



IROQUOIS MESSENGER

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

ENVIRONMENTAL DIGEST

COOKING OIL TO FUEL

San Francisco has launched SFGrease-cycle, a free program in which the city will pick up used cooking oil and grease from commercial food preparation establishments. The goop will be turned into biodiesel, which being made of plant oil will burn cleaner than petroleum-based fuels. This may be the largest such program in USA and will eventually include grease produced in homes and may someday power all city vehicles, with the locally produced biodiesel. The city has been testing the free grease pickup program since July and now services 55 restaurants, four hotels and one high school.

MARCELLUS SHALE

After a 5-year hiatus of drilling for gas in Pennsylvania state forests, companies are beginning to write leases once again. Estimates of gas vary between about 150 and 550

trillion cubic feet (TFC). The US consumes 30 TCF of gas annually.

Although some landowners in NE Pennsylvania welcome the unexpected income of gas leases on their land, others are concerned about environmental and health hazards, such as VOC and hydrocarbon air pollution and surface and ground water pollution by hazardous chemicals. Additionally, the well pads are huge and building them will destroy the integrity of wild and scenic areas.

The Marcellus shale formation continues up into New York, especially in the Chenango Valley area. So the potential for infighting between those who want drilling and those who don't will be quite close to home.

A highly technical Powerpoint presentation is on our website. We can continue to add information as it is emailed to us.

DAM LEAKS

By now you all turn off the light when you leave a room, right? Time to seal up the other energy leaks. Start damming up the leaks in your home energy devices! All those cell phones, DVD players, computers, TV's, microwave ovens and electric stoves leak. You can identify most of them by the eerie lights that stay on all night.

It may not seem like much, but an estimated 5% or more of the energy used in this country goes to "standby." As more devices become "must haves" the figure will rise.

Progress is underway to make devices that leak less, but turning off these energy vampires does not do the job. Power outlets in New Zealand have handy on/off switches,

and Kiwis are encouraged to keep their switches in the off position. We're hoping that trend will migrate to the States, but until then, try a smart strip, which can sense when electronics are idle and cut off the power flow to them. Search on line for "smart power strips."

Until yours arrives the only way to make the devices stop leaking is to unplug them. Or connect the power thieves to a power strip that is controlled by a wall switch to really turn them off. Then they will truly sleep while you do.

Your action will save you money, eliminate tons of CO₂ emissions, and reduce our national energy use.

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Tree Huggers,

Although I had decreased my lawn (a euphemism for a mowed patch of whatever grows) there were still small patches, front and back. The decision to go natural was made this spring by a nesting pair of Cardinals. Their low nest in an evergreen made even my tiny electric mower off limits. They now allow me to walk about without too much panic but they are my best excuse to have an eclectic prairie as the proper addition to my hedgerow, which replaced my privet hedge two years ago.

Besides, I think the mower battery is dead.

So much for my yard, now for the bottled water thing: Some people are concerned about re-filling old bottles with tap water. Here are the recommendations I have found:

Reliable source #1: OK to reuse #1 bottles, never #3 or #7.

Reliable Source #2: Reliable Source #1 is an Urban Legend. All plastic bottles are safe.

So want to be sure? Use refillable glass, aluminum or stainless steel and hold your breath for the next "reliable source."

But, remember bottled water is an environmental nightmare so please take the bottled water pledge: "I opt for public tap water over bottled water and support the effort of local officials who prioritize strong public water systems over bottled water profits."

This is the Chinese Year of the Frog, so learn all you can about the plight of amphibians. <http://news.mongabay.com/2007/1231-frogs.html>

Thanks for all you do from the trees, the critters, and me.

MarthaLoew

SUMMER EVENTS

Sierra Club Indoor and Outdoor events are **all educational or service programs** that encourage us to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet. They are always FREE & OPEN TO EVERYBODY.

ExCom meetings — Sierra members only — on second Wednesdays at 7:00 PM. Locations vary. Call 492-4745. Come and bring your ideas.

INDOORS

Indoor programs are held the **last** Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM, at University United Methodist Church (UUMC), 1085 E. Genesee St. Park and enter on University Ave. Info: 492-4745.

LOCAL CLIMATE CHANGE — JUNE 25

Globally, the climate is changing, and it's doing so faster than many had expected. Dave Eichorn, WSYR NewChannel 9 Chief Meteorologist, will explain how this is happening both on a global scale and on a local level, and why the evidence is so strong that human influence is accelerating the rate of climate change. You may be surprised to learn how the weather thousands of miles away may already be creating extremes in our weather in Central New York.

OUTDOORS

Outdoor programs are usually on **Sundays at 2 PM** at various interesting locations. Info and cancellations: 492-4745.

CORPORATE CHALLENGE — JUNE 24

The Syracuse Chargers & JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge Race at Onondaga Lake Park raises money for local not-for-profit organizations. Sierra-Iroquois

participates in the event in order to:

- Perform a community service;
- Meet the goal of 100% recycling ;
- Raise awareness of Sierra Club.

But we need your help! Even if you can spare only an hour, we'll be happy to put you to work. You'll receive an official race T-shirt and a brown bag supper. **Contact Lisa Daly by June 21** at 428-1384 or email: ldaly@yahoo.com.

Early volunteers will receive parking passes. If we run out, there will be parking for shuttle buses that run from the Solar St. lots on the south side of Hiawatha Blvd. They'll run from 4:30PM to 6:00PM, and then return from 7:30 to about 9:15.

Get directions to the recycling area at the volunteer table.

BIKE RIDE TO REGIONAL MARKET

— AUGUST 9

Have fun and help prevent global warming! Cycle instead of driving and buy locally grown produce at the Regional Market. Bicyclists meet at Thornden Park swimming pool. If you drive to Thornden, park on local roads. Helmets required. Bring a bicycle bag for your veggies. For other options or to meet us at the Market, contact Adina: 428-1905, pepperballmeow@yahoo.com.

DID YOU MISS THESE EVENTS?

CHINA TRAVELOGUE

Imagine the USA with One Billion more people. Would we still enjoy our high standard of living? Would we still be a democracy? Would we have enough food and fuel? Would our air and water be as clean as it is?

Now imagine China. We usually count the population of China as "over a billion." Well, that "over" amount equals USA. It's

an apt comparison, because USA and China have about the same amount of land, plus mountains, deserts and coastlines. So before complaining about China's environmental problems, ask if we would be any different with a billion more people.

Chris Cirimo said — and showed a bounty of slides as proof — that China's biggest problem is population growth and the biggest environmental problem is air pollution. By limiting families to one child each, China has taken the boldest move among nations toward population control. Hopefully, we can be optimistic and expect to see bold moves to improve air quality.

China's education system also evokes optimism. Gail Tooker's slides of a second grade class showed youngsters working in groups on a class assignment. No long lectures and perfectly attentive drones, but a tumult of inquisitive kids, typical of what we might see here in the best schools.

FORUM: COALSWARM

The good news is that energy generation companies are abandoning coal and exploring renewable alternatives. The bad news is that we're not there yet. Coal plants produce about 50% of our electricity in USA and about 80% of our CO₂.

But, according to Ted Nace, about 60 proposed coal plants have been taken off the table since early 2007! The major players are moving toward exciting technologies that make alternatives more cost effective, including inflatable plastic solar concentrators that may reduce the cost of solar electricity to about 5 cents per KW. The flush of interest is exhilarating! Environment OR jobs is no longer a valid argument: sustainable energy could provide plenty of jobs AND improve the environment.



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