

**ALW EARTHLINK  
FEBRUARY 2007**

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**February Birthdays**

**We celebrate the following ALW Angels as they celebrate their birthdays!**

**Susan – February 3**

**Caitlin – February 5**

**Tracy – February 8**

**Gia – February 13**

**Rea – February 17**

**Sophie – February 19**

**Kasy – February 20**

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**Lisa – February 24**

**Jessica – February 28**

**Happy Valentine's Day!**

**February 14 is Valentine's Day, and we thought we'd pass along some little 'snippets' of wisdom to help you celebrate this special day of love!**

*“In the coldest February, as in every other month in every other year, the best thing to hold on to in this world is each other!”*

**Linda Ellerbee**

*“If you would be loved, love and be lovable!”*

**Benjamin Franklin**

*“It is not what we do; it is how much love we put in the doing.”*

**Mother Teresa**

*“When we connect with ourselves in love,*

*We can connect with others and the planet in love.”*  
Rattana Hetzel

**ALW Angels Take Action!**

We want to take a moment to thank each of our ALW Angels who took the time to send a letter to Governor Ernie Fletcher of Kentucky, supporting annual funding for the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Your response was quick, encouraging and helpful! Letters to the Governor were mailed from Germany, France, Canada and England, as well as from places all over the United States! Let's keep our fingers crossed that our combined voices will be heard as the Kentucky budget is discussed! We'll keep you posted!

**ALW EVENT –**

**“Horsin’ Around in Kentucky!”**

ALW's annual “Roots & Remembrance” event will take place May 4-5, 2007 in Lexington, Kentucky. Lexington is the heart of the Bluegrass State, and Kentucky is the state where more than 10,000 Thoroughbred horses are born each year (generally from February through July). Our weekend (which is actually Kentucky Derby weekend!) will focus on horses and the environment, and you are all invited to join us to celebrate the Earth and some of the Earth's most beautiful creatures. If you were one of the 49 ALW Angels who recently sent us your mailing address, you will soon be receiving a special packet of information about Roots & Remembrance (if you have not already received it). The packet contains more detailed information about the weekend, as well as registration forms and full pricing. If you did not send us your mailing address, you can request information about Roots & Remembrance via e-mail. Just contact us at [alastingworld@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alastingworld@sbcglobal.net), and we'll forward you all the information you need.

The weekend's activities will include a unique horse farm tour (meet owners, horses, horse groomers, farm personnel, etc. as we tour historic farms in Lexington), a trail ride, a special guest pass to the Kentucky Horse Park, a hands-on environmental project at the Horse Park, all meals, a ‘make and take’ souvenir from Kentucky, a special “Old Kentucky Night” with dinner and entertainment, and our annual “Remembrance” luminary candle ceremony where we will attempt to “Light Up Lexington” with memories and with love. Please consider being a part of this very unique, very informative, fun-filled weekend! We have 14 people already signed up, and we would love to see that number go up! The price is right, the place is perfect, and the people you'll be hanging out with are all the BEST! So – come on down to Kentucky in May!

Note: This will be your LAST CHANCE to experience an ALW “Roots & Remembrance” Weekend! We have decided not to hold this annual event beginning in 2008.

**ALW FUNDRAISER –**

**‘LIGHT UP LEXINGTON!!’**

Since our first year of inception, ALW has held an annual luminary candle ceremony to celebrate the Earth and to remember loved ones, both living and deceased. Each consecutive year has found us lighting more candles, and the solemn reading of names at the ceremony has become a moving, emotional tradition that has touched the lives of everyone in attendance.

Last year we lit over 350 candles outside the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

This year, we’ll be placing our candles along a peaceful brick walkway at the Kentucky Horse Park, near the stunning Man’O’War Memorial. We’d like to see if we can reach the 500-candle mark. Will you help?

It is a \$3 donation to have a candle lit for a family member, a friend, a personal hero, a co-worker, a pet, a place, a milestone date, etc.

It is a \$5 donation to have a candle lit at the ceremony and to receive a memorial souvenir candle to keep.

To make a donation, you can use Paypal (our Paypal address is [alastingworld@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alastingworld@sbcglobal.net)) or you can download a form from an e-mail attachment and mail in your donation.

This candle ceremony is not limited to ALW members – anyone can have a candle lit for someone/something dear to them. Please spread the word! We want to “Light Up Lexington” so that the entire Earth will feel the ‘glow’ of ALW’s commitment to the Earth and to all its inhabitants.

If you have questions or if you would like more information, contact us at [alastingworld@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alastingworld@sbcglobal.net).

**Please consider lighting at least one candle in honor of our Honorary Chairperson, Kevin Richardson. For each candle you light in honor of Kevin, your name will go into a drawing for a special Kevin/Kentucky raffle prize, including a SIGNED item from Kevin!**

**All donation money received this year will go to help build a new nature center at the Cathedral Domain where Kevin grew up – so please be as generous as you can! Thanks!**

**CAMP H.O.P.E. (Helping Our Planet Earth) 2007**

Plans are well underway for our second annual Camp H.O.P.E. Thanks to your generosity in supporting our fundraisers and other activities, we are able to commit to bring 14 financially needy students from Appalachia to this year’s camp, totally free-of-charge. The school we are working with will be sending us the names of our 2007 campers later this week!

If you sent us your mailing address, you will be receiving information about Camp H.O.P.E. in the mail (if you have not already received it). Please look over the information carefully and see if there is any area that you might be able to help us out – by adopting a camper, by making a blanket for a camper, etc. If you did not send us your mailing address, and if you would like more information about the Camp, please contact us at [alastingworld@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alastingworld@sbcglobal.net).

Thanks!

## **Environmental News**

### **Try a Drying Rack**

A drying rack allows clothes to dry without even turning on the electric or gas dryer. It also has other additional benefits: 1) your home will be humidified without turning on a humidifier; 2) your fabric will last longer and will not pill; 3) your elastic will not deteriorate; 4) your home will take on a fresh laundry smell; and 5) clothing will remain soft if a little fabric softener is put in your final rinse. (By Karen Klages, Chicago Tribune Staff Reporter)

### **Eco-conscious Grocery Bags**

Check out [www.reusablebags.com](http://www.reusablebags.com) to find affordable string grocery bags (in off white, jewel tones, pastels, warm colors and black) that come with little stuff sacks so you can always have your string grocery bags at the ready. The cost is between \$29.95-\$34.95 for five bags and a sack.

If you can't see yourself buying (or making) a reusable grocery bag, consider taking your old plastic bags with you to the store and asking the bagger to use those. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency's website: "Reusing a bag meant for just one use has a big impact. A sturdy, reusable bag needs only be used 11 times to have a lower environmental impact than using 11 disposable plastic bags." So what's the big deal? "When 1 ton of plastic bags is reused or recycled, the energy equivalent of 11 barrels of oil is saved," says the EPA site. (By Elaine Matsushita, Chicago Tribune Staff Reporter)

### **Lawsuit Threatens National Parks**

Yosemite National Park, California. The plunging waterfalls and soaring crags chiseled by the Merced River draw millions of visitors each year, but the crowds are precisely what threaten the waterway and the park.

Efforts to safeguard the Merced have spawned a court battle over the future of development in Yosemite National Park's most popular stretch.

The case might come down to the challenge facing all of America's parks: Should they remain open to everyone, or should access be limited in the interest of protecting them?

In November, a federal judge barred crews from finishing \$60 million in construction projects in Yosemite Valley, siding with a small group of environmentalists who sued the federal government, saying further commercial development would bring greater numbers of visitors, thus threatening the Merced's fragile ecosystem.

"The park's plans for commercialization could damage Yosemite for future generations," said Bridget Kerr, a member of Friends of Yosemite Valley, one of two local environmental groups that filed the suit.

The government is appealing, fearing that the ruling could force the National Park Service to limit the number of people allowed into Yosemite each day, a precedent that it does not want to see echoed in other parks.

"I don't think we've ever had a ruling with these kinds of implications," said Kerri Cahill, a Denver-based planner for the park service.

"It's going to have a direct influence on the public who care about these places."

The case has Yosemite's most loyal advocates sharply divided over how to balance preservation with access to public lands.

Even environmentalists can't agree on how to minimize the human footprint – some believe that cars should be kept out entirely; others say visitors should have to make reservations in advance. For more information on Yosemite National Park and the Merced River, visit [www.nps.gov/yose/asf](http://www.nps.gov/yose/asf). (By Garance Burke, Associated Press)

#### **Hawaiian School Celebrates Landmark Achievement**

“I pledge allegiance to the Earth, and to all life that it nourishes.” So begins the oath that students and teachers at Kawaiaha'o Church School in Honolulu recite each day, in which they promise “to protect life on our planet, to live in harmony with nature and to share our resources justly, so that all people can live with dignity, in good health and in peace.”

At a recent ceremony honoring Kawaiaha'o as Hawaii's first National Wildlife Federation-certified schoolyard habitat, NWF President Larry Schweiger praised the school community for putting these words into practice – for “creating a wildlife-friendly space that kids can be part of.” Each class is responsible for tending a portion of the outdoor garden, which hosts a variety of native Hawaiian and Polynesian plants. For more information about NWF's Schoolyard Habitats program, visit [www.nwf.org/schoolyard](http://www.nwf.org/schoolyard). (From NWF Magazine)

#### **ALW ANGEL OF THE MONTH**

Robert Lawson, the Executive Director of the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Renfro Valley, Kentucky, is a soft-spoken, Southern-born gentleman with a welcoming handshake, a warm smile and a mischievous twinkle in his eyes. To get to his office, you must follow him through the hallowed halls where you see displays of costumes and artifacts, antique musical instruments and facts about Kentucky music and Kentucky musicians. Mr. Lawson casually, but with pinpoint accuracy, comments about everyone and everything upon which your eyes rest. You realize almost immediately that for Mr. Lawson this is not just a 'job.' He loves this place, and more importantly, he loves the people and the music it represents. He is passionate about instilling that same love in others.

He sits down behind a desk piled high with everything from gift shop souvenirs to just-received Montgomery Gentry memorabilia, ready to talk with pride about the Hall of Fame and Museum's past, and to speak hopefully of what is still to come. Here is the first part of the interview that our ANGEL OF THE MONTH, Mr. Robert Lawson, honored us with. Part two will appear in our March newsletter.

**ALW:** Mr. Lawson, tell us about how the idea of the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame originated.

**Mr. Lawson:** The Hall of Fame was actually the idea of Ann Lair Anderson, the daughter of John Lair (famed Kentucky musician). She had always made the statement that Nashville was taking charge of all of the country artists, and that Nashville was honoring artists with a Country Music Hall of Fame. With emphasis on Renfro Valley being the Kentucky music capital, her idea was to have a place where we could honor our Kentucky country music artists.

**ALW: How did she get support?**

**Mr. Lawson:** Over a period of several years, Miss Ann and our local Senator, Danny Ford, bounced the idea back and forth. Each time a new legislative session began; Danny would take their recommendations to Frankfort and share them with different representatives and different senators. And finally, in the late 1990's, they got serious about getting something started. Miss Ann and Danny started looking at what they could do to get funding for a facility. Everyone was in unanimous agreement that the facility should be in Renfro Valley. Miss Ann owns a lot of property here, which she had inherited from John Lair; and the horse barn, which is now our museum lobby, was one of the buildings she owned. She made a challenge to Danny Ford that if he could help get some money, she would donate some land to get the Museum started. During the General Assembly in 1998, Danny went to Frankfort with a purpose. He had John Connelly and several other Kentucky artists come up and speak before the General Assembly. These artists spoke about what they could do to spearhead the project. The project gained momentum, and over the next two General Assemblies, a total of 3.5 million dollars was allotted to the Hall of Fame and Museum, to build the facility.

**ALW: Was that enough money?**

**Mr. Lawson:** No. Another 1 million was raised through private funding, donations and pledges from individuals and businesses. That money was used to finish the details on the inside. So all together, about 4.5 million was raised through appropriations and private funds, to complete the project.

**ALW: When was the Hall of Fame officially opened?**

**Mr. Lawson:** The Hall of Fame opened on May 17, 2002, and we had a little over 10,000 people present at the grand opening – all inside the building -- because it was pouring rain outside! (Laughs)

**ALW: How were you chosen to be Executive Director?**

**Mr. Lawson:** My background is in retail and in business in general, and they hired me in mid-April, 2002, to take care of the front end of the business, which involved tickets, the gift shop, financials, bookkeeping and other duties. When I was hired, the only thing in the gift shop area was two horse stalls! So, over the course of the month before we opened, I essentially put together the gift shop – I built the shelves, found vendors, and basically put the entire operation together.

**ALW: How much time were you devoting to the job?**

**Mr. Lawson:** I was regularly putting in 18-20 hour days, because we had to get this place opened, you know!  
(Laughs)

**ALW: When were you given the title of Executive Director?**

**Mr. Lawson:** I worked the front area from April 2002 until September 2002. At that time, we had a Director on staff that had been hired about a year before the

official opening. For some odd reason, she didn't really like music and she didn't like dealing with people! Well, in this business you have to be a people person – and if you don't love music, you don't need to be a part of a Music Hall of Fame!

**ALW:** You seem like a perfect fit!

**Mr. Lawson:** Well, you know, I have always been involved with music. My Mom worked here at Renfro Valley, and my first job was here at Renfro Valley, so I grew up around music my whole life. I love the different styles of music. Everybody goes through the phases of listening to rock'n'roll and different styles growing up, and I just love it all. Music is just a part of who I am – I just love it! So – when the former Director left, they felt that I was in a position at that time to step in and take over. I hired my own staff and brought this place into what it is today.

**ALW:** What do you like best about your job?

**Mr. Lawson:** I talk a lot about the relationships. One of my main objectives in getting the Hall of Fame going was building relationships with the artists. If you can't have a good relationship with them or have good rapport with them, they're not going to do anything you want them to do! (Laughs) I have been pretty successful in facilitating different events, especially around the induction events. I am very proud to say that we don't pay a penny for any of the artists to come in for our events.

**ALW:** You seem to get along with everyone!

**Mr. Lawson:** (Laughs) Well, not everyone. But to have a good rapport with the artists and to have their support for the Museum and Hall of Fame – that is very important to me.

**ALW:** How do you get the items that are on display in the Museum?

**Mr. Lawson:** You know, I've talked to the Directors at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, and at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame – and they tell me that they essentially have to beg people – and a lot of times they even have to purchase – the items and memorabilia on display in their museums. We have never paid a penny for any of the items we have on display from the artists. It has always been donated by the artists themselves, by their families or even by fans. The artists have always been extremely generous.

**ALW:** Is that because Kentucky-based artists are more generous, or is that because you have such a nice way of relating to them?

**Mr. Lawson:** Well, you know, I think it's a little of both. I think it's the artists themselves – they understand what we are trying to do – they understand how important it is to recognize their music heritage here in Kentucky. For the most part, our artists are some of the most genuine people that you will ever run into.

**ALW:** We agree.

**Mr. Lawson:** There are some artists in mainstream music that won't even do autographs. It is very seldom that any of our Kentucky artists will not be friendly

or will not sign autographs or will not have a picture made with their fans. I don't care if they are the hottest thing out there or one of the biggest acts we've got going right now – they will go out of their way for someone else. I really believe that Kentucky artists are the most genuine, most giving people that you can ever meet. They understand what this is all about, and they know that we aren't here to take advantage of them. They know we're here to honor them. I think that goes back to having a good relationship with them – them understanding you and them knowing that you're not going to take them for whatever they've got.

**ALW:** How do you keep the good relationships you have with the artists?

**Mr. Lawson:** It all goes back to the personal relationship – the personal touch – with them. On a daily or weekly basis, I call the different artists, even if it's just to call and say "Happy Birthday" if it's their birthday – and even if they're not there, to just leave a message or an e-mail to let them know we're thinking about them. I try my best to get to Nashville as much as possible, to go down and just have lunch with them. You know, I say "Hey, I'm coming down next week, do you want to have lunch?" And I take them out to lunch on us – even though they would be more than willing to treat me. It's just going a little out of my way to say "Hey, we appreciate all your help and we want to recognize you." A lot of the artists are happy to be looked at in that light. They are asked so, so many times to do something for someone else. It's nice for them to be on the receiving end sometimes.

**ALW:** And that personal touch goes a long way!

**Mr. Lawson:** You're right. We try extremely hard to keep things on a very personal level. I don't like the 'corporate' thing. I personally promote the artists when they are here for concerts, and they know they can get that from me. You don't get that everywhere. And in the end, that's why I think we have such success with our artists and I think that's why this place is so special.

**TO BE CONTINUED.....**

**Coming in March:**

Read what Mr. Lawson says about Kevin Richardson and Brian Littrell, find out what plans the Music Hall of Fame and Museum has to build an **ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY** outdoor pavilion and amphitheater and more!

Find out how the current count of candles we will have to "Light up Lexington!"

Check up on the progress of Camp H.O.P.E.

Read more current, up-to-the-minute Environmental News

And more!

**AND FINALLY.....**

*"Do you have a dream for your life?"*

*Listen to the inner guidance being given to you from  
within. You have the power to make your  
dreams come true!"*  
**(Trudy Griswold)**

**See you in March!**

**Linda and Wen  
ALW Founders**