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CO-AUTHOR OF NEW BOOK ON DEMOCRACY WITH FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ TO SPEAK AT THE EARTHCARE FESTIVAL IN CUMMINGTON, SEPT. 16

Frances Moore Lappé will be joined by Adam Eichen, the co-author of her new book, "Daring Democracy," at the forthcoming Earthcare Festival at the Bryant Homestead in Cummington, Massachusetts, on Sept. 16.

Eichen, a Democracy Fellow at Lappé's Small Planet Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a prominent pro-democracy activist, will speak on "Reviving Democracy."

"Over the past 40 years there has been a sustained and concerted effort to undermine democracy and delegitimize government," Eichen said. "I plan to parcel out how these anti-democratic forces led us to where we are today. At the same time, I'll explain why I remain upbeat. Citizens are coming together from all over the country and across political lines to help push for a true democracy. This new movement has already won tremendous victories and is transforming its participants along the way."

The Earthcare Festival will be the first event at which the authors will appear in connection with their book, which is subtitled, "Igniting Power, Meaning, and Connection for the America We Want." It will be released Sept. 26 by Beacon Press.

Eichen and Lappé will also sell and sign copies of the book in the "Bookshop" in the Homestead's Apple Barn, a new feature of the festival that will also highlight many Hilltown authors and books. Among these are Mary Dearborn, Eric Laursen, Kathryn Jensen, and Robert and Mary Bagg.

The Earthcare Festival is the third program presented by the Hilltown Chautauqua of Western Massachusetts and has as its theme "Food, Farms, and the Future." The festival will open on Friday, Sept. 15, with a pig roast and concert by Americana musicians Jay Ungar and Molly Mason. The main festival day, on Sept. 16, will feature speakers, a tribute to Cummington poet Richard Wilbur, a panel discussion by 10 young Hilltown farmers, an installation of photography and paintings, a performance by the Wistaria String Quartet and country-folk-Americana fiddler Zoë Darrow, and, in the evening, a viewing of the film "Forgotten Farms." The full schedule and ticketing are available at www.hilltownchautauqua.org.

In her keynote talk, Lappé will discuss her personal and intellectual journey since her groundbreaking 1971 bestseller, "Diet for a Small Planet," and then address global

hunger and her vision for democracy as necessary to creating sustainable ways of living and a livable and peaceful planet.

“We are delighted that Frances Lappé will be joined by her colleague and collaborator, Adam Eichen,” said David Perkins, the festival’s director. “I think it is an inspiring book that combines an analysis of the path we’ve taken away from democratic ideals and practices, and a call to imagine ways of reviving them. The authors view democracy but as a moral system that embraces agency, transparency, accountability. Our greatest enemy is a sense of futility, they argue, and this book is their recipe for how we can rediscover a sense of purpose.”

Eichen, 24, is a graduate of Vassar College who spent a year as a Maguire Fellow researching comparative campaign finance policy at the Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris (known as “Sciences Po”). His recent research has focused on campaign finance, voting rights, comparative election policy, and social movement theory. His articles have appeared in Yes! and In These Times magazines and online at Billmoyers.com and Salon. “Daring Democracy” is his first book.

In April 2016, Eichen served as deputy communications director for Democracy Spring, a historic national mobilization for campaign finance and voting rights reform. Since 2015, he has sat on the board of directors of Democracy Matters, a nonprofit, nonpartisan grass-roots student political organization dedicated to deepening democracy.

Eichen met Lappé in 2015 at a Mexico City conference on reducing the influence of money in politics sponsored by International IDEA. After meeting at the airport, they began what Eichen calls “a virtual nonstop conversation about democracy.”

“The Trump presidency is scary, indeed. But there is now tremendous opportunity to turn crisis into possibility, harnessing the desire for change into meaningful, structural reform,” Eichen explains. “For us, ‘Daring Democracy’ is a roadmap for true solutions, not bromides.”

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