

Sun Shines on L.I.'s First Solar-Powered Café

Community Meeting at Café in Brentwood

Sunday, June 6 at 2 pm

An abandoned LIRR train station and a dilapidated eyesore in the Brentwood community has been turned into a showplace for renewable and sustainable energy by a visionary resident, Chris Castro.

The café will use solar photovoltaic panels that will provide electricity while solar water collectors will supply hot water. Castro's goal is for the café to ultimately run on 100% solar energy. The café currently gets 40-50% of its energy from the sun. Recycled materials were used from the existing structure during construction. The café will feature organic fruits, vegetables and meats in keeping with the environmental theme.

The Sierra Club will be treated to a unique opportunity to see and hear how the idea for this project came to be a reality. Everyone is invited to our community meeting at the café. Light refreshments will be served. Directions to the café can be found on the back page.



Once a vacant eyesore, and now after six years of planning and construction an environmentally responsible and healthy Solar Café. Artist's rendition courtesy of Harvey Miller.

Light Pollution Bill Now Before the Senate

L.I. to Benefit if Bill is Passed

Nighttime satellite photos show Long Island as one solid blob of light, extending nearly to the East End. Long Islanders stand to benefit significantly if the bill curbing light pollution which is currently before the NY State Senate is passed.

The term "light pollution" encompasses all of the following:

Glare: Light shining directly into your eyes, causing discomfort and impairing your ability to see. Glare from bad roadway and roadside lighting that blinds a motorist, even momentarily, can be fatal. Older Long Islanders are especially at risk; many are unable to drive at night because of glare from the ubiquitous unshielded "cobrahead" streetlights.

Light trespass: Light falling where it is not needed or wanted—for example, spilling over onto your property

Mark Your Calendar
Sat. July 24 and Sun. July 25
NY Solar Festival
Academy of St. Joseph, Brentwood

This two-day event will include seminars and educational programs, as well as participatory events focused on music. It will feature a solar stage with performances throughout the event. There will also be a children's theater and puppet show. The major theme will be "Educating Our Communities Through the Arts." More details and directions to event nysolarfest.org

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Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

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Submissions

Long Island Lighthouse encourages submission of articles, news briefs, book reviews, comments, letters, photos, graphics and other items. Contact the editor for submission format and details.



View From The Chair

by John Sauer

Rush Limbaugh and the Wild West

I admit to occasionally listening to conservative radio talk show host, Rush Limbaugh. I find him entertaining and, given his popularity and his powerful media position (20 million weekly listeners through 600 stations) I think it's important to know what he's saying and what he believes.

For those of you not familiar with Rush, among other things he takes a dim view of those who support environmental protection--the "environmental wackos", as he refers to us. For him, there is no environmental crisis. It's all a big myth. Rush's view of America is stuck in the 1860's, when America still seemed a vast open, untamed expanse, with limitless resources. Back then western railroads allowed passengers to shoot buffalo from the train for sport. By the 1880's millions of buffalo had been killed and only a few thousand remained. Fortunately in 1894 the U.S. Congress finally passed a law to protect and preserve the few remaining herd. Maybe our country's resources weren't so unlimited after all.

From the buffalo kills of the 1870's to the over-fishing of the 21st century (and the air, water and ground pollution, the suburban sprawl, and countless other examples of environmental degradation) it's clear that we have the power to damage, or destroy our habitat.

Rush recently used his radio podium to comment about environmentalists' efforts to ban snowmobiles from national parks because of the noise they create that disturbs the natural quiet. Rush's response to those wackos: "Screw you."

This is what we are up against, and to the extent that these 20 million weekly listeners trust without questioning the statements he makes, our efforts to change attitudes about respecting and cherishing our world and its resources will be more difficult.

Do not underestimate the power of those who deny there is a problem. Become informed and do what you can to help. The fight for our environment needs you!

Light Pollution Bill Before the Senate

Continued from page 1

or into your home. Of particular concern is light intruding into bedrooms; a growing body of research suggests that failure to sleep in complete darkness can damage our immune systems.

Sky glow: The result of upward-shining light, which is reflected off moisture and dust particles in the atmosphere to illuminate the nighttime sky and wash out all but the brightest stars. More than two thirds of Americans can no longer see the Milky Way--the galaxy of which Earth is a part. On Long Island the proportion is far higher.

Waste: Lighting that's on when it needn't be; lighting that's excessively bright; unshielded lighting that spills out and upward instead of being directed at its intended subject. Conservative calculations indicate that more than \$4.5 billion worth of electricity is wasted annually in the U.S. just on useless uplight. This waste causes unnecessary air pollution from burning of fossil fuels and squanders irreplaceable natural resources.

The legislation now pending in the NY State Senate would begin to curb light pollution in the

by mandating fully shielded fixtures for street lighting and on government property, and by providing a basis for resolving light trespass complaints. The legislation (S3003/A6950) is supported by the State affiliate of the International Dark-Sky Association, SELENE--Sensible and Efficient Lighting to Enhance the Nighttime Environment. The principal Senate sponsor is Carl Marcellino of Syosset, Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee.

The author, Gail Clyma has been actively working on this legislation and other light pollution issues since 2000. Gail is a member of the International Dark-Sky Association and may be reached at gailny@aol.com

What You Can Do

Letters to the Senate are extremely important to help counter well-funded opposition by the utilities that profit from wasted light, and the manufacturers who have been slow to develop the types of fixtures that curtail waste, glare, and trespass. **PLEASE WRITE** to your State senator **TODAY**, and for maximum impact, send copies of your letter to Senator Marcellino, Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, and Governor Pataki. Addresses and a sample letter are available on the "LP Legislation" page of the SELENE website www.selene-ny.org.

To really have your voice carry, there's also a postcard there you can download, print and distribute to your friends and neighbors.

Toxins by Air, Land & Sea The Bush Administration Assault on the Environment

Long Islanders have fought hard to protect their air, land and water. However, like the rest of the nation, Long Island is faced with renewed threats thanks to the environmental policies of the Bush Administration. From smog to mercury to toxic waste sites, the Bush Administration has eroded the regulations and weakened the rules that protect our everyday environment.

Power Plants: Easing up on Old Polluters. Did you ever have a neighbor who kept driving an old, smoky car. Pretty obnoxious, right? What if power plants were run like that?

Long Islanders have 19 of these neighbors in the form of old power plants that range in age from 30 to 50 years of age. LI also receives pollution from old power plants and factories in other states. The Clean Air Act requires these old

plants to install modern pollution control technology whenever they increase production. But the Bush Administration weakened these rules, allowing more than 17,000 factories across the country to keep on chugging without cleaning up their emissions.

In addition, the Bush Administration has proposed radical changes to the Clean Air Act that could allow polluters to emit twice the amount of soot and smog for a decade longer than if the current law were simply enforced.

This is bad news since Long Islanders already suffer from smog (ground-level ozone pollution). In fact, the EPA rates the New York Metropolitan area as severe for smog and Suffolk County as the 3rd worst county in the state for smog. Letting old power plants and factories continue to burn without

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Outings and Events

FOR AN UP-TO-DATE LIST OF OTHER SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION, LOG ON TO: newyork.sierraclub.org/outings

JUNE

WED 2 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, 7 PM

Call our hotline 516-826-0801 for location. All members welcome.

SUN 6 SIERRA CLUB COMMUNITY MEETING, SOLAR CAFÉ, BRENTWOOD, 2 PM

Join us for an interesting discussion and learn about L.I.'s first solar powered café, at the site of the old LIRR station. The Café's goal is to run the Café using 100% solar power. Get a first-hand look at the Café that will help re-vitalize the area. Light refreshments will be served. See article on front page for additional details.

SUN 6 TABLING EVENT AT PORT WASHINGTON HARBOR FEST

Requires volunteers to help staff the Sierra Club literature table. For more details contact *Marie Pendzich* 516-541-0615 or e-mail memepend@netzero.net

SAT 12 TABLING EVENT AT SWEETBRIAR NATURE CENTER FESTIVAL, SMITHTOWN

This exciting festival requires several individuals to staff the Sierra Club literature table. Festival time 10-5. For more details contact *Marie Pendzich* 516-541-0615 or e-mail memepend@netzero.net

SAT 19 NISSEQUOGUE RIVER, CANOE THE GREENBELT

We go thru salt, fresh, & intertidal wetlands with numerous waterfowl & other birds. Canoe and kayak rentals available. Easy trip. Suitable for beginners. Accessible by train. Leaders: *Don & Lisa Scott*, 322 River Road, St. James NY 11780. Call 631-265-2198 or e-mail donaldscott3rd@hotmail.com

SAT 26 PECONIC RIVER

Explore this beautiful L.I. river in a canoe or kayak. We will be paddling approximately 8 miles at a relaxed pace & enjoying the wonderful scenery. It is recommended that you be in good physical condition & have some prior experience paddling before coming on this trip. Must be able to maneuver through poison ivy infested narrow turns & avoid waterfalls. Significant portaging & paddling through a long tunnel is required. Canoe rentals available. There is no public transportation. Write, including a phone number (you will not receive a response without a phone number) or SASE, to Leader: *Eric Girolamo*, 1 Birchwood Ct #4C, Mineola NY 11501.

JULY

SUN 4 MATTITUCK BIKE

Mostly flat easy 15 miles. Going east on Rt. 25 in Mattituck turn left (North) onto Love Lane. Turn left into the parking area by the RR tracks. Joint ride with Trail Boss Bike Club. Arrive by 9:30, ride by 10. Helmets. Leader: *George Waldbusser* gjwbiker@optonline.net, or 631-499-3953--call this # only as last resort.

WED 7 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, 7 PM

Call our hotline 516-826-0801 for location. All members welcome.

SAT 17 NISSEQUOGUE RIVER, CANOE THE GREENBELT

We go thru salt, fresh, and intertidal wetlands with a naturalist to point out the numerous waterfowl & other birds. Canoe & kayak rentals available. Easy trip. Suitable for beginners. Accessible by train. Send SASE to leader: *Lenore Swenson*, 60 E 9TH St. #529, NY, NY 10003 or e-mail co-leader *Bobbie Josepher* at bsj5@cornell.edu No calls please.

SAT 24-SUN 25 SOLAR FESTIVAL, ACADEMY OF ST. JOSEPH, BRENTWOOD

A fun and educational experience for the whole family. Two day Solar Festival featuring music, plays, puppeteers which will heighten awareness of using renewable energy. See article on front page. For additional info and driving directions visit website www.nysolarfest.org

AUGUST

WED 4 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, 7 PM

Call our hotline 516-826-0801 for location. All members welcome.

SUN 8 LOWER CARMANS RIVER CANOE

Easy paddle with a dual purpose. As we paddle thru the Wertheim Wildlife Refuge we'll pick up any litter that we see. Plus we'll have a naturalist along to point out plants, birds & other wildlife both in the wetlands & on the short walk we'll take in the upland wooded area. Accessible by train. Send SASE to leader: *Lenore Swenson*, 60 E 9TH St. #529, NY NY 10003 or e-mail co-leader *Bobbie Josepher* at bsj5@cornell.edu No calls please.

SEPTEMBER

WED 1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, 7 PM

Call our hotline 516-826-0801 for location. All members welcome.

SAT 11 SHELTER ISLAND BIKE

L.I.'s bast kept secret, an island jewel. Great water views, beaches, rural landscape, quaint town. A 12 mile loop with optional riding extensions to 30 miles. Hilly, not for beginners. Meet at Greenport & Shelter Island Ferry at 9:30am. Helmets mandatory. Leader: George Waldbusser gjwbiker@optonline.net or 631-499-3953-call this # only as a last resort.

SUN 12 SHELTER ISLAND BIKE

Bicycle this gem of L.I. See beautiful vistas, lunch & swim on gorgeous beaches. Pedal approx. 18 miles. There are some tough hills. Don't fear, you can walk them. Helmets required. Bring snack, lunch & water. Meet at the Greenport Ferry parking lot at 11 am. Trip subject to cancellation. Must call to *Bruce & Carolyn Kagan* 631-929-5621.

OCTOBER

SAT 2 THIRD ANNUAL HIKE-A-THON

Details in next newsletter.

WED 6 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, 7 PM

Call our hotline 516-826-0801 for location. All members welcome.

SAT 16 NISSEQUOGUE RIVER, CANOE THE GREENBELT

We go thru salt, fresh, & intertidal wetlands with numerous waterfowl & other birds. Canoe & kayak rentals available. Easy trip. Suitable for beginners. Accessible by train. Leaders: *Don & Lisa Scott, 322 River Road, St. James NY 11780.* Call 631-265-2198 or e-mail *donald-scott3rd@hotmail.com*



Cleanup Volunteers at Carll's River Watershed in Wyandanch on April 17th. l to r Arthur Scheiman, Jeanne Sofia, Michael Cafaro, Betty Palmer, Rea Schnittman and Zakhia Grant.

Toxins by Air, Land & Sea

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modern pollution controls will only make matters worse.

Mercury: Warnings & Delays

Would you protect someone by telling them their food is polluted but you will wait another 10 years to take care of it? That's exactly what the Bush Administration has decided to do about mercury pollution in the environment.

Mercury is a heavy metal that is building up in fish. It has become an increasing problem. Last fall, the federal Food & Drug Administration warned children and pregnant women to limit their consumption of certain types of fish, such as tuna, because of their mercury content.

EPA scientists studied the problem and concluded that mercury pollution, which comes from coal-fired power plants, could be greatly reduced through pollution controls by 2008. At about the same time that the warning about eating fish came out, the Bush Administration announced that it is taking a go-slow approach to controlling mercury pollution, delaying full enforcement until 2018. They also want to permit utilities to trade credits for mercury pollution, allowing coal-fired power plants to go on polluting, so long as they buy credits from cleaner power plants.

Superfund: Making the Taxpayer Pay

If you make a mess, shouldn't you clean it up?

Not according to the Bush Administration. Unlike every previous administration, the Bush Administration has refused to support a long-standing principle of the federal Superfund toxic waste cleanup program: Polluters should Pay.

This year, American taxpayers will pay upwards of \$1.27 billion for the Superfund program—an increase of more than 300% since the polluter fee expired in 1995. New York taxpayers paid almost \$28 million in 1995. In 2004, our share will skyrocket to \$115 million while the polluters' share will drop to zero! **There are currently 27 superfund sites on Long Island.**

The author, Bob Muldoon is an Associate Regional Representative for the Sierra Club, working out of the National field office in NYC. He can be reached at Bob.Muldoon@sierraclub.org.

WE CAN CLEAN UP
OUR WATER...



WITH YOUR HELP.

Over the last thirty years, we've made real progress cleaning up our water. But the Bush administration is threatening that progress, proposing that "isolated" small streams, ponds and wetlands no longer be covered under the Clean Water Act. Work with us to strengthen the Clean Water Act and its enforcement. Together we can leave our children a legacy of clean water, air and wild lands. With your support, we can do better now.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

A Call to Arms

There are so many reasons to feel cynical about politics these days. One scandal seems to follow another in a vicious cycle of accusations, and counter accusations. Some are convicted, some aren't. Many in the public have lost all faith in the system entirely.

That is precisely why more involvement on the part of the citizenry is needed. The only way to take back the government, so to speak, is to become intimately involved with it. The only hope that we have to reform politics in America, and more specifically on Long Island, is to acquaint ourselves with all of the nuances and the intricacies of the issues, and the representatives who give voice to these issues for us.

More importantly, the only chance that the public has of seeing that all politicians are not corrupt, is to familiarize themselves with the process; and to experience the effect that their involvement can have on both the process and specific governmental officials themselves.

Environmental politics is no exception to this. It requires constant and never-ending vigilance over the government. One might call it a stewardship, if you will.

For many years, I was active politically, but only to the extent that I would pick a particular candidate, and then work for him or her as the election season approached. I had a visceral reaction to many of the issues involved, but I never felt the need to become something of a minor expert on them. Environmental activism requires a bit more work. The science involved, the intricacies of the legislation affecting it, are sometimes very daunting for the novice, and can be a bit off putting. But believe me, if I can do it, anyone can.

Please join me this year as we put together a volunteer team to work for and support the endorsed candidates of the Long Island Sierra Club. I promise you, it will be interesting, potentially exciting work, and you may actually experience a rise in optimism and idealism as a result. There is no greater cure for cynicism than direct participation. The future of Long Island--and the planet--depends on this.

The author, Michael Cafaro is a member of the Executive Committee and the Political Chair of the Sierra Club. He can be reached at 631-243-1127 or michaelcafaro@aol.com.

Taking the Confusion Out of Eating Fish

“Eat more fish” may be hard advice to swallow amidst recent reports on contaminants and heavy metals found in certain species. A recent study funded by the Pew Foundation found that farmed salmon contained significantly higher levels of contaminants like dioxin and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) than wild salmon. And in March of this year, the Food and Drug Administration and Environmental Protection Agency issued their first-ever joint advisory for consumers on methylmercury in fish. The advisory, aimed at high risk groups who are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of methylmercury on the developing brain and nervous system, states which fish should be avoided and which could be eaten in limited amounts.

Does this mean we should we stop eating fish? Certainly not, say experts. Research has shown that omega-3 fatty acids from fish can reduce the risk of developing heart disease, lower risk of heart attack in people who already have heart disease, lower blood pressure, and may improve certain inflammatory conditions such as arthritis and psoriasis. The American Heart Association stands by their recommendation of two servings of fish per week for the general population. “Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Americans, and the health-promoting benefits of fish, particularly fatty fish like salmon, far outweigh the uncertain risk posed by levels of contaminants which were found in the Pew study,” says Alice H. Lichtenstein, D.Sc., professor of nutrition at Tufts University in Boston and vice-chairperson of the American Heart Association’s nutrition committee.

FDA/EPA advisory to women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children:

1. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.
2. You may eat up to 12 ounces (two average meals) a week of a variety of other fish and shellfish--those lower in mercury--including shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, Pollack and catfish.
3. When choosing your two weekly seafood meals, you may eat up to six ounces (one average meal or one can) of albacore tuna per week. Albacore white tuna is higher in mercury than canned “light” tuna.

Enjoy the health benefits of fish while minimizing the risk of ingesting contaminants:

- Vary your fish intake.
- When cooking fish, let the fat drip off and avoid eating the skin where contaminants such as PCBs tend to accumulate.

- Buy wild Alaskan salmon if you can afford it.
- Try canned salmon. “Alaskan” or “Pacific” canned salmon is almost always wild and an excellent and economical source of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Cut down on mercury exposure by switching to light tuna and avoiding albacore white.
- Don’t overlook other tasty and ecologically safe sources of omega-3 fatty acids including sardines, herring and small mackerel species like Atlantic and Pacific (Jack mackerel).

The author, Anastasia Schepers, M.S., R..D. is a registered dietitian, writer & assistant editor for “Environmental Nutrition” newsletter. The website is www.environmentalnutrition.com

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LIRR to Build Storage Yards Along Port Jefferson Branch

Three sites are under consideration along the train lines between the communities of East Northport and Kings Park to construct rail storage yards in areas already notorious for heavy industry and air pollution. In addition, a proposal is currently being reviewed by the State Dept. of Environmental Conservation to construct an enormous power plant near one of the proposed sites--an adjacent parcel of land at the SE corner of Town Line Road and Old Northport Road in Kings Park.

The Sierra Club ardently supports the need for improving the flow of public transportation, however these improvements must be completed in a manner that has a minimal impact on our environmental resources. There could be potential damage to our underground aquifers, where LI derives its drinking water. Public awareness and attendance at MTA public meetings is essential, as well as letters to local legislators in heading off potential environmental disasters.

For additional information contact Richard M. Vladimir a Huntington resident, Sierra Club member and attorney at richvlad@juno.com

Directions to the Community Meeting

Solar Café

One First Ave., Brentwood

Sunday, June 6, 2 pm

From West: LIE to Exit 53, stay on service road, make Right on Washington Ave. going South. Go down about 1.5 miles. After you cross train tracks make first Right, that will be First Avenue. Pull into entrance on right.

From East: LIE to Exit 55, stay on service road, make Left on Washington Ave. going south, go down about 1.5 miles. After you cross train tracks make first right, that will be First Avenue. Pull into entrance on right.



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