

Dear Friends of Simplicity,

This is the Simplicity Matters Earth Institute Monthly Announcement for **January 2011**. It is going out to over **1,935 people**. If you do not want to receive this once-a-month email in the future, simply hit "reply" and ask to be removed.

Please also remember that if you prefer not to read this announcement in email form, you can always access it on the web at simplicity-matters.org/events/announcements . To access this specific issue go to <http://www.simplicity-matters.org/events/2011/2011-01.pdf>

We also have a Yahoogroup, called "DCMetroSimplifiers," with about 267 members, if you want to be involved during the month in an "interactive dialogue." You can subscribe from our "Online Convos" tab of our website or directly at <http://www.simplicity-matters.org/online>

For our friends in Baltimore, there is also a YahooGroup called "Green City Baltimore," with similar interactive opportunities and about 96 members. You can also subscribe from our "Online Convos" tab of our website or directly at <http://www.simplicity-matters.org/online>

This announcement is organized into five sections:

- Second Sunday Forum, Earth Forum of Howard County, Baltimore Green Forum
- Discussion Circle Update
- Community Events
- Action Opportunities & Tidbits
- February Preview

Lots of fun events to choose from this month. Even if you do not have time to attend them, you will hopefully be inspired by all of the folks in our region working toward a more sustainable future.

Please note we have one discussion circle starting this month. It is in Baltimore. Scroll down to the "Discussion Circle Update" for details.

Thanks to this month's editor, **Susan Belchamber**

SECOND SUNDAY FORUM

Sunday, January 9, 2011

6:30 pm–8:30 pm Movie Night!

A Farm for the Future

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00hs8zp>

In this beautifully filmed BBC documentary, wildlife film maker Rebecca Hosking investigates how to transform her family's farm in Devon into a low energy farm for the future. As she explores ways of farming without using fossil fuel, Rebecca learns that it is actually nature that holds the key to farming in a low-energy future.

Our events are always free and open to all. Please join us!

Where: in a private home in Bethesda, within walking distance of the Medical Center metro (Red Line), close to I-495 and Wisconsin Avenue.

To RSVP (required): Call Marney at (301) 652-0492 or e-mail forum@simplicity-matters.org . Please include your phone number in your message.

EARTH FORUM OF HOWARD COUNTY

Sunday, January 16, 2011

Earth Forum of Howard County

Rivers of Change: water safety, storm water reduction, and rising sea level

2–4:30 pm

First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, MD.

Features Brad Heavner, Director, Environment Maryland.

Fresh water, once abundant, free, and clean, is increasingly a commodity: sold and traded, and contaminated. Mr. Heavner will present insights on the perils affecting our essential water resources, and a plan to improve water in Maryland and the Bay.

The Forum includes Emphasis/Action group discussions including: It's Our Water: Act Now with Ned Tillman, How to Influence Corporate Policy with Tom McCarthy, and Building Community with Discussion Circles with Lore Rosenthal.

The Forum is free and open to all. For information or to sign up, contact earthforum@firstpreshc.org.
Directions and details at www.firstpreshc.org/earthforum.

BALTIMORE GREEN FORUM

The Baltimore Green Forum

Sunday, January 23, 2011

4-6:30 pm (NOTE NEW EARLIER TIME)

(the fourth Sunday of the month)

MD Presbyterian Church,

1105 Providence Road, Towson, 21286

<http://www.mpchurch.org/About.htm>

This month's featured speaker: **David Brosch, University Park Community Solar, LLC**

<http://universityparksolar.com/> . Learn how a group of citizens started an LLC and then installed a solar panel on a neighboring church.

The Baltimore Green Forum is trying a new format, with a short 45 min presentation, followed by break-outs into "Affinity Groups" (Food, Transportation, Energy, Economics, etc.). As always, time is left for announcements and networking.

For updated program info, visit <http://www.simplicity-matters.org/forums/baltimore> or contact baltimoregreenforum@gmail.com, 301-345-2234.

DISCUSSION CIRCLE UPDATE

New Northwest Earth Institute Discussion Guide premiered mid-September: The focus of "**A World of Health: Connecting People, Place, and Planet**" is on human health and how it connects to the health

of our planet. Not surprisingly, actions that are healthful for humans - eating well, using fewer chemicals in our homes, building healthy communities, consuming less, reducing our carbon footprint - are also good for the environment and all the species that share it with us. The guide offers suggestions for actions you can take, individually and in groups, including an EcoChallenge for each session. Our own Lena Rotenberg played an integral part in the development of this guide and in her opinion, "Of all NWEI discussion guides, this is the one that best brings it all together." Consider forming a discussion circle to enjoy interesting deep conversations about this important topic. Visit <http://nwei.org/> or <http://nwei.org/files/woh-sampler> (Price is \$20 plus s/h.)

NWEI Discussion Guides: (WOH) World of Health, (SSW) Sustainable Systems at Work; (RE) Reconnecting with Earth; (GW) Global Warming: Changing CO2urse; (CSL) Choices for Sustainable Living; (DSOP) Discovering a Sense of Place; (HCHP) Healthy Children-Healthy Planet; (MF) Menu for the Future; (VS) Voluntary Simplicity. **Other guides:** (LBP) "Simplicity Lessons" by Linda Breen Pierce; (LCD) "Low Carbon Diet" by David Gershon; (YMOYL) Your Money or Your Life.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Discussion circle books now cost \$20 plus s/h (except SSW, which cost \$35). They should be ordered directly from NWEI. For more info, visit <http://www.simplicity-matters.org/circles/order.php>

So far in 2010, we have started 20 circles (244 in total since 2002!). **We have one circle scheduled so far to start this month, marked with an asterisk (*).** It is in Baltimore.

You will see listed some of the "potential" circles in the works for later this winter or spring. More will be added as plans become more certain. Consider starting a pilot circle using "World of Health".

Our circles have become so widespread that **we are now breaking them down by county.** Please scroll down to see what is starting up near where you live. **For more info,** you may contact Lore at lore@simplicity-matters.org unless otherwise noted.

VIRGINIA

Vienna, VA – Our discussion circle, "A World of Health", is a huge success. The Virginia Green Baggers continue to make and give away cloth bags. Our latest giveaway was on Saturday, October 23rd. We are in need of more donated fabric and people who can sew. To date, we have given away 120 bags at various sites. We will be starting a speaker's forum on Sunday evenings, in January. Dates and speakers to be announced. For people interested in **future discussion circles in Northern Virginia**, contact Helene Shore at 703-861-6638 or email at Teachhss@aol.com.

Frederick & Washington County

None currently scheduled to begin

Carroll County

Westminster "Regroup" Contact CirclesCarroll@Simplicity-Matters.org to join the group for discussions and to watch videos. CS: Carole Flood

Howard County

Howard County Conservancy (tbd) CS: Florence Miller, hococlimatechange@gmail.com

Ellicott City "Matchmaker" (MF) CS: Lore Rosenthal, hococlimatechange@gmail.com

Snowden Overlook (tbd), CS: Judy Burt, hococlimatechange@gmail.com

UU Congregation of Columbia (MF), CS: Judy Burt, hococlimatechange@gmail.com

Integrated Therapies, Ellicott City (WOH), CS: Laura Muller, hococlimatechange@gmail.com

Howard County College (GW), Intro Mtg: TBD, CS: Kim Davis/Margo Duesterhaus, hococlimatechange@gmail.com

Glenelg (GW) Intro Mtg: TBD, CS: Marianne Pettis/Florence Miller, hococlimatechange@gmail.com
Howard County, Climate Change Initiative of Howard County (CCIHC) Committee is actively pursuing other potential venues. Details to follow. Visit www.hococlimatechange.org or email hococlimatechange@gmail.com

Harford County

None currently scheduled to begin

Baltimore City/County

* **Baltimore, Light Street Presbyterian (GW), Intro Meeting: Thurs, Jan 13, 5:30-7:30 pm.** CS: Retta Barkley

Baltimore "Matchmaker" Circle (tbd), CS: Lore Rosenthal, lore@simplicity-matters.org

Baltimore, Towson Presbyterian Church (MF) CS: Ann Phillips

Baltimore, Villa Assumpta, (CSL, MF, RE?), CS: Helene Murtha

PG County

Paint Branch UU Church (VS), CS: Raman Pathik

Montgomery County

Please contact marney@simplicity-matters.org.

Washington, DC

Washington, DC, Join the folks of the **Washington Buddhist Peace Fellowship** to discuss diet, climate change and how our spiritual practices relate to and illuminate these issues. Please see our web site www.wbpf.org for more information (events calendar). Contact person: Bill Jenkins, worldofmuse@aol.com, (301) 699-8704

Tenleytown or on Red Line (All Topics). There is interest but we need more people. If you are interested in joining a discussion group please let me know. Marney@simplicity-matters.org, 301 652-0492

"Circles List"/"Matchmaking"

This winter, SMEI will continue "matching" and/or "pointing" people into circles. In neighborhoods where circles are already forming, we will point you in the direction of a circle nearby. In those areas where there is not a circle already being planned, we will "match" people into home-based groups.

We have transitioned to a regional structure for the state. Please start using the emails below for more information about circles starting in your county.

SMEI Regional Coordinators:

Baltimore City/Baltimore Co.: CirclesBalto@simplicity-matters.org (Lore Rosenthal)

Carroll Co.: CirclesCarroll@simplicity-matters.org (Marney Bruce)

Frederick & Washington Co.: CirclesFredWashCo@simplicity-matters.org (Lena Rotenberg)

Howard Co.: CirclesHoCo@simplicity-matters.org (Lore Rosenthal).

See also **Climate Change Initiative of Howard County (CCIHC)** www.hococlimatechange.org

Montgomery Co.: CirclesMontgomery@simplicity-matters.org (Marney Bruce)

Prince Georges Co.: CirclesPG@simplicity-matters.org (Lore Rosenthal)

Washington DC: CirclesDC@simplicity-matters.org (Marney Bruce)

Elsewhere in Maryland or Jefferson Co., WV: Circles@simplicity-matters.org or 301-432-8721 (Lena Rotenberg)

For a list of our **most popular NWEI-published discussion topics**, visit <http://www.simplicity-matters.org/volunteers/forms/7guides.pdf>

If you are **starting your own circle** and would like to have your blurb posted here and on our website, please email it to Lena@simplicity-matters.org

For more info. about our discussion circles, visit our Discussion Circles page, <http://www.simplicitymatters.org/circles>, or email Lore at lore@simplicity-matters.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Tues, Jan 4, Neighbors of the Northwest Branch, business meeting. Location “tbd”
For further information, call 301-946-5599, e-mail jhfay@verizon.net or visit www.neighborsnw.org.

Tues and Thurs, January 4 & 6, LEED Building Design and Construction Exam Prep, 2-6pm, Andrews Air Force Base, MD. These two classes will prepare the student to take the LEED exam, focusing on the technical aspects of the rating system, and the strategies associated with credits and intents of the standard. For more information, contact Leslie Philip, leslie@sustaindesign.net, 202-667-1620 X1210. Directions & details: www.sustaindesign.net under trainings.

Thurs, Jan. 6, Bethesda Green First Thursday Happy Hour, 5-8 pm., Bethesda, MD. Ring in the New Year with an evening of casual conversation and networking with Bethesda Green at Ri-Ra Irish Pub, 4931 Elm Street, Bethesda, MD 20814. What's your New Year's Green Resolution? Jot it down with your name and email address. Bring your Green Resolution to the Happy Hour for chance to win a Ri-Ra gift card. We'll share ideas and publish highlights on our website, <http://www.bethesdagreen.org/>. Contact Dave Heffernan, dvheffernan@gmail.com or 301-767-7222. RSVP, direction and details via Bethesda Green Meetup, <http://www.meetup.com/greenhome-113/>.

Fri, Jan 7, Governor’s Forum on Sustainability, 9am-3pm, Wye Mills, MD, at Chesapeake College, Performing Arts Center, Routes 50 and 213 Wye Mills, MD. Please join Governor Martin O’Malley and other business, community and conservation leaders for an important discussion on the future of Bay restoration, energy and climate change, resource-based industries, and smart growth in Maryland <https://servicedesk.wufoo.com/forms/governors-forumsustainability/>

Sat, Jan 8, 1:00-3:00 pm, New Lens - Peer-2-Peer Education Project, 2401 Eutaw Place 21217
This project involves young people teaching workshops and/or organizing events at public schools about issues that matter to young people. This is a way to foster youth leadership as well as a way to help youth enliven school culture and curriculum. Students will be paid a stipend for participation. (at the corner of Whitelock St. and Eutaw Place by the #5 and the #13 bus stop. Enter through the Whitelock St. basement entrance). Please feel free to call or email with questions at 410-383-7200. This project is made possible by Youth as Resources and America's Promise Alliance.

Wed, Jan 12, Prosperity Plus Program, 7-9:15pm, Finksburg, MD. A 10 week journey in which we will move from fear, scarcity, and limited thinking to a life full of possibility, prosperity, and promise. We will learn the Universal Laws governing abundance and how to put them to use on a daily basis. Will be

held at Cedarhurst Unitarian 2912 Club House Rd, Finksburg, MD 21048. \$60 for workbook & 10 cds, tithing of time & treasure, Contact: Iris reviris@ccccl.org 410-318-8877 or visit: www.ccccl.org.

Wed, Jan 12, Greenbelt Climate Action Network, 7-9:15 pm, Room 114, Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Drive. Guest Speakers: Robert Yoho from Environmentally Appropriate Technologies and Mark Fisher from Harvest Chapel Mission. Both organizations are teaching people to produce their own food, water, and energy, both in the United States and in developing countries. For more info, contact Lore, lore@simplicity-matters.org, 301-345-2234.

Thurs, Jan. 13, Winter Bird Walk Series, 8:30 am-9:30 am, Irvine Nature Center, Owings Mills, MD Start your mid-week morning with a pleasant stroll along the trails of a local park. We'll discover which birds are hanging around and talk about their behaviors. Bring binoculars or borrow a pair from us. This program is part of a series (12/16, 2/16), but can be attended individually. Free! More information at www.explorenature.org or 443-738-9224.

Thurs, Jan 13, LEED Breakfast Roundtable, 8-9:30am, Hunt Valley, MD, at 230 Schilling Circle, Suite 132, Hunt Valley, MD 21031. Let USGBC MD be your guide to a comprehensive understanding of LEED 2012. Learn how you can play a role and how Paula Abdul fits in! A decade after the initial launch of LEED, on November 8, 2010, the USGBC released the next version of the rating systems. It is important that stakeholders engaged in green building take advantage of the public comment period open through January 14, 2011 (yes, the day after this program). More information at: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/1125060085>.

Fri, Jan 14, Sierra Club potluck dinner 6:30pm, program 7:30-9pm, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, MD The program describes "lights out Baltimore", an effort to define and prevent bird deaths due to night-lighted buildings. The nature center is at 13555 Beaver Dam Road and can be reached from the Shawan Road West exit (#20B) from I-83. Take Shawan Road to the traffic light at Beaver Dam, make a left and stay to the right to the parking lot. Call Joyce at 410 254 7240 for any other questions.

Fri-Sat, Jan 14-15, Future Harvest 12th Annual Conference, Pearlstone Center, Reisterstown, MD. Future Harvest - Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (Future Harvest-CASA) is a network of farmers, agricultural professionals, landowners and consumers living and working in the Chesapeake region. We work to promote profitable, environmentally sound and socially acceptable food and farming systems that work to sustain communities. <http://futureharvestcasa.org/>.

Sat, Jan. 15, Greater Baltimore Children and Nature Conference, 9am - 3pm, Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School, 1600 Guilford Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21202, The conference is presented at no charge to participants. Breakfast buffet at 8:30am. Lunch provided. For more info <http://www.parksandpeople.org/play/children-and-nature-initiative/nature-play/>

Mon, Jan 17, Lake Needwood Trash Cleanup, 10am - 1pm, Derwood (Rockville), MD 20855. Up to 50 volunteers aged 14 and older needed to clean the exposed lake bed of bottles, cans, fishing tackle, metal posts, tires, and other debris before it is filled again with water. Wear hat, warm clothes, sturdy boots. Coffee & bagels will be provided. Trash bags & reusable gloves available. For more information, contact Joan Furlong, joan@friendsofrockcreek.org, 202-215-4637. Directions and details on calendar at www.friendsofrockcreek.org.

Mon, Jan 17, Turkey Branch Trash Cleanup, 9am - Noon, Aspen Hill (Silver Spring), MD 20906. Trash cleanup along Turkey Branch in Matthew Henson State Park. Wear hat, warm clothes, sturdy shoes. Bring your own workgloves if possible. Trash bags and reusable gloves provided. For more information, contact Joan Furlong, joan@friendsofrockcreek.org, 202-215-4637. Directions and details on calendar at www.friendsofrockcreek.org.

Mon, Jan 17, Rock Creek Park / English ivy removal, 9 am - Noon, Washington, DC 20012. Help to remove invasive English ivy from trees along Fenwick/Portal Branches to Rock Creek. Wear hat, warm clothes, sturdy shoes. Bring your own workgloves and tools if possible. Ages 16+ please. For more information, contact Joan Furlong, joan@friendsofrockcreek.org, 202-215-4637. Directions and details on calendar at www.friendsofrockcreek.org.

Mon, Jan 17, Silver Spring Garden Club meeting, 7:30-10pm, Wheaton, MD. African American Gardenways: Roots and Origins of a Tradition at Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave, Wheaton, MD. Please join the Silver Spring Garden Club for this presentation giving insight into the presence and role of enslaved and emancipated African Americans in early American gardening and food culture, by Michael Twitty, a recognized food historian and community scholar of African American food and folk culture. Refreshments/social time following the talk. This event is FREE and is open to the general public. For more information, contact: Kathy Jentz, 301-588-6894, Laserblast@aol.com. Directions and details at www.brooksidegardens.org.

Tues, Jan 18, Introductory Discussion about Common Security Clubs, 7-9pm, Washington, DC. Introductory discussion with Chuck Collins, a senior scholar at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), at the Festival Center, 1640 Columbia Road NW in Washington DC. The clubs are a mini-movement of people coming together local communities to help each other understand and cope with the collapsing economy, and as impacted by peak oil and climate change.
<http://commonsecurityclub.org/2010/12/07/january-18-washington-dc-forum-on-common-security-clubs/>.

Tues, Jan 18, 12 to 1:15 PM, Do You Know About BGE's 80% Energy Efficient Lighting Program? 230 Schilling Circle, Suite 132, Hunt Valley, MD 21031 BGE's Small Business Lighting Solutions (SBLS) Program. BGE has a somewhat unknown rebate program that targets selected commercial customers. In their Small Business Lighting Solutions (SBLS) program, BGE will pay for up to 80% of the cost to perform an energy efficient lighting upgrade. Don't let the phrase "Small Business" throw you, there are over 75,000 accounts in BGE's service territory that qualify for this program. This session will walk you through the steps toward energy savings! Lunch Provided.
<http://www.eventbrite.com/event/1126139313>

Wed, Jan 19, Project Wet, Project Wild and Project Learning Tree, 4:30-7:30pm, Irvine Nature Center, Owings Mills, MD. 6 Sessions: Wednesdays, Jan 19, Jan 26, Feb 2, Feb 9, Feb 16 and Feb 23. Educators can introduce nature to elementary-aged children with these award-winning environmental education programs. Project Wild focuses on wildlife; Project Learning Tree emphasizes trees and forests; and Project Wet is all about water. All participants receive three curriculum guides with background information and detailed lesson plans for hundreds of different indoor and outdoor activities. Emphasis for this workshop is placed on grades 1-6, and it is designed for formal and non-formal educators of young children (teachers, naturalists, day care instructors, scout leaders, etc.). The course is led by Sarah Haines from Towson University. Maryland teachers can receive one in-service credit. \$20 members, \$30 non-members

Fri., Jan. 21, Painting: Twigs, Berries and Seed Pods, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Owings Mills, MD. During this 4-session course on botanical illustration, we'll focus on plants in winter. Students will learn the traditional watercolor techniques of wet-in-wet, dry-brush and graded wash via detailed drawings of winter berries, twigs and seed pods from Irvine Nature Center's property. We'll also cover the basics of color theory, color-mixing and composition. Students should have basic drawing skills. Materials list will be provided. Bring a bag lunch. This course is 4 sessions long and costs \$125 for non-members. For more information, contact info@explorenature.org or 443-738-9200. Directions and details at www.explorenature.org.

Sat, Jan 22, 6th Annual Polar Bear Plunge to fight climate change, National Harbor, DC. For the first time we're holding this event on the Potomac itself, just down river from Congress, along a little beach at National Harbor. More than ever, our national leaders need to hear the message: Save the polar bears. Save the humans. Keep winter cold. Commit right now, in the midst of skyrocketing global warming, to joining hundreds of citizens from the DC region and beyond for this annual CCAN fundraiser. It's easy to raise money and even easier to dip all or part of your body into the water. This year our goal is to gather 350 people on the beach at National Harbor while each participant pledges to make a good faith effort to raise at least \$350 in sponsorships from friends and loved ones. Why 350? Because that's the number scientists say is safe for carbon pollution in our atmosphere - 350 parts per million CO2. <http://www.keepwintercold.org/about-1/about-the-plunge.html>.

Sat, Jan 22, 1-5:30 pm, Awakening the Dreamer Symposium, Hosted By Mary Batson and Bob Sima, 803 Antietam Dr, Davidsonville, MD 21035. Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream is a program of The Pachamama Alliance that serves as a galvanizing space for individuals to deeply explore the extraordinary possibilities inherent in a communion of technology with spirit. Through participation in this program, people are offered a new place to stand in looking at their world and their lives, and are empowered to formulate their own personal daily practices that contribute to the creation of a new dream for themselves as well as for our world. Facilitated by Hillary Banachowski and Lynne Gardner. Suggested Donation: \$20. Please RSVP to host Mary Batson: mary@frontporchrambles.com. For more info, visit www.pachamama.org or www.awakeningthedreamer.org. Symposium Trailer: <http://awakeningthedreamer.org/>
FACEBOOK: http://www.facebook.com/AwakeningTheDreamer?v=app_4949752878

Sat, Jan 22, Film: For the Next 7 Generations, 7:00pm, Eldersburg, MD. Join us as we watch this powerful film of the 13 indigenous grandmothers from around the world, as they continue to create programs and ways to support our mother earth and leave a legacy for the next 7 generations. Held at: Masonic Freedom Lodge, 2253 Liberty Rd. Eldersburg 21784, \$10 and we supply the popcorn! Contact: Iris, reviris@ccccl.org or 410-318-8877 or www.ccccl.org.

Tues, Jan 25, Environmental Legislative Summit, 5-8 pm, Annapolis, MD at the Miller Conference Room, Miller Senate Building, 11 Bladen Street. Come to Annapolis and hear from top legislative leaders and advocates about the 2011 environmental legislation. Do your part for the environment and our communities! Help save the Bay. Support offshore wind power. Join us and lobby for good environmental policy. <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/events/e019.asp>
http://www.chesapeakeclimate.org/detail/event.cfm?event_id=1313.

Tues., Jan 25 and Thurs Jan 27, Volunteer Naturalist Training: Maple Sugaring, 9:30am-12:30pm, Owings Mills, MD. This 2-session course will teach you everything you need to lead preschool and elementary-aged students on maple sugaring school field trips at Irvine Nature Center. Learn how to recognize maple trees in winter, how to tap the trees to collect the sap, and how to boil down the sap down into maple syrup and candy. We will also cover teaching techniques and other signs of winter. Free! For more information, contact info@explorenature.org or 443-738-9200. Directions and details at www.explorenature.org.

Thurs, Jan 27, Wild Kingdom: Behavior and Ecology of Maryland's Wildlife, 7-8:30pm, Owings Mills, MD. Explore the fascinating behaviors and lifestyles of some of Maryland's common (and not-so-common) wildlife. Discover some of the unique adaptations that allow these organisms to survive, even in areas where expanding development and habitat-loss affect these animals. This course is five

sessions long, held at Irvine Nature Center, and costs \$80 for non-members. Contact info@explorenature.org or 443-738-9200. Directions and details at www.explorenature.org.

Fri, Jan 28, Discussion of "Sacred Economics" with Charles Eisenstein, 7-9pm, Washington, DC. Join us for a riveting discussion on economics based on flow, not accumulation; cycles, not consumption; sharing, not interest, and how the new economy will enact a changed attitude toward earth, toward humanity, and toward ourselves. Donations appreciated but not mandatory. Held at St. Columba's Church, 4201 Albemarle St, NW, Washington DC 20016, (one block from the Tenleytown metro with ample street parking). More information available at: www.AscentofHumanity.com.

Fri, Jan 28, "Hooked on Herps" with the Maryland Amphibian & Reptile Atlas, 7:30pm, Howard County, MD. This statewide survey of reptiles and amphibians began in 2010 and will continue through 2014. Join Sue Muller, the Howard County Coordinator to learn about the project as well as an overview of the first year of data collection including a new turtle species for the state! Volunteers are needed to conduct searches and participation easy. Search techniques will be discussed as well. You may even want to be assigned a park to search. Training is Friday, January 28 at 7:30 pm at the Howard County Recreation & Parks Headquarters, 7120 Oakland Mills Rd. in Columbia. Contact: Sue Muller, smuller@howardcountymd.gov, 301-498-8462.

Sat, Jan 29, Workshop for Facilitators Interested in Starting Common Security Clubs, 10-4pm, Washington, DC. Held at The Festival Center, 1640 Columbia Road NW, Washington DC 20009. Learn how to lead mutual support groups through topics like: the causes of economic and ecological changes, overcoming isolation and strengthening community ties. \$15 includes lunch. Register at <http://commonsecurityclub.org/2010/12/01/jan-29-washington-dc-facilitator-training/> For more info contact Sarah Byrnes at 617-477-8630 x 307 or Sarah@CommonSecurityClub.org

Sat, Jan. 29, Baltimore Cohousing Organizing Meeting, 3:30-5pm, Baltimore, MD. We are interested in forming an intergenerational cohousing community. We invite you to join us in learning about the process of planning a new community. We have no website yet, just a dream in our hearts. Please join us at the Ruscombe Mansion, 4801/4803 Yellowwood Ave, Baltimore, MD 21209. Directions: www.ruscombe.org/directionstoruscombe.html. For more information on cohousing, see www.cohousing.org and www.cohousingcollaborative.com. To RSVP to the meeting, email rebeccalachen@gmail.com

Sun, Jan 30, Green Expo, 10am-2pm, Pikesville, MD. Held at: Beth El Congregation, 8101 Park Heights Avenue, Pikesville, MD 21208. The Environmental Awareness Committee is presenting a community-wide event that features exhibitors and vendors representing all areas of green living including: gardening, cleaning, energy consumption, repurposing, crafts and home improvement projects. The event will also feature a variety of short presentations and demonstrations. 410-484-0411

Sun, Jan 30, Going Green for Groceries, 2-3pm, Owings Mills, MD, at the Irvine Nature Center, 11201 Garrison Forest Road. Follow the life cycle of a typical grocery bag, then discover ways you can reduce your own use of plastic bags. We'll also make your own reusable shopping bag using paint, sequins, stitching, stamps and buttons. Bag and other materials are supplied; just bring your creativity! Ages 6 & up. Free for members, \$10 non-members

ACTION OPPORTUNITIES AND TIDBITS

Fri, Jan 28, 5pm, Application deadline - Neighborhood Greening Grants for spring projects

Many great projects start small and just need a little help to get off the ground. Parks & People's Neighborhood Greening Grants provide essential funding to a wide range of projects throughout Baltimore. Neighborhood Greening Grants are available for Baltimore City community groups interested in conducting projects such as tree plantings, community gardens, vacant lot clean-ups and restoration, neighborhood clean-ups, schoolyard greening, water quality improvement and environmental education activities. Grant funds may also be used for tools, plant material, equipment and other needed supplies. Most Neighborhood Greening Grant awards are less than \$1,000 but their impact is often monumental. To be eligible for funding, all applicants are required to send a representative to one of the two Grant Application Training Workshops and schedule a site visit. Workshops for the Spring 2011 grant round will be held on Wednesday, November 17 and Thursday November 18 from 6-8 pm at the Parks & People office. Awards will be made in March.

Mon, Jan 31, Application due date for Maryland Ornithological Society Birding Scholarships.

Open to MD youth educators. A great opportunity to learn about the wonderful world of birds and how to engage youth in ornithology and nature. Successful applicants will get room, board, and tuition paid (excluding travel to Maine). Application process and details: www.mdbirds.org/education/scholarships. Contact baltimoreyouthbirding@yahoo.com for more information.

Mon, Jan 31, Last Day for EcoBall Ticket Sale!, Baltimore, MD. EcoBall tickets are on sale now! \$60 and \$30 w/ a valid student ID before January 31st (normally \$75/40 w/student ID.) A chance to get dressed up, eat wonderfully prepared local foods, taste some of our local brew and dance, dance, dance! For more information, go to baltimoregreenworks.com/events or e-mail bgw@baltimoregreenworks.com.

Veriditas Books announces the release of **Invitation to Wonder: A Journey through the Seasons by Elizabeth Ayres** in paperback and Kindle formats. In a hectic, uncertain world, these elegantly written, life-affirming reflections on Nature's beauty, wisdom and mystery provide a comforting respite. Annie Dillard, the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, says the book "creates space for all that is beautiful and true." For more information on the book and the MP3 audio series based on it, visit <http://invitationtowonder.com>.

FEBRUARY PREVIEW

Thurs, Feb 10, "Moving Stories: Getting Around Baltimore", 6–8:30pm, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore City

Maryland Humanities Council and The Stoop Storytelling Series present an evening of transportation stories, with discussion to follow, as a part of our new Practicing Democracy initiative. Do you have a tale about riding the bus in Baltimore City? We are looking for storytellers to tell a five-minute true personal tale about their experiences of navigating Baltimore--the good, the bad, and the ugly--for "Moving Stories: Getting Around Baltimore" on February 10 from 6 -8:30 pm at The Walters Museum. Send three sentences about your idea to Beth Barbush at ebarbush@mdhc.org. For more information contact Beth Barbush or visit our website <http://www.mdhc.org/programs/practicing-democracy/> and visit the Stoop Story Telling website at <http://www.stoopstorytelling.com/>.

Tues, Feb 22, 9 am – 4 pm. The Maryland Bicycle Symposium. Hosted by Bike Maryland, the Symposium will bring together advocates, industry leaders, on and off-road recreational cyclists and commuters, elected officials and staff from the Tri-State Region. 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. East Miller Office Building in the President's Conference Center.