

Evanston's Future!

A Monthly Electronic Newsletter of

*Evanston's Energy Future
Evanston's Transportation Future
Evanston Interreligious Sustainability Circle
Evanston's Affordable Housing Future
Citizens Lighthouse Community Land Trust*

May 2005

Editor: Debbie Hillman dlhillman@sbcglobal.net

Web Manager: Ross Vagnieres ross@rvdstudio.com

CONTENTS:

Energy: Circle: Circle: Circle:	Savings at School Districts Chicago Sustainability Guide Habitat Restoration Day Sustainable Living: Cleaning Products
Calendar	

All Network for Evanston's Future groups welcome new members, at any time and at any level of interest or participation.

Energy Savings at School Districts Honored

(submitted by Derek Supple)

The Evanston Environment Board, in honor of Earth Day, recently awarded its annual Environmental Stewardship Awards. The organizational recipients for 2005 were School District 65 and School District 202 for the recent installation of solar photovoltaic panels. The panels will be used as education demonstration systems for the energy of the future.

Both school districts also recently applied for and were awarded energy efficient lighting upgrade grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. Hats off to Lee Kulman of D65 and Steve Grbavac at ETHS for their commitment to saving energy!

Chicago Sustainability Guide Recommended by Interreligious Sustainability Circle

(submitted by Derek Supple)

Sustainability is about making cities livable and equitable. It's about creating and supporting an economy that nourishes people, fosters cultural diversity, and protects the environment. It starts

right here and now, with the decisions we make on a daily basis. To assist with these daily choices, the Foresight Design Initiative has recently launched the a website titled the "Chicago Sustainability Action Guide". This online tool is a complete listing of relevant local resources to answer sustainability questions in categories such as Food, Transportation, House & Home, Health, Recreation, and Energy. See the guide at: <http://www.believechicago.org/guide/index.php>

Circle

(submitted by Steve Perkins)

Habitat Restoration

Evanston residents are encouraged to join the Evanston Interreligious Sustainability Project for an afternoon of hands-on work to restore the Harms Woods Forest Preserve. We will be cutting down buckthorn (an exotic species) and planting seeds of native plants which were collected last fall. The work day will be on Sunday, May 22, 1 - 4 PM. Call Steve Perkins for more information at (773) 278-4800 Ext. 155 or steve@cnt.org

Sustainable Living: A Cleaning Product Primer

Below is an excerpt from Evanston resident Lynn Lawson's *A Cleaning Product Primer: What to avoid, what to use, and why*. It includes simple but detailed discussion on health issues related to cleaning products, plus definitions and principles to use in choosing a product; numerous resources are listed. A copy of the full 14-page document can be obtained from Lynn by contacting her at lynnword@aol.com. She is also the author of the book, *Staying Well in a Toxic World* (1994, with a 2000 update).

A Few Things to Think About

Outdoor air is worse than indoor air, right? Wrong. According to the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air can be up to a hundred times worse than outdoor air. Yet the EPA spends ten times more on outdoor air than on indoor air. It has no regulatory authority over indoor air. No one is minding the store. Should we be concerned?

Most of us spend 90 percent of our time indoors.

Most medical schools teach little about the effect of environment on health.

More than 85,000 new chemicals have been added to our economy since World War II; few have been adequately tested for their health effects. Some are accumulating in our bodies, according to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Environmental Working Group.

Scotchgard, first found in human blood in the 1970s, was finally withdrawn from the market in 2000. Toxic Teflon is accumulating in human blood (its manufacturer, DuPont, says in defense that we have many chemicals in our blood!). Flame retardants, found in human blood and breast milk, are being phased out by their manufacturer because of possible disruption of newborns brains. The antibacterial agent triclosan, with a toxicity rating of 3, has been detected in breast milk. The preservative propyl paraben, now showing up in human tissues, has been found to adversely affect male reproductive functions and decrease daily sperm production.

How many more will be found in our bodies? The government's policy is "don't ask, don't tell": don't ask

companies what's in their products, and if some toxins are revealed, don't tell the public. Instead, wait until enough people are harmed.

Traditional cleaning products are considered poisonous and have been dubbed cancer-causing, according to a World Health Organization 1997 study, which estimates that 80 percent of cancer cases in the 21st century will be attributable to the environment. According to the EPA, "toxic chemicals in today's homes are three times more likely to cause cancer than any outdoor airborne pollutants" (February 21, 2003, *Chicago Tribune*). "Many household consumer products contain chemicals that, if they were found outdoors, would be classified as hazardous air pollutants," says Richard L. Corsi, civil engineering professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

Many cleaning products contain fragrances, which are minimally regulated by the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. The FDA cannot require fragrance companies to pre-market test their products or to disclose their ingredients. Most fragranced products, including air fresheners, contain artificial musks (a known liver toxin) that are increasingly found in breast milk. When you use a scented product, you are taking part in an experiment with your health. Problem is, no one is collecting the data.

"Little by little, these toxins are seeping through your skin and lungs and into your bloodstream, building up in your tissues and organs like a time bomb. No one is sure what effect they might have on your health in years to come. The result is that, unaware and without giving consent, we are all acting as guinea pigs in a giant chemistry experiment" (January 13, 2004, *The Guardian online*).

A Handy Checklist for Some Toxic Cleaning Products to Avoid

All the following common household products contain either carcinogens or neurotoxins or both, according to *The Safe Shopper's Bible*, the indispensable book by David Steinman and Samuel S. Epstein, MD. The book also warns about these and other products for their flammability, causticity, allergenicity, and irritant, sensitizing, and reproductive effects. This is a daunting list, to be sure, but be aware that the authors also recommend safe alternatives and call many of these risks "minimal." Nevertheless, if you use many of these products, the exposures add up and contribute to your total body burden of toxic chemicals.

Avoid

Ajax Cleanser	Depend-O Blue Automatic Toilet Cleaner
Ajax Dishwashing Liquid with Lemon	Dial 5 Minute Wax & Acrylic Remover
Allen's Naturally All-Purpose Cleaner	Dial Liquid Antibacterial Soap
Allen's Naturally Dishwashing Liquid	Dial (soap)
Allen's Naturally Liquid Laundry Detergent	Didi (spot remover)
Allen's Multi-Purpose Spray	Dove Bar Soap
Arm & Hammer Heavy Duty Detergent	Dove Beauty Wash
Arm & Hammer Ultra Fresh Heavy Duty Detergent	Dove Pink Beauty Bar
Ball Liquid Carpet Mop Shampoo	Dove Unscented
Bathroom Duck	Dove White
Behold Lemon Furniture Polish	Drano Crystal All Purpose Drain Opener
Behold Light Scent Furniture Polish	Drano Instant Plunger
Bissel One-step Wood Floor Care	Endust Dusting and Cleaning Spray
Bon Ami Foam Cleanser	Energine Cleaning Fluid
Bruce 1-Step with Lemon Oil (for floors)	Energine Spot Remover
Camay (soap)	Fantastik All-Purpose Cleaner
Caress Body Bar	Formby's Almond Lustre
Caress Light Body Bar with Bath Oil	Formby's Lemon Dusting and Cleaning Spray
Citra-Solv (spot remover)	Formby's Lemon Oil Furniture Treatment
Clean and Smooth Antibacterial Soap	Formula 409 23 (all-purpose cleaner)
Dawn Sureshot	4The Planet 4Your Laundry
	Glass Plus
	Granny's E.Z. Maid Dish & All Purpose Cleaner

Great 'N Easy Bathroom Cleanser	Paste Wax
Gunk Green Concentrated Cleaner	Pine-Sol Broad Spectrum Formula
Hagerty & Sons Dry Silver Polish	Pine-Sol Multi-Action Spray Cleaner
Hagerty & Sons Heavy Duty Copper, Brass, Metal Polish	Pine-Sol Spray Cleaner
Hagerty & Sons Silversmith Spray Polish	Pledge Household Cleaner
Head Green Tea Liquid Body Soap	Pledge Lemon
Heavenly Horsetail All Purpose Cleaner	Pledge Spring Fresh Aerosol
Ivory (soap)	Ponds Dry Skin Cream
Jason soaps (4 kinds)	Ponds Moisturizing Cleansing Bar
Jergens Lotion Enriched Liquid Soap	Prevail All-Purpose Cleaner with Ammonia
Joy (dishwashing liquid)	Prevail Bathroom Cleaner Aerosol
Kappus Body Shampoo	Prevail Dust and Shine
Karen's Nontoxic Products Pine Oil	Prevail Furniture Polish Aerosol
Kiss My Face Liquid Moisture Soap	Prevail Liquid Scrub Mild Abrasive Cleaner
Kleen King Aluminum Brightener	Radiator Concentrated Multi-Surface Cleaner
Kleen King Copper & Stainless Steel Cleaner	Radiator General Purpose Cleaner
Kleenol (spot remover)	Radiator Glass Cleaner (aerosol or pump)
Kmart Window Cleaner (aerosol and liquid)	Reviva Silica Scrub (soap)
KR2 Spot Lifter	Scotts Liquid Gold Wood Cleaner
Lever 2000 (soap)	Shaklee Basic L
Lifebuoy (soap)	Shaklee Liquid L
Life Tree Automatic Dishwashing Detergent	Shield (soap)
Life Tree Bathroom Cleaner	Shoe Goo
Life Tree Home-Soap All Purpose Cleanser	Shout Aerosol (laundry spot & stain remover)
Life Tree Premium Dishwashing Liquid	Simple Green (all-purpose cleaners)
Life Tree Premium Laundry Detergent	Softsoap Aloe Vera Formula
Lysol disinfectant (all scents)	Softsoap Moisturizing Soap
Marble Shine	S.O.S. Ammonia Plus Glass Cleaner
Megular's Dull Finish Preserver	S.O.S. Vinegar Glass Cleaner
Megular's Furniture Polish	Spic & Span Pine Cleaner Liquid
Megular's Lemon Oil	Spray & Wash Tough Stain Remover (aerosol)
Minwax (seven kinds of waxes and floor cleaners)	Sunlight Dishwashing Liquid
Mountain Fresh (soap)	3M Aerosol Spot Remover
Murphy Oil Soap Liquid	3M Carpet Protector Concentrate
Murphy Oil Soap Spray	3M Carpet Spot Remover & Upholstery Cleaner (aerosol)
Naturade Cactus Hand & Body Gel	3M Carpet Spray Cleaner
Nature's Gate Antiseptic Liquid Soap	Tilex Soap Scum Remover
Nature's Gate Deep Cleaning Liquid Soap	Tone the Skin Care Bar with Cocoa Butter
Nature's Gate Moisturizing Liquid Soap	Vernax (furniture polish)
Octagon Crystal White Dishwashing Liquid	Weiman Aerosol Furniture Cream (with or without lemon)
Old English Furniture Polishes (7 kinds, not including Old English Wood Soap)	Weiman Aerosol Panel Bright
Palmolive Dishwashing Liquid with Lemon	Windex glass cleaners (7 kinds)
Palmolive Gentle Skin Care Bar	Zud Heavy Duty Cleanser

Some Suggestions for Healthier Products to Use

What about the cost? From your shopping, you may already know that healthier, plant-based (rather than petroleum-based), biodegradable cleaning products free of synthetic fragrances, dyes, and unnecessary antibacterial agents (poisons) and found in health-food stores often cost more than glamorous, mass-produced, heavily promoted, mostly petroleum-based cleaning products. Until more of us switch to the former, their prices will remain higher.

However, it is quite possible to clean adequately using only simple, old-fashioned, cheap, safer cleaning products easily purchased in all supermarkets--but be sure to read labels in case dyes, pesticides, or perfumes have been added:

- food-grade distilled white vinegar; full strength it dissolves mineral buildup on chrome, porcelain, and metal; mixed half and half with water, it cleans glass beautifully,
- Bon Ami, a nonchlorinated cleanser--an old standby,
- baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), a good deodorizer and all-purpose scouring agent; use as a paste to clean oven and polish silver,
- washing soda (sodium carbonate); cuts grease, removes stains, disinfects, softens water,
- 20-Mule Team Borax; mixed with hot water, it is a good disinfectant and mold-remover--another old standby,
- hydrogen peroxide, a mild bleach that removes stains on clothes, tile grout, and counters (when left overnight),
- tea tree oil, a natural antiseptic/antibiotic; use diluted, a few drops in a quart spray bottle of water.

Calendar

May 18: Evanston's Energy Future Meeting, 7:30 – 9:30 (Call for location.) Contact: Joel Freeman 847/328-3555 ext. 216

May 22: Hands-on Habitat Restoration at Harms Woods, 1 – 4 PM. Sponsored by Evanston Interreligious Sustainability Circle. Contact: Steve Perkins 773/278-4800 ext. 155

May 27 – August 14: Sustainable Furniture: Chicago Designers Respond. Chicago Cultural Center (78 E. Washington). Contact: Chicago Furniture Designers Association <http://www.cfdainfo.org/>

June 2: Evanston's Transportation Future Meeting. 7:30 – 9:00 PM (probably at Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge, Room 3650; confirmation advisable) Contact: Rick Martin rmartin101@comcast.net