

# Streams

No. 42 Winter '11 A Newsletter of Crystal Spring Center for Earth Literacy

## ***Ever-greening Our Common Way***

path through the meadow to the wood's edge to gather fallen white pine and cedar branches. The red cedars always germinate in turf, a reminder that this was once a grassy field as the apple and peach trees surrendered to the lack of human care. Circling back to the house we snip a few sprigs of red holly berries, the vibrant accent that makes beautiful both the garlands on the mantle and the evergreen sprays placed in niches to welcome guests. Gathering evergreen is an annual ritual albeit one whose sign now requires a longer trek in time and space.

Bringing evergreens into the home is a very old custom. The ancients noticed in the cold and dead of winter certain trees manifesting a spirit force offering food and nourishment to creatures. They hauled seed berry branches into their dwellings that such a life force might remain among them.

In every season that spirit force lingers, manifesting if we but notice. In May not more than ten feet from our window in the arm of the hemlock robins built a nest. Three blue eggs appeared. Two weeks later there was a constant flurry of feeding

and cleaning and calling until, late one afternoon, the final fledging vanished into surely what must have been for the parent robin, the terror of the night.

In July one could hear more than see a Cooper's hawk instructing and insisting that her young learn the survival skill of predator. And, just three weeks ago a fine red fox loped through the garden on her way to the brush. The very next morning her offspring followed the same trail slithering through the asparagus ferns and up past the pond.

Is it possible in this very season when we humans demonstrate our on-going love for offspring, family, and clan that what survives and manifests in the plethora of instinctual behaviors has been lost or suppressed in the speciation of the industrial human?

Fox and fin whale, robin and rainbow trout have all been part of an incredible complex and delicate system of exchange, taking energy and giving back energy. Our home, planet Earth, is one grand and gracious economy of borrowing and lending, paying back in a manner that enhances the whole. Are we not one of the grand expressions of such

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***Ever-greening Our Common Way,  
continued***

enhancement...the species that awakened to the wonders of that amazing system that subsists and surrenders? The rule of exchange was laid out by the wisdom of the primal forces long before our arrival. Our contribution is to acclaim and celebrate how things came to be. In learning and telling 'the story' of how things came to be we grow in a new understanding of what matters.

After the November mid-term elections the Boston Globe reported: *a strong job creating economy in the U.S .would be the country's most important contribution to a global recovery.*

In the same newspaper in another section was the story of a young Chinese couple. He had prospered in the computer industry. Yet, they were letting go of that security. Not far from their home was a small abandoned island and along with another couple they purchased the land and were beginning the laborious task of recovering the soils. They dreamed one day of fields and farm in place of the present sterile landscape.

Lying on the table beside the city news was Earth Network News. The journal contained a moving story about two groups of school children, one in Mexico the other in Texas. Their academic, social, and most especially cultural activities flourish from their relationship with Rio Grande. A community of people not identified by national borders but by their relationship with a river! Closer to home, across this state landowners are surrendering their properties to preserve forest and wetland, farms and open space

that whatever biodiversity might survive in a changing climate, resilient ecosystems might thrive in the future.

The terror of the ancients is not our experience. True ritual is a sign of the Real. What is real is of necessity. The children who hear the song of the river, the technician who hears the cry of the soils, the landowner who recognizes the path of the turtle laboring toward the sea touch the Real, the spirit force that endures through time and space.

Whenever we become attached to a particular way of thinking or seeing, we blind ourselves to Reality, that *life force* ever flowing toward greater Truth and Beauty. If we but "pay attention" and "notice" in this our industrial season of winter, we will find the ways to invite *spirit force* to abide among us. In seeing *this terrible Beauty* our thinking will change; our behavior will alter. Gift-giving will no longer be the "bettering" of those within the family, within the clan. In a consumer culture with insatiable needs, giving readily becomes self-serving. Slowly our species senses we are here for the "betterment" of all. We have been gifted with the Story of how things came to be. What matters then is that all life forms continue to share in the one daring embrace of spirit energy economy. To this awesome planetary, cosmic adventure we bring conscious awareness. Now, each surrender, each risk on behalf of the whole, is a chosen 'sacrifice.' As one of our Board Members wrote, "Understanding my place in the Universe Story and sensing a purpose in it has guided my daily choices to recognize I live in a community of subjects." ■CL

**Crystal Spring  
invites you to  
Our Open House ~ Holiday Event**

**Books ~ Breads ~ Local Honey  
Sunday, December 5, 1-4**

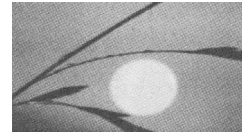
Browse for books, homemade breads,  
local honey and herbal products from  
our garden.

**Akin Bak Beekeeper, Howard Crawford**

**Linda Karabaris, TV chef: Linda's Kitchen**  
Sample some of her delicious treats

**It Takes a Grden Specialty Breads**  
Baked by Barb Harrington

Greet friends ~ enjoy tea and a holiday treat



***Winter Solstice Celebration***

**Sunday, December 19, 6:30pm**

The Crystal Spring community and companions will sit with open heart in quiet stillness in the winter of our times. A contemplative engagement to make real the ritual of receptivity, recovery and rebirth.

Preregistration is required. Phone number is requested since on-street parking is not allowed in our town during certain snow conditions.

508-699-7167 or [cryspr@comcast.net](mailto:cryspr@comcast.net)

### **Greening Our Common Way**

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, river keepers, land conservation, food security, human initiatives of all manner. We participate in this global effort locally ~ religious lands conservancy, food and farming cooperation, programs for children, workshops and retreats for adults. Your gift supports all of this and more.

\_\_\_\_ Please accept my gift as my participation in the network of the many

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Our gracious thanks for who you are in all that creates and sustains Crystal Spring*

## Winterer Calendar 2010 into 2011

### Homeschool

#### Module II

**Tuesday mornings, 9:30 – 11:00**

**January 11 - March 15**

Winter is the perfect time to learn from creatures of woods and gardens about their “waste management cycles.” We’ll follow their foot steps to reduce our carbon footprint. And who knows? Along the way we might invent a thing or two to keep our home planet cool. Cost \$40.



### Green Reel Series

Films shown on Sun. @ 7pm  
At Agudas Achim, 0=901 N. Main St, Attleboro

The End of the Line – January 23  
Discussant: Deborah Cramer

Black Gold – January 30  
Discussant: James Hayes-Bohanan

Dirt! – The Movie – February 20  
Discussant: Ken Oles

The Age of Stupid – February 27  
Discussant: David Ammerman

What’s the Economy for, Anyway? - March 6  
Discussant: Halina Brown

***Please pre-register for all programs - call 508-699-7167 or email [cryspr@comcast.net](mailto:cryspr@comcast.net)***

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Crystal Spring is the work of the Dominican Sisters, who are supported and encouraged in this work by many friends and people of like mind and heart. To register for a program or to seek further information, contact Crystal Spring.

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