

ECONEWS #191

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.

A very big thankyou to Bruce McKenzie, Gail Schultz, Julia Lissau, Josephine Munro, and Jim Hackler.

<i>The Money</i>	March	April	May
Copies printed	1800	1800	1800
Sent by email	3020	3022	3027
Print, postage	\$820	\$933	\$850
Editorial	\$450	\$450	\$450
Donations	\$693	\$325	You?
Advertising	\$100	\$180	
Balance	\$1567	\$689	

EcoNews by mail: call Guy 250-881-1304.

By email: www.earthfuture.com/econews

THE ECO-PERSONALS

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* **Short term rental**, prime Fairfield location \$30/night. 250-382-3810

* **5th Annual Organic Islands Festival & Sustainability Expo**, Victoria, July 4-5th. 150 Exhibitors. Solar Powered. Near Zero Waste. Live green, do good, we'll show you how. www.organicislands.ca or 250-658-8148. Volunteers Needed.

UVIC'S SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Not to be outdone by Royal Roads (see EcoNews #190), the University of Victoria has produced a Sustainability Action Plan for its Campus Operations, following a lengthy consultation process. "We are a country with a huge ecological footprint. Our current lifestyle comes at the expense of the health of the planet and its people. The University of Victoria recognizes that we must do things differently to succeed in this challenging environment." With that powerful introduction, the plan announces 129 detailed actions, to be managed and monitored by the Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability.

On climate change, it includes a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2010, and to reduce campus electricity use and greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below the 2007 level by 2015. To achieve this they will take numerous initiatives, including installing laundry lines in family student housing. They will also develop a strategy to implement large-scale renewable energy sources on campus.

On transport, their goal is to increase bus use, cycling and carpooling to 70% of all trips by 2014, and reduce the number of fleet vehicles that consume fossil fuels to 40% of the total vehicle fleet. They will install more bike lanes, parking, and bike shelters; make sure every building has showers, change areas, and clothing lockers; enhance the transit service to UVic; create a guaranteed emergency ride home program; consolidate their shipments of supplies; expand video conferencing, create a telecommuting program for employees, and work to offer zero-interest loans for new bicycles.

They are also going to change their purchasing policy so that all decisions reflect a triple bottom line; publish a sustainability report card with measured indicators; and implement a campus-wide sustainability communications strategy. 100% of all new buildings will adopt an integrated design approach, and achieve LEED Gold; 100% of building spaces will be cleaned with green techniques; and 50% of major renovations will be LEED registered.

UVic's grounds will eliminate toxic chemicals from all routine landscape management; ensure that 75% of all new plants are native; and work with local farmers and producers to create more local purchasing. The proposal to expand options for people living on campus to grow their own food was left on the shelf for now. They will also develop a process to plan a new Village Centre and Multi-Modal Transportation Hub on the campus.

They will divert 75% of their wastes from the landfill by 2012 (the CRD's goal is 60% by 2012, but the current reality is 36% and falling), eliminate plastic bags and disposable utensils and containers from university-operated food services, and reduce water consumption by 25% by 2015.

This is excellent progress by UVic, and absolutely essential if our universities are to be the leaders they so much want to be. Now we wait for Camosun College to step up to the sustainability plate.

ETHICAL INVESTING

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BC's ELECTION, MAY 12th

The BC election is very confusing from an environmental perspective. The issue that matters most is climate change, for if we fail to eliminate our collective carbon footprint, that'll be the end of most existence on Planet Earth, forests, fish, and wildlife included. The Liberals have shown great leadership, but they are compromised by their continuing support for oil and gas, and building more roads and bridges in the Lower Mainland (Gateway). The NDP have been playing a deceitful politics with the carbon tax, but their Green Bond proposal makes a lot of sense. The Green Party's climate change platform makes the most overall sense, but it would restrict the development of new renewable energy.

When it comes to South Island ridings, my recommendations are as follows: Saanich South – Lana Popham (NDP) will be a great advocate for agriculture and organic farming in BC, and a strong environmental presence in the Legislature. Saanich North & Islands: Gary Holman (NDP). Victoria Beacon Hill: Adam Saab (Green).

STV – 10 REASONS TO VOTE YES

This is arguably more important than the election, since it gives us the ability to end the undemocratic two-party system that has dominated BC for too long. Here are Ten Reasons for voting YES to STV on May 12th:

1. The Citizens Assembly that recommended STV was randomly selected. After studying all possible systems of voting and hearing hundreds of submissions, 95% of its members recommended STV as the best for BC.

2. STV is not complicated, as its opponents claim. You simply put a "1" by your first choice of candidate, and "2", "3" or "4" by your follow-ups.

3. Voting does not require a computer unless you want to tally the votes faster.

4. Under STV, few votes are wasted. 80% of the voters will see one of their top choices elected, compared to less than 50% in the current system.

5. STV will end the need for "hold your nose" strategic voting, causing antagonism between otherwise like-minded voters.

6. STV will not produce minority governments. It will often produce a single-party majority, sometimes a coalition majority. In Tasmania, six of

the last eight elections STV produced a single-party majority government.

7. STV will create more respect between parties, since they may need to form a coalition government together.

8. In most ridings, voters will elect MLAs from two or more parties, giving you a choice of who you can speak to when you have a concern.

9. STV will hopefully discourage negative campaigning, since a winning candidate may need 2nd and 3rd place support from voters whose first choice is a competing candidate.

10. STV will *not* encourage the election of fringe candidates. The preferential ballot weeds out extremists, and makes sure that the winning candidates have widely based support.

The system is used in Tasmania, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Malta, the Australian Senate, and in local government elections in Scotland, and it would be great to have it here in BC. To learn more, go to www.stv.ca.

The Garden Path

Open Garden & Totally Vegetable Sale
Certified organic heritage vegetables for seed saving

May 30th to June 7th

10 am to 5.30 pm Daily

395 Conway Road, (off Interurban,
1 block past Camosun College)
www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath

LIVING IN THE FOREST

With so much forest on Vancouver Island, and so many people wanting to live here, how can we cope? The business-as-usual approach is a disaster. There has to be a better way – and there is. Living Forest Communities (LFC) was set up by people on Cortes Island, including the singer Ann Mortifee, in response to the threat of a local “log and build” disaster. LFC seeks to establish and maintain sustainable natural forest ecosystems in perpetuity through land conservation and ecosystem-based forestry, financed by creating attractive, “light-on-the-land” residential hamlets modeled after traditional European towns – and they are close to getting planning approval for their first project. Elkington Forest, south of Shawnigan Lake, is 950 acres of mature forested land that was last logged in 1928. 85% of the land has been placed under a restrictive covenant for outright conservation, ecosystem-based forestry (FSC certified), and value-added manufacturing from forest products.

The remaining 15% includes space for organic food production, agro-forestry, and three residential hamlets, designed as a European-style mixed-use village, with houses fronting onto a public square, green space or community orchard, backing onto a huge acreage of wild forest and trails. The village centre will include a coffee shop and retail outlet, a small eco-lodge, and an artisan market space. The houses will be built to a high green standard (LEED), and the infrastructure will also be green, with an integrated rainwater/wastewater treatment system using a natural submerged wetland and sand filtration, followed by forest filtration. They hope to encourage forest-related businesses, including eco-tourism, value-added timber and agro-forestry. To learn more, see www.livingforestcommunities.com, or call 250-386-6600. There are site visits on most Fridays, and PS – the views are amazing.



ELEPHANTS IN VICTORIA

Two Victoria adventurers, Dag Goering, and Maria Coffey, have spent months in India and Thailand researching the plight of wild and captive elephants. Now, through their new Elephant Earth Initiative, they will work in S.E. Asia on elephant related issues, including the conservation of wild elephant habitat, improving captive elephant welfare, and developing humane and sustainable elephant tourism projects. On May 7th, they are launching the Initiative with the opening of Dag Goering’s photo exhibit *Elephant Enigma* at Dale’s Gallery, in Chinatown, which will run until June 2nd. All proceeds from the sale of photographs will go to Elephant Earth Initiative. They are also running a fund-raising *Elephant Adventure* in Thailand next January, if you want to enjoy some first-trunk experience. 250-995-2085

DAVID SUZUKI on DVD

Recent David Suzuki shows on the CBC’s *The Nature of Things* have had an encouraging emphasis on solutions, and now five of the shows are available

as a 2-DVD set. They cover David’s travels to Europe with his daughter Sarika in search of sustainability, and programs on sustainable cities, buildings, renewable energy, the car of the future. Available in all major retail stores. More DVDs will follow.

PREVENTING CANCER

It is happening to far too many people – every week this year, 3,300 Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer, and 1,450 will die of the disease. Meanwhile, the toxic chemicals that are getting into our air, food, water and our bodies and the degraded quality of the food people eat are rarely addressed. Ever year, of the \$400 million that is spent on cancer research, only a miserly 1.9% goes on primary prevention to eliminate the real causes of cancer. Prevent Cancer Now aims to change all that, with active campaigns against asbestos, incineration, and to spend 50% of the \$400 million on research that matters, instead of giving it to the drug companies. On Sunday May 24th I am organizing a 10km run and walk at Elk/Beaver Lake to raise funds for Prevent Cancer Now. Will you join me? Call Guy, 250-881-1304.

DAWSON CREEK GOING GREEN

174 of BC’s cities and towns have signed onto BC’s Community Climate Action Charter, in which they pledge to become carbon neutral by 2012, measure and report their community’s greenhouse gas emissions, and create compact, more energy efficient communities. Among them is Dawson Creek, in BC’s Peace. So far, they have installed solar hot water heaters on city owned buildings, solar operated traffic lights, and downsized the municipal fleet. They are also planning a major energy-saving retrofit and a solar PV system for City Hall, and they are monitoring for potential wind power sites, testing different biomass heating technologies, and testing plug-in hybrid vehicles. They are on target to reduce their civic emissions by 54% below the projected 2012 level. Way to go!

ACTION OF THE MONTH SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE

Action: Talk to people! Call three friends, and ask if they are going to vote YES to STV. If they have doubts, try to persuade them. This is our big chance to make our democracy more democratic and fair. Vote YES for STV!