

Streams

No. 45 Winter 2013 A Newsletter of Crystal Spring Center for Earth Literacy

Magic Happens

Thirty years ago a workman stood on the flat roof of the classroom addition, looked west and read the story of oaks and pines and a few scattered sugar maples. He said, "That woodland looks to me like about an eighty to ninety year recovery." I don't remember his name; I don't even recall why he was on the roof. What caught me and has long lingered was the startling awareness that someone was reading a landscape. The open pasture and agricultural fields penned in by stone walls was, year by year, returning to woodland. The land was growing itself. Paxton, Woodbridge and Canton soils, air masses blowing in from Atlantic, particularly those that sweep down from the northeast and give voice to wind, shape this place. Black huckleberry and low bush blueberry, smooth sumac and sassafras lean toward the east in ritual bow to morning's sun."

Someday, if you pull in and park in the small area off the driveway and look south you'll see a sign that reads – Spirit in Nature Trail. Head up there but when the trail turns into the meadow, don't take it. Continue on a few hundred yards and you'll be walking along the boundary just inside our conservation easement area. A sign with a bright yellow happy face sun printed in a child's large script invites you to a Journey through Sacred Spaces. Seven stations tell a story about who "the land grew" and when that species came to be our Story.

Laurita, one of our home school program teacher-guides, says that the children are ever drawn to ant hills, cavities in trees, openings leading underground. They ask always – who lives there? Their observations arouse their sense of wonder and their wonder awakens us to a sense of sacred spaces.

In this election year the two words repeated over and over throughout the campaign were economy and jobs. If we can get people back to work, we'll recover our stagnant economy. That statement is probably the simplest exposition of our separation from all that sustains life. True, the word economy itself has grown exponentially over time. But the etymology rests in the simple concept of how one manages one's home, one's household. It's in managing our own place that we build up and enhance the possibilities of all other places. Our common economic duty is to shape our home place in beauty with simple sustenance that all other habitats may thrive.

The wise elder and cultural historian, Thomas Berry, summoned us to experience the ever-creating order of our world as a source of wonder and delight rather than a commodity for our personal use. He wrote that history is governed by those overarching movements that give shape and meaning to life by relating the human venture to the larger destinies of the universe. Thomas concluded that creating such movements might be called the Great Work of a people.

continued

Magic Happens, *continued*

Thus we ask – what is our great work? What’s the venture that has already seeded itself deep in the soil of our collective soul? Over the past year on a few occasions we sat at lunch with the Red Tomato staff and told stories of the social, political, the environmental and spiritual movements that had captured our imagination and shaped our human responses. Declaring our age range from the 70’s down to the 20’s, our litany claimed the civil rights movement, the anti-war and anti-nuclear, the women’s movement, global justice, immigrants’ rights, and all that grew from that first Earth Day in 1970. In the voice of the younger folks seated at the table, food policy and foodsheds, regional resilience and action networks empower their work. What became crystal clear in the lunch conversations is that human needs will only be served when projects and programs augment the living system of a bioregion.

“When you fall in love with a place, magic happens,” wrote author and conservation activist, Terry Tempest Williams. That workman who stood on the roof and took time to turn and notice had that native love that comes with living a lifetime in one place. If he were to gaze out from that vantage point today, he would no doubt say – returning white pine is surely your identifying species. The over-arching movement that shapes our future and the future, not only of the twenty year olds who sit at our table but the children who follow the vole tunnels, will be a warming climate and a withering planet. Yet, it is in the face of that very reality that our psychic energy rises to protect and defend, to stand up for and to align with. Our great work will be the mediation of ourselves with all “who live here”. Our personal and collective love will not be limited to familial circles but will open wide to what is different. Our spirit will become one with the Spirit of this Place

No habitat in the natural world lasts forever. As our woodland grows itself anew so too the complex multitude of sacred dwelling spaces for the furry ones and feathered ones. Our own habitat question also folds in. Whatever the future holds for the community at Crystal Spring, if we but love this place, change will be magical. What becomes clear to all who gather at our table, whatever problems or challenges inevitably lie ahead, as we grow in love for each other and for this place, magic will happen.

In the past we chipped ice, shoveled pathways and lit dozens upon dozens of luminaries, all in preparation to celebrate Winter Solstice. We gathered in the stone-walled oratory and trudged up the hill to light the fire of gratitude. Hark, for the Sun is Returning! We continue our mendicant journey to the edge of new understandings. With huckleberry and sumac, each morning we bow to the east and light our candle to the great sun. Be one with us in that simple daily act. Ritual is our human way to make what is Real observable. ■CL



Celebrating the Darkness
Wednesdays, Nov 28 – Dec 18
7:00 – 8:30pm
Limited to 10 participants

How does facing our fears set the context for a more complete life expression, a seeing that is simple, sacred and unitive? We will use the perspective of Pema Chodron as guide to discussion and meditation into “living beautifully with uncertainty and change.” An opportunity to open up to practices for cultivating loving attention, compassion, energetic social action.
Cost: \$25

Home School Program 2013

Mapping the Winter World

Tuesday mornings 9:30-11am

Jan 8 – March 5

5 - 11 year olds welcome

Become a cartographer of winter. Learn to make an interactive map of winter plants, animal games, snow tracks and snowflakes. So wear your boots; your tracks become part of your own map. Cost: \$45.

Spring Becomes You

Tuesday mornings 9:30-11am

Apr 2 – May 21

5 - 11 year olds welcome

Leaps and bounds of new life are all around us. Be part of a time-tracking team as spring-time emerges. Buds and bark change daily; birds sing and squawk over mates, food and some serious nest making; vertebrates and invertebrates warm up to water management. Listen to the timing of pests becoming beloved neighbors. Cost: \$40

PROGRAM FOR 11 – 13 YEAR OLDS

Where Water Guides Us

Tuesday mornings 9:30-11am

Module 1: Jan 8 – March 5

Module 2: Apr 2 – May 21

Join the Crystal Spring community to explore the waterways of our place. Dive into the challenge to discover our role as a human species by "asking the planet" with the Biomimicry Youth Challenge (www.biomimicry.org). This year's theme is "WATER". Be instructed by the energies of water to create an innovative design to restore the waters during this moment of climate change. At the end of the two modules we will celebrate The Waters Within as rite of passage. Cost: \$45 for each Module

Supporting Our Coming Home to Place

People everywhere are inspired to join in the collective efforts seeking a new beginning. This requires a new way of thinking and a new way of participation. Respect for Nature's economy stirs in the work of local farmers, land conservation, food systems, human initiatives everywhere. All of your past support has brought us to this moment. In gratitude, we are building collaborative partnerships resonating with the Spirit of this Place

As my participation in the human initiative, please accept my gift of _____

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

Winter –Spring Calendar 2013

Green Reel – Winter 2013
Films for Sustainable Living
Sunday Evenings, 6:30 pm

Jan 6 ~ The Great Squeeze
Jan 13 ~ The Greenhorns
Jan 27 ~ GrowthBusters
Feb 10 ~ Split Estate
Feb.17 ~ Queen of the Sun

All films shown at
Congregation Agudas Achim
901 N. Main Street, Attleboro
Rt 95 – Exit 5
Rt 152 & Toner Blvd

Free and Open to the Public
For more information: 508-298-9450

And Watch for...

Children's Summer Adventure
It's Fun Becoming a Human Biomimic



July 22 – 26, 9 am – noon
for 5 – 13 year olds

Wow! How did we all get here? Why such fun and beauty? Whoever made up games? And why ever would they do it??? The natural world is chock full of imagination and seemingly goofy adaptations. Explore what's here to make up your own team game. Make it quirky. Enter your game into a festival of fun. Earth, water and sky are the limit! Cost: \$100

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