



EMC News

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

In the last month, several local news items about the environment concerned me.

With the news from the EPA that mercury in children is twice what was suspected, and that one in eight are born with blood concentrations above the EPA safe level, the headline in the paper stated "Threat called minimal in Tompkins County". While we may enjoy electricity produced from as clean a coal powerplant as is technically possible, one only has to look upwind towards Ohio, where powerplants there emit 6,715 pounds of mercury, or 7% of the national total.

Another author claimed that it was "still politically correct to carve a house lot out of a forest or farm fields far out beyond the Town of Ithaca, and needlessly consume 400 gallons a year of gasoline commuting between paradise and the city." He also felt that "all a person really has to do to be an environmentalist is to drive a Subaru and spout the right verbiage at public meeting." As this describes my situation exactly, I would like to point out that an "enlightened lifestyle" begins with the recognition that current practices are unsustainable.

Well over one thousand people have visited my home to learn about Solar power, and the class that my wife and I teach at Greenstar is always overbooked. It is obvious to me that many Tompkins County residents are interested in sustainable lifestyles, more so than almost anywhere else in the country.

As the Sustainable Tompkins program gains momentum in the next few months, maybe our leaders will finally recognize that preserving our attractive local environment should be the priority, as it is our most valuable asset. Our uniquely rich natural environment will attract sustainable businesses, and new residents that share a desire to improve and protect these natural resources. Ithaca is already on the national radar screen as an environmentally friendly place to live.

Submitted by Steve Nicholson

UPCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS AND CONTESTS

◆ Earth Day 2004 will be held from Noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday April 25, at DeWitt Park. The EMC will have a table. All interested in participating in the planning of this celebration, volunteering their time and talents, are encouraged to call Wally Woods, 272-1312.

◆ Third Annual New York State America Recycles Day Poster Contest. Sponsored by NYSDEC Open to all school children, the 12 contest winners will have their artwork displayed in the next calendar. Entries are due by May 28, 2004. Contact Steve Nicholson for details-539-6923.



◆ Earth Day Lobby Day is scheduled for Monday, April 19, 2004 at the Legislative Office Building in Albany. There are speeches from leading government and environment officials, issue briefings and how-to-lobby workshop in the morning. After a noon rally, participants lobby key legislators on important environmental issues. At EDLD 2003, lawmakers heard from activists on issues including: Closing Indian point, Environmental Cleanups, Expanded Bottle Bill, and Siting Cleaner Power Plants.

For more information or to be added to the EDLD mailing list, email: edld@eany.org, or contact Laura DiBetta at 518-462-5526, ext. 221.

Submitted by Steve Nicholson

NEW ONE-STOP FEDERAL GRANTS SEARCH

The federal government has launched a single, comprehensive Web site that contains information about finding and applying for all federal grant programs. www.Grants.gov now has information on more than 800 available grant programs involving all 26 federal grant-making agencies.

Our Next Meeting:
Wednesday, March 10, 2004
Let's start promptly at 7:00!!

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: ENERGY SAVING TIP OF THE MONTH

Your Home's Biggest Power User

The refrigerator is the single biggest power consumer in most households. Refrigerators in this country alone use the equivalent of the output of about 20 large nuclear power plants--nearly 5% of the nation's total electricity consumption. A typical refrigerator made around 1990 uses about over 900 kilowatt hours per year - that's the same amount of energy you would use by leaving a 1,250 watt hairdryer on for a month! And the older your refrigerator is, the less efficient it becomes.

If your present refrigerator is more than 15 years old, you'll save money on your electric bills if you replace it with a newer unit. New models can be as much as 50 percent more energy efficient than older refrigerators. ENERGY STAR® refrigerators incorporate a number of advanced features to save energy while keeping your food fresh. Consider downsizing your appliance if you shop for food more than twice a month, and let your favorite grocery store pay for your electric savings.

If every household in the United States had the most efficient refrigerators available, the electricity savings would eliminate the need for more than 20 large power plants. Remember, each watt not used is equivalent to at least 5 watts less production needed, due to energy losses in generating and transmitting electrical power through the grid.

Submitted by Steve Nicholson