



Ojai Valley Green Coalition

Monthly E-News

April 2009

Next in the Ecology and Community Series: Advocacy 101

April the 22nd—which happens, appropriately enough, to be Earth Day—will be the date of this month’s gathering for the Coalition’s Ecology and Community series. The presentation will again be held from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Chaparral High School Auditorium at 414 E. Ojai Avenue, with a discretionary donation jar at the door.

The focus of the evening will be citizen advocacy, or how to work within an established system to create change. “Advocacy 101,” as the presentation is being

called, will provide know-how for the active support of an idea or cause or the promotion of a change in governmental policy.

In years past, citizens of the Ojai Valley have come together to stop Caltrans from building a freeway through the middle of our valley. They’ve pooled their efforts to convince the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to locate a landfill elsewhere than in Weldon Canyon at the mouth of the valley. And ordinary citizens have also managed

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Adventures of an Environmental Activist

Michael Brune, the Executive Director of the Rainforest Action Network and the author of the new book *Coming Clean: Breaking America’s Addiction to Oil and Coal*, came to Ojai in March to share with our community some of his stories about environmental activism.

Brune was clear that he believes environmental sustainability is

achievable during our lifetime. “No one wants to breathe dirty



Michael Brune of RAN

air or buy oil from a country that doesn’t support us,” he said. He pointed out that we already

have the technology to create a clean energy future, adding that just 40 minutes of solar energy striking the surface of the planet is enough to meet the entire world’s power needs for a whole year. What the world doesn’t yet have at the moment, he said, is the political will to make the transition away from coal and oil.

According to Brune, “We must change the political equation in order to effect systemic change.” He used the

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Two Green Thumbs Up!

Kudos to the City of Ojai for listening to residents at the March 10 City Council meeting. On that evening, the elimination of Ojai's residential leaf blower ordinance was up for consideration. The ordinance was originally established from a noise-pollution perspective, and several citizens spoke on the environmental health issues also associated with leaf blowers because of how they affect air quality. The City Council members apparently agreed with them, because not only are they going to keep the original ordinance in place but they are now going to draft an ordinance for a total ban on leaf blowers within city limits.

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Written, edited, and designed by the
Communications and Publicity Committee



Activist continued

example of his efforts to stop the use of old-growth forests for products sold in the United States by Kinko's and Home Depot.

His first approach to Kinko's was remarkably successful, resulting in an immediate end to their use of old-growth wood. Interestingly enough, the person at Kinko's who was influential in bringing about that decision was Ojai's own Larry Rogero.

The lobbying Brune directed to Home Depot had to take a decidedly different trajectory. His initial appeal to corporate headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, was met with resistance. After many phone calls and a letter-writing campaign to company officials as well as the press, it became apparent that what Brune called "stunts" were going to be necessary. These stunts included a banner hung in front of the CEO's office window, placed by a fellow activist who rappelled down from the roof. Subsequently, some of Home Depot's own employees started helping with the effort.

When Brune was able to make announcements about the use of old-growth forest products to shoppers over the public announcement system at the store where many corporate managers were training, he got not only their attention but

also the attention of the press.

When that still didn't work to change corporate policy, Brune brought a Native American chief to the annual shareholders' meeting. The chief displayed a piece of old-growth hardwood that he claimed had been stolen off Indian land by one of Home Depot's suppliers. That same tribal representative then went to Washington, D.C., and filed a complaint with the attorney general.

At that point, Home Depot had finally had enough. They instituted a new policy that ended the purchase of all old-growth forest products.

Our speaker said he finds it unfortunate that so many "stunts" were required to urge a company to do the right thing. He believes that what's needed is new climate legislation. Until the United States takes a leadership role in this regard, he says, we have "zero influence" over the consumption policies of other countries.

Brune urged listeners to "follow the money" and "stay hard on the issues but soft on the people within these big corporations," as he doesn't believe them to be bad people.

His closing comment was, "It takes a while to change personal behavior, and even longer to change societal behavior."

A Message from the Executive Director:

How to Throw a Green Party

As my husband, Wayne, and I make plans to attend upcoming Earth Day celebrations as both volunteers and celebrators, my thoughts go to the general planning of events with an eye to their environmental footprint. I still vividly recall our dinner party for Wayne's 50th birthday this past December, when a guest commented in surprise on the fact that I was setting the table with real dishes and cutlery rather than disposable stuff!

In your own life, whenever you're planning a small personal gathering or perhaps helping to stage a community event, I'd suggest that you consider who is the ultimate host: Planet Earth. Honestly, in this new century, making events eco-friendly should be a given. Such green gatherings are appreciated by attendees and can also serve as a model for others to follow.

How might a party we throw at home look different from those of days past? First, as with everything else in our lives, we need to ask in the party's planning stage, Where can I reduce, reuse, and recycle? Can you issue the invitations by phone or email rather than on paper? If only paper invitations will do, consider sending a postcard or folding a

single sheet of paper so that the information is on the inside and the address on the outside. Also, if using paper we should choose some with the highest available percentage of recycled content. (For its event flyers, the Coalition uses 100% recycled-content paper manufactured with wind power.)

Once we know who's coming, can carpooling or other alternative transportation be arranged? A side



benefit of this fuel economy is that your neighbors will appreciate the minimal number of cars parked on your street. If guests are flying in from out of town, can you designate a window of time for arrivals to reduce the number of airport pickups?

Another big area of potential energy waste for any gathering is the food. With Ojai's great farmers market, is there any reason not to be using local organic produce? If the timing of the Sunday market doesn't work for you, there are several other markets and farm stands in the county (see if you can lump all your party errands

into one trip). Think about serving finger foods to reduce the need for utensils. If you do need extra dishes, how about borrowing some or, if you have frequent gatherings, starting a collection from the thrift stores. Sturdy, washable plastic plates and utensils are reusable, but remember to put up clearly marked signs where the trash will be thrown, to prevent guests from discarding them. Having more recycling bins than trash containers gives guests a good message, and adding a compost bin for food scraps is icing on the cake!

If you must use disposable items, choose paper over plastic or polystyrene. For tablecloths and napkins, cloth should be your first choice, followed by recycled-content paper. Also, beverage straws are so last-century . . . just eliminate them! Standing around the punch bowl is back in, though, so serve beverages in some kind of drink dispenser if you can. If this isn't possible for your event, offer drinks in containers such as plastic bottles or aluminum cans that can be recycled.

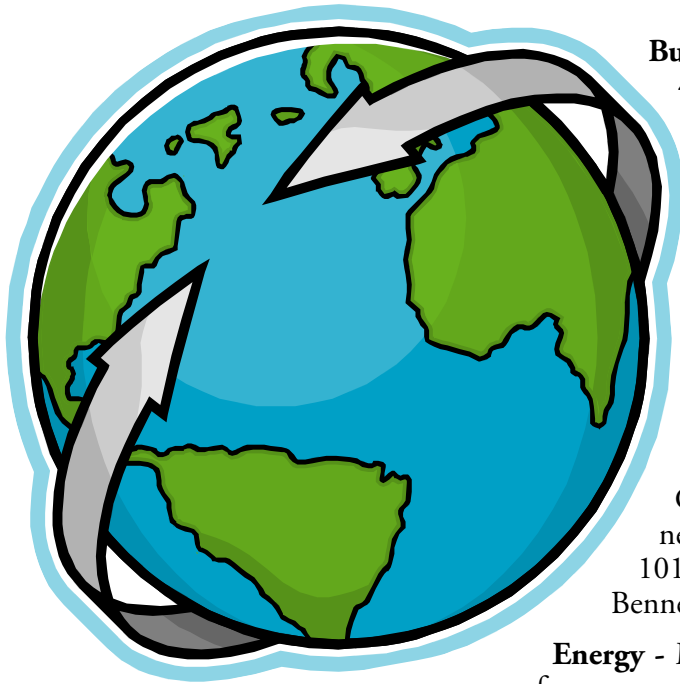
Have I piqued your interest? If you'd like to learn more, many further areas of party planning, such as décor and picture taking, can be greened. Do an online search for "planning a green party" and you'll find a whole afternoon's worth of reading.

Happy Earth Day every day!

—Deborah Pendrey

Coalition Committee Business

“Knowledge, When Put into Action, Is Power”



Building and Construction - Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. The committee will donate informational brochures to the City of Ojai Planning Department for distribution to building permit applicants. They're also discussing the creation of a Green Building Award.

Communications and Publicity - Meets 1st Thursday, 6:30 p.m., 202 W. Aliso Street. The press release and calendar notices for the Advocacy 101 presentation on April 22 have been completed. Other ongoing projects include website maintenance and the creating and editing of flyers, emails, display ads, radio interviews, this monthly e-newsletter, and columns or letters to the editor for the *Ojai Valley News*.

Event Planning - Meets 1st Monday, 5 p.m., 221 E. Matilija Street, Suite J. Call 653-8445 for confirmation. The committee is working on details for the next monthly presentation on April 22. Speakers for this event, called “Advocacy 101,” will be Steve Olsen of the Ojai City Council, County Supervisor Steve Bennett, John Broesamle, Kenley Neufeld, and Frank Malle.

Energy - Meets 3rd Thursday at 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. The committee is helping the school district research Recovery Act grants for solar energy. They are also sending proposed light ordinance research data to the City of Ojai Planning Department. An award program for homeowners with solar is also being discussed.

Environmental Health - The regularly scheduled meetings have been temporarily suspended, as the chairperson is helping with the Green School Committee in connection with a Food for Thought grant. She will be visiting the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. Call Marleen Luckman for more information: (805) 279-2101.

Executive Committee - Meets 3rd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. Committee chairs and board members sit on the Executive Committee. Box.Net, an online site for the OVGC, now has important Coalition documents, including minutes from most committee meetings.

Food and Agriculture - Meeting dates and locations vary. The next meeting is a potluck on Sunday, April 5, 5 p.m., at 206 S. Blanche. The Harvest Helper subcommittee meets on Tuesday, April 7, 8:30 a.m., at The Farmer and the Cook, 339 W. El Roblar Drive. Email Dulanie Ellis-La Barre at dulanie@sbcglobal.net for information. A fruit tree survey is in the works. The committee helped the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation install 20 vegetable gardens in Ojai. Volunteers from a corporation having their annual conference in Ojai will help install more such gardens and will provide all materials.

Resources - Meets 2nd Monday, 5 p.m., Ojai Unified School District, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, Tim Baird's office. The committee is planning a house party fund-raiser tentatively scheduled for June. The Board of Directors is working on a list of potential business contacts for event sponsor opportunities.

Transportation - Meeting time open. No committee business at this time; a new chairperson is needed. Call the Coalition's Executive Director, Deborah Pendrey, at (805) 653-8445 for further information.

Waste Management - Meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. The committee has provided a nine-page document to the City of Ojai regarding the use of plastic bags. State-level legislation is pending. The committee will focus on incentives to help change individual behavior. This may be a possible subject for a grant application.

Watershed - Meets 1st Thursday, 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. Email Brian at brian@biorc.com. One member of the committee has been looking into an Ojai Valley homeowners' association requirement that each homeowner have a front lawn. He will work with the association and request that drought-tolerant or other types of landscaping requiring considerably less water be allowed.

Advocacy 101 *continued*

to influence zoning codes, noise ordinances, and the introduction of chain stores.

How were these feats accomplished? On April 22nd (the fourth Wednesday of the month, per usual for this community evening), we'll all have an opportunity to find out, as government representatives walk us through the process of getting an issue introduced for legislation, changing existing legislation, or even defeating legislation.



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Q & A s e s s i o n .

It promises to be a fascinating and informative presentation!

A New Feature of the Coalition Website

The question was, *As a committee member, how do I know what other committees are up to?* or *As a new member, how can I see what committees are doing and decide which one(s) I'd like to join?* The answer is box.net, an online service the Coalition has accessed for free to set up a virtual filing system of meeting minutes and other documents. You can now find up-to-date information on the Board and Committees by following the "Cyber Files" link on the left sidebar of the Ojai Valley Green Coalition home page. If you just want to view a document and not download it, right click the document icon and select "Preview." We welcome page-improvement suggestions as well as ideas for a name other than Cyber Files. Send these to coordinator@ojaivalleygreencoalition.com.

Cultivating Change In Our Own Backyard

On May 2 from 9 to 4, a conference on will take place in Ojai at the Oak Grove School. how to achieve grassroots change in our communities in the current economic climate. For the \$25 requested donation, participants will also receive lunch. Go to cultivatingchangeinourownbackyard.org to sign up or learn more.

In and Around the Valley

April 9, Organizing Our Neighborhoods for Life After Oil, 7 p.m., admission free, 2259 Puesta del Sol in Santa Barbara, communityenvironmentalcouncil.org/events/EventCalendar/index.cfm

April 14, Native Plant Hike, ojaievents.com/event-detail.aspx?ID=3149

April 18, Hidden Gardens of Oak View Tour, ojaiconcierge.com/events.html. The OVGC will have lots of literature available on sustainable landscaping.

April 20, OVMAC Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Oak View Community Center, 18 Valley Drive in Oak View

April 22, Advocacy 101 Workshop, 7 p.m. at Chaparral Auditorium, 414 E. Ojai Avenue in Ojai

April 25, Earth Day Celebration & Concert, 2-5 p.m., admission free. Oak Grove School, 220 W. Lomita Avenue in Ojai

April 25, Household Hazardous Waste collection day: Call (805) 658-4323 for an appointment.

April 27, USGBC C4 presentation on Passive Building Design, 6 p.m., Patagonia Firehouse Community Room, 259 W. Santa Clara Street in Ventura.

By appointment, get a free energy-efficiency plan review for your project. Info at vcenergy.org.

Save the Date

May 27, A Passive Building Design presentation by the Building & Construction Committee

June 11-14, a Going Green booth at the Ojai Music Festival

Harvesting Rainwater in Our Backyard ~ Part 2

By Dianne Ulyon Bullard

Editor's Note: Gene and Dianne Bullard own a 1,200-square-foot home that sits on a third of an acre near the River Preserve. When we heard they were going to install a rainwater catchment system in their backyard, we asked if we could document the process through articles, photos, and film for educational purposes.

The installed system will allow the Bullards to capture a thousand gallons of water for every inch of rain that falls. With an average rainfall of 17 inches in the Ojai Valley area, that's 17,000 gallons a year. With a plan that includes the use of drought-tolerant plants, Gene and Dianne expect to incur no water expense in maintaining an attractive backyard. The system has been designed so that they can later add rainwater storage tanks with a 5,000-gallon capacity.

On the evening of Brad Lancaster's presentation to the OVGC, Gene and I bought Volume 2 of Lancaster's book *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond*. Also, we were introduced to Devin Slavin, a cheerful young man trained as a Permaculture consultant who is the originator of Ventura's "Grow Food Party Crew" group. Devin had been working actively with the Coalition's Food and Agriculture Committee to motivate others to create home gardens and to create a similar "Grow Food Party Crew" here in cooperation with that committee. On that same night, we scheduled a meeting with Devin to develop a landscaping plan for rainwater harvesting in our backyard.

During a subsequent one-hour consultation, Devin explained how he would work with the same concepts from Lancaster's lecture and two-volume book. Using measurements of our rooftop, he would calculate the amount of rainfall we could expect to capture from our home. Based on his computations, our home with the garage included totaled 1,600 square feet. Devin concluded that we have the

water from the roof flow through our gutters to one central location where it would be captured in water reservoir tanks. From these tanks, pipes would carry the rainfall into a catchment system of seven swales in our backyard.

The plan also included two 2,500-gallon water reservoir tanks. As we studied the design, these tanks raised many questions for us.



Initially, the planned bioswales and drip line paths were outlined with chalk.

capacity to capture 1,000 gallons of rainwater for every inch of rain. With an average annual rainfall in Ojai of 17 inches, that would be 17,000 gallons of water a year! With a rainwater harvest system, we could keep all this water *on* our property instead of letting it run down the street.

Devin later presented us with three drawings for our rainwater harvest system. They showed us how to have

How would the water be pumped out and the tanks be refilled? Would these tanks still have much water by summer when we really needed it? Would they be worth the expense? Should they be above ground or underground?

With the drawings in hand but some questions still in our minds, we were ready to find a landscaping company to get this project started.