



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

Newsletter, Summer, 2007

An Overview of the Sacred Activism Conference

Some Thoughts by Cindy Siebler

After the conference, my mind was swirling with so many comments, important facts and wonderful personalities. I came to the realization that like the micro within the macro, one speaker would never be enough to explain what Sacred Activism is; so, I have listed some of the speakers with a brief overview of their message, hoping that it will be enough to motivate each of you to move into Sacred Activism.

CAROLINE MYSS Emergence of Mysticism as a Global Force for Change

In order for anything new to come in, we MUST shed the old! With the global crisis facing us, it is a signal from the Divine Feminine that it is time to release history. The old ways must get shed. We must get to a place where we recognize we are carrying around an old belief pattern that does not work any more.

ANDREW HARVEY Following Your Heartbreak as the Gateway to Sacred Activism

The world is burning to death in the fires of greed, ignorance, and chaotic violence. We have, at best, 10 years in which to make fundamental shifts in all our ways of being and doing. Otherwise humans will cease to exist.

Sacred Activism is a fusion of two powerful passions that have traditionally been kept apart: the passion of the mystic for God and the passion of the activist for justice.

By the fusion of these two fires, a third is created, the nuclear energy of Love in action. The energy of the Christ consciousness, which then can, through the blessing of the divine, start working in extraordinarily powerful and swift miraculous ways to change the entire situation. That is what Sacred Activism is all about.

REV. JESSE WILLIAMS Meantime: Awakening to Self and Soul

Our spiritual senses are becoming sharper, keener and more defined. We are learning how to go beyond just knowledge and learning how to allocate and appropriate wisdom. Knowledge gives you information, and wisdom gives you how to appropriate that information into your life for good.

ROBERT KENNEDY JR. The Crisis in Our Environment, the Corruption in Our Politics and Media, and the Opportunity to Renew the Nation

One out of every four black children in America now has asthma. We know that asthma attacks are triggered primarily by bad air, by

ozone particulates. The principle source for those materials in our atmosphere is the 400 coal burning power plants.

In 19 states, it is now unsafe to eat any freshwater fish caught in the state because of mercury contamination. The mercury is coming from those same coal burning power plants. In 49 states, at least some of the fish are unsafe to eat. The only state where it is said the fish are still safe to eat is Wyoming, where the legislation has refused to appropriate the money to test the fish. We know a lot more about mercury than we used to. For instance, we now know that 1 out of every 6 women in America has so much mercury in her womb that her children are at risk for a grim inventory of diseases. According to the CDC, there are 640,000 children born in this country every year who have been exposed to dangerous levels of mercury in their mothers' wombs.

When the lobbyists for these big corporations and industries are pressed for an answer to the question, "How can you be doing this, you also have children who need clean air to breathe and water to drink?" they invariably say, "Well, the time has come in our nation's history where we have to choose between economic prosperity on the one hand and environmental protection on the other. That is a false choice. Good environmental policy is identical to good economic policy.

PAUL RAY The Emerging Wisdom Culture

Our job is to prepare the way for a right of passage to happen. Afterwards, it may feel like God's grace; but while we are going through it, it may feel like the wrath of God.

If we are successful, 20 to 50 years out we are probably going to be living outwardly simple lives but very spiritually enriched lives. We are going to make a good world for all of the children and the grandchildren. If we are going to have a wisdom type of civilization, we will have to make enlightenment processes normal instead of rare.

In the 1950's there were about 200 organizations around the planet that were concerned with planetary issues. Today there is between one and two million. That's just in the last 50 years. It is through all the millions of individuals working with these organizations that we feel very positive that change for the good can happen really really fast. We are part of a wave of change that has been building for 50 years.

We are the ones that must come up with the big vision of possibilities. We are the wise elders. We must re-imagine the divine world that we live in, and we have to redesign every way that we touch nature. It's about an emerging planetary wisdom culture. It's about the entire planet.

(Continued on page 4)

Reflections on the Sacred Activism Conference

By Cindy White

As I watched and listened to Robert Kennedy, Jr., speak at the Conference on Sacred Activism and the Power of Inclusion, I was mesmerized by his power and energy. He spoke for an hour and a half without a pause or a distraction. Names, dates and places flowed easily and concisely.

I found myself battling the issue of us vs. them as he spoke. I strongly feel that we have to move past this age-old survival instinct so we can evolve and move on. As the list of wrongs being done to Earth and the people who are committing them went on and on my heart and soul grew heavier. I wanted the blame to stop and the healing to start.

While sitting here reflecting on this the true meaning of the conference has come to me. As a person who has been aware of these devastations and tortures of Earth for many years I have worked through the despair. I have done life changes to help reduce my ecological footprint and have tried to be an example to others. Now I know that I also ran away from any kind of active involvement on a community, regional and national level.

There is a balance that we need to find between our inner personal work and our outer social work. We need to be activists both inside and out. We can do both with compassion for ourselves and for all other people. We have all come to this time in our history without blame or shame. No matter how different our viewpoints and beliefs are, we are all a product of the society that came before us.

With this awareness we can forgive and heal not only ourselves but other people also. We can join together peacefully and powerfully not only to stop the devastation, but to enlighten others as to why this is necessary.

Please join us as we bring this Sacred Activism to Wichita and beyond.

Earth Policy News

By Mary Schoenecker, ASC

I recently became aware of a very timely resource for staying up to date on Earth matters. It is called *Earth Policy News* and can be accessed at Earthpolicynews@earthpolicy.org. It seems to come out two or three times monthly, each time treating at length and in depth one or another matter of great importance for the welfare of Earth and the environment. Recently there has been a meaningful series of articles related to global warming.

In this present article I will aim to whet your appetite by including highlights on a few practical, if amazing facts, just in case you are not already receiving the e-newsletter. The May 9th issue, "Ban the Bulb," gives statistics on the value of phasing out the sale and use of inefficient incandescent light bulbs and replacing them with the highly efficient compact fluorescent bulbs that use one fourth as much electricity and last up to ten times longer. Australia announced in February that it would phase out the old and phase in the new by the year 2010. A worldwide shift would greatly cut carbon emissions, and the drop in electricity use would permit the closing of more than 270 coal-fired (500 megawatt) power plants. For the U.S. this bulb switch would facilitate shutting down 80 coal-fired plants.

One after another country is following suit and proposing similar legislation. In mid-March a U.S. coalition of environmental groups

launched an initiative to shift to the more efficient bulbs in all of the country's estimated four billion sockets by 2016.

In California, Assemblyman Lloyd Levine is proposing that his state phase out the sale of incandescent light bulbs by 2012, four years ahead of the coalition's deadline. He calls his proposed law the "How Many Legislators Does It Take to Change a Light Bulb Act." On the East coast New Jersey is trying to take the lead by making the change by 2010.

At the industry level, Philips, the world's largest lighting manufacturer, has announced plans to discontinue marketing incandescents in Europe and the U.S. by 2016. Major retailers are following the lead.

One word of caution is in order: each of these bulbs contains a small amount of mercury, roughly one fifth the amount in a watch battery. Therefore, like all things containing mercury, they must be properly recycled.

The challenge for each of us is to make the change in our own homes first. More importantly we need to contact our elected representatives at the city, state and national level to introduce legislation to raise lighting efficiency standards. Few things can cut carbon emissions faster than this simple step, a step toward greater advance in climate stabilization.

Our Web Stories

by Cindy White

Everyone has a story, a beautiful story to share, inspire and bring joy to others. With this in mind we are setting up a website to bring all of our stories together as a world wide community of storytelling.

Please email your story, poem, short autobiography—anything you would like (hmmm, must be clean). You can sign it, use just your initials, put your city and state, or just have it published anonymously. We will have a copyright clause on the site that the stories are the owner's and must have their permission to reuse or copy.

The website will be ourwebstories.com. We have the domain and am working on the design. It will be published as soon as there are enough stories. With all of people's interesting stories, the web is the way to "get them out there"!

We look forward to the beauty, creativity and sharing this will bring to us all.

"We have too long been occupied and distracted with the alienating story of greed and consumption. May we find the stillness that, through a practice of spiritual ecology, will allow a new story to live among us. The freshness, depth, clarity, and insight of our voices are a bow in that direction." - K. Lauren de Boer "*EarthLight*"



Vegetarian Is the New Prius

This is an attempt by Mary Schoenecker, ASC, to summarize an article by Kathy Freston of the same title published on Saturday, January 20, 2007, in the *Huffington Post*.

President Herbert Hoover promised "a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." With warnings about global warming reaching feverish levels, many are having second thoughts about all those cars. It seems they should instead begin to worry about all those chickens.

Recently the United Nations published a report on livestock and the environment, with a stunning conclusion: "The livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems at every scale, from local to global." It turns out that raising animals for food is a primary cause of land degradation, air pollution, water shortage, water pollution, loss of biodiversity, and not least of all, global warming.

It seems that when you step outside and wonder what happened to winter, you might want to think about what you had for dinner last night. The U.N. report says almost a fifth of global warming emissions come from livestock (i.e., those chickens Hoover talked about, plus pigs, cattle and others)—that's more emissions than from all of the world's transportation combined.

Last year researchers at the University of Chicago noted that feeding animals for meat, dairy and egg production requires growing some ten times as many crops as we'd need if we just ate pasta primavera, faux chicken nuggets and other plant foods. A further problem is the need to transport the animals to slaughterhouses, slaughter them, refrigerate their carcasses, and distribute them all across the country. Producing a calorie of meat protein means burning more than ten times as much fossil fuels — and spewing more than ten times as much heat-trapping carbon dioxide — as does a calorie of plant protein. The researchers concluded that, when it's all added up, the average American does more to reduce global warming emissions by going vegetarian than by switching to a Prius.

The UN report also cited the fact that if we include the vast areas of land needed to give us our steak and pork chops, it gets even worse. Animal agriculture takes up 70% of all agricultural land and 30% of the total land surface of the planet. And besides carbon dioxide, gases like methane and nitrous oxide, super-strong gases, come primarily from farmed animals' digestive processes and from their manure, and are far more harmful than carbon dioxide.

Knowing that a greener diet is even more effective than a greener car, we can make more of a difference just by keeping the animals off our plates. What's good for our health is also good for the health of the planet. So we can go for the veggie burgers and soy milk, and help to bring about a cooler and cleaner planet.

For more details, go to <http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=views07/0120-20.htm>



SUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

GPEI invites you to our celebration being held at Riverview Retreat—5225 N Sullivan, Wichita

Wednesday - June 20, 2007

6:00pm—Potluck Meal & Sharing

Please bring a covered dish, a lawn chair, table settings

7:00pm—Showing of 2012: The Odyssey

A very informative movie that brings together science and spirituality...all of which point toward the personal revelation and earthly changes of the next 5 years. Please join us as we expand our minds and experiences.

SACRED ACTIVISM - WICHITA

Thursday - June 21, 2007

7:00pm - Inter-Faith Ministries, 829 N Market, Wichita

8:30pm - Stone Circle in Riverside Park

This is a continuation of the dialogue on the conference in Tulsa.

Where do we go from here...

The group and anyone else are invited to the Stone Circle in Riverside Park to celebrate the Solstice after our meeting. Bring drums, chairs and bug repellent! Steve Murillo, co-creator of the Circle, will be our special guest!

GLOBAL WARMING: Changing Co2urse

June 18 & 25 and July 2 & 9

Mondays - 7:00 to 8:30pm

Inter-Faith Ministries - use Murdock (south) entrance
A four week course exploring the history and science of global warming, personal values and habits as they relate to climate change, and personal actions to curb global warming
Materials Cost: \$15.00

A WEEKEND RETREAT IN THE COUNTRY

July 13-15, 2007 - Kingman Cottage

There will be video input, discussions, rituals plus time to walk the labyrinth, relax, eat and enjoy one another's company.

SPACE IS LIMITED. COST: \$75.00

Please, bring snacks to share!

Starting time is 7:00pm, Friday evening - July 13

Ending time is 12:00pm, Sunday noon - July 15

If interested, please call GPEI at 316-262-4120 to register.

After registration, a confirmation with directions to the Kingman Cottage will be sent to you.

INTENDERS CIRCLE

Tuesdays - 7:30pm

Inter-Faith Ministries - 829 N Market, Wichita

A time to come together in a circle to share our gratitude and intentions for the Higher Good of the universe, ourselves and for all.

Please write down what you are grateful for and what you intend to manifest and create in your life before the circle begins. This way we all have time to share and bring our intentions together.

On the last Tuesday of the month we will have a potluck meal beginning at 6:30pm. This is a time to share and celebrate the "fruit" of our intentions!

(continued from page 1)

TIM BROADOUS Design Your Life

Thoughts create actions. Actions form habits. Habits define character. Character determines destiny. There must be alignment with my inner purpose awakening consciously and my outer purpose of what I do.

MICHAEL BECKWITH Moving Mountains

Faith is the substance available for the evidence of things which are not occupied by the senses; but, when our faith is activated, we begin to feed it and to begin to live from that vantage point. It is the ability to be aware that you are aware. That is what is meant by being made in the image and likeness of God. You share a faculty that God has, and that is the ability to think independently of circumstances.

There is an evolution of thought going on where we are getting closer and closer to God's idea of the self. By breaking down the pattern of how you thought yesterday or the day before, something else is emerging. Something is taking place. You can begin to allow the mind of God to think through you, which is inspiration. Real inspiration is the mind of God moving thru you, propelling you into right action.

Now, you are being asked to create a new vision of the world. Vision without action is a fantasy. Action without vision is chaos, so you have to have both and then be propelled into the right action that is for you. Everyone is not going to be doing the same thing. Everyone has different gifts and knowledge, and everyone is to do something to become a change agent here on this planet.

AND THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT IS!!!!

I could not have said it better myself. God bless each of us as we embark upon our paths of Sacred Activism.

Cindy Siebler

GRANDMA'S FARM EVENTS

6901 N Tyler Rd, Wichita, KS 67101
316-721-9964

GRANDMA'S GROUP

Wednesdays - 7:00 to 10:00pm

June 13 & 27 - July 11 & 25 - Aug 8 & 22

We are a group of like and open minded people coming together to teach and learn from each other. Each week there will be different insightful topics for discussion and input.

ACOUSTIC MUSIC NIGHT

The Second Saturday of each month

June 9 - July 14 - Aug 11

Clubhouse and stage are provided by Grandma's Farm, professional sound system provided by D-N-A Sound. Fun & music provided by YOU! Bring munchies and your instruments to share in the open mic.

Celebrating the Life of Stefanie Pulliam

Stefanie was a very brilliant, gifted woman of great courage. I have known Stef for the past six years. She served as a VISTA volunteer for one year and continued to do volunteer work for Great Plains Earth Institute for all the years after that experience.

I remember the day Stef told me she was an atheist. I had never been around an atheist before and so I looked at her and said, "How can you be an atheist and be so spiritual at the same time?" She just smiled and looked at me. I soon learned her spirituality far surpassed her atheistic tendencies. Her smile and her spirituality continued to grow every day as she carried out her mission to serve and inspire others on this Earth.

As a VISTA volunteer Stef coordinated the Procession of the Species. Again I saw this big contradiction. She told me she was not artistic — she created, with the College Hill kids, wonderful papier-mache species for the Procession. Her artistic abilities were evident in everything she did and everything she wrote. Her spiritual giftedness oozed from every cell in her body.

I always looked forward to our weekly staff meetings. We would pray together and Stef prayed with us. I would show a short video and then open for discussion. Stef was a deep thinker, a questioner with a strong belief system. She loved the Earth and was passionate about caring for the environment. Sometimes our discussions would go on for hours and we all had **new insights** and knew where each person stood on the topic.

Stef often facilitated adult Sunday school classes as well as classes for youth, using the Earth Literacy videos. I would hear from many of the participants about the meaningful and deeply spiritual lessons and the rituals that always followed the discussion. This past year Lincoln joined Stef in facilitating the classes and again both were so interested in ways they might touch people at deep spiritual levels.

Stef was always willing to help, worked well with others in preparation for the Awards Luncheon, could immediately see what was missing and creatively responded in whatever way was needed. She was also a marvelous cook and provided well, with unusual tasty dishes for small luncheons and also for larger groups of participants in the Holotropic Breathwork weekends. Whatever the task was, Stef was there. Whether it was selling compost bins out in the cold wind or giving a ride to someone in need. She was a joy to work with and a delight to be around.

Stef, all of us at GPEI will miss you very much. You have been a shape shifter, a tremendous blessing to all of us and a gift to all who have come in contact with you. May your **new journey** be filled with light, love and joys far beyond even your expectations. We will often call upon you at your **new address** as we continue the projects of caring and loving Mother Earth. Love to you from all of us.

Given by Rita Robl, ASC, at Stefanie's Funeral Service.



SACRED LEG CRAMPS MOVING ME INTO ACTION

After attending the Sacred Activism conference in Tulsa, I began to realize all the various ways Sacred Activism is already in my life. For example: while sound asleep, the slightly uncomfortable feeling of an impending leg cramp begins to take over my dream state. My first response is to do the least amount possible to not disturb my comfortable sleep, so I roll over and stretch out my leg. (*This is how we got into such a mess with the environment - rolling over not wanting to do anything that might interfere with our comfort zone.*)

Of course this does little to help except to be sure that now I am laying there waiting for the cramp to either go away, or continue to worsen; and, sure enough, it continues to worsen. (*Now, we are at the present moment in time where we can no longer continue without some type of action taking place.*)

As the pain begins to grow to the point that I can no longer stand to lay there doing nothing, I quickly jump to my feet and begin to walk around the still and quiet house. (*This is exactly what needs to be happening now for the planet - everyone MUST begin to take personal responsibility for their actions and how they affect the environment.*)

Most of the time, I can relieve my leg cramp by walking around, but it's that occasional, extremely painful cramp that puts me immediately in tears calling out to anyone who can hear me for help in rubbing ice on the cramp until it subsides. (*As with many things in life that seem completely overwhelming at the time, when we come together, in like minded groups and organizations, we can collectively overcome any of the current environmental issues. We can also create a new way of living that benefits all life everywhere.*)

It is my wish that all of you reading my analogy begin to realize that becoming a Sacred Activist is not something on your to do list - *it is something that you are in every moment of your life, even in the middle of the night.*

Blessings, Cindy Siebler

We are making the regular newsletter

GRASS ROOTS,

available by email distribution. For this purpose we are asking for an updated email address from each of you. If you prefer to continue to receive your copy through the postal service, please call and let us know. For those of you for whom email format is acceptable, please email us at info@gpei.org so we can add you to the e-mail newsletter group list.

Thanks for all of the time and paper you will save us.

Don't forget to visit our new website: www.gpei.org

our newsletter is also on this site in a downloadable/ printable format

“It would go a long way to caution and direct people in their use of the world, that they were better studied and knowing in the Creation of it. For how could they find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the Great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part thereof?”

- William Penn, *Some Fruits of Solitude*, 1693

In what ways do I express gratitude for the wondrous expressions of life on Earth?

Do I consider the damage I might do to the Earth's vulnerable systems in choices I make of what I do, what I buy, and how I spend my time?

In our witness for the global environment, are we careful to consider justice and the well-being of the world's poorest people?

Does our way of life threaten the viability of life on Earth?



Great Plains Earth Institute
829 N. Market
Wichita, KS 67214
www.gpei.org

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 229
Wichita, KS

*“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