



Living in the Balance

May 2015

The breakfast crowd has long cleared Tommy's Ham House as Mac downs his third coffee and I savor my third iced tea. T-minus 18 hours before Mac climbs in the filled to the gills Toyota truck and heads out to the Arizona forest where he'll be a fire watcher until the season ends in August or September. Mac retired as an airline pilot several years ago and discovered this gig as a fire spotter. From his perch in the fire tower he has captured spectacular photos of sky and storm and fire and then dozens more from nearby back road excursions. His images amaze.

He longs to take the cross country trip slowly on blue highways, but has a time crush to get to Tucson. "I have several swamps and old places I want see, but not sure about timing and the weather doesn't look promising." Our talk shifts to cameras and apertures and lens and photo ops. "The only thing more boring than watching people take photographs is listening to people talk about taking photographs," he smiles. I pick up, "I know you are time squeezed, but what fun to stop at every wide place on the back roads. I would love to throw my gear in with yours and head out, too, but we'd take about three months to get from here to Tucson! I'll be with you in spirit." And I feel that sweet, "hit the road" yearning building in my soul as we yak our way to his Toyota and I peer in at equipment and supplies. He beams as he opens the side window showing me the quick access to cameras and lens. He promises photos soon as he pulls away.

In my car, I sit. I wait. The lump in my throat doesn't calm and the ache in my chest clutches. When did my life get so safe? So predictable? So errands and grocery store?

My husband, Rex, and I both graduated from the same high school. He finished a year ahead of me. Rex doesn't "do" Facebook so when his 50th reunion classmates set up a page, I asked if he wanted me to join? "Sure. Yeah. Why not? Don't think we'll go, but who knows." As I follow the postings, they list the deceased classmates. Of the 900 plus in his class, more than 80 have died, including two of Rex's best buds. And more lists follow of the "anybody know the whereabouts of?" Among the deceased are three that I sang with in concert choir. Among the missing I find my sweet tenor choir mate who sang in our wedding. After high school graduation, he entered a monastic order. We shared coffee a couple of years later and he lamented that the monastery didn't work out and his "what next" remained unknown. I haven't talked to him since my wedding 44 years ago.

I think of this in my car; wanderlust and longing pulling on my soul. Insisting. Pleading. The list of missing and dead grows longer and the days shorter.

The committee that lives in my head gathers. Deidra Dutiful rolls her eyes at Willowy Wanderlust condescending, "Seriously, Willow. Still a child. Still wanting to run off and play." Scaredy Cat Catie screams, "Think about safety! You can't just wander around in this world stopping on the side of the road! Maniacs! Murderers!" And talking over everyone, Rita Responsibility hurls her crammed day planner hitting Latisha Longing squarely in the forehead. "Wake up!" she shrieks. "You **cannot** just get up and go! WHO will do this?!"

The haggling continues. Bracing the steering wheel, I stare past the windshield and start the car.

©Wanda Meade



Calendar considerations.....

Southern Dharma Center

A Marriage of Yoga and Meditation, May 12 – 17

Beginner's Mind for Everyone, May 22 – 25

Unfettering the Natural Mind, May 30 – June 6

Mindful Advocacy, June 17 – 21

For more information www.southerndharma.org

Offerings by **The Anchorage** in Greenville, SC

Mepkin Abbey Directed Retreats offered in April and July

For more information: <http://www.theanchorage.org/>

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

Sarah and Angelina Grimke with Sue Monk Kidd, May 5

Engaging Wholeheartedly as Women Leaders with Margaret Wheatley, May 8 and 9

The Endless Practice: Becoming Who You Were Born to Be with Mark Nepo, May 15, 16 and 17

www.thesophiainstitute.org

Valle Crucis Conference Center

Women Writer's Workshop 1, May 21 – 24

Men's Work: A Journey to Discovering your True Self, June 12 – 14

Women Writer's Workshop 2, August 20 – 24

Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat

Eight Day Intensive and Post Intensive, May 31 – June 6

Eight Day Intensive and Post Intensive, August 2 – 9

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, Tennessee

<https://copnc.org>

The Haden Institute

Summer Dream Conference and Spirituality Conference

Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

May 24 – 29

www.hadeninstitute.com





Calendar considerations.....

Montreat Retreat Center

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's Unfinished Agenda
Intergenerational "teach-in." Speakers include Leonard Pitts, Yvette Flunder, and
Bishop Vashti McKenzie.

August 21 – 23

Neighbor: Being Christian in a Multifaith World, Brian McLaren speaking

October 12 – 15

www.montreat.org

Women's Retreat with Dr. Lauren Winner

September 17 – 19

Lake Junaluska Conference Center, North Carolina

http://www.lakejunaluska.com/events/spiritual_enrichment/signature_series/

Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons

Searching for Jesus Beyond Belief

Harry Cook

Two different presentations at 2:30 and 4:30, Sunday, October 4

Trinity United Methodist Church, Anderson, SC

www.astlonline.org

Kanuga Conference Center

Enneagram Conference, October 4–7

Lansing Lee Conference October 18 – 20 featuring keynotes

Rev. Dr. George Carey and Rev. Canon John Petersen

Icon Writing November 15 –21

www.kanuga.org

AwakeningSoul Offers

Circling the Fire with Walter Brueggemann and Valerie Tutson

November 5 – 8

Lutheridge, near Asheville, NC

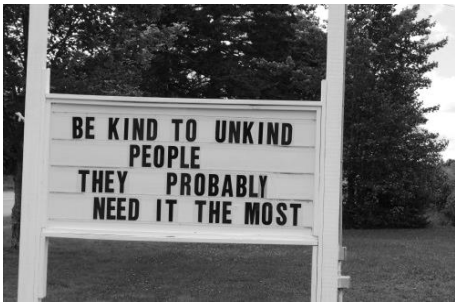
www.awakeningsoulpresents.org

Abbey of the Arts

Offering a number of on-line self-paced courses.

<http://abbeyofthearts.com>





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



The photos are my work. Let's just say they were shot on the blue highways. I encourage you go discover your own.