

INDIAN CREEK NEWSLETTER

June 2011

On the web at <http://www.frontiernet.net/~indiancreek> Contact us by email at indiancreeknews@hotmail.com

Worthy Quote

In the book of life, the answers aren't in the back.

Charlie Brown

Indian Creek Water Update

"The Indian Creek Homeowners and Water Association has available upon request the 2010 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The CCR includes basic information on the source(s) of your drinking water, the levels of any contaminants that were detected in the water during 2010, and compliance with other drinking water rules, as well as some educational materials. A copy of the report is at www.frontiernet.net/~indiancreek/icwater.htm on the Indian Creek website for future reference. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Hancock @ 728-2990 or our Certified Water Operator, Frank Cottrell @ 309-275-9341."

Rail Road Construction Towanda

UPRR (Union Pacific Railroad) has informed us that they will be closing Jefferson (CH 29) & Madison Streets in the Village of Towanda starting June 2nd through June 7th at the railroad crossings, weather permitting. Both crossings will be closed from 7:00am to 11:00am on June 2nd. Detour route will be posted via the Airport Road crossing in Towanda Township during this four (4) hour period. After the initial four (4) hours, the Airport Road crossing will again close and the Jefferson St (CH 29) & Madison Streets crossings will alternate their closures.

Sweeney Road (CH 65) will be closed from June 5th through June 18th at the railroad crossing. Main Street (CH 8) in the City of Lexington will be closed from June 7th through June 20th at the railroad crossing. Detour routing will be via Chestnut or North Streets when Main Street (CH 8) is closed.

All closures are due to the High Speed Rail Upgrade and we ask for your patience during any and all construction and closures.

Please contact us at 663-9445 for any questions.

Eric Schmitt - County Engineer

For full details, go to: https://local.nixle.com/alert/4694367/?sub_id=304545.

Ecology Action Center opens registration for June Rain Barrel Workshops



The Ecology Action Center has openings available in its current schedule of the popular hands-on workshops where individuals build their own water saving rainwater collection and storage container. Rain Barrels are an ancient technology undergoing a great resurgence as they not only help conserve water but also reduce storm water runoff contamination thereby protecting clean water. The workshops are a very cost- effective alternative to buying a ready-to-use rain barrel.

The current workshops are scheduled for Tuesday, June 14 at 5:30 p.m. or Saturday, June 18 at 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. The EAC is offering these workshops at a cost of \$28.00 for members of the

Ecology Action Center or \$38.00 for non-members. The rain barrel design includes an overflow fitting and hose to prevent a full rain barrel from sending water towards your foundation.

Workshop space is limited and pre-registration is required; registration forms are available for download at www.ecologyactioncenter.org on the BN Green Events Calendar or by stopping by the Ecology Action Center at 202 West College in Normal during regular business hours. Confirmation of registration and workshop location details and will be provided after payment and registration form are received. More information on the workshops is available by calling 309-454-3169.

The Ecology Action Center is the primary resource for environmental education, information, and outreach in McLean County. The EAC educates for environmental action at a walk-in information center and through educational programs on a variety of environmental topics.

Towanda Area Historical Society

The Society is sponsoring an event to be held on **Sunday, June 26, 2011 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Dale Sutter's farm.** His farm is located at 20510 Ft Jesse Road, about 1.5 miles East of Towanda-Barnes Road on the north side of the road.

On display will be a collection of antique tractors and farm equipment. The antique owners will be on hand to describe how and when the equipment was used. Farming practices, tales of the past, and general information about our agricultural heritage will be featured during this interactive program.

Bring cameras and questions and plan to join us for an entertaining and informative afternoon. Questions? Contact Gail Ann Briggs 309/728-2187 or rgbriggs@frontiernet.net

June Calendar

Fri.Jun.3 - Last Day of School for Unit 5
Sun.Jun.26 - TAHS event at Dale Sutter's farm
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Mon.Jun.27 - 4th of July Planning Meeting,
Community Building, 7:00 p.m.

July Calendar

Mon.Jul.4 - Towanda 4th of July Celebration
- Theme: *Celebrate Our Family Farm Heritage*
- Parade steps off promptly at 10:00 a.m. from the school
- Flea Market, food, concessions and lots of opportunities to see folks who return to Towanda for this annual event.

Towanda American Legion

The Towanda American Legion will have a breakfast on Sunday June 5th from 7:30 to 11:00. Breakfast will include scrambled eggs, egg casserole, sausage, bacon, hash brown potatoes, biscuits and gravy, pancakes, fruit and drink for \$8. Carryouts are available.

There will be a pork chop dinner on Friday June 10th from 5:30-7:30. Dinner will include pork chop sandwich, au gratin potatoes, coleslaw, drink and dessert. Carryouts are available.

We are continuing to collect donations for our troops overseas. If you know of a service person you would like to receive a package, please let us know.

Thanks again for your support of the Legion and our troops.

Towanda Busy Bees Meeting Notes

by Reporter Jacob Bonner

On Tuesday, May 17, 2011, the Towanda Busy Bees held their monthly meeting at the Towanda Community Building. President Taylor Morris called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Logan Bonner led the Pledge of Allegiance and Emma Reints led the 4-H Pledge. The roll call topic this month was, 'What is your favorite summer activity?' During the business portion of the meeting, Mr. Morris gave the treasurers report and Anna Dickerson gave the secretary's report. In old business Joey reported on the food drive. In new business the club voted to volunteer for the 4-H Sundae Booth at the fair. The club also voted to have a Club Booth at this year's fair and chose a committee.

This month's program was final planning for the annual blood drive on June 21st at the Towanda Community Building.

Thank you to the residents of The Village of Towanda, Lamplighter, and Indian Creek for donating 335 items for the Towanda Busy Bees food drive. All food was taken to the Salvation Army!

Pictured is Towanda Busy Bees food collection donations.



The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

The Towanda Busy Bees meet the third Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is on Tuesday, July 19. Membership is open to boys and girls ages 8-18—or Cloverbuds between the ages of 5-7 --everyone is welcome. Please contact Tom and Janet Morris at 664-0360 with questions.



Library Clean Up

On Friday, May 20, 2011 the Towanda Busy Bees held a Library Clean Up day at the Towanda Library. Club members trimmed bushes, moved and placed mulch, and planted flowers around the property.

Towanda Library

FRESH, the movie, Thursday, June 30, 6:30pm Join us for a free screening. Local food growers answer questions immediately following the screening. The *Edible Economy* initiative in Bloomington-Normal is co-sponsoring this event.

A Midsummer Knight's READ - The Summer Reading Program (See the full summer schedule on the library website: towandalibrary.org)

June 15 10:30 am Medieval Games: Youth learn about the hierarchy of medieval society when they dress like pieces of a chess set and face off in a life-size chess match. Will you be the knight or the king?

Other age-appropriate games and stories for the younger set, too.

June 21 5:30 pm Ecology Action Center: Resources are scarce and should be used wisely no matter what era you are born. Frugality in medieval times was a necessity – now it is smart!

June 22 10:30 am Medieval Luxuries: Books were luxury items in medieval times. Few people could read and write. Begging the king to see the royal library was common. We will make books.

June 22 10:30 a.m. Practice begins for the Reader's Theater Plays that youth will perform for their families at the July 26th (5:30) Medieval Feast.

June 29 10:30 am Medieval Arts/Crafts: Festivals with acrobats and magic shows were common forms of entertainment during this time. Wire jewelry and magic tricks are in the works today.

FRIENDS of the Library Meeting: Monday, June 20th at 6:00 p.m. at the library. Planning for the July 4th Book Sale and Summer Reading culminating activity - a Medieval Feast.

TOWANDA READS: Monday, June 20th at 7:00 p.m. at the library. We are reading *The 19th Wife* by David Ebershoff.

The Towanda 4-H Club

The Towanda 4-H Club will meet at 3:15 p.m. on Tues., June 7th at Miller Park Zoo. We will have a presentation on the different types of bugs and insects that are displayed at the zoo. After the presentation, members and parents are welcome to visit the zoo if desired. If you need a ride to get there, Kathy Schulz will be at the Community Center till 2:45. Our Juinor Leader will be Jenny Glasscock. If we are doing talks and demonstrations: C. Kinsella. Rvan Kraft. A. Lovel.



Classifieds

For Hire:

McKenzie Hayes, Age 15, will babysit



Towanda Busy Bees 4-H Sponsor June 24 Blood Drive

The Towanda Busy Bees 4-H Club is sponsoring the 18th Annual Red Cross Blood Drive on Tuesday, June 21 at the Towanda Community Building. Donation appointments can be scheduled between 3:00 PM and 6:45 PM. If you donated blood on or before April 26, 2011 (March 1, 2011 for double red cell donation), you may be eligible to give blood again on June 21. A blood donation takes approximately 45-60 minutes.

Eligible donors must be in good health; feel well the day of the donation; weigh between 110-350 lbs; be at least 17 years old (16 year olds may donate in Illinois with the approved consent form signed by a parent.); have vital signs within criteria. Remember to bring IDENTIFICATION or your Red Cross donor card so you can donate!

Every two seconds, someone in this country needs blood. There is fewer than ten percent of the eligible population actually donating each year. There are 10-12 pints in our bodies and a single pint can help save three lives. As an added incentive, all presenting donor (ages 21 and older) between May 16 and September 7, 2011 will have a chance to win a trip for four to Orlando, FL. All presenting donors of all ages are eligible to win other fun summer prizes during holiday timeframes!

Please help us in reaching our goal of 25 units donated. Call Pat Pulokas, 728-2118 or Janet Morris, 664-0360 to make an appointment. Walk-ins will be accepted. Be a "Holiday Hero" and give the gift of life.

Towanda HCE



The Towanda HCE will meet for their June Outing on Saturday, June 11 at the Towanda Community to motor to Atlanta, IL. The Show Bus will leave the CB at 9:15 am. We will tour the JH Hawes Grain Elevator Museum, lunch at the Route 66 Palms Grill and then tour the RGW Candy Company where we might be able to make our own candy. We should arrive back at the community Building around 2:45 pm. Please RSVP to Kathleen Emery, 728-2784 by June 1.

There will also be a short meeting of the group on Monday, June 13, 7 pm to discuss the upcoming Spaghetti Supper plans.

The Towanda HCE Spaghetti Supper is Sunday, July 3, 4:30-7:00 pm at the Towanda Community Building. Advance Ticket Prices: Adults \$5, Children \$3; At Door Prices \$1 more each. Contact any HCE members or Pat Pulokas, 728-2118 or Cindy Kelley, 663-4796 for ticket information. Avanti's spaghetti, bread, and salad plus homemade desserts and drinks will be served. Carry out is available. Plan now to preview the July 4 Flea Market and come eat some good food.



Towanda Seniors

The Towanda Seniors will meet at Shannon's Restaurant in Bloomington for lunch at 11:30 for their June 8th monthly meeting. If you have any questions please contact Beverly Meginnes at 728-2769.

Towanda 4th of July Events

July 3rd

4:30 - 7 - Spaghetti Dinner at Community Building
7:45 - Miss and Master Announcement
8:00 - 12:00 Hillbilly Jones Band will be performing in South Park (Raffle Tickets / Concessions for sale.)

July 4th

7:00 AM: Flea Market in North and South parks – ALL DAY EVENT
8:45 – 9:30 Parade Line Up
10:00 - Parade Begins throughout Towanda
DUSK: FIREWORKS (LAUNCHED FROM TOWNSHIP SHED EAST OF TOWN)

4th of July Miss and Master Entry Form

The contest is for girls and boys 5-8 years old. Previous winners are ineligible. Complete the entry form below and turn it in at the library by Saturday, June 18th. (NO PHOTOS NECESSARY). Winners will be notified by Thursday, June 23. They will be announced at 7:45 PM on July 3rd, before the South Park dance, and will ride in the parade on July 4th. Lineup for the parade will be at 9:30 AM in front of the school. Any questions, call Heather Luschen 728-2840.

Childs Name: _____ Gender _____ Age _____

Parents Name: _____ Phone: _____

Parents signature: _____



43rd ANNUAL

Towanda 4th of JULY CELEBRATION – 2011

Towanda, Illinois 61776

(Exit 171 - on I-55; 7 miles North-East of Bloomington)

Website: <http://towandajuly4.com>

Sunday, July 3, 2011

7:30 – 11:00 am Full Breakfast Served *Legion Hall on Hely St*

4:30 – 7:00 pm Spaghetti Dinner *Community Building*

The Following Events will be held at South Park

7:45 pm Miss / Master Introduced

8:00 – 12:00 pm Community Dance – *Hillbilly Jones*

Monday, July 4, 2011

All Day Flea Market & Food Concessions *North & South Parks*

8:45-9:30 am Parade Lineup *School*

10:00 am Parade Begins

Dusk Fireworks *Set off from Township Building .8 mile East of Towanda on 1900 North Road*

Sunday, July 3

BREAKFAST

Menu: scrambled eggs, egg casserole, sausage, bacon, hash brown potatoes, biscuits and gravy, pancakes, fruit and drink. Serving 7:30-11:00 am at Legion Hall on Hely St/County 29. Carry outs are available. Tickets are at the door ~ \$8.00.

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Spaghetti, salad, bread prepared by Avanti's; and homemade dessert and beverage, at the Community Bldg 4:30-7:00 pm. Advance tickets (\$5/adult; \$3/child 9 & younger, + \$1.00 at door); available from members or call ... Pat Pulokas, 728-2118
Cindy Kelley, 663-4796

CONCESSIONS

'Walk-around' food is available in both North and South Parks

MISS & MASTER

The Miss and Master will be introduced and presented with trophies at 7:45 pm in South Park (and ride in the Parade).

Girls & Boys 5-8 years old ~ pick up and turn in entry form, no photos, at the Library by Monday, June 27. (previously crowned Misses or Masters are not eligible).

Heather Lueschen ~ 826-8735

COMMUNITY DANCE and ENTERTAINMENT

Hillybilly Jones is providing music for the community dance to be held on the tennis court in South Park ~ beginning after the 7:45 pm program and continuing until 11:00 pm.

Bring lawn chairs.

Monday, July 4

FLEA MARKET

The Flea Market will be held all day in North and South Parks. Furniture, primitives, bottles, coins, art glass, china, pressed and cut glass, jewelry, brass and copper, handcrafted items, books, clocks, antiques, collectibles; many booths will have LOTS of items for sale.

Admission is free; dealer space reserved @ \$35.

Linda Potts ~ 728-2384

FOOD CONCESSIONS

Scouts ~ pork chop sandwiches, hot dogs, dessert, drinks, etc. at Community Building.

Lions Club ~ sno-cones in North Park

Family Fryer ~ ribbon potatoes, tenderloins, corn dogs, fried vegetables, elephant ears, etc. in North Park

Jay's Concession ~ Italian beef, chicken breast, ham & pork sandwiches, rib tips, etc. in South Park

PARADE

"Celebrate our Family Farm Heritage"

8:45 am Registration and line up at Towanda School

9:45 am Grand Marshal Award presented to the float that best represents the parade theme.

10:00 am Parade 'steps off' from the school

Parade Route: Adams & East St go West; Jefferson turn North; Washington go East; Madison turn South; Monroe go East; and Taylor go South and exit at Hely and the school playground.

Participants: Miss & Master & Court; Grand Marshal, Tin Lizzies; Community Band; Calliope; elected dignitaries and candidates; floats; Towanda's volunteer firemen; lots of antique tractors, cars and other vehicles, bicyclers, walkers.

Special Parade Unit: 'The 50 American Flags Living Memorial' is a spectacular and breathtaking unit!
Local flag bearers will carry the flags in the parade!

Older youth and adults are asked to call to sign up (route is hilly and about 1 mile long).

Speed Check-in and FLAGS for those who are pre-registered. No fee to participate; but donations are appreciated.

Gail Ann Briggs ~ 728-2187

FIREWORKS ~ at Dusk !!

This year the fireworks will be set off from the Towanda Township Building about .8 miles East of the Towanda on 1900 North Road. The display will be clearly visible from town.



Ecology Action Center launches Green Community Calendar

The Ecology Action Center is going back to its roots in creating opportunities for the Bloomington-Normal community to be more aware of environmental events and happenings. The new BN Green (*Bein' Green*) Events Calendar is a community-wide calendar for local organizations and agencies to promote special events, workshops, classes, and more; any local happening with an environmental focus may be submitted to the calendar. The calendar is found at www.bn-green.org and there is no fee to submit events to the calendar.

In addition to finding event listings area residents may follow events on the calendar using RSS feeds or can share events with friends using social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google Buzz, or even save events to calendars such as Google Calendar, iCalendar, vCalendar, Yahoo! Calendar, or Windows Live Calendar. Users may also keep in touch via their mobile phones using the mobile version of the site found at <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/calendar/events/m>.

The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit walk-in information and environmental education center with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.

Ecology Action Center to hold Composter Workshop

The Ecology Action Center is excited to announce its build-your-own-composter workshop. Backyard composting is the easiest way to reduce garbage from home and create rich soil nutrients to feed the garden at the same time. By taking advantage of natural processes, the amount of residential waste being landfilled can be reduced while also producing a valuable organic fertilizer.

The composter workshops will include everything needed to successfully begin home composting. Various types of compost systems and techniques will be discussed in addition to troubleshooting tips to avoid potential problems. In addition, each workshop will include a discussion on vermicomposting, or composting with worms. Participants will make and take home two 32-gallon composters ready for use as well as receiving a kitchen compost pail.

The composting workshop is scheduled for Thursday, June 2 at 5:30 p.m. Workshop space is limited and pre-registration is required; registration forms are available for download at www.ecologyactioncenter.org on the BN Green Events Calendar or by stopping by the Ecology Action Center at 202 West College in Normal. The cost is \$20.00 for EAC members and \$25.00 for non-members. For more information, call the Ecology Action Center at (309) 454-3169 or email khall@ecologyactioncenter.org.

The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit walk-in information and environmental education center with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.



Ecology Action Center

Ecology Action Center Celebrates 40 Years with 40 Green Ideas

In recognition of the fortieth anniversary of its origins, the Ecology Action Center is releasing a daily Green Idea for ways residents can help in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.

Day 18 - Take Pride in Your Organic Lawn

(Continuing from Day 17 in the May newsletter)

We have been convinced that a weed-free lawn is what we are supposed to have, but treatments for that lawn involve toxins that have been statistically linked to many health problems, including cancers, neurological disorders, asthma and most of all leukemia. The health of the workers in the manufacturing facilities, the applicators, anyone who comes in contact with chemicals, including pets and birds are at risk. There are also even more problems when the rain carries the chemicals into water supplies.

Please be kind to your families, pets and everyone involved and enjoy the health and biodiversity of a toxin-free lawn. Brag to your neighbors about your act of caring and responsibility for helping to make the world a better place to live. Organic fertilizer is available for sale at the Ecology Action Center, or you can make your own by composting. For further information, look at the websites listed below.

<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns> <http://www.chem-tox.com/pesticides>

<http://www.eartheasy.com/blog/2009/01/lawn-care-chemicals-how-toxic-are-they>

<http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/yard-smart/>

Day 19 - Recycle Your Electronics

The United States now dumps between 300 million and 400 million electronic items (e-waste) per year, and less than 20 percent of that e-waste is recycled. E-waste represents two percent of America's trash in landfills, but it equals 70 percent of overall toxic waste. E-waste is very hazardous to the environment. It not only takes up precious landfill space, but also leaches toxic substances into the land, air and water. Some of these contaminants include lead, cadmium, beryllium and mercury, all of which are harmful to human health and the environment.

The impact of e-waste on the environment can be drastically reduced by recycling your electronics when you are finished with them. The process saves virgin resources from needing to be mined, it frees up landfill space and it reduces the amount of energy needed to make new electronics.

Recycling electronics is easier now than ever, and you may be surprised as to how many items can be recycled. Recyclable items go beyond just televisions and computer monitors, but can be stereos, hair dryers, microwaves, blenders and all types of computer memory items.

Residents can recycle their old electronics at the follow places. The Normal Public Works Garage and Morris Tick accept the widest variety of items.

Normal Public Works Garage - all electronics and electronic media (DVD, CD, VHS, etc.)

<http://www.normal.org/gov/publicworks/waste/Electronics.asp>

Morris Tick Recyclers - many electronics and small appliances

<http://www.morristick.com/html/recycling.html>

Best Buy (309) 663-8090 - computer, TVs, and other items. \$10 fee but you receive a \$10 gift card

Goodwill Industries (309) 451-1010 - computers, computer peripherals

Day 20 - Use Natural Cleaning Supplies

Cleaning supplies are expensive and often contain harsh chemicals. Detergents, degreasers, stain removers and pesticides turn homes into chemical factories, endangering the environment by contaminating groundwater, lakes and oceans. One of the biggest culprits for ocean pollution is phosphates, which are commonly found in laundry detergents and some other cleaning products. On average, a person uses about 30 pounds of laundry detergent a year. High phosphate levels kill aquatic life. Chemical levels are also about 70 times greater inside our own homes than they are outside. Over 100 chemicals commonly found in homes have been linked to allergies, birth defects, cancers, psychological problems, skin reactions, headaches, chronic fatigue, chest pain, dizziness, insomnia, asthma and the list goes on. Homemakers have a 55 percent higher risk of getting cancer due to the cleaning products they are exposed to every day. Reduce your household hazardous waste and use natural cleaning products. For further information about safer cleaning alternatives, visit <http://ecologyactioncenter.org/waste-solutions/hhw%20alternatives.shtml>

Day 21 - Get Your Kids Outside

Today's young children are spending more and more time indoors and in front of screens than playing outside and enjoying the natural environment. This can have many adverse effects, which are pointed out in the book *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv. "Nature Deficit Disorder," as Louv calls it, is associated with higher rates of childhood obesity and attention deficit disorder, along with a lack of concern for the natural environment. Today's adult environmental stewards generally grew up more in touch with nature, playing outside more often and appreciating what the natural environment has to offer. Because of this, they have a greater concern in adulthood for the care of the planet and sustainability. Today's children have more screen time than outdoor time and are therefore not able to form a connection with and appreciation for nature, which carries on into their adult life. For the sake of our planet's future, it is crucial for children to get outside and form a connection with the natural world.

To get your kids and family outside, you can participate in local events at the Sugar Grove Nature Center. Saturday, May 7th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. is the Family Nature Exploration Day. Join them for this free event that includes a guided nature hike, crafts and animal feeding time. More information on the event can be found at <http://www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org/programs-events-may.htm>.

For more information on children and the environment, you can check out *Last Child in the Woods* from your local library or any of these websites listed below. www.cnaturenet.org www.kidsoutside.info/bilofrights.php www.naturerocks.org

Day 22 - Save Energy At Home Through Conscious Usage of Your Appliances

Before using your regular go-to appliance, think of other, more energy-efficient options. Limit your stove, oven and clothes dryer use in the summer as these appliances create more heat in your house and will make your air conditioner work harder (if you use one). Instead, make recipes that can be cooked on an outdoor grill or in the microwave and dry clothes on an outdoor clothes line. If you do use the dryer or dishwasher, postpone the cycle until later at night when temperatures are cooler. This can also help to save money on bills, as energy demand is lower at night. With a dishwasher, avoid a heated drying cycle and let the dishes air-dry by opening the door at the end of the final rinse. In the summer, you can also keep your air conditioner set at a higher temperature and supplement it with fans in occupied rooms to create a breeze and keep air flowing. A little bit of thought put towards the way that you typically use appliances in your home can result in big benefits for the environment and your wallet.

Day 23 - Radon awareness

Radon is a radioactive, colorless, odorless gas derived from the radioactive decay of uranium in the soil. The United States Environmental Protection Agency considers radon an environmental health concern because it is the second leading cause of lung cancer, surpassed only by smoking. Radon gas decays into airborne radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs. As these particles decay further, they release small bursts of radioactive energy that can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer over the course of your lifetime.

The only way to find out if your home has radon is to purchase an inexpensive radon test kit, which can save your life if your home tests positive. If your home tests positive for radon, there are easy measures that can be taken to remedy the problem.

Test kits are available for purchase at the Ecology Action Center for \$10. For further information on radon, visit the websites below. <http://radonmclean.org/> www.epa.gov/radon

Day 24 - Conserve Water

In the Midwest, we are fortunate in that we do not currently face a pressing water crisis. Most places in the world, however, are not so lucky and we soon may not be either. Less than one percent of the Earth's water is available for human consumption, as the other 99 percent is either saltwater or tied up in glaciers. We are increasingly using more and more water as a society, which the natural environment cannot keep up with. We are depleting our water supplies and putting too much stress on the natural ecosystems that provide us with this finite resource. By 2025, it is estimated that two-thirds of the world's population will live in water-stressed countries.

Small steps can be taken to prevent water scarcity from becoming an irreversible problem and every little bit helps. In your daily routine, you can take short showers instead of baths, as baths use considerably more water. According to the EPA, a five-minute shower requires 10 to 25 gallons while a full tub holds about 70 gallons of water. Another easy thing you can do is to only run your dishwasher and washing machines with full loads to make them more efficient. Along the same line, washing dishes in the dishwasher is much more efficient (with both water and energy) than washing them by hand. A newer energy efficient dishwasher can save as much as 5,000 gallons of water per year when used instead of hand washing!

There are even bigger steps that you can take to reduce your water consumption. One of the easiest things to do is to use a rain barrel (available at the Ecology Action Center) to water your garden and lawn. You can also install faucet aerators and low-flow shower heads on your fixtures, which will easily pay for themselves in a short amount of time. If you are looking to upgrade appliances (dishwasher or washing machine) in your home, check the water usage before making a decision and opt for the model with the lowest water footprint. Lastly, if you are in the market for a new toilet, choose a low-flow or dual flush model to stop flushing away extra clean water. For further tips on water conservation, visit www.wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserv/index.php.

Day 25 - Replace Incandescent Light Bulbs With CFL or LED Lighting

Did you know that if every home in America replaced only five incandescent light bulbs with CFL's, it would save energy equivalent to taking eight million cars off the road? The energy saved by replacing one 100-watt incandescent bulb with a CFL, over its lifetime, is enough to drive a Prius hybrid from New York to San Francisco!

CFL bulbs save electricity and save you money on your electric bill. Reduce household hazardous

waste and use CFL's. For more information about CFL's, visit www.ecologyactioncenter.org/waste-solutions/cfl.shtml.

Day 26 - Make Thoughtful Choices Where Potential Hazardous Wastes Are Concerned

Our lives are full of chemical products that help us clean and beautify our living spaces. Many of these chemicals are considered hazardous wastes when we try to dispose of the leftovers. Household hazardous waste disposal in Illinois is a problematic issue right now. The collection events that historically have happened in McLean County were funded by the State of Illinois, and state funding is not currently available.

We can't do anything about the hazardous wastes residents might already have that need to be disposed of, but we can certainly recommend some different choices in products people buy moving forward. Read labels carefully, and buy products that are NOT considered hazardous! If you must buy something that falls into the hazardous classification, be sure to buy the smallest amount you will need, and use the entire amount.

There are several choices that are fairly painless. For example, use latex paint instead of oil based paint. Leftover latex paint can be dried and disposed of with regular household trash. Use green cleaners in your home as opposed to more toxic or corrosive cleaners. Try using natural and traditional pest repellents in your yard instead of insecticides or natural soil amendments instead of synthetic fertilizers.

For more alternative choices, please refer to the document below, from the EAC's website. <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/doc/Alternatives%20to%20HHW%20Products.pdf>.

Day 27 - Join the Local Food Movement

The average food on an American's plate travels about 1,500 miles before it is consumed. The corn that is grown in Central Illinois must travel to different parts of the nation before it ends up back on our plate, often traveling up to 1,800 miles just to end up where it began. In addition to that, the U.S. food production industry accounts for 17 percent of our petroleum use.

Becoming a "locavore" will reduce your dependence on petroleum and lower your carbon footprint, all while it allows you to eat fresh and nutritious (often organic) food and support your local community.

Check out Downtown Bloomington Farmer's market (www.downtownbloomington.org/index.php?id=6) which opens on May 14th for a great selection of local food. You can also join a CSA (community supported agriculture) to get a wide variety of produce throughout the season.

The Heartland Local Food Network (www.hlfn.org) is a local non-profit working to promote a sustainable local food system.

www.LocalHarvest.org is a great site to look at to find out what local food options are in your area. Even if you are shopping at your local grocery store, many are beginning to carry local items, which are labeled. If they don't have any, request it!

Day 28 - Drive Less

Nationally, the transportation sector is responsible for one-third of all man-made carbon dioxide emissions and consumes 67 percent of all U.S. petroleum. Our heavy dependence on the automobile contributes to congestion, sprawl, water pollution to do runoff, greenhouse gas emissions

and the extraction of oil from sensitive places. The average person can save about 143 gallons of gasoline and keep about 2,778 pounds of CO₂ out of the atmosphere by driving two days less each week. In Bloomington-Normal, we collectively purchase 135,000 gallons of gas every day. At 20 pounds of CO₂ per gallon of gas burned, that's almost 3 million pounds, or 1,350 tons, of CO₂ generated from the gas we purchase in B-N daily. Not only are walking, biking and rollerblading better for the environment, but they are also much cheaper and great forms of exercise. For long distances, carpool, public buses or trains are great alternatives.

Good to Go is an ongoing community-wide project of GLT and ISU Sustainability designed to encourage healthy lifestyles and promote the use of alternative transportation instead of driving alone. The Commuter Challenge Kick-Off is May 14th and is a great way to challenge yourself to use more sustainable transportation.

For more Good to Go events, visit www.wglt.org/goodtogo/Calendar.

Day 29 - Grow Your Own Vegetables in Your Yard

Seeds are inexpensive and will provide a lot of nutritious and delicious produce. A vegetable garden will decrease your dependence on conventional agriculture, save you money, provide you with healthier food and allow you to eat more locally-grown food, which decreases your "farm-to-fork" mileage.

Make sure to plant seeds that are in season to ensure that they will grow properly. And watch out if lawn care companies tend to your yard as any chemicals they use on the yard may get onto your plants.

Visit the websites below for further information.

www.localharvest.org www.web.extension.illinois.edu/vegguide/tensteps.cfm
www.homefarming.com/category/1

Day 30 -Have your Home Energy Audited

In the USA, buildings account for 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions and 70% of our electricity use. You can save a lot of energy and a lot of money by sealing the leaks in your house and adding adequate insulation. Older homes especially have a lot of efficiency to gain, as they were generally built with inadequate insulation and they are more likely to have leaks in their exterior. Have an energy audit of your house performed to learn what's needed and to help you prioritize what can be done.

An energy audit can point you to the most cost-effective options, such as caulking your windows and doors, which will save the most energy (and money) in the long run. Act On Energy and Energistics (links below) offer inexpensive energy audits, while Mid-Central Community has a weatherization program for eligible low-income residents.

<http://www.actonenergy.com/for-my-home/residential-incentive-programs/discounts-on-home-energy-performance-measures/e-home-energy-audits-incentives.asp/>

<http://www.mccainc.org/programs/community-services/energy-assistance/weatherization/>

<http://www.energisticsolutions.com/home-energy-audits-great-information-existing-homes>

Day 31 – Use rechargeable batteries!

Don't bother with single use batteries that are bad for you and bad for the environment. Reduce your household hazardous waste and save money by using rechargeable batteries. For information on where to recycle your batteries, visit: <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/waste-solutions/disposal-household.shtml>

Day 32 – Install a Rain Garden to Protect Clean Water

A rain garden is a shallow area planted with native plants that tolerate wet as well as drought conditions. When implemented, a rain garden can help to alleviate many pressures that our lifestyles place on the environment. It can reduce flooding and keep excess water from entering stormdrains, which keeps pollutants like fertilizers, automotive fluids, and other chemicals out of our fresh water supply. When paired with native plants, a rain garden can also help to filter out pollutants and keep our water clean. Rain gardens also allow about 30% more water (compared to a similar patch of lawn) to infiltrate into the soil and recharge groundwater. On top of these benefits, a rain garden provides natural beauty and helps to restore the native landscape of Illinois.

Rain gardens are easy to install and once developed, are incredibly easy to maintain because of the native plants that can tolerate the extreme weather changes. To see a rain garden in action, visit the Davis Lodge at Lake Bloomington. For more rain garden resources, visit:

<http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/clean-water/rain-gardens.shtml> <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/champaign/homeowners/051007.html> http://www.standingupforillinois.org/cleanwater/rg_create.php http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/raingarden_design/whatisaraingarden.htm

Day 33 – Use a rain barrel in your yard!

Rain barrels are an excellent way to reduce your impact on the environment. One major benefit is that they provide you with free rainwater to water your garden and yard. Instead of using highly processed drinking water to water your garden, you can use free and natural rainwater. This reduces your municipal water consumption (and therefore bill) and decreases the pressure placed on local water supplies, which are having a hard time keeping up with the increased water demand. Rain barrels also reduce storm water runoff pollution, which occurs when rainwater collects pollutants, including motor oils, fertilizers, and pesticides, and washes them into drains and then carries them into streams, causing harm to the local water supplies

Be sure to check out the events calendar at www.ecologyactioncenter.org for upcoming rain barrel workshops to begin harvesting rainwater soon! For more information on rain barrels, visit <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/clean-water/rain-barrels.shtml>.

Day 34 – Keep your home cool without using air conditioning

Air conditioners use an enormous amount of energy and can count for up to half of a home's yearly energy bill. You can keep your home cool without the use of an air conditioner in a number of ways.

The first is to use fans in the rooms that you occupy. Ceiling fans and movable fans are great for circulating air and creating a breeze, while using about 1/30 of the energy needed to run an air conditioning unit. The use of fans alone can make a room feel 2-3 degrees cooler. Fans can be especially effective when paired with another. One draws cooler air in and the other pushes warm air out to create a draft and cooling effect. If you have a whole house fan, that can help to move warmer air out of your house as well, while only using a fraction of the energy needed for air conditioners.

Another easy thing you can do is to open windows at night, when the temperature is cooler, and close them in the morning to keep the cool air in your house for as long as possible. Closing blinds and curtains on windows will also keep the sun from heating up your home and will reduce drafts and keep the cool air in. Using some or all of these techniques will help you to make it through warm summer days without using your air conditioner, therefore saving energy and money.

Day 35 – Use reusable rags instead of paper towels

Paper towels cost money and you just throw them away after one use. Instead, use reusable rags and to clean up messes and washable cloth towels for drying hands. Reduce your waste by avoiding disposables wherever you can. For more information about waste reduction solutions, visit: <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/waste-solutions/>

Day 36 – Use native plants in your yard!

The benefits of native plants are endless. They require fewer artificial fertilizers and chemicals to survive, they support the local and native population of animals and insects, they require next to no watering to thrive, they are easier and cheaper to maintain, and they can help keep pollutants out of our water supply.

<http://www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org/programs-events-april.htm>
<http://www.for-wild.org/chapters/ilprairie/index.html>
<http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/~kenr/prairienativelinks.html>

Day 37 – Be Yard Smart!

We want a lot from our yards. We want them to bring beauty to our home and neighborhood. We want to invite play, laughter, and gatherings with family and friends. We want to provide sanctuary from the hectic daily busy-ness.

But sometimes our attempts to “beautify” our yards can cause unintended harm, especially when synthetic pesticides (like weed killers and insecticides) are used. The simple choices we make for yard care can have a big impact on the health of the whole community, from the water we drink, to the air we breathe.

Ecologically sustainable “Smart Yards” are safe for children, adults, pets, wildlife and all living things, conserve natural resources like water and fossil fuels, support native diversity in plants and wildlife, do not pollute air, soil or water, work with (not against) nature, and avoid or minimize synthetic pesticides and high-nitrogen fertilizers.

The Ecology Action Center wants to help you by Yard Smart; numerous fact sheets and resources are available for free at www.yardsmart.info. You can even apply for Yard Smart Certification to recognize your efforts and encourage your neighbors to do the same. For inspiration, join the EAC on the annual Yard Smart Garden Walk on June 25, visiting several area yards and gardens that utilize these practices but are diverse and beautiful. Sign up for this free event by calling (309) 454-3169.

Day 38 – Find new homes for unneeded items via Freecycle

The best way to reduce your environmental impact is to not make any waste at all. By offering your unwanted items on Freecycle, they can find a new home and not become another victim of our throwaway society. Somebody out there may be looking for the exact item that you no longer want, making it a win-win situation. Because they are taking an item off of your hands, a new item does

not need to be created, keeping that burden off of the planet as well. Offer your unwanted items on McLean County Freecycle at <http://groups.freecycle.org/McFreecycle/>

Day 39 – Take time and enjoy and appreciate nature; share your favorite places and experiences with family and friends

Take a hike, go bird watching, take a walk in a local park, get up early to watch the sunrise, stay up late to see shooting stars, dig a hole in your yard and see what you find, go for a walk in the rain and see what is going on, listen to frogs at the lakes, watch for bats emerging at sundown and their acrobatics, sit still under a tree in the woods for an hour and see what passes by, or choose another of thousands of activities that you can do outside.

Nature has so much to offer us, but we often do not take the time to appreciate it. The most beautiful things can be found in nature, none of which can be replicated by people. In order for us to care about the future of the planet, we must first have a connection with it. By spending time outdoors and appreciating what the natural world has to offer us, we can instill in ourselves and others a respect for our home and a desire to take care of it responsibly.

Day 40 – Wake up, become aware, start talking with those around you, and take action

Focus your energy. Pick one issue that you are truly concerned about. Learn more about it, then more, then still more, until you really know about that issue. Then get involved in helping to make changes. Talk to others, get little groups going, start taking action. Remember the words of Margaret Mead: *"Never underestimate the power of concerned individuals to change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has."*

Follow the 40 days of 40 Green Ideas at www.ecologyactioncenter.org, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/EcologyActionCenter, or on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ecoactioncenter>.

The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit walk-in information and environmental education center with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.