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Creating a compassionate and sustainable world through personal, community & cultural transformation.

SIMPLY LIVING BOOK CLUB GOES VIRTUAL!

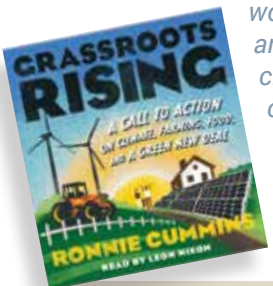
Our Spring selection, *Grassroots Rising: A Call to Action on Climate, Farming, Food, and a Green New Deal*, is an inspiring new book by Ronnie Cummins, author, activist, and director of the Organic Consumers Association. The book is a passionate call to action that provides practical solutions based on regenerative systems designed to revitalize our food system, promote biodiversity in order to reverse global warming and transition to a livable future.

Free, but please register on Eventbrite to receive the link to the virtual discussion group sessions: tinyurl.com/y9q84czg

Special discounted price of \$10 if you purchase it from Simply Living. Regular price is \$17.95. Email Chuck@simplyliving.org or call 614-354-6172 to arrange for pickup or mail delivery. Also available from Chelsea Green and other online distributors.

"This is a book that should be in the hands of every activist working on food and farming, climate change, and the Green New Deal."

~Vandana Shiva



MINDFULNESS, MOURNING, EARTH CARE, AND THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

by Michael R. Malley

Mindfulness is a buzzword associated with health, healing, and stress reduction, but what does being mindful really mean? To be mindful is to be truly awake and aware in this present moment. It is to directly experience our Earth through our senses - without the undo chatter of our thoughts and emotions. We dwell on this planet in this surreal period of pandemic, with physical distancing, many businesses shuttered, and our lives being lived in our homes. The coronavirus brings much suffering, illness, death, and mourning; it has also accomplished the unthinkable - it has slowed down the human family; it has stifled our freneticism. It has opened the way for greater mindfulness.



We need to be careful here. It is a mistake to romanticize what Covid-19 brings us. I know of a lovely family of three that consists of an elderly mom and her two kind-hearted middle-aged sons. They have all tested positive for the coronavirus, one of the sons is currently on a ventilator. All three of them have a history of poor health. They are

at great risk and they are our family friends. No one knows how many human lives will be lost to this pandemic. Writing in mid-April of 2020, the world count of deaths is over 100,000 and sadly it will grow much higher.

To be mindful is to be truly awake and aware in this present moment. One Tibetan Buddhist teacher juxtaposes fearfulness with sadness. If we are mindful, we will find that behind our fears there is often hidden sadness. People oftentimes lead such busy lives that there is no time to mourn. Our pain is pushed away. None of us want to be crushed by our sadness, but it is healthy to allow room in our days to feel sad and mourn. It is more than healthy, it is what we humans genuinely do.

My aspiration as a mindfulness practitioner and teacher (and as a human being!) is to allow myself to feel what I feel without either attachment or aversion. Our goal is not necessarily "to feed" our emotions, but it is also not to deny them. These days I notice that sometimes I simply need to mourn. My goal is not to push sadness away, nor to encourage it. It simply is. Of course, my goals do not always match my reality. Sometimes I am self-

See Mindfulness - page 3



BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Lilacs and Redbuds

Spring has certainly sprung; even though I've had flowers in my backyard since late February I still welcome the explosion of flowering trees and plants as if we had had a long hard winter.

Michael Malley's piece on Mindfulness in this issue is a great reminder of how we can slow down a little and experience life in all it's ups and downs without letting the internal chatter drown out what we feel. There are undoubtedly health benefits to mindfulness, through stress reduction for example, but the bigger story is a boosting of our abilities to empathize with those suffering around us.

Congratulations to Cathy Cowan-Becker for receiving the Carol Fisher Community Service Award at the annual meeting held at the India Oven! She richly deserves this award, as few have been more dedicated to steering Ohio communities toward 100% renewable energy

A virtual "Meet Simply Living" is planned for June 14th at 2:00 pm, and a date and time are being determined to virtually show the film The Story of Plastic – stay tuned for details! We are looking into moving the Sustainable Garden Tour to a virtual environment – not sure how it's going to work but video cameras and bandwidth are cheap these days.

In the last Newsletter we mentioned the changes to the Simply Living Board of Directors we see in 2020: Dan Barash stepped down as Board President and I [Jenee Murphy] have stepped into the role. The changes don't stop there however; the Board has met by telephone conference call the past 2 months because of the continued need to physically distance ourselves – this is distinct from social distancing, since there are many ways for us to continue social interactions. Social media (thanks Rachel Schank!), telephone conversations and texts, Zoom and Skype are among the most accessible and simple ways for us to stay in touch. It's nice to take a walk in the neighborhood and say hi to neighbors (through our masks).

So, enjoy the spring, plant your "victory gardens," and keep pursuing simpler, more sustainable lifestyles. From the entire Simply Living Board, good health to you and let's keep being safe!

– *With gratitude, Simply Living Board*

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752 High Street, Suite 2
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at COhatch co-working space

SIMPLY LIVING serves as the Transition Hub in central Ohio to promote resilient, sustainable communities. We are affiliated with TransitionUS.org.

SIMPLY LIVING is affiliated with the Northwest Earth Institute and offers all their courses on sustainability topics. Contact: Hello@simplyliving.org

SIMPLY LIVING is affiliated with the local Care & Share Time Bank. SL volunteers may earn HOURS to exchange services with other members. Contact: VilviVannak@gmail.com

SIMPLY NEWS NEWSLETTER:

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THANK YOU TO ALL WHO VOLUNTEER!

SIMPLY LIVING



Community Education for Sustainable Living

Upcoming classes and workshops are announced in the LEARN section of our weekly Community Update. Visit SimplyLiving.org/blog

MINDFULNESS - continued from page 1

suppressing, sometimes I am wallowing - but mindfulness invites me to notice, to be aware of "how I'm doing" and to recalibrate when necessary.

The Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (aka Thay - pronounced "tie" and meaning "teacher") was one of the first practitioners to introduce mindfulness to the West. As part of our mindfulness practice, Thay asks an important question, "What's not wrong?" At this time, part of my answer to Thay's question comes by attending to the "law of unintended positive consequences" related to this pandemic. When that attention is heightened and truly focused, it is mindfulness.

Our thirteen-year-old son softly strums his guitar in his room. He has taken this "hunkering down" time to focus on guitar (something he wasn't doing before), spending hours practicing each day. His 19-year-old elder brother (forced back home from college) sweetly comments on the way his kid brother is spending his time - Right now, what's better than learning guitar so you can share music with people for the rest of your life? On a Sunday morning Easter walk, my wife Ali and I stop to admire our neighbor's yellow tulips and the magnolia trees bursting into bloom. I stop to breathe in the fragrance of a white hyacinth. There is much that is not wrong.

What happens when we bring our mindfulness to this Earth? What happens when we allow time for presence? What happens when we attend to what's not wrong? If we silence our thoughts and emotions and truly observe what is before us, we will be overwhelmed with awe and wonder - for we dwell in the magical land of songbirds and crickets, children and cherry trees. My goodness, we live in a world where you can place tiny hard seeds in the dirt and they somehow transform into crunchy carrots and tasty lettuce. Yet, somehow, we are not overflowing with awe and gratitude.

Thich Nhat Hanh says that the key to sustainability and healing for our Earth is mindfulness and wonder. We must fall in love with our Earth again. We must experience the world directly. We must regain our child-like senses of curiosity, awe, and joy.

There is only one place where you can meet your children, your partner, your friends, your loved ones, as well as the dandelion, the cloud, the weeping willow, and your dog - that place is... right here, right now! But there is one condition, one unique key you need if you wish to enter this place: The key is presence...to meet the weeping willow or your best friend you must be present. You must be truly alive, awake: Right here. Right now.

Our thoughts and emotions have their place; they have roles to play in our lives, but one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is the ability to let them go. Mindfulness is not a program to increase productivity. It is not simply a stress-reduction technique. Mindfulness is not a formula. It is an invitation to pure presence. It is the practice of truly living, of actually being awake and alive. Mindfulness is really tasting the tea in your cup. It is truly feeling the breeze on your skin. Mindfulness is actually seeing your loved one as they smile. It is genuinely hearing the song of the backyard cardinal that is being sung right now.

Wonder, mystery, and awe are available. Life is here. Now. In this present moment. The coronavirus that is sadly taking so much away from us is giving us this one incredible gift: It is inviting us to slow down and be present. Our work is to awaken to what is here. Right now.

And again...RIGHT NOW. 🌸

Michael Malley is a mindfulness teacher and the senior pastor of Sacred Ground, a church/sangha grounded by Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings and mindfulness trainings; committed to healing our Mother Earth; and dedicated to honoring the beneficial teachings of multiple faith traditions. Michael holds a Master of Divinity degree with a specialization in eco-theology and social justice. He is currently completing his book, Are You a Buddhist Christian? Double Belonging in the 21st Century. Michael and his wife Ali have a long history of involvement with Simply Living, going back to the early 1990s. To learn more about Michael and Ali Malley, as well as their work with Sacred Ground visit TheHolyNow.org

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BUSINESS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

New
Business
Member!



A Sustainable Homegoods & Gift Store located in Historical Uptown Westerville

WHAT PRODUCTS DO YOU OFFER AND WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT FEATURED ITEMS?

We are so grateful for your support of local businesses! Though our storefront is temporarily closed, we have launched our new online store at www.shopgreenhaveneco.com. Shop online for 60+ sustainable collections of home decor, kitchenwares, zero-waste supplies, journals, jewelry, natural personal care products, garden, seasonal, and so much more.

HOW DID YOUR BUSINESS BEGIN?

Our business was created not only to give back, but to prove there are smarter, more sustainable ways to manufacture and purchase everyday products for the home and gift giving. A portion of sales is funneled back into environmental and wildlife conservation causes. We were established in 2016. We operated via a series of pop-up shops around Central Ohio before opening our Westerville storefront in 2018. Since that time, we have spent the majority of our time educating the public about our products, our makers, and the non-profits we support.

WHAT ARE SOME SIMPLE OR SUSTAINABLE CHOICES OR ACTIONS YOU HAVE IMPLEMENTED?

We ship via UPS Carbon Neutral at no additional cost to our customers. All of our products are selected based on care taken to source sustainable, upcycled, recycled, or repurposed materials. Local products by local makers receive our preference. There are a multitude of other environmental, wildlife, and community organizations we support throughout each year as well.

FUN FACTS

August 2019 - Recognized as a Top Scoring Retailer in 2019 by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and Sustainable Furnishings Council's Wood Furniture Scorecard.

October 2019 - Actress and activist, Susan Sarandon, made a visit to Green Haven Living while in town for the Democratic Debates held at Otterbein University.

12 W College Ave., Westerville, OH 43081

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women owned, small footprint store

source sustainable, upcycled, recycled, or repurposed materials

members of the Sustainable Furnishings Council (no deforestation)

preference local products by local makers

fundraise for the Ohio Wildlife Center and other organizations (see website)



TRANSITION IN A TIME OF COVID-19

Mac Crawford, Simply Living Board of Directors, Secretary

My apologies to Gabriel Garcia Marquez - if only we were living in magical realism; realism would be good. I confess I find myself struggling to focus on much beyond the pandemic, obtaining food (which I am so fortunate to be able to buy), and keeping in touch with friends and family. I have been reluctant to shop in grocery stores because the cloth mask I wear (sewed by my better 75%, Debbie) will provide limited protection of others from me, but will not protect me, much, from others who are to greater and lesser degrees practicing physical distancing and wearing personal protective gear.

The subject of groceries triggers thoughts of supply chains. For decades we have been living in an integrated world economy in which inventories are replenished "just in time (JIT)" to avoid empty shelves. This JIT economy provides for an efficiency that is good for the bottom lines of corporations – obtaining wholesale products from international companies located in countries with better and worse environmental and worker protections, having been shipped thousands of miles. Transportation specialists are able to apply algorithms

to minimize the costs of inputs, and thus the ultimate price of the goods we buy in the U.S. Those pesky environmental and worker-protection savings are what economists refer to as externalities: costs imposed on society by private entities that are borne by the populations of the countries producing the goods, and by marginalized populations of the U.S. (think of poor people living in the shadows of factories, open pit mines, fracking wells,

The "Just In Time" system provides for efficiency; but there is a countervailing concept to efficiency: resilience.

or coal slurry lagoons). These externalities mean that the goods we buy are not as cheap as advertised – corporations can pad their stock prices and reward management at others' expense – hey, thanks!

So, what does all of this have to do with Transition? The JIT system provides

for efficiency; but there is a countervailing concept to efficiency: resilience. Yes, resilience, or the ability of a system to absorb a shock with minimal disruption. We've witnessed what happens when the manufacturer of so many of the world's goods, China, shuts down (because of a pandemic, for example). Supply chains around the world are disrupted because so many product manufacturing processes around the world call for the JIT arrival of component parts from China. When the components are for making medicines or IV bags, or ventilators, or Covid-19 testing kits, the resulting disruptions may result in disaster. Resilience relies on having backup systems, sometimes utilizing "old" technology (think analog). It also relies on shorter, less-complex supply lines, and more domestic production and consumption (think local – ask Chuck Lynd).

Information about Transition and essays by Rob Hopkins, the "inventor" of the Transition movement, may be found on Resilience.org – this is not a coincidence. As we move through this unprecedented time in world and U.S. history, let's keep in mind a goal of building a new economy, not just the old one enabled by the endless chasing of GDP growth at any cost. What way of doing things might add to our levels of happiness and satisfaction? How can we support our friends and neighbors in pursuing healthy lives and vibrant communities? Transition isn't the only answer, but it's a good start.

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO JOINED US FOR SIMPLY LIVING'S 28TH ANNUAL MEETING

At this year's Annual Meeting, we honored Cathy Cowan Becker with the the Carol Fisher Community Service Award!

Cathy has a call to attention and action: 100% renewable energy by 2022.

- Make sure that aggregating for 100% RE gets formalized in the city's forthcoming Climate Action Plan
- Make sure it is used not just to buy carbon offsets but leveraged to build out local solar generation. Carbon offsets are okay as a temporary measure, but they can't be the only solution, especially not for a city the size of Columbus.



In 2017, the Sierra Club launched *Ready for 100* and Cathy Cowan Becker, founder of the Columbus Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby jumped on board. For years Cathy's Ready for 100 Columbus team has led projects, panel discussions, speakers, strikes, town halls, community dialogues, government official trainings, and mapping.

In February, that hard work began to come to fruition, Mayor Gunther's State of the City address included the call for putting community choice aggregation on the ballot in November. Aggregation means the city can pool together all its utility customers and use that to leverage 100% RE from the #utilities at a good price. This in turn can be used to leverage financing for building out local RE generation, which is what Cincinnati has done.

Rob Dorans says it is like "collective bargaining for energy generation." But for the city to be empowered to negotiate with the utilities on behalf of the citizens, it has to pass by a ballot initiative.

Express your support to Mayor Gunther's office: www.columbus.gov/mayor/Office-of-the-Mayor/

And to learn more, visit www.sierraclub.org/ohio/central-ohio/readyfor100columbus



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BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

Our members and the community at large refer to SIMPLY LIVING for relevant and current resources. Join us as we build a vibrant local and supportive community for a resilient future! Questions? Call 614-447-0296 or email hello@simplyliving.org for details.

SIMPLY LIVING is a 501(c)(3) organization. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

This issue we are diving deeper into what some of our Business Members offer so you can get to know them better.



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Blue Rock Station

Learn Virtually Until You Can Visit Philo & Blue Rock Station Yourself
Each week Annie & Jay Warmke present a radio program *When the BioMass Hits the Wind Turbine* (which appears on WOUB radio (NPR) and WGRN (Pacifica). Also syndicated on the Pacifica Radio Network, and hosted on Podbean, and on the BlueRockStation YouTube Channel.

When the BioMass Hits the Wind Turbine is a serious, but not too serious, look at issues surrounding sustainability and sustainable living, and expands Warmke's book of the same name.

Download books for free on the website

Two examples of their Green Living Book series:

When the BioMass Hits The Wind Turbine. The unvarnished past, present and future of energy, from 1492 to today. Learn how early innovations in energy came largely due to man's pursuit of beer. How Benjamin Franklin nearly killed himself electrocuting turkeys. How an Italian scientist believed he discovered the human soul while making frog leg soup for his girlfriend – which ultimately lead to the invention of the battery. And much, much more .

Restoring Health to Cats & Dogs, Blue Rock Station Style. After years of keeping animals (large and small), Annie Warmke has decided that nature really does know best, and there are no shortcuts in nature. But with kindness, good nutrition, common sense and a host of natural remedies – you and your pet will enjoy a happy long life together. The steps outlined in this booklet work with nature, to guide your pet to wellness, working with nature rather than against it. This 32-page booklet covers 23 topics.

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Tax Credits & Low Interest Loans Are Available for Solar Installations, and Solar Purchases Can Benefit Others.

The 2020 federal solar tax credit for 2020 is 26% and some local banks are working in conjunction with the State of Ohio ECO-link program to obtain the best possible loan rate. The PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) financing, allows businesses to finance a solar project over 20 years through their property taxes. Solar suppliers can direct you to these programs.

EcoHouse, is a longtime SL member, and leader in Central Ohio solar installations. To support the adaption of solar energy for low income people in the Central Ohio area, EcoHouse in 2020 created a Foundation. 5% of EcoHouse's profit goes into this fund and It also welcomes donations from individuals or organizations that want to support this initiative.

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Big Green Head

Big Green Head is a monster on a mission to educate and inspire people of all ages to rethink their habits, reconnect to nature, and embrace a lifestyle that is kinder to our planet and each other. And to summarize its Team motto: *Participate in reducing climate change where and whenever we can.* "Vote" for the earth with our dollars and time - by supporting green businesses and local organizations.

In this effort Big Green Head connects eco-conscious consumers to local green businesses through its annual May event, Green on the Green, and through an online green business directory, The Big Green Guide.

www.thebiggreenguide.com/green_directory

Although this year's Green on the Green Event is canceled, you can still support local green companies, check out the online directory. Since that first gathering in 2010, Green on the Green has reached thousands of people in Central Ohio, educating and inspiring folks to reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink how they live.

Big Green Head is also hoping to expand their directory. While you are reviewing the directory please let Big Green Head know if your favorite green business is not on the list.

OUR MISSION:

SIMPLY LIVING is a community organization that celebrates and connects people to learning opportunities that promote community sustainability, environmental awareness, and our local economy through educational outreach and partnerships within our community.



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"Meet" Simply Living

SUNDAY, JUNE 14 @ 2 PM

Meet Virtually and enjoy a slide show that highlights Simply Living initiatives, partnerships, and future plans. Chuck Lynd will facilitate and lead a discussion Q&A. Participate with video, audio, or phone - whatever works for you. Fun event. Enjoy (healthy?) snacks and drinks.

Register on Eventbrite:
tinyurl.com/ybovfrju

DATE TBD

Virtual Screening of *The Story of Plastic*

Produced by the Story of Stuff Project. Simply Living has applied for a license to host the event so stay tuned for details on our Friday Community Updates.

Sign up for our Community Updates:
simplyliving.org