

The Center for Ethics in Action

Activities Report for 2001

January: Meeting with Jan Roberts to begin the coordination an Earth Charter Summits around the country (1/12).

February: Meeting of the USA Earth Charter Commission in Washington, D.C. under the sponsorship of the Center for Respect of Life & the Environment (2/1-4).

March: International Women's Day at the United Nations/UNIFEM. Curation of an Art exhibition for the occasion as well (3/8). Global Governance Venice conference to present Earth Charter as a proclamation for underlying principles for an E-Parliament being developed by Earth Action (3/23-27).

April: Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust for Peace & Reconciliation Training with citizens groups in northern Ireland (4/7-11). Sponsorship of author Ann Crittendon's Talk at University of New England (The Price of Motherhood) (4/17 & 18).

May: Sponsorship of Virginia Foote's Talk at the World Affairs Council of ME (Vietnam Trade Council) (5/8). Participation in the Lifebridge Foundation's Weekend for innovative programs at Wainright House, Rye, NY (5/31-6/3).

June: Presentation of a paper at the Veteran Feminists conference at Barnard (6/9).

July: Program Director for Delegation of 10 Bulgarian Mayors World Learning (US AID) Training in Women's Leadership and democracy-building in Maine and Wasjoington, D.C. (7/1-15).

September: Participation in a UN conference on NGOs with Kofi Annan et al (9/10)

The September 29, 2001 Earth Charter Community Summit Event (requiring months of planning).

Nearly 150 people from VT, NH, MA and ME gathered at the University of New England's Westbrook College Campus for an Earth Charter Summit, an all-day event on September 29 to introduce and build support among Americans for a document with 16 principles for building an interdependent, sustainable world for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

This was one of 12 Summits around the United States that were linked together via audio-visual up and downlinks at several points during the day. As Portland presented its program to the other sites, Summit Coordinator Anne B. Zill in her UNE role as Director of the Center for Ethics in Action, introduced Mayor Kaileigh Tara of Lewiston and Mayor Nancy Larson of South Portland to welcome the group. Later in the day attendees at all 12 sites were treated to Robbie Dana and his Penobscot Native drumming team.

The Earth Charter, which calls for environmental stewardship, a culture of peace and an end to poverty and racism, is scheduled to be endorsed by the United Nations at its Rio-plus-10 Earth Summit in Johannesburg in September, 2002.

Other sites included the University of Chicago, University of Washington, Drexel University in Philadelphia, San Francisco State, University of Hawaii, Tampa, FL, Jackson, MS, Indianapolis, IN, St Edwards University in Austin, the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, and the University of North Texas, Denton.

Speakers included David Korten, author of *When Corporations Rule the World*, Middlebury Professor Emeritus Steven Rockefeller of the Earth Charter Commission, and Dr. Louise Diamond, author of *The Peace Book*.

During the day some 40 presenters took part in Plenary Panels and workshops, among them UNE trustee, Neil Rolde and former Westbrook College trustee, Barbara Goodbody. Everett B. Carson of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, Don Hudson of the Chewonki Institute, Scott Schnapp of Maine Businesses for Social Responsibility, Lois Barber of Earth Action, Eleanor LeCain of Women's Action for New Directions, Theresa Savoy and Carla Dickstein of Coastal Enterprises Inc., and Bob Sheppard of Clean Air/Cool Planet were among the featured speakers. Students came from as far away as Dartmouth and as close as UNE and the University of Southern Maine. The day ended in a reception at the Art Gallery with a series of theatrical presentations, dancing and more drumming by the Penobscot Indians.

Featured on the Westbrook Campus (and at each of the other sites as well) were 30-foot long scrolls placed on large signing tables inspired by Thomas Jefferson. These will be presented to the UN when the entire scroll is covered with signatures of earth Charter supporters. Because this event took place soon after the September 11 tragedy, there were repeated calls by speakers to respect our interconnectedness, and work together on positive antidotes to despair. Louise Diamond called for a "polarization fast-- no more them against us thinking."

Zill has been asked to organize another Earth Charter Summit next September 28, and is contemplating the task only if a working committee of volunteers can be found. In-kind donations from Sodhexo, O'Natural's, Shaw's Supermarkets, Artists & Craftsman, plus small grants from Maine Humanities Council, Lloyd Wells, Neil Rolde & John Hunting.