

ECONEWS #190

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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By email: www.earthfuture.com/econews

THE ECO-PERSONALS

\$1 a word. maximum 5 lines. Non-profits and low-income free. 1" box ad \$50.

* **Charming guest room**, \$30/night.

Cook St Village, ocean. 250-361-3102

* **Wanted** – full time Admin Assistant for the BC Sustainable Energy Association. www.bcsea.org/jobs

* **Volunteers needed.** If you can help Pesticide-Free CRD, a coalition of organizations and individuals who want to eliminate all unnecessary local use of pesticides, please call 250-380-2358. www.pesticidefreecrd.org.

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

SPRING IN VICTORIA

April and May are glorious months on Vancouver Island, when the wild flowers enchant us with their loveliness, especially in the Garry Oak Meadows. The Victoria Natural History Society and CRD Parks offer many local outings, so do make the most of them. April also brings **Earth Day**, and Victoria's annual Earth Walk on Saturday 25th. The parade starts at noon from the Legislature to an Environmental Fair at Centennial Square,. Bring your hope, vision, and optimism! They also need volunteers – if you can help, call Steve 250-216-5903 or chi-chi-leah@hotmail.com. See www.earthwalkvictoria.ca.

FRIENDS of MOUNT DOUG PARK

Everyone in Victoria knows and loves Mount Doug Park, but do we know about the hardworking Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, whose volunteers work to restore this 500-acre

wonder? During the last year, they have fought non-native alien invaders including English ivy, Scotch broom, Himalayan blackberry, and the tiny garlic mustard, that is driving out native plants. In June, they released 50,000 chum fry into Douglas Creek, which had moved into Cordova Bay by August. They have been restoring the creek to make it more attractive to fish, planting 1,000 plugs of riparian vegetation along its banks, and they are planning to transplant coho fry, crayfish, and then more chum fry. By 2010, they hope the salmon will return. They're a hardworking group, but they need more help to fulfill their hopes. If you feel inspired, call Judy Spearing at 472-0515. www.mountdouglaspark.ca

ROLL ON, ELECTRIC CARS!

The future clearly must have much more walking, cycling, and transit, but it will also have cars, and the electric car has taken a clear lead in the race to be the vehicle of the future. The Dutch city of Amsterdam has just announced that it wants all cars in the city to be electric by 2040, and will be opening 200 electric charging stations by 2012. Project Better Place is thinking the same thoughts on a global scale. They are working with Israel, Denmark, Hawaii, Australia, San Francisco, and Ontario to deliver an integrated electric infrastructure with Nissan/Renault EVs, recharging posts, and battery replacement stations. In Denmark, the government is charging a 180% tax on the purchase of regular cars and 0% on electric vehicles, to encourage the change. Better Place is thinking *big*. Their CEO, Shah Agassi, wants to see 100,000 electric cars on the road by 2011, and 100 million by 2016-2020. The cars will cost around \$20,000, plus a monthly lease for the lithium iron phosphate battery, which will last for 20-25 years. This is the future, and we need every city to prepare for it, starting here in Victoria.

ROYAL ROADS IS GOING GREEN

You may associate Royal Roads with its glorious woodlands and gardens, but there's a lot more afoot in the world of greenery. The University's goals include becoming climate-neutral by 2010, reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 50% below 2007 by 2020, and becoming "grid-positive", which means becoming self-sufficient in energy, waste, and water, obtaining heat

and electricity from local waste wood cogeneration and sewage treatment plants, in partnership with Colwood. They are aiming to change their current travel pattern (90% single occupancy vehicles, 4% transit, 3% ridesharing, 2% cycling, 1% walking), so watch for high parking charges and a better transit service. They are also working to maximize the protection of their ecological heritage, adopt green purchasing, and raise funds to build the new Robert Bateman Centre, a green-as-they-come "living building" designed by the Mayne Island architect Richard Iredale, for which they hope to break ground in 2010. The student body is engaged through Campus Green, which is developing various projects, and the University is working to integrate sustainability thinking into the many courses that are taught at Royal Roads. Way to go, you guys!

ALMOST GREEN

For good green bedside reading, I can't recommend James Glave's new book high enough *Almost Green: How I Built an Eco-Shed, Ditched my SUV, Alienated the In-Laws, and Changed My Life Forever*, which may tell you that it's not the turgid academic prose that afflicts some environmental books. James lives on Bowen Island, and decided that living a suburban life while being green at heart just wasn't good enough. So he embarked on his Big Green Adventure, chiefly into eco-building, and we get to be beneficial insects on his oh-so-green wall, encouraged by the fact that he's a natural when it comes to humorous writing. So indulge yourself – and I challenge you not get inspired while doing so! (\$22, Greystone Books 2008)

STUPID TO THE LAST DROP

Moving east, another book. *Stupid to the Last Drop*, by the superb writer William Marsden, is subtitled *How Alberta is Bringing Environmental Armageddon to Canada (and Doesn't Seem to Care)*. Everyone knows about Alberta's Tar-Sands, but to most it is a far-away disaster. Marsden's book grabs you from the opening paragraph, and takes you on a journey to the heart of the Tar Sands, meeting local characters such as Damien, driver of the world's biggest dump truck, who earns \$100,000 a year carrying 200 barrels of oil per load. I cannot speak highly enough of this book. You could visit

Alberta a hundred times and never gain the insights he lays out into the mindsets, politics, machinations, ecological denial, and the fortunes that some Albertans are making at the expense of the boreal forest, the wildlife, the planet, and everything we hold dear. He also delves deeply into Alberta's coal-bed methane, a toxic mess that poisons local water supplies and even sets them on fire, that is trying its hardest to come to BC. For convincing evidence of the corruption and folly of Alberta's oil and gas-controlled politics, this is your baby - it won the National Business Book Award for good reason. (\$19.95 Vintage, 2007)

WORLD'S OCEANS

Alanna Mitchell, author of *Sea Sick: The Global Ocean in Crisis*, is speaking in Victoria on Tuesday March 31st, and I hope she gets a sell-out crowd (see Green Diary). Here on the west coast we are surrounded by the ocean and revel in its delights, even as we dump our untreated sewage into it, but the global situation is appalling. With our advanced fishing technologies and insatiable appetites, we have driven a quarter of all known fish populations to the brink of extinction, including the once abundant tuna and cod - and another 50% are considered extremely exploited. If things continue this way, global fish populations will disappear

complete within 40 years. The worldwide catch has increased by 700% since 1960, and now fleets are chasing the more obscure corners of the oceans in a desperate quest to pay for their ever more expensive boats. Using ocean-floor dragnets, a powerful trawler can scrape 20 tons of fish off the ocean floor in half an hour, straight into the on-board processing factory. As well as the authorized fishing fleet, 1200 trawlers operate under semi-legal flags of convenience, and 1,600 operate as pirates under no flags at all - all to satisfy our craving for tuna, sushi, and cat food. Meanwhile, Earth's oceans are absorbing more of the CO2 that we are dumping into the atmosphere, which is turning their waters more acidic, killing some coral reefs and threatening every shelled creature; and we are filling the seas our garbage, polluting them with plastics, sewage, and fertilizer run-off from our chemically managed farms. I sure hope Alanna has some hopeful solutions, when she speaks here!

SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE

Is there a way to end the political travesty that produces so many governments that are opposed by the majority of their voters? Yes, there is. It's called the Single Transferable Vote, and we are can vote for it on May 12th. The campaigning will soon begin in earnest, and the NO side will try to tell

us that it will lead to unstable governments run by whackos of very colour. I spelled out the arguments in favour of STV last month, and I'll do so again next month. This month, there are public meetings in Victoria at Camosun Interurban Campus (Fri 3rd), Brentwood Bay (Sat 18th), and James Bay (Sun 26th) when you can learn for yourself - and please do. Take your friends, so that they can become properly informed. And see www.stv.ca

ACTION OF THE MONTH SAVE OUR SPECIES

BC and Alberta are the only two provinces in Canada that do not have an Endangered Species Law, which leaves over 1600 species at risk here in BC without adequate legal protection. Past Liberal and NDP governments have both failed to act.

Action: Go to www.saveourspecies.ca and sign the petition asking the BC government for such legislation. You can also download a petition, and ask your friends and neighbours to sign it. Polls show that 80% of British Columbians want such legislation, and the petition is being supported by the Sierra Club of BC, the David Suzuki Foundation, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Forest Ethics, and EcoJustice.

www.saveourspecies.ca

GREEN DIARY (continued)

- Sat 25, Noon **28TH ANNUAL EARTH WALK** Legislature to Centennial Square Environmental Fair. Parade peacekeepers and volunteers needed. Steve, 381-5120 chi-chi-leah@hotmail.com www.earthwalkvictoria.ca
- Sat 25, 4:30pm Introduction to Urban Homesteading. Course runs till June 20th. \$175. Angela: sitemgr@compost.bc.ca
- Sun 26, 10 am Make Your Vote Count. Single Transferable Voting for May 12th. James Bay Community Centre, 234 Menzies.
- Sun 26, 9-4pm Round Table Gathering for Men and Women. Queenswood Centre, 384-8236, www.wellfoundation.org
- Sun 26, 1:30pm Sacred Circles dance/worship service, 5575 West Saanich Road, Victoria. By donation. 250-479-4701
- Mon 27, 7:30pm VNHS Marine Night: How I Stopped Worrying About Global Fisheries. Biologist Brian Harvey slide show - aquatic biodiversity hotspots from British Columbia to Brazil. UVic, Fraser 159.
- Tue 28, 5-7pm Cowichan Green Drinks. Craig Street Pub, 25 Craig St, Duncan. www.greendrinks.org
- Wed 29th, 4-6pm **Youth Green Drinks**. Solstice Cafe, 529 Pandora.
- Wed 29, 7pm **EcoNews Dessert Potluck Mailout Party**, 395 Conway Rd (off Interurban). All welcome! Guy: 881-1304
- Wed 29, 7-10pm Didn't I See You In Second Life? Environmental Sustainability Education on Web. \$20. 1-866-890-0220.
- Wed 29, 7:30pm Friends of Mount Douglas Park AGM. McMorran's Beach House, 5109 Cordova Bay Rd. 250-472-0515
- Thur 30, 6:30pm **Oak Bay High School Green Evening**. Celebrating the school receiving 10 solar panels! Talks by Nobel Laureate Andrew Weaver and climate solutions expert Guy Dauncey. Refreshments and booths from local green groups and companies. \$15. whereismyrevolution@gmail.com
- Thur 30 - May 3 BC Nature Conference & AGM, hosted by the Cowichan Valley Naturalists. Duncan. www.bcnature.ca
- May 1 - Oct 31 Sustainable Food Production Skillbuilder course. ourbrandy@shaw.ca www.ourecovillage.org
- Sat May 2, 1-4 pm The Zero-Mile Diet - Grow Your Best Tomatoes Ever! Presented by Carolyn Herriot \$45/class at The Garden Path Centre, 395 Conway Road, off Interurban. 250-881-1555
- Sat May 2, 9-5pm **The Climate Challenge: Practical Solutions to Global Warming**. Full day course with Guy Dauncey. \$95 Royal Roads. 1-866-890-0220. www.royalroads.ca/continuing-studies/GLGI1504-Y08.htm
- EcoNews, 395 Conway Rd, Victoria, B.C. V9E 2B9 250-881-1304 guydauncey@earthfuture.com
www.earthfuture.com/econews Deadline for May: April 24th

