

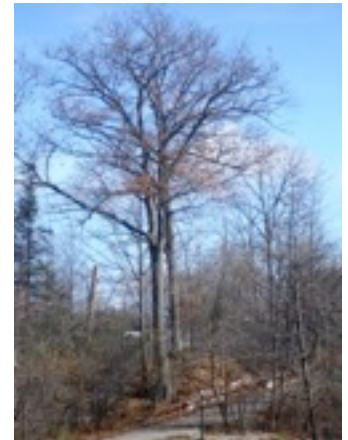
**“We are the Earth”** - a personal perspective (from former TWS parent Vibeke Ball)

*“Geomancy explores the realm where human consciousness meets and dialogues with the Spirit of the Earth. It empowers the harmonious interaction between person and place.”*

*Marko Pogacnik ( from his website)*

There was a group of 30 people walking around the Toronto Waldorf School campus on the last Wednesday in October in the light drizzle. They are part of a group learning about Geomancy with Marko Pogacnik from Slovenia. As a sculptor and lover of the Earth, Marko has written many books, including his most recent title “Sacred Geography” which outlines a form of working with and healing the earth . For Marko this work began in the seventies and has now taken him all over the world including Europe, South and North America. Two of Marko’s daughters share the connection to and love of the earth. They often work with him, in fact Ana Pogacnik, hosted by Arscura School for Living Art, came to work in our area four times in the last two years. With Ana we learned how to listen to the landscape that supports and holds our community. Ana, who studied archaeology at University, has developed her own educational program called “The Deeper Cognition of Landscape”. Marko and Ana have created a North American school of Geomancy; two of the faculty at TWS, Sandi Churchward and Elyse Pomeranz have completed this two year course.

Our group began the day at a huge oak tree that children pass everyday as they walk the path between the school and the parking lot. This oak is truly impressive in size and I sheepishly confess that in the 13 years I have been coming to this campus I have not noticed it and I consider myself to be an observant person and someone who truly loves nature and the Earth. Our family donates the earth flag that has been seen for a time flying on the flagpole. Marko tells us that this tree is the **guardian** of the campus. I notice with curiosity that its branches reach towards the west and the school. I remember that oak is one of the hardest woods and I have observed that in the fall long after the other trees have dropped their leaves the oak is still ‘holding on’. I also notice with interest that this statuesque oak seems to have a partner that stands very close and is of similar size.



After this we turn our attention to the **swamp** that lies on the south side of the driveway before the bridge. The swamp, Marko says, is teeming with life and compares it to our metabolic system where our food is transformed; a perfect description for me of the importance of a swamp. I notice how the people in our group feel the strong boundaries of this place and I think back to when our daughter Sunni was at the school and we had to rescue the beavers that had made their home in the swamp. Beavers are such hard workers.

Next we go to the platform that overlooks the ravine that follows the north side of the property. This ravine is likened to the spine or backbone of the campus and has an almost primordial or **primeval** feel to it. We do a meditation here that connects us in an imaginative way to the power that lives here. Personally I have an awareness of a huge and powerful dragon moving through the landscape. Of course the strong life force is evident in this ravine. I think how fortunate we are to have this ‘wildness’ on the property.

At the back of the property in the small sheep pasture we all stand quietly and try to perceive this particular spot. Of course we are not told ahead of time what this spot is so we can have our own experience and not step into the power of suggestion. For the most part everyone feels a very positive energy in this location. People share their perceptions of this spot in the landscape and of course, as individuals, we perceive in different ways: some feel it in their bodies, some have an imagination, and some receive words. We learn that the earth is actively producing new qualities and they express themselves in places such as this which Marko called a **Gaia** place.

As Marko said, "Our body is our landscape and we need to have a relationship with it. If we feel at home within our body, then wherever we are, we are at home and we serve the life of the earth. We have lived on the earth long enough as if it were an object. The intelligence of Gaia is within us and is working through us if we want to collaborate with her in working on the landscape." Just as listening and turning our attention to one another deepens and enlivens relationship and our well being, so does seeking communication and connection with the living aspect of the land.

This group ,comprised of students, teachers, parents ( present and former) members of TWS, AHWS, Hesperus, the Dowser's association and Arscura also spent the next day exploring the Humber Bay, Humber River area as this represents a very significant place for the whole city of Toronto.

*A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. - Henry David Thoreau*

If you are interested in this work please feel free to contact: [churchward.venne@sympatico.ca](mailto:churchward.venne@sympatico.ca) or for more information [www.markopogacnik.com](http://www.markopogacnik.com) or [www.lifenethome.org](http://www.lifenethome.org)



Graffiti under a bridge over the Humber river where we worked as a group on our final day.

Marko found the bridge over the Humber Bay near the lake to be an important place for the whole GTA.

These two photos were taken at the edge of the ravine on the Toronto Waldorf School property. The cosmogram was made by the whole group out of sand. Photo on the right is Marko.

