



# Gathering News

Volume 1, Issue 3

A DIVISION OF DIVERSE GATHERINGS, INC.

Autumn 2007

## Calendar of Events:

- **September 2, 2007** — Middle Earth Planning Meeting—4-6pm
- **September 9, 2007** — Middle Earth Planning Meeting—4-6pm
- **September 16, 2007** — Middle Earth Planning Meeting—4-6pm
- **September 20-23, 2007**—The Middle Earth Gathering
- **November 16, 2007**—Planning Events Potluck —7-10pm
- **December 14, 2007**—Holiday Party —7pm-1am

Planning Meetings and Holiday Party to be held at:

9598 SW Whitford Lane  
Beaverton, OR 97008  
Off of Scholl's Ferry across from McKay School, between Hall and Denny  
Call (503) 502-1415 for additional directions

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### Earth Gatherings

CREATING BALANCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND WILDERNESS

## Awareness, The Beginning of Change!

"Awareness is the beginning of change!" I have been saying that for years. And during those years, I have seen our community erode.

We have allowed our culture to erode the cohesiveness of our neighborhoods (How many of your neighbors do you know well?) by building subdivision after subdivision on top of our natural areas, farms, meadows, forests and hills and cultivating a generation that has lost their connection to community and Mother Nature! Have you heard that as a culture, on average, we move our dwelling every six years?

I have watched the Willamette Valley turn from a rich fertile valley to a series of Malls, housing developments and subdivisions, industrial wastelands, and polluted air and water! And what do people call this? Progress!! I think not!

We are all being *called* to make a change! To do that we need to become aware of how to live a healthy life. This means learning to interact with each other and our environment in a healthy way. We need to realize the value of diversity and

recognize it as essential to promoting healthy living. We need to recognize that Nature is still vital and that we each have a responsibility to restore the balance we have allowed to erode from our lives. (This is our stewardship.)

To some this might seem overwhelming, but it is not!

Diverse Gatherings (a grass-roots organization) has developed a fun, nurturing, experiential learning method that works to educate people about building healthy community and connecting in a meaningful way with each other and Mother Nature!

Through a series of three day campouts (The Mother Earth Gathering, The Family and Friends, and The Middle Earth Gathering), held during the summer, Diverse Gatherings brings people together in community and exposes participants to various aspects of nature and community through music, art, workshops (i.e., Permaculture, Composting, Plant identification, etc. ), nature hikes, and multicultural experiences. These are fun and often life-changing experiences. "The Gathering helps generate a sense of well-



Silver Falls State Park, June 2007

being and at the same time makes one aware of their responsibility as a steward of our planet and a member of community. It is a valuable experience that brings a greater awareness to people and helps one develop tools and skills to interact in a healthy and nurturing way. The Gathering is so fun that we sometimes don't realize how much we have learned until the weekend draws to a close!"

Blessings,

Bob La Du

Executive Director

[www.earthgatherings.org](http://www.earthgatherings.org)

## Sacred Circle

### The Braided Way

I first heard the term "The Braided Way" when I became involved with the spiritual community People of the Heart. It was there that I learned the term originated amongst the Northwest Coastal Tribal Communities. Author and anthropologist Angles Arrien, Ph.D. in her studies is who first brought the term to light within a variety of spiritual communities. And why is this information impor-

tant? As I grow more in my spiritual walk, I realize just how much of what I have to say is passed down information, that very little, truly originates with me. I am simply a conduit to pass on information. Hence, part of the braid. But to be a strong thread within the braid, I must give recognition to all of the braid.

What is a braid? We all know what a hair braid is. At the Mother Earth Gathering, anyone

who got to meet Eugenia also got to know some rather unique ways of hair braiding. But have you ever given any thought to this concept of braiding various ideas or ways of life into creating a stronger life for yourself? Maybe even as a way of checking on balance? I know for me, in this crazy, busy world of mine, it's so easy to get out of balance. So what would my three threads that I weave together be? My spiritual

## Sacred Circle (cont'd)



**Building a Traditional Lakota Sweat Lodge Mother Earth Gathering, June 2007**

**“These communities grow because of the “WE” and our like-mindedness to build together something that honors ALL. “**



**Hiking Silver Falls Mother Earth Gather-**

walk, the environment, and community would be the three that everything else blooms from. I feel very fortunate that for the most part, these three areas flow well together, and when they don't I have other people to reach out to, to help pull me back into balance.

My spiritual walk is a beautiful blending of traditions that compliment each other well, or at least I believe so. I've never been able to pigeon hole myself into just one flavor. My goodness, I can't even order off a menu without attempting to change something! Why I ever thought I could regarding my faith is beyond me. My walk includes teachings from my ancestors, the Celts, Native American and Buddhist teachings, and other indigenous cultures. I say these and cringe somewhat, because naming just these leaves too many out. I love the way my daughter titled our faith when she said, "Mom, we simply have an Earth-Based Faith. If the faith includes the Earth and all of Her inhabitants, we probably believe in it and practice it."

Another strand of my braid is my environmental walk. What have I done for the environment today is a question I ask myself daily, even when I don't feel so good. Taking care of this Momma Earth of ours is

very important to me. This is also an area of my life that has been under construction so to speak for the past year. I have been an active participant in trail building and restoration in the state of Washington for a number of years. Due to health issues, I'm not able to do this. At least not this year. So what can I do? I forgot the old saying, "Be careful what you pray for." Lots of opportunities have come up.

And then there is community. From that strand comes, family, friends, and so much more. The Mother Earth Gathering and The Middle Earth Gathering are all part of community. Spiritual community is our hope for a future here on earth. For it is in these communities that we grow, learn, and love despite our differences and because of our diversity. However, these communities grow because of the "WE" and our like-mindedness to build together something that honors ALL. My need for spiritual community includes more than my family. We need our friends. They hold our history, sometimes more so than our families do. My hope is that each of us builds strong friendships within the Gatherings, that the Gatherings will lead us to build a strong spiritual community, and within all of this

comes a sense of family. My friend Jayna Giebar says it well when she says, "In the 21st century, alive, vibrant, grass-roots communities may be the medicine that will restore our world. In supportive groups of kindred spirits, we heal and help others to heal. We become present to this moment of life we are living and we reach out to make a difference for others. We slow down and remember we are One."

I hope that each of us, as the Sun slowly makes its way around the wheel of the year, will also begin to slow down. Taking a good look at what our braid is made from. Asking ourselves whether or not our braid sustains us. And if it doesn't, do we have the courage to make the necessary changes. We are moving into the season of Harvests, the holidays of Lammas, Mabon, and Samhain. My wish for each and every one of you is a harvest rich with all that you need. That your harvest will be so plentiful you have enough to share with others without fear of going without. May the Divine One show you mercy and love in all that you do.

Blessings to All,

Rev. Mary M. Moore

## Cruising Through the Equinox

by Von Del Chamberlain—  
[www.clarkfoundation.org/astro-utah/vondel/equinoxaut.html](http://www.clarkfoundation.org/astro-utah/vondel/equinoxaut.html)

You can almost feel the planet cruising through the equinox.

We have reached the season of spectacular change! The hottest days have past and each is shorter than the last. Groves on mountains take on brilliant colors. The State Fair is over and school is in full swing. Everywhere, everyone seems more active and ready to get things done. Indeed, there is much to be done, for crops are

ripe: it is the harvest season! The perfect time of year has come again, the time of change, for Earth has coasted through the equinox.

Here in the north it is autumn, while far to the south, across the equator, spring has arrived. It happens every year and we all feel it. Many enjoy it; others tolerate it; but few give much thought to what brings it.

Sometimes it is difficult to think about riding on a great spinning ball of rock, with pockets of

water, all surrounded by a wisp of gas, zooming round a star. For most of human history no such concept crossed the minds of tribes that would grow into nations. Obviously, it was the sky that moved. Anyone could see that the Sun god leapt from sleep each morning to ride the sky and shower blessings down upon his children. Then stars moved about to beautify the night. We must be special, being at the center of all of this: nourished by warmth and light, refreshed by

coolness and the beauty of a jeweled ceiling; given enough warmth, yet not too much.

It took no small effort to break age-old traditions, only a few hundred years ago: to dare to think new thoughts, formulate new theories that could be tested by observation and experiment, and to invent instruments that could expand our innate abilities to measure and perceive. The names of the scientific explorers loom large: Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton...the list goes on.

They made it easy to know the truth: Earth is a gyro whose spinning mass maintains the axis of its course. One pole points nearly toward a star, and so its name, "Pole Star." Each time it spins it carries Sun, Moon, planets and stars in review across our sky in the period called "one day." Each day begins at a slightly different place in space as Earth migrates along its orbit around a star, the Sun. The orbit is tilted to the plane Earth spins in, and so different parts of the planet receive continually different amounts of energy. For six months, more and more of the Northern Hemisphere is bathed in the Sun's rays until we reach the place where the Northern Hemisphere is tipped most toward the Sun. Just the opposite is happening in the Southern Hemisphere. Then, for the next six months, in the other half of the orbit, the northern climes of Earth receive less and less direct rays until the

tilting axis of rotation brings shade to the north pole and less direct rays to those of us within the northern temperate zone. Then, the south receives the more direct illumination of the sun. These ever recurring changes repeat with each yearly orbit.

Watching from the surface of the spinning ball, we pace our activities by two waves that move constantly around the planet: we awaken with the wave of light, go about our work and play, then relax as the wave of darkness moves over us. Day after day it is the same, but not quite. Each wave of daylight comes at a slightly different place upon our horizon.

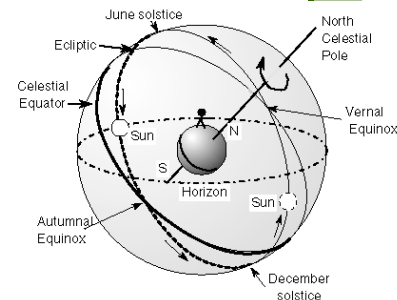
In late June, the Northern Hemisphere of Earth is turned as much toward the Sun as the orbit permits: the solar-orbit rises in the northeast, days are long and the Sun passes high at the middle of the day to set in the northwest. Nights are as short as they can get. Then, slowly, as earth moves on, the Sun slips southward in its rising and setting points and lower across the sky each day. Days get shorter and nights longer. Faster and faster the change occurs until we reached the time of equality between light and dark.

The maximum speed of change, the point of balance between day and night, is reached every year in late September. So, on

the day of the equinox the Sun rises directly east, crosses our sky in the middle of its range, and sets directly west. We feel its rays for 12 hours and live without them for the other 12. At the poles of Earth the Sun moves around at the base of the horizon, the north pole feeling its last solar rays until six months from now, and the south pole rejoicing in the returning Sun to light its sky for six months to come. Now, one day later, our portion of sunlight is a bit weaker, and so it will be until late December.

This is not cause for grief, for no matter what the season we do well to celebrate its gifts. Imagine, if you can, a planet that does not have rotation axis tilted to its orbit. Everyday would be the same: half light, half dark, no seasons, very little change. Perhaps it is change itself that most deserves our revelry, for we are creatures of change. The best things we do, from birth to death, result in changes for ourselves and others. The Roman poet, Ovid, wrote, "there is nothing constant in the universe. All ebb and flow, and every shape that's born bears in its womb the seeds of change."

Each day brings adventure: new stars coming into view; new sounds in moving air. If you really think about it, you can almost feel the planet moving: rolling upon its axis; flying upon wings of the constant tug of gravity that binds us to a star.



The Sun moves among the stars along the ecliptic, completing one 360° path in one year. The ecliptic is tilted by 23.5° with respect to the celestial equator. The Sun's position on the celestial sphere in August (full circle) and in February (dashed circle) is shown.

**"Days get shorter and nights longer. Faster and faster the change occurs until we reached the time of equality between light and dark."**

## Gathering Update

**The Mother Earth Gathering—June 2007 was a success!!!**

New friends, old friends, fun activities, music, and great connections!

Much thanks goes to those who worked so hard to make this the wonderful event that it was. -Special thanks to our Kitchen committee, Sandi Smith who provide all with so many delicious and healthy

meals. Sandi would like to express thanks to her wonderful help: Linda, Kevin, Charlie, Ann, John, Louis, Nicole, several more, and especially Greg. We appreciate all those who attended, volunteered, participated, and performed. It was a wonderful experience thanks to everyone involved!

**The Middle Earth Gathering!** It's almost here!!!

**September 20 — 23, 2007**

will be our celebration of the Autumnal Equinox, held at beautiful Silver Falls State Park. We have reserved the Old and New Ranch so there's plenty of space. This is our biggest event of the year, so bring your family and friends for a great time!

Like the Mother Earth Gathering, the Middle Earth Gathering is a three day Earth Awareness Festival with live music and performances, workshops, and activities for the whole family.

**“We appreciate all those who attended, volunteered, participated, and performed. It was a wonderful experience thanks to everyone involved!”**



**Drum Workshop  
Mother Earth Gathering,  
June 2007**

## Gathering Update (cont'd)

— All this plus lodging, park fees, and food included for only \$100 per person (children under 16 are free with accompanying adult). Remember, registrations are non-refundable, and there is a 50% discount for Members of The Earth Gatherings.

We're excited to announce that we have scheduled workshops to include Permaculture by Heather Coburn-Flores, author

of **Food Not Lawns**; Belly dancing with Angel B; Drumming with Peter Larkin, Lowering Fuel emissions with Mary Ehly; and Feng Shui with Lisa Hersch to name a few.

Our live music will include Reggae/Jazz/Funk band **Sauce Policy**, Folk/Jazz group **Sea and Sky**, Acoustic guitarist **Chris Baron**, Psychedelic band **Aristeia**, and **Sacred**

**Sound** with Tom Lange, Jen, Kristin Bowen, and Ryan Powell.

We'll also have Bardic Circles, Traditional Lakota Sweat Lodge, Equinox Ritual, Crafts, Hiking, Local Artisans, and more.

**There's still room so, register now for this exciting event!!!**

## Get Ready For Next Year's Gatherings

**We've started getting ready** for next year's Mother Earth Gathering! We're already lining up our music and workshops. The Mother Earth Gathering is scheduled for June 19-22, 2008. Mark your calendar! With just our preliminary plans it looks like it's going to be another fantastic event.

It has become necessary for us

to change registration fees for our Earth Gathering 2008 events, due to increased costs and in order to maintain our excellent quality in activities. Individual adult registrations will be \$125 (food, activities, music, & lodging are all still included). Children 16 and under are free with accompanying adult—limit 2 free children per adult. Additional

children will be \$50 each. **Discount for early registration:** adult registrations post-marked by April 1, 2008 will receive \$25 off. 50% off the regular adult registration is still available with membership to the Earth Gatherings. Membership per year is \$ 75 per individual & \$125 per family (up to 2 adults & 2 children.

## New Website is Up and Running!

Our new Website is finally here! We are really excited. Thanks to the hard work of Emily Keene, Kevin Keene, and Chris La Du it runs beautifully and looks fantastic. Thank you

so much!

There are all kinds of great things to check out on the site: Gathering information, Schedules, Newsletters, Photos, a Guest page, and even Registra-

tion Online. For those who have attended Earth Gatherings in the past, be sure to sign the Guest page and tell a little about your Earth Gathering experiences.

## Miscellaneous Information

### SUBMIT ARTICLES

We welcome the submitting of articles (400-500 words) for upcoming quarterly newsletters. Subject matters include (but are not limited to): seasonal holidays, culture / traditions, family life, environmentally friendly lifestyles, healthy living, and the like. E-mail ideas and/or submissions for consideration to Kathy Licitra at [kathy@earthgatherings.org](mailto:kathy@earthgatherings.org) or Bob LaDu, Jr. at [bladu@earthgatherings.org](mailto:bladu@earthgatherings.org)

### COME HELP US PLAN FUTURE GATHERINGS

\*\*Share your talents, skills, time, and ideas for creating wonderful memories and community spirit for all to

enjoy. \*\*We are looking for individuals interested in volunteering as committee heads and as committee members.

\*\*Committee areas include: Meal Planning/Kitchen Operation, Entertainment & Vendors, Workshops, Crafts & Activities, Newsletters, Photos & Memory Book.

\*\*\*Contact Bob LaDu, Jr. at (503) 502-1415 or email at [bladu@earthgatherings.org](mailto:bladu@earthgatherings.org)

### WRITE LETTERS

As part of community service, The Earth Gatherings organization periodically receives requests for correspondence from individuals at the state correctional facilities. Most of these requests are from persons looking for contact with the outside world. If you are

interested in writing letters in response to these requests, contact Bob LaDu

### SUBMIT DESIGN FOR GATHERING BUTTON

We're looking for designs for next year's Earth Gathering buttons—both Mother Earth Gathering (June '08) and Middle Earth Gathering (September '08).

Submit your original design in circle form on an 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet of paper with your name and contact information to:

The Earth Gatherings  
P.O.Box 19655  
Portland, OR 97280

If your design is chosen you will receive 30% off your next Gathering registration!

## Easy Eco Ideas

(from "Easy Ways to Go Green" by Leslie Billera)

### Recycle smart

From furniture to electronics, one person's trash is another's treasure—so when you want to dispose of an old item, don't make the dump your first stop. Two sites with alternatives: freecycle.org and earth911.org. The Freecycle Network describes itself as "a place to give or receive what you have and don't need or what you need and don't have—[to keep] stuff out of landfills." The Earth 911 Web site offers community-

specific resources, with a focus on recycling. Check out the home page to find out where you can recycle your computer, your cell phone—even used motor oil.

### Take paint precautions

Most paint emits VOCs (volatile organic compounds), the same kind of chemicals found in gasoline and nail polish. But manufacturers like

Sherwin-Williams have developed water-based products that perform well but give off virtually no VOCs. Krylon's

H2O paint is the first low-VOC

latex spray paint that can be leaned up with soap and water. Made from 99 percent food-grade ingredients, Anna Sova's Healthy Wall Finish (annasova.com) leaves your rooms smelling vaguely like vanilla. To be at least minimally

organic, use a water-based latex paint, not an oil-based alkyd paint—and remember, exterior paints should never be used indoors.



It's up to us.

## To Your Health

(excerpts from *The Naturally Clean Home* by Karyn Siegel-Maier, Storey Publishing)

### Benefits of Natural Cleaning:

#### Save Time and Money

Making your own herbal cleaning products is not a time-consuming or expensive endeavor. In fact, quite the opposite is true. It only takes a minute or two to fill a spray bottle with vinegar and water and add a few drops of essential oil. Bingo—instant glass and appliance cleaner! Having done that, there's one less aisle to visit in the super market.

The majority of commercial cleaners are quite expensive. A typical spray or foam cleanser for the bathroom, for instance, can deprive you of \$4.00 or

more. An herbal alternative, on the other hand, will cost mere pennies to make. I buy pure essential oils for an average of \$3.00 per half fluid ounce. Since I am only using between 5 and 30 drops of the oil (depending on the particular formula), that half-ounce bottle goes a very long way indeed. Other all-natural ingredients, such as vinegar, baking soda, water, and castile soap are also inexpensive.

#### Unclutter Your Cleaning Closet

You will also marvel at the amount of uncluttered space that becomes available in the area where you normally store cleaning supplies. According to Debra Lynn Dadd, author of

*Non-Toxic and Natural*, the average kitchen is home to thirty or more commercial products, the laundry room six!

Many of the herbal formulas you will be making will be multipurpose, so the number of cleaning products you store will be greatly reduced. This is an immense help, especially to those of us with only a little bit of space under the sink or in a closet.

\*\*\*To learn more information on deciphering labels, step-by-step switching to buying or preparing nontoxic formulas of cleaners, check out this great book that includes over 100 safe and easy herbal formulas.

**"It only takes a minute or two to fill a spray bottle with vinegar and water and add a few drops of essential oil."**

## In the Garden Patch

(excerpts from "Maintain a Weedless Organic Garden" by Lee Reich, *Mother Earth News* June/July 2007)

Weedless gardening! That's an oxymoron, an impossibility, right? Well, my gardens may not be 100 percent weed-free, but they are 100 percent free of weed problems.

I've achieved this happy state in four ways: 1) never tilling or otherwise disturbing the soil, so dormant weed seeds stay asleep, away from light and air; 2) design-

ating permanent areas for walking and for planting to avoid compaction and the need for tillage; 3) maintaining a thin mulch of weed-free organic material to snuff out any weed seeds that blow in or are dropped into the garden by birds; 4) using drip irrigation whenever watering is called for to avoid promoting weed growth in paths and between widely spaced plants. Those are the basics of keeping my

garden free of weed problems.

My final attack on weeds entails (dare I say it?) regular weeding. I'll hoe or pull weeds here and there as I walk through the garden, and as I harvest and plant. Just think of your hoe as your walking stick. For all the negative connotations of weeding, I consider it part of any pleasant visit to the garden, probably because the few weeds I have are neither ominous or demanding these days.

# THE EARTH GATHERINGS

A DIVISION OF DIVERSE GATHERINGS, INC.

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We're on the Web!  
[www.earthgatherings.org](http://www.earthgatherings.org)



**Earth Gatherings**

CREATING BALANCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATION  
AND WILDERNESS

## The Earth Gatherings Mission Statement

*The Earth Gatherings* our community and is an eclectic spiritual community dedicated to creating a natural way of living in harmony with our environment, by learning, teaching, and preserving effective methods and techniques, both ancient and modern, to create balance within



*The Earth Gatherings* seeks to enrich our personal culture through exploring, learning, and honoring the diversity in all cultures while seeking, acknowledging, and celebrating the similarities we all share as human beings.