

## Promise of Spring: Renewal and Rebirth

The months of March and April, bringing the promise of spring, are a time of anticipation and hope. Soon the first light-green buds on tree branches will emerge and the yellow daffodils and purple crocuses will push tenaciously up through a ground still littered with last autumn's leaves. The dreariness, coldness and weariness of winter will melt away, ushering in new dreams and increased light.

Spring is in the air, awakening spirits from their long winter's rest. The nap is over; we escape dullness once again. Hopes and dreams are revived. Life continues anew.

Rebirth, a part of the ongoing cycle of creation, is continuous. The renewal it brings is cleansing, assuring that heart, soul and mind find sources of new experience.

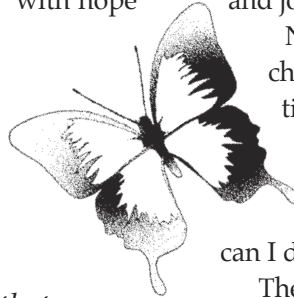
We leave behind the dormancy of winter, the time of hibernation. Foliage and grass clippings left on the ground in the fall have lovingly blanketed what rested beneath the surface. They've been compost, a fertilizer to the sleeping plants. We don't really see what has gone on underground, under the surface; yet it is from this resting, the fertilizer doing its quiet work, that new life springs forth and rebirth is possible.

The cycle of plants is a fitting analogy for our own lives. We sometimes perceive events, people and situations merely as "manure" Often, it is only much later that we realize that they had actually provided rich compost — fertilizer that has assisted us in our growth.

Recent events in our country offer another example of the cyclical nature of life. Many of us feel we have left a dark time and stepped into the light with the new administration of President Obama. We feel hopeful, excited, invigorated; leaving behind discontentment and apathy.

But what if the Bush administration did exactly what was needed to motivate us to act? Here is another opportunity for us to forgive and look through the

eyes of Love. We might consider that the outgoing administration fertilized and produced a new spring — a new government that is inspiring us, filling us with hope and joy, rejuvenating our faith.



Nothing is static; life is about change and transition. Even in times of turmoil, we have an opportunity to examine or reexamine what is going on: Why is this happening? What can I do? What's next?

There are historical moments when great dreams are shared, when ideas are carried forward, when inspiration propels humanity to greater good. A dream or a vision is not just for the few but for the many, to be influenced, inspired, urged to reach higher ground. The intentions of those in the past and the foresight of those who follow hold the keys to understanding and progress. Placing all wondering and questioning aside, I realize that divine wisdom is always

present to illumine my way. Let us acknowledge the known and trust in God for the unknown.

The Fellowship is embracing renewal and rebirth. Through our Town Hall meetings, we come together to deepen our connections, to discern and discover new levels and realms of possibility.

Along with the country and the world, we too, this Fellowship family, can say "Yes, we can!"

Enjoy this time of the year and look at all things through new eyes. Let's allow ourselves new hope as we feel the darkness of winter being pushed aside by the swirling colors of spring. It's a time for joy. Dance and make a glorious noise. Dream a new dream. We can create it.

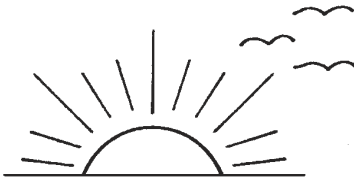
*"This means that we must open our creative imagination, individually and collectively, beyond all previous understanding. We must learn to make that vision a reality. We must pour our deepest passions into this passionate, magical opening moment."*

- Jean Houston

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Arndorfer".

Karen Arndorfer, Minister



# FELLOWSHIP FOR TODAY

## Honoring All Spiritual Paths — Recognizing the Divine in Everyone

### SUNDAY SERVICE

5:30 p.m. meeting time  
call 337-4070 for location

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# Conversations that Matter - Turning to One Another

By Grace Menzel

*“There is no power equal to  
a community discovering  
what it cares about.”*

- Margaret Wheatley

As the new chair of the Fellowship Steering Committee, I have a vision for a thriving spiritual community where everyone leads from their seats — a community where hands are raised, work gets done and people feel a deep sense of ownership that inspires them to act; a community where action grows from the seeds of love and of sharing one’s gifts, where we take care of one another spiritually, emotionally and physically, and where responsibility means the ability to respond to the needs of the community. To paraphrase Margaret Wheatley, change begins deep inside a system when people respond to a dream of what’s possible.



As members and friends of Fellowship for Today, you are being called to join in conversation about what matters to you. The Town Hall meetings convened in late January and early February are the beginning of conversations that are intended to include everyone. These are conversations about who we are, who we’ve been and who we want to become as a spiritual community. Your contribution to these conversations is essential.

It takes courage to start a conversation. We have to be willing to risk not knowing, to be confused. We have to be willing to let go, even if

for a moment, of the security of the past. We have to be willing to hold hands and trust that we can discover something new together by asking a simple question like, “What matters about this community?”

A good conversation connects us at a deeper level and helps us remember we are part of a greater whole. It means we are willing to discover and learn together. It means we are open to the change that is wanting to happen. A good conversation is generative — something new always happens.

This conversation begins with you. What if you took responsibility for starting a conversation with another Fellowshippian about how you can help this community flourish? What if you asked each other what really matters? What if you made a commitment to get curious about someone else’s ideas? What if you decided to listen

for what surprises you? What if you remembered that you cannot do this alone and need to ask for help? What is possible then?

An important conversation that needs to occur is around the move to a new temporary location for Sunday vespers. As many of you know, soon we will be changing the place we meet on Sundays. The Unitarian Universalists’ sanctuary is a big part of our past. It is a part of who we were for over 20 years. As we move to a new location (most likely 2722 E. Michigan Avenue) for Sunday services, we face some challenges that are inevitable with change. This move is a big adjustment to our spiritual, emotional and physical status quo.

# Change. Community Conversation

What kind of conversations might you have around this change? Here are some questions I invite you to explore with other Fellowshipians:

- How do I want to be with the move to a new location?
- What can I do to help?
- What must I let go of in order to adapt to this change?
- What must I embrace to make the new meeting space work for me?
- How can I support others in this process?

I invite each of you to start a conversation with another Fellowshipian about what your dreams and hopes are for our future. Find a person you don't know, maybe never talked to before, and start this conversation with them. Take a risk. Ask a simple question that will open them up. Then practice your very best listening skills. Stay curious. Lean in to one another. It is time to start a conversation about our future together. Will you join? ■

*Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about. Ideas, language, even the phrase "each other" doesn't make any sense.*

—Rumi

## FELLOWSHIP VOYAGES

...is an inspirational newsletter by and for Fellowship members and friends.

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NEXT VOYAGES DEADLINE: MARCH 20 FOR  
MAY-JUNE ISSUE

(3RD FRIDAY OF ODD-NUMBERED MONTHS)

For current events and time-sensitive news, see FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS, distributed via e-mail each Wednesday. To be added to this list, send your request to [info@fellowshipfortoday.org](mailto:info@fellowshipfortoday.org)

## For the Children

By Gary Snyder

The rising hills, the slopes,  
of statistics  
lie before us.  
the steep climb  
of everything, going up,  
up, as we all  
go down.

In the next century  
or the one beyond that,  
they say,  
are valleys, pastures,  
we can meet there in peace  
if we make it.

To climb these coming crests  
one word to you, to  
you and your children:

stay together  
learn the flowers  
go light

**March 1,  
5:30 p.m.  
Service will be  
held at the  
Fellowship  
Offices,  
2722 E. Michigan  
Ave., as a way  
for everyone  
to experience  
a service in this  
possible, temporary  
location. Annual  
Meeting of the  
membership  
to follow.**



# My Meijer Miracle



By Holly Makimaa

I have an embarrassing secret. Occasionally, I like to go to Meijer's late at night, between 10 p.m and midnight, just because I need a distraction. In general, I'm not a fan of fluorescent lights and big stores. I prefer to shop at the local co-op, farmer's market or health food store. But sometimes, the 24-hour Meijer's a mile down the road has been a cure to my restless heart and dry spirit.

It's the cross-section of people I see at Meijer's that so enlivens

me: an amoeba-like cluster of high school students sipping on 32-ounce pops; a group of hearty, uniformed firefighters filling a grocery cart; a young couple sharing a loving glance in the check-out lane; three twenty-something guys with backward baseball caps and low-rider pants sauntering the aisles; a middle-aged man in a sleek business suit picking up some necessities ... people with various purposes all gathered in one place.

Knowing that Meijer's is a microcosm of this random and mysterious universe, I often say a prayer before going inside. I ask to experience a miracle – a bit of synchronicity to lift my spirit. I have rarely been disappointed. Countless times, I have run into just the old friend, student or acquaintance I needed to see. During my last visit (I really only do this every three months or so), I was feeling disappointed that a new venture wasn't turning out as had I hoped. My spirit felt a little bruised and tender and my faith a little shaky. But, with a bit of childlike hope, I mentally pried open my heart a crack and expectantly entered the store – hoping for a mini-miracle.

I grabbed a cart and began scanning for the service desk to buy some stamps. As I weaved my way there, something strange occurred each time I looked at people. The first were two young men, possibly brothers or roommates, waiting for their groceries to be bagged. There was nothing special about what they were doing or even the expressions on their faces. They were just going about their business – completely ignorant of my glance. Yet, when I looked at them, it was as if a veil fell down between

us, and my heart could see their true essence. An Asian couple crossed my path and again, I experienced the same intense heart expansion and awe ... I wondered what was going on.

A little skeptical, I decided to test the experience. As I wheeled my cart through the store, I tried to find a person for whom I could not feel this expansiveness. Yet, with each new person I encountered, a flood of love rushed my heart. I still saw their individual characteristics – the delightful shades of their flesh, the variety in their dress, and the different shapes and sizes of their bodies. All this was secondary, however, to the amazing wonderment I felt for the creations before me. Each person was priceless and held the kind of beauty that makes you want to cry for sheer gratitude. I wanted to tell someone what was happening but I continued silently through the store in awe of the grace I was being given.

As I finally made my way to the check-out, a line from a birthday card I received this year suddenly popped into my mind: "The beauty you see around you is a reflection of the beauty inside of you." My heart filled — my Meijer miracle. How beautiful and precious we *all* are – including me.

**A side-note:** As I left Meijer's, feeling full from my experience, I received a little test. When I pulled out of my parking space, a car passed me and then suddenly stopped to let in two young women. Surprised, I yielded. The woman entering the passenger side sneered at me and mumbled something I imagined to sound like, "What are you thinking, idiot? Watch out."

Instantly, I was offended. "I had stopped; what was the problem?" I didn't like her judging my good intentions and began thinking not-so-nice thoughts about her.

As soon my face soured, I realized I had fallen from love. No longer was I in awe of my neighbor. I was fully separate from her and doubting her goodness. Sheepishly laughing at myself, I remembered that loving the essence of others and ourselves is an active choice. It is something we have to practice.

Originally, I thought that what happened inside the store was the Meijer miracle, but have come to see that what happened outside made the miracle come full circle. Now, I know what I need to practice to keep the miracle alive. ■

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the essence  
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It is something  
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Holly Makimaa

# A Dream of Love

By Larry Hutchinson

I woke up remembering a dream fragment. I was in a crowd of people, and across the room there was a woman who caught my eye. I looked into her eyes and she looked into mine, and there was recognition. I walked toward her, and she walked away. I kept moving through the crowd toward her though, and as she continued to walk she periodically looked back to see if I was still following. In my heart I knew the end was sure. There was no doubt or hesitation. Then she turned around and stopped. As I caught up with her she looked into my eyes, stood beside me and took my hand. As we walked off through the crowd together, I could feel her warmth as she leaned into me.

The woman can be seen to symbolize love. Not the romantic notion of love, but Love. The English language has one word, love, to represent several distinct situations. There's "being in love," which is simply an emotion. Then there's "being love," which is a powerful state of being that, once released, flows from the core of us. Once you've seen it or experienced it, you never forget it. You know, from that point on, it's what you've been looking for all along.

In the dream, as soon as I saw it, I recognized it, and it recognized me. As I moved toward it, there were many other people, or egoic voices, milling about, getting in the way. But once I'd seen it, I knew what was important; my attention was fixed and couldn't be distracted. It continually seemed just out of reach, but I kept going. When it was clear that my intent was sure, that I wasn't going to give up the chase, the chase ended. From that point forward, we walked together as one. The milling crowd didn't go away, but it was no longer an obstacle.

*"When you want only love you will see nothing else ... If you make love manifest, its messengers will come to you because you invited them."*

*A Course in Miracles, T-12, VII.8*

*"God would reunite you with yourself, and did not abandon you in your distress. You are waiting only for Him, and do not know it. Yet His memory shines in your mind and cannot be obliterated. It is no more past than future, being forever always."*

*A Course in Miracles, T-12, VIII.4:5-8*



## Together

By Larry Hutchinson

The Creator loves the created.

Yet the created hides.

The created seeks its independence,  
dreams perhaps of aloneness.

Yet the created knows  
deeply,  
silently,  
beyond words,  
beyond thoughts,

that the truth cannot be forever hidden.

## DIAL=A=MIRACLE MESSAGE:

**Call Dial-a-Miracle any time at 337-4070 for the daily lesson from *A Course in Miracles* and for an inspirational message.**

*If you observe a really happy man, you will find him building a boat, writing a symphony, educating his son, growing double dahlias in his garden, or looking for dinosaur eggs in the Gobi Desert. He will not be searching for happiness as if it were a collar button that has rolled under the radiator. He will not be striving for it as a goal in itself. He will have become aware that he is happy in the course of living life twenty-four crowded hours of the day.*

-W. Beran Wolf

# Center of Influence



By Bill Diedrich

**Y**ou are a center of influence. Every thought, emotion, word, and behavior that you offer has a ripple effect. The effect is reflected back to you in your life experience. The ripple effect impacts the lives of others.

As humans, we forget or don't know that we have such influence. We are, instead, a center of attention. Our focus is on what others or the world is doing to us, or on what they

should be doing for us. When in this state of consciousness, we become victims of our lives and of our relationships.

As a center of attention, we worry, get angry, and resist the people and events of our lives. As we focus on blaming life, at pushing it away, we experience pain and struggle. Our efforts, as a center of attention, become counter productive. We can move beyond this way of being by acknowledging that life is experienced from the inside out.

Your world emanates from your consciousness. Your world and your life aren't events happening to you. They are events that you evoke via your consciousness. If you don't like what you have, stop blaming people, events, or God. Reverse your perspective. Instead of looking at life as affecting you, look at how you are affecting life. What are your thoughts, your beliefs, your attitudes, your emotions toward others and toward life? How are those attitudes reflected back to you?

It is never about the events in your life. It is never about the people around you. The person who seemingly irritates you is your projection. It's all in your mind. Life in the physical sense is a manifestation of your mental state. Life is not happening to you. It is happening through you. Look at any situation or relationship that seems bothersome and stop seeing it as being done to you. Stop trying to analyze the other person. Instead, look at what you are giving to the situation.

If you are upset with someone, what are you giving to them? What are your assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward that person? Whatever they are, the other person is experiencing what you are giving. Your opinion of someone becomes your vision for

them. You then seek to make manifest your vision by way of your words, tone, body language, and behaviors. In other words, if you think someone is incompetent, you will probably treat him/her like an incompetent.

If you see yourself as sick, poor, or lonely, that becomes your vision for yourself. The Universe then returns to you physical circumstances that match your beliefs. Turn it around. Life is not offering you sickness, poverty, or loneliness. Life offers you opportunity. What are you offering to life? What is the ripple effect of your thoughts and emotions?

Catch yourself being the center of attention and reverse the flow of thought. Purify your thoughts by turning over your fears and miscreations to Spirit. Ask Spirit within to take charge. Go within and clarify your desires for life and then let go. In the classic book, *The Planetary Commission*, John Randolph Price wrote: "Claim your good. Imagine your good. Speak the word for your good. Then care not if your good ever comes to pass. Caring in this sense is another word for worry, concern, and it diverts your power. Choose what you want in life and see it as an actuality. Call it forth — then let go! Don't be concerned about the outcome. Take no thought! Turn it over to a Higher Power, and get out of the way."

Let things take their natural course. Adjust and align your thinking with Spirit. Simply ask: How would my Spirit/Higher Self see this situation? Move forward, trusting the process. Let life unfold. When artists, musicians, and writers create, they envision a work. Next they begin their labor. In most cases, they "take no thought." That is, they don't force anything. They begin work and the work unfolds of itself.

Let your life unfold. State your intentions, take action, and let the process unfurl. Whatever you want, you don't make happen. You allow it to happen. You are a center of influence, and the influence of your thought ripples outward into your world, evoking a like response from the Universe. Whatever you would create has been created already in your mind. Give thanks for it. Bless it. The work of creation is already done. Let go and allow it.

Move into this day as a center of influence. Allow the love, the wisdom, and the power of spirit to create through you. See people and situations as perfect. Know that each time you let go and let God, your decision has a ripple effect on the world that you see. ■

*Your world  
emanates  
from your  
consciousness.*

*Bill Diedrich*

# Voyages Plans and Options

For fourteen years, the Fellowship for Today has published a newsletter providing our community the insightful thoughts of our members — personal reflections, humor, essays, and other “spiritual food” — along with pertinent updates on FFT activities.

We are now evaluating what is the most effective and appropriate way to continue making these all-important connections with you, our readers.

The Fellowship’s first issue, then called *Fellowship Network News*, (May/June 1994) was four pages. Page 1 featured a photo of Beth Monteith and an article describing an agreement the Steering Committee had just made with her to serve as “our spiritual and organizational leader during the next 18 months.” (In fact, Beth went on to be our minister for 10 years!)

Other important news was the introduction of the Fellowship Prayer Connection (still going strong in 2009), a reminder of the last-Sunday-of-the-month Potluck (also continuing), and a new book group that would begin reading Joel Goldsmith’s *Practicing the Presence*.

The essence of the Fellowship was reflected in the community news and in the thoughts that were shared—an essay by early member Jim Ward considered the whereabouts of God, referring to the meditation: “God has a center that is everywhere and boundaries that are nowhere.” And there was some famous Fellowship humor: a cartoon offering words of wisdom from Gary Novak: “If people remain seated during our hugging session, it does not mean that they want you to sit in their lap.” The cover quotation? It was from *A Course in Miracles*.

For a feel of the Fellowship’s history, its values, its principles, visit the Fellowship office and browse through past issues. The heart and soul of our loving little community is well documented!

The newsletter quickly jumped to eight pages and in 1997 changed its name to *Fellowship Voyages*, meanwhile continu-

ing to document FFT events and, most importantly, expressions of our continued individual and joint efforts to be awake and to love.

In the late 1990s, *Voyages* expanded to 10 pages. Now there are 12 pages, and we mail to 625 readers. This large number of mailings requires us to consider another change—converting to electronic publication and asking for reader support for our printed mailings.

Online publication makes it much more feasible and wise for us to cut back on printing and mailing, reducing our impact on the environment. Each edition of *Voyages* is posted on our website, [www.fellowshipfortoday.org](http://www.fellowshipfortoday.org) — much faster than the postal service (snail mail) can deliver it.

Online readers can print their own copy of the newsletter (or any single article of particular interest). They can also download its contents, and access it simply from an e-mail notice.

Moving to an electronic version opens us to the likelihood of more timely news, lengthier articles, more variety and greater inclusiveness.

## **We’d like to hear from you, our readers.**

We’re asking you to help us make some decisions about the future of *Fellowship Voyages*.

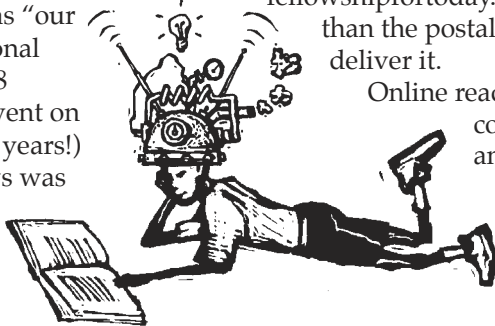
We want to hear:

- if you would be willing to read *Voyages* online at the Fellowship website.
- if you’d prefer to have a printed copy that you can take to bed with you.
- if you’d be willing to help financially with the cost of printing and mailing.
- if you’d like to advertise with us.
- what you like about the content, and what you don’t like so much.

We want to hear your brilliant suggestions!

Please give these questions some thought and respond by completing and returning the enclosed postcard. Suggestions can also be sent to our e-mail address, [info@fellowshipfortoday.org](mailto:info@fellowshipfortoday.org).

Thank you! ■



*We’re asking you to help us make some decisions about the future of Fellowship Voyages.*





# The Wind

By Denise Wootton

**T**his is a time of roaring winds. Loose bits on the house rattle, threatening to rip off and blow away. The difficulties that flow into our lives, around and through us, are like the wind. Our protecting selves huddle against the wind, tense against it, or blame it for our troubles. But our evolving selves

learn to be more like the eagle, riding the currents of our lives.

The winds support the eagle as he controls his altitude by tilting his wings. We human beings ride our own currents, but in our case it is our human relationships that support us. It is up to us to adjust our “wings” to the angle that lets these relationships carry us to the higher levels of spiritual consciousness we desire. By navigating the winds of our relationships, we reach our goal of becoming more completely human.

But we are only human. Sometimes we are excited and eager to soar; but there are also times when we are just trying to keep from being swept away by situations in our daily lives. Even when we are struggling to survive, when events and emotions threaten to sweep us away, we can do so consciously. It depends

on our willingness to stay open. The more we resist, the more we tighten up. The more we tighten up, the more solid an object we become for the wind to blow around. The less we resist, the easier it is for us to survive these events and emotions, and hopefully learn from them as well.

When we stay aware, stay conscious, we realize we are always able to choose whether we can (or should) orient ourselves to use the forces in our lives to move us to a new place, or whether we should soften and open ourselves to allow the flow to pass through us with as little damage as possible. Again, the eagle can be our model. Sometimes he rides the wind like a kite, soaring up, up, up, to great heights. Then, he folds his wings and slips through the wind, spiraling, plummeting, hurling earthward. Then, he pulls up, spreads his wings, and soars again. It is a cosmic dance the eagle instinctively knows how to do.

Like the eagle, our soul self knows how to maneuver the currents of our lives. We come back to being aware and exercising our choice muscles, rather than allowing ourselves to slip into unawareness and seeing ourselves at the mercy of forces around and within us. When we quit fighting against the injustice of it, the unfairness of it, the sadness of it, the madness of it, and just allow it to be, we remember how to soar.

Namaste. ■



# “The Shack”

(A Godly Discourse)

Book Review by Leon Harris

**I**n turbulent times such as ours, fearful minds look for miracle solutions and doubtfully inquire, “Where is God?” *The Shack*, by William Paul Young, offers timely answers.

In this novel, a terrible tragedy in the life of a loving father causes him to question, in agony, the reality of an all knowing, all powerful deity — one that has permitted gross harm to his innocent, defenseless child. With fear and apprehension, he answers a mysterious invitation that returns him to a remote wilderness area — the scene of his loss and resulting despair. A resulting magical encounter with personalities of the triune deity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) brings him understanding of the divine plan for

transformed humanity.

The sometimes humorous discourse of this novel reveals a kindly, approachable God, narrowing the human-divine gap and offering oneness with higher self! In a forgiveness scenario, the main character receives profound guidance for loving prayers toward his perceived enemies, bringing him relief from pangs of misery and potential physical ills.

The book provides insights about the story of Adam and Eve that expose misconceptions of our separateness from God. The Holy Spirit reveals truths of human divinity and the eternal nature of Spirit Being: While the mind is about doing, Spirit is about Being.

The author’s revelations of the realm of Divine Source provide guidance for navigating the path to Spirit. *The Shack* provides gems of guidance for atonement with the God-Self.

It offers mystical enchantment, the vibrancy of radiant light and loving Deity, an uplifting experience of deeper aspects of oneness with the I-Am Spirit. ■

# Looking Glass Sanctuary Preservation

It was a cold, bright Saturday in January when a sturdy crew of Fellowshipians pitched in to help the Michigan Nature Association (MNA) do preservation work at the Looking Glass Sanctuary in Bath (donated by the Fellowship to the MNA in 2006). We worked from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., hauling small logs and 12-foot branches through foot-deep snow, piling them at the roadside to be chipped and hauled away.

We were joined by several other friends of MNA. One nature lover from Dewitt donated his time and chain-sawing skills after he had read in *The Lansing State Journal* about the Fellowship purchasing and donating the 14 acres of land.

We all knew we'd be working hard, but little did we anticipate how much we would learn. Sherri Laier, stewardship director of the MNA, educated us with a wealth of pertinent, fascinating information about the property and its flora and fauna. Just a few things we learned:

That autumn olive is an extremely invasive species. (We cleared out about 125 bushes, and there are more to go. According to Denise Wootton, former owner of the property, there was just one autumn olive shrub on the property 16 years ago.)

Autumn olive was introduced to the U.S. in the 1950s. It was believed it would provide shelter for birds. Unfortunately, predatory critters can quite easily climb the low hanging branches, offering birds little protection for their young.

Autumn olive disturbs the chemical balance of the soil, thus inhibiting the growth of other plants.

Earthworms, also not native to Michigan, are attracted to areas where the nitrogen has been enhanced, such as where autumn olive and buckthorn grow. They create further imbalance to the soil.

Grapevine, which winds its way up the branches of Michigan trees, and is considered by many people as a pesky invasive, is the host plant to the larva of the hawk moth, which pollinates the federally endangered Prairie Fringed Orchid. It also provides nesting material for songbirds.

We also learned:

That an eager group of 12



*Mark Mandenberg wrestles with Nature.*

well-organized, middle-aged individuals can cut, clear and stack an impressive pile of brush in only a few hours.

That breathing oxygenated air while working with like-minded new and old friends can make you feel quite alive and joyful.

That hot dogs cooked on a camp stove are a fantastic stand-up outdoor meal on a cold day.

That many hands make light work (but we already knew that). ■



*Fellowship members and other friends of the Michigan Nature Association at the Looking Glass Sanctuary work day in January*

# Fellowship Happenings

## Byron Katie's "The Work" Workshops

Deb Canja

**Saturday, March 7**

2722 Michigan Ave., Lansing

9 a.m.-12 p.m. **THE WORK I**  
Introduction to "The Work"  
of Byron Katie

Cost: \$35

Learn a fast, gentle and amazingly effective way to clear your mind of stressful thoughts, change unwanted behavior, heal stressful relationships and find the peace you seek. Through a series of interactive exercises, video demonstrations and personal exploration, Deb Canja — student and staff member at Byron Katie's "School for The Work" — will help participants learn how to use "The Work" to bring happiness and peace to life.

**1:30 to 4:30 p.m. THE WORK II**  
Applying "The Work"  
of Byron Katie

Cost: \$25

Remove thoughts and memories that bring stress into your life. Continue your "Work" with this gentle method of changing unwanted behaviors and eliminating conflict, anger and disappointment. This session is a follow up to "Work I."

Lansing native Deb Canja graduated from Loyola Law School and served for 12 years as a Michigan Assistant Attorney General where she fought for affordable Blue Cross Blue Shield rates. She has led two non-profit organizations and is the co-founder and CEO of Bridges4Kids, an organization assisting children with special needs, or who are at-risk. She has two sons and lives in Okemos.

## The Path of the Dervish

An Introduction to Sufism

**WORKSHOP: Sunday,**  
April 19, 7 p.m.

**ZHIKR: Monday,**  
April 20, 7 to 9 p.m.

Location to be  
announced



"A dervish (practitioner of Sufism) is one who strives to become that which is loved. What is loved is ultimate reality." Dervish Muhammad Ichlas (also known to some in the Lansing community as Doug Berch) will offer an introduction to the spiritual practices of Sufism at an after-service workshop at the Fellowship on April 19. He'll outline the history, teachings and practices of Sufism, and then answer questions. On Monday evening, April 20, from 7 to 9 p.m., Fellowship members and friends are invited to participate in a Sufi zhihr (Ceremony of Divine Remembrance).

"To the dervish, nothing is separable from love and the source of love," Muhammad said. "Love is beyond being all-inclusive. Love simply is."

A dervish on the path of Sufism, he said, follows the teachings of a sheik — "one who has traveled the path and can show the traveler the way to love."

"As on any journey, there are turns in the road and situations that can lead the spiritual traveler away from their ultimate destination. The teachings and traditions of Sufism and Islam offer guideposts to assist the traveler in taking the straightest path to love," he said.

The zhihr (zik-ur) of the Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi Order is an active meditation involving movement, sound, and breath as vehicles for remembering the Divine Presence.

"The Divine Presence, or God, is always remembering us;" Muhammad said, "and in zhihr we make the intention to remember 'in whom and what we live and move and have our being.'"

The zhihr will incorporate chanting divine names, turning, and the singing of illahis (mystic hymns). All techniques will be explained. The zhihr is fully participatory and open to all, regardless of path (or no path).

Muhammad Ichlas (Doug Berch) is a dervish and khalifa (representative) of The Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi Order. He leads a circle of dervishes in the Lansing area: His responsibilities include leading zhihr, interpreting spiritual dreams, and offering teachings and initiation to those who desire to follow the path of the dervish. He was given the spiritual name Muhammad Ichlas by Sheik Nur al Jerrahi (Lex Hixon). The Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi order is led by Sheikha Fariha Fatima al Jerrahi.

For additional information or to register for any of these workshops or classes, call the Fellowship Office at (517) 337-4070 or e-mail at [info@fellowshipfortoday.org](mailto:info@fellowshipfortoday.org).

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## FELLOWSHIP SCHOOL OF MINISTRY CLASS

### Exploring Meditation

Rev. Denise Wootton

*Tuesdays,  
April 14 – May 26,  
7 to 9 p.m.  
\$70 for the 7 week class  
2722 E. Michigan Ave.,  
Lansing*

What does meditation do? It allows us to dispense with everything unnecessary.

Meditation has been a way of life in the East for thousands of years. But because we in the West have developed our thinking faculties to such a fine degree, we have had little time to appreciate the other side of the coin – the side which is fundamentally different from thinking.

Denise will facilitate an exploration of the benefits of meditation, dispelling some preconceptions about what meditation is. Several different methods will be looked at and each session will include discussion, practice, and sharing experiences.

Participants will have the opportunity to integrate various practices in simple, effective ways and will be encouraged to set aside personal meditation time during the seven-week duration of the class.

## 2012 AND BEYOND: Prophecies and Wisdom

*Saturday, April 4  
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
2722 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing  
Cost: \$25*

Ababaree!

A-ba-bar-ee, meaning, "Hello, good morning, good afternoon, welcome to my world," is an embracing greeting from the Tupi language, one of the most prevalent of the Amazon region of Ecuador.

Paulette Stenzel, a professor of international business law at Michigan State University who has studied in Latin America for many years, will share her knowledge of the Mayan people of South America, focusing on the Mayan Calendar and its significance as the year 2012 draws near.

A recent surge of interest in the Mayan prophecies regarding 2012 has generated numerous books, documentaries and examinations concerning the study of the heavens and the concept of time.

Some students of this astrological shift interpret the completion of the thirteenth B'ak'tun cycle in the Long Count of the Mayan calendar (on December 21, 2012, by most estimations) to mean there will be a major change in world order. Will this manifest in spiritual transformation? Will humanity will be elevated to a higher level?

This workshop will involve interactive learning. Paulette will provide film clips, slides and other materials. She asks participants to bring questions and perspectives, and expect to engage in stimulating discussion. Participants will also explore the need for harmonization, as represented by the Mayan prophesy of the Eagle and Condor coming together.

Paulette has traveled in various countries of Latin America since she was 17. In 2008, she spent time at Pakarinka Sisari, a center for ancestral wisdom, and was hosted by shaman Oscar Santillán a Kichwa and his family. She teaches sustainability and environmental protection and is active in promoting Fair Trade for indigenous people.

To learn more about Paulette and her studies, visit [www.tradeandsustainability.com](http://www.tradeandsustainability.com)

## OUR CALENDAR

### A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUPS, ongoing:

FFT office,  
2722 East Michigan Ave.,  
Lansing, 337-4070

Wednesdays, 9:15-10:30 a.m.

Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m.

Thursdays, 7:30-8:45 p.m.

### MARCH


March 1 – **BILL DIEDRICH**

*Musicians: Jim Noble and  
Lucille Olson*

**After Service: ANNUAL  
MEETING OF THE  
MEMBERSHIP  
at 2722 E. Michigan Ave.**

March 8 – **KAREN  
ARNDORFER**

*Musicians: Colleen Bethea  
and Frederick Allhadad  
Following the Service:  
Pen, Paper and Prayers  
workshop*

March 15 – **SPECIAL MUSIC  
SERVICE with SALLY  
POTTER** 

March 22 – **JUDY ROHM**

*Musicians: Linda Abar and  
Jeff English*

March 29 – **REV. BETH  
MONTEITH**

*Musicians: Matt Bliton and  
Frederick Allhadad  
Following the Service:  
Fellowship Potluck. Bring a  
dish to share!*

### APRIL

April 5 – **REV. BRAD MILLER**

*Musicians: Jim Noble and  
Doug Austin*

April 12 (Easter) – **REV.**

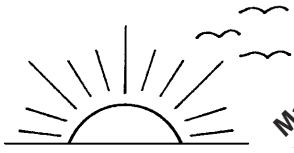
**KAREN ARNDORFER**  
*Musicians: Jim Noble and  
Doug Austin*

April 19 – **SPECIAL MUSIC  
SERVICE with SISTRUM** 

*Following the Service: Sufi  
Workshop with Dervish  
Muhammad Ichlas (Doug  
Berch)*

April 26 – **REV. PAULA  
LAWRENCE**

*Musicians: Lucille Olson and  
Linda Abar  
Following the Service:  
Fellowship Potluck. Bring a  
dish to share!*



FELLOWSHIP  
FOR TODAY  
2722 E. Michigan Ave.  
Suite 101  
Lansing, MI 48912

Address Service Requested

March 1,  
5:30 p.m.  
Service at the  
Fellowship Offices  
2722 E. Michigan Ave.  
We'll experience a service  
in this possible, temporary  
location. Annual Meeting of  
the membership to follow.

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*Be prepared for truth at all hours  
and in the most fantastic disguises.  
This is the only safety.*

*Christopher Morley*