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## Interhelp Update, April 2008

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Dear Interhelpers and Friends,

Among the announcements and links in this issue, I'm particularly pleased to inform you of an opportunity to participate in the creation of a Council of All Beings curriculum for youth; to announce Joanna Macy's October workshops in MA, and to tell you about a great book I just finished reading this morning. Please let me know if you have other books or resources to recommend, or Work that Reconnects experiences to share.

This Update concludes with a beautiful reflection and poem by Judy Conrad.

Blessings of the spring season to each of you,  
Paula Hendrick  
editor@interhelpnetwork.org

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### EVENTS

Tentative: Work that Reconnects workshop in Cambridge, MA on May 10. Watch for an announcement soon.

**Mark Your Calendars now! Annual Interhelp Gathering, Nov. 14 - 16, 2008, Woolman Hill, Deerfield, MA.** For more information, watch for future announcements, or contact [info@interhelpnetwork.org](mailto:info@interhelpnetwork.org)

**Joanna Macy returns to the Rowe Conference Center in MA on Oct. 3 - 10.** The weekend offering, Taking Heart in Tough Times, will be followed by a Sunday through Thursday workshop, World As Lover, World As Self. Not to be missed! For more info, go to [www.rowecenter.org](http://www.rowecenter.org).

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND LINKS

This spring, Nancy Burnett is in the process of developing an adaptation of the **Council of All Beings and related exercises for youth** ages 11 and up. She has completed a draft of the workshop guide and is seeking interested Interhelpers, and/or others who work with youth, to review and field-test the program. If you are interested in organizing and facilitating a test workshop in your area, contact Nancy at [golden.cypress@verizon.net](mailto:golden.cypress@verizon.net) for more information. In your message, please indicate where you are located and briefly

describe the work you do with youth, and write YCOAB in the subject line. Many thanks in advance!

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***Can we save the earth? Not unless we deal with our grief!*** by **Cindy Squillace of Syracuse, NY**. In this short article, Cindy shares the journey that led her to the Work that Reconnects. Here's the link: <http://www.peacecouncil.net/pnl/04/737/737earth.htm>

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For Work that Reconnects activities in the D.C. and Maryland areas, see [www.natureleadership.org](http://www.natureleadership.org)

Also, be sure to check out the new look at the **Great Turning Times**: [www.greatturningtimes.org](http://www.greatturningtimes.org)

Based in Great Britain, this site has useful information, reflections and inspiration for North Americans also.

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## **BOOKS**

*Strange as this Weather has Been* is a new-last-year novel by Ann Pancake (Shoemaker & Hoard). I read a lot, but it's rare to discover a book that "has it all": evocative but straightforward writing; exploration of themes both urgent and dear to my heart; satisfying to head, heart and gut. The book is about mountaintop removal mining in West Virginia, the destruction of the land and the journeys of the people in response. Wendell Berry calls it "one of the bravest novels I have ever read." I loved the characters, wept with their losses and admired their courage, and will never forget them.

Also not to be missed, Joanna's new revision of *World As Lover, World As Self*, subtitled *Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal*. Parallax Press.

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## **A DAUGHTER'S FAREWELL**

Judy Conrad has kindly given permission for us to publish the following letter and exquisite poem, written soon after her father's death. Judy, who lives in North Carolina, has been part of Interhelp since 1984.

Dear Friends,

My dear father ("Daddy" in private conversation) died December 5 at 1 a.m., peacefully in his sleep -- this last wish granted.

I have 2 guardian angels in my life, my father, Weldon and grandmother, Laura. They are both passed from this life. I'm feeling adrift.

It has been 3 years since my Dad's near-death tractor accident.

My heart is broken open. I have tears of loneliness one minute and the next, tears of joy for Dad's release.

I know that just as in labor with my only child Bryan, this deep pain will also give deep joy, eventually.

Daddy and I ended each visit with "our" song -- Carolina Moon, a song popular in his teen years. Our final goodbye was November 23. As I left his nursing home room, turning to blow a kiss goodbye, he lifts his palm to his lips and blows a kiss back to me. I have a treasure of many peaceful, loving memories of a man who personified "in gentleness, there is strength; in strength, there is gentleness."

Through the winter months I will be pondering my life -- where it's been and where it may be going. For now, I am in a space of "no longer and not yet."

My wish for you, dear friends, is a comforting blessing from the New Testament that seems universal to me, embracing all belief or non belief:

*My peace I leave with you  
My peace I give unto you  
Not as the world gives . . .  
Let not your hearts be troubled  
Nor be afraid*

Love,  
Judy

## Solstice

In remembrance of my father who died 12-5-07. One of my fondest memories is walking with him in the woods on a Sunday afternoon. This poem was written after a drive and walk along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

I feel your presence  
this Sunday afternoon  
on the road-in-the-sky.

I feel your presence in the deep hum  
of wind on the ridgetop;  
becoming a rumbling blast  
as the sun dries the clouds.

I feel your presence  
in the grey, leafless trees

slumbering 'til spring.

I feel your presence  
in the silent singing  
of the rock cliff.

I feel your presence  
in the gentle warmth  
of sun on my face.

I feel your presence in the eons  
of protection and beauty  
from these ancient mountains.

I feel your presence in the sudden  
rolling cloud of fog  
dispersing, with a shudder  
of sparkling sunbeams  
in the mist.

I feel your presence  
in the freedom of soul's flight  
into the Light  
evermore.

In the turning of the day  
In the sun after rain  
In the wind after a storm  
In the singing silence  
In the rock of ages.  
In the **blue** Carolina sky  
I see your eyes.

And I hear you say, I AM HERE. I AM HERE.