

Cobblestone Connections

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COBBLESTONE SPRINGS IS COMMITTED TO CONSCIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF CREATION.

Sisters Anne Alderman and Connie Bickford Leaving Cobblestone Springs

A message from Bob Schiesser, President of the Board of Directors

It hardly seems possible that twenty-five years ago Cobblestone Springs was just a dream and a derelict old house. But that's exactly what Sr. Anne Alderman faced when she stepped on the property all those years ago. Most people would have been overwhelmed and walked away. In fact, many did, but not Anne. With determination and great faith Anne set about making the dream of a retreat house a reality. It was not an easy task! Camping out in the north wing on weekends she spent the first few years with either a paint brush or a scraper in her hands. As time went on, the jobs just grew more multifarious. One minute she was plowing the driveway – the next calmly doing spiritual direction. The next night she might be cooking for guests, and the next day welcoming retreatants or giving workshops. All this was done with a quiet caring faith and a deep commitment to Cobblestone; so much so that a board member recently said, "Anne is Cobblestone Springs."

After 25 years Anne has decided to step down in that capacity. So – it is with great sadness the board has accepted Sr. Anne's resignation as Executive Director and as a Board member.

On another sad note Sr. Connie Bickford has also decided to leave Cobblestone. Connie was hired 10 years ago as the Administrative Assistant, for Cobblestone Springs. As with any job at Cobblestone it turned into so much more. Connie not only handled memberships and statistics and other administrative chores but she soon found herself preparing meals, mowing lawns, planting flowers, preparing the house for guests, and greeting each person with kindness. When something was needed at Cobblestone it was always, "ask Connie." Her deep faith enabled her to take on all the challenges at Cobblestone in stride. She even found time to participate on the Dundee Library Board and tutor students. Connie is excited to be returning to her first love: tutoring students.

Sister Anne and Sister Connie will be deeply missed here at Cobblestone. There are so many stories and so many things to reminisce about – more than we have room to record here.

A reception of fellowship was held in honor of Sister Anne and Sister Connie on August 25th.

For though my faith is not yours and your faith is not mine, if we each are free to light our own flame, together we can banish some of the darkness of the world.

— Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Note: In early September, we received Bob Schiesser's resignation as Board president. We hope he will continue to be involved with Cobblestone as his time permits. Our thanks go to Bob for his service and dedication!



COBBLESTONE **Sunday Suppers**

Sept 8 and 22; Oct 13 and 27 Rain or shine!

4:30 p.m.: activities and chat;

5:30 p.m.: harvest feasting

Come and enjoy our grounds and center! Come as you are. Bring a dish to pass, your own table service and non alcoholic beverage, and join us for a harvest feast.

[This new program](#) is hosted by Anne Meyer Wilber. The September evenings will feature lawn games (or board games inside if it rains). In October, bring an instrument and your voice; enjoy lawn games if weather permits. Per a recent Board decision, we will accept only free-will donations.

All are welcome: bring a friend, the kids, or your grands for some fun!

New Board Policies

At its meeting August 12, the Board of Directors began to tackle some of the issues that are arising with the departure of Sisters Anne and Connie. The transition and adjustment will undoubtedly take time, but the Board is moving forward to ensure minimal disruption to the programs and participants.

The Board approved Sr. Eileen Curtis's offer to take over on-site responsibilities for the next three months, to aid the transition to a new "house manager" or other position being filled.

The Board agreed to convert programs to a "donation only" plan effective with this fall's season.

Season of Renewal

With the September departure of Sisters Anne and Connie, the Board is revisiting the direction and operations of Cobblestone Springs. We hope our members and friends will get or stay involved as we move forward.

As we progress, we'll have additional opportunities for volunteering, for service as Board members, and for participation in new programming and events. This fall and winter, we also plan to move forward with renovating the building and plans for enhancing the grounds. Although scheduled programs will continue, we will be closed in January and February, as we have for the past three years, to catch up on facility upgrades.

We will be sharing many plans and projects as we move forward! Please let us know your interest in continuing to receive this newsletter, or if you are not on our list and would like to sign up to receive future issues.

Stay tuned! Refresh with us!



This watercolor painting by Mona Trezise depicts the Spence House in its early days, perhaps the 1850s.

Several Spence family members continue to be involved with Cobblestone Springs.

New Fall Program Schedule

*All programs are free-will donation only!
Number of participants is limited for some
programs. Call 607.243.8212 info/register.*

Mondays at Cobblestone, 1-2:30 p.m.

Sept 9 & 23, October 7 & 21

November 4 & 18, December 2 & 16

A reflection-discussion group for women using the book *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor. Each session will focus on a particular section of the book. It is not necessary to attend every session.

Facilitator: Judy Wilbert

Conversations About Race 101

Wednesday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m.

Sept 11 & 25; Oct 9 & 23; Nov 6 & 20

This discussion group will explore our assumptions and experiences of race, and seek to bring to light our blind spots.

Facilitator: Heather Cook

Conversations About Race 201

Wednesday mornings, 10-11:30 a.m.

Sept 11 & 25, Oct 9 & 23, Nov 6 & 20

A continuation of last spring's group, discussing the book *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*.

Facilitator: Heather Cook

Earth Poetry, Earth Spirituality

Sunday, Sept 22, 1-4 p.m.

The Earth is a source of wonder and revelation. This workshop will help participants connect with the spirit within nature, and express their own experiences in words and poetry. Materials provided. Registration appreciated.; call 607.243.8212.

Facilitator: Jan Carr, Sally White

Trust

Sept 28, Oct 26, Nov 9 10-1 p.m.

The foundation of our relationships, yet easily destroyed. Final 3 of 4 sessions

Facilitator: Lisa Rustici

Forest Bathing Walk

Saturday, Oct 5, 1:30-4 p.m.

Join us and immerse in the Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku, loosely translated as Forest Bathing (fully clothed!). This is not your usual walk in the woods. You will be skillfully guided in a slow, enjoyable, full sensory experience of the forms, sounds, fragrances, textures, tastes and wisdom of the forest. The walk will be concluded with a tea ceremony of wild tea, foraged from the Cobblestone grounds. Shinrin-Yoku can have a profound healing effect on mental, emotional and physical well-being. Call 607.243.8212 to register.

Facilitator: Deb Denome

Grief Circles 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Thursdays Oct 10, Nov 14, Dec 12

Many of us think of grief only in the context of the recent death of a loved one. Unattended sorrow can color our lives in puzzling ways. This circle includes ritual, quiet reflection, and sharing.

Facilitator: Heather Cook

Oak Hill Barbecue Benefit Sept 28!

Volunteers are needed to help for Saturday BBQ at Oak Hill, which will benefit Cobblestone Springs. Please contact Eileen Curtis at eileenc1ssj@gmail.com. No donation; work commitment only.

*See a program that you'd like to attend,
but it's at a time you can't come?*

*Let us know a time that would
be better for you.*

Classics in Religion

Penn Yan Public Library

Monday mornings, 11:00 a.m. – 12 noon

September— June

Come explore a tapestry of diverse topics with deeply spiritual threads!

Everyone is invited to attend one or many sessions.

Freewill offering.

Add your name to our list or watch your email for specific program offerings.

- **Sept 9, 16, 23:** [The Importance of Speech in the Jewish Tradition](#), with Leslie Schwartz.
- **Sept 30, Oct 7:** Annie Schliffer and David Barnet from The Folk Art Guild, topic to be determined
- **Oct 14:** Library closed for holiday
- **Oct 21, 28:** [Black Liberation Theology](#), with Henry Thomas

Interested in presenting, or in hearing a particular topic or person? Contact Mary Beth Gamba (marybethgamba@aol.com). To receive our emails, contact Sally White (CobblestoneSpringsRC@gmail.com).

What's New at CobblestoneSprings.org

Our website was redesigned in the spring of 2018, so it's about time for an upgrade there as well. We try to keep program information up to date (at the new location!) in a timely manner, so please check there if you need refreshing on a detail or two, or in case of last-minute program changes. **Please make sure we have your correct email.**

In addition to basic info, we hope to bring more background stories and features about the Cobblestone Springs experience, in this newsletter as well as online. We're excited about the opportunities ahead. Please let us hear from you so we know what YOU are interested in hearing more about.

Would you like an easier way to give us feedback? Look for us on social media: We're on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) (coming soon).

**Lose the hyphen: Find us online
at CobblestoneSprings.org
(not cobblestone-springs.org)**

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Call us: 607.243.8212; if we miss your call, we'll return it promptly. Thanks for your patience during our transition.