

The Magic Tree
2014

Thanks again to the The Village of Cherry Hill Business Association for hosting the Magic Tree. The Village of Cherry Hill hosts the Magic Tree for the sole purpose of continuing the gift of holiday cheer that the annual lighting of the Magic Tree brings to the community. The opinions expressed in this flyer and on the Magic Tree website (magic-tree.org) are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect those of The Village of Cherry Hill or any of its residents, businesses, or customers. Please remember to express your thanks to the businesses of Cherry Hill without whom the Magic Tree would not have a home. *Will Treelighter*

A new tree again this year for the 20th Magic Tree. Last July the tree that served as the Magic Tree last year was damaged by wind. A significant branch was removed and so I thought it best to attempt a new tree. This year's tree is a maple tree and is the tallest tree I have ever done. I didn't drop a tape measure from the top to get its exact height, but I would guess that it is about 36 feet. When I calculated the number of lights we put on it I was surprised to find that it was only about 33,480. I thought it would be closer to 60,000. My youngest son (who was one year old when I lit a tree for the first time) and I spent about 60 hours collectively putting up the lights. About 82% of the lights are energy saving LEDs.

What I like about doing the Magic Tree is all the people that come out to see it and enjoy it. It is a great privilege for me to be able to do something that so many like to come and see. Many call it beautiful and that is gratifying, because of course, making something of beauty is my goal and each year to make it more so if I can. But what is beauty? That which we find attractive and pleasing to the physical or mental/emotional eye? Yes, that surely is a basic definition. But it is about relationships, is it not, of color one to another or of objects juxtaposed to each other, or people with all their feelings and thoughts in relationship to with each other. There is a certain magnetism that draws you in and a sense of electric excitement, subtle though it may be, in even the observation of the quiet beauty of a rained soaked landscape.

There is a certain gravity to beauty that draws us in and soothes the soul offering a certain contentment and peace, but at the same time awakens us to greater facility and appreciation in the sense of making what is good better.

Beauty, surely though, originates in the human psyche where we make the judgements about what we observe. If you see beauty in the Magic Tree it is because you have judged it to be so. Your perception of the Magic Tree, then, is mirroring your own judgements. It is reflecting something we have within ourselves - as is, admittedly, all of our thoughts and feelings about all the rest of our observations of the world. Too often we don't like what we see, we don't find it pleasing, whether it is the weather, a job we have in front of us to do, or another's point of view. Sometimes our ugly thoughts and feelings are directed at ourselves causing much inner pain and anxiousness. It has been this way for me sometimes at least. But I have discovered something beautiful.

The Magic Tree is made of physical electricity that is producing colored light, but there is an invisible light in each and every thing and in each and every relationship between things and between colors and between notes in music and between people, even between communities, nations and worlds. That invisible light is what we recognize, judge or understand and feel as beauty. The problem is that when we become preoccupied with the things themselves, their material presentation, what they can do for us at a base level, we become unduly focused on ourselves and cease to notice the invisible light that they exude, or that we exude. Then things get ugly, competitive and dirty and we find little to love in ourselves or others around us.

This is the time to take ourselves in hand and purposely seek out the invisible light always present. When we do we are often surprised to notice something beautiful where before all we were seeing is ugliness. We find that we are soothed and healed of what are many times self inflicted wounds of psychological pain and torment and we are encouraged and strengthened to forge a new way in life.

There is much in the world now that is ugly. What if we seek out the invisible light therein? May we find new ways to get along, to understand, to share the world's resources so that all have enough? Would this not be beautiful? Would it not bring an end to the ways of war? Is not art, work and, indeed, life for the purpose of bringing what is invisible to the fore and making it manifest?

Beauty is the window and Love, the door. Will Treelighter