

# grass-roots NEWSLETTER

...an organization of environmentally-concerned parents, teachers, students & others.

## OUR NEXT MEETING

**Wednesday, May 13, 2009 from 4:30-6:30pm**

1155 Park Avenue (92<sup>nd</sup> Street) – RSVP: 348-7183, [blaneweber@aol.com](mailto:blaneweber@aol.com)

**NYC Drinking WATER!**

Julie McQuain, Co-Chair

**Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Clean Water/Watershed Committee**

Share your ideas with us – all are welcome!

## I PROJECT UPDATES

### Books

~ **Greenopia** - Eat, Shop, Live Green, a guide to more than 1,300 eco-friendly resources in NYC. Info, [www.greenopia.com](http://www.greenopia.com).

~ **Running the Numbers** - Chris Jordan has been photographing the “immense scale of our consumption” for the past six years. “Collectively we are committing a vast and unsustainable act of taking, but we each are anonymous and no one is in charge or accountable for the consequences.” Each image portrays a specific quantity of something eg.: 2 million plastic bottles, the number used in the US every five minutes; 20,500 tuna are fished from the world’s oceans every 15 minutes, and so on. “My hope is that images representing these quantities might have a different effect than the raw numbers alone...” Chris has had numerous solo and group exhibits with lots of press coverage. **Running the Numbers**, his first book of photographs, is available on line. Or to see his latest color photos go to [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/04/photogalleries/chris-jordan-massive-photomosaics/index.html?source=email\\_gg\\_20090422&email=ggB](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/04/photogalleries/chris-jordan-massive-photomosaics/index.html?source=email_gg_20090422&email=ggB)

### Energy

**Steven Chu on climate change** - In excerpts from YouTube, Nobel Prize-winning Energy Secretary Steven Chu states that global warming is not a debate anymore. He believes that we should take advantage of conservation and energy efficiency. It is easier to solve a technical problem when you have to do 1/2 or 1/3 as much. We squander energy. He also says there has to be a price on carbon of somewhere between \$40 - \$60 within 10-12 years. <http://www.youtube.com/GasDrillingTruth>.

### Food

~ Support your local farmers markets. Eat seasonally. Check out the local asparagus, spinach and ramps!

~ **FOOD, INC.**, the documentary illustrates the dangers of a food system controlled by powerful corporations that don’t want you to see, think about or criticize how our food is made. It also reminds us that despite what appears to be at times a hopeless situation, each of us still has the ability to vote on this issue every day – at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Opens 6/12 at Film Forum.

### Global Warming

You’ve never seen a clock like this one. Check it out <http://www.poodwaddle.com/worldclock.swf>.

### Neighborhood Issue

**Campaign to Save Ruppert Playground** - When the Ruppert Towers were developed there was a 25 year agreement between the developers, the Related Companies, and HPD to establish a playground (92/93<sup>rd</sup> Streets between 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues) which was desperately needed in the neighborhood. That playground is still desperately needed. Now the agreement has come to an end and the developer has been test boring for a 40-story building on the playground site. The neighborhood, with the help of NYC Park Advocates, is organizing a broad-based public awareness campaign to oppose the takeover of the Ruppert Playground/Park. Get involved: [save-theruppert-playground@googlegroups.com](mailto:save-theruppert-playground@googlegroups.com) or NYCPark Advocates 212 987-056. See Eco-Events May 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

~Green Movers USA: Find a green moving company by going to this website <http://greenmoversusa.com/>

~Earn money by sending your unwanted technological equipment back to HP Consumer Buyback and Planet Partners Recycling Program. [http://www.hp.com/united-states/hho/buyback-recycle/index.html?jumpid=ex\\_R602\\_go/ConsumerBuyback](http://www.hp.com/united-states/hho/buyback-recycle/index.html?jumpid=ex_R602_go/ConsumerBuyback)

### Water

**Don’t Flush** unwanted household medications or pour them down the drain. Return them to collection events where available or mix them with something undesirable such as coffee grounds, cat litter or dirt, then tape up the containers and toss them in your garbage. Flushed medications get into our lakes, rivers and streams. A nationwide study done in 1999 and 2000 by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) found low levels of drugs such as antibiotics, hormones, contraceptives and steroids in 80% of the rivers and streams tested. Fish and other aquatic wildlife are being adversely affected. Drug resistant bacteria might develop. We need to act now to protect our waterways before these discarded pharmaceuticals pose an even greater health threat to people. More info at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/45083.html>

## II. MEETING SUMMARY

Eva Martinez, the Recycling Outreach Specialist for the Department of Sanitation NYC (DSNY), gave an "Apartment Building Recycling Initiative Presentation" to grass-roots at our last meeting. There are 3 million households and almost 8.3 million residents in NYC, 70% of whom live in multi-unit dwellings. Recycling in an apartment building is more difficult than in a single family home. It requires close cooperation between the residents and staff and property manager. Recycling is the law and every resident should know what is recyclable and should follow their buildings' recyclable instructions. New Yorkers presently recycle ½ of what could be recycled. DSNY collects recyclables once a week in two separate streams, one of mixed paper and cardboard and the other of beverage cartons, bottles, cans, metal foil. Both streams use clear bags (you may use up any leftover blue bags) or any garbage can labeled with a blue or green recycling decal. DSNY has designed a fairly comprehensive recycling checklist available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/downloads/pdf/checklist.pdf> You will be surprised at how much can be recycled. Under the category of paper and cardboard: newspapers, magazines, catalogs, shredded paper, phone books, paper backs, any loose paper (staples not a problem), envelopes (even with glossy windows), paper bags, cardboard egg cartons, cereal boxes, pizza boxes (no food scraps but grease spots ok), corrugated cardboard (which can be flattened and tied). No soft paper such as napkins, toilet paper, tissue paper, paper towels, paper plates. The second stream of recyclables includes: milk and juice cartons (please rinse out), aluminum products, glass jars and bottles, metal cans including dried out paint cans, plastic jugs and bottles, empty aerosol cans, household items that contain more than 50% metal, such as scissors, irons, wire hangers, pots and pans. No ice cream, yogurt or take-out containers, frozen food boxes, plastic bags or wrap, mirrors, light bulbs. The above website also gives information about how to reduce junk mail, where to donate unwanted stuff, information on composting. Eva participated in a Waste Characterization Study done over four seasons in 2004/5 which studied the waste stream to determine the proportion of waste being recycled. If we recycled perfectly, we would have a diversion rate of 35.4% of the total garbage stream. The DSNY is aiming for a diversion rate of at least 25%. We are subject to fines that range from \$25 to \$500 for recycling improperly, but there are only 19 inspectors to enforce the laws. Some people suspect that not all recyclables are actually recycled, but DSNY denies that and lists many of the collection sites on their web site. Some of the recyclables actually produce a monetary (in addition to an environmental) profit for the city. And in the near future as the cost of carting away our garbage continues to increase, it will actually cost us less to recycle. One of our members saw a truck put recyclables in with trash and learned from DSNY that if you call 311 with the truck number, street address and time of day that information will get to DSNY. Info: [emartinez@dny.nyc.gov](mailto:emartinez@dny.nyc.gov).

## III. ECO-EVENTS

- 1. Shorewalkers ~Great Saunter** - See Manhattan at 3 MPH, May 2, \$15 for non-members. Info at [www.shorewalkers.org](http://www.shorewalkers.org); ~**Jersey/Hudson River Saunter** - May 16, 14+ miles, medium paced walk across GW Bridge then south along the Palisades, cliffs and shores of NJ, through Hoboken and end at rebuilt pier on tip of Jersey City. Meet 9:15am at information booth of GW Bridge, Port Authority Bus Terminal. Take A train to 175<sup>th</sup> Street Station. Rain cancels. Info, Matthew Brozyna 917 912-9533.
- 2. Citizen Pruner Course** - Arsenal (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) in Central Park, Manhattan, May 7 at 6pm. Cost \$100. [Info@treesny.com](mailto:info@treesny.com) [http://nycgovparks.org/sub\\_things\\_to\\_do/upcoming\\_events/events\\_search.php?id=165942](http://nycgovparks.org/sub_things_to_do/upcoming_events/events_search.php?id=165942) [Info@treesny.com](mailto:info@treesny.com)
- 3. Ruppert Playground discussed at CB8 Land Use Committee Meeting** - May 13 at 6:30pm. Hunter College School of Social Work, Room 1010, 129 E. 79<sup>th</sup> St. (Park and Lexington). Info 212 758-4340.
- 4. Powering the Future - Commercial Efficiency** - NY League of Conservation Voters: efficiency is key, but are NY's policies as effective as they should be? May 14, 8:30 -11am, NYU Puck Bldg, 295 Lafayette St. Info, [info@nylcv.org](mailto:info@nylcv.org), 212 361-6350.
- 5. Celebrate Global Launch of Open Green Map** - June 5, 6-8:30pm, at King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center at 53 Washington Square South in Manhattan. Celebration also taking place around the world as seen at <http://GreenMap.org/ogm-launch>
- 6. Montauk Spring Weekend** - Hikes, birding, seining. June 5-7. Cost \$345 includes two nights at Manor House, 5 full meals, 5 guided hikes and more, with free pick up at LIRR station. Info: American Littoral Society 718 318-9344 or [driepe@nyc.rr.com](mailto:driepe@nyc.rr.com)
- 7. Atlantic Chapter Sierra Club Awards** - Cocktails, dinner, art show. June 6, Inn at Great Neck \$75 /person. Info 516 4108461.
- 8. NY State Urban & Community Forestry Council Annual Conference** - July 16-18, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, 315 826-5743.
- 9. East River C.R.E.W.** - Started by St. David's science teacher Tori Gilbert Maksymowicz. Seeks to impart a love for and an understanding of the East River and the creatures in the river. Activities center on the rowing of two community-owned Whitehall gig rowing boats stored at 96<sup>th</sup> St and the East River. There are rowing sessions on Wednesdays, May 20 thru August 12, from 5pm to dusk, East 96<sup>th</sup> Street boathouse and esplanade. Info: Tori Gilbert [tgilbert@eastrivercrew.org](mailto:tgilbert@eastrivercrew.org) and Mary Nell Hawk [mnh2002@columbia.edu](mailto:mnh2002@columbia.edu). Other 2009 events at [www.eastrivercrew.org](http://www.eastrivercrew.org)
- 10. Boating in NJ Meadowlands** - Schedule thru September at <http://www.hackensackriverkeeper.org/canoeproject.html#TOURS>

### grass-roots

c/o Bonnie Lane Webber  
1155 Park Avenue #5SE  
New York, NY 10128

**The earth is what we all have in common!**  
**Wendell Berry**