

Conscious Calling



Greater Awareness through Festivals

Compiled by

Anthony "ThePostmOn" Postman

Through my own years as a music-loving festival-goer, I have seen events evolve that bring awareness to the masses: breaking down apartheid (the Mandela Concert), freeing political prisoners (Amnesty International concert tours), helping AIDS sufferers (Give Peace a Dance), feeding famine-stricken Ethiopia (Live Aid), helping American family farmers keep their homes (Farm Aid) and most recently the effort to combat climate change (Live Earth). Not only have these events entertained us with the sounds of our favorite artists, but they have lifted our awareness to the greater issues troubling the world. As I reflected on the vibes of the times and the festival season ahead, I wondered what some of the reggae and world music promoters and organizers are doing to raise the awareness of festival-goers. Here are some examples of the effort at large:

Political Awareness

Jesse Dawn produces Hawaii's Bob Marley Day, voted one of Hawaii's top annual events by the Hawaii Island Journal. Jesse shares, "A few years ago we dedicated our Bob Marley Day and Earth Day concerts to the election of



Festival hospitality tips By Gloria Mundi

Encouraging all generations By Lorette Paquin



Jamaican One Love Concert with Bunny Wailer, Abijah, Mackie Conscious, Luciano, Robert, Alicia & Julia Roskind, Stephanie Marley with her children (l-r) By Roy Sweetland

Green Party candidate, Keiko Bonk, avidly promoting her bid for a seat on the Hawaii County Council. She went on to win the election plus become Chairperson of the Hawaii County Council, the highest political office ever held by a Green Party member in Hawaii. Help support the conscious political power of reggae and its massive audience, Say II!" www.hawaiiireggae.com

Benefiting Youth in Need

"I produce a festival in Jamaica each year during the Chinese New Year (CHNY). This is a charity event benefiting DeepBlueRipple International Inc., a non-profit dedicated to bettering the lives of our children through music, art and play," writes festival producer, Libre Brousseau. Events include several nights of live music as well as the Friends of the West End Kid's Fair. The week-long CHNY festival brings money and help to many school children in need of school and art supplies, backpacks, books, musical instruments, recreational equipment, counseling and guidance. Among many endeavors, DeepBlueRipple brings music both in the forms of live musicians and in donations

Conscious Calling

of percussion instruments to Westham Children's Home (Hanover, JA), a home for mentally and physically disabled children. DeepBlueRipple also specializes in sustainable tourism, forming local business alliances to keep tourist dollars in the Negril community. Philanthropy thru Fun! Negril, JA, January 24-31, 2009! www.chny.org

Promoting Cultural Diversity

Phil and Sherri Rowe, promoters of Ocean State Reggae Festival write, "Our event is unique in that it takes place in a New England beachfront community, a difficult spot to establish reggae. We strive to promote cultural diversity in a predominantly white community with limited exposure to the genre. We have contributed to Jampact (Jamaican Impact) to assist hurricane victims and those in need of schools in JA. Another charity we are proud to support is Hands, Hearts and Homes who provide permanent shelters for foster children and wards of the state in both RI and CT." www.oceanstatereggae.com

Native Perspective

Alex Peacemaker of British Columbia promotes two events for native people, the Sinixt, in a campaign for identity: "I coordinate the music program for the Sinixt Native Indian Nation located in the Nelson, BC area. We do two fests every summer; the Shwan'ix'qa Roots Music Festival (including Froggy Fest for children and adult bands in the evening) and the three-day Sinixt Barter Fair. Both have an eclectic world music lineup with about half reggae. Last year we featured a host of local reggae bands and Earl Sundance came in from Hawaii. This year's acts are: Ojiji (former lead singer from Messenjah), plus the return of Earl Sundance the Ebony Indian."

To give a perspective on the Sinixt, read on: The Sinixt Native Indian people are the original "Mother Tribe" inhabitants of the region now called the West Kootenays, BC, Canada. A colonial genocide was committed against them. A



Clinton Fearon at Organic Planet Festival

By Kyana Taillon



Asheville, NC artist Nicole Potter with West End girls By Bobbe Jacobs



Pedal power is one solution By Kyana Taillon

Exploring music vibes open many doors

By Bobbe Jacobs



bounty was put on the Ancestors: man, woman and child - then the government of Canada declared the remaining survivors "extinct." The Sinixt are the only Native Nation in Canada to have been officially declared extinct by an order in Cabinet of the federal government. Being declared extinct means that the Sinixt have no legal entitlement to an Indian Status card, a Social Insurance number or a medical CareCard. Sinixt children are not entitled to attend public school. All of this makes survival very difficult in the midst of Canadian prosperity. "As long as I am classified an 'extinct' non-person, my territory and the creatures within will continue to be subjected to the untold damage of invading tribes, damaged watersheds and loss of crucial wildlife habitat and endangered species caused by unsustainable mining, logging and urban development," says Lola Campbell. If you would like to know more or have the means to help, please contact: Elmeek'qum (Headman appointed by the Grandmothers) Bob Campbell, (250) 226-6743, extinct1@telus.net.

Teaching Changes for Changing Times

This summer in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western NC, a unique event will be taking place. The Gathering of the Peacemakers: Getting Ready for the Changes is presented as "seven days of conscious instruction and six nights of conscious music." It is a conscious summer vacation that will change your life!

During the day, workshops are offered in areas of appropriate technology such as: solar and wind energy, bio-diesel fuels, living off-the-grid, waste recycling and organic, sustainable, bio-dynamic gardening. Others include: herbal remedies, alternative and holistic healing modalities, yoga, co-housing and intentional communities, wilderness tracking and survival, building your own home, handling your money wisely, conscious parenting, creating and sustaining loving unions and finding your mission in life.

Each evening there are performances by some of the Southeast's best-known conscious recording artists including

Conscious Calling

Corey Harris, Dub Conscious, Laura Reed and Deep Pocket Band, Afromotive, Ras Alan and Chalwa. The nightly concerts are followed by drumming circles, inspiring movies and acoustic music. Guatemalan Mayan Elder Tata Pedro Cruz will also offer ceremonies and speak on the Mayan calendar and prophecies.

"Festivals realign people back onto their path of love and unity. They remind us we can have a great time with just good friends, nature and upful music. Our summer program will take this a step farther by preparing people - physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually - for the coming decades of intense change. We do this with a sense of clarity and celebration," say Robert and Julia Roskind, festival creators and organizers.

For more information on Gathering of the Healers, visit www.onelovepress.com or email Roskind@boone.net.

Go Organic!

Organic Planet Festival (OPF) has an eye on the environment. OPF has featured Prezident Brown, Clinton Fearon, Wisdom and others on the musical bill and a roster of special speakers. In 2007 OPF featured two speakers: Lois Gibbs - who is famous for shutting down Love Canal (toxic waste debacle in Niagara Falls) and helping start the Superfund Cleanup program; and Allison Rogers, who was Ms. Rhode Island and a global warming awareness presenter trained by Al Gore, now working with Nancy Pelosi on the Greening of the Capitol initiative.

Additionally, there is a presentation and workshop tent which shares one-hour sessions on various topics. In '07 the topics included: Organic on a Budget, Green Building, Shade-grown Coffee and Beyond Organic Eating Environmentally on the North Coast.

OPF recycles as much as possible and provides all food vendors with biodegradable foodware. Unfortunately there is no commercial composting facility anywhere nearby, so the biodegradable foodware ends up in the landfill, but that's



Andy Pond and West End boy share a moment with the banjo By Bobbe Jacobs



Eureka Natural Foods' "World's Largest Organic Salad" By Kyana Taillon



Inside the children's story-telling tipi By Gloria Mundi

Bettering our children's lives through music, art and play By Bobbe Jacobs



still better than plastic and styrofoam. Also, all the food and drinks have to be organic.

OPF offers 50-60 organic and natural product exhibitors and non-profit info booths so people can browse, shop and learn. Their goal is to make the event fun for the whole family while still making it educational as well. "Did I mention we have the World's Largest Organic Salad?" queries Matt Lang, Festival Coordinator, Organic Planet Festival, www.organicplanetfestival.org

Large Operations Call for Personal Responsibility

Keeping Reggae Rising (known for years as Reggae on the River) clean and green is becoming more and more important, as we collectively shift towards stewardship of our neighborhood and our planet.

15,000 festival-goers create garbage and recycling in staggering amounts. Behind the curtain, there are 300 people on the recycling crew, working extremely hard to keep the grounds clean and green. Extensive on-site recycling efforts reclaim and separate: plastic, glass, aluminum, cardboard, steel, tin, wood, compostable materials, as well as hazardous wastes, such as propane canisters, paint, batteries and light bulbs. The recycling and the garbage is gathered by hand and brought to one of three areas at the venue. It is held in 24 separate 40-yard steel bins. These bins are loaded and taken off site by contracted professionals, where even further sorting takes place.

The human work force that cleans this event runs crews of six people through specific areas from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., with a late-night crew that works till 5 a.m. Recycling coordinators and the many other staff coordinators throughout the show work 20-hour shifts to facilitate a smooth-running festival.

In the midst of doing everything that can be done to manage the waste, what is really needed is more effort from the public to make it truly a green event.

Festival-goers can sincerely participate in the overall green effort by bringing more food and general supplies in bulk (less packaging), including beverages

Conscious Calling

in two-liter, one-gallon or five-gallon containers, beer in cylinders or kegs when possible. This reduces waste at the show. It takes significant preparation, when time is hard to come by – but this is it! This is something people can do to help an event be green.

Compostable silverware and cups are used in approximately 80% of the food vending, and while some of these products do not function as well as conventional plastics, they are getting better all the time. You can also buy food-based dinnerware as well as post-consumer recycled paper towels, plates, etc. before the show and use them in your campsites or bring your own utensils from home to stem the flow of waste.

The personal involvement of fans can help – big time – when they simply sort their trash at the waste can stations. There are 1,600 barrels in stations of six



Allison Rogers, global climate change expert, trained by Al Gore By Paul Lanzi

at Reggae Rising. All of the nearly 300 refuse and recycling stations throughout the venue are set up exactly the same, to make it easy for people to use.

“Our entire staff works so hard to present a festival of this size and caliber. Please join us in taking every step possible to help put the ‘Green’ in the red, gold and green,” says Pepper Sanborn, Recycling Coordinator, Reggae Rising. www.reggaerising.com

I hope you have enjoyed this brief tour of conscious-raising festivals. As stressed by Pepper Sanborn, it is our own personal involvement and participation that makes an event green. On the wider front of social issues, change begins with our own awareness, and greater still, our own call to action. Festivals at their best are microcosms of the world we live in. If we can take the positive vibes and teachings from festivals into the daily walk of our lives, we may begin to answer the calling. ☺

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