

Let's try to go green: keep an eye on your trash

Bill McKibben is the author of several books about climate change and his most recent one is called "Eaarth." Yes, that spelling is correct!

He feels we are no longer living on the planet we once knew so this new spelling reflects that. So many of the climate changes he anticipated happening "some time in the future" are here now.

I highly recommend his book. I heard him speak recently about where we stand and where we need to go. He has been listening to scientists from all over the globe and the news is scary. The scientists were wrong a few years ago.

Climate change is happening much faster than they expected.

Last year the event he initiated was the single largest global effort ever, the 350.org. day on October 24, 2009. This year the global climate change event will be on October 10, 2010. (10-10-10) It is a day of action and we should all take part in it. I'll write more on that in the future.

For now, please set aside the date. It shouldn't be too hard to remember!

It can be overwhelming and discouraging to hear such dire news. Fortunately for me, people who inspire and humble me every day by their dedication to helping the environment surround me.



**Sharon Vocke
Green Yet?**

My friend Terry has been recycling long before it was convenient. She used to drive over to Cheshire to get rid of her recyclables when they had a facility and we didn't. She also eats pretty low on the food chain by avoiding meats and eating only organics.

My friend Crystal also eats organics and is very conscious about feeding her family healthy foods without much processing. She recently hosted an event at her house with over 40 people and almost everything was composted or recycled. At the end of the evening she showed me the garbage and there was only a tiny bit of trash that barely covered the bottom of the can! All the rest of the party "garbage" will be turned from compost into food for her garden, sent to be recycled, or reused at her next gathering.

It made me want to have a party just so I can try it.

Like many Southington residents,

Crystal wanted to know what happens to all the things we send to be recycled, so she got special permission to tour the Murphy Road Recycling station in Berlin. This facility processes 600 tons of material per day.

She learned that these stations are privately owned and the owners make money by selling bales of recycled materials to countries like China and Indonesia, which use the materials to make products that are then sold back to us.

Imagine how much fuel we use to ship this stuff back and forth.

I wonder how unhealthy it is for the workers in those unregulated countries to deal with all our plastics and other toxins too.

There has to be a better way. I never imagined I would be concerned

about recycling, but I think we should find out more about what happens after it leaves Murphy Road.

For now, keep recycling. It's much better than sending our refuse to a landfill. Let's just try not to use so much plastic.

Up in Vermont, where I saw Bill McKibben speak at Solarfest, the efforts to recycle and compost were truly impressive.

First, the vendors all used only recyclable or compostable utensils, plates and napkins and cups. That's really important. No matter how sustainable we want to be, we aren't getting too far if we can only buy a coffee in a Styrofoam cup.

The festival also had volunteers at every one of the "trash" stations teaching what items go in each bin.

Food waste all went in the compost bin as well as most of the paper goods. The cans and plastics all went with the cardboard and other recyclables.

There was virtually no trash unless people brought it in with them, and most didn't, so they only had one small trash container of garbage at the end of an entire weekend with hundreds of attendees.

I was happy to see what could be accomplished with such a large number of people because of good planning and cooperation! This can definitely be ramped up and copied here.

What if we made the Apple Harvest Festival go green? We could have recycling containers, compost bins, and insist our vendors use only compostable and recyclable containers.

We still have the concern about all those recyclables and where they go, but if we encourage everyone to switch to compostables, like paper plates without plastic coatings, we'll be heading in the right direction.

All we need is cooperation, planning, and people who care.

If you think this might be a good direction for Southington, please let me know.

We can work together to make things better for everyone, starting with our celebrations.

So, show up at the Apple Harvest this fall, pay attention to our trash, and have fun!

Sharon Vocke is the co-owner of the local company Evergreen Energy, which installs geothermal, solar and wind systems. You can reach her at sharon@greenyet.net.

Town taxes are due by the beginning of August

Real estate, personal property and motor vehicle taxes on the Oct. 1 2009 Grand List are due by August 2.

Payments received after August 2 will be charged three percent interest with a minimum of \$2 interest.

Real estate and personal property taxes are due in two installments if tax amount due is over \$100.

Motor vehicle taxes are due in one installment

only. If you own property and/or motor vehicles and have not received a bill, call the Tax Office at 276-6259.

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