



# NATIONAL INTERFAITH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

*January 2012 Edition*

## FROM THE FOUNDER'S DESK ~ *Rev. Paula T. Webb*

### “An Independent Generosity”

Let's begin by asking the question ~ just what is generosity? What does it mean to be genuinely generous?

Webster's Dictionary describes the word generous as “*being noble-minded; to give or share.*” And Roget's Thesaurus states “*large or great heart; go out of the way; observe the Golden Rule; noble-mindedness; unselfish.*”

The noble-mindedness, of course, harkens back to the days of kings and queens, who had plenty and (hopefully) shared their wealth with others who had less. To have a large or great heart brings us to the idea of compassion for others, by giving of something of yourself. The Golden Rule, ‘do unto others...’ may not apply so much today, because we may not see how our generosity is accepted, appreciated, and just as importantly, returned back to us.

*“Give and it will be given to you...for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”*

*Christianity ~ Luke 6:38*

You may say, well, I don't expect anything when I am generous or give to someone! But in reality, most of us

do. It's only natural to expect some kind of response, or pat on the back ~ that's the world we live in. Instant gratification, I did this, now you do this for me. Especially, if you may be thinking, hey I couldn't really afford that gift, couldn't really take the time to visit ~ and that person really didn't seem to appreciate the sacrifices you made. Sound familiar?

Which gets me to the point of this article. To be truly generous, one has to resolve any feelings of the “give and owe” factor ~ meaning, just because you give something to someone, does not obligate them in any way to return the favor. And, this concept is multi-dimensional. First, to be generous, one has to take their own emotions out of the picture. Just giving, and expecting a “reward” or recognition for the simple act of giving, is not being generous. Look at it this way ~ did that person truly want you to give them that gift, did they really want you spending hours at their home or on the telephone chatting away ~ or did you just “give” of yourself from some personal desire to feel needed, or to say you did such and such for someone?

*“The gift which is given without thought of recompense, in the belief only that it ought to be made ~ in a fit place, at an opportune time ~ such a gift is Pure.”*

*Hinduism ~ Bhagavad Gita 17:20-21*

*~ continued on page 2 ~*

~ cont'd from page 1 ~

We all want to be needed and appreciated ~ that is a normal human condition. But think back to a time, or times, when possibly your gift, money, or time spent was not appreciated. What might that tell you? It's simple. It means that it might not have been appropriate to do for the other person at that particular time, but more importantly, it may not have been given by you, from a clear and clean space about what it means to be really generous.

Especially in these times of lost jobs, being over-extended with regard to credit, over-mortgaged for whatever reasons, and even just from the day to day exhaustion of life ~ it's very difficult, to say the least, to be truly generous when you just don't feel you have the financial, emotional, or personal time resources to spare, or give freely. But, we all go through this, so don't beat yourself up about it! Just begin to have an awareness of when and how you give to others, as we continue on in this new year.

Giving, and being generous is an individual endeavor that is unique to each one of us. There is no set rule or pattern about doing so. Being generous and the act of giving of oneself ~ is truly person-specific. So, if you truly do not feel you can give freely, without reservation, without thought of recognition ~ then don't! That's ok! And, when you do feel that you can give without any thoughts or expectations, then do so! That is the true essence of generosity ~ and that is when you will see the gratitude and appreciation for your gift and generosity.

*"If you knew the fruit of sharing gifts, you would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the idea of holding back ever be in your heart. If you knew the fruit of sharing, even if it were your last bit, your last morsel of food, you would not enjoy it without sharing it..."*

*Buddhism ~ Itivuttaka 18*

Pax!

Rev. Paula T. Webb

Founder & Editor



The National InterFaith Council is an innovative and progressive "think tank" membership, creating the "highest thoughts to serve others ~ while serving others."

We are an organization dedicated to serving all life with grace, through all philosophies, and honoring those who do so.

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“BEACON OF LIGHT”

FALL ~ 2011



Our

“Beacon of Light” Award

Fall 2011

is hereby bestowed upon

*Kari Nienstedt*

*State Director ~ Humane Society of*

*The United States*

For her loving and compassionate work for all our partners in the Animal Kingdom and for being such an inspiration to others.

# Can You Accept Your Gifts?

*Rev. Robin A. Morini*

We are all born with many beautiful gifts. Some people are delightful story tellers, artists, dancers and musicians; others reach beyond into the psychics fields, and still others are gifted as organizers, nurturers, computer gurus. My gift has always been to see the brilliant shining Light of a human being. Regardless of what their appearance or actions may be, I find some thing positive about that individual and focus on this.

There have been times when I have questioned my skill with this wonderful gift.

Two years ago I completed a healing project called Cosmic Trails, Through Hell and Back. This graphic novel became the tool necessary for me to work through the pain of being in a purely dysfunctional relationship. I entered into the relationship with someone who had been clean, sober and balanced of mind for many years, then made the decision to start drinking again. Through out this ugly time in the relationship, I saw his beautiful Light...this made it very difficult for me to walk away from the relationship.

As it turned out, he ended the relationship. It was during this time that I delved into deep inner healing work. As well as emotionally challenging, Cosmic Trails was a grand adventure for me. Inspiration came from many areas including my love of drawing, love of communication, my love of understanding the depths of an issue, and my own desire and need to face my own fears and move forward. This graphic novel was the tool All That Is/God gifted me with to work through my pain. Through this tool I worked through the pain of crashed hopes, anger, broken promises, life gone crazy. Every-day was a prayer answered as I sat quietly, listened to my inner voice and expressed my feelings through illustrating these feelings and writing about them. After nearly two challenging years I felt my project was complete and I had grown to another level of self awareness. Cosmic Trails was complete and I thought my healing journey in this area was complete. For two years Cosmic Trails, Through hell and Back sat in my bookcase.

Then IT happened...

Someone entered into my life...again clean, sober, balanced...I could see the brilliant inner Light glowing from his core of beingness...once again my heart blushed with hope and joy! And for a short period of time things did seem like they would work out. I began to open up, trust and feel a sense of security within the developing relationship. A prescription for pain relief brought a crashing end to the sobriety and sanity of my dear friend.

As the hope for an intimate relationship ended, I dragged Cosmic Trails off the bookshelf and opened my book. As I poured through the pages I asked my self, "what didn't I finish?", "What did I miss?", "What awareness did I overlook?" My anger sizzled as I pondered over the pages of my own story!!!! I was angry at him for falling from sobriety, but I was angrier at myself for being in the same position again.

While looking through Cosmic Trails, Through Hell and Back I began to wonder: how much work does a person have to do on themselves to move forward? How much pain is enough? How many times must a person have to repeat the same mistakes before moving on? How much light can a person shine before that person recognizes his/her own Light?



Through the anger a tiny voice whispered "SSSSShhhhhhh..."

Here I was back in the same position again...or so it seemed....

Like a sweet breath of fresh air that inner voice whispered..."There is nothing you can do."

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Softly the sound of those words filtered through my body, my heart and my soul. In that moment I felt the freedom of truth. This situation was completely out of my hands. All there was for me to do was to step aside and allow All That Is to bring forth the healing...to take care of whatever needed care.

At last...I didn't have to fix anything or anyone. All I have to do is be receptive to the answers of the questions I ask. My gift of seeing the inner Light and beauty of a person is truly a wonderful gift. The Light that shines in each of us is a gifting. When we recognize our own Light and gifting we become that glowing Light. It was during this ah-ha moment that I realized It was time for me to recognize my own inner Light, it was time for me to nurture, love and honor my own inner Light. It was a relief for me to understand that even in this field of nurturing, loving, giving, caring and compassion there are boundaries. It is for us to figure out what our boundaries are. How much can one give before becoming depleted? Is there a safety net/support system for oneself?

Thankfully, in the second relationship, I could see the pattern of addiction before it had to play out every ugly, pain filled process. This time I could gently say "I have had enough. It is unacceptable for me to stay in this situation." With that I could walk away from the relationship and my emotional attachment to it.

Letting go of my expectations and anger...just letting go... without having to work through days, weeks, months and years of grueling recovery work...was a gift for me. That simple saying from the "big book" of Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-anon, and Adult Children of Alcoholics: "Let go and let God" simple, sweet and true. For the first time in my life I felt the freedom of truly letting go. A ton of self imposed responsibility had been lifted from my shoulders.

The Light within my friend shines brightly ~ and my Light shines brightly. © 2009-2012

*Rev. Robin A. Morini is a third-generation artist and intuitive healer. She is Artist-in-Residence to the National InterFaith Council. For more information on her services, books, and artwork ~ [robin.ubm@gmail.com](mailto:robin.ubm@gmail.com)*

“When humans participate in ceremony they enter a sacred space.

Everything outside of that space shrivels in importance.

Time takes on a different dimension ~ emotions flow more freely ~

the bodies of participants become filled with the energy of life ~

and this energy reaches out and blesses the creation around them.

All is made new ~ everything becomes sacred.”

Sun Bear, Founder

[Bear Tribe Medicine Society](#)

# For Faith, Family and Farm Animals

*Karen L. Allanach ~ Associate Director*

*Animals & Religion for The Humane Society of the United States*



Spring is clearly God's gift to the world to remind us of his Son's resurrection, and presence on earth. As nature comes alive, there is a sense of hope and possibility in the air. With Easter upon us, we have come to the end of the Lenten journey. During that time many of us embraced the fasting ritual ~ the discipline of abstaining from meat and dairy ~ while engaging in contemplative prayer to seek a closer connection with God. We opened our kitchens to more vegetarian options and expanded our diets with healthier fare.

I challenge you not to abandon this journey and to continue this spiritual and physical cleansing all year long. Each time we choose vegetarian foods, we help to reduce the number of animals who suffer in factory farms. The HSUS has [humane eating resources](#) to keep you going.

The HSUS has a new DVD series *Latest in Clinical Nutrition*, which features our director of public health and animal agriculture, *Michael Greger, M.D.*, who offers practical advice on how best to feed ourselves and our families to prevent, treat and even reverse chronic disease.

Our responsibilities are not only to ourselves, but to care for all of God's creation, including the animals. Watch our compelling documentary, *Eating Mercifully*, about Christian perspectives on factory farming. Twenty-six minutes may change your view of food and faith forever. (You can request a free copy of the "eating Mercifully" DVD from the HSUS website).

As a married mother of two children and a beloved cat, I make all of the food purchases that feed my growing family. As an animal advocate, I consider the ethical implications of my food choices and seek products that reduce animal suffering, like cage-free eggs, or egg-replacer for baking. I also take into account the recession. I, like many other parents, make frugal choices at the supermarket.

It may seem like a tough environment to encourage folks to purchase healthier and more humane foods, that, in some cases, may be more expensive. But consumers do not have to compromise their compassion for animals in response to tough economic times.

## **The Great Depression Meets a New Recession**

During the Great Depression, people found ways to get by with very little, including whipping up recipes for rice pudding, cakes, biscuits and more without any eggs. Today, as we endure a recession, many people are looking for ways to stretch a dollar. Cooking and baking smarter is one way to make that happen.

How do you eat your eggs? What I discovered is that the only foods I eat which actually require eggs are scrambled eggs, or hard boiled. For all of my baking, I use an egg substitute or replacer, like *Ener-G egg replacer*. A 16 oz. box of egg replacer, a potato-starch based powder, costs about \$6 and can be found at many grocery stores and online. One box of egg replacer equals about 100 eggs, or about 8 dozen, and unlike eggs, it has no cholesterol.

There are many cookbooks with excellent egg-free recipes.

"*The Joy of Vegan Baking*" is outstanding for familiar favorite desserts. Author Colleen Patrick-Goudreau's chocolate cake recipe with chocolate icing has no eggs or even egg substitute, and I dare you to make it and tell me it isn't one of the best you've ever had. Using egg replacer, I've made her moist and delicious peanut-butter cookies with chocolate chips, for my daughter's kindergarten class and on several family occasions, and they are a huge hit.

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To paraphrase one of the kids in the neighborhood, speaking to my daughter, "Your mom makes the best cookies ever!" Check out these [endless eggless options on the HSUS website](#).

### Going Back is Not an Option

I am concerned about our environment for my children and future generations.

Factory farm waste emits greenhouse gases that have a greater impact on *climate change* than pollution from transportation. Confined farm animals produce almost 500 million tons of manure each year in the United States. The waste pollutes water and air, and in the process, harms rural communities. This raises the important question of how many farm animals, regardless of whether they're caged or cage-free, we should be raising and killing. Also, once you know that *the life of a battery-caged hen* is a life of suffering, why compromise on cruelty?

Packed together in cages, each hen is confined to a space smaller than a sheet of letter-sized paper, and hens are prevented from expressing natural behaviors such as spreading their wings, dust bathing, and foraging. The vast majority of caged hens are kept indoors their entire lives. Nearly 280 million egg-laying hens are kept this way in the U.S. factory-farming industry.

### The Three R's

In good and bad economic times, it is always a good time to re-evaluate our diets, to take inventory of our pantry and try to adopt healthier lifestyles. We can all make a difference for our families and the animals by following the "[Three R's](#)." **Reduce** the amount of eggs in your family's diet, **Refine** your diet by switching to cage-free eggs or **Replace** eggs in your recipes with so many wonderful substitutes available, and save money! ©

*Karen L. Allanach is Associate Director of [Animals & Religion](#) for The Humane Society of the United States. In this article, all titles or phrases highlighted in purple and italics are detailed on the HSUS website. For more information of their groundbreaking work pairing faith and humane choices, to sign up for their monthly newsletter "[The Humane Steward](#)" please visit ~*

[www.humanesociety.org/religion](http://www.humanesociety.org/religion)

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“Friends”

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The Hermitage Cat Shelter  
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\*

## PRESS RELEASE



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Our auxiliary department of the National Inter-Faith Council has met with great success since opening our doors!

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All net proceeds from tuition go to the Maricopa County Animal Shelters

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and

The Hermitage Cat Shelter

[www.hermitagecatshelter.org](http://www.hermitagecatshelter.org)

# A Case For Positive Thoughts

Rev. Paula T. Webb

I was a guest speaker at the Annual Congress of the New Thought Alliance several years ago during the summer of 2008. As I sat in the audience waiting to give my presentation, Rev. Herb Beierle ~ Dean of the University of Philosophy ~ began his speech. At first, I wasn't following him ~ something about his world travels and foreign language terminology that I really didn't relate to. As I went back to reading and memorizing my own speech, I heard Rev. Herb say something about politics, and I began listening.

Of course, in the summer of 2008, everyone was intrigued as to who might become our next president ~ the same-old, same-old, the tried-and-true, or something brand new? However, Rev. Herb was not speaking about what candidate might be better than another ~ rather he was speaking about the effects of positive thoughts ~ on and for the candidates!



*Yes! Sending positive thoughts toward our elected officials  
and leaders in Washington, D.C.*

He went on to explain that in his world travels, which were quite lengthy, he found that people outside the U.S., for the most part, never talked negatively about their elected officials. Rather, what he found was quite the opposite.

In France, Germany, Africa, England, Asia ~ as well as most of the countries he had travelled in over the years, most people he met were perturbed if he said anything less-than-positive about U.S. leaders. At first he couldn't understand, because weren't some of our policies affecting their countries in negative ways, he asked. He was surprised at the answer.

Almost everyone he talked to outside the U.S. had only good things to say

about their, and our, leaders. According to Rev. Herb, for the most part, it would not have occurred to them to think or speak otherwise. Why?

It was their experience, their belief that if you sent only negative thoughts toward your elected officials and leaders ~ how could they possibly do a good job while in office?

Most of the people he spoke with understood the dynamics of energy exchange ~ and I'm sure a lot of you reading this have "felt" those negative "vibes" from someone, sometime in your life.

So, if we take this a step further, as I always like to do, if our elected officials here in the U.S., from the time they are elected ~ only "feel" negative energy, negative vibes from those very constituents that elected them into office in the first place ~ how is it that we, then, as those very voters, can expect them to do good? When all they feel from us ~ is bad?

*What would be the impetus for them to serve in the highest manner possible? There wouldn't be any.*

So, let us think twice this election year as we watch any new Administration unfold and stretch its wings. And maybe, think back to a time when others let us begin a life, a career ~ or start over, begin again ~ let you find or renew yourself. And, then, send some nice thoughts to Washington D.C.!

Wouldn't you feel better about yourself, no matter what those elected officials end up doing ~ knowing that you did nothing but send them your best wishes? In essence ~ renewing yourself once again? © 2008-2012

“May the warm winds of Heaven blow softly upon you  
and may the Great Spirit bring sunrise in your heart.”

*A carving on the gateway to the Crazy Horse Monument ~ Black Hills, South Dakota*

[www.crazyhorsememorial.org](http://www.crazyhorsememorial.org)



## “The Renewal of Life”

Robert Webb

Tiny seeds fall onto the waiting earth  
And lie there until the sunshine stirs the senses  
Then the life process commences  
As the water and the soil add to its being.

A root takes shape invading the carpet  
Now cotyledons emerge to rise  
With leaves soon thereafter and into  
Woodland air that comprises a space  
Where it will flourish and grow.

Nature generates a maturing process  
The flowers fade as new seeds are formed  
To fall again to the forest floor  
Just as the ones that did before.

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## ~ INSPIRATION & PRAYERS ~

“Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God. If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature ~ even a caterpillar ~ I would never have to prepare a sermon. So full of God is every being.”

Meister Eckhart

\*

“Today Lord, a new day laid open, and here am I waiting to step into it. And yet there is a feeling of uncertainty, even fear, of what it holds, fear of what it will demand of me. Have I the resources, Lord to meet this day? Can I enter it with joy and certainty and contentment?”

*My child, this is the day I have made for you. Accept it gladly, dance into it, and carry with you the joy of resurrection, the peace of self-giving, the love that forgives and gives. Delight yourself in this day as a child delights in all that is new. Revel in it, absorb it, for it is today ~ new ~ that day that I have made for you.”*

Myrtle Hall ~ New Beginnings

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“Father, I am seeking: I am hesitant and uncertain, but will you, O God, watch over each step of mine and guide me?”

St. Augustine (354-430)

\*

“Holy Spirit, think through me ~ till your ideas, become my ideas. Amen.”

Amy Carmichael (1868-1951)

\*

“O God refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved, I will be a happy and joyful being. O God I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life. O God Thou are more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.”

Abdu'l-Baha ~ Baha'i Book of Prayers

\*

“Almighty and merciful Father, the Creator of all life ~ we remember before Thee with thanksgiving Thy creatures that are upon the earth, and in the sea and in the air. Grant that we may learn to respect them and have mercy. May we never exploit them for selfish ends but seek in all our dealings with them to care for the weak and helpless. As Your creatures contribute to the beauty of Your world, so may we increase that beauty so that all creation may praise and glorify Thee for ever. Amen.”

The Book of Protestant Prayer

\*

“I met God in the morning when my day was at its best, and His presence came like sunrise, like a glory in my breast. All day long the Presence lingered, all day long He stayed with me, and we sailed in perfect calmness o’er a very troubled sea. Other ships were blown and battered, other ships were sore distressed, but the winds that seemed to drive them brought to us a peace and rest. Then I thought of other mornings, with a keen remorse of mind, when I too had loosed the moorings, with the Presence left behind. So I think I know the secret, learned from many a troubled way ~ you must seek Him in the morning, if you want Him through the day!”

Ralph Spaulding Cushman

\*

“Each morning I offer my body, my mind, and any ability that I possess, to be used by Thee, O Infinite Creator, in whatever way Thou dost choose to express Thyself through me. I know that all work is Thy work, and that no task is too difficult or too menial when offered to Thee in loving service.”

Paramhansa Yogananda

\*

“At first I prayed for Light; could I but see the way, how gladly, swiftly would I walk to everlasting day! And next I prayed for Strength’ that I might tread the road with firm, unfaltering feet, and win Heaven’s serene abode. And then I asked for Faith; could I but trust my God, I’d live enfolded in His peace, though foes were all abroad. But now I pray for Love; deep love to God and man, a living love that will not fail, however deep His plan. And Light and Strength and Faith are opening everywhere ~ God only waited for me, till I prayed the larger prayer.”

Ednah D. Cheney

\*

“O God, I seek refuge in thee. On seeing Thee, all my doubts have disappeared. Without my mentioning it, Thou hast known my trouble. Thou has made me remember Thee. My misery is gone and I am all happiness. Joyfully do I sing they praise. Thou hast taken my by the arm and pulled me safe out of the dark. The Lord has removed my bondage and brought me back, though I had strayed away.”

Mohandas K. Gandhi

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“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Socrates

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“God created humankind so that humankind might cultivate and love the earthly ~ and thereby create the heavenly.”

St. Hildegard of Bingen

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