

# ECC NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2008

**ECC MEETING, JUNE 19, 2008, PARSONS COMPLEX, CONFERENCE ROOM C, 7:30 P.M.**

Well, June came barreling in like a hot flaming dragon compared to what May gave us. And, the weeds are proliferating madly, more than I have ever seen before. My seedlings are looking straggly because I was too late getting them in the ground. I am wondering how those four-inch Brussels sprouts will ever grow compared to Chris Wrinn's, which grew last year to at least five feet tall, absolutely inspiring. One stalk of her Brussels sprouts could have fed a family of four for at least a month or more. This is a perfect lead in to my next subject, but must mention last month's and this month's ECC meeting first.

Last month was an excellent meeting lead by Diane Vasseur with the discussion of building and demolition materials by Darlene Chapdelaine. She loves her work and her passion for the subject shows it. She contends that with demolition, nearly 99% is eligible to be recycled and there is money to be made.

Dan German on his website, <http://GoGreenMilford.com> that I highly recommend you visit, has great information. There are many sites to visit, especially good for recycling, reducing your carbon footprint and composting.

<http://www.freecycle.org/> If you're trying to find a new home for a piece of furniture, a bag of clothes, an old chandelier or anything that's hard to recycle, give Free Cycle a try. This free website connects people with things to give away with people who need those things. It's organized by ZIP codes, so it will put you into contact with groups in your community. No money can ever exchange hands and everything has to be totally free. You can learn more at [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org).

- <http://www.compostguide.com/> Here is a great guide to help you with composting. The how, why and what to compost.
- [www.Goodwill.org](http://www.Goodwill.org) Goodwill is a great place to bring anything from clothes, old sneakers, books, old lamps, old computers; things you think may have no value. Goodwill will sell what they can, if it doesn't sell within a couple weeks they will recycle it in some way or even ship to a country in need of your goods. Nothing goes to waste. So don't throw it out! Bring it to Goodwill and get a tax deduction as well.
- [www.Craigslist.org](http://www.Craigslist.org) You can sell or list anything on this site and it is completely FREE and easy!

Following up on recycling, this month we need a consensus on Bulk Pickup. This past month was a long and drawn out mess on the whole. We saw that the city lost money on the metal, which we predicted. People who were collecting it were making over \$100.00 an hour from our trash, money the city could be getting. We also found out that all the bulk was going to be burned in Bridgeport, not being shipped out of state. This leads us to believe that, that being the case, and the fact that the budget is so lean, we may not even have another pickup this year because of a shortfall with the budget. Why not have people put out on a regular garbage day items that need to be trashed and

burned. We, of course, encourage recycling anything that is possible. Goodwill will take just about anything and especially books, on which they can make good money. Secondly, we need consensus and discussion on whether to have a table at the Oyster Festival this year. The event is so crowded and very difficult to get the word out about the issues. It seems it is not a day to be serious. We are open to discuss any other pertinent issues. We need your attendance as we are considering making this the last meeting until September, also open for discussion.

The new guide "The Farms of Milford" which was made possible thanks to the generous support of Mary Treat of Robert Treat Farms, the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, the City of Milford, the employees of New Standard Institute and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture "Farm Viability Grant". This guide describes ten Milford farms, what they produce and a map of their locations. We will hand them out at our ECC meeting on June 19. They will be available soon, (they are going to press), at the Library, individual stores, Parsons, City Hall -- look for them. We are happy to announce that there will be a **Farmers Market** again this year in Milford, but in a different place and on a different day. Joe Agro has donated a portion of his parking lot adjacent to the RR and part of the parking for the **Town Hall Plaza** on River Street. **It will be on Saturdays from 9:00-1:00 p.m. beginning July 5-October 18. SUPPORT OUR LOCAL FARMS & FARMERS MARKETS.**

With the escalation of gas prices, have you noticed fewer cars on the road, and yet still, are they driving less hectically? Madness still exists on the roads, making it difficult to feel safe to bicycle, at least for us older folks. Driving the speed limits does save on gas even if you have a gas-guzzling car. The Prius may on average, get 47 miles per gallon, but this can be improved by staying within the speed limits. Coming from a stopped position or pressing the pedal when going up a hill really demands more gas. By slowing up when you see a red light ahead, try not to come to a full stop, you will save on gas. The one thing the Prius has, and I believe there will be other cars adopting this, is the gauge that tells you exactly your speed and how many miles per gallon you are getting. If you watch, you will be able to monitor your driving and perhaps change some of your habits. You will be rewarded with better mileage and money saved on gas.

In the words of the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), "The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is playing "Hard Ball". They would not support California's legislation to increase the emissions standards for cars using the Clean Air Act or even though it would be decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution and even improve our health.

The EDF has a suit against the EPA, along with a coalition of environmental groups, to overturn this decision. A separate suit was filed by California and was joined by 14 other states that want to adopt California's stricter standards.

**Last April**, in a historic ruling, the Supreme Court overturned the EPA's claims that it lacked the authority to regulate global

warming pollution under the Clean Air Act. This was led by a Massachusetts coalition and the EDF.

**September**, another major victory. A federal judge in Vermont struck down the automakers attempt to block California's new vehicle standards from being adopted. The judge rejected the automakers' claims that it lacked the technology to meet the tailpipe standards.

**In December**, we won another round when California federal district court judge, Anthony Ishii, similarly rejected automakers' attempts to block stricter limits on global warming pollution. The ball is now back in the EPA's court and they have failed the test. "With the consequences of global warming clearly accelerating," California has asked the court to expedite the hearing of its case. Jim Tripp of the EDF says, "It is following neither the science nor the law."\*

\*Source EDF's publication "Solutions"

I mention this typical story so you can understand the attitude of the EPA on too many stories of how they are not protecting us. The chemical and plastic companies be they pharmaceuticals for the workplace, the yard, the home, are not monitored or tested adequately, or not at all. We are being exposed to harmful chemicals without our knowledge or permission. It is scandalous that politics, not science or the law, dictates the EPA's decisions. Monsanto is a good example of one company that has been blatantly misrepresenting their products, their misuse of their chemicals, and their work on genetically modified seed production, to manipulating the control of its production, its distribution and sales. They already have a good inroad on the control of seed and food production around the world and if we don't do something very soon, we will be at their mercy. This is why we must be independent in our own food production on a local basis as well as seeking more sustainable energy sources to replace gas and oil.

We are at a very critical juncture in history and we must begin to get out of our comfort zones and to act now on a personal, local and federal level to make our voices heard. We cannot afford to lose any more time in this regard or in regard to global warming.

There is this book by Gustave Speth, called "The Bridge at the Edge of the World". The author as described in the editorial by Neal Pierce in the Sunday Register, is considered "The epitome of mainstream environmentalism: chairman of the President's council on Environmental Quality during the Carter Administration, founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council and the world Resources Institute and now dean of the Environmental Studies at Yale University. He does not paint a pretty picture; there is no time for pretty pictures and false pretenses about our situation regarding our life on this planet and what we are facing and about to face in the very near future. The title of the article is "Environmental movement must become more confrontational". Those are Gus Speth's words.

Looking at my incoming mail, seeing all the requests that come in on a daily basis, all asking for help to protect the polar bear, the forests, the lakes, the rivers, open space, Long Island Sound, the wolves, the whales, the seals, the ice caps, women's issues. It goes on and on. Doesn't that say something is terribly wrong with this world when so much is going awry? The whole world needs help; indigenous people are being flooded out on a yearly basis, with loss of land because of severe storms and flooding. There are threats of loss of countries, millions of

displaced people; our mid-western states are being hit by record powerful tornadoes. Houses and limbs are being lost and not getting appropriate movement from government for assistance, or recognition about climate changes, or inspirational advice about the life-changes that will be necessary to protect our planet. He says there must be a change in our paradigm about how we measure progress, profits and development, that increasing sales, production and profits; these measurements must change to be in the range of sustainability.

It is imperative that we prepare and educate, not coddle our children. They need to be trained to be self-sufficient in very practical ways, prepared psychologically to face these difficult changes and to deal with the societal needs and pressures in a democratic non-confrontational way. Our schools need to tighten their belts, instigate walking school buses, be green in management procedures, teach more environmental courses from kindergarten through high school, partner with our farms, recycle and compost in the schools, and even, God forbid increase the numbers in classes. The world is not going to be their oyster. They need to be prepared to face a very different world. We need to give them more credit; children have a strong sense of fairness, more than their parents, as shown on the playing fields. I believe, if they are directed towards the right attitude, these young children are up to the challenges ahead, that they will be a very innovative and creative generation, one, of which we will be very proud. A great deal, however, depends on us, the older generation to help them pave their way.

The Green Happy Hour was a great success, over 76 people attended, wish we had this kind of attendance for our ECC meetings and can vouch that we have had some very good speakers discussing issues that are very pertinent to what is important to our way of life and influencing our political way of doing business, specifically in the field of recycling. The next Happy Hour or Green Drinks will be June 25 at Stonebridge, 5:30-8:00.

On June 30 at 7:00 there will be a talk at the Savin Rock Conference Center, West Haven by guest speaker, Chester Arnold, University of Connecticut on "Land use and land use changes in Connecticut over the past 20 years and the ramifications of this change to the health of the State's Water Resources", sponsored by the West Haven Land Trust. (Special focus on the Long Island Sound Coastline, coastal streamside areas and West Haven region) Followed by Q & A. Art exhibit by local artists, refreshments and following the showing of film "The Connecticut Plan to Fight Global Warming."

On the political scene, all state representative and senate seats are open this fall. In order to run, the representatives must raise \$5000 and senatorial candidates must raise \$15,000. We are asking our members to donate to the candidate of their choice: 117<sup>th</sup> Paul Davis vs. Stephanie Williams; 118<sup>th</sup> Barbara Lambert vs. Nanci Seltzer; 119<sup>th</sup> Dick Roy vs. Kevin Liddy; and, 14<sup>th</sup> Senatorial Gayle Slossberg vs. Vin Marino. We have great candidates and we need these people to help with environmental issues that are facing us in the coming months. \$10 a gallon for gas is on the horizon and has already arrived in Europe, and the need to deal with all the ramifications thereof... transportation and home fuel.

Regards, Ann Berman, Chair, ECC