



Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

VOL. XIX, NO. 05 May 2023



Main Stage music provided by C.A.R.Ma
Peter Madcat Ruth, John Churchville,
Brennan Andes & Dan Ripke

THE 25th ANNIVERSARY SILVER BALL



April 29, 2023



Bob Hopkins



Dinner music for outside diners
provided by Mary, Eric, and Lori
Fithian



Sound Technician: Craig Brann



Diners in Social Hall



Tent for outside diners



Dancing to the music of C.A.R.Ma



Lyriel Claire, Pat Root, Margie
Hough, Valerie Charon, Erik
Nowakowski, and Craig Harvey,
dine in the tent



Randall Counts
makes sure
there is heat
inside the tent

Ministerial Miscellany

By Rev. Annie Kopko

Sometimes I Wonder

As the end of every month approaches and the deadline for Ministerial Miscellany, I am looking around and listening for ideas that I care about and ones that move me. I heard the word WONDER on NPR today. I love that word, and I love how I feel when I experience wonder: an unexpected thrill of the awareness of something new and different.

Should we worry that our life of habits and our work stifles wonder? It can, but wonder, like many things, is a child of our thoughts; and part of that child that is still within every adult eagerly awaiting release and expression. The appearance of wonder in our experience is itself a habit that can be cultivated. I think it takes a conscious decision to see our world with eyes of wonder, because the world has decided that we must know about all the things that are going wrong. A life of wonder is outside that box.

I suggest: be aware of choosing to do something different, no matter how little, every day. Listen to and watch as Nature changes every day. Learn something new. Anything. It is so easy when we have inexpensive or free apps on our phones for identifying trees and weeds and flowers and birds. WOW. That is Wonder.

We can wonder what there is to do at Interfaith. Lots! Check the website: interfaithspirit.org. Layla keeps us up to date on all the workshops, classes and special events. Every Sunday you will find an insert in the bulletin with all of this information as well.

Coming up for Cafe 704, Sat. May 13th at 7PM will be Spirit Singing Band, especially wonderful if you like to sing along to the simple songs they teach us.

On May 24th at 7PM Matt Watroba will lead a community sing. He brings songbooks with 1200 songs. Talk about wonder! I wonder if I can sing that one? It's worth a try, and it is worth the good mood we achieve together. The event is free but donations are encouraged and appreciated.

On the 1st Saturday is our Drum and Dance Jam, May 6, June 3 and Aug 5 at 7:30 pm, in person, led by drummer Curtis Glatter.

I look forward with wonder to seeing you at Interfaith.

Blessings, **Annie**



Our May Birthday

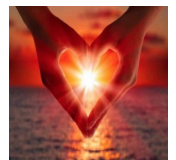
Celebrants are:

May 1 Kellie Love
May 8 Lindsay Passmore
May 10 Cayla Tchalo
May 15 Craig Brann
May 15 Rob Michalowski
May 15 Judith Sauer
May 16 Joy Williams
May18 JT Ramelis
May 19 Dave Bell
May 21 Marilyn Alf
May 24 Phill Carbonell
May 24 Rose Wisniewski
May 25 Iddie Patterson
May 26 Karen Jones
May 25 Tommy Kaminski

Spiritual Support Team (SST)

We invite you to give us a call or send an email for *any reason*...just to casually let us know how you are or to have a supportive listening ear to help you through these challenging times. Note: These are not meant to be formal counseling sessions. We are able to offer spiritual support and friendship.

Delyth Balmer
delyth.balmer@interfaithspirit.org
734-657-5384
Dave Bell dave@interfaithspirit.org
734-646-8475
Lyriel Claire lyriel.claire@gmail.com
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Janet Somalinog jsomalinog@gmail.com
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VOLUNTEER CORNER

Brought to you by: Annemarie Howse

May Volunteer Corner
An Invitation!

Submitted by Annemarie Howse, volunteer coordinator

If you choose Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth as a place to get inspired and to grow spiritually then we say, "welcome, we are glad you are here." If you want to be a part of the team that makes it happen, then we invite you to participate in one of our volunteer opportunities. It can be a one-time commitment or an ongoing volunteer opportunity. Volunteering is a great way to get to know others on a more personal level. There are many ways you can be involved and most are for a one time commitment (as seldom or as often as you wish). Here are some of the opportunities offered at this time:

- * provide a reading or lead a meditation for the Sunday service
- * bring a snack for after service social hour or Cafe 704
- * bring flowers for the Sunday service
- * write an article for the newsletter (prose, poetry, quotes)
- * help with small repairs at the center
- * assist Delyth with organizing, and clearing on Tuesday or Thursday
- * help to organize and update our bulletin board
- * serve on one of our committees
- * provide transportation to someone needing a ride to the center, doctor appointment, airport, etc.
- * volunteer to be a stand-by for nursery duty - or should I say, nursery PLAYTIME

For information on these and other volunteer opportunities please contact Annemarie Howse ahowse@gmail.com or 818-667-2815. Please leave a message if I do not answer as I receive an abundance of spam calls daily. Unknown numbers with no message may get blocked.

Inspirer Revisited

Have you read a great article in the Interfaith Inspirer and wish you could read it again? Chances are others feel the same. All newsletters are posted on our website Interfaith Inspirer Newsletter

<https://interfaithspirit.org/interfaith-inspirer-newsletter/>

Find the article, let Heide know where it is (i.e. Community Member of the Month, May 2014) and she will reprint it. This should be easy for those that participated in our year in review segment on Sundays, leading up to our 25 th Anniversary Silver Ball. When sending an article to Heide for the newsletter please put "submission" in the subject line so it is brought to her attention.

Feel free to also send poetry, spiritual quotes, tidbits, Interfaith event photos, etc.!

Caring Committee Tally

First Quarter Report

respectfully submitted by Annemarie Howse

The mission of the Caring Committee is to assist individuals or families primarily within the community of the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, and selectively support outreach groups or people that aren't part of our Interfaith Community but we know about them through our members and affiliations.

Since the Caring Committee may not always be able to provide the services that are requested, we may reach out to the Interfaith Community for help. For example: if someone is moving or needs a ride, we might make an announcement or send an email with their request. We would then ask that you contact a member of the Caring Committee to let them know you are able to help.

During the first quarter of 2023 (January-March) the Caring Committee provided the following services:

Transportation-3

Cards & flowers sent on behalf of the committee-4

Cards sent by individual members-22

Texts/emails-6

Phone calls-97

Home or hospital visits-2

Services such as providing a meal, helping someone move or light home repairs-6

Reiki (provided remotely)-10

These services were provided to 20 different individuals or families in our Interfaith Community.

Financial Report-Our balance on March 29, 2023 was \$2,359.92. During the first quarter, \$398.00 was donated to the Caring Committee by members of ISCG. We thank you for your generosity and are grateful for our ability to be of service.

Interfaith

Papparazza

calling you!

COMMUNITY MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Beneficient Bob

In September 2022 Bob said to me “I have an idea...just think Silver Ball...we can talk about it more at the Leadership Team Meeting.” And soon the idea led to the formation of a planning committee, meetings, sub committees, meetings, food tastings, more meetings, lots of details, and finally...on April 29, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. the guests began arriving for a most spectacular “Silver Ball” in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth.

Bob most generously, from the start, said it was his wish to fund most of the party expenses, including hiring a band and paying for the food. He said, “I want this to be a fundraiser for the Center, so that the income from ticket sales goes directly to the Center. This is my wish, to have a really great party, cover the costs, and make this a memorable 25th year celebration.

We all know how much Bob loves to dance, how much he loves Peter Madcat Ruth and good dance music. Well it certainly was a night to remember, and I think we carried off a pretty remarkable celebration, that will be difficult to “top” thanks to Bob’s support.

We are so grateful to you Bob. We appreciate the fact that you CARE about the Interfaith Center and have from the beginning of our formation. You have served and continue to serve in so many capacities including former member of the Board of Trustees, Volunteer Coordinator, Current Chair of the Leadership Team, regular attendee and commentator at Sunday Services and Café 704 among other events. Regular contributor to the Interfaith Inspirer Newsletter. Bob is a firm believer in the concept of tithing, and is a most generous contributor of his time, talent and treasure.

Thank you BOB HOPKINS. We love and appreciate you.

Rev. Delyth Balmer

Photos submitted by Lyriel Claire: Congregants dancing in the Sunday, April 23 service to the music of the Lotta Love Band. Even Marilyn in her wheelchair participated in twirling around!



Mark your calendars!

CAFE 704 CONCERT SERIES

Saturdays, 7 p.m.—9 p.m.

In person and on Zoom

May 13: Spirit Singing Band

June 10: David Mosher

July 8: Path

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

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

Caring Committee Meeting

1st Thursday

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. on zoom Marilyn Alf,

Chair sdtoaa@gmail.com

Singing for Comfort

with Layla Ananda

7-8:30 pm

every 2nd Thursday

THE SUFI WAY

By Bob Hopkins

Properly labeled, this column ought to go under the following title: The Sufi Way as interpreted by an Anglo-Saxon descendent, ex-Catholic, who has raised his consciousness through the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth to appreciate all that can be learned from the mysticism and clarity of the Sufi tradition within Islam. However, that title is far too cumbersome to be replicated each time this column is to be written for the Interfaith Inspirer. Still, it is useful to understand that multiplicity of adjectives will color (and limit) what is shared in this column.

I have been privileged to be on board for a delightful and informative class setting with our Imam Kamau Ayubbi from its inception in the Center in the late summer of 2019. It flowed easily into the Zoom technology employed by the Center and continues to meet weekly on Tuesdays from 7 PM until 8 PM, with rare exceptions. Before I continue to expound on some of the principles and ideas I have gained from my attendance, I would encourage each of you to consider attendance for yourself. There is no doubt that my perspective is limited by my background and almost total unfamiliarity with Arabic. I have, however, attempted to improve my understanding by a complete reading of the Quran, extensive reference to The 99 Names of God, written and Illustrated by Daniel Thomas Dyer and an almost completed reading of Angels Unveiled: A Sufi Perspective by Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabba-ni. Come and see more for yourself what I will be writing about in these upcoming months. Come and make your own journey to enlightenment on any or every Tuesday night on Zoom. However, Imam Ayubbi is currently traveling in Senegal and will not resume the Sufi Class with us



Indra's Jewel Net

submitted by Annemarie Howse

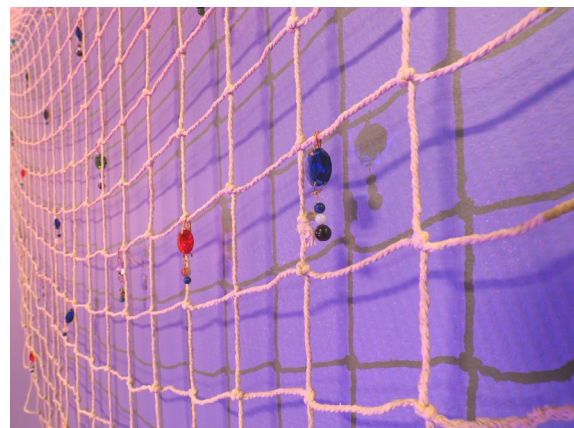
Indra's Jewel Net dedication ceremony was held on April 2, 2023.

The idea came from the concept of Indra's Jewel Net, which is "a much-loved metaphor of Mahayana Buddhism. It illustrates the interpenetration, inter-causality, and interbeing of all things.

"Here is the metaphor: In the realm of the god Indra, is a vast net that stretches infinitely in all directions. In each "eye" of the net is a single brilliant, perfect jewel. Each jewel also reflects every other jewel, infinite in number, and each of the reflected images of the jewels bears the image of all the other jewels — infinity to infinity. Whatever affects one jewel effects them all."

If you have not chosen a jewel to represent you, you can still do so. Go to our website <https://interfaithspirit.org/you-are-a-jewel/> and fill out the form. Your jewel will be placed on the net for you.

This project is the heart-child of Laurie Knerr, with help from many others – thank you all!



Members' Tidbits

Mother's Day Poems

submitted by Annemarie Howse

The poem "My Mother's Hands" meant so much to me when I first read it in 2006. My mother passed on December 23rd 2007, and at her time of transition I was holding her hand. The 2nd poem is one that is more fitting for me today. Perhaps you can relate to one of these, as we celebrate Mother's Day.

My Mother's Hands

~ author unknown

Written in my mother's hands are the stories of her life
A kind and caring mother through happiness or strife.
Faith and love and righteousness, are written in her hands
Charity and service as she follows "Father's" plan.

Sturdy through the storms of life, and humble as she prays.
My mother's hands are hard at work, but they find time to play.
Her hands rocked my cradle, showed me direction in my youth.
Encouraged me when I've been wrong, and pointed me to truth.
Wrinkled now as time moves on, these gentle hands I hold.
I'm grateful for my Mother's hands, and the stories that they've told.

How Grateful I Would Be To Have Just One More Day

~ Kathy J. Parenteau

If I could have just one more day and wishes did come true,
I'd spend every glorious moment side by side with you.
Recalling all the years we shared and memories we made,
How grateful I would be to have just one more day.

Where the tears I've shed are not in vain and only fall in bliss.
So many things I'd let you know about the days you've missed.
I wouldn't have to make pretend, you never went away.
How grateful I would be to have just one more day.
When that day came to a close and the sun began to set,
A million times I'd let you know I never will forget
The heart of gold you left behind when you entered Heaven's gate.
How grateful I would be to have just one more day.

Thoughts on God

Submitted by Janet Somalinog

Are old thinking patterns of winter long gone still showing up in your thoughts? Do thoughts of self-doubt, lack of self-worth, over-analysis of an issue or relationship become a comfort zone that taints all that goes on up there in your small mind? If they are, then they are also affecting the whole of Consciousness and it is time to place gentle awareness upon them, loosen the soil, dig them up and quietly release them to the compost heap.

Relax into your breathing for a few seconds and read the following:

God is here. It is right here, right now. Let me truly know this. I breathe in the Presence, the Strength, the Expansiveness as if the Infinite is in Me. I can feel Its energy in my body, in my head, and in my heart. I relax into This Truth. I breathe Spirit into my Being and as I accept this Energy into my body, I simultaneously let go of the old ruts of thinking. I am ready to surrender to the Wholeness of Life in which I live, move, and have my being. As I climb out of the thinking rut, the strength of Love is readily available to nurture me and lift me up. It fills in the neuronal pathways of old thinking channels and creates a garden for new thought patterns, creative ideas, unique links and more. A whole new array of potential is now available to me. I plant my New Thought seeds of Healing and Grace for me and all others. My words are now released into the Law of Mind. With deep gratitude, I say, "and so it is". Everyday I release the old and allow the New to show up and then I say again, "I am grateful and so it is !!!" Amen!!

Janet Somalinog, RSp, a Religious Science practitioner for many years, but without the certificate on the wall.

Here is something to contemplate:

The Law of Floatation was not created by the contemplation of sinking.

~ Thomas Troward





A Conversation with GENIE, a Crystal Skull

By Peggy River Singer

Genie was the second crystal skull to join my family. She was carved from clear green Gaia Quartz and has a strong Flowing Water energy, combined with an ability to go right to the heart of an issue and express it

lovingly but without any sugar coating that could disguise its importance and value. As soon as I had completed the purchase on eBay, Genie informed me what her name was, and asked that I be careful to spell it correctly. I believe she enjoys sharing the name of a powerful magical being that can make wishes come true!

Genie: *Can I choose what to talk about?*

Peggy: Absolutely, go right ahead!

Genie: *Then I shall start at the beginning of our friendship. Our connection was immediate when you saw me [on the eBay page]. I confess I did use just a bit of magick to attract your attention, but I shall not apologize for doing so because I recognized a heart-pairing that was Meant To Be -- yes with capital letters please -- and such a thing should not be treated lightly.*

Our connection is forever, just as with Zestry and Focus. (My other two crystal skulls.)

I/We are aware of your wish to do more and more spiritual activities and practices and writings and sharings and healings of different kinds. The three of us skulls are capable of tremendous power when we triangulate and synchronize our energies, and we have been using this gift for your benefit in many different ways. We support you in your life and activities, but our energy is very subtle. In fact, you have not been aware of it all these years, and that is appropriate.

Now we address all humans reading these words: We Crystal Skulls are connected by unseen threads of energy/communication/powers all around this world. This vast network includes countless sacred places of power, even those that modern humans are not yet aware of. Constructing the network was one of Creator's first tasks, and it is constantly growing, adapting, and changing to meet the needs of this busy, active world. (To be clear, the network as an entity does not take any active role in humankind's doings; that is not its function.)

However, individual crystal skulls have another equally important role in addition to being participants in the network; and that role is to work with humans who wish to experience MORE than day-by-day ordinariness.

*Do you ever daydream about WHAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE? Once you allow your imagination, heart and mind to believe that **everything is possible**, you open yourself to potentials and opportunities far beyond what you formerly believed you might otherwise accomplish in your lifetime, for we are speaking of that which is far beyond the capabilities of what you expect to experience as an "average human".*

Partnering with a crystal skull is one way to move forward into your higher self. Meeting and purchasing a skull is a very satisfying experience. But you can also look on the Internet or in books, and when the image of a particular skull attracts your attention, ask to connect, and explore whether a partnership will be suitable to you both. In this way, you can work with countless crystal

In this way, you can work with countless crystal skulls without the expense of buying them all.

I/We are very encouraged to see the increase of interest and participation in spiritual practices and awareness in this time of great changes. Your attention to our words is appreciated.



HOW BAD DOES IT NEED TO GET?

Seven words that can change your life.

A friend of mine had a dog that became very unhappy living with her. He tried to run away, pooped in the house, and generally misbehaved to get her attention. Although he was loved and well cared for, that was no longer enough for him to thrive. My friend asked me to check in with the dog, and I relayed to her the dog's unhappiness and desire to find a new family. But, my friend was unable to give up this dog. She just couldn't do it.

Time passed, and the dog became frustrated and impatient. My friend began to talk about how the dog was now snapping at her teen-aged son.

One day she told me she'd been out in the yard talking to a neighbor over the fence. Her son came out with the dog on a leash, to go for a walk.

The dog made sure my friend was looking at him, and he very deliberately bit her son. Not a vicious bite, it didn't break the skin; but it shocked everyone and was enough to get HER attention. And he looked back at her and waited to see what she would do.

She still couldn't give up the dog.

One day I spoke to her on the dog's behalf. "Dear one, how bad does it need to get before you let the dog go? He's so miserable that the next step he takes might be much more serious. He KNOWS that if he bites another human, he might be euthanized, but he doesn't even care any more. That's how unhappy he is."

We all have situations in our lives that can be improved, even healed, if we face them squarely and honestly, and give them our full attention. It's so easy to put this off for "a better time." I suggest that if you'd like to work on this part of your life, **set an intention**. Tell the universe you'd like help to move forward and to heal those situations that don't work for you, and which hold you back from the joyous, satisfying life we all deserve. And, remind yourself to **accept and allow** the help that is offered.

The rest of the story: Eventually, my friend gave the dog to a neighbor she trusted to take good care of him; and it has worked out beautifully.

Blessings from Peggy River Singer

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. Previous columns are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com.



SILVER BALL



Rev. Delyth Balmer & Rev. David Bell



Randall Rousse & Rev. Annie Kopko



Darlene MacLeod & Steve Schultz



Bill Moran & Vicki Davinich



Clockwise from top left - Brett Koon, Den Carbonell, Scott McWhinney, Lindsay Passmore, John Lenders, Jennifer Lenders, Holly Makimaa, Carol Bardenstein and Laura Koon



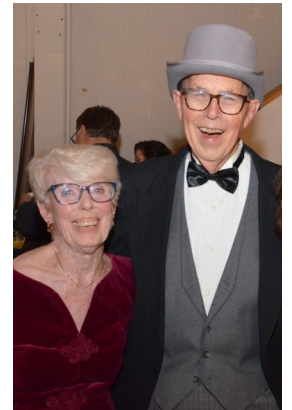
Don Digirolamo & Annemarie Howse



Michael OShea & Sally Searls



Marilyn Alf



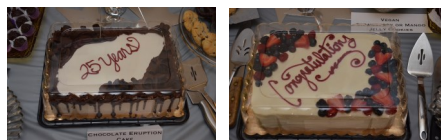
Judy & David Bell



Valoree Sprentall & Dave Beeman



Rev. Annie Kopko, Randall Rousse, Jean Wilson and James Robinett



Dessert! Chocolate Eruption Cake, Chantilly Cake, Vegan "Cookies & Cream" Cake, Assorted Tea Cookies, & Annie's Chocolate Truffles!



Bonnie Dede & Rob Fagerlund