

ECONEWS #208

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.

Many thanks to The Pinch Group at Raymond James, Leslie Gordon, Max Halber, Nancy Grant, Yvonne Pigott, Elizabeth Loutit, Gail Muzio, Carolyn Zyha, Hilda Dahl, Anette & Kenneth Martin, Richard Pearson, Marg Simons, Nancy Issenman, Robin Jones, Jean Evans, Marie von Baich, Pat Badcock, Pippa Blake, Elizabeth Nuse, North Meadow Farm, Stan & Elaine Copland, Martha Warnes, Laura Moore, Linda Chan, Anita Galitzine, Annette Geldsetzer, Claude Maurice, Suzanne Gregory, Share Organics, Henry Turner, Elisabeth Haythorne, Jean Thompson & Nils Jensen, Nuri Tzoweh, Laurie Kelley, Mike Isbrucker, Martin Golder, Maya on Gabriola, John & Betty Zaikow, Bernie Jones, Gabriel Epstein, David Squance, Paul Gareau, Andrea Carol Anderson, Bob Willard & Ludovic Clavier.

<i>The Money</i>	Oct	Nov	Dec
Copies printed	1500	1550	1500
Sent by email	3114	3140	3140
Print, postage	\$765	\$645	\$645
Editorial	\$450	\$450	\$450
Donations	\$2450	\$1915	You?
Advertising	\$50	\$0	
Balance	\$1325	\$2145	

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THE ECO-PERSONALS

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

* **Lovely room to rent**, close to ocean, downtown, cooking facilities, \$35/night, weekly and monthly rates 250-382-3810.

* **Continuing Studies** at UVic would like your ideas to help shape the direction of their environmental programs. Go to www.uvcs.uvic.ca/sustainability/survey to offer your opinions.

* **The Sooke Region New Farmer Mentorship Program** is accepting applications for new farmers to participate in our mentoring program, Jan-April 2010. Our *So You Want to Farm In Sooke* manual is also available to purchase. sooke.farm.mentorship@gmail.com

* **The Mary Lake property in the Highlands** is the missing link in a parkland corridor linking Thetis Lake and Gowlland Parks. Can you help us save it for all future generations to enjoy? www.savemarylake.com 250-478-5858

WORLD'S FIRST CARBON CARDS

Norfolk Island is a little chunk of paradise, 1700 km due east of Australia. If Gulf Islanders weren't so happy with their lives, it's the kind of place they'd head

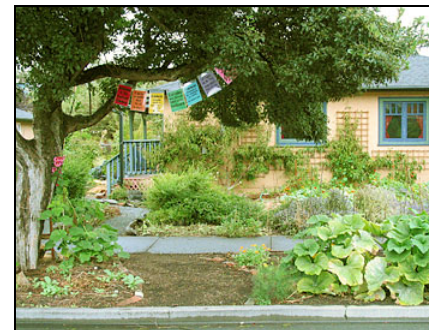
for. Most food is imported, and their power comes from diesel generation. The Island is the first place in the world to pioneer the voluntary use of a carbon credit card among its 2,000 residents. When Islanders who volunteer to join the program buy power, gas or food, they will present their card to "buy" the embodied carbon. If they walk and cycle, buy more local food or use less electricity, they will be able to cash in their left-over credits at the end of the year. Those who feast too heavily at carbon's table, on the other hand, will have to buy extra units. The Island's 30,000 annual tourists will be offered a carbon card on arrival, with credits tailored to the length of their stay. The pilot project is for three years to see how the idea is received. Here in BC, carbon cards could be pioneered in relatively self-contained communities such as Tofino, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Hornby, or Haida Gwaii. Why wait for Norfolk Island? Let's do it ourselves!

GREEN STREETS

We all know what a city street looks and feels like - it's part of the normal background to our lives. Imagine my surprise, then, walking in the leafy Vancouver streets east of City Hall, when I came across boulevards that had clearly been planted by local residents. It wasn't just the richness and variety of the flowers, shrubs and vegetables that replaced the dull foot-worn grass. It was more - there was a quiet radiance in the air that surrounded these places. I'm not sure where in my body I felt the difference - it was not a normal perceived sense. But it was real. These small public patches of the Earth felt *loved*, and by contrast, I realized that the other boulevards, with their regular city grass, felt *unloved*. As a pedestrian, I felt that difference. By contrast, I realized that the *unloved* feeling of the regular boulevards was influencing my life in a negative unconscious way. This is important, since it affects the way we feel as we go about our daily lives.

Vancouver's Green Streets program started in 1994; today, 325 Green Street gardens are being cared for by volunteers. A similar thing is happening on a far smaller scale in Victoria. At 1420 Haultain St, for three years, Rainy Hopewell and Margot Johnston have been planting vegetables on the boulevard and encouraging their neighbours to pick, eat and join in (see photo). This is not to diminish the work of our parks departments - in Saanich, they create miracles of floral abundance

each summer. But there is something extra that happens when people say "I will love this piece of land". We need to add the fifth element of love to the four-legged chair of sustainability, alongside environment, economy, community and political participation. See www.bit.ly/haultaincommons and www.vancouver.ca/greenstreets.



1420 Haultain St, Victoria

FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES

Contrast the small quiet actions of these gardeners with the fact that Canada's governments are going out of their way to protect the tax breaks and subsidies the oil and gas industry receive. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) estimates that in 2008, the industry received \$2.84 billion in tax incentives through 63 different subsidy programs, with \$1.38 billion coming from federal government - which has eliminated the ecoEnergy program and the wind power production credit. The IISD's report *Fueling the Problem* suggests that Prime Minister Harper is specifically to blame, and that he frequently meets with Canada's oil and gas companies. Climate change? Oh, that's some myth dreamed up by soft-minded liberals who want an excuse to extend the power of government. If God put these minerals under our soil, surely we're supposed to use them?

THE CLIMATE FIGHTBACK

This has been a terrible year for all who have put their hearts into trying to wake the world to the looming climate crisis. The climate deniers have had a field day, and are more confident than ever in their belief that it's all nonsense, dreamed up by climate scientists to inflate their salaries.

For every thousand solid research papers that demonstrate that our human activity is warming the planet, the deniers find small errors in two of them, and crow from the rooftops that the whole edifice of scientific understanding is fatally flawed.

This might be forgivable, if it were simply an instinctive response by those who hate the call to restrict our human footprint on this planet. It not just an instinctive response, however. It is funded by the deep pockets of the oil and coal industries, using the same tactics that were used to fight restrictions on tobacco and deny its links to cancer. It is a deliberately planned campaign that uses the gullibility of those who dislike government to fight off any attempts to put a price on carbon, or otherwise limit the burning of fossil fuels.

Have faith. This year has been a tough lesson in the need to push back, instead of allowing the deniers so much undisputed airspace. The scientists are now doing just this through the newly formed Climate Science Rapid Response Team (www.climaterapidresponse.org), where 80 climate scientists have banded together in a determined effort to meet to every untruth with valid science.

Truth has a power that will not desert us - but the many tragedies of human history teach us that we must always stand up and fight back when injustice, deception and malfeasance attempt to dominate. When we reframe the climate crisis from being a terrible problem requiring "mitigation" to being an amazing opportunity to achieve a great transition to a sustainable world, we will find it a lot easier to engage people with the determination and excitement that are needed.

It's Coming Up December

*It's coming up December,
when snow begins to fall,
cold days of coming winter,
on a planet growing warm.*

*Earth's atmosphere seems very large,
while we seem very small,
but the daily fires of ancient fuel
spell trouble for us all.*

*"God says He'll never harm us",
a Congressman assures us,
God's floods will not devour us,
- and His Word is always true.**

*But back on Earth, we mortals
need something more than this.
We need a plan, a way to act
with hope, not Genesis.*

*We need a great transition,
an end to fossil fuels,
a pathway to a greener world
where sanity prevails.*

-Guy Dauncey

* John Shimkus, a Republican Congressman who may become head of the US House Energy and Commerce Committee, stated in 2009 that the planet won't be destroyed by global warming because God promised Noah that it would not happen again after the great flood (Genesis 8:21). The flood was caused by sea-level rise at the end of the ice age, but nobody explained that to Noah. Here's Shimkus again, demonstrating his insights: "I believe that is the infallible word of God, and that's the way it is going to be for His creation. The earth will end only when God declares its time to be over. Man will not destroy this earth. This earth will not be destroyed by a flood."

ELKINGTON FOREST AWARD

Congratulations to Living Forest Communities, who are pioneering the meeting place of old growth forests and smart growth communities. Their Elkington Forest project - a 1000-acre ecoforest conservation community to be built south of Shawnigan Lake - just won the BC Real Estate Foundation's inaugural 2010 Land Award. See www.elkingtonforest.com.



ECO-SENSE AWARD

Congratulations also to Ann and Gord Baird, whose totally green solar-cob home in the Highlands of Victoria (see photo) has been recognized with 4-Petal recognition in the Living Building Challenge. This is the greenest building rating system on the planet, surpassing LEED, and their home has been praised for being "the world's greenest modern house". See www.eco-sense.ca and ecosenseliving.wordpress.com.

OUR COMMUNITY AFTER OIL

On Sunday December 5th, Transition Victoria is holding an all-day interactive visioning-to-action event, as part of the quest for greater community resilience in our region. Can life without oil be healthier, happier, and more rewarding than the way we live now? What will our region look and feel like? "Telling

A New Story" happens at St. John's Hall, 925 Balmoral. Anke 250-361-1955. www.transitionvictoria.ca

GREENSTART FOR BUSINESS

The GreenStart Small Business Pilot Program is recruiting 20 small businesses in the CRD to participate in an innovative program to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (\$100 per business). If you are interested, the second round begins in February See crd.bc.ca/climatechange/reduce.htm and submit applications by Jan 31st.

OIKOCREDIT BUILDS LIVES

If you are a financially poor woman in Kenya, Bolivia, or 71 other countries around the world, a \$50 loan can be all that is needed to start a business and begin to raise your family out of poverty. Oikocredit is a global organization that enables people who are relatively wealthier to invest in microloans, providing the capital to tackle poverty. Each \$1,000 invested for a year (earning 2% interest) helps create five jobs in the developing world, and 99% of the loans are repaid with interest. After 35 years of operation, Oikocredit reaches over 17 million people. The Oikocredit office for Western Canada is based in Victoria. To learn more, call Blaise Salmon at 250-384-1842. The deadline for investing in 2010 is December 15th. See www.oikocredit.org.

SEEDS OF VICTORIA

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www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath

**ACTION OF THE MONTH
THE SENATE'S CLIMATE BILL**

Bill C-311 was written specifically so that Canada would have a working Climate plan, designed to get us to an 80% reduction in GHGs by 2050. The House of Commons twice debated and approved it. It then went to the Senate, where Conservative appointed Senators seized the moment when there were not enough Liberals in the house to kill the bill without debate.

Action: At www.bit.ly/Can-Senators you'll find a list of every Canadian senator with their party affiliations and emails. Write an email of protest, and send it to as many Conservative Senators as you can, telling them how you feel about what they have done.