



The Nature Institute

Dear Friends,

Walking through the brightly colored New England countryside on a sunny day in autumn, one can hardly help feeling the almost overwhelming warmth and expansiveness of nature. The sense of richness is matched only by the awareness of rapid change. It is a time of gratitude and thanksgiving, which in turn are the ideal preparation for the reception of new possibilities.

There are moments when nature seems to mirror one's personal, social, or institutional circumstances with unusual fidelity. It is easy for us to feel this now, given the expansiveness and change—the abundant potential coming to fruition—here at The Nature Institute. If, as it could easily seem, we are indeed entering a new phase of the Institute's existence, perhaps a key signpost marking the beginning of this phase will prove to have been the completion of our building expansion.

In any case, for the better part of a year now we have been “taking hold” of the new space and putting it to use. Meetings, lectures, and workshops have recently been multiplying, and anyone who periodically checks our calendar (<http://natureinstitute.org/calendar>) will have noted that our educational offerings are now coming at a more rapid clip than ever before. So, too, with our educational outreach nationally and internationally. Craig, for example, has recently returned from teaching a course at Schumacher College in England. And now, as you will find on page 10, we are offering our first “nature adventure” to a distant part of the globe—an educational journey to the Amazon River basin.

Change and enrichment can take many forms, including a broadening of one's focus of attention. Henrike has undertaken a research trip to the Exploratorium in San Francisco. (The article on page 3 offers just a hint of her conclusions from that trip, which occurred in collaboration with two colleagues, one from Germany and one from California.) In response to external requests, Craig, a biologist, has found himself pursuing questions relating to technology—a field Steve was specializing in when he joined the Institute in 1998. Steve, in turn, continues his investigations in molecular genetics, which was strictly “Craig's field” in those early years. The twists and turns of life's pathways can be full of surprises.

Our current sense of change and new potential, of course, is dramatically magnified by the presence of a new colleague, Bruno Follador (page 13). Hailing from Brazil and deeply identifying with the mission of The Nature Institute, Bruno will direct a new project area we are calling *Living Soils*. You can expect to hear more about this in the future.

Finally, it is always good to enter into the worthy work of others and to offer support for it where that is possible. It might be hard to find any work more clearly worthy of such support than that of the late philosopher, Ronald Brady. His publications deserve vastly more exposure than they have yet received, and we are now engaged in a project aimed at securing such exposure (page 9).

All in all, it's a stimulating time to be working here at The Nature Institute! For this we are enduringly thankful to all our friends who make the work possible.

Craig Holdrege

Steve Talbott

STAFF

Linda Bolluyt
Colleen Cordes
Bruno Follador
Craig Holdrege
Henrike Holdrege
Veronica Madey
Stephen L. Talbott

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Marisha Plotnik
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EDITOR: Stephen L. Talbott

LAYOUT: Mary Giddens

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The Nature Institute
20 May Hill Road
Ghent, New York 12075
Tel.: 518-672-0116
Fax: 518-672-4270
Email: info@natureinstitute.org
Web: <http://natureinstitute.org>

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