

**ALW EARTHLINK**

**JANUARY 2009**

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**Happy New Year!**

**We found these words on a New Year's web site and we think they perfectly convey what we'd like to say to all you Angels.**

**“It's not just the dawn of a new day....it's a whole new beginning of new hopes and dreams to achieve and live every moment with love and peace.”**

**We also want to say “Happy New Year” in a few of the different languages that our ALW Angels speak all around the Earth!**

**China – “Xin Nian Kuai Le”**

**Dutch – “Gelukkig Nieuwjaari”**

**France – “Bonne Annee”**

**Germany – Prosit Neujahr”**

**Iran – “Sal –e- no mobarak”**

**Japan – “Akimashite Omedetto Gozaimasu”**

**Norway – “Godt Nyttor”**

**Phillippines – “Maligayang Bagong Taon”**

**Spanish – “Feliz Ano – Nuevo”**

**(We got these from [www.theholidayspot.com](http://www.theholidayspot.com) – so if they are not correct, don’t shoot the messengers! LOL!)**

### **January Birthdays**

**Birthday wishes to the following ALW Angels!**

**Maddie – January 10**

**Amanda – January 14**

**Maureen – January 25**

**Mary – January 31**

### **A Special Thank You**

**We received a very touching card from ALW Angel Meg Hunsicker and we wanted to share it with all of you. It’s in response to the tree all the ALW Angels planted in her father’s honor at the time of his recent passing. Here are Meg’s words to all of us:**

**“I’m so thankful for you!**

**There are so many times you've been like an angel in my life!**

**Thank you for everything!**

**“Thank you for planting a tree in my Dad's honor. This beautiful act of kindness not only honors my Dad and our friendship, but continues ALW's mission of a healthier environment. Having all of you “Angels on Earth” rocks!!**

**Love,**

**Meg”**

**ALW Angels are not only caretakers of the Earth -- they are caretakers of each other! It makes us VERY proud to be the Founders of such a wonderful organization of men and women who truly CARE. Thanks to all of you!**

#### **Mountains of Mittens/Make A Difference Day**

**In early December we were able to make TWO deliveries with all the holiday gifts, mittens, clothing, etc. that were donated by ALW Angels and others. We took the largest boxes to Estill Springs Elementary School, where the staff HAPPILY accepted our donations. We took several more boxes to a homeless shelter in Illinois (we couldn't fit it all in the van that we drove to Kentucky!). These people, too, were truly overwhelmed with our generosity and our wonderful holiday surprises. With your help, and the help of our friends at Friendship Station Preschool, we brought holiday joy to many, many children in two different states!**

**We are also pleased to say that we were able to grant the special Christmas wishes of two middle school age boys in Kentucky – without our help, they would not have received any gifts at all!**

**Thank you to all of you who helped with these projects in any way!!**

**FUNdraiser Updates**

**We are hoping to have another AWESOME ALW FUNdraiser in the next few months – and we’re hoping it’s one that will get y’all excited and enthusiastic about participating! Keep watching!**

### **Question**

**Would you buy an ALW tote bag? These would be made with recycled materials and would hold lots of ‘stuff.’ They would also be relatively inexpensive! E-mail us at [alastingworld@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alastingworld@sbcglobal.net), and let us know if you would (or would not) purchase one – all proceeds from the sale of the bags would go to help us fund Camp H.O.P.E. 2009. Thanks!**

### **Camp H.O.P.E. 2009**

**In case you are new to ALW or in case you need a quick update, this will be ALW’s 4<sup>th</sup> annual Camp H.O.P.E. (Helping Our Planet Earth). Camp H.O.P.E. is a week-long summer environmental camp held in Kentucky. The purpose of the camp is to give underprivileged Appalachian youth an environmental learning opportunity they would not otherwise be able to enjoy. The week includes environmental workshops, hands-on learning experiences, guest speakers, field trips, hiking, exploring (caves, ponds, creeks and natural springs), outdoor education, swimming, rappelling, games, nature art, and more. Besides the environmental aspect of the camp, we also try to build self-esteem and self-confidence in each participant.**

**With the help of fundraisers, sponsors, ‘adopters’ and in-kind donations, we are able to bring the students to camp totally free-of-charge. We provide each child’s full tuition, room, board, fees, workshop supplies, arts and crafts materials, camp clothing and all personal needs. We also provide each child with a few special gifts picked from his/her personalized ‘wish list.’**

**We have committed to bring 15 students to Camp H.O.P.E. 2009. We are blessed to already have 15 individuals and/or groups who have committed to ‘adopt’ these children. Each ‘adopter’ will be GENEROUSLY donating \$150 for the child he/she ‘adopts,’ and will also be providing some other, more personal items for the ‘adopted’ child.**

**YOU, too, can help make Camp H.O.P.E. 2009 a success! You may not be able to afford \$150 – but every smaller amount helps just as much! Consider purchasing a stuffed animal for a camper (to be used as part of our ecosystem/habitat unit, as well as to become a special friend to cuddle with in the cabins!). Help us purchase one bat house kit or bird feeder for our nature crafts. Donate one or more books for any of our different workshop topics. The possibilities are endless. No gift is too**

small, and every gift giver will be recognized in our camp yearbook and on our camp tee-shirt. If you have a heart for the children and would like to be a part of Camp H.O.P.E. 2009, contact us at [alastingworld@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alastingworld@sbcglobal.net). We'll give you some ideas of what YOU can do to help with this most worthwhile venture. Thanks so much!

## **Environmental News**

### **Free Online Newsletter**

Check out [www.nwf.org/enews](http://www.nwf.org/enews). This is where you will find "Wildlife Online," the National Wildlife Federation's online newsletter. In each issue, you will find any useful tips and wildlife alerts, as well as great stories about America's magnificent wildlife. (National Wildlife Federation)

### **The Dirt on Coal**

The following article is printed in the January/February 2009 Sierra Magazine, the official publication of the Sierra Club. We are copying the article in its entirety and we think it is exceptionally well-written.

**"The Dirt on Coal: A Messy Business Comes Home to Roost**

**by Silas House**

**One of my earliest memories is standing on the spine of a ridge looking down on the place that had been the House family cemetery in Lily, Kentucky. The cedar-pocked graveyard had been part of that ridge, but now it was pushed into the strip mine below.**

**All the caskets and tombstones were supposed to have been moved by the coal company, but we later found out that my great-aunt's had been pushed over the hill too, buried under some 50 feet of unwanted topsoil, clay, and low-grade coal – overburden, as the coal-mining industry calls it. I remember my father and uncles standing nearby, silent except for the coins they rattled in their pockets.**

**I thought back on this some 20 years later the first time I saw a mountaintop-removal mine; I didn't know whether to cry or throw up. The mountain, once a**

living, thriving entity, was now barren and lifeless. The miners hadn't even bothered to harvest the trees; instead, a dozer's shiny blade had simply knocked them down to make way for the site to expand. The trees, mostly oaks, beeches, and redbuds at the height of their springtime glory, were dumped atop a pile where hundreds more were burning in a smoldering fire. Their green leaves crackled in the still, dry air.

Since then I've visited dozens of similar mines. To begin to appreciate the enormity of the mountaintop-removal sites – some of which stretch across 15 square miles – you have to fly over them. Even so, the scale of destruction is hard to comprehend.

That devastation is not limited to trees and mountains, but extends to the people who live among the ruin. They tell stories of poisoned water, dried-up wells, and cracked foundations. They testify to fish kills, company intimidation, and roads crumbling beneath the weight of overloaded coal trucks. They fear paid-off inspectors, 100-year floods that now happen twice a year, and above all the wide-reaching power of King Coal.

That power grows every time someone says “clean coal,” as politicians of both parties are apt to do these days. The sad truth is that there's no such thing. Burning coal – regardless of where it's mined and how it's processed – pollutes America's skies and contributes to global warming. Yet the fantasy of clean coal leads to the reality of more coal being mined to meet the demand for this mythological substance. More mountains will fall to Big Coal, and more people will suffer – not only in Appalachia but also, due to our changing climate, in drought-ravaged Africa, the flooded fields of Asia, and the overheated and barren seas of Europe. Everyone will eventually pay the price for coal consumption.

For those far from the wasted landscapes of Appalachia, energy is an abstraction. The cost of powering our lives with this dirtiest of fossil fuels is, to most, as opaque as a lump of coal. These images seek to illuminate that cost, and to bring it home to you as it was brought home to me on that lonely Kentucky ridge.

**78 pounds** – amount of coal it takes to run a dryer for a month in an average U.S. household that relies on electricity from a coal-fired power plant.

**162 pounds** – amount of coal it takes to light a house with incandescent light bulbs for a month.

**170 pounds** – amount of coal it takes to heat water for an average U.S. household for a month.

**235 pounds** – amount of coal it would take to warm an average U.S. household with space heaters for a month.

**1,140 pounds** – total monthly coal consumption for an average U.S. household

(including appliances not listed in these pages), resulting in 3,369 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions.”

(Silas House is the author of three novels. His latest book, Something's Rising (written with Jason Howard), is a collection of oral histories and stories about people fighting mountaintop-removal coal mining. It will be published by the University Press of Kentucky in March. For more information, visit [www.silashouse.net](http://www.silashouse.net))

### **Did You Know?**

The average car emits twice its weight in the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, each year. Eliminating just one trip per week will result in a significant overall reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>.

If you've got a wood-burning stove or fireplace, make sure your firewood is mature and dry. Burning green or damp wood releases carcinogens into the atmosphere and contributes to air pollution and acid rain.

At dusk, when the outside temperature starts to drop, draw your curtains to hold in as much of your home's heat as possible.

In a two-story house, it is more efficient to live upside down; locate bedrooms downstairs and living spaces upstairs.

If you are buying an electric blender, choose one made of glass and stainless steel, rather than plastic. It will last longer and is less damaging to the environment to produce.

Choose adobe interior walls for your home. They will increase your home's thermal mass, which will reduce heat loss and help cut your energy use.

**Make food choices with the goal of less packaging. It is important to select foods that utilize little or no packaging, particularly avoiding plastic because the environmental cost of plastic is sky-high.**

**Always buy recycled toilet paper. You only use it once before disposing of it, so it doesn't have to be the very best quality.**

**Choose bamboo for window blinds, flooring, and other household items. Bamboo is a great green choice because it is fast growing, sustainable, and grows without the use of pesticides or fertilizers.**

**(Did You Know tips from "365 Little Ways To Save Our Planet" Calendar)**

**And Finally.....**

**"Be always at war with your vices,  
at peace with your neighbors,  
and let each New Year find you a better man."**

**(Benjamin Franklin)**

**"One resolution I have made, and  
try always to keep is this:  
to rise above the little things."**

**(John Burroughs)**

**“It’s a New Year for  
ALW, and for all our HOPES and DREAMS!  
Let’s BELIEVE we can make them all come true!  
(Linda and Wen)**

**See you in February!**

**Linda and Wen**