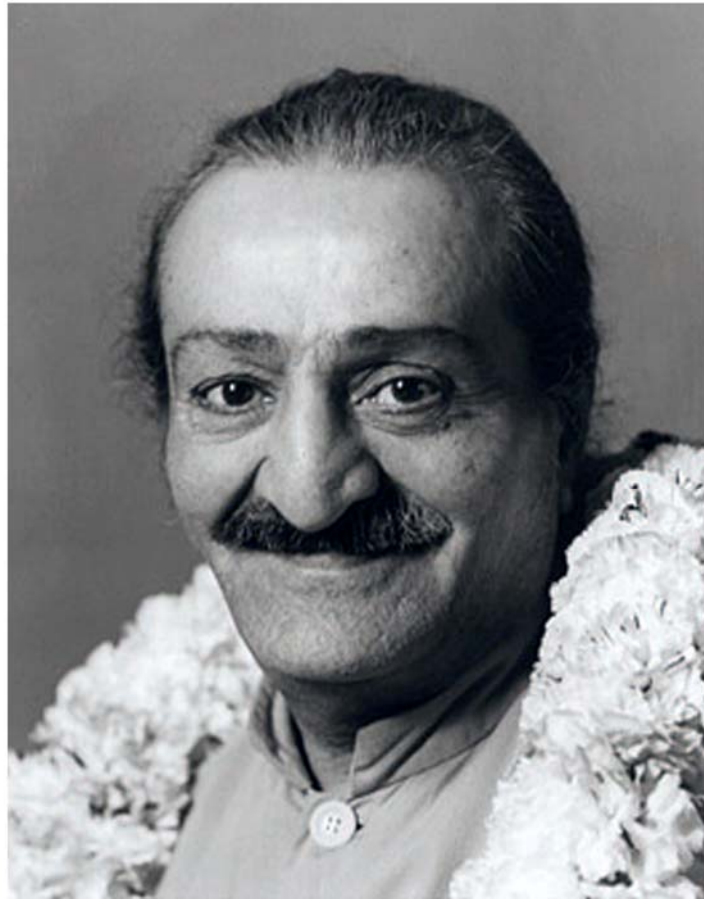


**Meher Baba Washington Gathering - Newsletter
October 2007 – January 2008**



The real task of the aspirant is to pierce through his own layers of self-imposed self-sufficiency and insensitivity so that he may expose a layer of vital awareness to the world about him which would teach him if it could (if it were allowed).

Meher Baba
The Discourses

- See last page for meeting locations.**
- Sat., October 13**
Geri & Jeff Craddock
Program Meeting
Cook-out – 4:30 P.M.; Meeting – 5:30 P.M.
Come contribute your ideas for the format and content of programs. How can our programs help bring us closer to Baba? Since we will begin with a cookout, *please RSVP for the meal: 301.588.6073*
- Sat., October 13**
Geri & Jeff Craddock
Movie Night – 7:30 P.M.
Movies of our Beloved: The ultimate mystery.
- Sat., October 27**
Brian & Louise Garnant
Music as an Expression of our Love for Beloved Baba – 7:30 P.M.
Every voice is welcome, whether you sing in key or not.
- Sat./Sun Nov. 10/11**
(Will be postponed in the event of rain)
Weekend in the Blue Ridge Mountains
The McConkey and Chanin families are hosting this weekend retreat. Enjoy the fall colors, crisp mountain air and great music by Michael McConkey. (See write-up in *News from the Gathering.*) RSVP to Pamela at 301.946.0236 by November 3rd.
- Sat., November 17**
Pamela Butler-Stone
The Spirit of Sahavas....Telling Our Stories! – 7:30 P.M.
Let's continue our sharing of Baba stories, jokes and songs that we began during the Sahavas.
- Sat., December 1**
Marian Lobred
Baba Game Night – 7:30 P.M.
Baba Jeopardy and Baba charades. This will be a fast-moving, well-organized evening of team fun devoted to Baba's love of games. And you may even learn a few new facts and quotes while we play.
- Sat., December 15**
Pamela Butler-Stone
Christmas Party and Celebration of the Light – 6:00 P.M.
Come celebrate the beauty of the season and Baba's advent as Jesus. Please call Pamela to coordinate your potluck contribution.
- Sat. January 12**
Terry & Robert Barton
Light the Dhuni Meeting – 7:30 P.M.
Start the New Year off right by throwing an attachment into the Dhuni and leave with a Baba quote that was meant just for you.
- Sat., January 26**
Murali & Manjusha
Amartithi Program with Special Guests Jeff Wolverton & Nan Wicker
Vegetarian Indian Feast – 6:00 P.M.; Program – 7:30 P.M.
Jeff and two of his friends saw Baba on Amartithi in New York City. Come hear his story. Jeff and Nan will also sing for Baba (but we can listen in). The Saleem family will lovingly provide a feast for us all prior to the meeting. *Please RSVP for the meal: 410.461.5033*
- Sun., January 27**
Clea & David McNeely
The Refectory Dining Room comes to Ellicott City!
Brunch – 11:30 A.M.; Program – 1:00 P.M. Jeff Wolverton and Nan Wicker have agreed to arrive home in Myrtle Beach late at night so they can spend more time with us. *Please RSVP for the meal: 410.461.5033*

The meaning of Sahavas is physical proximity, to meet one another, mingling together like members of the same family. But my staying with you and your staying with me do not mean the same thing. For ages past, Baba is with everyone; but here, you all have to be with Baba and forget everything else. Thoughts may come and thoughts may go. We cannot control or check them. How to control them? By losing yourselves, trying to be engrossed in Baba's Sahavas, so that they may come and go automatically without your being conscious of them. Do this much... Forget all your prestige, knowledge and spirituality. Try to observe the minutest details and analyze what takes place here. I want your hearts to be clean and open for me to step in. One most important point is to forget your difficulties-family, financial, health, et cetera – and only concentrate on Baba's love. Do not expect miracles. Do not think that by coming here you will solve all your difficulties.

*Meher Baba
Lord Meher*

Labor Day Sahavas with Rustom & Sohrab Irani and Jamie Newell!

The three-day Sahavas began with a fabulous Indian feast prepared by Saleem and Zeeba. Baba gave us perfect weather, making it possible for well over one hundred people to gather in Pamela and Saroja's back yard. Bhau wrote the following prayer, which was read out, setting the tone and helping us feel that he was again part of this Sahavas as he has been for so many summers since the mid 80's.

May Beloved Avatar Meher Baba bless all those who will be present for the Sahavas with His Love, so that they may enjoy remaining in His atmosphere during the Sahavas and receive the gift of His Love, which will make them feel and know that the Beloved

is always with them while they do other work of the world.

May they come closer and closer with the Beloved and go away and away from their false selves, so that they may receive His Sahavas every day in their lives.

May they know to bow down at His feet in such a way that-though they lift their heads after bowing down – still they may feel that they are lifting up their heads in order to empty them, so that Beloved Baba may be with them and they may not use their minds for any other purpose except to serve Him with all their love.

Rustom and Sohrab, through the relaxed intimacy of their stories, gave us a unique perspective on loving Baba, not just as God but also as their God-uncle. Baba's family has a way of making us feel that we are also part of their family. That feeling was highlighted by Rustom and Sohrab inviting other Baba Lovers to share the stage with them, telling their own unique stories of life with Beloved Baba. Rustom and Sohrab emphasized that this active sharing was in the true spirit of Sahavas.

Jamie Newell rocked, and we rocked with him! With words and music, Jamie wove a tapestry of love and devotion to the Divine Beloved that enfolded one and all. He regaled us with old favorite sing-a-longs like "Sing a Song of Meher Baba" and "Mehera, In What Manner Do You Love Him?" There was such an aliveness and depth to his voice, that even the surrounding neighbors couldn't resist listening.

Thanks so much to everyone who contributed to making the Sahavas a success. Most specially, we thank Beloved Baba for orchestrating such a beautiful Sahavas and making it possible for us all to come together in His Love.

(Continued on insert)

2007 – A Bountiful Year

Baba has brought many special guests to Washington, D.C. this year. Through them, He has rekindled our awareness of His vital presence in our lives, as well as our internal links as a Baba community. We offer heartfelt thanks to Michael McConkey, Jane Brown, Shaligram Sharma, Bill and Diana LePage, Jimmy and Firuza Khan, Rustom and Sohrab Irani, Jamie Newell and Charles Haynes for giving so much of themselves in their visits with us.

Returning to His Ocean.....

A drop in an ocean is not separate from the ocean. It is a bubble over the drop that gives it an appearance of separateness, but when the bubble bursts the drop is not, and the indivisible ocean is.

Meher Baba,
Everything and the Nothing, p.111

Recently there has been a wave of dear friends in Baba returning to Him - Rhoda Mistry, Viloo Irani, Gabriella Gibson, Jeanette Loew, Mary Lloyd Dugan, Hugh McCleneghan, Viloo Irani, Shirla Edwards, Lindsay Reiter, Shar Weisman and Hermes Reiter. Each of these Baba lovers strived to live their life in dedication to Meher Baba. In so doing, they touched the lives of all who knew them. The impact of their passing is deeply felt by those of us left behind. It also brings home to us a greater awareness of the ephemeral nature of our lives and the need to live each moment in the Eternal Now of Baba's Love. Eruch's frequent reference to a quote by Prophet Mohammad seems especially apt now. "Plan your life as if you will live forever, but live your life as if each day may be your last."

Thank You!

In our last newsletter a plea went out that volunteer help was urgently needed. Thanks

so much to Clea and David McNeely, Murali and Manjusha Kalavapudi, and Geri Layne Craddock for coming forward. Clea and David are the new program wallas and Murali and Manjusha are the new website and database wallas. Geri is our new bookstore walla. Here is a list of the current positions and the people who are serving in those roles:

Coordinators - Pamela Butler Stone and
Terry Barton

Program wallas - Clea and David
McNeely

Treasurer - Ursula Reichstein

Trust wallas - Terry Barton and
Manjusha Kalavapudi

Website and Database wallas -
Murali and Manjusha
Kalavapudi

Phone Tree walla - Al Grasso

Newletter wallas – Terry Barton, Joyce
Hedgepath, Ursula Reichstein, and
Pamela-Butler Stone

Bookstore walla – Geri Layne Craddock

Thanks also to everyone who contributed financially in response to the fundraising letter and the Sahavas. And again, thanks to all who came forward to help make the Labor Day Sahavas a great one.

Autumn Weekend in the Blue Ridge Mountains

There is a weekend getaway scheduled for Saturday, November 10th through Sunday, November 11th at the neighboring farms of the McConkey and Chanin families in Afton, Va. The gathering will begin Saturday at 1:00 P.M. with a potluck lunch and will continue through lunch on Sunday. Since Nov. 10th is the anniversary of Baba's lighting of the first Dhuni at Meherabad in 1925, we will honor that event with a Dhuni/bonfire in the tradition of the Dhuni at Meherabad, with music by Michael McConkey (and anyone else who would like to join in). During the day there

will be time to relax, go for walks and be together in a beautiful setting. There will be some sleeping spaces available in the two houses as well as great spots for camping. Please RSVP to Pamela, 301.946.0236 by November 3rd. Check the website www.meherbabadc.com for updates. In case of rain, the weekend will be rescheduled.

Sufi Softball Day A Great Success

Saturday, September 29th was a perfect day for a ball game and garden party. There was a clear blue sky, and a hint of autumn coolness in the air. Instead of the traditional singing of the Star Spangled Banner as a prelude to the game, this game began with a beautiful rendition of the American Arti led by Hillary Hogan. Then the playing began in earnest, with the group divided into teams of the Mehers and the Babas. It was great fun to play together and there was a high level of sportsmanship demonstrated by all. The score was quite close; 21 to 20 in favor of the Babas. Following the game there was an elegant garden party back at the Sufi Center. The Sufis were most gracious hosts, extending a warm welcome to all who attended. The food was superb and the conversation lively. After the dinner there was a lovely program of devotional music dedicated to Meher Baba. It was a delightful day and we look forward to more opportunities to come together as a community in Baba's Love.

Mailing List Updates

We are updating our mailing list and phone tree. We want to be sure we have everyone's current address, phone number and email address for quick updates, reminders and program changes. Please call Murali or Manjusha with your information at 301.258.0703, email them at muraliofdc@yahoo.com, or register at www.meherbabadc.com.

Newsbytes

- Several members of the Gathering made a pilgrimage to India in August; Pamela Butler-Stone, Saroja Stone and Malinda McCulloch. They all returned replenished from His Source.
- A number of young people from the Washington area attended the Youth Sahavas at the Meher Center – Francis Louvis, Sarah and Adam O'Brien, Shadi Marvastian, David Barton, Ian McConkey, Eli Chanin and Gabe Barouh. Also participating as workers were Richard Barton, Jay Louvis, Kamilia Butler and Gabriel McConkey.
- Shaligram Sharma was at Meherabad this summer and sent his love via Pamela and Saroja to all in the Meher Baba Washington Gathering.
- Each month the Meher Center showcases the art of different Baba lovers. During the month of October, Geri Layne Craddock's photographs will be on display at the Meeting Place. Don't miss her stunning photographs, all of which were taken on the Center.
- We send our sincere condolences to Mary Weiss upon the passing away of her brother in Florida.
- Our heartfelt sympathy is with Sky Wiseman upon the passing of his beloved wife, Shar in North Carolina. Shar was the faithful list-serve and website quote-walla for many years for avatarmeherbaba.org. Sky and Shar were members of the Meher Baba Washington Gathering for several years before moving to North Carolina.
- Joyce Hedgepath is moving to Walnut Creek, California this fall. She will be working at the Meher School as the Human Resources Coordinator. We will miss her wonderful presence and service to the Meher Baba Washington Gathering during the past twenty years. We wish her the very best.

- Greg Butler now writes a blog called holisitc-personal-development.com. It has a rapidly-growing, worldwide audience and is ranked in the top 1% of websites in terms of traffic. There are new articles there daily. Check it out!
- Brian Garnant is now available for homeopathic consultations, with a portion of his fee being donated to the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Trust in India.
- There is a new Baba group starting up in Charlottesville, Virginia. They meet twice a month, and the group is open to all. Please call Tom Terrill for more information at 434.979.1113.
- Gavin Elliott, who was here running the sound system during the Labor Day Sahavas, is missing his digital camera, an Olympus Stylus 760. If anyone has seen it, please let Pamela know.
- Check out the wonderful photographs taken by Geri Layne Craddock at the Labor Day Sahavas on our website, www.meherbabadc.com

The following beautiful quote was shared by Charles in his talk:

Do nothing even to please Me or the world against the dictates of your own conscience. Unhesitatingly do what you think to be right and proper despite the opposition of the world. Let your mind be as firm as a rock that resists strong blasts from all sides.

Meher Baba

Sayings of Shri Meher Baba. 1936

In His Abiding Love,

Pamela-Butler Stone and
Terry Barton

MEETING LOCATIONS—Please call the hosts if you need directions.

Terry & Robert Barton	6951 Duncraig Ct., 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
Brian & Louise Garnant	18717 Pier Point Pl., Montgomery Village, MD	240-683-9584
Murali & Manjusha Kalavapudi	8723 Bell Tower Drive, Gaithersburg, MD	301-258-0703
Marian Lobred	3215D Sutton Place, NW, Washington, DC	202-362-0664
David & Clea McNeely	3079 Chestnut Hill Drive, Ellicott City, MD	410-461-5033