

## ECONEWS #204

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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EcoNews by mail: call Guy 250-881-1304.  
By email: [www.earthfuture.com/econews](http://www.earthfuture.com/econews)

### THE ECO-PERSONALS

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

\* **Nice room to rent**, Marigold area \$400 per month inclusive. 250-479-1761 or [pat.chapman@shaw.ca](mailto:pat.chapman@shaw.ca)

\* **Want to become a zero waste household?** New Pacific Mobile Depot location at UVic, 2nd Sat, 9-12pm to recycle old electronics, styrofoam, soft + hard plastics, tetra packs. To volunteer: [Derek Juno djuno@uvic.ca](mailto:DerekJuno@uvic.ca). For all Victoria and Vancouver pick-ups see [www.pacificmobiledepots.com](http://www.pacificmobiledepots.com)

\* **Can you help?** I need 3 hours a week voluntary office help preparing for my open ocean swims in support of marine sanctuaries. Renate Herberger 250-656-1312. [www.costaricamermaid.net](http://www.costaricamermaid.net)

\* **Have a Green Children's Birthday Party** at the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre - no hassle or waste. Fun exciting atmosphere, promotes sustainable living. 250-386-9676.

\* **Wanted:** Organically-minded people required to help Dave Friend develop and expand Mr. Organic's Educational Programs to school students. 250-655-9156. [davefriend@friendlyorganics.ca](mailto:davefriend@friendlyorganics.ca)

\* **Wanted:** House and large yard for long-term urban permaculture homesteading in Victoria. Open to

renting, leasing to own, sharing/labour exchange. [oakandcamas@gmail.com](mailto:oakandcamas@gmail.com)

\* **The Green Party** in Victoria is seeking volunteers for special events, telephone canvassing, etc. Help us build a better Canada. Contact Sue Dakers 250-478-2477 to join our team.

\* **The Sierra Club of BC's Education Program** is seeking three educators to translate program materials into French, deliver classroom programs and coordinate youth sustainability projects. See [www.sierraclub.bc.ca](http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca)

\* **Follow Guy Dauncey on Twitter** for links to important news stories.

### HANDS ACROSS THE SAND

The oil is still gushing into the Gulf of Mexico, with recovery efforts being slowed by the first hurricane of the season. Global shock is subsiding into resignation, since there's little anyone can do, but the public will to accelerate the shift to safe renewable energy is much stronger. On June 26<sup>th</sup>, people met in over 850 locations to link their Hands Across the Sand, saying NO to more offshore drilling and YES to clean energy now. On Hornby Island, 100 people linked hands at Tribune Bay; on Salt Spring, 50 people linked hands around Fulford Harbour. Here in Victoria, 400 people linked hands at Willows Beach in a great event - we almost covered the entire length of the beach (see photo). Many thanks to Renee Lindstrom and Lisa Cole for taking the initiative to organize this.

### SAN DIEGO'S ELECTRIC CARS

One of the ways we'll be able to travel without oil is the electric car - so what's happening? The Nissan Leaf EV is being rolled out this fall, costing \$20,000 in the US after tax incentives (more in Canada). The US EV Project will put 5,700 Leafs and 2,600 Chevrolet Volts into home garages in five states, along with 14,650 charging stations and 310 fast chargers. In San Diego, where there will be 1,000 Leafs, each driver will have a home charging station in the garage, and there will be 1500 public charging stations and 50 fast charge stations where a battery can be topped up in minutes.

The purpose of the trials is to find out how this affects the grid. In San Diego, drivers will pay a price varying from 7 cents/kWh for super off-peak charging to 38 cents during peak summer demand, in the hope that they'll heed the price signals. Survey results are not encouraging - it seems EV drivers may willingly pay more for the gratification

of an immediate recharge. The solution may be smart charging - you plug in when you get home, and your charger communicates with the grid to determine the optimal time to recharge. That requires a smart grid. In June, the California Public Utilities Commission approved a comprehensive plan to digitalize the state's power system, enabling smart metering and a smart grid for everyone. A similar approach is being planned for BC by BC Hydro.

### THE GLOBAL FOREST

There's a major new excitement pulsing through the global mind, and it comes from Diana Beresford Kroeger, an Irish-Canadian botanist and biochemist who has just published her new book, *The Global Forest*. Diana shakes up the normal thought that forests are a habitat for nature, a place of beauty, or a source of timber by seeing the forest's trees as a living miracle, with a pattern of intelligence we have scarcely begun to understand. Diana comes from a deep Irish background. After her parents died in a car crash when she was 11, she chose to live with her bachelor uncle, a chemist, natural philosopher and lover of Buddhism and Gaelic poetry, who took her to meet her elderly cousins. "They were Irish speakers, and they knew all the old stories and the old cures. They showed me everything. They taught me to meditate, to focus my mind. They talked to me about survival." Over in Canada, with a doctorate in biochemistry, she found herself a renegade scientist, appalled at the influence of the corporations and the threat posed by pesticides. By contrast, she was trying to bring together aboriginal healing, western medicine and botany as she researched the biochemical and medicinal properties of trees. At Carraigliath, her 160 acre estate near Merrickville, Ontario, she has transformed the Canadian bush into a leafy sanctuary for over 100 types of tree. Her new book is opening people's eyes to the miracle of trees, such as their ability to remove air pollution: children who live in tree-lined neighbourhoods have 25% less asthma than those in treeless neighbourhoods. In a walk through an old-growth forest, "there are thousands if not millions of chemicals and their synergistic effects with one another." Among other things, trees produce aerosols, including a compound called alphapinene that stabilizes a child's breathing mechanisms and has a mild narcotic action on the brain, allowing the child to



calm down and be smarter. The Japanese have a phrase for this - they call it *shinrin yoku*, or “wood-air bathing”. Trees produce a spectrum of light we can’t see that monarch butterflies can, and infrasound we can’t hear but birds can. Half of the world’s oxygen comes from trees - and they have been producing it for 380 million years. Diana’s new book is a call for us all to think far deeper about the trees that surround us. “There’s an enormous difference between old-growth forests and tree plantations,” she says. Much as Merv Wilkinson did for 60 years at his Wildwood Forest, near Ladysmith, she recommends using stock from old-growth forests to grow new forests, to benefit from the advantage of their genetics. Her book has been praised as much for its poetry and lyrical nature as for its scientific content.

### LEGAULT’S DARK WATERS

Victoria’s Stephen Legault has set his latest crime thriller - *The Darkening Archipelago* - in the dark waters of BC’s Broughton Archipelago, where the crusty and alcohol-imbued environmental organizer Cole Blackwater finds himself thrown into a potent stew where poverty, racial tension and fish farming combine to murder Archie Ravenwing, a native fisherman and activist who is determined to save the wild salmon from a deadly assault by sea-lice. If you have not yet discovered Legault’s dark and deliciously sinister writing, and if you enjoy gritty realism, treat yourself to his new book for a good summer read. This is the second in a trilogy. In Legault’s first novel, *The Cardinal Divide*, Cole Blackwater gets caught up in another murder while trying to save a precious piece of the Rocky Mountains Kananaskis Country. Newest Press, \$19.95.

### QUEENSWOOD APPEAL

The Queenswood Centre on Arbutus Road in Victoria is facing a tough challenge; last year 6,000 people were helped there by programs and services to support their healing in body, mind

and spirit. The centre has been sold to the University of Victoria, but Queenswood can continue its lease if it can find immediate bridge funding of \$200,000 and commitments for \$1.2 million by July 15<sup>th</sup>. If this stirs you, and you can help, please call Kate Fagan Taylor at 250-514-0288. [www.queenswoodvictoria.ca](http://www.queenswoodvictoria.ca)

### THE SHRINKING SPERM

Take a good farmyard bull. 90% of its sperm are normal, and its sperm count is up to two billion per milliliter. Now take a healthy man from the 1940s: sperm count over 100 million per milliliter. Fast forward to the 1990s: the average male sperm count has fallen to 60 million, and 20% of healthy young men between 18 and 25 have an abnormal sperm count. Today, one in seven couples is classed as infertile. This has *trouble* written all over it, even though helps reduce our human population. Why is it happening? It’s not genetic, since the change is too fast, so it must have a lifestyle or environmental cause. The evidence points to something that’s causing damage during the mother’s pregnancy: when pregnant mothers were exposed to the chemical dioxin following an industrial accident in Italy, their sons had lower than average sperm counts. When a mother smokes during pregnancy, her son will have a 40% lower sperm count. When mothers eat large amounts of beef during pregnancy, it has the same grim result. What’s needed is research to differentiate between organic grass-fed beef and cows raised in industrial feedlots, full of hormones and antibiotics. Women who are overweight also produce sons with poor sperm quality. Is it the fat, or the harmful chemicals stored in the fat? Whatever the answer, the advice is clear: if you are pregnant, and you want grandchildren, do everything you can to avoid industrialized meat, smoking, and anything that smells like a chemical. Avoid alcohol too, since heavy use causes both fetal alcohol syndrome and birth defects.

### GIRLS’ PUBERTY BEFORE TEN

This story is probably linked to the one above, though the scientific jury is still out. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the average onset for puberty in girls was age 15. By the 1960s, it had fallen to age 12. Today, growing numbers of girls are reaching puberty before the age of 10, which is very distressing both for them and their parents. Scientists think the cause may be linked to chemicals in the food chain, junk food, or obesity - children certainly eat more than they did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bisphenol A, found in the lining of canned food and babies’ feeding bottles, is one suspect. But so is this: researchers at Bristol University, UK, found that 49% of girls who ate meat 12 times a week at the age of 7 reached puberty by the age of 12½, compared with 35% of those who ate meat four times a week or less. Again, is it the meat, or what’s in the meat? If I ate meat, I would avoid all mass-produced, industrialized meat like the plague.

### ORGANIC ISLANDS FESTIVAL

If you are free the weekend of July 10/11, treat yourself to the Organic Islands Festival at Glendale Gardens, off Interurban Road. Now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, it is a joyous celebration of all things green, with great speakers, music, booths, displays, and unhurried conversation among friends. All solar-powered, and near-zero-waste. Carolyn Herriot is also speaking and launching her new book *The Zero Mile Diet - a Year-Round Guide to Growing Organic Food* there on Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm. See you there! See [www.organicislands.ca](http://www.organicislands.ca)

### ACTION OF THE MONTH NO ARCTIC OIL DRILLING

This is such an important moment, with the oil pouring into the Gulf of Mexico. We need a firm commitment that there will be no drilling for oil in Canada’s Arctic or in BC’s west coast waters. There’s a petition you can sign at [wwf.ca/conservation/oceans/oil\\_spill\\_petition.cfm](http://wwf.ca/conservation/oceans/oil_spill_petition.cfm)