

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Sisters of the Holy Family, P.O. Box 3248, Fremont, CA 94539

October 2011

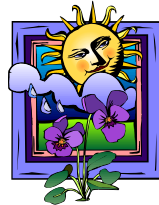


The mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is to promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace.



IN PURSUIT OF PROMISE AND HOPE

Every day our news media details the dismal declining economic situation, the increasing unemployment statistics, our rancorous and hostile political environment, the ecological woes, and warns of the possibility of space junk (a 12,000 pound NASA satellite the size of a school bus was September's update) hitting the earth. No wonder people are turning the TV and radio off and stopping the newspaper delivery! Perhaps this is the time to stop and look and listen to a brighter



note even as the daylight of October diminishes, and nature falls into hibernation. Maybe we need to hear at least **one** success story that will reveal the fallout from the pursuit of promise and hope.

...when we consider the condition of society, we realize that there are really very few who have conducted their activities with a mind to perpetuating the human race and cleansing this planet that we occupy.

Masaru Emoto, *The Hidden Messages in Water*, p. 140

I don't think I can end the violence in the world, but somebody has to try.

If nobody tries, it's never going to end.

Fall 2011 Issue **yes! magazine** (www.yesmagazine.org), an interview with W.S. Merwin, by: Sarah van Gelder , p. 14

If you look at the planet's pain and creatures' woe, you might see only despair.

If you look beneath, you may see hope woven in...

Joyce Rupp, Macrina Wiederkehr, *The Circle of Life*, p. 185



The FALL 2011 Issue of **yes! magazine**, whose mission is “to support you in building a just and sustainable world”, included an interview with the 17th poet laureate W. S. Merwin, at his modest home in the Peahi district of Maui, Hawaii, that is surrounded by a lush and vigorous rainforest. But this luxuriant landscape was not the reality in the ‘70’s when he purchased the site. Rather it was eroded soil, a few stressed trees, an eco-wasteland the result of the valley’s water supply being diverted to support a cane field inland. In the ’20’s and ’30’s the valley was plowed vertically to build a pineapple plantation; another 40 to 50 years of neglect and abuse followed the plantation’s demise, leaving the land almost beyond repair. But Merwin had an impossible dream for this place. “I wanted to have a native rainforest here,” he states, knowing how over the top that seemed. “All things that really



matter to us are impossible, you know. They say translation is impossible; sure it is. We do it because it is necessary, not because it is possible” (p. 14). Under his stewardship, he and his wife Paula transformed this wasteland through soil revitalization, the planting of over 800 species of palms, and hard labor. A conservancy easement now safeguards this land from development, ensuring that future generations will be able to say: “Oh yeah, the world is really here, still” (p. 15). In the Broadway musical production, “Man of La Mancha”, Don Quixote, the main character sings the signature song, “The Impossible Dream”. The lyrics tell of a quest to follow that star, that dream, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far, implying that the impossible dream is one way, and maybe the only way, to reach the possible.

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SOME OCTOBER FACTS

October 11, 1884 Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin Roosevelt, born New York City, New York, who accomplished the seemingly impossible.



October 24, 1945 United Nations formally established when members ratified the Charter.

Eleanor Roosevelt labored tirelessly as a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. She regarded the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted December 9, 1948 by the General Assembly, her greatest accomplishment and legacy. A modest woman who passionately pursued what she dreamed, the document remains a

cornerstone in the struggle for human rights and freedom for everyone - everywhere.

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin?

In small places, close to home - so close and small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person;

the neighborhood (one) lives in; ... the school, the factory, farm, or office....

Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.

Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home,

we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

<http://www.udhr.org/history/Biographies/bioer.htm>

OCTOBER is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

- ◆ This month of observance is meant to address the victimization of those who have been affected by household violence.
- ◆ The U. S. Department of Justice estimates that approximately 20,000 workers are threatened or attacked in the workplace every year by their partner or spouse.
- ◆ 75% of domestic violence incidents go unreported according to U. S. Department of Justice.

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence

Prepared by the Peace and Justice Committee