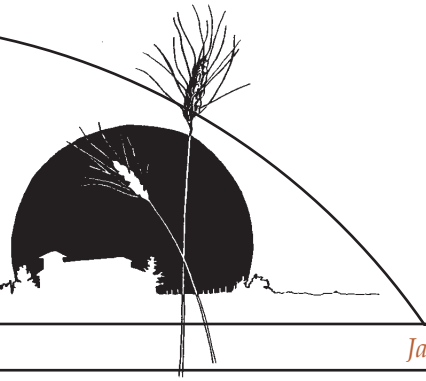


Grailville e-Newsletter



Vol. 24, No. e-1

January 2005

Caring for Mother Earth

*"I could stay here forever. I could.
I could sink myself into a daydream and stay
through autumn, winter, go dormant and shed myself.
Could stand here in the field and watch the sun and stars
spinning, watch the snow pile itself around me
then pull its meltedness into my roots and drink.
Could sit here and wait for a miracle, a reprieve, God.
All three live here, in the maples and the meadow and the pond—
with miracles flown round by wrens,
reprieves plucked from a bucketful of emptiness,
God sitting on the branch of me, ready, waiting."*

—Lynn Robbins, about Grailville

From WET to GROW: Grailville Renewing Our Water

In March 2001 the scent of “ripe” sewage sent Grailville’s WET (Wastewater Environmental Treatment) team on the hunt for a more appealing water treatment alternative. Three years later the GROW (Grailville Renewing Our Water) program leads groups of children through fields of flowers! Grailville has come a long way, and we are anxious to share our success with the neighborhood, if not the world.

The sub-surface flow wetland wastewater treatment system chosen by the WET team went on-line September 17, 2003, after much serious consideration and hard work. J.F. New, a design firm in Indiana, submitted the design which satisfied the WET team’s criteria. It is a model, on-site, zero-discharge system that meets Grailville’s commitment to sustainability. It is low-tech and thus easy to maintain and treats the water to recreational quality. It provides habitat for Grailville’s wildlife and educational opportunities for Grailville’s human population.

Cynthia Edwards shepherded the project through the construction phase, establishing **research collaborations with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the University of Cincinnati**. She also wrote the initial application for the Greater Cincinnati Foundation grant that instituted the second phase of the project, now known as Grailville Renewing

Our Water—GROW.

In June, Linda Martin and Suellen Shupe were hired as Environmental Educators sharing the full time position paid for by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation grant. Since that time they have networked in the community and

Grailville’s constructed wetland

through the Greater Cincinnati Environmental Educators organization. These contacts have paid off with wetland tours for groups from Thomas More College, Xavier University, and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College as well as activities planned for primary and secondary students and youth groups.

A second grant was secured from the Ohio Environmental Education Fund to begin in 2005. This money supports wetland/prairie maintenance, printing of the tour brochures and purchase of materials associated with carrying out the programs. Four

programs, detailed elsewhere in this issue, have been developed to offer to younger children through schools, scouts, and other youth groups.

Because **Grailville’s is the only functioning, full-scale, sub-surface wetland system in Ohio**, and because the technology is considered experimental in Ohio (though not everywhere) the research collaborations Cynthia established are very important. Part of the work of the GROW team is to develop a tour and presentation for professional representatives of permitting agencies, land developers, and wastewater professionals.

Grailville’s collaboration with the EPA and the University of Cincinnati researchers is essential in supporting our outreach to these professionals. Last summer the wetland looked lush and beautiful, but that will not satisfy those looking for proof of effectiveness. In September and October, staff and researchers participated in a plant census and biomass measurement that established figures for nutrient removal from the water passing through the wetland.

The staff also works with Greenacres, a local organization that has developed a program for establishing base water quality data in the southern reach of the Little Miami River (a National Scenic River) watershed. These data allow comparison between the water our system discharges and the water currently in local streams. Pending funding, a project manager will be hired to maintain and further develop the treatment system and to develop the data into promotional programs for the professional segment of our audience. This would allow Linda and Suellen to concentrate all their efforts on the student and general audiences.

Other aspects of the program still in development include: informative signs, a welcome kiosk and outdoor pavilion to serve the tour groups, “rain gardens” that demonstrate a beautiful method for controlling rainwater runoff, and the prairie.

—Suellen Shupe

Grailville Offers You...

- 300 acres of farm, organic gardens, pastures, forests, hiking trails, and labyrinths.
- Guest Services providing simple lodging for groups and individuals, nutritious meals, cultural resources and events, garden tours, house tours, labyrinth presentations, and educational opportunities focused on sustainable living.
- The Grailville Store & Coffee House featuring books, gifts and specialty items, a web store, and a performance space.
- An Oratory for prayer, rituals, and meditation.
- Garden and other volunteer opportunities.
- A diverse spiritual community creating a way of life reflected in programs, projects, and special events offered to the public.

GROWing with Grailville

When Linda Martin and Suellyn Shupe came to work at Grailville, their job description reflected the requirements of the grant Grailville received from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation to educate a three-pronged audience about human impacts on watersheds, specifically related to wastewater in the Little Miami River watershed. In addition Grailville's staff and leadership expected them to draw more people to Grailville in order to increase its economic viability. They have thrown themselves into these tasks with enthusiasm.

Linda Martin began working as a volunteer with Cynthia Edwards during the construction phase of the project, using her background in landscaping with native plants as a springboard. She heroically held the program together when Cynthia left, single-handedly seeding the prairie, and collaborating with Mary Lu Lage-

man to re-submit the Cincinnati Foundation grant. "The Grail and Grailville's commitment to an environmentally sound solution and Cynthia's dedication to making it happen spoke so eloquently to me that I felt impelled to help realize the vision," Linda reflects.

Meanwhile, Suellyn was finishing her Earth Literacy Master's degree program and not yet looking for a job in Environmental Education. "It's amazing how a certain flow is created, that carries you where you need to be," she says of quitting her previous job just two weeks before the decision to hire her here was made. "I've been training for this job all my life."

The two, who share one forty-hour per week position, met only once prior to starting work, but soon sorted out who would take the lead on which duties. Linda did the lion's share of the work on the Ohio Environmental Education Fund grant proposal, which will pay for much needed supplies, and materials to carry out the programs that the two have developed.

Linda developed **four program options for school children and youth** (see box at left) and works with teachers and youth group leaders to tailor them for their curricula. "I'm very excited to be working with Kathy Sund from The Academy [a school for gifted children in Cincinnati] who wants to form an alliance with Grailville to make environment a cornerstone of their curriculum. Teachers from other schools have requested programs that cover a wide spectrum of topics."

"And we received our first request from a Girl Scout leader last week," Suellyn chimes in. "The leader, herself, works for an environmental engineering company, and chose our program from the Great Rivers Council website for her scouts. Being a former scout

Grailville's earth-friendly wastewater treatment system

leader myself, I know that exposing the girls to programs like Grailville's is an important aspect of their education."

Suellyn concentrates on adult and university audiences. "Connections with Xavier University and Cincinnati State Technical and Community
Continued on page 4

Project GROW — Four Learning Options for Young People

- Option 1. **Tour** our *Constructed Wetland and Native Prairie*, the system that treats Grailville's wastewater using natural plant and microbial processes.
- Option 2. **Discover** through *Hands-on Learning Activities* the properties of water, biochemical plant and microbe processes, interdependence of earth systems, and more.
- Option 3. **Learn** about *Sustaining and Preserving the Environment* through organic gardening, composting, straw-bale building, and other earth-friendly approaches.
- Option 4. **Explore** 300 acres of *Farmland, Woods, and Waterways*, looking for animal inhabitants, both wild and domestic, wading in a rocky-bottomed stream, or searching for the "earth-spirit" wood carvings.

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Grailville is an environmental, education, and retreat center of The Grail, an international movement of women committed to spiritual search, social action, ecological sustainability, and the release of women's creative energy throughout the world.

Located on an organic farm in southwest Ohio, Grailville is a diverse community offering spiritual, cultural, and educational opportunities for the public, as well as providing guest facilities for meetings, lodging, dining, and special events.

The Ecovillage at Grailville

Planning for Grailville's Ecovillage continues with robust energy and forward movement. In November, the Ecovillage group hosted a weekend on Permaculture, bringing in expert Peter Bane. Saturday's public workshop was a sell-out success. Then, Peter spent Sunday consulting internally with the Grailville Ecovillage folks. The other exciting news flash: Maureen Wood

Calling All Aspiring Performers!

Grailville offers free space in our Coffee House for aspiring musicians, singers, poets—you name it—to come and perform.

For information contact Guest Services at 513-683-2340.

has been brought on as the developer for the Ecovillage project.

For more information on the Ecovillage at Grailville, contact: Bonnie Hendricks: 513-683-5750 or bonnienlt@grail-us.org. For more information on Ecovillages in general, check out the Global Ecovillage Network: <http://gen.ecovillage.org>.

Grailville Ecovillage Vision Statement: The founding group members commit ourselves to create a diverse community of people who have a passion for an Earth-harmonious, sustainable, socially equitable way of life. We seek to live the values of Grailville, which are: ecological sustainability, spirituality, full empowerment of women, and social justice. We will embody a sense of life's sacredness in all our actions and gatherings.

Growing with Grailville — Continued from page 3

College were already in place, but I'm carrying out the tours, and connecting with others, such as Sinclair Community College's Environmental Technology program," she says. The referral to Sinclair came from a participant who was attending an unrelated program at Grailville and took time to tour the wetland during September's Great

Garden Volunteer Calendar for 2005

Work projects begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m. Volunteers are invited to stay for lunch following the garden work session on days when lunch is served in the Dining Room. *Please call (513) 683-2340 four or five days in advance of the day you plan to volunteer to find out if there will be a lunch on that day and to put in your reservation.* Work projects will be cancelled in the case of severe weather.

Volunteer days are: March 19; April 2, 16, & 30; May 14 & 28; June 25; July 9 & 23, August 13, September 10 & 24; October 8 & 22; November 12.

Outdoor Weekend nature sampler.

Wastewater regulators and other professionals are a target audience for the research and maintenance aspects of the project. Quarterly tours and updates have been scheduled for these professionals to acquaint them with the attributes of constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment. "We're the experts in this area, and our research partners are helping us interpret the data for the technical people," Suellyn says.

The third prong of our audience is the general public. "The public has as steep a learning curve as the original WET team members did when they tackled Grailville's septic problem three years ago," says Suellyn, "and we are now in a position to educate them about wastewater and watershed issues." The workshop and lecture series (see box at right) represents GROW's initial steps to do so. The Grailville staff and leadership have every belief that the investment they made will result in greater public awareness of water and the attendant issues that flow from it. Linda and Suellyn believe it will result in greater awareness and support of Grailville as well.

GROW

Adult Workshop / Lecture Series

Wetland System Open House for Professionals

9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 16

Tuesday, April 19

Thursday, June 16

Guided Nature Walks

Meet at Coffee House

Saturday, February 5, 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 19, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 6, 8:00 a.m.

Starting Native Plant Seed

Hands-on workshop in Grailville's greenhouse and native prairie.

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 12

Installing a Rain Garden

Hands-on workshop demonstrating how to use plants in your home landscape to capture rainwater for use on your land, while preventing standing water and erosion.

Sat., April 9, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 13, 4:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Nature Writing Workshop

Treat yourself or your mother to a day of reflection, reconnection, and writing.

\$40/person includes lunch.

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 7

Native and Herbal Plant Workshop in Four Sessions

Native plants are better. Using native plants in the home landscape. Herbs in the garden. What to do with herbs after you grow them.

June 11-12

Seed Saving – Native Plant Seed

Learn techniques for gathering, storing and propagating seed.

Take home a sampling of seed gathered from Grailville's native plant beds and prairie.

Sat., Aug. 20, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

For more information, go to
www.grailville.org, Events.

Programs & Events

Mystics' Book Study Group

The *Mystics' Book Study Group* continues to meet the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. They began studying Chardin's *The Divine Milieu* in November. New members are always welcome.

Reiki Workshop Series

The word "Reiki" refers to a balanced cosmic and life force energy. Reiki is a healing technique, thousands of years old that originated as a Tibetan Buddhist practice. It was rediscovered in the late 1800's by Dr. Mikao Usui, a Japanese Buddhist, and is transferred from Reiki Master Teachers to students through a series of attunements.

Reiki can be used to heal yourself as well as others. Healers who have been attuned to Reiki healing energy

will find their natural healing energies enhanced, more powerful, and more easily directed.

This year, Reiki Master Teachers Carol Bussey, Linda Neumaier, Teresa Olson, and Elizabeth Tait, are offering six Reiki workshops to new, as well as more experienced, Reiki practitioners, with the following schedule:

Reiki I — January 16 and March 20

Reiki II — May 15 and July 17

**Reiki III — September 18
and November 20**

Reiki Share sessions will be held on each of the above dates and Reiki practitioners with varying degrees of experience may enroll in those sessions even if not taking part in the entire workshop.

Also, a Reiki Master Teacher Certification program will be held throughout the year for anyone interested in completing that program.

Go to www.grailville.org, Events, and scroll to any of the dates listed above to read all the details about this series.

What's All That Jazz?

After the great success of last year's performance, **The Calhoun Street Jazz Quartet** is returning to Grailville with two concerts, free and open to all, on **Saturday, February 12, at 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.** in the Caravansary.

This performance is part of the 19th annual Fine Arts Fund Sampler Weekend that has become a community tradition in the greater Cincinnati region. The event, sponsored by Procter & Gamble, is a real feast of the arts. This year there will be more than 180 distinct events at 57 venues around the region. Schedules of the events are available at Kroger stores and Grailville.

Grailville is proud to be part of such an exciting showcase of creativity and talent and is very happy to host The Calhoun Street Jazz Quartet again. The band will offer a selection of music ranging from traditional standards to jazz arrangements of popular songs, to original composi-

tions written by quartet members. Last year's concert was attended by an enthusiastic crowd of over 150 people. Since the concert is free and reservations are not required, we strongly suggest you arrive as early as you can before the beginning of each concert if you want to be sure to have a seat!

For the occasion, the Grailville Dining Hall will be open from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. with a "**Sweetheart Buffet Dinner,**" an all-you-can-eat delight that will certainly add even more pleasure to a great evening of music!

Dinner reservations are required. Prices: Adults: \$20 (\$15 if prepaid at reservation), Children: \$12 (prepaid \$8), Children under 4: Free. (No refund will be given on cancellations made within seven days of the dinner. An 80% refund will be given on earlier cancellations.)

For more information and/or to make a reservation for this great event, call 513-683-2340.

Centering Prayer

"Awakening to Our Deepest Self"

Friday, April 22 – Sunday April 24

A Carolyn Gratton Program

Call 513-683-2340 for details, costs, and times. Reservations required.

Zen Meditation Retreat

with

Fr. AMA Samy, S.J. and Zen Master

Fr. AMA Samy is returning to Grailville in September. Plan now to attend this wonderful week, or weekend, of silent meditation, vegetarian meals, and the beautiful expanse of Grailville.

AMA Samy, Jesuit priest and Zen Master, comes to Grailville from his meditation center in Kodai Kanal, India. He also conducts retreats in Europe and Japan.

• **Weekend Option:**

September 16 – 18; Friday evening dinner through Sunday lunch.

• **Week-long Option:**

September 16 – 23, ending with Friday lunch.

Visit www.grailville.org, Events, for the latest information on these and other Grailville events.

2005 Grailville Calendar

For more events and more information, including updates and event times, go to www.grailville.org, Events, or call 513-683-2340.

Recurring Events:

Prayer at the Ark

Come and join with fellow seekers.
1/3, 2/10, 4/14, 5/12, 6/9, 7/14, 8/11,
9/8, 10/13, 11/10, 12/8
10:00 a.m.

Prayer Vigil for Peace

Interfaith silent prayer and meditation.
Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m.
Call to confirm.

Sitting and Walking Meditations

Monthly Sunday meditations.
1/2, 1/30, 2/27, 4/24, 5/29, 6/26,
7/24, 8/21, 9/25, 10/23, 11/20, 12/18
3:00 p.m.

Mystics' Book Discussion

New members welcome.
1/11, 2/8, 3/8, 4/12, 5/10, 6/14, 7/12,
8/9, 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13
9:30 a.m. – Noon

Organic Garden Volunteer Days

Call ahead for lunch reservation.
3/19, 4/2, 4/16, 4/30, 5/14, 5/28,
6/25, 7/9, 7/23, 8/13, 9/10, 9/24,
10/8, 10/22, 11/12
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Additional Events:

JANUARY

Reiki Workshop Day or Series and Reiki Share

January 16
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY

Guided Nature Walk

February 5

Fine Arts Fund Sampler Weekend—Jazz Concerts

The Calhoun Street Jazz Quartet
Free and open to the public.
Sponsored by Procter & Gamble
February 12
7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Sweetheart Buffet Dinner

February 12
5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Wetland System Open House for Professionals

February 16

MARCH

Starting Native Plant Seed

March 12

Reiki Workshop Day or Series and Reiki Share

March 20
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Holy Week Events at Grailville

March 24-27

APRIL

Installing a Rain Garden

April 9

Wetland System Open House for Professionals

April 19

Centering Prayer "Awakening to Our Deepest Self"

A Carolyn Gratton Program
Friday April 22 - Sunday April 24
Call 513-683-2340 for details, costs, and times. Reservations required.

MAY

Nature Writing Workshop

May 7

Mothers Day Brunch at Grailville

May 8
11:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.

Pentecost

A Feast Day Celebration
May 15

Reiki Workshop Day or Series and Reiki Share

May 15
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Guided Nature Walk

May 19

Backyard Organic Garden Workshop

May 21

JUNE

Native and Herbal Plant Workshop

June 11

Wetland System Open House for Professionals

June 16

Feast of the Birthday of John the Baptist

A Feast Day Celebration
June 24

JULY

Installing a Rain Garden

July 13

Reiki Workshop Day or Series and Reiki Share

July 17
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

AUGUST

Guided Nature Walk

August 6

Feast of the Assumption

A Feast Day Celebration
August 14

Seed Saving

August 20

SEPTEMBER

Zen Meditation Retreat with Fr. AMA Samy, S.J. and Zen Master

September 16-18 and September 16-23

Reiki Workshop Day or Series and Reiki Share

September 18
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

OCTOBER

Blessing of the Animals

All living creatures are welcome.
October 2

Seed Saving

October 5

Feast of All Saints

A Feast Day Celebration
October 30

NOVEMBER

Reiki Workshop Day or Series and Reiki Share

November 20
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

DECEMBER

International Crèche Exhibit and Opening

Date: TBA

Crèche Luncheons

Dates: TBA

Advent Open House

Date: TBA

Grailville Christmas

Date: TBA