

## ISSSEEM Theoretical Frameworks Independent Exploration Group (IEG) A Bit of Background

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### **Inspiration:**

At the ISSSEEM Annual Conference in Boulder in 2007 I had a long and relaxed conversation with Elizabeth Rauscher, PhD – a professional physicist, long-time ISSSEEM participant, and key inspiration for many in our Society. When I asked if she had seriously considered the pioneering work of fellow physicists John Hagelin or Bill Tiller, we identified a key problem: the handful of ISSSEEM members and presenters qualified by virtue of their professional training in science to do serious theoretical scientific work rarely have time to study or comment on *each other's* work. She felt that some kind of forum where such individuals could come together might be most valuable, but expressed her concern that these busy individuals may well not have the time to participate. (She also opined that these same individuals sometimes also hold strong opinions that may *disincline* them to take the hours necessary to evaluate the scientific work of others.<sup>1</sup>)

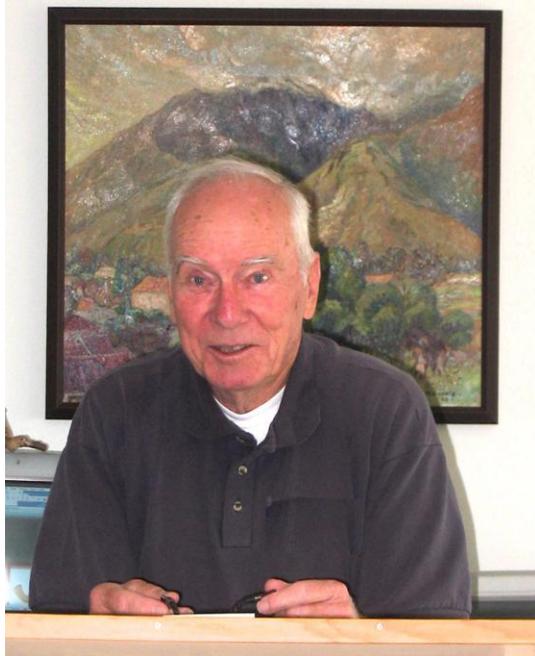


Here is a shot of the two of us, just after Elizabeth was awarded the Elmer Green Award at the closing luncheon.

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<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, several of the top scientists in dialog with the Dalai Lama in recent decades have noted that they have *never in their entire careers* had their fellow scientists *listen* to them as closely as had His Holiness. They also noted that he had been able to ask them questions about their work, based on his careful listening, that initiated entirely new directions for their research. There may be an important lesson in these observations.

So, although my conversation with Elizabeth was a key inspiration for the formation of this IEG, it seems we *may* have to move forward as best we can *without* the active participation of some of the individuals who have been key pioneers in developing theoretical frameworks for subtle energies.



A major exception will be Garvin McCurdy who has been most generous with his time and is effectively the co-founder of this IEG. Garvin has a strong background in physics and has contributed a number of intriguing theoretical perspectives at ISSSEEM meetings since 2004. (You can read about his work on his website located at <http://homepage.mac.com/infohand/index.html>.)

Garvin has also been kind enough to critique my initial brief technical report submitted to the '08 meeting, attend my debut presentation there, and give me excellent and extensive feedback – some of which is posted on [my website](#). I'm hopeful that Garvin will be able to continue to act as a bridge between the IEG and the sophisticated and highly technical world of the practicing physicists whose work bears on our discussions here.

### **Basic question:**

### **Can we begin to develop a *robust scientific theoretical framework that includes subtle energies?***

As a member of ISSSEEM since 1992, I long expected that subtle energies were just on the brink of scientific respectability. (In retrospect, I more or less assumed that one of the many “s”s in ISSSEEM stood for “science.”) In recent years, however, it has become clear that this is *not* about to be the case, and it has also become clearer *why* this is not about to be the case. What I'll outline here as briefly as I can, is what my study of these issues has revealed:

#### **1. Subtle energies have little, if any, scientific standing.**

First, as far as our mainstream science is concerned, there is no “science of subtle energies” and not even a consensual scientific definition of what “subtle energies” could possibly consist of. Thus, ISSSEEM has operated throughout its nearly 20 years *without* a scientific definition of subtle energies. This has not kept our Society from being a most lively and even delightful place for us “fans” of subtle energy – a wide variety of theoretical speculations, clinical studies, and personal observations have been presented at the annual meetings and/or published in our Subtle Energies & Energy Medicine Journal and Bridges newsletter. However, we still do not have a

definition of subtle energies that is either rigorous enough or consensual enough to be considered “scientific.”

## **2. Subtle energies are effectively taboo in mainstream society.**

In this day and age? How could this be so? We’ve split the atom and put men on the moon and still we don’t have even a definition of subtle energies – how come? The bottom line here is that our mainstream science has a demonstrable *bias* against subtle energies that is so powerful and so enduring that it might qualify as a taboo – effectively a *prohibition* against subtle energies.

The historical roots of this prohibition turn out to be ancient, may even date from pre-history, have involved societies Western *and* “Eastern,” and are thus *not* just found in our so-called “modern science” – it was present in the medieval and the “modern” *religions* as well. It is perhaps based on a fear that someone else might be “spiritually” (or somehow intrinsically) better or more powerful than I am. If we keep our individual and collective lives confined to material reality only, then we can have our heroes of athletic contests and war, but we *don’t* have to worry about them being somehow fundamentally *better* than we are. This is perhaps the basic “problem” with subtle energies – the very concept implies contact with a dimension of existence that it *seems* not everyone has access to. Most people find this threatening – hence the taboo. At least this seems like a possible explanation.

To overcome or banish a taboo it is not enough to *break* or *violate* the taboo – it must be understood, brought to full awareness, and then grown beyond. Most of us at ISSSEEM are members of this Society precisely because we know something of the importance of subtle energies for healing and for personal and spiritual growth from our own personal experience. We don’t feel threatened by subtle energies – on the contrary. The majority of our fellow citizens do however – subtle energies are mysterious, and hence potentially threatening – even if they cannot verbalize *why* they feel uncomfortable when the subject comes up. Meanwhile, however, the percentage of the population that does *not* feel threatened this way may be growing, and this may represent a key opportunity for our Society as a whole.

## **3. How a genuine science of subtle energies could develop (despite 1 & 2).**

As the number of individuals comfortable with subtle energies increases, there are among us an increasing number who *also* have some degree of training in science. My view is that it is *these* individuals who will produce over time a genuine and robust science of subtle energies. Some of these individuals will hopefully be drawn to this IEG as time goes by, especially if we can make it a lively forum for serious scientific deliberation, discussion, and debate.

It makes sense therefore, to consider what we are doing here as an effort to establish an entirely new field of science – perhaps even a new *kind* of science. Science up to now has confined itself almost exclusively to material phenomena and material causation. Thus, for a science to embrace subtle energies, it will necessarily have to take a very different approach than that taken to date by our “materialistic” science. This has been a recurrent theme at ISSSEEM meetings and in the pages of the Journal of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine since they were founded.

There remains, however, much to be done to establish our subject on a “firm scientific footing.” There are a host of thorny issues to work through relating to:

- Relevant factors in the long history of the ideas and many kinds of practices associated with “subtle energy” & “energy medicine.”
- Terminology and definitions.
- What constitutes a “viable theory”
- What a “new paradigm” might look like
- What *kinds* of math might be useful
- What areas of physics are relevant – cosmologic, relativistic, quantum, etc...
- What are the key associated phenomena in biology and psychology across all their complexity
- etc...

This Theoretical Framework IEG is devoted to beginning a discussion of what it will take to sort out all these difficult issues. I assume it can be done. I assume it will *only* be done, however, by individuals working together who are disposed, by virtue of their own personal experience with subtle energies, to see them as a legitimate field for scientific investigation and who are equipped by virtue of their training in science – formal or informal – to grapple with the issues involved.

Thus, I also assume that it might take quite a while for this undertaking to even begin to bear fruit and that there may be many twists and turns on the road ahead.

In any case, let us at least make a start.

*Winter Solstice 2008, Ukiah, CA*