

## U.S. GRAIL REPORT TO GRAIL NATIONAL COUNCIL

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### **UPDATES: The Grail**

- Festival of Faiths coming up 9/8—would like a contingent of Grail members to participate. SYAWI team and I will staff the info table so members can fully participate in the other activities.
- Taking part at Hometown History Day at Cincinnati Observatory 7/28. This event is organized by Museums and Historic Sites of Greater Cincinnati (MHS)—of which we are a member. Our table will focus on bias in historical texts (for example why history books use warrior instead of soldier). As a women's movement—one that was often mischaracterized and “called names” as a way to devalue and diminish—this topic felt right. This “sampler” is for the general public but teachers from area schools are also invited. Our table topic is by design simple—a way to get the conversation started.
- MHS is working with a coalition of organizations in Cincinnati focusing on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. This is a statewide initiative organized (loosely) by Ohio History Connection (the state historical society) and the State of Ohio. The Grail's Art at the Oratory series will be our “contribution” as the series connects Grail members and how their art was /is an expression of their spirituality AND was/is a means for/expression of social justice. Sharon Thompson has agreed to a featured artist in 2020. We are still working with MUSE Women's Choir of Cincinnati to highlight Lynn Malley's music, and I would like to ask Trina Paulus to be the 3<sup>rd</sup> artist in 2020.
- Girl Scouts of America is going to really start promoting SDGs in 2020 as part of their World Association's efforts to bring the SDGs to grassroots level—which really excited me when it was announced as the two movements really are similar in structure, mission and goals (with the exception of Grail being spiritual and Girl Scouts not). As a member of the local Gold Award Committee I am able to help them weave in SDGs into their projects. This is one example of how Grail members in their own communities can partner with their local Girl Scouts to advance SDGs. Getting the SDGs to the grassroots level is a goal of the UN as well, one that it is struggling with—see this article here:  
<https://www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l2269>
- Anti-Racism conference has 15 attendees registered...we need to help raise those numbers. I believe the committee will be making calls and has extended deadline. I was asked to attend and participate and am eager to do so!
- Cindy is working on possible GA sites to be ready for your face to face in October. She is also working on a Plan B for CSW in case the current facility is not available.
- We have written a request for Grail members to share their updates (a photo from regional meeting, or a book you read and think is excellent) in the News several times now and folks ARE via listserv...but not to the office for news etc. Will keep trying...possibly swipe some updates from listserv to re-purpose. Folks don't realize that there is a LARGE section of members who do not use the listserv for a variety of reasons so their “shares” aren't going out to all.
- We are promoting the “I Am An Answered Prayer” event Renee has helped put together with a coalition in Columbus. This is a great example of how we can

help members in their work. This event has been shared with MHS, Ohio Local History Alliance (I represent us on that board too) for their members and so they will add to their public calendars, will be on both Grail and Grailville Facebook and Grail Twitter.

- I am the Chair for the Beautification Committee for the City of Loveland. At our recent meeting we discussed why is there a beautification (flowers) cte AND a tree cte? Turns out the Tree cte is all men, and have no direction from the city so really all they do is work with Boy Scouts on builds. The beautification Cte is almost all women (1 man) and our direction is “beautify”...sexist imagery aside, it makes sense to combine the two into a “living environment” cte (need a better name) that looks at water, trees, flowers, etc. I was asked to write something for discussion with that group and our group and City Council. I mention this BECAUSE this could be a GREAT way for The Grail to be involved with the local area in advancing the SDGs and helping this community become a model for others. Note a part of this stems from attending a CSW session by the UN Habitat group and their New Urban Agenda (<http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>)
- **If you are on facebook and/or Twitter—please “follow” us! And then make sure you like/RT/comment/share etc. our posts.**

### **UPDATES: Cornwall**

- Talked to Benincasa. They have toured the center with our property mgr. They are interested in pursuing a lease followed by purchase. My concerns about their “rough draft” proposal were affirmed by our legal counsel: they want 3 years rent-free full and sole use of property with ability to make changes to buildings AND create conservation agreements (non starter) and claim they will take on all liability (not possible legally). They have asked that we give them a lease idea so we need to discuss what a lease could look like. They are aware we are not able to discuss sale yet and probably not before the fall.
- Greater concerns that Grail members are soliciting “solutions” with other organizations and indicating/implying that what they discuss is possible...when it isn’t. This is second time this has happened and the first time ended poorly...how do we manage this?
- The topic of our center was discussed in Village of Cornwall at monthly meeting during open session. I am fielding calls and emails from neighbors each week—and folks are nice and all is good with these. I go to CW 7/29 and return 8/4. During that time I am meeting with the regional conservation organizations to discuss possibilities and with neighbors to give update. Will also meet with our local attorney to update and discuss the Benincasa idea.
- Kathi move out official date is 9/3. She found a local storage facility she liked (in fact she found it) and for the cost we were able to pay a full year (with a 13 month free) upfront for her cheaper than the PODs option. I also made her move out date the Tuesday AFTER Labor Day so she didn’t have to incur higher campground fees due to the holiday. She is very happy with both.
- I will be following up with the appraiser we used before to do an appraisal of the property as a whole instead of 7 sections so we have a true idea of value.

**UPDATES: Grailville**

- Tidings—our contractor is working up an estimate to make Tidings less ramshackle—this would be the low end of repairs/updates recognizing we do not have a long-term plan for the building. Hope to have that before October face-to-face so we can discuss then.
- Tidings landscaping to begin this fall—this was the agreement we reached with Bonnie Hendricks to better define property lines as there were ongoing issues. The plants are all native species, are “un manicured” in look, and will have posts at “corners” to mark boundary points. Mary Lu suggested that there are local Grail members who would love to be involved in also landscaping around Oratory. I suggested that they work on a plan (using some of the plants from southside and some from Brian’s list for Tidings). Then Brian’s team can prepare all the space at the same time and do the “heavy lifting” and they can tackle what they are able to do in the fall. Part of the Tidings work will be to remove the very large, very dead, and very dangerous tree in the ditch area and replace it with 3 cyprus trees—fulfilling our goal of adding trees each year to replace the removed ones.
- The big tractor (Massey Ferguson 255) is in shop for repairs. Our goal this year was to determine WHAT equipment for the grounds is necessary moving forward. This is the ONLY piece Mary Lu and I feel will be needed. We will put up a lean-to addition to the shed behind the silo to house it and its attachments. I just read a great article on “green” roofs in Denmark...not sure this location would be good for it, but it would a great Learning Lab project (small space, not a huge investment, and a sample of what can be done at “home”). Obviously need to research more. Mary Lu is working on a list of what is left that she thinks can be sold of all the remaining equipment (we have had folks come in already and ask us about buying items). All of it we will be able to jettison before the end of the year.
- Break-ins on southside during the day prompted some changes: removed “closed to public at dusk” signs, added chains and no trespassing signs to entrance and exit, regular walk thrus and door checks continue, added overnight security drive thrus, local police also stepped up their drive thrus. No issues since July 5<sup>th</sup>.
- SYAWI doing well. Knocking out a LOT of work for the Grail this summer. One ongoing project is an audit of campus to make sure we are “walking the walk” in regards to the environment. We did this once before in 2012(?) so it is time to do it again.
- Mary Lu reported that 2 old hive boxes that were in the field by edible forest have become inhabited by local bees! We haven’t had hives since they were all wiped out a few years ago. We will be placing additional boxes out in the spring in a couple locations to see if we can encourage new hives to move in.
- The dissolved oxygen Learning Lab has finally started! Little Miami Inc. (who regulates our conservation easement on the north side) brought on board a professor at UC who has an ongoing student group working on Little Miami water health so what WAS just a dissolved oxygen test is now: dissolved oxygen (the HOBOS will be in place August-October), water sampling (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month), bug sampling (monthly), flow/depth (twice daily through August) and rain gauge (twice daily through August). We have a volunteer who will be doing the

bulk of the work (she has experience in this field) boosted by our SYAWI team. There will be 1 site on our property (this is the one we are responsible for) and then 2 other sites located upstream.

- We have welcomed the Ohio Detectorists Association on to the property to conduct metal searches. CMH, the Parks and St. Columban have also welcomed them to their land (that used to be Grail) so that they can fully explore the built history of this space. They have maps from 1936 and prior (hand drawn) showing residential structures (not barns) and then aerial maps from 50s and 60s and it is amazing to see the changes from the earliest to the latest. They will be tackling the garbage dump on property which is IN the conservation easement on north side. Once they “excavate” we will remove whatever is left and get it out of the easement. This will be a bigger project for the fall. Little Miami Inc. is supportive and I hope some of their volunteers will take part.
- The weekly prayer groups (Wednesday with Joe Schickel and Mary Lu Lageman) and the Friday (started by Terry Marshall and now organized by Mary Lu Lageman) have failed to bring any folks in. ANY. We continue to allow them the space to offer it, and we continue to promote both, but even the local Grail members do not attend.

### **Decisions Needed**

None at this time