

Streams

No. 41 Autumn '10 A Newsletter of Crystal Spring Center for Earth Literacy

Stream Flow

Forty one issues ago, back in the Fall of 1995, we selected the name Streams for our quarterly newsletter. The choice reflected another decision. Through fifty years of various ministries, from Dominican Academy to Womancenter, the name changes indicated the work of the eras. By the mid '90's the time had come to reclaim the original name of this place when the Dominican Sisters received such abundance from the Toner family. What was Crystal Spring Farm came to be called Crystal Spring Center for Earth Learning. There are very few still living in the town or the county who recall the little wooden spring house where folks came to draw crystal clear water. An old pipeline identifies the spot.

Reclaiming the name Crystal Spring made manifest the emerging consciousness among Religious Orders as we prepared to enter the 21st century. Our focus could no longer remain centered on human needs but we must alter our perceptions to see our human ways of being encompassed within a living system. The title of our newsletter symbolizes the variety of efforts, attempts, ideas that grew into projects and programs, all humble, that have flowed in and out and through this center over the past fifteen years.

There is in Massachusetts an Office of Ecological Restoration. Key to ecological restoration is the flow of streams. Bubbling brooks and rolling rivers are dependent upon

the well-being of streams. They are the master variable. Balancing the amount of water available for people, plants and animals, fish and insects requires a constant flow movement. The Division of Ecological Restoration was created to monitor and maintain the water flow necessary to sustain life. Through responsible dam management, the removal of barriers, technical assistance from biologists, engineers, species experts, the agency makes every effort to restore natural stream flows. A summer like 2010 challenges and instructs.

During this summer's hot, dry days we barely recall the drenching rains and powerful floods of early spring. The past three decades register the highest temperature since weather patterns have been recorded. Some say that the spike in heat is a natural occurrence; others show scientific evidence that our human choices have brought the heat index to a tipping point. This is what we do know. There's a rhythm, a conversation so to speak, a great balancing embrace that was established eons ago among the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the landmass, and the biosphere. We industrial humans have become a dominant force in that biosphere, so dominant that the other spheres can't adjust quickly enough to maintain a healthy balance or communal integrity. The waters, the land, and the air are all demonstrating the effects of chemical intrusions beyond their ability to engage or reconstitute their essence for the good of the

continued

Stream Flow, continued

Whole. The decades grow warmer. The record indicates that the atmosphere is heating up.

Our national consideration and our governmental legislation for clean air dates back to the 1950's. Throughout the ensuing decades amendments to critical legislation defined the Environmental Protection Agency's responsibility for protecting and improving our country's air quality and the stratospheric ozone layer. Over the past months there has been a strong legislative impulse to pass a clean air and renewable energy bill capping greenhouse emissions. The vote never came to the Senate floor. Critics argued that capping emissions saps corporate profits, particularly for the oil and coal companies, and capping contributes to out-sourcing jobs which are needed in this country. The defenders of the bill said that more jobs could be created in the manufacture of renewable energy products than jobs eliminated in present modes of production.

We are indebted to Al Gore for his film, *Inconvenient Truth*, which offers us both daunting challenges and incredible opportunities to respond to the "greatest challenge we have ever faced, global warming." Recently Mr. Gore wrote, "As long as we care about our country, our planet, and the future of our children and grandchildren, we must continue to fight..."

With all due respect to our past vice-president and aware his use of the word 'fight' implies that we stay with the struggle that the times demand, is it not possible to rethink the very basis upon which he builds his statement? If country is the first point of reference, need it be understood or conceived as an industrial nation defined by our capacity to mine global resources long ago buried deep below Earth's surface. Our livelihood, or jobs, depends upon the manufacture and production of those resources to fabricate commodities beyond either need or good use to transport, ship, fly, truck those

wares around the world for economic gain.

What if 'country' were not so much perceived as an industrial entity, but as the local hills and waterways, the shoreline and forest canopy. Can we begin to detach our human efforts from a mechanistic way of living on this planet to an organic functioning within an ecological living system? We have remarkable insights into the mechanics of how Earth's systems function but we have completely lost our ability to commune with all the magnificent manifestation of Earth's beings. What if we learned the path of a local stream, or bubbling brook, or winding river? What if we transformed our industrial perception of water to a Story that remembers all life crawled out of the Sea?

Cultural historian, Thomas Berry, understood that our ecological crisis is a spiritual crisis. He wrote, "The great work of our time is to transform our human behavior on the planet from a destructive presence to a mutually enhancing presence."

Each of us as individuals, families, organizations must look at the "master variable," the "flow" within our own life and the purpose and direction of our organization. That 'flow' of spirit energy must be for the greater good of the Whole, yet the work begins in our local place. The times demand response ~ challenge and opportunity.

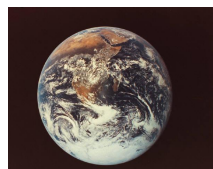
Like the Division of Ecological Restoration, Crystal Spring will need some technical assistance and some guidance from the experts. Periodically, every organization must take stock. We must remove the barriers, the dams that block the energy flows longing to define and reconstitute our presence in the world as we draw closer to the second decade of the 21st century. This is the requirement if we care about our country, our planet, and the future of children of all species, particularly the ones who make their home in this bioregion. ■CL

Where on Earth Are We Going?

And what can we do about it?

The **Awakening the Dreamer Changing the Dream Symposium** is a profound inquiry into a bold vision: to bring forth an *environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, and socially just* human presence on Earth.

The symposium was imagined and fashioned by the Pachamama Alliance. Pachamama is a Quechua word referring to the sacred presence of Earth, the sky, the universe and all time. The Alliance was born in response to a request from the Achuar, an indigenous people deep in the Amazon region of Ecuador. They were seeking a partnership with people from the modern world who could aid them in protecting the rain forest and their way of life.



If you have ever asked ~ where are we in terms of sustainability, spiritual fulfillment and social justice ~ and, what is possible now, this symposium will bring your voice into the collective response. It is the 'dreamer' in each of us that longs to be awakened, for within each of us lies the capacity to change the dream of the modern world.

Saturday, October 23
9:00am – 1:00pm

Mary Pendergast, RSM and **Nancy Audette, RSM**, facilitators for the Alliance, will guide the sessions. Donation \$20, includes snacks.

See the trailer at
www.awakeningthedreamer.org

Heroes and Storytellers

Why do bread baking with teens? It's in the heroics of the loaf itself. Soil, grain, water and air, the mineral and animal worlds all gather to be surrendered to the larger whole, submitted to the long wait, to the penetrating fire of transformation, to become food.



In a teaspoon of honey is the life work of 20 pollinating bees. How can we eat a slice of bread without reverence for that? In a world where sweeteners are being engineered from crops that could feed the hungry (high fructose corn syrup), how might we nourish a world where beauty and buzz conspire to create a mutually enhancing neighborhood? The same creative powers that constellate around the hive are present in every teenage eye measuring out honey for a loaf.

What about yeast? They set up the possibility for the rise. Yeast is everywhere in the air, attracted to flour. The invisible community of bacterial waste feeding, forming tangy acids is a miracle of flavor. The young hand kneading, paying attention to change as the community of dough develops, enriches the process.

Each loaf, too, is replete with stories to tell, a necessary ingredient. There is always a way to plot out "the probable story." Recipes do that. It's "the possible" that invites a young heroic soul to pay attention to the quality of ordinary things ~ the taste of water, the invisible yeast, the healthy hum of a bee working a meadow. After all, the legacy of the bee is to bring meadow, berry patch, and garden to our palate. There just has to be a story in that! Stories of heroes are the natural birthright of adolescents. Bake a loaf with them.

Check the calendar on the next page for the date and time for bread baking for teens. BH

Summer into Fall Calendar 2010

Autumn Equinox

Tuesday, Sept. 21, 3:00-6:00pm

Children will engage in the annual “dance of the beans” to shell the varieties ready for storage. Enjoy the camaraderie of CSA members as we acknowledge our shareholder support of local food efforts.

Awakening the Dreamer Symposium

Saturday, Oct 23, 9:00am -1:00pm

See description on previous page.

Bread Baking for Teens

Saturday, Nov. 6, 9am – 12:30pm

A great way to spend a Saturday morning is with the hidden energy of rising bread that is so tempting it may not make it home!
Cost: \$35 for one teen; \$60 for a duo.

Fall Evening Series

**Wednesdays ~ Nov. 3, 10, 17, Dec. 1
7:00 – 8:30pm**

Using Pema Chodron’s book, *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*, we’ll explore ways to awaken basic goodness in ourselves and others, staying with all the present moment has to offer. Discussion and meditation are our guides in this process. Cost: \$35 includes copy of Chodron’s book.

Homeschool In the Fall (module#1)

Nov. 9 – Dec. 14 ~ 9:30 – 11:00am

Animals and trees, soil and water have a astonishing fall season. This is a module to discover the wonders right under our noses and feet. Learn what kids are doing to make sure all this amazing life keeps unfolding down to the 7th generation.
Ages 5-11. Cost:\$35

Please pre-register for all programs - call 508-699-7167 or email cryspr@comcast.net

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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