

# Planetary Village Celebrations ahoy!

Seasonal celebrations in traditional cultures were essential for the well-being of the land and the people. Therefore it was natural that communities would put a lot of knowledge, time and effort into preparing them. In our time people seem busier than ever just keeping up with the demands of daily life and preparing celebrations is often on the end of our long list of things to do. In fact, some say, the 'Art of Celebration' is an art that is getting lost. How can we bring it back into our lives?

A year ago I coined an expression for my self-proclaimed profession: 'Celebration Activist'. Why? I felt the world and my own life needed more celebration. And activists are self-empowered people who will just do what needs to be done to create the world they want to live in. So, a 'Celebration Activist' is someone for whom celebration is so important that they spend a good portion of their lives practicing this art and thus make celebration happen wherever they go!

You see, beauty and celebration for some people is the icing on the cake. For others this is the food by which we live our daily lives!

In 2006 a group of three 'Celebration Activists' met in Findhorn to conspire for a solstice celebration: Francois Monnet, French trans-cultural artist, Ian Turnbull, dreamer in stone and builder of the Nature sanctuary and myself, Barbara Swetina, minstrel and musician of many skills.

We constructed a huge sun puppet with moveable arms to parade around with us (an effective way to have the sun shine whenever needed). Forming an improvised gypsy-band we played wild music against the howling winds and despite of the poor weather people joined us for dancing and singing in the dunes during our solstice ritual.

In looking for materials for the puppet Francois commented: 'You, as a community, should have a whole department dedicated to celebration, with materials, costumes etc.!' 'Great idea', I thought, 'but there is no budget!' We scraped and borrowed and paid for all costs ourselves, but decided to keep holding the vision for a 'Celebration Department' in Findhorn. Francois even started imagining a 'School of Celebration', where the art of celebration could be taught and practiced!

For midsummer 07 the three of us started to plan early. We wanted a week full of celebration, a participatory play-shop with the purpose to create a rich





Solstice ritual for and with the community. Flyers were sent out by e-mail and in response a group of friends gathered in the park for maybe the first 'Planetary Village Celebration' ever: participants included Foundation members, some people from abroad, as well as people from the wider community.



Having held the vision for more funds, things we needed appeared almost magically: Ecopia and NFA provided the start up money for materials, an enthusiastic private sponsor helped to pay for our expenses, the Findhorn Foundation gave us a meeting space in the yurt and the Hall helped us out with costumes! Thank you Universe, thank you angels!!



We had no plan, except to look out for the beauty in every moment and to use any excuse to celebrate life. There were many spontaneous outbursts of music and song, costume making and dancing, as well as two wedding anniversaries, one birthday, a community BBQ and a night under the stars, dancing by the fire. The final highlight was a magical pageant in the hall followed by a ritual walk and feast in the woods.



Characters of that last evening included Pan, the Longest Day (a man on stilts and in a high hat), Puck, the Prince and Princess of Spring who handed the staff of the seasons to the King and Queen of Summer, and various fairies, trolls, imps, and musicians. Francois, our theatre director, gave each person lines of conduct and ideas around which to build their character. After that we were free to act as we pleased. Therefore the performance was always fresh, alive and in the moment!



After all characters had been introduced in the Hall we asked our audience outside and guided them on a mystery walk. Singing at the love wells and passing through the veil between the worlds, we met Pan and other figures, who addressed the audience with messages from the natural world. The whole pageant ended with a fairy feast in the middle of the woods, with drink, cake and dancing for all. Wow, what an evening, what a week! It was truly a magical! And it was so well received that people asked if it would become an annual event.

So, the answer is: Yes, we are planning another event next summer, in the week from the 15th to the 22nd of June, in the Park in Findhorn.

So, if anyone feels inspired to be part of such frolic and fun get in touch with me, Barbara for info and bookings or look into my website. [barbara@sacredsongs.net](mailto:barbara@sacredsongs.net) [www.sacredsongs.net](http://www.sacredsongs.net)

