

NORTH TORONTO GREEN COMMUNITY



NEWS

Fall 2005 ♻️ News, views, and accessible environmental action for a healthy community ♻️ 10th Anniversary Edition

NTGC and Youth Growing Towards a Green Future

It has been about one year into my chairmanship role for North Toronto Green Community and I have been particularly honoured to be part of our special 10th anniversary year. I remain totally inspired by this organization and the tremendous vision, passion and hard work of the many staff, volunteers, friends and contributors.

Celebrating 10 years as a non-profit, environmental organization provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on where we have come from and where we are heading. NTGC's mission of promoting local environmental action and awareness through community-based programs remains true today, despite the fact that we are operating in quite a different world than the one in 1995. There are many examples of how the efforts of governments and grass roots organizations have made a positive difference. For example, in 1995 only one precedent setting municipality had a pesticide by-law and today over 70 municipalities have instituted these laws. However, there are also many examples of how the race to reverse the environmental damage done to our world is going to be extremely challenging. In the summer of 1995 there were 10 smog alert days, this year we have had 41 smog alert days by the middle of

August and having started as early as February (www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/smog/smog_new.htm).

The NTGC has been an important part of the positive changes in our community and beyond, and in order to continue our success we need to look at what makes our grassroots organization so effective. One of the biggest lessons I have learned from North Toronto Green Community is the positive power of community. The adjunct lesson is the critical importance of involving our youth in our mission: for their enthusiasm, creativity and special claim on the future of their world. That is why we are dedicating this newsletter to youth. It is also why we have included a "Youth Agenda" as a critical element of the work of NTGC. Not only do we have a dedicated Youth Action Committee, all program and administrative committees have been charged with the objective of incorporating youth programming, youth volunteers and youth interests in their planning. We have also instituted a special "youth membership" category for NTGC. Individuals 25 years or younger can get a yearly membership in NTGC for \$10 or a commitment of 4 volunteer hours with our organization. Talk about a win-win situation!



NTGC Board member Josh Matlow and youth volunteers at the "Youth Meet and Greet"! Read about in on page 5.

We are very excited about the next 10 years but we cannot do it without you. To the children and youth who have participated with NTGC, thank you for all your support. We look forward to your continued involvement. And don't forget to bring your parents to the next program. And for the parents who have been a part of our organization,

why not encourage your children to participate? From our wonderful youth programming including pizza parties, lost rivers adventures and our upcoming bike repair clinic to a wide variety of youth volunteer activities, NTGC can help youth secure the healthy and green future they deserve.

Cheryl Shour, Chair, NTGC

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NTGC
10 years of green action

1995

2005

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EDITOR
Jacquie Briggs

LAYOUT & DESIGN
Marc Rose

THANK YOU TO OUR
GENEROUS FUNDERS!



Forest Hill
Collegiate Institute

Mayor
DAVID MILLER

A Message from Mayor David Miller

It is a pleasure for me to extend congratulations to the many hard-working volunteers and members of the North Toronto Green Community, on the occasion of your tenth anniversary.

I applaud your tireless efforts in bringing an awareness of "green" issues to the community at large. In Toronto, it is becoming increasingly important that residents are made aware of the environmental impact of their day-to-day activities. Through such projects as Community Gardens and Green Garden Visits, the North Toronto Green Community's ongoing work serves to alert the residents of North Toronto to the importance of these issues.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, thank you for your valuable work. I wish you continued success in the future.

Yours truly,

Mayor David Miller
August, 2005



North Toronto Youth Recognize Their Role as Stewards of the Earth

By JOSH MATLOW

In our local community, volunteering with the North Toronto Green Community (NTGC) is a positive way for youth to become more involved in protecting the environment, learn new skills and to become more responsible and involved citizens.

The NTGC is involved in a number of worthy projects ranging from promoting public transportation to creating more green space, including community gardens. In fact, the NTGC works on such a wide range of eco-issues, that they really do have something to meet everyone's interests.

As a society, we are faced with growing concerns around climate change, smog alert days and the shameful loss of our city's green space. I believe that it is now more important than ever to encourage youth to become stewards of the environment, as it is they who will inherit the planet we leave for them. They may even leave it a bit better than they found it for their children.

Here in North Toronto, the NTGC is the "home base" for Toronto's environmental community and is the perfect organization for youth of all ages to get involved with. Secondary School students can use some of their 40 volunteer hours by working with the NTGC. As well, college and university students can gain important "real life" volunteer experience that certainly might give

them an advantage as they eventually enter the job market.

In fact, the NTGC is actually convincing youth that saving the planet is much more fun than watching television or playing computer games. Yes, it can be done! Already this year, dozens of young Torontonians have met and organized with the NTGC's Youth Action Committee (Youth Action). Youth Action's goal is to both support existing NTGC initiatives, while giving youth a role in our organization in which they can develop and direct youth-driven projects of their own.



At our initial Youth Action meeting, I was impressed by the knowledge and passion demonstrated by our new young volunteers. Over a meal of delicious and nutritious food, we debated and discussed environmental issues, brainstormed new ideas and then took a tour of a bus that runs almost entirely on vegetable oil. I want to express our great appreciation to Mike Divell for allowing us to learn about his bus and I wish him a "Bon Voyage" through his tour of Canada!

A very special thing about volunteering with the NTGC's Youth Action is the opportunity for youth to find new friendships that could last a lifetime- friendships built on a love for the environment, a commitment to community, and dedicated work and play.

Let us encourage youth to become involved in protecting the environment and to be leaders in our community. The North Toronto Green Community is a great place for them to start.

Josh Matlow is the trustee for St. Paul's at the Toronto District School Board and is on the North Toronto Green Community's Board of Directors. Please feel free to contact him at josh@joshmatlow.ca or visit his website at www.joshmatlow.ca.

Youth Member Profile:

Meghan O'Keefe

After days of writers block and consulting with my editor, I was asked to write an article about myself in hopes of inspiring youth to be, well, I guess, more like me? The irony of a self-titled contrarian attempting to inspire others is beyond me. But this article hopes to inspire every one of any age and creed to be more involved. So, let's get started:

Who am I? Well, my name is Meghan (Megs) O'Keefe, but that doesn't answer any questions.

What defines me? Beliefs, actions, and passions are traits that define a person; therefore, what are mine?

I believe that apathy is a horrible affliction. I believe that apathy causes global indifference and suffering. Apathy results in the death and destruction of social fabrics and of Mother Nature. Apathy leads to chaos.

I believe there is a cure to apathy. I don't know what the cure is but, I believe the cure is out there. I think the cure might be found in social networking and direct democracy. I think the cure is in tomorrow's youth. I know that today's youth and everyone alive on Earth today are the cause and the cure for apathy. I know that it is my responsibility to attempt to cure apathy in myself and those around me. These beliefs have drawn me to become a volunteer with NTGC. I know that I can cure apathy within myself and within everyone I meet.

My actions demonstrate many of my beliefs.

I believe that the natural world is being degraded and its death will lead to ours. Maybe, I am a human-focused environmentalist, maybe I just really like trees, but the bottom line is, the earth is in trouble. I believe this, and I am the member of several environmental organizations, NTGC included, and I have intentions of becoming an Environmental Lawyer.

I believe that individuals with mood disorders have inadequate access to education regarding their disorder and they are unfairly stigmatized. I am the youngest member to sit on the Board of



Directors of the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario.

I believe that inactivity and an unhealthy lifestyle are symbols of disrespect to your body, your mind and the environment around you. I am a vegetarian, I played varsity rugby at the University of Guelph, I am a cyclist, and I used to row competitively.

My actions are extensive, my beliefs are widespread, and my passion is all-embracing.

I am passionate about politics and my political volunteerism demonstrates my passion. I am passionate about athletics and my sportsmanship reflects such passion. I am passionate about food and if you ever get the change to see me in a kitchen, you can witness it.

I have strong beliefs and passions and I also have actions which reveal who I am. My actions are both small and large, and sometimes they go unnoticed. But as long as my actions are helpful, I am me.

So, who am I? I am a short, curly haired, Canadian, open-minded, hardworking, ambitious, active, fun-loving student who wants to (and will) change the world!

But sometimes even all this isn't enough. Some days (as Jim Cuddy said it best) "the half-finished bottles of inspiration lie like ghosts in my room." But everyday, we need to look around and appreciate who we are and what's around us (the trees especially) and if we are quiet enough to listen to the wind, then the wind will be our inspiration.

Meghan O'Keefe is a second year student at the University of Guelph. She is an environmentalist and her passion is politics. At 18 years old, she has accomplished more than many people have at 40 and she continues to charge on, making a difference in everything she does.

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From MSN to India: My Journey to Become the Change (Part II)

By MICHAEL MANULAK

Last year I was enjoying a well-deserved winter break from classes; lazing around the house in ripped socks, ratty jeans and a baseball cap. I turned on the tube and started watching a show about a tiger. See, when I was a boy, I absolutely adored tigers! Strange thing though: this tiger was running, and hunting dogs had their jaws clamped onto it. The footage proceeded, and then three men were driving a wooden stick into the tiger's throat! Worse still, you could see this look of terror in its eyes, slowly being drained of life.

Despite being an environmentalist, I had no knowledge of the state of the world's tigers. This footage hit me hard, and something clicked inside me: I had to save the tiger. After much thought and research we (Greenpower) travelled to a Tiger Reserve called Similipal in the East Indian state of Orissa. Our research told us that the most important cause of the tiger's decline was the depletion of its prey by large human populations.

So, the solution was simple: I guess we need to ask the people of India really nicely if they'll change their

means of survival to stop depleting the ecosystem? Not quite.

This January I had the opportunity to visit the villages and speak with the families around the reserve. After this, my understanding of the environment changed completely. Seeing the local conditions, the families struggling badly through disease and mal-nourishment, I understood why these people deplete the forests and hunt the prey: these communities are so poor and overpopulated that it is their only option. While watching families collect fuel, wood and fodder from the forests, telling them to stop "for the tiger" seemed like the stupidest thing I could've said.

As a result, instead of banning vulnerable populations from the forests they depend on (a common conservation approach used by Governments), Greenpower is working with local communities in India to develop alternatives. This year, Greenpower has established a Rural Energy Program that reduces village timber demands, while providing a safe and reliable source of energy, and an increase in agricultural yields. Additionally, in 2006 Greenpower will establish a primary school in the tribal village of Laxmiposi, which will emphasize youth leadership

Greenpower's Community Walk A Thon

WHERE: High Park Toronto

WHEN: October 1st, 2005 Saturday

Registration 9:30 am

To register, or for more info, please e-mail Michael at greenpowercanada@yahoo.ca

within a community conservation plan. Combined, these programs will empower local populations to meet their needs in ways that are more ecologically friendly. It is logical that people who are facing disease and starvation are simply not concerned with wildlife conservation. Let's solve those problems first.

Okay, so, onward! Greenpower needs your help! We have a tremendous opportunity to contribute greatly to a more equitable and sustainable global society! We need your support. If you are a young person

or even young at heart, visit our website for more information: www.greenpowercanada.org; or email me at michael.manulak@utoronto.ca if you would like to get involved!

Mike Manulak is a young activist who started his organization Greenpower while in High School, beginning with simple waste management practises. He is now at the University of Toronto and doing very noble work with Greenpower. He is a great example how any youth can make a difference in this world!

Green Reads

Green Reads is a new addition to the NTGC newsletter. Members are welcome to recommend their favourite environmental books to info@ntgc.ca.

- **The Wisdom of the Mythtellers.** Sean Kane
- **The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places.** Gary Paul Nabhan
- **Redesigning the American Lawn: A Search for Environmental Harmony.** Yale Univ. Press: 2nd Ed.
- **Never Cry Wolf.** Farley Mowat
- **Silent Spring / The Sea Around Us / Under the Seawind.** Rachel Carson
- **Dream of the Earth.** Thomas Berry.
- **Sharing Nature with Children.** Joseph Cornellx
- **A Field Guide to the Familiar.** Gale Lawrence
- **A Short History of Progress.** Ronald Wright
- **Fueling the Future: How the Battle Over Energy is Changing Everything.** Eds. Andrew Heintzman and Evan Solomon
- **Wisdom of the Elders.** Dr. David Suzuki

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10th Anniversary!

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Troops Clean Up the Burke Brook

_ BY PAUL DOWNEY

The 23rd Toronto Sunnybrook Beaver Troop went to the Burke Brook clean-up as part of our environmental education. Beavers Colin Downey (age 7), Nick Latimer (age 8), Joshua Smith (age 6) and their families participated.

Beaver Colin Downey was interviewed about his experience. Colin, what did you like about the day? "It was fun because it was in a creek with lots of water and rocks and hills. The part that was not so fun was that there was a lot of garbage that made it dirty."

What was the best part about the creek? "The creek was fun. I liked jumping on the rocks and walking across the water."

What would you do differently next year? "Next time I should bring my boots"

What did you think about the brook when we showed up? "The garbage was very gross, GR-O-O-O-O-O-S gross!"

What did you think about the brook when we left? "After we were done, it was spotless"

What did you do to help clean up? "I picked up garbage bags full of garbage, metal, containers"

When asked if he wanted to go back and help next year, Colin simply answered "yes."



The troops hard at work in Burke Brooke at Sylvan Valley Way

My First Lost River Walk _ BY SEAN BRIGGS

Amidst an increasing amount of personal scepticism and negativity concerning what I felt would be an uneventful nature walk, my sister Jacqueline (an NTGC member) insisted that I experience the Lost River Walks (LRW) program. The LRW website outlines the goal and philosophy of the program: to "help people appreciate their intimate connections to the water systems that form an essential part of their lives. We trace the courses of such forgotten streams evoking images of old mills, grand houses and native settlements. You'll find a way of looking at your neighbourhood in a whole new light."

Upon entering the Mount Pleasant Cemetery from the nearby Belt Line (another great hike) I remembered that I truly enjoy the company of abundant mature trees, of which there were a profuse amount throughout the walk. The older age of the majority of the members attending was initially discouraging as I felt I would have

little to speak about with anyone. Again, my concerns were foolish, as all members of the walk were present for the same reason: their love for nature that transcended age, or life experience. The same love for nature, I suspect, is what embodies the mission statement and fuels the spirit of the volunteers associated with the North Toronto Green Community.

A beautiful deer was spotted grazing on an adjacent hill as the walk continued. This uncommon sighting captured the attention of most of the group's members and represented another moment that lead me to believe this nature walk, despite my doubts, had become something very special.

The trail began just south of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery and ended in a beautiful Parkette in southeast Rosedale. The calm walking pace as well as historic tidbits from group

leaders allowed the nature walk to be both relaxing and informative.

The trail was scenic from beginning to end, however the section that stretched from St. Clair, moving south towards Mount Pleasant and Roxborough was especially pleasing. A combination of the mature tree canopy with just the right amount of sunshine peeking through, the pathway moving parallel to the stream that dissected the area was enough to ignite my nature radar and keep my attention focused.

The City of Toronto's Parks and Recreation Department has a vision that Toronto become known as a City within a Park. I personally believe this to already be our reality. Toronto has an extensive park system that connects various areas of the city and also serves as a communal space for all of Toronto's citizens.

Overall, I was very pleased to take part in the Lost rivers walk organized by the North Toronto Green Community and I encourage other young people to also take part in similar walks and to take advantage of the public parks in Toronto.

Sean Briggs is a professional Blue Jays fan. He graduated in the spring from U of T with a degree in Political Science and Geography. While you are reading this he will be en-route to London to spend three months in Europe.

The Lost Rivers project celebrates 10 years of walking along these buried creeks on Sunday, September 18 and Sunday, September 25 (See the Lost Rivers poster on the back page of this issue).

Earth Day? More Like Earth Week at Forest Hill Collegiate Institute!!

_ BY SHUANG SHAN

It's hard to get people together to celebrate and bring awareness to the environment in a school (Forest Hill C. I.) where the student body's first priority isn't greening the school or our environment. But our team of people in the Environmental Club had a great idea to fundraise for environmental programs by stretching Earth Day into Earth Week!

We started by talking to teachers and principals, who spread the message to students. Our donation requests to local companies, stores and organizations were very successful; some even donated prizes that we used for a fundraising sale and raffle. A Greenpeace representative spoke at the Earth Week assembly which preceded the fundraising.

Through the new Earth Week tradition we earned almost \$800 which was donated to both Greenpeace and the North Toronto Green Community. The best part about Earth Week was that we raised more than money: we raised awareness.

Shuang Shan is a 12th grade student at Forest Hill. She also sits on the youth committee of NTGC. She is committed to improving the awareness of Environmental issues at her school.



Youth Meet and Greet

By JACQUELINE BRIGGS

The inaugural NTGC Youth Action Meet and Greet on May 25th, 2005 was an evening of diversity. There was such a range of attitudes, opinions, interest levels, speakers, and transportation options that it truly represented the diverse composition of North Toronto Youth.

Not everyone is willing to tie him/herself to a tree in the path of a corporate bulldozer, nor is everyone even willing to recycle their pop cans; but Mike Divell is willing to dedicate "his whole life that is not 9-5 or Techno" to the development and maintenance of a school bus (aptly named "Harder") that runs mainly on vegetable oil picked up for free from fast food restaurants. The cameraman following the "Harder" group for a documentary film is evidence of what a great idea Mike has.

Nico Kapetaneas, another speaker, is involved in the development of the Student Environmental Network, and in May hosted a conference which was attended by over 40 schools and 220 students.

Josh Matlow shared how his career aspirations shifted away from acting after his successful leadership saved the Oak Ridges Moraine. He went on to run in a Provincial election, eventually parlaying his communication skills into his current role as TDSB trustee. Rumours are spreading all over North Toronto as to what he will do next.

While this meeting had its fair share of apocalyptic doom, the overall character and inspiration evident in the young people attending can be summed up in one of the many inscriptions in the walls of the "Harder" bus: "Don't dream it. Be it."

Jacqueline Briggs is working on her English Lit. degree at U of T. She became an NTGC member in April and has spent many, many hours to put together this Youth issue of the NTGC News.

north toronto green community 2005 speaker series presents

Youth, Environment and Education

Monday October 17, 2005

Speakers: Elise Houghton of EEON (Environmental Education Ontario) and Meghan O'Keefe

Location: North Toronto Memorial Community Centre, 200 Eglinton Avenue West (2 lights west of Yonge street) - This Speaker Series is FREE



Socially Responsible Investing

Monday November 28, 2005

Speakers: Michael Jantzi
Research Associates

Location: North Toronto Memorial Community Centre (NTMCC), 200 Eglinton Ave. W.

Cost: \$10

Please RSVP as this session is filling up quickly



*All Speaker Series events start at 7 pm. Light refreshments are served.
For more information, please call 416-781-7663.*

Youth Green Web Directory

- www.skyfishproject.org (Severn Cullis-Suzuki's site: sign the Recognition of Responsibility)
- www.davidsuzuki.org (Self-explanatory)
- www.greenpeace.ca (Again, self-explanatory)
- <http://yen-rej.org> (Youth Environmental Online Community)
- www.veg.ca (Toronto Vegetarian Association)
- www.greenpowercanada.org (Michael Manulak is on the NTGC Youth Committee, and is founder of Greenpower)
- www.trec.on.ca/windshare (Toronto Renewable Energy Co-op; NTGC members formed this co-op in 1997)
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3686106.stm> ("Planet Under Pressure" is a six-part BBC online series that looks at pressing environmental issues)
- www.environment.utoronto.ca (U of T's newly integrated Centre for the Environment)
- www.yorku.ca/fes (York U's Faculty of Environmental Studies)
- www.eco.ca (Environmental Careers Organization Canada: career website for students, educators, employers and practitioners of environmental careers and studies)
- www.cleanair.web.ca (Ontario Clean Air Alliance)
- www.cleanairfoundation.org (check out the Car Heaven program)
- www.planetfriendly.net/ecportal.html (Another green web directory!)
- www.planetfriendly.net/goodwork.html (Looking for and posting Canadian environmental jobs – paid and volunteer positions)
- www.ec.gc.ca/youth (Environment Canada: Youth)
- www.cen-rce.org (Canadian Environmental Network)
- www.eya.ca (Environmental Youth Alliance)
- www.syc-cjs.org (Sierra Youth Coalition)
- www.yc3.net (Youth Climate Change Conference: NTGC staff member Briana Illingworth attended!)
- www.janegoodall.ca/rs/rs_history.html AND www.rootsandshoots.org/ (Roots & Shoots - engages and inspires youth through community service and service learning. It emphasizes the principle that knowledge leads to compassion, which inspires action)
- www.ntgc.ca (North Toronto Green Community's Web site)

One Tonne Challenge: Six Tonne Result

BY MIKE ROCHA

The One-Tonne Challenge. Everyone has seen the advertisements on TV challenging Canadians to reduce their GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions by one tonne, but not everyone has given it a chance. Perhaps they feel it is too much of a challenge, or that there is not enough of an incentive to make the effort and reduce their GHGs.

Recently I spoke with Dave MacLeod, an employee of the City of Toronto's Environmental Services, who explained to me that reducing GHG emissions was easy considering that emissions reductions are directly proportional to the amount of money that can be saved. I soon came to realize that he really knew from first hand experience since he has successfully reduced his family's GHG emissions by 6 tonnes!

Dave cited his move from the west end of Toronto to Yonge and Lawrence as the biggest change that he made to improve his energy efficiency. This was a huge change, but it was right for he, his wife and family. Each had had their own cars in the west end for their commute to work each day. Dave went on to explain that they could sell one of their two cars, which on its own led to less insurance, gas, maintenance, and parking that needed to be paid. They could also walk to the subway station and commute anywhere in Toronto to avoid the clogged roads, thereby contributing less to clogging the atmosphere.

The next thing that needed to be addressed were the upgrades to their home that was in need of a fix-up. When I asked what they addressed

first, Dave mentioned the furnace: they didn't really have much of a choice since it "crapped out" shortly after moving in. When replacing the furnace, they simply decided to "do it right the first time" and buy an energy efficient model. Dave said that an afternoon of installing \$500 worth of insulation into the attic of his house made the biggest difference in terms of heating and cooling costs, and emissions reduction. Money and air-wise, this was a very reasonable upgrade.

So in the end, what got the ball rolling was Dave's commitment to a lifestyle change. They initiated change by moving closer to a subway station. It was a new beginning for Dave and his wife that allowed them to sell a car, upgrade their new house to use energy efficiently, and start using public transportation much more frequently than before.

Through this significant change Dave and his family reduced their GHG emissions by 6 tonnes!

Packing one's bags and relocating closer to a workplace, a child's school, public transportation, a recreation centre, grocery markets, etc. can have a real and lasting impact on the quality of life for Torontonians. As Dave said to me, "It doesn't hurt much to do it, and it saves money. All we need are conscious decisions to change our day-to-day habits. Turning off the AC when no one is home, shutting off a light when not in the room, and even relocating are important steps that accommodate more energy efficient ways of life."

Mike Rocha is a freelance Audio Engineer, musician and clean-air advocate.



Eco-Warrior Memorial: Bob Hunter

Bob Hunter, best known as one of the founders of Greenpeace, was a journalist, author, broadcaster and activist. Born in Winnipeg in 1941, Bob got his start as a journalist for the Winnipeg Tribune and the Vancouver Sun. Involved as an environmental activist in Vancouver, he and a group of like-minded individuals launched Greenpeace with a campaign to stop US nuclear weapons testing on Amchitka in 1971. Bob later served as president of Greenpeace Canada, before moving on to a career in broadcasting with Toronto's CityTV and as the enviro columnist at eye weekly. During his lifetime, he also authored many books, and won

the Governor-General's Award for literature in 1991 with *Occupied Canada: A Young White Man Discovers His Unsuspected Past*. In 2001, he entered politics with an unsuccessful run under the Liberal party in a provincial by-election in the Beaches-East York riding. Canada recently lost one of Time magazine's "eco heroes of the 20th century"; Bob passed away in Toronto in May 2005.

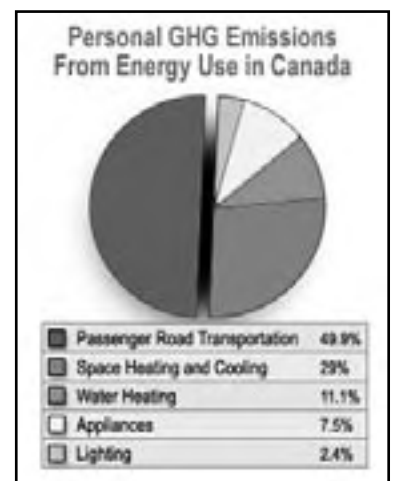
What's All The Fuss On Climate Change? May 30th Speaker Series

Dr. Danny Harvey, a professor of geography at the University of Toronto, explained to those in attendance at this Speaker Series event that there still isn't enough of a fuss over climate change. He debunked the climate change myths propagated by scientific groups (whom are probably paid by the oil and gas companies) that climate change is a naturally occurring phenomenon. It is not naturally occurring. We are causing it. He told us that the irreversible effects include, among others, a total wipe-out of all coral reef systems on the planet.

The good news is that we can all do our part to save the other ecological marvels on our earth and in our city. Individual reductions in energy consumption, such as taking public transit, ensuring your home is well sealed against heat loss by filling all cracks with silicone and increasing

insulation in places of high heat loss such as attics, as well as buying locally produced products to prevent transportation emissions, will have a truly amazing effect in reversing climate change.

Let us be remembered in history as the generation that took responsibility for our environment, not as the generation who left it for the next ones to fix.



Goodbye King Coal!!!

The Ontario Clean Air Alliance celebrated the closure of the dirty coal-fired Lakeview Generating Station May 26th with Premier Dalton McGuinty, Deputy Opposition Leader Elizabeth Witmer, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, and 500 other joyous attendees, including NTGC members.

The Lakeview closure marked the elimination of the number one air polluter in the GTA. Ontario is



the first jurisdiction in the world to commit to phasing-out the use of grimy coal power. Thanks to this precedent-setting decision, Ontario is entering a new era in which electricity generation doesn't have to cost us the air we breathe.

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Don Valley West One Tonne Challenge

BY BECKY FREEDMAN

We've just experienced the most intense summer in years. Record high temperatures were the norm; the number of smog days where one could feel and see the pollution reached an all time high, with over 57 alerts, and countless media stories and pleas were issued for businesses and the public to conserve electricity for fear of another blackout. If this is the new climate change reality, can we continue with our current high-energy consumption lifestyles? The answer is no.

We have been told that actions must be taken to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases being produced globally, but where to begin? With ourselves! We have more power to make changes in our hands than we might realize. For example, it is estimated that each Canadian produces over 5 tonnes of greenhouse gases annually through energy consuming activities such as heating and cooling our homes, using appliances, and driving. Taken as a whole, the individual actions of Canadians contribute more than one-quarter of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions!

For Canada to meet its Kyoto commitments, each of us has been asked to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by one tonne. Imagine

the difference we could make if we accomplished this goal – not only would we see a difference in the air, but we would see a difference in ourselves. One tonne – that may seem like a lot, but it is not difficult to make the changes needed to achieve this reduction. The changes needn't be drastic. There are plenty of small things we can do over time to move towards sustainable energy efficiency. For example, when moving, take house size, the heating system, and transportation options into account. When replacing burnt-out light bulbs and old appliances, look for energy efficient models. When undertaking any home renovations, get a home energy audit first – you may be eligible for government rebates.

Already feel that you're leading a pretty energy efficient lifestyle? Great! You are in a great position to show others what a sustainable lifestyle looks like. The best leaders are those who lead by example. Let family, friends and neighbours know the actions you are taking to minimize your energy consumption. Volunteer with, or show support for community organizations that help educate the public about energy efficiency. Find out what other new and creative things you can do to reduce your energy footprint even more. For example, consider renewable energy

credit options to offset your inevitable fossil fuel usage – at the same time you will be investing in the expansion of these sustainable technologies. Be an outstanding eco-citizen by going beyond your one tonne obligation!

And if you think that what we can do is minor compared to businesses, think again. Businesses supply products according to our demands. Therefore, we must take some responsibility for the embodied energy these products use during their production and delivery to us. Become a responsible consumer by purchasing local products and produce, and try to minimize the material goods you consume. Every action you take adds up.

The Don Valley West One Tonne Challenge (DVW OTC) has some exciting programs and campaigns running this fall and winter to help you get started:

- > Find out about Energuide home energy audits by calling Don Valley West One Tonne Challenge: 41 ONE TONNE (416-638-6663).
- > Look for us handing out information cards and decals during our fall Idle-Free campaign.
- > Find out how easy it is to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions from the daily commute through

our Telecommuting/Alternative Commuting program.
> Stay on the lookout for fun and educational challenges coming to a school near you!

For more information on any of these projects, or to get to know your friendly DVW OTC program, visit www.dvwonetonnechallenge.ca. And remember, the changes begin with you, but we can help!

The Don Valley West One-Tonne Challenge (DVW OTC) is working with community groups, resident associations, ratepayers groups, cultural groups, youth groups, faith communities, sports teams, employees of local businesses to educate and raise awareness of the benefits of energy reduction behaviors and energy efficient alternatives/products. The goal of the DVW OTC is to work in a consultative manner and through partnerships to ensure that Don Valley West is the most Kyoto-compliant riding in Canada.

Becky Freedman is the new DVW OTC coordinator, and brings to the job experience and expertise on community-based social marketing, environmental education, and outreach, not to mention her enthusiasm for this program. You can reach her at info@dvwonetonnechallenge.ca.



IS CALLING ALL CANADIANS!!!

MAKE A REAL CHANGE TO HOW YOU LIVE IN DON VALLEY WEST. IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK!

SURF TO:
[HTTP://DVWONETONNECHALLENGE.CA/](http://dvwonetonnechallenge.ca/)

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU!







Around Cuba by bicycle — BY BRIANA ILLINGWORTH

When I was preparing to go to Cuba, most people I spoke with gave the same response: “The beaches and resorts are so nice!” I’m sure the all-inclusive resorts are a great way to spend a holiday, but it sounded like the complete opposite of the trip I was planning with my sister, Meg - we were going to explore Cuba by bike. I was excited about the flexibility that we would have, in addition to some other perks of going by bike – more environmentally friendly than renting a car, and a better cultural experience than staying in an isolated resort. Many have described bicycle touring as ideal because you travel fast enough to see a country and slow enough to experience it.

We flew into Havana, and spent the first couple of days exploring the city

on foot, and planning our cycling route. We visited a lot of great sites, notably the Museum of the Revolution and Old Havana. After exploring the capital, it was time to get on the road.

We planned a route through the province of Pinar del Rio, just west of Havana. Our first three days on the road took us from Havana to Soroa, to San Diego de Los Baños, and ended in Viñales. We visited an orchid garden in Soroa, wished for some rain when we rode through the mountains, and had a drink with German cyclists we met on my birthday.

Viñales is a popular town in a very lush valley. The town is a destination for rock climbing, and the landscape is dotted with limestone mound and

fields of tobacco. It was the perfect place to take a break from the bikes, staying for a couple of days. We took a guided walk to see how tobacco is dried and rolled into cigars, and were treated to grapefruit and fresh sugar cane juice.

After heading west along the center island, we went north to the coast. We spent three days on our bikes, staying on Santa Lucia and Puerto Esperanza enroute to Cayo Levisa. In Puerto Esperanza, a fishing village, we spent the afternoon entertaining two girls by our inability to speak Spanish.

We reached Cayo Levisa, a small island resort, on the third day. This was the part of our trip to relax, enjoying lazy days on the beach. We



Meg riding between fields of banana trees

did one dive, but otherwise, did very little for two days.

We rode along the northern road, passing through small towns and enjoying a fantastic view of the coast. At one point, we stopped to take photos of an unusual-looking tree; while we were taking a break, a man selling fruit and baked goods came along, and we bought donuts and some bananas for later. Experiences like this seemed to happen easily as we traveled by bike – it was easy to stop and take a break, or to say hello to someone as we went by.

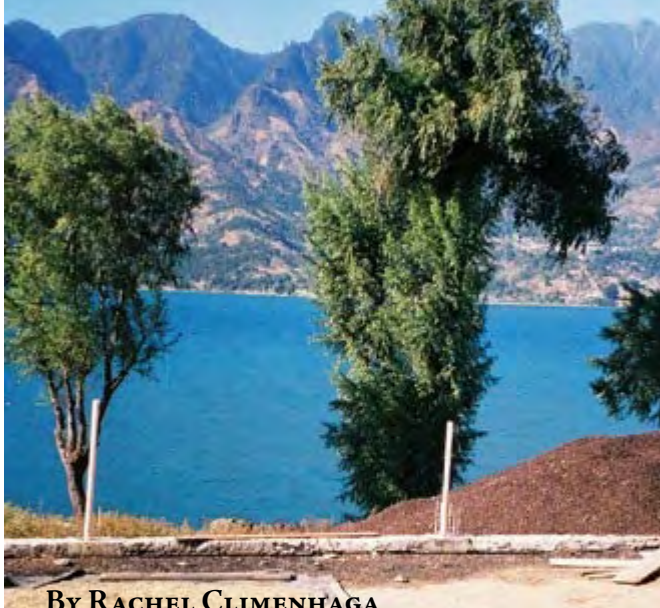
That night and the following day, we stayed in Las Terrazas, an eco-reserve

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Children outside a rural school

The striking beauty and sense of community that is Guatemala



By RACHEL CLIMENHAGA

I spent eight weeks in Guatemala this past winter and it was certainly a journey that opened my eyes to many things. Guatemala is a country of astonishing physical beauty. The western highlands, where I spent my first three weeks, is a mountain region with tiny Pueblos dotting the green hills. I stayed in a village on the majestic Lake Atitlan, my morning view a postcard

picture of the sweeping mountains surrounding the basin of the lake. In this area however, as is the case in so many Central American countries, huge portions of the mountain-sides are clear-cut and planted in row upon row of corn. Subsistence agriculture is necessary to many of the inhabitant’s livelihoods.

On one weekend hiking trip, I observed many people making their way down or up the deforested mountain, usually with a huge load of firewood or corn on their back, lapping us as we struggled with our knapsacks and fancy footwear. Locals told me that this daily trek is more preferable to them than not-so-long-ago, when many people in the highlands had to go (by foot) to work on large plantations on the coast, a trip that takes many days hiking up and down multiple mountains. However, for every mountain that is deforested (to the detriment of the forest but the benefit of the people) there still remain many that are untouched. The night of my hiking trip I was able in the distance an active volcano spewing lava many peaks away.

More than the breathtaking scenery, it was the people I met who impressed me the most. The Guatemalan people have had a difficult past, with a brutal civil war lasting over 30 years. Many had personal stories to tell of losing loved ones, or how they would simply “disappear”.

Despite this suffering, I found Guatemalans to be among the warmest of all cultures I have ever met. I lived with families and went to Spanish schools during my travels, so I was able to have a reasonable degree of interaction with many locals. My last five weeks were spent in a small town in the north of Guatemala called San Andres. I lived with a lovely woman, Doña Nidia, and her family. The cultural sense of community and family is so well rooted and it was wonderful to observe. Most families live together in the same house, and once the children are old enough to marry, they will build another dwelling on the same property. Doña Nidia had three children, all of whom lived in small houses

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