

The Weekly WoKer

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1 Welcome to the Weekly WoKer

Welcome to Volume 2 of the weekly WoKer, the first weekly newspaper for WoK Forums. Inside this edition you will find:

- A brief editorial piece offering my personal view of what has happened this week
- An overview of the week's activities, including descriptions of any exciting events that might have taken place outside of the usual schedule
- Brief summaries of each specific WoK activity, including lists of participants
- Announcement of the upcoming week's schedule, including the Sunday talk speaker and abstract, Monday reading group reading, and any deviations from the normal schedule

2 Letter From the Editor

As the holidays have been approaching people's schedules have grown increasingly hectic, but activity has remained strong in WoK Forums. Steven Tainer has given another remarkable Saturday presentation, and we have made our first formal venture into Second Life, completed more construction in Qwaq, and seen the continuing development of the Wiki (including a critically acclaimed instructional presentation Sunday, December 16). We are now on Holiday, but I encourage you to keep the spirit of WoK burning brightly in your hearts until we reconvene. In this issue you will hear about several ways to make that happen.

3 Tainer gives fourth presentation in landmark lecture series about the background of the Working Hypothesis

On Saturday, December 15th Steven Tainer gave the fourth presentation in his landmark series of lectures detailing the contemplative background of the Working Hypothesis. It was the first in a series of talks specifically about Asian contemplative traditions, and focused on the theme of ‘the self.’ Andrew McGowan, Bob Magrisso, Karen Sobel-Lojeski, Patrick St-Amant, and Roman Kolesnikov were in attendance.

For more information on the talk please see the copy of Steven’s powerpoint in the Archive. For a copy of the transcript of the questions and answers following the talk please contact Andrew McGowan at abmcgowan@gmail.com

4 McGowan Gives Critically Acclaimed Instructional Presentation on Using the Wiki

On Sunday, December 16th Wikimeister Andrew McGowan gave a critically acclaimed presentation on the use of the Wiki. Bob Magrisso, Jan Schwindt, Jill Gentile, Karen Sobel-Lojeski, Ossian Foley, Piet Hut, Sean Murphy, and Steven Tainer were in attendance.

The talk was a two part, theory and practice presentation, with the first part giving an overview of what the wiki is and why we want to use it, and the second part giving a practical demonstration of how to use the wiki, taking advantage of Qwaq’s in-forum browser technology.

5 Reading Group Overhauled

After an in-depth discussion Monday night at the reading group session the structure of the weekly readings has been drastically overhauled, as reported by former book-of-the-month master Doug Carmichael in his e-mail to the wokforums listserv on the evening of December 17th. Andrew McGowan, Doug Carmichael, Piet Hut, and weekly-reading master Steven Tainer were present at the meeting.

Under the new system the book of the month and the weekly reading will be merged. Steven will select a book, excerpts of which he will then present for discussion at the weekly meetings on Monday nights at 10PM EST. Participants are

encouraged to buy and read the book themselves, but buying and reading the book is not required to participate in the meetings.

Participants are also encouraged to send book suggestions to Steven. If their books are selected they will then have the option to give the weekly presentations, either by themselves or in conjunction with Steven.

For the month of January we will be reading Remi Brague's *The Wisdom of the World*, which Steven will be presenting in conjunction with Doug Carmichael. The discussions will begin Monday, January 7th at 10PM EST in the Colloquium room.

6 The WoKer now available online

The editors of the WoKer are pleased to announce that the WoKer will now be available online, drastically expanding the potential scope of the readership. 'Before we were reaching maybe 30 people,' commented WoKer Editor in Chief Andrew McGowan, 'Now, we have the potential to reach millions of people, though the readership is not likely to reach number of that size any time soon.' 'This represents a huge opportunity for the WoKer,' he continued, 'in addition to greatly improving our desirability to advertisers we will be able to reach many more people with our message.' The WoKer can be accessed from the Ways of Knowing web-site, <http://www.waysofknowing.net>, under 'what's new.'

7 First non-English Meeting Held in WoK Forums

At 5PM EST on Tuesday, December 18 Jan Schwindt, Leonore Wigger, and Piet Hut met in the garden for the first scheduled non-English WoK Forums session. They discussed the working hypothesis in a mix of high German, Swiss German and Dutch-accented German. The conversation ranged over the ongoing e-mail exchange on the woklab listserv, tracing tacit assumptions, and the art of listening to what people are trying to express (instead of just the words).

In the middle of the session repairman Andrew McGowan responded to their call to check on the unresponsive door to the building in the garden. When interviewed about the event McGowan had the following remarks, 'I didn't have my headphones, so I didn't hear a darn thing, but even if I did I don't think I would have understood it. And I still couldn't fix the door, but I think we've got it under control now.'

Five hours later, at 10 pm EST, the language of the land reverted to English as Doug Carmichael and Piet Hut met again in the garden for the regularly scheduled chat about the working hypothesis.

The WoKer would like to acknowledge Piet Hut for his thorough reporting on these two events.

8 Farm Boy Admits Responsibility for Mysterious ‘Tree Circles,’ Adamantly Denies Construction of Pagoda

WoK tabloids (which hold themselves to much lower standards of journalism than the WoKer) were rife with speculation December 19th after a mysterious circle of trees appeared in the garden, along with a scale replica of the Shwedagon Pagoda.

Theories ranged from alien intervention to the confluence of the activity of energies associated with the ancient Egyptians and the Energizer Bunny, until a local farm boy accepted responsibility for the trees.

He spoke with the WoKer under condition of anonymity. ‘I thought it would be fun to put the trees there, and it was,’ he said. ‘People reacted even better than I hoped they would. I mean, who would have thought the ancient Egyptians would be responsible for a circle of trees in the garden?’ But the pagoda, he said, was not of his doing, ‘I’m a pretty strong kid, but I’m not that strong. Somebody else must have been responsible for that. Maybe it was my cousin Ernie. He won the national arm-wrestling championships last year.’

The WoKer is not sure whether Ernie is capable of such a feat (unfortunately he was unavailable for interviewing), but we suspect that a different agent altogether may be responsible for both the trees and the pagoda.

9 Brownian Motion Experiment Goes Multimedia after Wednesday Discussion

On the evening of Wednesday, December 19 Andrew McGowan, Doug Carmichael, Jan Schwindt, Karen Sobel-Lojeski, and Piet Hut convened for the regularly scheduled discussion of the Working Hypothesis. The conversation ranged over the purpose of the Working Hypothesis and the value of group investigation, among other topics, and then turned to the effects of media on content. At this point Karen suggested using novel ways of expression, such as photographs, music and videos. Andrew then suggested Bob Magrisso’s office as an example of this kind of expression, and all five participants teleported to Bob’s office. While there, after further discussion, the par-

ticipants agreed that the Brownian Motion Conversation should now be multimedia. Please feel free to respond to the current remarks with images, pictures, sounds, and video. Whenever possible please do this by linking to external sites such as YouTube, since video files in particular take up a lot bandwidth.

As a reminder, all participants have the opportunity to decorate their own virtual office (to create an office send a request to abmcgowan@gmail.com). Doug Carmichael would also like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to come visit his office, and anyone else who has decorated an office is welcome to send an invitation to the wokforums listserv.

10 WoK Goes on Holiday

As of the end of the Working Hypothesis discussion on Wednesday, December 19th, WoK Forums has officially gone on Holiday. Participants have remained active, however, making appearances in Second Life, and continuing their discussions over e-mail.

Meetings will resume Saturday, January 5th at 5PM EST in the Colloquium room, for Steven's first Saturday presentation of the new year. Sunday guest lectures will resume on Sunday, January 6th, the reading group will resume on Monday, January 7th, and the Working Hypothesis discussions will resume on Tuesday, January 8th. After the holiday there will also be a follow-up to Andrew McGowan's recent Sunday presentation on using the Wiki, where he will be available to answer any and all questions.

In the mean time, there are many ways for you to keep the spirit of the Forums alive. You can work with the Working Hypothesis and write to the woklab listserv. You can write something on the wiki. You can even join us in Second Life (details follow below).

11 WoK Makes First Formal Appearance in Second Life

WoK forums made its first formal appearance in Second Life on Thursday, December 20, sources say. The meeting took place in the living room of Second Life's Kat Lemieux (in real life Katherine Prawl), a Second Life guru who has played an integral role in the construction and development of the Space Flight Museum (of which she is the Director), as well as the SciLands, a region of Second Life dedicated to science.

Representing WoK Forums were Pema Pera (Piet Hut), Benedizione Vita (Andrew McGowan), Edo Tigerclaw (Ed Turner), and Doug Sosa (Doug Carmichael). Edo's presence was particularly special, given that his PowerPC Mac has until now prevented him from joining virtual meetings in Qwaq Forums (which does not currently support PowerPC Macs). Edo is an astrophysicist at Princeton, who has over twenty years of experience in virtual worlds.

After some discussion the participants decided to make this meeting a daily event, for a while at least, during the holidays. None of them are likely to be there every time, but anyone is free to drop by, starting at 10 pm EST. The simplest way to get to there living room is to use your browser to go to the following URL:

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Aglia/15/70/42>

Clicking on 'teleport now' on that page will open Second Life, and when you then click on 'connect' you will be teleported to Kat's living room.

12 Quote of the Week

Give up all ideas about yourself and simply be.

– Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj