dominate the Toronto scene when I first settled here.)

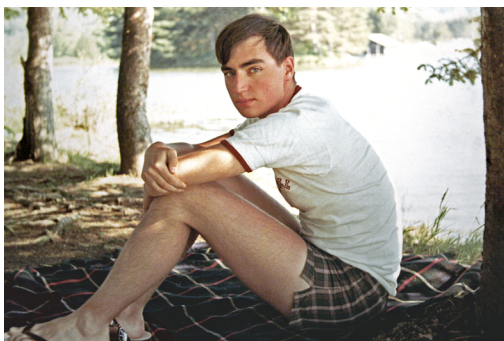
My Own Liberation

The story of my own gay activism began at Cornell University in 1967. I had come out in my second year in 1965 and I spent much of 1965-67 immersed in the reading of books related to the history of sexuality. I wanted to understand why it was that society had placed such strong taboos on homosexuality, making it both a criminal act and a mental illness. The more I read, the more radicalized I became. Of course, this was during the 1960s, a time of prominent protests by the Counterculture in America, fueled in part by the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. My generation was open to questioning most everything and this encouraged me to develop an analysis of sexual repression and oppression in Western society.

In May of 1967, *The New York Times* ran a front page article headlined "*Columbia Charters Homosexual Group*". After reading the piece, I contacted "Stephen Donaldson" (AKA Robert Martin), the student who had founded the group. His organization, like the ones founded later at Cornell and U of T, was called "The Student Homophile Association" (or League).

During the following year, I made a few trips from Ithaca to New York City: (1) to explore the Village scene, (2) to see Martin and (3) to attend meetings of the East Coast Homophile Organization (ECHO). It was there that I first met Franklin Kameny, Barbara Gittings and Foster Gunnison, the leaders of ECHO. I admit that none of these activists really excited or inspired me as these older homophile leaders were far too conservative. Even Martin himself proved to be an army/navy "brat" whose sensibilities were quite disparate from mine.

Nonetheless, I went back to Cornell and made the decision to form a local student gay organization. The Cornell Homophile League was officially recognized in May of 1968, more than a year **before** Stonewall! The Cornell story is a separate one with many tales worth telling (some of these can be found elsewhere on this blog.) However, for the purposes of this document, it is sufficient to say that I arrived at the University of Toronto with a "founding" event already under my belt. (For some reason - I suspect nationalism - almost no Canadian reference ever mentions my international activism.)



Jearld Moldenhauer, 1967
Cornell University

Ian Young

I should start by admitting that I had no previous idea about exactly how Ian Young characterized me or the founding of the UTHA ... except for what can now be found on the record. Generally, I found these public comments both inaccurate and deceptive. He may just have ridden the wave of misinformation flowing from some poor journalism or perhaps he simply took advantage of the group's own weak sense of history. Once an erroneous wave of reporting is established, it is indeed relatively easy for an individual, especially a writer, to embellish some points and to diminish others for that person's benefit.

However, this is *my* written record; *my* response to Mr. Young's quotes found on both Rick Bébout's website and in the U of T Alumnae magazine article by Anne Purdue ... and I wish to state, unequivocally, from the outset, that Ian Young had no part in the founding of the UTHA.

Furthermore, he was not at the first meetings attended by a handful of friends and the people who responded to an ad I had originally placed in the student newspaper, *The Varsity*, soliciting members for a new gay group on the U of T campus. Philip Atkinson, my oldest Toronto friend, attended those first meetings in "the cave", as my off-campus McCaul Street apartment was humorously referred to. He was considerate enough to respond to my

written questions about those foundational gatherings and he attests to the fact that Mr. Ian Young was not in attendance. (That interview, conducted through an e-mail exchange, is available upon request.)

Let's now proceed to examine some other assertions that can be found in a couple of Ian's quotes that appeared in Anne Purdue's article:

"My first meeting with Moldenhauer was not at a party. I must have been given his number by a mutual acquaintance; I phoned him and he asked me to come see him at his place of work at the U of T. I remember very clearly that the first time I met Moldenhauer, he was vivisecting a dog. You don't forget something like that!"

"We were never friends. As a long time anti-vivisectionist, my first encounter almost led me to have nothing to do with him, but I thought, 'well, I'm going to have to work with lots of diverse people in this cause, so I'd better get on with it.' Still don't know whether that was wise or not."

These are outrageous statements! I was "vivisecting a dog"?!? Yes, I worked for a physiologist who used dogs in his experiments but there were very few operations ... and they took place in a surgery room into which Ian Young (or anyone not connected to the staff) would never have been invited. Yes, I would have given him my phone number(s), possibly those for my home and

work. And yes, he probably did call and then visit my laboratory, but he certainly did NOT attend any surgical procedures. I assume he concocted this tale to elevate himself morally. And I note that he refers to me somewhat bluntly and disparagingly as only "Moldenhauer", not "Jearld" or "Mr. Moldenhauer". In my mind, this was Ian's attempt at a form of high-handed distancing and at expressing disdain for me, a lab technician who spent most of my days analyzing the digestive juices of Dog A, B, C and D.

He goes on to state that "We were never friends." The truth is we *had* been friends (of a sort) in the months before I went ahead with the founding of the UTHA. (I believe we met in one of the many Yorkville "hippy" cafés of the time or perhaps at the somewhat experimental Rochdale College). Our friendship was based on a mutual interest in both boys and gay literature. I was even invited to at least one of Young's 'tea parties' out in Scarborough, where he lived with his parents. And as you can see in the accompanying photograph(s), Ian also sat for one of my portrait shoots.

I also remember that, on one occasion, Ian even brought the controversial Canadian author Scott Symons and his young lover, John, to my basement apartment on McCaul Street. They had just recently returned from Mexico where they had fled following a RCMP arrest order after the publication of Scott's homoerotic novel,

Place d'Armes. (Decades later, Scott would come into Glad Day Bookshop ... but only occasionally. He never bought anything and, oddly, he even appeared to be disinterested in the books. He just took up space, sitting in the office, smoking foul smelling Gitanes and asking to look at pornography.) Later, Ian introduced me to Norman Elder, another born-with-a-silver-spoon-in-his-mouth Anglo Canadian homosexual. Interesting people ... even more so after Young published accounts of their lives ... but rather bizarre individuals, born with a deep sense of entitlement, something far different from my own class origins. I am unaware that either of these two personalities ever really contributed anything to their local gay community.

So much for the queers from English Canada's ruling class!

(I only mention these episodes to counter Ian's dismissive statement about our shared history.)

If I recall correctly, Ian was born in London, England but grew up under the Apartheid system in South Africa. Because of his upbringing, he possessed strong racist views by the time we met and, once these became apparent to me, it was I who ended the "friendship". (In fact, back then, my closest friend in Toronto was a black American draft dodger from Ohio, named John Mitchell. I once witnessed Ian and John getting into a dangerous physical fight in my McCaul Street

apartment, after Ian had started spouting his views defending segregation for privately-owned businesses, such as restaurants.)

Of course, I had discussed the Cornell gay group with Ian and told him about my plans to start a similar organization at U of T. He actually spoke with me about trying to link this as-yet-to-be-founded gay group with the Don Andrews/Edmund Burke/Western Guard crowd to which he was connected. This, combined with the altercation he had had with John, made me want to distance myself (and keep any gay projects I had in mind) from Ian Young. Imagine if the first Canadian gay group of the post-Stonewall period had been exposed as having Right Wing or racist ideological connections ?! I was schooled by the analysis of Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown. Unsurprisingly, Ian Young was an ardent follower of Ayn Rand and her 'cult' of selfishness and greed. (She was the heroine to so many in this shallow culture.) Again: despite our mutual aesthetic and cultural interests, once I realized where Ian was coming from, the relationship ended.

There are other Ian Young comments in Ms. Purdue's article that are calculated to further pull an obscuring scrim over reality: "I wanted to change things" he says, reflecting on his student days at U of T". Funny, I do not recall him ever joining any activist gay political organizations in Toronto during the early 1970s. (He did not even bother going to an important gay rights demo

in Ottawa.) Ian was interested in Ian ... and in advancing his career as a writer. And this did not include involvement in political activism or any civil rights organizations.

So what exactly were his "student days" at U of T ? When we met, he had no official standing at the university and, in fact (according to Ian), he had dropped out of the Undergraduate Program the year before. Indeed, if Ian Young had had some legitimate affiliation with the University, I would have reluctantly involved him from the beginning. To my knowledge, Ian never returned to U of T in any capacity, except to attend UTHA meetings once I had submitted an amended "Statement of Purpose" to the Students' Administrative Council/SAC (derived from the Cornell document ... which, in turn, had been influenced by the one at Columbia University). We were then granted official status as a student organization, thereby allowing us to list our meeting time and to place announcements in *The Varsity* newspaper. However, from his first attendance at a meeting, and throughout our shared history with the UTHA, Young never stopped trying to attack and undermine my position within the organization. Sadly, Charlie Hill (see below) always just sat there, passively letting Ian spew his negativity towards me ... again and again.

Young also said that he wanted to be a teacher "but, in those days, you couldn't be openly gay and teach at any

level". This was probably true at stuffy old U of T or in the secondary school system. I admit that this posed and still poses a major challenge. Nevertheless, I remember that, at Cornell, the most popular professor on campus was about as "openly gay" as could be. His lectures were a "camp" highlight ... and he could always be found cruising the student bars at night. [Unfortunately, he was also a very self-oppressed man and taught a course in "deviance" using Irving Bieber's - no relation to the Pop Star! - classic text on homosexuality as a mental illness and homosexuals as mentally sick ("Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuality"). Indeed, pressuring him to stop using that book was the one political action undertaken by the Cornell Homophile League when I was at the helm.]



Ian Young 1969

Portraits by Jearld Moldenhauer

To conclude my remarks about Ian, I wish to add that I do not think he maintained many of the political ideas that defined his arched personality/identity back in the early 1970s. There have been indications that he has since shed at least some of his Right Wing and racist views.

It is also true that, back in 1970, my seeing his (then vast) gay library was something of an inspiration for me, both in finding my role as a gay bookseller and as a serious book collector. And, as that bookseller, I always respected his published efforts and treated his books in the same even-handed way that I did all the titles I promoted and sold during my career. But, as far as the University of Toronto Homophile Association goes: he was a joiner, never a founder.

Charlie Hill

Charlie Hill and I met a few days after *The Varsity* ad was published. It had been a simple ad; my way of reaching out to a student body I barely knew. It asked those "interested in discussing the establishment of a student homophile association" to contact me. I provided my home phone number and, when a few people did call, they were invited to my apartment to discuss launching the group.

Charlie and I had spoken in the notorious UC washroom after an "encounter". The UC washroom was probably the most famous place in all of Toronto for a "quickie" (to say the least). It was almost always busy: not a day went by when it didn't see some sex action from students, Faculty, Staff, Queen's Park employees and "townies". I even met George Hislop there as well as a few well known people from the "Arts Community". If there ever was a cauldron for this nascent local gay movement, it may well have been that famous loo.

Unlike other similar underground venues, however, people actually carried on conversations from time to time ... so it served a social function at a time when there were few places - outside of a limited bar and dance club scene - where queers met and talked. And that is exactly what happened between Charlie and myself. He simply asked me if I knew who had placed *The Varsity* ad. When I told him that I had, we ended up further discussing his student status and I invited him to come to the meetings held in "the cave". Because I saw myself as an organizer/founding force and because I was neither a student nor a 'power broker', Charlie seemed to be a good choice to act as Chairperson for the UTHA.

Once word got out about the University's recognition of our new group, *The Globe & Mail* published a letter whose author stated that it was a mistake for SAC to have recognized it. As the group's founder, I wrote a reply. Anne Purdue's article quotes from my letter: "If

the homophile represents a challenge to society, it is only that he promotes an increased freedom of expression between human beings." This was pretty basic stuff, reflecting my larger worldview. However, my boss at U of T, Dr. Roy Preshaw, then called me into his office to inform me that the old gentleman who was the Chairman of the Physiology Dept. had seen the letter and had asked Dr. Preshaw to dismiss me ... which he did.

At the time, I neither asked for, nor received, any overt support from Charlie or the group. It was a fledgling organization still learning to find its way and, internally, the waters were already murky thanks to Ian Young's obsession over my leadership. And so I paid the high price for taking the initiative in founding and then defending the UTHA ... but, with this turn of events, I was left alone - 'high and dry' - to deal with the results.

[I recently tried to get answers to a few questions that I had for Charlie, to feel out his position and memory of these events. I wrote him, hoping for his support but, ultimately, I got the sense that nothing had changed about Charlie's wishy-washy ways. He wrote back once and I could see that he was waffling, claiming an uncertain memory. My follow-up e-mails to him then bounced back and I can only assume that they were being blocked ... Well, at least he is consistent.]

Forgive me if I admit that, after reviewing Charlie's comments in Anne Purdue's article, I felt that some of them were embarrassingly shallow. When she asked "the Curator for the National Gallery and a member of the Order of Canada how he mustered the courage to be the leader of the Homophile Association", he replied: 'Anger and irritation.' " OK. I know all about anger, but I still don't understand what he meant when he said that he had been irritated. (I get irritated waiting for the TTC, or for any number of reasons ... such as having to constantly defend my role as "founder".) He goes on to speak about "coming out" and "being out" and says: "We were an invisible minority and, as long as we were invisible, people could make up their own theories about us." Well, hurrah to all that!



**Charlie Hill &
Roger Wilkes,
Gay Student
Group
Conference,
York
University,
1972**

So: Three talented people, all successful in their own right.

Charlie Hill ... the author of a well reviewed book "The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation", published in 1995. In 2001, he received The Order of Canada for his book and for his long career as a curator at the National Gallery.

Ian Young ... the author of some 10+ books.

And Jearld Moldenhauer ... in his youth, a firebrand who established many gay organizations and institutions internationally.

The Researcher, Her Conclusions and Freedom of Information

I first heard about the "Plaque Project" in an e-mail on March 18th, 2011 from David Rayside, who immediately assumed that the news would "make me smile". (Rayside was formerly the Director of the Bonham School for Sexual Diversity Studies at U of T). He quickly sent a second e-mail to inform me that similar messages had been sent out to Charlie and Ian. Yet another e-mail followed and I started to see the writing on the wall. He referred to me as someone who had "placed that first ad" and I began to sense that the University's version of the historical record was about to reduce me to an "advertiser" for the group rather than its founder.

Even before Ms. Robinson began her research on the project, I sensed in what direction things would be

heading and I wrote to tell her: "I truly would rather be left out, denounced or simply ignored rather than be framed within a dishonest rendering of historical fact." (OK. I am not known for mincing my words. Needless to say, many have recoiled at my bluntness.)

On September 27th, David forwarded the Ontario Heritage Trust's Invitation. I wrote back asking about the wording on the plaque and was informed that the "plaque's text is not being revealed to anyone prior to the actual event." I reminded David that, a few months earlier, I had written a polite inquiry to Ms. Robinson about the conclusions of her research and she had responded in an ambiguous way. That had sent another signal that something was afoot. David responded that he had "considerable faith in the preparatory process used by the OHT." Writing him back, I declared my own lack of faith in the "system" ... and I think with good cause as there could be no healthy reason to withhold the wording from me except to prevent a response. (It was not as if there was some sort of national security threat here.) In his next e-mail, David ended the communication rather haughtily by stating "I see no particular advantage in continuing this exchange."

How I Received the Press Release and the Plaque's Wording.

On Oct. 14th, a friend sent me the Press Release about the Plaque's unveiling. No one officially associated with either the OHT or the SDS sent this public announcement to me. A few days later, on October 19th, another friend sent me the precise wording of the actual plaque. So much for courtesy and officialdom! So there it was: my name as "advertiser" in the Press Release but no specific recognition on the plaque itself (in fact, no names appeared).

All of this felt like déjà vu, reminding me of an award the old Gay Academic Union had presented, some decades ago, to "Glad Day Bookshop", instead of to the person who effectively was Glad Day Bookshop: me. The human being behind the organization seemed to matter less than the name of the organization proper. (Why not be as impersonal as we can!?) Obviously the people who make such decisions have no idea how this makes the person - the legitimate founder - feel ... the person who did the hard work and paid whatever price for these groundbreaking initiatives. Or maybe they do it intentionally ... as a way of negating the individual. Somebody should ask them.

During my communications with Ms. Robinson, I took what I considered a straight forward factual path. I assumed that, as with any researcher who was up to the task, once any facts were disputed, she would investigate further and, in this case, I would hear back from her. (How else can a person doing historical

research proceed otherwise, assuming they ARE 'up to the task'?) When, after several months, I had heard nothing whatsoever, it became obvious that either the wool had been pulled over her eyes ... or it had been decided that the "safest" path to proceed on would be to leave all names off the plaque, even if this diminished the role of the legitimate founder.

Founder or Advertiser?

The title of "Founder" has a basic enough definition in the Oxford dictionary: "A person who establishes an institution or settlement." So it's the idea and implementing of that idea that makes one a founder. In psychological terms, founders have special qualities that followers do not have. They have the guts to take on the world and to try and change it. This requires not only unusual courage but also a heavy component of naïveté, something you often find in youth. Take me away from the UTHA, (or Cornell SH, or Glad Day Toronto and Glad Day Boston, or even from *The Body Politic* and the CLGA) and what do you have? I believe that it is obvious that founding the basic institutions of the gay movement was my special talent, my contribution to the evolution of the culture. Why then, I wonder, have I had such a hard time getting the simple credit that is due?

[As a small additional note to this "founding" issue, I refer people to a website from Thunder Bay, Ontario call "Ebb and Flow - The Seventies." 1974

“Lakehead Gay Liberation (LGL) was formed in Thunder Bay at Lakehead University, sparked by a visit by Jearld Moldenhauer (of Glad Day Bookshop fame). LGL was recognized as an official club by the Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU). In February, a live interview aired on CBQ radio. The group was short lived as most members left for Toronto that summer, and attempts to revive it in the fall were unsuccessful.”

This specific visit had happened on a National Tour sponsored by GATE Vancouver and GATE Toronto. I had been sent by train west from Toronto to rally the troops in any and every city I was invited to, in order to forge a national front for the "Movement". Yes, this particular group, LGL, was apparently short lived but it marked the beginning of gay political awareness for the Thunder Bay community and they were kind enough - and upfront enough - to remember this history. Their historical memory and honesty does not go unappreciated.]

So what was gained by mentioning my name in the Press Release but excluding it from the plaque? The avoidance of controversy? The conclusion - or at least the one I feel they reached - was that it was better to deny the person the honest credit he deserved rather than to pass judgment on the other (misleading) accounts of what had happened.

As I said in Anne Purdue's article: "Somehow I don't expect to receive an apology 40 years later." First off, they would have to acknowledge the true reason for my dismissal. Apparently no one wants to do that. After all, these days, is any Canadian university anywhere willing to admit that it fired, without cause (other than homophobia), the founder of a gay group ? I somehow doubt it. Yes, U of T may not be what it was back in the early 1970s ... but that's all the more reason for finishing this chapter honorably.

During the 1970s and up until the mid-1980s, there seemed to be no question about who had been the actual founder of the UTHA. Sometime during the 1980s, I was even invited to give a talk about the gay history at U of T (as I remembered it). In 2005, the group - now called LGTBTOUT (what a mouthful!) - had a major 35th Anniversary Party at the ROM. I had, of course, heard about this but had NOT been invited. Closer to the event, I became aware that Ian Young was being touted as the founder of the group. About two days before the celebration, someone from the organization finally contacted me and invited me to attend. (Feeling insulted, I did not do so.)

That was the beginning of this serious distortion of UTHA history ... later reinforced and amplified by the Alumni magazine article. None of this really surprises me when you consider that members of the Executive Committee of the current group do not even use their

last names on the LGTBTOUT website. When I asked about this some years ago, I was told that it was a "tradition". If so, it's a sad one. Apparently, whatever we gained from 'Gay Liberation' and the central role of being "out" have been diminished for some time now. If this phenomena is widespread - and not just present at one of Canada's major universities - perhaps it partially explains the increase in gay-related bullying and in the continued high suicide rates of gay teens. One has to ask where the leadership is from people at such a major university when they so fear for their careers as to opt out and become the anonymously named Jane D. or John Q. ?

Egomaniac or Deserving Activist ?

I have become so very tired of being put on the defensive about my role in the gay movement in Canada. This has, no doubt, something to do with why I no longer live there. People should ponder the fact that some of us early activists paid a price for the public positions we took. In my case, the price was a rather heavy one although one I took in stride.

(Not only did U of T dismiss me but, a year later, the Toronto Western Hospital did the same after I brought Issue One of *The Body Politic* to work. The next year, I got a job working for the City of Toronto as a gardener. Once I was established and past my probationary period, I gradually came out, once again, by bringing gay

newspapers to work to read during break times. Despite my good standing, I was not only fired but was sent to work in isolation for 2-3 weeks at the Woodbine Beaches before they officially terminated me.)

After this introduction to the real world, I decided to build Glad Day into a real bookstore ... instead of operating at half throttle from my home. It was the silver lining in a cloud of some despair. Eventually, I developed myself into a professional bookseller with an encyclopedic knowledge of most every title and author who ever addressed homosexual topics. That career lasted from 1970 - with the inception of Glad Day out of a backpack - to the year 2000, when I closed the successful Glad Day Boston.

However, little did I realize that, within a few years of starting the Yonge Street store, Canada Customs would begin seizing and censoring gay and lesbian literature. What started as an "irritating" occasional event grew into an all-out assault by 1985, with Mulroney's internal Memorandum D-9-1-1. People know something about the court battles (such as the one over "The Joy of Gay Sex") but I doubt that they have any idea about what this "war" costs, not only in legal fees but also in its psychological impact on someone just trying to do his job as best as he can. Until 1991 - when I finally wearied of these "Customs" battles - it was a daily fight for survival as all the power of the State was unleashed upon a tiny business in an attempt to destroy it.

Glad Day Toronto is now the world's oldest surviving bookshop, specializing in gay and lesbian literature. In its time, it hosted readings and book signings by most of world's greatest living gay and lesbian writers including Christopher Isherwood, William Burroughs, Edmund White, Michel Tremblay and Jeanette Winterson.

As far as my ego goes, I think it's both pretty humble and low key. My class origins are lower middle class, something that helped me break through the barriers middle class and upper class individuals often find impossible to transcend. In sheer biological terms (my area of study), I saw myself as a sort of "sport", a hybrid with the right combination of genes, class and education to push my society a tiny bit forward.

I can remember when I was just 14 years old and my grandmother gave me - at my request - the Collected Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson ... Thoreau's "Walden Pond" also arrived in my hands soon thereafter. So, at a very young age, I was schooled in the principle of self-determination, with a belief in one's own intuitive grasp of reality. Given the battles that I have had to fight against an array of opponents, I feel these imbedded ideals have served me well.

Jearld Moldenhauer
Fez, Morocco
October 30, 2011

The above text is in the process of being published as part of a larger autobiographical account. All photos by Jearld Moldenhauer are copyrighted.