



What on Earth!

A monthly publication by and for citizens of the Clearfork Valley
 Reporters: Marie Cirillo and Carol Judy
 Editor: Marie Cirillo
 Layout: Brenda Partin
 Distribution: Carol Judy
 Printer: Ullrich Printing

Letters, comments and assistance should be addressed to:
 What On Earth!
 P.O. Box 81
 Eagan, Tennessee 37730
 Phone: (423) 784-0095
 email: cirillo.marie@gmail.com

Volume 12 No. 10
 October 18, 2011

There Is a Time for Everything

Marie Cirillo

WHAT THE PEOPLE WERE DOING IN THE 1980'S

Continued from August and September Issues

A. The Big Government Plan: The Enterprise Zone Planning Process united non profits, banks and government in Campbell County, TN and Bell and Whitley Counties, KY to develop an Enterprise Zone Application. This was a federal assistance program for the poorest of the poor areas in America. Together we produced our proposal - Appalachian United Vision . We non profits were so disappointed in its rejection. We still feel the pain. The Enterprise Zone included the small towns and unincorporated communities but left out Clairfield where the whole nonprofit movement started. It was clear to us that state lines are in extreme contradiction to natures boundaries that have everything to do with the socially unifying elements that have existed ever since humans made this terrain their home place.

B. Water: After at least thirty years worrying about the water supply, a handful of people in White Oak and Clairfield can be thanked for their determination to establish, in the mid 1980's, the Clearfork Water Utility. Today over 600 families have tapped on while the numbers who lose it for a month or two because they can't pay their bill becomes a more frequent occurrence. The establishment of this utility for our Tennessee residents hastened the negotiations from the Kentucky people who eventually got access to public water. There still remain families in the Clearfork Valley without access to any public water utility.

C. Land: After 100 years of 40,000 acres of Clearfork Lands being owned by a British Company, The American Association, It was sold to a New Jersey based company, The J.M. Huber Corporation. They graciously offered the Model Valley Development Corporation a parcel of land suitable for meeting housing and other community development needs. It was a moment of hope for all activities promoted by citizen groups.

Woodland Community Land Trust developed a partnership with friends and supporters willing to make annual contributions to Woodland's Land Acquisition Fund.

D. Housing: Woodland Community Land Trust built its first 5 houses on trust lands, started an emergency shelter and began managing 112 acres of forest land for the University of Tennessee. Timber from this land was used locally. They also purchased additional land , making the total land holdings 120 acres. They gave the office building to Woodland Community Development Corporation, a new corporation that would manage construction work for Woodland and visioning the potential for assisting the larger housing needs of the community.

Model Valley Development Corporation opened up more of their land for housing. Henderson Settlement had a healthy, active volunteer home repair program in the summer. Appalachian Service Project had spread throughout the entire region doing summer home repairs.

E. Building Supplies: Johnson's Hardware store in Hamblentown opened. It continues to provide easy access to building supplies for the families and organizations investing in houses and other homestead needs.

F. Education: Fonde Christian Accademy started in the Fonde Church 1984 and then moved into it's new facilities in 1986. Their annual Fall Festival is a way to keep the tuition as low as possible.

THE PEOPLE WERE DISTURBING THE PEACE:

A certain level of self awareness was brewing. Were citizens carrying a greater responsibility for governance than the county, state, regional or national government?

CHURCH WORK

White Oak Church of God

"Its Time To Take Back Our Community." People responded to this invitation and a good size group gathered at White Oak Church of God on September 24. Inspiring testimonies from the altar and from the benches were heard and responded to in song, prayer, poetry, theater and rituals.

The young peoples drama portraying the struggle to overcome temptation was powerful with lighting and sound reinforcing the inner responses of the soul.

The unity was in the cries of the people. They were humbled as they stood before their God and participated in healing the soul of this community. The call was to pray for the healing of this corner of Earth.

It was a sacred moment, and saying more would dishonor their intent.

Eagan Baptist Church

Proud to open their doors to accommodate guests from the U.S. Post office, people gathered to listen and be heard about matters related to closing the Eagan Post Office. The Postal people listened respectfully and answered questions, but reminded us that they were not the ones who make the decisions about what cuts to make.

Many issues, questions and implications were brought up and people began sharing their thoughts with one another as well as with the Post Office Representatives.

People lingered and pursued general concerns about the multi-layered impact of another empty building and the tremendous burden that would be put on citizens. The post office might save money by closing, but collectively we citizens will probably lose more money than the Post Office.

Some of the concerns were about delivery services in a rural area where many homes are in very isolated places and controlling theft from mail boxes had happened enough for people to not want to trust medicine, money order and stamp purchases to be left in a mail box without someone at home to immediately pick the mail up. Without someone at home, how could packages and money be left safely in the mail box for the deliverer to pick up. Recent years have proven that police protection is not sufficient to take care of this growing threat to the community.

Of course we could drive to the Clairfield Post Office. But what if we don't have a car or what if we can't afford the gas. Gas in this area sells about 50 cents higher per gallon than in town. From Primroy to the Clairfield PO is about 8 miles one way. Figure it out. From Roses Creek to the dumpster is 9 miles one way. Between emptying household garbage and going to the post office we could wear out our tires just keeping house and home together. We don't need to even talk about the condition of our roads. They are with us wherever we have to go.

As for people living on Y Hollow, what happens when high waters cover that sorry excuse for a bridge. How will the postal deliverer get to them? Residents might brave it over the railroad trusses if absolutely necessary, but days could pass before mail is delivered.

Drivers licenses, Social Security, Food Stamp, Credit card, Insurance, deeds and other papers will require a new address. Wow, who will be ready to help us with that?

Has anyone ever given thought to the nightmare this must have been for people living through the Katrina disaster?

And yes, people did think about the Post Office workers. People wondered if they could really make the rounds every day. How would the wear and tear on their vehicle/tires add up? What about snow days? What about the flooding of the Eagan bridge? Maybe the head people running the Post Offices need to advocate with us for some better state and county infrastructures and upkeep of public roads. As for the postmaster, will he or she have the time to read mail for people who can't read because of eye or other reading problems? Maybe the Post Office folks can advocate with us for better education and eye care.

The dismantling of P.O. is financial. Solutions, like the problems rest on internet communication. Yet mountain areas get little to no access. So, once again, are mountains the problem or can they be a solution to many issues that no flatlanders want to address?

What seemed most complicated for local people is the way major service sectors are so single minded. Any functional community that is unincorporated just can't handle the mega institutional systems one by one. We build community on trust. Corporations don't seem to have the time or capacity to know how to make decisions that help hold communities together. In fact the reverse seems to be the norm.

What can a community do?

We can write to our government representatives individually or collectively. Doing it collectively will take some organizing. If we fail in this effort who can pick up the pieces and transform the ruins into new life?

Maybe someone can make up a song from this Bible quote: "Where two and three are gathered in my name, there I am."

Subscribe!

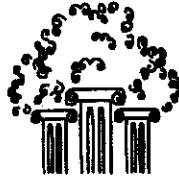
\$15 will pay for a year's subscription

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail To: Clearfork Community Institute
P O Box 81 Eagan TN. 37730

Appleseed



The Honorable Patrick Donahoe
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

October 14, 2011

Dear General Donahoe,

Appleseed recommends that the United States Postal Service (USPS) re-implement the Postal Savings System (System) to offer simple savings accounts. Congress originally established the System to provide federally insured deposits in the wake of banking uncertainty, and the program operated from 1911 to 1966 when it ended partly in response to the creation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), an independent agency authorized by Congress to insure bank deposits. There are, however, compelling reasons to resurrect the System.

Postal savings accounts would provide unbanked immigrants, rural residents and low- to mid-level wage earners with an alternative to less prudent - and frequently predatory - financial services available at check cashing outlets, pay-day lenders and pawn shops. Barriers to traditional savings accounts exist to this day. Many banks require minimum deposits to open accounts, with complicated terms, conditions and fees. Financial services are not available in many locations served by post offices. By providing a straightforward, low-dollar savings account at familiar and accessible locations, the Postal Savings System could reach a segment of the population currently underserved by financial institutions.

Many of the original purposes of the System are relevant today. The Postal Service website cites these as reasons for the originating legislation: getting money out of hiding, attracting the savings of immigrants accustomed to saving at post offices in their native countries, providing safe depositories and furnishing convenient services. Through Appleseed's Financial Access and Asset Building program, Appleseed has worked to achieve these ends through our support of the matricula consular identification program for immigrants, our research into financial services available to immigrants and new Americans and seeking access, security and safety in remittances and other financial products. We further recognize that providing small dollar savings accounts may, in the aggregate, provide some additional revenue to bridge the Postal Service budget gap.

For the above reasons, Appleseed urges you to consider reviving these accounts to promote low-cost savings for all Americans

Sincerely,


Betsy Cavendish
Executive Director, Appleseed,
bcavendish@appleseednetwork.org



Annette LoVoi,
Director, Financial Access and Asset Building
alovoi@appleseednetwork.org