

The Weekly WoKer

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1 Welcome to the Weekly WoKer

Welcome to Volume 9 of the Weekly WoKer, the first weekly newspaper for WoK Forums. Inside this edition you will find:

- An editorial piece offering my personal view of what has happened this week, including an overview of the week's events
- Upcoming Events
- 'Piet's Page,' a weekly column by forums mayor Piet Hut

2 Letter From the Editor

Activity in WoK Forums has been relatively slow this past week, as we pause in our programming to move in a new direction. The reading group, structured Second Life Meetings, and Steven's Saturday presentations have all concluded, and we are currently putting together a schedule for a new series of presentations from Steven. This state of affairs is uniquely challenging to a journalist, so it leaves a mere printer such as myself in an even more difficult situation, especially without letters to the editor or other contributions such as a printer might print.

One way to meet the challenge would be to take the relative absence of news and manufacture a story around it. I might make up something fantastic about the calm before the furious storm of activity, or about the imminent collapse of WoK. But neither of those stories would meet the high journalistic standards of integrity that a publication like the WoKer, unlike tabloids like the New York Times, must meet. Instead, as you may have noticed, I have taken the meta-approach of commenting on the situation at hand, in typical boot-strapping fashion.

The point is that both of the two manufacturing approaches I mentioned above are examples of the kind of fill-in effects that WoK aims to expose. Fill-in effects are mind patterns that tell us we know things that we do not—they paint a picture that has no gaps, when in fact our actual knowledge of the situation may be gaping. Not knowing can be a scary situation, which we may try to avoid, shutting down dynamic uncertainty with ungrounded stories.

Perhaps the most famous example of a teaching about fill-in effects in the Taoist story about the Chinese farmer. His horse runs away and his neighbors say ‘bad luck.’ He says, ‘who knows?’ His horse comes back with a whole herd of horses and his neighbors say ‘good luck!’ He says, ‘who knows?’ His son falls off one of the new horses and breaks his leg and his neighbors say, ‘bad luck!’ He says, ‘who knows?’ The army comes and recruits all of the able-bodied young men and his neighbors say, ‘good luck!’ You get the idea.

What does all of this mean for WoK and the WoKer? I don’t know, but I will tell you about some upcoming events we have brewing, and I would love to read and print whatever contributions you might pen.

3 Tainer announces dream yoga teachings

On Sunday, February 17 Steven Tainer gave a talk announcing and introducing his upcoming dream yoga teachings.

Steven will be offering a one-month course in a wake-up yoga he created years ago during his long dream-yoga retreats. The practice will require a 5-minute daily commitment, as well as a commitment to getting enough sleep. He will also be holding a make-up instructional session on a preliminary practice he developed based on a traditional Tibetan mirror-gazing exercise. This practice requires at least a two week commitment.

Steven comments: ‘The point of the mirror practice is primarily deconstructive, to see the limited status of some senses of “self”. The wake-up practice is designed to enhance sensitivity to more positive dimensions of presence, and it is there that the completeness of wh is to be found.’

We are currently working out the details about when exactly Steven will be offering these teachings.

4 Lemieux announces high tea and low tea, meets avatar with goatee

Second Life Guru Katherine Lemieux (real life Katherine Prawl) has informed the WoKer that Piet has suggested a daily tea time for the Qwaq Second Life Liaison in the clubhouse¹ Mondays we will have ‘High Tea’ to discuss any business the group might have, and all other days will be ‘low tea’ for informal gathering. White tie and tails are requested for high tea. All meetings will be at 11 am Pacific (SL) Time (2 pm EST).

5 Sosa will be giving talk about WoK in Second Life

Doug Sosa (Douglass Carmichael in real life) will be giving a presentation Friday at 2 p.m. Pacific/5 p.m. Eastern Time about the intent and process is in WoK, the use of meditation and dreams to put some perspective on how to make science thinking more open and creative, and the use of wholeness and letting go. We will meet at the ISM Clubhouse.

6 President of Supreme Central Council on Teachings resigns in wake of scandal following public statement published in WoKer

An anonymous source has informed the WoKer that the president of the Supreme Central Council on Teachings has resigned in the wake of public outcry in the astral sphere following his council’s contribution to the WoKer. Rogue activists have seized the opportunity the chaos affords and are now seeking approval for the gamut of as yet unauthorized teachings. Keep reading next week for updates on this WoKer exclusive.

¹To get to the clubhouse enter the following url into your web-browser of choice: <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Spaceport%20Bravo/163/187/59>

7 Piet's Page

How to place these virtual worlds, like Second Life and Qwaq and many others that are currently appearing? How to view them? They are software tools, but they are also new media forms, new art forms, they allow new types of crafts to sprout. What are they? What are we engaged in when we meet in our virtual world of Qwaq's WoK Forums?

We have been talking more about the role of experience, and the question of how to connect more theoretical considerations with more practice direct approaches. Can our medium give us a hint?

If we go back in history, we can find virtual presentations of actual situations already more than 30,000 years ago, in the form of two-dimensional cave paintings. Similarly, three-dimensional statues of all kinds have also been produced for many tens of thousands of years. In more recent times, with the invention of writing several thousands of years ago, much more detailed information could be represented and preserved. But the precision had its cost: writing presents a form that is far more abstract. It lacks the vividness of visual images and the tactile qualities of statues.

In the last hundred years, movies and television have combined something of the information content and experiential richness of cave paintings and writing. Stories can now be presented in visual as well as narrative detail. But these media forms have their own limitation, in the form of a linear time series. Whereas you can hold a statue in your hand and look at it from different angles at your own leisure, or walk around a painting to see it from different angles with different lighting, a movie moves at its own speed, and does not allow you to do much more than start, stop, and pause.

In one way or another, all representational media that have been ever invented by humans have had serious drawbacks, requiring us to take a relatively abstract stance in order to use and appreciate these media. We cannot step into them, we cannot really interact with them the way we do in real life. This means that we have to use our whole physical cognitive apparatus, our sensory systems and nervous system, in ways that are in some sense abstract and unnatural.

The significance of virtual worlds is that finally, for the first time in the history of humankind, we have a technology and art form that fits directly with our nervous system as it has developed over billions of years of evolution. Without the need for intermediate forms of interpretation, we can immerse ourselves in a virtual world, move, interact, feel a sense of keen presence, and a sense of co-presence with others.

8 Quote of the Week

What a day for a daydream.
– The Lovin' Spoonful