

THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN'S CONSCIOUS LIVING MAGAZINE

FREE

JANUARY THROUGH APRIL 2024 - ISSUE 85



**Jasmine Hampton,
Olympic Hopeful
and
Local Boxing Champion**

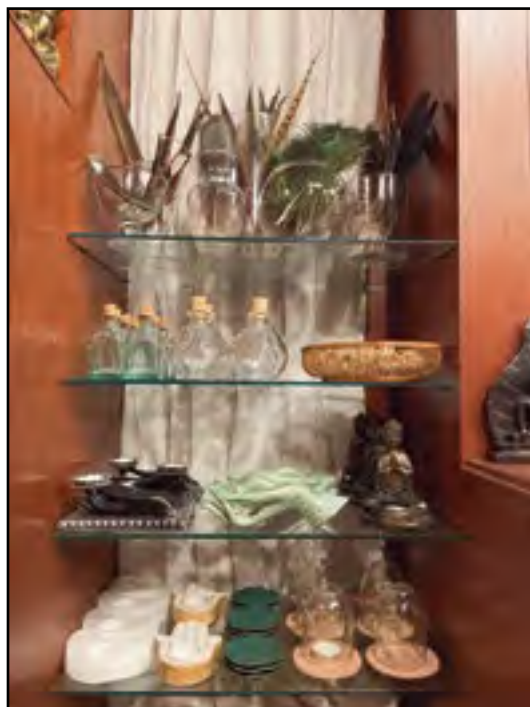
Kids Can Cook, Too! • Folk Song Jam Along with Lori Fithian and Jean Chorazyczewski

Hand Gestures in Spiritual Art • Anne Biris – The Healing Power of Chinese Medicine

Ashes in Art Glass • Raw Foods Mentor Ellen Livingston • A Singer, A Song, and Memories • Sex Ed in Michigan
• Growing Greens Indoors • Prophecy, Legacy and Trees • Trauma-informed Homeopath Kellie Mox •
Mom Breaks the Rules • Hedgewitching • Artist Ben Suydam • Talking about Race – Kirsten Mowrey Explores
the African American Museum in Detroit • Catherine Carr Goes to the Parliament of World Religions •
A Lament for Winter • Quietly Noticing • Yoga Column • Events Calendar • And More

CRAZY WISDOM BOOKSTORE

Have you visited us yet? If not, we hope you will!
The store reopened December 1, 2023 with a
fresh new look and
lots of new product, plus old favorites.



114 S. Main Street
Ann Arbor
crazywisdom.net
734.665.2757

Resources for Conscious Living

Acupuncture

Dr. Kong Acupuncture and Fertility Center

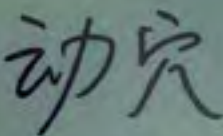
Sleep Better. Reduce Stress. Eliminate Pain.

4343 Concourse Drive, Suite #100, Ann Arbor
734.358.3379
 acupuncture-annarbor.com



2350 Washtenaw Ave. Suite 10 Ann Arbor, MI (734) 215-5151
 henry@dynamicpoints.com

Dynamic Points Acupuncture
 Henry A. Buchtel, L.Ac.
 www.dynamicpoints.com



Bodywork/Bodymind Therapy

Rob Meyer-Kukan, LMT

Bodywork: sound therapy, massage, reiki, reflexology, color therapy, & natural health consultations

7 Notes Natural Health
 7notesnaturalhealth.com
 248-962-5475 contact@7notesnaturalhealth.com
 5830 Packard Road Suite 120 Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108




Ginger Chase LMT
 Collaborative Therapeutic Massage

Ann Arbor, MI
GingerChaseMassages.com
 Call/Text: 734.660.5748 Chase.Ginger@Gmail.com



Astrology/Chart Services

NORTHERN SKY AND BEYOND, LLC
 Astrology with Alice

Charts • Readings • Star DNA

www.northernskyandbeyond.com
 info@northernskyandbeyond.com
 734.892.8809



Denise Held, RN
 CERTIFIED RELEXOLOGIST • REFLEXOLO-CHI™

Natural Healing Center
 2002 Hogback Rd. Suite 14
 Ann Arbor, MI 48105
 734-649-2891 (C)

deniseheld@gmail.com
 www.a2reflexology.com
 www.facebook.com/A2Reflexology

Therapeutic Foot Massage



Breathwork

this breath
 ADVANCED BREATHWORK

Jackie Miller
 Certified Breathwork Facilitator

thisbreath.com
 734-883-7130 / jackie@thisbreath.com
 Ann Arbor & Ypsilanti, Michigan




Birth

Melisa Schuster, LMSW
 psychotherapy for the childbearing years

- prenatal and postpartum depression
- traumatic birth
- childbearing losses
- parenting and child guidance

734-302-0033 • www.melisaschuster.com
 500 Little Lake Drive, #300 • Ann Arbor, MI 48103



Dance

Snowfall rouses your inner child to dream and play once more

Angie Weiland-Crosby



me-again
 dance wellness

Dance • Healing • Illumination • Unity • Love
 Nia • Gentle Nia • Dance for PD
 Assisted Living Classes • Wild Woman Work

meagaindance.com • megansims600@gmail.com



Resources for Conscious Living

Diamond Approach

DIAMOND WORK MICHIGAN
 Presenting the teachings of *The Diamond Approach*®

Lou Weir, Diamond Approach Teacher
 diamondworkmichigan@gmail.com
 diamondworkmichigan.org



THE DIAMOND APPROACH


Holistic Health

Yuliya's Naturals
 Holistic Apothecary Store
 Connecting people and plants

Herbal Infusers | Melrose Tea

Call/Text @ 248-787-9025
 Email @ healingwithyuliya@gmail.com

www.yuliyasnaturals.com




Equine Therapy

RAVENSONG COUNSELING ★

Equine Therapy at Hidden Creek Healing Farm

Individual & Small Group Sessions for Ages 10+

www.ravensongcounseling.com

★ Believe in your journey

(734) 604-7074



CHÉRIE ANN McMULLEN

Holistic Health Practitioner

Nutritional Consultations
 Vitamins/Herbs/Homeopathy

734-355-5369
 2223Cherieann@gmail.com



Expressive Arts Therapy

Kate Roos, MAAT, ATR, TCTSY-F

Movement & Art Therapy

A Trauma Informed Practice For Teens and Adults

www.kate-roos.com 734-221-0202



Back to Basics Holistic Health
 Restoring health naturally, one body at a time.

Services offered include:

- Nutrition Counseling
- Sauna
- Ionic Footbath
- Evox
- And many others!

Juli Johnson N.D.
 125 West Lake Street
 South Lyon, MI 48178
 (248) 921-0586
 juli@back2basicshealth.com
 back2basicshealth.com





Hypnosis

CHI Clinical Hypnosis Institute
 HYPNOSIS CERTIFICATION COURSES
 Hypnosis Classes & Sessions


Offering Online and In Person • Call for course dates

- State licensed school
- Personal enrichment
- Help people reach their goals
- Supervised practical experience
- Add a new modality to your practice

Cheryl Beshada, C.M.Ht.
 (586) 899-9009 • clinicalhypnosisinstitute.com



Grief



Grief Recovery Specialist & Compassion Coach

Have you experienced loss?
 Feeling stuck? I can help.

[Schedule a complimentary call.](http://www.keeleyward.com)
 www.keeleyward.com

Intuitive Coaching

Intuitive Coaching with Ruth Wilson

<https://ruth-wilson.com/easysteps/>
 Easy Steps to Create a Life You Love
 248-990-1902



Healing - Coaching - Hypnosis - Intuition

Resources for Conscious Living ADS
 for as little as \$99 an issue with
 a 3 issue agreement (\$295.00)
 Contact Tana
 at tana@crazywisdom.net
 for more information.

Resources for Conscious Living

Life Coaching



MIGHTY OAKS COACHING
 Nia Spongberg, ACC, CPC
 LIFE COACH
 mightyoakscoaching.com
 (734) 531-9024

Psychic Medical Intuitive



Psychic Medical Intuitive Healer
Christine Bridges



Universal Energy Healing and
 Massage Therapy for Women
 "Combine Intuition, Massage, & Energy Work"
 580 Forest Ave, Suite 3C,
 Plymouth 48170
 734-934-7271
 christinebridges2.wixsite.com/website

Mental Health

Joyful Spirits
 Reiki & Life Coaching/Counseling

Den Carbonell
 M.A., Licensed Professional Counselor,
 Life Coach, & Reiki Master

517.775.2731 call or text
 carboden@aol.com
 www.joyfulspirits06.abmp.com



209 E. Washington Ave
 Suite 180-B
 Jackson, MI 49201
 517-748-7075

Living Grateful
 Behavioral Health Services

Bill Mure, LMSW, CAADC
 bill.livinggrateful@gmail.com

Psychotherapy/Trauma Therapy

Transitions LLC
 Helping you successfully navigate the
 changes you encounter as you go through life.

Specializing in:
 Abuse and trauma issues
 Adjustments to changes in health
 Anticipatory and ongoing grief work

Linda S. Bender, ACSW, LMSW
 734.395.2285 LindaBenderTransitions@gmail.com
 4488 Jackson Road #4, Ann Arbor, MI 48103
 LindaBenderTransitions.com

Music/Music Lessons

Curtis Glatter

glattercurtisav
 734 972 6098 Percussionist/ Improviser/
 Composer/ Workshops/ Lessons
 cglattermi@gmail.com
 facebook.com/glattercurtisav1872



Stephen L. Rassi, PhD, LMSW, MA
 Clinical Social Worker

CBT for Anxiety; TIR for PTSD and Trauma Concerns
 Skills for Increased Focus and Concentration
 Counseling for Trans* and Gender-Diverse Clients

mercury@umich.edu • 734.945.9100



Chrysalis Facilitation
 and
 Counseling Services, LLC

Physical Therapy



Healing Hands
 Physical Therapy

58 Parkland Plaza, Ste. 100
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103
 734-222-8515

www.PhysicalTherapyAnnArbor.com

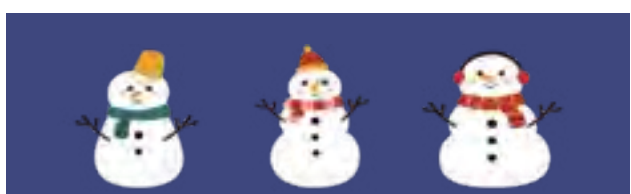
Reiki



REIKI
 THE USUI SYSTEM OF REIKI HEALING
 For Body, Mind & Spirit
 CLASSES & INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS


Suzy Wienckowski, Reiki Master
 Reiki Alliance Member

734.476.7958 SuzyReiki@aol.com




Resources for Conscious Living

Reiki



Andrea Kennedy
Reiki Master Practitioner & Instructor
Practicing since 1995

Usui/Holy Fire® III Reiki Certification Classes
Distance Reiki Sessions by Appointment



www.MainstreamReiki.com
400 W. Russell St., Suite 2370, Saline, MI 48176 734-664-2255

Shamanism



Feather Spirit Healing
–Heather Millio–
featherspirithealing.com
featherspirithealing@gmail.com
216 W. Michigan Ave. Suite 2
Saline, MI 48176
734.834.5705

*Maintaining the harmonious balance of humankind,
nature, and the spirit realm.*

Retail



Divine Sanctuary
Metaphysical Supplies
Educational Classes, inc.
Reiki Certification
Reiki Treatments
Ordained Minister
1826 Horton Rd. Jackson, Michigan 49203
517-247-8400 mydivinesanctuary.com
Also find us on  



Infinite Light Center & Sound Sanctuary


Providing:

- Events & Classes
- Healing Instruments
- Spirit Box Experience
- Sound Baths



infinitelightjackson.com
anne@infinitelightjackson.com
1.517.962.4725

Holistic Healing Through The Power of Sound.



120 E. Maumee St.
Downtown Adrian
517-260-0116
support@ghidrahs.com

Ghidrah's
Mind • Body • Spirit
"Your Favorite Spot to Spirit Shop"
Ghidrahs.com and MysticSheWays.com

Spiritual Healing

Eve Wilson Bridge to Wholeness



- ♥ Remarkable Healing Treatments
- ♥ Ascension Monthlies Class
- ♥ Award-Winning Weekly Word Blog
- ♥ Book - "Riding the Wave of Change"

 The Weekly Word for Healing & Ascension
www.spiritualherlers.com • 734.780.7635

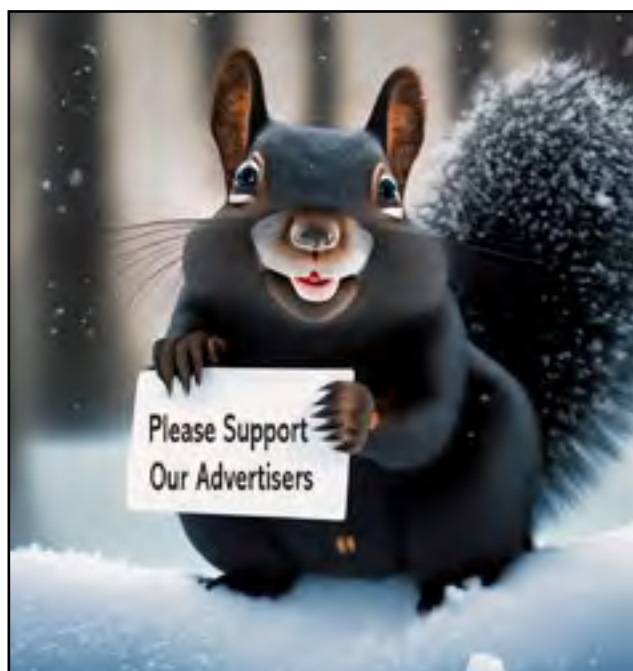


Theatre Groups

Neighborhood Theatre Group
Theatre from Scratch




www.NTGypsi.org
info@ntgypsi.org



Our advertisers appreciate your patronage

We **Embrace**
who **YOU** are

Our soul-enriching curriculum welcomes uniqueness and free thinking. Come meet our socially-accepting community.

DISCOVER CONNECT GROW



The **arts are integrated** into the full curriculum, to further **enhance the subjects** and create **a well-rounded, diverse education**.
Every 11th Grade Student completes their **own Self Portrait Painting** as part of the Art Curriculum.

Enrollment is OPEN!
SteinerSchool.org



THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL

In This Issue ~



Page 10
Kindred Conversations ~
 Joy Dettling,
 Life and Health Coach
 by Hilary Nichols

Page 18
Be a Solar Panel — Tips for Managing the Dark Days Ahead
 by Laurel Decker



Page 48
Cooking with Lisa — A Flavorful Winter in Michigan
 by Lisa Viger-Gotte

Page 52
Folk Song Jam Along — Singing and Playing Just for Joy
 by Sandor Slomovits



Page 60
Anne Biris — The Healing Power of Chinese Medicine
 by Madonna Gauding

Page 68
Bringing Warmth — Grief as an Anti-Racist Practice
 by Kirsten Mowrey



Page 72
A Handful — Symbols, Faith and History
 by Michelle A. McLemore

Page 88
Kids in the Community ~ Kids Can Cook, Too! And Why They Should...
 by Christine MacIntyre



Page 102
Dying to Wake Up
 by Laila Gislason

CWJ Features

Hedgewitching
 by Irena Barbara Nagler.....Page 23

Folk Song Jam Along — Singing and Playing Just for Joy
 by Sandor Slomovits.....Page 52

Know the World, Know Thy Self — Art Reveals All
 by Michelle A. McLemore.....Page 56

Anne Biris — The Healing Power of Chinese Medicine
 by Madonna Gauding.....Page 60

The Quartz Crystals in Our Lives — Necessity, Healing, and Magic
 by Wintermoon.....Page 64

Ashes in Art Glass — Encapsulating the Spirit of Remembrance
 by Christine MacIntyre.....Page 65

Bringing Warmth — Grief as an Anti-Racist Practice
 by Kirsten Mowrey.....Page 68

A Handful: Symbols, Faith and History — Ancient Art Reveals Spiritual and Cross-Cultural Connections Through Hand Gestures
 by Michelle A. McLemore.....Page 72

The Parliament of World Religions Returns to the Shore of Lake Michigan
 by Catherine Carr.....Page 78

The Current State of Sexual Health Education in Michigan
 by Grace Pernecky.....Page 82

CWJ Personal Essays

Be a Solar Panel — Tips for Managing the Dark Days Ahead
 by Laurel Decker.....Page 18

A Lament for Winter
 by Frank Vandervort.....Page 19

Prophecy, Legacy, and Trees
 by Marie Duquette.....Page 21

A Singer, a Song, and Memories
 by Sandor Slomovits.....Page 26

CWJ Columns

Kindred Conversations ~
 by Hilary Nichols.....Page 10

Joy Dettling, Life and Health Coach.....Page 10

Jasmine Hampton, Olympic Hopeful and Local Boxing Champion.....Page 12

Out of My Comfort Zone ~

Sharing My Song
 by Ellen Livingston.....Page 14

An Inside Journey
 by Kellie Mox.....Page 16

Green Living ~

The Wisdom of Plants
 by Mason Opp.....Page 20

Astrologically Speaking ~

Our Luminaries — The Sun and The Moon
 by Catherine Carlson.....Page 22

What's New in the Community ~

by Lynda Gronlund.....Page 28

What's New at Crazy Wisdom.....page 36

Leaps of Faith ~
 by Laurel Decker.....Page 38

Grace Proper.....Page 38

Whitepine Studios.....Page 40

All Creatures Great and Small ~

Adventures In Cat Sitting
 by Cheryl L. Kemp.....Page 42


Our Yoga Column ~
 by Katie Hoener.....Page 44

Sustainable Health ~

A Daily Dose of Sound, Vibration, and Frequency
 by Rob Meyer-Kukan.....Page 77

Craft Column ~

Masquerade
 by Jennifer Carson.....Page 94



On the Cover
Jasmine Hampton,
 Olympic Hopeful
 and Local Boxing Champion
 Cover Photo by Hilary Nichols



**Serving the Community
 Since 1982**



info@crazywisdom.net
 crazywisdomjournal.com

CWJ **Conscious and Tasty Eating and Nutrition**
Food Section Starts on Page 45

- Growing Greens Indoors All Winter**
 by Emily Springfield Page 46
- Cooking with Lisa — A Flavorful Winter in Michigan**
 by Lisa Viger-Gotte Page 48
- Great Tastes in Local Food**
 by Crysta Coburn
The Deep End Cafe and Gallery Page 50
Cups n' Chai Page 50
Hidden King Cafe and Bar Page 51
- Tea with Peggy — Mindfulness and Tea**
 by Peggy Alaniz Page 51

CWJ **Kids Section**
The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section Starts on Page 85

- Children's Book Picks** Page 85
- Conscious Parenting Column ~
 Harnessing the Power of Talking Out Loud —
 The Teddy Bear and the Talker**
 by Leann Fu Page 86
- Quietly Noticing**
 by Samantha Beidoun Page 87
- Kids in the Community ~
 Kids Can Cook, Too! And Why They Should...**
 by Christine MacIntyre Page 88

CWJ **Book Reviews**

- Book Review: *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention--and How to Think Deeply Again* — by Johann Hari**
 Book Review by Christine MacIntyre Page 109
- Book Review: *I'll Show Myself Out: Essays on Midlife & Motherhood* by Jessi Klein**
 Book Review by Christine MacIntyre Page 112

CWJ **The Calendar**

- The Crazy Wisdom Calendar Section**
 Calendar Edited by Kaili Brooks Starts on Page 96
- The Calendar** Page 96
- Our Calendar Editor's Picks of
 Interesting Happenings in our Community** Page 97
- Background Info on the Teachers** Page 115
- The Role of Our Autobiography in Our Present and Future Life**
 by Ellen M. Craine Page 99
- Dying to Wake Up**
 by Laila Gislason Page 102
- From Doubt to Perseverance — A Local Practitioner's Story**
 by Krystal Rain Bonner Page 116

CWJ **Advertisers**

- Advertiser Directory** Page 8
- Resources for Conscious Living** Starts on Page 1

CRAZYWISDOMJOURNAL.COM
 This issue will be posted on our website as of January 1, 2024

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal has been published three times a year since 1995. Copyright © Crazy Wisdom, Inc. — December 2023

No parts of this publication may be reproduced for any reason without the express written approval of the publisher. There is a token fee charged if you would like to use an article in this publication on your website, so make sure to contact us first. Articles from back issues are available on our website's archive.

Crazy Wisdom
 was founded in 1982.
 Since 1989, it has been owned by
 Crazy Wisdom, Inc., which consists
 of Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter.

Publisher/Editorial Director
 Bill Zirinsky

**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

Calendar Editor
 Kaili Brooks

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,
 Christine MacIntyre,
 Michelle McLemore,
 Kirsten Mowrey, Irena Barbara Nagler,
 Hilary Nichols, Grace Pernecky,
 Sandor Slomovits, Emily Springfield,
 Frank Vandervort

Artwork
 Jennifer Carson, Irena Barbara Nagler,
 Kelly Sharkey, Ben Suydam

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

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

The deadline for
 Free Calendar
 submissions
 for the
 May through August
 2024 issue
 is Monday,
 March 18, 2024

Contact
 calendarforms@
 crazywisdom.net

The deadline for
 reservations for
 Paid Advertising
 is Monday,
 April 1, 2024

Contact
 tana@crazywisdom.net

Listen to the interview
AADL Talks To:
Crazy Wisdom

Crazy Wisdom Bookstore
 Reopened Dec. 1, 2023

Hours
 Wednesday through
 Saturday 11 am - 7 pm

Closed
 Sunday through Tuesday





Expand Your Business Horizons!

Join our family of satisfied advertisers ...



The Crazy Wisdom Journal provides an amazing platform for us to reach our community in a way that digital media and other technologies simply cannot. As a newly-opened Cannabis Microbusiness, we were very fortunate to have the platform like this to connect with health-conscious Ann Arborites who value local, natural products.

—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

Advertise in The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal and reach over 25,000 loyal readers in southeastern Michigan interested in a healthy, holistic, and conscious lifestyle!

Advertiser Directory

Andrea Kennedy	4	Keeley Ward	2
Ann Arbor District Library	81	Kellie Mox	111
Ann Arbor Holistic Resource Guide	118	Krasnick Regenerative Medicine	76
Ann Arbor Rec & Ed Adult Fitness	25	Laila Gislason	102
Ann Arbor School of Massage	27	Leslie Science & Nature Center and Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum ...	91
Ann Arbor Thermography.....	103	Life Empowerment Coaching/ Maria Sylvester	75
Ayurvedic Astrology/ Elizabeth Sullivan	15	Living Grateful/ Bill Mure	3
Back to Basics Holistic Health/ Juli Johnson	2	Living Wisdom Coaching/Ikaro Phoenix	79
Castle Remedies	93	McLaren Wealth	9
Chérie Ann McMullen.....	2	Me-again Dance Wellness	1
Chris Nordin Fine Art Gallery/Ashes in Art Glass.....	67	Melisa Schuster, LMSW	1
Christine Bridges.....	3	Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education	67
Clinical Hypnosis Institute.....	2	Mighty Oaks Coaching/Nia Spongberg, ACC,CPC	3
Conscious Light Documentary	11	Monica Turenne / Four Paws Veterinary	43
Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle.....	101	Moving Stories/Stefanie Cohen	17
Crysterra Wellness.....	43	Natural Healing Center/Denise Held	1
Curtis Glatter	3	Neighborhood Theatre Group	4
Deep Spring Center.....	98	NITE - Naturopathic Institute.....	Back Cover
Diamond Work Michigan/ Lou Weir	2	Northern Sky and Beyond/ Alice Davinich.....	1
Divine Sanctuary.....	4	Nuero Fitness Wellness Center.....	25
Dr. Raymond Kong / Acupuncturist	1	Peaceful Dragon School.....	43
Dynamic Points Acupuncture / Henry Buchtel	1	People's Food Coop	120
Ellen Crane Counseling	98	Ravensong Counseling.....	2
Emanuele Acupuncture Center	106	Rob Meyer-Kukan, LMT / 7 Notes Natural Health	1
Enlightened Soul Center	11	Ronora Lodge & Retreat Center.....	39
Eve Wilson	4, 114	Roos Roast	55
Fox Hollow Tales / Jennifer Carson	35	Rudolph Steiner Schools.....	5
Frog Holler Farm.....	48	Ruth Wilson	2
Ghidrah's Mind-Body-Spirit	4	Sing Ann Arbor / Chris McCall	13
Ginger Chase Massages.....	1	Steiner Health.....	61
Grove Emotional Health	43	Stephen Rassi / Chrysalis Facilitation and Counseling	3
Healing Hands.....	3	Susan McGraw / Divine Inspiration at Work.....	108
Heather Millio/ Feather Spirit Healing	4	Suzy Wienckowski / Reiki.....	3
Hilary Nichols Photography	59	This Breath / Jackie Miller	1
Humane Society of Huron Valley / Tiny Lions.....	91	Transitions LLC / Linda Bender.....	3
Indigo Forest.....	45	Triple Crane Monastery	79
Infinite Light Center and Sound Sanctuary	4	Triple Moon Coaching.....	111
Inn at Rustic Gate	45	Victoria Schon.....	15
Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth	17	Winewood Organics	27
Joyful Spirits Reiki.....	3	Yoga Focus Collective.....	31
Judy Ramsey/ Heart to Heart Animal Communication.....	41	Yulia's Naturals	2
K. West.....	59		
Kate Roos, MAAT, ATR.....	2		

Meet Some of Our Creative Team

We sincerely appreciate all the talent that gets put to work to bring you the best *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* three times a year. Look for us to highlight some of our contributors in every issue in this space.

Bill Zirinsky Since 1995, Bill Zirinsky has been the publisher and editorial director of *The Crazy Wisdom Journal*. He's also conducted many in-depth interviews for the publication and is deeply involved in the editorial and visual content of each issue. Occasionally, he writes personal essays, too. He and his wife, Ruth Schekter, have been the owners of Crazy Wisdom Bookstore since 1989. He lives in Ann Arbor with Ruth, and their youngest daughter, Grace, who is a sophomore in high school. He's been a thrice-weekly lap swimmer for 45 years, and he's also an avid ocean wave-jumper.



Jennifer Carson is a children's author, sewing and crafting pattern designer, illustrator, and the managing editor of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. In her spare time she enjoys baking, sewing, playing card and board games with her four sons, and enjoying walks with her two pups.



Crysta Coburn has been writing stories for most of her life. Her first short story was published at the age of sixteen after winning runner-up in a local writing contest. She is a journalist, fiction writer, poet, playwright, editor, podcast co-host, and occasional lyricist. Don't miss Crysta's Great Tastes in Local Food column.



Laurel Decker is a curious soul who loves learning and teaching. She is a writer, photographer, yoga instructor, and flight attendant. Her first child, of four, was born a week after she earned her Bachelor's of Arts from BYU-Provo. She enjoys exploring places and subjects that bring peace and alignment to herself and others. Decker writes our Leaps of Faith column and the occasional personal essay.

Frank Vandervort is a writer, lawyer, and law professor. He enjoys being in and writing about the outdoors. His writing has appeared in *Michigan History Magazine*, *The Boardman Review*, and *Bridge Michigan* among other outlets. He was selected to participate in the 2023 Bread Loaf Environmental Writer's Conference. He lives in Ypsilanti Township. Look for his personal essay, *Winter Lament*, in this issue.



Peggy A. Alaniz is a tea enthusiast along with an Adjunct Writing instructor at Jackson College. She received an MFA from Naropa University in Boulder Colorado. She has been published in *Chicken Soup for The Soul*. Besides writing the tea column for *Crazy Wisdom* she writes regularly for her blog *TeaTravelandSpirits*.



MCLAREN WEALTH
STRATEGIES

HELPING BRING BALANCE TO YOUR FINANCIAL LIFE



Sam Maness, CFP®
Financial Advisor
Sam.Paul.Maness@raymondjames.com



Jason Coleman, CIMA®
Financial Advisor
Jason.Coleman@raymondjames.com



Emily Rice
Relationship Manager
Emily.Rice@raymondjames.com



Joelle Emery
Branch Associate
Joelle.Emery@raymondjames.com



Justin Rice
Investment Manager
Justin.Rice@raymondjames.com

315 E Eisenhower Parkway
Suite 301
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Phone: 734-944-7556

Fax: 734-661-1314

For all of us, time marches on.

You may have been managing your finances successfully for many years.

You may still feel you can manage the funds but would like some oversight to help you out as things change.

Perhaps you want someone who will listen, take good care of you, and not push you into the product of the day.

Check with us to discuss how our services might help to reduce your stress at a very reasonable cost.

Independent

Local

Thoughtful Advice

Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. member FINRA/SIPC. McLaren Wealth Strategies is not a registered broker/dealer and is independent of Raymond James Financial Services. Investment Advisory Services offered through Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc.

www.McLarenWealth.com

Kindred Conversations

with Hilary Nichols

Tears run down my cheeks. My right hand, resting on a hand cradle contraption, buzzes lightly. Life and health coach Joy Dettling asks me to continue speaking about my central concerns, as she monitors the correlating reactions on her laptop. "What's bothering you?" she asked. "What are the blocks between you and your betterment?" With one deep aha moment after the next, I am surprised to be finding the words to express some of my most long-held emotional blocks and self-doubts. As I speak, the ZYTO EVOX hand cradle measures my reactions through the pulses in my fingertips and reports the levels on her screen. With a thumbs-up, Dettling assures me that, "We are on the right track."

Like a lie-detector device the technology reads my frequencies and can gauge my strongest reactions without interference of interpretation—not my own, nor a therapist's. "I think we have narrowed into your central query here. You can continue to speak about this concern," Dettling encouraged. Tingles enter my right hand and spread throughout my body while the hand cradle now offers a return healing frequency.

This new therapeutic modality is unfamiliar to me. Of course, initially I was skeptical, but the description in their literature seemed viable. My interest was piqued with the statement, "New scientific studies are showing how frequency has powerful effects on the human body. Every cell in our body is resonating at a specific frequency and these frequencies are used to communicate about processes and functions in the body." When Joy Dettling offered to share her unique healing modality with me, I considered the treatment with a healthy dose of doubt, but I had witnessed Dettling's leadership style. As the founder of Ignite Life, she has a quiet confidence and an unassuming authority as the host of weekly movement gatherings, frequent workshops, and her treatment modality. Her grace and strength, her humility and open heart are assuring, and I have come to trust what she offers. Ignite Life's mission is to "ignite the spark of life within by accelerating true personal growth and healing," which for Dettling, includes her own. So, I took a deeper look.

"Shift the subconscious with ZYTO EVOX, an innovative healing frequency technology" is the description on the Ignite Life website. From there, I read the testimonials and became more intrigued. "The bio-feedback received through the tool was instrumental in my gaining insight and acknowledging next steps. I highly recommend Joy as she is invested in my process and success in achieving the knowledge that helped me to break through barriers I had created for myself."

As the founder of Ignite Life, she has a quiet confidence and an unassuming authority as the host of weekly movement gatherings, frequent workshops, and her treatment modality.

When Dettling shared her own story of this treatment, my faith was affirmed. I don't need to understand the inner workings to believe it. In fact, do I understand the underpinning of any of the treatments that I imbibe? From aspirin to antibiotics, it is all a mystery to me. These days Dettling is the picture of health: fit, slim, young, and agile. But that wasn't always the case. I met Dettling as the host of the 'Ignite Body Freedom' weekly ecstatic dance jam. She starts and ends each gathering with a check-in circle, and it is there that we got to know each other. She is a yoga teacher, a dancer, a traveler, and a lifelong devotee of healthy living practices. But she did not always feel healthy. In fact, for years of her life she felt anything but. She was sickly and in pain, complaining of countless discomforts and crippling fatigue. Traditional medical establishments found nothing to attribute it to. When she was first introduced to the ZYTO EVOX treatment she was a skeptic, too, but it was the first healing experience that actually relieved her condition.

Joy Dettling, Life and Health Coach

Photos by Hilary Nichols



"I had to know what makes ZYTO EVOX Perception Reframing so impactful," Dettling writes on her website, describing how she came to this body of work. "Starting ZYTO EVOX Perception Reframing sessions was the turning point in my health. With each session I felt like I was unpeeling layers of an onion, closer to the roots of my issues—physically, mentally, and emotionally. One session I did on "pain" mysteriously cleared my pain almost completely within the week. It was like my body was clearing out old beliefs about itself that I didn't need any more. With these sessions I was able to let go of those limiting beliefs and embody new empowering ones and watch them manifest in my overall wellbeing."

During my second session, I too became a believer and a fan. Again, she asked me to express what my concerns might be. And with my hand on the cradle, I found myself accessing the story of self-doubt. "Speak again, on that topic," she instructed. "Okay, you have had your release." My tears began to fall. My old beliefs became evident and I felt my outdated self-perception begin to clear away with such a feeling of release. "My work is very focused on getting to the roots," Dettling affirmed. "Yet there is nothing to figure out or understand, we just have to be receptive and let it apply its impact." Our third session in the series was over the phone. She left a cradle in my care, and I was patched into her home computer through the device. Joy was encouraging, calm, kind, and



True healing happens when we bring support to all layers of our Being: physical, mental, emotional, energetic, and spiritual.

—Joy Dettling

insightful. She seemed nearly as excited about my progress as I was. I had to ask, “How much of this experience is interpersonal and how much is the impact directly from the EVOK hand cradle?” Dettling doesn’t pretend to know. “People do seem to respond to me, and I realize that I do connect with the clients and impact their sessions simply with my presence.” I do recognize the benefits of a good guide, but nothing has moved me more certainly and swiftly than these sessions. I did wonder how the hand cradle’s buzz impacted me. Dettling explained, “The technology learns your frequencies with a sense of what is out of balance and can return the necessary frequency that is analogous to flower essence.” After each session Dettling shares a report that identifies the incoming dose in detail: *Virtual Items Select for Output 121.24 Bush Gardenia, 101.82 Water Violet, 75.70 Crabapple, 46.00 Black-eyed Susan, 45.94 Alpine Mint Bush and their characteristics: Positive Outcome: passion, renews interest in partner, improves communication. And negative conditions: stale relationships, self-interest, unawareness.*

Sunday and Tuesday mornings Joy Dettling invites the group of dancers to sit for an opening circle and then she begins her playlist of 75 minutes of energetic tunes that fill the gymnasium. She has hosted Ignite Body Freedom movement class twice weekly for over a year. As a frequent participant, I feel lucky that she has found her way to these many healing practices and that she has had the inclination to share them. Joy Dettling speaks from her own experience, “True healing happens when we bring support to all layers of our Being: physical, mental, emotional, energetic, and spiritual.”

Into the dance Dettling swirled, spun, sprung, and landed with her ebullient energy that ignites the room. We were carried through this practice of self-expression with her generous guidance, and then we sit again to share how important the magic of this childlike time is to each of us participating. For me, it all comes together and with a hand to my heart, I extend my gratitude to Dettling.

Learn more about Dettling and Ignite Life on her website ignitelife.net.

An Award-Winning Spiritual Documentary

WINNER
International Awareness Festival

WINNER
Impact Docs Awards

“What we would see if we were really serious about understanding consciousness.” —Jeffrey J. Kripal, PhD
Scholar of Comparative Religion

“Beautiful in its simplicity yet brilliantly profound.” —Ray Lynch
Three-Time Billboard Music Award Winner
Musician/Composer/Producer

CONSCIOUS LIGHT

THE DIVINE LIFE AND REVELATION OF AVATAR ADI DA SAMRAJ

WATCH NOW
www.consciouslightfilm.com

MEDIUMS & PSYCHICS • ENERGY HEALERS • INTUITION CLASSES • WORKSHOPS & GROUPS
CRYSTALS & STONES • SAGE • MONTHLY PSYCHIC FAIRS • RENT OUR ROOMS!

Enlightened Soul Center
& Shop for the holistic and intuitive arts

**WALK-INS WELCOME
for Readings & Healings**

Tuesday-Friday 12:00-7:00 pm
Saturday 12:00-6:00 pm

www.enlightenedsoulcenter.com / 2711 Carpenter, Ann Arbor

Kindred Conversations

with Hilary Nichols

Jasmine Hampton, Olympic Hopeful and Local Boxing Champion

Photos by Hilary Nichols

“That’s life,” Jasmine Hampton reports cheerfully from training camp. If she is anything, she is a good sport. Hampton is a two-time Junior Olympics champion boxer and 11x national champion with a record of 106-17 or so. She was enrolled in the Olympic Training camp with US Boxing in Colorado Springs as an alternate, even though she won her weight class. The selection process can seem arbitrary, but she is happy to train in any case. Born and raised in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, I met Hampton as the cool high school kid who lived down the street. I got to know her as she became a champion basketball player and track star first. It has been a treat to witness her devotion to the task every step of the way.

She has had an impact as an athlete, a student, and as a friend—always giving her all. Her teammate, Torianna Jackson, from Pioneer High School’s track team affirmed, “There is no stopping, Jasmine. She was a triple threat. First, she’s running sprints and then I turn around and she’s throwing shot put. She is just good at everything she does.” Jackson beams. “I just love her. I would do anything for her, ‘cause that’s the way she is, too.” Jackson continued, “She is there for her friends. She will drop her entire day to help someone if she can. She’s all heart, and it shows up in everything she does.” Her Pioneer high school psychology teacher and coach, Jodi Smith, remembered Hampton as “always extremely resilient and determined. No matter how hard things were, Jasmine was determined to outwork it and outlast the hardships. She humbled herself to ask for help and advice when others may have been too proud.” Smith boasts of her former student, as she points to a framed photo of Hampton included in her gallery of student heroes on her office wall.

She has had an impact as an athlete, a student, and as a friend—always giving her all.

School years weren’t always easy for Hampton. Moving between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti schools had its own challenges. When I asked her how she got into boxing she said, “The kids in Ypsi used to beat us up ‘cause we were from Ann Arbor. I had to learn to stand up for myself.” Hampton’s mother, Claudia, signed up her youngest daughter at the age of 10 to train at the A-Square Fight Club. She took to it right away. “Jasmine is a true champion, very competitive and deserving of the title,” club owner Eric McGuire said of Hampton’s 19 -16 Junior Olympic National Champion win, as a 15-year-old. “She has a very high boxing IQ and responds to instruction very quickly.”

Hampton’s drive is her defining characteristic. I asked her how she found the motivation and her answer came quick. “My mom.” Claudia Hampton made every effort to be at her daughter’s games and catch all her matches whenever she was able to. “She was always my biggest fan and supporter,” Hampton reported with pride. “My mom always talked me up. She told everyone that I was a nurse, when I was a medical assistant, and that I was the champ, even before I qualified.” That devotion was clear and coveted even though it wasn’t always easy for her mother to make it to the ringside. “She caught my events even if that meant having to get wi-fi from her hospital bed to catch a bout.” Her mother passed away in January 2022. Hampton was devastated, but she



channeled her grief and got back to work. She qualified for Olympic trials that March, even with the loss of her biggest fan as her fuel. That was when she claimed the #DoltForClaudia hashtag. Her career has been unstoppable ever since. As I write this, Hampton is ranked number one in the US at the 119lb (54 kg) weight class, and she is qualified and climbing at her 125lb (57kg) weight class, where she packs a real punch. In 2023 she joined Detroit’s Superbad boxing gym. Her new coach LJ Harris was quickly impressed. “Jasmine has always been a great boxer, but since training her I can say she has matured and understands more, that hard work is taking her talent to another level.” Harris said, “She works extremely hard. She needed a hard push and that’s what she is getting now. I have no doubt she will be a world champion.” Hampton and her team have a plan, and she is on point: to train, fight, and win in each and every opportunity that comes her way. All to build her resume on the road to becoming an Olympic champion and then a professional boxer.

However, success comes at a cost. US Boxing training and competing is an expensive pursuit. Hampton has to take on a lot of travel to be able to advance, and shifting her full focus to boxing has meant that she hasn’t been able to maintain a traditional job. At training camp, the alternates are not paid for their grueling five months of full-time participation for the team. From reading an article on MLive, a neighbor took notice and offered to host a fundraiser for Hampton. It was there that Jeff Hauptman of Oxford Properties Group got involved. “I met Jasmine through a city council person who was asked to help



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?

Ellen Livingston is the director of Living Heart Health Ministry. She is a natural health and wellness mentor whose insight is grounded in over 20 years of experience dedicated to a raw vegan lifestyle, and helping others choose a creative, heart-led life. Known for her sincerity, compassion, and accessible teaching style, Livingston is a sought-after public speaker and writer for topics ranging from raw vegan science, to lifestyle considerations, to mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Her audiences include those who are seeking to raise their health and energy levels, to those ready to embark on the deepest emotional and spiritual journeys.

She has been mentoring others and leading unique wellness retreats in the U.S. and Costa Rica since 2007 and has self-published a book called *The Ultimate Raw Food Diet Detox and Wellness Program*, with another one about to be released titled *Following Nature Home*.

Connect with Livingston at EllenLivingston.com or by emailing ellen@ellenlivingston.com. You can also find her on substack.com/@ellenlivingston, facebook.com/ellen.livingston.315, and youtube.com/@LivingYogaRawFoods.

Sharing My Song

By Ellen Livingston

I've never enjoyed exposing myself to potential scrutiny and criticism. Staying quietly out of the limelight seemed like a good strategy for avoiding these unpleasantnesses. My friendly, people-loving nature, along with a deep desire for approval, caused me to prioritize putting others at ease, and to do what I could to keep everybody comfortable. I'd always believed that was the right thing to do...the nice thing to do. In many ways it felt good, yet a disastrous cost to me of all this people-pleasing was that I was chronically tense, and I was squelching my own true self-expression.

My body couldn't lie. Symptoms of dis-ease developed and persisted, and finally, becoming sick and tired of being sick and tired was the catalyst that squeezed me out of my comfort zone...it simply became too uncomfortable there. What ignited the transformative journey that unfolded next, was my discovery of a diet almost wholly of fresh ripe fruits and greens—nature's pure and gentle nourishment. My painful symptoms subsided, my energy rebounded in spades, and I felt the whole frequency of me shift into a higher gear. It was thrilling!

My friendly, people-loving nature, along with a deep desire for approval, caused me to prioritize putting others at ease, and to do what I could to keep everybody comfortable. I'd always believed that was the right thing to do...the nice thing to do. In many ways it felt good, yet a disastrous cost to me of all this people-pleasing was that I was chronically tense, and I was squelching my own true self-expression.

And I found myself out on a limb, heroically courageous and determined, healed and healing, and... alone. I was ready to shout about what I had found and tell everyone what it was doing for me. But very few had any real interest in such radical change, and my exuberance seemed to frighten people. Weirdly, in younger years I was told I was "too quiet," and now I was told I was saying "too much." I had my deep knowing though, tucked safe in my heart, and nothing could deter me. I was onto something big and there was no going back to sleep.

I was daring to express my authentic journey, no matter what people would think of my unusual choices, and despite many people's attempts to pull

me back into *their* comfort zone. It was edgy for me...also liberating and exhilarating. I found wonderful new comrades in my raw vegan lifestyle: I posted a flier at The People's Food Co-op advertising potlucks in my dining room, and I traveled to raw vegan events. And so began a most colorful and adventurous chapter in my journey. My ideas and visions flowed unobstructed now, and I felt a new freedom to experiment. It seemed that each adventure synchronistically led into another, as if I was nimbly hopping from lily pad to lily pad across the water.

Getting onstage was a leap. It happened organically, as I was asked to share in a public arena. I was eager, and so nervous that I brought copious notes to my first talk at Arbor Farms Market, and I must have overwhelmed my small audience with much too much information. I was invited to give talks and food demonstrations several times a month in various locations, including a regular spot at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. I was requested every year for a decade as a main presenter at the biggest raw vegan festival in the country. With so much practice, I learned that a simple message was most effective, and that people loved my sincerity. I relaxed, put down my notes, opened up, and really enjoyed being myself onstage. I was inspiring other people to see outside of *their* comfort zones and dare to lead with their hearts. I owe a heartfelt thank you to The People's Food Co-op, Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, and Arbor Farms Market for giving my vulnerable new voice a friendly stage.

I was encouraged and I expanded more. I invented workshops, seminars, and then travel-retreats. I would start with the seed of an idea, plant it, and let it grow *with* me as I boldly blazed new trails, one inspired step at a time. I had no real guidance except the deep current of wisdom I felt tapped into, and I was amazed at how people trusted me. It was fun to live in this spontaneous kind of flow, designing as I went, and I experienced an intoxicating feeling of limitlessness.

Risk-taking became my new comfort zone, serving my insatiable desire to stretch my own boundaries and help others grow. I realized a big dream when I developed unique annual wellness retreat in Costa Rica. These retreats were a



A bird sings not because it has an answer, but because it has a song.

—author unknown



lot of work to organize but I was fueled by inspiration. And they were such fun in the moment. I would pinch myself as I played in spectacular jungle waterfalls with my clients, testing the reality that I had created this, and that it was supporting my children and me. I manifested some dreamy country property on the edge of Ann Arbor, and an amazing 30-foot Yurt which became a cherished community hub and the site of many wonderful, magical gatherings.

I found myself out on a limb, heroically courageous and determined, healed and healing, and... alone. I was ready to shout about what I had found and tell everyone what it was doing for me. But very few had any real interest in such radical change, and my exuberance seemed to frighten people.

Navigating the emotions and challenges that came with my quick transformation required two equally important actions from me: regularly going deep within to know my own capacity for wisdom and resourcefulness and reaching toward a benevolent higher power that is bigger than me and will always accompany me. I grew up in a family with no religious or spiritual program, and with little help understanding my emotions, so I simply invented ways of connecting with my Self and with God. Nature became my spiritual temple, and my heart led my earnest prayers.

"We all have the extraordinary coded within us, waiting to be released."

—Jean Houston

My journey of awakening is full of magic, synchronicity, and adventure, as well as challenges that rocked me to my core. Along the way I am learning to trust myself and the higher hand that lovingly guides me. I know that I can choose to rise stronger from the ashes of any apparent defeat. I dare to share my discoveries, however uncommon, and to live differently. Not because I want the discomfort of being uncommon or different, but because I was born to learn, grow, and share, and I cannot not turn away from this calling.

Wholehearted living ultimately brought my soul home to the sunny, fruit-filled, seaside tropics of southern Florida. This required leaving my Michigan nest, the only homeland I knew for 50-plus years. I have certainly exited many comfort zones along the way, as I've learned to worry less about what other people think. I find comfort and confidence now in the sublime beauty of heart-led living. I'll close with lyrics by a favorite Michigan band, which express my sentiments so well:

*I was born, into this wild terrain,
Choirs of light, to show the way.
I have traveled the long verse, to the refrain,
To find the note, that must be played.
I have sang this old chorus of love for ages,
And I will sing it, till the story's told.*

—The Ragbirds, from "Lemon Grove"

Victoria Schon
SACRED SOUND



Sacred Sound, Ceremony & Well-Being

www.victoriaschon.com



Elizabeth Sullivan
Certified Vedic Astrologer

Natal Chart Reading
Annual Follow Up
Relationship Analysis
Prashna (Question Chart)

Each person is born at the exact moment when the stars align with their destiny.

Your natal horoscope is uniquely yours. It is the blueprint of your personal karma, serving as a divine roadmap to help guide you as you progress along your life's journey.

Facebook:
734.845.4668

@astrologerelizabeth

astrologer-elizabeth.com

astrologerelizabeth@gmail.com

Stay Informed!

SUBSCRIBE
TO OUR NEWSLETTERS

Receive our Weekly E-newsletter which features information about new books, audio books, tarot, and more!
Get emails when the latest issues of the CW Biweekly magazine and The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal are available.

Name

Email Address

to subscribe: scan the QR code, [click here](#), or visit crazywisdom.net

scan QR code



You will also receive occasional emails, through us, from organizations, centers, and groups that sponsor the kinds of events, classes, and programs that you care about.

We will never sell or share your information!



OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE

Kellie Mox MPH, DCHM, CCH catalyzes healing with women and children through trauma-informed homeopathy, intrinsic coaching, and holistic health education. She is passionate about authentic, meaningful connections—to self, others, and the world—and believes that healing flourishes when we strengthen these connections. Mox is a certified classical homeopath and a certified coach with a master's in health behavior and health education. She works with women and children virtually and in-person from her home base near Ann Arbor, Michigan. Learn more at kelliemox.com or send an email to heal@kelliemox.com.

An Inside Journey

By Kellie Mox

Comfort zone: A familiar psychological state where people are at ease and in control of their environment, experiencing low levels of anxiety and stress (Wikipedia).

I studied abroad.

I jumped out of an airplane.

I started a business.

I acted in a feature film.

Here's the thing I've noticed about stepping out of your comfort zone: The more resistance you feel about doing the uncomfortable thing, the more learning and transformation you'll experience when you do it.

By definition, everything on the above list fell outside of my comfort zone, and nothing on this list catalyzed resistance like healing chronic illness. Healing has been the ultimate adventure out of my comfort zone.

Here's the thing I've noticed about stepping out of your comfort zone: The more resistance you feel about doing the uncomfortable thing, the more learning and transformation you'll experience when you do it.

How We Heal

I'm a homeopath and healing coach. I've always studied and worked in this realm. My experience with anorexia as a teen drove the desire to understand the psychology of health, and I never stopped exploring how we heal.

Even though I recovered from that eating disorder, the underlying disturbance that catalyzed it lived on inside of me. As an adult, I experienced chronic symptoms that led to diagnoses of Lyme disease, SIBO, pyroluria, CIRS, IBS, EPI, autoimmunity, and more.



My exploration into healing myself brought me to homeopathy and to some of my most challenging and transformative experiences outside of my comfort zone. You see, a premise of homeopathy is that suppression of ourselves—our physical symptoms, our emotions, our voice, our authenticity—creates disease.

In order to heal and experience true vitality we must allow our body, heart, mind, and soul fullness of self-expression.

Lessons from Self-Expression

Oh, how I resisted self-expression. There are so many ways it took me out of my comfort zone. But, the pain of this kind of discomfort is, as author and trauma expert Resmaa Menakem calls it, a clean pain. Clean pain has the power to heal. The pain of suppression is akin to what Menakem calls dirty pain. And that pain drives dis-ease deeper into our being. Knowing this, I've chosen to practice self-expression again and again. Each time I turn toward expression and away from suppression, I connect more deeply with myself. I heal. I learn.

I spent a large part of my life disconnected from my body. I didn't have an awareness or understanding of the wisdom in expression, so I feared my uncomfortable symptoms, cravings, impulses, and sensations. I tried to quiet them or make them go away by numbing, distracting, medicating, fixing, or analyzing.

Trusting My Body

I spent a large part of my life disconnected from my body. I didn't have an awareness or understanding of the wisdom in expression, so I feared my uncomfortable symptoms, cravings, impulses, and sensations. I tried to quiet them or make them go away by numbing, distracting, medicating, fixing, or analyzing. All of this resistance is a form of suppression, which kept me stuck and feeling stagnant in my healing, because I couldn't trust my body to do what it knew how to do. It knew how to heal.

Now, more and more, I'm able step out of my suppressive comfort zone and be with my body's expressions. I may dialogue with an uncomfortable symptom or connect with a sensation through meditation when I notice the urge to fix or change it. It's a positive feedback loop. The trust between me and my body grows every time I witness and allow my body to move through whatever's moving through, which in turn allows the symptoms or sensations to move through with more ease. Through expression I've learned how to trust my body.

Accepting Myself

I always thought of myself as a "heart on my sleeve" kind of person, and that's true, in part. But not *all* human emotions were in my comfort zone. Anger, for example, isn't a culturally acceptable emotion for women to feel and express. It's one emotion that I resisted for much of my life. It emerged, nonetheless, coming out sideways through digestive issues, muscle spasms, and pain.

Now, more and more, I'm able to step out of my suppressive comfort zone to be with and express difficult emotions. Sometimes I break sticks or sing a song at full volume or hold myself with compassion. Every time I do this, parts of me that once felt unacceptable remember their okayness. Through expression I've nurtured self-acceptance.

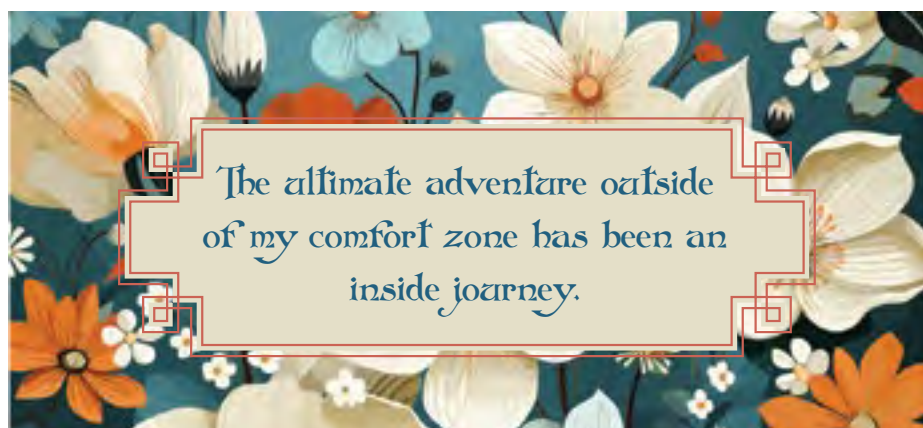
Knowing My Mind

I'm a recovering people pleaser. Pleasing others was a coping mechanism in my comfort zone because making others happy meant I was okay; I was safe, and I belonged. Of course, I resisted the alternative. But unchecked people pleasing lacks boundaries. Chronically poor boundaries contributed to my disease. Freeing myself from these pleasing patterns required me to express and live in alignment with my truth, even if others disapproved or felt displeased.

Now, more and more, I'm able to step out of my suppressive, boundaryless comfort zone and express my needs, desires, thoughts, and feelings. Every time I practice (and it is a practice), it's a declaration of who I am. I get to know myself more with every boundary I set. Through expression I've grown in self-awareness.

An Inside Journey

The ultimate adventure outside of my comfort zone has been an inside journey. Nothing in my life catalyzed so much growth and transformation as healing. Even when expression feels uncomfortable, I know now that going into the discomfort transforms it. Just like in homeopathy—like cures like.



Stefanie Cohen
Registered Somatic Therapist

Private sessions and group explorations
accessing your body's wisdom
to create meaning and healing

734-474-1517
stefaniemovingstories@gmail.com
www.somastories.net

Honoring All Spiritual Paths & Traditions

Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth

Be a light unto the world

704 Airport Blvd., Suite 1
Ann Arbor, 48108

Sunday Celebration Services
10:45-12:15

Monthly Concerts, Movies
and Drum Circles

Weekly Study Groups,
A Course in Miracles,
Science of Mind, Sufi Gathering
& more

*Sunday Service and many classes
available via live stream*

734.327.0270
interfaithspirit.org

Writers Wanted

Great way to be visible in the community, and connected.

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.



Be a Solar Panel:

Tips for Managing the Dark Days Ahead

By Laurel Decker

It was late October when I moved to Michigan from Alaska 16 years ago. The day I met my new neighbor, he enthusiastically told me some of the reasons he loved Michigan. It was reassuring, as a mom with three young kids, to hear the positive things he had to say about growing up here, but I had to admit that I was probably most excited about living in a place that has four seasons. I said that as much as I loved living in Alaska, the long winters were challenging for me—cold winters when some days the sun would rise after 10 a.m. and set before 4 p.m. I did not mention how much my mood was affected by the scarcity of light, but when I noted that I looked forward to having more sunlight during the winter, he laughed and responded with something like, “I don’t know if you know this, but even though we don’t have the same extreme when it comes to sun up and down, the sky can be gray pretty much all winter.”

I brushed off that last comment because I figured I would be happy with any improvement. Besides, as I walked away, I felt the sun on my face and the perfect crisp temperature of my first Midwest fall. How bad could the next few months be? Already smiling, I took in the view of the tree line at a distance—blazing in red, orange, and yellow. I was certain that Southeast Michigan and I would be very compatible.



It was reassuring, as a mom with three young kids, to hear the positive things he had to say about growing up here, but I had to admit that I was probably most excited about living in a place that has four seasons.

Fast forward, and it turns out I was right—I had found the perfect location match for my weather preferences. But I was also wrong to have given away my light therapy lamp when I made the move southward. It was somewhere around January during my first winter in Michigan that I experienced the familiar gloominess that set in during the darkest days in Alaska. I recognized the SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) symptoms, a condition The National Institute of Mental Health recognizes as a type of depression. Some even refer to it as “winter depression.”

The precise causes of seasonal depression are not entirely understood. Cold weather contributes to factors such as decreased socialization and physical activity, but the condition also seems clearly linked to less exposure to sunlight. That is because sunlight stimulates the hypothalamus—a part of the brain that controls chemicals and hormones that manage mood, appetite, and sleep. Though the exact effect continues to be studied for clarification, people with SAD experience a disruption in the production of melatonin and serotonin. Additionally, patterns in their circadian rhythm (internal clock that regulates sleep) become inconsistent. Although symptoms come and go with the seasons, these steep fluctuations in mood, appetite, and sleep patterns are no less difficult to experience than other types of depression. Symptoms become most severe during the months of December, January, and February in the Northern Hemisphere and tend to improve as the sun is up longer and spring weather is warmer. Eventually, symptoms may disappear altogether in the summer months.

The precise causes of seasonal depression are not entirely understood. Cold weather contributes to factors such as decreased socialization and physical activity, but the condition also seems clearly linked to less exposure to sunlight.



Recently my son was visiting from NMU in Marquette—a city with seasons that resemble Anchorage more than they resemble Ann Arbor. We were on a long walk, and he shared that one of his concerns about starting another winter in the Upper Peninsula is that he dreads the cold, dark days ahead. I told him that I can relate, and that lately I try to think about emotions in the same way that I look at weather patterns—they are constantly moving. In the low moments, I find hope knowing that even the most difficult periods of time will shift and improve. Darkness always passes and the sun eventually breaks through the clouds and brightens our world again. I told him that sometimes I pretend I’m a solar panel. I know it sounds silly, but especially in the months approaching winter, I make a point to thoroughly enjoy the bright moments as if I’m collecting energy and memories to draw upon in the colder times. Maybe this is part of the reason that Michiganders live summertime to the absolute fullest. From days on the lake to nights around a bonfire, we are spoiled with options for how to enjoy the season of sun.



I told him that sometimes I pretend I’m a solar panel. I know it sounds silly, but especially in the months approaching winter, I make a point to thoroughly enjoy the bright moments as if I’m collecting energy and memories to draw upon in the colder times.

While I am not an expert on depression, I am an expert in my own experience with it, and because mental health is complex and personal, I want to make it clear that I am only speaking from my perspective. Over the years I have learned and applied many tools to manage my mental health, and now I can truly say that I rarely experience signs of depression. When I do, I am quick to notice and respond accordingly. My hope in sharing this is that if you struggle with SAD, you will know there are others who relate. Maybe my insight will help you, or help someone close to you, to have a better understanding on how to support dealing with the effects of SAD.

The following are some of the tools that have helped me manage my mood in the winter:

- Try talk therapy.
- Explore SAD light therapy and/or spending at least 15 mins a day near a sunny window.
- Socialize with others.
- Intentionally participate in movement.
- Get outside to breathe in fresh air and appreciate the unique beauty of winter.
- Tidy up and/or change up your surroundings.
- Laughter! Watch a show or spend time with someone that cracks you up.
- Be in the moment with emotions. Observe them like a movie and notice as they change.
- Journal feelings without the pressure to “fix” them.
- Explore ways to adjust daily activities that feel burdensome.

Laurel Decker is a curious soul who loves learning and teaching. She is a writer, photographer, yoga instructor, and mom of four. She enjoys exploring subjects that bring peace and alignment to herself and others. To learn more, visit laurel-decker.com.

A Lament For Winter

By Frank Vandervort

On a recent morning, the sun rose just above the horizon, shooting spires of light through the trees and tinting the snow-covered ground orange. My exhalations froze in plumes as I walked our dog—or he walked me—amid the trees that cover most of our backyard.

Archie (our dog) waded through the couple inches of snow on his short legs, exploring the leafless underbrush, following his nose from one interesting thing to another, and tugging on the leash. Often, I am impatient to head back inside when he dawdles like this. But that morning, as he meandered, I watched the sky brighten, the moon and the stars fade. I stood still and listened—a light wind clacked the tree branches together, a few songbirds squabbled as they jockeyed for position at the feeder, and the interstate hummed low more than a mile away—and appreciated the day as it unfolded around me.

If it hadn't been for Archie's need to make his morning nature call, I likely would have been asleep. I would have missed that beautiful morning, one of the few snowy ones we seem to have these days.

I stood still and listened—a light wind clacked the tree branches together, a few songbirds squabbled as they jockeyed for position at the feeder, and the interstate hummed low more than a mile away—and appreciated the day as it unfolded around me.

I hear a lot of grumbling about winter—it's too long, it's too cold, there's too much snow. But I love it. In fact, I miss what I call “real winter.” Until I was a young adult, I lived in the northwestern Lower Peninsula, near the shores of Lake Michigan. At that time, there was never a question of whether we'd have a white Christmas. Snow that came for Thanksgiving stayed for Easter—sometimes, Mother's Day. It piled up and up. Some winters, parents warned their children not to climb the snowbanks and swing from the electrical wires. Roads sometimes became tunnels through the snow and drivers had to affix tall bicycle flags to their cars so that other drivers would see them around corners. Many a night we put a heater under the hood of the car and covered it with an old blanket to ensure that it would start in the morning.

But here in the southeast corner of the state, winter has always been a much milder affair. I have always felt disappointed by its meekness. So, I have regularly escaped north—and sometimes as far as New England—just to experience some of the beauty and joy of “real winter.”

But here in the southeast corner of the state, winter has always been a much milder affair. I have always felt disappointed by its meekness.

In the past few years, as winter has seemed to all but disappear, I realized that my disappointment has grown into something more like grief for the loss of the season. When I realized this, I thought I was just feeling nostalgic for the snow forts and caves, long toboggan runs, and skating on frozen ponds of my youth. Not that nostalgia is a bad thing. In fact, psychologists are discovering that it can be a very good thing (more about that later).

Recent trends in climate change have winter growing shorter, warmer, and more volatile across the Great Lakes region. Meanwhile, summers are growing longer, hotter, and drier. A study published in *Geophysical Research Letters* in 2021 found that between 1952 and 2011—measured by temperatures above the 75th percentile—summer lengthened from 78 to 95 days while winter—measured by temperatures in the lowest 25th percentile of the year—was reduced from 76 to 73 days, on average. The researchers found that both autumn and spring also shrank and predicted that if these trends continue—that is, if warming does not escalate—winter will shrink to less than two months while summer will expand to six months by 2100. In the dozen years since 2011, spring seems to be arriving earlier. Writing in *The New York Times* last March, Margaret Renkl noted that spring flowers in her neighborhood bloomed a month earlier than typical, in late February rather than late March. This is a trend I've noticed in our yard, too.

Another indicator of our shrinking winter is the lack of ice cover on the Great Lakes. During the 2022-2023 winter, ice coverage was substantially lower than typical. For example, research by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that in mid-February of 2023, only about seven percent of the lakes were covered with ice. While earlier in the month, about 21 percent of the lakes were iced over, his compares to an historical average of about 35-40 percent at that time of year. The warmer temperatures and the resultant lack of ice have caused the cancellation of some winter festivals.

While climate will trend toward shorter, warmer winters, we will also continue to experience unpredictable—even crazy—weather. There are freak large storms like the massive ice storm that hit Washtenaw County last March bringing down hundreds of trees (three in our yard alone) and leaving many thousands of homes without power for days. Or the storm that buried Buffalo under multiple feet of snow in February 2023 (while overall the temperatures in the city were above average for the winter).

Over the past decade, the American Psychological Association and ecoAmerica have partnered to publish periodic reports on the psychological impacts of climate change. The most recent iteration, *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate*, published in 2021, details the impact of both acute climate disasters and chronic changes in climate (e.g., warmer temperatures and less snow) on well-being. While the mental health impacts of acute climate disasters—devastating wildfires, massive snow dumps, and catastrophic flooding—seem obvious, what is perhaps not so obvious is the very real, even if more subtle, impacts of chronic exposure to the changing climate which essentially effects everyone. Anyone may experience stress, anxiety, or depression because of their chronic exposure to a warming climate. This condition has led to the coining of the term “ecoanxiety” which describes “the chronic fear of environmental doom.”

We will all need to find strategies to cope with changes wrought by a warming planet. Nostalgia, it turns out, may help us lessen the psychological impacts. Engaging in nostalgic reflection can help us experience an increase in happiness and feeling more satisfied with our lives. It can help to comfort us when we perceive a psychological threat and contributes to an overall greater sense of well-being.

As winter has grown grayer, more snowless, and less fun, I have found myself mourning its loss—and feeling nostalgic for its delights.

As winter has grown grayer, more snowless, and less fun, I have found myself mourning its loss—and feeling nostalgic for its delights. This sense of loss of the season that I love has me slowing down and appreciating more the ever-rarer experiences like that recent snowy sunrise. That morning, as the sun rose into a clear sky, it was me who wanted to tarry, to fill up my senses with my surroundings, and it was Archie who pulled me back inside.

**“[I] want it to be cold,
[I] want the snow,
desire the isolation,
desolation, insulation,
silence....
I want to be snowbound.”**

**— Winter, Rick Bass
(1991)**



GREEN LIVING

The Wisdom of Plants

By Mason Opp

Outside it is cold and dark. This time of year, in the northern latitudes, signs of life are less frequently encountered as plants and animals take refuge below ground. In burrows, roots, under fur and around waistlines, energy is stored safely away to get through these tough times. Sitting in my living room looking at the plants that surround me (in great contrast to what I see through the window), my home is alive. As I inhale the air around me and exhale carbon dioxide, my plants draw in carbon dioxide via their stomata and produce oxygen. This well-balanced dance is the rhythm of life on Earth—photosynthesis and respiration. It is this biological ballet that inherently ties plants and people together. When taken in full and reflected upon, this relationship has some valuable lessons to teach us.

This time of year, in the northern latitudes, signs of life are less frequently encountered as plants and animals take refuge below ground. In burrows, roots, under fur and around waistlines, energy is stored safely away to get through these tough times.

4.6 billion years ago the Earth formed. As best we can tell it was a very hot coagulation of rock for quite some time. 1.2 billion years later, bacteria start to photosynthesize and 700 million to a billion years after start to enrich the atmosphere of hot toxic gas with oxygen. Mutualistic relationships start to form between bacteria and algae, more complex multicellular organisms evolve. 475 million years ago non-vascular plants appear on land, shortly followed by the evolution of vascular plants, 55 million years thereafter, which are able transport water and nutrients via xylem and phloem and are no longer bound to a life in semi-aquatic environments. There is a green explosion on the blue planet—life proliferates.

In that time, plants have evolved to do some amazing things, enabling them to live almost everywhere on the planet. Common Dotter parasitizes other plants by literally inserting itself into the vascular tissue of another species and siphoning off the carbohydrates, water, and nutrients it needs to survive, akin to the lifecycle of ticks, leeches, or sea lamprey, more concisely living a life of nightmare fuel. Mycoheterotrophic plants go one step further and use this strategy via a fungal partner to do away with the thing that makes them so characteristically plant-like, photosynthesizing, such as the Western Underground Orchid which lives its entire life cycle below ground in Western Australia. Venus fly traps ensnare and eat animals to supplement nutrient poor environments (see *Little Shop of Horrors*). A number of orchid species trick insects into pollinating them via a complicated display of flowers and emission of pheromones that resemble a receptive member of the opposite sex, in an act that has been dubbed pseudocopulation. Plants also produce chemical compounds to defend themselves ranging from quinine to ricin, and those yet to be discovered, which have windfall effects on humans. The list goes on.

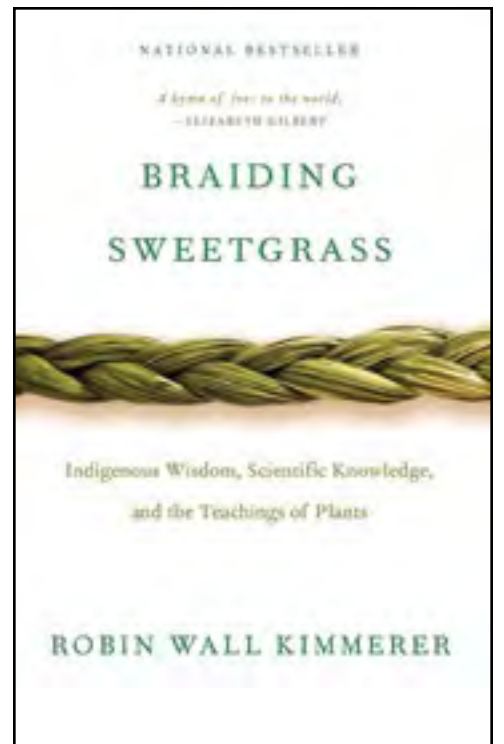
Homo sapiens, our species, came into being as we know it about three hundred thousand years ago—something which would undoubtedly not have happened if it hadn't been for the billions of years plants had been working at making the environment conducive to other lifeforms.



Homo sapiens, our species, came into being as we know it about three hundred thousand years ago—something which would undoubtedly not have happened if it hadn't been for the billions of years plants had been working at making the environment conducive to other lifeforms. About ten thousand years ago, our interspecies entanglement with plants changed drastically with the origins of agriculture. Soon, humans exerted great control over plants, breeding crops and making medicines from wild relatives. As societies and cultures have grown and thrived so have their connections to these cultivars and domesticates. Queue the agricultural revolution, queue the industrial revolution, and here we are sitting on my couch.

Depending on who you are and where you come from, plants will mean vastly different things to you and your community than they do to me and mine. The coffee tree by my record player could be your livelihood teetering on the brink of climate catastrophe, or it may simply grace the presence of your pumpkin spice latte. The pineapple top I've started to grow may be rooted in great controversy if used on pizza or a staple of your people. The spores from the *Lycopodia* used to dust for fingerprints may have been the evidence used to incarcerate family or friends. The needle from the cactus may be the tool which tattoos your body with the stories of your family.

One great injustice has been the control exercised by domineering cultures over the connection to and relationships with some of these plants, with total disregard for the harm being done. Fortunately, through the work of institutions like my own and collaborative efforts with community partners, that injustice is slowly being corrected. We strive to grow healthy communities of plants and people, and we are all better for it. I recently read Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. In the midst of climate change and the loss of biodiversity it is a glimmer of hope—an example of how our choices can positively impact our environment and all of those who call it home.



The plants in my house remind me how amazing life is, and how lucky we are to be alive. They connect me to the world, to other creatures that call it home, and to communities besides my own. They teach me about strength and resilience (when was the last time I watered you anyway?).

Warm and cozy, with the power grid in Michigan the space is heated predominantly by the consumption of fossil fuels, the ancient remains of photosynthetic organisms, distant cousins of the plants in my apartment. Ironically, it is the very act of warming this space that brings life into it which drives the climate catastrophe and subsequent loss of biodiversity outside. But it doesn't have to be that way. As communities we can advocate for sustainable systems, good policy, and government to support one another. We can tax carbon. Maybe in that future I can claim the cottonwood outside my window as a dependent and write off what they sequester.

The plants in my house remind me how amazing life is, and how lucky we are to be alive. They connect me to the world, to other creatures that call it home, and to communities besides my own. They teach me about strength and resilience (when was the last time I watered you anyway?) While they may not contribute directly to the ecosystem in which I live, to have them coexist with me, to breathe in while I breathe out, engaged in the delicate dance of life, they teach me what it takes to be a good steward, to care for others.

A colleague asked me recently what I've been up to in the Conservatory as they had never seen the gardenia have such a prolific bloom. Depending on how you look at it, I've learned much too late or mercifully early that the most important part of communicating is the ability to truly listen. Plants have a lot to teach us, but we must listen.

Mason Opp was the Conservatory Fellow at the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum. His tenure included the Conservatory Mapping and Inventory Project and the production of the holiday display, Aurora. He is currently pursuing interests tangential to his career as a horticulturist, such as biomaterial composites for sustainable surfboard manufacturing, and exploring the wonders of the world.



Prophecy, Legacy, and Trees

By Marie Duquette

I have dreams that come true. Not all of them, of course, but enough that I now accept this strange unbidden gift as a natural part of who I am. For example, I once dreamed that a dear friend's daughter was pinned underneath a huge tree that had fallen on her. In the dream, she was alive, but she was unable to move the tree, and she was hurt. The next day I found out this same 16-year-old girl, had been driving too fast on a gravel road, went airborne over a bridge, and hit a telephone pole in her dad's Dodge Ram. The pole fell, totaling the truck, and trapping her inside. She was banged up, shook up, but alive and safe. Before she had fully recovered, her dad received a bill from the city to replace the telephone pole.

I have dreams that come true. Not all of them, of course, but enough that I now accept this strange unbidden gift as a natural part of who I am.

Thirty years ago, I had a dream about a series of events that caused me to move from a tropical island to a house high off the ground, nestled in pine trees. I know this because when I moved to Ann Arbor, from a condo on the barrier islands in Florida, I found my dream journal from 1986 where I recorded that dream—otherwise, I probably would not have remembered.

I wouldn't call myself a prophet in the biblical sense, but I do seem to perceive events that are coming, which brings me to the idea of legacy. I have always been keenly aware that we are only here on planet Earth for a little while. Death comes for us all. Now solidly in the third quarter of life, I wonder what my legacy will be. Maya Angelou said, "Your legacy is every life you touch." This sort of takes the pressure off to do something big and profound, but what happens when all the lives you have touched are also someone else's memory? What is your legacy in the same way that trees have a legacy to continue to give life?

I heard an interview with Suzanne Simard on NPR recently. Simard is a forest scientist. Her memoir, *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of The Forest*, is about the literal life of trees and how they spend their decades (centuries, millennia). She said that a tree prepares to die for years, sometimes, for decades. In a study in which they sped up the process (so that they could study it) they learned that as a tree is dying, it dumps its carbon dioxide into the network of trees to which it is connected. In fact, those who study trees say that a tree gives even more life to the world after it dies than while it is alive.

That got me thinking about what I most needed to give away that might continue to give life long after I have died. As a writer, a speaker, a teller of stories, it's hard not to believe that my legacy is tied to my story—the stories I've collected and the stories I have told.

I have always been keenly aware that we are only here on planet Earth for a little while. Death comes for us all. Now solidly in the third quarter of life, I wonder what my legacy will be.

One of my earliest memories is when I was 11 years old. I would climb a tree in our front yard in the summer, prepared with a duffel bag of books, snacks, and a pillow for my head. I spent hours in the crook of that tree, reading, dozing, and listening in on adult conversations in our driveway or through the open window of our kitchen. Invisible, I was amused at how life went on for hours with no one looking for me. Safely held in the tree, 15 foot off the ground, I was exempt from chores, beyond the reach of annoying questions, and less swayed by the wild fluctuations in temperament (a constant in my family).

Forty years later, I was a pastor in a small church in Ashville, Ohio. I often let my mind wander while looking at the beautiful maple tree outside the bay window of my office. A boy about nine-years-old used to climb that tree, carrying a mostly empty backpack that held a book, a Gameboy, and a water bottle. He would sit in that tree in the late afternoon as the sun moved through the branches and began to set behind his apartment just across the street. One day, I ventured outside with a baggie of Oreos as a lure and asked him if he'd like to talk. He did not, but he did climb low enough to retrieve the cookies. That

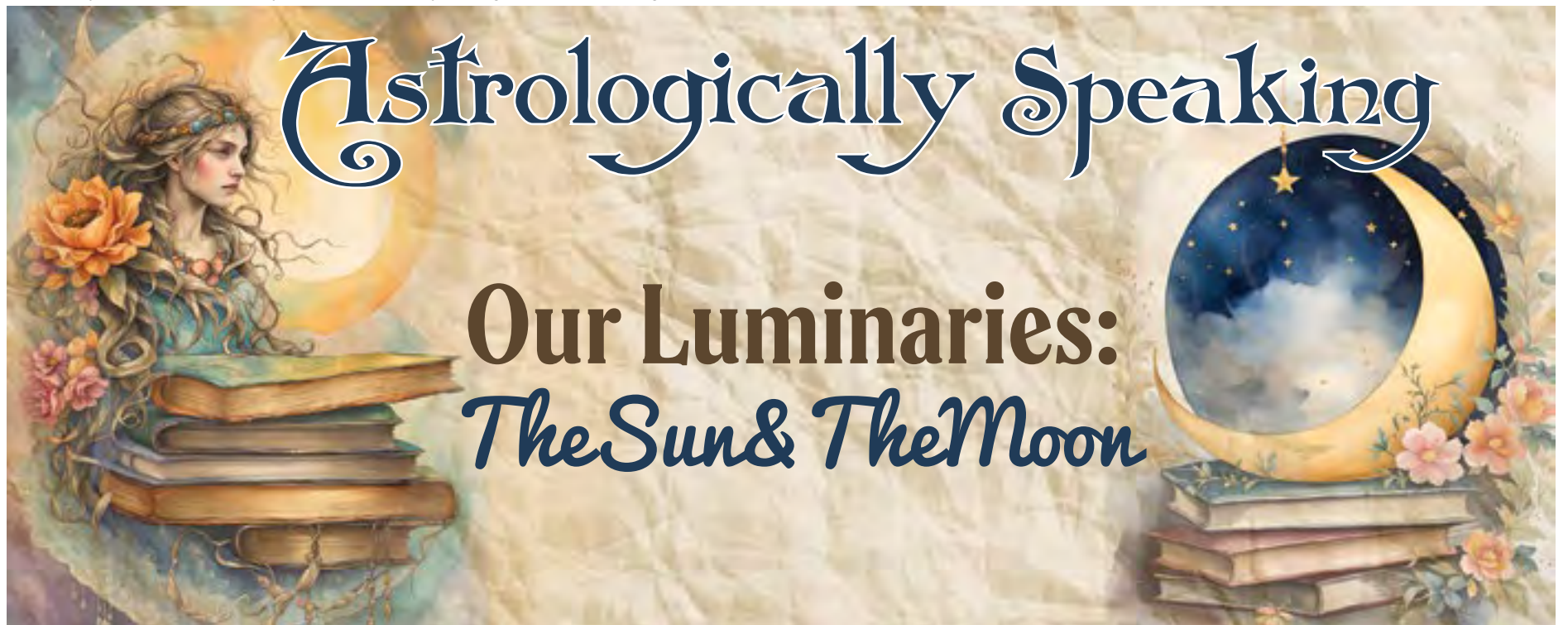
became an afternoon ritual for us, and eventually, he came all the way down and sat with me on the porch. He said he couldn't go home until his mom unlocked the door, and she usually didn't do that until it was almost dark. He started to show up alone at church on Sunday morning. The whole congregation adopted him. The ushers let him pull the rope to ring the bell. The women brought him sandwiches and homemade treats. One day he asked me if he could be baptized. His mother agreed with a gentle shrug saying, 'I guess it couldn't hurt.'

We decided he would be baptized under that beloved tree. When it came to the baptism part of the service, we all proceeded outside, an usher bearing a big bowl, a choir member carrying a pitcher of water, an acolyte carrying a towel and a candle. Once outside, to my dismay, his mother bolted across the street to their apartment. We sang three whole improvised hymns waiting for her return. Finally, she came, pushing her way through the circle, scratching a scab on her knee through the hole in her jeans. At the end of the baptism, I turned to light his baptismal candle and realized we had nothing to light it with. Without missing a beat, his mother produced a pink BIC lighter from her pocket, emblazoned with the words, "Crazy Biker Chick." And with that lighter, we lit the candle, telling the boy to let his light shine! Amid the clapping and hugs his mother said to me, "Damn right he will."

In fact, those who study trees say that a tree gives even more life to the world after it dies than while it is alive. That got me thinking about what I most needed to give away that might continue to give life long after I have died.

Ten years later, my youngest son married his high school sweetheart in that same church. That church is now 160 years old. I think about all that tree has witnessed and realize that amid all the change that is the constant of life, the tree has remained: steady, strong, and supportive enough to hold a young boy in its branches and provide shade on a sunny day in August for a young couple to make their dream come true.





Astrologically Speaking

Our Luminaries: The Sun & The Moon

By Catherine Carlson

Of all the lights in the sky, there are two that shine brightest—the sun and the moon. These two “luminaries” as they are called, illuminate our world more than any other celestial body, both literally and personally. Astrologically, they are also the two biggest influences.

The Sun

Worshipped throughout the ages all over the world, the sun is the strongest and most powerful cosmic influence we have here on earth. The sun provides life to earth along with daytime and the seasons. To say it is powerful is an understatement. The sun has a personal relationship with each one of us as it travels through the zodiac lighting up each sign for a month. If you are at all interested in astrology, the one thing you know is your “sun” sign—the sign that the sun was in at the time of your birth. This sign is how the sun expresses itself through you.

All planets, plus the sun and moon, are paired up with a different zodiac sign (or signs) and the fire sign Leo, symbolized by the lion, is partnered with the fiery sun. With its golden coat and fearsome roar, “The King of Beasts,” holds the honor of representing the life-giving sun.

Picture the male lion in its habitat and you can understand how in your natal chart the sun represents the father. This represents our own father or the person that represents the father archetype in our lives. This is the powerful energy that initiated the growth of your very first cells. It is also the person that was responsible for your well-being, providing for you, showing you the ropes, and cultivating your inner authority so that one day you could leave the nest and survive on your own.

In astrology, the sun gives us the key qualities that shine through us in life. Because we have a conscious awareness of the sun, our sun sign is what we are aware of—what we can see in ourselves. Our sun sign embodies our personality and creative impulses. Perhaps you are a practical Capricorn with a strong work ethic and high standards. With proper support you would have already perceived these qualities in yourself, and they would give you a sense of purpose and inner authority. On the contrary, not embracing these qualities can make you feel like you have a power outage, are losing motivation, or feeling disconnected.

Just as the sun provides life to the planet, it also provides life force to us in the form of our sun sign. The significations of your sun sign serve as a guide to what provides your vitality. These qualities are also what energize and fortify you. Let’s say your sun sign is Gemini, and you are curious or sociable—a natural networker. This would be something you would likely embrace, and it would give you strength. All the traits and significations of each respective sign are things that will be readily recognized and what give you energy. This is also why we all have a tendency to come alive during our birthday month.

In her book, *A Manual for Developing Humans*, PMH Atwater who had multiple near-death experiences, says that we have several personal annual cycles stemming from our birth date each year. Six weeks before your birthday she says is, “a time of weakness and tiredness,” while six weeks following your birthday is “a time of strength and ready-to-go energy.” This further underscores the power of the sun on your birthday as a personal battery re-charge each year.

Having just passed the darkest day of the year on the calendar in the northern hemisphere (December 21) we feel the power of the sun as it expands in warmth and daylight. As a little boy in the 1940s, before penicillin, my dad became very

sick with pneumonia in the middle of a Michigan winter. In an effort to heal him, his mother and her sister put the kids in the car and drove all the way to the sun—the Florida Keys. The trip was the exact prescription needed!

Whether you love to sit in the sun or not, the human body needs sunlight to thrive. The sun is the heartbeat in a birth chart, an ever-present life force energy sustaining and fortifying us in all aspects of our growth and development.

The Moon

Much smaller and connected only to earth, the moon is the earth’s night light. The energy of the sun is steady, reliable, strong, and ever-present. By contrast, the energy of the moon is magnetic, fluid, and ever-changing. The moon has also been revered in its own right. It is respected, honored, and celebrated when it comes to the cyclical rhythms of nature including planting, harvesting, and the female cycle. The moon’s cycle repeats monthly and touches all signs of the zodiac.

The moon, with its connection to water, is aligned with the water sign of Cancer, the crab (Cancer is Latin for crab). The crab is a fitting symbol being on or near the water. Crabs are sensitive creatures with a hard shell and a soft belly, never straying too far from their homes, just as the moon is always close to earth.

If the sun often represents the father in astrology, the moon can represent the mother or the nurturing figure in our life. This is the energy that feeds you, provides comfort, sees to your health, and fortifies your emotional well-being. The archetypal mother is like mother nature—ever nurturing and representing the creative and growth processes of life.

Together the sun and moon act as parental planets. The placement of these planets for someone personally can indicate the type of parents they had, their own relationship with them, and even ancestral information. The placement helps to understand that a person may have a different experience with their parents than their siblings had.

We can watch the effect of the moon on the ocean bringing in the tide and moving it out. Similarly, our emotions ebb and flow, never staying in the same place. They are represented by the moon astrologically. Our emotional body fluctuates like the moon—waxing and waning. Emotions surface then scamper away like the crab. Like our tears, emotions are represented by water. The moon illuminates the dark and with it, how we feel, react, or process things. This is a part of us that we are less aware of. It is our internal selves, with the vulnerable belly, where we experience things that are not always pleasant. Think of the werewolf in folklore whose hidden nature is only revealed under the light of the full moon.

While the sun signifies our vitality, the moon in astrology is what circulates that life force energy and represents our overall health, mental or physical. Where the moon is placed in your natal chart can indicate where your sensitivities are. A person with thyroid sensitivities could potentially have their moon in Taurus, the sign connected to that part of the body. The moon as it transits through your own natal chart can highlight your own personal cycles and rhythms.

Just as one luminary departs the other appears*. The yin-yang symbol is an appropriate representation of the sun and the moon. They hold the balance of day and night, father and mother, outer self and inner self. One is obvious, the other more mysterious. The sun and moon are the most important celestial bodies in our sky due to their proximity and their ability to illuminate our world every single day. Astrologically they are just as important—lighting us up inside and out. Without these two luminaries as a foundation, the influence of the rest of the planets on us would be altered as well.

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 energy of the sun is steady, reliable, strong, and ever-present. By contrast, the energy of the moon is magnetic, fluid, and ever-changing.



Art by Irena Barbara Nagler

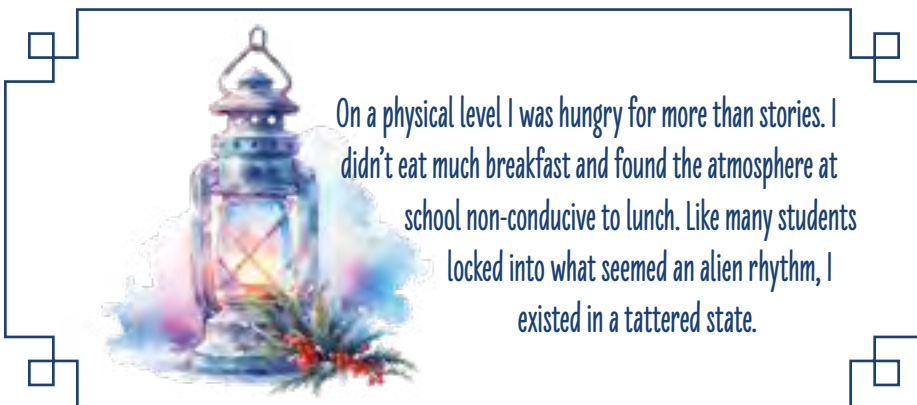
By Irena Barbara Nagler

In high school, I'd been set free to take French classes at the university. Waiting in the library to be picked up, I wandered and read. On a physical level I was hungry for more than stories. I didn't eat much breakfast and found the atmosphere at school non-conductive to lunch. Like many students locked into what seemed an alien rhythm, I existed in a tattered state.

I didn't want to be in high school. It was bleak, over-structured, and laced with the belief that we could not be trusted to conduct our lives with any wisdom. At the same time, I knew that I was learning things that had nothing to do with the classes I was enrolled in.

I read all the stories of E.M. Forster, including *The Machine Stops*, which hasn't lost its relevance any more than Huxley's *Brave New World* or Orwell's *1984*.

I also read *The Other Side of the Hedge*. That Forster story was satisfying and inspiring at the time—a parable for freaks and adolescents. It has accrued another level of relevance in the tension of an electronic grid that can remove us from direct connection and the full use of our senses in the immediate environment.



On a road bounded by dry hedges, the protagonist, wearing a pedometer, is forever in motion. So is almost everyone he knows. According to rumor, certain people, in an abject failure of will, fall by the wayside and land on the other side of the hedge. Of course, the protagonist succumbs to the hedgerow in the middle of the story and finds himself in a bucolic landscape where it seems at first that no one is going anywhere: just living. By the end of the tale, he has recognized the man who first helps him there as his long-lost brother.

Forster's hedge is sometimes interpreted as death and the realm beyond it as an afterworld. Having long had a sense that we are living with missing time, I never saw it that way. There are possible worlds where our transition from what we call indigenous living to modernity is not so abrupt or violent. There are timelines in which the transition is slower from the early 1990s to the present super-connected, yet quite profoundly disconnected world. Steps have been skipped, leaving raw gaps in experience, information, and intimacy with each other and our earth. Our version of global interconnection is riddled with divisive and exploitative hedges.

At this time, in 2024, people have experienced a gap after a deliberate, ragged break with "the beforetime." We don't know what might have happened had life been allowed to continue as accustomed, or with less extreme measures, during the fear-infused and obsessive "Covid years." The results bear some similarity to what people experience during and after wars and other disruptive events. There was much opportunity for learning and for honing observation, expression, and commitment to values.

Minutes have only existed on clocks since the Industrial Revolution. Before that, even hours may have seemed constrictive. Orienting by longer intervals might generate an expansive time-sense compared to the digits with which we often

hound ourselves and that short-circuit the ways in which eternity can breathe into time.

On the other side of the hedge, we can find another flow, for at least an interval of time. By our measures it could be a day, an hour, an evening, a moment. There is no going backward, but breaches can be healed as we carve portals out of air, imagination, communion with each other and the living system, and pieces of earth in secret gardens. It has to do with the perception and shaping of space outwardly, but more with what we do with what we have.

I went to an elementary/middle school in Kalamazoo. The building was composed of three connected, Greek-style brick structures with enormous white pillars, on a hilltop that had once housed a Potawatomi village. A wild brushwood straggled down the hill to an area of big playing fields, upper and lower levels connected by a long cement staircase.

Our official playground was on the hilltop outside the school. It was blacktopped over, but had beautiful, ancient oak trees that we could see out of classroom windows; we peered directly into branches from the upper levels of the building.

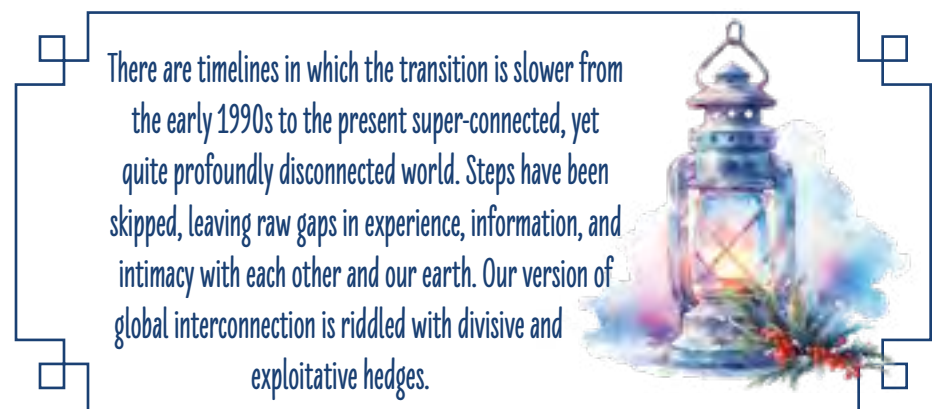
There were oak trees on the wooded hillside as well, bushes with fantastic tunnels through them, and wild grapevines. We weren't supposed to play there. The only exception was the use of a sledding area in the winter.

Of course, some of us did play there, preferring it to either the playground or the playing fields. We were "witches" stirring chokecherry potions in root-hollows. We explored the bush tunnels and sampled the grapes. The world of the bushes was a fractal weaving of human story with the energies of a living system.

I also preferred the upper playground with its enormous, comforting oaks to the playing fields. The fields were huge, but their psychological space was narrow, confined to rule-bound, competitive games. As an adult, I sense how space shapes us as much as we shape it: how often a greater quantity of it is given over to hierarchical pursuits with less leeway for cultural creativity or communion with the biodiverse tapestry of nature.

Yet sometimes, as Björk sings in "Alarm Call," "The less room you give me, the more space I've got!"

There have always been travelers through the hedge-- dreamers, shamans, believers dancing in mushroom rings. Fairy tales and modern fantasy offer journeys through wardrobes made from the apple-wood of another world, the interiors of cuckoo clocks, knives that cut portals in the fabric of the multiverse, lighthouse lenses that liquefy and transport.



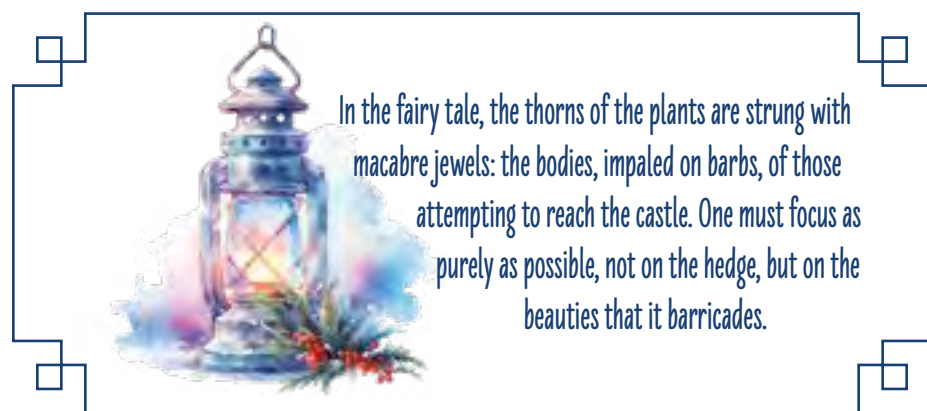
"Hedgewitch" was a term for witches, usually women, often solitary, who worked with plants, and knew ways through the hedges between worlds. It was a hope that the portals in the hedge could bring the possibility of multiple and alternative viewpoints and angles from which to craft more connected, less hierarchical ways of being and relating. Hedgewitches can see and work with the magic of the "ordinary," empowering the disenfranchised and overlooked.



Hedgewitching continued...

Scents and taste can enfold us in flowers of dreaming and reality that bites deep into memory. Dancing in the field of music we love is an entrance into a place with breathing walls, or none, only more doors and infinite space, free and joyous while grounded in the rhythms of feet striking earth. Winding paths can erase the sense of digital time and bring us into the moment, a *now* both many-layered and expansive. Archways and curving lines in architecture can bestow a sense of presence that contains openings to a fascinating unknown, a respect for mystery, in contrast to straight edges that evoke rigid plans for the future forged in an uneasy present.

The following is an exploration, based in ordinary memories, of some alternate spaces that loosen the sense of clock time. Some are from cityscapes and the doorways that open within them. Some are inner places, others shared, but all retain the tensile flexibility and expansiveness of dreaming, the timelessness that underlies any time system, and space that cannot be encompassed or controlled by an imposed grid.



In the fairy tale, the thorns of the plants are strung with macabre jewels: the bodies, impaled on barbs, of those attempting to reach the castle. One must focus as purely as possible, not on the hedge, but on the beauties that it barricades.

1990s: At a rave dance I see pterodactyls. We have made our way along a trail of rumor to a loft upstairs from a store on Liberty Street. The atmosphere is dark with a silvery undertone, a bit too invested in cool for my taste, slightly hostile. I watch patterns of light on a screen become ancient birds. They observe the world through us, catch fire when we dance, closing our eyes as an eternal forest breaks open seeds. Bird-shadows paint the air. Walking home later, I see them in city trees. I know they were created in the minds of branches. I remember that I was one of them, recall a fourth finger lengthening into a wing. I know a fearful moment, letting go of gravity, the wind becoming a bed, then soaring.

Another legendary hedge of thorns is the Sleeping Beauty Palace. I have been reminded of it on return to post-lockdown scenes. To work, in the district library, in June of 2020: the last dusty newspaper from three months before announcing the descent of the cloud; colleagues' faces, all hyper-expressive eyes but no mouth; hushed space yawning between work areas; a children's computer left on, plaintively chirping, "Touch the answer YOU think is right!" over and over again into the sound of silence.

And more recently, on a winter visit to the Conservatory in the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. To-the-marrow warmth; the tropical plants, who respond to environment with inexhaustible plant-imagination for nourishing and protective form; the newly cleaned lily pool; the desert strangely reminiscent of ocean—all flourishing and well-cared-for. Yet, the shimmering electricity of human presence and connection had yet to burn through in the former brilliance that I had never fully appreciated.

In the fairy tale, the thorns of the plants are strung with macabre jewels: the bodies, impaled on barbs, of those attempting to reach the castle. One must focus as purely as possible, not on the hedge, but on the beauties that it barricades.

2007: A young man and woman are walking in the alley by the Michigan Theater that is painted all over with murals and scrawls. Both have ink-black hair, both are wearing black and white. I have a sense of humans seeking Faerie through urban grids and electronic music, through alleyways both literal and dreaming, finding secret doors everywhere. Attempts may be made to hide them in glittering grids, but they're in our DNA, our blood, our heartbeats.

Same alley: Late November, 2009, soon after Michael Jackson's death. A wet, gloomy day with seal-coat shine. I heard a Michael Jackson song: "The Way U Make Me Feel." The sound was like lights, metallic gleams reflecting in the drops of rain. I looked across the street into the painted alley pulsing firefly-codes in its own dark night.

There he was, the Michael Jackson dancer, Bruce Woolridge. For fourteen years he had periodically danced there between walls splashed with color and spidery graffiti, always to Jackson's music and with Jackson's moves.

I saw him in silhouette way deep in the hieroglyphic tunnel. He was barely moving. I smiled in at him from across the street. It seemed, or I imagined, he nodded in return. His dance commenced, muscle unfurling, mimetic spirals,

walking the moon, snatching the ground: fluid, tensile, flaring from still centers of a thousand new stars. But he was moving slowly, nursing a flame, not yet releasing what must be shock. The rain was weeping down.

Fog and smoke can be portals, blurring one world and parting again on another that may be only slightly different, so that one is unaware of the transition. Every instant we choose world-branches to venture into. On a foggy day, you can take the opportunity to imagine where you might want to emerge or to appreciate the sense of mystery.

2012: In the garden of a student house, a pink lawn flamingo gazes away from the street into woods. On the Diag, the magic code of a little green, pale-brown-rough-rimmed acorn, one that I cannot read, hints at the seeding of a potential forest, branching in other areas of the multiverse.

Sometimes the hedge thins and the familiar world ties itself in dreamlike knots.

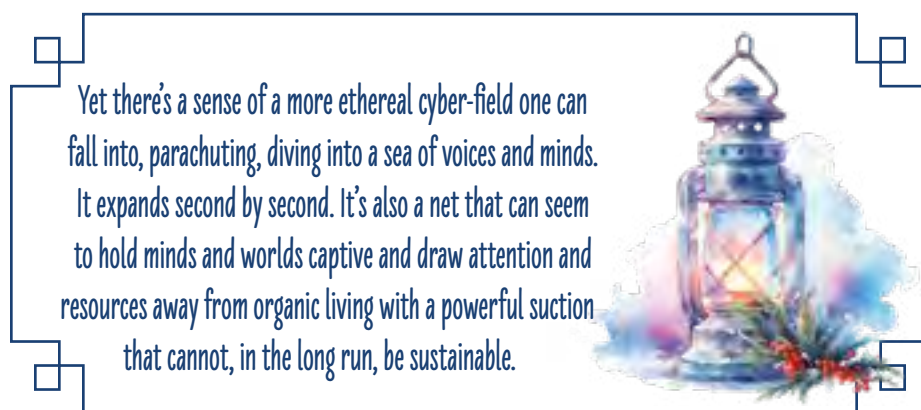
August 5, 2007: Lost and found in Lake Maumee. Carlos and I, going to our friend Maggie's in White Lake (or so we think) find ourselves journeying through a maze of Detroit suburbs, and once into the city itself, in the middle of the night. I believe we are exploring the bed of the ancient lake! It's underwater-feeling, murky, buildings blurred and half-washed-out, but the sound of night crickets and tree frogs is everywhere, swathes of wild bursting through grids.

We pass under a space-age arch, like going into an alien ship, a new structure raised a few years ago for the All Star game. Carlos opens the sunroof. Deep blue sky is framed in it, filled with the speckled white clouds that have been forming gigantic angels all evening. The half moon is among them, silvery in striated clouds.

We approach a building on fire, billowing with flame and huge clouds of smoke. We go to our friend Penny's in Southfield to see if she's at home. Her cat sculpture is guarding her door, shining white in the headlights, but no human is there. I see, out of the corner of my eye, a giant armadillo—creature from the prehistoric lake, and a group of boys on the street—also seen from the corner of my eye—look like ghosts on the road-edge as we drive away.

The roots of our concept of Faerie are primarily in Asia and the Middle East. But in Europe, and probably elsewhere including the pre-U.S. continent, displaced and conquered peoples probably went underground, and were glimpsed or encountered occasionally. Magic was attributed to them, both sinister and beneficial.

In physical crawlspaces and work tunnels, feral cats and humans (of necessity or curiosity) carry on an existence few suspect. Occasionally one might smell a whiff of tobacco or hear a radio playing in some inscrutable crevice. These places stitch together the visible world, run through it like veins and nerves.



Yet there's a sense of a more ethereal cyber-field one can fall into, parachuting, diving into a sea of voices and minds. It expands second by second. It's also a net that can seem to hold minds and worlds captive and draw attention and resources away from organic living with a powerful suction that cannot, in the long run, be sustainable.

June 1998: Under the mulberry tree at night with Matt and Kalaea in back of the Friends Meeting Center, after working in the sanctuary space on our "Shapeshifting" dance performance. We feel better than we have in a few weeks, riding a new wave of energy. Mulberries and what feel like nuts or seed capsules are dropping on us. As we talk, I crouch on the ground, and touching it, with the berries falling, little plops, the sense of roots under my hand, I am drawn into a light trance. The earth talks to me through my fingers and through my feet, penetrates my blood with tendrils of energy, words of berries and soil and leaves, swarming with intelligence and ancient love and tough/tender fibers along which it all runs. A door opens into root-caverns all aight.

Cyberspace is a place. It's a hedge, too, framing the arena according to limitations of machine capability. As James Bridle has written, the Cloud is contained in physical computers, underwater cables, satellites. It consumes vast amounts of energy that are seldom mentioned in discussions of possible human contribution to climate change. Yet there's a sense of a more ethereal cyber-field one can fall into, parachuting, diving into a sea of voices and minds. It expands second by second. It's also a net that can seem to hold minds and worlds captive and draw attention and resources away from organic living with a powerful suction that cannot, in the long run, be sustainable. The materials



No matter how much space seems evident, there is plenty of room to wander, in imagination, and in person. Whether immersed in the weave of the forest or reaching to feel the heartbeat of Earth through urban concrete and the overlays of culture and political mapping, every increment of land, and body, and mind is sentient, rooting deep, rising up in trees of life and electricity, and touching the stars.

involved are nonrenewable, and the people who mine them and manufacture the machines are out of sight, out of mind to most Western populations.

On February 8, 1996, Buddhist monks at the Namgyal Monastery Institute of Buddhist Studies in Ithaca, New York, issued a press release. They had decided to perform a blessing for the positive use of the Internet, on the premise that cyberspace is a space like any other, invisible or unverifiable, with no inherent existence but “a conceptualized area that exists as a field for mental activity.”

That mental space expands with every action upon it, as I sometimes imagine the universe growing when a new star or galaxy is born.

What if the machine-dependent cyberspace would cease to exist? Maybe the connection it has generated would continue to have a shape and a life. And maybe it could then become truly inclusive, more like Celtic knotwork that implies the interweaving of everything.

In a waking dream, go to ask a question of an oak tree in the night. The roots of the tree fan out into a silver leaf of light. Acorns roll about in a great tray of shadows. Touch one, then another.

The silver leaf is open to the world, to the autumn air, as though the root of the tree were exposed voluntarily, casting itself in moon shadows. Voices echo from gatherings of friends in the night by the tree. Voices of earth breathe longer rhythms.

There is so much light in the world, perpetual, as though stars had fallen to earth and blinded us. Insects, their ancient knowing thrown into confusion, gather near buildings to sing and sing by ever-full moons, to scribe silver lines on the night air.

After a moment with eyes closed, emerge and see the oak tree. A giant, a friend, swarming with life yet solid, reaching to a bright moon.

Be relieved that the heart of the wood is deep and dark and not exposed to light, silent, enfolding and strong, like the core humanity of you. It speaks to your cells. See if you can translate. Find what you can. The key to the garden is yours, and a winding, starlit path leads through the wood beyond it.

No matter how much space seems evident, there is plenty of room to wander, in imagination, and in person. Whether immersed in the weave of the forest or reaching to feel the heartbeat of Earth through urban concrete and the overlays of culture and political mapping, every increment of land, and body, and mind is sentient, rooting deep, rising up in trees of life and electricity, and touching the stars.



NEURO NF FITNESS
WELLNESS CENTER

“The Quietest Place in Ann Arbor”

Float Therapy

**Work hard.
Rest hard.**

Experience your body’s complete weightlessness and your mind’s colorful visual displays only possible in this environment

No gravity No distractions
No pain No worries
No sound* \$20 off any first time service!
No light* *optional

(734)206-2012
Hours: Thursday - Monday
10am - 8pm
6360 Jackson Rd STE A
Ann Arbor, MI
www.neurofitcenter.com

Adult Fitness and Yoga Programs for Healthy Living

We embrace all levels of fitness, body shapes, ages, experience and background. We're all about friendly, accessible yoga and fitness classes so everyone feels comfortable exactly as they are.

Build strength, restore flexibility and de-stress body and mind with in-person, online, or hybrid classes via livestream.

aarecedonline.com
734.994.2300

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.

A Singer, a Song, and Memories



By Sandor Slomovits

I first heard Steve Goodman's song, "The City of New Orleans" over fifty years ago. I remember seeing him sing it at the Mariposa Folk Festival sometime in the mid 1970s, but I heard Arlo Guthrie's much better-known version even earlier. I thought it was a terrific song, but I felt no special pull to learn it. I continued to come across it occasionally over the years, especially in the mid '80s after Willie Nelson's version came out, and always felt the same about it.

Until this past summer.

I no longer recall how I encountered it again, but this time it spoke to me, and I knew I wanted to sing it. I began exploring what key felt, and sounded right, for my voice then chose the fingering and strumming pattern which worked best on guitar. I remembered an old guitar trick that Josh White used on train songs; by repeating, quick downward slides on the lowest bass string, and damping all the other strings while strumming, he imitated the chugging sound of a train starting and slowly gathering speed. I'm not the guitar wizard that Josh was, but by simplifying his technique, then beginning the song very slowly, and gradually speeding it up, I devised a passable imitation of a train leaving the station and accelerating to cruising speed. I began singing the song over and over, memorizing the words. And discovered that I couldn't get through it without choking up and crying—every single time.

I remembered an old guitar trick that Josh White used on train songs; by repeating, quick downward slides on the lowest bass string, and damping all the other strings while strumming, he imitated the chugging sound of a train starting and slowly gathering speed.

There have been other songs that have moved me deeply, ones that I had some similar initial difficulty singing. But nothing quite like this.

To be sure, it is a somewhat sad song—an elegy to a bygone era when railways ruled the road. Some of its lyrics are melancholy; "Fifteen cars, and fifteen restless riders..." and, "All the towns and people seem to fade into a bad dream, and the steel rail still ain't heard the news..." and, "This train's got the disappearing railroad blues."

There are hints of Steve's awareness of our country's difficult race relations: "freight yards full of old black men..." and "through the Mississippi darkness..."

There have been other songs that have moved me deeply, ones that I had some similar initial difficulty singing. But nothing quite like this.

There's also the line in the chorus, "I'll be gone five hundred miles..." which hearkens back to a much sadder song, Hedy West's "500 Miles." But I've never had a similar problem with that song.

And besides, despite all those mournful references, "The City of New Orleans" doesn't sound forlorn; it's up-tempo, fun to play, and has mostly major chords. Goodman even gave a nod to the bawdy doggerel penned by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas and Yale law professor Thurman Arnold, when he quoted their first line, "The passengers will please refrain..." near the end of "The City of New Orleans."

So, why was I weeping? Sure, I was aware that Steve died way too young of leukemia at age 36 leaving behind his wife and three young daughters. He was a magnetic performer and a brilliant songwriter with countless songs still left to write. The only time I saw him live, nearly fifty years ago, improvising hilarious blues lyrics with David Bromberg, remains vivid in my memory. But could that explain my getting emotional, nearly forty years after he died?

Maybe it was the beginning of the chorus, "Good morning, America, how are you?" The answer to that question has been pretty cheerless since 2016. Was that it?

When later I told my brother my insights about the song, he pointed out quietly, "We do have other associations with trains..."

What about the lines, "The sons of Pullman porters, the sons of engineers, ride their fathers' magic carpet made of steel?" I've always been a sucker for father and son songs, perhaps due to my often troubled relationship with my own father. But that's the only line in the song about that subject, and it wasn't the only one, or even one that reliably triggered tears.

I kept practicing the song, not daring to bring it out in public. I asked my daughter to play it with me, to add her fiddle and harmony vocals on the chorus. It made things worse. Her fiddle imitation of a train whistle on the intro, before I even started singing, was enough to get me going.

Finally, months after I began working on the song, while attempting it once again with my daughter accompanying me on fiddle, I got a strong hit about what might be going on. Tears streaming down my face, I shared my fresh insight with her. "The first time I ever remember boarding a train was the day our family left our native Hungary in the wake of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution." In the days before we left, our mom had taken my brother and me on tours of her beloved Budapest, telling us repeatedly, "Remember this, we may not ever be back here." In fact, fifty years went by before we saw Budapest again.

Was it too far-fetched to think that a long-buried grief about leaving behind almost everyone and everything I knew when I was eight years old, prompts my present day blues when I sing this song, now more than sixty-five later? Maybe I'm not feeling my own sadness about leaving Hungary; perhaps I am identifying instead with the losses my parents may have felt. My mother was 39, my father 47 when we left Hungary. Both had lived almost all their lives in their native land. I reflected on the courage it takes to leave behind all your relatives and friends, your home, your career, your language....

I remembered a line in the song's chorus: "Don't you know me, I'm your native son?" It's a surprising sentiment in America, a land settled almost entirely by immigrants. I wondered if those who rail against asylum seekers and immigrants these days have given much thought to what their ancestors gave up in coming here, what some people risk now to escape the suffering they have had to endure elsewhere.

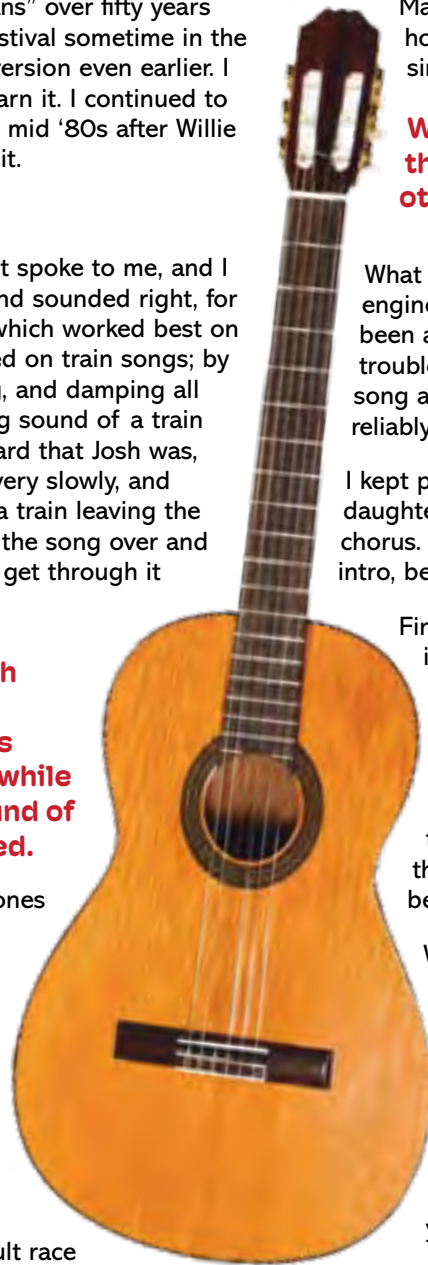
When later I told my brother my insights about the song, he pointed out quietly, "We do have other associations with trains..."

Oh. Right.

In late 1944, four years before my brother and I were born, our mother was forced onto a railroad cattle car in Budapest and taken to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in Germany. A month later, again in a cattle car, she was transferred to Penig, Germany to do slave labor for the Nazis in an airplane parts factory until the end of the war.

Our father carried a visible memento of one of his wartime train encounters. The deformed nail on his big toe was a permanent reminder of having a railroad car door slammed on his foot when he was in the forced labor unit attached to the Hungarian army.

Additionally, our paternal grandparents, along with nearly a dozen members of my father's immediate family were packed into crowded cattle cars bound



for death in Auschwitz. I couldn't help contrasting the cruel nightmare of their last train ride with the sweet images Steve Goodman sees on his journey, "Mothers with their babes asleep, rockin' to the gentle beat, and the rhythm of the rails is all they feel."

I don't know if these insights are adequate explanations for what happens to me when I sing "The City of New Orleans." They're theories that cannot be subjected to rigorous testing using the scientific method. They're not amenable to double blind studies. Nor do they need to be. They're just small examples of our human need to create stories that try to help us understand what may be ultimately unknowable.

We've long known that there are mysteries inside each of us, hidden from others and even—perhaps especially—ourselves; long forgotten events and encounters that shaped us and that, often beneath our awareness, continue to guide our beliefs and actions and affect our lives in small and large ways.



We've long known that there are mysteries inside each of us, hidden from others and even—perhaps especially—ourselves; long forgotten events and encounters that shaped us and that, often beneath our awareness, continue to guide our beliefs and actions and affect our lives in small and large ways. I don't know if my understandings will help me sing the song in public. We'll see. One of the reasons for trying to understand ourselves is that it may help us improve how we live our lives. But it's not the only one.



My experience with "The City of New Orleans" has reaffirmed my faith in the power of great works of art to move us in many different ways. In every medium, including folk song, these works enable us to make discoveries about ourselves, to experience otherwise unavailable, inaccessible emotions, and to find and tell our own stories.



**ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF MASSAGE,
HERBAL & NATURAL MEDICINE at
3684 W. LIBERTY ROAD 734-769-7794**

HOLISTIC MASSAGE THERAPY PROGRAM
Cyclical Enrollment
Integrating Natural Medicine
principles, details
at naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net

**2024 MEDICINAL HERBAL & NATURAL
MEDICINE SERIES**
Open for registration
naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net

PROFESSIONAL AND INTERN CLINIC
For massage and integrated
bodywork therapies
holisticmassageassociatesannarbor.com

Fees at \$35 - \$50 - \$75
per session—by length, no tips.

25% OFF YOUR FIRST ORDER

**BETTER CANNABIS
GROWS HERE.**

CRAFT QUALITY

CAREGIVER VALUES



**WINEWOOD
ORGANICS**

2394 WINEWOOD AVE.
ANN ARBOR, MI

WWW.WINEWOODORGANICS.COM

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.



Yoga instructor Marlene McGrath is the new owner of Yoga Focus Collective, formerly Yoga Focus, as of April 2023. See article on page 30.



Photos by Susan Ayer

Photo by Susan Ayer



Photo by Susan Ayer





What's New in the Community



New Offerings by Established Businesses and Practitioners



The Ann Arbor Women's Group is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to "connecting women in recovery," offering opportunities for women recovering from alcohol and drug addiction to "develop and sustain a healthy, sober lifestyle" through developing a network of recovering friends, having fun in healthy ways, and learning tools for sober living.

The group has existed since 2006, beginning when founder Koos Eisenberg noticed that newly sober women had no idea what to do with their weekends since they had usually previously spent them drinking or using drugs with the only social group they had—people who were doing the same things. She started asking women from her AA group to join her at professional women's basketball games and get pie and coffee afterward. The group held their first three-day retreat that year, and a few months later by chance, Eisenberg met the daughter of a woman who turned out to be the group's first major donor.

Board member Eileen G. explained that "women who make good solid connections in recovery are more apt to stay in recovery." After substance abuse treatment programs, when women return to hanging out with their "partying" friends, they often relapse. These women need new healthy friends to hang out with and new activities. They also may have limited funds, making it harder to pursue healthy and fun activities. The Ann Arbor Women's Group (A2WG) provides low-cost monthly events, with scholarships and transportation help available. They offer an annual three-day retreat on Lake Huron in August with many participants receiving scholarships. They also offer childcare at two weekly 12-step meetings, which is a rarely offered service but vital to many moms in recovery with young children.

Currently, A2WG is working to expand their outreach to women in southeast Michigan and are especially seeking to learn how to reach a more diverse population. They are looking to collaborate with any organizations with members who identify as women and are a part of the recovery community.

Anyone with connections in organizations that may be open to collaborating with A2WG are invited to contact Eileen G. at info@a2womensgroup.org. Anyone who would like more information about the group's monthly and other events can email events@a2womensgroup.org. More information is online at a2womensgroup.org.



Local bodyworker, shamanic healer, and writer for the Crazy Wisdom Community Journal, Kirsten Mowrey recently added two new areas to her work.

In bodywork, she has added a technique called Wheeler Scarwork to her repertoire of modalities. This technique allows her to return scar tissue to pliability and to re-integrate it with surrounding tissue. She said that it is a gentle and relaxing technique that does not typically cause pain, and that it works on scars of any age, new or old. She was able to use the technique to improve 25-year-old scar tissue in her own body and has been using it to help clients with all types of scarring including surgical scars, C-sections, mastectomies, burns, knee and hip replacements, arthroscopies, gender-affirming surgeries, and more. She was excited to have success with a client suffering from Dupuytren's disease, which is a thickening of the fascia in the palm of the hand at the base of the fingers, causing the fingers to curl inward, reducing use of the

hand and sometimes causing pain. Surgeries for this condition, she said, tend to have limited success. The client she used the Wheeler Scarwork technique on has been able to gradually re-open their hands. Mowrey began training in this technique in June of 2023 and has been using it with many of her bodywork clients since then. "I've had some wonderful changes for clients regarding mobility and pain reduction," she said.

She is also offering a new area of community work, based on the work of Francis Weller, author of *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief*, with whom she has been studying for the last three years.

The work, she said, is "about building a community that can nurture our most soulful lives and longings, give us a sense of belonging, and help us begin to build a community body that can hold our deepest dreams." She said that community grief work is important in this turbulent time, and that doing this work can help "return us to a sense of community...collectively holding and metabolizing our grief--not letting it get cold and congealed and heavy, releasing it and letting it change us."

Early in 2024 she will offer a Beauty & Imagination ritual and a Community Grief ritual. Details of both are to be announced.

Kirsten Mowrey can be reached by email at greatlakesrituals@gmail.com. Her website is kirstenmowrey.com.



Yoga instructor Marlene McGrath is the new owner of Yoga Focus Collective, formerly Yoga Focus, as of April 2023.

She bought the yoga studio and business from Karen Ufer who owned and operated it for 30 years from 1993 through 2023. McGrath had been an instructor there since 2001. Two new instructors, Pam Lindberg and Marly Spieser-Schneider have joined McGrath and longtime instructor Alicia Rowe on the teaching staff. Karen Ufer and her husband David Ufer remain on the teaching roster as well.

McGrath said that the renaming of the studio was a decision made together with Ufer when the studio changed hands. It honors the legacy while acknowledging the present and future in a slightly more uncertain time when everything has been changed by the pandemic and other factors. Lindberg and Spieser-Schneider joined the studio after the places they had been teaching at closed (as did many studios throughout the country and world). Many of their students came with them and are happy to have found a new "yoga home" when many studios have simply disappeared, she said.

All of the instructors at Yoga Focus Collective are trained in Iyengar yoga. They have had the longest standing Prenatal and Postnatal Yoga program in town, and possibly in the state of Michigan, having been offered consistently since 2001. They offer Supported Yoga, which is designed to be accessible to students of any age, stage of life, or level of skill or flexibility. They offer beginner level Basic Yoga, and Open Level Yoga which are mixed level classes, at a variety of times throughout the week to accommodate students' schedules. Special topic workshops like Yoga for Bone Health, Yoga for Gardeners, Yoga and Your Pelvic Floor, Yoga for Digestive Health, and many others are offered on a regular basis. Students socialize as part of their yoga community, gathering for lunch after classes at nearby York, and participating in outings to Washtenaw Dairy, Blank Slate, and the Dexter Cider Mill.

Before becoming a yoga instructor, McGrath was a psychiatric social worker at the University of Michigan Hospital. She began training in yoga to deal with stress and continued it when she became pregnant, and afterward. She said that she felt that yoga was "a wonderful companion for reflection, self-learning, self-knowledge, and keeping mind and body healthy" during different stages of life. She enjoys working with people of all ages and believes it to be "a wonderful practice throughout the life cycle."

Yoga Focus Collective is located at 1527 Eastover Place, Suite 5, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. More information is online at yogafocuscollective.com and any questions can be directed through their web contact form.

Upcoming Events

Greenhills School, an independent middle and high school in north Ann Arbor, is hosting author, journalist, and licensed clinical professional counselor Phyllis Fagell on Tuesday, April 2 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at their Campbell Center for the Performing Arts.

She will speak on "Parenting Middle Schoolers." The event is free, but registration is required, and can be done online.

Fagell's newest book, *Middle School Superpowers*, details her advice on helping middle schoolers develop resilience, manage disappointment, self-regulate their emotions, take healthy risks, and recover from setbacks. Her previous book, *Middle School Matters*, discusses key skills Fagell believes tweens need to thrive in middle school and beyond. Fagell works as a school counselor in Washington, D.C. and provides therapy to children, teens, and adults in private practice. She has worked in both public and private schools with students in grades K-12. She writes and deals extensively with issues relevant to middle schoolers like anxiety and depression, taking risks, developing a growth mindset, social turmoil, bullying, gossip, grades and expectations, different learning styles, career development, guiding kids in a changing world, and more. She helps parents navigate tough questions, like communicating effectively with their middle school age children when the adult and tween perspectives can vary so greatly.

This event is part of Greenhills School's Community Speaker Series, which hosts thought leaders on topics relevant to education, parenting, and child development. Past events have included "How Colleges Do Business: Insights from Ron Lieber" in October of 2023, "Raising Teens: Advice for Parents from Dr. Lisa Damour" in September 2023, "The Truth About College Admission with Rick Clark" in September 2023, and "Preparing Students to Participate in Democracy with Jane Coaston" in November 2023.

Greenhills School is located at 850 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Registration and details on the April 2 event are available online at greenhillsschool.org/greenhills-events. Questions can be directed to info@greenhillsschool.org.



New Classes



Ann Arbor Rec & Ed began offering a beginner's furniture making class with woodworking instructor Ken Ray in the fall of 2023.

Ray has been teaching his popular Woodworking with Hand Tools class for almost a decade, with full classes of ten or more students multiple times per year. In this class students use the chisel, plane, and saw to create a project box using hand-cut dovetail joinery. Ray explained that this is an ancient style of joinery that does not use nails, glues, or anything other than the wood itself, cut precisely to fit and hold pieces together. It is not easy for beginners, he said, but he is continually pleased to see students of all ages, genders, and backgrounds create beautiful results.

To add to the skills that new woodworkers can learn in the Ann Arbor community, he decided to offer the beginner's furniture class. In this class students construct a small nightstand using traditional mortise and tenon joinery with tapered legs and a thick cherry wood top. Mortise and tenon joinery is another method of fitting wood together, without nails or glue, dating from a time when those things were not available. Ray said that he is excited to help new generations learn the joinery and the use of non-power tools--skills which are in danger of being lost since they are not widely taught in schools or by parents now.

He hopes to continue developing his woodworking and furniture classes in the future, offering more projects for students to make as well as reaching more students. He would like to include middle and high-school aged children in some classes along with their parents in the future. His own passion for woodworking

arose from the now-defunct University of Michigan Student Woodshop on Thompson Street which he discovered about 20 years ago. The people at the Student Woodshop were happy to teach him everything he wanted to know about woodworking. The craft has been a source of fascination and stress relief for him for many years, and he has continued to seek out training in places like the Connecticut school of Woodworking, the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Maine, and the Vermont Woodworking School. Citing Malcolm Gladwell's idea that true expertise is reached through around ten thousand hours of practice, Ray said that he has reached and surpassed his ten thousand hours. He is excited to continue to pass down these skills and believes that the activity brings people from all ages and backgrounds together, which results not only in beautiful pieces that can be handed down in one's family, but also personal growth through practicing patience and resilience.

The winter session of Ann Arbor Rec & Ed classes begins in January, and all details and online registration can be found at aarecedonline.com. Adult Enrichment Program Supervisor Erica Humphrey can be reached at humphrey@aaps.k12.mi.us with any questions.



The Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME) is offering three-hour "Be Well Retreats" for teachers which can be a part of their professional development days.

Grant funds allow the organization to offer these sessions at no cost to school districts to help support teacher wellness. MC4ME has been offering mindfulness training in various formats to teachers and students for around 10 years and holds a three-day professional training retreat in the summer. Executive Director, and Mindfulness Educator, Rita Benn said that giving these mindfulness tools to teachers helps them to deal with the stress of the profession, maintain their well-being, and keep their enthusiasm for teaching alive. Teaching them to children helps "kids deal with their emotional lives," and shows benefits in their social-emotional development, attention, study habits, grades, and classroom climates.

The three-hour mini retreat/workshop format, said Benn, makes it easier for teachers to participate by bringing it to their district and including it as part of their professional training rather than having to take a day off or a day away from their own families to attend, when there are already "so many pressures on people's lives." It is also a good way to build community within a district, she said. MC4ME began offering these trainings in 2022.

The Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education website is mc4me.org. Districts interested in offering Be Well Retreats can email info@mc4me.org or call (248)770-4782.

Continued on page 33



YOGAFOCUS COLLECTIVE

STUDIO + CLASSES

We are committed to providing you with a supportive environment, expert instruction, and a wide range of classes and workshops.



Classes | Workshops | Prenatal

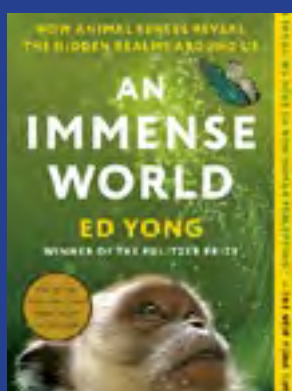
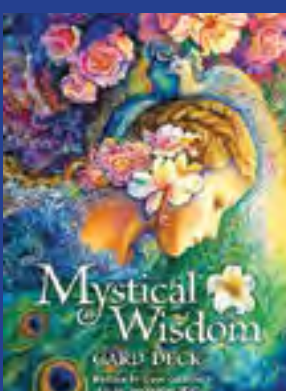
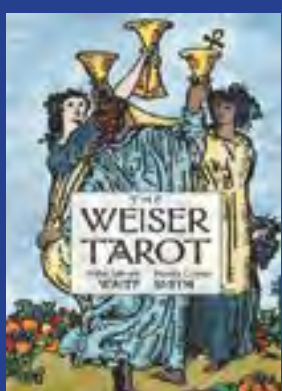
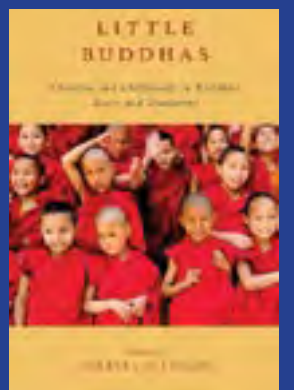
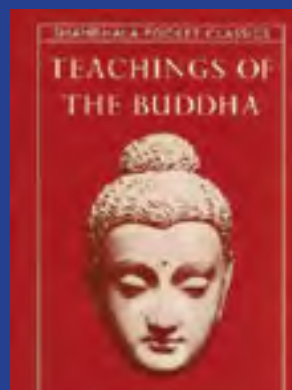
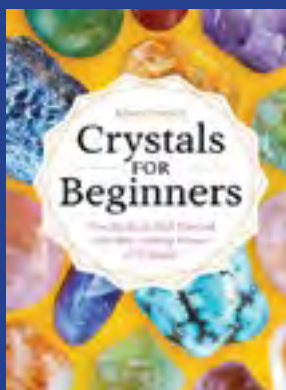
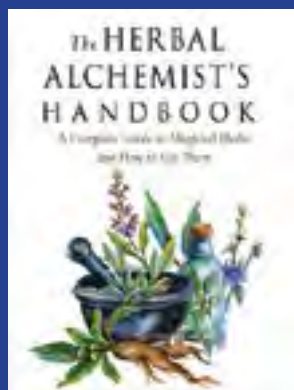
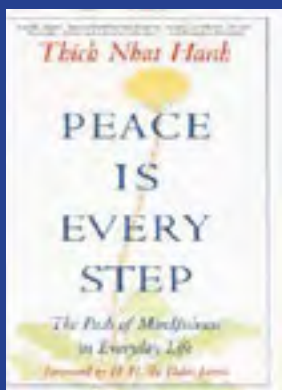
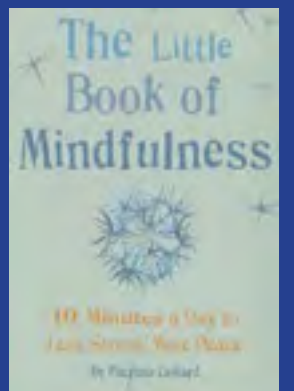
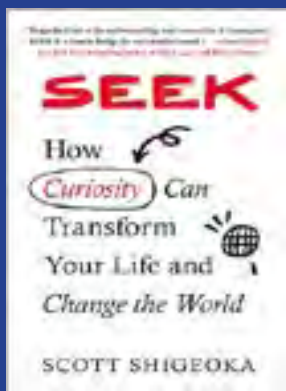
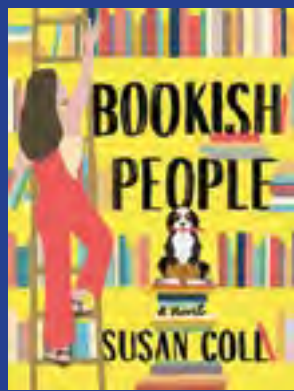
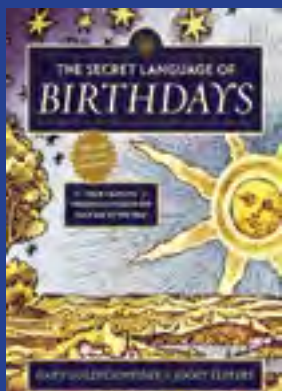
Eastover Professional Center • 1527 Eastover Place, Suite 5, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
email: yogafocusannarbor@gmail.com • Website: yogafocuscollective.com
Facebook | Instagram

ShopCrazyWisdom.com



Books, tarot, games, toys, blank journals, ebooks, audio books & more

Browse the millions of book titles available and thousands of items from gift, game, and sidelines vendors





What's New in the Community



Continued from page 31

New Practitioners and Businesses



The Children's Healing Center, a first-of-its-kind year-round recreational facility designed to allow children with weakened immune systems to play, learn, and socialize in as close to a germ-free environment as possible, is building its second location in Ypsilanti Township.

The original center is located in Grand Rapids and opened in 2015. It was the brainchild of CHC founder and CEO Amanda Barbour, who was diagnosed with Stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma just before turning 22. She received treatment at the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, delaying her chosen career in architecture and isolating her from friends and family while she underwent doctor appointments, surgeries, and chemotherapy. She met children at the hospital who were struggling not only with their life-threatening illnesses but also with the isolation and inability to enjoy things others took for granted, like dinner at a restaurant or birthday parties with friends, without fear of getting sick and further harming their health.

After her successful battle with cancer, Barbour continued her budding architecture career, but she began dreaming and planning what would become the Children's Healing Center. After five years of gathering community support while also working full-time, she launched the center and became its Executive Director, and more recently, CEO.

Since the Grand Rapids Center opened, several families from the Ann Arbor area have traveled to visit so their high-risk children could have some fun and socialization. Barbour said that the Ann Arbor area was a natural location for the second location since the community "celebrates philanthropy, which is central to our mission," and is near several children's hospitals and other health care facilities, including the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, which has partnered with CHC in the past and will continue to do so with the new facility.

The new location will be on South Huron Street north of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's office and across from Brinker Way. Ground was broken in July of 2023. It has broad community support and is supported by a \$2 million grant from the state of Michigan and a \$1.25 million matching gift from The Jones Family Foundation. The 11,000 square foot facility will feature a total absence of carpet, fabric, and other materials that harbor germs, instead using vinyl and other easily cleanable materials; microbial-resistant surfaces; a designated HEPA air filtration system and positive pressurization to maintain air quality; and the use of filtered tap water along with technology that ensures there is not standing water. The Center provides programming in STEAM subjects, fitness, culture, and other disciplines at no cost for qualifying children from birth to age 26. Siblings are invited to participate in all programming, and the Center regularly provides programs for parents and caregivers. Children who qualify for services generally have cancer, autoimmune disorders, organ transplants, congenital heart defects, sickle cell, or other medically complex conditions that leaves them at high risk for infection.

Lorrie Beaumont, Executive Director of the new Southeast Site, said that the target to open the facility is summer of 2024. She said that the team hopes to open in time to offer summer camps. In the meantime, they have been offering some pop-up events every few months for families with children in the area who are healthy enough to "be out and about in a separate area away from the public." To participate, families should email the Center to inquire whether they are eligible. Beaumont previously worked as the Chief Learning Officer at the Ann Arbor Hands On Museum and intends to partner with the Hands on Museum for future events. She said that in preparation for the facility opening she will be working with area doctors to introduce the space and concept so that they may begin to refer patients. Already, about 15 or 20 local families have participated in pop-up events, and Beaumont said that the original center

serves about 400 families in West Michigan. Due to the number of children's hospitals close to the new site, she expects to eventually serve two to three times that many families here.

Lorrie Beaumont can be reached by email at lbeaumont@childrenshealingcenter.org. More information is online at childrenshealing.org.



Misty Handmade Boutique & Crystals opened on Zeeb Road in West Ann Arbor in January of 2023.

Owner Rachel Nicole had long desired to open a shop, and she felt Ann Arbor needed and wanted the kind of store she envisioned: one that brings together handmade items from over 60 local crafters. With a background in selling candles and crystals in Downriver area shops and online, when she saw the available retail space in the plaza between two popular restaurants (Metzger's and Grand Traverse Pie Company), she knew it would be the perfect spot to realize her vision. The crystals portion of the store is an extension of her online business which she described as her primary job. All other items in the store are handmade. Products include wall art, candles, bath products, clothing, tumblers, pet items, wooden signs, jewelry, and more. One of the newest arrivals are "gear clocks,"--unique clocks made with car gears and chains. Rachel described the shop as having "a little something for everyone—gifts, décor, and things to treat yourself." The store hosts occasional events with guest vendors and special experiences like "permanent jewelry" pop-ups in which customers can get long-lasting bracelets that are welded together to be worn as long as someone wants. The shop is open Wednesdays through Sunday with varying hours.

Misty Handmade Boutique & Crystals is located at 299 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. More information about hours, events, and products is on Facebook at facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087239694638. Rachel Nicole can be reached via email at Mistymhandmadeboutique@gmail.com.



Musician Jesse Morgan became a board-certified Music Therapist in October of 2021, and he began working as a fellow at Mott Children's Hospital in January of 2022.

While this career path is a later-life development (he is 51), he said that he had been working on elements of what he does now his whole life. He was a high school English teacher in Dearborn Heights and Oxford, and enjoyed being the students' yearbook advisor; but when his paternal grandparents passed away within a week of each other, he realized that life was too finite to stick to the "safer" path and decided he would pursue his passion for music fully "even if it was foolish." He said he had been struggling with depression because he had been "denying [him]self what [he] most wanted to do." Music had always helped Morgan with difficult feelings,

Continued on page 34



What's New in the Community



Continued from page 33

and he wanted to be able to both help people through music and to develop his musicianship to his greatest potential.

Piano is Morgan's main instrument, but he also uses his voice, guitar, ukulele, and other instruments. At Mott, he works in the pediatric cardiology unit, largely with newly born babies. He said, "there are so many intense things happening" there, and that it can get "very emotional and heavy." When he plays and sings for the babies, he said he can calm them by matching his tempo with their breathing, and then slowing it down. He said he can sometimes take a baby from screaming in distress to sleeping in a short period of time. He said this is an example of "meeting the patient or client where they are" which is huge part of what he does.

Morgan explained that there are four areas of music therapy: improvisation, recreation, songwriting and composition, and receptive music therapy (listening to a patient or client sing or play). Music therapy interventions always fall within one of those areas, though there are many different types and styles used. At the hospital, he said, it's important to "size people up" quickly, to know what they might need in the moment. He always asks what people are comfortable with, asks if they've ever played an instrument or improvised before, and seeks to connect with them.

He said that he considers himself a community music therapist. He explained that while a person may have a problem or illness, such as depression, that exists within a society and community, not within a vacuum. One of his past projects was a nonprofit in Ypsilanti called Community Records, which focused on community building and songwriting for economically-disadvantaged kids.

Outside of his work at the hospital, he has a private practice for music therapy, music lessons, performance, and composition. One of his clients is an adult dealing with dementia. Morgan connects with him by playing music the man remembers from his youth. Another is an adult who is working through extreme shyness to develop more connection with people and another adult is dealing with trauma.

Morgan gives music lessons to children as young as four and enjoys working with people of all ages. He can help people deal with trauma, adverse childhood experiences, depression, anxiety, and work with people who are making meaning or trying to make sense of a difficult loss or life event. He has his own experiences of loss and trauma to draw from and is comfortable sitting with people in their pain as part of the healing process. Music, he said, is "the perfect kind of tool to help people really feel their feelings and do whatever they need to do."

More information about Jesse Morgan is online at jessemorganmusictherapy.com. He can be reached by phone at (734) 355-1501 or by email at jessemusictherapy@gmail.com. His music therapy studio is located at 726 Brooks, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Karen Lang opened her massage practice, Revitalize Massage & Wellness, in August of 2023.

She became a licensed massage therapist after training at the Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal, and Natural Medicine. She is also certified in manual lymph drainage by the Academy of Lymphatic Studies and trained in Oncology and Hospital Massage through Corewell (Beaumont) Health's Integrative Medicine, and in Craniosacral Therapy through the Upledger Institute. She is also a Reiki practitioner, trained through Corewell (Beaumont) Health's Integrative Medicine Reiki training program and Dona Duke, RMT. She said that she promotes holistic health through a blend of relaxation massage, craniosacral therapy, reiki, lymphatic wellness, and oncology massage where relevant. "My philosophy centers around the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit, recognizing the profound impact each has on our overall well-being," she said.



Opening her business was a significant career change for her, from working as an administrator at the University of Michigan and previously working in finance. She said that "it was during a massage that I felt called to the incredible profession of massage therapy." She said that she believes deeply in the transformative power of touch, and that she understands that many people feel "overworked and under-well." In her relaxation massage services, she said "I aim to create a haven where my clients can find solace from the demands of their daily lives, fostering an environment of tranquility and rejuvenation."

Regarding her oncology massage specialty, she said "individuals navigating the challenges of cancer treatment deserve compassionate and personalized care that addresses not only their physical discomfort but also their emotional and spiritual well-being."

One of Lang's goals is to make self-care affordable. Discounts are available to those in cancer treatment and those with chronic health conditions. She said that if pricing discourages someone from seeking self-care, they are welcome to reach out to work something out for their budget. She does not accept tips, preferring to charge what she needs to do this work upfront and avoid confusion or awkwardness around what more may be expected.

Starting in January, Lang will be working out of the Center for Sacred Living at 210 Little Lake Drive in West Ann Arbor.

Revitalize Massage & Wellness website is revitalizemassagewellnessllc.com. Karen Lang can be reached by email at langkarenr@gmail.com or by phone at (734) 489-1547.



Many Hands Lifesharing Community, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a unique housing and care community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Washtenaw County, has secured a 90-acre parcel of land on Baker Road, Dexter just outside of Ann Arbor.

Board Chair and Founder Kerry Kafafian explained that Many Hands intends to develop a farmstead community with "nurturing, family-like homes" for individuals with IDD and their caregivers. Nothing similar currently exists in Michigan. There are more than 7,000 people in Washtenaw County living with IDD, including severe autism, she said. At least 1,000 adults need 24/7 care from family or professional caregivers, and there is a severe shortage of residential options and care workers for these individuals. Existing facilities often have long waiting lists. Additionally, individuals with IDD over age 26 have aged out of school-based programs but have not outgrown the need for life enrichment opportunities these programs offer.

Using the Lifesharing model, a concept that is new to our state, but which has been used in other communities across the country, Many Hands will eventually help with all of these needs in Washtenaw County. Once fully built out and realized, the community will be home to 100 people, one third of whom will be adults living with IDD, and the other two thirds will be staff, who will live alongside IDD residents, allowing for a close-knit environment which enhances the quality of care, explained Kafafian. In addition to the large residential homes, the site will host a café, a farm growing fresh produce for residents, a petting farm open to the public, miles of accessible pathways, a craft house, an auditorium/gymnasium, a therapeutic pool, and more. Non-resident adults with IDD will be able to take advantage of many of the features of the site and will be able to connect with the broader community. Over sixty percent of the land will remain agricultural or natural, and the site will feature systems to reduce runoff into Mills Creek and sustainable structures with solar power systems.

Kafafian said that the Lifesharing model with caregivers and people living with IDD living alongside one another "promises a more holistic and compassionate approach to disability care, while at the same time providing much-needed affordable housing and valuable professional growth and training opportunities to caregivers." It has worked well in New York and Pennsylvania, where the idea has been around for over sixty years, but those communities are mostly private pay with supplementation by donations. Most families supporting a person with

IDD do not have the ability to pay for something like this at an annual cost of around fifty thousand dollars. Many Hands plans in part to take advantage of federal funding provided by habilitation support waivers through Medicaid to help make the program accessible. Private donations will fund other aspects of the project. Many Hands is partnering with Brio Living Services (formerly United Methodist Retirement Communities) as the developer and Jan Culbertson as the sustainability architect. They are actively raising funds for site work, and Kafafian said that she expects the first group of residents to move into their homes in 2025.

Kafafian's vision of Many Hands started when her own son, now 24 years old, was seven or eight and it became clear to her that he would need lifelong care due to his severe cognitive and developmental disabilities. He is very social, she explained, but due to the fact that day programs do not offer the level of care he needs and school programs age out at 26, he has few options to be part of a community. This project is the culmination of many years of research, collaboration with other family members of people with IDD, and work to create a place where she could feel good about her son and others like him living. "Everyone yearns to belong and deserves to be part of a community," she said. "The many social aspects built into our model will nurture this most human desire, and foster community, while providing residents safety and a greater sense of independence not available to them in the larger world."

More information about Many Hands Lifesharing Community is online at manyhandslc.org. Kerry Kafafian can be reached by email at kerry@manyhandslc.org or by phone at (734) 355-0991.

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home."
 - Edith Sitwell



Submit your listing for the May through August 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 (May thru August 2024) is March 1, 2024.

Now Hiring: Ad Sales Manager

Crazy Wisdom Journal is looking for an Ad Sales Manager, to start in the spring of 2024. The job averages 8 hours per week (with an ebb and flow during our 4-month publishing cycle). Help to maintain our print advertising base, and build it up. We must increase our digital ad sales, and this new Ad Sales Manager will need to have knowledge and ideas to help us do that. Experience in sales, especially Ad Sales, is necessary. Also, a good sense of what our publication is about, and its themes. It is locally/regionally focused, and in that domain, it is one of the very best of its kind in the country. Our Ad Sales Manager has to "get that" and be proud to be selling advertising for the *Crazy Wisdom Journal* and its related offerings.

\$25 per hour base pay, plus solid commission fees above a certain level of ad revenue. **Room to grow the base pay** (and the commissions) if you can help re-invent the business model with us, and thereby grow our ad sales.

This job will start in March and will include being oriented and trained by our current Ad Sales Manager, Tana Dean. This is a good job for someone who has 8 hours per week to devote to this, and loves what we do in the Ann Arbor community, and can make a real contribution to our ad sales, and to our team.

Please send cover note, and resume to: billz@crazywisdom.net.



A new series of picture books is coming this spring. Keep your eyes out for *Wojer & the Wizard of the Wood*, the first in the series featuring a whole cast of new characters learning and growing in the village of Fox Hollow.

"A modern version of Beatrix Potter..." —Adam Rex, author/illustrator of *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*

"Once again, I must sing your praises... what a wonderful story! I am delighted by this magical world you have created. There is a definite sense of place in these books and I delighted in the community you have brought to life."
 —Wendy Brotherlin, author/screenwriter

Learn more at:
furandfeatherfriends.com/fox-hollow-tales

What's New at Crazy Wisdom



Many people in southeastern Michigan will be excited to know that after being closed since February 15, 2022, Crazy Wisdom Bookstore reopened on December 1, 2023 under the same ownership of Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter, the couple who have shepherded the store forward over the last 30+ years.

New store manager Chandra Mitchel was brought on board in late August 2023 to prepare the store for its new phase. Operations have been streamlined: the store is open Wednesday through Saturday, the former Tea Room is not re-opening, and some products are no longer being carried. The upstairs (second floor) area is being remodeled, and all of the book and retail sales will be on the first floor. Crazy Wisdom will host events and talks and book-signings and gatherings in a redecorated space that was once the Tea Room. The Community Room is being refurbished, and will continue to be rented out for classes, workshops, drum circles, meditation groups, and book discussion groups. The second floor spaces, she said, should be ready in late March of 2024. Events will be announced later, but she anticipates that signature Crazy Wisdom events like Witches Night Out, Poetry Nights, and Salon nights will be returning, as well as author talks, storytelling nights, the Death Café, occasional live music or chant nights, and more. People will be able to rent the space for private events, and a small caterer's kitchen will be available. Though the Tea Room will not be returning, Mitchel said, some events may offer grab-and-go drinks and packaged snacks.



New store manager Chandra Mitchel

The store still offers many of its familiar products: jewelry, crystals, tarot decks, candles and incense, art, statues, calendars, cards, journals, gift items, and of course, books. Mitchel said that the store will feel like home to returning customers. The books have been somewhat re-organized, but all of the core topics are represented: spirituality and the world's wisdom traditions; transpersonal and body/mind psychotherapies; integrative, holistic and herbal medicine and healing; conscious living and sustainability; magic and esoteric and indigenous traditions; altered states of consciousness; and mindfulness and meditation. The bookstore will continue to give special focus to Buddhism, wicca and paganism, and women's spirituality, as it has done for its entire 40+ year history. There will also be books of topical interest and general non-fiction, including books on culture and society, as well as on politics and world affairs. The store will continue to carry quality fiction, and also thematically aligned kids' books.

Prior to joining the Crazy Wisdom team, Mitchel was General Manager at Bloom City Club for several years; prior to this she had been a book buyer at Whole Foods. She has been making jewelry for a long time and is interested in crystals and their metaphysical properties, as well as spirituality, and natural and herbal medicine. She called the opportunity "right up my alley," and said she's very excited to be back in a retail environment talking to people and helping them find what they are looking for. Crazy Wisdom carries a lot of books that people



can only find online, she said, and even though book buying has changed a lot in the last couple of decades, “book buyers still want to browse and flip through the pages; they still want to hold the book, look at the cover, read a few paragraphs, and touch the book before they buy it.” She feels that the desire for this experience will never really go away even though electronic books are so widely available. “We still want to see the books on our bookshelves; there’s just something about them,” she said.

Bookstore assistant Julia Rhodes is also interested in and knowledgeable about the books on Crazy Wisdom’s shelves, said Mitchel. Rhodes has a degree in comparative religions and “reads like crazy,” she said. Mitchel said she feels very grateful to be helping usher in Crazy Wisdom’s newest iteration and looks forward to working with the community.

Crazy Wisdom was founded in 1982, by Aura Glaser, a practicing Tibetan Buddhist, who was also instrumental in founding Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Center, which is based in Ann Arbor. In 1989, she sold the bookstore to Bill Zirinsky and Jonathan Ellis, with Zirinsky putting in the capital, and Ellis overseeing the bookstore management. Ellis had been the program director at Canterbury House, the Episcopal Campus Ministry at U-M, and he had also worked for the Edgar Cayce Foundation. Even earlier, he had been involved in the presidential campaigns of Robert F. Kennedy, George McGovern, and Ted Kennedy. Zirinsky had come of age as a U-M student, in Ann Arbor’s countercultural scene of the 1970’s; and after graduating, he co-founded and co-edited the *Alchemist of Ann Arbor*, a progressive, alternative monthly which was published in town starting in 1978. He’d also been trained as a Gestalt therapist at the Pellin Institute and studied Tibetan Buddhism at the Buddhist-oriented Naropa College in Boulder. Later on, he worked at the New York Times Book Company as an Assistant Editor.



Ellis, who had always worked with non-profits, was surprised by the stresses of running a “for-profit” bookstore, and departed after a few months, though he continued on as a sage adviser for many years, and helped to administer various “special projects” the store engaged in.

Zirinsky cajoled his then-girlfriend, Ruth Schekter, to move from Little Italy’s Mulberry Street in Manhattan to Ann Arbor. Right away, she found a place for herself at Crazy Wisdom, when it was located in a small retail space on North Fourth Avenue. Schekter, herself, was also a U-M graduate (some years later than Zirinsky), having majored in European History. Schekter, with an aesthetic eye and good taste and a love for crafts, oversaw all the store’s lovely jewelry and art and other “sidelines” while Zirinsky handled the book inventory.

The bookstore slowly deepened its range of books, adding well-curated book sections in the areas of psychology, sustainability, integrative medicine and healing, shamanism, and many other areas. The owners bought a building on South Main Street in 1997, and then gutted and renovated that building. They made a big move to that space (its current space) in the spring of 1999. They added a Tea Room on the second floor, which hosted live music every Friday and Saturday night for more than 20 years. The staff size went from six to eighteen, and the inventory increased dramatically in their larger space. Its downtown location became a destination for like-minded souls from all over southeastern



Michigan. Over the years, they also relied greatly on longtime managers such as Carol Karr, Rachel Pastiva, Jerri Dodge, and Sarah Newland to run the store and tea room, and to order and display and sell the merchandise and tea products. Carol Karr, multi-talented and creative, remains deeply involved, after 27 years, and she is the Production and Design Editor for the *Crazy Wisdom Journal*.

When they closed the bookstore and tea room in 2022, they were imagining they would sell the bookstore/tearoom, but they also noted at the time that the closing might just turn out to be a sabbatical. Soon after the closing, Zirinsky and former CW bookstore manager, Rachel Pastiva, began meeting with potential buyers. All in all, they spoke to 21 different potential buyers — individuals and couples—including one appealing younger couple they met with seven times, and a few other seemingly good prospects. But they did not find the right match. At the same time, they had been having numerous conversations about what a new incarnation of Crazy Wisdom might look like. Zirinsky wanted a smaller store, simpler to operate, no food service, smaller staff, open many fewer hours. Pastiva wanted a more focused and leaner book inventory, and streamlined operations.

Zirinsky, with Pastiva mapping the route, decided to reopen the bookstore, but have it be open only four days a week, and have the store closed six weeks each year, so “the motor wouldn’t be running all the time, and so the manager would get a chance to breathe.” Still, the essential focus would remain the same: to be a “bookstore about consciousness” and an oasis for people searching in their lives—spiritually, psychologically, and in terms of health, healing and conscious living.

For Zirinsky, the alignment of the brick-and-mortar bookstore with its publishing “arm” — the *Crazy Wisdom Journal* and the *Crazy Wisdom Biweekly* — had been a natural fit and aggregator for decades, and he missed the store’s brick-and-mortar presence downtown. Pastiva, currently the Director of the Friends of the Ann Arbor District Library, and the Founder and President of the Ann Arbor Book Society, had been Crazy Wisdom’s bookstore manager for 11 years. According to Zirinsky, Pastiva was vital to the planning of the latest incarnation of the bookstore and has been pivotal in overseeing the restocking and reconceptualizing of the bookstore. She will stay involved as the store’s Operations Partner. Co-owner Ruth Schekter has preferred to stay focused on family life at this stage. Zirinsky and Schekter have had four children, and their youngest, Grace, is a sophomore at Pioneer High School in Ann Arbor.

Crazy Wisdom Bookstore is located at 114 South Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 and more information is online at crazywisdom.net. The store can be reached by phone at (734) 665-2757 and Chandra Mitchel can be reached by email at Chandra@crazywisdom.net. Bill Zirinsky can be reached at: billz@crazywisdom.net. Rachel Pastiva can be reached at: rachel@crazywisdom.net.

Rachel Pastiva, Operations Partner, has been key to the reimagining and reopening of the bookstore.



LEAPS OF FAITH

TALES OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

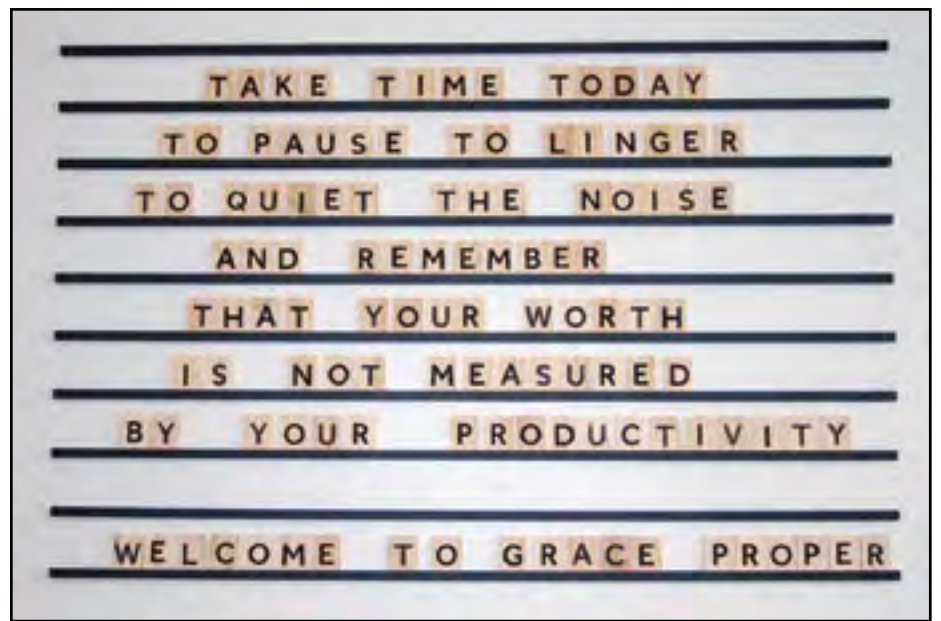
By Laurel Decker
Photos by Susan Ayer

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.

Grace Proper

8071 Main St.
Dexter, MI 48130
(734) 726-4048
IG: @Grace_Proper
www.graceproper.com
Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

When I first heard about Dexter, Michigan's new boutique gift shop called Grace Proper, a memory passed through my mind. It was from roughly four years ago when I worked at a high-end retail store in Ann Arbor. I was getting to know a fellow employee named Breana Jackson as we worked on what the company referred to as *standards*—tidying up products to display them perfectly folding t-shirts symmetrically, lining up candle labels, and arranging sizes from smallest to largest. In this memory, Jackson told me where she lived and why she and her husband Dan and their two daughters loved the community of Dexter. She beamed about their country home, great schools, and proximity to Ann Arbor that made them fall in love with the town. She said another reason the Jacksons



We set a coffee/interview date where I learned how she went from our conversation years ago as fellow employees to now being surrounded by the real-life manifestation of her dream.

chose Dexter was that she eventually hoped to open a shop on bucolic Main Street which attracts shoppers and diners from surrounding cities.

As she spoke, Jackson reached out to organize the dresses hanging in front of her, leaving enough room for her 9-month-pregnant belly. Baby number three would join their family any day now. I wondered how many more days I would be lucky enough to work with this stylish and easy-going mom and whether she would be back after the baby was born. As it turns out, Jackson and I worked together one more time, right after she gave birth to their third daughter, and just before the pandemic emerged along with an ambiguous future. Soon we were both furloughed when the store closed to comply with Covid-19 mandates.

Imagine my surprise when I walked into Grace Proper recently to see my friend—looking exactly as I remembered her—beaming from behind the counter of her own store. We hugged, caught up a little, and I asked if she would like to be interviewed for our Leaps of Faith column to share how the pandemic affected her journey as a small business owner. We set a coffee/interview date where I learned how she went from our conversation years ago as fellow employees to now being surrounded by the real-life manifestation of her dream.

As much as someone would describe me as an extrovert, most of my thoughts and processing stay inside my head. The store allows me to have an outlet where I feel like I'm sharing in the rawest way possible.

— Breana Jackson



Breana Jackson

Laurel Decker: Were there any unexpected benefits that came from opening during the pandemic? If so, what were they and why do you think it's unique to the pandemic?

Breana Jackson: Since we weren't a store front or online business yet, it was a daydream mentality. However, being the mom of three kids ages four and under during lockdown, the business became one of the only places my brain could escape to and find peace. I clung to it with the deepest depths of my soul and grew in my confidence of what I could share.

Laurel Decker: What is the most useful personal skill or trait that you, and/or your staff, have implemented to keep the business going?

Breana Jackson: Perseverance and a purpose. At times it felt like having an actual store front might never happen, but in my gut, I truly felt the community needed it. I spent years soaking up what I could in other retail/small business locations so when the time came, I was ready. I like to think that now that we are open, the purpose gets to come through more and make an impact. It's that connection that keeps the business going.

Though it is not a large store, Jackson has packed it tastefully with fun, yet sophisticated products that are community minded.



I did not realize how easy it would be to lose myself in being a mother. Grace Proper, although it has such a huge influence from those three graces of mine, is a pour directly out of who I am as a person—mother or not.

— Breana Jackson



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

Breana Jackson: I've known my entire life that I wanted to have kids. I have always felt that I had an exceptional amount of love in my soul and my girls have inspired so much of what I want out of life. They have always been my first choice; however, I did not realize how easy it would be to lose myself in being a mother. Grace Proper, although it has such a huge influence from those three graces of mine, is a pour directly out of who I am as a person—mother or not. It is an artistic outlet for all facets of my thoughts, dreams, and emotions. Just like a painter pours their feelings into their canvas, I take my whirlwind of life and channel it into Grace Proper. That release and connection helps me persist every time.

Laurel Decker: When did you first start planning to open the business and when did you actually open the doors?

Breana Jackson: I first started planning the business in late 2017. We incorporated in spring of 2018 but didn't open the doors until August 2023.

Laurel Decker: How does it feel to see your business operating after all of that planning and work to get to this point?

Breana Jackson: It's a flood of emotion. It's pride, it's calm, it's contentment. As much as someone would describe me as an extrovert, most of my thoughts and processing stay inside my head. The store allows me to have an outlet where I feel like I'm sharing in the rawest way possible.

Laurel Decker: Is there anything else would you like our community to know about your business?

Breana Jackson: So many want to put the store into a box with a label on it. The truth is, as much as the store is mine, my hope is that Grace Proper can really be a little bit of something for everyone. The design is that we will hold tools to help people connect with themselves and others. To some that's creating a space in their home to allow for meditation, for others that might be sending a card to let them know you care, or helping a child find their creative outlet. All of these things help us live lives more connected and more at peace.

On the morning that Jackson and I sat down for coffee, she was halfway into sharing her story when I simply had to ask, friend to friend, how it felt to stand in the actual store she had told me about when it was still an idea. "I am not a public crier, but I get emotional when I see people find something meaningful as I'm curating and placing things on the shelf. It feels like what I'm meant to be doing." Immediately I teared up. She might be good at keeping the public tears in check, but I felt so much joy for Jackson in that full circle moment that I couldn't help myself.

After coffee, we walked across the street to open Grace Proper for the day. I needed gifts for two upcoming birthdays. As soon as I started looking around, I knew this could take a while. Not only because I enjoyed the aesthetic environment, but also because there were so many unique items I had never seen before. Though it is not a large store, Jackson has packed it tastefully with fun, yet sophisticated products that are community minded: candles made in Detroit by a woman who immigrated from Romania, cards made in Mt. Pleasant, and a sun catcher made in Pinckney that I couldn't resist buying as a birthday present to myself after I found the perfect gifts for my friends. As I shopped and we talked, Jackson reached for the stack of colorful dishes next to the handmade wooden spoons I was admiring. I laughed when she straightened them out meticulously and said, "It's way more fun doing 'standards' in my own store."

###



LEAPS OF FAITH

TALES OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

By Laurel Decker
Photos by Susan Ayer

Whitepine Studios

105 W. Michigan Avenue
Saline, MI
(734) 330-2079
info@whitepinestudios.org
www.whitepinestudios.org
Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
The Gallery is open during events or by appointment on the weekends.

When artist Kaili Dence neared the end of her senior year at the University of Michigan in the spring of 2020, she received a strange message telling her that due to Covid-19 stay-at-home mandates, students must pick up all unfinished art pieces and vacate campus until further notice. Dence was stunned. She was also stuck trying to figure out how to transport the artwork she had worked tirelessly on—three massive 7'x7' canvases. Instead of showcasing her works as the apex of her time at U of M, she would have to store them.

Picking up their daughter and her senior project was an emotional experience for Randall and Joanne Dence. As they carefully loaded up a U-Haul at the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design, they could see that Kaili was crying—a rarity for her. For the family of four, including son Tyler, the only option was to rally for each other. The following weeks felt surreal as there were no finals,



We provide a place for local artists to create and display their works and for residents to be exposed to new art forms and ideas. We provide classes and programs for aspiring artists of all ages to build their skill levels and express their creativity. We also attract visitors that can shop and dine at the surrounding businesses. Our goal is to be the key player in a creative hub that enhances the cultural, economic, and social well-being of our community.

no graduation party, and diplomas were received in a “drive-by graduation” with horns honking from the safety and containment of separate vehicles.

Fast forward to the summer of 2023, and I stood in an elegant gallery in downtown Saline, Michigan looking at a variety of impressive 2D and 3D artwork. I was there to learn how Whitepine Studios went from that upsetting message in 2020 to a thriving women-founded business that had already outgrown its first studio location (opened in 2021). Here is what I learned about their journey from setback to success.

Laurel Decker: Why did you move from your first space into this one?

Whitepine Studios: Our original space was just across the street from where we are now. Our new space is nearly three times as large and allowed us to greatly expand our art adventure camp offerings. This captivating space also permitted



Kaili Dence

When artist Kaili Dence neared the end of her senior year at the University of Michigan in the spring of 2020, she received a strange message telling her that due to Covid-19 stay-at-home mandates, students must pick up all unfinished art pieces and vacate campus until further notice.

us to offer a dedicated gallery space that features the artworks of leading local artists. Our new venue is truly eye-catching, and we encourage those who have not seen it to stop by.

Laurel Decker: Why did you decided to open this particular business in such an uncertain time?

Whitepine Studios: The idea for the business grew from Kaili's experiences providing art lessons over Zoom during the Covid lockdown. While some children readily took to online learning, others seemed to struggle in the absence of more personal interaction and feedback. Based on our desire to meet the needs of all types of learners we decided to open Whitepine Studios in the summer of 2021 and offer classes and workshops for all ages and abilities. At this time, we also developed a full mobile studio that could take our classes to those not yet comfortable with coming to our studio...we retain the mobile studio today and still provide art classes to a wide variety of learning and living communities.



Whitepine Studios, like many small businesses, was launched over meetings at the family's kitchen table.



Laurel Decker: Where/how did you do most of the planning while under stay-at-home mandates?

Whitepine Studios: Whitepine Studios, like many small businesses, was launched over meetings at the family's kitchen table. We are a women-owned business, but all the family members participated in the planning and launch of the business.

Laurel Decker: Were there any unexpected benefits that came from opening during/following the pandemic? If so, what were they and why do you think it's unique to the pandemic?

Whitepine Studios: We opened our studio in the summer of 2023 and we were profoundly humbled by the excitement and joy we saw in the faces of our young campers and birthday party participants. The need to create and socialize is an extremely important part of the human condition. We frequently hear comments like "best birthday party ever" or "my child's whole outlook has changed."

Laurel Decker: Does Covid still impact your business, and if so, then in what ways?

Whitepine Studios: Yes, we still see some impact from covid on our business, but it is minimal. If a client feels unwell, we allow them to reschedule. As I mentioned, we also provide a complete mobile studio so we can come to the client's school, office, or home. We have even done outdoor painting parties if requested.

Laurel Decker: Is there a memorable moment, good or bad, associated with having a business during such an uncertain time?



Heart to Heart Shamanic Healing



Harmony of Spirit for Life

Rev. Judy Liu Ramsey
Animal Chaplain & Practitioner

for information or appointment, contact: info@judynamsey.net
Website <https://JudyRamsey.net>

- *Shamanic healing for people & animals
- *Support for life changes, loss & grief
- *Support for healing trauma & PTSD
- *Classes in shamanic practice
- *Ceremony for clearing, healing, bonding

Whitepine Studios: We were very confident that we had the right business model and team to thrive in a post-Covid world. But clearly, we were taken-aback by the overwhelming response we received to our first few birthday painting pARTys. Seeing the expressions of the birthday girl or boy having their first birthday party with friends and pizza made all the work and planning worthwhile. And frankly, sometimes the moms were just as excited to provide a unique custom birthday party experience after years of just close family members.

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

Whitepine Studios: We are motivated by all the positive feedback and support we have received from our students, celebrants, customers, artists, and community members. The Whitepine Studios motto has always been "Inspiring the Artist Inside" but often our art students inspire us.

Laurel Decker: How do you see the studio and gallery impacting the community now and in the future? And why is this meaningful to you?

Whitepine Studios: We see Whitepine Studios providing a host of benefits for the community. We provide a place for local artists to create and display their works and for residents to be exposed to new art forms and ideas. We provide classes and programs for aspiring artists of all ages to build their skill levels and express their creativity. We also attract visitors that can shop and dine at the surrounding businesses. Our goal is to be the key player in a creative hub that enhances the cultural, economic, and social well-being of our community.

Laurel Decker: As a family business, what are the skills and traits that individuals contribute to the business? Is there anyone else who contributes significantly?

Whitepine Studios: We each bring our unique skill sets to the business: (full bios at whitepinestudios.org)

Kaili Dence is the Creative Director. Kaili is responsible for setting the creative direction and teaching many of our classes.

Joanne Dence is the Managing Director. Joanne is responsible for operations and staffing.

Randall Dence is the Marketing Director. Randall is responsible for marketing and finance.

Tyler Dence is Technical Director. Tyler is responsible for our hardware and software technology platform.

Tara Joshi is Gallery Manager. Tara is responsible for gallery design and management.

Holly Ann Stewart is a Resident Art Instructor. Holly Ann is a lead art instructor for our classes and camps and also provides private art lessons.

During our interview, the Dences repeatedly attributed the growth of Whitepine Studios to community support—a community eager to reconnect following the restrictions on gathering during the pandemic. They emphasized how fortunate they were to provide that reconnection through their "mission to teach the fundamentals of art and design in a fun, creative, and supportive environment." During the recent grand opening of the gallery addition conjoining the studio, that support was felt by the attendance of many fellow art lovers, including the mayor of Saline. But community aside, I was also moved to note that their success as a business came from their strength as a family. Realizing that nothing would be the same after that day when they collected Kaili's three canvases, Joanne recalled, "We gave ourselves a few days to grieve together." And then they took advantage of their time together to plan a business that would tap into the unique skills of each family member, primarily inspired by Kaili's talent for creating and teaching art.

###



Adventures In Cat Sitting



By Cheryl L. Kemp

Sunday

3:00 p.m.: I just arrived at my sister Deb's for my pet sitting gig. The cats are wary and stand-offish but I'm sure I can remedy that.

I begin by reading the little sticky notes left by my sister. Everything is efficiently tagged and labeled, then I see it—the *notebook*. As I scan the many pages of instructions, I can only marvel over how these animals have her trained. I will not be dictated to by a pack of felines!

I just arrived at my sister Deb's for my pet sitting gig. The cats are wary and stand-offish but I'm sure I can remedy that.

4:00 p.m.: It's time to begin serving dinner. I must use new, clean bowls with each feeding, and I can't help but roll my eyes. It's dry food for heaven's sake. Four different foods? Young cats, old cats, special needs cats... Don't forget the many water bowls scattered around the house. A deep sigh escapes me.

After feeding, I scan the afternoon schedule and realize all is done until evening. Time to win over the cluster and do a baseline headcount. The cute gray tiger, Heartsy, was a no go—he hid. I'll get back to him. Rikki, the eldest, let me scratch behind her ears and pet her head...but just a little. "Let's not get all *handsy*," her nasty Siamese look said as she peered up at me with narrowed blue eyes. It's okay, I have three days. Good old Milton, the Maine Coon and mayor of Cat City, is on me like butter on toast. I love that fellow...thinking about making him a pirate patch for that milky-white eye. Paris, the female calico is accepting and sweet, so no problem with her. Lil Buddy, the bottle-raised rescue is also there but lounging in the bedroom side table. Maybe I should say he is the side table. He's a big boy—almost as wide as he is tall. I open the sliding patio door and the sleek sibling brothers, Tay, Andy, and Shanty shoot out.

7:30 p.m.: It's getting toward evening, and I wonder about the mischievous brothers. Oh good, Tay is at the front door. I pet his head and he rubs against my leg as he enters. I love me some Tay. He's a beautiful Siamese and still my buddy. Now where is that Andy and Shanty?

8:00 p.m.: I check the front door and pure black Shanty comes streaking in like an ink splash. Down the hallway he goes and leaps up on the open ledge in one fluid motion. He is gorgeous and looks like a lithe Egyptian cat. He is busily munching down dry food from his bowl, and I pet him. He happily rubs against my hand, and I smile. Sweet as molasses. Still no Andy...fret, fret, fret. It's very cold and dark out there.

8:30 p.m.: Where is that sneaky Siamese Andy? The apple of my sister's eye. I must get him in for the night. I spy him laying by the big pine tree out front. "Come on Andy-Pandy," I call in a high, cajoling voice. He's coming! ...almost here...strolling slowly across the drive...almost to the porch... He agonizingly slowly tiptoes over the threshold and he's in! Shanty darts out. WHAT THE...?! Are you kidding me? "Get in here!" I yell at him. Black tail waving like a victory flag he runs off. *Ok, fine! Don't panic.* Determined, I go about my business getting ready for bed. With crazy anxiety, I crack the front door. Shanty streaks back in. I'm so relieved but I can't help grumbling, "That's what I thought!" He appears to care less so I add a, "Hmph!"

Shanty darts out. WHAT THE...?! Are you kidding me? "Get in here!" I yell at him. Black tail waving like a victory flag he runs off.

Monday

1:00 a.m.: Andy is howling. It's an excruciating, echoing, guttural howl. He wants out. His brothers are wound up now and they also want out. I assure

them they are *not* going out. They shoot daggers at me with their piercing eyes and pace laps around the kitchen island to show their obvious displeasure at my apparent ignorance. "This one is truly dumb and cannot be trained," they seem to howl to one another. I crawl into bed and try to get back to sleep, but sleep is only a pipe dream.

5:00 a.m.: Shanty is at the door howling and pacing, growling, and parading. His two brothers join him. "Don't you know we do what we want, stupid human?" their shrill cries seem to mock. I refuse to sit and try to explain to them about responsibility. Yawn...so tired.

8:00 a.m.: Time to begin the process all over again. But, HELLO! This morning's chore list is much more in depth but I'm doing none of it until I've had my coffee! Check *the notebook*. Get it right because it's a cat frenzy up in here when I pop the canned food. Juggling bowls, trying to remember who gets what and where. I'm pretty sure my IQ went up 30 points. Milton and Heartsy are done in record time. Special urinary canned food for Rikki and Paris. I guess the females get UTIs just like the rest of us. Little Buddy refuses to eat with me there. I think he's still upset about the side table crack. The three hoodlum brothers will have to have leftovers as they jetted out the door while I tried to grab some fresh morning air. What a trio of asshats!

4:30 p.m.: Afternoon routine completed. The Three Brothers Grim bolt out.

8:45 p.m.: I open the front door to yell for the trio of delinquents. Tay runs in.

8:50 p.m.: Front door is opened, and Shanty runs in.

9:00 p.m.: I once again open the front door and nothing. "Annnndddd!" Where is he? Like I don't have enough stress...beginning to see a pattern here. Front door open, "Annnndy, Pannndy!" Wait, is that him? I click on the front porch light and he's lying under the blue spruce staring at me. "Get in here!" Staring.... staring. "You're an asshat!" I slam the door. I open front door. "Get in here!" Staring... staring. "I hate you!" I slam the door.

9:30 p.m.: I open the door to yell and Andy nonchalantly strolls in. Shanty makes a move to scoot out but I "Pssst!" at him. I'm pretty sure he told me to go "F" myself, but I *win*!

This morning's chore list is much more in depth but I'm doing none of it until I've had my coffee! Check the *notebook*.

Tuesday

9:00 a.m.: Everyone is fed and out and in. Morning kitty naps are in progress. Car loaded and I give my last pats and goodbyes to all my furry friends. I feel my jaw tighten and my eyes swim. Ah well, I'll be back.

Cheryl L. Kemp is a wife, a mother of two young adults, artist, gardener, herbalist, and writer. She is an avid animal lover and has extensive experience in dog handling and cat wrangling. Cooper and Triton, her two pitties are perfect gentlemen and ambassadors for the breed.





Crysterra Wellness
*ancient inspirations
 modern well-being*

Reflexology-Reiki-Lithotherapy-Yoga
 Supporting you on
 your Wellness
 Journey

Every step of the way...
www.crysterrawellness.com
 3173 Baker Rd. Dexter MI 48130 (Suite A)
 andrea@crysterrawellness.com
 (734) 649-1849



**GROVE EMOTIONAL
 HEALTH COLLABORATIVE**

**GROVE IS ACCEPTING NEW CLIENTS
 (CHILDREN, ADULTS, COUPLES + FAMILIES)**

IMMEDIATE OPENINGS FOR IN-PERSON + VIRTUAL

**THERAPY, MEDICATION MANAGEMENT,
 MINDFULNESS, MEDITATION AND YOGA**

To book, contact referrals@groveemotionalhealth.com,
 call (734) 224-3822 or visit www.groveemotionalhealth.com

Peaceful Dragon School



Tai Chi and Qigong

*Enrich Your Health
 Reduce Stress and Improve Balance*

LOCATION / CONTACT

1945 Pauline Blvd., Suite B
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103
 Easy parking - 1 flight of stairs

Phone: 734-741-0695
info@peacefuldragonschool.com

NEW CLASS! Tai Chi for Teens

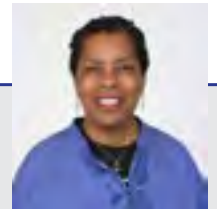
Participants will playfully get their relaxation and focus "on" with the mindful movement of Tai Chi.

**Ongoing Classes Begin
 January 8**

Ongoing, private and off-site classes



For complete schedule and services visit
www.PeacefulDragonSchool.com



Master Wasantha Young

Bringing the Best of East and West to Your Home



Monica Turenne, DVM, CVA, CT, CHPV

Now offering in-person and telemedicine
 for both holistic and hospice/palliative care patients.
 Please call for more information!

Dr. Monica is certified in palliative and hospice care for pets!
 She is passionate about helping pets
 and their families through this incredibly important journey.



-  In-home Euthanasia
-  Hospice and Palliative Care
-  End of Life consultations
-  Natural Death
-  Holistic Services
-  Ozone Therapy
-  Chinese Herbology
-  Food Therapy
-  Homeopathy
-  Acupuncture for Dogs & Cats
-  Wellness Examinations
-  Vaccination Guidance & Administration

FourPawsVetWellness.com

(734) 385-7161

YOGA COLUMN



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.

Namaste Katie,

I have been getting out and about hiking and whatnot this fall/winter as much as I can. This has been fantastic, but hard on my hips. I feel like the inside of my hips, groin muscles and such, are locking up when I sit for too long. Any tips? Thanks!

Renee, Ann Arbor

Dear Renee,

Great job on all the movement. It keeps the joints more fluid and everything working. As you noted, we all experience areas in our bodies that respond differently to our efforts to stay mobile. This, as we continue to note, is based on the design of our bodies, how we utilize our bodies on a daily basis (as we accumulate stress) and where we put our attention, as well as a whole host of other factors.

For those adductors, a part of which we refer to as the groin muscles, they play key roles in the stabilization of the pelvis and help to draw the legs back in toward the body. So, when we are on unstable surfaces, there is a lot of effort placed on those muscles. A great way to both lengthen and strengthen the adductor group to the degree that you are in need of/wanting, is through an asana called Goddess or Deviasana.

To come into Deviasana we place your feet out wide—that distance will be a comfort level that feels good to you—and rotate the feet externally so the knees, when bent, are tracking over the midline of the foot. This rotation will be different for all of us, so find a fit that feels good, as well as the distance of the feet from the body. When ready, allow the pelvis to remain neutral as you bend the knees and find a squat-like stance. The amount of bend in the knees will be up to how you feel that day. If those adductors are tight (or if the knees are sore) the bend may be slight; other days you may find more flexion in the knees. If you are sinking into the spaces check the knees are not falling in, rather staying over the middle of the feet. With tight adductors they love to creep in! See if you can lift up in the posture rather than have the knees collapse inward. There is also the opportunity to flow with the breath here: inhaling pressing through the feet and lifting out and exhaling bending the knees and sinking in. Enjoy.



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

Hello Kasey,

There are hundreds of Mudras. All these energy locks are created for different purposes. Some Mudras are used to move energy up and activate, while others help us to ground and refine our meditation practice. Another Mudra that can support our grounding practice is Bhu Mudra. This Mudra is made by bringing the index and middle finger together and extending them long, while remaining comfortable. The ring and pinky finger tuck into the palm with the thumb resting lightly over the ring and pinky finger.

If you have the opportunity to be in a seated meditation space, lightly press the extended fingers into the earth. If not, your hands can rest comfortably wherever—in the lap or on the abdomen. You are trying to find a space where you can feel the connection of the fingers into a solid space and draw your awareness to that place.

Once you have your hands positioned in a comfortable and steady place, start to direct the breath toward that connection. Allow your concentration to be focused on the space your fingers are making contact with—the earth, or the body, notice what is happening there. Can you deepen that connection? Does the energy change? If you deepen the breath does that alter the orientation of the Mudra? See if this focus on the energy lock makes an impact on your meditation practice.



Namaste Katie,

A friend recently told me that to be a 'true yogi' you had to be a vegan. Is there truth to this?

Javon, Chelsea

Namaste Javon,

Anyone who chooses to practice yoga, and continues that practice, is a yogi! That said, I believe I know where this came from. This first limb of yoga is called the Yamas, and the five Yamas are the abstentions, containing that which is to be avoided. One of the Yamas is Ahimsa or non-harming and sometimes translated as non-killing. Ahimsa has deep influence in nonviolent protest movements and is the source of many peaceful practices.

One of the ways some choose to practice Ahimsa is through non-harm to animals, with the strictest interpretation being non-killing of any sort (this means bug as well!). One way to exercise this choice is through more ethical food choices which may include vegetarian and vegan eating. These choices are up to you for the situation you are in. What we eat is one of the many ways we can choose to participate in non-harming. For some, restrictive diets can be harming to the self, so yoga asks we limit the prescriptive nature of our thinking, and ask ourselves, is this decision right for me and my practice, and overall doing the least amount of harm?

More recently there has been more concentration on the more subtle expressions of Ahimsa. How do we practice non-harming thoughts, toward ourselves, our loved ones, and to total strangers? How do we speak in ways that show compassion rather than cause harm? We applaud all efforts at genuine Ahimsa and know that not all practices are for every person. Find your fit and you will be on the right path.

CONSCIOUS & TASTY

food and nutrition

Growing Greens
Indoors All Winter
Page 46

Cooking with Lisa
Page 48

Great Tastes in
Local Food
Page 50

Tea with Peggy
Page 51



Call Beth for a
free consultation
(734)994-8010

DRUG FREE PAIN RELIEF

WHOLE BODY HEALING IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

AVACEN HEAT THERAPY



www.indigoforest.com

Inn at the Rustic Gate



A Retreat and Conference Center

A welcoming calm place • Room to roam on 146 acres
Meeting Space & Picnic Pavillion • Library & Meditation Loft
"Green Facility" • Individual & Group Retreats
Outdoor labyrinth for walking meditation

Voice: 231.796.2328 Toll Free: 800.319.5867

www.innattherusticgate.com
innattherusticgate@gmail.com

6991 E. Hungerford Lake Drive, Big Rapids, MI, 49307

Growing Greens Indoors All Winter



By Emily Springfield

As the days shorten and the gardens are put to bed, I find I not only miss fresh greens, I miss puttering in my garden and watching my food grow. So, for several years, I've been experimenting with ways to grow meaningful amounts of vegetables indoors. It comes down to:

- Choosing the right varieties
- Providing lots of light
- Planting in deep soil
- Fertilizing regularly

Let's take a closer look and hopefully you, too, can grow a "bag of salad" a week.

What to Grow Indoors

Indoor gardening is all about greens. While it is possible to grow things that produce a fruit or a root, greens will produce the most food with the fewest inputs. Different sizes of greens are possible. Baby greens have a few true leaves a little bigger than your thumb. You can grow full-sized lettuce, mustards, and Asian-style greens with enough soil and light. And microgreens—tiny sprouts, grown just until they have their first two seed leaves—need the least light and soil of all.

Good Varieties to Grow Indoors

Leafy Greens:

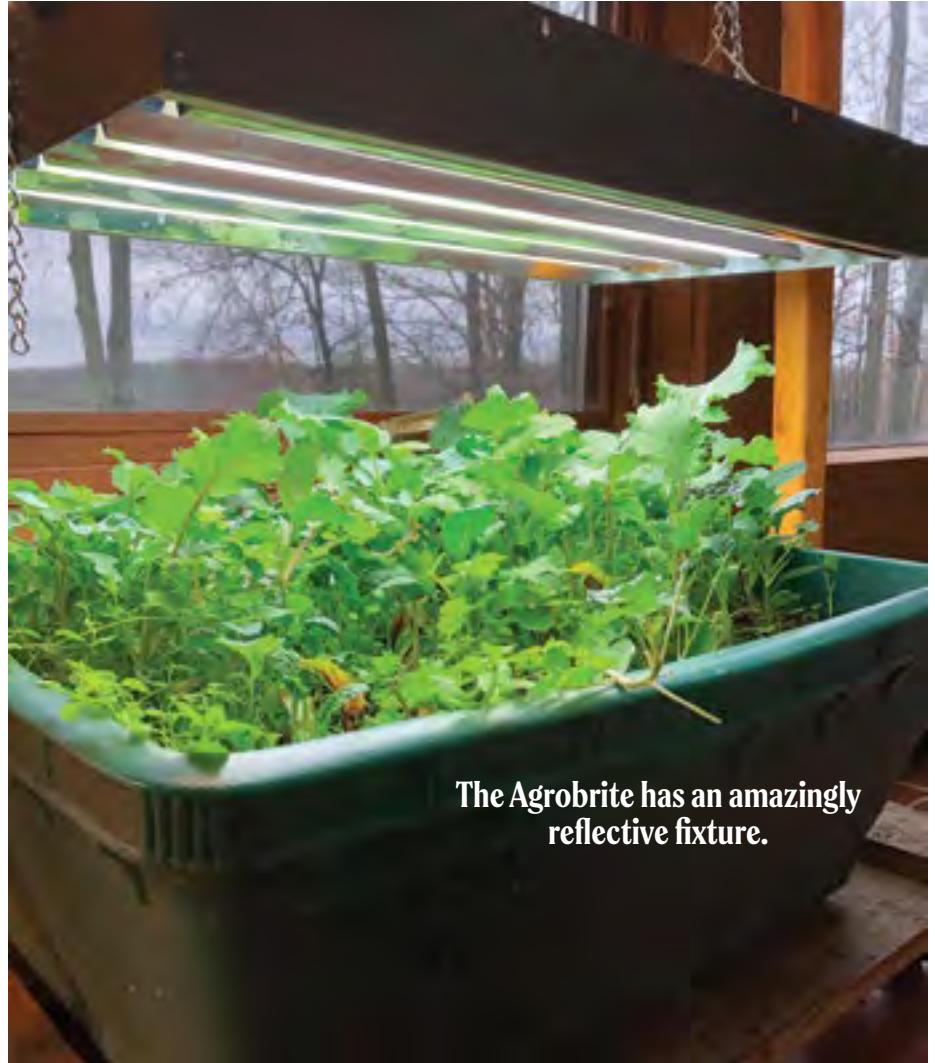
Baby Kale-any variety

Asian Greens-Tatsoi, chijimisai

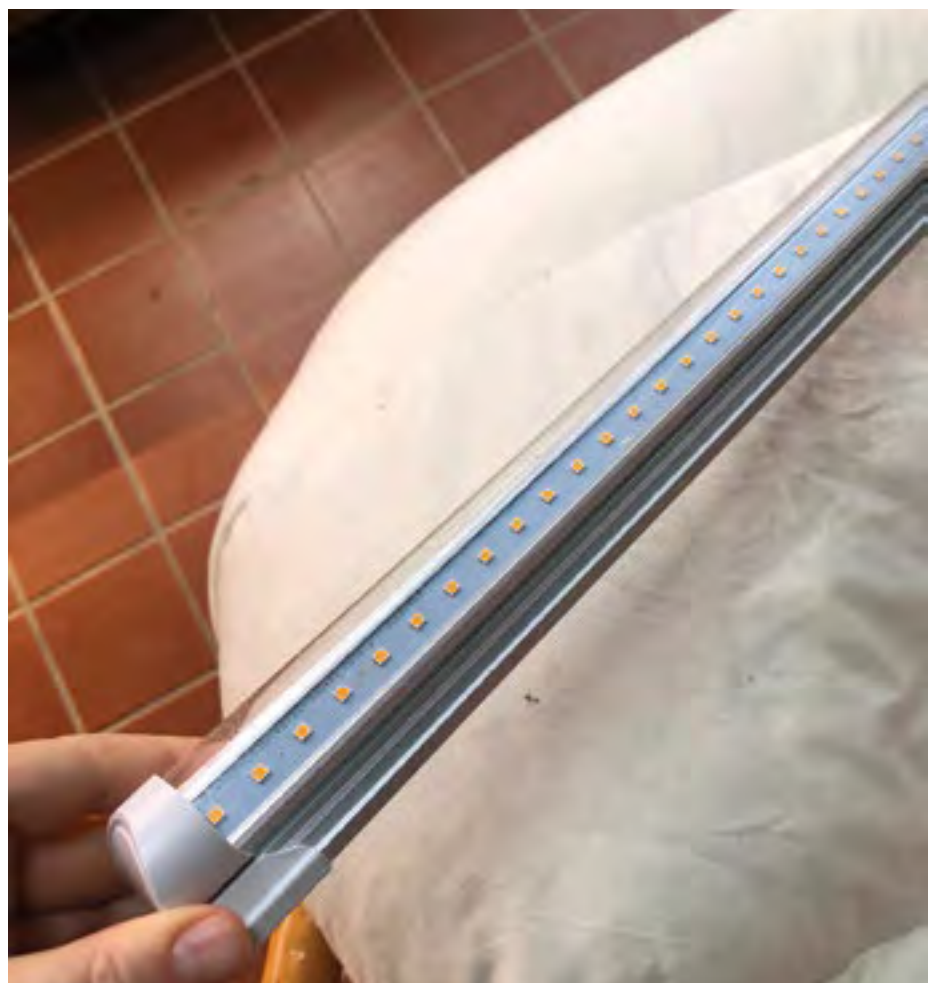
Mustard Green - especially "Green Wave"

Lettuce- leaf varieties

Beet or Turnip- harvest the greens



The Agrobrite has an amazingly reflective fixture.



Monios T8 LEDs. Note that this one doesn't have a reflector of any sort.

As the days shorten and the gardens are put to bed, I find I not only miss fresh greens, I miss puttering in my garden and watching my food grow. So, for several years, I've been experimenting with ways to grow meaningful amounts of vegetables indoors.

Provide Lots of Light

I have a whole wall of windows on the south side of my house that captures sun in the winter. However, I've discovered that they don't provide enough light through a cloudy Michigan winter. I've tried both T5 fluorescent setups and a couple kinds of LEDs. What seems to matter the most is not the kind of bulb, but the number of bulbs and the kind of fixture they are in. Reflectors are absolutely critical.

Fluorescent Lights

There are several prominent brands: Agrobrite and Vivosun are probably the two best-known and are both high-quality. Fixtures are either two foot or four foot long and can come with two, four, or six bulbs per fixture. I find two bulbs

to be sufficient, and four bulbs is ideal. Six fluorescent bulbs can get too hot, so there's not much reason to spend extra. If you get a highly reflective fixture (the underside by the bulbs almost looks like a mirror), your plants will be flooded with exceptional light. I usually find I need to replace one bulb per fixture per year, so buy spare bulbs when you get your lights.

LED Lights

There are many brands of LED light bars; I don't see much difference among the ones sold as grow lights, though you want to avoid similar-looking ones sold as under-cabinet lighting. LED light bars are convenient and modular. They come in two and four-foot lengths. You can hang them horizontally or vertically; you can screw their clips into wood or use the attached hooks; you can daisy-chain them in lots of configurations. They are sufficient as supplemental light or as primary lights if you put them close enough together (about six inches apart).

Whatever you buy, be sure it includes reflectors. Having some sort of reflection increases their light output by at least five times. If you have lights that don't have reflectors attached, you can improvise with aluminum foil, aluminum flashing, and mylar reflective sheeting. You'll want to install it above the lights in order to reflect down onto the plants. It's ugly, but it really helps.

Indoor gardening is all about greens. While it is possible to grow things that produce a fruit or a root, greens will produce the most food with the fewest inputs.

Note that LEDs are less expensive per light, but you need to buy more of them to get the same output. Four strips are necessary and six are ideal. You end up not saving money or energy over fluorescents. LEDs are also more likely to stop working and are non-repairable. Half the LEDs I bought to test stopped working after a year or so, but all my fluorescent fixtures still work (with a few replaced bulbs). So, despite the environmental drawbacks of mercury in the fluorescent bulbs, I've continued to use them rather than replace my fixtures with LEDs.



Baby greens in an under-bed box. Check out that root system!

Provide Deep Dirt

Unless you are growing microgreens, you need a lot of dirt to grow food in pots. Plants put out a lot of roots to forage for nutrients, and you need to give them enough soil and nutrition to get to full size. Make sure your planters are at least six inches deep. For example, one head of lettuce needs a pot at least 4"x4"x6". I really like growing two to three lettuce plants in clear plastic "shoe boxes" with holes drilled in the bottom. Three boxes fit perfectly under a two foot grow light. Plastic under-bed boxes are absolutely perfect for growing baby greens. They are deep enough and have a large growing surface, so there's no wasted dirt. They fit well under the foot grow lights, and they are sturdy enough to move when full. If you drill drainage holes, you can set the box on its own lid as a drip tray. They may be "unlovely," but at about \$10 each, they are a steal compared to most flowerpots.

Soil and Fertilizer

What kind of soil do you use to grow greens indoors? Something with good drainage and lots of fertility. I tend to go with bagged stuff rather than homemade compost to try to keep the bugs out of my house. Happy Frog is pricey but good. You can mix your own, but the price ends up being about the same in the end. In any case, you don't want to use something labeled "topsoil" straight out of the bag—it's far too heavy for growing indoors.

You'll want to tend that soil well because it's your big recurring expense. That means fertilizer.

I'm so accustomed to how I handle soil fertility in the garden, I took a long time coming around to accepting that I need to buy fertilizer and use it regularly. When confined to pots, plants just eat up all the nutrients in soil really fast, and then they just...stop growing. They don't die, but they don't thrive, either. You'll never grow full-sized plants if there aren't enough nutrients in your soil.

Hydroponic shops have a wide variety of fertilizers specifically designed for indoor growing. The sales staff tend to be very knowledgeable. Tell them you're growing leafy greens, and they will direct you to a number of products (including organic products) that will keep your indoor garden happy. Worm castings are a good choice, but you need quite a lot – a couple cups per planter. Manufactured fertilizers are more concentrated and convenient for mid-season feeding. They come in both granules and liquid. As a rule of thumb, add some fertilizer after each harvest of greens according to the directions on the package.

When it's time to start a new batch of plants—for example, if your lettuce goes bitter—pull out the old plants and do a heavy rejuvenation of the soil. Add vitamins (worm castings and the powdered fertilizer) and minerals (green sand and/or bone meal). After two to three rounds, or if the soil seems to be tiring out, dump it out into your garden and start with fresh dirt.

Wow, That Sounds Expensive

Yes. It can be. A couple years ago, I'd have said you would never save any money by growing greens indoors—although with organic greens now selling for \$10 a pound, that might be changing! Ways to economize:

- Reuse containers you already have
- Rig your own light stands and reflectors
- Buy lights on sale in the summer or fall
- Try microgreens instead of full-sized greens: they need almost nothing in the way of soil and light.

If you just want something that gets the job done, you can probably DIY a microgreens setup from things you have on hand.



Microgreens (and one tray of baby greens) growing in shallow trays. These are ready for harvest.

Microgreens

Microgreens are extremely popular and for good reason. They are four to forty times more nutritious than their full-size counterparts (a quarter-cup has the nutrition of a small salad). They can be grown indoors without lights in any season and are beautiful and tasty to eat.

So, how do you get started? It depends on your budget, DIY instinct, and tolerance for mess.

Least Expensive, Total DIY Option

Startup price: Maybe \$2, depending on what you have on hand.

If you just want something that gets the job done, you can probably DIY a microgreens setup from things you have on hand. Just find some kind of shallow tray or pan (aluminum pie tin? Plastic take-out tray?), put in about one inch of potting soil, seed starting mix, or coir, and sprinkle heavily with seeds. (There are great directions online at [gardeners.com/how-to/grow-microgreens/7987.html](https://www.gardeners.com/how-to/grow-microgreens/7987.html).) Keep seeds moist—some kind of clear cover helps—and harvest when they are about two inches tall.

For cheap seeds, check your local garden center for seeds sold in bulk. They are often about \$1 per ounce and an ounce of seeds will last you forever. The best varieties are broccoli and kale for mild flavors and radishes or mustard greens if you like them spicy. You can also just use leftover garden seeds. Just keep in mind you'll need a couple teaspoons for each tray.

continued on page 49.

Cooking with Lisa: A Flavorful Winter in Michigan

By Lisa Viger-Gotte

In Michigan, winter can be cold and snowy which limits the availability of locally grown fresh vegetables. However, some flavorful vegetables can still be in season during winter, especially if they are grown in greenhouses, cold frames, or are properly stored. Here are some vegetables that are in season and readily available during our winters. Many root vegetables like carrots, beets, turnips, and parsnips can withstand cold temperatures and are nearly always available in winter. These are versatile and can be used in a number of ways, including roasted, and in soups like the one below.

Winter Squash varieties like butternut squash, acorn squash, and spaghetti squash are typically harvested in the fall and can last through the winter if stored in a cool, dry place. Squash is delicious baked whole and then cut open. Remove the seeds and add a little salt and pepper. Yum! They're also great for creamy soups.

Cabbage is a hardy vegetable that can be stored well into the winter months. It's often used in dishes like coleslaw and sauerkraut but is also good in soups and other cooked dishes.

Kale is a cold-tolerant leafy green that can continue to grow even in colder temperatures. You may find fresh kale available in the winter.

Brussels sprouts are a late-season crop that can be harvested well into the fall and early winter. They're a lot like miniature cabbages and are both delicious and nutritious.

Some winter greens like spinach, arugula, and Swiss chard can be grown in cold frames or greenhouses and may be available locally. Leeks are typically harvested in the fall and can be stored through the winter. They are related to onions and have a mild, fresh onion flavor and are often used in soups and stews.

Daikon radishes, onions, and garlic are all staple ingredient that can be stored for long periods, making them available throughout the winter.



Recipes for a Delicious Winter

Roasted Root Vegetable Soup

Cozy up with a bowl of Roasted Root Vegetable Soup! This hearty, creamy blend of earthy flavors is perfect for winter warmth and comfort.

Ingredients:

4 cups assorted root vegetables (sweet potatoes, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, and/or beets)

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion quartered

2 cloves garlic

1/2 teaspoon thyme (or 2 teaspoons fresh)

1/2 teaspoon sage (or 2 teaspoons fresh)

1/2 teaspoon salt (or to taste)

1/2 teaspoon pepper (or to taste)

1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or to taste)

Liquid: 3 cups vegetable broth, more or less, depending on desired consistency

Topping Suggestions: Croutons, toasted bread, pumpkin seeds, lightly sauteed sage leaves

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Peel and chop your favorite root vegetables into 1-inch pieces. Toss the chopped vegetables and the rest of the ingredients, except for the toppings and liquid, in a bowl together until everything is lightly coated with oil. Then spread them all out on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and have started to lightly caramelize.



Frog Holler Farm

Organic plant starts
April - June

Organic produce
June - October

Wednesdays & Saturdays

Ann Arbor Farmers Market - 315 Detroit Street

Pre-order and curbside pickup available

www.froghollerorganic.com

Growing Greens Indoors

continued...



Most Expensive but Least Fussy: Microgreens Kit

You can find a variety of Microgreens kits online for about \$40. This gives you a tray, several refills, and enough seeds for several servings of microgreens each.

I originally thought these were extraordinarily expensive and ridiculously dependent on a disposable product you can only get from one manufacturer. But as I ran the numbers, I realized that the added expense might be worth it to some folks because of the no-fuss setup. Literally, just add water. There's no dirt to get on the seeds or splash onto your counter. The tray fits on a windowsill. You can get prettier trays if you're so inclined. You can even have the seeds sent on a subscription basis, so you don't even have to reorder. Price per serving (about 1/6 of a tray) is about \$2.17 for the first kit and \$1.05 for refills. If you could find a 6x12" tray, you could just buy their refills and get the ease of use without the shockingly overpriced plastic tray.

Happy Medium

Startup price: \$29 for three trays and enough seeds to last until your kid goes to college.

Okay, let's say you're willing to spend a bit of money, but you don't want to be stuck in case the boutique microgreens seller goes out of business or jacks up their prices. You can put together your own kit from widely available components:

- Seed trays: windowsill size or 10x10" size (search for "1010 trays no holes" for different colors)
- Growing medium: either coir or purpose-made microgreen mats
- Seeds: either local in bulk or professional-grade 1 oz. packets
- Optional domes: keep heat and humidity in and cats out (use binder clips to keep domes on). I recommend removing the domes, or at least cracking them open once the seeds sprout to avoid mold.
- The price on these works out to around .41 cents/serving to start, and .20 cents/serving for refills.



Allow the roasted vegetables to cool slightly and then place them into a high-speed blender with the vegetable broth, and puree until very smooth. This may have to be done in batches. Alternatively, use an immersion blender and place the roasted vegetables and vegetable broth into a large soup pot and blend until creamy.

Sauté whole sage leaves in oil over medium heat until lightly crisped for a delicious topping. This will only take a minute or two. Watch carefully to prevent burning.

Serve with toasted bread and/or garnish with croutons, and pumpkin seeds. Add a swirl of plant-based sour cream if desired.

Oil-free option: Simply omit the oil. The vegetables will be slightly more crispy but still delicious.

Maple Balsamic Brussels Sprouts

Roasted to lightly caramelized perfection, these nutritious green vegetables are coated in a sweet and savory glaze, creating a flavorful and irresistible side dish for any occasion. Maple Balsamic Brussels Sprouts, with their delightful balance of sweet and savory flavors, make an excellent and tasty side dish for just about any meal!

Ingredients:

- 1 lb fresh Brussels sprout
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon finely minced garlic

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Trim the ends of your Brussels sprouts, cut them in half, and then toss them with the oil, salt, and pepper.

Place the coated Brussels sprouts in a baking dish. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the sprouts just start to brown on top.

In a small bowl, whisk together the maple syrup and balsamic vinegar to make a glaze.

Remove sprouts from the oven and drizzle with the maple and balsamic glaze. Return to the oven for 6 or 7 minutes, until the glaze thickens, and the Brussels sprouts are nicely caramelized.

Good Varieties to Grow Indoors

Microgreens:

Kale	Turnips
Broccoli	Micro Mixes from Johnny's Seeds
Red Cabbage	Mix Together the remains of all you old brassica, chard, and beet seeds packets
Radishes	
Mustards	

Microgreens grow quickly and are harvested once, so lights are not needed. That's because seeds contain all the power they need to sprout, and they don't really start getting energy from the sun until they put out their first true leaves. You'll harvest the greens before they run out of sprouting power stored in the seed.

I hope this helps you decide what kinds of greens you'd like to grow this winter. I highly recommend trying it. It's so refreshing to watch something grow and to add a pop of color and nutrition to winter "comfort food"—good for the body and the soul.

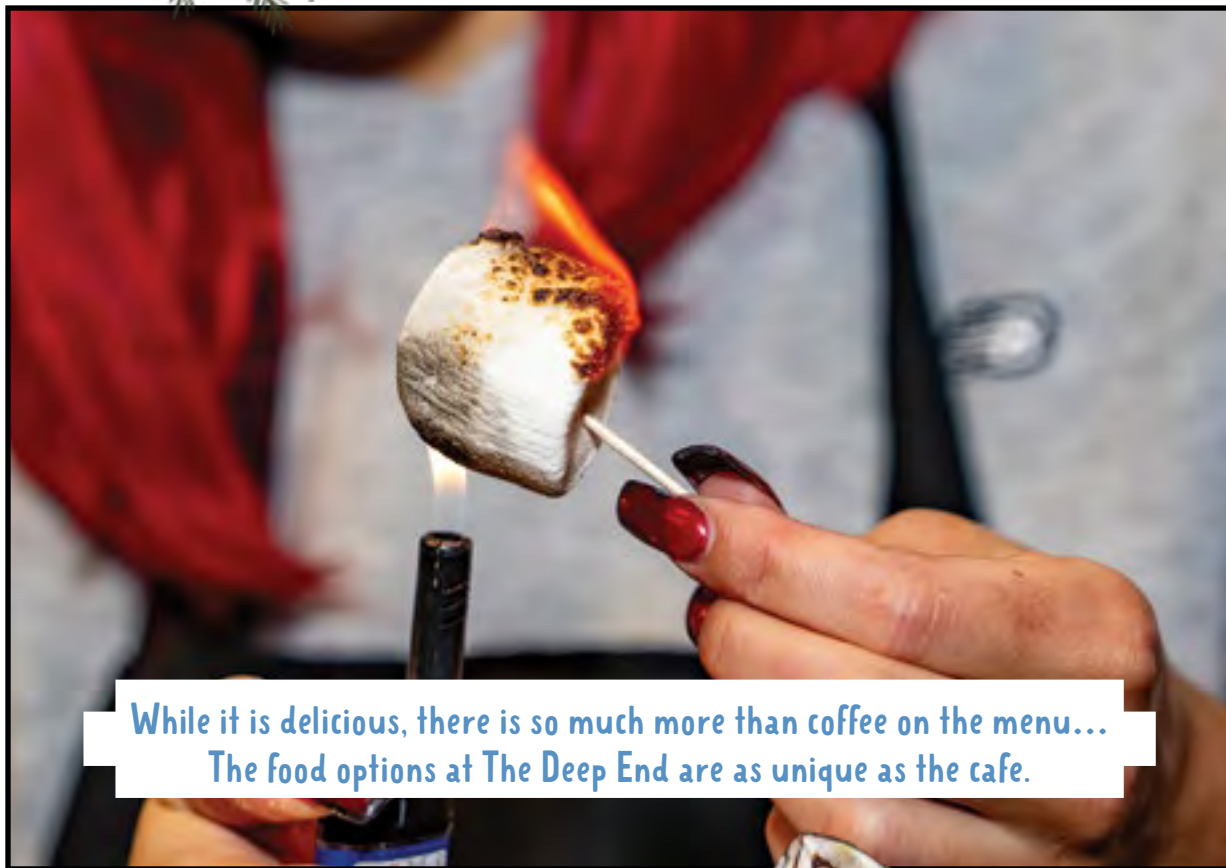
Emily Springfield is a Chelsea-area gardener, bodyworker, and herbalist specializing in body energy flows. She uses a combination of nutrient-dense plants, myofascial release, and t'ai-chi-based healing to help her clients improve their flexibility, resilience, and emotional health. Visit fenhaven.com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





Great Tastes in Local Food

Winter 2024



While it is delicious, there is so much more than coffee on the menu...
The food options at The Deep End are as unique as the cafe.

By Crysta Coburn • Photos by Tom Closs

The Deep End Cafe and Gallery



When I stepped through the door of The Deep End Cafe and Gallery, I was immediately enamored with two beautiful blue wingback chairs. They looked comfortable and inviting and sitting between them was a small table to set food and drinks. Opposite was a sofa with chaise where a group of friends could really settle in and get cozy. There were, of course, tables with seating as well including one coffee table with chairs around it in the middle of the cafe and a few stools at the counter. For a small space, it did not feel cluttered or tight. The pièces de résistance, for me, were the books scattered around to peruse. Nothing spruces up a space quite like a book.

The mission of The Deep End is (per its website) is “to provide a space for underrepresented artists and writers to sell and promote their works while enjoying ethically sourced coffee.” The walls of The Deep End showcase local artists, and most weekends have at least one special event such as music, live readings, karaoke, artist meet and greets, and more.

While it is delicious, there is so much more than coffee on the menu. And I don’t just mean espresso and macchiato. (Although the vanilla latte I ordered was pretty spectacular.) You can also choose between different smoothies, freshly pressed juices, wellness shots, and teas, including matcha and chai.

The food options are as unique as the cafe. On the “munchies” side there are Grits and Toast, O’s Favorite (two fried eggs, turkey bacon, and cheese on brioche), Banana Butter Crunch (sliced banana and peanut butter grilled on a tortilla with butter and cinnamon), and the mysterious P’s Pick of the Day. On the “sweet treats” side there is a parfait of the day, fresh fruit, and to indulge the sweet tooth, cake balls, lemon bars, and homemade peanut butter cups.

Because I can’t eat pork, I was very excited to see the turkey bacon on O’s Favorite. To anyone who is turned off by this, I urge them to give it a try. I can’t promise you won’t taste the difference, but with the eggs, cheese, and bread, I suspect the “alternativeness” of the meat will be less noticeable. I could have downed two of these delicious sandwiches, which is unusual for me.

Being located so close to Eastern Michigan University, parking can occasionally be tricky (a situation that Ann Arborites are no doubt also

familiar with). But there is some free parking on Perrin as well as meter parking along Cross.

The Deep End Cafe and Gallery is located at 310 Perrin Street in Ypsilanti. It is open Wednesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit tdecafe.com or call (734) 896-3841.

Cups n’ Chai

They had me at chai. If you, like me, believe there is nothing better than a warm cup of aromatic spiced tea, Cups n’ Chai will be your new go-to spot. It is a halal food certified cafe in Canton that specializes in South Asian tea (chai) and street food.

If you don’t like milk in your tea (normally I don’t), there are also green and black tea options. But the Karak chai is an absolute chef’s kiss. You can order it with or without sugar. Other chais on the menu are Amore, with notes of vanilla; Bonbon, with notes of caramel, cinnamon, and ginger; and the Sulaimani, a black tea with lemon and herbs. You can also order a dirty chai (tea and coffee) or the Karak coffee, which I think I would like more if tea weren’t the better beverage. (My husband is a diehard coffee drinker and he enjoyed the dirty chai.) Other beverages include mango lassi, masala soda, iced tea lemonade, a list of enticing mocktails, and so much more. But I have to stop writing about drinks because we need to get to the phenomenal food!

The paratha wraps are heavenly mouthfuls of flavor. My husband swears the peri peri chicken in the wrap is the best peri peri chicken he has ever had. (And yes, we’ve been to Nando’s.) I also really enjoyed the achari chicken wrap. It’s spicy but not overwhelming. The sauce in the BBQ chicken wrap was sweet and tangy. The chicken in all the wraps was juicy and so tender. The paratha is chewy and more than capable of standing up to sauces that might turn other breads soggy.

There are also vegetarian options, like the paneer chutney and manchurian wraps, samosa, kachori, a sandwich menu, an all-day breakfast menu, and an incredible dessert menu. As much as I wanted to try the rose petal cake and pistachio kulfi cake, I could not say no to the Biscoff and Nutella wraps which were as indulgently delicious as I dreamed they’d be. The paratha was far superior to a crepe in my book.

Although Cups n’ Chai is located in a strip mall (what part of Canton isn’t?), there is some lovely outdoor seating in addition to the tables and chairs inside. The patio couch is even under an overhang. It’s absolutely worth the trip to try some incredible South Asian food and chai that I haven’t seen anywhere else.

Cups n’ Chai is located at 43339 Joy Road in Canton. It is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. For more information, visit cupsnchai.com or call (734) 667-2196.



The Karak chai is an absolute chef’s kiss.



The furniture is dark and comfortable making Hidden King the perfect place to kick back with friends over a drink.

Hidden King Cafe and Bar

I started shopping at Peaceable Kingdom when I first moved to this part of the state over 10 years ago. It was one of my favorite shops to peruse and find fun gifts in downtown Ann Arbor. Like many in Ann Arbor, I mourned when its doors closed for the last time. Another unique and independent Main Street store was gone.

The space remained without a new business until recently, and rather than a chain business moving in as has happened to other addresses along Main Street, Hidden King and Bar is locally owned and operated by Mark Wilfong. He is the son of Peaceable Kingdom's owner Carol Lopez who passed away in August 2022.

While it is its own business with its own distinct vibe, Hidden King has kept some of Peaceable Kingdom's charm as well. The fairy house in front, for instance, is still there and customers can peer inside. For architecture fans, the metal ceiling is also the original and is beautifully maintained. While I was there, I enjoyed perusing the historic photos of Ann Arbor on the dark blue walls and reading more about them via a QR code in the corners of the frames. The furniture is dark and comfortable making Hidden King the perfect place to kick back with friends over a drink. My favorite part? There are no televisions broadcasting national news or sports games; nor is the music blaring.

I am not much of a beer or wine drinker, so I appreciate the teas on offer provided by local tearoom, Tea Haus. I was also excited to see café con miel (coffee with honey and milk)—one of the few coffee drinks that I really enjoy. (Chai lattes are also on the menu.) The coffee is provided by Super Duper who is a fair-trade Michigan roastery that donates 1% of its annual sales to nonprofit environmental organizations.

On my next trip to Hidden King, I intend to try a cocktail or a cider. My husband, I am sure, will opt for a beer. However, I will definitely try to talk him into trying the popular espresso tonic, made with Super Duper Espresso and Tea Haus Tonic, because I am very curious but also worried I wouldn't be able to finish it myself.

If you are looking for a lowkey place to relax with friends—and maybe make some new ones!—give Hidden King a shot.

Hidden King Cafe and Bar is located at 210 South Main Street in Ann Arbor. It is open Wednesday through Saturday from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. For more information, visit linktr.ee/hiddenkinga2 or call (734) 545-6760.



Tea with Peggy



Mindfulness and Tea

By P. A. Alaniz

Try the following experiment with me. Shut off your TV, silence your phone, grab your tea kettle, and go over to the sink. Fill it with cold water. Listen to the sound of the water falling into the pot. How does the sound change as it fills? Place the kettle on the stove. Listen to the sound the kettle makes as the water gently heats to a boil. Pour the hot water in a clear mug. Place your tea in the water. Observe as the color slowly swirls and filters through the cup until it turns the water a rich brown. Take a moment and breathe in the tea's aroma. Take a small sip. Sit for a moment and just breathe.

Even the act of drinking tea can be done mindfully. Not only can the physical act of drinking tea be mindful, but it can support your meditation or mindfulness practice, too. Some Buddhist monks have been known to drink matcha or green tea prior to meditation to enhance the experience. Tea contains L-theanine, and in combination with caffeine, it has effects similar to EGCG (Epigallocatechin) which helps to reduce inflammation and prevent certain types of heart and brain disease and diabetes.

When it comes to picking a tea to help you be mindful and reduce your anxiety, it depends upon your palette and how you are affected by caffeine. While caffeine in tea can help to relax a person in combination with the L-theanine, caffeine is not for everyone. This doesn't exclude a completely herbal tea though—many can still help to relax you and enhance your mindfulness practice. You have many flavor choices for tea that aid in mindfulness. Your choices can be traditional matcha or green tea, something with a bright citrus flavor, florals such as lavender and rose, mint, eucalyptus, as well as cinnamon, cardamom, and ginger.

I would pick the flavor of tea depending on what time of day or meditation experience that I hoped to have. For a more traditional experience I would stick with matcha or green tea. If a bit tired, I would use a bright citrus note with black or green tea in order to stimulate my mind to be more in the present moment. Should I be having a bit of anxiety, I would recommend going with a blend of tea that has mint or eucalyptus, these would help me to relax and breathe more. To enhance the senses, I would use tea that contained mint, cinnamon, cardamom, or ginger. Some mornings you just might need a combination of relaxing, stimulating, and enhancing, so I would choose a tea such as ginger or citrus green tea.

Ginger Citrus Green Tea

- 1 cup of water
- 1 tablespoon of sliced fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon of loose-leaf green tea
- 1 slice or more of your favorite citrus: lemon, lime, orange or a combination of all three.

Bring one cup of water to a boil and add one teaspoon of sliced fresh ginger, then boil for five minutes. Remove from the heat and add a teaspoon of loose-leaf green tea. At this time, you can choose to add your slices of citrus, or you can add them later as a garnish. After three minutes strain and serve. Enjoy and be in the moment.

P.A. Alaniz is a Chicken Soup for the Soul author, writes a blog called "Tea, Travel, and Spirits," and is a tea enthusiast. She has an MFA from the University of Naropa in Boulder, Colorado and has taught writing at Jackson College.

Folk Song Jam Along— Singing and Playing Just for Joy



Lori Fithian and Jean Chorazyczewski

By Sandor Slomovits • Photos by Hilary Nichols

A half hour before the six o'clock start time of the monthly Folk Song Jam Along, there were already about a half dozen people in the program room at the Westgate Branch of the Ann Arbor District Library. Song leaders Lori Fithian and Jean Chorazyczewski greeted early arrivals at the door and chatted with familiar regulars. There were about fifty chairs facing the large pull-down screen at the front of the long rectangular room. Fithian had set her Mac laptop, complete with purple case, on the lectern on one side of the screen, and Chorazyczewski's Yamaha electric keyboard rested on its stand near the other side. Fithian's brother, Eric Fithian, an excellent guitarist and bass player who has performed in a variety of bands around town for years, had plugged in his amplifier near Chorazyczewski's keyboard and sat in the front row, noodling on his vintage Gibson electric guitar.

By six 'o clock there were about twenty people seated throughout the room, some holding instruments—several guitars, a banjo, a baritone ukulele—while others were perusing the two-page song list that Fithian and Chorazyczewski had placed on every chair. There were 236 songs on the list, titled in alphabetical order, from the "Addams Family theme song" to "Zip a Dee Doo Dah," with a number next to each.

Fithian projected the lyrics of "Come and Go with Me to That Land" on the screen, with the chords above the words, and set the rhythm and tempo on her guitar. Everyone joined in, plucking, strumming, and singing. Chorazyczewski played chords with her right hand and bass lines with her left. Eric Fithian added tasteful guitar fills, and Fithian called out each new word to "zip" into the successive verses of this traditional gospel blues "zipper song." *There'll be justice... freedom... singing... dancing... in that land where I'm bound.*

By six 'o clock there were about twenty people seated throughout the room, some holding instruments—several guitars, a banjo, a baritone ukulele—while others were perusing the two-page song list that Fithian and Chorazyczewski had placed on every chair.



The term "Folk Song" in the Jam Alongs' title encompasses a much wider range of styles and genres than is commonly considered folk. But, as Louis Armstrong famously said, "All music is folk music—I never heard no horse sing a song!"

Partway through the song, someone near the back of the room joined in with a tambourine. When the song was done, Fithian asked, "You guys know the drill, right? Call out a number, whatever song you want to do next."

Chorazyczewski added, "We're still just warming up, then we'll introduce ourselves."

Someone called out, "How about 119?"

Fithian tapped on her laptop, projected "Clementine" on the screen, and Chorazyczewski started the song's waltz rhythm.

"In a cavern, in a canyon..." Everyone sang along, some on the melody, some adding harmonies, some giggling at the silly lyrics. When the song was done, a man in the front row said, "You missed a verse."

"Is there another one?" Fithian asked.

"Yes," the man replied.

"How does it go?" Fithian asked.

The man sang, *How I missed her/ How I missed her/ How I missed my Clementine/'Til I kissed her little sister/Dreadful sorry Clementine.*

After the laughter died down, Fithian asked, "What's next?"

Jean Chorazyczewski and Lori Fithian have been leading interactive community music-making events for decades. They met in 2003 when Fithian was holding regular drumming sessions on the second floor of the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. For years they've also hosted annual winter solstice holiday sing-alongs every December at the Unitarian Church. They were inspired to start the Folk Song Jam Alongs in 2012, after participating in a world-wide community sing called One Earth One Voice—Global Sing for Peace, also modeling the jams after a similar series in East Lansing where Sally Potter has been leading a monthly Community Sing for a long time. They began conducting the free monthly jams at the Unitarian Church.

Jean Chorazyczewski and Lori Fithian have been leading interactive community music-making events for decades. They met in 2003 when Fithian was holding regular drumming sessions on the second floor of the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore



"Fithian and I were helping plan things like family camp at the Unitarian Church," said Chorazyczewski. "We always did some musical something or other there, at the women's retreat and that sort of thing."

Fithian continued, "We were always about, how do we bring people together for fun? You don't have to be an expert singer. It doesn't matter. No rehearsals, no reading music, no pressure, just singing for fun."

"When we started, we only had a short list of songs that we would do," said Chorazyczewski. "But over all these years we've built up what we like to call our thing, which is over 300 songs, and growing."

In 2019 they decided they wanted to be more centrally located and approached Katie Monkiewicz at the Ann Arbor District Library about holding the jams at the library. In October of 2019, Monkiewicz scheduled them for a few monthly sessions alternating between the Westgate Branch and Mallett's Creek. The jams were very well attended and Fithian, Chorazyczewski, and everyone at the library was excited and decided to continue in 2020.

Then the pandemic hit. The libraries closed and the monthly sings stopped, the last one was in February 2020. Fithian and Chorazyczewski restarted the jams in October of 2022, and since then have been on the first Tuesday or Wednesday of every month, alternating between the Westgate Branch and Mallett's Creek.

People continued to trickle in. A man with his young daughter said sheepishly as they made their way down the center aisle, "We went to Mallett's Creek by mistake." Eric Fithian's wife, Mary arrived, carrying her guitar case, sat next to him, and added her strong voice to the group. Many of the chairs were filled by now and a couple of people stood in the back. The group ranged in age from a little girl about seven, to septuagenarians (and even possibly octogenarians!).

It was a middle aged woman's birthday that night. Fithian asked if anyone knew a birthday song besides the traditional one. A woman stood and sang *Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday, We Love You* to the tune of the *Merry Widow Waltz* and we all applauded.

Someone called out number 154 and Fithian said, "Wish us luck on this one. Eric will cover the intro." Eric Fithian started the iconic intro for "Here Comes the Sun" on his guitar and we were off. Some people scat sang along with the instrumental parts. We even managed to struggle through the tricky bridge part.

Next, someone said, "Number 308" and Fithian projected "Que Sera Sera" on the screen and Chorazyczewski started the tune on her keyboard. She played the bass lines with her left hand and conducted gracefully and enthusiastically with her right. She signaled the fermatas, the arrhythmic held notes, and the ending, and then said, "By the way, we like to schmaltz things up, so feel free. Every song deserves a big finish."

Then, it was 380, Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely." Chorazyczewski gave us the starting note because it's a little tricky to pick it out of the starting chord, and we began. Eric Fithian expertly played the signature riff that follows every verse, and we all sang and swayed along. Of course, we skipped over Stevie's brilliant harmonica solo, but the song is so wonderful that it worked just fine without it. Instead, we repeated the whole tune again, and when we finished, Eric Fithian got some well-deserved applause.

Fithian said, "What's next? Don't be shy. We don't judge anybody."

The term "Folk Song" in the Jam Alongs' title encompasses a much wider range of styles and genres than is commonly considered folk. But, as Louis Armstrong famously said, "All music is folk music—I never heard no horse sing a song!" At the jams the main criterion is "Songs that are familiar enough that you can recognize them," Chorazyczewski said. Fithian continued, "What's really fun is if we play a song that everybody knows, like say, "Hey Jude." Everybody gets into that."

The list Chorazyczewski and Fithian have compiled includes the theme songs of TV shows like the *Beverly Hillbillies*, and *I Love Lucy*, soul songs like "My Girl," gospel songs "Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning" and "Peace Like a River," hymns, show tunes, Broadway beloveds, children's songs, rock classics, country standards, bluegrass favorites, jazz ballads, songs in languages other than English like "Besame Mucho" and "Fere Jacques," and songs that don't fit neatly into any category, like Sibelius' "Finlandia."

Throughout the night the focus was firmly on the singers. You could hear Fithian, Chorazyczewski, and Eric Fithian's instruments and voices, as well as those of the other pickers and strummers, but they never drowned out or overwhelmed the voices of the group. Early on Fithian asked, "Are the instruments too loud?" We all agreed they were fine. A woman called out, "I feel freer to sing when everything is loud!" We all laughed.



Folk Song Jam Along



It's not joining the civic chorus and having to do a performance later. It's recreational music making. It's getting together for a jam. It's what humans have been doing forever...

—Lori Fithian

There is no admission fee for the jams, and Chorazyczewski and Fithian don't get paid to lead them. They're offering them as a service to the community and because they love to make music with groups of people. Their early childhood musical experiences have led logically to these community sings.

"My family was Polish and very musical," said Chorazyczewski. "We always had some kind of music in the household. My sisters and my brother all played either piano or accordion. And I wanted to be like my older sister. So, she was my first teacher and that was a disaster, because, while she taught me, you know, it's harder to learn from a family member because they can kind of like smack you. 'No, that's a wrong note!'. My sister, worked at The Music Center, which was in East Detroit, where I grew up, and she had a teacher whose name was Mrs. DeWolf. She was this very prim and proper woman. Beautiful camel skirt with a crisp collar, a beehive, and cat glasses. I started taking lessons from her. I played classical songs, but I was not classically trained. Instead, the best thing that woman did for me was teach me all the scales, and all the chords, augmented, diminished seventh, minor five, whatever. She did me the best favor in teaching me piano that way. It helps me play by ear now. I took piano lessons for a couple of years, but not long because my parents couldn't afford it. So, I just kind of copied my sister. My love of music came really from my family because we listened to everything: everything ethnic, Italian, Greek, Herb Alpert, and Polish music of course, polkas. There always was that kind of influence."

"We always had some funky little set of bongos and a Seven Up bottle going on my grandma's back porch," said Fithian. "Just singalongs. I think my uncle may have had a baritone ukulele. Eric taught himself guitar; he was always playing, and we would sing, 'You Are My Sunshine' and all those classic folk songs. We all had a rhythmic sensibility to bang out something or tap on the table. Then, in fifth grade we were supposed to pick an instrument



Lori Fithian

and I said, 'I want to play the trumpet.' And Mrs. Sharky said, 'How about the French horn?' I said, 'Okay,' and that was the best thing.

I began my classical training on the French horn and went all the way through into college. I even played when I got braces after my senior year. I actually got in the symphony band of the University of Michigan. I was last chair, but I still got in. I played a little bit into college and then at some point, I think maybe I was at a music festival, there was a drum booth, and I banged a hand drum. Oh, that sounded cool. And because I had had my bongo experience, I could fool around. It opened a door into this whole world of drumming: African drum workshops, Brazilian drum workshops, Cuban, and just being influenced by every rhythmical anything.

Then I kind of got sick of going to drum workshops because they were all the same. Traditional African drummers would teach us really simple parts and then [while we did those parts] just improvise like crazy."

Then, my friend Matt said, 'Hey, Arthur Hall is doing a drum circle workshop.'

I said 'Okay, that sounds fun.'

So, we went into the percussion room of the Guitar Center, and he was doing

what I do now, which is fooling around with drums. I had a double bell in my pocket. So, I *ding, dinging, ding*, just messing around for two hours. And that was the beginning of my whole drum circle facilitation career.

Arthur came up to me and said, 'What's your name?'

I'm like, 'Am I in trouble? Was I doing a bad thing?'

He goes, 'Let's tell Lori thank you, because she was gluing us together.' He invited me to a facilitation workshop in Ohio. That's when I began my whole drum circle thing. I taught myself guitar and became a singer just to add more music to the drum circle stuff that we did."



It's really about taking a pause and singing these amazingly fun tunes so that you forget your cares for an hour and a half, and you leave, like laughing and skipping.

—Jean Chorazyczewski



Jean Chorazyczewski

Chorazyczewski and Fithian set a very relaxed, welcoming atmosphere at the jams. "It's not joining the civic chorus and having to do a performance later. It's recreational music making. It's getting together for a jam. It's what humans have been doing forever. It's not possible to mess up because you're just fooling around with music. You're playing. If it's not fun, we're doing it wrong. If you're not smiling, but seriously trying to play a certain thing, forget it. That's not what it's about. I'll even say, 'Okay, if the chord chart says C major seven nine, or whatever, just play the C part, don't worry about the rest of it. Jean will fill in the extra notes.'"



"It's really about taking a pause and singing these amazingly fun tunes," Chorazyczewski added, "So that you forget your cares for an hour and a half, and you leave, like laughing and skipping."

"When we introduce [the jams]," said Fithian, "I'll sometimes say, 'Hey, also, if anybody has a special connection or reason that you picked a song, just shout out, I have a story.' So sometimes there's a little bit of community sharing. It's just not enough time, the hour and a half goes by so quick."



A stylized illustration of a white coffee pot on a red background. The pot has a lid with a knob and a spout. Inside the pot, there is text: "come visit Ann Arbor's Hardest to Find Cafe!". To the right of the pot, there is more text: "downtown cafe 117 E. Liberty Ann Arbor", "roasting hq & cafe 1155 Rosewood Ann Arbor", and "webstore roosroast.com". At the top, the words "ROOSROAST COFFEE" are written in a large, bold, black font. To the right of the pot, there is a small illustration of a burrito and the text "Try the famous RoosRoast breakfast burritos!".

By about 7:25, we'd sung through about thirty songs and, since the library closes at eight, it was time to wrap it up. The jams have sometimes ended with an a cappella version of the Carol Burnett song, "I'm so glad we had this time together, just to have a laugh or sing a song. Seems we just get started and before you know it, comes the time we have to say so long." But this night's final song was "Happy Trails," the theme song of the 1950s *Roy Rogers Show*, which was written by Rogers' wife, Dale Evans.

"Happy trails to you/Until we meet again. Happy trails to you/Keep smiling until then. Who cares about the clouds when we're together? Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather. Happy trails to you/Until we meet again."

After we were done, people packed up their instruments and stood around chatting until closing time. I walked out humming "Edelweiss," which I'd spotted on the list, but didn't get to suggest this time. I'll remember to ask for it at the next Folk Song Jam Along. It'll sound great with a bunch of voices.

Information about the monthly Folk Song Jam Alongs is on Facebook at facebook.com/folksongjamalong.

A graphic with a yellow background. The text "Folk Song Jam Along" is written in a large, black, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "WELCOME!" is written in a smaller, bold, black font. To the right of the text is a red silhouette of an acoustic guitar. A small black bird is perched on the neck of the guitar.

KNOW THE WORLD, KNOW THY SELF:

By Michelle A. McLemore

Benjamin Joseph Suydam isn't the typical hawker, wheeler and dealer. At festivals, he hangs back unobtrusively — approaching only when the looker is intrigued with a specific work. (Having seen his booth at various fairs, I can attest that something inevitably catches the eye and draws you in for a closer look. It's then you find your spirit subconsciously crooning in recognition of kinship to a particular print or painting's motif.)

After a visitor becomes intrigued with a piece, this tall, thin, young man casually saunters over to tell the story—not his story, per say, but the story of the piece's becoming. (Or peace's beginning, as Suydam would internally pun.) And more often than not, the art will go home with its new-old friend.

Over the course of emails and an interview, Suydam, 34, shared openly about his own, ongoing "Becoming" and in that time, I was grateful to be reminded there are people like him holding on and coming up in the world with perspective, wisdom, and inspiration ringing true for us all.

Entering his home studio outside Adrian, I was immediately aware of art hung on every wall space possible—but delightedly, a mix of his own and his friends'. (It is rare to find a young artist who can encourage his peers in his own space, ego-muted.) Humble but practical, one space leads to the next and different-sized pieces lead to the shelves stocked with finished canvases—some awaiting Suydam's hand-built frames. Small succulents in original nature-designed pots take in the sunlight from the window and sliding doors. And be prepared, suddenly Flower (a black and white cat named for the Disney skunk) will also assist in the tour. Down the center are worktables for Suydam's creation time and where once a week local friends gather for art nights.

He seemed quietly excited to share about his work and life. I observed his fedora, patient eyes, untamed beard, co-exist tattoo, casual pants, bare feet, and mother earth turtle self-designed t-shirt. (Yes, his style is that recognizable that I didn't have to be told it was his.)

Suydam explained, "Growing up, my favorite thing in the world was drawing, but when I picked up a camera for the first time (when I was a senior in high school) I was immediately hooked. A good photograph was like instantaneous art. While a good drawing can take up to eight hours or more, a good photograph can be done in the click of the shutter and maybe 5-10 minutes of photoshopping to get the colors popping. I did an associate degree in photography, but at art fairs and festivals I often call it my 'doctorates associates' because it took me eight years to get my degree...." His voice dropped explaining part of him was fighting against the societal notion that to be qualified, one has to have a piece of paper saying so. —

Still, Suydam finished it and roughly six years ago inspiration led him to his current unique style of Water Colored Photos (WCPs). In contemplating the texture of the photo paper, "It felt as if a light bulb turned on in my head and recognized, this is matte paper. This is not glossy. I should get out my watercolor

paints that I had since I was little—the little hard pucks that you add water to. So, I got the paint out and started coloring in my photo, quite abstractly I might add."

Suydam recognized he needed to personalize the piece, else he might as well keep the original picture. "I splattered paint all over it; I put any and every color all over the photo." After some consideration, he carefully used markers to trace back around the photo along with several of the paint splatters. "Then I saw it. I felt like I had performed magic. The end result had me very excited about the finished 'peace' I was holding in my hands."

This was the start of reviewing his archive of photos amassed since age 18. "With my new excitement, I would paint two to four new ones a day. Also, around the same time, I got really interested in acrylic on canvas, as well as just

water coloring on watercolor paper. I even found time to draw my own stencils and custom spray paint t-shirts. I enjoy ceramics and making little succulent planters out of hollowed out tree knots and colorful rocks that I have gathered by Lake Michigan."

From there, it was time to share to a larger audience. "One of the first open house art events I ever held was hosted in a coffee shop in Ann Arbor. Most of my aunts, uncles, and cousins showed up

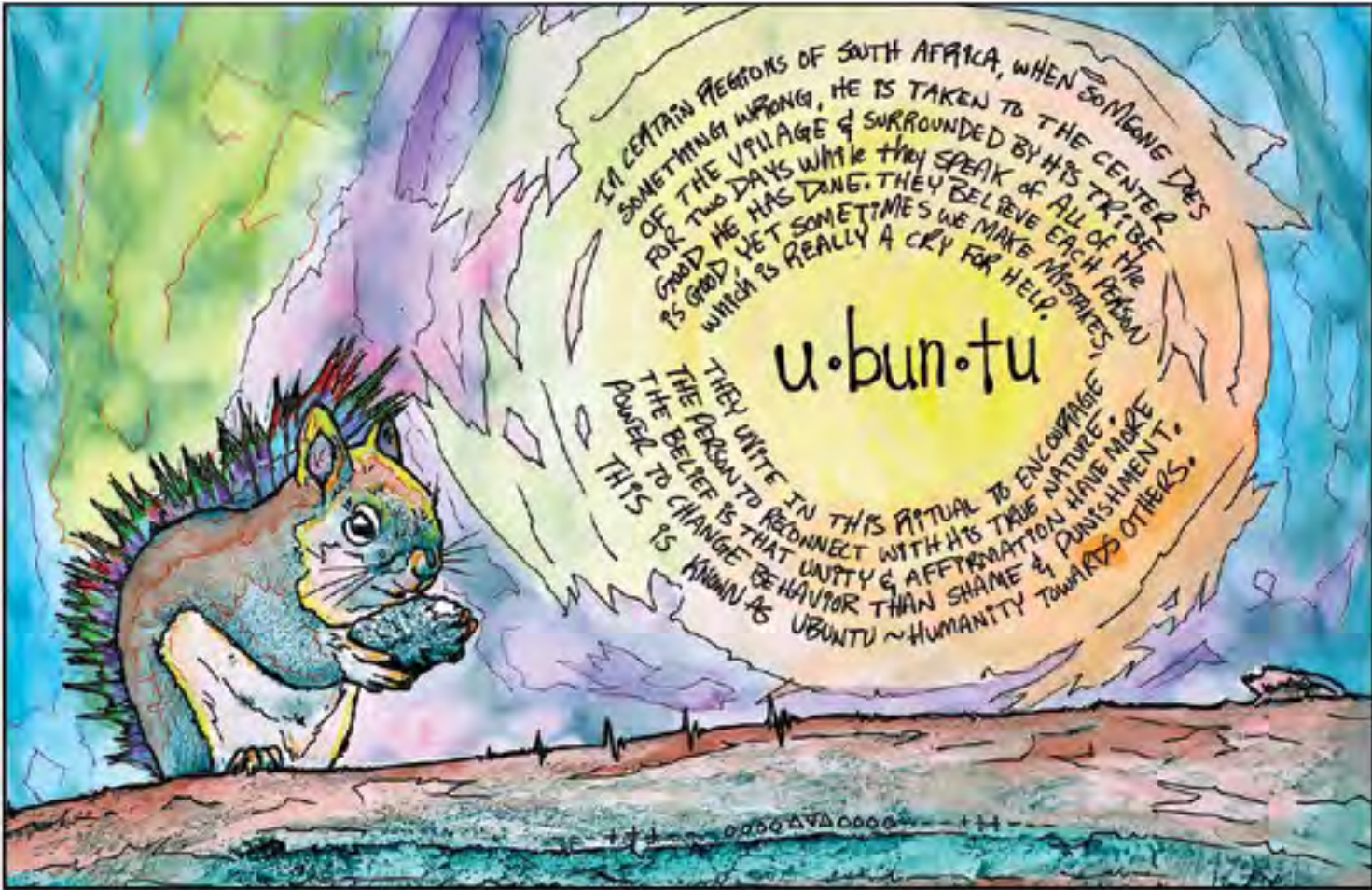
and all left with arms full of framed prints." With support and growth, Suydam eventually began making the art festivals circuit. One of his favorites is the mid-September Art-A-Licious festival in downtown Adrian. He also exhibited at the 2022 Belle Isle art Fair. At one point he did commercial work for Saugatuck Brewing company.

I wondered. What is it about art? What did he enjoy about it so much that it seems infused everywhere from his clothing, his home, to his very presence. His answer? "Everything." Suydam continued, "The freedom it offers my mind, how you can create something from nothing. How much it helps when you are having a bad day. I have often loved breaking down the word 'painting' in my mind... if you look the word 'pain' is right there in front of you: 'pain'ting. It has always been a place I can go within my mind to set myself free." And there have been some heavy topics on his mind for a long time.

We sat amid the ebb and flow of colors, questions, and plants, Flower curling up nearby. "From a young age my mother would often tell me that the human mind is the happiest when it is being creative and while I was growing up there was a lot of a pain that was present in my household, so anything to make me feel 'happier' was

welcome in my life."

Suydam shared a tragedy that occurred early in his awareness. "When I was five, I had a brother named Daniel that passed away at age four. It indirectly had a large impact on my life because I was so young, and my body was absorbing the world around me, and I now had a very sad mother. I didn't understand death or missing someone, but I became a sponge, absorbing all around me, becoming 'ultra-sensitive.' I have lived *in* to it. I can sit in a room full of people and I will find the pain. I can feel the actual physical pain in others." I noted, this was probably the beginning of his later understanding that he articulated as, "If even one person is suffering, then we are all suffering."



Over the course of emails and an interview, Suydam, 34, shared openly about his own, ongoing "Becoming" and in that time, I was grateful to be reminded there are people like him holding on and coming up in the world with perspective, wisdom, and inspiration ringing true for us all.

Art Reveals All

“Drawing and being alone in the woods were both things that took me away from the pain; so needless to say, I did both as often as I could.” As a Michigan native, Suydam shared, “I love being outside. I often say, ‘anytime spent in the woods is time well spent.’”

Suydam’s affinity for nature and the healing found in the wide-open expanse has remained with him through the years. “A week after I turned 21, I moved to Lake Tahoe, California. I also have had extended stays in Guatemala, Washington, New Mexico, Texas, and most recently spent a month living in Maui on an organic farm. I feel very blessed that my family lets me return home in between all of these adventures; I would not be able to live the lifestyle I do without a loving, supportive family.”

“It took a little while to get them to understand me, but I explained one day to my father that I would probably never live a normal life and that I wasn’t sure if, or when, I would get married or buy a house, a minivan, or a golden retriever. I explained to him that I wasn’t cut out for that life, and that the thought of it made me very uncomfortable and even a bit scared. I feel as if I owe them my life.” A smile broke the seriousness. “I have had itchy feet for as long as I can remember.” Suydam’s other hobbies include hiking, camping, mountain biking, kayaking, running, and spending time with his family.



His voice dropped explaining part of him was fighting against the societal notion that to be qualified, one has to have a piece of paper saying so.

Salvatore Dali, Andy Goldworthy (naturalist), and Vincent Van Gogh have all been inspiration for Suydam along with intuitive guidance. “Guidance in artwork may come in specific suggestions such as to do the work upside down or by a seemingly random impulse to pick up objects found along a walk. There is usually no pre-formed plan for what will be communicated on the canvas.” Rather it is after a piece is finished, that as a whole, it will reveal its messages, motifs, or ideas to him. And because it is a discovery or revelation for him, pieces go through several working titles—word play showing the duality of life and nature as often as possible.

We pause our walk about the studio for him to point out pieces in a Jesus series representing his ongoing coalescence of spiritual understanding, readings, and heart’s quest for truth. Then, he chuckles about the co-exist “bumper sticker” he has on his arm. He shakes his head about the hypocrisy behind the famous design and relayed the story that two different groups went to court over owning the design concept, basically violating the art piece’s essence.

What else? Ideas poured from him like a burst damn, waters bitter-sweet and urgent coursing along finding the paths that yield and accept. What other ideas and philosophies inspired his work?

“The war will be won when we are one.”

“We are more the same than we are different.”

“I like the idea of using my art to show how connected we all are as humans. I feel like for far too long the majority of our focus as a human race is what separates us—what makes us different. I want to help people to focus on what makes us similar, what makes us family. What makes us all one—united.”



We pause our walk about the studio for him to point out pieces in a Jesus series representing his ongoing coalescence of spiritual understanding, readings, and heart’s quest for truth.

At a sit-down with a business owner interested in helping Suydam display his work at their coffee shop, he explained that there is more to his art ambition than simply sales: “My goal is to change the world. I feel as if many of the pieces of art that I have made have deeper meanings and back stories that help with this mission. My favorite part of the



**ARTIST
BEN
SUYDAM**

KNOW THE WORLD, KNOW THY SELF:

continued...



deeper meanings is that I don't know what they are prior to making the art. Oftentimes, I look at a piece (sometimes months after I have made it) and then the deeper meaning of the art dawns on me." One example of such a piece is his work titled, "The War Within."

A week before going to Guatemala, Suydam saw the famous Vietnam-era picture of a hippie handing a flower to a soldier. "I knew I wanted to recreate this image, but that I wanted to be both people in the photograph. I set up my camera with a tripod and I had tape on the floor, mapped out where to stand. I used a 10 second timer and a make-shift studio in front of a bedsheet. I shaved off my beard between photos. It was a huge commitment and it felt weird without my beard. I tucked my hair up, put on a helmet, painted 'MP' on a rifle and took the second shot."



"We are far from getting past an eye for an eye mentality. Until we do, we will continue to reincarnate and get put back on earth. We need to learn ultimate compassion—love everyone and judge no one. Then we can delete the rest of the book."

—Ben Suydam

The revelation came a few weeks later. At an art show, he was handing out samples—glorified business cards with different art pieces on the backside. "I let people pick out one that they liked. A lady picked the recreated photo. When I explained to the lady, that I'm the hippie and I'm also the soldier, I felt an energy rush down my arms and across my body. I felt my head split. I am *also* the soldier. Everything looked a little bit different after that moment. I knew that I was deeply entwined to everything that is good in the world, but also to everything bad or that I disagreed with. In the past I wanted to blame the government for everything bad, believing we are pawns being manipulated. It's normal at the point of recognizing badness, that we want to be separate."

He continued, "We are far from getting past an eye-for-an-eye mentality. Until we do, we will continue to reincarnate and get put back on earth. We need to learn ultimate compassion—love everyone and judge no one. Then we can delete the rest of the book. I do get it. It's so much easier said than done. Things will make people angry, and you probably will want to get even. Yet, Einstein said, you can't create or destroy energy. If you murder someone, that energy reincarnates somewhere. You can't kill evil out of the word. You have to transmute evil. You have to get that thing help! If we don't change, we'll never evolve as a human race."

The hours had drawn on unnoticed except for the moving shadows across the wall. The interview must be concluded for the day, but I knew Suydam's wishes for humanity would breathe again in the article and perhaps be at least briefly entertained by each reader. I asked, "Any final thoughts that you want people to know?"

Suydam took a slow breath, nodding. "I want people to know that they are loved, and that they 'matter' both spiritually and scientifically. You matter as you are important, and you matter as in you are literally made of matter. It connects with my philosophy on unity and oneness."

Any patron will take home Suydam's main philosophy home with them, subtly infused in the art. He explained, "I have never been a fan of signing my work and often felt as if art was a gift from the universe and therefore it wasn't really mine to put my name on. But upon popular request, I started putting 'STIL' for Spread the Inner love." It is a mission worth entertaining daily.

Suydam's work is currently on display at Simply Found Creations at 991 Stoddard Road in Adrian, as well as his home studio in Adrian. Work offered on consignment will soon be viewable at Tecumseh Brewing Company. For more information, browse his website at spreadtheinnerlove.com.



Open Heart Surgery

the essential you in your best light
HILARY NICHOLS PHOTOGRAPHY

heartfelt portraiture * emotional events
www.hilarynichols.com / hilary@hilarynichols.com

The Crazy Wisdom Community Room is a great space for classes, workshops, meetings and more!

The Community Room has comfortable seating, and is a warm and relaxing space.

If you would like to hold an event, teach a class, bring an author to town, give a lecture, demonstrate your bodywork skills, or lead a seasonal ceremony... then, Crazy Wisdom Bookstore is the place to do it!

If you would like more information, contact billz@crazwisdom.net

Inquiries for bookings will be welcome starting March 1, 2024



Give Peace a Chance

K.WEST
 SKIN BODY SPIRIT

Ann Arbor's Luxury Holistic Spa

Skin Rejuvenation
 Organic Facials
 Massage
 Pedicure + Manicure
 LED Light Therapy Bed
 Reiki, Tarot
 Gua Sha
 Facial Reflexology
 Yoga, Kundalini
 Metaphysical Workshops
 Face Yoga + Gua Sha Classes

415 N. MAIN STREET
 ANN ARBOR, MI 48104
KWESTSKINBODYSPIRIT.COM
 734-436-8991

Anne Biris — The Healing Power of Chinese Medicine



By Madonna Gauding • Photos by Mary Bortmas

Anne Biris is a nationally board certified and State of Michigan licensed acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist, massage therapist, and practitioner of Chinese Medicine with offices in Ann Arbor and Dearborn Heights. She holds a Master's degree in Chinese Medicine and has been practicing for 30 years. She also provides acupuncture on a volunteer basis in the poorest areas of India and Sikkim. Biris likes to fly under the radar, but after much prodding (because Anne Biris is a treasure that readers of CWJ should know about), she agreed to sit down with me for this interview.

Madonna Gauding: So, let's start at the beginning. Where were you born?

Anne Biris: I was born in Seoul, Korea in 1973. My name was Jin Soon Cho. I don't know at what age I was dropped off at the orphanage. The records claim my father, a taxi driver, committed suicide leaving my mother, a housekeeper, to raise me and at least one other child on her own. In the patriarchal culture of Korea all social worth and legitimacy comes through the father. As a single mother, my mother would have been a social outcast, and I and my siblings would have been denied the advantages and opportunities of those with

fathers. It is likely that financial and social pressures led my mother to relinquish me to an orphanage. There was the hope, among single mothers in Korea, that their child would be adopted by a family in the United States and have a chance at a better life.

I was four years old when my American parents, Dean and Charlotte Biris, adopted me in 1977. My first memory is arriving at Chicago's O'Hare airport. That's when I became Anne Biris. I have no memory of my life in the orphanage or my life in Korea. Two years later, my parents divorced, and my father moved to Wisconsin. My childhood years were spent going back and forth between Illinois and Wisconsin, sometimes living with my mother, sometimes with my dad.

The records claim my father, a taxi driver, committed suicide leaving my mother, a housekeeper, to raise me and at least one other child on her own. In the patriarchal culture of Korea all social worth and legitimacy comes through the father.

Madonna Gauding: I first knew you as a patient. You read lips so well it took me several visits before I realized you were deaf. How has being deaf affected your life and your practice?

Anne Biris: Being deaf is something you are used to, like being left-handed. It does make it challenging with communication at times especially if a patient is face down on the table. But, on the whole, it causes me to pay more attention. I can't be distracted when "listening" to my patients.

Madonna Gauding: When did you first become interested in acupuncture and Chinese medicine?

Anne Biris: I graduated a semester early from high school. Right after my last class, I left for Hawaii to visit family friends and I ended up staying for six months. While in Hawaii I met a woman acupuncturist, and I immediately knew that was what I wanted to do with my life.

MG: Why acupuncture and Chinese Medicine?

AB: Well, I knew I wanted to do something in healthcare. And in high school I had studied tai chi, Buddhism, and Asian philosophy. So, acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine were a natural extension of my interests. When I returned to Wisconsin, a branch of The Chicago-based Midwest College of Oriental Medicine had just opened in Racine. I joined the first class in Racine.

MG: How old were you?

AB: I was 18 when I enrolled in acupuncture school in 1991. Technically, students were required to have completed two years of college before they enrolled, but the school made an exception and allowed me to attend community college at the same time I studied acupuncture. While attending school, I supported myself by working at the Theosophical Society in Wheaton, Illinois. In 1994, I received my certification in acupuncture and Oriental massage from the Midwest College of Oriental Medicine. In 2006, I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine Nutrition, and a Master of Science degree in Oriental Medicine from the Midwest College of Oriental Medicine.

MG: What is Chinese medicine and how is it different from standard western medicine?

AB: Chinese medicine is one of the few forms of healthcare that considers the whole person—their body, their emotions, their personal history, and everything going on with them in the moment. A good practitioner is able to incorporate every aspect of the patient into their treatment strategy. The treatment is not just choosing acupuncture points and inserting needles. It involves listening to the patient and understanding their unique needs. An individual may see five different acupuncture practitioners but will get the best results with only one, not because that person is a better acupuncturist, a better needler, but because they resonate with them on a personal and emotional level. The relationship between patient and practitioner in Chinese medicine is an integral part of the healing process.

MG: What kinds of patients do you see?

AB: I see patients of all ages, with all medical conditions, and from all walks of life. For example, I have worked with a lot of veterans who are often skeptical about acupuncture. They are often irritable because they are in a lot of pain. I used to spend a lot of time explaining what acupuncture is, and how it works, but they really weren't interested. They just want to know if I am a nice person, if I will listen to them, if I can help them and accept their idiosyncrasies. For example, there are some vets who don't like the door to the treatment room closed, they don't like confinement. Some have to be able to see the door at every minute, and some have to have their back against the wall. These are things I understand about them and do my best to accommodate. This goes for any of my patients, not just vets. All my patients are unique and have unique needs.

For questions call:
734-222-1491

FOR CHRONIC ILLNESS, CANCER, OR WELLNESS

Life Force Intensive Session

Regain your health with two weeks of anthroposophic medical care, therapies, and nutrition in Ann Arbor. Mistletoe treatment available.



Next Sessions:
March 4th-16th, May 6th-18th

Start your registration at
steinerhealth.org



At the time I first studied acupuncture in the early 90s, it was a kind of fringe occupation. We all went into it for the love of it. We didn't expect to make much money doing it, much less support ourselves. At the time, there was no recognition in mainstream medicine of the benefits of Chinese medicine, and there was no insurance coverage like there is today.

— Anne Biris

Anne Biris — The Healing Power of Chinese Medicine



MG: Can you explain the various forms of Chinese medicine?

AB: Chinese medicine includes acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping, heat lamps, *gua sha*, massage, and herbs. A lot of practitioners today only do acupuncture, which is effective on its own.

MG: But you do everything.

AB: Well, I feel I don't get the results I want with just acupuncture. Years ago, I started my practice sharing a chiropractor's office. I loved working with him. He helped me to understand muscles and muscle groups, nerve pathways and the vertebrae, pressure points, and muscle reactions. I rely on the traditional meridians and points but when it comes to pain, I add body work and massage and when inserting needles into points, I often look for a muscle response in addition to an energetic response.

MG: What is acupuncture? How does Chinese medicine work?

AB: Acupuncture uses very fine needles inserted at specific points along meridians, the pathways in the body through which life-energy or qi flows. These are not physical pathways, but energetic pathways that have been a part of Asian medicine for thousands of years. There are many different techniques and schools within the field of acupuncture. For example,

Being deaf is something you are used to, like being left-handed. It does make it challenging with communication at times especially if a patient is face down on the table. But, on the whole, it causes me to pay more attention. I can't be distracted when "listening" to my patients.

— Anne Biris

there are Chinese, Japanese, and Korean styles, and there are many different methods of choosing points and of needling. My style relies on Traditional Chinese Medicine.

I look at treatment in two ways. First, I address the patient's immediate concern, and then I address the whole person, including their mental and emotional state. For example, if someone comes in for back pain which is the most common condition I treat, I will treat their back pain, but I may also end up addressing their grief. In the past few years, I have treated people who have had Covid for fatigue, respiratory conditions, and digestive problems, and I often had to address their anxiety as well. Treating the whole person is unique to Chinese medicine.

MG: What is moxibustion?

AB: Moxibustion is the burning of the herb mugwort over an acupuncture point. You stimulate the point with the heat from the burning herb rather than with needles. There is a special way the mugwort is processed so that when you burn it you achieve the cleanest burn. It is also aged. The older the mugwort, the better. There are many different ways to burn mugwort or "moxa" as a treatment. The most common one is using the stick form which is shaped like a cigar. You light one end of it and hold it near the acupuncture point you are wanting to warm.

MG: Tell me about cupping.

AB: Cupping is a procedure for pulling stagnant blood out of muscle tissue. Special glass suction cups are applied to the body so that the blood is forced

I also work with couples to help them conceive naturally or support them when they are undergoing fertility procedures. Fertility patients are extremely emotional. The emotional ups and downs of waiting every month is stressful because they want that baby so badly. I understand the emotional toll it takes on them.

And I work with patients who simply want to optimize their health.

MG: What you are describing is so different than standard medicine where appointments are usually 15 minutes. Although some Western doctors try to work holistically within the constraints of the system, I rarely feel "seen" or understood in the ways you are talking about. The view of the patient as a whole that you describe in Chinese medicine is missing.

AB: Well, to be fair, standard medicine is different now than it once was. It used to be you would go see the family doctor, and he or she would ask, "How are your children? How is your job going? Have you read a good book lately?" You might say, "my stomach has been bothering me," and they might ask, "Well, are you still eating a lot of chocolate and drinking six cups of coffee a day?" And you might say, "Well, yeah." Then he may say, "Well, you might want to cut that out." That is what family doctors used to be like. They knew you well because your relationship extended over decades. Most of us no longer expect that kind of personal relationship with our doctor. Our primary doctors come and go. A specialist may have the worst bedside manner, but if he can diagnose what is going on with you, you are okay with that. On the other hand, having a personal relationship is an integral part of my treatment. It develops naturally over time. It's not optional.



I look at treatment in two ways. First, I address the patient's immediate concern, and then I address the whole person, including their mental and emotional state.

— Anne Biris

out of the muscle tissue being treated. It's almost a lymphatic way of moving blood and fluid.

MG: And what about herbs? Do you create your own herbal formulas?

AB: I don't do as much of that anymore. Instead, I use a high-quality line of prepared herbal formulas. I used to send my own formula of loose herbs home with patients, but they wouldn't cook them as directed. It takes time and effort, and they can be strong smelling, so they didn't use them. I needed something in pill form my patients would actually use and benefit from.



MG: So how do you diagnose a person?

AB: After practicing almost 30 years, I've gotten to the point where upon meeting a person I have a good idea what is going on with them. When I diagnose a patient, I consider the eight principles. And I look for disharmony in any of the organs—the kidney, the spleen, the heart, lungs, and so on. The eight principles are heat, cold, yin, yang, internal, external, deficiency, and excess. Also, there are six pathogens that can invade the body: wind, cold, heat, summer heat, damp, and dryness. If someone is cold all the time, I will do warming treatments. I notice if they are deficient or have a form of excess, and I will work to balance their body. The American population in general is damp so I am always looking for that.

MG: So, you assess a patient based on what they tell you and how you observe and experience them?

AB: I base a lot on appearance, skin color and quality, muscle tone, how they move, how they look, their affect. I also learn a lot about imbalances and overall health from touch and from body work.

MG: What are tongue diagnosis and pulse diagnosis in Chinese medicine?

AB: Tongue diagnosis is simply observing the color, shape, and texture of the body and surface of the tongue. It is a way of showing what is going on internally. The pulse is a much more subtle way of diagnosing a patient's condition. The speed, depth, and force all indicate different things. Tongue diagnosis and pulses are much more important for prescribing herbs. With acupuncture, it is not as important. If the patient is having symptoms I can't quite figure out, then I will look at the tongue. I will do pulses if I need confirmation of my diagnosis.

MG: Do you work with regular MDs or coordinate with them in a patient's care?

AB: I sometimes work with oncologists and other MDs. Cancer patients are very challenging. They have issues with digestion, pain, fatigue, and nausea. Having cancer is very difficult and patients need emotional support through their whole treatment process. My interest in cancer care was born out of a strong desire to find the best way to help those in these difficult circumstances. If I only worked with cancer patients, it would be a very fulfilling practice for me.

MG: Does your treatment differ according to the type of cancer the patient has?

AB: I can have five breast cancer patients, but each one of them is unique and will require a different treatment approach. Each patient can have the same western diagnosis but will end up with dramatically different treatment plans in the Chinese system. On the other hand, you can have five patients with five different western diagnoses, but they end up having the same Chinese acupuncture or herbal treatment plan. They may all be deficient and struggle with anxiety, for example.

MG: I love that Chinese medicine is so personalized. The patient is treated as a unique individual. Western medicine tends to base treatment on "best practices," or a one-size-fits-all approach driven by managed care and insurance coverage. I know you treat a lot of people with back pain but what about other kinds of pain?

AB: I treat many kinds of pain—back pain, knee pain, joint pain, and a lot of people come in for headaches.

MG: Are you successful with headaches?

AB: Actually, headaches are not that difficult to treat. A lot of headaches end up being tension headaches stemming from neck and shoulder muscle constriction. When I relieve that constriction, the headaches go away. Then, some headaches are stress related and diet related. I may suggest lifestyle changes for those patients. And, occasionally, some patients I am not able to help.

MG: Tell me what happens during an initial visit?

AB: The first visit is an hour and a half. I usually spend the first half hour going over the patient's medical condition, their history, and what brought them to me. I will then do acupuncture on one or both sides of the body depending on what feels appropriate. If I do the back, I will often combine a massage with acupuncture. *Tui na*, or Chinese massage, gives me additional information. I can tell a lot about what is going on with a person through touch. Then we talk about a treatment plan. I may suggest lifestyle changes and I may prescribe herbs.

MG: What do you love about what you do?

AB: It forces me to be fully present. I can't do what I do without being 100% focused on the patient and the process. I love that feeling and I love helping people.

At the time I first studied acupuncture in the early 90s, it was a kind of fringe occupation. We all went into it for the love of it. We didn't expect to make much money doing it, much less support ourselves. At the time, there was no recognition in mainstream medicine of the benefits of Chinese medicine, and there was no insurance coverage like there is today. Over the years there has been a growing acceptance and appreciation, among the general population and mainstream medicine, of the beauty, sophistication and effectiveness of acupuncture and Chinese medicine. I am so grateful to have the privilege and joy of helping people improve their health and their lives through this ancient method of health and healing. I have never done anything else and there is nothing else I would rather do.

Anne Biris, RAc practices at Eastern Integrative Services at 2300 Washtenaw, Suite 101 in Ann Arbor and 24534 Hass Street in Dearborn Heights. To make an appointment you can reach her at (734) 761-5402 or visit her online to learn more at easternintegrativeservices.com.

###

The Quartz Crystals in Our Lives — Necessity, Healing, and Magic

By Wintermoon

For as long as I can remember I have had a fascination with quartz crystals. They call to my heart and sing to my soul. I have them in most every room of my home. As a spiritual person, I believe in the metaphysical and healing use of crystals of all varieties. My favorite crystal is clear quartz. I love the beauty and clarity of these faceted wonders of nature.

Whether you're aware of it or not, our lives run on crystals. As a technology junkie I was curious about the role that these beautiful clear crystals play in our daily modern lives. Television sets, radios, computers, cell phones, cameras, and electric watches all have quartz crystals. Like humans, quartz crystals have a heartbeat. Quartz crystals are used in watches, computers, and other devices to keep time. When electricity is applied, the quartz crystal vibrates, or ticks, an exact 60 seconds per minute. A tiny quartz crystal slice, about 1/20th by 1/5th of an inch, creates a computer's heartbeat.

Crystals for electronic use were originally mined from the ground. Thankfully, since the 1950s, it's been possible to grow them synthetically, which makes crystals not only more accessible, but also saves this wonder of nature from being over mined.

Crystals for electronic use were originally mined from the ground. Thankfully, since the 1950s, it's been possible to grow them synthetically, which makes crystals not only more accessible, but also saves this wonder of nature from being over mined.

Now we hear that our cell phones, computers, and other electronics are powered by silicon chips. Curiosity sent me looking for more information about silicon versus quartz in electronics and found on *Satya Center* that, "Silicon dioxide forms naturally as quartz crystals. Over time, quartz erodes into beach sand, which is the non-crystalline form of silicon dioxide. Computer manufacturers extract pure silicon from the sand, heat the silicon to 1,500 degrees Celsius, and dip a tiny quartz crystal into the super-heated solution. The crystal is rotated and slowly extracted from the mixture creating a larger mass shaped like a cone. The cone is turned on its side and sliced into flat disks which are then subdivided into the tiny computer chips so ubiquitous in our homes, offices, cars, airplanes, and briefcases. It is no exaggeration to say that the digital age is the age of the quartz crystal."

Our bodies use electricity called e-impulses. These e-impulses in our bodies come from charged chemical signals and our human cells use that power to move, think, feel, and so much more.

Since quartz crystals respond to electricity, I believe it is possible to use the electricity in our bodies to program quartz for metaphysical and healing purposes.



Our bodies use electricity called e-impulses. These e-impulses in our bodies come from charged chemical signals and our human cells use that power to move, think, feel, and so much more. I am not a scientist, but as a person who lives with atrial fibrillation, I know how strong and important those electrical impulses are.

Crystals are found within the earth and on its surface. They are pure and have a purpose—to balance nature. When we take possession of one of these crystals and plan on programming it for our personal use, our intent should be to use them in a positive and responsible way.

- 1) The crystal should be cleansed and cleared to dispel any negative energies they may have picked upon their journey. It is recommended you cleanse your crystals when you first get them, and then once a month after that. This can be done in a variety of ways: Set it to bathe in the smoke from burning sage, rosemary, or incense.
- 2) Purify by placing the crystal in sacred water like sea water or water from the Great Lakes. Add a little sea or rock salt, or moon water (water that is left out overnight in the light of the full moon). Note: Use only non-salt water for soft or porous stones and minerals like calcite.
- 3) Bury them underground for 24 hours. This allows the earth to absorb any unwanted energy and refresh the crystals.
- 4) Lay your crystal on a cleansing crystal like selenite. Selenite can clear the energy of crystals.

After your crystal has been cleared and cleansed, it is time to program your crystal. Take some time to think about what you'd like this crystal to help you manifest. Are you looking for healing, love, prosperity, or help with anxiety? Remember your programming should be positive, responsible, and harm none.

After your crystal has been cleared and cleansed, it is time to program your crystal. Take some time to think about what you'd like this crystal to help you manifest.

You want to push your intent into the crystal using the energy of your thoughts. Hold your crystal and communicate to it what you desire to manifest. You can silently push your thoughts to your crystal. You can talk to it, sing to it, or meditate with it, letting the crystal know how you'd like it to help you. You can also write down your intention and place it under your crystal. There is no right or wrong way to communicate to your crystal.

Once you have charged your crystal with your intent, you should keep it close to you. Keep it on your nightstand, work desk, or kitchen counter—anywhere you spend time.

My family spends a lot of time in our living room, so on the coffee table I keep a group of crystals, each with its own programming. One for healing, one to reduce stress and anxiety, and one for prosperity for all who spend time in the room. I also keep crystals by my bedside, in my dining room, on my work desk, and on the television stand.

Quartz crystals can also be used in magic and healing by placing them in a wand or holding the pointed quartz in your hand and directing the point of the crystal toward where you want to direct your programmed energy. Use them to clear negativity from a person or a room. Use it on yourself at the end of a long day to clear your own energy and help you relax.

Whether you're aware of it or not, our lives run on crystals.

Whether in technology, healing, or magic, quartz crystals are, and will continue to be, a big part of our lives.

Here are a few good books to read for more information on crystals: *The Crystal Bible* by Judy Hall, *Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Crystal, Gem & Metal Magic* by Scott Cunningham, and *Crystals for Beginners: The Guide to Get Started with the Healing Power of Crystals* by Karen Frazier.



ASHES IN ART GLASS

Encapsulating the Spirit of Remembrance

By Christine MacIntyre

One local artist has found a way to etch a world of fleeting moments into eternal beauty. Nestled in a studio in Ann Arbor's Kerrytown district, Chris Nordin, the creative mastermind behind the business Ashes in Art Glass, breathes life into the ethereal by transforming the ashes of loved ones into stunning, sculptural remembrance pieces. At the core of this artistry lies a poignant convergence—the intersection of grief and craftsmanship—where glass encases the essence of a human spirit.

The process begins with a deeply personal connection. Nordin, a gifted artisan with a long-time passion for glasswork, understands the profound emotional journey of those seeking to commemorate their loved ones uniquely and tangibly. He collaborates closely with clients, listening to their stories, memories, and desires. This intimate connection between artist and client becomes the foundation upon which the transformative alchemy of ashes into art glass unfolds. Driven to help others navigate their grief, he embarked on a quest to master the intricate art form that would incorporate the ashes of cherished



Nestled in a studio in Ann Arbor's Kerrytown district, Chris Nordin, the creative mastermind behind the business Ashes in Art Glass, breathes life into the ethereal by transforming the ashes of loved ones into stunning, sculptural remembrance pieces.

individuals (including pets). Years of dedication, training, and refining techniques led to the culmination of his craft. Through this heartfelt endeavor, he found a way to merge his passion for art with a profound sense of purpose.

Nordin inherited his artistic flair from his creative parents, who encouraged him and his siblings to explore various artistic forms. "They had us all doing art, playing music, and expressing ourselves through various art forms whether it was 2D, 3D, music," said Nordin. While he didn't excel in traditional academics like spelling and math during high school, he thrived in hands-on classes. "I was really good at art and machine-related classes." Recognizing his aptitude, his parents encouraged him to explore art colleges.

The mid-1990s marked a pivotal moment in the life of Nordin, a then-recent graduate of the College for Creative Studies, where he had majored in glass and minored in metalworking. At that crossroads, he faced a choice: carry on the legacy of his family's steel business in southwest Detroit or embark on a path of his own that revolved around his passion for glass.

Opting for artistic pursuit, Nordin joined forces with fellow artist, and now-wife Michelle Plucinsky, to establish Furnace Hot Glass Works. This company would go on to redefine the art of glassblowing. Their distinctive fusion of 50's aesthetics and Venetian artistry soon became their signature line known for its masterful sculptures, captivating lighting designs, and installations spanning hospitality, healthcare, and residential settings.

Stepping away from the enterprises he co-founded has afforded him the luxury of fostering close and personal connections with his clients.

Years of dedication and commitment catapulted Furnace Hot Glass Works into the ranks of Michigan's most celebrated glass studios. Yet, Nordin's entrepreneurial spirit was far from sated. Alongside this success, Nordin and Plucinsky embarked on a series of ventures.

Their second business, Glass Academy, LLC, provides people with an intimate opportunity to engage with the glass world. The Glass Academy offers product classes and signature shows allowing individuals to experience the artistry up close. Simultaneously, they acquired the glassblowing facility at the Michigan Renaissance Festival in Holly, Michigan, founding Royal Glassmakers, LLC. This strategic move opened the doors to a glassblowing theater where they could educate thousands of eager customers about the intricate world of glass arts.

By 2016, Nordin's visionary spirit led them to collaborate with Cedar Fair Corp. to operate the glassblowing facility at Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio. This expansion marked the growing influence of Nordin's expertise in glass and solidified his role as a trailblazer in the art of glassblowing and education.

Today, Nordin finds pure creative liberation in his most recent venture, Chris Nordin Studios. Stepping away from the enterprises he co-founded has afforded him the luxury of fostering close and personal connections with his clients. Each bespoke creation he conjures represents an exquisite union of client and artisan, a symphony of experience and the virtuosity of a master glassblower.

ASHES IN ART GLASS

continued...



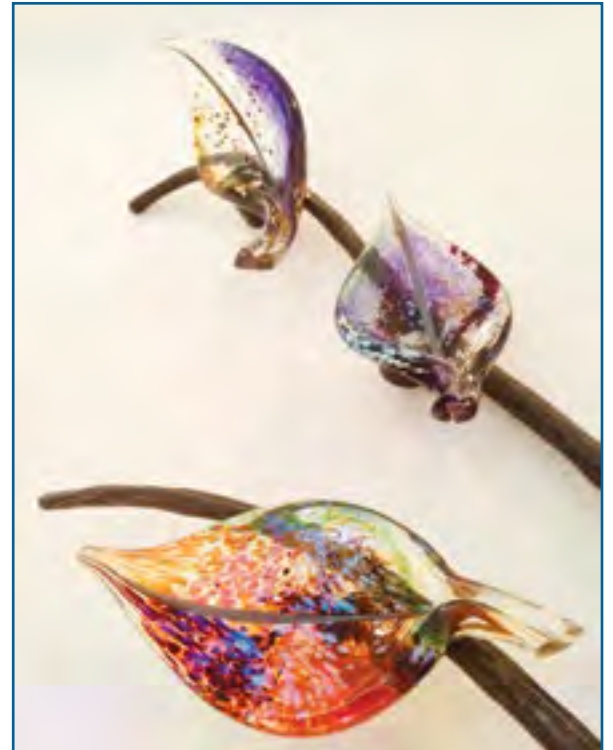
Nordin's craftsmanship is marked by a diverse array of designs and styles, illustrating the versatility of his art. While glass lies at the heart of these creations, Nordin emphasizes that they're more than mere glass. "Glass components encase the ash, but they're also metal and wood. They're sculptures with a glass component."

Special commissions, each reflecting clients' styles and ideas are married with Nordin's expertise and design aesthetic and includes a variety of finished items: chandeliers, wall art, landscape art, or artwork for specific nooks or surfaces in the home or office.

Nordin's portfolio has always emphasized one-of-a-kind projects exemplified by his remarkable designs adorning the chapel at Mott Children's Hospital. With his wife and son, Jacob, running and managing the Glass Academy Nordin can wholeheartedly concentrate on his ambitious endeavors.

Within the confines of his studio, Nordin breathes life into his imaginative visions using a diverse array of mediums from the ethereal beauty of glass to the rugged charm of forged steel, the precision of metal fabrication, and the timeless allure of wood. He utilizes mood, light, and color to create pieces that enhance spaces, portray specific characteristics or emotions, and bring clients' visions to life. In this haven of artistic ingenuity, he continues to be a maestro of creativity and craftsmanship as he pushes the limits of traditional art forms.

Inspired by a desire to help others encapsulate the essence of their loved ones in glass, he established Ashes in Art Glass. This heartwarming endeavor embodies his artistic evolution marking a transition from functional art to profoundly meaningful remembrance leaving an enduring legacy and a testament to the profound impact of artistry on countless lives.



Ashes in Art Glass is not merely a workshop; it's a sanctuary for those navigating the complex terrain of grief.

For Nordin, Ashes in Art Glass is the most passionate of all his ventures. "It's so important. It's a super cool experience with every client," said Nordin. "I feel so gratified being able to make people feel so good—making their memories of loved ones everlasting in a piece of glass." In the intricate journey of crafting these sculptural remembrance pieces, every step (from the delicate handling of ashes to the glass-blending process, where temperatures mirror the intensity of heartfelt emotions) is a meticulous fusion of art and science. The outcome? Truly captivating, one-of-a-kind creations that beautifully encapsulate the cherished memories of loved ones—preserving their essence, life, love, and enduring legacy.

Nordin's craftsmanship is marked by a diverse array of designs and styles, illustrating the versatility of his art. While glass lies at the heart of these creations, Nordin emphasizes that they're more than mere glass. "Glass components encase the ash, but they're also metal and wood. They're sculptures with a glass component."

The possibilities are limitless—from glass urns and vases to botanical sculptures, glass waves, horseshoes, and even spaceships—each bearing the ashes lovingly embedded within the glass. "I love that there's such an eclectic difference between the different levels of sculptures," Nordin said. "Maybe your wife spent a lot of time in the woods; let's talk about something like a really cool piece that's a branch with beautiful leaves that reminds us of that." Remembrance glass art can also include memorializing departed pets and specific events in a client's life, such as losing a beloved house to a fire.

In this collaborative process, the foundational memorial piece, known as the memory sphere, is deliberately distinct from traditional glass paperweights. They're designed to honor the memory of loved ones with the dignity they deserve and offer the flexibility of carrying them, holding them, and feeling the perfectly smooth, round surface—infinite like the memories they have. "I love the memory sphere because it's simple and affordable, but also, I can make them relatively quickly compared to some of the other designs. People are often eager to have their loved ones near them sooner than later."

Ashes in Glass is not merely a workshop; it's a sanctuary for those navigating the complex terrain of grief. Nordin provides a compassionate space where clients can find solace, healing, and a sense of closure through the artistic journey. "I want to make amazing experiences for my clients. Instead of someone feeling like they're supporting me by buying my art, I want to support them, and help make things okay for them through my art."

The consultation phase is crucial to understanding how clients connect with and remember their loved ones. At the core of this process is open dialogue, as Nordin listens to clients' stories, memories, and emotions, ultimately transforming those heartfelt conversations into creative ideas. This intensely personal approach ensures that every piece is a unique tribute to those who've passed, resonating with a loved one's memory. "Talking to the client is the key to the whole process. Other places are just a catalog where you poke your finger at a piece you think you want. There's no mojo in that; there's no true love," he said.

Nordin said that taking his time with each client in an unrushed conversation is the best approach to his business. "It's about the experience. I love making pieces that will blow people away and make them smile and become a part of their lives."

Nordin's powerful art form demonstrates how art can serve as a vehicle for emotion, preserving cherished memories and bringing solace to those who seek it.

Creating glass art designs with clients' loved ones' ashes entails significant ethical considerations. As an artist, Nordin sensitively handles ashes, ensuring he is mindful of emotional well-being. The quality and durability of his designs align with the high standards he holds for himself—he treats every piece as if it contains his loved ones' ashes. His pieces align with clients' memorialization intent, as expectations vary from person to person. Cultural and religious beliefs are factors as are desires for design, color, and use. This unique art form carries deep emotional weight, demanding utmost care, respect, and ethical conduct from start to finish.

Once he receives the ashes, Nordin embarks on a profound journey intimately connected to the client's loved one. He explained, "I've already consulted with the client about who we're going to memorialize, and I know that person in my mind. I try to give that memory its own piece of time while I'm creating." A profoundly spiritual individual, he infuses every piece with positive energy, ensuring the utmost reverence throughout the creative process.

The work is far from hurried; it's a deliberate, intentional, labor of love. Nordin emphasized that he doesn't produce these pieces while jamming to Led Zeppelin or amid distractions. Instead, he meticulously schedules his work during moments of solitude in the studio, where tranquility reigns, allowing him to concentrate and pour his heart into crafting a significant experience for himself and the clients he serves.

Incorporating ashes into art glass leaves an indelible mark on the art world and the concept of remembrance. This innovative approach challenges traditional mediums blurring the lines between art and the deeply personal. It offers a unique dimension to creative expression reflecting the evolving nature of art.

Ashes in Art Glass profoundly influences how people remember and commemorate loved ones, bridging the gap between the past and present. It transforms grief into a therapeutic outlet, fostering healing and closure. Nordin's powerful art form demonstrates how art can serve as a vehicle for emotion, preserving cherished memories and bringing solace to those who seek it. Ashes in Art Glass is a testament to artistic skill and the power of transforming personal tragedy into comfort and reassurance, introducing a transformative element to art and remembrance, and catering to niche audiences seeking personalized, emotionally resonant creations.



FINE ART BY CHRIS NORDIN
Metal - Glass - Wood
Custom Works
RESIDENTIAL HEALTHCARE CORPORATE HOSPITALITY

CHRIS NORDIN STUDIOS GALLERY

GALLERY HOURS:
Thurs 12 - 4 pm
Fri 12 - 4 pm
Sat 10 - 4 pm

117 E Ann St Ann Arbor MI 48103
www.chrisnordinstudios.com

By appointment: rita@chrisnordinstudios.com

ASHES IN ART GLASS
ELEGANT REMEMBRANCES

Custom Memorial Sculptures
Cremated remains incased in glass.

Wood - Glass - Metal
Memories memorialized in sculpture forever

VISIT: ashesinartglass.com

Custom musician memorial sculpture

BE WELL

Mini-Mindfulness Retreats for Educators & School Personnel

- Learn strategies to de-stress and gain skills in self-care
- Perfect for your next staff development
- Be Well Retreats are grant supported and free of charge

The Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education
Email us: info@mc4me.org

Mindfulness techniques help both students and teachers handle stress

Bringing Warmth: Grief as an Anti-Racist Practice



"The past is NEVER dead. it's not even past." —on the wall at Literati Bookstore

By Kirsten Mowrey

Harriet Tubman stares at me as I approach her. I am walking in the forest behind the high school with my dogs. It is an early spring morning, the sun lighting the sky but not yet risen, trees leafless, robin and cardinal calls in my ears. In 2020, art appeared in the forest: a colorful banded ACAB (for "All Cops are Bastards" used by a variety of groups, both racist and anti-racist) sign, Toni Morrison's portrait printed on sheet metal and Harriet, in orange and green. While Toni is gone, the others remain, and I greet them as I pass, Harriet in particular. Her eyes reach through time to touch my heart and depending on what is happening in the world, I feel her gaze as accusing, patient, angry, vulnerable, or shocked.

Being white in America right now is a call for attention. Attention to one's values, one's power, and one's intentions. For those of us on a spiritual path, it can be an engaging practice. An opportunity to learn, to practice being present to what is inside myself and what I am putting out into the world. Attending to what is arising in myself is crucial if I am to practice acting with love, kindness, and care for my community. That is true every day, in all times and places. But right now, it feels more *important* than at other times in my life.

Being white in America right now is a call for attention. Attention to one's values, one's power, and one's intentions. For those of us on a spiritual path, it can be an engaging practice.

"Dangers to their survival move living systems to evolve," wrote Joanna Macy and Molly Brown in *Coming Back to Life*. "When feedback tells them—and continues to tell them—that their old forms and behaviors have become dysfunctional, they respond by changing. They adapt to such challenges by seeking and incorporating more appropriate norms. They search for values and goals which allow them to navigate in more varied conditions, with wider connections. Since its norms are the system's internal code or organizing principle, this process is a kind of temporary limbo. To the mind it can be very disorienting. Psychiatrist Kazimierz Dabrowski names it "positive disintegration." In periods of major cultural transition, the experience of positive disintegration is widespread.... Bereft of self-confidence and old coping strategies, we may feel that we and our world are falling apart. Sometimes we panic or shut down; sometimes in desperation we get mean and turn on each other. It helps to recall that in the course of our planetary journey we have gone through positive disintegration countless times. The life living through us repeatedly died to old forms and old ways. Our evolution attests to this, and so does our present lifetime, as we learned to move beyond the safeties and dependencies of childhood. It is never easy. Some of the uglier aspects of human behavior today arise from fear of the wholesale changes we must now undergo" (44-45).

World falling apart? Check. Get mean and turn on each other? Check. Bereft of self-confidence? Check. Sounds like we are fulfilling Dabrowski's definition of disintegration, and the question is, what will the outcome be? Cultural transitions such as these take decades, centuries even, and so go beyond my life span. This behooves me to focus on what I intend in my limited lifetime to put forward—affirming my values, my desires for connection and community or toward fear and domination? In *All about Love*, bell hooks writes, "A

commitment to a spiritual life requires us to do more than read a good book or go on a restful retreat. It requires conscious practice, a willingness to unite the way we think with the way we act. Spiritual life is first and foremost about commitment to a way of thinking and behaving that honors principles of inter-being and interconnectedness" (77).

World falling apart? Check. Get mean and turn on each other? Check. Bereft of self-confidence? Check. Sounds like we are fulfilling Dabrowski's definition of disintegration, and the question is, what will the outcome be?

Talking about race is a particular aspect of this disintegration. Consciously responding with connection is the reason I visited the Charles Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. I wanted to stay with these questions: Can I stay in relationship to my whiteness at the same time I listen to the story of my fellow Black citizens? Can I stay in relationship to being white at the same time other white people are keeping people of color from having power, telling their truth, or trying to ignore history? hooks provides guidance again by writing, love is an action, a participatory emotion. Whether we are engaged in a process of self-love or of loving others we must move beyond the realm of feeling to actualizing love. This is why it is useful to see love as a practice. When we act, we need not feel inadequate or powerless; we can trust that there are concrete steps to take on love's path. We learn to communicate, to be still and listen to the needs of our hearts and we learn to listen to others. We learn compassion by being willing to hear the pain, as well as the joy, of those we love. The path to love is not arduous or hidden, but we must choose to take the first step" (165).

Her writing speaks to a robustness in the practice of love, an active engaging beating heart—of love felt in the body. My step was to drive into Detroit at the end of March 2023. A leaden grey sky poured rain onto me as I hustled over the walkway to the museum rising overhead. I walked up the steps and hung my dripping coat on the coatrack to my right. Then I stepped into the glass ceiled dome that hummed with the rainfall. On the floor, a seamless mosaic of black arms, broken chains, and white cotton centered under twelve flags that hung from the ceiling. A school group gathered opposite me—their voices audible in the dome's acoustics. It reminded me of the US Capitol in Washington DC where a whisper on one side of the dome can be heard on the other. After purchasing my ticket, I followed the school group into the main exhibit.

To walk into a museum of African American history is to touch grief. Past grief, of a people ripped from their homelands while physically and emotionally tormented, and present grief, of a people seeking recognition, dignity, and equality. At the Wright Museum, the historical/social part of the exhibit is titled "And still we rise" making clear that the move toward equality is not complete.

Those words could also describe the National Museum of African American History in Washington DC where architecture takes that metaphor and makes it reality. The historical exhibit begins in the basement three stories below the ground level entrance. Visitors move through rooms with a minimum of light past exhibits. I visited in August 2022, when summer bright light filled the sky highlighting the darkness. At one point, a boardwalk circles over a dark open space and voices are heard. I could feel the space below me, open air, but I could not see the bottom, only words and phrases spotlighted on the walls. The space is an attempt to give visitors the experience of what being in the hold of a ship transporting people to the Americas from Africa was like. I cried there, in the dark, imagining what it would have felt like to spend months on board,

and knowing that the museum was only touching the surface of the experience. It wasn't able to give me the smell of bodies, human waste, the sounds of the ship, and the noises from hundreds of other people packed into a too small space.

At the Wright, they give you this experience differently. Again, structure mimes metaphor: you walk up the stairs of a re-created fort where captive people were held, then step out into a brightly lit, blue-walled, wooden-floored room. Speakers project the sound of creaking ropes and sails, punctuated with shouts and directions for sailors. Though the ceiling is low, the lighting is so bright one could almost be outside. And then you descend into the hold.

I cried there, in the dark, imagining what it would have felt like to spend months on board, and knowing that the museum was only touching the surface of the experience. It wasn't able to give me the smell of bodies, human waste, the sounds of the ship, and the noises from hundreds of other people packed into a too small space.

At bottom of the stairs, you find yourself in a dimly lit corridor with a wall of unlit three-layer shelves to your left. It takes me a moment to realize that on the shelves are bodies—dark-skinned bodies—all lying at a forty-five-degree angle, packed next to one another on the shelf. Speakers project voices moaning, praying, crying, talking. As I walk the corridor, I pass heads with hair in cornrows and braids, mothers holding babies, and occasionally a pair of feet when someone lies the other way. All the bodies have a tension to them that I recognize—that holding of themselves close and tight when they are trying to maintain personal space and comfort. I am reminded of long plane flights in economy, where everyone contorts themselves to not touch their neighbor in the small spaces. Again, I tell myself that there would have been smells, and movement, and that this can only touch the tip of what the experience would have been like. Turning the corner, I walk past another set of shelves with bodies, eerie in their stillness. Each body is different, clothed with dresses or pants, arms folded across their chest or at their side. It is shocking to see them in their stillness, to know that they represent someone's great grandparents, ancestors of neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

Exiting the ship hold, I enter into a reconstructed colonial Annapolis, Maryland, complete with a slave auction site and figures awaiting sale. From there I enter

another room with a cabin, as would have been on a plantation, and displays of Slave Code statutes, prices for field hands in different states in different years, and cotton production tools. The exhibit then moves into abolition, emancipation, Reconstruction and its failure, leading to Jim Crow laws, and the Great Migration. I walk through Black Bottom, Detroit's African American district, past the Paradise Theater, a barbershop, print shop, and a dozen other businesses before finishing the exhibit at a round room with photographs of African American politicians and a video screen with political speakers.

As I've said before (See *The Crazy Wisdom Journal* issue #84, "Lovingkindness in Action: a visit to the Arab American Museum"), white is a social construct with fluid definitions. My Greek ancestors weren't considered white in the early 1900's, but by mid-century they were, primarily as a response to the Great Migration, in what bodyworker Susan Raffo calls a "conditional belonging." That uncertainty, the possibility of exclusion, plays on an innate human need for community and turns it into a tool for oppression and domination. It's an old tool, one that has been used throughout European history, from Victorian policy giving British born citizens more power than colonials, back through the Elizabethan era giving Europeans more rights than the Africans and Americans whose lands they plundered, to medieval Christianity separating out those of "pure" descent from those who had converted. White supremacy didn't begin on this continent; it was used first in Europe to divide and conquer. Take the story of the Scotch-Irish: as any fan of *Outlander* knows, Britain engaged in decades of wars to take Scotland, starting as early as the 1300's. Many of those Scots who lost their land fought in wars to colonize Ireland in the 1600's and then, when Britain taxed Ireland to pay for those wars, their descendants emigrated to America in the 1800's, where they settled along the frontier. They brought with them violent histories of unresolved pain from the conquest of their own lands and ancestors. "What white bodies did to Black bodies they did to other white bodies first" writes Janice Barbee in *My Grandmother's Hands*.

My maternal great-grandparents fled their village at night to avoid being recruited into the first World War. My own defensiveness around race, my own sensitivities when being with people of color—what if I addressed that by being with my own grief and the grief of my ancestors? The need to flee war, the loss of homeland and community, the difficulty in finding safety and security in a new place?

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History





It is with this legacy of European wounding in mind that Raffo wrote her love letter to white people. “This is a love letter because, with deep love in my heart, I turn to my kin, to those whose families fled deep injustice in their ancestral homelands to come here. This is a love letter because I know that not one of those families came here determined to cause harm in their new home. This is a love letter because I know that, upon arrival, survival depended on figuring out how to be safe in a country where the rules were all different. Not every European who came here settled for whiteness, but most did. Not consciously, but as an act of incremental change, the outcome of a thousand small decisions that chose safety for themselves and their families over struggling with those whose lives most resembled theirs back home.” She ends her letter with a sense of what we have to gain from touching this legacy, this story. “This is a love letter because this isn’t just about ending white supremacy so that violence against indigenous people and people of color ends, although that is deeply important. This is a love letter because ending white supremacy is about choosing human-ness over whiteness, about dealing with the literal trauma of disconnection that allowed whiteness to emerge in the first place. And this is a love letter because within the cycle of violence, even the perpetrator has to heal” (dailykos.com/stories/2017/8/27/1692745/-A-love-letter-to-white-kin-grappling-with-white-supremacy).

present with the grief arising in me, not halting it or pushing it away. Being with my own grief and mourning my ancestor’s griefs unburdens my heart and makes me more accessible to other’s pain. Giving myself and my grief kindness, attention, love and understanding makes me able to give that out to the world. Thich Nhat Hanh writes in *How to Love*, “You can’t offer happiness until you have it for yourself, so build a home inside by accepting yourself and learning to love and heal yourself”(17). Such simple words, such a difficult practice.

What happens when you sit with the story of your lineage? With the circumstances that made your white ancestors come here? What happens when you tell that story? For some of us, there is no story, or only scraps, a few threadbare strings leading back into nothing. That too is something to grieve, that the lock remained on our ancestor’s grief, giving us nothing to inherit but an endless sense of loss.

“Equal rights for others does not mean fewer rights for you. It’s not pie,” so says a bumper sticker I saw recently. It’s the same with grief—your grief doesn’t negate my grief, so only one of us gets to grieve. It’s both of us grieving and being vulnerable that allows us to reconnect in our common humanity. Grief comes to all of us: everyone’s parents die, illness and misfortune happen to families and friends, not one life goes untouched by sorrow and sadness. In an opinion piece about the *1619 Project* television series, Brian Broome wrote, “Many White people watch programs like *The 1619 Project*, and see only a story about White people. That leads to another tragic misunderstanding of why this curriculum is so good for America.

When I watched the first two episodes of *The 1619 Project*, I thought very little about White people. I was captivated by the story of [1619 Project creator Nicole] Hannah-Jones’s father, a military man who was proud to fly his enormous American flag in front of their modest house. I did not think about White people when she told the story of a Black man who was sent to prison and tortured for the crime of wanting to vote. Nor did I think of White people when she told the story of Black women who endured unimaginable torture and humiliations in the name of “science.” And while I am aware that it was White people who did all these things, I was not thinking about them as I watched. That’s because these stories aren’t *about them*, which in America is still rare. Instead, my overwhelming feeling was of deep gratitude. Of awe at what Black Americans before me had to endure and what we are still enduring. I felt pride. And I felt like an American in a way that has eluded me for most of my life. I didn’t dwell on the people who perpetrated the atrocities. I found myself drawn only to the strength, resilience, and resolve of the people who overcame them. Those who focus on the idea that telling these truths is “divisive” are centering White feelings about our real history. Why deny Black students the feeling of gratitude and pride that comes with knowing how your people endured—so that they can overcome and thrive?” (Washington Post, 2/5/2023)

Grieving together, white and black, we face our human condition and the legacies our ancestors have given us. As German journalist Stefan Wagner says, when speaking of visiting the concentration camps in Germany, “There is nothing we can do but go there and read, learn, kneel down, and cry.” Grieving together, we can know that we all feel pain, we all need nurturing, we have all inherited cycles of violence. If we remain unconscious, we repeat them. If we open our hearts to our own pain, our own vulnerability, then we can renew thinking and acting from our interconnection, our common inter-being.



The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History is located at 315 E. Warren Avenue, near the Detroit Institute of the Arts. The Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 pm.

Grieving together, white and black, we face our human condition and the legacies our ancestors have given us. As German journalist Stefan Wagner says, when speaking of visiting the concentration camps in Germany, “There is nothing we can do but go there and read, learn, kneel down, and cry.” Grieving together, we can know that we all feel pain, we all need nurturing, we have all inherited cycles of violence.

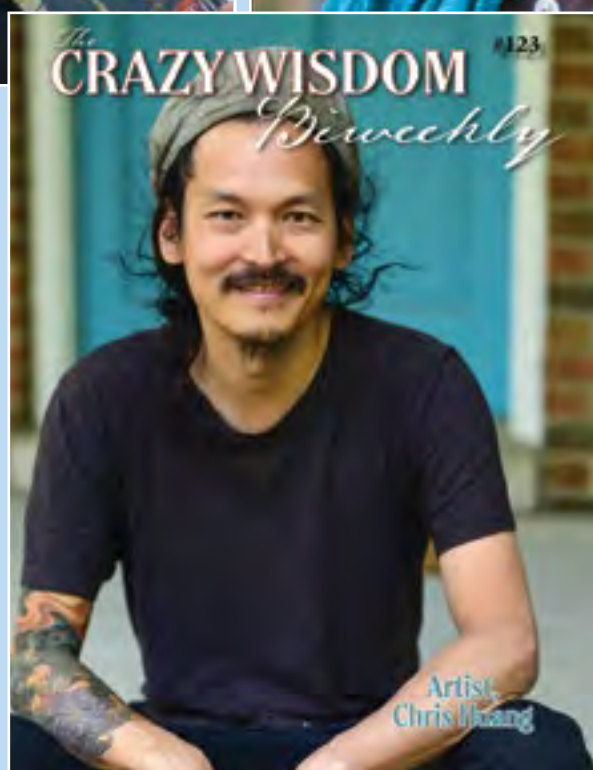
I feel grief rise in my chest, emotion swelling, when I read that ending. My maternal great- grandparents fled their village at night to avoid being recruited into the first World War. My own defensiveness around race, my own sensitivities when being with people of color—what if I addressed that by being with my own grief and the grief of my ancestors? The need to flee war, the loss of homeland and community, the difficulty in finding safety and security in a new place? Psychologist Francis Weller writes that we in the West are “conditioned to accept the notion of private pain. This cultural conditioning predisposes us to maintain a lock on our grief, shackling it in the smallest concealed place in our soul. In our isolation, we deprive ourselves of the very things that we require to stay emotionally vital: community, ritual, nature, compassion, reflection, beauty, and love.” Weller goes on to relate his own experience at a grief ritual, describing it as “aware that I had a reservoir of grief in my body but lacked the means of freeing it. I realize now how frozen I was, how disconnected I had become from my emotional body” (*Wild Edge of Sorrow*, 105). Being present with my own current grief, as well as inherited grief, regarding racial tension and the way it affects my community, nation, and state is a large, yet fruitful task. When I feel helpless about another story of pain and violence, I try to be

STAY CONNECTED

Read the

Crazy Wisdom Biweekly

The Crazy Wisdom Biweekly seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. With **NEW** articles and personal essays, **NEW** event listings, and **NEW** author, artist, and musician interviews, it's the best of Crazy Wisdom in a **bite-sized** read!



Join our mailing list to receive *The Crazy Wisdom Biweekly* in your inbox automatically every other Friday!



Visit our website to read the current and past issues of The Crazy Wisdom Biweekly!



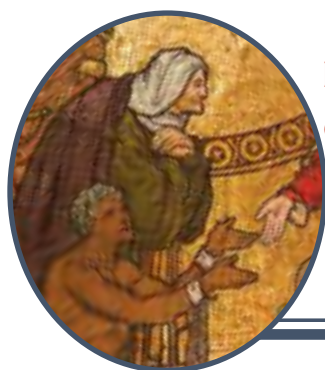
A Handful— Symbols, Faith, and History



Ancient Art Reveals Spiritual and Cross-Cultural Connections Through Hand Gestures

By Michelle A. McLemore

December gave the world a lot to celebrate: Bodhi Day, Day of Our Lady Guadalupe, Hanukkah, Yule, Christmas, Kwanza, Zarathost Diso, and New Year's Eve. Colorful lights and crackling fires against a crisp winter canvas always help me find time to ponder spiritual connections and how humanity has attempted to make sense of and, perhaps ironically, immortalize our understandings. The written word and art have always been equally powerful mediums for capturing abstract yet visceral emotions. Even tentatively opening the door to a museum or a used bookstore makes me catch my breath in anticipation and reverence for the sheer energetic power combined in one space from so many inspired, deeply affected souls.



Even tentatively opening the door to a museum or a used bookstore makes me catch my breath in anticipation and reverence for the sheer energetic power combined in one space from so many inspired, deeply affected souls.

I wonder as I wander the aisles: am I understanding what the creator intended as well as appreciating my own reactions? Art may be in the eye of the beholder; however, many artists infuse subtle messages—just as writers may use allusions. For the viewer or reader in the know, these hidden treasures become Easter egg goodies adding richness to the piece *if* recognized. For others, they are just benign, curious additions. And yet, what is the impact when multiple perspectives can be brought to the same piece for specific features? There may be either enlightenment or argument on which is “right.” And unless you are good with seances, asking the original artist’s intent may not always be possible.

This recent season has led me to seek out spiritual art. In the midst of flowy angels, chubby cherubs, and aura shrouded mystics, I’ve stumbled upon diverse interpretations of artists’ intentions regarding identical hand positions used in a variety of world faiths and artwork from early civilizations.

When I was very young, hands and feet were difficult to draw realistically, so I’d inevitably “run out of space” on the page for the feet. Oops. I’d hide the hands behind hips or objects in order to focus on faces—the ultimate challenge in my mind. I’m certain if a seven-year-old can strategically position hands, then a master most certainly would not haphazardly throw them on the canvas. Hands add emotion for dancers, singers, mimes (sorry—I had to), in addition to general semantic meaning for the deaf or hard of hearing communities. Yet, gestures have also had specific meanings for various groups which go beyond the common index finger pointing for “look there” and the middle finger for “you frustrate me.” Christian clergy, practitioners of Hindu mudras, palm readers,

and professional Greco-Roman speakers—among many other peoples—all have specific meanings for very specific gestures used in art.

The question is...was there one original, influential basis for these hand positions, or as different cultures and faiths intermingled in the Mediterranean and Middle East did they influence each other? Is there a right answer for an art piece’s hand portrayal? Were there historical meanings that perhaps even the artists weren’t aware of when composing their piece?

Famous Roman orators, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE) and Marcus Fabius Quintilian (35–100 AD) both record that effective rhetorical delivery covers both enunciation as well as gesticulation of the hands—the latter coming to be called Chironomia. After much nudging, Quintilian published his rhetoric manual near the end of the first century CE. He mentions in *The Institutio Oratoria*, “No one will deny that such details form a part of the art of delivery, nor divorce delivery from oratory; there can be no justification for disdain to learn what has got to be done, especially as chironomy, which, as the name shows, is the law of gesture, originated in heroic times... (189).

It makes sense that there would be common gestures for speakers and leaders to communicate across great crowds. For meaning to endure across centuries, gestures would have had to be recorded, taught, and used in a consistent manner even as a part of a commoner’s daily life. Religio Romano, Hellenistic paganism, Egyptian Heka, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Islam—all pre-Christian denominations—left evidence of gesture similarities in artwork. As time went on, these gestures also began showing up in Christian artwork and ceremonies—some still in use today.

Let’s examine just a few gestures—starting with a simple one—to add layers of perspective per chance you happen upon these gestures in the future.

The Point-er

First, envision pointing with the index finger and thumb toward the sky with the remaining three fingers pressed down to the palm, palm facing the audience. This was used to accompany a declaration, narration, offer caution, or request a pause for emphasis by ancient Roman orators. When I see it, the first image that comes to my mind is that of the Tinman in the *Wizard of Oz* when he says, “Someday they’ll erect a statue of me in this town.” Auntie Em interrupts, “Well, don’t start posing for it now.” His implied intention was to continue pontificating before Em reminded him to get back to work.

Now-a-days the meaning of the gesture hasn’t changed much. Teachers may use it to pause students’ discussion to make an additional point or add critical reminders. If you’ve seen the movie *City Slickers*, Curley informs that the secret of life is ...and he raises his hand in this gesture. “One thing. Find it...” Oddly to the modern reader, for an ancient Roman signifying numbers by his fingers on the left hand, this gesture actually meant the number three, not one! (Romans could represent up to the number 10,000 using both hands and holding them at different elevations or locations (Bede the Venerable transcribed a list of ancient documents in *De Temporum Ratione* providing us with the proof.)

Continuing, in more literal artwork, pointing sideways or specifically at something has always implied, “Would you look at that!” (Yes, allusion to Ed Bassmaster intended.) Blatant pointing is seen often in classic paintings. The artists must have had severe doubts that viewers would be able to single out the key figures or action in a mural. Consider “Descent of Christ to the Limbo” in the Medici Chapel from 1522. In the bottom left corner, a male in earnest is pointing out the central descended Yeshua/Jesus figure to an unknown (to modern viewers) but probably “just” otherworld female.

In viewing “The Personification of Chastity”—one part of the Ascension cupola of St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice, Italy—the mosaic female holds her left hand up and uses this gesture: Is it to “declare” the virtue labeled next to her and in the scroll within her right hand? Are we sure she doesn’t mean the number three? We would need to view the figures around her to see if perhaps there is a line of virtues and if she is in the third position. She certainly is not pointing to draw our attention elsewhere as her gaze is upon the label to her right which reads “Chastity” or “Purity” in Latin. The orator’s meaning of “Take note” seems the artist’s most likely intention.



Art may be in the eye of the beholder; however, many artists infuse subtle messages—just as writers may use allusions. For the viewer or reader in the know, these hidden treasures become Easter egg goodies adding richness to the piece if recognized. For others, they are just benign, curious additions. And yet, what is the impact when multiple perspectives can be brought to the same piece for specific features?

The nineteenth-century sculpture of Protestant reformer Martin Luther, in Worms, Germany, uses this same gesture. The statue was to commemorate when Luther defended his thesis facing Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor in 1521. Luther most assuredly had a point to declare with a narration to accompany it. (You might note his left hand is held over his heart—another common gesture in the art world.)

Leonardo Da Vinci, however, put a twist on the gesture. In both, “St. John the Baptist” and “The Last Supper” he rotates the palm inward to the body. This changes the gesture to point upward with emphasis—“Look there, and note it is important.”

Not too complicated, right? Let’s add another: **Grounding the Bird.**

What happens when the middle finger is bent to touch the tip of the thumb? (The rest of the fingers point straight up.) Quintilian described this gesture use to indicate the exordium—the actual attention-getting part of a speech. Memories from English class may bring back options of anecdotal narratives, imagery, or a relevant quotation by someone famous. The goal of every intro is to hook listeners—to bring them to the theme through personal association and understanding. How would that look in artwork? Often artists who included this right-handed gesture also composed something symbolic in the left hand. The two would work together to trigger a concept or memory in the viewer.



Examining the central figure of Yeshua/Jesus in the scene of the Deisis at the Vatopedi Holy Monastery, he holds this gesture with his right while the left hand holds pages of the Gospel stating: “I am the light of the world, the truth, the life, the resurrection, the way, the Shepherd, The Door: /through me if one enters in, he will be saved.” They are compilations of John 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, and 14:6. The scene is a mosaic above the entrance to the narthex. (Per Google, between the third and fourth century, a narthex is a meeting area on the western entrance of a church for those not allowed to enter the main worship area but who still want to hear the sermon.) So, imagine, one who is not worthy enough to join the main congregation, but is a seeker, sees this image while physically entering through to the area to be enlightened; the declaration is all they must do is enter in, through, and with belief in this Holy Being.



Interestingly, when studying Hindu/Buddhist Mudras (hand positions), this same hand position is named Shuni Mudra or Akasha Mudra. Connecting the energy of the middle finger and thumb is believed to nurture understanding, kindness, and patience toward others. Would a speaker be eliciting empathy in his or her introduction? Absolutely. If you cannot make a listener care about your issue, they will never agree with your position. And would speakers benefit from gaining patience toward their audience? Most certainly. Reading and relating to the audience is vital for an effective speaker to ad lib as necessary. The mudra additionally is said to promote living in the present moment—encouraging attentiveness to what one is hearing and seeing moment by moment—keeping listeners engaged. Finally, it is said to generate awareness of our inner divine self. Certainly, we could understand religious figures being painted with this hand gesture to symbolize their own divinity. Balance of the Yin and the Yang energies is a preferred state. But, in regard to oratory? Perhaps, to understand is truly Divine—a goal of all speakers and audiences.

Would Christians and artists know of the mudras in the twelfth century? Perhaps the real question is if Yeshua/Jesus and his subsequent followers would have known of mudras in their time? Hinduism is believed to be the oldest continuous religion dating between 8000 and 6000 BCE. Buddhism, it is said, originated in India around 400 BCE. Archaeologists have documented Buddhist gravestones dating between 305 BC to 30 BC in Alexandria, Egypt. Alexandria as a crossroads of trade and cultural interactions for Hellenistic Egypt could easily have transmitted awareness of mudras to many peoples and cultures during the development of Christianity. Additional interactions between Indians and various emerging Christian-type groups after the death of Jesus have also been documented in the Common Era.



Blatant pointing is seen often in classic paintings. The artists must have had severe doubts that viewers would be able to single out the key figures or action in a mural.

Some Christians and Catholic clergy today attempt to shrug off the various gestures in religious paintings as all simply “blessings.” Yet, I question, why would artists bother creating different gestures if they did not have different meanings? (I can’t believe finger work in mosaics was that easy to do well.) It seems more likely—and yes, I’ll admit conspiratorial—that the knowledge was either lost or more likely suppressed so believers would not question faith origins. Still, anyone studying ancient cultures and literature easily observes how one culture borrowed and modified from prior ones in many aspects. It need not be a secret or threat if current beliefs are well-intentioned.

A Handful— Symbols, Faith, and History continued



Some Christians and Catholic clergy today attempt to shrug off the various gestures in religious paintings as all simply “blessings.” Yet, I question, why would artists bother creating different gestures if they did not have different meanings?

But wait, there's more: **Mano Pantea**

This same gesture is found in even older times as a spiritual talisman of ancient Egyptians against “the Evil Eye.” Named Mano Pantea, Frederick Thomas Elworthy documented it and other talismans in the 1895 book, *The Evil Eye: An Account of Ancient and Widespread Superstition*. Built out of materials the

average citizen could afford, it was believed to be set up in the home to ward off evil. The figure was adorned with multiple symbols directly related to Egyptian deities and concepts such as Isis, Osiris, scarabs, and protection for pregnant women and mothers. The fingers and thumb represented Isis, Osiris, and their child Horus. Again, we see a holy trinity of deities.



It was also interpreted as the Kemetic (Ancient Egyptian) sign for peace, blessing, and assistance. Some accounts record it was gestured by son Horus to father Osiris as he climbed the steep ladder to heaven.

But, Wait! Yes, going back even further, the hand sign has been found

connected with Baal Hammon—a Phoenician weather and fertility of vegetation god—the King of all Gods. Examining the variety of objects used for protection in this gesture, one might question if the cultures were polytheistic (as long taught) or actually pantheistic. Pantheism.com defines pantheism as “the belief or awareness that God exists not as a separate, anthropomorphic deity, but as the Universe itself. And furthermore, that this intelligence and power and creative intent is inherent in all energy/matter.” Perhaps the Mano Pantea of ancient Phoenicia shows the people believed literally in the power of many natural creatures and elements and that these each could help protect one from envy or ill-intentions others might direct their way.

Ready to add another gesture and more perspectives? **The Blessing.**

A common hand gesture used in paintings and mosaics of Yeshua/Jesus, involves folding the ring and pinky fingers down to the palm while holding the thumb, index, and middle fingers straight up.

The gesture can be seen in the mosaic, “Christus Ravenna” or “Christ Surrounded by Angels and Saints” in the Basilica of Saint Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy, dating to 526 CE. Additionally, it is used in Leonardo Da Vinci’s “Salvator Mundi” or “Savior of the World” dated between 1499 and 1510 CE. Da Vinci’s use is reported to be in the position of giving a blessing during the movement of the Sign of the Cross, though no one notes proof of that intended full gesticulation. His composition appears to be modeled after earlier Byzantine art pieces.



The question is...was there one original, influential basis for these hand positions, or as different cultures and faiths intermingled in the Mediterranean and Middle East did they influence each other?

Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Christian Church clergy are still today taught that the first two fingers and the thumb represent the Holy Trinity—three in one divinity—which the church has defended since its founding by St. Mark, the Evangelist, in 42 CE. The two folded fingers represent the dual nature of the Messiah (human and divine). Therefore, a blessing done under this gesture is believed to hold the full power YHWH/Yahweh. It is used by Catholic clergy today as a general blessing.

And what of the pre-Christian/pre-Catholic era?

To Hindu followers, the same gesture is known as Ardhapataka Mudra. It emboldens people to free themselves from problems, vices, as well as physical, spiritual, or mental challenges. That meaning sounds like it would mesh well with a holy person giving a blessing—protection from all that would threaten their peace—as one sends his people back into the world. And then comes the next historical layer. Between 500 and 100 BCE a Hindu sage named Valmiki wrote a book on Palmistry (also known as Chiromancy) and its influence spread. A basic tenet outlined that each finger was assigned a particular planet.

In *Mythology and the Seasons* one article clarifies that the thumb represents Venus, the index finger Jupiter, middle finger Saturn, ring finger Apollo (the Sun), and the little finger Mercury. At the time of Valmiki, the Roman polytheistic religion and Greek counterparts were in full dominion from approximately 509 to 50 BCE. Looking at the Ardhapataka Mudra with the Greco-Roman deities, the mudra or blessing of protection is represented by Saturn, the Father (aka Chronus) with the tallest middle finger, the son Jupiter (aka Zeus) as the index finger, and Venus (the feminine spirit) as the thumb. In Christian terms, Yeshua/Jesus, or second Divine incarnation, is between His parents or originators—the three in one Divine trilogy. Suddenly the Egyptian Coptic interpretation has a potential longer history of origin.

Hamsa Hand

An open right-hand gesture with palm facing outward, for orators, indicated the audience should cease talking—to stop coming at or trying to interrupt or challenge the speaker. It is called Abhaya Mudra by Hindi and Buddhists. It is used to offer divine protection from attacks of any nature and ward off fear of such attacks. From the hand radiates the faith, energy, and intention of the hand’s owner. These two meanings then coincide: Stop an unwanted advance. It can also be found in Tai Chi’s “Repulse the Monkey” sequence.



A toned-down interpretation, per Russianicon.com is the Russian Orthodox interpretation: the gesture “depict[s] a saint whose thoughts are pure and whose soul is open to the world... one of faith and truth.” Perhaps, the “of faith” part is the emphasis and the power coming from such enabling warding off trouble is downplayed?



In Arabic, symbolic hands are known as Khamsa or Hamsa. This same open hand, palm out gesture, named the Hamsa Hand, is actually used across many cultures. Scholars record evidence of the open palm protective symbol in amulets in early Mesopotamia and Egypt and on Buddhist statues. In Judaism it is called the Hand of Miriam (sister of Moses and Aaron). In Islam, it is called the Hand of Fatima (Mohammed's daughter) (Elworthy, 355). For all, the intention was that it could ward away or shield the person from evil intent.

A stone stela of the open hand was even found in Carthage—a North African Phoenician civilization from 650 BCE to 146 BCE. Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, sculptures, and paintings also use the extended right hand.

According to Amira El Azhary Sonbol in *The Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies* (2005), the use of the Hamsa Hand was used so prevalently that in 1526 Episcopal Spanish clergy were pressured by Charles V to ban all open, right-hand amulets and encourage the wearing of crosses instead (Sonbol, 357). Jewelry and wall hangings abound today across the world with the Hamsa Hand as clear evidence in the continued faith in its protective abilities against evil or jealous intentions. Some households carry crosses as well as Hamsa hands.

The opposite gesture in form is the Varada Mudra—fingers pointing downward. In Buddhism, it is a gesture for giving gifts, boons, or charity. Likewise, as the Hand of Miriam or Hand of Fatima, it implies blessings if worn or displayed downward. Often, in spiritual artwork, holy figures are shown using both gestures simultaneously.



But, Wait! Yes, going back even further, the hand sign has been found connected with Baal Hammon—a Phoenician weather and fertility of vegetation god—the King of all Gods. Examining the variety of objects used for protection in this gesture, one might question if the cultures were polytheistic (as long taught) or actually pantheistic.



**Get Unstuck.
Be Unstoppable.**

Soar!

Live from the **HEART** of what really matters. **RECLAIM** a rich, meaningful life. **LOVE** who you are as you do it!

Life Empowerment Coaching
—Maria Sylvester, MSW, CPC

Enjoy a Complimentary Session!
734-717-7532

LifeEmpowermentCoaching.com
Life, Relationship & Couples Coaching
Maria@LifeEmpowermentCoaching.com
1785 W. Stadium Ste 104 | Ann Arbor, MI 48103



In Egyptian Coptic Orthodox training today, one hand up and one hand down deals with the binding and loosening in heaven and earth: In Jewish law, it references declaring what is forbidden and what is allowed. The protection and boon aspects are consistent.

Consider "The Wedding at Cana" by Isaac Fanous. Yeshua/Jesus holds his right hand down evincing his first miracle of changing water into wine as a gift upon his mother's imploring while holding his left hand up in protection and blessing for the newlyweds.



According to Amira El Azhary Sonbol in *The Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies* (2005), the use of the Hamsa Hand was used so prevalently that in 1526 Episcopal Spanish clergy were pressured by Charles V to ban all open, right-hand amulets and encourage the wearing of crosses instead (Sonbol, 357)

The Ringer

A relaxed version of Ardhapataka Mudra is when the ring finger of the right hand touches the top of the thumb with the other fingers remaining straight. It is called Privthri (Earth) Mudra and is used to strengthen and heal the physical body. Connecting to the Earth, it is associated with the root chakra and when this gesture is held, it promotes a sense of groundedness and self-confidence.

In modern Catholic churches, a relaxed version is sometimes called the Hand of the Benediction. It is recognized as making the literal abbreviation of the name of Jesus Christ in Greek Orthodox iconography. The first and last letter of each word, from left to right is written as ICXC: the index finger pointing up, signifies "I"; the curved middle figure represents a C; the middle finger crossed by the thumb creates an "X," and the pinky creates an additional "C." When clergy say a blessing in the name of Jesus, they are attempting to literally do it through His name. Often in paintings and older mosaics, Yeshua/Jesus will be shown making this gesture as well as having the abbreviated name somewhere in the background nearby. Interestingly, you can see the traditional mudra form used in a mosaic of Yeshua in an orthodox chapel in Dromolaxia, Cyprus with the abbreviated name in the background.

A Handful— *Symbols, Faith, and History continued*

Modify this gesture slightly again by touching the ring finger and little finger to the tip of the thumb and Prana Mudra is formed. In Yogic practice, it is believed to heal more than a hundred different kinds of diseases and health conditions by strengthening the immune system, promoting self-confidence, and increasing the body and mind's resilience to heal itself. It's interesting to contemplate spiritual leaders of various faiths shown using these mudras—especially ones known as great healers. Could Yeshua/Jesus have actually known the mudras and possibly taught it to the people he healed so they could continue in good health? The possibility takes nothing away from the stories of miraculous sudden healings. In my opinion, it takes the awe further to show His teachings were for both spiritual and physical health long term in humility by sharing world-wide healing strategies. Or perhaps, the artist knew the mudra and was simply adding that Easter egg layer to imply the healing powers of Jesus Christ?

These are just a few of several common hand gestures I've chanced upon in art across different religions, cultures, and time periods of the ancient worlds. The choices are intriguing, the possibilities moving.

An artist creates and releases its child into the world. He or she may publish notes on intent, but if not, intent is left to be interpreted, or sometimes crucified, by critics and viewers of every following age. It is a strong creator that gifts his creation without explanation and suffers through criticism, skepticism, or misunderstanding for all time. As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "To be great is to be misunderstood."

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 McLemore, you can email her at heartofthewalk@gmail.com. Interested in learning about more hand gestures through the ages? Look for a companion article coming soon in the CW Biweekly.





KRASNICK

REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

A CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE PAIN TREATMENT

If conventional pain treatments haven't worked, regenerative medicine could be a good fit for you. Avoid surgery and steroid injections.

Robert Krasnick, M.D. specializes in:

- Prolotherapy
- Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP)
- Bone Marrow concentrate (cellular therapy)
- Prolozone
- IV Therapies including
 - Myers Cocktail
 - Glutathione
 - NAD+
 - Ozone/UBI



210 Little Lake Drive, Suite 8, Ann Arbor, MI 48103
krasnickregen.com | (734) 585-5653

SUSTAINABLE HEALTH

A Daily Dose of Sound, Vibration, and Frequency

By Rob Meyer-Kukan

Sound, vibration, and frequency are a part of everything we do. Sit for a moment, take a deep breath, and listen.... What do you hear? Maybe it's the TV in the next room, or the gentle hum of the refrigerator's condenser kicking in, or traffic on the street or road outside the building you are in. Many of the sounds we hear are processed and filtered in a way that we just don't notice them. Whether it's white noise specifically used for relaxation, or any of the other "colors of noise," sound and vibration is a constant part of our life.

Many of the sounds we hear are processed and filtered in a way that we just don't notice them. Whether it's white noise specifically used for relaxation, or any of the other "colors of noise," sound and vibration is a constant part of our life.

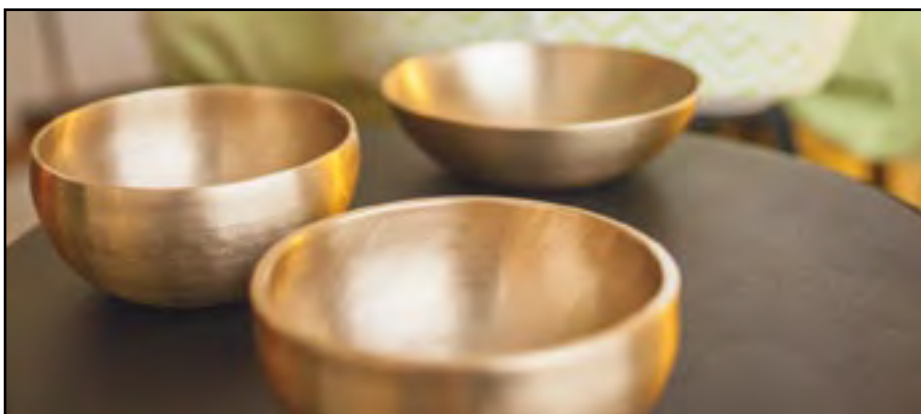
When I was a child, aged seven or eight, I used to spend hours seated in front of the stereo in our family's living room. During my listening sessions, I would blast the local Detroit classical music station. To add to the experience, I would adjust the treble/bass, and left/right balance sliders to match what I was feeling from the music. On one afternoon, I recall my mom coming into the living and saying, "Stop that, Robbie, you're driving me crazy." I don't fault my mother, after all, I can only imagine what, to anyone in hearing distance this classical symphony being played on full volume bouncing back and forth from left to right speaker with the up and down of treble and bass must have sounded like. It probably was leaving her flummoxed, to say the least. Without missing a beat, I replied, "But Mom, I'm conducting the orchestra." How could you argue with that? With that explanation, I was granted permission to continue with the experience... with one request... to turn the volume down, slightly.

The purpose of this anecdote is to point out two things. First, the importance that I believe sound, frequency, and vibration have in my life, and in all our lives. The second is to highlight that experiencing the therapeutic effects of sound, vibration, and frequency doesn't have to be limited to events, performances, or the practitioner's office. You can experience it anywhere, even in your own home.

All these models share the common philosophy that, given the right environment, the body can and will heal itself.

As a sound therapist, I use sound and frequency to help others find a relaxed state. When the body is relaxed it can heal. We see examples of this philosophy in many modalities from chiropractic's "innate intelligence" (ala Daniel David Palmer) to Craniosacral Therapy's "life force," or homeopathy's "vital force." All these models share the common philosophy that, given the right environment, the body can and will heal itself. For me, my work, and my clients, we rely on the support of sound and vibration from singing bowls, gongs, and more to assist with this process.

Hopefully, my words are compelling you to inquire and maybe even sparking some curiosity to explore sound and vibration in your daily life. One on one sessions with a practitioner or attending a group event (often called a "sound bath") are the easiest way to incorporate this work into your wellness routine. However, what could we do in small, incremental ways, every day to support our health and wellness with sound and vibration? I have three suggestions that you can almost immediately implement to add some of the balancing benefits of sound and vibration into your daily life.



Nature

Take a moment to pause, like we did at the beginning of this article. But, go deeper. Listen closer by listening outside of the space you are in. Move beyond the four walls of your current space and listen to what's happening outside. Mother Nature is the greatest conductor of a limitless orchestra of sounds and vibrations. From the buzzing of bees to the babbling of brooks, to the wind in the leaves, and more. Locally, we are blessed with 162 parks in the city of Ann Arbor. If you can't hear the sounds of nature where you are right now, there is a public space nearby where you can connect.

In your home it is easy to connect to nature, even if you live in an apartment. Open the windows! Consider adding a small water feature indoors or if you put it outdoors, simply sit on your porch or patio and take in the sound around you.

As Jonathan Goldman, one of the foremost teachers and pioneers in the field of sound therapy says, "Frequency + intent = healing." May it be so!

Things You Love

I love singing bowls. They are my go-to instrument for addressing my own wellness needs and the needs of my clients. However, I realize that not everyone can afford, or enjoys the sound of singing bowls. Perhaps you are more drawn to the sound of a gong, or the gentle song of a wind chime, or maybe the mesmerizing hum of a shruti box. Whatever it is that you love, consider investing in one item to assist you in your journey.

My first suggestion for many clients is to find the perfect set of wind chimes. Wind chimes vary in size, shape, color, tone, and much more. From bamboo to glass, aluminum to steel, brass, or bronze, painted or unfinished... the sky is the limit.

Ritual

This last suggestion is more about process than anything; but I believe it is key. Whether you tune in to your favorite radio station, as I did as a child, or invest in one or more instruments to bathe yourself in soothing sound, or simply allow yourself to be still and witness the sounds taking place around you, it's important to be intentional with the ritual around the experience.

First, set aside a specific space for this purpose. This can be a room in your home or office or a corner of a room. It can be as simple as spending time in your favorite chair, or anywhere you feel you can fully connect to the sound. Light a candle or include aromatherapy in this experience. Even simply smelling fresh cut flowers or the aromatic peel of a luscious piece of citrus fruit will heighten the experience. You can also explore the use of flower essences or enjoy some beautiful artwork by your favorite artist. Journal writing can be incorporated as well to tie the entire experience together.

This may all sound like an immense investment, but it can be accomplished in a few simple, intentional moments. Whether the time is long or short, the key is your intention. As Jonathan Goldman, one of the foremost teachers and pioneers in the field of sound therapy says, "Frequency + intent = healing." May it be so!

Rob Meyer-Kukan is the owner of 7 Notes Natural Health in Ann Arbor, Michigan. At 7 Notes he offers massage, sound therapy, reiki, color therapy, natural health consultations, and more. 7 Notes offers regular sound baths in their space and throughout the community. Learn more at 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

The Parliament of World Religions Returns to the Shore of Lake Michigan



By Catherine Carr

Religious leaders from around the world converged on the shore of Lake Michigan this past summer for a convening of the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago. For one week, the McCormick Center, which normally plays host to auto shows and pop culture conventions, was filled with priests, pastors, monks, nuns, rabbis, imams, swamis, and various other devotees of world religions.

For one week, the McCormick Center, which normally plays host to auto shows and pop culture conventions, was filled with priests, pastors, monks, nuns, rabbis, imams, swamis, and various other devotees of world religions.

For one week, the conference rooms and main stages were filled with speeches and panels on the topics of women's rights, the rights and wisdom of indigenous peoples, and the grave threats to human rights posed by environmental destruction—including inequity of access to food, water, and the massive combination drought-and-famine which has millions of people currently facing starvation or relocation in the Horn of Africa. (The Horn of Africa situation, by the way, is the largest humanitarian crisis currently in progress, but has received almost no mainstream news coverage in the West due to the lack of money or oil located in the affected regions. You can learn more about it and donate to relief efforts at ConcernUSA.org if you feel so inclined.)

This year's Program Chair, in charge of coordinating programming for the physical gathering itself, was world-renowned witch and Pagan author, Phyllis Currott. Multiple Pagan groups marched in full regalia in the Parade of Faiths alongside Chinese Buddhists and Zoroastrians. The very first blessing of opening ceremonies was given by Rev. Laura González, Priestess of the Goddess and Circle Sanctuary Minister. The Pagan Faith Room in the Faith Room hall was a constant hive of activity, bustling with warm conversation and talks on subjects ranging from knot magic and tarot reading to indigenous religions and the majesty and complexity of the Milky Way Galaxy.



Phyllis Currott

Photo credit: David Benthall

How did witches and Pagans, groups still marginalized and sometimes openly demonized in the United States, come to play such an outsized role in this Parliament of World Religions?

One obvious answer lies in the Parliament's official theme for 2023. Defending Freedom and Human Rights has always been a principal concern for witches and Pagans, who overwhelmingly see their religion as a people-powered one which seeks to empower individuals to commune with the Divine and the world around them without the need for approval or assistance from authority figures.

The specific humanitarian concerns of women's rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, and environmental destruction have always been at the forefront of the Pagan mind, stretching back to the days when these subjects were almost universally unpopular among mainstream churches in the West. The Pagans of the Goddess movement and modern animist witches have, in a very real way, been training for this shift in the priorities of the global religious community their whole lives. And now it seems that a growing number of other religious groups are willing to take their cues from the religious leaders who are most well-versed in the science and theology of these most pressing matters.

Defending Freedom and Human Rights has always been a principal concern for witches and Pagans, who overwhelmingly see their religion as a people-powered one which seeks to empower individuals to commune with the Divine and the world around them without the need for approval or assistance from authority figures.

"My church has a Wiccan priestess say the opening blessing for us during Earth Week," one Catholic who attended Parliament told me. "The bishop doesn't know—I imagine he wouldn't be too happy about it—but we didn't feel like it would be right for us to hold services dedicated to honoring and preserving the Earth without Wiccan participation."

To understand the significance of this moment, we must first understand what the Parliament of World Religions is and how it came to be. We'll then explore how Pagans got their first position on the Parliament Board and the inspiring story of how marginalized groups can become powerful when they work together and uplift each other.

Parliament Begins

The first Parliament of World Religions was held at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, not far from the location of this year's Parliament event. The World's Fairs of the 18th-20th centuries can be thought of as the beginnings of globalization and futurism. Driven by advancing technology, world

First Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in connection with the Columbian exposition of 1893.



Photo credit: Wiki Media

leaders and business magnates began to take seriously the idea that the future could, and should, be different from the past.

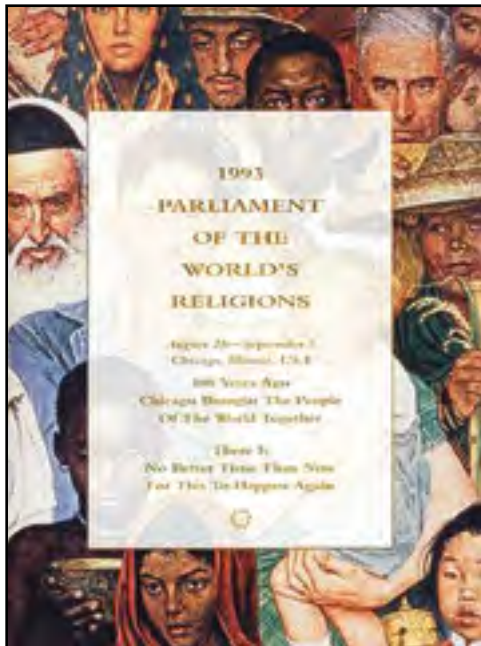
Driven by advancing technology, world leaders and business magnates began to take seriously the idea that the future could, and should, be different from the past.

The nations and cities who hosted World's Fairs sought to show off their own visions of the future and the wonders that were possible with the skill of their local engineers and inventors. People from around the world flocked to these displays of forward-thinking ambition. At the World's Fairs, they learned not only from the designated presenters but also from each other.

In Chicago in 1893, it was proposed that the religious leaders who had traveled across the world to this common destination—no small feat decades before the invention of the airplane—should meet to get to know each other and discuss the pressing problems facing the world.

The first Parliament of 1893 helped to begin the exchange of religious ideas between the East and West. In attendance was one Paul Carus, a German-born Chicago local whose family publishing operation became involved in publishing translations of Buddhist and Hindu sacred texts into English and distributing these for sale in America. This publishing operation evolved into today's Carus Books and Cricket Media.

Another Chicago local who was present at the 1893 Parliament was Caroline High-Correll, a member of the High-Correll family who in the 20th century would syncretize their blended Scottish-Cherokee magical traditions with Wicca and found the Correllian Nativist Wiccan Church. Today the Correllian Church oversees shrines around the world, many of which teach both Wiccan and local indigenous spiritual ideas and practices.



In the 1980s and 1990s, a look at the world's humanitarian problems, combined with the now obviously inevitable march of globalization, led to the proposal that what was then known as the Council for a Parliament of World's Religions should reconvene to discuss the pressing humanitarian issues which modern society now had much more knowledge of—and much more power to solve. In 1993, over 8,000 religious people from around the world gathered once again in Chicago to foster a spirit of camaraderie and understanding as well as to discuss working together to solve pressing humanitarian crises. The 14th Dalai Lama attended and gave the keynote speech.

As a result of this meeting, the *Global Ethic*, a moral manifesto depicting the human rights ideals shared by all religions who participate in the Parliament, was written. A *Sourcebook for the Community of Religions* was also authored as a consequence of the 1993 Parliament convening. This religious textbook was unique at the time, and is still rare today, in that each entry was actually written by practitioners of the religion in question. This was undertaken with the intention of minimizing the misunderstandings and misinformation which so often come about when one culture's only source of information about another's religion comes from outsiders whose own understanding of the religion is lacking.


The Parliament convened again in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999, with Nobel Prize-winning anti-apartheid Anglican theologian Archbishop Desmond Tutu as a keynote speaker. This convening resulted in the creation of "A Call to Our Guiding Institutions," an open letter to religious, governmental, and educational institutions around the world as well as businesses and media companies, to reflect on their role in shaping the world of the future on the eve of the millennium. Another book, *Gifts of Service to the World*, which chronicled over 300 humanitarian and community service projects from around the globe, was also published.

In 2004, over 9,000 attendees gathered in Barcelona, Spain to discuss ways in which religious communities could address pressing issues including the mitigation of religious violence, access to safe and clean water, the care of refugees, and the elimination of debts carried by developing countries. Attendees were asked to not merely talk about these issues, but to take action to solve them on the local or global stage.

The pattern of choosing especially pressing issues for global attendees to discuss and plan action on was followed by future Parliaments in Melbourne, Australia in 2009; in Salt Lake City in 2015; in Toronto, Canada in 2018; the virtual Parliament held entirely via a video chat platform due to Covid in 2021; and the return to Chicago in 2023.

Recent Parliaments have continually reevaluated what humanitarian issues are most crucial to the world's future. Since 2009, consistent themes have included

Triple Crane Monastery is now



TRIPLE CRANE

RETREAT CENTER

Retreat and workshop space available. Call 248.931.5914 for details.

Donations gratefully accepted

Visit our website often to learn about all of our upcoming events, yoga and meditation classes, programs, retreats, and MORE! TripleCraneRetreat.org

Triple Crane Retreat Center is committed to serving a wide, diverse, and supportive community of spiritual seekers and practitioners from our surrounding communities in Southeast Michigan. It is our goal to cultivate a tranquil environment for personal and group retreats, as well as residential and local commuter classes and programs where spiritual seekers with a desire for authentic spiritual growth can relax, unwind and submerge themselves in spiritual practice.

Residential Retreat and Workshop Space Available for Group and Personal Retreats
 TCRC also serves as a retreat place for other like-minded individuals, sincere spiritual seeker and organizations offering workshops and retreats for practitioners of their own. Contact us for more information on available residential retreat space.

Work-Exchange and Volunteers Program
 Triple Crane is growing its work exchange program. We are looking for committed and talented individuals to help co-create a thriving practice community. Visit our work-exchange and volunteer programs website page.

TripleCraneRetreat.org | 7665 Werkner Road, Chelsea MI 48118
Office@TripleCraneRetreat.org | 248.931.5914

LIVING WISDOM HOLISTIC HEALTH COACHING

Certified Xolar Vibronics Holistic Health Education & Natural Lifestyle Coaching

Services:

- Holistic Health Consultation
- Recapitulation, Self Inventory, Energetic Stalking and Clearing
- Chakra Balancing
- Holistic Ed. and Coaching

IKARO PHOENIX
(734) 210-0463
Ikaro@LivingWisdomCoaching.com
LivingWisdomCoaching.Earth

The Parliament of World Religions Returns to the Shore of Lake Michigan



a strong emphasis on women's rights, the rights of indigenous peoples around the world, and humanity's responsibility to be good stewards of the Earth in order to avert human rights crises caused by environmental destruction. These themes seem to have set the direction for the Parliament's work in the 21st century, with virtually all member religions agreeing that these concerns are of utmost importance to the world today.

One of the most important tasks that fell to attendees of the 1993 Parliament was choosing a representative to participate in the writing of the *Global Ethic* on their behalf.

The prioritization of these issues helps explain the outsized Pagan presence at Parliament, but I still had many questions about how a family of religions which are so marginalized in religious spaces in the United States became so influential within this group of religious leaders who gather to fight for human rights. I spoke to Angie Buchanan, the first Pagan to serve as a trustee on the Board of the Council for a Parliament of World Religions, to get some answers.

The History of Pagans at Parliament

From the very start, Pagans recognized the opportunity presented by the Parliament of World Religions. Representatives of at least five American Pagan organizations attended the 1993 convening. Amid the blessings of the world religions, Fellowship of Isis co-founder Lady Olivia Robertson played her sacred sistrum and said a blessing to the Goddess on stage as part of the opening Plenary to mixed reactions of approval and disapproval from the other religious groups in attendance.

Rev. Angie Buchanan was one of the Pagans in attendance in 1993, alongside representatives of the Pagan and Goddess movement organizations EarthSpirit, the Covenant of the Goddess, Circle Sanctuary, the Correllian Nativist Tradition, and the Fellowship of Isis. One of the most important tasks that fell to attendees of the 1993 Parliament was choosing a representative to participate in the writing of the *Global Ethic* on their behalf.



Angie Buchanan

Photo credit: parliamentofworldreligions.org

Representatives of EarthSpirit, the Covenant of the Goddess, and Circle Sanctuary agreed to unite behind one candidate: Deborah Ann Light, a Wiccan priestess who was active in environmentalism, feminism, and interfaith work. Light became one of the 125 global religious representatives who contributed to the process of writing the *Global Ethic*. She proposed that the Parliament use a consensus process similar to that used by the Covenant of the Goddess to ratify important organization-wide decisions in order to ensure the buy-in of global religious organizations to the ethic's vision for a better world. This proposal was ultimately accepted, and the consensus process was used to obtain approval from representatives of more than 125 religious organizations for the *Global Ethic's* contents.

The *Global Ethic* was authored by Catholic theologian Hans Küng, at the request of the Council, with the assistance of Peace Council founder Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez and Catholic vicar for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Thomas A. Baima. The forward-thinking document lays out in detail a vision of a world in which all people are liberated and empowered. Light, an avid devotee of Goddess spirituality, was among those who suggested to Küng that the word "God" should not appear in the document, as this would imply that any organization that signed the Ethic was endorsing worship of the same deity or supreme being.

Instead of focusing on a divine mandate as the primary motivation to make the world a better place—which would be a shaky proposition, since religious organizations exist who insist that their God is *against* human rights—the *Global Ethic* which resulted from this consensus process focuses on uplifting the community of humanity for humanity's sake. The document has been signed by representatives of 125 religious organizations from around the world, including the EarthSpirit, the Covenant of the Goddess, Circle Sanctuary, Küng's own Roman Catholic Church, and the Dalai Lama's Gelug Tibetan Buddhism.

Pagans played an important role in the creation of the *Global Ethic* as a truly universal endorsement of human rights, and the next logical step was for a Pagan to sit on the board of the Council. Unfortunately, there was a problem. Under the rules of the Parliament Board, only an existing board member can nominate a new board member for a vacant seat. And in 1993, none of the members of the Parliament board knew any Pagan leaders well enough to vouch for them.

This changed in the years to come, as Buchanan and other Pagan leaders remained involved in interfaith work. Buchanan came to know local Baha'i leaders through her work, and they became convinced that there was a need for her Pagan perspective to have a voice on the Board. The Baha'is, who were a critical part of the reconvening in 1993, *did* have a seat on the board. In 2002, Baha'i board member Yael Wurmfeld nominated Buchanan for the position. The nomination was accepted, and she became Parliament's first Pagan board member.

Buchanan's actions and experiences in the years to come confirm the power of interfaith dialogue and mutual support. After being nominated through the support of another religious group, Buchanan was able to draw upon the Earth Traditions community, a Pagan Church which she co-founded, to raise \$7,000 for Robert Houndohome Hounon of Benin, the Supreme Spiritual Leader of the Great Council of the Vodun Hwendo tradition, to travel halfway around the world to attend the Melbourne Parliament in 2009. She was also able to work with the Parliament board's Native American representatives to try to root out cultural appropriation among self-proclaimed U.S. Pagan leaders.

"At first," Buchanan recalls, "I was assigned to work on the programming committee with the Native American board member who was reluctant to work with me. In the 2000s there were people trying to submit modified indigenous ceremonies and lectures to the Parliament program. Most were claiming to have indigenous knowledge and [tribal] initiations when they didn't, and even making false claims about what indigenous peoples believed. But when she saw that I was equally appalled by this and that I refused to endorse or approve such programming, we reached a mutual understanding and respect for one another, and we were able to work together to ensure that both our traditions were respectfully and truthfully represented."

Seeing the Pagans gathered in their widely varied ceremonial regalia, speaking their languages from around the world, was a potent reminder of the work that Parliament is here to do.

The effect of having a Pagan on the Parliament board was powerful. In 2004, Buchanan arranged for Donovan Arthen, a 16-year-old Pagan who had been attending Parliament since the age of 6 with his Pagan parents, to introduce himself as a Pagan to the gathered crowd of 10,000 religious leaders from around the world as part of the opening Plenary. Arthen proudly told the assembled leaders that "Pagan" means "people of the Earth" while many Pagans in the audience, who had seen their religion reviled as devil worship for the last century, quietly wept.

Buchanan's work also helped resolve a significant point of misinformation and misunderstanding between American Pagans and the Greek Orthodox Church. For decades in the Pagan community, popular lore has held that the Greek Orthodox representatives present at the 1993 Parliament walked offstage in protest, and subsequently stopped attending Parliament, when the Goddess was invoked in the opening blessing.

What I did not know until I interviewed Buchanan was that this was not the whole story. In reality, the Greek Orthodox delegation had been told by a source that they trusted that local Pagans had performed an animal sacrifice in a public ritual shortly before Parliament. They walked offstage, not just in objection to the Goddess being invoked, but in objection to the inclusion of a group which they believed was practicing cruelty to animals in the name of their religion.

This was not clarified until Buchanan, a former law enforcement officer, investigated the matter by interviewing those who were present at the ritual and scouring back issues of local news outlets to determine if there was any truth to the allegation. Unsurprisingly, there turned out not to be: the ritual in question was a Full Moon celebration facilitated by Andras Corban Arthen of Earth Spirit Community in Massachusetts. No witnesses or written reports of any kind could be found backing up the rumor. Buchanan was able to reach out to the Greek Orthodox community to explain the misinformation, ultimately resulting in the Greek Orthodox withdrawing their objections to Pagan participation and beginning to participate in Parliament again.

Buchanan stepped down from the board in 2010, but not before nominating Rev. Andras Corban-Arthen of EarthSpirit, in 2006, and Phyllis Currott in 2008, to join her. In 2023, Currott served as the program chair organizing the entire 2023 Parliament of World Religions program. Currott has since served as Vice Chair and Program Chair, and has been instrumental in ensuring that indigenous and female voices be given high priority at Parliament gatherings.

But the fact that people who venerate the spirits of the land and the Divinity of all genders have been embraced by the Parliament of World Religions is a very encouraging sign.

One Hundred and Thirty Years Later

One hundred and thirty years ago, religious leaders from around the world met in an effort to find common ground and to strategize about how to make the world a better place in the future. Thirty years ago, this effort resumed again with the Divine Feminine being honored on the world stage before an audience of 8,000 global religious leaders.

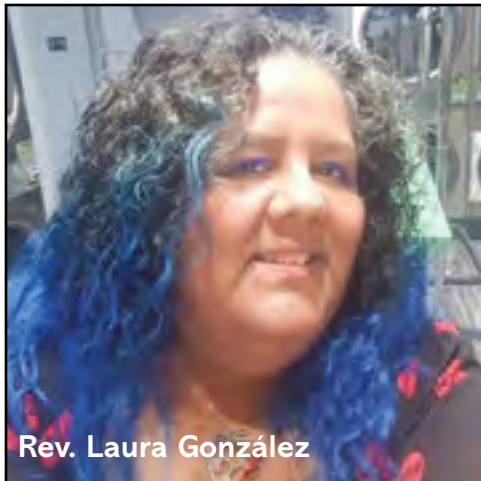
Since 1993, a major shift toward focusing on women's rights, the rights of indigenous people, and good stewardship of the Earth has put these issues at center stage. Pagans have continued to turn out in increasing numbers to contribute their thoughts and knowledge to the global religious discussion on these matters, often challenging the theological and economic basis for the oppression of women and the exploitation and destruction of the Earth.

This year, I witnessed firsthand the power of Parliament to foster peace and understanding. More than one Pagan in attendance reported to me that a fellow attendee had reported, "You're my first Pagan. But I still like you. Maybe I should come to one of the Pagan panels."

I handed a copy of my own Pagan theology book to a Christian pastor from California who reported that his congregation was endeavoring to become more trans-friendly. It was an utter joy to see the faces of solitary Pagans and other people with LGBTQ+, feminist, and animist leanings light up as they came to the Pagan faith room and found faith elders who were friendly to their cause and had decades of experience living a religious life which embraced the spirits of the land and the totality of human experience.

On Tuesday night, local Pagans hosted a ritual outside the Parliament venue. The choice to be outside was significant: it placed us under the new moon and meant the ritual could be open to the public. About a hundred Pagans and Pagan-curious people attended as Pagans from half a dozen traditions spanning four continents spoke blessings and invocations in four languages.

The ritual was a microcosm of the good work done by Parliament itself. The ritual facilitators included Rev. Laura González, who in addition to being a Priestess of the Goddess and Wiccan Circle Sanctuary Minister is also a practitioner of the indigenous Mexica religion. She chanted the Spirits Blessing in a variant of the Nahuatl language while beating a shaman drum. She was followed by Rev. Rolando Gomez Comon, a Correllian Wiccan and indigenous Filipino practitioner, who spoke the Ancestor blessing in Tagalog.



Rev. Laura González

Photo credit: <https://www.facebook.com>

They were followed by representatives of the American Pennsylvania Dutch community, who sang the blessing to the north wind in Pennsylvania Dutch, a South African Wiccan who invoked the spirits of the south, and Wiccans from the Aquarian Tabernacle Church on the west coast and the Correllian Nativist shrines on the east coast who invoked east and west respectively.

Seeing the Pagans gathered in their widely varied ceremonial regalia, speaking their languages from around the world, was a potent reminder of the work that Parliament is here to do. I could not help but remember how well-suited Pagans, with their polytheistic, animistic, and ecofeminist theology were to do the work Parliament had set out for itself.

While Parliament as a larger body had been endorsing feminism and the rights of indigenous peoples for years, I had to admit to being underwhelmed by some of the efforts I'd seen in 2021. While 2021 included an "indigenous peoples" track, about half of the presenters on it had been Christian pastors who identified themselves as indigenous because of their ethnic heritage but did not believe in or practice indigenous religions. Some of the participating major world religious organizations still teach that women are not spiritually suited to be clergy and so could not hold positions of real decision-making power within their religious organizations.

How can such groups hope to solve the oppression of women, or the eradication of indigenous beliefs and the corresponding wisdom about maintaining right relationships with the Earth, by themselves?

The answer is they can't. But that's not what was happening here. Pagans did not ask the indigenous people present to give up their relationships with the spirits of the Earth, or with their ancestral gods—far from it. Pagans tend to enthusiastically embrace and preserve knowledge of all spirits since their

More than you can imagine!

ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY

Study Rooms • Board Games • CDs & Vinyl • Art & Science Tools
Recipe Shares • Public Computers • Exhibits • Musical Instruments

theology innately teaches that there are countless spirits and all must be honored to maintain right relationship with the world as well as humanity's spiritual growth. Pagans are never likely to tell women they cannot lead or receive divine revelations, and Pagan gender theology has maintained the view that all forms of consensual sexual and gender expression stem from legitimate and beautiful divine callings since ancient times.

The challenges facing the global religious community are great as wealth inequality continues to skyrocket, and ongoing environmental destruction threatens the basic access to food and water of more and more people. With the resulting hardship and desperation creating an environment of anger and fear, frightening movements which see civil rights, environmentalism, and religious diversity as manifestations of weakness and immorality are on the rise globally again.

But the fact that people who venerate the spirits of the land and the Divinity of all genders have been embraced by the Parliament of World Religions is a very encouraging sign. It is my hope that all who read this history will consider becoming involved in their local interfaith councils and other organizations, where the opportunity exists to form alliances between marginalized and major world religions and work together to solve humanitarian problems.

In the past when movements of fascism have threatened, there have not been strong, organized majorities of people who refuse to accept the infringement of any human rights. There have not been strong majorities who understood the value of the land and our fellow species for their children's future. There have not been so many marginalized groups who recognized their essential kinship and supported each other despite any differences between them.

The work that is happening now in the Parliament of World Religions, and in interfaith and Pagan communities everywhere, assures us of one thing: this time, when the darkness comes, we will not be alone.




The Current State of Sexual Health Education in Michigan



By Grace Pernecky

“So... I think you know where this leaves us,” he stated simply and with a clarity I did not feel. There was a late summer breeze blowing through the aspens lining the woods around us at Bandemer Park alongside the Huron River, making everything shake and rustle. My former boyfriend’s face swam before me, my heart closing in on itself—nope, we were not breaking up. This was not happening. This wasn’t real. I was dreaming...but as soon as it clicked in my head, I turned as if in slow motion, then ran away as fast as I could, as if I could outrun the pain that was coming for me, faster and faster, like a train revving up, gaining speed with each second. I ran for the water, my body, mind, and spirit collapsing.

Sluggishly, over the next few days, everything would come back to me in fragments—the conversations about sex, me cringing at the thought of approaching him to state my own discomfort with the topic, the pressure building over the months we were in relationship. I loved him, but I didn’t know what I wanted because in my mind, I hadn’t been given an option. Even if you used the best birth control possible plus a condom, there was a chance that it would split, and that 1% chance loomed over my hormone-infused yet Type A mind—a line I could not cross because I refused to. I was holding on to an extreme self-discipline that I told myself would keep me safe. I lied. Told him that someone I knew had a bad experience with sex, and I was scared of that happening to me. I wasn’t. I wasn’t scared of what I knew. I was scared of everything I didn’t.


 I wasn’t scared of what I knew. I was scared of everything I didn’t.

Added to that was the pressure of peers, recognizing that even though they may not be more experienced than me, they still knew a lot more than I did. I didn’t know anything about sex except the not-so-fun parts: disease, protection, how to spot abuse in relationships. I had been told that sex would get me in trouble. Would ruin my life. Was not supposed to happen before I was married. I was good. I got all As. I was going to a good college. I would succeed. I would not cave.

But I was also young, and there was shame in my body for feeling things I didn’t yet understand—and burning curiosity. I wonder now, if I had had access to a more comprehensive, inclusive, trauma-informed, supportive, non-judgmental, and even loving sexual health education, I might have been able to facilitate the conversations with my partner at the time that would have allowed us a lot more clarity on what we both actually wanted, what consent should look like, and how to have a healthy, communicative, honest relationship.

Sexual Health Education in Michigan in 2023

It wasn’t until later that I learned that my experience with sexual health education was not uncommon. I assumed, as a kid whose whole world was based around school, that everything in the curriculum was what was required to be successful in life. At the time, I didn’t realize how career-driven it was: Math, Science, English, and History were the four main subjects. Nothing about growing your own food, repairing clothes, doing your taxes, paying a mortgage, how to have fulfilling relationships, how to maintain good mental health practice, and more. Even though we had “sex ed” in elementary, middle, and high school, to me, it felt limited. It didn’t really answer any of the questions I really wanted to ask, and because of my peers’ snarky, know-it-all attitude around the topic, I was terrified to ask them. Not to mention the fact that in high school, I was forced to test out of the class over the summer because I couldn’t fit it into my already busy schedule the following year. I remember nothing from it. It was all flashcards and memorization, and as soon as the test was done, everything flew out of my brain to make space for next year’s course load.

 Even though we had “sex ed” in elementary, middle, and high school, to me, it felt limited. It didn’t really answer any of the questions I really wanted to ask, and because of my peers’ snarky, know-it-all attitude around the topic, I was terrified to ask them.

Michigan’s current legislation on sexual health education creates many barriers for Michigan students to get comprehensive sex education. Right off the bat: sex ed is not actually required. Schools are only required to teach students about HIV. If they *do* elect to provide sex education, they must proceed with the following requirements: abstinence must be emphasized as the only 100% effective method of preventing STIs and pregnancy, abortion is not allowed to be taught as a method of family planning, and abortion referrals cannot be made on school grounds. The information must not be medically inaccurate, must be age appropriate, and contraception availability and distribution (this means condoms, folks) are not permitted on school grounds. It must also provide students with refusal skills, like saying no to sex and not pressuring someone into unwanted touching or sexual activity. It must also cover healthy relationships, how to recognize signs of abuse, and state laws regarding sexuality, age of consent, and teen parenting. Though several of these rules are helpful, the fact remains that none of them are required to be taught in the first place, unless a district decides to go through the work of having a sex education program, at which point, they are also required to form a Sex Education Advisory Board (SEAB).

For a district to teach sex education, it must create a SEAB. The committee must contain parents of students, students, educators, local clergy, and community health professionals. All sex ed content must be recommended for approval by this committee, and then given up to the school board for the final say.

Sex ed varies not only state by state, but district by district. Amanda Barratt, Senior Program Director at The Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence (MCEDSV), said, “Having things district by district means that someone could just live down the street and have completely different access to sex ed than someone else. We’re seeing huge disparities in just the access to sexual health education. It’s a problem because where you go to school shouldn’t determine the amount of information that you get. And that’s what’s happening right now.”

MCEDSV provides support directly to survivors of domestic and sexual violence through their free confidential hotlines, and its main deliverable is providing training and technical assistance to their member programs who are doing the work of preventing abuse, providing shelter, counseling, finding housing, and advocacy.

“I would say access to sexual health information to me doesn’t seem as controversial as what it ends up being,” Barratt stated, referring to some of the dissent surrounding sex education and arguments against providing access to it. “It’s very sensationalized. It’s very based in fearmongering. So oftentimes, it’s like, ‘well look here, I don’t want my kindergartener shown pornography,’ and it’s like, no one in sex education has done that ever!”

“We’re in this really political landscape right now. And it puts a lot of pressure on schools to be this vehicle of sexual health information,” Barratt told me. Because Michigan law states that you are not allowed to talk about abortion as a method of family planning, teachers are afraid to answer questions. Taryn Gal of the Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health gave me an example. “Say a young person needs birth control. Sometimes [teachers] get scared to even say ‘you could go to Planned Parenthood’ in case someone perceives that as a referral for abortion... so it’s just really restricting young people [from finding the help they need].”

A common sentiment amongst my interviewees was that there is a significant unseen gap in sex education; parents are informed that the school is teaching their kid what they need to



Taryn Gal,
Executive Director at the
Michigan Organization
on Adolescent Sexual Health

know about sexual health and relationships (by the way, they can opt their kid out of any portion of that education for any reason). While they assume this means they don't need to be involved at all, the schools assume the parents are covering the gaps. Especially "The Talk," which Barratt takes real issue with. "When I talk to parents, they're always like 'How do I have The Talk with my kid?'... and I'm like, 'it's not a talk – it's a lifelong conversation!' It's not one thing that you have to get perfect. It's small bits of conversation that you have over years and years that build on each other." But because the parents see paperwork stating that their kid's going to learn about sex, they are oftentimes uncomfortable and less-than-enthusiastic to cover the topic themselves. On top of that, the parents themselves might not have adequate sex education or resources.

Schools have limited funding and limited ability to teach comprehensive sex ed due to Michigan legislation. In fact, over 80% of teachers do not feel adequately trained to effectively teach sex education, according to the National Association for Head Teachers. Parents often feel uncomfortable talking to their kid about the topic and teachers feel they are being restrained. How are kids getting the information they need to thrive and be healthy?

In Michigan Daily's 2022 Annual Sex Survey, 30% of University of Michigan student respondents first learned about sex through the internet/social media, followed by 24% learning through friends. Only 17% of respondents first learned about sex from school. And regardless of when and how respondents first learned about sex, 40% perceived their sex education as a largely negative experience that was both uninformative and unhelpful. "When asked about how sex education could be improved, many write-in responses indicated the need for outlined steps to achieve female pleasure, how to engage in queer sex, clear definitions of consent, ways to detect sexual coercion and a comprehensive list of the best safe-sex practices," stated the article.



In Michigan Daily's 2022 Annual Sex Survey, 30% of University of Michigan student respondents first learned about sex through the internet/social media, followed by 24% learning through friends. Only 17% of respondents first learned about sex from school. And regardless of when and how respondents first learned about sex, 40% perceived their sex education as a largely negative experience that was both uninformative and unhelpful.

Even at the college level and onward, people seem to be affected by the sex education or lack thereof they received as adolescents. I wondered how these people find help, if they are even able to, and how they develop as adults due to this lack of education. I turned to Erin Martinez-Gilliard, practicing sex therapist and sex educator in the greater Ann Arbor area, as well as Taryn Gal, Executive Director of MOASH, for answers.

Trust-Building and Non-Shaming

"I've met maybe one or two people in my career that have said 'I think that I've had access to great sexual health resources,'" Martinez-Gilliard told me when I asked about her perception of the current state of sex ed in Michigan. "What are people even thinking about when they think about sexual health? What does that mean to people? I think that especially in the United States, it's really, really limited. And so, for the majority of people, once we open up the conversation, the places that I think it commonly pops up really quickly is a sense of shame, a sense of confusion... 'I don't know what I want sexually,' or 'I don't know how to communicate about that.'" Martinez-Gilliard added that the first time she opens up the conversation about sex, most people start crying within about 15 minutes, "Because there's so much there."

Gal of MOASH echoed Martinez-Gilliard's sentiments about shame. MOASH works to make sure that young people in Michigan have access to sex ed and sexual health services that are in line with best practice: "Everything from being medically accurate to research-informed to being non-shaming and developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed, all the way to being inclusive and affirming of all young people, especially those young people who have been ignored or silenced or not represented in these spaces," Gal recites comfortably. When asked, Gal emphasized non-shaming practices to be at the core of what her dream sex education program looks like. She reiterated a theory and best practice for curriculum created by the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (GLSEN); "Students need to see themselves reflected in the curriculum and also understand that there are many kinds of people in the world, so like, windows and mirrors; windows represent looking out and being able to see what others are experiencing, while mirrors represent seeing yourself reflected in the curriculum." She added that shame "Keeps everyone from asking questions; it keeps everyone from talking about things."

As practicing sex therapists, both Martinez-Gilliard and Barratt emphasize the harm that they have seen on the "back end" of an inadequate sex education. "A large portion of the folks I work with have been so harmed by shame surrounding learning about sex and sexuality, and not having adequate information when they were adolescents that it's turned into things that they are still struggling with as an adult. And I think that it's just really a big disservice

Continued on next page

A Conversation with Erin-Martinez Gilliard About Young People & Sex



Erin Martinez-Gilliard received her master's in social work from the University of Michigan and has now been in the field for over 20 years. She has completed her certificate in the Sexual Health Program at the University of Michigan and is an AASECT Certified Sex Therapist. She is currently a full-time clinician with a private practice in Dearborn, Michigan that provides therapy services to individuals, couples, and families. In March of 2023, Martinez published *Sex, Social Justice, and Intimacy in Mental Health Practice: Incorporating Sexual Health in Approaches to Wellness*,

a book which aims to equip mental health professionals to integrate discussions of sexual identity, health, wellness, and intimacy into the scope of their client's mental health, ensuring they are well-prepared to incorporate sexual functioning into core assessment, interventions, and treatment.

Grace Pernecky: What have you found to be the most effective ways to talk to young people about sex and relationships in your different roles as a sex educator, sex therapist, and mother?

Erin Martinez-Gilliard: Creating an open door for questions and conversation is imperative. This is never, in any role, a one-time Q & A. Young people need to be respected for their interests, curiosity, and insight. Often adults feel more comfortable "giving" information, but don't leave space for learning about young people's perspectives about sex and allowing for conversation.

Grace Pernecky: From what you've observed as a sex therapist, sex educator, and mother, what are young people's attitudes like toward learning about sex and relationships?

Erin Martinez-Gilliard: I find that the young people currently coming into their young adulthood are amazingly honest and insightful. In general, I find that their definitions of sex are more expansive than previous generations. As a general principle, most young people are more aware of some things about sex from access to pornography via the internet. We can meet that increased access with information that is educational and realistic because that is not what pornography is intended to do or is capable of providing.

GP: Why is it important for young people to be well-informed about sex, sexual health, and relationships?

EM: Lack of access results in higher risks across the board, increased assault, harm to bodies, infection, disease, pregnancy and of course, lack of pleasure. In a society that is rather obsessed with sex and then strangely afraid to talk about it, we are also very behind in teaching and talking about sexual pleasure. Sexual pain and sexual trauma are the most common issues I address in my work and the high propensity of these issues is directly related to lack of conversation and education.

GP: Why do you think parents/adults are so uncomfortable talking to their children about sex?

EM: There's this extreme discomfort for parents around talking about sex with their kids, because of the idea of the sexualization of their child. As a therapist, I'll ask people where they think that discomfort comes from. For a lot of people, it's really hard to pinpoint. It's this huge part of life, and doing it wrong can lead to some of the most severe consequences, so why are we not talking about it? We tell our kids how to do school, how to tie their shoes, how to cook for themselves, and more, but we don't talk to them about how to do sex, and that's the area where some of the consequences can be the most devastating and life altering if done ill-informed.

GP: What do sex educators need to know about young people so that they can provide the most effective education for them?

EM: If we are discussing sex and health and sex and safety we need to not just talk about tools (condoms, lubrication, etc.). We need to help young people think about how to incorporate that [those tools] into their lifestyle and communication. We should also provide next step information that offers ways for them to navigate their lives if the ideal decision making doesn't occur, where they can get help and resources for unintended consequences. Also, sex education should not be focused on limited ideas about how to be sexual that assume all humans are either cisgender or heterosexual.

The Current State of Sexual Health Education in Michigan



Continued from previous page

to humanity. It can be so powerful to have access to information about your body, and scary and dangerous to not have that information,” voiced Barratt with passion. “I have met so many people over the years that have been deeply hurt by something that should be positive,” added Martinez-Gilliard to this sentiment.

And so, by providing a comprehensive, non-shaming, inclusive, trauma-informed, affirming, medically accurate, research-informed sexual health education, it seems that educators could be preventing a lot of harm and trauma that may occur farther down the road. Prevention via sex education could be key not only to healthier and happier individuals, but to a healthier and happier society.

The Question of Where

There are many places outside of the public school system that are able to offer sexual health education as well, that are less constrained by Michigan law and therefore able to include more helpful information and resources to younger people in need of it. I spoke, for example, to Sam and Mary of the Residential College at the University of Michigan, current co-leaders of Sex Forum, a one-credit class in which students participate in a discussion-based, informal learning experience about student-chosen topics relating to sex, relationships, consent, and general sexual health principles.

Sam reflected on how the forum seems to have changed over the past several years. “It seems like people are generally shifting toward not just information about general health, but specifically how society interacts with their life and their specific perspectives from being a student on campus.” Mary added that one of the biggest challenges they have faced as co-leaders is building trust and community. Because it’s a one-semester course, students only have an hour a week for a few months to feel comfortable enough sharing their own experiences with sex-related topics. Sam and Mary have noticed this reluctance to be vulnerable. “Alongside that trust, we need to build an environment where people feel like they’re not being judged, and that [can be] extremely difficult to do, especially with students,” Sam said. Once again, the theme of shame inched itself back into the spotlight.

Barbara DeLancey, sex educator and registered nurse, spoke about her experience as a sex educator at First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor. She has taught a six-week long sex ed class for over 25 years to grades three through six, stressing the principle that, in her words, “your sexuality is good. It’s a gift from God, and we need to treat it as a gift, and love ourselves and love one another.” DeLancey said that when they started, people from all different faiths came to participate in the program, though she added that “we need some [community center] like the YMCA to have a program for all-comers, [regardless of their faith].”



Barbara DeLancey, sex educator and registered nurse

And then there’s the Holy Grail of The Internet. Though blind searching on Google could lead those curious to learn more down some pretty illegitimate

resource rabbit holes, there are a few high-quality programs available for parents or kids in search of a more comprehensive sex ed program than what their school district may offer. “Maybe that’s the future of sex ed—having something online that kids could just access [wherever they live],” reflected DeLancey toward the end of our conversation.

The Future of Sex Ed in Michigan

What does a good sexual health education look like, then? I asked my interviewees, and they came up with some basic principles:

1. Non-shaming.
2. Centered around the safety and well-being of children, not around the comfort-level of parents.
3. Not just in schools, but in community centers, online, etc.
4. Youth-inspired. (Martinez-Gilliard offered the suggestion that sex ed follow the medical model – “Doctors don’t just start talking to you about anything that happens medically. [They] ask questions that help [them] understand what’s going on.” Only then can they provide appropriate information and advice.)
5. Parent/Guardian involvement.
6. A hybrid model of information/lecture and open discussion.
7. Not divided by gender.
8. Incorporate ideas about individuality and pleasure.
9. Medically accurate and research informed.
10. Developmentally appropriate.



So, while the current state of sex ed in Michigan seems to be adequate in some districts and there is a trend toward more progressive and inclusive legislation, there is also room for improvement, both in the curriculum and in the policies that govern it.

Though there is a lot that could be improved within sex education curriculum today, there is also a lot that has already been achieved. According to Gal (who is also on the board of two Sexual Health Education Advisory Committees, one of which is for the Ann Arbor Public Schools district), increasingly, districts are using a really good sex ed curriculum. “We’re seeing more and more districts reach out, wanting to know more about curriculum that is comprehensive.” Barratt talked hopefully about the increasing media representation of the inadequacy of current sexual health curriculum and issues young people experience as they navigate puberty, in addition to representation of different gender identities in starring roles of certain Netflix films and shows. At MOASH, Gal talked about how they are really trying to leverage and “take advantage of the time that we’re in,” to push for more legislation for comprehensive sex ed programming in Michigan.

So, while the current state of sex ed in Michigan seems to be adequate in some districts and there is a trend toward more progressive and inclusive legislation, there is also room for improvement, both in the curriculum and in the policies that govern it.

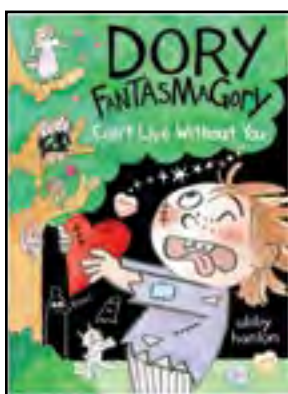
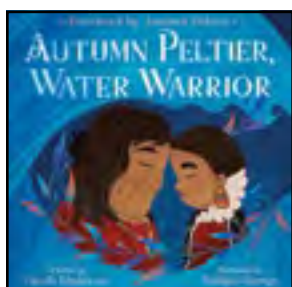
Though there is a lot that could be improved within sex education curriculum today, there is also a lot that has already been achieved. According to Gal (who is also on the board of two Sexual Health Education Advisory Committees, one of which is for the Ann Arbor Public Schools district), increasingly, districts are using a really good sex ed curriculum.



The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section



Our Book Picks for Kids and Tweens



Autumn Peltier, Water Warrior by Carole Lindstrom and Bridget George

This poetic picture book narrated by water itself honors the Indigenous activist Autumn Peltier and her aunt Josephine. Water recalls how once it was celebrated and cared for by Indigenous peoples, but then more people came who did not care for the water. Grandma Josephine, however, honored the water, spoke out about the need to care for water, and taught children about the importance of water. When she died, Autumn, her great-niece, used her voice to continue Grandma Josephine's work. It's a stunning picture book about the importance of caring for the water and how anyone can stand up and speak out about environmental issues.

A Spoonful of Frogs by Casey Lyall, illustrated by Vera Brosgol

A witch's favorite treat is frog soup. Luckily, it's healthy and easy to make. To give it that extra kick and a pop of color, the key ingredient is a spoonful of frogs. But how do you keep the frogs on the spoon? They hop, they leap, they hide . . . and they escape. What is a poor witch to do? Casey Lyall is a master of comedic timing with her deceptively simple and energetic text, and Caldecott Honor winner Vera Brosgol's vibrant, hilarious illustrations make the witch—and the frogs!—practically leap off the page. The solution to the witch's dilemma will surprise and delight young readers and their parents alike. Teeming with laughter and hijinks, *A Spoonful of Frogs* is pure fun from beginning to end. A must-have for young readers, parents, witches, frog-lovers, and aspiring chefs.

Dory Fantasmagory: Can't Live Without You by Abby Hanlon

This beginning chapter book series about a lovable rascal with an overzealous imagination is perfect for fans of Ivy + Bean and Junie B. Jones. In book six, Dory experiences a bout of separation anxiety. Her solution? To haunt her family forever! But her ghostly prank turns serious when Dory's nemesis, Mrs. Gobble Gracker, and her mom make surprise announcements.

The Lost Library by Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass

When a mysterious little free library (guarded by a large orange cat) appears overnight in the small town of Martinville, eleven-year-old Evan plucks two weathered books from its shelves, never suspecting that his life is about to change. Evan and his best friend Rafe quickly discover a link between one of the old books and a long-ago event that none of the grown-ups want to talk about. The two boys start asking questions whose answers will transform not only their own futures, but the town itself. Told in turn by a ghost librarian named Al, an aging (but beautiful) cat named Mortimer, and Evan himself, *The Lost Library* is a timeless story from award-winning authors Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass. It's about owning your truth, choosing the life you want, and the power of a good book (and, of course, the librarian who gave it to you).

Nell of Gumbling: My Extremely Normal Fairy-Tale Life by Emma Steinkellner

Nell lives in the small, magical town of Gumbling, and despite being magical, it's pretty boring. This year, every student her age is being paired with a community member as their apprentice. More than anything, Nell wants to be paired with the artist Wiz Brave. But instead, she's paired with the lorekeeper, Mrs. Birdneck. She thinks this will be the most boring apprenticeship ever. Her best friends both got their dream apprenticeships! Then a sister and brother arrive, claiming to be the heirs to the Gumbling castle — which is used as living quarters for the unhoused and other community essentials like the library. They want to turn the castle into an amusement park, which creates a huge uproar. Nell initially pays them little mind, but when it becomes clear that they could ruin Gumbling, she and her friends get involved, and her apprenticeship might be what saves Gumbling.

I Loved You in Another Life by David Arnold

Love knows no bounds in this epic YA romance from bestselling author David Arnold. Adult life — complicated as it is — is about to start for Evan Taft and Shosh Bell when they hear a strange song no one else can hear. Over the course of the novel, across time and far-flung places, we see how the power of love brings their souls together time and again.

You may purchase these books at shopcrazywisdom.com by either visiting the website or scanning the QR code.



Conscious Parenting

Harnessing the Power of Talking Out Loud — The Teddy Bear and the Talker



When you listen generously to people, they can hear the truth in themselves, often for the first time.

—Rachel Naomi Remen

By Leann Fu

Imagine your child is trying to figure something out, like what to do for the summer. As your child talks to you, what kinds of questions do you feel drawn to ask? Do the questions have more to do with supporting your child in exploring the parts of the conversation your child wants to explore, or more to do with your own concerns? What could enable your child to get the benefit of having plenty of room to talk out loud and to take the conversation wherever your child wants to go with it?

Serving as a teddy bear means that, for a short length of time, you've agreed to be a listener that does very little talking.

If your child knows about Teddy Bear Talk Support (TBTS), then your child can ask you to be a “teddy bear.” Serving as a teddy bear means that, for a short length of time, you've agreed to be a listener that does very little talking. You'll only talk when your child asks you to do things like ask questions or reflect some things back to your child.

Why would anyone want to talk to a teddy bear if teddy bears do so little?

The teddy bear might not be “doing much,” but the teddy bear's interest, presence, and attention can make all the difference. To some extent, as the speaker, you're imagining what the other person is paying attention to, what is the teddy bear expecting to hear you say, what parts of the story are likely to stand out for the teddy bear. As a result, some things can become immediately obvious. What you're focusing on (as the talker) can change, and that can make next steps clearer. The teddy bear has given you a new context to speak into, even if the teddy bear is not saying anything.

Plus, what the teddy bear is also doing for you is staying out of your way. This is key because TBTS is all about the talker having plenty of room to maneuver.

Here are some different things that the teddy bear might be asked to do besides mostly silently listen:

- Paraphrase parts of what the talker said.
- Offer some open, honest questions.
- Make guesses at what's at the bottom of what the talker is speaking about, e.g., make guesses at what feelings and needs are underlying what the talker is saying.
- Serve as a scribe who writes down parts when asked.

An important thing to note about TBTS is that the teddy bear doesn't need to fully understand what the talker is saying. The talker is speaking for the talker's own benefit, not the teddy bear's benefit! Serving as a teddy bear is how one mother was able to help her high school son with complex math that she couldn't understand. He talked through the math problems, and she served as the teddy bear, the second set of eyes, the other mind, the person to explain things to.

I regularly serve as a teddy bear for multiple people who are writing about topics I don't understand. One of them captured something that constantly astounds me one day by exclaiming, “It's amazing how I know what to say when someone is listening.”

The teddy bear might not be “doing much,” but the teddy bear's interest, presence, and attention can make all the difference.

TBTS is perfect for being able to have more connection with people who might otherwise be feeling lonely about having to work on something all by themselves. It can be so easy to feel isolated, and it helps to have easy ways to reach out. Instead of telling your kids it's time to go do something (clean

their room, do their homework), you can invite them to co-work with you. Have them do their own work, while you do yours, but every 20 minutes take a break from doing work and take turns doing TBTS with each other for three minutes each. That way, while they're doing an onerous thing, you're also doing work alongside them. Plus, you've “baked in” opportunities for benefiting from TBTS.

Not needing to fully understand also means that you can connect with the excitement and the ups and downs of a story that your child wants to share, even if you're not a passionate expert on the topic. After my 12-year-old's Brazilian Jiu Jitsu class, he had a long story about what had just happened involving how “he [the opponent] went for a one-leg, so I swooped down at the same time and got him in closed guard.” I could easily hear how satisfying it was for my son to predict what would work and could share in it with him, even though I didn't know what all the terms meant. Similarly, sometimes you can connect by having a child talk out loud about what they are doing or planning while the child is working on a project that you may or may not understand. This worked well with my son when I offered to be a teddy bear for him when he was deciding what he wanted to draw next. Being able to do some out loud processing gave him momentum and traction, whereas before he was at a loss for ideas.

TBTS is perfect for being able to have more connection with people who might otherwise be feeling lonely about having to work on something all by themselves.

Do you tend to get stuck in “parent mode” when listening to your child? Can TBTS help you shift into “housemate mode?”

A mother was able to use TBTS to get out of “parent mode” by having the teddy bear do something that I found surprising. The mother and her child, Serena, were talking about how adults can find it hard to say, “I don't know.” They decided to have the mother practice by having her be a teddy bear that only says, “I don't know.” All was going well until Serena asked, “Why am I alive?” The mother was supposed to say, “I don't know,” but she simply couldn't. Finally, she compromised and said, “What would be the benefit of me not giving you an answer?” She then saw Serena find her own truth.

Mainly listening might cause you to appreciate your child more, to be more supportive versus imposing *your* own issues on your child, and to be more able to see your child as a full person rather than as your responsibility.

You can think of teddy bears like housemates that talkers can run something past, people that happen to be around that you can grab for a moment to talk to. This housemate image is a helpful one for when your child is being the talker. You can see your child more as their own person (more like a housemate) rather than as *your* child. What can mainly listening reveal? Mainly listening might cause you to appreciate your child more, to be more supportive versus imposing your own issues on your child, and to be more able to see your child as a full person rather than as *your* responsibility.

Leann Fu is the co-facilitator of Empowering Wisdom parenting circles and the creator of Teddy Bear Talk Support. Leann leads workshops on Teddy Bear Talk Support specifically for parents as well as workshops for everyone. Learn more about the parenting circles and workshops at empoweringwisdom.org or teddybeartalksupport.com.

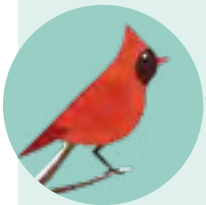


Quietly Noticing

By Samantha Beidoun

"Mom! Take your shoes off! Come on!"

I stood about twenty feet away from my two-year-old waiting to push her on a swing or do a count down while she hyped herself up to glide down a slide. I had just gotten done with a three-mile run with her in a stroller at the loop at Hudson Mills. The only way we get through these runs is a lot of snacks and the promise of playground time, and I was ready for the playground time. To me, playground time is a time that I don't have to keep my brain on high alert. Rinoa would play and I would catch my breath and not have to figure out how to run, push, grab, and unwrap a snack all at once as I had been doing for thirty minutes prior.



Suddenly, the simplicity in my parenting plan took a turn off course. She took her shoes off and ran in circles. She was beaming with delight, and she wanted me to share in the experience. There was a slight conflict though: I didn't want to take my shoes off.

The sandy volleyball courts drew my daughter's attention as she ran through them to get to the playground. Suddenly, the simplicity in my parenting plan took a turn off course. She took her shoes off and ran in circles. She was beaming with delight, and she wanted me to share in the experience. There was a slight conflict though: I didn't want to take my shoes off.

When she sweetly told me to do so, I immediately thought of the feeling of dried sand crusted onto my feet and how I'd have to slip back on slightly damp socks over the powdered grit and then walk in snug shoes over all of that when it was time to leave. At first, I was put off by this barefoot romping time, but then I thought of all the simple experiences I've missed over the years with my kids because I didn't want to do something due to the potential (and minor) discomfort I might have to endure. How many times have I refused to go outside because I didn't want to be cold or wet even though I want my children to grow to love nature and know that rain and cooler temps won't harm them? How many times have I decided not to take them to an activity at the library or a fun community event because I did not feel particularly social that day even though I want them to push themselves to try new things, learn as much as possible, and be comfortable with others? Motherhood breaks you down in many ways. It stretches you in the silliest of directions—directions you didn't know you needed to go in.

An invisible force intertwined with our breath for a moment before waning and left a refreshed grin on my daughter's face. The moment was beautiful in a way we don't often stop to think of.



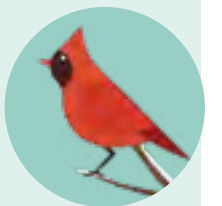
At this particular moment, I was pulled back to an old memory of the previous year when Rinoa was just starting to walk. She'd tumble down often—especially outside during our morning walks. Sometimes when she fell, she would roll over and lay there for a moment and smile. One day I decided to take the time to get on the ground with her and notice each small sensation as it came.

She lay there with me, babbling. We pointed at the sky and the trees and the birds. We noticed clouds shifting and the trees swaying. An invisible

force intertwined with our breath for a moment before waning and left a refreshed grin on my daughter's face. The moment was beautiful in a way we don't often stop to think of. When we got up, I heard the crunch of our honey mustard pretzel snack with her new little teeth; noticed the sweetness and tang that took over our mouths with each bite. The dewy grass soaked through the cotton of our pajamas, left the tips of our toes wet, and our shoes a tad squishy. Somehow our cat even seemed fluffier as he brushed his bushy tail on our faces. We followed the sound of sandhill cranes making their daily visit to the field across the street. We heard their calls every morning but never took the time to visit before. When we reached the magnificent pair of cranes there was a fragment of a rainbow with a vibrancy that seemed unmatched by any other rainbow that I could ever remember.

We are surrounded by so much beauty every day. As a mom, I'm personally distracted most of the time and it makes life seem tangled up. There is dinner to plan, and the groceries to buy, and timing out the shopping trip so that it doesn't interrupt nap time but also doesn't fall too late in the day so I'm rushing back to make dinner with enough time to get all members of the family at the table in the same hour before my son has to leave for karate or my oldest daughter needs to be taken to art class. And who is taking her to art? Motherhood leads to a fulfilling life, but there is much to plan and many logistics to unravel. I too often get caught up in thoughts, feelings, and crossing off the items on my to-do lists. I remember how good it felt to stop and take on a one-year old's perspective—to lay on the ground and follow the small things, untangling and cherishing everything as if it were new and enchanting again. And with that memory coming to the forefront of my mind I took my shoes off.

I hope to never lose sight of the simple parts, even if it's my child that must reel my focus back in.



I walked through the sand and felt the grittiness I had expected, but also rediscovered how soft it was, and how fun it was to run on it as it drifted up our ankles with every stomp. We bonded in our playfulness (and of course pretended we were dinosaur friends). It was simultaneously an imaginative and grounding experience to simply feel sand on my feet and follow a two-year old's lead in how to interact with the world for a few minutes.

Life can seem complicated. There are too many appointments and deadlines, self-care, and relationships that need to be tended. But when we can slow our clock down and sink our attention into moments broken down into fragmented clips of time, life can be simplified—you can breathe ease into the nonstop. I hope to never lose sight of the simple parts, even if it's my child that must reel my focus back in.

When you take a few moments to feel the cold of the snow on your face and hear the whisper of the chill in the air, notice the quiet in the ordinary, and the loud in the celebration you might discover that the overwhelming, complicated, conglomeration that we call life is mostly bound together with a lot of love lingering in the smallest parts that we are usually too quick to push away.



Kids in the Community

Kids Can Cook, Too!

And Why They Should...

By Christine MacIntyre

Cooking isn't just about whipping up tasty treats (although that's definitely a big part of the fun). Empowering and nurturing children's culinary skills extends far beyond the kitchen. It's a fantastic adventure where kids explore, create, and learn skills that will stick with them for life. Think of it as a mix of delicious experiments and add a sprinkle of essential life lessons on top. From crafting scrumptious snacks to understanding the fuel that keeps us going, kids learn the importance of nutrition, gain confidence, and feel accomplished. In today's fast-paced world, introducing kids to the wonders of cooking is an invaluable gift, offering them a foundation for a lifetime of healthy eating habits and a deeper appreciation for the culinary arts.

My 14-year-old and 10-year-old have their own unique approaches to the kitchen. One delights in baking, while the other finds joy in crafting new flavors for main courses, experimenting with various seasonings and sauces to create delectable dishes. I've made it a point to involve my kids in the kitchen, whether preparing our evening meals or making unique desserts for celebrations. I encourage them to explore and express their creativity by experimenting with their culinary ideas rather than rigidly following recipes.



Empowering and nurturing children's culinary skills extends far beyond the kitchen. It's a fantastic adventure where kids explore, create, and learn skills that will stick with them for life.

But cooking can sometimes feel like uncharted territory—especially when engaging kids beyond the fundamental kitchen tasks. I remind myself that, sometimes, it's the simple things that spark interest and creativity in the kitchen.

While there are ways to make it fun and educational without being a seasoned chef yourself, I find it exciting that opportunities exist for kids looking to dive deeper into the culinary world. I've discovered several fantastic avenues for kids to engage in and explore cooking in a safe and enjoyable environment while learning directly from seasoned professionals. The local options available are fantastic!

Sprouting Chefs

In the heart of bustling Ann Arbor, Sprouting Chefs quietly transforms how children relate to food. Founded by the passionate and visionary Lilian Anderson, this local gem is more than a cooking school; it's a culinary haven where young minds ignite, palates awaken, and a lifelong love affair with the art of cooking blooms.



In a world where fast food and convenience often overshadow the importance of wholesome, home-cooked meals, Anderson's Sprouting Chefs is a beacon of hope. It's where the sounds, textures, and smells of cooking converge with the excitement of discovering new flavors creating an unforgettable experience for kids.

The story is as inspiring as its mission. Anderson, a culinary enthusiast, realized the need for a place where children could develop a genuine connection with food. She saw the growing disconnect between young generations and the culinary traditions that have enriched our lives for centuries. Determined to make a change, she embarked on a journey to create an innovative learning environment that would not only teach kids how to cook but also inspire them to become confident, creative, and conscious chefs.





Eight years ago, she kicked off at home with fun, hands-on cooking classes for kids. After a booming start, she secured a kitchen space in a local church to make it official. The weekend classes, tailored for ages 8 and up, or 10 and up, run year-round, spiced with occasional sessions specifically for teens. Additionally, she runs a six-week after-school program in the fall. Without advertising, her classes always fill up, attracting students from far and wide. In the fall, she recruits help from students attending the University of Michigan's public health program. During the two-and-a-half-hour sessions, kids cook up a storm, ending with a shared meal. They cook in big batches, ensuring plenty to take home and share with family.



Founded by the passionate and visionary Lilian Anderson, this local gem is more than a cooking school; it's a culinary haven where young minds ignite, palates awaken, and a lifelong love affair with the art of cooking blooms.

The classes come in diverse themes, from baking extravaganzas to crafting full meals infused with various ethnic cuisines, spotlighting ingredients like potatoes, eggs, and bread in creative ways. Drawing from her own childhood kitchen experiences, such as baking holiday cookies, Anderson curates each class starting with a captivating theme and then handpicks the dishes the kids will prepare. "I try to use recipes that I think kids will find appealing. But I'll even include traditional meals that maybe kids have tried at a restaurant or at home." She emphasizes that the crucial aspect is to integrate and make use of a range of ingredients. For instance, she might use various herbs in chicken fingers' breading or opt for pretzels to add a crunchy texture. "I spend a lot of time testing recipes, often borrowing a bit from several and tweaking them," she explained. She meticulously considers if the recipes fit into the class duration, tackling logistics to ensure a seamless experience. Her rule of thumb? "99% of the time, three recipes are a good fit."

Age distinctions guide the curriculum, with children aged ten and above learning to use chef's knives, while younger kids focus on baking classes involving paring knives. Anderson emphasized, "I believe that kids aged ten and above are capable of handling tasks similar to adults. They learn essential safety skills and typically demonstrate a longer attention span than younger kids." This approach is a pivotal factor contributing to the appeal of her classes, where she imparts knowledge at an elevated level, engaging kids in a setting of mutual respect.

Anderson expressed her enthusiasm for teaching kids how to cook. "Kids are creative; they think outside the box. Adults are often set in their ways, but kids explore new ways of doing, and the kids shape their own creations." Furthermore, she teaches a pie-making class emphasizing that kids can decorate the top crust to their liking.

While Anderson is a registered dietician, she rarely mentions nutrition in class. "They're there for hands-on cooking, and, to me, cooking is right off the bat

'good nutrition' if you're cooking from scratch." Without lecturing, she imparts her knowledge of good nutrition by encouraging kids to eat home-cooked meals. "I have fun cooking, and it's provided me with a healthy lifestyle, so I want to pass on that skill," she said. She had no classroom teaching experience before her cooking classes but relied on her passion and experience in culinary food service to guide her.

Over the years, Anderson has noticed a decline in kids' cooking skills, often due to their parents' busy schedules or lack of culinary experience. Nevertheless, kids show a keen interest in learning. According to her, the advantages are extensive. It's not just about mastering cooking; it's also about reaping social rewards. "Cooking and socializing bring immense joy. It's fun to watch during class," she remarked. While some children attend with companions, many arrive solo. "At the start, the class tends to be quiet and reserved for the first half-hour. By grouping them in threes, they are encouraged to collaborate and communicate," she explained. As time progresses, she notes a gradual increase in lively discussions. "By the end of the session, they're chatting like they're all buddies."



Kids Can Cook, Too!

continued...



camp, older kids make wheat bread, banana bread, and cream puffs, and younger kids make delicious recipes such as Bavarian pretzel twists, Linzer cookies, and an iced layer cake. When coming up with recipe ideas for class, BAKE! instructors consider age and what certain age groups might be excited about making. Zingerman's Bakehouse Marketing Assistant Manager and Photographer Corynn Coscia said, "The older kids love the cake decorating so they can make occasion cakes for friends and families." They also try incorporating new foods kids may have never tried, such as Cornish pastries and knishes.

BAKE! kids' classes are more than just baking; they're interdisciplinary activities in which instruction can often touch on subjects like math, chemistry, physics, world history, geography, and horticulture. Their knowledgeable instructors make connections between these concepts and the recipes they teach. Kids can then enjoy creating in the context of learning. Kids learn to make delicious recipes such as biscuits, pizza, pasta, cinnamon rolls, brownies, cupcakes, and decorated cookies.

According to Coscia, kids' cooking and baking classes are beneficial beyond learning recipes. Beyond touching on subjects outside the kitchen, she said, "It's just plain fun to teach kids. The smiles on their

faces when they see their finished products let us know that they had fun, too!" BAKE! 's passionate instructors eagerly share positive experiences and time-honored traditions with younger generations. "Many of us began our love of baking when we were very young—the sense of discovery and feeling of accomplishment remain vivid in our minds."

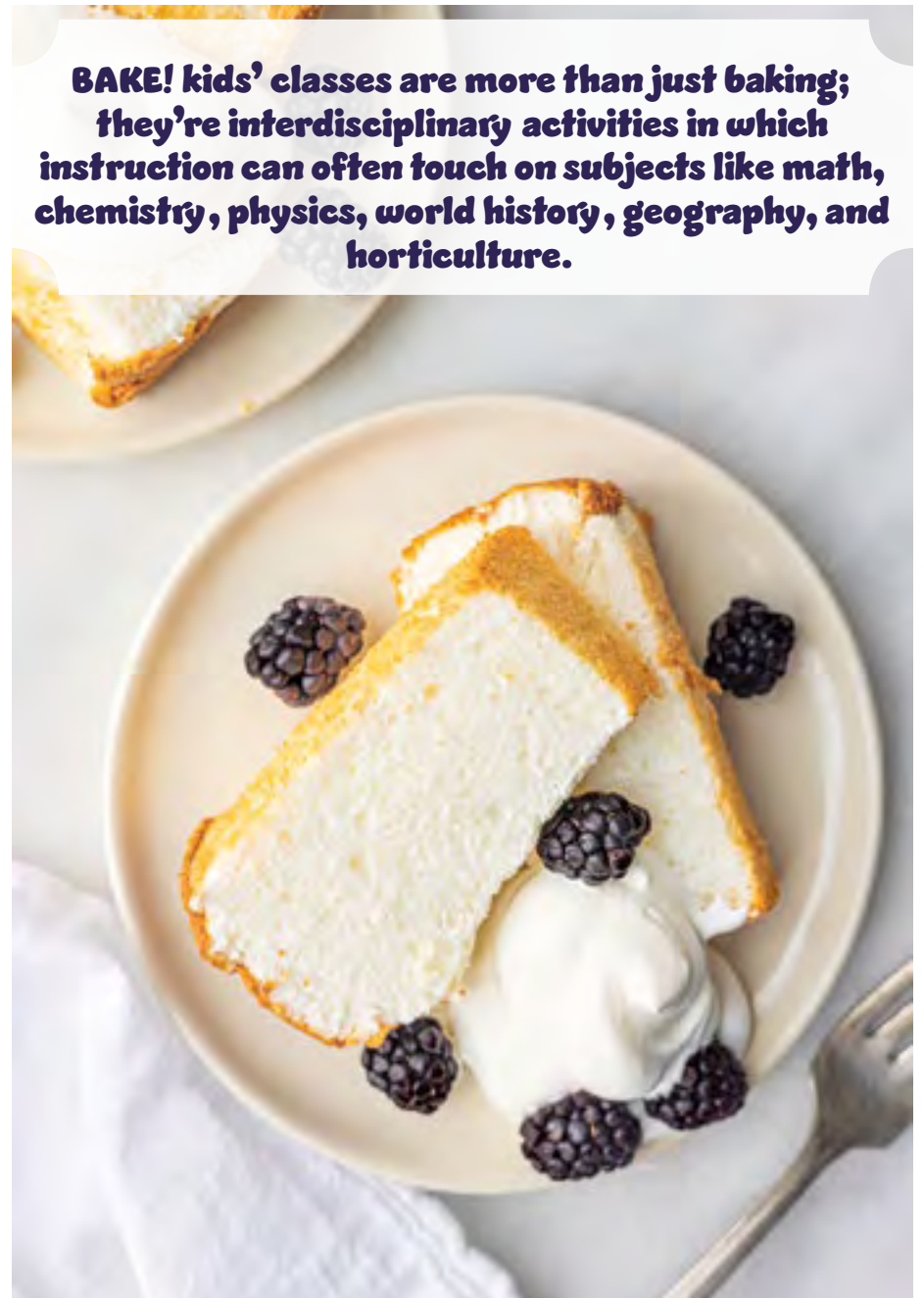
For more information about learning at Zingerman's visit bakewithzing.com or call (734) 761-2190. Zingerman's BAKE! is located at 3723 Plaza Drive, Ann Arbor.

Moreover, cooking classes play a role in assisting kids who are often picky about their food or hesitant to explore new flavors. "When they actively participate and experience the various smells and textures, they become more open to trying the food," Anderson said. Although she has seen a few kids initially grumble about the menu, she highlights how observing other children eating and relishing the creations naturally encourages hesitant kids to try them. "It compels them to be more comfortable and open to try new things."

Many kids return to Anderson's classes. She says she's had kids take multiple classes over the years, and now their younger siblings join in. The demand is there, but options for kids' cooking classes are few and far between. "I've given talks, encouraging others to venture into kids' cooking classes." For kids who want to learn but don't have access to nearby classes, kids' cookbooks can help, albeit Anderson said that they can often feel too basic for kids with a working knowledge of cooking skills.

For more information about classes at Sprouting Chefs visit the website sproutingchefs.org or give them a call at (734) 474-1006. Sprouting Chefs is located at 1532 Warwick Court in Ann Arbor.

BAKE! kids' classes are more than just baking; they're interdisciplinary activities in which instruction can often touch on subjects like math, chemistry, physics, world history, geography, and horticulture.



BAKE! at Zingerman's Bakehouse

Zingerman's Bakehouse is an artisanal bakery with a baking school in Ann Arbor. It was founded 30 years ago as a simple bread bakery with a single customer, Zingerman's Delicatessen. Today, they make bread, pastries, cakes, lunch items, and more. BAKE!, nestled between Zingerman's Bakehouse and Zingerman's Creamery, offers different bread, pastry, and cake hands-on baking and cooking classes in both the teaching kitchens and online.

BAKE! offers a variety of adult classes, but since they love to encourage cooking and baking from a young age, they offer a variety of classes designed for kids throughout the year as well. Multi-day camps for kids and teens occur in the summertime, and virtual kids' classes offer an excellent opportunity to learn from professional instructors from the comforts of home. Private classes are another perfect option for cooking and baking for kids.

Summer camp sessions are four days long, and they run all summer long. There are two sessions—one for ages 10 to 12 and another for ages 13 to 15. During



Sur La Table Kids' Cooking Classes

Young chefs aged seven to 11 will enjoy fun-filled days of cooking, learning, and laughter during classes at Sur La Table. Winter series classes include a four or five-day baking adventure that gives kids hands-on baking experience from mixing batter and kneading bread dough to decorating cookies. Each session explores essential baking techniques, food prep skills, and kitchen safety and gives them the confidence to recreate the experience at home. These classes are small, encouraging active participation and plenty of guidance from talented chefs and teachers.

Sur La Table also offers classes for ages 14 and up, albeit a paying adult must accompany any participants ages 17 and under. These classes are perfect for older teens who want to learn how to make dinner favorites such as homemade ravioli or dumplings, as well as diverse dishes taught in themed classes such as Chinese Takeout, Dinner in Portugal, or Cast Iron Comfort Cooking.

Learn more about Sur La Table Kids' cooking classes by visiting surlatable.com/cooking-classes/kids-teens-cooking-series or call (734) 531-0300. Sur La Table is located at 3050 Washtenaw Avenue Suite 109, in Ann Arbor.

How Do You Know When You Can Start Cooking With Your Kids?

The age at which your child begins cooking depends on their developmental stage and interest in the kitchen. Kids can start at any time! Ensuring they can manage basic cooking tasks is essential, with your assistance if needed. Activities like pouring, stirring, and whisking ingredients are enjoyable for children and serve as an excellent starting point. As their motor skills improve, they can gradually progress to more challenging tasks.

In addition to basic tasks, consider introducing your child to simple recipes and involving them in the preparation process. As they become more comfortable and proficient, encourage them to take on more responsibilities in the kitchen, such as measuring ingredients, mixing, and eventually following recipes with minimal supervision. This gradual progression will boost their confidence and independence while developing essential cooking skills. Remember to emphasize kitchen safety and the importance of cleanliness throughout their cooking journey. Making cooking a fun and engaging experience will foster a lifelong love for creating delicious dishes!

Activities like pouring, stirring, and whisking ingredients are enjoyable for children and serve as an excellent starting point. As their motor skills improve, they can gradually progress to more challenging tasks.

A flower doesn't compete with the flower next to it. It just blooms.

Yoga with Cats.

Want to be better? Practice yoga with kittens, and you'll be helping yourself and them. Low per-class fee goes into helping the homeless animals of the community, and you'll leave feeling better from mind to body.

tinylions?
LOUNGE & ADOPTION CENTER

5245 Jackson Road • Ann Arbor
tinylions.org/yoga
734.661.3530

It is a beautiful time to come PLAY

Leslie Science & Nature Center

Rentals, Summer Camp, Preschool, Birthdays, Critter House, Family Programming and more!

Our trails, Raptor enclosures and Nature Playscape are always free & open sun up to sun down.

Together, we provide Moments of Discovery for everyone in our community.
discoverscienceandnature.org

Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum

Open six days a week
10 am—5 pm

Memberships available
Museums for All
\$3 admission for (EBT/WIC card holders)

Kids Can Cook, Too!



continued...

Try This Kid-Friendly Recipe!

It was a delightful and memorable afternoon when my kids and I decided to create homemade ice cream using just three simple ingredients. What made it even more special was watching my 10-year-old take the reins and do most of the work himself. With enthusiasm and a dash of curiosity, he carefully measured and mixed the cream, condensed milk, and vanilla extract, his eyes gleaming with excitement as he poured the mixture into a giant bowl. The whirring motion of the hand mixer mirrored our anticipation as we eagerly awaited the transformation of our ingredients into a delicious-looking mound of creamy goodness, which we then put in the freezer overnight. It was a proud moment watching him take charge, showcasing his burgeoning culinary skills while creating a sweet treat that brought us together in the joy of making something from scratch.

This recipe is wonderfully simple and cost-effective calling for basic ingredients and minimal supplies. After researching various options online, we found this particular recipe to be our favorite. What I love most is its versatility, allowing kids to explore different flavors and mix-ins. Whether it's adding chocolate chips, crushed cookies, fruit, or nuts, this recipe encourages experimentation. It's an excellent way for kids of all ages to have fun while exploring various tastes and textures in their homemade ice cream!

Ingredients:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 14 ounces sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract



Instructions:

1. **Chill:** Ensure the heavy cream is well chilled before you begin. The colder the cream, the better the results. You can also refrigerate the mixing bowl and beaters for better whipping.
2. **Whisk:** In a large mixing bowl, pour the heavy cream. Using a hand mixer or stand mixer, whip the cream until stiff peaks form. This step is crucial for achieving the ice cream's creamy texture.
3. **Combine:** In a separate bowl, pour the sweetened condensed milk. Add the vanilla extract to the condensed milk and gently stir to combine.
4. **Blend:** Now, gently fold the whipped cream into the condensed milk and vanilla mixture. Use a spatula to combine the two mixtures, being careful not to overmix to retain the fluffy texture.
5. **Freeze:** Transfer the combined mixture into a freezer-safe container or a loaf pan. Smooth out the top and cover it with a lid or plastic wrap. Place the container in the freezer for at least six hours or overnight for best results.
6. **Serve:** Once frozen, scoop the delicious homemade ice cream into bowls or cones and enjoy the creamy, flavorful treat!

Mystery Ingredient Kid Cook-Off

Cooking challenges are a creative and fun way to get kids engaged in learning, creativity, planning, and, of course, cooking. The mystery ingredient challenge could be done solo, or they could ask their siblings or friends to join in.

Start by selecting a few mystery ingredients that are kid-friendly and versatile, such as apples, cheese, pasta, or a specific vegetable. These ingredients should be simple enough for kids to work with but also open to interpretation.

Present the mystery ingredients to the chef(s) and set a time limit for them to create a dish using those ingredients as the primary focus. Once the time starts, they plan and execute their recipes, utilizing the mystery ingredients and any additional items available.

Parents, siblings, or friends taste their completed dish. Is it creative, delicious, innovative? Categories for winners could include "Best Presentation," "Most Creative Use of Ingredients," or "Best Taste." Prizes or certificates can be fun, although bragging rights or compliments work well too!

This challenge not only encourages kids to think creatively and experiment with new flavors but also promotes teamwork, problem-solving, and culinary skills. It's an entertaining and educational way for kids to have fun in the kitchen.



Kids Cookbook Recommendations

Dynamite Kids Cooking School by Dana Bowen and Sara Kate Gillingham

This is an engaging and educational cookbook designed to ignite young culinary enthusiasts' passion for cooking. Filled with vibrant recipes and easy-to-follow instructions, this cookbook encourages kids to explore and create delicious dishes while learning essential cooking skills. From basic recipes to more complex culinary delights, this book is a fun and practical guide for children eager to experiment and develop their talents in the kitchen.

Named one of the best cookbooks of the year by *The New York Times*, this pick features recipes such as simple quesadillas (filled with sauteed greens), hearty lasagna, classic layer cake, and summery mac and cheese made with light ricotta. Each recipe features a tip or trick kids will easily retain for future use.

Kid Chef Vegan: The Foodie Kid's Vegan Cookbook by Barb Musick

The "Kid Chef Vegan" cookbook is a fantastic gateway to the world of plant-based cooking for kids. Packed with colorful, flavorful, and healthy recipes, this cookbook empowers young chefs to create delicious and nutritious meals that are entirely plant-based. With easy-to-follow instructions and engaging content, this book introduces a variety of delightful recipes, from tasty snacks to hearty meals, inspiring kids to explore the exciting and diverse world of vegan cuisine. It's the perfect tool for children keen on embracing an animal-free, environmentally conscious, and tasty way of cooking.

Kitchen Tools: The Complete Cookbook for Young Scientists by America's Test Kitchen Kids

This pick is an innovative and interactive culinary journey tailored for curious young minds. Bursting with exciting experiments and recipes, this cookbook combines the joy of cooking with fascinating scientific exploration. Each recipe is a hands-on experiment, allowing kids to learn about the science behind the food they prepare. Packed with simple yet intriguing culinary projects, this cookbook fosters a deeper understanding of chemistry, physics, and biology through the lens of cooking. It's an ideal resource for curious kids eager to blend their passion for food with the wonders of science.

Good Housekeeping's 1,2,3 Cook! My First Cookbook

This is a user-friendly introduction to the world of cooking for young chefs. Created by the renowned Good Housekeeping brand, this cookbook features simple and tasty recipes perfect for children starting their culinary journey. Packed with colorful illustrations and step-by-step instructions, it makes cooking fun and accessible for kids. From easy snacks to yummy meals, this cookbook encourages kids to explore their creativity in the kitchen, making it an excellent first step for aspiring young cooks.



CASTLE REMEDIES

Since 1984

Come browse our unique gifts
& jewelry this holiday season!

Your source for high quality
vitamins, herbs, and
homeopathic remedies

Senior Discount Tuesdays

2345 S. Huron Parkway, Ann Arbor • www.CastleRemedies.com





By Jennifer Carson

Masked balls began in the 15th century occurring during the coldest months of winter, just before spring began to poke its head around the corner (usually in late February or early March). It coincided with the period just before Lent, when Christians were required to give up certain things. This time before Lent was known as Carnival Season, a festive period before the solemn and sacred time of Lent.

This time of celebration involved parades, festivals, and outdoor parties. The parties may have included a masquerade ball—people dressing in elaborate costumes and masks. It is from these masquerade parties that masked balls originated.

You can add a little fun to a dreary winter day, or infuse some imaginative play into your week, by making your own mask! You can keep it simple or embellish it to your heart's content.

Materials needed:

- Wool felt in your choice of colors. You'll need one 9"x 12" sheet for the mask base.
- Embroidery floss in a variety of colors
- Embroidery needle for hand sewing
- 24" length of 1/2" ribbon for ties, assorted ribbon and trims for embellishment
- Fray Check for sealing ribbon ends
- Pins and scissors
- Freezer paper
- steam iron

Instructions:

Begin by tracing the pattern pieces onto your freezer paper. Cut these shapes out of your freezer paper, close to the line, but not on the line.

With a warm iron, press your freezer paper pieces onto the felt color of your choice. You'll need to cut out two of the eye mask bases, ear tuft, and inner ear tuft.

Cut the eye holes out of the mask bases.

Choose one of the bases to be the front of the mask. Embellish the front of the mask around the eye holes with ribbon or trims. The other eye mask base will be your back piece. Stitch ribbon to either side of your mask (indicated by the notches on the pattern).



Match the beak piece onto the Front Face piece and stitch in place with a blanket stitch or whipstitch at the top of the beak (indicated by the curved dotted line on the pattern). Embroider the Front Face piece up to the center (indicated by the second dotted line).



Fold the front face piece over the mask and pin the beak ends together. Using a small blanket or whipstitch, sew the front of the Front Face piece together around the beak—at times you will be sewing through all the layers of the mask as well.

Sew the ear tuft together by laying the inner ear tuft on top of the main ear tuft and running a line of stitching up the center.

Fold the tuft in half, with the larger tuft on the inside. Pin to mask front and sew in place.



To finish your mask, blanket stitch around the outside edge, the inside of the eye holes, and then let your imagination fly!

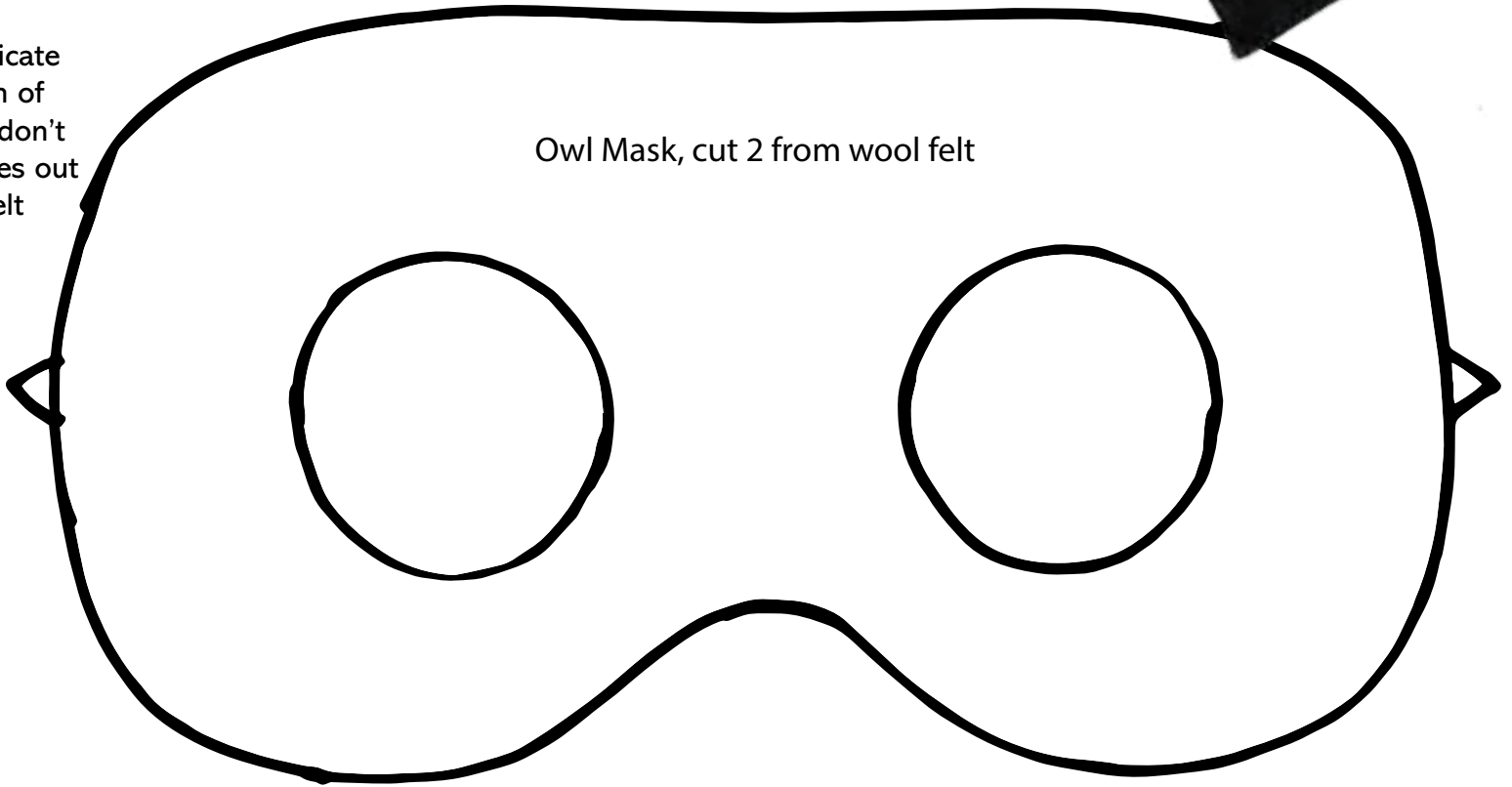
Jennifer Carson is a local author and artist who enjoys creating whimsical art for home and family. You can see her over 70 sewing and crafting patterns, her books for kids, and watercolor illustrations on her websites, the dragoncharmer.com or furandfeatherfriends.com. Follow her on Instagram @ [magickalJennCarson_art](https://www.instagram.com/magickalJennCarson_art).

**These are full size pattern pieces.
Just trace and start creating!**

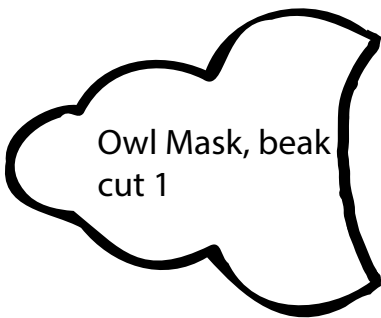


Notches indicate the location of ribbon ties--don't cut the notches out of your felt

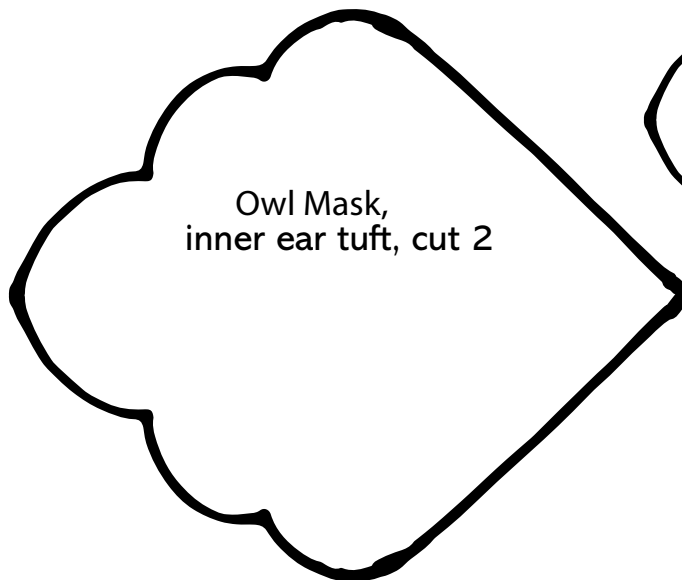
Owl Mask, cut 2 from wool felt



Owl Mask, beak cut 1



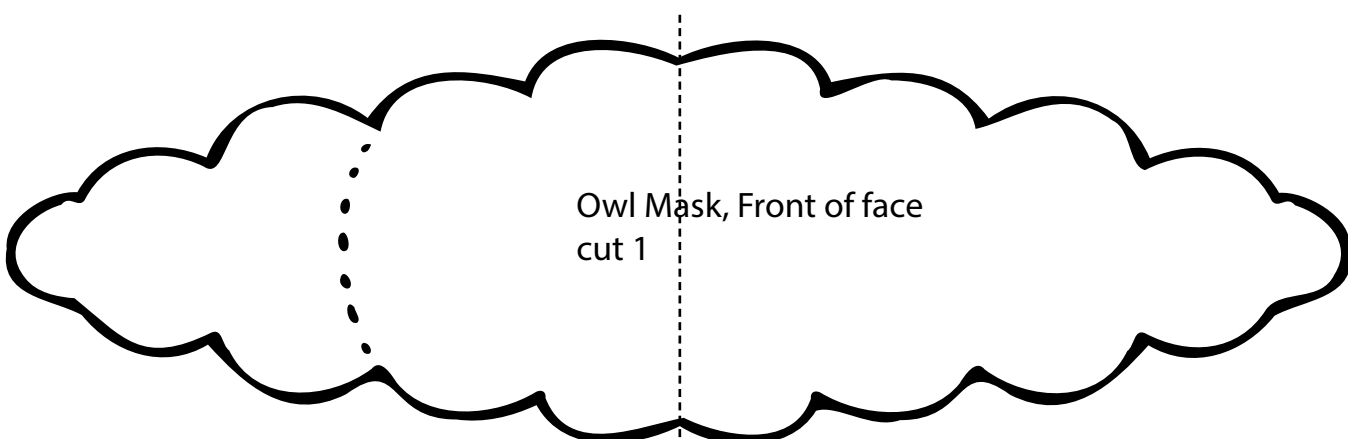
Owl Mask, inner ear tuft, cut 2



Owl Mask outer ear tuft, cut 2



Owl Mask, Front of face cut 1



The Crazy Wisdom Calendar



a free guide to local classes, workshops, and events

January through April 2024

Calendar edited by Kaili Brooks

Animals and Pets

Basic Animal Communication with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday and Sunday, January 27 & 28 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Learn to communicate with animals telepathically by opening your natural intuitive senses the way the animals do. Go step-by-step in a fun, nurturing, and supportive environment, working with both live animals and photos. Class is held online via Zoom. \$160 per person/ \$80 for repeat students. For more information email info@judyramsey.net or visit judyramsey.net.

Canine Massage Class with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Saturday, February 3 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • This fun and informative class will teach you how to give your dog a massage that will have health and behavioral benefits. A basic massage will be taught with emphasis on the hips. Bring to class: Doggie waste bags, a large blanket, and your dog. Dogs must meet the following to attend: Up to date on all shots, comfortable with groups of people, good with other dogs, and leashed outside the classroom. Cost of attendance is \$10. For more information contact Irene at (248) 350-1400 or email contact@irenes.edu.

Art and Craft

Artworks by Carlos Tobar • Daily, February 2 through April 21 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Carlos Tobar has explored and experimented with a variety of painting styles and media including stone, mosaic using recycled porcelain, and most recently pen and ink. Using exaggeration, color, and emotion, the inspiration behind his work often comes from observation of daily life or from his reaction to current events, the simple, the ordinary, the endeavor to capture a unique moment in time. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@webercenter.org, or visit webercenter.org.

28th Annual Exhibition of Artists in Michigan Prisons with the Prison Creative Arts Project • Friday, March 29 through April 2 • Sunday and Monday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. • The 28th Annual Exhibition of Artists in Michigan Prisons, a program of the Prison Creative Arts Project at the University of Michigan, showcases the work of incarcerated artists living in Michigan prisons. The work is by men and women from all 25 state prisons in both the upper and the lower peninsulas: 24 men's prisons and one women's prison. This year there will be about 700 works in two and three dimensions, including portraits, tattoo imagery, landscapes, fantasy, and wildlife, as well as images about incarceration and visions that are entirely new. We invite you into the space to enjoy the work and, if you like, make a purchase. All proceeds, minus necessary taxes and fees, go directly to the artists. FREE. For more information contact the Prison Creative Arts Project at (734) 647-6771, email pcapinfo@umich.edu, or visit prisonarts.org.

Ayurveda

Ayurveda—the Wisdom of Life with Kapila Castoldi • Sunday, February 4, 11 & 18 • 3 to 5:00 p.m. • Ayurveda offers a body of wisdom designed to help people stay vibrant and healthy while realizing their full human potential. The class focuses on understanding our unique mind-body type, living in tune with our nature, and achieving the body-mind balance that brings about harmony and happiness in life. FREE. For more information contact Kapila at castoldi@oakland.edu or visit meditationannarbor.com.

Book Discussion Groups

Jewel Heart Readers with Jewel Heart Instructors • Monday, January 8, February 12, March 11, & April 8 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Enjoy lively discussions on monthly Buddhist-related book selections with our community. All are welcome. Online only. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org or visit jewelheart.org.

Breathwork

Guided Group Breathwork with Jackie Miller • Sunday, January 7, 21, February 4, 18, March 3, 17, & April 7, 21. • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • First and third Sundays. A welcoming group session of gentle, connected breathing and breath holds with music, guided by a certified breathwork facilitator. Experience the power of activated breath energy and learn a variety of supportive breathing techniques. No prior experience necessary. FREE, donations welcome. For more information visit thisbreath.com.

Buddhism

9 Stages of Shamatha Meditation with Khenpo Tshering Chophe • Ongoing Saturdays • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. • You will be taught how to practice Shamatha (calm-abiding) meditation in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition on Saturday mornings. Lessons given with reference to the sutras and other texts and guided meditation sessions. Topics covered in earlier meetings frequently reviewed. Newcomers welcome! FREE. For more information visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

No Judgement Zone with Lama Nancy Burks and Khenpo Tshering Chopel • Ongoing First Saturdays Beginning January 6 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • A nonreligious support group where participants bring problems and challenges and provide nonjudgmental support and feedback. FREE. For more information visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times, with Demo Rinpoche • Sundays, Beginning January 7 through April • 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. Online and on-site. FREE, donations welcome. No discussion on March 3. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Foundation of All Perfections with Jewel Heart Instructors • Mondays, Beginning January 8 Through March 18 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Je Tsongkhapa's famous poem "The Foundation of All Perfections" guides us through the sequence of all stages of the path to enlightenment. Based on Gelek Rinpoche's transcript of oral teachings on this often-quoted work of the Lam Rim tradition, this course offers intimate access to the material through explanation, meditation, and discussion. No class on February 26. Suggested cost is \$75. Pay what you can - No one is turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.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 115.

Our Calendar Editor's Picks of Interesting Happenings in our Community

- **Yoga Essentials with Michele Bond • Ongoing Tuesdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • See Yoga**
- **ReVillaging for Modern Mothers with Miriam Dowd-Eller and Emily Adama • January 28 OR April 28 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. • See Retreats**
- **Canine Massage Class with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Saturday, February 3 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • See Massage**
- **Cacao + Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan • February 14 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • See Music, Sound, and Voice**
- **Deep AI: Mind, Matter, and Planetary Life with Ilia Delio • February 26 • 7 to 8:30 pm. • See Spiritual Development**
- **Candle Making & Crafting with Deanne Bednar • March 9 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • See Sustainable Living Skills**
- **28th Annual Exhibition of Artists in Michigan Prisons with the Prison Creative Arts Project • March 29 through April • Sunday through Monday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. • See Art and Craft**
- **Introduction to Shamanism with Connie Lee Eiland • April 21 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • See Shamanism**



Art by Jennifer Carson

Practical Buddhism with Gelek Rinpoche • Tuesdays, Beginning January 9 Through April 30 • 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. The sessions review Gelek Rinpoche's 2012 Sunday talks and into early 2013. No class February 27. Online only. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

The Bodhisattva's Way of Life with Demo Rinpoche • Thursdays Beginning January 18 through March 28 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • Shantideva's Bodhisattva's Way of Life is among the most beloved and inspiring works in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. In it, Shantideva gives detailed instructions on the benefits and methods of living in accordance with the bodhisattva ideals of unselfishly helping others. Cost to be determined. Pay what you can - No one turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

New to Buddhism with Khenpo Tshering Chope • Friday January 12, February 10, March 9 & April 13 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • A series of talks for those new to Buddhism. Topics include teachings common to all Buddhist paths, as well as beginner-level subjects found in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism. Newcomers welcome! FREE. For more information visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals

Dances of Universal Peace with Susan Slack • Friday, January 5 & February 2 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • The Dances of Universal Peace are interactive folk-type circle dances and walking practices while chanting sacred phrases from the world's spiritual traditions. Joyful moving meditation to live music, taught on the spot. All welcome! Masks are required. \$10 Suggested donation. For more information email peaceinacircle@gmail.com or visit dancesofuniversalpeace.org.

Cacao Journey with Alicia Clark-Teper • Friday, January 19, February 16, March 15 & April 19 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • With each cup of cacao, we set an intention, join in a circle, connect with each other, learn about the power of cacao, receive a guided meditation and Reiki journey, and come back to a circle sharing of whatever may be opening up for you in that moment. Our sacred life journey can be more enjoyable and accelerated when surrounded by community. Cacao Journey is every third Friday. \$45. For more information contact Alicia at (734) 945-5396, email clarkteper@yahoo.com, or visit SacredLotusExperience.com.

Clearing with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, January 21 • 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. This affords much deeper cleansing, purifying, sanctifying, and blessing (more 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 install powerful protection afterward! \$125. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Entering the Healing Ground: A Community Grief Ritual with Kirsten Mowrey • March 1, 2 & 3 • Friday at 4:00 p.m. through Sunday at Noon • Grief finds its way into all our lives through losses great and small. Recent years have given us little time to mourn. Losses, both personal and planetary, batter us daily until our hearts and souls become weary and overburdened. This weekend gathering invites us to share in a time of honoring the losses we hold in our hearts. Cost TBD. For more information visit greatlakesrituals@gmail.com.

Spring Equinox Ritual Celebration with Esther Kennedy • Sunday, March 17 • 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. • Come celebrate, pray, wonder anew, and dance spring's welcome. Gift us with a poem, story, a treat to share. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar



a free guide to local classes, workshops, and events

January through April 2024



Channeling

Evenings with Aaron with Barbara Brodsky and Aaron • Wednesday, January 10, February 7, March 6, April 3, & May 1, 29 • 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: Individual: \$10-\$30; All sessions: \$60-\$180. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Explorations with Spirit with Barbara Brodsky, Colette Simone, and Spirit Friends • Saturday, January 20, March 2, & May 11 • Tentatively 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. OR 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • This series is a continuation of the three workshops in Fall 2023. Topics will include: 1) Deepening awareness of one's fuller essence and living from that foundation of love and freedom. 2) Understanding karma. 3) Moving beyond perceived limitations. 4) Staying grounded in the midst of difficulty. Suggested donation: \$30-\$110. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Remembering Wholeness; Darshan with the Mother with Barbara Brodsky • Sunday, January 28, February 25, March 24, April 28 & June 2 • 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 messages that can most support program participants. People are able to hear what resonates for each one. Suggested donation: Individual - \$10 - \$30; All winter - \$50 - \$150. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Children and Young Adults

Thrive Baby Music Therapy Classes with Emma Wymer • Saturday, January 6, 13, 20 & 27 • 9 to 9:45 a.m. OR 10:15 to 11:00 a.m. OR 11:15 a.m. to Noon • Join us for a four-week music therapy class to promote developmental milestones, social skills, and infant-caregiver bonding. Through the use of instrument play and music listening, your child will begin to explore their body, voice, and environment in an evidenced-based curriculum! 9:00 a.m. session: 1-3 years; 10:15 a.m. session: 6-12 months; 11:15 a.m. session: 0-5 months. \$125. For more information visit birthplacemusictherapy.com.

Kabbalah for Parents and Children with Karen Greenberg • Saturday, January 28, February 25, March 31 & April 28 • 1 to 3:00 p.m. • Utilizing movement, multi-sensory input, color, and experiential learning, we build the self-esteem of spiritually evolved children (not reinforcing feelings of being different, damaged, defective, disordered, or dysfunctional). In an ascensional journey through the Tree of Life, we aid in organizational skills, navigating low-vibrational emotions, relationships, and setting healthy boundaries. We encourage children to discover and foster their authentic selves' genius, to fulfill their spiritual mission of a healthy, interdependent, functional planet for the "1000 Years of Peace" prophecy. Meets once per month for around a year. \$50 a session. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Death and Dying

Ann Arbor Virtual Death Café with Merylynne Rush • Third Saturday of Every Month • 10:30 a.m. to Noon • Join us for a conversation about all things related to death and dying. This is not a grief support group, but rather a "death-positive" event. Participants join in small and large group discussions 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. To receive the link, please email TheDyingYear@gmail.com and specify Death Cafe. FREE. For more information email thedyingyear@gmail.com.

Top 5 Questions about Becoming an End-of-Life Doula with Patty Brennan • Tuesday, January 9 • 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. • Do you have questions about becoming an end-of life doula? Join us for an hour-long webinar and get answers! We will discuss the role of the end-of-life doula, doula training and certification, how doulas interact with the hospice team, the types of services offered, your income potential as a doula, and more. FREE. For more information contact Patty at (734) 663-1523, email patty@lifespandoulas.com, or visit lifespandoulas.com.

End-of-Life Doula Training with Merylynne Rush • Friday, January 19 to February 23, 1 to 4:30 p.m. OR Tuesdays, March 26 to April 30, 4 to 7:30 p.m. • EOLDs provide hands-on care and comfort during the dying time, collaborating with hospice and other caregivers. The 100-page study guide includes resources and info on how to set up a business. Zoom class limited to 16; includes three facilitators and follow-up mentoring. No prior experience is necessary. Are you called to help others? Learn from a hospice nurse and experienced end-of-life doulas from diverse backgrounds. We emphasize cultural humility, understanding our biases, and reducing health disparities. \$725; scholarships and payment plans are available. For more information contact Merylynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, or visit TheDyingYear.org.

End of Life Doula Training with Patty Brennan • Friday and Saturday, February 3 & 4 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Online professional training to become a certified End-of-Life Doula (EOLD) through Lifespan Doulas. The Hybrid program features 50 hours of self-paced study plus a live, interactive workshop on Zoom. The 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. \$797. For more information contact Patty at (734) 663-1523, email patty@lifespandoulas.com, or visit lifespandoulas.com.

Advance Care Planning Facilitator Training with Merylynne Rush • Friday, April 19 • 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Learn how to assist healthy adults in identifying a healthcare advocate, discuss their values and wishes with them, and complete an Advance Directive through the Respecting Choices model, an internationally recognized and evidence-based ACP program. For nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, administrators, end-of-life doulas, and all healthcare professionals across the continuum of care. Advance registration is required. \$265 includes online study modules. For more information contact Merylynne at (734) 395-9660 or email thedyingyear@gmail.com.

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



2024 Programs

All live via Zoom

Classes | Events with Spirit | Retreats | Workshops
Weekly Silent Meditation

COMING SOON

Pre-recorded classes on demand

Join us on our path to living a life of Lovingkindness with non-harm to all beings. Experience the wisdom and compassion of Aaron, as channeled by our founder and guiding teacher, Barbara Brodsky.



DeepSpring.org | info@deepspring.org | 734.477.5848

Deep Spring Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. See website for details.

The Role of Our Autobiography in Our Present and Future Life

By Ellen M. Craine

Our past deeply impacts our present. Our childhood experiences have a huge impact on how we view the world today. We are deeply influenced, for better or worse, by the dynamics in our family, our religious upbringing, our cultural experiences, any bullying or trauma we endured, and the list goes on. All of these experiences are part of our autobiography and influence how we behave, think, and feel. In addition, how we experience life today, will impact how we experience life tomorrow.

An autobiography is comprised of two words: auto and biography. Auto means self. Biography means telling and/or writing of a story about someone and can be broken down even further to the two words “bio” and “graphy.” Bio means life or story according to *Miriam Webster Dictionary*. The word “graphy” refers to the telling of that life story in speaking or in writing. Thus, the word autobiography means the telling of one’s own life story verbally or in writing.

Our childhood experiences have a huge impact on how we view the world today. We are deeply influenced, for better or worse, by the dynamics in our family, our religious upbringing, our cultural experiences, any bullying or trauma we endured, and the list goes on.

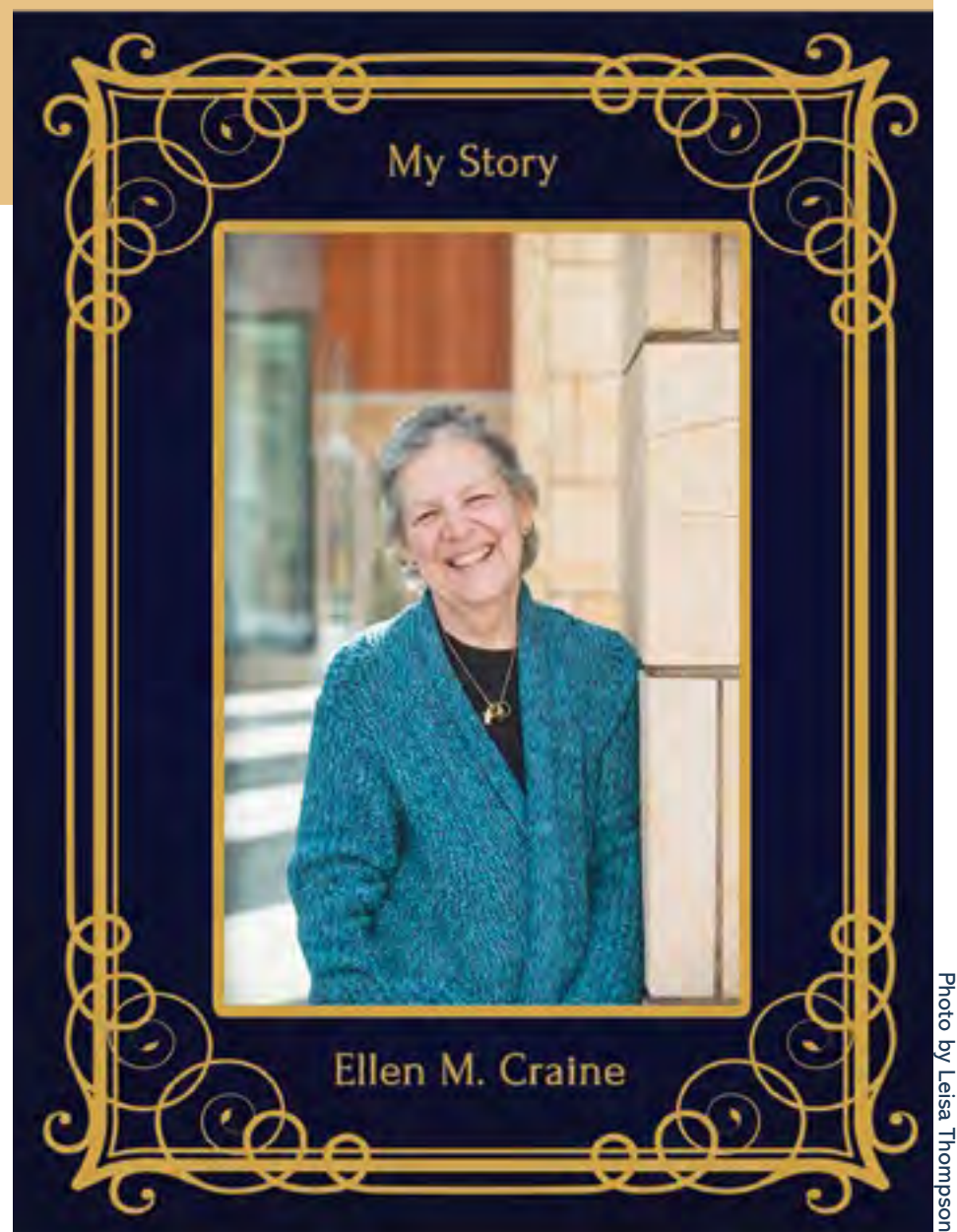
An autobiography focuses on the self-reflectiveness of the author (verbal or written). It is an exploration of one’s inner life and provides an evolution of one’s morality. Autobiographies reflect the author’s memories, feelings, and emotions. They can even reflect any public achievements. In *Parallels Between Writing Biographies and Clinical Practice*, author Urdang states, the bottom line is that “The autobiographical essay is a brief examination of subject matter important in the writer’s life, expressing the writer’s slant on the issues in question.”

The use of the biography and autobiography date back to 2000 B.C. and the story of Gilgamesh. Historically, biographies and autobiographies were to create contemporary understanding to gain insight into the figures of the past and to learn how the past influences the present problems. Autobiographies and biographies were treated differently for men than women. For men, the stories told were intended to create empathy or project onto, the life of the person portrayed. Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a Genevan philosopher, writer, and composer. His philosophies were a big influence on the Age of Enlightenment throughout Europe. He believed that self-contemplation was an important step to personal development. He also believed in the importance of childhood experiences as important influences in adult life. This self-contemplation and review of childhood experience elevates the significance of one’s emotional life: our senses and our feelings. Through this exploration, we have the opportunity to ask ourselves the following questions: Do we see ourselves as others see us? How accurate are our perceptions of ourselves? Autobiographies became extremely popular after the American and French Revolutions. In the 20th and 21st centuries, autobiographies and biographies have expanded into the sharing of intimate details of a person’s life. Urdang also explained, an autobiography allows tellers of their own stories the opportunity to reflect on their lives and potentially gain insight.

Self-exploration from telling one’s own story is possible if one is open to that. It requires the desire to seek a different understanding of past experiences by revisiting them. This is known as retrospective teleology.

Self-exploration from telling one’s own story is possible if one is open to that. It requires the desire to seek a different understanding of past experiences by revisiting them. This is known as retrospective teleology. For example, I have co-authored five books. In the first book, *Women Who Empower*, I tell my version of my experience as the mom of a pediatric cancer thriver and losing my husband to an inoperable Stage IV glioblastoma (a brain tumor). In *Women Who Dream*, I share my journey of my diagnosis and successful treatment for breast cancer. In *Leading with Legacy*, I write about finding the light within the dark based on my life experiences and connect historical meaning from several holidays that reflect this concept. In *Dear Younger Self*, I write about and reflect on what I would want my younger self to know to help guide and support me in my life’s journey. In my most recent book, *Shout it From the Rooftops Powerful Stories that Transform Lives*, I write about the challenges of caring for an aging parent and the importance of asking for help. In telling my stories, some of which are still ongoing today, I reflect on the experiences from my perspective and what take aways I have in reflecting on these journeys. In addition, my goal in sharing these stories is to offer hope and possible ways to cope with similar life journeys for the reader.

One reflection from all of these events is the importance of having a community to lean on in good times as well as challenging times. With strong support systems in place, it is possible to have hope in the future. Most people need



at least one other person in their lives to feel connected to and supported by. Another take away is that by writing about experiences and sharing them with others, there is an opportunity to process emotions and feelings related to them. Thinking about the audience that will read the stories impacts how those emotions and feelings are shared.

An autobiography focuses on the self-reflectiveness of the author (verbal or written). It is an exploration of one’s inner life and provides an evolution of one’s morality.

When we share an experience from childhood, or from any time in our past, and how it is impacting us today, we are telling part of our autobiography. In addition, we are processing how it has impacted us in the present. One healthful way to assist this processing is through journaling. Another healthful way is through processing the events through therapy or with a life/wellness coach. Most importantly, is the idea of self-reflection on the events and working to look at them as objectively as possible. Once we understand that what came before the events impacts how we cope with and see the present-day events.

One example of this is in the area of loss and grief. What a person’s earlier experiences are within the birth family, cultural, religious, and communal upbringing influence how a loss in the present is handled. In many experiences, grief from a loss is minimized or downplayed with attitudes that it is something to just get over. With this attitude about loss and grief, people feel in the present as if the emotions and feelings they have are something to be ashamed of or to be hidden. The ultimate result can be maladaptive coping and adaptation. When people are validated with their feelings and experiences, the view of the loss can become more realistic and can lead to more appropriate behaviors for the long haul. With success in this process in the present, it reinforces the desire and goal for success for oneself in the future. In the end, the more we understand our own autobiography, the more we can improve our own coping skills and positive adaptation—not only in the present, but well into the future.

When we share an experience from childhood, or from any time in our past, and how it is impacting us today, we are telling part of our autobiography. In addition, we are processing how it has impacted us in the present.

Ellen Craine JD, LMSW, ACSW, INHC is in private practice as a licensed clinical and macro social worker in the State of Michigan. She owns Craine Counseling and Consulting and has over 25 years of experience working with couples, families, groups, and individuals. You can learn more about Ellen Craine and reach out to her to schedule one of her workshops/trainings or individual or group work on her website: crainecounseling.com. She can be reached by email at ellen@crainecounseling.com.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

January through April 2024

Dreamwork

Dreaming at the Hearth: Imagination & Enchantment with Kirsten Mowrey • Saturday, January 20 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • We long for a lively, rich world where we experience an engaged ritual of living, not a routine of existence. To do this we must restore our connections to the imaginal and re-enchanted our lives. Only through cultivating our internal wells of imagination so that they flow freely can we change our daily lives. We will gather in community and turn our attention toward the images that beckon us, courting imagination and beauty through movement, writing practice, small group work and a community ritual. \$75. For more information contact Kirsten at greatlakesrituals@gmail.com.

Drumming

Intro to Taiko Drumming with Eileen S. Ho • Sunday, January 7, February 4 & March 3 • 3 to 5:00 p.m. • Explore the empowering art of Taiko in a 2-hour introductory workshop with demonstrations and hands-on activities that introduce participants to Japanese Taiko drumming. Share in the joyous energy and generous spirit of Taiko as we practice moving in space, using our voices, playing with instruments, and exploring the rhythm and groove of Taiko music together. Practice drums (taiko) are provided and drumsticks (bachi) are available to borrow or purchase. Drum and Dream with us! \$49, optional \$10/pair of bachi. For more information contact Eileen at (248) 773-8899, email eileen@greatlakestaiko.org, or visit michigantaiko.net/aareced.

Drumcommunity Jam with Lori Fithian • Saturday, January 20, February 17, March 16 & April 20 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Come join us for a family-friendly drum circle and improv jam. Bring your voices, instruments, drums, and other sounds,

and together we'll create an evening of rhythmic fun for everyone! This is a 'facilitated' circle, where Lori leads drum circle games and musical improvisation activities with a focus on fun and building community. Drums provided, no experience necessary, all ages welcome. Come jam! FREE, donations to the center are welcome. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818, email lorifithian@mac.com, or visit drummunity.com.

2024 Drum and Dance Jam with Curtis Glatter • First Saturdays Beginning April 6 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Local drummer Curtis Glatter will host the 13th season of the Drum and Dance Jam beginning April 2024 at the Interfaith Center of Spiritual Growth in Ann Arbor. No experience is necessary. You can bring your own drum or use a drum provided by the center. A sliding scale donation is \$5 is requested. Contact Curtis at (734) 972-6098, email cgindetmi@gmail.com, or visit facebook.com/glattercurtisav1972.

Energy and Healing

Heightening Your Vibration: Alchemy with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, February 4 & 11 • 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, and many more. \$180 for both days. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Healing & Ascension Monthlies Series with Eve Wilson • Thursday, February 29, March 28 & April 25 • 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. • You can help the world heal and ascend! Our deeply empowering meditations assist you, your hereditary line, soul group, and planet Earth. Joyful meditations designed for your needs each month help you live in unity with your higher self and grow humanly and spiritually strong and whole. Receive spiritual support for your life all month long. Participate live by phone conference or later by recording. Find out why people keep signing up for the next series! \$50 for individual sessions, \$300 for the full series. For more information contact Eve at (734) 780-7635, email evew@spiritualhealers.com, or visit spiritualhealers.com.



Nia-Avelina Aguirre is a board-certified Naturopathic Doctor, Ayurveda Wellness Consultant, Marma Point Practitioner (Ayurveda Acupressure), and holds degrees in Exercise Science and Sports Medicine. In addition, she is certified in several Bodywork and Energy Therapies. With 40+ years of experience in the natural health, wellness, fitness, yoga, and Pilates professions, she is passionate about integrating appropriate modalities to address individual concerns.

She also enjoys teaching community classes on self-care for the entire family and shares easy ways to get or stay healthy. Her on-the-road "Kitchen Clinic" is a fun and interactive series discussing the health benefits of foods such as culinary herbs, roots and bulbs, oils, nuts and seeds, and other food favorites. Healing recipes are shared and the "make and taste" is a blast. More recently, participants have asked about medicinal herbs, homeopathy, and Ayurveda, so the fun continues! To contact Nia email niaaguirre.nd@gmail.com or call (734) 883-7513.

Film

Film and Discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors • Friday, January 12, February 9, March 8 & April 12 • 7 to 9:15 p.m. • FREE. Concessions available. For more information contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

- **January 12.** *Walking the Camino* (2015). A documentary about the 500-mile journey of six men and women along the Way of St. James. For 1200 years, millions of pilgrims have been walking the Camino de Santiago from France to Spain. Have you ever walked—or wanted to walk—the Way?
- **February 9.** *You Can Heal Your Life* (2008). A documentary detailing the fascinating life story of the indomitable Louise Hay. A surprising, inspiring, motivational film that brings the fact that we can make a difference in our lives straight into our hearts.
- **March 8.** *The Keeper of the Keys* (2012). What are the keys to changing your life? Appearances by Jack Canfield, John Gray, Marci Shimoff and other personal-development luminaries who teach Michael (Scott Cervine) the key ideas to transforming his life. An imaginative adventure, think Harry Potter meets Woody Allen meets *The Secret*.
- **April 12.** *Café* (2016). Focused on the denizens of a coffee shop, the film asks tantalizing questions about and glimpses into the riddle of our very existence: who are we really as human, spiritual beings? What are we doing in this magical experience called life? Why are we here?

Herbal Medicine

Empowered Home Herbal Medicine Practices with Mary Light • Third Saturdays • 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • This is an apothecary/clinical-oriented certificate pathway, conducted by a medicinal clinical herbalist with 25 years of experience as a teacher and practitioner. Intended to empower participants in the use and understanding of applied natural medicine and herbal medicine and techniques for personal or clinical use. Students will learn to create, make, store, apply, and use a variety of herbal medicines upon completion. Students will directly learn which body systems, physiology, and conditions the herbal formulations should be used for or applied to. \$1,500.00 or by advanced per diem. For more information contact the Naturopathic School of Ann Arbor at (734) 769-7794 or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

Intuitive and Psychic Development

Psychic Psychology Women's Group – Teleconference with John Friedlander and Gloria Hemsher • Tuesday, January 2, February 6, March 5 & April 2 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • For Women Only. Meditations concentrate on women's issues relative to biological energies as well as that of the aura. See the website for the teleconference number and billing information. \$10. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit visitpsychicpsychology.org.

Winter Intensive - Webinar and Teleconference with John Friedlander • January 18 & 19 • 7 to 9:00 p.m., January 20 & 21 • 10:00 a.m. to Noon, and 2 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. • New material will be introduced with the continued development of advanced and core techniques seeking a natural sense of skill in practical everyday life. Prerequisite: Level 1, Psychic Development class, CD set, or permission of instructor. \$275. For more information email Gilbert Choudury at gchoud@yahoo.com or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Personal Chakras and Aura Explored In-Depth with Violeta Viviano • Thursday, January 25, February 1, 8, 15 • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. • Meditative techniques are used to identify your seven major chakras and personal aura using John Friedlander's "Basic Psychic Development" system. Class also known as Psychic Development Level 1. \$100. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513, email mviviviano@gmail.com, or visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

Focused Mind Meditation – Teleconference with John Friedlander • Sunday, February 4, March 3 & April 7 • 9:00 a.m. to Noon • The development of sustained focused meditation makes it easy to develop a whole new magnitude of psychic skill and healing ability, as well as a whole new level of mental clarity and spiritual openness. See the website for phone and payment information. \$15. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit visitpsychicpsychology.org.

Spring Intensive 2024 - Webinar/Teleconference with John Friedlander • April, See Website for Details • New material will be introduced with the continued development of advanced core techniques seeking a natural sense of skills in practical everyday life. Prerequisite Level 1 Psychic Development class, CD set, or permission of instructor. \$275. For more information email Gilbert Choudury at gchoud@yahoo.com or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Kabbalah

Brand New Beginning Kabbalah: Kabbalah Miracles with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, January 28, February 25, March 31 & April 28 • 10:00 a.m. to Noon OR January 29, February 26 & April 1, 29 • 7:15 to 9:15 p.m. • This life-changing journey is an ordered, systematic approach to developing and balancing all the important areas of life. Rather than utilizing energy resisting (exercise, meditation, sleep, eating and/or drinking healthily), we utilize that liberated energy to create on a similar vibration as our Creator. We become



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



January 24 — Ellen Bass, protégé of Ann Sexton, has poems in *The New Yorker*, *American Poetry Review*, and nine poetry collections—*Indigo* being her most recent. She co-wrote a groundbreaking guide for survivors of child sexual abuse and one for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. Chancellor Emerita of the Academy of American Poets, she teaches creative writing at Pacific University.

February 28 — Rachel DeWoskin began her career starring in the Chinese TV serial, *Foreign Babes in Beijing*, watched by 600 million viewers. Returning to the U.S., she published 5 novels and, most recently, two collections of poems: *Two Menus: Poems* and the forthcoming *absolute animal: poems*. She teaches fiction at The University of Chicago.

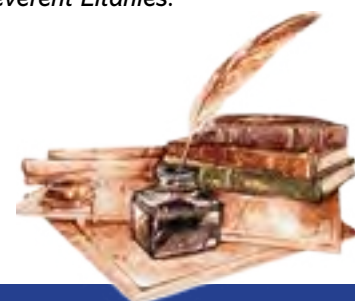


March 27 — Ken Meisel, a Detroit area psychotherapist whose poems dramatize personal and social conflict and recovery, is author of nine poetry collections, including *Mortal Lullabies*, *The Drunken Sweetheart at My Door* and—released just this year—*The Light Most Glad of All*. He was featured poet in the movie, *Detroit: Tough Luck Stories*.



March 27 — Russell Thorburn, has authored five books of poems, including *Somewhere We'll Leave the World*, and *Let It Be Told in a Single Breath* due for publication in 2024. Among his awards is a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. He wrote the play, *Gimme Shelter*. In 2013 he was the Upper Peninsula's first Poet Laureate.

April 24 — Zack Rogow is author, editor, or translator of twenty books or plays. His memoir, *Hugging My Father's Ghost*, will be published in April 2024. His dad was also a writer, and in the memoir, Rogow attempts to solve the mystery of the father he never knew. Zack's ninth poetry collection is *Irreverent Litanies*. zackrogow.com



Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle
The Poetry Series is open to all. There is never a charge.
<https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/>

Dying to Wake Up



By Laila Gislason

Though Boo wasn't my "real" grandfather I could not miss the realness of his final days. Despite the sticky doorknob, the smell of last week's lunch, dead flowers, and the junk pile obstacle course, I made my way to his bedside. The clutter used to spark an uncomfortable itch throughout my body, but I'd accepted it. His 98-year-old body was tired, but his spirit was very much alive as he pondered the end.

Boo, as I began calling him as a child, married my grandmother long before my birth, but it was always made known that he wasn't blood. "He's your step-grandfather," my parents often clarified. When you grow up in a home of familiar strangers, it's hard to understand how it differs, but since my "real grandfather" died when I was barely a toddler, Boo was the one I loved as such.

"There was always something," he'd say as he pointed toward the sky. In recent months especially, we'd yo-yo back to his fascination...the time his brothers miraculously saved him from drowning in the river in Latvia, the near misses of fatal bullets in the war, his mysterious survival of tragic car accidents, the whispers to "wake up" just as his life depended on it.



In recent months especially, we'd yo-yo back to his fascination...the time his brothers miraculously saved him from drowning in the river in Latvia, the near misses of fatal bullets in the war, his mysterious survival of tragic car accidents, the whispers to "wake up" just as his life depended on it.

Eager to capture his first-hand stories soon to be lost to eternity, I often recorded our talks. Still vivid, his attention darted from digging war trenches to engineering munitions. I once asked him how he *felt* amidst all of the death. After a glimpse of deep heartache, he gave a quick answer. "You know, it was hard." It left me longing for an emotional depth that he wasn't willing to dive into. He rarely mentioned that he fought on the Russian front for three months, in a swamp, with one set of clothing, in the winter. He was one of the few survivors.

His body was now failing, but his mind was as aware as ever. I held his frail hand as we settled into the silence together, breathing deeply.

In his final days, as he reflected, ever more fascinated by the "something more," our conversations shifted toward the more ephemeral things in life: music, art, and what happens when you die. He even asked if I could teach him to meditate. It seems that as we get close to leaving this physical world, our grip loosens from it, like when we're ready to drop our baggage after a long journey.

On the day of the meditation lesson, as always, the mess made it hard to get close to him. Maybe that was the point--like a protective post-war part of him still building trenches for safety, still wounded from the lack of clean clothes, the one loaf of bread per day, and the decades of silent struggle.

His body was now failing, but his mind was as aware as ever. I held his frail hand as we settled into the silence together, breathing deeply. Upon closing our eyes, I asked him to let his thinking mind rest and to shift his awareness into his body in a way he maybe hadn't done before... to be aware of it from within rather than spotlighting attention to various parts. "Begin by feeling the tingling within your feet and let's guide your awareness like an inner light of sensations." From his feet, the tingling bubble of awareness passed through his bony knees, up his spine, and then into his jaw. A smile came across his face and he interjected with surprise, "There is no color in here!" We laughed.

He had slipped into thought again so I invited him to shift his awareness back down toward his heart space. I said, "It might be tender, but feel your heart. Experience it as it is right now, from the inside." We paused here for a moment, breathing together in stillness. "Do you feel its love?" He gasped for air like it was his first breath and said, "Wow."

As we basked in awe together of the expansive omnipresence we felt our own love, each other's love, my grandmother's love, everyone's love, vibrating and interconnected with all that exists and will ever exist. Free of fear. Free of judgment. Free. When we finally opened our eyes, they locked as if for the first time, fully present, fully awake.

Still vivid, his attention darted from digging war trenches to engineering munitions. I once asked him how he felt amidst all of the death. After a glimpse of deep heartache, he gave a quick answer.

I could sense his awe but also the firing of his forever curious mind. I said, "It's like being aware of myself from a higher awareness." In this state we marveled at the nonduality of the universe exploring the wonders of consciousness, energy, vibrations, and electricity. Pondering questions like, "What *is* love? Is it like electricity? Is it the life force of the soul?" We laughed together for hours and re-explored his now pointless regrets and grudges from this new perspective. Finally, he asked, "If I am everything and nothing, then what was the "something" that always stepped in to save me?" His gaze peered up, and as if he had just dropped a final piece into a puzzle, a sly happy smile appeared. He didn't need an answer. Then, almost immediately, he joked, "But really, if I had known sooner that this life was all a dream, I would have done a few things differently." He smirked and we laughed again.

Every day until his last, we said our goodbyes from a deeper sense of closeness, and he promised to visit me from the timeless "something" and say "Boo!"

Laila Gislason is a certified mindfulness teacher and spiritual guide who awakens people through nondual techniques that point out our interconnected and loving true nature. Learn more at openquiet.com. Contact Gislason at laila@openquiet.com.

NONDUAL MEDITATION COACH
PSYCHEDELIC INTEGRATION
SPIRITUAL GUIDE



Experience your interconnected loving true nature, meet your authentic Self, and live an awakened life!

Laila Gislason
openquiet.com

empowered to develop 10 G-Dlike traits, join with G-D, and become co-creative, proactive manifesters of our dreams, desires, and goals, open to miracles, and fulfill our purpose and destiny. Monthly rate is \$150 for privates, \$180 for semi-privates with two people. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email, krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Love and Relationships

Kabbalah for Couples with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, January 28, February 25, March 31 & April 28 • 3 to 5 :00 p.m. • Has social distancing amplified the 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 monthly session 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. Future course dates to be determined. \$274 per session. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email, krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Massage

Community Massage & Foot Reflexology with the Ann Arbor Massage School Staff • Ongoing Tuesdays Through April • 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. • Open format community massage and foot reflexology. Fully clothed 20-minute sessions alongside staff with the goal of vitality and relaxation in our quiet, peaceful studio. \$25. For more information contact the massage school at (734) 769-7794 or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

Free Massage Class with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Friday, January 19 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • If you've never given a massage before, this is a great chance! 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 we will pair you up with a friendly partner! Bring a flat sheet and wear loose comfortable clothing. We recommend a bottle of water. FREE. For more information contact Irene at (248) 350-1400 or email contact@irenes.edu.

Reflexology Program with Charlotte Irwin • Saturday and Sunday, January 27 & 28 • 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • Charlotte Irwin's 150 reflexology program, one weekend a month for six months is designed for students to start a professional career in reflexology. This January introductory weekend class is a good place to start, and also for those just wanting to help family and friends. \$195. For more information contact Charlotte at (586) 268-5444 or visit center4thehealingarts.com.

Couples Massage Class with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Sunday February 4, 11, 18 & 25 • 2 to 5:00 p.m. • Spend four fun evenings with your significant other and connect on a deeper level, while learning proper techniques of a relaxing full-body massage. The first class is mandatory. \$275 for all 4 classes, and a \$75 fee is charged for less than five-day notice of cancellation. For less than 24-hour cancellation, the full cost of the class in non-refundable. For more information contact Irene at (248) 350-1400 or email contact@irenes.edu.

**Snow brings a special quality with it
— the power to stop life as you know it
dead in its tracks.**

— Nancy Hatch Woodward



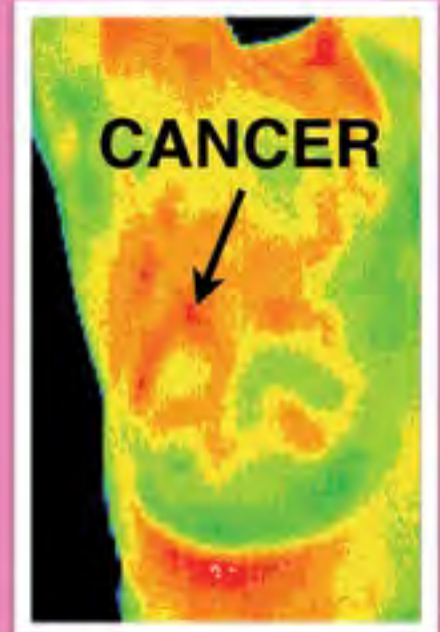
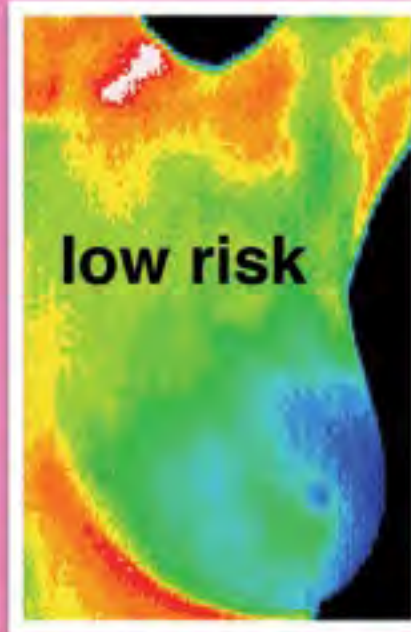
Meditation

Weekly Silent Meditation Practice via Zoom with Celeste Zygmunt • Sunday 11:00 a.m. to Noon AND/OR Tuesday 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. Please note this is not a class or a guided meditation. Suggested donation: \$5. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Weekly on Sundays from January 7 to April 28 • 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. • 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,

Protect your breasts: find problems early!

Cancer is hot: the cells are very active. With infrared pictures, doctors can find trouble early, sometimes earlier than mammograms. Gently and safely.



**Infrared breast cancer screening
No compression. No radiation.
Ann Arbor Thermography**

210 Little Lake Drive, Suite 12
on the west side of Ann Arbor

AAthermography.com
734-332-6290

A service of Malcolm Sickels MD. <http://drsickels.com>

and emotional suffering. No meditation March 3. Online and on-site. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Weekly on Mondays from January 8 through March 18 • 7 to 8:30 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. No classes February 26 or April 1. Online only. FREE. Donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Meditation Technology: Concentrated Meditation with Joe Palms & Vicki Cahill • Wednesday, January 10, 17, 24 & 31 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Concentrated meditation is the foundation of every kind of meditation. It brings clarity and sharpness of focus and allows us to stay with any object of observation for prolonged periods. This workshop introduces techniques to deepen concentration using the breath as the main object of focus. FREE. Donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Serendipity: An Exploration of Spirit, Dharma, and Meditation with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, and John Orr • Tuesday January 16, 30, February 13, 27, March 3, 26, April 9, 23 & May 5, 21 • 6:45 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: \$200-\$600. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Day of Mindfulness Meditation with Esther Kennedy • Monday January 29, Saturday March 2 & April 6 • 10 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 loved within family, neighborhood, city, and world. \$35 with lunch included. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Complimentary MBSR Orientation with Brenda Lindsay • Wednesday, January 31 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • Learn about the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) evidence-based, eight-week program, including the risks and benefits to determine if it is a fit for you. MBSR 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 lifetime. FREE. For more information visit mindtransformationsllc.com.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

January through April 2024

Meditation continued...

MBSR 8-Week Series with Brenda Lindsay • Wednesday, February 7, 14, 21, 28 & March 6, 13, 20, 27 • 6:30. to 9 p.m. • All Day on March 16
• Do you want to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, or possibly change habitual reactivity patterns that may damage relationships? Connect in real-time with others who are seeking greater balance, ease, and peace of mind. The MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) secular, evidence-based 8-week program was created by Jon-Kabat-Zinn in 1979 at the UMass Medical Center to optimize one's ability to face stress, pain, and illness and make sustainable changes across one's lifetime. Tuition Fees are a sliding scale: \$175.00, \$290.00, or \$380.00. For more information visit mindtransformationsllc.com.

Myriad of Meditations with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, March 3, 10, 17, 24 & April 7, 14, 21 • 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. • Meditation is an essential component of 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, the Four Worlds, different breathing, 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. includes several guided meditations through the Tree of Life. \$25 per class. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email, krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Mastering Meditation with Kapila Castoldi • Saturday, March 9, 16 & 23 • 2 to 4:00 p.m. • Introductory meditation series offered by the Sri Chinmoy Centre. Topics include concentration, relaxation, and breathing techniques, music, mantras, and meditation on the heart. FREE. For more information contact Kapila at castoldi@oakland.edu or visit meditationannarbor.com.

Sound & Vibrational Therapies Double Certification with Meditation School of Mindfulness • March 16,17,18 &19 • Saturday through Monday • 10:00 am to 6 p.m. • Tuesday 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • This interactive training is centered around the teaching of Sound Healing and vibrational Therapies. Our intention for this amazing interactive training is to not only share the theory, science, and practices of Sound Healing but to give you a "hands-on" experience. \$1,690. For more information contact Brian at (954) 641-8315, email brian@meditateyou.me, or visit meditateyou.me.

Letting Go - Loving the Life You Have Right Now with Janene Terns • Saturday, April 6 • 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • We are told that God works all things for our good but that is often hard to see in the midst of our day. Join us to discover the spiritual, emotional, physical, and practical aspects of your life which God may be inviting you to surrender. Learn everyday practices to live in this challenging world while increasing your trust, peace, and joy so you can truly love the life you have today. \$60. For more information visit prayer-in-motion.com.

Music, Sound, and Voice

Music Improv Session with Jesse Morgan • Reoccurring First Tuesdays • 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. • This session is a supportive, inclusive musical group improvisation. Skilled improvisers play alongside novices to make music in the moment, together. No musical experience necessary. All are welcome. We generally create three instrumental and one vocal improvisation. You may choose your degree of participation. FREE. For more information contact Jesse at (734) 355-1501, or email jessemusictherapy@gmail.com

Folk Song Jam Along with Lori Fithian and Jean Chorazyczewski • Friday January 5, February 6, March 6 & April 2 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Come sing and play, just for fun! Bring your voice and/or strummy (Ukulele, Guitar, etc.) instruments to play and sing along - we've got a lot of songs to choose from - it's like group Karaoke with our own band! We project lyrics and chords on a screen, so all can sing and/or play along. Beginning players are most welcome! We meet alternating days and locations - the Malletts Creek and Westgate library branches. FREE. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818 or email lorifithian@mac.com.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, January 5 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Celebrate the new year with Rob Meyer-Kukan at 7 Notes Natural Health with 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. \$40. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Creating Music During a Pandemic with Curtis Glatter • Saturday, January 20 • 3 to 5:00 p.m. • Curtis Glatter will be showing slides, videos, and explaining how a cross-country trio called TROIKASTRA released a CD called *It's the Door*

with the *Little Stairs* on the Castor and Pollux Music label. Signed CD's will be for sale at this event. FREE. For more information visit aadl.org or visit [facebook/glattercurtisav1972](https://facebook.com/glattercurtisav1972).

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, February 2 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation where we will explore the concept of waves of sound. 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. \$40. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Didgeridoo Sound Therapy Workshop & Sound Bath Meditation with Peter D. Harper & Bobbi Llewellyn-Harper • Saturday, February 10 • 6 to 8:30 p.m. • Award-winning Australian musicians and sound healers: Peter and Bobbi Harper present a Sound Therapy Workshop and Sound Bath Meditation using the ancient Australian Aboriginal wind instrument called the "Didgeridoo" (Yidaki/Mako). They will discuss the many types of didgeridoos available, how they are made and played, and their use in Indigenous ceremonies and healing. Didgeridoo sound healing is a profound form of vibrational healing. The sonic vibrations release physical pain, grief, loss, stress, and emotional blocks. A Sound Bath with the Didgeridoo is a powerful and uplifting meditational experience. \$50, Registration required. For more information contact Anne at (517) 962-4725, email anne@infinitelightjackson.com, or visit infinitelightjackson.com.



**I have a simple philosophy:
Fill what's empty. Empty what's full.
Scratch where it itches.**

— Alice Roosevelt-Longworth

Cacao + Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Wednesday, February 14 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan of 7 Notes Natural Health for a special Valentine's Day-themed, heart-opening cacao ceremony supported by sacred sound. Using ceremonial grade cacao, pure intention, and over 40 different instruments (singing bowls, gongs, therapeutic harp, shruti box, and more), Rob will create an experience that will immerse you in peace and tranquility. \$40. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, February 23 & April 19 • 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. Hosted by Breathe Yoga, 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 Amy at (734) 883-7427, email amy@breatheyogachelsea.com, or visit breatheyogachelsea.com.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, March 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. Through the gift of sound, you will be transported to places and spaces that are "out of this world." \$40. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.



Patty Brennan is the owner and visionary force behind Lifespan Doulas, a professional doula training and certification agency for birth, postpartum, and end-of-life doulas. For 40+ years, she has been a doula, midwife, educator, nonprofit executive, and entrepreneur. Patty has trained over 3,000 people to become doulas. She is also the author of *The Doula Business Guide*.

Brennan has been educating and supporting families to become their own best advocates and successfully navigate healthcare systems since 1983. She became interested in end-of-life issues after supporting two sets of parents through their final days, witnessing the remarkable similarities between birth and death, and what it means to hold space for these major life transitions. After this experience, Brennan developed and launched the end-of-life doula training program in 2016.

Learn more at lifespandoulas.com.

Chakra Sound Bath with Rob Meyer Kukan • Friday, April 5 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.

• In our understanding of them, we have seven main chakras but hundreds of minor chakras. In this time of sound bath meditation, we will seek to balance your energetic system with sounds from singing bowls, gongs, and more. \$40. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Sound Meditation with Mike Tamburo • Friday and Saturday, April 12 & 13 • Friday 7 to 9:00 p.m. & Saturday 8 to 10:00 p.m. • Enter a timeless space of listening as Crown of Eternity's Mike Tamburo orchestrates his way through 40+ overtone-rich instruments including Gongs, Bells, Sound Sculptures, Hammered Dulcimer, and tuned metal instruments. \$40 each night. For more information contact Anne Taylor at (517) 962-4725, email anne@infintelightjackson.com, or visit infintelightjackson.com.

Learn & Explore Gongs Workshop with Mike Tamburo • Saturday, April 13 • 10 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. • Join Mike for a one-day in-person exploratory and experiential workshop that will deepen one's gong practice and bring the player to a new level both in playing and in understanding the potential of working with gong music. Open to all levels. \$175. Contact Anne at (517) 962-4725, email anne@infintelightjackson.com, or visit infintelightjackson.com.

Praise, Poetry, and Potpourri with John Macnoughton • Thursday, April 18 • 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. • Enjoy prose, poetry, music, and song from a variety of presenters. Feel free to bring your own creations. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Parenting

Kabbalah for Parents and Children with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, January 28, February 25, March 31 & April 28 • 1 to 3:00 p.m. • Utilizing movement, multi-sensory input, color, and experiential learning, we build the self-esteem of spiritually evolved children (not reinforcing feelings of being different, damaged, defective, disordered, or dysfunctional). In an ascensional journey through the Tree of Life, we aid in organizational skills, navigating low-vibrational emotions, relationships, and setting healthy boundaries. We encourage children to discover and foster their authentic selves' genius, to fulfill their spiritual mission of a healthy, interdependent, functional planet for the "1000 Years of Peace" prophecy. Meets once per month for around a year. \$50 a session. For more information contact Karen 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 • Saturday, February 10 • 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. • Sunday, March 10 • 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. • Saturday, April 27 • 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. • Monday, April 29 • 6:45 to 7:45 pm • It happens so often. Something you say causes a disconnection, and your child checks out. What becomes possible if you offer to be a "teddy bear?" Teddy bears say very little. When a teddy bear talks, it's because the talker has asked the teddy bear to do something small, like ask questions or reflect some things back. Explore the power of listening in this one-hour in-person workshop for parents. Bookable online times also available. FREE. For

more information contact Leeann at (734) 237-7676, email teddybear@umich.edu, or visit teddybeartalksupport.com.

Personal Growth

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care with Christy DeBurton • Self-Paced • In this compact but powerful self-paced course, you'll get at the root causes of your self-sabotaging habits. Learn effective tools to set healthy boundaries without the guilt. Banish burn-out, overwhelm, and resentment. Get inspired to eat healthy, sleep well, and live better in your body. For more information email Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit yogaroomannarbor.com.

Healthy Boundaries with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, January 14 • 10 a.m. to Noon • Learn how to define "Healthy Boundaries" for and with yourself, how to set and enforce them without caving in, and how to respect others' boundaries in all kinds of personal and professional relationships and situations. Role play is a chief learning tool in the work. \$77. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email, krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Artful Reflection: Expressive Art & Holistic Coaching Workshop with Idelle Hammand-Sass and Susan Young • Saturday, February 3 & March 2 • 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. • The workshop begins with a grounding exercise followed by a one-hour group coaching session (topic to be announced) Our discussion will be guided by self-reflective prompts that are designed to get us from our heads into our hearts. A "Witness to an Image" mini workshop follows as an intro to the Open Studio Process (OSP), involving intention, witness writing, and reading aloud. The main workshop "Energy Made Visible" is a process-centered drawing workshop with oil pastels, accompanied by a percussive playlist to get us into our bodies. \$125. For more information email Susan at susan@triplemooncoach.com or visit triplemooncoach.com.

On January 1, 2024,
The Crazy
Wisdom Community
Journal will be available
on our website:
crazywisdomjournal.com.



The Crazy Wisdom Calendar



Personal Growth continued...

Thriving Through Change: Strategies for Grace-Filled Transitions with Janet Schaeffler • Thursday, February 15 • 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. • What, really, is change all about? How do I – or could I – respond? What do I do with all my feelings, worries, excitement, and/or apprehensions? Coupled with a deeper understanding of the elements of and our responses to change, we will also explore some practical hints and help to survive, thrive, and flourish amid the changes within and around us. \$45 includes lunch. Registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@webercenter.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Harnessing the Power of Talking Out Loud Co-working Sessions with Leeann Fu • Monday, February 12, 6:45 to 7:45 p.m. • Thursday, February 29, Noon to 1:45 p.m. • Saturday, March 2, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. • Sunday, April 7, 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. • Saturday, April 13, 10:15 a.m. to Noon • OR Tuesday, April 23, 10:15 a.m. to Noon • Separate in-person co-working blocks where work is interspersed with Teddy Bear Talk Support (TBTS) sessions. Do you think better when thinking out loud? Do you want to make use of this power more often? TBTS Provides a framework for participants to benefit from conversations with listeners who only listen or ask open, honest questions, and make guesses about what seems important. Come explore! (Bookable online times also available.) FREE. For more information contact Leeann at (734) 237-7676, email teddybear@umich.edu, or visit teddybeartalksupport.com.

Finding Your Ground Personal Growth Circle for Women with Rachel Egberman & Jessica Ryder • Wednesday, March 20, April 3, 17 • 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. • Guided practices for reflection and contemplation in a safe and supportive environment. In-person, in Ann Arbor. Open to all women regardless of gender assigned at birth. Contribution of \$1 - \$25. For more information email Rachel at Tellrachel123@gmail.com or Jessica at jessica@jessicaryder.net.

Community Renewal Day with Rob Meyer-Kukan and Bri Babiera • Sunday, April 21 • Noon to 5:00 p.m. • 7 Notes Natural Health is committed to giving back to the community! In previous years we have offered events for healers, teachers, veterans, and more. Now, we are thrilled to share that the previous model we have used is becoming Community Renewal Days. We will have new

practitioners, a new schedule, and more opportunities for community gatherings. Our same commitment to helping those who help others will shine through as we share this opportunity for all who help, assist, and support others to be held, renewed, and rejuvenated. Community Renewal Day is for anyone who works in the healthcare system - doctors, nurses, PAs, therapists/social workers/counselors, administrators, janitors, etc. and all who work in the healing arts - reiki practitioners, massage therapists, intuitive readers, sound healers. It is also for teachers, aides, paraprofessionals, school office staff, administration, custodial staff, bus drivers. The day will include Sound Therapy, Massage, and Reiki one on-one Sessions and new Renewal Activities including breathwork, intro to breathwork, mindfulness meditation, journal writing, crystal grid workshop, and our very popular yoga + sound. FREE. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Reiki

Reiki I & II Certification with Alicia Clark-Teper • Sunday, January 21 • 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • Learn the ancient Japanese technique of Reiki. Classes are kept small so that each student gets time to share and have hands-on practice. Take healing into your own hands for you and your loved ones. \$299. For more information contact Alicia at (734) 945-5396, email clarkteper@yahoo.com, or visit SacredLotusExperience.com.

Second Degree, Usui System of Reiki Healing with Suzy Wienckowski • March 22 & 23 • Friday 7 to 9:00 p.m., Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • This is the 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 at (734) 476-7958 or email suzyreiki@aol.com

Usui Holy Fire III Reiki Master Certification with Alicia Clark-Teper • Saturday and Sunday, February 17 & 18 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Take your Reiki healing to the next level with Holy Fire III Reiki master training. Learn new techniques, get more attunements and symbols, and have hands-on practice with



10%* discount off your first appointment.

Japanese Acupuncture in Ann Arbor



25 years experience


- * Off the body energy work
- * On the body diagnostic Palpation on abdomen
- * The main event! Expert gentle insertion style Acupuncture

See her beautiful website... emanueleacupuncture.com
 (734) 302-7300 • acurose@gmail.com

Crazy Wisdom Kids

An ongoing section of
The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

Articles, calendar listings, advertisements,
 music and book reviews, and other features
 that focus on raising conscious and spirited kids.



If you like our CW Kids section, and would like to contribute to it,
 contact jennifer@crazywisdom.net.
 We welcome story ideas, illustrations, feature writing, and photographs.



Art by Kelly Sharkey

other students. Light lunch provided. Must show proof of Reiki Second degree to attend class. \$450. For more information contact Alicia at (734) 945-5396, email clarkteper@yahoo.com, or visit SacredLotusExperience.com.

First Degree Usui System of Reiki Healing with Suzy Wienckowski • Saturday and Sunday, April 13 & 14 • 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 four individual initiations. Certificate awarded. \$200. For more information contact Suzy at (734) 476-7958 or email suzyreiki@aol.com

Retreats

Personal and Mini Wellness Retreats with The Yoga Room and Christy DeBurton • Ongoing • When you haven't got the time or budget for a full weekend retreat but just need a little 'me-time,' choose a Mini Retreat or a Personal Retreat to relax and renew. For more information email Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit yogaroomannarbor.com.

ReVillaging for Modern Mothers with Miriam Dowd-Eller and Emily Adama • Sunday, January 28 OR April 28 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. • Modern motherhood can leave women struggling with everything from social isolation, mood-disorders, and health challenges, to simply dealing with the near-constant ache for a more organic and effortless village for themselves and their families. Through movement, sharing circles, stillness, nature-connection, and song, these retreats will explore some of the qualities, mindsets, and tools you can use in your journey of "ReVillaging," to find and build the support, community, friendships, and connections you dream of. Price ranges from \$70 to \$150. For more information visit EarthWellRetreat.com.

Day of Mindfulness with Emily Adama, Miriam Dowd-Eller, and Ari Wakeman • Sunday, February 4 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Immersed in nature, we will be supported by time-honored practices, the presence of other practitioners, and themed readings exploring key mindfulness teachings. The majority of the day will be in guided silence; however, the day will begin and end with optional sharing and reflection with the group. Informed by the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, we will cycle through foundational mindfulness practices including breath meditation, walking meditation, body scanning, yoga, and sensory meditation. Price ranges from \$35 to \$75. For more information contact Emily at (989) 442-6779, email hello@earthwellretreat.com, or visit EarthWellRetreat.com.

Living from Non-dual Essence: The Mundane and the Ever Perfect • Saturday, February 17 through Saturday, February 24 • 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. • We're in a transitional phase of human consciousness. We see in ourselves and our world arisings of physical and emotional distortions. We want to fix it, but what does "fixing" mean? Nothing can be "fixed" if the solution is not already present. The healing we seek as a world and individually, is accessible if we can open to it. Paths to opening to the ever-healed, spiritually, physically, and emotionally are the focus of this workshop. Suggested donation: \$240-\$880. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Day of Renewal for Helping Professionals with Ari Wakeman and Emily Adama • Sunday, February 25 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. • Immersed in nature, you will move through two all-level yoga sessions, guided breath meditation, mindfulness and nature connection practices, receive a professional massage, and enjoy periods of personal and group reflection with others in your field, exploring techniques to prevent burn-out and improve self-care. F price options between \$160 and \$280 in order to reflect our values of inclusivity, affordability, and accessibility. Please pay what you are able. Includes programming, lunch, and a 30-minute professional massage. Overnight accommodations are available at an additional cost. Friday night yoga is available for \$15 for those staying the night. For more information email Ariawakeman@gmail.com or visit EarthWellRetreat.com.

Letting the Gaze of Jesus Rest on Us During Holy Week with Father Dan Crosby • Sunday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m. through Thursday, March 28 at 11:00 a.m. • The very first chapter of John's Gospel tells us Jesus, "turned and saw," the Baptist's two disciples following him at a distance. He then invites them to, "Come and see," where he lives, where he dwells. During this Holy Week retreat we'll, "Come closer and see," Jesus turning to gaze on us, inviting us deeper into his way of looking, loving—and living. Cost including meals: Commuter: \$160; Double Occupancy: \$325; Single: \$425. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Shamanism

Journey Circle with Judy Liu Ramsey • Thursday, January 4, 18, February 1, 15, March 7, 21 & April 4, 18 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • For those who know how to do shamanic journeying, this Zoom group explores the tools and resources needed for life's transitions and cycles. Enrich your life by joining us in this open and welcoming community of practitioners. The circle is online via Zoom. \$25 per session or \$40 per month per household. For more information email Judy at info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit judyr Ramsey.net.

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. Read our Crazy Wisdom Interview with Demo Rinpoche in Issue #78. You can find the issue online in our archives at crazywisdomjournal.com/journal-archive-1995-through-current.



Shamanism

Basic Journeying: The Art of Shamanism for Practical and Visionary Purposes in Daily Life with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday, January 13, 14 & April 27, 28 • 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. Learn techniques to help you develop a self-directed practice of empowerment, allowing you to move safely, and intentionally through the world in a balanced way. This class is a prerequisite to ongoing and more advanced shamanic studies. Online class via Zoom. \$160 per person/ \$80 for repeating students. For more information email info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit judyr Ramsey.net.

Shamanic Animal Communication with Judy Liu Ramsey • Tuesday, January 16 through February 20 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Learn the difference between telepathic and shamanic animal communication and how to apply the best of both in an integrated way. Join us for this deeply spiritual exploration of communication. Knowledge of telepathic communication is not required. Optional mentoring sessions are offered with this class on Mondays following. The class will be taught online via Zoom. \$260 per person/ \$130 for repeating students. For more information email info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit judyr Ramsey.net.

Shamanic Personal Safety: Creating Sacred Protected Space with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday, February 10 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Learn techniques for energy hygiene when doing shamanic work and why it is so important. \$80 per person. For more information email info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit judyr Ramsey.net.

Medicine For the Earth/Healing with Spiritual Light with Judy Liu Ramsey • Wednesdays from March 6 through April 10 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Explore the depth of your own inner light and its connection with All That Is. Learn how to transform energy behind toxic thoughts, achieving harmony and

balance in yourself and the world. Connect with nature, spirit allies, and the elements to learn how to transform and heal yourself, your community, and your environment. Suggested reading: *Medicine for the Earth: How to Transform Personal and Environmental Toxins* by Sandra Ingerman. Journeying skills are not necessary. All levels and traditions are welcome. The class will be taught online via Zoom. \$400 per person/ \$200 for repeating students. For more information email info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit judyr Ramsey.net.

Ancestors: The Power Within with Judy Liu Ramsey • April 6 & 7 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Ancestors can be powerful allies in your practice, and healing our ancestral lines can help us heal ourselves and our families. Explore your heritage and deepen your connection with the grandmothers and grandfathers in ceremony, in initiation, and in the shamanic journey. Prerequisite: basic journeying skills. The class will be taught online via Zoom. \$160 per person/ \$80 for repeating students. For more information email info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit judyr Ramsey.net.

Shamanic Healing for Animals with Judy Liu Ramsey • Tuesdays from April 16 to June 11 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Explore unique perspectives for animal healing that draw upon core shamanic practices. Students will develop a toolkit of techniques within a supportive, interactive, and experiential learning framework of instruction from a professional animal communicator who also practices shamanism. Prerequisite: journeying basics. Knowledge of animal communication is not necessary. The class is taught via Zoom. \$375 per person/ \$155 for repeat students. For more information email info@judyr Ramsey.net or visit judyr Ramsey.net.

Introduction to Shamanism with Connie Lee Eiland • Sunday, April 21 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • This class includes power animal retrieval and journeying to upper, lower, and middle worlds. Journeying is done utilizing drums and rattles. For more information contact Connie at (248) 809-3230 or email clshebear@gmail.com.

Divine Inspiration At Work with Susan McGraw

Let *Divine Inspiration* be the guide for *Your Next Chapter* and make smooth transitions in your personal life, career, or business.



Susan McGraw
Psychic Medium
Career & Business Strategist

**Psychic Readings
Career & Business Strategy Sessions
Live Virtual Workshops via Zoom**

Get more information and book a phone session:
DivineInspirationAtWork.com

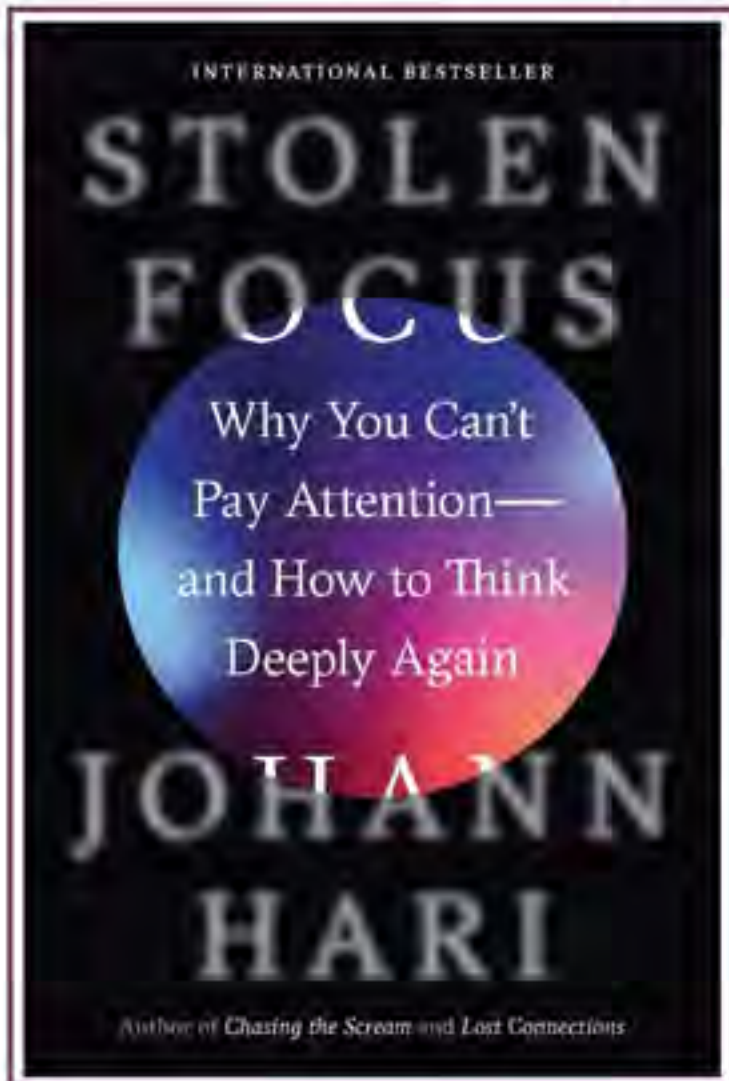
"I can say beyond a doubt that my reading with Susan has helped propel me in my soul's direction and vocation! She is incredibly accurate and left me feeling more inspired and excited than I could possibly express!" Hallie S., Salt Lake City, Utah

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 115.



STOLEN FOCUS:

Why You Can't Pay Attention—and How to Think Deeply Again



By Christine MacIntyre

In an age characterized by ceaseless distractions and a relentless assault on our attention spans, Johann Hari's thought-provoking work, *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention—and How to Think Deeply Again*, emerges as a timely and illuminating exploration of the modern cognitive landscape. In a world where the stimulating call of smartphones, social media, and constant connectivity beckons incessantly, Hari navigates the turbulent seas of our digital age with insight and personal resonance. The narrative provides astute observations, practical wisdom, and the hope that we can reclaim the ability to think deeply and engage meaningfully in our world.

Hari contemplated a disquieting notion: the pervasive inability to direct our attention toward significant matters has insidiously encroached on society, akin to an invisible itching powder set upon us, compelling everyone's minds to convulse and sway. Determined to unravel the enigma of society's dwindling attention spans, he embarked on a sweeping quest, engaging in conversations with luminaries spanning 30,000 miles, driven by the desire to lift the veil shrouding what he perceives as a systemic quandary—one formerly ascribed to individual shortcomings or the advent of ubiquitous cell phones. Instead, his journey led him to unearth a sprawling and intricate ecosystem perpetuating the pervasive inability to focus. Hari, not an expert himself, operates as a journalist who diligently seeks insights from experts and then adeptly translates their knowledge for readers. Supported by an extensive collection of over 400 online endnotes referencing more than 250 scientific studies, his work emerges as a compelling and authoritative exploration. In his thought-provoking endeavor, he prompts readers to ponder a critical question: Should the defining mantra of our time be, "I tried to live but got distracted?"

In a world where the stimulating call of smartphones, social media, and constant connectivity beckons incessantly, Hari navigates the turbulent seas of our digital age with insight and personal resonance.

The book unfolds as a captivating personal journey, with each chapter gently beckoning readers to uncover discoveries alongside Hari. Readers will likely find themselves forging connections with their experiences, nodding in agreement or recognition. Hari doesn't adopt a lofty stance; instead, he candidly acknowledges his struggles with focus, providing relatable examples. The narrative elucidates the challenging modern landscape where sustaining deep concentration becomes increasingly elusive, weaving a complex tapestry of contributing factors. However, amid these revelations, Hari offers compelling evidence that change is possible and within our grasp. The idea that the fragmentation of attention has repercussions for individuals and society emphasizes the crucial need to comprehend the underlying dynamics and reasons behind this phenomenon.

Throughout *Stolen Focus*, Hari meticulously dissects 12 underlying causes contributing to society's collective struggle with focus across 14 comprehensive chapters. Within this intricate exploration, he identifies these causes and sheds light on potential solutions that delve deeper into the issues at hand. These causes encompass a range of contemporary challenges, including the hindrance of flow states, the disturbance of mind-wandering, the ascent of what he terms "cruel optimism," the surge in stress and its impact on vigilance, as well as the detrimental effects of our changing diets and escalating pollution levels.

Hari's book exposes startling facts, like the fact that people interact with their phones 2,617 times daily, symbolic of the digital age's impact on our lives. While the internet accelerated declining focus, it's not the sole culprit. Our frenetic modern lives inundate us with information, challenging our concentration ability. Hari dispels the multitasking myth, asserting that our minds are wired for one or two simultaneous thoughts at most. Straining for more overwhelms our cognitive capacity, exacerbated by constant mental filtering, disconnecting us from the present and hindering deep thinking.

In *Stolen Focus*, a vicious cycle emerges, with people seeking relief from business through distraction or from distraction through rest, which further erodes their focus. Hari aptly encapsulates this dilemma, noting that "we live in a gap between what we know we should do and what we feel we can do."

Furthermore, the notion that mind-wandering is inherently detrimental is another misconception Hari explores. He argues that when the mind wanders freely, it often forges unexpected connections and can lead to innovative problem-solving. Ironically, the crisis of losing the ability to mind-wander freely can be just as detrimental as the crisis of losing focused attention.

In *Stolen Focus*, a vicious cycle emerges, with people seeking relief from business through distraction or from distraction through rest, which further erodes their focus. Hari aptly encapsulates this dilemma, noting that "we live in a gap between what we know we should do and what we feel we can do." Importantly, readers also discover that they aren't solely responsible for their inability to pay attention. Hari proposes that "there are six ways in which our technology, as it currently works, is harming our ability to pay attention—and that these causes are united by one deeper underlying force that needs to be overcome." The text conveys a theme: people are becoming less rational, less intelligent, and less focused because of the "collective downgrading of humans and the upgrading of machines."

Once readers grasp the core issue of the collective struggle with focus, Hari offers a glimmer of hope by suggesting that this challenge isn't solely an individual burden but rather a shared endeavor to reclaim stolen time, space, rest, sleep, and attention. Solutions lie in challenging the status quo, challenging societal conventions, and refusing to perpetuate the struggle. In concluding this narrative, Hari acknowledges that *Stolen Focus* isn't a self-help book, and the complexity of the issue requires an admission—that he, like many of us, hasn't entirely solved this problem within himself.

The collapse of Hari's focus mirrors the challenges of society at large, where sleep deprivation and overwork have become prevalent. We constantly switch tasks, besieged by social media's manipulative infinite scrolling, and stress has rendered us hypervigilant. When readers confront these factors, they gain insights into why their ability to focus has waned and the initial steps toward addressing it.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar



Marlene McGrath is the new owner of Yoga Focus Collective. All of the instructors at Yoga Focus Collective are trained in Iyengar yoga. They have had the longest standing Prenatal and Postnatal Yoga program in town, and possibly in the state of Michigan, having been offered consistently since 2001. They offer Supported Yoga, which is designed to be accessible to students of any age, stage of life, or level of skill or flexibility. They offer beginner level Basic Yoga, and Open Level Yoga which are mixed level classes, at a variety of times throughout the week to accommodate students' schedules.

Read about the new collective in the What's New in the Community article on page XX.

Spiritual Development

Connecting with Archangels with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, January 7, 14, 21 & 28 • 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 assistance, and how to safely call upon them. Connect—ask questions—often receive helpful information and guidance. \$777 for all four parts. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email, krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Being Real: An Online Introduction to the Diamond Approach with Lou Weir • Wednesday, January 10 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • We all want to be real, but often we don't know what that means. We see the world and ourselves through many subjective lenses. These teachings will look at these veils and help see a deeper truth. The Diamond Approach is a spiritual path which uses meditation and inquiry to uncover the truth of who we are in our authentic nature. This is an introduction to the diamond method, recommended before the full course. FREE. For more information email Lou at dwmich22@gmail.com or visit diamondworkmichigan.org.

Being Real with Lou Weir • Saturday, January 13 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • We all want to be real, but often we don't know what that means. We see the world and ourselves through many subjective lenses. These teachings will look at these veils and help see a deeper truth. The Diamond Approach is a spiritual path which uses meditation and inquiry to uncover the truth of who we are in our authentic nature. This is the full course. \$205, \$180 if paid a month in advance. For more information email Lou at dwmich22@gmail.com or visit diamondworkmichigan.org.

Cultivating a Personal Relationship with G-D with Karen Greenberg • Friday, February 2 & 11 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • Create a sacred space, compose and ask questions of your higher power, decipher if you are receiving "Yes," "No," or "Essay" answers from your spirit, thinking in your head, 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! For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email, krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Astral Travel, Including Heavenly Travel with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, February 4, 11, 25, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, & April 7, 14, 21, 28 • Additional Dates TBA • 5 to 9:30 p.m. • Sequential five-part series spanning a year and a half. Part One (2 sessions) - learning what is in G-D's Will, seven spiritual dimensions, 12 physical dimensions, Archangelic master cell readings, incarnation. Part Two (2 sessions) - preparing ourselves and our space for astral travel. Part Three (4-5 sessions) - different spiritual dimensions, Akashic records, gates of heaven. Part Four (4-5 sessions) - celestial locations; Part Five (4-5 sessions) - different star systems, universes. All previous sections are prerequisites and must be completed before continuing on. \$99 per session OR 15% discount for each group of four sessions paid up front. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Abrahamic Religions: The People of the Book with Susan Van Baalen • Thursday, February 22, 29, & March 7, 14 • 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. • A series of presentations exploring the history and evolution of religion from Judaism to Christianity to Islam for the purpose of understanding their relationship through Abraham. \$35 for the series; \$10 for individual sessions In-person and live streamed. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@webercenter.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Deep AI: Mind, Matter, and Planetary Life with Ilia Delio • Monday, February 26 • 7 to 8:30 pm. • Computer technology and artificial intelligence are the fastest evolvers of human evolution today. We have treated technology as a tool, but we have failed to recognize that nature is techne. We will explore the rapid rise of technology, the impact of techno-culture on human life, and Teilhard de Chardin's ideas on religion, technology, and evolution in the Noosphere. \$45.00 Livestreamed - Registration required to receive the link. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@webercenter.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Twelve Tribes with Karen Greenberg • March 3, 10, 17, 24 & April 7, 14, 21 • Additional Dates TBA • 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, the tribes you're most drawn to, and tribe archetypes that give you the knowledge, power, and wherewithal to fulfill your soul's purpose. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Finding Joy: An Online Introduction to the Diamond Approach with Lou Weir • Wednesday, March 27 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • We all have a natural connection to joy and happiness—a spiritual quality. Our conditioning (early environment) creates obstacles to this. We will explore the barriers to and the quality of joy in these teachings—and help us find our way back. The Diamond Approach is a spiritual path which uses meditation and inquiry to uncover the truth of who we are in our authentic nature. This is an introduction to the diamond method, recommended before the full course. FREE. For more information email Lou at dwmich22@gmail.com or visit diamondworkmichigan.org.

Finding Joy with Lou Weir • Saturday, March 30 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We all have a natural connection to joy and happiness—a spiritual quality. Our conditioning (early environment) creates obstacles to this. We will explore the barriers to and the quality of joy in these teachings—and help us find our way back. The Diamond Approach is a spiritual path which uses meditation and inquiry to uncover the truth of who we are in our authentic nature. This is the full course. \$205, \$180 if paid a month in advance. For more information email Lou at dwmich22@gmail.com or visit diamondworkmichigan.org.

Thomas Aquinas and Teilhard de Chardin: Christian Humanism in an Age of Unbelief with Donald Goergen • Saturday, April 20 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Thomas Aquinas, a medieval philosophical theologian, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a modern priest-scientist, may seem like quite a contrast. What does each have to offer our understanding of God, ourselves, and the world today? Are there fundamental views and visions compatible? What can we learn from each? \$45 Livestreamed only. Registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@webercenter.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Stress Management

Everything is Working Out Perfectly with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, January 14 • 1 to 5:00 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, 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 at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Sustainable Living Skills

Natural Building Wintership at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • January 7 through February 7 • This live-in one-month intensive adventure includes lessons in natural building (design, foundation, materials) plus hands-on classes: earth plaster and sculpting, round pole basics, thatching and reed collection, rocket stove, and earth oven! Enjoy the company of others and experience the Strawbale Studio, Hobbit Sauna, Middle Earhand the Kids Cottage, enchanting natural buildings of strawbale, earthen plasters, with thatched and living roofs, Rocket Stoves. Enchanting setting on 50 wooded acres one hour north of Detroit at the Strawbale Studio. Room, board, and all classes and workshops included. \$1250 - \$475, see details for early discounts and worktrade. For more information contact Diane at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

Thatched Roof Workshop at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Saturday and Sunday, January 13 & 14 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Explore this beautiful, ecological, and long-lasting roof system using local Phragmite reed grass. Saturday, tour two thatched roof buildings on-site. Demo and hands-on thatching on an inside small frame and thatching video. Sunday harvest and bundle reed at the nearby field. Online handouts provided. 12 student limit. Bring a bag lunch. Supper, overnight, and breakfast are available for \$25. \$85 prepaid two weeks in advance or \$100 after. For more information contact Diane at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

Round Pole Framing ~ Hands-on Basics with Deanne Bednar • Saturday and Sunday, January 20 & 21 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Learn hands-on basics and principles of construction of round pole framing for a small structure! Tour thatched roofs and round pole structures on site, harvest wood, use hand tools, and create a small team project using several types of notching and a mallet to take home (optional). Bring a bag lunch. Includes e-handouts. Instructor: Deanne Bednar has designed and co-built small round-wood structures on-site using both notching and lashing techniques. \$95 paid two weeks in advance or \$120 thereafter. For more information contact Diane at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

THE GREATEST HAPPINESS OF LIFE IS THE CONVICTION THAT WE ARE LOVED; LOVED FOR OURSELVES, OR RATHER, LOVED IN SPITE OF OURSELVES.

— Victor Hugo

Fire! Rocket Stove & Earth Oven Workshop with Deanne Bednar • Saturday and Sunday, January 27 & 28 • 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. OR April 13 & 14 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Create useful heat efficiently from local materials! Tour buildings and Fire Devices on site, (Rocket Stove, Earth Oven, Rumford Fireplace.) Hands-on: brick mockup of Rocket Stove combustion unit, model of an Earth Oven and mix cob and finish plaster. Make a pizza in the Earth oven! Info on principles, and design. Online handouts. Rocket Stove and Earth Oven books for sale. Limit of 12 students. Some overnight accommodations are available. \$110 paid two weeks in advance or \$125 thereafter. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

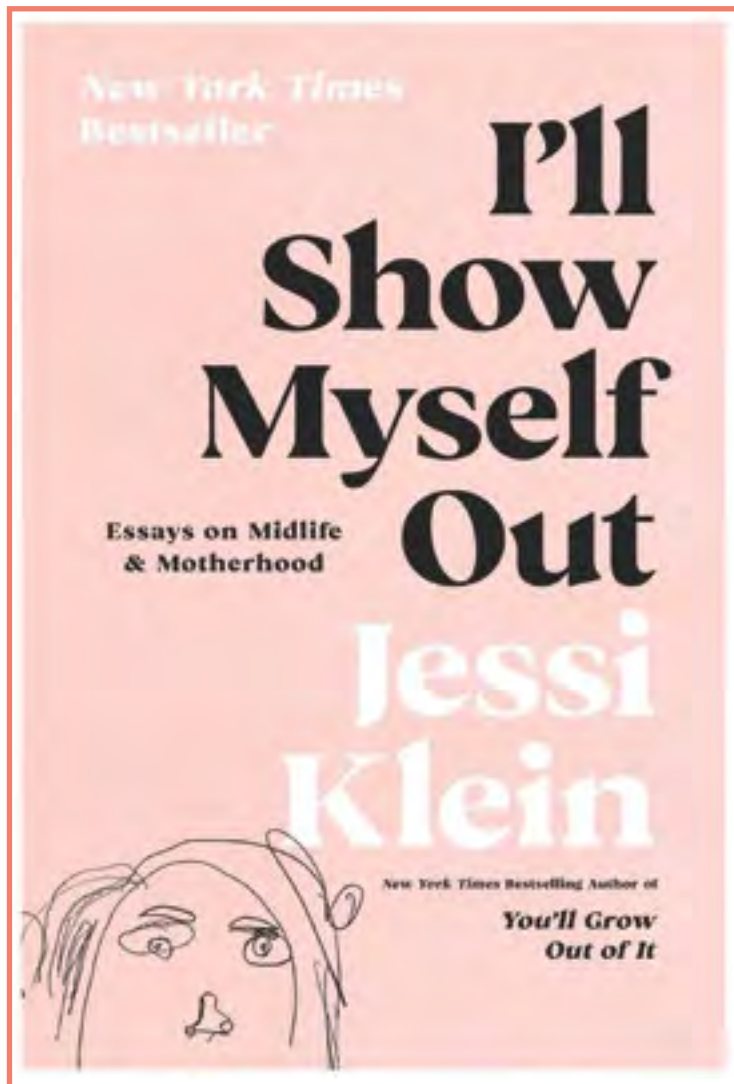
Earth Plaster & Sculpting with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, February 4 • 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • Learn the joy of natural earthen plasters that can be used in a variety of applications to beautify and naturalize your existing dwellings or future natural strawbale home or Earth Oven project! Tour natural buildings and identify, test, mix, and apply natural local soil to create simple or artistic expressions. Location, cozy main house. Bring a bag lunch. Limited to 12 participants. \$70 paid two weeks in advance or \$85 thereafter. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

triple:moon
COACHING
Susan Young
Certified Holistic Life Coach
LIFE COACHING FOR
WOMEN OVER 50
www.triplemooncoach.com
susan@triplemooncoach.com
@triplemoon_coaching

KELLIE MOX
COACHING & HEALING
Catalyzing revolutionary healing through
Trauma-Informed Homeopathy
Intrinsic Coaching
Holistic Health Education
KELLIE MOX, MPH, DCHM, CCH(cand)
KELLIEMOX.COM
HEAL@KELLIEMOX.COM | 734-476-0349
Free, 20-minute exploratory session for new clients

Book Review

I'll Show Myself Out: Essays on Midlife & Motherhood



By Christine MacIntyre

In a world awash with bad news and the relentless cascade of life's endless absurdities, Jessi Klein emerges as a comedic voice of reason, a beacon of humor and humanity amidst the chaos. Her eagerly anticipated second essay collection, *I'll Show Myself Out: Essays on Midlife & Motherhood* takes readers on a riotous journey through the tangled web of motherhood, midlife, and the quirkiness of modern existence. With interconnected essays like "Mom Clothes" and "Listening to Beyonce in the Parking Lot of Party City," The Emmy Award-winning writer and producer fearlessly tackles the cruel ironies, the joyous moments, and the poignant bittersweetness of this stage of life. Through her signature honesty and irreverent humor, Klein weaves a tapestry of insights and laughter, reminding readers that even in the face of life's most absurd moments, we can find solace, understanding, and a good hearty laugh.

In a world awash with bad news and the relentless cascade of life's endless absurdities, Jessi Klein emerges as a comedic voice of reason, a beacon of humor and humanity amidst the chaos.

In *I'll Show Myself Out*, readers find relatable themes encompassing motherhood, midlife, and the societal expectations tied to these phases of life. Klein skillfully navigates the complex blend of bitterness and sweetness, revealing the simultaneous irony, cruelty, and joy of existence. She dissects the challenges and absurdities accompanying these themes through her candid and relatable perspective. Klein's writing stands out for its honesty, wit, and sharp humor, making each essay a compelling and resonant experience.

In the opening essays, Klein introduces herself as a mother sharing glimpses of her daily life. She immediately discusses challenges (such as running to the store to replenish her son's snack supply to prevent him from having a meltdown) and reflecting on them without undue judgment. She reveals that her existence seems repetitive and occasionally self-criticizes. She admits to being an ardent fan of *The Bachelor* and Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*. In these moments, Klein takes on the role of a relatable mother, one that many readers in the same

stage of life will readily recognize. She humorously describes herself as feeling "invisible to the mainstream world, over the hill, like a Swiffer on legs, wiping his nose with my hand, and not having sex, and generally functioning as a kind of automated milk-and-comfort-dispensing machine." And just like that, she becomes a reader's best friend or sister wife.

Throughout subsequent essays, such as "The Butterfly" and "On the Starbucks Bathroom Floor," Klein candidly delves into her occasional struggles as a mother. She peels back the layers of self-doubt and personal insecurities, highlighting her struggles with not entirely fitting into her various life contexts—her town, her marriage, or even her skin. These moments of vulnerability strike a chord of relatability, as many readers have experienced similar thoughts and emotions. She reflects on how parenthood can render the ordinary both insane and mundane, prompting her to daydream about an alternate life. She yearns for the freedom to escape while simultaneously conveying the paradox of motherhood—longing for independence while cherishing the need to be essential to someone else. The essays encapsulate the myriad, often conflicting emotions parenthood can evoke.

She peels back the layers of self-doubt and personal insecurities, highlighting her struggles with not entirely fitting into her various life contexts—her town, her marriage, or even her skin.

From grappling with the anxiety of potty training and the challenges of picky eating to the overwhelming surge of emotion that occasionally leads to a loss of patience or the sensation of parenting on autopilot, Klein masterfully renders a sense of normalcy to the everyday tribulations of motherhood. Her essays serve as a reassuring breath of fresh air as though readers are finally free of an invisible weight. Her candid reflections resonate deeply reassuring others they're not alone in their battles.

Raising a child to adulthood is an inherently challenging journey, let alone navigating life's complexities simultaneously. Many parents wrestle with the feeling that motherhood is trivialized or underappreciated. As Klein aptly observes, she strives to find beauty in life, yet she realizes some things are beyond a parent's control. "... I'm not responsible for the fact that once the pretty things are turned over, horrible, dark little tidbits are lurking under so many of them." However, in sharing profound thoughts and experiences through her essays and the fact that she can discuss them with humor, Klein's words become a soothing balm for life's hardships. They provide a comforting reminder that no one is alone in their trials, offering camaraderie in the shared experience of motherhood's challenges.

Klein masterfully brings her book to a poignant conclusion in "The Return," where she delves into the profound transformation that parenthood imposes. She reflects on the irrevocable shift from her pre-motherhood identity, recognizing the parts of herself that have changed, with the realization that there's no turning back. She candidly shares a list of things she no longer misses, like wanting to be the prettiest in the room and the constant need to apologize, as well as items she doesn't have space for in her now-constricted mental capacity, such as Harry Styles and TikTok.

Ultimately, Klein underscores a fundamental lesson that parenthood imparts from the unwavering protective instinct to protect our children. She astutely observes that motherhood allows learning a profound kind of power—the ability to stand up for our children and ourselves. It's an unexpected insight that emerges from the journey of motherhood, presenting a unique chance for personal growth and self-assertion. In embracing this newfound strength, Klein leans into her transformed self, demonstrating her capacity to continue evolving and thriving, just as readers can.



Sustainable Living Skills continued...

Intro to Thatching: Tour & Reed Collecting with Deanne Bednar • Saturday, February 17 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Enjoy a unique day in nature! See several thatched roofs on-site during a two-hour learning tour at Strawbale Studio. Ask questions! The tour also includes Rocket Stoves, Earth Oven, Living Roofs, Strawbale, Cob, and Earth Plasters! Please bring a bag lunch. Then learn to harvest reed in a nearby field for thatching a future project at Strawbale Studio. Reed Collecting will also happen on February 18 if you want to join. \$35. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

Candle Making & Crafting with Deanne Bednar • Saturday, March 9 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Enjoy the rhythmic process of this ancient art as you dip six tapered beeswax candles, craft candle holders out of an earthen "cob" mix and decorate matchboxes with nature items. Relax with the smell of beeswax and the beauty of natural materials. Held at the Lovely Michigan Folk School, outside Ann Arbor. \$100. For more information visit mifolkschool.com.

Equinox Tour of Strawbale Studio & Earth Oven Pizza with Deanne Bednar • Wednesday, March 20 • 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. • Explore the enchanted buildings and grounds, make and fire your own Earth Oven Pizza, and enjoy a day in nature. Celebrate the Equinox with a Strawbale Studio Learning Tour 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. & Earth Oven Pizza-making & bonfire, Noon to 3:30 p.m. \$35. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

Making Cordage & Learning to Lash with Deanne Bednar • Saturday, March 23 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Join this fascinating workshop taught with materials straight from nature. Held at the Michigan Folk School outside Ann Arbor. Learn the traditional craft of cording using several different local plants! Then learn several very useful knots and apply them to some small-lashed model-making of your choice (ex. lashed ladder, A-frame Structure,). We will also make a few larger-scale projects together. Handouts will give ideas! A very interesting, fun, and practical class. \$100. For more information visit mifolkschool.com.

April Worktrade Program at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • April 1 through 28 • Come participate in this unique learning environment! Come join the crew and live on-site as you learn skills and help out. This work trade opportunity provides basic food and lodging in exchange for 25 hours of help per week on the grounds, buildings, and infrastructure. Assist with and participate in classes and activities held during the month; foraging and some crafts. 25 hours of worktrade per week. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

Simple Spoon Carving Workshop with Deanne Bednar • Wednesday, April 17 • 9:30 to 5:00 p.m. • Learn whittling techniques to make a wooden spreader knife and a simple spoon during this mid-week class. We will be using wood harvested from the land, and several types of knife tools plus a draw shave and shaving horse. A traditional skill to last a lifetime. Bring a lunch. Enjoy being in the enchanting thatched Strawbale Studio in the woods. Limit of eight students. \$65 paid one month in advance or \$80 thereafter. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Self Defense

Wu Style Tai Chi Chaun with Marylin Feingold • Weekly on Sundays from January 7 to April 28 • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Learn the ancient art of meditation in motion with this "soft style" martial art emphasizing relaxation and balance. Drop-in, \$5 per session collected at the door. No class on March 3. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Yang & Chen - Qigong & Tai Chi - Beginner – Advanced with Karla Groesbeck • Ongoing Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays • See Website for Times • Solo, two-person, weapons. Outside, inside & zoom. Yang Long Form 108, Chen Laojia Yilu. Various qigong sets & Zhan Zhuang. Sword, Staff, Bang, Ruler, Tuishou, and Push Hands. Free for folks 65+. Contact us for under 65. For more information contact Karla at, (734)276-3059, email info@taichilove.com, or visit taichilove.com.

Chen Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Instruction in Chen Tai Chi Chuan, a unique art emphasizing inner stillness and relaxation developed through disciplined whole-body integration and refined awareness. FREE. For more information contact Joe at annarbortaiichi@gmail.com or visit annarbortaiichi.com.

Women's Health

The Ultimate Perimenopause Guide with Christy DeBurton • Self-Paced • Lifestyle habits such as diet, exercise, stress, and sleep play a huge factor in (peri)menopause symptoms. This guide will help you learn about the different stages of (peri)menopause and the most common symptoms; gain knowledge about how to balance your hormones naturally through diet, supplements, herbs, and self-care; learn techniques to lower stress and improve your sleep; identify how to exercise smarter for this time of life. For more information email Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit yogaroomannarbor.com.

Eve Wilson

The past couple of years have seen dramatic change in the focus of her teaching and healing practice. After 36 + years training and certifying over 100 Spiritual Healers she has retired the Healer Development Program. In place of that she is training World Healing and Ascension Workers.

For seven years her Weekly Word for Healing and Ascension has been listed on feedspot.com's "Best Healing Blogs on the Planet" list.

You can learn more about Eve and her work and trainings at spiritualhealers.com.



Work and Right Livelihood

End-of-Life Doula Training with Merylynne Rush • Fridays, January 19 to February 23 • 1 to 4:30 p.m. OR Tuesdays, March 26 to April 30 • 4 to 7:30 p.m. • EOLDs provide hands-on care and comfort during the dying time, collaborating with hospice and other caregivers. The 100-page study guide includes resources and info on how to set up a business. Zoom class limited to 16; includes three facilitators and follow-up mentoring. No prior experience is necessary. Are you called to help others? Learn from a hospice nurse and experienced end-of-life doulas from diverse backgrounds. We emphasize cultural humility, understanding our biases, and reducing health disparities. \$725; scholarships and payment plans are available. For more information, contact Merylynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, or visit TheDyingYear.org.

Reflexology Program with Charlotte Irwin • Saturday and Sunday, January 27 & 28 • 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • Charlotte Irwin's 150 reflexology program, one weekend a month for six months is designed for students to start a professional career in reflexology. This January introductory weekend class is a good place to start, and also for those just wanting to help family and friends. \$195. For more information contact Charlotte at (586) 268-5444 or visit center4thehealingarts.com.

End of Life Doula Training with Patty Brennan • Saturday and Sunday, February 3 & 4 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Online professional training to become a certified End-of-Life Doula (EOLD) through Lifespan Doulas. The Hybrid program features 50 hours of self-paced study plus a live, interactive workshop on Zoom. The 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. \$797. For more information contact Patty at (734) 663-1523, email patty@lifespandoulas.com, or visit lifespandoulas.com.

Sound & Vibrational Therapies Double Certification with Meditation School of Mindfulness • March 16, 17, 18, & 19 • Saturday through Monday 10:00 am to 6:00 p.m., Tuesday 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • This interactive training is centered around the teaching of Sound Healing and vibrational Therapies. Our intention for this amazing interactive training is to not only share the theory, science, and practices of Sound Healing but to give you a "hands-on" experience. \$1,690. For more information, contact Brian at (954) 641-8315, email brian@meditateyou.me, or visit meditateyou.me.

Advance Care Planning Facilitator Training with Merylynne Rush • Friday, April 19 • 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Learn how to assist healthy adults in identifying a healthcare advocate, discuss their values and wishes with them, and complete an Advance Directive through the Respecting Choices model, an internationally recognized and evidence-based ACP program. For nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, administrators, end-of-life doulas, and all healthcare professionals across the continuum of care. Advance registration is required. \$265 includes online study modules. For more information contact Merylynne at (734) 395-9660 or email thedyingyear@gmail.com.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar



Writing and Poetry

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series with Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin • Wednesday, January 10, 24, February 14, 28, March 13, 27, & April 10, 24 • 7 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. • Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series hosted by Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month. Second Wednesdays, 7-9:00 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, 7-9:00 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. FREE. For more information contact Edward at (734) 668-7523, emaileacmorso@sbcglobal.net or visit <https://cwcircle.poetry.blog>.

Featured Readers:

- **January 24** - Ellen Bass, protégé of Ann Sexton, has poems in *The New Yorker*, *American Poetry Review*, and nine poetry collections—*Indigo* being her most recent. She co-wrote a groundbreaking guide for survivors of child sexual abuse and one for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. Chancellor Emerita of the Academy of American Poets, she teaches creative writing at Pacific University.
- **February 28** - Rachel DeWoskin began her career starring in the Chinese TV serial, *Foreign Babes in Beijing*, watched by 600 million viewers. Returning to the U.S., she published five novels and, most recently, two collections of poems: *Two Menus: Poems* and the forthcoming *absolute animal: poems*. She teaches fiction at The University of Chicago.
- **March 27** - Ken Meisel, a Detroit-area psychotherapist whose poems dramatize personal and social conflict and recovery, is author of nine poetry collections, including *Mortal Lullabies*, *The Drunken Sweetheart at My Door* and—released just this year—*The Light Most Glad of All*. He was featured poet in the movie, *Detroit: Tough Luck Stories*.
- **March 27** - Russell Thorburn has authored five books of poems, including *Somewhere We'll Leave the World*, and *Let It Be Told in a Single Breath* due for publication in 2024. Among his awards is a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. His wrote the play, *Gimme Shelter*. In 2013 he was the Upper Peninsula's first Poet Laureate.
- **April 24** - Zack Rogow is author, editor, or translator of twenty books or plays. His memoir, *Hugging My Father's Ghost*, will be published in April 2024. His dad was also a writer, and in the memoir, Rogow attempts to solve the mystery of the father he never knew. Zack's ninth poetry collection is *Irreverent Litanies*.

At Work Underground - A Writing Workshop with Tarianne DeYonker • Saturday, March 9 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • Hidden from sight under piles of snow and ice, nature continues her work during winter months. Sometimes against great challenges, plants, trees, and creatures small and large use these cold, dark winter days to rest and rejuvenate. As writers, we also need the same space and time to re-energize our writing. Why not join us for an afternoon to pay attention to the writing you're working on or create something new? Beginning and experienced writers are welcome whether in person or online. If you choose to attend online, the Zoom link will be sent to you a few days before the workshop. \$35. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, [email webercenter@webercenter.org](mailto:webercenter@webercenter.org), or visit webercenter.org.

Yoga

Yoga Your Way with Christy DeBurton • Ongoing • Hatha, Vinyasa, and Yin Yoga classes. Offerings include private sessions, hybrid live and virtual courses, video, and audio sessions. For more information email Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit yogaroomannarbor.com.

Open Level Yoga with Michele Bond • Sunday, 4 to 5:30 p.m. • Tuesday, 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Saturday, 10 to 11:30 a.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. Myofascial release is a recent—and welcome—addition to all classes. Learn to look for the good in yourself and others as you enjoy a dynamic practice. \$15 per class if registered for the semester, \$20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele at (734) 358.8546, [email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com](mailto:michele@yogahouseannarbor.com), or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Yoga Essentials with Michele Bond • Ongoing Tuesdays • 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, and developing a yoga practice that is safe, joyful, therapeutic, and fun! Myofascial release techniques help ease our way into the poses. \$15 per class if registered for the semester, \$20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele at (734) 358.8546, [email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com](mailto:michele@yogahouseannarbor.com), or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

The Practice with Michele Bond • Ongoing Wednesdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Great for athletes or anyone looking for a strong practice. Enjoy increasing core strength, and enhancing flexibility, agility, balance, and mental focus with this fun and energetic practice. Students return year after year to enjoy the benefits of this life-enhancing practice. \$15 per class if registered for the semester, \$20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information. contact Michele at (734) 358.8546, [email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com](mailto:michele@yogahouseannarbor.com), or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Hatha Yoga with Samantha Lieberman • Weekly on Thursdays • January 4 through April 25 • 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. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, [email programs@jewelheart.org](mailto:programs@jewelheart.org), or visit jewelheart.org.

Yoga with Jillian Diwan • Ongoing Saturdays beginning February 10 • 10 to 11:00 a.m. • This is a beginner ashtanga yoga class, offered with lots of modifications to make it accessible to everyone. Donations are welcome. Held at the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor. For more information email Jillian at jill@jamhandsbodywork.com.

Yoga at the Depot Town Freight House with Sarah Kreiner • May 18 • 10 to 11:00 a.m. • Free Yoga at the Farmers Market / Freight House facilitated by The Mix Fitness Studios. FREE. Donations accepted to go toward the Rutherford Pool in Ypsilanti. For more information visit the-mix-studios.com.

Eve Wilson Bridge to Wholeness

Healing/Ascension Treatments & Classes

Spiritual healings with Eve for adults, children, couples, families, pets. Healing body, emotion, mind, spirit and ascension, past, present and future. Recommended by Doctors, Nurses, Chiropractors and Psychologists.

International Award-Winning Blog: The Weekly Word for Healing & Ascension



Healing & Ascension Monthlies Class

- Learn to live in the new world.
- Help the world heal and ascend.
- Starts 2/29/24, 7:30-9:30 pm



Eve Wilson,
UCM Master Healer,
Intuitive Aura Reader,
Best-Selling Author,
Teacher

Riding the Wave of Change: Hope, Healing and Spiritual Growth for Our World

Read an excerpt and buy it now! at EveWilson-RidingtheWave.com also at Schuler Books, Castle Remedies & Amazon.com



\$10 off Treatments With This Ad

Treatments, Award Winning Blog, Book, Classes - spiritualhealers.com 734-780-7635

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

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS & THE CENTERS

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.

Emily Adama, MSW, has been teaching mindfulness and meditation in various settings since 2013. She has her master's in social work in Interpersonal Practice and Mental Health from the U of M and has been a dedicated meditation practitioner since 2010.

Bri Babiera is a Licensed Massage Therapist who serves the greater Ann Arbor community. Her specialization with the medical aspects of massage therapy is sought after by those in need of relief from chronic pain, autoimmune disorders, anxiety, depression, and immobility.

Deanne Bednar is the coordinator/instructor at Strawbale Studio: enchanting thatched and living roofs, round pole, strawbale, earth plasters, rocket stoves, and more. She also illustrated the books *The Hand-Sculpted House* and *Natural Plaster*.

Michele Bond brings an entire lifetime devoted to fitness and wellness, and a healthy dose of humor to her teaching. Michele 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.

Patty Brennan is the owner and visionary force behind Lifespan Doulas. For 40+ years, she has been a doula, educator, and entrepreneur. Patty has trained over 3000 people to become doulas and is the author of *The Doula Business Guide*.

Barbara Brodsky, founder and guiding teacher of Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry, has practiced meditation since 1960. Teaching Vipassana meditation and non-dual awareness from the Dzogchen traditions, also an ordained minister. Barbara is a trans-channel for Aaron.

Lama Nancy Burks, PhD Psychology, is a retired psychologist and trained lama who has completed three-year retreat in the Karma Kagyu lineage of Vajrayana Buddhism.

Vicki Cahill began studying Buddhism in 1995. She has led meditation classes in various venues, including prisons, and has served as a volunteer Buddhist chaplain in hospitals. Currently she leads meditation at her local library and facilitates a study group at the Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center.

Dr. Kapila Castoldi has studied meditation under the guidance of spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy. Her interest in meditation and Ayurveda spans over 30 years.

Khenpo Tsering Chopel, PhD Buddhist Studies, is an authorized teacher and preceptor in the Karma Kagyu lineage of Vajrayana Buddhism.

Jean Chorazyczewski and Lori Fithian are community music-makers, committed to creating opportunities for playing music in community, without the pressure of rehearsals and performance.



Wasentha Young is a Master of Tai Chi and Qigong and has received formal instruction in Buddhist and Taoist mindful meditation styles, holds certificates in acupuncture, Five Element Practice, and wellness counseling/mind/body consciousness. Young graced the cover of issue #79 of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. You can read the cover story by visiting crazywisdomjournal.com/journal-archive-1995-through-current. To learn more about Wasentha visit peacefuldragonschool.com or email wasentha@peacefuldragonschool.com.

Father Dan Crosby's life has been enriched by a variety of ministries and cultures, from college campus ministry and teaching to pastoring inner city and reservation parishes. Wherever he has ministered, Father Dan has worked to integrate Scripture as well as the Franciscan vision into his life and preaching. Elected to provincial leadership by his community, he was also director of St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Wisconsin. Presently Father Dan resides at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit, MI where he assists with the healing ministry at the Solanus Center.

The Dances of Universal Peace is an international network of circles around the world.

Christy DeBurton, RYT, is a Transformational Yoga Coach whose mission for the past 25 years has been to help people manage life with more ease

through Yoga, meditation, wellness retreats, HSP, midlife empowerment and 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. Our loving community commits to spiritual practices of wisdom, compassion, and an open heart.

Ilia Delio, OSF holds the Josephine C. Connelly Chair in Christian Theology at Villanova University. Her area of research and writing is Systematic-Constructive theology with particular attention to the integration of science, religion, and culture.

Tarianne DeYonker, OP, MSW, an Amherst Writers and Artists certified workshop leader.



FROM DOUBT TO PERSEVERANCE: A LOCAL PRACTITIONER'S STORY

I HAVE HAD MANY NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES. THE LAST TIME BEING THE WORST. I THEN PROMISED MYSELF I WOULDN'T LET LUPUS KILL ME. I WAS DETERMINED TO GET BETTER. I WAS GOING TO FIND A WAY TO CURE MYSELF.

if I could be a massage therapist. Despite being encouraged by my then employer, now mentor, I had a lot of self-doubt. I worried that I wouldn't be any good, that it would be too much, or that I may hurt myself. I also considered that it could be good for me and my career. Ultimately, I became a massage therapist and I'm so glad I did. Graduating from Irene's Myomassology Institute was one of the best decisions I've ever made. I loved massage and excelled at it, but then Covid happened, and I had to rethink, second guess everything I was working for. I decided to develop a product line that entailed handmade organic skin care, self-care products, and jewelry made with crystals, to keep my family afloat during the lockdown. I also received the opportunity to work as a deep listener for the app Hearme, where I learned valuable listening skills. I really enjoyed doing this work and feel it positively impacted the clients and employees. Eventually my time with the app came to an end though I still saw value with the service. The training and experience I received there helped me communicate effectively with my business partner, my clients, and in my personal life. I eventually handcrafted a listening service that I feel is beneficial to the community. The deep listening sessions provide clients with an unbiased sounding board for their thoughts, worries, and ideas surrounding any of their life situations, that they may not want to share with family or friends. I use my knowledge of active and reflective listening while asking key questions to help clients navigate through their emotions and situations. This then enables clients to embrace peace, resolution, closure, a different approach, or a different perspective. No advice is given, because sometimes you just need someone to listen.

MY JOURNEY IS NOT OVER YET. I'M STILL LEARNING, GROWING, AND HEALING. I HAVE SO MUCH GRATITUDE FOR BEING ALIVE AND FINDING A CAREER AND COMMUNITY THAT I LOVE.

After restrictions were lifted, I was generously offered a place to practice at the Cocoa Healing Collective, and my business, Authentic Healing Touch, was officially opened. After some time, I moved my practice to where it is currently in the Enlightened Soul Center. Last year I co-founded a wellness company that specializes in stress management for businesses, educational institutions, and medical facilities. My journey is not over yet. I'm still learning, growing, and healing. I have so much gratitude for being alive and finding a career and community that I love.

Krystal Rain is a passionate entrepreneur born and raised in Detroit. She is a Massage Therapist, Reiki Master Teacher, Certified Crystal Healer, and Deep Listener. Rain is the co-owner of Mobile Stress Management Solutions, a wellness company that provides stress management services to businesses, educational institutions, and medical facilities, and owner of Authentic Healing Touch. Learn more on the websites, stressmanagementsolutions.net and authentichalingtouch.com.

By Krystal Rain Bonner

My journey to self-discovery began about 20 years ago when I was diagnosed with lupus. For many years the disease kicked my butt. I was severely depressed, constantly in and out of the hospital, having one issue after another. I often had a hard time taking care of myself, and my children, especially after filing for separation from their father. I moved back home from Virginia to Michigan and started over. I tried my best to make a good life for myself and my sons, but lupus wouldn't let me be. I have had many near-death experiences, the last time being the worst. I then promised myself I wouldn't let lupus kill me. I was determined to get better. I was going to find a way to cure myself.

Anything I could change for the better I did. I researched all kinds of alternative natural healing modalities and came across three books that changed my way of thinking—and changed my life. *The Power of Now*, *The Law of Attraction*, and *Crystal Healer*. I developed a love for crystals and energy and began doing healing sessions on myself. I didn't cure myself, but I did get better. Eventually, better enough to get a job for the first time since I was fired 12 years prior for taking too much time off.

The job was for Worksite Chair Massage doing office tasks and any other work my boss would give me. My employer exposed me to a community filled with therapists, energy, and body workers of all kinds. In my experience, everyone I talked to about crystals and energy thought I was crazy, but the people I was meeting in this role were working professionally with alternative methods. I was inspired to train and become certified in Reiki and Crystal Healing.

I began to offer services at Evenstar's Chalice and started receiving great feedback. Continuing to work at Worksite Chair Massage, I began to wonder

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS & THE CENTERS

The Diamond Approach is a spiritual path combining the ancient wisdom traditions with modern psychology—a journey from ego to being.

Jillian Diwan, LMT and authorized level 2 ashtanga yoga teacher has been teaching and working with bodies since 2013. What started out with Thai massage, evolved into the study of pain management, then ashtanga yoga.

Miriam Dowd-Eller is a momma to one hilarious three-year-old, and has a background in massage therapy, yoga, contemplative dance and somatics, group facilitation, and holistic postpartum care.



EarthWell Retreat Center is located only 25 minutes from Ann Arbor near the towns of Manchester, Chelsea, and Grass Lake. We offer personal and group yoga, meditation, and wellness retreats with farm-to-table meals in a nature-based setting.

Rachel Egberman, LMT is a Certified Trauma-Informed HeartMath facilitator.

Marilyn Feingold began training Tai Chi Chuan in 1996 at Botsford Hospital Rehabilitation Center. Retiring from her job in 1991 as a child-care worker for the State of Michigan after being diagnosed with serious health problems, she began training Tai Chi Chuan as a way to help control pain and maintain good joint and muscle mobility.

The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor is a great community. Whatever your story, you're welcome there.

John Friedlander, is a psychic, author, and teacher with degrees from Duke University, and Harvard Law School. He studied with Jane Roberts in her Seth classes and at Berkley Psychic Institute with Lewis Bostwick.

Leeann Fu, PhD, has engaged in the practice of Authentic Movement and Nonviolent Communication for many years, has a decade of experience co-teaching a graduate level, "owner's manual for your brain" class at U of M, and co-facilitates Empowering Wisdom parenting circles.

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS & THE CENTERS



Donald Goergen, O.P., is a Dominican theologian, teacher, and lecturer. He has given retreats in Asia, Africa, Europe, and throughout North America. He has published many articles and ten books, the most recent being *Thomas Aquinas and Teilhard de Chardin: Christian Humanism in an Age of Unbelief*.

Curtis Glatter is an American artist, composer, improviser and percussionist who has studied with Wadada Leo Smith and Pierre Boulez. He has performed on numerous recordings all over America and is featured on various TV and radio stations.

Karen Greenberg P.T., is a Tracking Train-the-Trainer course, certified Essence Repatterning and D.O.V.E. Practitioner, dance instructor, physical therapist (formerly teaching at University of Maryland Hospital), as well as being a personal and spiritual growth teacher and author for metaphysical spiritual seekers worldwide.

Eileen S. Ho is a Chinese American performing artist and music educator in Ann Arbor. She is a member of the Raion Taiko ensemble and co-director of the Great Lakes Taiko Center (GLTC) Taiko Arts collective in SE Michigan.

Infinite Light Center & Sound Sanctuary is a spiritual center providing events, classes, services, and sound healing instruments.

The Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth welcomes all seekers and hosts many wonderful community and musical programs.

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.

fitness classes. Strength Training, Mini Trampoline Cardio, Yoga, Mat Pilates, Step Aerobics, Dance Fitness, Zumba, Cardio Drumming, and more.

Sam Lieberman has been practicing yoga since 1988. She received teacher training in Yoga Fit and Yoga Medics. Yoga Medics is a medical model approach with an emphasis on alignment and therapeutic needs.

Lifespan Doulas offers comprehensive online training and certification to become a birth, postpartum, or end-of-life doula, plus guidance for launching your own doula business.

Mary Light, ND, MH, LMT, is the founder of the Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, and has been a consultant medicinal herbalist and teacher for 20+ years.

Brenda Lindsay is a MBSR Teacher trained through Brown University and a Certified Meditation Instructor. Brenda is also a Council Member of the Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness, leads virtual meditation drop-in sessions, and has been practicing mindfulness since 2013.

John Macnoughton is the Creative Director at the Croswell Opera House, graphic artist, actor, and more.

Meditate: School of Mindfulness & Sound has a mission to create a global community of students, teachers, practitioners, and therapists who come together to support each other in the practices of mindfulness, meditation, yoga nidra and sound.

Rob Meyer-Kukan is a licensed massage therapist and sound healer. Owner of 7 Notes Natural Health, Rob works with people who suffer from chronic pain, need to relax, and who are looking for natural health alternatives.

Jackie Miller is a certified breathwork facilitator with 13 years of experience.

Jesse Morgan, MT-BC, is a board-certified music therapist running a thriving private practice in Ann Arbor, MI. His expertise extends across various age groups, where he supports individuals grappling with a spectrum of diagnoses such as trauma, anxiety, depression, dementia, and an array of psychological and physical conditions.

Edward Morin is a writer, editor, translator, and former university teacher.

Kirsten Mowrey has been a bodyworker, writer, and local healer for over 25 years.



To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone.

— Reba McEntire

Jewel Heart Instructors are senior students who consult a course syllabus, clarify written material, lead meditations, facilitate discussions, pose thought-provoking questions, and encourage everyone to participate.

David Jibson is a writer, editor, and former social worker.

Karuna Buddhist Center (est. 2022) is an ecumenical Vajrayana Buddhist center located in Bethlehem United Church of Christ.

Irene's Myomassology Institute is the oldest and largest massage school in the Midwest. Founded by Irene Gaultier in 1987, our nationally accredited school continues to set high standards for massage education.

Esther Kennedy, O.T is a Dominican Sister of Adrian, Michigan, a retreat leader, and spiritual director. She conducts a monthly Day of Mindfulness at Weber Center.

Jacquelin Kilburn O.T, has devoted more than 40 years to developing expertise in the treatment of the pediatric population. She has worked as a staff therapist, supervisor, educator, and manager, and business owner and product developer with a variety of clients aged birth to adult. Her current professional activity involves her private practice, JUMP-IN Therapy, serving children and adults.

Karla Groesbeck has over 25 years of teaching experience and a wealth of information in the body movement, meditation, Qigong, and martial aspects of Tai Chi, Yang, and Chen styles. She is the owner and founder of Tai Chi Love Studio.

Idelle Hammond-Sass, Jewelry Designer, Artist, and Metalsmith, has a studio in Ann Arbor where she creates jewelry and objects and teaches with Ann Arbor Rec/Ed. She has a BFA in Painting and sculpture from the Art Institute of Chicago and has been facilitating Creativity/Open Studio Process workshops since 2013.

Sarah Kreiner, founder of The Mix Studios. Safe, clean, comfortable, welcoming, local owned, small business that offers a variety of fun online, in-studio, and outdoor



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.

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS & THE CENTERS

John Orr received Theravada Buddhist ordination-training for eight years as a monk in the 1970's in Thailand and India. He teaches meditation, leading retreats since 1980, is a guiding teacher at New Hope Sangha in North Carolina, and a retired faculty member of Duke University.

Joe Palms has studied martial arts and meditation for 30 years to reestablish his mind-body connection. He facilitates meditation classes with the intent of helping others train their minds, to benefit themselves and those around them.

Prison Creative Arts Project Founded in 1990 with a single theatre workshop, the Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) has grown to include undergraduate courses, exhibitions, publications, a prison reentry arts program, and events that reach thousands of individuals each year. The Prison Creative Arts Project brings those impacted by the justice system together with the University of Michigan community for artistic collaboration, mutual learning, and growth.

Lissa Perrin is a poet and former clinical social worker.

Rev. Judy Ramsey is an animal chaplain who has served animals and their people for nearly 18 years, providing animal communication, interspecies counseling, and shamanic healing for both humans and non-humans.



**Welcome, winter. Your late
dawns and chilled breath
make me lazy, but I love you
nonetheless.**

— Terri Guillemets

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.

Gelek Rinpoche (1939–2017) was the Founder and Spiritual Director of Jewel Heart. Among the last generation of incarnate lamas tutored by the great masters in Old Tibet, Rinpoche's command of western culture allowed him to convey the Tibetan Buddhist tradition with wisdom, kindness, and wit.

Jessica Ryder, MN MS, is a Professional Mental Health Counselor.

Hartmut Sagolla has been studying Tibetan Buddhism for over 30 years. He lived at the Tibetan Buddhist Society, 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.

Janet Schaeffler, OP, former director of adult faith formation for the Archdiocese of Detroit, leads days of reflection/retreats, parish missions, workshops, and facilitates online courses. An author of many books and hundreds of articles, she also created and publishes GEMS: a twice-monthly news-

Visit the improved, and updated

Ann Arbor Holistic Resource Guide

Since 1982, Crazy Wisdom has served as a regional resource for information in the areas of holistic health and integrative medicine, bodymind therapies, psychology and personal growth, Buddhism, spiritual development, and consciousness.

Visit annarborholistic.com if you are searching for a practitioner or business in southeastern Michigan

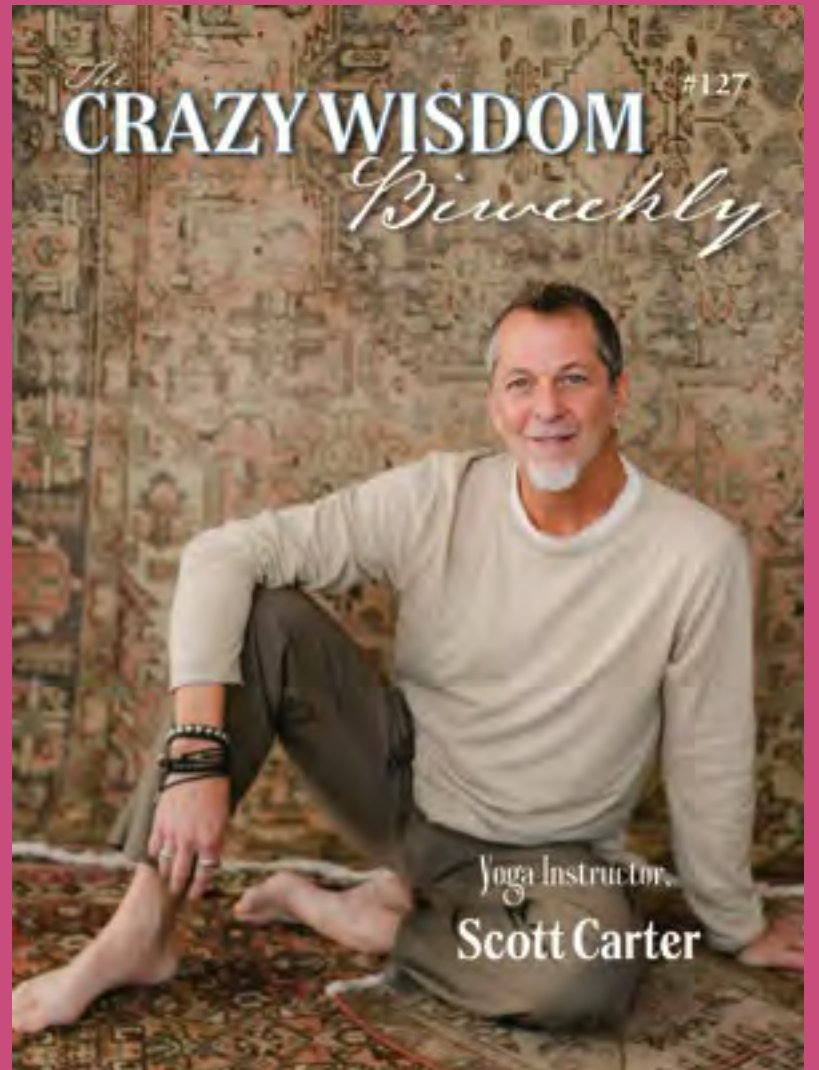


If you are a holistic practitioner or business owner, list your business for free in our online guide. Questions? Email annarborholistic@crazywisdom.net
Online advertising opportunities available!

www.annarborholistic.com



Ben and Anna Kwon are the owners of Bell's Diner in Ann Arbor. Read their American Dream story in issue #126 of the Crazy Wisdom Biweekly at crazywisdomjournal.com/crazy-wisdom-biweekly.



Scott Carter came from a world of hockey, football, and motocross to teaching yoga. Read about his journey in issue #127 of the Crazy Wisdom Biweekly at crazywisdomjournal.com/crazy-wisdom-biweekly.

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS & THE CENTERS

letter from an ongoing international best practices study on adult faith formation.

Colette Simone has served as a psychologist, educator, and musician. 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.

Susan Slack is a certified leader and mentor who has been leading dances for decades. A professional drummer and singer, she has recently stepped in to fill the vacancy in Ann Arbor following the retirement of Judy Trautman, the former leader of the Dances of Universal Peace.

Bill Sullivan, I brings years of practice and teaching in the fields of mindfulness, yoga nidra, hypnotherapy, transformational coaching and, sound healing to this training.

Mike Tamburo is a world-renowned musician, composer, artist, and educator. He is known and loved for his transformational live concerts performed on his personally curated set of gongs, bells, and other metal instruments. He teaches gong music, both in person and online with the School of Gong. He is also a part of the trio, Dig Deeper.

Carlos Tobar is a retired graphic artist and commercial offset printer. Essentially self-taught, he studied briefly with Martha Casereido of Chile at

the University of Toronto, and under Russian-born Nicolas Svistoonoff at the Central University of Quito, in his native Ecuador.

Susan Van Baalen is an Adrian Dominican Sister committed to lifelong learning for herself and for others. She is grateful for the opportunity to share her gifts of study and teaching with those who are interested in understanding the Oneness within the religions of the world. Susan holds advanced degrees in Theology and Ministry.

Violeta Viviano is an Intuitive, clairvoyant reader having studied with John Friedlander and Gloria Hensher for over 34 years.

Ari Wakeman, LMSW, received a master's in social work from the University of Michigan in 2015 and has worked in a variety of integrative medical and community settings. Ari is also a certified 200-hour yoga instructor, with specializations in Yoga for 12-Step Recovery (Y12SR) and perinatal yoga.

Joe Walters has practiced Chen Tai Chi for 29 years.

Lou Weir is a certified Diamond Approach teacher and also a founding teacher of Insight Meditation Ann Arbor.

Suzy Wienckowski is a Reiki Master and Massage Therapist with over 40 years of experience in the

healing arts. Reiki has been the focus of her work since 1993. Suzy teaches the traditional Usui System of Reiki Healing and is a member of The Reiki Alliance.

Eve Wilson is a UCM Master Healer, world healer, and ascension worker and has been healing and training healers since 1986.

Susan Young is an ICF-credentialed (ACC) Holistic Coach and certified facilitator of the Open Studio Process. She empowers women with personal development through a unique blend of expressive arts and life coaching. She holds a BFA from the UM and an MBA from UM-Dearborn.

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 also served on the DSC Board of Directors. She facilitates the Sunday and Tuesday online meditations.





PEOPLE'S FOOD CO-OP

NATURAL FOODS MARKET & DELI

216 N. FOURTH AVENUE ANN ARBOR, MI • PHONE (734) 994 - 9174 • PEOPLESFOOD.COOP



Supporting
Local Farmers
Since 1971.



FOCUSED ON LOCAL!

People's Food Co-op is committed to increasing access to local foods and products!
Through a variety of new and extended partnerships, we are offering more of
these opportunities to Ann Arbor.

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal Southeastern Michigan's Conscious Living Magazine crazywisdomjournal.com

View over 85 full issues of
The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal
spanning 28 years.

Visit our website
to read the current
and past issues of
*The Crazy Wisdom
Community Journal*



Join our mailing list to
receive news about
Crazy Wisdom
Bookstore and
The Crazy Wisdom
Publications
in your inbox
automatically.



Belong! Explore! Become!

Find Your Way at The Institute!

Explore all the
available programs of study
and apply online at:
naturopathicinstitute.org



Naturopathy

(each year 600 hours)

Natural Health Educator.....1st Year
Natural Health Therapist.....2nd Year
Natural Health Practitioner.....3rd Year
Certified Naturopath.....4th Year

*4th Year graduates are eligible for
Doctor of Naturopathy National Test & Title*

Massage Therapy

Therapeutic Bodywork Practitioner...1 Year

Holistic Doula Practitioner

Certificate Course.....3 Classes
Diploma Course.....7 Months

All Classes Meet on Weekends

Fri: 5-9pm and Sat & Sun: 9am-6pm
Naturopaths: 1 per month - Massage: 2 per month

Individual Classes:

*Herbology - Aromatherapy - Nutrition
Live Food Preparation - Light Healing Touch
Reflexology - Homeopathy & Much More*



(989) 773-1714 ~ Mount Pleasant, MI
contact@naturopathicinstitute.org
www.naturopathicinstitute.org

Over 25 Years of Experience Licensed and Accredited