

Power in the Garden...

"We are stardust/ We are golden/ And we've got to get ourselves/ Back to the garden" -Joni Mitchell, Woodstock

As spiritual feminists, it is difficult to look at the world today and see the unbalance, the unfairness and the unrest. Life, in so many of its aspects, seems to be moving towards extremes; the middle ground is eroding and the chasm between sides appears larger everyday. Power and wealth has been condensed into very few hands with humanity and nature are struggling to maintain multiculturalism and diversity against the push for monoculture and globalization.

In our present socio-economic dynamic, power is gained by accumulating wealth and exercising dominance over our environment and other people. This dynamic is what fuelled the formation of hierarchy and patriarchy, cultivated militarism, shaped the organization of corporate and political structures and is what sustains the luxurious lifestyle of the Western world. Power and wealth are hoarded by the reigning elite, leaving little or none for millions of our fellow human beings. Ours is a global system of "haves and have-nots" and its maintenance is dependent upon the "have-nots" never getting a larger piece of the pie. Capitalism needs the "poor" to do the under-valued and underpaid work that maintains our lifestyle. How else would Wal-Mart survive to provide us with all those bargains? This system also benefits from social instability as it prevents the organization and empowerment of a labour force.

So how do we begin to re-balance...? One way is by taking Joni Mitchell's advice and getting ourselves "back to the garden". If we view the Earth as our collective garden, then we must recognize the brutal domination that has been inflicted onto many portions of it. The current gardeners have planted a few showy flowers in the prime sun – to which most of the water and nutrients are given- while the remainder of the garden has had its resources stripped away, leaving the soil contaminated or unable to support new life. This method of gardening would be considered ridiculous if we applied it to our own backyards. Imagine only watering one corner and leave the rest to wilt and die? Would the beauty of that one corner be enough to block out the decay of the rest of the yard?

Of course not, so we should ask ourselves how this practice has become the accepted norm in our world garden? Furthermore, we are now in a situation where both the gardener and the garden are at risk.

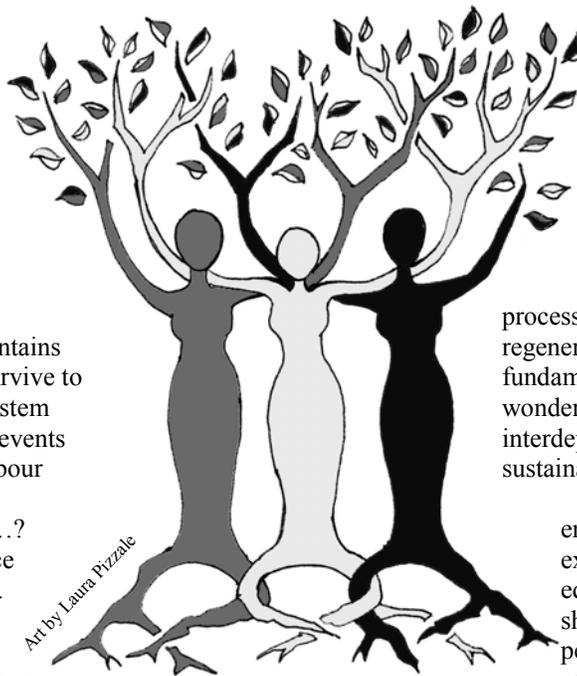
The time has emerged for the world to reconstruct our concept of power and increasingly, women are stepping up to do so. Tired of the inequity and injustice within our current systems, women are reclaiming power as a creative force rather than a destructive one. Power is being re-membered as something that is not given to us but something that is grown from within...that is not acquired through domination but cultivated through love, compassion, connection and freedom. We all carry the seed of

power within us, but the right nutrients are needed in order to make it flourish and bloom. The definition of power is being transformed into the capacity to inspire others, instill value and cultivate harmony. To be powerful is to be able to empower others.

If the Earth is our garden, we need to acknowledge and honour that all life interacts and is in relationship with the processes of creation, growth, blooming and regeneration. We need to respect diversity as fundamental to our garden's health and generate wonder and awe at our system's incredible interdependence. It is time to create balance and sustainability.

If the Earth is our garden, we should encourage water-loving plants growth near existing water and cacti in the dry parched edges where only cacti will grow. We should mandate an end to toxic waste and pesticides and companion plant in honour of diversity and symbiosis! We should take

what we need and ONLY what we need, trusting the natural cycles of the seasons to establish balance to provide for all life in the garden. There would be beauty and blooms. Who can stop a peony?? Who would WANT to stop a peony? A beautiful, bountiful garden that celebrates diversity and abundance and brings community of people and nature together is true power. It nourishes all the senses, it celebrates life and death, it honours the radical interdependence of all!



Art by Laura Pizzale



Exploring Kyoto

The Kyoto Protocol, agreed to in 1997 in Kyoto Japan, is the first international treaty that set goals of lowering greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. To date, 159 countries have ratified the agreement. Thirty-nine of the richest nations are required by law to reduce their global greenhouse gas emissions to 5% below what they were in 1990 by the year 2012.

The Canadian Government released a Kyoto implementation plan but so far, we have not made any real strides toward cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions – the result of burning fossil fuels. In fact, Canada is responsible for a 24% increase in emissions over our 1990 emission levels.

The first phase of the Kyoto Protocol runs out in 2012 and governments must start planning for what actions to take after that. In early December, Canada hosted the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Montreal attended by representatives from 181 countries. Building on the existing treaty, the participating countries have agreed to begin negotiating new targets of emission reduction, to review and build upon the Kyoto Protocol and to develop a 5 year plan for action and implementation. They also acknowledged that the industrialized world has an ethical, legal and political responsibility toward the world's poorest countries who are so greatly impacted by climate change. The result of this gathering was a commitment to greater reductions beyond 2012.

All links are provided on The Circle Website: www.brescia.uwo.ca/womencentre

Despite the lack of a concrete plan, the David Suzuki Foundation and Greenpeace both contend that the Montreal meeting was a success because it resulted in an international commitment that will allow for long term planning. The next steps involve more talks scheduled for May 2006 on the post 2012 phase of the Kyoto Protocol.

During the 2005/2006 Election campaign, Canada's involvement in the Kyoto Protocol was a hot item. Despite the fact that the Conservatives, the party with the weakest commitment to environmental issues were voted in, "two thirds of Canadians voted for parties that support the Kyoto Protocol," said John Bennett of Sierra Club of Canada. "Canada should continue to move forward."

Replacing Liberal Stéphane Dion as the President of the United Nations Climate Change Conference is newly appointed Environment Minister, the Honourable **Rona Ambrose**. May she be encouraged to continue fostering not only Canada's commitment, but that of all countries who have ratified the Kyoto Protocol and to further international consciousness and responsibility related to climate.

For more information about the Kyoto Protocol visit:

Greenpeace Canada: www.greenpeace.ca

The David Suzuki Foundation: www.davidsuzuki.org

Sierra Club of Canada: www.sierraclub.ca

Sierra Club's Kyoto Report Card: www.sierraclub.ca/national/kyoto/scc-kyoto-report-card-2006.pdf

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

These Women Keep The Circle Spiralling!

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On Our Shelves... *The Good Body* by Eve Ensler

Eve Ensler moved audiences with her internationally acclaimed and incredibly poignant play *The Vagina Monologues*. In *The Good Body*, Ensler is back with another thought-provoking piece that will have women thinking about the way they look at the rest of their bodies. While writing of her own insecurities, Ensler includes interviews with women of different ages, races, and ethnicities that expose the vast range of women's self-hatred or self-love for their bodies..

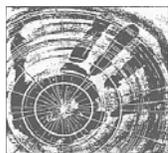
As many women would suspect, Ensler's interviews reveal the extreme pain and suffering women will endure to achieve what they believe is 'perfection'. With cosmetic surgery rising in popularity, Ensler speaks to a model whose story exposes the dangers and loss of self that occurs when a woman goes under the knife. While in India, she speaks with a middle-aged woman who is fearful of the way young women in her country are striving to become the next Miss Universe through an intense workout regiment and dieting. Encouragingly however is an African woman who speaks of her love and respect for her body because it allows her to work and play.

Through *The Good Body*, readers travel with Ensler as she journeys the world exploring the differences and similarities, the pain and the pride, with which women view their bodies.



Cathy Ryan,
a long time activist
and circle member,
died recently after
a prolonged and
arduous journey
with lupus. May
she rest peacefully
and enjoy
everlasting light.

Events at the Circle...



Open Circles...a tapestry of story, laughter, silence and the mystical experience of women gathered, where we can reflect the sacred in our lives. Last Wednesday of the month, Merici Lounge, Brescia UC, 7:30 p.m. Members: free Non-members: \$2.00
Everyone Welcome!

29 March
26 April
31 May
28 June

The Personal is Political...exploring spirituality and justice
Fire in the Soul...celebrating Beltane
Ecofeminism...cultivating harmony in the great Community of Life
Synergy in Motion's Dance Your Spirit Free

Exceptional Woman

by Marry Lukeman



Pins

\$6.00 each

"Award" an Exceptional Woman
in Your Life!

On sale at:

The Circle, Curiosities Gift Shop,
The Lotus Centre, Mandala Bookshop,
Medaille Retreat House & SACL
An International Women's Day Project

The International Women's Day Lecture of
The Sophia Series

THE HONOURABLE

FLORA MACDONALD

Activist, Politician, Feminist

WED. 8TH MARCH



7:30 pm

Free Lecture & Parking

Brescia Auditorium

All Welcome

432-8353 x28288



The future will be created
through conversation...
We need you to attend.

Circle of Friends

Thursday 13th April at 7:30 pm
Merici Lounge, Brescia UC

Your presence is essential.

Please RSVP by 6th April 2006

(519) 432-8353 x28288 or
thecirclewomenscentre@gmail.com

Please see insert for details!!

LORI LANSENS EVENT CANCELLED!

DUE TO PERSONAL REASONS, LORI LANSENS HAS CANCELLED HER EVENT HERE AT BRESCIA ON 9TH MAY.
STAY TUNED FOR INFORMATION ON A REPLACEMENT EVENT.

...and Beyond

17 Feb - 31 March - **The Luminous Shadow**, icons in stained glass of the Divine Feminine by Lynette Richards at Silcox Memorial Library, Huron College. Info: 673-4976

♀ **8 March - Inspiring Potential Potluck Dinner**, with singer-songwriter Sharon Bee, Hamilton Rd Area Seniors Centre, 525 Hamilton Rd, 4-6:30pm, bring a dish if you wish, info: 642-7630

♀ **8 March - Sherry Anderson, The Soul's Journey**, 7:30 pm, Back Student Lounge, King's UC, free. A presentation on the Diamond Approach, a present-day spiritual school.

♀ **9 March - Screening of Left Lane: on the Road with Folk Poet Alix Olson**, University Council Chambers (Rm 315), UCC, UWO, by donation, 7pm, info: usc.womens.issues@uwo.ca

17 March- Dance Your Spirit Free Workshop Series— Juna Guetter and Sabine Hildebrandt's "Synergy in Motion" combine the power of movement with life coaching tools using concepts from Nia, Yoga, Breathwork, NLP, and a variety of inspirational teachings. Various dates. Info: www.Synergy-in-motion.info or 690-1479

2 April- Rising Sun Yoga: Daily Yoga From Morning To Night w/ Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa, Lotus Centre, 10am- 4pm, \$108 (\$90 by Mar.18) incl. light lunch. Info or registration: 642-2378, lotuscentre.ca

22 & 23 April -Ubaka Hill. Concert: 22 Apr., 8pm, Aeolian Hall, \$20 in advance, \$25 at door. *Ubaka's Drumming Workshops:* Beginner, Intermediate & Advance, 22 & 23 Apr., Huron College, UWO. Info,

tkts or registration: www.beginnersmind.ca/ubaka.html

28 - 30 April- Spirituality & Justice in an Emerging Universe, sponsored by The Elderberry Connection. Reflect on sacred relationships in creation and foster a spirituality that inspires and supports action for ecological & social justice. Holy Family Retreat Centre, Oxley, ON; \$150 registration (incl. all meals, accommodation & program); Registration Deadline -April 10. Info: Sr. Helen Normandeau, helenosu@kent.net, (519) 352-5225
April 29 -WomenSpiritSong concert, 7:30 pm, Aeolian Hall, Tkts \$10.

12-13 May- Mother's Day Weekend-Treat mom to a 24 hours rest, reflection & a chance to re-fuel & re-appreciate the gift of motherhood. Friday 7:30 pm to Saturday 7:30 pm; facilitators: Suzanne Chevalier, csj and Kathleen Lichti, csj. \$60.00. Info or to pre-register: 641-1379, medaille@mnsi.net

1-4 June -Regional Social Forum, Scouts Canada site, 531 Windermere Rd. Second annual 4-day grassroots-organized Forum to provide an open meeting space for dialogue on local and global justice and peace issues-workshops, panels, conferences, presentations, testimonials, seminars, cultural and artistic performances/activities, film screenings, and other media of consciousness raising. All events & programming are FREE. Info: www.regionalsocialforum.ca or regionalsocialforum@gmail.com

Principles & Practice...



cultivating harmony in the great Community of Life

Principles and Practice is a new column dedicated to highlighting women's efforts to create change in the world. Whether it be individually or collectively, these are women dedicated to living their vision, putting their beliefs into action, their principles into practice...

Honouring Artists

by Lynette Richards

Ardath Finnbogason-Hill

Ardath is a Fibre Artist. Her 'Memory Wraps' are created for individuals, incorporating anything of value to that person. Pieces of treasured fabric, yarn, jewelry, baby blankets, wedding dresses, etc. are knitted or woven together, documenting a life's journey in a piece of commemorative wearable art...a life tapestry...

It is easy to pick out Ardath's house. All the surrounding houses have uniform grass rectangles, but Ardath's "lawn" is naturalized, wild and textural. Once inside, we sit on a sofa under an enormous fig tree whose limbs stretch out across the ceiling, twinkling with 'fairy lights'. Many framed pictures and knick knacks cover walls and surfaces. She declares that she has never used a 'decorating style' but surrounds herself with treasured objects. Each picture, sculpture, clay vessel, and photograph has a story that goes with it. She makes no effort to tell them in chronological order, but lets each story link naturally to the next....she is already weaving.

She tells me about her parents in Winnipeg who were committed to maintaining connection and correspondence with their Icelandic relatives; a commitment Ardath upholds. She tells me about the Sagas that encapsulate the histories of her ancestors that were passed down orally through the generations. She proudly points out pictures showing the traditional Icelandic black and white clothing, although Ardath is certainly not one for dressing in black and white! She and her husband lived in Trinidad for two years and fell in love with their use of colour. Trinidadians put great effort into the creation of costumes for the yearly 'Carnival', enjoying days and nights of dancing, singing and feasting in the streets - then casting off the costumes when it's over - for the event was the project, not the costume. She was comfortable in that culture that values inclusion and creativity. Ardath designed her own colourful clothes there.

Returning to London, Ontario was very difficult. It was like being pulled back into structure, where time and personal expression seem to be controlled. She joined a weaving class and found her soul responded to the colourful yarn. Her teacher, Evelyn Hunter, recognized Ardath's free spirit and gave her a corner of her own with instructions that "in art, there are no mistakes." Ardath had found her connection to colour, freedom of expression, and ultimately the means to weave stories together. Among these early projects was her first 'Memory Wrap,' the transformation of her mother's clothes and Icelandic jewelry into creations that Ardath could wear. She realized she was transforming grief into comfort, documenting a life's journey into wearable art. Since then she has made many 'Memory Wraps' for many people.

Ardath can be contacted at ardath@rogers.com or 519/657-3000...

Marry Lukeman

"I do what I love."

Marry Lukeman is a highly accomplished artist in clay. She just loves the stuff. "I especially like commissioned work because I can make exceptionally beautiful things with a purpose!" she says.

We sit in her dining room - decorated (as is the whole house) simply yet precisely with unassuming antiques, plants, her own sculptures and exquisite paintings by her late husband Edward Lukeman. As she speaks, she creates forms in the air with her hands and fingers to illustrate gathering clay in the Cypress Hills outside of Calgary. She moves easily from articulating concepts of the impermanence and permanence of clay, explaining the science of clay's metallic molecules fusing in the kiln. She praises clay's versatility, it is the very earth - compressed rock, ground and mixed with water. From this humble source comes a material that can insulate a space shuttle against the heat of the sun or create the most delicate of teacups. She remarks that the form of pottery must suit the function.

Marry also shows me her current sculpture project. Standing over 4 ft. tall and all in white, a veiled female figure emerges like a flower from furled leaves. The plant form stands upon a bowl with a curled lip to allow liquid to spill onto the square industrial base. "We must acknowledge that we are supported by nature. Industry can be a part of it, but we cannot let it dominate nature. This is what we need to go forward."

While she was young, WWII ended and thus she lived her life with a gratitude for peace and prosperity, her access to education, and freedom to travel. Marry studied art and was taught by world-renowned masters. She, her husband and children traveled widely, finding work wherever they were - England, Norway, Denmark, Germany...and making art and friends while following the circus and learning to sail their converted Norwegian fishing boat (shjota) before touring northern Europe. Although it has been 20 years since Edward Lukeman died, Marry never stopped seeking the next adventure. She traveled the Far East with a backpack for 11 months after his death.

Marry Lukeman is as versatile as the clay she adores. She chooses an unconventional life of travel, adventures, and art because that is what she loves. She knows she could have chosen a more traditional path, but like clay, 'the form must suit the function'. The form of Marry's life has led her to a place of unapologetic honesty. "Do what you love" and it will bring the best in you.

Marry can be contacted at marrylukeman@hotmail.com.

"To create one's own world in any of the arts takes courage." -Georgia O'Keeffe