



Brattleboro Area Hospice Newsletter

January 2009

Brattleboro Area Hospice • 191 Canal Street • Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
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It Is I Who Must Begin

Once I begin, once I try --
here and now,
right where I am,
not excusing myself
by saying things
would be easier elsewhere,
without grand speeches and
ostentatious gestures,
but all the more persistently
-- to live in harmony
with the "voice of Being,"
as I understand it within myself



-- as soon as I begin that,
I suddenly discover,
to my surprise, that
I am neither the only one,
nor the first,
nor the most important one
to have set out
upon that road.

Whether all is really lost
or not depends entirely on
whether or not I am lost.

~ Vaclav Havel ~

From Elizabeth Pittman, Bereavement Care Coordinator

I sometimes suggest to clients that they include in their journals a blessing and a challenge from that day or week. On any given day, there are probably a number of both that could be noted and, as I sit here at the end of the year, the list is quite long and weighted toward the blessing side. How fortunate and grateful I am to be part of and work with this staff, this board and you, our volunteers.

This year I want to particularly acknowledge the many ways the shop staff accommodate all of us at the office and have certainly been helpful to me: setting aside everything from office furniture to materials for special projects. They respond to even last-minute requests with good-humored willingness, while shuffling through piles twice their heights (though, really guys, I'll attempt to not be so last minute in the new year!)

Using some of those shop items, I would like to invite interested volunteers to an in-service that will hopefully provide enjoyment and perhaps insight while helping me out by exploring an idea I have for a Second Saturday activity. Using albums

and album covers, we will each create a Self-Portrait Collage based on the following suggestions:

- On the front cover: How does the world see us? What face do we present?
- On the record or inside covers of a double album: What's going on inside of me: thoughts, feelings/fears-hopes, etc.?
- On the back cover: Who and what backs me up? Where do I get my support?

An alternate idea is to use the front cover as how I saw myself and my world before a loss/change, the inside for how I'm feeling now, and the back cover for how I see myself since that change.

Let Jennifer know if 10-12 am Thursday, Feb. 5, or 5-7 pm Monday, Feb. 9 works best for you. We'll note the chosen time in the February volunteer newsletter.

May the New Year be full of blessings for each of you.

Elizabeth

From Dana Renault, Experienced Goods Volunteer Coordinator

At the end of 2007 I left Vashon Island, Washington, where I had lived for the last three and a half years. I rid myself of all belongings (once again) except what would fit into the trunk of our 1981 Mercedes, strapped four-year-old Sky into his car seat and drove off under ominous late-November skies, destination New England. It had been a long hiatus, physically and emotionally, from my homeland, and I was truly ready for what I prayed would be the warm embrace of family and the permission to just stop, settle down and sink in. Simon, my French love, was to fly from Paris to meet Sky and me in Rhode Island, at my parents, for the holidays, when we would begin the process of finding and creating home together, as a family, for the first time. Sky's father Mark and his pregnant partner Marcella were to follow in February, to meet us in our as-yet-undetermined new home and make it theirs as well. I drove with wide eyes and blind faith through Wyoming snowstorms, endless strings of Free to Be You and Me and Peter, Paul and Mommy sing-a-longs, and a dozen blessed pit stops at middle-America playgrounds and libraries.

A year later, I can only begin to digest all that has transpired as I look with awe and gratitude at the place I inhabit now. We found Putney, and claimed it as home. Simon and I were married

in May. I am now six months pregnant. Sky has a precious new baby brother, Hart. I am engaged in fulfilling work-in-the-world at Experienced Goods as the Volunteer Coordinator. And, just as winter's grip has closed in, we have constructed, erected and moved into our new yurt! After one month of inhabitation, we have made it a warm, functional home. We are still engulfed in the details of coaxing the yurt to its fullest in functionality and beauty, but this is work I love, "homing", and fulfilling the vision we set into motion a year ago.

I have been at Experienced Goods since August, and I thoroughly enjoy this work—because this is hospice, because this is a big, funky thrift shop, because we are selling affordable, recycled goods, because I am a part of a solid team yet am encouraged to work independently, because the schedule matches my son's kindergarten schedule, and because I feel useful and creative. This past year has been one of enormous change and manifestation, not the least of which has been landing this job and joining the BAH community. I plan to take maternity leave at the end of March, but expect to be a part of this community for some time to come, so please call on me as your fearless Shop Volunteer Coordinator (and hospice volunteer!) whenever the need arises.

Ice Crystals Bloom ...

Pantoums come from Malaysia where people write them aloud, probably as a kind of game, so I learned years ago from poet Verandah Porche. A Gatha, according to the Oxford American Dictionary, is "any of the 17 poems attributed to Zoroaster that are the most ancient text of the Avesta."

Just recently, I learned a gatha from Cheryl Wilfong's class from Insight meditation; "Breathing in, I calm body and mind. Breathing out, I smile." I know that many people will start the new year without someone they love beside them. As I sat down to write this month, both the gatha and pantoum merged to create the poem I share with you for 2009. You will see a pattern in this poem. Copy it and try it yourself. I'd love to read yours, e-mail me at <nintai@together.net>.

Smile, Frances

New year, past year, "We Remember Them."
frosty earth;
silent, benumbed garden.
my memories chatter eternally.

Frosty earth.
Be here now.
My memories chatter eternally.
Breathing in, I calm body and mind.

Be here now.
Breathing out, I smile.
Breathing in, I calm body and mind.

Ice crystals bloom in this sacred memorial

Breathing out, I smile.
I inhale their memory.
Ice crystals bloom in this sacred memorial.
May I be happy.

I inhale their memory.
Silent, benumbed garden.
May I be happy.
New year, past year, "We Remember Them."

Silent Sitting Tradition Continues With A New Beginning In 2009

After allowing sufficient time to mourn the loss of seeing our beloved Parker Huber at our office every Tuesday afternoon for years, when he would reverently sit silently with us and “hold our space”, we are continuing this tradition with a different structure. Volunteers Mary Quinn and Cheryl Wilfong have come forward to coordinate times for silent sitting here at BAH twice monthly. We will gather on the second and fourth Tuesday from 5:10p-6:00p. In addition to a period of silent sitting,

at each meeting we will read a short piece addressing the theme for that month and then have opportunity to discuss the piece so as to deepen our understanding and appreciation; and to connect with and support one another. All are welcome; tell a friend, there is no homework, only your presence necessary.

The Theme for January is: WHY MEDITATE ?

Fall Bereavement Volunteer Training

Congratulations to the eight participants who recently completed the Bereavement Volunteer Training held in Townshend. They are Heather Chaudoir, Natalie Donovan, Hope Jinishian, Petey Mitchell, Eva Shelby, Dawn Slade, Letitia Trent, and Donna Trumbull. We are grateful to have them join us. Thanks also go to BAH volunteers Marilyn Buhmann and Lynn Martin for coming to speak with the participants about their experiences as Bereavement Volunteers.

Death And Dying For Beginners

Do you know someone who has expressed interest in taking the volunteer training but has not because they do not have the time to volunteer? This winter, Bettina will offer a four week class for those wishing to explore issues connected to death and dying. The curriculum will include material used in the training. The class will provide opportunities for participants to explore their own attitudes and feelings about death and dying,

as well as to learn about ways to support a friend or neighbor during a time of loss.

The class will meet on Tuesday evenings February 3,10,17, and 24 from 5:30-8:00 pm at BAH, 191 Canal Street. Class size is limited to 10 and registration is required. For questions or to register please call Bettina at Brattleboro Area Hospice 257-0775 x 102.

Level I Reiki Class

February 20, 21, 22 at BAH

Reiki is an ancient, gentle, hands-on healing technique that promotes balance and harmony in the receiver and the provider. It can improve health and enhance the quality of life. Many have found it helpful in relieving discomfort and anxiety.

Rebecca Reuter, Reiki Master and proprietor of Reiki Healing Arts in Brattleboro, is offering Level I Reiki on the weekend of February 20, 21 and 22. The class will run from 6-8:30 pm on Friday, from

10am-4pm on Saturday with a break for potluck lunch, and from 1-5 pm on Sunday. There is a \$200 fee for the class.

Upon completion of the class, trained volunteers are invited to attend a monthly Reiki Circle for practice and support. For questions or to reserve a space for this class, please call or email Rebecca directly at 254-6232 or reikivt@gmail.com.

TANZANIAN BASKETS FOR SALE

In case you haven't yet seen the baskets displayed in the downstairs kitchen, you may want to come, look—and buy! David White, of Volunteer Hospice Services in Middlebury, brought these baskets back from his visit to Tanzania to meet with fellow hospice workers. All money from the sale of these baskets goes to Outreach Africa, a group that supports our Vermont-Tanzania Hospice Partnership.

Brattleboro Area Hospice

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Calendar

January 5, 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Reiki Circle for practice and questions, for hospice volunteers. Downstairs kitchen, Hospice Office. Contact Rebecca Rueter 254-6232 for questions or more information.

January 5. Volunteer Report Forms due.

January 8 & 22, 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 6:30 - 8 pm. Bereaved Parents Support Group. Facilitated by Lynn Martin. Upstairs meeting room. Call Melissa (x108) to register.

January 10, Saturday, 10 am - 12 noon. Second Saturdays. Facilitated by Elizabeth Ungerleider. Memory Boxes.

January 13 & January 27, 5:10 - 6:00 pm. Silent Sitting, with reading and discussion. January's theme is "Why Meditate?"

January 14 & 28, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 4:30 - 6:00 pm. Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards. Call Melissa (x108) to register.

January 14, 12 - 1:30 pm. Volunteer Gathering to meet Ryan and Muriel, refreshments provided. RSVP: Jennifer at 257-0775.

January 19, 2009 Hospice Office closed.

January 26, Monday, 5:30 pm. Board of Directors Meeting, Hospice Office.

January 28, 5:30 - 7:00 pm. Volunteer Gathering to meet Ryan and Muriel, refreshments provided. RSVP: Jennifer at 257-0775.

January 29, Thursday, 5:15 - 6:45 pm. Survivors After A Traumatic Loss (for example: accidents, suicide, homicide). A new three-week session beginning if there is sufficient interest. Call Elizabeth Pittman, facilitator, to register

We rely on the generous support of community members like you to keep all of our services free of charge. Please consider sending a tax-deductible donation today so that we can continue to serve those who are dying and grieving. Send your donation to: Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301. Thank you for your support!

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