Simply Living

SIMPLY NEWS

Sharing Information, Joy and Thoughtfulness

A Publication of Simply Living

Shall we join the Transition Initiative experiment?

Surprise! Human ingenuity is exerting itself yet again in a remarkable social experiment known as the Transition Initiative (*transitiontowns.org*). The first few "transition town" initiatives originated in Ireland and England and quickly inspired other towns. In a short few years the experimental movement has now grown to encircle the globe. Inspired by Rob Hopkins, author of *The Transition Handbook*, a longtime student of sustainability, and a permaculture design teacher and practitioner, a local Transition Initiative begins with a few committed people, readily available resources, and agreement that, when it comes to cultural transformation,

- if we wait for governments, it will be too little, too late;
- if we act as individuals, it will be too little;
- but if we act as communities, it might be just enough, just in time.

All of this is framed by the compelling context and interconnectedness of the following dynamic issues that are reshaping our world:

- Accelerating global warming and climate change
- Diminishing fossil fuel supplies (Peak Oil)
- A global economic system predicated on growth that has overshot the earth's carrying capacity.

What is so appealing about this kind of project? People work together at the community level, asking important questions and actively pursuing solutions.

Transition weaves the bigger picture--a social experiment on a massive scale--with the necessary human scaled efforts at the local level (localism), adding the capabilities of the internet to facilitate learning.

Transition is shaped by people engaged in what works, paying attention to applied living patterns, skills and practices and building a social movement with an underlying understanding of the psychology of change.

So, what do you think? On the following pages we introduce the possibilities of a Transition Initiative and hope to inspire you to say Yes!

Our 16th Annual Meeting

A Celebration!

~Saturday, February 28~

5:30-8:30 p.m.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

30 W. Woodruff Ave.

Join us for our annual celebration of this past year's highlights, election of our valued board members, Columbus' best potluck of the year, activities for children, and some inspiration and sharing. Please come! Bring your family and friends, a dish to share for six and your table service.

Getting there: St. Stephen's is west of N. High St. and south of Lane Ave. *Parking is limited* on the west side of the church. #2 COTA stops in front of the church.

Carpooling will be available from the Giant Eagle parking lot just south of our office. Meet in the lot by the gas station between 5 and 5:15 p.m.

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

Simply News is published six times a year by Simply Living.
Please send submissions (all welcome) to:
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Email: MARYFRANCES@INSIGHT.RR.COM
The deadline for items for the next issue is:
March 10, 2009

Call the editor at (614) 895-2100. Please remember to include your phone number with submissions.
PLEASE SEND ALL CALENDAR SUBMISSIONS TO:

Ben Redman
P.O. Box 82273
Columbus OH 43202

Phone: 614.447.0296 x100
Email *ben@simplyliving.org*

Simply Living
Welcomes New Members

Barry Adler
Helen Anstaett
Bud & Pat Biegert
Ed & Jan Biegert
Carrie Cox
Neal Edgar
Benjamin Gorman

Jerry Lopper
Ken Mills
Hari Ruiz
Tuesday Trippier
Dana Warner
Charles Schreier
Lynda & Joel Knepp
Ruth Briland & Greg Kilcup

Welcome!

Our Mission:

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

Simply Living Board

John Harrison, President, 216-6124
Donna Sigl-Davies, Vice President, 268-7656
Dan Baer, Treasurer, 343-0493
Jenny Floch, 563-9031
Jim Kammerud, 844-5066
Kris Keller, 885-2964
Chirs Luers, 447-2053
Lisa Staggenborg, 436-9931
Jed Swift, 921-1997
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

We invite you to invite others to learn about us! If you have someone whom you think would enjoy reading our newsletter and/or attending our events, contact Simply Living 614/447-0296 to pass on their names. We gladly send complimentary newlstters and find that our member's recommendations are the best "advertising."

Simply Living members are the organization. Members may be in volved 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: _____

☐ One Year Subscription to *Simply News* -- $20

☐ Individual Membership* -- $30 / year

☐ Family Membership* -- $45 / year

☐ Senior Citizen or Student Membership -- $25 / year*

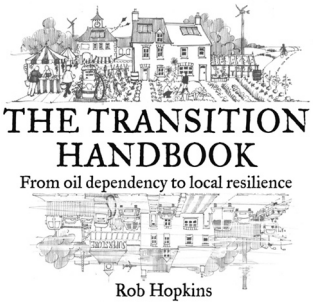
__ Please add me to SL ListServ
__ Please add me to the CCM ListServ
__ Please contact me about volunteering.
I'm interested in:

_____

*Note: Memberships include a one-year subscription to ***Simply News.***
Make checks payable to Simply Living and send to:
2929 N. High St. Suite A
PO Box 82273 Columbus OH 43202

The theme of this issue:

Introducing the Transition Initiative Experiment



What is a Transition Initiative?
(Adapted from the Wiki website: *transitiontowns.org*)

It all starts off when a small group of motivated individuals within a community come together with a shared concern: ***How can our community respond to the challenges and opportunities of economic distress, peak oil and climate change?***

They begin by forming an initiating group and then adopt the Transition Model with the intention of engaging a significant proportion of the people in their community to kick off a Transition Initiative.

An active, local Transition Initiative reflects an identified community working together to look our current reality squarely in the eye and address this **BIG** question:

> *For all those aspects of life that this community needs in order to sustain itself and thrive, how do we significantly increase resilience and drastically reduce carbon emissions?*

As the number of active participants working on the Initiative grows, people begin to build a comprehensive and creative process of:

- awareness raising around peak oil, climate change, and economic distress, and the need to undertake a community-led process to rebuild resilience and reduce carbon;
- connecting with existing groups in the community;
- building bridges to local governments;
- connecting with other Transition Initiatives;
- forming groups to look at all the key areas of life (food, energy, transport, health, heart & soul, economics & livelihoods, etc.);
- kicking off projects aimed at building people's understanding of resilience and carbon issues and community engagement;
- eventually launching a community defined, community implemented "Energy Descent Action Plan" over a 15 to 20 year timescale.

This results in a coordinated range of projects across all these areas that strives to rebuild the resilience we've lost as a result of cheap oil and to reduce the community's carbon emissions drastically.

The community also recognizes two crucial points:

- that we used immense amounts of creativity, ingenuity and adaptability on the way up the energy upslope, and that there's no reason for us not to do the same on the energy down slope;
- if we collectively plan and work together, there is every likelihood that we can create a way of living that is significantly more connected, more vibrant and more in touch with our environment than the oil-addicted treadmill that we find ourselves on today.

To find out more, visit *transitiontowns.org*.

Simply Stated

Sharing News and Information from the Simply Living Community

Letter to the Editor:

What a joy and a relief to open *Simply News* (Dec/Jan) and see an article by David Korten, a sane voice in an insane world. And Janeen Sands' neighborhood work provides hope on a local front.

Thank you, thank you all. One of the things of which I am most proud to proclaim is that of being one of the founders of this awesome organization that began with just 30 signers and *hope* and *belief*.

--Wanda Hambrick

About our errors….Your staff members--Ben, Jayme and Marilyn--have been known to make mistakes. We welcome your bringing these to our attention because we do strive to be perfect--and honest! Please call 447-0296 or email us so that we can correct errors. Thank you!

Continued on Page 5...

Keys to a successful local Transition Initiative

Creating the world we want is a much more subtle but more powerful mode of operation than destroying the one we don't want.
---Marianne Williamson

Each of us designs life. Even as we hold deeply the vision of how the world can be, we recognize the reality of 24 hours/day, our own mortality, and our own capacities.

On January 20, 2009, history was made, not only because Barack Obama is the first African-American president of the U.S., but also because he is the first community organizer to be so elected. Hardly a profession that one sets sight upon when embarking on post-secondary education, community organizing is nevertheless the key toward greater resilience of our communities.

So what do we need to know to create a successful Initiative?

Rob Hopkins suggests the following ingredients that have emerged from observing the process of Transition Initiatives as they have evolved in diverse local communities. Italicized text is excerpted from *The Transition Handbook* by Hopkins. Extraordinary synergy is generated when all of these tools and values are included in a local initiative.

Visioning - *…The Transition approach has, as a fundamental principle, the belief that we can only move towards something if we can imagine what it will be like when we get there….Creating a clear and enticing vision of our desired outcome is…key.* (p. 141)

Inclusion - *The scale of the challenge of peak oil and climate change cannot be addressed if we choose to stay within our comfort zones, if 'green' people only talk to other 'green' people, business people only talk to other business people, and so on. The Transition approach seeks to facilitate a degree of dialogue and inclusion that has rarely been achieved before, and has begun to develop some innovative ways of bringing this about…Without it we have no chance of success.* (p. 141)

Awareness-raising - *The media to which we are increasingly exposed continually give out double messages which can leave one feeling perplexed....It is essential to start with the assumption that people don't know anything about [peak oil and global warming]. We need to…set out the case as clearly, accessibly and entertainingly as possible, giving people the key arguments in order to let them formulate their own responses.* (p. 141-42)

Resilience - *…The building of resilience is, alongside the need to move rapidly to a zero carbon society, central to the Transition concept. Indeed, to do one without the other will fail to address either challenge.* (p. 142)

Psychological insights - *It is understood that among the key barriers to engagement are the sense of powerlessness, isolation and overwhelm that environmental issues can often generate. The Transition model uses [psychological] insights firstly through the creation of a positive vision, secondly by creating safe spaces where people can talk, digest and feel how these issues affect them, and thirdly by affirming the steps and actions that people have taken, and by designing into the process as many opportunities to celebrate successes as possible. This coming together…is very powerful.* (p. 142)

Credible and appropriate solutions - *It is important that Transition Initiatives…enable people to explore solutions of a credible scale….People are often only able to conceive two scales of response; individuals doing things in their own homes, or government acting on a national scale. The Transition model explores the ground between these two: what could be achieved at a community level.* (p. 142)

Simply Stated

Continued from Page 3...

Relevant tax reminders
As you prepare your tax returns, remember that Simply Living is a 501(c)3 organization, and all contributions other than program fees are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. This includes your membership in SL. For persons who have joined the Clintonville Community Market at the CCM level, your additional contribution to SL is also tax deductible. Please call our office if you have questions about specific gifts.

Start a conversation! Our discussion groups offer people a rewarding opportunity to clarify their values and to take actions congruent with those values. We love to assist in getting discussion groups started and supporting their success. Which topic might you want to explore with a group of thoughtful people? Possible topics are *Voluntary Simplicity; Exploring Deep Ecology; Discovering a Sense of Place; Choices for Sustainable Living; Global Warming: Changing CO₂urse; Healthy Child - Healthy Planet; Menu for the Future;* and *Globalization and Its Critics.* Please call Ben at 447-0296 to discuss possibilities.

Local Matters is currently seeking volunteers on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week to assist with their Veggie Van project. The Veggie Van allows Local Matters to distribute locally grown, fresh and nutritious produce in underserved communities. The van typically makes one-two hour, pre-determined stops in various neighborhoods on a weekly basis. They accept EBT cards (Food Stamps) in addition to credit cards and cash payments.

During the winter months, they stop at several indoor venues and set up their "mobile farm market". Volunteers will be assisting with set up, the selling of fresh fruits and vegetables and tear down at each site in underserved communities.

Interested persons should send an email to *mj@local-matters.org*.

Congratulations to SL member Don Pestana, recipient of the Oxford (OH) Citizens for Peace and Justice 2008 "Peace and Justice Award" this past December. As a local activist in Oxford, Don has been particularly involved with raising awareness and actions to address global warming.

Book Review:

Plan C Community Survival Strategies for Peak Oil and Climate Change by Pat Murphy, New Society Publishers, 2008

Plan C just might inspire those people who feel LOST when confronted with Peak Oil and Global Warming. Neighbor Pat Murphy, Director of Community Solutions in Yellow Springs, outlines solutions to these dilemmas and introduces the concept of *curtailment* as a necessary strategy for our current reality.

The first seven chapters provide background on U.S. energy use, media's influence, and the history and costs of resource imperialism, then focus on WHY we should change. Pat then compares four possible energy scenarios: Plans A, B, C & D. Plan A is Bush/Cheney's promotion of coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear energy. Plan B is the dream of many environmentalists: Unplugging from fossil fuels and switching to renewable (solar) energy [living happily ever after, lifestyles unchanged]. Plan D is the great die-off: It's too late; we should just give up.

Instead Pat proposes Plan C: a program of curtailment, or drastic energy conservation. Radical reductions in energy use of approximately 80% could be achieved by individuals with changes in our lifestyles, focusing on food, transportation and housing.

Various aspects of the book could be strengthened. If we reduce energy use 80%, where will we get the remaining 20%? With fossil fuels diminishing, we need solar energy (and wind and…). For 40 years we've heard about solar energy's problems. So what! Fossil fuels have problems, and we still use these. Solar energy offers abundant solutions. Having used solar energy and practiced curtailment for over 30 years, I have learned that curtailment is a tremendous aid for implementing solar energy.

I also wish the director of Community Solutions would say more about *community*. Community and spirituality can fill the void left by materialism and consumerism. I would also wish to see more text dedicated to HOW rather than WHY. Appendices offering more information on various solutions are needed. He could also describe our food system's brittleness. While numbers matter, some sections of the book drown in statistics.

I don't want Plan D, and Plans A & B are hardly viable. I was fascinated by the author's insights on resource imperialism and the media's role in our profligate energy consumption. More than a technical book, in *Plan C* Pat exposes the moral roots of our energy gluttony and doable solutions to increase our quality of life. His Smart Jitney is a marvelous recipe for achieving deep energy reductions with our existing automobile fleet. He outlines all the building techniques available, from zoning to superinsulation, to sharply reduce building energy use (while keeping comfort). Plan C has great strengths, including its realism. Through curtailment, it *is* possible to stop global warming and live on remaining fossil fuels well into the future.

-- Dale Hooper

Dale is a civil engineer who inspires many of us with his walking the talk!

Building blocks ...

(Adapted from the *Transition Initiatives Primer #26,* by Ben Brangwyn and Rob Hopkins, at *transitiontowns.org*)

What it takes is a scale at which one can feel a degree of control over the processes of life, at which individuals become neighbors and lovers instead of just acquaintances and ciphers, makers and creators instead of just users and consumers, participants and protagonists instead of just voters and taxpayers. That scale is the human scale. --Kirkpatrick Sale

These building blocks have grown out of what seemed to work in early Transition Initiatives (TI). Not surprisingly, each locale's project has evolved differently, without any "right sequence". Consider these as tools for the journey. Together they create the holistic dimensions and synergy of a TI project.

#1. Set up a Steering Group and design its demise from the outset
Begin with a core group to drive the project forward during the initial phases (steps 2-5). Once a minimum of four sub-groups have formed, the Steering Group disbands and reforms with one representative from each sub-group.

#2 Awareness raising
Identify key allies, build crucial networks and prepare the community for the launch of our TI. Screen informative movies, offer talks by experts, and use the media to raise awareness of the issues and to start thinking about solutions.

#3 Lay the foundations
Network with existing groups and activists, making it clear that our TI is designed to incorporate their efforts. Explore how a TI can be a catalyst to create grassroots strategies and solutions.

#4 Organize a Great Unleashing
Plan a large community event to build momentum for the initiative and to celebrate our community's commitment to act. Include contents about the current realities of peak oil and climate change in a spirit of "we can do something about this".

#5 Form working groups
Tap into the collective genius of our community by creating smaller groups to focus on specific aspects of the process, each developing their own ways of working and activities, and all focusing on: What's the best way to make our community more resilient and to reduce its carbon footprint?. Possible working groups include food, waste, energy, education, youth, economics, transport, water, local governments, heart and soul, transition tales, and more.

… of the Transition Process

#6 Use Open Space (and other learning tools)
A large group of people comes together to explore a particular topic or issue with no agenda or obvious coordinator. By meeting's end, everyone has said what they needed to say, extensive notes have been taken and typed up, lots of networking has taken place, and a huge number of ideas have been identified and visions set forth.

#7 Do things
From an early stage, create practical, visible manifestations in our community to enhance people's perceptions of the project and their willingness to participate.

#8 Facilitate the "great reskilling"
If we are to relocalize our communities with lower carbon footprints and more resilience, we'll need skills that our grandparents took for granted. Offer training for useful and necessary skills, such as repairing, cooking, cycle maintenance, natural building, gardening, basic home energy efficiency, food preservation, and more--all empowering and fun.

#9 Build a bridge to local government(s)
Whatever groundswell our TI manages to generate and however many practical projects we initiate, we will need and want a positive and productive relationship with our local government(s).

#10 Honor the elders
In order to rebuild the picture of a lower energy society, we can learn from those who directly remember the transition to the age of Cheap Oil, especially from 1930 to 1960. Without suggesting we are "going back" to this past, we can learn much from how things were done, how people and needs were connected, and how daily life was supported.

#11 Let it go where it wants to go…
Act as a catalyst for our community to design the fullness of what is possible in our transitions. Keep the focus on key design criteria--building community resilience and reducing our carbon footprints.

#12 Create an Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP)
Using the practical actions from each working group, the community collectively works toward the process of reducing our energy needs through building an EDAP. Imagine if Mayor Coleman had such a document in deciding how Columbus could best use federal funds from a proposed economic stimulus package!

Wisdom for the journey

If the world is to be healed through human efforts, I am convinced it will be by ordinary people, people whose love for this life is even greater than their fear. People who can open to the web of life that called us into being. *--Joanna Macy*

What makes the Transition movement so attractive is that its message is simple and unfailingly positive. It is place-specific in that it addresses the concerns of individual communities. It looks at what can be done rather than the possibility that it may be too late….It's also a sign of the times and an answer for anyone who saw *An Inconvenient Truth* and wondered, 'What can I do?'. The Transition movement has harnessed the collective call to action and is a glue that is mending the torn fabric of our communities. *--Cliona O'Conaill*

We have to find a way to live in this planet-time without closing our eyes to what we're doing. --Joanna Macy

The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them. *--Albert Einstein*

In the depth of winter I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer. *--Albert Camus*

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing. *--Arundhati Roy*

Resources

Copies of *The Transition Handbook* are available for purchase at the Simply Living Bookstore at the Clintonville Community Market and for loan through the Simply Living office, 447-0296.

Recommended internet resources in addition to the Transition Town website:

1) An article from the *Christian Science Monitor:*
features.csmonitor.com/environment/2008/09/11/communities-plan-for-a-low-energy-future/

2) An introductory talk by Transition Town co-founder Rob Hopkins, about 6 minutes long. Go to:
youtube.com and type in
"Transition Town Rob Hopkins" in the Search command

3) *transitionus.ning.com* where each of the U.S. states has its own section.

Next steps

Dear friends,

As I write this the world is preparing to celebrate the inauguration of Barack Obama as our 44th U.S. President. Winter is showing its brittle beauty with 3' icicles outside my window against the backdrop of shimmering snow and welcome sunlight.

The timing of this newsletter issue, our first of 2009, seems auspicious for introducing the Transition Initiative possibilities. While many are feeling a renewed sense of hope for significant changes in the new Washington leadership, do any of us doubt that our involvement in shaping those changes will be even more important? And that *our being the change*, as Gandhi so wisely noted, is perhaps the first and most important assignment?

Since the publication of *The Transition Handbook* mid-year 2008, which included mention of two U.S. Transition Initiatives, such initiatives are growing at an exponential rate. The first Transition Initiative training in the Midwest is taking place in Ann Arbor at the end of January, and SL member Beal Lowe will attend. Citizens from Boulder, CO, the first U.S. initiative, will be on hand to share their stories and experiences. Thanks to Beal, we have ten copies of the book for loan from our office, many of which have already been read and passed along to others.

What are your ideas about such an initiative in Central Ohio? Might you like to be one of the core group members initially? This is a first and critical step. Might you have ideas for a working group that you are especially passionate about and can help organize? Whom do you know that you think would be very excited to be involved?

With many aligned initiatives already contributing very significantly in Central Ohio (e.g. Sustainable Community groups, Consider Biking, Local Matters, neighborhood associations, etc), cooperation and mutual enhancement is especially important.

To share your energy and ideas, contact Beal Lowe - 284-4529, ot Ben or myself at the SL office - 447-0296 . Watch for announcements of get-togethers in our SL calendar and on our SL listserv (*janet@simplyliving.org* if you are not subscribed). Participate in our Annual Meeting. Let's toast the possibilities for creating greater resilience in our communities even as we lighten our carbon footprints, and let's do it!

Marilyn Welker

WCRS 102.1 and 98.3 FM, a broadcast service of Simply Living

A Project of Simply Living

WCRS FM News and Notes

Excerpted from our recent press release….

WCRS-LP Now Streaming Online

January 5, 2009. Columbus, Ohio. WCRS, Columbus' Community Radio Station and a broadcast service of Simply Living, began streaming its signal on the internet at midnight January 1, 2009. This new service simulcasts the radio station's daily 13 hours of FM programming and will offer web-only broadcasting for the additional 11 hours of the day at ***wcrsfm.org.***

WCRS is a time-shared, low-power radio station, broadcasting at 102.1 and 98.3 FM. Its signal covers most of Columbus and Franklin County. This new streaming service is available to anyone around the globe who has broadband internet access. Streaming will increase awareness and availability of WCRS' unique local and syndicated programming.

WCRS seeks businesses for underwriting

Are you a business owner wanting to support WCRS and community radio, or do you know a business that might? Jayme Richards, our Development Coordinator, has details about underwriting WCRS programming and would love to talk with you. Please call her at 447-0296.

Thank you, Zach!

On March 4, Zach Henkel concludes his VISTA Volunteer service with WCRS and Simply Living. Over his 15 months of service, Zach has worked diligently to build many critical capacities for the station, including recruiting, training and scheduling volunteers; promoting the station; involving people and community organizations to inform, educate, and activate our listeners about critical social issues; meeting the public and responding to inquiries; implementing our programming expansion from 5 to 13 hr/day; mentoring students involved as interns; and more.

Need we say that we would not be where we are without you, Zach?! And that this would not have been possible without the support of Ohio Community Computing Network, and the Corporation for National and Community Service who administers the VISTA program nationally.

We are pleased that Zach will continue to be involved with the station as both a volunteer and part-time employee to ensure continuity as we seek volunteers to assume necessary tasks. Please contact Zach at 447-0296 or *zachhenkel@hotmail.com* if you'd like to explore getting involved.

And with much appreciation to….

William McCulley and Chuck Adkins for their considerable contributions over the past eight months to improve our station and its operations!

Robb Ebright, Pat Leonard, Eugene Beer and Josh Tulecke-Paulson for hours and hours of technical work related to getting WCRS automated and streaming!

Featured Program - Weekend en Vrac

The Columbus geographical area has a significant number of French speaking residents, approximately 5000. We share the conviction that every community is filled with unique values, perceptions, aspirations, and beliefs to contribute to the world. After a few months of listening to the Somali broadcast programs on WCRS, a group of African immigrant French-speaking people began to generate interest in developing a French radio program with Simply Living.

In August, 2008, we applied to WCRS for a program, which was approved. We now have been on the air for 3 month, broadcasting on Saturdays and Sundays, 3 - 4 p.m.

Weekend en Vrac is a live program. We give voice to the artists, writers, poets, singers, and comedians of the community. It's a program with cross-cultural music, news from RFI (Radio France International), African stories, announcements for community events, interviews with guests, and events of the month.

After beginning our broadcasts, our listeners asked to create a network of French language speakers. We're calling it Simply Living French Connection, and we will be meeting monthly at the Simply Living office. Please contact me for details about February's get-together.

--Wazi Mandefu, Weekend en Vrac Producer
wazmodeste@yahoo.com

Wazi Mandefu and Eugene Beer at the WCRS Studio

In Memorium...

Anne Blatherwick
(d. 11/29/08)

In 2002, Anne moved to Central Ohio as my partner. She was delighted to discover the many opportunities to participate in SL and commented many times how easy it was to make the transition to Ohio because of our welcoming community.

Anne soon made many friends who enriched her life immeasurably. Anne enjoyed our many public events, especially the drumming circles, the women's Singing in Sacred Circle Group, and meditation and healing sessions. Anne had a wonderful capacity to listen to friends with her full attention. This gift was returned to her many times by all of you who supported her during her health challenges and especially this past year as she was limited to a hospice program at home.

Becky Allen shared this at her memorial service. "There was something very special--actually extraordinary--about Anne that we all recognized. She was one of those people who stood out in a crowd--not because she was flamboyant or in any way drew attention to herself. Quite the contrary. People noticed Anne because she was so gentle, genuine, sensitive, and serene. And she had the amazing ability to draw forth these same qualities in all of us when we were with her."

Anne was thoughtful, deliberate, and cautious in her manner, but she was passionate in her commitment to the environment and social justice. She did what she could to promote alternative approaches to health care, to advocate for alternative energy, to support a local, organic foodshed, and to ensure fair elections and campaigns. She was ahead of her time in many ways, and as death approached, she chose to have a "green burial" in the Foxfield Nature Preserve near Wilmot, Ohio.

At Anne's memorial service, I honored Anne with these words. "Thank you for being a pioneer….You were the canary flying into the coal mines of injustice… breathing in the toxins of this world, yes, but also seeing the way forward. I loved your energy, your passion for all the good causes, ones that today seem like common sense. Thank you for inspiring me and others to create a world where all of us canaries can breathe freely and live a long healthy life."

Persons wishing to share memories of Anne may do so at *caringbridge.org/visit/anneblatherwick*

--Chuck Lynd

Arthur E. Strauss
(d. 1/7/09)

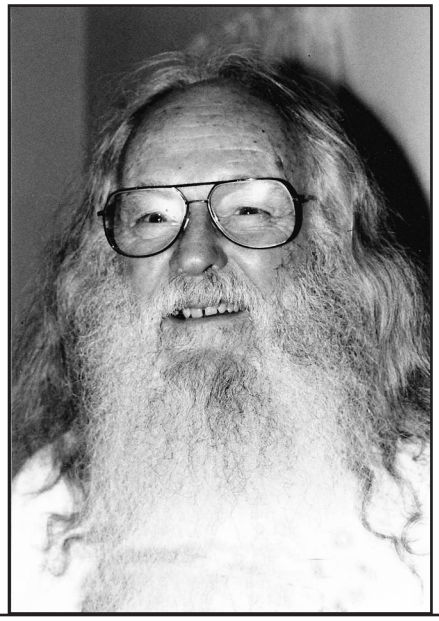
For many persons in our community, Arthur and Cindy Strauss have been inspiring examples of dedicated service in the name of Life for decades. As founding members of Simply Living, they were integral to our organization in countless ways, including photocopying our publications and hosting mailing parties, serving as treasurer, setting up and maintaining our database, housing a lending library, operating a recycled paper business, making our Comfest booth happen, showing up fully wherever whenever, and always giving their all on behalf of our beautiful world.

Art set up a copy shop in their house, and for years he and Cindy distributed literature everywhere they went, covering a broad range of topics in support of social justice and human/earth harmony. Art was especially appreciative of Joanna Macy's and Rachel Carson's contributions to our understandings of our humanity.

Art always felt the pain of our insane world and accepted responsibility. Art always exalted in the beauty of music, the perfection of the sparrows in the winter cold outside their dining room, and the preciousness of our children. Art was relentless in his efforts to be good and to do good and to honor Life. I am grateful to have known Art and to have shared his and Cindy's path. We are all the richer for their legacy in shaping Simply Living's voice in the community and in their efforts to awaken us all.

Cindy can be contacted at Oakleaf Village, 550 Karl Rd. Apt. 119, Columbus, OH 43229.

--Marilyn Welker



Irva Taylor: A member who simply lived every moment

Irva Taylor's passing in late November brings to light memories of her life, but these recollections contain more than just stories and images. Irva simply lived every moment of her 88 years with humility, grace and selfless service. Her actions, whether simple and basic or bold and obvious, embodied the values of Simply Living.

Along with many other Simply Living members, we only knew Irva during her later years. Yet even then she lived with tenacity, spontaneity, abundant joyfulness and strong resolve.

Her gentle soul was coupled with great strength that led her to work in the Deep South in the 1960s, to stand up for Native American rights, and to gently and lovingly work with adults with special needs. Her selfless service appeared in small yet profound ways--in the years of helping with Simply Living's monthly mailings to her service to the community through the ministries of the various churches she attended.

She always reached out to those who appeared to have the least and who needed comfort and support the most. She unofficially adopted her longtime friend John, a resident of the Ark House, whom she treated like a revered son. During the Civil Rights movement, her beliefs and actions for equality and justice led to threats on her own life when she was living with an African-American family in Mississippi and teaching in a Head Start program for African-American children.

Irva remained a seeker of meaning and simplicity throughout her life as shown through her study around "Conversations with God," participation in Simply Living's Earth Institute courses, her leadership in the local Dances of Universal Peace, and her love of the woods.

Her beauty shone during Michael and Ali Malley's wedding a decade ago, when she led a Dance of Universal Peace on the grounds of the Great Circle Earthworks in Newark. The dance was "a real stretch" for some of Michael's family... but then, how could you refuse Irva? At a Simply Living Intentional Community camping retreat years ago Irva twisted, turned, bent and dived over the pack to help undo a "human knot" during a group-building exercise.

In truth, Irva leapt and bent and struggled to untangle the knots of human existence throughout her life. We know her spirit will continue to shine and guide us.

--Eric Davies & Michael Malley

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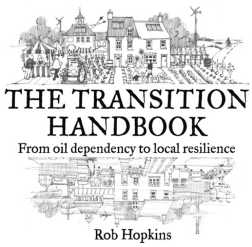

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