

ECC NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2004

ECC MEETING, NOVEMBER 18TH, CONFERENCE ROOM C, PARSONS, 7:30 pm

“Where On Earth Are We Going?” This was the title and discussion topic of a seminar that Barbara Bell and I attended at Wesleyan University in September. It was also a gathering of prominent people who wanted to honor and acknowledge the work of Maurice Strong, a Canadian who has been working since the early 70's to mobilize scientists and people of note, to educate us and other countries to recognize how and what we are doing that is changing our planet's culture, eco-systems and the climate that supports life as we know it.

Maurice Strong is Co-Chair of the Earth Charter Commission. What is the **Earth Charter**? Let me begin with its **Preamble**: “We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great **promise**. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.”

It is an ethical vision, that has been shaped by “contemporary science, international law, the teachings of indigenous peoples, wisdom of the world's great religions and philosophical traditions and declarations and reports of the seven UN summit conferences held during the 1990's, the global ethics movement, numerous nongovernmental declarations and people's treaties issued over the past thirty years, and the best practices for building sustainable communities.”

It “recognizes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible.” It is their goal to get it on the UN's agenda and passed as a viable document that “will provide a new framework for thinking about and addressing these issues.” It is divided into four **principals**:

1. **Respect and Care for the Community Life**
2. **Ecological Integrity**
3. **Social and Economic Justice**
4. **Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace**

And again into four divisions and subdivisions.
Website: <http://www.earthcharter.org>.

Promise is when three young students from Calf Pen Meadow School recognize the relationship between cause and effect. How our actions can have a direct effect on our environment. They were inspired by a song about Styrofoam. in the play.

“Guardians Of Earth”. They then researched other products to be used as lunch trays. Why? Because Styrofoam trays have a half-life of 400 years. So to bring this message home, they, with the help and support of their Principal Dolores Hannon and Thomas Stack, built a sailboat the SS LUNCH, out of 400 Styrofoam trays, resulting in a successful launch from Gulf Beach a few weeks ago. I think a Green Globe Award should be in order.

The ECC wants to do its part towards demonstrating **promise** too! As you are aware, the City of Milford has a strong history on environmental issues. Previously, the Board of Aldermen passed a "Sooty Six" resolution, which led the state to adopt stricter emissions standards for power plant pollution. Now is the time for us to take the next step! Accordingly, we have asked the Board of Aldermen to join us in working toward clean air, healthy communities and energy independence by supporting a "20% Clean Energy by the year 2010" resolution. On October 25th, representatives of the ECC, the Milford Health Department, Clean Water Fund and other concerned Milford citizens met with Mayor Richetelli to discuss how the city can lead by example by passing such a resolution. By committing to clean energy instead of the traditional, dirty power plants, Milford would not only reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming but, at the same time, would educate and encourage its citizens, businesses and institutions to reduce their energy consumption and choose clean energy options.

Mayor Richetelli has demonstrated his willingness to listen and further educate himself by attending the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities workshop “Funding Municipal Clean Energy Projects”. The half-day program will highlight clean energy subsidies and incentive programs of a free solar energy system. In addition, the workshop will address the Clean Energy Option that will be offered to Connecticut ratepayers in early 2005 and the economic opportunities associated with the development of fuel cell and other renewable energy technologies. This workshop is being held on Nov. 16th at 8:30a.m. in Room 2A of the Legislative Building in Hartford. It is open to the public. Anyone who wishes to attend, please contact me at 878-0910.

At the same time, we are working to provide the Mayor with information concerning the renewable energy technology and cost options. We have reviewed data obtained from the various municipal departments and determined that the City of Milford used a Grand Total of 21,046,037 Kilowatt-hours of

electricity in the fiscal year July 2003-June 2004. This information has been forwarded to Environment Northeast (ENE), a nonprofit environmental organization, which will prepare a memo, including cost projection figures for Milford, free of charge. We hope to have the report within the next two weeks.

Since our last meeting, we have obtained a simplified Clean Energy Option pledge form. By signing the pledge, you join "Connecticut's 20% by 2010 Campaign" supporting the work to achieve that goal in our community and learn more about how you can help with this effort. (If you have the old pledge form, simply check the first box on top.) Completed forms should be sent to: Clean Water Action, 645 Farmington Avenue, 3rd Floor, Hartford, CT 06105-2907. You will be notified when the Clean Energy Option becomes available from your utility. Customers do not have to switch electric suppliers to purchase clean energy but may choose from two independent suppliers to provide renewable options. The options will include a slight additional charge, which covers the cost to "upgrade" their traditional electricity portfolio.

We urge you to send in the pledge form to let the State know that we support clean energy and to help Milford qualify for the free solar system under the communities incentive program. We will keep you informed about the highlights of the November 16th workshop, so all the more reason to attend our ECC meeting on November 18.

Please Note This Warning about Dioxin, a carcinogen that is a cause of cancer, especially breast cancer. **Don't freeze plastic water bottles with water** in them as this also releases dioxin from the plastic. **Do not heat food in a microwave oven using plastic containers or cover with plastic wrap.** And it specifically applies to food that has fat, as it further enhances the release of dioxins into the food and ultimately into the cells of our bodies. It is recommended that glass, Corning Ware, or ceramic containers be used for heating food.

TV dinners, instant ramen and soups, etc., should be removed from the container and heated in glass, Corning Ware, etc., and cover with glass or paper towels. This notice was sent out in Johns Hopkins newsletters that are being circulated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

An update on the distribution of brochures and the Storm Drain Marker Program. We have nearly completed the eastern section of Milford that is from the Post Road south to the Sound, Milford Harbor, east to the Oyster River, except for the section off Roses Mill and Woodmont Roads. We are behind on the markers, though much of this section has been completed. There is much to be done west of the Harbor, particularly the Devon area off the Post Road. Very little has been done north of the Post Road.

Thanks to the Students from the Alternative Ed. School under Annaliese. They have been very instrumental in working on the upper eastern part of the city, distributing the brochures during their afternoon walking program. Special mention and thanks go to new members, Susan Slattery and her mother, Carmela Micik who have distributed hundreds of brochures along Mary Ellen Drive and Cornflower. And to Sheryl Blake, her daughter and friend for covering a large section in the Devon area with brochures and applying the storm drain markers. Linda Brewster, Joyce Acebo and Carolyn Alling have covered the Housatonic Drive area. Cub Scout Troop 709 is finishing up the area around Welches Point Road. Their work has inspired the Cub Scout Troop from Orange, under Lauren Sacks, to cross the border into Milford to help distribute our brochures around the upper end of Woodruff Road.

We are looking for more volunteers to incorporate delivering the brochures in their walking routine. It makes for a win win exercise/education project. Please call, especially if your street has not been done but even if it has, we need your call -- 878-0910. Let's finish this part of the project this winter and tackle the markers in the spring next year to finally finish this project.

Christina Swanke will be installing the map of Milford so you will be able to put your green dot on your plot, indicating that you have a **freedom lawn**, or a yard that is free of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The official date has yet to be set but you will be notified as soon as it has been installed.

Special thanks to all the candidates who participated in our political debate last month. They all articulated their desire to support environmental initiatives. They did their homework well. We hope that this will be a successful legislative session, especially the ban on pesticides for all schools and day care centers in the state.

I know this is early to be thinking about the holidays, especially our December holidays, but every year I open my house to ECC members, so we can all have the opportunity to meet each other and discuss other things besides the environment. The date will be **Sunday, December 12 from Noon to 6:00 pm**, 77 Pelham Street (from New Haven Avenue right onto Buckingham to the end, turn left onto Melba, then right onto Pelham. For parking, you may need to take first left off Melba onto Mills Avenue) Spouses, partners, etc. are welcome too!

We will not meet in December; therefore we need to discuss topics and projects for 2005, like Earth Day, education for organic lawn care, etc. Your attendance and your ideas are needed.

Happy Thanksgiving!!!

Ann Berman, Chair of ECC