



Inside: Madison and Intercity Bus Service; The Importance of Buying Locally; Local Flowers; Great Summer Recipes

Sustainable Times

Your guide to a natural alternative

Promoting sustainable communities, healthy lifestyles and local business

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FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT

How The Way We Eat Impacts Our Water

The way eat affects not only our health, but also our environment, because the food choices we make inevitably influence the way our food is produced. Conventional agriculture, which relies heavily on pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, produces most of our food. Its impact on the environment, especially our lakes, is not good.

by LYNN MARKHAM

A 2007 study estimated that one out of every three private wells in Wisconsin contains detectable levels of agricultural pesticides, including herbicides, fungicides and insecticides.

Areas of the state with higher percentages of the land in agriculture generally had greater percentages of wells with detectable pesticides.

Areas of the state with higher percentages of the land in agriculture generally had greater percentages of wells with detectable pesticides. In addition to supplying drinking water, groundwater also supplies much of the water to our valuable lakes.

Many pesticides and pesticide metabolites move with water as it runs off the land or seeps into the groundwater and then moves to our waterways.

So, in essence, we drink and swim in our land use habits. In this article we will look at how our food choices affect the water quality of our lakes and streams. While this article focuses on pesticides from agriculture and an approach where everyone can be part

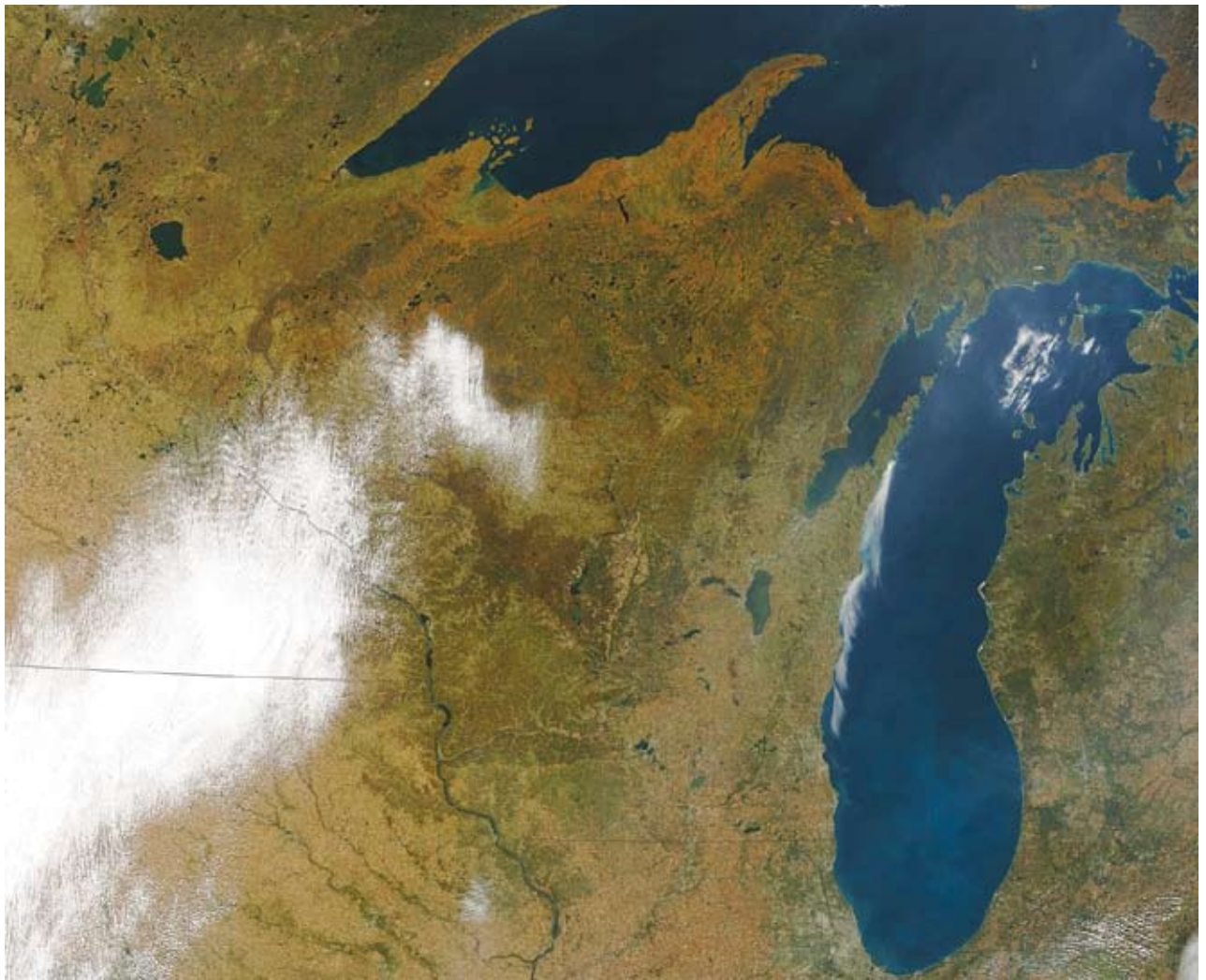


Photo courtesy of NASA

Wisconsin from space: What we eat affects our environment, including small and large lakes.

of the solution, pesticides applied to lawns, gardens, roadsides, golf courses and other lands can also affect our lakes and drinking water.

Let's start with how food is grown

in Wisconsin...

In the 2004 and 2005 growing seasons, farmers in Wisconsin reported using 13 million pounds of pesticides each year. This amounts to over two

pounds of pesticides for each person in Wisconsin.

Some pesticides have higher tox-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

GREEN BUILDING

Wisconsin's First LEED Platinum Home

Just like there are many shades of green for products, construction also comes in different shades of green. One successful attempt to give substance to the concept of green building is the LEED certification program. A Madison home has just received its highest level of certification.

by GEORGE ZENS

For Carol Richard and Fred Berg sustainability is not an abstract concept, but a way of life. So when they moved (back, for Carol) to Madison from Atlanta, they decided to take their commitment to a sustainable lifestyle a few steps further.

"If we have options, then we want to make the smarter choice that is consistent with our lifestyle," says Carol Richard.

They found they had options that could have a significant impact when it came to where and in what type

of house to live. In fact, with them being an architect (Carol) and engineer (Fred) husband and wife team, they probably had a better outlook on the options available to them than most people, especially considering that Carol is certified in LEED building (LEED A(ccredited)P(rofessional) Homes).

LEED stands for 'Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design', an internationally recognized green building certification system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. It can be applied to all types of buildings, institutional, commercial and residential, and offers several levels of certification, from basic through silver and gold to platinum.

When Carol Richard and Fred Berg started exploring the possibilities in Madison a couple of years ago, they knew they wanted to build a 'green'



Photo by GEORGE ZENS

Green building practices and modern architecture gracefully combined.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Let's Think It Through



George Zens

Therefore we spend most of our time and effort dealing with the unintended consequences of our previous actions and decisions.

It's what government for instance is all about.

But it also applies on an individual level.

Every decision we make has implications - good, bad or indifferent - that we most likely don't think about. And we don't have to because we are not affected by those implications, or at least not directly.

That is another uncanny ability we humans have: Make somebody else pay for the consequences of our actions, be it our natural environment, society in general or future generations.

It reminds me of the definition of communism that my old economics teacher used to give: What's yours is mine and what's mine is none of your business.

We are a very communist society that way.

Most of the decisions we make are not spectacular or even necessarily harmful in themselves. But their effects are amplified, and then become harmful and spectacular, because there are so many

of us who make the same little decision.

For example: If one person uses a plastic bag for groceries, it doesn't have much impact in itself. But since millions of people do that, the consequences become enormous, from the amount of oil used to manufacture and transport the bags (even the ones made from corn need tremendous amounts of oil-based fertilizer and pesticides) to the danger they pose to wildlife, the amount of space they take up in landfills and the length of time they spend there without decaying.

Another example: When one person idles their car for two minutes while in the convenience store, the effect is negligible (although it's dumb because we are wasting gas and money), but since millions of people do that, ...

Or when we buy a cheap cut of meat in a grocery store, do we think about the manure lagoons, the hormones and antibiotics the animals are fed, the soil erosion, ... consequences we trigger through our purchase?

We probably don't. But we should. And fortunately, alternatives are available.

Member



In this issue

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HABITAT RESTORE TO HOST SHOW WITH ART WORK WITH A SALVAGE COMPONENT

Jewelry, wall art décor and folk artwork are just a small selection of the creative work that will be available at the Habitat ReStore Art Show at the Artisan Gallery, 6858 Paoli Road, Paoli.

The show will start Aug. 7 and run through Sept. 13. The opening night reception will be held Friday, Aug. 7 from 5 to 9 p.m.

The art pieces will be sold by silent auction, with the proceeds benefiting Habitat for Humanity of Dane County. All art pieces will have a salvage component (such as a found object, construction material or something from the ReStore). Sixty applications were received and 27 artists were chosen for the show. There will be 41 pieces of artwork.

What: Artist Reception is Friday, Aug. 7, 5-9 p.m.
Where: Artisan Gallery, 6858 Paoli Road, Paoli ph.845-6600
Who: Habitat ReStore Art Show

When: Art show continues from Aug. 7-Sept. 13

The silent auction starts Aug. 7 and concludes Sept. 13. Gallery owners will be taking bids over the phone or in person during gallery hours which are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Artwork can be viewed at the Habitat ReStore web site at www.restoredane.org.

The Habitat ReStore is located at 208 Cottage Grove Road, Madison. For more information go to www.restoredane.org. or call Jen Voichick at 712-4535.

'MADISON LOCALS' FEATURE A TRUE TEST OF CHEFS AND FARMERS

Come join the premier local foods tasting event of Southern Wisconsin as Dane County's most popular chefs pair up with local farmers to serve delightful samples at the "Madison Locals" event Sunday, August 23rd from 4:00 -7:00 PM at The Madison Club located at 5 E Wilson Street off the Capital Square in Madison.

Offering sample dishes

that truly represent a taste of Madison, Madison Locals proudly features the diverse array of 20 different food producers and artisans that the Southern Wisconsin region is known for. Unique dishes will be specially prepared with locally raised meat, dairy and produce that highlight the region's character.

"We are looking forward to hosting chefs and guests for a true 'taste of Madison'! Not only do we want to share how the Madison Club is partnering with local farmers, we are excited to see where other chefs are finding inspiration this summer," says Chef Fox of The Madison Club.

This event helps raise money for REAP Food Group's Buy Fresh Buy Local program (BFBL). BFBL helps Southern Wisconsin restaurants find locally grown food that meets their needs and satisfies the craving of consumers. The BFBL program coordinator, Maria Davis, describes the event this way, "Madison Locals is a great opportunity not only to taste but to interact and learn from Madison's finest

chefs who use locally grown products." Building on the success of last year's event, Madison Locals 2009 shows tremendous potential with several restaurants already reserving a place.

Each \$35 ticket grants guests full access to each chef's specialty. Guests can also visit with the paired farmer and learn about their production methods and passion for producing great food. Tickets can be purchased in-person at The Madison Club at 5 E Wilson Street in downtown Madison or via phone (608 255 4861). More information of participating chefs and event details are listed at

www.reapfoodgroup.org

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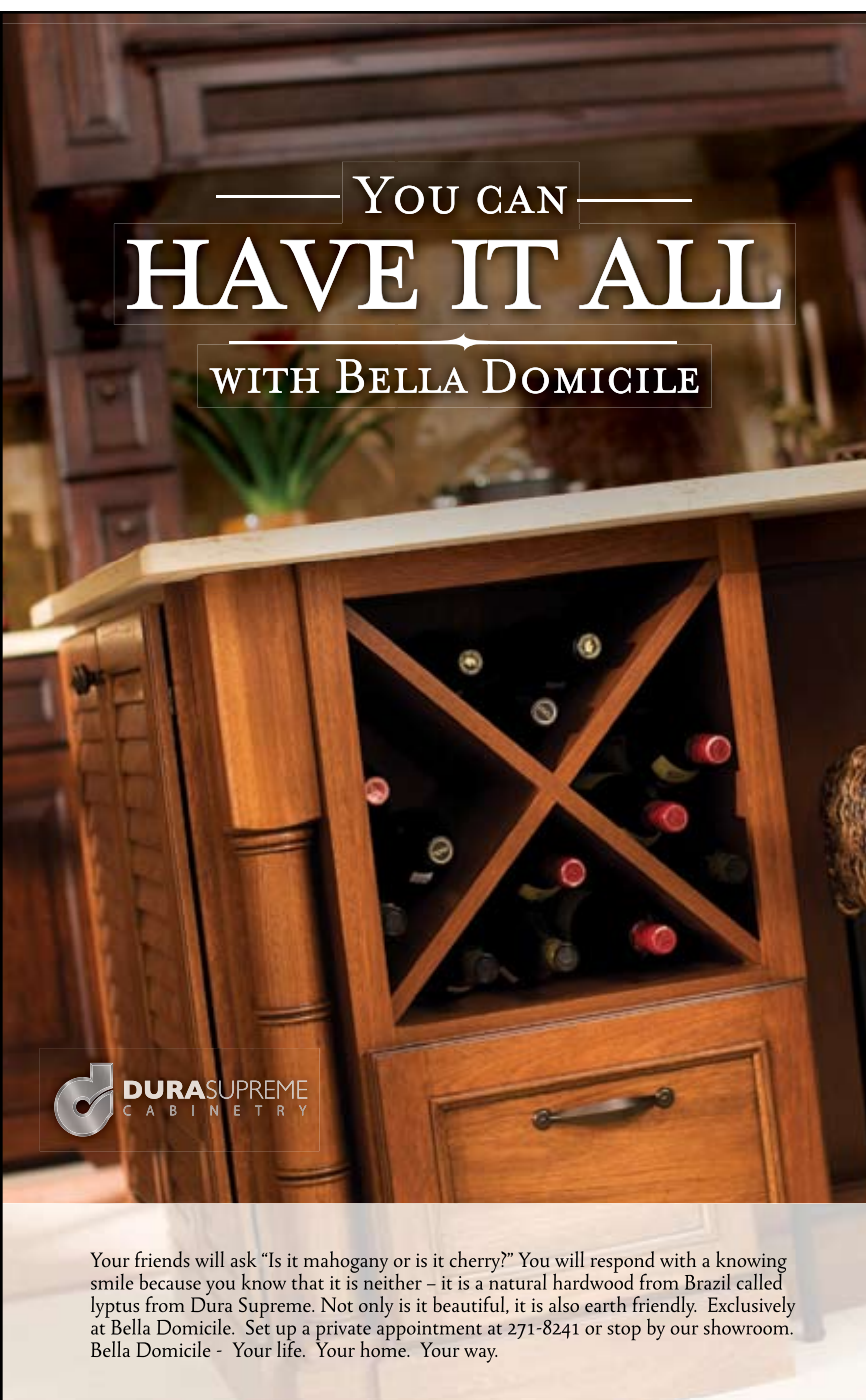
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FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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Average pounds of pesticides applied per acre in Wisconsin, 2004-2005

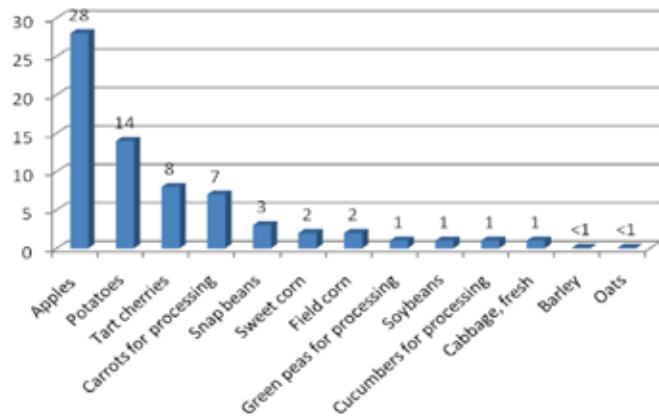


Figure 1

quantity than others, so quantity does not equal toxicity. We can consider pesticide use from a number of perspectives including total amount of pesticides applied to a crop throughout the state, and amount of pesticides applied per acre.

Figure 1 illustrates the average pounds of pesticides farmers reported applying per acre per year in Wisconsin.

The crops with the highest average annual pesticide application per acre are potatoes with 14 pounds of pesticides per acre each year, and apples with 28 pounds per acre.

In contrast, the Table 1 shows that pesticides are applied in the greatest total amounts statewide to field corn and soybeans, Wisconsin's top

two crops by acreage. Another interesting point is that while cranberries are grown on about 18,000 acres in our state and food analysis shows high levels of pesticide residues, pesticide application data are not reported for this crop.

Given that pesticides are used extensively in Wisconsin agriculture and regularly found in groundwater, it's not surprising that they're also found in lakes.

In 2005, 53 Wisconsin lakes were tested for atrazine in late summer. Atrazine was detected in over 90% of the lakes. While most lakes had some level of atrazine, differences in concentrations were found between lakes surrounded by varying degrees of agricultural

land use.

Lakes where atrazine was low or absent were primarily located in forested areas, whereas lakes higher in atrazine were found where agriculture comprised over 75% of the surrounding land area – the same trend found in the groundwater study.

Atrazine concentrations in lakes ranged from below the detection limit of the test (0.10 ppb) to 0.40 ppb.

To put these numbers in perspective, consider that the drinking water standard for humans for atrazine is currently 3.0 ppb, yet recent research found that male frogs exposed to atrazine at 0.10 ppb as tadpoles develop both male and female sex organs.

Although atrazine and other pesticides are legal to use, little is known about their effects on other wildlife.

Do we really know how agricultural pesticides affect our health? The short answer is "no."

Our society has chosen to allow pesticide use on a large scale across the landscape first, and to study the health effects later. The European Union and certain communities in the U.S. are moving to a precautionary approach toward pesticides and man-made chemicals in general.

We do have some health information about certain

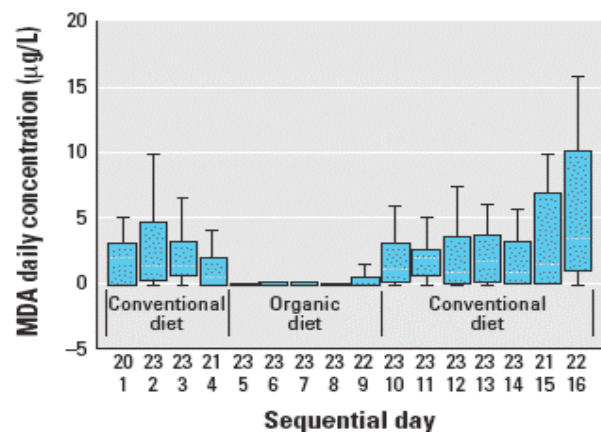


Figure 2

agricultural pesticides. For instance, research has found that atrazine may cause cancer in humans, in addition to the effects on sexual development in frogs.

What about other pesticides?

First, Wisconsin has not set standards for pesticide concentrations in lakes or streams. In addition, a large fraction of pesticides used in Wisconsin do not have safe drinking water standards either.

For instance, in 2004-2005 Wisconsin farmers reported using 17 pesticides on field corn, and 13 of these pesticides do not have safe drinking water standards. For potatoes, farmers reported using 26 pesticides of which 20 do not have safe drinking water standards. In addition, very few controlled studies have been done

regarding the health effects of being exposed to a mixture of pesticides in groundwater.

A number of scientific studies have looked at large populations and found pesticide-based health risks for children based on what they eat, where they live, or their parents' pesticide exposure. Specifically, here are a few of the research findings:

When children ate organic fruits, vegetables and juices, they had much lower pesticide levels in their urine, as shown in Figure 2.

A Minnesota study found the highest rates of birth defects in western Minnesota, a major wheat, sugar beet and potato growing region, which also had the highest frequency of use of chlorophenoxy herbicides and fungicides. Intermediate birth

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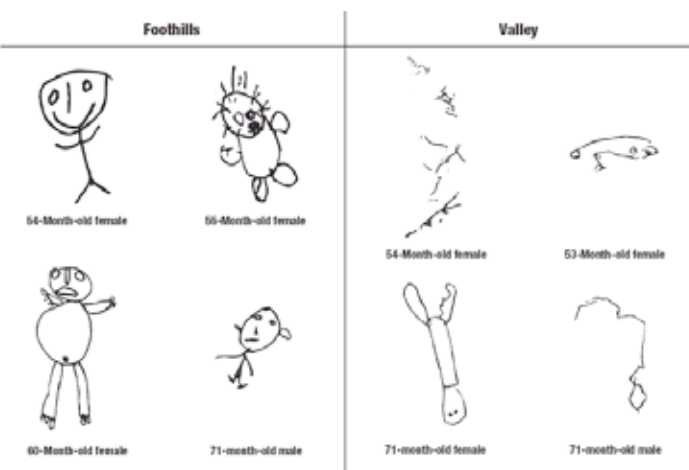


Figure 3

defect rates were found in corn and soybean areas, while the lowest birth defect rates occurred in non-crop regions of the state.

Children living in a valley with frequent use of agricultural pesticides had reduced eye-hand coordination, 30-minute memory, and the ability to draw a person, as shown in Figure 3.

The children of pesticide applicators had significantly higher birth defect rate.

So, what can we do to reduce pesticides in our drinking water and lakes? Perhaps too often the approach has been to blame the farmers.

I suggest an alternative approach where everyone can be part of the solution. Given that we all eat food, I suggest we use our food dollars to support local farmers who protect our lakes and groundwater by growing food without using pesticides, or grow some of our own food without pesticides.

If pesticides aren't applied in the garden or field, they won't end up in our drinking water and lakes.

Fortunately, Wisconsin has a strong and growing network of farmers providing locally grown food.

You may already know of some nearby roadside farm stands or a farmers market

Take a few minutes to get to know these farmers and ask about how they control weeds and insects. Another option is to check out the regional food guides in Wisconsin, known as Farm Fresh Atlases that include farms, farmers' markets, restaurants, stores and typically list whether the food is produced without synthetic pesticides – known as “organic.”

In Wisconsin we have 90 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms, with over 50 of them producing crops without the use of synthetic pesticides.

Crop	Average pounds of pesticides/acre	Total crop acres	Total pounds of pesticides applied
Apples	28	5,800	162,400
Potatoes	14	68,000	952,000
Tart cherries	8	1,800	14,400
Carrots for processing	7	4,200	29,400
Snap beans	3	76,000	228,000
Sweet corn	2	88,400	176,800
Field corn	2	3,800,000	7,600,000
Green peas for processing	1	30,200	30,200
Soybeans	1	1,610,000	1,610,000
Cucumbers for processing	1	4,600	4,600
Cabbage, fresh	1	4,400	4,400
Barley	0.1	55,000	5,500
Oats	0.1	400,000	40,000
Cranberries	n.a.	18,000	n.a.

Table 1

In a CSA, local households and farmers work together to share the responsibility of producing and delivering fresh food. Households support the farm by paying an annual fee that entitles them to a “share” of the season’s harvest. Once harvesting begins, CSA members pick-up their farm share of fresh foods at a regular interval. Shares may include produce, fruits, cheeses, eggs, meats, poultry, flowers, herbs or preserves. The typical CSA season in Wisconsin runs from the end of May through mid-October but many farms offer early spring shares or winter shares.

Or consider growing some food yourself. Strawberries and sweet crunchy sugar peas in June, ripe juicy tomatoes and

melons in August...mmmm.

They all taste wonderful straight from the garden. You can get transplants at your local nursery or farmers market or pick up a few packets of seeds for shorter season veggies to get started.

Buying and growing local food can be a joy. Watching seedlings grow, picking that perfectly ripe berry, getting to know local farmers with their stories and their specialties, and gathering with other CSA members for a day on the farm. Choosing locally-grown and pesticide-free food that protects our lakes and groundwater can be a great summer and fall activity – followed by a dip in the lake of course!

For further information on local food sources:

Local Harvest www.localharvest.org

Farm Fresh Atlases www.farmfreshatlases.org

Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture

Coalition (southern WI) www.macsac.org

Urban Ecology Center (Milwaukee) www.urbanecologycenter.org

Central Rivers Farmshed (central WI) www.farmshed.org

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GREEN BUILDING

continued from page 1



Photos by GEORGE ZENS

Carol Richard with Fred Berg (right) and John Sveum in the bright living room.

house. They were particularly interested in the LEED program, not least because of Carol's professional background, but also because its focus is wider than just the building itself.

"It's a much more holistic approach," explains Carol Richard. "LEED also considers aspects like the site, transportation or water runoff for example."

LEED for Homes was a new program in Wisconsin when they were looking into it, although it is well established by now. Some of the concerns addressed by LEED criteria confirmed habits developed by Carol and Fred in Atlanta:

"Having lived in Atlanta for years, we were committed to living sustainably. Atlanta has been in a severe draught, so you have to save water. We took the dishwasher and shower water to water our flowers for instance. We composted and rode bikes to work."

They found a suitable site for their new home on Madison's west side, an infill site in an otherwise developed neighborhood, close to public transportation and bike routes – all aspects that earn LEED certification points.

Carol Richard designed the house with Fred Berg being the engineer, and they selected Yahara Builders as general contractors.

"Yahara Builders related to green building practice and Carol's design," says Fred Berg. "They were on board philosophically with what we wanted to achieve."

Although Yahara Builders has a lot of experience with green building, this project was still a learning process, according to John Sveum, president of Yahara Builders:

"By our basic approach, all our buildings are basic LEED green-built. We learn with every house, but we learned a lot with this level of LEED. Everyone involved learned, including the subcontractors."

Some of these learning experiences might very well have a positive impact on future work practices. Thus a plumber for instance realized that he didn't get headaches anymore when he used low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) pipe glue.

"Everyone did things a bit differently, but nobody complained, everybody was cooperative," says John Sveum.

One different way of doing things for instance was using a temporary furnace during construction, so as not to contaminate the final high-efficiency furnace with construction dust.

As Fred Berg explains, LEED certification requires a lot of paperwork, which increases cost, and discipline, but:

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Solar panels on the detached garage and water retention with native plants.

“There is also a lot of value added.”

John Sveum agrees:

“The challenge for us was not so much with the construction, as with the paperwork. You have to keep track of everything, like the recyclables for instance. We were already recycling anyway, we don’t waste lumber, but here we had to keep exact records. It takes it to a different level.”

Taking their house to a different level was what Carol and Fred intended to do:

Their home is the first LEED Platinum certified residence in Wisconsin, achieving 102 out of a possible 136 certification points. As a comparison: for basic LEED certification, a minimum of 45 points is needed; silver requires 60 points, gold 75 and platinum 90.

It takes a serious concentrated and concerted effort covering all aspects of the project, from design to landscaping, to achieve that kind of commitment.

Thus for example, an inte-

grated design team was set up to spot and solve problems up front rather than discovering them when it was too late.

The infill site makes good use of existing developable land and city infrastructure, including water, sewer and transportation.

The house is oriented south to take advantage of the sun, with brises-soleil maximizing the sun’s impact in winter while keeping direct sunlight out in the summer, providing nonetheless a lot of natural

indoor light, thus reducing the need for artificial light.

Fred did a lot of research into artificial lighting, evaluating all kinds of compact fluorescent and LED lights before compromising on a mix of the two, but with the firm intention to keep upgrading as technology evolves.

The possibility to improve the building in years to come is an important aspect of a sustainable design for Carol and Fred:

“Durability is very important, including getting the best quality for the price. The Germans have an expression, ‘preiswert’, that describes it very well.”

Thinking ahead, they put in an elevator shaft – without the elevator for now, but it can be added when they feel too old to climb stairs. Meanwhile, the shaft doubles as storage space.

Another example of planning is the fact that the main roof is wired for future solar panels. For now the panels on the garage provide two thirds of the electricity they use, according to Fred.

Instead of doing one blower-door-test to determine how well the house is sealed, they did two – the first one before the final sealing was done to detect precise weak spots and not operate in the dark.

“The first test was pretty good already,” says Carol, “and the second one showed that the house is very tightly sealed.”

A high-efficiency air

exchanger brings in outdoor air and evacuates spent indoor air, while using the difference in temperature to climatise the house and keep heating and cooling costs down.

Water efficiency (rainwater recovery, raingardens, dual-flush toilets, high-efficiency faucets and showerheads), energy efficiency (35% more efficient than Energy Star requirements), use of materials and resources (recycling, environmentally friendly products, low-VOC paints and finishes), landscaping (all native plants, permeable pavers) and indoor environmental quality (including radon-resistant construction with the possibility for future forced ventilation) are other aspects leading up to the LEED Platinum certification.

Overall, Carol Richard, Fred Berg and John Sveum are very satisfied with the final result, and the process:

“Everybody brought a great level of concern and commitment to the project – the contractor, the subcontractors and the suppliers,” says Fred Berg.

For more information:

Carol Richard’s and Fred Berg’s website about their house:

www.rossstreethouse.com

U.S. Green Building Council:

www.usgbc.org

Yahara Builders:

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PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Madison's Role In Intercity Bus Service

On June 15 this year, the Madison Planning Commission has approved the Badger Bus Company's proposal to eliminate its bus station at the corner of West Washington Avenue and Bedford Street in Madison.

by DAVID KNUTI

The Badger bus station is to make way for 82 apartment units and 12,000 square feet of commercial space.

This development is likely to have consequences that will diminish the quality of Madison's current intercity bus service and limit capacity to expand and improve it in the future.

With final action scheduled for Tuesday, July 7 (as this issue of the Sustainable Times goes to press), the City Council has a last chance to mitigate the damage by conditioning actual demolition on a City-supervised reappraisal of the required arrival and departure arrangements for the existing bus services—Greyhound, Van Galder, and Badger—as well as likely future services.

This backward drift for transit is coming at a time when national climate and energy policies are calling for expansion of public transit services

and Federal appropriations for them. The State of Wisconsin has its plan for expanded intercity service from Madison and the legislature is about to authorize a charter of a Madison Regional Transportation Authority.

The Regional High-speed Rail system linking Madison and Milwaukee is moving toward construction this year, which should open debate on the location of its Madison terminal.

These draft plans all identify the need for a central unifying hub, and most plan maps have a circle looping around the Bus Station.

Unfortunately, at this time, these powerful emerging forces are silent, lacking organizational spokespersons or far-sighted city officials to articulate their needs.

Through five months of public meetings, the Madison Peak Oil Group and Madison Area Bus Advocates have been attempting to warn of the consequences the loss of the station, demanding viable interim bus arrangements and a concept for a long term intermodal transit hub.

Instead, city of Madison leaders, commissioners and staff have responded with resolute indifference. Badger offi-

cial have offered no transition arrangements in their redevelopment application and public appearances. At their hearing, the Transit and Parking Commissioners could not even ask a meaningful question of any of the bus companies. The staff felt no obligations to point out any problems.

Clearly, the loss of the station and existing bus volumes threaten either chaos on Langdon Street or the disorderly dispersion of bus operations onto congested downtown streets and fragmentation to distant peripheral locations such as the Dutch Mill park and ride.

The basic facts are that Van Galder (24 arrivals and departures) and Badger (14 arrivals and departures) operate two full schedules on a crowded narrow street with a small curb cut-off for two buses located near the corner of the Memorial Union.

There is a steady flow of Metro buses passing by and heavy traffic of students and bus riders. Badger also picks up and tickets at least 20 percent of its passengers at its bus station, and these would now be added to the crowd on Langdon.

A key issue is that Greyhound depends solely on the bus station on Bedford,

and its ten arriving and departing buses would be thrown onto the street. Logically, they should expect a right to accommodation at the city's central bus facility—which will be Langdon Street de facto - but Van Galder and Badger apparently do not expect to make room for them. The Union does not want to sell its complicated tickets, and UW officials hope they just go away. Nevertheless, Greyhound may show up and take whatever place is available in line.

Adding to the potential pile-up are charter buses that operate for events such state high school tournaments and extra buses for the end of term rush.

All these buses need space to hang out in reserve, which is also provided by the bus station. (It was interesting to be part of the recent pre-holiday crowds jamming the Bedford Street station, ready to board the four buses loading outside and imagine them joining the crowds on Langdon Street.)

Another key consideration is accommodating tomorrow's more numerous passengers and added services.

Badger officials admit that their ridership rose sharply last year with \$4 gas, and will swell again as gas prices inevitably rebound. The State has its

plans to add subsidized routes from underserved areas and future train and transit services with want to plan for orderly transfers to buses.

Badger officials maintain that something termed "the Megabus" model is the future of intercity bus travel. It consists of stripped down operations with internet ticketing, no terminals, and floating service which picks up and discharges passengers at freeway interchanges and park and ride lots.

This seems a recipe for low total ridership which leaves less-able and less-mobile people without cars and computers behind. And it is also likely to turn off discretionary passengers who just value an orderly convenient trip. It bears a chilling resemblance to many of our health insurance carriers, who pick off the cream of the most healthy clients at cheap prices and high profits, leaving the vulnerable, less mobile and low income people behind.

The fact is that modern, attractive stations are being built across the country that bring all modes of transit together in one facility including intercity buses, local buses, commuter rail, long distance rail and intercity buses.


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Champaign, Illinois, for impressive examples serving intercity buses effectively and at moderate cost. Badger says it will be moving its Milwaukee operations to the terminal soon and even Van Galder has built its own terminals in Rockford and Beloit.

These new generation stations were expensive to build, but Federal funds have paid much of the cost.

The mantra of officials, staff and even city commission members is that the City is powerless to stop a private land owner from changing land use if it is in accord with land use requirements.

The unspoken attitude from most officials, staff and commission members is "what, me worry?" and that there is no compelling public interest in the transportation effects of a project.

As articulated by local alderman Mike Verveer, the Badger Company "should not be made to suffer because of the city's unpreparedness" to deal with bus and terminal issues, and that a company cannot be forced to remain in business. Mayor Dave Cieslewicz was quoted in a Capital Times article that the public will just have to "do without" a terminal through 2010 or beyond.

The flaw in the argumentation is that Badger is not going out of business. Instead, it plans to increase its use of a free city resource, that is, the scarce space at the city's de facto terminal on Langdon Street.

This bus company expects to increase its profitability by disrupting the bus system in which it expects to continue to do business, at the expense of other participants in the system, particularly Greyhound, but also all future intercity bus riders.

The second flaw is that the city cannot use its powers for transportation issues on city streets. It does so frequently in forcing sales for road construction. Moreover, the public does have a regulatory authority over the sound use of public streets and the city authorities review all development projects for impact on traffic flow and parking.

The conceptual difficulty here is that the street impact falls a few blocks away from the project site.

Nevertheless, one should not criticize Badger too harshly. After all they have been single-handedly bearing the burden of the station, and doing a pretty good job of it. Instead, the regulatory eye should also be focused on Van Galder, which has been riding free in the post position on Langdon Street, and refused to join Badger's invitations to join in a common terminal.

The closure of the only city bus terminal is a major public transportation issue that a city administration should consider a worthy object of its legal powers and planning capabilities.

Even if the Madison City Council accepts Badger's project as a legal and soundly

planned real estate venture, it should also regard the associated transportation aspects as vital unfinished business.

If it must approve the development project, it should also fill the responsibility vacuum by officially recognizing the public's interest in intercity bus transportation and the city's responsibility to foster and regulate it.

Two kinds of measures are needed: First, adopting clear and firm conditions for the bus station's demolition, and, second, creating a structure for the city to assert controls and coordinate planning intercity buses services:

The city should not permit demolition until financing is clearly and firmly in place—an issue which should not be taken for granted given the local surplus of downtown apartments and empty commercial space, and the widely anticipated national crisis in commercial real estate finance.

The Council should further condition demolition on Badger's acceptance of a plan for intercity bus arrivals and departures with provision for all major stake holders including Van Galder, Greyhound, charter bus operators, and state bus planners. Ideally, such a plan should be led by Madison's traffic and planning staff with the participation of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The mayor and the City Council should adopt a policy statement officially recogniz-

ing the city's role in fostering and regulating intercity bus service, and assigning execution to planning and traffic control units and policy oversight to appropriate city commissions.

The mayor and City Council should review the city's parking and traffic control powers to regulate and channel bus arrival and departure activities in the public interest and prepare to use these powers to influence a proper implementation of that plan.

If necessary, the city should enact such additional controls as needed to control on-street bus boarding and arrivals, and to channel such bus traffic through appropriate terminal points with appropriate fees that share the burden of their operation.

The legality of such a condition might be questioned, but it would be difficult for a court to declare such a delay frivolous or arbitrary. With a truly purposeful delay in effect, it would be possible to evaluate alternatives, some of which are not currently on the table.

If the city immediately launches a regulatory and planning initiative, it could aggressively lead the process in a fruitful conclusion for all.

Meanwhile, Badger could consider both its real estate ambitions and the fate of its bus operation. It and Van Galder would confront the reality that their Langdon Street-Union options are limited and ultimately conditional on total public impact; that Greyhound

cannot be shouldered aside; and that new and expanded services must be accommodated. The potential continued use of the Bedford Street station - with assigned usage and appropriate fees - might then appear as a beneficial solution for all.

As Intercity rapid train, the RTA and state bus plans near implementation, their managing authorities could bring their resources to the table, and planning for intermodal connections could begin.

Badger might then reconsider its plans if they saw a real light at the end of the tunnel for financial burden-sharing for the Bedford Street station or even an eventual buy out. It might find it hard to land commercial tenants and nail down financing. As they have said in the past, the Badger owners like good stations such as Milwaukee and initially just wanted to avoid holding the bag for financial losses from the station.

Finally, Madison downtown planners, architects and interest groups should be encouraged to envision the form and location of a central multi-modal transit hub that would be a signature facility for Madison.

It is only with such plans that the public can evaluate the true alternative available and whether the station is truly indispensable.

David Knuti is a member of Madison Peak Oil Group

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Small and local businesses are rightly considered the backbone of our economy. They are also vital components of a vibrant community and crucial to sustainable economic development. Dane Buy Local represents about 500 local businesses in Dane County and works both to promote them to consumers and each other.

by GEORGE ZENS

It is very tempting to think that a trip to Walmart, Costco or Trader Joe's can save you money, especially in these economic times. And it might. Maybe. In the short run. But probably not. And certainly not when we look beyond the loss leaders that lured us in.

It is a widespread fallacy that chain stores are cheaper than locally owned stores. In fact, not only are many products at chain stores often more

expensive than at their local counterparts, but chain stores generally cost communities more than they contribute. They do this on several levels.

Often, for instance, municipalities will offer financial incentives to developers to bring in national retailers or chain restaurants. Taxpayers pay for these incentives, either directly through subsidies or indirectly through lost (property) tax revenues.

This, by the way, invalidates the argument that business success and failure is up to the free market, because even local governments have a lot of power to distort that market – and when they do so, it is almost never in favor of local businesses.

More important, however is the fact that chains have no special commitment to the community they do business in. Their relationship with the community is purely commercial, and when profitability decreases or the company's business strategy changes, it is easy for corporate headquarters to close the location, leaving behind not only unemployed staff members, but also the ruins from the local stores it (and the people who shopped there) put out of business earlier.

As the graph on the facing page (from a study done by Civic Economics) illustrates, more than half the money spent at chains (this includes big box retailers, restaurants, service providers, ...) leaves the community, while more than two thirds of every dollar spent at a locally owned business stays in the community.

Local businesses effectively help create a self-supporting economic system by recycling each dollar many times through purchases from other locally owned businesses, wages – generally better wages than the chains – paid to their employees, taxes (they actually pay local taxes, as opposed to some chains that either benefit from incentives – see above – or that use legal and accounting tricks to get around paying their fair share), and contributions to community events, non-profit organizations or fundraisers.

Communities with a wide range of locally owned businesses are economically more diverse and more solid than communities that rely on

DANE BUY LOCAL

The Importance Of Buying Locally



Photo by GEORGE ZENS

Dane Buy Local organizes many events for its members.

chains. Yes, local businesses close, but new businesses also get started, and local economies based on small businesses are usually more dynamic and more resistant against economic downturns than those that depend on the good will of anonymous managers at corporate headquarters several states or countries away.

A survey by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance found that independent retailers outperformed chains during the last holiday season in all 50

states. While the season was generally dismal, local businesses fared less badly than the chains.

According to U.S. Commerce Department data, overall retail sales in December 2008 were down 9.8% over December 2007. Local businesses, however "only" saw a 5.6% decline, while local businesses in communities that have an active 'Buy Local' campaign saw their sales fall by less than a third of the national average,

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namely 3.2%.

Not least in these tough economic times, organizations like Dane Buy Local play a vital role in stimulating community and consumer interest in locally owned businesses, for instance through its gift card program, promotion campaigns and its directory of locally owned shops in Dane County that has just been

released in its second edition.

But Dane Buy Local does more than that. The organization that has grown in a few years from a handful of members to almost 500 businesses representing all sectors of the local economy, also encourages business-to-business ties through networking and social meetings.

Dane Buy Local mem-

bers also participate in group advertising and get special rates from its media partners (including the Sustainable Times).

Strengthening the local economy and community takes less of an effort than one might think. Studies have shown that just a 10% shift in consumer spending from chains to locally owned busi-

nesses has a multiplier effect that dwarfs all public subsidies for the chains and more than compensates for the few dollars chains leave in a community.

We don't have to spend more money to strengthen our economy – we just have to spend it differently.

For more information:

Dane Buy Local:
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BICYCLING FOR THE REST OF US

Finger Pointers Need To Get A Mirror

So much for the Age of Aquarius. Harmony and understanding? Hardly! We live in the age of aggravation. Last month's column suggested that a few bicycle riders stir up trouble for the rest of us. But when it comes to sparking impatience, it's a two way street -- or path.

by BOB ALLEN

A friend of mine was happily pedaling along on a club ride a few weeks ago. It was early in the ride. He was following a big clump of riders heading into the country west of Middleton. They were peacefully rolling along on quiet little road that serves as a popular urban escape route for bicycle riders.

Suddenly, a man in full rant interrupted this morning idyll. Standing behind a roadside fence, the angry man was screaming at the riders to get off of "his" road and go ride on "Kathleen Falk's" bike path.

Never mind that the path he had in his troubled mind - along Highway 12 - runs northwest for about seven miles. These riders were heading west on a journey much longer than seven miles.

But the angry man seemed to think bicycle riding should be limited to the area's fragmented trails.

Actually, who knows what the guy was thinking? He obviously has issues.

First, he has misplaced feelings of ownership about a piece of public road.

And he seems to have some kind of fixation on the Dane County Executive. She finagled the Highway 12 trail as part of a compromise that paved the way for an expansion of the highway from two to four lanes. The trail is useful if you happen to be headed that way and don't mind riding a few feet from a busy highway.

Trying to see it from his perspective (and making an effort to see the other's perspective is what this column is really about), one can imagine that the sight of a large group of riders spread out across the road upset his sense of proper road use.

Taking up a farm combine's width of country road really isn't a problem if there is no other traffic out there -- and there usually isn't much traffic on that lightly used road on a Sunday morning. But seeing a

big group of bicycle riders acting like they own the road just bugs the heck of some people.

Fact is, they do own the road, just as much as any motorist. A public road is for all the public, whether driving a car or riding a bicycle. Wisconsin law makes no distinction on common roads.

And to think that bicycle riders should be limited to trail system is about as rational as the rest of us thinking that motorists should be limited to the motoring-only Interstate Highway system.

Trails and Interstates are both useful, but neither will get a traveler to or from every destination. It takes a much more extensive network to get us where we are going, and that network exists in the common road system.

The not-so-easy trick is getting people to share those roads. It's not so easy because a lot of people don't see bicycles as a legitimate way to get around. Many Americans long lived in a corner of the world where bicycle use was limited to a few kids flitting around their neighborhoods.

But now, gosh, what are all these grownups doing out there messing up the roads?

The car has been king so long in this country that some people are having a hard time adjusting to the fact that many of us pedaling patriots reject the old monarchy.

Ultimately, some of the people having trouble adjusting to the new reality simply don't like bicycle riders. Letting off the gas a few seconds and waiting for a safe place to pass a bicycle rider seems to be asking too much of these impatient drivers.

Of course, impatient treatment of bicycle riders is just one manifestation of the insidious impatience that infects so many drivers.

"Both civility and safety concerns evaporate the minute we settle into the driver's seat and hit the gas," notes Rev. Michael Schuler of Madison's First Unitarian Society in his fascinating new book *Making the Good Life Last*.

Schuler believes that exercising patience is one of the keys to living more sustainably. "People who are constantly in a hurry lose the capacity to reflect meaningfully on their own actions, and thus they find it difficult to uphold their core values in challenging circumstances,"

he writes.

Rather than reflecting, however, it is easier to cloak our dislikes in a fog of blame. Impatient drivers will eagerly and emphatically recite the flaws of anybody who slows them down. The occasional misdeeds of a few bicycle riders are assigned to every rider.

Sadly, anti-bicycle aggravation and agitation isn't limited to motorists. The list of the easily offended includes runners, trail walkers and bird watchers. At least that's how it seems, based on indignant letters to editors and talk around my own town now that trail improvements are being considered.

These innocents are quick to complain about "rude bicycle riders" who scare them by swishing by on paths unannounced. This group of aggrieved, of course, all feel utterly blameless for any conflicts that arise while supposedly sharing multi-use trails.

But listen up runners. When you block out surrounding sound by listening to iPods while running, you have little reason to complain about being startled by an overtaking bicycle rider.

That rider could have been

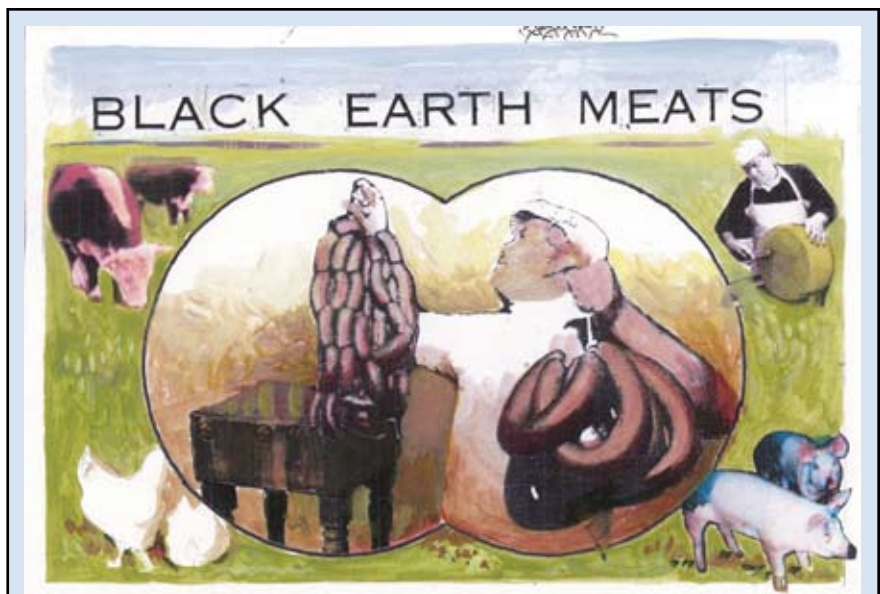
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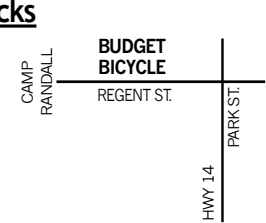
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In an angry world, a little self-reflection can go a long way.

ringing a bell or calling out to kingdom come -- but, because you have retreated under earbuds, you won't hear bells or birds or anything happening around you. When you obscure your hearing, you give up a key means of self-defense. You also give up your right to complain about being startled by overtaking traffic of any kind.

Now, you walkers who spread out three- or four-abreast across an entire path and pay no heed to approaching bicycle riders? You can be as irritating to riders as clueless riders who hog a road are annoying to motorists. If you want to spread out, fine, but please keep your eyes and ears open and be ready to move.

And you gentle bird watch-

ers who stand or set up tripods in the middle of public trails and stare transfixed through binoculars or scopes. Do you really have a right to get grouchy when a member of the public goes riding by on that public path?

Birders could easily avoid unnerving close encounters simply by standing next to the path instead of in the middle

of it. But, no doubt many birders who get a close brush in the middle of the trail go home grumbling about those thoughtless bicycle riders.

Of course there are bicycle riders who are not considerate of those with whom we need to share roads and paths. But it is a two-way path.

The problem here isn't bicycle riders or drivers or runners or birders; the problem is a common human flaw that afflicts us all. That flaw is the difficulty we seem to have with paying attention to much beyond our own immediate interests.

The interactions we have with others are sometimes unpleasant because one or both of the parties is not paying attention to the other.

Taking up a whole lane or a path is not hurting anybody as long as the people doing it are on the lookout for other traffic and make way for it promptly.

Bicycling on a multi-use trail isn't a problem as long as the rider considers the interests of other users and gives fair warning when approach-

ing them.

Bird watching along a public trail isn't a problem as long as the birders pay attention to the fact that the public is not limited to members of their own flock.

Paying attention to others, though, seems to be asking a lot. But it's really the least we should ask.

To pay attention is the first of the four keys to sustainable living Schuler explores in his book. Making the Good Life Last is unique because it approaches sustainability on a personal behavioral level instead of simply as a question of externalities, ecosystems or engineering.

The good Reverend is on to something.

My take is that sustainability is not, in itself, about buying a hybrid or riding a bicycle or planting a rain garden. Those all may be good things. But the key is cultivating a way of thinking that leads us to take useful steps, like, for example, more fuel-efficient travel or even fuel-free travel.

That way of thinking, ultimately, is simply thinking about how your own actions affect somebody and something other than yourself. By itself, such thinking doesn't guarantee the good life. But it's a start. And if it might lead to fewer scenes of screaming over fences and finger pointing, it's worth thinking about.

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TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Yes, But ... In Terms Of Sustainability, ... Is It?

On Saturdays, Libertarian Party advocates have a display at the Dane County Farmers' Market. Their position? Smaller government. Lower Taxes. More Freedom.

by RICK BROOKS

“How do you feel about government handouts to business?” they ask. Most people answer “Not very good at all,” and the discussion begins in earnest.

“Just look at the free enterprise system and the wealth it has brought us! Big government doesn't have any business trying to tell us what to do all the time,” one of the Libertarians asserted to me recently.

My response was “It depends on what we mean by ‘us.’ In the shadow of the State Capitol, we stood a block away from a homeless shelter and two blocks from the chronically overcrowded county jail in beautiful downtown Madison.

Having just spent a week with former UW students from Denmark, I was loaded with questions and ideas comparing Denmark's unabashed socialism with America's supposed free enterprise system.

Our Danish friends were

here on their SIX WEEK annual vacation, unburdened by debt for tuition to college, grad school and medical school. I wondered. Could it be that most Danes have a lot more freedom than most Americans because their basic human needs are taken care through the government, at taxpayers' expense?

The street debate at the Farmer's Market began to contain a lot more “yes, buts...” The U.S. is younger and more diverse than Denmark. It has massive advantages in terms of natural resources and a dream machine on overdrive.

It has wars to fight and freedoms to defend.

But the Farmer's Market Libertarians insisted that the advantages we enjoy mostly come from free enterprise, and America is losing ground fast. Our government, they argued, is trying to force all kinds of oppressive economic policies down our throats...like socialized medicine!

This year the Danes' nationwide goal is to reduce the average waiting period to no longer than a month for all medical procedures, including those in the highest demand.

A full hip replacement might cost a Dane a couple hundred dollars rather than the tens of

thousands it would cost here. Most Danes seem to be unworried by the spectre of financial ruin because of catastrophic illness or personal disaster. If they lose their jobs they can get up to five years of government support for training and job counseling.

And then...Cars in Denmark are generally smaller than the American varieties, with much higher mileage. Nationwide, Denmark has more bike paths and better bus and passenger rail systems than we do.

The country has less crime; much lower murder and injury rates. The percentage of its population in prison makes the American incarceration rate look outrageous by comparison. Researchers tell us that Denmark is one of the happiest countries on earth.

Denmark is hailed as a worldwide leader in sustainability initiatives and energy conservation. The credit for such success does not come from mere compliance with government edicts, however, but a better countrywide understanding of the common good. Denmark cannot seem to tolerate the vast differences between the rich and poor, haves and have nots that we have here in the U.S.

On the other hand --and this

is by far the most common observation about the Danish system--most Danes pay more than 50% of their income in taxes. “Ah hah!” free enterprisers and Libertarians would say. That alone would put the Danish system over the line for people who tend to believe that pursuing the American dream of wealth should trump pretty much all else.

The Danish government requires especially high taxes on energy, sugar, cigarettes and alcohol. (“See! See!”) As the complainers about the state and federal budgets in the U.S. have been saying over and over, this is the nanny state interfering in our freedoms. But look!

Danish parents get NINE MONTHS maternity leave per child; three months of paternity leave, and the list of government benefits goes on and on.

So, a Libertarian might ask, who does all the work? With the legal minimum wage somewhere around \$18 per hour, why would anyone be interested in running a store or private business? How could you ever earn a profit, and why bother if you have to give half of it away to the government? There must be millions of people just lazing around,

letting other people take care of business, right?

Well, no. But why? And now the big question --how sustainable is all this, anyway?

The Danish health care and social welfare systems are being challenged by immigrants from cultures radically different from northern Europe. Yes, taxes are intolerably high according to American standards.

But freedom and choice are definitely high on the citizen and government agendas. Freedom from want, freedom of speech, the right to assemble.

Freedom to elect leaders who are starting to look to the right, impose more punishment for offenders and have stricter enforcement of the rights of the majority. Like certain voices in the U.S. are saying we should do.

Note to self: find out more about Denmark. And let the discussion continue here in Dane County.

Rick Brooks is an Outreach Program Manager at the UW-Madison, vice-president of Wisconsin Partners for SustainAbility and co-founder of Dane Buy Local.

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TO YOUR HEALTH

Protect Yourself During Gardening

With gardening and yard work season in full swing, many people are doing physical labor every weekend. From a health standpoint, yard work is one of the most well rounded activities you can do. But it is important to properly prepare your body to avoid injuries so you can pull weeds and not your back.

by **DR. BRENDA TRUDELL D.C.**

Gardening and yard work have many health benefits, including prevention of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

It clears your mind after a long stressful day. It calls for creativity and gives your brain a workout. Gardening connects you with nature and the natural rhythm of life, allowing you to slow down and relax. Deep cleansing breaths of fresh air circulate oxygen to your muscles and organs. Being in sunshine gives you the best source of Vitamin D available. Gardening also provides the freshest and healthiest produce, which provides additional health benefits.

Yard work is an activity that provides regular physical exercise, both aerobic and strength training, and for this reason,

it has tremendous health benefits. It uses all the major muscle groups—the one that burn the most calories—such as buttocks, legs, shoulders, stomach, arms, neck and back. Gardening strengthens muscles and joints through lifting, pushing, pulling and digging motions. It increases flexibility with stretching and reaching motions. It builds aerobic endurance and burns calories by walking and changing positions frequently.

Just how many calories are burned in an hour of yard work? Depending on weight, activity, and intensity level, it's possible to burn anywhere from 250-500 calories an hour. For weight loss, gardening has enormous potential. To lose one pound of fat, you need to burn 3500 calories. If you gardened one hour a day and burned 500 calories, you could lose one pound a week. Plus, you will be eating the healthy produce that also promotes weight loss.

Number of calories burned varies by activity. Trimming shrubs and trees burns about 360 cal/hour. Raking grass and leaves, planting and weeding each burns 300 cal/hour. Clearing land and digging burns 400 cal/hour. It is easy to see how the fast the calories

can add up, especially if you garden for five or six hours a day.

People often forget that gardening is strenuous physical work and fail to properly warm-up and condition their muscles. As with any type of exercise, it is important to consult a physician before beginning, especially if you have a history of back or heart problems. It is also important to start out slowly to build up endurance. Begin building endurance by walking, stair climbing or doing squats a month or two before you get out in the garden. Muscles respond better to the increased physical activity when they are properly conditioned, leading to fewer injuries.

Warming up with a brisk walk will loosen muscles and ligaments and get your blood flowing. After warming up, stretch the muscle groups you will be using the most. Hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds and avoid jerking or bouncing. It is important to stretch the muscles in the motions you will be using them. For instance, if you will be doing mostly overhead work, stretch your shoulders by reaching up, not just across your chest. You need to stretch in the way that you will be working.

Make sure to switch positions and hands frequently by varying your activities. Remaining in one position for too long, especially one that is awkward or unusual, can restrict blood flow to tissues and promote sprains/strains. Switch sides with jobs that require repetitive motions. Doing all the raking, hoeing or shoveling on one side can lead to severe joint imbalances, spinal misalignments and muscle spasm. Try to switch it up every ten minutes to give your tired muscle groups a break. Using a variety of ergonomic tools, especially long handled ones that give you leverage, will put you in an optimal position and decrease stress on various parts of your body.

To protect your low back, avoid stooping and bending. Try kneeling with kneepads or sit on a small stool so you are closer to the ground. Whenever you are lifting, pushing or pulling, make sure to engage your core muscles to give more support to the low back area. To do this, draw your belly button in towards your spine and remain as straight and tight as you can. Avoid activities where you are bending forward, twisting sideways and tossing something, such as shoveling and

throwing a heavy load. This is a very common back injury. Also, try to save the heavier work for midway through your project so muscles and joints are properly warmed up. And always make sure to carry objects close to your body to reduce the risk of strain to your neck and back.

Even with preventative measures you may still find yourself with an injury. There is a difference between tired muscles from working hard, and muscle spasms or pain from an injury. If you notice pain or difficulty while you are working, STOP! You may cause serious damage by overdoing it. Ice and rest are best for an injury during the first 48-72 hours. Be sure to avoid heat as it increases the amount of inflammation in the area and can slow the healing process. A chiropractor can evaluate your injury and help you determine the best treatment. Chiropractic adjustments realign your body to promote balance and healing. Many people notice they heal faster and are less likely to re-injure the same areas when they are treated by a chiropractor.

Gardening and yard work are very important activities to many people. The list of health benefits is long and the rewards are many. To ensure that you can continue to garden year after year, it is important to take care of your body. By taking precautions ahead of time, conditioning muscles, and properly treating injuries if they do occur, you will continue to reap the rewards of your bounty for a long time.

Dr. Brenda Trudell is a chiropractor and co-owner of New Beginnings Chiropractic in Mount Horeb and Sauk City. The clinic focuses on natural health, especially for women, pregnancy and children through chiropractic, acupuncture, massage, reiki, nutrition and more. For more information, visit newbeginningschiropractic.net.

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FROM MOTHER NATURE'S PHARMACY

Food, Aromatics & The Heart (II)

In part one of this series I addressed the benefits of using hawthorn for heart health, described the heart's impact on the entire body, and elements in our lives that can lead to heart disease or dysfunction.

by KATHY EICH

This article supplements part one by including foods, nutritional strategies, and essential oils to strengthen the heart. I'd hoped to include other beneficial herbs and formulas, but the depth of information was too much.

Therefore, I'll finish this series on my website (www.redrootmountain.com) in a few weeks, and move on to a new topic next month.

FOODS TO SUPPORT HEART HEALTH

It takes a lot of will and discipline to change a diet. It also takes time for the changed diet to appear as better health. Regardless, the long term benefits of healing with food are enormous. It makes for a more sustainable and better quality of life, and creates a new energy that radiates out into the world.

Most people, when faced with eliminating their favorite processed foods and treats,

imagine a bland and bitter new world. But take a moment to imagine the bright new colors that will decorate your plate, and the fresh new tastes; visualize the change positively. I recommend a trip to your local farmers market to inspire change. Taste sweet strawberries (without sugar), or spicy arugula to realize there is nothing bland about them. Strike out, and allow yourself to become accustomed to a wide variety of flavors, not merely relying on a few safe options you already know. With my daughters, I always put just one leaf of something new or possibly distasteful on their plates. They eat the leaf. It's a start. A year later, they're eating handfuls.

While outlining a diet for heart health is unrealistic in a single article, I will touch on a few things that everyone can benefit from whether it is something to add, limit, or eliminate. I'd also like to point out that it is clinically proven that not everyone responds to the same diet. With that in mind, if you make changes you feel should be beneficial and don't get the results you want, consult with a nutritionist qualified to work with your condition. There may be something missing.

FLAX AND OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS

We have heard a lot about omega 3 fatty acids over the years. It is still just sinking in how important they are, and how deficient we are in them. While there is much that can be said about the different classes of fatty acids and their effects on the body, I will keep it simple here. If anyone is interested in more complex materials, please contact me via my website; I have an article from Integrative Medicine Communications that is excellent, and I'd be happy to forward it.

Omega 3 fatty acids are anti-inflammatory, affecting a multitude of functions on the body. They have been found to be beneficial for heart disease, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome and disease, diabetes, inflammatory lung conditions, and deficiencies in the immune system. The list goes on.

Omega 3 fatty acids convert through process of assimilation into substances that increase production of anti-inflammatory metabolites. These metabolites, in turn, decrease the amount of pro-inflammatory metabolites. They also function to regulate blood pressure and clotting, heart rate, vascular dilation, and the immune

response.

The benefits of omega 3's differ from source to source. It is said that flax, my preferred type, is not as effective as fish oil at lowering lipid levels. But flax has been found to improve arterial circulation and function.

What is the best way to get your omega 3 fatty acids? Use your best judgment, and do your research. I prefer to think of omega 3's as a food, as opposed to a supplement. In our family, we eat salmon (sashimi grade, available at Willy St Coop), but we consume flax regularly. Here are a few tricks that we use to incorporate it into our diet.

Flax oil is not heat stable. The anti-inflammatory properties are lost if it is cooked. But it can be used as a salad dressing with a little lemon and garlic, or mixed in with steamed veggies once they have cooled a bit. We love to use flax oil instead of butter on toast in the morning, with a hint of naturally-sweetened jam over the top. Our kids don't even know it's there. And now that summer is here, I have even slipped a bit into their smoothies.

Flax seeds can be ground fresh in a coffee grinder and baked into recipes for pancakes, breads, muffins or cook-

ies. They also serve as a good thickener in soups.

DARK CHOCOLATE

Dark chocolate is one of my favorite foods. I'm therefore pleased that it has been recognized as a healthy one! But let's be clear about what dark chocolate isn't. It is not a Hershey bar. In a strong dark chocolate there is no milk and far less sugar than in milk chocolate. It's new to some, but once you acquire a taste for it, you'll never look back.

Dark chocolate is said to have very high levels of flavonoids, an anti-inflammatory substance that is a small subgroup of polyphenols. This knowledge has inspired multiple studies on the benefits of dark chocolate.

One such study was published in The Journal of Nutrition, and conducted by Research Laboratories of the Catholic University in Campobasso and the National Cancer Institute of Milan. Their surprising conclusion was that by consuming ¼ oz. of dark chocolate daily, people were capable of reducing levels of C-reactive protein, a pro-inflammatory protein, in their blood by up to 17%. They know this doesn't sound like much, but it reduces inflammation enough to decrease

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