

Shutting off the Tap A Water Conservation Challenge

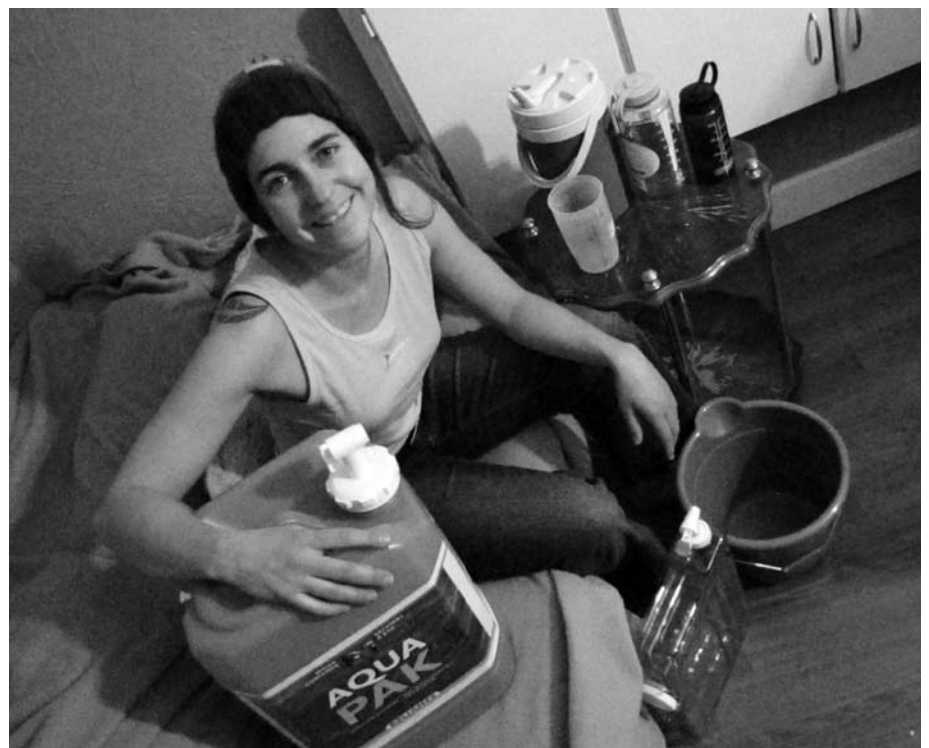
By Alina Siegfried
Saskatchewan Environmental Society

In a country like Canada, where we each use an average of 329 litres of water per day in our homes, is it possible to stay healthy and hygienic using only 25 litres per day for all basic water needs?

I plan to find out during a very dry month of March. Myself, along with more than a dozen other participants across Canada, will be meeting all our water needs, including drinking, cooking, cleaning, laundry, bathing and toilet flushing, using no more than a total of 25 litres per day of precious blue gold.

Is this even possible you may ask? This figure is half of what the United Nations considers the minimum daily allotment to meet basic water needs. Out of guilt at my usually decadent western lifestyle of water consumption (even the most frugal water consumer in our society uses far more than many in developing nations), I figure it is only fair for me to survive on half of what the UN recommends for the short timeframe of a month. For despite this recommendation, over 1.1 billion people worldwide still live with no access whatsoever to safe drinking water. 80% of China's rivers are so polluted that they no longer support aquatic life. Less than 3% of residents of Jakarta, Indonesia are connected to a sewer system, which has led to widespread contamination of rivers, lakes and groundwater systems.

Although this sounds very challenging, people in Saskatchewan were surviving without plumbing in their homes as little as 30 years ago. Using jugs, measuring cups and a well-kept water journal, I will



log my water use every day, and track my progress throughout the month on an online blog. You can follow my blog at: <http://saskatchewanenvironmentalsociety.blogspot.com/>

Track the entire group's progress at: <http://waterconservationchallenge.wordpress.com/>

Also please search for and join my Facebook group "Shutting off the Tap - A Water Conservation Challenge", as I will be posting all sorts of interesting links and videos throughout March.

You can help me save water by filling out a pledge form (available online). These are pledges with a catch...rather than asking for money, I am asking that you pledge a certain amount of water

that you will yourself conserve during the month of March. At the end of the month, myself and my fellow participants will tally up the total to see how much water was collectively saved. With participants all over the country recruiting friends, family and supporters, there is the potential to save hundreds of thousands of litres of water!

If you are really keen, consider joining the challenge in its entirety and using only 25 litres per day yourself. It's not as hard as it sounds! Please email water_challenge@yahoo.com if you are interested in joining us and rallying your friends and family to conserve water!

Bring on the sponge baths and the bucket laundry, I'm ready for the challenge!



Earthbeat

is a publication of the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation. SCIC is a coalition of organizations involved in international development and committed to the recognition of the dignity of all people and their right to self-determination, to the protection of the world's fragile environment, and to the promotion of global understanding, cooperation, peace and justice.

Publication of this newsletter is possible thanks to the generous support provided by Member Agencies and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency).

We welcome readers' comments and contributions, including donations to help cover production and distribution costs. Put your pen to paper, or your fingers to the keyboard, and send your contributions to: SCIC Newsletter, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK. S4P 2R7



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For more information on the work of SCIC and its Member Agencies, please check out our Web site: www.earthbeat.sk.ca or e-mail: scic@web.net or call 306-757-4669.

Payment of Earthbeat subscriptions (\$10) and Friends of SCIC donations are welcome anytime!

SCIC REPORT

International Development Week 2010

From February 7-13 SCIC celebrated International Development Week 2010. A whirlwind of activities kept all the SCIC team very busy during this 20th year celebration. Not only was International Development Week marking 20 years, it was also the 20th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation Global Citizen Awards. We acknowledged the tireless efforts, progressive thinking, and amazing successes of five people and organizations this year. In Saskatoon hundreds of people attended the Carnival of Solidarity at the University of Saskatchewan where Making the Links Radio, Jeremy Wildeman of Project HOPE, and Isabel Muzichuk were honoured for their global citizenship. Similarly in Regina, one hundred people gathered for a delicious meal and to hear from Rodney Sidloski of HELP International and Daughters of Africa speak about their work and passion for global justice.

An interesting aspect to this year's International Development Week festivities were municipal proclamations. The cities of Saskatoon, Regina and Weyburn all formally proclaimed International Development Week with SCIC. In each city we held small gatherings which were great opportunities for SCIC and Global Citizen Award winners to engage with municipal leaders to highlight the importance of global issues. These gathering also provided a fantastic occasion for SCIC to showcase its newest creation *Under One Sky – Voices of Youth* the video.

This video – created with financial assistance from CIDA, and skillfully produced and edited by Don Kossick and Steve Wolfson – was a special undertaking to mark the 20th anniversary of IDW. The video profiles 10 young Saskatchewan residents who are making a difference in this world. Their experiences are diverse, but through this short video it is



Global Citizen Award winner Rodney Sidloski of HELP International receives his award with two of his nominators.



SCIC Executive Director Debra-Jay Albus speaks about global citizenship at the Regina municipal proclamation for IDW.

clear that each of them is a passionate leader and agent of social change. If you have not seen this video yet, it is a must! You can search for it on youtube or better yet subscribe to the SCIC youtube channel (scicyouth), you can even check it out the link that is located on the SCIC website (www.earthbeat.sk.ca). Also, watch for it airing on SCN in the coming months!

If 2 galas, 3 proclamations, 5 Global Citizen Awards, and 10 youth featured in 1 fantastic video were not enough, SCIC also held three workshop exploring arts and activism with the help of Project HOPE and hip-hop artist Eekwol. We also distributed 25,000 colourful inserts in rural newspapers that not only acknowledged the outstanding international development work of Saskatchewan people, but also challenged readers to correctly answer 10 trivia questions about development. We are pleased to announce that Lisa Ryder from Pennant, SK has won a shiny new ipod RED.

SCIC is thrilled about how much was accomplished over that week, and over the last 20 years! Thanks to all who participated.

International Women's Day Grandmothers' Burden

March 8, 2010 is International Women's Day. This year SCIC is partnering on an event in Regina that is giving special focus to the many grandmothers who are the primary caregivers of their grandchildren. The truth is that grandmothers caring for a second generation are often the reality here in Saskatchewan and also in developing nations.

SCIC represents many organizations doing development work in Africa, and other developing areas of the world where urbanization, migrant labour and of course the pandemic of AIDS has left millions of children orphaned and relying on extended family and grandparents to care for them. Grandmothers, who often raise several grandchildren, take on the financial, physical and emotional stress of added family members. At a time in life when many in Canada contemplate retirement and relaxation, grandmothers in the developing world are taking on an incredible burden.

"The tireless work of several of our member agencies on issues of HIV/AIDS, health education and women's empowerment is helping these grandmothers," says Debra-Jay Albus, Executive Director of SCIC, "In many countries HIV infection rates are being affected by education and family planning. SCIC is proud of this work, but knows that today there are many grandmother-headed households and their stories need to be heard."

At the March 8 event in Regina past Global Citizen Award recipient Dale Dewar will be a keynote speaker. She will be there in her capacity of Physicians for Global Survival Executive Director. Dale will likely speak about her dual experience training health-care providers in countries like Iraq and Ethiopia, and as a physician in Saskatchewan serving Wynyard and the Northern community of LaLoche. Additionally, Muna DeCiman of Daughters of Africa, another Global Citizen Award recipient, will be a panelist at this event.



South African grandmother carries her granddaughter at local women's meeting.

In Saskatoon, International Women's Day is being celebrated a little differently. There they are accepting nominations for Saskatoon's W8. The W8 is the Oxfam alternative to the G8. Oxfam searched out 8 extraordinary women who have dedicated their lives to fighting for health and education in their local communities. Oxfam international is creating a global W8. The Saskatoon W8 is 8 incredible and representative women who are dedicated to social justice in the community. If invited to the

G8, they would bring to the table issues such as Indigenous Rights, Child and Maternal Health, Climate Change, and Women's Rights from a unique, grassroots perspective. The women selected will be involved in a number of events and activities in Saskatoon in the months leading up to the G8/G20 summits at the end of June.

These initiatives, combined with many others around Saskatchewan, ensure that International Women's Day is acknowledged and celebrated!

The 2nd Tragedy of International Development

By Owen Scott

EXPLORING CHANGE Promoting human development and driving extraordinary change requires a solid understanding of the complexities of poverty and the challenges to development that exist in both developing communities and here in Canada.

STUPID PROBLEMS

For the almost 6 million people in rural Malawi who lack access to a safe supply of clean water close to their home, a lack of life-sustaining water is a daily challenge.

More than a challenge though, it's also a tragedy.

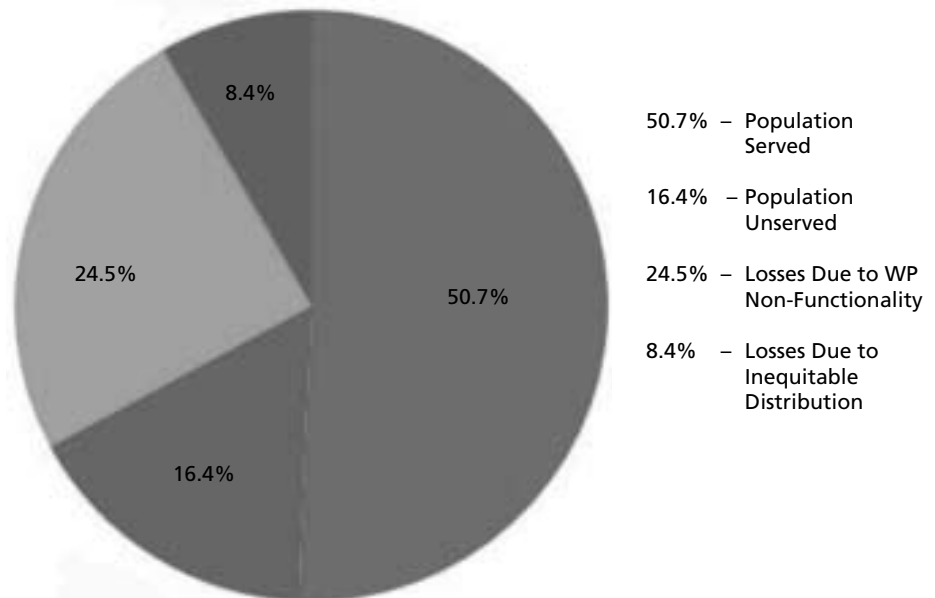
Without a safe water supply, young children become victim to dehydration from diarrheal diseases, leading to over 11,000 preventable deaths caused by diarrhea every year. That's three times the number of kids under 5 years old in Regina, dying every year from something completely preventable.

If that's not a tragedy, then the word has no meaning.

More insidious, but in many ways no less tragic, is the burden of carrying water, which falls almost exclusively on women and girls. Frequently having to travel several kilometers to the nearest water source, women and girls in Malawi lose countless hours, and expend valuable energy, on this inescapable chore. This time and energy could otherwise be spent studying, resting, or growing additional food on the farm, to name only a few alternatives.

Together, these two factors – preventable childhood mortality from diarrheal diseases and chronic fatigue from carrying water – represent what's often called the First Tragedy of international development, poverty itself. The First Tragedy is enough to get people caring. You can take the underlying statistics, add a few sad looking pictures, and start a fundraising campaign. People will donate. People will support your work.

Malawi Water Coverage



However, all of this neglects the Second Tragedy, the fact that things don't need to be this way. Over the last 40 years Malawi has received enough investment in its water infrastructure that rural water coverage could be 82% and growing, instead of being at only 50.7% today. The difference would be almost another 4 million people with clean water access.

The problems are simple – too simple. Infuriatingly simple.

The first problem is maintenance – everyone wants to install water infrastructure, no one wants to maintain it. \$10,000 pumps sit broken for lack of a \$1 part. Rather than repairing them, international donor countries (like Canada) prefer to pour money into new infrastructure. It's a huge wasted opportunity, and it's measured in human lives.

The second problem is planning. Pressured to spend their budgets quickly, organizations don't plan properly for the location of new infrastructure. The result is that some villages end up with more wells than they need, while other villages are chronically ignored.

This bad planning is exacerbated by commonly held views that foreign aid money needs to “get to the ground”, leading donors to pressure organizations to minimize overhead – a classic case of confusing efficiency with effectiveness.

The result is...well, bad results.

Poor planning means that money spent on water infrastructure doesn't go as far as it can.

So there it is. The pie chart shows the impact of these stupid problems, lack of planning and lack of maintenance, on water access in Malawi. It shows the Second Tragedy of international development. It shows that we need to get smarter, that we need to use our aid money better. It shows the problems that we're working on at Engineers Without Borders. They're pretty important problems. We could use your help.

Owen Scott is a UNB Civil Engineering graduate working with Engineers Without Borders Water-Point Functionality team in Malawi. This article was originally written for The Pillar magazine.

April 22 is Earth Day!

More than 6 million Canadians join 1 billion people in over 170 countries in staging events and projects to address local environmental issues. Nearly every school child in Canada takes part in an Earth Day activity.

Environmental challenges abound as our daily actions pollute and degrade the fragile environment that humans and wildlife depend on to survive.

What can we do?

Earth Day provides the opportunity for positive actions and results.

First launched as an environmental awareness event in the United States in 1970, Earth Day (April 22) is celebrated as the birth of the environmental movement.

Earth Day is a powerful catalyst for change. The first Earth Day, spearheaded by Wisconsin Governor Gaylord Nelson and Harvard University student Denis Hayes, involved 20 million participants in teach-ins that addressed decades of environmental pollution. The event inspired the US Congress to pass clean air and water acts, and establish the Environmental Protection Agency to research and monitor environmental issues and enforce environmental laws.

In 1990, two million Canadians joined 200 million people in 141 nations in celebrating the first International Earth Day. In many countries, the global event brought pressure on heads of state to take part in the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro to address issues such as climate change and the world wide loss of species.

In Canada, Earth Day has grown into Earth Week and even Earth Month to accommodate the profusion of events and projects. They range from large public events, such as Victoria's Earth Walk, Edmonton's Earth Day Festival at Hawrelak Park, and Oakville, Ontario's Waterways Clean-up to the thousands of small, private events staged by schools, employee groups and community groups. Here in Saskatchewan there will be many events taking place during the week. Here are two!

What about You?

Consider what you can personally do this Earth Day. Challenge yourself to waste less water, or only use reusable shopping bags. Too easy? Why not give up driving for all of April or commit to only eating local food! If you are pushing your limits for the earth, we would like to hear about it. Email your commitment to the planet to communications@earthbeat.sk.ca

Craik Earth Day Film Festival

April 23-25, 2010
Craik Legion Hall on Main Street

Films, workshops, EatLocal food, guest speakers, networking fair, eco-tours and more!

Some of the films you are likely to see are: *My Toxic Baby*, *The Quantum Activist*, *Over Land* and much more!!

This event was founded by the Saskatchewan Eco Network. Check out <http://www.econet.sk.ca/> for more information.

Regina Activist Awards and Environmental Film Festival

Exact dates still to be confirmed.
Royal Saskatchewan Museum

Keep your ear to the ground for this exciting event taking place in April.

This event will be brought to you by SCIC and the Saskatchewan Eco Network.



Changing Behaviour: Water and sanitation work in Malawi

I have spent the last two days on the back of a moto flying through the hills and down the rutted paths of the Mzimba district. Mr. Chuma, the water monitoring assistant (WMA) I am working with, and I visited seven villages to set up times for implementing Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and the Malawi WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) Movement Initiative. Both programs are similar in terms of the desired outcomes: empowering communities to adopt the use of latrines with a drop-hole cover.

CLTS is based on the principle that once a community realizes that they are eating their own and their neighbor's feces (through contamination of food by unclean hands, flies, and other insects) they will take collective action to improvise latrines and ensure that the whole community starts using these latrines and moves towards becoming open defecation free (ODF). CLTS follows a 'hands-off' facilitation style which allows communities members to make their own conclusions about their sanitation situation, no matter the result, CLTS does not provide any hardware subsidy, relying on the ingenuity and innovation of the community to build and design their latrines. CLTS began and was successful in many communities in Bangladesh and has since spread to different communities in Asia and Africa.

The Malawi WASH Movement Initiative (MWMI), like CLTS, comes from the idea that for sanitation programs (or development projects in general) to be successful, the community must feel ownership over it and thoroughly understand the benefits thus wanting to change their behavior. The MWMI works with children in communities



Colleen and a woman from a CLTS community in Mzimba district.

and attempts to – with more of an external push than with CLTS – get them excited about sanitation: adopting the use of latrines and practicing hand washing with soap at home. The children make up 'pro-sanitation' song to sing in their communities and visit each of the houses in their village to assess their sanitation condition. The children then tell the households that they will be returning for another visit to see if any improvements have been made. The idea, like with CLTS, is that after openly discussing open defecation, people will feel disgusted and ashamed with themselves and will take it upon themselves to change their practices.

It will be interesting to see how these programs are implemented and the opportunities/challenges they present in different villages. I am encouraged by the philosophies each program is based upon, I just wonder how this will translate into actual implementation during the next three months I will be here.

This article is taken from a blog written by Colleen Steele, an Engineers Without Borders volunteer who worked in Malawi. There she worked with the Mzimba district water office. Colleen is a student at the University of Saskatchewan where she studies Engineering and Gender Studies.

World Relief Canada

World Relief Canada is an international relief and development (R&D) organization, which partners with Christian networks around the world. With these partners, WRCanada works to build communities in post disaster situations and meet the needs of people caught in the hopeless cycle of poverty. Our main sectors of work involve microfinance, food security, water and sanitation, health education, as well as relief and rehabilitation.

World Relief Canada's Vision is to see people responding, with compassion and justice, to the needs of the poor, oppressed and suffering in ways that bring healing and transformation in the world's poorest communities.

In the microfinance sector World Relief Canada receives support from CIDA as well as SCIC.

Having few assets, the poor who own very small businesses have little or no access to services such as credit and savings mechanisms. World Relief Canada's microfinance programs have proven that these hardworking entrepreneurs are well worth the risk.

Our microfinance programs provide entrepreneurs with access to credit and savings services along with related technical training. Loans are provided to individuals or to solidarity groups that co-guarantee each other's loan. With increased access to capital, small business people can increase their inventories or purchase productive assets. The resulting increase in income enables beneficiary families to meet their basic needs. The original loan capital, once repaid, becomes available for the next group of recipients. This sustainable approach to development ensures that credit and savings services remain available in the communities we serve for years to come.

At the moment World Relief Canada is involved in microfinance in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Burundi, Kenya, Liberia and Rwanda.

CASE STUDY:

Client of Koinonia, World Relief Canada's Microfinance Partner in Bangladesh

Story: Jorina Khatun [age 40], and husband Nazim Uwdin [age 60], live in Balia Village, Natore District of Bangladesh. In 2005 Jorina's husband was ill and she had to go door-to-door begging to survive. Jorina and her husband had received no schooling during their upbringing and were considered "landless poor". Their two

sons had died in an accidental fire and their daughter had drowned. In desperation Jorina joined Nadi "river" women's group of 19 poor women who banded together to receive micro-loans from Koinonia Microfinance, World Relief's partner in Bangladesh providing micro-loans. With her first loan, Jorina bought two goats for Tk 4000 (\$70). In three years these goats produced 15 infant goats, 7 of which were sold for Tk 21,000 (\$370). After repaying her 1st loan, Jorina took a 2nd loan for Tk 6000 (\$105) and borrowed Tk 4000 (\$70) from relatives to purchase a

cow. She fattened the cow and sold it for Tk 16,000 (\$280). This funds was used to repay her loan and lease some land for cultivation. Her 3rd and current loan of Tk 8000 was used for refunding her relative and for wholesaling rice. Jorina despite her relative poverty is quite happy. She went from begging just to survive, to raising goats and wholesaling rice for a living. With her leased land she can grow a crop and meet her food needs. Jorina loves her small women's group so much that she wants to continue with it until she dies!





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2138 McIntyre Street
Regina, SK. S4P2R7

Upcoming Opportunities and Events

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MARCH 19-21

At the Table: With the UNFCCC Copenhagen Accord

Albert Community Centre, Heritage Room (610 Clarence Ave.) SASKATOON
6:00-9:00 pm

What happened and where do we go from here? On the opening night of the Oxfam Canada Prairie Regional Assembly, Oxfam Saskatoon is excited to learn more about community members who attended the UNFCCC negotiations in December 2009.

Speakers: Craille Maguire Gillies (Independent Media); Kim Graybiel (Climate Change and Strategic Planning, Government of Saskatchewan); Jeh Custer (Canadian Youth Delegation to Copenhagen)

1. What was your work in the time leading up to the UNFCCC negotiations in Copenhagen?

2. What was it like to be at Copenhagen? What do you think was accomplished or how could more have been accomplished?

3. What do you think is the best way to move forward in terms of next steps towards a fair, ambitious and binding climate deal?

For more information contact Mary Jean Handemaryjeanh@volunteer.oxfam.ca (306) 242-4097.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30 The 2nd Annual Forward Together Lecture

7:30 pm, Education Auditorium,
University of Regina, REGINA
Renowned environmental journalist
Richard Manning lecture "In Wildness
Is the Resurrection of Our World"

Six thousand years of agriculture have created ecological crisis throughout the world, but nowhere is the story more dramatic than in the North American grassland. But here also, nature has given us clear instructions as to how we must redesign agriculture and economy to resurrect the creative power of the plains. These instructions point the way not only to ecological restoration, but also to revived economy and human well-being.

All are welcome; free parking is available in lots 4, 14 and 17 (designated "M" areas only); and a book sale and signing will follow the lecture. Presented by the Presidents of Luther College, Campion College, First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina. For further information contact Jennifer Arends at 306.585.5144, communications@luthercollege.edu or visitwww.luthercollege.edu

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 2-4 Building Sustainable Peace: Global Perspective; Local Applications

Building sustainable peace requires the input of people of all faiths and secular organizations at all levels of society. The lecturer and discussion leader of this weekend school in Regina will be Dr. W. Andy Knight, Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta, a member of the Board of Governors of Canada International Development Research Centre and a member of the board of several other peace and human rights organizations.

Dr. Knight will provide an overview of international, national, regional and local peace building initiatives and needs and address the role of educa-

tion, social and economic development, gender equality, human rights standards, spiritual principles and interfaith understanding in building sustainable peace.

Throughout the weekend, music will be offered by Martin Kerr, a British-born musician based in Edmonton.

Symposium runs from Friday, 2 pm,
April 2 to 1 pm Sunday, April 4.

Free public Lecture and Concert:
Friday, April 2, 7 pm.

Both events will be held in Cathedral Community Centre, 2900-13th Ave Regina. Sponsored by Baha Schools Committee of Saskatchewan. Registration/info: Susan Pezderic (306) 329-4681 or Kendra Reddekopp (306) 937-7670.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 23-25

Craik Earth Day Film Festival

Craik Legion Hall on Main Street
Films, workshops, EatLocal food, guest speakers, networking fair, eco-tours and more!

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Keep your ear to the ground for this exciting event taking place in April. This will be brought to you by SCIC and the Saskatchewan Eco Network.