

# GAEA'S OWN

Fall 2015



RESPECT  
EACH  
OTHER

RESPECT  
THE  
LAND

RESPECT  
YOURSELF

SPEED  
LIMIT  
5  
MPH





# President's Letter

*Erin Marshall*



I want to start by simply thanking everyone for an amazing LBLD. This was our largest one to date, with over 530 people on the land who helped to raise over 32K+!! Go Team Gaea! If you have visited the website since LBLD you may have noticed a few changes. Ok so it's a whole new website! I want to thank Cyricx (Chris Byram) for designing and creating this simple and beautiful new site. We are still working on some small changes to add more content, but it will stay user friendly and simple.

Now that we are getting into the quieter, less busy season this time is a great time to reflect. This year we have been heavily stressing the Respect Agreement. There have been many, many new faces at camp this year. I was asked at LBLD by a dear friend what I would like people to know and to take from camp. And it really comes down to understanding the Respect Agreement as more than just its simple message.

**Respect for the Land:** this means take care of what you bring. If you brought it, make it your responsibility to take care of it. If you brought new people, TEACH THEM. Teach them what is expected on the land. Make sure they know the rules and the Respect Agreement. If you see them doing something wrong, teach them the correct way. And if you don't know the correct way....ASK! There are many people that can and will help you. "Camp in...camp out". All the "things" you brought are yours to care for, so make sure all your items get taken with you, and all your trash is thrown away. Even better, take as much trash with you as possible and throw it away at home. That is one less expense for camp, and one less bag that has to be sorted for recycling. I bet if everyone took a turn sorting recycling, there would be lots less trash left at camp!

**Respect for Others:** Everyone has a right to be on the land. Everyone! If they are following the rules and the Respect Agreement, then they have the right to be there, and be themselves. There will ALWAYS be people that are different than you. They may have different spiritual beliefs, backgrounds, lifestyles, kink, whatever. But Gaea is where we all get to be all those things and celebrate that we are different. So if someone is doing something that you don't understand, or is different than you have experienced, take the opportunity to either walk away, or maybe strike up a conversation and learn a new view of the world!

**Respect for Yourself:** This is always the hard one. It starts with following the first two agreements. But it also means to be YOU. Be your authentic self. Gaea is the place that allows us to be ALL of ourselves, to not have to hide away things that the rest of the world doesn't understand or accept. But to have our differentness embraced, and if not understood, at least it is accepted that it is who we are. This is the place where we are connected by our individualism. No matter what, all of us had a path that led us to this place and that is wonderful. Love you, Gaea does, she loved you enough to bring you to her land.

## A Note from the Caretakers

Fall is here and the leaves are starting to change. The festival season is over, but camp is still open. That said, here are a few things you won't want to forget. The gate will close at dusk and re-open at 7:00 a.m. If you are going to be arriving after dusk, be aware that you will need to open the chain to get in and close the gate behind you. The water will be shut off on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and will reopen on April 1<sup>st</sup>. There is potable water available near the stairs. We hope you to see you out enjoying the fall season.

Happy Autumn!



## A Statement Regarding the Respect Agreement at Gaea Retreat Center

### **RESPECT YOURSELF      RESPECT OTHERS      RESPECT THE LAND**

Gaea Retreat Center is a beautiful place. It is a great place to enjoy nature, to hold a festival, or just to relax and enjoy interaction with a most unique and eclectic community of people. It was founded with the expressed intent that Camp Gaea be a "recreational retreat center in a natural setting for the purposes of cultural and spiritual education".

Among the goals put forward in our mission statement are the encouragement of free exchange of ideas and experiences, and promoting greater respect and understanding. Gaea has indeed become a place where a person can encounter a widely varied community of people, share thoughts and experiences, and find acceptance that may be difficult to come by in other places. Respect is key to achieving these goals.

Respect for the land is vital in the attempt to maintain "a natural setting". A great deal of thought has gone into the way that we treat the land. Rules like cleaning up campsites, not littering, walking as much as possible rather than driving all over camp, and parking only in designated areas may seem like an inconvenience at times. Nevertheless, these rules are in place to protect the land and keep it beautiful. Respect for the land is truly fundamental to preserving the beauty of this place.

Respect for others is also vital to the success of Camp Gaea, and the goals which were put forward in its mission statement. With such a varied group of people on the property, occasional disagreements and misunderstandings are inevitable. It is incumbent upon everyone involved to handle these situations in an adult and respectful manner. Further, it is explicitly stated in the Rules and Regulations, that harassment in any form is prohibited. Whether harassment is verbal or physical, and for whatever reason it may occur, it is unacceptable. Providing sanctuary, promoting understanding, and encouraging free exchange of ideas all become impossible to achieve unless respect is shown for others.

Respect for one's self is certainly difficult to define. The meaning of this part of the respect agreement may be quite different for each individual. However one personally determines the meaning of self-respect, it seems clear that an appropriate respect for self is observable in the way that an individual treats others and the land.

It is the responsibility of the board of directors of Earth Rising to uphold the Mission Statement of our organization. The board must deal with the mundane details of operating the facility, and it must always strive to accomplish the stated purpose of Camp Gaea through the goals outlined within the Mission Statement. Disciplinary actions are without a doubt the least favorite task that the board of directors must face. Where possible, it is always seen as preferable to encourage understanding between those who encounter a breach of the respect agreement. Where circumstances are such that this is not possible, or when an individual or group blatantly or consistently shows disregard for the land or for others, it is the responsibility of the board to intervene. The board may wait for an issue to be brought to them, or it may choose to act on its own. When deemed necessary by the board, persons may be asked to leave for the day, for a period of time, or on a permanent basis.

Please read the Mission Statement, the Respect Agreement, and the Rules and Regulations of Camp Gaea before visiting. These are all available on the website at <http://gaearetreat.org/>. If there is a question as to the meaning of any part of these, please speak with the caretakers, or any member of the board of directors. They will be happy to help.

Any violation of the Respect Agreement should be immediately reported to a caretaker of Camp Gaea, or any member of the board of directors of Earth Rising Inc.

The Board of Directors of Earth Rising Inc.

## **Earth Rising, Inc. Intern Program**

The Earth Rising, Inc. board has decided to implement a program that is designed to encourage active participation in the running of Camp Gaea.

The Earth Rising, Inc. board is committed to providing a clear and concise list of expectations which will allow a person who is interested in the intern program to understand what is expected of them, and how they might have the opportunity to become a voting member.

Being part of the intern program is not a guarantee of board membership; however, any future board member will be expected to have been an intern for a period not less than 6 months, or to have previously served on the Earth Rising, Inc. Board of Directors for a term not less than 6 months.

An intern should be willing to commit themselves to:

**Be a self-starter.** Take on a project and stay with it. Identify areas that need help and develop a plan to improve it. Either create a project, or work with the board to identify what needs to be done.

**Attend all meetings.** While exceptions will occur, an intern needs to make ERI meetings a priority. Being part of the decision making process is one of the primary responsibilities associated with being a board member.

**Be the example and not the exception.** Setting an example is one of the most effective ways to communicate with people who are camping at Gaea.

**Show good faith** in resolving personal issues that might arise during the normal course of board business.

**Take the time** to connect with other board members and stay abreast of the issues at hand. It will be the responsibility of an intern to stay in the loop.

**Show** that consideration of the overall wellbeing of the camp is your first concern when new policies are being debated. Working with Earth Rising, Inc. is not the same as being an advocate for a special event or one of the Exclusive Rental groups.

**Exhibit objectivity** when making decisions.

This outline is designed to assist an intern in their efforts to work with the board. It is not meant to discourage people from becoming involved if they aren't willing to donate as much time as would be required for an intern; rather it is meant to help a person understand the level of commitment that is required to sit on the board of Earth Rising.

After a period of 6 months as an intern, that individual may apply for a position on the board if an opening exists or they may continue on as an intern and apply when an opening becomes available if they so choose.

# Treasurer's Report

JD Besares

We did it! Another amazing Laid Back Labor Day! Here is the official breakdown of our fund raiser. We raised \$5,095 at the auction! Thank you Sisters and friends for your hard work! Steve and Paul's fabulous wiener wagon cooked up an additional \$1,022 in donations. What fun was that?! Greg and Rain threw another swanky party netting camp \$400 in donations. A shout out to our dear president, Erin Marshall for raising \$612. Those last minute donations pushed us over last year's totals. Finally, our community raised \$25,522 together in registration fees. All total..... \$32,651!!!! Again, another record year and 15% higher than last year! I'd also like to send a special thank you to the ladies running registration this year. You rocked it! Hats off to the gate keepers, safety, atmosphere (the stage was sooo cool!) and caretakers (site)!



Looking for other ways to give? Earth Rising is on Amazon Smile.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/43-1589203>. Each time you shop, Amazon will donate 0.5% to camp for your eligible purchases. Now how easy is that? Save this link to your browser for quick access. They even have a handy little button you can install in Google Chrome, if that's your sort of thing.

At the beginning of October, the board will sit down to consider and prepare our winter budget. We have several projects that we'll be reviewing for fall and early spring. As we prepare for the holidays, perhaps you might consider picking up a Home Depot card for Gaea? Even with our careful budgeting and project management, we always need small supplies to supplement these jobs and random repairs around camp. If you would like to send a holiday gift card to camp, please mail it directly to the caretakers at: P.O. Box 696, Tonganoxie, KS 66086.

Check out our donation page for more info:

<http://gaearetreat.org/donations>

If you are interested in making a onetime donation, use the yellow *DONATE* button on the left side of the page.

***“May many hearts burn with the desire to see Gaea receive the care she needs and many blessings upon those who give to her in this spirit.”***



# Park and Walk: Help keep Gaea beautiful

I'd like to take a moment to address the issue of driving and parking at camp. It is important that we try to keep driving to a minimum while on property. There are several reasons for this.

To begin with, it is in our mission statement that we support ecologically sound practices. It may be easier to drive down the hill to go to the shower or the lake, but is it better for the environment? Of course it is not. It is also mentioned in the respect agreement. "Please restrict driving-park, walk, exercise and enjoy the land."

Excess driving also damages our roads. Every year, monies must be budgeted to care for the roads and repair damage that occurs throughout the season. The less we drive the less damage we cause. That leaves more money for other projects that we would all like to see accomplished.

Additionally, driving more than is really necessary creates traffic and parking difficulties. Besides the obvious difficulties resulting from the two way traffic on such a narrow road, our smaller parking areas become congested when people drive to shower or get ice. These areas are really only intended for limited and short term parking.

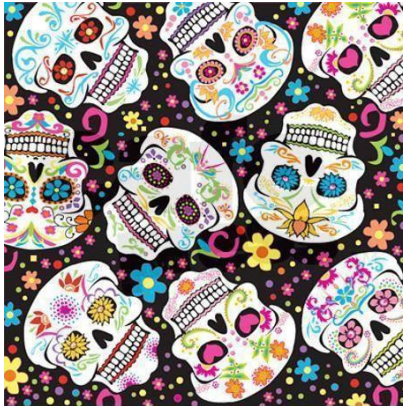
Of course there are exceptions for those with mobility issues. For the rest of us, being at camp is a wonderful opportunity to get some exercise and enjoy the natural surroundings. Let's leave the cars parked and help keep Gaea beautiful!



# ***Samhain Ritual***

## ***Oct 31, 2015***

### **Celebrating Our Ancestors!**



This year we want to share our ancestors with each other. We will do this by cooking their favorite dish to share at feast (don't forget to label it!), bringing a photograph for the ancestor table that will be in the dining hall and a small token of the ancestor that you may have.

If you have a short story you would like to share, please write it down and bring it with you. We will make time during ritual for 9 short stories to be shared. Feel free to let me know ahead of time if you feel strongly about sharing your story please. We will also have music to bridge the veil between us and our loved ones who have gone on....

#### The schedule for Samhain is:

3:00 -Pumpkin carving and other crafts (feel free to donate a pumpkin)

5:00 -Cabin Decoration Judging

5:30 -Trick or Treating

7:00 -Ritual (at Bardic Circle, weather permitting or at the dining hall otherwise) with a special part about El Dia de los Muertos.

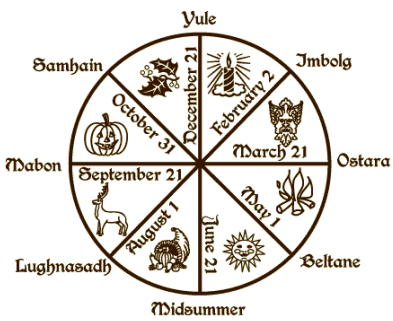
Feast to follow ritual

Costume contests for adults and children after feast.

Hay rides, again weather permitting

Anyone who would like a part in ritual, please contact Cat Andrews as soon as possible. She will need people of all ages (teens to mature adults), and especially people who are musically inclined.





## -Just a Shout Out -

Gaea would like to take the time to thank and show appreciation to the individuals and groups who perform our seasonal celebrations. Often overlooked and taken for granted, they offer an invaluable service of love to Gaea. Thank you for investing your energy to create moments in all time to honor the changing of the seasons!

*If you or your group would be interested in performing a ritual to mark one of our seasonal celebrations, please contact Rhi at 913-796-2141, or send a message from our new website, [gaearetreat.com](http://gaearetreat.com).*

## Upcoming Rituals

**Samhain – October 31**

**Yule– December 19**



Our rituals are open to the public and celebrate the pagan wheel of the year. Rituals at Gaea are opportunity to bond as a community and perhaps learn something in the process.

## Stewardship

*By Cat Andrews*

One night, more than ten years ago, I found myself lying in the middle of Sunflower Field late at night. The grass had not been mowed and so I had my own personal nest of stiff, prickly rust-colored grass. I had put a blanket down on it and was looking up at the cloudless night sky. All around were the sounds of the night insects and, occasionally, I would get a blink of a firefly in my peripheral vision. Otherwise it was quiet of human sounds.

It takes me a long time to relax in a situation like that; I was born and raised in a suburb of a small city with only occasional forays into the country. Even then, it was country that had been tamed by farming and ranching with thin strips of wild places between the properties. On family vacations, my mother made us pile into the light blue station wagon and travel across states to see national parks and forests, mountains and deserts. And yet, those were not so wild either with well-kept roads and signs pointing in the right directions, nice log cabins and walkways with handrails. So, lying on a blanket alone in the middle of a field takes me awhile to relax enough to soak it in. I forced myself to lie there; my fears of snakes and rodents, raccoons, opossums, bugs running electric shocks through me. Finally I imagined the worst: me dying due to some injury I received from nature and leaving my child alone in this world. My heart pounded and I struggled to control my breath until finally, my body calmed. I made myself scan the stars and look for the two constellations I knew: the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper. Eventually I realized I could see the faint path of the Milky Way sweeping across the sky. The breeze smelled sweet and was beginning to get cooler. Bats flitted between me and the stars and I silently thanked them for eating the mosquitoes. I heard rustling nearby and held very still, willing myself to experience whatever it was that was approaching. It stopped and I slowly turned my head. Through the thicket of the grass, I made out one of the camp cats staring at me like puzzled cats do. I reached out my hand but off the cat bounded, not to be bothered by some strange human in the field.

At some point later, I cried. Nature, and this untidy parcel of land in particular, was not out to get me. I was a part of this world and I fit in. I was in the arms of the Goddess and, as long as I honored Mother Nature's rules, I would be safe and nurtured. So I sat up and began to speak to her, putting my bare feet on a dusty patch between grass clumps and my hands on top of my feet. It took me a few minutes of rambling to get to the heart of what I wanted to say. "Mother, I honor you and pledge my attention to you on this spot at Gaea as long as I am able and as long as you'll have me. Show me the ways I can serve you by caring for the land and also by caring for the people who come to the land. I don't have the strongest body or the purest spirit or the sharpest mind but what I do have is yours. Help me remember your children here and elsewhere are my brothers and sisters and it is my wish to treat them with the love, respect and compassion all of your children deserve. Give me strength to stand up and protect you and my brothers and sisters if others come here to harm you or them. I ordain myself as your steward this night and all the days and nights to follow until my end." I heard no answer but the sweet cool breeze and the rustling grasses but my heart sang with the echo of her acceptance.

*Continued on following page*

Not everyone who comes through that mystical path from 235th Street to Gaea, feels this way. They don't have to. I recognize my fellow stewards as we walk Sunset Ridge, Olde Way, Nemeton, Coyote Run, Davawood, Moonstar Meadow and all the other named and unnamed areas of the 168 acres. Lake Onessa takes tribute from everyone; the stewards smile and shake their heads, and perhaps toss the matching earring in to the lake or leave as an offering to the fairies. As our community grows from dozens to hundreds the mowing still needs done, the trash sorted, the cabins and main buildings painted or cleaned. People with specialized skills are still needed to fix plumbing, build steps or decks, fix machines, wire buildings, crunch numbers, paint signs, brainstorm Gaea's future. These are all things to be done by volunteers, some of them stewards. Each of chooses our path at Gaea; each of has power to change our own world and the world of those around us. The cabin sponsors are one such group; they pledge a minimum of 5 hours community service to camp each month during the regular season and 2 hours community service to camp each month during the off season in addition to cleaning and maintaining the cabin before and after each festival and in between. There are other groups that are stewards of fire and firewood, special projects like the smoking pavilion and stairs from the shower house to the ridge, small sacred spaces around camp, trail blazers and flower tenders. There are people who rake and dig ditches. Clint and Rhi are mighty caretakers but they need us, the volunteers and stewards, to give of ourselves to the land we love so much. Buckets of sweat, streams of tears, drops of blood. All given freely to this magical bit of land tucked away in Kansas. Consider gifting Gaea with your specialized skills. Push a mower or lift a weed trimmer if you have the gift of bodily strength. Build community with your purity of spirit. Write for the newsletter with your sharp mind. Open yourself to the blessing of giving to Gaea. Become a volunteer; become a steward of this land.





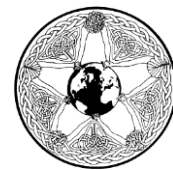
## Rules for Pets at Camp:

- 1) All dogs **MUST** be on a leash, **AND** under your control. This means the leash is in your hand.
  - A. Although you believe your animal will never harm someone, you cannot predict every situation.
  - B. You don't know how another animal, or another person, may react to your animal running up to them.
  - C. Dogs are **NOT** allowed in the Dining Hall or Bath House.
  - D. You **MUST** clean up after your dog when it makes messes (i.e. poop).
- 2) Do **NOT** feed any animals that you do not own. This refers to wild, stray and domestic animals.
  - A. Feeding the wild animals encourages them to come into people's camps and steal food; this is dangerous as this can also provoke a wild animal to attack.
  - B. Feeding strays encourages them to come back to camp, and to enter people's camps and steal food. We do not want to encourage strays to stay on the land.
  - C. Feeding domestic animals that you don't own may cause problems with that animal. You do not know if that animal may have a food issue, or is food aggressive.





## Fall Events



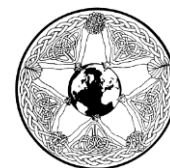
Samhain Ritual	October 31	Public Event
ERI Board Meeting	November 1	Public Event
ERI Board Meeting	December 6	Public Event
Yule Ritual	December 19	Public Event

Earth Rising Inc. Board Meetings begins at noon on the following dates:  
November 1, December 6

Most Cabin Sponsor meetings will be on the Sunday after the Public Ritual at Gaea.  
November 1. December 20

Please visit <http://gaearetreat.org/calendar> to ensure there  
have not been changes to this list!

Work weekends are a good opportunity to give back to Gaea, and earn some Gaea Bucks too! Check our [new website](#) or our [facebook page](#) for more information on projects as it becomes available.



## Mission of Earth Rising Inc

The Mission of Earth Rising is to provide a recreational retreat center in a natural setting for the purpose of cultural and spiritual education.

This Mission will be met through the achievement of certain goals.

These goals are:

To encourage the free exchange of ideas, views and experiences.

To promote greater understanding and respect between groups and individuals.

To support ecologically sound practices and land and wildlife conservation in the belief that the Earth and all life are interrelated and interdependent, and that respect for all life is a Universal Mandate.

To provide sanctuary to people who have experienced oppression or discrimination due to their cultural or spiritual practices.

### **For More Details:**

Calendar –  
<http://gaearetreat.org/calendar>

Donations –  
<http://gaearetreat.org/donations>

Contact Us –  
<http://gaearetreat.org/contact>

