

# THIS WINTER'S ECOLOGY EFFORTS

[SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD]

WINTER 2012

ISSUE 2

## SMALL WINTER ENDEAVORS

...realizing that every little bit helps



Have you thought of the ecological winter opportunities available to you in the climate where you live? Any time of year has its own possibilities so I invite you to read check out the links mentioned in the

following short articles to give you new ideas about this.

.....Mary Lou Schmersal (editor)

### Sharings from our Sisters

## WORKING TO PRESERVE NATURAL HABITATS IN MICHIGAN

Marie works with MNA in stewardship of nature

Sister Marie Kopin is a volunteer 'Co-Steward' of the *Alta Warren Parsons Memorial Nature Sanctuary* in Clare County, Michigan, near Farwell.

<http://www.michigannature.org/home/sancts/alta/alta.shtml>

It is owned and protected by the Michigan Nature Association (MNA), which has just celebrated it's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of existence in preserving vital types of plants and wildlife areas of Michigan

<http://www.michigannature.org/> Marie is a life member of MNA.

Parson's Sanctuary boasts many kinds of terrain including some of the shoreline of Ferguson Lake. This preserve is listed as one of the 'show piece sanctuaries' of MNA in Michigan with easy access, a nice trail

system, and various habitats including forests, swamp, a beaver dam, hills, and some flat

land forest.

As a MNA Sanctuary Steward, Marie visits this sanctuary several times each year, participates in workdays, contributes a mycological species count, and a yearly report along with her partner, 'Buzz' Parsons, son of the original donor of this preserve.

On a recent December work day, (note picture) Marie used a device made from PVC pipes to "paint" Round-up in an effort to remove 'Autumn olive', a dangerously invasive species overpopulating many

### THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS FOR SHARING WHAT THEY ARE DOING

We look forward to hearing from you for our next issue. Just take time to note and share what you are doing to be a little more "green" or to protect the environment at home, at work, with others or alone?

Perhaps you have found a great resource you can share with us or you visited a wonderful site that was helpful in some way. We'd like to hear about it. We would like to feature your efforts in our next SPRING edition bulletin.

Please send you contributions (along with a photo if possible) to me at [cppsnews@bright.net](mailto:cppsnews@bright.net) Deadline for the **SPRING issue is 3/30/2013.**



Marie Kopin here hard at work, volunteers as a MNA Sanctuary Steward.

Photo by Catherine Hollins, one of the *Regional Organizers of the Michigan Nature Association (MNA)*. Catherine co-ordinates and schedules work days in our area of Michigan.

Michigan fields and woodlands <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glyphosate> on freshly cut stems and branches of the invasive Autumn Olive Plant (*Elaeagnus umbellata*). It is a dense brushy plant with sharp thorns which is now overpopulating many Michigan fields and woodlands. This species is starting to 'take over' a number of areas at Parsons Sanctuary, and is becoming a big nuisance in many parts of Michigan and in Ohio and other states as well. For more information go to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elaeagnus\\_umbellata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elaeagnus_umbellata) and/or see an informative video @ <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/autmnolive.shtml> .

To take a look at the 'now' range of distribution of this particular invasive species in our NE states, go to [http://nrs.fs.fed.us/fia/maps/Invasive-maps/shrub/webmap\\_elum.pdf](http://nrs.fs.fed.us/fia/maps/Invasive-maps/shrub/webmap_elum.pdf) This USDA Forest Service map shows at least 15 counties in Ohio plagued with Autumn Olive, plus twice as many in Michigan.

"It has been an inspiration to work with people concerned about preserving our natural species and the environment."

MNA is one of the leading associations in Michigan which sponsors work-days to remove this and other invasive plants. Volunteers work hard in MNA's growing collection of some 10,000 acres in over 150 nature sanctuaries. MNA is also one of the leaders in education of the public about prevention and control of these unwanted species so that Michigan forests can survive and not be choked out by unwanted plants. Marie enjoys being connected with this organization since the 1970's when she moved back to Michigan. It has been an inspiration for her to work with people concerned about preserving our natural species and the environment.



a Rattlesnake Plantain Plant (*Goodyera pubescens*), of the orchid family, grows at Parsons and hopefully will continue if invasive species are removed.

In addition to her participation in the work days, Marie petitioned a county commissioner asking that the issue be addressed at an Isabella County Commissioners meeting in an effort to initiate an education and volunteer removal program. She notes that this invasive species problem started with a few plants bought from a nursery. Once established, the roots spread and are increasingly hard to eradicate. In addition, after eating the berries, the birds spread the seeds and the cycle continues. What are some invasive species in your area?

## RECYCLING efforts in Coldwater

.....Marty Bertke

Probably the most important thing I do during these winter months is to concentrate on **Recycling Efforts**. I think it is very easy to recycle items and I especially concentrate on recycling paper and plastic.

At Christmas time I receive very many Christmas cards. Maybe you do too. Do I recycle the envelopes? Of course, I do. Do you? Just cut your name & address out, then recycle the rest. I think you would be surprised at the volume of paper, after all every little scrap adds up, and so every effort is worth doing. Then once Christmas is over, what do you do with all those cards you received? Sure, read, re-read, enjoy, recall memories, and then remember to recycle. You can cut out important messages, then put the rest of the card between newspapers and then do what??? Yes, recycle.



So many items come wrapped in plastic or are in plastic containers. Remember to recycle! It helps our environment!



Another thought... watch this video and think about it. Sometimes we are part of the problem, albeit on a small scale or, as the video shows, even if it is an innocent bottle cap in the middle of the ocean.

The video you will see (3:55 min) shows an island in the Pacific Ocean, 2000 miles from any coast. This island is uninhabited, nothing but birds, however ...See what happens! A video that everyone should see! This loads slowly but is well worth the wait so be patient.

Click on: <http://www.midwayfilm.com>



Perhaps you have an opportunity to be part of planning a school, parish, city or congregational event...or even just a party in your neighborhood or home. Here are some ideas of how to make it a "zero-waste" event

## A Recipe for a Zero-Waste Event

Adapted in part FROM SYLVANIA FRANCISCAN NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

### Ingredients:

- A leader or co-leaders to coordinate the event
- A committed team of individuals, at least one with a background in Ecology
- A cooperative caterer
- A good communication team
- A willingness to compromise
- A lot of motivation and excitement

### Directions:

- Begin by planning the menu. The menu drives everything else: what utensils, amount of waste from food preparation, packaging, serving needs and place settings.
- Encourage RSVP's to avoid left-over's
- Add a plan for composting waste: research nearby composting companies, facilities that may have a composter or homes that have composting ability
- Research compostable cups, silverware, plates, etc.
- Stir in ways to recycle left-over's or packaging
- Make it a challenge and FUN!

Here are some things we learned along the way:

*Think Green!* **Here's some food for thought from your zero-waste committee**

*Think Green!* **Waste is a human concept. We are the only species that creates garbage as "waste".**

*Think Green!* **You use less water with a dishwasher than by washing dishes by hand.**

*Think Green!* **Use garbage bags made of compostable materials.**

*Think Green!* **Watch portion sizes – good for health and the Earth.**

*Think Green!* **Check out [www.terracycle.com](http://www.terracycle.com) for those hard-to-recycle items.**

*Think Green!* **Giving stuff away and buying used items is green!**

*Think Green!* **Consider how food is packaged when choosing a product.**

*Think Green!* **Compost your food scraps.**

*Think Green!* Food scraps do not completely decompose in a landfill. They need to be composted.  
*Think Green!* For an event, use reusable bottles or pitchers of water instead of non-reusable bottles.  
*Think Green!* Donate Leftover food from today – perhaps to a local food pantry  
*Think Green!* Paper such as napkins, coffee filters and tea bags are compostable.  
*Think Green!* Choose 'silverware' that is compostable.  
*Think Green!* Locate a facility that will compost Food waste from your event.  
*Think Green!* Take time to learn:

**Brower and Leon's "The Consumer's Guide To Effective Environmental Choices". Three Rivers Press.**

*Think Green!* Take time to learn: What Is Your Ecological Footprint? – see the footprint calculator at:  
[What are you doing?](#)

*Think Green!* Take the St. Francis Pledge and discover many other informative resources:  
[www.catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org)

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## Efforts in Chickasaw

..... Regina Albers

This is something quite small, but since where I recycle they do not take # 6, I save the # 6 and take them to the motherhouse where they do recycle the # 6. Not much, but something!! Regina [albers881@roadrunner.com](mailto:albers881@roadrunner.com)

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## Sr. Amy could use your help...



At a recent cluster meeting Amy asked us to save our used greeting cards (of any kind or occasion) for her work with women at the Sparrows Nest and the Oaks, the women's part of the Cherry Street mission in Toledo. With extremely limited budget and resources, Amy uses these cards to motivate the women to think beyond themselves as she helps them develop life skills. Most of these homeless women (ages 20 TO 60) participate in various programs and can reside there up to a year as they get ready to re-gain their children and live on their own again.



Using a holistic approach that attempts to focus their attention on giving back to the community Amy has the women re-making greeting cards, strategizing to write wishes and greetings on them for various occasions or events, working as a team to plan and accomplish the project. In doing so they improve their ability to think creatively, write clearly and concisely, manage their time, and even increase their math skills. It also gives them an occasional break from the ordinary class routine, a taste of success in a short-term project, develops an artistic eye and helps them relax a bit. To achieve this goal Amy welcomes any used greeting card from which her women can then re-make cards or bookmarks for any occasion. She can also use ribbon and cardstock of any size.

On a personal level, Amy recycles used wrapping and tissue paper. She has used it to:

- wrap breakable ornament, dishes, or any other "breakables" for storage or moving
- wrap smaller gift boxes with the non-wrinkled part
- make matching "to/from" tags
- use for art projects
- use patterned paper as a "conversation starter" or memory jog for people with limited verbal capacities
- cut doubles of each of several patterns, paste on index cards and use as a matching game for a small child or a dementia patient
- make "snowballs" out of white tissue paper and have an indoor snowball fight
- put the paper in a recycle bin



Amy also calls our attention to an article in NCR <http://ncronline.org/news/art-media/catholic-teen-uses-musical-talent-help-motivate-kids-save-planet> describing a 14-year-old Catholic high school student who recorded "Pacha's Pajamas," a cartoon about protecting the environment. Listen to the young girl's song on this YouTube link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufqvQh2qyZ4>

**How might you encourage someone to make a difference in the environment?**



## Think ahead

Even though snow is all around and the ground is now frozen, many gardeners use these winter months to think ahead and dream of what they might plant as the weather warms and spring gets nearer. Seed magazines arrive in the mail; classes are offered at local colleges and garden centers; the internet posts and blogs feature a wealth of information. One that I like a

..... hope is in the air



lot for its variety and broad areas of information is Mother Earth News in print or at this link

[http://www.motheearthnews.com/?utm\\_content=10.10.12+SLCS&utm\\_campaign=2012+SLCS&utm\\_source=iPost&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.motheearthnews.com/?utm_content=10.10.12+SLCS&utm_campaign=2012+SLCS&utm_source=iPost&utm_medium=email) The current on-line issue has a very informative article about what you need to know and do to start your own seeds.

This Ecology Bulletin is an endeavor by the Sisters who expressed interest in trying to keep the Environment an important issue for themselves and who desire to share ideas and experiences with other members of the Congregation and friends.

We invite your comments, questions and contributions.

[Amy Junk](#), [Marie Kopin](#), [Tish Rawles](#), [Mary Lou Schmersal](#)