

# Sequatchie Valley Institute Visioning Retreat

January 31 – Feb 1, 2009

## ***Urban Sustainability***

Urban Sustainability has been tabled until Feb 12 at 6pm at GreenSpaces.  
(Aaron Parsons, Matthew Hamilton)

*Notes about this subject from Jeannie Cerulean:*

Invite people to come and talk about creating sustainable houses in Chattown. These houses can be either built up from the earth or altered homes. The education effort needs to focus on the people who want the homes, the builders and the architects. Each of these players encourage the others to settle for the house that is the most sustainable possible.

The Art Warehouse could be the focus of a non-profit, grant driven build. Rooms for art and living spaces. High R factor and site source energy systems would make stellar space!!!!

Near Sewanee people are creating intentional community and using gasification for power. They are welding these systems from kits they purchased.

## ***Project Pataje Haiti ( Jeff Rogers)***

Pataje is the creole word for share and represents the spirit of this trip and the intention that the sharing happen in both directions.

Elizabeth Tallman, Trish Woolbright, Brad McCalister, Chris Gilligan, Alise and Rod met to talk about the possibilities of promoting Transformational Travel trips to Haiti with a focus on artists. Later Asha and Jeff met to flesh the idea out in greater detail.

Jeff spent a lot of time talking about the culture and dynamics of Haiti and there were a lot of questions and a lot of give and take. It seemed there would be quite a bit of interest. The concept would include a traditional Beyond Borders Transformational Travel trip [http://www.beyondborders.net/Trans\\_Travel.html](http://www.beyondborders.net/Trans_Travel.html) with the inclusion of an art buying component and the video documentation both of the trip and of the artisans at work. At the end of the trip we want to do a gallery show of the art work collected with a talk by the participants in the trip and the launching of the video and a website documenting the trip the work of the artisans and making that work available to the public. AVA, Create Here, and Greenspaces were suggested as possibilities for a venue.

The trip would last from 10 to 14 days.

The cost would be about 1,000.00 per person for a 10 day trip or 1400.00 for a 14 day trip plus airfare. The 1,000.00 would include all costs on the ground in Haiti, I.e. transportation, food, lodging, remuneration for services including translation, people to do cultural orientations and facilitation with the communities we will visit for homestays, the purchase of some art work

We talked about the possibilities of raising additional funds to cover video production costs, to make scholarships available to people who can't come up with the money but would be valuable participants and for art purchases.

## **FOOD**

We discussed four topics related to Food.

1. Local Food
2. The "Food For Life" Workshop
3. Using Sequatchie Valley Institute (SVI) to help farmers because they cannot apply for grants from the USDA, they need funds and a nonprofit to represent them.
4. A Food Co-Op in Chattanooga

## **LOCAL FOOD**

Trish W. read quote from Animal Vegetable Mineral.

**“ The baby boom psyche embraces a powerful presumption that education is a key to moving away from manual labor, and dirt – two undeniable ingredients of farming... When we walked away as a nation away from the land, our knowledge of food production fell away from us like dirt in a laundry soap commercial.” - Barbra Kingsolver**

We do not know where our food comes from when we purchase it from traditional grocery stores. As a group we offered several definitions of "Local Food":

Produced within 50, 100, 250 miles depending on your food shed

Grown by people you know

Seasonal

Farm Direct & Farm Gate Distribution

There are packaging concerns, a story was recounted about local blueberries from N. Carolina that were shipped to Florida to be put into plastic containers and then shipped back.

Local dairy producers face stringent FDA regulations and problems

Community Sustainable Agriculture (CSA)

What is your/our role in Local Food?

Those at the discussion are:

1. Consumers  
Meats, vegetables, road kill, alcohol, fruit
2. Raise  
Chickens, goats, bees
3. Grow  
Garden vegetables & herbs, edible landscapes
4. Ferment alcohol
5. Sell  
Sauerkraut, bee soap, temph, vegetables, fruits
6. Sell to/ Barter  
Family, friends, consumers
7. Where we buy or can sell our local food

Sequatchie Cove Farm, [www.sequatchiecovefarm.com](http://www.sequatchiecovefarm.com)

Chattanooga Market- only Sunday 12-5 [www.chattanoogaogmarket.com](http://www.chattanoogaogmarket.com), tomatoes & watermelons sell well; meat producers do not do as well

Greenlife & Niedlov's

It is more important to buy local than to buy organic due to packaging, shipping, carbon foot print, etc. Typically if it is bought from someone close, they practice organic techniques already.

Roadside fruit & vegetables stands get food from all over- not necessarily local

We want to keep local money circulating locally

Some of the participants attended the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference see: <http://www.ssawg.org/conference-.html>.

They reported that a "Mobile Market" was discussed there. This market could pick up food from producers and then bring it to various communities. Making both farmers and consumers happy because they could all stay in their neighborhood.

### **"Food For Life"**

"Food for Life" started in 1999 as an answer to Y2K. It looks at practical & political aspects of food production. Over the years, the topics included:

Canning, growing, macrobiotics, plant walks, simple cooking, using a mortar and pestle, and making chocolate, miso, beer & wine, and bread. Biotechnology, genetic engineering, skits, vegetarians.

Originally it was a 10-Day Festival, but it is shorter now and there is a desire to expand it and revive the festival atmosphere, instead of just having workshops. Play, dress-up and creative interpretation can be included. Concurrent workshops and kids workshops.

The brainstorming included many ideas listed here:

Edible landscaping, mushroom cultivation (mushrooms can eat petro chemicals, clean nitrites, and they are edible!), farmer trainings, permaculture, aquaponics (aquaculture & hydroponic mix), cooking, trade issues – video "Life or Debt", seed-swap, seed saving skills, rain barrel workshop, preserving food harvested,

Possible speakers:

Science ecology- possibly with Dr. Henry Spratt from UTC; Robert Stoney – Organic gardener from Ireland and an Inconvenient Truth speaker; Trey, Kids and Food; more help is desired for recruiting speakers.

### **Farmers**

Gas prices are leading people to hold onto their money, so food needs to be produced and available close to home.

Land can be shared; we can offset greed and poverty with land management. Looking for land to share.

Sharing of knowledge & resources as well in order to improve systems. Facilitate sharing our resources.

Create spaces that are good for cultivation as long as they are maintained.

These spaces can and should be very visible.

Everyone should read Sandy Katz's book, "The Revolution Will Not Be Microwaved."

Regular meeting can be arranged for bartering what is grown.

"Getting land to people who want to farm."

Community Canning stations, maybe help from Mike Feely or owners of market.

At Chattanooga Market or Community Kitchen

The Kitchen can take fresh vegetables and venison

The Millers have 80 acres of land on top of the mountain that can be shared for gardening. Nada and Bradley have 20 acres that can be used for animal based agriculture. 30 acres are available at SVI. There

is a possibility of sharing this land for livestock.

Interest in grant help from SVI. We can write grants for the pet projects we have and we can support each other by assisting & reviewing during the grant process.

### **Food Co-Op**

On the Southside of Main St., there is a warehouse, it used to be Hill's Wholesale Flowers, and the owners are interested in turning it into a co-op if there is sufficient interest from the community. The owner's only want rent, they are not looking to make a profit, they want to invest in their neighborhood and have a place to buy milk. Brandy, Asha, and Trish K. are on the steering committee for this project. A manager is needed. This person will need to research community demand and interest in this project. The owners want the co-op to be community driven and to have a buy-in before they begin the co-op. The space is approximately 10,000 square feet and decision need to be made about what foods to stock. It was suggested that prices remain low while health benefit of the foods remain high, so that people in the area can afford to shop there. The board also needs to be representative of the community.

1. There should be an education component within the store to teach local residents the value of healthy foods.
2. Buy-in could be calculated by figuring out how much income is necessary to reach monthly costs, and then finding x number of people to commit to spend \$100 a month there.
3. More affluent members could help support the memberships of less affluent members.

### **ART-IN-TRANSIT**

Asha Ironwood, Jeff Rogers, Stephanie Dyer

let's do it again! as an into to what art-in-transit is about, here's some info from our 1998/1999 project:

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In cooperation with Chattanooga Area Regional Transit Authority (CARTA) and other businesses and art organizations in Chattanooga, Human Scale and MEDIA RIGHTS is displaying local artists' work, utilizing the advertisement spaces on CARTA buses. We held a contest and allowed the public to vote for their favorite pieces which were on display for three weeks at the Association for Visual Artists' gallery in Chattanooga. Then the art was on the buses for many many months!

Commuters usually have little more to look at than advertisements. Utilizing this ad space, the buses gave everybody access to high quality art - public art in public spaces. We actually "put the ART in cARTa. This project brought art out of the museums and into the daily lives of Chattanooga area bus riders, with creative messages about clean air, less pollution, sustainable living, alternative transportation, and community empowerment, reaching thousands of people.

Art-in-Transit utilized advertisement space to promote a better quality of life, which will in turn helped those who rode the bus make more informed decisions about environmental and social justice issues facing us today.

This project helped bring more truth to the stated progressive nature of the City of Chattanooga, commonly referred to as "the sustainable city."

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so, there it is. asha, jeff and stephanie want to see it happen again. 2009/2010

**here's what we need to do:**

- get in touch with CARTA
- have the show at AVA again? green|spaces? createhere?
- funding could come from:
  - community foundation
  - benwood
  - Arts Build Chattanooga - Allied Arts
  - Makework - createhere
  - TN council for the arts - grassroots artist grants
  - puffin foundation
  - chrysalis foundation - mary moore
- need printer on board - all printing was in kind last time around
  - who did it last time?
  - jeff suggested david with habitat "something"
- asha needs to find all the old files and such
- asha needs to get in touch with sarah evans and stephanie everett (co-directors of project before)
  - printer contact
  - application, etc from their computer
  - how classroom/student involvement happened
  - outreach
- find proposals
- we could have the art opening and judging on earth day 2010
  - instead of environmental/social justice theme, it could be "environmental justice"

**ARTIST/ACTIVIST COLLECTIVE**

**MEDIA**

**USING SHUKUNLA AS A SPACE FOR MUSICAL PERFORMANCE AND RECORDING**

(group formed by combining three topics)

participants:

trish king, patrick, caara, cerulean, trishilicious, asha, alex, scott, brandy, jake, maya, kelly, stephanie, trey, marissa, will, bradley, couple in the rv, jake, jenni

we opened with quotes about play "if not for the emergence of the state we would now have a science based on the principle of play and not fear"

cerulean: culture is play. it is a playful thing. an arbitrary structure. the big tool - play - can help take apart the structure that is about abuse or profit...

are we interested in using art as activism? we need to come to a new agreement on our own about what our culture is.

play as practice for reality? play as practice for adult life? or is real life practice for play? we want to reinforce play as artistic, beautiful...

the joker is great and wise - he can grab his audience through trickery - work their minds - so - through art and play we can change the consciousness. cultivating consciousness.

Asha: In 1999 I put together the Music for an Active Heart CD's (recorded 96-99). Since that release we made enough money to buy better recording equipment and have some left to make the next two volumes. I've recorded many fantastic Musicians since then - there is enough for 2 more volumes (at least) and there are many talented musicians right here in this room that haven't ever recorded with me...

- Equipment - mini disc with mic. / - we also have a new digital recorder to record directly into the computer

- All music needs to be Recorded live at Moonshadow

- we've talked about making a soundproof place for other recording here (earth shag? )

- need volunteers to help organize the already-recorded music. and someone who knows about computer mixing techniques

Asha: My second project that i'm bringing to the table is this:

\* one-day, one-act venues where we'd open the shukun for performers. David Rovics came last spring and did music for children and adults - it was a great success and i'd love to see more of that here.

\*this event could be a place for crafts/party/ fundraising / cafe etc.

plus - we could hold A MUSIC AND ART FESTIVAL HERE AT MOONSHADOW. maybe planned for spring 2010. in addition to the performances we could hold\*

- Music Workshops

- making musical instruments

Scott- studied middle eastern music and has done workshops with this.

Theater?

Pottery?

any topic is fine right now...

Cerulean:

Let's Celebrate the high holydays in different regional communities.

moonshadow - winter solstice/samhain

pumkin hollow - summer solstice

short mountain sanctuary - beltaine

etc

cerulean - enabling a tour to the different collective communities. do art - from community to community - in a circuit. a 200 mile radius. creating things as a small sustainable group to build up their art forms. then eventually getting bigger - solar stage at b-roo, grants, etc.

festivals that exist - alchemy, transformus, dreamtime... we can take ideas that work from them and someday have something like that happen...

also - cerulean is writing and gathering company members for a summer production. she would like to record a collection of songs for the play.

maya - trying to get a warehouse in chattanooga in which to house an in-town space that's easy for folks to get to - studio space, concert space, collaborative work, artist-in-residence program that could move from there to moonshadow. bring awareness to passersby of regional art in progress. a stage, a theater, a gallery. propaganda table for activism.

question: is there a collective calendar for events like this throughout the region?

coptix - they're creating an event calendar...

there are lots of festivals in the area... we can be inspired at these festivals in order to create ours in the way that works. these are public venues that are places where we can practice.

circus is another metaphor that is a form of healing shamanism.

caara - has two properties in east lake in chattanooga - near ga - missionary ridge. so many cross cultures there - one prop. is commercial - one residential (2 acres). gorgeous village feel to it. an old school site that was closed in the 70's. can hold 9 houses. caara grew up doing ren festivals and her family had a cafe. so, she wanted to put a cafe on the site - but the more she walked on the property the more she wants to do festival there. one idea is to bring festival to inner city. this isn't about \$\$ but the movement of heartstrings. there's a site for a stage. she is writing a CreateHere grant. wants it to be solar powered - carbon neutral as much as possible. houses can come later. with public land - stage - garden cooperative. and it's connected to rossville, ga - a community that was once vital. caara has been involved in the community - meetings, etc. she's reaching out to the area residents. there is potential for real community in the area. low rent. but no gentrification! permaculture as bouncer to gentrification... grow it, they will stay away.

can this group have a booth at a farmers' market? or a flea market? it would be fun to have this artisan collective have a booth at the chattanooga market. or other markets forming in chattanooga.

scott - let's use media to get the word out. flyers, zines, podcasts, local pirate radio station... scott wants to do a slot for interviewing farmers, artists, sustainable projects, etc. etc. podcasting is the people's way of taking over the media. we could air podcasts on the radio station.

caara - used to live in minneapolis - their farmers' market had music from all over the world... we have culture in chatt but they are not coming out - they don't seem to have a voice to reach the whole community.

list of projects - subcommittee groups

- podcasting/pirate radio/video/youtube - MEDIA
- festivals/performance arts troupe
- caara's land
- music/art festival at moonshadow
- music for an active heart recordings

- the art warehouse in chattanooga
- infrastructure for performances for all of the above - a collective for using equipment

where do you want to do to live? chattanooga! why? art and community! natural building! festivals! media exchange!

asha - encourages folks in this circle to use svi - media rights... media rights was created in 1991 out of the idea that we have the right to produce our own media... let's do it! we have a non-profit 501(c)3 that could be used for these projects, if needed. for grants, for the name, for the network... if that's something that someone's interested in - let's talk.

asha - i know how to write grants, if anyone needs support

cerulean - every last sunday of the month the Random Acts of Art will meet at the Cerulean Ranch (8012 Shallowford) in the afternoon for walking and talking and play!

## ***Bringing SVI to the larger community / Chattanooga***

### **Bethlehem Center / SVI collaborative**

Elizabeth Tallman and Chris Gilligan discussed collaboration between Bethlehem Center and SVI. Elizabeth would like to begin a community garden at BC, to get children and parents (mostly single moms) involved in a project that will build community and have positive results for all involved.

Caara Stoney suggested Elizabeth contact her husband, Robert, who is an organic gardener and could assist with design for the project.

Chris suggested SVI gardeners and volunteers visit BC when the gardens are ready for planting; discussion and action could center around the growing need for local gardening to nourish people who have limited access to fresh food, and the energy and health benefits of local gardening.

Elizabeth asked about logistics for her participants to visit SVI; Chris suggested a ratio of 1 adult for every 7 children, and one SVI staff or volunteer for each sub-group. An overnight stay at SVI was suggested as a reward for BC participants.