



Great Plains Earth Institute
829 North Market, Wichita, KS 67214
GRASS ROOTS

Newsletter, Fall, 2007

FAREWELL TO “FLUSH AND FORGET”

Condensed by Mary Schoenecker, ASC, from an article of the same name by Lester R. Brown

In urban settings, the one-time use of water to disperse human and industrial wastes is becoming an outmoded practice, made obsolete by new technologies and water shortages. Water enters a city, becomes contaminated, and leaves the city dangerously polluted. Toxic industrial wastes discharged into rivers, lakes and wells also then permeate aquifers, making both surface and underground water unsafe for local fisheries. The time has come for better management.

Currently the concept for dealing with human waste is to use vast quantities of water to wash it away into a sewer system where it is treated before being discharged into the local river — the “flush and forget” system. This system is expensive, water-intensive, disrupts the nutrient cycle and is a major source of disease and death.

These water-based sewage systems take nutrients from the soil and dump them into rivers, lakes or the sea, and so lead to the death of rivers and to dead zones in the sea. In India, a family of five producing 250 liters of excrement per year, using a water-based system requires 150,000 liters of water to wash away its wastes. Both their rivers and their children were dying as a result. Worldwide this system is a huge public health hazard.

Fortunately, there is a low-cost alternative: the composting toilet. This is a simple, waterless, odorless toilet linked to a small compost facility. Table waste can be incorporated, too, into the composter. The dry composting converts human fecal material into a soil-like humus, essentially odorless and scarcely 10% of the original volume. Vendors can periodically collect the humus and market it as soil supplement, reducing the need for fertilizer.

This technology cuts water bills for residences and lowers the need to pump and purify water. It also reduces garbage flow, eliminates the sewage water disposal problem, and restores the nutrient cycle. Pioneered in

Sweden, these toilets work well under varying conditions where they are now used, including Swedish apartment buildings, U.S. private residences and Chinese villages.

Two household appliances, toilets and showers, account for over half of indoor water use. Whereas traditional flush toilets used 6 gallons (22.7 liters) per flush, the legal maximum for the new toilets is 1.6 gallons (6 liters). An Australian-produced toilet with a dual-flush two-button technology uses only 1 gallon for a liquid waste flush and 1.6 gallons for a solid waste flush. Shifting from a showerhead flowing at 5 gallons per minute to a 2.5 gallons-per-minute model cuts water use nearly in half. A horizontal axis design washing machine designed in Europe uses 40% less than traditional top-loading machines, and uses less energy.

Some cities are finding ways to recycle their water because of shrinking water supplies and rising costs. For some cities this recycling may become a condition for their survival.

More information may be found on-line at www.earthpolicy.org/Books/PB2/index.htm.

IT'S TIME TO THINK OF MEMBERSHIP!

The staff at GPEI thanks each of you for being interested in and/or being a member of our nonprofit environmental education organization that seeks spiritually integrated solutions to ecological challenges. Your membership dues help us to continue the work we are doing in the Wichita community. GPEI's fiscal year began July 1, 2007. We encourage you to renew or become a new member at this time.

Our intent is to continue bringing awareness of the beauty of our Earth and ways we can cooperate to make it more sustainable. With all that we're learning on the topic these days, we see many ideas for going green. Often it's hard to decide how to begin, but just a few small steps can make a huge difference.

Upcoming Events:

Fall Equinox Celebration: September 23rd: We invite you to attend The Equinox celebration at the North Chisholm Creek Open Shelter (just south of #96 on N. Oliver) **from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Sunday, September 23rd.**

The celebration will consist in a potluck meal, a cosmic walk, games and a Ritual. All are invited to attend. If raining, event will be cancelled. Please INTEND sunshine and wonderful weather. Bring a friend, yourself, a covered dish and your non-disposable table settings.

The Intenders' Circle: Tuesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m. in the Inter-Faith Ministries building at 829 N. Market — a delightful time to offer GRATITUDE for who you are today and the various aspects and happenings in your life, and INTEND, in a special way, what is needed in your life to reach your highest potential. (See CODE on page 3.)

On the last Tuesday of the month we have a potluck meal at 6:00 p.m. as a time to share and celebrate together.

We are delighted to announce three new Intenders Circles have formed in other parts of the city since this circle formed three months ago.

Sacred Activism, with Jane Goodall, renowned research scientist, environmentalist and humanitarian, who will be in Wichita October 11-13th for the **Roots and Shoots Global Program.**

On Saturday, October 13th, the public is invited to attend a special program at 2:00 p.m. at the WSU Metroplex, 29th St. N. and Oliver.

Monthly Film Club: On the **first Wednesday of the month** at Great Plains Earth Institute's new office near the Murdock Street entrance will be an interesting, exciting and informative film show and discussion from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Take time to broaden your perspective, participate and delight in an up-to-date new and different film:

Wednesday, October 3

Wednesday, November 7

Wednesday, December 5.

Grandma's Farm Events: 6901 N. Tyler Rd., Wichita, KS 67101, 316-721-9964, www.grandma'sfarm.org. Please visit Grandma's Farm calendar page for a complete listing of all their events. They have added many new and exciting ones.

Riverview Retreat Events: 5225 N. Sullivan, Wichita, KS 67204, 316-838-6230, www.riverviewretreat.com/ Please visit the Riverview Retreat for a complete listing of all their events, as they have added new and exciting ones

INTERBEING

by Thich Nhat Hanh

**There is a cloud floating on this sheet of paper
that you are holding in your hand.
Without a cloud, there will be no rain;
Without rain the trees cannot grow;
And without reees we cannot make paper.
The cloud is essential for the paper to exist.
If the cloud is not here
the sheet of paper cannot be here either;
So the cloud and the paper inter-are.
If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply,
we can see the sunshine in it.
If the sunshine is not there the forest cannot grow.
In fact nothing can grow.
Even we cannot grow without sunshine.
And so we know that the sunshine
is also in this paper;
The paper and the sunshine inter-are.
And if we continue to look
we can see the logger who cut the tree
and brought it to the mill
to be transformed into paper.
And we see the wheat.
We know the logger cannot exist
without his daily bread,
And therefore the wheat that became his bread
is also in this sheet of paper.
And the logger's father and mother are in it, too.
Looking even more deeply,
we can see we are in it, too,
because when we look at a sheet of paper,
the sheet of paper is part of our perception.
So everything is in this sheet of paper
You cannot point out one thing that is not here —
time, space, Earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil,
the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat.
Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper.
"To be" is "to inter-be."
You cannot just be by yourself, alone.
You have to inter-be with every other thing.
This sheet of paper is,
because everything else is.
As thin as this sheet of paper is,
it contains everything in the universe within it.**

*Instead of wanting
to go to heaven,
the practical mystic wants
heaven to come down to Earth.*

David Ray

THE CODE

Ten Intentions for a Better World

To have the Code work in your life, say it once a day.

The First Intent — Support Life.

I refrain from opposing or harming anyone. I allow others to have their own experiences. I see life in all things and honor it as if it were my own.

I support life.

The Second Intent — Seek Truth.

I follow my inner compass and discard any beliefs that are no longer serving me. I go to the source.

I seek truth.

The Third Intent — Set Your Course.

I begin the creative process. I give direction to my life.

I set my course.

The Fourth Intent — Simplify.

I let go so there is room for something better to come in.

I intend that I am guided, guarded, protected and lined up with the Highest Good at all times. I trust and remain open to receive from both expected and unexpected sources. I simplify.

The Fifth Intent — Stay Positive.

I see good, say good and do good. I accept the gifts from all of my experiences. I am living in grace and gratitude.

I stay positive.

The Sixth Intent — Synchronize.

After intending and surrendering, I take action by following the opportunities that are presented to me. I am in the flow where Great Mystery and Miracles abide, fulfilling my desires and doing what I came here to do. I synchronize.

The Seventh Intent — Serve Others.

I practice love in action. I always have enough to spare and enough to share.

I am available to help those who need it.

I serve others.

The Eighth Intent — Shine Your Light.

I am a magnificent being, awakening to my highest potential. I express myself with joy, smiling easily and laughing often.

I shine my light.

The Ninth Intent — Share Your Vision.

I create my ideal world by envisioning it and telling others about it.

I share my vision.

The Tenth Intent — Synergize.

I see humanity as one. I enjoy gathering with light-hearted people regularly. When we come together, we set the stage for Great Oneness to reveal itself.

We synergize.

Have you heard of Goodsearch? We encourage you to use **goodsearch** as your search engine.

It is a search engine exactly like google, that gives \$.01 for each search.

Just type: Great Plains Earth Institute in the "Who do you search for?" box, and then hit the "Verify" button.

If you make this your home page or add a bar to the toolbar, it will stay there.

<http://www.goodsearch.com/>

This is the link for goodshop.com — the stores working with [goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com/) also gives \$ to charities.

<http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshopping.aspx>

This is the link for giveline.com, an online store that gives 33% to the charity of the shopper's choice.

They carry everything from books and music to travel.

To renew memberships or sign up as a new member of GPEI, go to our new and exciting webpage:

www.gpei.org



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*"I know of no restorative of heart, body,
and soul more effective against
hopelessness than the restoration
of the Earth."*

—Barry Lopez, *Helping Nature Heal* (1990)

Great Plains Earth Institute was founded to be a resource for Kansas citizens who wish to "**Work Together to Care for Earth**".

I'd like to become a member of Great Plains Earth Institute

Membership includes a one-year subscription to Grassroots

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Day () _____ Evening () _____ Cell () _____

Membership: \$25 Grassroots Supporter \$ 500 Composter
 \$50 Sower \$ 1,000 Sustainer
 \$100 Gardener \$ 5,000 Earth Angel
 \$250 Mulcher Other

I'm already a member — Here's an additional gift of: \$ _____

I would like information on how to offer a course on:

Reconnecting with Nature Voluntary Simplicity Discovering a Sense of Place