



OJAI VALLEY GREEN COALITION

Newsletter Issue 10

February 2009

Come to the Energy Committee's "Solar Night" and Learn

On Wednesday, February 25, at 7:00 p.m., the OVGC Energy Committee will present a comprehensive educational slide show and overview of the solar electric industry at the Chaparral High School Auditorium, 414 E. Ojai Avenue.

At this latest in the Coalition's series of monthly community presentations, a panel discussion will feature local solar specialists representing three different solar companies that are active in the Ojai Valley: REC Solar, California Solar

Electric, and California Solar. An audience Q & A session with the panel will follow.

Among the subjects to be discussed will be understanding your electric bill, where grid power comes from, why rates keep increasing, and the financing of a solar system for a home or business. Attendees will also learn how solar cells convert sunlight to electricity, how to determine if you're a good candidate for solar power, what a solar system costs, and what federal or state incentives are currently being offered. ▲

And a Hearty Welcome to Our New Board Members

At its January meeting, the OVGC Board of Directors welcomed four new board members who together bring a new wealth of experience, knowledge, and energy to the Coalition. Ellen Hall, Sue Broidy, and Caryn Bosson have strong ties to the Valley and long histories of community service here. Jaimie Jenks comes to us from Santa Barbara with family ties in Ojai. She runs the Jaimie Jenks Foundation and, having been instilled with the importance of community service by her grandmother, has also been working with two other nonprofits. Further information on our four new board members will soon be available on the website at OjaiValleyGreenCoalition.org.

We expect the Coalition's newly refreshed board to help take this young organization to its next step of building resources and putting goals and plans into place. ▲

Ojai's Night Skies

Gail Topping joined the Coalition's Energy Committee because she was feeling more and more alarmed about the Ojai Valley's increasing light pollution. She researched light ordinances from other communities such as Ketchum, Idaho; Tucson, Arizona; Boulder, Colorado; and Santa Ynez, California, and found a website, DarkSkies.com, that provided still more information.

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In and Around the Valley

February 7, Pruning with John Lamar, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Ojai Community Demonstration Garden.

February 9, OVMAC Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Oak View Community Center, 18 Valley Drive in Oak View.

February 14, Wild About Ojai, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Info at ovlc.org.

February 18, City of Ojai Planning Commissioner meeting, 7:30 p.m. at City Hall. Energy committee light ordinance presented by city planner.

February 23, changes to the LEED rating system, 6 p.m., Patagonia Firehouse Community Room, 259 W. Santa Clara Street in Ventura.

February 25, Solar Night, an Energy Committee community presentation at 7 p.m., Chaparral Auditorium.

February 28, Soil Building Workshop, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Ojai Community Demonstration Garden.

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

Save the Date

Author Michael Brune, March 25

A Big Thank-You to Three Retiring Board Members

Along with our fellow board members, committee members, volunteers, and members at large, my fellow OVGC cofounder, Tim Baird, and I would like to thank our three retiring board members for their outstanding service to the community on the Board of Directors of the Ojai Valley Green Coalition.

Effective January 2009, Scott Eicher, Katherine Hope, and Todd Metlen stepped down from the Coalition Board. Scott, Katherine, and Todd helped launch the Coalition, volunteered countless hours of service, and helped guide and shape the organization as it went through its initial growing pains. We thank them and commend them for their exemplary interest in helping to transform the Ojai Valley into a model green and sustainable community. —Ken Wright

A New Guide to Local Food

If you're one of the millions of SoCal consumers who are increasingly interested in helping the environment, supporting local farmers, and eating fresh, locally grown food, your life just got easier. The first edition of *Local Food Guide for Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Northern Los Angeles Counties* is hitting the streets of Southern California.

Available free of charge at stores, restaurants, and farmers markets around the region, as well as online, the guide offers consumers a bounty of options on where and how to buy fresh local fruits, vegetables, meats, seafood, and dairy products—direct from farmers and food artisans or through markets, restaurants, and other venues that feature locally grown products.

"Local food is making headlines," says Karen Schmidt of the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance, who's one of the creators of the guide. "With growing concerns about food safety, childhood obesity, and global climate change, people are becoming increasingly aware of the impact their food choices have on the health of their families, the environment, and the local economy. This new guide provides reliable information on where to find delicious, high-quality fresh foods grown by people you can look in the eye, on farms that are within arm's reach of home."

The guide is available online at www.buylocalca.org, and available in print at certified farmers markets around the region and at select restaurants, retailers, and farm stands, including Rainbow Bridge, Underwood Family Farms, the California Welcome Center, the Farm Bureau of Ventura County, McGrath Family Farm, the Ventura County Community Foundation, and Watermark on Main. ▲



New Openings for Volunteers

Do you have a special interest in the future of transportation options in the Ojai Valley? The Ojai Valley Green Coalition is looking for a motivated person to head up the Transportation Committee—no experience necessary. The former chairperson, Kenley Neufeld, has taken on the responsibilities of information technology for the Coalition. The OVGC provides administrative support to those who volunteer to chair an Action Committee. If you'd like more information or know of a good candidate to suggest, please give a call to the Coalition's Executive Director, Deborah Pendrey, at (805) 653-8445.

If you enjoy writing, the Coalition is offering to train you in the art of writing a press release. A professional editor will provide you with any needed editing assistance, and you can choose to write just one press release a month or more, depending on your available time. If this opportunity to use your writing skills appeals to you, please email the Communications and Publicity Committee at contactcommunications@ojaivalleygreencoalition.org. ▲

So Much E-Waste!

The Ojai Valley Green Coalition's first annual E-Waste Recycling Event received an amazing response. We partnered with Ojai Community Bank, Ojai Valley Directory, and Gold Coast Recycling and Transfer Station to bring this service to the Ojai Valley, and Trader Joe's donated refreshments.

We were, in a word, mobbed. We unloaded electronics, household batteries, and ink/toner cartridges, among other items, as fast as we could for four hours. We took in an approximate nine tons of electronics and appliances and 900 pounds of batteries. And we've now shipped off 150 pounds of old holiday lights, collected at this event and in last November's Holiday Light Exchange.

We're not sure whether to be pleased about the turnout or dismayed by the amount of electronics used and disposed of within our small population . . . and no doubt we only put a dent in the potential collections. We'll be back next January, but in the meantime, please use the County's household hazardous waste program to dispose of all electronics. It's illegal to throw them into the trash because of toxic materials, and there's just no room in the landfills. Visit www.wasteless.org for more information on countywide recycling programs and businesses that refurbish electronics for sale or donation. The calendar for household hazard waste collection days is posted on the Coalition website. ▲

Support the environment and the Ojai School District! Sign up at www.41pounds to reduce your junk mail footprint, and select our school district on the drop-down menu. The average adult receives 41 pounds of junk mail a year, with 44% going into landfills. This unwanted mail takes 28 billion gallons of water and 100 million trees, while producing the CO₂ equivalent of 9 million cars.

—A message from our
Food for Thought partners

"For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another might be lost, until the whole of things will vanish by piecemeal." —Thomas Jefferson



Coalition Action Committees

"Knowledge Is Power, When Put into Action"

Building and Construction - Meets 3rd Tues., 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Ave., conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. The committee has selected a listing of "Build It Green" materials to be provided to the city. The members are looking at *Passive Design and Construction*, a system for super-energy-efficient buildings.

Communications and Publicity - Meets 1st Thurs., 6:30 p.m., 202 W. Aliso St. The committee is designing an online local green directory, and continues to support the activities of the Coalition with flyers, press releases, calendar notices, display ads, this newsletter, a "Green Scene" Ojai Valley News column, and writing and editing for the OVGC website.

Event Planning - Meets 1st Mon., 5 p.m., 221 E. Matilija St., Suite J. Call 653-8445 for confirmation. The committee is working on plans for the Energy Committee presentation on February 25, the next Ojai Reads event in March, participation in Earth Day at Oak Grove School in April, and the Ojai Valley Museum exhibit this fall.

Energy - Meets 3rd Thurs., 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Ave., conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. The committee has provided the city with a draft light ordinance, to be presented at the February 18 Planning Commission meeting. **Please attend, OVGC members!** A "Solar Night" will be presented on February 25 at 7 p.m., with a slide show and expert panel discussion, handouts, and a Q & A session, including the subject of financing.

Environmental Health - Meets 2nd Wed., 6:30 p.m. Call Marleen at (805) 279-2101 for meeting address and directions. At the February 11 meeting, *Toxic Brew*, a video about children's exposure to common toxic chemicals in the home, will be shown, and a group discussion will follow. Refreshments will be served. Due to limited space, please RSVP to Marleen at the above phone number.

Food and Agriculture - A Gleaning Subcommittee to develop a volunteer program for harvesting surplus fruits and vegetables in the valley will hold a planning meeting on Wednesday, February 11, 8:30 a.m. at The Farmer & the Cook, 339 W. El Roblar in Meiners Oaks. General meeting Sunday, February 22, 3 p.m. at 206 S. Blanche. Bring a snack to share. Email dulanie@sbcglobal.net.

Resources - Meets 2nd Mon., 5 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Ave., conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg A donation appeal form was created for distribution to attendees at the January 28 "An Inconvenient Truth" presentation.

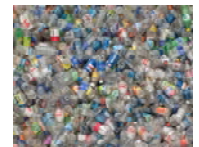
Transportation - Meeting time open. The committee is in need of a new chairperson, as Kenley Neufeld has taken on information technology responsibilities for the Coalition. Call the Coalition's Executive Director, Deborah Pendrey, at 653-8445 if you're interested in this position or can suggest a good candidate.

Waste Management - Meets 2nd Thurs., 7 p.m., conference room in breezeway next to Admin. Bldg. Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Ave. Committee is researching the issues surrounding a possible new city ordinance banning the use of plastic bags. Committee gave away 1500 reusable bags in Jan.

Watershed - Meets 1st Thurs., 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Ave., conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. The committee is working with the local Eagle Scout program and the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy in planning a creek restoration project. The group is studying bioengineering techniques for watershed restoration. Email brian@biorc.com for more info.



410,000 disposable hot-beverage paper cups used in the USA every fifteen minutes



Two million plastic beverage bottles used in the USA every five minutes



1.14 million brown paper supermarket bags used in the USA every hour



426,000 cell phones retired in the USA every day



60,000 plastic bags used in the USA every five seconds

Night Skies *continued from page 1*

Finally Gail and the committee drafted a 12-page document and presented it to the City of Ojai's Planning Department.

The proposed draft ordinance addresses the need for shielded street lights, timers, sensors, and better technology to stop energy waste from lighting and restore Ojai's night skies to starlight. The ordinance would also reduce glare for drivers and aid in the nocturnal patterns of animals, enhancing their ability to survive in our environment. Added benefits would include lower energy bill costs.

An important part of the OVGC mission is to advocate for important legislative issues such as this one. The Energy Committee is taking a leadership role in this regard, and many other issues will need this kind of leadership as we move toward a sustainable future in the Ojai Valley.

"We're losing the stars," says Gail. If you share her concern, please plan to attend the February 18 Planning Commission meeting at City Hall and weigh in on this important matter, to help establish the priority of dealing with light pollution in the City of Ojai. The light ordinance doc is available on the Coalition website. ▲

From Our Environmental Health Committee

Toxic Brew, a film about children's exposure to common chemicals in the home and the effects of this, will be screened at the next Environmental Health Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 11, at 6:30 p.m. The film includes comments by a toxicologist, a pediatrician, air quality specialists, researchers, and experts on hazardous chemicals. Refreshments and a discussion will follow the film. Space will be limited, so please call Marleen Luckman, the committee chair, at (805) 279-2101 for directions & to reserve a seat. ▲

The Truth Grows Even More Inconvenient

Audible gasps could be heard as an Al Gore-trained "Climate Jedi," Gretchen Lewotsky of Los Angeles, narrated for an Ojai audience an updated slide show of the presentation known as *An Inconvenient Truth*. Disturbing statistics provided by an 800,000-year-old ice core sample revealed that parts per million (ppm) of atmospheric carbon have continuously fluctuated through the millennia, but have never gone above 300 ppm. We are now at 400 ppm. If this trend continues, the atmosphere will contain 600 ppm within 35 years, yet scientists concur that we must stabilize at or below 350 ppm to allow for sustainability.

Lewotsky cited the example of automobile fuel-efficiency standards (miles per gallon.) Every other country in the world, including China, has higher standards than those in the United States. When California tried to require higher standards, the EPA under the Bush administration blocked enforcement. The new Obama administration has asked the EPA to revisit that decision, and has stated that science will be restored to decision-making.

As a country, the U.S. is responsible for 30.3 percent of all CO2 emissions, while representing only 4 percent of the world's population. Nationwide, 884 city governments have signed on to the Kyoto Treaty, which addresses climate change and promotes ways to reduce it. The U.S. is the only nation in the world that has never signed onto the treaty.

"Vampire Energy" is a term that describes the wasted energy lost by household appliances even while they're turned off. The audience members went home with a handy chart showing which appliances use the most Vampire Energy. (Plasma TVs are the

biggest standby energy wasters.)

By showing calving icebergs, vanishing glaciers, the increasing incidence of hurricanes and fires, the extinction of species, and the population explosion, Gretchen Lewotsky made her message clear: the earth is in crisis.

Lewotsky emphasized that we must learn to mitigate what is already happening to our planet. Humans have accelerated the warming trend, but we can choose to make changes. Rather than get depressed, she urged us to take action in all the ways that we can.

Donation \do*na'tion\, n. [L. donatio] to a local organization: investment in the community in which one lives or works, to assist those investing time and energy with the financial ability to carry out the organization's mission, so as to improve the community for all stakeholders.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Tim Baird, President
- Dale Hanson, Secretary
- Vivian Browne, Director
- Tyler Suchman, Director
- Ken Wright, Director
- Ellen Hall, Director
- Sue Broidy, Director
- Caryn Bosson, Director
- Jaimie Jenks, Director

Nonvoting Members:

- Cindy Cantle, Representative of Supervisor Steve Bennett's Office
- Steve Olson, Representative of the City of Ojai

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Online Donations Accepted
www.OjaiValleyGreenCoalition.org