

# CLIMATE ACTION ON DECEMBER 11

October 24 saw the largest climate action in Hamilton's history as over 350 people converged on the federal building to send a message to federal politicians, all Canadians and people around the world that we want real action to reduce carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million.

The Hamilton 350 Committee that organized the event grew out of EH's climate action group, and includes several EH directors as well as representatives from more than a dozen community organizations. EH and the Conserver Society jointly provided most of the funding.

The October 24 action in Hamilton (partly pictured below) was one of over 5000 that took place the same day in 178 countries – the largest climate action in world history.



The focus is now on the Copenhagen conference from December 8 to 18 where a post-Kyoto agreement is supposed to be concluded.

To push that forward, there's a candlelight walk on December 11 starting at 7 pm from the City Centre (York and James) and proceeding along James Street North in conjunction with the monthly Art Crawl.

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## MAKE IT YOUR GOLE TO JOIN US AT THE JANUARY 26 COMMUNITY FORUM

That's the day that Environment Hamilton is officially launching its newest initiative – the G.O.L.E. Project .

The 'G.O.L.E.' is all about Greening Our Local Economy and it includes exploring Hamilton's potential to undergo a blue to green collar transformation. Come and join us on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 7pm at the Hamilton Spectator Auditorium for a Town Hall meeting where, together, we'll begin an exciting exploration of what a green economy and green jobs are all about and how we might grab on to current opportunities to make a blue to green collar transformation become reality in Hamilton.

We are also excited to announce that we are kicking off our project in collaboration with BlueGreen Canada - a new initiative launched by the United Steel Workers and Environmental Defense Canada (see [bluegreencanada.ca](http://bluegreencanada.ca)). BlueGreen Canada is launching an effort here in Hamilton to "support the development of good green jobs as part of a new green economy". More details on the launch event will be available early in the New Year.



# INVITING SCHOOLS TO THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD TABLE

Hamilton Eat Local is well known for its local food map and directory, as well as encouraging folks to eat more Greenbelt grown foods. Now, the project is focused on bringing local food into Hamilton schools.

## Elementary Level: Working with Hamilton Partners in Nutrition (HPIN):

Together we have selected five schools for local food pilot work, including two elementary and three high schools. We will participate in the monthly workshops that HPIN offers to its volunteers and coordinators. The plan includes developing recipes and a web-based information source for those schools, as well as creating an online-capable ordering system to make it easier for programs to "go local".

## Secondary Level: Working with Cathedral High School

Cathedral has a green team, a hospitality program, a catering business, a greenhouse, and a hospitality teacher who is keen on local food and delighted to be working with us. We plan to develop curriculum based programming that features the use of local fruit and vegetables. We plan to involve the kids with an Eat Local event in the spring and are working towards a monthly local food meal in the school's cafeteria this spring term (5%), to bi-weekly (working towards weekly local food day by 2011).



## Working with the Hamilton Family Studies Teachers Association (HFSTA)

We began with a well-attended and lively information session on November 30 in which we explored issues, opportunities and roadblocks to local food use by FS teachers in Hamilton; we will build on this new awareness with a second working session to take place in the spring where we will problem-solve around these issues to prepare for programming in September 2010.

## Post-Secondary Level:

We are working with our centres of higher learning to procure local foods for their restaurants and catering services.

*EH has been provided with a year of funding from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation (total of \$50,000) to continue work related to promoting local food procurement in area schools.*



# DUNDAS HERITAGE TREE HUNT

The Dundas Valley Tree Keepers heritage tree hunt received 131 nominations. The contest was modeled after the Oakville Tree Hunt and offered residents eleven nomination categories ranging from rarity to kid-friendly. Local media attention from the Dundas Star, Hamilton Spectator and Cable 14 helped spread the word.

The Tree Keepers then had their hands full going out to measure the trees, take photos and meet with the judges who reviewed the nominations, poured over photos (there were hundreds), and visited most of the trees.

On Wednesday October 28th, the awards celebration was held at the Dundas Baptist Church. Over 80 people attended the celebration. Prizes were handed out, Honourable Mentions were presented and all the children that nominated a tree were given their own prizes – leaf shaped cookies and a tree identification guide book.

DVTK thanked all participants, and especially the judges, Eleanore and Richard Kosydar, Clare Crozier and Paul O-Hara for their time, wisdom and dedication.

The Tree Keepers grew out of Environment Hamilton's 2007 Trees Count project in Dundas, and contributed to a continuation of that inventory work last year.

For more information about the Tree Keepers visit [www.dundastrees.ca](http://www.dundastrees.ca)



# GOOD NEIGHBOUR CAMPAIGN

A Good Neighbor Campaign has been started within the North Hamilton area to open lines of communication between industry and the community in order to create better working relations and create positive change.

Our efforts are modeled after the approach used by Ohio Citizen Action; the organization that not only developed the Good Neighbor Campaign concept, but used it to produce substantial and beneficial changes within their community.

These changes have included persuading companies such as the Sunoco Oil Refinery to commit to investing over \$100 million in new pollution control equipment and implement new programs to reduce emissions by 75%.

Our goal is to bring together a group of citizens who are passionate about creating positive change within their communities. The group will act as a new voice to industry and emissions, and will center its efforts on the issues pertaining specifically to ArcelorMittal-Dofasco.

These issues will include, and will not be limited to: the company's overproduction of cancer causing agents, the black fallout which creates health and safety concerns, the company's request for Alternate Standards, and the company's request for a Comprehensive Certificate of Approval.

We realize that ArcelorMittal-Dofasco is, and will continue to be a part of this community, thus the campaign has NO intention of shutting down the plant. Rather, we plan to work with the company to not only encourage them to clean up their act, but to become a Good Neighbor to the community of which it is a part.

## Our first action - letter writing

Starting our efforts with a letter writing campaign is a great way to not only open the lines of communication with the company, but it allows the company to see that we're organized and empowered. It

will additionally allow you to voice your concerns about how ArcelorMittal-Dofasco is affecting you, your family, or your neighbours. Remember, although the company knows what effect they may be having on the community in general, they



most likely don't know how they directly impact you specifically.

Tips to Consider When Writing the Letter:

- Make your letter as personalized as possible! Remember, generic letters generate generic responses, so make sure to tell YOUR story, ask YOUR questions, and tell the company what YOU want!
- Handwrite the letter if possible. This will show that it was worth your time to write, and again, it will add a personal touch.
- Be direct, but not attacking. Although we want to have our strong opinions heard, we don't want to close the lines of communication we're working to create.

Address the Letter to Juergen Schachler, the company CEO.

Realizing that individuals may not be comfortable in revealing their identity, we are offering the option of complete confidentiality. If you are not comfortable including your name on your letter, you can feel free to identify yourself through a term such as "concerned neighbor".

We are asking that you submit the letters to us and have us submit it for you. By gathering and submitting all our letters together we can have a much greater impact. Just picture the community dropping off bags of letters to the company! An early/late Christmas present perhaps?

If you would like to submit your letter immediately, we do ask that you either inform us that you have sent it, or send us a copy to us which we can include with our other letters.

Send/bring your letters to us at:

Good Neighbor Campaign  
1130 Barton Street East, Suite 207  
Hamilton, ON L8H 7P9

The option for letter pick-up is available. If you would prefer us to pick up the letter from you, as opposed to mailing it/bringing it to us, just let us know! You can call in at 905-549-0900 or email [kstiel@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:kstiel@environmenthamilton.org)

Although no drop-off date has been finalized, we are currently aiming to have the letters completed and sent to us by December 20th, 2009.



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# U.S. STEEL SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT



U.S. Steel Canada has just signed an Environmental Management Agreement (EMA) with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE). While the agreement signing was announced on November 30<sup>th</sup>, agreement details were negotiated over many months prior to this.

Back on October 14<sup>th</sup>, Environment Hamilton, along with other community stakeholders including Clean Air Hamilton and the Bay Area Restoration Council, was invited to attend a meeting with MOE and U.S. Steel representatives.

At that meeting, we were provided with details regarding the plan to sign the EMA, along with a draft copy of the agreement. We were invited to provide comments and feedback on the draft.

In a nutshell, the EMA amounts to a 'working protocol' between the MOE and the company, that both have agreed "...to follow with respect to certain matters relating to environmental investments, operating improvements, approvals, compliance, enforcement, public reporting, and related administration".

We went away, carefully studied the contents of the EMA, and submitted 4 pages of comments back to MOE. Our response began by recapping MOE's assertion that the agreement:

- Will enable MOE to address US Steel's environmental challenges in a more proactive manner
- Does not impact on existing MOE

- legislated powers in any way; and
- Does not add any new MOE powers.

So we said we wondered why there is a need for the agreement and that we were concerned that the agreement may well represent a 'band aid' effort to fix a broken abatement system.

Further, we know the MOE has experienced significant cuts to human and financial resources since the 1990s and we have been concerned for a long while that Regional and District offices, especially in areas such as Hamilton where the load is so heavy, are unable to effectively manage the many issues that exist because of that lack of adequate resources.

We told the MOE we are keen to see fundamental improvements to the system – including a commitment from the Province to restore adequate funding to the Ministry – and, while we can understand the desire to pursue creative methods to improve the environment, we fear that this approach does not move us towards addressing this need for more fundamental improvements to the overall system.

We acknowledged that the agreement also includes some welcome elements. Among these are the following:

- The establishment of an on-going U.S. Steel Community Liaison Committee
- The requirement for the company to establish a web-based information tool to update the public on its efforts on compliance issues in general.

At the end of the day, the proof will be in the pudding as far as on-the-ground improvements that emerge as a result of the MOE-US Steel environmental management agreement.

But if it turns out that it takes an agreement like this to make the company comply, then we continue to wonder and worry about what this means as far as MOE's capacity to do what it needs to do on an on-going basis.

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## Join Us!



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Memberships  
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# ARCELORMITTAL-DOFASCO SUBMITS APPLICATION FOR NEW AIR PERMIT

ArceLorMittal-Dofasco has submitted an application to replace its 100s of air permits with one, comprehensive certificate of approval (C/A) for air and noise emissions. The public's opportunity to comment on the new permit, through commenting rights under the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights, ended on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Environment Hamilton prepared and submitted comments on the application. We raised a number of issues and concerns we hope the Ministry of the Environment will take into consideration when it makes its final decision on requirements in the air permit.

A Comp C/A (Air) sets out the production limits for a facility.

We have asked MOE to ensure that these limits have been set with best environmental performance in mind.

Surrounding neighbourhoods have struggled with odour impacts from the plant.

We have asked MOE to include a condition in the permit that limits odour to 1 odour unit at the closest sensitive receptor. Such a limit, if adhered to, will ensure that neighbours will not be impacted by plant odours.

Visible emissions have been an on-going problem at the plant.

We have asked MOE to include a condition that requires the company to install 'continuous emission monitors' (CEMs) to track visible emissions.

Further, we have asked that MOE require the company to make the information generated by these monitors available to the public through a system similar to what the Hamilton Air Monitoring Network now provides (see [www.hamnair.com](http://www.hamnair.com)).

The MOE has a Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) that sets out how the Ministry will approach its work. That SEV includes a commitment to consider both cumulative impacts and the precautionary principle when making decisions.

In our submission we urged the MOE to consider the cumulative impacts of the multiple sources of contaminants to air that Hamiltonians are exposed to every day. We also urged MOE to implement a precautionary approach, which dictates that



the best way to avoid harm is to remove the suspected or known cause of the harm.

We will keep EH members posted regarding the MOE decision on the Comprehensive C/A (Air). Hopefully it will include strong requirements for AM-Dofasco to ensure that it does not generate impacts on the surrounding community.

## ECO-FRIENDLY HOLIDAY GIFTS

The holiday season is almost upon us and Environment Hamilton has some great ideas for eco-friendly stocking stuffers. Consider giving someone the gift that keeps on giving all year – a membership in Environment Hamilton. Membership dues help to support the important environmental advocacy work we do in Hamilton. You'll find a special gift membership form in this issue of our newsletter.

If you're buying for a coffee-lover with a conscience, consider purchasing a bag of fair trade, organic, shade-grown beans that have been roasted right here in Hamilton at the SkyDragon Centre.

Environment Hamilton has partnered with the Skydragon Centre so that each one pound bag of beans that we sell, generates \$5 in funds to support Environment Hamilton's work. Beans sell for \$14 per pound – a price that is better than what you will pay for comparable coffee at local grocery or health food stores.

To place a coffee order, simply give us a call at 905-549-0900 or place an email order at [contactus@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org).



# BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY IN A FAITH COMMUNITY

This was the topic of a networking meeting put on at Stanley Street Baptist Church in November by *Greening Sacred Spaces*, a project run locally by EH. With four speakers presenting, the audience heard much to think about.

## FRUITS OF OUR TREES

The Hamilton Fruit Tree project is celebrating another record year of rescuing unused fruit from backyards and putting it to good use. Volunteers led by Juby Lee of Environment Hamilton collected about 5300 pounds of fruit (up from 4900 last year). That's similar to a long-standing Vancouver project and quite a bit more than a similar one operating in Toronto.

The 2009 program has held seven canning workshops including at the Eva Rothwell Centre on Wentworth North and with a boys cooking club organized by the Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO). The sessions preserved sour cherry jam, apple sauce, pear slices and beets.

A special event at Dundurn Castle on September 27 involved over 100 people and harvested over a thousand pounds of apples for the program.

A recent meeting between SISO and project coordinator Juby Lee has opened up



the possibilities of large SISO youth groups providing the volunteers needed for large harvesting efforts such as at local farms with excess fruit.

Most of the fruit that the project collects is given to food banks and social service agencies, providing fresh locally-grown organic produce to some of the most vulnerable

people in our community. Other fruit is canned and the preserves sold to help with project costs.

This EH project is funded by the Hamilton Community Foundation through the Conserver Society.

The evening kicked off with Environment Hamilton's Brenda Johnson who helped a Hamilton school reduce their waste from 94 bags per month down to four. She explained that getting the janitor in your institution on board means including him or her in decision making.

She also pointed out that giving the kids a sense of 'ownership' is a catalyst for promoting action. Johnson insists that you take small steps; "Pick one thing, otherwise you get overwhelmed."

Other helpful advice she offered included creating partnerships, pairing up with an event already going on, and encouraging groups that rent from the faith community to be part of the greening efforts.

Denise Neutel of Meadowlands Christian Reformed Church talked about the need to stay relevant to the community, to keep connected, maintain communication, and use websites, list serves and email. Again, the message was to really allow and encourage people to "do their thing," developing in this way, that sense of commitment necessary to sustain sustainability.

Next came a delightful presentation by youth from Cathedral High School's eco team (Chandal Kilgour and David Da Silva). The team started up when a dynamic teacher addressed the students personally about getting involved with creation protection.

There's a buzz going around now and everyone wants to be a part of it. Why? Because it is relevant and meaningful. And it's fun. From putting on a fashion show using recycled clothing to growing herbs, planting a garden and showing eco-films, these activities are spear-headed by the students themselves.

Jody Van Dorp from Redeemer College wrapped up the evening by talking about the importance of leading by extension, "living it out for them." Being told 'you should' is not something that sits well with Dorp nor with most people. Rather, it is modeling why we care that works better for motivating long lasting stewardship.

Dorp suggests that we "spread love of God through Nature" by getting people outside more. "This creates love of Nature," she enthuses.

After all, if you don't know it, and don't love it, why would you fight to protect it?

# PASSPORT TO THE HOLIDAYS

The seasonal rush is underway, money is always tight and the kids will be home for the holidays. Passport to Hamilton's map and an HSR day pass can help save you money and entertain the kids at the same time.

## GREENING SCHOOLS

An Environment Hamilton project co-sponsored by the Conservator Society is making things happen in local schools. The work began two years ago with a huge success at Woodward Avenue elementary school where monthly garbage output was cut from 95 bags to four – mainly through a litterless lunch project that actively engaged the students.

The approach has opened the door to a number of other school-based initiatives. Project leader Brenda Johnson sits down with teachers and staff to find out what environmental project they want to tackle and to give them suggestions and contacts to help make it happen.

An example is a recent visit to Earl Kitchener elementary in the Kirkendall neighbourhood at the request of one of their teachers. Project staff sat down with him for about an hour, obtained clear plastic bags for the school to ensure recyclables don't end up in the landfill, and arranged for councillor Brian McHattie and city staff to provide a coloured wall map showing all the streets and homes in the school catchment area.

The 33" by 36" laminated map has become the centrepiece of environmental programs for every classroom in the school. The map can be used by different grades for teaching curriculum expectations. For example, the Grades 1, 2, and 3 social studies curriculum explores the communities that they live in (i.e. their neighbourhood environment). These grades can use the map to identify streets, places of interest, residential, commercial and industrial zones.

Brenda has also pulled together environmental fairs at several schools, where community groups and city departments present information on actions that students and their parents can take.

While most Catholic schools in the city are already working to obtain Eco-School status, some of the Public board schools don't even have recycling programs in place. Brenda has succeeded in bringing representatives of the two boards together to share experiences and ideas.

Two adults and 4 youth (under the age of 19) can ride the buses all day with the \$8 HSR day pass. Get a Passport to Hamilton map and find out about great discounts at local places of interest, recreation centres, shops and restaurants when a family presents a valid HSR day pass.



Parents, why not plan a day trip with your families which can include spending the day in Dundas - with free admission to the Dundas Museum and Archives, you can save 10% in the gift shop when you have your HSR day pass. Kool Klay is offering a ½ price discount on studio time and don't forget to check out the other 7 shops have some great deals. Then grab a bite to eat and save at Adeline's Family Restaurant or the Thirsty Cactus.

Or head to the Puddicombe Farm, present the HSR day pass and receive free admission to their petting farm and play area. Visit their website for their winter activity calendar: [www.puddicombefarms.com](http://www.puddicombefarms.com).

If you still have that one person on your list, go to Ottawa Street and check out the many antique / gift shops offering discounts, buy some great inexpensive gifts for the holidays.

On the mountain, enjoy saving money at the various shops and restaurants. The Movie Palace has \$5 tickets when you have your HSR day pass in hand. The possibilities are endless.

Pick up maps at any Hamilton Public Library branch. For a full listing of all the destinations and discounts, visit EH at [www.environmenthamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org) and click on the "Passport to Hamilton" link.



*The Hamilton Community Foundation supports EH's ongoing work in local schools as well as the Passport to Hamilton project.*

# A NEW MODEL OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT



by Jack Santa-Barbara  
(Part 1 of 3)

Any of us would be hard pressed to name a single major system of our complex industrial society that is sustainable - one that uses less material resources than are annually produced by natural systems. Our transport, industrial and food systems, for example, are all reliant on enormous material and

energy inputs that cannot endure for much longer. Even our debt based money system is unsustainable, dependent as it is on continuous economic growth.

Current patterns of human settlement are the most significant examples of these unsustainable levels of consumption. Globally, we are becoming an urban species, each dense population nodule ever more dependent on remote production of basic necessities, and further removed from the natural surroundings of which we are an integral part. The larger the metropolitan area, the larger and the more dispersed is the hinterland required to support it. The industrial and commercial systems for supplying the needs of large metropolitan areas are multiple and ingenious. They are also complex and vulnerable to such issues as climate change and energy descent.

Given the lack of effective government action in dealing with these looming challenges the future of cities as desirable places of human settlement has to be questioned. How will basic infrastructure such as water and sewerage systems, for example, be maintained when per capita energy availability is significantly reduced due to fossil fuel depletion? How will basic goods such as food be transported thousands of miles to feed urban dwellers? How will electric power be generated to provide lighting and essential equipment? Where will the energy come from to transport people and goods over long distances? How much energy will be needed to transform our cities into sustainable settlements?

The techno-optimists believe that increased efficiencies and renewable energy sources will allow for a smooth transition away from fossil fuels. However, the

potential for alternative energy sources is questionable (Heinberg, 2009). Conservation will be the most important response to the decline of fossil fuels, even with increased efficiencies and improved technologies. But can modern cities be redesigned to function with significantly reduced amounts of energy and materials?

The lack of attention to these questions by politicians should be raising alarm bells. Governments at all levels remain focused on continued economic growth rather than grappling with these more fundamental issues of sustainability. Educational and lobbying efforts to change this outdated paradigm of economic growth are important; but they may not be effective quickly enough. It may be time to also begin building an alternative society that allows for living well sustainably.

It is unclear whether cities, especially large cities, can be modified to meet the constraints of a low energy lifestyle. The next parts to this series will examine two approaches to this question – transforming existing cities within the Transition Town initiative, and building new kinds of human settlements – a sustainable village.

*HEINBERG, R. Searching for a Miracle: "Net Energy" Limits and the Fate of Industrial Society, to be published by the Post Carbon Institute and the International Forum on Globalization, 2009.*

## VOLUNTEER WITH US

Environment Hamilton is always looking for volunteers. We have a variety of ways you can get involved.

For example you could:

- o Help us at public events
- o Research information
- o Design flyers
- o Write articles
- o Help us with web support
- o Make phone calls
- o Conduct surveys
- o and fund-raise

So if you're looking for work, have some spare time or need student volunteer hours, we'd be happy to hear from you. We'll match you with a project that suits both your needs and ours.

Take a look at our website [www.environmenthamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org) for ideas, and then give Julia Kollek, our Volunteer Co-ordinator, a call at 905-627-5410.

DEC 11



because the world  
needs to know!