



Living in the Balance

May 2013

I remember when my family got our first TV. I think I was five. The three major networks signed on and signed off with the National Anthem and the flag waving. Because I lived in DC, we got two additional channels....one local and one Baltimore....but actually tuning them in required major good luck and just the right twist of the antenna. At first, it was rabbit ears and aluminum foil, then an outside antenna that required someone like my father to get on the roof which resulted in my mother asking my father if he was crazy and my father ignoring her and hollering down, "Just let me know when the reception is good." I am assuming he was talking about the TV because the reception he got when he came down from the roof was my mother's fluttering eyelids and a lecture about the state of his sanity. Trust me. The eye flutter alone was enough to stop you in your tracks. My mother, who was an avid reader and lover of silence, believed that aside from Perry Mason, TV was a noisy, distracting waste of time. She wanted my brother and me outside or doing something constructive, like reading or riding our bikes or catching fireflies.

I thought TV was magical and wonderful and full of delight. I loved to watch the cartoons. All of kids were released from school one day to go home and watch John Glenn launch. But then President Kennedy died. The channels broadcast nothing but the funeral. Then the Vietnam War came into our living rooms. It was war as no one had seen it. Flag draped caskets. Helicopters. Bombs exploding. For this young girl, light magic became dark tragic. Reality too real.

In my life, we have gone from black and white channels to color to HD to endless channels. From the nightly news to the nanosecond news. Broadcasting from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. is now 24/7. And one screen can now be split and viewers can watch multiple screens simultaneously. We are bombarded from every direction. Install a movie screen in your home. Watch TV on the latest gizmo.

"Don't you want to add an 'app'?" the sales person asks me as I buy an Iphone? "There are thousands," she croons. "Amazing, really."

"Yes," I sigh. "Amazing."

She says, "Here's an app you have to have called 'find my phone'. It tells you the exact location of your phone so you won't ever lose it!"

I ask her to load it remembering that a friend used 'find my phone' and discovered she'd accidentally packed hers in a box she had shipped. I leave the store with my Iphone in hand, full of wonder and yet wondering, "Is there an app for 'find my life which is may be escaping from me every moment I spend on this device?'"

Some suggest that we are killing off the pleasure centers in our brain from this over stimulation. The steady stream of bottom and top screen scrolls, side bars of colored boxes, and the talking heads overload my circuits. Experts say we have a new "internet addiction disorder" which is probably going to change to "electronic device disorder." If they make that adjustment, I think they'll nail it.

I'm not opposed to technology. Even God has a Facebook page. And I understand that millions follow the Pope on Twitter. Facebook has its moments for me. My niece posts pictures of her new home. My nephew shares photos of his girls playing dress up. Emails. Texts. I like being in touch. But if I follow the collective directive too far, I will miss prowling through the woods. The heron flying over my garden. The moon out my back door. The smell of a brand new book and the feel of the paper under my hands. Sharing a meal with friends. Sitting quietly with my own thoughts.

I don't want to live a simulated, vicarious life. I have choice. I make mine. I close the window on the computer and click "shut down." I slide the Iphone icon to "off." I sit quietly in the dusk. © Wanda Meade



Calendar considerations.....

The Human Spiritual Journey with Svar

Saturday and Sunday, May 18 and 19

Greenville Yoga at Augusta Road studio

For more information: <http://greenvillyoga.com/workshops>

Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina

The dance of emotions: an insight meditation retreat, May 7 – 12

Touching the Unconditioned: a Vipassana retreat, May 16 – 20

Beginner's mind for everyone: The undoing of doing, May 24 – 27

Unfettering the natural mind: The path of clear seeing, June 1 – 8

For more information about retreats and the schedule <http://www.southerndharma.org>

The Sophia Institute in Charleston, South Carolina

Seven Thousand Ways to Listen with Mark Nepo, May 17, 2013

Healing from the Inside Out with Christine Page, June 21 – 23, 2013

<http://www.thesophiainstitute.org>

Mountain Top Lectures

Bishop John Spong

May 3 and 4, 2013

Amicalola Falls Lodge, Dawsonville, Georgia

<http://mountaintoplectures.org>

Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

May 13 – 18 offered at White Oak Conference Center, Winnsboro, SC

Speakers include Marjorie Thompson and Rabbi Rami Shapiro

For more information <http://academy.cs-staging.com/events/five-day-academies>

Or contact Pat Hansen at pat.hansen@juno.com

Imagine: Montreat's Spring Conference

May 24 – 27, 2013

Presenters include Marcus Borg and Tom Currie

Montreat Retreat Center, Montreat, NC

<http://www.montreat.org>

Summer Dream and Spirituality Conference

Offered by the Haden Institute at Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

May 26 – 31, 2013

For more information: <http://www.hadeninstitute.com/summer-dream-conference>

Eight Day Centering Prayer Retreat

Sunday, May 26 – June 8

Lead by Rev. Thomas Morris

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, TN

For more info: www.centeringprayermidtn.com

931-598-5342





Calendar considerations.....

SOULfeast

July 14 – 18, 2013

Featured speaker will be Trevor Hudson
Lake Junaluska Retreat Center
<http://www.lakejunaluska.com/soulfeast>

Jain Summer School for Youth

Open to students of all faith traditions ages 16 – 21
July 21 – 18 at Claremont Lincoln University in Claremont, CA
<http://jain.claremontlincoln.org/youth-summer-school>

Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons

Rev. Michael Dowd, October 13, 2013
Dr. Walter Brueggemann, February 16, 2014
Dr. John Philip Newell, November 9, 2014
For more information <http://astlonline.org>

Iona Pilgrimage with Jungian analyst Jerry Wright

September 20 through October 1, 2013
For more information contact Jerry at jwright@morrisbb.net

Lansing Lee Conference

Blue Ridge Tales: Stories of Survival, Healing and Faith featuring Rev. Becca Stevens
October 20 – 22, 2013
Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC
www.kanuga.org

Kanuga Conference Center

Icon Writing, November 16 – 22
Enneagram Conference, December 5 – 8
Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC
www.kanuga.org

Modern Mind ~ Ancient Soul

Thursday evening, November 7 – lunch Sunday, November 10
Offered by AwakeningSoul
Presenters: Lauren Winner and Jungian analyst, Jerry Wright
Lutheridge Conference Center, Asheville, NC
For more information
<http://www.awakeningsoulpresents.org/awakeningsoul-events>

The Anchorage offers programs throughout the year in Greenville.
www.theanchorage.org

The Hermitages at Valle Crucis in Valle Crucis, NC

Offer wonderful spaces for private retreats.





About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone
864-246-3960 or via email at wmeade@meadellc.com

Wanda Meade, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor
Completed Haden Institute in Spiritual Direction Program
PO Box 14940
Greenville, SC 29610



All of the photos in this month's journal are my work. The photo on the opening page was taken near the Sourwood Inn in Asheville. All of the other photos are of the rural crossroads of Pumpkintown, South Carolina.