

AIR POLLUTION AND HEALTH: THE WHITE FLAGS CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Given that the postcard initiative has come to a close, the campaign has decided to shift its efforts and create another action that will not only aim to further open the lines of communication with ArcelorMittal-Dofasco, but educate the Hamilton community as well.

Our new initiative aims to have a strong focus on health and has taken the form of a White Flag campaign.

The white flag tactic was originally created and utilized by Italy's Legambiente (Environmental League). To draw attention to industrial soot, the group distributed white flags for members and residents to hang out their windows. Before long, the white flags became discoloured. This was a great tactic because it was simple, fun, and allowed many people to get involved. Its meaning was clear to all, and it was deemed as very effective.

By conducting a white flag campaign along the Beach Strip and within the Northeast end of Hamilton, we aim to create a strong visual and bring attention to the visible pollution which covers our homes and enters our lungs. The action officially launched on Tuesday June 29th at the Kiwanis East Boys and Girls Club. Here, in collaboration with neighbourhood residents and groups, and with funding from Sam Merulla, Bernie Morelli, and Fred Eisenberger, we hosted an eco-friendly community BBQ and movie night.

Interested in getting involved? Great! The Good Neighbour Campaign is always looking for volunteers. If you are interested in helping with our neighbourhood canvasses, or helping with sewing and creating the flags, please give us a shout! We invite everyone to jump on board to help have a say with what is happening in their community.

Please contact Katie Stiel at kstiel@environmenthamilton.org or 905-549-0900.

OPEN STREETS - BIG SUCCESS

Hamilton's first Open Streets event counted almost 5000 visitors walking, biking, and riding on James StreetNorth on June 6th, despite the rain! By the time we had to "close" the street again, we had brought out the sun and had hundreds of smiling faces filling the road!



Visitors include councillor Bob Bratina, NDP provincial leader Andrea Horwath and Mayor Fred Eisenberger who stopped by to chat in the street with walkers and cyclists enjoying the day.

The feedback from the "Passport" surveys provided us with glowing support for the concept and execution of this innovative festival. The most common response given to the "What Did You Like" question we received was "Open Street/No Cars!" with some mentioning the lack

noise, pollution and danger of cars that allowed them to freely walk, ride and roll down James St N. Besides including more vendors, booths and music for our next event (September 26th), see *Open Streets* on page 2



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FAIR TRADE / LOCAL LIKE BROTHER/SISTER

Buying locally produced food is better for your health and your soul. It allows you to eat in-season while supporting members of your community. The local movement is a rebirth of what used to be, and still is in some parts of the world, a basic fact of life. All civilizations produced the food they ate until large-scale agricultural trade began to take root on an international level. Proponents of the local food movement believe that we as a society have swerved off the road of sustainability.

The well-oiled machine of agribusiness is simply not sustainable, but the crux of the matter is that there are some food items that have to be shipped in from overseas. Coffee, for one, is not something we can grow in Hamilton. The same is true for cocoa. This can be a conundrum for people who want to eat local but also enjoy a hot cup of coffee. What do you do if you want your coffee, but don't want to contribute to an unsustainable global system? Two words: Fair Trade.

The Fair Trade movement has worked diligently to balance the global economy so that farmers in the global south receive fair wages for what they produce, whether it be coffee, cocoa, or cotton. Like locally produced food, fair trade products provide those who produce it the resources with which to sustain their lives as farmers. The similarities also extend to the freshness and the overall high quality of the food. Fair trade is an ethical, responsible and sustainable way to purchase food from the global supermarket. It is not a contradiction to preach farmers markets and community gardens while drinking coffee. Both the fair trade and local food movements have plenty in common – support the farmers and invest in a sustainable economy.



OPEN STREETS SUCCESS *FROM PAGE ONE* (2010), the third most popular suggestion for future events was

to have them “More Often”, again confirming that our fellow citizens thoroughly enjoyed a free, open-air, health-focused event allowing us to take over the street for a day.

Leaders from the surrounding neighbourhoods joined forces with the organizing groups to ensure this festival had a very distinct “Community” feeling. Without the endless energy and support of Sheri Selway (North End Neighbours President), Dawn Manning (also North End Neighbours), Dawn Graham (Strathcona President) and Peg Kelly (Kirkendall Neighbourhood Association), all our

efforts would have been in vain. Residents were aware of street closures and businesses got involved

to support their neighbours’ efforts which created a very unique experience for everyone.

A very special thanks should also go to those who helped organize and fund the fun day! Thanks to Alison Bochsler (Hamilton Public Health), Paul Barrett (Green Venture), Jordan Fysh (Hamilton Cycling Committee), Peter Topalovic (Smart Commute), Donna Reid (Councillor Bratina’s office) and our EH executive director Lynda Lukasik, for their unwavering faith and hard work!

And of course who could forget our wonderful inspirational Lead Coordinator, Energizer-In-Chief, Simon C. De Abreu, whose undying enthusiasm and vision gave way to an incredible display of all the best Hamilton has to offer. But most of all, many thanks to the dozens of dedicated volunteers who gave their time for free (and a free t-shirt!).

Mark Your Calendars! Open Streets Hamilton will once again open the street on James St. N between 10am and 3pm on Sunday, September 26th – the day after Supercrawl (see www.supercrawl.ca). Don’t miss it! Watch for more details at www.openstreetshamilton.ca.

TAKING THE BUS TO THE FARM

Thanks to all who made our first Rural Routes tour a success! Despite rainy skies and the threat of thunderstorms, 55 people filled an articulated HSR bus on June 12th, selling-out our trip to ManoRun Organic Farm. Between bread-baking in the woodfire oven, visiting the barn animals and picking up some fresh produce to take home, participants got the chance to meet farmer Chris Krucker and learn about how their food is grown.

Many thanks to Chris and Denise from ManoRun Organic Farm and, of course, Hamilton Eat Local's partners in this endeavor: the HSR, Hamilton Smart Commute and Tourism Hamilton.

If you missed this tour, do not fret! There are still 3 more trips happening this summer. Up next is Mordern's Organic Farm Store on July 10th; followed by Puddicombe Estate Farm and Winery, and Carluke Orchards on August 21st and September 11th, respectively. Tickets are already getting scooped up, so stop by the Bread and Roses Cafe to get yours!

The cost is only \$5 per person or \$2 for children and seniors, which includes a small cup of organic fair trade coffee served before we depart that is roasted in-house at the cafe (not local but very fresh) — so be sure to come early! We board at 1pm sharp. For more details please visit: <http://cms1.smartcommute.ca/hamilton/ruralroutes>.



AEROTROPOLIS WORSE THAN EXPECTED

City council has foolishly decided to rush through a decision on the deeply-flawed aerotropolis plans. Information on these plans remains incomplete, but what has been released confirms that this sacrifice of over 2000 acres of rural farmland and natural areas is even more unacceptable than EH believed. The most recently revealed problems include the following:

Consultant studies reveal that 69 percent of this irreplaceable foodland is expected to be occupied by warehouses and trucking companies. This suggests little likelihood that the jobs provided - if they appear - will reduce out-commuting of Hamilton workers to the Toronto area - a long alleged benefit of the aerotropolis.

New manufacturing is only predicted to occupy 7 percent of the land and provide 8 percent of the promised jobs. Much of the remaining land and more than a third of the jobs are earmarked for business services including "retail, accommodation and food services."

Other studies just released say it will cost \$351 million for servicing infrastructure, but it is clear that number is a gross underestimate. It doesn't include any portion of the required 25-kilometre trunk sewer and water lines from Woodward Avenue to the airport lands; nor any part of the \$700 million bill to expand Hamilton sewage treatment facilities. The sewer line was costed last year at \$125 million, with at least half that cost reasonable attributable to the aerotropolis.

The city's draft secondary plan directs prospective occupiers of the aerotropolis lands to first have their plans reviewed by the private company that runs the airport. Since that company and its sister corporations are active in land acquisition in the aerotropolis, these provisions appears to provide them with information that could be used against the interests of the prospective businesses, and appear to create an unlevel business playing field.

Public information sessions are being held from 2-4 pm and 6-8 pm on August 3 in the Warplane Heritage Museum in Mt Hope, and September 8 in the Ancaster Fairgrounds on Trinity Road in Jerseyville. No sessions are accessible by public transit.

A statutory public meeting as required by the provincial Planning Act, is now expected to be held in late September. That will be the first time - and perhaps the last time - that citizens will actually be able to give their views on the largest proposed urban boundary expansion in the city's history.

Join Us!



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ECO-MEDITATION WALK

I had no idea what to expect when I organized an eco-meditation walk with Sister-Sister Tinh Quang from the Blue Heron Zen Buddhist Temple in Hamilton, as part of my work as project facilitator with *Greening Sacred Spaces/Environment Hamilton*.



But cradled by the soft warm breezes of a late spring evening, in the heart of Valley land, the light of the day- green and mysterious, we find ourselves, hand clasping thumb either in front or behind our backs, our gaze on the ground before us, taking very small, very slow steps while we allow ourselves to focus on the present-letting go of this morning's conflict with a co-worker, or tonight's supper or the trip we will be taking in August. *Meditation*: the returning of wandering thoughts back to the moment.

All the time, we make full use of our senses; we breathe in the smells around us, we listen to the sounds the forest makes, we feel the wind on our skins.

Crows call raucously, twigs snap unexpectedly, our shoes crunch on the gravel path, soft green light hangs at the edges of our sight; the smell of lilacs and then horse manure and then freshly mowed grass. The sounds of people passing by cautiously; curious at the strange site we make, walking in single file procession- and the children giggling.

When we pause in our walk, it is to look up and let our minds hold what our eyes first grasp. How vibrant the colours look around us now. We see the world with our new eyes and we are amazed at its intensity.

My eyes fall upon a rock at my feet; solid, grounding and non-obtrusive. Next a mosquito on my hand catches my eye. I let it be. Unwanted things we normally shun keep drawing my attention: the dandelion, the purple loose strife, the garlic mustard weeds.

Invasive species-how do they all fit into the grand scheme of things I wonder and then let the thought go, reaching instead to hold and embrace the world as it is before me; thistles and all.

As we emerge from the valley and back onto the rail trail, we are greeted by the setting sun that flashes on the tops of trees and under the wings of flying gulls. We breathe in deeply; we are light hearted, and glad. We want to hold onto this feeling; impossibly, to never let it leave.



SUMMER INTERNS ADD LOTS OF ENERGY

EH has successfully been granted 5 summer students from the Human Resources and Skills Development / Canada Summer Jobs program.

Currently, we have Alex Bissley and Sam Colbert working on Eat Local, Alex Miculan (returning for the third consecutive year) working on Passport to Hamilton and Adam DeSousa working on Greening Our Local Economy.

Coming soon is returning summer intern, Alessandra Gage who will be working on the Walkability Project in Dundas. She will be joining us in July.

4 LtoR: Alex Miculan, Alex Bissley, Sam Colbert and Adam DeSousa

RAISING A STINK ABOUT A STINK

If all goes well, Keith Neighbourhood residents will be able to breathe a bit easier if an Environmental Bill of Rights 'Leave to Appeal' application prepared by Environment Hamilton and a group of concerned residents from the area, is successful. Residents living around Baresa Kitchens, located at 7 Hillyard Street, have struggled for several years now with noise and odour impacts from the facility. The situation is a challenging one because the facility shares a property line with homes along its south and west sides. Some homes are as close as 7.5 metres to the facility. Baresa designs and manufactures custom kitchens using a variety of odorous solvents and paints to finish the woodwork.

Environment Hamilton learned that the company set up its operations at 7 Hillyard without the required Ministry of Environment (MOE) approvals. In January of 2008, the situation came to a head after residents complained to the MOE about noise and odour problems. A Provincial Officer's Order was issued, requiring the company to apply for the necessary MOE permit - a certificate of approval for air emissions. The Provincial Officer noted that residents complained about sickly sweet odours that gave them headaches when they were outside. Residents also described noisy fans and machinery that sometimes continued late into the night. The MOE required the company to move a fan indoors and to properly insulate another piece of machinery to address the odour concerns.

The situation seemed to be better until residents began to notice noise and odour problems again. Residents say the MOE told them to call the company with any concerns, which they did. At first, residents found the company was responsive, acting on their complaints and resolving any concerns. Then residents say the company stopped returning their calls and odour and noise problems persist today.

In early June of this year, Environment Hamilton staff found an MOE decision on an air permit application for Baresa Kitchens. On closer inspection, it was discovered that the air permit contained no conditions limiting odour impacts from the facility or requiring the company to assess and address odour issues. Further, the permit did not limit the operating hours at the facility. Working with residents, EH prepared a Leave to Appeal (LTA) application, indicating that no reasonable person would have granted an air permit without protections against the odorous emissions generated by the facility. Within days of the LTA being submitted, EH received a phone call from the MOE's solicitor requesting an opportunity to meet with EH and residents to attempt to work out issues of concern. That meeting is now being scheduled. A full report on the outcome of this effort will be provided in our next newsletter.



North end residents live cheek by jowl with smelly industries

DIGGING AT McQUESTEN

Last month's Members & Volunteers event was a visit to the McQuesten community in the city's east end. There is an exciting and inspiring story: by organizing themselves, and offering residents the resources they need (from legal clinics to a kids' breakfast club) they've improved the lives of their neighbourhood.

One exciting development is their new community garden and Environment Hamilton members and volunteers rolled up their sleeves to help put in raised vegetable beds for local families.

We're planning Membership & Volunteer Events for this fall, so if you have any suggestions, we'd love to hear them!

Contact Julia at the EH office 905-549-0900.



Helping out in the garden

PRESTO & PASSPORT

This fall the HSR will be joining several TTC subway and GO stations, as well as Oakville and Burlington transit, in introducing the PRESTO transit pass. By late winter 2011, the PRESTO pass will unite 10 different transit systems, including Ottawa on a common payment media.

The new PRESTO pass is the size of a credit card and uses “smartcard” technology to store monetary value and can be used on any of the 10 transit systems to pay your fare. The idea is that passengers will be able to travel throughout the GTHA and Ottawa seamlessly, only needing the one pass rather than separate tickets for each system. Passengers simply have to tap their PRESTO Pass on the Fare Payment Device when they get on any bus and it will automatically deduct the fare for the trip.

The card itself will cost \$6 and a minimum of \$10 must be added to the card right away. The card must then be used to pay a fare within 7 days to complete the transaction. To load money onto your card, you can visit any one of six locations in Hamilton or load it online/by phone. This card will last 4 years, at which point it will expire and need to be replaced. There are numerous other logistical details to the Pass from how to “Autoload” your card to how the GO systems plans to manage trips of various length, all of which are answered on their website at www.prestocard.ca.

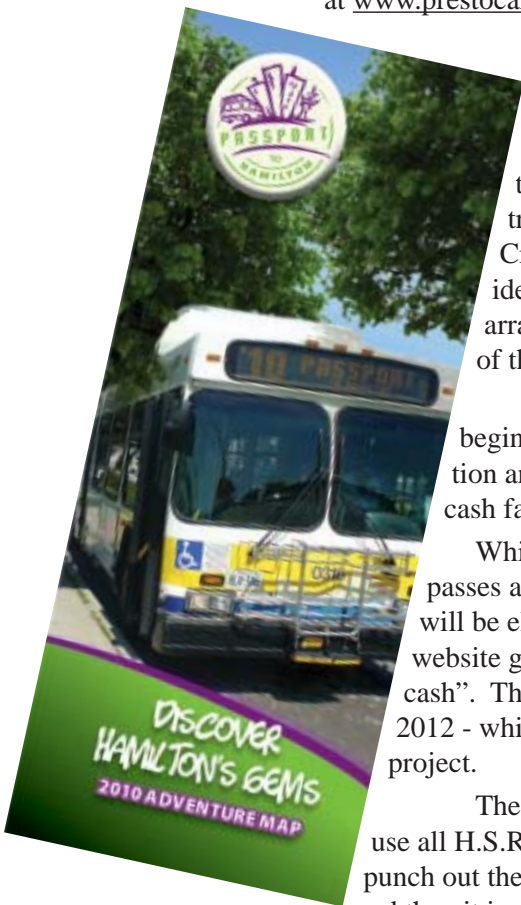
While PRESTO amalgamates the transit systems in the area to an extent, each individual transit system is left to work out details such as special fares themselves. The HSR has announced that customers will still be able to transfer for free within two hours. To work in the idea of a “monthly pass”, those riders who use a *registered* PRESTO card for a minimum of 32 one-way trips in a any calendar month will be eligible for a Federal non-refundable Tax Credit, providing up to \$115.20/year tax credit. (Each system will manage the idea of a “monthly pass” differently. For example, Burlington Transit has arranged that after paying 36 full-fare rides in any calendar month, the remainder of the rides taken in that month will be free of charge.)

Though no dates have been officially announced, passengers can expect to begin using their PRESTO Pass on the HSR in January, though equipment installation and service upgrades may cause some delays. Riders will still be able to use a cash fare to use the bus.

While nothing has officially been announced by the H.S.R. it’s possible that all passes and tickets (with the likely exception of student, disabled and senior passes) will be eliminated after a few months of trying out the new system. The PRESTO Pass website goes as far as stating that this card will “likely replace all fare media except cash”. This would include the eventual elimination of the HSR Day Pass - likely by 2012 - which poses a serious threat to Environment Hamilton’s “Passport to Hamilton” project.

The H.S.R. Day Pass currently allows a group of up to 6 people (up to 2 adults) to use all H.S.R. buses, all day for \$9. The pass can be bought at any time, but the driver will punch out the day’s date on the pass when you first board a bus the day you plan to use it and then it is only good for that day. The Day Pass is ideal for families, youth groups, tourists, etc. to use the bus and see the city. “Passport to Hamilton” allows groups using this pass to receive discounts at over 200 locations throughout the city! However, without the Day Pass, this program cannot be sustained.

Already, no new locations will be accepted to sell Day Passes. One of the key features of the program is that the date is on the pass so business owners can be assured that the group used the bus that day and they are not taking advantage of the program by using an old pass. Even if the PRESTO Pass was able to generate a similar fare system, there is no way to show business owners that you used the bus that day.



RESPONDING TO 'ALTERNATIVE STANDARDS'

Way back in the December 2008 issue of our newsletter, we reported that both of our local steel producers were applying for 'alternative standards' under Ontario Regulation 419 – Local Air Quality. After a long process of air quality modelling, monitoring, and third party steel expert assessments, AM-Dofasco's alternative standard application was reviewed by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and an MOE decision posted to the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry (EBR) for public comment. US Steel's application has been delayed because of the plant shutdown last year.

Environment Hamilton prepared a detailed submission on AM-Dofasco's draft alternative standard permit. But we found ourselves in a difficult position because we were only provided with a 2-page executive summary of a third party expert report that we were told we would have been given. When we asked for the full report we were told by the MOE that we would need to submit a formal Freedom of Information request – leaving us in a situation where we likely wouldn't have the information before the comment period ended. So we submitted a request to have the EBR comment period extended. Our request was more successful than we anticipated, with an extension granted as well as a decision from the MOE to release the full third party expert report to us without requiring us to go through a formal FOI request.

We raised a number of fundamental concerns in our comments on the altered air standards request. At the most fundamental level, we expressed concern about MOE approving a permit that requires only minimal reductions in emissions of substances like benzo(a)pyrene – a known cancer-causing chemical. Over a five year period the company will only realize a 17% reduction in benzo(a)pyrene at the nearest off-site location where sensitive uses occur (such as a home or a daycare). We do not believe this is an adequate level of reduction over five years.

Our access to the third party expert report revealed to us that operational requirements for coke ovens imposed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) south of the border are much stricter than the requirements currently in place in Ontario. In Ontario, coke oven operators follow the requirements set out in the 'Environmental Best Practice Manual for Coke Producers' developed by the Canadian Steel Producers Association. The independent experts put it clearly when they stated:

At an industry level, it is recommended that Canadian iron and steel facilities review current CSPA practices and reporting requirements and ensure that these procedures and emission management practices are consistent with USEPA efforts over the last 5-10 years to increase the stringency of requirements in controlling emissions from coke making. It is believed that monitoring and reporting of specific parameters for individual sources (i.e. observed door leaks, observed lid leaks) in the manner required by the USEPA over the current CSPA practice of reporting of emissions on a per tonne of coke produced on a per battery basis will potentially allow greater resolution of the significant sources of emission and support further efforts to potentially reduce the emissions from each of these sources. (MacTech & Environmental Health Strategies, 2010, pg13, emphasis added)

We asked that the MOE impose the more stringent US EPA requirements for ArcelorMittal-Dofasco's coke ovens. Ideally, these tougher requirements should be imposed for all coke producers in the province.

The third party report also revealed that the experts believed an improvement that we were

ALTERNATIVE STANDARDS RECAP

Ontario Reg 419 came into force in 2005, ushering in a process that allows the province to establish new air quality standards that protect our health and the environment.

Despite this focus, the regulation allows companies to request they be subject to less stringent, alternative standards for a set period of time while they work to make the necessary process changes and capital investments to meet the more stringent standards.

Companies that apply for an alternative standard must prepare an action plan, setting out how they will work to 'continuously improve' their emissions until they meet the new air standards. Alternative standards can be granted for anywhere from 1 to 10 years.



The Arcelor-Mittal Dofasco meltshop has been a source of pollutants

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Local musician and fellow tenant Dan Medakovic, along with EH volunteer Willy Mudenge jammed all night at our open house, playing a great selection of blues and jazz.

CELEBRATION AT OUR DOWNTOWN DIGS

Environment Hamilton opened its new downtown office space up to the community on May 14th as part of the monthly James Street North Art Crawl. The event proved to be a huge success with several hundred people stopping in over the course of the evening.

Our gracious landlord and building owner – Sonic Unyon Recording Company – allowed us to take over the building for the event, with EH activities happening on every level. On the main floor, people could join EH’s Good Neighbour Campaign Coordinator Katie Stiel along with GNC volunteer and artist

Louisa Kratka as they worked on a papier mache asthma puffer. On the second floor, wine sommelier extraordinaire Karen Lavigne offered tastings of Ontario wine samples while generously sharing her knowledge of local vintages. Karen was there as part of the launch of our 2010/11 Farm Map and Directory. Sue Coverdale from the City of Hamilton’s Economic Development Department, our partner in the production of the latest map, was also on hand to speak at the launch as was Farm Map Project Manager Juby Lee.

Meanwhile, In the hallway on the second floor, local musician and fellow tenant Dan Medakovic, along with EH volunteer Willy Mudenge jammed all night, playing a great selection of blues and jazz. Finally, on the third floor, people were welcomed into our new office space by EH staff. Volunteer & Membership Coordinator Julia Kollek was on hand, ready to sign up new members and enter peoples’ names into a draw for a rain barrel.

If you weren’t able to join us for the Open House (and even if you were) please feel free to stop by and visit us in our new space. We are located at 22 Wilson Street – between James North and Hughson - in the Sonic Unyon Recording Company’s building. Enter the front doors and head up to the third floor. We are the last office on the left hand side.

FRUIT TREE PROJECT 2010

This year’s Fruit Tree Project is underway! Hamilton Eat Local members and dedicated volunteers have already been harvesting sour cherries from generous tree owners. Over the coming weeks, we will be looking for more varieties of fruit to pick, including apples, pears, cherries and mulberries.

While those who donate trees and assist in picking are entitled to keep some of the fruit, the rest goes to local shelters and our programming, which is built around raising awareness of preparing and consuming foods grown and harvested in the local community. Workshops in canning, jam-making and baking are popular ways in which the fruit is used.

Over 5,300 lbs of fruit were harvested last year, and we are hoping for a good haul again this year. Please contact Juby at jlee.eatlocal@environmenthamilton.org if you wish to volunteer your time or your tree to the Fruit Tree Project. Be sure to keep your eye on the project’s blog at <http://hamiltonfruittreeproject.blogspot.com>. We will be posting information on upcoming events and providing updates on the progress of the project.

The Fruit Tree Project is working in partnership with the Small Change Fund and is also looking for monetary donations, big and small! Charitable tax receipts are available to those who contribute.

ALTERNATIVE STANDARDS *CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE*

told was not ‘economically viable’ because it would require shutting down a blast furnace before the company had planned to do so, could likely be implemented while the furnace was operational. With our comments now submitted, we will wait to see what the final approval from the Ministry of the Environment looks like. Meanwhile, US Steel next door continues to prepare its application to secure alternative standards. The full text of Environment Hamilton’s EBR comments can be viewed at www.environmenthamilton.org.

Join Us!



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