

ECONEWS #182

A monthly newsletter funded by your donations that dreams of a world blessed by the harmony of nature, the pleasures of community, and the joys of personal fulfillment, guided and protected by our active citizenship.

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THE ECO-PERSONALS

\$1 a word. Max 5 lines, non-profits, low-income free. 1" box ad \$50

* **Charming guest room**, \$30/night. Cook St Village, ocean. 250-361-3102

* Syd's Demo Salvage. Quality building materials. We also purchase homes. 250-381-1141.

* **Taxes:** June 15th tax deadline for self-employed. Enjoy the summer warmth! John Bowers 383-7727.

* **Pacific Gardens Cohousing** – a sustainable community under construction in Nanaimo 250-754-3060 www.pacificgardens.ca

* Couple looking for others to share purchase of land (+50 acres) in Courtenay/Comox Valley area to build natural houses. Steve 744-2244

* **Saturday workshops** on making raw organic foods: Breads, nut pates & cheeses, soups, sauces, wraps, fermented foods, pies, chocolate desserts. \$15/2hrs. Susanne 744-2244

GREEN DESIGNERS

Can one person make a difference? Valerie Elliot is a Victoria designer who has been trying to green up the design industry for years. Paper manufacturing is the third largest user of fossil fuels in Canada, and third largest buyer of elemental chlorine – but designers can determine how much paper they need

for a job. In 2004, thanks to Valerie's efforts, the Vancouver Island Chapter of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada formed an environment committee, and by 2007 there was enough support to start the discussion. As a result, in April 2008, a national sustainability committee was formed, and a unanimous motion was passed to develop a set of sustainability principles to become governing policy for the Society. Since this includes someone from the International Council of Graphic Design Associations, Valerie's initiative might yet influence the entire global design industry. Valerie writes: "I've been fighting my own industry for years. I am over the moon to see designers willing to discuss solutions and entertain the possibility of changing the industry." Way to go, Valerie!

GREEN VILLAGE

Jan and Carol Steinman have agreed to buy a 37-acre property on Salt Spring, next to Burgoyne Bay to develop an ecovillage grounded in the principles of sustainability, sharing, and compassion. It has a 2 acre pond, two large houses, and the current zoning allows for a cluster of 4 additional natural-built homes. The idea is to have a permaculture organic farm, biodiesel production, and educational workshops. They are seeking people who can contribute approximate half the value of a typical suburban house - or less if you've got "outstanding skills". www.ecoreality.org 250-537-2024

GREEN PARKSIDE PLACE

Susan Jones, who helps on the Monk Office Supply Enviro Team, has also formed an Eco-Team at Parkside Place, the 120-unit condo at Burnside/Tillicum where she lives. It's an old building, with 40-year old technology, and no sustainability at all, but it is set in 5 acres of mature trees and shrubs. She has four fellow residents on the team, and four Camosun College students who are helping them develop a sustainability plan that will look at everything from energy and water to Saturday education days for kids who live there, prizes for residents who green up the most, and turning the parking lot over to green-crete. Saanich is paying for an energy audit of a typical unit, under their new green building initiative. To learn more, see www.parksideplacevictoriabc.blogspot.com. Way to go!

GREEN SAHARA

From Victoria to Niger, north of Nigeria in West Africa, is quite a distance, but villagers there are working to achieve similar green goals. 13 million people live there in a country slightly larger than BC, and 90% depend on agriculture on the 12% of the land that can be cultivated. The rest is desert. A long time ago, the agricultural land used to have trees, but through drought, bad farming practices, and a law that said all trees were state property, they were cut for firewood, or just died. Today, however, Niger has millions of new trees, and is far greener than it was 30 years ago. Rainfall has helped, but the key change has been by villagers, who have stopped clearing out saplings before planting their fields with millet, sorghum, peanuts, and beans. Instead, they carefully plough around the saplings, and protect them – aided by a change in Niger's law that allows individuals to own the trees. In barren areas, women have been digging small pits in land as hard as asphalt, and placing a shovel of animal manure in the pit. When the rain comes, the pits help the manure to stay, and the land becomes fertile again. In this manner, they have reclaimed some 600,000 acres of land. They still have to deal with climate change, over-population, and future droughts, but through their own local efforts, big changes are happening.

TOP TEN CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

#7: ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV)

Ford, GM, and Chrysler tried to kill the electric car, but when the inquests into their future bankruptcies occur, history may judge it their single biggest error. The vehicles of the post-carbon world will not be hydrogen or biofuel – they will be electric and plug-in hybrid electric, supplemented maybe with sustainable hydrogen or biofuel, or maybe not, depending on how fast battery technology evolves. In Norway, the Think City EV is being sold on-line. When the battery needs recharging, it sends you an email, and likewise when it has surplus energy you can sell back to the grid. It will run 180 km on a charge, and go up to 100 kph. It sells for \$34,000, but under a different formula, it could sell for \$16,000 + \$150 a month for the lease of the battery.

As a climate change solution, an EV can run on green power from the wind, solar, geothermal, or hydro, producing

no greenhouse gases at all. The entire world's fleet could be 100% carbon free by 2030 if federal, state and city governments were to form purchasing partnerships with businesses and citizens to place bulk orders for EVs by the million. Here in BC, with a demand like that, we could have a green EV industry by 2010.

What about the cost? An EV will run 5 to 10 kilometres on a kilowatt-hour of electricity, costing 6 to 10 cents, depending where you live. Thus, a year's driving of 20,000 km will require maybe 3000 kWh, costing \$240 a year. A regular car with gas costing \$1.50 rising to \$4 a litre will burn 2200 litres, and cost \$3300 rising to \$9000 a year. Allow \$1800 a year for 5-yearly battery replacement, for a total \$2,000 a year, and the EV became cheaper when gas passed 90 cents a litre. EV prices will likely fall as mass production and battery improvements kick in. The result? A cheap, silent, zero carbon car that runs on renewable energy.



D-I-Y ELECTRIC VEHICLE

When I was in Boise, Idaho, recently, at the big Green Expo, I talked with John Weber, who has done his own EV conversion using a 1988 Ford Festiva shell he picked up for \$100 (see above). The result is a shining yellow EV that cost him \$4,000 in parts and no more than 35 hours of labour to convert. On the roof, he has fitted a 60 watts solar panel designed for an RV that recharges the car in sunlight. His range is only 15-20 miles (24-32 km), but that's good enough for all local travel. His running cost? Just 2 cents a mile. The joy of this is that old car shells that have already been crash-tested exist in abundance, so the car is allowed on the road, unlike most new EVs that have not yet been crash-tested. You do the maths. Take a mechanic and an MBA student, and even at twice the cost for parts, you've got a rollicking good business model.

You can also buy an EV conversion kit from Randy Holmquist's Canadian Electric Vehicles, based in Errington, here on Vancouver Island, for \$9,000.

On the Sunshine coast, Joanna Zinsel convert a 1993 Chevy S10 pick up using Randy's kit, and it has a range of 60 - 80 km. See www.canev.com

VICTORIA ROCKS FOR CANCER PREVENTION

On Saturday June 28th, at 10am at Elk/Beaver Lake, I'm organizing a 10 km run-walk as the annual fundraiser for the non-profit Prevent Cancer Now, which is working to stop cancer before it starts by campaigning against incineration, asbestos, toxic cosmetics, and other such things. I'd love to have a team of 30 people. Will you join me? Call Guy, 881-1304.

THE WORLD'S SHARKS ARE CLOSE TO EXTINCTION

Here comes the grim part – we'd not be honest if we did not bring reminders of how bad things are on Planet Earth, as well as the many hopeful solutions. Sharks have been living in Earth's oceans for at least 400 million years, and yet today, as a result of our human predatory behaviour over just the last 50 years, more than half of the world's sharks are at risk of extinction. That's the conclusion of a new study by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Out of 21 species of sharks and rays, one (the devilray) is endangered, ten are vulnerable, and five are "near threatened". Why? Because of fishing, both targeted and so-called "accidental", where sharks are discarded as unwanted by-catch from the search to kill tuna and swordfish. They are being increasingly targeted merely to cut their fins off, then thrown back in the ocean, where a shark with no fins will soon die or be eaten. And why? So that we can eat shark fin soup – and there are restaurants right here in Victoria serving it, especially in Chinatown. We truly are the generation that is determined to grab it all, regardless of pain, loss, suffering, and the hopes of Earth's future generations. Victoria City Council should step up to the plate, and place a ban on all sale of shark's fin soup in the city. Or better, the BC government should ban shark fin soup throughout the province.

FAIR TRADE

Free trade encourages the unfettered exploitation of people and the planet. Fairtrade started to be recognized in the 1960s, with Fairtrade coffee and tea. The principle has always been great –

fair trade growers and craftspeople receive a guaranteed price above the world market, plus a "Fairtrade premium" that is used to fund community projects and schools. Over the last decade, and in 2007 particularly, Fairtrade has really taken off, with \$3.6 billion in trade organized by over 700 registered Fairtrade organizations in 58 developing countries. In Britain, the sugar giant Tate & Lyle switched *all* of its sugar production to fair trade; Sainsbury's *only* sells Fairtrade bananas, and the Co-op and M&S (huge retail chains) only sell Fairtrade tea and coffee - no other brands. UK sale of Fairtrade goods increased by 72% last year, and Britain now buys almost 30% of the world's total value. In Sweden, it grew by 116%. The message is "Buy Fairtrade – and have faith!" It is totally reasonable to continue to visualize a world where *all* trade is Fairtrade, and "free trade" is seen as akin to slavery.

LIVESMART INCENTIVES

The BC government has announced 21 new energy efficiency incentives under its LiveSmartBC program, linked to federal incentives. They range from up to \$400 for basement insulation to \$4750 for a ground-source heat pump, \$1820 for an air-source heat pump, \$30 for electronic thermostats, and \$550 for air-tight sealing and draft-proofing. Some of the grants are linked to a Home Energy Assessment. For the details, call City Green at 250-381-9995 www.citygreen.ca.

ACTION OF THE MONTH A CRD NO-IDLING BYLAW

We should have done it 50 years ago – but better late than never. The CRD is finally proposing a bylaw to control idling, that irritating, polluting, gas-wasting, planet-warming activity that some people indulge in through simple thoughtlessness. Under the proposed bylaw, idling will be limited to 3 minutes. Any longer than that, and your car will be confiscated (just kidding).

Action: Please speak up!! We need this. There are Public Consultations on June 12th & 13th (see Green Diary), where you can speak. You can also send an email to the CRD Board of Directors (c/o ctheil@crd.bc.ca), and you can send your support on this special page on the CRD's website: www.crd.bc.ca/hfp/idling-control.htm