

Common Ground Board

Scott Eustis
Andrew Hunt
Ray MacNair
Beth! Orcutt
Monica Palta

Affiliates

Aceh Adopt A School Program
Athens Alternative Fuel Coalition
Athens Food Not Bombs
Athens Recess Center
Athens Living Wage Coalition
ACLU at UGA
Athena's Shield
Athens Clarke County Greens
Athens Grow Green Coalition
Athens Global Justice Collective
Athens Religion Society of Friends
Bike Athens
Citizens Not Suspects
Doubts About War
Ecolibrium
Georgians for Alternatives to The Death Penalty
Project Full Table
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Of Athens
Women in Black

Front Porch Editor and Designer

Kelli Hutchinson

Front Porch Contributors

Kelli Hutchinson, Ryan King
Beth! Orcutt, Scott Van Dusen

Submissions?

Updates about your progressive organizations, unique insights, fun photos, news about your favorite activist groups worldwide—if you have it, we want it! Send all submissions to: commongroundnewsletter@gmail.com (Note: Submissions will be edited for style & length.)

Colophon

Front Porch is the quarterly newsletter of Common Ground Athens. The newsletter is created using Microsoft Publisher 2003 and is printed by Bel-Jean in Athens, Ga. Common Ground Athens is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

COMMON STATS

In addition to hosting Interdependence Day and a series of monthly member socials, CG has been racking up achievements this summer. Here is a brief look at CG's accomplishments.

Friends of EarthFare

Throughout June every time an EarthFare shopper brought his/her own bag to the check-out line, EarthFare donated 10 cents to CG. CG made \$541 total! To participate in the program, registered non-profits should visit



Some members of the garden crew pose outside CG

Photo courtesy of Beth! Orcutt

their local EarthFare and speak with the community coordinator.

Garden Crew

Ten awesome volunteers have gathered at CG to build raised beds and plant

peas, tomatoes, beans and squash. To sign up for the gardening listserv, e-mail

CG-crew-subscribe@yahoo.com
by Kelli Hutchinson

YOUR SPACE:

BIG THANKS TO COMMON GROUND

Big thanks are in order for CG and the activists groups of Athens. When my wife, Anne, and I moved to Athens from Northern California this February, we weren't quite sure what to expect. We had heard Athens was a great place for the promotion of progressive thinking and activism. That rumor has turned out to be quite an understatement. Within weeks of moving here we were welcomed with open arms by Speak Out for Species (SOS), an animal rights group dedicated to educating the public on the horrors of factory farming. This organization is making great strides in informing people about the needless misery that farm

and lab animals must endure every day.

Recently a friend from SOS introduced us to CG, and what a treat this has been. From vegan potlucks to lively discussions about a variety of social, political and economic issues, CG provides a venue for nearly every facet of activism. In fact, the staff and members of CG have been so inspirational, they have encouraged me to start the Athens Alternative Fuel Coalition. Once again, many thanks to CG. We look forward to joining your quest to better the world in which we live.

by Scott Van Dusen

Common Ground is Open!

Please stop by and visit us.

157 N. Newton Street
Tues. & Wed. 12pm-9pm
Sat. & Sun. 10 am-6pm

Are you interested in volunteering with Common Ground?

Current needs include communications, tech support, gardening, grant writing and volunteers to man open hours.

However you can help, we need you!

For more information:
commongroundathens.org



The Front Porch

CG SUMMER GATHERINGS A SUCCESS

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- Meet Outstanding Member Monica Palta
- Support a Living Wage and Alternative Fuel
- Meet the Nominees for CG's New Board and Learn How to Cast Your Vote on Our Special Election Insert!

Common Ground Athens is a nexus for resource sharing to enhance the effectiveness of Athens-area groups and individuals working for progressive social change

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On a hot July 4th, music, laughter and conversation flooded the space outside CG's Newton Street headquarters. The day started slowly with me welcoming two young boys as they hesitantly picked up some chalk and began decorating the street. Later, the duo joined a young woman who read about CG in Athens magazine *Flagpole*, a vibrant elderly man and CG board member Beth! Orcutt in an exuberant game of four square. The celebration, dubbed Interdependence Day, drew approximately 100 people and received brief but positive recognition in the *Athens Banner Herald*.

While Interdependence Day attracted people from all walks of life, this summer also saw the introduction of First Monday, a smaller gathering for CG members. At the monthly gathering members enjoy a delicious meal prepared by



Fun and games at CG's 1st annual Interdependence Day
by Ryan King

affiliate organization Food Not Bombs and connect with each other in a relaxed setting. Coordinator Beth! Orcutt estimates approximately 30 people attended the first socials. Beginning in August the socials may attract even more members. The event will move from the first

Monday of each month to the first Wednesday due to a scheduling conflict with another organization. To participate in CG gatherings, e-mail: commongroundathens@yahoo.com.
by Kelli Hutchinson

ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST

In a college town, fall often marks a new beginning. With board elections scheduled for late August, CG is following suit.

Elections will be for eight board members who will join current members Andrew Hunt, Scott Eustis,

Ray MacNair and Beth! Orcutt to create a 12 person board. Monica Palta, currently a board member, will be leaving Athens to pursue her Phd. In future elections, six seats will be up for election annually.

As defined in CG's by-

laws, the board has the general power to control and manage the affairs and property of CG. For more information about the nominees and the election process, please see the special election insert.

by Kelli Hutchinson

Affiliate Updates

Athens Recess Center

After three months without a home, the ARC recently found a **new space at the Tracey St. Warehouses. Move in date is Aug. 1.** Opening day is as soon as they can get everything together. ARC needs automobiles and strong arms and legs to help with the move. To volunteer, e-mail info@recesscenter.org.

Economic Justice Coalition

Help UGA employees get the respect they deserve and raise a family on the wage they earn by buying a ticket for the **Barbeque on August 6, at Bishop Park from 11am-2pm.** You can pick up a ticket by calling 549-1142. Six bucks will get you chicken and/or vegetarian options (i.e. side dishes). You may have heard of Weaver D's fine foods on East Broad St.? His dad will be behind the grill. Automatic for the people!

UGA Living Wage Network

The Next UGA Living Wage Network **meeting will be Thursday, August 4 at 7:00 P.M.** at CG. UGA Living Wage Network asks that **10 UGA students** attend.

Women in Black

Women in Black holds a silent vigil for peace at the UGA arch **Tuesdays from 5-6 PM.** All are welcome to participate. Please call Nancy McNair at 546-5237 for more information.

PROFILE: MEET MONICA PALTA

Board member and treasurer, Monica Palta helped select CG's name, find the space and write the by-laws. A UGA graduate student poised to receive her masters in ecology, she'll soon be on her way to Rutgers to pursue a Phd. Monica took a break from packing and stopped by Newton Street to fill me in on her history with CG and Athens activism.

Monica moved to Athens in February 2001 to continue work in ecology. Originally from Wisconsin, Monica says, "I honestly didn't know anything about Athens. I didn't know REM was from here. I hadn't even set foot in Georgia." Monica now reports that her time here has been a greatly transforming and inspiring experience. Chiefly, living in Athens helped her become more receptive to collaborating with others and opened her eyes to activism. "I was very cynical about the efficacy of activism and whether you could really create change," Monica says. Her perspective shifted when friend Jessica introduced her to Garden

Springs Mobile Home Park, from which nearly 100 families were being displaced to accommodate a luxury student apartment complex. Seeing so many people come together to help the families touched Monica deeply. While developers did eventually overtake the property, affordable housing became a front-running issue in the local elections, resulting in the mayor and commission being voted out of office. Additionally, the former residents of Garden Springs received enough community support to incorporate as People of Hope Cooperative, Inc., a group dedicated to buying and developing land for a new park. If she could give two pieces of advice, Monica says the first would be do not give up because change happens slowly.

The second piece is, "You shouldn't be afraid to be part of a group effort, and that's what Common Ground is here for." Monica says, "I was pretty naïve when I started out [as an activist] because I assumed everyone had

similar ideas and a similar approach, but of course that's not true. One big life lesson is learning not only how to communicate with people but to address differences and proactively work through them."

Monica's involvement with CG began when the same friends who opened her eyes to Garden Springs started tossing around the idea of an activist resource center. Impressed by the changes CG's made since then, Monica acknowledges that CG members still need to work together in accordance with CG's mission to help the organization reach its full potential.

Although the same passion for ecology that led Monica to Athens is now taking her to New Jersey, CG will remain a constant in her life. Monica highly values her graduate education but says similar programs exist elsewhere. Monica says, "If there's one thing I'm really proud of having done *in Athens*, Common Ground is it."

by Kelli Hutchinson

FULL MOON'S FULL TABLE

This summer CG began helping feed low-income residents of the Nellie B. neighborhood in East Athens. CG is participating in Project Full Table, a new plan from Full Moon Cooperative, Athens' community supported farm and research center. This year Full Moon implemented Project Full Table to bring fresh, nutritious, chemical-free produce to

families in need. Project Full Table invites local businesses, organizations and individuals to purchase a full or partial "share" of Full Moon's harvest. These shares go directly to residents of Nellie B. This year, Full Moon's aim is to sponsor 10 Nellie B families. In November 2005, Full Moon will evaluate the new project's success. In

addition to supporting a Nellie B family, locals can enjoy Full Moon's produce at the hot new Washington Street restaurant Farm 255 and may also purchase personal shares of Full Moon's harvest. For more information call 706-369-8217 or visit fullmooncoop.org.

by Kelli Hutchinson

WORK FOR A LIVING WAGE

UGA Living Wage Network is rolling out a campaign to support a Living Wage for all UGA employees. Living Wages mean stronger families and a stronger Athens community. Government subsidies, such as welfare benefits, Medicaid, PeachCare, food stamps, and housing allowances, are less necessary when families make a living wage. Family abandonment and crime can potentially be reduced. Higher incomes mean greater tax revenue and healthier schools. Studies show local economies are strengthened by living wages because workers spend much of the additional money locally. If UGA wages increase, one can predict with reasonable sureness that other local employers will raise their wages slightly to com-

pete with the higher UGA wage floor. A living wage is clearly an economically healthy move to make.

UGA Living Wage Network supports a living wage of \$10.50 per hour, or \$11.50 without benefits, for all UGA employees. More than 2,600 UGA employees currently make less than a living wage. The wage floor at UGA, for permanent employees, is \$8.14 per hour. UGA proudly raises the wage of permanent employees about 3% yearly, but this raise barely keeps up with the increases in the cost of living. Also, UGA currently has the right to classify some positions as "temporary." Employees in temporary positions are not offered health benefits and make less than the \$8.14 wage floor. Is this-

the way we want our tax dollars being spent, to subsidize poverty? It has been estimated that paying a Living Wage to all UGA employees would cost the university \$7 million. This seems like a lot, until you consider that UGA's annual operating budget is \$1.2 billion. Suddenly that \$7 million becomes only 0.6% of the University of Georgia's annual operating budget!

UGA Living Wage network is affiliated with the Economic Justice Coalition of Athens. We are looking for more student members in order to achieve full status as a student organization, which will allow us to campaign on campus. To sign up, please visit www.econjustice.org or call 549-1142.

by Ryan King

ATHENS ALTERNATIVE FUEL COALITION

For far too long our government has squandered our country's resources on the importation of foreign oil and has ignored the many opportunities available right now to produce our own fuel. Many thousands have died, and our great country has been saddled with an enormous debt to pay for this oil war. If you are interested in freeing yourself from the dependence on fossil fuels, now is the time to join together and make a difference.

Alcohol fuel and biodiesel are two very achievable alternatives. Many newer

gas engine vehicles can run on ethanol (an alcohol fuel) with no modifications. Similarly, diesel vehicles can run on biodiesel with a few modifications. These two fuels have been around since the invention of the internal combustion engine. Ethanol can be made from a variety of biomass materials: potatoes, corn, sugar, rotting vegetables, etc. Biodiesel can be made from new or used vegetable oil. These fuels are a completely renewable source of energy and provide a great opportunity to reduce the effects automobiles have on the

environment. Some states are beginning to offer these fuels at the commercial level, but at this time Athens doesn't have a facility.

Athens Alternative Fuel Coalition (AAFC) is a group dedicated to the small scale production of alcohol fuel and biodiesel. We also want to spread the word about the benefits of these fuels. Volunteers are needed to help out in all areas. Please call Scott Van Dusen at 706-354-6620 or e-mail campusproperties2@msn.com for more information.

by Scott Van Dusen

Gallery



Food Not Bombs Cooks at UG by Beth! Orcutt



Scott Bobs for Apples by Ryan King



Kelli & Denver Prepare for Interdependence Day by B! Orcutt



Liberty Bakes Vegan Pies by Beth! Orcutt