

THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN'S CONSCIOUS LIVING MAGAZINE

FREE

SEPTEMBER THROUGH DECEMBER 2023 - ISSUE 84



Mara Evenstar

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Love, Memory, and Death — Now That Was a Great Funeral by Marie Duquette,
San Slomovits' Picture of My Past, Michelle McLemore on the *Power of Ancestry
and Personal Discovery*, and Joshua Kay on *Green Burial*

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FINDING A DEEP ROOTED SENSE OF BEING

Plant Hallucinogens and the Modern World

By Gary Merel

For centuries, people have gazed at the night sky with a sense of wonder, attempting to comprehend the mysteries of the cosmos in relation to their own existence. Not that long ago, communities would gather around a communal fire, exchanging insights and challenges while seeking wisdom from their tribal elders.

Ironically, despite the advancements in science, technology, and the abundance of comforts available to us today, the value of community has diminished, and the significance of elder wisdom has faded away. This unfortunate shift has resulted in a pervasive sense of isolation, leading to a surge in depression and anxiety. Many individuals have lost their connection to community and now lead lives of isolation. It is in response to this profound need to rediscover our core identity and experience the mysteries of life firsthand that the interest in and accessibility of psychedelic medicine has grown. Terence McKenna, a renowned author on plant hallucinogens, refers to this movement as an “Archaic Revival.”

Despite the advancements in science, technology, and the abundance of comforts available to us today, the value of community has diminished, and the significance of elder wisdom has faded away.

My Introduction to Plant Medicine

After a four-hour bus journey from Quito Ecuador, I finally arrived in Shell, a small town on the western edge of the rainforest with a population of approximately 10,000. Shell has a small military-civilian airfield from which one can charter a plane to travel into the rainforest. The flight to the Schuar village took around 30 minutes, and while waiting for a weather front to pass, I had ample time to engage in conversation. It was during this opportunity that I spoke with a woman who facilitated the flights. She was from the village I was traveling to and shared that whenever she felt anxious, depressed, or “out of sorts,” she would return to her village to consult the Shaman, who would administer Ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is the primary plant hallucinogen used by indigenous people residing in the South American rainforest. She explained how this ritual would restore her well-being and strengthen her connection to her village, emphasizing that it was an integral part of her life. Simply put, she said that’s what people do here when they feel lost.

The following evening, I participated in an Ayahuasca ceremony led by the village Shaman. Through a translator, he inquired about my desires and motivations for being there. I expressed my desire to possess the same healing abilities he possessed, which, in retrospect, was naive. I am not Schuar, nor do I live in the rainforest. The Shaman provided me with a yellowish liquid derived from wild tobacco, which I snorted, followed by ingesting a cup of Ayahuasca. Twenty minutes later, my stomach churned, and I found myself vomiting before descending into a profound state of being. I merged with the rainforest, experiencing its rhythmic essence. The separation between myself and the rainforest dissolved, and I entered into a state of pure existence. I experienced what I can only describe as the intelligence and wisdom of this plant medicine. Four hours later, I returned to what I would consider “normal” reality, abruptly thrust back into my own life. Nevertheless, an echo persisted—a visceral sense that something within my nervous system had shifted. It felt as if I had received a new, refined operating system. Integrating this experience into my life took several months.

My journey to the Ecuadorian rainforest occurred 50 years ago, yet its impact on my personal and spiritual development remains significant to this day. I have explored various forms of plant medicine throughout my life and have facilitated medicine circles for both groups and individuals. Most recently, I have integrated the use of Psilocybin mushrooms into my life coaching practice.

Psilocybin mushrooms have been utilized for centuries by various indigenous cultures for spiritual, medicinal, and recreational purposes. Recently, there has been renewed interest in exploring the potential therapeutic benefits of psilocybin. These mushrooms have been shown to facilitate personal growth and transformation, making them a unique and powerful approach to aiding clients in overcoming obstacles, gaining new insights, and achieving personal goals.

In my experience, integrating psilocybin mushrooms into a life coaching practice has enhanced its effectiveness. Research has shown that psilocybin mushrooms can induce profound and mystical experiences that significantly alter one’s worldview and perspective. Such experiences can help individuals break free from limiting beliefs and thought patterns, providing them with a fresh outlook on life and their position within it.

Integrating psilocybin mushrooms into life coaching enhances its effectiveness by inducing profound experiences that shift one’s perspective and worldview. These experiences help individuals overcome limiting beliefs and thought patterns, providing a fresh outlook on life. In a life coaching context, psilocybin mushrooms assist clients in identifying and overcoming subconscious blocks that hinder their progress toward their envisioned life. They promote creativity and open-mindedness, enabling clients to find innovative solutions to challenges. Additionally, psilocybin mushrooms foster increased empathy and connectedness, benefiting clients dealing with relationship issues or feelings of isolation.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that integrating psilocybin mushrooms into a life coaching practice necessitates careful consideration and planning. Working with a trained professional who can guide the client through the experience, ensure their safety and provide support, is essential.

Additionally, using psilocybin mushrooms in a therapeutic setting requires a comprehensive preparation process. This includes screening for contraindications, preparation and intention setting, and post-session integration support. It is equally important to ensure that the client has a supportive environment to return to after the session, as the experience can be intense and may necessitate time for integration and processing.

In our fast-paced world, it is easy to feel lost and overwhelmed by the constant changes happening around us. However, amidst the chaos, it is essential to remember that life is not merely happening to us. We possess the power to shape our lives and imbue them with meaning. Psychedelic medicine serves as a powerful and compelling tool that can help us reconnect with our authentic selves. By doing so, we can show up for others in our lives with integrity and foster meaningful connections.










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Gary Merel is an accredited life coach and trained facilitator leading individual and small-group psychedelic experiences. You can contact him by emailing at leanforwardlife@gmail.com. Or visit his website leanintoyourlife.net.



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On the Cover
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**Senior Design and
Production Editor**
Carol Karr

Design and Production Editor
Jennifer Carson

Managing Editor/Staff Coordinator
Jennifer Carson

Advertising Sales Manager
Tana Dean

Distribution
Richard Knapp, Paul Stehle

Editing
Jennifer Carson,
Michelle McLemore, Lexi Mohney

Calendar Editor
Jennifer Carson

Writers
Peggy Alaniz, Catherine Carlson, Catherine Carr, Crysta Coburn, Laura K. Cowan, Laurel Decker, Marie Duquette, Madonna Gauding, Lisa V. Gotte, Lynda Gronlund, Katie Hoener, Joshua Kay, Fran Mason, Christine MacIntyre, Michelle McLemore, Carin Michaels, Kirsten Mowrey, Irena Barbara Nagler, Hilary Nichols, Tchera Niyego, Grace Pernecky, Caitlin Potere, Sandor Slomovits, Emily Springfield, Frank Vandervort

Artwork
Jennifer Carson, Chris Huang, Laila Kujala, Eli Zemper

Photography
Senior Photographer: Linda Lawson
Susan Ayer, Mary Bortmas, Rachel Everheart, Kate Jackman, Hilary Nichols, Edda Pacifico, Joni Strickfaden, Rachael Waring

This issue is distributed starting in the last week of August.

The deadline for Free Calendar submissions for the January through April 2024 issue is Monday, November 13, 2023

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—Eric Parkhurst, Winewood Organics



Advertising, for over 20 years, in The Crazy Wisdom Journal has been a resource that keeps my business, Peaceful Dragon School, connected with a community of those looking for self-care and wellness methods that will augment their more traditional health support.

—Wasantha Young, Peaceful Dragon School



Leslie Science & Nature Center is honored to continuing being a part of this critical local publication. Personally, I love reading CWJ, both the digital and print publications. There is something special about the people featured within both journals. **I feel more connected and appreciative of the individuals and business who care for and celebrate the world around us.** The consistency of intimate personal stories, alongside deeper philosophical conversations that I really enjoy! Thanks, Crazy Wisdom Journal, for continuing to seek out and feature all of the incredible people making our community special!

—Susan Westhoff, Executive Director Leslie Science and Nature Center and Ann Arbor Hands on Museum



The Crazy Wisdom Journal is such a blessing to the area's holistic community! It's the one place you can go to find out about places, events, products, and practitioners of alternative and metaphysical pursuits in the Ann Arbor area. I especially love their in-depth articles, which allow for a real experience of whoever is the focus. Even the ads are a great exploration of the community's offerings. Many people have told us they've seen our ads and articles about us in the CWJ. We are grateful to be a part of such an important publication!

—Amy Garber, Enlightened Soul Center & Shop

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Meet Some of Our Creative Team

We sincerely appreciate all the talent that gets put to work to bring you the best CrazyWisdom Community Journal three times a year, and wanted to highlight different contributors from each issue in this space. Look for us to highlight some of our contributors in every issue.

Angela Verges is a freelance writer, author, and comedienne. Look for her book, *Menopause Ain't No Joke*. When Verges is not writing, she enjoys reading, spending time with her adult sons, and exercising (mind, body, and spirit). Verges believes that a chuckle a day keeps stress at bay and enjoys spreading joy, one laugh at a time. Read her humorous essay, *Laughter as Self-Care*, in this issue.



Catherine Carr earned her degree in Neuroscience from the University of Michigan in 2011, and she applies a scientific mindset to her investigation of religious and spiritual topics. Recently she published her first book, *World Soul: Healing Ourselves and the Earth through Pagan Theology*. Carr writes feature articles for *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* in the sphere of where spirituality and science meet.

Danielle Karr has been the bookkeeper for Crazy Wisdom since 2019. Raised in Bedford, near the Ohio border in Monroe County, she and her husband of 31 years, Tom, currently live in Hartland. She has two sons, age 17 and 23, and her whole family loves to sail, swim, and be outdoors.



Mary Bortmas is a photographer with over 25 years of experience. She photographed the King family of Frog Holler Farm in Issue #77, and took the lead photos for the *What's New Column* in our current issue. She owns her own studio, Unforgettable Photos, in Manchester. In her spare time, Mary enjoys traveling (especially to visit her five children), crafting, and gardening.

Michelle Mclemore writes major feature articles, practitioner profiles, and metaphysical and personal essays for *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*, and is part of the proofreading team. Her academic background as a former Psychology and English teacher blends with her training in energy therapies, yoga, tai chi, and stress management coaching.



Tana Dean is the Advertising Sales Manager for Crazy Wisdom Publications. She has a deep background in technology, and brings experience in sales, marketing, and as an entrepreneur, to bear on her role. She is also an author, and has served on several non-profit boards, and as Director of Administration for a local non-profit. Dean enjoys helping businesses reach out through marketing and advertising.

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Kindred Conversations



with Hilary Nichols



Ebony Evans is the founder of the reading club, EyeCU Reading & Chatting and the author of *Dead to Me*. You can connect with her online on Facebook @ AuthorEbonyEvans or the EyeCU Reading & Chatting Group. Follow on IG @eyecu_reading. Be on the lookout for *Dead to Me* on Audible, in production now.

Story and Photos by Hilary Nichols

It is said that we all have a book in us. As an avid reader, book reviewer, and book club leader, Ebony Evans has actively encouraged a lot of those books into being. Her book club, EyeCU Reading and Chatting Club, has over 2000 members online with impressive outreach and impact in the literary sphere. Evans discovered in previous book clubs that the participants weren't really there to read, they were catty and talked about each other. It became clear that she was looking for something distinct. So, she created it herself. "I wanted a close-knit group of like-minded women, who would support and be there for each other." Edward's group of lifelong friends solidified when she lost her baby son at 11 months old. "I realized we should get together not only in times of sorrow but also in the good times." In 2010 her book club EyeCU Reading and Social Network was formed of best friends who gathered monthly to read and so much more.

It is said that we all have a book in us. As an avid reader, book reviewer, and book club leader, Ebony Evans has actively encouraged a lot of those books into being.

They started off reading and reviewing mostly African American indie authors. "An author's exposure is heavily based on book reviews, if we read it, we review it!" The club's reputation for supporting these titles paid off. "People are dying for me to review their books," Evans said. "The popularity and constructive honesty of our reviews has gotten us sought out by many authors, who value the opinions of our readers." The notoriety attracts accomplished authors to participate in EyeCU. "But I just want to read what I like," Evans acknowledges. "When it is my turn to pick a book, they know it is going to be erotica." She laughs. "But when Tam picks a book we tease her, another slave read? Now we read everything." Walter Mosely's *The Last Days of Ptolemy Gray* is their current club assignment.

When the pandemic hit, the members of EyeCU had to make a decision—wait it out or pivot to online. The move toward hosting multiple groups in virtual spaces has been monumental. Readers from everywhere enrich the discussion. The increased visibility became an inspiration. Thanks to their literary focus, many of the founding members now boast some impressive professional gains. The crew includes Tamara Walker who is now a vlogger with a channel called *Tam Telling Tales*, Tina Smith who is now an editor for Precise Editing, and Stacye Lewis, under the pen name Kaylynn Hunt, is now an author of five books. Evans said, "We call her [Kalynn Hunt] the 'Freestyle Queen' because she always participates in the Friday Freestyle challenge. In addition to these, there are many more smart, accomplished women.

Evans came up with the idea of the freestyle challenge as a way to engage with their online community. She posts a weekly writing challenge to her membership inspiring countless stories. This September an anthology of the best of those stories will be released as a book titled *Freestyle Cipher*.

Yet, for years, Evans herself was not participating in these challenges. She admitted that "No one had ever read my writing before. Those posts are read and commented on by over 2000 people. That terrified me."

But in 2020, when her father went missing for 11 days, Evans turned to her writing. "It was all over the news. But no one in my life knew what was going



on. I went to work and put on a smile, while inside I was petrified." It was her writing that offered her some solace. "When I finally told my husband that I wanted to write my story, he said, if for nothing else, write for therapy."

When the pandemic hit, the members of EyeCU had to make a decision—wait it out or pivot to online. The move toward hosting multiple groups in virtual spaces has been monumental. Readers from everywhere enrich the discussion.

Evans joined an online writing course led by Victoria Christopher Murray. A *New York Times* bestselling author with over 30 titles, six of which have been made into *Lifetime* movies, Murray holds a certain sway. "When such an accomplished author tells you, 'girl you got to write your own book,' I kind of had to listen," shared Evans. "She stayed on the phone with me for over three hours, encouraging me to write. So, I put my head down and I wrote." A year later Evans sent a single page to Murray with the words, "The End." "I don't think she knew I was serious about finishing." Murray instructed Evans, "At next year's conference, come prepared."

When the pandemic hit, the members of EyeCU had to make a decision—wait it out or pivot to online. The move toward hosting multiple groups in virtual spaces has been monumental. Readers from everywhere enrich the discussion.

At the National Book Club conference the following year, Evans came prepared. She printed out bookmark announcements, posted a promotional reel, hosted a book release party, and she sent advance review copies to over 20 reviewers to be sure that the book would have a notable reception the day that it dropped. “I had been doing this for other authors, so I knew what was needed.” She even got a nice blurb from Victoria Christopher Murray: “*Dead to Me*, Ebony Evans’ debut novel is an emotional journey of love, loss, healing, and self-discovery. This intimate story will captivate you from the first page to the last. A page-turner that is hard to put down!” The promotions paid off. *Dead To Me* sold 300 copies in the first three days.

The host of this year’s National Book Club convention, singer Kem, has picked Evans to walk the red carpet. That is a distinction that rarely goes to a first-time author. “To be one of those authors and to walk the red carpet with Kem! I am just beside myself,” gushed Evans.

Dead to Me is certainly inspired by real life, but the fictional novel does take liberties. She added characters for comic relief and changed names to honor friends and family in unique ways. She includes the speech her husband shared at her father’s funeral almost verbatim. “My husband is a joker. He even proposed doing a stand-up comedy show. At the funeral, everyone was laughing, their spirits lifted. There was no more crying when he was up there. I asked him what was that joke you told? He said, ‘That wasn’t a joke; it was a true story of your dad.’ I needed to hear that again. So, that’s in the book.” Evans has been married to her soulmate Michael since 2000, and together they have one daughter, Essence, who shines in her own light as an accomplished swimmer and actor.

I know Ebony Evans as the most amazing customer service specialist where I shop. I asked her when she might leave her management job behind now that she is experiencing such success as a writer. She laughed it off. “I am not going anywhere. I love my job. It suits me.” She lauds her employer for allowing her to contribute her most natural gifts and shine in her role overseeing charitable giving. And her co-workers agree. Evans is clearly loved by her colleagues.

Her father’s mysterious disappearance and death could not have been easy, and it was certainly not easy to share the story. “I was starting to doubt this myself, thinking you’re too old to release a book, you’re not a real writer,” she admitted. But now she coaches others. “Don’t talk yourself out of doing your things ‘cause life is short. With my daughter in mind, I wanted to let her know that there are no barriers in life, unless you create them. I feel good that I was able to do this and stand in the faith that we all have greatness to share.”



“I was starting to doubt this myself, thinking you’re too old to release a book, you’re not a real writer... Don’t talk yourself out of doing your things ‘cause life is short. With my daughter in mind, I wanted to let her know that there are no barriers in life, unless you create them. I feel good that I was able to do this and stand in the faith that we all have greatness to share.”

—Ebony Evans

HELP WANTED

Calendar Editor for *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*

we are looking for the right person to be our Calendar Editor and also the manager of our Ann Arbor Holistic website

The Calendar Editor is responsible for entering free calendar listings and biographies of practitioners for *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*, which is published three times yearly in January, May, and September. So, this is a very part-time job, as the Calendar is compiled in a two-week period, just three times a year.

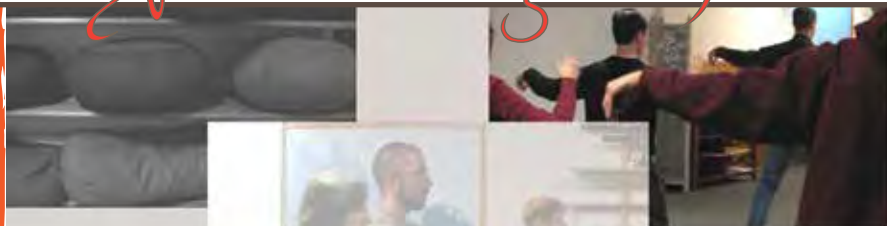
We receive 200+ listings of events, workshops, and classes per issue. An applicant must have an excellent handle on grammar, spelling, Google Forms and Sheets, Microsoft Word, proof reading skills, and be able to type with speed and accuracy. You must also be familiar with working in Wordpress. You must be able to work under pressure three times a year. The job of the Calendar Editor will take between 28-40 hours per issue, depending on the number of entries.

The Ann Arbor Holistic Website Manager maintains and updates the free listings on the website, adds new ones, and works to stimulate interest in the website. This job takes two hours a week.

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Kindred Conversations

continued...

Chris Huang creates with colored pencil and ink on wood and is inspired by the beauty in nature. You can see more of his work at yellowlotusdesigns.com.

Sometimes high art isn't so highbrow. The colorful collage-styled fine art pieces that lined the long gallery walls at Matthaei Botanical gallery this past summer are not comic, but they were inspired from comic books. Artist Chris Huang of Yellow Lotus Designs creates his colored pencil and ink artwork on wood from the inspiration of nature. He credits the way each piece fills the full frame as a nod to his lifelong love of graphic novels. "Someone once called it "high-folk art" and I kind of liked it as a description," said Huang. Each panel is a whole story that uses every inch to empower a complete expression. The bright and beguiling compositions are complex with many points of interest. Each piece takes time to really view all the elements. Central in his work are a fox, a Luna moth, and Sandhill cranes. Nature is the star here. Surrounded by fanciful foliage and curly que clouds, sun, stars, and stones—these pieces are carefully crafted out to the very edge.

As a kid Chris Huang's talents were evident, "I was drawing dinosaurs and comic book characters early. The interest went dormant during high school but was re-stoked from a drawing class while attending U of M. " School and travel both impacted his artistic aesthetic. "The Mexican muralists and the Native American and other Indigenous artists with their often- bold color choices and patterns struck a chord with me while living in the American Southwest." The overarching element is apparent in each piece as well. "Since art is a reflection of oneself, being of Chinese descent, naturally the most prominent influence is an Asian style that runs throughout all of the work."

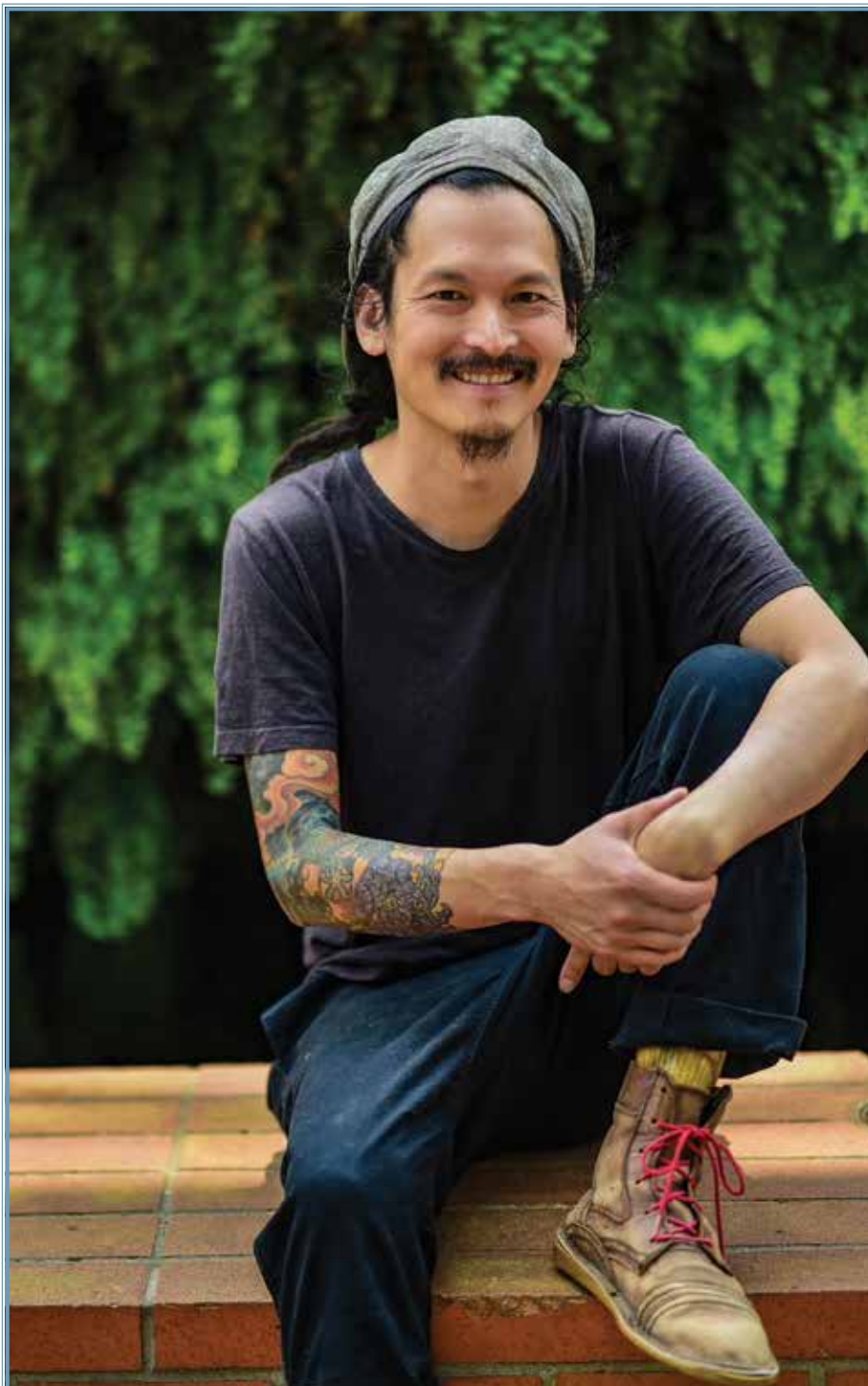
While living in Boulder, Colorado after college, this current style of artistry was established when a woodworker offered free wood panels to the community of artists. Quickly he realized the choice of surface was ideal for his color pencil applications. "First out of necessity, but it became a synergistic material right away, and it has come to really define the aesthetic of my pieces," Huang said. The match was made.

"My inspirations are varied, spanning several genres and cultures from comic books to stained glass of Frank Lloyd Wright, the Austrian painters Klimt, Schiele, Hundertwasser, and psychedelic rock poster art," Huang explained. He is happy to be able to pair his passion with purpose to help charitable organizations. His work benefits the environmental organizations such as Frack Free Colorado, Cornucopia Institute, and Conscious Alliance. Conscious Alliance commissioned a poster to raise funds for food relief at the Pine Ridge Reservations. Conscious Alliance is a non-profit hunger relief organization that unifies bands, brands, artists, and fans to collectively support communities in crisis. "Grab a poster—Feed a family" is their tagline. Huang's art has been

an active part of this brilliant pairing for years. "Chris cares deeply about the community. He uses his art to connect and giveback so that all may thrive. We are beyond lucky to have him as part of our Alliance," said Justin Levy, Executive Director of Conscious Alliance, when I inquired.

For over 20 years he has created artwork for people of all walks of life. "I pride myself on my ability to share work regardless of financial situations. It is important to me that my art is accessible." On his website his artwork is available as original or commissioned fine art pieces, prints, posters, tee-shirts, greeting cards, or on an intricate wooden puzzle to purchase at all price points. In Boulder, Colorado his work is available for all to view as an outdoor mural, commissioned as part of the city's Creative Neighborhood Murals project.

Huang was chosen as a city-approved artist before he recruited his dear friends to apply for this triple win. Huang is proud to share, "It remains some of my most meaningful work to have had the opportunity to create large murals for all to see, supported by the city, on the homes of loved ones. That is very significant for me."



Artist Chris Huang of Yellow Lotus Designs creates his colored pencil and ink artwork on wood from the inspiration of nature. He credits the way each piece fills the full frame as a nod to his lifelong love of graphic novels.

While living in Boulder, Colorado after college, this current style of artistry was established when a woodworker offered free wood panels to the community of artists. Quickly he realized the choice of surface was ideal for his color pencil applications.

His motivation is to show his work where people will appreciate it. "I simply haven't ventured where I wasn't welcomed or pursued leads that didn't appear before me. I've allowed myself to be guided more by intuition and accepting invitations through mutual acquaintances and friendships, rather than seeking a gallery based on prestige or perceived esteem." His first gallery show was 20 years ago here in Ann Arbor at Gypsy Cafe, where the current People's Food Co-Op's Cafe Verde is now. "I was in my early 20's just learning to express myself and I was able to cobble together enough finished work to create an exhibition." The early accolades and recognition were a huge force to ignite his career. "When I made my first ever sale it was so exhilarating for me. I can't stress enough how much coming up in the Ann Arbor community uplifted me in those days and what a nurturing community it was and remains. Ann Arbor really is the jewel of the Midwest," Huang gushed.

He moved West after graduating from the University of Michigan, living in Tucson, Arizona and Boulder, Colorado, but returned with his wife Jesse and kids Soté and Fractal in 2021. Soon after he was invited to show his work along with

the artwork of Anne Erlewine at Barry Lonik's private barn venue in Dexter. "I was honored to have Chris' work hang in my barn during several concerts in the summer of 2021," Barry Lonik said. "His combination of fanciful landscapes and mandalas with animal figures sold quite a lot that weekend and gifted me with a set of note cards that I have a hard time giving away!"

Fifteen pieces enhanced the barn walls behind the performing bands. "It went really great. I ended up selling work, and I felt so well received after just arriving here. It made me feel really welcomed," Huang said. "Artwork rarely doesn't enhance an experience, so why not include it?" When *Canvas Rebel* magazine asked Huang how we can benefit the arts and artists, "Buy more art. It's really that simple," was his response. "Try to showcase art into events like music, film, poetry, literary, food, yoga, and sports events. Art pairs well with everything."

The life of an artist is not a nine to five, but Chris Huang does spend hours each day making art. It is his job, and he approaches it with diligence. "It does require my attention, but it is not a struggle to want to work." Applying colored pencil in his intricate technique for four or five hours at a stretch is slow work but he is not in a hurry. The meditative practice is essential to the outcome. "I can't even express how grateful I am that I am able to do this work. Every day that I get to do it is a blessing, it feeds my soul." And that joy is evident in the glowing showings.

Animals are an important part of Huang's connection to the conversation. In the center of one piece, a Red Winged Blackbird has his beak open to evoke a very present summer sound that Huang missed one long winter. And the large Luna Moth also honors the summer times spent exploring Pickerel Lake's trails. "It was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen. So surreal, so big. Big as your hand." He is devoted to the local flora and fauna to connect his current art to his current place and community. Throughout his body of work he draws radiant energy lines from his subjects toward the heavens. He told me, "Just about all the pieces are trying to convey that same message. In a lot of ways I feel like I am creating the same drawing over and over again." All are different and unique, but all may amplify the meaning. "That is often an animal that is at peace, composed, balanced with its surroundings, effortlessly connected with the cosmos," he mused. I can't really think of a more important message. From comic books to cosmic connections, Chris Huang's work takes on true import, in a way we can receive with ease and beauty. "There is enough ugliness in the world. Right?" He asks. His art is his response. "We need a little respite. I am trying to remind myself of the hope, of our potential."



"There is enough ugliness in the world. Right? We need a little respite. I am trying to remind myself of the hope, of our potential."

—Chris Huang

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Out of My COMFORT ZONE

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal asked a number of leaders in southeastern Michigan's conscious living community to reflect upon times in their lives that they've left their comfort zones to venture out in new ways. In the distant past or much more recently, we asked, what did you do, what inspired you, did it change you, inside or outside, big or little? Did you attend a new class, take an adventurous trip, go skydiving, stretch beyond a long entrenched boundary, start a new relationship, or end an old one, take a leap, retire, join the Peace Corps, go on a night trek in the wilderness, or just do something way out of the ordinary?

Answering the Call to Rest

Ordained Priestess, Educator, Consultant and Social Impact Entrepreneur, Mara Evenstar, MTP, M.Ed., holds a Master in Transpersonal Psychology with specialization in spiritual psychology as well as organizational development. Her master's degree in education focuses on leadership and social transformation. A certified teacher of Realization Process and a Reiki Master Teacher, Mara has been teaching transformational classes and workshops for over twenty years. She is co-owner of Evenstar's Chalice, Director of Evenstar Institute, Board Member of The Intentional Living Collective and co-founder of Sophia Unfolds—all organizations created to support our conscious evolution individually and collectively. You can write to Mara at Mara@EvenstarsChalice.com.

By Mara Evenstar • Photos by Edda Pacifico

At the beginning of this year, I did what many of us do when preparing for another trip around the sun. I set about visioning, but also taking real stock and looking at the reality of the health of my enterprises, my finances, and my body. My approach to the known challenges, I decided, was to bring in freshness of perspective, make some pivots, and then put my head down and work it. My retail business and its educational programming are currently at a critical juncture, and they really needed my undivided attention and energy. Therefore, plans for personal development (i.e. retreats, trainings, coaching), travel, or casual socializing were put on hold. I felt good about this plan. I love my work. I want my business to thrive, and I needed a big turnaround in terms of finances. So, I grabbed my oar. However, a naughty word kept creeping into my thoughts...*Sabbatical*.*



I want my business to thrive, and I needed a big turnaround in terms of finances. So, I grabbed my oar. However, a naughty word kept creeping into my thoughts...*Sabbatical*.

In early February, an email invitation hit my inbox from an organization that teaches and practices sacred temple arts. It is a home for modern Priestesses like me, that provides sisterhood and support. (Claiming for myself the title of "Priestess" would be a whole other article about living outside of my comfort zone!) For several years now, with the exception of the Covid years, one of the programs of this group has been an annual retreat called "Avalon Remembered," which takes place in Glastonbury, UK. Each year this invitation comes, I think it sounds like a lovely, enriching experience for those going. I didn't hold any serious thoughts about doing it myself. However, this year when the email arrived, I opened it and found myself crying. "Uh oh," I thought to myself, this feels a little bit dangerous, like I might want to do this. I thought, perhaps I'm just a little emotional today and was easily moved. There was a Q&A call later that week, so I decided to attend if I could and see if I still felt strongly about it. Five minutes into the call, I was pushing the application button. The strength of my somatic response surprised me. My tears were flowing, I had full body chills, and I knew that I was being called. I had to *trust* in a big way. Apparently, what I think tending to my business looks like, and what the Universe thinks tending to my business looks like, are very different things.

Other unexpected invitations began coming my way. Would you like to co-present at a conference? Yes. Would you like to attend the Parliament of World Religions? Yes. Would you like to submit a proposal for an international



Mara Evenstar

Transformative Learning conference—you know, like, go to Italy? Maybe. But what happens to my own garden as I go bouncing around visiting the gardens of others? Can I really trust that *not* working in my business, and tending to my own needs and wants, is actually working on my business? Rationally, I know that in order to do these new things *and* build in rest—I have to hand off or put parts of my business to rest—knowing that doing so may mean loss of traction and potentially sunseting.

Earlier this spring, I facilitated an online class called "Intuitive Improv & Collective Wisdom." Each week we used a random process for uncovering the topic for the evening. We then deepened into the topic with activities meant to create space for wisdom to come through. On the first evening, our topic became "Answering the Call." From a depth psychology perspective, answering the call is often a call to action, a call to heroism, a call into High Service. It calls

for us to leave our comfort zone, to leave our home, and courageously (or fearfully) step into the unknown. Some of the wisdom that emerged that evening was in the form of this question: *What if “the call” is to be still, to be quiet, to listen?* This shouldn’t be a radical question...but in our culture which values productivity, which values having all the answers, which values heroic independence—well, it is radical.

Each year this invitation comes, I think it sounds like a lovely, enriching experience for those going. I didn’t hold any serious thoughts about doing it myself. However, this year when the email arrived, I opened it and found myself crying.



Ambitious, Independent, go-getter: These are prized qualities in mainstream American culture. And although the vocabulary is different, I feel the same underlying sentiment in the more altruistic narratives of the body/mind/spirit industry. Conventional wisdom tells us that discomfort is where the growth happens. For those of us whose “business” it is to support growth, development, and transformation—we also know that this can become a perpetual self-induced discomfort that doesn’t necessarily serve growth. It can, however, feed our shadows of perfectionism. It feeds our demons of “not enough-ness.” And then self-development becomes the next hustle. What if the comfort, and the quiet, are what’s truly needed for my growth? What if the growth is sometimes not in the stretch, but in the surrender?



I know that this is a cultural battle, a paradigm battle. I also know that de-programming my own mind and behavior is a critical component of transforming this for myself. It is difficult to break the spell of a paradigm while existing within it. Here in this paradigm, where action, production, acquiring, and dominion are God, it can be a radical act of love to value stopping, resting, and reciprocating the love and care we are all craving. Certainly, the pandemic made our interconnectedness more apparent. It also made it more apparent how out of balance our daily lives had become.

As I amble through the writing of this piece, I begin to hone-in to the heart of the matter. Regardless of the circumstances—whether they be self-created and personal, or part of a larger collective situation, I personally struggle with creating space and time for deep rest or an extended break. Over the years, and especially since empty-nesting and leaving corporate work, I have been able to create more of a balance in my day-to-day life. I feel way less guilty about naps. I leave a little space in my weekly schedule for doing nothing. And this last year, I’ve started setting aside one day of month as my “sabbath.” But what feels really hard, and sometimes downright impossible, is letting go and taking deep



rest, a real time-out. I think my fear of potential negative consequences tends to override my need and desire for such space. Rest is not rest if I am internally conflicted about whether my rest is appropriate. Prioritizing deep rest or even a “working” sabbatical is definitely out of my comfort zone.

Local healer and colleague, Jess Kilbourn, relayed to me recently that she is becoming a “student of rest.” I loved how softly that landed on my body. And I loved how that concept played in my mind. Ah yes, rest needs to be learned not earned. Now learning, that’s in my comfort zone.

*p.s. I look forward to colleague Colleen Newvine’s upcoming book on sabbaticals. I think her exploration of this topic is what encouraged some of my naughty thoughts.

What if “the call” is to be still, to be quiet, to listen? This shouldn’t be a radical question...but in our culture which values productivity, which values having all the answers, which values heroic independence—well, it is radical.



Out of My COMFORT ZONE

SOMETIMES I FALL: THE DISCOMFORT OF ASKING

Stefanie Cohen MA, RSME/RSMT has spent decades as a theater-maker, movement teacher, somatic practitioner, improvising dancer, curator, and a fine arts based performance artist. She is a registered professional member of the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association. Cohen delights in the integration of bodily awareness, contemplative practice, spiritual mystery, and creative process. Cohen resides in Detroit. Learn more at somastories.net.

By Stefanie Cohen

In response to your kind inquiry, 'Would you be interested in writing?', right off the bat, I've been transported a few miles, to the outskirts of the town of Discomfort. I stare at its welcome sign. *Founded: at the beginning of human time. Population: countless.*

I will hazard a guess that I'm not the first, nor last practitioner, in the community who briefly balks at first, if only inwardly, at the prospect of writing this column. Especially those of us who serve as healing artists, therapists, and teachers who daily determine how transparently to share the shaky terrain we often navigate in our own lives. The hard-won insights and the on-going struggles.

Stepping further off of the curb into the street bordering Discomfortville, I accept your invitation and its accompanying deadline, without, quite honestly, having any idea of what I'd write about. Without having figured it all out. Not knowing what it is that might possibly write itself over the course of the month.

Of course, the irony of my squeamishness at not knowing is not lost on me. The majority of my three decades-long dance/movement career has been as an improviser.

OF COURSE, THE IRONY OF MY SQUEAMISHNESS AT NOT
KNOWING IS NOT LOST ON ME.



In improvised performance, and as an interdisciplinary artist, I regularly navigate the unknowns that can, and *should*, nudge me out of comfort zones. Making performance or installation work alone, or with my longtime collaborator and life partner Corey, if we already knew what the work was going to look like, what it was going to mean, what it was going to say—even the specific medium through which it would emerge, we simply wouldn't need to make it. The questions it poses would already have been answered. In some way, it would already exist in the world, if only in our sketchbooks, our bodies, and/or our minds.

As a somatic therapist, I regularly walk with people to their doors of discomfort. I hold their hands as they peer into, feel into, with compassion and curiosity, what their bodies contain—the sensations, the exquisite, surprising, and unique personal images. The places so tender as to have been expertly bandaged and tucked far away. The resilience, the pleasures, and the joy.



Stefanie Cohen

Not knowing, however, is up there among the universally lesser-tolerated experiences.

Other notable edges of comfort I've negotiated include some amount of physical risk.

As a contact improvisation dancer (a kind of an art-sport born 50 years ago, out of a marriage of post-modern dance and martial arts), I often launch my body into space, into physical contact with other moving bodies. Sometimes I perch high upon their shoulders; sometimes I land gracefully and softly onto the ground. Sometimes I fall. Over the decades of dancing, though I have practiced falling countless times, I still freeze up there at times—making the falls, sadly, infinitely klutzy.

Showing something artistically raw or unfinished creates a *metaphoric nakedness*.

During a several-years-in-the-making performance art piece Corey and I have created about religion and spirituality, I sing along with the album of John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. I sing the words of the poem he plays on his saxophone. Among them:

"God breathes through us so completely...so gently we hardly feel it... yet, it is our everything.

Thank you, God.

ELATION—ELEGANCE—EXALTATION—All from God.

Thank you, God. Amen."

I rub against so many edges of discomfort, here. It feels presumptuous to sing his words. I have rarely *used* the word God, myself, much less sung it. I am very close to the audience, which I know includes colleagues and friends who are professional singers. My voice is not a saxophone. Much of the music is well out of my range. I'm not trying to sing well—but is it clear that I could if I wished? Could I? My voice cracks here and there....

Literal nakedness:

I worked for years on and off as a figure model. Though I certainly harbor some self-consciousness of my body, I don't let that stop me from displaying it in this way. Curiously, I discover that I'm more uncomfortable *dressing* in front of others than in undressing.

And though there are a couple of notable exceptions along the way, in the behavior I experience, the vast majority of the time I am treated with respect, admiration, and gratitude by the artists for whom I pose.

Finally, also with regard to body—navigating the very edge of intense physical discomfort—my most favorite, most triumphant, most *deeply* embodied example is from a moment in the birthing of my daughter:

Throughout most of the perhaps six-hour labor (to my best recollection), I simply breathed and gently moved my body. Not having known anything about the method of HypnoBirthing®, which I had been practicing, my doula later shared her fascination by my seeming serenity and the lack of my need for her assistance.



SHOWING SOMETHING ARTISTICALLY RAW OR UNFINISHED
CREATES A *METAPHORIC NAKEDNESS*.

At some point, most likely in the throes of the transition stage of labor, as my cervix dilated to its largest, I suddenly feel an impulse to squat down. Equally quickly, I acknowledge inwardly that squatting will make the sensation more intense, and, *sensibly*, to my mind, I back away from it. A moment later, I hear myself think “*Yes. That’s exactly what will happen. And it’s supposed to.*” Finally, having allowed myself the option to move away from the discomfort, I am free to choose to lean into it—fiercely, bravely, and with conviction.

Sometime not long after, with support from my midwife, doula, and husband, and from my baby, herself, I push my daughter out in to the awaiting world.

Each of these somewhat heightened examples, however edgy, does not confront me on an on-going basis as much as the insidious, inescapable, life-long imperative of *asking*. The anticipation of asking sometimes speeds my heart, clamps my jaw closed as though to halt the inadvertent escape of the words. It hangs the “Closed. Come again tomorrow sign,” outside my viscera, diverting blood to my limbs in case my nervous system says it’s time to run.

Asking for help.

Asking to help...especially when this necessitates speaking about some kind of elephant in the room.

Asking colleagues, clients, and students for referrals to my practice.

Asking people to attend workshops, performances, parties....

Asking people to participate in art—much of Corey’s and my work is participatory.

Asking myself what I want.

Asking to change my mind.

Asking, instead of second-guessing.

Asking, instead of expecting, and feeling disappointment later.

Asking for forgiveness.

Asking to be permitted to forgive.

Asking to be paid what my work is actually worth. Asking for rates that sit just outside what initially feels comfortable to request—amounts of money that I would currently have difficulty paying, myself. In so doing, because I offer an economic justice scale, I ask people to honestly evaluate their means and to pay at the top of the scale as they are able.

Asking for support while going through a crisis.

In the not-too-distant past, my body, spirit, emotions, and nervous system worn bare from the first year and a half of the pandemic, I found that I was unable to work. Unable to cook. Unable to think, feel, or cry at times, which is frighteningly unlike me. It took me a while to reach out beyond the couple of closest friends—the ones I have no choice but to lean upon—to a larger community of support. Some people, even, that I hadn’t known for long. When I did so, by email, first acknowledging my awkwardness in asking, I then laid out my requests. I asked for a few meals a week for me and my family; for bodywork, healing, and nervous system support from those who provide it; for prayers for gentle clarity, fortitude, and focus; and for visits, and patience if I found it hard to schedule them.

Though this could, I believe, be part of a *much* longer article about the inheritance of ancestral burdens, I’ll at least name that the real out-of-comfort

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zone is asking for help when there's *no* crisis. Asking for support, instead of holding on by my fingernails until I'm no longer able. Similarly, *not* asking for help for fear that what I might experience as crisis pales in comparison to others. In the Olympics of suffering, of need, my name could not possibly be as high on the scoreboard.

People, I believe, truly love to help—we appreciate being entrusted with another's request for assistance. We appreciate the opportunity to participate. To extend care. And we both love and need, *really*, to have modeled the permission to ask, ourselves.

My dear friend's paycheck is a little short. Her daughter's prom dress needs picking up *tomorrow*—could I loan her the money? I Cash App her within 30 seconds of seeing her text.

Someone in the community is sick, grieving, recovering from surgery, tending a new baby—will I sign on for the Meal Train? With relish, I launch into action, cooking and delivering the meals.

Our friends need to get to couple's therapy—can we stay with their kids for the evening? Without question, we're there, and ready to play.

In my intense hour of need, having reached out to my community, having given them an opportunity to help, they come through, well beyond my wildest dreams. They bring beautiful, delicious food. They send me songs and poetry. They massage my body, tend my energy, and sit and walk with me. They tuck a little money into their meal deliveries. And they hold a loving, confident vision of me until I am again able to hold it for myself.

Each time I ask, each time I surrender a need to do something on my own, I help to illuminate and reinforce the true essence of community. I am an experiential learner, by nature. In an email thanking those who had answered my calls for help, I shared: "I'm perhaps only just now starting to understand that resilience is not about the strength in bracing against adversity... but the capacity to lean back into nets of interwoven support."

Many thanks, again, *Crazy Wisdom*. Fully welcomed to this town of *Discomfort*, I'm so glad to have found it so warm and inviting. I'll no doubt come visit again, soon.

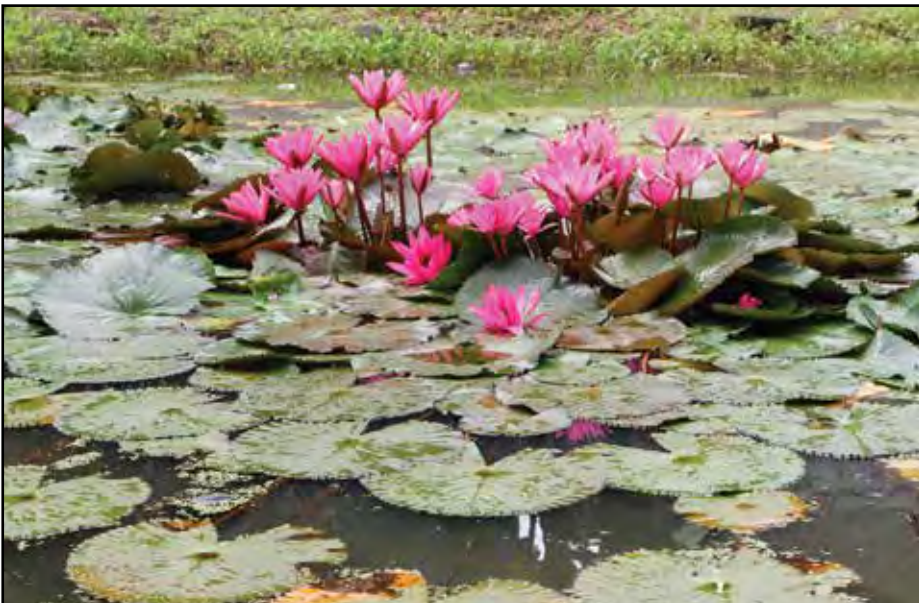


A Walk in North Bay Park in Ypsilanti



By Frank Vandervort

I stood near the entrance to a boardwalk watching an egret do very little. It was nearly motionless amid a cluster of pond lilies that covered the water's surface. Its shape—long, slender neck, bulbous body—reminded me of the glass beakers we used to mix potions in high school chemistry, its white plumage radiant in the afternoon sun. Between me, it, and a family of mallards, two larger birds stood on a log while a smaller one paddled about in the water. Just below me a Coors Light can and an emptied tin that once probably held peas, green beans, or fruit cocktail were imbedded in the mud. Eventually, the egret stretched out its neck and plucked some morsel from the brackish water with its yellow-orange beak. I took that as a reason to move along.



It was nearly motionless amid a cluster of pond lilies that covered the water's surface. Its shape—long, slender neck, bulbous body—reminded me of the glass beakers we used to mix potions in high school chemistry, its white plumage radiant in the afternoon sun.

I had a stack of papers to grade on my desk and I had planned to mow the lawn. But the morning had been encased in a thick fog. Although it had burned off and the afternoon had grown sunny and warm, my mood was still as gray as the morning had been. The last thing I felt like doing was pushing papers or a mower back and forth. Besides, I rationalized, I can shuffle papers later, and the grass was still soaking wet. So it was that I snuck away for a couple hours on a beautiful Sunday afternoon a few days before the autumnal equinox for a walk in a local park. North Bay is shoehorned between Interstate 94 to its north and Eastern Michigan University's hotel conference center and golf course to its south. Despite its small size and compromised nature—polluted, littered, wedged into a less than ideal setting—the park provides an oasis, an escape in which to seek solace, draw sustenance, enjoy time with family, and find community. Its presence helps me, and others, to build resilience against the demands of everyday lives that are over-busy and sometimes overwhelming.

The entrance of the wooden walkway is lined with sedges, cattails, marsh grasses, and non-native Phragmites that swayed in the breeze—many a good three feet above my head.

The entryway to North Bay is off Huron Road, a five-lane thoroughfare that teems with traffic. Just across from the park's entrance, a strip mall features one of those chain chicken wing joints and a Gold's Gym. The namesake of the park is a manmade inlet of Ford Lake, itself created in the 1930s when the Huron River was dammed to provide electric power for the Ford plant (which is no longer operational) that sits just the other side of the expressway.

The boardwalk stretched for a couple hundred yards along the southern edge of the bay, just an errant golf swing from the EMU facility. The entrance of the wooden walkway is lined with sedges, cattails, marsh grasses, and non-native Phragmites that swayed in the breeze—many a good three feet above my head. The Joe Pye weed had passed its prime as the seasons changed.

Back the way I'd come, the egret still stood motionless across the bay. Out on the lake, there were at least a dozen swans as well as ducks, geese, and cormorants. After I climbed down, I sat for a time on a bench in the shade of a small linden tree and watched, fascinated, as a cormorant repeatedly dove for its lunch.

A short distance along the boardwalk, on the swooping branches of a huge willow tree, sat a swan's nest constructed of small pieces of dried wood. Empty except for a few white feathers, in the spring a large, elegant mother could be found here, her body tucked tightly into the nest's confines. According to The Swan Sanctuary website, a swan will lay up to ten eggs with one being laid every 12 to 24 hours after the nest has been constructed. The eggs hatch in about 42 days. Swan cygnets are vulnerable to a host of predators, so the ten eggs the swan lays do not typically result in ten cygnets. Near the nest, two female wood ducks sat on the muddy bank. As I stood taking this in, an elderly couple walked toward me. The man pointed to where another wood duck floated in the mucky water and murmured something into the woman's ear. We smile and nod in acknowledgement as they walk past.

A half-dozen mallards nibbled at the duck weed that covered a large area of the water's surface. Their rapid-fire browsing sounded like a man slurping his soup. Many of these ducks were tiny balls of fluff back in the spring. Now they were preparing for their first migration south. They swam near and around a plastic grocery bag while a Styrofoam take out container floated in the stagnant water nearby. As I watched and listened to the ducks, I heard a sharp metallic sound. A moment later, a golf ball crashed through the foliage lining the shore. I didn't see where it landed. Then, an electric golf cart whirred to a stop on the embankment, and a man wearing a shirt the color of lime sherbet clamored out and began searching the bushes.

Despite its limitations as an escape into nature, walking there, seeing the animals go about their daily business of survival in an ever more challenging environment, never fails to lighten my mood and lift my spirits.

Further on a turtle the size of a holiday serving platter swam with only its head above the waterline near a plastic iced tea jug with the likeness of the golfer Arnold Palmer on its label. The afternoon sun had grown hot and sweat trickled down my back. A man speed-walked past, earbuds in place, the wire leading to his phone swung wildly in front of him. A young couple pushed a baby stroller. A row of small turtles sunned themselves on a log.

Overhead, a dozen gulls screeched, as they rode on the afternoon breeze. Thousands of feet above them, a jet lifting off from Metro Airport roared, a contrail unfurling behind. Below, a handful of small carp weaved around the bottom, stirring up roiling clouds of mud. A pond lily bloomed on the water's motionless surface, its spiky white petals reaching to the sun.

There is a lookout tower, and I climbed up. Back the way I'd come, the egret still stood motionless across the bay. Out on the lake, there were at least a dozen swans as well as ducks, geese, and cormorants. After I climbed down, I sat for a time on a bench in the shade of a small linden tree and watched, fascinated, as a cormorant repeatedly dove for its lunch. As I did, a friendly Irish Setter snuffled up to me. He gave me a good once over and took a few pets as I chatted with his human companion, then he tore off after a mallard that had been sitting in the grass nearby. The duck splashed into the water.

Back along the path, I hunkered down to look at clumps of buttercups growing at the water's edge. The water at the shoreline was streaked with a purplish, oily substance that is surrounded by a patch of green slime. Out further in the water, a fish jumped near a discarded tire.

Back along the path, I hunkered down to look at clumps of buttercups growing at the water's edge. The water at the shoreline was streaked with a purplish, oily substance that is surrounded by a patch of green slime. Out further in the water, a fish jumped near a discarded tire.

Along the causeway, three boys fished from a bridge. Two of the boys were maybe 11 or 12. One of them lectured a younger boy. "Like this," he says with an air of impatience, as he deftly threaded a worm onto a hook. The smaller boy and I made eye contact. A charming if embarrassed smile spreads across his face. I can relate. I, too, have an older brother who could be a pedant at that age.

Across the bridge, a family is gathered around a picnic table. A clump of balloons floated above attached to the table by a ribbon. One balloon was emblazoned with "Happy Birthday." At the next picnic table, another family whiles away the afternoon. The table was piled with food and delicious smells wafted from a small, portable grill. The women wore hijabs; a young man (the grill master?) sat on a lawn chair taking pulls from a hookah pipe, fingers of smoke curling around and above his head as small children chased each other

and giggled. A lesbian couple, one heavily tattooed, walked a small dog. On the far side of the park, the roar of cars and trucks pounding over the bridge that spans the Huron drowned out birdsong.

Time had passed on. So, I headed along the twisting path for my car reflecting on my walk and what I'd seen. I am always awed by the amount and variety of wildlife in North Bay. Despite its limitations as an escape into nature, walking there, seeing the animals go about their daily business of survival in an ever more challenging environment, never fails to lighten my mood and lift my spirits. The park's human vibrancy also reassures. Seeing my neighbors relaxing and enjoying themselves in this communal space gives me hope for our species amid our difficult times. And that day was no different. When I arrived back home, rejuvenated, I attended to that pile of student papers. The lawn, however, I left for another day.



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Now That Was a Great Funeral

By Marie Duquette

Lisa's funeral was three years, almost to the day, from when she was first diagnosed with stage four colon cancer on March 17, 2020. She was my friend, my colleague, a woman I admired, respected, loved. From the day she was diagnosed, she wrote daily in her Caring Bridge online journal. Throughout the pandemic, her chemo, and the unmentionable discomfort she endured, Lisa wrote. She told us the ugly truth of her experience and the beautiful hope and moments of joy that met her on her journey through life to death. Hundreds of people, including myself, regularly read her updates, even as we prayed, sent gifts, wrote letters, and signed up to send dinner to Lisa, her husband, and her four young children. Because all we could do some days was to be her witness, she wrote, and we read.

That is until the day when her journal entry began, "This is Lisa's husband writing..."

Lisa's funeral was two states and 221 miles away. It was the farthest I had driven alone since the pandemic began. It was my first time entering a church since I resigned from my pastoral duties. I had left the congregation only a month before, which had me grieving a different kind of loss.



Together, we heard remembrances from five people, beginning with her mother. The remembrances were well-crafted. The words these five people spoke helped us not just remember, but understand more deeply, the details of who she was. The words made us laugh. They made us cry. They made us hold the speaker in a communal embrace of support.

the speaker in a communal embrace of support. When they faltered, or needed water, or needed...a minute...love tempered the pause.

I have been a pastor for twenty years. I have served four churches, in three different states. I also worked for a funeral home in Columbus, Ohio as their on-call pastor for those who wanted clergy but did not have a church they called

I carried to that funeral guilt for not seeing Lisa in person after she was diagnosed. I carried a commitment to make the drive and show up for her and her family despite my desire not to go. I carried the familiar dread that everyone who has ever attended a funeral, packs for the occasion.

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church was packed. Easily a thousand people or more attended; many standing for the entire two-hour service. Together, we heard remembrances from five people, beginning with her mother. The remembrances were well-crafted. The words these five people spoke helped us not just remember, but understand more deeply, the details of who she was. The words made us laugh. They made us cry. They made us hold



Ellen Craine

JD, LMSW-Clinical
& Macro, ACSW, INHC

Social Work Ethics
Consultant,
Grief Expert,
and Trainer

#1 International Best Selling Author
ellen@crainecounseling.com • (248) 539-3850



At the other extreme, is this one from those not-yet-dead:

"I've already paid for everything and set everything up. The flowers, the hymns, even what I want to wear."

These positions do something that I doubt the one who emphatically says them understands:

By saying you don't want a funeral, or, by planning everything that will happen when you die to the last detail, *you are depriving the people you love from the healing that is gained by having a funeral. You are compounding their grief.*

In lieu of a funeral, I've also heard, "We'll have a celebration of life...later." That celebration may or may not actually happen. But the "later" part dismisses the lived wisdom that having a funeral close to the death is *the most* helpful thing for those who are plunged into grief when their loved one dies. Even as they dread it. Funerals and memorial services facilitate healing in ways that nothing else can.

A funeral (with a body) or a memorial service (with an urn):

- Enables the friends and family of the one who has died to see, in a memorable way, that they are not alone in their grief. Having an old friend show up, having come a long way to be with you, is an experience of love unlike others. Years later, when you remember your grief at that time, one of the things you will remember is when they walked in the door, and you first saw them.
- Allows those who grieve a unique opportunity to get to know the one who has died in a fuller way. When my own father died, I heard stories about his life that I never knew. How his brothers held open the doors at St. Catherine's so that he could ride his motorcycle down the hall and past the front office on his way to enlist in the Air Force. How he helped refugee families, putting himself at risk. The things we hear and see at a funeral paint a picture of the one who has died in a way we may have never seen while they lived.
- Gives purpose to those who are grieving. Fresh grief creates a compulsion to *do something*-- making calls, preparing food, writing an obituary, a eulogy, are actions that help the bereaved process their loss. When there is no need for these actions, grief tends to linger even *longer* and make those in the deepest mourning feel isolated.
- Gives those who live far away a prompt to respond to the loss. Flowers, charitable contributions, and sympathy cards, or buying an airline ticket gives them something specific to attend to in order to honor the life of the one being laid to rest.
- Officially marks the beginning of life without that person here, on Earth, in the way that we are accustomed to having them. Grief is hard enough to bear. To bear it alone, from the moment of loss, multiplies the mourning.

After Lisa's funeral, I stayed a night with my son and daughter-in-law. They did not know Lisa, but they knew I had attended a funeral for a friend. When I got to their place, they spoke gently, listened, and made comfort food for us. I would not have been a recipient of those gifts of care if I had not gone to Lisa's funeral.

A funeral is an ancient ritual that has stood the test of time. As the Church continues to reform, I hope we continue to plan and attend funerals. Our healing begins sooner when we gather to say goodbye to those we have loved, and to love those they leave behind.

Marie Duquette is semi-retired and working as a cook part-time, a job that has delighted her with the degree to which it satisfies her hunger for camaraderie and a sense of fulfillment. She was a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for twenty years, most recently serving at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Ann Arbor. She writes about the connections she finds between what we know and what we can yet only imagine.

Despite what one might think of the liturgy, the dogma, the history of the church, I know that holding space for a funeral is one of the most holy gifts the church still gives to this hurting world.

home. I have officiated at more than 200 funerals. And while I am currently deconstructing my faith and reconsidering the value of weekly worship, the one thing I know for certain that we should keep are the funerals. The funerals, if nothing else, have a value one only knows after attending a well-done funeral.

Despite what one might think of the liturgy, the dogma, the history of the church, I know that holding space for a funeral is one of the most holy gifts the church still gives to this hurting world. This is true whether a funeral is *in* a church, or in a garden. The structure for a funeral was designed specifically because of its proven power to help those who mourn process their grief. One need not use the actual words from the liturgy, but they are helpful when trying to figure out what to do and what to say. They help us find life in the midst of death, the life that is found in authentic community, where love stands in sometimes as words, and just as often as music, or silence.

The pandemic expanded the trend in which funerals were becoming less common, less formal, even optional. I'm sure you've heard, or even spoken yourself, the argument against having a funeral. It goes something like this:

"I don't want a damn funeral. Just throw a party. Go to a pub. Toss my ashes in a lake (the ocean, the mountains, by the cabin).

"If you have a funeral, I swear I'll haunt you. I don't want everyone sitting around being sad because of me."

By saying you don't want a funeral, or, by planning everything that will happen when you die to the last detail, *you are depriving the people you love from the healing that is gained by having a funeral. You are compounding their grief.*



Picture of My Past



By Sandor Slomovits

In November of 1997, my brother and I were visiting our parents to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. We've known since we were sixteen, when our mother let slip one day that she was our father's second wife, that our father had lost his first wife and three young children in Auschwitz. And long before that revelation, we'd heard about our father's other relatives who were also killed in Auschwitz. Our father occasionally told us stories of those people. The stories often ended with, "They were taken to Auschwitz." I can't recall a time when I felt a need for further explanations. Auschwitz was a part of our family history that I inhaled as naturally as many other far less remarkable facts. It seemed as if it was always there—like air—not really hidden, but usually invisible.

But though our father sometimes spoke of his parents, brother, sisters, and nephews who perished in Auschwitz, he never mentioned his first wife and children. And while there were pictures of his other relatives in our family photo albums, and even one on our living room wall, we never saw any pictures of his wife and children. Our mother did tell us once that shortly after she and our father married, she'd found a photo of them in his wallet, had asked him about it and had not seen it since.



Our father occasionally told us stories of those people. The stories often ended with, "They were taken to Auschwitz."

It wasn't until I was in my late forties that I finally braved talking with my father about his first family. He did not seem surprised then that I knew about his wife and children. I asked for stories about them, asked him to describe what they looked like. And he did. Briefly, haltingly, and with so much pain and sadness on his face that, feeling guilty about opening old wounds; I always dropped the topic after a few minutes only to find myself, days, weeks or months later, feeling compelled to bring it up again. I never asked about the picture of his first family.

Finally, on this golden anniversary visit, I got my father alone and asked him if he had a picture of his first wife and children. (Not wanting to create problems between my parents, I didn't tell him that I already knew of its existence from my mother.) My father made a grimace, looked away, and said, "No." I wanted to spare him the pain, but my longing to see these people had become so strong that I persisted.

I always dropped the topic after a few minutes only to find myself, days, weeks or months later, feeling compelled to bring it up again. I never asked about the picture of his first family.



"Are you sure you don't have any pictures of them? Weren't there any left when you returned home after the war?"

Irritated, he snapped back, "You don't understand. There was nothing left in my house. They were using it as a stable." ("They" being the Russian Army, stabling their horses in his house and in the adjacent synagogue. This was a story he'd told us long before.)

In my best investigative reporter/prosecuting attorney manner I continued. "But you have pictures of your parents and brother and sisters."

He went on the defensive, "I have no idea where I got those from. Maybe from one of my sisters who wasn't taken to the camps."

I was about to give up, but my mother, overhearing our conversation from the kitchen, called out now. "Herman, you used to carry one in your wallet. I saw it. It was of your wife and two of the children."

Embarrassed, either at being caught in a lie, or at having his fading memory pointed out to him, my father said slowly, "You're right, there was one picture." Then he quickly added, "But the children were not in it."

My mother, with fifty years of practice in standing up to him, was tenacious. "No, Herman. Two of the children are in the picture. I remember the little girl." My father snorted in disgust and left the room.

I could hear my father rummaging in his study. A few minutes later he returned, carrying a small black prayer book. Holding it open to the middle with one hand, he fingered a small photo with the other. Softly, in a tone of wonder, he said to my mother, "You are right, Blanka, the children are here."



My mother began setting the table for supper. I joined her and we worked silently. I could hear my father rummaging in his study. A few minutes later he returned, carrying a small black prayer book. Holding it open to the middle with one hand, he fingered a small photo with the other. Softly, in a tone of wonder, he said to my mother, "You are right, Blanka, the children are here."

I reached for the photo, but he stopped me and said, pointing to the page in the book where the picture had been secreted all these years, "See, this is where I recorded your birth dates." I looked where he was pointing and there, in my father's beautiful Hebrew printing, was the abbreviated heading, "Boruch Hashem, Blessed is the Lord." Below that, my brother's and my Hebrew names, the date of our births according to the Jewish calendar, and the words, "bonai hajkirim, my dear children."

I stared silently at the writing and the picture. I stood frozen, numb. A myriad of conflicting emotions stormed through me. Many of them I only recognized and sorted out weeks and months later.

Resentment and jealousy—Lord help me—because I didn't have the page to myself; I shared it, of course with my brother, and also with these other children. I'd always only thought of them as my father's first children. But I now realized—they are also my half brothers and sister.

Rage. My fists clenched, my jaw clamped. What kind of monsters could shove these people into gas chambers and then burn them to ashes?

Pain. Like the agony of someone whose anesthesia has worn off after major surgery. For the briefest moment, before I am overwhelmed by the horror of it and push the emotions away, I truly feel my father's anguish. How he must have ached when he looked at this picture. What was it like to lose your wife and children like that?

Next came grief. For the first time in my life, I began to consciously grieve for my dead brothers and sister and for the woman who might have been my mother.

Hard on the heels of the grief came guilt—recognition of my father's and my own. I understood that when he insisted on showing me what he had written in his prayer book before allowing me to see the picture, my father was perhaps trying to reassure me that he loved me as much as his other children. In my



father's prayer book, and maybe in his silent prayers, all his children were together. Did he ever feel guilty that he was betraying their memories by loving us?

And there were my feelings of guilt, of shame—the by now familiar guilt and shame of the child of a survivor of the Holocaust; shame that I might dare feel resentment and jealousy in the face of the horrific losses my father has endured; guilt, that my very existence mocks those losses. After all, I might not have even been born were it not for these people dying.

Eventually, through the din of all these emotions, I recognized gratitude. My father was giving me a priceless gift. He was telling me, in the only way in which he was capable, that I have been dear to him; that he has loved me, loved us, though he needed to keep his love secret, as he kept secret his love and grief for his first family. Bonai hajkirim, my dear children. He was letting me know that, contrary to the way I've sometimes felt, I've not been merely a replacement, a sad, inadequate substitute, for all he has lost.

Finally, I admitted to myself that perhaps the reason I hadn't dared ask my father about his first family was not only to spare him pain but because it was too painful for me—too painful to contemplate that my mother and brother and I might not be first in his affections. I saw how we conspired, colluded together to keep these secrets. Perhaps I, like my father, also needed to pretend all these years that these people have disappeared from our lives.

And for the first time in my adult life, I began to think of him not as my hand-me-down father—the father who first belonged to these other three children—but as my own father, worn, torn, patched, and faded by all he experienced before I was born, but still shielding me, protecting me, as he was unable to shield and protect his first children.

An absurd memory flashed in my mind. When my brother and I were in our early teens, we loved to play Monopoly with our father. It was the one game that he always played with us, and one of the very few leisure activities in which we could engage him. For several years we played it frequently, sometimes with my mother joining us, but often just the three of us. We all took a childlike delight in accumulating the piles of fake money and the various properties. Perhaps my brother and I reveled in having him all to ourselves at those times—being able to monopolize him, not having to engage in the felt, but as yet unknown, unfair competition with our dead brothers and sister.

I stared at the picture between the pages of the book my father was holding. I could not look at my father. Finally, I reached out and picked up the picture. I held it gingerly, as though it was a rare archeological artifact.

During these games my father was always very lighthearted, not somber or serious, not critical and judgmental, the way he seemed to be at most other times. Maybe he could relax with this make-believe wealth, this fantasy city. Maybe it reminded him of his happy life with his first family. Or maybe it allowed him to briefly forget.

I stared at the picture between the pages of the book my father was holding. I could not look at my father. Finally, I reached out and picked up the picture. I held it gingerly, as though it was a rare archeological artifact.

Which it is. Taken some time in the mid Thirties, it is a sepia-toned, informal, outdoor portrait of my father's first wife, Etta, his oldest son, Ernö, and his

daughter, Zelda. Etta, smiling faintly, clearly pregnant with their third child, Gyuri, is sitting on a simple wooden chair, her hands folded in her lap, wearing the traditional wig of orthodox Jewish women. Zelda, blonde and plump, about four years old, wearing a simple, short white dress and white knee socks, is standing to her left, looking suspiciously into the camera. Ernö, two years older, is standing next to his sister, wearing a dark cap, white sailor outfit with short pants, also with white knee socks, and holding a small ball in front of him.

I pulled the picture close. I tried to see if there is a resemblance between my half brother and sister and my brother and me, but I was too stunned, numbed to be able to make that judgment. To this day I can't tell. However, I noticed with some amazement the strong resemblance between my father's first wife and my own mother.



More than a year went by before the other half of the photo turned up... Together, they formed a picture of my past; a past I never saw, yet a past I can never forget.

I noticed something else. Three sides of the photo are professionally trimmed, but the fourth, the side where Ernö stands, is uneven and rough. Suddenly, I recalled another photo, one that I had seen before, in one of our family albums. It is of my father, seated in a chair identical to Etta's. I realized with a start—this was a family portrait that had been cut in half. I was holding the picture of the family that was torn away, destroyed in Auschwitz. My father had been hiding them ever since, keeping them safe, as he was not able to then.

I asked my father, "Why was this picture cut?" I reminded him of the other half. Did he cut it so he could fit this half into his wallet? Or had someone else cut it?

My father looked at me incredulously, "This was more than fifty years ago. Do you think I remember?"

Was it my father who cut this photo? Was it he who literally cut himself out of the picture, cut himself off from his first wife and children, as he was cut off from them by the Nazis? Was it he who removed himself from them, disappeared from the picture, as in a way he also has from us, his second family?

In the next few days, I searched meticulously through all my parents' photo albums. I could not find the other half of the picture anywhere. I began to question whether I ever had seen it.

But I knew I had. It was the only picture of my father from that period of his life. Did he hide that picture too? Did he throw it away? Has it vanished as completely as the man he was then?

More than a year went by before the other half of the photo turned up. I moved a bookshelf my mother wanted to relocate, and the picture, along with a few inconsequential scraps of paper, was underneath it. Neither of my parents had any idea how it got there. I put the jagged edges of the two pictures side by side. They fit perfectly. Together, they formed a picture of my past; a past I never saw, yet a past I can never forget.

This essay was originally published in the Washtenaw Jewish News.

The Power of Ancestry and Personal Discovery



By Michelle McLemore

Have you ever gone down a rabbit hole? (Figuratively, of course.) Warrens can be exciting as well as confusing. Some leads are dead ends while other passages lead you quite far from your starting point—almost to the extent that you forget what you were originally searching for.

My sister Lisa and I often joke about our rabbit hole research inquiries. The thrill of the potential finds keeps us searching. What started as separate hobbies eventually merged to combine into writing local history as well as GENMEMS (genealogical memoirs and house histories) for clients. Lisa summed up her genealogy enthusiasm by saying, “It’s like a puzzle, or mystery, to see how everything connects or impacts each other.” That connectivity is what we all need to take a closer look at to understand our inherited (yet transformable) tendencies, how we can gather strength from our ancestors’ stories, and finally, how to keep descendants and future communities in our conscious decision-making.



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Let’s start with basic biology. I, for example, was born July 15, 1972 to Loretta Mae (Rang) Coberley. Yet, the influences upon me from a biological layer began earlier—and the same is true of you. The egg that would become me, grew within Loretta in her first four months of gestation within *her* mother, Virginia Ann Estella (Cote) Rang approximately between December and March 1933—early in the Great Depression. (In short, grandmothers grow their children’s and their grandchildren’s eggs simultaneously.) We could start here and look for stressors on Virginia, or we could go back another couple generations to see what type of genetic patterns may have been passed to Virginia (as an egg) from her ancestors.

Virginia’s egg was developed during the Great Blizzard of 1888, post Civil War tension, temperance, and other reform furies. Her great-grandmother started as an egg toward the end of 1853 as westward expansion continued and eking life out of the rural landscape of Ohio was the daily grind.

Why does gestational egg development matter? Research has established that psychological stress immediately preceding conception (and during the initial stages of pregnancy) can impact the growing child with preterm births, early deaths, mental complications, and can cause compounding problems in four successive generations. That’s right, the next *four* generations.

Studies from 1999 to 2017 show strong evidence that psychological stress on a pregnant mother (such as depression or intimate partner violence (IPV)) caused a variety of additional effects such as increased risk for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, schizophrenia, major depression, and anxiety-related disorders in increasing complexity with each next generation.

Simplified, the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical stress of your grandmother and mother may have programmed you to be inclined to anxiousness or depression; it may have rewired your immune system and brain to react in certain less-than-healthy ways.

So, let’s take a closer look at my family models. For the sake of space, we’ll explore just two generations, though our research revealed at least four generations of economic challenges.

Grandma Virginia was conceived in 1914 in times of hardship, the third of nine children. Virginia’s family experienced poverty, scarcity, and uncertainty before it became fashionable in the Great Depression.

Whooping cough, Scarlet Fever, and Diphtheria worked through the entire family in 1919. December gifted the measles for Christmas. Virginia’s father fell off a garage in 1924, landing on his head. Then in November fell and was laid up for two years with internal injuries. Foreclosure was a continuous mid 1920s concern. In 1927, a house fire destroyed the clothes room and all of Virginia’s clothes. By 1930, they lost their home and moved into a shack. They wore castoff clothes, shoes, and picked up coal along the railroad that had fallen off the railcars. All the children dropped out of school as soon as they could hold jobs. A nephew recounted that when they came to visit, the children would even eat the bones because they were so famished. (An exaggeration? Still, they must have made quite the impression.) The constant instability no doubt left lasting impressions on Virginia. Yet, frugality, determination, and faith—lifelong lasting values—saw her through.

In 1932 at age 18, Virginia married Earl Rang. The Great Depression was in full swing when they conceived my mother, Loretta, in 1933. The feelings of scarcity again left their mark on this first child. Later in life, Loretta would occasionally let slip kernels of wisdom to us such as, “When you squeeze your ear, you forget you are hungry... for a little while.”

In 1938, Virginia’s sister Rita and husband Clarence were laid off and living in a tent in Virginia and Earl’s back yard for the summer. To support themselves the aunt and uncle worked in farm fields picking and pitting cherries and gathering potatoes at a neighboring farm. They earned three cents a bushel while Virginia’s brother Charlie earned 15 cents per hour to load baskets into the truck. Each family member helped out the best they could.

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In 1941, Virginia joined Willy’s-Overland Women’s Motor Defense Corps. This club trained women for duties with the Army. They learned skills such as first aid, nutrition, and driving motor vehicles. As part of this, Virginia and her sister Rita received firearms and training from the Toledo Police Department. They also completed classes on the principles of automobile construction, maintenance, and operation to be qualified as proficient motor vehicle technicians. Virginia even went on to teach a class on carburetor repair. She did not let her female status limit her ability to serve or prepare to help her nation in times of need.

Draft letters to married men went out in 1943 and husband Earl joined, training in California. Yet, by the next summer, Virginia was in the hospital and Loretta (age ten) and her two younger brothers, Charles and Richard, were forced to go live with another family. (Legend has it that Loretta tried running away.) Earl received an honorary discharge in 1944 so he could return and take care of the

family. No doubt there was rejoicing when the family was reunited. Still, what kind of uncertainty and anxiety had worked into the children's psyche about abandonment or fear of being orphaned by one or both parents? Mom never spoke of this separation.

Loretta attended school, doing fine but frequently felt "ill" during Latin class and had to report to the nurse's ward, befriending the nurse and caring for others. She would find solace from the no-nonsense parenting of her mother by helping at the horse farm where her horse was boarded.



In 1941, Virginia joined Willy's-Overland Women's Motor Defense Corps. This club trained women for duties with the Army. They learned skills such as first aid, nutrition, and driving motor vehicles... Virginia even went on to teach a class on carburetor repair. She did not let her female status limit her ability to serve or prepare to help her nation in times of need.

Things began looking up. Loretta married local boy LeRoy Coberley in 1952 at age 18 and by 1956 they purchased a farm in Michigan. Then, Loretta's father Earl died of a sudden heart attack. A year later, her brother Charlie died in a head-on collision with a semi heading home from a visit with Loretta at the farm. Loretta was heartbroken and had PTSD-type reactions for many years when driving past where the accident occurred.

Virginia went to work building an impressive Stanley Home Products marketing and distribution group supplying the remaining two children, and herself, with the basics they needed. She refused to play the victim or depend on the government. She was always dressed to sell, having learned the hard way that one's appearance will sway how others view you. "People will judge you by your shoes," she told a grandchild. Even in the last few months of her cancer battle, Virginia wanted her nails painted. My mom grimaced uncomfortably when one of the brothers tossed a ball cap on Virginia's head in attempts to be funny in her last days. A ball cap was never part of Virginia's style.

We could wonder if Loretta's migraines, scratching anxiety habits, and fibromyalgia were ingrained by the stress during gestation or the strain of life. However, attitude-wise, Loretta inherited the will and grit to endure and keep going—a balance no doubt demonstrated by observing her extended family.

My mother, Loretta, bless her, was definitely a child of the Great Depression, her mother's expectations, and the yearning of someone with big ideas but little self-confidence.



We could wonder if Loretta's migraines, scratching anxiety habits, and fibromyalgia were ingrained by the stress during gestation or the strain of life. However, attitude-wise, Loretta inherited the will and grit to endure and keep going—a balance no doubt demonstrated by observing her extended family.

Loretta was a thing-saver—because you never knew when something could be re-used, upcycled, or gifted. She taught us early that "good clothes" were for going out in and immediately upon our return home, "home clothes" were to be put on in order to make the good clothes last as long as possible. Home-sewn and second hand were normal. Loretta made the bridesmaid dresses for all of her daughter's weddings in addition to prom dresses and costumes. She saved what money she could get from her own Stanley Home Products sales or what Dad gave her as an occasional allowance. She knew banks could fail, and therefore, when she passed, we had to go through every book, stack of linens, canisters, and the like because she had hidden a cache for emergencies.

From the lean years, Loretta learned that charity, kindness, and community service was important. She helped at school and served others through church and 4-H. She even gained enough signatures to make an intersection near her home a four-way stop for safety. She participated in every election even though she joked she probably cancelled out Dad's vote.

How did my maternal ancestors impact me? That is my journey to discover. As a stress management coach, teaching my clients that generational stress patterns are real helps them to feel less "crazy." Examining ancestral stressors can help us understand systems built on fear, anger, victimhood, or the healthier patterns of resilience and determination. The research shows that not every child born during extreme stress develops stress-induced negative behaviors. This speaks to the power of the ancestors' grit and resilience—how they evaluated challenges and worked to create manageable living expectations...and modeled those proactive strategies for their children. The genes may be there, but the family witnessed positivity and therefore character strength prevailed.

The Seventh Generation Principle is a philosophy across many different indigenous groups. The ancient Haudenosaunne (Iroquois) speak of it as responsible living. To practice it requires making decisions with forethought so that each decision will lead to a sustainable world for the next seven generations. In thinking this way, what to buy, sell, build, plant, create, recycle, trash, or destroy all carries a much heavier responsibility and diminishes the potential for rashness, selfishness, and hedonistic tendencies.

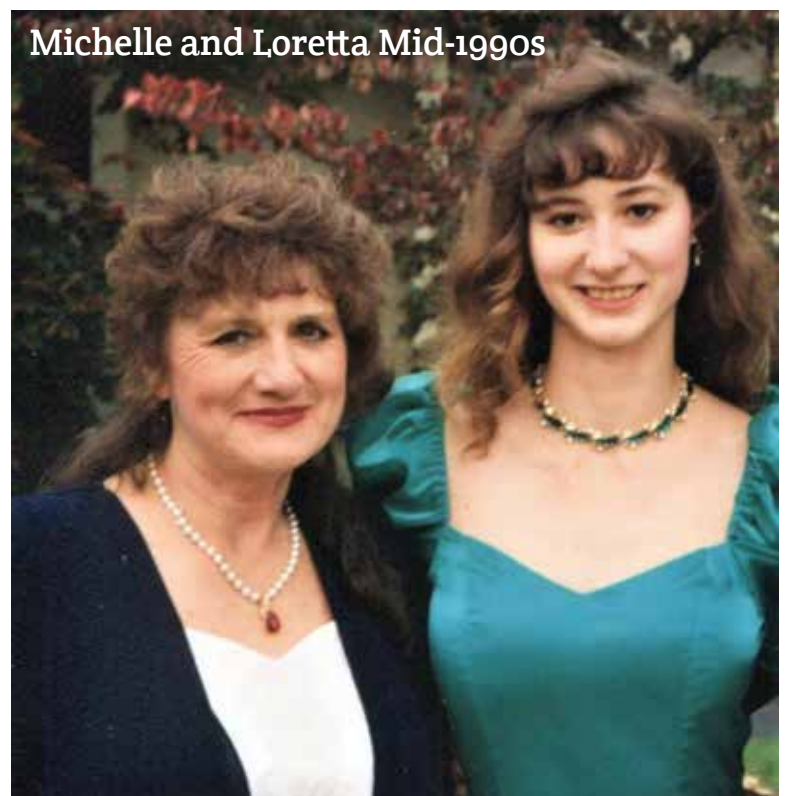
History is a teacher with both scars and gifts, if we will listen to it. We should add to it as new facts surface, and keep in mind enlightenment is a constantly evolving state of existence.



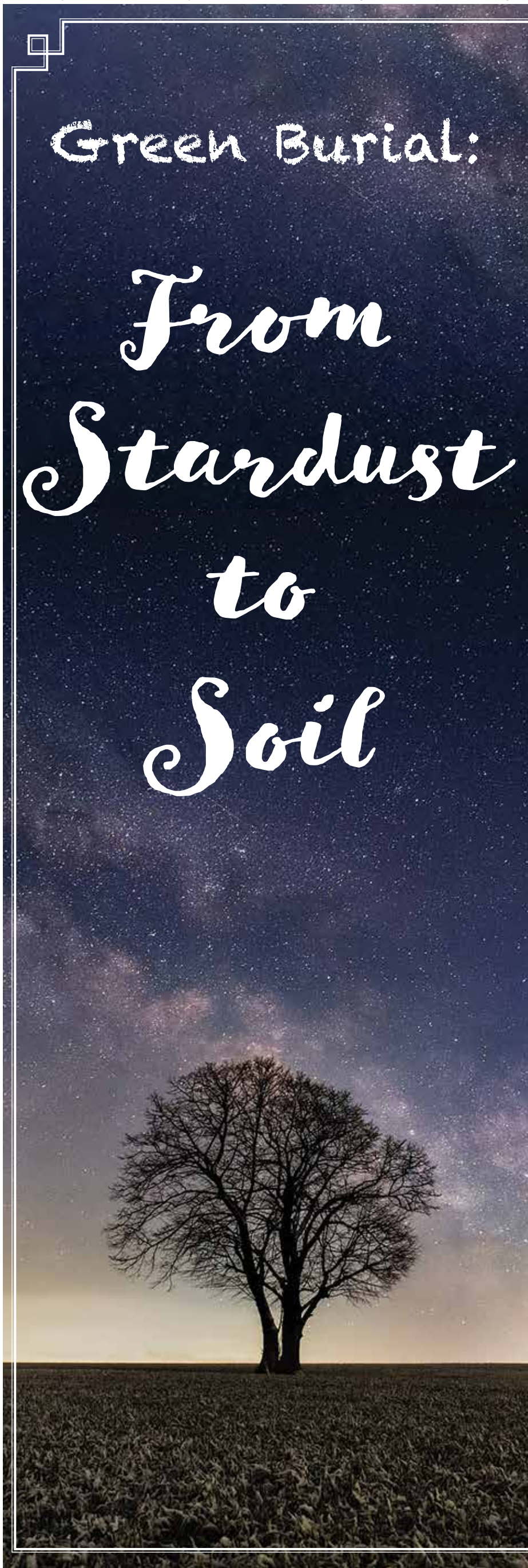
To practice it requires making decisions with forethought so that each decision will lead to a sustainable world for the next seven generations. In thinking this way, what to buy, sell, build, plant, create, recycle, trash, or destroy all carries a much heavier responsibility and diminishes the potential for rashness, selfishness, and hedonistic tendencies.

To learn and remember what one's ancestors endured, struggled through, fought against, and rose above, can offer a fountain of grit, endurance, and hope. We can identify problems yet refuse to cave to disillusionment. We can give grace to ancestors as we learn why they came to be the people they did. Talk to your oldest living relatives. Listen. Learn your family stories. Build on it for your health, your families, your community, and your world. Then, share. The history you make today is just as vital as the history which came before.

Michelle McLemore is a retired psychology and writing teacher enjoying a second life as a freelance writer, writing mentor, energy healer, and stress management coach. If you are interested in learning more about Michelle and Lisa's family biographies, memoirs, and genealogy services, email heartofthewalk@gmail.com or call (517) 270-0986.



Michelle and Loretta Mid-1990s



Green Burial: From Stardust to Soil

By Joshua Kay

On a cloudy afternoon this past winter, as we stood in the muted, gray light of our kitchen, I said to my wife, “When I die, just put me in the ground, maybe wrapped in a shroud—or in a pine box, or something like that—and let nature do its thing.”

“Me too,” she said. “That’s what I want, too.” With that, we’d sketched out a key portion of our after-death instructions, and we soon found ourselves talking about it with others. A friend told me that if he could, he’d just have his body laid out in the woods. Then another friend revealed she wanted her body to be composted.

In short, what we all wanted was to be returned to nature through a green burial—well, except the friend who wanted his body to be tossed into the woods. No burial there, but close enough.

We are not alone. According to the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), over 70% of cemeteries report that demand for green burial is increasing. In 2022, the NFDA found that nearly 61% of surveyed consumers expressed an interest in exploring green funeral options, up almost five percentage points over the year before. With many Americans still unaware that green burial is an option, these numbers promise to rise further as more people learn about it.

“When I die, just put me in the ground, maybe wrapped in a shroud—or in a pine box, or something like that—and let nature do its thing.”

The Green Burial Council has published standards for both green burials and green cemeteries. In its most comprehensive form, green burial forgoes the use of toxic embalming fluids, metal caskets, and grave vaults (i.e., concrete boxes in which caskets are sealed). Instead, the body is placed in a shroud or a biodegradable casket, often made of wood or cardboard, and lowered into the ground. Clothing and any mementos buried with the body should also be biodegradable. Graves might be unmarked, marked with a natural or native stone or wooden marker, or sometimes even adorned with a traditional headstone, depending on what the cemetery allows and the family’s wishes. The GPS coordinates of graves are documented, so there is a record of where a person has been laid to rest regardless of whether a marker is placed.

Green burial is legal, and though it strikes many of today’s funeral directors as novel, there’s nothing new about it. In fact, it’s consistent with how people have been burying the dead for thousands of years and shouldn’t be contrasted with “traditional” burial. Green burial *is* traditional. It’s just no longer conventional.

Merilynne Rush, an end-of-life doula, founded The Dying Year (thedyingyear.org) to help people plan for natural death care including, if desired, a home funeral. She points out that embalming was uncommon in the United States prior to the Civil War, when the bodies of thousands of soldiers killed in action had to be preserved for long-distance transport back to their loved ones. Having a deceased family member embalmed gradually became a symbol of wealth, and the funeral industry grew. It became more and more common for a body to be embalmed and otherwise prepared by a funeral parlor rather than laid out, washed, and dressed in one’s home by family members. The home funeral, which was common until the 1930’s, was largely relegated to history. So, too, was green burial. Now it’s coming back.

Green burial is traditional. It’s just no longer conventional.

Rush was introduced to green burial around 2008. She had been a birth midwife for decades, leaving that practice in 2007. A friend sent her an article in which she learned about both green burial and home funerals. “It just really appealed to me,” she said, “because it woke something up in me that was dissatisfied about what I’d experienced in my own family. What appealed to me is that this is what I want for myself and for

my family.” Soon, she was on the boards of directors of both the National Home Funeral Alliance and the Green Burial Council. Rush was careful to clarify that home funeral and green burial are separate decisions. Home funeral deals with after-death care of the body and related rituals, and green burial addresses final disposition. Rush stressed that it’s important to work with a funeral director who can understand and offer what you want.

Funeral director Mike Mitchell owns and manages Staffan-Mitchell Funeral Home in Chelsea, which offers green burial services as well as conventional options. Mitchell has a degree in environmental and natural resource policy studies from Michigan State University. After working in several environmental jobs, he was lured back to the family business and eventually earned a degree in mortuary science. Soon after that, in about 2007, he connected with the head of the Green Burial Council and learned about the practice. Prior to that, Mitchell didn’t

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know that green burial was an option despite his environmental background. Soon, he met Rush, and the two have worked together on behalf of many families providing after-death care for their loved ones.

According to Mitchell and Rush, there are about fifteen cemeteries in Michigan that offer some form of green burial. Some are near Ann Arbor, including in Dexter, Chelsea, and Milan, but none are within Ann Arbor. Mitchell notes that all the green burial grounds in Michigan are part of hybrid cemeteries that offer both conventional and green burial. The Green Burial Council website (greenburialcouncil.org) also describes “natural” burial grounds, which are entirely devoted to green burial practices, and “conservation” burial grounds, which are “affiliated with or in partnership with a land trust or other conservation entity.” Conservation burial grounds preserve native or natural habitat and flora and are legally protected in perpetuity by instruments like deed restrictions and conservation easements. Michigan does not yet have any natural or conservation burial grounds, but with increasing interest in green burial, it’s possible that some will be established.

Both Mitchell and Rush emphasize the flexibility of green burial options. Mitchell said, “I always tell people, whether they use my facility or not, to call and ask questions.”

Rush agrees, noting that funeral directors might say they handle green burials, but it’s important to ask detailed questions about how they do that and how willing they are to have family involvement. “There’s no one right way to do a green burial,” Rush said. “No one right way that everyone agrees on, so it’s incumbent upon a person to do some research and know what they want.”

Green burial can be more affordable than conventional burial, Mitchell said, depending on what the family wants. Again, it’s important to discuss details with the funeral director. While cremation tends to be cheaper than green burial, it isn’t an environmentally sound option, since it requires the equivalent energy of driving a car across the country to cremate a single body. With more people concerned about their environmental impact and wanting to be returned to nature after they die, Mitchell believes demand for green burial will continue to rise. He noted that as more cemeteries offer the option, more people will learn about it and choose it for themselves, a case of supply influencing demand. Rush, meanwhile, hopes that more people will ask cemeteries to allow green burial. If people do so, she believes cemeteries will “start getting with the program.”

Some people have misgivings about green burial. Rush said that people sometimes fear that animals will dig up a body or that bodies buried directly in the ground can spread disease or contaminate ground water. However, the practice does not actually pose these risks. Others worry that the lack of embalming prohibits any visitation, but Mitchell said simple measures like refrigeration and using dry ice address these concerns.



Green burial isn’t the only environmentally sound method of after-death disposition. Another approach is natural organic reduction or, more colloquially, human composting. This practice is not yet legal in Michigan, but an increasing number of states allow it.



MERILYNNE RUSH, FOUNDER OF THE DYING YEAR

Photo by Susan Ayer

Green burial isn’t the only environmentally sound method of after-death disposition. Another approach is natural organic reduction or, more colloquially, human composting. This practice is not yet legal in Michigan, but an increasing number of states allow it. The process involves placing a body in a vessel with various organic materials and allowing microbes to reduce the body to soil. Various companies offer human composting, mainly in Washington and Oregon.

Mitchell hasn’t yet encountered much interest in human composting in Michigan, but he said the option may become more widespread out of necessity. “Eventually, we are going to run out of space to bury the dead. Here in Southeast Michigan, there’s not a whole lot of room for new cemeteries, so you could see some form of composting in a cemetery or elsewhere. I think some form of it will happen at some point in time.”

Rush has found that the desire for green burial is usually motivated primarily by environmental concerns, or the wish to nurture the earth with one’s last act. But people often get much more out of it, perhaps especially when combined with a home funeral or in-home vigil. Rush said of family members, “They say it’s beautiful. They say it’s meaningful. In the midst of grief, it feels good, and ultimately it helps them on their grief journey to be able to wade into the pain of it and make choices that heal.”

Mitchell agrees. “When I do a service that has an in-home vigil, and then these people are caring for their dead at home, I don’t think I’ve had a request for grief counseling, because these people have been caring for their loved one and they see the death and the finality of it. It’s a meaningful process of death and dying and caring for the dead.”

No matter the motivation and exact wishes of a person and their family, both Rush and Mitchell encourage people to reach out and discuss them. The amount of flexibility can be surprising and comforting. People should also discuss their wishes with their family members.

“While death is hard,” Rush said, “thinking about this ahead of time, and knowing what different options are available and sharing [your wishes] with your loved ones so at the time they have the comfort of knowing what you want... It’s a loving thing to do, and there’s no one right way to do it.”

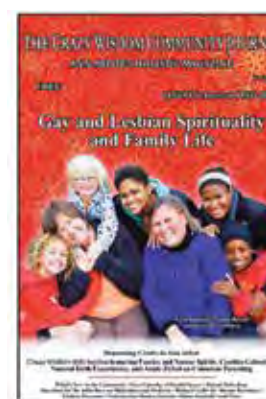
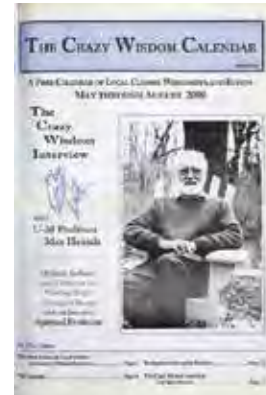
For more information on Green burial you can reach Merilynne Rush online at thedyingyear.org or by email at thedyingyear@gmail.com.

To reach Michael Mitchell visit mitchellfuneral.com/chelsea-michigan or call (734) 475-1444.

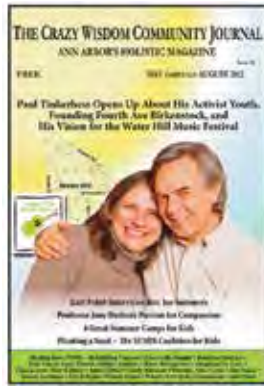
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A Life of Cat Companionship

By Christine MacIntyre

Giant ears disproportionate to the rest of his tiny body, beady eyes, a thin mousy tail, and tiger stripes. His name was Peppy, and he was the first kitten I ever called my own. My parents got him from a pet store, probably to quiet my constant nagging. I'd always loved cats. I visited my aunt often and spent time on the floor playing with her large orange cat named Mr. Jinx. I remember Peppy and Mr. Jinx as if they were still sitting before me and every cat after that. There's been many.

My parents got him from a pet store, probably to quiet my constant nagging. I'd always loved cats.

Growing up, cats served as my companions in a world where I often felt scared and lonely. A broken home, a disabled sister, and an introverted personality were a recipe for isolation. I spent a lot of time holed up in the safety of my bedroom or outside in nature, always with animals nearby.

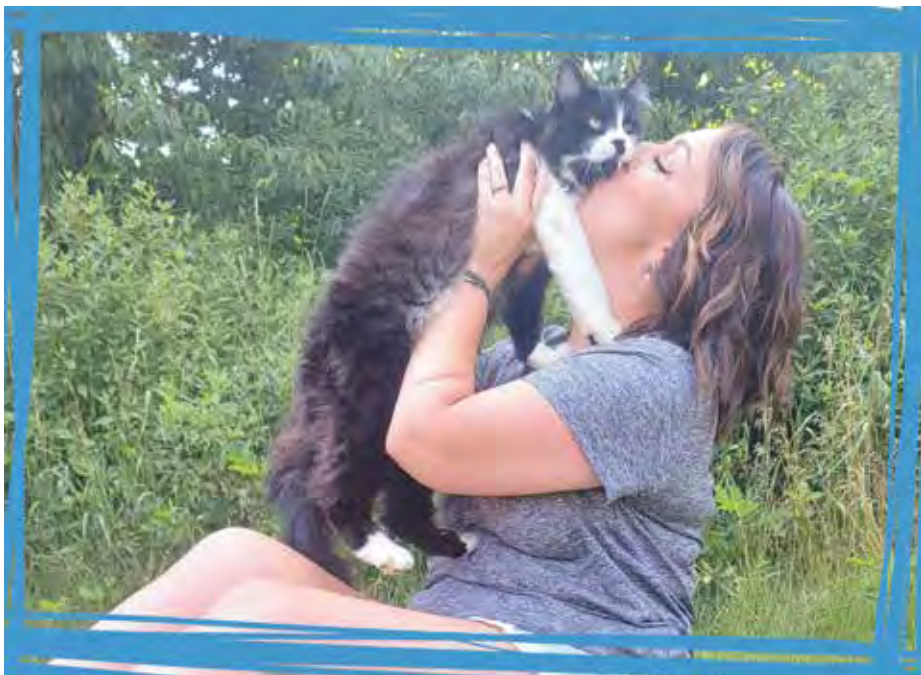
At eight years old, I quickly bonded with my tiny furry friend Peppy who became my confidant and security blanket. He slept with me, nestled up by my face like a scarf. Tears landed on his fur nightly, but he loved me anyway. He always came back; his friendship never wavered.

He didn't question why I would cry when I had so much to be thankful for, nor did he tell me to stop. People did, though. I learned early on that my sensitive personality and intense emotions, specifically crying, made people uncomfortable. It was as if they couldn't digest that I was bold enough to show emotion in a world where emotion was frowned upon.

He didn't question why I would cry when I had so much to be thankful for, nor did he tell me to stop. People did, though.

When the world felt like it was crashing down around me, cats were always the one steady part of my life. I've owned at least one cat, usually more, my entire life. Peppy, Pepper, Bunny, Tiger, Milo, Midnight, Sammy, Pudge, Olaf, Snowball, Chloe (and several of her kitten litters), Tiger (again), Moo-Moo, Freddy, and so many more. Most of them I got when they were old enough to leave their mom. Once in a while an ambitious cat escaped from the house and never came home. Losing a cat always feels like losing a piece of myself. I wonder if I take it harder than the rest of my family because of the profound bond I develop with them.

As a child, some people supposed to love, comfort, and protect me did the opposite. Instead of shutting down and locking away my emotions, I resorted to the creatures who most wanted my affection and who reciprocated it. In the face of violence or other horrifying experiences, I'd hide away with my furry friend and vent. My cat Bunny, who lived to be 19 years old, knew everything about me. More than any human has ever known. She sat with me through countless painful situations—abuse, neglect, accidents, divorce, betrayal. I laid everything out in plain sight, and I felt better partially because she didn't judge or turn her back on me. Cats act as a balm for life's challenging phases.



As an adult diagnosed with bipolar disorder, I adore my cats as much as, or perhaps more than, I did as a child. When I'm sad or scared or feeling insecure, I scoop my cat up onto my lap, knowing he'll fill the void that humans never could.

As an adult diagnosed with bipolar disorder, I adore my cats as much as, or perhaps more than, I did as a child. When I'm sad or scared or feeling insecure, I scoop my cat up onto my lap, knowing he'll fill the void that humans never could. My husband calls me a cat lady, and I am. I tease him and tell him I've turned him into a cat dad. When debilitating depression sets in and threatens to upheave an otherwise happy life, my cat Freddy serves as my best friend, shoulder to cry on, security blanket, and listening ear. When mania wreaks havoc, keeping me up all hours of the night, and racing thoughts interrupt work, Freddy is there to ground me. All it takes is the feel of his long plush fur and his steady purr. The fact that he follows me to bed, sits on the couch in my lap, and vies for my attention is more than I could ask for. Symptoms of bipolar are ugly, to put it mildly. I'm not always the easiest person to deal with, medicated or not, but Freddy is the one being who couldn't care less.

Admittedly, I've gone overboard with my cat obsession several times. As a teenager, I'd often sneak stray kittens into the house, where they would live unnoticed for weeks. I'd finally break down and tell my parents, or they'd find evidence, but it was too late by then. I'd have to keep them. Everyone knew how much I loved cats. I'll never forget the boyfriend who broke up with me, followed by a surprise delivery of a precious white fluffy kitten he'd found trapped in the wheel well of an old rusty car. He knew I'd love and care for him, and I was overjoyed—not only at the prospect of making this precious kitten my own, but for the meaningful gesture.

My kids are delighted every time I bring a new kitten home, although even they may think I sometimes overdo it. We did, after all, have eight indoor cats at one point.

My kids are delighted every time I bring a new kitten home, although even they may think I sometimes overdo it. We did, after all, have eight indoor cats at one point. Nonetheless, I want to teach them that companionship comes in many forms. In my case, humans failed to do this repeatedly.

As an adult, I'm primarily accountable for my own happiness. I realize that other adults aren't responsible for making me happy, pleasing me, or keeping me comfortable. Life is exceptionally rough sometimes, but I know I have a loving companion to turn to when all else fails. Call me the crazy cat lady all you want, but I wish everyone experienced the unwavering companionship I have experienced with cats.



A Minute to Meditate: Three Tips for Humor as Self-Care

By Angela Verges

If you give a mom a minute to meditate, she'll drift into a deep sleep. If she goes to sleep, she'll want to snuggle with her favorite fleece blanket. If her blanket isn't warm enough, she'll want fuzzy socks.

If her sock has a hole in it, she'll search for needle and thread to sew it up. As she sews the hole, she'll become tired and remember why she began to meditate in the first place. And in the life of a busy mom, the cycle repeats.

And in the life of a busy mom, the cycle repeats.

Children's book author Laura Numeroff wrote several books that I love reading: *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *If you Give a Pig a Pancake*, and *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*. When the characters received the item they wanted, they continued to ask for something more.

As busy moms, it's acceptable to want more time, more help, more space, and the list goes on. An important element to add to your list of *more*, is self-care. I am reminded of a safety instruction given by flight attendants, once you board a plane, "In the event of an emergency secure yourself, then assist your child."

I'm paraphrasing that statement, but the idea is that in order to help someone else, you must be well.

I've fallen asleep during meditation, prayer, and a Zoom class. None of these things were boring, it's just that my body has a mind of its own.

Step off the hamster wheel, the merry-go-round, the rinse and repeat cycle of life, and schedule deliberate time for self-care. Laughter is one tool I like to include in my self-care kit, and you can, too. Here are three ways to use humor or laughter as self-care.

1. Find humor in daily situations. I've fallen asleep during meditation, prayer, and a Zoom class. None of these things were boring, it's just that my body has a mind of its own. When it needs rest, it's going to rest. I find the humor in each situation and share it through a story or comedy. You, too, can uncover humor in your daily walk. Try it.

2. Treat yourself to a comedy show—find a comedy club in your area, call a friend, and laugh until your cheeks hurt.

3. Read something humorous—as a youngster I loved to read Archie comics. Every now and then I'll still grab an *Archie Digest* from the bookstore (Yes, Archie comics are still around). The stories my not be laugh out loud funny, but they can evoke a smile. I'm currently reading *Fifty Things That Aren't My Fault* by Cathy Guisewite, the creator of the comic strip, *Cathy*. I have laughed out loud while reading her book. I also had an opportunity to meet Cathy in person at an Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop. Her keynote talk had the room filled with laughter.

Laughter helps you view your situation with lightheartedness. Laughter should be a part of your self-care. A friend told me how she felt peaceful and relaxed after practicing meditation. I wanted to experience that relaxed state, that non-hurried feeling, a state of momentary euphoria. I wasn't sure where to start with a guided meditation, I turned to Google...and found what I was looking for, so I thought.

One morning, before the sky opened to light, I sat crossed legged on my bedroom floor. The only sound that filled the room was a bird chirping at my open window. I opened my laptop and clicked the link to the meditation I planned to use. The woman began talking in a calming voice "It's good to pause and relax. Close your eyes. It's okay to go to sleep...it's the end of your day."

I popped an eye open and listened a little more. "This guided sleep meditation will relax you for a good night's rest." I wasn't ready to sleep. I had just woken up! I didn't know at the time that there were different meditations for morning, evening, Christian, and other specifics. When you question Google, you may want to be specific in what you're seeking.



If you give a mom a minute to meditate, she can truly find a million other things to distract her.

If you give a mom a minute to meditate, she can truly find a million other things to distract her. The opposite can also happen—she may fall asleep because she just finished doing a million things. Laughter can help to ease some of the daily stress we experience.

Take a minute, or two (or three!) to invest in your self-care. Laugh more.

###

Angela Verges is a native Detroitter who writes books for children and blogs about parenting experiences as she practices being a grown-up. You can find her on stage bringing laughter to others. Follow her on Instagram at [writermama223](#), on Facebook at [@angela.verges](#) or visit her website [angelaverges.net](#).



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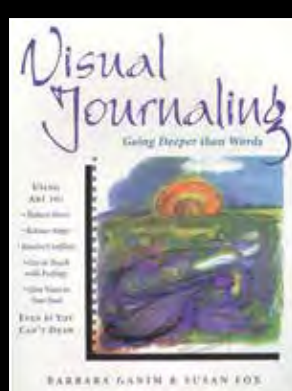
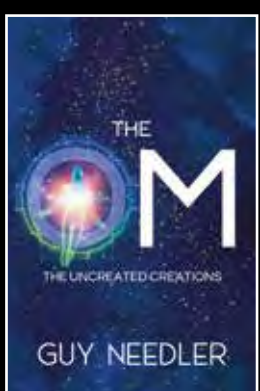
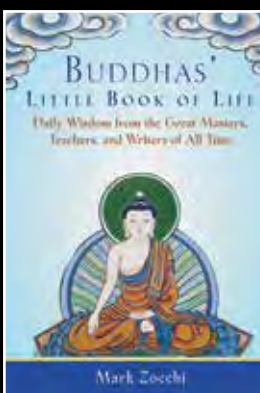
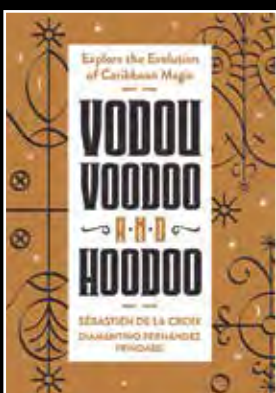
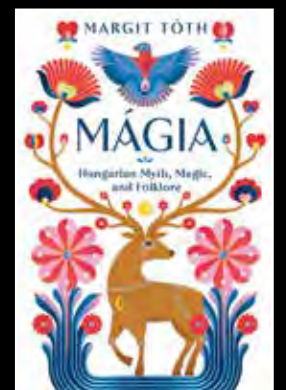
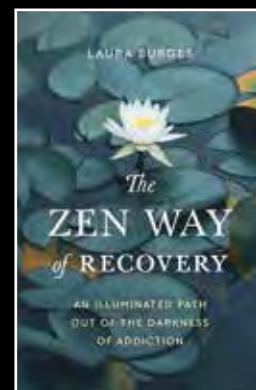
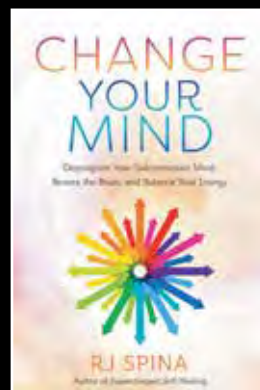
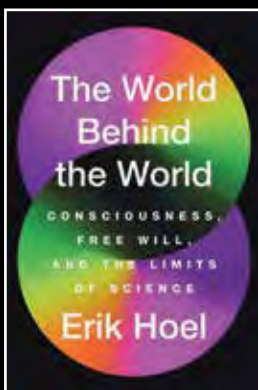


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What's New in the Community



By Lynda Gronlund

This ongoing column features upcoming events within Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County and surrounding areas' Body/Mind/Spirit communities, new (during the past year or two) practitioners and holistic businesses, new books written by local/regional authors, new classes, as well as new offerings by established practitioners and holistic businesses.

Pictured below are Jennifer Carson, one of the festival organizers, and head faerie, Michelle McLemore.



Hog Warts and Toad Bellies
Fairy Tale Festival

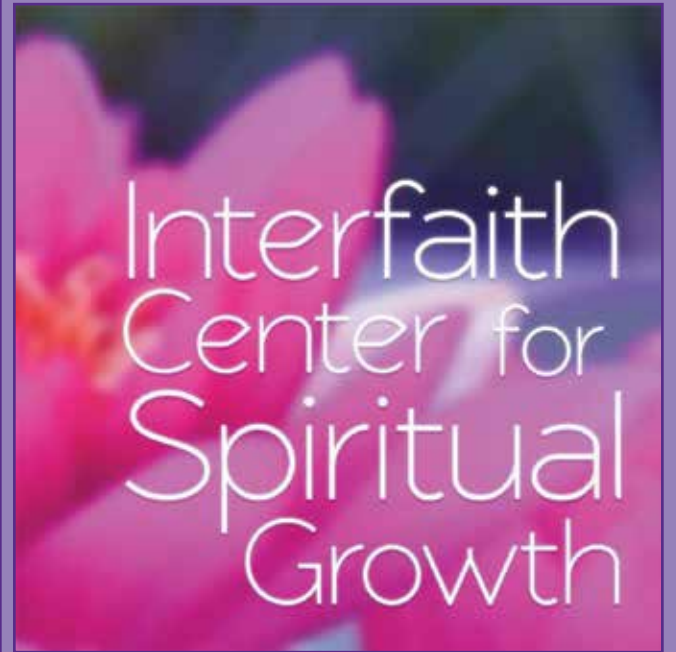
Michigan State University's Hidden Lake Gardens, a 755 acre outdoor attraction in Tipton, Michigan, containing gardens, an arboretum, trails, and a canopy walk, will host the first Hog Warts and Toad Bellies Fairy Tale Festival on Saturday, October 7 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Photos by Mary Bortmas

See article on page 39.

The Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth in Ann Arbor is celebrating its 25th year.



New Offerings by Established Businesses and Practitioners

The Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth in Ann Arbor is celebrating its 25th year.

In 1998 several individuals, some of whom are still active members of the Interfaith Center, asked Reverend David Bell if he would help them start a spiritual center. They had been attending a nondenominational church, which was almost, but not quite what they were looking for in their “expanding spiritual vision,” explained congregation member Annemarie Howse. Bell was an unusual minister, having spent his early years as an atheist. He started seeking answers when a sudden spiritual experience altered his worldview as an adult. Eventually attending seminary and becoming ordained, Bell had agreed when his wife told him he could do whatever he wanted with his seminary education, “except start a church.” However, she was very supportive of this path that presented itself, to create a spiritual center with no dogma. The only requirements to be a part of it were a desire to grow spiritually and keep an open mind.

It was important to the founders to create an egalitarian organization where everyone could be involved. So, people were invited to participate and provide readings and meditations during the service. This still happens every week. A board and several committees were established. The congregation met in schools and churches until 2007 when they moved into their current home on Airport Boulevard.

These days, Reverend Bell is retired but is still an active member of the Interfaith community. Two ministers are on staff: Reverend Delyth Balmer and Reverend Annie Kopko, though on many Sundays a guest speaker, or member of the community, might give the talk. Said Howse, “It is the best way we know of to provide a well-rounded perspective of what life and spirituality are all about.” Sunday services are provided in person and online via Zoom, which some members who travel during the winter find very helpful. Between 50 and 60 people are regularly in attendance, said Howse, and they comprise people from many different backgrounds and religious experiences. The weekly talk addresses all kinds of spiritual and life issues; some recent topics have included the sound of ohm and interpersonal transformation, trauma, and looking for love.

To celebrate 25 years as a community, the Center hosted a Silver Ball, as suggested by community member Bob Hopkins. In the 25 weeks leading to the Ball, at each service one person gave a 10-minute recap of what happened in each of the previous 24 years, from 1998 to 2022. This was a chance for some to reminisce, and for others to learn what had come before they started attending the Center. On April 29, the Ball was held, with two bands, dinner, and dancing under a silver ball. About 90 people were in attendance.

Howse said that her favorite part of the organization is the camaraderie; she said it’s like a spiritual family. The Interfaith Center community is still in a celebratory mood and planning a picnic in mid-September with a date to be announced.

More information on the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth is online at interfaithspirit.org. The Center is located at 704 Airport Boulevard, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. They can be reached by phone at (734) 327-0270 or by email at delyth.balmer@interfaithspirit.org.

Ruth Wilson, who has been an intuitive coach and metaphysical mentor for 23 years, became certified in hypnotherapy in March of this year.



The form of hypnosis as taught by Paul McKenna through MindValley, “Uses up-to-date, conversational techniques to focus the mind in ways that promote desired changes.” Wilson explained that while most people think of stage hypnosis as a pocket watch and mind control, in reality it is a way to teach the mind to focus, like reading an engaging novel or watching a good tv show. It allows participants to “use their own magic, go inside, talk to their subconscious, and find out what it can do for them.” This often takes the form of figuring out why the subconscious is stopping you from doing something. The job of the subconscious mind is to protect us, Wilson said, and sometimes it protects us by keeping us from doing things we ought to be doing. While the certification is recent and the training deepened her understanding of hypnosis, she had been using some hypnosis in her practice for years. She noticed that it was the one technique she found most helpful to people during the Covid-19 pandemic. She has helped people with money issues, with phobias, and with their jobs and businesses. She said that she “helps people find their best use of energy, their superpowers and intuition, to improve performance and life quality.” Some clients work with her for one session and get good results; others work with her for a few sessions to deepen the results they get. “I think hypnosis of this type is one of the easiest ways you can make a successful change,” Wilson said. Many methods can overcomplicate things when “little steps working with your unconscious mind to change your behavior really ends up getting big results.”

Ruth Wilson can be reached through her website at ruth-wilson.com, or by email at mailruthwilson@gmail.com. She does offer a free 20-to-30-minute consultation and mainly works with people through Zoom.

Animal communicator and shamanic practitioner, Judy Ramsey, became an ordained animal chaplain through the Compassion Consortium this summer.



Chaplains provide spiritual support, often nondenominational, to people in hospitals, prisons, military installations, airports, and many other settings outside of churches where people need help coping with stress, unexpected events, or simply comfort with life’s inevitable pains. Animal chaplaincy began about 30 years ago, said Ramsey, and is a new and growing category of chaplains. During the nine-month training program, Ramsey said, she learned more about what different religions say about the connection between humans and animals, which has been acknowledged in every tradition since the beginning.



What's New in the Community



The Compassion Consortium is a group of chaplains dedicated to animal welfare and developed a program about three years ago to address human to animal interfaces and relationships, both wild and domestic. The primary instructor and curriculum developer is Reverend Sarah Bowen, author of *Sacred Sendoffs: An Animal Chaplain's Advice for Surviving Animal Loss, Making Life Meaningful, and Healing the Planet*. The program covers ethics, compassion fatigue, problem solving and mediation, and perspectives of animals across various wisdom traditions, as well as animal activism. "This was a natural next step for my services as an interspecies counselor," said Ramsey. She has been providing animal communication services and instruction, as well as shamanic healing for animals, for around 20 years. "The intensive training deepened my resources and skills for helping families' relationships with their animals, as well as my ability to support veterinary and shelter/sanctuary professionals with compassion fatigue. The program's training brought all my skills together—animal communication, counseling, ceremony and ritual, and providing comfort to families in veterinary settings."

As an animal chaplain, Ramsey will help clients prepare for a pet's passing. She can also help them develop rituals, from memorial events to blessings, welcoming new animal companions, and providing support for issues that arise with new adoptions. She offers hospice communication to support the dying process for either a human leaving their animal or non-human leaving their person and can now provide companionship for the animal and the family to address their spiritual needs for support and meaning making. She is also passionate about helping veterinarians deal with compassion fatigue and based her capstone project for the chaplaincy program around this. She explained that there is a suicide epidemic among veterinarians and that many struggle with constant demands placed on them and animal suffering and death. She is working now on filming the three half-hour sessions she created around this issue and making it available online for vets to access on demand.

More information about Judy Ramsey is available on her website, judyramsey.net, and she can be reached through her contact page.



Ann Arbor based somatic therapist and bodyworker Errin LaVaque, who has been practicing in the area since 2012, has spent the last several years receiving training on trauma-informed approaches, and somatic trauma resolution modalities.

Somatic Experiencing (SE) is a modality which addresses traumas held in the body. They can show up as anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, feeling disconnected or numb, depression, hyper-vigilance, hypo-vigilance, chronic pain, chronic fatigue, inability to connect, difficulty with boundaries, over-or under-eating, addiction, autoimmune disease, and other issues. Through attuned and guided explorations, SE allows the body to slow down and process past traumatic events in the present moment. "In SE, we listen to and work with the nervous system's story, rather than the cognitive story," said LaVaque. "While our brains are very important and needed for integration and meaning making, our cognitive selves get less attention during this process, as we turn toward and spotlight our somatic selves."

The Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) is a non-invasive, acoustic vagal nerve stimulator, that helps to re-tune the nervous system and return it to safety. It uses algorithmically filtered music focused on the frequency range of the human voice that alters the way sounds are interpreted and transitions the nervous system from a defensive (fight, flight, or freeze) state, to a socially engaged (ventral vagal) state.

LaVaque is now offering a 12-week group workshop in which she will facilitate the Safe and Sound Protocol utilizing elements of Somatic Experiencing to complement and support the process. Each group will consist of three to four participants that will meet weekly via Zoom. In the group sessions, they will track their body sensations, internal images, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions during the listening process, focusing on establishing safety as well as honoring the feelings and sensations that come up as they emerge. Although everyone will be listening individually and on their own journey, there will be dedicated time to share and connect with the group, allowing for co-regulation and the power of healing as part of a community.

LaVaque will be starting these groups in the second or third week of September. In the first group she ran, the participants each struggled with anxiety and reported a huge improvement in their symptoms by the end of the 12-week container. She said that there is a lot of recent research indicating that SSP can be helpful for nervous system regulation after long covid. It can help with chronic pain and fatigue, depression, and anxiety, and can also help people who are just having difficulty being able to relax or calm down. "It is a good way to carve out time to relax and focus on the self," she said.

More information is available online at ErrinLaVaque.com; Errin LaVaque can be reached by phone at (734) 469-6557 or by email at errinlavaque@yahoo.com.

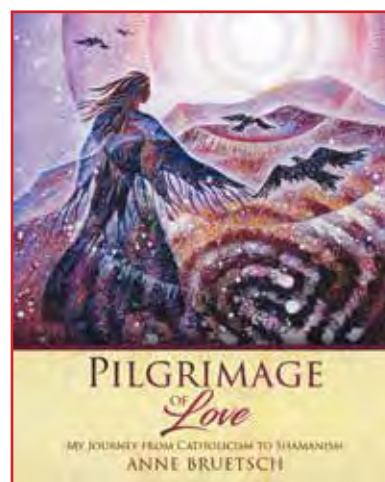
New Books by Area Authors

Anne Bruetsch published her book *Pilgrimage of Love, My Journey from Catholicism to Shamanism*, on May 8, 2023.



She called the book a "spiritual autobiography," and it tells her life story from childhood to her current age of 84. Born into a Catholic family, she was devout from an early age and became a nun for 13 years. Around that time, the second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, happened, which she described as "an opportunity to totally update the Catholic Church." This of course caused conflict between leaders who embraced change and those who disagreed with any changes. Bruetsch said that there was, and is, "A growing schism liberal versus conservative since then." She was in charge, in her community, of "updating traditions and practices," and this, she said, inevitably created conflict with conservative religious superiors. It was at this point that she had a medical and psychological crisis—waking up one day paralyzed from the waist down and being rushed to the hospital where doctors were unable to find a physical cause. A nun from another order, who was also a therapist, had been working with Bruetsch at the time, and she advised her to take a leave of absence as, if she did not, the therapist felt she would have a complete mental breakdown. Bruetsch did recover from the episode of paralysis and arranged for her leave of absence. During the leave, she eventually realized that while the call she had felt from God to live a life of service, was real, the community she had been part of was not the right place for her service.

All of this led to many years of new and different life experiences that she had never anticipated as a young nun, and eventually to exploring other spiritual paths. She went on to become a teacher, lawyer, and activist. Ultimately, at the age of 70, she said she found her "True spiritual home" in shamanism. She has been an apprentice in the Sweet Medicine Sun Dance path for the last 14 years.



"My book is not an academic textbook. It is a down-to-earth story of one ordinary person's life that an ordinary person can identify with, and hopefully learn from, and find inspiration for their own life journey," she said. Throughout her life, she has journaled, especially at times of crisis, and having these journals to look back on allowed her to examine her journey and examine how her "spiritual life... has impacted the many opportunities, challenges, decisions, and choices that everyday life presents in areas such as relationship struggles, health concerns both of mine, and of my siblings' aging and end-of-life choices."

Anne Bruetsch can be reached via email at pilgrimageoflove@yahoo.com, and more information about *Pilgrimage of Love* is available on her website, anne-bruetsch.com.

Continued on page 36



**"And suddenly you know:
It's time to start something
new and trust the magic of
beginnings."
— Meister Eckhart**



What's New in the Community



Continued from page 35

Upcoming Events



VegMichigan, a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization focused on promoting the health, environmental, and ethical benefits of plant-based eating, will host the 2023 Fall VegFest on Sunday, September 10 at Riley Park in downtown Farmington.

This is a free event held from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There will be a wide variety of vegan foods to try, including comfort foods like mac and cheese and burgers, and sweets, like fudge and donuts, said Program Manager Kim Korona. "It's like a regular fall festival, but all of the food is vegan," she said. The environment is welcoming to all, she explained, including those who have never tried vegan food and are new to the idea of plant-based eating, as well as longtime vegetarians and vegans.

One of the organization's other programs is a 30-day pledge, in which people new to plant-based eating sign up to reduce their animal-based food consumption for one month and receive some free vegan products (like Beyond Burgers) to try. Participants are surveyed after the challenge, said Korona, and "about 90% say they will eat more plant-based going forward." She emphasized that people don't have to give up animal products altogether to make a difference in their health and the environment. VegMichigan's role is to educate people on the many options available to reduce their animal product consumption and still enjoy many of the foods they love.

VegMichigan has been around for around 20 years, said Korona, and has held an annual VegFest since the beginning. Around five years ago they began holding a second festival, so there is now a Fall and Spring VegFest. During the pandemic, there were no festivals in 2020, and afterward the Spring VegFest was moved to the Eastern Market in downtown Detroit, so that it could be outside, which has turned out to be a great venue moving forward. The Fall VegFest started out at Madonna University and moved to downtown Farmington because there are a number of plant-based local businesses there who love to support the event. Riley Park, said Korona, is a beautiful park setting right in the downtown area, so people can enjoy the park, eat at picnic tables, play outdoor games, and walk over to downtown businesses that participate as well. There will be live music, a Kid Zone with children's activities including coloring activities and a comic book, vendors of eco-friendly items, and lots of different plant-based foods to try. The event's sponsors are Chive, a Farmington restaurant focused on minimal waste and from-scratch cooking with lots of vegetarian and vegan offerings along with Shimmy Shack, a food truck offering burgers, cones, chili, fries, nachos, milkshakes, and cookies that are all vegan and gluten-free.

Admission and parking are free. Riley Park is located at 33113 Grand River Avenue, Farmington, MI 48335. More information is online at vegmichigan.org and questions can be directed to tom@vegmichigan.org.



The 2023 Great Lakes Herb Faire will be held September 8 through 10, at the Cedar Lake Outdoor Center in Chelsea, Michigan.

It will be the group's ninth annual gathering. This event brings together herbalists and teachers from all over the Great Lakes' region, as well as a few from farther away. It is primarily an outdoor event, and local herbalist Jim McDonald said this is one of the aspects that makes it so special. At other conferences, he explained, people might gather at a college campus, or hotel conference center, and easily stay indoors the entire weekend, whereas at the GLHF people are outdoors, many camping or staying in the Center's rustic cabins, surrounded by nature and immersing themselves in the medicinal plants in their native environments. The presenters, he said, are all "Real plant people" with years or decades of experience in hands-on use with actual plants, not just with finished products like capsules and tinctures. Most classes and presentations are outdoors or in tents with some herb walks to actively seek the plants in their natural environment. "We want people to understand [herbalism as] a relationship with the land we all live on," said McDonald, "And to encourage reverence and respect for nature—to be in a good relationship with it and take care of it."

McDonald said that a major draw this year is keynote speaker Rosemary Gladstar, who has been practicing, learning, teaching, and writing about herbs for over 50 years. She is the author of 12 books including *Medicinal Herbs: a Beginner's Guide*. Said McDonald, "She is a pre-eminent person advocating for herbalism to be open to all and sharing knowledge and cooperating instead of competing." In addition to her keynote talk, "Voices of Our Herbal Elders," she will teach a class on "Adaptogenic and Tonic Herbs—Herbs for Longevity and Well Being."

This year's Great Lakes Herb Faire is already sold out, but McDonald said that it is always scheduled for the weekend after Labor Day for anyone looking to plan ahead for next year. The Faire is family and kid-friendly open to knowledgeable and experienced herbalists and beginners alike, to provide a space for sharing knowledge, networking, and strengthening the regional herbal community.

More information is available online at greatlakesherbfaire.org, and any questions can be directed to info@greatlakesherbfaire.org.



Ann Arbor Kirtan is a not-for-profit group of volunteer musicians and singers who participate in chanting as a spiritual practice.

Dr. Dennis Chernin, an Ann Arbor based holistic family physician, organizes the group, sings lead vocals, and plays the harmonium, a keyboard instrument. The group was started in 2005 by Chernin and Glenn Burdick, but it took a hiatus during the pandemic. Chernin said he practiced chanting on his own at home during that time. He has made a lifelong study of meditation and yoga, and recently published a book: *A Physician's Journey: Yoga & Meditation to Holistic Medicine*.

Kirtan, he explained, is a form of call-and-response yogic chanting, in which the participants are equally as important as the leading musicians. It is a form of satsang, he said, which is a Sanskrit word referring to people gathering together

to help one another find their path. This practice was born of call-and-response chanting in streets and temples in India in the 13th and 14th centuries. In the 1970s hippies brought the practice to America from India. The chants are often ancient Sanskrit mantras repeated many times, with the audience repeating after the lead singer/chanter accompanied by musical instruments. Some of the chants are ancient and some are more modern. It is a “Participatory cross-cultural musical experience,” said Chernin. He added that it is both a form of meditation and a form of spiritual self-expression which helps to “quiet the mind and bring us back to the center of our being.” Though Sanskrit is most often used, other languages can be used as well. “True language is universal because it is the language of the heart,” he said.

The accompanying instruments are a combination of Indian and Western and include flute, cello, guitar, bass guitar, violin, drums, especially the Indian tabla drum, tambora, (a Dominican drum often used in merengue music), harmonium, and sarangi, (Indian stringed instrument.) Different musicians have rotated in and out of the group, and sometimes guest singers and musicians participate. John Churchville, who plays tabla and sings, is a music teacher and performer who has won several awards. Alice Greminger plays the cello and sings; Matthew Pancone leads chants and plays the harmonium and soundboard. Rick Frires on bass and vocals, and Charlotte Frires on vocals are frequent guest musicians.

Prior to the pandemic the group performed almost monthly. Now, they play every two to three months, and Chernin said they intend to hold this pattern, because it “allows the energy to build up” between events. They usually draw fifty to seventy people, from all spiritual paths. Chernin’s own background is Jewish, and he has done an occasional Jewish chant. The mantras are universal, he explained, and deities represent certain qualities of human existence, like consciousness and bliss. They are “symbolic and poetic, anthropomorphic representations of forces within us.” Anyone from any religion can relate to these representations, he explained.

Kirtan chants are free to attend, but donations are accepted to help pay for the venue. Fall dates are to be announced on the Ann Arbor Kirtan website at kirtanannarbor.org. Dr. Dennis Chernin can be reached by email at dennischernan@gmail.com.



Previously known as the Kerrytown Bookfest, the A2 Community Bookfest will be held on Sunday, September 10 at the downtown Ann Arbor Library.

Current President and Exhibitor Chair Mary McDonald said that representatives from the Ann Arbor District Library asked if the Book Fest runners would like to host it at the downtown library, and they accepted. In 2022 the festival was held at Washtenaw Community College in Ypsilanti, which worked well, but McDonald said they are thrilled to return to their Ann Arbor roots, and be back in the downtown area. She said that the AADL offered help in many other areas as well: marketing, setting up children’s activities, facilitating authors, and more. McDonald remarked that AADL has some of the most robust and varied services of any public library system anywhere.

J. Ryan Stradal, author of bestsellers *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* and *The Lager Queen of Minnesota* will be discussing his new book *Saturday Night at the Lakeside Supper Club*.

Sonali Dev, who writes award winning Bollywood-style loves stories like *The Vibrant Years*, will preview her new book *Lies and Other Love Languages*. Dev attended graduate school at the University of Michigan and now lives in Chicago.

Poet and novelist Stephen Mack Jones will talk about his Detroit-based *August Snow* mystery series, which McDonald said, people familiar with Detroit will find rich with imagery of Mexican town.

Ann Arbor bookstore Booksweet, will host a Banned Books Club Discussion which will explore why books get banned, how we can advocate for books, and why free speech and access to different voices in society matter.

The University of Michigan Book Arts Studio will offer a block printing activity for teens and adults. This was a big hit last year, said McDonald, and will be similar, but not exactly the same.

Suzanne Jacobs Lipshaw will read to children from her picture book *Mighty Mahi*, about an injured sea turtle.

The Ann Arbor District Library’s Fifth Avenue Press will announce the release of new books from local authors.

Ian Tadashi Moore will teach children to make origami elephants inspired by his illustrated children’s book, *Zōsan*.

There will be book-related vendors, artists and artisans, booths from writer’s groups and publishers, authors, and book related nonprofit organizations. There

Continued on page 39

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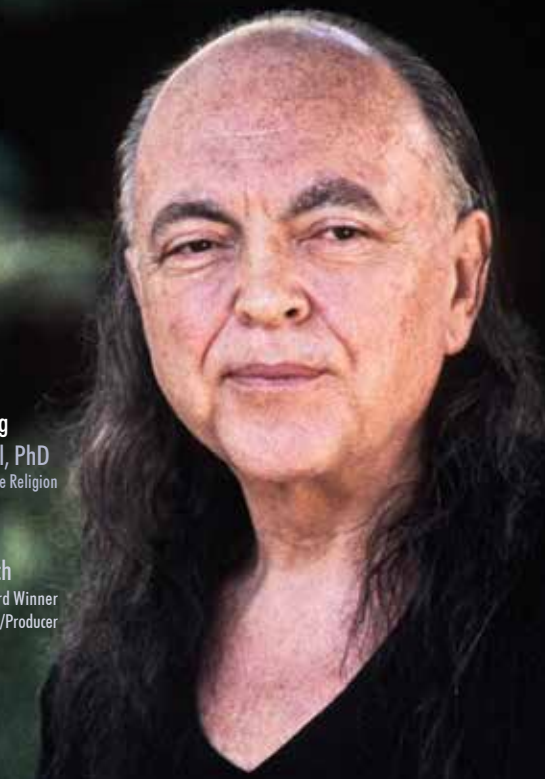


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What's New in the Community



Continued from page 37

will be a face-painter for children. Go! Ice Cream from downtown Ypsilanti will serve book-inspired ice cream flavors. The Bookfest will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with activities all day long.

The downtown Ann Arbor Library is located at 343 South 5th Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. More information is available on the website aadl.org/bookfest. Mary McDonald can be reached via email at maryclairmcdonald@gmail.com.



Michigan State University's Hidden Lake Gardens, a 755 acre outdoor attraction in Tipton, Michigan, containing gardens, an arboretum, trails, and a canopy walk, will host the first Hog Warts and Toad Bellies Fairy Tale Festival on Saturday, October 7 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Crazy Wisdom's Jennifer Carson, who is a vendor at the Michigan Renaissance Festival, said she had been dreaming of a fantasy fair a little later in the season, when it would be cool enough to wear some of the warmer costume elements like cloaks and capes comfortably. Hidden Lake Gardens used to host an annual fall festival, but this was interrupted by the pandemic and had not yet been revived. Carson decided to pitch her vision and Hidden Lake Gardens agreed to reimagine the fall festival in her fairy tale theme.

Another Crazy Wisdom staff member, Michelle McLemore, has agreed to serve as "Head Fairy" or information guide. At the time of writing, the festival was still seeking out performers, but there is already an exciting lineup of vendors, events, and activities. A "pocket fairy" will roam the grounds, and children can "pick" one of her many pockets for a prize. Guests can attend a fairy tale character picnic, build a fairy house, watch a chainsaw artist create sculptures, participate in a guided mushroom hike, get their faces painted, and decorate pumpkins. There will be a variety of performances by musicians and entertainers, lots of artisans and vendors to browse, and food trucks with delicious offerings.

A Knight's Adventure Trail will appeal to anyone who wants to learn about the code of chivalry and become a "knight" themselves by demonstrating bravery on the new canopy walk, which is 65 feet above ground at its highest point.

Fairy-tale themed costumes are encouraged for both kids and adults and will add to the magical atmosphere. Admission is \$5 per person, or \$20 for a family of four or more. Hidden Lake Garden members attend free.

More information will be posted as details are finalized at hogwartsandtoadsbellies.com. Hidden Lake Gardens is located about 45 minutes from Ann Arbor, at 6214 Monroe Road (M-50), Tipton, MI 49287.

New Classes



Nigel Kerr, an instructor at the Peaceful Dragon School under Master Wasentha Young, is offering a new Tai Chi class for teens aged 14 to 16 beginning in September.

The class focuses on Tai Chi as a tool for relaxation, de-stressing, and play. As a stepfather and grandfather, Kerr is concerned about the stress and the overstimulation of being "inundated by media" that teenagers experience. He said that when people think of Tai Chi, they tend to think of older people, but he said that teens can benefit greatly

from the practice, which he said helps with relaxation, focus, and mental health. He said he feels that helping teens develop this way of coping and self-care is something he should do.

In the first semester, students will learn a complete, short, modified Tai Chi form, as well as exercises and play. Each semester going forward will cover a specific topic in Tai Chi, starting from basic principles. Input from students, said Kerr, will figure into the topics of focus. He wants this to be a playful collaboration between teacher and students, and he plans to listen to what the teens are experiencing and could use support for. The class will be open to new students at the start of each semester, so beginners will work with more experienced students as time goes by.

The class will be offered on Monday evenings from 6 to 7 p.m. starting September 11. Students will wear exercise clothes and need no experience to get started. There is no belt ranking system. Kerr looks forward to bringing the benefits of Tai Chi that he has himself experienced to the teenage demographic.

The Peaceful Dragon School is located at 1945 Pauline Boulevard, Suite B Ann Arbor, MI 48103. More information and registration is available online at peacefuldragonschool.com. The school can be reached by phone at (734)741-0695 or by email at info@peacefuldragonschool.com.

New Practitioners and Businesses

Susan Young is a newly certified holistic life coach and founder of Triple Moon Coaching.



She specializes in helping women in their 50s and 60s explore and create an intentional, joyful midlife. Young herself is 57 years old and, like many women in their 50s, has had to navigate a lot of life transitions: becoming an empty nester, getting sober, retiring from her 28 years in the corporate sphere, and ending her marriage. Like many women, she felt that she had given so much of herself to her roles in serving others as a wife, mother, and worker, that her own sense of self and what made her happy eroded over time. At this stage of life, she said, "There's like an instinct that kicks in about mortality, thinking about legacy, restlessness... time is going by am I doing something meaningful..." She wanted this transitional stage of her life to be fulfilling, purposeful, and aligned with her own soul journey, so she had to first dig deep to discover what kind of life she wanted to build for herself, and then build it. She is passionate about helping other women do the same.

"I provide sacred space for women to explore the mind, body, and spirit, integrating creativity as a window into the soul," she said. "By connecting to our core essence and consciously checking the alignment of our trajectory, we can craft an intentional, joyful, purpose-driven life without regrets." Young is certified as a holistic life coach and is working toward her credential through the International Coaching Federation. As a practitioner of holistic wellness, she said, "I'm passionate about the interconnectedness between mind, body, and spirit."

Young currently offers one-on-one coaching sessions and is developing a 12-week hybrid group program she intends to launch at the end of the year which will include teaching modules, exercises, live small group discussions, online discussions, and one-to-one coaching. She will offer a pilot course with "all of the components, but less depth," starting in September. The working title of the course is *Voice, Vision, Vitality: Unleashing Your Authentic Expression for Personal Transformation and Collective Impact*. She does offer a free 30-minute discovery call for people exploring working with her.

Said Young, "The more women who can step into their power and know what they want to do... know deeply and express who they are without worrying what others think... it's only good things that come. There's a ripple effect--a collective impact from one woman."

More information is available on Susan Young's website, triplemooncoach.com. She can be reached via email at susan@triplemooncoach.com.

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*"I see the turning of a leaf dancing in the autumn sun, and brilliant shades of crimson glowing when the day is done."
- Hazelmarie Mattie Elliott*



What's New in the Community



Continued from page 39



Chef Eduardo Rubio of Fresh Forage is working on a new restaurant concept called Maria Bonita.

Currently in a popup/test kitchen phase, Maria Bonita brings authentic Mexican flavors and foods to Ann Arbor that are currently underrepresented. Rubio originally comes from Mexico City, known for its wide variety of street food vendors, and a rich heritage of traditional ingredients and preparations. Maria Bonita is intended to “push boundaries and change perceptions of ‘Mexican food,’” said Fresh Forage owner Rebecca Sereno. Rubio uses fresh, simple ingredients from

trusted local suppliers and makes most items from scratch. The resulting dishes are “fresh, healthy, and tell a story in every bite,” said Sereno.

Each popup event will differ as the Maria Bonita concept evolves, using customer feedback and chef experience. Some interesting ingredients Rubio uses include huitlacoche or corn smut, a fungus that can occur on corn and which is used in quesadillas, tortilla-based dishes, and soups; queso oaxaca, a white, semi-hard, low-fat cheese that is like unaged Monterey Jack; xoconostle, a cactus fruit native to central Mexico; and epazote, an aromatic herb used in Central American and Mexican cuisine. Menus have included various quesadillas, tacos, guacamole, and salsas, as well as less familiar-sounding dishes like sikil pak, a mayan pumpkin seed dip and drinks like agua de tepache, fermented pineapple water. In the future, Chef Rubio wants to be able to grind his own corn for masa, which is the base of corn tortillas. He said he really enjoys learning about such traditional methods of food preparation and at some point, intends to teach others so that the methods survive into the future. He said that he is still experimenting, and he wants to get every flavor just right before eventually opening Maria Bonita as its own restaurant.

Sereno said that she is excited to help Rubio with this concept and explained that the popup and test kitchen process is fun and allows customers to participate in the development of the concept.

Fall Maria Bonita popup dates will be announced on Instagram at [instagram.com/mariabonita eats](https://www.instagram.com/mariabonita eats) and on the website, [mariabonita eats.com](https://www.mariabonita eats.com). Fresh Forage, which hosts Maria Bonita, is located at 5060 Jackson Road, Suite. A, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Questions can be directed to hola@mariabonita eats.com.



Husband and wife Anne Taylor and Rick Nichols are the new owners of a spiritual center in Jackson, formerly the Jackson Spiritual Center and Corinthians Church, now the Infinite Light Center.

Originally, the pair planned to maintain the building and use it Monday through Saturday while the church used the space for Sunday services, but with reduced attendance since the pandemic, and with several ministers having already retired, the remaining two ministers made the decision to retire after many years of serving the community. Taylor and Nichols took over the building in December of 2022, and the last church service took place in May of 2023.

Prior to the pandemic, the building had been remodeled, including removing the old pews, so the sanctuary now has a huge open space perfect for yoga and sound baths. Both Taylor and Nichols are certified in sound healing, which is becoming very popular in this area. Taylor realized that there are no retail locations anywhere in Michigan or nearby that allow people to try out instruments used for sound healing. People just have to order online and hope the instrument they purchase works for them. Taylor described trying out different crystal singing bowls and only being able to get some to “sing” for her. She decided to make the Center Michigan’s first and only Meinl Sonic Energy dealer. She and Nichols ordered two pallets of instruments such as gongs, frame drums, chimes, singing bowls, steel tongue drums, kalimbas, and others, to set up in their showroom area. Sound healers can come try out the instruments before deciding to buy them. Individuals can also try and buy instruments for their own personal home use. Instruments will also be available for purchase on their website.

Prior to moving to Jackson, Taylor was a holistic aesthetician in Ann Arbor for 35 years. When she married Nichols two years ago and moved, most of her long-time clients were not willing to make the drive, and so she has been able to devote most of her time to the spiritual center. Currently there is an instructor offering yoga classes there: Kimberly Joy Rieli offers sound baths on a regular basis, and Taylor and Nichols are exploring what else the community needs, with the goal of “raising consciousness and bringing light in.” Both are ordained ministers but had not intended to start a ministry at the center. However, another couple who are ministers recently spoke to them about offering spiritual services there, so they are working out what that will look like. Eventually they would like to offer some classes in sound healing, especially something for parents and children, said Taylor. They will offer the center’s first holistic spiritual fair on November 11, bringing in healers and vendors from Jackson, Ann Arbor, and areas nearby. The center will be available for rental by teachers and practitioners, with a goal of being affordable.

The Infinite Light Center is located at 1805 East Ganson Street, Jackson, MI 49202. More information is available online at [infinitelightjackson.com](https://www.infinitelightjackson.com) and the center can be reached by phone at (517) 962-4725 or by email at anne@infinitelightjackson.com.



This fall, integrative mental health practice Reset Brain and Body, is adding an Ann Arbor location at 2725 Packard, in addition to its Plymouth and Northville offices.

The practice is celebrating five years since its founding by Kerry Cragin Biskelonis, LPC, and has grown to a team of over 20 therapists and 15 support staff.

Biskelonis did not always know she wanted to be a therapist. She majored in political science in college because she “wanted to save the world.” She ended up working in human resources and recruiting and had a few jobs at startups and Fortune 500 companies. Along the way, she realized that she loved working with people and hearing their stories, but that she would rather be supporting the employees than representing the interests of the business. She went to graduate school to become a counselor, and while there did yoga to manage her stress. She noticed so many connections between what she was learning in school and what she was doing in yoga, but no one was really talking about it.

She spent the rest of her graduate program focusing on the mind-body connection and yoga informed treatment. In her first private practice in Chicago, she worked out of a yoga studio where there were literally no chairs, so she “had to be really creative and integrative.” When they had a baby, she and her husband decided to move back to his hometown in Plymouth, Michigan, where she started Reset in the basement of a professional building. In working on building her clientele, she made some calls to local high schools and let them know she integrated yoga, mindfulness, and somatic therapies with mainstream talk therapy. Her practice snowballed from there, she said. She had not set out with the intention of growing to the practice’s current scale, she said, but the concept of integrative therapy has been very well received. People find it refreshing from traditional talk therapy, she said.

Within two years of starting, Reset was able to buy a building in downtown Plymouth. A year later they opened in Northville, steadily adding clients, therapists, and support staff. “We’ve grown with a lot of integrity,” said Biskelonis. “We believe so much in the mind-body connection. It has to be a therapist who really knows how to integrate.” She said that integrative therapy is beginning to move more into mainstream awareness, but “still has a long way to go.”

Margaux Forster, Marketing and Branding Coordinator, was hired two and a half years ago, and came from a corporate background like Biskelonis. She explained that many of Reset’s therapists and support staff come from corporate backgrounds, and that, “This is the something different we wanted to find—a place to do what we’re good at in a fulfilling space and help people.” Biskelonis’ husband Nick Biskelonis left his job at Ford Motor Company last year to join the team as Operations Director, and her sister Heather Buonsante was recently hired as Director of People and Culture. “This is now really a shared vision,” said Biskelonis.

Therapists at Reset specialize in a variety of mindfulness-based practices including meditation, creative expression, therapeutic yoga, somatic experiencing, and more, to help clients in reconnecting their brain and mental experience to their body/physical experience, and “live their most fulfilled, empowered, and healthy lives,” said Forster. They are able to help people with anxiety, depression, chronic pain, stress, trauma, substance use, parenting and relationship issues, LGBTQI+ issues, and there is a team of specialists who work with athletes. On initial intake, explained Biskelonis, the office coordinator gathers a lot of information so the client can be matched with the therapist that is the best fit for them. This makes things easier for the client, so they don’t have to spend a lot of time and energy shopping for the right therapist, and for the therapists, so they don’t burn out working with clients who aren’t a good match. Potential clients don’t have to know anything about yoga, meditation, or anything else, they should just be open to new experiences, said Biskelonis. “They will meet you where you are and challenge you to go beyond what is traditionally thought of, looking at your life holistically, and encourage you to bring your body into the session and connect to it throughout.” Forster emphasized that clients don’t have to do meditation, yoga, or somatic therapies, as the therapists are well versed in traditional talk therapy as well. But if people are open to other techniques, they can benefit greatly.

The Ann Arbor location of Reset Brain and Body is located at 2725 Packard Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. They can be reached by phone at (734) 531-8563 or by email at info@resetbrainandbody.com. Visit their website at resetbrainandbody.com.



Submit your listing for the January through April 2024 issue.

Please note that the “What’s New in the Community” column is part of the editorial (not paid-for-advertising) part of the CW Journal, and the editors may or may not include what you submit. Whether the editors include material or not will depend on space considerations, as well as other editorial issues, such as the need for high resolution jpgs and the overall mix of stories included in the “What’s New in the Community” column in a given issue.

If you would like to submit information to be considered for this column, please email communitynews@crazywisdom.net.

The firm deadline for submissions for the next issue (Jan. thru Apr. 2024) is November 1, 2023.

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LEAPS OF FAITH

TALES OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

By Laurel Decker
Photos by Susan Ayer

This column is a look at brave souls who have taken a leap of faith to open their own businesses in and around Ann Arbor. Business owners who are following their dreams and thriving despite the odds.

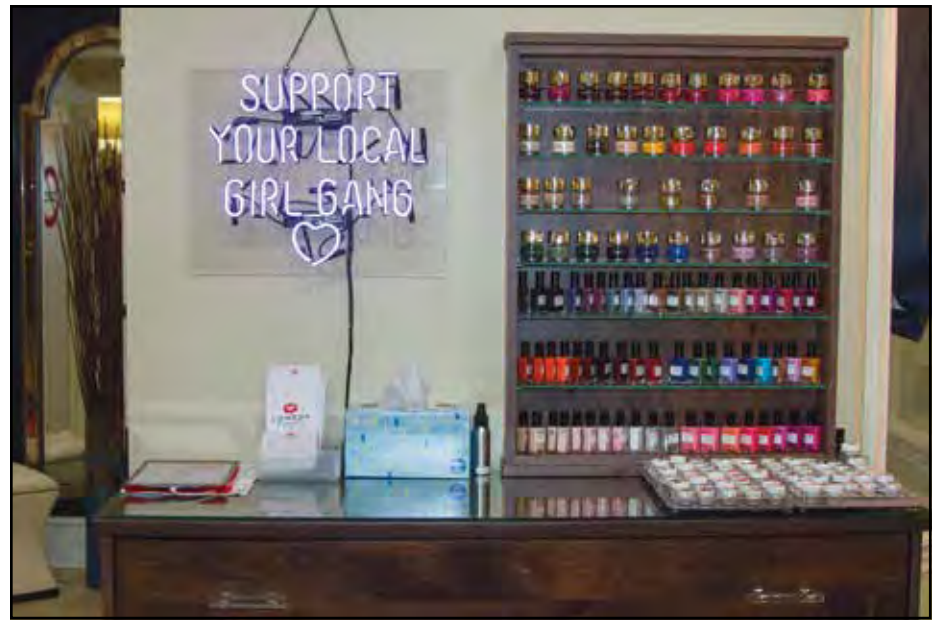
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Kathleen London has loved luxury brands for as long as she can remember. So, she was thrilled when her dream career path took her from Hudson, Ohio to New York City, where she lived what she describes as “the experience of a lifetime working in an adorable walk up near Central Park.” London worked at both the store level and corporate level for brands like Barneys, Max Mara, Sergio Rossi, and Geox to name a few. She found that she was especially drawn to brands that stand for clean products that are environmentally responsible. She also discovered a problem that she felt uniquely qualified to fix.



We strive to provide more service, education, and comfort which is the unique nature of the smaller business. London Beauty stores are also a place where you can have an expert give you advice customized just for your beauty needs.

—Kathleen London

After 20 years of living away from the Midwest, London knew she wanted to bring clean luxury beauty care to Michigan. She knew the industry inside and out, and after looking around various towns and cities in Southeast Michigan, she knew exactly where to open her small business. But there was something she could have never known when she opened London Beauty in Brighton, Michigan five years ago—that a global pandemic would force her to close her store just as she was planning to open a second one. But even as the virus threatened the stability of commerce, London did open a second London Beauty in Ann Arbor. This is where I met with London in the spa section of the store. We talked about everything from Chanel wallets to crystal healing mats, and I learned about her experience with opening her second store while Covid-19 was still very much a concern for small business owners.

I also had a chance to confide in London that the pandemic helped me to avoid the beauty product I felt most intimidated by. She smiled when I told her what it was and invited me to experiment with their products after our interview. The more I got to know about London and her values as a business owner, the more reassured I was that I was in good hands with the London Beauty staff.



Kathleen London

Kathleen London has loved luxury brands for as long as she can remember. So, she was thrilled when her dream career path took her from Hudson, Ohio to New York City, where she lived what she describes as “the experience of a lifetime working in an adorable walk up near Central Park.”

Laurel Decker : How was it different opening your Brighton store before the pandemic compared to your Ann Arbor location during the pandemic?

Kathleen London: It all felt crazy. We opened 18 months before the pandemic and then took over this location just at the bulk of the pandemic. Now we are facing street construction. That has added issues with accessibility for our customers. I think the biggest thing small businesses face these days is the ability to pivot and compete with chain stores. Clients have to want to shop with us and not Amazon. We strive to provide more service, education, and comfort which is the unique nature of the smaller business. London Beauty stores are also a place where you can have an expert give you advice customized just for your beauty needs. Everyone is so different and at different phases in their lives. I had a mom come in who said, "I've been out of my beauty routine for over a year now and my daughter shows me all of these things on TickTock about beauty care and trends. It's overwhelming!" She knew she wouldn't get what she needed just by trying all the random things that worked for other people. Plus, that can be more expensive in the long run than just getting exactly what you need. So, she came to us, and we had fun finding what worked for her.



I'm proud to say that with their help I have mastered the red lip technique, and now it's a lot of fun to wear this look. Just as mask mandates were lifted from the airline industry, I took a break from flying. I am going back to work in the coming months, and I will be packing my new perfect red lipstick to wear confidently without the mask.



Laurel Decker : Were there certain spa services and products that people were most eager to come back for after being unable to get them during the lockdowns and mask mandates?

Kathleen London: I would say facials. We were able to sell products and to perform certain spa treatments once the mandates became less strict, but facials were not available at all due to masking. People were also excited to buy new makeup after working from home and having to wear a mask when they went out. Some people found that their preferences and skincare had changed by the time they went back to full makeup.

Laurel Decker : Your website says you carry "brands that are exploding in the indie beauty movement that are organic, local, cruelty-free, and effective." Describe what that means to you, and why you are committed to offering clean beauty products.

Kathleen London: Rather like Whole Foods, people are taking an interest in transparency and ingredients. Your skin is your biggest organ. So, what we put on our face and body is as important as what we eat, if not more so. We are a boutique cosmetic store, and people come to us because they don't want

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to sacrifice quality or integrity in their products. They expect both. I look for innovative and clean products when I select brands for my London Beauty customers. There are a lot of high-end beauty retailers in NYC that have clean beauty products. But when I would spend time in the Midwest, I couldn't find those products anywhere. I learned the reason is that in NYC they see us [Midwesterners] as not being sophisticated and trendy. They joke that the Midwest are fly over states when it comes to buying. We know it's an incorrect lens. There are so many others in this region who are like me—who appreciate high quality and enjoy current trends.

Laurel Decker : What is the London Beauty experience?

Kathleen London: This is a holistic thing for us because beauty care can be a space that is very vulnerable. As a brand, our point of view is that we are providing a safe place to talk about, and explore, what makes us feel beautiful. Whether you are born or identify as a woman, all of us wonder if self-care is an investment we are worth. We remind customers that there are no rules. You can try it all and experiment! Overall, London Beauty is a place where you don't feel judged, and that goes back to feeling worthy of self-care. I think self-care is an affordable luxury that isn't always about a specific possession or product. It's about the experience. If you go to a beauty store and you don't leave feeling like a million bucks, you were in the wrong beauty store. I don't care if it's lip balm or mascara, or if you get full treatments in our spa, beauty care should be fun, playful and rejuvenating. And easy. Nine times out of ten we are showing someone how to do a five-minute look and feel put together so they can go about their day.

As we left the spa section of the building, we walked up the stairs toward the front of the store. Natural light spilled through the large windows of the historic brick building. Recalling my beauty product dilemma, London introduced me to Ilse Devereux, who listened as I explained that during the pandemic, I started a job as a flight attendant. I typically wear neutral makeup, but I thought it would be fun to try the signature "red lip" statement makeup. Right from the start I learned why this is arguably the most daring, and tricky, makeup product of all. I struggled to get the color and technique just right. I tucked the tube into the back of my makeup drawer and decided maybe it was fortunate for me that I had to work with a mask covering my mouth.

Devereux knew exactly which brand had the best reputation for staying put and not fading, and she quickly helped me find the perfect shade. As she applied the makeup and gave me technique tips, she noted common mistakes and ways to keep the color in place. She then put my new lipstick in a cute bag with the London Beauty logo on it—a red lipstick kiss mark. I had such a great time solving this makeup riddle while also meeting great people. This demonstrated for me what London shared earlier about why she pushes through the challenges of owning a small business. She is passionate about making beauty and skincare an enjoyable experience. She knows that the value of shopping locally is that it's fun, builds community, and provides personal service that can be compromised when shopping online or at massive stores.

I left London Beauty with more than new friends and a great product. I'm proud to say that with their help I have mastered the red lip technique, and now it's a lot of fun to wear this look. Just as mask mandates were lifted from the airline industry, I took a break from flying. I am going back to work in the coming months, and I will be packing my new perfect red lipstick to wear confidently without the mask.



LEAPS OF FAITH

TALES OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

By Laurel Decker
Photos by Susan Ayer

Misfit Society Coffee Club

Misfit Society Coffee Club
615 East University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 263-228
misfitsocietycoffee.com

Social Misfits Coffee
43 Fulton Street West, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 272-4984
thesocialmisfits.com • Instagram: @socialmisfitwcc

During the Covid-19 pandemic, entrepreneur Spencer Raymond experienced both the closing of one business and the opening of another. Before becoming the founder of Ann Arbor's Misfit Society Coffee Club (MSCC), Raymond had introduced the franchise Grabbagreen Food + Juice to Michigan. With three stores opened by the fall of 2019, Raymond had committed not only his money, but his creativity and passion for the food and hospitality industry toward supporting the Arizona-based company. Within months the pandemic was in full force, and he was forced to temporarily close his businesses following the Michigan shutdown mandates. Even as Raymond waited out the uncertain



We aim to build relationships in our community, to showcase that welcoming culture within our staff and in our customers.

Having a Bachelor of Hospitality Management from Michigan State and a solid knowledge of the culture in Michigan, Raymond's suggestions were well thought out and supported by personal experience, so to his surprise, he found that his ideas were not welcomed. He kept trying to contribute to the conversation and kept getting shut down.

timeline for the mandates to be lifted, he was optimistic about reaching the brand's full potential. When he was allowed to reopen to the public, business was understandably slow, and yet, Raymond remained hopeful that foot traffic would eventually pick up to resemble pre-pandemic numbers.

Things were looking bleak. Raymond sat in a meeting with the brand owners to figure out how to regain momentum, and he brought some progressive ideas to the table. Having a Bachelor of Hospitality Management from Michigan State and a solid knowledge of the culture in Michigan, Raymond's suggestions were well thought out and supported by personal experience, so to his surprise, he found that his ideas were not welcomed. He kept trying to contribute to the conversation and kept getting shut down. Discouraged and feeling like a "social misfit" who was being restricted in how he ran his business, Raymond finished the meeting in silence. Yet, his heart was speaking loud and clear, and he was inspired to write down his thoughts. By the end of the meeting, Raymond had developed a vision for how he would run his own company if he could do things his way.

Emma Stults, Andrew Soltis, and Kenzie Newby



Before becoming the founder of Ann Arbor's Misfit Society Coffee Club (MSCC), Raymond had introduced the franchise Grabbagreen Food + Juice to Michigan.

Shortly after that meeting, it seemed no matter what Raymond did, the businesses did not recover, and he was forced to close his three stores indefinitely. But his optimism remained. Feeling inspired by his realizations in the franchise meeting, Raymond was motivated to start his own business. Marketing was important to Raymond as he planned his first restaurant, and he made the smart move to hire Megan Seeley as the Brand Marketing Manager in May of 2021. Seeley hit the ground running, and her savvy use of technology and social media ensured that awareness of the unique “Misfit” brand Raymond founded would grow rapidly. Even as the pandemic continued to occupy headlines, Raymond opened Social Misfits Coffee, a full-service restaurant in Grand Rapids, in December of 2021. The one location he held onto when closing his franchises was at 615 East University Ave, adjacent to the U of M campus. He reopened it as Misfit Society Coffee Club in March of 2023, offering a place where students could study and lounge, and coffee enthusiasts like himself could enjoy a great atmosphere with outstanding coffee. Word is spreading, thanks to happy customers and Seeley’s strategic marketing. In a virtual interview with Seeley, she shared insights into how she and Raymond are keeping this brand going strong, and how business has been affected by the pandemic.



Although Raymond did not expect to find himself as an outsider as a franchise representative, he embraced the experience rather than letting it keep him down. It gave him the inspiration and motivation that set him on the path of solo entrepreneurship. That drive, along with his edgy approach to food, beverages, and atmosphere, allowed him to establish a strong brand and customer base even as effects of the pandemic lingered.

—Megan Seely, Brand Marketing Manager



Laurel Decker: Have you noticed any lingering effects from the pandemic that have impacted, or continue to impact, your business?

Megan Seeley: We have only been open for nearly three months now, so I don’t have an accurate before and/or after pandemic effects to relate specifically to our MSCC coffee shop. However, online ordering still seems to be widely prevalent in sales and operations of any business large or small these days. It definitely wasn’t quite as common pre-pandemic, but it does seem to confidently dominate a business model and structure over and over again with any concept I see that opens. Another thing I’ve noticed is that, before the pandemic, restaurants were not disclosing information. Companies that were not disclosing information, or didn’t keep up with technology that would help them share their day-to-day availability, went under. Consistency was not possible for most businesses, as it was affected by staffing problems and supply-chain issues. That’s where the value had shifted to favor communication. I think our emphasis on transparency is one reason we are doing so well.

Laurel Decker: Have you received any meaningful feedback from the community?

Megan Seeley: We do have an on-going QR code scan for feedback that sits on every table at MSCC. We have staff encourage customers to provide feedback,

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comments, suggestions, etc. We have indeed adjusted since opening due to ongoing and trending feedback we have received from the customers who have responded to this. Since opening, this has been coming in from students at the Ross School of Business, our loyal followers on our social platforms, email, and SMS marketing. Also, our loyal followers in Grand Rapids have been in great support of our coffee shop opening in Ann Arbor. I have received a few SMS messages and DMs on social media from our customers and supporters of Social Misfits who have tried out our coffee shop in Ann Arbor and have begun to see the full vision, direction, passion, and edginess Spencer puts into his concepts. As a Brand Marketing Manager, this speaks volumes to the success we already have seen with recognizing our brand(s) alone only after just being open for a few short months!

Laurel Decker: What does it mean for you to provide a social gathering space, considering the social restrictions that were imposed during the pandemic? How is that different from providing a product?

Megan Seeley: With our brand, a “social gathering space” speaks more to a mindset, a lifestyle. We aim to provide a “come as you are”, a warm welcoming house of refuge for all. Meaning, we are pretty much a place for anyone and everyone; whether you feel you belong to a place or not, you’re always welcome here. We aim to build relationships in our community, to showcase that welcoming culture within our staff and in our customers foremost. Of course, we ultimately want every customer to LOVE our products, what we do, the value we provide, and the quality, when it comes down to business. If our culture and our why is well-received first, the creative insights of every detail we do daily will be recognized just the same.

Laurel Decker: What do you like most about where you are located?

Megan Seeley: Spencer, his wife, and three kids are native to the Ann Arbor area. He frequents downtown Ann Arbor on date nights with his wife and has always admired the community. He wanted a location close enough to home he could easily pop-in anytime. Spencer loves being directly in the heart of U of M’s campus, allowing for the business traffic and business operating hours to be reflected by the U of M students and the college-age demographic.

Laurel Decker: What keeps you motivated to persist through the challenges of running a business?

Megan Seeley: I am enthralled by the ever-changing trends in the food and beverage industry. I have an absolute passion for the hospitality industry and everything encompassing it. It is the only industry I have ever been in. It sort of sucks you in—the culture, the relationships you build, all of it. Like always wanting to go out and staying up-to-date on the latest food and beverage trends around the world and in my area. Ultimately, the stories that other restaurant and business owners have of their own genuinely intrigues and inspires me. I get lost into their story and their perspective of how they did it their way. I wake up every day thriving off the food and beverage industry and am constantly in awe. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines a *misfit* as “a person who is not accepted by a particular group of people, especially because their behavior or their ideas are very different.” Although Raymond did not expect to find himself as an outsider as a franchise representative, he embraced the experience rather than letting it keep him down. It gave him the inspiration and motivation that set him on the path of solo entrepreneurship. That drive, along with his edgy approach to food, beverages, and atmosphere, allowed him to establish a strong brand and customer base even as effects of the pandemic lingered. These days, Raymond and his talented team are leaning into not fitting in, and it’s working for them. As is brand awareness, great service, and product quality. I was short on time when I stopped by Misfit Society Coffee Club in Ann Arbor after speaking with Raymond and Seeley. Rather than describing my brief experience there, I will only say that I agree with the section on the MSCC website that informs time-crunched customers that they can pick up online orders— adding, “Although you’ll be missing out on some BOMB-ASS coffee shop decor (and a sweet movie) by not dining in with us.” My quick stop was a tease, and now I can’t wait to go back when I have time to relax and enjoy this truly creative Michigan original.

The Witches of West Michigan Offer Spiritual Community for All

By Catherine Carr

I first learned about the Witches of West Michigan in 2022. That was the year a friend invited me to join them on a campground in Ionia for a weekend of camping with fellow witches.

Just a decade ago, being casually invited to such an event would have been unthinkable to me. There were no public-facing witchcraft groups within easy reach of my Michigan hometown at the time.



Just a decade ago, being casually invited to such an event would have been unthinkable to me. There were no public-facing witchcraft groups within easy reach of my Michigan hometown at the time. Even though I knew many local people had an interest in the Pagan spiritual arts, practice groups were generally underground and by invitation only.

Witchcraft has been a word used to describe a variety of spiritual practices, including the cultivation of relationships with nature spirits, divination, polytheism, Goddess worship, and the use of magical ritual for self-empowerment since the late 19th century.

This culture of secrecy was likely a holdover from the “Satanic Panic” of the 1980s-2000s, which saw groups and individuals suspected of spreading Pagan and Witchcraft teachings being investigated by law enforcement. This moral panic calmed in the mid-2000s after the FBI released official statements that no evidence of violent crime had been discovered in their extensive investigations of Witch and Pagan circles, and that law enforcement agencies were losing track of real violent criminals in their zeal to focus their investigative efforts on “devil worshippers” such as Witches, Pagans, and heavy metal fans.

Witchcraft has been a word used to describe a variety of spiritual practices, including the cultivation of relationships with nature spirits, divination, polytheism, Goddess worship, and the use of magical ritual for self-empowerment since the late 19th century. The precursors to Gerald Gardner’s formulation of Wicca as a religious path credited various goddesses with giving women and peasants the power to resist oppression by patriarchal religions and violent warlords.

In the modern era, Witchcraft has become a catch-all for empowering spiritual practices found in animistic, polytheistic, and Goddess-worship philosophies.

The term has even come to include monotheists, including Christians and Jews, who find benefit in contemplating God’s feminine side and atheists who see societal and clinical benefits to Witchcraft practices.

These practices and ideas were banned within mainstream Christianity and Islam for centuries, but more and more scholars are questioning the sometimes hasty scriptural translations that led to the bans. Some have pointed out that blanket Biblical prohibitions on divination and Witchcraft may have been mistranslations from the original Hebrew, and that some Biblical patriarchs appear to use spiritual arts at God’s command throughout the text which many modern churches would probably consider to be Witchcraft.

Witchcraft and Paganism have been among America’s fastest-growing religious and spiritual movements since around 1990. The number of self-identified Witches and Pagans in the United States has doubled every decade since that year, as more and more people found personal empowerment and a theology that promoted sustainable living through personal relationships with nature and self-directed spiritual practices. As knowledge of Pagan and Witchcraft teachings becomes more common, these movements are increasingly becoming seen for the eco-friendly and life-affirming forces that they are.

In the words of Witches of West Michigan administrator Erykah Rose, “‘Witch’ isn’t a bad word anymore.”

In 2020 the numbers of self-identified Witches seemed to reach critical mass in West Michigan, when the Facebook group Witches of West Michigan burst onto the scene and rapidly accrued over 2,500 members. This was their membership count when I was invited to their campout in August of 2022, where group members cooked s’mores over fires, played Pagan music from Bluetooth speakers in the forest, and shared stories of their often magical life journeys.

Sitting around the campfire, it was easy to see the appeal of magical spiritual communities. Here were people who walked off the beaten path, often after watching societal systems spectacularly fail them and their loved ones. Here was a group of people who accepted their stories of serendipity, magic, divine intervention, and finding personal power with gratitude for their shared experiences. Notably absent was the judgmental attitude I’d found in the religious organizations of my youth, where firsthand spiritual and religious experiences were actually discouraged and criticized if they did not match the sensibilities of local authority figures. Here, people could be supported in being their truest selves.



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Witchcraft has, from the beginning, been about self-determination. And that is arguably part of what fueled the “Satanic Panic” of the 21st century. Many segments of society once assumed that Witches, with their refusal to conform and follow the rules, must obviously have used their freedom and autonomy to do harm.

For this article I interviewed Erykah Rose, a member of the moderator and administrator team that’s planning the Witches of West Michigan’s next move.

Rose told me that, to her, being a Witch meant taking an uncommon path. “It means being a part of the world, but also being separate from it since many parts of society will reject you for going against the grain. It means following your spirit’s truest purpose. Being a Witch has always felt like an innate part of me. I’ve always felt a pull toward Witchcraft.”

According to Rose, she never saw Witches as being malevolent growing up. “To me, a Witch was someone who knew their own mind and their own power. Being a Witch meant never letting anyone take your power from you. It meant knowing yourself wholly, your knowledge and feelings. It meant not bowing to society’s expectations, knowing yourself so much that you weren’t afraid to be yourself.”

Witchcraft has, from the beginning, been about self-determination. And that is arguably part of what fueled the “Satanic Panic” of the 21st century. Many segments of society once assumed that Witches, with their refusal to conform and follow the rules, must obviously have used their freedom and autonomy to do harm. But as wave after wave of abuse and fraud scandals break in major religious and political institutions, more and more people are coming around to the idea that cultivating one’s own power and resisting outside pressures is in fact a powerful way to do good.

“To me,” Rose said, “Witchcraft is about cultivating the self. It’s about finding growth in turbulent times. And by growth, I mean taking control of the things you can control and becoming stronger in the face of adversity. Witchcraft kind of saved my life, in that sense.”



We’re not all Wiccans, though we do count them in our number, and we’re not here to tell people what to do or to gatekeep. We’re here to offer resources and community to help support them in growing on their own path...
— Erykah Rose

I don’t pry into that personal statement, but it’s a statement I hear often. Like with many religious converts, Pagans and Witches often report being failed by societal systems and other philosophies before finding the strength they needed to survive in Paganism and Witchcraft.

When asked if there was any marketing magic behind the group’s explosive growth, Rose said the answer was “no.” “It’s really all been organic,” she told me. “People were really hungry for a group like this. We saw about 800 people join after our local news covered one of our events in early 2023, but we were already thousands strong before that.”

As of today, the Witches of West Michigan membership stands at nearly 4,000. The group is currently drawing up plans to expand their calendar of both in-person and online activities into 2024. They already host monthly practices of their choir, the Michigan Muses; co-sponsor and co-host Grand Rapids Pagan Pride; and are planning on organizing regular workshops and classes in partnership with Grand Rapids’ Black Cat Bodega.

“On Wednesdays, in our Facebook group we have ‘Ask a Witch Wednesdays,’” Rose explained to me. “We want this to be a time when people can come and ask questions without feeling intimidated or judged. We were all new to Witchcraft or didn’t know much about it at one point. We want to be here to answer people’s questions and show them that there are multiple ways of working on the same problem.”

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As of today, the Witches of West Michigan membership stands at nearly 4,000. The group is currently drawing up plans to expand their calendar of both in-person and online activities into 2024.

“We also have Small Business Saturdays, where people with witchy businesses can advertise on the group’s Facebook page.” The group maintains an online directory of member-owned businesses which include legal services, doulas, locally Witch-made body care products, and education and coaching in wildcraft, herbology, art, and music.

Rose shares that the group is not tradition-specific and is friendly to people of all religious and traditional backgrounds. “We’re not all Wiccans, though we do count them in our number, and we’re not here to tell people what to do or to gatekeep,” Rose said. “We’re here to offer resources and community to help support them in growing on their own path. We have self-identified Jewish and Christian witches. We have people of lots of different Pagan traditions. A lot of us are eclectic Witches,” she said, referring to Witches who do not follow an established tradition but rather incorporate the spiritual practices that feel right to them.

One of the group’s future goals is to help Michigan-based Witches to find Witchcraft and Pagan events happening near them throughout the state.

“The response to the group has been really incredible,” Rose told me. “So many people have come forward saying, ‘I thought I was alone. But now, I see that I’m not.’”

With the work of organizers like the Witches of West Michigan founders and administrators, Witches and Pagans don’t need to feel alone in Michigan any longer.

People who host, or are planning to host open-to-the-public Witch or Pagan events are encouraged to contact the Witches of West Michigan leadership team at witchesofwmi@gmail.com if they wish to publicize their events to the group’s membership. You can find the West Side Witches on Facebook @witchesofwestmichigan.

Catherine Carr earned her degree in Neuroscience from the University of Michigan in 2011, and she applies a scientific mindset to her investigation of religious and spiritual topics. Her book, World Soul: Healing Ourselves and the Earth through Pagan Theology, is available on Amazon, or free in digital format through her website CatherineCarr.org.

Astrologically Speaking

Sheer Lunacy: The Moon's Journey Through the Zodiac Signs



By Catherine Carlson

The moon is our fastest moving celestial body. As such, every 30 days it cycles through all 12 zodiac signs. The sun, by comparison takes a full year to get through the signs.

While the sun reflects our personality, the moon reflects our emotional self. It can reflect the mother archetype and how we are cared for as well as how we nurture. It can also represent the health of the entire body. This means our feelings or how we react to things can be more steady, less intense or more amplified depending on where the moon is.



While the sun reflects our personality, the moon reflects our emotional self. It can reflect the mother archetype and how we are cared for as well as how we nurture. It can also represent the health of the entire body.

The moon stays in a sign for two to three days, so each month we get to surround ourselves with the energy of eleven signs other than our own and may feel a little like that sign briefly. Being so close to the earth means the astrological energy of the moon has a more intense effect on us and our planet.

Knowing what sign the moon is in can help you navigate your calendar and also understand yourself and your how you are feeling at any given time. If you know what sign your natal moon is in, you might find those are the times when it feels natural since it is the most familiar energy to you.

Here is an overview of the atmosphere surrounding the moon through each sign.



The moon in a water sign is going to be the most sensitive and introspective of all the elements.



Moon in Water Signs:

The moon is at home in water signs. The gravity of the moon affects all water on earth—the tides as well as we humans (who are made up of approximately 60% water). The moon in a water sign is going to be the most sensitive and introspective of all the elements. These are the times when you may feel the least social and find it the easiest time to let emotions flow.

Moon in Cancer:

Picture a crab on the rocks at night, finally able to come out of its dark hiding place. The moon is the planetary ruler of the sign Cancer, so this is naturally a very emotional transit. You may feel agitated or uncomfortable, or “crabby” during this time. On the other hand, your maternal instincts may be activated and you might feel caring toward loved ones or pets. It's a good time for healing both internally or externally. Having a cozy meal with friends or family aligns with this energy, as does watching a movie. If you have a party on the calendar and would rather stay home, the moon

may be in Cancer. It's a good time to lay low, stay in your crab shell, and process your emotions. [September 9-10; October 6-7; November 2-4, 30; December 1, 26 (full moon), 27-29].

Moon in Scorpio:

Sensitivity may be present but hidden under a Scorpio moon. Your emotional response during this time may not be obvious since there is often a lot going on beneath the surface. What about those feelings that are buried deep? This is the moon under which dark or heavy subject matters can be addressed. Long lost secrets may be revealed during a Scorpio moon. This energy can also bring about deep healing. [September 19-20, October 16-17, November 12,13 (new moon),14, December 10-11]

Moon in Pisces:

If you feel like the world is just too much, the moon may be in Pisces. It can be an extra-sensitive time of great empathy toward unfortunate situations with friends or strangers. Even if that doesn't apply, you may still feel the desire to escape reality during this time either through a fantasy novel or a beverage. Of all the moons, this one is most connected to dreams, so don't be surprised if you have some interesting ones, especially during a new or full Pisces moon. This moon has an energy that lends itself to romance and lovely dates to a concert, opera, or ballet. Drawing up designs, blueprints, or making music all work beautifully with this influence. [September 1, 28-29; October 25-26; November 21-22, December 18-19].



The moon in an air sign is going to highlight all kinds of mental activity. This includes how we communicate with each other as well as how we gather information and share it.



Moon in Air Signs:

The moon in an air sign is going to highlight all kinds of mental activity. This includes how we communicate with each other as well as how we gather information and share it. The moon in air signs won't be as sensitive as others because it tends to process emotions by talking about them instead of feeling them. If you feel like it's too much, let the air flow by remembering to breathe. Or better yet, go outside and feel the breeze.

Moon in Gemini:

This is perhaps the most social moon in the sky. It's a good time to have or attend a party, meet up with friends, start a class, or attend a lecture. Reading or learning about a fascinating subject is perfect since you may feel extra curious. It's also a fine time to write in your journal or catch up on emails and calls. Communication in all its forms will be the energy du jour, but you may feel overwhelmed by the amount of it with a tendency to feel scattered. [September 6-8; October 4-5, 31; November 1, 27 (full moon), 28-29; December 25-26]

Moon in Libra:

This moon may make you feel more sensitive to your best friend or partner as you strive for harmony and balance in all types of interpersonal relationships. You can also feel very much in touch with your inner designer and make inspired choices for your home or wardrobe. Under the influence of this moon, you may feel more confused overall or indecisive because

you can see the benefit of multiple choices making it difficult to make one. [September 16-18; October 14 (new moon solar eclipse) and 15; November 10-11; December 7-9].

Moon in Aquarius:

Under this moon you might find yourself the most detached from what you are feeling. Emotions can easily bypass a physical reaction. Because of this there can be a lack of inter-personal sensitivity and you may go against the status-quo, even if at other times this is not your normal behavior. At the same time there can be a desire to be with the group and an awareness of the needs of a collective. You may feel like lending support to a humanitarian cause, for example. [September 25-27; October 23-24; November 19-20; December 16-17].



The moon in an earth sign creates a solid and stable atmosphere.



Moon in Earth Signs:

The moon in an earth sign creates a solid and stable atmosphere. Overall, you may respond logically. If the energy of the moon in earth becomes overwhelming, try to have patience and remember to slow down which will allow you to feel your feelings rather than respond in a practical way.

Moon in Taurus:

This is considered to be one of the most comfortable placements as the moon is quite content in the sign of Taurus. It's a slower pace and it's reflective. You may naturally be drawn to cooking, gardening or creating beauty in or out of your home. You may also be prone to bouts of stubbornness or feeling a lack of physical or financial security as this energy is concerned about stability. [September 4-5, October 2-3, 28 (full moon lunar eclipse) & 30; November 25-26, December 23-24]

Moon in Virgo:

Virgo is a wonderfully predictive moon. You may find yourself tackling your list with greater ease or feel inspired to organize your drawers. This is a good time for volunteer work or lending a helping hand in all manner of ways. You may feel inspired to improve your health. Virgo's desire for perfectionism is strong here, so you may be inclined to be a bit hard on yourself, or judgmental of others. Take care to watch for that and build in some relaxation. [September 14(new moon), 15; October 11-13; November 7-8; December 5-6].

Moon in Capricorn:

"Taking Care of Business" is the theme song of this moon which lends itself to the need to have some degree of control or responsibility over our world. It can highlight all managerial or business matters. The desire to set goals and reach levels of achievement may be strong. Feeling grumpy can be common especially when things aren't done to a certain degree of excellence. [September 23-24; October 21-22; November 17-18; December 14-15].



When our emotions are held to the fire, we can be quick to react and may not even be aware of what we're saying or doing.



Moon in Fire Signs:


When our emotions are held to the fire, we can be quick to react and may not even be aware of what we're saying or doing. We may impulsively express honest and true feelings and be surprised at ourselves or others when they are let loose. Awareness, apologies, and time to cool down are key.

Moon in Aries:

Aries is the beginning, the first in line! This is a high energy moon that generates sparks of ideas and ignites passion. This is the best moon for exercising because the energy wants to move. You may find yourself a bit more self-focused during this moon. An Aries moon produces the shortest fuse of all so calming the fire may be necessary. [Sept. 2-3, 30; October 1, 27-29 (full moon); November 23-24; December 20-23]

Moon in Leo:

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Romance, children, and life pleasures take center stage. Loving the limelight, Leo moon brings out the drama, the romance, and the fun. This is a great moon for creative projects, letting your children take the lead, or going on a date to a rock concert or Broadway show. It's a good time to share the wealth. People may be overly dramatic and not having your way under a Leo moon can lead to being pouty or even a full-blown temper tantrum. [September 11-13; October 8-10, November 5-6, December 30-31]

Moon in Sagittarius:

The Sagittarius moon is optimistic and freedom seeking. Restless feelings of wanderlust may be present. You may feel the need to get in the car and go for a drive. Travel and spiritual retreats are perfect for this time. Under this moon you could find yourself in a group telling jokes or talking philosophy and religion long into the night, with copious amounts of food and wine. The Latin saying, "In Vino Veritas" (there is truth in wine) is applicable here as this moon can promote truth telling and you might be startled by words that are spoken. [September 21-22; October 18-20; November 15-16; December 12 (new moon), 13]

The moon is like a weekend guest, paying a short visit to each sign before it moves on to the next. You might just be reaping the benefits and then find it's gone. For sensitive folks, it can be intensely felt so a couple of days is plenty. If you enjoy some of the energy you experience with the moon, the good news is, it'll be back again every month! A quick Google search will tell you what sign the moon is in on any given day. There are also several free lunar apps that will tell you the phase and sign of the moon each day such as *My Moon Phase* or *Moon Phases and Lunar Calendar*.

Ann Arbor native Catherine Carlson is an astrologer who offers consultations for adults and children. She can be reached at catherine-carlson.com or catenka@mac.com.





The Golden Key to Everything

IMAGINATION

By Megan Simms

The most precious and undervalued resource on earth is imagination.

Picture a world in which imagination is valued for the infinite expansion it adds to our lives. Government, toilet paper, electricity, $E=mc^2$, Jazz, Starry Night... these all sprang from the deep well of their creator's active imagination. Yet in families, schools, government, commerce, and most other corners of our culture, imagination is often seen as frivolous, a waste of time, or unprofitable. It is neglected in favor of the countless more "important" tasks that fill our days, our screens, or pay the bills. Those who forge ahead by letting their imaginations run wild in the face of adversity, such as Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King, Gertrude Stein, Gandhi, Steve Jobs, Toni Morrison, and so many other creative warriors, shine a path into a better world for the rest of us to follow.

Yet in families, schools, government, commerce, and most other corners of our culture, imagination is often seen as frivolous, a waste of time, or unprofitable. It is neglected in favor of the countless more "important" tasks that fill our days, our screens, or pay the bills.

Let's be honest: we are stressed out. Climate change looms over our shoulders like a dark cloud on everyone's mental horizon. We keep hearing about the keystone pipeline bursting, again, and wonder, how many times can we hear this before we go numb? Or are we already? We read about Russia's relentless assault on Ukraine, and wonder, should I let myself feel this in my heart? To maintain any kind of amenable relationship to life on earth, we humans *must* realize that our imaginations are a precious gift and our saving grace. All civil justice began from a small group of heretics who were punished for having vision such as emancipation, woman's right to vote, and freedom of reproductive control. Those that fought for these basic justices had the vision to picture a world different from the one outside their doorsteps. Our next leap in this direction must be to seek wholeness on earth and release ourselves from the prison-like mindset that all must be sacrificed for the Almighty Dollar. Are we all going to suffer or die so a few ignorant rich guys can feel safe from death? So that we can play at "normality" even as we strain under the economy's backbreaking weight? The mind staggers at such tragic absurdity. We must imagine another way. Everything you see around you, everything in this world, began in our imaginations. It is the seed of reality. With a shared vision, our imagination can find the solutions to every single problem we face.

Four Concepts of Imagination

I believe there are four crucial ways in which imagination can shape our existence.

1. *To have empathy and compassion for others*—End racism, sexism, homophobia, ablism.
2. *To wrap our minds around paradigm-shifting, revolutionary ideas that change our entire worldview. Example: the discovery of the earth being round, not flat.*
3. *To realize that how "things are done" can be wrong and can be changed*—White supremacy is prevalent, and must be actively dismantled. Blind consumerism is killing life on our planet.
4. *To create the new:* music and arts, new social systems, new approaches to the economy, and creative approaches to research and discovery in math, science, health, medicine, and healing.

Intuition: the bite of the gut or following a hunch. Whatever our spiritual beliefs, we have all been tickled by divine inspiration.

Growing up as an only child, my mind had lots of time and freedom to roam across the multiverse of play. Blessed to grow up in a time before cellphones, my friends and I created the games that we played for hours at a time. Western frontiers, outer space, glamorous movie sets, we could project ourselves into an infinite array of experiences that started out as fun ideas. We'd move our bodies, our minds, our voices, and the energy would flow in and out of games and activities naturally, like a rushing river. This early play set me up to be a creative thinker, with a healthy, happy life. The creative solutions I find for my physical, emotional, social, and financial life grow from the fertile ground nurtured in my youth. The constant use of digital screens disrupts and dismantles a key component for creativity: boredom. Boredom is crucial as it creates a void into which ideas are sucked in from sheer necessity. As the saying goes, "necessity is the mother of invention." Today when kids are bored, they watch YouTube videos. Boredom, and creative opportunities are lost every time a screen is offered as a balm to boredom.

To maintain any kind of amenable relationship to life on earth, we humans must realize that our imaginations are a precious gift and our saving grace.

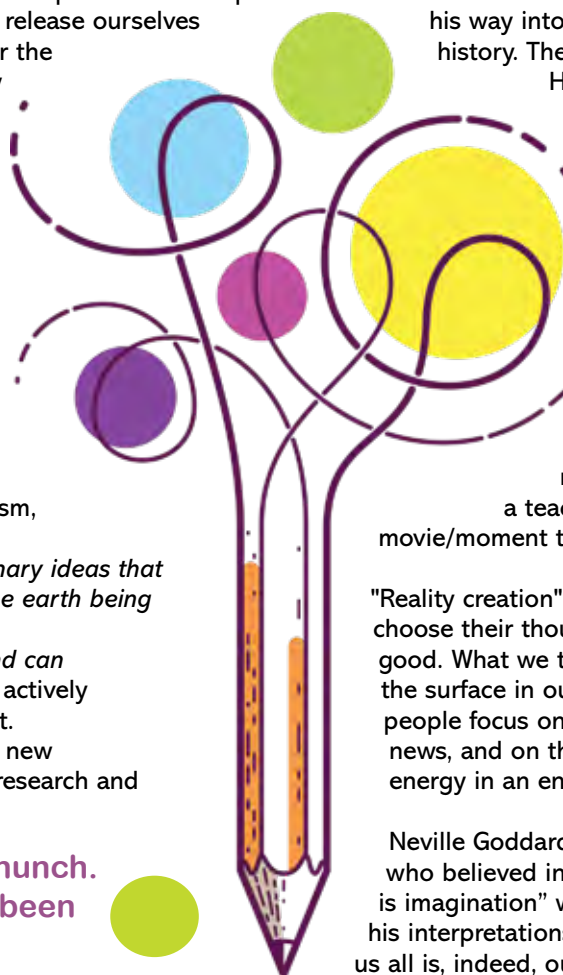
Albert Einstein, an icon of scientific genius and intelligence, blew up barriers of thought frameworks like the atom bomb (yeah, it sucks that he contributed to our most heinous weapon). Here's the thing: his theories came completely from his imagination. His studies in math and physics created a baseline of understanding with which to play. He called his daydreams "thought experiments," a slightly fancy term for picturing ideas that were interesting and "seeing" (imagining) how they played out. For example, he pictured what it would be like to ride next to the speed of light, at the speed of light. Our most important, successful scientific creator used his imagination as his greatest tool. Einstein did not generally perform experiments. He imagined his way into the most amazing scientific breakthroughs of modern history. Then, he figured out the math to test and communicate it.

Here's a thought experiment: imagine if Albert Einstein had a cellphone and was getting texts from all the girls crushing on him. Would he have created the Theory of Relativity? Hmmmm...

We are such powerful beings. We have the power of imagination to create beautiful, peaceful, and loving lives. So why, then, do war and pollution still ravage the world? Because most folks do not believe in this power. We are born into an endlessly materialistic society which encourages fear of the unknown and discourages both original thought and inwardly directed behavior and attitudes: inner authority. To rebel against this takes tremendous unlearning and often, a teacher, mentor, revelation, or breakthrough book/poem/movie/moment to point the way to freedom.

"Reality creation" is a term used for those who practice regularly to choose their thoughts and beliefs for personal fulfillment and the common good. What we think and focus on regularly, and what lurks beneath the surface in our subconscious beliefs, becomes our daily reality. Most people focus on what has happened before, or on the problems of the news, and on their daily lives. This creates more of that same vibrational energy in an endless wheel of negativity.

Neville Goddard was a New Thought author and speaker in the 1960s who believed in using imagination constructively, with intention. "God is imagination" was his central premise. Goddard was quite creative in his interpretations of the *Bible*, and literally believed that the God within us all is, indeed, our imagination. Those of us who have benefitted from



this simple but life-changing and reality-changing practice know not to try to forcefully convince others. It is one's own experience of shaping one's daily life with positive intention that does the convincing. It is free, fairly easy, and can transform an intensely stressful life into one of wonder, magic, and joy. What could the drawback be in trying to daydream on purpose? There's little cost and immense gain.

The creative solutions I find for my physical, emotional, social, and financial life grow from the fertile ground nurtured in my youth. The constant use of digital screens disrupts and dismantles a key component for creativity: boredom.

Intuition: the bite of the gut or following a hunch. Whatever our spiritual beliefs, we have all been tickled by divine inspiration. Some of us lack seeing the value in feminine wisdom, which honors intuition, using our emotions to suss out inner truths, and communicating our feelings to build strong relationships. Reason, logic, and reductionism dominate mainstream culture; hence we've lost the trust to listen to that "still small voice." Part of bringing balance to the world is to consciously reclaim our intuition, which Florence Scovel Shinn, another famous reality-creationist calls "our greatest spiritual faculty." This takes practice and faith.

Faith is the missing piece in the overall puzzle of imagination. Faith in the value of our imagination, and our process of *allowing* and *cultivating* it, is crucial. We are constantly using our imagination but, culturally, don't have faith in its value. Therefore, we throw away ideas or, worse, don't engage in the process of generating ideas. Watching a fire burn, or clouds roll by, are classic ways in which humans can relax. As the brain goes into alpha waves, the ground is laid for new insights or connections to roll in. If one does not value this process, or the merit and potential treasure of this process, one will not often engage in these potent activities, or feel guilty "wasting time" and therefore not reach the relaxed state—flow state—in which connection to one's mind, body, and emotions create a perfect trifecta for creating or synthesizing ideas.

Fear and ego have pushed and prodded us into this mental wasteland that feels dry as a desert. Everything is too hot, too bright, and the feminine 'way of water'—of cool reflection—is resisted. But inside of us there is a well of infinite creation that will never dry up.

Fear and ego have pushed and prodded us into this mental wasteland that feels dry as a desert. Everything is too hot, too bright, and the feminine 'way of water'—of cool reflection—is resisted. But inside of us there is a well of infinite creation that will never dry up. We simply need the time, desire, initiative, and faith to dive inside our own depths. In that deep, dark center of ourselves, the light of inspired imagination will not fail. What shall we bring to the surface? Dive in. Everyone benefits from the light that only you can see.

Megan Sims is the owner of Me-Again Dance Wellness. Sharing dance-medicine in a safe and loving environment is her mission in life. She is also co-founder of the All People's Planet Parade--a joyful ecoconsciousness raiser--every first Sunday afternoon of the month in front of the People's Food Co-op. You can learn more about her and her movement classes at meagaindance.com.



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Green Living

Urban Ashes: Triple Wins for the Economy, People, and the Environment

By Sandor Slomovits

Ann Arbor loses about 600 trees every year due to age, blight, storm damage, or to make room for new construction. The city chips and disposes of those trees, which means the carbon stored in them (wood is 50% carbon by weight) is released into the atmosphere, adding to the rising CO₂ levels that are causing climate change.

Paul Hickman is one of a number of individuals and companies nationwide, who have a better idea—actually a number of better ideas—about ways to put those 600 trees, and the many thousands more every year throughout the US, to better uses and to sequester their carbon. Hickman is founder of Urban Ashes, a local company that, since 2009, has been using salvaged wood to produce furniture and picture frames, and has done it primarily by employing formerly incarcerated people, a frequently marginalized population.

Paul Hickman is one of a number of individuals and companies nationwide, who have a better idea—actually a number of better ideas—about ways to put those 600 trees... to better uses.

First, a definition: “The term ‘urban wood’ is a bit of a misnomer,” says Hickman. “People think that it’s either deconstructed wood from urban buildings or trees from urban environments. It actually refers to any tree that comes down for any reason other than its wood value. It can be urban, suburban, or rural; street trees, yard trees, storm damaged trees, and blight-stricken trees like the ones devastated by the Emerald Ash Borer. As long as we keep that [urban] wood in use that carbon continues to be sequestered. If you chip it or landfill it, which is what’s typical for municipalities around the country, you’re releasing that carbon back into the atmosphere. On top of that, you’re cutting down trees from forests when you don’t need to. If we used all the urban wood that comes down every year—not cutting down perfectly healthy city trees—but trees that come down for other reasons, if we utilized all of the high-quality wood from that, [for furniture, flooring, construction lumber] it would be about 10% of the total hardwood industry in the US. Trees in traditionally forested situations get to stand longer and, instead, we’re utilizing ones that would typically be chipped or mulched. That also helps municipalities cut down on disposal fees and helps them continue to capture carbon. If we keep that wood in use, that carbon stays sequestered indefinitely. There are wood buildings in Europe that are 400 or more years old, and that carbon is still there.”

By April 2009, I launched Urban Ashes as a manufacturer of picture frames and furniture out of urban salvage wood with a focus on working with formerly incarcerated people and, pretty soon after that, adding in youth that had contact with the justice system.

—Paul Hickman

Hickman’s interest in sustainable, healthy, and planet-friendly use of resources dates back nearly three decades. “My degree is in fine art. I started painting billboards when I was 15, so I’ve always been kind of a maker. Later, I did all the graphics and signage for the Barbie and Disney galleries, for Mattel, big dollar stuff, all artificial, fake stuff that I couldn’t relate to. But, I also had trouble working with materials that I felt were pretty horrible both for myself and for the environment. So, in the mid-nineties, I started looking for alternative materials and finishes, and ultimately discovered a whole green building movement on the West Coast, specifically in the San Francisco Bay Area. I moved there in ‘98 and pretty much submerged myself in that world.”

In 2002, after the birth of his first child, Hickman moved his family back to the Midwest and settled in Ann Arbor. It was around that time that the Emerald Ash Borer, which devastated ash trees, was identified in Southeast Michigan. Hickman was on the Board of Environmental House at Recycle Ann Arbor and,

along with three others, Jason Bing, then Executive Director of that organization, Jason Haling of John’s Urban Timber, a local mill that’s still operating, and Jessica Simons, then with South East Michigan Resource Development Council, started the Urban Wood Project to make use of all those blighted trees. “Jessica in particular was the lead of the Urban Wood project” said Hickman, “which put together a network of mills in southeast Michigan, and she was also doing a lot of evangelizing about urban wood utilization around the country.”

Lumber sales increased, and the Urban Wood Project was expanding to other locations around southeast Michigan. One evening in the fall of 2008, Bing said, “We need to come up with a product that we can scale nationally for urban wood utilization, and you [Hickman] are the designer, so you need to come up with this, and it needs to be manufactured with transitional and disabled labor.” Hickman knew what disabled labor was but, “I had no idea what transitional labor was. It was a term that was used then, referring to folks coming home from prison. It sounded like a logical connection and was very intriguing to me. By April 2009, I launched Urban Ashes as a manufacturer of picture frames and furniture out of urban salvage wood with a focus on working with formerly incarcerated people and, pretty soon after that, adding in youth that had contact with the justice system. By 2012 we had grown to about 50 locations in a dozen or so states. By 2019, the year I chose to close down manufacturing, we had 250 retail partners in about 43 states.” He tried to find jobs in the businesses he’d been working with for his staff of six, and shifted his focus, “To helping to build infrastructure both on the supply side and on the market side for urban wood as well as for the labor force that we had been working with.

Triple bottom line businesses are ones that measure their success not only by the traditional bottom line of profit, but also by their social and environmental impact.

Part of our job is educating organizations and cities on what’s available to them, and providing them the workforce development services, as well as general education, to sort of cut down the stigmas.” What is the data for their investment into hiring these folks? “It has actually much higher benefits than your average individual or somebody who hasn’t come from that background.”

Ann Arbor is the pilot model that Hickman’s Urban Ashes is working on for what he calls, “a Circular Urban Wood Triconomy. It’s an economy built primarily around triple bottom line businesses. Triple bottom line businesses are ones that measure their success not only by the traditional bottom line of profit, but also by their social and environmental impact. In Hickman’s Triconomy model’s case, they are the businesses involved in every aspect of urban wood utilization, from the felling of the trees, to milling them into lumber, and to the manufacture of products for retail sales and, “All of it with a focus on the formerly incarcerated and youth that have had contact with the justice system.”

We are currently applying for a part of a national grant with an organization called Urban Salvage and Reclaimed Woods. It will help expand this model into ten to twelve new cities across the country including Detroit, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Syracuse, New York, and a number of cities in Oregon.”

For more information about Urban Ashes’ Circular UrbanWood Triconomy please visit urbanashes.wixsite.com/urbanashes-2021/general-1. For a brief video about Urban Ashes’ Circular Urban Wood Trichotomy visit <https://youtu.be/xmrvZRvt-fl>.



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TANTRE FARM HONEYBEE NUT FESTIVAL

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HERBS FOR YOUR GARDEN: YARROW

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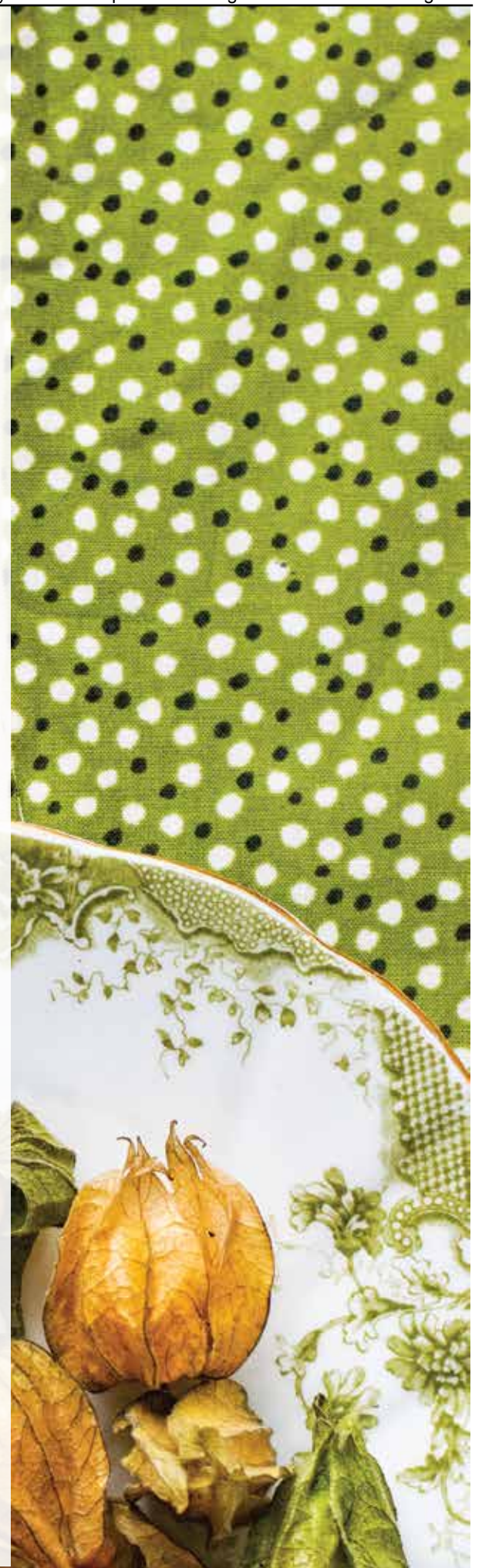
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Tantre Farm Honeybee Nut Festival

A Fall Celebration of Nature's Bounty

By Lisa Viger Gotte

If you're looking for a fun, free, educational, and delicious way to celebrate fall, the Third Annual Tantre Farm Honeybee Nut Festival in Ann Arbor is the place to be on Sunday October 8th.

Nestled on 160 acres of rolling hills and woodland in Ann Arbor, Tantre Farm is a small, family-owned farm that has been operating for over 20 years. The farm, owned by Richard and Deb Lenz, is known for its commitment to sustainable agriculture. The festival is an excellent opportunity for visitors to enjoy the beauty of the farm, to learn about sustainable growing methods and ideas, and to learn about the region's unique local foods and flavors.

One of the festival's planned activities features the delightful pawpaw, a little-known fruit native to the eastern United States that has been gaining popularity in recent years. Marc Boone, owner of one of the only cultivated pawpaw orchards in Michigan and a Michigan Nut & Fruit Growers Association member, will be on hand at the festival to share his knowledge about pawpaws, their cultivation, and unique flavor and texture.

Pawpaws have a sweet, tropical flavor that is often compared to bananas, mango, and pineapple. They're not commonly found in grocery stores due to their short shelf life and delicate nature. At the Honeybee Nut Festival, visitors can taste fresh pawpaws and learn about their cultivation and history in the region.

The fun and educational festival offers a range of activities and demonstrations related to local foods and nature. The hickory nut milk demonstration, which showcases the process of making nutritious and flavorful milk from hickory nuts, and the wild nut hike are led by Shawn Severance, Washtenaw County Parks Naturalist. Severance will take visitors on a guided hike through the woods to learn about the different types of nuts that grow in the region and their ecological importance.

The hickory nut milk making demonstration is a hands-on activity at the Honeybee Nut Festival that showcases the process of making hickory nut milk. A local expert leads visitors through soaking and blending hickory nuts to create a rich and creamy milk. The demonstration highlights the nutritional benefits of hickory nuts and provides visitors with a delicious and healthy alternative to dairy milk. Visitors can sample the milk and take home the recipe to try making it themselves.



Roasting chestnuts and hickory nut milk.



Local nut and fruit grower, Marc Boone describing how a pawpaw grows.

For those interested in foraging and wild foods, the festival also features an acorn flour demonstration and nature discovery walk with Rachel Mifsud, founder of Will Forage for Food. Mifsud shares her expertise on the many uses of acorns and other wild foods in cooking and foraging and leads a nature walk to explore the unique flora and fauna of the area.

The acorn flour demonstration teaches visitors how to make flour from acorns—a nutritious and versatile ingredient in many recipes. Mifsud will guide visitors through collecting and preparing acorns, grinding them into flour, and using the flour in various dishes. Visitors can sample dishes made with acorn flour and learn about the benefits of incorporating wild foods into their diets.

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From Mike Levine of Nature and Nurture Seeds, visitors can learn about sustainable agriculture and the importance of seed-saving and genetic diversity. Levine shares his expertise on seed-saving and the importance of preserving rare and heirloom seed varieties to promote biodiversity and protect our food system. He will also discuss perennial polyculture agroecology.

Perennial polyculture agroecology is a sustainable farming system that involves growing a wide range of perennial crops in diverse and ecologically rich landscapes. This approach seeks to replicate natural ecosystems and reduce reliance on inputs like fertilizers and pesticides. Perennial polyculture agroecology benefits biodiversity, soil health, and resilience in the face of environmental challenges. It is also economically and socially useful for farmers by reducing vulnerability to market fluctuations and providing various unique and high-quality products.



Perennial polyculture agroecology is a sustainable farming system that involves growing a wide range of perennial crops in diverse and ecologically rich landscapes. This approach seeks to replicate natural ecosystems and reduce reliance on inputs like fertilizers and pesticides.

Enjoy the bonfire and the delicious taste and aroma of fresh chestnuts roasted in a pan over the open flames, giving them a rich, smoky flavor perfect for the fall season. Pick some red raspberries and experience the camaraderie. The festival provides a space for people to connect with like-minded individuals, share knowledge, and enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings. It's a perfect way to spend a fall day with friends and family while celebrating nature's bounty.

The Tantre Farm Honeybee Nut Festival highlights the importance of sustainable and thoughtful agriculture. The farm uses various techniques to promote soil health, reduce erosion, and minimize the use of chemicals. They practice crop rotation, use cover crops, and employ natural pest management strategies. Visitors to the festival can learn about these techniques and how they help to preserve the environment and promote healthy food and a healthy planet.

One of the unique features of Tantre Farm is its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Members of the program receive a weekly share of fresh, organic produce during the growing season. The CSA model is a way for consumers to support local farmers and get access to high-quality, fresh produce. Visitors can learn more about the CSA program at the festival and even sign up to become a member just in time for Tantre Farm's fall Immune Boosting share and Thanksgiving share.

The Tantre Farm Honeybee Nut Festival is a delightful way to experience the beauty and bounty of the region and learn about the vital role of local agriculture and nature in our lives. The festival is family-friendly and offers something for everyone, from educational talks and demonstrations to delicious local foods and hands-on activities. Whether you're a foodie, a nature lover, or just looking for a fun fall outing, the Tantre Farm Honeybee Nut Festival is not to be missed.

Visit Tantre Farm on Sunday, October 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for the Nut Festival. The farm is located at 5700 Scio Church Road in Ann Arbor. Check out their website for a full schedule of events and other information at tantrefarm.com. Please, dress for the weather, including warm clothes and gloves. Bring snacks and water bottles and supervise children as appropriate. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome. Shelter will be available in the farm's timber frame barn, and tea and hot cider will be provided. This is a drug and alcohol-free event.



Planting a chestnut tree at Nut Festival.



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Herbs for Your Garden

Yarrow



By Caitlin Potere

Yarrow is an indispensable herb that you'll always find growing in my herb garden. Its versatility is formidable, making it an excellent tool in your herbal medicine kit. If you asked an herbalist what single plant they would bring with them to a deserted island, their answer will most likely be "Yarrow!" It's used to control bleeding, heal bruises and wounds, treat the symptoms of colds and flus, and has beneficial anti-inflammatory and healing effects on the gastrointestinal tract and urinary tract. The Latin name is *Achillea millefolium*, named after the Greek myth of Achilles—in the story, Achilles is given Yarrow to help heal the injuries of his soldiers. Other interesting nicknames for this plant include "Master of the Blood," "Wounded Healer," and "Woundwort."

If you asked an herbalist what single plant they would bring with them to a deserted island, their answer will most likely be "Yarrow!"

Yarrow is a classic herb for treating symptoms of viral diseases like colds and flus for all ages. It combines well with peppermint and elder flower to make a pleasant tasting tea. Yarrow has powerful styptic (stop bleeding) properties. Apply the tincture, powdered dried herb, or crushed fresh herb directly. Topical application is also useful for a variety of injuries including sprains, bruises, rashes, insect bites, cuts, and abrasions. (An infused herbal oil can work nicely here.) Yarrow is also extremely useful for dental health. The leaves and flowers can be chewed for mild oral pain relief. A mouthwash made with tea or tincture has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory actions that can be helpful for sores, gum disease, and ulcerations.

Yarrow has a pungent, bitter flavor that stimulates digestion. It can be taken as a tea or tincture to help with indigestion and bloating. Many herbalists use Yarrow as part of a larger protocol to treat leaky gut syndrome and other gastrointestinal issues because of its anti-inflammatory effects on the gastric mucosa (stomach lining). Several studies indicate that Yarrow can help prevent ulcers and stomach inflammation. Some people find that drinking a daily cup of Yarrow tea during their cycle helps relieve painful menstrual cramping. Yarrow is a multidimensional herb that has healing effects all over the body. It is both a beginner's herb and an advanced herb. The longer you study it, the more uses you will find.

Yarrow also has a spiritual dimension. Yarrow is a deeply protective plant on the spiritual level. The dried plant can be placed around the home or carried in a medicine bag or locket as a protective charm. White Yarrow flower essence is one of my favorite essences. As a flower essence, Yarrow helps us develop and maintain the integrity of healthy boundaries. You may identify as an empath, or you feel like you often "take on" or "absorb" other peoples' energy.

Fall is the perfect time of year to plant Yarrow seeds—this is the time that wild Yarrow plants are going to seed!



Photo by Caitlin Potere

White Yarrow flower essence helps reinforce the energetic boundaries between ourselves, and others, and prevents the transmission of unhealthy or negative energies. It feels like a protective field of white light is surrounding you and encouraging you to respond from a higher perspective. You can learn how to make flower essences from your own garden plants. Alternatively, local herbalist Bronwen Gates makes a wonderful product called "Yarrow Protection Magic," which is available at Castle Remedies.

Yarrow is a very handsome plant that has wild native populations growing throughout North America, as well as many varieties that have been developed by gardeners for beauty and color. When you're purchasing seeds or seedlings for medicinal use, ensure that they are *Achillea millefolium* (common yarrow), which is the "wild" species and grows clusters of white flowers. Garden-bred varieties usually have a special name like "Golden Yarrow" and come in colors ranging from bright yellows, to pinks, reds, and oranges.

Fall is the perfect time of year to plant Yarrow seeds—this is the time that wild Yarrow plants are going to seed! Yarrow can be direct seeded in your garden in late fall or early spring. It's a perennial plant that will keep coming back year after year. It's not picky, either—Yarrow grows in standard garden soil or poor, depleted soils, and doesn't require any extra watering. Choose a spot in full sun, scatter the seeds, and gently tamp them into the surface of the soil. The seeds are very small, so you may consider this trick: mix them with sand to make them easier to strew. Alternatively, you can sow the seeds in a flat and transplant them later. Space plants about 18" apart.

Yarrow is also extremely useful for dental health. The leaves and flowers can be chewed for mild oral pain relief. A mouthwash made with tea or tincture has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory actions that can be helpful for sores, gum disease, and ulcerations.

Both the flowers and the leaves are used medicinally. Gather the flowers at their peak when they are pearly white and vibrant. This is usually mid-summer and a great time to gather the leaves, too. The leaves should be green and lush, giving a strong medicinal smell when crushed. I recommend harvesting entire stalks and hanging them to dry. If you don't have space for hang-drying, you can gather flowers and leaves separately, and lay them in single layers on window screens or in a dehydrator. For hang-drying and screen drying, place in a cool, dark, dry area with good air circulation for 2 – 4 weeks until crisp-dry. For a dehydrator, dry on a low heat setting (between 95°F and 105°F) and check every eight to 12 hours for dryness. Store for one to three years in an airtight container, ideally with a food-grade silica packet.

Yarrow also has a spiritual dimension. Yarrow is a deeply protective plant on the spiritual level. The dried plant can be placed around the home or carried in a medicine bag or locket as a protective charm.

Some safety information for your consideration: Yarrow is in the aster plant family and should be avoided by people with severe ragweed allergies. Avoid internal use during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Excessive doses may cause nausea and vomiting.

Caitlin Potere is an herbalist and enthusiastic Project Grow community gardener. Potere manages Castle Remedies, a holistic pharmacy in Ann Arbor, and she is also a coordinator of the annual Great Lakes Herb Faire. You can contact her by email at caitlin@castleremdiies.com.

If you would like to learn more about adding herbs to your garden, check out Potere's free online class: *Herbs for the Michigan Gardener*, which covers 20 different medicinal and culinary herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. It's pre-recorded so you can watch at your own pace. Visit CastleRemedies.com and click on "Classes."



IN PURSUIT OF THE MORE PERFECT APPLE

at Amrita Farms

By Carin Michaels

Chad Kymal starts his day by walking through his organic apple orchard at 5 a.m. to inspect for any issues with his crop. He did not start Amrita Farms orchard ten years ago with such acumen. When asked to describe his experience, he stammers, looking tired, and quotes his recent Google search that stated it's unsustainable. He truly cares about organic farming's environmental practices which foster nature's biodiversity in order to preserve natural resources. Kymal's advantage as a full-time farmer is that he has a second day job. As president and founder of Omnex, he provides management solutions for different computing and operation standards and methods; also, he represents the United States for the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Unbeknownst to him, his resume enabled him to become an organic farmer in pursuit of the more perfect apple, and with a keen eye for process improvements, he had the grit to grapple with complicated problems on the farm.

UNBEKNOWNST TO HIM, KYMAL'S RESUME ENABLED HIM TO BECOME AN ORGANIC FARMER IN PURSUIT OF THE MORE PERFECT APPLE, AND WITH A KEEN EYE FOR PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS, HE HAD THE GRIT TO GRAPPLE WITH COMPLICATED PROBLEMS ON THE FARM.

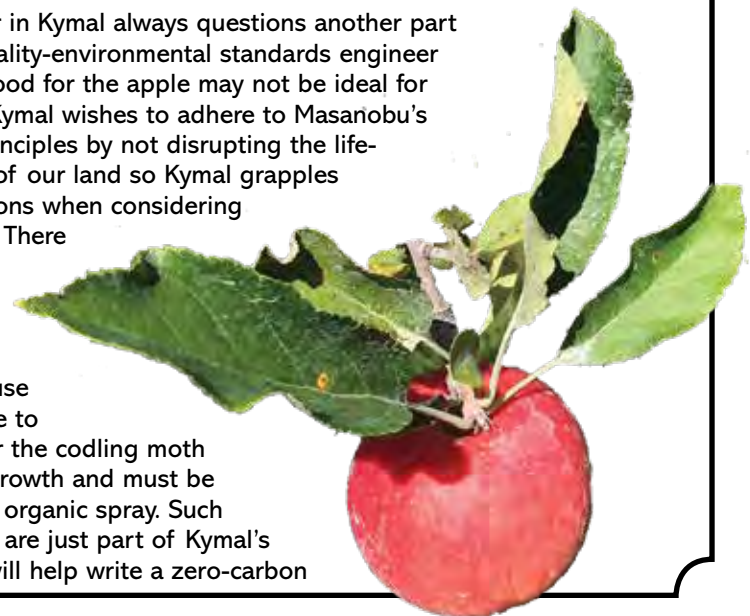
Amrita Farms is the only organic apple orchard within over a 50-mile radius for U-Pick apples. The farm was started 27 years ago, on a 54-acre parcel, in order to combine sustainable farming and education in pursuit of an eco-friendly lifestyle. The owner's first initiative was to help mother nature by planting several hundred evergreens. The farm struggled since its start to find its identity, milling through multiple products with a revenue stream not taking root because of the clay soil. Kymal, known in business circles as a serial entrepreneur, refused to accept failure. During the Covid outbreak, when he became landlocked and unable to travel to his 12 offices worldwide, he dedicated himself to the orchard.

The orchard sits on five acres with 10 apple varieties. He started with 1200 trees but only 950 survived given the initial harsh winters. As with any farm, the main challenges are climate, soil erosion, nutrient management, technology, and consumer expectations, but with truly an endless list, Kymal was able to conquer the challenges by hard study and investment. As a gentleman, Kymal attributes his success to others, particularly his mentors and volunteers. Amrita Farms is one-hundred percent volunteer-led with one

hundred percent of the revenue going to charity. But he quickly retracts the latter tagline because he believes his product can stand on its own laurels; it is that good.

Kymal was born in India but moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan with his parents during high school. Community service was part of his spiritual upbringing. He always asks himself how he can offer a hand to his fellow human being. He attributes his business success to this charitableness, as he believes the adage, whoever is kind to those in need will be rewarded for what they have done. Locally, Kymal cites support from fruit tree expert William Shane of MSU's Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center. Internationally, he ascribes his soil solution to the famous Dr. Elaine Ingham, a soil microbiologist and researcher whose work uses a soil-food-web approach that emphasizes soil regeneration. Kymal has his soil and trees tested twice a year to ensure they are not nutritionally depleted. He uses Dr. Ingham's recipe for wood chip permaculture and aerated tea compost (a compost brewed with water and other natural products like seaweed, liquid kelp, neem, and humic acid) to ensure his trees and soil are healthy. He also namedrops another famous Japanese farmer, Fukuoka Masanobu, who propagated the "no-till" philosophy since plowing leads to soil erosion and the loss of microbial life. The tenets from such sages advanced Kymal's farming acuity. When the weather gets cold, Kymal blankets his trees. When the bugs arrive, he uses an integrated pest management system that involves neem spray and/or followed by kaolin clay or nettle slurry. Other valuable investments have been in technology: an agricultural sprayer, a tractor, a truck—basic needs for farming a large orchard.

The organic farmer in Kymal always questions another part of himself as a quality-environmental standards engineer because what is good for the apple may not be ideal for the environment. Kymal wishes to adhere to Masanobu's natural farming principles by not disrupting the life-sustaining humus of our land so Kymal grapples with ethical questions when considering pest management. There is never an ideal solution when hanging traps for plum curculio (a beetle that can cause irreparable damage to his fruit harvest) or the codling moth that inhibits fruit growth and must be eliminated with an organic spray. Such mental gymnastics are just part of Kymal's day. This year he will help write a zero-carbon



Amrita Farms CONTINUED....

footprint manual for multi-national companies to follow. It makes sense that his energies have come full-circle back into the soil.

As a businessman, Kymal is acutely aware of consumer expectations. He never forgot when Masanobu stated in a video, that if he had to sow his farm over again, he would plant dwarf trees. It's so much easier to pick fruit from a shorter tree. Amrita Farms wanted to attract families who were interested in giving their children the apple picking experience that honors their mission of eco-friendly lifestyles. He attributes the farm's success to moms who go out of their way to bring their children to the farm—notably because they can reach up and grab an organic apple all by themselves.

AS A GENTLEMAN, KYMAL ATTRIBUTES HIS SUCCESS TO OTHERS, PARTICULARLY HIS MENTORS AND VOLUNTEERS. AMRITA FARMS IS ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT VOLUNTEER-LED WITH ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE REVENUE GOING TO CHARITY.

Amrita Farms has 10 different cutting-edge apple varieties that intrigue the taste buds: Twin Bee Gala, Gale Gala, Early Fuji Earligold, Autumn Crisp, Wine Crisp, Pink Lady, Snow Sweet, Liberty, Enterprise, and Zestar. The farm began making cider last year and each batch sold out with a waiting list for the following week's production. Kymal's slogan for his cider appropriately speaks to "a delicious life-changing experience." He is correct in focusing on the quality of the product instead of it as a means-to-an-end, even if the end is one that benefits charities.

Shana Weddington, manager of Argicole Farm Stop, speaks of Amrita Farms's "commitment to growing food naturally without the use of pesticides, [and] their apples are an unassuming premium product—incredible flavor and texture, but not the perfect grocery store version that most folks are used to seeing. They have spots and marks that sprayed apples do not. We were prepared to educate and encourage people to try them and more times than not, people were blown away and back for more!" Organic food consumers at times need to be reminded of the trade-offs from not being exposed to toxic and persistent chemicals on farms.

When visiting the Amrita U-Pick Farm, guests are privy to educational tours and various locally-made organic products for sale in their barn. In conjunction with their apples and cider, there is a group of volunteers that manage the farm's honeybee apiary which produced over 108 pounds of organic honey in 2021 and 92 pounds in 2022.



IT WOULD BE REMISS IF KYMAL'S SPOUSE, AJITHA, WAS OVERLOOKED AS THE POINT-PERSON FOR ON-SITE COMMUNICATIONS AND HOSPITABLE CHAI DURING A WORK BREAK. SHE HELPS CARRY THE BURDEN AND IS BAKER EXTRAORDINAIRE, SPECIFICALLY FOR HER SUGARLESS APPLE CRISP.

The Amrita Farms's Bee Club struggled over the last few years because of the harsh winters. They bounced back under the tutelage of Winn Harliss of A2B2, Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers, who is an 84-year-old third generation beekeeper. The biodiversity of organic farming plays out between the orchard and bee club volunteers when they keep each other updated on their progress since fruit trees require the cross pollination from honeybees.



Harkening back to the phrase *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child*, in this instance *It Takes a Village to Maintain an Orchard*, especially one that is non-profit. Kymal's right-hand volunteer arrived via the WWOOFing program (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms). This organization started over 50 years ago to match volunteers with organic farmers to promote a cultural and an educational exchange that builds community consciousness for ecological farming and sustainability practices. The mission of the organization is truly spiritual when like-minds collide as with Atlas Niles and Kymal. Niles is from Kalamazoo and would commute to the farm on weekends, showing up with his passion for the environment unmatched by any other on the farm.

Other volunteers understand that cultivating the environment enables them to feed the homeless at the Salvation Army-Staples Family Center Shelter on Packard Street in Ann Arbor and fund monthly food drives for Meals on Wheels. The board of directors at Amrita Farms decides which organizations need their attention. The last major international initiative they subsidized supported families left homeless from the Ukraine war. A volunteer at the Amrita Farms has parents in the Ukraine and she was able to research which nonprofit would be best served. The International Red Cross was one such organization.

It would be remiss if Kymal's spouse, Ajitha, was overlooked as the point-person for on-site communications and hospitable chai during a work



ASIDE FROM THE ORCHARD, VOLUNTEERS HELP MAINTAIN THE ECOLOGICAL BIODIVERSITY AT AMRITA FARMS, WHICH INCLUDE A KRATERGARTEN, MADE FROM EARTH MOUNDS THAT SURROUND AN AQUACULTURE POND, OR SIMILARLY, HUGELKULTURE BEDS, WHERE MOUNDS ARE MADE FROM WOOD DEBRIS AND COMPOST.

break. She helps carry the burden and is baker extraordinaire specifically for her sugarless apple crisp. She refuses credit because she says, “our apples are naturally sweet,” and over the last few years she has grown an immense respect for farmers, stating, “We are at the mercy of Mother Nature and without spiritual rumblings under my breath it would not be sustainable.”

As with her husband, Ajitha is grateful for the village of volunteers who show up. Aside from the orchard, volunteers help maintain the ecological biodiversity at Amrita Farms, which include a Kratergarten, made from earth mounds that surround an aquaculture pond, increasing their land’s nutritional footprint, or similarly, Hugelkulture Beds, where mounds are made from wood debris and compost. Also, there is a tree and plant propagation lab, a permaculture food forest, and the honeybee apiary. It is not uncommon to see Ajitha traveling the 54-acre compound in an old golf cart to aid volunteers.

AMRITA FARMS HAS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ARGICOLE FARM STOP, WHICH HELPS LOCAL FARMERS REALIZE THEIR GOALS OF FARM-TO-TABLE PRODUCTS. SHANA WEDDINGTON, AGRICOLE’S MANAGER, LED KYMAL THROUGH THE PROCESS OF GETTING CERTIFIED BY THE STATE OF MICHIGAN TO PRESS CIDER IN THEIR COMMERCIAL KITCHEN IN ORDER TO SELL DIRECTLY TO CUSTOMERS.

Amrita Farms has a special relationship with Argicole Farm Stop, which helps local farmers realize their goals of farm-to-table products. Shana Weddington, Agricole’s manager, led Kymal through the process of getting certified by the State of Michigan to press cider in their commercial kitchen in order to sell directly to customers. Weddington states, “We learned a ton together about the process for making unpasteurized cider and the licensing requirements. Their cider was the best I’ve ever tasted, and we were honored to be able to be a part of their journey.”

Amrita Farms volunteers present themselves on weekends at the Farm Stop to make and sell cider and talk to customers. Weddington adds, “One of the most rewarding parts of our mission here at the Farm Stop is being able to watch customers engage with our local food producers. Having Amrita here in the space making cider, selling cider, and engaging with the community for seven weeks, was such a gift. There’s great objective data that shows an increase in foot traffic and sales on the days that Amrita was here, but we also have subjective data from people sharing with us how much they loved having Chad, Ajitha, and the Amrita crew here to provide education, insight, and delicious fresh cider!” Kymal’s edict was correct: the cider’s sales pitch should begin and end with a taste-test because the product can speak for itself.



Amrita Farms is open Labor Day weekend through mid-November. The apples and cider are sold at the farm, Detroit Eastern Market, Argicole Farm Stop, Arbor Farms Market, and Argus Farm Stop. Amrita Farms also delivers bushels to interested customers. To pick your own apples, visit the farm at 4301 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Learn more at amritafarms.com.



FALL PRODUCE PRESERVATION *and meal prep*

By Emily Springfield

It's the perfect time to preserve the abundance of the local harvest—and make meal prep a snap all through the winter! If you've only used your dehydrator to make apple rings and kale chips, get ready to fall in love with dehydrating some new vegetables and learn how to use them to make fast, nutritious meals.

Winter Workhorses: Cabbage, Greens, and Squash

Cabbage, greens, and squash are in constant rotation in my winter meals. All are easy to source locally, and all dehydrate very well with proper preparation. Cabbage can be any color. Greens can include fall staples like kale, chard and mustard, and even wild greens like dame's rocket or lamb's quarters. Both summer types of squash like zucchini and winter types like butternut and acorn can be dried, though they need different preparations.

Dehydration is Perfect for Veggie Leftovers

If you have a CSA share or buy root vegetables at a farmer's market, your beets, radishes, and turnips probably come with the leaves attached. Dehydration is a perfect way to use the greens! And if you discover a few zucchinis that hid in the garden until they were too big to sauté, you can easily prep them for drying instead of sending them straight to the compost bin. You can also find "over-large" zucchini at the market or farm stands at very inexpensive per-pound prices, making them a very affordable way to bulk up the winter pantry.



IF YOU HAVE A CSA SHARE OR BUY ROOT VEGETABLES AT A FARMER'S MARKET, YOUR BEETS, RADISHES, AND TURNIPS PROBABLY COME WITH THE LEAVES ATTACHED. DEHYDRATION IS A PERFECT WAY TO USE THE GREENS!

Food Dehydration Basics

Dehydration preserves food by removing water so mold and bacteria can't grow. The resulting product is leathery, or even brittle, in texture and takes up far less space than fresh or frozen vegetables. It's shelf-stable and needs no electricity to keep it fresh for months or even years. And, though the dehydration process causes food to lose some nutrients (especially vitamin C), it's so handy to have whole, additive-free vegetables on hand you might find yourself eating more of them, making up the difference.

Tools: There are two categories of tools you'll need: cutting implements and a dehydrating device. While you can use a knife to prep your vegetables, I usually find a food processor, box grater, or mandoline to be preferable. They are fast and make very even slices and shreds. I've tried a number of different dehydration devices, and each have positive and negative points.

Oven: Pros: it was already in my kitchen. Cons: The lowest setting on my oven was too hot (temp should be maximum 150 degrees) and it took a lot of fiddling to dry the food without cooking and burning it.

Window screen on a box fan: Alton Brown popularized this method, where you lay a box fan on its back on a milk crate, then put a window screen or furnace filter on top of this to hold the drying food. Pros: Works quite well for apples; very energy efficient. Cons: I'm concerned about whether the surfaces are food-safe; can't dry much at once; not good for small shreds of food.

Hanging drying racks: Pros: Inexpensive; use no energy. Cons: Michigan's relative humidity is frequently above 40%, which means food will likely spoil before it dries.

Purpose-made dehydrators: Pros: Fastest to use; no worries about over-cooking food. Cons: Most expensive to buy (but you can often find them used) and

bulky to store. Note that you don't need a very fancy or expensive machine to do the job. I prefer square models with stainless steel racks over round models with plastic racks, but there's not a large difference between "economy" and "expensive" brands within those criteria. Silicone "fruit leather trays" are very helpful, especially if you will be drying a lot of squash puree or other sticky produce.

How to Dehydrate Vegetables

There are just four steps to making great dried vegetables*:

1. Wash
2. Cut
3. Dehydrate
4. Store

*See table on top of opposite page

You'll notice that I don't blanch most vegetables. After you wash your veggies and pat them dry, follow this chart for cutting and dehydrating each vegetable. The drying times given are for a 600-watt dehydrator set at 150 degrees. Dry all vegetables until they are leathery or even brittle. If you find any soft or damp sections, especially where shreds overlap, keep drying! Cool, then store in mason jars or other rigid air-tight containers. Plastic bags usually aren't adequate against Michigan humidity for keeping dehydrated food really dry.

Using Dehydrated Vegetables

I have talked to so many people who dried a bunch of produce...then never ate it, because they weren't sure what to do with it! In general, I prefer to use dehydrated veg in soups and stews, because the rehydrated texture more resembles cooked, rather than fresh, vegetables.

Dehydrating vegetables—especially squash—drastically reduces their size. For example, five pounds of zucchini shreds will easily fit into a quart mason jar. It can be disheartening to have your produce dry up "to almost nothing," but remember—the nutrition is still there! So, when you use them later, you'll only need about 1/4 of the fresh amount.

For more information about dehydrating foods at home, visit:

- * National Center for Home Food Preservation web site at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/dry.html>.
- * Eat Close to Home – the author's web site <http://eatclosetohome.com>.



Emily Springfield is a Chelsea-area gardener, bodyworker, and herbalist specializing in body energy flows. She uses a combination of nutrient-dense plants, myofascial release, and t'ai chi-based healing to help her clients improve their flexibility, resilience, and emotional health. Visit fenhaven.com for more information.

VEGETABLE	CUT	ARRANGE	APPROXIMATE DRYING TIME
CABBAGE	CUT THE HEAD INTO QUARTERS, THEN SHRED ON A MANDOLINE	PILE THE SHREDS ON THE DEHYDRATOR TRAY UP TO ½" DEEP.	3-4 HOURS
LEAFY GREENS	REMOVE CENTER RIB FROM EACH LARGE LEAF	LAY LEAVES OUT ON TRAY, AVOIDING OVERLAP.	2-3 HOURS
SUMMER SQUASH	SHRED IN FOOD PROCESSOR OR BOX GRATER, CUT INTO EVEN ¼" CUBES, OR SLICE ABOUT 1/8" THICK	SPREAD CUBES OR SLICES IN ONE LAYER. SHREDS CAN BE SPREAD INTO A LAYER ABOUT ¼" DEEP.	7 HOURS
WINTER SQUASH	WINTER SQUASH MUST BE COOKED BEFORE DRYING. BAKE, STEAM, OR COOK IN A PRESSURE COOKER UNTIL SOFT, THEN SCOOP OUT THE SQUASH AND MASH.	SPREAD MASHED SQUASH ABOUT ¼" DEEP ON THE "FRUIT LEATHER" TRAYS THAT USUALLY COME WITH THE DEHYDRATOR. SLICES CAN BE ARRANGED IN A SINGLE LAYER, NOT TOUCHING.	7 HOURS

Recipes to clip and save!

Here are some of my go-to recipes using dehydrated cabbage, greens, and squash. I turn to these on winter weeknights when I don't feel like cooking—yet the ingredients are largely "from scratch" and much healthier and less expensive than take-out.

Easy Minestrone



- * 1 Tbls olive oil
- * 1 diced onion
- * 3-4 cloves garlic, pressed
- * 1-2 tsp dry Italian-style herb blend
- * 8 c vegetable or beef broth
- * 1 can diced tomatoes with juice
- * 1 can beans (e.g., cannellini), drained
- * ¾ c dehydrated cabbage
- * ¾ c dehydrated zucchini
- * ¾ c dehydrated greens
- * ½ c small dry pasta (e.g., ditalini)
- * Salt to taste
- * Opt: rind of parmesan cheese (for flavor only; remove before serving)

Sauté the onion and garlic in the olive oil until fragrant. Add the other ingredients. Bring to a boil and simmer 10-15 minutes until the pasta is cooked. Optional: Serve with cooked meatballs (below) and/or top with parmesan cheese.

Vegged-Up Meatballs



This gluten-free recipe uses oatmeal and dried vegetables to add nutrition and stretch the meat over more servings.

- * 1 lb ground beef
- * 1 lb ground turkey
- * ½ c rolled oats
- * Pick one: 1 egg, 1 Tbl chia seeds, or 2 Tbl ground flax seed
- * Pick one: 1 small onion, diced, 1/2 tsp onion powder, or 2 Tbl dehydrated onions
- * ½ c dehydrated zucchini
- * ½ c dehydrated greens, crumbled
- * 1 tsp salt
- * 8 oz tomato sauce
- * 1 tsp Italian seasoning herb blend

Use your hands to mix all ingredients together. Form into 32 golf ball-sized meatballs. Bake 15-20 minutes at 350°.

Tea with Peggy

Mystical Pu'erh Tea

By Peggy Alaniz

As fall and winter fast approach, night arrives earlier, and the once lush fields and gardens filled with flora and fauna are dying. The magic of fall and winter is different than that of spring. Earth emits a darker unknown quality. It's a mystery to be explored. A time of year to tell a good ghost tale while shipping on something warm, dark, and inviting—like Pu'erh tea.

Pu'erh (pronounced poo-air) tea, like Oolong, is not one of your mainstream varieties of tea. However, Pu'erh is one of the five main traditional teas, with the other four being white, green, black, and oolong. If you like a smooth dark flavor profile when drinking tea, then Pu'erh is for you. However, be warned, it has more caffeine than green, black, white, or oolong. If you are caffeine sensitive, you might want to limit the amount you drink. It is also advised not to drink Pu'erh on an empty stomach. You should wait about one hour after you eat to drink a cup.

Pu'erh tends to make you more alert while staying calm, so it is great to drink prior to meditation. The tea is so calming that a person's demeanor is way more mellow after consuming—possibly due to its ability to increase melatonin production in the body. It's also credited with being a great detox for your digestive system. It helps to maintain a regular bathroom schedule as well as fight gut inflammation. Pu'erh is even said to be a great hangover cure. This tea is also one of the better ones to consume if you are trying to lose weight. It tends to flush fat out of your system and even lower cholesterol.

As for Pu'erh's flavor profile it tends to be a bit nutty, or earthy, with a sweet aftertaste. Because of its dark earthy flavor, it is a good one to try for people who tend to prefer coffee. It pairs well with currants, cranberries, and pomegranate. As for an alcoholic drink, try infusing it into Cognac or bourbon. The tea will enhance the flavor and taste.

Tea Infused Bourbon

Ingredients:

- 1 bottle of your favorite brand of whiskey or bourbon
- 1 to 2 glass mason jars
- 6 ½ tablespoons of Pu'erh tea or 2 ounces of brick per 8 ounces of bourbon.

Let tea steep in bourbon for a minimum of 45 minutes and no longer than 24 hours. The longer you leave the tea in, the stronger the infusion and flavor.

Strain and drink straight or over ice.



Weeknight Paella

This is adapted from the *Joy of Cooking's* Paella Valenciano, which relies on spicy sausage for flavor instead of seafood. With a good plant-based chorizo, you can make this a vegetarian dish.



- * 1 Tbl olive oil
- * 3 chicken thighs or 1 block extra-firm tofu (drained), cubed
- * 12 Oz chorizo, andouille, or spicy vegetarian sausage, sliced
- * 1 thinly sliced onion
- * 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- * 2 c chicken or vegetable broth
- * 2 c instant brown rice or 1 cup uncooked white rice
- * 1 tsp turmeric
- * 2 red bell peppers, diced
- * 1 tsp smoked paprika
- * ¼ tsp dried oregano
- * 1 tsp salt (if using unsalted broth)
- * 1 can white beans, drained
- * 1 can diced tomatoes with juices
- * 1 c dehydrated cabbage
- * ½ c dehydrated zucchini
- * ½ c dehydrated greens

Brown chicken, sausage, onion, and garlic in oil. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer until broth is absorbed, about 15 mins.



Cooking with Lisa

COZY SOUPS FOR FALL

As the crisp autumn air sets in, it's the perfect time to indulge in comforting and nourishing fall soups. From hearty stews to creamy bisques, these seasonal delights capture the essence of fall flavors and warm our souls. Here are two easy and delicious fall soup recipes that use seasonal ingredients and will keep you cozy and satisfied throughout the season.



By Lisa Viger Gotte

Butternut Squash Soup, 4 servings

Cozy up with a bowl of this Butternut Squash Soup. Made with love, this creamy delight is bursting with the natural sweetness of butternut squash and a hint of savory goodness. Perfect for chilly nights or lazy afternoons. Get ready to savor the flavor!

Ingredients:

- 1 butternut squash (about 2 pounds), peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil for cooking
- Optional garnish: fresh parsley, croutons, or a dollop of plant-based sour cream

Instructions:

Heat a large pot over medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Add the chopped onion, garlic, and sauté until soft and fragrant.

Add the butternut squash chunks and carrots to the pot and stir everything together.

Pour in the vegetable broth, cumin, and cinnamon. Season with salt and pepper according to your taste.

Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat to low. Cover the pot and let it simmer for about 20-25 minutes until the butternut squash is tender and easily mashed with a fork.

Once the squash is cooked, use an immersion blender, or transfer the mixture to a blender in batches and blend until smooth and creamy. Be cautious when blending hot liquids.

Return the soup to the pot and heat it over low heat, stirring occasionally until warm.

Serve the Butternut Squash Soup hot and garnish with your preferred toppings like fresh parsley, croutons, or a dollop of vegan sour cream.

Savory Lentil Soup with Potatoes, 4 servings

Cozy up with a bowl of Savory Lentil Soup with Potatoes. Packed with hearty lentils and chunky white and sweet potatoes, this soul-warming soup is a delightful blend of comforting flavors and nourishing goodness. Perfect for chilly days or when you need a satisfying meal. Dive in and enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup dried lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 medium white potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil for cooking
- Optional garnish: fresh parsley and/or a squeeze of lemon juice

Instructions:

Heat a large pot over medium heat and add olive oil. Add the chopped onion, garlic, and sauté until soft and fragrant.

Add the diced potatoes and chopped carrots to the pot and stir everything together.

Pour in the vegetable broth and add the rinsed lentils. Stir in the cumin, paprika, dried thyme, salt, and pepper.

Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat to low. Cover the pot and let it simmer for about 20-25 minutes or until the lentils and potatoes are tender.

Taste and adjust the seasonings according to your preference.

Serve the Savory Lentil Soup hot, garnished with fresh parsley and/or a squeeze of lemon juice if desired.

Great Tastes

IN LOCAL FOOD

By Crysta Coburn

Bridge Community Café

Bridge Community Café is appropriately found in the heart of downtown Ypsilanti. You can find it right next to the Ypsilanti District Library's Patsy Chandler Fountain. It is a terrific spot to sit and enjoy a cup of coffee or a lemonade and a vegan hand pie next to the flowing water fountain when the weather is agreeable.

With its exposed brick wall, Bridge is a tiny bit industrial-modern yet filled with color and light. Beautiful murals brighten the walls. There is also a quote by Gina Valdé painted on one wall that says, "Hay tantísimas fronteras que dividen a la gente, pero por cada frontera existe también un puente." (This translates to, "There are so many borders that divide people, but for every border there is also a bridge.")

There are also numerous potted plants that thrive in the windows and on tables and counters. The drink menu is colorful and unique. Each drink is built around a zodiac sign. The Lady Red, a delicious and sweet house-made hibiscus lemonade, is also my sun sign, Libra. Gemini is the Salty Boi, a salted caramel espresso latte. During chilly winter, I particularly enjoyed the Reina (Leo), an espresso latte flavored with pistachio rose syrup. For those of us who can't have cow's milk, oat milk may be substituted at no extra charge, or pay \$1 extra for cashew or almond milk.

As for food, all of the savory hand pies, burritos, bagels, salads, sweet mini pies, and cookies are vegetarian or vegan. For me, a broccoli and cheese hand pie and iced chai were the most perfect lunch. The pie crust was satisfyingly flaky and crispy. My dining companion's mushroom and peas hand pie had an adorable little mushroom made out of pastry on top so we could easily tell which pie was which.

For those in the community who can't afford a drink for themselves, Bridge has a pay-it-forward program. Those who can afford to may pre-purchase a drink for someone in need in the future. Bridge also offers a pay-what-you-can soup every Tuesday.

In addition to being a great little cafe, Bridge has hosted several events, such as a holiday mercadito (little market), free book swaps, clothing swaps, book readings, a film screening, and so much more.

Bridge Community Café is located at 217 West Michigan Avenue in Ypsilanti. They are open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and Friday has additional evening hours from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. For more information find them online at facebook.com/bridgecommunitycafe, call (734) 896-3710, or email hello@bridgecommunity.cafe.

Union Rec

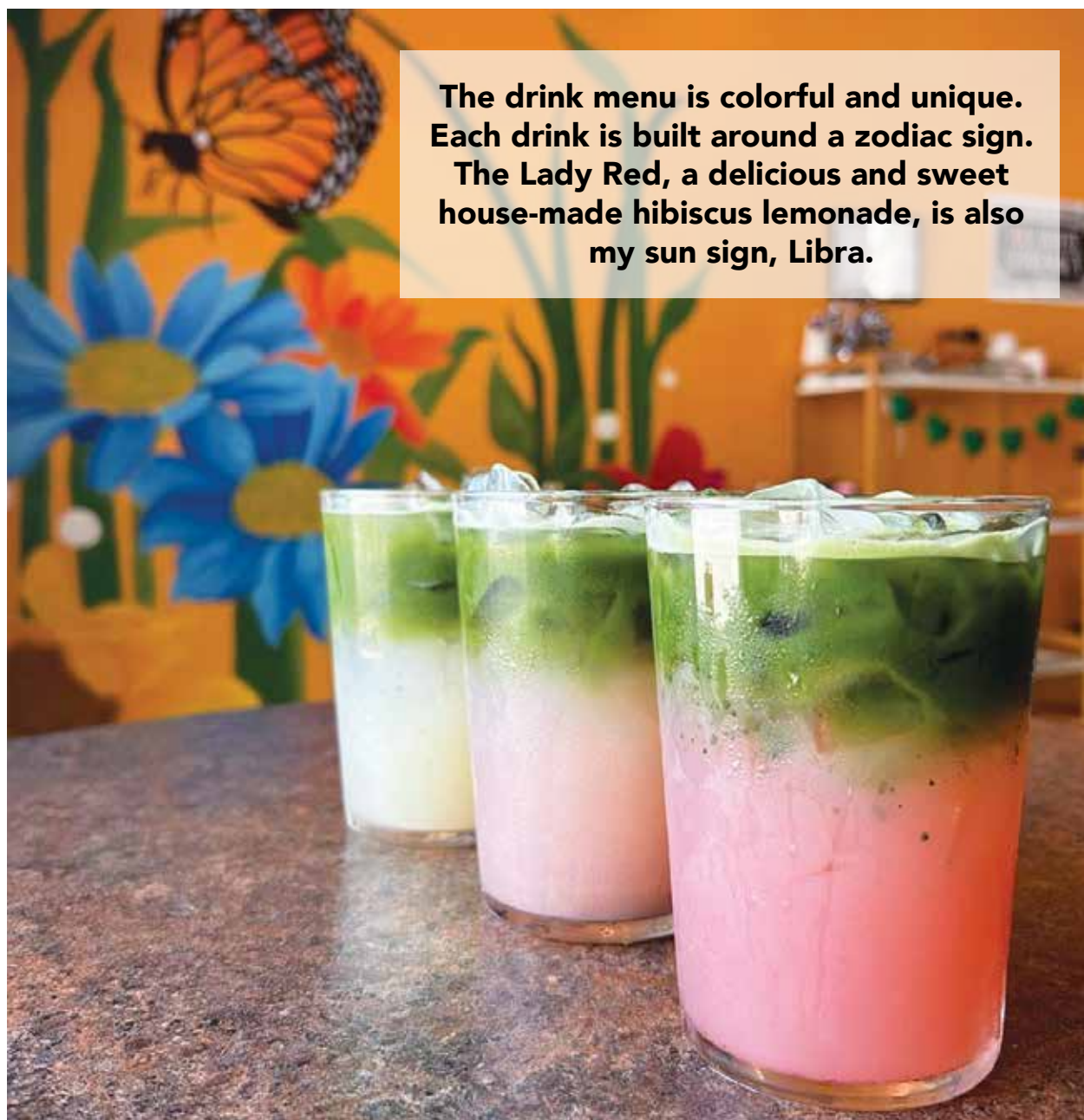
If you are looking for an elevated eclectic experience with a healthy dose of whimsy, Union Rec is the place for you. Located in a former Fingerle Lumber Company warehouse, Union Rec brings together multiple concepts under one roof. There is a coffee shop, which opens early to serve morning customers; a restaurant that opens later to handle lunch and dinner; and a bar for those who just want to grab a drink with friends. The restaurant also has a breakfast menu which is served all day.

The seating is eclectic. Along the back wall, the booths are covered by a tent, giving a blanket tent or treehouse kind of feel, and offering a nice bit of privacy in a space that is so open. Plush, comfortable chairs covered in plaid and clustered around a free-standing fireplace are reminiscent of a mountain lodge. There is so much to discover around every corner of this unique business.

The menu is pan-American—North, Central, and South. I enjoyed a half pound of brisket accompanied by a gluten free elote corn muffin with honey butter, which was deliciously sweet and fluffy. There were three choices of barbecue sauce on the table to choose from, and I had fun seeing how each one went with the brisket. The Brazilian barbecue sauce was made in-house and had a sweet taste, reminding me of Sweet Baby Ray's. There was also a mustard-based South Carolina-style sauce, and a Costa Rica sauce which was a nice middle of the road sauce.

You can also order disco fries, burritos, tacos, macaroni and cheese, soups, salads, and so much more. There is a full bar, so you may order alcoholic drinks with dinner, but there are also some delightful non-alcoholic options as well, such as the almond sour, which was pink with an air on top and tasted a bit like a limeade. It was served with a paper straw.

Union Rec is the kind of place I would frequent for the experience as well as the excellent food and table service. It could also serve as a memorable treat for out-of-town guests.



The drink menu is colorful and unique. Each drink is built around a zodiac sign. The Lady Red, a delicious and sweet house-made hibiscus lemonade, is also my sun sign, Libra.



Photo by Susan Ayer

If you are looking for an elevated eclectic experience with a healthy dose of whimsy, Union Rec is the place for you.

Union Rec is located at 545 South Main Street in Ann Arbor. The coffee shop is open daily starting at 7:00 a.m. The kitchen opens daily starting at 11:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, Union Rec closes at 9:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday they close at 11:00 p.m. For more information find them online at unionrec.com, call (734) 636-9999, or email info@unionrec.com.

Dozer Coffee

As part of the Homes Campus, Dozer Coffee is another food business that is part of a whole, though it seems to operate independently from the others. The other components that make up the campus are the Can Shop and Smooj Lab, a tap room as well as a place to purchase cans of Homes' latest brews and hard smoothies called Smooj (an original Homes innovation), and the gallery, an indoor seating area whose walls are filled with works of a featured artist. (When I visited, it was Ann Arbor artist and designer Gary Horton.)

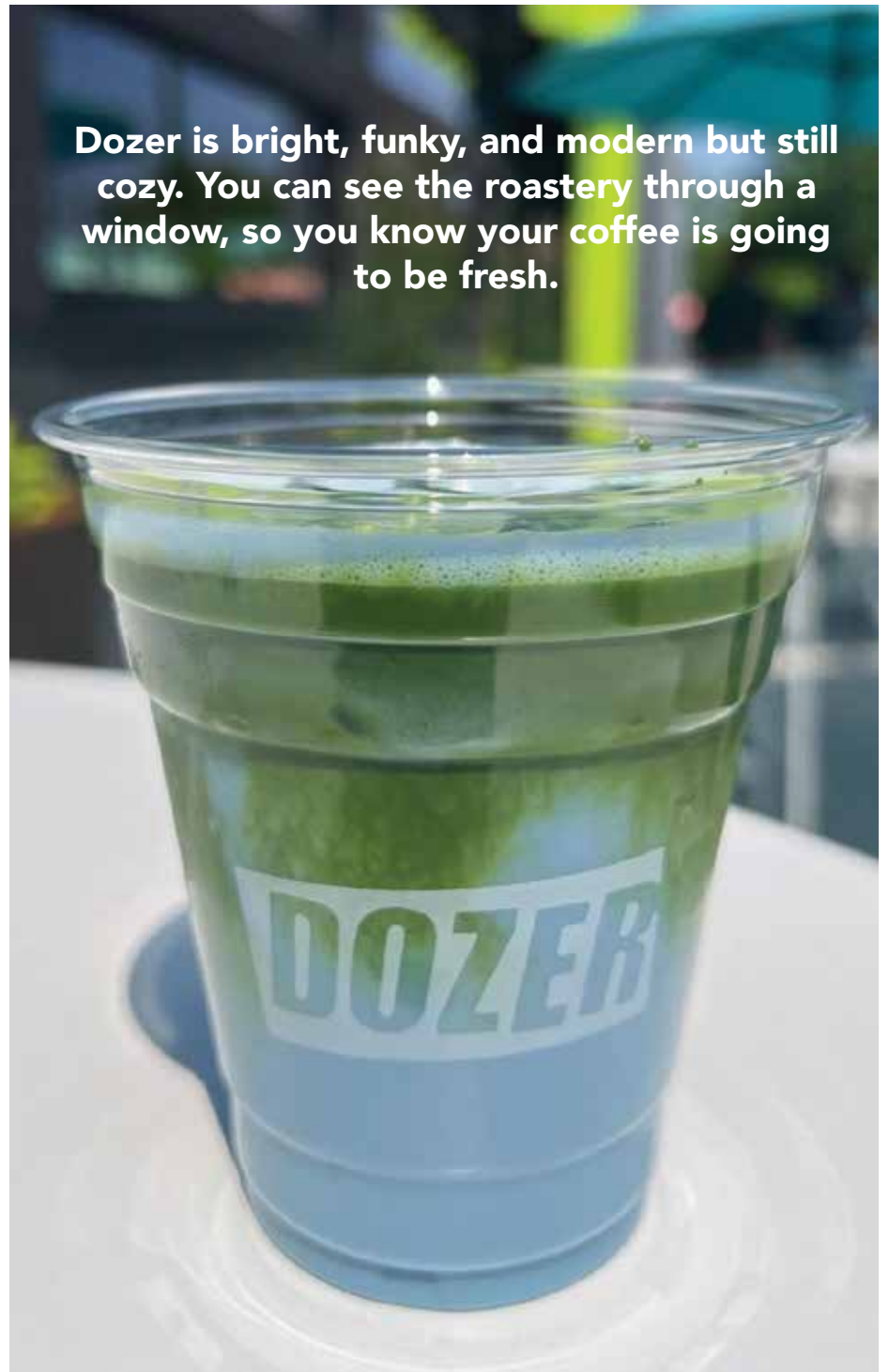
Dozer is bright, funky, and modern but still cozy. You can see the roastery through a window, so you know your coffee is going to be fresh. You can also take your drink and/or meal to the gallery to be surrounded by art, or head outside to one of the many tables in the courtyard between the campus buildings. There are colorful umbrellas to offer shade.

At Dozer, brunch is served until 2:00 p.m. and offers Mission-style burritos or bowls (for an equally satisfying gluten free version of the burritos), loaded tots, toast made from beer bread or a gluten free alternative, soup, and salad. I loved the huevos rancheros bowl, impressed by how much flavor even the eggs had let alone the beans and avocado. Sandwiches such as grilled cheese and corned beef hash are served all day. And you don't want to overlook the pastries that are made fresh daily in house.

The drink menu offers an impressive variety of coffee drinks and styles, teas, as well hot chocolate, milk, juice, and sparkling water. You definitely want to check out the seasonal lattes and sparklers. If you are a chocolate lover, I highly recommend the ganache mocha latte! It truly does taste like a cup of chocolate ganache. The honey dust latte is also a real treat for honey fans.

While I do suggest you stick around to enjoy Dozer's pleasant atmosphere, you may also take advantage of their order ahead and to-go services. The campus is host to events such as Sporcle Trivia and a rotation of different food trucks throughout the week as well, making a spot to keep an eye for sure.

Dozer Coffee is located at 112 Jackson Plaza in Ann Arbor. They are open daily from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information find them online at dozercoffee.com, call (734) 929-5217, or email info@dozercoffee.com.



Dozer is bright, funky, and modern but still cozy. You can see the roastery through a window, so you know your coffee is going to be fresh.



Jessica Ryder

Singing and Listening with the Heart:

A Therapist's Journey



By Sandor Slomovits • Photos by Kate Jackman

Jessica Ryder's business card lists her credentials (MS, LLPC, NCC) as a professional mental health counselor, yet, she also has printed on them "MM" or Master of Music. Ryder's academic training for her work as a therapist has been typical, though her life experience prior to was anything but. For twenty years she was a full-time professional musician working in some of the highest tiers of classical music. As Beverly Morgan, her birth name, we'll get back to that, she sang leading soprano roles at Lincoln Center, La Scala, the Berlin State Opera, and the Vienna State Opera, among others; she sang solo recitals at Boston Symphony Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall, at the 92nd St Y, and recorded for Deutsche Grammophon and Columbia Records. She performed and recorded the role of Dede in Leonard Bernstein's opera, *A Quiet Place*, with Bernstein conducting, and sang the role of Micaela on Broadway in the adaptation of *Carmen* conceived and directed by the legendary English director Peter Brook.

Sandor Slomovits: Was there music in your family?

Jessica Ryder: Both of my parents were great music lovers. My mother had a fine singing voice. I asked her, very late in her life, "Would you like to have done what I did?" And she said, "Oh, yes." I was so touched by that. There was always a piano in the house. I have three older siblings and we all had music lessons. I remember one of my father's birthdays and him opening an LP of the *Fifth Symphony of Beethoven*. I said, "Ooh, what's that?" I spent hours and hours just soaking in all the recordings that came through the house from then on.

Sandor Slomovits: When did you know you wanted to make a life in music?

Jessica Ryder: College was presumed in my family. My dad was a scientist and a professor at Dartmouth. So, I started out at a liberal arts school, Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. That was where I met my first true mentor, a conductor named Tamara Brooks. She went on to have quite a significant career as a choral conductor. It was she who recognized me. I remember her taking me aside after one concert when I had been given a little solo, and she said, "You know, you could do this professionally if you want." It was like a universe opening up. I had intended to stay at Mount Holyoke because I was taking music theory classes and I played French horn, my primary instrument. I had my heart set on continuing to work with Tamara, but at the end of my sophomore year, she announced that she'd taken a job at SUNY Albany. So, in a sort of very quick response to that, I decided to apply to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. All their audition deadlines were way past, but I put together a recording, and on one side I played the first movement of the Beethoven Horn Sonata, and on the other side, almost as an afterthought, I put a couple of

songs, a Schubert and maybe a Mahler. And they sent back a response: it was one of the most exciting moments in my memory, taking that letter out of the mailbox. They accepted me with junior status as a voice major. Now, mind you, I'd never had a voice lesson in my life, but I'd sung a lot. I've never been really all that certain whether it was a statement on my singing or a statement on my French horn playing.

I liken that moment in my life to the moment in *The Wizard of Oz* when everything goes technicolor.... Not that my life had been black and white, but I found everything there. I felt socially more competent and engaged. I had a home, a circle of friends; I found my wavelength.

Sandor Slomovits: You sang very successfully for a long time.

Jessica Ryder: It was such a powerful means of not only creative expression, but personal growth, personal development. I'd had a lot of issues as a young person. I didn't have the strongest sense of who I really was, and singing different operatic roles, stepping into different characters, allowed me to slip out of my skin and become somebody else. That was incredibly liberating. But the other thing was the incredible gift, the incredible opportunity I had of being able to work with great musicians, great artists. You know the rule of thumb, if you want to be a good tennis player, you play with somebody who's better than you.

Sandor Slomovits: Why did you stop?

Jessica Ryder: First of all, it was a wonderful, wonderful time. I loved it. It was also very demanding, and I reached a point where I kind of wasn't finding what was next. My voice, once I transitioned from mezzo soprano to soprano, never fit neatly into what they call in Germany the Fach system. You know, if you're a lyric soprano, you sing these roles; if you're a dramatic soprano, you sing these roles; if you're a coloratura, you sing these. I never fit neatly into any of those boxes and there weren't a lot of roles that really fit. I was getting kind of frustrated. I remember doing one audition for the Komische Oper Berlin. After that audition, there was kind of a click, like an aha. "I don't have to do this anymore." I felt like something just let go. So, I finished out the contracts I had and then made a radical left turn. I sold my apartment in New York City, where I was based for all of my professional career, gradually gave away or sold most of my belongings, and set out to explore.

I started out at a liberal arts school, Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. That was where I met my first true mentor, a conductor named Tamara Brooks. She went on to have quite a significant career as a choral conductor. It was she who recognized me.

I'm not sure I could have expressed this at the time, but I would say that I had found something as a performer, you could call it a presence, that sense of kind of forgetting your *self*—with a small "s"—and something else moves you or moves through you. I had really found that on stage and not in the rest of my

life. Once you've tasted that, you know what *that* is—and that it's possible to experience *that*—you just want to live there all the time. In retrospect, I can say now that I set out to find *that*—to really live *that*.

Of course, all the spiritual teachers tell you it's not out there, it's in here. At the same time, there is a reason that we travel geographically, which I did, and there is a reason that you work with different teachers, which I also did, because it helps you to contact or activate or bring to life what's in you. So, I traveled, and I worked some with Emily Conrad whose medium was movement; she was absolutely brilliant, and a great deal with Paul Lowe, hundreds of hours of listening to him. Paul was always empowering; he would have none of the guru nonsense, but he was also kickass. And there were some areas in which my ass needed kicking to wake me up.

In a way, I kind of stepped away from ordinary life. It was an amazing journey. It was also profoundly challenging. Eventually it was time to come back to, let's say ordinary life. And I gradually found my way back in through performing—at that point my own music—and teaching, and that gradually led to the counseling.

Sandor Slomovits: We'll get back to the counseling, but would you talk a little about your own music?

Jessica Ryder: People have asked me, what kind of songs do you write? I never really know how to answer because, again, it doesn't exactly fit in any boxes. Part of those years of exploration was exploring different styles of music and singing in different styles. The classical training is very specific to that style. [I was] seeing if I could get back to the pre-trained voice and evoke that in a more direct way. Kind of asking, what does the voice want to do? Not what *I* want it to do, but what does *it* want to do? That took me into the shallow end of the jazz pool. I don't compare myself in any way to serious jazz artists, but eventually that led to writing my own songs.

Sandor Slomovits: Do you still sing?

Jessica Ryder: Not currently, but I don't think it's gone. In 2016 I decided that I really should do formal training as a counselor. In order to work professionally, I started a master's in clinical mental health counseling and that was really pretty all-consuming. So, since then, the creative work has been set to the side, but it doesn't feel like it's over.

Sandor Slomovits: Your name as a singer was Beverly Morgan, your birth name. Why did you change your name to Jessica?

Jessica Ryder: I started hanging out with a friend who ultimately became my husband, now deceased. As we got to know each other it came out that the name I knew him by was not the name that his parents had named him. And it was like, "You can do that?" So, as that gradually sank in, in the years after I

left New York, I started experimenting with different names. I had never really loved being called Beverly, it never quite felt like a fit. After several years of experimenting with different names, when I hit Jessica, it felt like what I imagine a bell feels when the clapper strikes. Yes! That resonates.

Sandor Slomovits: What brought you to Ann Arbor?

Jessica Ryder: After I left New York, I lived in a number of different places: in Boulder, in northern California, briefly on Maui, in Berlin for several years. When I finally landed back in the US in 2001, I was trying to develop an independent teaching practice and finding that difficult because I'd lost a lot of the continuity of what I'd been doing before. So, I took a position at a community college in New Jersey and taught music history and music theory there.

In 2008 I experienced a great personal loss—my husband. I had friends who owned a house in Ann Arbor but were no longer living in it and weren't ready to sell it. They invited me to live there, and I knew I needed a change, so I said yes. Then, kind of as an afterthought, I thought, "Well, I probably should have a job," and was able in the nick of time to find a lectureship at the University of Michigan Dearborn and taught music history there.

Sandor Slomovits: Did you study psychology at U of M?

Jessica Ryder: No, I explored a lot of options and finally decided to go with Walden University, which is one of the oldest online schools. I have nothing but good things to say about them, aside from the fact that it's expensive, but a really excellent faculty.

Sandor Slomovits: So, when the pandemic hit you were perhaps more comfortable than many people with working online.

Jessica Ryder: Yes, surprisingly so. I was no more thrilled than anybody else about "Okay, now we can't meet in person." But I've been pleasantly surprised with just how well it works. It is a tradeoff. There are advantages and disadvantages, but it also makes it possible for a lot of people who couldn't do it otherwise.

Sandor Slomovits: I'm a musician, a performer, and in my own experiences with therapy, I've long felt that there is a resemblance between playing shows and therapy. Obviously, therapy is not an audience-performer relationship but, as in playing music before an audience, there's listening—both ways—and more significantly, in both situations you're creating something together. It's not one person doing something to or for another person. Yes?

Jessica Ryder: Absolutely. You got it. Thank you. Could you write that up? I'll put it on my website.

It was such a powerful means of not only creative expression, but personal growth, personal development. I'd had a lot of issues as a young person. I didn't have the strongest sense of who I really was, and singing different operatic roles, stepping into different characters, allowed me to slip out of my skin and become somebody else.



Singing and Listening with the Heart continued...

Sandor Slomovits: Can you talk about how your counseling work now is informed by your experiences as a musician as well as all the other studying and work you've done?

Jessica Ryder: It is literally true that my work as a therapist is informed by the totality of everything that I've done. While times I may have felt that I was on some sort of spur, or gotten off track, but then have moments (much later) where you go, "Oh, everything was for this." It might be just one moment with one client, where I hear something come out of my mouth, and afterward I can reflect and go, "Right. I couldn't have said that without all the rest of the journey." That's very gratifying.

Certainly, the training and discipline of music practice and performance has been powerfully informative. You start out thinking you practice for that performance. You practice and you practice so that you can get it right on the night [of the performance]. And [eventually] you understand a whole different sense of practice, much more of the Buddhist sense. You just practice. This is your practice, the practice of being right here, right now. You practice that daily, moment to moment. Then on stage, you are right here, right now. It's not, "Oh, this is it. This is the big moment," but you just keep practicing.



Also, ultimately, I had to acknowledge that whether I was playing a noble heroine, or a boy, or a murderer, I was actually finding all of that in me. It was the beginning of a profound sense of compassion and being able to empathize with a wide range of people. And of course, it didn't end there. It has deepened and grown substantially since I left that world. Also, through my work as a performer, I found the ability to be in the presence of strong emotion.

It is literally true that my work as a therapist is informed by the totality of everything that I've done. While times I may have felt that I was on some sort of spur, or gotten off track, but then have moments (much later) where you go, "Oh, everything was for this."

There were many other chapters since leaving the classical stage to what I do now, [one] certainly being a classroom teacher. I taught at Dearborn for about eleven years, and that taught me another level of humility. The classes I taught were generally introductory classes where some people have some musical experience, some have absolutely none. Finding a way to meet people where they are, really taught me other levels and ways of listening and paying attention. In the years of teaching, some of the most satisfying or meaningful moments would be when a student would come to me in distress and say, "I couldn't get this paper in on time because..." And I would just sit with them and see what we could work out. But as a teacher, you're very restricted as to what you can say or do, to what extent you can involve yourself. I wanted to be able to support more and at another level, and not only through the subject matter. In fact, when I began counseling professionally, I worked for a time at the counseling center at the University of Michigan, Dearborn.

Sandor Slomovits: We're meeting on Zoom, and I see that you're surrounded by several plants.

Jessica Ryder: Well, you know, I have to have family. I have had the great gift of having grown up in rural New Hampshire on a hundred acres of fields and woods and so my connection to nature is profound. I understand intuitively, and

The classes I taught were generally introductory classes where some people have some musical experience, some have absolutely none. Finding a way to meet people where they are, really taught me other levels and ways of listening and paying attention.

always have, that I am part of nature. It's not me and then there's nature out there. I use the word understand, but I don't mean this in an intellectual sense. I understand the healing power of nature and that that is so much of what we're groping our way toward as a species, is reconnecting [to nature]. I see it in my clients. I see the pain of it--people spending all day inside, usually on screens... Something as simple as going outside and looking at the sky, is huge. I think of them [the plants] as my counseling adjuncts. Maybe I can get a little subliminal message in, "See, green stuff."

The dual themes of communication and connection that have imbued Ryder's life, from her childhood experiences in nature, through her years of singing with other musicians for audiences, her studies of self and human potential, and her teaching, have culminated in her present work as a therapist. Ryder seems to have found a way to harness her experiences on the varied and fascinating path she has traveled, to now be able to support others in healing and growth.

You can learn more about working with Jessica Ryder by calling (734) 224-9869 or visit her online at Jessicaryder.net.



I understand intuitively, and always have, that I am part of nature.

—Jessica Ryder

HEALERS OF ANN ARBOR

TheraSupport for Neurological Conditions

By Laura K. Cowan

About seven years ago, I fainted when sick and hit my head. I sustained a concussion, but it was on the severe end of what is considered a concussion, right before you get to a moderate traumatic brain injury. I was sent to neurology and then neuropsych for a support group to teach me how to cope with the effects of the injury and how slowly the healing happens. Unfortunately, I was let go from the group after six months. I was told there was no evidence that this level of brain injury should continue after six months as it didn't show in imaging—therefore I was healed, and any remaining symptoms had to be a post-concussion syndrome (where your brain imprints the symptoms of an injury and perpetuates them even though the injury is healed). As we group members were all too brain damaged to filter our emotions, the leader of the group got an earful about the limits of the research and the support we needed that we weren't getting. It was quite the dumped off by the curb experience, where one day you are told you have resources, and the next you are told you are clearly imagining things.

This diagnosis turned out to be dangerously incorrect, as several years later I was diagnosed with a connective tissue disorder called Hypermobility Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome that is known to cause slow healing, among many other problems with soft tissues. I simply hadn't healed. I called the neurologist back and he told me that if he had known I had EDS, he would have sent me to their EDS specialist for brain injuries, but in the meantime, I had been left to rehab my continuing brain damage myself.

These days, I have learned some humility about people's limitations on short-term memory, as before the accident I was quite demanding that other people have the same excellent recall I did, and I was probably a pain in the butt. Even today, I misspell words for no reason, forget things at random with no later recall, and have enduring amnesia about life events for months around the brain injury, just like you see in movies. Reader, I even saw stars like a Warner Brothers cartoon and lost my ability to speak. Zero out of five stars—do not recommend.

I know a lot of people who have had repeat brain injuries, because it's easier to hurt your brain once it has suffered initial trauma. Whether it's from sports, car accidents, falls, or other trauma, lots of people are walking around a bit dazed and confused like I was. When I was invited to interview Lora Rosenbaum, CEO of Ann Arbor's TheraSupport, who help people with extra therapy and support while they heal neurological conditions of all kinds, I knew this was something special to bring to you in case you or a loved one might also benefit. There really should be more resources for people with neurological conditions, especially beyond the basic healthcare.

Neurological conditions are any disorder of the nervous system and can range from degenerative nervous system conditions to injuries to the brain and many more including conditions that cause seizures, pain, and altered levels of consciousness. The effects of a neurological condition can devastate someone's life, career, and even relationships. I learned during my stint as an addled post-concussive individual that the doctors weren't more worried about me because if I had a really severe brain injury, I wouldn't have retained the capacity to be so anxious about it.

People with severe neurological trauma can struggle with changing personalities, or, like me, lose their emotional filter and embarrass themselves by yelling at people. Nurses are quite patient with this—apparently your use of swear words is the last thing to go, along with the fight or flight system, and it means your brain is still working on a basic level. However, it is not fun to live through, and it is even more serious if you experience personality changes that indicate you have lost your capacity to worry or understand your predicament. I hope that this interview gives someone out there a lead to follow to help themselves or a family member as they pursue healing from a neurological condition or support through the tough days when nothing is helping. Blessings.

Laura Cowan: Tell me about the services offered at TheraSupport and what it is like to work with you.

Lora Rosenbaum: TheraSupport is an Ann Arbor-based family business. It was founded by Dr. Thomas S. Rosenbaum PhD (my father), a clinical psychologist, over 20 years ago. I've had various roles over the years, then began the position of CEO four years ago.

Laura Cowan: What kind of services do you offer?

Lora Rosenbaum: My passion is in the community we serve and the clinical services we provide. We offer occupational therapy, speech therapy, counseling and psychotherapy, testing and evaluations. In addition, we established a TheraYoga program and offer nature-based therapies.



Laura Cowan: That sounds really unique and helpful. How did you get into teaching, beyond working with your father?

Lora Rosenbaum: I've had the opportunity to learn about and teach yoga for over 23 years. I participated in a study with the University of Michigan on the benefits of yoga, spinal cord injury, and aging. We have brought the findings of that study into our current yoga program.

LC: As someone who has dealt with spinal cord and brain issues, that sounds amazing. What kinds of people would this help the most?

LR: We specialize in people who have traumatic brain injury, stroke survivors, concussions, neurological disorders, speech disorders, and gender affirming speech therapy. We also help with trauma, PTSD, grief, the aging brain, depression, behavioral issues, family conflict, life skills, and occupational in-home assessments for modifications/adaptations.

LC: Tell me about how you support people with traumatic brain injury.

LR: In addition to our outpatient services listed above, we have a Supported Independent Living program for people with traumatic brain injury. In this program we offer the services listed previously, plus residential apartment living support, care coordination, community integration, and direct care staffing for participants within this specific program.

LC: That is really comprehensive. As someone who has been through a severe concussion, I can appreciate how many areas of support are needed. Tell me more about the yoga classes.

LR: The classes I have the opportunity to teach are the Inclusive Yoga classes. They are one on one or small class settings. Our clinical team provides the assessment and oversight. The yoga class is led in our activities room that is filled with natural light and surrounded by nature. I'm able to implement the years of experience I've had with the research we conducted to provide a safe and meaningful yoga experience for those interested.

LC: This all sounds so helpful to people who might otherwise struggle to find the right support. Could you tell our readers where to find more information or how to speak with someone at TheraSupport to see if your services are a fit for them?

LR: Our website is TheraSupport.com. Consider visiting us on Instagram and Facebook @therasupport. TheraSupport is offering Grief Yoga classes that begin again this fall. Classes are led by a fully licensed therapist using sound and movement to aid in healing from grief and trauma. Feel free to contact lrosenbaum@therasupport.com if you have any questions or are interested in any of our services.

LC: What about insurance coverage?

LR: We take most insurance and have private pay options, too. We have an experienced and dedicated team at TheraSupport. Our commitment is to provide "full-mind wellness" to our community.

To connect with Lora Rosenbaum or TheraSupport, call (734) 677-0200 or visit therasupport.com. Laura K. Cowan is a climate tech and wellness journalist, a former meditation and reiki coach and practitioner, and co-founder of Ann Arbor-based content marketing agency and media outlet Cronicle Press at www.cronicle.press.



LOVINGKINDNESS IN ACTION

A Visit to the Arab-American Museum

By Kirsten Mowrey

"To imbue physical life with a sense of the sacred is a choice, even an act of will." —Joan Parisii Wilcox

I stared at the man silhouetted against the murky gray December sky. Strings of blue and white lights arched skyward as he placed them over the turquoise tiled sign announcing in Arabic and English *Arab American National Museum*.

Walking under the lights felt like a metaphor for the threshold I crossed as I entered the building. I stepped into an atrium that reminded me of dun stone buildings and courtyards, sunnier climates, and warm weather clothes. I breathed in, tuning into my body and the stream of sensations.

Race. Feel what happens in your body when you read that word. I notice a shallowness in my breathing, a tension in my torso, a pause in my heart.

I am so uncomfortable talking about race. I am so uncomfortable using the word "white" to describe myself. I feel ashamed. I feel I am pushing against polite society, like farting in a crowded room. Very inappropriate. Yet if we are living consciously, to do so means to look at and incorporate parts of ourselves, the familiar and the awkward.

Walking under the lights felt like a metaphor for the threshold I crossed as I entered the building.



Socialization is a long process by which we become enculturated and educated in our culture's goals, taboos, standards, and beliefs. It is not conscious, but an accretion of present life experience, past events—healed and wounded—and desires for the future. Unless we choose to make ourselves aware of how we have been socialized, we respond unconsciously to events for most of our lives.

Becoming aware of our socialization is part of becoming conscious. Robin DiAngelo writes in *White Fragility*, "Unlike heavy feelings such as guilt, the continuous work of identifying my internalized superiority and how it may be manifesting itself is incredibly liberating. When I start from the premise that of course I have been thoroughly socialized into the racist culture in which I was born, I no longer need to expend energy denying that fact. I am eager—even excited—to identify my inevitable collusion so that I can figure out how to stop colluding!" (p. 149).

My racial guilt could be a wall I hide behind, a bolster to feeling defensive about my whiteness, and a way I unconsciously perpetuate oppressive systems. Or I could do as Audre Lorde suggests: "If it [guilt] leads to change then it can be useful, since it is then no longer guilt but the beginning of knowledge."

Practicing being in the world with an awakened heart can be painful and overwhelming. My own heart aches every time I read the news, and sometimes I can only read a little. That is my practice: what can I manage today, now, in this moment? What can my heart turn toward now? What is too much? When I feel myself reaching an edge, it is time to turn inward again, to step away from the outward stimulation. Consciousness practice is a dance of continually noticing where I am in relation to what is in my external environment, whether it is my professional office, the grocery store, walking my dogs, talking with a friend, or sitting with myself.

I try to live consciously to liberate myself and stop collusion with harmful and unconscious behaviors.

While I was schooled in Christianity, I haven't been a Christian for decades. The foundations are still there, dormant, until confronted by world events: George Floyd, Ukraine, and deportations. Then, I find those educational foundations, like rotting timber hidden by rising lake levels. As I search for an answer to the things I do not want to see, the pain and suffering of the world comes gasping to the surface.

If I am to live according to my values, I need to dig into the mud they are built in to understand myself now and live from my heart, not from past teachings that lurk within.

Donella Meadows writes that changing paradigms—a system's goals, structure, rules and parameters—is one of the key leverage points to social change. "You could say paradigms are harder to change than anything else about a system. But there's nothing physical or expensive or even slow in the process of paradigm change. In a single individual it can happen in a millisecond. All it takes is a click in the mind, a falling of scales from the eyes, a new way of seeing." (*Thinking in Systems*, p. 163-64) Facing America's present and historical racial pain is taking my work to the next logical step, from all I practice out into the part of the world I inhabit.

I chose to begin addressing my ignorance through reading. In 2021, three professional colleagues and I created a white-affinity book group to read *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*. It was vulnerable to have conversations about race with other white people to dig into those muddy foundations of my past where my beliefs about race were formed. It was also valuable being with myself and others as we touched raw places.

In the chapter *Mending the White Heart and Body*, author Resmaa Menakem says, "The most important thing you can do to unravel White-body supremacy—and to mend your own personal, historical, intergenerational, and secondary trauma around the myth of race—is to notice what your body does in the presence of an unfamiliar Black body. Whenever you encounter an unfamiliar Black body, pay attention to your own body." (p. 206)

As an exercise, I visited museums dedicated to different racial groups and placed myself in situations where I was in the presence of other non-white bodies and practiced paying attention to my physical reactions.

I engaged with one of the largest immigrant communities in southeastern Michigan: Arab Americans. My wife is half Arab, so I have some familiarity with this population. I found in my bodywork practice that beginning with less charged areas of the body is the best way to start, moving slowly toward those

that are more painful or unknown. So, I entered the Arab American National Museum, the only one of its kind in the country.

An octagonal platform sat under a modern squiggly metal sculpture that pulsed with lights and bulged with iPads displaying videos. Tiled balconies rose to a simple octagonal dome. The vocals and music from different sources buzzed in my ears as I stepped to the side of the center opening.

Under carved ceiling tiles, deep brown wood framed perimeter displays, items in old fashioned cases dedicated to history, art, science, language, architecture, and music. The religious display cited the similarities between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam while displaying texts from all three.

I found my body tensing in response to the center display, the noise from the videos were cacophonous. Was it the music making me edgy or was it being present in the space? I retreated to a side room where work from artists in residence was displayed. The carpeting softened and warmed my sense of the room, and I felt my shoulders relax.

I am so uncomfortable talking about race. I am so uncomfortable using the word "white" to describe myself... Yet if we are living consciously, to do so means to look at and incorporate parts of ourselves, the familiar and the awkward.

I hustled up the stairs opposite the entrance, under the displayed Arab World Map. This community is often referred to as "Arab", "Islamic", "Muslim", or "the Middle East" but none of these words fully encompasses the diversity of this part of the globe.

The museum brochure dedicated several pages, a map, and several displays to talking about this question: who defines this area, and what do we include within or without as part of the basic process of self-identification? Some of these terms were bestowed by colonizers, not the people themselves—Middle East to what? Great Britain is where most of our terms in English come from, but terms are now in flux as nations define themselves.

WENA is one geography-based term: West Asia/North Africa, common among authors from the region, while MENA (Middle East/North Africa) gets more usage in the United States. Geographically, these terms cover the entire northern part of Africa, as well as the Horn of Africa (Somalia & Djibouti), the entire Arabian Peninsula and western Asia to the Zagros mountains on the eastern edge of Iran. That definition includes Israel, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

To add to the complexity, not all the nations in this area are Arabic speakers, so often descriptions fall back on the countries that are part of the Arab League, a political organization, as a way of narrowing their definition of who they represent. The League still represents a broad swath of the globe, an area with a history of commerce and travel and a diversity of cultures, religions, and skin colors.

The museum's map defined the region from Mauritania in western Africa to Sudan, including the Arabian Peninsula and north to Syria and Israel but not Iran.

As I reached the second floor, the echoing became less as it was absorbed by carpeting. I turned right into the history exhibits. In the first exhibit, I came face to face with one of our nation's greatest sources of pain: enslavement. The first Arab American in North America, Zammouri, came in the 1500's, enslaved by Portuguese traders, taken from his home in Morocco. A nearby map detailed the extent of the African slave trade, including a citation of a Moroccan Arab community in South Carolina in the late 1700's.

The legal records of the South Carolina House of Representatives ruled that they should fall under the laws governing whites. This meant they were exempt from the South Carolina Negro Act of 1740, which forbid "Negros" from raising food, earning money, choosing their own clothing, learning to write in English, or assembling in groups. (source: South Carolina Encyclopedia/slavecodes). The legal ruling, exhibited at the museum, attests, "Not only to the number of Moroccan Arabs in the South at the time, but also to the nature of the laws, which privileged those classified as "White."

Practicing being in the world with an awakened heart can be painful and overwhelming. My own heart aches every time I read the news, and sometimes I can only read a little.

Victoria Schon
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Where Do We Distribute The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal?

6,000 copies of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* are distributed to more than 235 locations in the Ann Arbor area, including Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, Castle Remedies at the Parkway Center, Kerrytown, Schuler Books, the Zen Temple, Sweetwaters, Pharmacy Solutions, Michigan Union, the Better Health Store, North Campus Commons, U-M, EMU, WCC, Arbor Farms, the Center for Sacred Living, Complete Chiropractic, the Lighthouse Center, Jewel Heart, Tsogyelgar, York, Argus Farm Stop, Michigan Theater, Seva, Booksweet, Clark Pharmacy, and the Weber Center.

We also distribute to the offices of dozens of doctors, holistic health care providers and therapists.

If you'd like us to bring copies of The CW Community Journal to your office, studio or center, please email: bill@crazywisdom.net.



Photo by Bruce Harkness

A Visit to the Arab-American Museum continued...

I felt surprise and shock enter my system, a familiar flush of shame, regret, and grief condensed into a pit in my belly. My reading educated me broadly about enslavement, but the details, the brutality and inhumanity, always took me aback. My chest became tight. I breathed slowly, in and out, feeling the pain bring tears to my eyes. I wiped them away. I stood there and breathed, taking in the truth of the map and the exhibit.

I reminded myself of Pema Chodron, who writes in *Welcoming the Unwelcome*, "The awakened heart begins with the wish to be free of whatever gets in the way of helping others." I want to stress this was not me trying to change what I read or pretend it didn't happen; I was practicing being present with the truth of our nation's history with race and being uncomfortable with it. In returning to calm and tranquility, I practiced being able to listen more, not less, to what the exhibits had to offer.

The museum brochure dedicated several pages, a map, and several displays to talking about this question: who defines this area, and what do we include within or without as part of the basic process of self-identification?

I was also practicing love. In her essay "Love as the Practice of Freedom," bell hooks [the author doesn't capitalize her name] writes, "The moment we choose to love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love, we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others. That action is the testimony of love as the practice of freedom."

hooks's definition of love comes from the famous 1970's bestseller, M. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled*, where love is "The will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." I understand that, as each time I extend my capacity for being present with suffering, my own and another's, when I practice turning toward it rather than away, I am practicing love and therefore freedom. If I am ever to create a different future, I must practice now.

I turned a corner and found a glass case holding old-fashioned suitcases and trunks, similar to ones I had played with as a child visiting my grandmother. Next to them was a sign. Again, I slammed into the wall of white supremacy when I

read the words "Classifying race." It stated, "Race is a cultural classification that changes with time," citing immigration officials' irregular definitions.

During the 1880's, immigrants came from both Africa and Asia, exhibiting a broad physical genome of skin color and hair texture, which led to officials classifying them in a wide range of groups depending on an individual official's definitions. The sign ended by stating, "Because of these changing racial classifications, we cannot always tell from government records if an immigrant was an Arab." Again, race was displayed as a social distinction rather than a biological one making classifications blurry rather than concrete.

I thought of my wife and her ancestry searches to learn about her family. Those searches rely heavily upon government records: birth, death, immigration, property. Human error in those documents, let alone racism, extends long shadows into our present. For those wanting to know the stories of their ancestors, the ambiguity of race hangs cloud-like over their efforts.

I continued through the exhibit, pausing again at a glass case with immigrant clothing and a sign about the Asian Exclusion Act of 1882. I kept breathing, moving on to the Immigration Act of 1924, which "In all of its parts, the most basic purpose of the Act was to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity" (code for Eurocentric) (US State Department website, accessed 1/8/23: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>.) and finishing with the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, which removed quotas based on national origin.

How did I not learn any of this in school? I knew from previous reading that "white" as a classification underwent tremendous change during the early parts of the twentieth century; my Greek and German ancestors hadn't been seen as white until fear of African Americans caused changes to their benefit (for more on this, particularly on classifications of Jewish immigrants, see *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* by Matthew Frye Jacobson).

At this point I had moved around a large room that felt smaller because of my focus on the signs and my reaction to them. I went quickly through many of the exhibits about the 1960s and 70s, giving myself time to re-center and breathe more openly before facing the inevitable: September 11, 2001.

As I said, my wife is half Arab. Her ancestry is English on her father's side, Lebanese on her mother's. Her family was part of the first mass migration. Listening to stories around her family's table for a quarter of a century, I heard so much that was familiar to my own family's Greek oral history: war at home (in my case, World War One conscription; in their case, poverty and famine in Lebanon) and migration to the United States. Settling in with family in one location, (in my case, Maine; in theirs, Iowa) and then moving to Michigan for jobs in the automotive factories.

My wife's mother and aunt would talk of growing up in Highland Park in the 1930s, their school full of migrants from Eastern Europe, the American South, and Middle East/North Africa. Being raised Catholic in the Detroit area, we shared histories, favorite local places, and food.

September 11th was a terrible day for America, a day of profound grief, loss, and horror. While the entire country felt that grief, Arab Americans were singled out for attention and the Dearborn area came under scrutiny. The museum exhibits a letter sent to citizens in the wake of September 11th, asking them for information. While the letter is polite, it is indicative of a broader public suspicion and racial prejudice built on previous decades of racism. There was no innocence until proven guilty, as the law states.

My wife's family became afraid of being Arab and spoke of being deported to a camp. They were in their 70s at that time, but they did not think they would be spared by their age, their Christianity, or their pale skin.

My wife's mother and aunt would talk of growing up in Highland Park in the 1930s, their school full of migrants from Eastern Europe, the American South, and Middle East/North Africa. Being raised Catholic in the Detroit area, we shared histories, favorite local places, and food.

It was in this climate that Thich Nhat Hanh wrote *Calming the Fearful Mind: A Zen Response to Terrorism*. I found the book years later, yet the guidance feels sure. Hanh writes of living in Vietnam during the war. He speaks of the death of friends and students and the great anger within him. As a practicing Buddhist, he wrote, "I didn't say or do anything, because I knew that doing or saying things while I was angry would create a lot of destruction. I paid attention to just breathing in and out. I sat down by myself, closed my eyes, and I recognized my anger, embraced it and looked deeply into the nature of my suffering. Then compassion arose in me... Hatred and anger left my heart. I was able to see that our real enemy is not man, is not another human being. Our real enemy is our ignorance, discrimination, fear, craving and violence." (p.11-12)

In talking about September 11th, he said, "The first step would be for each politician to come home to herself. Most politicians haven't had time to come

home to themselves. They are constantly focused outside of themselves. They are rarely in touch with or taking care of their bodies, feelings, mental formations and consciousness. They allow themselves to be carried away by things around them, like their projects, worries, regrets or by meaningless entertainment. So, the first step is to go home to yourself and to recognize the suffering, the pain in you and to know how to embrace and transform it." (p. 72)

Hanh says our first step is to practice deep, compassionate listening for ourselves, then offer that same depth to others. "Listen with all your mindfulness and concentration. Your sole desire is to give them a chance to speak out. Compassionate and deep listening means that the other person, or the other nation, has a chance to say what they have never had the opportunity or the courage to say because no one ever listened deeply to them before. At first, their speech may be full of condemnation, bitterness and blame. If you can, continue to sit there calmly and listen... Deep listening allows the other person to speak even if what they say contains misperceptions and judgements." (p.17)

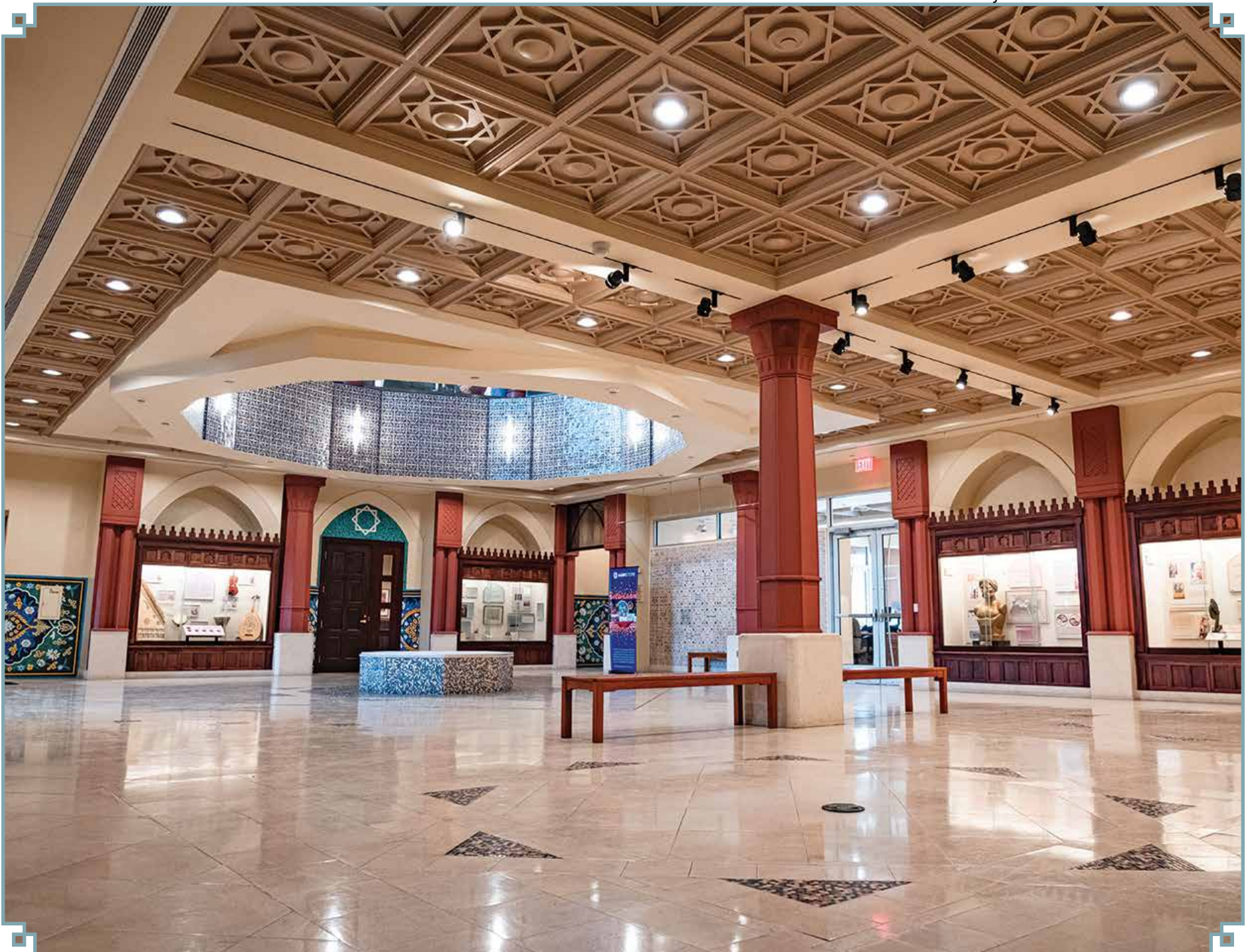
My entire visit to the museum was my attempt at listening, but I reached my capacity with this final piece. I felt cold inside, emotionally wrung out and needing to digest all I had seen. I walked through the exhibits dedicated to sport, art, broadcasting, and politics but I didn't really see much beyond faces on the wall. I slid my coat on, exited the building and went to restore myself.

Since my visit, I found I have more attention and curiosity for news about this community. I am more able to listen before reaching capacity, more able to hold the pain of the suffering happening in Israel, Palestine, and Iran. It's a start, a beginning on the road of love.

The Arab American National Museum is located at 13624 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, MI 48126 and is open Thursday-Saturday.

Kirsten Mowrey is a somatic practitioner and educator. You can find her on the web at kirstenmowrey.com.

Photo courtesy of the Arab-American Museum



COMMUNITY ACUPUNCTURE: A SYNERGY OF HEALING & COMMUNITY



A Conversation with Evan Lebow-Wolf, Cheryl Wong & Kiersten DeWitt of Ann Arbor Community Acupuncture

By Grace Pernecky

What is Community Acupuncture?

Did you know there's a place you can get acupuncture for \$25, and that it could be just as rewarding and healing as acupuncture you may receive for \$100-200 elsewhere?

Many of us know of acupuncture. Some of us have tried it ourselves. Acupuncture follows the tradition of Chinese medicine, which believes that energy, or chi, flows through the body along a variety of meridian pathways. When energy gets blocked, or is flowing too strongly or too weakly, our body becomes unbalanced, and we may experience symptoms and develop illness. Acupuncture places needles in strategic points in the body along the meridians in an effort to correct these imbalances and restore health. However, most clinics in the U.S. that offer acupuncture do so in a spa-like, private setting, with one-on-one appointments that often cost upward of \$100. It's a big investment for many people, especially for those who are already struggling with illness.

Community acupuncture, on the other hand, offers a sustainable and fiscally sensible solution to treating as many people as efficiently and effectively as possible. Evan Lebow-Wolf, co-founder of Ann Arbor Community Acupuncture (AACA), told me briefly about the difference between community acupuncture and private acupuncture. When I asked him whether he feels like there is anything missing in the community acupuncture approach that is available in private acupuncture sessions, he replied with a firm and resolute "no."

Community acupuncture offers a sustainable and fiscally sensible solution to treating as many people as efficiently and effectively as possible.

"To me, the main thing you get from a private 'Boutique' acupuncture (that's what community acupuncturists call it), is up-front, one-on-one time. And I really think that just comes out of this American obsession with individualism and privacy, with 'feeling special.'"

Lebow-Wolf told me that for those rare people who come into community acupuncture and don't like it, the reason is usually that they have had private acupuncture sessions and have an idea of what they think acupuncture should look like and what they should be getting out of the experience. "The vast majority of the time, people just end up doing really well with it," he expressed confidently.

Packing an AcuPunch: The Journey to Ann Arbor Community Acupuncture

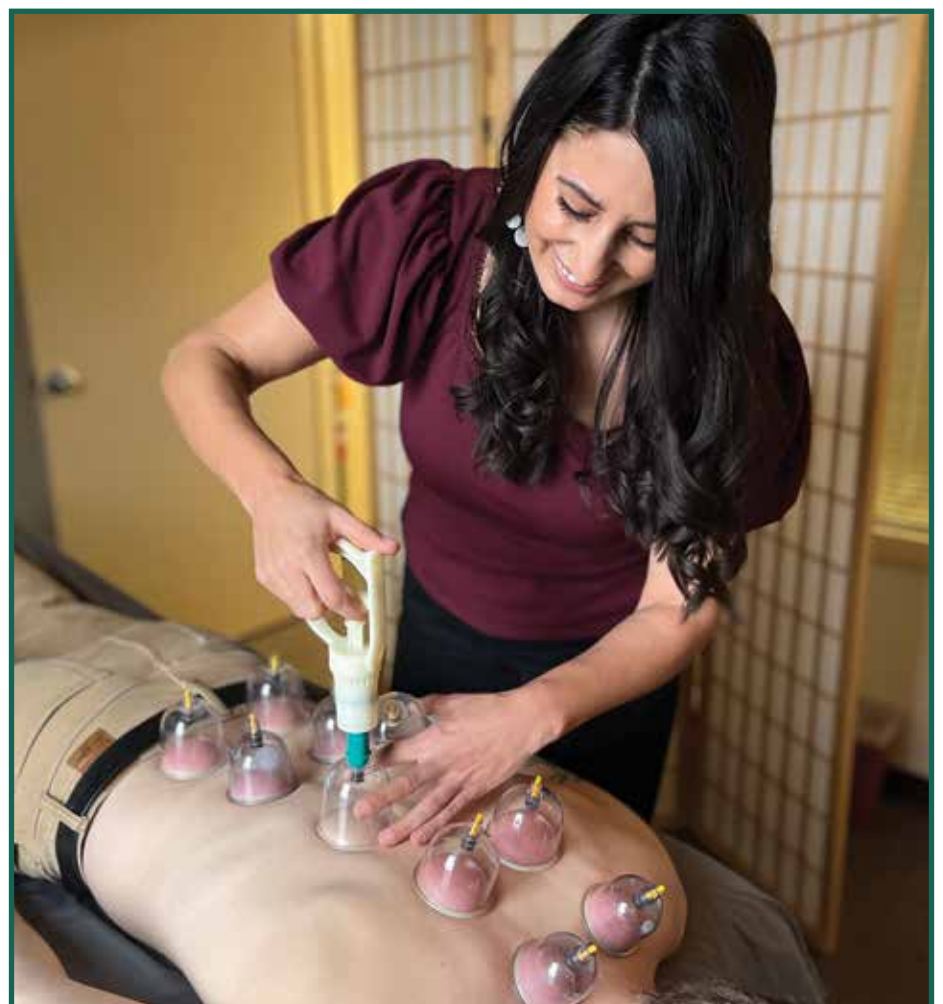
Lebow-Wolf and his partner and co-founder of Ann Arbor Community Acupuncture, Cheryl Wong, both attended Bastyr University in Seattle, one of the largest Naturopathic medical schools in the States. They were both attracted to the school because of its mission to develop the field of natural medicine with a science-based approach. Although they started off with an interest in the field of naturopathic, integrative medicine, and traditional Chinese medicine as a whole, over time they realized the power of acupuncture to restore balance to the body, even when other modalities failed to pack the same punch.

After graduating with a Masters of Science in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (and Wong with an additional Doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine), Lebow-Wolf and Wong moved to upstate New York. Wong started a small,

private naturopathic practice while Evan found work at a community acupuncture clinic. Wong quickly noticed the differences between her and Lebow-Wolf's work, despite offering many of the same services. "I would have to see one person at a time, and because of that I would have to charge \$80 minimum just to keep my office, just to break even. I would hear these stories from Evan about doing relatively simple treatments for these really severe cases at \$15 a pop, and a lot of these people being all better after just one treatment. It was insane."

In 2015, Lebow-Wolf and Wong founded Ann Arbor Community Acupuncture. Since then, they have provided over 30,000 treatments, and in 2017 their clinic gained 501(c)3 status as a non-profit.

In 2015, Lebow-Wolf and Wong founded Ann Arbor Community Acupuncture. Since then, they have provided over 30,000 treatments, and in 2017 their clinic gained 501(c)3 status as a non-profit. They hired Kiersten DeWitt in 2020. DeWitt attended Naturopathic Medical School at the National University of Health Sciences in Chicago, and though she started off with an interest in dietetics and nutrition, she soon came to the same realization that acupuncture was a powerful tool that could be used to treat many people efficiently and effectively.





Ann Arbor Community Acupuncture Team, Evan Lebow-Wolf, Cheryl Wong, and Kiersten DeWitt.

Since day one, AACA has been offering effective and affordable treatments to members of the Ann Arbor community. “Our first day, we had nine patients. They were mostly Evan’s mom’s friends,” laughed Wong reminiscing. “So much has changed since then.” The clinic has mostly grown through word-of-mouth. “We weren’t really doing any marketing or advertising; people would just find out about us through other people who had good experiences with us.” On average, the clinic now sees around 35 people every day.

What Does Group Healing Look Like?

“The physical size and space of our clinic has changed so much since the beginning,” Wong stated. Where there was once only a small treatment room where eight chairs were crammed into a 15 x 25’ space, post-pandemic, the clinic has been able to more than double in physical size, thanks to Paycheck Protection Program loans that the clinic applied for during the pandemic. “It now comfortably fits eight chairs that are spaced at least six feet apart,” said Wong, “and we are still requiring masking at our clinic so that everyone feels safe.”

What does a typical AACA appointment look like? How is it different from acupuncture in a private setting? What happens at your first session?

When you enter the clinic, you will check in at the front desk with a friendly receptionist, who will ask how much you would like to pay for your visit—no questions asked. You will pay on a sliding scale anywhere from \$25-50 and then make yourself comfortable while you wait for the acupuncturist to receive you. There is a fountain whose steady trickle of water will keep you company as you wait, as well as an abundance of literature about acupuncture and other various magazines, both entertaining and health-related. A map of all the community acupuncture clinics in the States is posted by the front desk, and a few other posters and art pieces line the walls.

Once the acupuncturist calls you in, you’ll have a short, five-to-ten-minute consultation, where you’ll talk to them about your health concerns and what you’d

like to address during your visit. They may talk with you about your lifestyle, diet, and ask other basic questions to get a better sense of your presenting problem.

After you’ve consulted with Lebow-Wolf, Wong, or DeWitt, they will lead you into the treatment room. When you enter the room, you’ll notice immediately how relaxing it feels: water runs steadily down a waterfall-style fountain, and dim lighting emanating from a variety of lamps around the outskirts of the room gives the place a gentle glow. The thermostat is set at a cozy 77°, and an electric fireplace blazes by the door and makes the room feel especially inviting. Asian-inspired art decorates the walls, and cushy reclining chairs sit evenly spaced around the room, some of which may already hold patients undergoing treatment. Your acupuncturist will tell you softly to find a seat and make yourself comfortable, while they check on the other patients and remove their needles if they indicate they are ready to complete their treatment.

We joke about our job actually being putting people down for naps. We just sort of tuck people in, and then in half an hour or so they wake up refreshed and happy.

—Evan Lebow-Wolf

Once you’ve settled in, the practitioner will take your pulse, and then begin to gently insert needles into strategic places along the meridian pathways in your body in a treatment that is unique to you. If any of the points are uncomfortable or painful once the needle has been placed, the acupuncturist will urge you to simply let them know and they will remove them. Once all the needles have been put in, you’ll be left to take a nap, listen to music, or meditate during treatment while the acupuncturist on duty moves on to the next patient.



COMMUNITY ACUPUNCTURE

continued...

“We joke about our job actually being putting people down for naps,” Lebow-Wolf said with a smile, “We just sort of tuck people in, and then in half an hour or so they wake up refreshed and happy.”

When you feel you are done, which DeWitt said for most people is “once you’ve come out of a state of deep relaxation and start to feel restless,” simply catch the eye of the acupuncturist when they reenter the room to check on the patients (about once every five minutes) and they will remove the needles.

“That’s another thing you have with community acupuncture that you can’t have with private acupuncture—we ask people to let their bodies decide how long they need the needles in,” Wong told me. “Sometimes that’s 20 minutes and sometimes it’s three hours. On average it’s about 45 minutes.” I asked her what the record amount of time someone has had the needles in for and she said “six hours” without batting an eyelid.

That’s another thing you have with community acupuncture that you can’t have with private acupuncture—we ask people to let their bodies decide how long they need the needles in. Sometimes that’s 20 minutes and sometimes it’s three hours. On average it’s about 45 minutes.

–Cheryl Wong

The Advantages of Community Acupuncture

At first, working in acupuncture was a bit of a “blow to the ego,” said Lebow-Wolf, because he, Wong, and DeWitt all spent years studying naturopathic and traditional Chinese medicine. Though acupuncture is only one of many tools utilized in this approach to healthcare, it seems to make the biggest, most noticeable difference in many of their patient’s lives. “[We] all have so many other modalities we could use, and sometimes we’re like ‘dang, I really want to talk to this person about nutrition,’ or other things that would take a lot more time and would be a bigger investment for the patient to make the changes and stick to them. But with acupuncture, it really can be just that simple. When patients go home, they don’t have to remember to do anything every day—they just have to show up for their appointment.”

That’s not to say that those other modalities aren’t utilized in the clinic. Though Lebow-Wolf, Wong, and DeWitt only have 10 minutes to check-in with a patient before their treatment, because patients can afford to come back regularly and consistently, those 10 minutes of checking in can really add up over time.

“Though our focus is on the acupuncture, we’ve found we can still plant seeds during that 10-minute check-in about herbs, nutrition, and other tips. And because the appointments are able to happen more frequently and over longer periods of time, there’s this trust that’s built over time that can be really important and something that seems to be lacking in our Western medical system. We can be the voice they trust that reassures them that it might be a good idea for them to take a trip to their doctor, when they may have lost that trust with the medical system at large,” DeWitt said.

Another benefit of community acupuncture is the possibility of group healing. “Relaxing in a space with other people who are also relaxed can add an extra level of healing,” stated Wong.

Along these lines, the more concise consultations at the beginning of each session allow for less rumination and cyclical thinking for patients which can be helpful, especially with patients who have more complicated or ongoing health struggles. Wong sees a fair amount of people who, she says, “have this feeling of wanting to really tell their story, identifying themselves as a person who is stuck with this disease. In a private setting, you can get away more easily with this sort of analysis-rumination that in the end, can be more harmful than helpful in terms of getting a patient in a state where they are open to treatment. Community acupuncture allows us to prioritize treatment.”

I asked Lebow-Wolf if they still feel they are able to individualize treatments with such a short timeframe to diagnose issues and come up with a treatment plan, and his response was a resounding “yes.” “In addition to having enough time to figure out what approach we can take, because it’s more affordable and people can come in more frequently than they may be able to at boutique acupuncture clinics, even if the first treatment doesn’t work, we can keep trying things over the course of time.” Lebow-Wolf clarified that healing is a process, not a bandage or a quick fix, and that community acupuncture allows for this process to unfold in a way that is really special and unique.



Photo by Grace Pernecky

The Magic of Acupuncture: A Results Driven Approach

When I asked Wong what the future of their clinic looks like and what she hopes for the future of community acupuncture at large, she launched passionately into a story about AACA’s most recent foray into helping folks heal from addiction.

“We’re currently working with Dawn Farm, an out-patient clinic for folks who are recovering from addiction. Because of funding from a private donor who really believes in the work we are doing, the farm is able to bus out around 15 people each week to come get treatment at our clinic. Addiction is something that can totally take over your life—you don’t know who you are anymore. These people come to our clinic and after receiving treatment, they can feel like themselves again, and realize that they didn’t do it with drugs. That’s really powerful.”

Wong hopes to expand this program, in addition to seeing the field of community acupuncture in the States grow. Right now, the clinic is seeing patients from West Michigan, Detroit, Ohio, and Indiana. “That’s how much of a need there is,” said Wong.

Acupuncture has been used to successfully treat and heal people with a wide variety of illnesses for centuries. On top of that, community acupuncture takes away the barrier of cost. This creates an affordable, low-risk way to try a new healing modality that, for some, may be exactly what they need.

When I asked about whether they’d like to see more research in the field of community acupuncture, DeWitt’s response intrigued me:

“There are definitely people doing research on acupuncture, and a lot of it is results driven, because the mechanisms are somewhat theoretical. But it’s also important to understand that there’s a lot in Western medicine that isn’t understood regarding the mechanisms. For example, there’s a good amount of pharmaceuticals with unknown mechanisms of action, where the mechanism of action that they were being studied for is not what they are being used for. I think there’s a bit of misunderstanding and bias when it comes to ‘we don’t know exactly how it works, therefore we shouldn’t use it,’ because that’s not necessarily how Western medicine is. It’s often results-driven, and that’s how a lot of acupuncture research is as well.”

Wong added a helpful comparison to the table: “It’s like bacteria. We didn’t know they existed until the microscope was invented. It’s the same thing with acupuncture. A lot of people can’t see it, so they don’t believe it. But I do see it—Every time I put a needle somewhere and the patient asks me to take the needle out of their leg but it’s actually in their foot.”

It’s a normal, human behavior to be uncomfortable with the unknown. It makes sense—we want to be as certain as possible that it’s safe to trust—that we’re not making a mistake. And yet, acupuncture has been used to successfully treat and heal people with a wide variety of illnesses for centuries. On top of that, community acupuncture takes away the barrier of cost. This creates an affordable, low-risk way to try a new healing modality that, for some, may be exactly what they need.

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Our Book Picks for Kids and Tweens



“Reading should not be presented to children as a chore, a duty. It should be offered as a gift.”

– Kate DiCamillo



Manolo and the Unicorn

By Jonah and Jackie Azúa Kramer, illustrated by Zach Manbeck

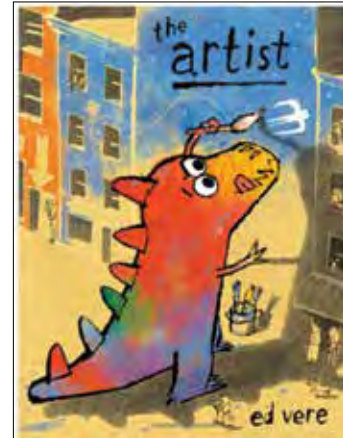
To Manolo the world is a magical place—a place where he searches for the most magical creature of all: a unicorn. Manolo loves unicorns. When the Wild Animal Parade is announced at school, and Manolo declares that he will come as his favorite animal, his classmates say there is no such thing as unicorns, making the world feel ordinary. That is, until Manolo meets a real unicorn—wild and graceful—and discovers that the world is truly extraordinary.



The Artist

By Ed Vere

Creative young children will see themselves and the world around them in a fresh light in this charming story about an artistic soul. Through setbacks and triumphs, our young hero adds color and life to a drab gray city, bringing beauty to those who live there. It's a journey that reminds us that it's okay to color outside the lines: Art is full of heart! The Artist is a perfect gift for creative kids, graduates, or anyone setting out on a new path, encouraging them to face life's obstacles with a positive outlook.



Calvin and the Sugar Apples

By Inês F. Oliveira, illustrated by Vanessa Balleza

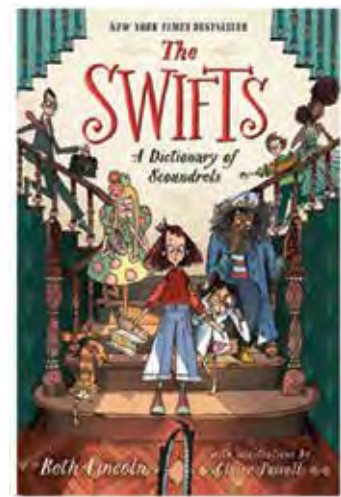
Ten-year-old Amelia has always had Calvin, her chinchilla friend, to talk to about her problems. But Calvin is no longer in his cage, and her parents just say he's in a “better place.” When Amelia and her best friend, Camila, have an argument, and Amelia later misses the school talent show, she doesn't know what to do. Without Calvin, who does she talk to about her disappointments at school? And who does she talk to about missing Calvin? Just when Amelia thinks she's completely alone, a new student arrives, and they begin to sort things out together. Amelia learns that it's always possible to make new friends, that expressing yourself can happen in different ways, and that it all starts with talking it out.



The Swifts: A Dictionary of Scoundrels

By Beth Lincoln, Illustrated by Claire Powell

On the day they are born, every Swift child is brought before the sacred Family Dictionary. They are given a name, and a definition. A definition it is assumed they will grow up to match. Meet Shenanigan Swift: Little sister. Risk-taker. Mischief-maker. Shenanigan is getting ready for the big Swift Family Reunion and plotting her next great scheme: hunting for Grand-Uncle Vile's long-lost treasure. She's excited to finally meet her arriving relatives—until one of them gives Arch-Aunt Schadenfreude a deadly shove down the stairs. So what if everyone thinks she'll never be more than a troublemaker, just because of her name? Shenanigan knows she can become whatever she wants, even a detective. And she's determined to follow the twisty clues and catch the killer.



The Isle of the Gods

By Amie Kaufman

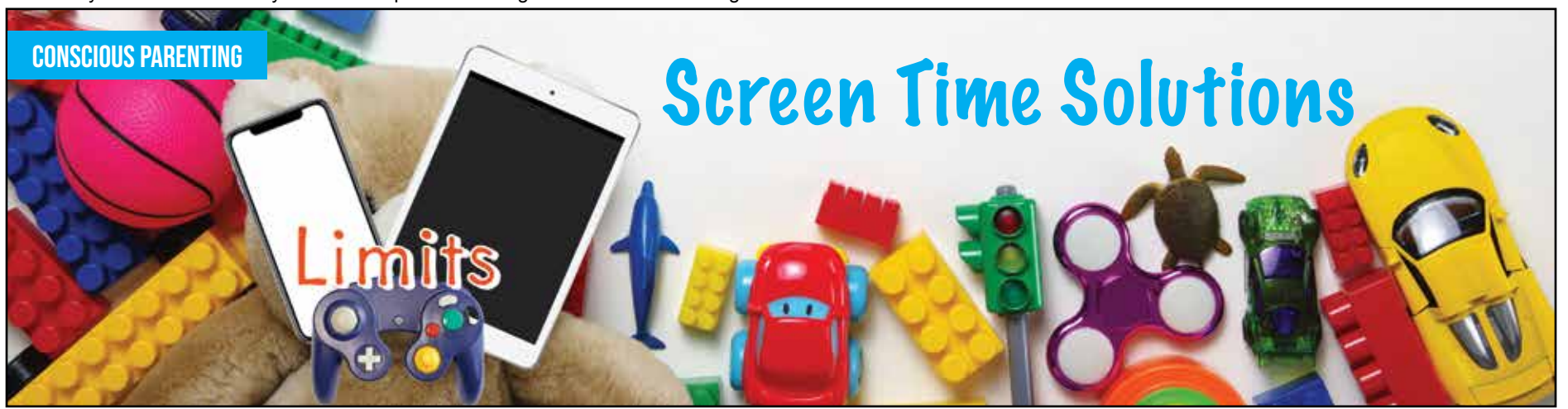
Selly has salt water in her veins. When her father leaves her high and dry in the port of Kirkpool, she has no intention of riding out the winter at home while he sails off to adventure. But any plans to follow him are dashed when a handsome stranger with tell-tale magician's marks on his arm commandeers her ship. He is Prince Leander of Alinor and he needs to cross the Crescent Sea without detection so he can complete a ritual on the sacred Isles of the Gods. Selly has no desire to escort a spoiled prince anywhere, and no time for his entitled demands or his good looks. But what starts as a leisure cruise will lead to acts of treason and sheer terror on the high seas, bringing two countries to the brink of war, two strangers closer than they ever thought possible and stirring two dangerous gods from centuries of slumber...



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The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section



CONSCIOUS PARENTING

Screen Time Solutions

By Fran Mason

As an elementary school teacher for almost three decades, I've witnessed a dramatic shift in recent years in the behavior and habits of children. Further, I've seen an alarming rise in obesity and violent tendencies during that time. I attribute these changes, in part, to excessive screen time as well as a lack of parental involvement.

Unfortunately, the social isolation we experienced during the pandemic only served to exacerbate trends already burgeoning.

Covid hit everyone hard. Unfortunately, the social isolation we experienced during the pandemic only served to exacerbate trends already burgeoning. In the last few years, especially, I've observed that students have dramatically reduced attention spans, have an increased "demand" for entertaining content (YouTube is *in*, books are *out*), are reluctant to follow rules and directions, and exhibit diminished social skills which leads to the diminished capacity to resolve conflict.

These trends are playing out, due in part to excessive screen time—even in the youngest children. There is still too little in-person interaction (i.e. playing with friends, especially outside, something I rarely observe in my neighborhood), and too little parental guidance and involvement.

TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME

Experts caution that too much screen time may lead to:

- Sleep problems/irregular sleep
- Behavior problems
- Impaired academic performance/lower grades
- Reading fewer books
- Delayed development of learning and social skills, particularly for younger children
- Less time spent with family and friends
- Not enough outdoor time or physical activity
- Weight problems/obesity, poor self-image, poor body image
- Mood problems/mental health issues
- Fear of missing out (*FOMO*)
- Overexposure to violence
- Less time learning other ways to relax and have fun

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Youngsters who spend a disproportionate amount of time interacting with screens often suffer from depression and anxiety. Further, failing to interact with friends and family in real life can lead to overall poor mental health. In May of 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy issued an advisory about the effects of social media on mental health.

"Children are exposed to harmful content on social media, ranging from violent and sexual content, to bullying and harassment. And for too many children, social media use is compromising their sleep and valuable in-person time with family and friends. We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis—one that we must urgently address."

While schools are increasingly implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies to help mitigate these mental health concerns, I fear it's not enough.

Youngsters who spend a disproportionate amount of time interacting with screens often suffer from depression and anxiety. Further, failing to interact with friends and family in real life can lead to overall poor mental health.

PHYSICAL CONCERNS

In addition to mental health worries, there are also physical concerns associated with too much screen time. The blue light emitted from devices can lead to eye fatigue, headaches, and retinal damage. Additionally, blue light can interrupt the body's circadian rhythm. Blue light blocking glasses can help reduce some of these factors.

Then, there's the obesity connection. On this topic, the National Institute of Health states, "Obesity is one of the best-documented outcomes of screen media exposure." A study by the U.S. Department of Education found that "kids

who spent at least an hour each day in front of the television were also 72% more likely to be obese."

A WORD ABOUT INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

So, what are parents to do? The first and most important task is to limit time on devices starting *right now*. I know, easier said than done! Changing the tide of too much screen time will take time and effort, as well as a paradigm shift in both kids and parents.

Speaking of paradigm shifts, fostering *intrinsic motivation* is a powerful approach to lessening the draw of screens. Intrinsic motivation is defined as completing an activity for its own inherent satisfaction and enjoyment, rather than for an external reward (such as a new toy, virtual coins, or a special privilege).

A youngster who completes their nightly homework because they want to do well in school or because they are genuinely curious about the subject matter is exhibiting intrinsic motivation. A child who practices their instrument because they love making music, as opposed to hoping to win a competition or avoid punishment, is also intrinsically motivated.

Speaking of paradigm shifts, fostering intrinsic motivation is a powerful approach to lessening the draw of screens.

Adults can help children grow their intrinsic motivation by:

- Allowing children to pursue their own interests with no expectations or strings attached. This can be challenging for some parents who want their kids to be a football player, for example, even though the child's real interest is in playing chess.
- Creating opportunities and engaging in activities (in real life) that children find interesting and challenging (building a backyard obstacle course, cooking an entire meal together, or visiting the art museum where the focus of the visit is on the child's favorite artist(s)).
- Fostering curiosity about the world generally leads to children pursuing a task for the sole pleasure of learning or mastering a new idea. To support this, ask open-ended questions that allow children to puzzle out their answer. For example, ask, "Why do you think Monarch butterflies only eat milkweed?" Challenge them to explain their thinking.



• Give positive feedback for their efforts, even “unsuccessful” ones. In response to a question about his missteps, Edison once said, “I have not failed 10,000 times—I’ve successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work.” Risk taking and perseverance begets success in the long run!

Deci and Ryan, from the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, claim, “Intrinsic motivation is driven by enjoyment, fun, interest, and the inherent satisfaction that comes from participating in the behavior.” Simply stated, when children have activities they are personally invested in, screen time is less of a draw for their attention.

A WORD ABOUT BOREDOM

We, as parents and caregivers, fear boredom in our children because it may lead to negative behaviors (temper tantrum in the grocery store?!). However, American sociologist Sherry Turkle counters, “Boredom is your imagination calling to you.” French psychotherapist Etty Buzyn agrees and advocates for the merits of boredom.

“Actually, boredom is a vital formative experience in a life of a child. The ability to deal with boredom is an unmistakable sign of good mental health. Being still makes children confront their solitude and deploy their emotions inside their personal world. This progressively lets them discover the ability to make their imagination grow and invent stories that will later become part of their games.”

In other words, we don’t need to put a device in front of a child at the first sign of boredom. Let them ponder the situation. Guide *them* in finding alternative ideas or activities.



SOME IDEAS TO BUST BOREDOM, INCREASE IMAGINATION, AND QUELL THE CALL OF CYPERSPACE

Experts agree that parents should start by replacing at least one hour of TV/ phone/computer time with real life activities and interactions. Instead of making limited screen time into a battle or punishment, consider these strategies for *redirecting* a youngster’s attention:

- Play a sport.
- Explore the natural world through unstructured play, hikes, camping, bike riding, and similar.
- Engage in other extracurricular activities (robotics, chess club, volunteer work, book clubs...) through school, scouts, or church.
- Spend time with friends (in person).
- Read to younger children. Read novels aloud as a family.
- Play board games or complete puzzles.
- Draw, color, paint! Don’t forget other art activities such as building with clay, leather craft, knitting or crocheting, printmaking, sewing, papermaking...the list is virtually endless!
- Offer children open-ended toys. Open-ended toys are those that can be played with independently, without guidance or batteries—toys that can be used in many ways based on the child’s imagination.

Open-ended toys include: blocks of all kinds, Lego bricks, human or animal figures, play food, dress-up clothes/costumes, vehicles, or art supplies. In other words, less *Nintendo Switch* more cardboard box!

Screens aren’t going anywhere. It’s up to us as parents and teachers to balance the benefits of devices with strategies that mitigate the negatives. Spending time with children in the moment, playing games, taking hikes, and reading books is *crucial*. When parents encourage exploration and curiosity and support the *process* of new learning (over the outcome), a happy, curious, well-balanced child is likely the result.

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ELEMENTS PRESCHOOL

By Tchera Niyego

I discovered Elements Preschool a few months ago during my extended early childhood education studies. To my delight, it is not only a place of discovery for children, but also for adults. Soon after being introduced to Elements Preschool, I started working with Kirsten Voiles, the founder and director, with whom I share a passion for education and the arts.

A significant part of the motivation in doing this interview was a desire on my part to get to know Voiles better while introducing her compassionate views to more caregivers, teachers, and parents. Voiles is resolutely dynamic, genuinely curious, straightforward, warmhearted, and playful. May all children everywhere endlessly blossom into autonomy, authenticity, and joyful expression.



Tchera Niyego: You hold a Masters in Consciousness Studies with a focus on neurophysiology of emotions and attachment. Would you please explain what that training entails?

Kirsten Voiles: When I began my research, I didn't know exactly how to define what I was looking for, what question about consciousness I was asking. I wanted to understand what the feeling of love is in all its different expressions and how this can allow people a sense of openness, freedom, and trust. Why are we able to hear things differently when we are in the state of love for example? How do we gain greater access to that state of being in order to better understand others? And why do certain experiences of love come with states of bliss and ecstatic sensations of oneness with all of existence?

During the two years prior to beginning my master's studies, I had experienced three massive shifts in my perceptual abilities. When I gave birth to my son naturally at home something revelatory happened to my body, and I suddenly had a lot more access to sensory and emotional information than I had had before. It seemed that many things had been stored in my body that were opened or released during the process of an unmedicated and non-medical birth experience.

I began to see this dramatic difference between usual adult ways of being with children and how kids really needed their big people to show up for them. Underpinning this difference was a feeling of trust, and I wanted to understand why adults mistrust kids and how we could change this.

Following that, I spent two years in deep philosophical conversations with my brother as he was dying. I started recognizing my emotions and realizing that the process of blocking them had been a slow development over years. It was like returning to a way of being that I remembered but that had become foreign as I took on the many roles of adulthood while acclimating to societal expectations. There was this inner navigation that it seemed I had always sensed and depended on during dramatic life changing decisions but had become silenced or dormant during everyday life.

And then I fell in love. The dramatic changes in my sensory stimulation, grasp on reality, and personal narrative was flooring.

Alongside all of this, I was teaching preschoolers. The changes in my emotional abilities were changing the way I felt the needs of the kids, changing the way I understood their struggles, conflicts, desires, and experience of life. I began to see this dramatic difference between usual adult ways of being with children and how kids really needed their big people to show up for them. Underpinning this difference was a feeling of trust, and I wanted to understand why adults mistrust kids and how we could change this. How could it be that we could believe in wanting to be loving with our children and not actually be communicating love to them or with them?

Ultimately it all came together in the question what is love? So, I studied consciousness, as in, how do I have any awareness of myself as the experienter? And how/why does that experience of myself change and/or stay constant? How does the knowledge of myself originate or develop? How do my feelings relate to or connect with anything "outside" of myself, say for example, my mother, my babies, the children that I teach, my wife, or the All of Everything? And how could I feel the connection to the whole of existence?

Being in an active state of love brought with it a way to trust in the validity of the children's experiences no matter what they were doing. Connecting the dots, concepts, and experiences, was the feeling in the person who was experiencing them. So, what are feelings? How do they work? How do we come to know anything, because the feelings seem to be the place where we land when we're "in knowing." This all led me to the neurophysiology of emotions, and that the body maps those pathways of sensation which are formed with our early caregivers and attachment relationships. The access to specific feeling awareness



is shaped by, nourished or blocked, and encouraged through regular pleasurable connective and affirming experiences, or numbed and defended against as dangerous with consistent experiences of pain, neglect, abandonment, ignoring, invalidation, or harm.

My thesis under the field of embodiment studies, is not only that the love we feel, and the ways we can feel--or more specifically allow love--is dependent on our particular bodies, but also that the cosmic, miraculous, transcendent sensations of oneness with all existence is ever present and accessible to us simply because we are bodies as part of a larger body. It is not just that we are interconnected, it is that we are cells of the whole and that under certain circumstances we can feel the larger body of which we are a part.

The most revolutionary of my findings is that we can practice and access more and more sensations of the connectedness between us. I would name this experience attunement. What I mean by it is, yes, resonance with someone or something, but more pointedly, a deliberate act of allowing the internal experience of another being to pervade your own sensory awareness. It is more than empathy. It's not just relating with how someone else is feeling or imagining/remembering how it feels to be in someone else's circumstance or how you've felt similarly. It's allowing your body to register the body of another. From my experience, it is much easier to do this in relationship with children because they have not yet learned all these culturally dictated, weaving and complicated ways of blocking access to their feelings.

When I first started working full time as a preschool teacher, I saw this constant struggle between adults trying to meet societal expectations in opposition to really understanding and connecting with kids. There was a dramatic break between the two ways of being—one that sought specific outcomes of behavior and achievement, and the other that rested in more primal, intuitive, body awareness and sensations.

Simultaneously, young humans must attune to their caregivers' emotions for sheer survival. We don't interpret the information when we're babies, or fetuses—we naturally and necessarily register and resonate the inner sensations of our caregivers' bodies. Over time, particularly in western culture, we are taught to numb access to this information and ultimately to override it. Again, from my experience, this is what makes attunement between adults more difficult. There are a lot of layers of self-defense, blocking, and misinterpretation to wade through in order to get back to sensing our own feelings and sensing what someone else is experiencing beneath those layers of diversion.

Tchera Niyego: Please tell us also about your background of 20 years educating children. When was Elements established and how did it come about?

Kirsten Voiles: My oldest son is 21 and my younger son is 15. So, in that way I've been caring for and educating children for many years. Even when I was a kid, I had this understanding that there was something separating adult ways of relating to younger people. That insight has never left me and guided my relationship with my own children and later how I approached working with kids in institutional settings.

I've studied education and worked with kids throughout my life in many different capacities. I've worked with kids in theater and dance, running camp classes and choreographing for plays. I taught dance for several years and did school programs for dance as well. My first degree is in Arts and Education, and I worked in several daycares as part of my undergraduate work. I also studied education at Eastern Michigan University, where I had intended to work with older kids and did my practicum at Huron High School.

Studying education really highlighted for me the state of our cultural dissociation with learning, growing, and being young. Witnessing the way that we educate teachers to educate children, I was watching in real time what I would define as a serious crisis of humanity. Why we develop this kind of amnesia that we sink into as we grow up within this culture was later more clearly elucidated through my master's work.

When I first started working full time as a preschool teacher, I saw this constant struggle between adults trying to meet societal expectations in opposition to really understanding and connecting with kids. There was a dramatic break between the two ways of being—one that sought specific outcomes of behavior and achievement, and the other that rested in more primal, intuitive, body awareness and sensations. For young humans, these, I would say, competing ways of being have dramatic and confusing effects on their development and ability to grow well. Along with the behavioral dictates for both children and adults, I began to get a glimpse of this entire paradigm that sees humans as inherently faulty, of needing instructions in order to not be bad, and of being wholly ignorant and incompetent. I wanted teachers and parents to think about how in addition to a general condescension toward children in this culture, the reliance on punishment as a way to manipulate young humans' movements to meet societal etiquettes, is a repeating cycle of maladaptive coping mechanisms in response to the trauma of dissociation from our bodies and the larger body of the earth.

Another teacher and I were connecting deeply on all of these understandings, and we were finding that the setting we were in was limiting our abilities to really create freedom and holistic nourishment for the kids. We decided to open

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Art with Kirsten Voiles, the founder of Elements Preschool.

ELEMENTS PRESCHOOL



our own school. As we continued to learn about how humans grow healthfully, we realized how important being in wild spaces is for natural development. We knew that kids naturally learn anything that they need to know and that trust in them, trust in humans, trust in the natural processes of life were essential in order to provide the best possible environment for them to learn with ease and joy and fulfillment. We wanted to create the framework of the school to be based on meeting the kids' needs, to create a flow to the day, and access to materials that supplied their intrinsic motivations. We also sought to highlight in our approach a sense of learning for the adults just as much for the kids. It was part of our outlook that when we found ourselves reacting to children from these maladaptive encultured ways, we would look deeply into ourselves to find the roots of our own behaviors, investigating our own experiences and trauma. Finally, we would rely on looking at what needed to change in the program to address each and every situation in which a child was motivated to push against whatever was happening at the time. We want to ask what does the child need at this moment that they are not getting? We got a grant, borrowed money from family, and put a lot on credit cards, and opened September of 2017. The building that we are currently in was the first place that we toured with our realtor. We felt it was a pretty clear signal that we were on the right path. During the beginning of the pandemic, my business partner moved to the southwest, and I became the sole owner and director.

Children in this setting... [are] more closely woven into a community of diverse families with unique experiences to learn from and understand, and in which to become a meaningful part.

Tchera Niyego: You are in the process of making some systematic changes in Elements Preschool, turning it into a "Learning Community." Please tell us about how that is designed to play out?

Kirsten Voiles: Well, you can imagine just how difficult of an expectation it would be to ask teachers to overhaul their paradigms in order to work in this setting. We've had a great many adults come to work at Elements, both with early childhood education and experience and without, who have embraced this deeply personal work. At the same time, one has to be really committed to this enterprise in order to sustain this level of self-investigation. This isn't what is taught when you go to school for education, and it is not a common expectation for working in preschools or daycares. Over the last year, it has been really difficult to hire folks who are in the place in their lives where this kind of undertaking is right for them, and I've struggled with how to appropriately imbue these ideals to teachers when the starting point of our relationship is one of employment. We all know how difficult it is to balance life, and then imagine that work life was asking you to take a deep dive into your own upbringing and unravel your assumptions of what it means to be a child and interact with young people.

At the beginning of last year, I asked the families at Elements if they would be willing to volunteer in a few different ways to help cover staff shortages, teacher absences, and emergency situations. Many families were excited to come to the woods with us in the morning or come play with us in the outdoor classroom in the afternoon. A few families who had already been working from home due to the pandemic had the ability to work from the school office. I trained a few parents on our indoor morning routine as support for teacher illness and vacations. At first, I thought this would just be a piecemeal solution to a temporary situation, but as I saw the benefits for the whole community of having families more directly involved at the school, I began to re-evaluate the energy that I was putting into hiring and training staff who may not have the bandwidth to be so personally invested in the school's mission.

Sharing the philosophical approach with families during their time at the school has been deeply fulfilling and inspiring for me, connective and expansive for the kids, and overall seems to be having positive effects on parents' relationships with their children at home and at school. Families have been excited about the insights that come out of their time sharing in their child's preschool day. Ultimately, I'm hoping to aid in the release of stress and expectations that families feel in their daily lives, so there's more space and energy for attunement with their kids and with themselves and their whole family unit.

With the way our society is currently structured, it may, at first, look like one more additional societal expectation to be involved in your child's school, obligated to volunteer a certain amount, and help out with the school's



consistent functioning, but my hope is that the whole idea of a "learning community" will have the opposite result. We all struggle as parents in this individualized culture, feeling alone in our development and learning, criticizing ourselves and seeking advice about how to do it right and better. Many families have limited family and community to help out with additional childcare and resources. Working both inside and outside of the home can be depleting and compartmentalizing for many parents. Sending our children to daycare can be a very difficult experience and can create a feeling (sometimes subconsciously) of distancing our feelings of sacrifice and grief.

My hope is not only that this experience will create more connections between families involved in the school for mutual aid and support, but also that in this little environment we might begin to normalize asking for help and receiving generosity, between families and also between the caregivers/teachers in relationship with families as well. I think that what Elements has to offer is mutually beneficial for all of us, and I'd like to divest from a model that sees me as the owner of a business service and get down closer to the truth that we're all raising these young humans together. The people who are caring for kids are really meaningful to the child's development. It is really important to know what those people think and feel, and I want families to be immersed in that knowledge at Elements as much as possible.

So, families will take part going to the woods, dancing, and playing during music, doing art, building, and eating with us. Each family will take part as little or as much in other ways as they feel inspired and available. Some families will work from the office for a day, stepping out to eat with us or hear a story or just join us in the yard at the end of their day. We currently have a parent volunteer as the family coordinator who sets up a monthly get together outside of school hours, and we plan to have regular learning opportunities such as curriculum night and a guest speaker for deeper investigation.

Finally, I think this model can be nourishing and healing for this culture in general. Not only that children in this setting may be having a more holistic, freeing, and attuned experience of life with their natural learning and developmental abilities supplied by these essential nutrients, but also to be more closely woven into a community of diverse families with unique experiences to learn from and understand, and in which to become a meaningful part. Imagining a learning community of families beginning to unravel some of the neural pathways built up from growing up in a culturally evolved environment steeped in punishment and dominion: It's a harrowing and enlightening prospect. The colonization upon which this culture was developed is deeply embedded in the ways that we move through life and in our perceptions of humans as disconnected from each other, disembodied from ourselves, and dissociated from our immersion in the earth. The many crises of our day and our history, from environmental destruction to every form of bias and racism, from the overall degradation of our health in all ways psychological, ethical, organic, and in all of our bodily systems to our escape mechanisms of violence, abuse, substance use, and materialism, can be seen through the lens of embodiment as the results of humans' repeating cycle of mis-attunement. Seriously, what if learning how to attune would shift the trajectory of our individual and collective evolution?

Elements Preschool is located at 5141 Platt Road, Ann Arbor, 48108. To learn more about Elements Preschool please contact (734) 369-33-57 and visit elementspreschoolmi.com.

Fall Allergies (please pass the tissues)

By Juli Johnson

Autumn is a welcome change after the hot and humid days of summer. Cooler days and nights, leaves changing colors and falling from the trees, pumpkins, bonfires, hayrides, and flannel invite us to get cozy and enjoy the transition to winter. However, for the folks who suffer from seasonal allergies, autumn isn't such a cozy time and winter can't get here fast enough!

For the folks who suffer from seasonal allergies, autumn isn't such a cozy time and winter can't get here fast enough!

According to statistics from the Center for Disease Control, one in three U.S. adults and one in four U.S. children suffer from seasonal allergies. For them, the fall season is a time of misery. Achool!

What are seasonal allergies? Seasonal allergies involve an immune reaction to substances found in the environment and occur at different times during the year. They occur most often during spring, summer and/or fall. While nearly anything can create an overreaction from our immune system, there seems to be some common environmental culprits with seasonal allergies. The two most common allergens of the fall season are mold and ragweed.

Mold can be a result of high humidity and rain from mid-summer to late fall. Outdoors, mold can be found in compost piles, rotting logs, mulch, wet and decaying leaves, grass, grains, outdoor furniture, fabrics, and clogged gutters—any damp place that doesn't get a lot of air circulation or sunshine. Mold can be easy to spot on cement and fabrics. It comes in a variety of colors: black, gray, blue, and green. Sometimes a fuzzy white substance can be seen on decaying matter. The most common types of outdoor mold are *Alternaria*, *Aspergillus*, and *Cladosporium*. When the fall winds blow those leaves around, you can bet the mold spores are airborne too! All three of these molds cause respiratory discomfort.

While nearly anything can create an overreaction from our immune system, there seems to be some common environmental culprits with seasonal allergies.

Ragweed Pollen: Ragweed is the most common culprit of fall allergies.

Hay fever is a name given to ragweed allergy which is silly since ragweed has nothing to do with hay, nor does it cause a fever. What it *does* cause is a whole host of unpleasant respiratory symptoms! Ragweed is a weed that's part of the daisy family, and has a leafy, ferny style appearance. Ragweed plants can be found in nearly all states and Canada but is most commonly found in the East and Midwestern states. Ragweed only lives for one season, but each plant produces up to one billion pollen grains per day. That's a whole lot of pollen! When the nights start to get longer in late summer is when ragweed flowers mature and begin to release their pollen. The pollen is very light weight, so it travels through the air easily. The pollen release can continue until the first frost. For some, I'm sure, it feels like an eternity!

Both mold and ragweed sensitivities share the same symptoms: runny nose, stuffy nose, watery eyes, sneezing, wheezing, coughing, fatigue, itchy rashes, headache, dark circles under eyes, loss of taste and smell, and sometimes the worsening of asthma.

Traditional options would include the use of antihistamines and other drugs to suppress the body's response to these triggers. Those can provide temporary, and sometimes needed relief, but what can one do for the long term?

So, what's a person to do with all this moldy, spore, ragweed-infested air swirling about? While living in a bubble might sound appealing, it isn't a viable option for those of us who are busy living life! Traditional options would include the use of antihistamines and other drugs to suppress the body's response to these triggers. Those can provide temporary, and sometimes needed relief, but what can one do for the long term? I'm glad you asked!

Tips for alleviating seasonal allergy symptoms:

- Avoiding foods that tend to be high in mold and foods from the ragweed family is essential. Those foods you should avoid include bananas, cantaloupe, cucumber, honeydew, watermelon, white potato, zucchini,



sunflower seeds, dairy products, mushrooms, alcohol and fermented foods, condiments and dressings, dried fruits, and leftover foods.

- Remove your shoes when coming in from outdoors. You'd be surprised at how much we track inside just from our shoes.
- Stay well hydrated! Drinking half your body weight in ounces of water is important for keeping mucous thin and easy to release.
- Shower daily and be sure to rinse your hair.
- Irrigate nose and throat with warm saline solution three to four times daily to wash away irritants.
- Have a nebulizer on hand to nebulize colloidal silver or saline.
- Use a weather tracker to follow pollen counts in your area. Try to stay indoors on days when it's very high.
- Consider an air filter for the room you spend the most time in or a whole house air cleaning system. Change your furnace filters monthly!
- Think about pets! They're bringing in pollen and mold if they spend time outdoors. Wipe their coat and feet off with a damp cloth when they come back inside. Have them bathed/groomed during the late summer and fall months.

Desensitization using natural modalities such as homeopathy, acupressure, and energy clearing, are typically very successful, much more comfortable, and less time consuming than traditional medical methods.

The use of homeopathic remedies for allergies is an alternative option rather than antihistamines and the bonus is you won't feel as though you're in a fog. Quercetin has been used to control allergy symptoms successfully. Vitamin C, especially in a liposomal form, and one that is *not* derived from corn, may also be helpful.

Allergies are often related to poor gut health, leaky gut, and congested kidneys. Addressing underlying inflammation issues is key to overcoming and conquering seasonal allergies. The more inflamed a person is, the more sensitive they become to more things. Desensitization using natural modalities such as homeopathy, acupressure, and energy clearing, are typically very successful, much more comfortable, and less time consuming than traditional medical methods. I highly recommend meeting with a natural health practitioner for a personal assessment to address your unique needs.

Dr. Juli Johnson is a board-certified naturopathic doctor and owner of Back to Basics Holistic Health in South Lyon, MI. Johnson uses bioenergetic testing and has specialized software to assist with all natural health care needs. Specialties are SETDB (sensitivity elimination technique), breast implant recovery, detoxification, and general health support. Back to Basics offers near infrared sauna, ionic foot detox, VIBES bed sessions, nutritional supplements, homeopathy, 100s of organic herbs, teas, and healing crystals. Learn more at back2basicshealth.com or give Dr. Johnson a call at (248) 921-0586.



The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

a free guide to local classes, workshops, and events

September through December 2023



Calendar edited by Jennifer Carson

A Course in Miracles

A Course in Miracles Study group via Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Monday, September 4 through December 25 • 6:45 to 8:45 p.m. • Course study group. Free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

A Course in Miracles Study group via Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Thursday, September 7 through December 28 • 6:45 to 8:45 p.m. • Course study group. Free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Animals and Pets

Interspecies Counseling with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday, October 7 and January 13 • 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • If you communicate with animals either telepathically or shamanically, this training will deepen your ability to mediate between species, human and non-human, to support problem solving, trauma resolution, and complicated grief. There are two 'group' trainings in counseling and mediation techniques, accompanied by three 2-hour mentoring sessions in topics you want to deepen for yourself regarding animals and their people. Mentoring sessions are scheduled for your personal timing, about six weeks apart. This training is for those who want to become professional communicators in community service. Pre-requisite: application essay. Includes reading packet. \$880. For more information contact Judy Ramsey by emailing info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit <https://judyr Ramsey.net>.

Art and Craft

Sound & Art with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, September 9 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Come and join Whitepine Studios and Ann Arbor's 7 Notes Natural Health, for our seventh collaboration, but first in our cozy new studio, as we listen to the melodic sounds of the singing bowls while painting a fall composition with watercolors. As you paint and listen to the soothing sounds of the singing bowls, your muscles will lose tension, breathing and heart rates will slow down as the body begins to receive the waves of vibration and the meditative benefits of art. No art experience necessary. Register at whitepinestudios.corsizio.com. \$50. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Intro to Waldorf Style Dollmaking with Jennifer Carson • Thursday, September 14, 28, and October 12 • 6 to 8:00 p.m. • In this class you will make a 5" Waldorf style doll. Learn how to make a Waldorf style head, wire a poseable body, embroider hair and eyes, and design your doll's outfit. A perfect gift for a young child or doll lover! A sewing machine is only needed for the second class. Everything else is hand sewing. \$55 includes cost of materials kit. For more information contact Jennifer Carson at jennifer@furandfeatherfriends.com or visit lisd.us/instruction/adult-learning.

Artist Reception with Sue Schreiber, OP • Sunday, October 8 • 2 to 4:00 p.m. • The exhibit is a partnership of INAI and Adrian Center for the Arts (ACA). As a member of ACA, INAI participates in and supports its mission as a "warm and welcoming environment for all." By offering artist residency, gallery space, classes, and professional development opportunities, ACA aims to help visual arts flourish and be celebrated regionally. Show hangs from October 6 until January 28. FREE. For more information call Weber Center at (517) 266-4000.

Weber Shop Christmas Open House with Katherine Dusseau • Wednesday through Saturday, November 1 through Saturday, November 4 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Christmas Open House. Unique Gifts, Beautiful nativities, Christmas cards, one-of-a kind art pieces, original ornaments, and other specials. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Byzantine Iconography, Learn to Paint Your Own Icon with Aruna Olga Bachmann • Saturday & Sunday, November 18 & 19, December 9 & 10, and following weekend TBA • Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sundays, Noon to 7:00 p.m. • (three weekends to complete one traditional style icon) Icon painting (writing) taught in the traditional monastic 15th and 16th century style using gessoed wood board, clay and gold leaf, egg tempura paints, sealed with stand and linseed oils. This is a multi-layered, liturgical process, much like a meditation in practice. \$500, includes materials. For more information contact Aruna Olga Bachmann at (734) 808-1335, email lhci.financials@gmail.com, or visit lighthousecenterinc.org.

Candle-making & Gift Crafting with Deanne Bednar • Saturday or Sunday, December 3 or 9 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Enjoy the rhythm & aroma of making dipped bees wax tapered candles. Ah. Held in the cozy kitchen of the main house at Strawbale Studio land. One hour north of Detroit on wooded rural land. Also sculpt earthen candle stick holders & decorate matchboxes with nature items like birch bark and pods. Great for gifts! All materials provided. You can also forage & bring some of your own nature items for decorating. \$45 + \$10 for materials. \$55. For more information visit strawbalestudio.org or call Deanne at (248) 496-4088.

Candle-making & Cob Craft with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, December 10 • 1 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Enjoy the rhythm & aroma of making dipped bees wax tapered candles. Ah. Held in the cozy kitchen of the main house at Strawbale Studio land. One hour north of Detroit on wooded rural land. Also sculpt earthen candle stick holders to go with your candles. Great for gifts! All materials provided. You can also forage & bring some of your own nature items for decorating. \$35 + \$10 for materials. \$45. Look for the learning tour immediately preceding this class under the heading "gardening and ecosystems." For more information visit strawbalestudio.org or call Deanne at (248) 496-4088.

Book Discussion Groups

Jewel Heart Readers • Sunday, September 10, October 1, November 12, December 10 • 7 to 8:20 p.m. • Enjoy lively discussion on monthly Buddhist-related book selections with our community. All are welcome. Free, donations welcome. For the month's book selection and participation information, visit jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Dine & Discuss Book Club with Janet Doyle, OP • Thursday, October 5 • 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. • *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* is a 2016 non-fiction book by American author Matthew Desmond. Set in the poorest areas of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the book follows eight families struggling to pay rent during the financial crisis of 2007-2008. \$15, includes book and dinner. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this calendar, please look in the section that follows the calendar, which is called "Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers" and which starts on page 106.

Breathwork

Guided Breathwork with Jackie Miller • Sunday, September 3, 17, October 1, 15, November 5, 19, and December 3, 17 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • A group session of gentle, connected breathing and breath holds with music, guided by Jackie Miller, certified breathwork facilitator. Experience activated breath energy and learn a variety of supportive breathing techniques. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, visit thisbreath.com.

Buddhism

Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times, with Demo Rinpoche • Sunday, September 3, 10, 17, 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, November 5, 12, 19, 26, December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. • Join Demo Rinpoche for weekly Sunday morning public talks on a variety of topics that are suitable for newcomers and long-timers alike, followed by a facilitated group discussion based on the morning talk. On the first Sunday of the month, Rinpoche presents the Jataka Tales, stories from the Buddha's previous lives. Talk begins at 11:00 a.m., moderated discussion begins at 12:15 p.m. Online and on-site. No discussion October 8. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Practical Buddhism Online by Gelek Rinpoche • Tuesday, September 5, 12, 19, and 26, November 7, 14, 21, and 28, December 5, 12, and 19 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • "Practical Buddhism" offers video recordings of earlier teachings by Gelek Rinpoche as an opportunity for some to revisit and as an introduction for others. A panel discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors follows each session. Discussions are not recorded. Each session reviews Gelek Rinpoche's 2012 Sunday talks and into early 2013. No sessions in October and on December 26. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Our Calendar Editor's Picks of Interesting Happenings in our Community

Saraha: Gnostic Poet of Bliss with Professor Roger Jackson • Wednesday, October 25 • 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • [See Buddhism](#)

Full Moon Monthly Ceremony with Moonologist Jayne Yaczak • Thursday, September 28, October 27, November 26, December 26 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • [See Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals](#)

Monthly Dream Workshop with Psychic Medium Jani • Sunday, September 24, October 22, November 26, December 31 • Noon to 2:00 p.m. • [See Dreamwork](#)

Lightworker Training with The Selenite Swords of Light with Tom Ledder and Maryke Love • Saturday, September 16 and Saturday, September 17 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • [See Energy and Healing](#)

Hog Warts & Toad Bellies Fairy Tale Festival at Hidden Lake Gardens • Saturday, October 7 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • [See Fairs and Festivals](#)

Practical Spirituality: Engaging Your Most Magical Self with Brandie Wright from 1129 Simply Divine • Thursday September 21—November 9 • 6 to 8:30 p.m. • [See Intuitive and Psychic Development](#)

Songs of Starlight: A Musical Meditation with Norma Gentile • Saturday, September 2 • 8 to 9:30 p.m. • [See Music, Sound, Voice](#)

Virtual Nature-Inspired Expressive Arts Gatherings with Hello from The Cocoon's Laurie Aman & Sarah Bruno • Sunday, September 17, Thursday October 26, Sunday, December 10 • Sunday, Noon to 2:00 p.m., Thursday, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. • [See Personal Growth](#)

Dr. Nia's Kitchen Clinic Series—Roots, Bulbs & Tubers with Dr. Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND • Wednesday, October 18, 25 • 6 to 7:15 p.m. • [See Nutrition and Food Medicine](#)

The Joy of Awakening Workshops with Barbara Brodsky, Colette Simone, and Our Spirit Friends • Saturday, September 30, October 21, December 2 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • [See Spiritual Development](#)

Tai Chi for Teenagers aged 14 -16 with Nigel Kerr • Monday, September 11 through December 11 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • [See Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Self Defense](#)

Black Cat: A New Nightmare with Neighborhood Theater Group Friday and Saturday, October 13 & 14, and October 20 & 21 • 8 to 10:00 p.m. • [See Theater](#)



Art by Laila Kujala

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

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Master Class: Pramana of Dharmakirti: Logic & Reasoning - Part 4 with Demo Rinpoche • Thursday, September 7, 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12, 19, 26, November 2, 9 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • Reasoning and logic are essential in order to reveal what is in fact true and reliable knowledge. Pramana is a Sanskrit term that Hindi, Buddhist, and Jainism traditions use to refer to the elements necessary to recognize how knowledge is understood and how its veracity and reliability can be ascertained. Drawing from Dharmakirti's Compendium of Valid Cognition, Demo Rinpoche will explain various methods to help gain reliable true knowledge of the nature of reality as well as be able to discern the diverse understandings people may reach. Jewel Heart members \$100 / Jewel Heart non-members \$120. Pay what you can—no one is turned away. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Delam: The Smooth Path of Enlightenment with Karen Market and Jack Schramm • Monday, September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, November 6, 13, 20, 27 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Delam, the Smooth Path, composed by the Third Panchen Lama with a special emphasis on meditation practices, is one of the eight classical commentaries on the stages of the path to Enlightenment. It is specifically meant for meditation. We will study Gelek Rinpoche's 2012 Malaysian teaching of Delam that provides a contemporary window into the heart of all spiritual practice. On-site only. Suggested \$75. Pay what you can—no one is turned away. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Jissoji Zen Ann Arbor Meditation with Taikodo Marta Dabis • Sunday, September 17, 24, October 15, 22, 29, November 5, 19, 26, December 3, 17, 24, 31 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. • Zazen – zen meditation – followed by fellowship over lunch. Please arrive early. Orientation and introduction to meditation forms available by request. Donations appreciated. Everyone welcome. FREE, donations welcomed. For more information contact Marta at 248-202-3102, jissojizen@gmail.com or www.jissojizen.org, and find them on MeetUp.

Old and New Kadam Traditions with H. E. Dagyab Rinpoche • Saturday, September 23 • 9 to 10:30 a.m. • Atisha (982–1054) is the founder of the Kadam tradition in Tibet, bringing with him the best of the highly developed Indian Mahayana Buddhist tradition. After Atisha, a line of great Kadampa masters taught as individuals through oral instructions based on their experiences. Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) rejuvenated and further built on the foundations of Atisha's system of study, analytical thinking and deep meditative practices. From this time onward, his teachings came to be known as the New Kadam tradition, which has been flourishing through a long line of great lineage teachers up to the present day. \$55 Jewel Heart members / \$75 Non-members. Pay what you can—no one is turned away. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

The Diamond Cutter Sutra (Part 2) Online with Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe • Tuesday & Friday, October 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • The Diamond Cutter Sutra is a discourse on the Buddhist concept of emptiness or "Wisdom Gone Beyond." In this Sutra, the Buddha offers a view of the world that deconstructs our normal categories of experience. He shows us that what we think are real entities in the world are actually our conceptualizations. His insights into dualism and illusion are critical for understanding the ultimate nature of reality. The "diamond" can cut through any obstacle on the road to enlightenment. These teachings continue The Diamond Cutter Sutra teachings given by Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe in April 2023. \$200 Part 2 if previously registered for Part 1; \$300 Part 2 only; \$500 Part 2 plus Part 1 access. Pay what you can - no one is turned away. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org/, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Fall Seminar—12 Links of Dependent Origination with Demo Rinpoche • Friday through Monday, October 7, 8, 9 • 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., except Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination provide an insight into the chain of unsatisfactory existence. There is no realm of life in which these realities do not exist. Perhaps the most profound part of the Buddha's teaching is the description of how this wheel of uncontrolled life, death and rebirth continues rolling on and identifies the root cause and thereby shows a method of how to stop it. The insight into all the links of the chain of existence is expressed in the depiction of the Wheel of Life. Legend has it that the Buddha himself designed the first illustration of it and offered it as a gift to King Rudrayana. \$180 Jewel Heart Members / \$225 Non-Members. Pay what you can—no one is turned away. For more information, visit jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Saraha: Gnostic Poet of Bliss with Professor Roger Jackson • Wednesday, October 25 • 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • Saraha, "the Archer," is arguably the most important of the mahāsiddhas, the charismatic and sometimes outrageous Indian Buddhist tantric adepts of the 8th to 11th centuries CE. This workshop will explore the context, life, and teachings of Saraha, drawing on our knowledge of his Indian milieu, the Tibetan hagiographical tradition devoted to him, and selected portions of his verse. We will focus above all upon understanding Saraha's Buddhist teachings, utilizing literary analysis and religious and philosophical investigation to get a sense of paradoxes and promises of his distinctive and deeply influential presentation of the Dharma. The workshop includes lecture, discussion, and some meditation, and it is suitable for students with all levels of knowledge and experience. \$80 Jewel Heart members / \$100 Non-members. Pay what you can—no one is turned away. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Science and Art of Tantric Healing with Joseph Loizzo, MD PhD • Wednesdays, November 1, 8, 15 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, November 18 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Buddhist psychiatrist-scholar Dr. Joe Loizzo shares the fruits of his lifelong journey unpacking, translating and transplanting the healing science and practice of the Vajrayana tradition into the soil of contemporary life, by grafting it together with Western psychotherapy, neuroscience and social psychology. The three evening classes approach the three key phases of the Tantric path—preliminaries, creation and completion—in light of the Yuthog tradition of Tibetan psychiatry and the contemporary psychologies of intersubjective self-transcendence, narrative self-creation and embodied integration. The closing daylong retreat puts the healing insights and skills explored in the classes into practice, through shared reflection, guided meditation and embodied breath-work and movement. The aim is to help dharma practitioners understand and deepen the healing power of their contemplative practice, whether Sutric or Tantric. Vajrayana initiation/practice is helpful but not required. \$135 Jewel Heart members / \$160 Non-members. Pay what you can—no one is turned away. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

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Demystifying the Magic

By Nikki Wisniewski

When I was in early grade school, I lived in a modest ranch home in a downriver neighborhood. One evening while lying in bed in my room, I felt compelled to look out my window which faced our backyard. As I stood on my bed and looked out, the sky in the distance looked ominous. The dark clouds certainly meant a storm was coming. I loved storms (still do!), so I watched, fascinated by the swirling colors of the clouds.

Suddenly, a tornado was coming right at me! It broke through the wooden fence along the side of our yard, and I felt it hit the house. I felt myself lift, I heard the house flying apart around me, and then it was silent and dark, and I was face down in the grass. As I lifted my head, I saw that the entire neighborhood, including my house, was intact, like nothing had happened. I was outside in the backyard lying just outside my bedroom window. It was very dark and foggy, and in the cone of light under a nearby streetlight, I saw a shadowy figure looking at me.

Then, I woke up.

As scary as that tornado dream was, I wasn't afraid when I woke up. I was curious. I knew it was telling me something.

As scary as that tornado dream was, I wasn't afraid when I woke up. I was curious. I knew it was telling me something. Over the course of roughly a year, the dream repeated, and I connected it to things unfolding in my life. My parents' marriage deteriorated and fell apart, my dad moved away, we moved away, my life changed completely—and though I was alright, my future felt uncertain.

That was the dream that started a lifetime of realizing that meaning and messages in my dreams, connect to my life. It was the dawning of knowing the many ways spirit connected and communicated with me. I recognized and interpreted signs and synchronicities in my life long before I knew there was a name for it—to me it was simply how life worked. Throughout my life, people have come to me for input and guidance, and for help understanding their dreams and odd experiences. I, too, continued to be curious and wanted to understand as much as I could. I read, took classes, sought out guidance, and experimented continuously. As my path unfolded, I discovered that many of my experiences were not considered “normal” and that few people seemed to have them. I was regularly told I was “gifted.”

I have stepped in and out of that giftedness. Like many, I spent a lot of time trying to be “normal.” In the pursuit of normal, I earned an engineering degree and master's degree in data analytics. I worked in a variety of positions and roles in the corporate world, as a realtor, and even as a high school teacher and special educator. In hindsight, I know that through it all, I stayed connected, and I learned that all the varied personal and professional experiences I have had, have been important to me becoming who I am. Several years ago, I decided to step into myself fully. To own who I am, to embrace the connections and communication I experience, and to share it with others as my full-time work.



Many of us don't understand how it works for us, and that natural spirit side of us is not cultivated. In fact, we learn to shut it down and ignore, or even fear it. Often, in our attempts to explore and learn, we run into esoteric and difficult to understand language and information.

You see, I firmly believe that we are all gifted, and that magic is all around us. That the ability to connect and communicate with spirit is a very natural part of who we all are. Many of us don't understand how it works for us, and that natural spirit side of us is not cultivated. In fact, we learn to shut it down and ignore, or even fear it. Often, in our attempts to explore and learn, we run into esoteric and difficult to understand language and information. I aim to bring it down to earth and make it accessible to everyone—to demystify the magic! My work is all about helping people re-awaken and discover their natural gifts and abilities, learn to understand and develop how the connection and communication with Spirit works for them, and embrace it and integrate it into their lives. I do this through a variety of services and offerings including private readings, individual and small group coaching and mentoring, workshops, and classes.

My readings often bring clarity and direction, help identify challenges and blocks, and provide insight on how to move forward. Readings also include mediumship connections and messages that bring closure and comfort to many of my clients. Coaching, mentoring, and classes are all about supporting people along their life path and helping them experience and integrate their connection and gifts.



I recognized and interpreted signs and synchronicities in my life long before I knew there was a name for it—to me it was simply how life worked.

Nikki Wisniewski blends intuition, experience, and skill to mainstream the magic all around us, educating and enabling her students and clients to trust their gifts, access authenticity, navigate personal transformation, and live their best lives. She's written and taught on topics ranging from dream analysis and symbology to intentionality, intuition, and manifestation. If you're ready to demystify your magic, learn more at <https://nmwunveiled.com>. Wisniewski holds regular office hours at Enlightened Soul Center. Learn more at enlightenedsoulcenter.com.



The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

September through December 2023



Meditation and Discussion with Lama Nancy Burks • Ongoing • Wednesday • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • The meeting includes group practice and discussion meaningful to students at every level. The content of each meeting will be informed by the interests of the participants, and may include a Dharma talk, meditation, Q and A, and/or book discussion. Participants are encouraged to share their questions, reactions, and experiences with the group. Join in person or on Zoom. FREE. For more information contact Pat at (734) 678-7549, email aaktc@yahoo.com, or visit annarborktc.org.

Sitting and Walking Meditation with Lama Nancy Burks • Ongoing • Saturday • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. • Every Saturday morning, we meet for sitting and walking meditation, followed by informal discussion and tea. Newcomers are always welcome! FREE. For more information contact Nancy at lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals

Ryaku Fusatsu—Full Moon Ceremony with Reverend Marta Dabis • Sunday, September 3, October 1, October 29, November 26, December 24 • 11:00 a.m. • Traditional Japanese Soto Zen Full Moon Ceremonies in the tradition of the San Francisco Zen Center, in English. The program starts with 40 minutes of silent meditation and concludes with informal conversation. FREE, donations are appreciated. For more information contact Marta at (248) 202-3102, jissojizen@gmail.com or jissojizen.org, and find them on MeetUp.

Full Moon Monthly Ceremony with Moonologist Jayne Yatzak • Thursday, September 28, Friday, October 27, Sunday, November 26, Tuesday, December 26 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • The Full Moon is the time to surrender, heal, and release so that you may increase your ability to manifest your dreams. Engage in a Full Moon ceremony to help you step into your personal power, prepare your unconscious mind for transformation, and align yourself with the frequencies of the universe. \$20. For more information contact Jayne at jyatzak@emich.edu or (734) 961-5450 or visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

Uncork a Cure for ALS with Active Against ALS • Friday, October 5 • 6 to 9:00 p.m. • Active Against ALS celebrates our 15-year anniversary at York Food and Drink. Enjoy an evening of food, drink, and entertainment while supporting our goal of raising \$150,000 for research. We look forward to celebrating our progress and appreciation of community support as we continue to raise funds, hope, and awareness of ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). \$100, \$120 at the door. For more information visit activeagainstals.org.

Winter Solstice Ritual with Esther Kennedy, OP • Sunday, December 17 • 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. • Life stirs silently on this night. Light rises up from within the caress of the deep darkness. Gather with us in song and dance. Bring a story, a poem, a prayer, a treat to share. FREE. For more information call Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, visit webercenter.org or email webercenter@adriandominicans.org.

Clearing with Karen Greenberg P.T. • Sunday, December 17 • 1 to 5:00 p.m. • Many know that smudging can clear a space; however, you can learn a 12-step protocol (including how to cut cords to those where unhealthy energy's flowing) that affords much deeper cleansing, purifying, sanctifying, and blessing (than just smudging) of spaces, places, people, animals, and grounds. Learn to create and utilize holy divine geometry, holy water, sacred circles (indoors and out), and mother essence. Learn to clear negative energies / entities and to install powerful protection afterward! \$125. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngnbg@gmail.com, or visit clairascension.com.

Channeling

Remembering Wholeness | Darshan with The Mother with Barbara Brodsky channeling The Mother • Sunday, September 17, October 15, November 19, December 10 • 2 to 5:00 p.m. • A mother is one who gives birth to, supports, and cherishes, and then releases out into the universe, with love, always ready to hold and support. The Mother will offer personal and group message that can most support program participants. People are able to hear what resonates for each one. Suggested donation - Individual sessions: \$10-\$30; All fall sessions: \$50-\$150. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Evenings with Aaron—Aaron Channeled by Barbara Brodsky • Wednesday, September 27, October 25, November 22, December 20 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Evenings with Aaron meets once a month. All are welcome. Aaron has met with us regularly since 1989. In this gathering, Aaron often will address a present world issue and how we can best support the resolution of this issue from a place of loving awareness. Suggested donation for Individual sessions: \$10-\$30; All fall sessions: \$40-\$120. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.



Photo by Susan Ayer

Rita Benn, PHD is a clinical psychologist, mindfulness trainer, and meditation practitioner of 40 years. She is the co-founder of the Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME) and teaches mindfulness meditation to education and mental health professionals as well as patients with cancer and their caregivers. Dr. Benn is also an author and co-editor of a recently published book, *The Ones Who Remember: Second-Generation Voices of the Holocaust*. In her free time, she enjoys painting, poetry, yoga, and playing with her grandchildren.

Childbirth

One-Day Childbirth Education: Jam-Packed Learning with Toni Auker & Cynthia Gabriel • Saturday, September 9, OR Monday, October 9, OR Saturday, November 4, OR December 2 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This class aims to prepare you for your best birth. We will cover topics including stages of labor, communicating with providers, informed decision making, coping techniques, and postpartum. VBAC friendly. LGBTQ friendly. \$275. For more information contact Tony Auker at nestandnurturea2@gmail.com or visit nestandnurture.org.

Childbirth Education for Everyone! Six-Week Series with Toni Auker & Cynthia Gabriel • Tuesday, September 19, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24 • 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. • This class aims to prepare you for your best birth whether you are planning an all-natural, unmedicated birth or hoping for an epidural. VBAC students welcome! We will cover topics including stages of labor, communicating with providers, informed decision making, coping techniques, and postpartum. Taught by experienced doulas with lots of experience at local hospitals and a nationally known author/researcher. LGBTQ-friendly. IVF friendly. Disability friendly. \$350.00. For more information visit nestandnurture.org or email hello@nestandnurture.org.

Childbirth Education in Depth with Toni Auker & Cynthia Gabriel • Tuesdays, November 7, 12, 21, 28, and December 5, 12 • 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. This class aims to prepare you for your best birth no matter what kind of birth you are planning. We will cover topics including stages of labor, communicating with providers, informed decision making, coping techniques, and postpartum. VBAC friendly. LGBTQ friendly. \$350. \$350.00. For more information visit nestandnurture.org or email hello@nestandnurture.org.

Death and Dying

Death Cafe via Zoom with Rev. Annie Kopko and the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Tuesday, September 5, October 3, November 7, and December 5 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • Discussion of Death and Dying. Free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information contact the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth through their website interfaithspirit.org.

Online End-of-Life Doula Training with Patty Brennan • September 16 & 17, OR Wednesdays, October 11, 18, 25, OR November 11 & 12 • Online professional training with Patty Brennan to become a certified End-of-Life Doula (EOLD) through Lifespan Doulas. Hybrid program features 50 hours of self-paced study plus a live, interactive workshop on Zoom. Course prepares you to support family and friends on their final journey, seek employment as an EOLD, enhance your support as a hospice volunteer, or open an income-producing community-based doula practice. Explore creative ways to blend the doula model of care with your unique experience, gifts, and passion. \$697 (payment plans available). For more information contact Patty Brennan at (734) 663-1523, email patty@lifespandoulas.com, or visit lifespandoulas.com/end-of-life-doula-training.

Ann Arbor Virtual Death Café with Merilynne Rush, The Dying Year • Saturday, September 16, October 21, November 18, December 16 • 10:30 a.m. to Noon • Join us on Zoom for conversation about all things related to death and dying. This is not a grief support group, rather a “death positive” event. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. For more info about the Death Cafe movement, visit DeathCafe.com. Open to all adults. FREE. To receive the link, send an email to thedyingyear@gmail.com.

Ann Arbor Death Café via Zoom with Rachel Briggs • Sunday, September 17, October 15, November 19, December 17 • 10:30 a.m. to Noon • Join us for a frank, lively, and confidential discussion on all things life and death. We meet via zoom, the third Saturday of each month. All are welcome! Learn more about world-wide Death Cafes at deathcafe.com. FREE. For more information contact Rachel at RachelBriggs@gmail.com.

Online End-of-life doula training with Merilynn Rush • Tuesday, September 19, 26, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24 • 4 to 7:30 pm • Live on Zoom, with three facilitators all with end-of-life doula experience. Class limited to 16 people. EOLDs provide hands-on, non-medical care and comfort during the dying time, collaborating with hospice and other care givers. 100-page study guide included with resources and info on how to set up a business. Call or email to find out more. No prior experience necessary. The world needs you! \$725; scholarships and payment plan available. For more information contact The Dying Year at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com or visit thedyingyear.org.

Understanding Death and Passing for Everyone with Lisa Wolfe • Saturday, September 30 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • In this very special seminar held at GilChrist Retreat Center in Three Rivers, MI, we will explore ways to become more compassionate with others and ourselves during the end-of-life season. From a holistic perspective, we will draw on the wisdom available to us as a group, through nature, and from the quiet within. We will find ways of caring for ourselves and others as we help navigate the death and passing journey. \$175 early; \$190 after August 1, 2023; financial hardship accommodations available. For more information contact Lisa Wolfe at (269) 221-8335 or email wolfe.lisa8@gmail.com.



Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

Hosted by Edward Morin,
David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin

Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m.

Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for 1 hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry. Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m.

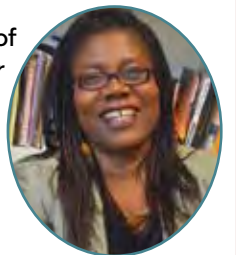
All sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom.
Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link.

Featured readers



September 27 – John Hoppenthaler has had four books of poetry published by Carnegie Mellon U. Press, including *Night Wing Over Metropolitan Area*—due out this October. Professor of Creative Writing and Literature at East Carolina University, he also serves on the Advisory Board for Backbone Press, specializing in publication and promotion of marginalized voices.

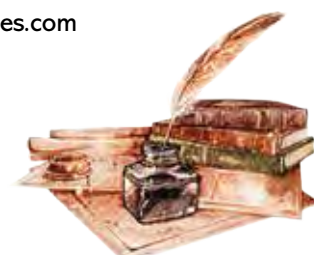
October 25 – Patricia Jabbeh Wesley is the author of seven critically acclaimed books including *Praise Song for My Children: New and Selected Poems*. She has edited *Breaking the Silence*, the first comprehensive anthology of Liberian poetry, published this year. Originally from Liberia, she is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Penn State U.



November 29 – Jeff Gundy has published eight books of poems including *Without a Plea, Abandoned Homeland*, and *Somewhere Near Defiance*, for which he was named Ohio Poet of the Year. His latest prose book is *Wind Farm: Landscape with Stories and Towers*. Former Fulbright lecturer at U. of Salzburg, he's now Writer in (Non)residence at Bluffton University.



November 29 – Colleen Alles is a native Michigander and award-winning writer living in Grand Rapids. The author of two novels and a poetry collection, she's also a contributing editor with *Great Lakes Review* and *Barren Magazine*. She enjoys distance running and corralling her kiddos. You can find her online at www.colleenalles.com



Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle
The Poetry Series is open to all. There is never a charge.
<https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/>



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www.hilarynichols.com / hilary@hilarynichols.com

Death and Dying, continued

Advance Care Planning Facilitator Training with Merilynn Rush • Monday, November 13 • 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Learn how to assist healthy adults to identify a healthcare advocate, discuss their values and wishes, and fully complete the advance healthcare planning process. Respecting Choices® is an internationally recognized, evidence-based model of Advance Care Planning (ACP). For nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, administrators, family members, end-of-life doulas and all healthcare professionals across the continuum of care. Advance registration required. \$265. For more information contact Merilynn at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com or visit thedyingyear.org.

Dreamwork

Monthly Dream Workshop with Psychic Medium Jani • Sunday, September 24, October 22, November 26, December 31 • Noon to 2:00 p.m. • At this monthly discussion workshop, participants dissect their dreams together, facilitated by Psychic Medium Jani. \$10 For more information contact Jani, (720) 514-9724 or janimedium.com.

Energy and Healing

Energy Work—Wild Goose Form with Master Wasantha Young • September 11 through December 11 • Tuesday • 6 to 7:00 p.m. and/or Thursday, 10 to 11:00 a.m. • The Wild Goose Form is a series of interconnecting movements—a reverent dance that embodies the multidimensional aspect of Energy. The movements include imagery, stretching, acupoint contact, and a connection with universe, nature, and earth. The Peaceful Dragon School is down one flight of stairs. In-person (limit 12) \$195. For more information email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, call (734) 741-0695 or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.


Healing & Ascension Monthlies with Eve Wilson • Thursday, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 7, January 4, February 1 • 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. • Monthlies are a chance for you to contribute to world healing and ascension and to benefit yourself as well! Attend live or by recording and receive all the support either way for your own journey of spiritual self-mastery, life, success, empowerment, healing, and ascension. Class is by teleconference and support for your life continues all month. This is cutting edge work, powerful, unconditionally loving, guided by your own Higher Self. \$300 For more information contact Eve Wilson at (734) 780-7635, email rewev@spiritualhealers.com, or visit spiritualhealers.com.

Lightworker Training with The Selenite Swords of Light with Tom Ledder and Maryke Love • Saturday & Sunday, September 16 & 17 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • You will be working with the Selenite Swords of Light, the most powerful tools on the planet with information channeled through Maryke Love. The workshop is experiential, you will have the opportunity to work one-on-one a partner experiencing both giving and receiving. The Selenite Swords of Light are powerful, non-linear, multi-dimensional tools used for healing self or others. Swords will be available to use and to purchase. \$300 For more information and to register, visit seleniteswordmaker.com.

Healing Touch Course 3 Advanced Healer Preparation with Barb McConnell LPN, CHTP/I • Saturday & Sunday, September 23 & 24 • 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • This course is for Healing Touch students who have taken Courses 1 and 2. Course 3 Advanced Healer Preparation involves learning to elevate one's personal energy vibration which facilitates the student's application of techniques that can be utilized in the upper layers of the biofield. The student will learn clearing, balancing, and energizing techniques in the upper energetic layers as well as in-depth techniques to support spinal health. \$300.00. For more information contact Barb McConnell at (517) 914-4133 or email Barbmcconnell7@gmail.com.

Heightening Your Vibration: Alchemy (two-day class) with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, October 8 & 15 • 8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. • Some people have become depressed with the Covid-19 isolation, variants, and aftermath. Learn a myriad of tools and techniques, to change your vibration from a lower to a higher vibration, and to sustain it—including, but not limited to, sacred letters, powerful Archetypes, sacred oils, affirmations, visualization, meditation, prayers that you compose, gratitude, breathing, drumming, movement, music, Holy Geometry, traditions, toning Names of G-D, Archangels, Angels...\$180. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Healing Touch Course 2 Energetic Patterning and Clinical Applications with Diane Rothman CHTP/I, HSC • Saturday & Sunday, October 21 & 22 • 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • Prerequisite: Healing Touch Course 1. Students will learn the skill of completing an intake interview in order to identify which Healing Touch techniques may be useful in assisting a client to re-pattern their energy field. Healing Touch techniques learned in Course 1 are reviewed and integrated into spinal health applications and deeper levels of healing by expanding the client's heart energy. You will practice the ability to remain grounded, present, and heart-centered, assess the status of the chakras and biofield before and after sessions. In addition, we will review the Healing Beyond Borders Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and Scope of Practice as it relates to your development as a Healing Touch practitioner. \$300. For more information contact Diane Rothman at drothman1056@comcast.net or call (248) 957-6510.



There is something so special in the early leaves drifting from the trees—as if we are all to be allowed a chance to peel, to refresh, to start again.

— Ruth Ahmed

Exercise and Fitness

Try It Free Week for all AAPS Rec & Ed Fitness, Pilates & Yoga classes with a Variety of Ann Arbor's Best Fitness, Pilates, & Yoga Instructors • Monday, September 11 through Sunday, September 17 • Classes are held at various times, but you must register to attend. For class descriptions and registration visit aarecedonline.com. All listed classes are Free during the 'Try it Free Week.' For more information contact Terry McNeely at mcneelyt@aaps.k12.mi.us, or call (734) 646-2698.

Rivalry Ride with Active Against ALS • Sunday, October 15 • 6:30 a.m. • Join Active Against ALS on October 15 and bike 65 miles from Spartan Stadium to the Big House to raise funds to find a cure for ALS! Sag wagon support, t-shirts, lunch in Stockbridge, and bus from Ann Arbor to East Lansing available. For more information contact us at info.activeagainstals@gmail.com or visit our website at activeagainstals.org. \$40-\$80. For more information email info.activeagainstals@gmail.com.

Festivals And Fairs

Ann Arbor Pagan Pride Day • Saturday, September 9 • 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • Featuring a community ritual, plus workshops, information booths, vendors, and other activities from members of our local Pagan community. We will be at the Community Park on the campus of Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor. FREE. (Suggested donation of non-perishable food for our local food bank) For more information contact Rob Henderson at a2paganpride@gmail.com, call (723) 277-1897 or visit a2paganpride.com.

Joyful Movement for Complex Healing



By Teresa Myers

Imagine following a choreographed sequence of movements that are designed to be both fun and challenging—the emphasis on pleasure rather than perfection, where students are encouraged to modify the movements to suit their own needs and abilities.

The Nia technique is a somatic movement practice that combines dance, martial arts, and healing arts to promote holistic fitness and well-being. Developed by Debbie Rosas and Carlos Aya Rosas in the 1980s, Nia is based on the belief that movement is medicine and that the body’s innate wisdom holds the key to healing and vitality.

The Nia technique is a somatic movement practice that combines dance, martial arts, and healing arts to promote holistic fitness and well-being.

The practice incorporates elements of jazz dance, modern dance, and Duncan dance, as well as Tai Chi, Tae Kwon Do, and Aikido. Nia also draws on principles from the Feldenkrais Method, Yoga, and Alexander Technique to promote awareness, relaxation, and self-healing.

One of the key principles of Nia is the concept of “the Joy of Movement.” Rather than seeing exercise as a chore or a means to an end, Nia encourages participants to find pleasure in the act of moving their bodies. This can be a powerful antidote to the stress and anxiety of modern life and can help to promote a sense of inner peace and well-being.

I discovered Nia about 20 years ago after an exhaustive search for an exercise routine I could do following an extensive surgery to remove cancer that had eaten through muscle in my back and rib cage. You name the form of exercise, and I have probably tried it in my quest to regain health and movement. When I found Nia, I truly got my life back. I am virtually pain free, with much of the scar tissue, both internally and externally, alleviated. In many ways, I believe I am moving better now than I was before the surgery.

Another important aspect of Nia is the focus on mindfulness and awareness. By paying close attention to the sensations in the body, participants can learn to move more efficiently and effectively, reducing the risk of injury and promoting greater flexibility and strength. This increased awareness can also help to promote emotional and spiritual well-being, as students learn to tune in to their own inner wisdom and intuition.

For many of us who have experienced trauma in general, or are “othered” in society, overriding or numbing sensations can become a mechanism for survival. This can leave us disconnected from a key source of life information and satisfaction.

While Nia helped me to heal physically, I also realized Nia had an incredible ability to help me mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Ask me what I did after (fill in the blank—as there have been too many injustices to name). I took Nia to the dance floor to move this trauma and oppression out of my body.

Since my initial healing, I have become a teacher of Nia and am passionate about sharing its healing potential as a somatic movement component within Embodied Social Justice. (Embodied Social Justice is the study of the way our bodies are shaped and influenced within unequal societies.) For many of us

who have experienced trauma in general, or are “othered” in society, overriding or numbing sensations can become a mechanism for survival. This can leave us disconnected from a key source of life information and satisfaction. Learning to feel our organic aliveness through sensation lets us connect with ourselves, feel what we care about and long for, build empathy and connection with others, and feel what needs to be attended to, acted upon, or healed.

My goal is to guide students to reclaim (or first recognize) their relationships with their bodies by learning the language of the body: sensation—the foundational language of living. When we are able to sense, we are able to be at the seat of our humanity and self-liberation. When we discern that we are coded for safety, dignity and belonging, we are able to extend this birthright to others.

I promote Nia’s full body (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) wellness practice as an open invitation for everyBODY to move something, heal something, feel something...to come home to the body. Nia classes are low impact on the body yet high impact on the emotions and spirit.

Teresa Myers is a licensed Black-Belt Nia Practitioner and part of the Nia Training Faculty in Ann Arbor, specializing in White Belt Trainings with a focus on Embodied Social Justice. To learn more about Nia and Teresa visit soulfulmovement.com.



The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

September through December 2023



Festivals And Fairs, continued

Ann Arbor Community Bookfest • Sunday, September 10 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Come celebrate books and reading with featured guest authors, book discussions, kid's activities, and book-related vendors, artists, writing groups, local authors, and book-related non-profit organizations. For more information visit aadl.com/bookfest.

Enlightened Soul Two-Day Psychic Fair at Enlightened Soul Center & Shop • Saturday and Sunday, September 9 & 10, 23 & 24, October 14 & 15, 28 & 29, November 4 & 5, 18 & 19, December 2 & 3, 16 & 17 • Saturday Noon to 6:00 p.m., Sunday, Noon to 5:00 p.m. • Join us for two days of high vibrations at the Enlightened Soul Center & Shop at our twice-monthly ESC Psychic Fairs. What a great way to explore a variety of readings, energy healing, and metaphysical shopping at one time, under one roof! Saturday \$5, Sunday \$3, plus sessions \$2/minute (minimums vary). For more information contact Amy Garber at (734) 358-0218, email amy@enlightenedsoulcenter.com, or visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

3rd Annual Entheofest with Student Association for Psychedelic Studies (SAPS) & Michigan Psychedelic Society (MPS) • Sunday, September 17 • 1:11 to 3:33 p.m. • The 3rd Annual Entheofest in Ann Arbor on September 17th at the Diag on the campus of the University of Michigan. Entheofest is a day for activism and to celebrate and educate on plant medicines and fungi. It also marks the anniversary of the passage of the City of Ann Arbor's resolution to decriminalize these natural substances in 2020. This year's keynote speaker is Rev. Mariela Pérez-Simons, a Cuban-American UU minister focusing on eco-spirituality, ecofeminism, and religious naturalism. FREE. For more information visit Entheofest.org entheofest@gmail.com

Hog Warts & Toad Bellies Fairy Tale Festival at Hidden Lake Gardens • Saturday, October 7 • 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Come dressed in your fairy tale best for this day of family revelry! Join the Knight's adventure trail and be knighted by the king of the fair, build a fairy house, picnic with characters from your favorite fairy tales, decorate pumpkins, go on a treasure hunt, shop in our artisan village, and more! \$5 per person/ \$20 for a family of four or more. For more information visit hogwartsandtoadsbellies.com.

Holistic & Spirit Fair at the Infinite Light Center • Saturday, November 11 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Please join us at the first annual Holistic & Spirit Fair at Infinite Light Center! Perfect timing for holiday shopping! Check out the first Spirit Box in MI, an experiential device that connects our Higher Selves to Universal Oneness. Readers including tarot, oracle, runes, psychics, animal communication, energy healers, Reiki, crystal healing, aura photography, crystal bed, amethyst mat, and vendors selling hand crafted tea, jewelry, candles, essential oils, crystal bowls, kalimbas, tongue drums, and more! \$3 admission, extra fee for readers and energy healers. For more information contact Anne Taylor at anne@infinitelightjackson.com or visit infinitelightjackson.com.

Film

Free Film and Discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors • Thursday, September 8, November 10, and December 8 • 7 to 9:15 p.m. • Jewel Heart Instructors present the film and moderate the discussion afterwards, posing thought-provoking questions, keeping the discussion on track, and encouraging everyone to participate. No film in October. Free. Concessions available. For more information, visit jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

- September 8 "Heal." (2017) A documentary film that takes us on a scientific journey where we discover that by changing one's perceptions, our thoughts, beliefs and emotion, the human body can heal itself from disease. The fact is we have more control over our health and life than we have been taught to believe.

- November 10 "The Legend of Bagger Vance." (2000) A story about finding your true self. People see similarities between how this story is told and the Bhagavad Gita. Directed by Robert Redford and starring Will Smith, Matt Damon, and Charlize Theron.
- December 8 "The Tree of Life." (2011) An impressionistic story of a Texas family in the 1950s. The film follows the life journey of the eldest son, Jack, through the innocence of childhood to his disillusioned adult years as he tries to reconcile a complicated relationship with his father. Jack finds himself a lost soul in the modern world, seeking answers to the origins and meaning of life while questioning the existence of faith. (Starring Brad Pitt & Sean Penn.)

Conscious Light Film: The Divine Life & Revelation of Avatar Adi Da Samraj • Ongoing • Online • Conscious Light offers a penetrating glimpse into the remarkable life and enlightened teachings of Avatar Adi Da Samraj and his work to establish a way of ultimate spiritual realization for everyone. It draws on extensive archival film, photography, and audio recordings, as well as interviews with students who lived with Avatar Adi Da and continue to practice the way that he revealed. FREE, donations welcome. To watch visit https://consciouslightfilm.com/screenings?utm_source=3rd+Party&utm_medium=CrazyWisdom+Journal&utm_campaign=online_screening_CWJcalendar_reg.

Gardening and Ecosystems

September Natural Building Internship at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Saturday, September 2—28 • Live on-site at the Strawbale Studio for four weeks and learn a variety of basic natural building and sustainable living skills! Earth Plaster, Round Pole framing Basics, Thatching and more! \$1250 or \$950 prepaid one month in advance. For more information visit strawbalestudio.org or call Deanne Bednar at (248) 496-4088.

Earth Walk with Megan Sims and John Donabedian • Saturday, September 2, October 7, November 4, and December 2 • Noon to 2:00 p.m. • Earth Walk is a casual urban walk in Ann Arbor with Earth-loving folks and their kids (and pets). It's an opportunity to express our concern for the environment, and to have fun doing it! It's also very good therapy for eco-anxiety. Before and after the walk, Earth Walk Basecamp is a place to get energized with live music and plug into the Earth-conscious community with insightful guest speakers, roundtable discussions, performance art, and poetry. FREE. For more information visit earthwalk.love or call John Donabedian at (248) 761-7461, or email 123jondon@gmail.com.

Worktrade Month at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Tuesday, October 3—30 • Live on-site and help out with buildings and grounds and other aspects of maintaining this place that models natural building and sustainable skills! Includes room & board + 2 sustainable skills per week, such as "cording" and foraging for food, in exchange for 25 hours of worktrade. Learn, and enjoy being in nature! 25-hour work trade/week. For more information visit strawbalestudio.org or call Deanne Bednar at (248) 496 4088.

Learning Tour at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, December 10 • 10 a.m. to Noon • The Learning Tour of Strawbale Studio and surrounds includes a variety of enchanting natural buildings made of strawbale and some cob, with both thatched and living roofs. Learn about these buildings as well as the Earth Oven, Rocket Stove, Rumford Fireplace, and nutrient recycling. One hour north of Detroit. Look for the candle making workshop on the same day under the heading "art and craft" \$20. For more information visit strawbalestudio.org.

Healing

Monthly Reiki share with Jennifer LaFeldt, LMT, RMT • Sunday, September 24, October 22, November 26, December 31 • Noon to 3:00 p.m. • For Reiki 1+ practitioners to practice what they've learned. We will guide you if you have forgotten the hand positions. Practice one-on-one or in small groups. \$15. For more information contact Jenny at reikitherapy@sbcglobal.net or (734) 478-0866.



On September 1, 2023, The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal will be available on our website: crazywisdomjournal.com.



Connie Eiland has been a shamanic practitioner and teacher for twenty years, having studied with Sandra Ingerman and Betsy Bergstrom and others. She loves this way of life, which allows direct access to Helping Spirits and has found it personally life-changing and life enhancing.

During the pandemic, sessions became long-distance only and her drum circle switched to teleconference. She offered small classes in person at that time when she decided that Zoom didn't work for her. As it was possible to include meeting in person for drum circles, she also continued teleconferencing as some people joined in from other states. Her monthly drum circle provides community, as well as the opportunity for shamanic journeys.




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Psychic Psychology Women's Group—Teleconference with John Friedlander and Gloria Hemsher • Tuesday, September 5, October 3, November 7, December 5 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • For Women Only. Meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies as well as that of the aura. See website for teleconference number and billing information. \$10. For more information visit psychicpsychology.org or contact Violeta Viviano at (734) 476-1513.

October Intensive 2023 with John Friedlander—Webinar & Teleconference with John Friedlander • Saturday, October 7 • 10:00 a.m. to Noon and 2 to 4:00 p.m. • Sunday, October 8 • 10:00 a.m. to Noon • October 9 through October 13, 7 to 9:00 p.m., • Saturday and Sunday, October 14 & 15 • 10:00 a.m. to Noon and 2 to 4:00 p.m. • Deep sustained meditation and training, spending considerable time on each of the seven major chakras from a clairvoyant technical perspective. Continued study of information presented at previous intensives. \$275. For more information contact Gilbert Choudury at gchoud@yahoo.com or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Practical Spirituality: Engaging Your Most Magical Self with Brandie Wright from 1129 Simply Divine • Thursday September 21— November 9 • 6 to 8:30 p.m. • Eight weekly workshops filled with practical information and exercises to help you activate and use your intuitive gifts. Topics include: Auras, Pendulums, Channeling, Manifestation, Cleansing, Spirit Guides, Energy Testing, and Finding Your Soul Purpose. \$25 per class (materials included). You may take all or choose only classes of interest. For questions or to reserve your seat, email brandie@1129simplydivine.com.

Kabbalah

Brand New Beginning Kabbalah: Kabbalah Miracles with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Wednesday, September 13, October 10, November 8, December 13, future dates TBD • Morning classes 9:15 to 11:15 a.m. OR evening classes 7 to 9:00 p.m. • This life-changing journey is an ordered, systematic approach to develop and balance all the important areas of life. Rather than utilizing energy resisting (exercise, meditation, sleep, eating and/or drinking healthily), we utilize that liberated energy for creating, on a similar vibration as our Creator. We become empowered to develop 10 G-D like traits, join with G-D, and become co-creative, proactive manifesters of our dreams, desires, and goals, open to miracles, and fulfilling our purpose/destiny. Monthly Course Rate-\$150/person; Monthly Semi-Private (2 people) Rate-\$180/person; Monthly Private (1 person) Rate-\$150/hour (based on time utilized). For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Kabbalah for Couples with Karen Greenberg P.T. • Sunday, September 10, October 8, November 5, December 3, future dates TBD • 3 to 5:00 p.m. • Has social distancing amplified distance between you and your partner? K4C is for good relationships that both parties are willing to work on to make their relationship even better, physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, spiritually, and energetically. This two-hour session (not one hour), once a month, for about a year, is not couples therapy; it can help you get your relationship to the place that you always wanted it to be but did not know how. \$274. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

*The heart of autumn must have broken here,
and poured its treasure upon the leaves.*

—Charlotte Bates

Massage

Free Massage class with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Friday, September 15 or October 27 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • You can relax and have some fun at Irene's free massage class! This is an excellent opportunity for those interested in massage. During this free two-hour class, you will have the opportunity to learn basic techniques while both giving and receiving massage. We invite you to bring a friend to exchange massage or come alone and you'll be paired with a partner. Bring a flat sheet, a bottle of water, and wear loose, comfortable clothing. For more information visit irenes.edu or email contact@irenes.edu.

Meditation

Online White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Sunday, September 3—December 17 • 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. • No meditation on October 8 or December 24. Tara is the mother goddess of Tibetan Buddhism, known for her quick and compassionate activity. White Tara is particularly associated with healing and long life. These guided meditations use visualization techniques to overcome physical, mental, and emotional suffering. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Weekly Online Silent Meditation Practice with Celeste Zygmunt • Sunday, September 3, through December 31 • 11:00 a.m. to Noon or Tuesday, September 5 through December 26 • 9 to 9:30 a.m. • We will have a brief period of chanting, then mute ourselves, and then begin silent vipassana meditation. After the hour is finished a bell will ring and meditators can go on with their day. There will be time to stay and chat or discuss questions if someone so chooses. By Donation. For more information call Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Manifest Inner Peace & Clarity with Anna Hsu • Monday, September 4, October 2, November 20, December 4 • 6 to 8:00 p.m. • Release stress, get unstuck, and manifest the life of your dreams in this high-vibrational visualization and meditation workshop. You will leave feeling empowered, grounded, and will have gained clarity on what was once unclear in your life. If you feel stuck in a rut, this is the perfect class to re-center and re-inspire yourself! \$15. For more information email Anna@alignanduplevel.com or visit alignanduplevel.com.

A Lantern in the Dark: Navigate Life's Crossroads with Story, Ritual, and Sacred Astrology

By Christine MacIntyre

Danielle Blackwood meets readers at life's crossroads—a space of “betwixt and between”—where she guides and inspires through story, ritual, and sacred astrology. Infused with myth, folklore, and the hidden wisdom in stories, *A Lantern in the Dark*, provides insights to readers of varying ages and stages of life while they stand at a juncture often riddled with confusion, dilemma, and restlessness. Throughout the text, readers learn about the underlying developmental purpose of their journey and begin to achieve clarity, comfort, and meaning. According to Blackwood, knowledge and understanding of the transpersonal realm at any crossroads are a welcoming lantern in the dark.

Danielle Blackwood meets readers at life's crossroads—a space of “betwixt and between”—where she guides and inspires through story, ritual, and sacred astrology.

The space of betwixt and between provides the setting and is where Blackwood builds a toolkit for readers to utilize as their journey unfolds. She defines this space as a crossroads where an individual is no longer who they used to be and not yet who they're becoming. Often, individuals realize they've lost their way and recognize that they're no longer confident in their beliefs or identity. Betwixt and between is, however, “a place inhabited by the strange and uncanny, as well as unexpected enchantment and possibility.” While every path is different and every individual arrives at a distinct crossroads with the specifics of their own lives, Blackwood believes every threshold to be a transitional space full of possibility, soul crafting, and magic making.

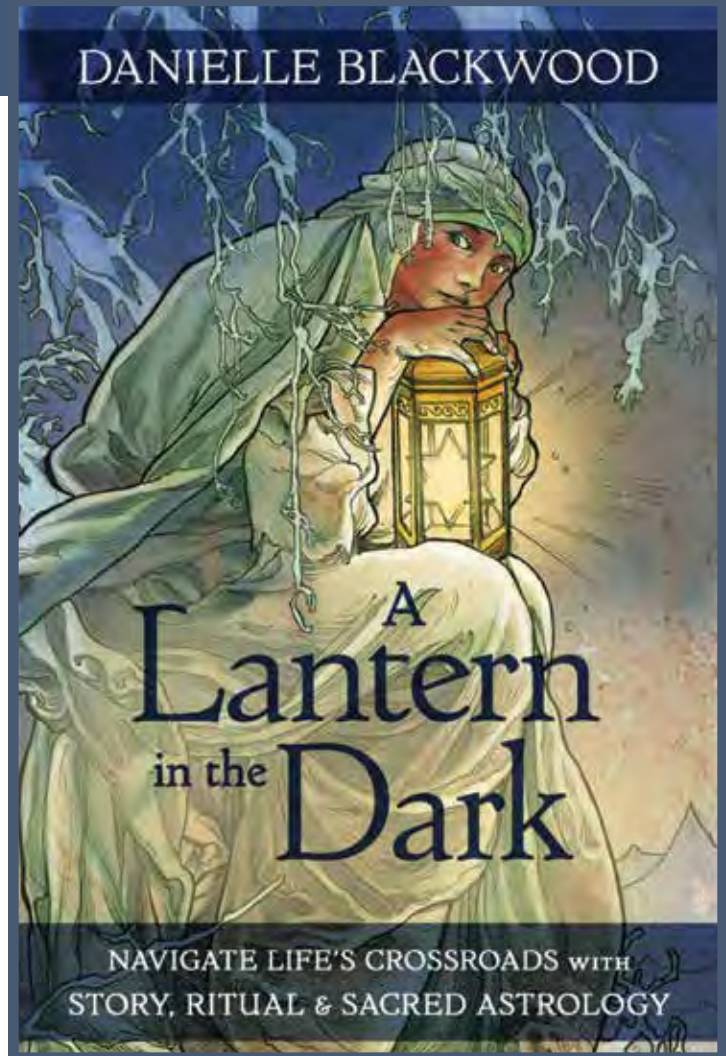
The text opens with a heartfelt introduction to the crossroads and a warm welcome to readers who find themselves at a challenging point where they're unsure how to proceed. Readers might exist on the edge of the awareness that there's more to their story than what they see but are still determining how the junctures along their path align with the unfolding of their heroic journey. The book's premise reveals itself within the first pages. “In this book, you will discover when to expect the crossroads times throughout your life so you can make peace with the past, navigate the present, and create a more purposeful future.” Blackwood shares her personal story with readers to exemplify how an archetypal lens can reframe a story.

The tender encouragement woven into the first few pages gives way to an introduction to sacred astrology and how the concepts serve a purpose to propel the soul's journey forward. Blackwood focuses on the most pivotal of life's crossroads during the phase of life between the first and second Saturn returns. Therefore, the book begins with the first, which occurs in the late 20s/early 30s, moves onto midlife, transits between ages 36 and 48, and ends with the second Saturn return, which occurs during one's late 50s. The book is a workbook of sorts, and depending on where readers fall within the age range, readers might choose to move directly to the chapter which highlights where they're at. Reading the entire book lends clarity to the transits already completed. Additionally, Blackwood proposes that understanding future emerging motifs and archetypal themes will help readers prepare and gain control.

Therapeutic rituals appear throughout the book as a source to help readers work through complex issues at various crossroads. For ritual use, Blackwood intersperses recipes for various teas, such as Baba Yaga's tea. Guided pathworking and journal reflections facilitate more profound healing and create new insights. What, where, when, how, and why are beautifully sewn in to ensure every question is answered regardless of readers' knowledge of these practices. Additionally, powerful folktales such as the Russian folktale “Vasilisa the Beautiful” epitomize the path through the dark wood and are included as an additional source of wisdom applicable to any crossroads.

From ages 27 to 30, when life breeds authenticity, Blackwood reveals steps to navigating the Saturn Return. For example, people often experience feelings of isolation and disconnect during this time, as old goals no longer hold relevance

Readers might exist on the edge of the awareness that there's more to their story than what they see but are still determining how the junctures along their path align with the unfolding of their heroic journey.



and long-standing relationships may phase out. Blackwood recommends reassessing priorities, natural consequences, radical self-compassion, reflection, creating healthy boundaries, and reinvention of self. She concludes the section with a magical toolkit for the Saturn Return, which includes recommendations on pathworking and ritual. These allow readers to “call on Saturn to assist in practical matters, such as finding the perfect home or job, as well as consciously structuring your life in a way that makes sense.”

Chapters six through 18 summarize the midlife transits, including the Pluto Square, the Neptune Square, the Uranus Opposition, and the Saturn Opposition. Each includes an introduction of the phase, including a brief astrological history and explanation of its archetypal resonance, expected ages when the transit will occur, themes likely to arise, and the phase's purpose for the overall picture. Since Blackwood identifies shadow work as conducive to the midlife transits, she incorporates relevant information on shadow work throughout these chapters, including why it's crucial. “Until we get acquainted with our shadow, it can be an unconscious driving force beneath many of our behaviors, perspectives, and cognitions, which can result in self-sabotage.”

Blackwood includes a list of allies and correspondences for each transit. For example, after the final phase, the Second Saturn Return, she includes a list of stones and minerals, essential oils, deities, colors, herbs, plant allies, Bach flower remedies, astrological signs, house, element, and tarot cards which readers may find helpful.

A Lantern in the Dark is much more than a pleasure-reading book; instead, it is a comprehensive guide to life's inevitable troublesome points. Where some books might provide information, Blackwood's book is an informative and immersive journey on which she takes readers through the ins and outs of navigating life. She does a remarkable job putting life into perspective through an astrological lens. From beginner to advanced, anyone who reads this book can learn how to utilize astrology, seasons, magic, and myth to uncover hidden truths and shed light on dark times. The tone and clarity make the reading enjoyable, and the call-to-action provided through the brilliant inclusion of pathworking, ritual, and journal reflections spark enthusiasm and an eagerness to participate.

***A Lantern in the Dark* is much more than a pleasure-reading book; instead, it is a comprehensive guide to life's inevitable troublesome points.**

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar



Amy Garber is a spiritual counselor and intuition teacher. Garber is also the founder and co-director of the Enlightened Soul Expo, and co-founder and director of the Enlightened Soul Center in Ann Arbor. The mission of the Enlightened Soul Center is to spread the light to Southeast Michigan and beyond, providing instruction and experiences in the holistic and intuitive arts, plus products to support them. A wide range of unique readers and energy healers are onsite most of the open hours, for drop-in sessions as well as by appointment, and they continue to regularly host and sponsor workshops, groups, and classes of a holistic and metaphysical nature while also operating a store and offering practitioner sessions. Find out more at enlightenedsoulcenter.com.



Photo by Susan Ayer

Meditation, continued

Creating Space: Clarity and Insight Through Meditation with John Madison and Wendy Weiner • Wednesday, September 6, 13, 20, 27, October 4, 11, 18, 25 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Meditation provides us with a clear stable mind, necessary for a happy life and the foundation for deepening our spiritual journey. This course offers hands-on experience with the basic elements of meditation using breath, posture and techniques for coping with distractions and laxity of the mind. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Open Concentrated Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Thursday, September 7—December 14 • 6 to 6:45 p.m. • Facilitators offer lightly guided concentrated meditation sessions using the breath as the point of focus. Open to all levels of experience. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Sound Bath & Gallery Reading with Rob Meyer-Kukan and Ryan Mehmandooost-Gauthier • September 8 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Sound Therapist, Rob Meyer-Kukan and Psychic/Medium, Rev. Dr. Ryan Mehmandooost-Gauthier for this time of sound bath meditation including a gallery reading. In addition to the soothing sounds of singing bowls, gongs and more, played by Rob. Ryan will share messages from loved ones, Higher Selves, Spirit Guides, Master Teachers, Angels, and more. Register at <https://forms.gle/XysQwDWYnrwrqSP6>. \$50. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

A Day of Mindfulness Meditation with Esther Kennedy, OP • Saturday, September 9, October 7, November 11, December 9 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • Join our mindfulness community as we deepen our understanding of

and commitment to daily meditation practice. Reflecting upon our relationships with honesty and courage, we amplify our capacity to be love within family, neighborhood, city, and world. \$35.00/session (Lunch included). For more information call Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, visit webercenter.org or email webercenter@adriandominicans.org.

Daylong Meditation Retreat with Carol Blotter • Saturday, September 9 or December 2 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Meditation practice of sitting and walking plus a short talk. Find peace and calm in the quiet wooded space of Michigan Friends Center in Chelsea. Donation only, suggested is \$30 - \$60. For more information email manager@mfcenter.org.

Online Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Monday, September 11—December 18 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Hartmut Sagolla leads a 30–40-minute guided meditation on a Buddhist theme followed by discussion. Meditations are centered around healing oneself and others and developing compassion. They include concentrated meditation, visualization, and contemplative meditations. FREE, donations welcome. For more information visit jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Path to the Awakened Heart: The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali with Robert Jacobs • Friday, September 15, 29, October 6, 20, November 3, 17, December 1, 15 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is an ancient text that is a guidebook for walking the spiritual path. The course considers the Sutras from the point of view of Tantric Yoga, particularly the North Indian school of Kashmir Shaivism. This is a non-dual school. An introduction to Vipassana and Pure Awareness meditation, open to all levels. There will be instruction, meditation time, and a question/response period. For more information call Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.



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Vipassana Half-Day Introduction with Barbara Brodsky • Saturday, September 16 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. • An introduction to Vipassana and Pure Awareness meditation, open to all levels. There will be instruction, meditation time, and a question/response period. Suggested donation \$25 - \$100. An introduction to Vipassana and Pure Awareness meditation, open to all levels. There will be instruction, meditation time, and a question/response period. For more information call Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Introduction to Mindfulness: Concepts & Practices with Libby Robinson • Saturday, September 16 • 2 to 4:30 p.m. • This workshop, Introduction to Mindfulness, covers fundamental concepts and practices for cultivating moment-to-moment compassionate awareness of whatever arises in our experience. This highly interactive and experiential session will include practicing mindfulness in a number of different ways. In addition, a brief review of the vast research findings on the benefits of mindfulness will be covered. The session will be virtual, free, and 2 ½ hrs. FREE. For more information contact Libby Robinson by email at libbyrobinson7@gmail.com, call (734) 476-3070, or visit libbyrobinsonmindfulness.com.

Serendipity: An Exploration of Spirit, Dharma, and Meditation with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, and John Orr • Tuesday, September 19, October 3, 17, 31, November 14, 28, December 12 • 6 to 9:00 p.m. • This class will be a mixture of meditation instruction and practice (Vipassana, Pure Awareness and heart centered practices), deepening awareness of our intentions as awakening humans, and explorations of ways to live our practice in the challenges of everyday life. Suggested donation \$105- \$350. For more information call Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

The Art of Meditation with Naren K. Schreiner and Lopamudra Bose • 5:00 p.m. Friday, September 22 through Sunday, September 24 at 2:00 p.m. • We invite you to this special retreat that will focus on deepening our understanding and practice of meditation as an art and science, taught by Paramahansa Yogananda and his Kriya Yoga lineage. Yoga meditation is universal and is rooted in the Raja Yoga of Patanjali Yoga Sutras, in the Bhagavad-Gita, and in various other yoga dharma. This retreat is designed for both new meditators and veteran practitioners, gathered into a devotional and concentrated silence in this sacred land of Song of the Morning. \$150, plus lodging. For more information contact sunny@songofthemorning.org, call (989) 983-4107, or email songofthemorning.org.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • September 22 • 7 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation in the creative space of the Plymouth Artist Collective at the PARC in downtown Plymouth, Michigan. In this time of sound bath, Rob will play metal and crystal singing bowls, with drums, chimes, and more washing you with sounds intended to bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and ease tension. Please bring a yoga mat and blanket and any additional supports you would like for your comfort (pillows, bolster, eye pillow). Please note, the studio floor is concrete, and we are unable to provide yoga mats and blankets for this event. Register at <https://forms.gle/2HTYmQky798CXC9P7>. \$40. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction with Libby Robinson • Saturday, September 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4, 11, 18 • 2 to 4:30 p.m. • Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is the mindfulness meditation curriculum developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn which sparked much of the current interest in mindfulness. It is the class on which most of the research on mindfulness rests. This virtual, interactive, and experiential class meets weekly for 2.5 hrs. Each class includes multiple mindfulness practices. Home practice of 20-30 minutes/daily between classes deepens mindfulness, as does a four-hour retreat on Nov. 4. \$300 (negotiable). For more information contact Libby Robinson by email at libbyrobinson7@gmail.com, call (734) 476-3070, or visit libbyrobinsonmindfulness.com.

Equinox Labyrinth Walk and Crystal Bowl Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan and Webster United Church of Christ • Saturday, September 23 • 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. • We begin with singing bowls and a walk for gratitude will follow. Join us as we celebrate the season of summer's blessings and prepare to enter into the new season of autumn! Please register for this event by completing the form found here - <https://forms.gle/XztgsP1KXxRWCM2n8>. Weather Policy - The event will be canceled in the case of inclement weather. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, September 29 or November 10 • 7 to 8:30 • p.m. Relax, unwind, and allow yourself to calm the overworked, overstimulated nervous system, by allowing the healing frequencies of sound to flow through you. Sound Bath Meditation is an immersion in soothing sounds and vibrations that are relaxing and rejuvenating for your body, mind, and spirit. Often simply called a "Sound Bath," it is an experience that washes you with the sounds of intentionally chosen instruments that bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and tension. \$28. For more information contact Breathe Yoga, (734) 883-7427, email amy@breatheyogachelsea.com, or visit breatheyogachelsea.com.

Myriad of Meditations (Seven classes in the series) with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, October 1, 22, 29, November 12, 19, 26, and December 10 • 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. • Meditation is an essential component to spiritual evolution. Learn a myriad of meditation techniques, to discover which resonate for you (possibly dissolving years of resistance to mediation). Learn meditations with fire, water, air, earth, with the Four Worlds, with different breathing, with Holy Geometry, sacred letters, powerful Archetypes, Biblical figures, spiritual beings, higher self, qualities of G-D, with movement, music, toning, colors, scents, gemstones, and trees, including several guided meditations through the Tree of Life. \$25 per class. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Complimentary Orientation with Brenda Lindsay • Tuesday, October 3 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • This complimentary session is an opportunity to learn what mindfulness is along with the benefits and risks of the Gold Standard in mindfulness training, the evidence-based Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) 8-Week Series starting on Oct 10th. Find out if MBSR is a fit for you. FREE. For more information contact Brenda Lindsay at Brenda@mindtransformationsllc.com or visit mindtransformationsllc.com.

Magical Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan and Julie Brown • Friday, October 6 • 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan and Julie Brown of Something Peculiar for this magical sound bath meditation. In this time of sound bath, Rob will play singing bowls, gongs, and more with the intention of washing you with the sounds that bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and ease tension. Julie will offer her gifts of intuitive readings, tarot, and palmistry. This is the perfect way to usher in the autumn holidays and explore the bounty of the season! Yoga mats and one yoga blanket are provided for each attendee. Please bring any additional supports you would like for your comfort (pillows, bolster, eye pillow). We also have seven zero gravity chairs available to the first 7 participants who request them at the event. Register by completing this form - <https://forms.gle/UmynozRRdLY15BkUA>. \$50. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Eight-week Class with Brenda Lindsay • Begins Tuesday, October 17 with an all-day session on November 21 & 28 • 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. • Do you want to reduce stress and increase resilience or possibly change habitual reactivity patterns that damage relationships? Perhaps you want to reduce anxiety or depression? Connect in real-time with others on Zoom seeking greater balance, ease, and peace of mind. The MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) secular, trauma-sensitive, 8-Week program was created by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD in 1979 at the UMass Medical Center to optimize one's ability to face stress, pain, and illness and make sustainable change across one's lifespan. Tuition Fees: \$175.00, \$290.00,

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Trauma-Informed Music Therapy: Theory and Practice

By Christine MacIntyre

The timely book *Trauma-Informed Music Therapy: Theory and Practice* is a collaboration of the expertise of music therapists, educators with experience in psychological health and trauma-informed education, clinicians, and psychotherapists. Based on the intersection of music therapy and trauma healing, the resulting body of work is an expansive text readers can utilize repeatedly.

Trauma-Informed Music Therapy presents aspects of trauma treatment relative to music therapy, and trauma-informed practice is a heavy presence throughout the pages. Therefore, the directness to the narrative is evident: “the foundation of which is in the ways we listen to ourselves and others,” including how music therapists think about and resource their practice. Readers, likely those teaching and training to be music therapists or individuals who commission trauma services, can glean off the spread of work which will stimulate, provoke, and challenge them in considering and shaping their approach.

Trauma takes many forms, and its effects are nondiscriminatory, meaning anyone could experience trauma, and the physical, emotional, and psychological presentation are as unique as the individual. Ruptures in normalcy that upheave everydayness and well-being can potentially leave individuals traumatized. Authors Laura E. Beer and Jacqueline C. Birnbaum reveal that “given its far-reaching and deep impact... trauma is often a factor in the treatment provided by music therapists...” This is the intersecting space of music therapy and trauma. Advancements in neuroscience provide evidence of the efficacy of music as therapy.

However, the text reveals why music is therapy and effective in trauma healing and how and when to (and not to) utilize music when addressing trauma. The sensitive nature of trauma requires ethical practice and a comprehensive understanding of how and why trauma plays a role in clients’ lives, as well as music therapy as a treatment modality. Trauma-informed practice theories include clinical implementation, social justice practices, and music therapy theories.

Trauma-Informed Music Therapy is divided into sections, including Theories and Perspectives, Children and Adolescents, and Adults. Part I, penned by Jennifer Sokira, Joy Allen, and Heather Wagner, provides insights on trauma-informed practice and constructs a framework within which music therapists can clearly and concisely identify and contextualize the clinical relationship, music, and therapeutic interventions. The resilience framework highlights the importance of developing client resilience to gain choice, control, and agency throughout their healing journey. Clinical focus, clinical considerations for music therapists, and questions for reflection add to the practicality and implementation of the narrative.

Case vignettes recount real-life scenarios involving traumatic events or circumstances and the intervention methods to offset the resulting symptoms and promote healing. The conceptual model and theoretical foundations utilized within these examples give readers further insights into how interventions are developed and used.

Further detailed sections include participant goals, organization and summary of services provided, lessons learned, and recommendations, demonstrating the frameworks that guide the design and delivery of music-based interventions to trauma.

The final chapters in Part I present a case for cultural humility and structuring safety, each being crucial for anyone utilizing music therapy through a trauma-informed lens.

Part II shifts the focus to a specific client base—children and adolescents—and provides a reference for music therapists on using a trauma-informed approach with all children to avoid further traumatization, provide a healing setting and presence, and create experiences that promote resilience. The pages within this section emphasize the need for proactivity when working with children and the consideration of cultural, historical, and gender issues. Including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) outline of the six key pillars of a trauma-informed approach lends credibility to the text. Suggestions for consideration include utilizing PRIDE skills (an

acronym for play, reflect, imitate, describe, and enthusiasm) while following Perry’s engagement sequence (regulate, relate, and reason). Used in conjunction, these “can promote felt safety, trust, collaboration, and empowerment.” Again, a case example illustrates how music therapists working with children might incorporate these components. Practice recommendations provide a guide for what the approach entails.

The chapters within Part II are seemingly all-encompassing, as they touch on various forms of trauma, including race-based, natural disasters, life-threatening illness, and household dysfunction. The authors provide an overview of the indicated trauma followed by the respective considerations, foundations, and suggested steps for trauma-informed care.

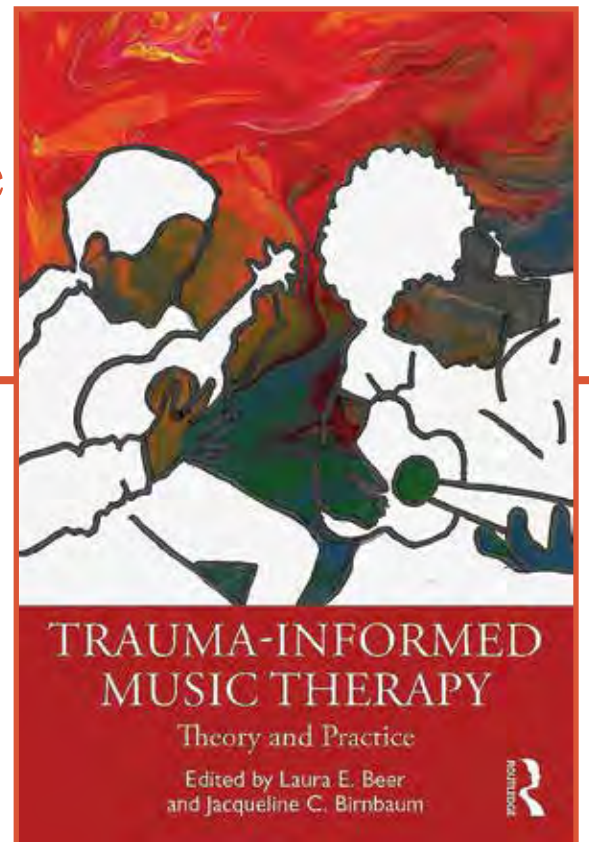
Part III shifts gears, shedding light on adult trauma. Sexual violence and intimate partner violence head this section, as authors Rachel Ebeling and Sarah Michaelis approach this section with care, advising readers of the “serious and long-term effects” of trauma and components such as confidentiality, sense of safety, and empowerment. “Trauma-informed practice (TIP) seeks to mitigate the risks of re-traumatization through realizing the prevalence of SV/IPV, recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma, and responding to trauma’s vast impact on an individual’s general functioning.” Throughout the text, readers begin to conceptualize music as trauma therapy, as the authors highlight how music therapy provides empowering experiences through the prioritization of individual experiences.


A therapeutic songwriting project demonstrates how music therapists might utilize creating and sharing music to provide a vehicle for traumatized individuals who feel silenced to be heard and seen. Further, a music therapy individual case study describes a sexual violence survivor’s journey. In her music therapy sessions, she expresses her desire to reclaim her identity and identifies feeling confined due to trauma. The music therapist then took phrases listed by the client to create song lyrics, to which they improvised a vocal melody over a chord progression. Throughout the process, the client made the decisions and maintained complete control. In the end, the client expressed that she felt empowered and accomplished. Through the text, readers can see how music therapy becomes a powerful coping skill in a healing journey.

Models for trauma-informed music therapy in various settings include working with symptoms, topics, and improvisation. When incorporated into trauma-informed music therapy for treating trauma in musicians, author Joanne Loewy delves into play’s potency. This chapter highlights the myriad of challenges musicians face, often resulting in trauma due to musicianship.

Brian Harris authors a chapter exclusively geared toward trauma, the LGBTQAI+ community, and music psychotherapy. An arts-based exploration of how trauma is experienced in gender expression leads to an overview of the systemic supports and failures within the LGBTQAI+ community and how analytical music therapy, which emphasizes awareness of self as a clinical tool, is helpful in such cases due to its emphasis on creative intersubjectivity.

Special care was taken in authoring this book, as the authors acknowledge the sensitive nature of working with trauma patients. “Working in inpatient psychiatric treatment and recovery can be deeply rewarding, but it is not for the faint of heart,” says Cadesky. Working with clients suffering from trauma and its deep-rooted symptoms means potentially dredging up unexpected feelings and business from the music therapist’s life, “including our own experiences around mental health, bias, and stigmatization.” However, the authors’ narratives create a structured path by which music therapists might cultivate positivity in others’ lives in meeting them where they are with compassion, support, and understanding.





Based on the intersection of music therapy and trauma healing, the resulting body of work is an expansive text readers can utilize repeatedly.

or \$380.00 Suggested sliding scale, “pay what you can” pricing. Please pay more, if you can, to help support those less able to pay. We strongly believe in making this class available to anyone who believes that it might be helpful in their life and is willing to commit themselves to do the work. For more information contact Brenda Lindsay at Brenda@mindtransformationsllc.com or visit mindtransformationsllc.com.

Mastering Meditation with Kapila Castoldi • Sunday, October 22, 29, and November 5 • 3 to 5:00 p.m. • Introductory Meditation Series offered free of charge by the Sri Chinmoy Centre. Topics include: concentration, relaxation and breathing techniques; exploring meditation on the heart center; the awakening of inner awareness; the role of music and mantras. FREE. For more information contact Kapila at (734) 994-7114, email castoldi@oakland.edu or visit meditationannarbor.com.

Candlelight Labyrinth Walk with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, October 27 • 6:00 p.m. • Join Veriditas trained Labyrinth Facilitator, Rob Meyer-Kukan at Webster United Church of Christ, 5484 Webster Church Road, Dexter, Michigan for a candlelight labyrinth walk. This event is offered as a donation based event to support the work of Webster UCC. Donations may be made to Webster UCC. Parking for this event can be found on the grassy area in front of the labyrinth or along Farrell Road. Once parked, follow the signs to the labyrinth. Please register for this event by completing the form found here - <https://forms.gle/6AiTPky76cFsmEff9>. By Donation. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Cacao + Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan and Alicia Clark Teper • Wednesday, November 1 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan of 7 Notes Natural Health and Alicia Clark-Teper of Sacred Lotus Experience at 7 Notes Natural Health for a heart opening cacao ceremony supported by sacred sound. Using ceremonial grade cacao, pure intention, over 40 different instruments (singing bowls, gongs, therapeutic harp, shruti box, and more), Alicia and Rob will create an experience that will immerse you in peace and tranquility. Please bring a mat and any additional supports you would like for your comfort (blankets, pillows, bolster, eye pillow, etc.). Also, please bring an item for the altar. A photo of a loved one or an item that reminds you of a transitioned loved one. Register at <https://forms.gle/6P5cGZ8mBSUZZDEaA>. \$50. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Meditation Getaway with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, November 18 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • This day long retreat will be your oasis of peace and calm, a chance to connect to nature, to spirit, and to your higher self. Walking/hiking meditation opens our day at one of Ann Arbor's many local parks. We continue with various forms of meditation, yoga nidra, journal writing, breath work, a sound and aroma experience, and more. Ample time for sharing and reflection will be provided. Advanced registration and payment is required to secure your space at this event. To register, visit <https://forms.gle/XfwPVudvVdfGEPJv8>. \$125. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, December 1 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation. In this time of sound bath, Rob will play singing bowls, gongs, and more with the intention of washing you with the sounds that bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and ease tension. Yoga mats and one yoga blanket are provided for each attendee. Please bring any additional supports you would like for your comfort (pillows, bolster, eye pillow, etc.). We also have seven zero gravity chairs available to the first 7 participants who request them at the event. Register at <https://forms.gle/WESUKjv7Y6z6rvPH7>. \$40. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

NYE Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer Kukan • Sunday, December 31 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Relax, unwind, and allow yourself to calm the overworked, overstimulated nervous system, by allowing the healing frequencies of sound to flow through you. Sound Bath Meditation is an immersion in soothing sounds and vibrations that are relaxing and rejuvenating for your body, mind, and spirit. Often simply called a “Sound Bath.” it is an experience that washes you with the sounds of intentionally chosen instruments that bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and tension. \$32. For more information contact Breathe Yoga, (734) 883-7427, email amy@breatheyogachelsea.com, or visit breatheyogachelsea.com.

Still Mountain Buddhist Meditation Center Sunday Morning Sitting • Ongoing • 10 to 11:30 a.m. • Our weekly meditation and sharing is open to the public. We will sit in silence for 45 minutes, take a quick break, and gather for sharing related to the Dharma. Zoom option is available. FREE. For more information contact Kenneth Morley at Kenwmorley@yahoo.com.

Movement and Dance

Ann Arbor Dances of Universal Peace with Susan Slack • Friday, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Transition to in person dances with new leader and possible new location. Susan Slack has been on the DUP board and newsletter. She is seeking local musicians. For more information contact Susan Slack at peaceinacircle@gmail.com, or call (941) 544-8405.

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Sacred Sweat for Unity with Megan Me-Again Sims • Thursday, September 7 • 5:45 to 8:30 p.m. • Experience embodied connection and creative expression through the power of dance and nourishment to and from Mother Earth. Let's lift the harmonized energy for all to share! Sacred Sweat will culminate in a community open mic gathering at the “Little Stage” in Nichol's Arboretum. We'll meet at the Geddes entrance at 5:45-6pm and walk there together. Bring a song, poem, story, instrument, or just willingness to help heal the web of life with your presence, in community. Me-Again guides from the heart so that you can feel like you-again. By donation. Check meagaindance.com for time and location details. For more information contact Megan Sims at megansims600@gmail.com, or (734) 417-7020.

Music, Sound, and Voice

Sacred Sound Journey with Victoria Schon • Sunday, September 10 • 4 to 5:30 p.m. • Join Victoria for this deeply restorative sacred sound journey of crystal singing bowls, Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, chimes, drumming and other sacred sound instruments in this acoustical setting that favors sound and frequency vibration at Verapose Yoga & Meditation House in Dexter. \$40. For more information visit victoriaschon.com.

Singing for Comfort in Person & Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Thursday, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Singing for Comfort. Free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information contact the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth through their website interfaithspirit.org.

Sound Bath Meditation in Sacred Sound Sanctuary with Kimberly Joy Rieli • Saturday, September 30, October 14, November 18, December 9 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Sound healings are like a deep reset for body, mind, and soul. Unwind from your week as Kimberly Joy Rieli bathes you in the healing sounds of crystal bowls, drums, hand pan, Celtic harp, chimes and voice. Bring your yoga mat, comfy clothes, blankets and pillows. Please arrive 15 minutes early.: \$22 - \$44 sliding scale (Please pay what you can to support our artists and the Infinite Light Center). To reserve your spot, please send your donation via Venmo (preferred) to [@singing-For-Your-Soul](https://www.venmo.com/@singing-For-Your-Soul) or by Paypal to info@singingforyoursoul.com. Cash payments and donations will also be accepted at the door. For more information email anne@infintelightjackson.com or call (517) 962-4725.

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this Calendar, please look in the section that follows the Calendar, which is called “Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers” and which starts on page 106.



The Crazy Wisdom Calendar




Parenting

Kabbalah for Parents & Children with Karen Greenberg P.T. • Sunday, September 10, October 8, November 5, December 3, future dates TBD • 1 to 3:00 p.m. • Utilizing movement, multi-sensory input, color, and experiential learning, we build self-esteem of spiritually evolved children (not reinforce feelings of being different, damaged, defective, disordered, dysfunctional). In an ascensional journey through the Tree of Life, we aid in organizational skills, navigating low-vibrational emotions, relationships, setting healthy boundaries. We encourage children in discovering and fostering their authentic selves' genius, to fulfill their spiritual mission of a healthy, interdependent, functional planet for the "1000 Years of Peace" prophecy. \$50/session for 2-hour class, meets one time/month for about a year. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Harnessing the Power of Talking Out Loud for Parents with Leeann Fu via Zoom • Monday, October 16, 23, 30 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • Sunday, November 5, 12, 19 • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Sunday, November 29, December 6, 13 • 8 to 9:00 p.m. • Free three-week session for experimenting with harnessing the power of talking out loud with Teddy Bear Talk Support (TBTS). TBTS provides a framework for benefiting from listeners who only listen, or only do a few other limited things, like ask open, honest questions, and make guesses about what seemed important. Zoom link for the meetings: meaningfulaction.org/tb. Please be punctual as we will be splitting into breakout rooms at the start. For more information: teddybeartalksupport.com FREE. For more information contact Leeann Fu at (734) 237-7676, email teddybear@umich.edu, and visit teddybeartalksupport.com.

As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas and colors enough to paint the beautiful things I see.



—Vincent Van Gogh

Personal Growth

First Sundays InterPlay at the Friend's Meeting House with Rob the Buffalo and Me-Again • Sunday, September 3, October 1, November 5 • 2:15 to 4:15 p.m. • InterPlay is an active, creative way to unlock the wisdom of the body, in community. Gently facilitated to be incremental and easy-going: Rob the Buffalo and Me-again will guide you through forms that the coax movement, stillness, story and song. Creativity flows and authenticity reigns. The only requirement is that you are human, and willing to try something new. No experience necessary. Suggested Cost \$15-25 sliding scale: no one turned away for lack of funds. ALL bodies welcomed. For more information contact Megan Sims at megansims600@gmail.com or call (734) 417-7020.

Virtual Nature-Inspired Expressive Arts Gatherings with Hello from The Cocoon's Laurie Aman & Sarah Bruno • Sunday, September 17, Thursday, October 26, Sunday, December 10 • Sunday, Noon to 2:00 p.m., Thursday, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. • September program: Pumpkins & Creating Magic, October program: Leaves & Transitions, and December program: Owl & Entering the Dark. Each gathering will feature a Nature-Inspired Guest (moss, blue heron, whale) and also weave in seasonal themes (mothering, transitions, trust). Carve out time to connect with nature and your own creativity. We'll have a spacious two hours for nature lessons, intuitive art, gentle movement, and vocal play. You are highly encouraged to connect with others by sharing your nature-inspired feeling, insights about the topics we explore, and of course—your creativity! Donations appreciated: \$10-30 suggested. For more information contact Laurie Aman at (860) 823-9743, email Hellofromthecocoon@gmail.com, or visit hellofromthecocoon.com.

Finding Your Ground: Ongoing Personal Growth Circle for Women with Rachel Eggherman and Jessica Ryder • Wednesday, September 20, October 4, 18, November 1, 15, 29, December 13 • 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. • Guided practices and reflection in a safe and supportive environment. In person, in Ann Arbor. By donation: \$1 - \$25 per meeting. For more information contact Jessica Ryder at jessica@jessicaryder.net or Rachel Eggherman at tellrachel123@gmail.com or visit celebratedheart.com.

Honoring All Spiritual Paths & Traditions

Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth



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Music, Sound, and Voice, continued

Cafe 704 with Paul Vornhagen & Aron Kaufman via Zoom and in Person with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Saturday, October 14 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Live music in a smoke free environment. \$10. For more information contact the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth through their website interfaithspirit.org.

Cafe 704 with Jean Wilson & Friends in Person and via Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Saturday, November 11 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Live Music in a smoke free environment. \$10. For more information contact the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth through their website interfaithspirit.org.

Songs of Starlight: A Musical Meditation with Norma Gentile • Saturday, September 2 • 8 to 9:30 p.m. • Norma Gentile, sound shaman, offers a Meditation Concert with singing bowls, healing songs and harmonic toning. Sacred music from medieval times composed by St. Hildegard of Bingen and healing chants inspired by Spirit in response to the audience's energetic presence create a deeply still, rich atmosphere. Bring a blanket and/or meditation cushion if you wish to lie down. In person and online. \$20 suggested donation. For more information visit healingchants.com.

Monthly Group Sound Bath with Reverend Amy Feger • Sunday, September 24, October 22, November 26, December 31 • 4 to 5:30 p.m. • From quartz crystal singing bowls to shamanic spirit drumming and rattles, Amy Feger brings deep energy healing through sound vibration while playing in a meditative state, allowing the release of what no longer serves you while the frequencies fill and uplift your energy field and body. \$15. For more information contact Reverend Amy Feger at (734) 210-1312 or email sacredwhisper teachings@gmail.com.

Cafe 704 with Emily Slomovitz & Billy King in Person and via Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Saturday, December 9 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Live music in a smoke free environment. \$10. For more information contact the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth through their website interfaithspirit.org.

Managing Relationships Using Emotional Intelligence with Pat McDonald, OP • Thursday, November 16 • 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. • An informative session that addresses our reactions—personally, professionally, socially, and relationally — to interactions with others. What might we want to “change, moderate, or alter” in connecting with others? \$15. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care with Christy DeBurton, RYT • Self-Paced • Online • In this compact but powerful self-paced course you'll get at the root causes of your self-sabotaging habits. Learn simple and effective tips and tools to set healthy boundaries without the guilt. Banish burn-out, overwhelm and resentment. Get inspired to eat healthy, sleep well + live better in your body. \$39.50 For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Nutrition and Food Medicine

Dr. Nia's Kitchen Clinic Series—Culinary Herbs & Spices with Dr. Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND • Wednesday, September 20, 27 • 6 to 7:15 p.m. • Come learn how common herbs, spices and other kitchen foods are beneficial for your immune system, your heart, your digestive system and so much more. Find out how to fend off or heal from the common cold and flu. These are fun, interactive make-and-take classes. Each two-part series are \$108, includes food, take home containers, and all handouts. For more information contact Dr. Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND at (734) 883-7513, or email niaaguirre.nd@gmail.com.

Dr. Nia's Kitchen Clinic Series—Roots, Bulbs & Tubers with Dr. Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND • Wednesday, October 18, 25 • 6 to 7:15 p.m. • Come learn how common herbs, spices and other kitchen foods are beneficial for your immune system, your heart, your digestive system and so much more. Find out how to fend off or heal from the common cold and flu. These are fun, interactive make-and-take classes. Each two-part series are \$108, includes food, take home containers, and all handouts. For more information contact Dr. Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND at (734) 883-7513, or email niaaguirre.nd@gmail.com.

Dr. Nia's Kitchen Clinic Series—The Fit Nuts & Sensible Seeds with Dr. Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND • Wednesday, November 15, 29 • 6 to 7:15 p.m. • Come learn how common herbs, spices and other kitchen foods are beneficial for your immune system, your heart, your digestive system and so much more. Find out how to fend off or heal from the common cold and flu. These are fun, interactive make-and-take classes. Each two-part series are \$108, includes food, take home containers, and all handouts. For more information contact Dr. Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND at (734) 883-7513, or email niaaguirre.nd@gmail.com.

Reiki

1st Degree Reiki Training with Suzy Wienckowski • September 23 & 24 • Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • Reiki is a gentle, hands-on healing practice that promotes balance and harmony on all levels: Body, Mind and Spirit. Reiki is easily learned by all and after initiation by a Reiki Master, healing energy flows effortlessly through your hands. The first-degree class includes the history of Reiki, hands-on treatment form for yourself and others, and 4 individual initiations. Certificate awarded. \$200. For more information contact Suzy Wienckowski at (734) 476-7958 or email SuzyReiki@aol.com.

Second Degree Reiki Training with Suzy Wienckowski • October 14 & 15 • Friday, 1 to 4:00 p.m., Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Second level of training in the Usui System of Reiki Healing. Students learn and are empowered to use the three sacred Reiki symbols. The symbols focus and intensify the Reiki energy enabling the practitioner to heal on a deeper level and to send Reiki at a distance. (First Degree training is a prerequisite.) \$500. For more information contact Suzy Wienckowski at (734) 476-7958 or email SuzyReiki@aol.com.

Retreats

Half-day silent meditation with Rev. Marta Dabis • Sunday, September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10 • 8:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • Join us for several periods of sitting meditation in the lineage of Shrunyu Suzuki of the San Francisco Zen Center, starting from 8:20 a.m., followed by dharma talk at 11:00 a.m. Donations are appreciated. Everyone is welcome. Can come for any portion of the program. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Marta at (248) 202-3102, email jissojizen@gmail.com, or visit jissojizen.org, and find them on MeetUp.



Embracing Struggle: Walking with Teilhard de Chardin with Kathleen Duffy, SSJ • Saturday, September 16 • 9:30 am. to 3:30 p.m. • In the early 20th century, when Teilhard de Chardin suggested an approach to science and religion that would integrate the science of evolution with Church dogma, he was forbidden by his Jesuit Order to speak and publish on these topics. Instead of losing hope, he learned to deal with struggle in creative ways. During this retreat day, we will reflect on how Teilhard de Chardin's approach to struggle might give us hope for the future and encourage us to continue to struggle for the kind of change needed in our Church and in our World. \$45, includes lunch. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Listening To God, Listening To Each Other: Finding Truth in Love with Dorothy Henderson • Friday, 7:00 p.m., September 29—Sunday, October 1 at 11:00 a.m. • NVC is a spiritual practice masquerading as a communication tool that helps us speak our truth and hear another's. Eldering is the practice of deepening the spiritual grounding of an individual or group by accompanying them in an intentional relationship with God. Cost (includes meals): Double occupancy: \$175 | Single occupancy: \$225 | Commuter: \$55. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Fall Yoga & Self-Care Weekend Retreat with Christy DeBurton, RYT • October 20 through 22 • Enjoy a peaceful weekend of self-care in Big Rapids, MI: yoga, nature, farm-to-table meals, good company and time to 'unplug' from the outside world. See website for details. For more information contact Christy by email at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

If you are a holistic/spiritual/psychological growth practitioner in the area, but don't regularly lead classes or workshops, you can still be listed for free in our online Holistic Resource Guide. List your practice and add your logo, photo, and even a short video. To claim your listing, please visit AnnArborHolistic.com.

Retreats, continued

Living from the Awakened Heart with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, and John Orr • Friday through Sunday, November 3—5 • This retreat will be a mixture of meditation instruction and practice (Vipassana, Pure Awareness and heart centered practices) and explorations of ways to live our practice in the challenges of everyday life. Suggested donation: \$125-\$300. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

The Potter & The Clay an Advent Retreat with Father Vic Clore • 6:30 p.m. Sunday, December 3 through 11:00 A.M. Thursday, December 7 • During this first week of Advent, we prepare for the coming of Christ into our lives and our communities, which will involve conversion and transformation for all of us. The scripture readings for these days are quite rich: allowing ourselves to be formed by the Potter, daring to beat our swords into plowshares, being lambs lying down among wolves, nourishing whole crowds with a few loaves and fishes, and building our house on solid rock. Cost (includes meals): Commuter: \$160 | Double occupancy: \$325 | Single occupancy: \$425. Registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

The 12 Days of Christmas Retreat with Staff and Community of Song of the Morning • Monday, 5:00 p.m. December 25 through Friday, January 5 at 9:00 p.m. • Song of the Morning is a place of exquisite peace and beauty during the holiday season, and the perfect place for those feeling pulled inward into spiritual reflection. Experience the peace and joy of the season embraced by a warm and welcoming community celebrating and honoring the deeper spiritual energy of this season. We warmly invite you to join us for all twelve days, or you may choose a shorter length of stay! Homemade vegetarian dinners will be offered to guests daily during this stretch of celebratory days, and a variety of items for breakfast will be provided in each building including oatmeal, fresh fruit, coffee, tea, and snack bars. Please plan on bringing your own food to supplement around these mealtimes, and read about the room/space you are booking so that you know what it offers in terms of kitchen access, privacy, and amenities. Lodging is \$60-210/night, retreat is free. For more information contact sunny@songofthemorning.org, call (989) 983-4107, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Mini Wellness Retreats with Christy DeBurton, RYT • Ongoing • Choose from a variety of three-hour Mini Retreats at The Yoga Room to relax and renew. When you haven't got the time (or budget) for a full weekend retreat but just need a little 'me-time,' these are the perfect option. Watch for details for scheduled Mini Retreats in newsletter or grab up to 3 friends and create your own Bespoke Mini Retreat! See website for details. For more information contact Christy by email at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Shamanism

Shamanic Animal Communication with Judy Liu Ramsey • Tuesday, September 5, 12, 19, October 3, 10, 17 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Explore the differences between telepathic and shamanic communication with animals of all species, and those who have passed. Find deep connection with all their relations and the richness that shamanic connection gives to communication. Prerequisite: Basic Journeying. Class is taught via Zoom. \$240 per person/\$125 for repeating students. For more information contact Judy Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net, or visit judyramsey.net.

Journeying Circle with Judy Liu Ramsey • Thursday, September 7, 21, October 5, 19, November 2, 16, December 7, 21 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join us for in-depth exploration of the new cycles of life, transitions, and endings that we all experience. Journeying brings you into the spiritual aspects of these processes and provides tools and wisdom to help you thrive on your path. Prerequisite: knowing how to journey shamanically. \$25 per session or \$40 per month. For more information contact Judy Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net, or visit judyramsey.net.

Shamanic Journeying as a Spiritual Practice | Workshop with Lauren Jubelirer and Barbara Brodsky • Saturday, September 9 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • A conversation between Aaron, Lauren Jubelirer, and Barbara Brodsky about how shamanic journeying can support your relationship to the divine within, as well as to your guides, teachers, and healing teams. Lauren will facilitate a Shamanic Journey. Suggested donation: \$25-\$100. For more information contact Deep Spring Center (734) 477-5848, om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Shamanic Extraction with Connie Lee Eiland • Saturday and Sunday, September 9 & 10 • Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • This class teaches ways to perceive and remove misplaced energy in clients. In addition to multiple methods practiced in pairs, there will be individual journeys, group healings, and ceremony. Close relationship with Helping Spirits is required. \$300. For more information contact Connie Lee Eiland, (248) 809-3230, clshebear7@gmail.com.

Shamanic Journeying for Guidance and Healing with Lauren Jubelirer • Monday, September 11, October 23, November 2, December 4 • 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. • This class is a synthesis of my own experiences as a healer, what my guides have taught me, and what I have learned from other shamanic

teachers. You will learn how to incorporate Shamanic Journeying into your spiritual practices. This class is appropriate for those with previous journeying experience as well as those new to this practice. Suggested donation: \$75-\$250. For more information contact Deep Spring Center (734) 477-5848, om@deepspring.org or visit deepspring.org.

Extraction: Illness & Healing from a Shamanic Perspective with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday and Sunday, September 16 & 17 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Deepen your understanding of illness and how one's spirit can help the physical body thrive or not. From a shamanic perspective, there are three causes of illness: loss of power, loss of soul essence, and intrusions. We will focus on power loss and extraction of intrusions. Explore different ways to "diagnose" an illness as well as to address its healing. Working with partners, deepen your understanding of spiritual intrusions and learn ways to extract them. Prerequisites: Basic Shamanic Journeying, Medicine For the Earth/Healing With Spiritual Light. Suggested Reading: *Walking In Light* by Sandra Ingerman. Class will be taught via Zoom with careful monitoring of techniques and practice. \$220 per person/\$125 for repeating students. For more information contact Judy Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net visit judyramsey.net.



The autumn wind is a pirate.
Blustering in from sea with a
rollicking song he sweeps along
swaggering boisterously. His face is
weather beaten, he wears a hooded
sash with a silver hat about his
head... The autumn wind is a raider,
pillaging just for fun.

— Steve Sabol

The Nameless Path: The Primal Celtic Mysteries with Rocky Rains • Saturday, September 30 • 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. • Spirit Flight, Primal (Shamanic) Witchcraft, and the Otherworld Initiation; Techniques of Otherworld Travel. Tools of the Primal (Shamanic) Magikal/Spirit Practitioner. (Includes the making of a Crane Bag.) Trance Dancing, Prophetic Utterance, and Shapeshifting. Lunch will be provided. Potluck after. \$190. For more information contact Rocky Rains at (734) 799-7502 or email rainsrocky4@gmail.com.

Greater Wholeness with Connie Lee Eiland • Saturday & Sunday, October 14 & 15 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • This class addresses the parts of us we don't claim--both the positive and what we see as the negative. Healing practices, sacred art, journeys and ceremony are included to help with integration and wholeness. \$200 until 10/01/23, then \$240. For more information contact Connie Lee Eiland, (248) 809-3230, clshebear7@gmail.com.

Creating Safety and Sacred Space with Connie Lee Eiland • Sunday, October 29 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • This class gives you practices, ways of looking at safety and sacred space that will serve you. It is experiential. \$100 until 10/14m then \$125. For more information contact Connie Lee Eiland, (248) 809-3230, clshebear7@gmail.com.

Shamanism, Death, and Dying with Connie Lee Eiland • Saturday & Sunday, November 4 & 5 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • This workshop heightens our spiritual understanding of death and dying and teaches ways to assist others as they approach transition. It also includes psychopomp, which is assisting those who are lost and haven't transitioned. This will be done both individually and as a group. \$200 until October 21, then \$230. For more information contact Connie Lee Eiland, (248) 809-3230, clshebear7@gmail.com.

Basic Shamanic Journeying with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday and Sunday, November 18 & 19 • 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • The shamanic journey is an easy and powerful tool we can use to access spiritual information. In this class you will meet and begin to develop a relationship with a compassionate spirit or power animal who is coming forward to help you at this time in your life. You will learn techniques to help you develop a self-directed practice of empowerment, allowing you to move safely, intentionally through the world in a balanced way. This class is a prerequisite to ongoing and more advanced shamanic studies. The class will be taught online via ZOOM. \$160 per person/\$75 for repeating students. For more information contact Judy Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net, or visit judyramsey.net.

Spiritual Development

Sunday Services via Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Sunday, September 3—December 31 • 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. • Sunday celebration. Free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Sufi Chanting, Meditation, and Development via Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Tuesday, September 5–December 26 • 7 to 8:00 p.m.
• Study of Sufism. \$5-10 per class. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Monthly Midrash Study with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, September 10, October 8, November 5, and December 3, future dates TBD • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • The written version of the Old Testament (Torah) tells a story. What has been passed down orally for thousands of years is the backstory and various mystical, hidden meanings. It is rich, colorful, detailed, and compiles interesting data like who ascended to Heaven alive, who was so righteous that their deceased bodies never decomposed, the seven things that we are not permitted to know in human form...\$90/month. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Akashic Records Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers • Sunday through Wednesday, September 10—13 OR 19—21, October 7—8 OR 17—19, November 1—3 OR 28—30, December 9—10 OR 11—13 • See website for specific class times • Nine-hour class in three, three-hour sessions. Class times vary. Experience the Akashic Records through the Pathway Prayer Process to Access the Heart of the Akasha®. Encounter the energy and wisdom and develop your skills for successful navigation of the Records. Learn about the Akashic Records, the method of access, and the tremendous personal possibilities for you. Find out how to use the Akashic Records for yourself and others. Enjoy a more conscious relationship with your own Soul and honor its wisdom. \$360. For more information visit powers365.com/events or call (734) 926-8423.

Writing for Spiritual Wellness with Holly Makimaa • Thursday, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • Cultivating Spiritual Wellness Through Journaling: Online Monthly Open House. FREE or love offering. For more information contact Holly Makimaa, hollymakimaa@gmail.com, yourtransformationaljourney.com.

Akashic Records Advanced Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers • Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Oct 23, 24 & 25 OR Nov 13, 14 & 15 • See website for specific class times • Nine-hour class in three, three-hour sessions. Class times vary. Experience the Akashic Records through the Pathway Prayer Process to Access the Heart of the Akasha®. Encounter the energy and wisdom and further develop your skills for successful navigation of the Records, working in the Akashic Records for Energy Healing, Clearing Ancestral Patterns, and Reconciling Past Lives. *This is second level "Advanced Practitioner" to follow level one "Practitioner" Certification. \$430. For more information visit powers365.com/events or call (734) 926-8423.

Healing Through the Akashic Records Certification with Shellie Powers • Saturday, September 9, 16, 23, 30 OR Monday through Thursday, November 6, 7, 8, 9 • See website for specific class times • 12-hour class in four-3 hour sessions. Times vary per class. Embark on a journey of spiritual practice, embracing unconditional self-love, transforming resentment into acceptance, and breaking free from limiting patterns. Activate your inner ascension matrix to overcome challenges and bask in the radiance of your soul. Our spiritual healing is achieved through the Akashic Records, enabling you to apply their insights, guidance, and wisdom to your daily life. As our paths become illuminated, we concentrate our light on our souls' purpose. \$500. For more information visit powers365.com/events or call (734) 926-8423.

The Grace of the Divine Mother with Naren K. Schreiner and Lopamudra Bose • 5:00 p.m. Thursday, September 14 through 2:00 p.m. Sunday, September 17 • We invite you this special retreat to deeply immerse yourself in the sacred presence of the Divine Mother. Devotional meditation and chanting, sacred ceremonies and intimate communion with the Divine. Tune into the ecstatic love that Paramahansa Yogananda—and many other great masters—experienced with the Divine Mother, who is both our eternally loving mother and the Cosmic Goddess. Led by Naren K. Schreiner and Lopamudra Bose, who are both trained in India's traditional worship of Divine Mother (of Sri Ramakrishna's Dakshineswar tradition), this retreat is an opportunity to join other devotees in the serene and beautiful land of Song of the Morning and draw ever nearer to the Mother of us all. There will be ample time in the beauty of Nature—Fall is a lovely time. \$200, plus lodging. For more information contact sunny@songofthemorning.org, call (989) 983-4107, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Peace Generator via Zoom with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Friday, September 15, October 13, November 10, December 15 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Manifest peace for the planet. FREE, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

The Joy of Awakening Workshops with Barbara Brodsky, Colette Simone, and Our Spirit Friends • Saturday, September 30, October 21, December 2 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • In this series of workshops, we will come together in many ways to support that expansion of consciousness through sharing of ideas and through meditation and related means. While each workshop will stand on its own, and may be registered individually, there will be a strong overlap as we explore origins of consciousness, evolution of consciousness, the Divine Feminine and Masculine, Non-duality, skillful living from awakened consciousness, and much more. Suggested donation \$25-\$100. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Connecting with Archangels—Parts 1 through 4 with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, October 1, 15, 22, 29 • 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. • Become acquainted with the various Archangels represented in the Sephirot (Spheres) in the Tree of Life. Learn who the Archangels are, what they each do, how to create a sacred, protected space, on whom to call for particular assistance, and how to safely call upon them. Connect—Ask Questions—Often Receive Helpful Information and Guidance. \$777. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Cultivating a Personal Relationship with G-D with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, October 1 & 15 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • Create a sacred space, compose/ask questions of your Higher Power, decipher if you are receiving "Yes," "No," or "Essay" answers from your spirit vs. thinking in your head vs. emoting or having sensations in your body. Ask G-D how you can serve (learn to trust/surrender to G-D); express gratitude, awe, and be comforted, healed, protected, guided by G-D. Compose prayers, feeling close to G-D, like G-D were a close friend: HE/SHE IS! \$90. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

A Spirituality Named Compassion with Rev. Matthew Fox, PhD • Thursday, October 12 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • During this event, we explore compassion's many dimensions, including how today's physics gives us a basis for true compassion. \$20. Registration required to receive live stream link. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Nature's Portals: Doorways to Inspiration and Well-being with Bruce and Carol Malnor • 5:00 p.m. Friday, October 13 through 2:00 p.m. Sunday, October 15 • We invite you to join us at Song of the Morning for a weekend of nature activities and personal reflection in a beautiful setting. Fun, interactive group activities, quiet time alone for personal reflection, increased awareness of the natural world, tools for regaining balance and well-being, personal relaxation and renewal, and meditative walks. \$108 plus cost of accommodations. For more information contact sunny@songofthemorning.org, call (989) 983-4107, or visit songofthemorning.org.

The Poor, The Widow, The Orphan, & The Stranger in Your Land with Maribeth Howell, OP, PhD, STD • Saturday, October 21 • 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. • What do the Scriptures say about how we are to relate to people who are most in need of compassion? Begin by examining selected texts from the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, and several prophetic works before turning to New Testament writings and select Church teachings. \$25, includes lunch for in-person participants. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Chakra class with Aruna Olga Bachmann • Tuesday, October 24, 31, November 7, 14, 21, 28, December 5, 12 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Take a deep dive into our seven main Chakra Energy Centers, into the general mental/emotional/spiritual issues involved in each one, and then engage in some experiential sharing as we meditate week to week on each of the chakras. \$80. For more information contact Aruna at (734) 808-1335, email lhci.financials@gmail.com or visit lighthousecenterinc.org.

Astral Travel, Including Heavenly Travel with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, November 12, 19, 26, and December 10 • 5 to 9:30 p.m. • Sequential five-part series: Part 1 (2 sessions) — learning what is in G-D's Will, seven spiritual dimensions, 12 physical dimensions, Archangelic master cell readings, incarnation; all prerequisite for Part 2 (two sessions) - preparing ourselves and our space for astral travel; all prerequisite for astral traveling to: Part 3 (Dates TBD) - different spiritual dimensions, Akashic records, gates of heaven; all prerequisite for Part 4 (Dates TBD) - celestial locations; all prerequisite for Part 5 (Dates TBD) - different star systems, universes. \$99 for each of the first four sessions (Parts 1 & 2) = \$396 OR \$333 (\$63 discount) if all four sessions paid up front. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Twelve Tribes with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, October 22, 29, November 12, 19, 26, December 10, 17, January 21 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • Learn the history of the patriarchs / matriarchs who fostered the Twelve Tribes and familiarize yourself with: the Twelve Tribes highlighting Levi, Joseph, Benjamin, and Judah; the conquering and disseminating of the Holy Land; the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel; and the magic of the Breastplate. This course will help you discern your Soul's Purpose, tribes you're most drawn to, and tribe archetypes that give you the knowledge, power, and wherewithal to fulfill your Soul's Purpose. \$400 or \$333 if paid in total up front. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Stress Management

Everything is Working Out Perfectly with Karen Greenberg, P.T. • Sunday, September 10 or November 5 or December 17 • 8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. (except 12/17/23 – 5 to 9:00 p.m.) • Have you ever felt so overwhelmed with so many things to do that you become very anxious and don't even know where to begin, which devolves into you becoming more disorganized and inefficient and unproductive? Then Everything is Working Out Perfectly is perfectly suited for you! Please come and join us! \$55. For more information contact Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar



Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Self Defense

Wu Style Tai Chi Chaun with Marilyn Feingold • Weekly on Sundays beginning September 3 through December 17 • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Learn the ancient art of meditation in motion with this “soft style” martial art emphasizing relaxation and balance. No class on October 8. Drop-in, \$5 per session. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan with Disciples and Advanced Students of Sifu Genie • Ongoing • Monday, 1 to 2:00 p.m. or 7 to 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Wednesday, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. or 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Thursday, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Saturday, 9 to 10:30 a.m., 10 to 11:30 a.m. or 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., and Sunday, 4:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. • Wu Style tai chi chuan is a soft style martial art emphasizing balance and relaxation. Everyone welcomed to learn this ancient art of meditation in motion. \$45/month for one class per week; \$70 for two classes per week. Student/senior rates available. For more information email info@wustyle-annarbor.com, or visit wustyle-annarbor.com. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

Tai Chi for Teenagers aged 14-16 with Nigel Kerr • Monday, September 11 through December 11 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • A new Tai Chi class specifically for teenagers aged 14 to 16. Students will explore and study Tai Chi as movement, as a way to relax and focus, as moving meditation, as fun. Students will learn a modified short Tai Chi form, and play with movement in games inspired by Tai Chi. \$150. For. More information contact Nigel Kerr at (734) 845-7917, email nigel.kerr@gmail.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Tai Chi Beginner's Class with Master Wasentha Young • Monday, September 11 through Thursday, December 14 • Monday, 10 to 11:15 a.m. and/or Thursday, 6 to 7:15 p.m. • T'ai Chi, often characterized as a moving meditation, is a series of postures linked together in a continuous, fluid manner. As a practice, it integrates the mind and body, promotes relaxation, as well increases balance and concentration. Register for one class and you can attend both sessions—whatever your schedule allows—at no extra cost! (limit 12 in-person) \$195. For more information contact Peaceful Dragon School at info@peacefuldragonschool.com, call (734) 741-0695, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Tarot and Divination

Drop-in Tarot Study Group with Nicholas O'Donnell • Ongoing • Sunday • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • This is a drop-in group of Tarot enthusiasts that meets once a week, facilitated by Nicholas O'Donnell. The meetings will consist of focused open Tarot discussion, Tarot meditations, Tarot theory and theosophy, Tarot reading, Tarot history, Tarot symbolism, etc. The intention is to deepen Tarot understanding and build a local Tarot community. Tarot practice usually occurs after the formal meeting has ended. \$10 minimum donation. For more information contact Nick at nicksvictorygardens@gmail.com, call (734) 299-6472, or visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com/tarot-study-group.

Theater

NTG's Far Out Season 8 Telethon Fundraiser 70's Spectacular to the Stars with Neighborhood Theater Group • Saturday, September 9 • 7 to 10:00 p.m. • NTG's 8th season will be performed exclusively in the Off Center Gallery at Riverside Arts Center! We are thrilled to announce this new residency and community partnership. All funds raised at this event will go directly toward our new residency and production costs. For more information email info@ntgypsi.org or visit ntgypsi.org.

Black Cat: A New Nightmare with Neighborhood Theater Group Friday & Saturday, October 13 & 14, and October 20 & 21 • 8 to 10:00 p.m. • Come along with us and face your deepest nightmares. All original music and score. For more information email info@ntgypsi.org or visit ntgypsi.org.

A Man for Christmas: A Made for TV Musical Parody with Neighborhood Theater Group • December—Dates TBA • We're bringing those holiday TV musicals (we know you watch them) to the stage in an original musical parody! For more information email info@ntgypsi.org or visit ntgypsi.org.

Women's Health

The Ultimate Perimenopause Guide with Christy DeBurton, RYT • Self-Paced Online • The Ultimate Perimenopause Guide combines science and personal experience, so you feel like you're going on a self-guided journey with a knowledgeable friend. In this self-paced guide Christy shares 10 years of research she compiled during her own perimenopause journey, and then helps you create a plan to support your body pro-actively through nutrition, supplements, exercise, stress relief, and more. A must for any woman 40+! \$29.50. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Writing

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series with Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin • Wednesday, September 13, 27, October 11, 25, November 8, 29 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Second Wednesdays, Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m. Fourth Wednesdays, Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for one hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry. Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m. FREE. For more information contact Edward Morin at (734) 668-7523, email eacmorso@sbcglobal.net or visit cwcircle.poetry.blog.

- Featured Readers September 27 – John Hoppenthaler has had four books of poetry published by Carnegie Mellon U. Press, including *Night Wing Over Metropolitan Area*—due out this October. Professor of Creative Writing and Literature at East Carolina University, he also serves on the Advisory Board for Backbone Press, specializing in publication and promotion of marginalized voices.
- October 25 – Patricia Jabbeh Wesley is the author of seven critically acclaimed books including *Praise Song for My Children: New and Selected Poems*. She has edited *Breaking the Silence*, the first comprehensive anthology of Liberian poetry, published this year. Originally from Liberia, she is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Penn State University.
- November 29 – Jeff Gundy has published eight books of poems including *Without a Plea*, *Abandoned Homeland*, and *Somewhere Near Defiance*, for which he was named Ohio Poet of the Year. His latest prose book is *Wind Farm: Landscape with Stories and Towers*. Former Fulbright lecturer at University of Salzburg, he's now Writer in (Non)residence at Bluffton University.

Ho! for the leaves that eddy down,
 Crumpled yellow and withered brown,
 Hither and yonder and up the street And
 trampled under the passing feet; Swirling,
 billowing, drifting by, With a whisper soft
 and a rustling sigh, Starting aloft to windy
 ways, Telling the coming of bonfire days.

— Grace Strickler Dawson



- November 29 – Colleen Alles is a native Michigander and award-winning writer living in Grand Rapids. The author of two novels and a poetry collection, she's also a contributing editor with Great Lakes Review and Barren Magazine. She enjoys distance running and corralling her kiddos. You can find her online at colleenalles.com.

A Path to Awakening Project with Celeste Zygmunt • Monday, September 18, October 16, November 20, December 18 • 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. • This project continues from last semester. It consists of compiling Aaron's teachings in order to delineate the path he puts forward for awakening. Suggested donation \$60-\$200. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477.5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Writing for Spiritual Wellness with Holly Makimaa • Thursday, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • Cultivating Spiritual Wellness Through Journaling: Online Monthly Open House. FREE or love offering. For more information contact Holly Makimaa, hollymakimaa@gmail.com, yourtransformationaljourney.com.

Writing Workshops with Terianne DeYonker, OP • "Letting Go & Making Room For the New" • Saturday, September 23 • OR "Winter's Invitation" • Saturday, December 2 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • Autumn is nature's reminder of how important letting go is as we move through our lives. Trees letting go of their leaves simply are making room for new leaves to thrive in the spring. Writing can support our letting go and encourage us to make space for the new in our lives. If you are feeling nudged to do some letting go, come join other writers in this exploration. This workshop is for beginning and experienced writers. Both workshops are in person and online. \$35 per session. For more information call the Weber Center (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Sit. Stop. Write. Zen and Poetry with Dmitry Berenson • Sunday, September 24, October 22, November 26, December 24 • 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. • Like a plant that grows out of bare ground, to express ourselves in poetry we must start from an empty place. We'll do a little meditation and reading from Zen and other sources to help us touch that place and then spring out to write our own poetry. Find your seat; find your voice. FREE, donation welcome. For more information contact Marta at (248) 202-3102, email jissojizen@gmail.com or visit jissojizen.org, and find them on MeetUp.

Write for Life with Mary Ledvina • Do you want to begin, stick with, and complete a creative project? Learn the tools that Julia Cameron used to write more than 40 books with her new book: *Write for Life: Creative Tools for Every Writer (A 6-Week Artist's Way Program)*. Develop a writing practice and fill your well with inspiration. See website for class dates. \$180. For more information contact Mary Ledvina at (734) 646-9161, email maryledvina@gmail.com, or visit maryledvina.com.

Yoga

Hatha Yoga with Samantha Lieberman • Thursday, September 7 through December 21 • 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. • Sam loves the process of creating and offering safe yet challenging yoga sequencing. She enjoys sharing her love of yoga with all levels of students and is deeply honored to pass the gift of yoga to others. Drop-in \$15 per session—First visit is free! Cash or Venmo at door. Seniors receive 10% discount. Discounted packages available. Bring your own mats. No class on November 23. For more information, visit the Jewel Heart website at jewelheart.org, call Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, or send an email message to programs@jewelheart.org.

September Guided Personal Yoga Retreat with Staff and Community of Song of the Morning • 5:00 p.m. Friday, September 8 through Sunday, September 10 at 2:00p.m. OR October 20—22 OR November 17—19 OR December 8—10 • The Song of the Morning Yoga Retreat community invites you to join us for an uplifting weekend experiencing spiritual refreshment and relaxation in a supportive peaceful atmosphere. Offered during select weekends in 2023, guided personal retreat offers a greater sense of community and support, so that you might get the most out of your retreat experience. During these special weekends you are invited to join our daily schedule of events which includes meditation, devotional practices, community meals, and more (see schedule below). At the beginning of the retreat, our community facilitators will be happy to welcome you, and offer simple guidance and answer questions in our sincere effort to help you get the most out of your retreat, and experience what our founder envisioned: "Spiritual refreshment and relaxation." Lodging is \$60-\$210/night plus pay what you want toward the retreat itself. For more information contact sunny@songofthemorning.org, call (989) 983-4107, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Yoga & Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan and Paul Barr • Friday, September 15 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Sound Healer, Rob Meyer-Kukan and Yoga Instructor, Paul Barr for this seasonal series of Yoga + Sound at 7 Notes Natural Health. Paul will lead a mindful yoga practice that focuses on themes tied to each of the seasons. Rob will support with gentle sounds of singing bowls, gongs, and more. An extended time of savasana will allow you to deeply rest into the new season while being immersed in sacred sound. Register at <https://forms.gle/qkLoC9xqAGwCjNdS7>. \$40. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan, (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.



Crazy Wisdom's E-Blast Service is a great way to showcase yourself, your business and your services! This service is a cost effective method of reaching a targeted audience without the need for investment in costly hardware and mail related software!

Send out a listing of your upcoming classes, workshops, and events.

This is a great way to reach the more than **8000+** people who are currently subscribed to receive our E-Blasts.

Affordable pricing starting at \$99.00 for any one email!

For all requirements and to pay visit www.crazywisdom.net
Click on "Crazy Wisdom's Email Service" in the left-side menu.

E-Blast Service ads must be mail-ready (see website) and emailed to Carol. Questions? Contact Carol at carol@crazywisdom.net

Yoga & Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan and Paul Barr • Saturday, December 16 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Join Sound Healer, Rob Meyer-Kukan and Yoga Instructor, Paul Barr for this seasonal series of Yoga + Sound at 7 Notes Natural Health. Paul will lead a mindful yoga practice that focuses on themes tied to each of the seasons. Rob will support with gentle sounds of singing bowls, gongs, and more. An extended time of savasana will allow you to deeply rest into the new season while being immersed in sacred sound. Register at <https://forms.gle/qkLoC9xqAGwCjNdS7>. \$40. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan, (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Yoga Your Way with Christy DeBurton, RYT • Ongoing • Holistic private yoga sessions, hybrid Live and Virtual Yoga Wellness Courses, 15-minute Yoga for Busy People videos, and yoga audio sessions. Hatha, Vinyasa and Yin yoga. See website for details. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Open Level Yoga with Michele Bond • Ongoing • Tuesday • 6 to 7:30 p.m., Saturday 10 to 11:30 a.m., and Sunday 4 to 5:30 p.m. • Each student is encouraged to honor their own unique abilities and limitations in this mixed level class, with variations offered for all levels. Our method blends the science of biomechanics with an openhearted, uplifting philosophy. Learn to look for the good in yourself and others as you enjoy a dynamic practice. \$15 if registered for the semester, \$20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele Bond at (734) 358-8546, email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com, or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

The Practice with Michele Bond • Ongoing • Wednesday • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • This class is great for athletes or anyone looking for a strong practice. Enjoy increasing core strength, enhancing flexibility, agility, balance and mental focus with this fun and energetic practice. \$15 if registered for the semester, \$20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele Bond at (734) 358-8546, email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com, or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Yoga Essentials with Michele Bond • Ongoing • Thursday • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • For those new to yoga, or new to this system. Learn Universal Principles of Alignment that are an invaluable aid to learning the postures, deepening your understanding of the body, developing a yoga practice that is safe, joyful, therapeutic, and fun! \$15 if registered for semester, \$20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele Bond at (734) 358-8546, email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com, or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.



Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders & the Centers



Photo by Hilary Nichols

Quentin McMullen, M.D. and Molly McMullen-Laird, M.D. are the founding physicians of Steiner Health. Both specialize in Internal Medicine. The Steiner Health Center is modeled after the anthroposophic hospitals in Germany. It is the only inpatient anthroposophic medical center in the United States. Learn more about them and their practice at [steinerhealth.org](https://www.steinerhealth.org). See the cover story about them in issue 71: https://www.cwcommunityjournal.com/docs/issue_71/60

Aaron is a discarnate spirit who serves as a wisdom teacher from a realm beyond the Earth plane. He has been a Buddhist monk and scholar in many lifetimes, and expresses as a being of great love, compassion, wisdom, and gentle humor.

Active Against ALS, a local nonprofit formed in 2008, raises funds for ALS research while raising awareness, and building an active and compassionate community.

Nia-Avelina Aguirre, ND, AWC, is a board-certified Naturopathic Doctor, Ayurveda Wellness Consultant, Ayurvedic Marma Point Practitioner, Bodywork & Energy Therapist, and Exercise Specialist. With over 40 years of experience, each client benefits from a personalized, well-rounded, integrative session.

Laurie Aman is a Certified Soul Art Guide using creativity to move you through transitions and step into a new version of yourself.

Ann Arbor Pagan Pride is the local branch of the Pagan Pride Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of prejudice and religious discrimination through education, activism, charity, and community.

Toni Auker is a mother of three who attends births at U-M and St. Joseph Hospital and has been teaching CBE since 2011.

Aruna Olga Bachmann has been a Byzantine iconographer for over 35 years, studied over 15 years under Russian/Eastern Orthodox professional iconographer Vladislav Andreyev in New York (originally a monastic iconographer who immigrated from Russia to the USA).

Paul Barr has been a Certified Yoga Teacher through Yoga Alliance and Reiki Master for over 10 years. Barr is also a Certified Personal Trainer through the National Personal Training Institute (NPTI) and a Certified Nutritionist through Precision Nutrition.

Deanne Bednar has a background in teaching art, natural building, and illustrating books. A favorite activity is foraging local materials and making practical and beautiful things! She is the coordinator and teacher at Strawbale Studio.

Dmitry Berenson has been writing poetry for twenty years, and his work has appeared in *The Worcester Review*, *Poet Lore*, *MiPOesias*, as well as several anthologies. He has also practiced meditation in the Zen and Vipassana traditions, including daily practice and several intensive retreats. His teaching explores the intersection of meditation practice and poetic creative expression.

Carol Blotter has been practicing Insight Meditation since 1989 and has been teaching since 1999. Her 25+ years practice and study has led to a blending of Vipassana and non-duality teachings. She is the primary teacher of Chelsea Meditation Group.

Michele Bond brings a lifetime devoted to fitness and wellness, and a healthy dose of humor to her teaching. She has an extensive background

in martial arts, dance, competitive synchronized swimming, gymnastics, stunt fighting, and swordplay, as well as over 800 hours of training in yoga, yoga therapeutics, and meditation.

Lopamudra Bose has been a part of Sangita Yoga since its inception, working on translations, research, teaching language, and offering cultural and spiritual guidance. Her passion to preserve the traditions of her homeland, brings a special quality. Initiated in the spiritual lineage of Paramahansa Yogananda, her spiritual focus is the foundation of her life. Her degree in Philosophy from University of Calcutta reflects her deep interest and study of the spirit.

Patty Brennan is the owner and visionary force behind Lifespan Doulas. For forty years, she has been a doula, midwife, educator, author, nonprofit executive, and entrepreneur. Brennan has personally trained over 2500 people to become doulas and is the author of *The Doula Business Guide*.

Rachel Briggs joined Ann Arbor Death Cafe 2018 and is a trained End of Life Doula. She supports the dying and their families as they plan and navigate the end of life. Briggs also provides grief support and resources after sudden or traumatic death.

Barbara Brodsky, founder and guiding teacher of Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry, has been practicing meditation since 1960. She teaches Insight/Vipassana meditation and non-dual awareness derived from the Dzogchen traditions and is an ordained minister. Brodsky is a trans-channel for Aaron.

Sarah Bruno is a Certified Speech Therapist and artist whose passion is to communicate with care while helping others.

Buffalo is a certified InterPlay Leader.

Lama Nancy Burks has been a student of Buddhism since 1978. She completed a traditional three-year, three-month meditation retreat in 2000. Since then, she has taught at dharma centers in Ann Arbor. Before retiring, Lama Nancy worked as a psychologist.

Jennifer Carson is a writer, illustrator, and dollmaker and has been designing and sewing dolls and stuffed animals and selling sewing patterns since 2006.

Dr. Kapila Castoldi has studied meditation under the guidance of spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy for over 35 years. The classes are offered free of charge as a community service.

Father Vic Clore attended Sacred Heart Seminary high school and college, with two subsequent graduate degrees: theology from the Gregorian University in Rome and developmental psychology from Wayne State University. He has been a parish priest in Detroit since 1966, always serving in racially integrated city parishes.

Diana Cramer has been facilitating the monthly Ann Arbor Death Cafe since November 2012. She is a seasoned death care worker and facilitator.

The Reverend Marta Dabis is a board-certified hospital chaplain and ordained Zen priest in the San Francisco Zen Center Suzuki/Katagiri lineage.

Christy DeBurton, RYT, is a Holistic Yoga and Wellness Educator. For 25 years she has helped people manage the stresses of their lives with more ease through Yoga, Meditation, Wellness Retreats, HSP, and Midlife Empowerment, Self-Care, and Perimenopause Guidance.

Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry is a non-profit 501(c)3 guided by wisdom teachings from multiple traditions.

Sister Tarianne DeYonker, OP, MSW, is Amherst Writers and Artists Affiliate.

**Autumn
leaves
don't
fall, they
fly. They
take their
time and
wander
on this,
their only
chance to
soar.**

—Delia Owens



Writers Wanted

Fun ways to be visible in the community, and connected.

Kids Columnist

We're looking for a new columnist for our ongoing CW Kids Column. Each issue, the columnist writes a feature article which includes three or four profiles of interest to parents and their kids. We focus on people, organizations and businesses offering cool, fun, meaningful and sometimes therapeutic activities, programs, events and classes for kids. Great opportunity for a writer who is also a parent.

Writers

We are always looking for good articles about the holistic scene... reportage, personal journaling and essays, profiles, interviews, journalistic explorations, and other feature writing.

Modest but respectable pay. If you might be interested, please send a letter of interest and links or PDF samples of previously published writing to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

The Dying Year provides training and mentoring for EOL doulas, as well as a weekly, free discussion group.

Earth Walk is a community-based non-profit organization focused on raising consciousness of climate/environmental issues of today.

Connie Eiland has studied shamanism for over 20 years with Sandra Ingerman, Betsy Bergstrom, Ana Larramendi and others. She has been a practitioner and teacher for 15 years.

Rachel Egberman, LMT is a professional massage therapist, energy worker, and HeartMath® facilitator.

Enlightened Soul Center & Shop's mission is to spread the light to SE Michigan and beyond, providing classes and services in the holistic and intuitive arts, plus products to support them. We offer psychic guidance & energy healing sessions, both walk-in and by appointment.

Reverend Amy Feger teaches sound vibration healing at Irene's Myomassology Institute. She is initiated in The Nine Rites of the Munay-Ki of the Peruvian Shaman and is a Reiki Master in Usui Reiki Ryoho.

Marilyn Feingold began training in Tai Chi Chuan in 1996 at Botsford Hospital Rehabilitation Center. Retiring from her job in 1991 as a childcare worker for the State of Michigan after being diagnosed with serious health problems, she began training Tai Chi Chuan to help control pain and maintain good joint and muscle mobility.

Rev. Matthew Fox, PhD is an author, theologian, and activist priest, has been calling people of spirit and conscience into the Creation Spirituality lineage for more than 50 years. His 40 books, as well as lectures, retreats, and innovative education

models have ignited an international movement to awaken people to be mystics and prophets, contemplative activists who honor and defend the earth and work for justice.

John Friedlander is an internationally acclaimed psychic, author, and teacher with degrees from Duke University and Harvard Law School.

Leeann Fu, PhD has been engaged in the practice of Authentic Movement and Nonviolent Communication for many years, and has a decade of experience co-teaching a graduate level "owner's manual for your brain" class at U of M.

Cynthia Gabriel is a birth researcher, mother of three, and active doula. She is the author of two childbearing-related books.

Sifu Genie has trained and taught Wu Style tai chi chuan for over 30 years. She is a disciple of Grandmaster Wu Kwong Yu, gatekeeper of the Wu style. Our teachers are her disciples and advanced students.

Norma Gentile is a sound shaman. She blends her training as a professional vocalist with her ability to hear and connect with other people's guides and angels. Norma developed healing music, podcast meditations, and individual healing sessions which facilitate greater understanding of how Spirit supports each of us.

Karen Greenberg is a Success-Tracking, Train-the-Trainer, certified Essence Repatterning, and D.O.V.E. Practitioner, dance instructor, physical therapist, as well as being a Personal and Spiritual Growth teacher/author for metaphysical spiritual seekers worldwide.

A GIFT OF CLAIRVOYANCE and Psychometry



By Barbara Pott

When a small Santa Claus ornament was handed to me by a friend, the vision hit me immediately: An adult male, only in his 30s, suffered a severe heart event that stopped him in his tracks. He was so discouraged that he could no longer live his life as he intended. As a young husband in the late 1940s, he loved his wife and daughter dearly but couldn't provide for them as he longed to do. That is what I told the owner of the ornament, Lori, who confirmed my accuracy. She went on to say that her mother became the breadwinner and Lori, who was quite young at the time, had to grow up quickly to help the family. I then told Lori additional information that she wasn't previously aware of but was useful to her.

While I was born with this ability to get information from objects, I was discouraged from using it growing up. Parents often don't know what to do with a child who talks about things she isn't supposed to know. But my gift surfaced repeatedly one summer in my early 30s.

On another occasion, I held a young client's cell phone. I told her there was a young male in her life who was active in water sports and who was important to her. She said, "No, nothing like that." I looked at the phone again and insisted, "Yes, there is." She seemed to be searching for someone like that, not finding anyone in her life. She had been thinking of her family. I said that this young man was in the limelight because of his water sport. "Oh! My boyfriend is a national championship diver." There it was. And, of course, being interested in romance, many of her following questions were about the future of her relationship with her boyfriend.

Sometimes my clients will not recognize something I say as true or relevant, but later will come back saying I was right about a grandmother's name or an event in their parents' lives or how someone died. I recently described to an elderly client about a spirit who was near, and she didn't recognize anything I said about him. A couple of months later the client returned saying that she told her daughter about it and her daughter immediately recognized who that spirit was. When my client heard from her daughter who it was, she broke into tears with that recognition and the spirit's visit was a comfort to her.

While I was born with this ability to get information from objects, I was discouraged from using it growing up. Parents often don't know what to do with a child who talks about things she isn't supposed to know. But my gift surfaced repeatedly one summer in my early 30s. I worked in the office of my husband's business and one day took a check from a customer to be deposited with the rest of the receipts that day. As soon as I touched the check, I heard the words "no good." This didn't scare or startle me; it felt rather natural. I silently asked, "NSF?," for "not sufficient funds," and the answer came right back, "account closed." In that moment I did what I was taught to do growing up: I chided myself for paying attention to my gift. But sure enough, the check was returned to us from the bank as no good due to a closed account. That's when I decided to take ownership of my talent and explore it more.

I've had other, more thunderous moments of clairvoyance and some that are so faint, I almost miss them. Normally though, I need to open myself intentionally to the input to receive anything.

I didn't have supportive parents in this regard, but I give thanks that my husband does support me in this work. We have been married for forty-

two years and I can attest that being supportive of each other's interests, whatever they are, is one of the keys to a long and happy marriage. That doesn't mean we need to participate directly in each other's work or hobbies, but the support we give each other grants a healthy amount of confidence and encouragement that we can succeed and are deeply loved regardless of what we pursue. This is golden.

I've had other, more thunderous moments of clairvoyance and some that are so faint, I almost miss them. Normally though, I need to open myself intentionally to the input to receive anything. This is good! I do not want to be bombarded all day about things that are neither relevant to my life nor helpful. And I really don't care to know anyone else's business unless they ask me as a professional.

But I do believe my gift, like other talents, are meant for the good of the community and should not sit idle. I started reading as a professional at the Crazy Wisdom bookstore about 14 years ago and did so for a number of years. My day job began taking more of my time and energy, so I stopped public readings for a while. When I retired from corporate America a year ago, I was able to secure an office at the Enlightened Soul Center in Ann Arbor where I could start reading for the public again.

While working with one metaphysical talent, other metaphysical abilities tend to grow as well. Psychometry in metaphysics makes use of clairvoyance, clairaudience and all other ways of receiving and knowing information. I most often get images of vignettes that I can sometimes turn into short videos showing movement and action. But I also will get sounds or words, emotions that are felt by others (including spirits), smells, and even just an awareness or knowing of something. I very often see symbols as messages for my clients. Or if they are considering a relocation, I can pull up a map in my mind's eye to see where in the country holds the best options for them.

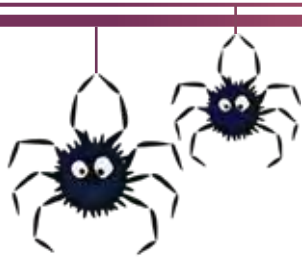
While working with one metaphysical talent, other metaphysical abilities tend to grow as well. Psychometry in metaphysics makes use of clairvoyance, clairaudience and all other ways of receiving and knowing information.

Names also give me information. If a client wants to know about the future of their career or particular job, the name of the company they work for will give me information about their likely future with the company. If the client wants to gain insight about future choices, I can look at each potential option and give them insights about how they will feel once they are in that role; for instance, will they grow bored quickly or will it be a source of happiness and pride for them.

My varied background allows me to incorporate additional information in my services. I have backgrounds in human resource management, botany and earth spirituality, and pastoral studies. I offer eco-spirituality mentoring (connecting one's spiritual life with the natural world) and Myers-Briggs personality assessments. One of my former bosses used to ask everyone, "What is your passion?" My passion is learning. My Aunt Joan was right: I'm a perpetual student. Getting degrees in botany (Univ. of Michigan), pastoral studies (Loyola Univ.) and human resources (EMU) represents only about two-thirds of the time I've spent in study. More esoteric learning has been through the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids; Avalon Mystery School; Duality, an energy course on Mindvalley; and many other shorter courses. Knowledge is light, and my offerings are intended to help shed light for others on their path.

Potts holds regular office hours at the Enlightened Soul Center in Ann Arbor Tuesday through Friday. Scheduling an appointment with her is easy online through Calendly at calendly.com/awencrafts. Or you can contact her via email at awencrafts@gmail.com.

Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders & the Centers



Dorothy Henderson has taught and practiced Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication in workshops, retreats, and classes for the past 20 years. More recently, she has been teaching eldering workshops to Quaker meetings and communities.

Hidden Lake Gardens has 755 acres of gardens, an arboretum, trails, a canopy walk, and hosts year-round events and activities.

Maribeth Howell, OP, PhD, STD, is a Dominican Sister of Adrian, a member of the Congregation's Vocations Team, and a spiritual director. She taught at Aquinas Institute of Theology and Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis and St. Mary Seminary in Wickliffe, Ohio.

Anna Hsu is a self-worth and inner fulfillment coach for high achievers. She is certified in somatic, emotional, mindset, inner child, and subconscious reprogramming coaching and has a degree in biopsychology and neuroscience from the University of Michigan.

Infinite Light Center is a community collective of spiritual seekers, teachers, energy and sound healers here to serve all.

Irene's Myomassology Institute is the oldest and largest massage school in the Midwest. Founded by Irene Gauthier in 1987, our nationally accredited school continues to set high standards for massage education.

Roger Jackson is professor emeritus of Asian studies and religion at Carleton College and visiting professor of Buddhism at Maitripa College. His research and writing interests include Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, meditation, and ritual; Buddhist religious poetry; and modern Buddhist thought.

Robert Jacobs studied the primary scriptures of Indian yoga for many years under two well-known spiritual masters: Swami Muktananda and Gurumayi Chidvilasananda. He believes the true way to study yoga is through both understanding and practice.

Jani has been a practicing medium for over 13 years. Upon the tragic death of her older brother, she began to embrace connecting with Spirit and the messages she was receiving.

Jewel Heart is dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism and to bringing the practice of this rich tradition within the context of contemporary life to everyone. Programs for all levels of interest.

Jewel Heart Instructors moderate the discussion, posing thought-provoking questions, keeping the discussion on track, and encouraging everyone to participate.

Jissoji is an Ann Arbor-based Soto Zen meditation group offering Zen meditation at the Center for Sacred Living in Ann Arbor on Sundays.

Lauren Jubelirer is a professional life and embodiment coach, acupuncturist, and shamanic astrologer who has incorporated shamanic practices as a healer since 1987. She studied with several indigenous shamans, healers, and

medicine people as well as Western teachers like Hank Wesselman and Sandra Ingerman. Shamanic Teacher Training with Sandra Ingerman in 2020.

Esther Kennedy, OP, a Dominican Sister of Adrian, Michigan, is a retreat leader and spiritual director. She conducts a monthly Day of Mindfulness program at Weber Center.

Nigel Kerr has studied PDS since 2015, under the supervision of Master Wasentha Young, Director.

Jennifer LaFeldt, LMT, RMT is an animal Reiki practitioner and Usui/Holy Fire Reiki master, as well as an infant massage therapist.

Tom Ledder, founder of Selenite Sword Maker, LLC, is dedicated to bringing the knowledge of the Selenite Swords of Light out to the world.

Mary Ledvina is a writer, healer, artist, and teacher who uses *The Artist's Way* tools daily and wants to share them with you for better self-care and creative expression.

Lenawee Intermediate School District Adult Learning Program's goals are to help adult students build on their personal and professional experience to gain knowledge and skills needed through our various course offerings and programs.

Sam Lieberman has been practicing yoga since 1988. She received teacher trainings in Yoga Fit and Yoga Medics. Yoga Medics is a medical model approach with emphasis on alignment and therapeutic needs.

Lifespan Doulas offers comprehensive online training and certification for becoming a birth, postpartum, or end-of-life doula, plus guidance for launching your own doula business.

Brenda Lindsay, CPC, PRP, MBSR is a teacher trained at Brown University.

Joseph Loizzo, MD, PhD, is a contemplative psychotherapist, clinical researcher, and business consultant who integrates ancient contemplative science and technology with contemporary breakthroughs in neuroscience and optimal health. He founded Nalanda Center for Contemplative Science and is on faculty at the Weill Cornell Center for Integrative Medicine and the Columbia University Center for Buddhist Studies. He has published books, translations, and several articles and also has a private practice in Manhattan.

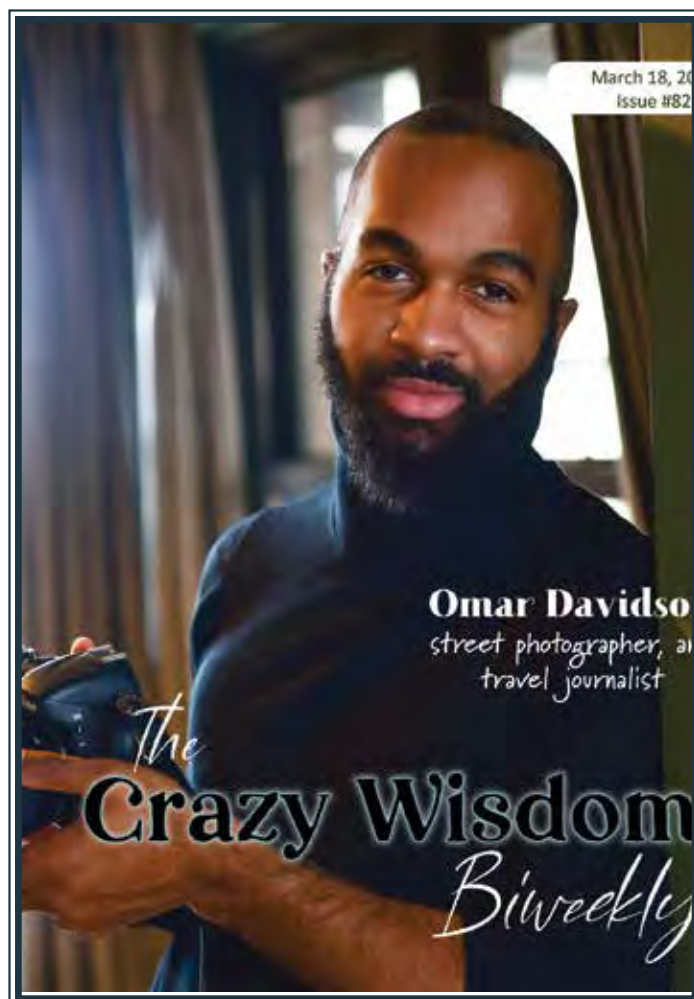
Maryke Love is a sacred channel, master activator, and divine catalyst.

John Madison has been teaching meditation for over 25 years. With a master's degree from the University of Michigan, he is the Principal Violist of the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra, a regular with the Detroit Symphony, and is on faculty at Wayne State University.

Holly Makimaa is a trauma-informed spiritual coach and interspiritual minister who specializes in helping people find spiritual aliveness, joy, and wellness beyond physical or mental health alone.

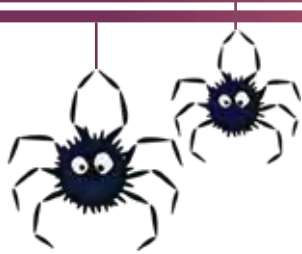
Bruce and Carol Malnor are nature educators, authors, and presenters. They've conducted nature awareness workshops and retreats in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Taiwan.

Barb McConnell, LPN, CHTP/I has over 30 years' experience in clinical, industrial nursing, and industrial management. She is a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner and instructor.



Omar Davidson is a street performer and travel journalist born and raised in Detroit. Read his article, *Detroit's Hidden Gems*, co-written with Hilary Nichols in *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* issue #80 (you can find past issues in our archives on our website, crazywisdomjournal.com). The story from *The Crazy Wisdom Biweekly* #82 that featured Davidson also features his piece, *Daytripping with a Detroiter*, also co-written with Hilary Nichols. You can find this issue at crazywisdomjournal.com/biweekly-82.

Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders & the Centers



Karen Markey is retired from the University of Michigan where she taught aspiring librarians how to help people find the information they need. Her spiritual seeking started in 2006 at Jewel Heart where she began studying with Gelek Rinpoche, and it continues to the present day with Demo Rinpoche.

Rob Meyer-Kukan began his practice in 2015 as the Healthy Musician Institute, LLC, serving musicians and performing artists with repetitive strain injuries. He is a passionate educator and musician. In addition to this he is a licensed massage therapist and sound therapist.

Michigan Friends Center is a non-profit rental space promoting social awareness, environmental friendliness, and spiritual love.

Jackie Miller is a certified breathwork facilitator.

Neighborhood Theatre Group's mission is to make theatre an accessible home for the collaboration of people, artistic challenges, and new ideas.

John Orr received Theravada Buddhist ordination and training for a period of eight years while living as a monk in the 1970's in Thailand and India. His Asian teachers are Ajahn Chah, Ajahn Buddhadasa, and S.N. Goenka. He is the guiding teacher of the New Hope Sangha, in Durham, North Carolina.

Nicholas O'Donnell uses a unique set of skills melding mindfulness meditation, esoteric studies, and the intuitive arts into a comprehensive spiritual system that anyone can understand and learn. Through immersing himself in mindfulness meditation and the Tarot, Nick has developed a one-of-a-kind Tarot Meditation program exploring the deepest meanings of the tarot on a personal level.

The Peaceful Dragon School has offered year-round programs in the self-care practices of Tai Chi, Meditation, and Qigong (Energy Work) since 1990.

Shellie Powers is an Advanced Certified Teacher with Linda Howe's Center for Akashic Studies, teaching three certification levels: Practitioner, Advanced Practitioner, and Healing in the Akashic Records, for over a decade.

Rocky Shadow Bear Rains has over 45 years of experience in traditional Celtic and North American Primal Witchcraft. Among his teachers are Kerry Wisner, Gareth Knight, and from the spirit world, Robert Cochrane, and others.

Judy Ramsey has been teaching and practicing shamanic healing for both humans and animals for nearly ten years. Her primary training was through Sandra Ingerman, Penelope Smith, and Carla Meeske. Ramsey was recently ordained as an animal chaplain and has been engaged in interspecies counseling for over a decade. She is an approved instructor for both Sandra Ingerman and Penelope Smith.

Kimberly Joy Rieli, founder of Singing For Your Soul, is an award-winning vocal empowerment coach, singer, and musician. She holds a B.A. in music, Master's in Vocal Performance, and is certified as a sound healer, yoga instructor, and Reiki practitioner.

Demo Rinpoche is Jewel Heart's Resident Spiritual Advisor. He studied uninterrupted for almost thirty years at the Drepung Loseling Monastery in India under the supervision of the Dalai Lama and received the highest monastic degree of Geshe Lharampa in 2011. His studies continued at Gyume Tantric College, Sera College of Higher Tibetan Studies, and Union Theological Seminary.

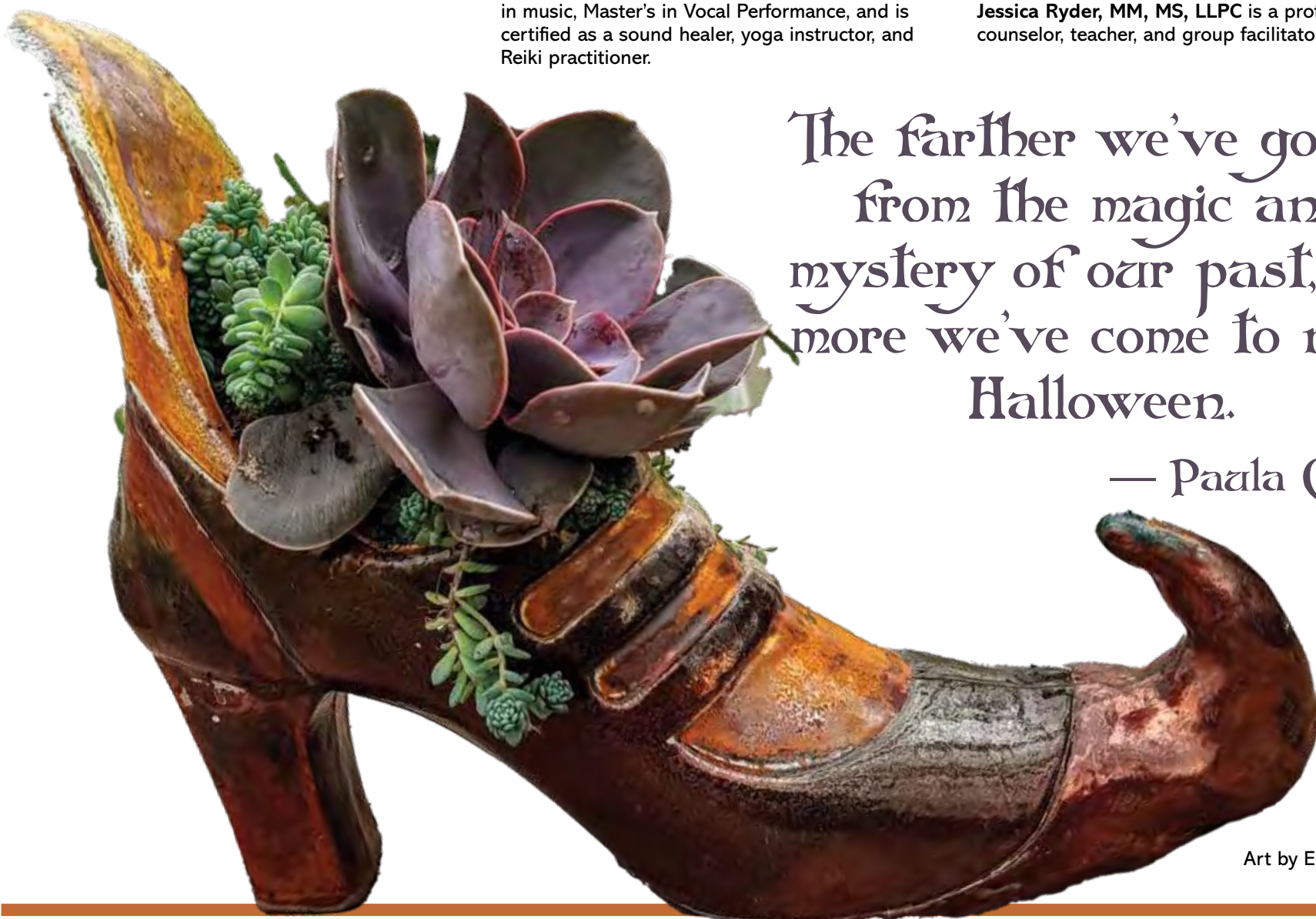
H.E. Dagyab Rinpoche went to Germany in 1966 in response to an invitation from Bonn University to work as a Tibetologist at its Institute for Central Asian Studies. In the 1980s, due to the explicit request of people interested in Buddhism, he became active as a spiritual teacher for Europeans. The Buddhist community, Chödzung, came into being because of this collaboration and together with Rinpoche, they founded Tibet Haus Germany.

Libby Robinson has been practicing mindfulness meditation for 40+ years and has taught 50+ mindfulness classes. She is a Certified Teacher of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and offers classes, workshops, and presentations on mindfulness to a variety of audiences and participants.

Diane Rothman CHTP/I, HS is a certified Healing Touch practitioner and instructor. A member of Healing Beyond Borders, owner of The Sacred Sage Spiritual Emporium, and founder and senior clergy of The Church of the Human Spirit.

Merilynne Rush, MSHP, BSN, is a well-known natural death care educator who has trained over 300 doulas. Merilynne was previously a home birth midwife and hospice nurse. She has specialized in Advance Care Planning, Home Funeral, and Green Burial since 2009.

Jessica Ryder, MM, MS, LLPC is a professional counselor, teacher, and group facilitator.



The farther we've gotten
from the magic and
mystery of our past, the
more we've come to need
Halloween.

— Paula Caran

Hartmut Sagolla has been studying Tibetan Buddhism for over 30 years. He lived at the Tibetan Buddhist Society in Melbourne, Australia, before moving to the U.S. Since 2002, he has served as a Program Director at Jewel Heart. He is a long-time Jewel Heart Instructor and Director of the Bloomfield Hills chapter.

Avatar Adi Da Samraj (1939–2008) devoted his entire lifetime to revealing and establishing a unique means for human beings to discover the ultimate nature of reality itself, which he describes as Conscious Light, or the "Bright." Avatar Adi Da communicated this reality not just through words or philosophy, but through his direct spiritual transmission.

Victoria Schon is a Spirit-led guide to Sacred Sound Journeys, Sacred Instrument Training, Cacao Ceremony, Holistic Health, and a mentor who supports a heart-centered approach to holistic well-being.

Jack Schramm is a retired scientist with an interest in energy conversion technologies. A lifelong spiritual seeker, Jack started a meditation practice in 1969, studied various philosophies and yogas, East and West, and finally focused on Tibetan Buddhism at Jewel Heart in 2006, where he studied under Gelek Rinpoche and now Demo Rinpoche.

Naren Schreiner resides at the Kali Mandir in Laguna Beach, CA where he serves as an ordained Hindu priest (pujari). His life work brings him to serve devotees and communities all over the US and Mexico. Naren also serves Song of the Morning as a member of its Spiritual Life Council.

7 Notes Natural Health is Ann Arbor's premier destination for integrative bodywork, incorporating massage, sound therapy, energy work, and reflexology.

Colette Simone has served as a psychologist, educator, and musician in a variety of settings. Her involvement with the Ra Material/Law of One led her to Deep Spring Center in 2017. She serves as channel for Yeshua, Mary Magdalene, Anna, grandmother of Yeshua, and I AM that AM.

Megan Sims is the owner of Me-Again Dance Wellness.

Song of the Morning is a non-profit yoga retreat center located on 800 acres of Michigan's northern woodlands that welcomes truth-seekers from all paths and traditions to experience spiritual refreshment and relaxation.

Student Association for Psychedelic Studies' mission is to provide opportunities for education, networking, outreach, and community involvement surrounding psychedelics for the broader student body at the University of Michigan. We believe that the study of psychedelics is currently underrepresented, and we aim to improve accessibility to these topics at Michigan.

Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe is a genuine contemplative master and a member of the last generation extensively trained in old Tibet. He received his monastic education at Drepung Loseling Monastery and, in 1969, was awarded the Geshe Lharampa, the highest degree of scholarship conferred within the Geluk School of Tibetan Buddhism. He is Professor Emeritus of Buddhist Philosophy at the Central University of Tibetan Studies in India. His scholarly work is extensive and includes a translation of Lama Tsongkhapa's *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*.

Eve Wilson is a master healer, blogger, and author. As a cutting-edge World Healing & Ascension Worker, she creates each class uniquely to support what is needed on Earth.

Wendy Weiner has enjoyed lifelong learning on the spiritual path, growing up Christian and raising a Jewish family while practicing Tibetan Buddhism for the past 15 years. Weiner has an MBA, and she gratefully serves as the Jewel Heart-Ann Arbor Sangha President and is a Jewel Heart Board Member.

Brandie Wright is an ordained minister with a degree in divinity and an internationally associated death doula. She is a channel of love for others in this lifetime and her passion for art and music often takes center stage as she accesses the Akashic Records for others through drawing, painting, and songs.

Wu Style-Ann Arbor is one of twelve academies licensed by the International Federation, under the auspices of Grandmaster Wu Kwong Yu. They offer in-person, hybrid, and online classes.

Jayne Yatzak has a PhD in medical anthropology and is a certified Moonologist, certified intuitive reader, and a certified tarot card reader. She is also a Certified Crystal Energy Guide and Quantum Touch practitioner.

Wasantha Young, a practitioner since 1968, is a Master of Tai Chi and Qigong. She has also received formal instruction in Buddhist and Taoist mindful meditation styles, holds certificates in acupuncture, Five Element Practice, and wellness counseling/mind/body consciousness. In addition, she has a master's degree in Transpersonal Studies.

Celeste Zygmunt has been involved with Deep Spring Center for nearly three decades. She took part in teacher training programs Venture Fourth and Dharma Path and served on the DSC Board of Directors. She facilitates the Sunday and Tuesday online meditations.

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YOGA COLUMN



Namaste Katie,

I find the meditations with a strong focal point much more grounding than those where I sit in silence. Is this the Westerner in me that I cannot seem to find silence to be a place for quiet? I know, this sounds silly! And do you have any advice on steps to take to ease myself away from the apps on my phone?

June, Saline

Namaste June,

This is a recurring topic for us for a reason! Meditation takes dedication to come to any sense of comfort with the process, and as you mentioned, in this day and age, silence is not something that most of us are used to settling into. In my 200-hour yoga teacher training my teacher offered us many styles of meditation to try and practice. We learned Japa, chanting, Dharna, concentration (which comes in many forms), and many classical Dhyana, meditation practices. What I think you are struggling with is what is often referenced as Vipassana, brought forth by S. Goenka in which meditation is silence. The lead into Vipassana is traditionally a 10-day silent retreat, which prepares the mind for this sense of calm and clarity as the default, the home base.

Silent meditation is not for everyone. And it's not for everyone all the time. The Yoga Sutras advise us to try out as many meditation techniques as we can find, or are available to us, and if we come upon one that works for us, that allows us to connect with that sense of peace, to stick with it. Much of that Western mentality that you highlight, is that when something works, rather than stick with it, we go searching for more. We think to ourselves, "I wonder if I could meditate better," rather than recognizing that stillness is stillness. If the apps on your phone are working, use them! If it's the phone part that is getting to you, and I can relate to that, is there another way to connect with

Namaste, Katie...



Whether you're a seasoned yogi or getting ready to roll out your mat for the first time, here you'll find a variety of useful tips from local yoga instructor, Katie Hoener.

what the app is bringing you? Music on a radio and an egg timer? I know, analog approaches, what fun! If you'd like to try a whole new approach entirely, we've covered some in these columns, and I always recommend a studio, or other shared space; it truly solidifies the experience.

Namaste Katie,

I love a good twist. I routinely ask for them in classes and I am hoping to have a gentle seated twist that I could incorporate into my post run routine. I already have a wonderful standing twist, and I am hoping for something that targets more of the lower back.

Thanks,

Bryce, Dexter

Dear Bryce,

Twists are so beneficial post run, as they touch on so many layers of the body, opening up muscles, fascia, circulating lymph fluid, and supporting digestive movement and blood flow. A wonderful, seated twist is Janu Sirsasana, which allows us a lot or variety depending on the needs of the body on that particular day.

From a seated posture, we can open the legs out as much as is comfortable, remembering that we all have a varied range of motion in the hips. We'll take one foot in toward the extended leg, and possibly allow the sole of the foot to rest against the extended leg. Some days I do this, and other days I leave space, just as some days the foot moving in toward the body is close in toward the pelvis, and other days it is closer to the knee. Whether we were out running, or are starting our day off with some postures, we want to determine these placements based on what feels both safe and comfortable. We always have the option to hold here in this more neutral alignment.

If we'd like to try out the twist offering, on an inhale we extend through the spine, and rotate toward the extended leg as much as feels good. If we find our heart center hovering over the femur, we may want to stay with a long spine, and we may want to move into a forward fold. If we choose the fold option, be mindful of the sensation in our hamstrings, the low back, as well as the neck/shoulder area. If anything tenses up as we fold, let's ask ourselves to back off just a bit. We can hold for a few breaths and see if we'd like to deepen the posture or make an adjustment. After a minute or two switch sides and complete the same mindful process on the second side.

Namaste Katie,

I took a Mudra workshop during the shutdown and have been loving incorporating that energy work into my asana practice. Is there a particular mudra you recommend for my meditation practice?

Kasey, Ann Arbor



Namaste Kasey,

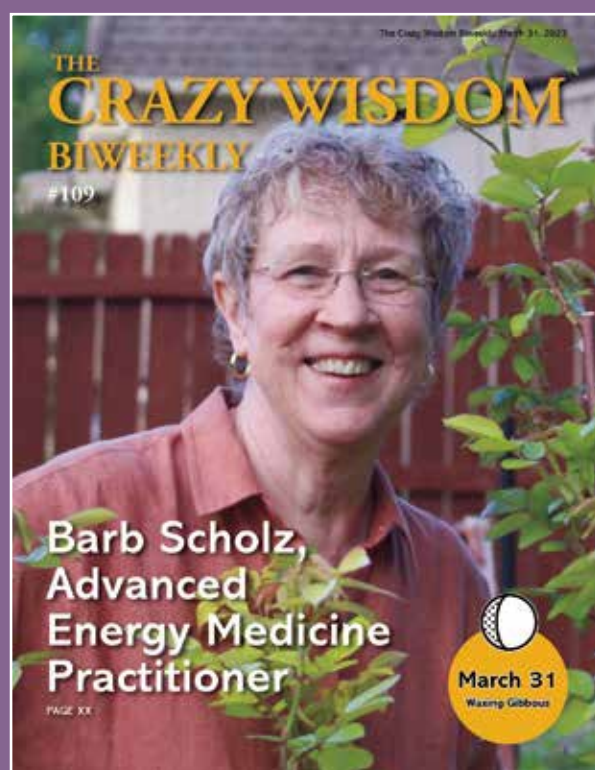
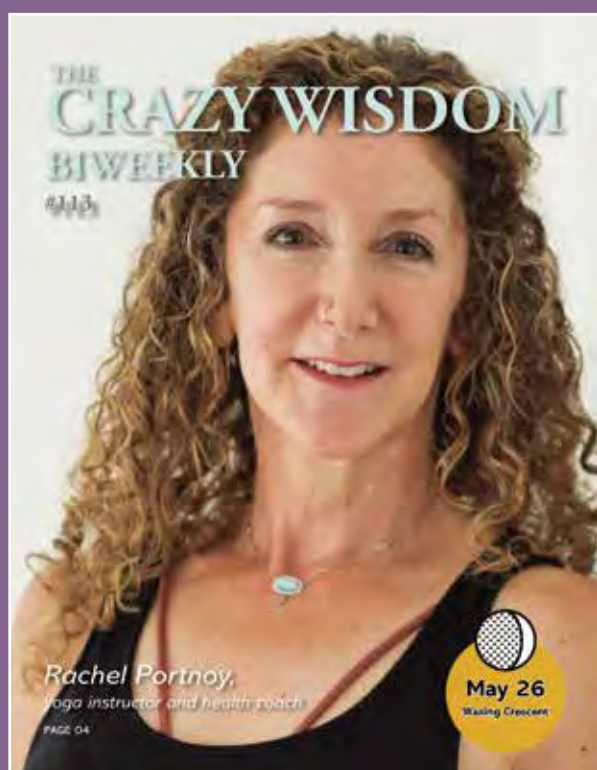
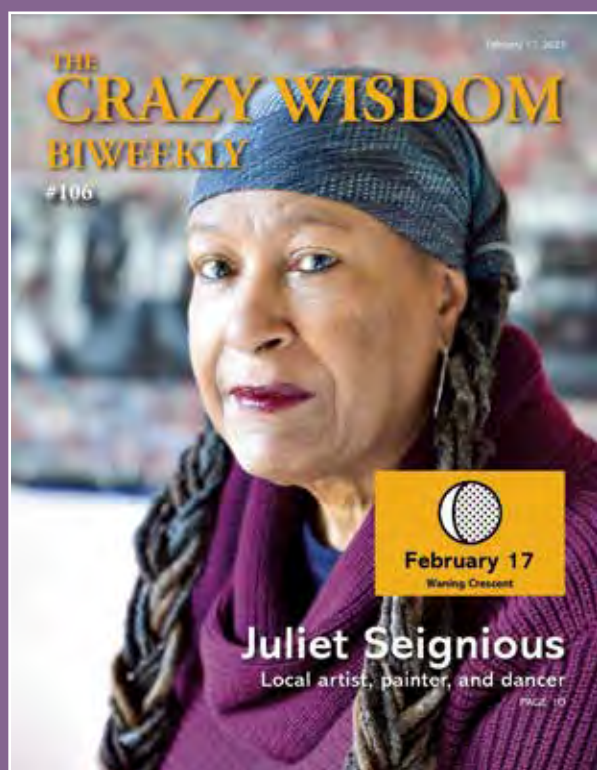
How delightful! We've had a Mudra workshop at Verapose, and it is a lot of fun. Ours primarily centers on mudras for meditation and more centering work, so this question is right up my alley. You have certainly planted an idea though for some more exploration around Mudra in an asana setting.

There are many fantastic mudras for grounding and centering, and let's spend our next few issues moving through some energy locks, or seals, that assist us in moving toward our own center. To start let's try Sankalpa Mudra and set our intention to find ourselves a little bit of quiet. Recognizing that even a few breaths of stillness allows our brains the opportunity to establish new neural networks, and when we are able to add on we do! We come into Sankalpa Mudra by placing the left hand face up on the right thigh, and then placing the right palm on the left palm and lightly curling the fingers around the opposite hand. The pressure between the hands is light, and if there is any strain with placing the hands on the right thigh, let that go and let the hand move back to a more neutral space. Sankalpa Mudra works on firming up our left-right brain connection, grounds us, and moves us toward our intended goals. Let's try out this mudra for a bit to see what connections it brings.



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