

**ALW Earthlink
December 2007**

In this issue.....

December Birthdays

Playing “Santa” in Kentucky – Twice!

Fundraiser Updates

Environmental News

And Finally.....

December Birthdays

Happy Birthday to the following ALW Angels, who celebrate their special dates during the last month of the year!

Pat – December 1

Tracy – December 2

Debra – December 8

Christina – December 16

Lisa – December 18

Jim Hanna (Honorary Angel) – December 20

Rochelle – December 24

Sonia – December 31

Playing “Santa” in Kentucky – Twice!

On November 29, thanks to the generous donations of many of our ALW members, our ALW friends and our family members, we were able to fill up a TRUCK with holiday gifts for underprivileged children in Estill County, Kentucky. A representative from Estill County Schools met us at our Lexington storage unit, and we worked all morning loading the gifts! Here’s just a sampling of the **BRAND NEW ITEMS that ALW contributed this year: 30 electronic keyboards, a Little Tykes kitchen, two Huffy bicycles, train sets, a pirate action set, toy trucks, talking Disney plush animals, puzzles, dolls, board games, dress-up clothing, Lego blocks, Hot Wheels cars, backpacks, school supplies, bubble bath, lotion sets, and more! And then there were the clothes! Hats, mittens, scarves, pajamas, slippers, holiday outfits, dresses, baby items, jeans, sweats, tee-shirts and socks! **THANKS to EVERYONE** who contributed in some way to this very worthwhile project.**

Our SECOND “Santa Stop” was made to a very special family of six in Kentucky. They live on a mountain, and they’ve had a pretty tough year because of some unforeseen medical expenses and other high costs. With their permission, we asked for a toy ‘wish list’ from each of the four children in the family. We were able to fill almost all of the toy ‘wishes’ on the kids’ lists, and we were also able to supply each child with a new winter jacket, new hat/gloves/scarf sets, new pajamas, new jeans, new tops and new socks! We even managed to surprise the kids’ parents with a few gifts! **THANKS to those of you who supported ALW fundraisers this past year. Because of you, this Kentucky family is celebrating a very happy holiday!**

Fundraiser Updates

We made over \$200 on our bake sale a few weeks ago! YAY!

In the first week of the holiday book campaign, the Barnes & Noble store in Lexington, Kentucky collected over 475 books for ALW to give to Estill County Schools! The campaign continues until January 1. YAY!

Because you all voted so faithfully on the local radio station's website, Wen was named their "Unsung Hero" for October! \$500 will be awarded to ALW in Wen's name, to be used for Camp H.O.P.E.! YAY!

If you have not received it already, be watching for an envelope from ALW that will arrive in your mailbox! It has suggestions for two ways you can help ALW send more underprivileged kids to Camp H.O.P.E. in 2008! ☺

Have you started putting your spare change in your ALW envelope? Don't forget that every penny helps send kids to camp!

Don't forget! We have holiday ornaments available for \$5 and a small shipping and handling fee. We will attach a special card and mail it to anyone you want to remember this season. The entire \$5 goes to help send underprivileged kids to Camp H.O.P.E. – so this is a gift that gives TWICE! Contact us at alastingworld@sbcglobal.net for information on how to order!

More FUN 'stuff' on the way! Be watching!

Environmental News

For the Gardeners

Gardening blogs have grown exponentially in the last few years, so if you know how to navigate the Web, you'll find information on almost every topic. Blog subjects include vegetable, water and urban gardening; some blogs have a regional focus. Two good sites are www.GardenRant.com, written by four women living in different areas of the country, and www.GardeningGoneWild.com, a blog that features a variety of expertise and opinions. These blogs enable you to interact with other fellow gardeners in cyberspace and to exchange ideas. (Fran Sorin, USA Weekend)

Customize Your Holiday Wrappings

Many people are interested in ways to protect the environment, and your efforts don't have to stop just because the holidays have arrived. Re-use paper grocery bags when wrapping gifts, and allow your children to color, stamp, and/or paint their own festive designs on the paper. Adorn gifts with small items that the recipient will enjoy (e.g., tie a cookie cutter onto the box for the baker in the family). Use homemade ornaments or handprint cut-outs as gift cards. Need a natural bow? Tie a sprig of holly on your grocery-bag-wrapped-boxes.

The Outside Advantage for Kids

The Nature Conservancy recently found that kids under 13 now take part in freestyle play outdoors for only one half-hour per week. This is having a negative impact on children's physical and mental health. Although scientific studies of the effects of nature on child development are still in their infancy, quite a few point to a distinctly positive role. Here's how:

NATURE CAN BE A STRESS REDUCER. A 2003 study published in *Environment and Behavior* concluded that green plants and vistas reduce stress among children in rural areas. The more natural the surroundings, the better: A greater degree of 'greenery' around the home was linked to more significant stress reduction.

NATURE CAN MAKE KIDS MORE FOCUSED. University of Illinois research found that children with attention-deficit disorder can focus more effectively after outdoor activities such as camping and fishing. Other studies have yielded similar results: Urban kids have shown increased cognitive ability when they have access to natural settings, and Swedish preschoolers who played in more natural settings suffered fewer attention lapses – being distracted, interrupting, not listening – than those who played in less natural areas.

NATURE CAN ENHANCE A CHILD'S EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. If young children have regular opportunities for unstructured play, then they are likely to have a greater chance of getting along with others and being happier, healthier and smarter, report researchers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Teens also can benefit: A survey of participants in wilderness programs found that their interactions with nature resulted in enhanced self-esteem, independence and initiative.

Get kids outside! Nature doesn't have to be Yosemite. Getting in touch with nature doesn't require that you load up your charge card with equipment from R.E.I. If you can't get to a pond or lake, then find a puddle! Take a walk in your neighborhood at night. Take a blanket outside after dinner and read on the lawn. Kids will find fascinating things to explore anywhere! (Dennis McCafferty, USA Weekend)

What You Can Do to Stop the Destruction of our Nation's Waterways

Limit or eliminate the use of fertilizers on lawns. Use only phosphorus-free fertilizers.

Consider planting native vegetation, trees and shrubs to reduce grass lawn areas. Ensure that organic wastes are stored properly and treated before release – pet wastes should be picked up and disposed of properly. Septic systems should be inspected and pumped out regularly. When boating, use shore-side pump-out facilities to empty marine toilets. Stockpiled manure on farms should be covered and stored well away from water bodies.

Have your furnace and chimney checked and cleaned annually so they operate as cleanly as possible.

Ensure your car is well tuned to run at peak efficiency to reduce air pollution.

Urge your Congress members to pass the Clean Water Restoration Act to ensure that all our waters receive protection from pollution and destruction.

Advocate for your municipality to have upgraded sewage treatment plants that remove nutrients from its discharges.

Visit www.WATERKEEPER.org and get involved in your local Waterkeeper program. (Waterkeeper Alliance)

Environmental Groups to Contact

Check out these websites for environmental information!

Environmental Defense – www.environmentaldefense.org. Innovative and practical ways to solve the most urgent environmental problems.

Sierra Club – www.sierraclub.org. America’s oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – www.ipccc.ch

Established to assess scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant for the understanding of climate change.

University Corporation for Atmospheric Research – www.ucar.edu. UCAR strives to advance the understanding of weather and climate in order to benefit society.

Climate Action Network – www.climatenetwork.org. A non-profit organization working on climate change issues.

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) – www.nrdc.org.

An Inconvenient Truth – www.climatecrisis.net. Former Vice President Al Gore’s book and movie, “An Inconvenient Truth,” looks at climate change. Read about it and watch clips from the movie.

A Lasting World (ALW) – www.alastingworld.com. Check us out often! LOTS of environmental education/news/forums to go to!

The Coolest Schools!

Many young people see environmental problems – especially global warming – as the challenge of their generation, and 400 college and university presidents have responded by signing a pledge to make their institutions carbon neutral. Students at almost 600 U.S.A. and Canadian schools are organizing around clean-energy solutions as part of the Campus Climate Challenge, a two-year-old campaign initiated by youth environmental groups (including Sierra Club’s Student Coalition) that has added sass and sex appeal to a somber topic.

Sierra Club recently named its top ten ‘green’ colleges. Here’s the list! Congrats to the students and staff at all these institutions!

Oberlin College, Ohio (2,800 students); Harvard University, Massachusetts (20,000 students); Warren Wilson College, North Carolina (850 students); University of California system (10 locations, 214,000 students); Duke University, North Carolina (12,800 students); Middlebury College, Vermont (2,400 students);

Berea College, Kentucky (1,600 students); Pennsylvania State University (24 locations, 83,700 students); Tufts University, Massachusetts (8,800 students); Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania (10,000 students). (Sierra Club Magazine)

Traveling for the Holidays? Check into a “Green” Hotel!

Many eco-conscious hotels put soap and shampoo in shower-mounted dispensers (eliminating plastic bottle waste) and will change your linens less frequently at your

request, saving about 5% on utilities, according to the Green Hotels Association (GHA). Check out www.greenhotels.com for a member list of the GHA.

And Finally.....

*“Camp H.O.P.E. is
Heaven on Earth –
Kentucky Style!”*
■ Julia

**Happy Holidays
to all
our ALW Angels
and to everyone who
believes in ALW and
who helps us make our dreams come true!**

See you in January!

Linda and Wen