



# The Ecology Action Center News

Summer 2006

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## Become Yard Smart!

Join us Saturday, June 24 for the Ecology Action Center's fourth annual Yard Smart Walk! From 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We will tour five yards in the Bloomington-Normal area that demonstrate the Yard Smart principles.

The Yard Smart Program is a voluntary effort to help reduce synthetic pesticide use, conserve natural resources and make room for wildlife. Because studies indicate human health concerns as well as environmental concerns associated with over-use of synthetic lawn chemicals, Yard Smart has developed yard care practices that are safe for children and pets. This program originated by Living Upstream in partnership with the John Wesley Powell Audubon Chapter and Ecology Action Center. Each organization has developed a certification that allies with their mission including Living Upstream's "chemical-free yard", Ecology Action Center's "easy on the earth" and JWP Audubon's "wildlife yard".

The event is free and open to the public. Lunch will be provided on a first come, first served basis. If you are interested in joining the tour, please call the Ecology Action Center at 309-454-3169 to reserve your spot. For more details on the Yard Smart Program please visit: [www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)

## Summer Reading EAC-Style!

The Ecology Action Center presents . . . Bash Trash on Recycle Isle . . .

Parents and kids can Join Major Hippo and his Beaston Buddies as they discover a clever way to make music by bashing trash. We will read The Great Trash Bash by Loreen Leedy and create our own musical instruments using . . . Can you guess? Yes, "trash"!

This program will be presented in many municipal libraries in McLean County. Ask your local library if they are involved! You may also meet us at the Children's Discovery Museum June 8, July 13 and August 10 to experience this unique program. Call the Ecology Action Center at 309-454-3169 for more information.

## Earth Day Raffle Results

This spring's fundraiser was a tremendous success with proceeds totaling in excess of \$3,000! We thank all of those who contributed and participated in the raffle. We would also like to thank the area businesses that contributed and made this event possible. Congratulations to the lucky winners:

**Tree of Choice from Greider's Sod and Landscaping**—Connie Kosteic, Pontiac  
**Organic Lawn care from Kid Conscious Lawn Care**—Kathy Sentiman, Bloomington  
**Movies a Month for a Year at the Castle Theater**—Dave Bratcher and Jessica Dalisay, both from Normal  
**One Night at the Vrooman Mansion**—Mary Strack, Bloomington  
**Pressure Cooker from the Garlic Press**—Pam Hansen, Normal  
**Park Restaurant Dinner for two**—Jane Zilmer, Bloomington  
**Massage at Body Works**—Charlotte Brown, Normal  
**Spa Package from Midwest School of Cosmetology**—Deb Rhodes, Normal

### Ecology Action Center

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[www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)  
11-6 p.m. Mon.-Thurs.  
11-5 p.m. Fri.



# What's New At the EAC

## Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo promotes Healthy Communities!

The Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo held at Illinois Wesleyan University on April 21-22, 2006, was a tremendous success! This event was a collaboration between Ecology Action Center, Center for Sustainable Community, and the IWU Wellness Program.

The Expo was divided into two parts: the Exhibitors Fair and the Workshop Conference. The fair was free to the public and had over 110 exhibitors that shared products and information on many aspects of sustainability and wellness with live music, children's activities, live stage performances, and a fuel efficient vehicle demonstration. Seventy workshops were also held covering a wide variety of topics including: Sustainable Living Practices, Wellness, Renewable Energy, Green Building, Land/Farming Resources, Community Building, and Simple Living.

We are grateful for everyone who participated and helped to promote environmental awareness and wellness in our community and beyond! Special thanks to the Renewable Choice Energy, Horizon Wind Energy, GraceFull Life Coaching, Healing Arts Network, Natural Life Magazine, Ameren, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Prairie Signs, Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Bloomington-Normal Jr. Women's Club, The Pantagraph, IWU Shenanigans Comedy Troupe, Chetney Family Band and the numerous volunteers that made this event possible.

We look forward to your participation in next year's festivities, which will take place on April 20-21, 2007. For more information about this past ISWLE and for future updates of next year's ISWLE, go to the following web address: [www.islwe.org](http://www.islwe.org).

## It's time to . . . (drum role please) . . . Meet the Interns!

Grant Gilliland is a Geography Education Major at Illinois State University. He hopes to gain experience at the EAC before teaching in and coaching at a high school. He's coached varsity football and has supervised a basketball camp both at Alexis High School.

One of Michael O'Keefe's goals in completing an internship at the EAC is to gain practical knowledge to complement the "book knowledge" he's gained at Illinois Wesleyan as a Biology major and Environmental Studies minor. He is involved in various honors societies at IWU and plays on the IWU tennis team. Michael has already shown the EAC his talents, as he's created many articles in this newsletter!

Kyle Roberts is a Geography/Political Science double major at Illinois State University. He hopes to gain experience in the working world while interning at the EAC. He also coaches baseball at Holy Trinity Junior High.

Sara Whitworth is a Liberal Arts student at Lincoln College Normal. Sara is currently working with a grant to create a recycling program for Lincoln College. What important work! She also volunteers at the Humane Society of Central Illinois. Check out her recipe for non-toxic dishwashing detergent contained in this newsletter.

We are glad to have such wonderful assistants with us this summer!

*We all live  
downstream;  
let's keep our  
water clean!*



# News from the Network

## Experience Gardens!

Come enjoy summer splendor on Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 – 8:30 pm on the **Sugar Grove Nature Preserve summer Garden Walk**. This special event is free, although donations are always appreciated. No reservations are required. For more information contact Sugar Grove.

Sugar Grove Nature Center is also one of fourteen gardens that will be included on the Saturday June 17<sup>th</sup> **McLean Garden Walk and Quilt Display** from 10:30-3:00 pm. Tickets for this walk will be available at the Sugar Grove Nature Center on Friday for the discounted price of \$7 dollars for adults. Children accompanied by adults are free. For more information about this and other events, go to [www.mcleanchristianchurch.org](http://www.mcleanchristianchurch.org).

## Humane Society Garage Sale!

Clean out your garage while helping your local Humane Society! Humane Society of Central Illinois will be holding a Garage Sale and is looking for items to sell. Items need to be dropped off at the old location 3001 Gill Street (west door in back) during scheduled drop-off times between June 11-13. Sorry, HSCI is unable to accept clothing. All donations are tax deductible, forms available at time of donation.

Once you've gotten rid of your "old" pet supplies, pick up some new ones at the sale on June 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>. Your pet will love you for it! For more information contact the Humane Society at (309) 451-1000 or [www.hiscipets.org](http://www.hiscipets.org)

## Ethanol Pollution Surprise

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the idea of using ethanol as a "gasoline additive" has become more popular. While the corn-based fuel might not hold the key to an oil-free future, it may provide a stopgap remedy while scientists look beyond corn for an answer. Advocates of ethanol see it as a renewable fuel, made from homegrown crops like corn, that could help reduce American dependence on foreign oil as well as reduce automotive gas emissions of carbon monoxide and other toxins. There is growing evidence, however, that ethanol has been oversold as a clean and renewable fuel.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has recently cited many ethanol plants as being major sources of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides. In an April 24 letter to the industry's trade group, the EPA said the problem is common to "most, if not all, ethanol facilities." Cornell University ecology and agricultural sciences professor David Pimentel estimates that ethanol has benefited from a \$1.4 billion subsidy while degrading the environment and diverting a crop better suited for food. He has calculated that ethanol takes more energy to produce than it yields, which he said makes it difficult to describe as a renewable resource; that it causes water pollution from fertilizers and pesticides on corn crops, and causes air pollution at ethanol plants.

Another issue to consider is what will be the source of the fuel for ethanol production plants? Most plants have been built to be natural gas-fired, but some new plants are slated to be powered by coal because of the recent rise in natural gas prices. The global warming pollution produced by coal powered ethanol plants, of course, will largely offset any environmental improvement fostered by drivers eventually using the ethanol produced by these plants. As such, many environmental organizations are strongly opposed to the use of coal to power ethanol plants, and are pushing for the more rapid implementation of cellulosic materials as not only a feedstock, but also as a power source. For more information visit the following websites: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) and [www.energyjustice.net/ethanol](http://www.energyjustice.net/ethanol).

*Is ethanol a  
"perfect" fuel  
source?*

Recycle the Ecology Action Center Newsletter by passing it on to someone else after you have read it.



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## Cool Stuff for Summer!

### Non-Toxic Homemade Cleaning Product Recipe!

#### Dishwasher Detergent

Materials: 1 cup Borax, 1 cup baking soda, Tupperware container



Directions: Pour 1 cup borax and 1 cup baking soda into Tupperware container, mix together.

Use 2 tablespoons of mix per load. Increase baking soda by small amounts for hard water. Use vinegar in rinse cycle to remove hard water stains from glasses.

### A New Camp!

Congratulations Campers who have signed up for our 1st-4th grade EcoAction camps (run through the Normal Parks and Recreation department). Both EcoAction camps are already fully enrolled. Campers can expect to have a great time learning about the environment!

Spots are still available for 5th-7th graders to attend the EcoExperience camp July 24-28! EcoExperience campers will travel to different locations to learn about ecology and environmental issues in the local area. For more information call (451-4455) or stop by the Normal Parks & Recreation Department.