

Eight Years, Twenty Issues, and Counting

This is the twentieth issue of our *InnerPeace/WorldPeace* Journal. The first issue came out in December of 2003.

We have produced these issues in a little more than eight years. It has not been easy. Each issue involves a lot of work. There are no paid staff. It has been altogether a labor of love.

Initially our editorial board (See listing in margin on the last page) brainstorms ideas for articles and recruits writers. At a second meeting submissions are reviewed for content and mechanics. At this stage most articles go back to their writers for approval of our editing or to make changes of their own. In a third round, the editors review for grammar, spelling, syntax and style. By the end of that third round, the articles are ready to be sent to our design editor, Emory Mead, who lays out the articles for a given issue and adds artwork.

There is one more round, which we call "circle editing," where we go over the whole issue with a fine-toothed comb. When the final changes from the circle editing come back from Emory, the issue goes to our production editor, Cindy Palombi, who makes copies on the First United Church copy machine. Members from our Saturday morning group help fold, seal and stamp copies and someone hauls the whole batch off to the post office.

While there may be some differences over editing issues, the entire process, from the initial brainstorming to the trip to the post office, is largely one of cooperation. Relationships deepen as we work together over the years.

The articles in this issue speak for themselves. Some are first-person accounts; others are more didactic. We welcome poetry. All of us in *InnerPeace/WorldPeace* who have been involved in one way or another in producing these Journals take some measure of satisfaction in what we have done. We hope we have made some contribution to the learning and practice of nonviolence and the overarching goal of peacemaking.

—Bud Hayes, Editor

Journey of The Universe

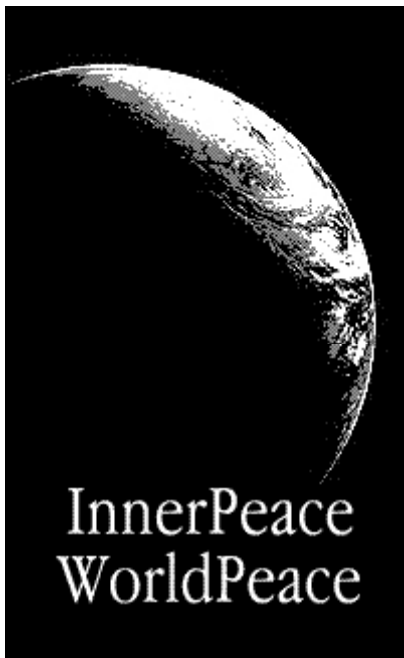
Journey of the Universe : The Epic Story of Cosmos, Earth, and Human Transformation is produced and written by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Brian Swimme.

Weaving modern science with enduring wisdom from the world's cultures and religions, this movie explores cosmic and Earth evolution as a profound process of creativity, connection, and interdependence. Humans intuitively knew about the web of life. But now science is confirming our intuitions! This reminds me of the time Red Hawk was asked the question, "How are white men different from red men?" He answered that for white men everything around them is dead. For red men everything around them is alive.

Twentieth-century humans are the first to know the 13.7 billion- year story of the universe. We are seeing the universe with new eyes. Just 100 years ago scientists were wondering if there were two galaxies. We now know there are millions of galaxies. Hubble discovered that, far from being static, the universe is in motion, expanding. We know that if, after the Big Bang (the flaring forth), the expansion of the universe had been one millionth of 1% slower, the explosion would have collapsed into itself. If one millionth of a 1% faster, it would have exploded into tiny particles. But, wonder of wonders, here it is! The universe is not just a backdrop for our human adventure. It is the subject of the adventure.

Those stars in that backdrop are not just big rocks in the sky. A star is in constant dynamic conflict. There is an expanding nuclear fusion pushing outward from its center, and, a simultaneous, a constant, gravitational force pulling inward. When the fusion eventually slows down, the star will collapse into a death spiral, ending in a black hole.

continued



Journal 20 June 2012

What's inside:

Journey of The Universe
—Wayne Vanek

Breaking the of Chain of Violence
—Anonymous

Illinois Dream Act
by Wayne Vanek

It's Been A Long Time,"
Music To A Mediator's Ears
by John Cabral

"Together"
by Mark Latus and Mary Erkins

Shattering the Peace,
Saving the Child
by Mark Latus

Another example of the dynamic nature of the Universe is the relationship of Earth to the sun. Over billions of years Life on Earth has built a resonance with the sun. We know that Life can exist in only a narrow band of temperature. During the last 4 billion years, the sun has increased its heat 25%. Yet Earth has not burned up. Earth has “learned” how to cool down. It takes the increased heat and forms algae, which sinks down onto the ocean floor. Plant cells take the rays of the sun and convert them into food—photosynthesis. Plant life pours oxygen out into the atmosphere, thus sustaining the conditions for continual growth of all Life. It is as if the atmosphere forms a protective membrane around Earth. This resonance with the sun has grown into entwinement, as Life has gotten more complex

Dr. Swimme shows us that this profound process of creativity, connection and interdependence found in the planets and stars also exists on the cellular level. There seems to be an awareness of pattern and structure held in the cell membrane which is constantly making “decisions,” what to keep in the cell, what to let in or let out. It seems the dynamic structure of the universe, memories of decisions and changes, is kept and passed down through DNA. Life on Earth is learning how to learn!

If Earth is the universe coming alive, then we humans are Earth coming to self consciousness! The big breakthrough for us came when human awareness complexified into symbolic consciousness. Humans were able to put signs on bone and stone to externalize their DNA memory. An individual could contribute to the community culture.

Dr. Swimme speaks of a “self-amplifying loop.” The more an individual expresses his consciousness through symbol, the more other individuals become more conscious and express themselves. Humans eventually made fifteen-foot tall statues, which looked super human’ and this gradually changed their self concepts They were emboldened to create, for example, irrigation systems rather than wait for rain.

The film reveals a *great irony*. All this incredible beauty of the Earth process which has taken so long to unfold, is being destroyed by the very products of this long unfolding—we humans. The film shows pictures of the devastation. What becomes clear is that the biological structures and patterns which have guided the unfolding of the Earth process for over 4 billion years are no longer in charge. Human symbolic consciousness is taking over. But the attitude of “Earth as backdrop for us humans” is now destructive. Do we humans have the wisdom necessary to replace Earth’s 4 billion year guidance system? We have accomplished many awesome things, especially in space. But it happens often that what we do turns out to have terrible unintended consequences.

Yes, we humans are powerful, but we are so young as a species. Let us set up an analogy that one calendar year equals the 4 billion years of Earth’s existence. It took eight months of that hypothetical year to create conditions capable of bringing forth Life. That is, for molten gases to evaporate and form the ocean; the crust to cool and the continents to shape themselves; amino acids to grow into such complexity so proteins come forth. In the 4 months remaining of that hypothetical year, life appears on Earth and learns how to swim, to breathe, to see, to hear, to reproduce. In the last 3 days, land and marine mammals develop in complexity and diversity. And then in just the last 24 hours, (December 31), there develops a complex skeletal structure; a nervous system so organized, a brain so highly complex that it is capable of reflecting. The first twenty-three hours of the day are prehistory of which we know little. What we know as history begins at 11:00 pm. We humans have been around an hour!

The film ends by asking where the wisdom will come from to meet the challenges before us. Swimme muses, “Possibly wonder will guide us,” as it did when consciousness was first born. Maybe, by becoming more child-like, more humble, we will gain a second wisdom.”

— Wayne Vanek

“There is an expanding nuclear fusion pushing outward...and simultaneous, constant, gravitational force pulling inward.”

For more information see—
www.journeyoftheuniverse.org

Breaking the Chain of Violence

Two years ago, I was attacked at work. As I walked down a hallway, a man I had supervised for 15 years came up, glassy-eyed, and without saying a word, punched me several times. He broke my nose, damaged my vision, and bruised my body.

After the attack, things got worse instead of better, for several reasons. The attack dredged up memories of physical and emotional violence I experienced as a child. After years of counseling and Al-Anon meetings, I thought I had mostly worked through the abuse, but this attack brought back all those previous attacks in an incredibly powerful way. I was flooded with sweaty flashbacks, shame, insecurity, and panic.

Second, my family has never dealt with our history of violence and wasn't able to respond in a way that met my need for support.

Third, the attacker never apologized. Instead, he filed charges against me. It took 1½ years before the charges were dismissed.

Finally, at work there have been people who blamed me, saying I must have done something to set off the attacker. When kids are beaten, they always conclude it is their fault. As an adult, to be blamed for being attacked was agonizing. I had to keep telling myself that I didn't deserve it, that the beating had to do with the attacker, not with me. I reminded myself that people who do not acknowledge our universal vulnerability to chaos may choose instead to blame the victim.

I felt disappointed that some people weren't there for me, angry that I was unfairly accused, frustrated that I couldn't give my side of the story to everyone who heard about the attack, and worried that I couldn't bear it all.

Things got better because there were people who were willing and able to offer support. Here I'll mention just two. A friend from work went with me to the hospital. During a quiet moment she said, "You are stronger than you know. You are going to be fine and more fine." She will never know how much her presence and those words sustained me. And moments after the attack, she called my partner who immediately left work and drove three hours to the hospital. That act was minor, actually, compared to what followed. His sensitive, calm support gave me ground to stand on. Like many abused children, I have often felt unlovable; there is grace in the way these acts of kindness, and others, helped me feel loved.

Things got even better when I focused on breaking the chain of violence. When I was a teenager, I shuddered when I first read that abused kids often become abusers. What a tragedy that each generation adds a link in a chain of violence. I did not want to do that. Similarly, I did not want to come out of this attack swinging. I wanted to find a way to get past the pain and transform it into something good.

In *Pay Attention for Goodness' Sake*, Sylvia Boorstein suggests a way to do this through lovingkindness meditation. "Life is so difficult, how can we be anything but kind?" Along the lines of our Inner Peace/World Peace approach, she suggests first offering lovingkindness to yourself before offering it to others. She drafted this meditation:

*May I feel protected and safe
May I be contented and pleased
May my body provide me with strength
May my life unfold smoothly with ease*

You can say it to yourself over and over, throughout the day. At some point, you may want to wish for others what you wish for yourself. You can change the "I" to "you," and widen your circle to include your loved ones. You can widen the circle again to include friends, neutral acquaintances, strangers, and finally the people you find challenging.

continued

"...life will your break
your heart, and
the challenge is
not to break
someone elses..."

If you can pause throughout the day, particularly when you are in pain, and direct your energy away from harm and toward something positive, you are creating peace. When you widen your circle of care from yourself to others, you are building peace.

Because we are all connected in an web of life, what one person does in one part of the web affects other parts. I feel comforted and empowered by the idea that if I can break the chain of violence in my life, if I can manage not to take my pain out on others, if I can transform my pain into something positive—justice, compassion, lovingkindness — I contribute to peace in the world. Because we are all connected, small acts can be large. I celebrate that redemptive possibility.

Reader, this is true for you, too. Whoever you are, one way or the other, life will break your heart, and the challenge is to not break someone else's in a negative chain reaction. Let's not pass the pain along. If we can live, as the Buddhist writer Pema Chodron puts it, broken-open-hearted, and not lash out, if we can make room for our pain, if our heart can become larger and more able to hold both our suffering and that of others, we bring peace to the world. We can overcome the violence and turn it into positive power. Something good can come out of something bad.

—Anonymous

Illinois Dream Act

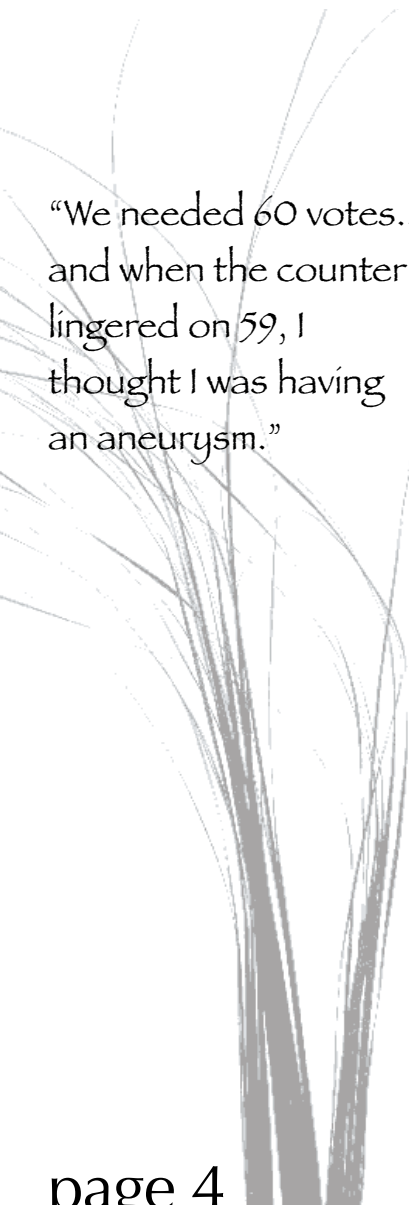
I recently attended training about the Illinois Dream Act which provides for a state commission to set up and administer funds for scholarships for undocumented students to attend college. I was impressed by the high school and college students who organized and ran the event. However, when I heard the story of how the Act came to be, I was really impressed.

Conversations about creating an Illinois Dream Act bill began shortly after the US Senate failed to pass the federal bill last December 2010. Illinois Senate President John Cullerton worked closely with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) and the immigrant community in drafting the contents of the bill. The Immigrant Youth League, along with ICIRR, spent the past five months working to gain support of legislators, university presidents, evangelical leaders, and even the newly elected Mayor of Chicago. Here is an edited summary of a story written by one of the youth who is an organizer with the Immigrant Youth League.

We conducted lobby days in Springfield with over 1,200 attendees. We also made hundreds of phone calls and sent out countless emails and faxes asking our champions to advocate for us. Our first win came on May 4th. The bill passed the state Senate 45-11 with bipartisan support, paving the way for passage in the House of Representatives.

“During the final week of the spring legislative session, May 23-29, 2011, we traveled back to Springfield to insure that the bill would not fall off the radar in the House of Representatives. We organized a full week of lobbying, bringing different advocates to the Capitol to meet the Representatives. We were somewhere in the ball park of 50-53 votes and needed 60 to win. About 70 of us scattered throughout the Capitol in search of our target Representatives. I was taken off guard when asked to testify during the hearing of the bill in the Executive Committee meeting. My hands quivered. My palms, drenched in sweat, I tore through my hurriedly scribbled talking points as I realized what was at stake at this point of the process. I guess we did fine with making our case since the bill passed out of committee with a 7-4 vote, but no Republican support. We fully expected the house vote that day, but people playing politics delayed moving the bill forward. When the vote didn't seem likely to happen the next day, we returned to Chicago. The next day an email was sent out to us saying that the Memorial Day holiday would be cancelled for us, replaced with a vigil at the Capitol until the bill is passed. About 50 of us undocumented youth and allies returned to Springfield on Memorial Day. We decided to stake out Speaker Madigan's office. We were demanding that he sign on as a chief sponsor of the Illinois Dream Act /Lobbyists /walking by saw us, the

continued



“We needed 60 votes...
and when the counter
lingered on 59, I
thought I was having
an aneurysm.”

DREAMers, sitting in the office and lobby, some 20 or so in caps and gowns, making our plea for the Dream Act.

About an hour into our sit-in, we were told that the vote would be taken. I couldn't blink. I couldn't swallow. Not until the bell rang and voting began. We needed 60 votes to pass the bill, and when the counter lingered on 59, I thought I was having an aneurysm. The two longest seconds of my life. Then bam! Green light, 61 votes! Bipartisan support! We won!

Although there's still a long way to go in terms of implementing these counselor trainings and raising funds for the scholarships, Illinois has paved the way for other states to open up access to colleges for undocumented youth. I'm lucky to live in this state and in the great city of Chicago. Yet, I can't help but think of my fellow undocumented friends living in states where young people are banned from schools because of their status. All I know is that I remain optimistic in this fight for equality, because even if we have to take blows to the gut every once in a while, I know undocumented youth will emerge stronger.

—Wayne Vanek

It's Been A Long Time," Music To A Mediator's Ears

Before the judge stood an African-American woman and a Latino man, both in their early twenties, each flanked by a sharply-dressed attorney. Most who come to this particular court for unmarried couples cannot afford a lawyer; so this was unusual. I was there as a volunteer, sitting in the back, hoping for an opportunity to practice my mediation skills.

Marco's lawyer told the judge his client was asking for full custody of their three-year-old boy. Sonya's lawyer said her client could scarcely believe the father was requesting this and would never allow it. The judge, a woman, smiled, raised her eyebrows, and tilted her head slightly, pausing. I stood up and raised my right index finger. "Judge, I can get these two to talk directly to each other right now." A few minutes later the attorneys were gone and I was in a small conference room with Sonya and Marco.

Thich Nhat Hanh, the venerable Buddhist teacher and peace activist who has lived through two wars in his native Vietnam, says all conflict is caused by "wrong perceptions". It was a useful insight as I helped Sonya and Marco get to the bottom of their dispute.

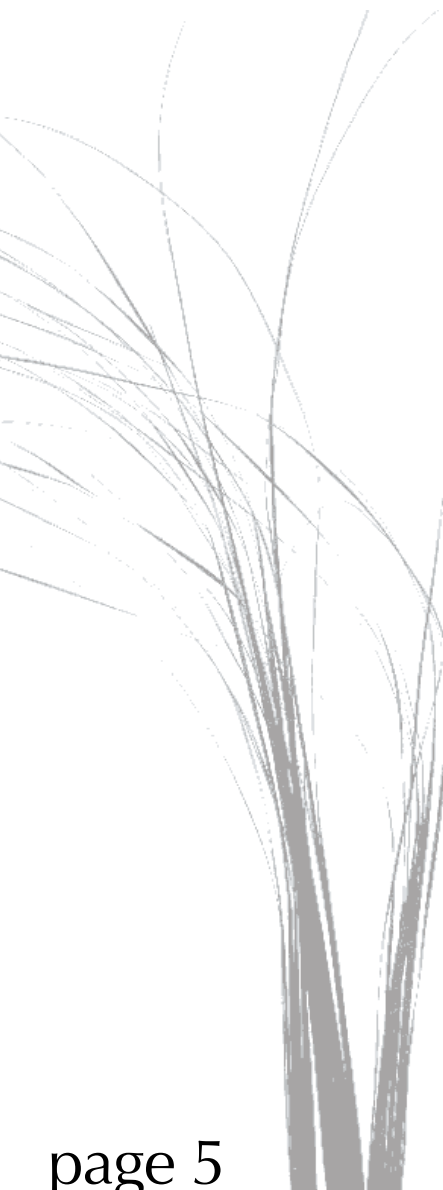
In the cross-talk it became apparent that Marco got the feeling Sonya believed he was a negligent and maybe even an abusive father to three-year-old Armando. Sonya couldn't understand Marco's hostile defensiveness in response to her questions about why little Armando had recently begun coming back with certain explicit new words and poking certain of his mother's body parts.

Marco and Sonya stopped talking altogether. Reacting in order to protect her little boy, Sonya had begun to curtail Armando's time with Marco and his family.

Marco was advised by the attorney to take an aggressive posture, even though until just recently everybody had been happy with Sonya and Sonya's mother doing the bulk of the parenting and Armando being at Marco's family any time he was wanted.

In mediation, I helped them discuss their son's observable behaviors, express their feelings and needs, and clear up the "wrong perceptions".

With both parties' permission I took a break from the cross-talk and gave a three-minute lecture on how we can stick to observations—what was actually said or done—instead of interpretations or analyses of what happened. I asked them both to make requests, not demands. Both of them seemed to easily understand that a request is a request if when I don't comply with what you want me to do, you don't punish, blame or try to make me feel guilty—you just explore the problem further with me until we can figure out a solution that both of us can live with. They nodded in agreement when I said that in any interaction between them they *continued*



had two choices: either listen “empathically” or express themselves with “honesty”—about their own feelings and needs.

Mediator: Sonya, could you tell Marco what the essence is of what’s bothering you?

Sonya: I don’t want Armando coming home talkin’ ‘bout “tits” and “pussies”.

Marco: I don’t know where he’s getting that from! He isn’t getting it from me!

Mediator: Sonya, could you tell Marco what it is you’re trying to preserve or protect?

What really matters to you here?

Sonya: OK, Armando’s too small to be learning about sexual things.

Mediator: Tell Marco what beautiful value or need you are trying to protect.

Sonya: You mean like...Okay like. I don’t....I want Armando to keep being innocent and pure like a little boy should be.

Mediator: Thank you Sonya! Marco, what is Sonya deeply wanting here?

Are you hearing it?

Marco: Yeah, sure, I’m hearing it.

Mediator: Can you say it back to her in your own words so she knows you’re hearing her?

Marco: She thinks I’m corrupting our son.

Mediator: Thanks. That’s not what I heard her saying.

I heard her saying something different.

Marco: Okay, I get it. She’s like “I want Armando to keep being innocent”.

Mediator: Thanks. Is he getting what you want Sonya?

Sonya: Yeah. Now he is!

Mediator: Do you want the same thing she wants, Marco?

Marco: Yeah, for sure...

The two discussed the little boy’s behavior and possible causes including the other little boys who are often at Marco’s parents’ home. Marco agreed that certain “male” swatting-on-the-butt practices would be kept to the baseball field only and not repeated at home.

Marco easily agreed to instruct his attorney to drop the motion for full custody. In a more difficult negotiation, he agreed to pay one-half of the \$2,000 that Sonya, in a panic that she might lose her son, had just spent on the attorney. Sonya said she never doubted Marco’s love for the boy. Their body posture changed as the two of them relaxed.

When we walked out into the lobby, we had a signed memorandum of agreement ready to present to the judge in the afternoon. An older African-American woman came up and hugged Marco saying, “It’s been a long time!” We all sat down together—Marco, Sonya, her mother, and I. Sonya, enrolled in a master’s program at the university, looked at me intently. “Did you have to study to be able to do that?” I smiled and nodded, feeling calm and glad inside.

—*John Cabral*

Our Mission Statement

InnerPeace /WorldPeace
advocates for nonviolence by
means of spiritual disciplines,
group meetings, education and
activism. We believe there is a
necessary connection between
inner transformation and
finding effective alternatives to
violence in the world.
We welcome dialogue
with others.

“Together”

Richard Sennett's new book, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* builds on a vast body of research and thinking about what makes people live fulfilling lives together. Sennett grew up in Chicago his early years in the Cabrini Green Housing Project. His early childhood in Chicago, and its influence on his thinking and work is described in an earlier book: *Respect in a World of Inequality*. Sennett uses his latest book to explore the genesis and nature of cooperation from early humanity to the complex societies of today. He also traces the development of the cooperative instinct and practice from infancy through adulthood. Interesting is the notion that infants undertake “a process of rehearsal of cooperation that may lay the groundwork for complex cooperation later in life.”

The body of the book is arranged under three major headings: *Cooperation Shaped*, *Cooperation Weakened* and finally, betraying some optimism despite the very significant difficulties he identifies in modern social organization and activity, *Cooperation Strengthened*.

As a teacher, I (Mark) found particularly interesting Sennett's discussion of how inequality in the classroom affects children's ability to develop cooperative skills later in life: “...inequality makes a profound difference in the lives of children, inhibiting their capacity to connect to and cooperate with one another.” And I also found interesting, that in place of connecting to others, children may become avid consumers of physical goods. Sound familiar?

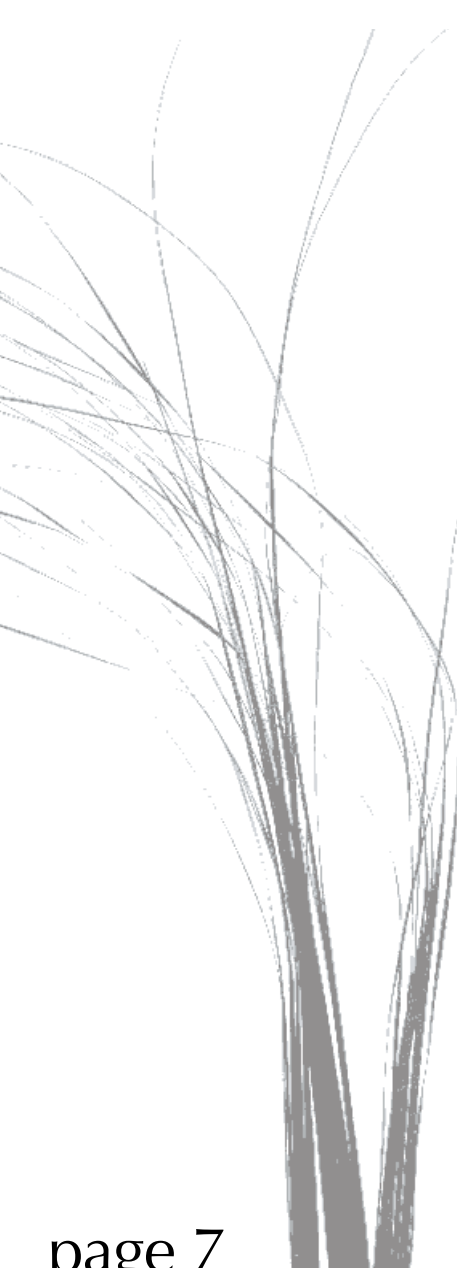
When reading a book that is so brilliantly informative and inspiring as this, I (Mary) always feel compelled to act. I felt the same way after reading David Brooks' *Social Animal*. Certainly something needs to be done in light of the pernicious quality of our politics here in the United States.

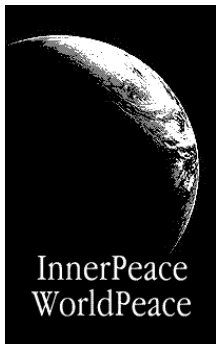
Sennett maintains that “...we are hard-wired for cooperation,” that it's in our DNA. Why, then, is it so absent in our politics of the day? And what's to be done?

It was much easier when I was teaching elementary school children. I could usually weave my activism into my lessons. The classroom was my laboratory. We had cooperative ventures in all areas of the curriculum. Once the students decided to create a pair of six-foot-long, paper mache leopards with the help of one child's father who had made the chicken-wire frames. Every child participated in all phases of the project. What was astounding was the fact that children, who had had little rivalries on the playground from time to time, worked together mixing paste, tearing strips, paper macheing the big cats and painting the finished products — all conversing happily as they worked. One child even wrote a letter to the public library to ask that the leopards be displayed in the children's section. I believe they're still there.

So where do we begin to mend the political rift?

— Mark Latus and Mary Erkins




FYi

Journal Sign-up

Sign up at our website:
www.innerpeaceworldpeace.org,
 or phone: 312-720-1171
 or write to:

InnerPeace/WorldPeace
 319 South Harvey Avenue
 Oak Park, Illinois 60302

Use of Our Material

You are welcome to reproduce articles or make copies of this journal. If you do quote from this journal, please credit the source and let us know how you used it.

To Our Readers

We would like to hear from you. This journal is about conversation and dialogue about the things that matter most. All responses will be acknowledged. Some, with your permission, will be included in our journal as space allows.

Editorial Group

Mary Erkins
 Bud Hayes, Editor
 Emory Mead, *Design*
 Jeff Olson
 Cindy Palombi, *Production*
 Wayne Vanek

budhayes@innerpeaceworldpeace.org

**Be the change
 you want to be
 in the world.**

—Gandhi

Shattering the Peace, Saving the Child

Walking down a local shopping street, I pass a car in which a woman is sitting in the driver's seat. She is wearing what looks like a ski jacket and is buckled in. The car's windows are closed. She is puffing on a cigarette, and smoke is wafting throughout the car's interior creating a fog. As my disapproving gaze moves in, I notice a toddler in the back, buckled into a child's car seat. The youngster is helpless to the danger, but perhaps also is the woman, presumably the child's mother. The child is physically constrained and emotionally tied, but perhaps the mother is also helpless in the face of her lethal addiction. Any awareness of preserving her own health and that of her child seems not sufficiently strong.

In a few seconds, my mind switches from my grocery list to a call to potential action against a fellow human being who I instinctively feel to be abusing another. If this were a scene beloved of crime-thriller writers, where a passer-by comes across a smoke-filled garage or attic, in which a body lies slumped and asphyxiated, the unquestionable course of action would be to break down the door or smash the windows and so dissipate the dangerous fumes.

In this instance, would a tap on the car window, a gentle word with the mother, an admonition as to the dangers of passive smoke in confined areas, suffice? I did none of these through impotence for fear of an ugly confrontation. After all, it is not illegal (yet) for people to smoke in private cars even when children are present.

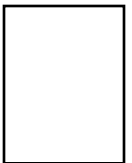
This took place six weeks ago, and I am left with a nasty image in my mind's eye and a worse feeling of not having done something, however ineffectual the outcome of my action might have been. I also feel anger as well as sympathy toward the mother. Anger, for endangering the health of a helpless baby; sympathy; because I do understand the power of addiction.

Would shattering the peace on a quiet shopping street that day, have been the right thing to do for the child? For the mother? For me?

—Mark Latus

InnerPeace/WorldPeace
 319 South Harvey Avenue
 Oak Park, Illinois 60302

RETURN REQUESTED



War and April

When the forsythia was right, and April had a song,
We learned again the advantages of waiting.
The robins came late that year.
One day turned winter into spring.
The change of seasons is a capricious thing.

The war did to our minds what the weather could never do.
It filled up the front pages, added a special section.
It tried to be discreet, but we all knew,
It had to do with the rapture of killing.

The apologies for April are well known,
Storm tracks, temperature extremes,
The greening of the land, first flowers,
Three hours on a cross, an empty tomb.

The apologies for war are rather more obscure,
Buried deep in rhetoric, wrapped in abstractions.
War offers an excess of explanations, explaining nothing,
Which may be just as well,
Because war opens the gates of hell.

The consolations of April are bittersweet,
It can be forgiven its indiscretions.
Its gifts are lavish, but a price is paid,
Winter endured, the finality of death accepted.

The consolations of war are hollow.
It can be dignified only in prospect or retrospect,
Never while it's going on.
To the failed explanations, others are added,
People scratch their heads,
And then there is a terrible forgetting.

—*Bud Hayes*
April, 2003