

## Interhelp Newsletter, Winter 2013

Dear Interhelpers and Friends,

Mark your calendars! **GATHERING 2013** will be held on November 8-10, 2013, once again at Woolman Hill in Deerfield, MA. The weekend will have a special emphasis on Going Forth, but of course our journey together will include grounding ourselves in Gratitude, Honoring our Pain for the World, and Seeing with New Eyes ... all woven through and supported by time in nature, laughter, music, conversation with friends new and old, and eating wonderful food.

**See below for more:** past and upcoming events, links (including news of an important new site), and a thoughtful piece by Rosalie Anders about going forth, post retirement.

Finally, please read this message from our colleague **SARAH VEKASI**, whose Eco-Chaplaincy Initiative is based in coal country (see [www.ecochaplaincy.net](http://www.ecochaplaincy.net)):

“I know this season has been a roller coaster for all of us. The psychological impact alone of mass media predictions of apocalypse, horrifying mass shootings, severe weather, and all the ups and downs of our do-nothing congress, just to name a few, is immeasurable. Beginning to think about mountaintop removal, fracking, ice melts in Antarctica, and staying present at all is a great feat. It is hard to stay focused on a bigger picture of little details: the miracle of tea in a mug, sunshine rising over the mountains, the voice of a loved one, the touch of our skin, breathing in and out. Staying awake in a time of global crisis is one of the noblest professions I can dream of, and any moment we can achieve it is a great victory. All we have is to return to presence again and again and again, it’s okay to not dwell, just return.”

May you “return to presence,” again and again,

Paula Hendrick  
[interhelpeditor@gmail.com](mailto:interhelpeditor@gmail.com)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Work that Reconnects in **CAMBRIDGE, MA on April 14**

John MacDougall, Rosalie Anders, Joseph Rotella and Aravinda Ananda invite you to join them for the day at Cambridge Cohousing on April 14th. This will be an opportunity for people familiar with the Work That Reconnects to renew themselves and gain tools and allies for their work. The day is being offered on a

donation basis and a simple lunch will be provided. Contact Aravinda at [aravinda.ananda@gmail.com](mailto:aravinda.ananda@gmail.com). Space is limited, so sign up early!

### **SPRING RHODE ISLAND** workshops

Jim Tull and Karina Lutz invite you to Work That Reconnects workshops in EXETER, RI, on March 30, again on June 1.  
[yogaforpeace.messageplanet.com](http://yogaforpeace.messageplanet.com), click on "schedule"

See Aravinda's article below for events still in the formation stage, an **EARTH DAY COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS**, and a workshop including a **REQUIEM FOR LOST SPECIES**.

Monthly evening gatherings continue in **NEW BEDFORD, MA**. I wish I could have been there for the February meeting: "In keeping with Valentine's Day, we'll explore several facets of love, and how they affect our own lives and our communities. We'll also create sacred space, stretch and breath, sing, and have fun. Everyone is welcome."

Contact: Emily Johns at: [ejohns\[at\] ecoisp.com](mailto:ejohns@ecoisp.com)

### **OTHER NEWS**

PLEASE VISIT [workthatreconnects.org](http://workthatreconnects.org). This new resource serves the expanding networks of people interested in this work. Features include event listings; forums for questions and discussion; the spiral of experiential exercises with guidelines; community-driven development of the work; and an application to be listed as a facilitator.

"ON BEING" radio host Krista Tippets **interviewed JOANNA MACY** on the topic of Joanna's translations of Rilke. <http://www.onbeing.org/program/wild-love-world/61>

Check out "itunes store" and "itune university" for other programs of interest.

FACEBOOK users may want to check out this Work That Reconnects site (Facebook login required) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/30282864810/>

### **WORKSHOP REPORT from Aravinda**

On February 3, Aravinda Ananda, Joseph Rotella and Shanti Gaia offered a Work That Reconnects day for facilitators of the Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the

Dream symposium.

We began with an "arrival milling" adapted from our experience with Joanna in October. Encounters with partners included physically and metaphorically removing from each other the yoke of responsibility; undoing the necktie of society's restrictions that hold us back from speaking out; and removing our tinted glasses that skew the way we perceive the world. Moments of humor helped us shake off whatever had been pulling at our attention so that we could arrive into the present moment.

We shared the Haudenosuanee Thanksgiving Address (each taking turns to read a passage) followed by a Truth Mandala. In the afternoon we created a brief Council of All Beings and wrote a letter to ourselves from Pachamama, Earth Mother.

In the Council of All Beings giant clam offered the insight that we humans are interconnected with the web of life, just as clam is interconnected with the coral reef. Porcupine, who spends a lot of time out and about at night, suggested that the more-than-human beings can reach out to humans during dream time. We also heard a recommendation for more Councils in which humans are the listeners.

Aravinda and Joseph left this day with the desire to host a workshop, perhaps in the spring or summer, that will include a **REQUIEM FOR EXTINCT/ ENDANGERED SPECIES** and a **COUNCIL AF ALL BEINGS**. During this Requiem, participants can share about species that are leaving this planet forever—similar in some respects to the Bestiary, but with more elaboration. It feels so important to honor these species who have passed or are passing from this world forever.

One final thing: Aravinda is exploring having a **COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS on Earth Day weekend**, perhaps with Occupy Boston, on the Rose Kennedy Greenway in the heart of Boston. To explore these possibilities, please contact Aravinda at [aravinda.ananda\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:aravinda.ananda@gmail.com)

### **Musings from ROSALIE ANDERS**

Many of us have been inspired by the story Joanna Macy tells of the Shambhala Warriors who, when the world is in terrible crisis, appear. This seems like the time —with weapons of unfathomable power and technologies that are destroying the very fabric of life—but what does it mean to be a Shambhala Warrior? What does this extraordinary time call for us to do?

This past year I retired from my job as an environmental planner, and the

transition to another phase of life has prompted a lot of pondering about how I should answer those questions. Of course I know that retiring from paid employment shouldn't mean no longer working for the Great Turning. But what does it mean? I think a bit wistfully about my old ideas of sitting in a café with a friend or a good book. Now I think about staying in shape for the battle, about how best to engage.

In graphs predicting the effects of climate change, one line typically stands for BAU—business as usual. This line, showing what we can expect if the world doesn't take definitive action, heads up the graph to disaster.

Does that translate into no more BAU for us as individuals? What does that mean? As a recent retiree, I have much more control over my time. Is there some reasonable number of hours to spend on trying to heal the world? Should I even be thinking in those terms, given the unprecedented urgency of the crisis?

It feels as if we don't have an agreed-on set of social norms about any of this.

It's not as if the work is onerous, usually. It involves great companions, lots to think about, it gets me out of the house, makes me feel useful, etc. Often it's just plain fun to sit at a well-run meeting with other earnest people trying to figure something out. To a large extent, I've just slipped into the same groups and volunteering to do the same kinds of activities I used to get paid for. But is that what I should be doing?

To meet the challenges we face, maybe we need to create new patterns of living, maybe new kinds of activism. Would it be helpful once in a while to meet with others around a question: In light of what is happening in the world and in your immediate life, do you feel you are on the right path (and how do you know?), or do you want to shift direction?

For me, I wonder if I need to create a new structure for my daily routine now that my 9-5 life is over, so that I feel more productive. I also wonder if I could be more effective if I had more of a laser focus in my work. It might be helpful to have some kind of a group process where together we looked at questions like these. While Interhelp does help people become part of ongoing support groups, getting these groups going can be a challenge, and something that met occasionally—a Shambhala Warrior check-in?—might be easier to organize and maintain.

I am not very warrior-like in any sense, but the notion of Shambhala Warriors does help me make the tough phone calls or stand up at a meeting when I'm feeling shy. Maybe occasional focused groups would be easier to start and maintain.

I'm full of Shambhala Warrior questions. Are the directions we've chosen getting the results we hoped for? Is there more can I do? What can I let go of? Are our

strategies working well? Could they be tweaked to good advantage? Is it time to move in a different direction? How do personal strengths mesh or not with the missions we've chosen? Do we need new allies? Are we enjoying the struggle?