

FRIENDS OF



CLARK COUNTY

EARTH DAY

EVERY DAY, FOR EVERYBODY

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

www.clarkfriends.org

(360) 695-5570

April 22, 2006

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Lora Caine

You've heard the complaint: "why won't somebody do something about it?" *Who are those "somebodies"?*

They are the people who want to see things be better than they are. They research issues, attend meetings and hearings, ponder, and sometimes come up with solutions or remedies. They give their effort to "do something about it".

Many times, people have asked me how they can get involved; what they can do. Sometimes they are unsure of what they have to offer—whether they have the abilities or the time to help.

A step forward, though small, can still get things moving. Almost everyone can spare some time to volunteer. A good website with ideas for volunteering is called: "Give Five—Ten Tips on Volunteering Wisely" (http://www.independentsector.org/give5/volunteer_wisely.htm).

Some of the tips I thought were especially helpful are:

- Research the causes or issues important to you.
- Consider the skills you have to offer.
- Don't over-commit your schedule.
- Consider volunteering as a family.
- Give voice to your heart through your giving and volunteering.

The Board of Friends of Clark County welcomes volunteer help. If you have a little time there are things you can do. Please call anyone on the Board for ideas. Or check inside this newsletter for our Earth Day events and come talk to us. Even a little help can make a difference.

Many of you may know the quote from anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY

CONTACT US:

P.O. Box 61711
Vancouver, WA 98666
V/F 360.695.5570
info@clarkfriends.org
www.clarkfriends.org

MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Clark County is a nonprofit, membership-based organization creating, educating and empowering advocates for Smart Growth.

Our mission is to conserve and protect Southwest Washington's quality of life.

FoCC MEMBERSHIP

Please join/renew your membership using the order form in this newsletter. We need your support to help cover the costs of our meetings, newsletters, public forums, research and to continue our vital work protecting your quality of life in Clark County.

**2006
BOARD of DIRECTORS**

Officers

President

Lora Caine
Ridgefield

Vice President

Sydney Reisbick
Ridgefield

Secretary

Andrew Ness
Vancouver

Treasurer

Ila Stanek
Hazel Dell

**Executive Director
Newsletter Editor**

Bridget Schwarz
Ridgefield

Board Members

Val Alexander
La Center

Kerri Altom
East Vancouver

Russ Freeland
Vancouver

Kelly Puntaney
Vancouver

Linda Wolfe
Vancouver

HAPPY EARTH DAY !

by Bridget Schwarz

This year your Board of Directors has been actively involved in planning Earth Days events in Clark County.

We think you will be pleased with the results!

First, this newsletter is packed with articles about this year's theme—global warming. BONUS: Senator Craig Pridemore has written about his electronics recycling bill and Bill & Mona Moyer describe their hybrid car.

Second, Friends will staff several Earth Day information fairs (listed on page 10). Come check out our table top display, visit us (and the other exhibitors), and learn more about environmental concerns.

Finally, we have compiled an interesting variety of Earth Day resources. For example, how much greenhouse gas does your household emit? Will you heat your home with bio-fuels? Drive a hybrid car? Read on! Get informed! Get involved!

What is Global Warming?

from the Climate Change Fact Sheet

First, it is the wrong term!

We are talking about long-term *climate change*.

Climate change is measured by changes in average weather conditions like temperature, precipitation, wind, etc. It also involves how much that weather varies around the averages.

Second, the term implies that the world will warm up uniformly. But the increase in average global temperature will cause atmospheric circulation to change. Some areas will warm more than others, some may even cool.

So, the term global warming significantly misrepresents what really happens. Overall, temperatures are on the rise, which is why the term global warming came into use.

An increase in greenhouse gases is the primary cause of this climate change.

What is the Greenhouse Effect?

From the Climate Change Fact Sheet

The Earth's surface, oceans and atmosphere are all heated by sunlight. To maintain a balance, the Earth also emits heat energy back as infrared radiation. So heat is continually 'recycled' up and down.

Our atmosphere traps the sun's heat just like glass in a greenhouse. A natural process known as the "*greenhouse effect*" regulates the global temperature. It makes surface temperatures warmer from repeated absorption and radiation of heat.

But surface temperatures also become warmer because of the heat-trapping effects of certain *greenhouse gases*. Without these gases the Earth's average temperature would be much colder.

Some greenhouse gases occur naturally and some come from human activity.

- Water vapor is the most common.
- The burning of fossil fuels produces carbon dioxide
- Methane is released from vegetation in garbage dumps, rice paddies, and, yes—grazing livestock.
- Nitrous oxide is released from the natural environment and chemical fertilizers and manure.
- Halocarbons are released from chemicals that contain chlorine and fluorine (including CFCs that damage the ozone layer)

99% of the dry atmosphere consists of nitrogen and oxygen. Both are relatively transparent to sunlight & have little effect on the circulation of heat energy.

Greenhouse gases, then, only comprise 1% of the atmosphere. Because the concentration is so low, human emissions can have a significant impact.

Over the past 10,000 years the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere has been relatively stable. For the last few centuries, the concentration has been increasing due energy demands necessary for industrialization and growing populations, and changes to land uses and human settlement.

Greenhouse gases are extremely effective at absorbing and trapping radiant heat. Only a small increase in the amount of greenhouse gases can significantly change the atmosphere.

FoCC THANKS OUR SUPPORTERS

Annual FoCC membership dues are \$25. We are so grateful to those members who have recently joined / renewed at one of our higher levels:

SUPPORTER

Jack & Sherry Burkman
Evelyn Dusenberry
Stephen & Elizabeth Douglass
Laura Emerson
Preston Seu
Dr John Soelling
Robert Wallis
Steve & Jo Zimmerman

DONOR

John Bishop & Elizabeth Cook
David & Susan Gurock
Judie Stanton
Tim Leavitt

Friends of Clark County is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

FoCC WEBSITE

Our new webmaster is doing a fabulous job of keeping our site updated. You'll find:

- the latest updates to our meeting and events calendar;
- background and action items for issues that impact you;
- projects we are working on;
- links to other organizations that share our quality of life goals;
- opportunities to get involved with Friends of Clark County.

Our URL is www.clarkfriends.org

CALCULATE YOUR IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

How much do YOU contribute to global warming?

Americans make up 5% of the world's population, but we contribute nearly 25% of the greenhouse gas pollution that causes climate change.

Learn how much your energy use and transportation choices contribute to climate change.

Calculate your impact!

Learn how to reduce it!

Go to <http://reference.aol.com/nowyouknow/globalwarming/calculator>

Do you want to "pay" your carbon bill? Go to www.carboncounter.org.

Follow the simple directions to measure or estimate the emissions from your home, car, and air travel.

Decide the percentage of your emissions you'd like to offset. A tax-deductible donation will be suggested.

Your donation will enable Portland's Climate Trust to obtain offsets through projects that:

- Create energy-efficient homes and buildings;
- Support renewable energy;
- Utilize wasted energy sources to generate electricity;
- Substitute low-carbon materials;
- Reduce traffic congestion;
- Plant and protect native trees in diverse threatened ecosystems.

What causes climate change?

from the Climate Change fact sheet

Earth's climate changes naturally. But these cycles change over thousands of years. These changes are caused by major volcanic eruptions, variations in the sun's intensity, or slow changes in ocean circulation and land surfaces.

But for thousands of years the Earth's atmosphere has changed very little. The conditions have been just right for life on Earth to survive.

Two things usually cause the more rapid climate change that causes concern:

- 1) A change in the total amount of the sun's energy that is absorbed by the earth's atmosphere and surface;
- 2) A change in the total amount of heat energy from the earth's surface and atmosphere that escapes to space.

Humans can cause climate change by releasing greenhouse gases and aerosols into the atmosphere, changing land surfaces, and depleting the ozone layer.

An increase of greenhouse gases impacts the necessary atmospheric balance. It enhances the warming capability of the natural greenhouse effect.

Our burning of oil, coal and natural gas (fossil fuels), in particular, affects the climate. It heats our homes, runs our cars, produces electricity, and manufactures products. Americans burn enough fossil fuels to release 40,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per person annually.

Only 5% of the global population causes 25% of the carbon dioxide emissions.

The increase in greenhouse gases is more accurately described as "climate forcings" since they force the climate to change to new values.

What will climate change do?

from the Climate Change Fact Sheet

Hotter temperatures destabilize our atmosphere. Increasing temperatures will change many kinds of weather, including wind and precipitation.

A hotter climate means more severe weather conditions. Weather that kills, like heat waves, storms, floods, and droughts could happen more frequently.

Alpine glaciers have been retreating and sea levels have risen. Flooding and erosion will damage coastal regions. Increased evaporation lowers water levels inland.

Climatic zones are shifting. Many plant and animal species may not be able to adapt.

Our health and well-being could be affected. Air pollution problems will increase respiratory problems for children and the elderly. Increases in mold and pollen could also cause respiratory problems such as asthma.

New diseases are emerging, moving into warming temperature zones. Large cities could experience a significant rise in the number of very hot days.

Earth's temperature is rising at the fastest rate in recorded history. Our climate is changing.

As more nations industrialize, climate change will accelerate. We must prepare to adapt to these changes.

No one knows what climate change will bring in the decades to come. But we are already getting powerful warnings. Let's heed them.

Ultimately, the battle will be fought and won in attitude change. Let's think about our children's planet.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Every one of us can make a difference. Here's how to reduce your emission of greenhouse gases:

- Use energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Lower the thermostat and save 2% on your heating bill for every 2 degree reduction.
- Keep your vehicle well maintained to reduce fuel consumption.
- Drive 10% less by using public transit or ride-share.
- Use ethanol-blended gasoline.
- Measure tire pressure once a month and save money on fuel cost and tire replacement.
- Use your car's air conditioning sparingly.
- Give up that second vehicle.
- Don't idle and you'll save fuel.
- Buy the most fuel efficient vehicle you can.
- Install an efficient furnace to save heating costs.
- Pay attention to packaging and buy durable goods.
- Install storm windows.
- Keep curtains open during the day in winter.
- Install insulated exterior doors or storm doors.
- Remove window air conditioners during winter.
- Insulate basement walls and attics.
- Use as little paper as possible.
- Turn off lights and equipment.
- Scrape, don't rinse dishes, and run only a full dishwasher.
- Keep fridge and freezer away from heat sources.
- Keep the fridge between 35-38F
- Keep the freezer at 0F.
- Wash clothes in warm water, rinse in cold, they'll be clean.
- Weather permitting, hang clothes outside to dry

CLIMATE CHANGE INFORMATION

The Climate Change Fact Sheet is a .pdf file you can download from:
www.thegreatwarming.com/pdf/climatechangefactsheet.pdf

Our Changing Climate is a booklet suitable for ages 13 and up. Request a free copy from:
john.kermond@noaa.gov

For the latest news on hybrid cars visit www.hybridcars.com

To learn more about greenhouse gas "offset" projects go to www.climatetrust.org

For more information on biodiesel fuel go to www.biodiesel.org

To learn more about international sustainability projects go to www.greenempowerment.org

To learn more about the Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign go to www.protectingcreation.org

To order an Earth Day 2006 t-shirt call 877.677.1837 or go to www.earthdayshirts.com.

KOOB DOOG A *

"The Great Warming" documentary now in theaters is based on a book by Lydia Dotto, *Storm Warning—Gambling with the Climate of Our Planet*. Other books by this science writer include:

- Ethical Choices and Global Greenhouse Warming
- Thinking the Unthinkable: Social Consequences of Rapid Climate Change
- The Ozone War

* OK, that's A GOOD BOOK spelled backwards.

KITCHEN COMPOSTER

from the Nature Mill web site

Food and paper decompose naturally. But they are the two largest components in landfills (nearly 50% of all municipal waste). According to the EPA food is the #1 least recycled material.

Landfills block the oxygen necessary for decomposition. So even biodegradable waste like food and paper is 'embalmed' in a mix of plastic and chemicals.

The organic nutrients in food and paper waste are removed from the food chain. Instead, landfills produce methane (a greenhouse gas) & leach toxic chemicals into our water and air.

And we're running out of landfill space.

But you can turn food and paper into a high nitrogen fertilizer right where it's generated—in the kitchen—without any smell or mess.

NatureMill is a compact electrical unit (22H X 22D X 14W) that uses only 10 watts of electricity (i.e. a night light) every day.

It is a fully automatic home composter. Temperature, air flow, moisture and mixing are precisely controlled to accelerate the process. For that reason even dairy and meat products can be composted (again, without any smell).

The unit has a 5 pound capacity per day and a 15 pound capacity per week. Most of the material is converted into water vapor.

The unit yields approximately 10 pounds of a highly nutrient rich and naturally organic fertilizer (compost) every 2 weeks.

For more information on the kitchen composter call 800.613.6629 or visit www.naturemill.com

HYBRID CARS

By Bill and Mona Moyer *

As the owners of a 2002 Toyota Prius, we've been asked to provide some insight (no, not the Honda Insight) into hybrid cars. 'Hybrids' are just that—a hybrid of gas and electric (battery) power. The gas engine is conventional. The engine's electricity comes from a large battery that resides in the trunk.

You don't plug in this car! The battery recharges through regenerative braking and gas engine operation. The engine shifts automatically and seamlessly between gas and battery power.

The Prius is a Super Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (SULEV). It puts out 20% of the pollution of a conventional gas engine. Because emissions are substantially lower and hybrids don't 'idle' at a stop (remember, it's on battery when not moving), emissions inspections are not required.

For acceleration from a standing stop, the Prius operates on a combination of battery and gas. Where gas engines can be sluggish taking off initially, a hybrid's acceleration is pretty quick due to the inherent torque of an electric engine.

To get the best mileage from this type of car, we've learned to drive the Prius a little differently. First, when possible, we don't accelerate rapidly at lower speeds. This lets the Prius run on the battery longer. The Prius can operate on just battery power up to about 28 mph provided you aren't accelerating rapidly or climbing a hill.

Second, at cruising speeds we let the car 'coast' when doable. This may require speeding up then letting it roll. While rolling the gas engine will shut off but the battery will continue to regenerate.

Don't buy a hybrid just to save money on gas. Unless gas prices get REALLY high, you won't. But for those interested in reducing their impact on the environment, not stopping at the gas station as often, and concerned about rising gas prices and availability, it's a great option, especially as a commuter car. It's also fun to drive!

* *The Moyers are Friends of Clark County members*

HYBRID PROS & CONS

By Bill and Mona Moyer

PROS:

- Our gas mileage is 40-50 mpg. Mileage is actually *better* in town than on the highway.
- Faster acceleration is great for driving and merging on and off freeways.
- Income tax credits have been available for a few years, but they may be phased out. Washington State may also offer a sales tax reduction for hybrid vehicle purchases. Check the current tax codes for more information.

CONS:

- New Technology—hybrids can be prone to unusual problems while bugs are being worked out.
- Batteries are a few thousand dollars to replace and will probably last 5-8 years.
- Cost equivalent conventional gas vehicles are several hundred to a few thousand dollars cheaper to purchase than a hybrid.

BIO-DIESEL FUEL

Traditional diesel vehicles can run on safer, cleaner burning bio-diesel.

Pure biodiesel can be used undiluted or blended with petroleum diesel. Engines built before 1994 may require the replacement of natural rubber seals if a blend greater than 20% biodiesel is used.

EARTH DAY EVENTS

THURSDAY, April 13th
5:30—7:30

6th floor Hearing Room
CC Public Service building
1300 Franklin

Join Commissioner Steve Stuart for a discussion of environmental issues facing Clark County.

MONDAY, April 17th
10:00—2:00

Clark College Gaiser Hall
Screening of environmental documentaries.

TUESDAY, April 18th
10:00—2:00

Clark College Gaiser Hall
Environmental Awareness and Nonprofit Fair (*Stop by and meet Friends of Clark County Board members!*)

WEDNESDAY, April 19th
Speaker series

Clark College Gaiser Hall
Student Center

- 10:00 Dave Cox, Soil Builders
- 11:30 Clark Public Utility District
- 12:30 Plant giveaway
- 1:30 Bev Doty, worm bin composting

THURSDAY, April 20th
11:00—2:00

Hewlett-Packard Earth Day Fair

SATURDAY, April 22nd
9:00—1:00

Clark College
Household hazardous materials collection in the parking lot near the soccer field.

GOVERNOR SIGNS E-WASTE BILL

By Senator Craig Pridemore *

Despite the intense lobbying efforts of several manufacturers, Governor Gregoire signed SB 6428 into law on March 24th. The bill will require television and computer manufacturers to pay a fee into a special fund to recycle those products at the end of their useful life.

While companies like Panasonic and Sharp engaged in shameful and dishonest efforts to kill the bill, it was actively promoted by responsible corporate partners like Hewlett-Packard, Amazon.com and BestBuy.

For consumers, it means they'll no longer have to keep those old electronics products "stored" in the closet - they'll have places to turn them in that will ensure that they're responsibly recycled.

For environmentalists, the bill represents a landmark achievement. It holds manufacturers financially responsible for the impacts that their products have throughout their lives.

This is a concept called "product stewardship" and has been a long-sought goal of the environmental community. Just imagine if the full-costs of all products were reflected in their sales prices...

Rather than just buying the cheapest product available regardless of its environmental impacts, consumers would be actively motivated to make environmentally responsible decisions.

Manufacturers would be financially motivated to produce products that minimize long-term impacts to the environment.

That is the goal of product stewardship.

continued on the next page

Electronics recycling

continued from previous page

While a similar program exists in Maine, Washington is now the recognized national leader in this concept. We have already attracted attention from Colorado, Minnesota, Florida, New York, Canada and others.

We still have much to do.

Product stewardship needs to be expanded to encompass more products. It needs to incorporate not only the costs of recycling and safe disposal, but the full-costs of production too.

Manufacturers who pollute the environment and leave the costs to communities to clean up need to be held financially responsible and forced to incorporate those costs into the price of their products.

Unfortunately, the Governor felt that one provision in SB 6428 violated the interstate commerce clause of the US Constitution.

It prohibited manufacturers from exporting products intended for recycling to countries that do not have a viable recycling industry. Clearly, we don't want to collect old products here merely to have them dumped on the side of a river in a third world country.

The Governor vetoed this provision but we're hopeful that the program will still be able to prevent these abuses. To truly prevent it, it is critical that we get a national ban on such practices. Contact your US congressional members and senators to request such a ban.

SB 6428 is landmark legislation that will pave the way for greater expansion of product stewardship in our state & eventually our country.

** Senator Pridemore wrote SB-6428 and is a member of the Friends of Clark County Advisory Board*

BIODIESEL HEATING

Oil #2 is the primary heating oil sold in the US. It is essentially the same as diesel sold at a gas station but with more of the pollutant sulfur.

The amount of sulfur accounts for the level of pollution emitted by the furnace and the amount of fouling on surfaces inside the furnace.

Luckily you can choose a lower-sulfur fuel to heat your home that will lower pollution by up to 70%.

Better yet, using biodiesel to heat your home will provide significant environmental benefits.

Biodiesel is fuel from vegetable oils like soy and canola. You can use a blend of up to 20% biodiesel with petroleum oil without modifying your furnace. Use low-sulfur diesel in your mix for the greatest environmental benefit.

Biodiesel is a solvent so it will actually clean up your heating system. It is a 100% American fuel to increase our country's energy security.

Plans for several biodiesel production facilities in the northwest are in the works. Currently SeQuential-Pacific Biofuels operates a small biodiesel production plant in Salem.

Biodiesel heating oil will cost up to \$.20 more per gallon. Ultra-low sulfur will cost anywhere from \$.01 to \$.05 more per gallon.

Your heating oil provider may carry biodiesel—or can get it. Tell your supplier that you are interested in cleaner-burning choices.

FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY
P.o. Box 61711
Vancouver, WA 98666
www.clarkfriends.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No.262
Vancouver, WA

FRIENDS OF



CLARK COUNTY

EARTH DAY

EVERY DAY, FOR EVERYBODY

EARTH DAY EDITION!

- Global warming? Or climate change?
- Greenhouse gas causes and effects
- Kitchen composter recycles food waste
- Alternative cars and fuels
- Senator Pridemore's electronics recycling bill

Please renew your membership with FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY using the order form inside this newsletter.

We need your support to help cover expenses as we continue the vital work of protecting our quality of life in Clark County.

If you join at the Donor level (\$100) or above we'll give you a Friends of Clark County baseball cap FREE.

Thank you!