Passages:
The Story of JACO

A HISTORY OF THE JUNG ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OHIO

1989 TO 2014

J. Claire Hagan Bauza with input from Ann Murtha and Linda Thompson

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The story of JACO started in 1984 with a syncronistic event, when Ann and Bob Murtha first met each other at Kirkridge, a retreat center in Pennsylvania, where each was attending a workshop on the Jungian topic of individuation. After marrying and living for a time in Texas, the Murthas arrived in Columbus in 1987, where they became active in the First Community Church (where Bob at one time had been the business manager). At that time, a small group at First Community was looking for ways to blend spiritual life with religion and psychology. The Murthas were asked to lead a Jungian study group, but instead, they said they would facilitate a monthly Sunday evening gathering in their home, on Neil Avenue, using Jungian materials provided by the Centerpoint Foundation. The Murthas added a potluck supper, music, and simple rituals to the gatherings.

As more people heard of the Neil Avenue group and wanted to join, it was clear that the Murtha home could not accommodate more people. By this time, the Murthas had begun to hear through the grapevine of several Jungian-inspired people in the academic world (Bob Bargar at OSU, Mary Jo Myers at Ohio Dominican, Jeff Hopper at the Methodist Theological School, Joyce Karsko at Otterbein, none of whom knew about the others!) There were also on-going dreamgroups led by Nancy Lee, with a Jungian approach. Linda Thompson, with the Ohio Department of Education, had met with Ann at the Russian Tearoom in the Short North early in 1989, and was able to suggest several people to Ann who might be interested in helping to start a Jungian group. (Linda, who was in the graduate program at OSU in the Education Department, began reading Jung in the 70’s, and she and other grad students with Jungian ideas inspired several professors to begin to use Jungian concepts in their classes.)

The Murthas, excited by the underground swell of Jungian enthusiasts, decided to show the three-part film, *The Story of Carl Gustav Jung*, narrated by Laurens van der Post, who was an anthropologist, author and close friend of Jung. Bob and Ann decided that in order to advertise this event, held at the King Avenue Methodist Church, on Sunday, December 2, 1989, they should have an actual organization in place. So, in October of that year, the Jung Association of Central Ohio was formed with Mary Jo Myers, Robert Bargar, Jeffrey Hopper, and Ann and Bob Murtha as the initial board members. Mary Jo, Bob and Jeff, along with Nancy Grimes, who had recently finished her training and was a practicing Jungian analyst in southwest Ohio, were asked to be on a panel to discuss the film. On that cold, snowy December Sunday, the Murthas, who had placed small ads in the *Columbus Dispatch*, had no idea whether ten people or fifty people might come. The admission was $10 to cover costs, and the event was to go from two to five PM. To their amazement, 130 people came that afternoon, and many signed forms indicating their interest in helping to start a Jungian organization.

I was one of the 130 people to attend that film and panel discussion, and was excited by the film and the number of people who seemed so supportive of Jung’s ideas. When Ann called me in January to invite me to have lunch with she and Bob, I was curious about the possibilities of what might be next. We met at the Columbus Museum of Art on Thursday, January 25, 1990, and I agreed to be a board member. The first board meeting was held at the Murtha’s home on Neil Avenue on February 10, 1990. Present were Bob Bargar,
Judith Hagan, Jeff Hopper, Joyce Karsko, Ann Murtha, Robert Murtha, Mary Jo Myers, Linda Thompson, and Dick Witter. Not able to attend were Ruth Gardner and Gary Harbaugh. At this meeting, Bob Murtha noted that the Articles of Incorporation had been filed with the State of Ohio on October 25, 1989. The proposed Constitution and Code of Regulations, required by the State, were discussed and unanimously adopted. An application for a non-profit organization mailing permit had been filed with the post office. Each trustee was eligible to serve a maximum of two additional three year terms beyond their initial term. Ann and Bob served ex-officio as Executive Director (Ann) and Treasurer (Bob). Election of Chair and Vice-Chair was deferred to a later meeting. Membership was discussed, and fees established: Basic Membership $15 single, $25 two-person, Student $10, Senior $10. Sustaining Members $50 single, $75 two person, and $50 Student or Senior. Members would receive discounts on events and registration priority. This was to be in effect until JACO’s year ended June 30, 1991. Members joining prior to June 30, 1990 would be designated as Founding Members.

Some decisions made at this first meeting of the Board of Trustees were ones that are revisited yet today. It is a reflection of the unusually broad background of members of the first board that the Jung organization has continued to sustain a presence here in central Ohio, while other much more formal and therapist controlled Jung groups have struggled or closed down. With people from business, art, education, and religious worlds, as well as several therapists, the Jung Association from the very first was democratic and widespread in interests and experiences. At the suggestion of Bob Bargar, who said he hoped to get to know his fellow board members well and work together closely on the organization’s needs, the board decided to meet every two or three months rather than once a year, the minimum mandated by the state in order to be a viable organization. This surprised Ann and Bob, who had thought that the board might not want to give that much time. As it has turned out, the decision to have a board closely involved in the running of JACO was vital to its survival a few years later, in 1994, when the Murthas retired to Colorado.

From the first, the intention was to host programs with Jungian content, presented by the best presenters available. The first event was called Honoring Your Dreams, and was scheduled for May 19, 1990, with a morning lecture by Dr. Albert Buytendorp, MD, trained at the Jung Institute of Zurich and in New York, and a psychiatrist from Cincinnati, with a “fish bowl” demonstration of dream analysis. Lunch and breakout groups in the afternoon were also to be part of the day. The event was scheduled at the Ohio State Union. I, along with Nancy Lee, Nancy Grimes, and Al Buytendorp, led the afternoon breakout groups.

The day ended with a panel discussion. Dreams, which continue to be a fascinating topic for many people, was an excellent beginning topic.

Ann felt that it was essential to have advisors for the new organization, and through her many contacts, was able to assemble an impressive group. In addition to Al Buytendorp and Nancy Grimes, mentioned earlier, the others who agreed to be on the Advisory Board included: Cynthia Hirni, Associate Director, Kirkridge Retreat Center, Pastoral Counselor/Depth Psychology; Don Kalsched, Director of Professional Enrichment Program in Depth Psychology, Wainwright House, New York, as well as Jungian Analyst and faculty member at the Jung Institute of New York; Sister Mary Milano, Retreat Leader and Spiritual Director, Provincial House, Cincinnati; Bob Raines, UCC Minister and Director, Kirkridge Retreat Center, Bangor, PA, and author; Bob Rodgers, Professor, Education and Psychology, OSU; Nathan Schwartz-Salant, Jungian Analyst, faculty of Jung Institute, NY; Robin van Loben Sels, Jungian Analyst, faculty of Jung Institute NY, and Wainwright House Enrichment Program, and poet.
It wasn’t long before the idea of a permanent space for JACO was discussed. In the April, 1990 JACO newsletter, which Ann edited (and had begun sending out in January, 1990) there was this note: “... under consideration is a permanent location in Columbus’ Short North area which would provide meeting space for up to 30, a library/reading room, kichenette, and office.” While Ann was doubtful JACO would be able to support such a place, Bob and I were the optimists who looked at the house on East Lincoln and said “Let’s do it!” The Board agreed, and we were off on the next part of the journey. While the access to the second floor was a steep stairway, the space was open and large enough to hold small groups for discussion, making art, and for exhibits. The Gardner Company donated and installed the track lighting for the upstairs, and everyone helped with the scrubbing, painting, carpeting, building of bookshelves, and stocking the kitchette. People were invited to “endow a chair,” or endow one folding chair. The resulting red chairs are still used today! Committees were formed, programs planned, and Ann remembers using an old typewriter (before she knew about computers) and a hand calculator, as well as a toilet brush, dust cloth, broom, and window cleaner.

In a September issue of the Columbus Dispatch, George Myers Jr., then the Dispatch book critic, wrote an article about the new organization called “Subliminal energies vibrating.” He mentioned the open house to be held during Gallery Hop on October 6, 1990, as well as some background on the organization and Jung. While trying to be humorous (“And no, the Haus doesn’t serve bratwurst like Schmidt’s, or sell bawdy greeting cards like Hausfrau Haven,” “Presenters . . . together have enough diplomas to wallpaper the panels of our collective unconscious”), George did get out the news. JACO had as many as 300+ members in it’s first few years. There were few organizations in Central Ohio at that time who were presenting the kind of programming JACO was doing, and doing well.

From the beginning the gallery has been an integral part of JACO, as both a way to connect to the public and a way to honor those who are on their journeys of individuation and who create visual evidence of those journeys. The first exhibit, by local artist Mary Jane Alford, was an imaginative array of works in mixed media. Since that first show, JACO has as of 2014, hosted around 140 exhibits, ranging from solo shows by both newly emerging and well-established artists, to group shows, often showcasing work by members. Because I was the director of a large community gallery, I had connections to a number of regional artists, and many of them exhibited at JungHaus over the years. One of the most popular presenters at JACO, Judy Sohigian, was in Columbus for a year while her partner was at OSU. Her exhibit, in November and December of 1991, was full of color and abstraction that many people found irresistible. Her workshops were well-attended, and talked about to this day by those who participated. Leslie Constable, who wrote art reviews for the Dispatch, was herself an artist, and exhibited paintings in January and February, 1992. She wrote many reviews of exhibits at JungHaus, but when she moved to New Mexico several years later, it became difficult to find reviewers to come and see shows, especially once the gallery scene became crowded with venues.

The November, 1992, JACO Newsletter announced that JungHaus would be moving just after the start of the 1993 year. This decision was based partly on the need to hire a part-time administrative assistant, Betsy Grund, and a budget increase. As the rent on Lincoln was to go up, it was necessary to find a less expensive rental space. The new location, at 29 East Russell, had recently been purchased by Bob Murtha’s company, Macintosh Partners, and offered many features that the JACO group felt important, such as a larger gallery and meeting space, larger bookstore and library space, and offices. In fact, the large
north office space was first used by Ann Murtha and several other professionals for therapy practice, with the thought that, in the future, this office could be a factor in JACO's plan to bring Jungian analysts to central Ohio.

It was an unusual sight to see a group of Jungians carrying items from East Lincoln, down Pearl Alley to the new home of JungHaus on East Russell! Again, everyone pitched in to help, from, again, installing track lights and molding for the gallery, carpet and bookshelves for the library/bookstore area, to cleaning and scrubbing. Early in 1991, Michael Bauza had joined the board replacing Gary Harbaugh, and in 1992, Phil Meeks came on board after Dick Witter, seriously ill, resigned. Nancy Lee, who had been leading Jungian-oriented dream groups for some years, also joined the board in 1992. Pat Meers, a Property Consultant, Robin Lawrie, artist and future art therapist, and Pam Kircher, poet and OCLC Product Manager, came on the board in 1993. Many board members have stayed involved with JACO over the years, even after leaving the board. Certainly, JACO has been fortunate to have a core of loyal supporters right from the earliest years.

In 1993, Ann Murtha, at the suggestion of Nancy Grimes, wrote a letter to the Jung Institute in Zurich asking that word be given out to those to graduate soon that Columbus was looking for an analyst to locate in the area, and that an office was available as part of the JACO space. By this time, Ann and Bob had decided that they would be moving to Colorado in the next year or so, and the office space that Ann had been using would be available. During the summer of 1993, Dick Sweeney and Ellen Kandonian, who were married later that same year, on December 11, came to Columbus and met with members of the board as well as Ann and Bob. They decided to make Columbus their home, with Dick arriving in January, and Ellen later after completing her Jungian training and fulfilling her other obligations in New England. On January 28, 1994, members were invited to meet Dick in a free coffee and conversation evening, and then on Saturday, the 29th, Dick gave the first of his many presentations on Jungian thought, this one titled *Voices of the Soul: A Jungian Approach to the Problem of Conscience and Decision*. Dick began his therapy practice on January 10, 1994.

1994 was a year of big transitions for JACO, with the arrival of the Sweeneys, and several of our largest programs. A major joint program with the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus brought Jeremy Taylor, a dream teacher and facilitator, here from California. Jeremy, author of several books on dreams, presented on March 25 and 26, 1994, his program called *Hidden Gifts and Open Secrets: Dreaming of the Shadow as a Personal and Archetypal Reality*. 1994 was also the year that Shaun McNiff, Professor of Expressive Therapy at Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, gave his experiential workshop on the second floor of 29 East Russell, which at that time was still one large, open space. We got chalk dust all over the walls and floor, and ourselves, but people loved the experience!

With the departure of Ann and Bob in 1994, JACO was thrown into a major depression! Ann and Bob had been the mainstays of JACO since its inception, and now we were on our own. After some difficult passages, JACO found people willing to take on the responsibilities that had been those of Ann and Bob, and we continued to stay afloat, although at times it seemed just barely. Betsy Grund also left Columbus, and the board hired first Joan Hensley, then Judith Vierow as parttime office administrators. Later, Judith Hagan (aka Claire) and Linda Thompson agreed to co-administrate JACO for a year, during which they evaluated exactly what was needed to keep JACO running smoothly. After some discussions with the board, a description of the position was created, and Gina Peacock was eventually hired in late 1998.
One of the many legacies from the Murthas that have benefited JACO is an endowment fund they established after they moved to Colorado. This endowment was, in part, to encourage JACO to have a well-known Jungian speaker come to Columbus and give a major presentation. The first speaker in 1998 was Murray Stein, who at the time was Director of the Chicago Jungian Institute and the author of several well-regarded books. The ongoing series is called the Bollingen Lecture Series, after the tower Jung built for himself as a retreat near Zurich, Switzerland. Since that first presentation, many outstanding Jungian and Jungian-influenced speakers have come to Columbus to give a Friday night lecture and a Saturday workshop, usually in the fall. (The timing is partly to honor the beginning of the Jung Association in Ohio when it was incorporated in October of 1989.)

Since the founding of JACO, there has been an increase in programming by other organizations. Many of these programs are similar to what JACO has pioneered in central Ohio since 1990. Especially for those who are unfamiliar with Jungian ideas, attracting people to programs is challenging. As a result, at times it has become harder to maintain memberships and to know that we will have enough participants in programs to support costs. Fortunately, speakers like Jim Hollis and Dick Sweeney are very highly regarded and attract a number of participants to their talks. Unfortunately, on his last visit to Columbus in May of 2014, Jim Hollis let us know that as he turns 75, he is cutting back on traveling and no longer could come to Columbus in the future.

Bright spots are the Second Saturdays, which continue to bring both established members and potential members to this free programming. Many of the presenters for the Second Saturdays are members who want to share their interests and areas of expertise. Another positive part of the picture is the JACO gallery which from the beginning in 1990 continues to exhibit mostly local artists, many of them members. Gallery schedules are usually filled at least a year in advance. While sales of artworks from gallery exhibits is not the main focus of the exhibits, there have been enough sales, with artists invited to donate 20% of sales to JACO, to pay for the track lighting in our gallery spaces. In the past several years, another ongoing monthly program has been added to the schedule: Fourth Saturdays, which focus on sharing of poetry, art works, music, etc. Coordinated by Jeanne Marlowe, the Fourth-Saturday gatherings are small and intimate, offering a safe environment in which to share.

We also have a dynamo part-time director in Gina Peacock, who has given more than the hours for which she is paid, from the beginning in 1999. She basically does it all, from program planning, presenter arrangements, financial reports, making coffee for Second Saturdays, working with volunteers, cleaning, and helping to make the move from Russell Street to West Third in 2004. This was the third move in JACO’s history, all of which were in the Short North area. The 2004 move was to the Victorian house purchased by Dick and Ellen Kandonian Sweeney at 59 West Third Avenue. The Sweeneys had been looking for several years for a place they could purchase that would become the home of the Jung Association and a place where multiple office spaces would be available for both the Sweeneys and for other Jungian analysts.

Because of already scheduled exhibits for 2004, artists were expecting to have a space in which to exhibit work despite the move in the spring of 2004. So, for the third time, track lighting had to be installed, an office set up for JACO, bookshelves built and finished, and a lot of scrubbing and cleaning had to be done. (Also painting, and a total rehab of part of the basement by Robin Lawrie, who was JACO’s artist-in-residence for several years before moving to Florida.) The new space had several pluses: a big kitchen with an island that is perfect for a serving place for receptions; a half bath on the first floor and two full bathrooms.
upstairs, lots of windows and good lighting for exhibits; already built-in bookshelves in the first room (more have been added since 2004 as many people have donated Jungian kinds of books); and what has been named the garden room in the rear of the downstairs. Upstairs are offices for four analysts. It is a far cry from 1994 when Dick and Ellen arrived in Columbus and were the only Jungian analysts in town!

In 2005, soon after the move to West Third Avenue, JACO lost one of its board members, Martha Alcock. Martha, who was a professor at Capital University, had recently returned from a trip to Zurich, a place she had wanted to visit for some time. Not long after this visit, Martha died of cancer at the age of 50. In her honor, a fund was established to buy books for the library, which has continued to add Jungian type books over the years.

In 2009, JACO celebrated its 20th anniversary with a dinner at First Community Church, attended by founders, board members, patrons, sustaining members, volunteers and others. The dinner, on September 25, was a hit, with excerpts from a play by Katherine Burkman, remarks by Dick Sweeney, and the excitement of having Jung’s Red Book published and an image of the cover of the Red Book on the front of The New York Times Magazine! Each attendee also received a Jung finger puppet, thanks to board member Jay Young, and these were used by people at the various tables to “read” the Jungian quotes that were on each table. The Murthas were able to come from Colorado for the event, and were given a gift created by Elizabeth Fergus-Jean.

Another plus for JACO has been the ongoing development of a web page, thanks to the efforts of Matt Meara. On the web page are multiple areas with which to connect, including a listing of exhibits going back a number of years, names of all the Bollingen presenters and their titles since 1998, information on current programs and on-line registration; and membership application and renewal forms. More recently, it is now possible to pay for programs and memberships on line. (www.jungcentralohio.org)

In 2010, a recognition was given to the JACO gallery for 20 years of exhibitions. Claire Hagan Bauza, (earlier known as Judith Hagan), coordinator of the gallery for the 20 years, was celebrated at an event at the Jung Haus during which she was honored with a plaque to recognize her contribution. An article in the Short North Gazette gave the community the information about the celebration of the gallery. Two exhibits were held, one at the JACO gallery and the other at High Road Gallery in Worthington, which showed work by artists who had exhibited during the 20 years.

During much of 2013 and into 2014, board member Tracy Sidesinger, with the help of long-time volunteer Rosemary Muldowney, reorganized the library. Several new shelving units had been purchased and installed in the front room to expand the already existing shelving on each side of the fireplace. Tracy and Rosemary created a catalogue of all the books to help in the search for particular titles or categories.

As the 25th anniversary of the Jung Association drew near, in 2014, it was realized that Dick Sweeney would also be celebrating his 20th year in Columbus as a Jungian analyst. Dick was asked to be the 2014 Bollingen speaker for the annual Bollingen Lecture Series. On Friday, October 10, Dick gave a lecture The Soul as Transformative Process, followed by a workshop on Saturday, October 11. After the Saturday workshop, a luncheon in honor of Dick was held. A wonderful article about Dick was published in the October, 2014 Short North Gazette. The exhibit at the Jung Haus for September and October, 2014, was a celebration of the two anniversaries, including a timeline going from
1989 to 2014. Many images and texts by some of Dick’s analysands, and also from those who wanted to express their thanks for the 25 years of the Jung Association in central Ohio were in the exhibit.

As part of the celebration of JACO’s 25 years, Board Chair Mike Schaefer designed a mandala logo to reflect “the fire that has been present in our organization since the beginning.” As Michael Bauza, one of the earliest board members put it in his reflections on the idea of the founding fire of JACO:

> Each of the several spaces that have contained JACO over the years evokes a foundry and its furnace, one capable of holding the necessary fire, the refining fire, the transforming fire, a projection of symbolic, creative fire that has bound founders and board, analysts and staff, members and all those who find this space (or does it find them?), over some twenty-five years.

Celebrating the past, enjoying the present time, and looking ahead to the future, JACO board members and all who are part of the organization, in whatever way they are involved, will determine the next 25 years. It takes all of us to make this kind of group work. We need to be willing to go forward in ways that will build on what has come before, and perhaps go in directions we cannot now imagine.