



Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication



A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

With immense appreciation and gratitude ~ **thank you** ~ Scott McWhinney & Chris Hedly of **Path** for creating the awesome Benefit Concert for the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth on September 12. Scott & Chris have been supporting the Center for the past *many* years by choosing to make their Cafe 704 appearances a Benefit Concert. This year **Mary and the Huz ("Big"Band)** joined the show, including Mary Fithian, Eric Fithian, Lori Fithian, Sam Clark, and Dan Bilich.

It was Magnificent!

The musicians donated 100% of the proceeds from the concert to the Center totalling \$610.
WOW!!! We are so blessed and so grateful!

In This Issue:

<i>Benefit Concert, Halloween Party</i>	1
<i>Tales from the Coop</i> by Linda Gilchrist.....	2
<i>Meet Norah Reilly</i> by Beth Wheland.....	3
<i>Ernestly Speaking</i> by Janet Somalinog.....	4
<i>Ministerial Miscellany</i> by Annie Kopko	5
<i>Photos from Murray Lake Picnic</i>	6
<i>The Little Duck that Taught Me a Big Lesson</i> by Peggy Riversinger.....	7
<i>October Events</i>	8

Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth

Annual Halloween Party

Friday, October 30th

5:30–8:30 pm



Costumes, Chili Cook Off
Games, Treats, and Fun Together!

Sign up at:

<https://forms.gle/ZSsmUzsrtqC2g56y9>



Tales from the Coop

by Linda Gilchrist

Leon and I became chicken "parents" shortly after we became Michigan residents almost two years ago. I had chickens previously when I lived in North Carolina and although I loved them, I only imagined having three or four at most. But Leon had bigger plans, so what started out as 10 chickens has now doubled!

Our hens are family. Every one of them has a name and her own personality. Henrietta is the Head Hen. She is the ruler of the roost. Despite her bossy nature she is very friendly with humans. She greets us at the coop door every morning and is jealous when we pay attention to the other hens. Ava is a lovely, gentle girl who craves petting.



**Henrietta,
the Head Hen**

Each one is unique. Did you know that chickens are highly intelligent, social creatures capable of recognizing more than 100 faces? Some other fun facts:

- They are the closest relatives to T. Rex
- They have a cognitive level equal to a dog
- They show empathy and grief, have friendships, love to play, have REM sleep and dream just like humans
- They see more colors than humans including ultraviolet and iridescence
- They communicate to their chicks while still in the egg. They vocalize to them and the chicks chirp back.

Talking about vocalizations, there are more than 30 different sounds that communicate different things.

Recently our hen, Martha, suffered a broken leg. Fortunately, chicken bones heal quickly, but this meant three weeks of ice packs to her leg three times daily along with splint changes.

We fashioned a splint for her with bamboo strips, gauze for cushioning, and an elastic wrap. She didn't always like it but now is walking with just a slight limp. We've taken to calling her "Gimpy".

We have another hen, Geraldine, who is recovering from a head trauma. This has proven far more difficult because although she is physically recovered, emotional scars remain. I am not sure what started it, but she and Henrietta got into a henhouse fight. Once blood appeared on her head all the other hens joined in. That is just something chickens do (maybe it is the dinosaur in them!). In any case we rescued her when we saw the fight, but her head was severely pecked. I didn't think she would survive. However, after a few days in a cool, dark environment along with cold compresses, several days of hand feeding, and lots of prayer, she started to improve. Now, two months later she is physically well but will not interact with her flock mates. She spends her days up on a roost and will not come down even to eat or drink and has to be fed separately. At this point, we are trying to give her controlled exposures and interactions with just a few flock mates at a time, but she remains terrified. So sad! Hopefully, given time, she can be reintegrated. It's just like having a kid. You don't want to make them too dependent on you, but you need to keep them safe at the same time. Geez!



Leon and I both have come to love and admire our chickens. We enjoy sitting by the chicken tractor and watching their antics as they interact. When the weather is hot, we hang watermelon in the run for them to bat about and cool off with. In the winter, we feed them warm oatmeal and spices to help keep them warm. If, on occasion, one becomes eggbound, that means warm Epsom salt baths are warranted until the condition is resolved. And when their egg laying days are over, they will live out their retirement years in our care. So, you see, chicken keeping involves much more than you might suspect!



Meet Norah Reilly

by Beth Wheland



If you are relatively new to the Interfaith community, chances are good that it was Norah Reilly's eye that spotted you from across the room and her smile that made you feel embraced. "I want new people to know that they are seen and welcomed," says Norah. "I want them to take what they need and learn what they can from the community."

Norah has been a member of the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth since 2008. She greets folks at the door, gives readings and meditations, writes for the newsletter, and, utilizing her gifts of charm, wit, and persistence, ensures that readings and meditations are included in all our services. Norah attended the past two Annual Meditation Retreats. She learned at the first retreat that it is okay to be vulnerable, in a safe place and given the opportunity. Group participants made her feel that she could speak from the heart and share bits of her authentic self. This year's retreat was, Norah said, "like stepping in to your favorite clothes. It was just lovely. The familiarity was cool. The leaders were great. I did discover, however, that yoga is not for me!"

What is for Norah is introspection with a touch of humor. When she was seven, she decided one summer evening to see if she could climb a chain link fence. Her plan was to climb the fence in a right-side up position from her yard and climb headfirst down the other side, into the neighbor's yard. All was going well until her shirt snagged on the fence and Norah found herself hanging upside-down on the other side. Not wanting to ruin her shirt (and perhaps be yelled at), Norah let go of not

one but both hands, so that she might unsnag the shirt. The consequence of this was her immediate introduction to gravity, resulting in two sprained wrists and a lengthy lecture from her mom. Norah says it was all worth it because she found out what not to do, as well as discovering that mistakes are an essential part of learning and that she is very good at making them.

Norah is also very good at photography. She credits photography with being her savior throughout the challenges of her life. A mostly self-taught artistic photographer, she picked up such practical skills as copy prep, printing, line work, and color theory in prior workplaces. Norah started taking pictures when she was ten years old and feeling homesick at a Girl Scout camp. A trip to France and time spent in the Alps and Geneva inspired her art. Along the way, she fell in love with wildflowers. "In flowers, form and function come together, with every part of a flower usable."

Norah does a lot of nature photography. Her goal is to expand her vista. By her 70th birthday, Norah wants to sell her apartment, buy a small camper van, and travel the United States, starting with the great state of Maine. Another goal is the simple pursuit of happiness. The following quote from Scott D. Clary sums up the attitude Norah is striving for:

"Something I noticed about genuinely happy people: they're doing less than you. They have fewer goals. Fewer appointments. Fewer obligations. They've learned that addition by subtraction is real. While you're optimizing every minute, they're sitting on the porch drinking coffee. They're not lazy. They just figured out that most of what we chase doesn't matter. Busy is a choice. Peace is, too."

Indeed!



ERNESTLY SPEAKING

Science of Mind & Indra's Net

by Janet Somalinog and
Bonnie Dede

This month on October 18, we are re-dedicating our community, ourselves, and new members to the concept behind Indra's Net, the beautiful, bejeweled replication of the ancient Vedic myth of Indra, the king of all gods, the Storm God. We actually have styled it more along the version of Mahayana Buddhism, a unified, interdependent cosmology where each jewel reflects all the other jewels and that we are not isolated beings, but live in conjunction with each other and all other phenomena in the Cosmos. Science and physics support this very concept that we live in a connected, energetic universe. $E=mc^2$ says solid matter is actually vibrating energy. Quantum Mechanics shows that particles experience quantum entanglement. And all beings and things consist of particles.

So, YES, we are all entangled together. I envision a huge domino game where the dominoes/jewels are not lined up on a flat surface, but are arranged in multiple dimensions. Each entity not only reflects, but also leans, falls over, and topples into the other entities causing cascades of effects and consequences throughout the Universe, time, and space. The first falling domino may not even know who or what is benefitting or suffering as it travels and bumps around far down the line and into the future. This is where our spiritual work is needed, knowing that our actions and even our hidden/secret unconscious beliefs travel and have impact throughout the "Net."



The parallels to Science of Mind (SOM) are many, and may provide some assistance in supporting an informed, practical way to build awareness of our presence in the cosmos, i.e. Indra's Net. I liken this to the famous Five-Step Treatment Prayer I've written about before. In step one we recognize that there is only one infinite, all-inclusive Life which is exactly what Indra's Net is. This step also declares that all things, relationships, events, all causes and effects, beliefs, conditions, solutions, answers, qualities, and resources are part of and inherent in this unified field of everything. Step two is where we declare that this is who and what we are! We are part of, born of, and inclusive of all that God is. The energetic vibration of our being is so closely entwined with the energetic fibers of this Net that we say we are the Net. This is why anything that we think, say, or do reverberates throughout the Net. This reverberation happens with or without our permission. So when we work the third step of the "Affirmative Prayer," we use our conscious choice of words, thoughts and beliefs to influence the atmosphere of the Net or what SOM calls the "Subjective Mind." We cannot stop the flow of what we set in motion, but, as a collective, we can alter the concentration of the atmosphere, through the study and healing of our interior beliefs.

Why do we want to study our deeply held beliefs? Because those are very tenacious paradigms, developed over years and generations, and can be harder to reach and shed light on. They also combine energetic momentum with the many other human thinkers who are living with the same belief structures. The more humans who consciously choose thoughts of love and care, acts of empathy and repair, and who believe in peace and safety for all, the greater the increase in these qualities of the entire cosmic Net.

This is why we invite you to join us on October 18 to re-ignite our Light and consciousness for a world that works for everyone and the planet.



Ministerial Miscellany

The Blessings of Silence

by Rev. Annie Kopko

I wonder how often we find ourselves with an unexpected bit of quiet time, only to immediately look for something else we "should" be doing. I know this is true for me. I am learning, to take advantage of these opportunities for quiet in ways that are new for me.

First, I should mention that sometimes quiet simply feels like a good time for a nap! A couch like mine, with its high back, is a blessing because I don't actually want to lie down or go to bed. That could seriously interfere with a good night's sleep later on. And yet, I also don't want to spend my quiet time feeling as though I am grasping for a few peaceful moments in the middle of a busy day, carrying all the stress I have been trying to push aside.

One thing that can be surprisingly helpful is to seek out a small animal and simply pay attention to it. This can be good for both of us—the animal and me. My one remaining cat has never been a lap cat, but he will come and lie on the floor beside me, especially when I am trying to do yoga on my mat. Somehow, his presence makes the moment feel more peaceful.



Happy Birthday

October



2	Emily Lieberman	21	Lorri Coburn
13	Lisa Teets	22	Jill Crane
13	Marius Nowakowski	23	Dick Durham
15	Judy Bell	29	Craig Harvey
18	Eric Engel		

Lately, I have begun to realize how many opportunities for quiet there actually are in an ordinary day. There are spaces between one event and the next—quite a few more than I had realized—when I can pause and become mindful of what I am doing and feeling. Perhaps you have more moments of quiet than you realize, too.

I know I am often hurrying. But I have developed a habit of finding small moments in which to express gratitude and invite peace. When I get into my new car, for example, I say a few words of gratitude. I remember doing the same thing when I got into my old car, often offering words of gratitude and protection for the car and for myself.

Perhaps the blessing of quiet is that it gives us room to notice what is happening within us and around us. In the quiet, we can pause long enough to feel gratitude, listen more deeply, and trust that life is always unfolding in ways we may not yet see. Let us find and use those quiet moments—for gratitude, for peace, and for appreciation of all the days of our lives: beautiful, long, lovely days.

Life is Good.

Love & Blessings,

Annie



ICSG Annual Picnic at Murray Lake

Thank you Dawn, for your gracious invitation for us to gather once again at Murray Lake for our Annual ICSG Picnic. Dawn brought a stack of song books so we could enjoy participating in a sing-along after lunch. Thank you Don Digirolamo, Mike Fedel, Susan Slack, and Dawn Swartz for leading the sing-along.



(L-R) Dave Snyder, Craig Harvey, Susan Slack, Dawn Swartz, Don Digirolamo, Delyth Balmer, Annie Kopko, and Marian Orihel



Don Digirolamo



Delyth Balmer, Annie Kopko, and Dave Snyder

*not pictured: 11 other attendees
and lots of wonderful food!*



Al Carter, Marice Clark, Norah Reilly, and Cathy DeLauter

Submission Guidelines for the Interfaith Inspirer

The submission deadline for the November Newsletter is October 10



- Please send your contribution to newsletter@interfaithspirit.org.
- We will confirm receipt.
- Suggested article lengths: 150 words – quarter page, 250 words – half page, 600 words – full page.
- All articles are subject to minor edits by the editorial team, including edits for length.
- Please let us know if you would like to review the final version before it is printed.

Newsletter Team: Lyriel Claire, Annemarie Howse, Norah Reilly; Delyth Balmer; Vicki Davinich
We are looking for someone with publishing software experience to join our team. The team meets once a month in person or on Zoom to collaborate.



The Little Duck Who Taught Me a Big Lesson!

by Peggy Riversinger

Background: I've always had a White Knight persona, so when I see someone in peril I want to gallop forth on my gallant steed to save the day! That's not always a good idea...

The Setting: I live near the Huron River in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Several times a week I drive past Huron Landing, a park on the riverside. A small white duck appeared several weeks ago among the flock of waterfowl who hang out at the landing. It was probably abandoned by someone who didn't want it any more.

Analysis: In spite of its small size, the duck had the feathers of an adult. Autumn was approaching, and I was absolutely certain Little Bit had no chance of surviving the cold weather.

Assumptions: The duck is tiny—human tendency to think small things are helpless—so it can't take care of itself. It's domestic, so the poor little thing must be confused and anxious and missing its home.

Conclusion: Winter is coming, so **I Must Rescue This Poor Helpless Duck!** [trumpet fanfare] Little Bit is my new quest! I shall post on Nextdoor and ask whether anyone has experience rescuing helpless waterfowl!

Mistake Number One: My attempt to get a good photo was frustrating. As soon as LB saw me, she would hide behind vegetation and other birds. I was so wrapped up in my mission that I forgot that when a human pursues an animal to get a good photo, that Wanting and Demanding energy can feel like Capture and Kill to the animal.



Mistake Number Two: I connected with LB and explained that I wanted to help. I told her what to expect: some humans who were also worried about her would come to capture her as gently as possible; and she would be taken to a wonderful new home. I informed her that there wasn't much chance that she'd survive the winter living wild. So could she please allow all this to happen?

Response: Two nights later I had an apocalyptic dream (courtesy of LB and her feathered friends) in which I had escaped a burning warehouse, but I kept trying to drive back into it to rescue one person who absolutely refused to go with me. So I'd leave to save my own life, then go back in because I couldn't bear the thought of leaving that person to die in the inferno. When I finally woke up, I was groggy and felt like I'd lived that scene a hundred times.

Mistake Number Three: I never asked whether LB was happy in her new flock, or whether she had been accepted, or whether she had made new friends. And most important, did she want to stay with them?

Outcome: I've apologized to LB and promised to stop trying to "help" her. I've invited her to let me know if there's anything I can do to help her have a good life, and I've extended this goodwill gesture to the whole flock.

The Rest of the Story: These days, I see LB pretty regularly at Huron Landing. Since I've renounced my quest to "rescue" her, I think she feels safer. Now I feel delighted and grateful that she's become part of the flock; and that she looks healthy, safe, and comfortable.

So, a happy ending for everyone, and a valuable lesson I'll never forget!

OCTOBER EVENTS

Words & Music OpenMic@ICSG

1st & 3rd Thursdays
October 1 & 15

7–9 pm

Doors open at 6:30 pm

Suggested donation for all
attending \$5.00



For more information
Contact Don Digirolamo
at dondidge@gmail.com

Cafe 704 presents Robert Spalding Newcomb

Saturday, October 10, 2026 7–9 pm

Doors open at 6:30 pm



*** New Music ***

And Our Journeys Never End

*Improvisations for Guitar, Sitar, Keyboard,
Drum Pad, and Electronics
Web Site – partialmusic.com*

Tickets \$10.00–\$20.00
(sliding scale)

If attending in person, you may pay at the door

If viewing live on Zoom, purchase your ticket at

<https://interfaithspirit.org/cafe-704-coffeehouse/>

Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth
704 Airport Blvd. Ste. 1, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

West African Drum Classes for Beginners & Intermediate with Susan Slack

Four Tuesdays 7–8 pm,
October 13, 20, 27 & November 3
\$40 for all 4 sessions

Come to 1st class for \$10 applied to \$40 fee should you
decide to continue. All funds go to Interfaith.

More Info: interfaithspirit.org/events or email Susan at
peaceinacircle@gmail.com Subject line: drum



Drumcommunity Drum Circle w/Lori Fithian

Saturday, October 17
7–8:30 pm

Donations to the
Center are appreciated



Community Sing

Interfaith Matt Watroba

Wednesday, October 28
7–8:30 pm

\$5–\$10 suggested donation