

The Magic Tree 2016

Flier 13

The nightly hours of the Magic Tree through January 6th are dusk to 12:00 PM.

Thanks to the The Village of Cherry Hill Business Association for hosting the official Magic Tree every year since 2010. Another word of thanks to the nearby residents who graciously live with the nightly noise of the crowds that come to enjoy the tree. Thanks, too, to all of you who come for a dose of colorful light and inspiration. While I light other "magic trees" around town and elsewhere, it is here at Cherry Hill that the official Magic Tree resides. I volunteer the time to light this tree. Cherry Hill provides the space, the electricity, and helps with the cost of the lights through a generous donation. 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 flier 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. Visit the Magic Tree Facebook page and please remember to express your thanks to the businesses of Cherry Hill without whom the official Magic Tree would not have such an accommodating home.

Will Treelighter

This is the 7th year the official Magic Tree has been here at Cherry Hill. Prior to that it was at my home where in 1995 I began doing the kind of tree lighting that has developed into what you see now, which makes this year's Magic Tree the 22nd. Each year I just kept putting more and more lights up, doing more and more of the branchlets until I was lighting every branch of the tree. This year's tree, an *ornamental* (appropriately enough) cherry tree, has 45,000 lights on it that took 62 hours to put up. (it will take about the same amount of time to get the lights back off the tree and properly put away and organized for the next year's Magic Tree.) Each year I enjoy developing a new scheme of colors. Although it can be difficult to find enough time to do all the tree lighting I do, it is play and such a joy to be up in the tree (on ladders) while the lights are on. Surrounded by glowing electric colors imagination is getting a steady current of energetic creative inspiration.

If we stop and think about it, imagination is the beginning of all that we know objectively. We even employ imagination merely to interpret what we perceive with the five senses. (No wonder we often disagree on interpretations!) Much that mankind has wrought into being - desks, chairs, houses, cars, skyscrapers, computers, systems of mathematics, scientific principles, etc. etc. - were enabled to come into being by our first being able to imagine some embryonic form of it. All that we take to be objective in the world begins in the subjective and is then developed into objectivity either by means of physically building it in three dimensions or by developing theories and then setting about to prove them. Even such things that happen organically or that come about naturally without the assistance of mankind must first be perceived by us and then interpreted by us (requiring our imagination) before we can have an objective understanding of such natural phenomena such as, for instance, the existence of the Universe.

All I'm trying to get at is that all that we take to be objective understandings of things begin in the subjective and are then developed into objectivity. Why is this important? Well, often, the imaginative and subjective are thought of as somehow not as viable as objectivity. Such emphasis is put on objectivity that sometimes discourages us to be imaginative. Yet if objective understandings come from the capacity to imagine and the actual objective things that people bring into physical reality begin in the imagination, perhaps imagination deserves a little more of our respect and attention.

I first imagined what it would be like to put lights on every branch of a tree. *Then* I did it and the Magic Tree was born. When people see the Magic Tree they often describe it as beautiful. Beauty is a subjective interpretation of something and yet it is something we tend to agree on almost as fact. Is beauty something that we merely imagine or is it more objective than that since we often can agree on what is beautiful? And what does beauty produce? There is a sense of love, well being and peace when we perceive beauty. When we perceive ugliness we tend to feel uncomfortable, even ill and unsettled. Then, is beauty a "real" objective thing?

If we beautified our cities would there be less violence and crime in them? What do you imagine? If we beautified our relationship with others would we have a more loving peaceful relationship with them? How do we make relationships more beautiful? It only takes one of us to give without expectation of anything in return and suddenly there is something beautiful in that. There are smiles and a sense of well being. What if the giving of one goes unnoticed by the other? There is still the awareness of the giver having given freely

(beautiful) - unless the giver is looking for recognition of his/her giving, but then the giving is not really being done freely. But if we give with strings attached, expecting something back for our effort, there is an ugly feeling of owing or even of manipulation. (One must be careful here and apply wisdom. I'm not advocating giving without discrimination or without regard to our own wellbeing or when it comes to careers, without fair compensation. We must take care of ourselves so that we may give some more on the morrow.)

This Principle of Sharing, if you will, can bring into objectivity a new day for humanity if it is applied broadly enough. This "day" would be one of beauty, love and peace expressed by the way whole nations of people would cooperate with each other by giving what they have in excess into a common pool from which nations could draw to fill what they have need of. Imagine such cooperation and trust. Imagine such giving! Imagine such a world where we do not say, "First you must do as we say and only then will we be generous toward you." A world where nations care more for the way they treat others than the way they are treated by others. Imagine a world ruled by the goodwill of its people, free of desire for anything but a world at peace and full of beautiful loving action.

It begins with our ability to imagine it. Then plans can be drawn. Attempts can be made. Plans can be redrawn. New attempts made. Eventually we will have a world where freedom reigns, liberty is realized by all and at the same time no one's rights are infringed upon. Freedom and liberty are in interesting contrast to rights. The freedom of one group to be at liberty to do as they please may infringe upon the rights of another group to have what they need. But if we freely choose to put the Principle of Sharing first we can have our cake and eat it too through the goodwill generated by giving.

Imagine it.

The Magic Tree represents to me a world of little lights of vast variety and color in groupings that compliment each other. In the Magic Tree the very presence of one group of little lights compliments and augments, in contrast, another group of lights. This is what art is made of. There is an art to living too. We can take our behaviors and our attitudes, our judgements, and arrange them, adjust them, and rearrange them to make a life of beautiful contrasts. Each of us must do for ourselves in this. No one can or should attempt to do this for another - it breaks the rule of freedom. On the contrary, it behooves each of us to guard the rights of others and to be sure our choices are not taking from others what is rightfully theirs. Again our imagination is called upon to sort this out. Again the Principle of Sharing, if employed, is an excellent tool for beautification of relationships and making sure everyone has enough of what is rightfully theirs and has access to what we hold in common while allowing for maximum freedom of choice for all involved. - Interesting that the letters of "involve" are the same letters of "in love".

Nations too, are individuals in the world of nations, with different personalities like different people, and similar principles and guidelines apply to them. They grow, change and evolve, as well, over time by the tug of the people within them.

So, what does the Magic Tree do for your imagination? What do you imagine can be when you see the Magic Tree? If you are not already doing so, I invite you to explore with your imagination what *can* be and then move toward that in your own unique and artful way.

Regardless of appearances Love *is* in everything and beauty is its signature. It can be found anywhere one looks with eyes open for seeing it. This is a principle that I have discovered with my imagination. By careful, thoughtful, imaginative analysis one can discover all sorts of useful ideas. Don't be fooled by the apparent solidness of objects into thinking that they are more real than ideas. Thoughts are things too and from them come much of the apparently more solid physical forms as well as such things as scientific discovery, democratic government, universities, and liberal and conservative ideals.

If we will imagine, develop, entertain, envision, hold and foster ideas of a positive future full of goodwill, we make it more likely to come about. As you enjoy the light of the Magic Tree may you be blessed with lasting good cheer and be assured that Love wins! It is the only legitimate player after all. Everything else is merely a disguise of the deep underlying Love buried in our forgetfulness and ignorance.

Love's in everything, beauty is its signature,

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