

# the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

## Summer 2007 e-Newsletter - Social Justice Edition



If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.  
—Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Not only is another world possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing. —Arundhati Roy

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### Awake to this Moment:

#### A Zen Meditation Retreat for Activists and Organizers

Led by: Rev. Ryūmon Hilda Gutiérrez Baldoquín



Saturday July 28th - 10am-7pm

Sunday July 29th - 8am-4pm

\$65 Limited Spaces!

Registration Deadline: June 22nd

Smith College

Northampton, MA

Pre-registration and non-refundable pre-payment required.

Visit [www.contemplativemind.org/enewsletter/sj\\_events/07ryumon.htm](http://www.contemplativemind.org/enewsletter/sj_events/07ryumon.htm)

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### Reflections on Keeping Hope Alive

Unquestionably, these are challenging political times, making it easy for social justice workers to move easily into despair and hopelessness. The reflections that follow might help you

maintain a sense of patience and optimism.

Howard Zinn, in his essay "The Optimism of Uncertainty," writes "To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places — and there are so many — where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory."

Legends and mythologies often provide excellent stories that help us stay uplifted in tough times. There is an Ethiopian legend about the incredible nature of hope. We read it in Joyce Rupp's "Dear Heart, Come Home." A shepherd boy, Alemayu, was forced to spend the night on a bitterly cold mountain. He only had a flimsy piece of clothing to wear. But to the surprise of the villagers, he survived the ordeal and returned alive and well. When asked how he made it through the night, he answered: "The night was bitter. When all the sky was dark, I thought I would die. Then, far off in the distance, I saw a shepherd's fire on another mountain. I kept my eyes on the red glow and I dreamed of being warm. And that is how I found the strength to survive."

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### Practice Staying Hopeful

Here are some practical things you might consider doing with regularity to strengthen your sense of hope.

1. Create a collage of inspiring and hopeful images.
2. The color yellow inspires hope and good cheer. During moments of hopelessness and despair keep a vase of yellow flowers in your home, apartment or workplace. You might even consider planting a window box of yellow daffodils or tulips. The more artistically inclined can make a bouquet of paper flowers. For instructions see <http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/crafts/paperflowers.html>.
3. Write or read a story of hope.
4. Invite close friends to dinner and watch one of the movies listed below.
5. Put an inspiring and hopeful image on your screensaver.
6. Read Howard Zinn's essay titled "The Optimism of Uncertainty."
7. Light a yellow candle in your sacred place and meditate on hope, optimism and patience.
8. Celebrate the hopeful things going on in your community, town or city.
9. Write prayers that express your hopes for yourself, your community, your nation, and the world.

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### A New Publication from the Center: The Activist Ally



The Center's newest publication *The Activist Ally: Contemplative Tools for Social Change* is a resource manual for social justice activists seeking to bring contemplative practice into their lives, communities and workplaces. Social justice workers will find this a valuable resource for personal transformation. It provides tools and techniques for both individual and group practice. Copies are available for purchase.

Visit <http://contemplativemind.org/publications/#socialjustice> for more information and a

preview!

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## Upcoming Retreats, Events, and Workshops

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### **SPIRITUAL/GLOBAL PSYCHOLOGY SUMMER INSTITUTE**

#### **In Service to the World: Soul in Social Action**

Wednesday, June 20 - Sunday, June 24, 2007

Easton Mountain, Greenwich, NY

Presenters: Roshi Bernie Glassman, Raúl Quiñones-Rosado, Ph.D., Alexander (Sasha) Badkhen, MD, and Mark Pevzner, MA.

There is a growing need for increased engagement and action in service of the critical challenges facing our world. Yet many hesitate, arrested by questions such as:

- \* How we can be present to what is happening in our world without becoming overwhelmed?
- \* How we are to respond in the face of such large-scale, complex challenges while remaining grounded in the realities of our own lives and location?
- \* How do we, as North Americans, help create a new future while being embedded in an industrial paradigm that threatens all of life?

Sponsored by The Concord Institute, Easton Mountain, The Growing Edge for Sustainable Peace and Healing, and The Uniterra Foundation.

For more information, visit

[http://www.eastonmountain.com/programs/070620\\_psychology.html](http://www.eastonmountain.com/programs/070620_psychology.html)

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### **Diversity for Environmental and Social Change**

#### **Session 1: Foundational Concepts**

9am -4:30pm, June 25-26, 2007

Boston, MA

\$350-405 sliding scale

What are the knowledge and skills necessary to create thriving, high-impact, diverse environmental and social change organizations and movements in the 21st century?

The Diversity for Environmental and Social Change Leadership Series is a 5-part program designed to foster knowledgeable and skilled leadership to make diversity a hallmark and fundamental asset of environmental and social change efforts. SESSION 1 is a two-day workshop that provides foundational concepts and experiential learning to:

- \* Demystify diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence and clarify their relevance to organizational effectiveness and movement building.
- \* Understand the dynamics of power that impact organizational productivity, performance, and the ability to sustain diverse partnerships.
- \* Develop skills for observing and diagnosing diversity issues in work teams, organizations, and coalitions.
- \* Assess organizational phases of development on diversity.
- \* Create a supportive community of change agents who share values and a vision for a making diversity and inclusion foundational to environmental and social change.

OUR TRAINING TEAM – Mark Kaplan, Amber Mayes, and Angela Park -- brings decades of collective experience in diversity training and consultation, organizational development, and

leadership skills. They have worked with a wide range of nonprofits, companies, foundations, and educational institutions and know and understand the needs and histories of environmental and social change organizations and movements.

For more information contact:

[info@diversity-matters.org](mailto:info@diversity-matters.org)

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**Introduction to Spiritual Activism:  
Cultivating Joy While Changing The World**

Led by Carla Goldstein, J.D. and Bonnie Singman, B.A.

June 29, 2007 - July 1, 2007

Rhinebeck Campus: Rhinebeck, NY (US)

Tuition: \$255 (does not include accommodations or commuter fee)

For more information visit [www.tinyurl.com/2768cl](http://www.tinyurl.com/2768cl)

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**PEOPLE OF COLOR Meditation Sitting Group**

Every Friday Evening

One Brigham Place

Mission Hill, Roxbury, MA

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Come together to learn and practice the joy of meditation as nourishment.

Chairs are available, but you are welcome to bring your own sitting cushion.

For more information contact:

[pocmeditate1@mac.com](mailto:pocmeditate1@mac.com)

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**Being Change: The Way of the Activist**

at Vallecitos Mountain Refuge, Taos, NM

Hosted by stone circles

August 5-10, 2007

stone circles is excited to offer a 5-day retreat for activists across the country. This retreat is an opportunity to gather together for dedicated spiritual practice in an atmosphere that explicitly honors the complexity of our work for justice and the larger social realities of the world. The retreat provides abundant time in silence, in structured and unstructured reflection, awareness practices, discussion, and workshops on change theory, group dynamics, and spiritual/political strategy.

Visit [www.stonecircles.org](http://www.stonecircles.org) for more information and to register.

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**Values in Action:**

**A Mindfulness-based Leadership Training for Change Makers**

Trainers TBA

Vallecitos Mountain Refuge, Taos, NM

October 11-14, 2007

At Vallecitos, we meet in a new way. We convene deep in the deep woods and mountain wilderness, with no computers or cell phones, and we turn inward. We use a set of time tested awareness and contemplative practices drawn from the great wisdom traditions that are simple, direct and undogmatic. We spend time in the woods, hiking in the majestic old growth forest of

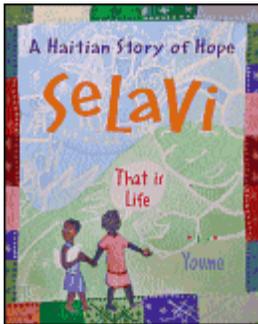
the magical and legendary La Manga wilderness that borders the ranch.

The format cultivates creative dialogue, critical thinking and strategic problem solving. We explore important issues from different points of view, discover insights and formulate creative actions to systemic problems.

Visit [www.vallecitos.org](http://www.vallecitos.org) for more information and to register.

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## Recommended Reading



### **Sélavi: That is Life**

Landowne, Youme

Cinco Puntos Press: El Paso Texas, 2005

This children's book tells us the story of a young Haitian homeless boy living in Haiti in a time of political unrest.



### **The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear**

Loeb, Paul Rogat

Basic Books, New York, NY, 2006.

This collection contains Howard Zinn's essay "The Optimism of Uncertainty" among other great writings.

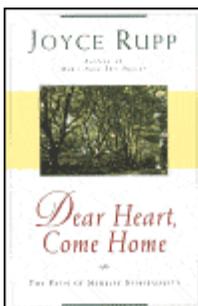


### **Breathing Space:**

### **A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx**

Neumark, Heidi B

Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 2003.



### **Dear Heart, Come Home: The Crossroad**

Rupp, Joyce

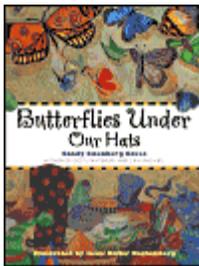
Publishing Company, New York, NY, 1996.

### **Butterflies Under Our Hats**

Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg and Joani K. Rothenberg

Paraclate Press, Boston, MA, 2006.

This young reader's book, based on a Jewish folktale,



tells us that being hopeful is an important aspect of being human.

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### Recommended Viewing

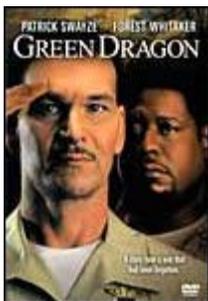


#### **All or Nothing**

Directed by Mike Leigh

United Artists/MGM 10/02 DVD/VHS Feature Film

This film depicts the valiant efforts of some working-class residents of London to pull themselves out of a dungeon of helplessness and hopelessness.



#### **Green Dragon**

Directed by Timothy Linh Bui

Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment 07/02 DVD/VHS Feature Film

This film tells the stories of hope of Vietnamese families arriving in the US during the 1970s.

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### Recommended Listening



#### **Mulato**

Sosa, Omar

Óta Records, 2004



#### **Sentir**

Sosa, Omar

Óta Records, 2002

#### **Raise Your Voice!**

Sweet Honey in the Rock

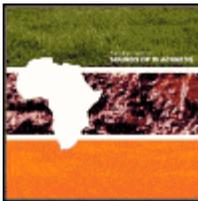


Earthbeat, 2005



**Sacred Ground**

Sweet Honey in the Rock  
Earthbeat, 1995



**The Very Best of Sounds of Blackness**

A & M, 2001

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top image by Lisa Berry