



La Vista Ecological Learning Center

A ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

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E-News and Eco-spirituality Calendar

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

February

A Magical Life



In early January I heard of the death of a Sister of St. Joseph who entertained old and young alike during her life as the magician *Sister Leprechaun*. Because she was a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, the Broken Wand Ceremony was performed at her funeral. Through tears, another member magician broke Sister's wooden wand and placed it in her casket. He said that without her, the wand had lost its magic.

The image of that broken wand touched me deeply and spoke volumes about our present reality on our rare and precious planet. It seems there is no magic in a world where mountain tops are removed, forests are clear-cut, Native American sacred sites are lost to profit, oceans are choked with plastic, and human beings are denied justice. The problem lies within us when we have died to the miracle and magic of a living Earth and Universe.

In contrast, in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer highlights some magic of our world: *Light is turned to sugar. Salamanders find their way to ancestral ponds following magnetic lines radiating from the earth. The saliva of grazing buffalo causes the grass to grow taller. Tobacco seeds germinate when they smell smoke. Microbes in industrial waste can destroy mercury.* (Kimmerer, 345) How my imagination is sparked and my love for Earth ignited when I read such descriptions. This helps me know I live a magical life!

In another book Kimmerer reflects: *With sophisticated technology, we strive to see what is beyond us, but are often blind to the myriad sparkling facets that lie so close at hand. We think we're seeing when we've only scratched the surface. ...Has the power of our devices led us to distrust our unaided eyes? Or have we become dismissive of what takes no technology but only time and patience to perceive? Attentiveness alone can rival the most powerful magnifying lens.* (Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses)

Magic calls an audience to attentiveness just as our living planet evokes attentiveness – the kind that is also prayer, the kind that takes time and patience to develop. May we be alive to the wonders through which we walk every day of our magical lives. And may we be grateful! Photo: Thanks to Lora Ninova on Unsplash

February 2 Groundhog Day/World Wetlands Day

Some years ago when I journaled in the evening, I decided to name each day as a way to honor and remember it. Reading the names for today on my calendar called this practice to mind. I was also reminded of this simple spiritual practice when I found the following lines by Mary Jean Irion in my inbox, sent by Gratefulness.org:

WEDNESDAY
GROUNDHOG DAY
WORLD WETLANDS DAY
Legend says if the groundhog sees its shadow, we'll have six more weeks of winter. No shadow means an early spring.
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Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, savor you, bless you before you depart. Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.

I am grateful to the author for this very touching insight – the preciousness of this day – any old day, every day, including Groundhog Day. Not only that, but I love that she seems to have a relationship with day, so much so that she speaks to it. She is intimate with her day. Since reading her original words, I have used them to begin my day, and I find it *grounding* as well as

challenging.

A concluding thought from another author, Maya Angelou: *This is a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before!* Photo: Sister Maxine

February 8 Workday in Oblates' Preserve
9:30 am - Noon
 After missing two workdays because of Covid concerns and freezing weather, we are hoping to make this one happen! If you prefer working without perspiring, I think this is the day for you. Thanks for letting me know if you plan on participating: info@lavistaelc.org

February 14 Valentine's Day the Earth Way

Earthday.org offers great tips and free downloadable valentines to send an eco-love message this year. Suggested actions include giving Fair Trade chocolate, native plants, and/or cooking a plant-based dinner. If you prefer sending a note, their thirty cards are cute and corny with great graphics. Some messages: *Our love won't break down but food scraps will; I can't bottle up my feelings anymore (Say no to plastic pollution; say yes to love); My love for you is renewable; and Roses are red. Violets are blue. Let's restore our Earth so I can plan my future with you.* Visit <https://www.earthday.org/valentines-day/> and join the fun!

February 16 Celebrate Full Sap Moon

In this bioregion, and maybe in yours, during the first week of February maple sap flows freely due to freezing nights and thawing days. Consequently, Native peoples named this full moon *Sap Moon*. I learned this from the book *Full Moon Feast* by Jessica Prentice in which she offers readers a wealth of history, lore, and recipes related to each full moon.

My favorite part of this particular entry is in the last paragraph where the author calls us to give thanks for sap *"which is to plants what blood is to animals and water is to earth – that liquid movement of life, growth and return. May we all be blessed with the sweetness of life..."*

To honor the magic of life on this special day on our sweet and precious planet, you might enjoy a Cape May Sundae: Vanilla ice cream topped with maple syrup and walnuts. YUM!

Photo: Sister Maxine



