



Exploring a  
Sense of Place

# SEASONS

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## Winter Solstice

A solstice occurs twice a year whenever Earth's axis tilts the most toward or away from the Sun causing the Sun to be farthest north or south at noon. The Winter Solstice, also known as Midwinter, occurs on the shortest day or longest night of the year. The name is derived from Latin and means *Sun set still in winter* because at the solstice, the Sun stands still in declination, that is its movement north or south is minimal. The term is tricky however, since seasons of the northern hemisphere and southern hemisphere are opposites, our Winter Solstice in the northern hemisphere is the Summer Solstice in the southern hemisphere.

## Growing Seeds

As word has gotten out, we have helped launch similar programs to our own Exploring a Sense of Place Course in other places near and far: the East Bay and San Diego in California, Ashland/Oregon, Colorado, the Blue Ridge Mountains/North Carolina, and the Chesapeake Bay Region/Maryland. Prompted by an advertisement of our guidebook in the Resurgence magazine, a very enthusiastic and engaged group from the Northwest of England contacted us. Today we would like to share stories from these two newest developments, San Diego and England.

### What's in season now?

- Citrus fruits (oranges, mandarins, grapefruits)
- Winter squash
- Kohlrabi
- Parsnip
- Cabbage
- Winter greens
- Celery root
- Brussel sprouts
- Escarole

## Conservancy in San Diego, California

In October from the top of Volcan Mountain, the Conservancy in San Diego launched its first annual outdoor seminar series designed to give participants a crest to coast with mind and heart through close and personal experience in the San Dieguito River Valley. The series takes 25 committed explorers on 8 monthly all-day Saturday excursions and is co-facilitated by Chris Khoury and Linda Corey, long-time Conservancy members and outdoor enthusiasts, and Leslie Woollenberger, resource specialist for the Conservancy.



Similar to our program, each Saturday will focus on a particular region and nature topic in the park and explorers will have an opportunity to spend peaceful, creative time alone and with others sensing the beauty and power of the place. As the recent fires have devastated much of the San Dieguito River Valley, the group postponed their November outing but their spirit is unbroken and they will continue after schedule changes and adjustments. Here is a taste of their first excursion day from Linda Corey's summary:

"Fourteen of us opted to hike the 1000 foot elevation gain to the top of Volcan Mountain, while others opted to ride up the mountain. Both groups experienced open vistas and dense forests. We lunched in the golden grass of Ferguson Flats overlooking the steep drop to the desert and Scissors Crossing. Our after-lunch quiet time resulted in our noting the serenity of the valley, the sounds of ravens and a woodpecker, a bee buzzing in the grass very close to a human ear, the warmth of the sun, the green and lavender plants dotting the grasslands, the rust of autumn buckwheat that perfectly matched Gigi's shirt, and finally -- from those exuberant boys that live inside Craig and Jason -- THE BIGGEST OAK TREE they'd ever seen -- a canyon oak that all of us visited on the hike out. Jeanette and Eric have shared pictures of this magnificent tree that invites climbing and nesting and the urge to draw.

In his borrowed journal, Chris produced the following poem, which captured the moment for him and many of the rest of us as well:



*The great canyon oak,  
Deeply rooted in the Pacific Crest,  
Presides majestically and serenely  
Over the desert expanse  
Of undulating ridges and dappled valleys.  
Teach me to be deeply rooted,  
To understand that the journey is the going,  
not the arriving,  
To feel the rafting of the great plates,  
And to feel kinship with plants and animals,  
Wind and rocks, past and future,  
Who share this great mystery.*

A splendid day. Longer than expected and so fine to "Let Nature be our teacher."  
(Photographs by Jeannette DeWyze)

Chris Khoury

## Simply Connect in England

Our newest group interested in starting a program is an organization in the Northwest of England. Actually, it looks more like several organizations and projects. Janice Every and Chris Newsam are involved with an organic nursery and run an organic box delivery scheme “Growing With Grace” ([www.growingwithgrace.co.uk](http://www.growingwithgrace.co.uk)), a workers cooperative and social enterprise. Janice also works in coordinating a nationally renowned community health and arts charity called Pioneers Projects Ltd. ([www.pioneerprojects.org.uk](http://www.pioneerprojects.org.uk)) promoting the health and well-being of communities through art and celebration. As if all this is not enough, they also run a small organization called Live With Spirit ([www.livewithspirit.org.uk](http://www.livewithspirit.org.uk)) celebrating community based on:



And last but not least their latest endeavor is a group called “Simply Connect” which will be a not for profit social enterprise and the envisioned home for a course similar to our Exploring a Sense of Place program. Simply Connect is a monthly informal group inspired by Resurgence Magazine and the Schumacher Circler, seeking positive ideas about the theory and practice of good living through permaculture, community supported agriculture, local economics, ecological building, ‘slow’ food, art and beauty, open spirituality, and deep ecology. Their flyer states:

“We believe that new ways of living in harmony with the environment and with one another in an equitable way are not only possible, but essential, if we are to craft a viable future for all. We would like to recapture the sense of awe and wonder at the beauty that surrounds us, and in so doing deepen within one another a sense of connectedness and of the sacred.”

## Upcoming Events

Monday, January 7, 7-9 pm: Enrichment Evening, Conexions Center  
Saturday, January 12, 9-3 pm: Jasper Ridge, Wildlife tracking  
Monday, February 4, 7-9 pm: Enrichment Evening, Conexions Center  
Saturday, February 9, 9-3 pm: Palo Alto Baylands, Migrations & Reflections  
Monday, March 3, 7-9 pm: Enrichment Evening, Conexions Center  
Saturday, March 8, 9-3 pm: Arastradero Preserve, Restoration & Preservation  
View the complete calendar at [www.exploringsenseofplace.org/site/?page\\_id=4](http://www.exploringsenseofplace.org/site/?page_id=4)

Monday, March 17, 7:30pm: Book presentation at East & West Bookstore,  
324 Castro Street, Mountain View, [www.eastwest.com](http://www.eastwest.com)  
Tuesday, March 20, 6:30: Sense of Place presentation (starts at 7:30 pm) at Sierra  
Club's Third Tuesday, <http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/>, location to be determined

Wednesday, January 30, 7 pm: Protect the Tuolumne River, Acterra  
Do you know where your water comes from? If you're reading this newsletter then chances are it comes from the Tuolumne River as it flows through Yosemite National Park. You can learn more about the Tuolumne and a controversial plan to divert an additional 25 million gallons of water per day from this "wild and scenic" river at a public forum on Wednesday, January 30 at 7pm at Acterra. Acterra is next door to Conexions at 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto. For more information please contact Peter Drekeimer at [Peter@Tuolumne.org](mailto:Peter@Tuolumne.org) or (415) 292-3531.

## Get involved!

Exploring a Sense of Place is growing and we welcome your help. Here's a few ways you can join in:

1. **Contribute to this newsletter.** We welcome submissions of photos, artwork, poetry, recipes or articles for the newsletter. Submissions for the next newsletter need to be in by March 13, 2008.
2. **Spread the word.** Contact your local bookstore and ask them to stock the Exploring a Sense of Place guidebook. Tell them about the exciting book presentations and events coming up (dates see above).
3. **Donate.** Make a financial contribution today! Great way for last minute presents! Donate online at [http://exploringsenseofplace.org/site/?page\\_id=94](http://exploringsenseofplace.org/site/?page_id=94). Or mail a check to us at the address at the bottom of the page. Make checks to Exploring a Sense of Place.

For more details on any of these opportunities, contact Brigitte at [bfleeman@exploringsenseofplace.org](mailto:bfleeman@exploringsenseofplace.org).