

Transition Charlottesville Albemarle Honors Activist Larry Gibson by Raising Awareness of Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining

Contact: Joanie Freeman, freeman.joanie@gmail.com, (434) 987-1026

Event: Mountaintop Removal Awareness Meeting & Memorial for Larry Gibson

When: Monday, October 22, 6:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where: McIntire Room, 3rd Floor of Jefferson-Madison Regional Library Central Branch, 201 E. Market St., Charlottesville, VA 22902

Charlottesville, VA - Charlottesville and Albemarle residents will gather October 22 at Central Library to learn how energy consumption in Virginia adversely affects Appalachian communities through the practice of mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR). The event is free and open to the public.

Transition Charlottesville Albemarle, the local branch of the worldwide Transition movement, organized the Oct. 22 event to honor activist Larry Gibson, who spent more than two decades educating and protesting against destructive strip mining operations in the Appalachian mountains. Gibson, who died in September at age 66, became a preeminent leader in the fight against MTR while struggling to save his home on Kayford Mountain in West Virginia, where his family has lived for generations. The Keeper of the Mountains Foundation was created to support Gibson's work.

Mountaintop removal strip mining involves blasting away as much as 600 feet of mountain elevation in order to access coal seams hidden deep below the surface. More than 500 mountains have already been destroyed by MTR strip mining. The EPA estimates that 2,000 miles of Appalachian headwater streams have been buried and polluted by "valley fills" when toxic debris from MTR sites is dumped nearby. Thirteen power plants on the Dominion Virginia Power grid purchase coal directly from mountaintop removal strip mines in Appalachia. (*Sources: Appalachian Voices, ilovemountains.org*)

At the event on Oct. 22, Katie Corish, a member of the Green Sanctuary/Environmental Action group at Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church - Unitarian Universalist (TJMC) in Charlottesville, will speak about MTR and present three short videos on the subject. A group from TJMC traveled to West Virginia in June 2010 to meet Larry Gibson and learn about mountaintop removal. Following Corish's presentation, attendees will be invited to discuss strategies for reducing energy consumption.

Attendees are invited to arrive at 6:00 p.m. for a potluck dinner. The meeting will begin at 6:45 p.m. Transition Charlottesville Albemarle meets on the 4th Monday of each month to educate the public and discuss issues surrounding peak oil, climate change, and global economic crisis.

Links for more information:

Transition Charlottesville Albemarle <http://www.transitionville.org/get-involved/>

Larry Gibson Obituary http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/larry-gibson-w-va-activist-who-fought-mountain-mining-dies-at-66/2012/09/13/93af1cf6-fdbe-11e1-a31e-804fccb658f9_story.html

Keeper of the Mountains Foundation <http://mountainkeeper.blogspot.com/p/meet-us.html>

Appalachian Voices "Mountaintop Removal 101" <http://appvoices.org/end-mountaintop-removal/mtr101/>

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