

# **Meher Baba Washington Gathering**

**June - August 2008**



**W**hen the Word of My Love breaks out of its Silence and speaks in your hearts, telling you who I really am, you will know that is the real Word you have always been longing to hear.

**Meher Baba**

## Visiting from Avatar's Abode, Australia

## Bill and Diana LePage

Bill and Diana make their third return visit to the Washington Gathering. Join us in the companionship of remembrance of our Beloved for seven full days.

### **Wed., June 25**

David & Clea McNeely

### **Welcome Back Dinner**

Dinner – 6:30 PM. Meeting begins – 7:30 PM

Come and welcome our Australian lad and lassie back to town. Don't worry about getting dinner first; it will be awaiting you, along with your Baba family. RSVP by Monday, June 23rd if at all possible. 410-461-5033. If your plans change and you can join us unexpectedly, then come anyway (but you may just get a peanut butter sandwich, if you're late).

### **Thurs., June 26**

David & Clea McNeely

### **Lunch, Tea, or Dinner with the LePages**

Ellicott City is about twelve thousand miles closer than the MPR, so take advantage and come hang out with Bill and Diana whenever you are able to leave the labor phase for a few hours. Please call first: 410-461-5033.

### **Fri., June 27**

Pamela Butler-Stone

### **Evening Extravaganza with Bill LePage and Michael McConkey**

Dinner – 6:30PM Meeting Begins – 8:00 PM

Start this amazing evening with a dinner lovingly prepared by Chefs Saleem and Zeeba. After dinner Michael McConkey will serenade us with his joyful music. Bill LePage will then take the stage to tell his stories of being with the Beloved Meher Baba. Please **RSVP** to Pamela by Wednesday, June 25th: 301-946-0236

### **Sat., June 28**

David & Clea McNeely

### **Mandali Hall, Washington Edition**

Gathering and tea–3:30 PM Meeting Begins–4:00 PM Dinner – 6:30 PM

The fragrance of Baba's presence is so delightful when we listen to the personal stories of those who have been with Him. In all our lifetimes as a drop-soul, how rare are these moments! Too rare even in this one lifetime. Bill will have fresh stories of Baba, and of Eruch, and of times in India for us. Then we'll set up the big table again so we can all share a meal, camaraderie and Baba stories with each other. Please **RSVP** by Thursday, June 26th: 410-461-5033

### **Sun., June 29**

Jeff & Geri Craddock

### **Painting Meher Baba:**

Potluck lunch – 12:00 PM Meeting Begins – 1:30 PM

We've had Baba stories, we've had Baba music, and now it's time for Baba in art. For the last 29 years Diana has been drawing and painting Meher Baba and His mandali. Her murals hang in the dining room at the new Meher Pilgrim Retreat at Meherabad. People who have seen Diana's presentation say it is absolutely not to be missed. Please **RSVP** and coordinate potluck: 301-588-6073

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**Mon., June 30**  
David & Clea McNeely

**Lunch, Tea, or Dinner with the LePages**

Come hang out with Bill and Diana whenever you are able. As wonderful as the meetings are, intimate time with Bill and Diana is even better. Please call first: 410-461-5033.

**Tues., July 1**  
David & Clea McNeely

**Lunch, Tea, or Dinner with the LePages**

Come hang out with Bill and Diana whenever you are able. Please call first: 410-461-5033.

**Wed., July 9**  
Marian Lobred

**Silence Day Warm-up**

Gathering – 7:00 PM Meeting begins – 7:30 PM

Come talk about keeping silent. This evening will range from funny stories of breaking silence on Silence Day to a more profound (we will pretend, anyway) discussion of the meaning of Baba's silence and the suffering it caused Him.

**Sat., July 19**  
Terry & Rob Barton

**Gutta Night**

Potluck and Meeting – 6:30 PM

The Gutta planning meeting held one year ago resulted in the magnificent Labor Day Sahavas with Baba's nephews and Jamie Newell. Regular planning meetings created a star-studded program throughout the year. What's next for the Washington Gathering? Please come help plan the program for fall quarter.

**Sat., August 9**  
Mojgan Seyedsafi

**Mani Stories**

Gathering – 7:30 PM. Meeting begins – 8:00 PM

Stories of and by the master storyteller Mani Irani, Meher Baba's sister. Bring your favorite stories to read aloud.

**MEETING LOCATIONS** - Please call the hosts, if you need directions

Terry & Robert Barton	6951 Duncraig Court, McLean, VA	703-883-8093
Pamela Butler-Stone	11227 Dewey Court, Kensington, MD	301-946-0236
Geri & Jeff Craddock	2799 Beechbank Road, Silver Spring, MD	301-588-6073
Marian Lobred	3215D Sutton Place, NW, Washington, DC	202-362-0664
David & Clea McNeely	3079 Chestnut Hill Drive, Ellicott City, MD	410-461-5033
Mojgan Seyedsafi	10214 Bushman Drive, #124, Oakton, VA	703 -899-6659

The following story from John Grant's book, Practical Spirituality with Meher Baba, seems especially timely as Silence Day approaches. Eruch Jessawalla was asked the meaning of Baba's last spoken words, July 9, 1925, when He told His close ones, "*Beware of snakes. Always carry a lamp with you.*" Eruch replied, "Figuratively, He said these things. It is all symbolic. Snakes mean our desires—things that imperceptibly enter into us and poison us. Carry a lamp with you all the time—that is, the lamp of His Love, His Remembrance, His Name, so that desires won't harm you. Baba said, '*If you don't have a lamp and they bite you, then I am helpless— you fall and you succumb. Always carry the lamp of My Love, My Name, My Remembrance, so that it will throw light upon the situation and you will know it to be what it is.*'"

One of the gifts of being part of a Baba community is the opportunity to come together to remember Him. In these last several months we have been blessed with some wonderful opportunities to leave the distractions of the world behind and to immerse ourselves in His Company. And now we have another treat in store as we welcome our special returning guests, Bill and Diana LePage, in late June! See calendar for details.

### **Bhau Kalchuri**

A number of us from the Washington area had the great pleasure of being with Bhauji during his three weeks at the Meher Center. Bhauji made the long journey here despite his many overwhelming health problems, and it was a gift to have him with us once again. Knowing that this would most likely be his final trip to the West, people came from all over the country to be with him, and there was a deeply felt awareness of how precious this time truly was. As usual, he gave tirelessly of himself, with a morning talk at the Barn and an evening talk at the Meeting Place every day. His indomitable spirit remained very strong throughout his stay, even at times when his physical self was not at

all strong and doctors were urging him to go to the hospital. It was amazing to witness Bhau's absolute dedication to serving his Lord Meher. Every breath and every word expressed his faith and service to his Beloved, and we are all the richer for his inspiring example.

A beautifully written account by Greg Butler, entitled Beyond Suffering—Bhau Kalchuri, highlights a particularly dramatic incident which occurred during Bhau's visit to Myrtle Beach. His website can be found at [www.holistic-personal-development.com](http://www.holistic-personal-development.com).

### **Mr. and Mrs. Jagganath**

The Jagganaths brought the spirit of India and Baba's Love to Washington. He emphasized the importance of remembering Baba and striving to keep His Presence constantly with us. One quote he shared that underscored this theme is the following:

*Love and direct relatedness with the Avatar is the high road of all roads to inner development, and while I am in the body and for sometime after I drop my body, the potential for love and direct relationship is there and should be used.*

*But one day as the Truth and the Presence of the Avatar begins to diminish, then humanity will have to use lesser, secondary techniques and I must provide for that time and so I have given out these extensive discourses on meditation. But do not mistake Me, because meanwhile, it is a distraction from your time and energy to use meditation.*

*Meher Baba*

Mr. Jagganath also related a beautiful story about Kusum Singh's mother, the Maharani of Saharanpur (Mohini), whose mansion was adjacent to Baba's bungalow in Dehra Dun. Khusum's sister, Pushpata Lata, had died in childbirth, and the Maharani Mohini was overcome with grief. During this difficult time, she learned about Meher Baba, and, in

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desperation, went to see him with a request to bring her daughter back. She wept as she told Baba her story, and Baba comforted her with the assurance that she would have her daughter back. Baba's words lifted the burden from her heart and gave her hope. When she asked, "Would you truly give me back my daughter?" Baba assured her that He would. He told her to stop worrying and have patience; her daughter would come back to her. All she had to do was to remember Him and love Him. She was with Baba on many occasions and became happy and cheerful while with Him. Inwardly she began to lean more and more on Baba. Whenever she would remind Baba of His promise to her, He would reply that she must be patient; her daughter would definitely return to her. But meanwhile she should go on remembering Baba more and more. Years went by and the Maharani and her husband were visiting Baba. Baba looked radiant that day and suddenly stated, "I am in the mood at this moment to give you whatever you ask. Tell me at once, do you want your daughter back, or do you want Me?" The Maharani gently placed her hand on Baba's knee and replied, "I want you, Baba." Baba replied, "Now you have your daughter back. The whole world is in me, including your daughter." *Details of story excerpted from Lord Meher by Bhau Kalchuri*

### **Tom and Cathy Riley**

The three-day celebration of Baba's birthday was a feast of love as Tom and Cathy Riley shared their gifts with us. Tom was in top form as a storyteller, regaling us with his story of coming to Baba and seeing Him for the first time in Myrtle Beach, as well as his saga of traveling overland to India for the 1962 East West Gathering at Guruprasad. One seldom-heard story that Tom shared is the following:

*For the better part of 10 days in 1958, from May 19th to May 31st, I was present with Meher Baba at the Meher Center in North Myrtle Beach. During this time I became acquainted with a uniquely-conscious woman from NYC whose name escapes me now. She was extremely well-off. Her husband, no*

*longer living, had been the president of the World Bank. This woman was a close personal friend of Rachael Carson, that extraordinary individual who wrote "The Silent Spring." If you will remember, this wonderful book was a real forerunner and a stark revelation in the field of environmental and ecological catastrophes created by man's unconsciousness or ignorance everywhere on the planet. As you may recall, the facts revealed in the book at that time were shocking. Now, the awareness of this dilemma is more general knowledge.*

*One afternoon during the Sahavas, Meher Baba was not available to us for an hour and a half or two. My friend, Mrs. X, who was obsessed with the problem Rachael Carson's book had revealed, was walking with me, Simon Thorpe and another friend near the original Meeting Place, and was quite seriously involved in talking about the world environmental crisis. She wanted nothing more than to bring the matter to Meher Baba's attention. We were just passing the entrance to the Meeting place when Meher Baba suddenly appeared from within the building. No one had known where He was, but there was Baba with two of His mandali. He smiled happily at us and gestured, asking whether we had anything we wished to bring to His attention. Thankfully amazed, Mrs X brought to the forefront the whole essence of the planetary catastrophe. Baba listened seriously, focusing His concerned attention upon her question. When she had concluded, He gestured the following, "Everything you have said is absolutely true. Poisons are everywhere, but let your primary concern, let your constant preoccupation be to reveal Me within yourself. Let your focus be to discover and realize My Presence, My being within you."*

Cathy moved us all with her beautiful music. Her concert was a stirring retrospective of her journey with Baba through music. She sang a number of songs from the early days at the Center, particularly Bob Brown's music, and

even demonstrated Bob at his wildest, getting down on his knees and rocking out.

One of the songs Cathy sang was an inspiring hymn called, My Life Flows On. We've included the beautiful words here:

*My life flows on in endless song  
Above earth's lamentations  
I hear the real, though far-off hymn  
That hails the new creation  
Above the tumult and the strife  
I hear its music ringing  
It sounds an echo in my soul  
How can I keep from singing?*

*What though the tempest round me roars  
I know the truth, it liveth  
What though the darkness round me close  
Songs in the night it giveth  
No storm can shake my inmost soul  
While to that rock I'm clinging  
Since Love is Lord of heaven and earth  
How can I keep from singing?*

### **Allan Cohen**

Allan Cohen was our special guest at the end of April. He enthralled the audience with his sweeping exploration of how one can function as a spiritual being in a mayavic universe. He started with Baba's explanation that the majority of humanity is creating new sanskaras, while those turning to the spiritual path are beginning the process of consciously choosing to become free of those bindings. Allan referred to the former group as "winders" and the more spiritually oriented group as "unwinders." (Meher Baba describes the winding of sanskaras in the process of evolution and reincarnation and the unwinding of sanskaras in the process of involution in both *God Speaks* and the *Discourses*.) Sharing his experience both as a psychotherapist and a spiritual aspirant on the Avatar's path, he discussed the phenomena of internal experience, specifically the common experiences of anxiety, depression and interpersonal conflict. He suggested that such experiences usually are related to protecting the personal ego. In Baba-lovers, however, such

experiences may relate more to successes in helping to disintegrate the ego or resolve karmic situations. With this notion, it could be helpful not to be anxious about one's anxiety, not to be depressed that one felt depressed, and not to try to "win" interpersonal battles, to know that such feelings are but the "smoke" of the "fire" of the divine process and to follow Baba's advice to take life lightly, "try to act cheerfully" and love others to the extent possible.

### **Meherazad Memories**

Terry Barton shared experiences from her recent trip to Meherabad and Meherazad. She focused especially on time spent at Meherazad. Meherazad was Baba's home for so many years, and the timelessness of His Presence is still very much felt. Being with Baba's remaining three women mandali felt most natural and yet extraordinary at the same time. Their lives revolve around always remembering Baba and striving to please Him, providing a beautiful example of how to live one's life for Baba. The atmosphere of Meherazad came to life for all of us as she described sitting on Mehera's porch, surrounded by the beauty of the garden and listening to the birds singing. It brought to mind a quote once shared by Mehera as she described a particularly beautiful day at Meherazad, "God is in His garden and all is right with the world."

Many of the people at the meeting also shared their experiences of India. Al Grasso, who had also just returned, shared photographs of the play for Baba's birthday and other highlights of his trip. Pamela, who had been to India last summer and is returning soon, spoke about the gift of intimacy with Baba and His mandali that we have all been given and what a rare privilege we have received. The opportunity to visit Meherazad and His mandali beckon and are still available though we don't know how long Baba will hold the doors open to be with those who served Him so faithfully all these years.

### **Danny Maguire**

The incredible journey of Danny McGuire and his family has touched many people all over the world since Danny's accident in July 2005.

Danny passed away on May 18, 2008 in California after a long saga which began when he was struck by a drunk driver while riding his bicycle. During the past three years, Jeff (Danny's dad) has written heartfelt letters to share an intimate glimpse of Danny's courageous struggles and triumphs with a worldwide circle of friends. Jeff's letters have been a powerful reminder to not take anything in life for granted and to treasure every moment we are given with our family and friends. We salute Jeff and Lynn for their inspiring example of unwavering love and devotion. We can only imagine Danny's joy in reuniting with his Beloved Baba.

If you would like to write to Jeff and Lynn, their email address is **manonash@verizon.net**.

#### **Newsbytes**

- Malinda McCulloch, who has been a vital part of the Meher Washington Gathering for many years is moving to the Chapel

Hill area. Though her wonderful presence will be greatly missed, we wish her the very best in this new adventure.

- Manijeh Lavassi, who shared her bright smile and lovely energy with all of us in the last year, recently moved back to Iran to be with her family. She is also availing herself of the closer proximity to India to make more frequent visits to Baba's Home.

In His Abiding Love,  
Pamela Butler-Stone and Terry Barton

To a devotee Baba once gave these two "spiritual secrets," as He called them: "*Never to hurt the heart of another, because that is where God resides; and always to be grateful, to give thanks to God every day.*" *The Awakener, Volume 14, No 2*