

MOSAIC



5TH ANNIVERSARY ~ 2008 EDITION

Chicago's Green Evolution Revealed!

Dining
Organic!

One man's trash
is another one's
dinner...

Small people doing
big things for a better
Chicago...

Are we getting carried
away with green?
Columnists speak out...

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

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Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fifth issue of Mosaic, an annual student magazine dedicated to issues of social justice and responsibility in the Chicago area. Chicago, on the exterior, is a muscular, growing city with mammoth structures of steel and glass and booming enterprise. In this issue, students of Loyola University Chicago, under the advisement of Professor John Slania, take a closer look at environmental issues in Chicago and peel back the layers to discover Chicago's hidden green thumb.

We look at every aspect of daily life in the city to find ways that Chicago is going green. From environmentally safe dry-cleaning to Dumpster diving to green nuns, this issue of Mosaic tries to open up a forum for discussion of green practices.

You'll find insights into the lives of people that make Chicago tick, and how they are influencing Chicago's environmental practices. We'll take a look at the bigger picture as well, focusing on eco-relevant trends.

Students were responsible for writing and editing all of the stories in Mosaic. They also designed the layout, sold advertisements, and promoted its publication. Making a magazine with classmates has been an interesting, new experience, and we hope you will enjoy this year's Mosaic just as much as we enjoyed producing it.

Additionally, our Website www.luc.edu/orgs/mosaic2008 offers more information on the stories found in these pages, a blog from our writers, and a video feed, as well. So get reading, and let us know what you think- you can email me at jparikh@luc.edu.

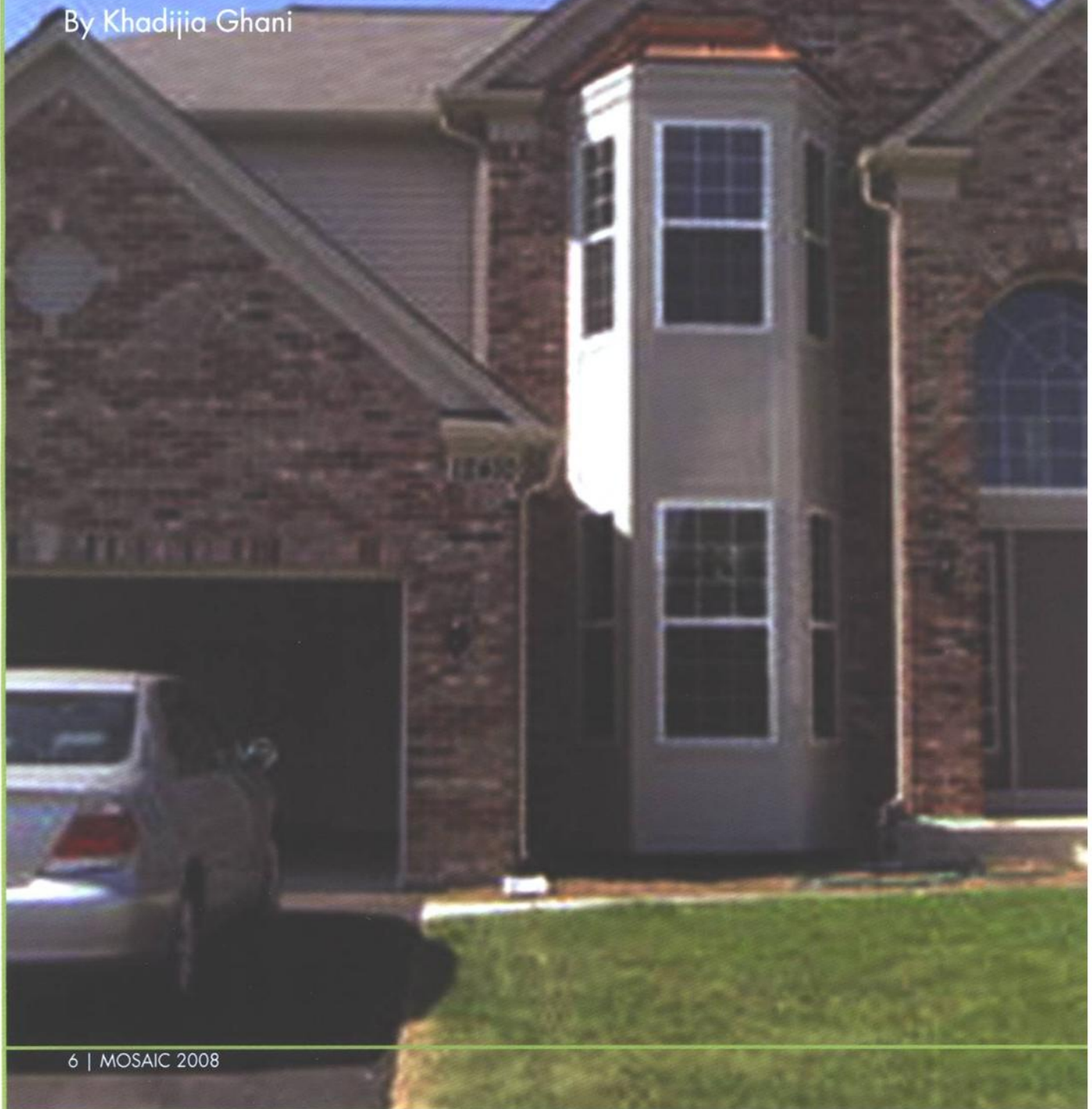
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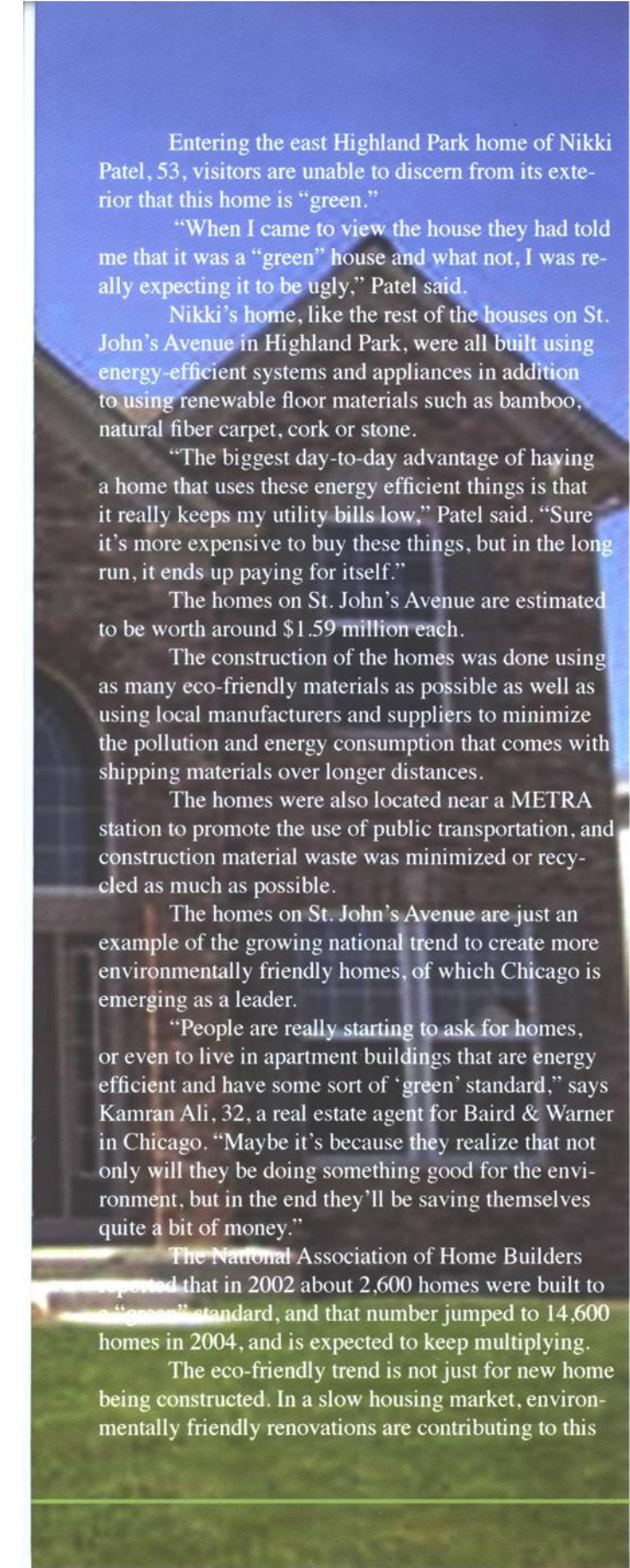


Green House Effect:

A Neighborhood Chooses Eco-Friendly Homes

By Khadijia Ghani





Entering the east Highland Park home of Nikki Patel, 53, visitors are unable to discern from its exterior that this home is “green.”

“When I came to view the house they had told me that it was a “green” house and what not, I was really expecting it to be ugly,” Patel said.

Nikki’s home, like the rest of the houses on St. John’s Avenue in Highland Park, were all built using energy-efficient systems and appliances in addition to using renewable floor materials such as bamboo, natural fiber carpet, cork or stone.

“The biggest day-to-day advantage of having a home that uses these energy efficient things is that it really keeps my utility bills low,” Patel said. “Sure it’s more expensive to buy these things, but in the long run, it ends up paying for itself.”

The homes on St. John’s Avenue are estimated to be worth around \$1.59 million each.

The construction of the homes was done using as many eco-friendly materials as possible as well as using local manufacturers and suppliers to minimize the pollution and energy consumption that comes with shipping materials over longer distances.

The homes were also located near a METRA station to promote the use of public transportation, and construction material waste was minimized or recycled as much as possible.

The homes on St. John’s Avenue are just an example of the growing national trend to create more environmentally friendly homes, of which Chicago is emerging as a leader.

“People are really starting to ask for homes, or even to live in apartment buildings that are energy efficient and have some sort of ‘green’ standard,” says Kamran Ali, 32, a real estate agent for Baird & Warner in Chicago. “Maybe it’s because they realize that not only will they be doing something good for the environment, but in the end they’ll be saving themselves quite a bit of money.”

The National Association of Home Builders reported that in 2002 about 2,600 homes were built to a “green” standard, and that number jumped to 14,600 homes in 2004, and is expected to keep multiplying.

The eco-friendly trend is not just for new home being constructed. In a slow housing market, environmentally friendly renovations are contributing to this

growing trend.

According to the American Institute of Architects (AIA), homeowners are looking to make their homes more eco-friendly, especially when it comes to their kitchens and bathrooms. In a survey of 500 architecture firms working in the residential sector in 2006, 65.2 percent of the respondents said homeowners were looking for more energy efficient appliances and housing materials.

“One of the most common things I’ve installed for homeowners wanting to be more environmentally conscious, is the ‘green toilet,’ says Dan Aldridge, an independent contractor with an environmental agenda. “I make it a point to use as many environmentally friendly practices throughout the construction process as possible.”

The “green toilet” works by using up to 20 percent less water and can save homeowners up to 50 percent on their water bills

Another renovation to consider is geothermal heating and cooling. Geothermal pumps are filled with water and glycol and use the earth as a heat exchanger. Although geothermal pumps initially cost twice as much as a traditional heating and cooling system, it ends up paying for itself with much lower heating and cooling costs. That’s in addition to eliminating the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Geothermal pumps on average can save homeowners up to 70 percent on their utility bills. Location is a factor in how expensive a geothermal pump will be to install, but prices start at \$4,000 and can go upwards to about \$11,000.

Evanston’s Church Street Village development which consists of 40 townhouses was the first in the nation to use this type of construction. “With the price of natural gas becoming more expensive, this kind of investment is a smart choice,” said Aldridge.

Whether it is the use of water saving showers and toilets, solar panels, or energy efficient products and heating systems, the housing sector has definitely moved toward greener pastures.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if in a couple of years, instead of just a few isolated ‘green’ neighborhoods, we began to see whole communities. Illinois is definitely at the forefront of ‘green’ innovation,” Aldridge said.

Builders Design Energy Efficient Homes

By Brian Bene

As long as Joe Pelayo can remember, he has always been passionate about nature and the environment. He finds pleasure in discovering unfamiliar bike trails and loves to go hiking. He claims to have a stubborn personality that leads to borderline obsession with particular concerns. It comes as no surprise then, that the awareness-raising global warming issue sparked Pelayo's interest.

"I started investigating and...found out that the burning of fossil fuels is the main contributor [of] carbon dioxide emissions," Pelayo said. "I wasn't surprised when I confirmed my suspicions that the homes and buildings we live and work in are also major contributors."

At the time of his discovery, Pelayo already owned and operated a home construction company in Schaumburg. Subsequently, his findings went hand-in-hand with his business. He decided to start building and promoting green homes, which cut down on carbon dioxide emissions and ensure less energy use.

He soon found himself in the middle of an escalating and exciting trend. So he acted quickly.

He renamed his company "Green Home Pros" and began to capitalize on the popular movement. According to a 2006 study conducted by the National Home Builders Association and McGraw Hill Construction, there was a 20 percent increase in home builders focused on environmentally sensible construction than in the previous year.

In 2007, the trend seems to have already caught up to the rest of the industry.

"Where our office used to only get a handful of green projects a year, we now almost exclusively do all green projects," said Dan Contreras, project manager at Nathan Kipnis Architects in Evanston. "I imagine this increase is also evident throughout the entire industry."

A green home often will feature many of the following eco-friendly options: sustainable materials such as wood, recycled wallboard and insulation, solar and natural lighting, solar thermal panels, low volatile organic compound paint, and many energy saving appliances.

The trend hasn't gained its rapid momentum solely because of its eco-friendly advantages, but it can be financially appealing to home owners as well.

The average electric bill of a green home is generally lower than that of a standard home of comparable size because of all of the neat elements that cut down on energy consumption. Low flow faucets, tankless water heaters and solar tunnels are some of the more popular features that minimize water and energy use.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average monthly energy bill of an energy-efficient home is approximately \$135. That is \$40 less than the average bill of a non-energy-efficient home.

"It's comforting," said Kimberly Gray, professor at Northwestern University, of her green home. "My utility bills are down, it's well insulated, it holds heat in the winter and it's cool in the summer."

Utilizing the green scheme to remodel an old house could raise land value as well as the home's selling price. But it's not necessarily an inexpensive investment.

As great as it is for the environment, building a green home from scratch or turning an old home "green" can be a pricey decision.

"It has to be a quality, lasting home or it's not green," said Zoka Zola, principal of Zoka Zola Architecture and Urban Design in Chicago. "It certainly is more expensive because it's better quality. With a real green home, the standards go up and it's built out of durable materials."

All of these ingredients can add up to a dent in the pocketbook. But there are many conflicting reports on exactly how much more expensive the costs of going green can be. According to Pelayo, construction of green homes costs about 2 percent to 8 percent more than regular homes. But he also expressed that the upfront costs can be regained, especially if the home owner decides to sell.

"You can expect to recoup your investment almost instantly due to the high demand of a green home," Pelayo said. "A green home will be worth a lot more than a home that is 2 to 8 percent lower in price [to build]."

With the demand of green homes on such a rise, it's possible that all homes and buildings will eventually be green. Many cities, including Evanston, are signing onto the Kyoto Protocol, which calls for a collective effort to be made to reduce emission levels. In Chicago, a mandate has been

Homes Continued...

issued for all public buildings to be built with Leadership in Energy and Environment certification, a rating system that monitors sustainability, water savings and energy efficiency.

Safe to say, the trend is clearly noticeable.

"It's happening right now in our offices," Contreras said. "Many green building techniques are considered just good building techniques, so they will eventually become

commonplace."

Unfortunately for Pelayo, the market is becoming harder to corner as the trend becomes more popular. But being the eco-conscious individual that he is, he's fine with that. It's all in the name of a good cause.

"I feel pretty confident that what we're doing now will soon become the norm for future homebuilders," he said. "I don't know if the majority of America's homes will ever be considered green. I wish they were. But I do know that it's going to matter to more people."

Public Works Building Goes Green

By Ashley Brusso

Government buildings are often dull, dark and lifeless.

But the newly-opened Oak Park Public Works Building is bright and green. It is now the first public works facility in Illinois to be green-designed.

"A public works building typically uses less energy than a conventional type building so it was difficult to try and design a system that could further reduce energy usage," said Karen Rozmus, Oak Park's Waste Reduction Manager.

Some features of the new 155,000-square-foot building, which houses the public works department offices, equipment and trucks, are a 20 percent reduction on water use because of low flow faucets and fixtures and a 100,000-square-foot green roof to also limit water runoff. Also, many materials in the three-level building were recycled or bought locally.

Oak Park village officials and architects in charge of creating the \$29 million building made sure to follow procedures that would ensure it met Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, LEED, standards. Although there are many benefits to the new Public Works building, they are still looking to do more.

"Another item we hope to add is a solar thermal water heating system which will be an array of 15 solar panels," Rozmus said. Rozmus said this kind of installment would cost an additional \$60,000.

"The village will have an approximately 15 year payback for the investment, but after that it will just benefit from the reduced water heating costs," Rozmus said.

Despite the added costs of constructing a green building, village residents seem to be in support of the project.

"I think it is fantastic. It is a reflection of what Oak Park residents want from the Village. It is proof that going green is becoming more main-stream and also that it is more attractive and a signal from what is to come," said resident Maria Onesto-Moran, owner of the store Green Home Experts.

Rozmus is pleased by the positive feedback.

"It is a healthier environment for employees," she said. "And it will be a showcase for the community; an educational demonstration of green building."



Greening Chicago One Rooftop at a Time

Popularity of Green Roofs Grows in Windy City

By Jaime Sharer

Every day, millions of people walk the streets of Chicago staring at the magnificent buildings and fine architect. Many of the buildings are so tall, it is impossible to see over their rooftops. Imagine being able to fly over the skyline and actually see what lies on top of some of these large concrete structures: gardens. Gardens full of grass, flowers, vegetable plants and soil.

Several buildings in Chicago such as the Rock 'n' Roll McDonalds, Apple Store, and City Hall have built their own gardens or "green roofs" in an effort to stay environmentally friendly.

"The city leads by example and it is showing that technology can work to install green roofs on top of buildings," said Larry Merritt, spokesperson for the City of Chicago Department of the Environment. "For example, they have been installed on schools, firehouses and municipal buildings."

Green roofs are an environmental trend that hit Chicago roughly seven years ago. According to Steven W. Peck, founder and president of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, a non-profit organization working to promote the green roof industry throughout North America, there are six basic elements that make up a green roof. The roof deck, waterproofing membrane,

root barrier, drainage layer, filter cloth, growing media, and plants are all engineered to sit upon a built structure. These layers make up a garden that will help the environment, offer the building owner financial benefits, and add beauty to an urban landscape.

The concept of a green roof is thought to have developed as long ago as the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and before, Peck said. "The modern green roof movement came from work completed in Germany after World War II," Peck said. "Germany is the leader in green roofing with an estimated 2 billion square feet implemented, largely the result of public investments and regulations combined with private investments."

Germany may be the leader in green roofs globally, but Chicago takes the crown as the U.S. city with the most square footage implemented annually. In total, Chicago has four million square feet of green roof.

Merritt suggests that there are more than 300 green roof projects that have been completed or are on the drawing board since the first was constructed on top of Chicago's City Hall in 2000.

Cities following close behind with the most green space are New York, Philadelphia, Portland, Seattle, and Boston.

The national market of green roof installation grew by 25 percent between 2005 and 2006, according to Peck. "The rate of growth is likely to increase as more and more governments recognize the benefits of green roofs and support them," Peck said.

Although green roofs have become a national trend, the Midwest seems to be one of its forerunners.

Charlie Miller, president and founder of Roofscapes Inc., the company that designed and installed the green roof on top of Chicago's City Hall, says he finds green roofs to be a bigger trend in the Midwest than in other regions of the country.

"Midwest cities are progressive from an environmental standpoint," Miller said.

Regardless of the city they are in, all green roofs benefit the environment and financially benefit the building owner.

"If done properly and in some situations, it may help insulate and help prevent heat loss," said Dave Hampton, secretary and director of Research and Development for Urban Habitat Chicago. "It can be a major part of storm water control. It extends the life of the roof membrane by diverting UV light and mediating between extreme temperature fluctuations."

According to Merritt, other benefits of green roofs are the reduction of the "urban heat island effect," the overheating of cities in summer that leads to pollution and increased energy consumption, the roofs also lower air temperature, reduce heating and cooling bills, and improved air quality.

"Many of the most important benefits, like human use and enjoyment, are difficult to quantify," Peck said.

For some small business owners, having a green roof can provide immediate benefits as well.

Paula Companio is the owner of True Nature Foods, an independent and natural food store which had a green roof installed in 2006 with the help of Urban Habitat Chicago.

"The food [from the garden] goes directly into the store beneath and then the profits from the food go back into sustaining the garden," Companio said.

"There weren't any reasons not to have a green roof; we all need to start having them."

The price of installing a green roof depends on the extent, depth, plant types, structure, whether it is new or a retrofit, irrigation, safety access, and many other factors, Hampton said.

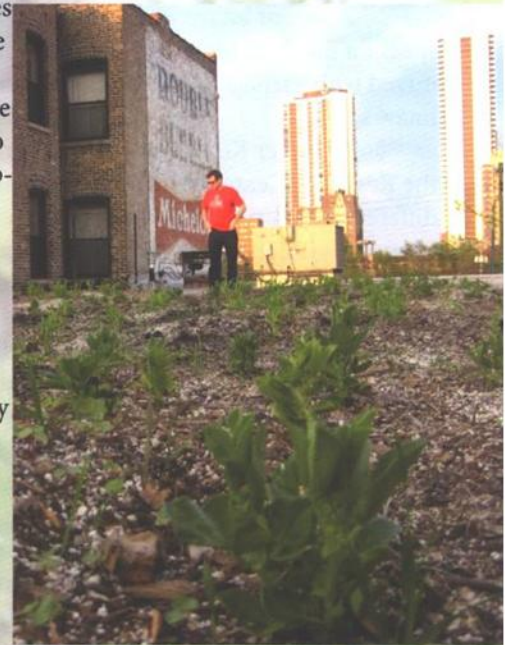
"I've seen quotes for 1,200 square feet retrofit green roof range from \$22,000 to \$40,000," Hampton said.

For some small business owners, this may be a steep price to pay, but the City of Chicago has implemented a Green Roof Grant Program which makes funds available to people and business owners.

Last year, the city was able to award 20 grants of \$5,000 each for a total of \$100,000, according to Merritt. The number of grants awarded is determined on a year to year basis, but in 2006, the Green Roof Grant Program was able to come up with \$200,000 for a total of 40 grants.

Mayor Richard M. Daley has made it known that he has a goal for Chicago to be one of the most environmentally-friendly cities in the country. With the city's time, money, and interest invested in the development of such things as green roofs, it looks like the mayor's goal could be one step closer to a reality.

"Green Roofs are becoming increasingly more popular," Hampton said. "Yes, it is a trend, [but I] hope it doesn't become a fad."



Green rooftops are taking root in Chicago.

Urban Farming

Chicago Cultivates City Farms

By Sarah Baraba

A vacant lot may be one of the most lifeless spots on Earth. A block of broken concrete or rubble mixed with garbage is not exactly the most hopeful of images.

However Ken Dunn, director and founder of the Resource Center of Chicago sees vacant lots quite differently, as a sign of potential. Dunn makes farms from this potential, turning inert lots into gardens of vitality, following what many others across the nation have already begun, urban agriculture.

Urban agriculture is “the growing, processing, and distributing of food and other products through plant cultivation and animal husbandry in and around cities,” according to the Advocates for Urban Agriculture (AUA), a group of local organizations that are working make Chicago a more sustainable city.

“Advocates for Urban Agriculture have given a lot of impotence for the move to urban growing in Chicago,” said Harry Rhodes, executive director of Growing Home Inc., a transitional employment organization working to train people in organic, urban agriculture.

The Chicago Park District, Botanic Garden, and the Department of Cultural Affairs along with many others are part of an initiative to work with the City on planning for sustainable, urban gardening and farming.

In June 2007, the City of Chicago adopted the “Chicago: Eat Local, Live Healthy” initiative, working with local and regional food producers to create a sustainable, health, and environmentally-conscious strategy for food and business relations.

While urban agriculture in Chicago is just in the beginning stages, worldwide, this practice has

proved to benefit society. In Toronto, Canada, for example, more than 40 percent of residents grow their food at home or in community gardens, and the United Nations Development Program said that nearly 20 percent of food produced world wide is harvested in urban areas.

In Chicago making productive use of tens of thousands acres of vacant lot is a start, according to Dunn, whose organization the Resource Center of Chicago works to make the city a more sustainable, eco-friendly environment by reducing waste, and utilizing what is already available.

The Resource Center organized City Farm, an ongoing, mobile farm project that started for job creation nearly 13 years ago, and today is still offering a lot to the Chicago community.

“City Farm came out of looking to utilize all of our resources,” said Dunn. “We really need to start tending to our space more carefully and not beautify certain areas, but not others.”

Using vacant lots from property owners from around Chicago, the Resource Center has found a low cost way to clean up an area, turning what were what Dunn calls “symbols of distraction,” into community gardens or farms. Once their work is complete, the move on to the next vacant lot, starting the process over again.

“Beautifying vacant lots could cost billions of dollars, we needed to find something that didn’t have an ongoing cost,” said Dunn.

But can producing food 10 minutes from downtown really be that beneficial?

The AUA say yes. In addition to making wise use of vacant lots, urban farming can also reduce air pollution, reduce fuel consumption by lowering the distance and fuel needed to transport goods, and cleans up Chicago soil that is tainted by urban living. This is not to mention urban agriculture also tends to save city residents money by purchasing locally, boosting economic activity within the community.

Many residents of the City have to travel quite a distance to get fresh produce. Marva Brown lives



across the street from a new urban farm on Chicago's South Side, the Wood Street Farm. Brown used to have to travel to 87th and Ashland to get her fruits and vegetables; she is looking forward to having fresh produce so close to home.

"By this being close like it is, we won't travel across town to get our vegetables," she said.

The United States Department of Agriculture reported the overall amount of farms in Cook County has declined by 24 percent, down from 276 farms in 1997, to 211 farms in 2002. Additionally, the total acres in farmland of Cook County have declined from 42,174 acres in 1997 to 23,836 acres in 2002, to a drop of 43 percent.

Many have attributed this to the urban sprawl of cities in Illinois; urban farming could help to gain back some production lost by decreasing amounts of farmland.

The AUA argues that urban agriculture reduces reliance on emergency food systems in cities and promotes food security, as well as educates people on the importance of being self-sufficient.

Growing Home Inc., works with the community to boost city agriculture. Projects of Growing Home include the Su Casa Garden on the South Side, which offers training for urban agriculture and the Les Brown Memorial Garden in downstate LaSalle County, a 10-acre certified organic farm, meaning no food or livestock at the farm comes into contact with conventional pesticides, are fed with hormones, or genetically engineered.

Produce from Growing Home Inc. like many local farmers, is sold at Green City Market in Lincoln Park, whose mission is to connect the community with their farmers, chefs and customers.

Additionally, many high-end restaurants such

as 312, Blackbird, North Palm, and the Frontera Grill have started purchasing produce and food from urban gardens.

"I think we're at the cusp, there's a lot of interest from the city, Within the next two to five years there will be a lot more going on." said Rhodes of Growing Home. Growing Home recently opened its Wood Street urban farm, located at 59th and Wood Streets. This is the first permanent, year-round urban

farm in Chicago. The Wood Street farm has three greenhouses, which even in the intense chill of a Chicago winter, allows for harvests throughout the year.

But community and the environment are not the only benefactors of urban agriculture, Rhodes said that community farming and gardening promotes on an individual level as well. Many of the people employed by Growing Home and the Resource Center have been homeless, substance abusers, or down and out.

"There's no chemicals involved in our farming, and many people working here are coming out of chemical abuse, growing food without chemicals I think really speaks to them,"



Urban greenhouses are sprouting up in Chicago.

Rhodes said.

Parris Brewer went through Growing Home's urban agriculture education seminar and today is the marketing manager of the Wood Street Farm.

Brewer said the most important aspect of the Wood Street Farm will be "teaching how to grow organic, and giving back to the land," he said. "It's much healthier for you, eating all natural."

Following the trends of urban vitality is a start, says Dunn, but not the solution.

"Urban decline and rebuilding is not a green process in itself," Dunn said. "By injuring a lot, we are injuring a community; we have to find the ability to sustain good food distribution, employment, and nutritional education."

Friendly Fire

Controlled Burns Restore Prairies

By Andy Dost



Controlled burns actually help restore prairies.

to the soil, to removing overpopulations of animals, to bringing back seedlings and

once vanished creatures, there is a diverse workload.

“We work in prairies, savannas, and woodlands,” said John Balaban, a science teacher at St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago and, with his wife, Master Steward of the North Branch Restoration Project. “These areas were overrun by aggressive native and non-native weeds and brush when we started. We have removed buckthorn, garlic mustard, white sweet clover, maples and green ash, and many of the areas are rich, bio-diverse communities of self-rep-

The fire blazes and smoke wafts through the treetops. How bad is it, the forest ranger assessed?

It’s great, he decided. It’s a controlled burn. “Out West, fire’s a problem. It can be used as a tool, but it can also be a problem,” said Jim Chelvig, a local naturalist and director of the Trailside Museum of Riverside. “[Here,] it’s done under the right conditions with the right preparations and the right staffing and those 30-foot flames [are burning] what you want burned... the invasive species, which can’t tolerate the fire, but the native species can.”

There is a relatively unknown green cause people have rallied behind in the forest preserves of Cook County, and indeed across the nation.

It’s not just any old green supporters want: native species of animals and plants are what they want. The Forest Preserve District manages and works alongside the cause’s volunteers. District workers come out for prescribed burns to keep it all safe.

From chopping down invasive species of plants, to burning and returning the remains

licating native species now, though, of course, and there is still much work to be done.” Wildflowers bloom again, and scores of animals play in the restored environments. The Bunker Hill Forest Preserve on Chicago’s Northwest side has experienced over a seven-year period a 9 percent increase in the number of native species. Other spots in the Cook County area have seen similar increases and hope to continue to see them.

In other areas of the country, grassroots organizations similar to those here have done the same sort of work successfully to the broad spectrum of American ecosystems.

From Baker Park Stream Bank Restoration Project in Maryland, to Lava Lake Ranch Restoration in Idaho, effort is underway to restore what is labeled damaged land.

As with any cause, there is controversy. In the Chicagoland area, groups have opposed ecological restoration vehemently. Others just find it wasteful.

“It seems a little unnecessary and useless. I don’t think the garlic mustard or buckthorn

is going away," said Fred Herr, of Elmhurst. His wife, Mary, volunteers her time to restoration work. "Nature's a wonderful thing. You just can't change it intentionally. Whatever change happens will have to happen naturally."

Understandably, it looks odd for environmentalists and forest preserves to allow trees to be cut down, but they remain stalwart.

"Without intervention, it was clear that we were losing the very features that the preserves were meant to save," said Jane Balaban, the other Master Steward of the North Branch Restoration Project.

Supporters of restoration contend that biodiversity is more important to keep a healthy ecosystem than letting a few dominant species choke out the others. The Forest Preserve District agrees.

"We don't want a deer park covered in buckthorn," Chelsvig said. "We want a green woodland with deer, squirrels, raccoons, salamanders, insects, and perching birds that nest in the underbrush and eat the insects. We want the ecosystem more what it should be as opposed to a near monoculture."

It looks good on that front. Where loping prairies had turned into thorny forests, they have returned to their

natural states.

Across the U.S. and the world, the same has happened in a variety of ways. Besides chopping and burning, other regions reintroduced native species, spreading seeds and releasing animals back into the wild.

Famously, grey wolves were returned to Yellowstone Park and have restored a natural balance in the ecosystem. That park is considered to be in better shape than it was decades ago with overpopulations of deer and bison desolating the land.

But such vacation spots are not the only places to care about, and the work is not finished for volunteers. Restoring the treasures surrounding Chicagoans to what they were before human intervention is a great quest in itself.

"There are 68,000 acres of forest in Cook County," Chelsvig said. "That amount of space, this close to a metropolitan area: there's nothing like that anywhere else in the world."

Mosquito Spraying is a Success

By Andy Dost

Is the summer's acidic smell of citronella candles appealing? It might be, but it's not the only thing keeping the mosquitoes away.

Spraying in the Chicago area was a great success last summer. This is no sign of the skeeters' return in the summer to come, sadly.

The Chicago Department of Public Health monitors for the West Nile Virus. They order spraying when the infection rate in an area reaches 10%.

"That's when you begin to see human cases," said Tim Hadac, director of public information for the department.

While there are no acknowledged severe health or environmental effects of the spray, the department prefers to avoid it.

"We don't spray simply for aesthetics, to get ride of so-called nuisance mosquitoes," Hadac said. "We spray simply as a last resort."



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Saving the Strays:

Harmony House Gives Shelter to Cats

By Anthe Mitrakos

It's not everyday you see cats roaming around Chicago streets. But these frisky felines, whether lost, abandoned, or wild-born, have added to the growing population of strays, many of which end up in the hands of anti-cruelty societies. That's doomsday for cats, no one adopts. Due to limited shelter space, thousands of animals are euthanized every year.

That's not the case at Harmony House for Cats where felines are welcome to enjoy the rest of their lives.

"What makes us special is our cage-less environment...no kill policy, and the incredible staff and volunteers that make up Harmony House," said Ann Dieter, 48, president of Harmony House.

Harmony House for Cats has an extensive history of rescuing cast, emphasizing their no-kill, no-cage policy.

Frustrated with Chicago animal shelters' short term and unsatisfactory care for cats in the 1960s, a small group of animal lovers began rescuing strays, often housing them in their own homes. In 1970, they founded a non-for-profit organization and ran under the name "Animal Protective Society." Seven years later, the society housed rescued cats in a two story building on Wrightwood Avenue. In 1988, they relocated to their current address at 3809 N. Kedzie Avenue, and adopted the name Harmony House for Cats.

Harmony House's logo of two cats hugging each other conveys companionship many cats find in other cats while living at harmony House.

Caring for a large pack of cats roaming cage-free can be a hassle, but thanks to the help of volunteers and donors, Harmony House has provided care for cats and kittens for years.

"I love animals...I didn't know it would be as hard as it is taking care of them," said volunteer Candace Prudik, 37, of Rogers Park. Prudik has worked with harmony House for two years, playing with, cleaning up after, and promoting adoption for the benefit of cats.

Eighty percent of the cats living under Harmony House's roof were once strays.

Other cats are found by the door in boxes or cages, left by owners who for one reason or another cannot take care of them anymore. Drop off exceptions have been made in situations like that of a cat named Mora, whose owner was called to Iraq.

To ensure cats leaving the shelter have a promising future, harmony House requires all prospective adopters to spend some time with the cats before taking them home. This helps adopters get to know the cats' personalities and find their perfect feline match. All cats at harmony House are spayed or neutered to help curb the growing population of unwanted animals.

The cats at Harmony House receive play therapy, veterinary check-ups, the food and shelter they need to stay happy. Each of the three floors includes couches, shelves, and multi-tiered cat trees creating a cozy, home-like atmosphere.

The no-cage policy allows cats to roam free and engage in a communal environment in which they seem to be quite content, and no one is kicking them out any time soon.

"They don't leave here unless they are adopted," Prudik said. When space is limited, Harmony House finds other no-kill shelters like that of Harmony House.

"I feel that by adopting from them [Harmony House], I am giving another cat a chance to live in a great shelter like theirs, plus I have a new family member as well," said Elizabeth Flynn, 26, of Chicago.





Americans are increasingly buying environmentally-friendly items for their pets.

Pets Save the World:

Eco-Friendly Pet Options Are on the Rise

By Julie Sammarco

Rose Aari, 36, used to bring her dog to the park equipped with a baggie full of treats and a tennis ball, ready for an evening of playing. She'd throw the ball. He'd bring it back. She'd throw the ball. He'd bring it back. This went on all evening. By the time they were ready to go home, the tennis ball was a mess.

"He likes to run and chase the ball, but then when he gets tired, he'll lie down and tear the felt off," Aari said. "I was going through a case of tennis balls a week."

Looking for another, more durable, toy for Tito, her Jack Russell Terrier, she came across Planet Dog, a company that sells non-toxic, recyclable dog products.

This company has also won awards for fashioning the "most durable, pliable, buoyant, and bouncy dog toy on the market," according to its website. Intrigued, Aari purchased a Planet Dog ball.

Pleasantly amazed by the company's mission of selling eco-friendly products for pets, she decided to make the switch from tennis balls to eco-friendly toys.

"That's my baby," she said, pointing down at 3-year-old Tito, "If I can change the light bulbs in my house, I can be smarter about what I buy for him, too."

As Americans are becoming more environmentally conscious of what they buy, eat, and how they live, they

are transferring those values to how they provide for their pets. Some attribute this to the humanization of pets lead by Hollywood debutantes like Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. Because pets are part of the family, buying the best products for them has become a priority. Eco-friendly pet products inflict minimal harm to the environment. Many are non-toxic, and made from 100 percent recycled materials.

“Although the minority of pet owners use these products—maybe 10 percent,” said Catherine Frost, Director of Marketing and Product Development for Planet Dog. “The numbers are definitely growing. It’s on pace with the growth of eco-awareness, overall.”

Natural and organic food and non-food supplies for pets racked up sales of approximately \$527 million in 2004, based on double-digit annual sales gains that show no sign of abating. Sales are expected to top the \$1 billion mark by 2009, estimates Packaged Facts, a leading publisher for market research.

“With over 70 million pet households in the U.S., the products [Americans] use [for their pets] have a big impact on the environment,” Frost said.

Being an eco-friendly pet owner is not limited to buying natural or organic foods and toys. Companies like Planet Dog, Bella Creature Comforts, and Global Dog Natural Pet Products, are selling leashes, collars, beds, grooming supplies, and waste management options—yes—eco-friendly poop bags. It doesn’t stop there. Doggie septic tanks called Doggie Dooley Toilets are being installed in backyards across the country, keeping lawn areas cleaner and more sanitary. The Cat Genie, a self-flushing, self-washing cat toilet, also won best new cat product at the 2007 Global Pet Expo.

Consumers will not have to dish out the extra dough to buy these products either. Most nature friendly products sell for about the same price or lower than prices on products that aren’t environmentally friendly. Planet Dog toys start at \$5.95, where toys from Petsmart can be as high as \$19.99. Planet Dog hemp collars range from \$15.95-\$17.95, where Petsmart’s collars range from \$2.99-\$54.99. A bed from Bella Creature Comforts can be sold at \$79.99, where an equally-sized bed is sold at Petsmart for \$99.99.

Not only can these products save you a few bucks, they may also be healthier for your pet.

“People have to make sure that toys are appropriately sized for their pet and won’t break apart easily. Those are always the safest, healthiest toys. If companies can find ways to meet those two goals and make them environmentally friendly, I think that’s great.” Some eco-friendly pet products are dubbed the most durable on the market, making them some of the safest toys out there, said John Michael, a veterinarian at the Animal Care Center in Plainfield, Ill.

But Michael wants pet owners to be cautious.

“Before putting your pet on an entirely environmentally friendly diet, make sure everything is safe, ask your vet. There can be some uncommon things put into those diets that could be harmful to your pet,” he said.

Aari and Tito continue to visit the park for their evening routine of fetch. The eco-friendly ball she purchased has endured five strenuous months of play.

“We’re both happy,” she said. “I don’t have to buy a pack of tennis balls every week, and he loves that toy, and helping the planet and our country out in this way is important to me so, this is great.”

Is Fido becoming Vegan?



Museum Lets Visitors Discover Nature

By Andy Dost

To get there, visitors pass acres of trees, deer hightailing it across the road, and a few Frank Lloyd Wright houses.

When they park, they find a pond in front of their car. A fisherman sits on his cooler, dozing, to the left, and an old dead tree to the right serves as a waterborne shelter to ducks.

The Hal Tyrell Trailside Museum is perched over Division Street and Thatcher Avenue in River Forest. It operates, free and open to the public, as one of six district nature education centers for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

Up until two years ago, it served as the only wildlife rehabilitation center in the county. In line with the original vision from 75 years ago and the older purposes of its building that once served as a school, education has again become the museum's focus. The museum maintains rehabilitated animals to educate visitors.

"These are animals that can't possibly be released for a variety of reasons and that we can get some kind of educational benefit from," Jim Chelsvig said, director of Trailside for the past seven years. "There's a lot of misunderstanding."



Museum visitors see animals up close.

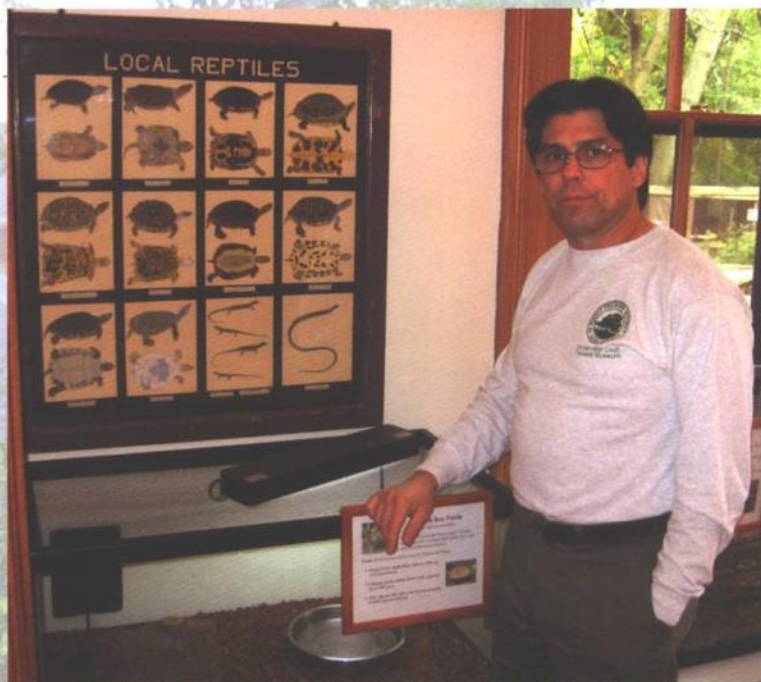


"[Like the coyote in the cage outside:] having this animal, it's an attractive animal, people enjoy looking at it, it lets them see what a coyote really looks like, up close, safely, and it gives us a chance to inform people, educate them about coyotes, what they do, the benefit to them being here, and how to get along with them," Chelsvig said.

With its energy again in education, Trailside added to its full-time naturalists, from two to four. Programming increased dramatically, and the staff and some of the animals appear at events all over the county.

Of course, learning still happens close to home: the museum and woods provide a backdrop for plenty.

"I think the strength of a place like this is it's a discovery place. Real education comes out of self-discovery,"



Jim Chelsvig is director of the Hal Tyrrell Trailside Museum.

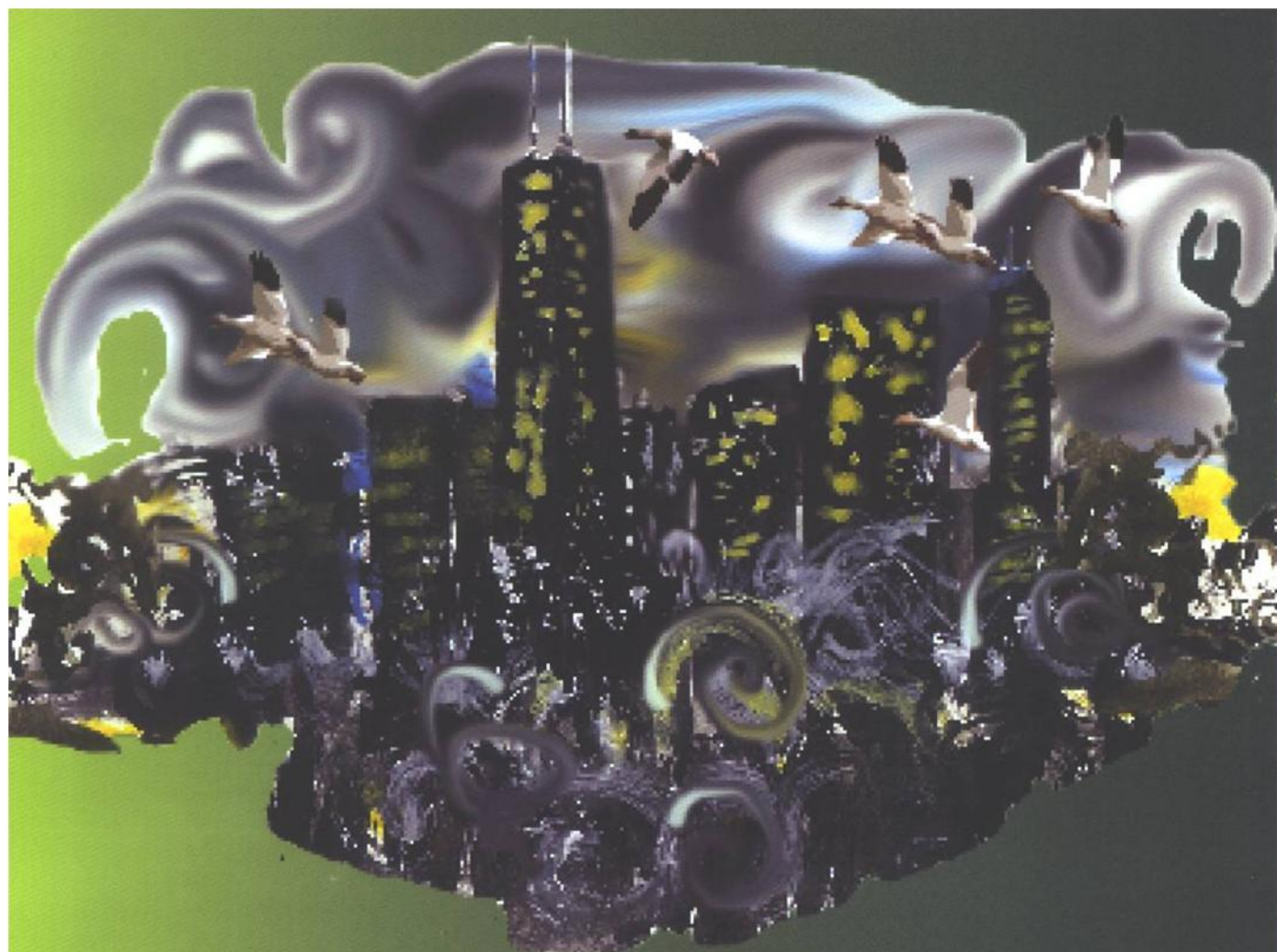
“I think the strength of a place like this is it’s a discovery place. Real education comes out of self-discovery,” John Elliott said, education manager for the Forest Preserve District and supervisor of all its nature centers.

A group of University of Chicago students and several families seem to agree. They spent a day enjoying the local flair.

“[My kids] get to see local animals, a lot of plants, that otherwise they wouldn’t really see,” Mike Vest, 46, of Oak Park, said while watching his two little girls. “Can’t see this kind of stuff at Brookfield Zoo.”

“I had seven [Oak Park River Forest High School kids] show up here [for a program] at 7 p.m. on a Sunday night,” Chelsvig recalled. “We went down by the pond, watching, listening, we’ve got the detectors on, and all of a sudden one kid’s pointing his up at a tree and it’s just chirping like crazy... We had bats flying [all around us, very close]... And the kids are like, ‘Wow! See that! Look at that!’” Chelsvig gets a thrill from educating people about wildlife. “It was cool to see how excited they were about it, and I was happy because I had never seen that much activity.”





Lights Out for Chicago Birds

By Anna C. Tyrkala

Kamikaze birds are a no-no for downtown Chicago businesses.

Conservation groups Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, Audubon Chicago Region, and the Chicago Audubon Society have teamed up with Chicago skyscrapers for a program called Lights Out Chicago. The program is intended to prevent birds from flying into and around buildings during fall and spring migration.

"Downtown offices agree to turn off lights or close their blinds after 11 P.M. of any floor above 40," said Skipper Joy Walters, editor of *Compass* and member of the Chicago Audubon society. The *Compass* is a bimonthly newsletter published by the Chicago Audu-

bon Society.

"Birds are attracted to the light and may either fly into the building or around it until they make themselves dizzy and eventually wear out."

Participating downtown offices are notified several months in advance to the migration seasons, and have even sparked an interest in other U.S. cities.

"Our offices developed the idea, and we are helping to develop Lights Out in other cities," said Judy Pollock, Director of Bird conservation at Audubon Chicago Region.

So, the next time a bird flies into a building, the bird is probably not dumb. The lights just weren't out.

Chicago is More Than Downtown Mr. Daley!

By Jaime Sharer

Chicago aims to be the most environmentally-conscious city in the U.S.

It's not news to anyone that Mayor Richard M. Daley is working to make Chicago one of the most environmentally-friendly cities in the country. He has imposed a tax on bottled water, promoted green roofs, proposed a bike rental program, and the lists goes on. The question is: is all of Chicago going to turn "green" or just the tourist's hot spots?

A couple of weeks ago, I randomly struck up a conversation with an architect who was in town for a green building convention. I asked him if Mayor Daley had attended and he nodded and smiled. "You know, I understand that he wants to make Chicago the most environmentally-safe city, but look around—he has a lot of work to do," the architect said.

At first, I was a little taken back by this comment. When I look around downtown Chicago I see a beautiful, clean city. That's the problem though. I am only looking at the downtown area. Take the red line all the way to 95th and Dan Ryan and you see a much different side of the city.



There are no green roofs or bicycle paths as far south as 95th and Dan Ryan. The South and

West Sides of Chicago are covered with vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and garbage lining the streets. I rarely see a street cleaning vehicle sweep the cracked roads of the South Side like they do to neatly paved Michigan Avenue.

In order to make Chicago the most environmentally-friendly city in the country, we need to focus on more than just the downtown area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2006 there were 2.8 million people living in Chicago. I'm going to assume that over 2 million people do not live in just the downtown, high-rise, luxury part of the city. That 2 million people are spread over the entire Chicago area. So, how is it fair to only concentrate on the parts of the city where tourists visit? We're not fooling anyone by only sprucing up the downtown area.

If Chicago wants to beat out cities such as Boston and Seattle for the title of most "green" city, we have to open our eyes. We need to come up with a better recycling program than the blue bags and implement and promote it everywhere in the city. Garbage bins are on every corner downtown, but let's increase the number of them in other areas as well. If we want people to stop drinking so much bottled water, we need to build more drinking fountains everywhere as well.

Now, don't get me wrong, I feel Chicago has the potential to be the most environmentally-friendly city in the country. We just need to learn to include everyone and every area of the city in order to win that title.

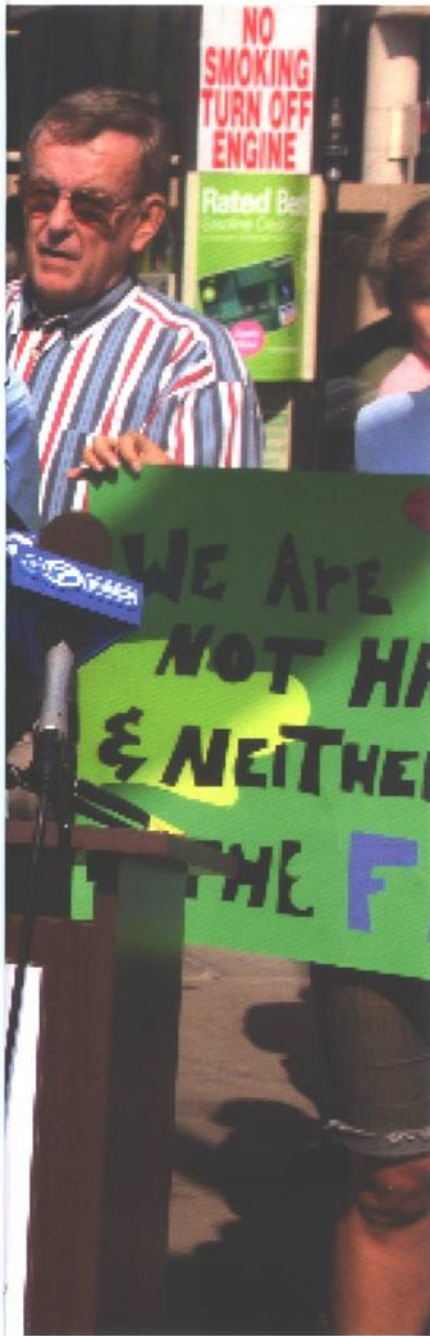


Max Mueller is focused on improving the local enviro

Down on Dumping

Activist wants to save the lake

by Nizam Alavi



ment as director of Environment Illinois.

When British Petroleum received a permit to increase dumping of ammonia and other toxics by up to 3 tons a day into Lake Michigan, Max Muller from Environment Illinois vowed to move “Beyond Pollution” and lobby against it. Running campaigns, holding gatherings at BP gas stations, and going to hearings in Indiana resulted in what some described as a firestorm of public outrage.

“The cumulative effect is that every politician in Illinois spoke against this dumping,” Muller said. Raised in Portland, Ore., Muller, 28, enjoyed the outdoors and camping. With zoning permits limiting city expansion, a 20-minute drive took him out to the country, something that has had a lasting effect on Muller to work for the environment.

After graduating from Grinnell College in 2000 with a degree in history, Muller worked as a legislative aide in the Oregon House of Representatives, where he first met with environmental lobbyists.

“I looked around and I saw that the best jobs people had were lobbyists because they run around and talk about issues they are passionate about. And it looked like a fun and interesting job,” Muller said.

In January of 2006, Muller transferred to Environment Illinois, a lobbyist organization in the state, where he now tackles three broad issues: water policy, toxic policy, and funding for open spaces. Sporting 20,000 members and 80,000 activists, Environment Illinois is a force to reckon with.

His biggest victory, as of late, is BP recalling its bid to dump excess waste into Lake Michigan due to the public outcry. And lately he’s seeking funding in the state budget this year on various environmental projects such as preserving and restoring the wetlands. Just this past year wetlands decreased by 16 percent in Illinois said Muller.

But the biggest aspect of his work is cleaning up toxics and preventing direct exposure of toxics.

“This is the sort of industrial era that people are exposed to tens and thousands of chemicals that they weren’t exposed to more than six years ago,” Muller said.

“The federal law that regulates chemicals is really really weak. It exempts all chemicals. The results are 100,000 chemicals that are used in the market place, with toxic screening only on a handful of them,” Muller said. But overall, Muller has praise for the city of Chicago.

“Chicago is a big city and some aspects they are taking a lead on the environment. They have a great energy program. The mayor has been a leader in protecting the great lakes,” he said.

Mayor Richard M. Daley condemned the waste increase permit to BP immediately.

As for activities citizens can do to improve the environment, Muller suggests people to support their local environmental organization to make changes, such that all constructions workers are required to build environmentally sound homes for example.

“We need to change the law to fix systemic problems,” Muller said.

Muller is currently in a situation where he is trying to change policy on making cars more efficient. But lobbyists from car companies do not want to change them, making it tough on passing policy reform according to him.

“They have an army of lobbyists, a ton of money and they are powerful. They are totally out of step with public opinion,” said Rebecca Stanfield, state director of Environment Illinois.

Only an increased support towards environmental lobbyists, Muller said, is the only way to change the ongoing problems.

“We’re never going to get there,” Muller said, “If we ask people to do these things.”

One Man's Trash is Another One's Dinner

By Sarah Henry

Digging around the inside of a Dumpster with a flashlight late at night in hopes of finding something edible or useable doesn't sound like an activity that a middle class young man with a good job would need to do. But for Darnald, a 25-year-old Chicago resident, this is a normal weekend event.

"I'm always happy when I can leave a Dumpster with at least something in my hands; I usually end up walking away with a garbage bag full of food or other items," said Darnald, who doesn't want his last name used because he doesn't want to draw attention to his activities.

Darnald is an example of a growing trend in the world called "Freeganism."

Freegans, "free" plus "vegan," are a society of people who are boycotting the economic system and living off consumer waste in an effort to minimize their support of corporations and their impact on the planet.

The strategy of Freeganism is "urban foraging" or "Dumpster diving." This is an activity of going through the garbage cans of retailers, offices or apartment complexes in search of useful goods. Despite what many people may think about digging through garbage, the waste that is recovered by Freegans is not slimy and disgusting; a lot of things are still in their wrappings from store shelves or boxes.

"We throw out things that are good enough to eat all the time," said Dave, the manager of a Trader Joes grocery in Chicago who can't disclose his last name due to corporate policy. "They just aren't good enough to sell in the store."

Darnald says that he stocks up on food from garbage bins and then freezes the items so that they will last longer. Besides food, he has recovered clothing, electronics, books, magazine, appliances, and furniture.

"I save so much money just by dumpster diving a couple times a week," Darnald said. "You just need to find out where the good places are."

Darnald works as a plumber in Chicago and usually "Dumpster dives" on the weekends when he has free time.

The act of Freeganism dates back to the days of gleaning, the act of collecting leftover crops from farmer's fields, and from Diggers, a group of agrarian communists who flourished in 17th century England. The word "Freegan" didn't show up until 2000 and became popular once the Website Freegan.info was created.



Adam Weissman, a resident of New York and the movement's chief spokesman, created Freegan.info four years ago, and it promotes Freeganism and teaches people how to live like Freegans. He frequently leads trash tours in New York and actively participates in the Freegan lifestyle.

Freegans mission is to reduce the overall volume of waste by Dumpster diving and starting groups like Food Not Bombs, an organization that recovers food that would otherwise go to waste and uses it to prepare meals to share in public places with anyone who wishes to partake.

Some Freegans Dumpster dive alone, but many go in groups and plan meet-ups to go dive together. In New York City, there is a large amount of Freegan activity, Dumpster tours and Freegan feasts. Items recovered from Dumpster diving can also be found or shared with others on Websites such as Freecycle and in the free section of Craigslist.

"Not everyone can eat garbage," said J.C. Dwyer, former Director of Programs and National Service at the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. "But people can find ways to minimize the amount of waste that gets thrown out every year."

A University of Arizona study found that Americans throw away more than a pound of food every day. "Even as a child, I would watch how much food people would waste," Darnald said. "I would eat the leftover food on people's plates; now I eat the leftover food out of Dumpsters...this is a bit messier though."

Some restaurants or food markets toss out perfectly good food every day. If an item on the shelf is nearing its expiration date it will get tossed in the trash because people may not buy almost expired food or because managers don't want to worry about people suing them because they were sold bad food.

"I know we are one of the biggest contributors to Freegans," said Dave of Trader Joes, "but we absolutely have a problem with it." He said that they do not want to be liable for any of the bad food that they throw out that gets eaten. He also said, "It's just plain illegal."

Many people worry about the health risks related to Dumpster diving, but Freegans say they are careful about what they put into their mouths.

"I get the food that is near the top of the Dumpsters," said Darnald. "I don't eat food that's underneath a bunch of garbage, and I make sure to wash everything first."

Some Freegans say they have experienced a couple upset stomachs from food they have retrieved from the trash, but it doesn't stop them from getting their next meal from the garbage. The Freegan.info website provides health and safety tips from a doctor regarding which foods not to eat from the trash such as meat, poultry, or half eaten food because of the dangerous levels of bacteria and communicable diseases

Freegans don't just Dumpster dive though, some change their whole way of living for this movement. They scavenge for their furniture and clothes that they wear; they try and avoid using transportation that creates pollution and the destruction of the wilderness to build roads; some become "squatters," people who occupy and rehabilitate abandoned houses and turn them into rent-free housing or community centers; and they minimize the amount they work so they are not working in companies who are all part of the economic system. They spend more of their free time volunteering at organizations like Food Not Bombs.

"I think the question for all of us is simply, to ask questions with every consumption choice we make," Weissman said in an email. "Not necessarily to feel this well of guilt over how we've lived our lives, but to ask ourselves how can we continue to live our lives."







PHOTO BY SEAN KENNEDY | 29

Green Movement Makes Me See Red

By Anthe Mitrakos

Guess what color is in this season...again. If you guessed green you are correct, and it's not going out of style anytime soon. Ladies and gentlemen, the "go green" craze has descended upon us. What once seemed like a sincere cause to help save trees has now erupted into a ridiculously handled, in my opinion, movement.

According to various "go green" sources, it is suggested you make your own cleaning supplies, avoid drinking bottled water, hang your clothes out to dry, make home-made gifts for the holidays and donate the money you would have spent to a green cause. Then there is the walk to work, the bike to work, and the eco-friendly vacations reducing the very distance you travel in miles. Try telling your kids there will be no Disney World...too far, not eco-friendly enough. Buy yourself a bright yellow helmet and bike to work every day...in your suit. I'll be laughing at you when it acid-rains.

While sightseeing on a vacation it is suggested by the Journal Times Online, a publication based in Wisconsin, that you "leave a light footprint - literally" and you "don't travel on fragile terrain and take care not to trample crops or gardens." OK so now I have to watch where I step just in case there is a single blade of grass I may trample on. What's next? Oh

yes...a green wedding where brides should consider purchasing a used dress and save trees by sending online invitations. Your pets can even go green now that someone came up with non-plastic (newspaper) lining. How ingenious!

Then I read a Times Magazine article introducing new eco-friendly ways of drinking wine, that is, purchasing it in plastic, not glass bottles. Let me not get into "vegan green shoes" made of plastic. I guess those who have a way with words can attempt to persuade an audience but I am not too thrilled about saving the environment if it means I have to bring my anxiety level to its maximum just reading these absurd ideas. As far as I know...anything made of plastic is not so environmentally friendly. Key word, NOT. Personally, I'll stick to the leather shoes, sorry cows, but if I eat you your hide might as well not go to waste.

Is anyone else getting a major headache reading these ridiculous "go green" inundations? A significant amount of what I read about the green movement irritates me. It gets to the point where I want to yell



out 'what about green eggs and ham?' but I'm sure that would not be too original of me.

The fact of the matter is, as human beings sharing this planet we have to take some major action and stop thinking of reusing that piece toilet paper a second time around in an effort to save trees. With a fixed amount of natural resources it's no question why we should start thinking of saving our planet from destruction caused by environmental abuse and indifference. We should do so in positive ways that make sense and actually make a difference.

In doing so, however, let's not overcomplicate things. It is evident waste, water, and air pollution things no one wants to have to deal with in their everyday lives, except perhaps Oscar the Grouch from Sesame Street. He lives in a garbage can so I can't expect much from him. But hey, at least he's green, right?

Before we label just about anything with the term "green," let's stop and think how we can contribute to preserving and maintaining a healthy environment without getting lost in translation. Do it because you want to, do it for the world, respect your surroundings and don't waste.

Let us instill in children, future consumers, the importance of respect and love toward the environment. That means make sure 5 year olds everywhere throw their ice-cream wrappers inside the park garbage can and not outside where the wind will surely pick it up and so will my dog eventually, which has a craze for plastic wrappers with chocolate remnants.

Like my High School chemistry teacher used to say, "recycling (paper) is good, but if you can use less to begin with that's even better." Stick with the basics. Recycle as much as you can, reuse your plastic shopping bags, don't start forest fires, carpool, and respect the ground you walk on out of American pride and love for the environment.



Something Borrowed, Something Green

Weddings Vow to be Eco-Friendly

By Lora Swarts

Something old...Something new...Something borrowed...Something green?

Eco-friendly weddings have grown so rapidly that companies are adding environmentally-friendly choices for interested engaged couples. Natural fiber wedding gowns, locally grown flowers, organic food and wine, recycled gold rings, and invitations made from recycled paper are just a few examples of how weddings are becoming environmentally conscious.

This trend has been spreading across the country, including larger cities like Chicago.

Candis Smith, 20, and Justin Bond, 24, who were recently engaged, are planning a green wedding.

"At first Justin was not interested in the idea of having an environmentally-friendly wedding," Smith said. "But, throughout the planning, he became so involved and even contributed his own ideas. He is really excited now and has tried to live more organically."

Chicago offers an array of options for couples that choose to live organically. The Chicago Bridal Expo hosts bridal shows annually which support local vendors. Recently they have added organic and "green" companies. Paper Couture in Grayslake, supplies in-

itations for all occasions. Just recently, owner Kristen Foote has made the transition to follow the trend and "go green" by featuring special invitations for the environmentally conscious.

"I just recently started getting involved this year after clients started asking me about it," Foote said. "I started researching the idea and was surprised to find there are so many ways to make this eco-friendly. Invitations can be made from homemade paper, banana fibers, banana leaves, recycled paper or even coffee grounds."

Location is very important when planning an eco-friendly wedding. Many Chicago museums, parks and churches are hosting the weddings and receptions. Candis Smith and Justin Bond chose to keep both their wedding and reception at a local church.

"We are having a July wedding and we wanted to take advantage of the beautiful summer weather by having our wedding outside at a local church," Smith said. "We wanted to keep fuel emission low by not having the guests drive to another location. Choosing a location that can be used for both our ceremony and our reception was one of the most important decisions we made."

Smith also recently learned that gold mining actually emits harmful chemicals into the Earth's atmosphere. She, along with Justin, restored her grandmother's gold wedding ring.

"When I learned that mining for gold was actually harming our planet, I knew that buying a brand new band was not necessarily important," Smith said. "My mother just recently gave me her mother's wedding ring, and I was so moved that I decided to have it restored. Keeping antiques in the family and traditions alive is way more important to me, than having the latest trend on my finger. I would rather support a trend that is helping our planet, not harming it."

The chance to go "green" also has places earning green. Companies all over Chicago are hoping clients choose them over others because they are eco-friendly. Downtown Chicago based florists, Flowers With Feeling, hope they have a bloom in business due to all the "green" publicity. President Jeffrey Warden, has owned and operated Flowers with Feeling since April 1986.

"This idea of using organically farmed flowers is relatively new, since around 2003," Warden said. "It is similar to growing organic fruits and vegetables, through the use of the right soil and having good transportation conditions and working conditions for the employees."

These companies are branching out and working with other corporations in order to provide the eco-friendly wedding items. Paper Couture works with the Chicago Bridal Expo, while Flowers With Feeling works closely with local farmers.

"There was more of a demand for us to use these flowers, especially in the past year," Warden said. "We had to find a way in order to supply them which not only expands our business, but helps support our environment. So, we stated working with farmers who were socially aware to the importance of the environment. We made sure that the people we work with embody our same values."

Planning a "green" wedding is not only environmentally friendly, but also friendly on the checkbook.

"Our invitation packages are priced between \$4 and \$5, which includes the invitations and envelopes" Foote

said. "They are the same price as our regular invitations. Switching to use eco-friendly paper isn't any more expensive and there is more of a selection and variation to choose from."

Flowers With Feeling wants clients to know that using these flowers is a great opportunity for everyone involved and will not put dent your wallet.

"Organic flowers are more readily available to consumers, so their prices will be the same as regular flower arrangements," Warden said. "It is more of a reason to buy eco-friendly flowers."

Due to the emergence of all things green, many are left to wonder how to incorporate eco-consciousness into the fabric of their lives.

"Along with reducing, rethinking, recycling and reusing, remember to research," Smith said. "When it is time to put on my dress, walk down the aisle, and say 'I Do,' I will know that all the tedious wedding planning and hard work was worth it and having a green wedding was the best decision I ever made. Well, that and deciding to spend the rest of my life with Justin."



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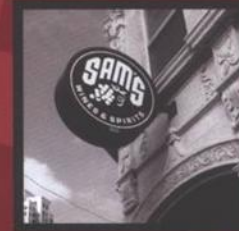
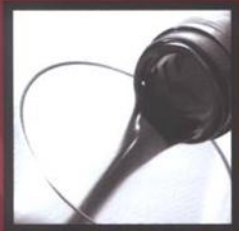
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Plastic Waste By Anthe Mitrakos

Chicago's plastic waste keeps piling up as recycling rates plummet. The number of recycled plastic bottles has steadily declined over the past decade, according to the Chicago Recycling Coalition, an organization focusing on the proper recycling of waste in Chicago.

That means more and more non-biodegradable is ending up in landfills every year.

Roughly 23 percent of PET (polyethylene terephthalate) was recycled in 2005, compared to almost 40 percent in 1995, says the National Association for PET Container Resources, an industry trade association. The environmentally friendly are pushing for a higher recycling rate in combination with reduced production of plastic containers.

"Best of all for the environment might be reusable glass bottles that are sanitized then refilled," says Janet Larsen, director of research at the Earth Policy Institute, an eco-activist organization.



Shopping in Green Style

'Green' Mall Will Help to Encourage 'Green' Lifestyle

By Lindsey Malkus

Chicago mall rats may soon be doing their part to help protect the environment. Chicago will soon be home to Green Exchange, the first 'green' mall, which is being developed by Baum Realty and is using Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

Green Exchange, on Diversey Avenue near the Kennedy Expressway, will have a 'green' roof with a garden area and high-efficiency energy systems. Also as an incentive to customers, priority hybrid parking will be available, in addition to several other 'green' features. A broad range of eco-friendly businesses including a printing company, furniture store, clothing company, and a 'green' café will be available to shoppers.

Phil Baugh, director of leasing for mall, said the hope for Green Exchange is that it will, "help to expand the green market place. With this convenient location it will be easier for people to learn how to make their lives green."

Green Fashion

By Jill Parikh

Green is the new black in the Chicago fashion world. Pivot, a newly opened West Loop boutique, features hand-picked, eco-friendly apparel and accessories. Nature consciousness inspires everything at this store from handbags made from recycled skateboards to bamboo shirts and dresses.

Pivot's motto, stated on their website, sums up this eco-friendly fashion boutique as, "Coupling responsible materials with beautiful and functional design- a combination that speaks volumes- just like cutting edge fashion should."

Pivot is not the only boutique to follow this trend. Only She, a shop on the Gold Coast sells clothing made by Linda Loudermilk, the inventor of Luxury Eco, a line that uses soy to create a high-end fashion product that does not impact the environment negatively while being produced.

"Being environmentally conscious is the future of fashion," said Jessa Brinkmeyer, the owner of Pivot, "If someone is wearing a cotton shirt in 5 years, you are going to know it's organic."

Growing Up Green:

Local Woman Sells Green Products For A Younger Generation

By Lindsey Malkus

Charis Irving doesn't remember exactly what the item was that she was searching for. She knows she saw a picture in a magazine and that she wanted to get it for her 2-year-old son Eric, so she spent hours searching the Internet and calling stores. It was during this whole ordeal that an idea hit her: Maybe she could gather together all of these other great items she was finding and sell it herself. Thus, the idea behind Tink-Tinks was born.

"I ran across a lot of great stuff out there," said Irving while standing in her eco-conscious children's store, Tink-Tinks, only a year and a half after first coming up with her idea. Tink-Tinks also already has its own Website, TinkTinks.com.

Irving, a 33-year-old mother of two, officially opened her shop at 1104 Davis Street in Evanston in January. The store's name comes from her nickname for Eric. Tink-Tinks sells products for babies and young children which are more environmentally friendly than your everyday baby products. Its eco-friendly products include diapers, bottles, clothing, and skin care products.

Irving's mother, May Irving, who helps out with running the store, was not surprised by how quickly this store went from an idea to a reality.

"She's always been like that. When she thinks about something and makes up her mind to do it she does it," May Irving said. "She's a go getter."

Before starting her business, Irving pursued a few



careers. After graduating from the University of Illinois with a degree in psychology and a minor in sociology, she sold real estate, and then was a buyer for a department store. In 2002, she got married and became a homemaker and then a mother.

Charis Irving owns Tink-Tinks in Evanston.

A vegetarian and avid recycler, Irving tries to live as green as she possibly can, but realizes that sometimes living green can be a challenge. That is part of her mission with Tink-Tinks. 'Green' products tend to be

more on the expensive side, but Irving tries to keep the prices under control in her shop.

“If something is a moderately good product, and I wouldn’t mind having it in the store, but the price is a little bit out there, then most likely I’ll pass on it. There’s no point in having it here if it’s really nice but no one can afford to buy it,” Irving said.

For those familiar with the high prices associated with a “green” lifestyle, the prices at Tink-Tinks are reasonable. The chemical-free glass baby bottles cost \$10.99, cloth diapers cost \$15.95 to \$17.95, and the organic baby oil is \$14.

Because of the expensive prices, Irving admits that not all her products are “green.”

“Everything in here is not completely green, but we’re definitely in the process of greening up as much as we can,” she said.

Irving’s store seems to take a new twist on the “green” trend. She says that she has yet to see another store like hers, “but I have heard rumors that there are others out there.”

There certainly are others out there. The “green” baby gear is a relatively young business, but there are already quite a few companies out there. One such company is Happy Green Bee, which already has a store in England and is opening one in Australia. Green Bee was founded by one of the creators of Burt’s Bees, Roxanne Quimby.

“I think a part of it is the global warming crisis. People are just a little more conscious of what they’re eating or wearing and what they’re putting on their children. The demand is increasing, that’s why you’re seeing more of these products available, because of the demand,” said Ian Skelly, controller for Happy Green Bee.

Irving also thinks that there is a trend developing that favors towards the use of “green” products.

“Green is really the thing now and so a lot of people are becoming more aware of their impact on the environment and the environment’s impact on us,” she said.

Irving hopes her store has a lasting impact. She said she likes to believe “that there is going to be a positive impact, especially for my children, on their health and on the environment.”

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Sharon Feigon:

I-GO, Why Don't YOU-GO?

By Julie Sammarco



I-Go's Sharon Feigon

The artwork on the outside brick wall tells visitors something extraordinary is happening inside the building. Bright yellows, pinks, oranges, and reds absorb the canvases hung along this wall. Among these vivacious colors are illustrations of flowers and plants, and people of all colors, depicting images of social justice and community.

Tree leaves brush the shoulders of guests entering the Center for Neighborhood Technology. They are greeted with recyclable pens and small plants at the front desk. From the waiting area they can see the jungle that is the company's break room. Vines climb the file cabinets, flora garnish workers' desks, and tall, modest trees reach for the sun light pouring in from the partially glass ceiling.

This office speaks volumes about Sharon Feigon, 54, CEO of I-GO Car Sharing in Chicago. Things intensely green here and dedicated to making a difference.

From fighting for girls' rights to wear pants to school in her high school years to marching in Washington, D.C to being involved in Vietnam demonstrations in college, Feigon's itch for social justice was strong. She went on to found the Seattle Tenants Unit with some friends – a company that provided legal consultations for people who were treated unjustly by their landlords. This group was able to amend laws in Seattle dealing with the landlords and their tenants. Among several other things, she also worked for Mobilization for Survival, a national disarmament organization in New York.

"I've always been interested in progressive issues, trying to make a difference," Feigon said.

Even though right now Feigon said she would rather be backpacking in the Pacific Northwest with her son, Gershon, 23, her work is what she likes to do and her business is certainly helping her to help others make that difference in Chicago.

Car sharing allows people to use low-emission or hybrid cars at their convenience. Located in 32 Chicago neighborhoods, I-GO users reserve cars, for as little as \$6 per hour, pick them up at their designated and reserved parking spots, and then return them when they're done. Customers don't pay for gas, insurance, or parking.

Environmentally, each I-GO car replaces 15 cars on the road, reducing the amount of emissions let off by vehicles.

Financially, people are saving trunk-fulls of money. In the City of Chicago, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey from 2003-2004 estimates that the average car owner spends \$7,512 per year in vehicle-related expenses. A typical I-GO member spends about \$2,520 per year, according to I-GO statistics.

"There was no way I could possibly transport 500 purses and 2,500 audio adapters on the blue line, says Liz McLean Knight, an I-GO customer and small business



owner. So I looked at renting an SUV vs. I-GO cars, and for short runs like running to O'Hare and back, I-GO was way more affordable. I signed up within the hour, and thanks to Larry working some magic, I was able to get my application approved, a card in my hand, and an Element reserved within a mere 2 days, saving me a ton of cash."

Coming from a woman who spoke of Japan's "amazing transit system" when asked about her favorite traveling experiences, one can safely say Feigon's mind never stops thinking about her passion. But gardening, walking the dog,, and traveling all sound good, too.

"When I first started here, even though she was always really busy, she made it a point to say 'hi' to me every-day," commented Lauren Hugel, an I-GO employee. I-GO is increasingly making amazing differences in the way Chicagoans think, as well. I-GO records showed that roughly 25 percent of customers are increasing their walking, 14.5 percent are increasing biking, and 45.9 percent have given up or postponed purchasing a vehicle or have considered selling a vehicle because of joining I-GO.

Feigon's work has entered the minds and hearts of city travelers all over Chicago. To know Feigon is to know her work-at the forest growing inside of the Center for Neighborhood Technology with I-GO or in previous years. Brian Steele of the Chicago Department of Transportation agrees. "She really believes in the mission of car-sharing." McLean Knight adds, "I think what I-GO is doing is great, and I am happy to be part of something that will keep additional cars off the road, as well as potentially increase the quality of life for everyone."



Electric Car Offers Luxury

By Anthe Mitrakos

Imagine a world where technological advances helped revert ecological damage caused by human development. Drivers get a taste of that feeling when they glimpse at Tesla Motor's latest innovation, the Tesla Roadster, America's first ever 100 percent electric luxury sports car.

Tesla Motors, names after the inventor of alternating electric power, Nikola Tesla, is a newcomer to the automobile industry. Tesla Motors was founded in 2003 by Martin Eberhard.

The Tesla Roadster, priced at roughly \$100,000, can accelerate to 60 mph in just under 4 seconds with no trace of pollutant emissions. A full battery charge takes as little as 3.5 hours and can last a range of 245 miles before a re-charge. The battery is estimated to perform at highest capacity for the first 100,000 miles and can be replaced and recycled. Tests administered by Tesla Motors show the Roadster has superior acceleration than even the higher end Lamborghini Murcielago and twice the mile per gallon equivalent of most popular hybrid vehicles such as Toyota's Prius and Honda's CNG.

Tesla Motor's innovation lies in precise research, modern mechanics, and an elegant design. Four-cylinder conventional automobile's motors are typically comprised of over 100 parts which may require costly servicing down the line. Tesla's motor consists of just one.

"Electric cars are really fun to drive because they have instant torque," said Daniel Jedlicka, Auto Editor at the Chicago Sun Times.

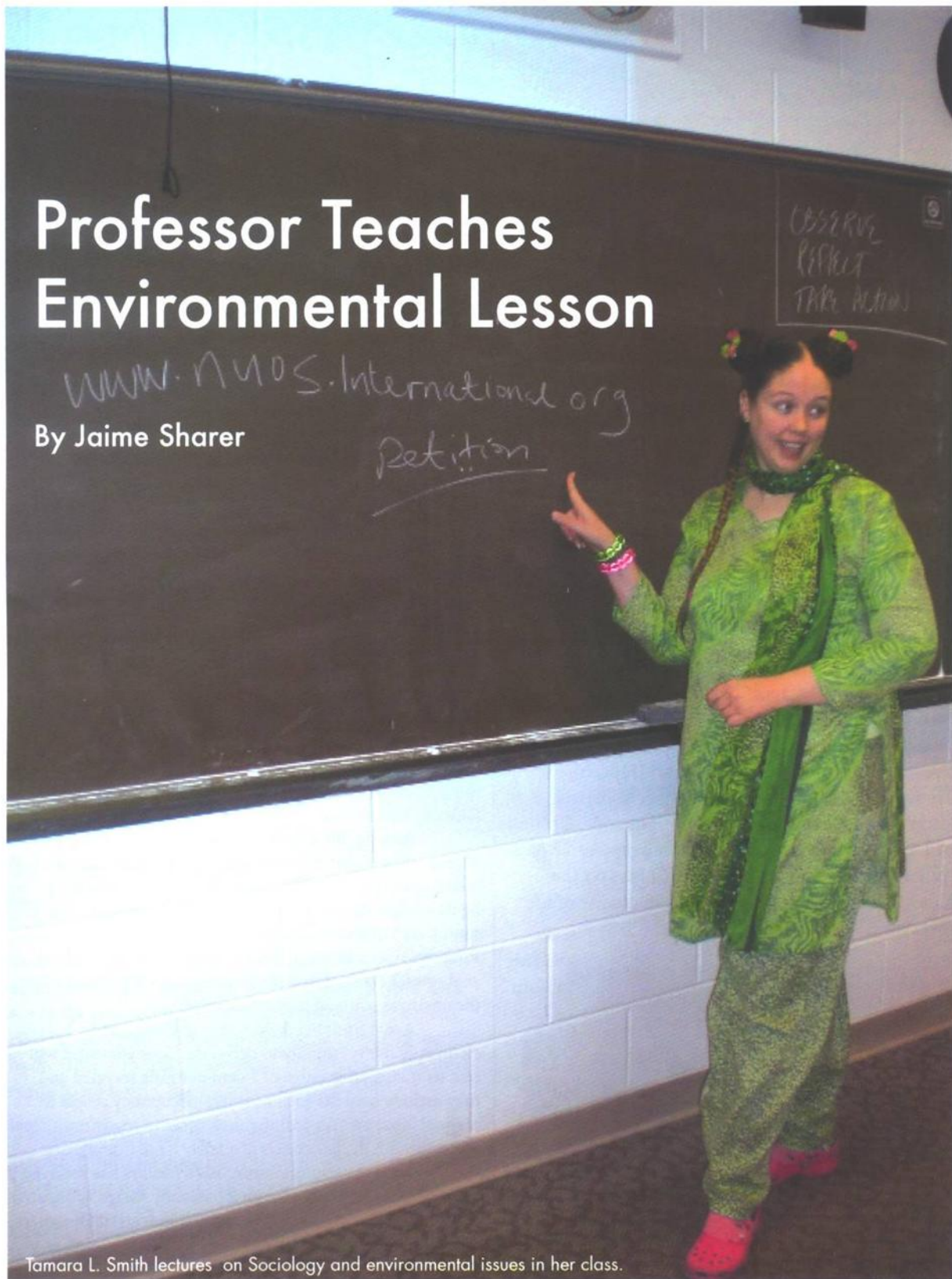
Among other things, an owner of a Tesla Roadster would never have to worry about changing filters, oil, water coolants, or mufflers. The Roadster is powered by its energy storage system (battery), fast accelerating motor, transmission, and power electric module. The Tesla Roadster uses a lithium battery pack, which, unlike lead-acid or nickel metal hydride batteries, is not hazardous to the environment and may be recycled.

Apart from being very chic in design and environmentally friendly to drive, the Tesla Roadster will cost its owner an average of 1 cent per mile traveled and may include benefits such as single-occupancy access to carpool lanes and no parking meter fees in many municipal areas, though the car comes at a fairly large initial price.

Among various awards, Tesla Motors has received the Gold International Design Excellence Award sponsored by Business Weekly Magazine and the Industrial Designers Society of America.

Professor Teaches Environmental Lesson

By Jaime Sharer



Tamara L. Smith lectures on Sociology and environmental issues in her class.

Wearing a bright yellow and green dress, pink sandals, bright, chunky jewelry, and her long hair in three separate braids, she does not appear as the typical college teacher. She does not stand behind a podium or sit behind a professor's desk. Instead, she sits in the same desks as all of her students. She does not give out pop quizzes nor does she try to frighten her students. All Tamara L. Smith wants to do in her classroom is simply discuss sociology and environmental issues.

Smith, 40, teaches Environmental Sociology part-time at Loyola University Chicago and serves as assistant to the President at Heartland Alliance located in Chicago. She doesn't own a huge corporation nor is she a political leader. Smith is a human rights worker, activist, graduate student, and an all-around environmentalist.

"The environment sustains our existence; we can't ignore it," says Smith.

Growing up in a poor, rural area of southern Illinois, Smith was surrounded by environmental injustices.

"Poor people don't have much say in pollution," Smith said. "That's why I'm so concerned with environmental justice now."

Growing up, she saw her mom get hepatitis from the water around their house and push for a water tower in their city. Sure enough, her mom got the water tower and Smith became inspired.

College only sparked Smith's interest in taking action. As an undergraduate at the University of Illinois, she became friends with people who were also active in environmental issues. She formed a social networking of groups and her involvement grew from there.

"I enjoy being able to share some of the many fantastic resources I've come across over the years," Smith said. "I also like getting people interested in the environment."

As an adult, Smith now has a large list of accomplishments under her belt. She is one of the founding members of Loyola's Campus Greens, which is a group that supports the key values of the Green Party such as feminism, anti-racism, anti-homophobia, and social justice. She is also involved in an array of activists groups, as well as the Illinois Green Party and Rogers Park Greens. She has volunteered in political campaigns and has even marched in Washington, D.C. for environmental issues.

Smith takes all of this experience and knowledge and brings it into her Environmental Sociology class at Loyola. This is the first class Smith has ever taught, but she has a clear message of what she is trying to get across to her students.

"My goal is to facilitate students' learning and inspire action, Smith said. "I want to give students analytical tools and the opportunity to practice using them, point them in the direction of resources that will help them understand the issues, and encourage them to act to increase environmental justice."

Her determination and involvement is something all of her colleagues recognize. "She is energetic and enthusiastic, with a real passion for environmental justice issues," says Fred Kniss, sociology department chair at Loyola University Chicago.

Aside from all of this, Smith also has a full-time job at Heartland Alliance, a service-based, human rights organization. Smith leads Heartland's green initiatives and is helping them to become more environmentally friendly. One project she is helping work on is setting up green housing in Guatemala for people affected by war.

Smith may have her hands full, but she never lets this affect her personality or the way she treats other individuals.

"She is a delight to work with. She is never rattled by anything. She is always pleasant and professional. She treats everyone with dignity. She is an ardent human rights activist and environmentalist," says the Rev. Sid L. Mohn, president of Heartland Alliance.

Although Smith believes environmental problems are much bigger than anything our individual actions can solve, she is still the perfect example of how one person can make a difference. Whether it is through work, teaching, or volunteering, Smith shows people what it is that they can do to take a stand and work towards a healthier environment.

"Before taking this class, I really didn't understand our environmental problems," says Tanya Grancharova, 19, a Loyola junior in Smith's Environmental Sociology class. "Tamara has taught me that the first step is educating yourself on environmental issues and from there it's up to you to go out there and work for a change."

Evanston Dry Cleaner Deals With A Pressing Issue

By LaKase Perry

Susan Aaron, 60, of Evanston, has been a faithful customer to Victor and Janice Seyedin's Lake City Cleaners dry-cleaning business for many years, but said it wasn't until the business introduced a new environmentally conscious system that she knew there would be no switching cleaners.

"When he [Victor Seyedin] started talking about this new piece of equipment, I was interested in participating in the 'green' movement," Aaron said. "We fortunately live in a part of the country where environmental movements are very strong."

The new system, Solvair, works unlike any other process, in that it utilizes no heat, a biodegradable natural solvent is filtered in, and carbon dioxide freezes the stains off the clothes. The process also avoids adding to greenhouse gasses or smog formation, and because only one machine is used for cleaning and drying, less energy is necessary.

Also, the machine can wash clothes of any fabric color together, cutting down the number of necessary loads.

Janice Seyedin, 41, said they bought the store three years ago with the intention of offering customers the most efficient and environmentally-conscious service they could find. They met with specialists, attempting to find the best ways to offer cleaning.

"We're seeing our customers expressing concerns about the environment," Seyedin said. "A few years

ago people wouldn't have asked, but now we're being asked about the process we use."

Despite a cost of \$150,000 to purchase, Victor Seyedin, 57, said he was determined to bring the new system to his customers.

"It's the first production model in the world, and I believe this is the beginning of revolutionizing the dry cleaning industry," Seyedin said.

Rather than the standard Lake City \$6.35 cost of dry cleaning, Seyedin has priced the process at \$7.05. However, Aaron, who has worked in the Chicago civic community for 25 years, said the increase is unimportant compared to the good of the system.

"You have to ask yourself: Are you willing to pay for something that can be good for you and the environment as well? I was," Aaron said.



The Growing Climate Exchange

By Sean Kennedy

Big cities are often cited as the cause for global warming, but Chicago is trying to reverse the stereotype with the help of the Chicago Climate Exchange, the world's first (and North America's only) voluntary, legally binding greenhouse gas reduction and trading system.

The Exchange, known as CCX, is like a stock market - but instead of individuals trading bonds, it consists of companies trading carbon offsets.

Each of CCX's 350 members, including the City of Chicago, Ford, Motorola, Bank of America, and others, has pledged to reduce greenhouse emissions by 6% before 2010, according to a spokesperson. Those who beat their targets earn surplus credits they can sell, while those who don't meet their goal must buy offsets to comply. Started in 2003 with 13 members, CCX has quickly emerged as a major player in the fight against climate change.

Donate Old Phones to Help Charities

By Sarah Henry

With the release of the new iPhone, many old mobiles have probably gotten tossed in a drawer, or the back of the closet to gather dust. Even worse, they have been thrown out and are leaking out toxins in landfills. Charitable Recycling is one of the many companies whose goal is to make use of unused cell phones. By sending in your old phone they donate \$1 to the charity of your choice.

"Every phone, working or not, we make a donation to charity," said Margaret Synder, coordinator and developer for Charitable Recycling. "We provide free postage and have a list of over 300 charities for people to donate to."

All you have to do is print out the free postage label at www.charitablerecycling.com and send in your phone. Not only will you be helping out a charitable cause, you will be helping the environment become a better place.

The Archdiocese Raises Awareness

By Brittany Loveisky

The Catholic Church is not just saving souls these days; it's also saving the environment.

The Archdiocese of Chicago has been busy raising money and spreading awareness in support of local environmental grassroots organizations.

These grassroots organizations are fighting for cleaner city air and construction of more community gardens, according to Elena Segura, program director for the Chicago Archdiocese Office of Peace and Justice.

The Archdiocese is also concerned with providing help to the neighborhoods and communities of Chicago that need it most.

"We are particularly concerned with environmental toxins and toxin producing factories that disproportionately affect Chicago's minority population," said Nicholas Lund-Molfese, director of the Archdiocese of Chicago Office for Peace and



Thinking Green is Business as Usual

By Brittany Loveisky

When it came time for Bain & Company Inc., a Chicago business consulting firm, to move offices, Neel Bhargava, 23, an associate consultant, decided it was the perfect opportunity for his employees to clean up its act. Inspired by environmentally conscious reforms made in Bain's Toronto office, Bhargava was determined to get his office to go green as well.

"The move presented a good opportunity to change behavior and get people in the office to start thinking green," Bhargava said.

Unlike Bain's previous location in the Sear's Tower, their new office space in the Emporis Building at 190 S. LaSalle St., would be designed from scratch to meet all the company's needs. This opportunity led Bhargava to assemble a Green Team of Bain employee volunteers that would ensure the new office space would be environmentally friendly.

"I have always been concerned about the environment in terms of recycling at home and turning off the lights," Bhargava said. "It's something that's always been in the back of my mind. Now I have the opportunity to motivate people to think about these things."

Reducing the amount of waste the office generated was one of the main goals for Bhargava and the Green Team. They traded their soda vending machine for a soda fountain to eliminate the use of aluminum cans. Styrofoam cups, plates and bowls were replaced with reusable dishware that employees now run through a dishwasher and reuse.

"We have saved a lot in terms of disposable materials," Bhargava said.

According to the Green Team's estimates, in one year the office will save 40,000 aluminum cans and 25,000 Styrofoam items.

The team also addressed the company's paper usage and waste.

"We've encouraged everyone in the office to use double-sided printing. We made sure people knew it was a simple way they could contribute," Bhargava said. "That alone can save our office over 100,000 sheets of paper a year."

A brand new office provided Bhargava and the Green Team the ability to collaborate with the designers of the company's new home.

"When designing the new office space we built in recycling bins at every desk and made sure the property manager could accommodate our recycling needs," Bhargava said.

Overall he feels the company has been receptive to the changes made by the Green Team.

"I think we shifted the paradigm in the office, made people more aware. Everyone is beginning to understand that giving a little bit up in terms of convenience and selection is worth the positive impact," Bhargava said.

His peers seem to agree.

"The changes that Neel and the Green Team implemented have been practical and convenient. They are practices that over time have become habit in our office," said Gil Nayot, a senior consultant at Bain. Not only has the Green Team's mission been sensible it has also been in accordance with the standards and codes of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

"The LEED Green Building Rating System is a voluntary building certification program that defines high-performance green buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work," said Ashley Katz, a LEED communications coordinator.

Since last year's move, Bhargava has expanded the Green Team's horizons. Last spring, the team spent a weekend cleaning up the Chicago River, and on Earth Day Bhargava invited Chicago's Department of Environment commissioner to speak at the office.

"We're now in the process of re-launching the Green Team and focusing on other opportunities and larger scale projects," Bhargava said.

Other Bain offices located worldwide are being influenced by the environmentally conscious ideology of the Green Team. According to Bhargava, there is discussion of a large-scale project to offset the carbon emissions of all Bain offices in North America.

"Big businesses have negatively impacted the environment for years and it's catching up to us now. We have the responsibility to reduce that impact," said Bhargava. "We're thinking bigger and offices are collaborating together to reduce our environmental footprint even more."

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Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

Newleaf Natural Grocery

By Brian Rene



Newleaf Natural Grocery owner Steve Parkes brings fresh produce to Rogers Park.

Grocer Turns New Leaf

Metal rock gods Slayer can sometimes be heard in the background while interested people-watchers can spy hipsters test organic kiwis

for ripeness. Diverse groups of people hang out in the storefront windows sipping roasted organic coffee and freshly made tea while attentive employees busily stock shelves and aid inquisitive customers. The setting is Newleaf Natural Grocery, in Chicago, and according to co-owner Steve Parkes, it's just an average day.

But Newleaf Natural Grocery is far from your average grocery store. Based on appearance, consumers could easily mistake it as someplace that they could pick up a second hand Vonnegut novel or a used Velvet Underground CD.

Tucked away on Loyola Ave., in Rogers Park, roughly one block from the Loyola L stop, the store is a haven for eco-conscious consumers. But looks aside, Newleaf is doing wonders for local farmers, the community, and the environment.

"It's unique to shop at a place that's not just concerned with the bottom line," said Parkes, 31. "We are very concerned with sustainability. We recycle as much as we can and we try to [limit] the amount of waste that comes out of the store."

Parkes, a former photographer, has co-owned Newleaf along with Karen Keane for four years. He volunteers on the weekends at Chicago's Working Bikes, a non-profit organization that reuses old bicycle parts to provide people with affordable alternative transportation options. He limits his natural resource use, insulates his windows to cut down on gas and uses energy efficient light bulbs. He also will only purchase his clothes from thrift stores. Steve Parkes is doing his part. Newleaf helps to reinforce that.

"I don't think that the capitalist/consumerist model fits very well with any sort of sustainable business model," Parkes said. "I saw working with local farmers, selling fair trade items, and stuff like that as not just being business as usual."

A unique service that Newleaf offers is a produce box. For as little as \$15, a customer can receive a box stuffed with a plethora of owner-picked fruits and vegetables. It's just another exceptional way that the grocer provides for customers that want to eat healthy.

Shopping at Newleaf is a different experience than shopping at major grocers. Still, Parkes is not obsessed with competition. Major retailers buy in such massive quantities that they are able to get the best prices possible. Since Newleaf cannot secure similar prices, it can only marginally mark-up their produce, leaving little room for profitability. Treating customers as individuals, however, is a market that it can corner.

"It's smaller, so you get more personal service than you get in Whole Foods or Trader Joe's," said Deb Hansen, general manager of Homegrown Wisconsin Co-op, an organic distribution company. "I appreciate their devotion to local sustainability and organic produce."

Newleaf's clientele seem to also appreciate the store.

"It's a neighborhood treasure, definitely," said Katherine Crawford of Rogers Park. "I can't imagine [the neighborhood] without it."

The store does a great job of attracting all types of customers from all kind of backgrounds. Attribute this to Parkes, a down to earth guy who welcomes everyone into a store that treats everybody equally important.

"He's very hard-working and very passionate about what he does," said Rodney Scaman, CEO of Goodness Greeness, a privately held organic distributor. "There should be more people like him."

With all of the great goods and services offered, Parkes maintains that it's the simple things that can be absorbed and enjoyed at Newleaf. So what can customers expect the next time they drop by?

"Slayer and a smile," he joked. "I hope I'm not creating a false hope."



Against the Grain:

Organic Bakery Follows Different Recipe

By: Sarah Baraba

The Bleeding Heart Bakery might not be punk rock in appearance as they claim, but it's definitely punk rock in philosophy.

Brownies, teacakes, and coffee are not rebellious in form; in fact it's quite the contrary. To the unassuming customer, these baked goods look the utmost traditional.

But be assured a purchase at the Bleeding Heart Bakery is no normal buy.

The muffins have no artificial flavoring, the blueberries inside those muffins were never genetically altered, and the flour was probably harvested a few hours away from downtown Chicago.

Bakery manager Rebekah Chapman explains that like punk rock, "we do what we like because we know that it's right."

The Bleeding Heart Bakery has been the first and only United States Department of Agriculture certified organic bakery in the nation since ovens started burning October 31, 2005. In order to achieve this status, every edible item in the store from a loaf of bread to a bean of coffee, are never sprayed with conventional pesticides, grown in fertilizers with synthetic materials, or bioengineered. Most of the ingredients for the Bleeding Heart Bakery's goods come from local farmers who sell their food at the Green City Market in Lincoln Park.

Michelle and Vinnie Garcia opened their store at 2018 W. Chicago Ave. as a choice to be more conscious about the environment, health, and the Chicago community.

“After having their son, they started thinking a lot more about the food they would be feeding their kids,” explained Chapman of the Garcias, “we’re definitely interested in community outreach and involving people in the area.”

Almost every day the bakery donates leftover pastries to charitable organizations such as the Resource Center who works to reduce urban waste and improve city living. The bakery also supplies many local cafes and universities.

Indiana Certified Organic, an organic certification agency that offers the organic stamp of approval for crops, livestock, and wild crops, certified the Bleeding Heart Bakery.

However, organic products are not the extent of eco-friendly measures at the Bleeding Heart. Deliveries to supply local cafes and restaurants are made in a hybrid car, all cups and flatware are biodegradable, and soy ink is used on all business cards.

But even in the intensity of maintaining a strictly organic kitchen, passion for the cause keeps the bakery running.



Bleeding Heart Bakery offers a variety of organic baked goods.

“Everyone here takes pride in what we’re about,” Chapman said of the nine employees at the Bleeding Heart.

The bakery also caters business luncheons, conventions as well as weddings and creates wedding cakes.

With growing popularity and demands of the bakery, business has outgrown the Chicago Avenue location. Moving a smidge north, a new bakery at 1955 W. Belmont Ave. will house a new kitchen and workspace almost triple the size of the first location, which is to be transformed into a café, names the Painted Lady.

It’s devotion to the environment and the community that gained the Bleeding Heart respect in Chicago.

“The organic farming techniques are better for the farmers, their families, and the environment,” said customer Isabel Crowder, 23, whose favorite treat at the Bleeding Heart is the zucchini teacake.

The Bleeding Heart bakes up an array of breads ranging in price from \$7-12. Brownies, candies and cookies average around \$2.50 a piece. Seasonal jams such as apple butter, cranberry-orange and tomato comfiture are available for \$8 a jar. The bakery also serves fruit and savory tarts for \$4 each, and whole quiche pies for \$24.

Chapman said the Bleeding Heart is not just about making great organic food, but about how and why the food is made organic.

“The bakery is definitely more than pastries,” she said, “it’s friendly activism.”





The Heartland Cafe in Rogers Park offers an organic menu.

Home is Where the Heartland Is

By Lora Swarts

On a typical Saturday night, music is blaring and the crowd is buzzing. Walking through the doors, visitors notice the walls, covered with knickknacks and memorabilia from the past. Posters of Ray Charles, Louis Armstrong and Gracie Slick all line the brick walls. Patrons sit at the bar chomping into the Big Heart Lentil Burger and vegetarian chili cheese fries. It is open mic-night and everyone is singing along to the musician on the stage. The Heartland Café is alive and pumping.

Owner and operator Michael James is as iconic as The Heartland.

Michael James, 66, was born on January 16, 1942, in New York City, but was raised in the suburbs of Westport, Connecticut. The move from city life to suburbia was a drastic environmental change. Yet, his parent's progressive attitudes stayed constant.

"There were a lot of artists, farms, old New Englanders, and there was a spirit of the Revolutionary War," James said.

Growing up, James had always been surrounded by activists and very progressive individuals. His parents had always told him to be careful if he ever chose to get involved in politics because it was a serious game. They supported James and that is what drove him to continue his societal involvement.

"I was progressive even at 10 years old," recalled James. "I was so motivated that I once tried to sabotage the building of new houses in our city."

After taking a year off from school, James decided to attend Lake Forest College in 1961.

"In college we all got really involved politically," James recalled. "We integrated the barbershops, took over the school newspaper, and attended speeches at

other schools like UIC, to help support whatever we were fighting for.”

All of James’ interests in human sociology, and political and environmental change, led to building The Heartland in 1976. Located at 7000 N. Glenwood Ave., The Heartland has remained in its original spot for more than three decades.

“My notion was to build a network of businesses that would raise money towards the cause,” James said. “The cause being women, civil rights, peace or the environment.”

The Heartland is not only a café, but also a community general store. The food at the café is one of the staples in making it so diverse from other neighborhood establishments. The food is all fresh and organic. Customers can purchase farm raised catfish, a buffalo burger with sweet potato fries, or a turkey sausage corn crust pizza. Not one single entree is more than \$15.

With his new found philosophies on serving the people, James became a “Mr. Rogers” figure of Rogers Park: a man who knows his neighbors. One thing that separates James from any other restaurateur and entrepreneur is his relationship with his clientele.

“I know a lot of the customers here,” James said. “I have seen people come in here and improve their health and also come in here as they were dying. It’s neat for me to watch people over time. I like being in one place and having the world come to me.”

Employees find a home and family through working at the café.

“The Heartland in general is such a cornerstone for many people,” said general store manager,



Michael James is Heartland’s owner.

Paige Listerud. “A lot of people find a family here. I know that my relationships here are beyond co-worker status. Michael makes sure that we are enjoying life though good food and company. Coming to work every day always is an experience.”

James makes sure that not only are the customers welcomed into his home, but also the employees who may need a little extra care.

“Michael is not just a boss, but a friend,” said Beth McKee, The Heartland’s longtime bartender and server. “He has made sure that everyone who walks through the doors, customers and employees, are always taken care of.”

Although the mission of James and his endeavors are serious, his working conditions could not be any less rigid.

“We get to be both serious and fun at the same time,” Listerud said. “We are given a lot of freedom here, and I think people see that when they come. Some customers are surprised how much Michael is involved. He is working the cash register, seating guests, and answering phones. This is why people return. It is in a sense for Michael.”

Education is one goal that is important for everyone at The Heartland.

“We have taken positions on things in our community, like environmental causes, most recently,” James said. “We don’t want to force a change on anyone’s opinions. But ideally, we want people to be inspired to go forth into the world and make a change.”

James was always involved in “going green,” but now he wants to make The Heartland more modern.

“We have plans to build a green roof and to install rain barrel catchers for the water we use,” James said. “We have always supported the movement through hosting causes, hosting speaker’s visits, raising donations and more recently through word of mouth over our live radio show hosted on WLUW 88.7 FM.”

Customer, Jim Schaag, 58, was dining alone in the café. He expressed as to why the café is so significant to him and his family and to many of the other Rogers Park citizens.

“I now live out of town, but I love to bring my daughter here because she goes to Loyola,” Schaag said. “When I visit her, we always make sure to come here and spend a few hours together eating and sharing stories. I have always told her that this was my place to go when I was her age. This place will always be a community landmark and Michael will always be a community icon.”

Too Much Green to Go Green?

By Sarah Baraba

Any movement towards an environmentally friendly society is a step well taken. As seen in this issue of Mosaic, the greening trends of Chicago and the nation as a whole, and even the words out of the mayor's mouth to become the greenest city, people know about the dangers our environment is facing. Global warming is not a question - pollution and waste levels are continually rising - yet, action people are taking to green their communities and lifestyles are steps to address this communal crisis.

However, I've been finding a problem with this movement. One rooted in an unequal spread of resources and opportunities, one that leaves out those who do not have the means to attain a greener lifestyle, one that stems from the seed of the almighty dollar. The unfortunate inequality of poor vs. rich.

Think about the recent campaigns and products all boasting eco-friendly approaches. You can drive a hybrid car, eat organic food, use recycled wrapping paper, take your suits to a greener cleaner and switch to energy efficient light bulbs; it seems that eco-friendly alternatives are everywhere!

But that's not quite the case; at least for those of us on

a budget, it seems you must bring in a lot of green to go green.

While researching my pieces for Mosaic, I was impressed with greening movements, yet somewhat discouraged. There seems to be quite a line of inequality as far as the availability of green alternatives among social classes. Marva Brown, a woman living on the South Side of Chicago told me she hardly bought produce because the nearest grocery store was too far away.

But even if you're around a grocer offering organic food, take a look at the price sticker. Organic produce costs 10-40 cents more a pound, and similar price differences are seen in organic dairy, grains and even sweets.

Now granted tacking on an extra quarter for a pound of apples doesn't seem like a lot, but when you're ready to swipe your card at the register and your bill knocks out your chances for an enjoyable weekend, it becomes clearer.



As a student I am finding it a little difficult to go organic in my eating, I cannot imagine what the cost would be to feed a family an organic diet. My guess is the pocketbook would get a little tight.

And the hybrid car. Everyone loves the hybrid car. Lexus recently released its luxury hybrid SUV the RX 400 which starts at almost \$43,000, and I'm sure every yuppie will rush out to get one. But it's just that, the yuppies will run out to get one, and those who can afford a new car will rush out to get a hybrid Toyota. What about the rest? What about public transportation?

Last time I checked, the 147 was still spewing some nasty fumes from that exhaust pipe.

Cable networks such as the Discovery Channel are airing programs promoting environmental awareness. But those are cable networks. What about people who cannot afford cable, or even afford a T.V.? How are they going to be informed about global warming?

Many high-end restaurants in Chicago buy their produce from organic local farmers for ingredients in their savory dishes. However, that's only the high-end restaurants. While we are nowhere close, nor may we ever be, to eating an organic hamburger at McDonalds, it's just these types of discrepancies that I feel are unfair. So penny pinchers can't get in on the green movement?

I was recently in a Big Lots mulling around when I came across a wall display of light bulbs. Immediately I noticed none of those light bulbs were energy efficient. While energy efficient light bulbs are not the solution to the environmental problem, it is addressing energy overconsumption. So in a store that boasts lower prices, appealing to those of us on a budget, you tell me if it seems fair that an option as small as a greener light bulb isn't available.

Growing movements of people across the nation, calling themselves "freegans", are addressing these inequalities. Their philosophy is built around avoiding involvement to an endless cycle of economics and waste. Through processes like planned obsolescence, designing something so that it will break, become useless, or out of date in a quick manner to promote consumption (and effective spending) freegans argue the only

way to combat it is not to contribute. So, they go from dumpster to dumpster at organic food stores and pick up produce, baked goods, dairy that has been thrown out because of the expiration date, all for free, most of the food either organic or vegan, and survive off what has been deemed "waste."

In no way am I trying to criticize going green. As I said before, I think it's great, but how about we make that progress and greening available to more? It's gotten to the point that I'm sick of seeing "green" products and campaigns endorsed by celebrities. I sincerely hope that the interest in the environment and making conscious, ecologically smart choices is not just a passing fad. And it likely will not be, projects such as urban farming have reached neighborhoods with fewer resources, providing fresh starts for the unemployed and ex-convicts and fresh produce to areas where fruits and vegetables are scarcely available.

Now I realize that is a lot to ask, and there is no easy solution. But when we as a society already face inequalities based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, and income let us not face further inequalities of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we drink because of those.



Green Sisters: Nuns Do Their Part For The Environment

By Patrick Krillic

What do nuns and black bears have in common?

It has something to do with the environment. That's what Sarah McFarland Taylor found out one day in a forest in Pennsylvania while she was doing research on her book, *Green Sisters*.

"I was with the sisters while they were building a solo straw bill hermitage in the forest when I drifted off to explore," Taylor said, "As I was walking I came across a black bear, I stood still and allowed it to pass, then made my way back to camp."

This is just one of the many memories that Taylor has from her journey covering environmentally friendly monasteries for 10 years.

Taylor is an associate professor at Northwestern University in Evanston. She specializes in religion and American culture, gender studies in religion, and religion and ecology. Taylor, who is in her late 30s, teaches on aspects of American religion and culture and explores religion as it relates to ethnicity, women's experiences, and the natural environment.

She published several journals on the topic of green ministry before her book was released.

The idea of covering economic friendly Roman Catholic Sister's monasteries was first brought to Taylor by a friend.

"A friend from back home in New Jersey had alerted me of Genesis farm, which would relate certain interest to my profession and suggested I should research it," Taylor said.

Genesis Farm, located in Blairstown N.J., was founded in 1980 by the Dominican Sisters. The intention of Genesis Farm is to address the basic issues in society today by raising questions about the current global crisis. These sisters practice their ecological and agricultural work through the belief that everything on the earth was created by an ultimate force.

The Genesis Farm ecological learning center offers abundant activities and programs, which

provide hands-on learning experiences to bring people closer to the environment. One important program is the 12-week accredited graduate certificate in earth literacy, where participants live together while studying the binding relationship of the Earth and the creations that have risen from it.

Taylor observed many of these experiences and programs in her first visit to Genesis Farm. Shortly after her trip to Genesis Farm, Taylor's idea for a book was born. Over the next 10 years, Taylor traveled across the United States four times, spending time in eco-friendly monasteries observing their environmental practices.

"One of the greatest experiences I had during this journey was watching the sisters wake up at 4:45 a.m. to greet the dawn with prayer showing how they connect to life on this planet diurnally as well as nocturnally. I learned a lot about prayer contemplation from this experience," Taylor said.

Taylor's book helps break down barriers between religious orders and the public.

"Dr. Taylor writes about ecology minded sisters and nuns who are overlooked by the stereotypes that exist of the sisters not being in touch with reality," said Dr. Susan Ross, director of the Gannon Center for Women and Leadership at Loyola University Chicago.

Taylor is working on two more books projects, *Eternally Green: The Ecological American Way of Death and Eco-Prophecy: Religious Responses to Global Climate Crisis*.

Over her journey, Taylor learned much about the binding relationship between ministry and ecology, while gaining a deeper appreciation for her own ministry,

"I wanted to give voice to sisters," she said. "When you look at the environmental movement today, you see a center focus on male leaders, such as Al Gore winning the Noble Peace Prize. I wanted to shed the voice of these sisters and the important work they do towards saving our environment."

THE JOURNALISM PROGRAM IS PROUD OF THE WORK OF ITS JOURNALISM MAJORS IN THE WRITING, EDITING, PHOTOGRAPHY, & DESIGN OF *MOSAIC*.

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