



Ojai Valley Green Coalition

Monthly E-News

May 2009

Next in the “Ecology and Community” Series: **THE PASSIVE DESIGN REVOLUTION**

For the May event in its “Ecology and Community” series, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition will share smart, time-tested heating and cooling strategies of architectural design as the new way to control indoor temperatures. A presentation entitled “The Passive Design Revolution” will be given on May 27 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Chaparral High School Auditorium, 414 E. Ojai Avenue.


Wintertime solar gain, summertime solar shading, efficient insulation, and natural ventilation are all elements of the passive-design methodology now being used internationally. German-speaking countries and Scandinavia have been leading the movement, and so far more than 15,000 “passive houses” have been built.

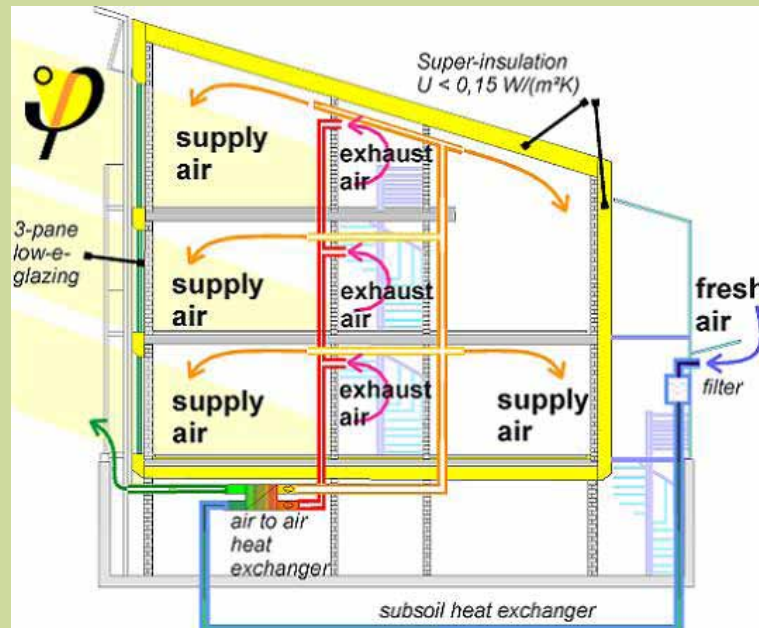
As more and more homeowners are asking for passive design, more and more architects and contractors are learning how to offer it. With passive design,

even the need for solar panels and wind turbines is virtually eliminated, because in passive-design houses

indoor climate control can be as much as 90 percent self-sustaining. The presentation will show that passive design is today’s single most significant way to reduce energy waste—in the Ojai Valley and around the world.

The evening will feature a PowerPoint photo slideshow, and a question and answer period will follow. The

presenter, Wayne Pendrey, is a member of the Green Coalition’s Building and Construction Committee, serves on the Board of Directors of the Ventura County Contractors Association, and is the chair of that association’s Green Building Committee. Pendrey is also chairman of the Strategic Partner Committee for the California Central Coast Chapter of the United States Green Building Council. 



Two Green Thumbs Up!

Ojai's [Bernadette DiPietro](#) has been hanging her clothes out to dry ever since her Italian mother first set the example. Back in 1978 she began photographing clothes hanging out to dry in countries all around the world. She joined an organization called [Project Laundry List](#), which promotes the air-drying of laundry as a simple, effective way to save energy. Fox News found Bernadette through Project Laundry List and featured her clothesline and photographs on their Earth Day programming. Thumbs up to Bernadette for being such a positive role model!



A New Tradition for the Ojai Music Festival

By Christiana Thomas

In this, its 63rd year, the 2009 Ojai Music Festival, slated for June 11 to 14, will build on the success of its 2008 Green Initiative by once again partnering with the Ojai Valley Green Coalition to make its world-renowned musical gathering environmentally friendly. The Festival and Green Coalition efforts will again include a bike valet service, recycling and compost stations to divert waste from the landfills, and free water stations where patrons can refill their personal beverage containers.

This year, the Festival has also committed to reducing its carbon footprint by purchasing carbon offsets for all artists' air travel. Money for the offset will go to Ojai Trees, a local organization

dedicated to planting trees in and around Ojai. Festival patrons who wish to offset their own carbon emissions will be able to stop by the Green Coalition's Green Booth during the Festival to make a contribution. A donation of only a dollar will offset the carbon from a roundtrip car ride from Los Angeles to Ojai.

"We're proud to once again be working closely with the Ojai Valley Green Coalition to help make the Festival as environmentally sustainable as possible," said Jeff Haydon, Executive Director of the Ojai Music Festival. "The efforts of the Green Coalition volunteers play a critical role in ensuring the success of this initiative."

Festival patrons will be encouraged to participate in the environmental sustainability efforts by walking or biking to events, purchasing a souvenir Ojai Music Festival stainless steel water

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- Steve Olson, Representative of the City of Ojai

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Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 653-8445

Online Donations Accepted
www.OjaiValleyGreenCoalition.org



A Message from the Coordinator:

Using Water by the Sip, Not the Gulp

First it was peak oil, then peak water, and now it's peak everything. But lately I think a lot about the concept of peak water. If there's anything in my life that can make me break out in a cold sweat at the thought of not having it, it's water. Take away the car, the TV, Q-Tips, even chocolate, but—please—indoor plumbing is not negotiable. Yet most people on the planet don't even have the luxury of plumbing, much less plentiful water at their disposal.



Wayne and I have been weaning ourselves off water usage more and more, especially as we keep learning more about various issues at the Coalition's monthly presentations. After a friend said she and her husband use 200 gallons a day, I checked our water bill. Wow, I think we can be proud of the fact that we average 50 gallons a day. Reducing our use of fresh water (also known as virgin water use) does take thought and work—not to be interpreted as

sacrifice and inconvenience. It has also required us to change some socially ingrained habits that many would consider inalienable rights, but I'd rather have the option of taking three or four showers a week than none.

After another dry winter, and with some California communities starting to ration, the Coalition has responded to two opportunities to discuss water at upcoming community presentations. Mark your calendar for June 24, when we'll show the locally produced film *Watershed Revolution* and talk with local watershed heroes. And then on August 26 we'll have Jim Thebaut, director of *The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry?*, joining us for a viewing of his film and discussion of water or the lack of same.

To round out this topic of water conservation, I want to tell you about a video I recently viewed online that makes a really strong statement: www.circleofblue.org/waternews/world/video-no-reason/. This short film, entitled *no reason*, artistically and provocatively expresses the impact of some of our personal water choices and the global tie-in.

The worldwide water crisis doesn't have to be our story here in the Ojai Valley. Our valley is uniquely positioned with its precious water sources, and we can lead by example for other communities. Let's work together to conserve, to be efficient . . . to be water wise.

—Deborah Pendrey

Coalition Recognized with a Climate Change Action Award

Last year, for Earth Day 2008, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted a Countywide Climate Change Action Awards Program. This year, to kick off the program, the Board asked many groups and organizations throughout Ventura County to name nominees in seven different categories. The selection committee then named the top nominees, and the Board of Supervisors announced the first winners of these annual awards on April 21.

As it turned out, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition was recognized as one of the top three groups in the Community Organizations category! This honor comes to the Coalition less than two years after its inception. With more than 500 members and counting, the OVGC has now been officially recognized by Ventura County as a leader in the effort to reduce greenhouse gases.

Music Festival

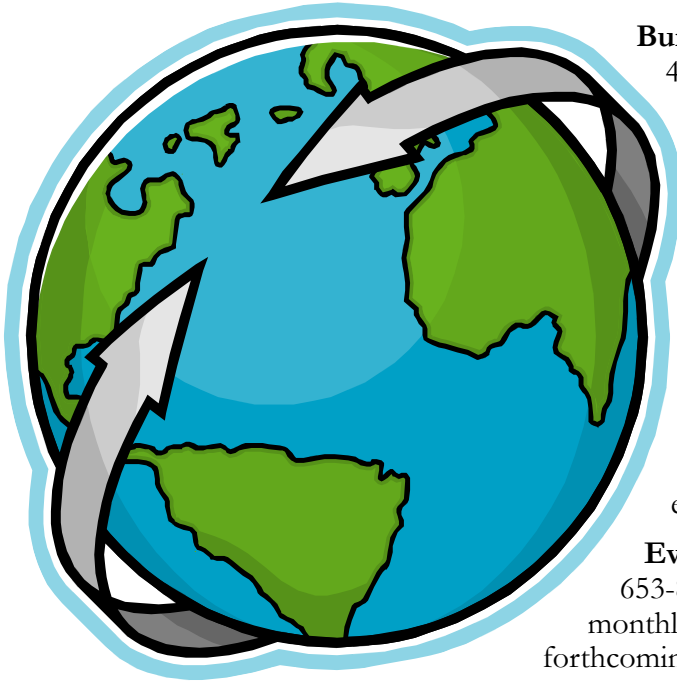
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bottle to use at the water stations, and recycling or composting the refuse from their food and drinks.

To learn more about these efforts, visit www.OjaiFestival.org. For tickets and program information, visit the above website or stop by the Festival office at 201 South Signal Street, across from Libbey Park. 🌱

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 is preparing to offer the May community presentation at Chaparral Auditorium. They're working on a residential efficiency evaluation program, and they hope to work with youth in initiating the program and to focus on low-income families with the service.

Communications and Publicity - Meets 1st Thursday, 6:30 p.m., 202 W. Aliso Street. The press release and calendar notices for the Passive Design presentation on May 27 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*, plus a national media campaign being spearheaded by Ellen Johnson and preparations for the OVGC's winter exhibit at the Ojai Valley Museum.

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 May 27. They are also giving thought to the Coalition's forthcoming museum exhibit.

Energy - Meets 3rd Thurs. 7 p.m., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, conference room in breezeway next to Administration Bldg. The committee has submitted to the board for review an outline for a business and residential sustainability award program that would start with PV electricity. The members have also submitted for the board's approval a meeting agenda template that would be used to meet with businesses that “overlight” property at night. The purpose is to educate companies on light pollution and energy waste while providing tools and resources.

Environmental Health - The regularly scheduled meetings have been temporarily suspended, as the chairperson has been working with the Green School Committee in connection with a Food for Thought grant. 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. Email Dulanie Ellis-La Barre at dulanie@sbcglobal.net for information. The committee and its Grow Food Party Crew subcommittee are staying busy: applying for a Community Food Project grant and preparing for a July community presentation on urban chickens, among many other projects.

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 for June. The committee has two new grant writers, and the Board of Directors is seeking event sponsors from the business community.

Transportation - Meeting time open. There is no committee business at this time, as a new committee chairperson is needed. Call the Coalition's Executive Director, Deborah Pendrey, at (805) 653-8445 for more 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 is focusing on incentives and educational awareness to help change individual behavior regarding the use of disposable plastic shopping bags. This may be a 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. The committee has submitted a grant to the Community Wetland Restoration Grant program to secure initial funding for a creek restoration project, and proposes to eradicate non-native invasive plants and restore the riparian ecosystem of the Ojai Creek riparian corridor within Libbey Park. Also, the members provided comment on the Ventura County Watershed Protection District Water & Environmental Resources Division's new horse owner BMP mailer, which addresses water-quality issues.

Advocacy Is a Contact Sport

For our “Advocacy 101” presentation, Tim Baird introduced the speakers, starting with local actor/producer Frank Malle, who read an account of an advocacy experience from the book *Achieving the Impossible*. Several government officials and local activists then outlined how a citizen might advocate for legislative change in the Ojai Valley.

Representing the city along with Steve Olsen, Ojai City Manager Jere Kersnar emphasized that the process is lengthy and cumbersome, and that laws can’t be changed on a whim because local officials are limited by federal, state, and county strictures. He cited 20 volumes of code handbooks, noting that he believes in the principle of “representative democracy” and that, because the City Council is elected by majority vote, “the council’s decision is always the right one.”

Kersnar emphasized that citizens should work with the council to effect change—that you must “lobby, lobby, lobby” through letters, petitions, conversations, and formal appearances at council meetings. Also, you should represent a broad range of interests, not just your own. The most effective strategy, he said, is to craft a “whole solution,” including where the money for the proposed changes will come from. If lobbying fails, initiatives and referendums should be a “last resort.”

We also heard from Coalition member Kenley Neufeld, who last

year initiated a new chain store ordinance in the City of Ojai. Neufeld shared his experiences with the initiative process, which required dedication and countless hours of research to make it happen. (He went door-to-door to collect 700 signatures.) Ultimately, he and the City Council compromised on an ordinance before the initiative actually went to ballot.

Supervisor Steve Bennett then spoke about the county level of government, at which influencing change is more complex because the Ojai Valley elects only one of the five supervisors. The county is also bound by many federal and state laws and codes. Bennett shared his thoughts about how organizations that work to effect change should be clear about what they want. Once an issue is identified, see it through, and everyone who represents your organization should be credible and clear about its goals. This is how government officials will learn to trust you and become your partner. And never resort to personal attacks on officials, as this will not help your cause.

John Broesamle, the last Ojai activist to speak, said he worked with the California Coastal Conservancy and Supervisor Steve Bennett’s office to create a nature preserve that was to have become a corporate-owned golf course and luxury home development. Broesamle was able to challenge the outdated Environmental Impact Report and convince the corporate developers to abandon their plans. 🍏

In and Around the Valley

May 14, Bike to work day! More info at: <http://www.vcapcd.org/btw.htm>

May 16, Edible Flowers Workshop, 10 a.m. at the City of Ojai Community Demonstration Garden, 401 S. Ventura Street

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

May 18, USGBC C4 Energy Auditing 101 presentation by Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance (www.vcenergy.com), 6 p.m., Patagonia Firehouse Community Room, 259 W. Santa Clara Street in Ventura

May 27, Passive Design Revolution presentation 7 p.m. Chaparral Auditorium, 414 E. Ojai Avenue in Ojai

There’ll be no Household Hazardous Waste collection day in Ojai for May. Call (805) 658-4323 to make a drop-off appointment.

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

Save the Date

June 11-14, Going Green booth at the Ojai Music Festival. Come to May’s community presentation and, for a buck, get a chance to win two lawn tickets to the concert of your choice!

June 24, *Watershed Revolution*, the community premiere of a locally made film

Harvesting Rainwater in Our Backyard ~ Part 3

By Dianne Ulyon Bullard

Editor's Note: Gene and Dianne Bullard's house is sited on a third acre near Ojai's River Preserve. In this last of our three-part series on the Bullards' new rainwater catchment system, Diane describes the installation process.

The installed system will allow the Bullards to capture a thousand gallons of water for every inch of rain that falls. With an average Ojai Valley rainfall of 17 inches, 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.

Based on extensive research and advice from experts, we decided against installing rainwater storage tanks. For one thing, we couldn't find the compactly designed metal tanks shown by Brad Lancaster in his presentation. The available tanks had massive dimensions or were more difficult to install. Also, we weren't certain we understood how we would be capturing and releasing water throughout the year.

One supplier suggested that, for adequate water bill savings, we'd need to have 10,000-gallon tanks. The tanks and their installation

would have added \$5,000 to the cost of the project, so we decided to delay the tank installation but design our system to allow for them later.

We chose Mike Daley of Daley Landscaping as our contractor. Having worked with him in the Green Coalition, we knew he

roof's gutters to the first (highest) swale. The entire network was then covered with four inches of mulch. (We later tweaked the swales. A few seemed too deep (for aesthetic or safety reasons), so we refilled a couple of them to a six-to-eight-inch depth.

So far there hasn't been much



The Bullards' finished yard, its new swales covered with mulch.

shared our enthusiasm. With our permaculture consultant, Devin Slavin, we laid out the swales with gypsum lines. The swales were dug by hand to a twelve-inch depth, with canals interconnecting them. All the excess earth easily filled a former horseshoe pit, helping to regrade our property.

Pipes were laid underground to direct the flow of water from the

rain, yet we've been able to see all the water in the first swale overflowing into the second one. And we know that no water is running off the property into the street. We're particularly pleased with the aesthetics of the swales, which add contours to our backyard. With the addition of accent rocks and plants, the final effect will be green in more ways than one! 🌿