



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication  
VOL. XV, NO. 03, March 2019



## **I Love You** *By Vicki Davinich*

"I Love You," can be said in different ways. Because I grew up in post WWII fifties, we heard my dad call Dr. Spock a jerk—all that touchy, feely crap undermined my dad's belief that a good kick-in-the-ass solved everyone's problem and was the longest therapy anyone ever needed. My dad, suffering through undiagnosed PTSD after WWII, lectured that life was serious business and we would end up injured or dead like men in fox holes who let down their guard. My mother did not back up my father's approach and wanted to share love she felt was missing from her mother, whom she described as whiney and emotional, but Mom never felt comfortable saying "I love you."

We didn't hear other parents saying "I love you." In fact, we heard neighbors yelling at their kids, or kids screaming as they were hit. I was in the 66% bulge of the bell-shaped curve of families with middle-class homes, clean clothes, enough food, and whose moms didn't work outside the home because the fathers could support them. We felt love as our parents led scout troops, and moms brought cookies to church coffee hours, and became school room mothers to spend more time with us. I felt super-proud every time the teacher welcomed "Mrs. Davinich" into my classroom.

In 1958, our town had a polio outbreak and I thought my mom jumped into action as part of her room-mothering obligations. She joined the nurse squad that vaccinated everyone in the community. The girl who died had been at the same birthday sleepover that my sister and I attended. We had all swum in the town creek before dinner, presents, and cake. Within 24 hours, the creek was closed forever to swimming, and the health dept. set up vaccination clinics using the new polio vaccine. Mom, wearing her WWII nursing uniform, joined the makeshift clinic at my elementary school. I could not have felt prouder and wanted to scream out, "That's my MOTHER." I never realized her involvement calmed her fear by making sure her kids didn't miss the vaccination for any reason. This was love at its best, we felt it, she displayed it, and no one heard an "I love you" as the needle went into their arms.

Stressors, personal and global shredded the Norman Rockwell happy family. As teenagers, my sibs and I tested all limits: my sister tried cigarettes; my brother played on the train tressel; another sister discovered tight yellow bell-bottoms and tissuey blouses that tied at the midriff. I avoided home by skipping the afternoon school bus and walking around town, or driving around with band nerds after football games. And

on schedule every morning Mom bid us "Behave!" as we left for school.

Even though we believed Mom was a lightweight, she knew what "behave" meant. As an Army nurse in Australia she made sure she wasn't one of those women sent back to the States after too much drinking with enlisted soldiers, or because they were pregnant.

I grew up knowing the significance of "behave" as code for "I love you," but it wasn't until I had my baby that I learned to say, "I love you." My older sister Dorothy, a LaLeche advocate during her infants' years, learned that breast-feeding built a child's immune system. She decided that loving words built confident children. Dorothy regularly told my baby "I love you." Every time she buckled my son into his car seat, she'd stare into his eyes and say, "I love you." He'd fill with delight and just about pop out of his seat. Witnessing this bonding encouraged me to say, "I love you's" with conviction."

Slowly, Mom's vision deteriorated and her falls increased. My husband, son, step-daughter and I ended every visit to her with kisses, hugs, and "I love you." Her response was always "Love you too," or "mm hmm." If we lingered, she would command, "Behave!" – our cue that it was OK to leave.

During her last summer, Mom's vision worsened and her night dreams flowed into our daytime visits. When we stopped on the shoulder outside the yak farm on Currie and 7 mile in Salem township, Mom announced how yaks were hatched from little blue eggs. On subsequent visits, we heard how amazed she was that such huge animals could survive because their mouths were so tiny, hidden by fur, unable to take in food easily. During one Sunday's stop outside the yak farm, Mom announced that yaks were really half man/half animal. I heard my husband inhale, then slowly exhale as he leaned over the steering wheel in simple resignation. These visits always ended with my husband and I telling her, "I love you," and with her "mm hmm," then "Behave!"

Finally, Mom's stroke removed her ability to talk or move. Family and friends helped hospice staff change her clothing and Depends, hold her hand, stroke her forehead, sponge-moisten her lips, stare into her eyes hoping for a response. We told old stories, brought our pets to lay next to her, and told her how much we loved her. Everyone encouraged her to join brothers Dave and Bob amassing the welcoming committee on the distant shore. After five days, she died. A Danny DeVito-sized caretaker carefully folded her into a shroud and welcomed us to accompany her down the elevator to the waiting van. As she drove away in her last car ride, I bid farewell with the parting words that had always meant love, "Mom, behave!"

**Ministerial Miscellany**  
By Rev. Annie Kopko

Here we are, still gripped in the cold, but Spring is actually closer than you think! The redwing blackbirds are at my birdfeeder right along with the blue jays and cardinals! It seems (along with my own record keeping) that they are 10 days early!

Winter is always a great teaching for me. I get a chance to see just how much I really do complain about the weather, and I find so many who complain with me (as if it would help somehow). But what would happen if I was aware as I complain and was able to stop. I would be happier, I think. Others around me could be happier. Imagine that! Let's try it! Be aware, Be happy with what is! It sounds so simple, but I never said it was easy.

There are so many good things about winter that are so easy to overlook: the days are getting longer, there are no mosquitoes(!), it strengthens our bodies to be out in the weather, we appreciate the sun so much more, and the contrast of cold and warm is delicious, really!

Speaking of delicious, there are some great events coming up this month at Interfaith, besides the first day of spring. As always, for more details, check our website at [interfaith-spirit.org](http://interfaith-spirit.org). Delyth always posts events on the bulletin board by the kitchen.

What you see here is just the highlights, and will not include all the weekly and monthly events, meditations, or ongoing classes.

Sunday, March 3rd, our speaker is Ali Hussain, Ph.D. in Islamic studies from the University of Michigan. On Tuesday March 5th, he begins a 4 week class, Introduction to Sufism. March 5th –March 26th.

Saturday, March 9th, 8PM, Café 704 will feature Harmony Bones, a group of 6 musicians. Their music will be celebrating the life of Hosain Mosavat and his poetry.

Thursday, March 14th, 7PM, Singing for comfort. Led by Layla Ananda, we sing simple uplifting songs that open our hearts and release our bodies.

Tuesday, March 5th, Death Café, 6:30 to 8:30PM. Come early for potluck (which gathers every Tuesday). We meet and discuss any aspect of death.

Sunday, March 31st, ANNUAL MEETING, 1-3PM. If you come to nothing else, come to this. Here we share our ideas and create the community we desire. We will be electing new board members. Lunch will be provided by donation.

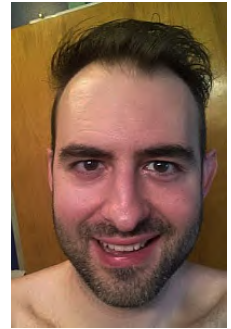
*May we always be aware of and grateful  
for all of our Blessings,  
Annie*

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*Community Member  
of the Month  
Eric Novakowski*

Exceptional

Eric



By Jaclyn Morrow

As we begin to feel the hint of spring's new life in the air, let's give thanks to Erik Nowakowski- a spirit that has brought a surge of new energy into the center. Erik's work ethic is ceaseless and inspiring. He is incredibly intelligent and has an ability to find the gaps where his skills can lend a hand.

You may have noticed Erik quietly sitting in the sound booth as he offers his keen ear and awareness to the Sunday service once a month. This is a comfortable place for him. Since his Recording Industry Degree at Middle TN State University, Erik has been the sound guy for many different venues and performers. Not only did he get his degree in TN but he met his future wife there. Erik met Jaclyn near the end of college. They got to know each other in a small group that met regularly to practice Kundalini Yoga. Kundalini, Kirtan and *the Conversations with God Series* by Neale Donald Walsch were instrumental in the beginning of their relationship. Shortly after his graduation, the two moved to Michigan and have been shoveling snow and enjoying Bliss Fest ever since.

Erik is an amazing father and hard working business owner that jumped into Interfaith with both feet. He grew up in South Lyon Michigan in an open minded Catholic Family.

"I first found out about ICSG in 2016. At the time we were attending the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor. This was a time of renewed passion for being part of a spiritual community which had been lacking since becoming disenchanted by the Catholic faith I was raised in.

After attending a couple services with my wife and two boys, we witnessed the openness, freedom and Love present in the ICSG community and we started attending regularly. I was truly inspired by (now retired) Senior Minister David Bell's messages and their resonance with the teachings of A Course in Miracles. I had a truly revelatory spiritual experience when I was 18 and the messages in ACIM were in harmony with the realizations presented to me during this.

*Continued on page 3*

### Volunteer Coordinator Corner

By Bob Hopkins

This space will be used to identify volunteer needs and appreciation as of February 20, 2019

We regularly need to add to our pool of people who help to set-up and clean-up for potlucks – Step up

We want responsible people to set up and tidy up the sanctuary before or after the service – Step up

We can always use treats for after Service – See Ted or just bring them in

We could use people at the Welcome table on the fourth and fifth Sunday of the month – See Bob

We need people to assist with transportation – See Donald Prescott-Hart, transportation coordinator

We need a people to help with the new Cub 704 designed to attract the young -- See Bob or Donald

We need candidates to fill the annual vacancies on the Board – See Delyth, Mary Alice or Brett

### APPRECIATION

**THANKS TO:** Donald Prevost-Hart who has agreed to take over as the Transportation Coordinator.

**THANKS TO:** Brett Koon for agreeing to join the Nominating Committee to fill board vacancies.

*Continued from page 2*

The greatest thing about ICSG is that all spiritual paths are welcome."

While we recognize the work Erik has done in the public eye like running sound, sharing poignant readings and meditations, and finding a new projector for the center, we also want to bring awareness to his work behind the scenes. In 2017, the need arose for new board members.

"I knew I could help, so extended an offer to the board chair, to fill a vacant seat. My commitment is to help the organization grow and to continue to be a loving presence in the greater spiritual community of SE Michigan."

Erik has worked tirelessly on the board as well as on the Co-Creation Team. He takes the work very seriously and is sincere in his goal to lift up the community and to create a loving space for all involved.

For more information on Erik's business check out his website theavpro.com, and find them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TheAVPro](https://www.facebook.com/TheAVPro). Not only can the AV Pro provide honest technology answers for your home and business, Erik also runs his own website and does writing on the side.

Thank you Erik for all you do for your community and your family!

### March Music

**3: Harmony Bones (March 9-CAFÉ 704)**

**10: Don Allen**

**17: Mike Fedel**

**24: Curtis Glatter**

**31: Norma Gentile 9 (Meditation Service)**

### March Talks

**3. Ali Hussain "Sufi Aesthetics: Finding Your Inner Divine Treasure"**

**10. Lou Weir "Finding your Authentic Nature—the Diamond Approach to Spiritual Inquiry"**

**17. Rev. Dawn Swartz "Honoring the Good in Christianity"**

**24. Rev. Delyth Balmer: Approaches to Answering "What is Self?"**

### March Birthday Babies Happy Birthday!

**1. Lance Clark**

**7. Janet Fry**

**21. Bonnie Dede**

**23. Tommie Parker**



## LEPRECHAUNS, THE HEART AND SOUL OF IRELAND

*By Peggy Lubahn*

The word "leprechaun" brings to mind Lucky Charms cereal, St. Patrick's Day, and a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. St. Patrick probably didn't approve of these pagan nature spirits, even though they have come to be associated with the saint's day. But leprechauns represent the beating heart of Ireland, and they are such beloved symbols of the Irish spirit that they also have their own holiday, on May 13.

Leprechauns are the oldest of the nature spirits, "older than the Earth itself," and very wise. They work with time expertly, and many of them are skilled at manipulating energy, mechanics, and electronics. They have a long tradition of making first-class shoes for fairies and other folk, and that's how they earn piles of coins and gems. And yes, they use rainbows to mark where they bury crocks full of treasure. A leprechaun weaves a series of clues into the fabric of the rainbow itself --- clues only he can decipher --- so no one else can dig up his hoard.

Leprechauns tend to enjoy the company of human children more than adults. They take great pleasure in helping to make wishes

come true (especially for kids), and will usually honor any wish that is made with good intentions.

For those who think leprechauns are just a charming myth, the first recorded sighting was in the 8th century. And to see a photo of a real mouse-skin shoe found in 1835, get a copy of Janet Bord's book, "Fairies, Real Encounters with Little People."

Masters of blarney, leprechauns are slick talkers who love a good practical joke. After centuries of dealing with greedy humans who are after their gold, they know how to distract us and vanish in the twinkling of an eye. But if you approach them with respect and an open heart, and ask them to share their secrets, they may choose to reveal a new world of wonders to you!



### ANNOUNCEMENT AND POSTING

The Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County will be looking for new leadership as both George Lambrides and Susan King will be retiring in September, 2019. The current model is a co-directorship, each a 5-7 hour a week appointment, but both appointments could be combined into a 10-15 hour a week position. We are looking for people who value multi-religious engagement, have a commitment to creating a local culture of understanding and inclu-

sion among religious identities, and can focus on taking this organization to the next level of growth and expansion. Additional information is available including a job description, an outline of duties and responsibilities, background information, and compensation. All applicants, including those looking to add some hours to their current responsibilities, will be considered. If interested, please contact Bryan Weinert (IRT Board Chair), 734-883-5720, [bryancweinert@gmail.com](mailto:bryancweinert@gmail.com).

# Youthful Spirits



*Love, Light, and Laughter  
Heide, Kellie, Tommy, Dawn,, and the Youthful Spirits*