



2011 Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast

Please Join Us in a Lenten Fast . . . From Carbon

As we write this invitation, the World Meteorological Organization along with NOAA and NASA all have data showing 2010 tied with 2005 for being the hottest year on record. We also read that in December 2010, Arctic sea-ice cover was the lowest on record. Just as humanity now recognizes climate change as a predominant scientific, economic and political issue, we also realize it is a profound moral issue. Life on earth as we know it is mortal – it is susceptible to change, hurt and, yes, death.

Ash Wednesday (March 9, 2011) invites us into the season of Lent – a time within the church year to acknowledge that we are mortal, limited. Lent awakens us to hope in God whose "steadfast love endures forever" and to struggle against everything that leads us away from the love of God and neighbor. The Lenten disciplines of repentance, fasting, prayer, study and works of love are guides for returning to the steadfast love of God. During Lent we confess our mortality, our limits and our vulnerability so that we might be transformed and become the new life God calls us to be.

We invite you to join us as we commit to fasting from carbon during Lent. Beginning Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent, participants will receive a daily email with the day's suggested carbon-reducing activity. When possible, this will include a quantitative measure of the carbon reduction resulting from the activity. Each daily email will also have a section suggesting a weekly focus for the congregation.

This invitation is being emailed to pastors all over the country by UCC Conference Ministers and by our counterparts in numerous denominations. In this way we will make this Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast a broadly experienced ecumenical spiritual practice. Our hope is that Christians the world over from every denomination might participate in this carbon fast.

For more information and to join us: <http://www.macucc.org/pages/detail/2410>.

Low Carbon Fun



2011 UCCH

Lenten Fast from Carbon

The story of Jesus life, death and resurrection is the story of conflicting values, struggling to be faithful, overcoming betrayal, suffering death, and yet experiencing new life. In recent years our congregation, among others, has sought to weave the story of struggle, faithfulness to a cause and hope's triumph to the current human struggle with a carbon-based economy. While the energy intensity of carbon-based fuels has supported economic growth that has brought millions from subsistence to flourishing, only in recent decades have we begun to understand the cost of that intensity: pollution, bio-diversity loss and climate change.

On the Second Sunday of Lent we will read Paul re-interpreting the promise of God to Abraham to be inclusive of all. In so doing he defines the God of Abraham as one "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" which is as true for Jesus as Abraham. While we see the wounds that the burning of carbon-based fuels inflicted on the earth, we are strengthened to be a co-creator by having hope in a God "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."

In recent years our congregation has called for a fast from carbon for Lent to raise awareness of our global climate situation. In 2008 and 2009, we challenged one another to make our homes and households sustainable. In 2010, we discerned the impact of our diet and shared favorite recipes, as we realized that our diet is a major contributor to climate change.

This year, 2011, we are inviting the congregation to reclaim hope for a future with less carbon-based intensity by recalling joys in their life that were not energized by carbon. We invited people to offer stories about low carbon activities that sustain families and build community. It is our sincere hope that you will find some inspiration in some of the stories to copy or to come up with your own version. We hope that you will turn off the TV or the x-box and get out a deck of cards or ride the bike to the local restaurant instead of driving to the big mall. Enjoy!

-UCCH Earth Ministry

- 74 Run a marathon!
- 75 Sit on a porch, and watch the world go by, drinking ice cold lemonade (or mint juleps).
- 76 Play on a trampoline.
- 77 Ride a scooter.
- 78 If you are near mountain snow, go ski, sledding or build a snow man.
- 79 Put on a puppet play with the kids.
- 80 At the beach? Dig for shells!
- 81 Turn an exercise bike into a power generator and peddle hard!
(http://www.windstreampower.com/Bike_Power_Generator.php)
- 82 Get some exercise and make some fire wood - with a hand axe!
- 83 Get in the yard and trim your trees and bushes with hand tools instead of electric.
- 84 Use a push mower to mow the lawn.
- 85 Ever play put put golf?
- 86 Have a tug of war.
- 87 Play pirates on a play ship.
- 88 Ever been to the NC Zoo? Plan at least two days.
- 89 Ever walk on any part of the Appalachian trail?
- 90 Bungee jumping?
- 91 Tube down a nice slow river.
- 92 Ever practice Crew (rowing a boat - racing others who row boats).
- 93 Volunteer to pick up trash along side a road, beach or just your neighborhood
- 94 Build a solar powered oven and make a snack!
(http://www.ehow.com/how_4507254_make-solar-oven-science-fair.html)
- 95 Do an energy audit on your home or apartment and commit to reducing your carbon footprint by 30%.
(<http://www.brightalt.com/energy-efficiency/energy-audits/single-family-energy-audits.html>).
- 96 Paint a room in your house w/ hand brushes & rollers instead of power sprayers.
- 97 For kids, ever play with good old hot wheels and the famous bright orange gravity track?
- 98 Remember the pogo stick? Get one, go play and wear a helmet.
- 99 Watch a Durham Bulls game, live! (for no carbon - ride your bike to the game).
- 100 Plan a day (or just 5 hours) where you force yourself not to use any electricity, just to see what it would be like if there was none!
- 101 Make a list, even longer than this, of low carbon activities.

Tim Copland

41	Play Golf. (Use an electric golf cart).
42	Play tag.
43	Play Hockey.
44	Play Baseball.
45	Play Football.
46	Play Racquetball.
47	Learn to Fence.
48	Hula Hoop.
49	Dance, but to live music (no iPods or plug in stereos).
50	Go listen to a live, acoustic music performance.
51	Go see an orchestra.
52	Climb a tree.
53	Plant a garden.
54	Plant flowers and or trees.
55	Develop a wood working hobby, with hand tools.
56	Look at the stars.
57	Tell stories.
58	Look through family picture albums.
59	Make Gazpacho (or cook other dishes that do not require heat to create the dish).
60	Make a dinner that requires no "cooking" only chopping (veg, fruit, cold soups).
61	Go bird watching.
62	Go to the Duke Gardens and walk around.
63	Take a two year old to a pet store and show them the fish, birds, cats, snakes, etc
64	Go white water rafting.
65	Go camping, if you MUST bring electronics, bring portable solar panels for charging them (http://www.altestore.com)
66	Ask Grandpa or Grandma to tell you his favorite story.
67	Go Fishing in a row boat.
68	Take a sea kayak for a spin in a lake, ocean, river, pond, etc.
69	Go to a horse farm and ride a trail.
70	Go tour Maple View Farm. If you're up for a tiny bit of carbon use, have some ice-cream (refrigeration requires electricity).
71	Sing songs. (caroling, choirs, glee clubs, etc.)
72	Ever drive an electric car? Go to a Raleigh Ford dealer and do so (<i>Raleigh is one of a few select markets that Ford will sell it's first all electric Ford Focus in!</i>)
73	Got \$9,000 to \$13,000 burning a hole in your pocket? Convert your old economy car to a full electric car! It's easy, just not cheap! (http://www.electric-cars-are-for-girls.com)

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Picking Elderberries

My grandmother was a product of the depression and a hardscrabble childhood; so, she was resourceful. Hard times did not extinguish her enthusiasm for wonderful meals and especially desserts. Fortunately for me this extended to teaching her granddaughters strategies for making something out of nothing! We looked forward to late summer when the elderberries ripened along the canal at Chippewa Lake, OH where my grandparents had a lake cottage.

My grandmother would get out a bag for each of us, strap us into our life jackets and we would row together down the canal, gliding into "sweet spots" where elderberries were plentiful. We picked and picked until there was no more room in the bags and rowed back to the dock where we clambered out of the boat with the harvest. The rest of the day was spent stripping berries by the lake until we were purpled with juice. Once the berries were washed, we learned how to make pies and syrup. Most of the berries were processed and stowed either in jars of syrup or pies for the freezer. But pie that night with freshly churned ice cream was assured. I can still taste it.

Peace,
Jill Edens

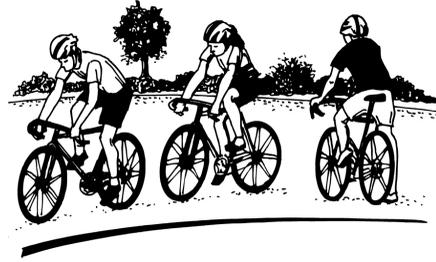


101 low carbon things we can do....

- 1 Go for a walk in your neighborhood.
- 2 Go for a hike in the woods (or anywhere).
- 3 Walk to a park and play there.
- 4 Ride a bike.
- 5 Play Frisbee.
- 6 Canoeing.
- 7 Purchase or build an electric go-cart and race (use solar panels to recharge battery)
- 8 Read a book.
- 9 Exercise.
- 10 Go Running.
- 11 Play Chess or Checkers.
- 12 Play any board game.
- 13 Meet a friend face to face, and chat over a cold glass of tap water.
- 14 Skip stones.
- 15 Fly a kite.
- 16 Walk, run, play with the dog.
- 17 Take a nap.
- 18 Sit in the sun and get a tan.
- 19 Read a news paper.
- 20 Write a letter, with a pen!
- 21 Go window shopping, and buy NOTHING.
- 22 Have a Pizza Party and play truth or dare, hide and seek, and have staring contests.
- 23 Learn to play an instrument - play every day.
- 24 Wash the dishes.
- 25 Wash and wax the car.
- 26 Go the beach, and spend a day building sand castles.
- 27 Tour a museum.
- 28 Tour a college campus.
- 29 Volunteer at a shelter or kitchen.
- 30 Volunteer at a retirement home, assisting with reading
- 31 Paint a picture.
- 32 Paint a house.
- 33 Build a tree house or play house.
- 34 Put up a zip line in your yard, and play!
- 35 Join a club (karate or knitting) and learn a skill you can do whenever you want.
- 36 Go spelunking in a cave.
- 37 Swim.
- 38 Skateboard.
- 39 Play Basketball.
- 40 Play Tennis.

Bike Riding in Tonga

Although this story takes place in another country, one can do some of these activities here in the USA. It has wonderful memories for our family.



During the summer of 1984, Skip went to the Kingdom of Tonga from Hawaii to do research during his time at UH. My daughters, Kaselelia and Miako, and I decided to spend the summer there with him. The girls were 9 and 6 years old. We rented a small house down the coast from the main village. We decided instead of renting a car for that time, we would buy bicycles. Then we could sell them again when it was time to go. We had many adventures on those bicycles. I remember one Sunday afternoon when we spent the whole afternoon riding on back roads through coconut palms to pristine beaches. We took many trips into town. We would go to the farmer's market and come back loaded with local fruits and vegetables. Or we would head to the "Basilica," the Catholic church grounds, where they had a little library where we could borrow books and a great restaurant where we would meet "Papa" for lunch.

One evening we ventured out to the movie theater in town. I can still picture our ride home along the coast. Although it was dark, we had a brilliant full moon lighting our way and shining on the Pacific Ocean. We sang as we rode, "In the evening, La dee do dah, in the moonlight, la dee do dah." Oh, my, what an adventure! The girls also played with the neighborhood children. They learned a few Tongan words, but what helped them get to know the neighbors most was a bouncing ball. They all had fun playing with that ball and learning about one another. These days taught us that we don't need a lot of things to have fun together.

Sandy Polson

Little Trickster vs. Big Trickster

When my three children were young, most of their free time at home was spent with art projects, listening to music, building with huge blocks or legos, dressing up from the costume bin, creating huge cities with many smaller blocks, and reading books together. Also, my son was very good at making up games. He created some board games; but the favorite game was called "little trickster/ big trickster".

Will made that up so that they could be playing a game with me while I was busy working on cooking, baking, setting tables, etc for a dinner party. All I had to do was keep working in the kitchen and big family room, and keep an eye out for sudden movements out of the corner of my eye. Their part was to sneak around the house and try to get behind me and tap me without my seeing them first. The first floor was set up so that you could circle around, which made it much better for sneaking up.

It was the perfect game...I could be having fun with them at the same time that I was getting ready. And of course, the more preoccupied I was, the more they could score against Mom! Such lovely memories of simple very low carbon indoor physical fun.

Suzanne Lampert



Simple Math Yields a Satisfying Solution

Four divided by two is two. This seems like elemental arithmetic, but making the decision to step out of a four-wheel friend and hop on a two-wheeled stranger requires a change in mind-set. Tom Ed White has a very effective strategy to help reluctant folks make that important decision. He uses an infectious disease model. You see, Tom Ed has a passion for biking, a passion which is contagious. I listened to him talk for about an hour, watched him demonstrate the ease and joy of using his compact scooter, and caught the bug. It's easy to philosophize about the advantages of trading your fossil-fueled friend for a two-wheeled, healthy, fuel-efficient bike or scooter, but it sometimes takes more. Tom Ed's enthusiasm, patience, and willingness to loan me one of his two-wheeled treasures succeeded in getting me on a bicycle for the first time in decades.



On Saturday Tom Ed coaxed me to ride with him from my home at the foot of Pathway Drive in Carrboro, up the hill and over to Greensboro Street (which has clearly marked bike lanes). We took a short diversion through the delightful Frances Lloyd Shetley Bikeway (which connects Greensboro and Shelton Streets), and then over to Weaver Street Market for a welcome brew on a warm afternoon. The ride was surprisingly easy with an array of gear selections to climb hills and maximize flat stretches. The experience of riding a bike was far more interesting and enjoyable than whizzing down the road on all fours, intent on minimizing transit time, rather than appreciating the environment, as I have been accustomed to do for years. Suddenly I was the master of my destiny, rather than the slave of technology (which is presently in the garage for periodic maintenance which will cost a bundle!)

Tom Ed has a strategy for getting others to apply the simple mathematical transform to life and that is mentoring, one-on-one. This strategy may not be the most efficient way to save the planet, but it works and provides a lot of satisfaction for the mentor and the student! Tom Ed's passion for two-wheeled transportation is infectious and his mentoring strategy is a useful model for adapting to climate change!

by Dave Otto

Knitting

During my middle school years, my mother, my sister and I would sit together in the family room after school and share our day's experiences with each other. My mother, who was a teacher, always knitted until her tension in her knitting loosened, then she knew she was relaxed enough to face the rest of her day. My sister and I had stunning sweaters all the time, often with matching stitched down pleated skirts to match.



The family photo albums were full of us in hand knitted snowsuits with matching hats and mittens.

When I became a teacher I taught my students to knit. They made their own needles from dowels sharpened in pencil sharpeners, hand sanded and rubbed with mineral oil. The finials on the ends were made from Fimo dough.

The boys were equally as proficient at knitting as the girls. While I read chapter books to the class each day they knitted. Listening was better, minds were open, mouths were closed and hands were productive.

Today I always have a knitting project in progress. At book club, at the airport on planes, at meetings and occasionally during church I knit.

The hand engages the mind which knitting does so well.

Cathy Beemer

Pickin' and Picklin'

Dog Training

I was driving down 54 recently when I recognized a woman walking her dog on a path in Meadowmont. She was walking quickly, obviously combining exercise for herself and her dog with her enjoyment of one of the few warm, sunny days we've had this winter. If I hadn't known her, I wouldn't have been able to tell that she is vision-impaired.



I first started raising puppies for a guide dog school because I love puppies. But through my association with Guiding Eyes for the Blind, I have learned a little bit about the lives of people with limited vision. For example, I used to take for granted the ability to get where I want to go. People who are blind not only can't drive but also find walking and taking public transportation a challenge. A guide dog profoundly changes their lives by giving them the ability to confidently walk or take public transportation.

Since guide dogs walk as much as their partners, I need to keep the puppies in shape and walk them in all conditions. I also need to expose the puppies to public transportation as much as I can so that they will be able to lead the way onto a bus or train when they are working. Consequently, when I have a puppy in the house I am more aware of opportunities to walk or take the bus. Why drive to the market up the street when I can get the dog some exercise and exposure to the sights and sounds in the neighborhood? Why not take the bus downtown with my guide-dog-in-training? Yes, driving is more convenient. But I need less carbon and more exercise in my life and, as I have learned, being able to enjoy the sights while walking or taking the bus is a blessing.

Janet Newcity

Growing up the 4th out of 6 children, we would spend our summers cultivating the family garden. Dad would till up the soil and create these perfectly parallel rows for us Cresses to drop in the seeds. As quickly as the seeds would sprout, so would the weeds. Guess what!!! It seemed like UNENDING HOURS of weeding so the plants we wanted to produce our crops would be able to fight their way forward. Without fail, corn would sprout, cucumbers would vine, tomatoes would be staked and lettuce would leaf.

As a child, it's hard to appreciate the subtlety of a freshly picked tomato on a slice of toasted bread or a salad made from leaves just recently clipped from the bunch, but gourmards pay dearly for a hint of the fruits of Mother Earth. I regularly regret the appreciation I have for the amount of talent and love that was poured into the healthy FRESH nourishment I was provided LITERALLY by my own hands, but my parents had the vision!

I remember the pressure cooker valve jiggling as the cans of fresh green beans and tomatoes were prepared for the long winters' storm to nourish a family of 8 with limited means. Many summer evenings were spent shelling butter beans, shucking corn and washing potatoes freshly dug from the earth.

Pickles were one of my FAVS and something that Chip and I have tried to put a new twist on! We've taken this recipe and pickled cucumbers, green beans, asparagus and okra go to your local Farmers' Market, be creative, create a family story like the ones that I remember FONDLY!

Here's a pickle recipe to HOPEFULLY inspire you:

Dill Pickles

Scrub cucumbers and soak in cold H₂O for 3-4 hours

In each sterilized jar, place 1 bud of garlic and 1 sprig of dill (add ½ a jalapeno for spice)

Pack in cucumbers

Combine and boil in a pot:

1 ½ cups of vinegar

2 quarts of water

½ cup of salt

Pour boiled "brine" into jars and seal in water bath

Philip Cress

Fasting from My Clothes Dryer

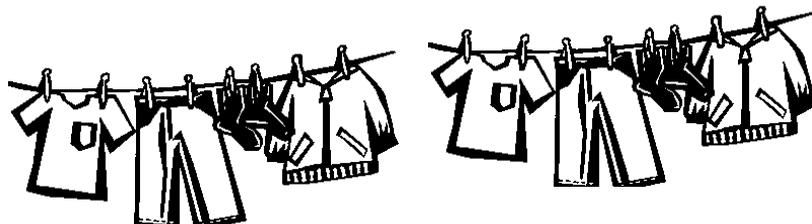
In college, the first house that I lived in one of the first things that I set up was our laundry line outside and one in the basement. It felt very liberating to hang my laundry instead of using the dryer that I had used throughout my college career. Then I hung clothes in New York (in our apartment since we had to yard), in Richmond – on our back porch (on the 3rd story of a downtown apartment building – always a good view!), in Florida (we house sat for a couple and they had a clothes line already there) and now on our deck in Chapel Hill.

Hanging clothes on our own deck here in NC was not as easy as it sounds. When we bought our house in Chapel Hill we specifically looked at the HOA covenant to see if clotheslines were outlawed and found that they were not. However, shortly after I started hanging laundry, we received a letter from the HOA manager that we were violating the “nuisance clause in our HOA covenant”. That was a long shot and we went to the next board meeting with our neighbors to talk about why hanging clothes was an important right that all of us should have – to save the environment, increase property values (one of the reasons that we bought our house was because we could hang our laundry), and overcome old stereotypes of not wanting “those people” to live here. Not only did the HOA back off of trying to get us to take it down, my husband is now the president of our HOA and our neighbors are hanging their clothes too.

Besides the impact that we are having on the environment (we save 880 pounds of CO2 per year by hanging our clothes), I have also used my clothes hanging time to keep in touch with my family (I hang on weekends when minutes are free!) or as quiet time to think.

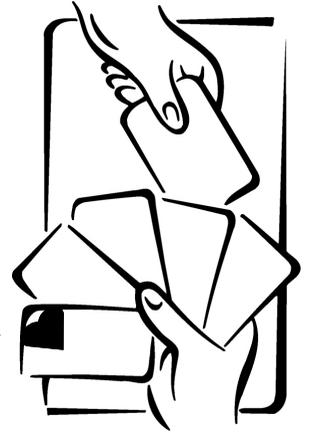
If you are not a clothes hanger now, maybe this Lent would be the perfect time to try it out – it would be a fast from your dryer !

Becky Ceartas



Playing Rummy with Grandma

This summer, while visiting my parents with my two children, I was reminded how when I was a kid and we would get together at my grandmother’s house, we would always play the card game of Rummy. I remember having so much fun and laughing so hard because it really brought out all of the participant’s characters. My grandmother was very serious about the game and always really wanted to win. This was a side of her I had not really seen before.



My cousin Ursula would always accumulate so many cards that she would either win and leave everyone else in the dust or lose it all. She wouldn’t be too upset if she lost. My father never really enjoyed the game and if he played at all, was not really into it. My younger brother was a sour loser when he was younger but outgrew that later. The winner would be rewarded with a big piece of chocolate. My mother and I introduced the game to my kids and it really caught on. We played Rummy almost every evening and had a great time! The kids asked to play it over and over again. The chocolate reward was certainly an extra motivator.

I wonder if there is a game that reminds you of getting together with your family when you were a child. For me, the most challenging part is making the time to do these things. My goal for lent is to make more time for simple activities.

Claudia Sheppard

Booking It!

To my embarrassment, I didn't discover the Chapel Hill Public Library until after my librarian wife Linda died. But now, I try to make a trip to the library something that I do each weekend, and something that I do on my bike. Having to get the books back each week provides a strong incentive for the trip. I ride from Carrboro down North Greensborough Street from Bolin Forest, then ride across Estes Drive Extension. That works, because they have bike lanes on North Greensborough Street and they have widened the shoulders on most of Estes Drive Extension from North Greensborough Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and there is a pedestrian/bike path on Estes Drive from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

The tricky part is a short stretch of Estes Drive starting at N. Greensborough Street, but going to the library this is pretty much downhill. On the way back, I cut through Wilson Park to avoid riding up the Estes Drive hill to N. Greensborough Street. There is a beautiful corridor lined with trees on the path from Estes Drive to Wilson park, which is particularly gorgeous in the late afternoon, when the light shines through the leaves like a rosary stained glass window in a medieval cathedral.

This is a great way to combine the entertainment of an almost endless supply of science fiction and mystery books to read with getting some sorely needed exercise.

Geoff Frank



No electricity? We won't freeze.

We wanted to reduce our electricity and fuel use (carbon dioxide). We also wanted lower utility bills. To do this, the most interesting thing we have done was to get a solar water heater.

It was easier than we expected.

We found an expert engineer, and he assessed our situation. Despite the woods surrounding our house, there was sufficient shade-free time on the roof of our two-story house. But it is a west-facing house, and the solar collector panel could not be flush with the roof surface, but needed to be suspended perpendicularly to it, looking a little like a billboard. We decided to do it anyway. He suggested an active system with glycol being heated in the roof panel and pumped down to the cellar to a tank in which it would heat our water.

The installation only took one day. He even added a small solar photovoltaic panel to power the glycol pump. Then the system would also work during an electrical outage. We requested installation of thermometers so we could tell how much it was heating. The glycol came down from the roof at 135 deg. F and the water came out of the exchange tank at 120 deg. F (on sunny days). We did a month-to-month comparison of our electric bills for several years, but the year-to-year variations in other things obscured the decrease due to the reduced electric heating of water. But we are sure it's there!

Jon Haebig

A boring walk in the woods?

We regularly take walks in the many forest preserves which are all around Chapel Hill, but one of our favorites is the Johnson Mill Preserve, on the north edge of Chapel Hill. During the past six years we have acquired a loving familiarity with it in all seasons. New Hope Creek runs through it. The several trails have a great many very different and beautiful areas. One trail follows the creek closely; others go through flats or up the hill.

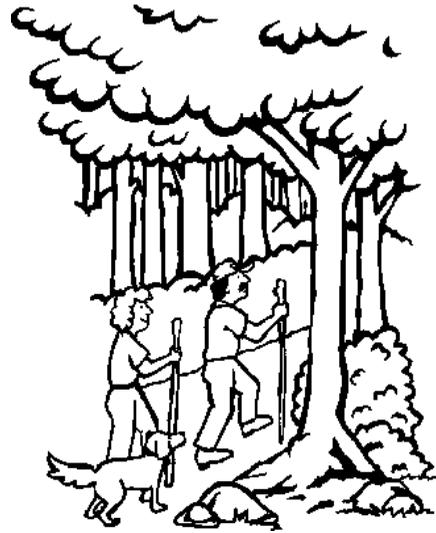
There is a carpet of ferns, and spicebushes everywhere, with their tiny yellow blossoms and later, red berries; and those curious-looking box elder bushes.

A few bladdernut bushes surprised us a few years ago, and is now a thriving thicket, decorated with large seed pods. We know where to pot the spring ephemerals every year- the trout lilies (covering some areas), spring beauties, hepatica and toothwort, and later, Jack-in-the-pulpits more numerous than anywhere else. The resurrection fern we know greens and grays with the seasons.

At the ford the creek ripples over a multitude of small stones; kids are sometimes there having fun with them. There are views down straight stretches of the creek, framed by arching branches and moss-covered stone monuments. One trail leads up the steep hillside into a cathedral-columned beech forest, and to a long view out onto a creek-side flatland. The stone wall from the Johnson Mill, and traces of the roadbeds dug by homesteaders remain mysteriously, stimulating our imagination of past times there. Occasional floods leave us signs of nature's dangerous but fascinating power: debris caught on bushes at eye-level by the creek.

And there are a dozen other preserves and trails here, with their treasures! Are you going to watch the game this afternoon, or shall we go and explore some more of nature's lessons? From Hwy 86, turn eastward onto Mt. Sinai Rd., at 0.8 miles pass Brisbane Dr. on your left, and as you (slowly) descend around a curve, the entry to the preserve's parking lot is on your right at 1 mile, just before the bridge over New Hope Creek. And see <http://www.triangleland.org/> and click "Visit"!

Jon Haebig



Collage Spilling

Supplies:

- any kind of notebook, journal or blank paper
- pen or pencil
- glue stick
- crayons, markers or colored pencils
- paper scraps, such as a magazine, junk mail or newspaper



What to do:

- ◆ Open to a random page in your journal.
- ◆ Quickly rip out 7-10 full pages from your paper scraps.
- ◆ Rip 7-10 images from these pages.
- ◆ Drop them randomly onto the page. Don't think about how they're arranged, just drop them and glue them down.
- ◆ Choose one color crayon, marker or pencil and scribble or color over the whole page.
- ◆ If any words occur to you, write them around the collage items.
- ◆ Say to yourself, "I don't care what this looks like." The point is not to be perfect but to trust your own creative process.

This is a fun activity for parents and children to do together.

From: Diana Trout, *Journal Spilling: Mixed Media Techniques for Free Expression*, Cincinnati: North Light Books, 2009.

Susan Steinberg

Less Driving, More Living



Our family of four lives about six miles due West of UCCH right off of Dairyland road. This is a rural area, so there is no such thing as a quick trip to the store. Just about every trip involves a six mile ride past UCCH up to the MLK Blvd. "corridor" (twelve miles round trip), plus the additional travel distance to our final destination.

Recently we instituted a meeting every Saturday morning where we plan our weekend itinerary so as to limit our driving to a single car trip per day. With breakfast complete, the meeting is convened. We list out all of our destinations for Saturday and Sunday on the kids' drawing easel, which has been repurposed as the trip planning whiteboard. We note which activities have a required start time and which are flexible (i.e. we must arrive at the Soccer field by 11 am, but we can stop by the hardware store at any time). Then we list any additional dependencies (i.e. must stop by the grocery store last so that the perishable food is still cold when we get home). Then comes the hard part ... trying come up with a timeline and route that works. I imagine it must have been difficult planning D-Day or the first Apollo mission, but I have to believe that those planning sessions were mere walks in the park compared to our deliberations. Yet in the end, we always find a way to make it work. We may end up with "slack time" mid-trip, but that can be a blessing as we find ourselves with an hour or two for bonus activity like a walk along Bolin creek, a stroll through Duke Gardens, or a visit to whatever point of interest happens to be along the route. Often we decide that one or more of the activities can be postponed to another day, or wasn't really necessary in the first place. In fact we may realize that we don't need to use the car on Saturday, as all of the away-from-home activities for the weekend can be combined with the trip to church on Sunday.

At first we were afraid that limiting ourselves to a single car trip per day would mean that we waste a lot of time between appointments, but now we realize that it is our old way of doing things was wasting a lot of our time as well as gas! The net result is that we spend a lot less time driving back and forth, which gives us extra time in our day for activities that are far more fun and less carbon-intensive than driving.

Danny Eskenazi

A tradition of gardening

My parents always had gardens.

When Jon and I lived in Pittsburgh, I spent cold evenings browsing through seed catalogs, studying plant requirements, and planning my garden. I started seeds under grow lights: tomatoes, parsley, basil, and various flowers. I always included something new; perennial candytuft was one of my successes. I even grew daylilies from seed. Watching the seedlings grow was a kind of miracle. Our children ate cherry tomatoes like candy.

Our kids experienced nature through many activities. Garden preparation was a parent-approved way to play in the dirt. We took them camping and walking in the woods. There they enjoyed touch-me-nots, sticky weed, blackberries, and wading in creeks. We attended a farm tour highlighting four different kinds of farms; their favorite was the mushroom farm. In the summer they attended a day camp appropriately named Camp Deer Creek. Their middle school spent several days each fall at an environmental education center with a return visit in January.

When we moved to Chapel Hill (bringing along one of my seed-raised daylilies), we found gardening a new challenge. The abundant neighborhood deer ate the daylily, our yard was too shady for a vegetable garden, and I could not tolerate the summer heat. Instead of grass to cut, our yard had large oaks and hickories that provided a forest habitat with songbirds, welcome shade, and plants we didn't know. We now grew largely hardy woodland natives. Last spring when we down-sized; we brought a few of our plants with us. So far the deer have not eaten them. This spring we will add one of my favorite trees, a white redbud, to our backyard.

Our daughter Ann is carrying on the gardening tradition. She and her boyfriend planted fruit trees in their yard, and this year she is planning a vegetable garden.

Mimi Haebig



Generations of Applesauce

When I was growing up in the '40's, in late summer on our family farm, a weekend would be set aside for making applesauce from bushels of "Golden Transparents." Each of us had a role to play-apple washing, removal of the skins and cores, slicing, cooking and straining, filling the Mason jars, and sealing them in boiling water. This assembly line was a busy one with many fun-filled moments and lots of story telling. This was a tradition that I continued with my three sons in our Chapel Hill home.

Encouraged perhaps by an unsatisfied appetite for home-made applesauce, re-enactment of the event has crossed the generations and carried into the home of my second son who resides in Bucks County PA. Every fall, Jeff, my youngest son and his family drive up from Alexandria, VA to join Rod and they produce as many as 148 quarts of applesauce. One of my grandsons summed it all up when he said, "This is my favorite event right up there with Christmas!"

Sandy Turbeville



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Once upon a time, my wife, Jerri and I thought about how we could reduce the amount of trash we bring to the landfill and came up with a plan that has worked really well. Our plan has four components.

For starters, we recycle just about anything that can be recycled. Using our imaginations, we decide what is "useful junk" that can be used for classroom projects. Kind of like a mini version of the Scrap Exchange. Since we eat lots of vegetarian meals, we compost regularly, which truly does reduce in a big way the amount of trash taken to the landfill.

We add the rich compost to our garden beds. We also save anything that can be used for packaging and usually have what we need in recyclables for packaging and sending gifts in the mail.

Jerri and I will often brainstorm ideas for activities and projects regarding sustainability that I can implement in my earth science classroom. I have a huge amount of 8 x 11 paper in my classroom that has one blank side. I make it a point to direct my students to this resource. Some of it gets cut up into smaller pieces and is used for writing hall passes. It is always a good idea to model conservation to others without necessarily preaching. People eventually "get it" when they see conservation as a normal, common everyday occurrence.

Rob Greenberg



Sing, Sing, Sing

If you've seen the movie, *The King's Speech*, you'll remember a pivotal moment. The stammering George VI is about to be crowned in Westminster Abbey. His speech therapist is goading him, challenging his authority to be king. George VI finally, reverberantly shouts "I have a voice!" And that is the whole, show-stopping moment of truth.

I've played French horn professionally for nearly half my life, but I sing purely for joy. Singing in choirs, singing in the shower, singing under the stars, singing with friends, singing in church, singing early and often makes me feel fully alive and a participant in the whole range of human expression.

How many of us have silenced our voices when it comes to singing? Perhaps you were told that you had a "bad" voice by your elementary school music teacher. Maybe your family members held their hands over their ears when you sang Christmas carols together. Or maybe you just assumed at some point that singing was for other people, the ones who sang in choruses, were trained, and got "good at it?"

Each of us has a voice. No matter whether we sing on pitch, or have a pleasing timbre, or know the words, raising our voice in song is a God-given gift. It's good for our health and it brings us together in harmony with others. When you lift up your voice in song, your heart goes right along with it. The hymn, *How Can I Keep From Singing*, says it well:

*My life flows on in endless song: Above earth's lamentation,
I catch the sweet, tho' far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul--
How can I keep from singing?*

And speaking of hymns, next Sunday may you sing your heart out!

Hope Horton



Star Gazing

I grew up gazing at the stars with my father. He was a lawyer, but really wanted to be an astronomer, so he planned all our family vacations around meteor showers. We would drive to remote deserts or the tops of mountains to get away from city lights and set up camp and wait. Dinner would be late after a day of hard play in the local woods or creek and an afternoon nap. The camp fire would burn down to coals and the night would deepen and darken. The air would get cool, and we would bundle into our sleeping bags, lying on our backs and watch the stars appear, the milky way brighten and the moon set. Then, just as we kids were getting sleepy and the hooting owls threatened to put us to sleep, the shooting stars would begin. First an occasional one with time enough to make a wish. Then a couple close together. And then more and faster and bigger and brighter stars would shower down on us so fast we couldn't make wishes anymore. The show was always spectacular, exciting, and never the same. We always fell asleep before it was over -- full of wonder and joy and anticipation of the next night and the next year.

Now as an adult, I still gaze at the stars, watch meteor showers, get up for eclipses and identify constellations. No special equipment is required -- just awareness, a calendar and sometimes an alarm clock. The night sky is always there, and looking is free -- free of charge and free of carbon. Give it a try!

Kathy Shea



Favorite After School Activity

When I was a kid growing up in Manhasset on Long Island one of my favorite things to do after school was to ride my bike over to Tommy Stapleton's house and head straight into the woods. It was great fun. There were trees and bushes, of course, but the best thing about it was the creek. It seemed to us as pure mountain spring water, and we thought nothing of wading in to find frogs and tadpoles and little fish. There was nothing quite so satisfying as finding a big rock and throwing it in just the right place to make a huge splash and that wonderful thwinking sound.



With the seasons and the rains it would change from a raging torrent to a trickle over polished rocks. In the fall the colored leaves would float down on us like colored snow. In the spring we would watch the bright green of the budding trees welcome the critters back from their winter lairs. I can't count the hours we spent just hanging out in nature, getting wet and mudding and being thoroughly content. It's a right of childhood that everyone should share. What great memories! I still enjoy riding my bike. I still enjoy being in the woods and messing around in streams. And sometimes when we walk to the Dean Dome through the woods behind our house which involves fording a creek, I'll flash back to Manhasset with a smile.

Tom Shea

Cutting Grass the Old-Fashioned Way

I started cutting my lawn using a 'reel-style' push lawn mower as a part of the first sustainable household challenge program at UCCH and I have never looked back. In the 5 years since then I have used less than 10 gallons of gasoline for all of my lawn care needs. That used to be the amount of gas that I used up in two weeks when cutting my lawn using my riding mower. And there have been a number of other benefits beyond the gas saving that I had not expected.



The cutting the lawn is much quieter task now, no need for earplugs to prevent hearing loss from engine noise. I also find I am more aware of my surroundings and my lawn, trees and nature itself. It also makes me a better neighbor to the small creatures living in the grass that now have a chance to hop and scurry away as I approach them the spinning blades. And after pushing the mower over our sizable lawn (sometimes split over two days) I have no need for a gym membership. I actually miss it in the winter, and raking leaves is a short-lived alternative. And then there is the attention I get from neighbors and passers by as they watch the guy cutting grass the 'old fashioned' way. Who knows, maybe they are thinking or trying it themselves.

Haiwatha Demby

Eating "local"

For four years we have been buying a share of a local farmer's season of produce: a "Consumer Supported Agriculture"- (CSA). In exchange for giving up control of what we eat, we receive a farmer's box of seasonal vegetables along with a weekly email with recipes suggestions for serving the weekly supply.

The first year we learned about leafy green vegetables. We had never eaten vegetables much beyond broccoli, romaine lettuce, green beans, maybe occasionally spinach. Now we were eating beautiful yellow and red Swiss chard, kale, curly kale, and many varieties of cabbage that I had never seen in any grocery. We enjoyed the experience of having food like this with high nutritional content, but all very new to us.

The second year another farmer provided greens as well as strawberries and heritage tomatoes, melons, and other kinds of beans, lettuce and onions. Real tomatoes that have a rich exciting flavor. Two new items to us: tomatilloes for salsa and edamame were a bit more challenging.

The benefits for me of eating local produce are many: I learned to enjoy many new foods that are nutritious which I never would have bought off the grocer's shelf. I supported local farmers efforts to make a predictable income. I ate more local food, that is a way to reduce the carbon footprint involved in transporting food long distances. I have really enjoyed being exposed to more variety, learning how to cook new items, and expanding my food repertoire.

Andrea Vizoso



Feed the Birds

A couple of years ago, my husband came home with a bird feeder. I was traveling to Wisconsin, and by the time I returned he had it swinging on a wrought-iron bar over our second-story balcony rail. While it took the birds a while to discover the newest neighborhood eatery, the squirrels showed up right away. Their daring and remarkably persistent attempts to chow down on hulled sunflower seeds were hilarious to watch. Fortunately, the feeder proved to be, as the folks at the Wild Bird Center assured us, squirrel proof.

Our little condo sits next to a woody area with a variety of tall shrubs and trees. This provides habitat for a surprisingly large number of birds from red-bellied woodpeckers and thrashers to nuthatches and chickadees. Not that I knew any of these names from the get-go. Despite some avid bird-watching as a child, I had to be re-introduced to most of them, and I'm still learning to tell the difference between house finches and purple finches, catbirds and cowbirds, and those basic little brown birds that all look alike.



The feeder is a popular place, especially on cold and snowy days. I've delighted in seeing the changes in plumage as winter waxes and wanes; tuning into the different species that come and go with the shifts in seasons; noticing the contrasting personalities displayed and feeding strategies employed. But the undisputed highlight of my bird-watching stints belongs to the bluebirds. This fall when the weather turned cold, they started paying daily calls to our back deck. It's still a heart-stopping, breath-baiting moment for me when they show up in electric blue coats with russet-brown cravats and peck away at their leisure. Even the glutinous goldfinches give bluebirds a wide berth, seeming to recognize that they are in a class of their own.

My husband and I are now branching out, attempting to spot birds in the wild and recognize their song signatures. But we have a long way to go. In the meantime, I'll keep the feeder filled, the bird book handy, and the binoculars within reach. I don't want to miss a thing come spring.

Hope V. Horton

Spring in my Step



One of my favorite things to do is to watch the seasons change. The best way I know to do this is to walk. I walk a lot, up the hill to UNC, over to the grocery store, down the path to the library, or along one of the many nature trails nearby. Some of the time I'm lost in thought and could be in Peoria for all I notice what's around me. But other times I make a point of looking – really looking -- and seeing at least one new thing along the way.

This is the third spring that my husband, Paul, and I will experience in Chapel Hill. We moved from Madison, Wisconsin, where the earth doesn't usually wake up from her deep winter's sleep until mid-April or May. Here in Chapel Hill, we are ecstatic to see lemon-yellow winter jasmine in January, mauve-pink Lenten roses and fiery red tulips in February, and just about every color of shrub-and-tree blossom come March. (Then there's the plague of pollen which turns our car from forest green to chartreuse!) We keep a keen eye out for the delicate spring wildflowers such as spring beauty and hepatica, Dutchman's britches, trout lily, and bloodroot, plants we know well from annual excursions in Wisconsin.

But much of what we come across is unfamiliar and hence exotic to us. We comb through the Coker Arboretum or the NC Botanical Gardens searching for signs that tell us what the heck that flower is that looks like a firecracker, or the one that reminds us of something out of a Dr. Seuss book. Then there are the songs of birds, the rustle of wind in the trees, the splashing of a stream, and the scent of something fragrant in the air. When my mind wanders, I open my ears and listen to all the sounds around me. This brings me back to my senses, and I feel the warmth of the sun on my face and feel the strength in my body as I tackle yet another stretch of street or field or path.

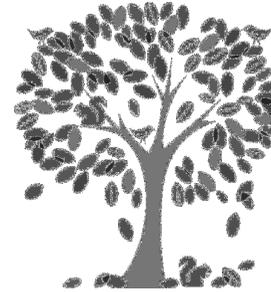
Spring is here, and walking outdoors gives you a ring-side seat. Enjoy the show.

Hope V. Horton

Raking Leaves

Having the electrical-powered appliances and gas-powered lawn care products in my home is like having a 100 servants and more. Some new gadget comes along and offers still more convenience. The electrical leaf blower is one of these. It not only sprays the leaves from our lawn and into flower beds, it takes away one of those ancient rites of fall—raking leaves.

The journey to a less energy intensive world and recovery of old ways has to start somewhere, and this fall I decided I would go back to raking the lawn. We have a large lot that is covered with tall elm, oak, poplar, cherry, maple, sweet gum, sourwood and other trees. A portion is wooded, but the area to be raked is still large. And the leaves don't all come down at once, so there are several stages.



I remember raking leaves in past falls . . . the cool fall air, the silence, the swish of the rake, the declining, many-hued sun as it reflects on the colored leaves. We are lucky in North Carolina to have such brightly colored fall leaves. I also remember the smells of burning leaves, not common now and not greatly missed.

I remember especially one cold November morning when I was in school at the University of Chicago and I helped a friend rake his yard. First bundled up and then coatless as my then strong, almost inexhaustible shoulders pushed the leaves. I also remember leaf raking at my grandmother's farm and the piles of leaves where grandchildren and great-grandchildren would play after Thanksgiving lunch.

And so this fall, I set the leaf blower aside, and raked and raked in intervals over six weeks. My shoulders are not so strong now. It takes a long time and carrying the leaves is hard. Still, there is this wonderful solitude, and stillness, and presence of nature. The cool weather, changing skies, colored leaves and birds hopping on the forest floor comfort and inspire me.

Herman Greene