



Catholic Committee of Appalachia

PatchQuilt

Summer Issue 2011

-many pieces
- fits together
- each piece special
-adds color
-gives warmth

Citizen Action to Save our World, Earth

by Fr. Al Fritsch, SJ

Today, the US Environmental Protection Agency is being threatened with gutting this ability to control carbon dioxide emissions. Ironically, a Congress doing this under the pretext of fiscal responsibility has been recently termed the Catholic New Service as “the most pro-life Congress.” However, when considering the entire web of life, some representatives and senators deny the human-causation of climate change emissions and are moving to become the LEAST pro-life Congress. Deliberately, to curtail and reduce or eliminate funding under the excuse of being fiscally responsible is disingenuous. To escape to other issues regarded as equally pressing, when Earth herself is under threat, is reprehensible. In face of today’s great temptations of denial, excuse and escape, advocates who champion the cause of the fetus, senior citizen, hospice patient, and death row inmate cannot continue to remain silent on environmental issues.

The failure to defend the entire web of life when our environmental agencies are under attack will not soon be forgotten. In fact, publicity of a “partisan approach to pro-life issues” may weaken our previously united stand. How can neglect and silence greet the actual decline in animal and plant populations, the rate and variety of de-

cline not witnessed since human life began? Human-generated gas emissions threaten to increase overall global temperatures, acidify oceans, disrupt coral reefs, melt glaciers and permafrost, and precipitate floods and droughts of monumental proportions. The vast majority of the scientific community predicts very rapid climate changes to surface and perhaps accelerate in the next decade. We cannot afford to allow the same propaganda mills that denied tobacco-smoking dangers for several decades in the last century to do the same stunt on this issue— only the specific industries funding them are different.



A silent pro-life community is partisan on perhaps the most decisive issue of this century. With a united community that includes pro-life people and the traditional environmental community this threat to our planet could be halted by support for the USEPA and its programs. A greater

reason to give support at this time is that China and India look to American leadership in fossil-fuel reduction programs. If our country fails to act, forget about the predicted two-degree global temperature rise, and expect his rise in temperature to double; the results for the world’s poor will be catastrophic.

Please make your position known. What is happening in gutting environmental programs is PRO-DEATH and it should not be tolerated. We cannot afford to remain silent.

www.earthhealing.info

PRAYER FOR CREATION & ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

God of the sun and the moon, of the mountains, deserts and plains, God of the mighty oceans, of rivers, lakes and streams, God of all creatures that live in the seas and fly in the air, of every living thing that grows and moves on this sacred Earth, we are formed by Christ into Your People, called to bring the world into Your marvelous light. As the Body of Christ, we are messengers of ecological vocation. We are entrusted with caring for this Earth which You have created. Help us to love and respect it, to repair what we have damaged, to care for what You have made good and holy. Give us the wisdom and the passion to change our minds, our hearts and our ways. Let us be mustard seeds in our world bringing about ecological conversion which grows and spreads to every corner of the Earth, for our sake now and for every generation which is to come. We ask this through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

2 Care for the Earth

By Anne Leibig, CCA Member
(sent in by Mary Herr, April 2011)



Anne Leibig

This year Earth Day is on Good Friday. The coming together of these two days is significant in this time when humans have the power to destroy the Earth.

I live in the Appalachian Mountains and have been part of a group called In Praise of Mountain Women. As I think about Earth Day I think about In Praise of Mountain Women and how we describe ourselves: (www.inpraise.info).

Our practice is to create a movement of women caring for self, the Earth as our Home Place, and hearing stories of women from around the world.

"The issues we are addressing are the destruction of the Appalachian mountains and culture. We experience the mothers of the Appalachian Mountains as the carriers of the culture. When we draw our strength from the mountains, we also recognize the increased destruction that is being done to the land. We are wounded like our earth is wounded, what we allow to be done to the earth we allow to be done to ourselves. We want to gather to share our sorrow and our hopes for our Home Places and for the Earth, our common home. We need to acknowledge this violence and we need to move forward with our solutions. One way to move forward, beyond the violence, is to tell stories, celebrate the arts, culture and spirituality, our supports for who we are. By maintaining our culture and celebrating the wisdom of women we will remain grounded in the mountains. We see change coming from this grounding. The women who participate experience that we can create from our own values and wants and do not have to keep swallowing what the national culture and economy ask of us."

(from 2010 proposal)

The current threat to the Earth in the Appalachian Mountains is "mountaintop removal" which is the blowing up of mountains to get to the coal seams. For more information see: www.ilovemountains.org

Mary's Pence has funded In Praise of Mountain Women. I have just completed a three year term on the Board of Mary's Pence. Before I was elected to the Board I was asked "Why do you think women's social change is important?" I wrote: "I believe women's organic and cultural lens is a unique gift and if it is not at the table or in the process the future is impaired." I still believe this and now will say "the earth is threatened."

Catholic tradition insists that we show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. The goods of the earth are gifts from God, intended for the benefit of all. Stewardship of Creation is one of the Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. http://www.osjspm.org/catholic_social_teaching.aspx

Anne brings to the table her experience of living and working in the Appalachian Mountains, creating and sustaining community frameworks for full living, with an emphasis on women's participation.

Catholic Committee of Appalachia

885 Orchard Run Rd.
Spencer, WV 25276
(304) 927-5798
ccapal@citynet.net

Director

Fr. John Rausch, Glenmary
Stanton, Kentucky
jrsausch@bellsouth.net

Administrative Director

Jeannie Kirkhope
Spencer, WV
ccappal@citynet.net

Chair

Arnie Simonse
Pineville, West Virginia
arnoldsimonse@aol.com

Vice-Chair

Mary Herr
Whittier, North Carolina
maryherr@dnet.net

Secretary

Brian DeRouen
Pence Springs, West Virginia
brianderouen@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Sr. Robbie Pentecost
Lancaster, Kentucky
rpentecost@qx.net

At Large

Marcus Keyes
Knoxville, Tennessee
commonjustice@aol.com

Jeri Whitely
Bristol, Virginia
jwhitely@aol.com

Mary Going
Martin, KY
maryeg53@yahoo.com

Ann Quinn
Campton, KY
quinnann@hotmail.com

Tom Barnes
Lexington, KY
tbarnes@uky.edu

Bishop Liaison

Most Rev. R. Daniel Conlon
Diocese of Steubenville
dconlon@diosteub.org



2011 Annual Meeting

During this year's Annual Meeting, we will incorporate workshops to combine our experiences and ideas to answer these questions:

- *How do we imbue a spirit of oneness with creation in our dialogues on issues of justice?*
- *What new, creative ways can we bring about awareness and demonstrate concerns?*
- *Who else, in and beyond our faith tradition, can we invite to share and work with to expand and deepen our efforts?*

In this way, participants will be helping to plan a symposium for ecumenical, interfaith and secular activist groups and movements. (date: TBA)

Registration brochures to follow in the mail OR register online by going to www.ccappal.org

The Lesters

David and Martha Lester, of Enterprise, West Virginia, are long time CCA members who recently gave us an update on what they've been up to. David writes:

"Martha assists in volunteer office work at their parish, St. Peter the Fisherman, one day per week. She is also a volunteer driver with the Cancer Society for patients receiving treatments. Martha is a cancer survivor herself with over six years since last occurrence.

I serve as Deacon at St. Peter's with primary responsibility for pastoral visitations of the sick-homebound, hospital and several nursing homes. Of course with the Deaconal ministry comes liturgical commitments, preaching, training lay ministers and

ecumenical outreach.

I am also actively involved with local Council of Churches. Since ordination in 2005, I have coordinated and led 10 ecumenical mission work team efforts-five to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Katrina each Christmas/New Years, and five in Appalachian around July 4th week in response to flooding and other needs."

Together, the Lesters have initiated Santa Croce Farm, now in its third year. Its mission statement is this: *We are a Christ-centered, community-based enterprise cultivating the soil and human hearts for the harvest of justice. Our community supported farm will raise and market vegetable produce and composts using sustainable methods. Every aspect of the enterprise will be aimed at increasing the health and well-being of the community; its vision, its land and its people.*

Spiritually speaking, David describes Santa Croce Farm as "grounded in the idea that what appears to be worthless in the eyes of the world, may become an instrument of grace when infused with the Spirit of God."

He goes on to say, "This ministry is based in Benedictine Spirituality, such that work and prayer describe a rhythm of life that is formed in the soil of thanksgiving and trust, and gives rise to the fruit of unity -body, mind and spirit - personal and communal. We reflect on the idea of remnant as a calling to join all of those broken pieces of life which have unlimited potential to image God when in cooperation with the grace of God's spirit."

For more information contact the Lesters at davidplester@aol.com

Eco-Chaplaincy Initiative

Eco-chaplaincy is a form of inter-religious and secular 'spiritual' chaplaincy designed for people engaged in environmental and social justice work. The term was coined by Sarah Vekasi, M.Div. in 2005.

Eco-chaplains support organizations, activists, organizers, individuals, and communities who are engaged in helping life continue on Earth in this time of great turning. Just as a patient in a hospital or a soldier in war can receive support from their chaplain; organizations, activists and community members can turn to an eco-chaplain.

Sarah Vekasi is a professional eco-chaplain and a member of the national network of trained facilitators of "The Work That Reconnects," created by Joanna Macy. Sarah can bring to your organization or community through weekend or week-long workshops, retreats or in weekly sessions, any of the following services:

- Individual Pastoral Counseling
- Facilitating the Work That Reconnects*
- Reflective Listening, Empathy, Communication Support
- Preventing and Managing Burn-out
- Group Process Work
- Facilitation
- Mediation
- Restorative Justice Practices
- Rituals and Ceremony
- Listening Circles
- Conflict Resolution
- Self-Care Practices
- Group-Care and Reflective Practices
- Workshops
- Retreats
- Trainings
- Internships
- Lectures, Classes, and More!

Eco-Chaplaincy Initiative * Sarah Vekasi, M.Div. * PO Box 890 * Swannanoa, NC 28778
contact: sarah@ecochaplaincy.net or go to: www.ecochaplaincy.net



After the Diocese of Richmond closed their Office of Justice and Peace in late 2009, Director, Sr. Jackie Hanrahan, and ecology educator, Susan Hedges, opened the Appalachian Faith and Ecology Center. The mission of their Center is

"... educating people of faith about the current issues that impact the ecological integrity of Central Appalachia and how those same issues have an impact on the ecological integrity of Earth."

The inspiration for this work is two fold: 1) Appalachian Pastorals: "The Land is Home to Me" and "At Home in the Web of Life" and, 2) work of the New Cosmology, particularly of the tradition of Thomas Berry, as it specifically applies to Central Appalachia.

AFEC

- Recognizes those denominations and traditions whose spiritualities see that ecology is at the heart of faith.
- Works with local and regional, national and international groups who see a mutual connection between ecological sustainability in Appalachia and in their own communities
- Adopts a set of religiously based Principles of Environmental Justice that guide our education, advocacy and research in Central Appalachia

For more information, contact AFEC@me.com, go to www.appfaithecocenter.com or go to Facebook and become a member of **Appalachian Faith & Ecology Group**.



*CCA Member,
Sr. Jackie Hanrahan*

Franciscan Passages

My name is Julie McElmurry and I am the founder of Franciscan Passages. Raised in the mountains of Western North Carolina, I fondly recall the Franciscan Sisters, Glenmary priests, diocesan priests and lay parishioners who helped to shape my faith. I hope to express my gratitude for this gift by helping to augment and shape the faith of others.



Franciscan Passages, Inc., a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, has as its purpose to teach people about Francis of Assisi, Clare of Assisi, their ideas, spirituality and the movements they started in the 13th century. Our method is by offering classes, presentations, workshops, retreats and adventures, each of which has their foundation in the rich, fascinating 13th century letters, biographies, prayers, Testaments and other writings which are at our fingertips. The exemplary lives of Francis and Clare have the power to inspire us to greater holiness.

Invite Franciscan Passages to be your teacher for a day, a weekend or a series of evening events, and you will come to understand the context in which certain texts were written, the intent of the author and what their written thoughts and words have to say to you, today.

For more information go to: franciscanpassages.org or contact Julie at info@franciscanpassages.org

Dear Bishop Dan,

We, the board and staff of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia, wanted to pause a moment to thank you, not only for your service to us, but for your presence among us. Over the six years that you acted as our bishop liaison we felt your support. Your yearly fund raising among the Appalachian bishops reminded them of the region, and your attendance at our annual meetings demonstrated your concern for our work.

We recall that in your first year you and John logged over 2,300 miles contacting 8 Appalachian bishops describing the work of CCA and listening to their feedback. That could only have occurred because of your commitment. We so appreciated that effort.

We also recognize your generosity to meet with us in Charleston for a discussion on ministry and direction. The dialogue proved the trust level of our relationship. Thank you for that.

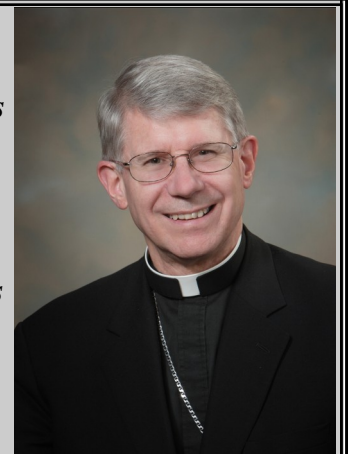
We will miss you. While we know the distance is great between Joliet and Abingdon, VA, where we will convene this year's annual meeting, September 16-18, if you can attend, we would welcome and honor you for your years of service.

We send our best to you, Bishop Dan. Joliet is getting a truly dedicated bishop, deeply committed to his people, affable and spiritual. We thank you and regard you as a brother among us.

In the spirit of Christ in Appalachia,

Arnie Simonse
CCA Board Chair

Since 2005, Bishop Dan Colon of the Diocese of Steubenville has acted as CCA's liaison for the Church's hierarchy in Appalachia, succeeded only by Bishop Emeritus Walter Sullivan. We regret to announce Bishop Dan will be leaving us for flatter pastures. Pope Benedict XVI has appointed him Bishop of the Diocese of Joliet, IL. His installation will be July 14th in Peoria, IL.



Appalachia Is Rising: The March on Blair Mountain

Published on Tuesday, June 14, 2011 by CommonDreams.org

This past week history came alive again in the hills and hollows of West Virginia through a successful march to Blair Mountain, WV organized by a coalition of community members, environmentalists and labor rights activists and historians. Appalachia Rising: March on Blair Mountain is a turning point in the movement to end mountaintop removal coal mining and the ongoing struggle for economic choices and diversity in the coal-poor regions of central Appalachia, and one that deserves our attention.

In 1921, over 10,000 miners marched from Marmet, WV on their way to Mingo County to organize a union amidst the horrific working conditions in the coal mines. They were stopped at Blair Mountain on the Logan County line. A five day battle ensued in which over a million rounds were fired and it was the second largest armed insurrection in American history next to the Civil War. The battle was an initial setback for the union, but it was that battle that helped bring us the eight hour work day and collective bargaining rights, and its history is vital. Outrageously, that same mountain, Blair Mountain, is now in jeopardy of being blown up and destroyed forever for coal by way of mountaintop removal mining.

This past week, three hundred of us walked the same footsteps as those miners did, ninety years later, to call for an end to mountaintop removal coal mining, a just and sustainable economic transition in central Appalachia and to save Blair Mountain by returning it on the National Register of Historical Places and making it into a National Park rather than another mine in an already ravaged county. On the last day, we marched and rallied twelve hundred strong.

We walked and worked our way through an onslaught of obstacles, and let me tell you, there were many times that we could have turned back, or stopped because the coal industry came at us with the might and brute it is famous for. But we did not. We kept walking. We could have fallen apart into the demoralizing tangle of stress and interpersonal communication tensions brought about by sleep-deprivation and difficult conditions, but we did not. We kept walking. Every single resting place was

taken away by us due to politicking and coal company intimidation on our march. Every single place the organizing body had secured for us to sleep for the week fell through. So did we quit? Did we give up in exhaustion or internal collapse? No. We kept marching.

I just marched in 90-100 degree weather with 200-300 brave and tolerant people through unbelievable conditions. We walked past organized groups of people yelling at us to go home, and get a job, and unfortunate slurs that do not need to be repeated, yet did we give up? No. We did more than just keep marching, we marched with our hearts open and heads held high and stayed committed to our agreements of nonviolence. We marched with our hearts open and honestly, received far more support than opposition from the communities we walked through. We often walked in a solemn and proud single file down narrow and windy roads while people walked from the hollows out to watch us go by, to take our photos or offer water, to sit on a four-wheeler with a sign that said simply "thank-you," and to join us.

We walked and we worked and we let our sweat consecrate our shared intention of ending mountaintop removal coal mining, creating a diverse and sustainable local economy in the region, and honoring the history of those who have always expressed our shared need for dignity, honor, respect and justice by protecting Blair Mountain. That was why we walked. And that is why we did not give up and are not going to give up. At the end, once we made it to Blair, over 1,000 more people joined us. Kathy Mattea sang for us and Robert Kennedy Jr. and locally impacted residents spoke at the bottom of the mountain, and then together, we marched up to the very top of Blair Mountain in the heat, where we made it be known, that history is alive, that this mountain deserves to stand, as do all mountains, and that this region is ready for a more sane economic future.

We marched together as locals, labor organizers, environmentalists, college students, elders, artists and all with a common, yet multi-faceted cause, and despite all odds, we made it. While the long-term work for central Appalachia continues, we will now always have our organizing efforts "before we marched to Blair Mountain, and after we marched on Blair Mountain."

by [Sarah Vekasi](#)



Networking

Dear Members,

Each January, we confirm your contact information when you turn in your membership dues. However, this year, we would like to include just the information that is already public on a page of the website called "Networking."

When you go to www.ccappal.org and click on the "Networking" tab, you will be able to find *in one place:*

- email addresses of old friends and new acquaintances.
- their areas of interest and services
- and links to the websites of the ministries.

By allowing us to post some of you information, you will be able to reunite, share what you are working on and collaborate your efforts. New people coming into the region and potential members will be able to connect with us and immediately find a "home" of like-minded folks right in their own state. All we need from you is this:

For the past 40 years, CCA has been the best way for people of faith to connect with each other, interested in and working for justice in the mountains. Now, with the help of the website, we can make that even easier for you.

If you'd like to be listed, please fill out the form below, detach it and send it to:

CCA
885 Orchard Run
Spencer, WV 25276
Or email the information to ccappal@citynet.net

INFORMATION FOR THE NETWORKING PAGE OF THE WEBSITE

Name _____

State _____

Email _____

Website _____

Company/Ministry/Position _____

Work and/or service _____

Areas of interest _____

Membership Form

Annual dues are collected each **January**. If you have not already done so, please fill in and return this form with a check or money order to:

Catholic Committee of Appalachia
885 Orchard Run Rd. * Spencer, WV * 25276

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Suggested membership fees are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 student/low-income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 Sponsorship (please indicate name and address of sponsored person) | |

In this Issue...

...we're all about Networking! You'll see what exciting things CCA members have been up to. We've been getting more updates and hearing about NEW members, too. Now, it's YOUR turn to share about yourself!

PatchQuilt Wants to Know!

- How & when did you get involved with CCA?
- What special highlights can you give of your ministry, &/or your times with us?
- What you have been doing lately?

TOO SHY???

TATTLE ON YOUR FRIENDS!

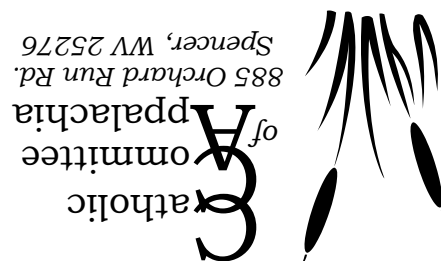
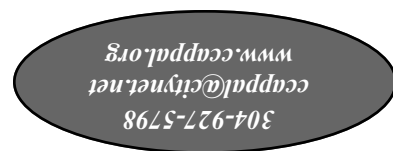
Tell us in one or more short paragraphs.
Jot it down and mail it in, or email directly to

ccappal@citynet.net

The *PatchQuilt* and all CCA publications are printed on Recycled Paper.

We're happy to send a copy of *PatchQuilt* to your friends, coworkers and fellow parishioners.

Send us their address and we will gladly do so. Help spread the word about CCA to people you work with and members of your parish!



885 Orchard Run Rd.
Spencer, WV 25276

Catholic
Committee
of
Appalachia

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #327
SPENCER, WV 25276