



Local Earth Advocates & Friends

www.metroeastleaf.org

May 2010

Metro East LEAF is an all-volunteer, civic oriented group. Our mission is to engage our community about environmental issues, to provide a forum for discussion and seeking small-scale local solutions while building coalitions of local groups towards these aims. LEAF is open to all residents of the Metro East area.

Monthly Meeting Dates

We typically meet the first Wednesday of each month at the Belleville Public Library, basement level. For current meeting dates, visit us at www.metroeastleaf.org or request to be added to our email list by emailing Peg Rombach-Riggs at wombatwig@charter.com.

Changing Roles

It is with sadness that I must step down as Co-chair of LEAF. Like so many, I find myself involved in multiple organizations, and life now demands I pursue employment in the months ahead. Given such time commitments, I must start decreasing the number of things I am involved in. I have truly enjoyed being a part of something so positive and empowering. I have had the opportunity to meet so many inspiring and beautiful fellow *Earth Advocates*. Peg will carry on as Chair, and I am confident that LEAF will continue to serve an important role in the community as well as a place to discuss environmental concerns and ideas.

I will continue to serve as chair of Sierra Kaskaskia Group—so please feel free to send me community happenings relevant to environment and health. In turn, I will also keep in touch with LEAF about Sierra Club and other local environmental initiatives. I am sincerely grateful for all the time, support, warmth, and insight you have provided over this past year!

Amy Funk

Newsletter Help Needed

Since this will be Amy's last LEAF Newsletter, we could use some help putting future ones together. If this is something you might be interested in doing, please contact Peg Rombach-Riggs at 618-234-5583. We welcome newsletter submissions that pertain to environment and health. For all future submissions, please email them to Peg at wombatwig@charter.com.

We need your time and talents!

Community Happenings

Strawberry Family Festival

Strawberry picking, Family Bike Ride, Garden Tours

May 22, 2010

7a.m.-3 p.m.

Scott Troy Road, Lebanon IL

Special Presentation to Mayor Gary Graham of O'Fallon at 11 a.m. For more information call 314-603-6868 or visit www.stop158.com

Community Helpings Food Co-op

This bi-monthly co-op offers baskets containing a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Additional items can be purchased such as nuts, eggs, free-trade coffee, and other items. There are several locations in the metro-east area. Fairview Heights Parks and Recreation Dept. recently started a new one at Longacre Park. For information, contact Fairview Heights Park and Rec. at 618-489-2040. For additional locations, visit www.communityhelpingscoop.com

American Red Cross

Standard First Aid Course CPR/AED

June 5, 2010 Saturday 8:30-4 p.m.

10218 Lincoln Trail Dr., Fairview Height, IL

Cost is \$54 and includes CPR training. For those that prefer the First Air Certificate without the CPR, you may register for the first 4.5 hours of the course for \$42. Please call your local Red Cross Office for more details.

NOTABLE LOCAL ORGANIZATION

THE TOCO SHOP –RESALE - RECYCLE

The TOCO shop thrift store, located on 825 West Main in Belleville, specifically makes conservation and the environment part of their mission. As an entity of Tapestry of Community Offerings, their mission is to serve regional children and families in need. They sell items in their shop, online and redistribute them through GREEN community partnerships. As environmentalists, we all know the value of thrift stores in diverting consumer goods from landfills. The Toco Shop is proud to "promote a progressive community pledge to Resale, Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle." So the next time you are cleaning out those closets, consider donating those lightly used items for reuse. To find out more information about TOCO, visit their website www.tocoshop.com

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May 2010

The Farmer's Market: A Collective Experience

Amy Funk

May is one of my favorite times of years. Spring is in full bloom, radiating positive energy and illustrating the richness of life. Nothing exemplifies this more to me than walking through a farmer's market in spring. May is the start of many vibrant markets offering a colorful assortment of produce, delectable sweet treats and jams, and local crafts. My affinity for the local markets goes beyond the ability to buy fresh produce at reasonable prices. For me, it borders on a spiritual experience.

They represent simplicity, community, camaraderie and all the wonderful things life has to offer. Conversations organically surface; people smile as they pass connecting on a very human level. Things move a little slower as seldom do you see a person rushing through a farmer's market—they take it all in: the sights, the smells, the symphony of laughter and enjoyable conversation. It is a collective experience, one where the word community has deep-rooted meaning. It reminds us that there is a face and story behind the food we eat and we can for one day a week enjoy being part of a community, minus the demands and stressors that often occupy our lives.

Local Farmer Markets ST. CLAIR COUNTY

Belleville Old Town Market

West Main and First street, Belleville

May 1–October 30

7:30 a.m.–noon, Saturdays

There are 15 to 20 vendors with locally grown fruits and vegetables, artisans with wares and crafts.

Mascoutah Silver Creek Mill-

602 South Jefferson Street, Mascoutah,

May 1–October 30

Saturdays, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

There are 10 to 15 local growers selling produce, plus jams and jellies, baked goods, eggs, honey, fresh-cut flowers, plants.

Swansea Farmer's Market

1500 Caseyville Ave, (Melvin Price Park), Swansea

May–October

Thursdays 3p.m.–7p.m.

Offers 15 vendors selling fruits, vegetables, meats, and crafts.

Got Extra Produce?

Peg Rombach-Riggs

Linda Nitchman of Glen Carbon is a gardener and environmental advocate who devotes her time to helping members of our local community get access to healthy food. She helped to establish chapters of the "Plant-a-Row" program in Madison County in 2003, and St. Clair County in 2004.

The Plant-a-Row program matches gardeners with food banks and pantries, helping to distribute the freshest of produce on a grass-roots level. The idea is that gardeners who are able can plant an extra row of vegetables and donate them at harvest time. If you are able to participate, the following food banks and pantries would be grateful to share your bounty (please call ahead of time to coordinate your delivery with the best time frame for them to make use of your gift).

O'Fallon Food Pantry

108 E. State Street

Mon & Tues 9-12; Friday 9-3

632-5562

Fairview Heights Food Pantry

412 St. Clair Rd.

Mon & Friday 9-11 a.m.

398-0292

Catholic Urban Program of East St. Louis

771 Vogel Place

Hours: Please call

398-5616

Salvation Army of East St. Louis

616 N. 16th St.

Mon & Tues 9-4; Wed & Fri 9-12

874-3136

Community Interfaith Food Pantry of Belleville

205 W. B. St.

Mon, Wed & Fri 1-3; Tues & Thurs 9-11

Noteworthy Website

Environmental News Network

<http://www.enn.com>

For the past sixteen years, Environmental News Network has been bringing up-to-date news on pressing environmental issues. The ENN editorial mission "is to inform, educate, enable and create a platform for global environmental action." This is a mission that they do well! For current and informative environmental news, this is one website worth visiting.