

GREEN BROAD RIPPLE

articles from
The Broad Ripple Gazette



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Why Green

In 1952 my family immigrated to Indianapolis from Italy. We settled in a small house on Indianola Street south of 52nd Street. For the better part of the intervening half century, I have lived and worked in and around Broad Ripple harboring a growing affection for this place for various vague and unspoken reasons. Yet it has only been in the last decade or so, in the seasoned phase of my life, that I have truly begun to appreciate Broad Ripple for the marvel that it is.

Broad Ripple is a rich and complex community largely because, through the years, it has attracted and accommodated the unusual, the offbeat, and the independent along with the traditionalist, the established and the pragmatic. This mix lends an air of sophistication to its character - an honest worldliness largely devoid of affectation. Hip and with it, there is always a myriad of activity in Broad Ripple. Art, poetry, live music, fine dining, quick food, spas and salons, unique mom and pop shops, grocery stores ... all comprise the elements that make urban life desirable.

The other face of Broad Ripple is the one most appreciated by its residence - the village ambience. Quaint cottages and bungalows arranged along quiet streets shaded by mature trees which harkens back to a slower more natural way of life for which many of us in our hurried culture hold a deep longing. This, in conjunction with the river, the canal, the trail and numerous parks points to the strong connection Broad Ripple has to Mother Nature. Broad Ripple has a Green soul. As such, I believe that it is timely, appropriate, and visionary for Broad Ripple, now, to declare itself the first Green Community in Indianapolis.

What would a Green Broad Ripple look like? How would things change? What are the steps to get from where we are to where we want to be? There are no ready made answers to these questions yet it will be through the addressing of these questions that our community will gain an informed understanding of what it means to be Green.

This column, in the upcoming articles, would like to open the discussion of Green as it pertains to Broad Ripple. It will attempt to illuminate the various issues on going Green: what it means to be Green, what has been proposed by other communities, the practical consequences, the means of implementation, the difficulties and the benefits. It will work to present information in a factual and unbiased manner. Yet the author, here, openly admits that he is a proponent of Green and because he believes that in a certain sense Broad Ripple has been Green many decades prior to the concept becoming popular, if this column is only half way successful in telling the Green story, many of you will come to realize, as he has, that Green Broad Ripple is a phrase whose ring is just so undeniably right.

What is Green - An Overview

Thinking Green compels us, here at the dawn of this new millennium, to assess our relationship, as human beings, to Technology - a term used here to include Industry. The Industrial Revolution, which began at the dawn of the 19th century with Thomas Newcomen's invention of the steam driven pump, completely altered societies throughout the world. The enormous impact of the changes brought to us by this dynamic has affected all aspects of our lives, our psyche, our self perceptions, our relationship to nature, and our expectations for the future. Technology has, not only brought many marvelous benefits to our everyday lives, but also, to some minds, elevated our species to a higher level of evolution. Technological Man is higher on the evolutionary scale than Agrarian Man.

Yet the ills of a technological society became apparent almost as soon as the first steam engine, fired by coal, began to severely pollute the atmosphere. It is an understatement to say that the rapid switching from agrarian rural life to urban slum life, with factory grime choked air and open sewers festering with disease; did not make for a happy circumstance for the average peasant. These conditions, in fact, gave birth to the Arts and Crafts Movement and a style of design and architecture which Broad Ripple, today, can rightly lay a modest claim.

The Arts and Crafts Movement, as the Industrial Revolution, was born in England and migrated to America where it flourished from roughly 1880 to 1920. The movement was a revolt against the industrialization of life. The founders and proponents of the movement saw factory work as dehumanizing and unfulfilling and the manufactured object lacking in the beauty and intrinsic value of the unique hand made object. They asked "...what would become of a people so caught up in the quick production and consumption of mere things?" They brought into question whether progress was worth the price. They made a call "...to integrate labor and art, lend beauty to everyday acts and objects, and seek coherence, unity, and simplicity in all aspects of life, for all people."

These are wonderfully Green concepts from a century ago. Most are still poetically relevant today. Yet today, it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine a way that we can return to an agrarian way of life devoid of technology even as we come face to face with the realization that our technological impact is degrading the biosphere at such an alarming rate that instead of elevating us to the next level of evolution, Technology may well be leading us to our extinction in the not too distant future.

A New Day is Dawning! This was declared by Ray Anderson in his keynote speech at Greenbuild 2005 and supported by a growing international momentum toward Green. Green today is the embrace of this New Day Dawning. In a New Day Dawning, Industry will not disappear but rather begin to apply its genius to repairing the environmental damage of the past and invent new technologies to assist us in lightening the heavy footprint we currently leave on the Earth - "the rarest and most precious of objects in the known universe." In a New Day Dawning our human hearts will reawaken to the twin virtues of compassion and respect and apply them to each other and the other thirty million or so species that make up the web of life - a web of which we are a part and on which we absolutely and utterly depend. I believe that this not only will happen but has already begun to happen. It is casually called Green.

A New Day IS Dawning!

What is Green - The Practical

I love the theoretical. I am just bent that way. The purity and elegance in theoretical and ideological thought call to me like sirens compelling me to keep thirty years of Scientific American neatly catalogued in my basement. String Theory, Black Holes, Holography, Fractal Geometry... fill my field of interest which appears to many as a disregard for the common and the practical. I am a dreamer. I admit it - a shoot the moon sort of character, according to my wife.

Thus, it has been my good fortune to have married my complement - Practical Patty. Patty is everything that I am not. She is down to earth. She is frugal, compassionate, reverent, sincere, earnest and humble. She is an animal lover, a planner and a saver of money. Patty and I share our lives in a small one story "Western Bungalow" on a mostly quiet street in Broad Ripple. Even though we may be different in many ways, we share more than a small number of convictions about living well and responsibly.

A shared discomfort with waste has modified our household routine to include composting and recycling, two activities which have cut our landfill contribution by half. I am constantly reminded to turn off lights because "we do not own the Power and Light Company." The windows of our home are open as many days and nights as possible; reliance on conditioned air is held to a minimum. We have invested in a Sears chipper which allows us to recycle leaves and lawn debris into mulch. We appreciate the diversity of plant life in our small natural lawn that never sees chemical fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides and which I cut with a push reel mower. We enjoy preparing meals ourselves from naturally grown, locally produced products. We garden, preserve and can the old fashioned way. We ride bicycles rather than drive whenever possible. We elect to hang our clothes to dry in the sun rather than to use the automatic dryer. Patty takes joy in feeding the birds, "God's creatures" she calls them, as we look for opportunities to connect with nature that exists even in our urban environment.

In looking to the future, Patty and I are formulating plans to make our bungalow much more energy efficient for we realize that the age of cheap energy in America (and the world) is over. We are researching environmentally friendly ways to improve the effectiveness of the wall insulation. We will invest in refurbishing the windows. An improved exterior wall system will make it feasible to replace our gas fired furnace with a water furnace, a geo exchange system that uses no fossil fuels and can potentially reduce the heating costs by 40%. We are investigating fitting rain barrels to our gutter system to harvest rainwater for use in lawn irrigation and toilet waste flushing in order to reduce our water use because we know that water also will inevitably become more precious.

This life mode did not arise from a plan executed all at once. Rather, it came to be through making one small choice at a time as the opportunity presented itself. While Green may be a big idea it is implemented through small acts. Green is not rocket science. It is imminently practical. It is a series of small acts of everyday life based on a mindset that respects that the Earth is precious and finite; that the Earth belongs to all of life - we humans and the other 30 million or so life forms that depend on it. While we may not be the sole owners of the Earth, Patty and I are sure that we humans are most definitely its stewards.

Community

My wife and I do many things (see the last article) that are Green trusting that these acts are not mere symbols of our Green conviction but are practical ways to lessen the damage being done to our environment. Even so, we realize our small Green acts pale to insignificance when compared to the juggernaut "Take Make Waste" industrial system that continues to churn profit from activities that contribute, directly or indirectly, to the degradation of the Earth's biosphere. If the majority of our neighbors followed these Green practices, however, our collective impact would begin to have serious practical consequences - the most important being capturing the attention of the Captains of Industry so they might recognize the fallacy in conducting business as usual. Yet, one knows that significant Green change, the kind of change that is needed now, can only happen when individuals, like us, come together and work through "Community."

"Community" is a fluid concept. It has many subtle meanings that are context dependent. Yet, we need to look into and try to better understand the deeper workings of "Community" because of its importance to our being able to affect meaningful change toward a positive collective future. Many of America's greatest thinkers have thought and spoken about "Community." Novelist/poet Margaret Atwood pointed to what seems to be a general consensus. In a recent interview she said; "The United States has promoted individualism so much that the responsibilities of giving to a community, and vice versa, have been trampled by rampant individualism..." Hearing this we need to ask - how can Broad Ripple, with its strong individualistic sense of itself, come together and form any kind of stable cohesive "Community?" Novelist E.L. Doctorow; "...Communities appear temporally rather than spatially. They form as circumstances demand, and when the emergency is over people go back to their semi-estranged mood..." Can we not attest to this through our own practical Broad Ripple experience?

Important too is the recognition of the fundamental distinction between "Neighborhood" and "Community". The Broad Ripple "Neighborhood" is defined geographically. It is bounded on the North by the river; South by Kessler Blvd.; West by Meridian St.; and East by Evanston Ave. In round numbers, there are about 12,000 people that reside within these boundaries. If you own property, live, or work here you are part of the "Neighborhood." You have a right to claim a measure of ownership and you acquire a certain Membership in the "Hood" so to speak. Membership in the Broad Ripple "Community", however, is not nearly so straight forward for it is conveyed not through geography but through human interconnection and only comes into being when neighbors realize their interdependence, develop the intent to give of themselves, and commit to the collective well-being of the group.

Although "Community" is not defined by geography, it does have boundaries. The boundaries are defined by who belongs and who does not. Interconnectedness establishes the boundary and defines "Membership." Who are the "Members" of the Broad Ripple Community? What percentage of the 12,000 neighbors claims "Membership?" What will induce more people, especially the young, to become "Members?"

These are questions worthy of answers more complete than will fit in the space available to this column and I am hopeful that Broad Ripple will muster the will to address them. As it does so, the words of the great Green thinker, Wendell Berry, expressed through the voice of one of his characters may serve. "...The difference ain't in who is a member and who is not, but in who knows it and who don't." We in Broad Ripple are all, in varying ways, interconnected. We are all "Members of the Community." Some of us know it. Some of us don't.

How about you - Do you know?

Community - Ethical Commerce

Food is the most intimate of all products we purchase. Indispensable to life, it can also be the source of great pleasure and enjoyment. In many families the table is still the center of family culture. We take food into our bodies and it becomes part of us - literally, we are what we eat. The importance of food to our well being is difficult to overstate and the choices we make in the selection of food have consequences that extend far beyond the palate.

Last Thursday I had a conversation with Nick Brown, Store Director of our Sunflower Market a recent newcomer to our neighborhood. I am happy to report that Nick appears quite aware of his community membership as does Sunflower Corporate. Nick related that Sunflower Markets carry mostly certified organic food and locally produced products. They do so not only to satisfy a growing demand by the customer but also out of a certain ethical sense that it is the right thing to do.

Organic farming is not new. It is a natural way developed over the 10,000 years of human agriculture before the farm industrialization of the last 75 years. Organic rejects the use of any synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. The most relevant consequences of synthetic chemical use are that; farm products retain a chemical residue that is unhealthy when ingested by people and animals; chemicals destroy the micro ecosystem of soil reducing a natural, healthy, alive, and self rejuvenating system to a dead medium that serves as a mere plant anchor; chemical run-off and aquifer penetration poisons water; synthetic chemicals consume a huge amount of energy in their manufacture contributing to global warming. Certified Organic cropland more than doubled from 1992 to 1997, and doubled again between 1997 and 2003. More and more farmers are turning Organic as a response to the growing market demand. Yet, the ones I know personally do it largely because they are convinced that it is the right thing to do.

Food produced by the conventional system travels an average of 1,300 miles from farm to plate consuming 80 cents of every food dollar on storage, handling, transportation, and retail costs. Only 20 cents finds its way back to the farmer. Because of the distance factor, produce is picked prematurely and ripened with chemicals. While this produces a product that may have eye appeal, taste and nutritional value are diminished during the long shipping and storage process. Emphasis on system efficiency has greatly reduced the diversity of crops being grown in the U.S. My wife Patty purchases local products because of their just picked freshness. She likes the idea that more of her food dollar goes to the farmer hoping this may play a part in the revitalization of our rural communities. She likes knowing where her food came from, how it was grown, and who grew it. She celebrates the variety and seasonality of our food experience and yes, she knows that, in a very practical sense, it is the right thing to do.

Our Sunflower Market donated 30 tons of food to Second Helpings last year. It recycles all store refuse, including one half ton of cardboard per week. It provides bicycle racks and two recycle bins for customer use even as public recycling drop-offs are being reduced. Future plans include; an expansion of recycling facilities and bike racks; a composting program that could support community gardens; and development of improved store management techniques to affect cost savings and price reductions so that Organic may become more accessible.

It seems to me that this spirit is the essence of Ethical Commerce. Commerce is a necessary part of life in our community. We need to do business yet we can do it in an ethical way - a way that is considerate of the welfare of our neighbors, supportive of our community, and contributes to the long-term health of the Earth. Ethical Commerce is definitely doable and, in the end, is the Green thing to do.

Community - Civic Glue

Last week I had a conversation with Rich Bees over a beer at that venerable establishment, The Red Key in SoBro (South Broad Ripple). He related his ongoing concern for the litter problem in Broad Ripple. For the past ten years he and his immediate neighbors have diligently picked up trash in their surrounding area which often is considerable because their homes are located near the Broad Ripple night action. Attentive to detail, Rich has discerned some interesting characteristics of Broad Ripple trash.

It is not the residents of Broad Ripple who trash but the visitor. Trash is seasonal and event related. Summer school closing brings increased trash. A major doing at the Vogue is inevitably accompanied by a spike in the trash volume especially if there is a strong Westerly wind. Trash volume also increases after a Butler U event but its character changes. One sees a lot more Mickey's Big Mouth and Red White and Blue bottles. The highest quality trash is left by the Formula One race crowd - trendy foreign beer bottles and John Player cigarette packs.

Rich is currently a Member of the Board of the Broad Ripple Village Association (BRVA). He has proposed that the BRVA acquire a street cleaning machine because city street cleaning services are virtually non existent in Broad Ripple. He has researched and found a machine made in Scotland nicknamed the Green Machine, touted to be the world's most versatile sweeper. It is currently in use in many communities including Buckingham Palace and the Vatican and has a proven safety record. Committed to; developing cleaning routes and schedules; securing a storage facility; establishing a maintenance schedule; and training a corps of volunteers for an ongoing street cleaning effort, Rich is currently submitting grant requests to secure funding for the acquisition. It seems to me that this type of Civic Engagement by an individual is what produces that mysterious element that binds individuals to each other and to community - Civic Glue.

The beer bottle is arguably the most ubiquitous object in Broad Ripple so Rich and I began to wonder just how many beer bottles go through Broad Ripple on any given week. We made inquiries to Sam the bartender and after some consultation we were given the figure of 27 cases. Now if the sedate Red Key serves 27 cases, bars on Broad Ripple Avenue probably do many times that number - the exact figure, however, has proven surprisingly difficult to verify. So let's say, for our purpose, that the average bar in Broad Ripple serves 50 cases per week and the average restaurant 25. The Gazette lists 33 bars and 23 restaurants in the general Broad Ripple area. Using our guesstimates we conclude that on any given week 53,400 bottles pass through Broad Ripple. With some measurements I made in my kitchen sink with material from our recycle bin, I can report that this translates to 23,779.69 LBS and 10,550.21 CF. A pile of bottles the size of my house is transported to the landfill every week!

The Greening of Broad Ripple is not going to happen all at once. Rather, it will come to be one manageable project at a time. It seems to me that recycling this glass is a worthy first step. It is doable. It will not require major changes and is more a matter of logistics and collective will than insurmountable technical difficulty. I have spoken to Rob Sabatini, Average Joe's Managing Partner and Gino Pizzi, Ambrosia Owner both of whom expressed an interest in taking part in an initiative. Alan Hague, Gazette Editor, expressed a willingness to facilitate. So I raise my bottle to a toast that we in Broad Ripple make a New Year's resolution to "Recycle the Bottle" in 2007. Such a project would not only be good for the neighborhood and the Earth, it may even produce a bit more of that scarce and mysterious element - Civic Glue.

Happy New Year

Buildings

In 2005 the UN Commission on Population released a report which stated that half the world's population will live in cities in two years. That time has arrived. 2007. This year marks a threshold in human evolution. We humans are evolving into an urban species - a process that we can expect to advance even more quickly in the future. In cities, buildings go beyond their utilitarian function of protecting its occupants from the physical elements. Buildings become the environment.

Buildings provide not only physical but also psychological sanctuary. We all share a sense of *personal space*; our invisible envelope, our immediate individual physical space. When this 18 inch boundary is entered by another against our wishes, we are made uncomfortable and even feel violated depending on the severity of the intrusion. Buildings; our homes and spaces in our workplace become extensions of this *personal space* - they become our *habitat*.

Buildings speak *to* us and *about* us. We fill our *habitat* with a bewildering array of items. Some are practical some sentimental. Some are from our past and some are from our expected future. The mix is a reflection of our own complexity because, in a very real sense, our *habitat* is an extension of ourselves. When we return home from an extended absence, our space retells us the story of who we are. This story is also told to any receptive ear that may visit.

Our interaction with our buildings is bidirectional. We create them with intent yet when completed they influence us often in unexpected ways. They influence our character. Great religious buildings remind us of our humility and our morality. They influence our health. In the history of civilization, plumbing has done more for human health than medical advances. They influence our happiness. A quality building not only protects from the elements but also uses space, light, color and sometimes elements such as whimsy to uplift the spirit.

Although Broad Ripple likes to refer to itself as a village, it is very urban in nature. Containing a large residential faction it also harbors a sizable, diverse, and vibrant commercial corridor. Some buildings remain in their original state, some have been remodeled, and some are relatively new. Each has a unique story. So what kind of stories are the buildings in Broad Ripple telling these days? What are our buildings saying about the content of our character or the quality of our aspirations? Do we know? Do we care? These are questions of self-assessment - the first step toward developing any sort of vision of a desired future which Broad Ripple, to this date, has been unable to develop. Such a plan and the process for its development could produce quite a bit of that mysterious Civic Glue (see the last article) perhaps even transforming Broad Ripple into a more cohesive Community.

Buildings account for 40% of all that is extracted from the Earth. Large percentages of the world's fresh water withdrawals, of its wood harvest, and of its material and energy flow go into buildings. As the world population grows, this level of resource consumption cannot be maintained. On the practical side, building Green is an opportunity to use our resources more efficiently while creating healthier buildings that improve human health, maintain a better environment, and provide cost savings.

On the spiritual side Green is the vision for a positive future - The New Day Dawning. Now in 2007, the time has arrived. We in Broad Ripple have the opportunity to embrace this future, seize the moment, and collectively work to bring it about. Building Green is happening all over the world and it can happen here. Being Green will be good for our health, good for our self esteem, good for our sense of community, and good for tourism. Yet most satisfying is the thought that our Quality Green Buildings could, for generations to come, tell stories of our compassion for the whole of life, our respect for the Earth and of our delight in the beauty of nature.

Buildings - Quality

What transforms a structure into a building of quality? Andrea Palladio, arguably the most imitated architect in history and the author of "The Four Books of Architecture" published in 1576, wrote "For one could not describe as perfect a building which was useful, but only briefly, or one that was inconvenient for a long time, or, being both durable and useful, was not beautiful." For Palladio, a man famous for the beauty of his buildings, beauty was not something intentionally imparted rather it became manifest in buildings that were both useful and durable. Usefulness and Durability were, for him, the hallmarks of "Quality".

Usefulness is more complicated than it appears at first sight. To make a building truly useful the design must be thoroughly informed in the activities and processes that the building must accommodate. It must anticipate how internal dynamics such as growth and external dynamics such as weather, on timescales from years to centuries, might come to bear. It must provide for the comfort, health and safety of its occupants and beyond the practical, a useful building must speak to their spiritual and emotional life as well and make a positive contribution to the community.

Durability is assured through the application of craftsmanship which begins with the development of adequate plans for the construction process. This is followed by gathering the best possible materials for the given application and budget, and then assembling the components with care and skill. Thus constructed, a building assumes an integrity that extends its life for many generations.

The nature of buildings is implied by the intricacy of the word itself. The word "Building" is both a noun and a verb - both the process and the result. A building exists as an object yet is never quite complete because "Building" as process is perpetually at work; maintenance, repair, remodel, refurbish... all are part of the "Building" until overtaken by the finality of demolition. Continually changing and evolving, buildings are alive through the symbiotic relationship they have with us humans.

Generally, buildings fall into one of three categories - domestic, commercial, and institutional each exhibiting a unique type of quality. They all live and change but do so at different rates and for different reasons. Domestic buildings - houses - reflect the intimacy of family relations. Their rhythm of change is synchronized to the changes of the family within. A new family member arrives; junior goes to college, grandmother moves in... Houses change as the family changes. Houses are capable of exhibiting a considerable amount of quality and in Broad Ripple this is tied more to the expression of honesty and integrity than opulence and extravagance. Many homes in Broad Ripple are quite beautiful in their simple elegance and unaffected honesty.

Commercial buildings are, by nature, metamorphic. They need to be. As businesses come and go they must adapt. As businesses grow they must accommodate. As new technologies develop, they must incorporate. Their lives are subject to the same intense competitive pressures as the businesses they harbor. It is most difficult and unusual for these buildings to invest in any serious amount of Durability. It is much more convenient and cost effective to rely on "Cheap Imitation" (the enemy of Quality) to create the illusion of quality. Or they may promote "Shabby Chic" or other devices as acceptable alternatives to quality. A number of buildings in Broad Ripple are of this sort. Can you spot them?

Institutional buildings tend to be stoic edifices that project propriety and rectitude. They reflect the need of the institution within to convey timeless reliability. They are mortified by change and only come to it, as they must, with great difficulty and expense. Built in 1907, the former Masonic Lodge on the corner of Guilford and Broad Ripple Avenue is such a building. Its classic presence and substantial construction speak well of its durability. Yet today it tells a woeful story for its original lofty usefulness is no longer required and its personality is poorly suited to the undignified nature of the business that it is forced to accommodate.

In our dynamic business oriented time, Palladio's notions of quality may seem, to some, to have lost their relevance. Yet the Green movement, the latest thinking on the quality of buildings, recognizes that Usefulness and Durability are important elements not only in quality but also in sustainability.

Buildings - Regulations

The right to own property and do with it as we like is considered by many Americans to be one of those unalienable rights endowed to us by our creator. Nothing should be allowed to abridge this right for it is the cornerstone of our precious freedom. The 20th century, however, brought us the Industrial Revolution and explosive urban growth which made obvious the need to bring some order to the process. Thus Building Regulations were born in America as the Community acquired the right to dictate certain aspects of the built environment. Today, the tension between individual rights and the rights of the Community is rarely more apparent than in the issues of buildings and their regulation.

The number of building regulations has grown exponentially as our culture has increased in complexity. Generally these regulations are one of three types; Statutory, Contractual, and Voluntary. Statutory Standards are developed by career planners and code industry professionals. The regulations consist of standards covering local, state, federal, building and land use regulations which are intended to protect life-safety, health and welfare of the public. Once formally adopted by the appropriate authority, building standards become codes and acquire the force of law. The State of Indiana administers the Indiana Building Code through the Indiana Fire and Building Safety Administration. The county administers a Zoning Ordinance through the Metropolitan Development Commission for the purpose of regulating land use according to the intentions of a master plan. Cities and Municipalities often add another layer of local regulation such as the standards administered by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission. While codes do much to promote order, safety, and preservation, their bulk and complexity are expensive to support and maintain. Even so codes seem always to be a bit behind the curve and with their authoritative bureaucracies at work often serve to impede and frustrate the new and innovative.

Contractual regulations take the form of Covenants. These are prepared by attorneys. A Covenant is a contractual condition placed on the purchaser of property which restricts the style, size or type of building that he/she may erect. Covenants often regulate building materials, time of commencement and completion, vegetation preservation, fencing restrictions, and condition of resale. The most evolved and restrictive covenants are employed by Gated Communities which, beyond regulating building requirements, may even regulate acceptable human behavior. These regulations are enforced through the power of the civil court.

Widespread concern for the state of the environment has fostered a new egalitarian form of building regulation that is based on Voluntary Compliance. The US Green Building Council (USGBC) was established some ten years ago with the overarching goal, shared with other environmental organizations, of reversing the rate of destruction of the environment. Along with his environmental passion, Rick Fedrizzi, founder of the USGBC, brought with him a thorough understanding of the business of building and a genius for organization and efficiency. In the ten years of its existence the USGBC has emerged as one of the leaders in the development of Green Building Regulations. Termed the "LEED Green Rating System", this set of regulations developed by the USGBC is comprised of design guidelines rather than building standards. Being consensus driven, the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) development process gathers many diverse and voluntary opinions from the myriad of industries and interests associated with the building industry while making the best use of information technology to distill these opinions to workable rules for the development of Green buildings. The voluntary nature of development of and compliance to these rules is not just incidental but is crucial to their effective acceptance and implementation in the marketplace. While LEED is the instrument of implementation, the numerous USGBC symposiums and workshops; publications such as "The Business Case for Going Green", connections and partnerships with major industry players, and the yearly International Conference and Expo "Greenbuild" help to create a compelling vision of a hopeful Green future.

Broad Ripple can share in this hopeful future even though it has no official power of self-determination, little political influence, no genuine autonomy, and few means for gathering resources. For Broad Ripple does have resources. Among its citizenry are creative individuals with a strong affection for this place who continually give of themselves to the benefit of the community. They know from experience that volunteer efforts, in every way, can be more efficient and effective than any other. It will be through the Voluntary Commitment of local individuals and businesses to the emerging restorative global initiative that Broad Ripple will realize its own Green destiny.

Buildings - Destiny

Winston Churchill once said "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us." Buildings live through their symbiotic relation with us (see previous article) thus they share our Destiny. Many believe that Destiny does not in fact exist. They don't believe that our lives are predetermined - the playing out of an unalterable script written by some superior hand. They insist that we are all masters of our own fate and the only force responsible for our individual and collective future. Frankly, I don't believe in the rigid script scenario either yet I do believe in Destiny.

Fate and Destiny, although often used interchangeably, are not the same thing. Fate is an unalterable outcome predetermined by an outside force while Destiny, is determined by our own makeup. Our predispositions, temperament, intentions, habits, biases, perceptions, convictions, motivations... all work to give direction to our lives and a certain continuity to our behavior that lead to predictable ends. Our make-up puts our life on a trajectory which may be consistent and predictable, due to momentum and inertia, yet not necessarily rigid or unalterable. We can change it. We can change it by changing ourselves. The apparent inevitability of Destiny is simply the reflection of our own difficulty with and resistance to change within ourselves.

Here at the new millennium, Technology is the prime force of our Destiny. 200 years ago, the dawn of the Industrial Revolution began a process that; fostered the development of International Commerce and Big Business; witnessed the ascendancy of Capitalism; pronounced Modernism as a credo for the future; and produced unimagined technical advances. Technology has brought us sweeping change that has served to benefit our human condition. Yet it has done so at a price. It also; made us more distant from one another; perpetuated conflicts and weapons that threaten to extinguish life on this planet; disconnected us from nature; molded us into soulless consumers; poisoned our environment; and replaced the nurturing Community with a culture founded on the principles of competition and exploitation. Many, at this point in time, are wondering, as did the proponents of the Arts & Crafts movement, whether the increasing costs do not outweigh the diminishing benefits.

Where are we headed? What view of the future can our current Destiny provide? What will happen if we continue on our current trajectory? It is increasingly difficult to ignore the realities of the environmental degradation caused by world industrialization. Continued destruction of the biosphere predicts a gloomy future indeed. There is hope on the horizon however. On January 22, 2007 ten major corporations, including GE, DuPont, and Caterpillar, joined with Environmental Defense in a "Call to Action" urging the federal government to act swiftly and thoughtfully to produce legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The tone of conviction and urgency of this pronouncement gives cause for optimism that change is possible especially in the light of the fact that, heretofore, no corporation had ever supported any environmental legislation whatsoever. This is change - the kind of change that can alter Destiny.

Buildings are the key to our future. Besides being the single largest piece of Technology, our symbiotic relationship offers the real possibility that by changing our buildings we will also be changing ourselves. Changing what our buildings are and how they are built, even in small and gradual steps, can have huge cumulative consequences on our environment. The environment could benefit because 40% of all that is extracted from the Earth goes into buildings and building demolition contributes nearly that percentage to landfills. Small changes scale up to large consequences. Buildings could evolve from being disposable envelopes to being permanent bridges to nature. They could become more lifelike finding a harmonious place within the pattern of nature rather than displacing it. In doing so they might teach us lessons that we need to learn about our own relationship to nature. These changes have already begun to occur and are giving rise to a whole new Technology. A Technology based on cooperation rather than competition and mutual dependence rather than exploitation. This Technology is Green - the force of our new and improved Destiny.

Building Green

Green buildings, including houses, are often referred to as “sustainable” and “high-performance”. A sustainable design works to “...meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.” Doing more with less is a good definition of high performance. In Green design, these elements are not just appended to the conventional consideration of size, style, budget and system of construction but become the overarching principles from which all other considerations flow.

From a Green point of view, well planned high density is to be encouraged. Development should be channeled to urban areas with existing infrastructure. Reusing prior developed land protects undeveloped land, wildlife habitat, and natural resources. Proximity to public transportation reduces the reliance on the automobile - a huge source of pollution. In site selection, preference is given to sites with pedestrian access to a variety of services. Green encourages the use of bicycles by providing convenient access and storage while discouraging automobile use by minimizing parking accommodations. Letting go of our love affair with the automobile is a reoccurring theme in our reach for sustainability.

A prime concern of Green design is water efficiency for fresh water is a finite resource and water treatment is an expensive proposition. Vegetated roofs, permeable paving, rainwater harvesting, and eco swales are some of the proven techniques that work to reduce rainwater inflow into the sewer system while, at the same time, replenishing the natural groundwater aquifer. As it often happens with Green design, these natural low-tech techniques produce co-benefits. They present opportunities to introduce nature and beauty, not as elements applied superficially after the fact, but as intrinsic features of the design. Green is not all low-tech however. Technology such as low flush toilets, waterless urinals, tankless water heaters... are gaining acceptance as effective ways to reduce the wasting of precious fresh water.

The most technologically intensive aspect of Green design deals with matters of energy. Already there exist, in the market, systems and materials that make it possible to construct “Net-Zero” buildings. Buildings that use only the energy they produce. Research and development of new products that will make this routine rather than the exception are based on new ideas like; electrochromic windows offering the dynamic control of infrared energy, inexpensive highly efficient nanocomposite materials for solar energy conversion, thermoelectric materials which transform heat directly into electrical energy, solid state lighting that produce light at a fraction of the energy of current fluorescent lighting, selective water sorbent technologies that offer the performance of a geo-exchange system at the cost of traditional systems, distributed sensor systems that continuously optimize control devices, and integrated energy systems that provide on-site power as well as heating, cooling, and dehumidification. Products of this type are already transforming the marketplace and hold the promise of “Zero-Sum” buildings - buildings that produce more energy than they consume.

While environmental responsibility and resource efficiency are prime concerns of Green design, the most important is occupant well-being. In recent years, much has been learned about the poor quality of the average indoor environment. Indoor pollution sources that release gases or particles into the air are prevalent in conventional construction. Inadequate ventilation, and high temperature and humidity often concentrate indoor pollutant levels to two to five times - and occasionally 100 times - higher than outdoor air. Rigerous studies inform us as to the importance of natural light and its effects on productivity, health, and sense of well-being. Green design still holds concerns for style, fasion and aesthetics yet it subordinates them to concerns for a heathfull habitat.

How much more does all this cost? This is the question often posed by skeptics. “Integrated Design” and “Life-Cycle Costs” are the Green answers. The integrated design process considers all the components as integral parts of the whole - more insulation in the walls equals a smaller mechanical system. This holistic approach is what makes Green buildings competitive in today’s market. Because Green buildings invest in quality, durability, and energy efficiency, they may appear more costly. Life-Cycle Costs Analysis however, reveals the true cost of buildings. During its life, the cost of operating and maintaining a poorly designed building dwarfs the initial building cost. Adding the cost of; lost productivity, ill heath effects, and the contribution to the destruction of the biosphere raises the true cost of our conventional buildings to an astronomical level - a true cost that we can now no longer afford.

Building Green - The Site

Land is different than any other type of property because there is only a finite amount of it. It cannot be moved, manufactured or disposed of. Our laws refer to it as "Real Property" as opposed to "Personal Property" or "Chattel." All the land in America has been measured (surveyed) and recorded and this information is maintained by various agencies as a matter of public record. Properties are comprised of one or more parcels with accurately defined boundaries. "Site" however, is a much more amorphous concept. A "Site" holds the property at its center yet includes the influences of the surrounding properties and buildings, infrastructure, and cultural fabric which contribute to its characteristics. Site requirements vary greatly for the three basic building types - domestic, commercial, and institutional. If we wish to build Green however, there are some site characteristics that apply universally to all.

Site selection is largely an exercise in compromise. Evaluating the available alternatives involves assessing which piece best accommodates the largest number of the most important requirements of the project. So it is with Green. Not all sites are equally Green yet Green design guidelines are quite specific as to property that is inappropriate for development. Projects should not be developed on; prime farmland, land located in a flood plane, land containing habitat for any species on the endangered list, land that is near wetlands, and land which, prior to acquisition, was public parkland. In short, do not develop what are referred to as "Greenfields" (undeveloped land). So you may wonder, what remains? Selection of a previously developed property proves to be the best Green strategy for it avoids the major negative aspects of outlying development. The development of open areas away from city center cores encroaches on natural habitat. It increases dependence on the automobile for commuting - contributing to water and air pollution. Prime farmland is lost while inner urban sites deteriorate and become wastelands - uninhabitable and un-tillable. Costly infrastructure investments inevitably need to follow outlying developments increasing the environmental impact far beyond that of the initial development while existing infrastructure lays underutilized. Green brings nature into the city - not the city into nature.

Living in cities and making the city livable is the most direct way to sustainability. The preservation of nature and wilderness is not an exercise in management but one of constraint - nature does best when left alone. The land we do disturb needs to be well utilized. We can do this by constructing or renovating buildings on a previously developed site with projects that meet or exceed densities currently allowed by zoning. The challenge of Green design is to do so while greatly reducing waste of resources and improving the quality of life. This holds the promise for the revitalization of the community by valuing sites that have a pedestrian connection to at least ten Basic Services such as: Banks, Places of Worship, Grocery Stores, Day Care, Cleaners, Fire Station, Beauty, Hardware, Laundry, Library, Medical/Dental... all elements we currently enjoy in Broad Ripple. To be Green, all we need to do is get there by walking.

A prime consideration of a Green site is that it affords access to public transportation. As Green as I profess to be, I must confess that I cannot remember when I last rode the buss here in the city. It is not an appealing prospect for me. There is something unglamorous about waiting on a street corner then climbing into a lumbering, polluting, disheveled, rolling billboard to get from here to there. Yet, when I visit Chicago, I know I could live there and not own an automobile. The difference is that, in Chicago, the public transit experience compares favorably to the expressway motoring experience and as a consequence, people use it. The more people use public transportation the more resources it attracts. It improves through use. Therefore, I hereby vow to ride the buss more often here at home as a positive act toward improving our local public transit system. The more of us do it - the more it will improve - the Greener we will become.

The intense competitive nature of development forces developers to avoid contaminated sites (Brownfields) like the plague. Yet, remediation of a Brownfield is the essence of restorative development. Green favors the rehabilitation of damaged sites as a means of reducing pressure on undeveloped land. Often, the additional costs of clean-up can be mitigated by tax incentives and lower initial property cost. Symbolically this is what Green is all about; repairing the damage of the past, healing the land, and bringing it back to life.

Green Road Trip

As enthused as I am about Green, I must confess that I have, since my last article, experienced a certain loss of confidence that plowing through all the details of Green Design and its merits in 700 word chunks will indeed make for interesting and engaging reading and serve as catalyst for your conversion to the Green Way. I don't know whether it is just the difficulty of relating all that one knows about a technical subject in a way that makes it meaningful to the uninitiated or whether I simply lack the skills required to do so. Serious self doubt is occurring. In an effort to overcome, I have engaged in; contemplative introspection, extended walks and bike rides, meditation, super hot baths, and eating only vegetables. I am certain that a few glasses of wine would do wonders but I have given alcohol up for Lent. I am in crises - what am I to do? In circumstances like these there is really only one sensible remedy - Road Trip!

By the time you read this, Patty and I will be in Bella Italia (Beautiful Italy) and nearly 2 weeks into our trip. Since I am writing this before our departure, I can only speak to you of our plans and expectations. Patty and I have traveled to Italy many times yet this trip promises to be unique from the standpoint that it is the first trip since we realized our commitment to sustainability. For the first time we will see Italy through a Green lens. We are both excited about our new perspective and expect to spend a portion of each day looking into all aspects of the Green Italian life. We expect to return with some useful knowledge because the Italians, as well as the rest of the Europeans have been forced to accept sustainability as a fact of life for many decades due to cultural and physical necessity.

The first part of our trip will take us to a small resort town in the region of Toscana (Tuscany) called Montecatini Terme 70 miles North of Firenze (Florence). Montecatini lies at the foot of the Pistonian mountains and boasts baths and spas that date back to the fourteenth century that have been visited by such notables as Verdi, Princess Grace, Orson Welles, Clark Gable, Douglas Fairbanks and assorted European royalty. We will be sharing a villa with four other couples who were selected because they are experienced travelers and accomplished cooks. In between our taking of the waters, cooking, walking in the countryside, and dining lavishly, we will poke around to see how this community handles trash and recycling. We will also make forays to the nearby towns of Luca (where I have family) and Siena where Patty, on an earlier trip, suffered what she called an Italian Overdose (yet another story).

Patty and I and another couple will then travel by rented car (keeping meticulous mileage records) to my home town of Ancona in the region of le Marche. Ancona is an industrial town of 100,000 or so population on the Adriatic coast and lies at the foot of an extinct volcano called Monte Conero. Although quite picturesque, Ancona is a manufacturing town producing many things and being best known for its yacht building and modular kitchen fabrication. We expect that my extended family will not only prepare extravagant meals for our enjoyable consumption but will also assist us in communicating our interest in all things Green with the municipal authorities especially those involved with assuring air and water quality.

The final leg of our adventure will see us traveling by train to Roma where we will join in the Holy Week celebrations. On the way, we will apply our Green lens perspective to the Italian mass transit system to gain from our first hand experience. How efficient, how practical, how economical, how comfortable is it. During our stay in Roma, Patty and I have made plans to renew our marriage vows as a celebration of our 5th anniversary. We will do so in St. Peters. We will also look for the "Green Machine" (see previous article) for the Vatican trash control is a marvel to behold. Finally - Easter in the Eternal City - Rebirth!

Thus renewed and newly informed I will return home to complete the planning of the exciting "Glimpse the Future" Earth Day 2007 event (please refer to the ad at the upper right hand corner of this page) and although it is not clear to me, from my current vantage point, how it will come about, I trust that my renewed positive energy will attract the necessary resources for me to effectively carry on with Green Broad Ripple.

Green Road Trip Report

I am writing this article just having returned from a sixteen day excursion to Italy in search of all things Green. We did so because, after all, Green is a global issue. Patty and I visited small towns in the regions of Tuscany, Umbria, and le Marche and spent a week (Holy Week) in Roma. We drove on the high-ways, traveled by train, and took the buss. We departed with expectations and returned with a new awareness.

Major industries in Italy are precision machinery, motor vehicles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, electric goods, and fashion and clothing. Most important however, is food and tourism - two elements that are inextricably intertwined in the history and culture of this nation of 55 million. Living on a landmass slightly larger than Arizona, Italians are perpetually adapting the lessons learned over 3,000 years to the demands of our modern times. History is everywhere in Italy. Antiquity is layered upon antiquity. This has engendered a respect and even a love for the historic and the authentic. Buildings are not disposed of but reused - even those that are hundreds of years old. There is constant effort in restoration. Everywhere restoration efforts are conspicuous and everywhere people come from all over the world to experience the history. The income from tourism coupled with a deep and genuine regard for the past makes Italy very Green in the reuse of building resources and, at the same time, promotes quality and permanence in new construction.

Plant vines for your children, olive trees for your grandchildren. So the saying goes among the 5% of the population now involved in Italian agriculture. Grape and olive are the predominant crops. Both grow slowly and transcend human generations. They can be seen growing on hillsides all over Italy cultivated much the same way for centuries. In the mild Italian climate, farmers also produce a large variety of fruits, grains, beans and vegetables. Meats tend to be lean and much is processed into the form of cured products such as prosciutto and salami. A wide variety of cheeses are produced from cow, sheep, goat, and water buffalo milk and as the sea is always nearby, the varied seafood is always fresh. The long history of city states along with the large variety of soil and climate conditions has engendered a strong sense of regional identity and localized cuisine traditions that attract many visitors for the gastronomic experience alone. It is not surprising then that Italy, along with art and antiquity, considers food (cibo) a national treasure. Naturally organic, locally produced and celebrated, and cultivated with time tested methods, Italian food is appreciated for its diversity and superior quality even by those who are unaware of its Green nature.

Italians seem to be conservative in their use of utilities. All the bathrooms are fitted with low flush toilets and bidets and we observed instances of rainwater harvesting. At our villa in Tuscany, we could only plug in one kitchen appliance at a time. The high cost of utilities is certainly a contributor to conservation. Train and buss services seemed to work well and were convenient and affordable in small and large cities alike and driving, although it always takes some getting some getting used to, was a manageable adventure everywhere but Roma.

Roma is an enigma. It is a marvelous walkable city choked with traffic - a perpetual conflict between the vehicular and the pedestrian. Walking is an exercise in survival. In fact, if you do a little Googleing, you will find websites dedicated to giving tips as to how to cross the street in Rome. Driving is an exasperating and stressful collision avoidance endeavor and it takes a miracle to find a parking spot. Granted, we saw Roma at its busiest, yet how can it be that the Italians, who are so aware of their cultural history, be so indifferent to this glaring contradiction? Perhaps it is because things may be a little out of control. Many Romans feel that while the official population of Rome is 3.5 million there are at least that many illegals. Perhaps it is because 90% of the people that work in Rome need to commute, rent being prohibitably expensive. Perhaps it is because 100% of the Italians have a love affair with their autos and scooters. Or perhaps it is a twist of irony that their attachment to the past encumbers their ability to invent a new future. It is this last point that made me realize that if the world does go Green, it will do so following the leadership of the land of possibilities - Broad Ripple.

Green Gap

Last night, Patty and I were among the 700 or so who gathered in the Beth-El Zedeck sanctuary to hear Al Gore speak. It was, for us, an important and moving experience. The Beth-El Zedeck congregation did a superb job of hosting and managing the event. The large attendance stretched the capacity of the facility yet all seemed well under control from the parking to the gracious greeters to the ever-present yet unobtrusive security. The introductory speeches were gems of oration - intelligent, informative, and movingly gracious. When this well



dressed diverse audience stood up to sing the Star Spangled Banner, a palpable sense of benevolent solidarity filled the hall. We knew that in spite of our many differences, we were united in our concern for the well being of Planet Earth. Al Gore was marvelous. Even though much of the material was drawn from his "An Inconvenient Truth", it took on new meaning in his personal delivery. Tailored to the audience, his 90 minute talk was informative, convincing, humorous, challenging, pertinent and moving. Not one person left the hall untouched. The desert reception was a perfect ending. The sugar buzz provided by the delightful and plentiful sweets reenergized the audience. Among the myriad of effervescent conversations, a calm and patient Vice President accommodated all who approached him with remarks, question or requests - such as mine as you can see by the photograph. All in all it was a marvelous evening. Yet today, I cannot help wonder how many in the audience will change the way they live in any significant way.

Green Gap is a phenomenon I have been observing with increasing frequency in our community. It is a good thing that more and more of our citizens are hearing and believing the message that Mr. Gore and many others are delivering that sustainability, at its core, is about the prevention of our human extinction. This is serious business indeed and is the source for much anxiety. Many of these believers are, more and more frequently, inclined to attend meetings, join organizations, support environment groups, make sustainability part of their discussions and applaud Al Gore yet this has produced surprisingly little evidence that the only thing that really matters is occurring at all - a change of the way we live on this Spaceship Earth.

Two days prior to the Vice President's visit - on Earth Day 2007, "Green Broad Ripple", a newly formed not-for-profit organization, hosted "Glimpse the Future - A Colloquium on Local Sustainability" in the Frank Basile Auditorium of our wonderful Indianapolis Art Center. Four speakers presented first real Green efforts in our Community, our City, and our State. Projects already built, in the process of being built, and on the drawing board. These are efforts that are beginning to close the Green Gap - projects that are beginning to make an actual difference. Yet if we are to ensure that the Earth will continue to be habitable by us, our children, and grandchildren, it is imperative that we step up the effort. To this end, Green Broad Ripple was formed with a mission to; Educate About Sustainability, Cultivate Green Commerce, and Develop a Green Master Plan for the Broad Ripple Community. Its strategy is to; Strengthen Sense of Community, Gather Sufficient Resources, and establish a Consensus Based Democratic Process.

"We have a Moral Imperative to save the Earth". The Vice President made this point most convincingly. To sit idly by as the Earth loses its capacity to sustain life is not only the height of foolishness it is morally wrong. The time for words and half measures is over. What is need is action. Action at all levels - the individual, the community, the business/corporation, the state, the nation, and the world. We can begin a serious effort right here in Broad Ripple. Strengthening a Sense of Community is our first logical step. Green Broad Ripple will launch a concerted effort toward this end. If you would like to help, drop me an e-mail at cortellini@broadriplegazette.com. Get involved. You can make a difference.

Green Community

Green (sustainability) is all about respect. Respect for the planet, respect for nature, respect for community and for one another. It is about emphasizing the quality rather than the quantity. At its core, Green Community is a collective commitment of the spirit. The first step toward improving the quality of life in Broad Ripple is to strengthen the Sense of Community and the first step toward this is to undergo a process of profound and honest soul-searching. Here is a passage taken in tact from the website of the "Foundation for Community Encouragement" (FCE).

"Community Building, as practiced in the context of FCE, is a group process where participants experience and practice communication skills that create the possibility for deep human connection. The process was first described by best-selling author, Dr. M. Scott Peck, in his book, *The Different Drum*. He presented further information in a later book, *A World Waiting To Be Born*.

Participants sit in a circle. Brief instruction is offered regarding the guidelines for interaction. Supported by two facilitators, the group begins to interact with persons speaking as they are moved to do so. The work of Community Building belongs to the group as a whole. The facilitators do not teach or provide answers. Their role is to pay attention to the group process and give helpful feedback to the group as it does its work. Generally, a group will cycle through four distinct stages. In the stage of *pseudo-community*, the group is characterized by polite interaction as individuals "test the waters" of relationship, operating on the assumption that group members have few differences that divide them.

As the group continues to talk, the previously unspoken differences begin to emerge. Typically, participants deal with the discomfort caused by the discovery of difference by seeking to "fix" others or to "convert" people to their point of view. In this stage, there is often limited listening, high emotional energy, and a significant level of frustration. This stage has been labeled *chaos*.

Groups regularly deal with the confusion of *chaos* by retreating to the stage of *pseudo-community* or by attempting to organize in some way. Neither of these avenues leads to a deep level of connection with others. A difficult, but effective way to transcend the barriers to relationship lies through *emptiness*. *Emptying* happens when individuals begin to notice what they are carrying within themselves that prevents them from being authentically present with the group and fully accepting others. As people begin to share what is real for them—personal experience of the present moment in the group, prejudices, stories of past pain or joy, unfulfilled expectations—group members begin to come together in a new way. In this stage, a group will often feel like it is dying but, in the painful struggle to let go of the barriers to relationship, there is opportunity for something new to emerge.

The process of *emptying* provides room for a group to receive the gift of *Community*. In this stage people experience a deep acceptance of others and find themselves accepted as well. Individuals come to know themselves and others in new ways. Differences still exist but they are transcended and celebrated rather than suppressed. The group is characterized by a sense of profound respect, appreciation and joy. Each of these stages is part of healthy community. A group will not rest undisturbed in the fourth stage but continue to cycle through all the stages. A gift of this process is that people acquire skills to enable continued movement through the stages instead of being stuck in places of division. Community Building provides an opportunity for people to learn how to come together authentically and truthfully in ways that encourage wholeness in relationship."

This depth of interaction was nowhere present in our last town hall meeting - a meeting dominated by our deputy mayor who appeared to me to be on a PR damage control mission. He agreed with everyone and everything and promised everything to everyone. It is time that Broad Ripple undertakes a serious effort of Community Building. We have a great resource in the Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center. Their experienced specialists can help us work through a process rooted in the Asset-Based Community Development philosophy that has the potential to unite us, the citizens of Broad Ripple, in building a truly nurturing community. Stay tuned. A New Day Is Dawning.

Who Is Green?

Ten years ago, when Green building was in its infancy, it was difficult to find people that knew about Green and even more difficult to find companies that made Green products. As awareness and commercial interest has grown many people profess themselves as being Green and there seems to be a rapidly growing commercial sector that promotes itself as Green as well. The difficulty today is determining who is and who isn't.

When you Google "Who is Green" your screen reads "about 167,000,000 entries" and when you try "How Green Are You" the first 10 of 410,000,000 entries are listed - that's 410 million entries! Certainly this is an impossibly large number to ever be able to work through in a lifetime. Fortunately, after visiting the first 10, a pattern emerges in the content similar to the following from the energyrefuge.com site that gives one comfort that visiting the remaining 409,999,990 will not be necessary.

1. Do you recycle?
2. Have you replaced all the standard light bulbs in your home with CFC bulbs?
3. Do you walk/run/bike whenever you can?
4. Do you support conservation efforts in your local community?
5. Do you buy products packaged in biodegradable packages?
6. Do you drive a hybrid?
7. Do you use harmful chemicals in your home?
8. Are you a part of a highway or park clean up crew?
9. Do you buy only Energy Star™ or energy efficient appliances?
10. Do you utilize alternative energy in your home?
11. Have you conducted an energy audit of your home?
12. Do you have a compost pile or composter?
13. Do you leave each day a little brighter and better because of your "green" actions?

I recently heard a lady profess "I am as Green as anyone". My heart is lifted at the notion that Green is coming into vogue yet I wonder how many of these protestations are truly sincere and well informed. A recent statement made by a man who considers himself well informed on Green reinforced my concern. It went something like this. Green (vegetated) roofs are fine for the fortunate few that live on the top floor of buildings but since they are not visible to the passer-by, who cannot partake of their natural beauty, they are of little use. If this man would have attended the Green Roofs Symposium recently sponsored by the city, he would have spent the entire day learning all the benefits that Green Roofs bring to the urban environment. He might have learned that, more important than the aesthetic value, Green Roofs mitigate the Heat Island effect of urban environments. They act as natural insulators and reduce the amount of insulation required by the building. They absorb water and act as retention systems reducing the flow into sewers during peak storms. They replace the wasteland of black asphalt and rubber with habitat for plants, birds and insects. Some are even used to grow herbs to season the offerings of roof top restaurants.

"There is no reason why any building in America should not be LEED certified" - President Bill Clinton. Following the thirteen steps (see above) to becoming a Greenie, although helpful and necessary, will not be sufficient to reverse the damage done to the environment or stop global warming. What will make a difference is changing the way we produce the built environment. This is not just a matter for developers, construction professionals, and planning and regulating agencies. The built environment is our environment. Although largely privately held, it belongs to us all collectively. Here in America we are fortunate to have the right to influence the way it develops. You have more to say than you might think. Yet your ability to influence is directly related to how informed and how involved you are. You can find out all about LEED at usgbc.org. You can find out about proposed building projects in your neighborhood at indygov.org. Get informed. Get involved. Let your voice be heard. Demand that all buildings from this day forward be Green (LEED Certified) and perhaps the person in the mirror will begin to appear a truer and deeper shade of Green.

Green Kindred Spirit

Caveat Emptor! This isn't Conrad Cortellini but guest writer, Bob Sander. I've no "green" pedigree in architecture -- or any other field. I'm a storyteller by profession. When Conrad suggested I pen some words I was grateful for the opportunity -- but it's certainly a challenge. His musings are inspirational, wise and witty. So be warned: I am empty-handed -- save for a story or two. And here's the first:

Two friends were walking in Manhattan. One lived in the city. The other was his guest. Amid the din of activity and traffic the visitor said to his friend:

"I hear a cricket."

"Impossible. Too much noise."

His friend cocked his head and slowly approached a potted plant in front of a hotel. Pulling back the lower limbs he revealed - a cricket, musical legs working away.

"Amazing! How did you hear that?"

"It was nothing. Anyone could do it. Watch."

To illustrate he pulled a couple coins from his pocket and threw them into the air. When they struck pavement a dozen people stopped and turned their heads toward the spot.

"You see? Anyone can hear it. But it all depends on what you're listening for."

I follow this by asking: Can our kids hear the cricket? And if not, will Green buildings, vehicles, or transit networks matter -- if they're not bequeathed to a generation that values them? Simply put, envisioning Green hard-scape is easy compared to instilling an interior ethic that harmonizes nature with the soul. If doing just that was once an organic part of growing up American -- something acquired in daily life - that is no longer a blanket assumption.

As a kid I had access to a nearby scrub woods. It wasn't much. All it had was trees, ravines, grape vines to swing on, a creek with frogs and salamanders and snakes -- and once a 30 lb. snapping turtle that I caught and thoughtfully stored in my mother's bathtub (for which indiscretion I received Holy Hell). No adult was on hand during our forays, no play equipment, no outdoor classes. Therefore the woods had absolutely nothing to teach us of any value -- except a deep and abiding connection to the natural world and a sense that this was a place to come for pleasure and meaning. It's where and how I learned to 'hear the cricket'. If such a relationship as that little woods afforded is more the exception than the rule for many kids today, what takes its place? Countless hours spent indoors.

A recent book by Richard Louv, *Last Child In The Woods*, is subtitled: 'Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder'. Louv made up that term to describe what investigators perceive as a condition when children fail to develop a connection to the natural world -- and suffer for it physically as well as psychologically. But is this kids' fault?

Consider, says Louv:

*Places to connect with nature near to where kids live are fast disappearing (like my woods, whose trees were bulldozed for condo's named after them). The cheap money that's made suburban development irresistible has proceeded with scant regard for a Green remnant or buffer.

*Largely adult order has been imposed on kids' outdoor activities (think organized sports versus unstructured play; housing covenants which view a kid-built tree house as illegal).

*Fear of lawsuits, strangers or other perceived threats cause well-meaning parents to send subtle messages to children about the nature of the outdoor world.

*A tidal wave of media is designed to absorb children's time and attention (and parents' money) with product advertising, electronic gaming, etc. Is it surprising a child quoted in Louv's book said he preferred to play indoors because "that's where all the electrical outlets are"?

One thing the book examines is how many effects of the 'nature deficit' fade when the outdoors is again a part of kids' lives. Not nature in the abstract -- exotic animals in far-away places. No, kids need 'dirty-finger-nail' knowledge from their place, our place, the local sphere we all inhabit. They need to get out and walk and play in it. The back yard comes first, then the neighborhood, then wider gyres. Frequent forays of curiosity and discovery in the outdoors become foundational. A whole life attitude can rest solidly there. But the places have to be there. The forays have to happen.

We adults can preserve spaces, help see time in nature happens. We can make sure safety is observed -- but finally these experiences still beg for an unmediated, kids-only quality.

Let's bring green transport, housing and energy systems into being. But let's also be prescient enough to look "around the (generational) corner". A Green Ethic must come early if it is to come at all. It's an imperative we can't answer by building or inventing but rather by remembering, respecting, and modeling. Then we'll all hear the cricket.

#18 Written June 7, 2007

Bio: Bob was the resident storyteller at the Indianapolis Museum of Art for fifteen years. He has researched, written and performed stories for museums and corporations, been featured at Midwestern Storytelling Festivals and worked in schools and libraries around the Midwest. He is a co-founder and previous director of Storytelling Arts of Indiana.

Green Consequences

Thank you, Bob Sander, for your poignant story in the last article of this column about how our modern habits are separating us from nature. You and Nancy are the most grounded people I know and your home in Rocky Ripple always affords a visitor a wonderful reconnection with nature that many appreciate yet find difficult to create for themselves. This difficulty arises from the fact that most of us have bought into the notion that life needs to be synthetically comfortable and universally convenient.

Patty and I live in Broad Ripple and, in spite of the recent heat spell, we have only used our air conditioning system one night so far this summer. We live with our windows open as part of our commitment to "Intentional Living". Our aspirations of becoming Greener requires us to reflect on our habits and routines, activities we perform automatically - without thinking, and deliberately change them for a Greener outcome. If you were to try living with your windows open, let's say, for one month - only using your air conditioning as a last resort to avoid heat stroke or suffocation, your life would bear significant consequences.

The first thing that would strike you is just how few people live with their windows open in Broad Ripple. I know Bob Sander does in Rocky Ripple because I don't believe he even has air conditioning. Yet, I can tell you that, virtually no one on my street and surrounding area regularly have their windows open. All my neighbors seem to be afflicted by the synthetic comfort syndrome. They wake up in their air conditioned houses; drive to work in their air conditioned cars; work all day long in their air conditioned offices whose windows don't even open; and return home to their cool houses that have been kept that way all day long in their absence by their universally convenient thermostat set at 68 degrees. They know the day has been hot only because they watch the weather channel.

The second consequence you will experience is quite spatial. An open window expands the interior to the outdoors and invites the outdoors in. One becomes much more aware of the activities in the yard and down the street. In time you get to know the antics of the Sparrow, the diligence of the Wren with young, and the fierceness of the Blue Jay as you witness nature's panorama unfold even in our urban setting. A new appreciation of the subtlety of weather is possible as it changes hour by hour, day by day, week by week, and season to season. It is cause for ritual and celebration that in the two billion year history of Planet Earth there have never been two days with the exact same weather. Even this modest interaction with nature has enriched our lives to the extent that it easily overcomes the increased dust and diminished sense of privacy and security that comes along with open window living. As air conditioning uses 10 to 20 times more electricity than an electric fan, we feel good that we may be reducing our contribution to CO² emissions and at the same time are realizing a financial benefit as well.

Most disturbing, you will experience the high level of noise pollution that pervades our environment. Humming compressors, alarms, sirens, barking dogs, airplanes, traffic and motorcycles all contribute to pollution that to quote Wikipedia "...can seriously damage and effect physiological and psychological health. For instance, noise pollution can cause annoyance and aggression, hypertension, high stress levels, tinnitus, hearing loss, and other harmful effects depending on the level of sound, or how loud it is. Furthermore, stress and hypertension are the leading causes to health problems, whereas tinnitus can lead to forgetfulness, severe depression and at times panic attacks." The fact that air conditioning insulates so many of us from this form of pollution may be contributing to its growth. The one time we used air conditioning this summer was not to obtain relief from the weather but from young revelers conversing at the top of their voices and sometimes yelling and screeching at 2:30 in the morning in the street 30 feet away from our open bedroom window. They seemed unaware and unconcerned for our well being. So it may well be that besides the other benefits of open window living the most valuable will be that it will reconnect us to our awareness of and respect for our neighbors then we might all hear the cricket.

Green Expectations

As an architect, Broad Ripple citizen, and Green advocate, I had always hoped and halfway expected my first Green, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building would be built in Broad Ripple for I held the conviction that Broad Ripple is a progressive community with a strong connection to nature. It turns out however that this first building may well be built in Crawfordsville. I have been working with clients Shari and Doug since May of this year and the design is well along with a possible ground breaking date in August.

Most of us know that Crawfordsville (population of 14,000) is the home of Wabash College - a well respected institution with an all male student body. How many of you know however, that Crawfordsville is known as the Athens of Indiana? The work of Meredith Nicholson (*A Hoosier Chronicle*, *The House of a Thousand Candles*, *Otherwise Phyllis*) and General Lew Wallace (*Ben Hur*, *A Tale of the Christ*, *The Prince of India*) drew attention to a small yet vibrant colony of artists thriving in Crawfordsville at the turn of the 20th century. This connection to the intellectual ideals of Ancient Greece established a correlation still referenced today.

Patty and I became acquainted with Crawfordsville through a friend, Joyce, who moved there to provide a kinder, gentler, more nurturing community setting for her two young daughters, Jessica and Jennifer, whom she was rearing as a single mom. Things have turned out better than she expected. It's easier to get your kids around, neighbors are trustworthy, caring and helpful, and life seems generally more wholesome for family living. Jennifer is quite active in the marching band and Community Theater and most gratifying, Jessica will be attending Indiana University next fall after accepting the prestigious Wells Scholarship. Joyce is noticeably happy and has just recently become the owner/operator of Campbell's on Main Street offering specialty coffees and teas, soups, and sandwiches in an atmosphere of friendly sophistication.

Shari is one of those neighbors who has lived in Crawfordsville all her life. She came to me through Joyce because she wanted to build a Green home. For many years she and her two young sons, Sam and Ben, suffered with symptoms of allergies and asthma. She visited doctors regularly who prescribed medication yet the symptoms persisted. At one point she began to research effects of environmental pollutants. She has subsequently stopped using chemicals of all kinds in her home. She paid more attention to the eating habits of the family and began preparing meals from natural and organic food products. And she eliminated any product that emitted VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) in her home. Gradually the symptoms subsided and today, she and her boys are doing well and are completely off medication.

Working with Shari and Doug, some interesting concepts have found expression in the design. The living area opens widely to the South through a generous screen porch allowing control of solar heat gain and storm exposure. The configuration of the structure will encourage natural ventilation largely eliminating the need for air conditioning. The basement and crawl spaces will utilize insulating concrete form blocks that will greatly improve the insulation value of the foundation making it Energy Star compliant. The exterior walls will use AAC (Autoclave Aerated Concrete) that will provide twice the insulation value of a typical wood and brick wall in a substantial and durable masonry structure. The mechanical system will be a geothermal system with a 350 foot loop field that will heat the home comfortably for a projected cost of less than \$400.00 a year. All interior finishes and cabinet work will follow LEED design standard recommendation. This and other Green considerations give us cause to believe that a LEED Certification of silver or better is possible for the home. If you have an interest, you can see the plans of this home and more details at www.cortellini.net.

Patty and I love Broad Ripple and yes, I would have liked to have completed my first Green project in Broad Ripple yet hey, Green is too important to wait for indifference and resistance to come around. Green needs to happen anywhere it can and who knows, perhaps we can learn to appreciate the charms of a Green Crawfordsville as well.

Green Alleys

I began this column in October Of 2006 thinking that once the benefits of Green were elucidated herein the community would rally around the concept and declare Broad Ripple a Green Community. Perhaps I was more than a little naive in this expectation because I am learning many are having trouble even just imagining what a Green Broad Ripple might look like. In this climate, projects that propose large steps toward sustainability, even though meritorious, have found and will probably continue to encounter opposition. Now as a matter of reference, I would like you to know that Patty (my wife) and I have taken to theaming the years of our lives as a means of becoming aware of the larger patterns that influence our "Quality of Life". The theme of this year is "Unrelenting Patience" which followed last year's; "Appropriate Selfishness." Since establishing 2007 as the year of "Unrelenting Patience", Patty and I have been amazed at the large number of opportunities that have presented themselves to practice this virtue. With this year's theme strongly influencing our posture, I and my Green friends (we) would like to propose a baby step; "Green Alleys." Here is the thinking:



Broad Ripple Alley Photo by Cortellini

As Patty and I walk the alleys of Broad Ripple regularly, we have come to the realization that alleys are an underappreciated and underutilized asset. They are wonderfully diverse spaces; sometimes very urban other times almost disappearing into nature. They provide glimpses of the more personal and informal ambience of our community. The "New Urbanism" has long espoused that alleys could lead to better integration of automobile and foot traffic. Where streets are primarily vehicular in nature accommodating pedestrian traffic to varying degrees, alleys could become primarily pedestrian spaces which accommodate the automobile. This could provide an alternative network for strolling, exercising and generally getting around.

Beyond the transportation and recreation possibilities, alleys, if they were Green, could provide more opportunities for a connection to nature while working to ameliorate drainage and sewer problems. Planting a greater variety of indigenous species could enliven the visual space with plants that are well adapted to the climate and would require little or no maintenance. Use of water management techniques such as rain gardens, eco-swales, and semi-permeable paving, while also enriching the visual experience, would, at the same time, ease the sewer burden by providing ways for storm water to return naturally to the aquifer.

Even this baby step will present some formidable challenges. The effort will require cooperation from the Mayor's Office, Department of Metropolitan Development, Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Police, Our Neighborhood Organizations, the City Council, surrounding neighbors, and agencies yet to be identified. It will require fund-raising. It will bring up issues of privacy, public safety and crime, and community responsibility. The process will test our patience as diverse views and interests bear on the related issues. It will not be easy. But it will bring us together to work out solutions to difficult problems that directly affect the "Quality of Life" in our community. This is what community building is all about.

We (Green Broad Ripple) propose an even smaller baby step. Before beginning a program to revitalize the alley network of Broad Ripple, we have in mind a particular section of alley that can be used as a test model. This may not only test the physical techniques of the reconstruction but also the process to bring the diverse interested parties together voluntarily to arrive at solutions that are mutually beneficial - mutually beneficial to all involved and to the planet as well. Completing a small section that can work out the logistical problems will provide concrete evidence for the evaluation of possibilities and give us confidence to take the next baby step. It may also give us reason to consider 2008 as the year of "Effective Perseverance."

If you like to comment on this idea, send me an email at the address below.

Green Eyes

One of the great pleasures of being involved, (my wife Patty assures me I am over involved) is that one meets and has the opportunity to learn from remarkable people right in our own community. Over the years, involvement has brought me more pleasure than any form of entertainment I can think of. Prominently at the top of my list of involvements is Toastmasters International. I joined Toastmasters in the year 2000 at a club that formed at my workplace. Soon after, I left the company which forced me to seek out another club. I was fortunate to have been invited to a meeting of the club that I still attend to this day; Daybreakers.

Daybreakers has 28 or so official members with 15 to 22 members showing up for meetings on a regular basis. The meeting format is very formal with a strictly followed agenda yet each meeting is unique in its mix of participants and topics discussed. The membership is remarkably diverse in age, background, political leanings, and professional pursuits and while the focus of Toastmasters is the form of public speaking not the content, content is often the most rewarding aspect of each meeting. Oh by the way. The reason that the club is called Daybreakers is that it meets each Friday morning at 6:30 AM promptly. I know it stretches credulity that 15 to 22 people rise at 4:30 AM every Friday to go to a meeting and give speeches to one another but it's true. It happens regularly and we all love it.

Also prominent on my involvement list is the Green movement. As structured as Toastmasters is, Green is free flowing. I am making it up as I go along - but then so is everyone else at this time. Here too I have met many remarkable people; professionals, environmentalist, farmers, builders, gardeners, writers... all share a marvelous positive energy and unifying camaraderie that is rejuvenating and invigorating - the "New Day Dawning" effect I have spoken about in earlier articles. One of these people is Jennifer.

I first met Jennifer at a conference sponsored by the Hoosier Environmental Council. Jennifer is a lovely young woman, a civil engineer by profession, and a tree hugger by disposition. She is Green through and through down to her very spirit. She courageously substituted for one of the major speakers of our Earth Day 2007 event who was called out of town due to a death in the family. She did so with only one day's notice and did a marvelous job in tough circumstances. It was then that I suggested she might enjoy visiting Daybreakers. Her initial response was quite positive yet she was taken aback at the hour of the meeting for she explained that she is not a morning person. At my repeated suggestions however she overcame this obstacle and is now the latest new member of Daybreakers.

Earlier this month Jennifer gave her second speech. I must say that it made me proud that I was the one who introduced her to the club. Not only did her speech contain all the form elements of a quality Toastmasters speech but also she delivered it with confidence, competence and grace. More importantly, her speech informed and provided insight. The title was "The Eyes Have It". She related the story of her walk on the Monon one day accompanied by her police officer boyfriend. She remarked to him about her observation of how some aspects of the drainage along the trail might be improved. He did not immediately respond. A few minutes later, he remarked how some of the areas along the trail could present potential security risks. They were looking at the same trail but seeing different things. He was looking through a policeman's eyes and she, the eyes of a civil engineer. Thus their remarks whizzed by one another without connecting in any meaningful exchange.

Yesterday, Jennifer sent me an email with an attachment. The attachment was "The Chicago Green Alley Handbook - An Action Guide to Create a Greener, Environmentally Sustainable Chicago" (see the last article). Her email note simply read "I found this in my mailbox. Enjoy!" She did not need to say anything further because there is a certain unspoken understanding between us - an understanding that is born from the fact that we both see the world through Green Eyes. Hum - Green Eyes. Are Green Eyes a huge shift in paradigm or are they merely a baby step?

Green Power

Electricity is one of the greatest inventions of the Industrial Revolution. While the phenomenon of electricity was known to the ancients, no real progress in understanding began to develop until the middle of the 1500s. Scientific knowledge grew steadily through contributions from scientist and others from all parts of the Western World and by the end of the 19th century numerous companies came into being that investigated, developed and perfected the techniques of electricity transmission and distribution until on December 17, 1880, Edison founded the Edison Electric Illuminating Company which two years later established the first investor-owned electric utility on Pearl Street Station, New York City. It was on September 4, 1882, that Edison closed the switch and began supplying commercial electrical power to 59 customers in lower Manhattan.

The advent of distributed electrical power did much to improve the quality of life in the urban and industrial environment. Bright light with no smoke or fumes required no transportation or storage of volatile fuels. Electric motors soon replaced noisy and smoky steam engines which improved the factory environment and as a consequence worker health. In the 1920s all manner of appliances of convenience began to appear that were promoted to housewives. This cadre of agreeable and competent electric servants could expedite her domestic obligations, such as washing, ironing, toasting and vacuuming all at the flip of a switch thus providing for her a life of leisure heretofore only experienced by the wealthy. It was a marvelous bright clean vision. Yet while the electric lights and motors cleaned up the environment at the point of use, at the edge of town, where the power plant burned coal to generate electricity, huge quantities of smoke were sent aloft by tall stacks and flowed downwind. Out of sight, out of mind.

We in Indianapolis currently enjoy low electric rates due to the fact that Indianapolis Power and Light Company (IPALCO) burns coal to generate it. In fact during the course of a year IPALCO consumes seven million tons of coal. The unit of measure of electricity is the Kilo Watt Hour (kW-h). One kW-h is the energy required to burn ten 100 Watt bulbs for one hour and it takes burning 2.2 lbs of coal to produce it. There are many pollutants in coal combustion gases including sulfur dioxide which mixes with rain water to produce acid rain and mercury which concentrates in the food chain and makes it hazardous to consume fish from many waters of the state. The solid waste from coal burning contains many heavy metals and low levels naturally-occurring radioactive isotopes. Yet the most harmful impact on the environment appears to be the large quantity of carbon dioxide that is produced in the burning of coal.

If you recall your high school chemistry, you may remember that carbon dioxide is comprised of one atom of carbon and two atoms of oxygen. Burning 2.2 lbs of coal to create one kW-h of energy produces 4.02 lbs of carbon dioxide. It's true. Oxygen, although it is a gas, weighs something and when two atoms of oxygen in the atmosphere combine with one atom of carbon in the coal, the molecule nearly doubles in weight. You can check the math for yourself on Wikipedia.com - just search for coal. The 7 million tons of coal IPALCO consumes each year generates 13 million tons of carbon dioxide which floats to the upper reaches of the atmosphere. Out of sight, out of mind.

Considering this scenario in terms of world energy production, the amount of carbon dioxide becomes truly astronomical. As more and more power plants consume more and more coal with no end in sight it will become increasingly difficult to ignore the consequences. Fortunately there are already sensible alternatives available. Beyond using less electricity you can enroll in the IPALCO Green Power Option. Windmill farms have already been established in Indiana that sell power to IPALCO. When you enroll in the Green Power Option, a substantial portion of the money you send to IPALCO finds its way to the operators of the windmill farm not the coal mine. No burning fossil fuel; no acid rain; and no carbon dioxide. This is a marvelous way to integrate new renewable sources of energy into the existing infrastructure. The process is market driven. It is democratic. It is very American. For an additional two or three dollars a month on your electric bill you can assume your portion of responsibility and take action that may very well save life on this beautiful planet Earth.

Green Way

Last night, Tuesday August 28, along with a few friends, Patty (my wife) and I attended a screening of Leonardo De Caprio's new documentary; "The 11th Hour." We were provided tickets by Lynn Jenkins of "Indiana Living Green" magazine who promoted the event that attracted 100 or so dedicated Greenies of our region. A solemn hush pervaded the theater as the 93 minute film recounted the climate change story in convincing and compelling terms. It was the proverbial preaching to the choir for Patty and I believe the message, as many others in the audience, that we humans face a looming catastrophe of, in the words of Dan Aykroyd, biblical proportions. Time is short. It is not only the 11th hour but it is 11:59:59 PM. We need to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions by 80% as quickly as possible - which will require a huge reconfiguration of our industrial, energy, and transportation systems. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that the scale of mobilization that will be necessary has even begun to take place. Yet the film, ending in a note of optimism, points out that this scale of reconfiguration is not without precedence in our American experience. During WWII the automobile industry was converted to the most prolific producer of armaments the world has ever seen in just three and a half years.

De Caprio is among a growing number of voices raising the alarm and calling for big thinking and substantive action. Here is a to-do list published on the NewUrbanism.org website:

1. An immediate and permanent moratorium on all new major road construction and expansions.
2. A huge increase in funding for Amtrak, and the rapid construction of a new nationwide train network.
3. An immediate moratorium on the building of any additional sprawl.
4. A major focus of federal, state, and local governments on New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and Transit Oriented Development...
5. The rapid tripling of minimum vehicle miles per gallon standards for all vehicles produced in America...
6. An immediate and permanent moratorium on all new airport construction and expansions, as well as an end to all aviation subsidies.
7. An immediate moratorium on the construction of any new coal fired or nuclear power generating plants.
8. The rapid construction of massive new solar and wind power generating capacity all across America, from large-scale installations to smaller neighborhood and roof-top units.
9. The rapid installation of full roof solar panels on every building in America.
10. The installation of hundreds of acres of organic farms throughout every city and town in America. In addition to this, the planting of millions of trees across America.

There are many complex reasons why we are not seeing action on this scale. Perhaps our leaders are not yet convinced by the evidence. Perhaps the systems of industry and government have become so complex, cumbersome or insular that they are beyond a leaders' ability to effect change. Perhaps our culture is so intertwined with consumerism that it cannot envision another form of desirable living. We can only hope that, if indeed, the worst case scenario turns out to be true, our culture and our institutions will be able to take corrective action in time. In the meantime, let me bring you up to date on what Practical Patty is doing to save the planet.

Three months ago, Patty, conservative by nature, quit her well paying job with benefits because the work had become unfulfilling and the office environment emotionally caustic. After a couple of weeks of detox, in a relaxed moment, she yielded to the notion she belonged in the Green world. She embarked on a job search - finding just the right position could take six months or more so, in the meantime, she signed up for a class "Low Carbon Diet" conducted by Doris Jane Conway at St. Luke Methodist Church. The course outlines how to quantify a household carbon footprint and works through ways to reduce yearly household CO² emissions by 5000 LBS. She made connections with surrounding Catholic Parishes and is initiating a Green Ministry at Christ the King Church. She volunteered for a committee to organize a hazardous waste drop in the Glendale area. She signed up for a LEED Green Building Standard class toward becoming a LEED Accredited Professional. She is talking to everyone she meets and quoting from books with titles such as "Its Easy Being Green" and "Food Not Lawns." She has discovered her passion and she is convinced that the planet will be saved by reaching one mind at a time. This positive flow and following the threads that crossed her path in her Green endeavors led her to finding a perfect job. At first meeting Terry Black, Randy Gray, Fred Gray, and Robyn Baker, she knew. She knew she wanted to work for Green Way Supply.

Green Way Supply is a recent startup company owned and operated by Terry, Randy, and Fred and anchored by Robin. Green Way Supply carries and installs smart, earth friendly, energy efficient and healthy alternatives to conventional building materials. Everything from recycled flooring and countertops to quality zero VOC paints

for the home owner, builder, developer, or design professional. It represents an important step in transforming the marketplace to a Green economy in Indianapolis. It pleases me to support their efforts because it may well be that Planet Earth will be saved not by government edict but by the forces of the marketplace. Besides, since Practical Patty has been working there, I have never seen her happier.

#24 Written August 29, 2007 © Cortellini 2007

Urban Connections, Naturally

Ruth Ann Ingraham is a naturalist, author, and sensitive soul who, here as guest columnist, expounds on an important eco-concept in a way I could never do. I am grateful to the Gazette for providing the circumstance for our meeting. As a volunteer, I will have the pleasure of returning the favor by recounting the special story of her home and garden to visitors during the upcoming Broad Ripple Historic Home Tour.

I am an enthusiastic reader of the Broad Ripple Gazette. I especially liked Cortellini's June column about keeping his windows at home open during the warm months. After reading it, I immediately emailed him:

Ahh. A kindred spirit. Another odd one in the neighborhood who shuns being shut up during the summer. I love awakening with cardinals, chickadees and robins and being lulled to sleep by katydids. Why do 99% of my neighbors choose not to?

This email fostered an Internet exchange, which led to wine, cheese and conversation in my garden room with Conrad and his wife, Patty. They reciprocated with a homemade pesto pasta dinner on their screened porch. After two lively conversations about fresh air, native plants, air conditioning, and biodiversity, we have lightheartedly created the "Open Window Initiative" for Broad Ripple. Conrad invited me to be guest columnist for The Gazette. "Write whatever you'd like," he said, perhaps assuming I would choose a topic related to our discussions.

The Open Window Initiative encourages you to cut your electric bills and reduce greenhouse gases by turning off the AC and opening your home to the outdoors. I understand your hesitation. Who likes nonstop barking dogs, rumbling motorcycles, sirens, fireworks, boom boxes and partygoers whose revelry spills into front yards and streets? I hear all of the above, but not too often.

In fact, I've enlarged the windows in my 1938 home of 42 years on Kingsley Drive. I want to both see and hear what's happening outside. With rare exceptions my drapes are pulled aside, the blinds up and the windows open. If you're not already an aficionado of fresh air, throw open those windows. Welcome the sights and sounds of nature into your homes.

On a typical fall day a lot happens in my front yard perennial garden where a rabbit raised her young this summer. Goldfinches pluck seeds from the flower heads of black-eyed Susans and fragrant bee balm. Robins chirp softly as they stretch to snatch an eggplant-colored pokeweed berry. At the same time I hear captor and prey in the side yard where, in its beak, a victorious cardinal carries a cicada, frantically buzzing one last time.

Through the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society I've learned that the plants I choose for my garden foster the biodiversity I seek and now my garden is a certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat. To qualify I provide what all species of wildlife need - food, water, cover and places to raise young. I've nurtured the volunteer bur-oak and ancient beech trees in my yard and planted spicebush, beautyberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, coral berry, dogwood, bottlebrush buckeye, and American hazelnut for their fruit and nuts. This array of shrubs and trees provide nesting nooks and materials for birds. My common milkweed foliage produces milky sap and is a vital food source for monarch butterfly caterpillars.

Until mid-summer 1988, I lived without central air conditioning. Floor fans coupled with an attic fan at night provided relief. I admit that I was miserable at times but felt virtuous for sweating it out with the billions in the world who have no escape from crushing heat. But that stifling summer my parents offered to purchase central air conditioning for their newly single daughter. I accepted.

Even so, I only submit to air conditioning's lure on those ten or so truly killer days each summer. Otherwise my windows are open from spring into fall when I learn by listening. I hear a sweet plinck and spot the migrating thrushes that find a respite in my yard each May. I hear the first faint insect-like chatter of hummingbirds and see one flit through my yard.

Aren't we fortunate that we have sufficient green space for humans and wildlife to live together? A friend from Osaka, Japan, studied and lived in Pittsburgh. Kaeko recalls with amazement the wildlife that lived in her yard

there and specifically mentioned rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks and birds. How different our urban world from Kaeko's, where rarely a living thing other than a human or plant is seen.

I invite you to make the most of your yard to help create wildlife corridors throughout Broad Ripple. Reduce the size of your lawns, as the Crotellinis and I have done, and expand habitats for birds, insects and mammals. Join me in making urban connections - naturally.



Ruth Ann Ingraham attended IPS schools #80 and Broad Ripple High, graduated from Purdue University in 1960 with a degree in French, married the following year, and left with her new husband on a 10-month adventure in a VW bus through West Africa, Europe, Scandinavia and England.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s Ruth Ann was Executive Director of Offender Aid and Restoration of Marion County and co-founded the Indianapolis Correctional Aftercare Network. Leaving that work, she co-founded the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society (INPAWS).

In addition to authoring *Swimming with Frogs: Life in the Brown County Hills*, her writings have appeared in *Traces*, the quarterly magazine published by the Indiana Historical Society, the INPAWS Journal and *Bloom* magazine.

#25 Written September 12, 2007 Ruth Ann Ingraham

Is Grass Green?

Earlier this week I attended a meeting of the Indiana Chapter of the US Green Building Council. I had the opportunity to ask a question of one of the presenters who was relating all the green efforts his company was initiating. "Have you considered getting rid of lawns." I have spoken on this subject before in this column yet I recently ran across a most relevant passage in a book written by Heather C. Flores, "Food not Lawns," that does such a good job on the subject that I herewith quote her liberally.

"French aristocrats popularized the idea of the green, grassy lawn in the eighteenth century when they planted the agricultural fields around their estates to grass to send the message that they had more land than they needed and could therefore afford to waste some. Meanwhile French peasants starved for lack of available farmland, and the resulting frustration might well have had something to do with the French Revolution in 1789.¹¹

Today fifty-eight million Americans spend approximately thirty billion dollars every year to maintain more than twenty-three million acres of lawn. That's an average of over a third of an acre and \$517 each. The same-sized plot of land could still have a small lawn for recreation *and* produce all the vegetables needed to feed a family of six. The lawns in the United States consume around 270 billion gallons of water a week-enough to water eighty-one million acres of organic vegetables, all summer long. Lawns use ten times as many chemicals per acre as industrial farmland. These pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides run off into our groundwater and evaporate into our air, causing widespread pollution and global warming, and greatly increasing our risk of cancer, heart disease, and birth defects. In addition, the pollution emitted from a power mower in just one hour is equal to the amount from a car being driven 350 miles. In fact, lawns use more equipment, labor, fuel, and agricultural toxins than industrial farming, making lawns the largest agricultural sector in the United States. But it's not just the residential lawns that are wasted on grass. There are around seven hundred thousand athletic grounds and 14,500 golf courses in the United States, many of which used to be fertile, productive farmland that was lost to developers when the local markets bottomed out."

"These huge numbers are somewhat overwhelming, if not completely incomprehensible, but they make the point that lawns not only are a highly inefficient use of space, water, and money but also are seriously contributing to the rapid degradation of our natural environment."

"If we truly feel committed to treating the earth and one another with equality and respect, the first place to show it is by how we treat the land we live on. It *is* time to grow food, not lawns! The reasons include reducing pollution, improving the quality of your diet, increasing local food security, and beautifying your surroundings, as well as building community and improving your mental and physical health. You will save money and enhance your connection with the earth and with your family."

"If we can change our land use philosophy from one of ownership and control to one of sharing and cooperation, we can renew our connection with the earth and one another and thus benefit through increased physical and mental health, an improved natural environment, and stronger local communities. What have you got to lose besides a few blades of grass?"

Heather certainly makes a compelling argument for the case that grass is not Green but also that lawns may be an artificial and wasteful extravagance we can no longer afford.

Why Green?

As some of you who read this column with some regularity may have already surmised, I am a creature who holds a romantic fondness for ritual. Life, in essence, is measured through the passage of time and ritual not only illuminates and celebrates special passages but also offers the possibility of fashioning a certain continuity between the past and the future of life. My life is filled with rituals for I consciously make an effort to transform life's mundane routines into rituals and to mark and celebrate those once-in-a-lifetime moments that connect me to time scales greater than my own life span. One such moment was the arrival of the New Millennium.

Christmas 1989 found me between jobs, between families, between marriages, and between loves. What I needed was an adventure. An opportunity was presented by my friend and travel agent, Carol, who was leading a trip to Rome for the holidays. New Year in Rome - how exciting! The first moment of the first day of the first year of the last decade of the 20th Century and the end of the Second Millennium - this passage seemed worthy of attention and celebration.

We flew into Rome on Christmas Day and enjoyed the sights for two days. I then parted from the group to visit family in Ancona where, one evening, my cousin Anna Grazzia, took me shopping for appropriate attire. My cousin is quite good at shopping and seemed to enjoy it immensely. Under her guidance we arrived at a small shop near the port section of the city where I plunked down more money than I had ever spent on any suit for a Giorgio Armani tuxedo.

The New Year celebration was held in a splendidly restored Baroque theater in an old part of Rome called Trastevere. The evening was a magical mix of Italian cabaret theatre; luscious 7 course meal with as many wines; elegant international company; Champaign, dancing, and general revelry and me in my Giorgio Armani. What an evening - a most memorable marking of the moment. Shortly after our return to the States I began a conversation with Carol to plan a trip to Rome for New Year 2000 and, sure enough, ten years later, there I was in St. Peter's Square in my Giorgio Armani toasting in the New Year, the New Century, and the New Millennium, with the Pope's blessing, fireworks, Patty, and 40,000 Italians and international visitors. Now, as the end of 2007 approaches, plans for New Year 2010 are already under way. A most grand and consequently rewarding ritual.

Why Green? "Why Green" was the title of the first article of this column written on October 14, 2006. Writing this column has become a ritual with a biweekly cycle. The ritual is perpetual and traces over all of my other activities. Celebration is in order at each completion and delivery to the editor even if a day late. The work begins anew only a few days later with the gathering of thoughts and ideas for the next one. I think about it often and try many ideas on for size. I talk to friends. I discuss it with Patty. I wring my hands, I ruminate, I procrastinate. Then at the last moment, usually in the early morning hours, I write it and send it in always reserving the right to make last minute changes prior to publication. So why do I do it? There are probably a myriad of reasons both intentional and sublimated yet I can tell you that it's definitely not the money. Rather, I am motivated by a vision that this New Millennium has indeed ushered in a new world. At the turn of the last century, the Eiffel Tower became the symbol of industrialized change that completely transformed all aspects of life and thought. This century, the planet is becoming the symbol for even greater change of a different sort looming our way - change that will make demands on us all. The world will be a very different place at the end of the 21st Century than it is today. Perhaps like no other time in history man's destiny will be determined by his individual and collective action. Change is inevitable. It will come to those who embrace and those who resist. I choose embrace.

Smart Growth

In the world of sustainability advocacy, there now exists a triad; New Urbanism, Green Building, and Smart Growth. All share many common convictions about elements that lead to improved quality of life yet each has a unique focus. New Urbanism is concerned with town planning, Green Building promotes Earth friendly, energy efficient, and healthful building design and construction while Smart Growth's focus is transportation.

On Monday, October 22, the Indiana Chapter of the American Planning Association, as part of their on-going Urban Planning Scholar Series, brought Mr. Dom Nozzi to town to speak. Mr. Nozzi is the Executive Director of Walkable Streets, www.walkablestreets.com, and the author of "Road to Ruin" and "The Car Is The Enemy Of The City"

"Transportation establishes Design!" That was the opening premise of his presentation - a truly powerful notion that he convincingly demonstrated during the course of his 2 hour presentation. Once the decision is made as to the primary way people will get around, certain patterns of development follow regardless of the desires and intensions of community planners. Sprawl is the consequence of our reliance on the automobile as the primary, and in our town the only viable, form of transportation. Since the 1950s, we in America, have been building spaces that make cars happy; wide multilane highways with high speed limits, huge parking lots, houses with garages as front doors, commercial strip centers surrounded by huge fields of asphalt... . Spaces that make people happy; are intimate and articulated, are pedestrian safe and friendly, are filled with human activity, foster conviviality, provide opportunity for serendipitous encounters... . "You can create spaces that make cars happy or you can create spaces that make people happy but you cant do both." Happy Cars versus Happy People.

Another salient point illuminated in the presentation is the fact that it is impossible to eliminate congestion by widening roads because of the principle of "Triple Convergence." Three inevitable consequences of road widening are: more rush hour traffic will converge, more people will choose to travel by car, and more people will change their route. Widening a four lane road to six lanes does not eliminate congestion it simply provides six lanes of congestion instead of four within a relative short period of time after completion.

Mr. Nozzi, who has traveled widely, pointed out, that our commitment to the auto has profoundly influenced our culture. In Europe, people live in much smaller residences and spend a much larger portion of their day out and about. A relative modest investment in the Private Realm and a huge investment in the Public Realm affords a much greater interaction with the other members of the community. This civic interaction is the source of stimulation and great satisfaction which sustains a high quality of life. In our culture, we build large, even palatial, private residences and almost completely disregard the Public Realm. We end up living isolated vicarious lives with television characters as our friends.



Mr. Nozzi gave his presentation to a number of groups here and in Bloomington. I had a chance to chat with him after attending a second presentation he delivered at The Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 52nd and Central Ave. the following evening. He was brought to our community by the Meridian Street Foundation as part of their exciting initiative; HARMONI. He brought to our community much vital information about the impact transportation has on our lives. How it effects development; relationship of Public/Private Realms; the importance of place making; the paradox of road widening, the nuance of congestion, the benefit of density, and how "Quality of Life", while improving life experience for the members of the community, ends up being a powerful economic engine as well. I intend to elaborate further on all these issues in subsequent articles for the ideas of Smart Growth are crucial to the

understanding of our current dilemma and why initiatives like HARMONI are important strategies for a better tomorrow.

Green Change

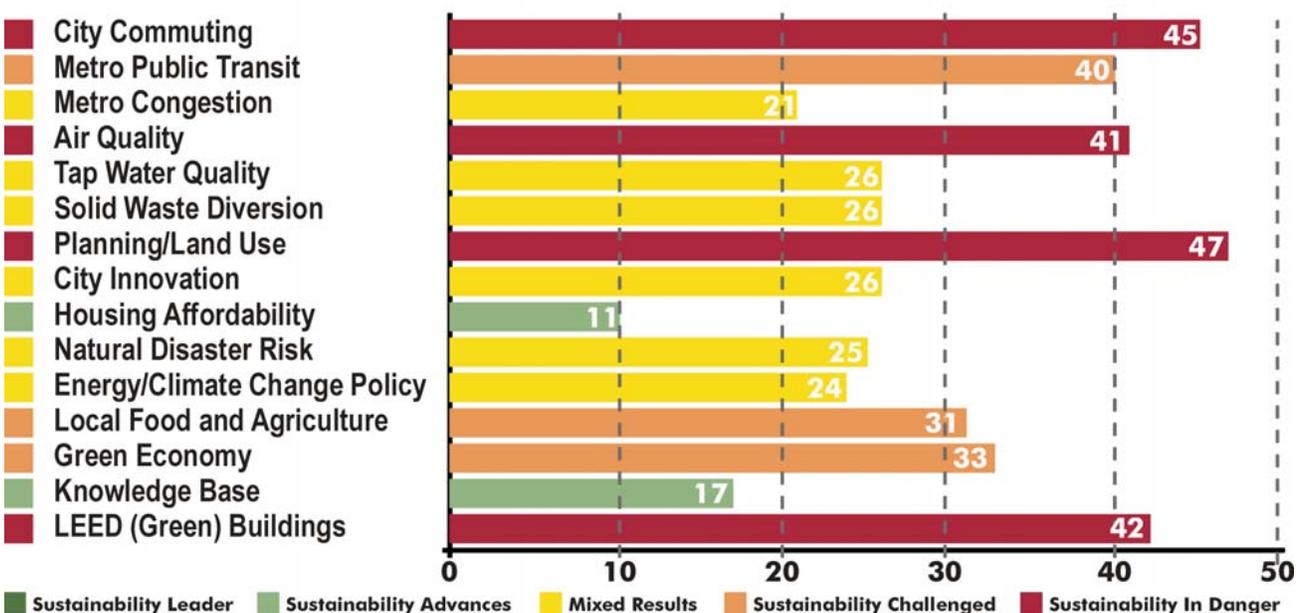
On November 6, 2007, I and many other citizens of Indianapolis went to the polls and cast an overwhelming vote for change. It was the first time in 40 years that an incumbent mayor was voted out of office. Apparently the challenger's message: "Had Enough?" resonated within our community. Although it is yet unclear what the consequences of this change will bring, many felt the need to chart a new direction. And so, change, as yet undefined, has come to our community through the power engendered in the citizen. This trust in the possibilities of a new yet untested future is the genius of our democratic American culture.

On November 7, 2007, I traveled to Chicago with Patty and other parties in a group trip to Greenbuild 2007 sponsored by Green Way Supply (GWS). We met at GWS at 7:00 AM for a continental breakfast and were in our bus and on the road by 8:00 AM. The bus was not only a Green way to travel but also afforded us an opportunity to talk and socialize on the three plus hour trip to McCormick Place. We encountered little traffic and the bus dropped us at the door - most convenient. We gathered again at the bus at 4:30 PM for the ride home and continued our socializing which was considerably enhanced by the introduction of food and adult beverages.

Greenbuild is the US Green Building Council's (USGBC) yearly conference and expo. The first one was held in 2002 in Austin, Texas and attracted 4,189 visitors. Last year it was held in Denver - it attracted 13,329. This year, in Chicago, over 28,000 visitors were expected. As we ascended the escalator to the exhibit hall level, we were flabbergasted by the vision of a huge line that snaked back and forth in the cavernous space for what seemed to be at least a mile or two. After somewhat forceful inquiries and indignant protestations we accepted the fact that this was our line for entry even though we were all pre-registered. Accepting the idea, we began to make the best of it by resuming our socializing and expanding our circle by engaging strangers in line. In doing so we learned that an unexpected 7,000 visitors had shown up over and above the record breaking attendance already expected and surely they were all in line ahead of us. We shuffled for 2 hours to be admitted yet, we came to realize that this is good. Green is definitely catching on. This is explosive growth - the kind of Green Change that is needed. You can see details on Greenbuild and view video of keynote speakers including Former President Bill Clinton at www.greenbuildexpo.org.

For this reason, I am quite proud of my membership in the USGBC and have great confidence that the organization is indeed making a difference in moving our culture toward a sustainable future through, as their motto says, "Transforming the Marketplace". Yet the marketplace cannot do it alone.

#45 Indianapolis, Indiana



The figure above is a reconstruction of a chart which appears on the www.sustainlane.com web site showing the ranking of the 50 largest cities in America - the lower the number the better. Indianapolis is ranked 45th - not a source of pride. A number of the glaring deficits such as Public Transportation, Air Quality, Planning/Land Use are functions of city government and, although the former administration aspired to leadership in this realm, the performance has been dismal. Where we appear better, in Affordable Housing say, the reason may be more a function of the depressed real estate market than intended sustainability efforts. Hopefully, the new city administration will do better. It is not only city government that matters in the equation however. We all must assume our measure of responsibility for the improved livability of our city. We can do much in our personal life to live Greener lives yet we could accomplish even more through concerted effort at the local government level. For this reason, I urge you to get involved with the nearest thing we, in Broad Ripple, have to a local government; the Broad Ripple Village Association (BRVA). On Tuesday, November 20, 2007, the BRVA will hold its annual elections for Members of the Board of Directors at the Indianapolis Art Center. The elected members will serve on the Board for three years and make many decisions that will affect all our lives and the life of the community. Show up; get informed; if a member, "Vote for the Future" of our marvelously unique community. Let's see if we, together, can begin the process of Green Change for a more hopeful, healthful and prosperous tomorrow.

#29 Written November 9, 2007 © Cortellini 2007

Unsustainable Development

It is my observation that almost everyone in our community has a vision of what Broad Ripple could be and as there are about 12,000 residents and many more merchants and visitors, there are probably as many visions for a future Broad Ripple. This is not a situation that is conducive to the creation of an action plan. What Broad Ripple has not yet been able to do is to create a single vision for an obtainable future arrived at through a process of consensus building whereby many visions are forged into a single plan for the future that all can buy into. Not an individual vision of community but a community vision of itself. This is the vision that is missing in Broad Ripple. The first step toward creating this vision is to design the consensus process itself. This is the first work we face - designing a plan for the development of the plan.

In order to make headway in this endeavor, we first must cure ourselves of the NIMBY disease. The notion of a NIMBY epidemic was only one of a number of valuable ideas Dom Nozzi provided to us during his presentation on Smart Growth that he brought to our city and our community last month. The symptoms of NIMBY and related maladies seem to be: partial loss of vision making the sufferer oblivious to elements of his/her environment, partial paralysis whereby the afflicted, although he/she may realize increased urges toward reactionary behavior, loses all capability for proactive endeavor, a reduction of brain capability especially in rational functionality, and a development of a curious behavior reminiscent of the ostrich's strategy for avoiding danger. NIMBY is an acronym for "Not In My Back Yard." Other related afflictions are: NIMTOO = Not In My Term Of Office, CAVE = Coalition Against Virtually Everything, BANANA = Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything, NOTE = Not Over There Either, and NOPE = Not On Planet Earth.

Some who are afflicted with NIMBY, and there seems to be a considerable number in Broad Ripple, would say that my characterization is unfair - that NIMBY is not an affliction but represents a legitimate vision of the most desirable future for Broad Ripple. Yet I propose that this view has done little to stop change from happening. What it has done is to effectively prevent our community from being able to manage or even influence the change. Instead of development occurring as a result of public discourse the process has gone underground. Important and far reaching decisions are made in closed secret meetings well outside the realm of public scrutiny. The worst strategy for a developer is to openly announce his intentions and invite the community to participate. It is obvious that this policy based on preventing change is ineffective and, most importantly, will never be capable of producing a plan to manage the inevitable change that is certain in our future.

Parking is a hot button for every merchant in Broad Ripple. Much of downtown Broad Ripple is Zoned C4 (Community-Regional Commercial District). For the purpose of our discussion, let us say that a new tavern would like to open its doors on Broad Ripple Avenue. The Commercial District Regulations would require this new business to provide one off street parking place for every employee and one for every 75 SF of bar floor space. A 5,000 square foot drinking establishment employing 20 people would need to provide 87 parking places in order to satisfy zoning requirements as set forth by the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC). Now the fact that providing 87 new off street parking spaces in down town Broad Ripple is probably an impossibility, coupled with the fact that a bar has a huge profit potential provides incentives for clever people to find ways around this regulation. For a number of years, a parking shell game has been perpetuated right under the nose of MDC. The prospective owner meets the parking requirements by renting any excess parking any adjoining businesses might have to amass the total number required - a practice commonly accepted by MDC. After a year of operation however, the establishment simply stops paying for the rented spaces. As MDC has no means in place to track which space belongs to which business, excess parking is used over and over again in this way for various businesses to technically meet the letter of the zoning requirements while avoiding the regulation's intended effect at the expense of the community.

Now you may say that this is a highly unlikely hypothetical scenario. Information has come my way however, that a large chain by the name of Brothers Bar & Grill is currently negotiating to purchase the Broad Ripple Trophy Center building for their operation and it seems to me that playing the shell game will be an irresistible way for them to meet the zoning requirements. As a community we have the right to question whether a new additional 5,000 SF bar is likely to benefit the community. We have the right to have a say in how we want the future to be in Broad Ripple. Since no community vision for a future exists and Broad Ripple has consistently failed to muster sufficient civic energy to counter the power of big money outside interests it is likely that Big Brothers will open before most Broad Ripple citizens have an opportunity to ask what's up.

Green Health

In an earlier article I stated that in the world of sustainable development advocacy, there existed a triad; New Urbanism, Green Building, and Smart Growth all who shared many common convictions about elements that lead to improved quality of life. All three originated in the building and planning industry. There is a fourth faction as well and it arises from a totally different endeavor - the health care industry.

The Alliance for Health Promotion (AHP) is a health advocacy association that, in their own words, "... collaborates with organizations in the public and private sectors to implement best practice approaches to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce behavior-based diseases in Indiana." Alarmed at the epidemic proportion of obesity and diabetes, especially in the young, this, and many other health organizations, began to investigate the causes for this ill health. What they found, again in their own words, is that "Since World War II, physical activity has been engineered out of many parts of American life. From elevators and drive-thru restaurants to cul-de-sac suburbs and strip malls, we have become increasingly sedentary. Currently, more than one in four Americans get no activity at all in an average day. Not surprisingly, rates of obesity and related health problems have skyrocketed during the same time period." Subsequently, the AHP has formed the Health by Design coalition to "... find creative approaches for integrating physical activity into Hoosiers' lives. Rather than solely addressing obesity as an individual health problem, the coalition's work focuses on how the built environment — including neighborhoods, transportation systems, buildings, parks and open space — can promote more active lives."

So it turns out that the way we currently build our cities and our neighborhoods is not only unhealthy for the planet in an abstract long term sense but unhealthy for us and our children in a very real and immediate sense. Whatever economic benefits are touted for the way we currently produce the built environment will be dwarfed by the expense of caring for the fully 25% of our population, including children, who are made ill by their life style. Does his make any sense?

On September 10, 2007, I attended the first Health by Design conference where five speakers made compelling presentations that, while geared to a focus of health, looked very similar to those delivered by Smart Growth advocates and New Urbanists. The two reoccurring themes; moving away from our auto based culture, and encouraging urban density with increased accommodation of pedestrian and bicycle traffic, were restated and strongly reaffirmed as desirable, if not essential, strategies for stemming the current health crisis.

The images below were borrowed from a slide presentation "The Consequences of Inactivity" by Richard E. Killingsworth, Executive Director of The Harvest Foundation delivered at the conference.



This scene depicts what Dom Nozzi would describe as Happy Car Space. A space where cars are very happy - long straight wide roads which accommodate high speeds; spacious abundant parking; large easily legible signs; and an absence of encumbrances such as slow bicycles and pedestrians. This is space scaled to the benefit of the automobile.



This is the same scene transformed into what Dom Nozzi would call a Happy People Space. A space where people are very happy - planned as mixed use where living and working are in walking proximity; intimate and articulated offering opportunity for interaction and serendipitous encounters; providing many charming places to congregate; accommodating multimodal transportation and calm vehicular traffic for efficiency and safety. This is space scaled to the benefit of the human being.



This is a photo I took of our own College Avenue. While not as austere as the first image, College Avenue is still very much a Happy Car Space as anyone crossing this street during rush hour as a pedestrian will attest. Those of us Broad Ripple citizens who are still afflicted with the NIMBY disease ("Not In My Back Yard" - see last article) don't see any problem with this situation. In fact we view College Avenue as an important line of demarcation between the living and working areas of our community which we feel, must be kept separate. We hold contempt for the concepts of density and mixed use. We see no reason to bring about change. Those of us Broad Ripple citizens who, on the other hand, see Broad Ripple for the urban community that it has become cannot help feel that transforming College Avenue to a Happy People Space is not only the desirable Green thing to do toward restoring the health of Mother Earth, but also would provide a major boost to our local economy. Most importantly, we would be taking a first essential step toward restoring our own health and the health of our children.

Letting Go

New Years is my favorite holiday. For me and my wife Patty, it has become an important event observed with ceremony and ritual, and holding profound spiritual consequences. Socrates once said; "The unexamined life is not worth living." New Years, for us, is the celebration of our examined life; a time of reflection on our past; and a renewed commitment for the future. Our New Year's ritual is less a pronouncement of resolutions and more of an establishment of a theme for the year. These themes do not arise arbitrarily from our will. They make themselves known to us as we spend time reflecting on the events of our lives and after the year ends, they become a permanent part of our introspective awareness.

The theme that presented itself in 2006 was "Appropriate Selfishness." 2007 as the year of "Unrelenting Patience" and, I must say, Patty and I have been amazed at the large number of opportunities that presented themselves to practice this virtue since the theme gave our vision a focus. For 2008, "Letting Go" has come to light as timely both in our personal lives and the world at large.

The relevance of "Letting Go" in our personal lives was brought home to us through a book we are currently sharing entitled "Hooked - Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume." The foreword written by Paul Hawken, a major figure in the sustainability and social justice movement, recounts the story of a friend who at one time was an officer of a large world bank whose home currently holds a total of 600 objects. This is everything, including teaspoons. The result of a willful commitment on limiting consumption, when he buys something or accepts a gift, he selects something to give away. Hawken goes on to say "This is not a zero sum game. As the years have gone by, his home has become more nuanced and lovely. Every object has meaning; nothing is retained unnecessarily. His home is like a small temple. He needs little money to live on, which means he spends most of his time helping others. He is utterly alive, elfish, bright eyed and present." This is an appealing vision for us yet Patty points out we have a long way to go for we probably have more than 600 objects in any one room of our house.

"The Arctic is Screaming." This is the headline of a December 11, 2007 Associated Press story that quotes concerned scientists who expressed alarm at the rate that summer ice is disappearing around the north pole. Earlier worst case scenarios predicted the disappearance of Arctic summer ice by the year 2040. New data suggest that summer ice is likely to disappear by the year of 2012 - just a few short years away. In the scientific community there is very little doubt that global warming is real; that it is indeed caused by our industrialized way of life; and that it poses the greatest threat to civilized humanity the world has ever known.

"The American Way of Life is not negotiable." Thus President George H. W. Bush forcefully declared at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This policy continues under his son. The current American Way is based on our disproportionate consumption of the world resources and is, at its core, unsustainable. We lead the way in producing the pollutants responsible for climate change through our consumption. In the 60s, we talked about Conspicuous Consumption. The 80s and 90s ushered in Excessive Consumption and the new millennium brought us Extreme Consumption. We are told that consumption, even if wasteful, drives the economic engine that provides prosperity. We are seduced by sophisticated marketing messages that promise that consuming will make us happy and create in us a want of want that can never be satisfied. We Americans constitute 5% of the world's population but consume 24% of the world's energy. If undeveloped countries consumed at the same rate as the US, four complete planets the size of the Earth would be required yet we believe that we have a right to our American Way - a principle we cling to strongly.

If America is to assume its rightful role as world leader it must do so through example. It must regenerate the American Spirit for honest assessment, benevolent intent, nobility of vision, and courageous action that has made it the great nation that it is. It must recognize its responsibility to the other peoples of the planet and to the planet itself. It must assert its confidence, embrace the future, and lead the way to a new American Way based on principles of sustainability. In the effort to mitigate climate change, it will not suffice for America to simply change its light bulbs to CFLs. The hope of the world is that America will realize that it can and must, in the period of a few decades, reinvent itself. The first step is "Letting Go."

Green Contrast

Did you read the informed and depressing article appearing in the December 12 issue of *Nuvo* written by Broad Ripple author and business owner Tom Healy entitled; "The Toxic State of Indiana?" If you missed it, you can read it online at http://nuvo.net/articles/the_toxic_state_of_indiana/. In the article, Tom skillfully elucidates all the reasons why Indiana was ranked 49th on *Forbes* magazine's published list of America's Greenest States. 49th - only West Virginia was lower. As a city, Indianapolis does not fare much better and is ranked 45th of the 50 largest US cities by Sustainlane.com while our big sister to the north, Chicago, is #4. How can we be so close and yet so far apart?

Below left is the Highlights portion (only a small part of the web page) of the Department of Environment (DOE) to be found on the City of Chicago web site. On the right is the local counterpart to be found on the Indygov web site and is all that appears on the web page. "Locate a Recycling Site" and "Mayor's Action Center" are links that no longer work and "Keep Indianapolis Beautiful" is a private sector not-for-profit, not a government agency. The contrast is striking don't you think?

Chicago



Welcome to DOE

Our mission is to protect human health and the environment, improve the urban quality of life, and promote economic development.

Highlights

03-Dec-2007 [Green to Blue Christmas Tree Recycling](#)
07-Nov-2007 [Daley, President Bill Clinton Announce Climate Change Initiatives](#)
24-Oct-2007 [Mayor Daley Kicks Off Green Building Month](#)
10-Oct-2007 [Mayor Daley Announces New Cool Roof Grant Program](#)
16-Aug-2007 [Mayor Daley Names New Commissioner and Creates New Post](#)
11-Jun-2007 [Mayor Daley Announces Protocol for Protecting Calumet Region's Plants and Animals](#)
28-Mar-2007 [Join Us in Taking the 2007 Environmental Pledge](#)
26-Mar-2007 [Mayor Daley Announces Energy-Efficient Light Bulb Giveaway](#)
15-Feb-2007 [Be a part of Chicago Conservation Corps Leadership Training in April](#)

Indianapolis

Environment Services

- [Fine Particle Readings](#)
- [Locate A Recycling Site](#)
- [Ozone Readings](#)
- [Environmental Monitoring and Protection](#)
- [Mayor's Action Center \(MAC\)](#)
- [Keep Indianapolis Beautiful](#)
- [Knozone](#)

It is most hopeful that given the obvious lack of initiative on the part of our state and city governments in leading our communities toward a more healthful sustainable way of living, the Green idea is being embraced by an ever increasing number of Hoosiers who are taking the time to inform themselves on the issues. Increasingly they are; joining Green advocacy groups; attending "Carbon Diet" workshops; starting Green Ministries at their place of worship; signing up for Sustainability Seminars; looking for ways to recycle and conserve; and incorporating Green ideas in their daily lives. The remarkable spread and coalescing of the Green idea at this grass roots level is facilitated by a phenomenal access to information especially through the internet and it is this feature of our culture that holds the promise for the change so urgently needed yet so strongly resisted. Hoosiers must continue this effort and take a step further. They must hold governing officials responsible for their actions or inactions. They must review government action with a critical eye and have the courage to speak openly, loudly and in a forthright manner on these the most critical issues of our day - bravo Tom.

The dismal environmental record of our past Mayor does have a bright note. One year ago, he established the Green Commission and the Indy Greenprint initiative and, while a whole decade later than Chicago, it is beginning to bear first fruit. The Commission recently released its first report. Among language apparently intended to reassure the established business interests in our community that no drastic change will be forthcoming, it does contain many important and valuable ideas that, if implemented, could only lead to drastic change. Is this contrast or is this paradox? You can judge for yourself by accessing the 43 page report at <http://chapters.usgbc.org/indiana/documents/GreenPrintActionAgendafinal.pdf>. To me it looks like paradox. Yet life's lessons have compelled me to accept that paradox is unavoidable and often irresolvable thus I have no difficulty in delving deeper into this document in subsequent articles to see if I might gain and share insight, however speculative, as to how this document might actually change our daily lives.

Livability

In the last article I pointed to the fact that Indiana was ranked 49th of the 50 states on *Forbes* magazine's published list of America's Greenest States. The depression that set in on contemplating this bit of information was relived by the first fruits of the Indy Green Commission. You can access the first report at <http://chapters.usgbc.org/indiana/documents/GreenPrintActionAgendafinal.pdf>. Now I personally like the word "Green" because of its wide general inference and its friendly non threatening tone however, these positive attributes may actually disguise the gravity of the issues facing us. So, for a time, I would like to use the word "Livability" in place of the word "Green" in the context of the same discussion. The Greener, the more Livable. This small change forces us to realize that our state is next to last in the country in Livability.

Having been buoyed by the notion that the city of Indianapolis was actually coming up with ideas for improving the Livability of our city, my hopes were sunk by our man Mitch's 2008 State of the State address. You can read the speech at <http://www.indgop.org/newslinks/display.php?NewsID=245>. It is no wonder that our state is at the bottom - not a single mention of sustainability, Green, or Livability. These issues don't appear even to be on his horizon. Ironically, under the guise of no more business as usual, he continues to perpetuate last century's growth models that have led to our current low Quality of Life status - policies that enrich the few at the expense of the many with great cost to the environment. Is this progress? Is this improved Livability?

I will expound on these two documents in subsequent articles for they contain much revealing information but here, I want to apply the notion of Livability closer to home - Broad Ripple. On a walk along the trail, Patty and I stopped in Sunflower Market last Saturday to purchase some green bell peppers for a dish we were preparing and were most disturbed to be greeted with a sign that announced the imminent closing of the Market in the next couple of weeks. We briefly discussed the matter with the manager and other staff and it seems that the store did not generate sufficient profits to satisfy food distributor giant Super Value out of Minneapolis the owner of the Sunflower chain. The decision was strictly financial - Livability issues not a consideration.

At the same time, we understand that the plans for a Big Brother's bar to soon occupy the Broad Ripple Trophy Center Building are progressing. Given that police representatives state that 90% of Broad Ripple crime is bar related and that our community continually fights a severe litter problem that includes numerous protein spills (tern coined by Rich Bees) generated every weekend, in large part, by the cultural tourists that frequent the bar scene, how is the addition of one more drinking establishment likely to effect the Livability of the residence of the Village?

There is a general notion that if you want to open a restaurant it is good practice to select a location where other restaurants already flourish. The same must also be true of bars - at least it appears that way in Broad Ripple. While economics might not allow the survival of a community asset such as the Market, there seems to be no shortage of profit to be made in bar keeping - but what is the effect on Livability? The fact is that the high profitability of bars makes them formidable competitors in the real-estate market for their operation can afford to absorb much higher rents than a typical small retail store. What is most disturbing is that after the Market liquidates its inventory; the employees manage to find new jobs; and the Market closes its doors, the building will only be affordable to another bar operation - Hooters perhaps?

Twenty years ago Boston experimented with legalization of the seedier social elements and concentrating their activity in an area about the size of down town Broad Ripple that became known as "The Combat Zone". Perhaps Broad Ripple is destined to become Indianapolis' "Combat Zone" by design, by happenstance, or by economics. On the other hand we could come together and muster the resources to influence our destiny toward a more Livable future. Mounting an effort to keep the market functioning as food store, perhaps as a food coop, would be a huge undertaking - yet a successful community owned and managed food coop is not without precedent. Our community could gain much more than fresh locally grown vegetables in the organizing effort. The process will most certainly bring neighbors together in community - the single most important factor of Livability. If interested in what might be possible, please send me an e-mail at the address below.

Livability First

Perhaps the most significant initiative of the last mayoral administration, in terms of improving the Livability of our city, was the establishment of the Indianapolis-Marion County Green Commission (Commission) and the Indy GreenPrint Initiative (GreenPrint). It is to the credit of our new Mayor that he appears to be supporting a continuing effort of the Commission. As I mentioned in previous articles, the Commission has issued the first report - "Action Agenda: Phase 1" (Report) of its investigation which you can access through a link at www.greenbroadripple.org.

The Report opens with: "Commitment to Progress toward Sustainability."

"In 2007, the Indianapolis community began its first organized effort to bring together diverse community stakeholders to construct an action agenda for achieving the integrated goals of enhancing economic prosperity and maintaining a healthy environment in order to ensure a vibrant, sustainable Indianapolis." "...Mayor Peterson asked the Green Commission to map a process consistent with the Indy GreenPrint whereby economic vitality and environmental responsibility reinforce one another over time - ensuring a high quality of life for ourselves and our children and, thereby, creating a legacy that will sustain future generations in Indianapolis." In my opinion, our community would have been much better served had he begun GreenPrint in 2001 instead of the Cultural District Initiative that, as far as I can see, did little, if anything, to improve the Livability of our community. It did, however, generate a substantial amount of expensive hype which you can access through another link at www.greenbroadripple.org entitled "The First Five Years." I could elaborate extensively on the failings of the Cultural District Initiative, and will do so if forced to, yet my preference is to look to the future and the promise of our "Commitment to Progress toward Sustainability" - a commitment to improve, not the image, but the actual Livability of our community. The Report offers 29 recommendations that, if implemented, will allow us to feel good about letting go of the stuff of the last century and bring us in step with the challenge and the promise of this new 21st century.

I would like here to point to the last three recommendations of the Report for they deal with neighborhood revitalization which, in my mind, is at the root of Liability. The final section of the Report opens with a quote: "Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how." It then offers the following:

"Recommendation

27:

Invest in community organizing around quality of life planning."

"Recommendation 28:

Invest in neighborhood-level sustainability initiatives attending to both the built and natural environments."

"Recommendation 29:

Support and direct neighborhood residents' efforts to connect with the resources and build the relationships necessary to effectively implement neighborhood plans."

This is very encouraging for it is precisely what needs to happen if Broad Ripple is to realize its full potential and capitalize on the dynamics of the times and gain, rather than loose out, in the maelstrom of risk and opportunity created by the change that is surely coming our way. The elaboration of these three recommendations in the Report offers a roadmap for a positive future for our community yet, this future can only be realized through proactive action. Unfortunately there is, as yet, no agency in our community with the intellect, the will, the organization, and the competence to implement or even fully understand these recommendations let alone embark on an effort to organize Broad Ripple into an effective cohesive community. What Broad Ripple needs is an organization that invites all the citizens of the community to participate in the planning effort so that all have a stake in the plan's success; an organization that recognizes that at the heart of community is the sense of inclusion and belonging that is fundamental to human well-being; an organization that would champion the interest of the people who live and work in Broad Ripple in order to make our community an exemplar place to live, work and rear children; a community that would work to create a prosperous, healthful, vibrant, and nurturing environment. A community that among the many considerations: taxes, politics, traffic, development, business... , would place Livability First.

Livability Verso - Consuming

Earlier this month, Patty and I received an intriguing invitation. The National Association of Women Business Owners in conjunction with the Indiana Business Diversity Council and Ice Miller's Legal Series sent out an invitation to "... join Ice Miller's Kristina Tridico, Paul Jones and Julie Williams as they discuss the legal aspects and bottom-line benefits of "greening" your business." Wow - Ice Miller; a prominent, conservative, Indianapolis legal institution was holding a conference subtitled "Why Green, Why Now". How could we resist?

At around 10:00 AM on the morning of Tuesday, February 19, we caught bus 18 at 60th and Central Avenue for a 25 minute trip to downtown Indianapolis hopping off at Ohio and Meridian Street. As a means of economy, we had planned to run a couple of errands prior to the Ice Miller event. I don't know how many of you were out and about that day but if you were you can remember that it was unusually cold due to low temperatures and high wind conditions. Nevertheless we walked from Ohio and Meridian Street to the Power and Light Building on the circle and then to the offices of Keep Indianapolis Beautiful near Pennsylvania and St. Claire Street to pick up materials Patty needed for a Low Carbon Diet workshop she is co-facilitating. We then walked to the offices of Ice Miller in the One American Square Building at the corner of Ohio and Illinois Street. We arrived early, with errands completed, over 13,000 steps chalked up on our pedometers, and a healthy vigor from the cold and exercise. As the remaining attendees filtered in, we selected our box lunch and waited for the room to fill. We could not help to muse as to how many of them arrived the way we did.

For Patty and me the presentation held little new. We were glad to hear that there are federal tax deductions of up to \$1.80/SQ for LEED certified buildings as well as federal energy tax credits and that the Department of Energy has little used grant programs of \$5,000 to \$25,000 to promote renewable energy. We shared in the embarrassment when the discussion turned to the paucity of Indiana sustainability initiatives, legislative and otherwise. Nevertheless we were happy to see Ice Miller spreading the good word to the local business community and apparently, to many in the room who seemed to be hearing the message for the first time.

Under the heading of Corporate Opportunities, Internal Actions, the presentation hit a discordant note that points to just how long the road to a sustainable economy promises to be. It was noted that natural daylight in buildings not only conserves energy but brings many benefits to the occupants such as increased productivity, faster healing for hospital patients, higher test scores for students, and increased sense of well being. Yet what seemed to be of even greater interest was that when Wall-Mart installed skylights in certain areas of their stores, that area sold more products. I was tempted to make a reference the *Story of Stuff* with Annie Leonard, which you can access through a link at www.greenbroadripple.org, but a gentle yet firm kick under the table from Patty dissuaded me from that course. Thus we were able to leave the



gathering on good terms with everyone. We walked to the bus stop and a short while later were heading north to Broad Ripple. The ride afforded us a generous moment for reflection.

At this time the facing page of Livability is Consuming. We must find a way to turn to a new page - perhaps even to a new chapter where we might find the facing page of Livability is Conservation.

#36 Written February 23, 2008 © Cortellini 2008

Planning Livability

The paradigm which, even today, directs the efforts of most city planners and zoning ordinances that brought us our pervasive sprawl landscape emerged in the 1950s. An early influence in this direction was a proposal made by Ebenezer Howard in 1898 in London England to build a new kind of town - the Garden City. Sir Patrick Geddes extended the Garden City to entire regions under concepts of regional planning that were enthusiastically adopted in American building in the 1920s. The works and teaching of Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, Catherine Bauer... among others, elaborated the concept that cities would be best thinned out with their population and enterprises dispersed among smaller towns. They became known as the "Decentrists" and they gave us suburbia.

Our need to ramp up the postwar economy and our victory in WW2 gave us an unquestioned confidence in the power of industrialization which made it easy for us to adopt proclamations such as: *"Our enormously productive economy... demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption... We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate"* - Victor Lebow, 1955. We have been consuming with reckless abandon ever since. Our love of competition, genius for practical problem solving and the availability of cheap energy made us Number One in the World in almost any way one cares to measure with the exception of happiness perhaps. Yet it has also brought us to this moment in time where it has become apparent that the aggregate of negative consequences of our approach to growth has reached a critical mass so as to demand our attention to the need for change. What must change? Well for starters we need to reconsider our consuming habits and then the way we go about planning our communities.

In matters of planning, here is what the Indianapolis - Marion County Green Commission had to say in their first report issued at the end on 2007: *"Recommendation 27: Invest in community organizing around quality of life planning. We recommend marrying neighborhood organizing with neighborhood planning that identifies, inventories, and builds upon existing assets in the neighborhood. When neighborhood residents participate in defining the character of their neighborhood, they are much more likely to feel a sense of control, ownership, and pride toward their neighborhood and, subsequently, are much more likely to actively participate in sustaining a higher quality of life in their community."* This seems to me to be a new approach that is based on some sound reasoning. The approach recognizes that the power and authority to determine how a community is to grow rests best with the members of the community itself - with those who have intimate knowledge of how the community actually works not some remote bureaucrat employing abstract notion of how a community should function. We the citizens of Broad Ripple should rightly be the planners of Broad Ripple's future. How are we to begin?

With authority comes responsibility. Planning involves complicated issues that often require counter-intuitive insights. If we, the citizens of Broad Ripple, are to undertake such an enterprise, we will need to muster and cultivate our highest level of objectivity and put our prejudices behind us. We will need to organize and build sound democratic organizations that are inclusive while remaining effective. We will need to bring all facets of our community together in open and candid dialogue and work cooperatively toward a mutual goal. Most importantly, we will need to educate ourselves for it will not serve our efforts well to simply rely on our good intentions and good instincts. As an inaugural event in this enterprise, Green Broad Ripple Inc. will coordinate a "One Book One Broad Ripple" community wide read. During the next month, however many join the effort, will read "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" by Jane Jacobs. The book was written in 1961 and has become a classic. The New York Times described it as "perhaps the most influential single work in the history of town planning..." All who have an interest can purchase a copy at our very special local Big Hat Books bookstore or take it on loan from the Glendale or 42nd Street libraries. Additional details are to follow.

As war is too important to be left to the generals, community planning is too important to be left to the officials. We, in Broad Ripple, have an opportunity and even an obligation to build a plan setting forth the direction of our community's future. Each of us has something of value to contribute. We who have been around a while and remember how things used to be can provide continuity and a sense of heritage. Those with families can provide stability and hope for a viable tomorrow. Youth can contribute vitality and expectation of the future. All this and more will be needed in any viable effort towards making Broad Ripple a more Livable community now and for the decades to come.

Planning Livability Together

On Tuesday, March 18, 2008, the Broad Ripple Village Association (BRVA) sponsored another Town Hall Meeting held in the small auditorium of Broad Ripple High School. The format was quite different from the two previous meetings I attended last year and, for me, represented a marked improvement. The statements by the panelists were kept brief allowing a greater percentage of the meeting time for questions from the attending citizens who were asked to submit questions in writing. Written questions seemed to impart more rigor and precision to the process while reducing the emotional and confrontational elements. Even as many questions raised issues whose answer would require more time afforded by a town meeting forum and other questions posed complicated issues in oversimplified terms, the panel generally did a good job of responding to the intent of the question.

In terms of planning, most questions were fielded by Ryan Vaughn, District 3 City-County Councillor and Maury Plambeck, Director Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD). Our Councillor was most impressive. His answers were honest and intelligent. He appeared to be on top off the issues that came his way and it was obvious that he is proactive in addressing many of these in his personal initiatives with other council members and community leaders. Our community promises to benefit greatly from his work, forthright demeanor, and informed and considered opinion. We are fortunate to have him for we, as a community, have much that we must do. Mr. Plambeck also did a good job of fielding questions but his answers were less direct for he spoke as the head of DMD a large Unigov agency of 250 employees.

"In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is", Yogi Berra. The theory: A community benefits from having a vision of a future and a plan to guide change toward that vision. The vision and the plan are best developed by the citizens of the community in an inclusive process that makes each citizen a stakeholder. The plan is primarily founded in concern for the well being of the citizens of the community while at the same time fostering and encouraging creative economic development. The plan contains built in flexibility and is implemented evenly and equitably. In practice: things are quite different indeed.

Development in Broad Ripple is directed by the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan that was originally adopted in 1965 and subsequently in 1969, 1977, 1984, and 1991-93. It has undergone an extensive update with the Indianapolis Insight initiative commencing in 2000 and ending in December of 2006. This update promises to change things for the better yet it has been, as of now, only partially adopted and it is difficult to anticipate how long it may take for the plan to influence real change in the zoning process. A huge amount of time, professional and volunteer, along with a sizable sum of money has gone into the development of this plan. You can sense the scope of the effort by visiting www.indygov.org/eGov/City/DMD/ED/home.htm. Even though the plan is updated every 4 to 8 years, it always seems to be behind the times.

Currently, Mixed Use (considered by many as a desirable approach to town planning where commercial space and residential units exist in the same building) is poorly accommodated by the current zoning ordinance. The approval of a mixed use project often requires special procedures such as Planned Unit Development (PUD), Rezoning, or Zoning Variance which are costly, time consuming and subject to subjective influences resulting in unpredictable outcomes. Let's consider the Zoning Variance process.

If an entrepreneur wants to build a mixed use project on a parcel whose current zoning does not allow mixed use he needs to apply for a Variance of Use. This 35 day process that often takes longer and sometimes can take years, begins with the filing of the petition. The paperwork is not impossible yet if you are serious about prevailing in the process, it is advised that you retain an attorney, or other professional, specialized in the zoning process. Once filed, the entrepreneur becomes the petitioner. The process requires the petitioner to mail legal notice to neighborhood groups and surrounding property owners no later than 23 days prior to the petition coming before one of three divisions of the Board of Zoning Appeals. The petition is assigned a planner, a staff member of the planning department of DMD, to review the project and produce a report with recommendations published 7 days prior to the hearing. This is where the process begins to accrue some subjective elements. Where project that fit the requirements of the current zoning ordinance are approved as a matter of routine regardless of their quality, projects that require a variance are subjected to additional scrutiny.

At our town meeting, in response to a zoning question, Mr. Plambeck informed us that the planning staff and the five member Board of Zoning Appeals take five elements into account in zoning petition issues according to the requirements of Indiana Code 36-7-4-603, which requires that the Metropolitan Development Commission pay reasonable regard to:

1. The Comprehensive Plan;
2. Current conditions and character of structures and uses in each district;
3. Most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted;
4. Conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction;
5. Reasonable development and growth;

Mr. Plambeck concluded that DMD does not and rightly cannot lead community planning at the neighborhood level. This is understandable. He did say that DMD is prepared to assist our community in such an effort as it has in earlier attempts. We in Broad Ripple would do well to come together and take him up on it.

Planning Livability - First Step

Tuesday, April 22 is Earth Day 2008. Last year, on Earth Day 2007, Green Broad Ripple celebrated with an event entitled "Glimpse the Future" that presented completed and planned "Green" projects in Indianapolis and elsewhere in the state. This year, Green Broad Ripple Inc. will sponsor "Envision the Future" which will explore the necessary elements in organizing an effort to develop a "Town Plan" (Plan) for the greater Broad Ripple community. Creating a Plan will not be easy for the process must accommodate and reconcile many diverse and strongly held views. The Plan must address all aspects of community life; safety, aesthetic, economic, political, cultural.... The planning process will raise important issues that impact every citizen and will likely bring to the fore difficult points of contention. Yet we must establish the confidence that we, as a community, have, or can attract, the resources to see the process through.

LISC (Local Initiative Support Corporation) is one such promising resource. Its motto is; "Helping neighbors build communities." It does so in a myriad of ways as one discovers by browsing their website - www.lisc.org. Most interesting is the GINI (Great Indianapolis Neighborhoods Initiative) project - a pilot program to support comprehensive community development in six demonstration Indianapolis neighborhoods by helping each create a comprehensive quality of life plan. "A Comprehensive Quality of Life Plan" - an intriguing possibility for Broad Ripple - no? In my discussions with Will Pritchard, LISC Senior Program Officer, I learned that the planning phase of the GINI initiative concluded in 2007 yet, he went on to say, there is no reason why our neighborhood could not undertake an independent effort using their procedures, methods, and published material. LISC would be willing to assist in this effort as well as investigate the possible availability of suitable grants to fund the effort. Mr. Pritchard has agreed to participate in our Earth Day 2008 gathering and contribute to our discussion of planning and its process.

Another resource is HARMONI (Historic Midtown Neighborhoods Initiatives), an organization whose mission is to catalyze a new "Indy Midtown" in the same way that Indianapolis Downtown, Inc. helped to revitalize downtown's quality of life and economic development (see www.indyharmoni.org). This initiative is a high priority of the four participating neighborhoods: Meridian-Kessler, Broad Ripple Village, Butler-Tarkington, and the Meridian Street Foundation. In its short life, this organization has already begun employing Smart Growth principles in an initiative to revitalize the Meridian Street corridor. It has recently obtained city approval for a Meridian Street improvement proposal that includes traffic calming concepts - a feat impossible just a few years ago. Co-chairman and HARMONI, Inc. board president Kathryn Shorter will help facilitate "Visioning Broad Ripple 2012" at our Earth Day 2008 gathering.

Other resources include planning assistance from the planning staff of the Department of Metropolitan Development and an offer of collaboration from the Broad Ripple Village Association yet the main player in the development of the Plan will be the Broad Ripple citizen. If we are to move forward with this effort, a sufficient number of citizens must seriously engage the process. They must attend, work, promote, educate others, and most importantly they must educate themselves. What will make the process viable is a citizen planner who harbors a love for community coupled with a cultivated informed opinion. Toward this end, Green Broad Ripple Inc. has begun a One Book One Broad Ripple initiative. The initiative invites individuals who would like to participate or are simply interested in the creation of a Broad Ripple Plan to read the book; *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs. This classic book called "Perhaps the most influential single work in the history of town planning...a work of literature" by the New York Times Book Review provides uncommon insights into the elements that make cities livable. A discussion of these ideas will be part of the celebration of Earth Day 2008.

These are the planned activities that will take place at the Glendale Library Auditorium on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 3:00 - 5:30 in the afternoon. Other things may hopefully happen as well; sense of community, clearer understanding, inspiration of possibilities, and hope for prospects of a promising future. If you are interested in participating or would like additional information, please send an email to the address listed below or call 317-466-1099. Planning the future of Broad Ripple promises to be a long journey. Confucius once said "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Lets; we the citizens of Broad Ripple, on Earth Day 2008, take the first step.

Earth Day 2008

The universe is an incredibly large place and we have been studying it for a long time. So far we know of only of one Earth. It is the rarest and most precious object in the known universe and is humanity's only home. Broad Ripple too is our home by happenstance or by choice. We are becoming increasingly aware that the destiny of Broad Ripple and that of Earth are inextricably intertwined. How goes the Earth, so goes Broad Ripple.

The huge global changes brought on by the industrial revolution especially in the 20th Century transformed humanity and our individual lives more than any previous time or generation. Invention and refinement of the airplane, the automobile, industrialized farming, household appliances, mass production and radio and television, drastically altered how we live; the distance and speed of our travel; the convenience of daily life; the ability and power of our communication; and the perception of our selves. All these bewildering changes were recounted to us as historical stories of ourselves by Walter Cronkite almost as soon as they occurred.

One structure heralded the coming of this age like no other - the Eiffel Tower. Designed by an engineer, it prophesied the technological explosion that was to be the hallmark of the 20th Century. At the beginning of the last century, it represented a challenging feat in design, fabrication and construction. Today, tall, erect, and still confident, it stands astride nature and dominates the landscape. Yet even as it was being built, most Frenchmen detested it. There were near riotous demonstration that subsided only with the promise that it would be torn down as soon as the World Fair it was built for concluded. Only the fact that the tower proved valuable for communication purposes saved it from demolition.

There is a persistent reoccurring theme emanating from our intuitive artistic sense that I like to call the Frankenstein Syndrome. The notion that as we strive to create inventions to serve us and make us more powerful, inevitably, these very same creations turn out to be the source of our undoing. When Al Gore came to town some months ago, he consulted with me. And after he recounted his climate change, pollution, and destruction of the planet story, one I definitely ascribe to, he agreed that it may be a classic example of our own beloved, empowering creation transforming into the source of our destruction. When Dom Nozzi, a diehard proponent of Smart Growth, came to town, he further codified this notion. He made the statement, I paraphrase here, that "...once one establishes the mode of primary transportation by which people get around, regardless of the intent of the planners, all aspects of growth and development follow." Promoting the Hummer, brings the McMansion, the culdisac, and sprawl. More roads, more strip centers, more parking lots and more happy car space. This has promoted a sedentary life based on convenience and manufactured food now cited as the primary cause of an epidemic of obesity and diabetes in our children.

This new century opens with many problems. It also offers a new way of seeing the world. A shift from the efficiency of mass production and consumption to the effectiveness of Livability. Livability is the herald of this new century. It's no longer about how much we can own and produce but how well we can live on how little. We are, and will continue to be, faced with choices. "...you can have happy car space or you can have happy people space but you can't have both." Livability is a very personal thing. Ask one hundred people and you will get one hundred answers. Even as a nation, we must muster the energy expended on the Manhattan Project; going to the moon; or waging the war and channel it toward restoring the environment, we as a community, must muster the energy our citizens generated in the current local property tax debacle and channel it toward developing a vision for the future of Broad Ripple and a plan for achieving it. This will not be easy. Even as the level of difficulty is hard to gauge, we must come together; gather the necessary resources; and develop a plan that encourages renewed economic vitality; improves the quality of life; restores our health and the health of our children; adds to the beauty of our community; and contributes to the healing of our planet for how goes Broad Ripple so goes the Earth. What better day to begin than EARTH DAY 2008.

Food & Community

Food may not be the most important element of Livability but its pretty high up on the list. Food produced by the current industrialized system travels an average of 1,300 miles from farm to plate consuming 80 cents of every food dollar on storage, handling, transportation, and retail costs. As the cost of fuel goes up, and by now most of us realize that cost hikes in oil based fuels are inevitable, so will the price of food. What can we do about it? Here is a radical and subversive idea; let's grow our own food right here.

In her book "Food Not Lawns - How to Turn Your Yard into a Garden and Your Neighborhood into a Community", H. C. Flores lays out an approach that with a little customization, innovation, and organization could turn Broad Ripple into a major food producer. Imagine that - growing food in close proximity to where it will be eaten. This idea is too simple - it will never work you say? Green Broad Ripple intends to give this idea a try. It has brought together a number of Broad Ripple restaurants, volunteers, property owners, and consultants to establish a "Green Community Garden" with the intent to grow food for local consumption. In the next few articles I will introduce the players in this venture for, while industrialized food is produced by machines, Broad Ripple food will be grown by people. Following is a piece written by Bill Scott, a consultant to the effort. Bill is a chemist and perhaps the Greenest person I know. He definitely walks the talk.

I don't focus on "going green" but take hopeful actions that seem to work in that direction. Rather than thinking about reducing "global warming" or my "ecological footprint" I look at things I can do to add joy and quality to both my life and those around me, while helping me cope with things that are out of my control. They add up to going green "naturally".

Here are some examples: I buy a \$55 monthly pass for unlimited travel on IndyGo and get around mostly by bus or walking. When on the bus I can read, watch people, day dream or, occasionally, doze off (I admit to having missed my stop a few times, but, hey, it's an opportunity to get in another little walk). I don't miss the tension I feel commuting in a car, dodging pot holes and aggressive drivers like me. Since my wife passed away I'm a bit companionship deprived so I enjoy the smiles of recognition from bus passengers and drivers - most of whom are quite friendly and each unique. After I recently returned from two weeks in Poland I even had a driver say "welcome back"! The money I save (I used 4 tanks of gas for car travel all of last year) I prefer to spend on garden supplies, and beer and tips at the Brew Pub. The walking to and from bus stops for work, or when I skip the bus entirely and walk for errands and recreation, keeps me in shape and saves me the money I would otherwise use at a fitness club - which, of course, I would need after the beer.

I'll use the car when IndyGo doesn't go there, or I need to carry large items. I occasionally drive to the Brew Pub to haul away some of the leftover spent grains from their brewing process. In my compost heap I combine the grain with kitchen scraps, coffee grounds from Broad Ripple Hubbard and Craven, Starbucks and the Cathedral Soup Kitchen (diversity is what compost is all about!), shredded leaves I buy from students at St. Thomas in their fall fund raising, and a free bag or two from Mrs. Greenwade across the street. I save and reuse the leaf bags. Using my trash bag inventory as a measure, the fact that I never buy them yet always have more than I need tells me I'm a net importer of trash. Because I compost all my kitchen scraps (except meat), recycle all my paper, cardboard, bottles, cans and most of the plastic, I put a trash bag out only every two months.

Where's the joy and quality of life here? The bus rides, compost gathering and food growing all bring me into contact with good people and help me get out of my shell. The stages of the composting process remind me to trust and find comfort in the mysterious transforming nature and presence of God through all the cycles of life. The vegetable garden I feed with this compost yields an abundance of produce - potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, carrots, beans, lettuce, spinach, onions, garlic, beets, peppers, raspberries, strawberries, herbs, etc. I love seeing the neighborhood children rummage in my back yard for vegetables and fruits for their dinner. I give thanks when they reappear with a dish for me - say potato salad - the produce from my garden transformed by a thoughtful parent into a return gift. (I guess this makes me and my neighbors "extreme locavors").

Of course working in the soil is a joy, and a garden a continual reminder of how the good Lord will provide for us through nature if we just cooperate a bit, and, especially, don't actively mess it up. This is a good thing for me to remember, and a comfort when I realize there is so much out of my control, like gasoline, food prices, and the actions of others (myself included) that trap us in a cycle of dependence on things we really don't need or actively harm us. Some other time I'll worry about "going green". For now, I'll just enjoy going green naturally!

Bill Scott, April 21, 2008

Now I can't help but believe that Bill's advice will serve the effort well and considerably increase its chance of success. Growing food locally will do wonders for Broad Ripple sustainability and growing it with personal love and caring will do wonders for our sense of community.

#41 Written May 3, 2008 © Cortellini 2008

Defining Moment

The internet is a marvelous invention especially for anyone wanting to know what is going on beyond the standard "News" fair propagated by television and the spun "News" deployed by governments. Sometimes it takes more than a little work to bore down into web sites to obtain that information you are searching for while other times it simply comes your way.

I personally subscribe to 27 web newsletters currently from diverse organizations. On Mondays, I inevitably receive a "Monday Memo" from John Gibson of Earth Charter Indiana that is often personal and usually informative. The last "Monday Memo" contained a verbatim Los Angeles Times article entitled "Civilization's Last Chance" written by Bill McKibben, author of the currently popular book; "Deep Economy." Here is a quote at the center of Bill's piece: "A few weeks ago, our foremost climatologist, NASA's Jim Hansen, submitted a paper to Science magazine with several co-authors. The abstract attached to it argued -- and I have never read stronger language in a scientific paper -- "if humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO2 will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm." Hansen cites six irreversible tipping points -- massive sea level rise and huge changes in rainfall patterns, among them -- that we'll pass if we don't get back down to 350 soon; and the first of them, judging by last summer's insane melt of Arctic ice, may already be behind us... **This is the defining moment.**" You may appreciate that those of us who have corroborated this idea through other sources and feel that, to varying degrees, Bill and Jim are on to something important, are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety and frustration. I have friends who are convinced that Climate Change is a total fabrication and are as intractable about their opinion as those who propose that Creationism is Science.

Recently, I also received the latest news from Environmental Law & Policy Center a Midwest environmental advocacy organization working to promote clean energy, sound transportation, wild and natural places, and sustainable business. Here are a couple of headlines:

"Mich. & Wis. Governors Sign Global Warming Agreements with Britain

Advisory groups appointed by Governors Granholm and Doyle are now formulating recommendations on how Michigan and Wisconsin should reduce global warming pollution in the years ahead. In a further echoing of national frustrations at the lack of federal action on global warming, the governors this week signed separate agreements with the United Kingdom to further accelerate the development of solutions to our global warming problems." Where is our man Mitch at this Defining Moment?

"Toyota Prius Becoming Harder to Find as Hybrid Sales Soar

Last year, the hybrid Prius became the 10th best-selling car in the United States, joining the top ten for the first time. So far this year, as gas prices have soared, Americans have pushed the Prius up to #8. Both availability and price are being affected by the increasing demand, whose fuel efficiency is #1 in the nation. And with the combustion of gasoline producing almost 20 pounds of carbon dioxide pollution per gallon, the Prius also provides great global warming benefits." The Prius also enjoys the greatest customer satisfaction rating of any automobile in history while the Hummer, the worst. Is there a lesson here?



Toyota Prius \$21,100
EPA estimated MPG 45 city, 48 highway.



Tahoe Hybrid (limited availability) \$53,500
EPA estimated MPG 21 city, 22 highway.

Over ten years ago, Toyota made the decision to develop the Prius, employing a broader view and greater understanding of the realities of the world while American auto manufactures continued to pander to the whims of the fickle marketplace. It is apparent to many of us that Toyota made the right decision in that in the last decade, Toyota has gained the moral high ground, garnered the respect of the world, and greatly improved its business. Where is Ford and Chevy at this Defining Moment?

#42 Written May 17, 2008 © Cortellini 2008

Humane Food

Eating is the most intimate interaction we carry on with our Mother Earth. As we eat, we actually ingest part of our environment. It sustains us. It gives us life. It becomes part of us. It is most definitely high on my list of the great pleasures in life as well. I pay attention to food and lately it's been hard to miss the serious discussion revolving the current jump in food prices occurring world wide.

Serious criticism of our industrial farming methods arose in the sixties and found an eloquent and penetrating voice in Wendell Berry; author of "The Unsettling of America" first published in 1977. Many writings followed. In 2002, a scathing indictment of the system was published in the form of a collection of essays edited by Andrew Kimbrell entitled "The Fatal Harvest - The Tragedy of Industrialized Agriculture." Here is an excerpt from the prologue:

"Our conversion from agrarian, local, fully integrated food systems to industrialized, monocultured agricultural production has brought a staggering number of negative side effects, many of them unanticipated. Throughout the entire food system, we can trace this crisis as it manifests itself in soil erosion, poisoned ground waters, food-borne illnesses, loss of biodiversity, inequitable social consequences, toxic chemicals in foods and fiber, loss of beauty, loss of species and wildlife habitat, and myriad other environmental and social problems. To make the crisis even worse, we continue to export this destructive industrial system of food production around the world."

I recommend this book but I must warn you that it is likely to depress you for the industrialized system is so entrenched and powerful that it is difficult to envision a way as to how things might be able to change.

Earlier this month, I received a newsletter from my "Just a Girl in short shorts talking about whatever" subscription containing a YouTube video; "Meet Your Meat." This is the contemporary manifestation of the argument against Industrialized Agriculture. I recommend this to only those that maintain a constitution similar to that of a Marine sergeant. It vividly depicts the horribly inhumane treatment the animals in our food chain are subjected to. In the engineering economics of large scale industrialized agriculture, the wellbeing of the animals is not a consideration. The system is ruthlessly focused on engineering large quantities of cheap food. Unfortunately we are discovering that the highly processed food this system churns out has many negative qualities not the least of which is that it's proving to be unhealthy. Its production processes generate an enormous amount of pollution the cost of which is not reflected in the price of the cheap food while consuming huge quantities of natural resources, water, and energy that once were plentiful and cheap but now are much more scarce and expensive with a continued cost rise in the future expected as inevitable.

A bright spot on the horizon has been the huge success of farmer's markets throughout the country. Providing direct customer access for the small local food producer, it is a marvel of efficiency. Low transportation costs, freshness of product, opportunity for socializing, and greater return for the farmer all contribute to a new vision of how food production might be improved. Following this thread, Green Broad Ripple (GBR) has organized on a new initiative. On Friday, May 30, 2008, on a half lot on 61st Street between Guilford and Winthrop, the first Green Broad Ripple Urban Garden was established. The lot has been owned and gardened for years by Candace Glass so profuse vegetables and flowers growing on this lot will not present anything new. What is new is that Candace has



Johnny Crockett Tree Service preps the site.

joined Morgan Johnson in co-chairing a GBR Urban Garden Committee. The intent will be to build connections between local gardeners and Broad Ripple restaurants so that more and more of the produce used in Broad Ripple is grown in Broad Ripple. Friday saw employees of Johnny Crockett Tree Service organically preparing the site for planting and Saturday saw Candace and Morgan and committee volunteers, Neal Bennett and Patty Cortellini devoting much of the day to a first planting. Candace and Morgan make a great team. Candace is a natural earth



Candace Glass & Morgan Johnson at the site.

mother. She loves digging in the dirt and has completed master gardener courses. Morgan loves gardening and brings a disciplined organizational disposition with a keen eye for detail to the effort.

Will this change the world? Perhaps not - yet it may change Broad Ripple. Besides being a great deal of hard work there were many pleasant moments during the day. There was camaraderie and fellowship, discussion of all sorts, attention from curious passers-by some of which engaged in conversation in a neighborly way and Candace even provided lunch. It is my belief that this positive energy; this giving and love of the doing in collaboration with others is a growing powerful force that holds the promise of transformation. If you would like to know more, please contact me at the email address below.

#43 Written May 31, 2008 © Cortellini

Slow Food

An overarching idea at the core of going Green is the notion that it is good, if not essential, to slow our current pace of life. Our embrace of the industrialized way, with its emphasis on mechanized efficiency, unrelenting competition, and demands for maximized productivity, has forced us, within a single generation, to completely change the way we live. It was not so long ago that life accommodated time for friends and family, walks in the wilderness, home cooked meals, impromptu conversation with neighbors on the front porch, story reading at bedtime, and unsupervised sports and games we made up ourselves. Today, both mom and dad need to work, long work hours are expected, food is selected for its convenience, children need to be rushed off to school and then to other organized activities via the automobile, and socialization is promulgated electronically. We baby boomers can probably still remember those simpler times but many born after 1980 only catch glimpses of the simpler life on vintage television programs and it must seem just as distant as any other television fantasy. Many in our culture are now sensing that the hectic life we currently lead has ceased to improve our happiness.

This sense of dissatisfaction entered my life at the end of the last century thus I began to look for new hopeful opportunities to change that situation not only for me but for others suffering the same malady. Near the end of 2002 I ran across the following statement:

"Recognizing that the enjoyment of wholesome food is essential to the pursuit of happiness, Slow Food USA is an educational organization dedicated to stewardship of the land and ecologically sound food production; to the revival of the kitchen and the table as centers of pleasure, culture, and community: and to living a slower and more harmonious rhythm of life."

This spoke to me. How elegant. While tackling all the ills brought to us by Industrialization may seem overwhelming, the revival of the kitchen and the table seems imminently doable. There is something poetic in an advocacy effort to change the fundamentals of a culture through the seductive pleasure of preparing and enjoying great food. Sign me up.



Slow Food USA logo

I delved into researching the Slow Food movement and things only got better. The above is the Slow Food USA Mission and here is the Slow Food International Manifesto:

"Endorsed and approved in 1989 by delegates from 20 countries

Our century, which began and has developed under the insignia of industrial civilization, first invented the machine and then took it as its life model.

We are enslaved by speed and have all succumbed to the same insidious virus: Fast Life, which disrupts our habits, pervades the privacy of our homes and forces us to eat Fast Foods.

To be worthy of the name, Homo Sapiens should rid himself of speed before it reduces him to a species in danger of extinction.

A firm defense of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of Fast Life.

May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment preserve us from the contagion of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency.

Our defense should begin at the table with Slow Food. Let us rediscover the flavors and savors of regional cooking and banish the degrading effects of Fast Food.

In the name of productivity, Fast Life has changed our way of being and threatens our environment and our landscapes. So Slow Food is now the only truly progressive answer.

That is what real culture is all about: developing taste rather than demeaning it. And what better way to set about this than an international exchange of experiences, knowledge, projects?

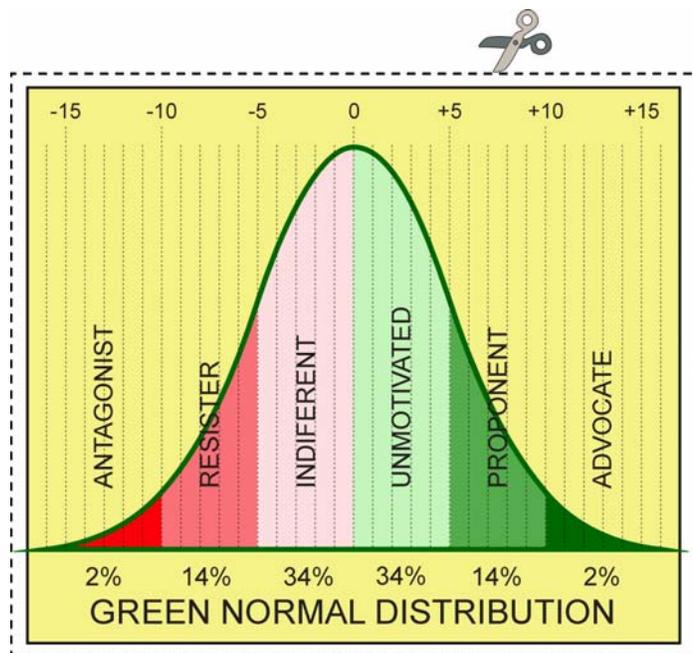
Slow Food guarantees a better future. Slow Food is an idea that needs plenty of qualified supporters who can help turn this (slow) motion into an international movement, with the little snail as its symbol."

I did learn later that the 1989 conference, held in Paris, where this manifesto was written and Slow Food International was founded, was a boisterous affair lasting several days and as many sleepless nights where the forming of ideas and the writing process was aided by the consumption of large quantities of red wine. Never the less, looking back nearly 20 years, the words seem prophetic.

In early 2003 Patty (my wife) and I, along with a number of friends, founded the local chapter of Slow Food USA. Local chapters are known as conviviums because they promote conviviality. Although the mission has changed a bit, Slow Food Indy is still very active today. You can get information at www.slowfoodusa.org. "Green" or "Slow", we share a vision for a better future. Candace's Urban Garden may give us cause to celebrate together - over food, wine and, of course, conviviality.

Green Scale

Green is the notion that the Industrial Revolution that brought us material wealth has done so at great expense to the environment and to culture. Our industrialized way of life has reached a point of diminishing returns and its "take make waste" method of production is testing the carrying capacity of the planet. Green proposes that it is crucial that we move our culture toward a more sustainable way of living. The chart on the right is a normal distribution curve, otherwise known as a Bell Curve. It illustrates six generalized categories of the various positions on Green I have encountered in the last few years as I have tried to



advance the notion of going Green. This chart is my own creation and is not supported by scientific data yet it appeals to common sense. I think it fairly represents the relative proportions of the various positions described below:

1. **Antagonist:** The individuals in this category are openly hostile to the notion of Green, Sustainability, and Climate Change. They fervently voice the opinion that there is no environmental crisis and that Climate Change is a completely fraudulent scam. If you Google "global warming scam", you will get a long list of sites like: www.heartland.com of the Heartland Institute that elucidates "Eight Reasons Why 'Global Warming' Is a Scam." Fortunately, Antagonists appear to be only 2% of the population.
2. **Resister:** Up the scale a bit are the Resisters. They are not as vociferous as the Antagonists but maintain, to varying degrees, that the data does not support conclusions that require drastic change especially in the realm of business. They refrain from insult and present, what appear to be, rational arguments to make their case often in defense of the industrialized way of life and the status quo.
3. **Indifferent:** 34% of the population seems to be unaware that there is such a thing as a Green movement or that it has any bearing on their lives. They enjoy the bliss of ignorance which they are reluctant to abandon so they shun involvement yet curiously, they seem to never be short on opinion.
4. **Unmotivated:** The Unmotivated comprises another 34% of the population that is strongly related to the Indifferent only it has heard, and perhaps believes, the Green arguments but the members of this category are so immersed in the current way of doing things that they are unwilling to consider or unable to envision how they might change their lives to make a difference. This category is also populated with Greenwashers - those who mask their extensive polluting by pointing to their small Green initiatives as proof of their Greenness.

5. **Proponent:** This not insignificant portion of the population knows and understands the Green message and, to varying degrees, its urgency. It is working to make a difference yet it suffers from the fact that, in the name of pragmatism, it is often ready to sacrifice principle for the sake of practicality. This realm has its number of Greenwashers as well but their transgressions are less conspicuous. Only time will tell if this approach will prove too little too late.
6. **Advocate:** Deep Green - me and others like me. We are convinced by the evidence that civilization is in peril and although the full consequences may not come to bear for several decades, if we are to have any effect on the situation, the time for action is now. Green offers a best hope of ameliorating this threat while, at the same time, improving the quality of our existence. We feel that an intrinsic part of Green is trading our culture of consumption for one that offers a reconnection to nature and a rebirth of community, civility, and spiritualism. Unfortunately, there are only 2% of us and I must point out here that on this scale, I am probably a +11 (please refer to the chart). There are many more informed and more strident voices than mine. There is difference of opinion certainly and Greenwashers live here too, probably for reasons related to reputation rather than economics, but we mostly agree on one thing: The time for talk and half measures is over.

If you are a regular reader of this column, it might serve you to cut out the above chart and clip it to your refrigerator for the subsequent articles of this column intend to make reference to it. The latest thread of this column has been food which is one of the most important elements of sustainability and even survivability. The next article entitled "Green Food" will explore and give a Green rating (according to the chart) to some of the various food offerings of our community and provide suggestion as to how they might yet become Greener. I am compelled to also point out how things might have been done Greener in the first place as a means of offering suggestions to projects currently on the drawing board. I recognize that I do so at the risk of drawing resentment for today, in Indianapolis, it's still not easy being Green. Not yet. Not yet.

Green Food

The Atlas Supermarket closed permanently on May 11, 2002, 2-1/2 years after the passing of Sid Maurer. It was only last January that Sunflower Market suddenly closed its doors. Have you noticed that our Kroger has undergone an extreme makeover and that there is a fledgling new food enterprise, Locally Grown Gardens, at the intersection of 54th Street and the Monon Trail? Have you visited the Broad Ripple Farmer's Market lately? And then; how about the recent grand opening of the long awaited "Fresh Market?" These, along with the always reliable but uneventful Marsh and a host of specialty shops like The Breadsmith, Johnny's Market, the Village Pantry, and the snack section of the CVS drugstore represent the retail food culture of our community. Is there anything to learn from asking how Green it might be? Let's look at the Atlas site.

In the year 2000, Green was still only a whisper yet Atlas exhibited many very Green elements. Words like frugality, sufficiency, conservation, and naturalness represent concepts that are at the core of the Green way and the Atlas way as well as I recall. These traits came to Atlas through Sid's dedication which infused his own personal qualities into the enterprise he created and dearly loved. Sid was Atlas.

A fundamental premise I learned in my studies in sustainable design is that the Greenest building is one you do not need to build. The environmental impact of demolition and new construction cannot be compensated for by the new building's energy efficiency. Similarly, trading in your perfectly serviceable automobile for a new one with better gas mileage is not a Green thing to do because the energy saved with the better mileage will never add up to the energy expended in making the new car. Sid knew this. No energy was expended on frills and affectation yet you could always find that unusual food item on his 50 year old shelves at a reasonable price. I especially appreciated his handling of the produce. He never bought into the marketing notion that lettuce is better presented drenched in water. This may have a dubious measure of sensual appeal at the point of sale but it encourages rot which in turn increases waste both at the store and at home. On arriving home with such a product I am compelled to remove it from the package, dry it as best I can, wrap it in paper towel, and repackage it in another dry bag so that it might last more than a day or two in the refrigerator. I could stick Sid's shrink wrapped lettuce in the refrigerator and not worry about it for better than a week or so. For this and many other similar reasons, I loved Sid's Atlas but the most profound loss at Atlas' closing was the loss of community. I am certain that Atlas made a profit but it did not seem that it was the primary motive for its existence. There was virtually no turnover in the help - they seemed part of the extended family. They were real, competent, and happy to be there.

Here now arrives Fresh Market and even though the community and its leadership supposedly has had considerable input in the design process, neither Green nor Sid seem anywhere to be found. My first impression is that frugality, sufficiency, and conservation seem to have been replaced by extravagance, excess, and waste precisely at a time when urgent environmental concerns, rising property taxes, the mortgage debacle, falling dollar values, skyrocketing medical costs and growing economic inequality have degraded the quality of life of the middle class to the point that many of us are now struggling just to get by. On the other hand Fresh is convenient and I was able to buy some decent prosciutto there the other day.



Fresh Market

Can Fresh go Green? Although it is probably too late to do much about the building envelope and the mechanical system, and beyond the obvious efforts to reduce energy consumption, recycle, and reduce waste, Fresh could spearhead a Going Local initiative by leading an effort to establish an organized distributed urban garden network. Fresh appears to have the resources to implement any plan it chooses to pursue. If it chose to, it could engage and contribute to the community by building a network of small local gardens to supply a portion of its produce instead of relying on the current industrialized system that is heavily dependent on truck transport. The effort would be primarily a matter of organization. Plantings and harvests could be scheduled to deliver locally grown, truly fresh produce to the store in a timely way and with the use of high tunnels and green houses, production could eventually extend year round. Further, by converting its rooftop from parking to an intensive green roof with greenhouses, Fresh could grow plant starts for the effort. Radical? Yes. Impossible? Not in my opinion. It would take vision. It would take courage. It would take commitment to community. It would be a truly creative community building move toward sustainability. How cool! How Green - and how respectful to Sid's legacy.



Fresh Market Roof Parking



Cortellini is a licensed architect in the states of Indiana and Arizona. He holds a BFA from Indiana University Herron School of Art. He has taught at the college level at several universities while pursuing independent artistic endeavors. His architectural practice has focused on residential and light commercial. His firm is committed to the design of Green buildings and is a member of the US Green Building Council. Cortellini is a LEED Accredited Professional.



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