



Growing Green Angels

Environment Wing Newsletter



March 2016

Green Retreat 2016 The Australian BK Environment Wing met for their annual retreat, with the theme of *Living With Conscience* (29-31 January), at *The Brahma Kumaris Centre for Spiritual Learning, Illawara*. It was a small and relaxed gathering of Miriam McFarlane (Hobart), Jan Wright and Catherine Elliott (Queensland), Geoff Brooke (Victoria), Tamasin Ramsey (Vic. & NSW) Debbie Hannan, Greg Wellham & Jessica Yuille, Jennifer Forrest, Janet Sylph and Paul Cini (NSW). Charlie Hogg provided wisdom with a class on “Living with Conscience.” The retreat had a focus on the relationship between humans and the animals with a viewing of *The Animal Communicator* documentary. This documentary showed an appreciation of how much animals understand and can relate to humans at a deep and complex level. Tamasin led a session on the issues and concerns of the dairy industry. We enjoyed powerful meditation, with Greg facilitating *Yoga for the Environment*. Paul inspired with demonstrating the systems in place in the Wilton vegetable garden; sharing the secrets of the green (comfrey) fertilizer and the composing process. It was decided to continue to use the theme, *I Can Make a Difference* as a focus for future public environment programs. The logo and a segment to share your *I Can Make a Difference* stories is included in the Newsletter. Debbie handed over the role of editor of the Newsletter to Catherine. Thank you to Debbie for your efforts over many years. On Sunday morning there was a SKYPE link with Sonja Ohlsson, of Denmark, who co-ordinates the BK International Environment Initiative. Sonja shared experiences of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris. Debbie Hannan is now involved assisting the BK International Environment Initiative and will keep us informed of any plans of the BK’s attending other UN Conferences. It is yet to be determined if there will be participation in a conference in Hawaii later in the year



MAKING PEACE WITH THE EARTH

Dr Vandana Shiva in Conversation
with Paul Barclay (ABC Radio National)
April 20, 2016 @ 7.30pm

An opportunity to hear one of the world’s most prominent environmental advocates. Indian scholar, environmental activist and anti-globalization author, Dr. Vandana Shiva has dedicated her career to investigating ecological and social issues, highlighting the economic and ecological costs of corporate led globalization. She is also known as an eco-feminist who has helped redefine perceptions of women in developing countries. Dr. Shiva’s address will be complemented by the music of Tenzin Choegyal.

BK Environmental Commitment

The Brahma Kumaris Environmental Policy aims to encourage all of us throughout the organization to feel we are guardians of the earth’s resources. Living with simplicity, buying compassionately, using economically, learning continuously, sharing generously.

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I can make a Difference:

This segment is for individuals to tell their story of how they made a difference through their actions, "The Power of One." George Harris of Gold Coast has been invited to tell his story of the work he has done in India and Australia in setting up vegetable gardens in the BK Centres for our next newsletter.



Ideas to reduce plastic use:

- Buy in bulk
- Bring your own shopping bags
- Say no to straws
- Stop buying bottled water
- Bring your own thermos to the coffee shop for take away coffee
- Rethink food storage

Diary Dates



March 19: Earth Hour 8.30pm

March 21 - April 11: Golo (from Mount Abu, India) will be touring Australia speaking with a focus on "A World in Transition." Golo is a BK has a particular interest in renewable energies. Contact your local BK Centre to get further details regarding his program.

April 1-3: *Spiritual Awareness for a Sustainable World - a retreat for environmental and sustainability professionals.* BK Retreat Centre Leura. For more info contact Jessica: environment@au.brahmakumaris.org

June 5: World Environment Day

June 16 - 20: BK European Green Retreat in Lisbon, Portugal

July 29-31: Fifth BK North America Green Retreat. Peace Village, New York

Plastic Free July: the challenge is simple... Attempt to refuse single-use plastic during the month of July.

Website: www.plasticfreejuly.org

International BK Green News from Sonja & Arnold

An important focus this year is updating our organizational environment policy. We need your input. Consider what environment friendly practice at the center would make you proud of the BK's? Send your views to Arnold at:

environmentblog@brahmakumaris.org

Natural Cleaning Products

On the Australia Day holiday Sandra Nichols (member of the BK Environment Wing) ran a natural cleaning workshop at the new Five Dock premises in Sydney. She was assisted by Jenny Forrest. The participants learnt about common toxins in commercial cleaning products such as sodium lauryl sulphate, the potentially carcinogenic foaming agent, also found in many personal care products such as toothpaste and shampoo. Laundry powder and benchtop spray were made. Why not try making some yourself from the recipes below. Jenny demonstrated her steam mop, an effective way to clean all types of



floor.

Laundry powder recipe

Mix 2 parts washing soda (1 cup), 2 parts borax (1 cup) and 1 part grated soap (half cup). Add a few teaspoons of baking soda. Shake container. Use up to 1/4 cup per load.

Benchtop spray and wipe

Add 60ml eucalyptus oil and 60ml methylated spirits (evaporates easily; can be left out) to a spray bottle and then add water to make up to 500ml.

The Environment Blog on the BK Website. Rebecca Attwood from the Gold Coast Centre is co-ordinating the Environment Blog. Rebecca advised the aim is to have a new post each month with a view to increasing the posts to one each fortnight to keep the blog fresh and current. Any contributions for the Blog email to Rebecca rebecca.attwood@au.brahmakumaris.org