

newsletter



sustainable
otautahi christchurch

Volume 1 No 6 May 2006

Energy Efficient Homes Tour

SOC members had a great day on Sunday April 23rd touring a selection of environmentally friendly and energy efficient homes around the district. Organised by committee member Rhys Taylor the tour commenced at the home of Pat and Paul Pritchard in Church Bay.

Their home featured solar hot water, extensive insulation, double glazing and thermal mass to soak sun energy and keep the house warmer. Paul really liked to experiment with his home. He devised fans to transfer heat efficiently around the home and made sure the sun would provide them with lots of cheap energy.



Paul and Pat were also extensive recyclers. Very little waste leaves their property, a total of eight rubbish bags per year. All paper is mulched; all food compostable waste is shredded and transferred to a worm farm. Special shutes collect recyclable bottles, cans etc. An

amazing amount of thought has gone into this house. Paul's ideas have inspired his neighbours to think about energy efficiency and recycling. He could list eight neighbours who had installed solar hot water heating.

Governors Bay was our next stop. Here we visited a rammed earth home. The beauty of this home was it was a community-building project in its self. Family members and friends made rammed earth bricks. The home was made mostly with natural products. Wooden tiles, shakes featured on the roof. We were told that at 5 deep the insulating properties of the roof were great. With thick brick walls and the most unusual tiles the house was very warm in winter and cool in summer.



Up over Dyers Pass and down on the flat to Burnham. The next property was a straw bale home. With an R rating of 34 the insulating properties of the straw were



really impressive. A very rustic feeling home. Double-glazed and with solar hot water the house has significantly lower energy bills than many homes. A log burner warms the home in winter and good design transfers the heat from the lower to the upper floors.

The thermal mass on this house is impressive as well. The foundation is made from straw and concrete. The concrete retains the heat well and radiates the warmth back into the house.

The next property was part guesthouse and permanent home. An Eco Architect designed English Park. Double glazing, solar hot water, hydronic heating that can one day run on solar panels and hebal bricks made this house energy efficient. Natural products exist throughout the house. Waste management was also something the owners were very proud about. All compostable material goes over to the local school. All cleaning products were chemical free and all food offered was free from animal products. The house was also centrally located with good access to the bus and activity centres without the need to drive. This house represented a totally eco friendly home where the owners incorporated sustainability practices into every aspect of their lives.

SOC's Vice Chair Roger Buck designed the final



property. With concrete walls and roof the property maintained an even temperature year round. Situated north to get the maximum benefit from the sun the property doesn't have any heating inside. At present it remains a constant 24 degrees. Like the other properties it is double-glazed and has solar hot water

heating.

The tour was really interesting for all the participants. There are so many different building methods that can be used to get more energy efficient homes. Whilst we can't all build a new home to achieve better energy efficiency we can make alterations to our existing residences. All the owners recommended their solar hot water systems.

Quite by coincidence 5 of the 6 had installed Thermocell units developed by SOC vice chair Arthur Williamson! Contact Arthur if you would like more information on solar hot water. Many thanks to Rhys and the homeowners for making this trip possible. A very informative day.

Wal-Mart Documentary

The Wal-Mart movie was shown to SOC members and friends at two separate screenings during April. It highlighted the negative impacts of this enormous retailing chain on the environment, the economy and local communities.

Throughout the ages there are always firms or institutions that exploit a situation. With Wal-Mart it appears this exploitation occurs the entire length and breadth of the production and distribution chain. From the workers in China who manufacture the goods, to the employees in the USA who on sell and the local communities that have to pick up the pieces of the impact of such a large retailing outfit on their local economy.

The film highlighted the negative impacts of this chain store. Cities for Peace has summarised them as follows.

- Wal-Mart has not been a good neighbour to the communities it has moved into.
- Wal-Mart does not pay a living wage.

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- Wal-Mart does not provide its workers with decent benefits.
- Wal-Mart undermines and destroys existing local small businesses.
- Wal-Mart exploits minors and immigrants and discriminates against women.
- Wal-Mart routinely violates its workers' rights to organize a union.
- Wal-Mart has received over \$1 billion in public subsidies and drains the tax base.
- Wal-Mart damages the environment.

Cities for Peace believes that America needs Wal-Mart to meet community standards by:

- Pay a living wage to all employees.
- Providing affordable health care (not just telephone numbers for Medicaid) for all employees.
- Allowing employees to organize and to join unions if they so choose. etc etc.

For a full listing of the other things recommended please refer to the web site

<http://www.ips-dc.org/citiesforpeace/walmart.htm>

The Wal-Mart story is a call for us to look what happens in our own backyards? Do we have retailers that are causing the same negative impacts on our communities in New Zealand?



If you are worried about the adverse effects of this type of retailing you can contact Warren Snow who was our guest speaker at the first movie screening. Warren is the Manager of Envision, a group that supports townships/communities that are seeking more responsible retailing and the

retention of existing vibrant retail centres.

Warren's contact details are:

mailbox@envision-nz.com

Sustaining our Communities

Katherine Peet.

"Seeing" the unseen activities that contribute to sustaining our communities is vital to determining how to live more sustainably. A member organisation of SOC, Network Waitangi Otautahi (NWO), has been working with Statistics NZ to clarify some key definitional issues. This initiative has had the support of SOC and a number of other agencies in Christchurch.

Statistics NZ decided to develop a Satellite Account for the Non-Profit Sector, to stand alongside the regular National Accounts (Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Product). Publicity from Statistics NZ now makes it clear that the Satellite Account is not of the Non-Profit Sector but of Non-Profit Institutions (NPIs). This acknowledges that there are aspects of the Sector that are not in NPIs.

An example would be the work done by Southland farmers at the time of the Wairarapa floods. That activity was planned, unpaid and performed outside the household, but not done through any NPI. Another example would be a concerned citizen putting up a notice on a community noticeboard calling for helpers to clean up a stream or beach. Some of these organised activities continue for many years, some are short term. There are many such examples in all our communities. NWO experience is that many Maori work really hard in such activities and that many other people also just roll up their sleeves and organise what needs to be done. Often these activities are the backbone of what is needed to sustain our communities. In particular there is concern at the prospect of these being commodified and at risk of being stopped by concerns about Occupational Safety and Health rules and regulations.

One way of looking at all that goes on in our communities is to recognise "Core" activities as important, alongside activities we recognise in the Household, in Government (whether local, regional or central), in Commerce or in Non-Profit Institutions. The following diagram indicates that while there is overlap between the types of activities there is still part of the Non-Profit sector - its "Core" that needs not to be ignored, if we are sustain our communities i.e. keep valued things going in the long term.

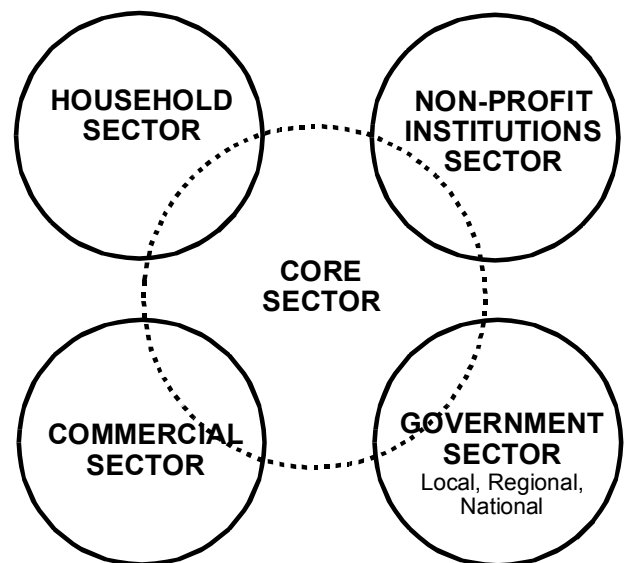
Follow up involves:

* Working with Statistics NZ on the development of the questions for the next Time Use Survey

* Contributing to the research being undertaken in preparation of the socio-economic statistics for the Genuine Progress Indicator(GPI). This measure of progress takes into account social and ecological factors, not simply the quantity of market activity.

* Working with the Living Economies Forum in order to discern the emergent properties of local currencies such as Time Banks and Local Exchange and Barter Systems that lie outside the market.

Anyone interested in being involved is invited to contact Katherine Peet john.peet@canterbury.ac.nz Phone 384 1281.



Adapted from Hilikka Pietilä

Member Achievements:

Matt Morris is in the final stages of completing a PhD into the history of home gardening in Christchurch. Matt has focused on the development of gardens from 1850 to 1954. His work has covered three aspects of gardening. What are the main themes of gardening over the period? Were these themes of importance to homeowners over the period? Did they reflect these ideas in their own gardens?

Were gardens different in different sections of the city? Matt's work is really relevant in a city that has a proud relationship to its gardens. The finished work will provide Christchurch with a valuable insight into the significance of home gardens and the cities history.

Topical Comments

Nigel Williams, SOC committee member has recommended the newsletter contain a local and global issues segment of items relevant to sustainability. Nigel kicks off the segment with these words. Contributions for future editions warmly welcomed.

Regional Comment Spot:

Intensive Dairying Set to move onto soils with higher DDT levels.

In the Christchurch Press on Monday 8 May Fonterra announced that it has lifted the permitted weighted average soil level of DDT for new supply properties from 0.2mg DDT/ kg of soil to 0.7mg DDT/kg soil.

The issues noted in the report in the Press revolve around assurances that Fonterra will still strictly monitor DDT levels in milk, to ensure compliance with international milk quality requirements.



What was not discussed was the impact on ground and surface water that may arise from the required intensive irrigation of soils with these higher levels of DDT. The fact that the DDT gets from the soils into the milk suggests that it is mobile in water – both upwards into plants and downwards into near-surface water tables.

From these water tables the water will flow either into surface water or ground water.

We hope that ECAN will determine safe irrigation rates and other measures to avoid or mitigate the escape of DDT residues into potable ground water supplies and into the already-threatened surface waters of the Canterbury Plains.

Nigel Williams

Global Comment Spot:

Big-box

In an article in The Economist (10 May 2006) Kenneth Rogoff (Professor of economics and public policy at Harvard University and formerly chief economist at the International Monetary Fund) has revealed some startling aspects of the effects of Big-Box activities.

He says that together, Target, Best Buy, Home Depot and Wal-Mart account for about 50 per cent of America's much-vaunted productivity growth edge over Europe

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during the past decade! Similar advances in wholesale supply chains account for another 25 per cent, adding to a total contribution of around 75% (Seventy Five percent!!!) of productivity growth! Hence, he says, the notion that Americans have got better at everything, while other rich nations have stood still, is wildly misleading. The US productivity miracle and the emergence of Wal-Mart-style retailing are virtually synonymous.

So, from a Sustainable New Zealand perspective, does this demonstrate how a particular 'flavour' of business can basically high-jack an economy, leaving it perched precariously on an unsustainable foundation? If the big-box phenomenon goes out of fashion, so will most of the growth in one of the biggest economies in the world. Surely, an example to beware of?

Nigel Williams

More Events:

WEA Series: Sustainable Development, Global and Local.

Session 5: Tuesday 30 May 2006 at WEA.

Fair Trade tea and coffee from 5pm.

Presentation and discussion 5.30pm-7pm. \$4

With WEA, Christian World Services and Trade Aid, SOC has been involved in organising a series of Tuesday evening sessions at the WEA. The final session is on 30 May. Alice-Ann Wetzel and Cr Bob Parker are presenting on the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (GCUDS). You will remember that SOC made a substantial submission on the GCUDS options a year ago. Alice-Ann and Bob will update us on the work currently going on in preparation for a draft strategy going to the public in September this year.

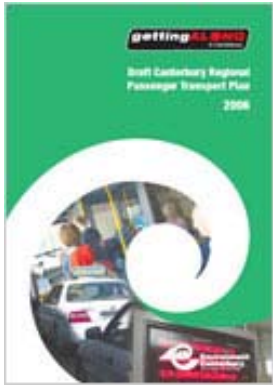
A large turn out from SOC at this session would demonstrate our continuing interest in the UDS with an emphasis on strong sustainability.

University of Canterbury

Tues 23 May, 4-5pm room A4 at UC

Hear Professor James Bohman a leading international philosopher, speak about the cutting edge of redefining basic theories of democracy and justice in response to the calls for self determination or voice from indigenous groups, ethnic communities and new social movements.

Draft Canterbury Regional Passenger Transport Plan:



SOC will be making a submission on the Ecan Draft Canterbury Regional Passenger Transport Plan. If you would like any comments included please contact Wendy Everingham by May 28th. Contact details: wendy.everingham@xtra.co.nz or 328 8359.

Thinking about Packaging:

Are you tired of the endless waste that have to endure when we buy products? Annelies Pikelharing has had enough. She wants to get a group of people together who will highlight the problem at many stores around Christchurch. If you are interested in being part of a campaign please contact Annelies. Her contact details are anneliesp@xtra.co.nz. She plans that the campaign would start September, with a group of people targeting certain shops and undoing wrappings and leaving these behind on the counter.

Presentations:

Our main executive team visited Councillors from ECAN and Christchurch City. Two comprehensive presentations were made detailing what SOC does and how its expertise could be utilised within the councils. SOC is really trying to get in early to the decision making process at Council. We hope we could be used as advisors to Council and not a late submitter. To date Arthur Williamson has been appointed to one advisory group on waste. Roger Buck will probably have a role with Urban Design and we anticipate a place on the Greater Christchurch Urban Design Strategy. Mayor Gary Moore acknowledged SOC are a substantial group and should be utilised better. SOC will make presentations to both Ecan and Christchurch City LTCCP

Next Committee Meeting

Tuesday May 30th, Ecan, 7.15 –9.15 at ECAN in Kilmore St. All members welcome to attend to see what's happening at SOC. Meetings are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Tell your friends and Colleagues about SOC.

Anyone with an interest in sustainability issues should be encouraged to become a member of our organisation.

Membership rates are:
Students/Unwaged \$10
Households \$15
Organisations \$30

Please contact Komathi (Komie) Kolandai, komie3@yahoo.com for a membership brochure to be emailed or posted to people who may be interested.

A New Waste Minimisation Trial

The Lyttelton Community Garden has been experimenting with waste collection from local restaurants. Volunteers have been collecting organic waste from two of the restaurants and composting this waste at the garden in large drums that are fermented with bokashi granuals.

The programme was successful but got too big for volunteers to organise. A recent grant from the Christchurch City Council will mean we can pay some local people to carry out the service. The benefits are many. We are educating our local restaurants and residents about waste, we have more compost to develop our new garden beds and we are reducing the amount of waste going to local landfill. We hope this service can become a regular feature of Lyttelton rubbish collection.

Interested to follow up on Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth'?

Trailer

http://www.apple.com/trailers/paramount_classic_s/aninconvenienttruth/trailer/

Interview

<http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2006/05/09/roberts/index.html?source=daily>

Next Edition

Members are encouraged to send contributions for the next newsletter to wendy.everingham@xtra.co.nz or by mail to 1-4 Harmans Road, Lyttelton.

The next deadline for contributions is July 25th.

The newsletter will be published every second month.

The distribution plan for 2006 is: July 28th, September 29th, and December 1st.