



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

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## **When life gives you ice storms... Make iced tea!**

*By Heide Kaminski*

This winter, we were hit by an ice storm of the likes I haven't seen in 20 years. I can remember the last one clearly. Tommy was 4. In the front yard we had a pine tree with branches pointing up. But one morning, I heard Tommy exclaiming with excitement, "Mom! The tree is upside down!" The ice was weighing down all of the branches! We had a gas heater on our enclosed porch at the time. For three days, we turned to that for heat. We bundled up in the living room and left the door to the porch open. Our town looked as though a tornado had rampaged through it. We had no power for three days, two teen girls, a toddler, a mom, and dad. Somehow we made it through. I don't think any of us developed any emotional scars from that event. We played games and read to each other. We made iced tea!

Recently, when an event of a similar magnitude happened, it was just myself and Tommy at the house. This time, the advancement of technology enabled me to stay in touch with the outside world. I sat in my car a few times, charging my phone.

One of those nights, my neighbors and I stood outside, chatting. Like the time when we had a tornado warning while I lived in a trailer park. We had no shelter to get to so we decided we might as well stand outside and wait for doom, watching the incredible spectacle head on, because we were unable to avoid it anyhow. So we stood around, chatted, bonded, and watched the tornado fly right over us without touching down on our park. Take-away: we BONDED. We made iced tea of the situation!

In the recent storm, my neighbors and I compared the sounds in our subdivision to a war. Crackling branches sounded like gun fire, branches hitting the ground, a house, or a car,

sounded like explosions. We watched a bright red light, followed by a boom, in the sky and knew a transformer across town just blew up. And then, our transformer across the street went up in flames. My neighbor called 9-1-1, but when the five fire trucks arrived, it was too late. The fire was ended by an explosion resulting in the entire neighborhood going dark. But again, we were BONDING. We made iced tea.

Shortly after the transformer blow-up, my giant oak tree in the front yard dropped one large portion of its branches onto my driveway and another portion onto my roof. The tree's trunk stood proud and bare. The next morning, I realized that the trunk had wormholes. About 10 years prior, the tree had been hit by lightning. The flash had gone straight from the top to the bottom, and blasted a portion of the bark off. That portion was the size of my body! I thought the tree had died, but it blossomed again in the following spring. I frequently thanked the tree for saving my house. Apparently, the tree was dying after all, slowly, from the inside bottom up... Again, the tree protected me. It made sure that the branches did not cause irreparable damages to my house. The tree made iced tea!



This is the remainder of my 80-year old oak.

In our new tradition of making iced tea, we planted a little smoking tree, which is supposed to grow about 5 feet tall. It is surrounded by sweet potato vines which will eventually decorate the entire old trunk.

## Ministerial Miscellany

By Rev. Annie Kopko

I am writing this month about freedom, well ahead of the 4th of July holiday, so that we have a chance to really think about this idea. How much do we want freedom? What is it that we are willing to give up in order to feel free? The truth is, we are naturally free, but we daily heap onto ourselves all the expectations that the ego part of ourselves thinks we ought to be and do in order to be "successful" and we make ourselves into the "prisoners of production". Let's give up some of our attachments to this world and remember that our true expressions of our Spiritual Self is our choice to freely be our joy and our LOVE. We really are free to be happy or not.

What I notice with the recent deaths among the members of our community: (Esther in April, Ray in May, and Rose in June) is that I miss their smiles, and their energy, and their enthusiasm in just being alive. Just to know that we are going to die forces us to make more careful choices about our lives, choices about the thoughts that go through our minds and words that come out of our mouths. Let's remember to be grateful for all of our freedoms.

At Interfaith we have many weekly and monthly classes and study groups. Check out our events and lots of useful information on our website at [interfaithspirit.org](http://interfaithspirit.org).

Join the last of this series of the Community Sing with Matt Watroba on Wednesday, June 28th at 7:00-8:15 p.m. There will be joyful folk singing (always your old favorites) led by Matt, who is an extraordinary musician from Detroit. Donations are welcomed and encouraged!

Our next Cafe 704 is Saturday, July 8th. Scott McWhinney has announced this will be a fundraiser for the Interfaith Center. He and his band "PATH" and also Lori Fithian and Jean Chorazyczewski leading a "Folk Song Sing Along" will perform from 7:00-9:30 p.m. All funds raised will go to Interfaith. Tickets are \$10.00 per person.

The next Drum and Dance Jam with Curtis Glatter is **Saturday, August 5th** at 7:30-9:00 p.m. Bring your drum or use one of ours. We appreciate a \$5.00 donation for this event.

Sending blessings of freedom to All,

*Annie*



<b>June 1</b>	<b>Staci Haarer</b>
<b>June 3</b>	<b>Fred Sauer</b>
<b>June 4</b>	<b>Marlena Studer</b>
<b>June 4</b>	<b>Bob Songer</b>
<b>June 5</b>	<b>Melanie Fuscaldo</b>
<b>June 6</b>	<b>Dawn Swartz</b>
<b>June 7</b>	<b>Denise Carbonell</b>
<b>June 8</b>	<b>Ted Poprafsky</b>
<b>June 10</b>	<b>Laurie Knerr</b>
<b>June 10</b>	<b>Paul Jurgensen</b>
<b>June 13</b>	<b>Lu Evergreen</b>
<b>June 23</b>	<b>Brece Clark</b>
<b>June 24</b>	<b>Jean Balent</b>
<b>June 24</b>	<b>Layla Anada</b>
<b>June 24</b>	<b>Nooshin Sobhani</b>
<b>June 24</b>	<b>Annie Kopko</b>
<b>June 27</b>	<b>Sharon Hayward</b>
<b>June 27</b>	<b>Heide Kaminski</b>





## Volunteer Corner

Submitted by Annemarie Howse

Being a member of Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth has been one of my greatest joys since moving to Ann Arbor in 2019. It is such an important part of my life that I have gradually taken on more volunteer positions, ultimately agreeing to be the Volunteer Coordinator in January 2023. With this new position I recognize that I can't do it all (although time and energy permitting I probably would) and so I am reaching out to you, to assist in one or more of the following ways:

- \* **Social Hour and Cafe 704**-Provide snacks. Can be home made or store bought (cakes, cookies, chips, nuts). Please keep in mind that **Interfaith is a peanut free facility**.
- \* **Monthly potlucks**-arrive at 10:00 am to assist by letting folks know where to put their items, cut desserts, make sure there is cream for coffee, etc. We also need a few folks to stay until the end and make sure all food items are cared for, dishes are placed in the dishwasher, trash is emptied, etc.
- \* **Flowers for the Sanctuary**-share your garden with us or make a trip to Trader Joe's (like I do). It would be nice to know ahead of time if you plan to bring flowers but if you are inspired on Sunday morning to cut a few blossoms from your own garden, they will be greatly appreciated (we can never have too many flowers).
- \* **Provide a reading or lead a meditation** during one of our Sunday services. The only limitation/restriction is to please keep your portion to the 3-5 minutes allocated so the service can end on time.
- \* **Bulletin board**-Janet S. and Laurie K. did an excellent job of setting up the bulletin board. We are looking for someone(s) to keep it updated with new, inspiring, fresh material.
- \* Volunteer to be a stand-by for **child care/nursery** duty during the service (requires an interview and background check).

Most positions are a one time commitment. If you enjoy it, you can volunteer again.

Please let me know if you would consider assisting in one of these ways. If you are new to Interfaith, it is the perfect opportunity to get to know folks. We can meet during social hour to discuss the details. You may also call, text, or email me. If you call, please leave a message as I screen my calls and block suspected spam callers.

Annemarie 818-667-2815  
[ahowse21@gmail.com](mailto:ahowse21@gmail.com)

## New Authors to add to you favorite's list

Tommy Kaminski

Type into Amazon book search bar:

ISBN 9798835733286



Everyone thinks having superpowers would be great. Who wouldn't want to fly above the clouds? Or bend steel like rubber? Or sneak into movies with the power of invisibility except you have to be naked because your clothes aren't affected by it?

Bob Hopkins

Type into Amazon books search bar:

ISBN-13 : 979-8397189477

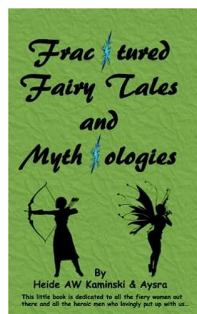


My latest creation is designed to be a sequel to the Charles Dickens classic: A Christmas Carol. The book features the further adventures of Ebenezer Scrooge and Bob Cratchit. This sequel is interspersed with stories of the women I have known and loved -- equal parts of the sequel and the adventures.

Heide Kaminski

Type into Amazon books search bar:

Heide Kaminski



This little book is dedicated to all the fiery women out there and the heroic men who lovingly put up with us.

*The New York Times*

**BESTSELLER**  
**Here we come**

# Happy Father's Day

## **Silent, Strong Dad** By Karen K. Boyer

He never looks for praises.  
He's never one to boast.  
He just goes on quietly working  
For those he loves the most.

His dreams are seldom spoken.  
His wants are very few,  
And most of the time his worries  
Will go unspoken, too.

He's there...a firm foundation  
Through all our storms of life,  
A sturdy hand to hold onto  
In times of stress and strife.

A true friend we can turn to  
When times are good or bad.  
One of our greatest blessings,  
The man that we call Dad.

## ----- **Father** by Jennifer S. Williams

When I scratched my knee,  
Or if I bumped my head,  
When I was afraid of the dark,  
Or that thing under my bed,  
When I cried in the night,  
Or even in the day,  
You were there for me  
To make it all okay.

You tickled my feet  
And laughed at all my jokes.  
You taught me to believe  
In having high hopes.

You are my father.  
You did what you had to do,  
But more than a father  
You are my friend, too.

You made everything good  
That was once bad.  
I just want you to know

I love you, Dad.

## **Special Hero** By Christina M. Kerschen

When I was a baby,  
you would hold me in your arms.  
I felt the love and tenderness,  
keeping me safe from harm.

I would look up into your eyes,  
and all the love I would see.  
How did I get so lucky?  
You were the dad chosen for me.

There is something special  
about a father's love.  
Seems it was sent to me  
from someplace up above.

Our love is everlasting.  
I just wanted you to know  
that you're my special hero,  
and I wanted to tell you so.

## ----- **My Dad** by Vicky Frye

If I could write a story,  
It would be the greatest ever told.  
I'd write about my daddy,  
For he had a heart of gold.  
My dad, he was no hero  
Known around this world.  
He was everything to me,  
For I was his baby girl.

I'd write about the lessons.  
He taught me right from wrong.  
He instilled in me the values  
That one day I'd be strong.  
He taught me to face my fears,  
Take each day as it comes,  
For there are things that we can't change.  
He would say what's done is done.

He would say hold your head up high,  
Carry yourself with pride.  
Thanks to him, I am somebody,  
I will never run and hide.  
If I could write a story,  
It would be the greatest ever told.  
I'd write about my daddy,  
For he had a heart of gold.

## **Message from the Caring Committee**

"Any interested Interfaith member can serve on the Caring Committee or volunteer services. A special invitation and welcome is extended to any man in the ICSG community who might join and represent masculine caring insights on the Caring Committee. Contact any member of the Committee to express your interest, or fill out the form in the basket on the Welcome Table and hand it to any Committee member!"

## **Mark your calendars!**

### **CAFE 704 CONCERT SERIES**

Saturdays, 7 p.m.—9 p.m.  
In person and on Zoom

**June 10:** David Mosher

**July 8:** Path and Friends

**August 12:** Kozora Quartett

**September 9:** Nutshell

**Oct.14:** Vornhagen and Kaufman

**November 11:** Jean Wilson and Friends

**December 9:** Emily Slomovits and  
Billy King

**Interested in performing at Cafe 704?**  
Send an inquiry to [cafe704@gmail.com](mailto:cafe704@gmail.com)

### **PEACE GENERATOR**

7—9 pm  
Every 3rd Friday

### **Leadership Team Meeting 2nd Sunday**

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
Bob Hopkins (734) 985-5572

### **Board of Trustees Meeting 4th Sunday**

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
Marice Clark & Claire Groshans,  
Co-Chairs  
[board@interfaithspirit.org](mailto:board@interfaithspirit.org)

### **Caring Committee Meeting** **1st Thursday**

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. on zoom Marilyn Alf,  
Chair [sdtoaa@gmail.com](mailto:sdtoaa@gmail.com)

### **Singing for Comfort**

with Layla Ananda  
7-8:30 pm  
every 2nd Thursday

## THE SUFI WAY

*By Bob Hopkins*

### THE SUFI WAY ONWARD

As this is being written, Kamau Ayubbi may well be on his way back to the United States from his extended stay in Senegal. He was able to celebrate the bulk of the month of Ramadan with all of his family in a country where the majority of the population identifies as Muslim. By the time this is read, the Tuesday evening class that is offered through the Center and is available on Zoom should have resumed. I would encourage anyone to join the group on any week of your choice. It is not necessary to make a reservation and (most importantly) there is continuity among the sessions, but there is no established sequence or lesson plan that Kamau sets forth beforehand. Each class stands on its own and creates a mystical type experience in every instance. The peace and inspiration that emanates each is notable and those who attend with some frequency keep coming back for the feeling tranquility and inner guidance each session inspires.

I would note that if there were any way to prepare for the experience, I would strongly advocate you speak to any of us who have attended with any regularity of the power of Zhikr. Like many of the Arabic words that are translated for spelling into English, its spelling does not seem to match the pronunciation of the word. A more appropriate phonetic spelling of the word is well represented by the word 'vicar'. The experience of it has been powerful for each of us. Kamau has given us the pronunciation and the meaning of various Arabic phrases, many of which are drawn from the 99 names for Allah and combined with other Arab words to represent a statement of relationship. To go on further is not to do the practice justice. It is far better experienced than described. I hope you will take up the challenge to see for yourself.

Dear ICSG family and friends,

This submission is for Ray Fix and for all who knew and loved him. He was a huge Religious Science devotee and student and mentor. Today's prayer, like all the prayers I write and say and know in my heart, are the prayers that pulse through the Whole Universe. I keep my mind on this inner and **highest** pulse of Love at all times, so that our evolution truly unfolds on the wings of our Consciousness. May my words here fill your mind and heart with Truthful Energy for your day and your weeks ahead that are unfolding and revealing the following:

*I am sitting, standing, walking, dancing in the Life Force of God, right here and right now. There is no place that I can or will go that is not already a living and breathing activity of Spirit. I feel this presence deep within me and I choose to honor my Life as Infinite Spirit. I bring my Gift wherever I go with this loving vision and the lightness of my Joy. I bring an equanimity to all things because I am tooled with God's unconditional Love.*

*I flow effortlessly as I surrender to the serendipitous Generosity of Spirit. I am truly blessed and supported in all that I do and in all that I dream about doing, for the creative God Power is responding to me by moving through me.*

*With gratitude filling my body, heart, mind and soul, I release these words into the Law of Mind and as I let them go, I keep my arms wide open to receive the equivalent and more. Yeah!! Glorious world, I am an integral component of evolving Life forward into more and more good every day, every moment.*

*I loudly declare, "And so it is!!" Amen!*

Janet Somalinog





**INTERFAITH  
CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH  
BENEFIT CONCERT**

**Evening of Musical Fun!**

**Saturday July 8<sup>th</sup> 2023  
7 - 9:30 PM**



Jean Chorzyczewski and Lori Fithian, song leaders

**FOLK SONG JAM  
ALONG  
8:15 PM**

Lori Fithian and Jean Chorzyczewski lead an interactive sing and jam along set of fun summer folk songs. Everyone is encouraged to sing, play & dance with the sounds & good vibrations! Bring your voices, drums & folky instruments. Lyrics and chords will be projected on a screen for everyone to see and join in!



**PATH  
7:00 PM**

Ann Arbor's favorite folk/soul band PATH. Songwriter and guitarist Chris Hedly joins Tim Prosser on mandolin and Scott McWhinney on harmonicas for sweet melodies, vibrant vocal harmonies, handcrafted rhythms and upbeat musical fun.

All Proceeds From This Fundraiser Will  
Go To The Interfaith Center

**\$10 / PERSON  
SUGGESTED DONATION**

Interfaith Center  
For Spiritual Growth  
704 Airport Boulevard  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**SCOTT MCWHINNEY  
(734) 223-3025  
scottmcw@umich.edu**

# A CONVERSATION WITH THE DEVA OF THE MACKINAW BRIDGE

By Peggy River Singer

The Mackinaw Bridge opened on November 1, 1957; and my parents couldn't wait to try it out for another camping trip Up North! I was only four years old, but I remember the excitement of that first crossing vividly, the glorious beauty of a sunny day and the song of the car's tires on the roadbed. I've taken that bridge many times since then, and it never fails to work its magic. July is the perfect month to connect with this Michigan icon!

**Bridge:** *Well, here we are at last! I perceive in you a very long thread of connection, it is most pleasing.*

**Peggy:** Thank you, what a pleasure to be able to speak to you! How shall I address you?

**Bridge:** *"Bridge" will be fine, thank you.*

**Peggy:** It takes many years of planning, and more years of construction, to create a bridge of your size. At what point did you, as a Deva, come onto the scene?

**Bridge:** *Excellent question. My awareness took shape during the planning stages, as I wished to be involved from the beginning, you see. Creator thought that would be the most beneficial approach, since my physical structure is expected to last for a very long time. You may visualize it as me looking over the shoulders of those working on the design and details. As the project moved along toward completion and became more "real", so did I develop the abilities to care for it; so the physical structure and I are very nearly the same thing. I do retain a separate level of awareness that allows me to function in, and connect with, the "real world"; and of course my connection with Creator remains pure.*

**Peggy:** Did you play any part in the selections of materials, the hiring of personnel, or other details?

**Bridge:** *I did influence the selection of the designers, Creator allowed me this. At other times I have "nudged" a few decisions here and there. Other than that, I am not routinely involved in such.*

**Peggy:** I've seen videos of people climbing the towers and cables for maintenance, especially painting. Do you offer them any protection as they do their work?

**Bridge:** *I shall say, I am expected by Creator to avoid interfering with individual life path decisions.*

**Peggy:** Are you able, or willing, to call attention to dangerous developments such as cracks or steel failures?

**Bridge:** *I shall repeat my previous comment.*

**Peggy:** I understand. Do you control or influence the land under the ends of the bridge, and the approaches to the bridge?

**Bridge:** *I have a cooperative arrangement with those who specialize in those areas.*

**Peggy:** The towers extend more than 200 feet below the bridge, and are rooted in bedrock. Will you speak about your relationship with the bones of the earth which allow the bridge to be stable and safe?

**Bridge:** *This is a question I have been waiting a long time to answer. Another wishes to speak.*

**Another voice:** *Here am I, the rocks of whom you speak. Thank you for granting me this means of expression. Thank you for extending proper respect to my role. I agreed to allow the drilling and construction involving*

*massive changes to my physical forms, at the request of Creator. My role in the success of the bridge is not apparent to those who see only the above-level structures; but some do think about the "big picture" as you say, and it pleases me to entertain their interest.*

**Peggy:** I'm so glad you have spoken up! Our part of the country does experience earth movements occasionally. Do you allow those to happen, or do you take some action to protect the integrity of the columns and other structures you support?

**Rock:** *I am instructed by Creator to allow the movements as they occur.*

**Peggy:** Is there anything else you'd like to share?

**Rock:** *I am content.*

**Peggy:** Thank you. Bridge, I've never walked across on Labor Day, but I have friends who love to make the trip every year. How do you feel about this tradition?

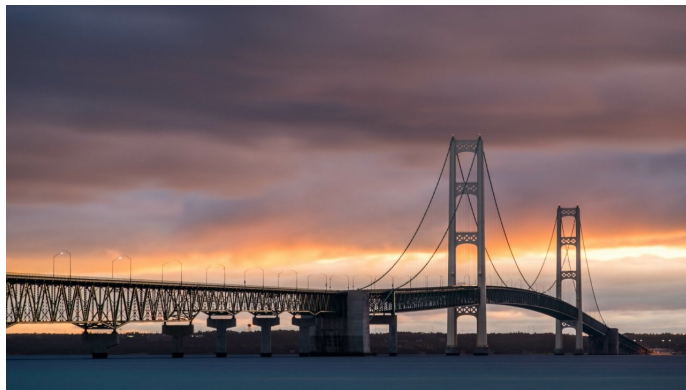
**Bridge:** *Whoosh! That is how much I look forward to the walking! Only at this time can a large number of humans fully experience my structure, my BEING, and connect with my spirit if they are so inclined. They can feel the rumbling of the vehicles passing, feel how the winds cause me to sway gently; they can look down and see the waters sparkling so far below. Some of them can hear my voice, the singing of the cables as they vibrate in the wind. It is a very special time.*

**Peggy:** That sounds lovely! What else would you like to say to those who will read these words?

**Bridge:** *Find your bridge, that which connects you with something you treasure. The bridge is part of the journey, so honor it equally. I am done.*

## AUTHOR BIO

Peggy River Singer is a Lightworker, all-beings communicator, faerie ally, Reiki practitioner, and lifelong writer who combines her gifts to help create harmonious relationships among all who share the Earth. Connect by email at [newbluecanoe@aol.com](mailto:newbluecanoe@aol.com). Previous columns are posted on [angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com](http://angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com).





## Highlights from the Board of Trustees Retreat

By Claire Groshans

On Friday evening, May 21<sup>st</sup>, and all day on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Interfaith Board of Trustees gathered for a dynamic and meaningful retreat. The Bell's were gracious enough to offer their home as the venue for the retreat. It was such a lovely space to gather.

The retreat began by discussing that the end result of the gathering would be to create a strong and unified Board – a team that can work in concert with each other and Spirit during the next year to look at all areas of the Center.

As a fun way to review aspects important to the Center, the Board used several words beginning with the letter “C” as discussion launching pads. Those words were: Curiosity/ Comfort/ Clear Vision/ Centering the Center/ Communication / Contributions/ Care/ Companionship/ Challenges/ Change/ Connecting/ Conversations/ Celebrations/ and Community.

For fun team building, the Board along with Delyth Balmer and Annie Kopko, participated in a relational psychology virtual walk, art (*in the form of cartography*) as a method of reflection, and lots of time for shared discussions of our visions for the Center. Brett Koon offered meditations each day that powerfully guided focus and intent.

Here are examples of some questions that were asked and answered during the retreat:

*What has led to our Center's successes (last year, last 4+ years)? What is our Center known for that can help us accomplish our mission? What are the good things that people are saying about our Center? What should we do that we are not doing today to help us accomplish our mission?*

The Board was graced with presentations by Layla Ananda and Delyth Balmer. Their discussion topics included items like Board Rules, The Carver Model, By-Laws, Documents, and Relationships.

I am very grateful for the bright spirit of hope that was shared at the meeting and for the enthusiasm of this Board to do the work (*teamwork*) of serving you on the Board of Trustees.

