

ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 PEACEBUILDER NEWSLETTER
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PEACE PARKS AND TRAILS

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In these newsletters of the Rotary District Peacebuilders, we want to invite readers for contributions and ideas, suggestions and possibilities for our efforts to educate others by promoting the foundational skills for promoting peace and civility, i.e., nonviolent conflict resolution, improved communication and cooperation, successful negotiation and mediation as well as the critical and creative thinking that can help communities move through obstacles and difficulties. In this issue we focus on peace parks and trails and what may be possible in your community. Visit our blog and comment if you wish:
www.rotarypeacebuilder.com

NATURE AS A HEALING FORCE

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We are currently coping with a worldwide pandemic. Until there is a vaccine, the best way most of us can avoid becoming ill is to wear a facial covering, keep our distance (6-12 feet) from one another and “stay inside.” There is however, another beneficial and forceful activity in which we can engage that will stimulate our healing system and maintain our health. That healing force is “Nature.”

The notion that Nature can heal us is not new. Sometimes, I think there have been no new ideas since the Greeks. The great Greek physician, Hippocrates, wrote, “*Nature itself is the best physician.*” More recently in 2001, the Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network (SHEN), Carolyn Raffensperger, coined the term “Ecological medicine” and in her book, *Our Planet, Our Selves*, wrote, “*The health of Earth’s ecosystem is the foundation of all health. Human impact in the form of population pressure, resource abuse, economic self-interest, and inappropriate technologies is rapidly degrading the environment. This impact, in turn, is creating new patterns of human and ecosystem poverty and disease. The tension among ecosystem health, public health, and individual health is reaching a breaking point at the beginning of the Twenty-First Century.*”

Research today demonstrates and confirms that the healing and restorative effects of nature have a profound impact on our health and well-being. For example, there are studies that show some trees emit invisible chemicals known as “phytoncides” that reduce our bodies’ production of stress hormones like cortisol, lower blood pressure and improve one’s immunity. Another study showed that people living near urban green space reported “*less mental distress, have lower incidence of 15 diseases, including depression, anxiety, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and migraines.*”

It seems that we are beginning to recognize that Nature indeed heals body, mind and spirit. It is no wonder that for centuries, thousands of cultures and enlightened masters have always encouraged our connection with nature. For instance, Buddha left his palace at a very young

age to seek “liberation and enlightenment” in the woods. He even advised his disciples to meditate in the jungle to reach higher states of consciousness. Naturalist and zoologist, John Muir, wrote, *“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”* And again, Muir wrote, *“And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.”* Even Albert Einstein recognized the value of being in nature when he wrote, *“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”*

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that 85% of the reasons that people seek medical treatment are “directly related to stress.” In this time of a COVID-19 pandemic, a whole lot of us are “stressed to the max.” In the book, *“The Nature Principle: Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age,”* author, Richard Louv, writes, *“One of the main benefits of spending time in nature is stress reduction.”*

Perhaps, all of us should pay attention to Louv when he acknowledges, *“There is something magical about being in nature. You cannot put it in words, but you feel it deep within – it touches your spirit. Just a few minutes of being in nature makes us feel healed and restored. Nature gives us strength, drains away all negative energy and fills us to the brim with positive energy.”*

SERVING AS TRANSFORMATIONAL SITES AND SACRED SPACES

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There has never been a more urgent time than now to begin conceptualizing a Peace Park and Peacebuilder’s Trail for Fort Collins and other communities around the world. I would love to see a network of these transformational sites lighting up the planet, serving as sacred spaces for troubled individuals seeking inner peace or trying to resolve differences when in a group dynamic. Knowing that there are numerous such sister sites around the planet could help us feel more related and of similar mind and issue to those we’ve never met.

When we are at a place of inner peace, it is much easier to make peace with others in our family and community. From that calm and compassionate state, it is also easier to then see the relationship and importance between our own well-being and that of the environment we live in, both locally and at large. Hopefully all-important self-care would lead to care of the other, spilling over to care of this exquisitely beautiful world that we have been blessed with.

When the setting for these transformations is outdoors within the gentle embrace of nature, we are in a nurturing place that will be more likely to foster healing and reconciliation. There will be no walls or ceilings which can sometimes create a closed in, pressure cooker type feeling which can only exacerbate already difficult situations. It also encourages us to connect to the bigger picture – that of One Planet and our role as guardians.

Having a Peacebuilder’s Trail in association with the Peace Park would serve as a meaningful way to honor those who have positively impacted our community and the lives of others in this realm. It could serve as an inspiration to all generations, but particularly the youth who need to pave the way for a more peaceful and sustainable future.

I recall how trees opened their limbs to me in my youth, providing comfort and solace when times were rough. As a horticultural program coordinator for several years at the Gardens on Spring Creek, I could see how the benefits of working with plants actually did improve the

lives of volunteers and visitors as the mission intended. And of course as of late during our universal troubles, few would dispute the peace of mind that is provided by spending time in one's garden growing our own food while supporting nature's wildlife, our all-important partners on the planet.

The increased popularity of our parks and open spaces has never been greater than they are now. People are realizing how physically and mentally restorative and important these places are to help us not only survive but continue to thrive and deal with whatever challenges come our way.

With this in mind, may our work towards creating a Peace Park and Peacebuilder's Trail be one of our all-important legacies, contributing to opportunities for healing the wounds of the past, solving today's problems, and laying the foundation for a way forward for generations to come.

MY FAVORITE WAR: THE PIG WAR
MY FAVORITE PARK: THE SAN JUAN NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

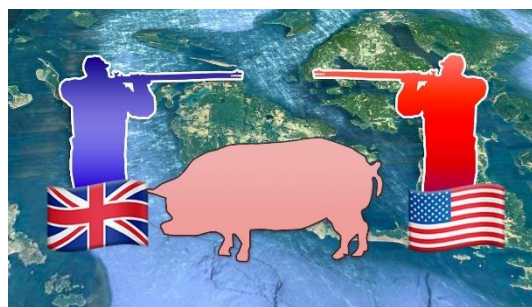
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Parks, gardens, cemeteries, war grounds, and trails have often been established to memorialize both the sacrifices of soldiers during war, the suffering of civilians and victims, and a commitment of nations to seek peaceful relationships. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) operates and maintains U.S. military cemeteries, memorials, and monuments both inside and outside the United States. In addition the U.S., Canada, and Mexico maintain several trans-boundary Parks along national borders that are public reminders of peaceful cooperation (Glacier, Klondike Gold Rush, Waterton Lakes National Parks, and Peace Arch Park between the US and Canada, and the joint Big Bend/Santa Elena Canyon areas along the Mexican border.)

Probably the most well-known burial location is the Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia which was established after the Civil War on the grounds of the estate of George Washington Parke Curtis, grandson of Martha Washington and adopted son of George Washington. The estate at that time was the former home of Robert E. Lee, Confederate General. The Gettysburg battlefield in Pennsylvania reminds us all of one of the most brutal battles of the Civil War, during which between 46,000 and 51,000 soldiers of North and South were casualties, the costliest in U.S. history.

Similarly, the Trail of Tears that winds about 2,200 miles through nine states in the South including land and water routes reminds us of the mistreatment and suffering of the Cherokee (22,000 removed, 8,000 died), Creek (19,600 removed, 3,500 died), Choctaw (12,500 removed, 4000 died), Chickasaw (4,000 removed, and 800 died), and Seminole (2,800 removed, 700 died) Native American Indian peoples as they were forcefully displaced from their southern homes by the US government.

But there is another park that lies today within the boundaries of the United States but commemorates a little-known today war standoff between the United States and Canada/United Kingdom that lasted from 1859 to 1872 (13 years) ... **The Pig War**. The dispute was over the possession of the San Juan Islands that lie in the Strait of Juan de Fuca between the State of Washington, US, and Vancouver Island, Canada.



Tensions arose due to confusion about the location of the U.S./Canada border after the Oregon Treaty of 1846 which defined the boundary along the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude. The treaty writers were not really familiar with the geography of the area, and the final treaty signed left the exact location of the boundary in the Strait undefined.

In an effort to establish possession by occupation both American and Canadian citizens occupied farms on San Juan Island and claimed ownership. On June 15, 1859, the ambiguity led to direct conflict between an American farmer and an employee of the Hudson Bay Company. A large black pig owned by a Hudson Bay employee intruded and rooted up the American farmer's potato garden. This was a repeated offense, and the furious farmer shot the pig but offered to pay damages. He offered \$10 (equivalent to \$280 in 2018), but the pig owner demanded \$100 (\$2800 in 2018 dollars). The farmer claimed this was extortionate and refused to pay, so the British authorities threatened to arrest the farmer. The American farmers called for US military protection. Escalation followed with a detachment of 66 American soldiers sent to establish a gun battery and military redoubt on the island, while the British Governor of Vancouver ordered the British navy to land marines from five British warships to displace the Americans.

British Rear Admiral Robert L. Baynes refused to engage and decided that *"two great nations in a war over a squabble about a pig"* was foolish. So, there was a standoff, and cooler heads sent for further instructions from London and Washington D.C. As a result of negotiations between U.S. General Winfield Scott and British Governor James Douglas it was agreed both sides would hold their positions until international mediation could occur. The English Camp was established on the north end of the island and the American Camp held land on the southern end of the island¹, each side limited to 100 men.

This situation lasted for over 12 years with amiable and social exchanges including sports days, combined dinners, and summer balls occurring between both camps during the "Pig" or "Potato" war. During the interim years, the United States was distracted by the Civil War, so little was resolved. Finally, in 1871 the matter was arbitrated by German Emperor Wilhelm I who appointed a commission which decided in favor of the United States. Today the Pig War is commemorated in the San Juan Island National Historical Park.² American and British flags are still ritually raised over both military camps today.

Happily, aside from the death of one pig, this dispute was a bloodless conflict. Noteworthy is that all disagreements need not result in physical conflict, not all military face-offs need to be

¹ The American camp redoubt was built under the supervision of new West Point graduate 2nd Lieutenant Henry Martyn Robert; and Robert went on to become a General in the Army of the Potomac during the American Civil War and author of Robert's Rules of Order. Today, Robert's Redoubt is considered the best-preserved fortification of its kind in the United States.

² National Park Service, San Juan Island National Historical Park <https://www.nps.gov/sajh/index.htm> and <https://www.nps.gov/sajh/learn/historyculture/the-pig-war.htm>

life-taking confrontational, and peaceful negotiations are indeed possible.

**“COMMON GROUND”
FIGURATIVELY AND LITERALLY ENGAGING PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS
LEADS TO COOPERATION**

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Wage peace, manage conflicts, and facilitate cooperation by working together on common issues and opportunities as close to the situation as possible: *Common Ground!* Seek and identify common interests to the group, avoid immovable positions, and agree on common goals and directions of action. The closer one gets to the roots of interests and opportunities, the more likely there is a chance for cooperation: *Common Ground!*

National parks have been established around the world by executive actions in the interests of leaders and conservation but have displaced persons in the quest to have places for wildlife and sustainable conservation.

Rotary helped me to study wildlife conservation in Africa, so I'll use the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park as an example of a reasonably modern and perhaps sustainable approach to protect environments and persons involved: *Common Ground!* This 35,000 kilometer-squared peace park began with a memorandum of understanding signed in 2000 enjoining conservation boundaries with political boundaries of Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Mozambique. The boundaries included existing national parks, communal lands, and private lands seeking cooperative management and use strategies. These countries discouraged interactions for immigration, tourism, and many professional uses when I first knew them in 1985. Military and police battles and human conflicts raged between the countries.

I was studying socio-economic values of wildlife on private lands in South Africa as a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholar. The timing and location of private interests was at the forefront of a movement to enhance national conservation practices and those actions contributed to the merits of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park.

Before cooperation began, friends in South Africa warned us about personal safety concerns with travel to Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Mozambique had much turmoil and many wildlife populations were reduced by military, poachers, local users, and wild land conversions to agriculture. Over time and with a common goal, greater cooperation between and within countries, fences between the parks started to come down and animals resumed old migratory routes that were blocked by earlier political boundaries: *Common Ground!*

We visited large private wildlife reserves west of and adjacent to Kruger National Park in South Africa where fences between National Park lands and private lands were taken down setting the stage for greater national and international cooperation. Society generally believes that wildlife is important to the greater good because they are part of the national heritage, they signify unique environmental components of biodiversity, and they reflect stability of natural systems.

People outside of parks do not necessarily agree that wildlife have positive benefits, because

animals cause conflicts and damage to private interests. My purpose for being in South Africa was to learn how the private sector benefitted from having wildlife on their lands and their influence on national interest lands and management: *Common Ground!*

To my chagrin, many private properties were fenced to keep animals enclosed, similar to how national parks in the area fenced animals from being problems with the local and international neighbors. The landowners that I studied could make money from having animals on their lands only if they could keep them on the property, thus fencing began to increase. Landholders sold the surplus animal production to other managers. They culled excess numbers and sold the meat in clean butcheries for public purchase. The most common use of animals was for tourism and managed hunting was used to reduce numbers, balance animals with the capabilities of the land, and to earn an income from and for management.

The phrase “if it pays it stays” seemed to be too crass of an economic paradigm for the young conservationist in me to accept, but I soon appreciated the significance of needing value for the beholder to take interest: *Common Ground!* Values need not only have economic significance, because persons do many activities out of altruism for the greater good. However, it is not prudent to expect local persons to suffer costs when other persons reap the benefits: *Common Ground!* Whether managing private lands or Peace Parks, seeking common benefits, and reducing unequal costs will more likely result in common actions: *Common Ground!*

Without common interests, conflicts result. Without common goals conflicts result. With *Common Ground*, civil actions can be waged toward peaceful coexistence.

CENTER FOR PEACE AND NATURE FOR A PEOPLE EMERGING FROM WAR

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During a trip to the Orient as part of a Kellogg National Fellowship I wanted to better understand what can be done to promote recovery out of conflict, what individuals and people could do to recover from trauma. In Japan I was able to visit the peace park in Hiroshima which had been ground zero in 1945 when the U.S. dropped the first of two atomic bombs. Announcements by U.S. military spokesmen that this was a purely military target proved false when the radioactive dust settled and there were approximately 80,000 killed and another 35,000 injured, primarily women, children and elders. This area was once the city’s busiest commercial and residential district.

Yet the U.S. generals who carried out the bombing insisted to President Truman that Hiroshima was a legitimate military target where there would be few civilian casualties. Three days after that first bomb, a second atomic bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki and killed more than 39,000. Sixteen days later Japan surrendered. For many Americans that was the justification enough given the number of lives that would be lost for the allies to storm the Japanese home island using without resorting to the atomic bomb, a weapon prohibited by the Geneva Convention of which the U.S. was a signatory.

The question remains: Could this Peace Park serve as living memorial that prompts deeper consideration of these considerations and questions, leaving the world in both a better ethical place going forward as well as a better place for preventing nuclear weapons

exchanges in the future?

The Peace Park in Hiroshima is a place to see that life could emerge from the devastation of this bombing. Trees, flowers and green lawns now feature striking statues, including a children's Peace Monument that is decorated with colorful chains of paper cranes that the young fold and then travel to Hiroshima to hang here in public.

As these children return regularly to pay homage to this site and what happened here so should those committed to a more peaceful future follow their lead. As important, I would hope that communities around the world consider setting aside spaces for reflecting on peace, ideally with trees, flowers, green grass and statues to the children adorning these spaces. Universities and colleges everywhere could—and should—find spaces for addressing issues of peacebuilding, places where the various disciplines could meet for a common reference and goal.

In our book, *147 Practical Tips for Teaching Peace and Reconciliation*, Dean Nelson, a combat veteran who now refers to himself as a “peacenik,” writes: “Although different peace symbols are used throughout the world, the meanings are typically the same, that is, the absence of war, strife and suffering, a nicer and gentler world free from fear.

Several symbols seem to have near universal appeal, e.g., the white dove with an olive branch. Others may be associated more with a particular culture; e.g., the peace crane. Helping people learn more about the origins of these symbols can lead to valuable discoveries and rich discussions” (66-67). The Buddhist practice of *Tonglen* guides us in breathing in the horrors of events like the My Lai Massacre and breathing out positive thoughts of healing and peace.

In remembering the horrors of the atom bomb that the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima, Nelson found that the origin of the white dove as a symbol of peace has its roots in the Bible and the story of Noah's Ark. The olive branch in its bill signaled the end of the flood and God's forgiveness. The peace crane has its origins in post-World War Two Japan and the story of Sadako Sasaki and the thousand paper cranes. The following description can be found on the web site for the Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park:

Visitors to Peace Memorial Park see brightly colored paper cranes everywhere. These paper cranes come originally from the ancient Japanese tradition of origami or paper folding, but today they are known as a symbol of peace. They are folded as a wish for peace in many countries around the world. This connection between paper cranes and peace can be traced back to a young girl named Sadako Sasaki, who died of leukemia ten years after the atomic bombing.

Sadako was two years old when she was exposed to the A-bomb. She had no apparent injuries and grew into a strong and healthy girl. However, nine years later in the Fall when she was in the sixth grade of elementary school (1954), she suddenly developed signs of an illness. In February the following year she was diagnosed with leukemia and was admitted to the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital. Believing that folding paper cranes would help her recover, she kept folding them to the end, but on October 25, 1955, after an eight-month struggle with the disease, she passed away.

Sadako's death triggered a campaign to build a monument to pray for world peace and the peaceful repose of the many children killed by the atomic bomb. The Children's Peace Monument that stands in Peace Park was built with funds donated from all over

Japan. Later, this story spread to the world, and now, approximately 10 million cranes are offered each year before the Children's Peace Monument. (See City of Hiroshima (n.d.). Paper cranes and the Children's Peace Monument. Retrieved from <http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/shimin/heiwa/crane.html>)

Reflective activity: Try your hand at folding a peace crane. Inspire others to get involved whenever there is a tragedy to be remembered and a call for healing and peace is needed. Breathe in these difficult memories—including what we know of war-time horrors like at My Lai during the Vietnam War or the bombing of Hiroshima during World War Two—and then write wishes for peace in the paper squares. You can easily find directions by searching various web sites. Display your cranes locally or send them to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park by using the directions they provide on their website.

Vietnam

As a Vietnam War veteran, Mike Boehm felt traumatized by the impact of that war and the My Lai Massacre, in particular. Representing the Quakers in Madison, Wisconsin, as well as their chapter of Veterans for Peace, Boehm made a commitment to return to Vietnam and help lead an effort to build a peace park at the site of that massacre where troops under the command of William Calley torched a village and then slaughtered 504 villagers—again, primarily 182 women including 17 who were pregnant, elders and 173 children that included 56 infants—as “suspected Viet Cong.” What stopped the killing was the courageous decision by Hugh Thompson, a U.S. helicopter pilot, to intervene when he recognized what was happening. Landing, Thompson and the men under his command confronted Calley and his troops.

Horrified by this events, Boehm promised himself that he would return some day and, with support from Madison, Wisconsin Quakers, help rebuild what had been destroyed, specifically schools and health clinics. In addition, Boehm also led the effort to build a Peace Park on this site, unique in this small country that had seen a dramatic growth of military hero statues once the war ended and the Americans had left. Perhaps the My Lai Peace Park could also help a process of recovery for a nation that had suffered such enormous destruction and casualties with as many as 2,000,000 civilians on both sides dying along with over 1.2 million fighters.

Peace trails and centers

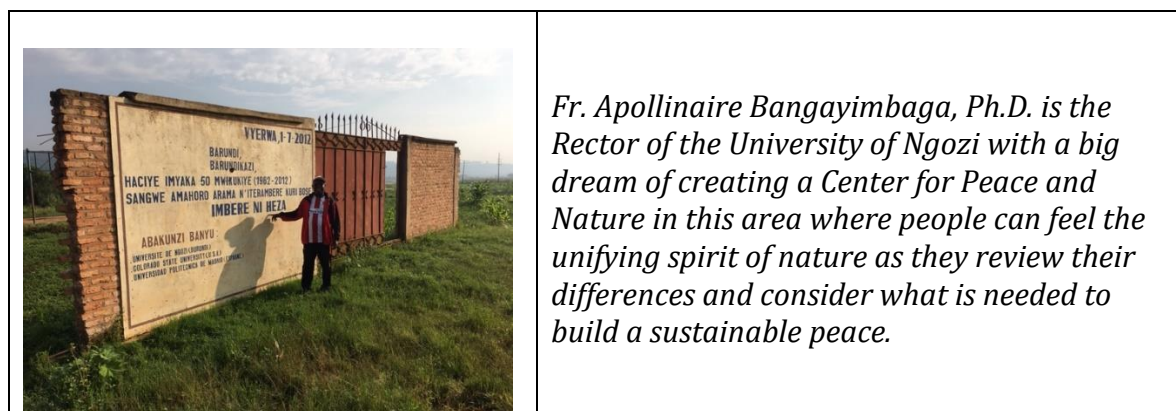
Boston, Massachusetts has a very famous “Freedom Trail” that celebrates historic moments and places that are part of the American experience during the lead up to the Revolution. In contrast to what they may have only read about previously in their textbooks, visitors—and think about the impact on the young—can deepen their understanding of events by climbing Bunker Hill and walking on to the nearby USS Constitution, “Old Ironsides,” the world’s oldest commissioned naval vessel still afloat in the Charlestown Naval Yard. People can also visit Paul Revere’s house and reflect on that very special ride to warn the Americans of the imminent British attacks on Concord and Lexington. Nearby is also the historic Old South Meeting Hall and Faneuil Hall where the great orators of the day spoke about freedom, democracy and citizen rights.

Every community could create its own “Peace Trail” where local citizens could be celebrated for their contributions to a better and more inclusive community, one that is committed to peaceful transitions, truthful commentaries, honesty and integrity in every policy and

practice. Plaques could be placed in specific areas, perhaps where other statues now stand and could use an updated context. As many museums now do, technology could be used to link to smart phones to create commentaries of those a community wants to celebrate for promoting peace.

The Corrymeela Community Center was founded in 1965 to aid individuals and groups who had suffered through violence and conflicts, stresses and losses in the deeply divided society of Northern Ireland, the legacy of an imperial conquest by British forces in the late 12th century. During the “Troubles” of the late twentieth century and after “Bloody Sunday” in 1972 when British troops fired on Catholics in Londonderry who were demonstrating for an end to second-class citizenship, historic prejudices, barriers and limitations. The Center at Corrymeela, then, became a safe, neutral space for all sides of this conflict to meet and discuss ways forward—an ideal reference point for the upcoming season of peace and goodwill.

The University of Ngozi would like to create something similar but expand the mission to include our collective needs to not only make peace with our own selves and others but with the natural world that supports all life. In truth, the very definition of sustainability calls for this kind of integrative perspective, a focus on the interconnected health of society, the environment and the economy.



Fr. Apollinaire Bangayimbaga, Ph.D. is the Rector of the University of Ngozi with a big dream of creating a Center for Peace and Nature in this area where people can feel the unifying spirit of nature as they review their differences and consider what is needed to build a sustainable peace.

A deep connection with the natural world motivates leaders and students at the University of Ngozi who want to promote new forms of cooperation through positive interdependence. In general, students must have a stake in each other’s success for the group experience to succeed. In order to complete a project, for example, everyone must contribute something of value, some part of the answer or final product.

Initial “peacekeeping” efforts often require a focus on separating combatants. Once the violence is contained, cooperative “peacemaking” efforts help to define the policies and practices needed to prevent conflicts from reigniting. Eventually, much more will be required for a deeper and broader “peacebuilding” effort where collective attention helps to improve communication and cooperation, critical and creative thinking, i.e., those historic, cultural and economic factors that have sparked conflict and violence in the past.

Inspire and learn through international service

In *Learning Life’s Lessons* (Peace Knowledge Press, 2019) I write about the Cold War when in March of 1961 many feared the inevitability of a nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. It was then that President John F. Kennedy initiated the Peace Corps through an executive order, beginning a tradition of international service that inspired thousands of

Americans to volunteer and learn more about people in the far reaches of the planet, especially those in poor and developing areas. Since its first days some 200,000 volunteers have now served in 139 countries.

Today the call of the Peace Corps continues to expand, now resonating more with older and more specialized volunteers. The appeal of this program over so many years provides another model for increasing global understanding in our increasingly interdependent world. Could a Center for Peace and Nature help inspire the return of the Peace corps to Burundi now that the threat of the violence that propelled their exit in 1993 has subsided and calm has returned?

In our book, *147 Practical Tips for Peace and Reconciliation* (2009, Atwood Publishing), we note how peace scholar and professor, Jing Lin (2006, p. 315) has advocated for a global ethic of universal love, forgiveness, and reconciliation. She provides a constructive, optimistic critique of the very purposes of education in the United States and around the world when the daily reports of violence and conflict indicate such a clear need for increased understanding and appreciation among countries and populations.

In her co-edited book, *Transforming Education for Peace*, Lin (2006) argues for a paradigm shift where the teaching of love comprises the central purpose of education. Lin maintains, "I envision our future schools will shift from a mechanical, functionalistic perspective that primarily emphasizes tests and efficiency, to a constructive, transformative paradigm where students' intellectual, moral, emotional, spiritual, and ecological abilities are developed in order to promote understanding of the world and help nurture love and respect for all human beings and nature. In all, constructing a loving world should be the central purpose of education in the twenty-first century." Pairing that ethic with service in the Peace Corps, for example, provides a context for reaching Lin's vision in a realistic manner and connects peacebuilding efforts with the threats to sustainability and the earth's limitations.

Reflective activity

Ask everyone to envision the ideal program, school, community, nation, or world where love, peace and sustainability serve as the foundation for education. Can Peace Corps serve that role? Can a Center for Peace and Nature also serve that role? Describe the curriculum, how teaching is conducted, how people are assessed on their capacities for providing needed services as well as a commitment to love, peacebuilding and sustainability, and how the policy context and rule of law shape the containers in which cultural actors engage in everyday actions.

Is it possible to develop a "Peacebuilder's Trail" in your community similar to what Boston has created with its "Freedom Trail" of historical sites that existed at the birthplace of the American Revolution there? For example, Fort Collins, Colorado, could identify local people and places who were connected to the "birthplace" of the Peace Corps here including those who served as volunteers. This trail could also celebrate business leaders who were the first to break with the traditional racist exclusion of non-whites, i.e., "No Dogs or Mexicans Allowed" was a sign that was often hung out at a store's entrance.

ECOLOGICAL MEDICINE

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Last week, I wrote about the healing force of connecting with nature and introduced the concept of “ecological medicine.” I received many inquiries about what ecological medicine meant. Today, I want to share some of the concepts and values that are integrated in the field of ecological medicine.

Naturalist, John Muir wrote, “The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.” He was ahead of his time. In the October, 2002 issue of “*The Networker*” journal (Vol. 7 No. 4) you can find “*The Case for Ecological Medicine.*” Within this essay you will read, “*Ecological Medicine is a new field of inquiry and action to reconcile the care and health of ecosystems, populations, communities, and individuals. The health of Earth's ecosystem is the foundation of all health.*”

That essay goes on to share the following: “*Ecological Medicine integrates the following concepts and values:*”

- *Interdependence. Each of us is deeply connected with Earth's ecosystems; each of our lives is only a moment in the grand scale of time. Ultimately, we all depend on the health of the global community and of Earth's biosphere for our own health and happiness. Individuals cannot live healthy or happy lives in poisoned ecosystems and unhealthy communities. By the same token, healthy communities and biological systems depend on human restraint and responsibility in technologies, population, production, and consumption.*
- *Resilience. Health in humans and ecosystems is not a steady state but a dynamic one marked by resilience. Both medicine and ecosystem science and management should focus on promoting and restoring the innate ability of biological systems to protect themselves, recover, and heal. Systems that draw upon or mimic the elegance, economies, and resilience of nature offer promising paths for health care research and development.*
- *"First, do no harm." Health care should not undermine public health or the environment. This precautionary principle should be applied to decisions affecting the ecosystem, populations, communities, and individuals.*
- *Appropriateness. "Medicine," in its Greek origins, means "appropriate measures." The goal is to achieve maximal health with minimal intervention, promoting good health that is appropriate to an individual's stage of life without overburdening Earth's life-sustaining processes.*
- *Diversity. Health is served by diverse approaches, including many traditional healing systems, local adaptations, and indigenous science around the world. Ecological Medicine encourages freedom of medical choice, guided by informed consent and compassionate practice.*
- *Cooperation. In order to gain knowledge and improve practices, patients should be partners with practitioners, and medical professionals should cooperate with ecologists and other students of the natural world. Health care organizations should be managed with the active participation of the communities they serve, while communities must learn to integrate their welfare with that of their regional ecosystems.*
- *Reconciliation. Individual health care services should be economically sustainable, equitable, modest in scale, of high quality, noncommercial, and readily available to all. Societies should build and maintain infrastructures that assure all citizens the capability to meet basic needs such as health, nutrition, family planning, shelter, and meaningful work while minimizing harm to the Earth. Societies should increasingly devote their*

material and creative resources to policies and projects that restore and maintain the health of biological and human neighborhoods. All efforts to improve human welfare must be conducted within a cooperative framework established by the health of the Earth.”

Why do I think the above essay is so important? I agree that the foundation of all our health and well-being is the health and balance of all the natural ecosystems of our planet. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Today, instead of conflicting with one another, all healing disciplines and movements of public health, ecology, conventional medicine, complementary and alternative medicines, conservation medicine, conservation biology, and campaigns such as “Health Care Without Harm” have sought to address any conflicts between your individual health, public health, and ecosystem health.

As you take full responsibility for creating a lifestyle of maximum health and well being, I hope you find this column useful.

PRIORITIES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

See the RI website: <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/our-priorities>
If you would you like to respond to one of the pieces in this newsletter, check out our blog www.rotarypeacebuilder.com and join the conversation! If you would like to contribute to a future newsletter, visit www.rotarypeacebuilder.com/submit/. You can find some of our past issues at the Rotary District 5440 website: <https://www.rotary5440.org/sitepage/peace-building-newsletters>. Future issues may explore the following: JANUARY (A New Year with New Possibilities; FEBRUARY—Transforming Conflict. If you have ideas for future topics, please send them to any of our writers.