



The Eco Beat

insights to help people live in a healthy and sustainable environment

A quarterly newsletter Fall 2010

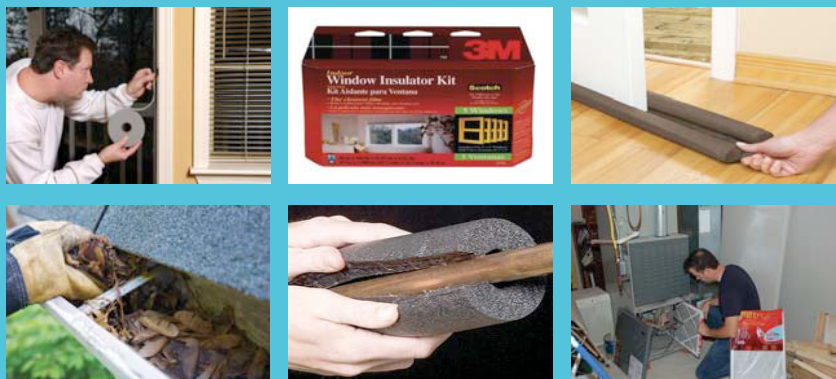
Participate in our 1st Winterization Challenge!



EcoLiving Events Home Winterization Challenge November 13th, 2010 9:00am – 1:00pm

Winterizing your home: Stop air leaks with caulking and weather stripping, insulate your heated pipes, insulate your hot water tank, install a programmable thermostat, change your furnace filter, and add plastic to your windows is a start.

Simple Ways To Winterize



Further Steps To Take



Get your team together to help out a community. Learn how to winterize homes from an expert, and winterize a local home all in ONE morning! A winterized home is more energy efficient, has lower utility costs and is more comfortable in the cold winter months.

Are you one of the following:

Team of six people?

Fundraise, learn and get hands-on experience! (Minimum \$250 fundraising for supplies)
(Great team building / community service opportunity)

Business?

Donate supplies for a great cause (caulking, weatherstripping, furnace filters, etc)

Renovation Master?

Volunteer your time and expertise for the day (Great way to showcase your business)

Bowness homeowner?

Get your home winterized for FREE!

Participate by:

Registering by November 3rd, 2010

(Send us an email or check out the website for forms)

For more information:

To make a donation or other interests

(Send us an email us or call 403.880.4467)

info@ecolivingevents.ca

www.ecolivingevents.ca

Spring 2010 EcoLiving Tour

Filled with information about Sustainable Developments

June 19, 2010 was our ninth year to host our EcoLiving Tours. Every year there is a larger pool of facilities to tour. That indicates that many people in Calgary are seeing the benefit of using energy efficient building technologies or are installing various forms of alternative energy sources to offset their utility usage.

EcoLiving Tours returns to the same locations when there is something new to see. This year the Tour had forty eager participants. The tour bus traveled to: **Home Haven Bed & Breakfast** and listened to Mary Nokleby talk about her green renovation, high efficiency heating, solar water heating, drain water heat recovery, and solar electric. Mary was very informative and excited about her efforts to reduce her ecological footprint. EcoLiving Events applauds forward thinking people like Mary.



Our next stop was to **The EchoHaven Demonstration Home in Rocky Ridge**. This project was in construction phase and had a number of demonstration tables set up with the numerous environmentally friendly products that the building was incorporating. The features of the EchoHaven Demonstration Home include:

- south orientation for passive solar gain
- PV modules to generate electricity for the house
- solar thermal collectors for hot water
- electric heating – radiant panels in the ceiling
- heavily insulated envelope – walls-R54, ceiling-R108 and under slab-R32
- triple glazed fiberglass windows, low iron on south exposure for enhanced solar gain
- efficient appliances and low flow fixtures
- rainwater collection and a dedicated greywater line

The demonstration home is the first home in the EchoHaven community of 25 homes. The community features include: zero greenhouse gas emissions, 100% rainwater retention and balanced water management strategy, shared amenities and on-site renewable energy generation and the community design preserves more than 60% of the area's rich wetlands ecosystem and maximize solar exposure – www.echohaven.ca.

We will ask to visit this area again for the 2011 spring tour. This is a must see. Thank you to Dave Spence for organizing this Tour stop.

Our third location was to the Bow River Weir and the Constructed Wetlands. Our experienced tour guide quickly went through the Constructed Wetlands because we were already behind our schedule. Daryl spent a bit more time talking about the re-construction of the Weir. We will go back to this location when the construction has been completed.

After having lunch, we visited a home built by **Jigsaw Homes**. This contemporary (over one million dollar) masterpiece in Altadore is one High Performance, Energy Efficient home.

Some of the features:

- Solar Thermal hot water heating system
- 95% efficient forced air furnace
- Whole home HRV
- Whole home Hepa air filtration system
- 2 pound, soy based spray foam insulation throughout
- Low-E, Argon windows
- External water circulation lines to reduce water waste
- 98% efficient tankless hot water boiler
- Remote opening skylights with automatic rain sensors
- Eco-bee wireless thermostat (can control from your i-Phone)
- Pre-wired for whole home automation

This home is beautiful, has many unique features and everyone had to take the tunnel that connect to the garage.

Our next stop was to **The Brama Project** in Marda Loop. Nicole Pitman from Coley Homes (and the home owner) shared many details about their home. Designed to produce more energy than it uses annually, the Brama Project is an inner-city exercise in resource efficiency. Passive solar design, geothermal heating and cooling, earth tube ventilation, HRVs, ICF/SIP construction and rooftop PV solar are key systems. Thermal mass plays an important role in the Calgary climate and this home has plenty of it

Many people commented about the costs of the projects that we visited. The price of these homes are more than most people can afford. It was still great to visit the homes because it gives homeowners and developers information about what can be incorporated into building to reduce energy usage. Even if only one of the many features are added they will improve the efficiency of the homes.

Our final tour location was where we began the tour at the Climate Change Central office. This will be the last tour of this facility as Climate Change Central has moved to a new location. We really appreciate Janet Gehring (our tour guide) and Kimberly King (helped us with registration) for helping us with so many EcoLiving Tours over the years. We will need to find a new location to start the EcoLiving Tour in 2011. Watch our website for more information.



First Annual Green Stampede Breakfast

Yahoooo!! our first ever Stampede Breakfast was a huge success. We served pancakes, sausages, coffee and juice to over 400 people. We cooked part of our breakfast by solar power thanks to Skyfire Energy who supplied the portable solar trailer. Our musician, Russ Eldon got everyone tapping their toes and laughing as he is quite the stand-up comedian. Thank you to Kerry Ross with Alberta Ecoroof Initiative and Dave MacKillop with Calgary Technologies who lead several tours of their Green Roof, Waterwise landscaping & Solar Displays. This event was a lot of fun and introduced some of our visitors to some very sustainable technology. The Breakfast was so good we will do it again next year. See ya in 2011 partners!

Earth Hour at Olympic Plaza, March 28, 2010

Over 500 Calgarians came down to Olympic Plaza to participate in the "Earth Hour in Calgary" event. Several families with young children attended. We hope that the children grow up to understand the importance of supporting this type of global initiative. Calgary seems to be hesitant to join the movement.

After some technical difficulties, all the lights in Olympic Plaza (the decorative tree lighting was eventually extinguished), the lighting at the Calgary Tower, the lighting at the Municipal Building and the construction lighting on the Bow Tower went dark. There were also a number of office towers with only a few lights shining in the windows. Corporate Calgary and The City of Calgary should be commended for their efforts.

The people who attended the event at Olympic Plaza were very happy they spent their evening drinking hot chocolate heated by solar power, participating in a drumming circle, watching the various forms of entertainment and talking about what they are doing to reduce their GHG emissions.

Organizers of this event are not discouraged with only a .5% reduction in power. At least there was a reduction and as long as we are reducing our GHG emission during the hour and talking to people about ways to reduce Climate Change we consider our efforts a success.



Pathway and River Clean Up

EcoLiving Events had a team for the 43rd Annual City of Calgary Pathway and River Clean up on May 2, 2010. This event is hosted by The City of Calgary Parks and is sponsored by Stantec Consulting Ltd., Tim Horton's, Waste Management, Calgary Area Outdoor Council and the Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation. Other City of Calgary supporters include the Calgary Fire Department, Waste and Recycling Services, and Calgary Police Service.

It was the fourth year that EcoLiving Events participated in this very worthwhile event. We had a team of seven and cleaned along the pathway of Bowmont Park. We were very surprised how clean some of the area was and then realized that another group was working in this area...no wonder it was clean. We moved away from the river banks and cleaned the field below the 85th Street and up towards the dog park. There was a lot of garbage in this area! After collecting about 12 bags of garbage in a downpour of rain, our team went out for Pizza. A great way to wrap up a job well done. Mark this event on your calendar and join our team on May 1, 2011.

Our First Casino: counting money, chip runners and the food!

EcoLiving Events got a taste of a different world on April 29 and 30 when we worked for Stampede Casino. It took a lot of paperwork to get approval for our organization to work at the Casino; and then more paperwork to gather our volunteers. Now that we have a nice pool of money in our bank account it will take more paperwork to spend the money. Oh what is an organization to do? I guess we will continue to fill out the paperwork.

Thank you to everyone who came out to work at this event, especially the people who stayed until 3:00am. I enjoyed my time visiting with everyone and listening to the cheers from the winners. I heard other people say they also thought it was not a bad way to spend an afternoon or evening. I am so glad to hear this as we have booked another for the fall of 2011. We will be calling on you again.

Sustainable EcoLiving Book Club

4th Floor North Meeting Room, Calgary Public Library - 616 Macleod Tr. S.E.

Join us for discussion at the Calgary Public Library, once a month on Wednesday evenings 6:00 – 7:30 PM at the Central Public Library for discussion about relevant topics and trends in the environment. Below are the upcoming 2010/2011 dates and featured books.



Book List and Dates

15 September, 2010 *[Bring on the Apocalypse](#)* By George Monbiot, "Tell people something they know already and they will thank you for it. Tell them something new and they will hate you for it". Monbiot's essays on self destruction deal with themes of science, political power, war, religion, economics and culture. He has strong opinions and expresses them with concise, intense broadsides against everything from climate change deniers, to the fundamentalist "Christian Taliban," to the evils of teen magazines, and what continued interest in the Loch Ness monster says about our attitude to real monsters. Some of the issues he reveals will make you very angry, especially at the wasteful incompetence and sheer self-centeredness of government.

20 October, 2010 *[The Price of a Bargain](#)* By Gordon Laird. Calgary investigative journalist Gordon Laird provides a brilliant investigation into the true cost of our bargain economy — and the end of consumerism as we know it. Ours is the age of discount: we want more, cheaper, better. But the result is low wages, urban blight, environmental damage, labour abuses, a cookie-cutter model of progress, and now an international economic crisis. Laird traces the bargain from its humble dollar-store origins to its place as global juggernaut. From Alberta's tar sands to China's factories, from Las Vegas to the Arctic Circle, a single question emerges: how will we survive the bargain?

17 November, 2010 *[The End of Energy Obesity](#)* By Peter Tertzakian, Is it any wonder that our energy needs are so great? Nearly everything that defines our way of life requires energy-consuming devices, from cars, planes, trains, and air conditioning to lights and computers. And our global appetite for energy keeps growing as population and wealth obliges consumption on an unfathomable scale. Increasing the efficiency of our devices, ironically, makes us consume even more energy. We've periodically cut back our energy use only to revert back to bad habits. Now we are energy obese. How can the world reduce its energy appetite and change its diet of fuels for a prosperous and secure tomorrow? Peter Tertzakian, a Calgary economist and energy expert, explores solutions to this question by analyzing the role of technology and circumstance on our energy use. Tertzakian focuses on the most practical options that provide the highest leverage for resolving our energy problems and reveals how evolving habits, lifestyles, mind-sets, and innovations—that might seem improbable now—will help curb our insatiable energy appetite.

08 December, 2010 *[A Sand County Almanac](#)* By Leopold Aldo & Michael Sewell. Published in 1949, shortly after the author's death, A Sand County Almanac is a classic of nature writing, widely cited as one of the most influential nature books ever published. Writing from the vantage of his summer shack along the banks of the Wisconsin River, Leopold mixes essay, polemic, and memoir in his book's pages. The collection of essays advocates Leopold's idea of a "land ethic", or a responsible relationship existing between people and the land they inhabit. The book is considered a landmark in the American conservation movement.

19 January, 2011 *[Animal Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life](#)* By Barbara Kingsolver. Kingsolver very skillfully combines an entertaining memoir of her family's year of living on local provisions, mostly home grown on their farm in southern Appalachia, with humorous and serious reflections on rural life, the food industry, the environment, health and local farmers' economics. Her science background and success as a fiction writer allows her to captivate her audiences. She addresses some serious questions regarding the food we choose to eat. Issues range from protection local seeds and biodiversity to industrialization of our food system and the environment impacts that we are facing today and in the future. Readers are encouraged to ask ourselves some fundamental questions about our own approach to food, where it comes from, how far it traveled to reach us, and how we make important economic and environmental as well as health choices every day.

16 February, 2011 *[The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger](#)*. By Wilkinson and Pickett. The authors emphasise that it is not the poor and the deprived in isolation who suffer from the effects of inequality, but also the bulk of that nation's population. According to their findings. Incidences of mental illness, for example, are 500% higher across the whole population spectrum in the most unequal societies than they in the most 'equal' ones. Countries like Scandanavia and Japan have the narrowest of divergence between highest and lowest incomes and, indeed, boast the best psychological health of all. Conversely and rather predictably, those nations like the US and Britain, with the widest gulf between rich and poor, are plagued by the highest occurrence of health-related and social problems. Why is this? Their answer is simple, profound and disquieting; they argue that inequality, ipso facto, breeds stress across the full spectrum of society, not just among down trodden. The authors themselves urge that greater equality becomes grounded and 'built in' to the models of present and future societies.



16 March, 2011 *[A Short History of Progress](#)* By Ronald Wright. Palaeolithic hunters who learned how to kill two mammoths instead of one had made progress. Those who learnt how to kill 200 - by driving a whole herd over a cliff - had made too much. Many of the great ruins that grace the deserts and jungles of the earth are monuments to progress traps, the headstones of civilizations which fell victim to their own success. The twentieth-century's runaway growth has placed a murderous burden on the planet. "A Short History of Progress" argues that this

modern predicament is as old as civilization. Only by understanding the patterns of progress and disaster that humanity has repeated since the Stone Age can we recognise the inherent dangers, and, with luck, and wisdom, shape its outcome.

13 April, 2011 *[The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture and Human Intention](#)* By David Orr. The environmental movement has often been accused of being overly negative--trying to stop "progress." The Nature of Design, on the other hand, is about starting things, specifically an ecological design revolution that changes how we provide food, shelter, energy, materials, and livelihood, and how we deal with waste. Ecological design is an emerging field that aims to recalibrate what humans do in the world according to how the world works as a biophysical system. Design in this sense is a large concept having to do as much with politics and ethics as with buildings and technology. The Nature of Design combines theory, practicality, and a call to action.

18 May, 2011 *[The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience](#)*, by Rob Hopkins. We live in an oil-dependent world, and have got to this level of dependency in a very short space of time, using vast reserves of oil in the process without planning for when the supply is not so plentiful. Most of us avoid thinking about what happens when oil runs out (or becomes prohibitively expensive), but The Transition Handbook shows how the inevitable and profound changes ahead can have a positive outcome. These changes can lead to the rebirth of local communities, which will grow more of their own food, generate their own power, and build their own houses using local materials.



Ask Us

Do you have burning questions related to sustainable living that you can't seem to find reliable answers to? Send your questions to info@ecolivingfair.ca with "Eco Beat Question" in the subject title and we will take advantage of our large environmental expert networks to find your answer. In the next issue of Eco Beat we will feature the most relevant and eye-opening questions for all of our readers!



Looking For Committee Members

EcoLiving Events Ltd. is a not for profit corporation registered in May, 2007. We are recruiting people interested in becoming part of the EcoLiving Events Committee, we ask anyone interested to fill out an application, which can be found on our website, www.ecolivingfair.ca and submitted to info@ecolivingfair.ca or jvanden1@telus.net.

Let Us Know What You Think

We would appreciate your feedback on our first quarterly newsletter as we would like it to be as relevant and useful for our readers as possible. Please email info@ecolivingfair.ca with comments and suggestions for this and future newsletters. We appreciate your feedback!

EcoLiving Board of Directors

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