



Gathering News

Volume 2, Issue 1

A DIVISION OF DIVERSE GATHERINGS, INC.

Spring 2008

Calendar of Events:

- **April 12, 2008**—Planning Meeting/Potluck—7pm-9pm
- **May 17, 2008**—Planning Meeting—7pm-8:30pm
- **May 31, 2008**—Planning Meeting—7pm-8:30pm
- **June 7, 2008**—Planning Meeting—7pm-8:30pm
- **June 14, 2008**—Planning Meeting—7pm-8:30pm
- **June 19-22, 2008**—Earth Gathering
- **July 12, 2008**—Mother Earth Debriefing/Potluck/Mother
- **July 18-20, 2008**—Family & Friends Campout
- **September 18-21, 2008**—Middle Earth Gathering

*** Planning Meetings to be held at:

9598 SW Whitford Lane
Beaverton, OR 97008
Off of Scholl's Ferry across from McKay School, between Hall and

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Earth Gatherings

CREATING BALANCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND WILDERNESS

The Promise of Light

The coming of Light-Embolc, The Vernal Equinox, Spring! The Winter seems long but the promise of light... the gradual lengthening of daylight and the promise of new life, growth and beauty whispers to us through the stark beauty of winter. It's coming! Light, SPRING, Flowers, Greenery... every indication of "the turning of the wheels" speaks of hope and wisdom, light and love.

This is exciting! This anticipation for the next season and the next gathering- The Mother Earth Gathering! This celebration of Mother Nature is filled with budding friendships and new experience that add color and richness to every person who attends. Now is the time to prepare!

We are planning a wonderful and Magickal Gathering to be held at Silver Falls State Park,

near Silverton, Oregon (June 18-22) at the Ranch area. We welcome any and all to participate in the planning meetings being held between now and the gathering. We need volunteers and ideas to help the gatherings grow and bring an awareness of our relationship and stewardship with Mother Nature to all who attend.

The Registration Fee is **\$150 per adult** (Children 16 and under are free) and we are offering a **\$50 discount** to all who register before **APRIL 1, 2008**- so of course NOW is the time to register! Those who have attended the gathering understand the great deal this is and look forward to the workshops, the three (3) nights of camping and the great food, fun and friendships!

So as the days lengthen and the wheel turns through Spring and closer to Summer,



Hiking at Silver Falls

be sure to reserve these dates on the calendar (mark it now) and register before April 1, 2008. Get involved with the planning, and if you want to volunteer you can experience a whole new dimension to your Earth Gathering enjoyment.

I can hardly wait to see you all there!!!

Blessings,

Bob La Du
Executive Director

Sacred Circle

EARTH DAY is coming! EARTH DAY is coming! EARTH DAY is coming!

April 22nd, 2008 is Earth Day and it falls on a Tuesday this year. What will you do that day to bless this glorious blue and green ball that we live on? I am including a link to KINK.FM radio so you can look at some of the local happenings for Earth Day.

Earth Day is the first recognized environmental day that I celebrated with my children. We lived in Seattle which is almost as earth friendly as Portland. Each Earth Day we

would decide what new thing we would implement in our family to help Mother Earth be a happy healthy place to live. Some times it would be something very simple like committing to learn something new each month about recycling or sustainable living. Other times it was harder like learning to eat lower down the food chain. For a former steak lover, this was HARD!! The year my daughter turned 15, with the help of one of her teachers, several friends, and me, she took on the task of getting 300 trees planted on the Kent Golf Course. Each year,

individually or as a family we have continued to celebrate by renewing our commitment.

Most of you have heard me talk about or have read things I've written about the Fairy Ring by my home. Some of you have even been there! It is just a small piece of Mother Earth. One I have fallen in love with. It sits just off the upper trail of a county park in my neighborhood. It's obvious that others spend time there too, because whenever I go, there are cigarette butts and paper garbage left behind. I have promised the Wee Ones that

Sacred Circle (cont'd)



Irises

**“EARTH DAY
is the first
holy day which
transcends all
national
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geographical
integrities...”**

live and play there, that I will do my part to keep this special sacred place clean. So at least once a week I take a garbage bag and my gloves up to the Ring and clean up whatever debris is left lying around.

What would it be like if all of us, young and old and in-between, adopted a small piece of the Earth? With that adoption we would agree to care for that land as if it were a tender infant who needed us to keep it safe. I'm not talking about a piece of land that we own or where our homes sits; but a stripe of dirt and plants along the side of a road, or an open field where “weeds” are trying to pop up amongst the junk. Do you think just maybe, Mother Earth would notice? Do you think She would appreciate the attention?

Two weeks ago I was out wandering and came across a huge pile of debris someone had dumped in the field by my home. I went home and got a neighbor, bags, shovels, and gloves, together we went back to clean up the pile. For our

effort, we were awarded about 75 iris bulbs; I've planted at least 15 in a nice sunny spot by the garage. I just know if not this year, then next, there will be beautiful fragrant blooms where there used to be only dirt and rocks. I like to believe that this is the Earth's way of thanking my neighbor and me for cleaning up a little spot of ground. Whatever it is, it brings me much joy.

What are you doing for Earth Day this year? Here is the link for KINK radio station where you can see the different activities that they have listed.

<http://www.kink.fm/Earth-Day--Green-Events/197448>

With that I'd like to end with a quote from Margaret Mead when she added her support for the equinox Earth Day in 1978 declared:

“EARTH DAY is the first holy day which transcends all national borders, yet preserves all geographical integrities, spans mountains and oceans and time belts, and yet brings people all

over the world into one resonating accord, is devoted to the preservation of the harmony in nature and yet draws upon the triumphs of technology, the measurement of time, and instantaneous communication through space. EARTH DAY draws on astronomical phenomena in a new way – which is also the most ancient way – using the vernal Equinox, the time when the Sun crosses the equator making night and day of equal length in all parts of the Earth. To this point in the annual calendar, EARTH DAY attaches no local or divisive set of symbols, no statement of the truth or superiority of one way of life over another. But the selection of the March Equinox makes planetary observance of a shared event possible, and a flag which shows the Earth as seen from space appropriate.”

Bright Blessings to All of Us,

Rev. Mary Moore
Midnight Woman

Springtime Poetry

If the Earth is a woman
I have always been her lover.

Watching the little fish swim
in the dark rivers of her heart
touching the hidden flowers
of her lips beneath the rough
bark
of cliffs above the sea.

If the Earth is a woman
I have tasted of her salt
and of her honey too
and seen her face beneath
the moonlit mirrored ice
before she melted in the
liquid warmth of spring.

If the Earth is a woman
we have known each other,
will know again
until not even the wind
can separate our dust.

If you hear music... dance!
If you don't hear music...
sing!

If you walk barefoot
along the path of the heart,
your singing will not awaken
the sleepers nor will your
dancing disturb the self-
righteous

But the birds will follow you
and take from your hand
some crumbs and
sing to you their truth.



Silver Falls State Park

Family Ties



Riding bikes as a family

“There is a fairy house in the middle of my yard right now with sticks, rocks, bunches of dried grass, flowers .”



Gardening

What are some fun and easy ways city families can take care of the earth? It's surprising how many ways you can think of when you put your mind to it!

There are lots of activities you can do to teach and model to children earth friendly values. One way is to ride bikes! Ride to a nearby store instead of driving. Ride together instead of sitting in front of the television. Riding as a family can be done even with little children too young to ride their own bikes. We started off with a trailer and rode to the store and library, piling food and books on top of the kids!

Our roommate used a seat that attaches onto the front of her bike and rode everywhere with her toddler bundled up and riding in front like a hood ornament. We plan to get a tandem attachment for our bikes this upcoming spring. We have a 7 year old who loves to ride long distances, but it's a little too much work for our 5 year old. I have seen really cool bikes in my neighborhood that have a place attached to the front where children can sit while the adult peddles. It's like a little children's taxi service!

And don't think you have to get any of these things new. Craig's list and Free Cycle are the best places to get all kinds of great biking stuff! That way you can also reiterate to your children the concept of re-using as a way to be earth

friendly.

Another way to impart your earth conscious values is to take a nature walk. My daughters and I take a bag to collect a few items. We bring them home and create fairy houses. There is a fairy house in the middle of my yard right now with sticks, rocks, bunches of dried grass, flowers, and I think an interesting piece of plastic my youngest daughter procured. Eventually the wind displaces everything, (or the lawn mowing parent). You can always blame the fairies for taking apart their houses!

Save your cool shaped plastic and paper containers for a "creation station" in your house on those days that it's just too icky to play outside. We recently created a city out of boxes, strawberry containers, and cans. Acrylic paint covered surfaces nicely. It's called Maryville and my youngest daughter is the mayor. (Guess what her name is!).

A less obvious but fun and easy way families can be good stewards is vermicomposting. This is composting things like vegetable and fruit peelings and scraps in a big Rubbermaid tub (with a lid) full of composting material and Red Wiggler worms. There is a lot of great information about vermicomposting on the internet. I highly recommend doing it. The worms can even live under your sink, and it doesn't smell bad. A pound of worms can eat an enormous amount of scraps, and watching and learning about them is fascinating.

Planting a garden with children is also a great way to get them to fall in love with dirt, seeds, water and the earth's amazing power to grow things. We planted sunflowers in one of our garden beds last year. They grew so big and tall and the kids created a little play space in between the stalks. It was shaded by the flower heads and butterflies, ladybugs and worms were frequent visitors.

I recently found out that my new church has a recycling team. I plan to volunteer on that committee and bring the children with me. They will love helping and hopefully will learn that our community is involved and cares, not just their family.

My oldest daughter is in charge of remembering the cloth grocery bags we have for grocery shopping. Using our bags has become so common that seeing a paper or plastic bag surprises them. I love that, because when they grow up taking the extra step will be second nature to them.

There are a lot of websites with all kinds of great information and activities. There are groups children can join with an earth focus. I searched "family earth friendly activities" and got a lot of interesting hits. Two sites I recommend are: www.epa.gov/kids/ and www.uoregon.edu/~recycle/kids_booklets.html

Have fun finding more ideas your family can do to be a part of the global solution!

-Maggie Reece

In the Garden Patch

Gardening with my Daughter
By Mary Ehly

I wish I'd read Heather Flores' book, "Food Not Lawns" before starting an organic garden in my front yard.

Usually, when we move, I plant fruit trees and start a garden as soon as possible. It is a lot of work but so worth it. We don't just grow fresh food; we grow memories. It feels like home when we can

wander in our own yard and snack on fresh fruit or pick vegetables to toss into the soup.

This house was different though. The back yard was covered by shade from tall fir trees. If we wanted to grow anything, it would have to be in the front yard.

The front was crammed with overgrown bushes and hedges meant to

keep neighbor kids off the lawn. Did I dare take it all out for a vegetable garden - and risk offending the neighbors who had perfectly manicured yards? I rationalized that our yard was so overgrown that the neighbors were already offended, so it wouldn't matter what I did. I pulled out the hedges and discovered hidden rose bushes. I hired one of their gardeners to take up most of the lawn. [Now I wish

I'd had him take it all.]

We went to the local nursery to get fertilizer and seeds and plants. I had sort of a plan - in my head. What I didn't realize was that my daughter was now old enough to have her own vision. And it was nothing like mine. It wasn't until we unloaded the van at home that we realized our mistake. We had both bought plants and trees - for the same areas.

We got a lesson about communication. We argued a bit, but the plants needed to get into the ground, so we compromised and figured out a way to make everything fit. When we started digging the holes, we realized our second mistake. We should have prepared the soil first - before buying the plants. The ground

was filled with river rock, so many that it took hours just to dig one hole for one plant. We filled buckets with the rocks.

Weeks later, when we finally got all the plants into the ground, some didn't look healthy anymore. It was partly the delays but also, without good planning, we had forgotten to give each plant the right conditions. Plants that need acidic soil were next to alkaline loving ones and plants that need full sun were mixed with shade loving ones. We would have to move plants or some would die. We worked a lot harder than if we had known what were doing when we started, and we left a lot undone for this summer.

It wasn't all mistakes though. We did get to sit in the front yard and eat fresh strawberries. We did get some green

beans to add to the soup. The cherries, blueberries, plums and grapes that we planted will produce this summer - and every summer from now on. We dug up enough rocks for the next project we've planned: a path from the sidewalk to the front porch. And we got to spend one of our last few summers working in our yard together before Allison leaves home to start growing her own life.

By the way, our neighbors were not offended at all. Several saw us working in the yard and stopped to compliment our progress - and welcome us to the neighborhood. Two decided to copy us and are planting edible gardens in their own front yards. We have strongly recommended that they read "Food Not Lawns" first.



It's up to us.

To Your Health

Health. It's on everyone's mind these days. Research has shown us that 30 to 40 percent of all diseases can be prevented with a healthy diet and lifestyle. We all yearn to be healthier and to have our children as healthy as possible. We all want to eat better, think better, sleep better, and eliminate as much stress as we possibly can.

When we finally decide to take that initial step toward our health, the question is "Where in the world do I start?" How do we know what's healthy and what isn't? Advertisers have deluded us into thinking that even sugar-free Jell-o is healthy. We're inundated with "all natural", "healthy", "FDA approved", and the like. If the truth be told, it's likely that none of these things are truthful. Even when we choose all organics, buy our produce directly from the farmers, and purify our own water, we still breathe in bacteria that create parasites and toxins. To minimize the "bad guys", it's a good idea to build a solid foundation. Salt, flour, and sugar are very good places to start.

Table salt first appeared on our tables in

1914. A short time later chemicals were added to aid in the treatment of goiters. Although goiters are no longer prevalent, chemicals remain in our table salt. It can be sold for mere pennies and has more fillers than can be named. Unrefined sea salts are the best choice in choosing a healthy salt. Although the level of iodine is less than conventional table salt, the levels of natural minerals are quite high. There are numerous types of unrefined sea salts. The Bon Marche has Hawaiian Red Sea Salt that's fun. Whole Foods sells fine and course Celtic Sea Salt. It's very expensive, but if you take the time to look, you may occasionally find it in bulk or even on-line.

We all know that white flour is nutritionally empty. Wheat flour is not as processed as white flour. If you suffer from stress, anxiety, or depression, even the nicest Duram Semolina wheat will magnify your symptoms. Studies have shown that even signs of Autism in children are reduced when wheat is eliminated from their diets. Garbanzo bean/fava flour can be a nice substitute. It will bread your zucchini and make a nice biscuit. Brown rice flour can be a bit gritty but

added to millet flour makes a nice tempura-type breading.

There are so many sugar substitutes to choose from. Organic cane sugar, organic cane juice, milled cane, muscovado sugar, and sucralose. Stevia is a healthful herb that's 30 times sweeter than sugar. It's nutrients are minimal and is essentially noncaloric. Stevia also suppresses dental bacteria, regulates the blood sugar, assists with weight loss, regulates blood pressure, and reduces mental and physical fatigue. Xylitol is a natural sweetener that's made from cornstalks, corn cobs, almond shells, pecan shells, or birch tree cellulose. Although Xylitol costs about 10 times as much as white sugar, it also protects against streptococci, guards against dental plaque bacteria, prevents tooth decay & mouth sores, and regulates blood sugar.

Whatever health-choices you decide to make, organic is always your best bet. It reduces the amount of toxins you put in your body and reduces your visits to the doctor's office.

Here's to your health,
Sandi Smith
Nutritional Consultant

"We all yearn to be healthier and to have our children as healthy as possible. We all want to eat better, think better, sleep better, and eliminate as much stress as we possibly can."

THE EARTH GATHERINGS

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Earth Gatherings

CREATING BALANCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATION
AND WILDERNESS

The Earth Gatherings Mission Statement

The Earth Gatherings 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

our community and enhance our ability to live sustainably in harmony with Nature and each other.



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.