

November 1<sup>st</sup>

The day of leaving home has arrived. My excitement of returning to Nepal, seeing my friends, and being with the children has been growing. I was up at 5:30 and into my morning meditation which was a little more distracted than usual, the thoughts luring me away at times; so many details to the journey to go over before I close the house door behind me.

The sky was dark and intensely clear on this cold morning, the Big Dipper standing on its handle, having emptied its summer warmth and fall splendor, now ready to fill us with days by the woodstove, evenings of long reading, whatever our individual forms of winter hibernation are throughout the next six months.

Kara (daughter) commented yesterday that the year had gone by so quickly. We know that time simply is and is neither slow nor fast but what we do within it does skew our perception. It has been a good year, Kara having worked in three national parks and taken in the incredible beauty of our land while improving its trails and meeting some incredible folks along the way. Kane (son) is in school working towards certification as an alcohol and drug counselor while he and Stephanie raise the two boys Brennen and Koltn (what a handful!).

After having taken a year away from work I returned to my alcohol and drug counseling skills in January by accepting contractual part time work with the Roane County Day Report Center, an alternative sentencing program for addicts/abusers who have committed crimes. Building treatment programs instead of prisons has been a no-brainer for most of us in the field for many years. Unfortunately politicians and others have been slow to follow. Many prisons are run by corporations and we know that the love for money has been trumping common sense and wisdom for thousands of years

The summer was wonderful although the weather unpredictable as it has been over the last decade due to our continuing damage to the planet. The garden was productive with enough to freeze or can foods for those long winter months. The bees provided enough honey to get through the year and appear strong enough to survive the coming months. I didn't get enough motorcycle riding as I would have liked on my beloved BMW's but they will wait patiently until warmer weather.

Kara and I attended a four day music festival (AllGood) in late July which was simply awesome as was the time that I spent with Kane in Washington State. He picked me up at the Seattle airport and we went camping in the Cascades for 2 days before we settled in at his home with the boys. These two children (Kane & Kara) have my heart and are my two dearest friends.

October was a whirlwind of activity, beginning with our annual WV Alcohol and Drug Counselors Conference over five days. A wonderful family of dedicated and committed individuals who are making a difference in our world, providing knowledge, skills and support to those and their families struggling with addiction issues.

Two weeks ago I was in Rochester, NY with 40+ community activists from around the country representing their communities and Prevention Research Centers (PRC) based in Universities at 37 sites. This is another of my "families", like addiction counselors who are compassionate and driven to decrease the disparities so many in our country are struggling to overcome. The Rochester PRC is committed to working within the deaf culture on health related issues. We learned much about the richness of the deaf culture and to be more aware of our own attitudes and actions in interacting with those who are seemingly different from ourselves but in reality are all part of the same human family trying to make sense of the world and our place within it.

On Saturday many of my closest friends celebrated a birthday for one ours (name withheld to protect the number of mounting years). There was an excellent vegetarian potluck, drinks within moderation, stimulating conversations, new folks to meet, dancing and a sense of warmth and security that being with friends can offer.

And you.....who have given so much in making this service work possible to improve the educational opportunities of the children in Nepal. We began with \$1700 in our international service fund this year. The Roane County High School TIFU (Take It From Us) group raised \$1500 for the schools through a basket bingo. Many of you have sent schools supplies that will be deeply appreciated by the children. Many sent jewelry for the young girls that we can distribute as we walk through the rural villages. To see the smiles and gratitude on their faces is to simply have your heart melt and your eyes to tears. My goal was to have \$6000 to use in improving the schools and purchasing additional supplies. We are at \$7300 because of your generosity and compassion. At a 70:1 exchange rate this will go a long ways in serving the children and schools and I thank you very much.

To my wonderful Rotarian friends in the Ripley Rotary Club, you have my commitment to service above self even though the return to my soul in this effort is enormous. Thank you for paying the airfare, the additional school supplies and financial donations. Thank you for all that you do in support of this project and for tolerating me.

All of these donations come from the 99% to the 95% of the world who live below our standard of life, who struggle to have food, shelter, clean water, education, access to health care, and jobs but are some of the happiest people I have ever met. May I be their student.

My thanks to the Wall Street Occupiers around the world who are bringing a focus on the incredible disparity between the rich and poor throughout the world. Democracy demands that we take action when there is injustice. My thanks to the many friends in the environmental movement in WV who work tirelessly in protecting our waterways, forests and mountains from the ravages of corporate America. Our responsibility in this as consumers is to use less, learn to be comfortable in the simplicity of life, recycle, be energy conscious and efficient, support local farmers markets, and reduce our impact on the limited resources of our beautiful mother earth by having reverence for the gifts it provides.

**“Were stuck on feeling like a monkey stuck in a tar trap. A glob of tar is placed where a monkey will get its hand stuck and, in trying to pull free, the monkey gets its other hand, both feet, and eventually its mouth stuck, too. Consider this: Whatever we do, we end up stuck right here at feeling and craving. We can't separate them out. We can't wash them off. If we don't grow weary of craving, we're like the monkey stuck in the glob of tar, getting ourselves more and more trapped all the time.”** Upasika Kee Nanayon

Peace to you my friends

Chuck