

# Locals Living and Loving

## Our Environment, that is!

written by Marion Crawford  
photographed by Josh Norris

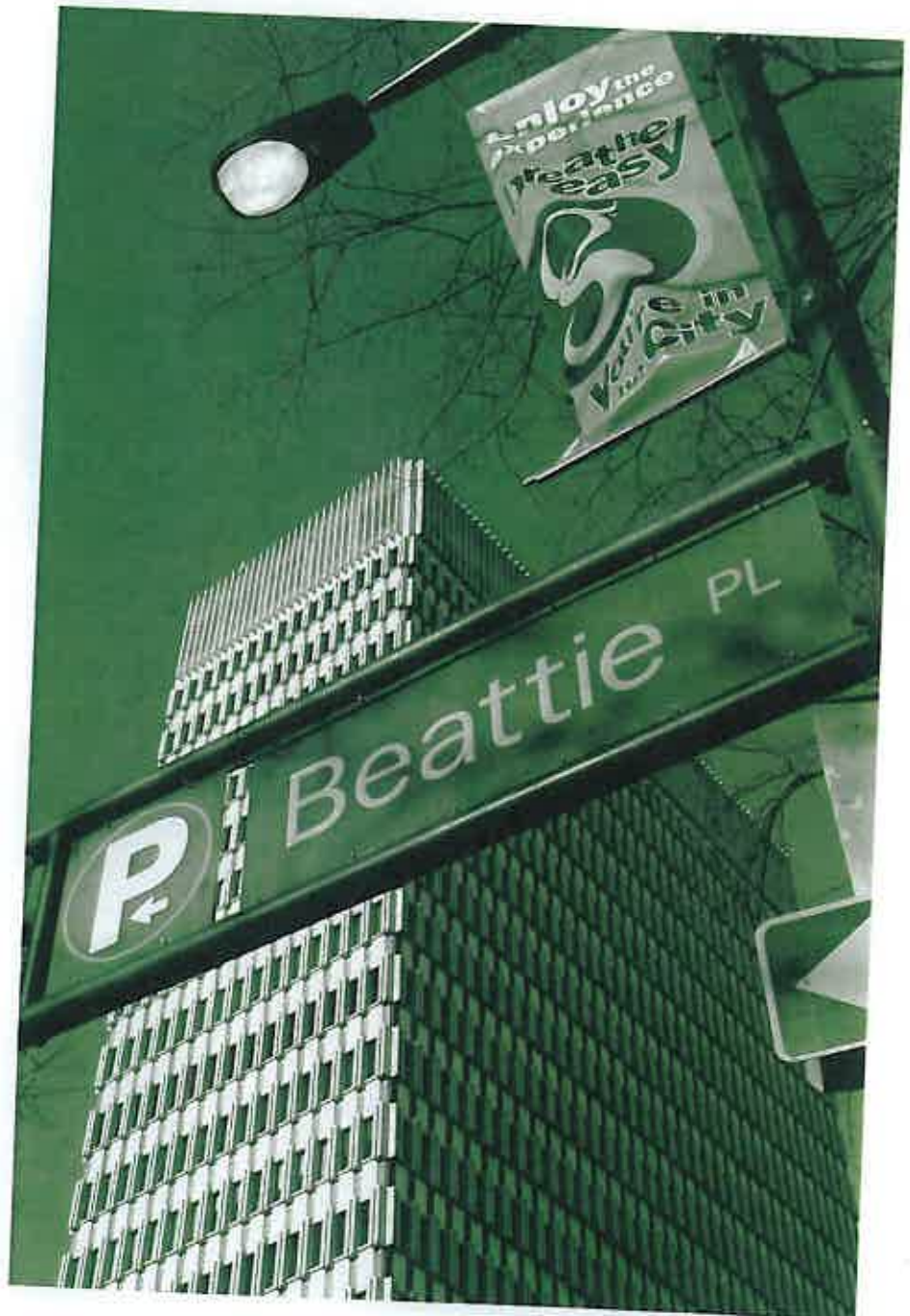
**Green.** It's more than a color, it's a craze. A wave of environmental consciousness is sweeping across America, and Greenville is definitely on the bandwagon. Throughout our city, individuals and groups are taking steps — both big and small — to keep the “green” in Greenville.

Is it just me, or is it true that “times, they are a changin’?” It seems to me a few years ago I was one of many who lived in an environmental vacuum. By that I mean that I didn’t set out



**ASIDE:** Brad Wyche, with Upstate Forever, joined forces with Carlton Owen to create Upstate House, the Owens downtown dream home. Upstate House was built with recycled materials wherever possible and the environmental impact of construction was minimized.

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right: Allen Freeman of Freeman and Major Architects is the architect for Westminster Presbyterian Church's sanctuary expansion and renovation project. The church's new addition will reuse existing materials where possible and will incorporate eco-friendly elements throughout



to destroy the environment, but I didn't set out to save it, either. A few years ago, I brushed my teeth without noticing whether the tap was on or off. A few years ago, I didn't worry if I left the house with lamps or an overhead light blazing. Today, I am still forgetful and overly consumptive, but I'm certainly more aware. That environmental awareness is the first step on the road to a "greener" way of life.

"People are finally realizing that our planet is in serious trouble and that 'thinking globally and acting locally' is imperative," Wyche says.

There are many people in Greenville who have been trying to spread the "green" word for decades. **Brad Wyche**, executive director of Upstate Forever, is one of those people. Wyche founded Upstate Forever in 1998 because he saw a void and aimed to fill it.

"I saw the urgent need for a voice in our region for a better and different way to grow — a way that conserves both land and tax dollars," Wyche says.

Upstate Forever's mission is to promote sensible growth and to protect special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina. To that end, Wyche has been instrumental in helping our community take steps toward environmentally friendly living. Upstate House is one of those big steps.

Upstate House is **Carlton and Brenda**

right: Upstate House in downtown Greenville boasts environmentally friendly features such as a solar hot-water heater, recycled-pallet flooring, soy-based insulation and compact fluorescent lighting

Owen's downtown dream home. What makes Upstate House so special is that it was built with recycled materials wherever possible and the environmental impact of construction was minimized.

Among many other environmentally friendly features, it boasts a solar hot-water heater, recycled pallet flooring, soy-based insulation, paperless wallboard and compact fluorescent lighting. Upstate Forever partnered with the Home Builders Association of Greenville and local architects and builders to make Carlton Owen's dream a reality.

»» page 24



## Fifteen Relatively Pain-Free Ways to Help the Environment

1. Reduce the number of miles you drive by walking, biking, carpooling or using transit.
2. Keep your tires properly inflated.
3. Use compact fluorescent light bulbs.
4. Wrap your water heater in an insulation blanket.
5. Follow the "three Rs" — reduce, reuse and recycle.
6. Adjust your thermostat (move at least 2 degrees down in the winter and at least 2 degrees up in the summer).
7. Keep reusable shopping bags in the car.
8. Buy fresh foods instead of frozen.
9. Buy locally grown and produced foods.
10. Use real napkins and plates instead of paper or plastic products.
11. Only run the dishwasher if it is completely full. Better yet, hand wash dishes.
12. Turn off lights if you leave a room for more than a minute.
13. Use one less paper towel a day.
14. Clean or replace filters on your furnace and air conditioner.
15. Plant a tree.



LEFT Katherine and Steve Hoover with Zachary the youngest of their four children. The Hoovers added a green roof to this downtown building after purchasing it years ago.

While Wyche is involved in many significant environmental activities, he stresses that being "green" doesn't have to be overwhelming.

"People are finally realizing that our planet is in serious trouble and that 'thinking globally and acting locally' is imperative," Wyche says. "Each of us can make a big difference by taking steps to reduce our own impacts, setting an example for others, and demanding action by our elected officials."

**Bill Holt** is a member of an organization called C.S.I. at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

"Surprisingly C.S.I. doesn't stand for Crime Scene Investigators," Holt says with a laugh, "but for Creation Stewardship Information. The purpose of our group is to try and impress upon members of our congregation the importance of doing our part to care for God's creation around us. We have bulletin boards up at church to educate members about ways to conserve and preserve. We're also instituting a recycling program around the church."

While Westminster's C.S.I. group is educating members about the importance of caring for creation, there is also another "green" effort underway at the church. **Allen Freeman** of Freeman and Major Architects is the architect

for Westminster's sanctuary expansion and renovation project. He says that green construction was high on the priority list.

"Our construction waste will be sorted and sent to the appropriate place," Freeman says. "We're trying hard not to put anything into the landfill that can be recycled."

Freeman says that many of the new materials in the addition will have some recycled content.

"Carpet is a good example of that. Some percentage of the carpet will be made from recycled materials. We'll also reuse as many existing materials in our renovation as we can. For example, when we take the limestone down, we will reuse it when possible."

Freeman says that other eco-friendly elements for the Westminster addition will be skylights and windows located high on the wall to let in more natural light and dimmable fluorescent lights.

**Katherine and Steve Hoover** are firm believers that if everyone would take small steps to help preserve our environment, we would see big results. One of the steps Katherine has taken toward a cleaner environment is a clean house.

"We use Shaklee cleaning products and

we love them," Katherine says. "Steve has a relative who sells Shaklee. The company is committed to a healthier planet and our family is, too. If you read about the chemicals in the popular cleaners and you realize how bad they are for people and the environment, it makes you want to stop using them right away!"

With four children, the Hoover family has a built-in carpool of their own. But Katherine says she considers gas mileage on the days when she doesn't have her entire family in tow.

"Steve and I will switch cars if I know I'm going to be running around town and won't be hauling everybody with me. His car is small and gets better gas mileage. We are currently evaluating our next car purchase, and gas mileage will play a big part in our decision."

Steve Hoover owns a building downtown with his brothers. Steve says that one of the steps they took after purchasing the property was to add a green roof.

"Green roofs will absorb up to an inch of water," he says. "The leftover rain water is filtered, which gives a cleaner runoff and benefits the Reedy River."

Steve adds that green roofs also last longer than traditional roofs, and improve the building's efficiency.

Katherine is on the board of The Children's Museum of the Upstate, and says she's proud of the Museum's emphasis on being green.

"I am so impressed with the environmental effort that has been made regarding this project. There will be several key green elements to the new museum, including an exhibit that focuses exclusively on recycling."

Not to be left out, the Hoover children

are taking some green steps of their own. Four-year-old Zachary loves to sing the Barney song "Never Let the Water Run" to remind his brother and sisters to turn off the water when brushing their teeth. Twelve-year-old Mary Allison joined the Green Club at Beck Academy earlier this year. She says she is excited about the club's planned outing to clean up the Reedy River.

Another area where individuals can make a big impact is with their shopping habits. **Starr Haney** and a group of friends who call themselves the Green Strings are taking steps to reduce the number of plastic bags that end up in our country's landfills each day. The group is launching a reusable shopping bag initiative that will benefit local environmental groups.

The project began, Haney says, because she was tired of the plastic bags she accumulated in her cabinet after every grocery run.

"I did some research and found that a family of four, on average, brings home a thousand plastic grocery bags a year," she says. "Even if you reuse the bags as trash bags or for other things, I would be surprised if you reuse a thousand. The cost to the grocery store is around fifteen dollars per family."



Haney decided that her obvious next step was to invest in reusable shopping bags, but the question was, which ones? "I felt funny carrying my Publix reusable bags into Bloom and my Bloom reusable bags into Whole Foods. I wanted a bag that promoted environmentally friendly living rather than a store. That way, I could carry my bag into any store, anywhere without feeling awkward. That's how the idea formed."

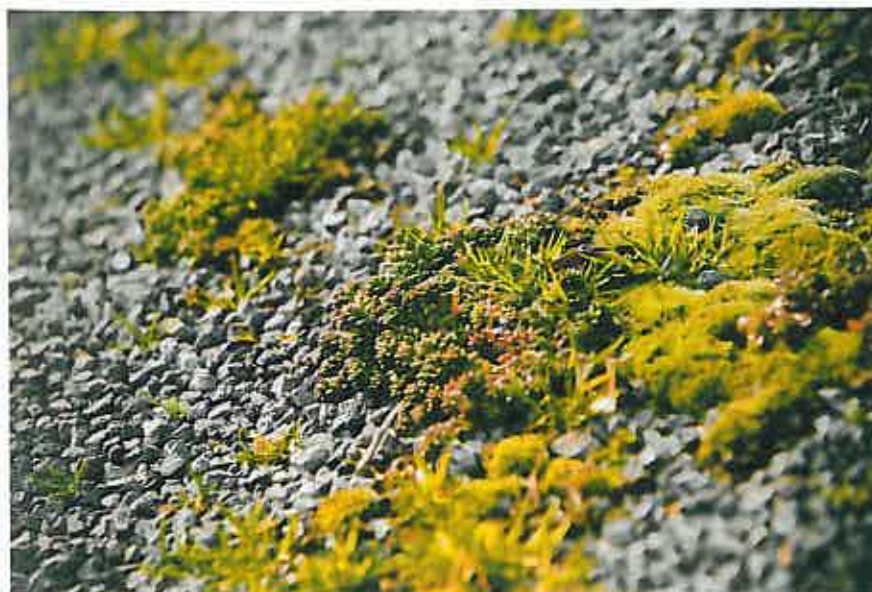
Haney and her Green Strings group are working to create and sell reusable shopping bags with a logo that

*above: Starr Haney, Beth McMillan, Mignon Canale and Angi Einstein, along with some other friends, call themselves the Green Strings. They are launching a reusable shopping bag initiative that will benefit local environmental groups. The bags' logo will promote Greenville and green living.*

promotes Greenville and green living. Starr says the group is committed to giving 100 percent of their profits to Trees Greenville, the Greenville Tree Foundation and other local environmental organizations.

"The idea is that we won't have so much plastic lying around in our landfills, it will cut costs for grocery stores and it will promote Greenville's environmental concerns," Haney says.

Our planet has a finite amount of natural resources. Thankfully, Greenville is full of environmentally conscious citizens who want to do their part, whether big or small, to make sure those resources last as long as possible. They're hoping that the rest of us will jump on their bandwagon and go green for Greenville! ■



*left: Steve Hoover says that green roofs like this one last longer than traditional roofs, improve buildings efficiency, and can absorb up to an inch of water. The left over rain water is filtered, which gives a cleaner run-off and benefits the Reedy River.*