

The Go-Back Club

Newsletter of the Simple-Living Brigade

December 2013

Thirty-six members in seven states, the District of Columbia and three countries.

Eight Tribes That Are Way Ahead of the Climate-Adaptation Curve

By Terri Hansen

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Much has been made of the need to develop climate-change-adaptation plans, especially in light of increasingly alarming findings about how swiftly the environment that sustains life as we know it is deteriorating and how the changes compound one another to quicken the pace overall. Studies and numerous climate models, and the re-analysis of said studies and climate models, all point to humankind as the main driver of these changes. In all these dire pronouncements and warnings there is one bright spot: It may not be too late to turn the tide and pull Mother Earth back from the brink.

None of this is new to the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island. Besides already understanding much about environmental issues via millennia of historical perspective, Natives are at the forefront of these changes and have been forced to adapt. Combining their preexisting knowledge with their still-keen ability to read environmental signs, these tribes are way ahead of the curve, with climate-change plans either in the making or already in effect.

1. Swinomish Tribe: From Proclamation to Action

On the southeastern peninsula of Fidalgo Island in Washington State, the Swinomish were the first tribal nation to pass a Climate Change Proclamation, which they did in 2007. Since then they have implemented a concrete action plan.

The catalyst came in 2006, when a strong storm surge pushed tides several feet above normal, flooding and damaging reservation property. Heightening awareness of climate change in general, it became the tribe's impetus for determining appropriate responses. The tribe began a two-year project in 2008, issued an impact report in



Photo: Newtok Planning Group

Native Alaskan village Newtok had to relocate as its shoreline washed away because of melting permafrost.

2009 and an action plan in 2010, said project coordinator and senior planner Ed Knight. The plan identified a number of proposed "next step" implementation projects, several of them now under way: coastal protection measures, code changes, community health assessment and wildfire protection, among others.

The tribe won funding through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the Administration for Native Americans to support the \$400,000 Swinomish Climate Change Initiative, of which the tribe funded 20 percent. When work began in 2008, most estimates for sea level rise by the end of the century were in the range of one to one-and-a-half feet, with temperature changes ranging from three to five degrees Fahrenheit, said Knight. But

those estimates did not take into account major melting in the Arctic, Antarctica and Greenland, he said.

"Now, the latest reports reflect accelerated rates" of sea level rise and temperature increases, Knight said. Those are three to four feet or more, and six to nine degrees Fahrenheit, respectively, by 2100. "We are currently passing 400 ppm of CO₂, on track for [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] worst-case scenarios."

Since the Swinomish started work on climate issues, many tribes across the country have become active on these issues as they also realize the potential impacts to their communities and resources. The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) has been funded

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over the last few years to conduct climate adaptation training, Knight said, “and probably more than 100 tribes have now received training on this.”

2. Jamestown S’Klallam: Rising Sea Levels and Ocean Acidification

Jamestown S’Klallam tribal citizens live in an ecosystem that has sustained them for thousands of years on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State. Over the past two centuries they have successfully navigated societal changes, all while maintaining a connection to the resource-rich ecosystem of the region. Though they have also adapted to past climate variations, the magnitude and rapid rate of current and projected climate change prompted them to step it up. That became apparent when tribal members noticed ocean acidification in the failure of oyster and shellfish larvae.

“Everyone who was part of the advisory group all had their personal testimony as to the changes they’d seen,” said Hansi Hals, the tribe’s environmental planning program manager, describing a meeting of a sideline group. “Everybody had something to say.”

Tribal members brought their concerns to the attention of the Natural Resources committee and tribal council three years ago, Hals said. This past summer they released their climate vulnerability assessment and adaptation plan, which identified key tribal resources, outlined the expected impacts from climate change and created adaptation strategies for each resource. It included sea-level-rise maps for three time frames, near (low), mid-century (medium) and end of century (high).

3. Mescalero Apache: Bolstering Tribal Resilience

Tribal lands of the Mescalero Apache in southwestern New Mexico flank the Sacramento Mountains and border Lincoln National Forest, where increased frequency and intensity of wildfires is due to drought-compromised woodlands. Mike Montoya, director of the Mescalero Apache Tribe’s Fisheries Department, executive director of the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission and project leader for the Sovereign Nations Service Corps, a Mescalero-based AmeriCorps program, has observed



Photo courtesy Mescalero Apache Tribe

Mescalero Apache Tribe’s holding pond can contain 500,000 gallons of water, nourishes the community garden.

climate-driven changes to the landscape in his years in natural resource management.

The tribe has undertaken innovative environmental initiatives to help bolster tribal resilience to climate change impacts, Montoya said. One example is a pond constructed for alternative water supply to the fish hatchery in the event of a catastrophic flood event. It holds 500,000 gallons of water from a river 3,600 feet away.

“It’s all gravity fed,” Montoya said. “Now, with the aid of solar-powered water pumps, we are able to supply water to our community garden.”

4. Karuk Tribe: Defending the Klamath River

With lands within and around the Klamath River and Six Rivers National Forests in northern California, the Klamath Tribe is implementing parts of its Eco-Cultural Resources Management Draft Plan, released in 2010. The plan synthesizes the best available science, locally-relevant observations and Traditional Ecological Knowledge to help the Karuk create an integrated approach to addressing natural

resource management and confront the potential impacts of climate change.

5. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes: Strategic Planning

These tribes, who live in what is today known as Montana, issued a Climate Change Proclamation in November 2012 and adopted a Climate Change Strategic Plan in 2013. The Tribal Science Council identified climate change and traditional ecological knowledge as the top two priorities for tribes across the nation in June 2011, according to Michael Durglo, the tribe’s division of environmental protection manager and climate change planning coordinator, as well as the National Tribal Science Council’s Region 8 representative.

So did the Inter-Tribal Timber Council, which his brother, Jim Durglo, is involved with. In Fall 2012 the confederated tribes received financial support through groups affiliated with the Kresge foundation and from the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative to develop

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What on Earth is The Go-Back Club?

We are a group of people who are willing to use our lives to purposefully go backwards to using less energy, living more simply, etc. When new people sign up, I’ll print their comments here and publish our new membership numbers. For comments, I’ll use initials and states only. No further

demands, no money, just a monthly, online newsletter. If you want to share your new and creative tips, I’ll be happy to publish them. You can reach me at gobackclub@pa.net or <http://www.gobackclub.com> or 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255.



Photo: NAU ITEP

Nez Perce project in northern Idaho “before and after” reforestation damaged land as a means of preserving natural resources and generating jobs and income.

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plans, Michael Durglo said. A year later, in September 2013, the tribes’ Climate Change Strategic Plan was completed and approved by the Tribal Council. Next the tribes will establish a Climate Change Oversight Committee.

“This committee will monitor progress, coordinate funding requests, continue research of [Traditional Ecological Knowledge], incorporate the strategic planning results into other guiding documents such as the Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resource Management Plan and others, and update the plan on a regular basis based on updated science,” said Michael Durglo.

6. Nez Perce: Preservation Via Carbon Sequestration

More than a decade ago the Nez Perce Tribe of the Columbia River Plateau in northern Idaho recognized carbon sequestration on forested lands as a means of preserving natural resources and generating jobs and income, while reducing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. In the mid to late 1990s the Nez Perce Forestry & Fire Management Division developed a carbon offset strategy to market carbon sequestration credits. The purpose of the afforestation project, about 400 acres in size, was to establish marketable carbon offsets, develop an understanding of potential carbon markets and cover the costs of project implementation and administration.

As carbon markets soften and actual project development slows, the tribe cites the increased awareness and education of other tribes of the carbon sales process and opportunities for more carbon sequestration

projects in Indian country as its biggest accomplishment of the last two years.

7. Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians: Attacking Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Photo: NAU ITEP

This tribe in southern California has taken numerous steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the impacts of climate change on tribal peoples, land and resources. In 1998 the tribe formed the Santa Ynez Chumash Environmental Office (SYCEO).

“We are also looking into opening a public compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station (replacing our fleet with CNG vehicles), are installing EV charging stations, implementing an innovative home- and building-upgrade training program through an EPA Climate Showcase Communities grant,” said Santa Ynez environmental director Joshua Simmons.

SYCEO’s projects are numerous and have had impressive results, including major reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. An example is the Chumash Casino’s implementation of a shuttle bus program that eliminated 800,000 car trips in 2009, replacing them with 66,000 bus trips. The

casino is reducing its energy consumption, chemical waste and use of one-use materials. It also has an extensive rainwater and gray water collection and treatment system. Many of these initiatives have economic benefits and provide a model and economic incentive for tribal and non-tribal businesses to implement similar changes.

8. Newtok Village: Ultimate Adaptation Plan — Evacuation

This Native village on the western coast of Alaska is home to some of the U.S.’s first climate refugees. They leapfrogged over mere adaptation-mitigation as sea and river cut through and then eroded the permafrost beneath their village and a 1983 assessment found that the community would be endangered within 25 to 30 years. In 1994 Newtok began work on what then seemed the ultimate adaptation plan: relocation.

They selected Mertarvik nine miles to the south as the relocation site in 1996. Their efforts intensified when a study by the Army Corps of Engineers found that the highest point in the village would be below sea level by 2017. The Newtok community, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations formed the Nettok Planning Group in 2006 but, as Newtok’s administrator Stanley Tom searched for funding, he struck little pay dirt. Mostly, he hit walls. Now Tom is calling for evacuation, exposing it as the true ultimate in adaptation.

“It’s really happening right now,” he told the *Guardian* last May. “The village is sinking and flooding and eroding.” Tom told the British newspaper that he was moving his own belongings to the new, still very sparse, village site over the summer — and advised fellow villagers to start doing the same.

Indigenous Perspectives Fill Issue of Climate-Change Journal

By Tanya H. Lee

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As climate change alters the very environment that sustains us, traditional knowledge and Western science find themselves intersecting more and more.

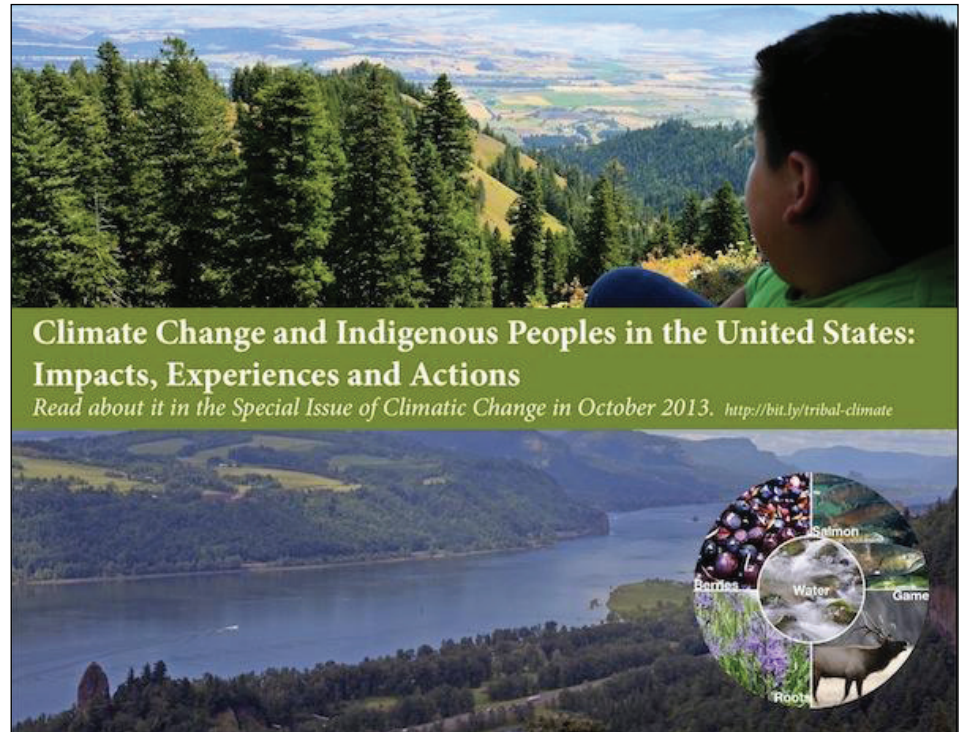
A special issue of the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Climatic Change* has taken this up a notch in a tacit admission: Common sense demands that governments bring tribes to the table as full participants in a discussion of how to deal with the challenges that climate change presents and that they treat indigenous viewpoints not as quaint supplements to Western science but as equally valid explanations of how the world works — that such observations, taken as they are over millennia, are a science in their own right.

This increasing collaboration and respect between the two took a major step forward this month with the entire October issue of the journal *Climatic Change* devoted to indigenous perspectives on climate change — the first peer-reviewed journal to put traditional knowledge on a par with modern science. The issue also covers climate change's effects on people and culture to paint a picture of its implications for daily life.

The issue, "Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples in the United States: Impacts, Experiences and Actions," features papers from American Indian scientists ranging from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz in Oregon to the Penobscot Indian Nation in Maine, plus a host of environmental experts from dozens of organizations. It grew out of a rising recognition of the degree to which Indigenous Peoples are on the frontlines of climate change and was spurred by work on the Third National Climate Assessment, a report put together by the U.S. Global Change Research Program, a collaboration of the research departments of 13 federal departments and agencies.

The assessment marks the progress of the phenomenon formerly known as global warming. When the team requested papers for a single chapter on indigenous perspectives, 200 poured in from tribal environmental experts, said Julie Maldonado, who works with the Third National Climate Assessment and helped edit the journal issue.

"Working with the author team of the tribal chapter, we recognized that there was a need for peer-reviewed, scientific literature on the impacts of climate change on indigenous people and tribal



communities in the U.S.," Maldonado told Indian Country Today Media Network. The wealth of material from across Indian country enabled her team to identify five or six key issues, from which they plotted out what the journal's special edition would cover. "We really wanted to try to get every region involved if possible and to highlight some of those really important issues such as water quality and quantity, permafrost melt and sea level rise."

The result: a collaboration of more than 50 authors representing tribal communities, academia, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations that covers everything from the impacts of climate change on tribal traditional foods in the context of tribes' legal and regulatory relationship with the federal government, to the effects of glacier melt on Pacific salmonid species protection and recovery — and then some.

"This one journal issue covers all the different aspects of climate change — not just the science but also the impacts on people and cultural resources, [presenting] a more holistic understanding of the implications of climate change," said Laura Gephart, watershed program coordinator for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, whose member tribes are among the contributors. "It is unique to have it all in one journal."

Several articles stressed that because indigenous people often have limited

financial resources and little political clout, and because they have relationships with the rest of the natural world that dominant cultures often do not recognize, they are simultaneously supremely vulnerable to climate change and uniquely qualified to understand it.

"Indigenous Peoples draw on practical lifeway experiences — not one person's experience — but that of entire nations and communities to share multigenerational 'deep spatial' knowledge of empirical landscapes and seascapes," wrote Daniel R. Wildcat, Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma, in his introductory essay.

Justice demands that governments support tribes' self-determined efforts to adapt to climate change, wrote Kyle Powys Whyte, Citizen Potawatomi, in "Justice Forward: Tribes, Climate Adaptation and Responsibility." Given that Indigenous Peoples bear the bulk of the climate change burden, environmental justice is a key component of a climate-change strategy.

Justice "represents a crucial framework for guiding leaders, scientists and professionals in their understanding of what actions are morally essential for supporting the institutions that tribes must rely on to adapt," wrote Whyte.

The call to action is the latest iteration of the concept of environmental justice and this issue of *Climatic Change* may be one indication that the call is being heard.

Letters and Emails to the Editor



Dear Iona,

Thanks! Very good to have!
B.T., Pennsylvania (new member)

Hello Iona,

I enjoyed your story, Iona — thanks— quiet mode and crochet or hand stitch something — as soon as I have my 'life back' let's plan on doing that!!

You might want to explore the Negawatt a bit more — that was interesting and I went online to research it further . . . there's more story to it at <http://www.negawatt.com/products/building-tuner>.

BTW I sewed my own prom gown — silver lame halter dress . . . I have a sewing machine still in the box if you ever need to borrow it — I plan on one day being able to sit down with it and sewing something — maybe I can get some lessons from you since I probably don't remember how to sew or use a sewing machine!!!

Thanks for the paper!
D.M., Pennsylvania

Dear Iona,

(compiled from several emails)

I have been busy giving special lectures to my students and having meetings with organizing committee of international conference next year. I took a walk on trails near my place. The leaves of trees turned yellow and red and rice fields are in golden color. Farmers are busy harvesting crops. I saw several white cranes in a reservoir. And I attended the 30th anniversary of our department of health science of the

university. I met my old students who came to the meeting. I was the first professor for the department in 1983. The old students are already middle-aged persons. This Friday I will talk to my students about globalization and our role for world peace. I talked to students how to live with the nature in harmony and how to protect the environment. I enjoy talking to young students.

I like your philosophy: "Be kind, respect everyone and everything, be compassionate and be a good humble servant to Most High God and everyone else." We have to get rid of stubbornness and arrogance from our heart.

Oh! Natural gas in Korea. Actually Korea does not have natural gas but she imports LNG and uses it as heating and cooking. In the past Koreans had to use firewood for heating and cooking. And they cut the trees in the mountains and they devastated the forest. As the economy got better the government imported natural gas for heating and cooking. On top of that Koreans planted a lot of trees not only on mountains but also streets.

The other important factor is that most Koreans are living in multi-dwelling complexes which are very heat efficient. What I mean is condominiums. There are many and many high rises not only in big cities but also small towns. Almost nobody uses fire woods any more. Of course some farmers in remote areas use fire woods. I am very happy to see many trees in the mountains and streets. And then birds returned to the trees and make nests for

their babies. Nowadays I can see many wild birds, which are my favorite friends.

Nowadays Koreans realize the importance of environment and the local governments try to make a lot of trails and bicycle routes. Many Koreans, men, women and children love to ride bicycles. When I was young I loved to ride a bike. You can sing when you ride a bike. And you can enjoy the scene and fresh air. Autumn is really beautiful here at Daegu. The sky is blue and mountains are like burning because of red foliage.

P.R., Korea

Submitted by Allen Hengst, Washington DC

Pennsylvania's natural gas boom has brought thousands of new gas wells, a number of transient workers and a host of social problems. Food & Water Watch found that traffic accidents, civic disturbances and public health problems in rural Pennsylvania counties have increased since the shale rush began in 2005, diminishing the quality of life for residents of once-bucolic communities ... These social and public health costs increased more in rural counties with the new shale gas wells than in rural counties without shale gas drilling. These negative social impacts were especially pronounced in the counties with the highest density of shale gas wells.

~ Food & Water Watch; The Social Costs of Fracking: A Pennsylvania Case Study, September 2013; http://documents.foodandwaterwatch.org/doc/Social_Costs_of_Fracking.pdf

DINOSAUR DUNG TO BE FRACKED!

By David Ira Kagan

Breaking news in the gas hydraulic fracturing world! Marcellus shale gas industry seismologists recently divulged to UPI and AP news bureaus that, indeed, the rumor was true. Once the hydro-fracturing of the Marcellus and Utica shale deposits is completed (estimated by the year 2050), the industry plans to continue to drill down even farther into the Earth.

Seismological imaging has revealed huge deposits of dinosaur dung, about three miles below the surface, directly under the shale deposits of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and West Virginia. And the dung is just loaded with embedded, very natural, gas!

Already, a coalition of well-known Marcellus gas industry companies —



Chesapeake, Range, Anadarko and Pennsylvania General Energy (CRAP) — is planning for the future retrieval of this new and apparently abundant energy source. Trapped among the Mesozoic Era rock deposits, the dung-gas can be released by a recently-discovered, improved hydraulic

fracturing technique — an advancement called Super Hydraulic Intense Technology (with an acronym that goes without saying).

Responding to questions about the safety of such deep-earth drilling, a CRAP spokesperson replied, "I'd just like to go down on record as poo-pooing those who believe this will be even more dangerous than the shale drilling. The federal government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is already preparing policies to assure the public safety; for example, if such drilling should happen to result in volcanic activity (more specifically, the release of lava from the bowels of the Earth), EPA will quickly relocate residents, free of charge, to designated encampments

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in central Nevada, and designate the devastated areas as national parks, with lifelong free admittance to those who used to live in the affected areas.

“And the individual state agencies are also preparing, out of concern for their citizens; for example, Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection has already put a rule on the books that no dinosaur-dung drilling would be allowed within 20 feet of any residence or within 25 feet of any wells or waterways.

“Even agencies within the states to be affected are soon going to issue statements to the public; for example, Pennsylvania’s Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) is going to assure Pennsylvanians

living along that watershed that the planned dumping of fracked dinosaur dung residue into the West and North Branches of the Susquehanna River and their tributaries will be harmless — in fact, will be beneficial — to the waters and adjacent lands. An SRBC spokesperson pointed out, ‘It’ll be free, power-packed fertilizer!’

“Residents in the four states to be affected are already rushing to lease out the drilling rights to their land. One unnamed north-central Pennsylvanian has said, ‘I’m excited about this new gas industry initiative. Who’d have thought that those big, ugly dinosaurs that roamed this land millions of years ago, unthinkingly pooping all over our beautiful land, would be the means of our getting rich so many

years later?’

“And residents interested in working for the CRAP coalition of gas companies when dinosaur-dung drilling dawns, have already formed a union, called the Jobs-at-any-Cost Association, the JAAC ASS union. The intent of the union is to try to prevent workers from other states (especially Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana) from being hired by CRAP. ‘We’ve had enough of that s__t happening with the Marcellus shale gas industry.’

“In conclusion, the future of dinosaur-dung drilling is golden brown. The deposits are filthy rich in gas. Especially rich are areas that we’ve determined to be loaded with Tyrannosaurus turds. We can’t wait to blast the crap out of them.”

The Go-Back Club: Simplicity in Gift-Giving

By Iona

You don’t need to go to a mall if you have any talent at all. And I feel sure that if you’re old enough to read this, you are capable of making at least a few gifts by hand.

Although the bulk of this story is about needlework done in bygone days, I own a saber saw and made my father a little table for my parents’ patio one year. That surprised and delighted him, though admittedly it was rather rough. So, you see, this kind of thinking needn’t be limited to stitching; please read on to get the feel for this idea.

There are four little presents I have saved for six decades, which I found in my mother’s attic; looking at them still thrills me with their simplicity, beauty and practicality. Two of the four almost look as if they had been made in an elementary school Home-Ec class. The third seems to be the work of a creative adult with tiny, even stitches holding it together. But the fourth — a masterpiece — is done by a skilled crochet artist.

All four are small, no more than five inches in any direction; all are hand-stitched. There is no evidence of an electric sewing machine. It’s so easy to picture someone sitting quietly in the evening (before television took over people’s living rooms and lives), peacefully and gleefully snipping and stitching away the time, maybe in a rocking chair by the fireplace, with the family nearby, each working on their own project or reading.

Here are brief descriptions of these tiny creations.

First is a heart-shaped pin-cushion made of two pieces of felt cut out with pinking shears (those cumbersome zig-zag scissors) — one bright red, one dark green. On the green side is a little light-green tree with sequin stars on the branches and, of



Photo by Iona

Four home-made gifts discovered in Mom’s attic.

course, one at the top. The heart is stuffed and round sequins decorate the edge with stitches holding it all together.

Second is also designed with two pieces of felt cut with pinking shears, this time it’s pink felt cut in the shape of a girl’s silhouette. She’s wearing a bonnet with a thin piece of felt for her bow. Her skirt is decorated with a flowerette of white crocheted lace attached in the center with sequins, which also outline this girl-child’s shape. Her little legs and skirt lift up revealing two white pieces of felt, one storing safety pins and the other needles.

The next one is somewhat similar in that there is an outer cover with contrasting felt inside for pins and needles but it’s different because the body is constructed of green cotton fabric with daisies (no synthetics back then). It’s a rectangle folded in half with a thin, white ribbon sewn across the underside reaching across to the front for

tying it shut.

The last one has wee, salmon-colored, crochet stitches adorned with three green leaves and three tubular bluebells. The shape is that of a little, round box which closes with a pearl button. I can almost feel the joy this person had conjuring up and creating this present for someone she loved.

All of these pieces look dingy now and I wouldn’t dream of washing them or even using them. They are treasured reminders to me of days long ago, days I’m hoping to help recreate with The Go-Back Club.

I can make little presents like this and so can you. Together we can search for and find alternatives to the hectic holidays filled with mass-produced, high-energy, over-packaged junk, most of which is imported from sweatshops overseas.

What do you say?

Let’s start today!

*One year
I made
everyone in
my family
these
counted-
cross-stitch
stockings,
16 in all.
I just love
seeing them
hanging
in each
family’s
home
during the
holidays.*

Photo by Iona

