

ECONEWS #215

EcoNews is a free monthly newsletter, funded by your kind donations. It 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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<i>The Money</i>	May	June	July
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Advertising	\$30	\$75	
Balance	\$174	-\$274 (Help!)	

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, \$30/night, 250-382-3810.

* **Local Masonry Heater** builder, Boris Kukolj, offers large hand-built units \$8000. kukolj@bcsupernet.com 778-433-6066. Detailed photos: <http://bit.ly/kukolj>

* **Wanted:** two like-minded people to join two others in renting an "Intentional House" here in Victoria. See oneroofvictoriabc.wordpress.com

* **Tree ripened**, super fresh #1 & #2 organic cherries, nectarines & more in pre-ordered 20 pound cases. Contact amelita.fruit@gmail.com for information on two summer fruit deliveries.

SARA CASSIDY

Summer reading with a twist! Sara Cassidy is a young Victoria author and mother of three who has worked as a professional clown, youth hostel manager, tree planter and human-rights witness in Guatemala. She has just written two short books for teenagers called *Slick* and *Windfall* (Orca Publishers, \$9.95) in which we share the troubles and exploits of 13-year-old Liza and her "change the world" school group called GRRR - Girls for Renewable Resources, Really! In one book, Liza and her group take on oil industry skullduggery in Latin America. In the other, they protest the death of a tree and work to grow more food here in Victoria, while pondering the death of a homeless man. But don't let me spoil the stories - drop into a bookshop before you

head out to the beach. Both books should be popular with teenagers who are impatient to change the world. I'm no teenager, and I certainly enjoyed reading them. Sara's website is www.saracassidywriter.com

BIKE TO WORK WEEK 2011

Bike to Work Week has come and gone, but it's worth pondering just how big an event it has become. This year, there were 615 registered teams with 5723 cyclists, of whom 887 were new cyclists. During the first week of June, they cycled more than a quarter of a million kilometres. The Mountain Equipment Coop produced the highest level of large team participation, with 27 of their 30 staff taking part. If instead of cycling they had each driven an efficient 30 mpg car, burning a litre of gas every ten kilometres, they would have consumed 26,562 litres. Each litre of gas creates 2.34 kg of carbon dioxide, so by cycling they prevented 62 tonnes of global warming CO₂ from entering the atmosphere. But that's not all. Every litre of oil also had to be drilled, refined, shipped and trucked across the world to get here. The 5,723 cyclists also took that many cars off the road, along with the associated noise and stress. They increased their own health and fitness, and they probably became that much happier too - that's what cycling does to you. All-in-all, it's a huge hats off to the Bike to Work Week organizers. For team results, see www.biketowork.ca/node/8410/results

THE CYCLING SOLUTION

A Portland cycling activist, Ellie Blue, has been writing some great columns for Grist on what she calls Bikenomics. Let me try to compress a few of the gems:

* \$3,000 to \$12,000 - that's how much you save each year if you ditch your car.

* \$90 million - that's how much the bike-related industry contributes to the Portland economy every year.

* \$3,000 to \$37,000 per kilometre - that's what it costs to add a bike-lane to an existing road. If we take \$20,000 as a media price, it means that for the \$24 million that the McTavish Interchange at the airport cost, we could have had 1,200 kilometres of added bike lanes.

* Off road bike trails. The new E&N Bike Trail is costing \$875,000 per kilometre. For the same \$24 million, we could have had 27 kilometres of safe new off-road bike trail.

* Healthcare - Portland found that for every \$1 they were planning to invest in

new cycling infrastructure, they would save \$5, partly in fuel costs, mostly in health care and reduced mortality savings. Riding a bike increases physical and mental health, as well as reducing air pollution.

* Parking - you can create provide 160 bike parking spaces for the cost of creating one space to store a car.

* Bike parking clusters or "corrals" cost around \$4,000 to park 11 bicycles. Portland has 59 corrals, and after initial resistance, businesses are complaining that their on-street parking is not being replaced fast enough, because bike parking attracts more customers and generates more revenue than car parking. Researchers have also found that people who walk or bike to a local business spend more money there.

* All told, the business case for prioritizing cycling in the Capital Regional District is enormous. See www.grist.org/article/series/bikenomics



VARNA TRIKES

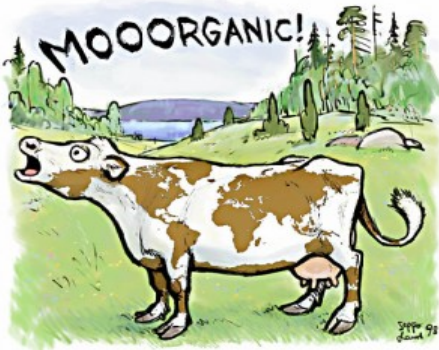
Still on this theme... Georgi Georgiev, maker of bicycles on Gabriola Island, whose bikes hold 30 records including the world bike speed record of 132 kph, and have won seven Paralympics gold or silver medals, has designed a solid and sturdy trike for people who want to ride but do not feel safe on a 2-wheeler due to age or health. The bike costs \$2,200 or \$3,590 for the electric version. Georgi himself rides the trike every day at age 69, having recovered from a stroke, and he says that doing so has greatly improved his overall health and state of mind. If you'd like one, call Varna Hand Cycles at 250-247-8379. www.varnahandcycles.com

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

The entire world's farming needs to be organic. That's the only sustainable way to manage our land and secure our health, and the evidence shows that it is doable, and that there would be no loss of yield - the world would in fact be able to grow more food. Using chemical fertilizers made from non-renewable resources and chemical

pesticides that damage farm ecosystems and our own health is just the wrong way to go. But in spite of a 150% increase since 2000, the land being farmed organically - 37 million hectares - is still only 0.9% of the world's farmland. In only 24 countries is more than 5% of the land being farmed organically, including Austria at 18.5% (Europe 4.1%; US 0.7%; Canada 1%).

In India there are almost 700,000 organic producers. In Uganda almost 200,000. But it is oh so slow. Here in BC, 475 farms are organic (2.4% of the total), and 87 are in transition. Organic dairy production has shown a recent rapid 8.5% increase in BC, with 15 producers, but across Canada as a whole organic dairy is only 1% of Canadian milk production.



In a sustainable world, all subsidies to conventional agriculture would cease. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides would be taxed to compensate for the damage they cause, and the income would be used to help farmers make the transition to organic. One looming threat is the increasing price of farmland, driven by investors speculating on land in the hope that food shortages will push up its value. In a sustainable world, speculation on food and agricultural land would not be allowed.

Here in Victoria, there was a small victory of kinds at the end of May. An attempt by Victoria Parks staff to demolish Kale Corner in Fernwood, where Zoe Mager grows food on the boulevard for anyone to eat, was halted, and the City will be making a renewed effort to clarify its rules so that its goal of encouraging more urban agriculture is not sabotaged by a lack of clear guidelines as to what is allowed.

We can help by buying more organic produce. Way to go, Moss Street Market, celebrating 20 years this summer! www.mossstreetmarket.com. For a full list of Island farmers markets, see www.harbourliving.ca/vancouverislandfarmersmarkets.php

Thanks to great local support, LifeCycles Project and the CRD have won a \$25,000 prize from The Keg to support "Growing Schools: From Classroom to Table" in The

Keg's 40th birthday Thanks a Million contest. They will establish 5 new school gardens across the region; educate 1,000 students on food, nutrition and sustainable living; launch a food and climate change educational campaign; and distribute 500 vegetable seedlings to households in the region through a voluntary pledge program. Yea, Dan, Sarah - and the Keg!

Explore the Wild Side of Victoria

Oak Bay and the Islands aboard M.V. Aquitania, 45' cedar-strip Edwardian Motor Launch

Discovery Island Picnic-Wildlife Tour
Adults \$50 Teens \$40 Children \$30.
www.BlackfishAdventures.com
250-508-1981

IT'S A GREEN BUSINESS

Do you own a small business in Victoria, or have a friend who does? And if so, do you want to receive a free energy assessment, learn about upgrades that improve your work environment and deliver quick payback through energy savings, and receive grants for upgrades? LiveSmartBC has a new Small Business program to help you go green and save. If you run a commercial kitchen, for instance, it could fund 100% of the cost of replacing and installing equipment such as lighting and pre-rinse spray valves. There is also \$275,000 in funding for businesses that become LiveSmart Champions by developing innovative ways to conserve energy in specific sectors. Applications must be in by August 15th. Call a CRD LiveSmart advisor: www.citygreen.ca/livesmart-bc-small-business-program-crd.

And speaking of green businesses - in BC Hydro's Energy Fix contest, after many of us voted on-line, The Fernwood Inn has won the \$35,000 grand prize for a big energy efficiency makeover! Yea, Sarah and Michael! Drop into the Fernwood Inn to congratulate them, and sample their amazing carrot, coconut and ginger soup.

BIOFUELS FOREVER

Ah, but which biofuels? Biofuel made from recycled restaurant fat? Biofuel made by farming corn for ethanol? Or biofuel made from plants that grow on wasteland or by farming algae? This August, the world Collective Biofuels Conference is coming to Duncan, organized by Cowichan Energy

Alternatives. Biofuel aficionados, d-i-y folks, entrepreneurs and cooperators are gathering from all over North America, some from as far away as Ghana, to share the latest and best technologies, case studies and experiences. Josh Tickell, producer of the award-winning film FUEL will be there to premier his new movie FREEDOM about ways we can unhook our economies from our addiction to oil. It's \$135 for students and non-profits for a weekend full of varied activities, \$175 general. See www.cowichanenergy.org/collectivebio-dieselconference.html

CANCER PREVENTION HEROES

When it comes to cancer, we have to do more than run for the cure and sell pink ribbons. We have to stop cancer before it starts, by working on prevention - and Prevent Cancer Now (PCN) does just that. On Saturday July 30th I am wanting to organize a unique fundraising event for PCN in downtown Victoria, but I really could do with some help to organize it. The goal will be to choose ten stores or non-profits which are being Cancer Prevention Heroes by nature of the goods or services they offer, and to do a sponsored run-walk-or-bike connecting them, stopping at each to give them their award, and declare them a Cancer Prevention Hero, with a nice sticker to say so to display in the window.



Is anyone able to help me organize this? We need to identify the Heroes, and build a team of people who will join us at the Saturday July 30th morning event, and raise funds by asking their friends and colleagues to sponsor them. This would be Victoria's contribution to Prevent Cancer Now's 2011 Cancer Prevention Challenge (www.preventcancer.ca/cpc-2011). If you can help, please call me at 250-881-1304, or email me at guydauncey@earthfuture.com. I would love to have come company!

ACTION OF THE MONTH

Write to Premier Christy Clark about the need for BC to have strong legislation banning the sale and use of pesticides - see front page.