

“Priceless is Coming”



This place was my grandfather's farm. It carried that family, including my mother, through the depths of The Great Depression on the cream from just 28 cows. They made that milk from the corn and alfalfa grown here on soil rich from barn manure. There was never a petrochemical sprayed across these fields. Now, we are understanding how fortunate that is.

I came here as a child. In those days, many of my friends also had roots in old family farms which they, too, visited to see grandparents, great uncles, and spinster aunts. We chased frogs and dug ditches. There were snakes, skinks, hawks, owls, and rabbits, always plenty of rabbits. And, here, there still are. This is because we have learned to value and protect them along with anything called Nature. And, it is because we work hard not to overuse or abuse.

We are above an underground lake, here. Cool water is only 2 to 20 feet down across the whole of this land, which we now call Green Island. We could feed cities, even civilizations, on the water that can be raised from beneath this soil. Does that mean it can be wasted, claimed, taken, drained, polluted? Does that even mean it's ours?

It is only passing through.

This water moves quietly down to a creek, which flows into a river; that river joins the Mississippi, and goes to the gulf, and then to the ocean. In fact, ground waters from all across my county are moving through fields, and under farms, past

wells, through ponds, under pipelines, around gas tanks, past foundations, through septic systems and on their way to where? Well on their way to the neighbor's place. Then, on from that neighbor to the next, and the next, and the next.

This is our sea of common wealth on the move and at risk at every point. Carelessness is common. Carelessness means not even caring, and that is everywhere. So, here is a common wealth which is readily hoarded, frequently damaged, and often ignored.

But, on our land we treasure it, we talk about it, we teach about it. Our trees use it in honest amounts and our soil returns it undamaged. We draw the smallest portion for our gardens and we send it back fully aware of what we've been given.

We know it is common: commonly forgotten, commonly ignored, commonly compromised.

But pricelessness is coming.

By Kent Scheer & Vicki Chepulis