

THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN'S CONSCIOUS LIVING MAGAZINE

FREE

JANUARY THROUGH APRIL 2021 - ISSUE 76



**Energy Healer
Karla Zarley**

Ann Arbor's iZosh: Lifting Women Up Globally • Dr. Suman Tewari, Holistic Gynecologist
• Golden Fleece – Keeping You Warm and the Planet Cool • The Art of Sangchen Tsomo •
The Whimsical World of David Zinn • Forest Bathing and the Kindness of Trees
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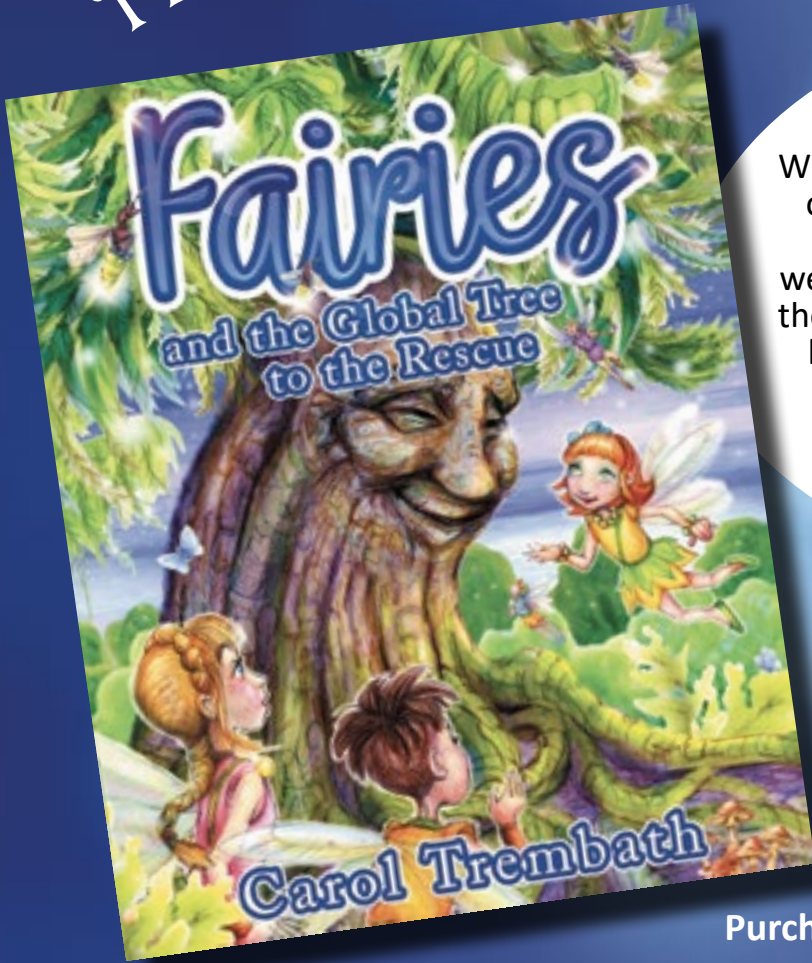
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Karla Zarley co-founded, and is president of, the Great Lakes Center for Healing Touch in Ann Arbor. She works at the Center for Sacred Living.

Cover Photo by
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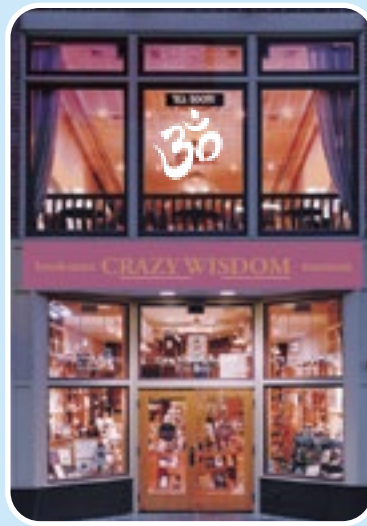
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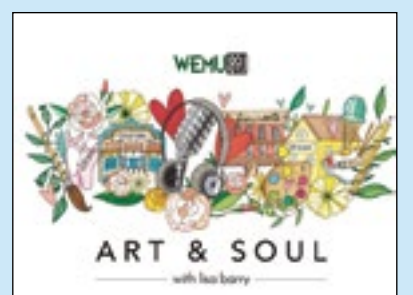
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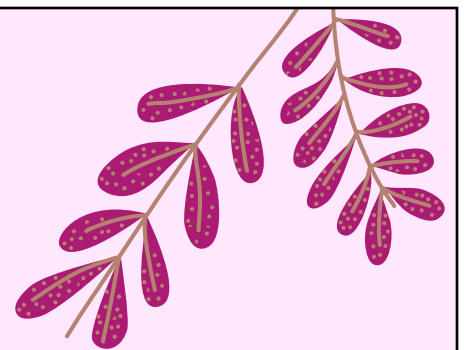
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Random Acts of Kindness

On Forest Bathing and the Kindness of Trees

By Madeline Strong-Diehl

For as long as I can remember, I have been a tree-loving, tree-hugging kind of gal. At 4'11" tall I had a small body and strong arms that made it easy for me to climb trees. For years, I could follow my two children up any tree as high as they could go. But somewhere along the way I gained some weight and fear of heights, and my tree-climbing days were over. Nevertheless, I have never gotten over my deep reverence for trees. It should be obvious to anyone that they are higher life forms.

Everywhere I have lived, a particular tree has called out to me in friendship. When I first moved to Ann Arbor, more than thirty years ago, I met my "Grandmother Tree" in Wurster Park, located on the Old West Side (and tantalizingly close to Washtenaw Dairy). Prior to that, my Grandmother Trees had been pretty modest, but according to a nearby sign, the tree on top of the hill at Wurster Park is a champion-sized chinkapin oak that's on the natural registry of historic trees. Ever since we found each other, I have visited my tree often, seeking peace, solace, and advice. There's no doubt that she's at least one hundred years old, and a lightning scar down her middle has always helped me remember that we can survive and grow from almost any difficulty in life.



Everywhere I have lived, a particular tree has called out to me in friendship. When I first moved to Ann Arbor more than thirty years ago, I met my "Grandmother Tree" in Wurster Park.

Up until now I would not be so open about the fact that I hug and talk with trees. Fortunately, there is a lot of scientific data coming out that confirms that establishing a close relationship with trees—and even houseplants—can benefit human health in a lot of ways. This is especially important during the time of Covid. We're probably not going to return to our old ways of socializing with each other indoors anytime soon, however there is a lot of communing—and healing—that we can do outdoors among trees.

A 2001 study sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency found that the average American spent 93 percent of his or her time indoors—and that was before the coronavirus pandemic caused many people to work from home. Beginning in 2005, researchers had begun to study nature deficit disorder—a condition that can contribute to higher rates of emotional and physical illnesses, including obesity, attention difficulties, and feelings of alienation from nature and from our own bodies.

But luckily, there's more recent data showing that we can restore our relationship with nature—and ourselves—quite easily and reap the tremendous health benefits of forest bathing just by spending an hour or two meditating among trees—and it's all free.



Fortunately, there is a lot of scientific data coming out that confirms that establishing a close relationship with trees—and even houseplants—can benefit human health in a lot of ways.

The Japanese coined the term and began to study the effects of *Shinrin-yoku* (forest bathing) in the 1980s. Then, in April 2018, Qing Li, a doctor at Nippon Medical School in Japan, published a book about forest bathing for a general audience after more than twenty-five years of research. According to research by Dr. Li and his colleagues, forest bathing can "release positive hormones in the body," leaving people less sad, angry, anxious, burnt-out, and depressed. It also enhances the immune system, leads to fewer days of illness, and provides a faster recovery from injury or surgery. It improves heart and lung health and is "known to (increase) focus, concentration, and memory." It sounds like a miracle cure, but the field of Forest Medicine is growing throughout the world, along with the number of scientists who are studying it.



Unlike taking a walk from here to there, the main point of forest bathing is to walk randomly, without a destination.

So, what is the difference between forest bathing and just taking a walk through the woods? Well, unlike taking a walk from here to there, the main point of forest bathing is to walk randomly, without a destination. Leave your phone and your camera at home and enter the woods mindfully and without any preset expectations. Try to stop listening to the chatter in your head and listen to the forest instead. Look all around you and really notice everything—all living creatures, great and small. Stay in the moment and perhaps meditate on this query: Everything in the forest lives as one. How can I join the One? Most importantly, my own advice—keep your heart open and use all of your senses to search for your Grandmother Tree. She will call out to you, and then you must ask her permission to enter her space; touch her bark; sense the peace and kindness that she is sending out in every direction. When you are both ready, you will both embrace each other, and you'll feel more grounded to the earth than ever before. You will know, without question, that you belong here. Stay as long as it takes until you're able to offer yourself radical self-compassion, and remember to say thank you to the forest, and to your Grandmother Tree, when you are done.

Don't despair if you can't get to a state or national forest to practice *Shinrin-yoku*. You can actually practice by befriending just one tree. Ann Arbor earned its place as a "Tree City USA" for good reason, and in your search for a tree to commune with, you'll be hard-pressed not to find one.

If you can only afford an hour of forest bathing a day or so, pick a tall, stately pine to stand under and look up as far as you can see. Most importantly of all, breathe deeply, in and out, and notice that your heart is beating more and more steadily with each breath. As you continue to focus on each breath, you'll smell and sense that the air all around you is uncommonly cleansing, fresh, and healthful. As it turns out, that's not just your imagination. Certain trees like conifers emit oils and compounds to safeguard themselves from microbes and pathogens. These molecules known as Phytoncides are good for our immunity, too.



The other important thing that forest bathing can provide is a sense of confidence and empowerment, and this, too, has been borne out by research.

The other important thing that forest bathing can provide is a sense of confidence and empowerment, and this, too, has been borne out by research. I dread the interminable grey Michigan skies, the constant threat of a polar vortex, and the lake effect snow. I especially dread the social isolation that another year of Covid-19 is likely to bring. However, now that I know about the healing power of forest bathing, and how accessible it is, I am helpless no longer. Dear reader, please try it out and let me know what happens. Most of all, please take good care of yourself and your loved ones. We have a lot of kind and loving trees on our side, and that love is not just random—it's a fact.



CASHIERING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Working the Front Lines at a Grocery Store During Covid



By Rosina S.K. Newton

I started working at Whole Foods in March of 2016. When our Somerset store moved to Birmingham in October 2017, I moved from the Produce department to the Store Support Team—otherwise known as the cashiers.

I felt right at home with this huge team. The managers had a positive and respectful communication style. There is a beautiful diversity of ages, skin colors, and personalities. We serve a diverse array of customers, too—some in minks and some using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). I've met a famous drummer, a singer, a chef for the Detroit Lions, yoga teachers, and accountants.

I've shared deep, moving conversations and important information with hungry shoppers who glide through my line. The quality and length of our exchange is only limited by the number of items in their cart, the number of customers in line behind them, and our mutual willingness to share.

I love the steady stream of one face after another, new people and regulars. I shift my focus, adjusting to each person, assessing their needs, and—on a good day—I exchange some health or gardening advice, a positive message, or a dad joke.

What did the bra say to the hat? "You go on ahead, and I'll give these two a lift." (Thanks, Lauren Crane, of *Taller Than They Appear* for that one!)

So this is how my days go—exchanging energy, information, and laughs with multitudes of people. It is a great gift to me when someone says, "You just made my day!" I learn so much from my customers that I carry a small notebook. I've shared deep, moving conversations and important information with hungry shoppers who glide through my line. The quality and length of our exchange is only limited by the number of items in their cart, the number of customers in line behind them, and our mutual willingness to share. Sometimes I am dishing out quips, comedy, and wisdom so rapid-fire my station feels more like my stage or my pulpit. These are the good moments. Yes, it can be monotonous and much harder on the body than you might think, but rich connections with fellow staff and customers are what make this job worthwhile to me.

I am pretty sure I coined the phrase "cashiering as a spiritual practice." I don't know any other job where I could get this much practice to be my best self with scores of unique people every day. Of course, it's easy and rewarding to serve someone who is competent, friendly, and polite. The actual spiritual *practice* happens when someone is not blessed with these qualities. How do I feel when a customer is on her cell phone during the entire transaction, never making eye contact, and barely a thank you? What are my thoughts when someone is overtly rude, demanding, or both? What if someone is looking down on me, as they perceive my "station in life" beneath theirs? How about the customer whose eyes are burning a hole in me because she is in a hurry and thinks the long line is my fault? With humility, I realize I've been "that impatient customer" before, too. See how many opportunities I have to practice every day?

Of course, it's easy and rewarding to serve someone who is competent, friendly, and polite. The actual spiritual practice happens when someone is not blessed with these qualities.

Now, I won't even begin to analyze what happened on the state, national, or global level since mid-March of 2020. I cannot imagine what it's been like to be a health care worker during these times. My prayers, great respect, and gratitude go to all those working to keep our fellow citizens healthy and alive these past nine months. I am grateful to have a job and to have *this* job. It feels like a gift to communicate with customers, hearing firsthand how they are feeling, perceiving, and adjusting through this surreal shared trauma.

At first, the effects of the pandemic crept in slowly. Some staff and customers began voluntarily wearing masks. Then it hit us like a freight train. I remember the first two days after the looming lockdowns were announced, when it really got crazy. Everyone in the world decided to shop at the same time. I work well in a crisis, thank goodness, but this was obviously unlike anything we had ever seen. Lines were non-stop at each register, sometimes running half the length of the store. I rang up my first \$1,000 sale. Colleagues from other departments, some who had never cashiered before, were pitching in to help ring up or bag groceries. Store managers made PA announcements informing customers that yes, we were doing everything to help the lines run faster. Please be patient because we had "all hands on deck." We hunkered down, rang canned food, rice, pasta, beans, frozen food, and yes—even toilet paper. People were panic shopping. When our shifts were over, we shared with each other in guilty tones that we were panic-shopping, too—if there was anything left. The human fear response can be contagious. The sight of one empty shelf after another was disorienting. We took photos. I posted on social media. Then someone I respect, maybe Brené Brown, advised us not to post the photos of empty shelves. It only increased the panic and fear, she said. I removed the post gladly, all the while recognizing that adrenaline reward of having "insider info." To me, though, promoting peace and calm was worth more than the ego rush.

It was a miraculous vision to see the shelves even partly restored to their former fullness the next morning. This occurred thanks to the overnight elves. They must have had quite a shock reporting for duty that first night after the fear of starvation hit the communal fan.

People were panic shopping. When our shifts were over, we shared with each other in guilty tones that we were panic-shopping, too—if there was anything left.

During the complete lockdown, it was just grocery stores, hospitals, liquor stores, gas stations—along with other "essential businesses"—that were still open. The commute was a breeze—and eerie. We monitored the number of shoppers in the store and kept it to a minimum. Only the bravest souls and those without compromised immunity came to shop. Many were shopping for family members, neighbors, or friends. Customers were not in a hurry or talking on their cell phones. Every fourth or fifth customer looked me in the eye and sincerely expressed, "Thank you for being here."

I am sure I was not alone in the process of learning the ropes of pandemic hygiene. I soon learned it would be impossible to be 100% perfectly hygienic and still function with my sanity intact. I watched the video of the nurse explaining that gloves do not have superpowers—they also transmit germs if you touch a bunch of stuff with gloved hands, then your phone or your face. We were all doing the best we could. We all were, and still are, dealing with the cloud of Covid over our heads. The news, numbers, and stories of death, loss, and confusion are overwhelming if we ponder them for too long. Frankly, I'm amazed at how everyone has continued to function as well as we have.

The customers who enter our store seem to be a microcosm of what's in the news. I've witnessed extremism on both ends of the spectrum, from complete denial to absolute, irrational panic. We have customers who refuse to wear masks. We have customers who are clearly fearful to be out in public and wrap everything in plastic

bags. A woman walked in recently and began proselytizing—loudly enough for us to hear on Lane 6—that the end is near, and we should repent. The best moments—and there have been many—are the ones where people simply share with me what’s really going on, what they are learning, and what they are grateful for.

The customers who enter our store seem to be a microcosm of what’s in the news. I’ve witnessed extremism on both ends of the spectrum, from complete denial to absolute, irrational panic.

Here is a sampling of the most memorable customer quotes, especially from the lockdown:

I have never looked forward to grocery shopping this much in my entire *life!*

I talked to my lawyer today, just to let him know. Today is the day I will put arsenic in my husband’s coffee.

Did you see the photos of the clear skies over China? Los Angeles? India? We have the power to eliminate air pollution in one week!

The next time I see my kids’ teachers, I am going to give them a huge gift basket!

I have so much more appreciation for teachers now!

I am not good at homeschooling.

Helping our children do their schoolwork, my husband and I realized that we had no idea how much our children *knew!* My husband and I now meet every week to talk about what’s going on with our kids.

We just need the vaccine. Everything will be fine when we get the vaccine.

We are very lucky. We are very grateful. All of our family members are healthy.

I am a nurse. It’s worse than they are saying.

I had Covid. I’m fine now, but I had such a fever. It really messed with my mind.

Do you know how many people have died from Covid? Zero! ZERO!

It’s the Plandemic.

There is no virus. Do you know anyone personally who has had the virus? (No.) See?

(A young person, after I asked, “How are you doing?”) Oh, we’re great, of course. We’re young! We’ll be fine!

There is so much shaming going on. (Cue Brené Brown conversation).

It’s best if we don’t talk. My doctor said.

My husband missed out on seeing our first child’s first steps because he was at work. Now that he’s working from home, he got to see our second child’s first steps. It was wonderful!

This virus is teaching us what is really important in life. Family. Connection. All the rushing around I used to do! I never *really* spent time with my family.

Something had to happen. We can’t go on living the way we were!

This is God’s way of saying, “Go to your room!”

In conversations in the grocery line and elsewhere, many of us agree that we humans, especially in the U.S., have so much to learn. My prayers include the grandest of wishes—recovery, health, vitality, wisdom, harmony, and justice for all. Let’s get through this together.





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Honoring Our Ancestors



By Moira Payne

I was 18 years old when the telephone rang. My grandmother had passed. In a moment of stunned disbelief—this was my first experience of death in our family—I was also informed that in two hours my flight would leave for Boston. There was much to be done and very little had to do with processing emotions. I had to arrange for someone to cover a shift at the restaurant where I was waitressing, contact my college about missing class, find someone to care for my cat, and pack a suitcase. I had never been to a funeral, and my only reference was the movies. Yet, somehow, I managed to sort it all out and found myself surrounded by family, all mourning my grandmother.

My father was an only child and the center of my grandmother's life. One of my most vivid memories of her is that she always cooked for him, even though he lived in Michigan and she lived in Chelsea, Massachusetts, just north of Boston. Each time he visited her he would bring home a green vinyl suitcase filled to the brim with tin-foil rectangles and plastic containers frozen solid. She made enough blintzes, kinishes, kreplech, latkes, and matzoh balls to feed our entire family and any guests we had, filling her freezer until it was time to give it all to her son. Everything was prepared perfectly and with such love.

My ancestor altar has become a sanctuary to which I gravitate when I need to be enveloped in peace.

On the night of her passing, he had just arrived for his visit. They went out to dinner, just as they did each month, and late that night she transitioned. The following day was her funeral. There was a blizzard that morning; pure, glistening snow covered the earth, and I listened as relatives recalled humorous stories, shared touching moments, and recognized my grandmother's courage in life. I discovered things about my grandmother through the stories on this day that I had never known. Years later, it was my father's pain that I remember the most from that day, and my feelings of helplessness as I stood nearby.

The next day, I remember packing up her belongings, watching as her entire life was placed in boxes to be sent, brought with us, or given away. We also packed up the green vinyl suitcase for the last time, knowing that she had cooked for him right up until her passing. On the flight home, I recognized that this might be my last trip to Boston—my last time seeing my distant family. It was.

Decades have passed, and since then I have been to many funerals. I have watched as friends have sorted through the various arrangements, driven by traditions and wills, as they have buried their friends and loved ones. I have witnessed the desire for perfection in those arrangements as people pay their respects—and I have witnessed the stark coldness of grief in the aftermath. For when the activity is done, the grief remains.

When the time is right, one of the things that we can do is honor those who have passed. In my home, I have an ancestor altar. I started it years ago, putting up pictures of my late relatives, and then, as time passed, my late friends. I added protection statues that were significant in my tradition: crystals, heirlooms, letters, and other odds and ends that reminded me of those who have passed.

My ancestor altar has become a sanctuary to which I gravitate when I need to be enveloped in peace. I find myself smiling through the veil that separates life from death as I seek answers from those who were wise. This is where I go to be close to my grandmother again. I feel her presence there and remember the stories that were told as I gaze on her pictures. At times, I feel I can smell her cooking and even hear her laughter.

I never place pictures of people who are still living on my ancestor altar. Some traditions stress that the ancestor altar should never reside in your bedroom; some say the altar should face west. Some deem the altar should be in a private place; others mandate a position of prominence. My altar has moved many times, and I feel that you can decide what works right for you in your own home. As our lives change, our altars change, and our situations dictate what feels right at that time.

Cleansing this space is important, both physically and energetically. I remove all of my items periodically and wipe everything down. I use incense as a smoke cleanse and play music in the background. I play music from my grandmother's era when I want to feel a deep connection to her, and at other times I play songs of healing. I use an altar cloth underneath and place each item back, taking care to place them in a particular way.

Birthdays, holidays, and other dates may prove to be the most difficult for those who are still in the process of grieving. This may be a good time to honor your ancestors in other ways. Fix their favorite meal, placing a small portion on the altar overnight.

Beverages can also be placed on the altar, such as a glass of water that is replenished every few days. Flowers can be placed on the altar as well. When these offerings are ready to be discarded, I find they are best to be returned to nature.

Speaking aloud to your ancestors is important. Read to them from favorite books, scriptures, or letters. Saying their names will help with the connection. I keep a bowl on my altar, filling it with scrolls of paper upon which I have written things—requests for help, declarations of forgiveness, and petitions on my behalf.

Some have chosen to have famous people on their altar that have served as replacements for their family—or even characters from story books. Archetypes can be powerful in this way and can be used to heal and guide us. I have several famous people on my altar that have served as my heroes that continue to guide my path. As they join my ancestors, I feel a deep sense of connection with them.

Relationships are not easy. They can be complex and full of pain. I know people who have chosen not to put people on their altars for this reason. We can honor their memory in other ways or choose to sever all ties. To sever ties, people have performed rituals and written letters to the people who have wronged them. They have poured out their hearts in their letters and then burned them, burning away their feelings of obligation to venerate. No one should feel obligated to have to honor their abusers. Sometimes it is best to let the pain rest for a while before deciding how you would like to proceed. You can burn the memories and bury the ashes or let the ashes float down a stream away from you as you watch.

There is no expiration date on when to set up an altar. Some people need much more time to process their grief before they explore ancestor work. Items can be respectfully stored until they will be used. The event of pulling items out of storage can be a ritual in itself, as the items are handled with reverence and love. Carefully planning the ritual will make it more special, and the exertion of effort—making food, lighting candles, singing, reading aloud, writing—may bring peace.

With complex relationships, we may not always feel connected to our ancestors. One way to find out if your ancestors want to connect with you is to simply ask permission. As I work with cycles of the moon, I may start on the first day of the new moon and ask that a message be received by the full moon if permission is granted. When you allow your awareness to be open in this way, you will see your message in a form that may surprise you.

Sometimes it is best to let the pain rest for a while before deciding how you would like to proceed.

Many people have told me about messages that they have received from their ancestors. Phones or doorbells ringing, lights flashing, televisions turning on or off seem to be quite common. One friend told me that when her husband passed, she received a picture of the two of them together sent from his cell phone that was sitting within her sight next to his hospital bed. Finding pennies in strange places in your home is a common occurrence. Feathers on walkways, butterflies landing on cars, eagles circling above—these are small reminders that our loved ones are near.

If you are looking for messages, keep a journal next to your bed and start recording your dreams. If you have difficulty remembering your dreams, you can write down the feelings that you have when you wake from sleeping. Numbers are a common occurrence. I have friends that associate particular numbers with their deceased loved ones. When they see those numbers, they feel their ancestors have given their approval. If you are asking for specific answers, write down the question and ask it aloud, leaving the question on your altar overnight.

What is remembered, lives. This is a common saying among Pagans. When I contemplate the meaning of this, I think of those memories that we bring with us. I have chosen to remember the happy times with my deceased loved ones; I remember them in their perfect health. I remember the good things that they did. We can learn their crafts and give [to charity or other good works] in their name. We can pick up the trash. We can plant flowers and trees. We can care for animals and cook food for the hungry. We can stand up for those who continue to be oppressed and marginalized in our society. We can honor our ancestors by continuing their good works.

Moira Payne was born and raised in Ann Arbor. She walks the path of the Witch, having respect for all things in this world and beyond. She is active in the Pagan community and participates in festivals across the country. If you would like to contact her, email WitchesOfAnnArbor@umich.edu.

Nocturne

By Irena Barbara Nagler

One Halloween, the night when barriers are said to dissolve between dimensions, as perhaps they do every night, my friend Marin and I took a ceremonial walk after dark through Bird Hills Nature Area. We stopped to read poetry and tell dreams at places we knew in the forest.

We carried a candle-lantern that cast more shadow than light. Sorcerous mantles extended from it, flickering and expanding. In the electric hush and rustling of the autumn woods, far more awake than somnolent, we were startled once by the voices of another group of celebrants clustered near the biggest oak tree. With its large, low-growing branches, it clearly began life before most of this forest was planted. One morning a few years before I'd found on it burnt-down blue candles remaining from some ritual or tryst. On this night the two boys and a girl sitting under it, perhaps startled by us as well, departed down one of the darkened paths. The new forest, still hosting the spirit of an older one, hid us from each other again, wrapping us in a wind-stirred night. The forest was alive with the soft scrape of dry, fingerlike leaves. The oak tree hefted up its own nocturnal roads, limbs and branches extending into folds of living darkness.



We carried a candle-lantern that cast more shadow than light. Sorcerous mantles extended from it, flickering and expanding.

Intruders, we might have been, but humans once knew the night, and some of us are drawn to part those living curtains and explore it. I had made a necklace to give the woods as a gift. Once or twice the ground beneath me seemed to yank it out of my hands, as though it became a gravitational divining rod for something compelling beneath the forest soil. The necklace lay in the path, seeming as startled as I was, and I picked it up again. When I felt it was time to hang it in the branches of a small tree, I became aware of the rushing of water pouring through the seep that runs down one of the hills.

Folded into another hillside is an old orchard at the edge of the Leslie Golf Course. On a recent full moon night, the bright eye shined through the high branches of trees so old and tall that the forest was darker than night beneath them, though fallen walnuts glimmered yellow-green. Just beyond two fences the trees (pear trees, according to a naturalist friend) are spaced apart from each other, each with its distinct shape and character: gnarled, scraggy, tough yet delicately-formed. Together in the night they form a field of doorways, a place where the multiverse

seems near and one might visit alternate worlds. Nighttime opens seams that stitch the trees into a loose weave of passageways and synapses. Though nearby housing developments cast too much light for clear visibility, I imagine them holding up a network of stars in their branches.

During his three university residencies in Ann Arbor (1921-26), Robert Frost wrote the poem "Acquainted with the Night." The title evokes a sentience that might lay hands upon the wanderer who moves as though on a deserted stage with scenery remaining from a play.

As a student I lived for ten months in a group house owned by a professor's family on sabbatical. They had left their disgruntled cat with us. He felt abandoned, and we had reason to believe he was too often the butt of jokes among his people. He loved one of the young sons of the family and would often appear on a roof projection at the window of my room, which belonged to the boy, and demand to be let in. I also had the job of feeding him.

One summer night, before students dispersed for the year, a housemate and I took a walk in the neighborhood. The black cat slipped out to follow, or rather, to precede us.

We passed a house with an elongated porch arcade on one side, edged with rectangular columns. The cat suddenly darted into its interior. He began to patter swiftly between the columns, appearing, disappearing, pulling out the stops on his cat magic and demonstrating to us how to walk at night. This is how it's done, he said, become inseparable from light, from shadow, from architecture and place, merge with its dreaming. I felt I had not known him until then, nor had he ever been more elusive and memorable.

Forward many years: Paula Frank, my niece Kes Nagler, and I were on a night walk to Barton Nature Area and the dam. Insects sang among grasses and bristling trees and shrubs. We crossed the pedestrian bridge, with the view over the oxbow drenched in silvers and grays. The woods were black and the curve of wetland I had seen under many moon-phases bright and wavering with water. We moved onto the old canal path and passed a tree whose upper branches form a star thrusting up above smaller trees.

A friend calls it the Owl Tree. I'd once seen an owl flying near it, a gray comet, soundless. I call it the Star Tree, for the many times I have seen stars bejewel its branches. Once, in daylight, I found a secret: iron spikes thrust into its trunk, probably many years ago, now incorporated in its growth. Were they steps up to some long-ago treehouse?

The three of us had planned a trip to an observatory that night, but chose to walk here instead because the sky was overcast. But we saw glowworms on the ground, little earth-stars. Their light was whiter than the greenish-gold I recalled from other summers. It seemed almost a camouflage—a reflection of contemporary humans' LED lighting. They were living diamonds jewelizing the area beneath the bushes that crowded in on the path. We walked a labyrinth, an area more extensive and deep than I'd known before, moving between trees and bushes, among the baby fireflies and crickets, the place seeping into our blood. We agreed that one must get lost in

Nocturn continued



order to find some things; let the place itself speak and lead us. Ahead I could see what looked like the ridge of woods at Barton Hills, but we did not reach the dam.

Soon we found we had looped back onto the known path. My niece read her GPS, and we headed in the “right” direction. We crossed the bridge and arrived at the dam area. A weight of silvery water lapped the edge of the path. In the open area across it, a powerful welter of it poured down the dam and the pool churned. The high wall of the building loomed ahead. There is a sense of fulfillment here. I remembered volleys of big fish leaping one moonlit night years ago, silver-grey, launching themselves out of and splashing in dark whorls.



On a recent full moon night, the bright eye shined through the high branches of trees so old and tall that the forest was darker than night beneath them, though fallen walnuts glimmered yellow-green.

An orange light-fixture on the dam building turns on, with a buzzing sound, then off, then on again periodically. It is a haunting night-rhythm, an inarticulate warning.

We climbed the stairway onto the dam and walked the bridge of it. Halfway across, you can look out and sense the surge of the river and see white water muscling and pouring away into night, the Bird Hills forest rising beyond and its living presence piercing through the dark massing of trees.

We talked of the electricity of this place where industry and wildness converge. Paula mentioned that Alice Cooper had called Southeast Michigan “intense.” We felt an old, old magic. I think of salt seeps in the ground, extending into the middle of the peninsula, emanating from great deposits of halite under Wayne and Monroe Counties: remnants of ancient seas.

December in Gallup Park. Full moon, river-pools, white-shining rocks, trees and silver pathways. Around the moon is a large, clear area, bounded by a strange, full-circle cloud formation, like a wheel-rim. From the wheel, wisps of horsetail clouds radiate outward.

Walking on bridges, the moon is visible in the water abutting the pilings. Tiny particles from plants, floating on the obsidian water, move over the reflected glow, highlighting the steady motion of the water, slowed by a dam. It looks like flowing black glass. Near bridge supports, the water wrinkles into small whirlpools over the reflected moon.

After walking a place at night it becomes part of you under the skin. I dreamed once of a boat on a river or canal. By day it seemed decrepit. But in the night, bathed in silver-blue light, it darted with grace and swiftness on the waters.

We humans enumerate the turns of our planet, separating days and nights mentally from the one being with two faces that they are: one earth, one sun, and one expansive field.

Our pre-agricultural ancestors were more intimately acquainted with the night than we are. They lived in rhythms more fluid than clock-time. Painting, dance, theater, and poetry by firelight in caverns brought to life the dreaming and neurological connections between dimensions and levels of consciousness. Evidence also suggests that far more recently most humans spent time active and awake in the night between “first and second sleep.”



This is how it’s done, he said, become inseparable from light, from shadow, from architecture and place, merge with its dreaming.

In ancient Greek, medieval, and Renaissance literature, including Shakespeare, night is associated with death. Hypnos (Sleep), and Thanatos (Death) are Night’s twin children, conduits to other worlds.

In the countryside in northern Europe, meandering paths used to be oriented to starlight for dark of moon wayfarers, but in the modern city the dark is diluted. Singing insects of late summer and autumn are awakened to perpetual courtship by artificial moonlight.

Even some plants are affected by perpetual light. Under natural conditions, their leaves droop at night; in cities, they remain erect.

Summer nights flower with lights as if the air breathed them out. Meteors run down curves of space like drops of bright, unexpected rain trailing on glass. Fireflies flame up from a field. It can be difficult to tell if you are seeing a long-tailed star or a male firefly signal.

The fireflies are threatened, like migrant birds and sleepless humans, by city lights that paint galactic rivers of their own on the earth as seen from space, and overwhelm night’s own wells of illumination. A dark sky movement is growing, with areas dedicated to eliminating light pollution and enabling direct connection with the star-salted skies. Michigan has three of them, including the oldest in the nation in Lenawee County. There are still places from which to greet these old night friends.

I have watched fireflies as they glittered over the peony garden in the Arb, while above them, a score of bats flickered. At the edge of the garden, tree peonies with rich presence and scent are opened into a blend of moonlight with the pale smear of city glow.

Next to the garden is a cemetery. On a recent night, two friends and I pushed open the vine-clad gate between the worlds and entered a well of moonlight and shadow. The moon rode above, shining among oak branches. The cemetery was wondrously dim and quiet, and the moonlight spilled in, creating its own roads. The light seemed tangible as glowing paint or water, highlighting its chosen stones: silvery and melting, or gray fading to black. The meander of roads did not admit to clock time which collected in its own pool outside the fence but could not touch us. People have set tiny solar lights into the ground here and there, quiet constellations. We walked on the gentle dark face of the world.

In another cemetery I saw the moon whiten an angel statue on a hill that seemed imbued with magnetic stone. The hill drew on the iron in our blood, slowing our steps when we climbed it on foot, resisting the linearity of the street that ascended it.

For many years there has been a special opportunity for people to walk in a group at night. On New Years Eve, Heather O’Neal and Pem Dorjee Sherpa lead a series of “New Year’s Eve Gourmet Dinner Treks,” all conducted after dark.

I participated for the second time in 2015. The year before we had traversed the nighttime woods, stopping for various stages of a dinner at points in Bird Hills and Argo, ending up at the Cascades. The hike was well-attended and fun. We walked through Sunset Brooks and part of Bird Hills, proceeded to Barton Dam where we ate snacks, and then climbed up on top of it to see the white water pouring down and churning among sheets of shining ice.



Their light was whiter than the greenish-gold I recalled from other summers. It seemed almost a camouflage—a reflection of contemporary humans’ LED lighting.

On private walks my friends and I use flashlights minimally. On the group hikes, there were many cell phones, the myriad white lights imbued with energy and curiosity, projections of mentalities dancing on the ground and bouncing off trees. Fey in their own manner.

The house of the Voyageurs Club glowed warmly in its windows. We moved along the ice-shining river, had dinner at Argo, then trekked through the Cascades. They were fantastic, with wind brushing through gold grasses and the water foaming white. It was colder here, but I breathed in the freshness.

Near Broadway Bridge walked a lone man, yipping and laughing like Coyote himself, at the meeting of three roads—named *trivia* by ancient Romans. A place for trading stories and information, sacred to the Greek Hekate and transferred to a version of the Roman Diana. Such places of popular exchange were later denigrated as “trivial.” Coyote knows better.

Today, a year later, our hike followed the trail of the buried Allen Creek. The stream was sequestered underground in 1926 (a common practice in cities then) and forgotten by most for many years. It rushes through another, perpetual night enclosed in cement pipes. On low-lying areas it will send extensions of itself bursting up in fountains through manholes during some storms. According to Heather O’Neal, you can hear the rushing sound of one of its drainage tributaries under a manhole on Eighth Street near Waterworks Park. Children in the 1920s swam in it, jumping into the water from a rope swing. And it may have inspired another Robert Frost poem.

I first heard of the stream in the 1990s from Bob Grese, professor emeritus in the U-M School for Environment and Sustainability, who told me and a friend about it, calling it “his watershed.” Around that time I also met people who were among the first to consider asking the city to open up parts of it again. A resolution has since been passed to create along its path a greenway trail named Treeline that would connect with the Border-to-Border trail of Washtenaw County, and the Iron Belle trail of Michigan.



In the countryside in northern Europe, meandering paths used to be oriented to starlight for dark of moon wayfarers, but in the modern city the dark is diluted.

O'Neal is involved with the Treeline proposal. Her group met that evening at Himalayan Bazaar. We walked first to the Michigan Stadium. We huddled in the shadow behind its bulk, near which the stream begins, discussing our route. The stadium is built on a swampy area with such a high water table that pumps are used to drain water into the underground creek to avoid flooding the Big House. When the stadium was being constructed, natural springs were uncovered, and the site was so flooded that it was dubbed "Tillotson's Pond" after Harry Tillotson, the business manager of the Athletic Department in the year 1926, when excavation for the stadium began.

We proceeded along the buried streambed, following railway tracks: a corridor, one of many through the city, rich in secret passageways that hide in plain sight. The tracks are lined with abandoned industries: more art space and housing may be available than we sometimes imagine.

At West Park, where we stopped for dinner and delicious Nepalese tea, sitting beneath big dark trees with a palpable beauty and presence, I felt a melancholy that seems to underlie this part of the town. Does the land miss another time, another people?

As we arrived at Argo, and Heather O'Neal pointed out where Allen Creek spills out gray and white and extremely forceful through a big pipe into the river at the bottom of the dam, we were exhilarated by the white, churning water and the silver-gleaming mirror further upstream that always reveals itself as vastly beautiful at night. I had been feeling the depression of having the stream underground all those many years, treated as an obstacle, then forgotten. I remembered many women who arrived one night at a dance I used to DJ at the former People Dancing Studio. They were dancing up their own storm on the floor, the stream under our feet seeming to well around them. There was an odd restlessness in the atmosphere. That same night, the Huron River took two lives.

There are fields of living interconnection through water, a flow we are meant to be part and aware of. In a water-rich area, there can be a sense of drag that when resisted results in depression. I find the cure is often to go to the water—the lake, the river, the wetland, even a rain puddle.

Night and water can bring worlds together, mend disruptions and rifts. Maybe ice is melting in glaciers, and seas are rising, in part to restore an interrupted flow.

Heather O'Neal sent me "A Brook in the City" by Robert Frost. It was published in 1923, possibly during one of the school years when he was in residence here. It may refer to the plans underway, sparked in 1923 by petitions from residents, to have Allen Creek buried, though it also probably references a similar situation in a New England city. An excerpt from it includes these phrases and lines:

*How else dispose of an immortal force
No longer needed?...The brook was thrown
Deep in a sewer dungeon under stone
In fetid darkness still to live and run --
And all for nothing it had ever done
Except forget to go in fear perhaps.
No one would know except for ancient maps
That such a brook ran water. But I wonder
If from its being kept forever under,
The thoughts may not have risen that so keep
This new-built city from both work and sleep.*

For women there is another opportunity for group night-walking. I only participated twice, many years ago, in Take Back the Night. The event may have had one of its multiple origins in Belgium, during the 1976 International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, with a spontaneous candlelit walk through moonlit streets. In 1978, women survivors of sexual violence staged another in San Francisco, and from there it grew into a movement and an annual event worldwide.



A dark sky movement is growing, with areas dedicated to eliminating light pollution and enabling direct connection with the star-salted skies.

The surge through the streets was a joyous flood; the sense of momentum toward an unprecedented state of freedom. It was one of the few times that I have felt the presence of a goddess, a specifically female deity. But I have walked in night woods with at least one man who was more uneasy there than I was. And I've long ago become aware that boys and men also are threatened, raped, and subject to predation in the night.

Hidden streams run through us. Night connects them, eluding artificial grids. It can take some courage to embrace them, especially alone, but the nocturnal gift can be a warm intimacy with life, with other people, with oneself, and the ineffable. We can support each other while exploring fertile dreaming that births new days.

The cat becomes shadow and light, merges with what he explores in intimate respect. We're visitors and it's best to approach night fields and forests with humble regard, ask permission to touch and gain entry.

Mid-July. Another walk with my niece, Kes, in Furstenberg Park. It's still firefly time. Distant voices call to an errant companion. We laugh, imagine encountering her and asking, "Are...you...Sheila?" in sinister tones. The little embers flare gold and green. Then we find what may be a deer path into a deeper thicket where a small dark pond is loud with the evening conversation of bullfrogs. And in those less penetrable woods, the nature of the fireflies' flashes changes. Another species, maybe, that we see in some locations: they spark. Their flashes are quick, emanating sharp bursts, little firecrackers, you can almost hear them snapping. They are everywhere. Momentary flares held in the embrace of one eternal moment that is their mother-matrix and ours, erasing what little may be left of the grid we walk on in patterned streets during the day. They immerse us in the present, the pool of night, the enchantment of the world.

Irena Nagler writes fiction and poetry, teaches environmental movement meditation, and is a visual and performing artist. Contact her by email at birena@umich.edu. Information on creating and preserving dark skies and minimizing light pollution can be found at sites.lsa.umich.edu/darkskiesmidarskypark.org (a website on Headlands International Dark Sky Park in the northern Lower Peninsula) and many other sites.



Anyone interested in a group night-hike with Heather O'Neal is welcome to email her at ofglobal@aol.com.

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THE ART OF *Sangchen Tsono*

By Tchera Niyego

Born in Indiana, college at University of Michigan, it was not until her mid-20s that Sangchen Tsono encountered the Tantric Buddhist path as taught at the Tsogyelgar Dharma Center, which has been located for more than two decades on a beautiful piece of farmland a few miles west of Ann Arbor. (See the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* cover story on Tsogyelgar in Issue 64, the Fall 2016 issue, available on our Archive at: crazywisdomjournal.com.)

In the ancient Tibetan tradition of yogis and yoginis, she walked away from the ordinary world to spend more than 13 years in solitary mountain retreats. By the criteria of her Buddhist community, she is considered to have accomplished “all the stages of the esoteric way” and to be living in the “profound state of wisdom spoken of in the sacred texts.”

A master of the ancient healing practice of the Vajra Armor tradition, an Afro-Cuban conga drummer, a painter, and maker of found object art, Sangchen has produced six CDs of music with her group *Just a Tourist* and four CDs of solo Afro-Cuban pieces. All of these can be found on Spotify. Sangchen has also produced several hundred works of art, both paintings and small magical boxes that are tiny worlds unto themselves.

Sangchen still spends much of every year on retreat in the West Virginia mountains and the rest in Ann Arbor making music, playing with her Rottweilers and helping to guide friends in their spiritual practice. Twice featured on the cover of the *New Collectors Book*, Sangchen’s works also occasionally appear in shows and in private collections. Much of her art can be seen on her Tumblr page *Nobody Daughter of No One*.



“Dreams in Blue and Green”

“Sometimes I am a woman, sometimes a man. Sometimes I am twilight, sometimes I am dawn. I wear these cloths for you, my friends, so that we might share a moment.”

—Sangchen



“Sarah-la-Kali”

Black Sarah, patron saint of the Romani people. The center of her veneration is Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in Provence, France. Every year the Romani gather from all over to carry her sacred statue into the ocean.





“Inayat Khan on the Edge of Revelation”

Music is a profound mystery disrupting ordinariness. Music has the possibility of changing ones very state of mind, transforming and transporting.



“Shirdi Sai Baba”

“The world is made of mystery. The mind’s concepts attempt to reduce this to something knowable, a piece of knowledge, but it is irreducible bright wonder. Living this knowing is the body’s purpose- it changes the world.”

—Sangchen

“We are the Dreams of Wisdom”

We are the mytho-poetic dreaming, the expressiveness, of a divine mystery. We are bioluminescent wonderment seeking to realize its full meaning.



“The Circus Came to Town”

Painting of Alexander Calder who once said, “About my method of work: first it’s the state of elation.” Art reveals the meaning quality of one’s life and shares this with others.

OUT OF MY *Comfort Zone*

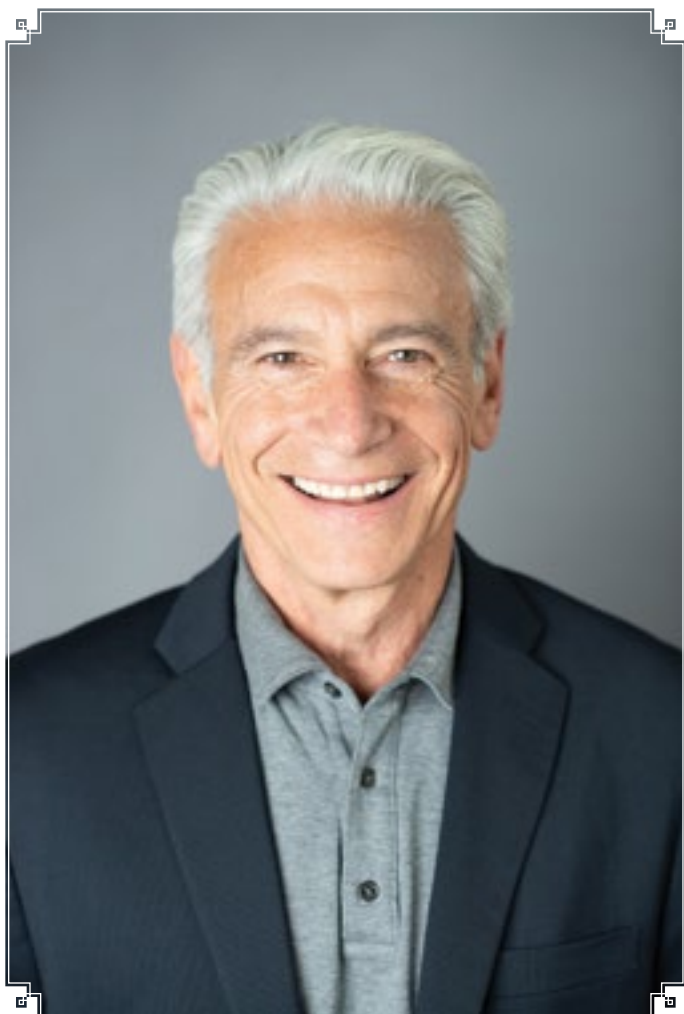
By Diane Majeske

Crazy Wisdom 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 your ordinary?

HARRY D. COHEN—BE THE SUN, NOT THE SALT

Harry D. Cohen is an executive coach, speaker, owner of the Black Pearl (a restaurant in Ann Arbor), and author of the new book Be the Sun, Not the Salt. He stepped out of his comfort zone in 2015 to deliver a live TEDx talk at Elon University. You can watch his talk here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4QU6tuo-E>.

I speak for a living so giving a public talk is not a big deal, but a TED talk is the equivalent of an actor being asked to host the Academy Awards.



Here is my attempt to articulate my experience of pushing through my discomfort zone. Five years ago, I was asked to do a TEDx talk. I speak for a living so giving a public talk is not a big deal, but a TED talk is the equivalent of an actor being asked to host the Academy Awards. I had never done anything like that before.

The performance is recorded live, and you get one take, that's it. You don't get to edit it. You don't get to shelve it. If you blow it, you're the guy who blew it. There is a permanent record online. Shall I go on? Putting yourself out there for the world to give you the big thumbs-up or thumbs-down was, and is, and will always be, quite scary.

Putting yourself out there for the world to give you the big thumbs-up or thumbs-down was, and is, and will always be, quite scary.

I experienced the fear, and I did it anyway, and it was just okay by my standards. My heart was pounding in my chest as I got up to speak... I could barely breathe... one chance ...stand on the red circle and deliver.

Here is the big breakthrough. It wasn't great, it was only okay. I know that. But that was as good as I could muster that day, and *that* is just fine. Maybe I'll get another shot; maybe not. I know I'll say yes now to *any* opportunity that makes me uncomfortable in the service of something noble. I love, love, love, the message of the talk. But, I'm disappointed in how I delivered it. I know I can be better. It's like blowing the high note while singing the National Anthem at a ball game. Well, maybe not that bad, but close.

I ended my talk with the simple suggestion to be the sun, not the salt, and to leave people with an afterglow, not an aftertaste.

But, so what? My discomfort is about my ego being a little undernourished. My ego needs no more food! It gets enough. Since giving my TEDx talk, I've been working on my message over and over, until I get it right. I'm more inspired than ever to get better at conveying the message of being a positive energizer to the people around us. I ended my talk with the simple suggestion to be the sun, not the salt, and to leave people with an afterglow, not an aftertaste. The moral of my story is to not salt my own roots and to practice what I preach.



ELLEN SAPPER— FROM MEDITATION TO PAINTBALL WARS

Ellen Sapper retired from 39 years as a high school English teacher and guidance counselor, and currently has a private practice in college preparation and educational consulting. She holds master's degrees in communication, and guidance and counseling, as well as bachelor's degrees in comparative literature and social sciences.

She is a lifelong seeker of enhanced psychological and spiritual growth, and has participated in The Planned Change Internship in organizational development, EST and The Forum, group therapy, Trails CBT training, Tavistock-style Group Relations conferences at Northwestern, Rosh Hodesh circles, psychoanalytic teachings, women's growth groups, and workshops in comparative spiritualities based on Carl Jung's teaching and transpersonal psychology. She has also been involved with the Siddha Yoga, Kashi Nivas, and Kirtan communities, the Diamond Heart path, and vision quests with The Deer Tribe Metis Medicine Society. For the past 16 years, she has been engaged in the Spiritual Guidance Wisdom School programs of Atum O'Kane. She is regularly involved in spiritually-oriented pilgrimages to such places as India, Andalusia, Assisi, Morocco, and Poland, among others.

New psychological and spiritual challenges were part of my comfort zone in the 1970's and beyond, or so I thought, until I signed up for The Warrior's Retreat in California with a shaman-medicine man who taught in the Twisted Hair tradition.



I had an awakening in 1974 that propelled me into an Indian tradition of Kashmir Shaivism, a non-dualistic philosophy from India. I meditated and chanted mantras happily for many years, though eventually wanted more grounding in what I'd call an "Earth tradition." New psychological and spiritual challenges were part of my comfort zone in the 1970's and beyond, or so I thought, until I signed up for The Warrior's Retreat in California with a shaman-medicine man who taught in the Twisted Hair tradition. The brochure touted learning ten different martial arts, psychological warfare, healing through sweat lodge ceremonies, and learning to live in balance in the natural world. All this sounded good to me in the mid-1980's, to balance the teachings from the Indian Guru with the teachings from Native American Indians in the shamanic tradition.

What I did not realize was that this particular retreat would be run in a quasi-militaristic fashion. The shaman's purpose was to teach the hippies as well as the Vietnam vets strength of body and spirit, to know the enemy and know yourself, to prepare for what he said would be the future terrorists who would not care if we put a flower in their gun barrels. Hence, we were divided into companies and platoons, donned fatigues, learned to shoot paintball guns, to combat attackers with jujitsu and tai-chi moves, eat foraged plants, and outwit the enemy. From before sunrise until after midnight, we alternately froze and baked in the sun and moon of the Tehachapi Mountains, crawling on our stomachs through brush to avoid the enemy, camping, and hoping for a moment to eat what little food we brought. I was not prepared for any of this. I wanted to become more grounded after years of living in the world of "everything is unified consciousness," yet learning self-defense against male attackers I might meet on the streets of L.A. or during a battle with the terrorists, wasn't what I had in mind.

Some folks had left the retreat in disgust at the militaristic nature of the program. I stayed, weary, having no way to get home from the desolate mountain.

Still, with an eighteen-day retreat, and nowhere to retreat to, I persisted. At age 36, I was taught to kick and punch where it hurts, and to aim a paintball gun to destroy my opponent, all while nearly starving in the heat of the mountainous desert of southern California. After the first paintball "war," a week into the retreat, we were told that the next week it would no longer be a "children's war" (a simple paintball game of three hours), but that we needed to be prepared for real terrorists, who someday would be attacking us near home, or at home. We participants prepared tobacco and passed a pipe, sending prayers to the heavens that the next war would be cancelled.

Our shaman teacher brought us together under the stars to tell us the "adult war" the following week would have himself and others as "secret terrorists among friends." We could not just get hit and out, as in normal paintball rules, but we would have to meditate under the tree and "reincarnate" to enter the game again, either as a peace-lover or terrorist, thus confusing who was on which side of the battle. By the time the dawn to midnight "game" was over, we had been double-crossed by our chosen leaders who turned into "terrorists." The woman dressed as a grandmother pulled her paintball gun out of her goody basket and smiled wryly as she splattered her followers with paintballs. We were confused, and exhausted, by a fake war meant to mirror the feelings of what it might be like to become disoriented, even when supposedly prepared through mental and physical preparation during the weeks of the retreat. We ended the day with our shaman explaining the trials of war and then steamy healing sweat-lodges, in preparation for the upcoming

finale of a self-defense exhibition against fake attackers brought in from L.A. and the culminating Harmonic Convergence, where the planets aligned for the world's first synchronized global peace meditation in August of 1987.

Some folks had left the retreat in disgust at the militaristic nature of the program. I stayed, weary, having no way to get home from the desolate mountain. Still not fully comfortable with fighting, with or without weapons, I dressed in my combat clothing for the martial arts extravaganza. We gathered on mats under a makeshift tent, the women divided into groups of six, while the men sat around the outer edge of the tent, watching, awaiting the big guys from L.A. When it was my turn, I stood nervously, in the middle of the circle, but there was no big guy, only the Qigong instructor, filling in as too few big guys showed up. Each circle of women was told to go all out on these men, who were padded and wearing goggles and ready to be taken down. But not my guy. He was a martial artist himself and had his own idea of how to proceed. I was the second in my circle attacked. I kicked and grabbed and elbowed and successfully brought him down. But as I proudly returned to the circle, he grabbed me a second time! I wasn't alert but came to my senses and went for his knees. Victory!—until the third unprecedented attack, at which point I fell backward, twisting my leg. I couldn't stand, nor stop the pain.

We had signed releases that we were responsible for our own well-being. A tanned, bare-chested man came up to me wearing a pouch of needles and offered acupuncture. Others offered, or should I say, in the way of spiritual emergency medicine, did crystal healings on all parts of my body. The concern lasted minutes. Then, the extravaganza was over, and everyone went to the next activity while I lay on the mat unable to move, miserable, and lonely in the heat of the day.

Eventually, a friend carted up the sandy mountain to my tent, where I lay in pain, contemplating the inner lesson of my predicament for a few days. The harmonic convergence came with hundreds of hopeful aspirants drumming and chanting through the night, but no planet alignment healed my leg. I begged a woman with a car to take me to a clinic in Bakersfield where I was x-rayed, handed an envelope with the x-ray, and days later, I was taken to the UCLA hospital. When the doctor clipped the x-rays to the light-board, he suggested, "Perhaps you were hit with a hammer about three weeks ago? Your leg is fractured but it is healing nicely." I didn't tell him I was attacked by a Qigong master but did tell him it happened only three days ago, and that I had no medical treatment except acupuncture. I left out the crystal healing. Soon, all the doctors in the ER were looking at the x-ray and saying, "Acupuncture? acupuncture?!" Hmmm, I thought, maybe it did help. They put on a soft cast, and off I went to continue the healing journey of body, mind, and spirit.

When the doctor clipped the x-rays to the light-board, he suggested, "Perhaps you were hit with a hammer about three weeks ago? Your leg is fractured but it is healing nicely."

It was an important experience to come into my body after many years in more of a mind-based spirituality. Now older, I do prefer a more serene spiritual practice, but that retreat awakened my sensibility to the importance of awareness of my physical being and the threat of terrorists long before the shaman's prediction came to pass on our shores. I will always remember the shaman saying, "They won't care if you stick flowers in their guns."

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In this column, Crysta Coburn writes about crazy-wisdomesque people and happenings around Ann Arbor.

Crysta Goes Visiting



Andrea Blohm Millinery

Sometime in the 1960s, American women decided that (outside of winterwear) a hat was no longer necessary to complete an outfit. To me, this has always been a shame. As someone with light-sensitive eyes and a face prone to polymorphous light eruption (a kind of rash) caused by even the briefest exposure to sunlight, a hat has become an essential part of my 21st century wardrobe.

Andrea Blohm, a local milliner, that is a person who makes or sells hats (in our modern age, particularly women's hats), grew up in Pentwater, a small west Michigan resort town along the shores of Lake Michigan. She attended my alma mater Western Michigan University (go Broncos), majoring in Textile and Apparel Design. And, as she shared with me, "[I] did a study abroad program in London, England where I had my first millinery course." Blohm moved to Ypsilanti in 2012 for a job in the automotive engineering field.



In my opinion, there's a fine line between 'just right' and 'too much' when it comes to millinery. —Andrea Blohm

Loving hats as I do, I had to ask what tools and materials are used in millinery. "I use traditional millinery supplies to make my hats; fur felt, wool felt, different kinds of straws, and leather," Blohm said. "The most important tool in hat making are the hat blocks. Wooden hat blocks have been used for hundreds of years to shape hats. They are typically made of various hardwoods, balsa wood, or even foam and plastic." Blohm has "a large collection of both antique and new wood blocks." These are used to mold the hat bodies into what will be their finished shapes. "The hat bodies are steamed and shaped over the hat block, stiffened with millinery sizing, sewn with an inner band and wired brim edge if necessary."

Blohm's skill is evident in the beautiful finished products. I wondered about the unique challenges of hat-making. "Knowing when to stop," Blohm answered. "In my opinion, there's a fine line between 'just right' and 'too much' when it comes to millinery. I tend to leave my hat designs simple and classic, while smaller headpieces can be more elaborate."

As for what inspires her designs, she said, "I've always loved old movies and history, especially the 1930s/40s for fashion. A lot of my hat blocks are from that time period. One of my favorite block sets (crown and brim) is a similar style as Ingrid Bergman's iconic hat worn in Casablanca."

Despite the gorgeous, and occasionally dramatic, hats, Blohm said that her personal style is simple. "I wear all black most days, because it's easy." Sounds like the perfect backdrop for a hat to me.

In addition to making hats, Blohm also teaches how to make them through the Michigan Folk School. If you are curious about this age-old craft like I am, check out Andrea Blohm Millinery and the Michigan Folk School.

For more information, visit andreablohmmillinery.com or [facebook.com/andreablohmmillinery](https://www.facebook.com/andreablohmmillinery). If you are interested in taking classes, visit www.mifolkschool.com.



Sculptures and Illustrations by Ed Warzyniec

A sculptor and illustrator, Ed Warzyniec grew up in Ypsilanti, Michigan. "Aside from a year overseas and a short four-year stint in Florida, I've lived here pretty much my whole life," he told me. "Having lived in Ypsi through the 80s, 90s and 00s, it's been great to see my hometown slowly grow and evolve through the years into a kind of hip, craft beer/foodie/artsy hot-spot. I'm really enjoying what the city has become and am looking forward to seeing where it goes from here."

Like many of us, Warzyniec enjoyed playing with polymer clay as a child. "I loved the idea of being able to create my own little figurines and creatures," he said. "I've always been artistically inclined, so I dove in head-first and taught myself how to sculpt through trial and error."

In middle school, Warzyniec shifted his focus from sculpture to illustration and 2-dimensional art. Around 2007, while in a craft store, he came across polymer clay and decided to give it another try. "It was really cool going back to a medium that I hadn't used since I was young and discovering what I could come up with using my adult skill-set."

When I asked about the unique challenges of sculpture over 2D illustrations, he answered, "The challenging thing about sculpting is that I'm not just designing something from a single point of view as if I were drawing. You've got something with multiple sides and multiple viewpoints, so you have to make sure to include details on every angle. There are also no erasers in sculpting, so if I make a mistake, it is a lot more time and labor intensive to fix or re-do it. But those challenges are also part of the fun to me."



The challenging thing about sculpting is that I'm not just designing something from a single point of view as if I were drawing. You've got something with multiple sides and multiple viewpoints, so you have to make sure to include details on every angle.

—Ed Warzyniec

Many of Warzyniec's creations are of a fantastical and whimsical nature, such as the adorable Tree Folk and creature sculpts. He is an avid outdoorsman, and he finds inspiration in nature. "You're definitely going to find that a good amount of my pieces have twisted wood, gnarly vines, and assorted mushrooms, lizards, and bugs making an appearance as well." But also, he said, "I am and have always been a huge monster/sci-fi/comic book/horror geek... [B]eing a child of the late 80's/early 90's, I had buckets full of Ninja Turtles, Ghostbusters, Star Wars, X-Men, and pretty much every action figure from that time period that you can think of." I also grew up during that time period, which is likely why his art speaks so much to me.

Regarding the creation process, Warzyniec said, "While I do enjoy the process of actually sculpting, drawing, and adding details, I really like the creative process of making preliminary sketches, brainstorming, looking for inspiration, and then comparing what I started with to the end result. This is why you'll see so many different looking creatures in my portfolio. I'm always getting inspired to try out different ideas, and different techniques, and create something that I've never done before."

Warzyniec is an artist to keep your eye on!

Email ed@ej3art.com or visit www.ej3art.com for more information and to peruse its multiple galleries.

Game of Mos Artistry by Morgan Hoeffel

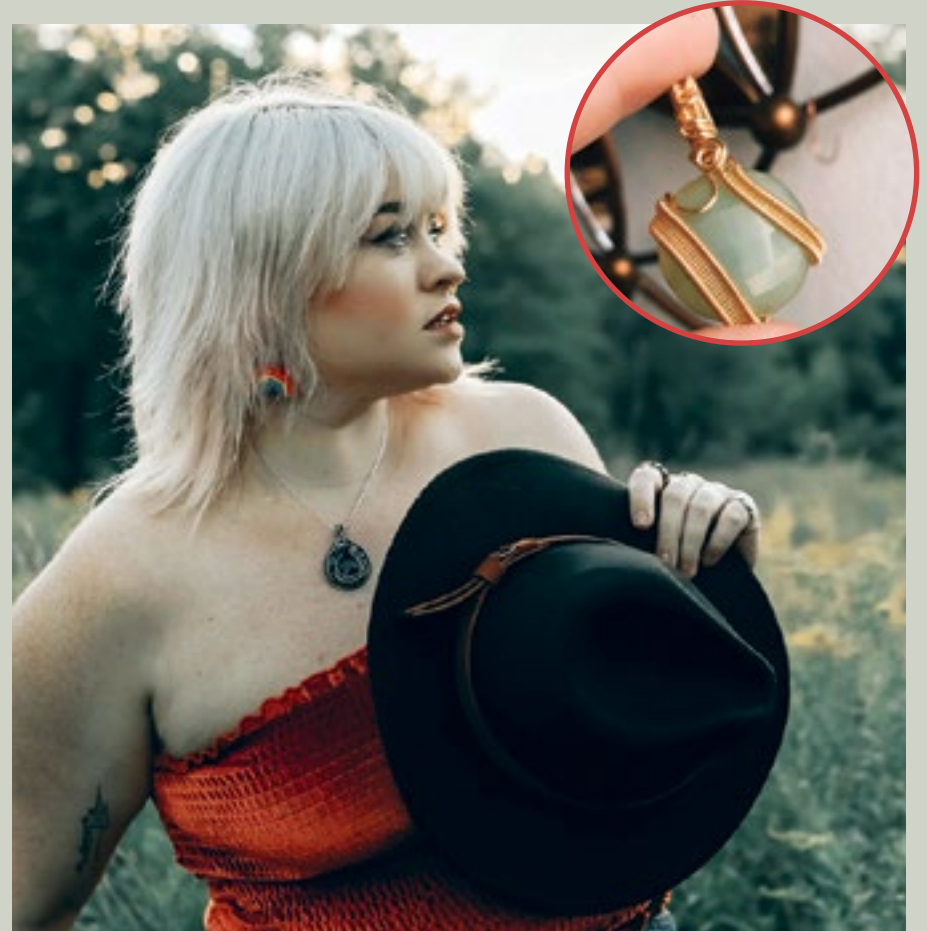
When I was younger, I enjoyed making simple jewelry—bracelets, earrings, and pendants. Morgan Hoeffel makes intricate, beautiful jewelry that I could never hope to emulate. It's a good thing she sells her wares under the name Game of Mos Artistry!

Hoeffel grew up in Goodrich, Michigan, "a village of 1800 people...just south of Flint." She then attended Eastern Michigan University where she earned her degree in Theatre Arts. After graduation, she decided to stay in the area. As she told me, "I've met such incredible, authentic folks and have found jobs that help support my artsy endeavors!"

I'm a large believer that the stone and the wire will do what they are meant to do, and the end result will be a beautiful and sturdy piece. — Morgan Hoeffel

When I first saw Hoeffel's wire-wrapped jewelry, I was impressed. How did she make such delicate work? "I originally learned wire wrapped jewelry in order to take custom orders at work and found it super meditative and relaxing and it took off! Luckily, wire wrapping doesn't require a whole lot of tools. Many of the tools you can get at your local hardware store. I use chain-nose pliers, round nose pliers, and wire cutters to manipulate and set the wire, and I use 18-gauge wire for the base and 28-gauge wire to do the detail weaving."

This sounded like a challenge to me. Hoeffel explained, "The biggest challenge of wire wrapping is setting the stone and making sure it is sturdy. As a jewelry maker, you never want a stone to fall out due to the structure of the piece. I make sure that all my pieces are sturdy enough to wear on a daily basis without any faltering, so your jewelry looks good for years to come."



I asked what she looked for in a stone. She said, "I usually look for flash and pizzazz when I choose my stones, but sometimes I also look for earthy patterns and really whatever I'm drawn to!" And then, "I let the wire do what it wants to do. I'm a large believer that the stone and the wire will do what they are meant to do, and the end result will be a beautiful and sturdy piece. The stone itself is usually the inspiration. I choose the wire color based on what compliments the colors in the stone best and what would make it 'pop.'"

In what other ways does Hoeffel express her creativity? "I'm a very creative person, so I have many outlets, but my all-time favorite is acting. I love being on stage and miss it so much [during the shutdown]." I've seen Hoeffel on stage and definitely look forward to seeing her perform again. She is a terrific actor. But in the meantime, I can go shopping.

Find Game of Mos Artistry online at gameofmos.etsy.com, facebook.com/gameofmosartistry, and instagram.com/em_oh_not_moe/.

What's New in the Community



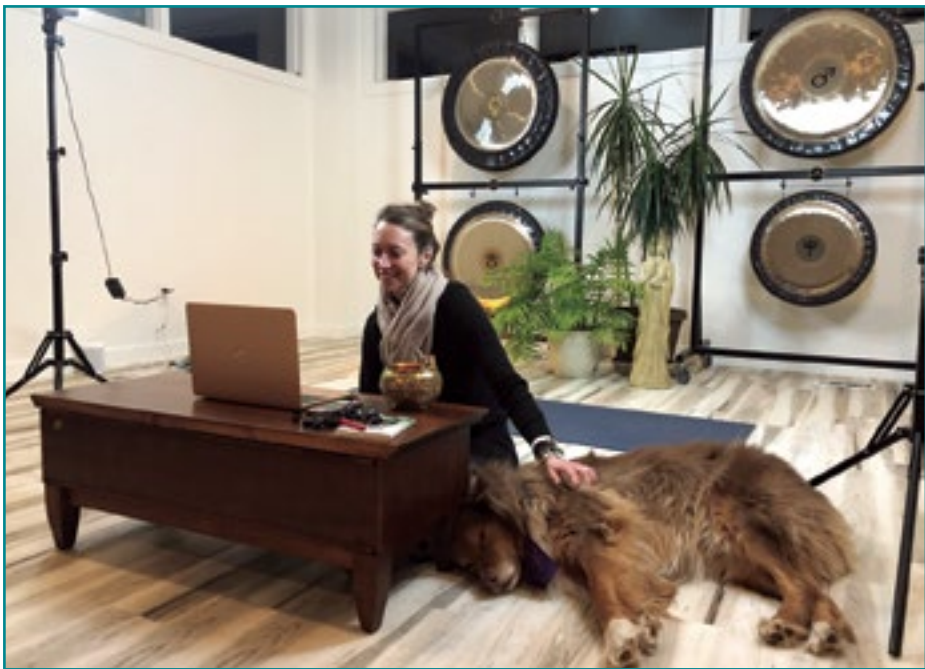
Even in these uncertain times, there are still great things happening in the community!

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.

By Lynda Gronlund-Naeem

New Offerings by Established Businesses and Practitioners

Verapose Yoga and Meditation House in Dexter started holding virtual classes immediately after Governor Whitmer ordered nonessential businesses closed in March.



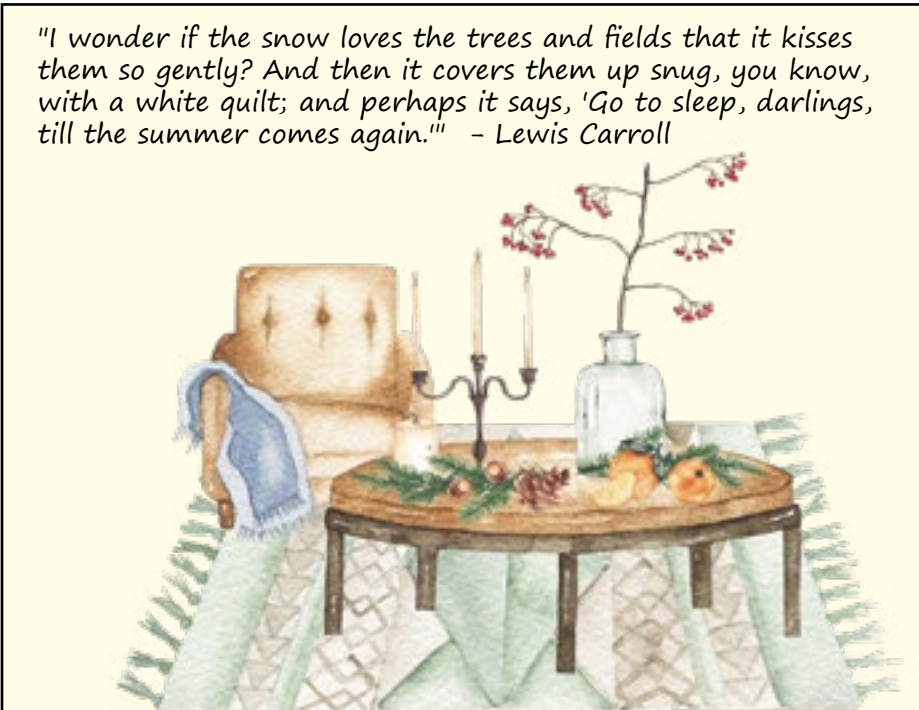
Founder and Instructor Courtney Fitzpatrick said she and her team had to learn from scratch how to conduct classes online but were quickly able to make it work. She said that the studio is thriving. Though some existing clients didn't want to participate in online classes, others were excited for the convenience of attending from home, and a new demographic of people who prefer online classes have gotten involved. Fitzpatrick said, "It has been quite a blessing" in a time when many businesses are struggling. The studio did begin offering in-person classes again for about a month in October; however, they again went completely virtual before Michigan's November "Three-Week Pause," feeling it was the most responsible thing to do under the circumstances. Fitzpatrick said it was important to her to recreate the feeling of community that was part of what made the studio special prior to the pandemic. At the beginning of each class, members can chat and connect with one another, and she said she has heard from many people that this aspect has helped them stay connected and motivated during a time when so many are struggling with difficult feelings of isolation. Fitzpatrick called it a "lifeline."

More recently, the studio's Yoga Alliance certified 200- and 300-hour Yoga Teacher Trainings have gone online. Fitzpatrick said that there are currently six advanced students in the 300-level program who have to complete final projects, which is an opportunity for her to offer additional programming to studio members for free. She reflected on how thankful she feels for the technology available to make this all work. "This would not have been possible even ten years ago," she said.

In addition to yoga, Fitzpatrick teaches mindfulness and works with *A Course in Miracles*, Helen Schucman's 1976 book, which she described as a way to "unlearn what we think we know about the world." As part of this practice, she recently started a "21-day complaining fast," in which she and her family agreed to not complain or speak negatively about anything, including themselves, for 21 days, starting fresh if they slip up. She let the Verapose community know about it, and she said almost 100 people decided to join her. "During Covid, people need peace," she said. "And this is one way to get closer to it."

Of the pandemic, Fitzpatrick said, "If you have a business you can replicate virtually, it's been a great time of creativity and survival." She sees it as an opportunity to "take what we have and move forward."

Verapose Yoga and Meditation House is located at 3173 Baker Road, Dexter, Michigan 48130. Their website is veraposeyoga.com. Courtney Fitzpatrick can be reached by email at veraposeyoga@gmail.com or by phone at (734) 726-0086.



"I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields that it kisses them so gently? And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt; and perhaps it says, 'Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again.'" - Lewis Carroll

After 21 years, the Center for the Childbearing Year in Ann Arbor has closed, though all four businesses that had been operating in the Center remain open and serving clients.



Patty Brennan, owner of Lifespan Doulas and manager of the space, explained that a confluence of circumstances, most notably the inability for work to happen in person due to Covid-19, contributed to the decision to let go of the building. Although she regrets they were unable to host a farewell party, Brennan said that her own plan had been to convert most of the trainings Lifespan Doulas offers to online over the next two years in any case, and that the pandemic only sped that plan up. Lifespan Doulas offers skill and business training for traditional birth doulas as well as End-of-Life Doulas, who assist dying people and their families through the process of death. She said online training has been going very well, and now that she has managed to adapt to this new paradigm, she looks forward to continuing to fully realize her vision for the business.

The Breastfeeding Center of Ann Arbor has moved into a new space on Washtenaw. They are also offering online consultations and classes. New Moon Midwifery is offering home visits and Zoom meetings for expectant parents. Ann Arbor Doulas, an agency which matches doulas to clients, has moved its operations online.

Brennan said "it's all sort of surreal," and of course bittersweet, but that this move has made her life "a little simpler" and that she is at peace with it.

Lifespan Doulas is online at lifespandoulas.com. The Breastfeeding Center of Ann Arbor is online at bfcaa.com, and their new space is located at 2300 Washtenaw Avenue, Suite 200, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. New Moon Midwifery is at newmoonmidwifery.com. Find Ann Arbor Doulas online at annarbordoulas.com.

The Naturopathic Institute of Therapies & Education (NITE) located in Mt. Pleasant, which offers training, therapies, and retail herbs and products, continues to thrive despite 2020's adversities.



Julie Wagester, the Institute's Director of Administration, said, "At the Institute we have continued to maintain our class schedule, after a short pause between March and June. Our programs have not changed, as we are still a face-to-face program, and continue to have full participation for all of the classes as scheduled."

From the very beginning, NITE has continued to promote the ideals of a healthy immune system and how to achieve it through natural and holistic modalities. This philosophy isn't any different than what we teach at the Institute to our students, regardless of world events. We have had to change some of the homework for students to be able to get the most out of the work and still be sensitive to them being unable to assemble in large groups. This had lessened over the summer, but the students are now limited again. Slight adjustments to homework tasks have not been insurmountable, though, Wagester said.

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A quote for our times:

"It is impossible to tell what exactly the new emerging holistic science will be like, but so much is certain: It will have to be a science which integrates the still divided fields of morality, ethics and aesthetics and it will have to be a humanistic science at best, otherwise humanity will cease to exist" (Gebelein, 2000)

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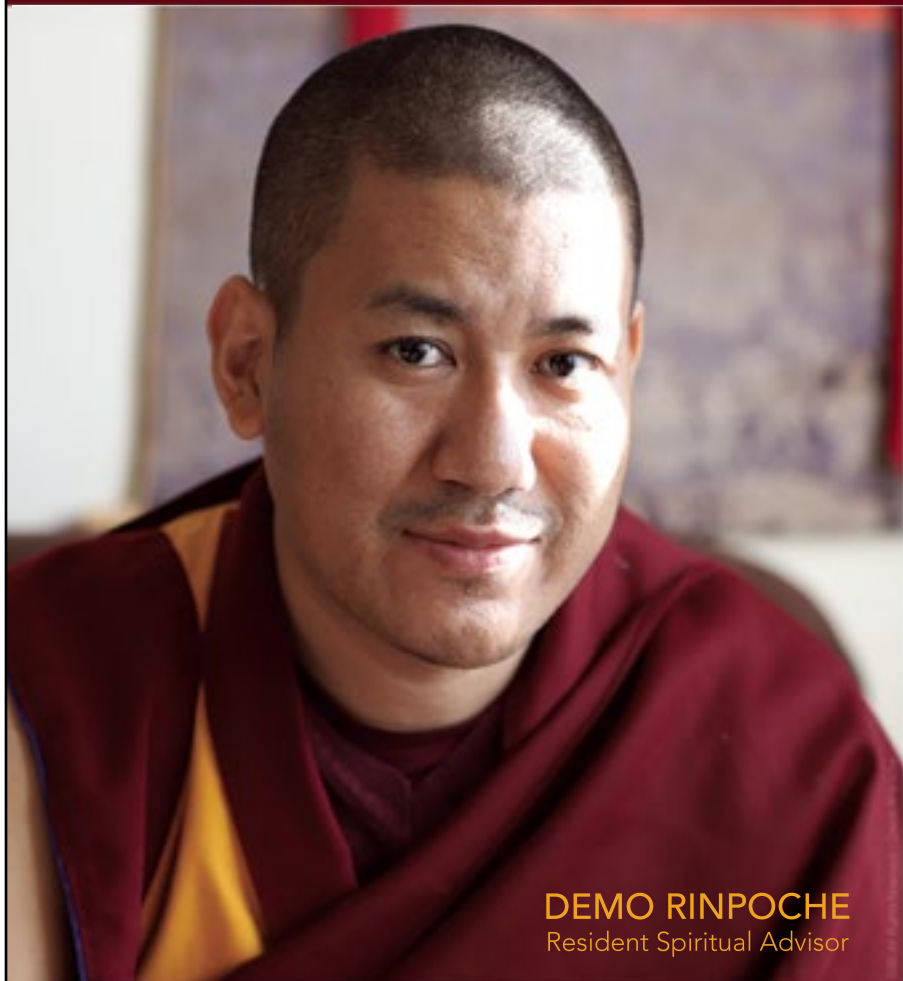
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What's New in the Community

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The next rotational start for the Therapeutic Bodywork Practitioner program and the Natural Health program will start in January, and the Doula program will start in March 2021. The mission of NITE is to educate and facilitate students to become versed in treatments that focus on the client and suggest therapies that treat the whole person using only natural remedies and therapies. While there is not another school in the state of Michigan, or surrounding states, to compare apples to apples, here are some points that do make NITE an exceptional place:

The Institute is well respected for teaching at the highest level, proven by the fact that they have a 100% passing rate for their students who take the American Naturopathic Medical Certification Exam to become Board Certified Naturopathic Doctors as well as the MBLEx for students who wish to become Licensed Massage Therapists. Their programs are affordable (tuition includes books and manuals as well as a massage table for those wanting to start the Therapeutic Bodywork Practitioner program), convenient (classes meet on weekends to meet the needs of working adults), instructors are all credentialed either at the state or national level, and their programs are recognized at both the state and national level. They also offer housing accommodations for students who have to travel as all of the curriculum is offered face-to-face. Tutors and mentors are available free of charge, as well as other academic and student services.

The Naturopathic Institute is located at 503 East Broadway Street, Mount Pleasant, Michigan 48858. The NITE website is naturopathicinstitute.org, and they can be reached by email at contact@naturopathicinstitute.info or by phone at (989) 773-1714.

The Ann Arbor Summer Festival held two Community Listening Sessions in 2020, the first in February focused on the South Asian community, and the second in October focused on the Black community in Washtenaw County.



These sessions were designed to help Festival leaders “learn how to better serve and represent residents in its programming and leadership.”

The Festival’s Marketing and Communications Manager, Natalie Robbins, said that in “2019 under the leadership of Executive Director Mike Michelon, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival made a commitment to address topics of inclusivity and audience engagement. The Festival team is aware there is a reality in which certain communities, particularly communities of color, do not feel welcomed or represented at the Festival, and there has been a concerted effort to address these issues in the Festival’s Community Engagement Committee (co-led by Programming and Operations Manager James Carter and Natalie Robbins).” The Listening Sessions series began with the South Asian community and was facilitated by the founder and CEO of Mela Arts, Heena Patel, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Festival held another Listening Session, with the Black Community facilitated by CEO of Nonprofit Enterprise at Work, Yodit Mesfin Johnson.

The Festival intends to use the insight gained during the Listening Sessions to inform programming decisions, marketing outreach strategies, and Festival leadership makeup. Following the South Asian Listening Session in February, the Festival programmed more local South Asian artists during their 2020 virtual season, including visual artist Sajeev Visweswaran, Odissi exponent and Rasa Festival Founder Sreyashi Dey, and a modified event with Patel, Garba 360, which will return as a live event in 2021.

The Festival team has learned a great deal from the community during the Listening Sessions series, including from those who have articulated their experiences coming to the Festival and not feeling welcomed in what feels like a predominately “white space.” They have also learned about ways they can improve their marketing outreach efforts in communities further east, and of opportunities to engage more youth in the Ypsilanti school systems and in the greater Washtenaw County region.

The Festival is actively recruiting more members to diversify their Community Engagement Committee to further aid in its inclusivity efforts. There will be more Listening Sessions held in 2021. Robbins said, “The plan is to facilitate sessions with the Hispanic, Arab, and Native American communities in the future.” The Festival’s Executive Director Mike Michelon said, “The work we began earlier this year with the South Asian Listening Session, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, energized our organization. It sparked a series of sessions and expanded to the Black community. Ultimately, we desire deeper relationships with all residents throughout the county.”

Anyone interested in learning more about future Ann Arbor Summer Festival Community Engagement Committee activities and/or the Listening Session series can email info@a2sf.org. More information about the Festival is available at a2sf.org.

Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center has adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic by expanding their online offerings and creating content for helping people deal with these uncertain and stressful times.



Ann Arbor’s Jewel Heart is the international headquarters for Jewel Heart centers, of which there are several in the United States, the Netherlands, and Malaysia. Most of their teachings and trainings were already available online in webinar format as well as in-person. Even retreats offered webinar access to those who were too far away to practically come in-person. One week after the Center’s initial closure, everything converted to Zoom so that communication could more easily happen between teacher/speaker and students. Currently the Center’s physical location is closed, but the Resident Spiritual Advisor Demo Rinpoche is teaching more than ever online, said Program Director Kathy Laritz.

The Center began offering free virtual programs in mid-April. “Generally, Jewel Heart offers programs for people who are curious and need general support all the way through dedicated practitioners,” said Laritz.

Sunday programs, which have served as an entryway experience for newcomers, as well as a routine for longtime members, have moved to the Zoom format. Traditionally, there is a guided White Tara meditation hour followed by the “Sunday Talk,” a Buddhist-inspired talk by Demo Rinpoche or guest speakers, and then an open discussion and social hour. For the first 10 Sundays of 2021, Demo Rinpoche plans to speak on the 10 Jataka Tales, which are Buddhist fables based on the previous lives of the Buddha taught to both children and adults. Laritz said that the “Sunday Talks,” as they have been called for many years, will be renamed as “Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times.” She said that in addition to the local Jewel Heart Community, members have been attending virtually from all over the U.S., Malaysia, the Netherlands, and other parts of the world.

There is a section on Jewel Heart’s website titled “Healing Meditations for the Coronavirus Situation,” which contains videos as well as a prayer Demo Rinpoche wrote at the beginning of the pandemic. There are many other resources on the website that anyone can access for support, healing, and learning.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Demo Rinpoche speaks on “The Bodhisattva’s Way of Life.” A Bodhisattva, Laritz explained, is a person who seeks enlightenment not only for his/her own sake, but in order to help the world. They aspire to “six perfections: generosity, morality (to live without doing harm), patience, enthusiastic effort, meditation, and wisdom. This program is free for Jewel Heart members and carries a modest cost for others. These, as well as other programs, are streamed live, but

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also recorded so that people can review or watch them later. People can continue to register after the live session and receive access to recordings if they missed lessons. Group sessions for different areas of study are on Friday nights. In 2021, Demo Rinpoche will offer several Introduction to Buddhism courses. Virtual programs, as well as support, will be ongoing for the foreseeable future. Demo Rinpoche has been largely teaching from home, though he will occasionally teach from the center with precautions in place for safety. Said Laritz, "We naturally miss being together there (as does everyone else in today's world), and it's nice to see him teaching from there [the Center]."

Jewel Heart is located at 1129 Oak Valley Drive, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108. The Center can be reached by phone at (734) 994-3387 or by email at annarbor@jewelheart.org. The website is jewelheart.org.

The Fair Food Network is a national nonprofit organization which works to support families with low income, local farmers, and food entrepreneurs.



Each of these groups are impacted by the current pandemic, and the organization is working harder than ever to help communities support people by improving access to healthy food.

Their signature program, Double Up Food Bucks, is increasingly beneficial as the pandemic creates more need for food assistance. The program matches SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) dollars spent on fruits and vegetables, which helps families' dollars go farther, encourages the purchase of healthier foods, helps farmers sell more produce, and boosts local economies. In Michigan, they have increased the amount of benefits families can receive in this program and are working to fast-track new retail markets to expand their reach. They are also working with partners to enable automatic enrollment in the program for new SNAP recipients through their phones, reducing the need for physical cards. They're also increasing their marketing efforts to spread the word and increase participation. In other states, they are working with local partners to ensure Double Up remains a strong resource and keeps pace with increasing demand.

The Fair Food Fund invests in food entrepreneurs who are "growing community health and wealth through food." Businesses in every area of the food system are struggling economically, and the Fund is working to provide resources to businesses they already work with as well as accelerating investments to help entrepreneurs make needed changes to maintain food access to their communities during this uniquely challenging time.

The Fair Food Network's Ann Arbor office is located at 1250 North Main Street, North Suite Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. More information is available at fairfoodnetwork.org. They can be reached by phone at (734) 213-3999 or by email at info@fairfoodnetwork.org.



New Books by Area Authors

Local artist, yoga instructor, and trauma release practitioner Suzy Adra, Ph.D., RYT, CCL, published her book *Sex in the Twenty-First Century: Healing Collective and Individual Trauma* in September.



She explained that the book is about "healing trauma and the importance of creative process." She said it "examines how patriarchy has programmed the way we view and engage in sex and the things we can do moving forward to elevate sex into the sacred realm." A trauma survivor herself, Adra feels that her life's work is to "help alleviate the inner suffering of others and unlock the creativity within."

Along with her book, she is offering her art therapy program, called "ArtKeyTypes," available to individuals and groups via in-person and online sessions. The process is described in a chapter of the book and is her signature art therapy approach. "To release something," she explained, "you have to see it or make it known." Painting is one way to express "things that can't be spoken." She described a process of "dancing on the canvas," similar to automatic writing, in which the painter lets the subconscious mind choose the colors and move the brush around. There is no experience needed to work with this process, and, in fact, someone who didn't have training in painting might be even better equipped to let the unconscious mind take over instead of consciously planning out a painting. She also uses yoga, breathwork, and a method of "talking to the subconscious" in this process.

"You don't heal from trauma," she said. "You just complete it."

She feels the book will be helpful and interesting to almost everyone, as we all have some level of trauma in our lives, as well as interesting to therapists who work with trauma survivors.

Adra is also the founder of Bija Healing Sanctuary, a retreat space located at a medieval castle near Rome, which she bought and renovated, where she will be leading retreats after international travel resumes. She lives in an artist community in Dearborn, Michigan.

Dr. Suzy Adra can be reached by email at info@suzyadra.com, and her website is suzyadra.com. Her book can be purchased through her website or at the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore.

Local author, artist, and Crazy Wisdom Community Journal editor Jennifer Carson published her new children's picture book *Dragons Don't Dance Ballet* in December.



The book is for children aged four to eight and is a cute and funny story about Esmerelda, a dragon who decides to audition for the City Ballet with the encouragement of her friend Harold. Being a dragon, her unique physical attributes seem like a big problem! Her tail trips the other dancers, and the wind from her flapping wings blows them offstage. She is embarrassed, but Harold encourages her not to give up on her cherished dream of being a ballerina. Finally, her uniqueness is seen as a positive thing.

"I see it as a story about going for what you want and not letting naysayers hold you back," said Carson. She explained that she was inspired by her own

struggles to fulfill long-held life goals that others tried to discourage. She also said the publisher, Vinal, is promoting it as a book about body image. Carson said she is comfortable with the book having multiple meanings and takeaways and doesn't think the messaging detracts from the entertainment value of the book to kids. She believes children will "see themselves in Esmerelda's struggles to fit in with a group, and I hope they'll learn that standing out of the crowd is okay, too."

Dragons Don't Dance Ballet is available at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, of course! Jennifer Carson can be reached at jencarson75@gmail.com, and her website is thedragoncharmer.com.

New Practitioners and Businesses

The Thrift Depot, in Ypsilanti's Depot Town, opened on September 1st.



Owner Joshua Maxam said he had a background in online resale, getting to know thrift stores and estate sales, and decided to take his experience into a venture he knew could help people as well as provide for his own family. He knew many people in Ypsilanti were experiencing homelessness, and one of the things he liked to do to help was to give people shoes. The Thrift Depot takes that idea much further. It partners with 10 different organizations which refer people experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, or other problems. When someone in need comes to the store, they are given a \$50 voucher they can use for anything there: shoes, coats,

clothes, kitchen items, and more. Maxam's wife makes care kits which are stocked at the front of the store. They are free to those who need them and include items like toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, nail clippers, floss, and lip balm. Maxam said that during their first month they gave away 60 care kits. There is also a free food table up front with nonperishable food items for people to take.

The store is a great place for people to find inexpensive items. All clothing is \$2.50, no matter what item it is. All shoes are \$5. The store takes donations. It is staffed by Maxam full-time, and his father-in-law helps part-time. His wife, while caring for their three young children, takes care of their social media and bookkeeping from home. Maxam said, "We're here to help. Period. Whether you're shopping or in need." He is proud of creating a welcoming space where people can ask for what they need. As with most retail businesses during the pandemic, business was up and down. As it has gotten colder there have been fewer customers as Depot Town is pedestrian-oriented, but Maxam says he is not worried and feels strongly that doing this is what's right for his family, for Depot Town, and Ypsilanti. He is "trusting that times will get better."

The Thrift Depot is located at 19 East Cross Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198. The store's phone number is (734) 516-1405. Joshua Maxam can be reached via email at info@thethriftdepot.com. More information is available online at thethriftdepot.com.

Dr. Andrew Schmale's practice, Michigan Advanced Psychiatry, opened in October.



The clinic offers BrainsWay's Deep Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (Deep TMS) for major depressive disorder (MDD) and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Schmale said, "We believe it is critical, due to the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on mental health, specifically around depression and OCD, that we are investing in clinically proven treatments like Deep TMS to better serve our community in the Ann Arbor area."

BrainsWay's Deep TMS treatment is an advancement of the standard figure-8 TMS treatment, which was first introduced in 1985 as a form of noninvasive brain stimulation. It was later discovered that utilizing TMS's magnetic fields to stimulate certain brain structures can help stabilize and regulate neural activity, which was in turn found to relieve adverse symptoms of mental health conditions.

Dr. Schmale said that he has seen remarkable improvement in even the most "severe, stubborn depression and OCD. There have been patients who have had over 10 medication trials, feeling disappointed and hopeless about the state they are in with thoughts they will never improve. TMS finally brought them the relief they were

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What's New in the Community

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looking for.” He enjoys being part of the process and seeing patients regularly as they go through treatment. “The most amazing patient experience occurred to one patient as treatments were wrapping up, and the patient had responded very well. He disclosed to me that before starting treatment he went to the rooftop at work and considered jumping. He no longer had thoughts of suicide, rather a newfound will to live with minimal depressive symptoms. It was invigorating, inspiring, motivating, and emotional all at the same time.”

The feeling that psychiatry was stuck concentrating far too much on medications, and ignoring technology and the improved understanding of the brain, during his residency at the University of Michigan is what got Dr. Schmal interested in this type of therapy. He said, “I would see patients repeatedly come in having tried a handful of different medications without significant success or unwanted side effects that left them to suffer for years. Still, with these patients, the standard seemed to be offering yet another medication. They were frustrated, and so was I. It was particularly painful when my knowledge of neuromodulation (through interventions like TMS or ketamine—both offered at Michigan Advanced Psychiatry) grew. Knowing these treatment choices existed and were far better options, yet most patients knew nothing about them, I immersed myself in this area of study and saw the success treatment-resistant patients could have. I knew I had to bring these options to the community to provide an evidenced-based alternative to the norm.”

Michigan Advanced Psychiatry is the first and only facility in the Ann Arbor area to provide BrainsWay Deep TMS to treat major depressive disorder (MDD) and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). They also provide FDA-approved ketamine treatments in the form of Spravato, which is covered by many insurances (relative to IV ketamine which is not FDA-approved and is not covered by insurance).

Unfortunately, approximately 40% of people diagnosed with depression are treatment-resistant to standard options such as antidepressants and may be unaware of it. One-third of those treated for OCD with Deep TMS experienced more than 30% reduction in their symptoms after failing to respond to other treatments. Deep TMS has continued to show success in treating treatment-resistant depression and OCD as the helmet administers magnetic waves to targeted deep structures of the brain to impact depression symptoms. The treatment is both noninvasive and does not require medication, allowing patients to return to normal activities, such as driving, immediately following the 20-minute session.

Michigan Advanced Psychiatry is located at 320 North Main Street, Suite 300, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. More information is available online at michiganadvancedpsychiatry.com. Dr. Andrew Schmale can be reached by phone at (734) 436-4886 or by email at drew.schmale@gmail.com.

Home, kitchen, and garden store, Stone & Spoon, opened its doors in downtown Ypsilanti on November 2.



Owner Jen Eastridge, who also owns the Unicorn Feed & Supply two doors down from the new shop, said the idea was something she had been thinking about for the last year and a half, and she was thrilled to find the space so close to her existing business. “Anytime I travel, I look for unique shops that are playful and also shops that are cozy, that make you want to curl up with a cup of tea and a book,” she said. She also felt the shop was a good fit for downtown Ypsilanti as there’s nothing similar.

Many items in the shop are from local artists and makers, and there are a lot of women-owned businesses featured. Eastridge said the store’s dried flowers and wreaths are from Ypsilanti business We Adore Flowers, which grows and arranges all organic blooms. All of the cookbooks in the shop are written by women, she said, and mentioned

as a favorite *My Little Michigan Kitchen* by Mandy McGovern. Local metal and woodworker Jacob Warren’s cutting boards and handmade spoons are featured,

as well as jams from local woman-owned business Gus & Grey. The store carries a selection of houseplants sourced from Graye’s Greenhouse in Plymouth. There is a selection of candles and oil blends from Ypsilanti’s Bookend Candle Company.

Eastridge said the store “is working to make greener choices,” such as offering emailed receipts instead of printed ones, and “giving people tools to make greener choices,” stocking items such as reusable produce bags and items made from eco cloth and recycled bottles. Her vision is to offer products that are “utilitarian but also beautiful gifts that soothe the soul,” as in the store’s tagline: “Home, Kitchen, Garden & Heart.” She said that the pandemic seems to have reinforced people’s desire to “find ways to nurture our space around us and our well-being emotionally and physically, as we figure out how to navigate our daily lives in a different way.”

The store is open with a number of health precautions in place. Customers are required to wear masks and distance inside (markings on the floor help remind people of the correct distance), and the number of customers at one time is limited to eight. Each customer is asked to sanitize their hands upon entry, and surfaces are sanitized throughout the day. Eastridge is also offering “virtual shopping,” where a customer can shop from home via a video call with a staff member. She is also happy to set up private shopping hours before or after regular store hours for those who want the store experience but are not willing to risk being around others. She does custom gift collections as well. You can call the shop, describe the person you’re buying gifts for and your budget, and Eastridge will put together a perfect personalized collection of items. These services are all available at the Unicorn Feed & Supply as well. The store offers free curbside pickup, \$10 delivery within 10 miles of the store, and shipping for further distances.

Stone & Spoon is located at 110 West Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197. Jen Eastridge can be reached via email at stoneandspoon@gmail.com or by phone at the store at (734) 945-7976. More information is online at stoneandspoon.com.

Submit your listing for the May thru August 2021 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, or drop off or mail information to the store: What’s New in the Community, 114 South Main, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. The firm deadline for submissions for the next issue (May thru August 2021) is March 1, 2021.

Never forget yesterday,
but always live for today...
because you never know
what tomorrow will bring,
or what it can take away...



An Unexpected Journey

By Ann Olugbile

In 2016 my life started to transform. I was pregnant with my second daughter and I was joyful and terrified at the same time. My daughter's father and I had been on and off for several years. He was in another relationship and I wanted to be with someone so badly. I believed if I were patient enough, kind enough, and quiet enough, he would pick me. Shortly after announcing I was pregnant, he admitted there was no choosing me, and the pregnancy would not change that. It was the biggest wake-up call of my life. For years I'd waited for him to choose me and make me a priority. The breakup slowly made me realize that I needed to choose and love *myself*. I gave birth in 2017 and committed to a journey of self-love, but it evolved into a deep spiritual journey.

I believed if I were patient enough, kind enough, and quiet enough, he would pick me.

The first step on the journey was mental health counseling. The break-up and the postpartum hormones had left me in a bad place. I learned in therapy that my childhood shaped beliefs of unworthiness and low self-esteem. The "not good enough" narrative was rampant in all my relationships. I lacked boundaries and allowed others to misuse me. It took months to unlearn the negative narrative and place necessary boundaries around my toxic relationships. I began challenging that childhood belief and created a new one—I am enough, just as I am, and I am deserving of good things in my life. A year into regular sessions, I gained a new sense of self and wanted to explore becoming a yoga instructor. The universe announced a different plan.

It took months to unlearn the negative narrative and place necessary boundaries around my toxic relationships.

A week following that decision, I fell down the stairs and broke my ankle in two places. I was devastated. Right when I was ready to make a huge step forward, I was literally stopped in my tracks. I cried for many nights asking God, "Why? Why now?" I did not expect an answer, but God answered through two woo-woo experiences.

First, I noticed a local tarot reader's card appearing in different places in my home. I found her card once in the kitchen, once in the bedroom, and then again in the bathroom. I got the message and scheduled a reading. The reading was phenomenal. We discussed what to gain from a broken ankle spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. The reading also helped me decide to apply for disability through my employer and take some needed time off.

The next experience was a very lucid dream. I saw myself sitting on the edge of the bed crying to God (again!) and asking why my disability paperwork was denied. I was very angry and confused in the dream. When I woke up, I immediately called the doctor's office and discovered they never faxed the disability paperwork. I talked to the office manager and the paperwork was faxed immediately and approved. Something new and mysterious was happening.

This class was way out of my breadth of knowledge and budget, but I made a deal with God that if I received the money before the class started, I would enroll.

My tarot reader was teaching a workshop called Deepening Your Intuition. I enrolled and learned about the basics of intuition, guarding energetic space, clearing energy with sounds and water, and setting boundaries with the spirit world. We were also given a shamanic energy clearing. During my clearing, the shamanic practitioner said to me, "There's a lot of fear around walking your path." How interesting, since I just broke my ankle! I mulled over her words for weeks, questioning what I was so afraid of. In the last class I mustered the courage to ask the practitioner, "What if I want to go deeper with this? Are there more classes?" She calmly said yes and advised a psychic studies and mediumship class that started in three weeks. This class was way out of my breadth of knowledge and budget, but I made a deal with God that if I received the money before the class started, I would enroll. Once again God answered, and the money came!

Fear again emerged the first night of class. I didn't know what to expect and thought I would make a fool of myself. Who am I to think I could be a psychic? This was only for special, gifted people, and I never felt special or gifted. The not good enough narrative was back.

It was clear from then on that it was my responsibility to express these gifts with the world.

I sat quietly through class and was hit with a surprise. We would give a psychic reading that same night. Through the fear, I gave my first psychic reading. I noticed the information came to me quickly and accurately. The next twelve weeks of class I discovered the gifts of claircognizance, clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychometry, and mediumship. Mediumship became my passion because it offers such a healing experience. The ability to provide answers to the living from those who have crossed



over is transformative. This sparked more inner healing because I tapped into my power. It was clear from then on that it was my responsibility to express these gifts with the world.

An opportunity to learn shamanism appeared next and I went full steam ahead. It was a tough experience. Doubt and fear reared its head again during the sacred rites initiation. Again, I thought, am I really a shaman? Am I cut out for this? All the fears and negativity took a toll on me and I became sick. Shamanic illness is common during this process. Old wounds surface that need addressing in order to move on. My shamanic illness was pneumonia. I needed to confront the root of the fear and unworthiness narrative. I scheduled a shamanic journey session with my teacher and remembered as a little girl, during a traumatic event, I silenced my voice and convinced myself speaking up was not worth it. The belief I'd kept since childhood for safety, disabled me emotionally as an adult. I stayed quiet about my unhappiness in all relationships. It made others happy, but I was suffering inside and scared to voice my true feelings. I felt whole after the session and regained my voice.

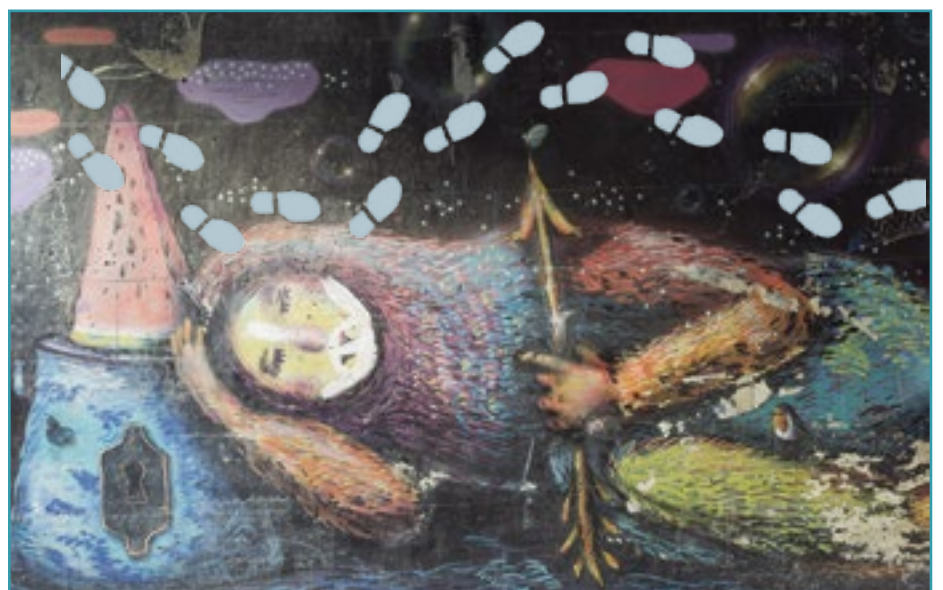
I made a promise to myself, to use my voice when it's clear, when I doubt, or even when it shakes.

I made a promise to myself, to use my voice when it's clear, when I doubt, or even when it shakes. Joan Walsh Anglund beautifully wrote, "A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song." I became well again and received the final sacred rites to become a shaman and a new name, Lowanpi Nagi, which means singing soul.

I don't know what's next, but I know God will answer, and I look forward to meeting the next version of myself.

The path I had in mind was to reconnect with loving myself. I achieved that and so much more! I am forever grateful for the heartache, ankle break, and pneumonia. Those events birthed a new woman who is confident and knows her worth. I still struggle with some doubts, but I know their roots and how to talk to them. I am gentle and compassionate toward my inner child and move at her speed. The spiritual journey is tough and intimidating and I wanted to give up many times. I don't know what's next, but I know God will answer, and I look forward to meeting the next version of myself.

Ann Olugbile is a shamanic practitioner, psychic medium, and an avid writer. You can contact her at aolugbile@gmail.com.



Healing Writer's Block

Through the Mystery School



By Weam Namou

“Were you abused as a child?” Lynn asked.

The temptation to hang up the phone burnt my fingertips like I had touched a car bumper that had been sitting under a hot sun for hours. I did not call Lynn Andrews—a shaman healer, mystic, and an internationally best-selling author with 20 books to her name—to talk about my childhood as if I was sitting in front of a psychiatrist or a talk show host. I’d hoped that this one-hour phone session could resolve some issues I had been having with my writing career.

“I actually had a safe and healthy childhood,” I said, wondering if I was once again being stereotyped because of the origin of my birthplace, Baghdad, or if I had been swindled by a con artist. Since Muslims are usually the ones who get a bad rap, I wondered if she would change her perception of me if I told her that I am Chaldean. Chaldeans are the indigenous people of Iraq, otherwise known as Neo-Babylonians or Christian Iraqis. Our lineage dates back over 7,000 years.

The temptation to hang up the phone burnt my fingertips as if I had touched a car bumper that had been sitting under a hot sun for hours.

But she persisted. “Did you have to be careful as a child?”

I began to feel uncomfortable, and yet the conversation had an earthy and intimate hand that disrobed a garment off my character with each word. I laid down my resistance and said, “My parents never spanked me if I did something wrong. The first time anyone ever laid a hand on me was when I was in third grade—I had missed Saddam’s parade. It was mandatory to attend, but my niece, who was my age, begged me to spend the night at her house, and my family did not take the mandatory bit too seriously. The next day at school, as punishment, the school principal slapped me so hard I fainted. The second time someone laid a hand on me was that same principal. The teacher sent me to her office because I couldn’t answer a question in science class. Other than these two incidences, I led a pretty happy childhood in Iraq. I didn’t know what unhappiness was until I came here and felt alienated and isolated.”

A silence followed.

“You were oppressed by and had to be careful of an entire nation,” she said, “and then you came here and you had to be careful of another nation, in a different way. You had to be careful of two nations.”

Her words pinched my waist so hard that it shook me to my roots. Growing up under Saddam’s totalitarian regime, I learned that there was a boogeyman to fear and avoid through silence and good behavior. When I came to the United States, I discovered that it was best to remain silent in order to avoid ridicule.

“So, my dear, why have you called me?” Lynn asked. “What is it that you want me to help you with?”

Writing Spirit had called for me to pick it up, as if it were a lonely child, off the bookshelves.

We finally arrived at the subject I was anxious to talk about, writing, but now I was interested in further dissecting the role my two nations had played in my life. I wanted to ask her what all of this meant. Why was I born in Iraq, yanked out of my birthplace at the age of nine, and placed in the United States? Being uprooted from my home made me feel as though I were a plant taken out of the soil. After repotting, plants often enter a state of shock as they struggle to adapt to the new environment.

But with only a one-hour session, there wasn’t enough time.

“I have lost my literary voice, and I want to get it back,” I said. “Last summer, I came across your book, *Writing Spirit*. I was in a really bad place with my work. I no longer loved it and half the time I woke up wishing I had the sense to quit and find a different profession.”

Writing Spirit had called for me to pick it up, as if it were a lonely child, off the bookshelves. It was an odd-looking book about writing, yet the last thing I wanted was a book on writing. I had been writing for over 20 years, and the journey had proven so futile, I wanted to bury the pits of this desire into someone else’s backyard and start a new garden, one that resembled those in the *One Thousand and One Nights* stories, where the hero ends up with breathtaking trees bearing pears, apples, figs, pomegranates, and apricots made of real gold, diamonds, and rubies.

Yet the book stuck to my hands like glue. I bought it, even though I barely had time to take a shower or eat a meal sitting down, let alone read a book. I was raising two young children and doing a lot of freelance work, as well as trying to write a book.

The moment I read *Writing Spirit*, the fragrance of that Arabian treasure garden raced out of the pages, and I remembered all the reasons I’d become a writer in the first place—the calling, the sacredness of storytelling, the freedom this profession provides; in my case allowing me to raise my children without having to abandon my career. I had scheduled a phone session with the author for a bit of literary advice, not realizing our conversation would lead elsewhere: how the Iraq war had badly bruised my heart; how the loss of my New York literary agent threw my career off track.

The moment I read *Writing Spirit*, the fragrance of that Arabian treasure garden raced out of the pages, and I remembered all the reasons I’d become a writer in the first place...

I sat on the carpet and told Lynn all about it, adding that shortly after these events, I got married, had kids, and attained journalism jobs and other writing-related opportunities. The jobs led to wonderful experiences, but they also scattered my thought process. Trying to return to my literary voice since then was like trying to get to a very faraway place on foot.

“Don’t get upset at some of your past mishaps,” she said. “They made you who you are today. As for your stories, there’s a time for every story. When you live through life-defying experiences, you come out on the other side with incredible abilities—abilities to survive, abilities to comprehend a higher reality. The Mystery School could help you make the right decisions regarding your work.”

“What is the Mystery School?” I asked.

“It’s a four-year school that will teach and awaken the beauty and power within you. It will give you the direction you need.”

Four years? It didn’t take me that long to get my bachelor’s degree. “I have children,” I said. “I can’t leave my home to go study somewhere.”



Sometimes it's not writer's block that prevents us from achieving our dreams, but old wounds, patterns, and stories that need to heal and help us transform.

"This is a school without walls. I created it so that anyone, anywhere in the world could do this work without having to move to a campus. I wanted to create a learning environment where people could learn through their own experiences, not to try to be their teacher."

"I'll check it out on your website and consider it," I lied. Yes, she said some profound things that stirred me, and yes, I felt a connection with her that was ignited as easily as one lit a match, but no, I was not going to fall for this gimmick.

Yet after we hung up, I spent a moment staring ahead.

For a long time, I had struggled to fit into two worlds, my birth country of Iraq and my home, America. The process made me feel like a yo-yo and, oftentimes, like I was

living a double life. Then, not knowing what shamanism was, or who Lynn Andrews was, I stepped into a four-year shamanic school that dusted off the residue that clogged up my creativity, one by one removing the particles of fear and sadness, eventually bringing me from darkness into light.

I ended up completing the book I had trouble writing, called *The Great American Family*. Today, I'm a mentor at Lynn Andrews's school. Sometimes it's not writer's block that prevents us from achieving our dreams, but old wounds, patterns, and stories that need to heal and help us transform.



Weam Namou is the Executive Director of the Chaldean Cultural Center. She's an author of 13 books, an international award-winning filmmaker, journalist, and an ambassador for the Authors Guild of America (Detroit Chapter). Learn more about Namou by visiting her website at weamnamou.com.

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Photo by Hilary Nichols



By Katie Hoener

Namaste Katie,

My wife is very insistent that I bring my thumb and first finger together when we meditate, as we see in pictures. Though we see this in pictures, we are completely unsure of the meaning. Can you give us a little background?

Grant, Ann Arbor

Hello Grant,

What a great line of inquiry! We see so much going on in terms of yoga, and don't always take the time to unpack all of the small details. This is certainly true for life as well. Being mindful of the details is an excellent representation of mindfulness in practice. We have explored Mudra before and will take time for a quick refresher. Mudra means 'mark' or 'seal' and in yogic practice is thought to harness energy that flows through the nadis (energy channels). There are hundreds of Mudras, some used in meditation, some used in dance, and each represents a different purpose and use of energy within the body. Mudras are thought to be a more subtle expression of energy work than some of our asanas.

Being in touch with the more subtle aspects of our own energy bodies can help unlock so much for us spiritually and emotionally.

Bringing the thumb and index finger together is often referred to as Jnana Mudra. Jnana in Sanskrit is representative of knowledge, so this is the Mudra of knowledge or wisdom. The joining of the thumb and the index finger is representative of bringing together all that is external with all that is internal. The benefits outlined in Mudras of India by Cain and Revital Carroll, consist of feelings of lightness, calming the mind, directing energy back to the body, and opening the chest to increase breathing, to name a few.



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.

Adding Mudras to your practice can connect you more deeply to your journey, whether that particular path is meditation, pranayama, or an asana practice. Being in touch with the more subtle aspects of our own energy bodies can help unlock so much for us spiritually and emotionally. See what you might experience with this addition.

When we are ready to move our energy up, and build some heat, finding some standing postures can keep us grounded and elevate us energetically and physically.

Namaste Katie,

I have found yoga to be a lifeline this past year. I have been spending my time in restorative spaces and feel like I am ready to build up my practice. Is there a particular posture that I can integrate into my practice to start to build in some strength and a little bit of heat?

Thank you,

Faye, Ann Arbor

Dear Faye,

I agree with you in a percentage that cannot be named. Yoga has supported many of us during these times of uncertainty, and I am glad to hear that yoga has supported you. I also hear you on taking events as they come. Treating yourself with healing and support shows courage and compassion. When we are ready to move our energy up, and build some heat, finding some standing postures can keep us grounded and elevate us energetically and physically.

Virabhadrasana I, or Warrior I is an excellent posture for rooting us into the earth and starting to build heat within the body. To come into Virabhadrasana I, start in Mountain Pose (Tadasana) and step back with one leg. The distance between the legs, both front to back, and side to side, is up to you, and your comfort level. Check the safety of the front leg, by making sure that the knee does not pass the ankle. The hips should face the short side of your mat as much as is comfortable. Once you feel solid and strong through the legs, you have the option of lifting through the arms. As with every posture we play with, we have the opportunity to make adjustments as needed, according to what feels right at the time. We may wish to float the arms overhead, or have the hands rest gently on the hips.

Warrior I, when paired with a full breath, taps us into our own strength and allows us the chance to focus on how to face challenges head on. See if you can take a few deep breaths on each side. Over time, you may want to build this up, seeing how you can play with the forces of both grounding and lift, of settling and expansion.



Namaste Katie,

I have been struggling mightily with Savasana. I am not certain if it is new formats, all the goings on in my head, or just the way things are. Any tips for bringing me into the moment that I enjoy so much?

Many thanks,

Kate, Dexter

Hi Kate,

Yes, there are many reasons why we struggle with Savasana, or Corpse Pose, and with all these layers of added stress it can be more challenging to find a place of stillness and quiet. One of the most successful ways of coming back into the body and finding a connection to stillness is through a body scan.

One of the most successful ways of coming back into the body and finding a connection to stillness is through a body scan.

While resting in Savasana, move through the body systematically, either from head to toe, or from toes to head, and see what muscles you may be able to relax. Every little bit of tension that we can let go of allows the body and the mind to relax one breath at a time. When the mind drifts away to the many competing tasks, gently guide it back to the part of the body you were last inviting love and tenderness into. This process can offer relief in the moments we are in, and also build our body awareness for the next time we take time for savasana. As we recall the places that felt tense, we are at times able to relax those areas with greater ease. Bringing our minds back into the body, with the support of the breath, can realign us with our Savasana practice.

Katie Hoener is an RYT 500, receiving her 200 and 500 hour trainings. She is also a Licensed Master Social Worker and a partner at Verapose Yoga in Dexter (veraposeyoga.com). Please send your own yoga questions to katie@veraposeyoga.com.

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GREAT TASTES *in* LOCAL FOOD

By Crysta Coburn • Photographs by Rachel Everheart



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buns
are
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RUMI'S PASSION BAKERY

As I have grown older, I have acquired more and more food sensitivities and intolerances. I know I am not alone in this. Those of us in this same boat are incredibly lucky to live in southeast Michigan where there are countless restaurants ready and able to cater to our special culinary needs. When I was forced to give up wheat products, I was afraid I'd never be able to enjoy a bakery again. I needn't have worried!

Family-owned Rumi's Passion Bakery in Plymouth delivers on its promise of "artisan gluten-free baked goods." Per their website, "As a dedicated gluten-free, wheat-free bakery, we specialize in wedding cakes, custom birthday cakes, and cupcakes. Everything is baked daily from scratch. We also offer bread, muffins, cookies, and much more." With so much to choose from, it was difficult for me to decide what to buy!

I knew that I couldn't leave without trying a childhood favorite, the blueberry muffin. I never would have guessed that it was gluten free. The taste and texture were just what I remember my mother making every summer after blueberry picking, and her muffins were definitely not gluten free. Rumi's was a delicious muffin that happened to also be gluten free.

I also could not resist a pasty and a "pizza roll" (think calzone rather than the microwavable bite-sized snacks). The pasty's crust was suitably flaky, and I could really sink my teeth into the pizza roll. I can't say that I miss bread per se, but pizza rolls have always been a comfort food for me, so being able to enjoy one again was beyond satisfying, especially since it was so big. And the mini éclair I had for dessert was such a delightful treat! There are even gluten free donuts, though I was there on the wrong day to grab one. (Keep an eye on Rumi's social media for what is available each day.)

I knew that I couldn't leave without trying a childhood favorite, the blueberry muffin. I never would have guessed that it was gluten free.

If you are dairy, corn, soy free, or vegan, Rumi has options for you, too. There is a long list of freshly baked breads that are gluten, dairy, corn, and soy free as well as gluten and dairy free pies and cakes. (The vegan cakes are only available in chocolate.)

In addition to the impressive array of baked goods, Rumi's also carries gluten free grocery items, such as frozen pierogi, baking mix, pasta, snacks, and more. It's the perfect place to treat yourself as well as pad out your gluten free cupboard.

Rumi's Passion Bakery is located at 41116 Five Mile Road in Plymouth. Find them online at rumispassion.com. They are open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. They are closed Sunday and Monday. For more information call (734) 335-7145 or email rumisgfbakery@gmail.com.

GRAVINGS DESSERT LOUNGE

Opening a new business in 2020 must have been a challenge, especially here in Michigan when we didn't know what would happen from one week to the next. Would we be moved back a step in the reopening timeline? Would we ever progress forward? These business entrepreneurs must be brave. One such new and bold business is Cravings Dessert Lounge in Ypsilanti. And has it been a welcome addition to the community!

My husband grew up near Dearborn, so normally if we wanted a tray of baklava for a party or social gathering, we would drive out there. Those days are over. When I stepped through the doors of Cravings Dessert Lounge, I gasped at the dozens upon dozens of rows of neatly packed, mouth-watering, pan-Middle Eastern sweet treats that seemed to stretch on forever. There was baklava from Greece and Turkey, *ma'amoul*, *harissa*, *namoura*, Turkish delight, and so many more.

I was intrigued by a dessert that seemed to take center stage on the counter and that I was not familiar with. The friendly and helpful man behind the counter told me it was the most popular dessert in the Middle East, *kanafa*, "warm sweet cheese, topped with a sweet semolina flour base, drizzled in warm syrup and pistachios." (This dessert has many spellings in our Roman alphabet; this is the one used on this menu.)



Whether you are already a fan of Middle Eastern desserts or are just looking to try something new, Cravings Dessert Lounge is a must-visit.

Semolina is, alas, not gluten free, but I could not resist giving this treat a nibble. The cheese is mild in flavor, and overall this dish is very sweet. For an original twist, try the kanafa bowl, which is a little like a yogurt parfait but with *kashta* (a kind of clotted cream) in place of yogurt and topped with shredded kanafa, fresh fruit, and pistachios. My husband was a big fan!

If European style cakes are more your thing, I spied some of those on display, as well, including a beautiful multi-layered rainbow cake that I wished I could try. There is also an ice cream counter, which I intend to avail myself of often in the future. I have yet to try the kashta or mango ice cream, both of which make my mouth water at the thought.

Whether you are already a fan of Middle Eastern desserts or are just looking to try something new, Cravings Dessert Lounge is a must-visit. They are located conveniently close to the Michigan Avenue exit of I-94 as well as Eastern Michigan University.

Cravings Dessert Lounge is located at 2643 Ellsworth Road in Ypsilanti. Find them online at www.facebook.com/Cravings-Dessert-Lounge-101085064854102/. They are open every day from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information, call (734) 221-5658.

CHAPALA

As soon as I stepped through the door of Chapala, I knew I was in for a good time. I was actually there to pick up a take-out order, but I was immediately taken in by the music that set my toes tapping, the bright colors, the festive decorations, and the swings at the bar.

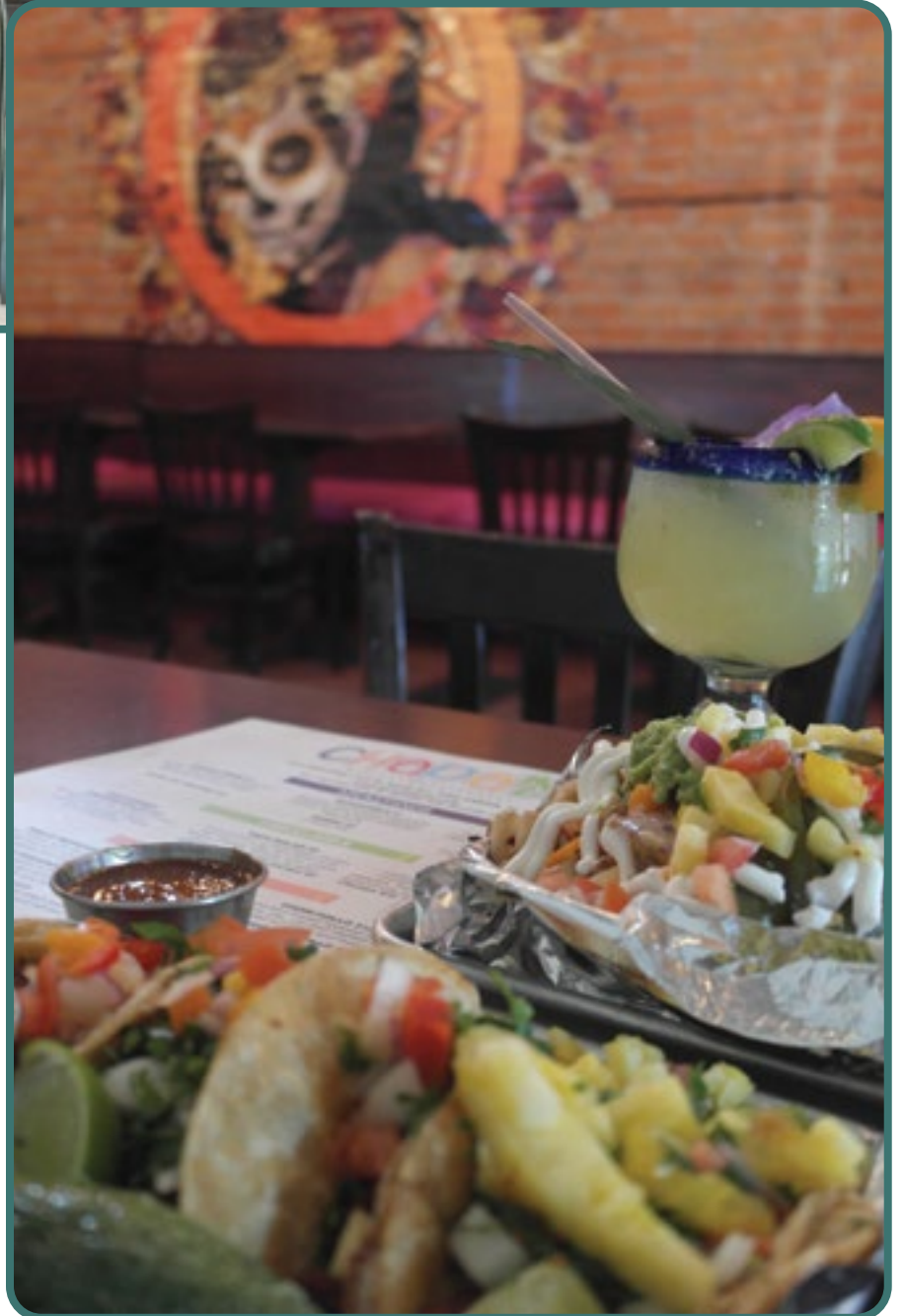
That's right, mixed in with the usual bar stools one expects to find, there are swings! Of course, I had to try one out while I waited for my order to be rung up. The seat was made of wood, and it hung by two ropes from the faux roof built over the bar. It was a gentle swing, like a porch swing, not like what is found on a children's playground.

This fun little touch made me curious to further explore the restaurant on a future visit. I learned that Chapala had already proven so popular that seating for an additional 30 people was being added in the basement.

If the employees were enthusiastic about what they served, surely there had to be something to it. And he was absolutely right!

While I waited, I also chatted about the menu with the person behind the bar. He gushed about the food, which I took as a good sign. If the employees were enthusiastic about what they served, surely there had to be something to it. And he was absolutely right! I was blown away by the wonderful flavors of the Asada Fries (waffle fries topped with grilled steak, queso, pico de gallo, jalapenos, and sour cream).

I mentioned to the bartender that they were similar to an appetizer that I had once had at another restaurant, only that restaurant used chicken rather than steak. He said that chicken could be substituted if the customer preferred. I was in love with the asada, but having also tried the Arroz Con Pollo (grilled strips of chicken over a bed of rice, topped with cheese dip, and served with lettuce, sour cream, guacamole, and tomatoes), I can say that one would not go wrong with the chicken either.



The portion sizes are generous, especially for the price. In addition to deals like Taco Tuesday (when tacos are only \$2.50 each), Chapala offers daily lunch specials that are perfect if you work downtown or walk over from campus. The dinner menu is fantastic, too, and more options are being added to keep things interesting. Enjoy surf, turf, and vegetarian options.

Chapala is a beautiful oasis on a less-populated part of Main Street that is totally worth the trip.

Chapala is located at 211 North Main Street in Ann Arbor and online at www.getchapala.com. They are open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. For more information, and to phone in a pick-up order, call (734) 996-1456.



Don't Gobble 'til You Wobble.

Save Those Holiday Leftovers and Put Them to Good Use!



By Christine Frank

More than likely, this wasn't a typical holiday season for you and your family. Maybe part of your family decided to stay home due to health concerns, or maybe they didn't like who you voted for. Either way, you'll probably have some major leftovers. Don't despair! Put your leftovers to good use! Save yourself some time with meals ready to go in the oven that don't taste like you've already eaten them for three days.

If you are a meat and potato family like us, you can combine those leftovers into a tasty meat pie. Just make a quick butter and flour crust, or purchase a pre-made pie crust, cut up your leftover meat and lay in the bottom. Spoon in those leftover vegetables, leftover gravy, and spread any leftover mashed potatoes on the top. If you freeze the crust overnight and then add your leftovers in, you can package against freezer burn, and slide the pie into your freezer to use at a later date!

Have a lot of leftover ham? Cut the ham into bite size pieces. Combine it with yellow potatoes sliced thin, some butter, cheddar cheese, and breadcrumbs, and voila! A tasty casserole ready to go in the oven.

Want to use that ham bone? Let's make ham and bean soup! Simmer the bone in water for a couple of hours, pull any meat off and toss the bone. Add some pre-soaked navy beans, cook until beans are done. Of course, you could slice up onion and carrots to add some vegetables to the broth, if you'd like. Make some *nifflies* (also known as spaetzle, a German egg and flour noodle) and you have a warm, filling soup.

If you cooked a large beef cut for your holiday meal and have leftovers, one of the things we like to use those leftovers for, besides meat pie, is a beef and noodle dish. Cut/shred your beef, add a can of cream of mushroom soup with cooked egg noodles, and serve!

If you have biscuits left over along with chicken or turkey and gravy, you can make biscuits and gravy. Simply shred your meat leftovers, combine with your gravy, and top your biscuits with the mixture.

No matter what your holidays looked this year, don't let your leftovers go to waste! Hopefully these recipes will jumpstart your creativity in the kitchen. I guarantee you won't hear, "leftovers, again?!"

All recipes serve 4-6.

Ham and Potato Casserole

Ingredients:

- 2 Cups-ish leftover ham cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 Cups shredded cheddar cheese, colby-jack works well also
- 4-6 TBLSP of butter
- 6-8 yellow potatoes
- Breadcrumbs

Cut butter into pats and place in a casserole dish. Heat your oven to 350 degrees. Place casserole dish into oven and melt butter. While waiting for the butter to melt, cut your potatoes into thin slices. Pull casserole dish out and combine potatoes with melted butter. Add your ham and stir together. Layer your shredded cheese on top then layer your breadcrumbs on top of that. Cover dish and cook for 35 minutes, or until potatoes are fork tender. Remove cover and cook for another 10 minutes.

Leftover Meat Pie

(This recipe was first published in the CW Weekly, issue #22. Haven't read the weekly? Look for it at <http://www.crazywisdomjournal.com/weekly-22>)

Ingredients:

- 1-2 Cups of leftover meat (ham, chicken, turkey, or beef)
- 1 TBL Better than Bouillon (chicken, turkey, or beef) plus 2 TBL of corn starch or leftover gravy
- 2-1/2 Cups of flour
- 2 Sticks of cold salted butter
- 2 Cups of leftover veggies (or a frozen mixed-veggie blend)
- 2 Cups of leftover mashed potatoes
- 1/4 Cup to 1/2 Cup of ice water

Cut your butter into the flour until the butter is small, pea-sized pieces. Drizzle the ice-cold water into the flour mixture. Stir. Keep adding water and stirring until the dough starts to stick together, then pick it up with your hands. If it holds together without crumbling, it's good to go, if not, add a little more water and knead a bit. Wrap dough in parchment paper and put in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.

While waiting, cut your leftover meat into smaller pieces and put aside. Then make your gravy in a small saucepan by adding 2 TBL of bouillon to 1-1/2 cups of boiling water. Next, mix 2 TBL of cornstarch with a bit of cold water. Pour this mixture into the saucepan slowly while stirring the gravy at the same time. Let simmer for a minute. Check consistency. Add a little more cornstarch if needed to thicken. Set aside.

Retrieve your dough from the fridge and break it into two pieces. Roll into a 14" circle and place crust into bottom of pie plate. Fill pie with meat and vegetables. Pour gravy into pie. Cover pie with leftover mashed potatoes. Roll your second dough circle out and place on top of pie. Press and trim dough edges. Slice top crust 4 or 5 times with a knife. Place on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Cover edges of pie with aluminum foil.

Use the leftover dough for crust cookies! Roll leftover dough out to 1/4" thick. Use a small cookie cutter to cut out fun shapes. Place on cookie sheet with pie.

Bake the cookies for 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Continue baking pie for another 30 minutes. Remove the aluminum foil and continue baking pie for another 15 minutes. Let it cool for 5-10 minutes before serving.



Ham and Bean Soup with Niffles

Ingredients for soup:

- Leftover ham bone
- 8-10 Cups of water
- 1 Package of dry navy beans
- 1 Small yellow onion sliced thin
- 1-2 Carrots cut into tiny cubes

Ingredients for Niffles:

- 2 Cups flour
- 3 Eggs
- ¼ Cup milk or water

In a large pan simmer your ham bone for 2-4 hours in 8-10 cups of water. Periodically check your water level. You may need to add water as you go. Pre-soak your navy beans as instructed on package.

When beans are ready, and any leftover meat is falling off the bone, finish pulling meat off of the bone and discard the ham bone. Add your pre-soaked navy beans to the broth and cook according to package. At the same time, add your onion and carrots.

In a separate pot, boil 8 cups of water. While waiting for the water to boil, combine your flour, and eggs and mix together. Add your milk and stir until you have a dough that isn't too runny or too thick. Add a bit more milk or flour to get the right consistency. When water is boiling, take a spoonful of the dough and "cut" it into tiny pieces with another spoon, dropping those pieces into the boiling water. Cook your drop noodles approximately 8-10 minutes, then drain. Add your noodles to the ham and bean soup and enjoy!

Put your leftovers to good use! Save yourself some time with meals ready to go in the oven that don't taste like you've already eaten them for three days.

Beef and Noodles

Ingredients:

- Shredded leftover beef (leftovers from a roast is best)
- 4-6 cups of water
- 2 Tablespoons of beef bouillon
- 1 Package of wide egg noodles
- 1 Can of Cream of Mushroom soup

Bring your water to a boil and add your egg noodles. Cook noodles according to package directions. Add a can of mushroom soup and your beef bits. Simmer for 10 minutes, season to taste, and serve.



TEA TIME WITH PEGGY

Kombucha Tea



By Peggy A. Alaniz

Good Bacteria! Many of us are aware that there is such a thing as good bacteria, however it tends to be killed daily along with the bad bacteria. In a Covid-19 world most products talk about how they kill viruses and bacteria. The overuse of germ, virus, and bacterial fighting products kind of makes me cringe with fear. Now, while hand sanitizers and antibacterial soaps are becoming a necessary evil, we need to keep in mind that balance is a good thing. In order to eradicate the bad bacteria, some of the good becomes a casualty. Those antibacterial products slowly leak into your body, destroying the helpful bacteria needed to aid your body's natural digestion process. So, you need to be aware, and start your own counter measures to keep good bacteria in your body.

What does this have to do with tea? You can, of course, get probiotics, or good bacteria, in capsule form as well as in yogurt. Yet, for those of us who might be a little lactose intolerant, Kombucha could be an alternative choice. Kombucha is made from fermented black or green tea. It is slightly effervescent with a strong tart vinegar taste. It has pucker power for sure! The origins of Kombucha are still debated, however, more than likely it was developed in China, Japan, India, or eastern Russia along the silk trade route, probably to counter the adverse effects of drinking water from an unfamiliar area.

Nutritionists claim that Kombucha helps our bodies in many ways, such as aiding in digestion, helping to reduce blood sugar levels in people with diabetes, lowering cholesterol levels, aiding weight loss, and reducing inflammation. From my personal experience with Kombucha, I can attest to the fact that it helps a sluggish digestive system. I also believe that it helped to aid some weight loss. Then again, if your tummy is happy, the rest of your body follows suit. I drink Kombucha on a regular basis, but again, balance is key. Since it helps digestion, I usually drink about a cup after my largest meal. This way I am introducing the good bacteria into my system with something that it can feed off of. Some people consume it like soda pop, which I would not suggest, as too much of a good thing can become a bad thing quickly.

While you can make your own Kombucha at home, I suggest store bought, unless you are meticulous in your process. There is a lot that can go wrong (kind of like homemade hooch). Since there is some alcohol content in Kombucha it can be unstable. A creditable recipe, or working with an individual who already is reputable at brewing Kombucha, would be a good place to start if you want to go the home brewing route. You will also need to purchase or produce a starter.

Another type of tea that also helps to aid digestion is ginger tea. Fresh ginger tea is spicy and warming. So, for our tea recipe we are going to go with a fresh ginger tea, which can be drank hot with some lemon or orange slices, or cold in an iced ginger fizzy.

Peggy A. Alaniz is a tea enthusiast and former employee of Celestial Seasonings Tea in Boulder, Colorado.

Ginger Tea

You'll need 1 Tablespoon of fresh grated ginger to 1 cup of water. Add your grated and peeled ginger to your water and bring to a boil for five minutes. Strain and drink with a slice of orange or lemon.



Iced Ginger Fizzy

First you will need to make a simple syrup out of the ginger tea. You will need 1 cup of ginger tea to 1 cup of honey. Boil for 30 minutes then cool. Then add a quarter cup of your ginger syrup to 8 ounces of carbonated water with a ¼ cup of orange juice over a ½ a cup of ice. Garnish with an orange slice.





Learning the Culture and Heritage of Washtenaw County through Food and Architecture

By Angela Madaras

Prior to Covid-life, the Local Food Summit event took place with food diversity and food justice being the main focus. I had the pleasure of sitting with speaker, Melissa Milton-Pung, who represented a program she created in conjunction with the county's Heritage Tourism department. The tour is called the Foodways Heritage Tour and there is a recipe guide online for those interested in our counties rich and bountiful cultural heritage.

The tour includes recipes from African Americans, Germans, and even the women's suffragette movement. The tour doesn't just focus on cuisine though, it also teaches the historical relevance these groups of people in different times gifted to our amazing community, things that make Washtenaw county so unique and vibrant today. The tour also includes buildings which have historical connections to each movement, culture, and social movements. I asked Milton-Pung why she felt the Foodways program was important to the local food movement of today. "The piece which is particularly powerful is the concept of cultural transference through food gathering, preparation, and social interaction around the table," she answered. "Not only does a member of a family or community directly experience the tangible joys of these actions, tastes, and smells, they also learn about the identities and traditions closely connected to these dishes, sparking ongoing conversations and understanding between generations, families, and community members. It's really powerful."

The Washtenaw Heritage Foodways Tour was part of a project Milton-Pung built along with staff member Melinda Schmidt (who is now staff at Washtenaw

County Historical Preservation). The two women researched, tested, and created the program over the course of many years. The tour highlights local food traditions, featuring the foods from many eras and groups local to the area, including the First Peoples/Native Americans and early European settlers through the Abolitionist Movement, World War II, and recent social changes that mark the 20th century.

It is my distinct belief that food brings people together in ways nothing else does. Stories arise from sharing meals and cooking food together. Even in Covid times we can still share our recipes, backgrounds, heritage, and diversity online, in safe outdoor settings, within a small family bubble, or through social media and podcasts. Foodways is a great project that deserves your attention and time. I learned so much that I never would have known until I said hello to Melissa Milton-Pung!

You can learn more about the Foodways tour by visiting the program online at washtenaw.org/637/Heritage-Tourism. Learn more about Food Summit 2021 at localfoodsummit.org.

Madaras's way of giving voice to food is through the Crazy Wisdom Community Journal and The CW Weekly. We invite you to contribute your own food memories, present day foodie tricks of the trade, recipes, family meal ideas, and anything that can expand our knowledge and sensitivity. Send your submission to jennifer@crazywisdom.net

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Gut Feelings and Your Brain ~ The Bidirectional Communication Between Your Brain and Digestive System



Artwork by Jennifer Carson

By Meghan Marshall

Anyone who's ever had a "gut feeling" or felt the stomach-sinking effect of bad news probably believes in some kind of connection between the brain and the gut. These people would be right. However, the strong bidirectional communication between the brain and the digestive system is much more complex and intertwined than most people realize.

Bidirectional means that there are messages being sent both from the brain to the digestive system, and from the digestive system to the brain. The digestive system even has its own nervous system—the enteric nervous system.



All illness has physical and psychological components, and it is necessary to treat both the body and mind simultaneously, especially with chronic illness.

The brain sends nerve signals, which are either carried out by the parasympathetic nervous system or the sympathetic nervous system. The parasympathetic nervous system is known as the "rest and digest" system, while the sympathetic nervous system is what responds during dangerous or stressful conditions. Consequently, when the parasympathetic nervous system is responding, gut function is stimulated while the sympathetic nervous system inhibits gut function.

These signals are sent using nerves, hormones, and inflammatory molecules. The vagus nerve is one of the key components of this brain-gut connection. The connection of the vagus nerve between the gut and the brain can influence factors like appetite, food intake, pain, mood, and more. Interestingly, most of the signals sent via the vagus nerve go from the digestive system to the brain; for example, when the stomach is empty, ghrelin is released from the gut to stimulate feelings of hunger from the brain. The information generated in the gut that reaches the brain is then interpreted by the brain and sent back to the gut in order to adjust its functions.

Knowing about this strong and intimate connection between the gut and the brain, it only makes sense that emotions, or a certain state of mind, can considerably impact digestive functions. Particular emotions can even be a predictor of certain diagnoses, like irritable bowel syndrome or chronic constipation. How can this be possible? Well, as mentioned, the body reacts via different systems depending on the present situation. When stress or danger is signaled, the sympathetic nervous system responds, moving blood away from the digestive system to help negate the threat (i.e. bringing blood to the muscles so you can run away), inhibiting the vagus nerve and slowing digestion. The hypothalamus in the brain releases a molecule called corticotropin releasing factor (CRF), generating a gastrointestinal stress response and also releasing the stress molecule cortisol.

During very high-stress or anxiety-inducing situations, the gut signals are felt more sensitively, which is what can lead to an immediate response of diarrhea or even vomiting during these types of situations.

This response is very helpful in life threatening situations. However, it becomes problematic when this response is chronic; common in our high-stress, demanding lifestyles nowadays. With persistent unpleasant emotions—as in someone with an anxiety disorder—this can lead to changes in the enteric nervous system over time. These changes can induce continual, increased gut sensitivity and lead to symptoms like bloating, stomach pains, or constipation. This dysregulation in the digestive system can eventually lead to diagnoses like IBS, indigestion, or chronic constipation or diarrhea. Unfortunately, each of these can be a "catch all" diagnosis when physicians can't seem to find a physical explanation for the cause of these symptoms. Treatments for these conditions are usually aimed at minimizing symptoms instead of correcting the root cause for the dysregulation, and relief from the symptoms can be hard to come by even with these therapies. New studies are now being conducted on the effectiveness of psychotherapies like cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness, and hypnotherapy for IBS and similar conditions with promising results.



The connection of the vagus nerve between the gut and the brain can influence factors like appetite, food intake, pain, mood, and more.

Stress isn't the only emotion that can have an impact on the digestive system, however. Depression, sadness, and hopelessness can result in a decrease in peristalsis, which are the wave-like contractions along the digestive system that

help to move the food through the intestines, possibly causing constipation. Anger and aggression can trigger the contractions in the lower intestine.

Furthermore, your body has the ability to store responses and memories of a traumatic or stressful event, which can elicit reactions after the event occurred, even years later. Childhood and even generational stress can cause a predisposition to the gut overreacting to stressors, leading to gut-related symptoms.

On the reverse side, dysregulation in the gut can also have a negative impact on a person's mental and emotional state. One type of dysregulation could be the makeup of one's microbiome, which is the name for the trillions of microorganisms that populate the digestive tract. The activity in the brain or state of mind can influence the microbiome, and the microbiome can reinforce emotions and even prolong them. Not surprisingly, the microbiome has the ability to also influence risk for digestive diseases. Some of the non-beneficial or harmful microbes are able to increase their numbers with the metabolites that result from stress. This imbalance of "bad" bacteria in relation to the beneficial bacteria is called dysbiosis. Dysbiosis can also lead to undesired gut-related symptoms.



Knowing about this strong and intimate connection between the gut and the brain, it only makes sense that emotions, or a certain state of mind, can considerably impact digestive functions.

Studies are even starting to show the association between neurodegenerative diseases and the gut. Parkinson's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative disease, may be one example of this. Some recent studies have found that even before characteristic Parkinson's symptoms materialize, the enteric nervous system goes through the typical Parkinson's nerve degeneration and is accompanied by a change in the gut microbiome.

With all of this evidence contributing to clear proof that the mind and the digestive system are strongly interconnected, what should you do with this information? One recommendation is to avoid eating whenever you're experiencing high, short-term stress. The body's focus won't be on digestion during this time, which can lead to acute gut-symptoms like stomach pain and bloating.

For someone who's chronically stressed or overwhelmed, therapies aimed at relaxing the mind and body can be beneficial. This could include yoga, meditation, walking, or spending time in nature.



With all of this evidence contributing to clear proof that the mind and the digestive system are strongly interconnected, what should you do with this information?

In regard to supporting the microbiome, fermented foods are ideal. Some recommended sources are kimchi, miso, sauerkraut, and unsweetened yogurt or kefir. While food sources are optimal, supplemental probiotics can be an alternative. However, desired results can vary depending on probiotic strain, so it is recommended to begin these under the supervision of a qualified medical professional. A healthy diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is also favorable for gut health and supporting the microbiome. Avoiding antibiotic overuse and not purchasing antibiotic soaps or household products can further benefit the microbiome and help to reduce the risk of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Being aware of this impactful gut-brain interconnection can help lead you to a happier, healthier life.

Meghan Marshall is a Registered Dietitian with a master's degree in Nutrition and Functional Medicine. Meghan currently works as both a clinical and community dietitian, and is the owner of Black Moon Nutrition + Wellness. She is the creator of and writer for the new blog, Black Moon Nutrition Blog blackmoonnutritionblog.com.



• Healers of Ann Arbor •

Greg Knollmeyer

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Reflexologist and T'ai Chi Instructor



By Laura K. Cowan

You can try a new type of massage or read a chiropractor's online reviews, but how do you really know when a healing modality is right for you? Columnist Laura K. Cowan goes in depth with local healers to give you a behind-the-scenes look at what they really do to help people relax and heal.

In this issue Laura spoke with Ann Arbor reflexologist and t'ai chi instructor Greg Knollmeyer, who approaches t'ai chi almost like a physical therapist would. Knollmeyer teaches tai chi classes out of the Ypsilanti Senior Center as well as private instruction in Ann Arbor and practices reflexology out of the west side Ann Arbor office he shares with wife, chiropractor Diane Babalas.



Greg Knollmeyer and his son, Raffi.

Laura K. Cowan: How did you choose these two modalities to practice? Why this particular type of healing practice?

Greg Knollmeyer: Working at a bookstore in high school, I found some very compelling Taoist texts. It was an elegant perspective—sparse and not weighted with anything extraneous or heavy dogma. In it I found a joy in paradox and struggled to wrap my mind around weak overcoming strong or yin overcoming yang. A coworker and I were talking about it, and he told me about t'ai chi and how those paradoxes can be found in its practice. So in high school I learned a very little bit of t'ai chi from two people, but it stuck with me. I loved how t'ai chi fit with the Taoist texts and that brief sense of connectedness I felt when doing t'ai chi.

In college, I found a good teacher 30 minutes away and learned a complete form. But then I spent all my savings in a year abroad studying at Oxford. I couldn't afford the gas or the class when I returned. But still t'ai chi stuck with me. I practiced very intermittently, but always it was in the back of my mind to find a teacher again.



I realized I wanted my career to involve the intrinsic energies I was cultivating.

After I changed from a traveling job and moved to Ann Arbor, around 1999, I began to study and practice very consistently. Five years ago, finding my current teacher, Richard Clear, was like discovering t'ai chi for the first time all over again.

In 2003, I was leading a training team at a Fortune 500 company. In my time there, we had reorganized the department, established core curriculum, completed a few large projects, and things were running smoothly. At that point, I found myself less than fully engaged in work. At the end of each day, I found myself rushing from work to take or teach t'ai chi and yoga classes. I realized I wanted my career to involve the intrinsic energies I was cultivating. So, I began to try all kinds of different bodywork. Much of it was helpful to receive but wasn't compelling for me.

The very last thing I tried was reflexolo-chi. My wife, chiropractor Diane Babalas, suggested that I try reflexolo-chi. I remember saying "I don't see myself rubbing people's feet for a living." But I tried and found the work very helpful in a way that I hadn't experienced in the others. I studied intensely for a couple of years and then opened my healing practice. My studies continued in depth and grew into other areas including subconscious belief work, fa gong energy healing, biofield tuning, and others.

I remember saying "I don't see myself rubbing people's feet for a living."



Laura K. Cowan: What's your favorite thing about doing reflexology and t'ai chi?

Greg Knollmeyer: When people ask me why I like t'ai chi, I'll often ask them why they like chocolate. Sometimes simple reasons are best. T'ai chi tastes good. Every day I find t'ai chi allows me to explore my inner space, move energy, and shape energy. I am more awake, relaxed, grounded, and myself through the practice.

The healing work I do really allows me to help people at a deep level. It is very humbling and wonderful to help people through difficult healing and evolution.

Laura K. Cowan: How can someone decide if reflexology or t'ai chi is right for them?

Greg Knollmeyer: The truth is everyone could benefit from t'ai chi. I've helped folks with multiple strokes regain balance and mobility. I have helped ex-military folks with black belts become more relaxed and powerful. Many students are happy to develop more calm and energy flow. Having said that, it's the most beneficial when you like it. The best way to find out is try it.



The healing work I do really allows me to help people at a deep level. It is very humbling and wonderful to help people through difficult healing and evolution.

Laura K. Cowan: What's the best place for readers to learn more about your style of t'ai chi and reflexology?

Greg Knollmeyer: The best place to learn about our t'ai chi is at an intro class. There is also a short video overview at www.SpiralChiCenter.com. The best way to learn about the healing work is also to experience it, but there is an overview of the work at www.Healing.GregKnollmeyer.com.

Laura K. Cowan: How are you handling coronavirus cleaning and social distancing concerns?

Greg Knollmeyer: For reflexolo-chi I'm doing all the things—masks, wiping every surface and knob down between clients, et cetera. I did close for a couple of months during the larger lockdown, but I've been seeing clients for a while now. I do feel it's really safe, one client at a time, intense cleaning, masks, and so on.

I am not offering my normal free introduction classes any time soon. I'll be waiting until things calm down a bit. During the larger lockdown, I was teaching solely online for continuing students. The last few months, I've held live outdoor classes that are simultaneously on video call. So I'll have students outdoors with me as well as a few online at the same time. It's been working wonderfully, and past classes are available via a student portal. You are welcome to join us 6:30 on Mondays behind the senior center. When it gets cold, I'm guessing we'll go back to solely virtual unless the situation changes.

Laura K. Cowan: Are there any restrictions or contraindications for people who might want to hold back or choose a different style of treatment or exercise?

Greg Knollmeyer: For t'ai chi, private lessons are best for people who are not able to take a long walk or who have significant limitations to movement. In private lessons, we can find ways of getting movement and energy activated through the body's limitations. Group classes require standing and moving for an hour.

For reflexolo-chi, people need to be comfortable lying on their backs on a soft massage table. Also, since reflexolo-chi really activates circulation, working on folks with blood clots is contraindicated.



I always enjoy seeing the expressions of wonder on students' faces as they experience something new in their own bodies. Helping someone experience not only the world but themselves in a different way is wonderful.

Laura K. Cowan: Could you tell me a favorite story from one of your client sessions or classes, when you knew what you were doing was really helping someone?

Greg Knollmeyer: I remember working with Jeff who had visual migraines about twice a month. They were serious and debilitating. When he arrived for his first appointment, he told me that one of his migraines was developing. And then he said in a bit of a challenging tone something like, "I didn't take any drugs because I was coming to see you." At the end of his session the migraine was gone, and he didn't get another one as long as I stayed in touch with him over the next three years.

I always enjoy seeing the expressions of wonder on students' faces as they experience something new in their own bodies. Helping someone experience not only the world but themselves in a different way is wonderful.



To learn more about Greg Knollmeyer's work, please visit www.healing.gregknollmeyer.com.

Laura K. Cowan is a columnist with Crazy Wisdom as well as a tech and wellness journalist. She is co-founder and executive editor of Ann Arbor tech blog *Cronicle Press* (www.cronicle.press). Her work has appeared in the *Ann Arbor Observer*, *Automobile Quarterly*, *CNBC*, and green design blog *Inhabitat*.



An Integrative Approach to Women's Health

An Interview with Holistic Gynecologist Dr. Suman Tewari



As a holistic physician,
every day I go into work,
I know in my heart that I'm
serving my patients the best
way I know how.

By Crysta Coburn

A graduate of Wayne State University Medical School, Dr. Suman Tewari is a women's doctor who has incorporated many aspects of functional medicine and mindset coaching with her allopathic training to bring the best possible care to her patients. I sat down with her at her beautiful office in the Parkway Center to discuss what she means when she says "holistic gynecology" and why women might not feel "empowered to heal."

Interview continued on next page



An Integrative Approach to Women's Health ~ An Interview with Holistic Gynecologist Dr. Suman Tewari

By Crysta Coburn

Photos by Susan Ayer

Crysta Coburn: Please tell us where you were raised. Do you live in Ann Arbor? If you're comfortable sharing, please tell us your husband's name and what he does, and your kids' names and ages.

Dr. Suman Tewari: I was raised here in Michigan, on the west side of Detroit. And, yes, I live in Ann Arbor. I've been in Ann Arbor since 2014. My husband's name is Muneesh. He's a physician-scientist, an oncologist and researcher at the University of Michigan. We have two children. Our son, Vivek, is 14 and our daughter, Shreeya, is 12.

In the beginning, I wasn't even interested in becoming a medical doctor... I saw myself doing research on reproductive genetics and studying the process of meiosis (cell division in reproduction).

Crysta Coburn: Why did you choose to go into gynecology?

Dr. Suman Tewari: In the beginning, I wasn't even interested in becoming a medical doctor. I saw myself doing research on reproductive genetics and studying the process of meiosis (cell division in reproduction). One of the researchers in the laboratory where I worked was an MD. So, out of pure naïveté, I decided that I should get an MD to be able to do the research I wanted to do. I applied for medical school thinking I was going to get a combined MD PhD. But then, I fell in love with the clinical part during my third and fourth years of medical school and decided to focus my career on taking care of people.

When I got to my OB-GYN rotation, honestly, it was the deliveries that got me hooked. At the time, I didn't know what to call it, but I had what I know now to be a transcendental experience. When it came to the time of the delivery, even though there were many other people around—the attending physician, residents, and nurses—everybody was kind of just a blur, like they disappeared. It was just so amazing to watch this baby take its first breath. Being part of the process of guiding it out and helping it to enter the world was like nothing I had ever experienced. After the baby was born, everyone seemed to materialize back into the room again. I just couldn't shake that experience. And that happened for me with almost every delivery!

Crysta Coburn: So, that's what led you down the path of specializing in obstetrics and gynecology?

Dr. Suman Tewari: Yes, but once I got into private practice, the real-life stress of all the responsibility that I never had as a medical student or resident weighed heavily on me. The years of disruptive emergency calls and deliveries at all times of day and night wore me down. Ultimately, the high price of malpractice insurance for obstetrics made it easy for me to stop delivering babies. Once I narrowed my practice to gynecology, I experienced another thing that was totally unexpected: I realized that I was only treating patients at a superficial level, addressing symptoms, but not the underlying causes. That was a tough realization for me because it went against the grain of all those years of education, training, and clinical practice.

It was a disorienting period of time. I went on a journey of deep soul-searching. I hired a coach who helped me restore my sense of who I was and to build the confidence that I needed to break free and try something different. That's when I discovered functional medicine, which takes a holistic, integrative approach to medical care. And a holistic approach is something that makes good common sense to me. There's no way I could ever go back.

It was just so amazing to watch this baby take its first breath. Being part of the process of guiding it out and helping it to enter the world was like nothing I had ever experienced.

CC: Why integrative? What do you mean by using that particular word?

ST: What I really mean by integrative is addressing not only the physical, but also the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of an individual, to heal at multiple levels. You can't fully heal the body without taking these other elements into account, because they are all interconnected. For example, in my conventional allopathic practice I often treated biochemical abnormalities, but didn't really ask...why is the biochemistry off. Now, I routinely ask this question, and it often leads me back to what's going on with inner thoughts and beliefs, because these run our lives.

An additional meaning of integrative is being open to other healing approaches beyond the conventional allopathic model that I trained in. There are so many

other ways of healing practiced all over the world—traditional Chinese medicine, ayurvedic medicine, homeopathy, acupuncture, and many more. Allopathic medicine is important and can be lifesaving for acute emergencies, as well as for other conditions. Yet there are a number of chronic health challenges where allopathic medicine falls short, where it only treats the symptoms and doesn't get to the underlying cause. With an integrative approach, our intention is to search for that root cause. And it's not always easy. It depends on the person and how far they may want to go. How much healing do they really want?

CC: So, what you mean by integrative is holistic. Healing the whole person.

ST: It is! It's holistic, [healing the] mind-body-soul [simultaneously], absolutely. Life events can have a major effect on physical health, and most of us are not taught how to deal with our emotions in a healthy way. For example, a woman who has gone through a divorce and not healed emotionally could experience physical symptoms even years later. We need to not only address the physical symptoms, but also address the emotional disturbances to heal fully.

Our body is always working for us. It's always trying to keep us at our optimum. And that's one of the key things I try to let the patients know when they come here—to be thankful for your body, because it's taking care of you. Like, okay, I want some of this weight to be gone. But wait, body, I see that you're doing your job well, to keep me alive. Even when I put excess food in you, you adapt to it and store it away for me. It's seeing how much your body is doing for you at all times. When I think that way, I don't have to force myself to eat better. If I have a loving relationship with my body, I want to take care of my body, right? So, you have to be grateful for the body that you have. Otherwise, we're just upset with the body, and that energy doesn't help. Love is usually the answer. Loving yourself and loving your body.

Once I narrowed my practice to gynecology, I experienced another thing that was totally unexpected: I realized that I was only treating patients at a superficial level, addressing symptoms, but not the underlying causes.

CC: What kinds of results are you seeing compared to a straight allopathic course?

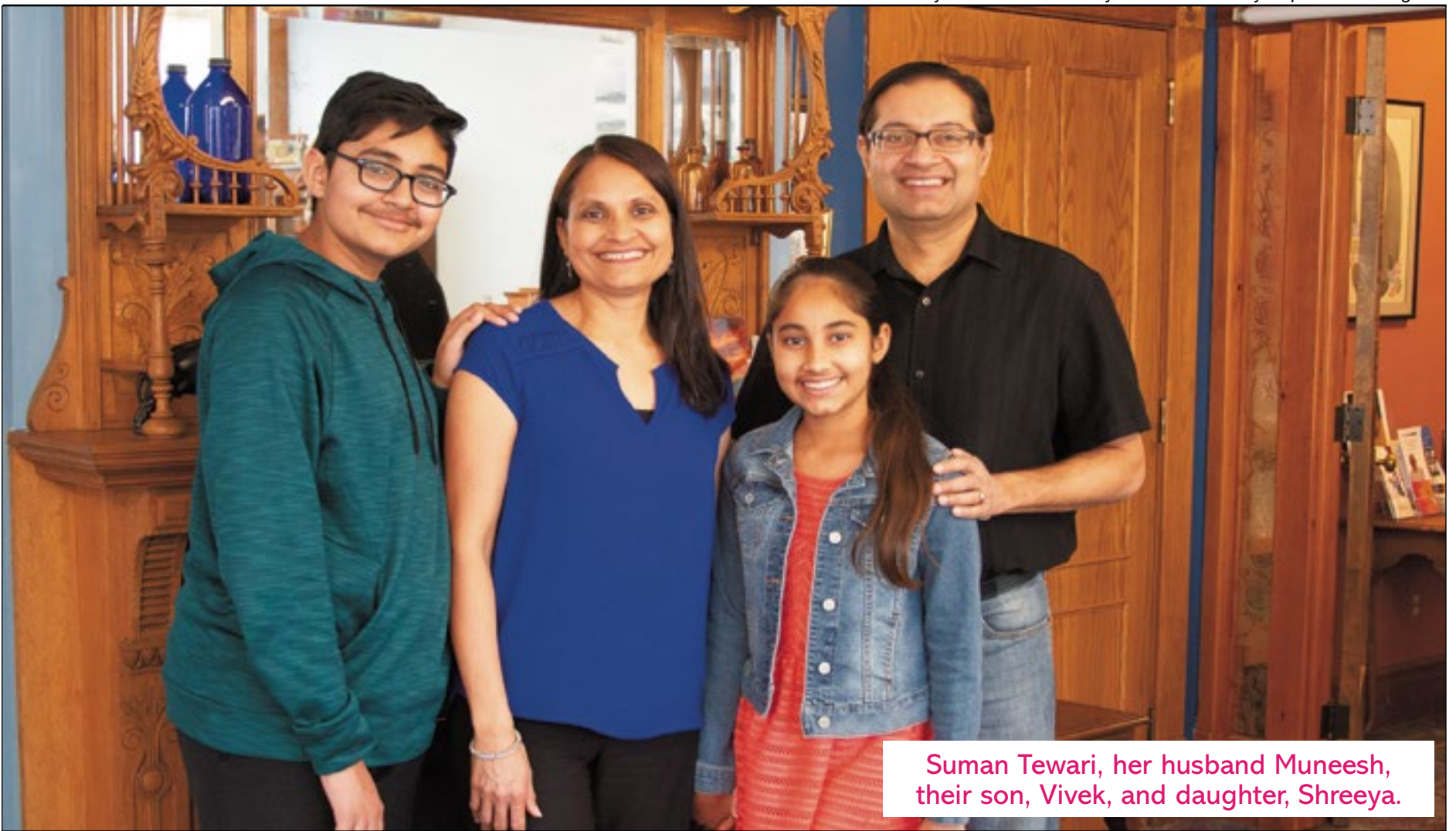
ST: One of the common things I hear from my patients is that they feel empowered. Although this is starting to change very slowly, in the traditional allopathic model, patients are placed in a passive, rather than active role. In the holistic model that I prefer, the physician is a facilitator of health, not the ultimate authority. For instance, I encourage my patients to tap into their intuition when it comes to making choices about various options and alternatives for treating a particular condition. That more expansive mindset carries over into other areas of their lives as well.

I've also noticed that the women I take care of develop a different relationship to their bodies. They better understand their bodies and are better able to tap into the vital connections between their heads and hearts and everything else in-between. They realize that this is a journey of healing. It's not a "one and done." They don't expect to lay down on the exam table and walk out with a quick fix. They take better care of themselves. Because they are more in tune with what's going on with their bodies, they are more proactive about their health and well-being. Having my patients take a proactive role in their health helps me to be a more effective physician. And it's a more satisfying way for me to apply my knowledge, skills, and experience.

CC: You talked about being better in balance. How do we become better balanced?

ST: It starts with accepting ourselves for who we are, where we are, as we are, and giving ourselves permission to be that way, whatever way that is. So, we're not resisting and fighting. It's not about not having wants, it's great to have wants, and goals, and desires. But it's not [great] to be coming at it with this resistance energy, energy of "it should be a different way, it shouldn't be this way, I should be ten pounds lighter," whatever it is. And instead of that, it's having the attitude that this is great what I have, but I'd like to be this way. What can I do, what's in my power [as a health facilitator] to do that's going to help you get there?

What I've experienced is anything that brings you joy and calmness, that's what's going to help you. So, when you're asking yourself, what do I do? How do I get myself in balance? It's about how do I get joy flowing in me? Usually there's nervous energy, or there's something in the past. You could be unbalanced on many levels. It will manifest itself, physically, your blood pressure is off balance, but it's actually happening at a deeper level. What is off is I have a desire that's not meeting my current state, we're not happy with our current state. That's not a bad thing. That's actually a good thing. That's feedback to you that, hey, we could be doing better.



Suman Tewari, her husband Muneesh, their son, Vivek, and daughter, Shreya.

We have a goal, and maybe the goal is a little too much. Maybe we need to make a smaller goal. Instead of saying, "I want to lose 50 pounds," maybe five. It just becomes more attainable, and it calms you down. Anything that calms your nervous system down is going to be better for you and is going to help you get back in balance.

This is where I get into adrenal health. To me, the adrenal gland gets very little respect in the medical world. In the allopathic medical model, unless you're way off—your cortisol is way high or way low—there's no treatment for it. We talk a lot about the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous system, sympathetic being the fight or flight and parasympathetic being rest, relax, and restore. You are faced with a traumatic situation, and boom. Your adrenaline kicks in. Your cortisol has to rise. You've got to get away from the situation, or you've got to deal with the situation. You've got to be armed. That's where our bodies need to be at that time. The problem is, we don't know how to shut that off very well afterward. And then when we're replaying it [in our heads], we're still in that fight or flight moment. And we're faced with that a lot on a daily basis.

I won't say this [is true] for everybody, but most of us are "on" a lot during the day hours. The only time we're really "off" is probably during our sleep hours. And many people are not sleeping well. They may go to bed, but are they really sleeping? Getting good sleep and getting the rest that you need is where the real healing takes place, because that's when your body is at work getting everything back in balance. During the day, because we're on so much, we don't have enough down time. Unfortunately, we're on, and it's like being on the whole time, then we wonder why we're depleted, why our cortisol levels are off, why we're gaining the weight, why the sugar is off, why there is a blood pressure problem. I feel like a lot of it is just from that [depletion]. The more we take care of our emotional health, the more it translates into more life. Learning how to deal with life, and realizing that, [whatever issue we were dealing with] is not the end of the world may help us activate our parasympathetic (rest, relax, and restore) nervous system more and bring us back into balance.

I don't want to set people's goals, but the majority of us agree the goal is to be happy—to have joy. I like to think about what that really means. What's it like to be joyous? You're actually enjoying life. Life isn't meant to be miserable. And I don't think we realize often enough that we're miserable because we're not taking the time to ask [ourselves], "Hey, how much joy do I have in my life?" But that is a question I ask myself more and more as I've been on this path. I'm evolving all the time. That's been my most recent question before going to bed. How much joy did I experience today? What filled my cup of joy? That leads into the gratitude journal. I advise a lot of my patients to do this. Before you go to bed, be thankful for all the things that went right. First thing in the morning, be grateful that you have another day. Start appreciating the things we already have and are taking for granted now.

There's an emotional level to us—spirit, soul, something else that's deeper within us. It's got to be healing on all those levels, and they have to integrate. It's a whole. We're not just a body.

CC: How do you help your patients become better balanced?

ST: I work on it from different angles. Depending on what's going on, I may need to

evaluate their hormonal balance, to coach them to help balance their perceptions (mindset), and often also work with them to discover what activities will help them feel more in balance. It's different for different people. We live in a wonderful age where it's so much more acceptable to take time for yourself. For some, it's yoga and meditation. It could mean doing an Epsom salt bath. Go and soak in a tub for half an hour—whatever is joyous. Often, I find that we as women need to give ourselves permission to do less. We are so much about evaluating our worthiness based on how much we do. Last I checked we were human *beings*, not human *doings*.

Continued on page 44

Calendar Editor Wanted

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal is looking for a detail-oriented calendar editor, a person who is interested in the holistic and conscious living subjects covered in our publication.

The Journal is published three times a year, and it includes a community calendar for our readership – somewhere between 300 and 550 listings per issue. We are looking for someone who has an interest in local events, knows how to use Google sheets and forms, is familiar with Word, and is a good proofreader. You must own your own computer as this is a work-from-home position, and you must be local to the Ann Arbor area.

If you are a team player and are interested in this position, please email a letter of interest and a resume with relevant work experience to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

(This job pays reasonably well, but it is a very part-time position.)





An Interview with Holistic Gynecologist Dr. Suman Tewari

Continued from page 43



I don't want to set people's goals, but the majority of us agree the goal is to be happy—to have joy.

CC: What can a woman expect on her first visit with you?

ST: My interaction with a new patient starts with the first phone call. I want to get to know her and to see if this is really the right fit for her. I haven't done much marketing yet, so most women reach out after hearing about me from other patients or being referred by their doctor. At that first visit, the goal is getting to know her, to understand how she operates, and who she is. The key thing is that women have the answers within them—the healing happens from within. And I listen, not judge. A lot of things are being said, and it's not only what's being said, but what's *not* being said that I pay attention to. These are clues. The answers are there, and I help bring them to the surface.

She can expect a visit that is very different from what she may be used to. A new patient visit is typically an hour and a half in length, in which I not only review her medical history, but come to know and feel who she is as a person. Sometimes this involves a physical exam, and other times that part doesn't happen until a second visit. A new patient can expect to be received by me as two people in one body—as both a gynecologist medical professional, and as a woman. She can expect to be received not just as a patient, but as a person. She can expect to be heard, and that I will work with her to also uncover the things she is not saying, that she is not asking, but which matter greatly to her and her healing.

CC: Do you ever find that women aren't used to being listened to?

ST: I think there is a lot of truth to that. I think it's that they don't feel heard, not just what they say, it's what they're not saying. And for whatever reason, I can tune into that. Maybe it's because I'm interested in what's happening on a deeper level. I always want to know why things aren't working. Just because something has worked for ten people, doesn't mean it will work for you—I believe you! People are not lying. If they say they're in pain, believe them. They're in pain if it's at the mental level or the physical level. Just because I don't know what's going on, doesn't mean it's not happening. That's healing itself, just being heard.

CC: Do you integrate use of herbs and supplements? Especially, with regards to menopause?

ST: Yes, I do. I think this is an important aspect of the holistic, functional medical approach. There's so much that can be accomplished naturally or with herbs and supplements

for menopause, even without using any hormones directly. For example, black cohosh (an herb) and Siberian rhubarb (a vegetable) have been found to reduce the frequency and severity of hot flashes.

Most people don't realize that adrenal gland fatigue can worsen the symptoms associated with menopause. So, when I'm working with a woman who is perimenopausal or in full menopause, supporting her adrenal glands is one of my top priorities. I frequently recommend adrenal support supplements such as licorice root, ashwagandha, and ginseng along with daily exercise, staying fully hydrated, regular meditation, breathing techniques for relaxation, and making a concerted effort to improve one's quality of sleep and rest.

**Our body is always working for us.
It's always trying to keep us at our optimum.**

CC: What is the age range of the women that you treat?

ST: The youngest patient I've seen was a 10-year-old. I have patients in their 80s. But the majority of the women that I'm taking care of are between 20 and 70.

CC: Can you give some more examples of the issues of menopause and perimenopause that you address holistically?

ST: Women going through perimenopause and menopause commonly experience hot flashes and night sweats, mood swings, trouble sleeping, painful sex, dry skin, thinning hair, weight gain, as well as aches and pains related to joint stiffness. The knee-jerk approach from the allopathic model is to prescribe hormone replacement, antidepressants, and other synthetic drugs. While these have their appropriate time and place, as you might expect, I take a different approach.

As I've mentioned earlier, I recommend a variety of natural remedies for hot flashes and night sweats. I've mentioned the connection between adrenal health and menopausal symptoms as well. Adequate hydration is important for helping your body wash away harmful toxins and keeping your joints working as smoothly as possible. For more restful and rejuvenating sleep, I recommend establishing a calming, relaxing routine before bed, including things like:

- Taking a bath with essential oils
- Reading uplifting material
- Writing in a gratitude journal
- Prayer
- Guided meditations and breathing techniques

I also recommend putting away electronics to bed 30-60 minutes prior to you turning in for bed.

Nothing beats regular, vigorous exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, at least several times a week. In fact, multiple studies have demonstrated that such an exercise practice is more effective than prescription anti-depressants for elevating one's mood. The only problem is that exercise doesn't come in a pill!

Now here's the thing that I believe is a really important aspect of a holistic approach to menopause: I see this period of a woman's life as an opportunity for deep personal growth. It's an opportunity for a woman to explore previously unexamined beliefs, patterns of thinking and decision-making, and habits of taking action. All of this has been ingrained from decades of being on "autopilot." Such beliefs may have served a woman well at one time, but no longer; in fact, they may now be having a negative affect.

It's also an opportunity to challenge the results of one's previous choices and actions. Such as the health of your home and work environment, and the health of your relationships. I encourage my patients to adopt a flexible attitude and mindset of going with the flow of life.

In my estimation, maybe about 5-10% of women that I've seen experience menopause like this: "Oh, my last period was 12 months ago, and you know what, I have no idea about what a hot flash is like." The interesting thing about these women is a pattern I noticed—all of them take life just "as-is." They see the positive sides of things. They accept what's so. They don't struggle in their minds (and, therefore, in their bodies) with "shoulda, woulda, coulda" self-talk. Now, they're not passive by any means. Rather, they have an "attitude of gratitude." They're grateful for the opportunities to grow, they embrace life's challenges.

I don't want your readers to think there's something wrong with them, that there's something automatically wrong with their mindset because they *are* experiencing menopausal symptoms. Instead, I think it's really, really important to provide a lot of reassurance to a woman who is going through this. It can be a scary time, keeping fears and concerns bottled up like, "Am I normal? Am I still attractive? What do people think of me? Am I still going to be able to do the things that I enjoy? Is there something wrong with me because I feel the way I do? I've read things about other women, but is what I'm going through, okay? Am I odd?"

As you might imagine, so many of the emotional and mental concerns that come up don't get expressed. For many women, there's no safe place to do so. That's my approach, it starts with listening and reassuring. A lot of it. So much is happening physiologically, mentally, emotionally, even spiritually. And it's easy to misinterpret things they've heard and read.

About a year after I stopped delivering babies, I had this epiphany: I am helping women with birthing their new self, the next version of their self-expression and freedom!

Now here's the thing that I believe is a really important aspect of a holistic approach to menopause: I see this period of a woman's life as an opportunity for deep personal growth.

CC: That's beautifully said! Though you are not an oncologist, as an integrative gynecologist, how might your approach differ when you are working with women with breast or ovarian cancer?

ST: My approach starts with the basics, assessing their overall health, regardless of what illnesses and diseases exist. I'm looking for root causes of their condition. So, some of the questions I ask are:

- What is important to her in her life? (values, meaningful)
- What is the level of inflammation present in her body and what can we do to cut down her inflammatory state?
- Is her immune system over- or under-active? What can we do to boost or calm down her immunity?
- How can we improve her gut health?
- What needs to be done as far as detoxifying the body?
- What are her religious and spiritual practices, if any?
- What lifestyle factors can be improved? (Smoking, drinking, drugs, exercise, diet, relationships, friendships, work, sleep)
- What dietary and nutritional factors need to be considered?
- What hormonal imbalances exist and need correction?
- What's her home and work life like?
- Is she in healthy, supportive relationships?
- What emotional factors contributed to the cancer? Do they still exist?

You know, in traditional allopathic medicine, the contribution of emotions is, unfortunately, ignored for the most part. But we know that our emotional states influence our physiologic states. When we're excited or scared, our heart rates go up. When we're relaxing or meditating, our heart rates go down. So, what's happening at the cellular level? A lot that we don't know about or understand yet!

To help address inner conflicts that can affect my patients' health, I provide mindset coaching as part of my approach. We often work on emotions, beliefs, fears, and concerns as they relate to their lives, in general, and medical conditions, in particular.

I also think self-love and learning to appreciate who you are is important. Only then can true healing begin. Self-loathing and negative self-talk contribute to depressing the immune system and other cellular processes that are vital to optimal health and well-being. All of this makes sense when you hear it and read it, but in practice it's more challenging. I support them in developing the habit of valuing and validating themselves, by doing things for themselves. Sometimes this means pursuing interests that they've pushed away for years, for instance.

Relationships are important to consider as well. But also, often overlooked. Cultivating healthy relationships and healing conflicts—whether it be with a boss, a spouse, a kid, a parent—it takes a lot of work. But it's an investment of "heart" dollars that pays a lifetime of dividends.

About a year after I stopped delivering babies, I had this epiphany: I am helping women with birthing their new self, the next version of their self-expression and freedom!

CC: Many women have fibroid tumors. Please talk about ways that you might approach this that would be the same and would be different from a strictly allopathic gynecologist? With UTIs (Urinary Tract Infections)? With STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections)?

ST: Fibroids are the result of a hormonal imbalance where there's too much estrogen in her system, relative to the other hormones. A woman with fibroids needs help with clearing estrogen out of her system.

In my allopathic training, time was the issue, there was no discussion regarding the underlying cause. Basically, we were taught to either manage it with hormones (birth control pills, progesterone, or [hormonal] IUD) or, if they were symptomatic with persistent bleeding or pain, then we took them to surgery, and you removed it and—voila! You fix their pain and bleeding issues, but you never addressed what was the original cause of it, so they're still running around with that imbalance in their hormones!

To balance their hormones, one of the things to do is, yes, you can give them the progesterone to help offset the extra estrogen in their system. But the other thing I like to focus on is studying how they are processing the estrogen in their bodies and getting rid of the estrogen. This is important to consider because there is a healthy way and an unhealthy way to metabolize your estrogen. By understanding this, I can give them supplements to help them process estrogen in a healthy way and get rid of unhealthy, harmful forms of estrogen before they can cause any long-lasting damage.

When treating UTIs, one of the things I do differently is to focus on improving the healthy bacteria that live in the genital area and urinary tract. This is called the microbiome. There is a probiotic that women can take that is specifically designed to improve the health of the tissues that line the bladder and vagina. For women who are prone to UTIs or vaginal infections, I've observed that taking this probiotic daily helps reduce the likelihood of getting an infection. For women who have an active infection, I start them on the probiotic as well. It's also important to consider

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their nutritional status, in particular, levels of certain vitamins, like B12, folate, magnesium, and other micronutrients. I help patients sort this out by ordering a nutritional profile.

For STIs, it's a matter of boosting their immune systems, which I address more now. I didn't learn that in my allopathic training. If I am treating a patient with antibiotics, I recommend that she also take probiotics to help keep a healthy balance of healthy bacteria in her gut. It's common knowledge that antibiotics are going to affect your gut microbiome, but even so, some doctors still overlook the importance of taking probiotics along with antibiotics.

In contrast to the allopathic model, I think it's important to address the emotions associated with dealing with an STI. It's one thing to write a prescription and hurry a patient out the door. But to really help a patient, I think it's important to discuss the health of their relationships with lifestyle choices and sexual partners. It's also important to acknowledge that their self-esteem can be negatively impacted by contracting an STI. Just mentioning this to a patient can give her a sense of relief from validating her feelings, like guilt, shame, and fear. It's important for her to be heard, even if she doesn't want to discuss it much further.

CC: Thank you so much, Dr. Tewari! It has been wonderful speaking with you.

I think self-love and to learn to appreciate who you are is important. Only then can true healing begin. Self-hate, self-loathing, and negative self-talk contribute to depressing the immune system and other cellular processes that are vital to optimal health and well-being.

Dr. Tewari can be contacted at DrTewari@A2HG.net or by phone at (734) 418-2188. Visit her online at annarborholisticgynecology.com. Her office, Ann Arbor Holistic Gynecology, is located at 2345 South Huron Parkway in Ann Arbor. She is seeing patients both in person and by telemedicine.



Golden Fleece



Keeping You Warm and the Planet Cool with Michigan Merinos at Happy Goat Lucky Ewe Farm

By Kirsten Mowrey • Photos by Fresh Coast Photography



“Watch out for the ram.”

Surrounded by sheep, I turn quickly, trying to find the one ram among the twenty plus ewes in the pen. They all look alike in their thick winter fleeces on this January visit, dashing away from me when I approach like minnows in a pond. I move closer to Bridget Kavanagh, the owner of Happy Goat Lucky Ewe farm, to make sure there isn't enough open space for the ram to follow through on his name. Sheep bump against my thighs, and I feel like I'm being hit by toddlers with pillows, their fleeces are so thick. It's a barnyard comedy show: I'm darting after the sheep to see how long their fleeces are, they are running away from me while chasing the hay that Kavanagh is tossing to them for their late morning feed. Finally, I spot the ram, fortunately across the pen from me, horns hidden by fleece, leaving the black straps of his chest harness the sole identifier.



Increases in the environmental impact of petroleum extraction, personal attention to health, and awareness of local economies brought the question, “Why are we wearing oil?” to the forefront.

He's wearing a harness because now is when he will cover (mate) with the ewes. The harness contains orange chalk that he will leave on the rumps of the females and Kavanagh will know who will be expecting later in the spring. He is essential to the continued future of Kavanagh's business, Michigan Merinos—ground zero for fiber production in Michigan.

Humans use many materials for our clothing needs. Originally, most clothing was from animal fur and skin. As human culture and agriculture developed, plant-based fibers also appeared. Plant and animal based fabrics have been the foundation for all clothing throughout history, until the advent of synthetic petroleum based fibers in the late 1800s. Increases in the environmental impact of petroleum extraction, personal attention to health, and awareness of local economies brought the question, “Why are we wearing oil?” to the forefront. Just as farmers, health professionals, and economists shone attention onto the how, where, and way of food production, dyers, fiber artists, and clothing designers are asking the same of our textiles. Our skin is the first layer of protection for our body, keeping what we don't want out (viruses, toxic chemicals, thorns) and keeping our internal organs, bones, and other systems safe. Why would you care for your body and then place a carcinogenic chemical-soaked cloth on it for eight or more hours a day? Yet, in our anonymous long production chain economy, we do exactly that.



Every ecosystem produces fibers that help protect thin human skin. Local sourcing of fiber grounds local economies in their unique ecosystem, its strengths and limitations, helping us to come home to our place on this beautiful blue-green planet.

Knowing where your clothes come from and how they are made isn't only about knowing what you put on your skin, it's also about being present in your place on this planet. Every ecosystem produces fibers that help protect thin human skin. Local sourcing of fiber grounds local economies in their unique ecosystem, its strengths and limitations, helping us to come home to our place on this beautiful blue-green

planet. I've written about growing local color via indigo dyeing, (see the article *True Colors: Growing and Creating Local Color with Colorwheel in Issue #73*), and creating clothing by learning to sew fabric and knit yarn, but the basis for all of our clothing is agriculture. Cotton, America's favorite fiber, is frost intolerant and cannot be grown in Michigan. Flax, the basis for linen, grows well in Michigan's climate but requires about seven years to become fully adapted to our ecosystem. Hemp, a strong and durable fiber, was deregulated in the national Farm Bill in 2018, but still requires significant oversight at the federal level, and other plant-based fibers are limited by our long winters.

Which leads us to animal-based fibers: wool, angora, cashmere, and alpaca. With plentiful rainfall and abundant grasses, Michigan is an excellent ecosystem for grazers. Prior to European settlement, most of southern Michigan was oak savanna and prairie, likely grazed by buffalo. European settlers arrived and substituted sheep for bison. The Saline Historical Society's website documents local “breeders and feeders,” a 1910 newspaper article citing the sheep practices of area farmers, breeding for wool or meat, and the financial advantages of each strategy. Currently, most of the lower peninsula is defined as “open land” by the US Forest Service and so ready, again, for grazing. Kavanagh's farm is bringing back historical practices, raising sheep and angora goats, while dedicating land to pollinators and wildlife.



Prior to European settlement, most of southern Michigan was oak savanna and prairie, likely grazed by buffalo. European settlers arrived and substituted sheep for bison.


She didn't start out this way. Kavanagh was working as a legislative assistant in the Michigan state legislature when she was asked by state representative Bob Bender to become the public relations manager for the state's bovine tuberculosis program. She said, “I was a farmer-ette back then. We had a small farm and pets for the kids, goats, horses, everything but cows.” After two years in public relations, she became the program's interagency coordinator, working with the DNR, Agriculture, Public Health, MSU Extension, Farm Bureau, and the USDA. Then Agriculture hired her to continue that coordination position as well as being the zoonotic disease health liaison between departments. Kavanagh noted “[Because] avian influenza was happening, and the same groups of people had to rise for that occasion. And we did a lot of emergency exercises for SARS and other zoonotic diseases, which are diseases that jump between humans and animals. It's constant [work] and it's still going on, but I did it for close to twenty years.” [Covid-19 is a zoonotic disease].

Kavanagh retired in 2015 and purchased her Merino sheep in 2017. She had raised sheep for meat before, but then “I discovered Merino—the wool is so absolutely amazing. Its 3000 years of research and development has gone into making the Merino sheep the perfect fiber animal. And you get the great attitude and personality of sheep. They're the most amazing animals. They're mellow, quiet, not aggressive. They just really like to eat, and ruminate, and they seem very wise to me.” Merino wool is very fine, its thickness measured in microns. Merino thickness is less than 24 microns, compared to 25 to 35 for Shetland wool. Fine wool means it feels softer to human skin and fetches a higher price.

Raw fiber needs to be processed: washed, skirted, vegetable matter removed, picked, carded, and hacked to create a base material that can then be turned into

thread. Wool is processed into one of three forms: batts, roving, or yarn. Batts are large squares, typically used in quilts or for creating felted cloth, while roving is fluffy lightweight pillows of fiber ready for spinning. While Kavanagh has some clients who buy raw fleeces, and do the work themselves, for others she sends her wool off to mills for processing. Michigan, with its manufacturing and agricultural past, is fortunate to have mills within the state, keeping shipping minimal, but wool producers in other states often have to ship their wool thousands of miles. Some customers want roving, others yarn, and yarn type depends on what they create.

Kavanagh explained: "For hand knitting yarn, a soft, beautiful, light and airy twist, I use Stonehedge Fiber Mill [located in East Jordan, MI]. Hoof to Hangar in Richmond does a very nice job, too. Zeilinger's [in Frankenmuth, one of the largest mills in the country] does the yarn for machine knitting because their twist has to be extra tight. If you look at the yarn from Zeilinger and the yarn from Stonehedge, you wouldn't believe it came from the same animal because [the one] is so super tightly spun. But the fibers open up as you wear them. So, you get your hat back or your socks and it seems kind of coarse and you think: I don't like this. I don't think this is Merino. As you wear it and wash it, it softens up and blooms into this really lovely soft yarn. But it takes a while, and the tight spin will help it last a longer amount of time."

 Kavanagh's farm is bringing back historical practices, raising sheep and angora goats, while dedicating land to pollinators and wildlife.

In the pen, I try to part the sheep's fleeces to see the skin and measure how long it is. Dirty gray on the outside, the slightly oily (from lanolin, which the sheep secrete) parted fleece reveals whiteish fiber turning to honey colored near the skin, almost like an egg. My inspection finished, we watched the sheep leave the pen, while Kavanagh talked about sheep care, farm grants, and her upcoming shearing day. Watching the sheep walk away, I feel a calmness that the presence of animals brings. Yet, these sheep are doing more than easing my nervous system, they are also helping to combat one of the hottest topics in politics: climate change.

Carbon is an element, number six on the periodic table that hung in all chemistry labs as I was growing up. We are made of carbon, it's in all our cells, and when we, and everything on this planet, dies, that carbon is freed up to continue moving through the many cycles that keep our planet supporting life. The carbon cycle, which includes carbon dioxide, is the name of how carbon moves through our biosphere. A very simple description looks like this: we breathe in oxygen, and we exhale carbon dioxide. Trees inhale carbon dioxide and exhale oxygen. Some processes, such as burning fossil fuel, emit large amounts of carbon dioxide. Other systems, such as oceans and atmosphere, take in carbon dioxide. Again, this is a simple description of a very complex system, but the devil, as always, is in the details.

Herbivores are often cited as a form of emissions, similar to factories and transportation, but not all herbivore activities are equal. A CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation), where cattle are fed imported grain, kept in small lots, and slaughtered young, yields great amounts of carbon emissions and manure. Yet this is not how cattle, or any other herbivore, lives in an ecosystem. In an ecosystem, herbivores range, moving from place to place to find food and leaving behind their manure. Their grazing stimulates plant growth, causing the grasses to take in *more* carbon, acting as a carbon sink, not an emitter. Their manure returns nutrients to the soil, enabling *more* plant growth and *more* soil bacteria, again acting as a carbon sink. Concentrating animals is essentially creating a factory with biological components. In an ecosystem unmanaged by humans, concentrations such as these occur only seasonally and only for short periods—think of bears in Alaska feeding on spawning salmon, or migrations of wildebeest in Africa. They don't stay there for months and months, because the ecosystem can't support that, but the short term intensity creates a situation where the plants are grazed, the soil disturbed, and then [the land] takes in more carbon to create the new growth, overall drawing down the carbon in the atmosphere.



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This cycle is exactly what Kavanagh recreates on her 35-acre farm. As we crunch through the snow, she explained, "This paddock is 13 acres. I divide it into five [areas] in the summer with premier electronet fencing. It is portable, you roll it up. They get three days on one area and then they go to another area. I have 12 separate areas. The first run of the season here," she gestures, her blond hair swinging behind her, "we'll go to the right to recover. It's over a month before you are on it again." During that month, the grasses and soil are sucking carbon out of the atmosphere, turning her farm in Mason into a carbon sink. Part of a USDA program, Kavanagh's soil is tested regularly to check the carbon uptake and her "climate-beneficial" wool fetches better prices.

 Herbivores are often cited as a form of emissions, similar to factories and transportation, but not all herbivore activities are equal.



March 21st, the first day of spring. Shearing day at Happy Goat Lucky Ewe. Gray skies and deep cold belie that truth, making it feel more like winter than it has for weeks. Some of the flock have already been sheared when I arrive, Cubist Picasso versions of sheep, with sharp lines and angles in their fleece, diagonals wrapping around from back to belly. I can clearly see which ewes are pregnant now, wide hips and curving bellies hidden no longer. At the back of Kavanagh's barn, shearer Sy Caryl and his assistant clip the herd, balancing on plywood boards while they hold the sheep between their legs, bent over in a semi-squat. Their razors hang from motors above on long cords drooping to the ground. Behind a fence, a sheep is held by an assistant ready for the next shearer, one hand on their head, one on their rump. When Caryl is ready, the gate goes down, the sheep is handed through to Sy, who bends the sheep's head to the right and spins it onto its rump, so the sheep is sitting semi upright, as if it were in a recliner, with the sheep's hind legs between the shearer's. Then the shearer grabs their razor, and starts moving it through the fleece, with the left hand holding the skin taut, the right holding the razor. Merino's have wrinkly skin, increasing surface area, and thereby the size of the fleece, but this makes it very difficult for the shearer and

Golden Fleece



Keeping You Warm and the Planet Cool With Michigan Merinos at Happy Goat Lucky Ewe Farm

Continued from page 47



opposite end. Here she spreads out the fleece for skirting, where tarry brown lanolin clotted ends, vegetable matter and other bits of unusable wool get removed from the fleece. Kavanagh holds up the lace-like fleece up to the light, spreading it wide while teaching Herron about her new acquisition. Once skirted, the fleece goes back in the bag and the two women head up to Kavanagh's house to weigh the fleece and complete the sale. Herron will need to wash and card the fleece to make it ready to spin, and the eagerness in her face shows that is no chore for her.



Current politics are also creating new options for Kavanagh. Tariffs and embargoes against China mean that yarn stores are unable to receive yarns from certain vendors or only in very limited supply.



In an ecosystem unmanaged by humans, concentrations such as these occur only seasonally and only for short periods—think of bears in Alaska feeding on spawning salmon, or migrations of wildebeest in Africa.

I see the occasional nick. The sheep don't seem to mind though; many of them close their eyes, stretch their legs, and lie back onto the shearer. They remind me of ladies at the beauty parlor—that look women get on their faces when their hair is washed: closed eyes, deep breaths, pleasure loosening their jaws. The amount of wool pooling at the feet of the shearer is stunning, clouds of pale foam up to their knees, as if another whole sheep lies there.

Sheep need to be shorn for their health. If unshorn, the wool would continue to grow until it hampered the sheep's ability to move. Seeing the amount of wool coming off sheep after sheep, I can imagine the discomfort of moving with it on a hot summer day. The shearer keeps moving the sheep, clipping off the hair. Sometimes it's a leg, then the head, then the rump, until he has encircled the sheep and all the wool lies at his feet. Then he pushes the sheep forward onto their forelegs, away from the wool and releases it. The sheep shakes itself, then walks off on surprisingly stocky legs, back to the field where its friends browse on hay. Some give an opinionated "Baa", as if they were giving a review for *ShearAdvisor*, before they, too, walk off, while the shearer takes a moment to stretch upright and loosen his back.



They remind me of ladies at the beauty parlor—that look women get on their faces when their hair is washed: closed eyes, deep breaths, pleasure loosening their jaws.

Lora Herron stands near me, watching sheep MO 4242 (her ear tag number) get sheared; this fleece will be hers. Tall, blonde, and fit looking, Herron lives in Grand Blanc and visited the farm a few weeks earlier to choose her fleece. It's a doozy, one of the largest, and Herron laughs, delighted by plans of spinning and knitting with it. Once the fleece is off the sheep, Kavanagh bundles it into a garbage bag, keeping it away from the mud, then moves back into the barn to a large plastic table at the

This moment, Herron's face shining with joy as she holds her fleece and Kavanagh's shared joy and pride—this is the moment that all the work builds toward. This is the moment when the producer and artist meet, when Herron receives a fleece from a sheep she knows was well cared for, and Kavanagh hands her labor over to a creator who knows the value of that wool. It is beyond the transaction, it is relational, exponential beyond what currency and numbers can quantify, a way of being in the world that affirms life and nourishes spirit.

Contrast that with the commodities market. Wool as a commodity has faced flat prices for decades. "Most wool goes for 17 cents to 26 cents a pound," said Kavanagh. "People don't even get paid for their fiber. The shearer is there to take the wool off because they need to have their wool removed. The shearer comes in and he takes it and gets a nice check because he's [collecting] from all of the farms. He might have 10,000 pounds of wool at 26 cents a pound. Merino, you get \$4 a pound for the wool."



It is beyond the transaction, it is relational, exponential beyond what currency and numbers can quantify, a way of being in the world that affirms life and nourishes spirit.



Since I wrote this article, we have as a nation learned a great deal about long supply chains and how they affect us.

Kavanagh, however, gets \$10 a pound, selling directly to spinners and knitters, offering a high-quality product. "I don't make a lot, but I make enough to continuously improve the farm." She also makes hats. "My goal for this year is to find a ski resort that wants to carry US grown and made hats. My hats are expensive, but everything is traced and traceable." Current politics are also creating new options for Kavanagh. Tariffs and embargoes against China mean that yarn stores are unable to receive yarns from certain vendors or only in very limited supply. What does a shepherdess do? "I contacted two yarn store owners. I said, Hey, why don't you do a run of your own yarn for your own shop and buy local? One is buying a hundred pounds of wool. [The retail store] Why Knot Fibers up in Traverse City, is going to have their own yarn made and their own label."

The late Macarthur Fellow and systems analyst, Donella Meadows, wrote of leverage points. Places where we can change systems to "get more of what we want and less of what is undesirable." She identified ten places where we could do this; one of the most useful is the paradigm being used, the mind-set behind the goals and purposes. The current mind-set behind our clothing system is to create as cheaply as possible and ignore any human, environmental, or social impact as incidental, but with a small mental sidestep, we can leave that paradigm and the waste and pain of human and animal lives aside. We can move into a mindset that is healthier for us, our planet, our ecosystems, and the places we live. As Meadows wrote, "There's nothing physical or expensive or even slow in the process of paradigm change. All it takes is a click in the mind, a falling of scales from the eyes, a new way of seeing." (Thinking in Systems p. 163-164)

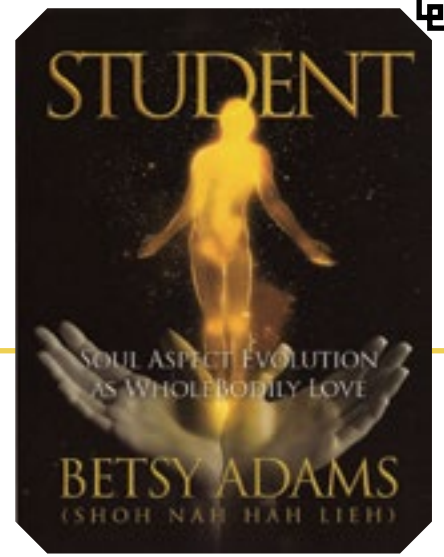
Since I wrote this article, we have as a nation learned a great deal about long supply chains and how they affect us. Weeks of shortages of chemicals for coronavirus testing, limited PPE (personal protection equipment) for hospital and health care workers because of textile mills thousands of miles away, empty shelves with no hand sanitizer. Local resources helped us to meet some of these needs: quilters organized via Maker-works and created cloth masks to fill the gap, Operation Face Shield used 3-D printers to create necessary equipment, and distillers changed from beverages to hand sanitizer. These local industries and supply chains were there because people like Bridget Kavanagh and others believed in creating locally to meet local needs. Corporations may source distantly and cheaply, but if there is a lesson to take from our coronavirus shutdown, it is to show the fallacy of those distant sources, the faults in that paradigm, and the strengths of a strong local economy. I hope you have enjoyed these articles about natural dyes, knitting, local jeans, and local wool. I hope they sparked interest in how we color, create, and source our clothing, and invited thoughtful introspection about your own relationship to your wardrobe, making the question, "What do I wear today?" bigger than you ever imagined.

Visit Bridget Kavanagh's online store at: www.michiganmerinos.com. To learn more about plant and animal-based fibers, or about creating a local textile economy, visit www.fibershed.org.

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Pippen— Our Own Little Mafia Boss

By Jenn Carson

My husband and I have been together for almost 30 years. In that time, we've raised four boys and six dogs. Well... six and a half if you count the puppy we raised for my mom for the first five months.

Most of our dogs have been of the "big" variety—labs and lab mixes. Our first dog we had together, Meghan, was adopted from the Huron Valley Humane Society. I was told she was a shepherd/lab mix, but we always wondered because she wasn't built like either of the two breeds. She had long, slender legs, petite feet, a glossy coat, and a fan tail that curled up. It wasn't until recently, when my husband's aunt and uncle brought an English Shepherd puppy home that we had an aha moment—Meghan had been an *English Shepherd*.

Neither one of us ever considered getting a little dog—they were yappy, biting little creatures (or so we thought).

Neither one of us ever considered getting a little dog—they were yappy, biting little creatures (or so we thought). Big dogs were safer—they kept strangers away from our kids, foxes away from the chickens, and our feet warm in bed. So, what made us change our mind?

As life moved on, our priorities shifted. Everyone in our family is now an adult. Constant supervision is no longer something our children need, which leaves my husband and I free to explore the country—to see all the things we didn't get to because we started a family when we were young instead of sowing wanderlust. We bought a small motorhome in order to do this, but a 90-pound lab and a small motorhome don't really go together all that well. We knew we'd never leave a dog behind for three or four months, and we knew we wouldn't want to be without the companionship of a dog. So, the search began—for a small dog with a big dog attitude.

Boy, was this a lesson in framing your wants to the universe correctly!

We got a small dog with a very big attitude.

Pippen was a sweet-looking, less than three pounds, little bundle of brown and white fur. A cocker spaniel, poodle mix. We'd never paid more for a pup than we did for her, plunking down 800 hard earned dollars. The first weekend we had her she wiggled under the claw-foot tub in our Victorian house—and came out with a blue pill in her mouth. A struggle ensued—she didn't like to give found treasures up. A few months previous my husband had dropped his blood pressure medicine—he thought he'd picked them all up—obviously he didn't get them all. I scrambled to the phone and called the emergency vet, since it was a Sunday morning. The receptionist was very calm until I told her that Pippen only weighed three pounds.

Boy, was this a lesson in framing your wants to the universe correctly!



Scout and Pippen

Mary Bortmas, Unforgettable Photos



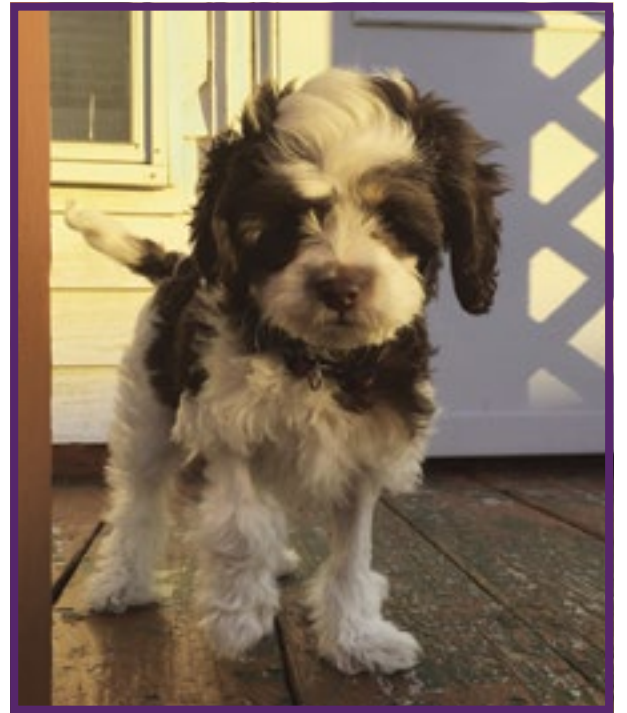
Needless to say, a whole day at the vet on IV's, and \$600 later, we came home with a little ball of fur with two shaved front legs and a lesson learned—small dogs can get into places you've never even thought of. Looking at this positively, the floor under the tub has never been so clean.

Even though Pippen is the smallest dog in the house (only 11 pounds)—we still have a 90-pound male lab, and an old girl who weighs about 65 pounds—she is the dominant dog—most of the time. Our old girl will still put her in her place occasionally, but our male dog lets her boss him around something fierce.

It's comical most of the time, but sometimes momma has to step in, like when the other dogs want to wake me up in the morning. As soon as they approach the side of the bed Pippen starts to guard me. While I appreciate the fact that she wants to let me sleep, the fact that she's standing on my head growling at the other dogs doesn't really help all that much.

Pippen can also be very demanding.

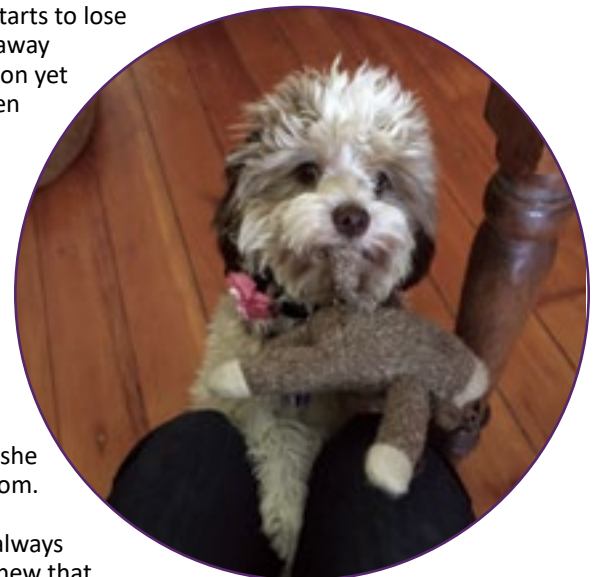
I trained her to ring a bell when she has to go potty. I was so proud of how smart she was! She learned this little trick in about four days, and even trained the other dogs to know that when the bell rings, everyone can go outside. But now I wonder if I trained her or if she trained me? She now rings the bell when she wants to go out to potty, but she also rings it if she wants to distract the big dogs, if she wants to sit on the porch steps in the sun, or wants to go for a walk. If I don't get up right away she walks into the room I'm in and cocks her head as if to say, "What are you doing hooman? I rang the bells! Are you deaf?" The look on her face is priceless and always makes me laugh (and groan at the same time because I've been interrupted for about the tenth time that afternoon).



Okay—so having a puppy has always been like having an infant—I knew that going into this, but I didn't think I was getting a new mafia boss in the house.

Pippen can also be very insecure.

When I put my shoes on, she starts to lose her mind. She steals and runs away with the shoe I haven't gotten on yet and she attacks my fingers when I'm trying to tie my laces. I've started kenneling her up when I have to leave without her before I put my shoes on or putting her harness on first if I am going to take her with me—that way she knows she's going. Thankfully, she has also developed a bond with the boys who still live at home, so if I do have to leave her, I feel better about it—but she definitely prefers to be with mom.



Okay—so having a puppy has always been like having an infant—I knew that going into this, but I didn't think I was getting a new mafia boss in the house. I'm hoping that she'll calm down a little as she gets older—and for right now, I'll just remember that it feels good to be so loved, even if she does try to boss me around.

squirrel sense



By Randall Andrews

They call it *birdseed* for a reason, but squirrels don't know that.

For those of us who enjoy feeding birds, squirrels can be crafty, and sometimes costly, adversaries. A hungry fox squirrel can chow down a dollar's worth of sunflower seeds faster than a small flock of finches, which can be annoying. Or it can be entertaining.

For the most part, I've maintained the latter perspective. I do remember grinding my teeth when I spotted a bushy tail at my new "squirrel-proof" feeder, but my frustration faded quickly in the face of the mystery. How had he done it? Could he fly? Repel? Teleport?

Where I live, fox squirrels and red squirrels have been in residence at least as long as I have. It wasn't until much later that the first gray squirrel appeared. It was exciting in a way, spotting a new critter, but it was also worrisome. Birds aren't the only ones with pecking orders. I liked the squirrels I had, and I didn't want some newcomer crowding in on their territory.

THEY CALL IT BIRDSEED FOR A REASON, BUT SQUIRRELS DON'T KNOW THAT.

It turns out, I needn't have worried. There was a little jockeying for position, but everyone settled into a new routine, a new normal, and no tails were lost in the transition. To accommodate my newly expanded clientele, I added a little wooden table and chair to the feeder tree, just the right size for an ear of corn and a squirrel.

As time passed, the gray squirrel not only won me over, but rose to the top of my favorites list. Because he was gray, and because I was reading Oscar Wilde at the time, I named him Dorian. Even by squirrel standards, he was extraordinarily acrobatic, a talent that granted him access to any feeder, squirrel-proof or not. Of course, that became a moot point once he started eating from my lap.

INSTEAD OF SHOOING HIM AWAY, I STARTED CALLING IT SQUIRRELSEED. THERE. PROBLEM SOLVED.

Years earlier, after noticing the natural boldness of chickadees, I performed an experiment, the result of which was dozens of birds of several species eating from my hands. I did that on purpose, according to a plan. With Dorian, it was different. I had no intention of training him, and maybe I didn't. Maybe he trained

me. Regardless, he ended up in my lap eating the birdseed that was supposed to be for—you guessed it—the birds!

Instead of shooing him away, I started calling it squirrelseed. There. Problem solved.

So there I was, enjoying increased biodiversity in my own backyard, as well as the company of my first rodent friend. I should also have been experiencing the satisfaction that comes with insight. After all, my initial reaction to Dorian's appearance proved to be way off base. Adding him into the mix had only made things more interesting. There were definitely lessons to be learned there. But sometimes I'm a slow learner.

I'm not sure how much time passed before the black squirrel showed up. Maybe a year. Maybe a little less. I do remember that despite the fact that I should have known better, I responded with the same groan as before. I again thought of my regulars, and of Dorian in particular. We were buds by then. As long as I supplied him with corn and *squirrelseed*, he was more than happy to hear me whine about work or the weather or whatever Detroit sports team was playing then. (He's an excellent listener.)

I liked the way things were, and I didn't want them to change. I didn't want anybody ruining our routine.

Albert Einstein once said, "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." Smart guy. Wise words.

I'd been looking into nature, but I hadn't been seeing everything clearly. Fortunately, Dorian was going to give me a second chance to learn the lessons I'd missed the first time around.

EINSTEIN WAS RIGHT. NO SURPRISE.

It became quickly apparent that Dorian and the black squirrel could get along. There were some spirited games of tree-tag, but they felt more playful than aggressive. In fact, there were times when it seemed almost . . . flirty? The more I watched, the more convinced I became that *he* really liked *her*. A lot. Hmmm?

As chance would have it, the answer to my next question was within easy reach. I'd been trying (for the hundredth time) to deal with my book hoarding problem, and knew the exact location of my Peterson Field Guides.

As I'd suspected, black squirrels are, in fact, gray squirrels. This might sound strange, given the obvious difference in their appearance, but it's true. More familiar to most people would be the case of Labrador Retrievers, found commonly with coats of black, chocolate, or yellow. They look very different, but inside they're the same. It's the same with the squirrels.

And with us.

Einstein was right. No surprise.

I realize that accessing nature on a regular basis is not a simple matter for many people. However, I strongly believe that getting grass under your feet and the electric light out of your eyes from time to time is vital to good health. Also, it really is true what Einstein said. Looking deeply into nature can lead to a greater understanding of so many things, including ourselves.



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Stirring the Spirit to Health: A Profile of Energy Healer Karlta Zarley

By Michelle McLemore • Photos by Hilary Nichols

There you are minding your own business, and the sound of a battalion of bees builds to a crescendo—and then disappears just as rapidly. If upon hearing the sound you freeze in momentary panic, you only have a nanosecond to catch a glimpse of the source, and most often it will only be a blur. Seasoned, you know to not swivel about wildly, but to scan with your eyes and turn slowly. Then, you may see the actual flight of the hummingbird. It is a flash of iridescence, a determined small head leading a wake of whirring wings—an almost visible stream hanging in the air where it cuts through this pane of reality like a knife through warm butter.

When asked to reveal the depths of a high-frequency energy individual, like Karlta Zarley, it is like trying to spy a hummingbird in flight. Her true spirit—her energy identity—might be compared visually to a shimmering iridescent cloud—a fluttering of high intensity consciousness because, as she shared, “[she is] working 24/7 in some dimension.”

To begin to understand someone who chooses to assist in healing (others and the earth) we must first recognize there is more than meets the eye. Understanding energy—the universal life force which connects and flows through all aspects of life as we perceive it—guides us into understanding communication, and intercessions occur across dimensions and the concept of time. And that new wisdom facilitates understanding that 24/7 “work” doesn’t create physical exhaustion...if you have evolved to the point where Zarley is. Along with that comes the understanding that there is no real separation of work from person—there is simply the path and the person she has chosen to be.



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To put it bluntly, for those who know her from metaphysical circles, Karlta Zarley is held in deep respect and high regard; Zarley is one of southeastern Michigan’s deeper and more profound healers, one of our regional equivalents of international psychics and healers such as Sylvia Brown, Barbara Brennan, and Elaine Grohman.

Zarley’s iridescence is due to how she lives her life—how she eats (as naturally as possible), walks, gardens, communicates, thinks, and prepares. She emphasizes

the need for self-care three to seven times a week. For example, she may do swaps with others for modality work like massage. She meditates 30-40 minutes a day and has fallen in love with the free “Insight Timer” meditation phone application. At its mention, she seems to start sparkling (next thing I know I’m listening to a brief commercial by a strong advocate). Fifty-five thousand free meditations, 8,000 teachers, 9-11,000 people meditating at the same time—“that is critical mass numbers for change on the earth population,” she exclaimed, “and it rewards you with a star every ten days.” Zarley leaned in to share, “We couldn’t afford stickers or gum when we were young, so this motivates me.” In a culture that has been

advocating self-care for the last five years, Zarley clarified it is not just about the self: “To do the level [of healing work] I do, this is the level of self-care I need.”

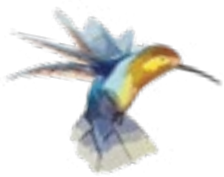
These choices elevate her personal energy frequency, enabling her to interact across matter in ways beyond what most people fathom. And yet this intensity of potential is contained physically in a down-to-earth, nature-loving, casually dressed, no-muss figure of a 63-year-old woman. If the hummingbird symbolizes her internal psychic energy, Zarley manifests in the flesh like a red hawk for her observation and analysis skills, as well as a squirrel in intelligence, communication, loyalty, preparation, trust, and thriftiness.

When I reached out to ask for an interview, warmth issued through Zarley’s words on the screen. She suggested a grassy park near Chelsea and intuitively spot-on gave me directions via landmarks versus road names. (Some of you will understand this and know my immediate relief and gratitude.) She had brought a home-packed salad from her garden and had brought me a gift—a bag of fresh green beans. In the back of my mind, my Native American teacher was scolding me for not having brought Zarley—the teacher—a gift. Graciously, Zarley did not acknowledge my faux pax—if it even crossed her mind. We sat at a picnic table in the open-air pavilion, and I hesitated. What is acceptable to ask? What is too personal? Some spiritual healers seem to carry a cloak of mysticism, but there Zarley sat beside me, clear as midday sunshine.

Perhaps the most comprehensive and succinct title at this point would be to describe Zarley as a “whole health consultant.” Her health focused journey, however, began very young. She recounts reading to her mother at age four, paging through the dictionary to find the biggest

word, when she “chanced” across “obstetrician.” As her mother explained what the job entailed, she remembered feeling from that time on that she would work in medicine. Not surprisingly, Zarley would go on to commit over 30 years in traditional western medicine as a registered nurse, mostly in women’s studies. But first, within a year of this medical calling, she was faced with a major health challenge of her own.





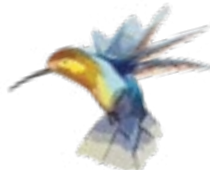
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Around age five, Zarley came down with measles and then encephalitis. She was in a coma for a week in a hospital ward with two other children with the same dire conditions. It was during this time that she remembers having her first prophetic dream. Though the details faded, the sense that it was peaceful remained, and in the dream there came an assurance that she would come through the illness all right despite how frightened her parents appeared. Just as the dream foretold, other than having initial difficulty walking due to the multiple injections in her thigh, Zarley fully regained all abilities. Though she didn't dwell on it, Zarley did comment that the other two children in the ward both suffered lasting physical and cognitive impairments. She didn't say she was lucky, nor blessed, nor set up for some great purpose. Still, her respectful pause made it clear she also doesn't take her full healing for granted.

This hospitalization and prophetic dream also marked Zarley's conscious beginning of extra sensory perception. Why? Perhaps Native American tradition can explain it: often a spiritual awakening and rise of spiritual gifts occurs during times of severe illness or temporary loss of consciousness. It is in these times of physical stillness that the spirit may concentrate internally. Perhaps without the external distractions, the inner self can explore and cement access to energetic networks of greater knowledge.

Zarley is grateful that her parents were always supportive when it came to her early intuitive episodes. "They never told me something was impossible, or I wasn't seeing what I knew I was seeing." Today, it is more common to hear of children talking to "invisible friends," remembering prior lifetime facts, or even simply declaring things they shouldn't have any access to knowing. How the caregivers respond makes all the difference in the child's acceptance of these abilities and confidence in "normalcy" within society. Zarley explained, "They understood unconditional love even though they had normal parental concerns." Concerns, perhaps, like how could their daughter know certain things [that were happening in the world while] growing up in Iowa?

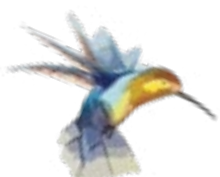
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Higher sense perception, psychic abilities, or intuition is experienced by different people in different ways. Some are intuitive in one way, such as clairvoyance, where one might see places, people, or events that are not in the immediate physical realm. Others are clairaudient, clairsentient, clairolfactory, and so on. Basically, a person can use any one of the five senses to tap into a higher consciousness network of continuously streaming information. Some, like Zarley, access multiple methods. "Sometimes I see images, have smells, see words, feel others' sensations in my own body. Sometimes I get whole packets of information from just above and right outside my body, and it just hits me here [indicating her chest]. And it just comes in."

Exploring, testing, and learning to trust one's intuition and the avenues or guides that help facilitate incoming information tends to be a life-long process. Zarley affirmed, "I work very hard at clarity because you are only as good as how clear you are. Expectation screws things up. Everyone can have blind spots because we can be vested in both optional answers." Consider if you are asking for counsel on a predicament for your child. Should you do A or B to assist? Perhaps option A is to sit tight and wait for effective healing from another source, and choice B is that you should jump in and help immediately. A parent wants to help her child so both could be equally appealing answers. If one doesn't listen carefully, then personal, earthly preferences may cloud the message received.

Continuing, she shared, "I also channel. I can see auras, but it's not turned on all the time. I am very conscious of boundary crossing." This is just one example of the respect Zarley extends to friend and stranger alike. Just because someone can read thoughts, personal histories, or see someone's health imbalances and weaknesses, doesn't mean one ought to do so without permission. "If someone intentionally comes to me," Zarley explained, "I feel they have given permission to see whatever I



She has an inherent drive to "learn to ask the right questions for one's culture" and to "meet people where they are." As a medical practitioner and holistic healer, she believes one must honor a client's traditions and their truths.



might need. Still, I ask for their history to save time—to narrow down to the specific concerns instead of sifting through their entire life and past." This level of ability might make some uncomfortable. Yet, even with a brief encounter, Zarley's presence makes trusting in her easy.

She has an inherent drive to "learn to ask the right questions for one's culture" and to "meet people where they are." As a medical practitioner and holistic healer, she believes one must honor a client's traditions and their truths. Understanding a client's concerns helps to shape the flow of a session and build trust for work. "I never start a session by naming or asking about any particular disease or ailment. Why would I want to put that fear into their mind if it wasn't there?" By letting a client name what he or she wants to work on, eventually everything that needs to be addressed gets addressed "because everything is connected." In holistic work, healing examines the connection between the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual layers present in every human and how one always impacts the others.

Zarley describes her healing work as finding the big picture. Her gift of pattern recognition and creating ceremony for someone is integral in the work that she does. She went on to define ceremony as "working with energy and symbology—to [help a client] have closer communication between their three-dimensional self, their higher self, and beyond—Divinity." She emphasized the importance of ceremony. "You can't skip it. You can simplify it, but you must still hold the intent."

Zarley has been a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner for over 20 years and has mentored level four Healing Touch apprentices on their way to becoming full practitioners. She has studied the use of essential oils and the benefit of natural foods. She emphasized, "We need to think of food as medicine. In our farming practices, even the mass-produced organic foods tend not to be fertilized with the micronutrients that we all need...magnesium, manganese, boron, molybdenum, and so on. As a society we don't realize that if we garden with the various devas [benevolent Vedic divine beings] of the earth, our veggies, flowers, and yards will be much more beautiful, sustainable, and restoring than without that awareness."

As an earth healer, Zarley has helped balance earth energy fields, repair ley lines, release old and trapped beings, and bless geological formations. At first, she was hesitant to do the work and felt she should solely follow the direction of another trusted friend. Then, she realized, the earth energy and Spirit will tell you what it needs, when, and how. Just listen, then follow the energy. Sometimes what is called

for may not make any sense to a practitioner, but it doesn't have to fit into our often-limited logic or rationale. Are you willing to do the work? "Just do what Spirit says," Zarley explained. "Be aware and notice. If you follow the energy it works better—like Yin—you allow it, rather than expect it to lead."

Healing sessions and workshops with Zarley may incorporate a variety of modalities. She has led Seals of Solomon activations (dealing with advanced chakras), past life integrations, a form of Dinshah colored light therapy, herbology, St. Germain's Violet Flame (for transmuting personal and planetary past errors), and cosmic and planetary harmony. She has helped people contact spirit guides, explore energy basics, and set personal boundaries. She also leads retreats exploring Sedona, Arizona and Mount Shasta in California.



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Mount Shasta, known as the home of one of the Earth's own chakras, holds several special memories for Zarley.

Medicine Lake is on the west flank of Mount Shasta. Zarley loves its remoteness. "There is no easy way to get to the old native healing ground there unless you have a map or directions from the local natives." During one retreat, she sat in a clearing in the woods, waiting for the next student to approach. In the wait, the totem animals began presenting themselves to her before each student's session. "I couldn't have orchestrated that," she reminisced in awe. The sacredness of the space, and the honor of the animals choosing to manifest in the ceremony, made the day unforgettable.

After overseeing retreats, Zarley plans time for herself to recharge and explore. She makes this private time need clear to all students and asks that they respect her time. Occasionally, someone doesn't "hear" the need and more extreme measures must be taken. On one particular trip, a student refused to respect her wishes and kept following her, going to great lengths to discover her schedule so he could meet up with her. After re-establishing her boundaries with the student, and again him violating them, at the top of Mount Shasta she was forced to shape-shift her frame and that of her accompanying good friend. The intruder came into the clearing, looked all around, but could not see them. He went on and never recovered their path.

One of her "craziest" experiences also occurred on Mount Shasta. After another retreat, Zarley and two close friends decided to drive up the coast to the southern part of the Oregon coast as part of their recuperation time. The glorious day took more time than anticipated so they decided to take an unmarked shortcut over a local mountain pass in an attempt to get home before dark. The "road" turned into a half lane without lights, guardrails, or the other normal security measures most drivers prefer on strange winding mountain paths. Add to that abundant wildlife and the knowledge that Zarley's friends call her "Mario Andretti," and you begin to grasp the full excitement of the drive. Rocketing through the curves, they got off the road about 15 minutes prior to total darkness. Both friends confessed—through their terror—they had both been doing energy work. One was creating a tunnel of white light and protection to drive through while the other was pushing the various wild animals off the route ahead of the car to avoid a collision. There was much laughter about the team effort when they stopped for dinner.

Perhaps civilization is now at the state that basic energy premises could be taught earlier, and in doing so, advance the health of all generations and the planet.



Perhaps civilization is now at the state that basic energy premises could be taught earlier, and in doing so, advance the health of all generations and the planet. Zarley suggests the following two tenets be taught universally:

1. Everything is some form of energy. Therefore, reality is not set in stone despite what we each accept as our physical vision. Energy is about balance. There must always be a payment. There is always a rhythm—a sending forth and a cycling back, even seeable in breath. It is the infinity wave cycle.
2. You have more control than you think—every output will come back ten-fold. So be careful. It may not be immediate.

When asked what makes her disappointed or sad, Zarley admitted: "When people don't understand that all we are is spirit and that from that point of view, they have so much more to offer themselves and the world."

"Everyone has amazing gifts. I *expect* to see them in people," Karlta Zarley adamantly shared. "I have strong faith and belief in the client's power so that the client can see it and heal themselves. The biggest step for clients is to see the possibility of their own control. They have hesitation—self-doubt. But we continue if they are willing to do the work. They think I'm doing it [the healing], but I'm just holding the cookie bowl... and doing a little stirring."

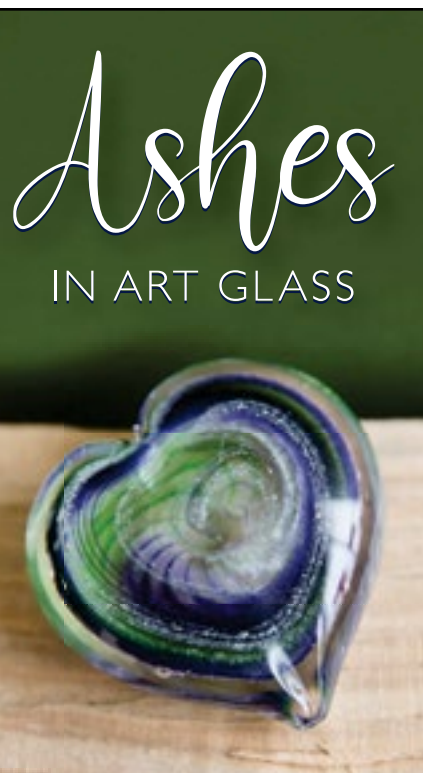


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One of her joys is listening to the sound of her husband, Keith, and their two kids (Kahli, 30, and Keilor, 33) and their spouses, laughing with each other after she has retired for the evening. Zarley met her husband while working in Alaska. She had been invited to a dance by friends, and Keith ended up her dance partner for the evening. He left to complete his PhD in narrowed physics in New York. By that October, he had invited her to join him. They would move several times for jobs or to care for aging parents, but they were committed to walk this lifetime together.

In regard to how her children or spouse think about her energy work, her daughter and one of her son-in-laws “are very supportive and have me work on them. The rest are in varying degrees of skepticism.” For many today, first-hand experience still seems to be the barometer for believability. When there is an opening, however, Zarley takes the opportunity. “I’m teaching them about how energy works, how to reframe their experiences from how the world sees them to a higher perspective, and how to manifest more easily and gently.” And the circle cycles back around.

Zarley’s quest for answers about how life works also started early, and she was fortunate to have “Crazy Aunt Marge” as a long-term mentor. “She was hilarious...a great cook,” and her theme was, “More is not enough.” Marge was compassionate, passionate, kind, and safe. “She would never laugh at or mock me for any of my questions.” Aunt Marge wasn’t frightened to talk about anything. She even did Zarley’s first astrological chart.

“Everyone has amazing gifts. I expect to see them in people.”

—Karlta Zarley



Zarley had always been interested in religion. One day while she was still in her teens, she asked Crazy Aunt Marge, “Which religion is the right one?” Her father then suggested the conversation take a break. Zarley did not want to upset her father, so kept future counseling sessions with her aunt private. Still, one day shortly after, her father surprised her by bringing back up the topic of religion and encouraged her to continue seeking spirituality answers, *but* waiting for collegiate studies. He wanted to encourage her inquisitiveness; he simply hadn’t wanted to risk her losing a faith support net during her teenage years—hence the discouraging of the topic earlier with her aunt.

Ultimately, Zarley’s questioning did not lead to a disbelief in spirituality as many parents often fear. After high school, she attended Iowa State University but found they didn’t have a nursing degree. So, while attending, she began building her

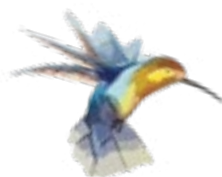
repertoire with a Distributed Studies bachelor’s degree in human anatomy and physiology along with minors in world religion, psychology, and chemistry. (What great prep for her one-day holistic health work!) She would pick up her nursing degree at Rochester Community and Technical College. Regarding world religions and their intrigue, Zarley conceded, “They [religions] may not have it all right, but they must be doing something right to have lasted this long.” During dark times, “and there have been several,” Zarley shared, “every time, it is a mix of total faith that God is present, loving, and helping me, combined with an extremely good support network that has gotten me through.”

Client testimonials from her website exclaim that “Zarley gets it at the soul level when everyone else has failed to.” Another client described Zarley as “an awakened Bodhisattva.” Zarley dropped her chin at this praise. In Mahayana Buddhism, a bodhisattva is viewed as one who is capable of reaching nirvana—the plane of spiritual enlightenment, but out of compassion, or perhaps empathy, he or she stays in this plane of existence to save suffering beings. Zarley explained that she is glad to serve and pleased to hear that others view her as humble. “Ego can be a slippery slope; more than money.”

Healing the conscious flaws and pains is only one level of spiritual work that could be done to free one’s spirit and improve one’s life. “Our nation still has puritanical archetypes ingrained and reinforced over these 200 years. We have always been, and continue to be, immigrants coming with the experience of ‘lack.’ That is why we came—because of a shortage or need for something that the old countries didn’t have. So, we all struggle against this archetype basically bred into us.” These inherent, subconscious yearnings and fears need tending. To do so would require alignment with the higher self.

“Everyone is in a state of major house cleaning.” And yet, Zarley shared, people generally struggle to challenge their inherent beliefs. To address this and grow, each person must tell—or give permission to—the higher self to “go at it, baby cakes.” How to go about it? She suggests to go into a meditative state. Call up your higher self. Bring up your current beliefs. Tend to business one area at a time, being fastidious to finish each area fully. The higher self will clean at the same time. Over time you will see your ideas change and eventually come forth. And that change may catch you curiously off guard. “Where did *that* come from? Is that what I *really* believe?” Better to have the whole being aligned and the old patterns which no longer serve you swept out versus sticking to age-old adopted ideas that you cannot (nor truly want to) defend.

When asked if there is a necessity of doing past life healing as well as work for energetic ascension, Zarley’s answer was candid. “Spirit doesn’t care how you do the work—as long as you do it.” She clarified that during the healing process, “Ripples [of what is needed] will come forward in some way and make it be addressed. You end up working through all the phases.” Multiple lifetimes and times outside of the body may need addressing to clear trauma or unhelpful beliefs so that the person may grow into stronger peace, health, and joy.



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By this point, I wondered: did Zarley ever get frustrated? She laughed. “The great cosmic joke is when someone comes with a very specific question and then no information comes. It just happens sometimes, and sometimes we don’t get answers in the quick way we often prefer.” An intuitive needs to understand that patience and acceptance are part of our daily world. Gaining access to information cannot, or more appropriately, should not, be forced.

Zarley summed up her life experiences by saying, “My whole life is a series of epiphanies. Unexpected confirmation—it can knock your socks off and blow you away. Intention requires belief, practice, and improvement. I want to show Spirit that I’m all in.” And in that statement, again, I caught a brief blurring and the faintest buzzing as her energy, being of joy and light, kicked up another notch. It was a humbling sighting.



Karlta Zarley co-founded the Great Lakes Center for Healing Touch in Ann Arbor. She works at the Center for Sacred Living in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The second Tuesday of every month she channels spirit in gatherings on how to shift forward in Ascension. You can also sign up for her monthly newsletter in which she shares an intuitive message for the public. To learn more about Zarley, you can access her webpage at karltazarley.com or call (734) 761-5908..

How Your Grandmother Paved the Way for Green Living



By Alaina Lightfoot

My grandmothers were many things. Wise, kind, the best at giving hugs, and the best at baking cookies, as I'm sure your own grandmothers were. When I look around at things as they are today, I often wonder what my maternal grandmother, who lived her life as a farm wife, would have thought of the fast pace of our current world. I don't have to wonder what she could have taught me about the ongoing efforts I make to live more sustainably, though. I learned those tips from watching both of my grandmothers throughout my life. In fact, you may have noticed these patterns in your own life if you were fortunate enough to have spent time with older relatives growing up. I've compiled five of what I consider my grandmothers' best sustainable living methods. Practices which came to them as naturally as baking cookies and loving their grandchildren.

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Minimize Your Daily Travel

I don't mean this tip in the sense that we should be more conscious about our vacations (although that is an important thing to consider, that's a point for another day). I mean that if you think back, you may remember your own grandmother having some kind of "errand day." Mine lived on a farm 15 miles from the nearest town. When she would go shopping, she'd do it for a few weeks at a time, and she'd compress all her errands into one day so as to not have to drive back and forth multiple times. By doing this, she saved herself countless trips and probably loads in carbon emissions from her drives. Think about what errands you can squeeze into the same day or even the same side of town. Many people do this naturally! Taking it a step further, many people in the 1950s and 60s who were in more urban environments would walk between multiple stores, minimizing their drives as much as they could.

Our grandparents were prolific at getting their money's worth from things, and as a result often diverted perfectly good items from landfill while managing to not contribute more to the waste stream by buying a new product they didn't really need.

Reuse and Repurpose

I'm not encouraging you to turn your home into the kind where no yogurt container is thrown away, but think of what ordinary things you have on hand that can be reused. Who hasn't opened a butter tub in the fridge at Grandma's only to find it contains leftovers? Or pried open a biscuit tin only to discover it full of sewing supplies? Do you need the latest in aesthetic zero waste storage solutions, or would rinsing out that old pasta sauce jar work just fine? Our grandparents were prolific at getting their money's worth from things and, as a result, often diverted perfectly good items from the landfill while managing to not contribute more to the waste stream by buying a new product they didn't really need.



Photo by Clem Onojeghuo on Unsplash

Find the Substitute

There's an old saying from the WWII Era in the United States: "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." That last tip, "do without," while great for the environment—as it means not rushing out to buy the latest of something every time it's available—can seem daunting. I like to think of it as a challenge. My grandmothers certainly did! Instead of thinking of it as "doing without," I think of it as finding the substitute. Do I need to run to the store just to buy another can of black beans, or will pinto work okay in this recipe? Do I have to have the latest crop top this season, or can I repurpose a shirt I have on hand? I noticed my grandmother would alter clothes that were going to be passed down for each of her four daughters so that they would feel fresh and new. This helped divert waste from landfill and cut down on consumption of new goods too!

Instead of thinking of it as "doing without", I think of it as finding the substitute.



Gardens Are a Girl's Best Friend

Don't tell Marilyn Monroe, but in my grandmother's opinion, a garden, not a diamond, was a girl's best friend. While it may not be practical for everyone to grow their own food for a litany of reasons, you may have something you can grow for yourself in your home. The shortest supply chain for food, and therefore the one with the least environmental impact, is the food you grow at home. Sure, not everyone has time for a full-fledged garden, but maybe you could grow a tomato plant on your back porch or start an herb garden in your window. Don't be afraid to start small and try something new. I personally didn't inherit my grandmother's green thumb, but it may be worth a shot to see if growing some of your own food at home might work for you. If you're in an apartment, a dorm, or another small space, try looking into some creative gardening solutions online. You'd be surprised what you can do with limited outdoor space!

Don't tell Marilyn Monroe, but in my grandmother's opinion, a garden, not a diamond, was a girl's best friend.

No, Plastic is Not Okay

Grandma may not have had a cute reusable tote bag she took with her to the market, but she did opt for paper bags, because the plastic ones weren't as widely available or popular in her era. If you're able, opting for paper bags over the thin plastic ones that are extremely difficult to recycle, can be a huge help for the environment. They're sturdier and can fit more in than plastic bags as well. Try to opt for this green option like Grandma did, whenever you can.

Our grandparents may not have mastered the art of sustainable living, but like many things in our lives, they laid incredibly firm foundations for us to build on and learn from. Take into account their wisdom. Just because something is the way it has always been done doesn't automatically mean it's the better way to live. However, when it comes to these tips, it turns out Grandma really did know best.

Alaina Lightfoot is a freelance writer with a passion for making sustainable living simple and accessible. Her work has previously appeared in The Crazy Wisdom Journal's fall 2020 issue. Alaina also recently published her first book, Namely Art and Love. She is local to Toledo, Ohio, but loves taking frequent trips with her husband and their dog to Ann Arbor to explore.



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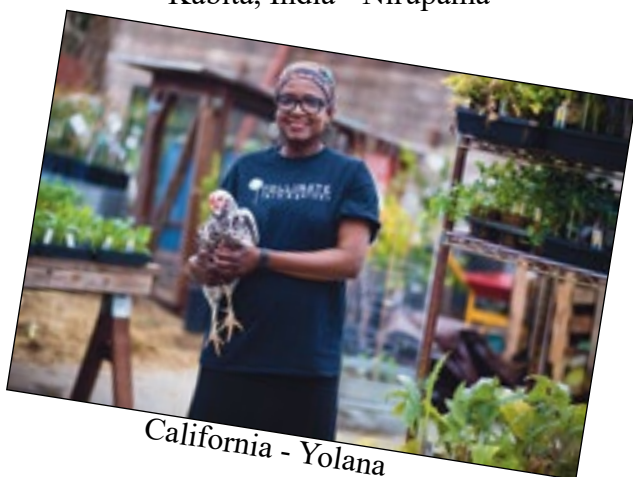
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Haiti - Philona

by Carin Michaels

“What takes us past the tipping point when the forces pushing us up overpower the forces pulling us down and we’re lifted from the earth and begin to fly? How can we summon a moment of lift for human beings—and especially for women? Because when you lift up women, you lift up humanity.”

~*The Moment of Lift* by Melinda Gates

iZōsh is an emotive and powerful Ethiopian word with no English equivalent. It is said to a woman specifically, and it connotes compassionately coming alongside her. The closest translation means: “I’m there for you; you can do this, and I won’t let you fail.” iZōsh is also the name of an Ann Arbor micro-lending organization that funds third-world women who live in extreme poverty.

The micro lending movement garnered international recognition when Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur and economist who founded the Grameen Bank to pioneer micro loans to impoverished women, won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work. iZōsh was inspired to mirror Yunus’ lending model in late 2011 as a “call to arms” after six friends through happenstance began reading *Half the Sky* by Nicholas Kristof and Cheryl WuDunn, a husband and wife Pulitzer Prize journalist team.

Half the Sky argues that the oppression of women worldwide is an epidemic, and it demands our attention, because if we help women, we help raise up a community. “Women [typically] reinvest 80% of their income in the wellbeing and education of their families. With the same amount of land, women can increase crop yields by 20%, reducing world hunger for 150 million people. Women business owners

set an example for the next generation of students and leaders.” These facts are cited by one of their micro lending partners at kiva.org. Kiva is a shining example of microcredit. This non-profit allows individuals to lend money via the internet to provide financial opportunities to low income entrepreneurs, students, or rural farmers in over 80 countries.

iZōsh has the more specific mission to financially help a woman, who lives in extreme poverty, start or continue her business. Women who attend an iZōsh event are ensured some experiential cache to feel inspired by their participation, because an iZōsh event is like a theatrical production.

Since its inception in early 2012, iZōsh has funded 622 women approximately \$221,000. At one biannual meeting, an out-of-town guest was so enamored with the iZōsh event she asked where the national headquarters was so she could contact them and learn how to start her own chapter. The co-founder, Robin Phillips, of Chelsea, Michigan, explained that Ann Arbor is the epicenter.

In the process of learning about iZōsh, Melinda Gates released her new book, *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*. After reading it, she became one of my heroes.



As I became an advocate for iZōsh, I developed an elevator pitch: iZōsh is a micro lending organization that meets twice a year to fund women, who live in extreme poverty, and the decision of whom to fund is democratically-based upon all in attendance, similar to a Village Saving and Loan model developed by CARE in Africa. Basically, all women present at the meeting have a vote, and majority rules. There is also an educational component at an iZōsh meeting, particularly a guest speaker who is an expert in some area of extreme poverty, to keep members informed about the challenges that women face around the globe. This is followed by roundtable discussions—spiritual camaraderie that lends to sisterhood.

iZōsh has had almost 100% payback, and then the loan repayments get rolled over into new loans predetermined and managed by the micro lending partner institution.

In the process of learning about iZōsh, Melinda Gates released her new book, *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*. After reading it, she became one of my heroes. In an attempt to spare you the data analytics that supports micro lending, I will just quote her, “The correlation is as nearly perfect as any you will find in the world of data. If you search for poverty, you will find women who don’t have power. If you explore prosperity, you will find women who do have power and use it.”

iZōsh is an emotive and powerful Ethiopian word with no English equivalent. It is said to a woman specifically, and it connotes compassionately coming alongside her. The closest translation means: “I’m there for you; you can do this, and I won’t let you fail.”

Since its inception in early 2012, iZōsh has funded 622 women approximately \$221,000.

Money is power, and Gates uses both to direct her philanthropy. “Our call is to lift women up—and when we come together in this cause, we *are* the lift,” she said. When interviewing my local iZōsh heroes, each woman unknowingly used the same terms “lifting women up” or “uplifting.” I found this striking, and even though I had a compendium of standard interview questions, their individual stories took over and became more compelling. Ruth Ann Logue, a cofounder of iZōsh, discovered the word on her own journey of compassion. Robin Phillips, another cofounder, has had the fortitude to champion iZōsh into an international nonprofit. Katie Gulpker is the current chair of iZōsh Ann Arbor, a 30-something high school English teacher. I spoke to each of them about iZōsh, and they provided a deeper understanding of its underpinnings, but like true heroes, they alluded to the courage, sacrifice, and selflessness that drove their stories.

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Ruth Ann Logue, Katie Gulpker, and Robin Phillips



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“A man goes out on the beach and sees that it is covered with starfish that have washed up in the tide. A little boy is walking along, picking them up and throwing them back into the water. “What are you doing, son?” the man asks. ‘You see how many starfish there are? You’ll never make a difference.’ The boy paused thoughtfully, and picked up another starfish and threw it into the ocean. ‘It sure made a difference to that one,’ he said.”

~*Half the Sky* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn



Ruth Ann Logue

Ruth Ann Logue, a Registered Nurse, who supported her husband through law school, and then went on to raise a family of six, lives in a farmhouse on the outskirts of Ann Arbor, where rolling hills and native flora surround their restored Dutch Colonial barn. Her lyrical dialect hints of her Alabama roots, but she was a tumbleweed in her youth, finally making Ann Arbor her home for the last 27 years.

In the heat of the moment, it was Logue's moment of lift, when she would not allow the forces opposing her adoption to outweigh her power as a mom.

Logue helped cofound iZōsh. As she discussed iZōsh, she reminisced about cherished events in her family's history. “It was during the same time that I adopted my son.” Logue and her husband, Kyle, decided to foster a child while he received medical treatment in southeastern Michigan for a life-threatening illness that could not be treated in Ethiopia. Logue did not know that a small commitment on her part to foster a child, or a nonprofit, would produce an abundance of joy.

In response to reading *Half the Sky*, just before Thanksgiving 2011, Logue and five other friends decided to meet at one of their homes, bringing five dollars each, with a total of \$30, to discuss and learn how micro lending works. A minimum micro loan with Kiva is \$25.

Logue has a dynamic story to tell during this period of time because her personal and professional ambitions are inseparable. The foster parent opportunity fell in her lap through her friend's son's swim coach who had heard of an opportunity to foster

from a previous swimmer, who was in medical school at the time. The student's dad was a local pediatrician and there were open interviews to find a host family for this Ethiopian boy during his five week medical treatment. As the story unwinds, Logue pays tribute to many people who helped her son, and these moments of gratitude mark her character. She said, “It takes a village to, raise a child,” and added, “Oh, the Ethiopian community. Fekele [her adopted son] wasn't here but ten minutes and they were knocking on my door to help him.”

As Logue wanders back in memories to how she came up with the name iZōsh, she speaks fondly of Abdi Zeynu, her foster child's interpreter, a graduate student in Electrical Engineering at the University of Michigan. Zeynu volunteered to translate for Fekele, because he could not speak English. Logue and Zeynu would sit together in the waiting room while her soon-to-be son received treatment. Logue decided to quiz Zeynu for some potential names for this nonprofit, which, at the time, was being referred to as “Group Formed in Response to *Half the Sky*.” Around the fourth iteration of questioning, Logue asked, “How do you say, my sister's purse?” Zeynu paused in frustration, and he asked Logue what she was trying to do. She replied that she was forming a micro lending group that simulates a saving and loan banking model practiced by women in African villages. Then she explained that the nonprofit would not recirculate their funds internally like a bank, but they would lend to women in need of a lift, particularly in third-world countries. Abdi's smile reached his eyes. Logue, initially, rejected his recommendation, iZōsh, but when he argued it's no different from iPhone or iPad, she agreed.

iZōsh has partnered with a few micro finance institutions (MFIs), particularly, Kiva, Opportunity International, and recently, Healing Hands of Joy, to offer micro loans to impoverished women. These organizations screen the loan candidates to ensure they have good credit and integrity. The loan recipients provide a biography with a rationale as to why they need a loan. Due diligence is performed by the aforementioned organizations. iZōsh has had almost 100% payback, and then the loan repayments get rolled over into new loans predetermined and managed by the micro lending partner institution. Currently, iZōsh lends approximately \$15,000 each meeting with 125 members in attendance. This nonprofit has gained such momentum that it has formed iZōsh International to launch other chapters outside of Ann Arbor.

Logue recalls this nonprofit startup being stressful because during this period her foster child's medical treatment was extended, and his birth parents needed to be informed that their son would not be on the pre-booked return flight home. But his parents did not have access to today's modes of modern communication.

The Logues, with the help of Steven Weinberg, a medical student who was going to Africa, recorded multiple videos on an iPad to inform Fekele's birth parents about his delayed treatment and life in the United States, which included him learning to ride a bicycle. When in Africa, Weinberg recorded Fekele's birth parents' reaction to the video communications. Logue said there was a long pause during their transcription, and they looked at the translator, who then explained what the birth parents were asking: would the Logue family please adopt their son? They were a poor farming family with nine other children, and they went bankrupt to get their son treatment in Africa, which was unsuccessful. They sold their only bison that tilled their fields. If another setback occurred, they could not save their son.

At that point, Logue had developed a strong maternal and loving bond for her courageous foster child, so she and her husband huddled down for deep introspection. They began their research for adoption, and after the treatment, her husband Kyle, their eldest 16-year-old son Thomas, and their foster child Fekele, trekked back to the hills in Ethiopia to talk to his birth parents. After an 18-hour flight to Addis Ababa, then a Jeep ride to the foothills, followed by a horse trek up those hills—all of which took eight hours after touchdown at the airport—it was readily apparent to everyone involved that Fekele, who was 11 years old and cured of his life threatening illness, could make the split from his birth parents to a better life in Ann Arbor. He was thriving, and his parents witnessed a miracle by seeing him not only survive, but flourish. However, when someone robbed Kyle's money belt, which contained both passports and visas for all in Addis Ababa, they were only able to put Thomas, a U.S. citizen, on a flight back, but Fekele was in limbo without the signed adoption paperwork and U.S. entrance visa. Logue told her husband not to come home without him.

In the heat of the moment, it was Logue's moment of lift, when she would not allow the forces opposing her adoption to outweigh her power as a mom. Fekele's father had to make the arduous eight-hour trip to Addis Ababa to refile, certify, and expedite paperwork that Logue sent to her husband, which would normally take months. She used this example to articulate her empathy with women, who would do anything to uplift their families when stricken by poverty.

Melinda Gates and Logue are two women cut from the same cloth. Many words used by Logue are coined in *The Moment of Lift*. Yet, Logue has yet to read Gates' book. The similarities attest to Logue's charm. “My heart breaks,” she said, when she remembers her son's birth parents asking Logue to adopt their son. Gates has a chapter in her book called, “Let Your Heart Break: The Lift of Coming Together.” Gates also describes when she was asked by an impoverished mother to adopt her daughter to ensure she had a prosperous future. The pulse between the two is one of Jungian sisterhood.

Gates' philanthropic platform is to empower women. She writes, “Understanding this link between women's empowerment and the wealth and health of societies is crucial for humanity. As much as any insight we've gained in our work over the past twenty years, this was our huge missed idea. My huge missed idea. If you want to lift up humanity, empower women. It's the most comprehensive, pervasive, high-leverage investment you can make in human beings.” Logue attests to discovering this insight herself after finishing *Half the Sky*. She said, “Reading that quote about putting resources in the hands of women really opened my eyes.”

She is referring to the quote that “...several studies suggest that when women gain control over spending, less family money is devoted to instant gratification and more for education and starting small businesses. Because men now typically control the purse strings, it appears that the poorest families in the world typically spend approximately ten times as much (20 percent of their income on average) on a combination of alcohol, prostitutes, candy, sugary drinks, and lavish feasts, as they do on educating their children.” Logue qualifies these findings, because this obviously does not apply to all men, especially her husband, who is tremendously supportive of her motherhood.

Logue cites an example of his support when they were deliberating if it was fair to everyone involved to adopt Feleke. Her husband used an analogy, albeit not perfect, but the best he could summon at the time, to help her understand the birth parents’ plight. He asked her to imagine that they were stuck on a deserted island with one of their children, and there was no food or water. Suddenly, a lifeboat comes by with room for only one person, and the captain ensured, paraphrasing her husband that “our child would receive a good life; not just a good life, but better than good. What would you do?” Logue’s voice begins to shake as she continues to recall her dilemma, “My heart breaks if he goes home, and it also breaks for his birth mother if he stays.” Logue adds that Kyle’s voice continues to ring in her head, as he said, “They’re putting him on a lifeboat, Ruth Ann.”

Fast forward to 2021. Logue is currently the co-chair for the Educational Committee that selects keynote speakers and books to read to help inform members about issues concerning the oppression and exploitation of women around the globe. Common educational topics deal with female genital mutilation, obstetric fistulas, rape, prostitution, and child brides, and it is for this reason that iZōsh is a women’s only group. Some women in attendance, particularly those who have personal experience with any of these traumas, may not feel comfortable having these discussions in a mixed gender group. iZōsh wants to be a safe place, and at every event, they have a trained counselor available if needed to provide emotional support.

An iZōsh event is abuzz with excitement, camaraderie, featured entertainment, and women speaking into microphones announcing the results from each round of voting. It’s similar to being at a race track, except Logue, a demure Erin Brockovich type, is flush with emotion when introducing the educational themes of the evening with her co-chair, Melodie Marske. Logue streams off citations and facts about the progress notes of women from the Congo, who were victims of sexual violence (used as a weapon of war). Logue then sits back at her table and mumbles about her Ethiopian son and his birth family. She is still fighting to uplift her son’s family in Africa, no matter how many unknown degrees of separation exist between the Congo and Ethiopia.

She admits that poverty exists in Ann Arbor, too, and she wanted to help close to home as well, but when she saw a mother’s plea for assistance on a Facebook post, she didn’t know how to perform due diligence. Her friend told her “to follow your gut.” On the Facebook [now defunct] page called BuyNothing, Logue requested the post from a single mother of four. “It said, ‘Need anything’ or ‘everything.’ I can’t recall exactly, but I got a knot in my chest.” After a few exchanges with this mom, she went through her own closet, took some towels, sheets, pillows, blankets, and anything else she could find. Then she went out and bought three bags of groceries. Her hunch was correct: this pregnant mother of four was sleeping on the floor so her kids could sleep on air mattresses. Logue asked her friends to help further with her latest mission to furnish this woman’s apartment. Then the apartment manager at this single mom’s complex came to Logue and asked if she could help a few other women. A simple ask was the start of “House N2 Home.” Logue still maintains a relationship with the first mom she helped. She came over to Logue’s house with her kids for lunch, a few days prior.

Logue apologizes for adhering to some privacy about her adopted son, but she thinks he is ready to create a new story for himself aside from being that child adopted from Africa. She truly respects his life journey even if it is not like her own.

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Clenda is a 26-year-old mother of two who has spent the last eight years working on building her farming business. She employs one farmhand and sells the milk her cow produces at the local market. In order to increase milk production and earn an extra income, Clenda needed a loan of 25,000 KES (300 USD) to go toward purchasing a new dairy cow.

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“Let my heart be broken at the things that break the heart of God.”
~Bob Pierce, American Baptist minister and relief worker

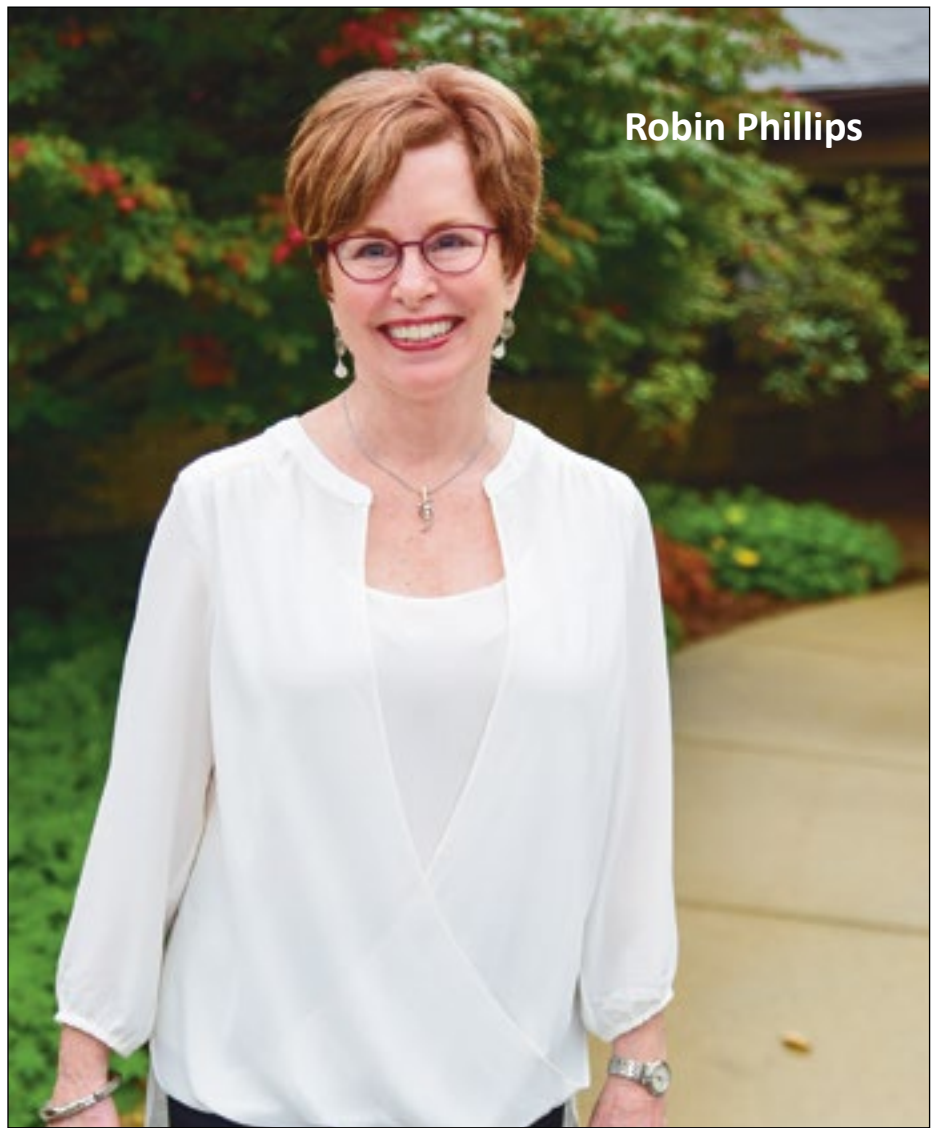
Robin Phillips is retired, but she is all business when it comes to her volunteer work with iZōsh. She references definitions and bylaws to educate local women about how their financial sacrifice, no matter how small, makes a huge difference to women who live in extreme poverty. She explained, “The industry’s definition of living in extreme poverty equates to \$1.90 a day, and it’s not just a lack of income and resources, but a lack of health care, infrastructure, sanitation, and electricity.”

She has decades of experience using her skills and insight needed to help the oppressed. “I empathize with the underdog. It’s in my DNA,” Phillips said. Raised in Louisville, Kentucky, Phillips currently lives in Chelsea, and was working as a social worker while her husband finished his PhD. He went on to manage and own Eisenhower Center for Traumatic Brain Injury, an employee-owned facility with locations in Ann Arbor, Manchester, and Houghton, Michigan and another site in Jacksonville, Florida.

Phillips has an illustrious career of her own, too. She laughed, when dating herself, saying, “I worked as a social worker in President Johnson’s War on Poverty back in the day.” Then she sat on a state legislative committee while working for United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Florida, which was the first state to implement the federal law called “Education for All Handicapped Children Act.” This ruling required any schools that received federal funding to give equal access to education for children with physical and mental disabilities. She cited it: Public Law 941.42.

This committee was comprised of eight lawyers and a few social workers to advocate for the law’s efficacy. During this period of time, she realized that the folks who had power when creating policy were the lawyers. “I kept working with people, and that was great, but I wanted to have an impact on the system.” So she went on to get her law degree from Southern University of Illinois.

Jump to 2011. When a friend approached Phillips after she read *Half the Sky*, to query whether she had any interest in creating a book discussion on the subject, she



Robin Phillips

She references definitions and bylaws to educate local women about how their financial sacrifice, no matter how small, makes a huge difference to women who live in extreme poverty.

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laughed. She had read the book. It was a difficult and necessary read, but she didn't see how discussing the book would help women combat oppression. However, she wasn't ready to ignore her friends, six in total including herself, "because the risk of oppression and exploitation that girls live under just because they were born into extreme poverty is phenomenal," she said. "And we have no clear understanding as North American women because we don't experience it." She reminded herself that as an advocate, she must educate those who cannot conceptualize the underpinnings of oppression, and she saw the book as a rallying cry to action.

She reminded herself that as an advocate, she must educate those who cannot conceptualize the underpinnings of oppression, and she saw the book as a rallying cry to action.

It didn't take long to see that Phillips is a skilled policy maker. She is careful with her words, but quick. This comes from working the system on both sides. The Eisenhower Center developed a program that paid for their clients to sponsor a child who lived in extreme poverty, inspired by her own personal initiatives, but Eisenhower clients would be responsible for communicating with these children through a speech therapist who transcribed their letters. "It was a win-win situation," Phillips said, but the Eisenhower Center eventually got a call "asking who we were with all these sponsorships," and she laughed again.

At that point, Phillips moved beyond sponsoring children to performing due diligence for aid organizations to ensure their funding at international locations was met with operational integrity. Then she worked on Development Programs, particularly in Rwanda after the genocide, to verify community sponsorship by an aid organization had efficacy. Phillips particularly relished her experience working with a group of women from a Village Saving and Loan Association, the type that were started by CARE. "On one trip to Africa, I met these amazing women. They blew my socks off. They were smart, but uneducated. They couldn't go to school, but they were rock star entrepreneurs." Phillips had stacked up enough experience to lead a group of six friends through a discussion about extreme poverty and women's oppression.

iZōsh founders began to meet weekly and decided to loan to a woman on Kiva.org, but they used democratic voting to determine which candidate to fund. "It was so thrilling to push the 'fund' button, and more fun to do it together." She continued to describe their first lending experience by saying, "I know Ruth Ann, and it felt like she knew Elizabeth from Guatemala, because she's telling us all about her from her research, so I'm thinking she's a friend of a friend. I was connected to that woman. Yes, I wanted to give that woman a loan." This was in the early stages when each member brought just \$5 to the table.

Then a light bulb went off in Phillips' head at a conference where she participated in a small group exercise that mimicked the experience of a Village Saving and Loan model, where women pool their resources and educate each other on business and personal matters. When they have enough savings in the bank, the women decide who to fund in the group based upon a democratic vote. Phillips realized her conference experience could be used to create a funding model at iZōsh. But instead of keeping the money internally, to create a bank, iZōsh would lend their money to these loan candidates, who must pay back the loans with interest, but to their partnering MFIs (micro-finance institutions).

Then a light bulb went off in Phillips' head at a conference where she participated in a small group exercise that mimicked the experience of a Village Saving and Loan model, where women pool their resources, and educate each other on business and personal matters.

Phillips pitched this idea to her friends, and they agreed to try it. They pooled their money (the individual amounts to this day are only known by the treasurer) and also, they wanted the required educational component as with the Village Saving and Loan model. All decisions about who to fund were democratic, and they decided to donate the loan amount after it was paid back to the MFI to regenerate microlending. Thus far, iZōsh chapters have lent approximately \$221K to 622 women, but it is exponentially unknown how many women this money has helped since it is reinvested. For example, Kiva and Opportunity International have made \$2.5 billion in loans with an average 98% repayment rate.

"Micro loans are not a silver bullet," Phillip said. "They cannot cure poverty." For example, Melinda Gates' philanthropic platform focuses on maternal and newborn health, family planning, education, unpaid work, child marriage, and equality for women in agriculture and in the work place. "There are many pieces to the puzzle," Phillips said. "iZōsh decided to focus on women in business. Putting cash where it counts."

Phillips said her moment of lift occurred when she "saw our way of living was taking away the dignity of people with disabilities and decided I had to do something about it. Again, it's in my DNA." She witnessed some of her clients lose their ability to thrive when basic opportunities like jobs, education, and transportation, weren't accessible, and she made it her life's mission to change that. Our lifestyles create barriers, and Gates, the humanitarian, parallels it to bullying when stating, "Adults try to create outsiders, too. In fact, we get better at it. And most of us fall into one of the same three groups: the people who try to create outsiders, the people who are made to feel like outsiders, and the people who stand by and don't stop it... Overcoming the need to create outsiders is our biggest challenge as human beings."

Phillips has garnered a pantheon of experiences to support advocacy. She reflects on her travels to South America, Mexico, Honduras, Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Morocco, and Rwanda, to name a few, where a donation of \$2 per day, or even less, can make a difference in a woman's life. She recalls a loan recipient telling her that because of the money she received, she was able to leave her house with pride and earn an income. Phillips seems addicted to perpetuating this moment of lift for as many women as she can.

She refocused herself by citing a quote from *Half the Sky*. "In the nineteenth century, the central moral challenge was slavery. In the twentieth century, it was the battle against totalitarianism. We believe that in this century the paramount moral challenge will be the struggle for gender equality around the world." She knows the challenge is onerous and said, "iZōsh is a movement."

Melinda Gates just committed \$1 billion over the next ten years to shift gender equality in the U.S. because, she said, "I want to see more women in the position to make decisions, control resources, and shape policies and perspectives." Phillips is doing just that as the matriarch of iZōsh, having been its first co-chairperson and currently the chair of iZōsh International. She established a board, and in the summer of 2019 they had an intern. She is creating a guidebook for new chapters and helped shepherd chapters in Birmingham, Michigan, and another in Cumberland, Maine, right outside of Portland.



Jackline is married with four children between 13 and 6. She is 48 years old and has been running her mixed-crop farm for 7 years. She employs one farmhand to produce a mix of sorghum, milk, maize, tea, and beans, which she sells at the local market. She used her loan to purchase a dairy cow. Now she can add milk and yogurt to her shop's offerings, bringing in even more income.

Even though iZōsh's mandate is to combat oppression, and that can be a heavy topic, there is great joy putting money into another woman's hands. Meetings rejoice with cowbells ringing, seashell rattles rustling, constant announcements informing members of loans awarded. The administrative volunteers even get real-time email confirmations from their MFI in these third-world countries stating their gratitude for the support. iZōsh sisterhood is ceremonial, and it's empowering to be part of the lift in another woman's life. iZōsh makes the experience real. "iZōsh rings true to its intended translation of the compassionate support of a girl or woman," Phillips said. "We can help these women maintain their dignity. Because once they have financial power, they have a voice."

iZōsh core chapter values are: Compassionate, Educational, Committed, Participatory, Invitational, and Intergenerational.

Katie Glupker is the one of the youngest board members at iZōsh. As the current chair, she is a stalwart of this global sisterhood initiative, and she can articulate its merit intuitively. Glupker was skeptical at first. Her mother invited her many times to iZōsh meetings, but she shied away since she thought it sounded like a Ladies Missionary Circle. She told her mother, "I don't think it's my thing."

Glupker envisioned privileged women sitting around, chatting, drinking wine, and "doing" charity. iZōsh wasn't on her bucket list. She had traveled the world and even lived in Shanghai for three years while teaching English. Currently, she is busy teaching English and mentoring students at Washtenaw Technical Middle College. She doesn't remember what changed her mind to attend in 2013, but she recalls being enthralled with the sisterhood energy that filled the room. As a teacher, Glupker can easily articulate iZōsh's values because she "believes they're in the power of story." Helping one woman won't change the world, but it will change her story. She said, "One person's story matters."

iZōsh turned Glupker's idea of charity work upside down. "I made an incorrect assumption," she said. "I like how unexpected or subversive it is by tapping into this power of global sisterhood. There is something uplifting and powerful about a group of women helping other women financially succeed. It's something not to mess with." She went on to say, "iZōsh is unflinching in the way that it addresses hard topics to move women ahead."



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Katie Glupker

Glupker recognizes being a female living in America is the “luck of the draw,” and she said, “I don’t believe I get this life that I have just to make myself happy.” She articulates *compassion*, and further argues that, here in Ann Arbor, she doesn’t have to leave her house to get running water, and she wasn’t forced to get married at 15, but this privilege comes at a cost to her, whereby she uses her free time to help the poor, and educates herself about how to effectively be of assistance.

iZōsh recognizes that some educational topics they cover can be depressing, so they couple them with other uplifting experiential activities, such that, when members attend, they walk away with the same feeling of empowerment similar to what iZōsh is trying to give to loan recipients in third-world countries. Each time a loan is awarded, various types of jubilations are expressed—from cheers, to ringing cowbells and rattles, hugs, and even joyful tears.

As a teacher, Glupker can easily articulate iZōsh’s values because she “believes they’re in the power of story.” Helping one woman won’t change the world, but it will change her story. She said, “One person’s story matters.”

Glupker reminisces about her first meeting when she sat at a roundtable with eight other members who introduced themselves when answering a participatory icebreaker question: “When was there a time that a woman took a chance on you?” Prior to that moment, she was given two stones to place in communal baskets to vote for two of three loan candidates. Glupker liked iZōsh’s egalitarian presentation: roundtable discussions, social components with a community experience, and learning about the universal advancement of women.

Glupker also liked that her financial commitment could be based upon any amount she thought she could afford as a recent graduate from University of Michigan with a Master in Education. Before graduate school, Glupker was living and teaching in China while traveling the globe. Before that, she grew up in Victoria, BC Canada. She shared a fun fact that the best place to grow up as a girl is Canada (sourced from a U.N. report called *The World’s Women, 2015*). She learned this preparing for iZōsh’s opening remarks for a meeting on International Day of the Girl Child. Their Keynote Speaker was Lilliam Covington, VP of Global Development from Opportunity International (OI). OI is one of iZōsh’s MFI partners.

Covington spoke on empowering women and girls through programs that emphasize agriculture, technology, and micro finance. Carly Fiorina, previous CEO of Hewlett

Packard, spoke on her “One Woman Initiative” stating, “Together, we hope to engage women in the United States to serve as passionate advocates to address the needs and expand the choices of women in developing countries.”

Repeatedly approached by Robin Phillips, chair at the time, to take on a leadership role in iZōsh, Glupker was initially hesitant. “The board is supportive of its youth. They encouraged me to exercise my own strengths. Then it became a natural fit,” she said. “I like leading, teaching, and reading.” This recruitment trajectory falls in line with iZōsh’s unflinching tone of the sisterhood. Also, Glupker felt a civic responsibility to help Phillips, who wanted to step down as chair to “spend her time trying to franchise iZōsh internationally. Basically, to start new chapters.” Of course, this doesn’t negate the fact that Phillips intentionally took a chance on Glupker.

When Glupker spoke about the “nuts and bolts” of iZōsh, she referred to her colleagues as “ladies,” not to support her faulty hypothesis that iZōsh was a missionary society, but quite the opposite. “It’s so much work to put these events on, and it’s all volunteer run. Things aren’t haphazard, and it’s so thrilling. It’s a production,” she said, as she prepared for the upcoming meeting. They even have a dress rehearsal the night before. “But writing those remarks about why we believe in these women—each time I do this, I believe in our purpose that much more. It’s uplifting.”

A week before each meeting, members have the opportunity to recommend loan candidates by screening applicants on Kiva.org and OpportunityInternational.org. Every loan candidate recommended comes up for a vote. “Some members are more prone to choose single moms, pre-existing business owners, farmers, or women from India. It’s all over the gamut. iZōsh members range from high schoolers (who must attend with another adult), college students, working women, stay-at-home moms, and retirees. It’s intergenerational, up to an octogenarian—89 years old to be exact.

In preparation, Glupker watched two documentaries about Mukwege’s father, called, *City of Joy*, and *The Man Who Mends Women*. She said, “They were difficult to watch. And what does that say about me [after watching] if I chose to do nothing? I chose empowerment.”

Glupker seems to have a knack for leadership as she shared a recent big vision question about iZōsh’s core values: “Can first-time guests vote?” She answered in the affirmative. She said, “Guests must participate in voting because iZōsh is a participatory event for all women in attendance.” A financial commitment can be as low as \$5, but working the numbers shows that on average each woman donates \$125. The last attendance drew 125 women who raised over \$15,000.

Glupker’s moment of lift is a story. It came about when she was preparing her introductory speech for Dr. Alain Mukewege, a keynote speaker and research associate at University of Michigan’s School of Nursing, where he conducts research to advance fistula treatment, particularly at his father’s Panzi Hospital in the Congo. His father, Dr. Denis Mukewege, is recognized as a co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and an international humanitarian for his work there. In preparation, Glupker watched two documentaries about Mukwege’s father called *City of Joy* and *The Man Who Mends Women*. She said, “They were difficult to watch. And what does that say about me [after watching] if I chose to do nothing? I chose empowerment.”

Her argument went a bit further as she explained that an obstetric fistula is completely treatable in the United States. “After a woman gives birth, the surgery is performed before she leaves the hospital, but opportunities like that don’t exist in parts of Africa, because of home births, lack of access to a medical facility, stigma and shame, even grief if the woman loses her baby.”

Empowerment is the endgame to any iZōsh story. When Glupker discovered an organization called Healing Hands of Joy in Ethiopia as a potential micro lending partner, she realized iZōsh could help. Healing Hands of Joy was started by Allison Shigo and Brett O’Donnell, two Emmy award-winning documentarians. Their 2009 movie called *A Walk to Beautiful* follows five women who were scorned by their village and family for suffering from obstetric fistulas. Healing Hands helps women recover from fistulas and trains them to go on to become Safe Motherhood Ambassadors, who educate other women about the importance of going to a medical facility for their birth. The fistula survivors receive counseling, support, and education, leading to income generating skills. “These Ambassadors, who lead the charge, are given the opportunity to receive micro loans from iZōsh. They are inspiring. They are teachers. I’m a teacher. I don’t want to be that person who would ignore this. I can make a difference.”

Empowerment is the endgame to any iZōsh story.

iZōsh is now international, but the local founding chapter can be found online at izosh.org/annarbor/. If you are interested in receiving a guest invitation, email contact.annarbor@izosh.org. To learn more about becoming a member of iZōsh, please visit: [/izosh.org/annarbor/become-a-part-of-izosh/](http://izosh.org/annarbor/become-a-part-of-izosh/).





The WHIMSiCAL World of
David Zinn



By Cashmere Morley

OVER HIS LIFE, ZINN HAS HIDDEN OVER 1000 CHALK CREATURES ALL OVER THE WORLD.



point of view, at least inside my head—even if I don't know their whole backstory, and certainly the ones that I draw out repeatedly. I don't know why I see them so often. But they do have distinct sort of the yin and yang personality profiles."

He's referring to two of his most recognizable figures, a green character with stalk-eyes named Sluggo and Pigasus (a pig with wings) named Philomena. Images of these two, more than any other character, show up all over Zinn's social media and website.

"I REALIZE THAT EVERY TIME I SLIP PAST THAT PAGE AS I KEPT DRAWING IN THE SAME BOOK, I NEVER FAILED TO HIGH-FIVE THE PIGASUS, BECAUSE I NEEDED IT."

-DAVID ZINN

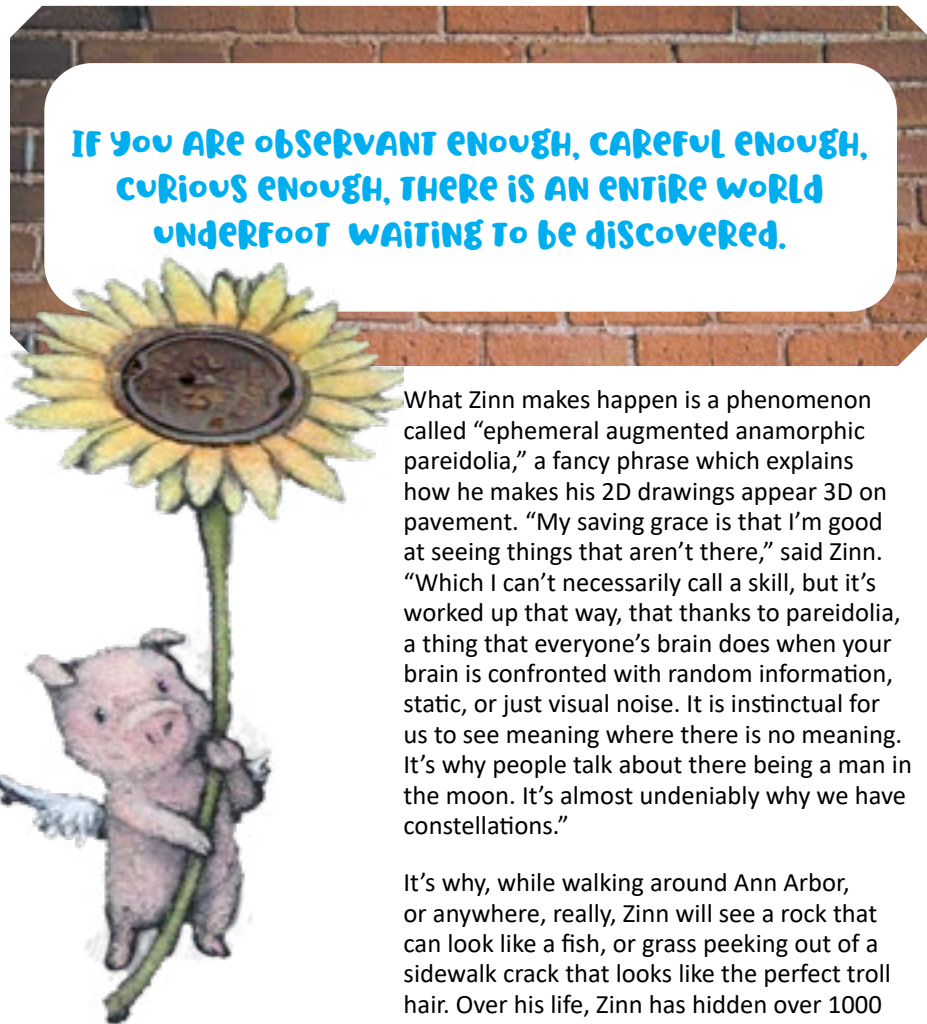
IF YOU ARE OBSERVANT ENOUGH, careful enough, curious enough, there is an entire world underfoot waiting to be discovered. It is a world nestled in ours but unlike ours—an illusionistic wonderland etched in chalk by Ann Arbor's neighborhood "chalk man." It's a reality only visible to those who are looking for it amongst the jumble of the mundane. But in this world, if you are lucky enough to stumble across it, one rule remains the same as ours: things will not, cannot, last forever. Artist David Zinn says that's the point.

"I'm a compulsive doodler. That's a given. I've been doing it since the same age everyone else has been doing it. I just didn't stop," said Zinn. An Ann Arbor native, Zinn has been doodling his chalk drawings on sidewalks all over the city for over ten years. "It was a good way to navigate being really shy as a kid, because people can't talk to you if they can't look you in the eye, and they can't look you in the eye if you've got your head buried in a sketchbook, so it was ironically meant to keep me safe from interacting with people. And now that I draw in public, it's the main reason why I interact with people." Zinn laughed and added, "I'm using art to create the things that reality failed to provide. I would like to see excited, cheerful, or serene creatures staring up at me from the sidewalk. I'd like to be able to sit on the curb next to my imaginary friends. So, I make that happen."

"It's probably not hard to notice that there's a very different demeanor between the two of them. Which was not planned. I'm only explaining after the fact because I don't know why I draw them. But perhaps because of his bug-eyed anatomy, Sluggo is always very excited about whatever's happening, one way or the other. Happy, terrified. He just always has a strong reaction. Maybe because he doesn't have eyelids. So, it's his own choice, but I think it goes beyond that. And he's very energetic, ready to engage. Ready to react," said Zinn. "And I learned early on when I once tried to draft Philomena looking frightened that she won't do it.

That particular drawing only works with an implacable, accepting, neutral expression. It's just a very steady, 'Okay. All right.' And it's actually strangely reassuring. I think I get more reassurance from Philomena because whatever is going on, she's just okay with it. I wish I could do that. And I'm hoping to learn to live by that model over time."

IF YOU ARE OBSERVANT ENOUGH, CAREFUL ENOUGH, CURIOUS ENOUGH, THERE IS AN ENTIRE WORLD UNDERFOOT WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED.



What Zinn makes happen is a phenomenon called "ephemeral augmented anamorphic pareidolia," a fancy phrase which explains how he makes his 2D drawings appear 3D on pavement. "My saving grace is that I'm good at seeing things that aren't there," said Zinn. "Which I can't necessarily call a skill, but it's worked up that way, that thanks to pareidolia, a thing that everyone's brain does when your brain is confronted with random information, static, or just visual noise. It is instinctual for us to see meaning where there is no meaning. It's why people talk about there being a man in the moon. It's almost undeniably why we have constellations."

It's why, while walking around Ann Arbor, or anywhere, really, Zinn will see a rock that can look like a fish, or grass peeking out of a sidewalk crack that looks like the perfect troll hair. Over his life, Zinn has hidden over 1000 chalk creatures all over the world.

"I mean, to be fair, since my work is all improvised, there are a lot of creatures I've drawn that I hesitate to even call characters because I've only met them once. And we only had a passing acquaintance. But they're real to the point where they have a



Zinn recounted a time he was traveling for work, feeling homesick and stressed out about events in his life, when his work was a sort of refuge from the day-to-day.

"I have a doodle from a sketchbook I carry around," said Zinn. "When I just absentmindedly drew Philomena with one hoof raised up a little bit. In a strange way, it seemed very obviously intended as an attempted high-five. I really needed that in that moment. There was no look of great sympathy on the face, just a very unshakable, placid face combined with this little tiny raised hoof sent a very strong message, 'You know, you're doing your best.' I realize that every time I slip past that page as I kept drawing in the same book, I never failed to high-five the Pigasus, because I needed it. I almost always needed that little extra help, that little reassurance."

He hopes that people find that kind of solace in his work.

SINCE THESE ARE MY FRIENDS, AND THEY DO WASH AWAY, IT IS PRETTY MEANINGFUL THAT THIS IS THE ONLY TIME YOU GET TO SPEND WITH THEM.

-DAVID ZINN

“At the end of the day, you can’t tweak it. You can’t stop and wait and wonder if you did it the best way you could. You have until the sun goes down. Or until the shadows get too long, the sun moves in a bad position, you get too cold or too hot. And since you’re drawing chalk on a sidewalk, that will have no value when you’re done with it, you might as well draw what makes you happy right now. Because that’s the main reason why you’re doing it. And you’re done when you’re done. Eventually, you have to walk away. Since these are my friends, and they do wash away, it is pretty meaningful that this is the only time you get to spend with them. Just once. You can’t pull them out of your drawer later or put them on your wall. You’re done when you’re willing to bond with them enough to let them go.”

Zinn, who draws his creatures with off-brand chinks and vine charcoal, invites everyone to pick up chalk because “you don’t feel like you need to take a class for it to be successful at it.” And there’s no pressure to be good at it, because it will wash away at the end of the day.

“Everything is falling apart,” said Zinn. “The Mona Lisa is falling to dust right now. Just more slowly, and with more people fighting it. There’s a lot of calm and acceptance in just letting go. In that sense it’s very therapeutic to draw outside with chalk. You’re reminding yourself that holding on to things is where a lot of the anxiety comes from. Enjoying them while they’re here and then letting go is much better.”

Zinn continued, “If everything I had drawn in Ann Arbor is still there, you wouldn’t be able to walk two feet without stumbling over something I’ve drawn. I love that people wish they’d never wash away, but believe me, you’re happy they’re gone. It’s a small town! You could drop me anywhere in town and somewhere in my line of sight is a place where I drew something, no matter where. If I think about it, there are some strange places that I’ve drawn that people probably haven’t even discovered yet. Because part of the satisfaction, I’m realizing now, [is] that this is my job.”

Zinn’s job has taken him all over the world to a variety of places both simple and baroque.

“Usually upon very careful inspection, even a very respectable plaza has some curious little broken spots that are going ignored. The main separation is usually trying to distance myself from people to really talk to that spot, to figure out what it wants. The theoretical belief is that every spot on the planet has something it would like to be if given the opportunity. You just have to listen to it carefully,” said Zinn.



...THE GREATEST SATISFACTION IS FOUND IN RANDOMLY STUMBLING UPON A SORT OF IGNORED AND FORGOTTEN SPOT.”

-DAVID ZINN

“But the greatest satisfaction is found in randomly stumbling upon a sort of ignored and forgotten spot. It’s nowhere special, I just happened past because I was walking a different way to the post office, and maybe other people walk that way to the post office, and maybe they don’t. But I can put something in a very random, ignored corner, where chances are maybe one person will see it before it gets washed away by the rain.

“If you’re trying to share your art with the world, this is a terrible plan. But if you’re trying to make an impact, even on one person, wholly molly... I mean, if you’re that one person who happens to be in the right place at the right time and look down at this one spot, and see this completely insane drawing, insane in the way that no one in their right mind would take the time to draw this one weird thing in this one weird, sad, spot, you’re going to wonder what’s going on in your day now. And maybe even, just for a moment, wonder if it was put there for you, because in a way it was. If you were the only person who saw it, I didn’t know it was you who would see it, but it was put there for you. You’re 100 percent of the audience.”



David Zinn, 50, grew up in and around Ann Arbor. The son of a research scientist and an administrative assistant for the University of Michigan, he attended Sayer Elementary school in South Lyon before attending Greenhills. He lives in a 150-year-old house on the Old West Side with his feline companion. To see more of David Zinn’s work, visit zinnart.com, or check out his social media on Instagram @davidzinn, Facebook @DavidZinnIllustration, or Twitter @DavidZinn_Art.



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Hand Crafting

A Charming Faerie Baby



By Jennifer Carson

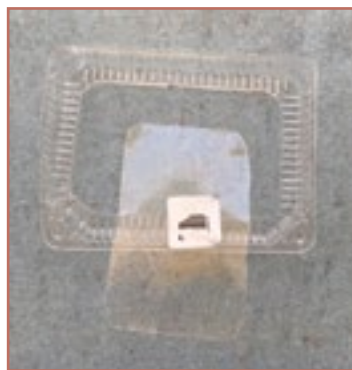
Oh, the last days of fall! Soon the flowers will be snuggling into their winter beds, the birds will fly south, and little faeries will begin to hibernate. In the spirit of these little environmental sprites, I've designed a cute little faerie baby reusing a plastic deli container (I'm sure you have some of those laying around since we've all been supporting our local restaurants delivery service through the pandemic). You can use the plastic bauble you make as a magnet, make a pin or a charm, or tie it to a lovely winter gift.

What you'll need to make your own faerie baby:

- A plastic deli container—it must be a #6 plastic (it will have a stamp on the bottom somewhere that identifies it as #6).
- Colored pencils—I used Prismacolor pencils in the following colors: crimson red, kelp green, lilac, jasmine, light peach, peach, pink, carmine red, and dark brown.
- A hole punch (if you want to attach your baby to something).
- A heat gun—the kind you use with embossing powders.
- A pair of pliers to hold your faerie while shrinking.
- A pair of sharp scissors.
- Fine grit sand paper. I used 320.
- A pair of sharp scissors.
- Some kind of sealer—I used Modge Podge Dimensional Magic.
- A small piece of cardstock, or something similar to help flatten your piece.
- The faerie baby template on page 89.

Begin by cutting out the flat section of your container. Clean off any labels.

Sand one side of your plastic. I sanded mine horizontally first, and then vertically. You want a nice frosted finish so that the pigments from your pencils will stick.



On the sanded side of your plastic, trace the faerie drawing with your dark brown pencil. When coloring, try not to scrub your other colored pencils over the brown line or it may smudge a little. Just get as close as you can!

Color your faerie! I used light peach as the base color for her skin. To create some depth, use your lilac pencil around the eyes, in the inner ear, under the chin, under the top foot, and under the top hand/arm.

Color her nose with peach, and add some blushing on the top hand, shoulder, bottom of foot, cheeks, and tip of ear. Go back and add a bit of pink to those same areas.



With your jasmine colored pencil, color the bridge of the nose, and add some to the eyelids.

Color the left side of the hat with carmine red to create a highlight. Color the remaining hat with crimson red—blend into the carmine red.

The blanket wrap I colored with kelp green, and then overlaid jasmine in order to create some highlights.

Color the hair with your brown pencil.

If you want to create a charm or necklace, make a dot with one of your pencils where you are going to punch the hanging hole.

Cut your faerie out—you should leave about 1/8" around your coloring. If you are putting a hole in your coloring for hanging, make sure you cut around your dot, too.



Punch your hole.

Hold your faerie with a pair of pliers in order to keep your fingers away from the heat of the embossing gun. Don't keep your heat gun in one place for too long—move it around a bit. Your faerie will shrink pretty quickly. Don't freak out if it starts to stick to itself. Just gently pull it apart (you can use a bamboo skewer for this) and keep heating. When it stops shrinking, press your piece with your cardstock to flatten it.



For comparison, the photo on the left is the template, the photo on the right shows how much your plastic shrinks!

After it cools, you'll want to put some kind of sealer on it. I used Modge Podge Dimensional Magic. Let it dry overnight and your faerie is ready to use.

If you'd like to finish it off the way I've shown below, I purchased a fancy safety pin and tied on various ribbons and trims, then stitched on a few vintage buttons. I had to attach the faerie charm with a jump ring so that it laid correctly.

I'd love to see how you use your faerie charm!



Jennifer Carson is a local author and artist who enjoys creating beautiful items for home and family. You can see more of her work and peruse all of her crafting patterns at thedragoncharmer.com.



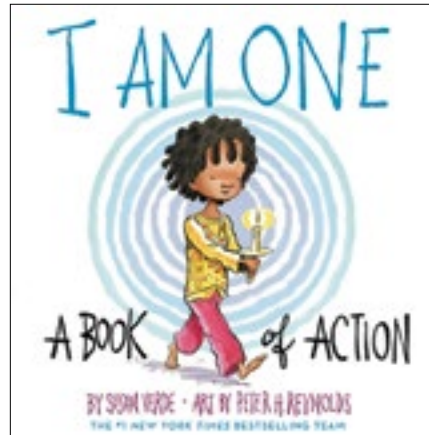
The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section

Books Available at Crazy Wisdom in our Children's Section Reviews by CWJ Staff

I Am One: A Book of Action

By Susan Verde, Illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds
\$14.99

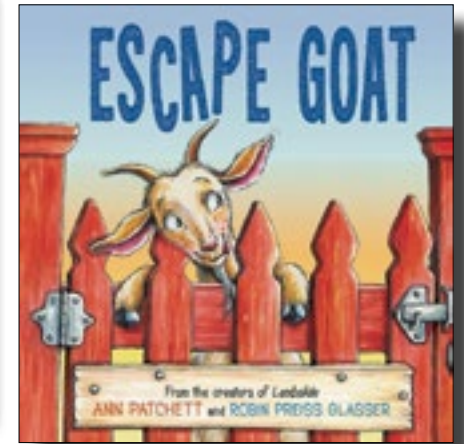
One seed to start a garden, one note to start a melody, one brick to start breaking down walls: Every movement and moment of change starts with purpose, with intention, with one. With me. With you. *I Am One* is the newest book from this dynamic duo and I dare say it might be my favorite. When a child ponders how they can make a difference in the world, they realize that "beautiful things start with just one." One small act can lead to another creating a much larger ripple effect that knows no bounds.



Escape Goat

By Ann Patchett, Illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser
\$18.99

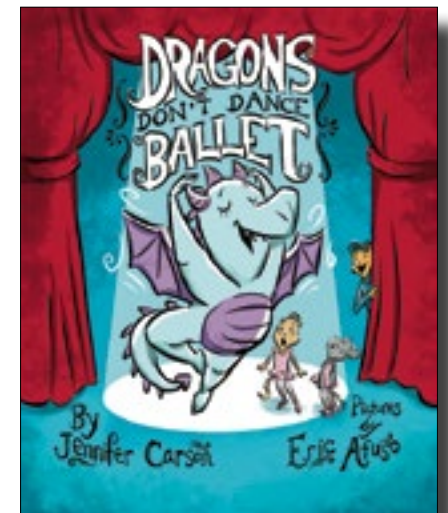
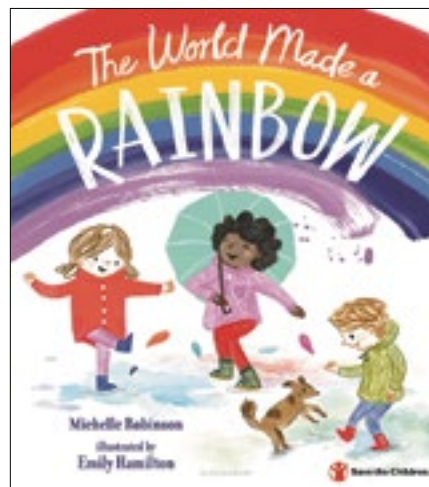
The Farmer family has a big problem! Every day their goat escapes, and every day, Mr. Farmer brings him back. So, when things start to go awry on the farm, it must be the goat's fault. Who's to blame when Mrs. Farmer's petunias are trampled? Or when all the cupcakes for Archie's party disappear? And when the whole bucket of paint is spilled? Of course, everyone blames the goat! But is it really his fault? A hilarious and heartwarming story about a goat who keeps getting all the blame, but ultimately teaches one family about the importance of honesty and owning up to your mistakes.



The World Made A Rainbow

By Michelle Robinson, illustrated by Emily Hamilton
\$17.99

Did you ever paint a rainbow and hang it in your window? Did you see that your neighbors did, too? Did it make you feel a little less lonely? *The World Made a Rainbow* is a story to remind us that light can't shine without dark, rainbows can't color the sky without rain, and the world is always full of hope and possibility, even when we feel lost and alone. This beautiful, reassuring picture book is the perfect reminder of the power of creativity, joy, and togetherness.



Dragon's Don't Dance Ballet

By Jennifer Carson, illustrated by Eric Afuso
\$22.50

Esmeralda Dragon works the spotlight at the City Ballet, but what she really wants to do is dance. Encouraged by her friend Harold to audition, Esmeralda takes a leap of faith only to discover that she doesn't quite fit in with the other ballerinas. But Esmeralda isn't ready to give up—and neither is Harold! A whimsical picture book that challenges body image expectations.



Knowing the Orisha Gods & Goddesses

By Waldete Tristão, illustrated by Caco Bressane
\$8.99

This beautifully illustrated exploration of Afro-Brazilian spirituality introduces you to the gods of the African diaspora known as the Orishas. Presented in a fun and easy-to-understand format, *Knowing the Orishas* provides brief descriptions of twenty important deities, highlighting their talents, characteristics, and customs as well as where they live, how they dress, the foods they like to eat, and more.



Grace From Space

By Barbara Glazier-Robinson
\$5.99

A planet with vanishing dreams. A girl dedicated to their safe return. One young heroine must trust her voice to save Earth's future. Eleven-year-old Grace spends every young moment protecting the hopes and wishes of Earth Kids. When each plan to return their dreams comes up crickets, the preteen has no choice but to call an emergency session of the mighty Galactic Council. With time running out, Grace's BFF Conor unleashes a brilliant and daring new plan with a heart-stopping catch... When the council agrees to the plan, the fiery redhead realizes she'll have to face her greatest fear: speaking in public. Saving Earth kids' dreams has rapidly turned into Grace's worst nightmare. Will Grace discover her voice in time before hopelessness blankets the Earth?

You may purchase these books at
shopcrazywisdom.com
by either visiting the website
or scanning the QR code (right).



Illustration by JENNIFER CARSON
furandfeatherfriends.com



Conscious Parenting

Focus on Connection

By Sheri Stankorb-Geiselman, LMSW

Parents are under a high degree of stress right now. Racism and its effects, a pandemic, an election year, environmental disasters—all are our backdrop as we surf waves of work and kids' schooling. Now more than ever, it's essential to bring ourselves—and our parenting—back to the basics.

Now more than ever, it's essential to bring ourselves—and our parenting—back to the basics.

Children's brains are primed for learning when they feel safe and connected. And when they're feeling *disconnected*, or a backlog of tension is keeping them stuck, they know just how to signal us for help. And oh—how we wish it could come in the form of clear, calm, direct words! A memo, perhaps, that says, "Dad, I'm really stressed—help me. Can you sit with me awhile so I can feel your presence? It would help me remember that I'm okay and will get through this." If only! More often it's wrapped in a package tailor-made to get our attention—and our goats—balky behavior, surliness, sibling teasing, tantrums, aggression, unreasonable demands. Sound familiar?

The beauty is that when parents understand the signals our kids send, we have an opportunity to give them what they need to get un-stuck: connection. And when connection is restored, they can once again think, finish their math, apologize to their sibling, be affectionate, do their chores—all the things that make family life flow well.

The beauty is that when parents understand the signals our kids send, we have an opportunity to give them what they need to get un-stuck: connection.

How to offer that connection? Hand in Hand Parenting is an approach that offers five simple tools for parents to build and restore connection and help things go more smoothly in families—especially during turbulent, uncertain times.

One tool—Special Time—is a pre-emptive way to fill kids' connection cups. When full, they can cooperate, think more clearly, willingly walk the dog, or practice their cello. It's the go-to tool for keeping family gears running well. It may look different with a toddler than a teen, but the underlying concept is the same—it's a way to meet their need for connection and bathe their system in the message that they are deeply wanted and liked. When there's discontent brewing or during transition times—returning to school, a move, changes in friend groups—Special Time can ease the way.

It's the go-to tool for keeping family gears running well.

How does it work? Parents take five to 20 minutes to delight in their kid and follow their lead. No teaching, guiding, correcting, or rules. (What?!? Yep, aside from safety, now is the time to relax the rules). Your job is to set a timer, turn off your phone, remove all distractions, press pause on the eternal to-do list of your mind, put a twinkle in your eye, and bask in the wonder that is this young human at the heart of your family. Your job is also to say a hearty "Yes!" to whatever your child brings to you for those few minutes. This is one of the reasons the timer is necessary—it's hard to be fully present for some of the things our children delight in! Yes, jumping on the bed! Yes, putting on makeup! Slime? Bring it on! It's not the time to bring your A-game to Candyland, either. Just let your child lead and be with her every step of the way.

Sometimes parents say, "Are you kidding? I'm with my kid 24/7, and you want me to do what?!" Really, I wouldn't recommend it if it weren't so powerful. Do an experiment. Put a warm smile on your face, and say to your child, "Let's do some Special Time. That means you've got me for the next ten minutes to do whatever you want." Set the timer, follow their lead, and see what happens. Often children are



brighter and lighter after Special Time. Or, when the timer ends, a child may wisely use it as an opportunity to offload some tension with tears. Let them flow, and simply listen. No need to talk him out of them—he's so smart to use your attention in that way. And as a bonus, Special Time is a powerful antidote to parental guilt. You've completed a major item on the parenting to-do list when you've filled their need for connection.

Your job is to set a timer, turn off your phone, remove all distractions, press pause on the eternal to-do list of your mind, put a twinkle in your eye, and bask in the wonder that is this young human at the heart of your family.

Follow the Giggles

There's nothing quite like the power of laughter to hit the reset button in a tense child—or parent, for that matter. One mom was listening to her nine-year-old son's fears about the new school year. He was gnawing his fingernails, bit one off, and showed it to her, thoroughly grossing her out. She wanted to scold him, but remembered the connection "groove" they had built up over time: He would say or do something icky, then laugh uproariously at mom's discomfort. So, she looked at his fingernail, and said in an exaggerated way, with a smile in her voice, "Ewwwww! Get it away from me!" He took her cue and proceeded to delight in making mom squirm. She knew this interaction—and the laughter—could lighten the weight in his emotional backpack. Sure enough, after a couple minutes of this play, he settled down and said, "I feel so much better, Mom."

Roughhousing also gets the laughter going. Let your child best you. Dare them to tackle you, declaring yourself impossible to knock over. Give it your best, and let them take great joy in defeating you. This kind of play is gold for a child's nervous system, breaks up tension, and brings you closer together.

Resource Yourself

Many parents feel like they're barely keeping their heads above water with work, school, and family all in the same space and time. Promoting connection with our kids and listening to their feelings is itself emotional work. It's work that pays off big time and can actually free up energy in your life and family. But it *is* work, and parents need a way to re-fuel. Building support for yourself is essential. Hand in Hand Parenting has a tool called Listening Partnerships. It's free, simple, and has been a game-changer for thousands around the world. You and another parent take turns listening to one another without judging, interrupting, or offering advice. It's amazing how another person's warm attention can ease our stress and our parenting loads.

Lovingly Lower Expectations

If ever there was a time to embrace cereal for dinner, this is it. Especially for those solo parenting, or working full-time from home while managing online learning, or both, please know that you are being tasked with the impossible. Whatever you can do is enough. Do what you can; even consider it an early gap year. All of the good standards we parents hold for homework, hygiene, screen time, manners, nutrition—all are important in guiding our children, but now is the time to pick the ones closest to our hearts, and let the rest slide. Bring your focus back to the basics—including connection. Remember, you are the most important thing your child needs, and you are enough.

There's nothing quite like the power of laughter to hit the reset button in a tense child—or parent, for that matter.

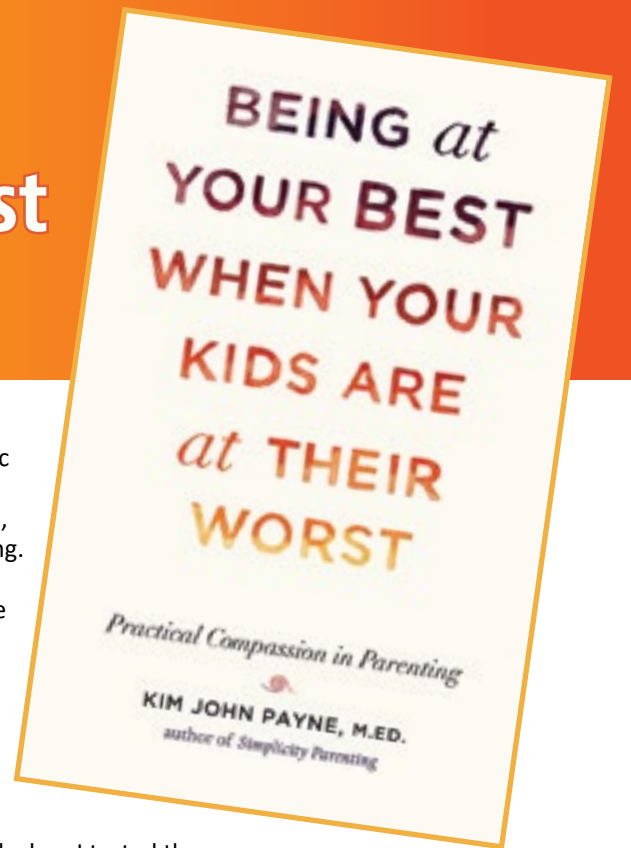
Hand in Hand Parenting, based in Palo Alto, California, has been supporting parents around the world for over 30 years. To learn more about Special Time, Listening Partnerships, and more, go to handinhandparenting.org for resources (many free or low-cost) including articles, books, podcasts, videos, online courses, consultants, Parent Club, and more.

Sheri Stankorb-Geiselman, LMSW is a therapist in Ann Arbor who works with people and families throughout the life span. She can be reached at geiselmanpsychotherapy@gmail.com.

Book Review

Being at Your BEST When Your Kids Are at Their Worst

By Kim John Payne, M.ED.



By Catherine Carlson

Have you ever felt the “red mist” (of frustration) rise in you regarding something one of your children said or did? Did it soon follow with saying or doing something you later regretted? Author Kim John Payne understands this experience from the perspective of a parent, but also as a child that witnessed such behavior.

Growing up, Payne’s mother suffered from health issues, and he was the victim of many an angry outburst from her. Sometimes she hit him with a belt, which was deeply hurtful, but not uncommon in the culture. Once he became a parent himself, he was surprised how easily he became frustrated and how quickly it escalated into anger. Reflecting back on his own upbringing he sought answers.

Payne is a bestselling author with a background in school and family counseling and consulting. He is the founding director of the Simplicity Parenting Institute and the Center for Social Sustainability. *Being at Your BEST When Your Kids Are at Their Worst: Practical Compassion in Parenting* is Payne’s guidebook on how to be a parent with less regrets and a better connection with your kids. The book is an easy read structured into three parts: The Problem, The Key, and the Transformation.

“If your children are going to be at their best, they need to be okay with taking appropriate risks and accepting failure as a possibility.”

—Kim John Payne

There are many reasons why parents struggle to not “lose it” with their kids. Some have a natural tendency, and some are the opposite—avoiding conflict completely. Looking at how your parents behaved toward you and your siblings is a natural place to begin. Payne addresses patterns and derailments that contribute to parenting challenges. One interesting piece was a chronicle of parenting behaviors through the decades dating back to the 1930s. Ninety years ago, “discipline wasn’t really an issue. Immediate survival and ‘just getting through’ were much more pressing.” Actual parenting “styles” didn’t come about until the quality of life improved and work was less a family affair. He discusses the things that push our buttons, including the resentment that builds when, as parents, we do so much without so much as a “thank you,” and how you can change that. He covers things that challenge us: screens, activities, and keeping up with peers.

The core teaching of the book is the Compassionate Response Practice. The Practice is a type of guided visualization. It was born out of Payne’s experience using visualization as a young elite athlete and is structured in two phases. The first is a four-step process of extreme self-awareness viewed from two states of being. The first is what Kim refers to as Flow, when you are feeling strong and centered. The second state is when we operate out of what he calls Fever, when tensions are at their highest. Payne’s work often draws on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, and this fourfold concept is not new.

The second phase of the Practice is where the magic happens, and it involves four visual stages : Radiate, Integrate, Unify, and Closing. This phase ultimately integrates the flow and the fever together. He uses the metaphor of a sick child when wondering how to handle your own unwanted emotions—hold them close, just like you would your child.

I admit I was a bit skeptical when I tested the Practice out for myself, but I was surprised at the simplicity and effectiveness of it, and that it didn’t feel like a chore. It would seem that Payne has developed something unique and helpful, and if I did make it a regular practice, then it could definitely improve my own parenting and other relationships.

Once you understand the two phases of the Compassionate Response Practice for yourself, there is a really wonderful chapter devoted to using the Practice for a child in need. The child could be your own, who may be having a hard time, or any child you know. This seems like an amazing tool that would have an exponential impact. Payne notes that some faculties and care teams use this form of The Compassionate Response Practice weekly: “Each person quietly chooses a student or client he or she will carry (placing that person in the visualization). The group need not choose the same child... By doing this, many children are held in this very special way each week.” This is similar to praying for someone, only more purposeful.

Lastly, the book reveals the gifts that come once you integrate the Compassionate Response Practice. Payne says this is one way he has found to be less afraid of messing up as a parent. Remember that you are the role model. “If your children are going to be at their best, they need to be okay with taking appropriate risks and accepting failure as a possibility.” At the same time, when a parent is angry, this is the point at which the child is vulnerable, and they are watching to see what the parent does next. If the parent can regulate their own nervous system, the child will naturally do the same.

The book is filled with amazing stories of parents struggling and succeeding. As a counselor, Payne saw one father, a perpetrator of domestic abuse, experience a big shift one day when his daughter refused to get in the car. “I knew, and she knew, that we were headed into really dangerous territory. And then it happened. It’s hard to describe how good it felt, but I was able to speak to my child knowing that it was me she was hearing and not something from my messed-up past.” All it really takes to learn the Compassionate Response Practice is giving yourself some time and some space away from your family. Although the focus is on children, this technique can also be applied to many other relationships.

A few years ago, I was fortunate to see Kim John Payne speak to a group of parents and educators. He was funny and engaging. He seems to have a gift for filtering all the advice parents have been given and funneling it down to a simple and lighthearted approach to problem-solving with kids, no matter their age.

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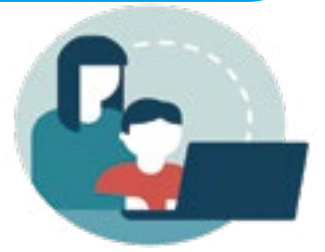
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Crazy Wisdom Kids in the Community

Remote Programs in 2021



By Laura K. Cowan

What programs and groups are available for kids to connect during social distancing? It's a problem that has continued to evolve this year as conditions shift, especially for younger ones. I was concerned when after a long spring and summer in semi-quarantine, my daughter seemed a bit sedentary and missed her friends. We enjoy being home, but we've never been home for months on end before. So, I started looking for programs that were flexible which we could join now or through the winter.

Originally, I was hoping for something that would get her off her screen, but I was so impressed by some of the remote programming I found around Ann Arbor this year that I wanted to pass it on to you.

Originally, I was hoping for something that would get her off her screen, but I was so impressed by some of the remote programming I found around Ann Arbor this year that I wanted to pass it on to you. Winter months might be challenging for outdoor activities beyond sledding, so being a planner, I wanted options ahead of time. In the end, I was much happier with most of these programs than I expected to be, especially given the circumstances. People have really stepped up to design high-quality kids programming accessible and safe around town, and my daughter has perked right up from her participation in programs like virtual playdates and online art programs. I know now we'll be okay. I hope you find your way through these times as well. From outdoor bonfires to remote classes, there are so many programs still going on for kids right now that keep safety in mind.

People have really stepped up to design high-quality kids programming accessible and safe around town, and my daughter has perked right up from her participation in programs like virtual playdates and online art programs.



Ann Arbor Art Center Art Boxes & Remote Camps

Ann Arbor Art Center switched their classes to pick-up Art Boxes at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, they're continuing to play it by ear and are offering remote Zoom classes as well as a whole series of Art Boxes for kids (and adults!)—you can even paint a pottery piece and then drop it off for firing in the kiln.

"We're still staying attuned to what's happening with Covid," said Jean Spindler, Youth Programs Manager at the Ann Arbor Art Center. "We're optimistic that at a minimum, at the times [in spring and summer] that we have camps, we would have Art Box camps."

Art Boxes contain single projects or a series, complete with virtual and written instructions, for ages 5-12. You can try a single box, an Art Box camp, or even donate a box to youth in need. The boxes contain general art supplies for completing school and personal art projects at home. They are self-guided plus have extra project ideas included in the box.

The cool thing about virtual classes is that it allows the Art Center to draw in teachers from across the country instead of just locally...

For teens, Art Boxes are planned as well, including copper plate embossing, block printed tote bags, and watercolor silhouettes. Classes and boxes will continue to change throughout the year, so you can keep coming back for fresh options each semester.

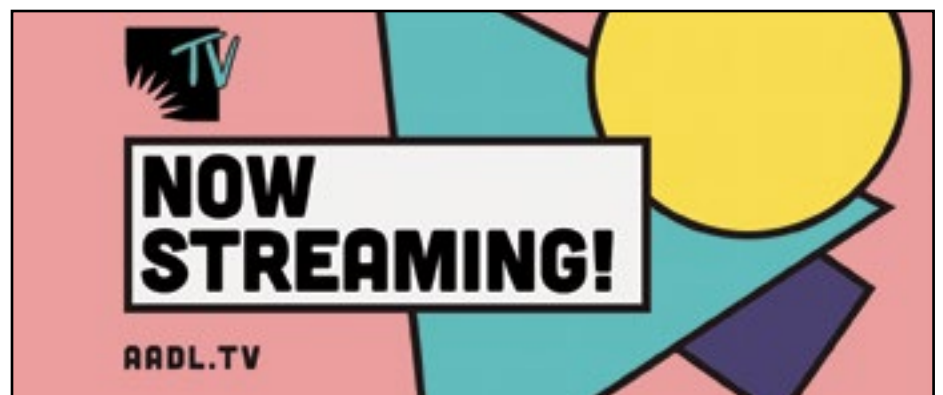
The best way to keep up with the latest at the Ann Arbor Art Center is to visit their website, as even during normal times their classes are updated regularly and fill up very quickly. "We just launched our first few classes on a smaller scale because it's our first attempt" at virtual classes, Spindler told us. Most classes are now planned to be virtual for the remainder of the year, and the Art Center won't plan any in-person classes until conditions change.

One exciting class recently held was the Comics Academy class hosted by popular graphic novelist Jerzy Drozd, which ran October through December. "Jerzy's class is very interactive led through the Zoom platform," Spindler said. "We encourage kids to be visible and to interact, but they do have the option to turn the camera off. There are lots of chances to interact one on one."

The cool thing about virtual classes is that it allows the Art Center to draw in teachers from across the country instead of just locally, so keep an eye out for similar classes heading into the next semester. It's possible that this shift in formatting leads to permanent changes in how children's programs are run with virtual options and teachers or special guests pulled from farther afield on a more long-term basis.

If you're homeschooling or can't get into a class because it's full, you can visit the Art Resources Page at the Ann Arbor Art Center website for home art project ideas for kids—from sketchbook prompts, to websites to explore, videos, and art games.

You can learn more about programs at the Ann Arbor Art Center and check out current classes and Art Boxes at annarborartcenter.org or call (734) 994-8004 for more information.



Ann Arbor District Library TV

In conjunction with the Ann Arbor Art Center, the Ann Arbor District Library recently launched free recorded drawing classes with Payton Cook, which is hosted on the AADL website and TV station on Sunday afternoons. The AADL was at the forefront of switching programming and services online during the coronavirus shutdown and continues to shift kids' programming online to keep children entertained and educated this year. They even switched up their "Summer Game" to a "Bummer Game" during the initial coronavirus shutdown, to give kids something to do during quarantine, and created rich programming and improved access to e-books at the drop of a hat when schools and public facilities were shut in March.

"Dozens of staff members got to work learning how to record video from their homes to launch storytime, trivia contests, book discussions, arts and crafts demos, games, and so much more."

— Rich Retyi, AADL Marketing and Communications Manager

AADL Marketing and Communications Manager Rich Retyi told us that AADL launched the now popular AADL TV program online during quarantine in March at aadl.tv. "It was a way to take our very popular physical programming online," he said. "Dozens of staff members got to work learning how to record video from their homes to launch storytime, trivia contests, book discussions, arts and crafts demos, games, and so much more."

Retyi said the team was hard at work keeping the content fresh. "As the weeks passed, we once again started working with partners and outside organizations from the community to bring that content to AADL TV as well. From launch through the end of September of 2020, the Ann Arbor District Library had over 162,000 video views reaching nearly two million people."



“Some of our most popular programs are our weekday storytimes,” Retyi told us, “with members of the AADL story team singing songs, reading books, and playing with our awesome puppets.”

The library even came up with TV series programming to run on a regular basis. “We have our weekend variety show, *The Saturday Show*, which is geared toward kids, but has something for all ages. We have World Famous Trivia, a weekly Crafty Chat, Drawing for Kids and Adults, tons of other arts and crafts programs, food and cooking programs, and so much more.”

The AADL has also offered a number of book, film, and music discussions in their Black Lives Matter Discussion Series, which might be a good fit for teens or older kids looking for thoughtful discussion of contemporary events. And the library has been offering contactless lobby pickup for books and other checkout items since June 2020 by appointment.

More info on programming and times can be found at aadl.org.

In lieu of in-person field trips, the University of Michigan Museum of Art has new offerings for K-12 teachers, remote schoolers, as well as parents.

UMMA Remote Field Trips

One real bummer this year is missing field trips. In lieu of in-person field trips, the University of Michigan Museum of Art has new offerings for K-12 teachers, remote schoolers, as well as parents. Grace VanderVliet is the Curator for Museum Teaching and Learning at UMMA, and she told us about changes to the museum programming that have allowed kids to connect remotely with exhibits and programs this year.

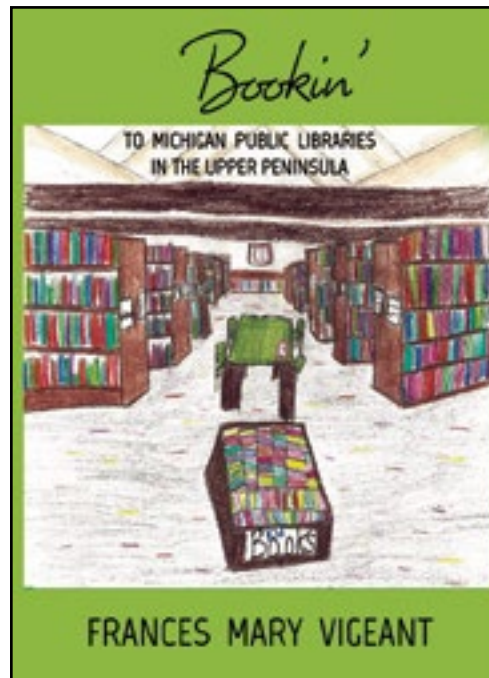
“For families, we offer free, live (registration-required) Zoom art-making classes once per month,” VanderVliet said. “A few recorded sessions can be viewed online at umma.umich.edu/content/virtual-family-art-studio.”

“I’m talking with Laura Pershin Raynor, otherwise known as ‘The Story Lady’ from AADL, who recently retired. We will put on a virtual storytime sometime this year that combines storytime plus looking at art related to the story themes. We’ll integrate tips for parents along the way about how to tell stories (rhyme, rhythm, refrain) and how to talk about art.”

UMMA also partnered with the Nam Center for Korean Studies this fall to provide a virtual Chuseok (harvest) festival. It’s becoming more common for museums to offer virtual tours of exhibits and virtual field trips as well, so stay tuned for other events you can access remotely.

You can find information about virtual learning opportunities at umma.umich.edu/k-12-resources and umma.umich.edu/k-12-resources/virtual-learning.

Continued on page 74



How libraries are shifting to meet Michigan's needs.

“Get a fascinating tour of UP libraries ... jump on her train and take a ride.”

— Katherine Edgren, author of *The Grain Beneath the Gloss*

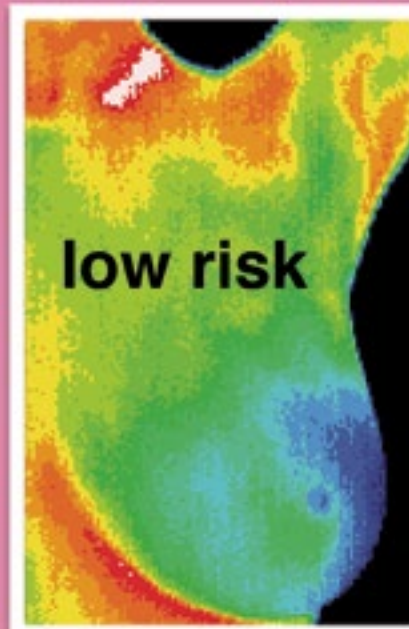


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Art class at UMMA

Crazy Wisdom Kids in the Community

Continued from page 73



Checking temperature outside

Rec & Ed Online & Outdoor Programs

Jenna Bacolor is Executive Director of the Ann Arbor Public Schools' Community Division. She directs the Ann Arbor Rec & Ed programs as well as Farm to School and other initiatives. We caught up with her to ask how Rec & Ed is heading into the winter, after fall programming that combined outdoor sports with online programs. Like many other programs, Rec & Ed has many plans up in the air and changing as social distancing requirements shift. Bacolor told us what they do know so far for the remainder of the year's programming.

"This fall and winter, Rec & Ed is continuing to provide fun, enriching, and active youth experiences that are in formats that adhere to Covid-19 safety protocols," Bacolor told us. "We're offering some of our popular in-person programs, such as chess and languages, in live, online classes."

Rec & Ed has adapted other classes to outdoor formats and has added some new classes such as ukulele lessons, outdoor nature and art classes, and a mobile photography club.

Rec & Ed has adapted other classes to outdoor formats and has added some new classes such as ukulele lessons, outdoor nature and art classes, and a mobile photography club.



Is it sometimes easier to deliver an online class than one in person? As the quarantine wore on, I became more curious what new traditions we might be able to form, new classes my daughter could access that we didn't have the chance to find before. Bacolor said that they haven't had too many challenges connecting kids to their virtual classes, possibly because of the Herculean efforts the Ann Arbor Public Schools made to distribute Chromebooks and iPads this fall to keep kids connected with remote learning. "Every AAPS student has a device," Bacolor said, "and the IT department has helped many families with internet connectivity."

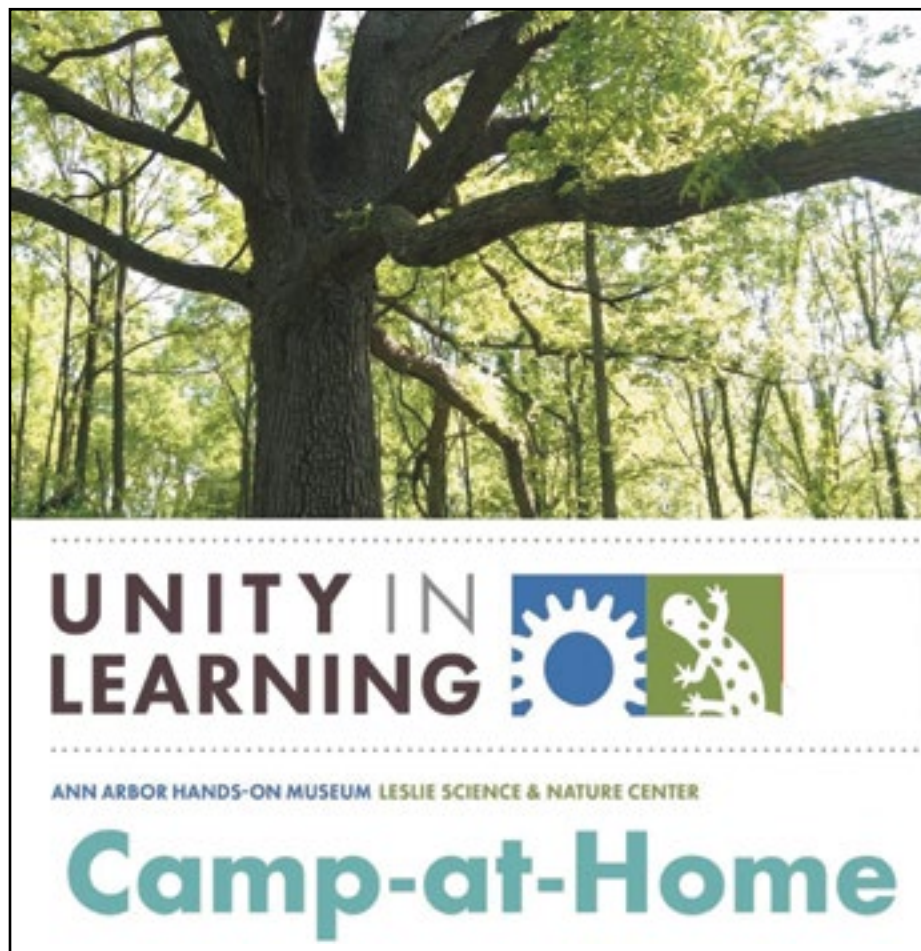
If you missed your chance to sign up for the next semester of Rec & Ed programs, they also posted a late fall session of free programs offered earlier in the fall, with the possibility of repeating this in other semesters. Bacolor told us, "Rec & Ed is offering free programs for the first time to AAPS students ages pre-K through eighth grade. It's a massive effort to offer three different outdoor, in-person programs at every elementary and K-8 this fall plus middle school tennis."

There are also virtual classes for karate, yoga, and dance. We asked Bacolor about the best ways for kids to stay connected when they can't participate in in-person sports right now. She said these virtual workshops have been a great way for students to stay in touch with each other. "We've witnessed so many positive interactions between students!" she said. There is a section of free youth classes on the website where these classes are listed for future semesters, so keep an eye out for registration periods.

You can learn more about current Rec & Ed offerings by visiting aarecedonline.com/youth-enrichment-classes. Parents can follow Rec & Ed on Facebook (facebook.com/aareced), visit their website at aarecedonline.com, or call (994) 2300 ext. 0.

Leslie Science & Nature Center Remote Camps

Leslie Science & Nature Center and the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum recently merged organizations. During social distancing, both facilities were closed to the public temporarily, but Leslie has now reopened with unique options for families, including private parties for families or pandemic pods, and outdoor events. "We anticipate that we will continue our free monthly programs," said Susan Westhoff, who is Executive Director of Leslie Science & Nature Center and the COO of the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, "including our Raptor Feeding, Fireside Fun, and the New Moon Hike with nocturnal animal programs." Leslie also plans to adapt their annual Valentine's event, Owl Do I Love Thee, for an outdoor or distanced program. The Spring Eggstraveganza program that follows animals that lay eggs in spring is also planned to be reinvented for social distancing.



The cool thing about the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum merging with Leslie is that parties at Leslie can now involve cool projects from the Hands-On Museum, from creating slime to building and launching rockets. Westhoff said that families can reach out to schedule private birthday parties or events for their pandemic pods so they can feel more comfortable as a group going out of the house, and those parties can include Hands-On Museum projects like this, as well as fire pit rentals, dissecting owl pellets, or seeing the rescued raptors on site at Leslie. It sounds like a lot of fun, just as much as going to one of their outdoor bonfires. Westhoff said Leslie is also planning to partner with the Ann Arbor Public Schools and local preschools to create programming for days that many children are asynchronous (remote schooling days) learning.



The cool thing about the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum merging with Leslie is that parties at Leslie can now involve cool projects from the Hands-On Museum, from creating slime to building and launching rockets.

The Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum remains closed to the public but may also create more socially distanced programming hosted at Leslie or on-site. Westhoff told us that one of the benefits of working together is that joint programming can now bridge the gap between STEM subjects, like states of matter or environmental engineering, and nature programming, such as tree identification in Leslie's Black Pond Woods and learning about the water cycle. Leslie currently has an outdoor tent on-site with indoor bathroom access and often has programs near the fire pits for warmth as the winter closes in. We hope that between all those options, you find a cool outing for your family among the many programs they've reimagined for kids this year.

You can learn more programs through the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum at aahom.org or the programs at Leslie Science and Nature Center at lesliesnc.org.

It's Not Really So Bad Being Home

I thought we would face challenge after challenge with the school year starting with remote school technical glitches and social isolation, but as fall has eased into colder weather this year, I saw my daughter ease into a new schedule that worked very well. She does PE at home, takes a remote art class we coordinated with a friend, and calls her friends on her laptop whenever she's not in school. It's nothing to complain about, given the circumstances. More than anything, I feel lucky to have a family to love, to be home and safe after a year of uncertainties, to have a kid who really only needs loving family, art supplies, and her dog. If you're having a hard year, my heart goes out to you. I hope that some of these remote and outdoor programs will offer your family a renewed sense of connection with the community, and I'm glad the options are so diverse. I truly am impressed with the number of programs put together literally overnight by community programs in Ann Arbor with kids' safety, education, and comfort as the highest priorities. It's what makes Ann Arbor still feel like home, even on Zoom.

Laura K. Cowan is a tech and wellness journalist and the Kids in the Community columnist for the Crazy Wisdom Community Journal. She also writes the Healers of Ann Arbor column. She is executive editor of Ann Arbor tech blog Cronicle Press at www.cronicle.press.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

A Free Guide to Local Classes, Workshops, and Events
January through April 2021

Calendar Edited by Melanie Baldwin

Animals and Pets

Basic Animal Communication with Judy Ramsey • Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 16-17, Apr. 17-18 • 9 a.m.-4 p.m. • Learn to communicate with animals the way they communicate with each other telepathically. In a nurturing environment, you will learn step-by-step how to calm your mind to allow your natural telepathic skills to blossom and connect with animal minds. This is a two-day online class that goes from 9am-4pm each day. Prerequisite: read *Animal Talk* by Penelope Smith. \$160 per person/\$140 if paid by 1/5/2021 or 3/12/2021 for the April class. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or <https://JudyRamsey.net>.

Aromatherapy and Essential Oils

Creating Personalized Bath Collection with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, Feb. 28 • 2 p.m. • Choose from a massive collection of essential oils to create your own personalized bath collection to take home, to awaken, to believe in yourself, to help move you closer toward your life's purpose, for purity, for clarity, to envision, for inspiration, to surrender, for acceptance, for hope, for joy, for gratitude, for humility, for courage, for love, for clearing, for energy, for creativity, and for abundance. \$125. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or <http://www.clair-ascension.com/>.

Arts and Crafts

Finding the Artist in You: Acrylic Painting, Mixed Media, and Watercolor Class Part 2 • Thursday, Jan. 28 • 1:30-3:30 p.m. • Chase away the winter blues; bring out the "creative you!" No prior class or art experience is necessary. Registration Required. Class will be 1:30pm to 3:30pm on Zoom. \$50. Contact (517)266-4090 to leave a message at INAI or email sschreiber@adraindominicans.org.

Bodywork and Bodymind Therapies

Rolfing Lecture and Demonstration with Jeff Belanger • Saturday, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, Apr. 10 • 1-2 p.m. • This is a Zoom session with a lecture to explain what Rolfing is and how it works and answer any questions. There will also be a brief demonstration. Interested folks should email Jeff@annarborrolfing.com beforehand so he can send the Zoom link. Free. Contact Jeff at 657-3210 or jeff@annarborrolfing.com.

Book Discussion Groups

Dine and Discuss Distantly • Wednesday, Feb. 24 • 7 p.m. • We will be reading: *The Words of My Father* by Yousef Bashir. Create your own discussion group. Tune in to view a group discussion and a presentation by Linda Tomala. Registration required for video link. \$10 for book and postage. Discussion is free. Contact 517-266-4000, or www.webercenter.org.

Buddhism

A Zen Priest Turns Her Attention to Immigrants in Distress with Myozen Joan Amaral • Wednesday, Jan 10 • 11 a.m. • Ordained Zen priest and founding teacher of Zen Center North Shore, Myozen Joan Amaral, is using her platform to support immigrants; Joan regularly meditated with Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainees at the Suffolk County House of Correction in Massachusetts. Her Dharma talk addressing Zen practitioners of JissoJi and their guests, will inspire sharing our practice with all beings. Donations welcome. Contact Marta at 248-202-3102; JissoJiZen@gmail.com or JissoJiZen.org.

Children and Young Adults

Bowenworks4Kids with Lisa • Sundays, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18 • 3-5 p.m. • Bowenworks4Kids is an opportunity for children to receive high quality soft tissue Bowenwork therapy. It can provide permanent healing and relief of pain from a multitude of acute and chronic conditions. The work frequently results in a deep sense of overall relaxation and facilitates the recharging and balancing of the body. Young people respond well to this work. First session free for kids under 17. Contact Lisa at Bowenfix.com.

H2W2 - K4K - Happy, Healthy, Wealthy, Wise - Kabbalah for Kids (5th grade and up) with Karen Greenberg • Sundays, Jan. 24, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, • 1 p.m. • Utilizing movement, multi-sensory input, color, and experiential learning, we build self-esteem of spiritually evolved children (rather than reinforcing feelings of being different, damaged, defective, disordered, dysfunctional). In an ascensional journey through the Tree of Life, we aid in organizational skills, navigating low-vibrational emotions, relationships, setting healthy boundaries. We encourage children in discovering and fostering their authentic selves and genius, to fulfill their spiritual mission of a healthy, interdependent, functional planet for the prophecy of "1000 Years of Peace." \$50/session. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or www.clair-ascension.com/.

STEM At Home with the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum and Leslie Science and Nature Center • Virtual • Visit the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum and the Leslie Science and Nature Center from the comfort of your own home! Check out their STEM listings and videos to bring the science home. Contact the Hands-On Museum at <https://www.aahom.org/experience/programs/type/stem-at-home>.

Ann Arbor District Library Storytimes on AADL.TV • Mondays-Fridays • 10-10:30 a.m. • Come see your favorite library staff members read you stories online! Hear from a different staff member each day of the week! Contact the Ann Arbor District Library at 327-4200; aadl.org or aadl.tv.

Ann Arbor District Library Baby Time on AADL.TV • Mondays • 11-11:30 a.m. • A fun, interactive program for parents and caregivers of babies aged 0-2 full of ideas for songs, rhymes, baby bounces, stories, activities, and more to do with your baby. Contact the Ann Arbor District Library at 327-4200; aadl.org or aadl.tv.

To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold.

— Aristotle





Artwork by Logynn Hailley

Wolverine's Cache: Our Calendar Editor's picks of some of the more interesting happenings taking place in our community.

Understanding Death and Passing - Virtual Course * Fridays, Mar. 5, 12, 19, and 26, 6-7:45 p.m. * See Death and Dying.

Virtual Pilates with Gwyn * Monday-Friday 9:30-10 a.m. * See Energy and Healing.

Gut Health Matters Virtual Retreat with Foundations of Wellness for Women * Saturday, Jan. 23, 12 p.m. * See Holistic Health.

Mindful Pause — Mindfulness of Feelings with the Weber Center * Thursdays, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 4 p.m. * See Meditation.

Nature Bath with Amanda Anastasia * Sundays, Jan. 1, 17, 31; Feb. 7, 21; Mar. 7, 21; Apr. 11, 11 a.m. * See Meditation.

Being & Becoming: An Introduction to Consciousness & Spiritual Evolution with Susan Billmaier * Fridays, Jan. 15, 22, 29, 6:30-8 p.m. * See Spiritual Development.

Essential Energy Care 'Tools' for Frontline Workers (and everybody else, too!) ~ Virtual Class with the Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing, & Counselling * Saturday, Jan. 9, 3-4 p.m. * See Stress Management.

Sit. Stop. Write. Zen and Poetry workshop with Dmitry Berenson * Sundays, Jan. 24, Feb. 28, Mar. 28, Apr. 25, 1:15 p.m. * See Writing and Poetry.

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 "Background Information" and which starts on page 91.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals

Full Moon Ceremony and Zen Meditation with Marta Dabis • Sundays, Jan. 24, Feb. 28, Mar. 28, Apr. 25 • 11:40 a.m. • Full Moon, Vow renewal ceremony in the Japanese Soto Zen SFZC lineage, in English, on Zoom, after our usual Sunday morning 11 a.m. Zen meditation. Free. Contact Marta at 248-202-3102; JissoJiZen@gmail.com or JissoJiZen.org.

Easter Satsanga & Meditation ~ Virtual Gathering with the Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling • Sunday, Apr. 4 • 10:30 a.m. • We warmly welcome everyone, of all faiths, to join us on Easter morning for our Gathering on Zoom. The Zoom link will be open by 9:30 a.m. so you can get setup early before we start sharing in song~chants, inspired thoughts, and a recorded talk by Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharma, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer for as long as you wish to (away from our devices). These are such beautiful times with many blessings, please feel free to tell others so that they too may have the opportunity to join in and receive. Email by March 31st or check our website for the Zoom link. Free. Contact Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing, & Counselling at 517-641-6201, info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Channeling

Remembering Wholeness via Zoom with The Mother channeled by Barbara Brodsky • Sundays, Jan. 10, Feb. 14, Mar. 14, Apr. 11 • 2 p.m. • Energy sharing (darshan) with The Mother channeled through Barbara Brodsky. Darshan is an event in consciousness: The powerful energy of The Mother gets transmitted as she looks directly at each person through the camera. Number of participants limited; register early. \$10-25. Contact at 477-5848; om@deepspring.org or deepspring.org.

Evenings with Aaron channeled by Barbara Brodsky • Wednesdays, Jan. 13, Feb. 17, Mar. 24, Apr. 14 • 7 p.m. • An open session with Barbara Brodsky channeling Aaron. Talk followed by Q&A. All welcome; no registration necessary. Aaron will speak about spiritual practices such as Vipassana (Insight) and Pure Awareness meditation; how to work with inner guidance; and how to support changes in our physical/spiritual bodies through work with body energy, the elements, sound, and an open heart. \$10-35. Contact at 477-5848; om@deepspring.org or deepspring.org.

Chanting

Introduction to Mantra and Chanting with Susan Billmaier • Sundays, Mar. 14, 21, and 28, • 10 a.m. • Through story, translation, and practice, this class explores simple single-syllable seed mantras as well as complex 24-syllable mantras. It will give the student the confidence to begin a mantra practice at any level. \$54. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Death and Dying

Understanding Death and Passing - Virtual Course • Fridays, Mar. 5, 12, 19, and 26 • 6-7:45 p.m. • What happens when we die? Go beyond myths, emotions and traditions to set yourself and others free to face the reality of death and therefore embrace life more fully—honoring the inner self. Also available by appointment. Please see our website for more and updates on retreat availability! \$210. If you cannot afford the full fees, please ask about a bursary. Contact Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing, & Counselling at 517-641-6201; info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or www.SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Energy and Healing

Healing & Ascension Certification Course with Eve Wilson • Every other Thursday beginning January 21 • 7 p.m. • Comprehensive Healing and Ascension for people, pets and the planet, body, emotion, mind, soul and spirit. Aura reading, clearing, repair, present and past life empowerment and healing from traumas, fulfilling and clearing soul contracts, much more. Graduates qualify for Legal UCM Healer Practitioner Certification. \$3,200. Contact Eve at 780-7635; ewew@spiritualhealers.com or www.spiritualhealers.com.

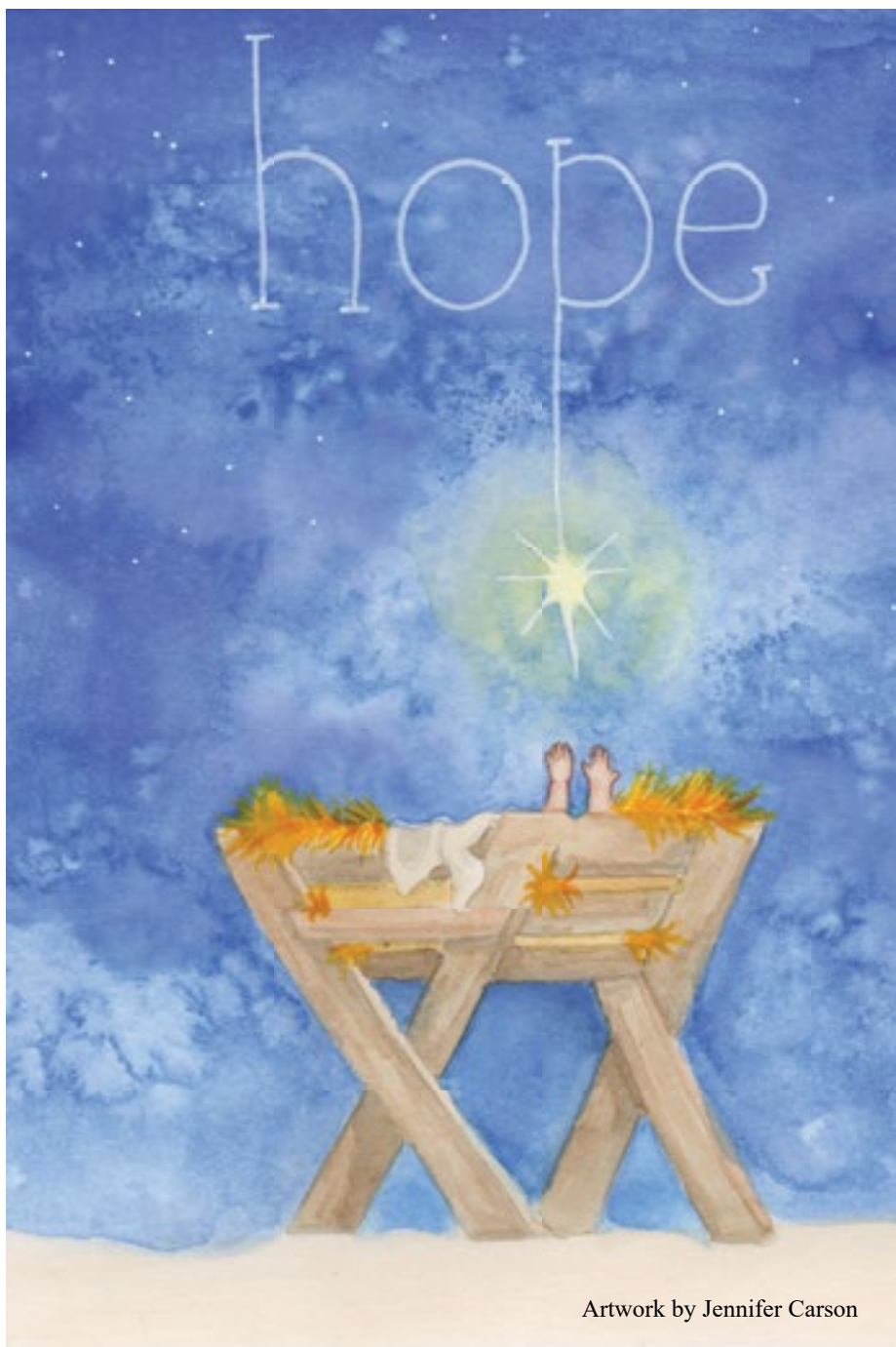
Pure Spiritual Healing Course - Virtual Training • Saturday, Feb. 2 • 2:30 p.m. • Unconditional Love and Professionalism ~ the ideal combination for a caring Healer. Healing energy comes from a loving Infinite source and empowers those who receive it to take responsibility for themselves. We will begin this training virtually and consider whether we are able to shift to in-person. If we need to stay virtual, we will cover the first two of five modules over 20 half day training sessions. \$1,100 for the first two modules. Contact Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing, & Counselling at 517-641-6201; info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or www.SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Virtual Pilates with Gwyn • Monday-Friday • 9:30-10 a.m. • This class will guide you through each move and help you build a better understanding of your Mind and Body connections. The class focuses on alignment and posture, building movement awareness with a blend of natural movements. Modifications are given to all levels as you build the fundamentals of Pilates and Natural movement patterns. \$5. Contact Gwyn at gwynjonespilates.com.

Virtual TRX with Gwyn • Wednesdays and Fridays • 8:15-45 a.m. • TRX is a suspension training workout that will give total-body health benefits for everyone. Gravity is your resistance here, so adjusting and modifying your moves gives you the advantage to choose the level of difficulty you want. Modifications are given for every move so you always keep building workouts. TRX will challenge your strength, core and cardio individually or all at once. \$10. Contact Gwyn at gwynjonespilates.com.

When I let go of what I am,
I become what I might be.

– Lao Tzu



Artwork by Jennifer Carson

Healing

D.O.V.E. DIVINE ORIGINAL VIBRATION EMBODIMENT System Training with Karen Greenberg • Set of three Fridays, Jan. 15, 22, and 29; Feb. 5, 19, and 26; Mar. 5, 12, and 19; or Apr. 16, 23, and 30 • 9 a.m. • After studying D.O.V.E. System manual, learning to identify and re-pattern client's limiting beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, and patterns, and assisting client in expressing any commensurate low-vibrational emotions, and instituting new behaviors, through the Tree of Life, learn to Kabbalistically balance client's energy via art, movement, music, toning, sound, aromatherapy, gemstones, sacred symbols, connecting with G-D, Archangels, Angels, Masters of Light, trees, powerful Archetypes, and more. \$777/set of three classes. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or <http://www.clair-ascension.com/>.

Holistic Health

Heightening Your Vibration: Alchemy with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, Jan. 10 and 17, • 1:30 p.m. • 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, Masters of Light, and more. \$110. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or <http://www.clair-ascension.com/>.

Gut Health Matters Virtual Retreat with Foundations of Wellness for Women • Saturday, Jan. 23 • 12 p.m. • It's no secret that you become what you put into your body, and the health of your digestive system—which puts those nutrients into your body—matters, too. The problem is that most people never consider the health of their gut. What if your digestive system was telling you (even screaming at you) that it's sick and unhealthy...? Would you listen? More importantly, would you do something about it? If you're nodding your head and answering with a resounding "Yes!" we have a treat for you! Actually, a virtual RE-treat. \$79. Contact at liza@simply-healthcoaching.com.

Intuitive and Psychic Development

Teleconference: Focused Mind Meditation with John Friedlander • Sundays, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, Mar. 7, Apr. 6 • 9 a.m.-12 p.m. • 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. \$15. Contact Violeta at 476-1513 or mvaviviano@gmail.com.

Teleconference: Psychic Psychology Women's Group with John Friedlander • Tuesdays, Jan. 5, Feb. 2, Mar. 2, Apr. 4 • 7-8 p.m. • For women only, meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies as well as that of the aura. \$12.50. Contact Violeta at 476-1513 or mvaviviano@gmail.com.

Winter Webinar/Teleconference: Exploring Core Techniques and Advanced Material with John Friedlander • Thursday-Saturday • Jan. 14-16 • New material introduced with continued development of advanced material and core techniques seeking a natural sense of skills in a practical everyday life. Prerequisite: Level 1 Psychic Development class, CD set, or permission of instructor. \$275. Contact Gilbert Choudury at gchoud@yahoo.com or www.psychicpsychology.org.

Spring Intensive 2021 Webinar with John Friedlander • Exact dates to be determined. • We will delve into newer meditative areas, exploring topics outside of John's core curriculum. Expect powerful healings and growth in skills for everyday use. Available as teleconference over the phone. Pre-requisite: Level 1, CD, or instructor's permission. \$275. Contact Gilbert Choudury at gchoud@yahoo.com or www.psychicpsychology.org.

On January 1, 2021,
The Crazy Wisdom Calendar
will be available on our website:
www.crazywisdomjournal.com

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

hosted by
Ed Morin, David Jibson,
and Rainey Lamey

Second and Fourth Wednesday
of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Until further notice, all sessions
are virtual and accessible through Zoom.

Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link

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 up to 1 hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series Featured readers



January 27 - Hedy Habra is a polyglot essayist and artist whose third book of poems, *The Taste of the Earth*, won the Silver Nautilus Award. *Tea in Heliopolis* won the USA Best Book Award and *Under Brushstrokes* was finalist for the International Book Award. She has lived in Egypt, Brussels, and now Kalamazoo. Her website is hedyhabra.com



February 24 - Patricia Hooper is author of *Separate Flights* and *Wild Persistence*—the most recent of her five books of poetry. Her poems have appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, and *Kenyon Review*, and have won six major awards. She is a U. of Michigan alumna and now lives in Gastonia, North Carolina.



February 24 - Danny Romine Powell, newspaper editor and author of *In the Sunroom with Raymond Carver* and four other poetry collections, often depicts troubles with close relatives. She has published in *Ploughshares*, *Paris Review*, and *Poetry*. She once occupied the former bedroom of Sylvia Plath during a residency at the Yaddo Foundation's mansion.



March 24 - Ken Meisel, is a psychotherapist and author of eight books of poetry. With tender, grave empathy, *Our Common Souls: New & Selected Poems of Detroit* traces the conflicted searches for hope, sense of connection to place, and material and social problems embedded in the landscape of his deindustrialized city.



March 24 - Jeff Vande Zande has published four novels including *American Poet*, which won a Michigan Notable Book Award from the Library of Michigan. His story collections are *Emergency Stopping*, *Threatened Species*, and *The Neighborhood Division*. He is also a film maker, teaches at Delta College, and has a blog at www.authorjeffvandezande.blogspot.com

April 28 – Celebrate National Poetry Month!

The peer-to-peer writers workshop of the Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle, which meets on the second Wednesday of each month, read selections of their work. Featured readers: Joseph Kelty, David Jibson, Edward Morin, Rainey Lamey, Lissa Perrin, Gregory Mahr, Dana Dever, and others.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle
The Poetry Series is open to all.
There is never a charge.
<https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/>

Risa Gotlib has over 20 years of experience as a student and teacher of yoga.

She currently holds an E-RYT-200 with the Yoga Alliance and is the founder and owner of Tiny Buddha Yoga. She has an extensive training background in Vinyasa, Iyengar, and Ashtanga styles and has studied with world-renowned teachers. As a self-described “goofball” she brings energy, laughter, and wit to her teaching, while still demanding a whole-hearted effort from her students. Students can expect her classes to be well-rounded, powerful, and alignment-based. Tiny Yoga Buddha is hosting a full schedule of virtual classes. To learn more about Risa and Tiny Buddha Yoga visit their website at tinybuddhayoga.com.



Kabbalah

Brand New Beginning Kabbalah: Kabbalah Miracles with Karen Greenberg • Thursdays, Jan. 21, Feb. 18, Mar. 18, Apr. 22 • 10 a.m. or 7:30 p.m. • This life-changing journey is an ordered, systematic approach to develop and balance all the important areas of life. Rather than utilizing so much energy RESISTING (for example, exercise, meditation, eating and/or drinking healthily), we utilize that liberated energy for CREATING, which puts us on a similar vibration as our Creator. We become empowered to join with G-D and become co-creative, proactive manifestors of our dreams, desires, and goals, open to MIRACLES, and fulfilling our destinies. \$137/person for semi-private, \$150/person for private, \$120/hour based on time utilized. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or www.clair-ascension.com/.

Kabbalah for Couples with Karen Greenberg • Sundays, Jan. 24, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18 • 3 p.m. • This is not couples’ therapy. This is for basically good relationships that both parties are willing to work on, to make their relationship even better, physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, spiritually, and energetically. This two-hour session (rather than one hour), one time per month, for about a year, can help you get your relationship to the place that you always wanted it to be but did not know how. \$205/2 hours (if one or both have taken Beginning Kabbalah). Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or www.clair-ascension.com/.

Life Transitions

Helpful Legal Tips for Every Stage of Life with Elizabeth Hurwitz • Saturdays, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, Apr. 10 • 11 p.m. • Useful legal information for every stage of your life and the lives of your loved ones. Question and answer period and group discussion time included. The workshop will take place via Zoom. Please email Elizabeth to obtain the Zoom link at elizabethwhurwitz@gmail.com. Free. Contact Elizabeth at 657-0835; elizabethwhurwitz@gmail.com or hurwitzlawoffices.com.

Love and Relationships

Creating Your Ideal Mate with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, Feb. 14 • 1 p.m. • Identify your Ideal Mate's qualities (as I did so to manifest my mate of over two decades) and enhance these with the richness of the group input. Learn how to use ceremony, meditation, chanting, movement, fragrances, essences, elixirs, herbs, flowers, colors, shapes, metals, altars with sacred symbols, Archetypal images, and candles. Learn to work to remove blockages, to work through fears and "deserving" issues, and to trust the Divine Order and Timing! \$125. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or www.clair-ascension.com/.

Living Love Project with Michael Oliver • Sundays • 11 a.m. • Learn about living and sharing love in fun, achievable ways...using wooden hearts to share world-wide. Free. Contact Michael at 313-819-7567; michael@mindtation.com or mindtation.com.

Meditation

Connecting with Various G-D Names/Aspects: Heavenly Travel • Sundays, Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24 • 9 a.m. • Learn how to create a sacred, protected space to astral travel safely to the planets associated with the Ten Sephirot (Spheres) in the Tree of Life, to become more deeply acquainted with ten different aspects of G-D. Learn how to connect to the energy of each different aspect of G-D, and the special quality that it represents. You may receive invaluable messages and/or answers to compelling questions. \$190 for all 4 parts. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or www.clair-ascension.com/.

Zen Meditation with Jissoji Zen Ann Arbor practitioners online • Sundays, Jan. 3, 17, 31; Feb. 7, 21; Mar. 7, 21; Apr. 4, 18 • 11 a.m. • Zen meditation in the tradition of Shrunyu Suzuki, founder of San Francisco Zen Center. Instructions are available by request, the group meets on Zoom every week, Ceremonies rotate according to the Buddhist calendar. Donations welcome. Contact Marta at 248-202-3102; JissoJiZen@gmail.com or JissoJiZen.org.

Mindful Pause—Mindfulness of Breath with The Weber Center • Thursdays, Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 4 p.m. • Mindfulness of Breath and Physical Body calms your mind and opens your heart. Each morning we are born again. Registration Requested. Free. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

Nature Bath with Amanda Anastasia • Sundays, Jan. 1, 17, 31; Feb. 7, 21; Mar. 7, 21; Apr. 11 • 11 a.m. • Soak in the high-vibration, healing energies of nature as we collectively engage in a guided meditative immersion that will bring you back home to all that you are. Led by Amanda Anastasia, yoga instructor and joy coach. Dress for the weather and look forward to feeling refreshed by the loving, warming connections we will make with all your relations - earth, wind, air and fire. Please contact Amanda to register at least three hours prior to the event. We will be meeting in various locations in Ann Arbor. Details will be emailed closer to the date. Approx. one-two hour workshop. Sliding scale fee: \$33-\$77. Contact Amanda at amahessling@gmail.com or www.joypriestess.com.

Pure Meditative Peace ~ Virtual Class with Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing and Counselling • Saturday, Jan. 16 • 3 p.m. • Also available by appointment. Find inner peace. Of value in all walks of life, it helps you to be in charge of how you feel and takes only a few minutes to practice each day. Includes book and a follow-up appointment. \$70. If you cannot afford the full fees, please ask about a bursary. Contact Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling at 517-641-6201; info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or www.SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Reflective Meditation for Worriers with Erica Dutton • Mondays, Jan. 18, 25; Feb. 1, 8, 15 • 5:30 p.m. • Reflective Meditation is an open, receptive, flexible approach to meditation which is ideally suited to helping worriers. Many people say they 'can't meditate' but in this practice you can be successful. With guidance and support, you can develop a meditation that works for you to 'hold' your worrying in a gentle, kind way until it dissipates on its own. \$100. Contact Erica at 417-4385 or eld006@yahoo.com.

Myriad of Meditations with Karen Greenberg • Sundays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28; Mar. 7, 14, 21 • 10 a.m. • Meditation is an essential component to spiritual evolution. Learn a myriad of meditation techniques, to discover which resonate for you (possibly dissolving years of resistance to mediation). Learn meditations with fire, water, air, earth, with the Four Worlds, with different breathing, with Holy Geometry, sacred letters, powerful Archetypes, spiritual beings, qualities of G-D, with movement, music, toning, colors, scents, gemstones, and trees, including several guided meditations through the Tree of Life. \$25/class. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or www.clair-ascension.com/.

Mindful Pause—Mindfulness of Feelings with the Weber Center • Thursdays, Mar. 4, 11, 18 • 4:00 p.m. • Mindfulness of Feelings invites us to sit quietly and to listen. Every path has a measure of fear and love. Every path has a measure of sorrow. Sometimes it is this that awakens us. Registration requested. Free. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

Pure Meditation Course including Raja~Kriya Yoga with Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing and Counselling • Sunday—Saturday, Apr. 25-May 1 • The ultimate Course for today's world helping you to find and be your True self; develop greater peace of mind, health and happiness and understanding of yourself and others. For everyone: practicing Pure Meditation helps you to be in balance ~ come what may ~ and to reach your full potential in every aspect of your life. Find answers to all life's questions on both a Spiritual and mortal level; learn how to truly Master yourself and bring peace, joy and unconditional Love to all that you do. Inquire for price. Contact Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling at 517-641-6201; info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or www.SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Sunday and Tuesday Group Meditation via Zoom • Sundays, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.; Tuesdays • 9-9:30 a.m. • Insight meditation offered via Zoom twice weekly. No experience necessary; all levels of meditators welcome. No instruction. Donation. Contact at 477-5848; om@deepspring or deepspring.org.

Meaningful Mondays ~ Virtual Gathering with Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing and Counselling • Mondays • 8 p.m. • We warmly welcome everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually on Monday evenings. We will gather on Zoom, sharing in song~chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings and/or her recorded Inspiring Talks, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer for as long as you wish (away from our devices). These are such beautiful times with many blessings, please feel free to tell others so that they too may have the opportunity to join in. Please email us at: info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org by 10 a.m. any Monday to receive the Zoom link. Contact Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing and Counselling at 517-641-6201; info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or www.SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Shiva Meditation Life Sustaining Program • Tuesdays • 7:30-9:30 p.m. • Meditators from all backgrounds can share in the collective synergy of group meditation at the Kashi Nivas Shiva Meditation Ashram. The evening begins with chanting and a 20-minute silent meditation, followed by a group discussion or contemplation. The evening concludes with refreshments and social time. Due to the Pandemic restrictions this is an online program. Go to the link below to access the program. <https://www.kashinivas.org/video-conference>. Donations welcome. Contact Kashi Nivas at 883-6947; atmananda@kashinivas.org or visit <http://kashinivas.org>.

Advice is like the snow. The softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon and the deeper it sinks into the mind.

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Insight Meditation Ann Arbor Online Sit via Zoom • Wednesdays • 6-6:30 p.m. • Join us for a 30-minute meditation. There will be an opportunity on some of the evenings to stay for questions, comments and sharing for an additional 30 minutes. Come for just the sitting or stay for the sharing. The sittings will typically be silent with a short instructional lead in. No registration required. Contact info@insightmeditationannarbor.org.

Self-Inquiry Meditation Session Online with Kashi Nivas • Saturdays • 7-8 p.m. • Each week Kashi Amma will offer a different thematic inquiry that will include a talk, and contemplation or meditation. Donation welcome. Go to <http://kashinivas.org/videoconference> to participate. Contact Kashi Nivas at 883-6947; atmananda@kashinivas.org or visit <http://kashinivas.org>.

Movement and Dance

Zoom Ann Arbor - Toledo First Friday Dances of Universal Peace • Fridays, Jan. 1, Feb. 5, Mar. 5, Apr. 2 • 7 p.m. • Dances of Universal Peace, moving meditation, will be led on the Zoom platform to guide personal meditation and dance, while keeping dancers safe. The Dances of Universal Peace, dubbed Sufi Dances, were created in the 60s by Samuel Lewis and celebrate mantras of the world religions. Donation welcome. Contact Judy at 419-475-6535; jltrautman@sbcglobal.net or <https://sites.google.com/view/a2-toledodup/home>.

ann arbor
center for
mindfulness

Cultivating Mindfulness
for Health and Well Being

**Classes, Retreats,
Drop-in meditation sessions,
Presentations and workshops**
for businesses & organizations,
Workshops with nationally-known teachers,
Support for mindfulness teachers & practitioners,
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Winter and Spring Classes Online Live

**Mindful Self-Compassion Short Course
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One-on-one mindfulness training available.

Mindful Eating Workshop with Lynn Rossy,
health psychologist and author of *The Mindfulness-Based
Eating Solution*, rescheduled to Fall 2021.

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STEPPING INTO FREEDOM: A Funny Thing Happened On My Way Out the Door



By Jennifer Evans

What then is freedom? The power to live as one wishes.

—Marcus Tullius Cicero

I was wearing a walking cast on my broken right foot toward the end of my tenure as an administrative assistant at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. At work one day, when I knew I was tendering my resignation but had not yet announced it, I was clunking into our “hub” from my office down the hall. The hub was a room that had multiple functions: mail room, kitchen, copy room, and a place where people touched base, shared a greeting, or had a chat. On this day one of my co-workers walked in at the same time as I and greeted me with, “How long do you have?”

On this day one of my co-workers walked in at the same time as I and greeted me with, “How long do you have?”

I didn’t understand. What’s he talking about? Could it be? Oh no! All I could think he meant, because it was at the forefront of my heart and mind, was, “How long do you have ‘til you quit this job?” Not understanding how he could know, but knowing what it meant to me, I worried. I scrambled to come up with a reply.

I looked at him quizzically, because there was no reason he would have any idea of how strongly I was leaning toward moving on from my position. I was silent, surely looking confused, and he asked again, “How long ‘til you’re free?”

Again, I thought, what?! And then, yes!

It was exactly how I felt! *How long until I am free?*

Then I wondered if he’d gotten a hint from a new definition I’d taped on my door which was: Eleutheromania (n.) an intense and irresistible desire for freedom. This taping up of eye-catching things was a ritual I practiced normally, so not unusual, but was this particular one a too obviously personal window into my emotional world? Was it that to which he referred? While the word did express my feeling, I really couldn’t imagine that he’d make the leap to my emotional state. Stumped and in a bit of a panic, I continued looking at him with confusion. He then nodded in the direction of the boot on my foot.

This taping up of eye-catching things was a ritual I practiced normally, so not unusual, but was this particular one a too obviously personal window into my emotional world?

Obviously. Obviously, what he meant. How long do you have? How long ‘til you’re free? My body flooded with relief as my understanding caught up with his meaning. Free from the hindering cast! Finally, I answered his simple question and laughed myself back to my office.

And then, I knew even more than I’d known before. What it meant to me to be free. Not just freedom to walk freely. But free to be truly me.

Things you might want to consider:

- *Where do you feel restrained?*
- *What step could you take to move toward freedom?*
- *What first occurred to you that you perhaps quickly shunted to the side?*
- *That is a likely and possible step—if it weren’t, you wouldn’t have thought of it.*
- *If it is too much, do a small something toward it—at least you’ll be moving in some direction.*

**And then, I knew even more than I’d known before.
What it meant to me to be free.**

Jennifer Evans is a positive deviant by nature. She shares her discoveries through workshops and writings. Learn more at positivedeviancelab.com

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Personal Growth

Healthy Boundaries with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, Jan. 31 • 12 p.m. • Learn how to define "Healthy Boundaries" for and with yourself, and 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. \$55. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or <http://www.clair-ascension.com/>.

Reiki

Reiki 1 with Susan Billmaier • Mondays, Jan. 11, 18, 25; Apr. 12, 19, 26 • 6 p.m. • Reiki 1 class introduces and attunes initiates to Reiki energy. It provides tools for self-healing and nurtures the opening of intuition and enhanced sensation and perception. Core class components: • Introduction to Reiki and attunement • Level 1 Attunements • Self-healing hand positions • Practitioner Ethics • Sensing Energy. \$187.50. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Retreats

Half-day meditation with JissoJi Zen Ann Arbor • Sundays, Jan. 10, Feb. 14, Mar. 14, Apr. 11 • 8:20 a.m. • Periods of sitting and walking meditation in traditional Japanese Soto Zen style, instructions are available by request. All events are on Zoom during the winter months. Link available by request. Donations welcome. Contact Marta at 248-202-3102; JissoJiZen@gmail.com or JissoJiZen.org.


Holy Week Retreat-From Ashes to Pentecost with the Weber Center • Sunday-Thursdays, Mar. 28-Apr. 1 • Having come through Lent, we prepare to meet the Risen Lord who longs to give us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Having been accompanied by a pandemic, a national election and violence in our streets, we await God's word of hope. With time for silence, for prayer, for insights from the Scripture, God comes to meet us to reveal God's love. What are the lessons we have learned? Registration required. Open to all. Donations are greatly appreciated. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

Shamanism

Basic Shamanic Journeying with Judy Ramsey • Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 2-3; Mar. 13-14 • 9 a.m.-3 p.m. • The shamanic journey is an easy and powerful tool we can use to access spiritual information. In this class, you will meet and begin to develop a relationship with a compassionate spirit or power animal who is coming forward to help you at this time in your life. You will learn techniques to help you develop a self-directed practice of empowerment, allowing you to move safely, intentionally through the world in a balanced way. This class is a prerequisite to ongoing and more advanced shamanic studies. This is a two-day class online via Zoom. \$180. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or <https://JudyRamsey.net>.

Bi-monthly Shamanic Journeying Circle with Judy Ramsey • First and Second Thursdays, Jan. 7, 21; Feb. 4, 18; Mar. 4, 18; Apr. 1, 15 • 7-8:30 p.m. • Join us for an exploration of personal and community healing topics through shamanic journeying. Knowledge of journeying is required. Donations welcome. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or <https://JudyRamsey.net>.

Shamanic Healing for Animals with Judy Ramsey • Tuesdays, Jan. 12-Mar. 9 • In nine weeks, explore unique perspectives for animal healing that draw upon core shamanic practices as well as other traditions. Students will develop a toolkit of techniques within a supportive, interactive, and experiential framework of instruction from a professional animal communicator and shamanic practitioner. Prerequisite: Students must know how to journey. Knowledge of animal communication is not required. Class is online via Zoom for nine weeks. \$360 by Jan. 8. \$390 after. \$100 for repeat students. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or <https://JudyRamsey.net>.



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Healing with Spiritual Light and Medicine for the Earth with Judy Ramsey • Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 23-24 and 30-31 • 9 a.m. • Explore the depth of your own inner light and its connection with All That Is. Learn how to transform the energy behind toxic thoughts, achieving balance in yourself and harmony in your world. You will 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 required. All levels and traditions are welcome. This class will be presented online through a ZOOM platform. \$360 by Jan. 5. \$440 after. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or <https://JudyRamsey.net>.

Spirit Gardens with Judy Ramsey • Saturday, Feb. 20 • 9 a.m. • Join us to brighten winter doldrums. In this one-day workshop, learn how to manifest your dreams through shamanic gardening. You will learn how to "plant" your ideas and goals so that they grow into beautiful realities in your life. Knowledge of journeying is required. Fun is guaranteed. \$75/person. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or <https://JudyRamsey.net>.

Advanced Shamanic Healing for Animals with Judy Ramsey • Every Thursday, Mar. 30-Apr. 27 • 7-9 p.m. • This workshop will take students more deeply into techniques introduced in Shamanic Animal Healing and introduce advanced techniques for shamanic animal healing including storytelling, extraction, and psychopomp. Prerequisite is Shamanic Animal Healing I. \$250 by Mar. 15. \$275 after. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or <https://JudyRamsey.net>.

Introduction to Journeying with Connie Lee Eiland • Sundays, Mar. 7, Apr. 18 • 10 a.m. • Six-hour class includes power animal retrieval and journeys to Upper, Lower, and Middle Worlds. Journeying is with drums and rattles. \$70 until two weeks before class. \$80 after. Contact Connie at 248-809-3230 or clshebear7@gmail.com.

Spiritual Development

Journey of Gratitude with Susan Billmaier • Wednesdays, Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27; Feb. 3, 10, 17 • 7 p.m. • Gratitude opens the heart and mind, so the body will perform actions of appreciation. Since actions beget reactions, actions that are generous, kind, or caring will promote receiving similar actions. Journey of Gratitude strengthens the relationship between inner thoughts and feelings of gratitude with outer experiences of the results of that gratitude. In gratitude, the world opens to possibility, the heart is light, and everyone is a channel for Good Will to be returned. \$126.00. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Being & Becoming: An Introduction to Consciousness and Spiritual Evolution with Susan Billmaier • Fridays, Jan. 15, 22, 29 • 6:30-8 p.m. • What is consciousness? What is the relationship between consciousness and spirit? Where are we as individuals and humanity in our spiritual development? How might we know? In this introductory course on consciousness and spiritual evolution we will explore the ways in which we study consciousness, states and stages of consciousness development, and models of consciousness from contemporary and ancient worldviews as they relate to spiritual development and evolution. Free. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Incarnation: Christianity's New Horizon with the Weber Center • Saturday, Jan. 16 • 9:30 a.m. • Incarnation celebrates God's embodied presence, not merely in the person of Jesus, but in all forms of embodied presence that adorn creation. This newly expanded horizon carries several implications for how we are called to live and practice our faith today. This is a virtual presentation by Diarmuid O'Murchu. Registration required. \$30. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

Growing Older in America: *The New Culture Wave*



By Elizabeth Hurwitz

When I was a kid, my grandparents appeared to be permanently ancient in my eyes. Grandma smelled like cookies and mince pies. Grandpa (retired from working on the line at Chrysler at age 65) smelled of gardens and woodworking. The oldest person on TV in 1963 was Granny on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. She was portrayed as a cross between a beloved spry old chicken and your slightly demented next-door neighbor for whom you shovel the sidewalk each winter. Although this show presented a few progressive plot lines about class conflict, you still could not have made an episode about seniors and bathrooms 30 years ago for TV. Only when us baby boomers began to ride the cultural wave of aging in America did perceptions of what it meant to be an elder start to change.

The plot of season six of *Grace and Frankie*—the comedic vehicle starring Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin on Netflix—centers on an improved toilet product. Frankie is inspired to create this wonderful machine so she can help Grace stand up after she’s used the bathroom. Prior to inventing this gadget, Frankie has been on 24/7 call to help Grace (who has a bad hip) return to a vertical position and walk away from the toilet. Frankie’s invention will ostensibly allow Grace to go back to using the bathroom in complete privacy.

The oldest person on TV in 1963 was Granny on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. She was portrayed as a cross between a beloved spry old chicken and your slightly demented next-door neighbor for whom you shovel the sidewalk each winter.

Honestly, I was a little embarrassed the first time I saw this episode. Jane Fonda sitting on the throne? But getting old in Western culture (and needing physical assistance) has been viewed as a private experience for a long time. But we are asking different questions today. What does it mean to become an older person? What does it mean to be a person who might live many more years than either his/her mother or father did? How do I regard my mind, my body, my belongings as I age? The cultural shift in values regarding aging has already been immense, and we’re just at the beginning stages of this great change.

What do these changes have to do with Elder Law? Well, in the big picture, quite a lot.

Baby Boomer Elders are defined as those individuals born between 1946 and 1964. When I first began practicing Elder Law in the mid-1990s, it was not a particularly well-known specialty. I had previously practiced civil rights, entertainment, and business law after graduating from University of Detroit Law School in 1979. I came to Elder Law because of several disability and aging situations that unexpectedly arose within my immediate family. These situations required me to learn about disability and elder law as quickly as possible.

Only when us baby boomers began to ride the cultural wave of aging in America did perceptions of what it meant to be an elder start to change.

A random marketing fact, we—the perpetual consumer—tend to be more comfortable with images we have grown accustomed to seeing regularly. In the 1980s and 1990s folks in the business of selling something rarely used an image of an individual over 50 in their ad campaigns. But that’s changed today. Why? Well, the sheer number of folks over 50, with purchasing power, accounts for the big uptake of elder images in medical device ads, life insurance ads, supplements ads, and ads for vacation spots appealing to seniors. Does this increase in images

of older folks in our daily life affect the responsibilities of an elder law attorney? I’ve found it has—both in context and in content.

The perimeters of an elder law practice haven’t changed much, but the content has expanded, in part because today, an older person expects to actively participate in planning the last third of her/his life.

The needs of the typical client who seeks advice from an elder law attorney continue to fall into predictable categories—estate planning (wills, powers of attorney, trusts), estate administration and distribution (following the death of the person who did the estate planning), and certain common issues with Social Security Disability, veterans’ benefits, Medicare/Medicaid and taxation. The perimeters of an elder law practice haven’t changed much, but the content has expanded, in part, because today an older person expects to actively participate in planning the last third of her/his life. The context has changed, too. We now live in a society with a significantly increasing number of older individuals coupled with a cultural shift in perception of what it means to be an older person. An elder law attorney now serves the client in a true holistic sense, being mindful of these irrevocable shifts in both content and context.

Estate planning can now encompass assisting the client with difficult non-legal (on their face) issues such as, “Can we afford to have our elder person age in place?” Can we care for an elder with a diagnosis of memory loss (dementia or Alzheimers) at home? How do we handle the possibility of the elder needing to apply for Medicaid in the future? We know that certain family members don’t get along. How can we avoid a fight over the elder’s assets after the elder has passed away?”

Folks are much more involved with end of life care as well. Providing hospice care for a loved one at home is a huge undertaking. Planning so that family and friends have sufficient resources (time, energy, financial security) to fulfill the wishes of an elder who wants to die at home is part of an elder law practice. It’s also become more common for an elder law attorney to hear questions about “natural burials” and the Hemlock Society. Folks want to discuss home remedies, alternative healing sources, and locating a death doula. I’ve found that many non-legal issues boil down to one set of concerns: “How can I control the atmosphere surrounding my death and how can I control the disbursement of my worldly goods? I don’t want to be dependent upon my children, or my friends for assistance if I live to be past what I think will be my life expectancy. I don’t want to be a burden, but I am nervous because friends my age are starting to die off. How will I live in the future?” These conversations weren’t happening very often 30 years ago. Today they are not uncommon discussions.

It’s a shock the first time you hear a stranger (while conversing with another person) describe you as “that old lady over there.” Sometimes it’s just the moment when you realize you are supremely qualified for that senior discount at a restaurant or a movie theater. Or one day you notice that absolutely no one—including the young person behind the register at Kroger’s—is going to card you for the vodka you’re purchasing. Or you land awkwardly on your knee while wrestling with your dog, and suddenly, it’s a big deal because you’re not healing up as quickly as you did in your 30s and 40s. Or you realize that what you thought was your occasional waking up in the middle of the night to pee has been a nightly event for months now. Hey! We are back to *Grace and Frankie* bathroom issues again!

*Elizabeth Hurwitz is an elder law attorney practicing in Ann Arbor, where she addresses the needs of the whole person and the whole family. Please visit her website for information about legal services at hurwitzlawoffices.com. Hurwitz’s book, *Growing Older, Getting Better* was published earlier this year.*

Spiritual Development, cont.

Monthly Midrash Study with Karen Greenberg • Fridays, Jan. 22, Feb. 19, Mar. 19, Apr. 23 • 3 p.m. • The written version of the Old Testament (Torah) tells a story. What has been passed down orally for thousands of years is the backstory and various mystical, hidden meanings. It is rich, colorful, detailed, and compiles interesting data like who ascended to Heaven alive, who was so righteous that their deceased bodies never decomposed, the seven things that we are not permitted to know in human form. \$150/month. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngnbg@gmail.com or <http://www.clair-ascension.com/>.

Understanding OurSelves and the Way Forward ~ Virtual Workshop with Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling • Saturdays, Jan. 23, 30 • 2:30-5 p.m. • Are you searching to find meaning in what's happening? Looking for ways to keep from getting caught in the emotion, conflict, negativity and fear? Looking for ways to make lasting changes? Want to help bring more positivity and Light to yourself and the world? Join us to look at all these and learn simple techniques that take moments to use that can help you to be more yourSelf no matter what's happening. Also available by appointment. Please see our website for more and updates on retreat availability! \$120. If you cannot afford the full fees, please ask about a bursary. Contact Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing, & Counselling at 517-641-6201, info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Unveiling your Divine with Susan Billmaier • Saturdays, Feb. 6, Mar. 6, Apr. 3 • 3 p.m. • A landscape usually is viewed from one vantage point. What if you could expand that view that embraces a number of perspectives and possibilities? During this course, Wasentha will help to guide you in your process of discovery. You will learn to identify the colors, shapes, and veils that have shaped your inner landscape. Using writing, sounding, and art you will unveil parallel inner landscapes that will be foundational to developing a ritual to bridging the potential of living a life vibrating at a more divine frequency. \$150. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Christian Mercy and Our American Prison System with the Weber Center • Thursday, Feb. 18 • 7 p.m. • A look at our American Prison System through the Eyes of Christian Mercy and Ethics. Free and open to all. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

Shadow Work Through the Chakras with Susan Billmaier • Sundays, Feb. 21, 28; Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28; Apr. 11, 18, 25 • 6 p.m. • In this intimate class of only six participants, we will be using a combination of sacred play, witnessing circle, contemplation, reflection and ritual to bring the shadow aspects of our seven main energy centers into the light for acceptance, integration and healing. \$333. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized. In the first, it is ridiculed. In the second, it is opposed. In the third, it is regarded as self-evident.

– Arthur Schopenhauer

Journey of Courage with Susan Billmaier • Wednesdays, Feb. 24; Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; Apr. 7 • 7 p.m. • Journey of Courage is designed to strengthen the inner-spiritual-warrior. It is created to promote unshakable faith and trust in the Inner Divine. It is about the courage to do the right thing, and the bravery to resist illusion and falsehood. Journey of Courage lays the foundation for Freedom, Peace, and confidence for walking your spiritual path. \$126. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Connecting with Archangels - Parts 1- 4 with Karen Greenberg • Sundays, Apr. 11, 18, 25; Saturday, Apr. 24 • 9 a.m. • Become acquainted with the various Archangels represented in the Sephirot (Spheres) in the Tree of Life. Learn who the Archangels are, what they each do, how to create a sacred, protected space, on whom to call for particular assistance, and how to safely call upon them. Connect—Ask Questions—Often Receive Helpful Information. \$180 for the four parts. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngnbg@gmail.com or <http://www.clair-ascension.com/>.

Women in the Church: Past, Present and Future with the Weber Center • Saturday, Apr. 17 • 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. • In her acclaimed book *Crispina and Her Sisters*, author Christine Schenk, C.S.J., explores the history of women's roles in early Christianity and the authority women exercised in the ancient church. Looking closely at visual imagery found on burial artifacts, Sister Schenk

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demonstrates how these early Jesus followers were far more influential than is commonly understood. What was it about Jesus that made his movement so attractive to women? Come and spend time with the fiery Christian women of yesterday and today who are changing the course of history and consider what it means for Christian communities today and tomorrow. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

Lightworker Activation with SANDYA—Sandra Shears • Wednesdays • 7 p.m. • As a Lightworker or World Server, you have incarnated at this time in order to facilitate the transition into the next age. It is time to bring forth the gifts that will accelerate healing and activate spiritual purpose. Ongoing commitment required. \$100/month prepaid. Contact SANDYA-Sandra Shears at 340-2616; sandya2033@yahoo.com or sandyasandrashears.com.

Lightworker Development with SANDYA—Sandra Shears • Third Fridays. Individual set-up the previous week • Group lightwork with current spiritual, astrological, and energy events - includes energy adjustment and activation with a sound attunement. Ongoing commitment required. \$100/month prepaid. Contact SANDYA-Sandra Shears at 340-2616; sandya2033@yahoo.com or sandyasandrashears.com.

Stress Management

Essential Energy Care 'Tools' for Frontline Workers (and everybody else, too!) ~ Virtual Class with the Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing, & Counselling • Saturday, Jan. 9 • 3 - 4 p.m. • In one hour learn simple techniques that take moments to use that can help you do all you do with more efficiency, accuracy, peace and have energy left for you, too! Follow-up appointment and continuing support always available. Also available by appointment. Please see our website for more and updates on retreat availability! \$30. If you cannot afford the full fees, please ask about a bursary. Contact the Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing, & Counselling at 517-641-6201, info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org or SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction with Elizabeth Robinson • Monday, Jan. 11, Mar. 29 • 5:30 p.m. • Introduction to Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. Free. Contact Libby at 476-3070; libbyrobinson7@gmail.com or libbyrobinsonmindfulness.com.

Stress Management, cont.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Eight-week Class with Elizabeth Robinson and Pam Schweitzer • Mondays, Jan. 25 - Mar. 15; Apr. 5 - May 24 • Offered on-line, this eight-week course includes a 2.5-hour class each week, four-hour retreat, recordings of guided meditations, and handouts. The course provides lots of opportunities to practice mindfulness using a variety of techniques and approaches from meditation to informal mindfulness in daily life. The emphasis throughout is on developing the mental habit of being more aware of this present moment without judgment and with gentleness, in all its vastness and range of difficulty and ease. \$200/eight-week course. Contact Libby at 476-3070; libbyrobinson7@gmail.com or libbyrobinsonmindfulness.com.

Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Self Defense

Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan • Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturday • Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan is an internal martial art emphasizing balance and relaxation. All are welcome to learn this ancient art of meditation in motion. \$32/one class a week. \$50/two classes a week. All classes are virtual. Contact info@wustyle-annarbor.com or www.wustyle-annarbor.com.

Chen Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Mondays and Thursdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 10-11 a.m. • Unique movement art emphasizing inner stillness and relaxation developed through disciplined whole-body integration and refined awareness. Instruction in stance training, silk-reeling/spiraling exercises, and Chen forms. \$85/month. Contact Joe at annarbortaiichi@gmail.com or annarbortaiichi.com.

Primordial Qigong Online with Steven Sy • Saturday-Sunday, Feb. 27-28 • 9:30 a.m. • Primordial Qigong is a short qigong form that opens your heart center and accelerates spiritual development. No prerequisites. \$109. Contact Steven at 517-295-3477; steven@spiritualtao.com or www.spiritualtaoworkshops.com.

ST101: Qigong Meditation Basics 1 Online with Steven Sy • Saturday-Sunday, Mar. 20-21 • 9:30 a.m. • Qigong Meditation Basics 1 is a set of meditations designed to release inner tension, increase self-acceptance, open the heart, detoxify negative emotions, balance one's inner energy, and rejuvenate the body. These meditations are combined with soft physical body movements (qigong) to promote health and well-being. No prerequisites. \$195. Contact Steven at 517-295-3477; steven@spiritualtao.com or www.spiritualtaoworkshops.com.

Tai Chi: Beginning through Advanced with Good EnerChi Studio and Staggerin' Dragon School of Tai Chi • Ongoing online classes • Tai Chi classes are for individuals of any age and fitness level who seek to relax and have fun with this engaging body/mind activity. Tai Chi is a peaceful, flowing, low-impact exercise, well-suited for calming and centering. Free/low fee. Contact Karla at 325-4244; karla@goodenerchistudio.com or goodenerchistudio.com/classes.

Classes with Asian Martial Arts Studio • Ongoing In-Person Classes • Martial arts classes include Aikido, Kung Fu, Karate, Tai Chi, Wing Chun, and Lion Dance with the goals of developing a truthful knowledge of the fundamental elements of our martial arts traditions and their roots in Asian culture. Children's classes offered also. Contact 994-3620; a2amas.com.

B.C. Yu Martial Arts Center • Ongoing classes • Forty classes per week include Tae Kwon Do, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Modern Arnis, Mixed Martial Arts, and Fitness Kickboxing. Children's program teaches life skills. All classes available online. Contact 994-9595; questions@bcyu.com or bcyu.com.

Tea Events

A Deia-Tea for Every Season with Susan Billmaier • Wednesdays, Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27 • 7 p.m. • Every season of our life has its unique blessings and challenges. Using tea to commune with the sacred has a long history starting in ancient China. In this course we'll explore how formulating unique tea blends can help us invoke various goddesses to help us on our life's journey. We'll start with the season of winter learning from Persephone and MORTA the importance of Rest, Renewal, and Surrender. We'll move through the wheel of the year concluding with Autumn and her gifts of Gratitude, Abundance, and Crossroads. This is a four-class course with one class covering each season. \$108. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.



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Martha Travers is a well-known contemplative studies lecturer at U-M in the Department of Jazz & Contemporary Improvisation. She leads spiritual discussions, meditation workshops, and Nature Quest Journeys to sacred sites. She also offers distance courses and apprenticeships.

She is fortunate to live in a fairly remote country setting, so the necessary isolation of this Covid time has deepened her contemplative lifestyle. She is grateful for the internet and her computer as ways to connect across the barriers that are temporarily in place, but she invites everyone to experiment with 'less is more' when it comes to screens, and to replace screen time with greeting, feeling, and expressing gratitude to earth, wind, water, and fire. To prepare simple, lovely meals, light candles, listen to soothing music, read beautiful literature, and fill yourself with positive thoughts of the possible world that together we can create where all beings are treated with respect and reverence. To engage in compassionate action to keep each other safe. She encourages us to remember that the story we tell is the story that happens. Learn more about Martha on her website, natureandhealing.org.



Work and Right Livelihood

Lead from Within with Susan Billmaier • Mondays, Jan. 18, 25; Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22; Mar. 1, 8 • 7 p.m. • This course draws on somatic processes, shamanic practices, guided meditations, and movement to support your leadership development, connect with your own inner wisdom, and create a dialogue with a future that wants to emerge through your organization. You will deepen your capacities as a leader: finding new reserves of wisdom and compassion. This course will also provide you with new ways to relate within your teams. And you will learn how to engage the consciousness of your organization as a source of wisdom, guidance and support. \$216. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Writing and Poetry

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series hosted by Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Rainey Lamey • Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month • 7-9 p.m. Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link • Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Poetry Workshop online via Zoom. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins at 6:45 p.m. Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Public Reading online via Zoom. Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for one hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry. Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m.

- **January 27** • Hedy Habra is a polyglot essayist and artist whose third book of poems, *The Taste of the Earth*, won the Silver Nautilus Award. *Tea in Heliopolis* won the USA Best Book Award and *Under Brushstrokes* was finalist for the International Book Award. She has lived in Egypt, Brussels, and now Kalamazoo. Her website is hedyhabra.com
- **February 24** • Patricia Hooper is author of *Separate Flights and Wild Persistence*—the most recent of her five books of poetry. Her poems have appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, and *Kenyon Review*, and have won six major awards. She is a U-M alumna and now lives in Gastonia, North Carolina.
- **February 24** • Danyne Romine Powell, newspaper editor and author of *In the Sunroom with Raymond Carver* and four other poetry collections, often depicts troubles with close relatives. She has published in *Ploughshares*, *Paris Review*, and *Poetry*. She once occupied the former bedroom of Sylvia Plath during a residency at the Yaddo Foundation's mansion.

- **March 24** • Ken Meisel, is a psychotherapist and author of eight books of poetry. With tender, grave empathy, *Our Common Souls: New and Selected Poems of Detroit* traces the conflicted searches for hope, sense of connection to place, and material and social problems embedded in the landscape of his deindustrialized city.

March 24 • Jeff Vande Zande has published four novels including *American Poet*, which won a Michigan Notable Book Award from the Library of Michigan. His story collections are *Emergency Stopping*, *Threatened Species*, and *The Neighborhood Division*. He is also a filmmaker, teaches at Delta College, and has a blog at www.authorjeffvandezande.blogspot.com

April 28 • Celebrate National Poetry Month! Members of the peer-driven writer's workshop of the Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle, which meets on the second Wednesday of each month, read selections of their work. They are: Joseph Kelty, David Jibson, Edward Morin, Loraine Lamey, Lissa Perrin, Gregory Mahr, Dana Dever, and others.

"Writing to Free the Body" Eight-Week Online Workshop with Julie Mariouw • Tuesdays, Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26; Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 • 6:30-9 p.m. • Workshop designed to develop & strengthen a mindful relationship w/the body, connect w/memory, emotion and stifled creativity, allow the body to guide our writing, thereby opening our subconscious minds. We will use metaphor, senses, polarity, and physical movement. Some texts I will use: *Journey from the Center to the Page* by Jeff Davis, *Writing from the Body* by John Lee, and *Writing and the Body in Motion* by Cheryl Pallant. \$250. Contact Julie at 730-6175; julie@wellspringwritingworkshops.com or <https://www.wellspringwritingworkshops.com/events>.

"Deepening Our Writing - Part 2" Eight-Week Online Workshop with Julie Mariouw • Thursdays, Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28; Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25 • 6:30-9 p.m. • In this workshop we will create one original piece every four weeks and will deepen it throughout the rest of that time period. We will work continually with metaphor, the senses and physical movement, moving ever-more-deeply toward the center of the writing. This is a highly effective way of pulling material from the subconscious mind and teaching us how to achieve the trance state necessary for meaningful writing. \$250. Contact Julie at 730-6175; julie@wellspringwritingworkshops.com or <https://www.wellspringwritingworkshops.com/events>.

Sit. Stop. Write. Zen and Poetry workshop with Dmitry Berenson • Sundays, Jan. 24, Feb. 28, Mar. 28, Apr. 25 • 1:15 p.m. • Like a plant that grows out of bare ground, to express ourselves in poetry we must start from an empty place. We'll do a little meditation and reading from Zen and other sources to help us touch that place and then spring out to write our own poetry. Find your seat; find your voice. Donations welcome. Contact Marta at 248-202-3102; JissoJiZen@gmail.com or JissoJiZen.org.

The Raindrop Technique

By Rob Meyer-Kukan

Essential oils—they're everywhere! You can find them in the grocery store, home improvement stores, the mall, and even the gas station. Aromatherapy, with essential oils, is extremely popular right now. As the saying goes, "everything old is new again." That's truly the case with essential oils.

Essential oils have been around since the beginning of recorded time and have been used for thousands of years. As the holistic health field blossoms, we are seeing a return to all things natural. Homeopathy, Iridology, energy work, aromatherapy, and other holistic modalities are quickly becoming more mainstream.

Essential oils have been called "man's first medicine." References to essential oils have been found in Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese manuscripts dating back thousands of years. There are close to 500 references to aromatics, incense, and ointments in the Bible and other sacred texts.

Today we use essential oils in three ways:

1. Topically (applying them directly to the skin)
2. Aromatically (breathing them in either by placing the oils in your hands, rubbing them together, and cupping them over your nose, or with the aid of an essential oil diffuser)
3. Internally (as a dietary supplement, in a gel capsule, or in your cooking)

As a massage therapist, I incorporate aromatherapy into my practice in many ways. One of my favorite ways to use essential oils is to incorporate them topically into a body work session. One such way is the Raindrop Technique.

References to essential oils have been found in Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese manuscripts dating back thousands of years.

Developed by the late Dr. D. Gary Young (founder of Young Living Essential Oils) in the 1980s, the Raindrop Technique uses nine therapeutic grade essential oils on the feet and along the spine to create a deeply balancing and relaxing experience. It is said that the Raindrop Technique rejuvenates the mind and balances the body. The essential oils used in Raindrop Technique are: Valor (essential oil blend), oregano, thyme, basil, cypress, wintergreen, marjoram, Aroma Siez (essential oil blend), and peppermint. Additionally, another blend, White Angelica, is applied at the end of the Raindrop Technique.

To begin, the therapist applies essential oils to the feet of the client along the spinal reflex points. These points, as laid out in traditional foot reflexology, lie along the medial (inside) edge along the sole of the foot from the heel to the tip of the big toe. A specific, gentle fingertip rolling technique called VitaFlex is used

to apply the oil to the feet. Once all of the oils have been applied, the therapist may do some additional work to the feet including reflexology or other traditional relaxation techniques.

It is said that the Raindrop Technique rejuvenates the mind and balances the body.

Then the practitioner applies the oils to the back of the client. Employing a variety of different massage techniques, the essential oils are, one by one, gently dropped onto the back of the client. Gentle finger rolling, fanning, effleurage techniques (smooth gliding strokes), and more are used to disburse the oils on the back. Once all of the oils have been applied the therapist may choose to perform additional massage techniques here to aid in relaxation or relieve tense or tight muscles. At this point, some practitioners find it beneficial to apply a hot compress to the back.

This encourages deep penetration of the oils and is very soothing and relaxing to the client. The final step of the Raindrop Technique stimulates the flow of lymph by gently engaging the cranial bones at the back and base of the head.

While developing the technique, Gary Young applied his vast knowledge of the chemical properties of the essential oils, with the finger rolling technique, and the feathering and fanning techniques that he learned from the Lakota people of South Dakota. The finger rolling technique called VitaFlex is based on a traditional Tibetan acupressure and reflexology technique brought to the world by Stanley Burroughs in the 1920s. The concept is that gently rolling the fingertips, with light pressure, over specific reflex areas of the body brings an energetic vitality to the body. Burroughs initially coined the name VitaFlex to be a shortened version of his phrase "vitality through the reflexes."

When the United States/Canada border was established, and the Lakota could no longer freely migrate north, they began to incorporate this light effleurage technique of feathering and fanning strokes into their healing practices to simulate the energy of the Northern Lights.

The Native American influences seen in the Raindrop Technique include the light effleurage technique we call feathering and fanning. At certain points in the year, the Lakota people of South Dakota migrated across the Canadian border into the northern regions of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It was here that they would take in the healing energy of the northern lights. When the United States/Canada border was established, and the Lakota could no longer freely migrate north, they began to incorporate this light effleurage technique of feathering and fanning strokes into their healing practices to simulate the energy of the Northern Lights.

A Raindrop Technique session takes approximately 60 minutes to complete, while other therapists allow for additional techniques to be performed in a 90-minute session.

Rob Meyer-Kukan is a Licensed Massage Therapist, a Licensed Sound Therapist, and a Natural Health Educator. He is the owner of 7 Notes Natural Health located on Ann Arbor's southeast side. To learn more, please visit his website robmeyerkukan.com or contact him by email at rob@robmeyerkukan.com.

Writing and Poetry, cont.

Writing and Healing with Susan Billmaier • Sundays, Jan. 31, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 7 p.m. • Sacred Writing is a simple, powerful, loving approach to spending time with Self and All That Is. In class circle, you will receive this small gift and learn techniques to be in each moment and to deepen. There are three parts to the class: ways and practice of sitting in the present moment, sacred writing itself, and reflecting on our experiences and process. All Sacred Writing is private—it is for nobody but you. Together, we will co-create time and space for sharing our experiences of Sacred Writing and for inspiring each other and ourselves. \$135. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Lifelines Workshop with Susan Billmaier • Wednesdays, Feb. 10, 17, 24 • 7 p.m. • Looking backwards, we can trace the threads of our lives and begin to see, with gratitude and awe, our unique tapestries. Look! There are your colors, spirit, love, lessons, epiphanies—all you have co-created! Simple Lifelines and deepening techniques—focused on Self and Soul desires and needs—are creative and powerful tools for self-understanding, synthesis, and healing. Come join a small circle of introspective souls. Let's engage in deep soul play. \$81. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Writing and Healing with Susan Billmaier • Sundays, Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28; Apr. 4 • 7 p.m. • There are many ways to think about healing. We can support the healing of another, our own healing, the healing of Gaia and All That Is. Writing, like healing, is a mysterious and magical process. It is one way to explore and understand, if only in this moment, those aspects of life experience that are hidden yet waiting to be discovered. Here, writing is loosely held, encompassing many and infinite forms of self-expression. Join a small circle of healers who practice writing magic and creative expression to reflect on the work and the nature of healing. You may choose to keep your writing private and just for you or to share, if you wish. \$135. Contact Susan at 678-2071; evenstar.institute@gmail.com or evenstarschalice.com/institute.

Prose, Poetry and Potpourri (A virtual gathering) with the Weber Center • Sunday, Apr. 8 • 3:30 p.m. • April is National Poetry Month! Settle in, get a cup of tea or your favorite beverage. Relax and enjoy a virtual hour of prose, poetry and potpourri. Listen to poetry read by the authors, a reading from a book soon to be published, as well as familiar and original musical compositions. Be amazed by the talent in our midst. All are welcome. Free. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

Faerie Baby template from the handcrafting column on page 68. Feel free to reduce or enlarge to suit your project. Trace onto your shrink plastic and happy creating!



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Yoga

Yoga Space Experienced Intermediate Yoga • Mondays through April • 6 p.m. • Yoga for Experienced students who do inversions or substitutions. Class is Iyengar method and tailored to needs and experience of students. Zoom classes help guide students through their own practice at a comfortable rate with helpful suggestions based on the teacher's observations and experience. \$15/class. Contact Sue at 622-9600; sue@yogospaceannarbor.com or yogospaceannarbor.com.

Yoga Space All Level Yoga Class • Mondays through April • 9:30 a.m.; Tuesdays • 10:30 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. • All Level Yoga from Beginner to Experienced. Class uses the Iyengar method and is tailored to the needs and experience of students. Zoom classes help guide students through their own practice at a comfortable rate with helpful suggestions based on the teacher's observations and experience. \$15/class. Contact Sue at 622-9600; sue@yogospaceannarbor.com or yogospaceannarbor.com.

Yoga Essentials with Michelle Bond •

Tuesdays through March • 6 p.m. • For those new to yoga, or new to this system. Learn Universal Principles of Alignment that are an invaluable aid to learning the postures, deepening your understanding of the body, developing a yoga practice that is safe, joyful, therapeutic, and fun! Classes are on Zoom, with the instructor observing alignment and offering individual attention. Time for questions and conversation after class. \$14/registered. \$18/drop-in with instructor's permission. Contact Michele at 358-8546; michele@yogahouseannarbor.com or www.yogahouseannarbor.com.

Yoga Space Beginning/Supported Yoga Class • Wednesdays through April • 10 a.m. • Beginning/Supported fundamentals for anyone who wishes basic yoga and extra time or support when needed. Zoom classes help guide students through their own practice at a comfortable rate with helpful suggestions based on the teacher's observations and experience. \$15/class. Contact Sue at 622-9600; sue@yogospaceannarbor.com or yogospaceannarbor.com.

Some men see things as they are and say why – I dream things that never were and say why not.

– George Bernard Shaw



Artwork by Ani Daher

Yoga, cont.

Yoga for Athletes with Michelle Bond • Wednesdays through March • 6 p.m.

• Our new cutting-edge method will bring balanced muscular action, power, lightness and spring to your sports performance, as well as grace and ease to daily movement. Enhance core strength, decrease risk of injury, and learn to heal pre-existing injuries with indispensable tools for anyone who likes to play hard in their bodies. Classes are on Zoom, with the instructor observing alignment and offering individual attention. Time for questions and conversation after class. \$14/registered. \$18/drop-in with instructor's permission. Contact Michele at 358-8546; michele@yogahouseannarbor.com or www.yogahouseannarbor.com.

Compassionate Yoga with Mary Seibert • Thursdays • 5:30-6:30 p.m. • Classes are taught remotely at this time. Kripalu yoga is great for beginners and seasoned students. Emphasis on mindfulness, breath, postures, strength and balance. Sliding scale prices, \$5-\$15/class. Contact Mary at 323-2520; mvsa2mvs@gmail.com or compassionateyoga.info.

Open Level Yoga with Michelle Bond • Thursdays, 6 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m. through March • Each student is encouraged to honor their own unique abilities and limitations in this mixed level class, with variations offered for all levels. Our method blends the science of biomechanics with an openhearted, uplifting philosophy. Learn to look for the good in yourself and others as you enjoy a dynamic practice. Classes are on Zoom, with the instructor observing alignment and offering individual attention. Time for questions and conversation after class. \$14/registered. \$18/drop-in with instructor's permission. Contact Michele at 358-8546; michele@yogahouseannarbor.com or www.yogahouseannarbor.com.



Virtual Yoga Classes with Imagine Fitness • Yoga classes for everyone. No experience necessary. Styles include Hatha, Restorative, Beginners, and Fundamentals. \$21/drop-in. Contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at 622-8119; imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com or imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Yoga Classes at The Yoga Room with Christy DeBurton • Private sessions available via Zoom/Facetime/Skype • Offering Hatha, Yin, and Vinyasa yoga classes. See website for pricing and full schedule. Contact Christy at 761-8409; info@christydeburton.com or yogaroomannarbor.com.

Yoga Classes Online • Daytime, Evening, and Saturday classes • Beginning and experienced level classes with individualized instruction that meets the needs of each student. Teachers teach how to do yoga and are experienced and certified. Contact Sue at 622-9600; sue@yogaspacannarbor.com or yogaspacannarbor.com.

Online and In-Person Yoga Classes with Ema Stefanova • Ongoing classes • Classes are designed to effectively relieve stress at a deeper level, both in the body and in the mind. Experience a sense of harmony and centering. Dynamic posture sequences are followed by systematic relaxation and visualization at the end. Also offering private yoga therapy and meditation for clients and groups. Contact Ann Arbor Yoga and Meditation at 665-7801; emastefanova@cs.com or yogaandmeditation.com.

Gentle Yoga with Marlene McGrath • Ongoing Virtual Classes • Expanded offerings of gentle yoga classes designed for students who want a more supported and slower-paced class. See website for times, dates, and costs. Email at marlenemamayoga@yahoo.com or marlenemcgrathyoga.com.

Prenatal and Postnatal Yoga with Marlene McGrath • Ongoing Virtual Classes • These classes are designed to support the changes of a pregnant body, instill confidence in the body's abilities, and provide physical, mental, and emotional preparation for birth and mothering. Postnatal yoga is practiced with babies present. See website for times, dates, and costs. Email at marlenemamayoga@yahoo.com or Marlenemcgrathyoga.com.

Iyengar Yoga Classes with Laurie Blakeney • Ongoing Virtual classes • Safe, transformative, and educational instruction in the art of practicing yoga asanas (postures). Call for session rates. Call 663-7612; aasylaurie@gmail.com or annarborschoolofyoga.com.

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Many of life's failures
are experienced by
people who did not
realize how close they
were to success when
they gave up.

– Thomas Edison

Libby Robinson is a founding member of the Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness. She began practicing mindfulness meditation in 1979 and has been teaching mindfulness-based stress reduction since 2007.

Since the pandemic, Libby has transitioned to teaching online (using Zoom)-- a big transition for a tech skeptic/novice! She had noticed the online drop-in sessions that she's also helps lead had a definite unexpected power that comes from sitting in meditation with a group of people, even though they were only connected virtually. The course is different, of course, and requires more attention and flexibility from the teachers/facilitators and some new tech skills, but Libby thinks it's wonderful to be able to continue to teach and share the tool of mindfulness in daily life, at a time when so many are so stressed out by uncertainty, worries, sadness, loss, and distress.

Learn more about Libby and the Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness on their website at acfm.org.



Aaron is a discarnate entity channeled through Barbara Brodsky, founder and guiding teacher of Deep Spring Center Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry. He offers wisdom and teaches us that we are all beings of light.

Myozen Joan Amaral is a dharma heir of Zenkei Blanche Hartman in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki, Roshi. Her interest in zazen grew out of a background in modern dance and the cultivation of energy that can support the practice of stillness.

Amanda Anastasia is a University of Michigan graduate of Environment—Nature & Well-being, a yoga instructor since 2012, and a trained life coach. Amanda changes lives by bringing others into unity with their hearts and with the forces of nature that nourish us all. Amanda supports her clients intuitively by gently guiding others to organically adopt ancient and modern technologies for aligning their body and mind with the divine. Her intention is to bring more joy into the lives of those ready to allow more abundance, more grace, and more expansion.

Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and the Centers

Jeff Belanger has been a Certified Advanced Rolfer since 1982. He's practiced Rolfing in Ann Arbor since 1990. His other interests include gardening, meditation, enjoying his family, and playing with his two Australian Shepherds, and Frank the Cat.

Susan Bellinson, CIYI Level 1, has taught for 20 years and brings a unique energy and caring to her teaching. She has a strong interest in helping her students know themselves and be comfortable in what they are doing.

Dmitry Berenson, a Zen practitioner, robotics professor, and published poet, has been leading Zen and poetry workshops for JissoJi Zen Ann Arbor for several years.

Susan Billmaier, PhD is a spiritual teacher, healer, and administrator. With roots in the Vedas (Haidakhan Tradition), Buddha Dharma, Christianity, and 20th century New Thought, including ACIM, she has been practicing spiritual purification and healing for over 25 years.

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.

Barbara Brodsky is the founder and guiding teacher for Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry and a channel for Aaron. Rooted in the Buddhist and Quaker traditions her teaching reflects this balance.

Marta Dabis is an ordained Zen priest, leader of JissoJi Zen Ann Arbor, a board-certified hospital chaplain, and researcher of clinical spiritual care. She lives in Cohousing in Ann Arbor and originally is from Eastern Europe. Marta was trained at the San Francisco Zen Center and at Yale New Haven Hospital.

Erica Dutton started studying meditation 30 years ago and has been teaching for 12. Reflective Meditation is a unique approach to meditation and has helped in ways she never expected. Her goal is to share this practice with others so they too can succeed in meditation and see their experience as important and valued.

Connie Eiland has been studying shamanism since 2000 with Sandra Ingerman, Betsy Bergstrom, Herb Stevenson, Ana Larramendi, Carol Proudfoot-Edgar, and others. She is a shamanic practitioner as well as teacher.

Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and the Centers, Continued

Mara Evenstar expresses her life purpose—connecting people with their inner drive toward wholeness and unitive experience—through transpersonal psychology, teaching, and healing, and working through local organizations including Evenstar's Chalice, Evenstar Institute, Sophia Unfolds, and The Intentional Living Collective.

Foundations of Wellness for Women is a program of Ann Arbor Holistic Gynecology (Dr. Suman Tewari, MD) and health coaches Jen Sprague and Liza Baker. Programs include bi-weekly Zoom workshops, virtual retreats, and—in 2021—a concierge women's health practice.



Snow falling
soundlessly
in the
middle of
the night
will always
fill my heart
with sweet
clarity.

—Novala Takemoto

John Friedlander is an internationally acclaimed psychic, author, and teacher with degrees from Duke University and Harvard Law School. He has studied with Jane Roberts in her Seth class and at the Berkeley Psychic Institute with founder Lewis Bostwick.

Karen Greenberg, R.P.T., and Certified Essence Repatterning Practitioner is a Registered Physical Therapist, who taught Physical Therapy Students at University of Maryland Hospital, Dance Students at Dance Studios she owned, has traveled for decades and continues teaching virtual Personal/Spiritual Growth to metaphysical spiritual seekers worldwide.

Don Goergen is a Dominican priest, a lecturer, writer, and author of ten books and many articles. He has completed a new manuscript on the thought of Thomas Aquinas and Teilhard de Chardin. He has given retreats throughout North America, Asia, and Africa. He currently resides in Chicago and is an assistant to the Provincial for the Central Province of Dominican friars.

Cindy Guillean has been sharing the magic of writing and self-expression with others for more than 30 years. She is a teacher, learner, seeker, writer, Reiki Master, Cognitive Coach, National Writing Project Fellow, and an awakening soul.

Elizabeth Hurwitz graduated from law school in 1979 and was admitted to practice in New York State shortly thereafter. She returned to Ann Arbor and opened her solo law practice here in 1994. She specializes in elder law and family law.

David Jibson, poet, editor, blogmaster.

Gwyn Jones' classes take you on a journey through natural movement exercises that can give you a dynamic and healthier lifestyle. Her mission is to have you reap the benefits of restoring and sustaining natural movement habits. She is STOTT Pilates Mat, and TRX certified. She brings a variety of

exercise options to her classes, personal training sessions, and workshops.

Esther Kennedy OP, a Dominican Sister of Adrian, Michigan, is a retreat leader and spiritual director.

Rainey Lamey, Zoom host, open mic moderator.

Barry Lipscomb draws from wisdom technologies to lead meditation groups and mindfulness. He is the former Executive Director of NYC-based Focalizing Institute and a certified Focalizing Practitioner. Barry is currently studying Depth Hypnosis, which draws from shamanism, Buddhism, hypnotherapy, and transpersonal psychology.

Julie Mariouw is a trained Amherst Writers & Artists workshop leader, published author, and former English teacher. She led a Journaling Workshop for seven years, and has been offering creative writing workshops in Ann Arbor since 2016.

Drake Meadow is a certified leader in the tradition of Dances of Universal Peace.

Edward Morin, poet, translator, and English teacher at universities and colleges.

The Mother is a discarnate entity channeled through Barbara Brodsky, founder and guiding teacher of Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry. She offers events in spiritual consciousness through the sharing of spiritual energy.

Dr. Michael Oliver has over 25 years of leadership development in the field of human performance and has facilitated training programs and speaking engagements around the world. He has dedicated his life to developing programs and practices that raise human consciousness, helping people to live in joy.

Diarmuid O'Murchu, a member of the Sacred Heart Missionary Order, and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin Ireland, is a social psychologist most of whose working life has been in social ministry. As a workshop leader and group facilitator, he has worked in countries around the world, facilitating programs on Adult Faith Development.

Sifu Genie Parker has trained and taught Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan for over 30 years. She is a disciple of Grandmaster Eddie Wu Kwong Yu, head of the 5th generation of the Wu family and gatekeeper of the Wu style. All teachers are disciples and certified by the Grandmaster.

Shalina Rankin is an Herbalist and Founder of Fiery Maple Wholistic Healing, Inc. She completed an Herbal Medicine Apprenticeship at the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine and earned her certificate of completion in Herbal Studies from the Habitat Reskill Center of Ann Arbor.

Judy Ramsey's shamanic healing and animal communication skills have been helping the Ann Arbor community for 15 years. Judy is a shamanic teacher for Sandra Ingerman's approach to shamanic practice. She also teaches four levels of Penelope Smith's animal communication classes, including Interspecies Counseling.

Elizabeth Rand is a pastor and mentored leader in the tradition of Dances of Universal Peace.

Elizabeth Robinson, Ph.D., MSW, has taught Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction since 2007 to psychotherapists, nurses, physicians, and other health professionals, as well as community members in Ann Arbor and Flint. She leads drop-in meditation sessions and has presented to organizations and businesses on mindfulness.

Susan Salaniuk, CIYI Level 3, IAYT, RYT500. Sue has taught for 33 years. She excels in helping individual students in a group class, therapeutics, and ageless students.

Swami Atmananda Saraswati (Swamiji) is the Co-Director of the non-profit Kashi Nivas Shiva Meditation Ashram in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Swamiji began practicing yoga and meditation in 1970. Swami Atmananda has over 40-years of experience as a meditation teacher and is an accomplished Self-Inquiry facilitator. On Makar Sankranti 2019, while on retreat in Ganeshpuri India, he took Sannyas Diksha in the Mahanirvani Akhada. He has been leading and accompanying the practice of Bhakti Kirtan (devotional chanting) for over 45 years, facilitating Kirtans at ashrams, temples, retreats, yoga studios, festivals, and homes around the US, Australia, and India.

Swami Lalitananda Saraswati (Kashi Amma) is the Co-Director of the non-profit Kashi Nivas Shiva Meditation Ashram in Ann Arbor, moved here from Australia in 2014. She lived in an Ashram in Australia and became an adept facilitator of the unique method of Self-inquiry, the Shiva Process. She is also a graduate from the Shiva Yoga Meditation and Hatha Yoga Teacher Training programs. Kashi Amma is also a devoted Kirtan leader and was an integral part of the Shiva Ashram chanting group in Australia. In January of 2019 Kashi Amma took Sannyas Diksha (initiation) and was given the name Swami Lalitananda Saraswati along with the affectionate title of 'Kashi Amma'. The initiation ceremonies occurred while on retreat in Ganeshpuri, India.

Sister Chris Schenk has worked as a nurse midwife to low-income families, a community organizer, an award-winning writer-researcher, and the founding director of an international church reform organization, FutureChurch. Her first book *Crispina and Her Sisters: Women and Authority in Early Christianity* (Fortress Press, 2017) received a first place in history from the Catholic Press Association.

Pam Schweitzer, PMHCNS-BC, Psychotherapist is an experienced psychotherapist trained in mindfulness. Both of us have led many drop-in meditation sessions.

Mary Seibert, BSN, RYT200 is a Certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher with a foundation in Iyengar yoga. She is also a Holistic Nurse and Certified Healing Touch Practitioner.

Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling. Founded by Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharma. 501(c)(3) Nonprofit near Lansing, Michigan, serving since 2003. Supporting those struggling or suffering in life on any level, assisting those who seek inner knowledge and personal growth in the pursuit of peace, health, and happiness.

Brenda Singleton, MFA. is the Director of the Art Factory at 209 North Main Street in Adrian, MI.

Book Review

The Five Element Solution

By Jean Haner

By Catherine Carlson

Author and teacher, Jean Haner, has carved out a unique niche for herself as an expert on Chinese spiritual methods, including: the art of Chinese face reading, the Nine-Star-Ki (a form of numerology), and Space Clearing. Her latest book, titled *The Five Element Solution: Discover The Spiritual Side of Chinese Medicine to Release Stress, Clear Anxiety, and Reclaim Your Life* was inspired by her clients who wanted more support after their sessions with her.

In the past, Chinese scientists looked at nature and realized that all life moves in a circle. They divided the circle into five stages and named them after the five elements present in Chinese medicine and culture. The cycle begins with water, which flows into wood, then fire, followed by earth, and finally metal. Wood and earth may sound like the same thing, but they are distinctly different elements in this system.

The book is divided into four parts, beginning with a survey to determine where you are within the five elements. Which are you strongest in? Which are weaker? I had a fun time going through the survey and felt like I saw myself in all the elements, although some seemed to stand out a little more, which was made clearer as I read further. Haner says that everyone carries each of the five elements within. The book then progresses through problem-solving and a list of health issues for each element, followed by simple remedies or full prescriptions for all five elements. All of the suggestions are things a person can easily do and do not require anything special. There is a natural flow cycle as well as a control cycle. For example, water controls fire, so one way to help with excess water is to stimulate fire.

The most common symptom of Fire imbalance in our culture is “lack of joy.” This is due to being stuck in situations that are unfulfilling instead of heartfelt.

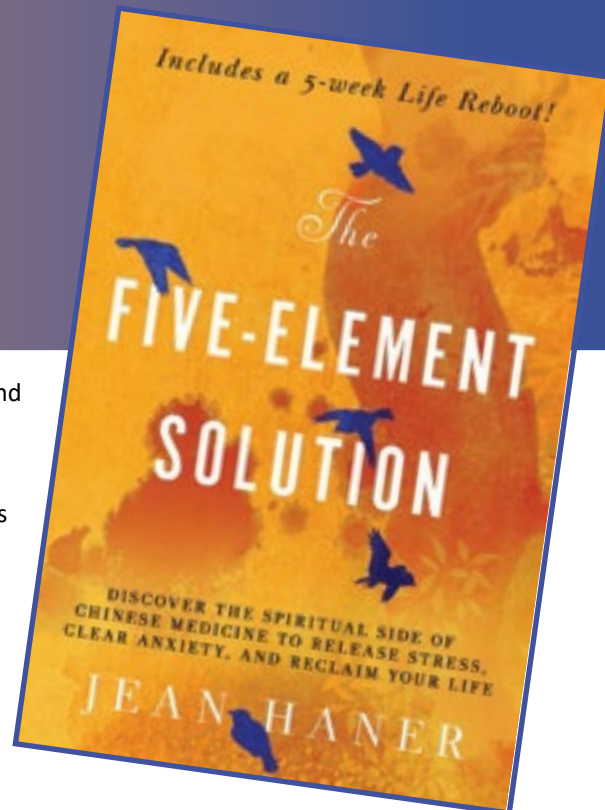
The essence of the water element is slow, non-linear, and without agenda. Lower back pain and adrenal issues are symptoms of water imbalance. If water being out of balance is a consistent problem for you, wearing black can help, and so can drinking more water! There are wardrobe and food prescriptions for all the elements. Wood follows water in the cycle and is the vital energy of spring. Unlike water, wood is linear, has a plan (much like a tree), and is necessary to help us achieve our goals. If you are a wood element type, you may be prone to depression. Each element has a way to assist with the imbalance of every other element, and in this way they all work together. For example, a woman in an unhealthy relationship was unable to think clearly. Her “wood was exhausted, and so her ability to think, and plan, and to have confidence so she could begin anew was seriously depleted.” Saturating her life with the water element eventually gave her the courage to take steps for herself.

Fire comes after wood and aligns with midlife and summertime. In Chinese medicine, it represents the heart, and it also falls in the “heart” (center) of the Five-Element cycle. Fire is connected to the place within us that feels joy, makes others feel loved, or has an intuitive sense about a person, so we know if we can trust them with our heart. The most common symptom of fire imbalance in our culture is “lack of joy.” This is due to being stuck in situations that are unfulfilling instead of heartfelt. If you are a fire element type, you may be an empath and easily react to others’ emotions. Rejection and heartbreak are also more painful for those with a strong fire element. One prescription to help if your fire is often out of balance is to add play and fun into your life.

Lastly are the elements of earth and metal, which align with the energies of Mother and Father, respectively. Like a mother, the earth element in balance would be one that is providing enough nurturing and comfort to themselves and others, but not so much that they are depleted. Weak boundaries are a common imbalance for this element. To help rebalance earth, one might include exercising with a friend instead of alone, as well as eating breakfast between 7-9 a.m. All the elements align with a different time of day. Metal element relates to gold and silver but also rocks and crystals, all of which are hard and inflexible. Metal has a refined quality and helps us be our best selves and focus on what is important, much like a father. Metal imbalances can include anxiety and financial worries. One man who was house-hunting agonized “over the prospect of buying the house and then having it lose value. Because he spent so much time on this hyper-analysis, other buyers took house after house before he could decide.” Healing metal imbalance allows you to recognize what is essential, and let go of what is not, as well as be able to say something is “good enough!”

The latter part of the book contains a five-week program which incorporates each element into your life. It’s a way of rebooting your system if you are stuck or you’re not sure which element you should focus on. This way you don’t need to figure it all out, just follow the plan and trust. The weeks are to be completed in cyclical order. There are dos, such as when in the water week: Do slow-flow exercise. There are also don’ts, such as in week five to encourage metal: Avoid crowded and noisy spaces.

The Chinese elemental cycle can be seen in the natural cycle of our day—having fun (fire) follows work (wood)— the life cycle—beginning with water—or throughout the decades with the free-spirited 60s following a time of rigid structure. “The five elements are the choreography we, and all of nature, are dancing to,” says Haner. Another way to view the cycle is with the words Be-Do-Love-Eat-Praise. Each of these naturally moves into the next one, and if we go with the flow of these elements, life has a natural balance and rhythm to it.



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Kathryn Getek Soltis is assistant professor of Christian Ethics and Director of the Center for Peace and Justice Education at Villanova University. She completed her Ph.D. at Boston College in Theological Ethics. Her dissertation develops a virtue ethics approach to justice with application toward the reform of the American prison.

Steven Sy is a Senior Instructor of Master Mantak Chia's system, certified in Qigong Meditation Basics, Tao Yin Qigong, Iron Shirt Qigong 1-2, Tai Chi Qigong 1-3, Fusion of the Five Elements 1, and Healing Love.

Lisa Teets has been an advanced Bowenwork practitioner for 10 years. She also teaches Yoga, Tai Chi, and high school mathematics.

Linda Tomala is a member of the Detroit hub of META Peace Team which practices non-violence and by-stander intervention both domestically and internationally. She has made several trips to the Middle East including to the Israeli/Palestinian Border.

Judy Trautman is a certified leader, mentor in training, and Cherag "minister" of Universal Worship in the tradition of Dances of Universal Peace.

Joe Walters has been practicing Chen tai chi for 26 years.

So many of our
dreams at first
seem impossible,
then seem
improbable, and
then, when we
summon the will,
they soon seem
inevitable.

– Christopher Reeve

Lou Weir has been teaching meditation for over fifteen years. He believes that the practice should meet the student. His classes emphasize a safe open space for personal exploration. His background includes Gurdjieff work, insight meditation, Zen training, and the Diamond Approach.

Suzy Wienckowski is a Reiki Master and Massage Therapist. Suzy has over 40 years of experience in the healing arts. Reiki has been the focus of her work since 1993. Her training includes study with two Masters initiated by Hawayo Takata and with Hiroshi Doi, a member of the original Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai in Japan. Suzy teaches the traditional Usui System of Reiki Healing and is a member of The Reiki Alliance.

Reverend Eve Wilson, UCM Master Healer, Award-Winning Author and Blogger, World Healing & Ascension Worker, Training Healers since 1986, Public Speaker.

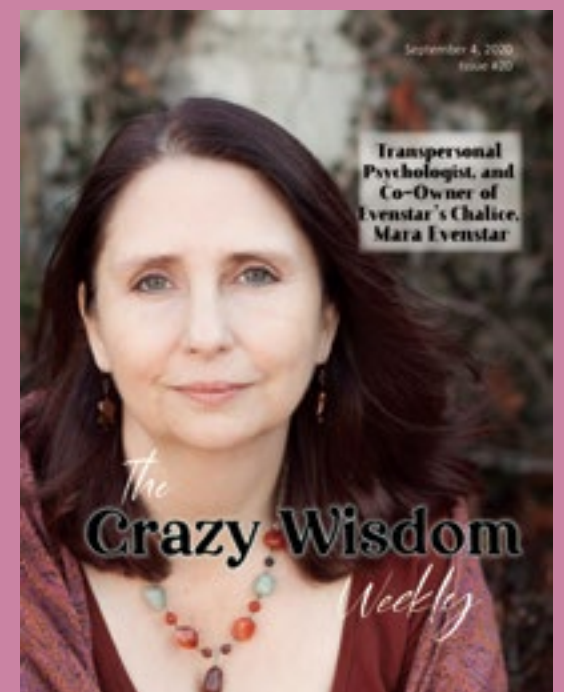
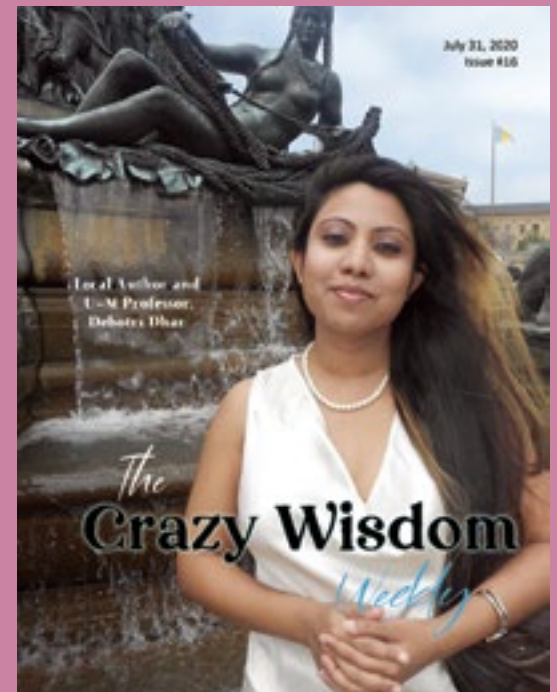
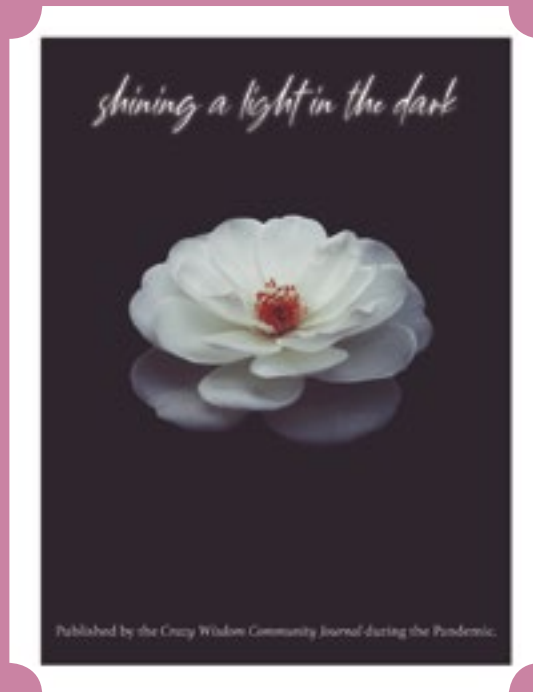
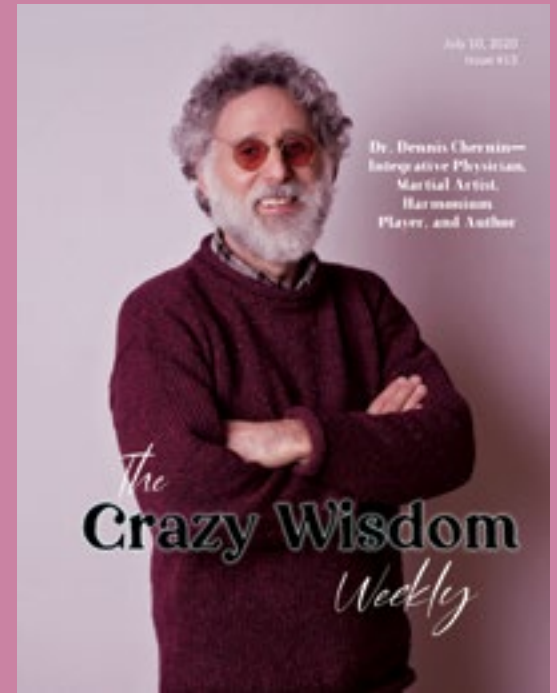
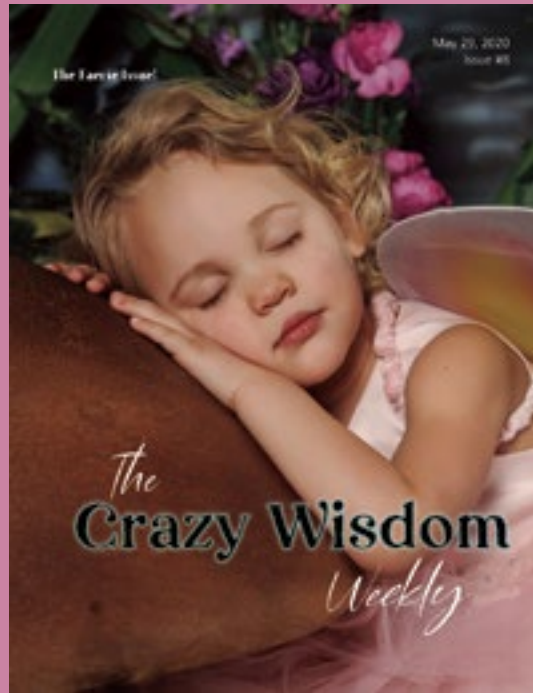
Wasantha Young is a Tai Chi Master and professional Mosaic Artist. Wasantha teaches self-care practices as they relate to the human emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. She has taught at such places as Omega Institute, Institute for Transpersonal Psychology, and the National Qigong Association.



Artwork by Ani Daher

If you haven't been reading **The Crazy Wisdom Weekly**, you've been missing out!

Born during the pandemic, The Crazy Wisdom Weekly seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. Have the e-zine delivered directly to your inbox by visiting crazywisdomjournal.com/crazy-wisdom-weekly and click on "Sign Up Now."



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