



Master Design Charrette: Creating a Safe Healing Space

Charrette is a French word which means “cart”. It depicts the cart that proctors circulated to collect the final drawings of art and architecture students during the 19th century in Paris. A current day charrette is a series of collaborative design intensives that harness the ideas, creativity and perspectives from a diverse group of people. On April 26th, young and old, architects, designers, planners, permaculturalist, builders, healers and community folk gathered at the Illinois Institute of Technology Kent School of Law for a collective visioning of the future of Black Oaks on the Savanna in Pembroke Illinois. From the day long session came 5 design plans. All the plans included protecting the endangered black oak wooded areas, stacking of living functions for permanent and temporary residents. A

healing center & food production. Ecological water and waste management as well as the use of renewable energies. Students from Betty Shabazz International Charter School, Muhammad University of Islam, Sutherland School, Science Academy of Chicago and St. Johns De La Salle engaged with a wide array of graduate students and prominent green architects, designers and planners. The Illinois Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects chimed in too! People came from as far as the Pacific Northwest, Denver Colorado, Pittsburgh Pa. and Detroit Michigan. All this was generated from the efforts of Dan Hatch, a board member for the na-

tional organization *Architects, Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility*. ADPSR works for peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice, and the development of healthy communities. “We believe that design practitioners have a significant role to play in the well-being of our communities.” Dan said. From this community project, new links to ecologically focused design firms have broadened the scope of ADPSR here in Chicago. This was the 1st of a series of charrettes.

The next charrette is June 14th. Join us (see the back page) THANKS!!! We couldn't do it without you!!!

The Grandmother of Black Oaks Returns to the Land Again

by Jifunza C.A.Wright Carter M.D., M.P.H.

Over 70 years ago, Nana Ama Clemmie Burns Wright sped away from Amory Mississippi as a toddler along with her 7 brothers and sisters, her mother and father on the back of a pick up truck. “My mother was committed to give us all a better life” she recalls on the eve of her 78th birthday. “She was determined to leave sharecropping, lynching and all the injustices that came with living in the south.” The Burns family left their shotgun house. The first stop was

Paducah, Kentucky. That was the last time she recalls seeing her mother’s mother, Mattie Ann Wise. She was a short lady with a stern look on her ruddy face and 2 braids that went down her back. After a terrible flood, the family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, then on to Dayton. The last stop was Cleveland. Her father missed the land. He knew well how to grow food for his hungry children. He returned to Mississippi

after having a difficult time finding work in the city. “Dad had been on a farm all his life then to have to be in a city where there was no farming at all. That was very difficult” Ama reflects. “Mother’s will prevailed and Daddy joined us in Ohio” she recalls. “Mother was kind of psychic. She always prayed and asked for guidance to do what was best for everyone.” Ama says.

Special points of interest:

- *Preparing the Community for an Energy Descent (2)*
- *Practical Tips towards a Lower Energy Lifestyle (3)*
- *L is for the Land: the Next E-WALES Meeting June 11th 2008 (3)*
- *Charrette Round 2 at Black Oaks on the Savanna, Your Invitation (4)*

Preparing the Community for an Energy Descent

by Fred and Jifunza Wright Carter

In facing rising fuel prices, its impact on the economy and our daily lives, we've had to take inventory of what we have accomplished, where we are going and how we are going to get our community down the road towards an energy descent in a way that is beneficial. We dusted off the strategic planning notes from the community visioning held at the Center for Neighborhood Technology and the Women's Business Development Center in 2006. Let's all re-look at this, see how well we have progressed, what we left out or would change and what will it take. Once again, thanks Heather Parish and Rufaro Prim for crystallizing this. Here are some the highlights:

Value Statement

- learning how to function as a collective and working for the greater good of the whole.
- honoring the sacredness of life.
- educating about sustainable ecological living, energy efficiency and conservation.
- community self sufficiency and determination.
- strengthening the family.

3 Year Practical Vision

- buy and generate local goods and services
- develop personal conservation practices:

recycle, less wasteful, energy conservation (increasing the energy efficiency of our homes)

- engaging in cooperative efforts (food, energy, housing etc)
- producing edible landscapes yielding 50% food consumption and 20% from the region.
- Community energy audits and successful community conservations projects
- Community posters, billboards, murals in key locations to educate.

5 year Practical Vision

- Conservation skills taught to and through youth.
- Urban Farming
- Modeling sustainable economic development, a replicable structure
- 40% of all affordable housing to be energy efficient
- Community Based Self Care Lifestyle Interventions

Blog us and give us feedback, resources...

The Grandmother of Black Oaks Returns to the Land Cont.

Indeed her mother's tenacity paid off. Ama was able to get a quality education, acquire clerical and bookkeeping skills and above all, she married a wonderful man, Charles H. Wright, a master plumber. She gave birth to 4 talented daughters and ran the back room of the family business. "My children went on to get an even better education. They are 2doctors, a teacher and a nurse."

Through 43 years of a happy marriage, Nana longed for the land. Holidays and family celebrations were held in the great outdoors. She took every chance to grow

something. While her husband loved the lap of luxury on their weekend get-always, Ama was content with going the rustic route with few amenities. "I was very happy when my daughter Jifunza and her husband Fred got the land. Some of the funniest times I had with my sister Ruth and my brother Lee was here at Black Oaks, making bond fires, sleeping in tents and planting gardens. I knew this is where I wanted to spend the rest of my life." So

"I want to wake up to the rooster's call, go for a walk in the woods and water the garden"

once again, she packed her belongings in a truck and moved them this time to Black Oaks Center on the Savanna where she looks forward to completing her cabin to live an earthly life. "I want to wake up to the rooster's call, go for a walk in the woods and water the garden" Ama smiles.

It is good to be back on the land again!

Practical Tips towards a Lower Energy Lifestyle

Transportation

- walk, bike, skate, take public transportation
- do I-GO
- carpool
- GO SLOWER!!!!
- time the lights
- plan your trips and your route
- fuel stretchers???? (do they really work??? blog us and let us know)

Food

- collectively buy in bulk
- store 2-4 months of food
- plan your meals
- do raw or low to no cooking
- Keep supplements, herbs and health items well stocked
- put in an edible garden instead of a lawn.
- buy and support local food production

Housing

- caulk, weather-strip, plug the leaks, super insulate
- keep thermostats lower in the winter, higher in the summer
- keep southern sun exposure down in the summer and max it in the winter
- dress for the weather inside your house
- Let cool breezes in and keep hot air out in the summer

E-WALES Meeting June 11, 2008:

L is for the Land: A Listening for Local Food Systems and Security

The next E-WALES meeting will be held at Chicago State University from 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday June 11th.

The focus is on “L”: the land, listening and local food safety, security and systems.

We will be joined by new consortium members from the Pembroke Hopkins Park community, Johari Cassime Cole of the Multi Talent Resource Center. She

along with the Urban Juncture Inc. and the Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force will conduct a Listening and Information session which will be submitted to the Governor’s Task Force for proposed recommendations to Illinois legislators. “We need to hear from communities of color concerning food access, availability, prices and food related health disparities” Johari said. “What are the special needs? How to best address low income areas?”. She encourages

the community to show up full force to give and share ideas and solutions. Information on the current state of Illinois food systems, supply and security, farm bill updates, organic vs. conventional farm production, carbon footprints and food desserts will be presented. The gathering of ideas and solutions from community can change and improve local food access.

SAVE THE DATE !!!

E-WALES Consortium

We as African Americans have a God given right to live, work, play, learn and worship in a healthy environment, sustainably. We as have a responsibility to do all that we can personally and collectively to revitalize our communities, to care for and utilize the life sustaining resources of energy, water, air and land (the earth) wisely. Doing so side by side with other communities, will secure present and future resources for our children.

E-Energy: To conserve and efficiently utilize all sources of energy, in every aspect of our lives including: housing, transportation, heating, cooling, our day to day activities and our own personal energy. To learn skills of reducing energy consumption and diversifying energy use including the use of renewable energies such as solar and wind in addition

to fossil fuels.

W-Water: To conserve water in our daily lives. To do what is necessary personally and collectively in community to contribute to cleansing our water supplies of pollutants.

A-Air: To personally and collectively alter our day to day activities to contribute to significant reductions in CO2 emissions and other harmful air pollutants.

L-Land: To reconnect our communities to the land, nature, the Earth. To do what is necessary to care for the Earth to rid it of harmful pollutants and to work with the Earth to feed our communities. To ensure food security and safety for our families. To live in beauty and balance

E-Economic Relocalization: In reducing our energy consumption and acting responsibly

in our environment, we commit to building local economies with and for our children. To be producers of goods and services. To learn skills of self sufficiency.

S-Sustainability

As the San Kofa bird returns and fetches, we acknowledge our Ancient Ancestors who mastered living in balance and harmony with nature. We call upon the higher aspects of ourselves to embrace neighborliness over competition as we live for the greater good of our communities, not individualism. In the transformation of ourselves and our relationships we will in unity, transform the quality of our lives and the quality of our environment. We commit to live the highest expression of our humanity in the face of resource depletion and climate change.

BLACK OAKS CENTER FOR
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*A clearing for transitioning to a
post carbon world*

The mission of the Black Oaks Center for Sustainable Renewable Living is to heighten awareness of resource depletion and our dependency on fossil fuels. Our focus is Indigenous communities from urban to rural. Trainings in energy conservation, energy efficient housing, permaculture, renewable energies and survival wilderness trainings are offered to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels as well as production of CO2 emissions. Experiences in being collective and team building are fostered to transform attitudes of individuality into one with the best interest of everyone in heart and mind. Our vision is to create a life boat full of families who have mastered the skills of sustainability that will assist our people and humanity in successfully transitioning to a post carbon

www.blackoakscenterblogspot.com

Your Invitation

WE ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING SAFE HEALING SPACES

MASTER PLAN DESIGN CHARRETTE: ROUND 2 ON THE SAVANNA

OUR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN PROCESS IS ON THE WAY

PLEASE JOIN US

SATURDAY JUNE 14, 2008

10 TO 4

BLACK OAKS CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE RENEWABLE LIVING

14485 3000 SOUTH ROAD

PEMBROKE TOWNSHIP, ILLINOIS

for details: the next steps, car pooling, diesel bus charter, go to the blog:

www.blackoakscenterblogspot.com