Simply Living

Our new website is launched!

Activity levels have reached a feverish pitch in the last few weeks to bring our new Simply Living website online: www.simplyliving.org. Created in Drupal, an open source software, this collaborative process has required the exceptional expertise and time of Robb Ebright, unbelievable tenacity on the part of Lisa Staggenborg, plus many, many hours of work from Ben Redman, Chris Luers, Jenny Floch, and Janet Ingraham Dwyer. This new site has been anything but simple and has required a steep learning curve for all involved.

Visit us soon….New features include member forums, an ongoing calendar, a fresh look, and overall more timely communications. Our goal is for our website to serve as primary information source and communication tool to both our members and the public. We invite and welcome your feedback and involvement! Please email Ben: ben@simplyliving.org, to let us know what you like, suggestions, how you’d like to help, etc. Realizing a number of people use a dial-up connection, the website is designed for fast loading of content, including graphics.

As with the development of our current site, our former website has been a volunteer effort through and through. We thank Janet and Andy Ingraham Dwyer for more than ten years(!) of shepherding the SL website as a labor of love, and Pat Collins for being our web host We also thank Ray Pacorski, Ann Lennon, Martina Panzer, Carol Fisher and John Harrison for their help in creating our new site.

Newsletter Changes

To reduce costs and paper, we will continue to send the printed newsletter to you only if you request it. We anticipate that future printed newsletters will be formatted as a digest using web content, and we expect to send an occasional print mailing.

Tell us your preferences! Please contact Ben: 447-0296 or ben@simplyliving.org to tell us to:

1) Add you to your monthly email notice, which will provide links to SL and community events, articles, and stories online.

2) Continue to send you a printed newsletter.

We’re a bit nervous about this transition, wanting to ensure that you are connected in a timely manner with Simply Living’s news and information. Serving you and strengthening our mission are our goals Please tell us what you think!

—Marilyn Welker, Director

Simply Living’s Vision: Creating a compassionate and sustainable world through personal, community and cultural transformation.

Vol. 17 Issue 2 April/May 2009 www.simplyliving.org
Simply Living Welcomes New Members

Hans Gorsuch     Ann Powers
Kashmira Asnani  Lynn & Avner Friedman
Georgia Glunt    Sue Green
Jerry Lopper     Ann Karimy
Kurt Monnier     Janet Shumaker
Carolyn Peterson

Welcome!

Our Mission:
Simply Living of Central Ohio supports individuals, families and organizations in creating a more compassionate and sustainable world by offering learning opportunities which promote personal and civic responsibility, informed action and wholeness.

Simply Living Board
Donna Sigl-Davies, President, 268-7656
Chris Luers, Vice President, 447-2053
Gwen Uetrecht, Secretary, 261-8399
Dan Baer, Treasurer, 343-0493
Marisa Benzle, 256-714-3870
Jim Kammerud, 844-5066
Lisa Staggenborg, 436-9931
Marilyn Welker, Director, 937/484-6988

An Invitation to Electronic Information
You are invited to receive timely, relevant information through two listserves created and sustained by the generous commitment of Janet Ingraham Dwyer and Chuck Lynd.

• Simply Living Listserve: Expect 2-5 diverse messages per week ranging from events of note to free available items to housing requests and more. Contact Janet Ingraham Dwyer to join and/or to request posting of information you’d like to share with the Simply Living community: janet@simplyliving.org
• Clintonville Community Market (CCM) Listserv is created by Chuck Lynd and now available on the CCM website: www.communitymarket.org. To receive an email notice when an updated calendar has been posted, please contact Chuck Lynd at clynd@cavenet.org. Chuck’s Community Update calendar is an enjoyable read, chocked full of opportunities to connect with good work, good people and good fun!

Simply Living Membership Information
Join us in supporting vital work that is creating sustainable communities! You will participate in a lively community of like-minded people engaged in creating resiliency in the midst of change.

Simply Living members are the organization. Members may be involved at various levels, are financially committed, and share a vision of growth and transformation.

We invite members to participate in all activities and to offer your special interests and gifts as well. For more information, call Simply Living at 614/447-0296.

Name: _______________________________________
Address: _____________________________________
City, State, Zip: ________________________________
Phone: _______________________________________
Email: _______________________________________
Visa/MC: __________________________ Exp: ______

Individual Membership* -- $35 / year
Family Membership* -- $50 / year
Senior Citizen or Student Membership -- $20 / year*

Please add me to SL ListServ
Please add me to the CCM ListServ
Please contact me about volunteering.
I’m interested in:

______________________________________________
______________________________________________

Join online at www.simplyliving.org or make checks payable to Simply Living and send to:
2929 N. High St. Suite A
PO Box 82273  Columbus OH 43202
Dear Friends,

These are times that try our souls. In choosing this issue’s theme, I kept coming back to a section in The Transition Handbook titled “The Heart: Why having a positive vision is crucial.” As author Rob Hopkins says so eloquently, “Ultimately, at the heart [of this work] is the understanding that the scale of this [cultural] transition requires particular inner resources, not just an abstract intellectual understanding.”

I was recently struck by the simplicity and eloquence of a friend’s remark, “We all need to belong.” And of course, we all do belong. We just need to remind ourselves of that through inner and outer practices. Christa Hein shares an inner practice—the work that reconnects—as taught by Joanna Macy. Mary Struble speaks of how life experiences have honed her understanding of the necessity of both the inner and outer work for our well-being. I hope Meg Scott’s story piques your curiosity to laugh a whole lot more and to not take ourselves too seriously!

*It is best to think of this as a revolution, not of guns, but of consciousness, which will be won by seizing the key myths, archetypes, eschatologies and ecstasies so that life won’t seem worth living unless one is on the transforming energy’s side.* –Gary Snyder

The transformation from a culture that treats life as expendable to a culture that celebrates and affirms life is underway. What is your role to play at this time, in this place?

--Marilyn Welker, Director

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**Picture This: Earth Day 2009**

Sat. April 18 - Work day to green our communities
Sun. April 19, 12 - 7 p.m. - Celebrate at Goodale Park

Green Columbus is hosting their third annual Earth Day, featuring worksites aplenty to create gardens, plant trees, clean river banks, remove invasive species and more. Visit their website at picturethis09.org to learn more and to volunteer for a project.

**We’d love your help for a few hours at Simply Living's booth on Sunday, 4/19, at Goodale Park.**

Shifts will begin with set-up at 11 a.m. and end with take down at 7 p.m. This crowd is the best for great conversations! Please contact Ben at 447-0296 or ben@simplyliving.org to sign up.

**Compassionate Communication - Central Ohio presents**

“Speak Peace and Change Your World”

April 23 (evening), 24 and 25 (9-6)

Broad Street Presbyterian Church, 760 E. Broad Street

An intensive Nonviolent Communication (NVC) workshop with five gifted trainers to help improve communication with family members, children, co-workers and friends. Special areas of focus will include:

- Third Presence Mediation
- Getting off the Wheel of Submission and Dominance
- Transforming Our Fears About Money

$295 (includes Sat. & Sun. lunch)

* CEU’s provided by Buckeye Ranch

For more info call/write Andy: 614-558-1141 or eco112@sbcglobal.net.

(Simply Stated continued on Page 9...)

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Walking the Circle:  
Hope and Gratitude amid Chaos and Despair

By Christa Hein

I don’t have to spell out the dire situation that the human race has gotten itself into. Global warming, species extinction, financial crisis, job losses, increasing poverty and despondency; these are the topics that are daily broadcast across the TV and radio, are discussed at dinner tables, and are debated between experts and peers. With uncertainty around every corner, it is easy to sink into despair. This is just what author Joanna Macy asks us to do. However, in Joanna’s Work That Reconnects, one doesn’t sink; rather one is lifted because of the despair. In a process that can be undertaken in a workshop, in your living room, or on your commute to work, individuals are asked to walk through a circle of practices.

The circle always begins with gratitude. In a place of gratefulness, our eyes are opened to the beauty of the world, to the gift of our life. It is in this place where we focus on that which we love. It is often in this place of appreciation that we realize those things/beings which we love may be in peril in these tenuous times. Opening to love, we open to loss. Without grief we risk apathy, the inability or refusal to feel pain. Apathy can become a stagnant glaze that lets people walk by a dire situation without acting. By stopping to feel the grief, to express our anger, we open ourselves up to compassion or “suffering with.”

Seeing with new eyes is the result and is the third point on the circle. Through compassion, we realize our capacity to love and are transformed by it. It is here where we see that those whom we “suffer with” are not that different from ourselves. Our capacity to see the connectedness of all life is expanded. As we prepare to go forth, completing the circle, we process our desired outcome and envision that which we hope will better the world. Visions are set as intentions as we prepare to go about our lives reconnected to that which we love, mourn, and hope for the world.

A fellow participant in a week-long experience with Joanna shared his personal experience with The Work That Reconnects after he returned home and read of a devastating oil spill. His first inclination was to put the newspaper down; he didn’t have the energy to deal with the news. But remembering his experience with Joanna, he allowed himself to walk the circle of reconnecting. Starting with gratitude, he thought of the beauty of the shore birds, hearing in his mind their calls, watching their flight across the water. He stayed with this image, feeling love for these creatures he had never physically encountered.

And then he allowed the news of the day to penetrate his vision, seeing oil covering the water, witnessing birds and other sea life drowning, being swallowed up by the black oil, others gasping for breath on shore, coated with it. He allowed himself to feel the grief, to cry and express his anger as he sat in his living room alone. As he felt the despair, as he suffered with, he envisioned what he would do to help remedy the situation. He stood up and began walking in circles in a moving meditation. Eyes closed, he bent down and picked up an oil coated bird. He stroked its feathers with a cloth, cleaning the oil from its wings and face. And then he set it free. He picked up and cleaned another, and another. This he did in his mind, walking around his living room, sending out his intention of healing to the creatures on the other side of the world.

And then he returned to his couch, took a deep breath, and thought of how he himself could reduce his dependence on oil, and he set a goal. Instead of brushing aside the despair that surrounds us, Joanna Macy asks us to step inside it, feel it, and allow it to change us. This is The Work That Reconnects.

The circle can be completed with more than ecological issues. I have worked through relationship difficulties by starting with gratitude, bringing to my mind what qualities about the other I’m grateful for. And then I have allowed myself to feel the anger or the pain of the situation. When I have emptied my heart of whatever grief I held, I sought compassion, asking myself what solution would be best for all involved, and have then set goals towards that solution.

Whether personal or planetary, it is important to allow ourselves to feel our pain and not brush it aside. The understandings we gain from gratitude, grief, and seeing with new eyes opens up within us priceless gifts that we can take forth into our lives, shaping our thoughts, actions, and our world for a better tomorrow.

SL member Christa Hein will be facilitating The Work That Reconnects at Stratford Ecological Center in Delaware on September 25 and 26. Visit www.StratfordEcologicalCenter.org or email Christa at treebeing@aol.com to register.
Finding Inner Peace: An Interview with Mary Struble

By Tuesday Trippier

Being quiet is difficult these days with the constant interruptions of cell phones, iPods, email, radio and television. But it is precisely the silence that is needed to listen to what our bodies are trying to tell us. This seemingly simple concept takes practice, and that is what Simply Living member Mary Struble has spent more than 30 years training others to do.

A certified biofeedback specialist, now retired, Struble fell into this career at the age of 51. Formerly a dental hygienist, she was teaching children with behavior and learning disorders when she was asked by the wellness center where she volunteered if she would be interested in taking on the role of biofeedback technician.

“The director called me on a Friday and asked if I would be interested in the newly vacated position,” recalls Struble. “I told him I would think about it. He said that there was a training workshop the next day in Cincinnati if I wanted to go. So, I said sure!”

And the rest, as they say, is history. Struble eventually came to run her own clinic and has spent years working with clients in corporate settings as well as individuals in need of stress reduction.

According to the Mayo Clinic website, biofeedback is based on the idea, confirmed by scientific studies, that people have the innate potential to influence with their mind many of the automatic, involuntary functions of their bodies. Getting that ongoing, immediate feedback about our physiological selves involves monitoring muscle tension, hand temperature, brain waves, heart rate and blood pressure among other things, says Struble. Monitoring these responses and working with relaxation and meditation techniques enables a person to self-regulate and self-heal.

Many of the disorders we currently suffer from are stress related, explains Struble.

“So many people are going through life on automatic,” she says. “It is my belief that if people aren’t awake, if they aren’t aware, then they can’t make changes. Awareness training helps us become more aware of our bodies, our thoughts and our behavior. It is empowering. We can learn to become aware, and then we can make changes.”

Struble worked with clients once a week for a period of several months and would always give them homework. She explains that biofeedback is not a quick fix, and she would only be able to successfully work with people who were willing to make a commitment. Encouraging and training what Struble calls your “observer-self” takes practice. Being able to step outside yourself and notice habits, emotions, and behaviors is all part of becoming conscious.

“The more aware we are, the better able we are to find peace of mind,” Struble says. “Intention is also important, as is using your inner guidance…I also try to get across the whole thing of not fighting what you can’t change—which is, is.”

Very involved with the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS), Struble helped found the Central Ohio IONS chapter years ago. IONS is an international non-profit membership organization whose mission is to advance the science of consciousness and human experience to serve individual and collective transformation. Noetic comes from the Greek word nous, which means something close to “intuitive ways of knowing.” Astronaut Edgar Mitchell founded the group in 1973 after his safe return home from his Apollo 14 mission to the moon. To learn more and to take advantage of some of their excellent resources, log onto www.noetic.org.

With the constant distractions of everyday life, with people working longer and harder, and with women especially trying to do it all, we, as a society, seem never to have time for quiet, for silence. Struble used to work with middle school students at the Ohio Wesleyan/Junior League of Columbus summer camp in Delaware, Ohio, and she noticed how uncomfortable they were with silence.

“I would work with these youth to be comfortable with being quiet,” she remembers. “To become fully conscience, we need to disconnect ourselves from being constantly plugged into cell phones, headphones and other technology.”

When asked about the long-view of our future, Struble recalls two articles in one of her IONS journals—one outlined a long list of things we can all do to lessen our impact on the Earth, the other pointed out that unless there’s a change in consciousness, nothing’s going to happen—at least not on a global level.

“Doing all those things to live lightly and simply on the Earth are important,” says Struble. “But it must be done with intention and understanding…and that comes from awareness.”

Although 81 years young, Struble keeps telling herself she needs to retire. She has enjoyed offering workshops and will be offering one titled “Beyond Stress Management to Awareness” through Simply Living in April. The workshop begins April 8th, 7-8:30, and continues over the next three Wednesdays [see April calendar for details], giving participants the opportunity to learn, digest and practice some of these awareness techniques.

“I think it is important to stay involved in something that feeds your soul,” she says. “And I enjoy empowering others to help themselves.”

SL member Tuesday Trippier lives in Delaware, is a mother of three and a writer who pens a weekly green-living column for the Delaware Gazette.
Laughter: the best medicine

By Meg Scott

In February 2007 a laughter yoga club at Laguna Beach, California, was featured on NPR. The story mentioned that thousands of these clubs exist worldwide and that locations could be found on the web. Ellen Poage, a Laughter Yoga leader in Fort Myers where I was staying, had started the “Laughalots” group only three weeks prior, so I participated in the once-a-week class for about a month. I was smitten by the laughter bug and wanted to be part of this amazing movement, begun in 1995 by an Indian physician.

With a background in teaching, I had been looking for a way to contribute to the community. Upon returning to Ohio in May, I was unsuccessful in finding a Leader training workshop in Ohio. I decided to be certified as a Laughter Yoga Teacher. When I learned that Dr. Kataria, the founder of Laughter Yoga, was offering an intensive five-day training in Miami, I jumped at the opportunity.

Laughter Yoga is a mild aerobic exercise that incorporates a variety of physical activities, including stimulating pressure points on your palms by clapping, laughing exercises and deep yogic breathing, all done in a fun, playful atmosphere. Embracing laughter and leading laughter clubs and workshops has helped me become more outgoing, comfortable with people, affectionate and optimistic. Participants share how laughter energizes them, and that they are happier, cope better and laugh at situations that in the past would have been annoying and aggravating. Feedback I’ve received from club members reinforces my belief that this simple tool can change lives, if only we open our eyes and hearts to enjoy the human gift of laughter.

You can experience laughter yoga in laughter clubs, on the phone, with your friends or even alone. Eleven times a day, seven days a week, a trained Laughter Yoga teacher or leader volunteers time to lead a laughter session of about 20 minutes. To participate, call 712-432-3900 and use pin #6071292 to experience the Laugh Line conference call with people from all over the country. More information is available at www.followthelaughter.com.

In Summer and Fall I lead a laughter club at Sharon Woods Park and will be hosting this club again in June when I return from Florida. Laughter clubs are free--just give yourself permission to laugh. Certified Laughter Yoga Leader Deb Wiseman has also started a club at the Lazelle Parks and Rec. Center. Contact Deb for more information: Deborahwiseman@hotmail.com. I also will be offering training workshops, introductions and lectures upon my return. Feel free to contact me at 614-216-9371 or megscott35@yahoo.com with questions. I hope to laugh with you soon!
Earth Institute discussion course a winner

Over the past few months, twelve staff members at COSI participated in an Earth Institute discussion course titled Menu for the Future. The course provided continuing education, an opportunity for community-building, and motivation for eating more local and healthy foods. For more information about upcoming courses, contact our staff member Ben Redman: ben@simplyliving.org; 447-0296.

I am so happy I had the opportunity to participate in this program. A lot of the concepts were new to me, so learning all of this information and being able to discuss with others how they put the concepts into practice really gave me a good idea of the realistic changes I could make in my eating/grocery shopping habits. I also really value the opportunity to get to know some members of my team members better; we should have more! – Elaine McLoughlin, Internal Event Manager, COSI

I loved the course. The way it was set up, with the readings and discussion group, was very effective. I liked that it took place over several weeks because changing your habits and attitudes about food takes time. It’s a process…a really long process for some of us who have had our habits and attitudes a long time! It was somewhat frustrating that we did it during winter when fresh local food was not available because I was anxious to put it into practice, and it wasn’t so easy. I’m excited about the ideas we have for on-going projects that came out of this course: potlucks, field trips, a team garden. The possibilities are endless. A very positive outcome was getting to know team members better, and this leads to a greater sense of community. – Claire Paul, Experience Division Manager, COSI

The Menu for the Future course is a short but impactful way to learn more about food—where it comes from, the pressures on food production, things we can do to make a difference for ourselves and the planet. I really enjoyed the course and would like to learn more. I also really enjoyed getting to know my COSI colleagues better and finding others who share an interest in eating well and healthy. I miss the group and study since it ended and hope we can form another learning group around related topics! – Chris Hurtubise, Senior Director of Marketing, COSI

Menu for the Future gave me some perspectives to consider. Food and health are extremely important to me. I was excited to learn how making small changes to my practices, choices, and diet could have a huge impact. As the leader of COSI’s professional development programs, I was impressed with how Menu for the Future was organized. In addition to personal growth, this experience brought team members together on a topic we could be passionate about and supportive of each other. – Andy Aichele, Business Strategist, COSI

Menu for the Future certainly delivered on its promise to provide a way for us to explore local food systems, modern agricultural practices, and the choices each of us can make to create and support sustainable food systems. But the benefit to our staff went beyond the actual content of the course. First, the fact that the leadership role rotated throughout the course meant that each person in the group had the opportunity to develop skills as a discussion leader or presenter. But even more significantly, the participants were people from different departments. Through weekly discussions, we got to know people that we do not normally spend time with. In this way, the course fostered community across the divisions in our organization, something we have been trying to accomplish through a variety of means over the years. I am personally grateful for the new friendships that resulted from the course. – Sharon Tinianow, Director of Sustainability Initiatives, COSI
Welcome New Board Members

Simply Living’s board members contribute hundreds of hours in various capacities to strengthen our mission. We warmly welcome our new board members and share their introductions.

Chris Luers: I gave up a 20 year career as an automotive technician and, along with my wife Diane, joined Simply Living in 2004. We started by taking Earth Institute discussion courses and that really changed our lives! Along with a nonviolent communication (NVC) course, these courses gave us the foundation to create the life we wanted. Co-founding the Alternative Transportation Project (ATP) with a few other SL members, we more recently created our “Walk, Bus, Bike” presentation. I have jumped in with both feet since then.

After trying several things to earn income, Diane and I settled on Little Square Farm with rain water harvesting and composting products. This gave me the flexibility to be with my family, our two daughters, and granddaughter, and it gave me time to give back to Simply Living. I am currently involved as Vice President of the Board and serving on the Finance Committee, Infrastructure committee, ATP, and forming a new business support group for others who want a more satisfying lifestyle. Simply Living has meant everything to us, and we could not imagine life without this organization!

Gwen Uetrecht: I joined Simply Living in 1999 when I became a member and regular volunteer at the Clintonville Community Market. I could probably write a book about how Simply Living has changed my life! The first Simply Living event I attended was an introduction to the Earth Institute discussion courses. I took several of the courses with a core group of people who are now some of my closest friends. With the support of my friends and the Simply Living community, as well as the knowledge and skills I learned from the discussion courses, I was able to simplify my life significantly and quit my corporate job of 17 years in 2001. I now work at the co-op as office administrator and membership coordinator and have a small part-time business as a licensed massage therapist and a drum circle facilitator.

I have volunteered with Simply Living on and off over the past ten years, including as a board member, on various committees, and as co-op liaison. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve on the board again, this time as Secretary, and on the Membership Committee.

Marisa Benzle: I was born and raised in Hilliard, and am a recent graduate of Columbus College of Art and Design in the field of Media Studies with a minor in writing. I am a fourth generation artist, and my family also has a long tradition of being community activists passionately supporting community arts and media. I currently live in Hilliard on a three acre property with my brothers, housemates, and goats Innis and General Sherman.

Marisa is actively involved with WCRS, co-producing Starshine and Clay with Carlotta Penn, which airs on Mondays at 7 p.m.

(Photo not available)
Simply Stated  ...Continued from page 3

Mother Artists at Work presents
2nd annual KidzArtz show

Sat. April 25, 3-7pm
Junctionview Studios, 889 Williams Ave.

Don’t miss this unique event showcasing kid artists, including visual and performance art and arts and crafts. Participation open to children from preschool through 18. Free admission. ArtSafe, a youth arts organization, will benefit from raffle ticket sales and door donations. Vendor fees: $5/child to reserve a provided table space; $1/ piece for visual artists; N/C for performance artists.

Visit: www.kidzartzcolumbus.com to register and for more information. Registration deadline 4/17.
Email: kidzartzcolumbus@gmail.com.

EarthSpirit Rising, A Conference on Ecology, Spirituality and Living Economies
June 12-14, Xavier University, Cincinnati

The subject matter couldn't be more timely….Plan now to attend this conference to explore more deeply an approach to economics in tune with your values and congruent with your ecological principles.

Plenary speakers include: David Korten, Sr. Miriam Therese MacGillis, David Orr, and Sr. Paula Gonzalez. Experts in their fields, David Haenke, Pat Murphy, Marty Crouch, Jim Schenk, Megan Quinn Bachman, James Buchanan and others will share in small group sessions. Workshop presenters include our SL members Karen Hansen, Eric Davies, and Donna Sigl-Davies.

For further information, visit www.earthspiritrising.org or call 513-921-5124.

Four reasons to listen to your community radio station - WCRS

1) Hear conversations with local people doing extraordinary things (ex. Conscious Voices/Fri. 3pm; Starshine and Clay/Mon. 7pm).
2) Hear Democracy Now! live at 8am; rebroadcast at 5pm.
3) Support diverse voices, points of view and local artists.
4) Dream up ways for community radio to connect good people with good work to build a more resilient community!

We are seeking underwriters for our programs. Contact Jayme: 447-0296; jayme@simplyliving.org for more information.

Streaming from our website, wcrsfm.org, you can listen to WCRS from any internet-connected computer in the world.

Programmer Roland Pagniano sent this report in early March: Just a quick note to let you know that that my wife and I were able to connect to the live streaming of WCRS on the web in Bogota, Colombia, and now here in Barranquilla, and it sounds GREAT!.... The WCRS internet live-streaming connection is superb with no drop outs! We are right now listening to the late morning jazz on WCRS….I don't mean to rub it in, but it's sunny and about 85 degrees, and listening to the great jazz on WCRS makes it even better.

Recently added programs:

Shark Week - A local arts, music, and culture program produced and hosted by Pat Roach and Laura Clark, featuring interviews with local artists plus music of their choice.

Youth Beat Radio - Youth trends, perspectives, and activities to improve communities and the environment. Produced by Kristi Lekies and students of The Ohio State University and Upper Arlington High School.
Highlights of our 16th Annual Meeting

Festive Spring flowers graced the Fellowship Hall at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church as 120 members and guests gathered to celebrate our 16th birthday on February 28.

BUSINESS MEETING

“Retiring” board members recognized and thanked:

- John Harrison for 3 yr. of bd. service, including 2 1/2 as president;
- Jenny Floch for 4 yr. of bd. service;
- Kris Keller for 1 1/2 yr. of bd. service.

Introduction of new board members Marisa Benzle and Gwen Uetrecht;

Appreciation to continuing board members Donna Sigl-Davies, President; Chris Luers, Vice President; Dan Baer, Treasurer; Lisa Staggenborg, Jim Kammerud, and Jed Swift.

Treasurer’s report:

2008 was a year of investment by the board, especially in building WCRS and increasing our staffing.

Your support makes this possible, and we are grateful for your contributions. We especially celebrate the 109 individuals and families who have made multiple year pledges to support our mission.

Simply Living is affected by the current financial crisis, and we thank you for timely membership renewals, pledge payments, and continuing generous support.

CELEBRATING OUR WORK

Earth Institute courses - Ellen Baumgartner highlighted the life-changing value of these courses and invited people to participate. Contact Ben, ben@simplyliving.org, for more information

Simply Living listserv - Janet Ingraham Dwyer invited people to join this announcement/information listserv, sent a few times a week. Contact: janet@simplyliving.org to subscribe.

Play Group - Ali Malley invited families with young children to participate in this group which meets regularly, providing a supportive community. Contact: Gary Allison, gary.allison@gmail.com.

Gratitude to Zach Henkel, VISTA Volunteer for WCRS - Kris Keller thanked Zach on behalf of us all for his 15 months of VISTA service and considerable accomplishments.

WCRS highlights - Marisa Benzle shared accomplishments, including programming expanded from 5 to 13 hr/day; 50+ volunteers who have contributed over 8800 hours of service, valued at $170,764; development of the website, wcrsfm.org, and now streaming 24/7!

Programmer Kristi Lekies shared her excitement in producing Youth Beat Radio, a new program airing Mondays at 7:30 p.m. on WCRS, produced by area high school teens.

LOOKING FORWARD

Transition Initiative - Beal Lowe described our beginning efforts to develop a local Transition Initiative to create a more resilient region. Contact Beal: email.beal@yahoo.com

Launch of new website - Chris Luers highlighted new features as we anticipate an April 1st launch.

Member-initiated projects - Marcia Miller inspired us all with her commitment to involve 80 friends through her work at Yoga on High to create a community garden, with produce to be shared with a local food pantry.

Interspersed throughout the evening were table conversations about our efforts and commitments to “be the change”. Thanks to all who contributed to the evening’s enjoyment!

--Marilyn Welker

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Simply News April/May 2009
Because of my work with Simply Living’s Alternative Transportation Project I joined this group. Since serving, I have realized how little emphasis in the public planning process is placed on mass transit, especially on our bus system. With plenty of advocates for pedestrians, bicycling and even rail transportation, the importance of a solid bus system is consistently overlooked. Your advocacy for stronger bus service, which is truly a cornerstone of a sustainable community, is sorely needed.

Here is a sampling of topics from recent meetings:

- Metro Parks will have a 10-year renewal levy on the May ballot. Cost to homeowners for a $100,000 home will be $23/yr., which I think is quite a bargain given the education and conservation work of this park system. Because this is an “off-year” election, low voter turnout is expected. Your vote could make all the difference! Find out more and request a speaker or yard sign at www.vote4metroparks.com. To get involved with a new volunteer group for Metro Parks visit www.stewardsofmetroparks.org.

- MORPC is helping to sponsor and promote Walk-to-School Month this October.

- MORPC is currently scrambling to propose projects to use federal stimulus money for Central Ohio transportation projects. The guidelines for these funds are a moving target, but it’s a frantic “use it or lose it” set up. I believe that the CAC plays an important role in reminding MORPC of the need to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities in all projects, regardless of the deadlines and special requirements of the stimulus, and I advocate for mass transit whenever I can. Visit www.nado.org or www.narc.org for more info on the stimulus.

- Pickaway County is working on plans for an expanded East-West connector to handle truck traffic from the Rickenbacher inter-modal facility. Because congestion is an issue, I recommended they consider mass transit in their plans.

I encourage you to join me in advocating for improved mass transit—especially bus service that supports all ages and incomes—here in Central Ohio. We must not miss any opportunity to point out the “obvious”, that we need more and better service. Although it may seem that our voices are not heard, consistent repetition from many sources does matter and does result in change!

--Lisa Staggenborg (lstag@columbus.rr.com) serves on the SL board and is actively involved with numerous Sustainable Worthington projects.
Several Simply Living members have been riveted and enthralled by this adventure story of a man finding his path to building peace within himself and in the rugged mountain villages of Pakistan and Afghanistan. As he works to make tangible his belief that education for girls holds the key to easing violence in these beleaguered countries, a profound vision quest tale unfolds. Mortenson’s insightful writing is acutely relevant to current front page headlines about this volatile region.

Just Out!

Children’s Version
Listen to the Wind-
The Story of Dr. Greg and Three Cups of Tea
by Greg Mortenson and Susan L. Roth
Illustrated with Susan L. Roth’s strikingly colorful, life-filled collages

Greg Mortensen – “Haji Ali taught me to share three cups of tea, to slow down and make building relationships as important as building projects. He taught me that I had more to learn from the people I work with than I could ever hope to teach them.”

Hours: Daily 8 a.m to 10 p.m.