

grass-roots NEWSLETTER

...an organization of environmentally-concerned parents, teachers, students & others.

OUR NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, November 12, 2008 from 4:30-6:30pm

1155 Park Avenue (92nd Street) – RSVP: 348-7183, blaneweber@aol.com

Stop Re-Licensing of Indian Point Nuclear Reactor

Susan Shapiro

Attorney and Member of Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition

Share your ideas with us – all are welcome!

I. PROJECT UPDATES

Energy

Free CFL light bulbs from Con Edison to replace your incandescent bulbs for customers in the zip codes of 10028, 10128, 10075 and 10029. Installers will do all the work for you. Each bulb lasts 10-15 times longer, using up to 75% less energy. Call 866 364-8269 for an appointment. Save money, save energy, save hassle, save the environment!

Food

~*Buy Local!* There are now 22 CSAs in Manhattan alone, all of which have waiting lists. They have been successful beyond anyone's expectations! For CSAs in NYC check www.justfood.org. We also have 27 farmers markets in Manhattan with Union Square being the biggest one. For a list of the sites, go to www.cenyc.org. Those in our neighborhood include Mt Sinai Hospital at East 99th between Madison and Park, open on Wednesdays from June to November; St Stephens on East 82nd between First and York, open on Saturdays from July to November; 92nd Street and First Avenue, open on Sundays from July to November.

~*Think before you buy!* It is obvious from the above that people are beginning to pay more attention to where their food comes from, but one aspect of food that we don't give much thought to is the amount of food waste that we generate. It is estimated that about 20% of our climate change emissions is related to the production, processing, transportation and storage of food, but we are throwing away a third of all the food we buy. For example, cheese making includes feeding and milking the cows, cooling and transporting the milk, processing it into cheese, packing it, getting it to the shops, keeping it at the right temperature all the time. If it then gets thrown away, it will most likely wind up in a landfill site, where it rots and actually releases methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. If we assume that half of the food thrown away could have been eaten, then this would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save us time and money as well. Info, <http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

~*Apartment Building Recycling Initiative* – Have some fun learning the latest about Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in NYC and improve your building's recycling with help from the NYC Department of Sanitation. Next sessions are December 10 and February 10 from 5:30 – 8:30pm at 44 Beaver Street. Bonnie and Helen plan to attend class on February 10th and hope others will join us. Go to this site for your registration form; http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/recycling/recycling_abri.shtml

~*More reasons for bringing your own bag!* – Data from the US Environmental Protection Agency shows that somewhere between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed world-wide each year. Less than 1% are recycled. It costs more to recycle a bag than to produce a new one. Plastic bags are made from polyethylene, a form of plastic made from oil. Many countries have banned the use of free plastic bags. China estimates it will save 37 million barrels of oil each year due to their ban. Over time the plastic breaks down into ever more toxic petro-polymers, which are harmful to many animals, especially fish, and eventually contaminate soils and waterways. Learn the dangers of plastic bags PoconoRecord.com: [Slideshow: The dangers of plastic bags](#)

~*Recycle your cell phones!* Do not throw your cell phones in the garbage! "They are the most valuable form of e-waste. Each one contains about a dollars worth of precious metals, mostly gold. And while single phones house far less hazardous material than a computer- an old, clunky monitor can incorporate seven pounds of lead - their cumulative presence is staggering. Last year, according to ABI Research, 1.2 billion phones were sold worldwide. Sixty percent of them probably replaced existing ones. In the United States, phones are cast aside after, on average, 12 months. ... Four out of every five people in the country own cell phones"* Take them to Best Buy, Staples or check out this website http://www.secret-life.org/cellphones/cell_recycle.php, and these two videos by Inform: <http://www.secret-life.org/paper/>, <http://www.secret-life.org/cellphones/> * NYTimes

Water

Water footprint! It is not only our carbon footprint that we should be concerned about, but also our water footprint. We need to consciously think about our water usage every time we turn on the tap. To find out about the water footprint of common items including groceries, clothes, stationery and electrical goods, check out this website run by the University of Twente in the Netherlands, <http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=files/home>. The results are striking! For example a kilogram of barley has a footprint of 1,300 litres, while the industrial production of a kilogram of beef amasses a water footprint of 15,500 litres. A kilogram of chicken meat has a footprint of 3,900 litres.

From The Independent, UK

II. MEETING SUMMARY

Suzanne Thompson, a principal at Coronado Consultants, has been closely involved with an organization called “Global Partnership For Afghanistan.” This organization, GPFA, was founded in 2004 by Dana and Bruce Feyer as a people-to-people initiative to help Afghans replant their orchards and forests after years of war devastation and drought. In the 1970’s Afghanistan was self sufficient in food and exported 40-60%. In 2004 there was no food being exported, there was a high unemployment rate and people in the rural areas were living on \$1 a day. Many refugees were not able to return to their land until it had been de-mined. Only modest amounts of foreign aid money reached village levels. Eighty per cent of the people had been live off the land and were having problems restoring their livelihoods. Initially funded by friends and family, GPFA now has financial support from several different countries and from the World Bank. GPFA first meets with the Council of Elders and then work closely with the Afghans themselves, providing trees, cuttings, fertilizer, tools and technical assistance. The farmers agree to pay back the investment. Many of the farmers are women who have been widowed by the war. (Women now have 25% of the seats in the Parliament.) GPFA hired an agronomist to run farmer field schools and hired trained Afghan women to work with the female farmers. They brought poplar trees which are fast growing and will be used for timber, and interspersed these trees with vegetables for current income. Farmers are also required to plant other types of trees for diversity. Fruit orchards are being restored. GPFA is building underground cold storage facilities so that fruit farmers need not sell all their fruit immediately after harvesting it, but can store some to sell later in the winter when the prices are higher. They also teach farmers to extend their season with pieces of plastic. Since many giant underground cisterns were destroyed by bombing, farmers are taught to use drip irrigation systems. GPFA has gained international recognition as an effective organization, more support has come to them and they now have 60 employees in nine provinces. They have also become involved in building roads and in telecommunications. As US General John Abizaid said about the need to promote peace and security in Afghanistan by helping people to help themselves, “The Taliban begins where the road ends.” In a few short years, farmers’ incomes have doubled and are competitive with poppy growing. Info www.gpfa.org.

III. ECO-EVENTS

- 1. Million Trees NYC Fall Planting Day** - Come and dig in! November 8, 10am-3pm. Help plant 15,000 trees in parks. Children must be at least 12 years old to participate. Info 212 360-1356, <http://www.milliontreesnyc.org/html/misc/nov8.shtml>
- 2. Fall and Winter Weekend Permaculture Design Certificate Class** - Permaculture practicums, bioregional research and real life design projects at Epworth Camp & Retreat Center – High Falls , NY. Taught by Ethan Roland, Andrew Jones, Kay Cafasso and others. First weekend November 22-23, sliding scale cost \$800-1200. Includes tuition for six weekends and use of camp facilities, including overnight. Food is potluck or bring your own for weekend. Info, 845 687-7646 or mamajoane@yahoo.com.
- 3. Central Park Across the Curriculum** - Teacher workshops at www.centralparknyc.org/cpac Info on program costs and registration, call 212 360-1403 or email cpac@centralparknyc.org
- 4. The Politics of Food - A Conference on New York’s Next Policy Change** – Committed to creating a framework for a NYC food charter that engages government, business, and nonprofit leaders as well as the general public. November 19, 8:30am – 2pm at Lerner Hall, 2920 Broadway, Columbia University. Info, 212 669-8299, rpierre-louis@manhattanbp.org
- 5. Local Sustainable Delicious, A Culinary Celebration** - This event is a fundraiser for Chefs Collaborative (\$250) in honor of Joan Gussow. November 10, 7pm, Astor Center, Manhattan. Check other events at <http://www.slowfoodnyc.org/events>.
- 6. Learn How To Be Safe In An Emergency** - Red Cross Emergency Preparedness classes sponsored by Carnegie Hill Neighbors. November 10 or December 8 at 6pm at Church of St. Thomas More, 65 E 89th St. Info 212 996-5520.
- 7. An Inconvenient Truth and Beyond** - Live presentation followed by a panel of experts to learn what you can do to address the climate crisis. Nov. 12, 6:30pm, Congregation B’nai Jeshurun, 257 W 88th St. Free. RSVP and info (212) 787-7600 ext. 366 or ClimateChangeNYC@gmail.com. Sponsored by Environmental Advocates of NY, Congregation B’nai Jeshurun and others.
- 8. The Global Water Cycle and Its Changes** - November 20, 11 am –noon, at Monell Building , Columbia University. Speaker is Kevin Trenberth, National Center for Atmospheric Research. Info, amg@iri.columbia.edu or 845 680-4436.
- 9. Walk Off the Turkey with Shorewalk** –November 29, meet 10am at Staten Island Ferry terminal, end about 12 miles and five hours later at GW Bridge. Bring lunch and water. Take N or R train to Whitehall St or #1 train to South Ferry. Info, 212 330-7686.

grass-roots

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Eat Local!