

Winter 2014



The Merry Leaflet

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College

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Learning to Lead at Merry Lea

“He’s a born leader. She’s a take-charge kind of person.” We often hear people say these kinds of things and assume that leadership is a personality trait one carries from the cradle—or lacks.

According to Merry Lea’s executive director Luke Gascho, that is not the case: leadership can be taught. “We have preconceived notions of what it means to be a leader, and sometimes this is a Westernized view of an aggressive, dominating personality,” he says. “I feel that everyone is an influencer, whether they realize it or not, and we can all become more effective at using that influence well.”

Leadership and Administration for Environmental Education is one of the six courses taught in Merry Lea’s graduate program in environmental education. Effective leadership is also one of the outcomes expected of students in the undergraduate Sustainability Semester in Residence.

One of the benefits of both educational programs is that they are embedded in an operating nature center. Students encounter the people who fill various roles and the issues they work with simply by being in the same building, joining staff lunches or running into staff members in the hallway. They get a bird’s eye view of the culture that makes Merry Lea tick.

For the graduate students, this is helpful experience to draw on when they are asked to develop and direct an imaginary nature center in the leadership course they take with Gascho. The survey course is designed to give students a little exposure to the many facets of being an effective leader, so assignments include both the visionary and the practical. Students write a philosophy of leadership, a mission statement and a strategic plan. They also prepare budgets and job descriptions, give some thought to

buildings and fundraising and practice communication skills related to their role. The project culminates in a final presentation about their nature center for the class and Merry Lea staff members.

This year’s cohort came up with an unusually varied set of environmental centers, most of them located in urban areas. Here’s what happens when people “get to work and start daydreaming,” as one student described the assignment.

Boston Families United with Nature

Lisa Myers, who hails from Boston, Mass., envisioned an urban nature center in the heart of her home city’s financial district. Interestingly, Boston Families United with Nature (B-Fun) owns no land.

“I couldn’t afford any land!” Myers says. “Besides, I love the green space already available in Boston.” This city

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Dressed for Success

Merry Lea’s 2014 MAEE cohort takes a stab at “executive director garb” with the help of ties from staff member Paul Steury’s closet.

They wore the festive ties for the final presentations they made on the environmental centers they designed during their leadership course.

Left to right: Caitlin Lorenc, Beulah, Mich., Abbey Bradley, Baltimore, Md., Lisa Myers, Boston, Mass., Jane Litwiller, Goshen, Ind., Sara Stanislawski, Plymouth, Mich., and Allison Broomhall, Ludlow Falls, Ohio.





Director's Desk

Leadership Meets Ecology

by Luke Gascho

Little did I know the leadership transformations that I would experience when I came to Merry Lea as the executive director almost 17 years ago! I had over 20 years of experience as a leader

and administrator in K-12 education. I knew how to lead effectively in the formal education setting of a school. What did I know about leading a center that focused on informal education? Not a lot! I believed I had gifts and experiences to offer that could be helpful to Merry Lea, but I didn't realize how Merry Lea would influence me.

Initially, time slowed to a crawl relative to the fast-paced school setting with teachers, students and parents seeking my time. The Merry Lea team members already knew what they were doing, so they didn't really need my input and supervision. The first several years provided a setting for renewal, retooling and refocusing. I had time to explore the landscape of Merry Lea, both physically and historically. Gradually I found a transformation happening within my being—and my leadership—that was rejuvenating. I realized the central values, practices and foci of Merry Lea matched my inner core in ways that I could not have predicted.

A new growth area for me was gaining insight into the meaning and significance of place. Working at Merry Lea, learning from team members and reading authors such as Benjamin Redekopp and Simon Western have all stimulated my understanding of the value of rootedness and place. I now realize afresh how other places in my life—northern Minnesota, Grenada and the Laurel Highlands of western Pennsylvania—have also influenced the development of my inner core.

I was energized by what my immersion in Merry Lea's landscapes taught me about planning and outcomes. The learning came from ecology itself. A new leadership paradigm developed and aided my thinking about change as I watched restoration projects on various parts of the Merry Lea property. Time and again, I would hear our

land manager respond to the question, "When will this restoration look the way you hope it will?"

"Long after we're dead," he would reply.

The definition of ecological change and the time it takes a plan to become reality are both different from what the typical Western model of leadership expects. Patience is critical. So is paying attention to sequencing and the web of relationships involved. The healthiest growth in an ecological system—and in an organization—is when all the parts and players are able to holistically find their niche.

Ecological leadership is a new and emerging field with a growing body of literature. I have been blessed to learn about this concept in a hands-on and experiential setting. It has also been rewarding for me to teach multiple cohorts of graduate students about leadership in this setting. When we designed the master's program, we believed that having formal and informal training in leadership was an important objective. What a delight to see the students reflect on leadership from a Merry Lea perspective—and to use their imagination regarding places where their leadership abilities will be used!

Merry Lea is an outstanding setting for observing the beauty of nature, learning how ecology works and experiencing how leadership functions. The intertwining of these three activities creates a wonderful incubator for developing a new way to understand leadership. I believe that ecological leadership is contributing a new leadership spirit that will serve us all well as we seek healthy and hopeful responses to the issues of our times. Ω

Recommended Reading:

Redekopp, Benjamin. *Leadership for Sustainability*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.

Simon Western, "What is Eco-Leadership?"
<http://www.simonwestern.com>.



Merry Lea was created with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy and through the generosity of Lee A. and Mary Jane Rieth. It is operated by Goshen College. The center provides a comprehensive program of environmental education and recreation.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Janie Beck Kreider, Associate Coordinator of Public Pr.
Luke A. Gascho, Executive Director
Kerry Goodrich, Property Supervisor
Carol Good-Elliott, Environmental Science Educator
Dale Hess, Director of Collegiate Programs
Jane Litwiller, Environmental Educator/Maintenance
Bill F. Minter, Director of Land Management

Jennifer Halteman Schrock, Coordinator of Public Programs
Jonathon Schramm, Assistant Professor, SEED
Ryan Sensenig, Director of Environmental Science Program at
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Paul Steury, K-12 Education Coordinator
Maria Tice, Admin. Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator
Lisa Zinn, Assistant Professor, SEED
Jon Zirkle, Farm Manager

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The *Merry Leaflet*, published in spring, summer, fall and winter, provides news about programs and developments at Merry Lea. Jennifer Halteman Schrock is its editor and the author of articles without bylines. Look online at www.goshen.edu/merrylea/latest for more news.

Leadership *continued from page 1*

is home to an inviting string of parks known as the Emerald Necklace. The parks were designed by the renowned landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmstead and remain connected by pathways and waterways. Together, they cover 1100 acres, which makes them almost as large as Merry Lea.

Myers' staff utilizes whatever outdoor spaces are available, especially those accessible by public transportation. One day, they might be at a school creating a rain garden. Another day, they might take a Big Brothers/Big Sisters group camping or join with other environmental groups to clean up a neighborhood vacant lot.

"I was lucky enough to have been taken out of the city to places like New Hampshire and Maine when I was young," Myers said. Her nature center makes some of those experiences accessible to people who might not have the opportunity to travel.



Rosie's Garden

Jane Litwiller, Goshen, Ind., observed that while women are breadwinners in over 50% of American homes, not many of them work within the green sector of the economy. Her environmental center helps women get the training they need to secure good wages in fields such as engineering, alternative energy, biomass fuels or retrofitting. In addition to providing job training, Rosie's Garden also offers supplemental training in home repair, family planning, home economics and financial planning. Women can manage their stress with a visit to the on-site counselor, a walk on the trails or a stay in the lodge.

Litwiller named her center Rosie's Garden after Rosie the Riveter, a nickname given to the women who replaced male workers in factories during World War II. She located the center in Muskegon, Mich., a blue-collar port along Lake Michigan.

Charm City Outdoors

Abbey Bradley knows that her home city of Baltimore, Md., scores a 4 out of 100 on the crime index and contains two of the worst neighborhoods in the country. But she also has faith in the healing power of nature. Bradley's

plan for ravaged south Baltimore is called Charm City Outdoors. Her answer to crime is to connect impoverished communities to the natural world and join them in resisting environmental injustice.

Bradley's imaginary nature center already has a real world problem: a company is planning to build what would be the largest trash incinerator in the country in Curtis Bay, a struggling neighborhood with the worst air quality in Baltimore. Charm City Outdoors is out with the local high school students, protesting against asthma and other ills the incinerator would bring.

When they're not planning environmental justice advocacy workshops, Bradley's staff is leading adventure education field trips: hiking, rock climbing, canoeing and camping in the Appalachian Mountains or along the Chesapeake Bay. They also do environmental education.

Bradley prepared the logo on this page for an informational brochure she drafted about Charm City.

Other students dreamed of maple sugaring, an urban farm with the acronym, DUNG, and an environmental center stocked with "wildlife ambassadors." Ω

Issues Course Uncovers Causes Worthy of Leadership

While Merry Lea's graduate students are honing their leadership skills, they're also taking Environmental Issues and History with Paul Steury. Each student researches a current issue and practices communicating their message in a variety of venues.

After her mother died, Lisa Myers decided to give some thought to burial practices. Every year, cemeteries across the U.S. bury over 1.7 million tons of steel, copper, bronze and concrete. These are all materials that need to be mined and/or have high carbon footprints.

During one of Myers' required presentations, she invited Jan Ostland of Green Legacy Caskets, Goshen, Ind., to come and introduce their alternative to ornate metal caskets. Ω



Above, MAEE student Lisa Myers tries on one of Green Legacy's simple pine coffins as part of her research on green burials.

See another issue, page 7

Brutal Winter has a Bright Side at Merry Lea



While parents lamented the challenges of finding childcare for frequent school closings and homeowners steeled themselves before looking at heating bills, Merry Lea's staff celebrated the best broomball season in memory and its very first Winter Olympic Games.

Broomball is an informal version of ice hockey, played with brooms and a rubber ball. Players wear shoes, so slipping and sliding is part of the fun. This enables the athletic and the athletically challenged to play together on an equal footing, so to speak.

Broomball became Merry Lea's official sport when staff member Lisa Zinn arrived in 2003. Zinn had

previously lived in upstate New York and northern Michigan and brought her passion for broomball south with her. Most years, the staff is lucky to catch two or three broomball games in between winter thaws. This year, the Kesling Wetland has been frozen since mid-December. This resulted in lunchtime games any day players could squeeze them in around work demands.



Not Your Average Office Party

Twice a year, Merry Lea staff members gather with their families for a themed meal and entertainment. This year's staff party fell

during the Olympics, which provided a ready theme. The potluck meal featured foods in the colors of the five Olympic rings and the festivities included two sporting events: tobogganing and curling.



Captions, top left to bottom right

1. **Olympic teams** made their own flags for the occasion, while the inventive Lisa Zinn, center, created an Olympic banner appropriate to the local context. The circle in the lower right corner is the curling target, constructed from cattail pieces frozen into the ice. "I was trying to come up with a biodegradable target," Zinn explained.

2. **Merry Lea staffers** Tom Hartzell and Jon Zirkle receive last minute advice as they prepare to launch their homemade toboggan from the top of a picnic table.

3. **Erich Schramm**, son of staff member Jonathon Schramm, heaves a curling stone. The Kesling Wetland version of curling had a level of suspense not found in the professional sport, as the homemade curling stones proved fragile. Zinn made them by filling balloons with water and freezing them. Some were not completely frozen, and all were prone to shatter – or splatter.

4. **Peter Wise**, a sophomore at Goshen College, guards his goal during a broomball game involving visiting Goshen College students.

5. **Lisa Zinn** gains control of the ball in the same spirited game.

6. **Skiing** was Merry Lea's original winter sport. Throughout the 1980s, harder winters allowed Merry Lea to run a weekend cross-country skiing program. Volunteer hosts spent the weekend and worked with staff to rent skis to guests. The program was terminated when snow cover became too unpredictable to make it worthwhile, but community members still remark about their memories of the ski program. Judging from tracks in the snow, skiers and snow shoers frequented Merry Lea's trails this year



Students Link Peacemaking and Environmental Education

by Janie Beck Kreider

Partly because Goshen College is connected to a peace church tradition, the Masters of Environmental Education students at Merry Lea participate in a Faith, Peacemaking and the Environment course. In this course, students spend time discussing why environmental education is an important way to work at peacemaking in the world.

Faith, Peacemaking and the Environment is a readings-based course that aims to introduce students to the inevitable diversity of people they will work with in their careers as environmental educators. This course helps construct a framework for better understanding and openness toward people of various faiths, philosophies and worldviews and encourages finding common ground in order to solve shared environmental problems. It also encourages students to think through their own biases and perspectives.

The one-credit hour course provides brief glimpses of a variety of conflicts around the world, community problems closer to home, and the complicated environmental and religious dynamics at play in these conflicts. The following is an interview with graduate students Allison Broomhall, Caitlin Lorenc, Lisa Myers and Sara Stanislawski about their experience in the course. Abbey Bradley was unable to be present.

What are the key things you learned in this course?

Caitlin: Your values, whether they are faith-based or not, influence how you do environmental work and why you do it. If you didn't think the connections between humans and the natural world were important, then you wouldn't be doing this kind of work.

Lisa: I began to see how peacemaking and environmental problems are interwoven. How many conflicts in the world are really related to environmental issues when you get

down to it: oil, water, food, everything. Connecting peacemaking and the environment is pretty interesting. I hadn't thought of it in a broader sense until this program and this school. It makes sense that these things should be integrated because so many conflicts have an environmental nexus.

Allison: I was struck by the fact that we're not addressing violence unless we address the underlying causes of conflict. Violence distracts us from addressing the environmental aspects of the issue. If we could focus on the real root causes and work together, it would help solve violent conflict and problems around the world.

What does peacemaking have to do with environmental education?

Sara: My mind was always focused on the science aspect of environmental education. As I learn

how to connect with students, understanding who they are as people and where they are coming from is becoming more important to me. We can integrate these interdisciplinary aspects of education at the same time we are teaching science.

Caitlin: Environmental justice is the most obvious intersection with our work. I would also like to know more about some of the religions we talked about, and the role they play in peacemaking.

Lisa: Environmental issues are where we can find common ground. Everyone needs clean water; everyone wants to eat. Think about how much you value a healthy environment and how important it has been to have opportunities to connect with nature. For me, a lot of the value of nature has been the peace it brings to me. I didn't think about it as peacemaking until this class. Ω



This Could Be You: New Volunteer Opportunities at Merry Lea

Enjoy growing things? The Merry Lea Sustainable Farm is ready to receive volunteer help. Tasks would vary depending on when volunteers are available. They could include anything from animal care to weeding, watering, transplanting or harvesting plants. Above, Farm Manager Jon Zirkle and Dr. Dale Hess, director of the Agroecology Summer Intensive, work with soil blocks of lettuce in the greenhouse. Contact: zirkle@goshen.edu for more information.

Indiana's Coal Ash Conundrum

by Sara Stanislawski

Indiana has long been one of the nation's leading states in terms of coal combustions for electrical generation. The cheap price and sheer abundance of coal make it hard to consider other forms of electric generation. But what happens to the coal once it has been burned? The by-product of coal combustion is called coal ash. Coal ash comes in various forms and is disposed of through a number of different processes. While some proponents argue that coal ash can be recycled, many cite the more detrimental impacts on the environment and health.

Coal ash comes in three forms: fly ash, bottom ash and boiler slag. Fly ash is a powdery, non-combustible inorganic matter that is carried up with hot flue gases and trapped by stack filters during the combustion process. Some of the fly ash is released into the air, but due to the increased use and effectiveness of stack filtration, scrubbers and the like, this may be as little as one percent of it. Bottom ash is formed in coal furnaces and is an agglomerate of ash particles that are too large or dense to be carried in flue gases. Boiler slag is produced when ash melts under intense heat and collects at the bottom of the boiler in exhaust stack filters. While some of this coal ash is destined for recycling

projects, much of it will end up in landfills or ponds.

Storage of coal ash in landfills and ponds is poorly regulated at the federal and state levels. Although coal ash contains numerous toxic heavy metals, it is not considered to be hazardous waste, leaving possibilities for disposal and recycling abundant. Indiana state law does not require ponds or landfills to have composite liners to prevent leeching into ground water. This means they are less regulated than a trash landfill. Facilities are not required to monitor ground water at sites with landfills or ponds, nor are they required to establish these disposal sites with regard to the water table. Currently, the state fails to require that coal ash dams be designed by professional engineers, nor that they be inspected or have emergency response plans in place. The lack of regulation regarding disposal allows for the re-use of coal ash in various projects, which many argue is better than disposal into landfills or ponds.

The most common recycling of coal ash is in cement while other uses include mine backfilling, road base and construction, soil stabilization, wallboards and roofing tiles or shingles. While some oppose recycling coal ash due to the possibility of leeching heavy

metals, many proponents say that it is economically and environmentally friendly. For instance, making cement using fly ash requires less water than traditional processes use. Boiler slag used for grit blasting is silica free, preventing the health risk of silicosis. The residue from desulfurization of flue gas can be used in wallboards, avoiding the need to mine for gypsum.

Coal ash that is not recycled can contribute to air and water pollution, but water pollution is the most common problem in Indiana. Heavy metals such as arsenic, mercury and boron have leaked into aquifers and groundwater systems leaving some municipalities without water. These chemicals can increase the chances of cancer, organ disease and respiratory illness to name a few.

One afflicted location is the town of Pines, Ind., just west of Michigan City. Residents with wells are still drinking bottled water a dozen years after the problem with coal ash was discovered at the local landfill.

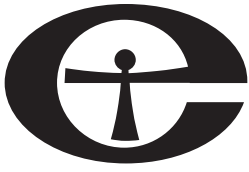
Speak with your representative to establish safeguards and regulation to help protect our communities and future Hoosiers. Ω

Sara Stanislawski Plymouth, Mich., is a student in Merry Lea's MAEE program. She researched coal ash for a course on environmental issues.

Merry Lea's Rieth Village

owes part of its LEED® rating to coal ash. Two of the 55 points that earned Rieth Village a platinum rating came from recycled content, and that included products from power plants. Recycled fly ash was added to the concrete in the buildings' foundation to serve as a hardening agent. This makes the concrete stronger, more durable and less permeable. It also reduces the carbon footprint of the concrete. The synthetic gypsum in the wallboard is a waste product from a power plant as well.





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of Goshen College

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“Where Earth and People Meet”

Upcoming Public Programs at Merry Lea

Spring Birding Challenge

March 1 to May 31, 2014

Form a team and see how many species you can spot in three months. It's a great way to learn your birds and get outdoors this spring. *\$10 per team*

Friends of Merry Dinner

POSTPONED from March 22 to May

Meet at the Farmstead Barn

The Merry Lea Sustainable Farm is the theme for 2014. Tour the permaculture garden, greenhouse, orchards, nut orchards and kitchen garden. Learn about agroecology and agroforestry from Dr. Dale Hess and Jon Zirkle, pictured on page 6. Date pending; check our website. *Free to Friends; others pay \$15 or \$25 per couple.*

Merry Lea Sustainable Farm Open House

Saturday, April 5, 2 to 6 p.m. at Rieth Village

Another chance to learn about the Merry Lea Sustainable Farm, especially for prospective students and volunteers. *No charge.*

Nature and the Arts: Seeking Signs of Spring

Friday, April 4, 7 p.m., through Saturday, April 6, 8 p.m.

Meet at the Farmstead Barn; lodging at Rieth Village

Participants can choose to work on photography, creative

writing or watercolor painting and printmaking. See our website to meet the instructors. *\$95 includes lodging at Merry Lea's Rieth Village, three meals and instruction.*

Ecology of the New Testament

Thursday, March 20, 7 p.m., Newcomer Center 17 at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

Did Jesus have anything to say about the earth? This is a lecture and discussion with Dr. Mark Bredin, a New Testament scholar and author of *The Ecology of the New Testament*. *No charge.*

NatureFest

Friday, May 9, 6 p.m. to Saturday, May 10, 2 p.m.

Farmstead Site

Family camping, S'Mores, canoeing, hiking and other nature activities make this a favorite for all ages. *Kids pay \$5; adults pay \$5 to \$15 depending on length of stay.*

Local Midwest Birding Expedition

Friday, April 25 to Sunday, April 27 at Merry Lea

This year's birders will roost at Merry Lea instead of taking wing for distant parts. Explore Merry Lea's hidden secrets, try your hand at bird banding and visit other local birding hot spots like Eagle Marsh in Fort Wayne. *\$225 includes lodging at Rieth Village, guiding and five meals.*