

Motivating individuals to examine and transform personal values and habits, to accept responsibility for the earth and to act on that commitment.



# CANADIAN EARTH INSTITUTE

## Planet Care

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5  
DECEMBER 2006



### YOU AND GLOBAL WARMING

Here in Victoria, we are getting a taste of what climate change looks like – unusual hurricane storms, thunderstorms in winter, lower winter temperatures and more snow for longer, record rain falls, hot summers. This trend will increase if each of us does not take action to reduce our actions that cause climate change. What is it that we can do?



NWEI's new course, *Global Warming: Changing CO2urse*, will be offered in Canada through CEI hopefully in March 2007. It is an opportunity for you to explore your personal values and habits around climate change as well as why society has been slow to respond.

It will increase your understanding of the history and science of global warming and identify our participation in this ecological crisis. The up-lifting part is empowering individuals and collectives to curb global warming, enabling future generations to meet their needs. Your grandchildren will be thanking you for the your efforts in leaving a livable world for them.

The course has a new format of 4 weeks instead of 8. To participate in a course, gather at least eight people for a one hour introductory meeting led by a CEI volunteer and those who are interested will form a discussion circle. Just phone the CEI office after you have your group, date of meeting and place to line up a CEI volunteer introductory presenter.

The course is free, the study guide costs \$30 plus shipping. Phone: CEI at 250.727.9163.

### The BENEFITS OF BALANCE by Darcy Ambler

Over the course of my almost 50 years of living, the changing meaning of one small word has had a profound impact on how I live my life and the values which I hold dear. It's a word that pops out of my



mouth more and more these days, as I think about the changes that we will all need to make in our lifestyles, if humans are going to be able to live on the Earth in a sustainable way. In my view, it is the first essential life change that needs to happen before we are able to find the time to adjust any of our other habits. What is this term that I attribute so much influence to? It's the word **BALANCE**.

When I was in my early 20's, fresh out of university with an accounting degree, the term

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# THE BENEFITS OF BALANCE (cont.)



meant what every good business student had learned over and over again; the difference between the credits and debits in an account. If you were dealing with assets (what you owned), the bigger the balance the better; when looking at liabilities (what you owed), the eventual goal was the smaller the better. Coupled with what seemed to be the main focus of the society in which I lived, the acquisition of STUFF and lots of it, my energy drawn toward the basic

goal of accumulating MONEY, whatever it took.

That is what my husband, at the time, and I set out to do with great gusto. Never mind that at least one of us was working in a job which didn't fulfill many needs, other than a good salary, and both of us were working long hours, with little time for leisure or even seeing each other, as long as we were able to pay for the house, the cars, the far too short vacations, the dinners out, and so



on and so on, all was well. What did I learn from this experience - that all was NOT well. The effect of this lifestyle was the inevitable negative toll it took on



If you are reading this, one of your values is likely a concern for the Earth, as a well-functioning, healthy, living unit. The choices that soon need to be made to solve the problems surfacing in this regard are far too complex to make on the run. Living out of balance does not serve either our own needs or those of the Earth. I have learned that focusing on putting more balance into my days, in terms of harmony and ample time to spend on things important to me, has led me down the road of making more conscious choices. A work in progress with no end in site, I am finding this beneficial to both my own satisfaction and hopefully to my impact on the Earth as well.

my mental health, happiness and marriage, not to mention the effect on the Earth, which was not even on my radar at the time.

Fast forward to today and the many hundreds of directions the meaning of BALANCE has taken in my life. Today I prefer to focus on another definition when making my life choices; harmony and proportion. This can apply to a work of art or to the way we spend our time each day. Again, coupled with our culture's focus on filling every minute of our day with activity of some kind, we spend our days rushing from appointment to appointment, without always stopping to consciously assess whether what we are doing is fulfilling our own needs and serving the values we consider important.



A quote from the Great River Earth Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota ..... Even environmental professionals, who often begin the deep ecology class believing that they are quite well aware of their environmental impact and are doing all they can, usually come out with new ideas and renewed inspiration to become even more Earth-friendly.

## WHAT'S NEW AT CEI

- We are collaborating with Royal Roads again and offering another course on Monday nites 7pm starting Jan. 15th. This time we are offering Voluntary Simplicity. This course has changed the lives of many people. One participant went from jet-setting high rolling consumer to forming a house collective that modeled growing their own food, sharing resources, recycling and reducing her work week to 3 days by being able to live on such a modest income. Our last course at RRU included a planner for a new LEEDS project, a farmer, a teacher, a student, ...
- We are coordinating an Electronics Recycling Fundraising Event on Saturday January 13th from 9 to 2 pm at Breakdown Recycling, 852 Devonshire Road in Esquimalt. Bring your old cellphones, computers, stereos to be recycled instead of filling Hartland or being shipped to Asia. We would love to say hello.

## WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE STANDARD OF LIVING?

Did you know that the North American per capita energy use is more than twice that of Europeans, more than 10 times that of Asians and more than 20 times that of Africans?

A socially sustainable global carrying capacity for the whole world must be based on use of renewable resources, possibly supplemented by very low consumption of non-renewable resources.

Some sources say that if all people lived at a European standard of living, we would survive.

How do you fare in living sustainably? Compare your lifestyle with "The Sustainable United States Model Citizen/Family for the World" by Cameron J. Gordon see

<http://www.cof.orst.edu/cof/extended/sustain/articles.php>  
(CTL + link)



Where do  
you  
find hope?

NWEI and CEI are founded on hope. Our vision anticipates a minority of committed citizens arising to lead the region to a sustainable future. In doing so, we provide a model for the nation. In other words, the goal is fundamental cultural change.

Earth institute work is hopeful. Generally, it involves working with groups of people of good will, who are struggling to find an ethical path at a difficult time, and who become connected at a deep personal level.

The work incorporates Joanna Macy's idea of,



The Great Turning – the essential adventure of our time where society shifts from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization. By being engaged in a struggle for change, we put meaning, satisfaction and empowerment in our lives.

Current visible signs of hope are the sudden appearance and popularity at mainstream theatres of movies and documentaries on climate change, globalization, fast foods, electronic waste to Asia, etc.

Hope is the unswerving vision of the possible, despite having no ultimate control over the outcome. Optimism and pessimism are distractions.

It is important to practice hope, to work without burnout. How do you prevent the discouragement of knowing what is happening to the planet push you to desperately work too hard?

We would like to hear how you keep hope alive in your life and how you take good care of yourself to enable you to sustain this good work. We will share them in the next newsletter. Please email us your story at [canadianearthinstitute@telus.net](mailto:canadianearthinstitute@telus.net)

