

The Magic Tree 2018

Flier 15

The nightly hours of the Magic Tree through January 6th are dusk to 11:00 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 or others 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 purchase of the light sets 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 9th year the official *Magic Tree* has been here at Cherry Hill. Prior to that it was at our 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 24th. 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. In 2004 I put my first flier out calling the tree *The Magic Tree*. I've put a flier out every year since making this one the 15th. To get more details on how the *Magic Tree* has developed over the years or to review my past attempts to inspire you can view all the *Magic Tree* fliers at magic-tree.org.

This tree is an *ornamental* (appropriately enough) cherry tree. It has 7000 more lights than last year totaling over 53,250 lights that took nearly 80 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 next year's *Magic Tree*. Doing the math, with 5280 feet in a mile and calculating an average of 3.5 inches of 3 wires between each light, there are nearly 9 miles of wire on the tree this year.

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. I invite you to get out of the car to experience its currency for yourself. Come in close to the tree, stand in its glow and take in its diversity of color combinations at close proximity. Who is the I that takes in the experience and decides it beautiful, or not?

This tree is not a fundraiser. During this season associated with the giving spirit it behooves all of us who have to give to those who do not. Even when we perceive ourselves as the needy ones if we give to others who have even less it increases the wellbeing of us all. So, by all means give to others freely all year long and it is in this spirit that the *Magic Tree* is created. It is put up entirely for your enjoyment without any sense of obligation. Enjoy it with a clear conscience and free spirit. However, if you aspire to discerning what is behind the ever diversifying multifaceted Light in all its many manifestations around the globe that is here symbolized in the *Magic Tree* I present the following attempt at inspiration as perhaps one line of contemplation you might take.

In a sense *you* could be like a magic tree. Instead of being covered in tiny lights and wire you can be thought of as circuited with relationships that light up bright or dim depending on the amount of energy you give them. We all have many branches of relationships. There is a branch of family relationships and a branch that is work relationships. Another is friends. Still others are neighbors, religious, political and business groups. Additionally there are our interests such as book clubs, professional or student groups of various types, sports enthusiasts and so on. Then there are the casual relationships we all have with those we meet on the street, in the store, at the check out counter, other drivers on the road, the pedestrian at the crosswalk, the homeless person at the stoplight, the people we jostle with at an event of some kind - a concert or sporting event and so on. We even continue relationships with those loved ones who have passed on and in a way we are in relationship to those not yet born. As we grow and age our branches reach out further and diversify with more and more little branchlets and sub-branchlets reaching out to catch a little light. Some branches, for reasons sometimes clear and at other times inexplicable just die or get cut off and a whole group of relationships are lost. Other times just one little branchlet will dry up and fall off. Once in a while we experience a storm or a heavy snow or freezing rain and a much loved branch breaks from the strain. But we keep growing new branches sometimes establishing new relationships, sometimes re-establishing old ones with fresh vigor.

And then there is our root system that digs shallow or deep into the soil of nutritive nurture. In the ground unseen and little contemplated roots stretch out and are fed by myriads of tiny organisms and minerals. Hardly understood or paid attention to capacities evolve that connect us one to another like the mycorrhizal networks in nature. Occasionally there is a specimen tree that is all by itself in a field, but most of us are just one in a forest of trees rubbing branches with each other while reaching for the light.

Each of us is a walking tree of relationships with each branchlet representing a person we have a relationship with, branches that represent certain groups of these persons and roots that draw on unseen resources to feed these relationships. What if we lit up each other's branches with something akin to electric light? What would it look like? How could it be done? A forest of human magic trees! Each with his or her own unique coloring. Each contributing to the other's well being. After all, a branchlet of a relationship on my tree of relationships is an outlet of insight into another person who is a whole tree of relationships them self on which *I* am but a branchlet. So why not contribute freely to each other's well being? In fact our relationships are so intertwined that, whether we realize it or not, we each lead the world from our own little corner of it. A world of world leaders - something to think about.

The following poem is offered as a personal meditation to cultivate your magic tree of relationships.

More Valuable than Diamonds and Gold

I am I. I am unique. In all the world there is no one else like me. Yet, I am like everyone else. (Like the proverbial snowflake, each one with its unique pattern and yet all made of the same stuff.) Like everyone else, I am conscious of my self. We live life. Life lives through us. The way I choose to live life matters: to those close to me; those I live with, work with, play with; to those in the broader community I live within; even those I may never see or meet. When I drop resentments, I see love lives in me.

Desire for stuff and sensation is one way I have spent love in the past. I can use love now in the present to help others. A new desire wells up from within: to live life well and help others do the same. Capacity to share myself in kindness expands. Compassion grows. Love brings people together in a kind of unity that nevertheless respects our differences and our uniqueness. I am I. When I express love without self concern I am closest to being my real self, unique in all the world and yet the same as everyone else. More valuable than diamonds and gold.

Love's in everything, beauty is its signature, the world its playground. Will Treelighter