



THE MAURIN ACADEMY FOR REGENERATIVE STUDIES

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THE REGENERATIVE READER

Official Newsletter of the Maurin Academy for Regenerative Studies

Founder's Message

BY BRYANT MACFARLANE, CO-FOUNDER

As one of the five co-founders of the Maurin Academy, I am truly humbled and exceptionally excited for you to be reading this. The Maurin Academy for Regenerative Studies is the realization of the work of five individuals towards the creation of ongoing public discussions aiming at a renewed, healthier future. We, like medieval centers of learning, have divided our offerings into the categories of Cult, i.e., theology, Culture, i.e., arts and sciences, and Cultivation, ie food, farming, and ecology. Cult, which shares an origin with culture and cultivate, comes from the Latin *cultus*, a noun with meanings ranging from "tilling, cultivation" to "training or education" to "adoration."

This newsletter is but one of several methods we intend to use to form a participative community for alternative public education. We have hosted several seminars and a short series in the past, and, thanks to your support, are announcing several more in the very near future. We are also hosting lectures and primers that aim to fill knowledge gaps. We host the Dustbowl Diatribes and Political Philosophy Podcasts - available everywhere - and are looking to bring more praxis sessions to you in the very near future.

On behalf of Laurie, Spencer, Emily, Jakob, and myself - thank you for participating in our community!

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President's Letter

LAURIE JOHNSON, CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

From the outside, it might seem like The Maurin Academy, our online –and on the ground-- ‘agronomic university,’ is something new. But some of you already know the story. Our Plan A, inspired by Spencer as he took off on his venture into local agriculture, was simply to get down to business and start living more cooperatively with people and the land to show that there is a better way, one in which people value each other based not on the money they can bring to the table but on the intrinsic value they have as human beings and the contributions in time and work that they can give to make their community thrive. That plan has not disappeared, but we learned that it's extremely difficult to do anything like that in a meaningful way. People peeled away just when things got interesting.

This reality led to questions that didn't have easy answers. Why is it so hard to move beyond “cosplay,”* as Mike Sauter and Michael Martin put in an interview with me recently on their Regeneration podcast? Cosplay or “larping”* may take the form of “back to the land” libertarian stockpiling, 60's inspired New Age communal aesthetics, Extinction-Rebellion style performative protest, MAGA truck parades, excessive consumerism based on false life-changing promises, Trad-Catholic exhortation to attend only Latin services, and more. But what it can't do is discontinue haunting a form and move into real and socially successful action. In a nutshell, as our co-founder Jakob Hanschu discussed in a Dustbowl interview, the abstract forces of capital have reached such a critical force of power and self-reinforcement such that people cannot choose to really separate themselves from it. We are not only physically but psychologically and spiritually chained to the imperatives of our economy. Even when we try to break free, we are simply larping.

Larping functions as a way of providing pressure release for people who know that there's something deeply wrong with their world but who don't have the ability to fundamentally change it. Larping is a protest that functions to help things stay the same. Spencer and I have spent a lot of time both on my YouTube Channel and on Dustbowl Diatribes explaining how this functions, with the notion that before we can do anything better, we at least have to fully understand our situation. Our recent interviews with Chris Cutrone and Dr. Larry Chappboth in their own way, attempted to probe this problem of our “actual situation.”

We not only do not have, but we refuse to pretend that we have any definitive, recipe-like answers for how to deal with our current predicament. Our era is defined most profoundly by the fact that our future and the future of our children will be profoundly and irreversibly affected by climate change brought about largely for reasons that were not worth it—the ability to wage war and dominate the globe with the threat of mass destruction, to eat yogurt out of single-use plastic cups, to get into our car whenever we please to do whatever we please, to fly to places we don't need to go to, to trade in immaterial stocks and bonds in order to attain ever-receding “financial security,” etc.

In other words, as Bryant Macfarlane discussed on Dustbowl earlier this year, we've used our precious fossil fuels, mineral, and other resources largely to indulge our worst inclinations and only haphazardly to create the means to move humanity to the next level of development and more meaningful and loving human living. Because our weak efforts in only the very recent decades are reactive and, in fact, too late, we now must face the fact that our children will endure perils we can't even imagine. We have used our resources, not to guarantee their safety and well-being, but to destroy, make ugly, pollute, and play around. It is impossible to fully acknowledge how stupid this has been, how irresponsible, and how fatal.

As a “serious professional,” I'm supposed to agree that saying anything about this, trying to do anything about this, is silly, misguided, and even dangerous. I can't help but think of that old fairy tale I learned as a child, “The Emperor Has No Clothes.” The Maurin Academy co-founders are not in lockstep ideologically, religiously, or otherwise, but we do all agree that it's right to proclaim that the emperor has no clothes and to seek shelter and ways to depart the empire. We seek to be clarifying, and we promise to struggle for answers for our future in the light of constant clarification.

Thanks to our co-founder Bryant Macfarlane (who will be teaching classes this Spring on the political impact of the modern mastery of the ‘technological sublime’) for editing this newsletter. I hope that you will join all of us in this venture, continue to read this newsletter, and share it with others so that the word spreads.

Welcome aboard,

Laurie

*Cosplay is short for Costume Play. Larping is an acronym for “Live Action Role Playing” games.



Media

LAURIE JOHNSON, CO-FOUNDER

Our Dustbowl Diatribes and Political Philosophy podcasts are available for free through pmaurin.org or wherever you find your favorite downloads. We post Dustbowl Diatribes on YouTube a couple of weeks after it comes out as a podcast. Political Philosophy comes out as a video first, then a podcast.

Curious about what to expect from attending a seminar, short series, or lecture? Segments of our seminar on Christian Anarchism from earlier this summer is currently available for streaming through our Classes and Series tab on pmaurin.org. Have an idea or request for a course? We'd love to hear from you, email us at maurinacademy@gmail.com!



"Union Square can teach something to college professors, as well as learning from college professors"

PETER MAURIN

Upcoming Offerings

JAKOB HANSCHU, CO-FOUNDER

- Laurie will discuss great ideas in political thought and theology on the first Thursday of each month, starting in January 2023. These hour-long talks with Q&A, "Laurie's Sessions," (tentatively subtitled "Pints with Plato") should help to bridge knowledge gaps and get to know the Maurin Academy better. Sign up on Eventbrite or Patreon!
- Laudato Si (or, "on care for our common home") Short Series by Laurie, a two-meeting short series on the meaning of the second encyclical of Pope Francis. Meeting March 23 and March 30. Sign up on Eventbrite!
- The Sublime and the Beautiful, presented by Bryant: a four-meeting short series on understanding classical and more modern theories on individual and social motivation. Meeting April 12, April 19, April 26, and May 3. Sign up on Eventbrite!
- Spencer Hess will be leading a short series on Romano Guardini's The End of the Modern World. According to Kirkus, "the work attempts mainly to depict in general outline the character and the promise of a new man, Mass Man, and a new world, a world of technological collectivism, which the author sees as emerging with the simultaneous demise of the modern age." Sessions on May 17, 24, 31, and June 7.
- The Religion of Technology, presented by Bryant, is a six-meeting seminar on whether technology and faith are at war with one another - or if technology has a central place in the relationship between humanity and what lies beyond. Meeting June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22, June 29, and July 6. Sign up on Eventbrite!



Brain Drippings

RANDOM THOUGHTS BY OUR FOUNDERS

- Good positions take time and effort to achieve, but poor positions cost a fortune. Poor positioning kills more dreams than poor decisions. Good positions allow you to master your circumstances, rather than be mastered by them. In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 'A Study in Scarlet,' Sherlock Holmes discusses this with Watson:

"I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things, so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skillful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones."



JP II Farm

EMILY LARNER AND SPENCER HESS, CO-FOUNDERS

- As we are winding down into winter, we've had more time to reflect upon the many challenges and graces our community endured this year. Everything from farming during one of the driest years in Kansas City this decade, to all the fragility and limitations we encountered in our interpersonal relationships. Currently, we are in the process of reenvisioning our farm/homestead project which up to now has been named M:O/R/T Collective. We've come to the understanding that perhaps M:O/R/T--as the etymology suggests--must also die to be born again with a re-newed vision. However, this new vision is actually quite old, and as Peter Maurin would suggest, "a philosophy so old it looks like new." As challenging as this year was for us, our faith was strengthened all the more. Spencer was confirmed into the Catholic Church this summer, and Emily is set to be baptized this coming Easter. Inspired by Catholic Social Teaching and the many popes that've propounded this body of teaching over the centuries, we've concluded that our rebirth should include rechristening M:O/R/T to the John Paul II Catholic Worker Farm.

Membership

SPENCER HESS, CO-FOUNDER

We are working hard to provide top quality participative and distributed media experiences. Becoming a Patreon member has benefits for us all, and it helps us to increase our offerings. You can become a member today and experience all of our member benefits immediately. Nonmembers are always welcome to sign-up for course participation through Eventbrite or to purchase a download from our (forthcoming) course archive.

- Rational (?) Economic Actor (\$1/month)
 - Access to all podcast content, our newsletter, reading lists, occasional essays, and announcements.
- Salt of the Earth (\$5/month)
 - Access to Laurie's monthly live sessions "Pints with Plato," our growing course content archive, and all previous content.
- Worker-Scholar (\$10/month)
 - Access to all new (live) course content, and all previous content.

Sign up on Patreon!



Donations



- The Maurin Academy is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Your donations are tax-deductible.
- Scan the QR code above with your smartphone camera or use https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=RPS5NGBZEGGAA to donate via PayPal.
- Checks can be made out to "The Maurin Academy" and mailed to:
 - The Maurin Academy, 1828 NEWTON AVE, KANSAS CITY, MO 64126-2762