



Celebrating the Lives of Our Elders

Alexander Dreier

Alexander Richardson Dreier died on June 23, 2019 at his home in Belchertown, Massachusetts. He was an inimitable poet, an anthroposophical comedian (with a strong German accent, known as Herr Dreier), a psychotherapist, and a farmer who helped start the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, MA. He was 70 years old.

The Biodynamic Association is grateful for the grant in his memory from the Triskeles Foundation.

The cause of death was Lewy Body Disease. Having been diagnosed with the disease, which leads to dementia, at the age of 63, Alexander went on to write poems inspired in part by the gradual cognitive changes he experienced, publishing a book of poetry entitled, *The Brain is a Boundary: A Journey in Poems to the Borderlines of Lewy Body Dementia* (SteinerBooks, 2016).

After growing up in Washington, D.C., and attending St. Albans School, where he found few avenues for his innate creativity, Alexander made his way to Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where he relished the freedom to explore avant-garde ideas. It was at Antioch that he first heard of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, which became a source of inspiration throughout his life.

Alexander's interest in anthroposophy soon led him to a biodynamic farm in Connecticut, where he met his wife of 43 years, Olivia Phelps Stokes Dreier. Together, they attended Emerson College in England, where Alexander trained in biodynamic farming and they both participated in the first year-long course at Emerson's Social Development Centre. After getting married, they lived first at Hawthorne Valley Farm in Harlemville, New York, where Alexander helped run the dairy, and then for three years at the Gould Farm therapeutic community in Monterey, Massachusetts, where Alexander ran the organic farm. In 1982, Alexander and Olivia settled with their two children in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts.

Soon after arriving in the Valley, Alexander and his wife became involved in helping to start the Hartsbrook School, serving for many years on the school's board and securing land for its Hadley campus. Then, after enrolling in a doctoral program in counseling psychology at Harvard's School of Education and completing all but the dissertation, Alexander co-founded and worked for many years at Windhorse Integrative Mental Health in Northampton, which offers a holistic, relationship-centered approach to supporting people with mental health challenges. He was also a member of Windhorse's board, as well as serving on the boards of SteinerBooks and the Hawthorne Valley Association.

Known in the community for his acting with the Hampshire

Shakespeare Company as well as his comedic monologues, Alexander went on to become a founding member of the popular comedy improv troupe The Villa Jidiots, performing for years throughout the Valley. He also co-founded NetMirth, which offered tailored comedy to enliven workplace culture.

Alexander lived for 34 years on the family's small farm in Belchertown. Before his illness, he enjoyed raising livestock, often donating meat to the Food Bank. He continued to live at home even after the onset of dementia, supported by many neighbors and friends. He died peacefully at home on Sunday morning, June 23, surrounded by loved ones.

(From the obituary in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, June 28, 2019, edited for this publication.)

DUSK IN A SPRING PASTURE by Alexander Dreier (from *The Brain is a Boundary*)

*Bells,
metal's sounding matters
in rope-drawn rhythms
from a high hill somewhere until the toll crawls down
into my sternum's aching echo.*

*Moaning, bellowing sweetness
of cows lazy
on tongue-torn grass of new May; their savoring the caress
of wild rosebush
on barn-weary hide.*

*Surprising fullnesses
of fat moon over
apple tree explosion,
the welcome fire of frog song reborn so answeringly
to no snow now,
that once more
in the roundness of what matters, I stand stunned,
unready.*