



## La Vista Ecological Learning Center

A ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

July, 2021

### E-News and Eco-spirituality Calendar

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Monthly reflections are archived in the Blog on the web site.

## July, Backyard Holes, and the Mystery of Matter



One morning I watched Groundhog lumber along the back fence, and I became curious to learn the destination when suddenly Groundhog disappeared, entering a hole in a wooden slab that had been the floor of a shed in years gone by. I had to imagine the homey burrow underneath and how far it stretched underground. A couple days later Skunk appeared, waddling along the same route, only to disappear in the same place. Soon carpenter ants and chipmunks joined the ranks of hole diggers, creating an abundance of entrances to the underground all around the yard!

Although not enthused about some of these inhabitants, they did bring to mind a significant shift in perspective I recently encountered during retreat. The presenters challenged us to consider *transcendence* as a reality found deep within in addition to far out, above or beyond. I felt that these digging beings who love the ground had a message for me, especially during our time of ecological crisis and shifting images of the Divine.

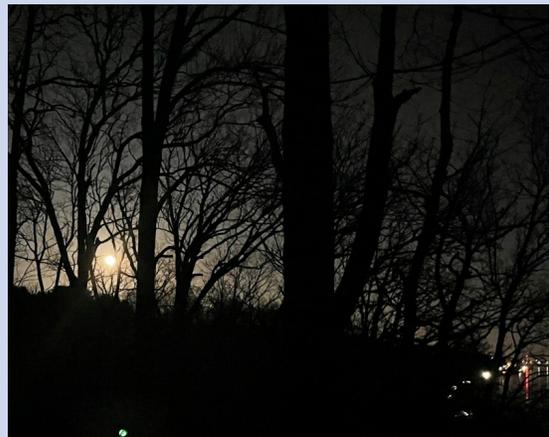
Author John Philip Newell, in his book *A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth, and the Human Soul*, joins this perspective by using church spires pointing up to God to share his thinking. He says, "But as long as we allow our spires to give the impression that God is primarily above and beyond the earth, in opposition to what is deepest in creation and in the body of the human mystery, then our spires are going to crumble." I had to recall the holes Groundhog and friends created in the yard when he called for symbols that point to the within-ness of God. He says, "We need vessels that hold the holy rather than simply pointing away to the Holy. These vessels he says, remind us that the deeper we move into the mystery of matter, the closer we come to the One from whom all things are born... The One who is beyond us is at the same time the very Ground of our being."

May all beings that burrow, dig, den, and tunnel remind us of the Ground of Being and our own share in the sacred mystery of matter. During July, sink into Being!

Photo by Sister Maxine

## July 4<sup>th</sup> and a Declaration of Celestial Rights

Years ago I attended a lecture at the St. Louis Planetarium entitled “Can the Moon Save the Earth?” In my naivete, I expected to learn that human beings’ love for the moon could have some healing effect on our planet. I guess that came from my own deep appreciation for the moon and its faithful presence throughout my life. Was I wrong! Instead I listened to a scheme to put some kind of shield on the face of the moon to beam energy for our use on Earth.



Recently, when I read about a group in Australia creating a “Declaration of the Rights of the Moon”, I had to think about their polar opposite relationship with the moon. Their declaration was created in response to a double awareness: first, that wealthy nations and corporations are developing technologies that may make it possible to live on, mine, and otherwise alter the Moon; and second, that humanity has had a devastating impact on Earth. With this declaration they seek to avoid probable destruction and change to the natural systems of the Moon. Is this crazy or is it prophetic and a natural evolution of our consciousness away from anthropocentrism and toward a much broader awareness of the inherent value and sacredness of the entire universe?

On this Independence Day, consider this declaration of celestial rights by visiting the web site: CDER – Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights. Reading their Declaration is a meditation in itself!

Photo courtesy of Ken Trzaska - Full moon and lights along the Great River Road

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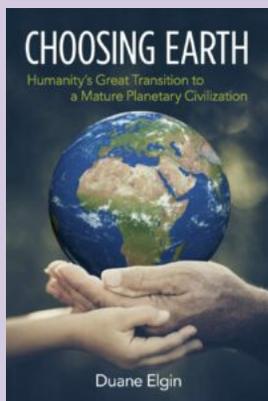
## July 13 Work Day in the Oblate Preserve

9:00 am – Noon

Please let me know if you plan to participate: [info@lavistaelc.org](mailto:info@lavistaelc.org)

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## July 31 Resource Suggestion: The Choosing Earth Project



Join groundhogs and other beings that escape summer’s heat underground by going indoors to view the documentary *Facing Adversity: Choosing Earth, Choosing Life*. Inspiring and informative, the *Choosing Earth Project* includes a documentary, a book to download, study guides, events, resources, and more. The project’s goal is to deepen an understanding of the immense challenges facing humanity **along with creative opportunities for transformation**. Undergirding the goal is an invitation to humanity to grow in conscious regard for the well-being of all life.

Explore the *Choosing Earth* website <http://www.choosingearth.org> where you will find links to the excellent documentary as well as the downloadable book *Choosing*

*Earth: Humanity's Great Transition to a Mature Planetary Civilization* by Duane Elgin. The book alone is a gem of insight into our living universe and ourselves united with the creativity in the cosmos. *Don't miss a great read/meditation!*

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## Looking Ahead

### **August 6 Online Book Discussion of *The Leak*** **7:00 – 8:30 pm**

Do you have a relative or friend who is middle school age and interested in our planet? Please invite him or her to read this month's selection, *The Leak*, by Kate Reed Petty, and then join your youngster for our online discussion.

In this graphic novel, a young female journalist discovers water pollution in her area and learns about corruption and freedom of the press in a compelling story. Register by emailing [info@lavistaelc.org](mailto:info@lavistaelc.org). I will send you the Zoom link.

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