



Dances of Universal Peace North America



*A field of balsam root joyfully receiving the nourishment of the sun
in the foothills of Boise, ID*

Joy can be defined as "Intense and especially ecstatic or exultant happiness" (Free Online Dictionary), and we all recognize the feeling. It fills us until we feel as though we are as bright as the sun. It nourishes us, and it brings smiles

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to the people we share it with.

It is, of course, a transient state, one that cannot be endlessly sustained, and an attempt to try would be exhausting: joy is a high-energy state, balanced by moments of quiet contemplation, or perhaps even grief and sadness. They're all part of the human experience, and our work is to let them all flow through us without becoming attached to any of them.

In a Dance circle, joy is often found when a heart full to bursting reaches the completion of the Dance. Our tendency is to want to whoop and holler, jump up and down, clap and make noise, hug somebody - anything to dissipate the intensity of the feeling within us and to reach out to share this exuberance.

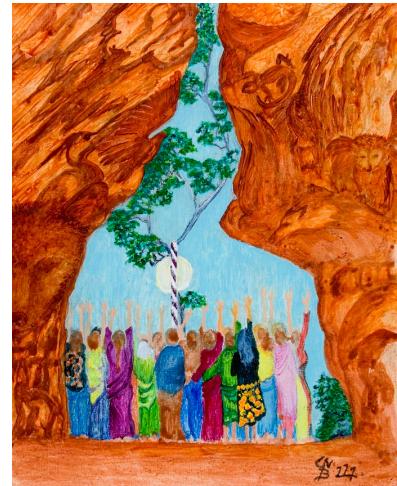
One of the practices in the Dances is to learn to make ourselves large enough to hold all emotions and feelings as they move through us, including joy. This is what the stillness at the end of the Dance helps us practice. Can we hold our joy, radiating it out to the world, without becoming uncentered?

*"In the promise of the dawn, in the breaking of the morn, in the smiles of the rose,
Beloved, I see thy joy at my homecoming."*

~*~ Hazrat Inayat Khan ~*~

Gratitude for Donations

DUPNA would like to thank the following circles and events for their dana from their events and gatherings to help further the work of DUPNA and outreach of the Dances. May you be blessed in return!



Artistic rendering of ecstatic joy in Split Top Cave, Canyonlands Dance Camp; drawing by Clint

Featured Song of the Month:

Ecstatic Zikr

originated by
Munir Peter Reynolds
who writes:

"I find that dissonance and tension in music helps me to feel the intensity of letting go. It's not always easy to let go and to face the truth, what must be confronted. But when that finally happens, consonance and harmony in music represent the ecstasy of coming out the other side."

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Featured Video of the Month:



The Kalama

Canyonlands Dance Camp (UT) Cleveland OH Dance Circle

Although no longer requiring memberships, the organization still accepts voluntary memberships and donations of any kind, which enable us to continue providing services such as the extensive website and these monthly newsletters.

Please [click here](#) to make a donation to support and further enliven the work of DUPNA. Thank you!

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*Joyful companions at Wilderness Dance Camp,
Flathead Lake, MT 2013*

How the Dances Have Changed My Life *by Elizabeth Santero*

**When we dance
the sun sails safely through the night
When we dance**

**The Kalama, the
closing Dance at the
Spring Renewal Retreat
with Allaudin Ottinger
and Leilah Be,
April 2014, in Prescott
AZ, with video
enhancements.
Video by Dennis
Roshay.**

~*~

**There are some great
DUP videos out there,
so if you have a good-
quality Dance video
you would like to share
with the community,
please send the links to
dupnamail@gmail.com
to be shared in
upcoming newsletters.**

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

*"The spiritual dance
has no other purpose,
no other aim than to
elevate humankind
beyond self thought,*

the future is formed by our feet
When we dance
the stars move through the heavens...
When we dance
Venus shimmers the desert
When we dance
dust becomes silver
stones are made of gold

to joy, to bliss, to realization and to peace. The sincere dancer is one of the best workers for universal harmony, and so for universal peace."

A year ago I had never heard of the Dances of Universal Peace. That all changed when I attended the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly (GA) in Louisville, Kentucky, last June. GA is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of congregations. While there we worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy through the democratic process for the Association.

Anyone may attend; while Unitarian Universalist congregations must certify annually to send voting delegates. I was attending my second GA as a delegate from my congregation in Madison, Connecticut.

GA represents everything I love about Unitarian Universalism -- the excitement of the sermons, the energy of the services, and the enthusiasm in the workshops that provide the chance to immerse yourself in something completely new. This is what happened to me, and it changed my life.

The program description for the Dances of Universal Peace sounded appealing. "Got Spirit? Got Inspiration? Got Peace? Embody your commitment to peace and justice with this contemplative, yet rejuvenating moving meditation experience. We will sing and dance together using simple, easy to learn melodies and movements from the world's wisdom traditions..." Jennifer Friedman, who led the workshop, is a Dances of Universal Peace leader from Longmont, Colorado; she was sponsored by the DUPNA. Her joyful presentation created a sense of hope, love, compassion, and peace.

What I experienced was a moment of deep clarity and synchronicity that the Dances could be what I'd been preparing for my whole life! All the years of singing and dancing, movement and body awareness, teaching and building community connections, had been leading up to

~*~Murshid SAM~*~

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

A Few Dances with an Attunement to Joy

Softening

Ecstatic Zikr

Light of this World

Haida

I Am Alive

Ivdu HaShem B'Simcha

"Now, I am not running a fun club, and I am not running a dramatic show. I believe we can learn through exaltation, through ecstasy, through joy and through love. At the same time we must also keep one eye open, so to speak, on our peace, if we want strength, because strength comes out of our inner peace. A lot of people go and speak against ecstasy and they don't know what

this moment. And, in that moment, the individual strands of my life came together to form a new whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. The experience has pointed me in a new direction and moved me to a new level of commitment.

[Click here](#) to read the complete article.

it is. A lot of people speak for it and they don't know what it is. So I find love should produce a certain kind of ecstasy and ecstasy if it is real will produce a certain kind of love."

~*~Murshid SAM~*~

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~*~



Moment of ecstatic joy at the Sufi Youth Jam in Bailey, CO 2014

Upcoming Dance Camps & Events submitted to the DUPNA website from around our Region:

~*~

Dance Deepening
May 24-26
north of Boston, MA
with Abraham & Halima
Sussman, Jon Maitreya
Stevens, and Malika
Salazar and friends
Contact:
Abraham Sussman
617-876-5272

~*~

Northern Colorado Dances of Universal Peace and Sufi Camp
May 29-June 1
Berthoud, CO
with Grace Marie & Gregory Gayan Long
Contact:
Grace Marie
970-498-8422

News from the Sufi Youth Jam

The first report is in from Anael Surya!

There were so many areas of the world represented, so many new dances we exchanged, so little time to learn them! Delegations from Germany, Czech Republic, Latvia, Colombia, Ecuador, North America, and Mexico were present; all brought new information about camps in their own regions.

The unification which birthed through the Ruhaniat Youth Council, had representation of all Sufi order youths and DUP kidlings. There was vast discussion among all of us of new ways to unify and visit other Sufi communities, suggestions of best places on earth to dance (New Zealand and Hawaii being contenders).

A strong Murshid SAM core was carried throughout the camp, with first time dance leaders practicing and gaining wisdom in dance leadership (yay!) under the sage advice of dance mentors.

~*~

Want to encourage this? [Click here](#) to visit the Sufi Ruhaniat Youth Scholarship page to donate to the scholarship fund or visit www.sufiyouth.com OR www.ruhaniat.org/index.php/youth-about to learn more about how the Ruhaniat encourages youth and young adult participation in the practices of Murshid SAM and Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

To learn more about how you might become involved with the organization of a national young adult Dance gathering in 2015, [click here](#) to email Jen Friedman.

And [click here](#) to download, print, and share a document detailing volunteer opportunities for youth and young adults with Dance organizations in North America. We are looking for the voices of the next generations to help guide us toward the future. Please encourage those young ones in your lives to get involved!

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Akhlaq Allah and Joy

In the teleconference titled "The Walking Practices initiated by Murshid Samuel L. Lewis," recorded on July 26, 2012, Murshid Wali Ali Meyer talks about the joy that accompanies "Akhlaq Allah," the practice of experiencing the presence of God.

Listen to the full conversation by clicking here:
<http://www.dancesofuniversalpeacena.org/regional-teleconferences-north-america.htm>

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I am happy even

Triangle Dance
Intensive: Attuning to the
Elements
June 6-7
Durham, NC
Contact:
Farrunnissa
919-361-2383

~*~

Wilderness Dance Camp
June 22-28
Flathead Lake, MT
with Allaudin Ottinger
and Lila Flood
Contact:
Misty Harding
406-209-3857

~*~

24th Annual Ithaca Dances of Universal Peace Camp
June 26-29
Ithaca, NY
Contact:
David Gallahan
OR
Diane Olden
607-351-3000

~*~

Dances Video Project
with Anahata Iradah
June 28-29
Aptos, CA
Contact:
Vanessa Hafiza
831-662-0534

*before I have a reason.
I am full of Light even before the sky
Can greet the sun or the moon.
Dear companions,
We have been in love with God
For so very, very long
What can Hafiz now do but forever
Dance?*

~*~ *Hafiz (Daniel Ladinsky, trans.)* ~*~

Poem on Joy

We have no haikus to share this month, so we share this poem and comments from a fairly new northern CA Dancer.

Next month's theme is Tending the Garden. Send your haikus to dupnamail@gmail.com

~~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Gratitude abounds for each and all of you for holding space and guiding the flow of the Sunday Dances of Universal Peace. After many years of Spiritual searching by means of mental and subtle mind enquiry these Dances have opened all the human faculties for the purpose of Divine acknowledgement. Sight, sound, sensation, human interaction, emotional, mental and physical...all in devotional surrender. Thanks to each of you for your part, you each have enriched my life.

Here is something I wrote about the Dances:

My voice rises along with other voices
until this is felt to be One voice

My body moves among other body's
until it seen to be One body

Around in a circle we move
until it is known that all space is One

When my hand touches another it is felt as One

~*~

**Every Wave of the Sea:
Higher and Higher!
with Mariam Baker &
Allaudin Ottinger
July 10-13
Trinity Center at the NC
coast
Contact:
Habiba Debi
252-756-6088**

~*~

**Ecstasy of Infinity: 6th
Annual Retreat with the
Fort Wayne Dance
Collective
with Munir Peter
Reynolds
July 25-27
Fort Wayne, IN
Contact:
Jarin Hart
260-424-6574**

~*~

**Eat, Dance, and Pray
Together: 14th Annual
Sufi Dance Community
Retreat Camp
July 31-August 3
MA
Contact:
Abraham Sussman
617-876-5272**

~*~

**Circling Around the
Earth**

**When our eyes meet it is Self looking into Self
When the circle seems to move..
it seems to be the room moving
Gratitude overwhelms each and all
as we feast on these Dances of Universal Peace.**

**Be at Peace,
Sage Lee One**

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**with
Murshid Saadi Neil
Douglas-Klotz, Murshid
Tansen O'Donohoe and
Murshida Sophia
Gita Onnen
Aug. 29-31
Silver City, NM
Contact:
Mariam Weidner
575-534-1441**

~*~

Newly Certified Dance Leaders

We send blessings to the newly certified leaders within our region. We bow in gratitude to their service and devotion, and in joy at their stepping forward to do this work!

This month we bless...

**Joy Jencuyah (CA)
Kathy Kochevar (NC)
Jessica Noe (MI)
Bhavani Judith Tucker (CA)
Diana Shemaya Haqq Pelletier (PA)**

Click here to view a complete and detailed listing of Dance Camps and Events submitted to our website from around our region

Our newsletter is now being archived on the website!

Click here if you recently missed a month.

"One of the reasons I am teaching this music and dancing is to increase Joy, not awe towards another person, but bliss in our own self. This is finding God within, through experience."

~*~ Murshid Samuel L. Lewis ~*~

**Sincerely,
The board and staff
Dances of Universal Peace North America**



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HOW THE DANCES HAVE CHANGED MY LIFE

By Elizabeth Santero

When we dance
the sun sails safely through the night
When we dance
the future is formed by our feet
When we dance
the stars move through the heavens...
When we dance
Venus shimmers the desert
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dust becomes silver
stones are made of gold

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GA represents everything I love about Unitarian Universalism -- the excitement of the sermons, the energy of the services, and the enthusiasm in the workshops that provide the chance to immerse yourself in something completely new. This is what happened to me, and it changed my life.

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What I experienced was a moment of deep clarity and synchronicity that the *Dances* could be what I'd been preparing for my whole life! All the years of singing and dancing, movement and body awareness, teaching and building community connections, had been leading up to this moment. And, in that moment, the individual strands of my life came together to form a new whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. The experience has pointed me in a new direction and moved me to a new level of commitment.

One aspect of the *Dances* that I noticed immediately is the opportunity for eye contact with each other as we progress around the circle. Unfortunately, the decline in eye contact in today's world has been well documented. An emotional connection is made when eye contact lasts for at least

60-70% of a conversation, yet most people only experience this important connection 30-60% of the time. Since we spend more and more of our time staring at screens, there's less time left over to look into people's eyes -- including the eyes of the people we care about most. Eye contact can be an important way to express caring, confidence and respect; it conveys our interest in what's being said and tells the other person that they matter. It has a direct effect on our nervous systems and brains in ways that we are only now beginning to understand. What a gift of love the *Dances* are giving to the world!

On returning home I started going to the one *Dances of Universal Peace* group in Connecticut. They meet in Ledyard from 6-8 PM on the fourth Sunday of every month at a place with the wonderful name of The Dragon's Egg. Since September my good friend, Lucia, has accompanied me to the *Dances* and has also been inspired by the deep spiritual connection that she has felt in the circle.

Lucia and I like to escape the harsh cold of our New England winters by heading south -- especially to Mexico where she lived much of her adult life. Recently we spent a chilly week together in San Miguel de Allende and, not wanting to repeat that experience, we couldn't decide where to go this year. Finally, after one of our dance sessions, I offered to check the international website of the *Dances* to see if there might be a workshop listed that would interest us. What I found was in Mexico, in February, and on the Yucatan peninsula, south of Cancun -- perfect! This was the fourteenth year that Bernie Heidman, also from Colorado, has been offering a week long *Dances of Universal Peace* workshop in Puerto Morelos. And, in another moment of syncronicity, Bernie just happens to be Jennifer's mentor. We signed up immediately!

Mexico was a magical mix of sun, dancing, eating and snorkeling on the world's second largest coral reef. We even managed to squeeze three extra days out of our trip because of the numerous snow storms back home! While there we deepened our love of the *Dances* and made some wonderful friends. Of course, we are booked to return next year.

With my sixtieth birthday in a couple of weeks, I am grateful that the *Dances of Universal Peace* came into my life when they did. And at what better place than GA where all the world's wisdom traditions are honored. They have given me a renewed sense of direction and purpose for the third part of my life. I want to give back in a way that is both meaningful and nurturing for the world. After over twenty years of teaching older adults, I also have a vision of working to adapt the *Dances* for those populations that aren't able to stand and move in a circle -- the overlooked, elderly, handicapped, and wheelchair bound. Right now I'm staying open to what the universe brings -- like the opportunity to write this article, and, of course, dancing as often as possible. I can only imagine what the future holds in store!

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