



GREEN FIRST

Helping First Congregational move toward more sustainable living

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First Congregational United Church of Christ

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Green First Congregational – Upcoming Potluck Foodprints

By Debi Brewer & Connie Toops

Come out and celebrate Earth Day with a potluck sponsored by the Christian Action Team. Bring a dish with enough for your own family and a little bit more! Bringing your own dishes reduces our carbon footprint, so build yourself a little kit!

As part of the festivities, the Earth Team challenges you to know the 'foodprint' of the dish you bring. We heard about foodprinting from the Girl Scouts of America by way of our own Virginia Himmelheber.

Considering the main ingredient of your dish, use the following to score the foodprint of your food. We'll have little flags for you at the potluck.

- 1 point - the main ingredient is local, within 100 miles
- 2 points - the main ingredient is from elsewhere within the continental United States
- 3 points - the main ingredient is from elsewhere in North or Central America
- 4 points - the main ingredient is from elsewhere in the world, e.g., South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, or Australia.

In typical American homes, food travels about 1500 miles from production to our tables. A great way to save fuel required for transportation, and to enjoy fresh food, is to grow some of your own vegetables. At the April 11 potluck, Earth Team will host a *Grow a Garden!* table offering free seeds and gardening advice. Even if your yard space is small, you can grow something this summer. We especially invite sharing this fun experience with kids, grandkids, or other young friends.



Spring and Tailgate Farmers Market Season Arrive

From ASAP: Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program

<http://www.asapconnections.org/farmersmarketseason2010.html>

There's no better way to welcome spring than going to a farmers tailgate market. Markets begin reopening in April, offering not only the freshest local food, but a chance to reconnect with neighbors and the people who grow your food, and enjoy free outdoor activities. The Asheville City Market's downtown location at 161 South Charlotte Street opens on Saturday, April 17, 8:00a.m.-1:00p.m. Many other markets in Buncombe County and counties around the region are opening as well.

"After such a dreary winter, I'm so looking forward to fresh produce and farmers markets' simple pleasures like eating a fresh strawberry in the sunshine," says market patron Brook Thompson. The first markets' tables will display many varieties of greens, radishes, peas, asparagus, and other signs of spring. You can always shop tailgate

markets for eggs; meats, many of them grass fed and naturally raised; baked goods, sweet and savory; preserves such as jellies and dressings; and crafts. Ever more diverse markets now carry prepared foods such as mustards, frozen meals, pasta, kimchi, and tempeh too. For those who want to grow their own food, markets offer plant starts.

Another market supporter, Emily Jackson, says she goes to the farmers market for edible treats she can't get anywhere else--"croissants from Dave, and cowgirl cookies from Amy." (She's referring to the owners of Farm and Sparrow and Sweet Heart Bakery by name.) Additionally, she goes "to catch up with the farmers who grow my food, and all the people who gather at markets who I haven't seen over the winter." Creating a festive atmosphere, Sherri Lynn & Mountain Friends Band will start off the season of live music performances at Asheville City Market's downtown location on April 17. Many other markets provide live music and activities.

Find the farmers tailgate market in your community by visiting www.buyappalachian.org.

There are many on the list. Here are a few:

Madison County Farmers' and Artisans' Market

Mars Hill College, 339 Cascade Street, Mars Hill. Saturdays from 9am - 1pm, April through October.

Asheville City Market

Downtown Asheville's producer-only market featuring local food from local farmers including farm-fresh produce, local eggs, savory meats and fish, brick oven breads, delicious pastries, handmade pasta. 161 South Charlotte Street, Asheville, NC 28801, (828) 348-0340

Asheville City Market - South

South Asheville's producer-only market featuring farm fresh produce, local eggs, pastured meats, brick oven breads, delicious pastries, gourmet cheeses, natural body care products, artisan art & crafts. 31 Schenck Pkwy., Asheville, NC 28803, (828) 348-0340

Black Mountain Tailgate Market

Our market is a seasonal Saturday morning community event featuring organic and sustainably grown produce, plants, cut flowers, herbs, locally raised meats, seafood, breads, pastries, cheeses, eggs . . . 130 Montreat Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711, (828) 669-8722



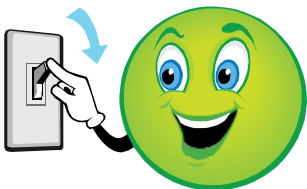
Green Asheville – Update on Transition Asheville

By Ron Martin-Adkins

As you may recall, Transition Asheville (TA) is part of an international effort to build resilient communities, because we know that a decline in oil supplies is on the horizon, climate change will not disappear, and global economies will inevitably experience an end to "growth."

Since our last report, the movement continues to gain momentum. Several of the nine discussion groups reading the Transition Handbook completed their study and are anticipating a joint picnic to celebrate and continue the networking process. Two more study groups are beginning, and four orientation sessions are scheduled in the near future. The two March presentations on Peak Oil and Community Resilience by Professor Laura Lengnick were well attended and added more people onto the mailing list that now includes more than 400 names. The TA sponsored Edible Park Tour and tree pruning demonstration on Arbor Day, led by arborist Bill Whipple, also attracted a large group of people on a beautiful spring morning.

If you have not yet connected with Transition Asheville, you might consider one of the orientation sessions scheduled in the next few weeks, or join us for the informal picnic/celebration the evening of April 29 at the Malvern Hills Park in West Asheville.



Green 101: Is Your House Haunted By Energy Monsters?

By Terri Bennett

<http://www.terribennett.com/blog/post.cfm/is-your-house-haunted-by-energy-monsters>

Are you living in a haunted house? Are there phantoms sucking energy from your home or monsters devouring huge chunks of your utility bills? Are there goblins living in your

fireplace allowing energy to escape from your home without you even knowing? Do Your Part and eliminate the energy ghouls in your home. It's so easy to do it's scary!

Begin by putting an end to phantom power. That's the energy being wasted by having electronics plugged in that aren't being used. Anything with a continuous display or remote and most every kind of charger sips energy even when you're not using them. Think of all the items in your home that do that - appliances, tvs, dvd players, game consoles and all of those chargers! When you put it all together, it starts to really add up. In fact, phantom power uses around 10% of the total energy we use in our homes. The easiest way to stop wasting all that power is use a power strip with an on/off button that will truly shut down the flow of power. You can also find Smart power strips that will help you do the job easily where lots of phantoms lurk.

<http://www.unplggd.com/unplggd/electricity-power/smart-power-strips-to-cut-down-on-power-110653>)

Next, tackle your energy monsters. More than half of the energy used in your home goes toward heating and cooling. Get a programmable thermostat and program it to reduce your heating and cooling needs while you sleep or are away from home. Also make sure you have adequate insulation in the attic. This includes the attic entryway, which is often not insulated.

Your clothes dryer is also an energy monster. Use it only for full loads and keep your dryer vent line clean. This includes the lint trap as well as the tubing or duct that vents to the exterior of your home. Keeping the line free of lint build-up will reduce the amount of time and energy your dryer needs to operate. You can hire a service to clean the line or you can purchase kits to do the job yourself at local hardware stores. Lastly seal off your fireplace from warm air goblins by keeping the damper closed when you're not using it. In some homes, that won't be enough to keep warm air from escaping up the flue. Hold a lighted match near the closed damper on a windy day to see if you still have a draft. If yes, you can find a relatively inexpensive reusable fireplace balloon that is easily inflated to seal off the flue until you're ready to enjoy your next fire. You can learn more about fireplace draft stoppers at www.batticdoor.com

Clearly, I love Halloween, but I'm no fan of wasting energy or money. It's really not difficult to start taking small steps to start living a little greener every day. The additional savings will have you howling at the moon with delight in no time!



Book Review: *Sleeping Naked is Green*

Book Review by Connie Toops

In February 2007 Vanessa Farquharson, a 27-year-old arts reporter for Toronto's *National Post*, decided there should be a more meaningful and responsible way to respect Earth than just composting, changing to CFL light bulbs, and eating local organic food. Those are actually great commitments, but she wanted to do more. So she decided to quit her job, green her life, and keep readers informed about the quest on her blog.

Vanessa, who had been jolted into action by Al Gore's film *Inconvenient Truth*, admitted "I knew nothing about the science of climate change, the technology behind solar panels, or why #2 plastics were superior to #5 plastics in the waste hierarchy, but I did know that I planned on investing in a few tote bags and using public transit more often." Even though her initial actions were a bit naive, she designed a plan to do one new thing every day for a year, stuck to her resolutions, and blogged about the results. In the process, she didn't quit her job and convinced her editors to let her write a weekly environmental column.

During her eco-year, Vanessa gave up among many things: Styrofoam, bottled water, refrigerator, car. She vowed to eat only fair-trade chocolate, free-range meat and eggs, and in-season veggies. She thought carefully about products she "needed," reducing consumption and resulting in less waste to recycle. If you're wondering about the book's title, she realized sleeping in the buff eliminates pajamas and the detergent, water, and electricity to wash them. Yes, her quest was life-changing! Zerofootprint, a Toronto environmental offset consultant, calculated she saved more than 11 tons of CO₂ that year.

After Vanessa's eco-year ended, she did resume using her hair drier, but not her car. She continued about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the green lifestyle changes. "Once you go green, you never go back," she wrote, citing new habits that make sense. She also noticed many friends, family members, and business associates also adopted some of her eco-friendly ways.

Vanessa's personal guidelines for her eco year included:

- Visualize a better world and work to achieve it
- Seek quality information to address world problems
- Take personal responsibility for your actions

- Recognize you can make impacts, but you can't do everything

In case you need ideas or inspiration to make your life more green, this book is available to borrow from the FCUCC library.

(Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin, 2009, ISBN 978-0-547-07328-6, \$13.95, www.marinerbooks.com)



The Green Couch Potato

A Column by Debi Brewer

I was going through a cluttered corner of my apartment the other day and came across several of those gift bags we all use now instead of wrapping paper. Each bag had a couple of sheets of tissue paper inside and as I flattened the bags, my first impulse was to crumple the tissue paper and throw it away. I found myself, however, smoothing it out and folding it up carefully thinking that I would use it again. At that moment, I had a flash of spirit from my grandmother, dead these last twenty years. I saw her at all manner of gift-giving occasions: birthdays, Christmas, Mothers Day. And she, just as carefully, would loosen the tape from the ends of the box and remove the paper, smooth it out and fold it for another use.

I used to think she was crazy.

But, then again, I was born right into the middle of American suburban consumer culture. "Throw it away! There's more where that came from!" Grandma, on the other hand, had been a new bride when the Great Depression hit. She doesn't seem near as crazy these days.

I tried to think about other things she'd say and do. I remember she used to chide my brother and me for "eating too many pastries. You need to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables!" And nowadays, I do. She also told us to get outdoors as much as the weather will allow, walk instead of ride when possible, and wear comfortable shoes.

We've come full circle, Grandma and I. As I was smoothing and folding my tissue paper, I realized that it had already been used before. Whoever had gifted my family had

taken the time to save it. I smiled and thought of the all the interlocking circles of my family and the families of those I love.

Green First is a periodic e-newsletter provided as a service of the Earth Team to members and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Asheville, North Carolina.

Send questions, comments, or input to: debibrewer@aol.com or colinstash@att.net