

# Appalachian Alternatives

Appalachia - Science in the Public Interest

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## Attention:

Following are ASPI's new permanent email addresses:

**General E-mail** [aspi@a-spi.org](mailto:aspi@a-spi.org)

**Nature Center** [nature@a-spi.org](mailto:nature@a-spi.org)

**ASPI GIS program** [gis@a-spi.org](mailto:gis@a-spi.org)

**Jack Kieffer** [jackkieffer@a-spi.org](mailto:jackkieffer@a-spi.org)

**Executive Director** [benperry@a-spi.org](mailto:benperry@a-spi.org)

**Ky Solar Partnership** [solar@a-spi.org](mailto:solar@a-spi.org)

**ASPI web master** [webmaster@a-spi.org](mailto:webmaster@a-spi.org)

★ Our web address is still [www.a-spi.org](http://www.a-spi.org)

★ You can visit Al Fritsch's new *Daily Reflections* website at [www.earthhealing.info/daily.htm](http://www.earthhealing.info/daily.htm)

## ASPI's Joshua Bills Takes Solar Mission to Niger

A couple of years have passed since associates of the ASPI community have done service work overseas, the last time being Jennifer and Mark Schimmoeller's solar cooking outreach work in Malawi in 2000. In October of 2002, Joshua Bills, Kentucky Solar Partnership Coordinator, was commissioned by the Peace Corps to install a solar electric system at the Peace Corp volunteer training center in Niger, Africa. There is little argument that Niger, a landlocked country located in Western Africa, is in need of service outreach work. Life expectancy there is about 42 years, and the gross domestic product (GDP) is about \$191 per person per year, making it by some statistics the third poorest country in the world.

Although the primary focus of ASPI is to help those in Appalachia, ASPI also embraces a philosophy of reciprocity. We feel that our sharing of appropriate technologies outside of our region is not only good ambassadorship, but exposes us to new technologies and ideas that we can bring back and implement in our Appalachian work. Josh returned with new insights and solutions to share locally.

Joshua's friend, Courtney Stonestreet, a Peace Corps volunteer in Niger, mentioned his solar energy work, here at ASPI, to the Nigerien Peace Corps administration. The



Joshua Bills & Courtney Stonestreet in Niger, Africa

Peace Corps then notified Joshua that they were interested in having a solar electric system installed to power a classroom at the training facility which houses and prepares Peace Corp volunteers for the first 3 months of their service experience. One thing led to another, and Josh found himself on a plane (only one flight per week) heading to Niger via Paris and New York.

The work took about a week to complete and the installation was enthusiastically received. The majority of equipment was acquired in Africa, but a few of the items had to be purchased and brought in from the US. The barber, tailor, and all-around handy-person, Mickey, took notes and helped where he could. It is important in solar installations that someone on-site become familiar with the system, so they can perform the minimal maintenance necessary to keep the system running smoothly. All of the appliances at the facility ran on European voltage, so quite a bit of time was involved incorporating the solar electric system into the existing classroom wiring. According to Josh, however, the hardest part was working on the roof under the mid-day Nigerian sun, with buckets of sweat running off his brow.

Previously, all electricity was supplied by large, inefficient diesel generators. Each morning, power from these generators is used to pump water into a water tower, and most of the buildings are also wired to the generators, which provide electricity for a couple of hours each day. This arrangement was awkward for the classroom, however, since it meant firing up the noisy, expensive generators anytime electricity was required for a projector, lights, fans, or other basic needs. The classroom also serves other local humanitarian organizations, which would have to pay for generator fuel in order to have electricity. The classroom now has free electricity whenever it is needed, provided by energy from the sun.

After the installation, Joshua spent a week in the village where his friend Courtney is stationed. This village is located about 60-miles from the nearest streetlight, and according to Josh, "the night sky view was simply incredible, I didn't know there were so many stars out there." In the village, Josh learned a lot about different foods and how they are prepared. Much of the diet is made up of millet, peanuts, and sauces made from tree leaves. Most of his time was spent with village children in simple playfulness.

## **2002 National Tour of Solar Buildings a Success**

In 2002, the National Tour of Solar Homes, organized nationally by the American Solar Energy Society (ASES), changed their format in a couple of ways. First, they moved the date from the third to the first Saturday in October. More importantly, however, they changed the format to include buildings other than homes. This allowed ASPI to show off both the solar-assisted office in Mt. Vernon, and our passive solar home in Livingston, on a beautiful October 5<sup>th</sup> autumn day.

Door prizes were given for the first time this year, thanks to a mini-grant from ASES. A solar powered radio was given to a Cincinnati resident for traveling the furthest distance for the tour, and a solar-powered flashlight was given to a professor from Berea College for having the most passengers (five) ride-sharing with him. Finally, a solar powered security light was given to a Laurel County resident for showing up in the most fuel-efficient vehicle (a Honda Civic).

At the Mt. Vernon office, tour attendees were shown our net-metered solar electric system, which feeds excess solar electricity back into the grid through the electric meter. Many got to take rides in ASPI's electric car, "The Gray Ghost", named for its color and silent way of moving. Everyone got a chance to sample solar baked chocolate chip cookies (see photo right). More students, mostly from Berea College, attended this tour than ever before. At the ASPI Livingston solar house, visitors toured a passive solar-heated home with a thermal mass floor of locally gathered stone.



***Andri Kukas retrieves solar oven-baked cookies at the Mt. Vernon office solar tour***

2002 also marked the first year that the home of Timi Reedy and Tammy Clemons was included in the tour. Their geodesic dome home was particularly instructive as it was "very much under construction" according to Tammy, allowing visitors to see how the indoor wiring connected to the solar electric system. Tammy said "we were honored to be included in the Solar Tour this year and are already brainstorming activities for participating again next year". She added, "We hope that those who visited our unfinished solar dome will return next year to see it in its complete livability and sustainability".

Mark your calendars now for next year's October 4, 2003 tour. If you've purchased an ASPI 2003 calendar, the date is already marked for you. Next year promises to be even more exciting with a number of newly-solarized homes open for touring.

## **2002 Garden Notes**

The final tally for the 2002 ASPI raised-bed garden, shows that we harvested 811½ pounds of produce in 2002. This compares with the 992 pounds harvested in 2001. We feel that a couple of factors were primarily responsible for the decrease. First, it is part of an overall trend since the early days of the garden, which points to overall soil depletion despite our dedicated composting efforts. Second, for the first time since the garden was put in, there was no one living on-site to give the garden daily attention and keep up with the harvest.

We are looking at the possibility of a different crop rotation starting this spring and will be calling on the services of new board member and permaculturist Susana Lein for ideas in building up fertility in the soil. We are also hoping to find someone to live on site and give the garden the attention it needs.

On the positive side, it was still a beautiful and productive garden in 2002. It continues to produce mustard, collard, and turnip greens and still has probably 40 to 50 pounds of carrots and turnips in the ground. These have been the ingredients for a number of good soups and stews recently. One of the big surprises in 2002 was the bumper crop of fall zucchini. We planted in early August, in order to circumvent the life-cycle of the squash bugs, and harvested beautiful zucchini from mid-September until mid-October.

## Simple Living on the Rockcastle River

ASPI's long-time associate Jack Kieffer, who lives in our cordwood-wrapped mobile home on the Rockcastle River, is now into his winter routine. Since the leaves have fallen, he has cleaned out his gutters to increase rain-water flow into his cistern. He is periodically splitting wood for his woodstove, which not only keeps him warm but maintains his muscle tone over the winter. Much of the wood he uses is scraps, which keeps his heating costs at a minimum. He regularly gathers dandelion greens, winter cress, and chickweed for fresh, organic salad greens through the winter. They contain an abundance of vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants and cost only the time it takes to gather them.



**Jack Kieffer on the Rockcastle River**

## Newsletter Changes

In our ongoing effort to practice what we preach, we are implementing some changes designed to reduce our use of paper and staff time for our newsletter. The first change is that we are now offering the *Appalachian Alternatives* Newsletter in electronic format. If you are interested in receiving the newsletter electronically, just E-mail us at [aspi@a-spi.org](mailto:aspi@a-spi.org), and specify that you would prefer to receive it via E-mail.

The second change is that we will be revising the mailing list over the coming year to make sure that the newsletter is going to good addresses, willing recipients, and recipients who are donating at a minimum annual support level of \$10. Please let us know if you are not the addressee or if you no longer care to receive the newsletter. We don't want to mistakenly cut anyone off, so we will put notices in the next three newsletters and a final appeal in the Fall 2003 Funding Drive, to allow every opportunity for those that wish to continue receiving it. We will begin paring the list down as of the Winter 2004 newsletter. As always, we will make exceptions for those under difficult circumstances.

## Help Support ASPI and Make Extra Money

This is the first announcement of a new program designed to help support the work of ASPI, while offering an opportunity for interested persons to generate a substantial supplemental income. As director of ASPI, I spent a portion of my time this fall promoting our Appalachian Simple Lifestyle Calendar to local businesses, and discovered that it was both an enjoyable and profitable (for ASPI) task. From this experience, I saw an opportunity to better realize the income-generating potential of the calendar and other ASPI products, by building a committed group of supporters to promote both our products and our mission in their communities.

Although the details have yet to be worked out, the program will work generally as follows. Our supporters will promote our products and our work to retail stores, businesses, schools, etc. No aggressive or "slick" approaches will be tolerated, but honesty,

enthusiasm and belief in our mission is strongly encouraged. Our representatives will be responsible for passing orders and payments to ASPI, and will be paid on a per-piece or percentage basis of the paid orders we receive. We will supply invoices, samples, literature, and information on promising approaches and markets. ASPI will ship all orders.

Since this program is in its infancy, our early participants can help us with the design and implementation of it. We don't promise great riches, but if you believe in our mission, we feel that it can be a rewarding way to supplement your income. If this idea sounds interesting to you, please call, write, fax, or email us so we can discuss the idea further.

In addition to the contributors listed below, we also want to thank the many kind people that supported our work by purchasing calendars, note cards, light bulbs, and publications.



9/10/2002 to 1/3/06: Carvel Kreisel, Dawn Ramsay/N.C.B.A.F., Sally Firestone, Allene Long, Catherine Reichenberg, June Tosh, Chris Klug, Maggie Brandt, Sharon McComb, Anne Martin, Francie Link, Herb Petitjean, James & Denise Bennett, Mary Montgomery, Nancy Jackson, Helen Harms, Lynn Chong, Marian K. Baker, Marilla Barghusen, Connie Schmitt, Louise Hamel, Ian Rudick, Oswald Lodil, James & Sarah Minick, Michelle Harr, Bill Nickle, Mary Grisco, Robert & Mary Beth Blinn, Hedi & Martin Kaufman, Joyce Sheehey, Kris Moore, Diane McCalley CSJ, John Cleveland & Artie Ann Bates, Charlotte Offerdahl, Joy Crosby, Doris Magan, Leah Aasen, Greg Van Wormer, Brenda Evans, Guy Maluda, Steven Harmeyer, Stanley Auerbach, Jim Storm, Jim & Jerryanna Bier, Ben Atkins, Sarah Lois Heilemann, Katherine Christensen, Meg Bowerman, David & Karen Hinchey, Joan Kay Yeager, Anton Prange, Leah Bookman, Ralph Kincaid, Martin Albert, Patrice Emmerson, Patty Kipps, Joseph T. Netherland, Liz Kauffman, Jane Rector Donaldson, Paul Buterbaugh, Sara Peterson, Margaret Kiekhaefer, Steele Hinton, Cecile Parker, Kathleen Rehwald/America the Beautiful, Beth Gundahl, Julie Rodolph, Susan Eick, John Rausch/Home Missioners of America, Phillip & Linda Pfeiffer, Norma Allen, Carolyn Lambert, Isaac Ruchman, Ralph Dowdy, Jancie DiMario, Andy Ries & Deb Baird, Russ Tucker, Barbara Holt, James & Hildegard Wachob, Sue Shugars, Michael Fogler, Wayne & Shirley Davis, Martin Ogle, Nick & Julie Schnitzer, Chris & Della Oberst, Don & Rosemary Thielke, Arthur Redmond, William Andrews, James Sullivan, David & Ethyl Merrick, Patricia Pace, Eric Matchette, Leanne Herda, Chris Schimmoeller, Donna & Clay Goebeler, Katherine Christensen, Carol Ann Morrow, John & Dorothy Tohill, Carpenter Warren Insurance Agency, Mary Wiss, Robert Rouse, Ben Perry, Delbert & Ruth Shirley, Gilbert & Margaret Switala, Carl Moore, Jim Wayne, James Zeller, Lilian Lawrence, Colin Raitiere, Kathleen & Greg Harmeyer, Clare McBrien, William Hughes, Jerry Hardt, Joan Davison, Kris Peterson, Dana Corman, Donna Hanley, Ted & Betty Linden, Gayle Brabec, Dr. & Mrs W.R. Kingsolver, Robbie Pentecost, Edward Lammert & Maynard Tetreault, Carl Callenbach, Mariana D'Amico, Walt Bado, Ken Herren, Jane Aldele Spear, William Shallenberger, Anna Kunzler, James Lichtenberg, Bruce Griffith, Dan & Lauren Chapman, Judith Petersen, Lee Amundsen, Don Mullineaux, Stuart Butler, Joan Grey, Linda & Tom Green, Phyllis Machta, Andy & Janet Ingraham Dwyer, David Schmenk, Andrew & Kathleen Weigert, Lordel McClain, Terry Jones, Richard Middendorf, Joe Cramer, Jenny Holmes, Thomas Campbell, Bob & Eddie Fields, Ann Stuart, Kathi & Ken Berrbohn, Richard & Jane Frank, Alex Lee, John Rogers, Linda Truty, Ruben Angel, Dominique Brown, Jim Gormley, Liz Swinfen, Theresa Cross, Mary Sweda, Ed & Christina Fritsch, Daniel Knight, Carrie Carter, Dana Wildsmith, Dolores & David Siegenthaler, Joyce Eisold, David & Becky Grandgeorge, Dorothy Shields, Frank Schwartz, Laurie Webb, Ted Vansant, Mary Pat Hill, Patricia Pace, Virginia Polanski, Casey Sterr, Bev Kent, Kate Campbell, Anna Auteri, Lisa French, Robert & Diane Mushaben, Sherri Amos, Lyle Starr, Chris Tabeling, Rick Axtell, Genevieve Kruger, Lynne Moody, Carole Russell, Clara Fister, Maura Ubinger, Lucy Mahaffey, Mike & Judy Shremshock, Anna Belle Day, Pauline Reeser, Robin Cockran, Rosemary Leahy, Ronald & Elizabeth Legum, Bob D'Errico, Nancy Stein, James & Catherine Brausch, Beth Gunn, Richard Murphy, Gregory Reineke, Susan Verbalis, Keneth & Virginia Smith, Don Pratt, Maureen Darcey, Leonard & Dona Marie Wrona, Carl & Amy Gardner, Ed Stodola, Paul & Patti Smithson, John & Shelley Koeijmans, Jonathan Kern, Michael Mattox, Steve & Ann Rhodes, Kate

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## Publications

Technical Paper 70 – *Straw Bale Housing: Appropriate for Eastern North America, or Long-Term Potential Health Concern?*, by Paul Gallimore, 10 pp. A controversial, in-depth look at ecological home building principles as they relate to the straw bale house - a subject worthy of investigation.

# The ASPI Flea Market

**Notecards** – We still have many ASPI *Appalachian Wildflower & Appalachian Winter* notecards left. There are still 6 different varieties of the wildflower cards, but the winter cards are down to 5, so you will get 2 of the same scene in your set of 6 winter cards. The Wildflower notecards are all full-color pictures of daisies, roses, dogwood blossoms, rhododendron, phlox, and black-eyed susans growing near rustic structures such as split-rail fences and log cabins or in other Appalachian settings. For those of you that have not seen any of Warren Brunner’s color photography, you are in for a treat. The Appalachian Winter notecards are all black-and-white snow scenes of Appalachian mountains, forests, fencerows, barns and outbuildings, and are equally stunning. (See pricing below)

**Light Bulbs** – Our compact fluorescent bulbs (CFs) have been such big hit that we had to bring in more to fill our orders. We now have 23 watt CFs (90 watt equivalent) and 15 watt mini-CFs (60 watt equivalent) designed to fit anywhere a standard light bulb fits. Unlike older and cheaper CFs, these give off a warm soft light with an instant-on feature and no perceptible flicker. We like them so much that we have replaced all of our tube fluorescents with them here at the office. Operating six hours a day, the 23 watt CFs will last five years, **saving about 640 lbs of coal from being burned at power plants, and saving \$40 on electricity** compared with standard 90 watt bulbs. (Based on current Kentucky electric rates)

**Calendars** – As of February 1, our 2003 Simple Lifestyle Calendars are marked down to \$3 each.



## ASPI Flea Market Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail To**  
 ASPI  
 50 Lair Street  
 Mt Vernon, KY 40456

**Notecards**

\$4.00 per set for 1 to 4 sets = \_\_\_ sets x \$4.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 or \$3.00 per set for 5 or more sets = \_\_\_ sets x \$3.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Light Bulbs**

\$9.50 each      \_\_\_ 23 watt + \_\_\_ 15 watt bulbs x \$9.50 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Calendars**

\$3.00 each      = \_\_\_ calendars x \$3.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Subtotal = \_\_\_\_\_

KY residents add 6% sales tax = \_\_\_\_\_

**Shipping**

Notecards - Shipping is \$3.50 for 1 to 9 sets and Free for 10 or more sets      Shipping = \_\_\_\_\_

Light Bulbs - Shipping is \$5 for 1 to 4 bulbs orders of 5 or more are shipped free      Shipping = \_\_\_\_\_

Calendars - Shipping is \$5.00 for 1 to 9 calendars and Free for 10 or more      Shipping = \_\_\_\_\_

My tax-deductible donation to help support ASPI education, research, & advocacy programs = \_\_\_\_\_

Grand Total = \_\_\_\_\_

## *Wish List*

Videotape Copier, Laser pointer for slides or PowerPoint, Firebox or Fireproof Safe, Sign-making system, Multi-line phone system, Office Chair(s) with good lumbar support, library materials (books, reports, periodicals, reference materials).

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