

ECONEWS #197

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

* **Lovely room to rent**, close to ocean, downtown, \$30/night, 250-382-3810.

* **Conservation buyer** wanted for 2+ Gulf Island acres. Greg Rowland - Holmes Realty (877) 656-0911 (250) 656-0911 greg@gregrowland.ca For TLC Members: 25% Commission Fees Donated to TLC.

LITTLE HOMESTEAD

They live in Pasadena, California in a smallish house with a smallish garden of 3900 square feet (66 ft by 66, 1/5th of an acre). But the Dervaes family of five has been turning their life into one helluva showcase for sustainable urban living. In that small garden, they grow 350 varieties of vegetables, herbs, fruits and berries, and in 2008 they harvested 4,340 lbs of produce, plus 921 chicken eggs, 1028 duck eggs, 25 lbs of honey, and an unspecified amount of milk from their dwarf pygmy goats. And yes, they have rabbits too.

All in all, they grow 99% of their produce, right in the heart of the city.

And that's not all. They can, freeze and dry their food; they compost; and they make their own biodiesel for their car. They've also cut their daily power use down to 6 kWh a day, or 2,190 kWh a year for a family of five. Here in BC, average household use is 10,000 kWh a year. They've also installed 12 solar panels, built a solar oven, a cob oven and an outdoor solar shower, and have a pedal-powered grain mill. If this fascinates you - because it's all doable in Victoria - check their website at www.pathtofreedom.com and come see the new movie 'Homegrown' about their life, at the Camas Bookstore, 2590 Quadra on Saturday December 5th, 7pm.



MADRONA FARM APPEAL

Speaking of urban miracles, Madrona Farm (above) on Blenkinsop Road produced 175,000 pounds of food in 2008, feeding hundreds of loyal customers at their roadside stand with virtually no waste, no artificial inputs, and less than 700 litres of diesel. They are into the third and final phase of their funding appeal; another \$836,000 is needed by January 30th 2010 to protect the Farm forever through ownership by The Land Conservancy (TLC). They've won through to Round 3 of the Aviva Community Fund Award - if they win, they could receive up to \$250,000. You can help, since it's done by cumulative voting - and once you've registered, you can vote every day at <http://bit.ly/ixui>. (They have to make it through to Round 4 first - fingers crossed). You can also make a direct donation for Madrona to the TLC at <http://madronafarm.com>.

TV AND BABIES

Do you have friends with children under the age of 3? If so, *please* show them this. Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affects between 5-20% of America's children (Canada's figures are likely not much different), and the prime suspect is TV. A young child's brain is still growing at that age, and the flashing lights, rapid scene

changes, quick edits and auditory cuts appear to be over-stimulating the developing brain. In 1971, most children started watching TV at age 4; today, it's 4-5 months. The American Academy of Pediatrics has been warning for years that young children *should not be watching TV at all* - not even the specialty programs and DVDs created especially for them like Baby Einstein and Sesame Street. In France, the government has banned French TV channels from airing TV shows aimed at children under 3 years old to shield them from the development risks that TV poses, which encourages passivity, slow language acquisition, over-excitedness and troubles with sleep and concentration. What seems to be happening is that when the infants' brains take in all the stimulation, it is rewired to become hyperactive. The hours of peace with TV as a babysitter can lead to years of grief with an overactive child whose brain has been wired to think the whole world operates the way a TV program does. So please - save your child years of grief, and a future dependent on drugs like Ritalin that try to undo the damage.

Caribbean Escape

This winter we will be chartering a sailboat to sail the Virgin or Windward Isles for a week or two. No experience required. If interested in joining a group of up to 6 "adventurers", call AI (250) 216-2389

THE TOBIN TAX

Don't you love all those derivatives (whatever they are) and "credit default swaps" that put the financial industry on such a permanent high - and then cause the whole financial system to tumble into a black hole, requiring a taxpayer bailout? There is a medicine to the madness that has been around for years, but no-one paid much attention until recently. It's called the Tobin Tax, after the economist who dreamed it up, and it was originally intended as a small 1% tax on foreign exchange transactions, "to throw some sand in the well-greased wheels" of global currency trading, and swing the balance back in favour of real investments. Ten years ago, such a tax could have raised \$360 billion a year - enough to pay for the UN, the \$100 billion a year Climate Fund for developing nations; the worldwide elimination of AIDS, leprosy and diphtheria; the elimination of third

world debt; the elimination of poverty; and the dismantling of all nuclear warheads. Today, with trading at \$4 trillion a day, it could raise \$720 billion a year. That's quite an achievement for a small tax on currency trading.

The Tobin Tax is re-emerging in the US as a proposed 0.25% tax on derivatives, and a larger proposal to tax all dealing in shares, futures, options, and credit default swaps except savings accounts for retirement, health and education, and the first \$100,000 a year, to let small investors off the hook. The US could sure use the income of some \$150 billion a year. There's enough interest among US Democrats that the White House has toned down its opposition - but it would need support from other countries too - such as Canada. In 2007, the global derivatives market was worth \$598 trillion, so there's huge potential to apply a tax to tackle climate change, poverty and hunger, while simultaneously taking the heat off all the financial craziness.

SIX MILLION CHILDREN

Speaking of hunger, six million children under five die every year due to malnutrition and related illnesses - and the total's been rising every year since 1996. That's a terrible lot of dying every year, because collectively, we can't get our act together. In the absence of cohesive global action, such as a Tobin Tax on traded wealth, the charities try to do what they can - and one is worthy of special attention. RESULTS Canada works to eliminate hunger and the worst aspects of global poverty, working through small groups of committed members who meet monthly to write letters, applying pressure where it's needed. And wow, are they effective! In 2008 and 2009, every \$1 donated to RESULTS helped generate over \$1000 in programs that bettered the lives of the world's poor. In the past 24 months, with a \$300,000 budget, RESULTS Canada has helped leverage \$300 million to tackle TB, AIDS, and malaria; to extend micro-loans to 106 million of the world's poorest women; to strengthen health systems in Africa; and to achieve legislation which ensures that Canada's foreign aid must be directed toward poverty reduction. If you want to join this band of pragmatic doers, there's a group in Victoria - call Anita Mark, 250-744-8668. www.resultscanada.ca

SEEDS OF VICTORIA

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On-line seed 2010 catalogue:
www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath

SAANICH CLIMATE ACTION

How does a local municipality respond when it looks at the climate emergency? Saanich has just released its draft Climate Action Plan, and it's full of detail. In 2007, the residents of Saanich produced 521,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases - and by 2020 it will be up to 577,000 tonnes if we carry on as normal. (Plus the large carbon footprint from imported food and other purchases, none of which gets recorded). To get that down by 33% by 2020, Saanich is adopting a tough carbon weight-watchers program to lose 228,000 tonnes. Overall, 62% of the heat-trapping greenhouse gases come from transport, 30% from buildings, and 8% from waste.

Saanich has already done a bunch of things, including reducing its corporate emissions by 10% and creating a Saanich Carbon Neutral Calculator. The goal - by 2020 - is to reduce the fuel-related emissions by 45%, building emissions by 30%, waste emissions by 50%, and to use renewable energy to cut building emissions by a further 5%. For transport, the goals are to increase transit use from a miserable 5.3% to 8%, cycling from 2.4% to 5%, and walking trips from 9% to 12%. This means a commitment to a better bus service, more cycling lanes and trails, and better sidewalks. No magic bullets here - just a persistent effort to get people out of their cars. It also includes plans to create more village centres that people can walk to and to have 5,000 electric vehicles on the streets by 2020, with all the accompanying EV recharging posts.

Making our buildings more efficient is equally challenging. Saanich's goal here is to increase the efficiency of all buildings in Saanich by 30% by 2020 - and there are 33,000 buildings to retrofit. Without effective provincial or federal support, this will be really hard to achieve - so a lot of the emphasis needs to go on achieving such support. It's doable - but it will need such things as a low-interest Energy Efficiency Loan Fund, and allowing 100% of the

cost to be tax-deductible.

The waste-reduction goal is probably easier - as soon as CRD manages to get community-wide composting going and bans organic matter from the landfill, we'll see some progress. We need the whole CRD to set a strategy to achieve 100% Zero Waste by 2020. For the details, and a place to send your comments, see www.saanich.ca/climate/climateActionPlan.html.

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THE MOON GALLERY

Here's one of Victoria's hidden gems. The Coast Salish artist Darlene Gait has a beautiful gallery on the Esquimalt Nations land that's open every Fri, Sat & Sunday, 10-5pm. Her work is wonderfully rich, reflecting humanity, nature, and the spirit; Robert Bateman is one of her heroes. "Her art reflects her passion for the environment and wildlife as well as her beliefs in the oneness of humanity and the beauty of its diversity." Treat yourself to a visit this holiday season, and you'll come away enriched. The One Moon Gallery is on Kosapsum Crescent, off Admirals Road, just south of the Gorge. www.onemoon.ca

ACTION OF THE MONTH CALL OTTAWA!

December 7th sees the start of the big Copenhagen climate conference. The climate science calls for a 25-40% reduction in our carbon emissions below the 1990 level by 2020, but Canada's only committing to 3% below. In the eyes of the rest of the world, Canada is among the world's worst polluters when it comes to responsible action on the climate emergency.

Action 1: Pick up the phone, call (613) 992-4211, and ask to leave a voicemail message for Stephen Harper, telling him how you want Canada to be a leader at the UN Climate Summit this December. (Press # to skip the outgoing message).

Action 2: Now do the same for Michael Ignatieff, leader of the Liberal Party (613) 995-9364, urging him to show far more leadership. The future of our whole world is at stake.