

Touching Minds Through World Radio

The Story of New Dimensions

by A. KRIS GARRETT

"It is only through a change of consciousness that the world will be transformed. As we bring mind, body, psyche and spirit into harmony and unity, so also will the world be changed. This is our responsibility as we create and explore new dimensions of being."

So starts each program aired over New Dimensions Radio. Stan Ulkowski and Lynda Dahl interviewed Justine and Michael Toms, the founders and producers of the program, in their Sausalito, California recording studio in March. Michael's son by a previous marriage had very recently died, yet the Tomses chose to honor their prior commitment to *Reality Change*. Through their work, these leading edge visionaries have brought the minds of the world a little closer together, and global understanding a little nearer. SNI salutes their exceptional contribution.

Twenty years and about two thousand interviews ago, husband and wife team Michael and Justine Toms entered a radio studio and brought news of the revolution in human consciousness to the airwaves of San Francisco. Since that localized beginning, the Tomses' brainchild, New Dimensions Foundation, which includes New Dimensions Radio, has seen its radio program picked up by over 300 stations in the United States and around the world, reaching well over three million listeners weekly in over 130 countries. The Tomses' weekly program features unique, thought provoking inter-



Stan Ulkowski

Lynda Dahl of SNI (left) interviews Justine and Michael Toms in their New Dimensions studio in Sausalito, California.

views with such transformational thinkers as Joseph Campbell, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, David Bohm, Fred Alan Wolf, Bernie Siegel, Jean Houston, J. Krishnamurti, Deepak Chopra, Michael Talbot—and the list goes on.

It all started back in 1973 when Michael and Justine attended a conference at the University of California at Berkeley called "Parapsychology: Frontiers of Consciousness." Just prior to the conference, they had been traveling around the United States for over three months in a camper, searching for a method of synchronically blending career and spiritual search. Part of their quest included attending workshops and seminars, immersing themselves in Tibetan Buddhism, and exploring their own inner selves. The UC Berkeley con-

ference brought them the answer they sought, at least over time.

According to Michael, "Charles Tart, the foremost authority on non-ordinary states of consciousness in America, and Professor of Psychology at University of California at Davis, gave a lecture in which he said the world was in the midst of the most important period in the evolution of consciousness humanity had ever experienced, and that nobody was paying attention . . . meaning that there were no research funds, no media coverage, et cetera. The next morning Justine and I were having breakfast with a friend and I commented that it was amazing that there wasn't more attention being given to this critical area, and our friend said, 'Well, why don't you do something?' And that was the birth of New Dimensions."

Cover Story, continued

A short time and one visit to a lawyer's office later, the nonprofit organization New Dimensions Foundation was officially born. The original vision, which is still intact, was to bring an overview of the scope of activity around this burgeoning area of new thought to the world. According to the Tomses, it was the time of rediscovering Earth-centered cultures, the spiritual traditions of the East were flowing into America, the birth of humanistic and transpersonal psychology was breathing new life into conventional psychology, and holistic medicine sprouted wings, as did the environmental and women's movements. Says Michael, "There was a lot of excitement everywhere, and northern California was a core area. It was like the consciousness candy store."

While on the surface the various groups seemed to be independent, the Tomses sensed an undercurrent of connectedness, ripples all pointing to a major cultural shift, a global transformation. In order to explore this exciting energy, they created first a conference, and then a radio series. It didn't take long to realize that radio was the perfect medium for their long-range goals. "It is intimate and personal," they say. "For example, a Tibetan Lama with a shaved head is not visually seen, so what he's *saying* becomes the focus, not his appearance. His delivery and essence make the impact because that's what people tune in to. Plus, radio activates and involves the imagination, stirring the mind to new heights."

It is immediately obvious Justine and Michael Toms are a team. Michael is the principal interviewer and Justine the program's producer. Michael's way with people is legendary, leading to exceptional interviews. He never pre-plans his questions, but is careful to prepare in advance by reading his guests' writings and discussing ideas with Justine and/or staff members. He comments, "I realized early on that preparing questions

limits the scope of the interview because I found myself thinking about the question that I wanted to ask next rather than being present and in the moment with in our guest. What I like to do is explore the topic naturally and intimately, and I feel I can do this more organically with a less structured approach."

Indeed he accomplishes his goal. "I find that I lose myself in the interview. It becomes a kind of dance between myself and the other person. I literally feel like I become them. Sometimes I simply think a question and our guest starts responding with an answer. There is a mystery around the whole process that we don't even try to understand, but we do try to respect it. We have a saying around New Dimensions that our job is to tune into the program that has already happened."

While Justine occasionally hosts a show, she always manages the topic selection, the in-studio taping, and the post-production details. "I mostly produce the interviews, I'm very much a part of the whole process. I sit with the engineer in the control room and stay in eye contact with Michael at all times

during the interview. Sometimes I write questions out for Michael to ask our guests as they occur to me, then I hold them up to the window of the studio. It's quite amazing, though, because many times as I think of the question, Michael starts asking it!"

The Seth material found its way onto New Dimensions in 1974. Several programs were produced that consisted of readings from Jane Roberts' books, interspersed with music and followed by discussions. Justine and Michael were very impressed with the Seth concepts, recognizing their relevance to the times. Michael says, "All of us at New Dimensions read the material and were struck by how powerful it was. We tried to get an interview with Jane Roberts, but it never came to pass."

Justine was especially affected by *The Education of Oversoul Seven*. "That book really renewed my interest in the Seth material, because it was talking about simultaneous lives. That was so fascinating to me. It helped me place my problems of the time in a larger context. I didn't have to get worried or stuck. I



Jim Lerager

Justine and Michael Toms with one of their famous interviewees, Dr. Joseph Campbell.

just thought, 'Well, that must just be from a simultaneous life.' I continue to use the material in my life today, and I do feel it's good to check back into it occasionally. It's just like New Dimensions Radio. You might hear an interview one year, and then several years later you hear it again—but it seems completely new. Your life experience has expanded and so your relationship to the material has changed. The potential for relating on a deeper, broader level might now exist."

Michael's interest in the Seth material was piqued because of his psychology orientation. "I had just come out of grad school, trained to be a licensed counselor, when I first read it. Books like *The Nature of Personal Reality* had so much information that was really intriguing for me, especially because of my background. One of the things we've come to realize over our years on radio, however, is that you can't just come out with statements like 'You create your own reality' without getting absolutely nailed! We've seen it happen to people, including us in the early days, and so we've learned to focus on the larger landscape and gradually fill in the details, so that insights are presented within a reasonable context."

One of the most memorable and powerful programs New Dimensions produced was a discussion with astronaut Rusty Schweickart, one of the first men to walk in space. "Rusty talked about the impact of his experience . . . passing over the earth and not being able to see national boundaries. It was poignant and profound, a mystical moment in time for him. It was awesome just listening to it." Others thought so, too. A filmmaker from Maine was so moved by the broadcast that he contracted with Mr.

Schweickart to make a film about his experiences.

A good friend of the Tomses once told them that "we only know half of one percent of the results of our work. It's like we're on the side of a pond, tossing little pebbles and watching the ripples. Often we can't follow the ripples, but

leading edge, we've been amused when something we covered seven or eight years ago appears in *TIME*. That's how far ahead we'd like to stay, but we notice the gap getting narrower and narrower. A subject we cover this year might hit mainstream America next year. It is very clear that the culture is catching up with us."

And this dedicated husband and wife team has played an important role in reducing that gap. The Tomses' vision has reached people all over the globe, offering new perceptions and helping to change lives. "What we do is create bridges for empowering, inspirational and important information, broadcasting it through the mass medium of radio so anyone can tune in and listen."

Here's to bridge builders the world over, the ones who reach out and touch a civilization. Here's to New Dimensions, as always, on the leading edge.*

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—Michael Toms

sometimes we get feedback that suggests they're making an impact. We've heard stories of someone writing a book, another creating a film, and others changing their lives because of what they heard on New Dimensions. We once met a pre-medical school student at Harvard who told us she decided to become a doctor when she heard Frederick Leboyer on our radio program—and she was in the eighth grade at the time that program aired."

Michael believes that much of the interest in new thought information went underground in the eighties because there was little support for such explorations in our culture and society. The invisible world wasn't given much credence in a decade of such self-absorption. However, he senses that the nineties have already brought a shift toward more balance. Once again these innovative ideas are emerging, just as the spiritual wisdom of the unseen is becoming more visible. "Because we try to stay on the

Besides their radio program, Justine and Michael Toms produce a bi-monthly magazine, *New Dimension Journal*, and make tapes of all radio interviews available to the public. Michael, with the assistance and support of Justine, has written several books, including *An Open Life: Joseph Campbell in Conversation With Michael Toms*, and *At the Leading Edge*. For a sample copy of *New Dimension Journal*, which contains the name, the time and call letters of the radio station in your area carrying the series, and information on how you may become a member of "Friends of New Dimensions," write: New Dimensions Foundation, P.O. Box 410510, Dept. V, San Francisco, CA 94141, or call 415-563-8899.

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Couple's radio show from cutting edge of society

'New Dimensions': Interviews with poets, visionaries, scholars and more

By Walt Wiley
McCLATCHY NEWS SERVICE

SAUSALITO — Pull up a log and hunker down by the fire. It's dark. The fire is warm. The voices are clear — voices of elders, of people who have seen things, done things, people who believe in things.

Never mind the high-tech recording machinery and the clangy new age music. That Stone Age fireside is the mood that prevails in the darkened studio where Michael and Justine Toms show up two or three times a month.

They drive down from the hills of Mendocino County to tape their "New Dimensions Radio" program, which airs weekly on public radio stations around the country and by shortwave to 134 countries and an audience they estimate at a million.

"It could be more than that, too," said Michael Toms on a recent afternoon. "The one most common theme in letters we get is, 'Where can we get more programming like this?'"

The subjects of interviews that garner such responses are seldom the subjects of mainstream interview shows, although some have become such, often through early

exposure on "New Dimensions."

Myth scholar Joseph Campbell was a guest on "New Dimensions" nine times before Bill Moyers popularized him on public television.

And there have been the likes of Maya Angelou, the poet who was featured at President Clinton's inauguration; poet-author Robert Bly; the Dalai Lama; visionary author R. Buckminster Fuller; and on and on to a total of more than 4,000 in 20 years.

On this day, Michael Toms was interviewing New Mexico author Natalie Goldberg, who was in town to plug a new book, a spiritual autobiography called "Long Quiet Highway."

In his smooth baritone voice, obviously familiar with both Goldberg and her book, Toms led his subject with bare-bones economy of intrusion on his part into an hour of intimate talk about spiritualism, pure thought and real writing.

Earlier he had said he wanted the interview to take on the mood of a primeval campfire story session, and he seemed to have succeeded.

"This went fast," said Justine Toms after the interview. "It's often the case that the hour passes in what seems just a few minutes, but sometimes it can be just the opposite. You get engrossed so deeply you would think three hours had passed, and it's only one."

The Toms are one of those couples in which two people seem to form complementary parts of one

dual mind; they end one another's sentences, answer questions directed at the other.

But the business of "New Dimensions" is split quite well between the two.

Michael, 52, a rotund, quiet-spoken bear, does most of the interviews. Justine, 50, fresh-faced and animated, does some interviews and keeps track of the far-flung empire that they run from their rural Ukiah home.

It is there that they do all the reading that leads them to interview ideas, they said. Michael is also an editor with HarperSan-Francisco, dealing with many of the same writers who appear on the program.

"It's a wonderful deal for us," said Michael. "This was our avocation anyway, and now it's our vocation, too."

The reading, the preparation, is the core of things, but there are also the Sausalito and San Francisco offices from which they maintain liaison with their broadcast outlets, sell tapes of back programs and solicit memberships to keep the program going.

"We only charge the radio stations \$10 a week for this, so the only way we can keep going is to be supported by members, just like the public stations," said Michael. "The problem is, we can't solicit on the air, but the word gets around."

For information about "New Dimensions" and the stations that carry the program, write P.O. Box 410510, San Francisco, CA 94141-0510.

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Casting A Wide Web

Justine and Michael Toms Look Back to Radio's Future

BY FRANK BEACHAM

From a high-tech "electronic cottage" in rural Northern California that links to more than three million people in 132 countries, Michael and Justine Toms, creators of New Dimensions audio programming, have their fingers on the pulse of the future of radio—a future linked to the World Wide Web.

Though the Internet, "pay-per-listen" distribution, CD-ROMs, and direct-to-home satellites figure prominently in their future, these veteran producers of spoken-word radio programming hark back to a preelectronic era when describing their work.

"Radio is the tradition of storytelling," says Justine. "We have learned stories from each other since the beginning of language. We share stories

around the campfire as our ancestors did. The only difference today is we sit in front of microphones that happen to go out on invisible radio waves. It's a magical medium."

Since 1980, coproducers Michael and Justine have been broadcasting the *New Dimensions* program on 250 public radio stations in the United States and to over 130 countries around the world via shortwave stations and the Armed Forces Radio Network. Michael serves as on-air host of the show.

As a listener-supported, nonprofit educational organization, New Dimensions also sells audiocassettes from a radio archive of over 2,000 recorded conversations, publishes a magazine, runs workshops, and produces specialty audio programming.

Over the years, the *New Dimensions* show has carved a significant niche for itself. Focusing on the human-consciousness movement, it is the only nationally distributed program centered on personal and social transformation. Its guests—who have included such notables as Buckminster Fuller, Joseph Campbell, and the Dalai Lama—address the dramatic cultural shifts and changing values in society.

As information entrepreneurs of the '90s, the Tomses see major changes ahead in radio broadcasting due to new technology that allows specific programs to be addressed to specific listeners.

"Traditional radio will change radically because local stations [will have to] compete with everything else that's coming down," says Michael. "The way they can compete is to become more local and more connected to the community which they serve."

Bypassing the gatekeepers of traditional radio broadcasting and getting directly to the listener is a key goal of New Dimensions. "A lot of people are interested in audio they can't hear on the radio," Michael says. "People are discovering they can create their own commercial-free programming with cassettes. The new technologies allow people to hear their programming when they want it."

In addition to their current worldwide broadcast

distribution, New Dimensions is using several new technologies to expand its listenership. These include a recently opened Web site (<http://www.newdimensions.org>). "We see the Internet as a 24-hour-a-day radio-station extension. A radio station without a transmitter," says Michael.

RealAudio technology is being added to the site to allow the real-time playback of programming on demand. Much of the content, however, will remain free to listeners. "People are used to having audio for

free. It's the way we've all come up," says Justine. "We expect to provide quite a bit of free material on the Net in hopes that people will want to [purchase] other material that is not available for free."

"If we do a series of programs on new business paradigms," explains Michael, "we might play one for free on the Internet and have the rest of the series

available for purchase."

New Dimensions is working with Cupertino start-up Information Highway Media Corp. on the test of a new audio-on-demand service called "Listen Up"; the technology behind it may be termed "pay-per-listen." Subscribers to the new service will use their cable-television systems to download audio programming to a portable digital-storage device that allows listening anytime, anywhere.

"This is the concept of addressability—the ability to capture individual households," says Michael. "That hasn't been possible up until now. We will be able to put out information over the 'electronic airwaves' and reach small numbers of people in a commercially viable way."

But the Tomses' innovations don't stop there. "We have over 5,000 hours of material from the radio program," says Michael. "Much of it is timeless with archival value.

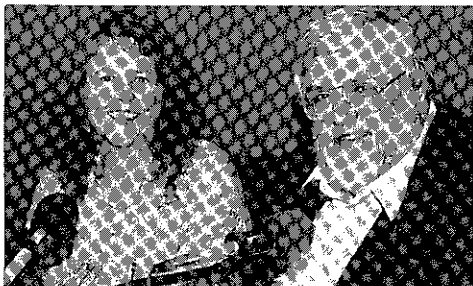
There are tapes with people who have become more famous in death than they were in life. This kind of audio can be coupled with visuals to produce effective educational and commercial material on CD-ROM."

Other potential new areas of distribution include informational audio channels on direct-to-home TV satellite services, digital-satellite radio, and audio-tape subscriptions by mail.

"We want to make our audio information available in whatever form, through whatever technology, is available," says Justine. "Radio will always be around, but it will change when people can program their own commute time."

A recent *New Dimensions* guest, Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the MIT Media Lab, helped Michael Toms refocus on his audio roots.

"He said the future of audio is bright because people have a lot more 'ear time' than they have 'eye time,'" Michael recalls. "More ear time than eye time. When you think about it, it's so true. No matter which technology we use in the future, we are basically committed to sound and the aural tradition." ■



Justine and Michael Toms

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New Dimensions Radio

Twenty years after shoestring beginnings, Michael and Justine Toms reach over one million listeners through their provocative interviews with leading-edge thinkers.

By Caren Goldman

When Michael and Justine Toms first began broadcasting "New Dimensions Radio" in September 1973, they envisioned using the power of the oral tradition to gather their listeners around an invisible campfire to hear the stories of leading-edge thinkers and cultural innovators. Now, 20 years after shoestring beginnings and that initial half-hour live transmission on radio station KQED-FM in San Francisco, this husband-and-wife team are celebrating a goal well met.

Weekly, the sound of the "New Dimensions" theme song, "Icarus," and the words, "It's only through a change of consciousness that the world will be transformed," beckons over one million people in 42 states, 134 countries, and on every armed services ship at sea to stay tuned for an hour of provocative conversation between one of the Tomses and the most dynamic thinkers, creative artists, social trendsetters, and pioneering scientists of our time.

Usually, it's Michael's rich baritone that feeds into the studio's mike and engages in dialogue with guests like the Dalai Lama, Bernie Siegel, Natalie Goldberg, Robert Bly, Brooke Medicine Eagle, Fritjof Capra, Ram Dass, Matthew Fox, and Maya Angelou. Nearby, behind a glass wall, Justine provides cues and input from the director's chair.

The two are the cofounders of the New Dimensions Foundation, a nonprofit, listener-supported, independent program producer. Michael serves as president,



While Michael's rich baritone is generally the "voice of choice" for interviews, he and Justine, his partner of more than 20 years, cocreate their perennially popular, nationally broadcast talk show.

publisher of a bimonthly journal, and executive producer of the radio program. Justine is the executive director and the producer of "New Dimensions Radio," as well as editor-in-chief of the journal. However, on a day to day basis, their alliance is not so much about honoring divisions as about cocreation.

Both Tomses are ingenious when it comes to discovering and spotlighting people whose work will eventually be considered revolutionary, controversial, or in vogue by the American public. For example, as early as 1975, long before Bill Moyers introduced television viewers to

Joseph Campbell's world, "New Dimensions" was broadcasting the first of Michael's 13 conversations with the man of a thousand myths, as well as others with Krishnamurti and Buckminster Fuller. Today the ever-growing list of well over 3,000 interviews taped in their Sausalito recording studio remains an unparalleled who's who of those specializing in human potential, medicine, healing, science, creativity, environmental awareness, spirituality, and wisdom.

As they strive to open new frontiers for listeners questing for self understanding and wholeness, the Tomses tread a path

not often taken by their peers. Indeed, every time Michael uses his low-key, congenial approach to interviewing guests, he departs from a professional arena in which predatory talk show hosts savor any opportunity to brazenly provoke people into the temptation to rage and bare all. Although that tactic is fashionable and tends to draw large and loyal audiences, it's not the way the Tomses execute their craft.

For them, radio is a ubiquitous vehicle that invisibly transports "endless hopeful visions" to "New Dimensions" listeners. These visions, Michael contends resolutely, are an antidote for the rampant cynicism now dominating the media. "This profession still operates under Newtonian principles and 'old model' thinking," he exclaims, passionately decrying the state of his chosen art. "Good news is out. Bad news is in. Optimism has been held by the media as unrealistic and lacking credibility. Cynicism is viewed as reasonable and credible."

To counter that attitude, the Tomses attempt to effect what the late theoretical physicist David Bohm called "open dialogue." In their eyes, the interview should be a forum during which guests relate information that expands each listener's landscape by offering them a wider view of a situation. They feel that talk show hosts who act disbelieving, cynical, or judgmental invariably limit what their listeners hear, see, and ultimately experience.

Reflecting on his technique for querying guests, Michael muses, "My contention is that if you give people a safe place to roam by establishing trust, supporting them by being there as an attentive listener, and respecting their right to say whatever they want, however they want, then they will reveal themselves. We want to inspire people, not depress them. So much of what passes today as 'engaging' talk in the media is disempowering, paralyzing, and entrancing. It keeps people unconscious, overwhelmed, and without hope."

When I interviewed Justine and Michael over the telephone, it seemed appropriate not to be talking to them face-

to-face. Instead, sitting in Ohio, three quarters of a continent away from their home and editorial offices 120 miles north of San Francisco, I found myself relying on my imagination to create pictures of their expressions as they shared their story.

While they recounted their personal lives and careers before and during more than 1,000 weeks of airing "New Dimensions," I was struck by how fluidly this duo negotiated their conversation. Listening to them exchange sound bites and tell stories of their love affair with each other and the medium of radio, I felt myself borne along on a current of thought flowing rapidly and unobstructed between them.

Together, Michael and Justine filled in details of the personal paths and spiritual struggles that led them to find each other. For Michael, the journey began in the 1960s, as he approached the summit of the corporate ladder as the top sales executive in a multinational firm in Virginia. A transfer moved him to San Francisco, where he kept climbing—until one day in '68 he began wondering if he was about to grab the top rung of the wrong ladder. In an attempt to discover the answer, he dropped out and began spending most of his time reading books on metaphysics, philosophy, and religion. A year later, his money ran out, and he reentered the nine-to-five world as the head of his own advertising agency.

Meanwhile, Justine Willis, a fervent Christian fundamentalist who was teaching school in Alabama, had moved to California for a new start after her divorce. Once there, the winds of cultural change pushed her in the direction of the local Jehovah's Witnesses. She now admits that at the time they were simply a convenient spiritual safety net, but for three years she spent much of her time knocking on doors trying to convince others to follow her footsteps.

These two paths hardly seemed destined to merge. Yet surprisingly, soon after Michael and Justine met at the home of a mutual acquaintance, their relationship became serious. Initially, Justine was concerned about their differing spiritual viewpoints. One night, when she visited Michael with a copy of her Bible in hand, they went into his then 2,000-vol-

ume library (which today tops 7,000) to study the scriptures and talk.

"I'd say, 'Now, you see, this scripture just has to mean this,'" Justine recollects. "Michael would reply, 'Yes, absolutely. And you might look at it this way.' Every time he said that, he would embrace and then amplify what I was saying. It blew me away, because I didn't feel like it was an argument—I felt like it was an expansion of my boundaries."

With Michael's encouragement, Justine soon found herself attending workshops and conferences on spirituality, which continued to expand her and gave her "a bigger playpen to play in." Realizing that she no longer needed an outside agency to "save" her, Justine had instead "found a companion on the path who was asking with deep sincerity his own spiritual questions: Why am I here? What has meaning in my life? How do I live a responsible life? What is my connection to nature and spirit?"

In 1972, while still seeking the answers to those questions and a never-ending list of new ones, Michael and Justine made their relationship a permanent partnership. Shortly thereafter, they decided that Michael should sell his interest in his financially successful ad agency so they could set out in a camper to follow their bliss.

Using intuition for a road map, they traveled through 38 states, along the way discovering the many spiritual disciplines and techniques that were emerging nationwide, each with its own agenda, leader, and dogma. Three months later, they returned to California to brainstorm plans to offer conferences and other events that would present an overview of the new culture as it was creating itself. "We felt this overview should be without attachment to any particular way, path, or approach. Underneath all the ferment and change, the deeper movement was clearly one of the spirit in the broadest sense of that term," they reasoned.

However, it was not until they attended a parapsychology conference in September 1973 that they discovered their real calling: New Dimensions. Au-

thor and psychology professor Charles Tart was one of the speakers. "We are in the most important revolution in human history—a revolution in consciousness," he said. The statement jolted Michael, who turned to Justine and declared, "The media should be covering such things!" A friend sitting with them replied, "Why don't you do it?"

Twenty-four hours later, in a lawyer's office, they created the New Dimensions Foundation, which debuted with a convocation of philosophers, scientists, and spiritual leaders. Then the Tomses accepted an offer to do their first half-hour biweekly radio series on station KQED-FM. Over the next four years, the show, "Frontiers of Consciousness," evolved into a four-hour Saturday night staple for a large audience.

Despite the show's success, KQED changed their programming format in 1979 and canceled it. The Tomses had to choose between shutting down their involvement with radio and taking a quantum leap of faith into the world of national broadcasting. "Those were difficult times," says Justine. "We were in a financial crunch and thought it was all over. But eventually we decided to do what we loved and believed in."

Their timing was serendipitous. A year earlier, in 1978, Congress had passed the Public Telecommunications Financing Act, which funded satellite systems for public broadcasting. On the vernal equinox in 1980, Michael launched a new talk show on National Public Radio.

Pondering an enduring childhood affinity for the medium that the late Marshall McLuhan described as a "mythic connection," Michael, 53, offers the thought, "Growing up with radio opened whole other worlds for me. I listened entranced to shows like "Sky King" and "Archie." They would take me to places like South America, and I would form pictures in my mind. Radio became a laboratory for my imagination and creativity."

Justine, 51, interjects, "I can remember the first time I tuned into a radio program called "Adventures in Consciousness." I was transported to another world. I felt connected to a whole community of people—not just me, but all the people listening in that moment."

Author and psychologist Arnold Mindell uses the words "openness, togetherness, wonder, sustainability, possibility," and, most of all, "hope" to describe the messages the Tomses are transmitting to the world. Michael once stated that his definition of "hope" embraces the idea that it is possible to believe in spite of the evidence—and to then take responsibility for working to change the evidence. Justine compares this transformative process to "connected baby steps." "We don't have to worry about the outcome—we just take those steps that are close to us and keep focused on what is close by, what we can do right now."

Years ago, author and psychologist Gay Luce said to the Tomses, "You'll never know more than half of one percent of the effects of what you're doing." Undoubtedly, she was right. After 20 years of creating what they call a "metanetwork" of friends, associates, former guests, and listeners, it's clear there's a growing community of people throughout the world—and perhaps elsewhere in the universe—whose connection is "New Dimensions."

"What we're doing here is sitting on the side of the pond, tossing in pebbles and watching the ripples. But it's an infinite pond. We never see where all the ripples go," says Michael. "Once in a while we hear, 'Well, I wrote a book because I heard this or that on "New Dimensions.'" Or, 'I created a film,' or 'I changed my life.' We hear a little bit, but not nearly as much as what's really happening."

Both Michael and Justine see the potential for transformation and change in the world coming from those who become a part of such networks. They expand exponentially, observes Michael. "When we have someone on the air, the person listening is taking it into their body of experience and their life path. That listener may come up with a totally new insight for themselves that wasn't said here, but was catalyzed by what was said here. Then they go out into the world and affect other people—it goes on and on."

Earlier this year, the Tomses received an award from the National Federation of Broadcasters for their outstanding con-

tributions to radio over the years. Taking a birdseye view of what they've created, they look to the future. "Our audience has become much more sophisticated. People are looking for more depth. Our challenge is to help people in their search."

Projects designed to accomplish that goal include going online with the 1,400 titles in their program guide and tape catalog and publishing four books of interviews from the show. These will be comparable to two already on the market: *An Open Life: Joseph Campbell in Conversation with Michael Toms* and *At The Leading Edge: New Visions of Science, Spirituality, and Society*. In addition, they hope to present more conferences (they held two this year to celebrate New Dimensions' anniversary) and expand their taped interviews into thematic series.

The Tomses' greatest challenge for the future is to keep "New Dimensions" funded. They point out that they do not receive funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is the conduit for government money coming into the public radio system. Instead, almost all of New Dimensions' revenue comes from memberships in a group called Friends of New Dimensions, donations from supporters, and audiotape sales.

In an age when most of what is said over the airwaves is lost and quickly forgotten, the Tomses are striving to deliver enduring messages that can strike a reverberating chord in all who hear them. Michael concludes, "The purpose is not to fill empty minds like pouring water from a pitcher into a cup, but rather to activate the imagination and the innate capacity within all of us to contribute and make a difference. It is through the exchange of ideas and information that we can be empowered and enabled to meet the future with greater energy and clarity." ♦

Caren Goldman is a frequent contributor to Yoga Journal.

For information about "New Dimensions," programming in your area, publications, or tapes call (415) 563-8899, or write New Dimensions, P.O. Box 410510, San Francisco, CA 94141-0510.

Sounds so intriguing you'll feel yourself changing.



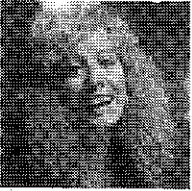
J. Krishnamurti

*"The crisis is in our consciousness,
not in the world."*

J. Krishnamurti

*"What you choose not to look at in
your life rules your life."*

Lynn Andrews



Lynn Andrews

*"The secure way is really the
insecure way. The way in which
the richness of the quest
accumulates is the right way. To
find your own way is to follow
your own bliss."*

Joseph Campbell



Joseph Campbell

*"When you look for spirituality,
you should look for something that
is real and works for you on an
everyday basis—that helps you to
solve the problems of today. You
don't have to wait until you get to
heaven."*

Sun Bear



Sun Bear

*"The very fact that you desire to be
enlightened will give you the
power to be enlightened. That
desire is the fuel. Flame it. Fuel
it."*

Marsha Sinetar



Marsha Sinetar

*"Observe and allow thoughts to
arise and settle...after that comes
clarity. It's not the thoughts that
matter, it's the thinking of the
thoughts."*

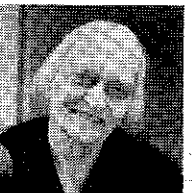
Lama Sogyal Rinpoche



Lama Sogyal Rinpoche

*"Knowing how to handle the
obstacles represents perfection."*

Irina Tweedie



Irina Tweedie



Joan Halifax

*"Practice of mindfulness in our
relationship to our ordinary,
immediate lives can be every bit as
rewarding and instructive as
taking wild journeys to far off and
exotic places to be with the greatest
teachers in the world."*

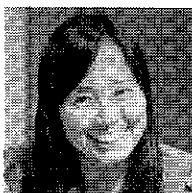
Joan Halifax



Willis Harman

*"Not only is global peace possible,
it's the only way to go."*

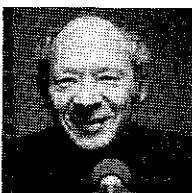
Willis Harman



Jean Shinoda Bolen

*"If you're with a person or in a
place where you feel a sense of
joy...a sense of harmony...then
you've arrived at your own
particular sacred place."*

Jean Shinoda Bolen, M.D.



Joseph Meeker

*"If the planet is changing, the best
thing to do is to find out how it's
changing and change with it."*

Joseph Meeker



Patricia Sun

*"Any important relationship will
cause movement. We need room in
relationships to be conscious."*

Patricia Sun



Robert Bly

*"After the Industrial Revolution
when the father went off to the
office, that was the greatest blow to
the relationship between fathers
and sons in 4000 years."*

Robert Bly



David Bohm

*"Creativity is essential for order. If
we are not creative, we are going to
be destructive, because our order
becomes rigid and mechanical and
no longer fits the reality."*

David Bohm

All quotations are excerpted from actual "New Dimensions" programs.

Current



Toms try new pathways, direct to their audience

New Dimensions, the weekly, hour-long program that features interviews with specialists in spirituality and healing such as Sogyal Rinpoche, Joan Borysenko and Andrew Weil, has big plans for reaching new listeners in 1997.

The 23-year-old New Dimensions Broadcasting Network is carving out several new distribution channels, via direct satellite delivery, Internet, an audio-on-demand service, and tape subscriptions.

The company recently signed on with the Wisdom Network satellite delivery service, part of Turner Vision Inc., (no connection to Ted) in Bluefield, W.Va., and expects to be feeding into the homes of C-band dish owners before spring.

New Dimensions, run by Michael and Justine Toms in Ukiah, Calif., will also participate in a pilot of a new audio-on-demand subscription service offered by Information Highway Media Corp., Cupertino, Calif. The company will feed audio via cable TV systems to consumers with special digital storage devices.

The programming—which includes the daily interview program hosted by Michael Toms, as well as special series such as one on alternative medicine—will also be available on the Internet via RealAudio technology. Users will be able to hear excerpts free of charge; to hear entire programs, they'll have to pay a nominal fee, Michael says. Also online will be New Dimensions' archive of tape descriptions, which currently go out to subscribers in the *New Dimensions* quarterly journal. The web site will feature a search mechanism allowing users to locate a tape by name or subject.

New Dimensions programming is already distributed beyond the public radio system. U.S. Armed Forces Radio carries it, along with Australian public broadcasting, and shortwave radio. The Toms are also raising funds to build a shortwave station in Costa Rica, and plan to carry *New Dimensions* programming and the work of other "life-affirming" producers once it's up and running, says Michael.

With all of the planned new pathways to listeners, New Dimensions can finally bypass the radio "gatekeepers," Michael says. "We're a listener-supported independent producer. Our constant challenge is convincing program directors and station managers there is an audience out there for what we do. . . . With these other technologies, we don't have to deal with that gatekeeper." About 250 stations carry the weekly program, the company says.

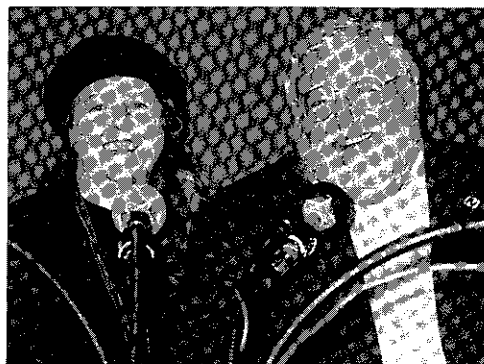
New Dimensions is fortunate to have associates, including Michael, "who have been very visionary in looking to the future, to what is possible in audio," says Justine. At a time when so many regard audio production as a step to video, New Dimensions is "completely devot-

ed" to audio, she says. "We think it delivers what we want to deliver in the best way possible. It certainly is the most inexpensive. And it is accessible, democratic and immediate." Michael adds: "We discovered very early on . . . the medium is exquisite for the kind of exploration we do. It's personal, it's intimate, it's ideal for conversation."

New Dimensions topics cover a wide range, from science and literature to spirituality and philosophy to business and politics. Past guests have included Isabelle Allende, Joseph Campbell, Deepak Chopra, Gloria Steinem and Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart. The show has also hosted the Dalai Lama, who discussed the youth democracy movement in China, and his friendship with Trappist monk and author Thomas Merton.

Michael says he is surprised that public radio, unlike its television counterpart, hasn't recognized the audience potential of material pertaining to the inner life. He points to the CPB-funded audience analysis "Audience 88," which showed public radio core listeners are by and large "inner-directed, societally conscious." *New Dimensions* "still is the only consistently, deeply, week-in-and-week-out program that's focused directly to the inner-directed," he says. "It's clearly proven the public radio audience is interested in this information. It's amazing to me more producers, even NPR itself, haven't been more hep to this."

New Dimensions' plans for 1997 are not solely technological. The Toms' intend to produce at least two new series, possibly ongoing. *The Power of the Human Spirit* would focus on creativity, and *Soul of Business* would look at business ethics and smart, positive management practices.



Justine and Michael Toms, co-founders of New Dimensions Broadcasting Network.

NEW DIMENSIONS  *RADIO*®

New Dimensions Radio is a project of New Dimensions Foundation, a nonprofit tax-exempt organization.

P.O. Box 569 • Ukiah, California 95482 • (707) 468-5215

Website: <http://www.newdimensions.org> • Email: ndradio@igc.org

THE CELESTINE JOURNAL

EXPLORING
SPIRITUAL
TRANSFORMATION

OCTOBER 1996

audio cassettes, and can be purchased through New Dimensions. (see address)

Justine, how did you shift from being a Jehovah's Witness to co-creating a radio program that gives a voice to many different forms of spirituality?

JT Well, I was raised as an Episcopalian, and in my twenties I experimented with other Christian religions. One was Southern Baptist and the other was Jehovah's Witness. When I ran across the Witnesses, I really felt that they had an expanded view of spirituality and how the world works with God. Then one day I met Michael and I knew that I really wanted to get to know him better. We connected in so many ways, but I was worried about our spirituality. I knew that when I had a partner in my life, our exploration of spirituality had to be a full partnership.

So I called Michael one night, very early in our relationship, and told him that I wanted to talk about spiritual things, and that I wanted to bring over my books. Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses print their own translation of the Bible and books that go along with it. I went to his town house in Sausalito all armed, so to speak, with my books. We went down into his library. It was filled with floor-to-ceiling books about every culture and practically every spiritual path on the planet. When I said I wanted to talk about spiritual things using my Jehovah's Witness translation of the Bible, Michael leaned over and pulled a copy of the same Bible off a shelf. It was just one of the many translations of the Bible that he had. Seeing that made me think, "Oh, maybe he's being more inclusive than I am." We then had one of the most dynamic conversations I had ever had up to that point in my life. Looking back on it, I realize it was the beginning of our work at New Dimensions. It was the seed of exploration in dialogue, not negating anyone's belief, but dialoguing about the possibilities of holding it in a larger way that might include even more.

V

ISIONARIES AT WORK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JUSTINE & MICHAEL TOMS

BY SALLE MERRILL REDFIELD

THEIR radio series, New Dimensions, has touched the lives of millions around the world each week for over two decades. Justine and Michael Toms began New Dimensions Radio in the early 1970's in order to dialogue with transformative thinkers about personal and social change. Throughout the evolution of the human potential movement, the Toms have interviewed such notables as Jean Houston, Joseph Campbell, The Dalai Lama of Tibet, Deepak Chopra and Bernie Siegel.

Michael is known as the voice behind New Dimensions Radio; Justine is known as the producer, even though she hosts interviews on occasion. As a couple, they have been very active in keeping the art of conversation and story telling alive. The more than 2,000 recorded conversations they have produced are available on

Out of your union came New Dimensions Radio?

JT Right. We got together in 1972, and just about nine months later New Dimensions was birthed.

I just recently heard someone say that the future leaders are going to be couples. Have you heard that, Michael?

MT I haven't heard that specifically, but it certainly makes sense. I think that the future really is collaboration and cooperation in community and it begins with relationship. To work together is to be in relationship and I think relationship is the path to enlightenment. You have to be in a relationship to be mirrored back to yourself. Otherwise, you are in isolation. It challenges us to look more deeply into ourselves. And there's a synergy that comes out of relationships. So I think the future—the next twenty years or so—is really going to emphasize relationship and being in partnership.

Aren't the two of you part of a strong support group?

MT We have many support groups. I am part of a men's circle and Justine is part of a women's circle. We have one group or circle that we have been getting together with for seventeen years. At one point we actually bought land together and lived on it for four years. Now everyone is spread out geographically, but we still get together twice a year. In such a circle, where you get together and dialogue for that length of time, a deep level of trust is created.

JT It's not just a reunion twice a year, although that's part of it. It's sitting down formally in a circle, dialoguing and checking in and really listening to one another. Magic happens in that process.

That way of life seems to be reflected in your work.

MT It is hard for us to tell the difference between our work and our life, it's all one thing. We see relationships developing over time with the people we interview, like you and James.



MICHAEL AND JUSTINE TOMS host and produce weekly New Dimensions Radio programs which are heard worldwide. Salle and James were featured July 29-Aug. 4, talking about *The Celestine Prophecy Revisited*. - photo by David Roberts

We've been with you a couple of times, and I'm sure we'll be with you again. There are people like Andrew Weil, Robert Bly, Sam Keen and Jean Houston that we've been talking to for twenty years. We may get together every year or so, and there's a bonding that has occurred. We're able to enter into a depth of dialogue that's not otherwise possible.

How do you see the spiritual movement today compared to twenty years ago?

MT I think it's a lot more amorphous. It's not as defined as it was twenty or twenty-five years ago when there were specific areas of definition that were happening like the gurus from the East and the emergence of the human potential movement and Esalen. Now it's all merging. The ecology movement is merging with the spiritual movement, which is merging with the women's movement, which is merging with the health movement. All the movements that were birthed out of the sixties are starting to come together in various and sundry ways to create one large consciousness transformation. Underneath it all is the spiritual, because if you don't have a spiritual base you're going to burn out. People burned out in the sixties with social activism because there wasn't a spiritual base. People like

Alice Walker and Maya Angelou, who were firebrands in their early years, are still rocking the system, but are now doing it in a way that is very positive and constructive. They've come through their own fire of tempering their spirituality and their purpose in life.

JT Gloria Steinem is another one.

MT Gloria Steinem is writing about the heart within and the voice within and the inner self. You wouldn't have found that in her work twenty years ago.

You've probably seen changes in what many people you interview are talking about.

MT There's much more depth. A lot of the faddish ideas and teachings have gone by the boards. People are looking for something that really makes a difference in their lives. I think that we are seeking a spirituality that allows us to function in life, and not have to go off to a monastic mountain top where we essentially leave life. Another aspect of challenge in the future will be expressing a spirituality that integrates itself further into life.

Do you find that the subject of your radio interviews challenges listeners?

MT In many ways many of our interviews do challenge listeners, but the listeners seem to be people who know that they are going to be stretched. A lot of our listeners write us and tell us that New Dimensions is a means for them to expand their own horizons. We get a few letters here and there that say, "Oh, how could you do that," or "How could this person say that." But they're very few and far between and they do illustrate the point that there are always ideas people are not going to agree with. We're just putting the ideas out there, and people can resonate with them as they choose to. We're not trying to tell them this is the way, the truth, and the light.

It must be very rewarding to hear from people who have benefited from the interviews.

JT Oh, it is. One little girl was listening to one of our tapes—I think it was Susan Jeffers' *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*. When she went to bed that night, she said, "Mommy, I'd like to hear that tape again about the fear." I just loved it. She was eight years old, and she was really understanding and getting the picture that we all feel fear, and that that's not something wrong or bad, it's just part of life.

Let's talk about the project that you're undertaking at New Dimensions.

MT Well, the new project, of course, is the New Dimensions Broadcasting Network, which is a vision of a twenty-four hour programming service that features life-affirming, socially and spiritually relevant programming all the time. It's using not just radio but all the technologies that are available for delivering audio, such as the Internet, cable audio and direct broadcast via satellite to the home. These kinds of things are opening up a lot more opportunities to deliver audio. We're really excited about that, because our main challenge has been getting stations to carry New Dimensions. Many stations don't realize that there is an audience for this kind of programming.

We are also excited because we now have a site set up to build our own short-wave transmitter in Costa Rica on the campus of the UN's University for Peace. We're doing that in conjunction with Radio for Peace International, which has been broadcasting New Dimensions ten times a week on their transmitter. Our own transmitter will give us the facility to make programming available to more people and organizations worldwide.

You also have a way that people can encourage their local station to carry your programming, don't you?

MT Yes, we have a networker guide package which we send out to listeners who want to contact their local stations. We're putting programs up on the satellite weekly; all the stations have to do is tune in their downlink, and they can record the program.

JT And they don't have to just downlink either. We can send tapes to stations to air, so they don't need satellite equipment to carry the series.

MT We also publish a bimonthly magazine called *New Dimensions Journal*. It has the list of network station affiliates, and all the programming that's coming up in the next two months.

Would you talk about the Earth Circle that you are involved with?

JT Yes, Earth Circle is a world-wide meditation that takes place on the first day of every month, always at the same time. For five minutes, people simultaneously sit down and focus on healing the planet and themselves. We picked a certain time when it was daylight for the majority of the populated world. Here are some of the time zones, all in standard time: New York City 11:00 AM; London 4:00 PM; Moscow 7:00 PM; Honolulu 6:00 AM.

MT One last thing I want to say is that we feel the work we're doing is carrying on the oral tradition, which is the storytelling tradition that's been with humanity since life began. It is the way human beings have always learned, by telling stories. And New Dimensions has created a forum where people can tell their stories. More of that needs to happen. We're just one small part of that whole process. 🌍

Radio World®

January 24, 1996

SAUSALITO, Calif. From a high-tech "electronic cottage" in rural northern California that links to more than three million people in 132 countries, Michael and Justine Toms, creators of "New Dimension" audio programming, have a daily pulse on the future of radio.

Though the Internet, "pay-per-listen" distribution, CD-ROMs and direct-to-home satellites figure prominently in their future, these veteran producers of spoken-word radio programming go back to a pre-electronic era when describing their work.

"Radio is the tradition of storytelling," said Justine. "We have learned from each others' stories since the beginning of language. We share stories around the campfire as our ancestors did. The only difference today is we sit in front of microphones that happen to go out on invisible radio waves. It's a magical medium."

Since 1980, Michael (as on-air host) and Justine (as producer) have been broadcasting New Dimensions on 250 public radio stations in the United States, on the Armed Forces Radio Network and on shortwave stations reaching more than 70 countries. As a listener-supported, non-profit education organization, New Dimensions also sells audio cassettes from a radio archive of over 2,000 recorded conversations, publishes a magazine and engages in workshops and the production of specialty audio programming.

Program Focuses on Local Involvement

by Frank Beacham

Over the years, New Dimensions has carved a significant niche for itself. It is the only nationally distributed program that focuses on personal and social transformation. The show's guests — who have included such notables as Buckminster Fuller, Joseph Campbell and the Dalai Lama — address the dramatic cultural shifts and changing human values in society. Its focus on the human consciousness movement has created a treasure-trove of historical information.

As information entrepreneurs of the 90s, the Toms (they are husband and wife) see major change ahead in radio broadcasting due to new technological developments that allow specific programs to be addressed to specific listeners.

"Traditional radio will change radically because local stations are going to have to be able to compete with everything else that's coming down," said Michael. "The way they can compete is to become more local and more connected to the community they serve."

Bypassing the "gatekeepers" of traditional radio broadcasting and getting directly to the listener is a key goal of New Dimensions.

"A lot of people are interested in audio they can't hear on the radio," Michael said. "People are discovering they can create their own commercial-free programming with just cassettes. The new technologies allow people to hear their programming when they want it."

In addition to its current worldwide broadcast distribution, New Dimensions is using several new technologies, including the World Wide Web, pay-per-listen services and CD-ROMs to expand its listenership.

"We see the Internet as a 24-hour-a-day radio station extension. A radio station

without a transmitter," said Michael.

New Dimensions just opened its web site (<http://www.newdimensions.org>).

"It's still a walk up the hill," Justine said. RealAudio technology will be added in early 1996 to allow the real time playback of programming on demand. Much of the content, however, will remain free to listeners.



Justine Toms & Michael Toms

"People are used to having audio for free. It's the way we've all come up," said Justine. "We expect to provide quite a bit of free material on the Net in hopes that people will want to (purchase) other material that is not available for free."

For example, said Michael, "If we do a series of programs on new business paradigms, we might play one for free on the Internet and have the rest of the series available for purchase."

New Dimensions is working with Cupertino, Calif., startup Information Highway Media Corp. on the test of a new audio-on-demand subscription service called "Listen Up."

The new service will use cable television systems to download audio programming to a portable digital storage device that allows listening at anytime, anywhere. (See the related column, Signal-to-Noise, page 31 of this issue.)

"This is the concept of addressability ... the ability to capture individual households," said Michael. "That hasn't been possible up until now. We will be able to put out information over the electronic airwaves and reach small numbers of people in a commercially viable way."

They are also exploring the possibilities of CD-ROMs.

"We have over 5,000 hours of material from the radio program," said Michael. "Much of it is timeless with archival value. There are tapes with people who have become more famous in death than they were in life. This kind of audio can be coupled together with visuals to produce effective educational and commercial material on CD-ROM."

Other potential new areas of distribution include informational audio channels on direct-to-home TV satellite services, digital satellite radio and audio tape subscriptions by mail (just begun at a cost of \$300 per year).

"We want to make our audio information available in whatever form, through whatever technology is available," said Justine. "Radio will always be around but it will change when people can program their own commute time."

A recent New Dimensions guest, Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, helped Michael Toms refocus on his audio roots.

"He said the future of audio is bright because people have a lot more ear-time than they have eye-time," Michael said. "When you think about it, it's so true. No matter which technology we use in the future, we are basically committed to sound and the aural tradition."

New Dimensions is located at P.O. Box 410510, San Francisco, CA 94141; 415-563-8899.



Ingrid Lunclan

MEDIA

A New Dimension in Broadcasting

FOR SOME TWENTY YEARS, THE weekly radio show "New Dimensions" has served as the new age's "Larry King Live". More than a million listeners each week tune in to hear host Michael Toms engage in wide-ranging, one-on-one dialogues with such luminaries in the field of consciousness and social change as Deepak Chopra, M.D., James Redfield, Ram Dass, and Maya Angelou. Now Michael and his wife and business partner, Justine Toms, have launched an ambitious plan to give high-minded radio listeners an equally good reason to stay tuned the rest of the week as well.

Their goal: to found a 24-hour-a-day nonprofit audio oasis, The New Dimensions

Broadcasting Network, which would create and distribute (through local radio stations and a raft of the latest communications technologies) a steady supply of what they call "life-affirming" programming—from interviews with the Dalai Lama to reports on complementary medicine to shows on boosting creativity.

With a \$5 million price tag, the Network won't be in full operation for a while yet. Indeed, their projected deadline is not until the dawn of the millennium: December 1999. However, depending on your listening area, you may be able to sample these new waves right away. Last April, the fledgling network began distributing a fascinat-

ing first batch of programming for local radio stations to pick up (some directly available to short-wave listeners), including "Thinking Allowed," featuring discussions of intuitive thinking with host Jeffrey Mishlove, a Ph.D. in parapsychology; "The Love of Wisdom," taped interviews with the late philosopher Alan Watts, one of the main importers of Buddhism to the West; and "The Roots of Healing," a series on complementary medicine co-hosted by *Spontaneous Healing* author Andrew Weil, M.D.

As the nonprofit network raises funds over the next few years, future programming will be released in stages. Among the intriguing possibilities: "The New Spirituality," possibly hosted by creation-spirituality theologian Matthew Fox; "At Dharamasala with the Dalai Lama," profiling the influential spiritual leader; and "Money Wisdom"—a show that sounds more Tao than Dow—offering tips on voluntary simplicity and "financial consciousness." Other ideas include children's programming, a world music hour hosted by Justine, even a live variety show featuring humor, special guests, and vignettes. ("Planetary Home Companion," perhaps?) "We are limited only by our imagination," says Justine.

However inspirational, programs on abstract topics like consciousness or intuition may never be an easy sell to hard-nosed station managers. So the Network plans to be as pioneering in their medium as in their message: They're currently working on ways to distribute their shows through the latest communications technologies ushered in by the information age—cable lines that pipe in radio signals along with the usual TV channels; direct-to-home satellite systems; "multi-casting," the form of audio sent over the Internet; even building their own short-wave station. The idea is to create a sort of Radio Free new age, available to listeners at any time of the day or night. "These forms of direct access are very democratic," says Justine Toms. "They go around the 'electronic gatekeepers' who hold information and withhold information. They open up new options for people to do their own exploration."

Stay tuned!

— Cheryl Jarvis

To plug into the New Dimensions Broadcasting Network, contact PO Box 410510, San Francisco CA 94141-0510; (415) 563-8899; <http://www.newdimensions.org>.

Ukiah Daily Journal

Radio Broadcasters offer Listeners a New Dimension

RUSH RELIEF

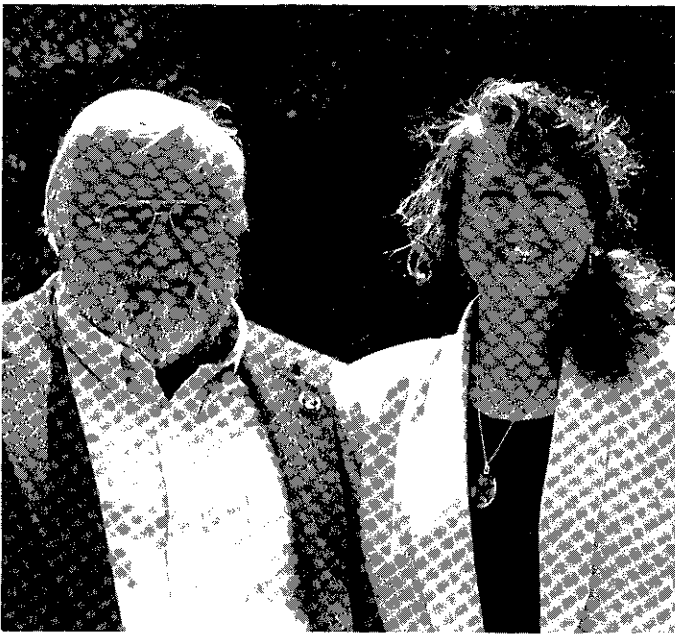


Photo by Ingrid Lundahl

Michael and Justine Toms believe "We have to get beyond the right and wrong."

By K.C. MEADOWS

If you're one of those people who cringes when you hear Rush Limbaugh braying over the air in your local garage or diner, or you try to whisk the radio dial past "ditto-head" diatribes before a full statement can register in your brain, you may be ready to tune in to a New Dimension.

"We see ourselves as an antidote to (Rush Limbaugh-style) programming," says Michael Toms, who, with wife Justine Toms has launched the New Dimensions Broadcasting Network.

The Ukiah couple have a real problem with many of the radio talk shows they hear today.

"What so often happens is the problem continues to be addressed, but no one gets to the solutions," Michael Toms says.

"It's all about my position or your position, I'm right, you're wrong," he explains, pounding his fist first right, then left on the table before him. "We have to get beyond the right and wrong."

NDBN is an expansion of the Tomses 20-year-old New Dimensions Foundation through which they have been producing lecture series and radio programming that explore new ideas, society's alternative lifestyles and the culture's new curves.

Through technological advances, the Tomses are able to do most of their business right from home in the eastern hills of Ukiah. They have an office in San Francisco for the convenience of their listeners and a recording studio in Sausalito.

New Dimensions programs can be heard on 250 public radio stations nationwide, including Mendocino County's KZYX radio in Philo.

Interviews with well-known New Age

philosophers such as Joseph Campbell and Fritjof Capra have attracted thousands of fans to the Tomses' programming, and the list keeps growing.

Operated much like a public radio station, the Tomses' non-profit organization depends largely on contributions from fans.

The new 24-hour radio network was born of necessity.

"We've been waiting around for someone else to do the 24 hours, but it kept bouncing back into our court," Justine Toms explained.

The couple hope to raise \$5 million over three years and be on the air 24 hours a day by the year 2000. The broadcasting network will use a variety of new technologies, including satellite radio which beams directly into the home much like TV satellite signals do.

The Tomses also tell of a new radio band, the S-band, which has been freed from military use by the Federal Communications Commission and will open up to public programming competing with AM and FM.

They are heard widely on short-wave radio and already have a site on the World Wide Web of the Internet at the address at: <http://www.newdimensions.org>

"What we're doing is life-long learning, the quest for knowledge and insight," Michael Toms said. He said the couple seek to broaden the landscape and provide different perspectives for people.

Some of the thinkers who have expressed themselves on the Tomses radio show include:

■ Gloria Steinem – "I'm trying to write about this stage

of life (turning 60) what I wish I had read much earlier...it is a new period of life that, especially for women, is very exciting."

■ Daniel Goleman – "Alternative medicine' may be a misleading label. Maybe it's just medicine of the future."

■ Duane Elgin – Government is not going to save us this time. It's going to be the actions of millions of individuals, working one by one, that will accumulate into an avalanche of transformational change."

■ David Darling – "music exists in that space of spirituality - it's not a religious thing, but it has a spirit about it that moves everybody."

■ Michael Meade – "If we don't know our own story, our lives are somewhat in danger."

■ Ken Carey – "It's so easy to get caught up in our human affairs and forget to step outdoors and just allow ourselves to be defined by nature instead of by other human beings or by our own self-images."

Michael Toms said he believes the reason so many religious broadcasters are a success today is because, whether you agree with them or not, they offer a hopeful vision.

"People are really hungry for a hopeful vision – we want to present other hopeful visions," he said.

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Editorial Offices

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