

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER...**

We might start at a given point that ultimately leads us in a direction not even anticipated. This happens in life decisions, in problem solving and as we work on solutions to our everyday needs.

When YREA researched its SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING campaign, it spurred many questions about the sustainability of textiles made from cotton, polyester, wool and bamboo. I have some items of clothing made from hemp and organic cotton, but still produced and transported from China, more than 12,000 kms away.

A natural progression for me when thinking about how we could make clothing locally in the context of peak oil, climate change and local economic stimulation was to consider the possibility of industrial hemp production in York Region. Chris Olivier of Ontario Energy Matrix is already working on a pilot project near London Ontario to use hemp/lime technology as a sustainable, local, carbon neutral building material. Purity Hemp in Peterborough grows hemp for seed, oil and feed for horses.

The myriad uses for hemp include food - seeds, oil, flour; toiletries - soap, shampoo, lotion; textiles - clothing, towels, bedding, canvas; household products - carpet, detergent, paint, toys; industrial products - rope, paper, concrete, insulation, fuel, car parts.

There are some very exciting economic possibilities with huge benefits to York Region in establishing hemp growing and manufacturing here. It will take many partners and some time to make it happen, but discussions have already begun and action will be taken in the coming year to get closer to making this vision a reality. Anyone interested can contact me gloria@yrea.org.

SHOP like the planet's watching also addresses the issues of garbage. By popular demand, we again submit waste-free seasonal shopping list ideas.

STUFFLESS GIFTS

- Vouchers for services - such as lessons for dance, rock climbing, cooking, scuba diving; therapeutic massage, chiropractic, acupuncture, hair styling, auto tune up; weekend getaways; restaurants.
- Consumables - such as grocery vouchers; Ontario wine, cheese & other goodies; handmade soap and candles; phone cards.
- Tickets - to the zoo, plays, concerts, art galleries, museums, movies, playing paintball & sporting events.
- Homemade tickets for swimming, skating, sleepovers, staying up past bedtime.
- Save a tree at Ontario Nature.
- Adopt an animal at the zoo, or through WWF.
- Donate to a worthy organization such as YREA on behalf of recipient - <http://www.yrea.org/>.

There will be much less garbage at the curb eventually and you will be supporting our Ontario economy.

Best Wishes from all of us at YREA,

Gloria Marsh
Gloria Marsh

In this issue	
Message From the Executive Director	1
YREA Appeal & Donor & Volunteer Thanks	2
Social Benefits of Sustainable Urban Development.....	3
Getting Ready for the Holidays ...	4
Transition York Region.....	5
Is There a Hummer in Your Garage?.....	5
Biomimicry - Science Seeking Solutions in Nature	6
ON Update Highlights.....	7
Transforming Neighbourhoods.....	7
Note from Brenda Hogg	8
Refill, Not Landfill	8



GREENWORKS



OUR GOAL IS TO RAISE \$70,000 FOR 2011 - YOUR VITAL SUPPORT IS NEEDED

The campaigns that YREA has undertaken get a lot of exposure and media attention and that is a good thing. However, we also work at less visible levels with regards to community issues. This involves attending many meetings, writing many letters and providing input with regards to policies and plans. Not very glamorous stuff, but important nonetheless.

For a number of years, we have been tackling waste reduction in many sectors – targeting in particular excess packaging at grocery stores; and garbage generated at shopping centre food courts - giving examples of countries such as Belgium, Germany and Iceland that use real dishes in food courts rather than Styrofoam.

You can imagine our delight when we recently heard that the Cadillac Fairview renovation of the Eaton Centre will include reusable dishes and cutlery, instead of Styrofoam and plastic and a pulping machine that will turn food scraps into semi-dry compost in the new food courts. Congratulations Cadillac Fairview!

For 2011, along with our unglamorous activities, and year two of SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING, we are collaborating with, among others, the following organizations and groups:

- Sustainable Urban Development Association (SUDA) - to engage the development industry in dialogue towards a more sustainable housing model in York Region.
- Transition York Region - finding ways to decrease our dependency on oil, our impact on climate change and to develop local economic resilience.
- Seeds for Change – creating community gardens in York Region adjacent schools, places of worship and other open spaces.
- TRCA's Don Watershed Regeneration Council board member – serving as 905 crew.
- BioMinds – connecting nature and science education.

Please consider contributing to the York Region Environmental Alliance with a generous donation. Your financial support is vital to us.



A heartfelt thanks to our latest donors:

Protector – Town of 

Keeper – Lynda Sutherland

Stewards – Spencer Lanthier & Diana Bennett, Gloria Marsh

Friends – Billinda Pita, William Shore

NOTE FROM A READER

I read with interest your article in Greenworks (Fall 2010) titled *Trees and a Collective Age Replacement Strategy*. Thank you for such a thoughtful and excellent piece.

The Planning Act s.1.1(a) and s.51(24h), the Provincial Policy Statements and the site plan control s.41(4)2.e all enable Councils to insist that those trees be preserved and incorporated into the development proposal. It was in the approvals process that the real opportunity was missed, not in the replacement ratio. I hope King and other municipalities will lead with a tougher approach in the future.

Barbara Heidenreich
Ontario Urban Forest Council
<http://www.oufc.org>

If you prefer, enclose this form with your donation and mail to:
YREA, 225 Lakeland Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON L4E 3A5

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ email _____

Please note the amount of your donation enclosed:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Guardian \$2000 & up <input type="checkbox"/> | Protector \$1000-\$1999 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Custodian \$500-\$999 <input type="checkbox"/> | Steward \$200-\$499 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Keeper \$100-\$199 <input type="checkbox"/> | Friend \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note: YREA does not exchange the personal information of our members/supporters with other organizations or groups.
Registered charity - #84559 0553 RR0001



SOCIAL BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

by John Stillich, Executive Director, Sustainable Urban Development Association (SUDA)

Most people equate sustainable urban development with protecting the health of our natural environment. But true sustainability also means economic and social sustainability. There is a strong traditional view by many that when you've bought a detached home in the suburbs, you've achieved a major step towards happiness. But if it means heavy financial costs, long commuting times, property maintenance every weekend, less time for family and friends, and so on, the negatives can outstrip the positives.



Project illustrated is Top of the Annex TownHomes, artist rendering, Coolearth Architecture Inc.

Sustainable communities are, by definition, denser than typical suburbs, more energy-efficient, much less dependent on travel by automobile, mix residential and non-residential places, and are mostly dominated by smaller housing forms that are not detached homes. This urban form brings with it a variety of positive social outcomes for their inhabitants, some of which are listed here:

- People who do not or cannot drive cars have the means to access their destinations using active transportation (walking, bicycling) because distances are relatively shorter, or can access destinations by public transit because sustainable development enables better services.
- Because walking is a much more frequent mode of travel in sustainable communities, there is more casual social contact along the way, and more opportunity to develop friendships. Where the children's 'backyard' is the neighbourhood, more interaction with other children and adults helps to develop social skills.
- Exposure to people of differing circumstances increases understanding of others, which tends to reduce fears of people who are different.
- A pedestrian-focused community – where daily needs are accessed by walking – increases not only contact with neighbours, but raises awareness of and concern for

the condition of the local community, the public realm.

- The public library, community centre and parks become more valuable to people. For municipalities, this may mean greater willingness and/or understanding regarding public service expenditures.
- Sustainable urban communities offer a wider variety of housing choices within a neighbourhood. More choices can enable people to remain in the same neighbourhood as life circumstances evolve.
- Less money is spent on energy and transportation. This opens up opportunities for families to fund other priorities, or to reduce the number of hours worked.
- More affordable housing, energy and transportation means less financial stress, a key influence on social well-being for household members.
- Affordability means there is less need for two incomes in the households, which means more time can be available for being with the family's children, household maintenance, and more time for volunteering in the community.
- Walking to daily destinations improves personal health and vitality which, in turn, fosters positive mood and intellect.
- Walkability means that local small businesses experience more casual walk-in customers, improving their success. The connection between shopper and local merchant is strengthened by familiarity. In contrast, in typical suburban areas, zoning favours national retail chains, big box stores and large businesses.
- Mixing non-residential uses into denser urban environments provides greater access to, and knowledge of, employment opportunities in the local area.

SUDA is a registered Canadian charitable organization whose mission it is to foster a healthy natural environment by providing information about sustainable city building, through outreach, research, and analyses, networking and electronic communications. www.suda.ca

Editor's note: Two members of YREA have joined the SUDA board in an effort to more effectively partner to influence sustainable urban development practices in York Region and the GTA.

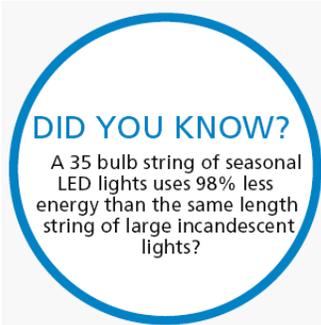


GETTING READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

It's December and people are getting ready for holiday celebrations with family and friends. Here are some tips from PowerStream to help you enjoy the holiday season while continuing to practice energy conservation at home.

HOLIDAY LIGHTING

Lights seem to be everywhere during the holiday season! First and foremost, stay safe and be sure to use only CSA approved lighting. LED holiday lights are now one of the main choices for lighting during the holiday season. Many of us have already replaced the incandescent strings with LED lights but if you need more convincing please read on! The holidays are a perfect time to switch to LED. Some fast facts:



- LEDs do not heat up
- A string of 35 seasonal LED bulbs uses 10 times less energy than the same length string of large incandescent lights.
- LED lasts up to 7 times longer – they have a lifespan of 20-30 years!

Another great feature is that LED holiday lights look great and come in all different varieties from net lights, icicles, rope, mini and regular string applications. Don't forget to turn off all indoor holiday lights during daylight hours, when you leave home or retire for the night.

Consider when you put your outdoor lights up. Some people put them up and on by the end of November and leave them on each night until mid-January. Try and reduce the hours you have your seasonal lights on – it will help you with saving money and energy.

TIMERS are another easy way to reduce your electricity consumption. Place indoor and outdoor seasonal lights on a timer or sensor so that they are not left on during the day or when they are not needed. If you are using a timer outside, be sure to use a durable timer that is made to withstand the outdoor elements.

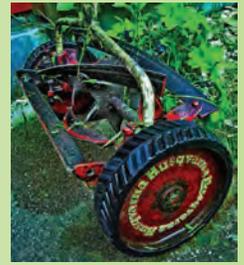


Time-of-Use Rates November 1, 2010 - April 30, 2011

	Times	TOU Period	TOU Price
Weekends & holidays	All day	Off-peak	\$0.051 per kWh
Weekdays	7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	On-peak	\$0.099 per kWh
	11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Mid-peak	\$0.081 per kWh
	5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	On-peak	\$0.099 per kWh
	9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	Off-peak	\$0.051 per kWh

On behalf of PowerStream, have a safe and happy holiday season!





TRANSITION YORK REGION

By Sue McKee, Founder

BUILDING COMMUNITY...BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

When you think of your community who do you think of? Is it your neighbours? Your family and loved ones? Those that you meet with regularly in your shared interest or activity? Your fellow commuters on the 400 or 404? Your coworkers, who you spend more waking time with than your family? What is it that you get from these people you call your community, that makes it worthwhile putting your time, money and energy into nurturing these relationships?

Transition Towns, a worldwide movement, may well be our newest opportunity to create bonds with others that will serve us all and serve the planet. Transition asks us to shift from "I can do it myself" to "I have lots of people I can lean on and support" while at the same time sharing our skills and gifts. The future is asking us to come together in community in ways we do not yet understand... to stand together, to create together, to make, build and grow together, and to resolve conflict and learn together... while we transition toward oil independence.

The challenges of climate change, peak oil and economic instability facing us in the next few years are immense and yet not insurmountable. However, if we think that we can build resilience alone or just for our household, we may be sadly mistaken. So as the saying goes, "It takes a village" of concerned, committed and fun-loving people to build sustainability and resilience that will carry us through.

TRANSITION YORK REGION UPDATE

LOGO CONTEST: Calling all designers and budding artists! We need your help to design the most fabulous logo for Transition York Region. Have a look at the details posted in the Forum -

<http://transitionyorkregion.ning.com/forum/topics/transition-york-region-logo>

EVENTS AND PLANS: We are in the process of developing a 2011 calendar and plans and have some exciting activities in the works... monthly heart & soul cafés, drumming circles, visioning the future, permaculture workshops, training for transition, cold frame making workshop, monthly film nights, re-skilling workshops galore, open space training, and many more.

What might you be looking for as we transition into the future? WE are the change that we're looking for. There is a place for you in Transition York Region. <http://www.transitionyorkregion.org>

NEW PARTNERSHIP: We have secured a formal partnership with the Sharon Temple, a national historic site in our region. The Sharon Temple was built in 1823 by a utopian group of generous, community-oriented ex-Quakers known as The Children of

Peace and their values align beautifully with Transition Towns. You can learn more at www.sharontemple.ca. Watch for collaborative efforts and events with the Sharon Temple in the New Year.

GEOGRAPHIC WORKING GROUPS: You may have noticed that geographic working groups are emerging in recognition of the fact that York Region is too big to be considered a single community. The geographic working groups will operate in tandem with the themed working groups, creating a wonderful matrix of collaboration possibilities. Please consider joining or creating your own community group so that you can really 'get local' in your transition efforts.

IS THERE A HUMMER IN YOUR GARAGE?

By Glenn Shukster, Chair, Gas Lawn & Garden Equipment Project, Transition York Region

What is so loud it disturbs your neighbours, causes more pollution than a Hummer while costing more to own and operate than alternatives? A gas lawnmower. But unlike cars, gas mowers burn fuel very inefficiently. They have no catalytic converter and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Some reports say one hour of cutting your lawn is like driving 550 kms in a car. Gas spills are another concern. One study states lawn and garden equipment spill 17 million gallons of fuel in California per year. In the face of climate change issues, why are gas mowers still being sold? What would be the impact if we all changed from gas lawn equipment to alternatives such as manual, electric or solar? How can we get more people to change sooner? Why do we need so much grass anyway? We have started a project within Transition York Region in conjunction with YREA and are in the process of researching issues connected with gas lawn equipment. Once we have compiled this data we plan to raise awareness and instigate change. To get involved with our team, please visit us at <http://transitionyorkregion.ning.com/group/reducegaslawnmowerusage>.



BIOMIMICRY - SCIENCE SEEKING SOLUTIONS IN NATURE

Self-cleaning paint inspired by the lotus leaf, visual display screens based on butterfly wings, energy distribution based on swarm logic, fan blades that are more efficient because of what we've learned from whales! What do these things have in common? They are all the result of a new science called biomimicry. Biomimicry studies nature's models then emulates these designs and processes to solve human problems. Nature inspires us with solutions that have been proven to work - as only workable solutions survive and support life on earth.



Humans have always looked to nature for ideas but over time we have shifted our focus to an extraction relationship with earth's natural resources. Nature's resources are more than a warehouse with a limitless wealth of materials. Biomimicry acknowledges the even richer supply of ideas, principles and methods.

The practice of biomimicry means understanding and applying life's principles. These principles are sustainable, support life on earth and are subject to earth's operating conditions of being water-based, subject to limits and boundaries and being in a state of dynamic non-equilibrium. In other words, the chemistry is water-based, resources are limited and change is a constant.

To see how natural solutions come to mind, just try this out. When faced with a problem ask yourself the question, 'how would nature...?'. Look around and you'll see examples of how nature builds, manufactures, assembles, communicates, coordinates, signals - it's endless of course. Now think about the processes at work. Typically they're water-based, made from simple basic elements such as carbon and oxygen, low temperature reactions, self-assembling and self-disassembling, non-toxic solutions. Some current examples are improving the solar

by Karen Verbeek, Founder, BioMinds

panel manufacturing process with nontoxic aqueous methods and providing safe alternatives to bisphenol A and toxic hair dye. As part of the biomimicry approach, green chemistry is a discipline that supports biomimicry-based solutions with new materials and processes to free ourselves from the finite petroleum-based economy we depend on today.

The inspiring shapes of natural forms such as leaves and shells are aesthetically pleasing but that is not the basis of their design. Their shapes evolved to meet a functional challenge. A leaf for example, is shaped to most efficiently capture sunlight for photosynthesis, catch and shed rainwater appropriately and grow according to the plants overall needs.

How about systems in nature? Natural systems are the source of inspiration for innovative organizational, business and communication models. Knowledge from bee and ant communication known as swarm logic has led to new ways to manage people, communication and electricity. Ecosystem services such as water filtration and purification provided by wetlands are serving as useful product and service models.

Biomimicry inspires at many levels and provides examples of natural innovation we can use to address all three pillars of sustainability - economic, environmental and social. This is the power of biomimicry; the principles can be applied to a myriad of challenges. Biomimicry is a way of thinking that will be very powerful in the minds of youth as they develop strategies, products and solutions for the sustainable future they will build.

YREA and BioMinds are partnering to secure funding to create and bring biomimicry programs into schools.



ONTARIO NATURE (ON) UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS

by Sylvia Bowman, YREA ON Representative

Ontario Nature RESOLUTION ON WIND FARMS passed at the 2010 AGM. ON has submitted comments to government agencies on the bat policy, the five-mile exclusion zone for shorelines, and on the proposed policy on wind turbines in water bodies. They particularly pointed out the need to ensure that new wind farms are not put in migratory pathways for either birds or bats, and the need for more research on the migration of bats.

THE 20/20 VISION - As the United Nations has declared this the year of biodiversity, Ontario Nature has initiated this special campaign outlining what the province needs to do to stop the loss of biodiversity by the year 2020. In April 2011, ON will submit the charter, with as many signatures as possible, to the Premier and the Ministers of Natural Resources, Environment and Northern Development. Visit <http://www.ontarionature.org/index.php> to sign on and for other information.

REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN ATLAS work continues. Send Ontario Nature any data on any sightings you may have.

ON has a new project in the town of Uxbridge where they are doing research in end use rehabilitation of gravel pits with the goal of developing a certification scheme for gravel pits similar to that for forestry industry.

MALCOLM BLUFF SHORES is a nature reserve on the Bruce peninsula that they have recently been able to expand in partnership with the Bruce Trail Conservancy. It now preserves 4 miles of Georgian Bay Shoreline. They have a campaign to raise an additional \$2.5 million to acquire the last piece of land for this reserve.

ON has recently entered into an agreement with the forestry industry, along with several other environmental groups to help **protect woodland caribou habitat** in the boreal forest across the entire country. ON now has an office in Thunder Bay as part of their **far north outreach project**. This is a response to the activity of extensive mining staking now occurring in the area of the James Bay lowlands known as the Ring of Fire. ON staff are working with first nations to help them develop proper land use plans ahead of the mining activity. There are currently no requirements for Environmental Assessments for mining projects unless a federal EA is triggered under fisheries and oceans federal legislation.

NATURE GUARDIANS held their 2010 Youth Summit for Biodiversity early this summer. Sixty teens attended this 3 day event. Roberta Bondar was a guest speaker. One of the outcomes of the summit was the development of a youth council to advise Ontario Nature on how to engage youth.



TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOODS

into greener, healthier places to live, work and play

By Janet Ivey, Watershed Planning Coordinator, TRCA

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP) is a program led by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to help established communities become more environmentally friendly and prepare for climate change, one neighbourhood at a time. The SNAP process brings together residents, businesses, community groups and government agencies to develop a science-based action plan for change. Richmond Hill's Lake Wilcox community is a pilot SNAP neighbourhood. Building on the Town of Richmond Hill's Lake Wilcox remediation studies, this SNAP is investigating community-based measures to further reduce phosphorus loads to the Lake and work with existing groups to support environmental stewardship. SNAP will address water quantity and quality of the Lake and its catchment, as well as protection and restoration of natural areas within a broader sustainable community context. A neighbourhood survey of the Lake Wilcox area is planned to better understand the current level of adoption of sustainable practices by residents (e.g., back yard naturalization, water and energy conservation). Please visit www.sustainableneighbourhoods.ca for more information on the SNAPS and a link to the survey (coming soon in December).



NOTE FROM BRENDA HOGG, RICHMOND HILL REGIONAL COUNCILLOR

Richmond Hill has met its corporate greenhouse gas emissions reduction target under FCM's Partners for Climate Protection program. The target that Council endorsed in 2004 was a 20% reduction below 2000 levels by 2009. In fact, the Town accomplished more than a 30% reduction over this time period.

As a member of FCM's Board of Directors, I am very pleased with our accomplishment especially for a growing municipality like Richmond Hill. Only five other municipalities across Canada appear to have reached this stage of the program: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Fredericton, and Whistler. Let the competitions begin - Cleaner air, fuel conservation, green innovations. Bravo for the 'Green Economy'! Good job, Richmond Hill!



Refill, NOT Landfill

By Karen Thompson, Cartridge World, Newmarket
<http://www.cartridgeworld.com/ca/CAN13>



I remember when a printer was a very valuable piece of equipment. Nowadays, the industry offers printers at rock bottom prices. With such affordability, many households, businesses and private offices have multiple printers.

With this increase of printers comes an increase in printer cartridges, and the responsibility of disposing of them properly. Some fast facts on printer cartridges and how they impact our environment:

- It takes nearly 4 litres of oil to make a new laser cartridge.
- In North America alone, over 350 million cartridges per year are discarded in landfills and that number increases by about 12% annually. This is equivalent to throwing away 67,612 Ford Explorers a year.
- A laser cartridge thrown into a landfill can take up to 450 years to decompose and some of the components made of industrial grade plastics will take over 1,000 years to decompose.

- If a year's supply of the world's discarded cartridges were stacked end-to-end, they would circle the earth more than 3 times!
- About 70% of used printer cartridges throughout the world are currently being thrown away.
- Approximately 3 litres of oil are burned in the production of a single new toner cartridge

What can you do? Reuse your cartridge. Every remanufactured cartridge saves nearly 3 -1/2 pounds of solid waste from being deposited in landfills. Using remanufactured cartridges reduces pollution and waste by minimizing the amount of material such as plastic, steel, aluminum and rubber disposed of in landfills. It also conserves natural resources by eliminating the need for virgin materials used to make new cartridges. A used toner cartridge can be remanufactured several times. Lets say 4 times as an example - this would potentially save 12 litres of fuel. Think green and save money....refill and recycle your printer cartridges at Cartridge World, 16640 Yonge Street, Newmarket. 905-954-3828