

**The Second International
Mary Parker Follett Conversation
on Creative Democracy**

**October 21-24, 2004
Boise State University • Boise, Idaho**

Sponsored by the Mary Parker Follett Foundation

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS AND THEMES

Most individuals feel powerless to affect the world around them, yet it is their daily decisions and acts that ultimately drive local, national and global policy. What can be done about this paradox in a world of complexity and conflict?

You are cordially invited to participate in a unique and significant gathering that will focus on one of the most critical questions of our time: **how can we fulfill the promise of democracy as a creative experience, one that releases both personal and social potential, from the local to the global level?**

Named after the Progressive Era visionary in the field of democratic thought and practice, this conference will bring together people from all disciplines whose approach to human relations, community building, public affairs and management are based on integrated diversity and continuous creativity among stakeholders. The team-based conversation format will provide an enriching participatory experience that will produce new knowledge, new goals, initiatives and impetus.

WHO SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN THIS CONFERENCE

- civic leaders
- community development specialists
- social activists with grassroots, integrative philosophies
- conflict management and dispute resolution practitioners
- scholars in political science, sociology, public administration and management
- progressive managers in the public, private, and non-profit sectors
- systems thinkers
- organizational consultants

CONVERSATION FORMAT

Unlike workshop-based conferences or those focused on the presentation of papers, the Follett Conversation would use a team-based, disciplined conversation format. The format works as follows:

1. Individuals or groups propose themes to pursue. These are circulated to the body of people who've expressed interest in attending, and teams begin to self-organize.
2. Teams of participants interested in exploring topics together begin their dialogue several months prior to the conference, via e-mail. Papers may be exchanged during this preparatory phase.
3. At the conference event itself, participants engage in dialogue for several days and present their findings, ideas, or initiatives in a plenary session at the close of the conference. Presentations can be formal or technical, but creative and artistic presentations are encouraged as well.
4. Teams may continue through to the next year, with original or new participants, or they conclude their work.
5. Several months after the conference, final team and individual papers will be published online in Follett Conversation Proceedings. Selected papers may also be published in a cooperating journal or journals.

This approach – modeled after the experience of the Asilomar and Fuschl Conversations on Social Systems Design – is a desirable alternative to the conventional conference format because it supports integrated diversity, produces much more mutual learning and new knowledge, and builds long-lasting networks. It also represents a recognition that the most interesting part of typical conferences has been the conversations that occur in doorways, in hallways, and over coffee and meals between presentations.

THEMES OF INQUIRY

- The integrating theme of the Conversation is *creative democracy*. Conversation teams can self-organize around any concern or issue of common interest, in any context, within this theme. Themes must, however, be non-partisan and non-commercial.
- Teams must design their inquiry around a “triggering question” that is intended to lead them to new knowledge, new understanding, new ideas or initiatives in their chosen area of shared concern.
- In order to build a common ground upon which to work, teams may wish to choose a set of shared readings, and they may exchange “input papers” prior to the conference event.

Inquiry themes might involve, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Organizational Culture
- Neighborhood Life
- Leadership
- Diversity
- Education
- Social Systems Design

- Technology
- Peace as an Active Principle
- Globalization and Democratization
- Dialogue Practices

Themes for 2002, the year of the first Follett Conversation, included:

- ❖ Designing a Community Learning System for Learning Democracy
- ❖ Post-Hierarchical Leadership
- ❖ Understanding Community Learning

See the 2002 Proceedings for more details on these teams.

To provide you with some sense of earlier themes, the following are the titles of teams that were proposed and/or organized in 2002 and 2003 (note that the 2003 event was canceled):

- Community-Based Non-Profits as the Vehicles for Follettian/Pragmatic Democracy
- Designing a Community Learning System for Creative Democracy
- Visualising Post-Hierarchical Leadership
- The Perpetuation of Creativity for Creative Democracy
- Creative Democracy through Virtual Interaction?
- Fostering Democratic Leadership in Emerging and Challenged Democracies
- Understanding Community Learning
- Addressing Power Dynamics and Inequities in Democratic Dialogue
- Metropolitan Democracy through Neighborhood Organization
- Developing a Community-Wide Curriculum for Civil Awareness and Reciprocity
- Empowering Citizens through the Social Planetarium
- Envisioning an Iraqi Model of Democracy
- No Future Left Behind: Promoting the Participatory Redesign of Public Education
- US National Interests and their Impact on Democracy in Pakistan
- Globalization and its Role in Reshaping Individual's Perception of Life

SCHEDULE AND DEADLINES

April 15: Theme Proposals deadline. Theme proposals must include a description of the concept, an initial Triggering Question, and an idea of what the originator would like to see regarding preparatory work by participants. Teams can consist of as few as two people, or as many as desired. Those who propose teams do not need to bring their own team. They do need to be willing to help organize those who are attracted to their team idea. The proposer must specify

how long the team will remain open to new participants. They also need to be prepared to attend the Follett Conversation itself.

Theme proposals should be sent to Matthew Shapiro, Conversation Coordinator, at mshapiro@follettfoundation.org or by mail to the Mary Parker Follett Foundation, P.O. Box 573, Boise, ID 83701.

May 1: Conversation Themes Bulletin sent out to all persons interested in attending the Conversation.

June: Teams formed and distance-based inquiry begins.

July 1: Non-refundable Conference Fee deposit due (\$50).

August 1: Conference Fee balance due (\$175). Checks should be made out to The Mary Parker Follett Foundation - Conversation

September: Final Conversation Bulletin sent out.

October 21-24: Conference event.

December, 2004: Team and individual (optional) output papers due for Proceedings

January, 2005: Individual papers due for journal review (optional).

January, 2005: Proceedings published.

Note: While it is preferred that participants find a team that they are most interested in and join that team well in advance of the conference event, participants are not required to commit to a team. Some teams may also remain open to newcomers up until the start of the Conversation itself.

CONFERENCE FEE

The Conference Fee is **\$225**. This fee is based on the cost of conference facilities at Boise State University and includes the following meals plus beverage service:

- dinner on Thursday the 21st;
- breakfast, lunch and dinner on Friday the 22nd ;
- breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday the 23rd;
- breakfast and lunch on Sunday the 24th.

Note: Conference Fee does not include lodging or transportation.

Contribution to the Mary Parker Follett Foundation

This is a suggested and optional contribution to help support the important charitable and educational efforts of the Foundation. Contributions will also help pay for conference-related expenses such as printing and mailing. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided for by law. *The Foundation is recognized as an exempt organization under IRS section 501(c)(3).*

Suggested Minimum Contribution:

General: \$50

Students/Low-Income: \$35

LODGING

We have in the past made special arrangements with two hotels within a convenient distance of the conference location. Arrangements have not yet been finalized, and we will update you on this in the near future. The **Courtyard Marriott** (800-321-2211) is within approximately one-half mile (walking distance) of Boise State University. The Courtyard offers an airport courtesy van.

As another option, the **University Inn** (800-345-7170) is an older 80-room motel which is adjacent to the campus of Boise State University. The Inn also offers an airport courtesy van.

Other hotels and motels are available at a further distance from the conference facility. Contact us for more information on these options.

LOCATION

The Follett Conversation 2004 will be located on the campus of Boise State University, in Boise, Idaho. A city of 190,000, Idaho's state capital is a vibrant city of diverse neighborhoods, and it has been undergoing rapid growth due to its quality of life and economic resilience. Boise is a jumping off point to Idaho's abundant recreational destinations – its mountains, rivers, and deserts. This "City of Trees" along the scenic Boise River is also home to several major national firms, including Albertsons, Inc., Micron Technology, and The Washington Group (formerly Morrison-Knudsen). Hewlett-Packard also has a major presence here. Boise State University is a leading regional institution, with a growing student body of more than 18,000 students.

Direct flights and connections to Boise are available from the following cities:

Chicago
Minneapolis-St. Paul
Dallas-Ft. Worth
Denver
Los Angeles
San Francisco
San Jose

Phoenix
Las Vegas
Billings
Salt Lake City
Portland
Spokane
Seattle

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Mary Parker Follett Foundation was founded in 1995 as the Idaho Systems Institute. Its early focus was participatory, community-based social systems design, with projects directed toward educational change. The Foundation (then Institute) was also instrumental in seeing Follett's seminal work *The New State* reissued by Penn State Press in 1998. The organization was re-named in 2001 as the Mary Parker Follett Foundation to honor Follett more directly, and has been organized with a global scope and the following mission:

To help foster the development of core competencies for the 21st Century that will engender a democratic and just society, create healthy and authentic communities, and build the capacity for all people to actively participate in the evolution of their selves, their lives and their world.

Four program areas are:

- Learning Democracy
- Participatory Design of Social Systems
- Dialogue as Community Reflection
- Evolutionary Inquiry

CONTACT

For further information about the Follett Conversation, please contact Matthew A. Shapiro, Foundation President and Conversation Coordinator, at mshapiro@follettfoundation.org or (208) 343-3042.

Written material and conference fees may be sent to the Foundation at the following address:

The Mary Parker Follett Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 573
Boise, Idaho 83701

We look forward to seeing you. **Participant Registration Form below.**

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Participant Registration Form

Participant Registration is due **July 1, 2004**.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____

Affiliation (If applicable):

Preferred Research Team (this may be a team that you are proposing)

Note: If this is not a team that you are proposing, then this part of the registration form cannot be completed until team proposals have been circulated after April 15. If it is a team that you are proposing, see the information in the Call for Participants and Themes regarding requirements for team proposals.

Would you be traveling by car or by air? (Circle One)

Registration Fee Schedule

July 1: Non-refundable Conference Fee deposit due (\$50).

August 1: Conference Fee balance due (\$175).

Total Registration Fee is **\$225**.

Checks are payable to *The Mary Parker Follett Foundation – Conversation*.

Send this form by mail to:

Or fax to:

The Mary Parker Follett Foundation
P.O. Box 573
Boise, ID 83701

309-273-0259