



RNDM Earth Community

“We are One, We are Love”

June, 2011

“Let ours be a time remembered for awakening a new respect for our earth and all her inhabitants, for one another, for ourselves and for our common destiny.” (RNDM Congregational Chapter, 2008)

Vol 2, No. 4
Page 1 of 2

“OH GIVE ME LAND, LOTS OF LAND ... ”

Sheila Madden, rndm

There is a Native American saying that “the hand that fashioned the continent also fashioned the [man] for his surroundings.” As “prairie people”, do we not simply seem to fit into the landscape? Can we be anything other than people of the land?

We all have an “inner landscape” and when I reflect on my inner landscape I know the land is my home. My father, a farmer of Celtic lineage, recognized the gifts that nurtured and nourished his family. My most enduring and satisfying memory is of his Sunday walk around the land he cultivated. This was impressive to me as a child (and still is) for I had seen him walk that same land for ten to twelve hours daily, Monday through Saturday, guiding a plow, a disc, the harrows ... drawn by horses.

**Through and in the land,
divine allurements fill the universe
and I catch the invitation
to live with deep meaning and inspiration.**

The land - the soil, the physical ‘dirt’ laden with meaning – draws me into an earthy, mystical sense in which I recognize the presence of God in every piece and pattern of its life. Through and in the land, divine allurements fill the universe and I catch the invitation to live with deep meaning and inspiration. The land connects me with a gentle God; life is to be lived to the full.

Our contemporary world, with all its technology and instant connecting, exists in an agony of rootlessness. Persons and communities, disassociated from the land, experience a sense of being lost, displaced, homeless. We yearn to belong somewhere, to have a home, to be in a safe place.

Land with its gifts, its promise and challenges, is so central to our identity. Land is thick with the energy of life and in the land it is possible to establish roots. Land, a physical source of fertility and life, is a vibrant theological symbol and can serve as a prism through which to understand other aspects of faith. The land, the antithesis of dualism, holds our daily, ordinary and our life with God as one, for the land offers us a constant invitation to be intentional about our intimate bond with the Indwelling One. All that we are and all that we do constitute the warp and woof of our spiritual lives. When on the land, angels are near!

We do not weave the web of life - we are mere strands in it. What we do to the web we do to ourselves. This is especially evident in our relationship with the land. Regardless of deed and statements of ownership, we do not own any part of the earth. May we all be generous in our care of the land. Memories of being a part of the prairies where the wind blew free, where there was nothing to obscure the light of the sun, and where all were free to draw a deep breath of healthy air continue to nurture and nourish me and my heart continues to sing “give me land, lots of land ... and, don’t fence me in”.

**What we do to the web
we do to ourselves.**



TIPS FOR GREEN LIVING

Good compost is the best way to ‘feed your soil’. It adds nutrients and contains soil microbes that build up a healthy soil ecosystem. Through good stewardship of the soil in our own backyards, we can have an important positive impact on the health of our communities and our planet.

For an excellent explanation of microbes and soil, check this website:

<http://www.compostjunkie.com/support-files/compostandthesoilfoodweb.pdf>

“The soil is the great connector of our lives, the source and destination of all.”

(Wendell Berry, The Unsettling of America, 1977)

BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE . . .



Bit by bit our eco-building is moving from dream to reality! Patience and persistence is our motto! Our Building Committee has engaged in a number of interviews over the past several months as we move closer to establishing a design/construction team. In order to create a building that will meet the multifaceted needs of the community for gathering space, administration, residence and outreach, the building structure, its systems and the site are treated as one interdependent system. This approach is known as the **Integrated Design Process (IDP)** and brings together the key stakeholders and design professionals – groups like the RNDMs (owners), project manager, engineers, architects, builders and consultants – to work collaboratively and

interactively from the planning stages through to building occupation. We will be making a recommendation soon to our leadership team regarding a possible project manager, engineers and architectural firm. It is all quite exciting as we recognize ourselves as part of the earth community and thus imagine our way into new structures and relationships for the sake of a healthier and happier planet-home.

"One morning, while meditating outside, subdued and silent, I sat in awe drinking in the water and breathing in the sky. I bent and scooped up a handful of earth and realized that I'd just picked up my ancestors and my successors. Every person who ever lived on this earth is still here; their bodies have returned to the earth from which they came and their remains nourish the life we live today. I sat there in awe of the whole of life, present right there in my hand.



This is my family—birds, animals, trees, plants, flowers, stars, rain, and universe. We are one; imminent yet transcendent; distinct from one another, but still one." - Rev. Vicki Joy McClure

Retrieved June 22, 2011 from The Chaplaincy Institute website: <http://www.chaplaincyinstitute.org/topic/ecospirituality>

WORKSHOP COMING THIS FALL

On Saturday, October 29, 2011
the Canadian Religious Conference will be presenting
“A Place at the Table:
the Contribution of Christians to the
Public Discourse on the Environment”

More details in our September newsletter

If any of these articles have stirred a response in you, please share your insight at GreenSistersTalk@yahoo.com