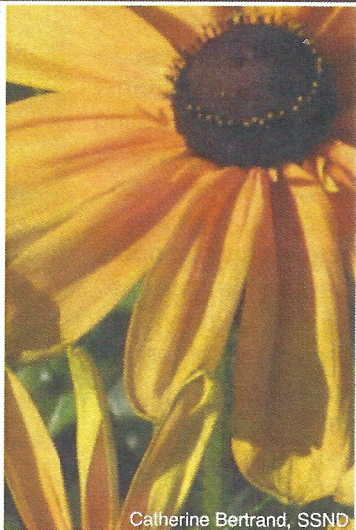


center for  
Earth Spirituality  
& Rural Ministry

FALL 2011

# EARTH ALMANAC



Catherine Bertrand, SSND



Scott Kudelka

*Earth Education*



a ministry of  
**School Sisters of Notre Dame**  
Central Pacific Province

center for  
Earth Spirituality  
& Rural Ministry

Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus  
170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN 56001  
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**STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS, CREATING HOPE**



# ORGANICALLY YOURS—

LISA COONS, CENTER COORDINATOR



**“FOR US,** this is the taste of home,” explained Florence Okot, one of our African gardeners holding up a handful of the greens she plants every year in her small community garden plot. Like all the gardeners who work small plots in the gardens, the garden is about much more than the vegetables grown. Sure, the vegetables are beautiful, the tastes exquisite. Truly this is food money can’t buy. But there’s something else going on.

Growing in the community gardens is also about plugging into a

broader food movement of eating and living locally. It’s about community food security and food safety. For many it’s about community. It’s about capturing for a season the fresh taste of home, of sharing that with children who may never have had that taste experience. It’s about growing some food to eat year-round. It’s about gaining great nutrition, good exercise, and participating in the creative process of growing life. The community gardens are so deeply a part of people’s lives that our gardeners bring visiting friends and family members to the gardens to show them how they’ve been spending their time and what they’ve had a hand at producing. And, when the gardens are at their height of production, people haul out food by the boxful! They share it with friends, neighbors, each other and the food shelf.

Our season of bounty hasn’t been limited to the gardens here at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. We’ve gotten our Canning and Food Preservation Tool

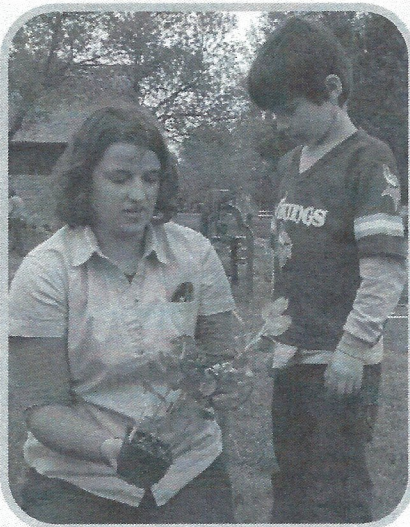
Library up and running. We took the social media plunge and have a wonderful fan page on FaceBook. We’ve hosted workshops and garden classes, shared another summer solstice celebration and marked our 15th Anniversary here on Good Counsel Hill. Speaking to classes about our work, inspiring congregations in their own green directions and educating legislators on important concerns fill our time as well. We’ve been planning for our annual fall Earth Conference all year long and will be hosting canning workshops yet this summer and early fall. We’ll kick off a new season our Green Book Club in September. Abundance surrounds us in so many ways!

As I reflect on all this abundance, I am filled with gratitude for this wonderful community resource and to those of you who connect with us and our work. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Organically yours—

**LISA** lcoons@ssndmankato.org

## INTERN UPDATE—



*OUR SUMMER INTERN, MAGGIE Freeman, reflects on the time she spent with us honing her skills.*

*Hoping to dig deeper into a community’s sustainable food production systems, most of her time was spent in the Community Gardens.*

“This internship has been nothing shy of amazing. Doing this internship provided me with so many fun and informative experiences that completely broadened my horizons. I feel that my education finally came to life in the gardens. Rather than sitting in a classroom, I was out working with kids in the Kid’s Peace Garden Class or learning the foundations of gardening in the ECHO Food Shelf plots. I began this internship with the desire to learn more about local, organic food production. Now that my internship is nearing the end, I can see that I have learned

way more than I anticipated. I will use the knowledge I have gained from all of the wonderful people of the community gardens to forever feed myself and those around me. My inner-gardener has been unleashed!”

—Maggie Freeman, intern, summer 2011





# RESPONSIBILITY DESPITE DISAPPOINTMENT—

BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN, SSND, CENTER CO-DIRECTOR



**IT SEEMS PRETTY SAFE TO SAY** that many Americans and Minnesotans are disappointed in legislative outcomes from both state and national leaders. Reasons for this disappointment vary. Some of us in the CESRM network belong to this group of disappointed citizens.

One disappointment was our failure to stop passage of some specific bills we consider destructive to the environment. In the past year at the state level, we joined with other

organizations that have sustainability of land, food and all kin as part of their mission. A number of bills we did not support were passed, such as lowering Minnesota standards for environment review or providing more money to support organic research at the University of Minnesota.

Such defeat could discourage our ongoing efforts. Yet, at the same time, we were successful in some areas, such as sustaining a bill that preserves communities right to local control. This bill allows local governments to enact temporary moratorium when unanticipated development, such as factory farms, racetracks, junkyards or Wal-Mart, etc. are proposed.

So as the old saying goes: some you win, and some you lose. This is a part of life.

However, our deeper disappointment centers not on these specific losses, but on the intense divi-

sion between parties and some legislators seeming unwillingness to compromise. We promote the great value of compromise. We want to call legislators to this. At the same time we advocate that compromise does not land totally and greatly on the backs of the economically poor, the disfranchised, and any vulnerable kin such as water, land, and air.

We also believe that in our disappointment, we can't abandon our own responsibility to continue to call legislators to the values we honor and to challenge ourselves to take an active role in the legislative process. At our next Earth Conference, Saturday, November 5, we invite you to join us in deepening our understanding of our role in organizing ways to create policy that supports our values. How fortunate are we as Americans to possess the ability and opportunity to be responsible citizens. \*

## BOOK REVIEW—

BY SCOTT KUDELKA, BOARD MEMBER



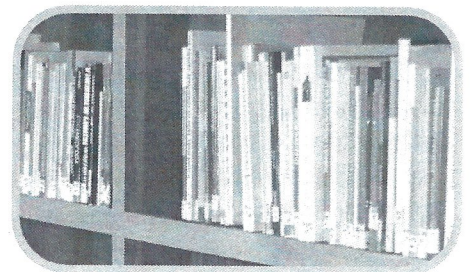
**"GRASS ROOTS: The Universe of Home"** by Paul Gruchow. Paul Gruchow grew up on the rolling prairie and wetland dominated landscape of Chippewa County in western Minnesota. Here he developed a love for the natural landscape and responsibility for protecting the environment that carried with Paul until

his tragic death. In *"Grass Roots,"* Gruchow tells his story of life and his intimate tie to a time and place that is quickly disappearing and why we should care. The book follows in the footsteps of Wendell Berry, Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold and other writers who saw the value in what the natural world has to offer and ultimately how to protect and cherish it.

I find myself going back time after time to reread different passages and to remember how I became connected to the landscape around me. Here is one passage that really touched something in me: *Again, I lived along the riverbanks where beaver built their dams; mud turtles sunned on half-submerged logs; bullheads and northern pike,*

*saugers and buffalo fish swam the murky waters; white-tailed deer came down to drink; the tracks of mink mingled in the shoreline mud with the remains of the deer-toe clams they had fished from the shallows.*

*"Grass Roots"* is a book as timeless as Leopold's *"A Sand County Almanac"* and one we all should read at least once in our lifetime.





## WHY I'M INVOLVED—



**WHEN LISA ASKED ME** to write a small article on why I am involved with The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (CESRM) and why I have chosen to be on the CESRM board, I responded with an enthusiastic YES! I knew it would be an easy article to write, as I love talking about, writing about, and con-

necting people with CESRM and all that it has to offer our community!

In the two years that I have been back in the Mankato area I have found CESRM to be somewhat of a haven for me! In my personal experience, CESRM is a place where the land is held in sacredness and utilized in service to the greater community in a sustainable manner. This is evident to me on many levels, from the use of their land for community gardens and their choice not to allow pesticides on the land, to the SSND's decision to grow some of their own food on the hill, making their own personal community more sustainable. CESRM is a place for education and lifelong learning. They offer re-skilling workshops and an amazing fall conference with excellent keynote speakers and cutting edge information. CESRM also has a diverse lending library with a wealth of information,

available to the public. It is a place where diverse members of our community can meet, grow, share and learn from one another in an open and accepting environment. We are so blessed to have a place like The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry in our greater Mankato area.

These are just a few of the reasons that I chose to accept a position on CESRM'S advisory board about a year and a half ago. Personally, it was an opportunity for me to be in direct communion and collaboration with members of my community. It has allowed me to grow, learn and be in active service to my community. The board is one of many commitments that I have chosen to make to the ever-unfolding, always evolving, family of life here on this planet!

—Deborah Bauer, board member

## SPROUTS PRE-SCHOOL GARDENERS—



### THE KID'S PEACE GARDEN

is keeping watered on these sultry summer days thanks to the Little Sprouts Preschool class on Wednesday mornings. **WE LOVE WATER!** We love to splash; we love to watch water pour out of spouts; we love to give our plants a drink.

The sprouts is a free, drop-in summer gardening class for preschoolers.

Parents and children come each Wednesday at 10 a.m. to enjoy this special garden space and develop a love for nature.

We spent early summer planting flowers, beans, and potatoes. Now we chase baby bunnies (out of our garden) and butterflies (into our garden).

We romp and dig, nibble and sniff, and watch the plants get bigger, and bigger, and BIGGER! Our bean teepee has reached its full height of seven feet. Our tomatoes are starting to ripen. We've sniffed oregano, basil, mint, and lemon balm. Finicky eaters have tried kohlrabi and asked for more. We look forward every week to seeing our friends and finding new garden treasures.

—Lynn Rosen,  
community gardener and board member

### NOTE:

An article featuring the Sprouts class was published in the Mankato Free Press on August 16, 2011

### STAFF:

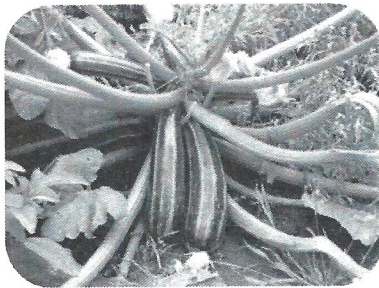
Lisa Coons, Co-Director  
Kathleen Mary Kiemen,  
SSND, Co-Director

#### Center Advisory Board:

Monika Antonelli  
Deborah Bauer  
Scott Kudelka  
Barb Lamson  
Christal Lustig  
Paul Prew  
Lynn Rozen  
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND



## SUMMER RECIPES—



### TOO MUCH ZUCCHINI?

*Zucchini make wonderful dried zucchini chips—just slice thin, dehydrate and then toss with a spice mixture of choice. Zucchini is fabulous brushed with olive oil and grilled. We eat pasta topped with sauteed zucchini and garlic all year long. (Slice extra zucchi-*

*ni into chunks now and freeze for winter use; freeze grated zucchini for bread and muffins, soups and hot dishes.) You can even slice it and substitute it for cucumbers in your favorite refrigerator pickle recipe. And when you've done it all and still have zucchini piling up in your life turn it into this delectable treat:*

### CHOCOLATE-CHERRY-ZUCCHINI BREAD

3 cups grated zucchini  
3 eggs  
1/4 cup milk  
1/4 cup melted butter  
3/4 cup cocoa  
3 1/2 cups flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
pinch of salt  
1 cup sugar  
2 tsp. vanilla  
1 cup dried cherries (or any other dried fruit you've got lying around)

Mix the dry stuff together and the wet stuff together. Combine. Pour into a greased loaf pan and bake at 375 degrees until a tester comes out clean, about 35 minutes.



### BAKED KALE CHIPS

*—This is a surprisingly delicious snack!*

Heat oven to 300°. Take one bunch of kale, remove ribs, and tear or chop into small pieces. Toss with 1–2 T. olive oil. Spread out on a baking sheet

and bake 10 minutes or until crisp. Remove from oven and sprinkle with salt. Enjoy with your favorite salty snack beverage.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS—

- ✓ **Green Book Club Community Conversation**, Thursday, September 22, 6 p.m., *Walk Out, Walk On* by Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Friese. Please RSVP attendance.
- ✓ **Fall Equinox Celebration and Potluck Supper**, Friday, September 23, 5:30–7:30 p.m. Community Gardens Red Barn.
- ✓ **Canning Workshop** – Thursday, September 29, 5:00–9:00 p.m.
- ✓ **6th Annual Earth Conference, "Claim the Commons: We're In It Together!"** Saturday, November 5.

## THANK YOU!!!

### WE HAVE MANY PEOPLE TO THANK

for their generous donations of time, talents and resources toward our work. We are grateful for how the following people and organizations have expanded and enriched our work over the past several months. Your gifts have made a difference!

Jim Ackil  
Meghan Babcock  
Becky Bates  
Deborah Bauer  
Dr. Maria Bevacqua and her  
Gender and Food class

Katie Boone  
Anika Cristwell  
Paul Eskridge  
Maggie Freeman  
Marian Fullmer  
Colin Green  
Jeanne Groebner  
Hickory Tech Volunteers  
Chantill Kahler-Royer  
Julie Keleher  
Scott Kudelka  
Barb Lamson  
Marcus Larson  
John Lee  
Patricia Linehan  
Judy Luebke  
Jeanne Lundquist  
Christal Lustig  
Kirsten Markiewicz  
Shawna Merrill  
Mara Natrakul  
Dorothy Olinger, SSND  
Savanna Peterson-Wahl  
Lynn Rozen  
Patti Ruskey  
Katie Shabrack  
Mark Sharpless  
Laura Sysouthavongsa  
St. John's Catholic Church Youth Group  
Michael Williams  
Laura Wilson  
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND  
Terry Wolf  
Drummer's Garden Center, Mankato, MN  
Green Earth Growers, Prior Lake, MN  
Habitat for Humanity Re-Store, Mankato, MN  
Sue Musser and Joyce Schmidt of Musser  
Produce, Fairmont, MN  
True Value Hardware, Mankato, MN



# CELEBRATE

## WE KNOW HOW TO CELEBRATE

### Can a ministry celebrate too much?

In a lighthearted way, someone mentioned to the CESRM staff that: "CESRM celebrates a lot!" We could acquire this reputation since on June 21 at Good Counsel Hill, numbers of us gathered to celebrate Summer Solstice, and then only a month later, on July 23, more of us gathered to celebrate CESRM's 15th Anniversary. CESRM claims a goal to celebrate Earth. Here are some pictures that tell us why and how we celebrated:

- ❖ A green growing garden greeting tour takers
- ❖ Welcoming and honoring collaborators
- ❖ Making ice cream from our Tool Library ice cream maker
- ❖ Young and elders enjoying that ice cream
- ❖ Dancing children of our Sprout and Peace garden sessions
- ❖ Musicians who gave melody with marimba and flute
- ❖ Participants giving thanks for CESRM's mission of collaborating to live, to educate, to network and to organize and advocate for sustainable values and actions that deepen relationship with all our kin

This we celebrated. This we hope to continue. Thanks to all who participate in our mission. \*

