



VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

SEPTEMBER 2009

Coming Events

LIGHT is pleased to announce our upcoming events for the Fall 2009 season.

There is *no admission charge* for any of these events, but donations are gratefully accepted.

LIGHT Lecture Series

The talks will be held on the first or second Tuesday of the month in September, October, November and December. Attendees are invited to a buffet starting at 6:30 p.m., with the talk to follow at 7:00.

Location: Charisma Restaurant
83D Sherbrook St.

Tuesday, September 8

Beth Martens: "Creativity at the Source"
The core of your Self is at the heart of every creation. You can learn to be aligned with that using ancient yogic techniques which have persisted and evolved over centuries, now scientifically "proven" to work. Join us for this direct experience through soul-catching meditation, mantras, guided breathing and devotional music.

Yoga teacher and musician Beth Martens (a.k.a. Vijaya) offers people the opportunity to explore life at a deep level. Mentored by masters in India and with 17 years practice—these things have led her to appreciate the importance and lightness of being alive.

Tuesday, October 6

Doug Staley: "The Shadow Side of Spiritual Groups and Teachers"
Our contemporary world abounds in spiritual groups, teachers and teachings. How can an earnest seeker distinguish between an authentic teaching and a cult, between a false and a real spiritual teacher? The presentation will examine the warning signs of spiritual blight and abuses of power, money, drugs and sex that have occurred in many spiritual communities in the last few decades.

Doug Staley is a statistician and researcher at St. Boniface General Hospital and the President of LIGHT. He has studied Western and Eastern spiritual teachings for many years.

Tuesday, November 3

Tara Maniar: "Finding Peace in the Chaos"

Peace is determined by our internal attitude, which manifests in our external world. When we are at peace within, we will have peace in our world. Let us have a discussion about how to be at peace when we are living in this chaotic, violent world. Come prepared with questions, and let us learn from each other the actions required for that shift within for a life of peace and joy.

Tara Maniar is a local, national and international speaker, learning facilitator, consultant and interpersonal wellness coach.

(See page 4 for Tara Maniar interview.)

Tuesday, December 1

Marianne Johnson: "Dreams of the Cat"
According to Jung and von Franz, dreams are messages from the unconscious and provide a gateway to the soul. When the cat appears in your dream, what is your psyche trying to tell you? Bring your own dream (or fantasy) of the cat to this presentation. The Jungian method of dream interpretation, both personal and archetypal, will be described and illustrated by considering cat imagery in the mythology and religion of different cultures.

Dr. Marianne Johnson is a psychologist in private practice with long-standing interests in Jungian psychology, including two years of training at the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland.

LIGHT Film Series

LIGHT will be presenting three films on twentieth century spiritual masters in the months of September, October and November.

Location: Robert A. Steen C. C.
980 Palmerston Ave. ~ Fireside Room
(side entrance off the parking lot)

Dates:

Sunday, September 20 - 7:00 p.m.

Gurdjieff's Mission: Introducing the Teaching to the West

This award-winning second video in a trilogy details Gurdjieff's relentless struggle to establish the ancient teachings of the Fourth Way in Russia beginning in 1912 and later in Constantinople and France.

Sunday, October 18 - 7:00 p.m.

Abide As the Self: The Essential Teachings of Ramana Maharshi

(narrated by Ram Dass)

Sri Ramana Maharshi was one of the most renowned spiritual masters of the twentieth century. This video takes you on an inner journey through his life and teachings.

Sunday, November 22 - 7:00 p.m.

Ram Dass: Open to the Infinite

In his first public appearance after his 1997 stroke, Ram Dass joins with the singer Krishna Das in an inspiring presentation which demonstrates that the silence of the Spirit and the eternal chant of India both emanate from the same source.

Winnipeg International Storytelling Festival

As part of the fourth annual Winnipeg International Storytelling Festival, **LIGHT** sponsored a storytelling event on Saturday May 9 at the Millennium Library. "An Afternoon of Storytelling Magic" featured Manitoba storytellers Joe McLellan and Ruth Christie, who delighted the children and adults in the audience with their telling of traditional aboriginal stories and tales. Joe added an engaging element to the

proceedings with his spirited drumming and chanting, accenting many of the stories.

LIGHT would also like to thank Joe for his generous gift of ten copies of his new storytelling CD, "Nanabosho and Friends," which features Joe and his wife Matrine relating stories of Nanabosho—the traditional teacher and protector of the Anishinabe people. A special treat on the CD is the wonderful fiddle playing of Sierra Noble which accompanies several of the stories. **LIGHT** has donated the CDs to the Winnipeg Public Library.



LIGHT Board Members

There have been a number of recent changes to the **LIGHT** Board of Directors.

First, long-time board member Sharon Wisemyn has resigned, effective September 1. Sharon and her husband Parzival will be moving to the Yukon to study with Buddhist meditation teacher Lama Lodro.

We would like to thank Sharon for her many years of dedicated service to **LIGHT** and for the excellent advice and perspective she offered. We wish Sharon and Parzival all the best at this new stage of their lives.

LIGHT would also like to welcome new board member Karen Barkman. Karen is a nurse by profession and has studied many spiritual traditions and been involved in a number of spiritual groups over the last few decades. Her experience and enthusiasm will be a welcome addition to the board.

LIGHT Lending Library

LIGHT would like to thank Louis Fournier of Moncton, New Brunswick for his recent donation of spiritual videotapes. Louis became aware of **LIGHT** through our website and contacted us to explore the possibility of donating titles from his collection of spiritual videos. We have received and catalogued the videos; they are now available to **LIGHT** members from our Lending Library.

The videos feature talks by important spiritual teachers such as Ram Dass, Jack Kornfield and Eckhart Tolle as well as biographies of spiritual masters Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna and others.

We have also added a number of new titles to the "Mindfulness and Insight Meditation" section of the Library by authors Charles Tart, Byron Katie, Tony Parsons and others. Our Library catalogue can be accessed through our website.

In addition, we would like to remind you that **LIGHT** is a charitable organization, which means that individuals who make material donations to **LIGHT** are eligible for official income tax receipts.



Multi-Faith Labyrinth Walk

Beautiful clear skies, warm temperatures and the silhouette of the new moon greeted the more than one hundred individuals, families and children who gathered at the Carol Shields Memorial Labyrinth in King's Park on the afternoon of Sunday May 24. The occasion was "Exploring Sacred Space—the Labyrinth Experience," a multi-faith celebration and walk of Winnipeg's largest outdoor labyrinth, which had marked its official opening just two weeks earlier. The event was organized by **LIGHT** and the Manitoba Labyrinth Network to provide the opportunity for people from diverse cultural backgrounds, religions and spiritual beliefs to walk the labyrinth together.

Anne Nesbitt, Executive Director of the Manitoba Labyrinth Network, opened the proceedings with a brief history and overview of the Carol Shields Memorial Labyrinth before leading a demonstration of Tai Chi movements in the labyrinth itself. This was followed by opening prayers by Anglican Church minister Kolleen Karlowksy, a reflection by Karen Toole, Provincial Spiritual Care Coordinator (Manitoba Health and Healthy Living) and a Hindu meditation led by Tara Maniar.

A guided procession through the labyrinth was accompanied by the beautiful voice of Cantor Len Udow, who offered a traveler's prayer from the Jewish tradition. This ushered in the labyrinth walk as people quietly entered the labyrinth and slowly walked the winding path to the centre. Here blessings and songs were offered as a tribute to the universal nature of sacred space and the shared spiritual impulse of all human beings. Finally, a labyrinth healing was presented by members of the Manitoba Therapeutic Touch Network and Creative Retirement. During the healing, angelic sounds rang out from the crystal bowls of the Keepers of the Sanctuary, washing the labyrinth in an ocean of healing energy and spirit.



Those who attended the event agreed that the day had been uplifting, peaceful, healing and created a sense of sharing, celebration and community. Hopefully the multi-faith labyrinth walk at the Carol Shields Memorial Labyrinth will become an annual celebration of the human spiritual journey.



So come, my friends, be not afraid.
We are so lightly here.
It is in love that we are made:
In love we disappear.
Though all the maps of blood and flesh
Are posted on the door,
There's no one who has told us yet
What Boogie Street is for.

Leonard Cohen



LEARNING INSTITUTE FOR
GROWTH, HEALING AND
TRANSFORMATION

980 Dorchester Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3M 0S1

Phone: (204) 453-2717

E-mail: info@lightwinnipeg.org

Website: www.lightwinnipeg.org

Directors

Karen Barkman
Richard Bredsteen
Tim Freeman
Douglas Staley
Ernie Strauss

Newsletter Editor:

Ernie Strauss

Contributors to this issue:

Tara Maniar
Doug Staley

LIGHT's membership year begins on September 1

To become a member:

- Fill in a membership form
- Attach \$20 (cash/cheque)
- Leave it at any LIGHT event or mail it to the address at the bottom of the form

LIGHT Interview: Tara Maniar

Tara was born in Trinidad and has lived in Winnipeg since 1971. She is married and has two adult sons and two grandsons. She earned a B.Sc. degree from the University of Manitoba; and, as a lifelong learner, has attended numerous professional/personal development workshops and courses in human resources, communication and diversity. She took her Yoga teacher training in Rishikesh, India and is presently doing a Focusing Practitioner practicum and an Interpersonal Wellness Coach certification. Currently, Tara develops and facilitates workshops/discussions on peace, culture and diversity; and guides individuals and groups to discover their greater potential.

When did you first feel a connection to Spirit?
As a young child I sensed that I was not separate and alone but connected to a greater power, an awareness of the Divine nature of Creation.

As you grew older were you drawn to study spiritual teachings?

Yes. My grandfather, through his living example, instilled in me the desire to know and understand myself and the world through the principles of *Sanatan Dharma* [commonly known as Hinduism] —the ancient spiritual teachings of the universal, eternal Truth and the many paths to the Divine. My mother taught me to read and write Hindi and the importance of rituals. I developed a love and respect for different cultures, religions and spirituality and discovered that all spiritual teachings are tools for our self-discovery/enlightenment.

How did you meet Guruji and what influence did he have on you?

I met my spiritual master in 1994 at a special function at Bird's Hill Park. In 2001, during a 3 month stay at his ashram, he offered to be my guru. The Guru is the 'remover of ignorance' to reveal the Divine within. I try to make an annual pilgrimage to India to be in his presence and receive his spiritual blessings.

What does peace mean to you?

Peace is internal not external; it means doing what you love to do and living life with passion and joy. When we are at peace within, the whole world will be at peace. Peace in the world is everyone's responsibility.

What spiritual practices support inner peace?

Everything we do can be an expression of inner peace, but certain practices such as a vegetarian diet, yoga or a similar body-mind-spirit discipline, watching your breath and simple walking can naturally lead to a deep feeling of inner peace.

Is violence or war ever morally justified?

This is a challenging question. As an admirer of Gandhi I am a strong believer in the principle of non-violence. Yet we have to accept that even exemplary moral principles are never absolutes and when taken to an extreme may be detrimental in certain exceptional circumstances such as self-preservation. And in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna advises Arjuna to face battle with an attitude of non-attachment to the outcome, a sense of duty to the greater good and service to justice and protection of dharma.

What does God or Spirit mean to you?

God is both within and without. Spirit is the eternal Divine energy, the Source of Creation that manifests in all forms. Like the lotus in a pond, the universal cosmic energy exists within and without, in the world and beyond the world.

Do you feel that you have a life mission or purpose?

Yes. To guide individuals to discover and live their purpose and serve humanity with active compassion, love, respect, humility, integrity and enthusiasm.

