

Streams

No. 48 Winter/Spring 2015 A Newsletter of Crystal Spring Center for Earth Literacy

A Spark in the Web

On a Saturday not long past, a new generation of farmers came to see what lay before them. Invited by Land for Good, Inc. and Crystal Spring, they arrived with an array of interests and ideas, but most of all sensitivity and spirit. They came because an ancient invitation offered at a breakthrough moment will resonate forever ~ come and see. The seeing now must extend far beyond the landscape to the flood plains of the heart for only there will one's observing eye hear the voice of the land.

Why do we seek a farmer? Because, like others, we have come to understand that land in its multidimensional forms offers a clarifying voice in regional conversations. Land illuminates who a people are and where they are going in an evolving story.

Crystal Spring is not the rural scene that Sister Bernardine exclaimed sixty five years ago ~ that expansive view of orchards and gardens. We fold into suburban landscape now. Over the past seventy years a suburban way of life became embedded in our American consciousness, a sense of space and family life, affordability and prosperity. Some would say that suburbia with all of its promises has become our nation's dream. However, serious questions about

'this dream' have begun to surface as our home planet approaches a critical era.

An awareness of global warming hangs, like cloud cover on a November day, over us. While news reports may at times disturb, our daily involvements demand our primary attention. And often, the information coming forth from all manner of scientific observations can seem to contradict the weather events or patterns of a local place.

In 1988 the United Nations Environmental Program, in partnership with the world Meteorological Society, created the International Panel on Climate Change. As early as the 1970's, evidence had begun to display globally that changes in climate could and would impact all societies, particularly their means of economic well-being. Thus, one of the first tasks of the Panel was to consider a broad range of assessments from the ever-growing knowledge of the science of climate change and to report the conclusions at an international conference.

In 1992 the conference was held in Rio. Not immediately, but within a few short years, an incredible interweaving of the voices of experts and common folk from

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A Spark in the Web, *continued*

almost every nation affirmed a Charter written in a language that inspires and motivates. Today the guiding principles of that Earth Charter invite people of every nation on the planet to embrace the well-being of all Life while we work out the practical applications in our own local regions.

Now, in 2014, the fifth report from the Panel on Climate Change has been released. This one differs significantly. The earlier reports focused on changes in the physical climate system and how those changes affected Earth's physical environment. At this point the observations highlight "anthropogenic" stresses and our greenhouse gas causing changes. The testimony clarifies that our human behavior and national policies are factors in global warming. For the first time preparing for and responding to climate change will not only include the best scientific responses, but also our human values will influence choices and set directions.

Imaging a scenario has been a consistent method used by the Panel to consider how a system might adapt to climate change. A key component for success in a scenario is resilience. Resilience is the ability of a system to respond to disturbances, self-organize, learn and adapt. With the human now a key component in the adaptations in local regions, the influence of ethics, justice, and responsibility will enter considerations about land, food, energy, water, and all that longs to thrive within a place.

Set over the stump of a downed hemlock and angled so anyone entering our drive-

way can easily read is a sign – **Red Tomato, righteous produce!** Their offices nestled in our once school classrooms, this is what they write about themselves. In business since 1997, we're an ambitious non-profit that works our heart out to deliver fresh, great tasting produce while cultivating a more sustainable, ethical food system. Rooted in fair trade, we strive to insert fairness, transparency and sustainability into every aspect of the way we do business – including stewardship of earth; fair, safe treatment of farmers and workers; wide access to affordable healthy food; and the financial well-being of both Red Tomato and the farms in our network. We believe change is possible.

Upstairs on the second floor in the office of the Religious Lands Conservancy Project, a poster sits atop a file cabinet. In large block letters: **Mission ~ 1000 acre easement preserves the natural state of land for future generations.** Over the past 30 years many Religious Orders have explored the insights of a living cosmology, an emerging worldview, to reassess our mission and our ministries. The dawning insight that we are part of a vast evolving universe provides a compelling framework for interpreting the roots of our present cultural crisis and for granting congregations new directions to respond. We witness now the many people who have been translating new ways of doing economics, agriculture, community development, preservation, and construction based on the principles by which Earth sustains and regenerates itself. This reconnection with Earth holds the key upon which the future of life literally depends. Thus the significance of our lands must

A Spark in the Web, *continued*

be reconsidered. Without land none of the organizations or projects would be able to demonstrate the connection.

In our stone building, the oratory, the very stones cry out anew. Upon entering the "Museum" one is drawn into a multidimensional presentation. The mask presentation of the Universe Story hangs on the walls. Beneath each mask the writing of the older students tells the story of the long epic journey of our unfolding universe. A marvelous array of every expression of our woodlands along with 'fossils' discovered in the backyards of the younger children are on display. Each treasure is placed exactly where the rock, the winged, the budding one came forth in the Story.

Our minds and hearts turn now to ponder the winter solstice. How many centuries of terror before an ancient people hauled and set in place the great stone portals to welcome the Sun's return? And what of our terror ~ the great heat, the great dying of species, the great rising of sea levels, the great loss of languages and cultures. How do we shape our rituals?

Never has our species faced into a moment of planetary crisis that is human activated. Every effort to create a new human presence through land-based projects, every partnership of people with place, every bold choice, become the sparks for a great conflagration in human consciousness. Earth is alive with a unique community of beings. Only in this awakening can our rituals, once again, make present what is Real.

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Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

from the Earth Charter Preamble
www.EarthCharter.org

Coming Home to Place

People everywhere are inspired to join in the collective efforts that seek a new beginning. This requires a new way of thinking, a new participation. Respect for Nature's economy stirs in the work of local farmers, land conservation, food systems, community programs, human initiatives everywhere. Crystal Spring is one among the many seeking our way toward the next articulation. We are all one in the "great work" of our times.

Please accept this gift as my participation in the common work _____

Name _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

Our gracious thanks to you who are present in all that creates and is Crystal Spring.

Garden Mysteries

Spring “dazzles gradually”, doesn’t it? At first you follow snaky trails of water from melting streams; they lead you into the garden. Here Sister Water appears to have written in squiggly lines! You scratch your head. What’s she telling you about soil temperature, where the rocks have hidden, how the worms have survived the winter? You take out your trowel and magnifying glass; you dig into the first few inches of ground and touch upon glacial soil, the crumbly remains of Grandfather Rock’s relatives. All this and you haven’t even planted those spinach seeds jumbling around in your pocket!

If you’re **5-7 years old**, you’re going on an adventure of water, dirt and bugs. What a story!

8-10 years old, you’ve heard about compost, right? Well, have you heard a pile of it? Let’s snoop into this heap of biology. It’s been waiting all year for you to spread its side of the story around the garden.

If you are **11-13 years old**, you are “something else” being drafted into springtime by “nothing but” photosynthesis and pollination. After all, we live in an emergent universe that, for years you’ve been sure, is all about sugar. Now we get it that these processes teach us about peace-making in a new climate reality. Sweet!

Join us for 10 weeks of Tuesdays as we open our being to the wonders of a living planet!

For more information, email Barb at barbarahop@comcast.net

**March 3rd - May 5th
Tuesday mornings, 9:30 – 11am
Cost \$75/child**

Summer Adventures

Summer invites us to a week of exploring the universe right in our own backyard. It’s amazing what “all our relatives” have in store for us. Join the community fun...

**July 27-31
9:00am – noon
Cost: \$125/child**