At this time of year, "turning over a new leaf" or "beginning again" are stronger themes than usual. But in reality, new beginnings can occur at any time. Some, like the birth of a child or the first day of college, are obvious markers: yesterday I was one person, today I'm someone else. Some are less obvious: who we are the day before the new year or a birthday usually seems pretty much the same as the day after.

Besides the outer signs of a new beginning there are those inner moments of rebirthing ourselves, waking up again - and again - to the new reality of this moment, and then this one. The slant of the light through the kitchen window, the quirk of a loved one's smile, the sound of our breath.
Spiritual teachings say that every breath is a new beginning, letting God breathe into us and then breathing out into God. Often in the Dances we are offered those moments of total awareness and new beginnings. How are new beginnings serving you at the start of this new year? How do the Dances play a role in this rebirth?

"As life unfolds itself to man the first lesson it teaches is humility; the first thing that comes to man's vision is his own limitedness. The vaster God appears to him, the smaller he finds himself. This goes on and on until the moment comes when he loses himself in the vision of God."

~*~ Hazrat Inayat Khan ~*~

January 15th: Our Day of Celebration and Gratitude

January 15th marks the date of Murshid SAM's Urs, and was chosen as the "birth date" of the Dance Network. Two reasons to rejoice!

Murshid Samuel L. Lewis was the originator of what became known as the Dances of Universal Peace; he also brought through the spiritual Walks and influenced a whole lineage of teachers and mentors. He died on January 15, 1971. In the Sufi tradition, your day of death is your Urs, your wedding day with the Beloved (Rumi's Urs are celebrated on December 17th, as another example.)

Click here to read more about Murshid SAM's life at the Sufi Ruhaniat International website and click here to read about SAM at the Dances of Universal Peace International website.

In September 1998, Murshid Moineeddin, Murshid SAM's successor as the spiritual head of the Ruhaniat, when asked what Murshid SAM sought to accomplish with the Dances, wrote, "From one point of view, the Dances are a simple and effective means to actualize devotion and

Quick Links

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Find the Dances

Help us grow our network!

Follow us on twitter

New Year's Eve at the Mentorgarden

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Featured Song of the Month:

We are the Rising Sun

We are the Rising Sun, a circular (pun intended) chant recorded at a pre-Dance moment at the Canyonlands Camp, led by Bernie Heideman

Click here to watch

"Two stories of meeting Murshid SAM"

as remembered by
increase grace, glory, wisdom, joy and peace in people's consciousness. And this is sufficient for the multitudes. From another point of view, the Dances are a gate to esoteric training, the path of initiation and discipleship. From yet another point of view, the Dances are a beautiful expression of the ideal of Universal Worship."

The Dance Network itself was born out of a vision received by Murshid Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz in 1981. In 2002, he wrote: "As a young student in Sufism, I was on personal retreat in December 1981 and received in vision the message from Murshid Samuel Lewis to start a school of the Dances open to all, collaborating with the best teachers then available." The vision was to begin with a program of residential study for prospective teacher of the Dances, which included the Walks, visiting local Dance meetings and 'cleaning up the kitchens.'" When this vision was confirmed by Saadi's teachers, he wrote, "the only sure way to tell was to try it out."

"And so it went. The International Dance Network as we know it was started first as a 'school,' (then called the Center for the Study of Spiritual Dance and Walk, and based at the Mentorgarten in San Francisco). But after only two years, the inspiration came to re-establish it as a 'network and research center,' that is, an organization whose 'center' could be anywhere and everywhere."

From those beginnings, the Dances have spread and touched the lives of many thousands of people. Dance circles worldwide mark this as a special day. How do you recognize it as such?

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Click here to view a whole page of video, audio, and photos of Murshid SAM and his students' memories of him.

Click here to view the Facebook Page and sign up to attend the Live on-line Urs celebration of Murshid SAM at Rising Tide International in Florida on Tuesday, January 14th 7:30-8:30pm EST

Featured Video of the Month:
Hazrat Inayat Khan's Urs in February

The Sufi Ruhaniat International is privileged to be the host of the 87th Urs Celebrations of Hazrat Inayat Khan at his dargah in New Delhi, India in February 2014. Pir Shabda & Murshida Leilah Be, with Murshida Halima Sussman and Murshid Abraham Sussman, will lead a program in India, January 31 - February 9, 2014.

Hazrat Inayat Khan was an Indian classical musician and Sufi teacher, who brought the message of Universal Sufism to the west in the early 1900s. He was a teacher of Murshid SAM, and as such is considered one of the grandparents of the Dances.

Click here to read more about Hazrat Inayat Khan at the Sufi Ruhaniat International website and click here to read about him at the Dances of Universal Peace International website.

~*~ Hazrat Inayat Khan ~*~
Sufi Youth Jam in Colorado

Have you ever hung out with the next generation of our movement and marveled at their natural capacity to embody the Oneness ideal? Among those of us between 18-39 years old, there is a deep passion and longing to bring forth those cherished qualities of compassion, acceptance, and profound love into the wider world community. Imagine these "youth," and beautiful beings from the next generations gathering in one place to be inspired and empowered by these ideals and one another.

The Sufi Ruhaniat Youth Council is sponsoring - for the first time - an international Sufi Youth Jam, which will be held April 29 to May 4 at Camp Santa Maria, a YMCA camp near Bailey, Colorado (40 minutes west of Denver), where young people, ages 18 to 39, will gather to meet their beloved peers from all over the world in order to practice, seed connections, and envision the future unfolding of the lineage. Accommodation options include cabins and camping. Anyone, ages 18 to 39, with an interest in the Dances of Universal Peace and/or Universal Sufism, is invited. Cost is $250 and includes meals and lodging.

Click here to download and share the flyer for the event.

The Youth Jam schedule will be shaped to include and address the specific interests and passions of the participants. The next generation of leaders and mentors will be invited to share their gifts and teachings throughout the retreat. Participants will be supported and encouraged to contribute to the retreat by leading dances, music, Sufi practices, and by engaging fully in conversation geared toward building a strong community and deep relationships rooted firmly in our shared lineage of Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan and Murshid Samuel Lewis. Each day will include Dances of Universal Peace, Sufi practices, instruction in musicianship and Dance Leader training. New leaders will be welcomed, nourished and celebrated in a circle of peers. There will also be plenty of opportunity for Colorado fun! Hiking, campfires, performance hours, drum circles, exploring and enjoying the beautiful mountains. Dancers, leaders and members of the wider community (all ages) will be invited to join us for an evening meal and program so that they may experience the leadership of the next generation.
Cost for youth attendance can sometimes be prohibitive, so communities/circles are encouraged to raise funds to sponsor specific attendees to the Youth Jam. Funds raised for an individual's registration fees should be sent directly to Sára Rain. Travel expenses should be given directly to the individual.

You can also donate to the Sufi Youth Jam via earmarked donations to the Sufi Ruhaniat International scholarship fund. The funds collected by the Ruhanian will be used to provide grants to youths who wish to attend. At the SRI Youth Council website, www.sufiyouth.com, click on "Scholarships> Donate" Instructions are clear for both online and mailing donations; make sure to add a note saying: "Youth Jam Scholarship."

Young people who wish to apply for a grant to attend the Sufi Youth Jam may apply through the Ruhaniat. At the SRI youth Council website, www.sufiyouth.com, click on "Scholarships>Apply" Another suggested approach is to ask a Dance leader to write a letter about the youth who wishes to apply articulating the need, a brief bio including a photo, and to ask the local community to solicit support through cash donations, frequent flyer miles, etc.

Click here to view the Sufi Youth Jam flyer, a detailed instruction sheet for how to support the youth among us, and how to apply for scholarship funds if you are between 18 and 39 years old.

Sára Rain has already received a check from the Santa Fe NM circle to pay the registration fee for four participants from Germany! So support and encouragement is out there! If you know of someone between the ages of 18 and 39 who attends the dances, let them know about the event and consider fundraising for them to attend!

Click here to view more detailed information on the event, including a Paypal link for online credit card payments.

"But life inevitably throws us curve balls, unexpected circumstances that remind us to expect the unexpected. I've come to understand these curve balls are the beautiful unfolding of both karma and current."
Newly Certified Dance Leaders

We send blessings to the newly certified leaders within our region and bow in gratitude to their service and devotion, and in joy at their stepping forward to do this work! This month we bless Beth Basira Fergin (WA).

Haiku on New Beginnings

New beginnings apparently cannot be captured in words, so we have none to offer.

However, we do offer another haiku on stillness (from last month) and a correction to another haiku from last month (apologies to Narayan).

A single heron
day and night and day stands still
portrait of prayer
~Karen Mastracchio

Narayan Eric Waldman’s corrected haiku:

in becomes out, and out in; an infinite point desist
What breathes now

Next month’s newsletter theme is Devotion.
Please send your haiku to dupnamail@gmail.com

"Come, come, whoever you are! Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving, come! This is not a caravan of despair. It doesn’t matter if you’ve broken your vow a thousand times, still come, and yet again, come!"

~*~ Rumi (Coleman Barks, trans.) ~*~

Corrected Link to Last Month's Article: Announcement to Dance Leaders in the North American Region Regarding Leaders

Contact:
Sàra Rain
970-227-5275

Canyonlands Spring Dance Camp
Moab, UT
April 30-May 4, 2014
with Bernie Heideman,
Sky Majida and Friends
Contact:
Sky Majida
928-536-3307

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

Click here to read an article in the Elephant Journal about the Dances of Universal Peace from the perspective of a new dancer.

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
Guild Fees

In last month’s newsletter, the link to view the details for the new process for Dance leaders to pay their Leaders Guild fee was not working properly. Here, please find the article again with the corrected link.

~*~

Beginning January 1, 2014 whenever your annual $30 Leaders Guild fees next become due you will pay them directly to Dances of Universal Peace International (DUP IN). DUP North America (DUPNA) will no longer collect Leaders Guild fees on behalf of Dances of Universal Peace International.

Click here to view details on the process.

To see how to access this from the DUPNA website, see http://www.dancesofuniversalpeacena.org/support-na.htm

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May you be blessed with an unfolding beyond your comprehension so that you may participate in the rebirthing of our world.

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

We appreciate your donations and dana. Blessings on all of you who offered support to DUPNA during 2013; may the blessings return to you tenfold.

These circles offered donations within the past month:

Willits, CA circle
Summit, NJ circle
Cottonwood, AZ 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. Happy new year and thank you!

Two year Dance leader training and deepening with Radha Tereska Buko is starting in April in Iowa; the early registration deadline is February 1st. Click here to learn more.

Forward this email