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### **The International Spirit at Work Awards Dinner & Conference**

Garrison Institute, Hudson River, New York State – October 27/29 2006

A reflection by Alan Harpham:

I was lucky enough to attend the awards dinner and conference for the second year of its existence. It was even better than last year's and a privilege to attend.

**The location:** Last year's was held at The Princeton Club in the heart of Manhattan, New York. This year's was held at the Garrison Institute, a former seminary located on the Hudson River, an hour or so north of NY on the opposite bank to West Point, the US equivalent of Sandhurst. A simply stunning location with the huge and busy river running by, opposite a beautiful waterfall, surrounded by beautiful trees with all those wonderful shades of the Fall – greens, yellows, orange and bright reds. The building is as you might imagine a seminary, remote, set in the woods, a large imposing brick building steeped in its spiritual background and tradition. Inside, the private charitable trust which now runs it as a spiritual retreat centre, has begun the work of bringing the interior up to modern standards whilst maintaining its original stark simplicity. The refectory, with its long tables, calling out for groups to sit in silence eating, or on other occasions to be in deep conversations; our group tended to the latter most of the time. The former Chapel now the meditation room, long clattering wooden floored corridors, large meeting rooms, and as well as the many simple bedrooms, beautifully appointed rest rooms and showers and bathrooms.

**The Food:** Last year's was fine food, plentiful and what you would imagine being served in a 'preppy' institution. This year's was quite extraordinary, a vegetarian's delight, although we carnivores got our share of protein at one meal a day. Breakfast started with fresh fruit, porridge or other cereals, bread and jam served with a variety of healthy teas or coffee – normal or decaf. Lunch followed with beautiful home made soup, followed by incredible salads, potatoes or rice all beautifully done with pulses and incredible dressings served with a piece of fish or meat, followed by a beautiful sweet. Dinner tended to the salads with lots of pulses, potato or rice all beautifully dressed followed by a sweet and coffee again

or tea. Everyone left saying they had never had food like it before, simple yet satisfying and keen to get a copy of the recipes.

**The Event:** The heart of the matter. Last year's was good but all served too quickly in too short a space of time – an evening and a day. This year's was a far better pace with the awards dinner on the first evening, with fewer awardees (just four) followed by a whole day and a half of conference, with lots of spiritual times for reflection, and opportunities to network with the other attendees. The turnout was slightly disappointing at around one hundred (similar to last year), particularly given the effort put in by the simply lovely planning and organising committee led by the indefatigable Dr Judi Neal and her two key helpers Tim and Abby (very appropriately named for the location!) As ever the awardees were an inspiration and each got a thoroughly deserved standing ovation. Two from the private sector, one a German Cleaning Company – Clean Service Power GmbH, the other an Indian pharmaceuticals company – Nicholas Piramal India Ltd. Two from the 'not-for-profit' sector, one an American dedicated to transforming the way people, organisations, and governments deal with conflict – Search for Common Ground, the other an Australian organisation with Ignatian spirituality and values working with the poor and underprivileged – Jesuit Social Services.

There were four key note speakers (five really, as one was a couple.) John Renesch, author and futurist, who jointly founded the award with Judi in memory of Willis Harman and who told us all about Willis and his inspirational work. Diana Whitney an Appreciative Inquiry thought leader who explained the technique and ran a case study around SaW as an example with all of us – a beautiful and thought provoking speaker. John Smith, CEO of Hearthstone Homes and a man practising what he preaches who is definitely a very advanced soul. Last but by no means least an extraordinary couple – Peter and Monika Mitchell Ressler, a pair of Wall Street Head Hunters – who shared by alternating inputs, the transformational effects of 9/11 on their own lives, their life as a couple and business and on those around them. A shocking and yet moving story full of the power of love, not something those from Brooklyn are naturally brought up to live with! Allegedly! Peter is now a fully fledged member of his own local volunteer fire department.

The second evening was extraordinary with an impromptu concert by the attendees. Just like a talent show, but better than anything you might imagine. Some read poetry often written by them, full of great beauty, some sang – from pop to classical opera, some acted 'impromptu', some did combinations singing their poetry even. Some had never, ever, done their piece before, or not since primary school; others were semi professionals, but all were wonderful. The quality was incredibly high and there were no embarrassing moments at all. It was a truly inspiring evening and the presence of 'spirit' was felt by all. Our three key planners for instance comprised Judi, with husband Dennis on bass, playing guitar with Judi singing with her lovely voice, Tim singing opera like a professional and Abby who rounded the evening off with her vibrant rock voice

and strong guitar playing – which sounded good enough to be at the Carnegie Hall!

But back to the main thrust of this story, namely the stories of the four awardees, past awardees and consultants all sharing their own stories pre and post awards. I will confine myself to the four new awardees and these are their 'profiles':

### **Clean Service Power GmbH – Germany**

The vision of CLEAN SERVICEPOWER's founder and owner Thomas-Michael Baggeler—Working and Succeeding for the Good of All Involved—has defined the company since its founding. Dolphins are central to CLEAN's brand identity as a symbol of living in harmony with nature and riding on the waves of laughter.

As a privately owned company, CLEAN has mastered the challenges of cost pressures and the need for streamlining operations while putting customers first and honoring a responsibility to all involved.

- CLEAN employees think and act holistically and emphasize sustainability with regard to man, earth and the universe.
- They are open to the spiritual traditions of different cultures.
- Life and work are based upon values such as faith, honesty and the concept of divine love, which flows through every individual.

Intensive training in Feng Shui, Qi Gong and different spiritual traditions by the organization's leader prepared the way for the development of a unique business concept in the cleaning industry: holistic commercial cleaning.

With a new understanding of office and private space and the effect a space can have on the vitality of the people living and working in it, CLEAN brings together conventional commercial cleaning with holistic, energetic cleaning in order to create and maintain healthy working environments over the long term.

Through the use of natural, biodegradable and energetically vitalizing cleaning agents, CLEAN make its contribution to preserving the earth and demonstrates its commitment to nature. Its commitment to process control and efficient operations is evidenced by its certification to DIN EN ISO 9001 and DIN EN ISO 14001 standards.

CLEAN employs people from different cultures and countries on all company levels. Starting at the management level, CLEAN abides by a code of absolute honesty. Meditation allows employees to step back from the everyday routine, process their experiences, and restore their strength. In addition, CLEAN's employees enjoy organic lunches, weekly massages, and energetically cleared offices designed and decorated according to feng shui principles.

**Thomas-  
Michael**

## Baggeler

Founder and  
Owner

Clean Servicepower GmbH  
Königswinterer Straße 730  
53227 Bonn  
West Germany  
+49 (0) 700 / 888 898 89  
www.clean.de

› 940 employees

› Founded in 1989

### **Search for Common Ground – United States**

Search for Common Ground is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the way people, organizations, and governments deal with conflict: away from adversarial approaches toward cooperative solutions.

### **The Common Ground Approach**

The Common Ground Approach comes from the hearts and minds of people who courageously choose to focus on commonalities with their enemies and to bring forth compassion, tolerance and understanding in addressing shared problems.

While consistent with the spiritual underpinnings of many religions, the Common Ground Approach is not affiliated with any specific religion. A natural result of the approach is tolerance and mutual respect. The organization's programs and overall operations model the cooperative behavior it seeks to inspire in entire societies.

A cornerstone of the approach is to place people from the different ethnic, religious, and political groups side by side in any given conflict. This means that the staff come from all different religious traditions, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and so on.

Members of the staff are trained in the philosophy and methodologies of the Common Ground Approach. They recognize that peace-building starts with each one of us and that understanding affects and informs the ways in which they deal with their differences of opinion. They are also encouraged to explore their own spiritual paths.

- Many practice various types of meditation, yoga, and prayer, along with deep affiliations with their own specific spiritual traditions and communities.
- The organization's "education funds" support attendance at spiritual retreats and programs.
- On-going lunchtime presentations focus on spiritual growth.

Considered the leader in conflict transformation field, Search for Common Ground has had a profound effect on millions of people, applying spiritual principles in very difficult places around the world.

## John Marks

President

**Search for Common Ground is the largest non-governmental organization in the world working in conflict transformation.**

**With an annual budget of approximately \$18 million, it has programs in 17 countries, many of which reach people in neighbouring countries as part of a regional focus.**

**Search for Common Ground**

**1601 Connecticut Ave. NW**

**Suite 200**

**Washington, DC 20009**

**(202) 265-4300**

**[www.sfcg.org](http://www.sfcg.org)**

) 300 employees

) Founded in 1982

- ) Programs in 17 countries: Angola; Belgium; Burundi; Côte d'Ivoire; D.R. Congo; Guinea; Indonesia; Liberia; Macedonia; Middle East, with staff in Jerusalem and Amman; Morocco; Nepal; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Ukraine; and the USA
- ) Three international programmes: US/Iran; Partners in Humanity; and Radio for Peacebuilding Africa

## **Jesuit Social Services – Melbourne, Australia**

Jesuit Social Services developed their People, Leadership and Culture Strategy that provides a framework for integrating values into daily practice. Grounded in Ignatian spirituality, it has great potential for professional and personal benefit and it is a powerful contributor to the organization's success. The strategy has three areas of focus:

**Personal/Spiritual**—striving for respect in all encounters.

**Practice Framework**—striving for compassion and rigor in professional practice.

**Business Process**—striving for accountability and excellence in all processes.

When CEO Julie Edwards joined Jesuit Social Services in May of 2004, the organization began to purposefully create opportunities for conversations and actions that highlight the spiritual element of work. Specific practices that include the following are impacting the workplace culture.

**Leadership Development** is carried out on personal, interpersonal, and group levels.

**Induction Processes** focus on the vision and values of Jesuit Social Services and the organization's culture.

**Reflection Training** makes it possible for groups to share perspectives while remaining focused on the matters at hand.

**Reflection Days** are encouraged among the staff who can take up to 2 days for some form of reflective practice.

**Program Delivery** emphasizes that all stakeholders become aware of, and take responsibility for, their actions.

### **Crossing boundaries**

There is a great diversity of belief and faith backgrounds among the Jesuit Social Services staff. In the Ignatian tradition, much value is placed on being “a home for all faiths.” People are simply asked to make themselves aware of the values and mission, agree to work within that framework, and treat each other's journey with respect.

**Jesuit Social Services provides a range of direct services directed to highly disadvantaged young people, families, and communities. The primary concern is young people with complex problems associated with offending behaviour. In addition to direct service delivery, their work spans social enterprises, mentoring, restorative justice conferencing, parenting and creative arts. They work to effect social change at a local, state, and national level through research, social policy, and advocacy work.**

**Jesuit Social Services  
371 Church Street  
Richmond, Victoria 3121  
Australia**

**[www.jss.org.au](http://www.jss.org.au)**

- › 110 employees
- › Founded in 1995
- › Several locations in Melbourne and Victoria
- › Julie Edwards, CEO

### **Nicolas Piramal India Ltd. – Mumbai, India**

Nicholas Piramal is an amalgam of many cultures, most of them being multinational in nature. As a result the company has developed its own Nicholas Way, a program of best practices that creates a unique culture that reflects unity in its diversity.

The organization regards spirituality as “Living the right way in whatever we do and not just paying attention to ritual. Our definition of spirituality encompasses a wider philosophy laid out as the Sanatan dharma, the laws of universal oneness and compassion for all living things.”

The Bhagwad Geeta is a 3,000-year-old epic poem with nearly 800 verses about the immortal laws of life enunciated by Lord Krishna to Prince Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Eighteen of these verses give the inspiration for management and Nicholas Piramal produced a book about them entitled "The Light has come to me." To convey the message of this philosophy, sound, light, and dance were used in a performance for the entire company.

### **Making a difference to quality of life**

### **by reducing the burden of disease**

Among Nicholas Piramal's strongest attributes is an unwavering focus on ethics, transparency, corporate culture, stakeholder relationships, contribution to society, and a commitment to growth. A key element of Nicholas Piramal's success is the empowerment of its people, with a strong performance culture.

As part of the pharmaceuticals industry, which is highly dependent upon intellectual capital, Nicholas Piramal emphasizes knowledge management. The world-class research facility in Mumbai has both modern equipment and a rich art collection that exhibits ancient Indian excellence in science.

With employees in 22 countries, the company has grown from \$3 million in 1988 to its current \$300 million in annual sales. It is among the top five pharmaceutical companies in India. The company is now a global leader in the contract manufacturing services space and exports products to over 60 countries. Scientists have filed international patents for discoveries in cancer and infectious disease.

**The Piramal group was founded in 1871 and is one of the oldest industrial groups in India. The flagship business was textiles with one of the oldest textile mills in the country. The group includes textiles, retail, pharmaceuticals, real estate, glass manufacturing and electronics. The group acquired Nicholas Laboratories, an Australian company in 1988 and renamed it Nicholas Piramal India Ltd.**

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[www.nicholaspiramal.com](http://www.nicholaspiramal.com)  
› 6,000 employees  
› Founded in 1988**