



The Subud Boston *newsletter*

Newsletter of Subud Boston Inc.

September/October 1997 Volume 5 • Number 9-10

Editorial

There have been a number of news articles and talk-radio programs recently dealing with contaminated meat. Hamburger contaminated with E. Coli bacteria. An outbreak of streptococcus iniae in Canada traced to farm-raised fish. Chicken and eggs carrying salmonella and other diseases. In England mad-cow disease plagues the country for more than a year. Experts consulted all seem to have the same advice: Consumers should be more careful when handling raw meat and should cook it very thoroughly; government and industry need better methods for testing meat during processing.

Though it is wise to take precautions, these outbreaks of disease do not result from domestic cooking methods; they are the predictable consequences of the industrialization of animal agriculture. In modern "meat factories" animals are raised in extremely crowded, stressful conditions. They are fed on highly processed, high protein feeds (often made in part from the same species of animal) in order to bring them to market weight in the shortest possible time. The animals are slaughtered and processed in huge plants where meat from diseased and healthy animals gets mixed together and exposed to contamination.

These methods are not only unsanitary, they are cruel to the animals. The reason for them, of course, is economic. By crowding fishes or chickens or cattle into feedlots and bringing them to marketable

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REPORT FROM WORLD CONGRESS:

Susila Dharma PART I

Hillel Natanson

Shortly before I departed for Spokane, Cassidy asked me if I would be willing to cover Susila Dharma (SD) at the World Congress for the Subud Boston Newsletter. The assignment, to the extent that I took it seriously, turned out to serve as an anchor for me at congress, and was certainly one of the big blessings for me there. SDIA had its own full congress schedule, from morning through the evening, every day of congress. Though I certainly could not be at nearly every event I made a point of being at several that seemed particularly meaningful to me. I also went to a couple of presentations when I suddenly found myself feeling overwhelmed. I occasionally found the experience in Spokane to almost be too much, with so many people and faces, known and unknown, and so many events and conversations happening simultaneously. At times, I thought I might lose my ground altogether and just float away. At just such times, a small voice would tell me it was time to go do a little SD coverage.

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CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER:

Conservation vs. Judicious Use

Lorena Kreda

The water's running. "I really should shut it off while doing the brushing part of the thrice daily teeth cleansing routine", I think to myself. All that water running down the drain, city water processed and purified for no reason, destined only to run out of the faucet and back into the sewer. How fortunate we are as a society that clean water is such an abundant commodity that cmany millions of gallons can be ollectively discarded so nonchalantly. The contrast between water consumption in this country versus other countries is one of the many insights I received at Congress. Water is more precious in Australia, for example, where toilets don't hold nearly as much water as our US variety. Learning fun facts like this is just one reason to attend these international gatherings. I guess the problem of waste, and the guilt resulting from my relatively poor effort at reducing my own waste-generating capacity, has always made a big impression on me, even if I fail to do a whole lot about it.

When I was growing up, my sister was much more concerned about these things than I was, and I used to resent her for this (perhaps my

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Vol. V • 9-10

September/October 1997

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The Subud Boston Newsletter is published bi-monthly by Subud Boston and sent free to all members of Subud Boston and its affiliated regional members. The subscription rate for all other U.S. subscribers is \$18.00 a year. Foreign subscribers \$23.00 a year. Address all subscriptions, editorial mail, manuscripts, and letters-to-the-editor to:

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REPORT FROM WORLD CONGRESS:

Komenca—New SYA magazine is born

Patrice Brodeur

Dear Subud Boston friends,
My first World Subud congress was a fascinating experience. It was exhilarating, if at times, tiring. It just took me a week to recover! Now that my level of physical energy is back up to match the level of spiritual energy acquired during the congress, I feel like writing down a few brief thoughts.

I truly felt the presence of God working in mysterious ways throughout the congress. While striving for efficiency in punctuality and communication, I often had to let go and submit to divine time-liness: an inner clock whose rhythmic precision and lack of time zones is probably more accurate than our latest tools for navigation through cyberspace (although I would definitely not like to submit to a lack of e-mail access!).

The general attitude of submitting to God in the process of testing for official positions led to much less power struggle than I have experienced in any other organization. I hope that this process is indeed reflected at all levels of the organization.

I noticed that there was a lot of confusion about how to define Subud to non-Subud people. The organization as a whole does not provide as much guidance in this sphere as is needed out there, if I am to judge by the kinds of challenges people face both within themselves and from their surrounding religious communities. In two workshop series, "Is Subud a sect?" and "Subud and Interfaith Issues", problems of definition and boundaries came up. In a few cases, these problems were reported to have led to life-and-death situations. While unable to provide further assistance at this point in time, a number of us Subud members who specialize in the study of religion talked about the possibility of organizing a conference on these issues specifically in order to come out with some published materials to provide both guidance to the whole Subud community and a bridge to the non-

Subud world. In fact, a longer article on this subject should appear soon in Subud Life.

Finally, my primary role during Congress was to help consolidate the Subud Youth Association (SYA). As you will see from the Youth report to be published soon in Komenca (the new SYA magazine), SYA members did not waste their time in Spokane. They redefined their own identity and role within Subud as a whole. They also took up responsibilities to fulfill a vision of concrete programs for the next four years. My hope is that this wonderful process will continue in how SYA grows outward to reach as many young Subud people as possible and helps achieve their needs through the formation of national and local branches.

To start this process at home, I will host a "Youth Reflections on Congress" evening for the Boston area group. I invite any young Subud related person interested in hearing about SYA to come. No help nor commitment will be requested of you at this one time gathering. Just bring along your enthusiasm and creative criticisms! We will make sure your suggestions get back to SYA via the new SYA magazine "Komenca" (copies of which will be made available at this gathering). If anything develops locally afterwards, it will come out of your own ideas and interests expressed during this get-together. For more info, contact me at (617) 983-2610.

Young people are already demonstrating their power to change the world. But for this to happen, structures reflecting the various realities of young people around the world need to be developed. Empowering young people to take action needs flexible structures that have both some degree of independence and some degree of cooperation with other branches within Subud and other youth organizations without. The re-energized SYA reflects this balance in theory; SYA activ-

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ities over the next four years will be the real test that counts, starting with Boston! But at the end, this new structure is only an instrument to serve our collective Subud needs; it is never an end in and of itself. As long as the spirit moving SYA is one of concrete actions reflecting the will of God on earth, it will find its way to strengthen the Subud and human family as a whole.

Patrice Brodeur

CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER—continued from page 1

own guilty conscience playing off low self esteem). In the eighth grade I remember sitting in a social studies class, and the topic of discussion was “what can we do to conserve energy or resources in our daily lives.” For some reason I distinctly remember my classmate Tom Calzini suggesting shutting off the water while brushing one’s teeth. The teacher thought this was a particularly impressive idea. At the time, I never ran extra water anyway; my parents taught us not to. In recent years it’s been harder to not get swallowed up in the pervasive wasteful attitude that is all around us. I’ve found myself leaving the water running more than I used to and noticed a desensitization to conservation in the midst of my own growing consumerism.

Conservation and personal accountability are two areas (of many) that received vitalizing inspiration at Congress. I attended several workshops on sustainable development, first to find out what these words really meant, and later to find out how I could participate in the newly forming “Sustainability Network.” Academically, I learned that sustainable development is a phrase referring to a three cornered approach to responsible resource consumption where the vertices are the economy, society and environment. When solving a development problem one must ensure that all economic, social and environmental resources are used and replenished in such a way that the quality of life for future generations is not compromised. Since I live in an area that is already developed, the immediate relevance for me was in finding ways to consume less and in accepting a higher level of responsibility for the condition of the society of which I am a part. There is a core group of about 15 interested Subud members of widely varied backgrounds who will be forming a network by which to share information and ideas about how to study, promote and participate in sustainable development.

The flip side of resource conservation is judicious use. Clearly it is important to use less, and most of the time consumption reduction is in order. However, consumption at some level is not wasteful if it is efficient and within reasonable limits.

If we think of the latihan as the water running through a vessel that is each of us, it would pour forth endlessly if we were to let it. And for me, like the faucet left running, so much of what I receive in the latihan goes unused, washed down my own spiritual drain and ultimately forgotten. In contrast to the water faucet, it makes no sense to conserve the latihan by turning it off when not using it. Instead we need to make the greatest use out of every precious drop and act on what we receive.

I’m more careful now about how much extra water runs down the drain, and I’m always looking for ways to live the “reduce, reuse, recycle” mantra. At the same time, I’m trying to be careful about remembering and acting upon more of what I receive in the latihan. In fact, I’m finding it wonderfully inspiring to tap in to the latihan regularly, not just during our twice a week meetings. It’s always there, just like the water in the faucet. △

Quote of Note

T.S. Elliot’s Alfred Prufrock asks, “Do I dare disturb the universe?” Each new poem, song, work of art disturbs the universe. Each is a being that has never existed before. Love also disturbs the universe. It creates something new, a reality that never existed before.

John Bradshaw

SUSILA DHARMA, continued from page 1

The first thing I attended was the general meeting, early on. Most of the attendees were people very active in Susila Dharma, including national chairs and people active in projects at the grassroots level. There were also a few interested general members. The meeting turned out to be a general planning session for SD's schedule for the congress, and it gave me a chance to see the organizational side at work, and I was impressed. There were a lot of details to deal with, and it all went quite smoothly. I came away not only with an idea of the what events would be happening at the congress, but with the general impression that SD has really grown up and is a well-oiled machine doing precious social and humanitarian work on a global scale.

SDIA Chair Rosanna Hille of Canada, who was tested in at congress for a second four-year term, knows how to organize, communicate, and to delegate responsibility, and does so with great energy and authority. While this meeting revealed a lot about the form of SDIA, the many presentations, workshops and working meetings throughout congress filled that form with rich content.

One presentation that made a huge impression on me was about Susila Dharma in Africa. Because of visa problems and financial constraints, few African brothers and sisters other than those from South Africa were able to attend congress; but those who did brought with them tremendous faith and courage, and touched everyone they met. There were representatives of the Congo, Nigeria, South Africa and Algiers present at this meeting, as well as several French brothers and sisters who have worked consistently with Subud in Africa. Stefen Solat, an American who works professionally in the area of development and health in Africa, also participated. Although there is a strong SD presence in Ethiopia, none of the members were granted visas for Congress.

A major focus was on the Republic of Congo (until recently called Zaire), a huge nation in central Africa with many Subud members and many problems. The recent political turmoil there has opened the door to at least the possibility of some long-term improvement, but in the short-term it has aggravated already severe conditions. Many people there, including Subud members, have begun small enterprises in order to survive. The deterioration of society, the economy and the environment have all happened hand-in-hand, and although there are actually thirty SD projects and enterprises in the Congo, their expansion cannot begin to keep pace with the needs because of the lack of funding. These thirty projects are mostly related to education, health and food, and include schools, clinics, agricultural and small

business enterprises.

A recent effort is to match up the enterprises with the projects, with the idea of supporting the social projects, at least in part, with income from the enterprises. A discussion on whether it is most effective to fund the enterprises first so that they can become stable and productive and help to fund the projects or to give most of what money is available to the projects because their needs are so pressing was unable to find a real resolution; but many interesting ideas came from it.

For cultural reasons and because of their natural dignity, Africans are neither inclined to beg nor to complain; and, though it was certainly possible from the discussions to understand that they are very much in need of material assistance and professional expertise from their Subud brothers and sisters, it is difficult for them to make it clear just how desperate their circumstances are. Two French Subud members with whom I spoke each told me that we cannot even begin to imagine the things these people have gone through, which include, in the case of one man, being tied up by a group of armed men and robbed of literally everything he owned except for the walls of his house—his toothbrush, underwear, even the clothes he was wearing. And not just once, but three times!

Those running schools in the Congo said that the needs are so overwhelming—schools without ceilings or furniture, let alone books—that prioritization is almost impossible. As low as the teachers' salaries are, there is no money with which to pay them. I was amazed to hear that when some of the brothers working on a particular school project were asked, during a presentation being made to a charitable foundation, to estimate the cost of completing the school building, they were unable to provide an estimate in dollars. It

was not a question of currency conversion, but simply that there is such poverty and disarray in the Congo that such a question is meaningless for them—they are building the school with bricks they fashion by hand from mud and water and

materials gathered by hand or, in some cases, bartered for. Thus, coming up with an accurate western-style budget is impossible.

Kiti ki-Menghi, the director of this school, which now has over 700 students, has been inspired by stories of the success of another SD project, the Colegio Amor in Bogota, Colombia. He said that their experiences gave him the will to continue when things seemed impossible. He also said that it is not easy to ask for help from his Subud brothers and sisters, but that he feels he can do this because we all share the latihan. Arrangements were made during con-

***...the needs are so overwhelming—
schools without ceilings or furniture,
let alone books...***

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SUSILA DHARMA, continued from page 4

gress to send him to visit Colegio Amor before his return to Africa.

I was moved by a proposal from some Colombian members in Subud to provide assistance to this project, and a little bit ashamed as an American. Almost no Americans were present at this meeting; though it should be mentioned that, technically speaking, Africa and Europe form one Subud “zone” together, and that France in particular has linguistic and historic ties to central Africa. Of course, we have our own severe problems in America, though of a different nature; nonetheless, prior to this meeting, while I was walking through the underground passageway that connects the Spokane Center with the Doubletree Hotel, I overheard one African member saying to an American, “...but can’t you see? You must help us. You have so much wealth here, and we have nothing.”

It was the second day of Congress, and perhaps his first visit to the United States. I can only imagine what Spokane—especially the various hotels and facilities along the river—must have looked like from his point of view.

Another discussion was about the remarkable success of the ICDP (International Child Development Program), originally developed in Norway and successfully implemented by Subud members in several parts of the world, including Angola. This nation, right next door to the Congo, suffers from appalling poverty, lack of sewage, and large numbers of abandoned children, many originally members of the middle class whose parents died during the long civil war. Ruqman Hundeide of Norway said that when ICDP was first introduced in Angola, there was much favorable publicity, and this helped greatly. They first trained a group of trainers, who then moved out to different parts of the country and began training teachers. These teachers then began actually teaching parents in this basic approach to nurturing self-esteem and emotional well-being, and he estimated that five years later more than 20,000 children have been definitively and positively affected by the program. Ruqman suggested that since Angola and the Congo are so close and are both French-speaking nations, it should not be difficult to begin implementing ICDP in the Congo.

Subud Nigeria recently purchased a concrete machine, and once they have acquired training in its use, they hope that not only can it be used to help raise a building for Subud, but also as an income-generating enterprise. A member from South Africa said that SD had all but collapsed there, but has recently been rebuilt and has a program for refugees. She said that a long period of demoralization has finally come to an end, that

things are beginning to come together nicely.

There used to be a Susila Dharma project in Algeria, where there was a program making eyeglasses for the poor; but the political violence and repression have gotten so bad there that the man who ran this program has moved to Morocco. People expressed hope that things will improve in Algeria, both for Subud members and for the people as a whole.

I left the meeting with a new awareness of Africa, and decided to interview some of the Africans to learn more. After warnings from the experienced French members that being interviewed is a very foreign and unnatural experience for them, I borrowed a tape recorder. I decided to begin by interviewing a Nigerian member, since they speak English. Lateef, a retired petroleum engineer, presented a picture of Subud in Nigeria and their problems with inter-group communication and infrastructure. He finished by saying that what African Subud members really need from the rest of Subud’s membership is its’ prayers as they work out their fate.

When I rewound the tape, there was silence—I had not set the machine properly. At that point it became very clear to me that I should quit pushing something that was not meant to be, and give up on the interviews. But there was a lesson, and I saw quite clearly something in my attitude that was not right, something a bit voyeuristic that gets a perverse pleasure, or an exaggerated personal sense of meaning from the hardships of others. So it seems we each have an “inner Africa” of our own to work with, one with a truly great potential which can begin to be realized when we allow for it. I therefore plan not only to send my prayers to my African brothers and sisters, but to maintain a positive and joyous image of that continent.

I would like to finish this section by noting that two Africans, one man and one woman, are now part of the dewan of International Helpers, and by saying that several of the African members spoke of their deep desire to receive Subud visitors from other parts of the world.

The conclusion of Hillel’s World Congress report on Susila Dharma will be found in our next issue. In it he tells about what is happening in Amanecer and other some other parts of Latin America.

Quote of Note

Almost everything we do is insignificant. But it is very important that we do it.

M.K. Gandhi

**“...but can’t you see? You must help us.
You have so much wealth here,
and we have nothing.”**

Little seeds take root in Colombian soil...

Cassidy Sterling

Amalia Natanson reconnected with old friends from Amanecer while she was at the World Congress. She brought back information about Semillitas de Amanecer, or "Little Seeds of Amanecer". Semillitas de Amanecer is a social program that for the past six years has been working in the area of education as a pre-school with three levels. At present these levels are: pre-school, transition, and kindergarten. Forty children from poor communities, known as "marginal communities", around Amanecer attend.

The term "marginal" tells a lot about the social realities of the families from which these children come for it originates in the language of economics. something is marginal when it is the last thing that is bought when times are good and the first thing discarded when something else becomes more desirable. And so it is with the poor in Latin America. They are the last hired and the first fired. In Quindio, (the departamento or province in which Amanecer is located) many of these poor have made their homes on railroad right of ways since this is the only land which is available for them to live on. Others come from isolated farms and working-class neighborhoods. The children growing up in these communities are greatly loved but their opportunities to gain skills and an education are often limited. Some of them cannot rely on receiving enough food.

Semillitas de Amanecer provides a crucial link between home and the larger society for these children, helping them to develop the basic skills which will enable them to go on learning and adapting to the realities they will face in their live. "Subud professionals from the educational domain, with experience in different methodologies, are developing a unique method that permits each child the affirmation of his or her innate talents or natural abilities. Through experiential workshops in the different areas of human culture, the children have a chance to discover their talents."

In addition, *Semillitas* works to help the families of the children to improve their socio/economic position and actively involve the parents in the overall process of the formation and improvement of intra-familial relationships using the International Child Development Program (I.C.D.P.) techniques that have been developed Rukman Hundeide (see Susila Dharma article Hillel Natanson). Already they have trained fifteen mothers in this methodology.

Money for the program is in short supply. In addition to paying the staff salaries, they need to build two kiosks for dining room and classroom space, and they need a van or some sort of small school bus. They have

been using a pick-up truck, but it is extremely old and not at all safe for the children. *Semillitas* total budget for this year is less than US\$29,000, but in Colombia this is a sum that is much more difficult to raise than it would be in the United States. The families of the children are not able to afford the cost of this education and so, of course, the program depends on fundraising and contributions.

One way of supporting *Semillitas* is by becoming a Padrino, or Godparent to one of the children. Cassidy has sheets with photographs and descriptions of four very charming little seedlets which he will be showing to you on latihan evenings and Ruth Thomas (see "Letters") has written saying that more detailed descriptions are on the way. It costs about US\$180 to support a *Semillita* as a *Padrino* for one year.

An additional way that the *Semillitas* project can be supported is by spreading the word. If one can support a child's education and also encourage a friend to do the same the amount of support could be truly effective.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME SEMILLITAS CHILDREN

Johnathan Cordoba: He is very a very happy, extroverted boy and a good student. He is from a very poor family and does not have a school bag, or rolder (sic) or apron. And he needs notebooks, pencils, etc.

Brayan Bermudez: This boy is very tender and affectionate. He is in a stage of adaptation to the Semillitas program. He shows a great interest in learning. He lives with his mother and three brothers and sisters.

Luis Fernando Vargas: He is a very expressive, happy and participative boy who loves to learn new things. He first came to our school with serious problems of aggressivity and was rejected from another pre-school. Now he is much more colm and serene. He is the eldest of two children and lives with his mother.

Sandra Lilliana Santiago: She is a very helpful girl, and a little bit shy. She shows great interest in learning and expresses a lot of happiness when she arrives at school. She lives with her parents and is the youngest of two children.

Katerine Tabares Colorado: She is a very happy and active girl, though quite timid. During the time she has been in the semillitas program, she has developed her intelligence and shown herself to be a very expressive, tender and playful person. Δ

Letters

This letter is from Ruth Thomas who is now in charge of social programs at Amanecer. I wrote to in Spanish to Semillitas for more information and this was the response. —Cassidy

DEAR CASSIDY,

I hope you won't be disappointed to get this in English, from your old cohort Ruth Thomas! Here I am coordinating social programs in Amanecer and helping Semillitas with communications, along with the director, Ilaina Ramirez. She has gone right now to put together a letter for you and some profiles of children who need Padrinos to support their education.

Semillitas began 7 years ago, the first "program" to begin in Amanecer. The initiative came from Raschidah Ramirez, whom you may remember, and was later supported by Garrett Thompson, whom I know you will never forget! In order to benefit from a government program that subsidizes daycares here, there was a requirement that 15 children benefit from the service. This meant involving families from the farms and communities around Amanecer. When you were here, we worked fairly exclusively with kids from KM38, a squatter settlement near the railway. Things were very "grassroots" and rather primitive. Chayatun Valencia became community mother and helped to form a good working relationship with the local ICBF (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar) that subsidizes thousands of daycares. Rosana Silva got involved and helped the program to take on a more "professional" aspect. The teachers are all qualified graduates, and the supporting team is much better equipped (administration, finances, etc.). Ilaina Ramirez is the director of a team of three other teachers working with the different age levels: pre-school (2-4 years), kindergarten (4-6 years) and grade 1 (6-10 years). Now Semillitas serves 40 children from the neighbouring area, and is growing every year. The teachers are developing their own methodology, and working with the communities with the ICDP program. The program is efficient and well-organized, and the kids are happy and productive.

An information package is on its way to you, and please use the E-mail address, amanecer@eccel.com, to keep in touch and ask us for more information about Semillitas or other projects here.

Great to hear from you, and God Bless, please send love to Hillel & Amalia.

Love, Ruth.

EDITORIAL—continued from page 1

weight quickly, huge economies of scale are realized. Unfortunately, all the costs are not accounted for in the market and the external costs are high. The costs for the outbreaks of disease are chiefly born by those who become ill; and there is also the cost to local ecosystems. In Scotland and Ireland, for instance, all the trout have died in the rivers and streams because of sea lice introduced from the salmon pens offshore.

The costs to the animals themselves are apparently not accounted for in anyone's books. They are real none the less. A sizable percentage of factory raised animals die from disease or just from sheer misery. These costs are borne by neither the meat industry nor the consumer.

In order to understand the problems of disease that we see cropping up in our system of food production and distribution, we must come to understand that there is a difference between biological and mechanical systems. When we treat animals as if they were food machines we block the life of the higher, animal, force in favor of the lower, material, force. We try to interpret disease outbreaks as purely logical problems. Unfortunately, our system of scientific logic tends to deny the reality and importance of the higher spiritual forces, especially love, as being "subjective". But when we divorce ourselves from our higher relationship with the animals that we raise, we deprive them of the care and love that animals, especially higher animals, need. We create situations in which health cannot exist. If we persist in treating the living world as if it were a machine, we will be constantly surprised by these disasters. △

Quote of Note

"[Modern agricultural technology has acted] ...to change the dairy cow from the family companion animal she became after domestication and through all man's subsequent history into an appropriate manufacturing unit of the twentieth century for the efficient transformation of unprocessed feed into food for man...."

The Evolution and Future of American Agriculture
Salisbury and Hart

The discarded language, oddly phrased though it is, comes close to a kind of accountability: the internal (family) and the external (cow) are joined by a moral connection (companionship). A proof of its accountability is that this statement can be the basis of moral behavior: "Be good to the cow, for she is our companion."

Standing By Words
Wendell Berry

Dates to Remember

SEPTEMBER

- 21 Helper/Committee Meeting
- 28 Housing Committee, 5:00 PM

OCTOBER

- 5 Enterprise Workshop, 4:00 PM
- 6 Helper/Committee, 7:30 PM
- 19 Helper/Committee, 7:30 PM

DECEMBER

- 6 Christmas Party, afternoon

Birthdays

SEPTEMBER

- 11 Richard Shaw
- 22 Alicia Brownell
- 29 Sandy Renna

OCTOBER

- 3 Adrea Blum
- 6 Peter Hensley
- 22 Susan Holbert

NOVEMBER

- 2 Mayer Kirkpatrick
- 5 Hillel Natanson
- 11 Peter Baptiste

Newsflash

TIME FOR SUNDAY LATIHAN HAS CHANGED!!!

The new Sunday Latihan time will be 7:00 PM/

On Sunday, October fifth **Mayer Kirkpatrick** will be hosting an **enterprise workshop** at St. Andrew's Church

Interested in a bigger latihan halls? A Subud Boston House??? Come to the Housing Committee meeting at the Church, Sunday, September 28 at 5:00 PM

Lucia Cargill and her family have moved to Florida. Her new address is:

Lucia Cargill

8185 Causeway Blvd. South

St. Petersburg, FL 33707

tel: 813-384-0244 Work: 813-864-8339

The Subud Boston Newsletter

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