

# HELP EH CELEBRATE TENTH ANNIVERSARY!

It's hard to believe, but Environment Hamilton turns ten years old this year! It was way back in December of 2001 that we officially launched EH, with a day of special events featuring Robert F. Kennedy Junior, president of the International Waterkeeper Alliance. Kennedy joined us for a kick-off breakfast and a special event for local students at the Great Hall at Hamilton Place.

We are also planning a celebratory event for late fall of this year. Stay tuned for the details but rest assured that the celebration will include



good food, good music and more than one special guest. If you are interested in helping with the planning of this event and other Tenth Anniversary activities, consider joining our Tenth Anniversary Committee. Call us at (905) 549-0900 to get involved!

Now that we have reached such a significant anniversary, it also seems like a really good time to reflect on where we have been, what we have accomplished and to give some serious thought to the opportunities and challenges facing us as we move into the future.

We will be celebrating our decade of environmental work in Hamilton in a variety of ways, including a series of articles in our newsletter over the course of 2011. To kick off our Tenth Anniversary article series, look for the piece entitled 'How It All Began' in our April issue.



## Inside:

Operation Smoothie...2

Volunteer Lorna Moreau...3

Planning Battles Workshop ...4

Tree Lichens for Air Quality... 5

Farm Tour this Month...6

Target 350...7

Moving Still Not an Option...7

New Menu for Hunger ... 8

Remembering Zen... 8

## SOLAR WORKSHOP DRAWS HUGE CROWD

Environment Hamilton's GOLE (Greening Our Local Economy) Project and Blue Green Canada were overwhelmed by the response to our December 5<sup>th</sup> *Helping Hamilton Go Solar* workshop held at the McMaster Innovation Park. We optimistically planned for a crowd of 170 participants, but were blown away when over 250 people showed up to learn how to get started with rooftop and other basic solar installations.

The crowd benefitted from the expertise of Graham Flint, the solar technology expert working with the Halton Environment Network's 'Halton Enablers of Renewable Energy' or HERE! project. Staff from TD Canada Trust, the official sponsor of the workshop, provided an overview of financing options for homeowners contemplating investment in a solar system. Jennifer Patterson, a senior economic development consultant with the City of Hamilton's Economic Development Department, provided an update on confirmed and potential *see Solar Workshop on page 2*



## Living on Earth...as if we want to stay

Free public presentations by author Mike Nickerson

Dundas - Mar 1 - 7:30 pm

Knox Presbyterian, 23 Melville Street

Hamilton - Mar 2 - 7:30 pm

Grace Lutheran, 1105 Main West



## SOLAR WORKSHOP continued from page 1

renewable energy manufacturing facilities emerging in the Hamilton area. Dan Medakovic, president of Radiant Returns and Ken Baigent, a certified energy advisor with Green Venture, provided a detailed overview of the province's microFIT program along with helpful tips on how to complete the on-line application process for the program. Presentation slides can be accessed on the Environment Hamilton website at [www.environmenthamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org).



Coming out of the workshop, it was clear that Hamiltonians are hungry for information on solar technology and are eager to learn how to benefit from the Province of Ontario's microFIT (Feed In Tariff) program, which offers subsidized rates for individuals generating and feeding renewable energy like solar energy back into the grid. Stay tuned if you are interested in learning more about microFIT. We are currently planning several 'hands on' sessions to walk people through the on-line microFIT application process. Contact Lynda at (905) 549-0900 or via email at [gole@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:gole@environmenthamilton.org) if you would like to be informed of the details of these upcoming sessions once they are confirmed.

## FOOD AND FILM FESTIVAL AT FENIAN

Hamilton Eat Local, The Locke Street Farmers' Market and the Hamilton Film and Television Office are proud to present a FOOD & FILM FESTIVAL at FENIAN. Great food. Movies *King Corn*, *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* and local short feature films; locavore pizzas and more made fresh for our event by Earth to Table Bread. Bar and local wines available for purchase for only \$15 per person... **Friday February 25**, doors open at 5:30 pm. Proceeds will support Hamilton Eat Local's "Operation Smoothie" and the Locke Street Farmers Market. **Fenian Films** is located at 211 Locke Street South.

## OPERATION SMOOTHIE

This past winter Environment Hamilton hosted 2 interns as part of the YMCA Youth Eco-Internship Program. DJ Billings and Rebbecca King worked under the supervision of Karen Burson on a "eat local" project called Operation Smoothie. The project was designed in partnership with Hamilton Partners in Nutrition and Breakfast Clubs of Canada to introduce healthier and locally sourced food alternatives to elementary school breakfast programs in Hamilton.

As part of the *Operation Smoothie* testing and pilot phase Rebbecca and DJ visited Living Rock Ministries and King George Public School to provide smoothie demos to students and youth. DJ and Rebbecca have also worked to create a smoothie recipe booklet for use in Hamilton schools. The booklet, *Operation Smoothie: Smoothies for Success* will be launched at the Hamilton Farmer's Market February 12<sup>th</sup> at 10-10:30. The launch will include smoothie sampling and eat local info.



You can follow Environment Hamilton on Facebook and Twitter. Keep up to date on our latest activities and upcoming events by signing up as an EH follower today!



## BETTY BLASHILL PRIZE NOMINATIONS

Betty Blashill was a passionate advocate for a better environment who preferred to protect nature in her own quiet and steady way, far from the limelight. Betty was especially important to all of us at Environment Hamilton because of her role as co-founder and huge source of organizational support. She lived according to her favourite saying of Mahatma Gandhi: "Live simply so that others may simply live". While Betty and her passionate and tireless environmental work are missed sorely since her death in 2006, we know others are taking up the torch to improve Hamilton. Please consider nominating one of those individuals for the Betty Blashill Prize. Visit the Environment Hamilton website for nomination forms or give us a call at (905) 549-0900 and we will send you a nomination package.

Nominations have also opened for the Environmentalist of the Year (EOY) awards. The nomination package and background information are posted at [www.eoyawards.org](http://www.eoyawards.org). Nomination packages can also be requested by contacting John Struger at (905) 547-5116 (home); (905) 336-4966 (office) [john.struger@sympatico.ca](mailto:john.struger@sympatico.ca). Deadline for nominations is March 31. The annual awards dinner will take place on Wednesday, June 8.

# GOOD NEIGHBOUR CAMPAIGN TO USE TREE LICHENS TO MONITOR AIR QUALITY

Lichens are unique in the world of vegetation in that they cannot be neatly classified into any of the ordinary categories we think of as “plants”. The reason is simple: **lichen are not a single entity, but a composite of a fungus and an organism capable of producing food by photosynthesis.**



There are close to 14,000 species of lichen in the world, tremendously diverse in size, form, and colour. They are biologically different from mosses, hornworts and liverworts.

Lichens are exposed to air pollutants at all times and, without any deciduous parts (parts that fall off), they are unable to avoid the accumulation of pollutants. Because lichens do not possess roots, their primary source of most elements is the air, and therefore elemental levels in lichens often reflect the accumulated composition of ambient air.

The processes by which atmospheric deposition occurs include fog and dew, gaseous absorption, and dry deposition. Consequently, many environmental studies with lichens emphasize their feasibility as effective biomonitors of atmospheric quality.

Not all lichens are equally sensitive to air pollutants, so different lichen species show different levels of sensitivity to specific atmospheric pollutants.

Lichen growth is additionally very slow. On average lichen can grow between 0.5– 2 mm per year. Thus, testing doesn't need to be done more than once annually.

## TESTING TREES: THE WHAT, WHERE, AND HOW OF OUR STUDY

Building off the success of the white flag initiative, the Good Neighbour Campaign is looking to continue to provide residents with the tools and skills needed to monitor air quality within their neighbourhoods. Impressed with the lichen study performed by George Sorger, a McMaster professor, the campaign has decided to model its approach and utilize his methodology.

Testing both Ash and Maple trees, Sorger found that there existed a relationship between lichen presence (specifically two types: *Physcia Millegrana*, and *Candelaira Colcolor*) and Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels. He found that areas with high SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> had low to non-existent levels of lichen present, and areas with low levels of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> had high levels of lichen present. Given that SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> are good indicators of airborne pollution, we can assume that areas with a high lichen presence have better air quality than those with a low lichen presence.

Thus by monitoring these two types of lichen on Maple and Ash trees, we can get a better idea of neighbourhood pollution levels.

We plan to conduct this study throughout Hamilton and Dundas.

## GET INVOLVED!

Thus far, the GNC has held 4 community information/training sessions. Here we went over the



study in more detail and provided the tools and information needed to take part. Given we want to involve as much of the interested community as possible, we aim to hold additional sessions in the upcoming months. If you yourself are interested in attending a session, or know of a group who might be interested in participating (community groups, schools, etc), please contact Katie at [kstiel@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:kstiel@environmenthamilton.org). We encourage all those 15+ to get involved!

Why join the lichen study? Here are some quick incentives:

- Actively participate in a project aimed at community betterment
- Become informed about the status of the community's air quality
- Learn to identify local trees native to Canada
- Understand the role of lichen and be able to identify two types
- Gain community service hours  
(if you you're a Gr.9-12 who needs them)
- Assume a leadership role within the campaign
- Have fun!



## WORKSHOP ON PLANNING BATTLES

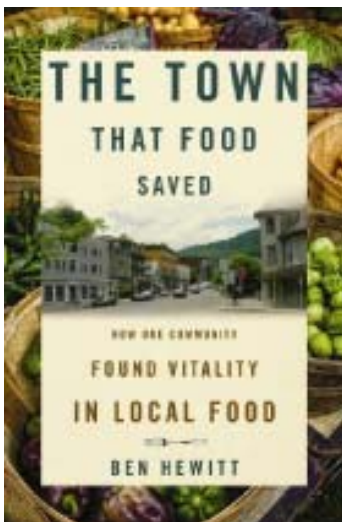
You never know when you'll need to make a presentation to a City Committee or even organize a delegation at an Ontario Municipal Board hearing. Residents are increasingly being drawn into hearings or formal meetings regarding planning issues in their neighbourhoods. This can be a first experience for many people and in addition to being unfamiliar with process and preparation, residents can also find themselves facing a tight deadline - as well as scrambling to raise funds for expert witnesses or lawyers.

In the last few months we've seen residents successfully fight a quarry expansion: a proposal to build a self-storage facility on turtle nesting lands: and some communities are engaged right now in other development issues.

So we're pleased to announce a workshop that will help you prepare for what may lie ahead - as well as offer tips on how to create a presentation that successfully gets your point across.

On Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup>, Conservation Authorities from the Golden Horseshoe area, together with Hamilton-Wentworth Stewardship Council are hosting their 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Sharing Experiences Workshop". EH will be giving a presentation and we hope to have seasoned neighbourhood activists in attendance to give the benefit of their experience.

For more information, please contact Jaime Overy, Hamilton Conservation Authority at [Jaime.overy@conservationhamilton.ca](mailto:Jaime.overy@conservationhamilton.ca) or call 905.525.2181 ext 165.



## THE TOWN THAT FOOD SAVED

Ben Hewitt is a farmer based in Northern Vermont. His book *The Town That Food Saved*, tells the story of a rural, working-class Vermont community that is attempting to blueprint and implement a localized food system.

Come and join Environment Hamilton's Greening Our Local Economy (GOLE) and Hamilton Eat Local projects, the Beasley Neighbourhood Association and Canadian Organic Growers as we welcome Ben to Hamilton to share his story.

**Wednesday, February 23 - 7 pm**

**at the Freeway Cafe**

**333 King Street East (at Wellington)**

For info call Environment Hamilton at 905-549-0900

*This event is made possible through the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation*



**Join Us!**



22 Wilson Street  
Hamilton L8R 1C5

[contactus@  
environment  
hamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org)

**905 549-0900**  
[www.environment  
hamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org)

**Memberships**  
\$25 per year  
\$15/unwaged  
& student

# EH VOLUNTEER LORNA MOREAU

U.K born Lorna Moreau, is a retired hairstylist for men of 32 years. She has lived in the Crown Point neighbourhood of East Hamilton for 30 years. Lorna has been involved with Environment Hamilton since the 'black fallout' battles in 2006.

## **Have you always volunteered?**

I've always volunteered; the bad fallout of 'carbon black' back in July 2006, SWARU, the water works, the Red Hill Valley. I protested the property taxes when they almost doubled in 1999.

## **About the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) as protector of our environment:**

I knew these companies were spewing out toxins but I didn't think there was anything we could do about them because I thought that there were standards that were enforced by the MOE. So I put up with it, because I thought that they wouldn't be exceeding the limits.

When I found out was going on! You know I would have gone after the environment a long time ago if I had known. But I just thought like most people, that the MOE and the health department were here to protect us. But they are not! They are not doing their jobs. I would like people to be made aware that they're not protecting us. That's why I got active; because I am shocked.

Substances like benzene and benzo a pyerene just have guidelines; no standards and so cannot be regulated That just appalled me. Five years for the MOE to implement is too long. So are working on trying to get standards in place much faster to protect our health.

## **Unlike most people who know about these things and don't do anything you are actually doing something.**

It was shocking to me! *We* can't break the law. I know that my car can pass the emissions test. *We* have to do it every two years. *We* have to tow the line. If a fire is in my back yard with smoke, the fire department and everyone descends on me and I'm charged. Yet the big boys get away with it.

In all fairness to the Ministry, I think they're doing their best. Personally I don't think Hamilton gets enough money. I don't think anybody has ever gone up against these big companies. I think that these big companies do rule. So it is all new for the Ministry and they would like to change things if they could. It's difficult to do it. But it needs to be done.

## **So that's why you are involved in the GNC campaign.**

This is why EH is so wonderful. They have been so helpful and resourceful in bringing in the Good Neighbourhood Campaign (GNC). Katie Stiel is doing an absolutely fabulous job in bringing awareness to the community bringing us together and putting Hamilton on the map internationally as being a great community in supporting the campaign.

More than enough support. I can't tell you how great they've been-helping us get organized, making us aware of the Bill of Rights because I know as Canadians we have rights; but I wasn't aware of the connection with the environment- that we could utilize these things, what was available. I'm 'working folk.' As a working person you are not aware of this.

## **What's the best thing you like about EH?**

They're the best organization in Hamilton! The other agencies are all there for the money; doing nothing. EH does so much for the community. I tell every body I meet about EH if I get the opportunity because they are 'the salt of the earth.'



### **What does volunteering do for you personally?**

To me, I have a wonderful life, I am truly blessed, I feel. I was raised that 'you have a good life, you share.' I'll do whatever I can to give back. Especially down here in our little section.

Down here, we get a bad rap and it bothers me. The *Code Red* and so on. Poverty is not going to kill me. We live within our means. We live very well. Pollution will kill me.

There are a lot of young families and so I do it for the children and because I'm retired. I have the time and the energy and guts. I'm not shy. I have the 'gift of the gab.' Why not use it? A lot of people do their thing in their own way; I am just blessed that I can do this.

### **Parting words for those who are hesitant to step outside of boundaries, intimidated or unsure of going beyond their comfort zones?**

I would say, "Just get on board." All of the EH staff are down-to-earth people working for the better of Hamilton. They are not pretentious. I've been called activist, tree hugger and all sorts of things and usually people who are activist are good, down to earth. People shouldn't be intimidated by them because a lot of people think they are educated, environmental tree-hugger wackos; and they are not.

### **People think they are not educated enough to make a difference.**

That's true. You don't have to know anything, just come out. The MOE will not be aware of our concerns unless people complain and voice their opinion. Even if you can't speak, come out because numbers count. I never feel inferior even though I know that when you're educated you can express yourself better. And so when I go to the meetings, I always say, "Please bear with me because I don't say the words like I should."

### **You don't need a whole bunch of letters after your name to fight for a cause!**

The problem is when I first started, the MOE did not have standards for benzeno and do you think I could say the official name benzo(a)pyrene? I still can't say it.

I wrote it on the bottom of my shirt so that I could remember it. I thought I'd never be able to say it and I still can't, but I can get my point across!



## **FARM TOUR IN FEBRUARY** *rural routes*

February is Farm Month and Hamilton Eat Local and Smart Commute are pleased to announce Rural Routes in February!

**Saturday February 26th 10:30am-1pm**

We are heading to Black Walnut Lane in Millgrove. This is a lamb farm and it is the height of lambing season. Tickets are: \$10 for adults; \$8 students / seniors; \$6 for children 10 and under. Prices include hot drinks, lamb samples and an exclusive discount on purchases.

Tickets are available at Bread and Roses (27 King William St) We will be departing Bread and Roses at 10:30am sharp. We will end the tour at the Hamilton Farmers Market and visit Black Walnut Lane's stall. This event is rain or shine. Note, there are sheltered areas but will not be heated. There is rugged terrain and icy conditions are expected. Please wear appropriate gear.

For more info please contact Juby Lee 905-549-0900 or [jlee@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:jlee@environmenthamilton.org)

Rural Routes will return for more regular tours in June 2011.

Check [www.environmenthamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org) and click Rural Routes for updates.

## **NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Our annual general meeting will include elections for the EH Board of Directors. Four of the eight positions are automatically up for election at each AGM. Members in good standing may nominate individuals to stand for election to the Board. These nominations should be forwarded to the chair of the Nominating Committee at the EH mailing address (1170 Barton Street East, Suite 207, Hamilton ON L8H 7P9) no later than April 1, and should be accompanied by the supporting signatures of three EH members. Nominations can also be made from the floor at the Annual General Meeting in April.

# TARGET 350

The Mission Committee of Knox Presbyterian Church in Dundas produces Target 350, a newsletter for members of Eco Churches of West Hamilton (EcoWHAM). EcoWHAM is a group of eight area, eco-minded churches, "promoting responsible stewardship of God's creation."

Why the name Target 350? Let's just say, Mission Committee is not afraid of telling it like it is. About the 350 target they write, "it is not just about some number on a piece of paper. It is about our common destiny." (September 2009 issue). 350 is the safety limit of Carbon Dioxide present in our atmosphere. The levels have remained higher than 350 parts per million (ppm) since 1988. The current levels of Carbon Dioxide in our atmosphere stands at 389 ppm, and continues to increase at 2 ppm per year.

The cause of this unacceptably high level is our ubiquitous use of fossil fuels to supply our growing energy demand. Climatologists are warning us that unless we reduce our current use of fossil fuels by at least 50% our planet will become mostly uninhabitable.

Climate change is real and the Mission Committee at Knox Presbyterian church along with many members of the EcoWHAM are not shy about taking action and being vocal on what we need to do today, to insure a liveable world for tomorrow's generation.

"God's world is in our hands!" says Wim Feunekes, a key member and a founder of the group. "We have seen the earth from space only to discover that, unlike on our human maps, there are no lines visible to mark the limits of self-interest of nations.

Feunekes reminds members that there is only one earth and that we must learn to live in it together now. "Each child, like millions of others, depends on us to limit what we consume each day. What we do not consume will be our children's only heritage," he worries about the increasingly limited resources that future generations will have to deal with.

Knox Presbyterian Mission Committee not only produces Target 350, but together with the other EcoWHAM churches, they've been acting on their concerns. Since their formation in 2009, they continue to participate in local demonstrations put on by groups such as Hamilton 350.org. Most recently, many members were present at the protest, in front of a Hamilton Federal building against the killing of the Climate Change Accountability Act.

Members go out and engage and speak to local politicians about their concerns with respect to climate change. Hosting speakers events, workshops and film screenings, they educate their congregations and their communities.

They inspire others to action: a number of faith groups have approached EcoWHAM in order to learn how they too can get involved and create their own eco-faith groups to target climate change and become greener in their places of worship.

## MOVING IS STILL NOT AN OPTION

How would you feel if you bought your house across the road from a park, only to find that several years later industry moved in instead? These are some of the serious issues facing residents in several parts of our city. There are many implications, including the fact that your home is suddenly devalued – and moving just isn't an option.

Our program has successfully offered support to help residents navigate environmental regulations, including little-known information about the Environmental Bill of Rights that protects all Ontarians' right to enjoy their property – as well as empowering them with the phone number of the local Ministry of Environment office.

You can all the Ministry to report any pollution - from soot in your backyard to a strange odour – at 905.521.7650 during office hours, or their 24-hour hotline 1.800.268.6060. And if your neighbours share your concern, get them to call too: the more reports made, the better.



*Some of the 60 people who demonstrated on November 18 outside the Federal Building.*

---

### Join Us!



22 Wilson Street  
Hamilton L8R 1C5

[contactus@  
environment  
hamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org)

905 549-0900  
[www.environment  
hamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org)

Memberships  
\$25 per year  
\$15/unwaged  
& student

---

## EAST HAMILTON LOSES A FIGHTER AND ENVIRONMENT HAMILTON LOSES A DEAR FRIEND



**Zen Matwiyiw**

**Join/Renew On-line!**  
You can now join EH or renew membership on-line. Simply click on the 'Become a Member' link from our homepage, fill out the on-line application form, and continue on to secure payment of your membership fee via Paypal or with a credit card.  
For this and your best source for news about the environment in our city visit us at [www.environmenthamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org).

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 the environment lost a good friend in former Environment Hamilton board vice-chair and long-time east Hamilton anti-toxics activist Zen Matwiyiw, who succumbed to pancreatic cancer on that day.

An independent hauler by trade, Zen worked for many years in his spare time to improve the quality of life in his east Hamilton neighbourhood. Zen was known for his no-nonsense approach, openly chastising any expert who attempted to convince him that they had come up with a 'state-of-the-art solution' to the toxics issue of the day.

Zen became deeply involved in environmental efforts in his neighbourhood when the case emerged against the city for allowing the old Rennie Landfill to leak toxic chemicals into Red Hill Creek. The situation hit incredibly close to home as Zen's yard backs directly onto the Rennie site – something which made him wonder more recently whether it was environmental exposure that led to his cancer.

Through his persistent nature and willingness to speak out, Zen demonstrated that a whole lot of common sense mixed with a good dose of chutzpah really can make the world a better place. He demonstrated this in public meetings, while serving on community liaison committees and during his time on the EH board. Zen was truly a one-of-a-kind. We will miss the great debates and the Sunday afternoon 'dump hikes'.



## NEW MENU TO MEET INFORMATION HUNGER

We're developing a new menu of programs for schools, mostly to meet the demand of teachers and students who are hungry to do more about climate change.

One project that's grabbing the attention of high school students in particular is our Supermarket Tour. What could be more fun than going grocery shopping? Teaming up with Juby Lee, one of our Eat Local experts, we take students into their local supermarket to examine everything from canned food labels to the produce counters and meat sections.

Some of the questions raised include Food Miles – how far an item has travelled and how nutritious it could be – to

why does a box of mac and cheese list about 15 ingredients, when you'd only need 3 if you made it yourself.

Another new program centres around plastic and its creeping prevalence in our lives. What kind of containers did our grandparents use for soap and what did they wrap around their sandwiches in the days before plastic? We've got students thinking about where plastic can end up (inside the majority of sea creatures) – and asked them to pledge three items they could replace with an alternative.