

A Diet You Can Live With

There's a diet resolution you can make in 2008 that we guarantee will trim your waste and fatten your wallet. It's an energy conservation diet and it's really easy. Interested? All you have to do is pick one simple action that saves energy, an action that interests you and easily fits into your lifestyle, and do it every day. The OneThing™ website (www.onethingct.com) has lots more information and ideas.



The OneThing campaign, launched by Governor M. Jodi Rell in 2007, is aimed at helping CT residents save money on their energy bills and has big benefits for the environment. "OneThing builds on the momentum that can be achieved if everyone in Connecticut takes one small step, every day. If each of the state's 3.5 million residents do OneThing a day, every day, for a year that would be more than 1.2 billion OneThings - more than enough to make a real difference on issues such as consumption, conservation and the use of clean and renewable energy," says Governor Rell.

Like exercise, if you pick one that interests you, you might actually do it and the benefits will build over time. For example, change your light bulbs to compact fluorescents. If you replace 4 light bulbs, you'll save \$35 this year.

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Or, use a clothes rack for drying some of your laundry. One less dryer load per week in 2008, and you'll save about \$50. Do you really need that second refrigerator in your basement or garage? Getting rid of it will save you about \$100 per year on your electric bill. All these savings can really add up.

There are lots of reasons to do your "one thing". Many of the fuels used to create energy - like oil, natural gas and coal — are non-renewable and contribute to air pollution and climate change. By using less energy generated from non-renewable resources, our air will also be cleaner and we'll be emitting fewer greenhouse gases. Cleaner air means easier breathing for all of us, especially children, the elderly and those who suffer from asthma and lung disease. Fewer greenhouse gases produced also means less global warming. So your one action can actually make a difference and contribute to a less polluted Connecticut and a "greener" world.

Make an energy diet your resolution for 2008! It's easy...look who else is doing OneThing!

- DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy's OneThing is to give greenhouse gas reduction credits as gifts - the perfect present for any occasion! For more information, go to: www.treehugger.com/files/2006/03/survey_of_carbo.php
- David Doeblar, President and General Manager of NBC Channel 30 says that their station's OneThing is to use many green building features in their new West Hartford facility, including a low output heat system that will reduce their HVAC needs. Tune in for their local "Going Green" reports!
- *P2 View* reader Karen Zimmitti "can't wait" to use her new clothesline to significantly reduce her dryer time.
- Don Droppo, Jr., Senior Vice President of Marketing for Curtis Packaging in Newtown, CT says that his company has committed to going "carbon neutral" and is using 100% renewable energy to power all of their operations. At home, Don has installed programmable thermostats and has noticed a big reduction in energy use. www.curtispackaging.com/news.shtml

So Watts your OneThing for 2008?

We'd love to hear from you!

Please e-mail us at judith.prill@po.state.ct.us.

First 10 respondents will receive a reusable shopping bag made from recycled soda bottles!



A Mission

Towards Sustainability

Welcome to Mercy-by-the-Sea in Madison, CT. Located on 1100 feet of frontage on Long Island Sound, the beautiful retreat and conference center is run by Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters are dedicated to making the Center a reflection of their reverence for the Earth and their commitment to sustainability.

Being “green” comes naturally to the Mercy Sisters who have always given their guests the option to keep the same bedding and towels during their stay, because it was aligned with their belief in simplicity. Other policies and practices demonstrate not only their concern about the environment but social justice issues as well. The facility does not use bottled water of any kind. The Center’s Ecology Director Sherill Baldwin states, “Water bottles contribute to our significant solid waste problem in CT, and importantly, we believe water is a resource for all and should not be owned.”

Even though the Center has made impressive strides in reducing energy and water use, minimizing waste and reducing pollution, they are continually looking for ways to do more. For example, Baldwin has recently initiated a Green Team that will look at cleaning products and air fresheners and may look at composting kitchen waste.

Let’s take a tour of the Center:

Checking In

Visitors will first notice the beautiful grounds. The Center uses organic land care practices and follows the CT Northeast Organic Farming Association’s standards. Leaves and garden leftovers are composted. Buffer plantings along the shore and lining the long driveway, protect the adjacent wetland and the Sound.

Guests breathe cleaner air because of the “no idling” policy on the site. There is information in each guest room about the Center’s “Moving



Towards Sustainability” which outlines their values and recent accomplishments. Meals are prepared using local and organic food whenever possible, including produce from the Center’s own organic garden. Soap and shower gel are supplied in bulk to guests.

Waste Not, Want Not

Guests dine on china plates and cups, glassware and use metal utensils. No disposables are used. (Paper cups are only used for groups larger than 30.) Recycling bins are available throughout the common areas, the offices, the gift shop and kitchen for metal cans, bottles, and plastic as well as mixed paper, cardboard, and newspaper.

Let there be (compact fluorescent) light! All incandescent lighting in the main building and the 9 outlying buildings has been replaced with CFLs. Exit signs are LEDs. The Center has reduced their electricity use by almost 10% in 2007.

High Water (Conservation) Marks

The Center has decreased water use by almost 20% in the last year due in part to replacing 44 water-wasting toilets. Other measures include installing low-flow showerheads and faucets. Except for the vegetable and herb gardens, watering is only done to establish new lawns or transplant perennials.

For more information, contact the Mercy Center at (203) 245-0401.

www.mercybythesea.org

Recycling Roundup

Everything You Wanted to Know about #1 and #2

What happens to my recyclables after they are picked up?" It's a question we've heard from many of our readers. So over the next year in Recycling Roundup, we will explain the life of recyclables after the curb. We begin with plastics.

In the 1967 movie, "The Graduate," Mr. McGuire told Ben there was a future for him in "plastics." Flash forward forty years: Mr. McGuire was right! We find plastics in every kind of product — from bottles to medical supplies; clothing and building materials, but nationwide only 3-5% of all plastics are recycled.

Plastics are not yet a state mandated recyclable in CT, but most towns collect #1 (PETE) – and/or #2 (HDPE) narrow neck bottles. The resin number is usually found on the bottom of the container surrounded by chasing arrows. You will find the #1 resin code on clear plastic water bottles and some food and other beverage plastic containers and the #2 resin code on plastic milk jugs and gallon water jugs, laundry and detergent bottles, and some food and beverage containers. Why are only # 1 and #2 plastic bottles collected in curbside recycling programs? They are the most common and there are markets for them. Generally there are not enough bottles made of the other resins to market them for recycling.



Once your recyclables get to an Intermediate Processing Center (IPC), the plastics are separated, by resin type, sorted, bailed and sent to plastic recyclers. They break the bales apart and go through processes that clean and granulate or pelletize the plastic. The plastic is then ready to be made into new products. Manufacturers re-melt the flakes or pellets and mold them into new plastic products such as plastic bottles, flowerpots, decking, or even clothing. PETE is typically recycled into carpeting, fleece clothing, comforter fill, tote bags, and new containers. Recycled HPDE is made into plastic bottles for non-food items, plastic lumber and pipe, garden edging and floor tiles.

Don't be tempted to put plastic other than what your town collects in your bin! They will have to be sorted out at the IPC. This not only makes recycling more costly, but it can also contaminate the other plastics because their chemical properties, like their melting points, are not compatible.

(continued on page 5)

Everything You Wanted to Know about #1 and #2 (continued from page 4)

While separating plastic for recycling is important, you should also support plastics recycling with your purchasing decisions by buying products made from recycled plastic:

- Purchase products with recycled content (e.g., carpeting, fleece clothing)
- Look for recycled content on plastic containers
- Try to buy products in plastic packaging you can recycle
- Let manufacturers know you want their packaging to be recyclable and also be made of recycled material



The plastic bottle you recycle today may become a fleece hat tomorrow.

Plastics have made our life easier in many ways, but at a high cost to our health and the environment in the manufacturing process, their use and disposal. Most plastics are made from petroleum. About 4% of the world's annual oil production (about 84.5 million barrels per day) is used as feedstock for plastic and approximately 4% is used to transform the feedstock into plastic. Some plastics also act as endocrine disruptors when they are burned or leached into products from their plastic containers. Plastics are also found littering our cities and recreational areas. In the Pacific Ocean, a huge mound of floating trash consisting of mostly plastic debris, is estimated to weigh 3 million tons and covers an area the size of Texas.

Want to learn more about plastics?

www.greenerchoices.org/products.cfm?product=plastic&pcat=homegarden or
www.healthobservatory.org/library.cfm?RefID=77083 or
<http://thegreenguide.com/doc/77/plastics>

(source:
[www.grist.org/
advice/ask/2007/
03/14/plastics/](http://www.grist.org/advice/ask/2007/03/14/plastics/))

Nursing Us Back to Health

One in one-hundred Americans is a nurse, so chances are we all know one, whether it's because we were in the hospital or a friend or family member was, or the school nurse or just one of our neighbors. Since the days of Florence Nightingale, nurses have played an important role in health care, but now, many nurses in Connecticut are going beyond the basics of everyday care and are making the link between our health and the environment. Several of them have gone out on the road and presented information on ways to make important changes at work and at home, including at a recent workshop sponsored by the CT Hospital Environmental Roundtable (CHER).

Maria Sanzo, Michelle Cole, and Kathy Visinski, three nurses at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, are committed to making improvements in their hospital, their homes and their communities. "Despite being health care professionals, we knew little about the effects of the environment on our own health and the health of our families, patients, and colleagues until recently," admitted Sanzo. At the CHER workshop, the nurses pointed out examples of toxic chemicals that we are exposed to everyday and the effects these chemicals can have on our health.

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Nursing Us Back to Health (continued from page 5)

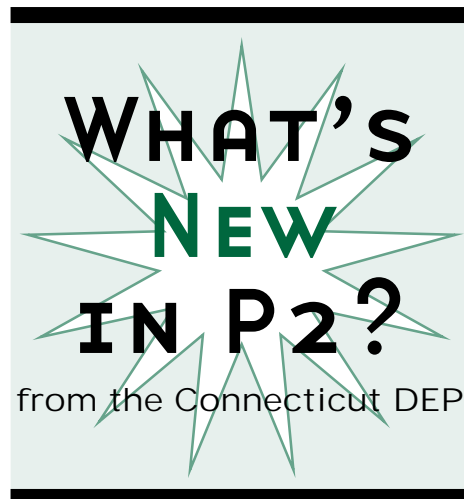
Toxic chemicals may be found not only in our water, but also in plastics, health aids, cosmetics, foods, cleaning products, and toys – they're in items we use at home as well as medical equipment. Some of the chemicals may be familiar, like lead, mercury and pesticides, but others, like phthalates, parabens, bisphenol A, and polybrominated biphenyls may be substances you've never heard of. Health effects can range from headaches and irritations of the skin, eyes and lungs, to much more serious problems. These toxic chemicals have been linked to cancer, neurological and learning disorders and reproductive problems. In some cases, the effects on our health may not be fully established scientifically so the nurses employ the "precautionary principle" and take measures to avoid these chemicals whenever possible.

If you're a nurse or know someone who is, here are ways to get information on the health and environment link to help make positive changes in your community.

- The presentation given by the CCMC nurses provides details of alternatives, including the Dirty Dozen, a list of the 12 most contaminated fruits and vegetables. www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/p2/institution/cher-oct-17-07/ccmc_presentation_11.07.pdf
- The CT Nurses Association provides tools for nurses to advocate for a healthier environment, a curriculum and two new Environmental Health Nurse Consultants. The website contains links to many other resources and organizations that focus on health and the environment, including Health Care Without Harm and Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E). www.ctnurses.org/associations/1710/files/HCWHiinformation.cfm
- The Luminary Project: Nurses Lighting the Way to Environmental Health has stories of how nurses are creatively addressing environmental problems and illuminating the way towards safe hospitals and communities. www.theluminaryproject.org/

New Service Stops Catalog Clutter

Over 19 billion catalogs are mailed to U.S. consumers each year – representing 53 million trees, 5.2 million tons of carbon dioxide gas emissions and 53 billion gallons of water. You can stop unwanted catalogs from cluttering up your mailbox and wasting natural resources. *Catalog Choice*, a free service sponsored by the Ecology Center and endorsed by the National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Resources Defense Council, makes it easy for you to choose the catalogs you no longer wish to receive. To sign up, visit www.catalogchoice.org



Solid Waste Committee Work Continues

Join DEP's State Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee and help us continue working towards meeting the goals of the statewide plan. Upcoming meeting dates for the full committee in 2008 are February 26, March 25, April 22, May 27, June 24, September 23, October 28 and November 25. There are no meetings scheduled for July, August and December. Agendas and minutes are available on the DEP website at www.ct.gov/dep/swmp



Note: This feature offers answers to select environmental questions. Send your question to the editor's address -- judith.prill@po.state.ct.us and watch future issues for an answer.

Dear Eartha:

Is it true that keeping tires inflated to the proper pressure increases gas mileage? I've had a hard time finding a gas station with a working air hose, so I want to make sure I'm not wasting my time and energy filling my tires with a few pounds of air.

David B.,
Norwich, CT

Inflating your tires to the recommended pressure will not only increase your gas mileage but it will also save wear on your treads and lower your risk of a blowout. When a tire has too little air in it, the sidewalls are forced to flex excessively and heat builds up – contributing to tire failure. Properly inflated tires roll easier, improving fuel economy and tire life. The federal EPA estimates that running tires at 20 psi (pounds per square inch) or lower can cost you at least a mile per gallon.

Federal regulations now require that new cars be equipped with a tire pressure monitoring system. A dashboard light will illuminate if the pressure in one or more of the tires falls 25 percent or more below the recommended inflation level. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that the new system will save 120 lives and prevent 8,400 injuries yearly. Drivers who are prompted by the warning light to add air to their tires should also benefit from longer tread life and improved gas mileage.

Ways you can save money on gas, including tire tips and guidelines –
www.fueleconomy.gov
www.howstuffworks.com/how-to-drive-economically.htm
www.carcare.org (see "proper tire inflation")

- Eartha

How Can I Keep My Tires Inflated Properly?

Tires can lose up to 1 psi every 30 days (even more in cold weather) so check their pressure at least once a month. The recommended tire pressure for your vehicle is listed in the owner's manual or displayed on a sticker inside the glove compartment or driver's side door. Use a tire gauge (not the built-in gauge at the gas station air hose since they can be inaccurate) to check if your tires are at the proper pressure. Check the inflation when the tires are cool —you will get a more accurate reading when they have been driven less than a mile or so.

Most gas stations in Connecticut (those who sell more than 10,000 gallons of gas per month) are required by law to supply free air for the purpose of tire inflation during their hours of operation. Another option for keeping your tires inflated is to purchase a 12-volt air compressor, either a cordless model or one that plugs into your car's cigarette lighter. They are relatively inexpensive, small enough to carry in your trunk of your car and usually have a built-in pressure gauge.

Information on CT's law requiring gas stations to provide free air –
www.ct.gov/dmv (Type in "free air" in the search block.)



Use a gauge to check your tire pressure.



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P 2 C A L E N D A R

A S E L E C T I O N O F E N V I R O N M E N T A L E V E N T S

February 7, 2008

Alternative Products and Green Chemistry

Northeast Utilities Conference Center, Berlin, CT

Increase your awareness about toxic chemicals and the changing global business environment.

Conference is sponsored by the UConn Health Center. For more information call (860) 679-4720 or visit www.oehc.uhc.edu/uconnconference.asp

February 27, 28, 29, March 3 & 4, 2008

NOFA Course in Organic Land Care

URI Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI

An intensive five-day course based the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Standards leading to an accreditation as an Organic Land Care Professional. For more information, visit www.organiclandcare.net or call (401) 364-3387.

February 13, 2008

High-Performance Schools Seminar

Connecticut College, New London, CT

A series of seminars for school building stakeholders has been providing an overview of Connecticut's 2007 Green Building legislation, the process of building a green school, construction (case studies of New Haven Public Schools) and next steps and assistance available. If interested, there is one seminar remaining - visit www.CTGBC.org for details.

February 29, 2008

Sustainable Development and the Law

UConn School of Law, Hartford, CT

A range of speakers will discuss the framework within which green building is regulated, new legal issues faced by developers and financial incentives for sustainable design. For more information, visit www.law.uconn.edu/news/events/gallivan or call (860) 570-5244.

Want to put in your 2 cents on Clean Energy? – www.smartpower.org/blog