

Cooking with the Sun

You've probably heard of solar ovens – simple contraptions that use a combination of reflectors and the greenhouse effect to gather heat from the sun and cook food. Dozens of plans for cookers of different shapes can be found online¹, and many manufactured models are also available for purchase. But how well do they work, especially in Michigan? What kinds of things can you cook in them? And how well do they fit into a 9-5 lifestyle?

I began my experimentation, as many people do, by building a simple “box oven” from plans I found on the Internet². I know some folks have great success with box ovens, but I was not one of them. The main problem I had was getting the sun into the oven. My reflectors never stayed put, and, if I tilted the box to get a better angle, the pan of food also tilted and sloshed.

The commercial Sport Solar Cooker³ addresses these issues. After much deliberation, and berating myself for not “doing it myself” from recycled materials, I ordered one. When it finally arrived – they are backordered due to incredibly high demand – I knew I'd made the right decision. The oven is a masterpiece of simple, effective engineering – and largely made out of recycled plastic!

A key feature of the oven is its prismatic shape. Its cross-section is a 30°-60°-90° triangle. By laying it on the broad face, the clear window is at a 30° angle to the sun. More importantly for people at our latitude, if you lay the oven on the narrower face, the window is at a 60° angle to the sun, which works much better for collecting the solar rays when the sun is low in the sky. Sun angle is actually a much bigger factor in solar cooking success than outdoor temperature.

My first trial dish in the oven was roasted potatoes. I put the oven in the sun on the “winter angle” setting, as it was the first week of September. I went into the house to prep the potatoes, and when I came out, it had preheated to 150°. I put in an 8"x8" baking dish of potatoes (covered with an identical pan for a lid) and left it alone for 2 hours. When I came back, the thermometer read 275° and the potatoes were done – and oh, my, were they tasty!

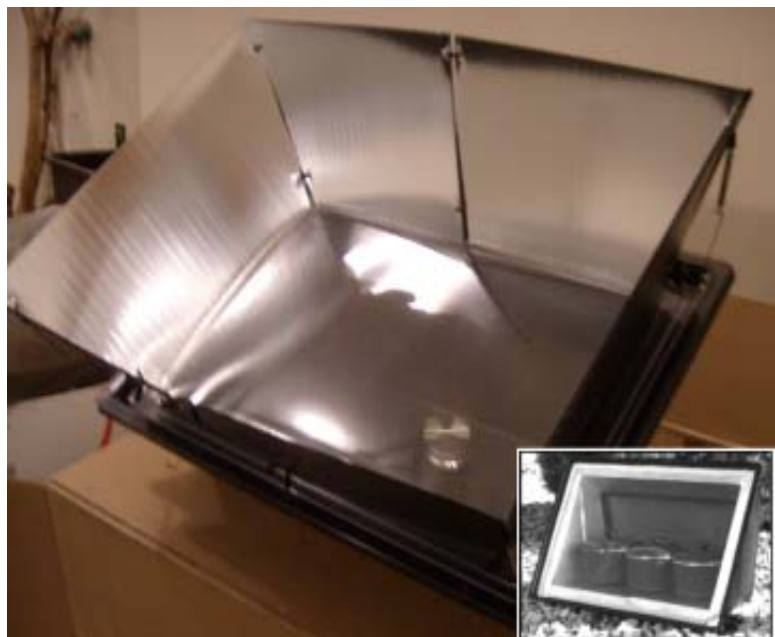
From my experiments, I've learned a few crucial things:

- ◆ It really does work better to use the “winter” angle at this latitude this time of year.
- ◆ The shadows move *fast* between 5:30 pm and sunset!

continued page 2



By Emily Springfield



Solar Cooking continued from pg 1

- ◆ Beans and rice – what I think of as quint-essential solar cooker food – are actually some of the most difficult foods to cook.

So what do I cook in my solar oven? Roasting root vegetables is a perfect solar meal, and we're just getting into prime root vegetable season. Pick up some carrots, beets, potatoes, parsnips, and onions at the market, drizzle with olive oil, salt, and rosemary, and top with a sausage or two, and you've got dinner. Stews and such are good options, too. In fact, any slow cooker recipe is a good candidate for solar oven cooking. You

could theoretically set everything up before you leave for work in the morning and come home to a hot dinner – though I don't think I'd do this with meat dishes. I don't trust that the food would stay above 140° until I got home, especially when it's nearly dark when I return from work. And what about neighborhood dogs? So for the moment, I use the oven when I'm home to keep an eye on it. It's great on days I'm working from home!

(Footnotes)

¹ <http://solarcooking.org/plans/>

² <http://solarcooking.org/plans/easyid.htm>

³ <http://www.solarovens.org/buy.html>

Thank you!

Thank you to the many volunteers who have helped with recent newsletters. These people have written stories, submitted photos, shared recipes, edited, designed, proofed, and printed labels. Many of these volunteers have folded and stapled - by hand! - the very newsletters you are reading right now, at our quarterly "fold-and-staple" parties. (We bring the food, you just bring yourself!) Thanks to the good work of these volunteers, your local Sierra Club's costs are kept very low, and more of your donation is used directly for local environmental conservation. Join us in extending our thanks to all the volunteers.

*John Alfaro
Lorna Brown
Eugenia Carpenter
Jennifer Fike
Elizabeth Flahie
Karen Flahie
Betsy Foote
John Fritz
Bruce Graves
Ruth Graves
Julie Griess
Kelly Grocoff
Matt Grocoff
Suzie Heiney
Vera Hernandez
Rich Kato
Dianne Kimball
Cindy Leet
Barry Lonik
Ginny Maturen*

*Rita Mitchell
Jan Neukom
Kent Newman
Dorothy Nordness
Gwen Nystuen
John Nystuen
Barbara Powell
Alan Richardson
Mary Roth
David Schafbuch
Jay Schlegel
Nancy Shiffler
Patti Smith
Emily Springfield
Ed Steinman
Bob Treemore
Kim Waldo
Mary Waldo
Jack Woodward*

Thank you! If we've missed or misspelled your name, just drop us a line - hvgnews@yahoo.com - and we'll fix it in the next issue.

We need your help! The newsletter runs on 100% volunteer power. If you have ideas to make it even better, or if you can lend a hand at one of our quarterly "fold-and-staple" parties, please get in touch today: 734-377-8248 (Suzie Heiney) or hvgnews@yahoo.com. Thank you!

The Huron Valley Group Newsletter is published 4 times a year by Huron Valley Group, Michigan Chapter, Sierra Club, 621 Fifth Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Michigan's Valuable Treasure: Water

By Elizabeth Flahie



Elizabeth Flahie is a student at Eastern Michigan University. This summer she studied in Mexico for 6 weeks, and one of the first things she did when she returned home to Michigan was to drink water directly from the tap.

I wake up startled. Out of control, my body is shaking and I feel weak. I don't remember what I was dreaming about, but the feeling it leaves me with assures me that whatever happened was terrible, and it is better that I do not remember. All I can think of is a cool drink of water to wash away the memory and the overwhelming parched feeling of my tongue and throat. Kicking off the tangled mess of my sheets, I practically fall out of bed in an attempt to run across the hall to the bathroom and the nearest source of water. Still in a daze, I plunge my face into the basin of the sink and turn on the cold water. The first drop that falls from the sink clears the fog from my brain and I immediately close my mouth so as not to allow even a drop of the seemingly refreshing water to pass into my mouth. I splash my face a couple of times, but this does not alleviate the feeling of cotton balls in my dry mouth. Barefoot, through the dark, I navigate the ill-lit staircase downstairs to the kitchen. I still have trouble operating the contraption holding the five gallon water cooler to get a glass of drinkable water. Finally, procuring the glass of precious water, I drink deeply, gulping, and at the same time inhaling the wonderful smell of fresh, cool, potable water.

Nightmares can happen anywhere in the world and, in my case, even far from home in Mexico. I spent six weeks living in Querétaro, Mexico, as part of a study abroad program for my Spanish degree. I went with a group of 20 other students and, by the end of our 42-day stay in Mexico, I had seen every single one of them become terribly sick from having ingested the tap water from one source or another. They couldn't eat for three days and barely could crawl out of bed. By the fourth day, they were so weak they could only attempt to eat some crackers and broth. The most frightening aspect of this nightmare is that water was the culprit. The truly amazing fact is that even the locals do not drink the tap water, eat salads, or have ice cubes at restaurants. Natives, too, get ill.

The importance of potable water is not emphasized in our culture here in the United States because it is so easily accessible. To live without being able to consume certain foods or have ice in a beverage is something that many Americans just don't understand. Having to carry a four-pound water bottle as I walked to school everyday, along with all my other books, is a hassle but undeniably a necessity. Water is heavy. Water is expensive. Water is

limited. What can we do to ensure the future of safe water sources on our planet? I saw what can happen. I lived it. I don't want to make it a reality here too. Where to go from here?

Bottled water isn't the answer. It takes too many resources to provide those plastic bottles of water at the convenience store. Worldwide, it is estimated that 2.7 millions tons of plastic are used every year, and only less than 20% recycled. It actually takes 3 liters of water to make 1 liter of bottled water. And that's not to mention transportation costs—remember that a gallon of water weighs about 8 pounds. Each year 38 billion bottles use 912 million gallons of oil and then go into landfills. Can our world sustain this misuse of our quickly diminishing supply of oil? Seems silly, considering that 40% of bottled water is nothing fancy—just filtered tap water!

We can start by getting filters for our home and using a stainless steel or nalgene bottle. Avoid those hard plastic bottles because they generally are made with polycarbonates. There is evidence according to the FDA that the chemical bisphenol-A, or BPA, found in polycarbonate containers is leaching into the liquids in those containers. According to a study just published by the Journal of the American Medical Association, BPA can have negative affects on health. In the study, it was found that those with a higher exposure to BPA were more likely to report heart disease and diabetes. Here is the simple way to avoid all the problems and reduce waste at the same time—just use BPA-free containers for filtered water from your tap!

Protecting our sources of potable water is the long-term answer. Amazingly, it can take 600 years for a molecule of water to go through the whole water cycle, from groundwater to rain to ground water again and all points in between. If we pollute the groundwater, if we use up the groundwater, it impacts the next 20 generations!

The need is now crucial to remain vigilant and pass legislation to protect our sources of potable water. Sierra Club has worked hard to keep Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) from getting too much out of control. It is an ongoing effort. The club also worked with other allied groups to pass legislation in Michigan that protects our waters from withdrawals. The Great Lakes Compact is an agreement with the eight Great Lakes states and Canada which works to establish standards for water diversions from these states.

Water. I'd never thought that I would have to think about it so much. But my nightmare in Mexico was much more than a bad dream. It was an awakening.

Washtenaw Inner City Outings Celebrates Ten



By Vera Hernandez

ICO Photos by
John Alfaro

How quickly time flies! It is difficult to believe that 2008 marks ten years that Washtenaw Inner City Outings has been out there working with at-risk youth in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. We thank the original organizers of the WICO program for their effort and dedication in getting this program up and running and still growing and going strong in 2008. Big thanks to – Megan, Peter, Gwen, Alan, Laura, Ralph & Barbara, Mohammed, Susan, Matt, and many more whom I am forgetting at the moment, for all of your hard work over the years.

2008 has been an interesting year for WICO. As of October 1, we successfully planned and executed thirteen outings serving over 100 youth and providing 690 youth hours in the great Michigan outdoors. Our youth from Hikone and Green Baxter enjoyed skiing, ice skating, hiking, snow-shoeing, sleigh rides, hayrides, sledding, garlic mustard pulling, canoeing, fishing, horseback riding, and a visit to the nature center and farm center at Kensington Metropark.



Elijah Stewart, age 9, tries donkey riding at Highwater Corral in Pinckney Recreation Area in September.

We were very pleased to be able to sponsor a family of four at the annual Sierra Club – Michigan Chapter retreat. They sent me a special thank you note for giving them the opportunity to enjoy a wonderful weekend away. Something that we may take for granted is a rare occurrence for families living in public housing. After the retreat, I stopped by to pick up ICO gear and they showed me hundreds of pictures they had taken to record their wonderful memories of Lake Michigan and the wonderful friends they met at the retreat and, of course, those breathtaking sunsets.

We are thrilled to welcome new outing leader Tracy Raymond to our pool of certified outing leaders. Tracy led her first outing on July 19: a canoe trip on the Huron River, just three short days before her wedding! There is a dedicated leader! Congrats to Tracy and husband Brian.

As we head into our eleventh year - 2009, I am looking forward to more adventures with our great group of volunteers, leaders, youth, parents, and agency staff. All these folks make it happen. Our plans for 2009 include more hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, ice skating, maple syrup making, park cleanup, a cabin overnight trip (perhaps in a yurt!), canoeing, fishing, swimming, bike riding, apple picking, a farm visit, and a return visit to the chapter retreat.

Washtenaw Inner City Outings is a worthwhile program. If you agree, we would love to hear from you. Better yet, we welcome you to get involved in the program. We are



Nicole Martinez, age 13, plays on the Lake Michigan beach at the 2008 Sierra Club Michigan Chapter retreat

Years!

always in need of dedicated volunteers willing to share their knowledge and love of the outdoors with children who otherwise would not have the opportunity to experience the natural world. If you can spare a few hours a month or more, please contact us. We need you! There are a variety of activities needing your expertise – from fund raising, organizing and communicating with volunteers, and managing our equipment, to writing articles for The Lookout.

The Washtenaw Inner City Outings program has a critical need for certified leaders to keep the program strong. We would love to expand our program to offer outings with youth at Bryant Community Center and, until we have more certified leaders, this is not a possibility. Please contact us for details on becoming a certified leader. Some of the requirements include assisting on two outings, having a criminal background check, completing First Aid training, being a Sierra Club member, and providing 3 character references. It is easier than you think!

To learn more about the program, please contact us at washtenawico@yahoo.com or visit our website at: www.ico.sierraclub.org/washtenaw . Hope to see you on an outing soon!



Outing leader Michelle Nawal canoeing on the Huron River with ICO volunteer and Hikone youth participant in July.

How you can help: Consider joining the fun of sharing an outdoor experience with local children. Contact washtenawico@yahoo.com or Vera Hernandez at 734-665-8118.



Outing leaders Michelle Nawal & Matt Vernier with the Gomez family at the 2008 Sierra Club Michigan Chapter retreat in August

Clean Car Update

By Alan Richardson

Here is the running total of the economic and environmental consequences of my choice to purchase and drive a Honda Civic GX fueled by natural gas.

Period covered: 18 October 2000 (purchase date) to 2 October 2008

Distance driven: 116,163 miles
 Fuel purchased: 3,541 gallons gasoline equivalent (GGE)
 Fuel economy: 32.8 miles/GGE
 Fuel cost of CNG used: \$4,426
 Average fuel cost: \$1.25 per GGE
 Cost economy: 26.3 miles per dollar
 Savings over gasoline: \$2,788
 Payback mileage*: 76,440
 Payback date*: 1May 2006 (payback complete!)

* Payback of \$4,500 purchase premium for natural gas fuel option reduced by \$2,000 Clean Cities cash rebate and \$2,000 federal income deduction at 28% marginal tax rate in effect at time of purchase.

Estimated exhaust emissions of different passenger vehicles driven 113,539 miles

(pounds)	Average car	California LEV** Civic GX	
Hydrocarbons	716	19.2	0.77
Carbon monoxide	5,348	870	40.9
Oxides of nitrogen	356	51.2	5.12
Total (pounds)	6,420	940.4	45.79

** Standard for 'Low Emission Vehicle' passenger car required by California starting in 2001





People's Food Co-op
Café Verde

Big enough to meet your needs...
Small enough to meet your neighbors!

*Community-owned and
environmentally conscious since 1971!*

(734) 994-9174 • 216 N. Fourth Ave. • Ann Arbor • www.peoplesfood.coop

**For 100 Years,
Your
Downtown Source
for Bird Feed.**

**DOWNTOWN
HOME & GARDEN**

210 S. Ashley Ann Arbor, Mi 734-662-8122



Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar

Participants in Sierra Club outings will be asked to sign a liability waiver. If you wish to read the waiver before coming to an outing please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630. When carpooling is used to facilitate logistics for an outing, participants assume the risks associated with this travel, as well. Carpooling, ridesharing and the like are strictly a private arrangement among participants. Park fees may apply. **For up to date information, visit our website at <http://www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron.org>**

IMPORTANT! All hikes carpool from Ann Arbor City Hall parking lot (N. 5th Ave. at E. Huron) unless otherwise stated.

Like nature? You could become a volunteer hike leader! The Sierra Club Huron Valley Group is accepting new volunteer outings leaders to lead short day hikes in and around Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti. We will reimburse you for American Red Cross basic first aid training. You will first go on the outing that you choose, and then lead that outing on a later date - or propose your own ideas! Great for your résumé, good company, exercise, and fun! Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for information on how to get started.

Tuesday November 18, 2008. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Journey Through the Arctic: An Odyssey Through an Imperiled Landscape** with Chad Kister, coordinator, Arctic Refuge Defense Campaign. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

Monday November 24, 2008. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, typically 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

Wednesday December 3, 2008. Executive Committee Meeting, typically first Wednesday of each month, 7:15 pm. Contact Doug Cowherd at doug.cowherd@michigan.sierraclub.org for location.

Tuesday December 9, 2008. Sierra Club Book Club. 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **The Snoring Bird**, by Bernd Heinrich - an autobiographical journey by one of our favorite nature writers. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

Sunday December 14, 2008. Inner City Outings. 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome. For meeting location and more details, please visit ICO's events page or contact Vera at 734-665-8118.

Tuesday December 16, 2008. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Great Adventure Trips Around the Globe.** Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

Monday December 22, 2008. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, typically 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

January 23, 24, 25, 2009. MacMullen Ski Weekend Trip. Located near the northern shores of beautiful Higgins Lake, near Roscommon, you'll enjoy good food and good company on this ski trip. Ski the well-maintained trails at your own pace, Saturday and Sunday. Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for details and to register.

More 2009 events will be posted soon – please check our website for the latest details: www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron.



By Jay Schlegel

Opinion: Too Many Questions?

"Why do we never get an answer
When we're knocking at the door
With a thousand million questions
About hate and death and war."
—"Question," The Moody Blues

You think you've got answers? Well, I've got questions!

What if our elections were not a choice among "the lesser of two evils"?

What if everyone actually voted?

What if everyone who voted knew as much about the candidates and the issues
as they do about their favorite sports-team/TV-show/celebrity?

What if it were easy for everyone to vote?

What if all elections were publicly financed?

What if corporations were prohibited from giving campaign contributions?

What if our elected officials had the public's best interests in mind whenever
they made a decision?

What if we asked meaningful questions at our campaign debates?

What if everyone waited to hear answers to meaningful questions before
deciding whom to vote for?

What if failing to follow through on campaign promises was no longer just
a joke for comedians but instead grounds for dismissal?

What if we spent \$700 billion on developing renewable energy, or creating
jobs in a sustainable economy, or improving our education system, or
improving our health care system, or improving our agricultural system, or ... ?

What if we had spent as much money on developing renewable energy as
we have spent so far on the war in Iraq?

What if we have already passed the point of peak
oil production?

What if there is no such thing as "clean coal"
and "safe/clean nuclear energy"?

What if everyone reduced, reused, AND recycled?

What if it were easy for everyone
to reduce, reuse, and recycle?

What if "politics as usual" were no longer acceptable?

What if we held our elected leaders accountable?

What if we held ourselves accountable?


What if, indeed.



Other Local Events

Saturday December 6, 6:00-8:00 pm - Stewardship Network Year End Party! Join us in celebrating local successes through 2008! The Huron Arbor Cluster of the Stewardship Network includes Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, The City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation, Washtenaw Land Trust, University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum, Michigan State Parks, and many private landowners and individuals. **Location:** Matthaei Botanical Gardens. To register and for more information: www.stewardshipnetwork.org or 734-996-3190.

January 23 & 24, 2009 - Stewardship Network Conference: The Science, Practice & Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems. Last year we gathered nearly 400 land managers, researchers, volunteers, private contractors, ecologists, homeowners, restorationists, students, outdoor enthusiasts, nonprofit staff and volunteers, and nature lovers of all kinds for the first Science, Practice, & Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems conference. This year is shaping up to be even better! Location: Kellogg Center, East Lansing, Michigan. To register and for more information: www.stewardshipnetwork.org or 734-996-3190.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Sierra Club 2009 Calendars



Order Form

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Engagement Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$13	_____	_____
Wilderness Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12	_____	_____
Total			_____

Buy from us and support local conservation!
 Order and pick up your calendars at Sierra Club Huron Valley Group monthly public programs (Nov. 18 & Dec. 16) or contact Jay Schlegel to make an order and arrange an alternate pick-up time: jayhschlegel@comcast.net or 734-477-5715

Cash or check only please. Payment is due at pick-up.
Thank you!

Living Simply: Homemade Deliciousness of the Season



By Patti Smith

Gobble, gobble! It's almost that time of year again—Thanksgiving! That magical time when you get up early to watch the parade, when you watch the Lions blow it on national TV, and when you stuff yourself silly. Here are some ideas for your fall feast!

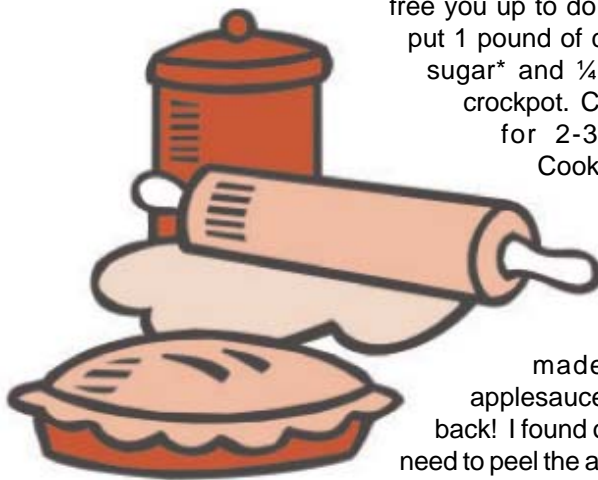
Last year, I used a locally purchased turkey and it made all the difference. The turkey didn't have a little thing pop out of it when it was done, but since I know how to use an oven timer, it all turned out very well. I also used local potatoes for mashed potatoes. I did try to get creative, and used the following recipes for my family! (Ingredients with an * were produced in Michigan).

Old-Fashioned Bread Stuffing

Melt 2T of butter* and sauté 1 ½ cups of onion* and 1 ½ cups of celery* for about five minutes. Remove from heat. Crumble ½ round loaf of white bread* and ½ loaf of herb bread and place in a bowl. Add ½ cup chopped fresh parsley, 1-2 t of dried marjoram, 1 t of dried thyme, ½ t salt, ¼ t pepper plus the onion and celery mixture. Add one stick of melted butter and blend. Add 1 beaten egg* and beat. Add chicken broth as needed to moisten the stuffing. Makes enough stuffing for a 12-pound turkey. (Source: Great Harvest Bread Company)

Cranberry sauce

Once I made this, I knew I could never go back to the cranberry sauce from the can (although the way it slithered out always amused me). This recipe is extremely simple and will free you up to do other things. Simply put 1 pound of cranberries, 2 cups of sugar* and ¼ cup of water into a crockpot. Cover and cook on high for 2-3 hours. (Source: Cooks.com)



Homemade applesauce

Again, once I made homemade applesauce, there was no going back! I found out that you don't even need to peel the apples, which was what was keeping me from trying the recipe. Basically, you need to buy some local apples*

and cut them up, removing the core and seeds. Put them in a pot and turn on the stove. Over medium heat, stir the apples until they become soft. Add sugar if you want to, but you really don't need to. Add cinnamon to taste. Put mixture into a food mill and crank it through. The skins will be removed, leaving you with soft, tasty applesauce!

Maple-glazed carrots

(Note: I messed these up last year. I still don't know how. If someone makes this recipe and it turns out right, please let me know!)

Combine 4 1/2 cups water, carrots*, 4 T butter*, sugar*, and coarse salt in heavy large pot. Bring to boil, then reduce heat. Cover and simmer until carrots are just tender when pierced with knife, about 10 minutes. Drain. Melt remaining 6 tablespoons butter in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add maple syrup* and brown sugar and stir until sugar dissolves. Add carrots and cook until heated through, about 5 minutes. If desired, season with salt and pepper. (Source: Epicurious.com)

Pumpkin cheesecake with gingersnap crust

Cut a pumpkin* in half and clean out the seeds and strings. Cover a cookie sheet with foil. Butter the pumpkin's cut edges with butter* and place on the sheet, cut sides down. Cook about one hour. Puree.

Next, in a blender, combine 16 oz (two packages) of cream cheese, ½ cup of the pumpkin puree, ½ cup sugar*, ½ t vanilla, ½ t cinnamon, 1/8 t nutmeg and a dash of cloves. Mix with the blender until well blended. Add two eggs* and mix until the eggs are blended in. Pour into the crust and baked at 350 for 35-45 minutes. Refrigerate at least 3 hours.

Gingersnap crust

Mix 1 ½ cup gingersnap cookie crumbs, 3 T sugar*, ½ t ginger, 6 T melted butter*. Press into a greased 9" pie pan. Bake at 350 for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and cool before filling. (Source: Unknown)

Enjoy—and don't forget to participate in "Buy Nothing Day" the day after Thanksgiving! Happy eating!!!!

Off the Beaten Path: Taking the Long View

Genetically speaking, there's essentially no difference between us bipeds and the creatures that emerged from the jungles of Africa earlier in the Pleistocene. Some argue that our attraction to distant views dates back to that seminal time when our ancestors stood at the edge of the forest and gazed across the savannah with thoughts of diet colas, liposuction, and Dancing with the Stars racing through their minds. Whatever the source, being able to see long distances is pleasing to the eye and good ocular exercise for those who spend way too much time staring at computer screens and other short-distance sights.

In a landscape lacking in dramatic heights and largely covered with tall vegetation, long views are not so easy to come by. Fortunately the Erie-Saginaw interlobate of the Pinckney and Waterloo State Recreation Areas (SRAs) features some of the highest points in our area, several of which provide such views. Here are some high spots, and another special place, where one can see for miles and miles and miles.

1. Crooked Lake overlook. This spot is on the Crooked Lake Trail, and also part of the Potawatomi Trail, in the Pinckney SRA. The best hiking or skiing access is at the Silver Lake parking area. Enter from Dexter Townhall Road at the sign for the SRA and park near Silver Lake. Take the marked trail along the water. At the first sign post, continue ahead (westerly) through the woods. The trail will turn south, cross Silver Hill Road, turn west again and cross the access road to a campground on Crooked Lake. Continue on and climb the hill; there's a bench at the top. The hillside has grown up, mostly in invasive autumn olive, so the view isn't as dramatic as it used to be but still impressive. Hike back or do the rest of the Crooked Lake trail loop.

2. Pond Lily overlook. Pond Lily is a large but very shallow water body, visible from Harvey Road, that annually attracts large numbers of waterfowl. From Ann Arbor take I-94 west to the Clear Lake Road exit. Go north about two miles and turn right onto Green Road. Take Green Road east; it will make a southerly dip and then head east again. At this latter spot there is a trail intersection. Park there and follow the trail southwesterly a short distance to the overlook. It's possible to do a nice loop through hilly terrain through mature

woods.

3. Sackrider Hill. From Ann Arbor take I-94 west to the Mt. Hope Road exit. Go north about three-quarters of a mile. Park on the west side of the road, opposite where Katz Road runs into Mt. Hope. The Waterloo-Pinckney Trail (WPT) crosses Mt. Hope just north of the parking spot. Head west on the trail; it begins climbing almost immediately and steeply. Sackrider has 180° views south across rolling hills and farmland. The top is listed at 1,128' above sea level, perhaps the highest spot in our area.

4. Cassidy Road "prairie." This spot can be accessed from several places including parking along Cassidy Road past the state prison, where the WPT crosses it, or from the Green Lake campground. From the former, hike the trail north from the road as it follows a large wetland. After a short time, look for an unmarked secondary trail on the left that continues to follow the wetland. It runs through some scrubby areas and young woods, crosses the wetland outlet over a culvert and enters a huge grassy area. The trail follows the middle of the fields and eventually links up with other unmarked secondary trails, but several of the area's highest points can be seen from the middle of it.

Southern Michigan has a very impressive fall color display and these are all great spots to see it. There are fewer maples here and more hickories than in the northern lower or U.P., but one can get a fall color fix a lot closer to home.



By Bob Treemore





Shop to Stop Sprawl!

Living creatures need space to live. Over the past decade, Shopping for the Earth has helped generate \$110 million to preserve natural areas and farmland.

You can help us do more by buying EarthCash vouchers for the stores where you already shop.

"A bonus for nature for every grocery purchase I make—even chocolate!"
--Rita Mitchell

For every \$20 of vouchers, you get \$20 in store credit and earn \$1 for the local Sierra Club.

Complete details are available at
<http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/sfte.htm>

Help preserve nature at no cost to you!

Shopping for the Earth Order Form

Indicate the number of EarthCash vouchers you want for each store and available dollar amount below. Enclose your check payable to "**Sierra Club-Huron Valley Group**." Total order (\$500 maximum): \$ _____.

	\$5	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$50	\$100
Ann Arbor People's Food Co-op ¹						
Arbor Brewing Company						
Arbor Farms						
Borders Books & Music ¹						
Busch's ² (reloadable)						
Hiller's Markets ² (reloadable)						
Kroger ² (reloadable)						
Whole Foods ¹ (and affiliated stores)						
Meijer	A rebate program, no vouchers (neither paper nor cards). Please see http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/SFTE_Meijer.pdf or call Betsy at 734-997-9348.					

¹ non-reloadable card - Consider buying several cards.

² reloadable card - The Sierra Club receives a contribution when you reload card, so only one needed per person.

Arbor Farms uses paper vouchers rather than electronic cards.

- check here to receive local Sierra Club e-mail updates
 if not a Sierra Club member, check here to receive local Sierra Club newsletter

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Mail to:
 Betsy Noren
 (betsynoren@gmail.com)
 1210 Clague St.
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103
 (Your data will not be shared)



**Huron
Valley
Group
Directory**

www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/

- Chair
Doug Cowherd* 662-5205
- Vice-chair
Nancy Shiffler* 971-1157
- Treasurer
Ken Morley 677-7791
- Secretary
Joel Dalton* 945-8132
- Chapter Representative
Nancy Shiffler* 971-1157
- Conservation Chair
Dorothy Nordness 668-6306
- Inner City Outings Chair
Vera Hernandez 665-8118
- Outings Chair
Kathy Guerreso 677-0823
- Inner City Outings Liaison
- Membership Chair
Ed Steinman* 665-0248
- Political Chair
- Publicity
Joel Dalton* 945-8132
- Acting Program Chair
Doug Cowherd* 662-5205
- Shopping for the Earth
Betsy Noren 997-9348
- Fund Raising Chair
Jay Schlegel* 477-5715
- Web Designer
Suzie Heiney 377-8248
- Newsletter Team
Suzie Heiney, Editor 377-8248
Mary Roth
Kevin Bell
Kim Waldo 971-1941
Jay Schlegel* 477-5715
Patti Smith 649-4647
Gwen Nystuen 665-7632
Effie Hanchett
Ed Steinman* 665-0248
- Executive Committee
Mike Anglin*
Rita Mitchell* 665-0248

* = HVG Excom Member

How to Get HVG reminders via email!

At each HVG general meeting, there is an email sign up list. For those who missed it, or haven't joined us at a meeting, here's how you can get our general meeting reminders.

If you would like to receive email notices of each month's Huron Valley Group general meeting and occasional notices about other local Sierra Club activities send an email to Doug Cowherd at dmcowherd3@comcast.net with your name and "HVG email list" in the body of the message.

Are You A New Member?

Welcome to the Huron Valley Group of the Sierra Club. When you join the Sierra Club you are automatically a member of a local group, as well as a state chapter and the national organization. Membership entitles you to this newsletter as well as all editions of the state and national member publications. Check this page for our Directory with contacts on conservation, outings, political action, and the Inner City Outings program. Check the calendar in the middle of this issue for announcements of Monthly Public Program topics and our calendar of activities. We will be glad to see you at our next meeting or answer any questions if you care to call. Please take advantage of your membership as an opportunity to enjoy, preserve and protect our natural environment!

Membership

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ ZIP _____
email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

Mastercard Visa Exp Date ____/____

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

F94Q **W2-103**-1  **SIERRA CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO, 80322-2968



Articles are for informational purposes only. No endorsement of particular positions, groups, or activities is implied.

Candidates and Ballot for the Election of the



Mike Anglin

My first term on the Executive Committee has been very rewarding. I enjoy working with people of all ages when I represent the Sierra Club at such public forums as Earth Day. Most importantly, as a City Council member, I feel lucky to be serving on the Parks' Advisory Committee, the Land Acquisition Committee, and the

Environmental Committee where I can speak to the fundamental values of the Sierra Club and how they apply to very practical decisions here in Ann Arbor.

For example, I played a crucial role in getting funding for Project Grow, and I continue working on getting more trees planted. I'm also concerned with other ongoing issues of concern to all of us like the Greenway, the Allen Creek floodplain, and the Huron watershed. I have been working to protect our parks and have succeeded in getting water made available so that volunteers' new plantings may flourish. Every step towards protecting the environment counts. I am deeply committed to making this region as environmentally friendly as it can be, and hope you'll honor me by electing me to another term on the Executive Committee of the Huron Valley Group.



Joel Dalton

I have enjoyed my first couple of years on the HVG Executive Committee and wish to become even more involved in protecting the Michigan natural places my family and I enjoy. We regularly hike and camp in wilderness areas, canoe the Huron, and run in Ann Arbor green spaces. We also

support a new Ann Arbor Greenway.

My professional experience is rooted in innovation and sustainability, with extensive knowledge of alternative fuels and new vehicle technologies and policies - including biofuels, hybrid electric vehicles and plug-ins.

I believe environmental groups have been unfairly labeled "special interests" by actual special interests, when there can be no more common good than preserving the environment. I believe that we must protect true wilderness not only for conservation reasons but also to remind us of what we have lost and what will remain perpetually at risk.

Many environmental threats used to be a result of

personal and corporate *ignorance*. But today's more urgent threats are a result of *purposeful* actions combined with an overwhelmed public's confusion and disengagement. I believe the Sierra Club has the ethical and political standing to be a leader in re-energizing the environmental debate not just nationally but locally.

Going forward, I hope to help the HVG collaborate more with local organizations to inform and recruit members, motivate volunteerism and actions on parks protection and energy choices, and provoke thoughtful and practical discussions of our local, intertwined sustainability issues – including local food, Great Lakes water, and various development issues.

James D'Amour



I'm asking for your support to serve the Huron Valley Sierra Club's Executive Committee. I've been a general member for a while, but in the last year I've had the chance to get more involved. I currently serve on the Conservation Committee, and participated in Lobby Day in the Michigan Legislature.

Civic Involvement (partial list): City of Ann Arbor: Planning Commission, 2003-2006; Parks Advisory Commission: 2002-2003.

Growth/sprawl issues have been front and center for our community and, during my time on the Planning Commission, I made it a priority to involve ALL citizens in the planning process, be it when they asked for a downtown greenway, or when citizens asked that the city preserve the last open places in the city and beyond. On Parks Commission, I made important recommendations involving land acquisitions. I'm an avid open-water swimmer, and the issues of preserving our water quality and the accompanying land use, be it the Huron River watershed and its adjoining lakes, or the dunes around our great lakes, really hit home for me personally.

As a consultant who works with national associations and local chapters on leadership and membership issues, I will work hard to make the Sierra Club even more attractive to current members, as well as working with the chapter to attract more members. In short, I'll work hard for you! My thanks in advance for your consideration in selecting me to be a part of the Executive Committee team!

Huron Valley Group Executive Committee



Matt Grocoff

My wife Kelly and I are currently greenovating our century-old home on the Old West Side of Ann Arbor. We are using our home as a teaching tool to show others how they can have a huge impact on lowering carbon emissions. Hundreds have stopped by our home to learn how to affordably reduce their water consumption by 80% and energy use by 60%. We firmly believe that saving the planet starts at home, but large-scale change will happen through active community and national organizations. Sierra Club is a reflection of the values we act upon daily. Our chapter can play an exceptionally powerful role in education and environmental activism. The Huron Valley is uniquely suited to be a national model for a progressive movement toward interconnected eco-villages surrounded by wilderness and farmland.



Ed Steinman

I'm running for a third term on the Huron Valley Group board because of the effectiveness of our Sierra Club group. I enjoy working with the other board members and hope to continue to contribute to the efforts of HVG as membership chair and coordinator of the Shopping for the Earth program. Other environmental work: member of Southwings and Lighthawk environmental aviation groups covering CAFOs, mountain-top removal, coal plants, illegal logging in national forests, and other problems.

Ballot for Sierra Club Huron Valley Group Executive Committee 2008

The Huron Valley Group Executive Committee (ExCom) is selected by you. Ballot instructions and anonymity guarantee:

1. Please mark up to four votes on the ballot provided. Only those ballots with a membership number on the attached mailing label are eligible.
2. After marking your ballot, **remove this entire back page from the newsletter.**
3. Fold the bottom third over first to conceal your votes, and fold the top third over to show your mailing label.
4. Return your ballot in a sealed envelope either by hand at the November 18th or December 16th HVG meeting or by mail to: HVG Election, c/o Nancy Shiffler, 2877 Sorrento, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Mailed ballots must be received by December 15, 2008 to be counted.

Sierra Club Huron Valley Group Executive Committee Ballot 2008

Four to be elected to 2-year terms beginning January 2009 - Vote for up to four.
Second column of boxes is for second voter in same household.

Mike Anglin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
James D'Amour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joel Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matt Grocoff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ed Steinman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Huron Valley Group Newsletter
The Sierra Club
621 Fifth Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 215
Ann Arbor, MI

Fall 2008 Inside:

- Cooking with the Sun - page 1
- Michigan's Treasure: Water - page 3
- Calendar of Events - page 7
- HVG Elections - Ballot - pages 14 -15



Do you like to write? Edit? Take photographs?
Make a difference?

Then you may be able to help! The Sierra Club Huron Valley Group is looking for contributors for The Lookout, the quarterly newsletter. Great for your resume, a fun team to work with, and a great way to help spread the word about protecting the environment.

To learn more, call Suzie Heiney at 734-377-8248 or email hvgnews@yahoo.com. We look forward to talking with you!