

Dear ATLA Friends,

A mind shift is occurring and there is explosion of activities happening here in Wellington and around the World. You are living in a unique period of change and hopefully a paradigm shift. We all have different starting points and we engage where we can.

Thanks for your support. We have attached a newsletter, and submission written on the Ngauranga to Airport Strategic Transport Study.... or "Help keep Wellington on the Move". The time for submissions has been extended by a week, so you can still write one of your own, or sign the Option3 Card drafted by 5 different groups.

Our next ATLA committee meeting is on Monday 25th Feb, ...do come along if you want to have some input on our direction.

Best wishes,

Paul Bruce
President ATLA.

ATLA committee meeting 7.30pm Monday 25th February 2008

***Venue: Wellington City Council, Committee Room 1
(enter by atrium off Wakefield St, round to the right on the ground floor)***

Agenda to include:

Meetings & activities for coming year.
Change Makers meeting VUW Cotton 304 12th March
ATLA membership flier and subscriptions
MoE State of our Environment report

Apologies to:

Paul.Bruce@paradise.net.nz

Tel 04 972 8699, 021 02719370

Rethinking Consumption: a symposium on sustainable consumption 12-13 March (separate pdf attached)

A two-day symposium to discuss the issues around sustainable consumption (and production). This event will enable you to share ideas and knowledge with other key thinkers and implementers to develop more coordinated and effective actions, policy and underlying research in this area.

http://www.motu.org.nz/docs/news/rethinking_consumption.pdf

Workshops on the Market for Sustainability 9.30am-12noon 12 & 17 March - Wellington Chamber of Commerce

A free half-day workshop for business operators & entrepreneurs looking to understand, connect & deliver to sustainability-conscious customers. It will also offer practical information for businesses wanting to operate more sustainably.

Sustainable Households - 7-9pm 6 week course from 28 Feb & again from 16 Oct - Wellington High School's Community Education Centre

Learn how to conserve energy, food and other consumer items used at home, make better use of gardens, minimise waste and adopt more natural ways to sustain living to benefit both yourself and the environment.

Show us 'What's your sustainability?' and Win!

Capture on film the fun and creative ways that you are living smarter, reducing your impact on the environment and saving money. Prizes are a MacBook, Bike to the value of \$2000 and iPods! So grab a camera and show us in 3 minutes or less what living sustainability means to you!

Entries close 28 March 2008.

www.sustainability.govt.nz/upload-videos for further details sustainability.govt.nz

Rainbow Valley

Joe Polaischer died early this morning (14 February) aged 62 from cancer. He had a brain tumour removed in December, and he and his partner Trish attended Heart Politics at Taupo in mid-January with Joe apparently full of vigour and energy, leading and taking part in workshops with his trademark passion.

He was a member of the Greens for a fair few years, and a permaculture exponent well known in Japan and Europe. His legacy is Rainbow Valley Farm near Warkworth - please visit it at www.rainbowvalleyfarm.co.nz

SKIN CARE FOR PLANET EARTH

Brent Clothier FRSNZ, Massey University

The soil-plant-atmosphere ecosystems which cloak the lands of our earth provide valuable ecosystem and economic services.

In a landmark paper in Nature, Costanza et al. (1997) estimated the annual value of 17 terrestrial ecosystem services, all involving the soil-plant-atmosphere system, to be US\$5.74 trillion. When oceanic services were added in, the global value of the earth-surface's natural capital and ecosystem goods and services amounted to US\$33 trillion per year. Gross global economic

productivity only sums to \$18 trillion per yr.

Here in New Zealand, some 20% of our gross domestic product relies on the top 150 mm of our soil. The natural capital value and ecosystem goods and services provided by New Zealand's soil-plant-atmosphere systems are our pots-of-gold. Over the last decade, agriculture has grown at about 4% per annum, more than twice that of other sectors of the economy. This growth spurt has been sustained by intensification of our existing land uses, and the move of intensive land uses onto new soils.

Through intensification we could, as Hawken et al. (1999) assert in their very interesting book 'Natural Capitalism', "... temporarily exceed the carrying capacity of the earth, but put our natural capital into decline". This is a fool's paradise, for they warn that "... the ability to accelerate a car that is low on gasoline does not prove the tank is full".

So, understanding and managing the soil-plant-atmosphere system is therefore critical, not only for our economic futures, but also for the health of our environment, and the wealth of our social systems. Sustainable use of our natural capital will derive from sound policies for resource management, and good land-management practices within agricultural enterprises.

Enhanced scientific understanding of how our soil-plant-atmosphere systems function is a vital means by which we can develop both good policies and sustainable practices. Unfortunately, as Joseph Fourier (1768-1830) lamented, "... nature is [complex and] indifferent to the difficulties it causes scientists"!

However, that is the exciting scientific challenge. It is difficult. It is all joined together. It involves all the sciences: mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, economics and sociology. And the most exciting and fun bits are at the intersections of the disciplines. This is also a challenge for how we manage our education programmes and our science investment schemes.

NZ Transition Towns

Newsletter - Feb 2008

The Transition Towns movement has experienced phenomenal growth in the last few years. From its humble beginnings as a Permaculture design project by students of a Permaculture Design Certificate Course in Kinsale, Ireland in 2005 until today where there are now 39 officially recognised 'Transition Towns' throughout the world with 2 of these in New Zealand! And my experience here in New Zealand, is of numbers of amazingly skilled and talented people stepping up to embrace the Transition Town framework and offer their help. It is frankly outstanding, and this newsletter will only be able to hint at all that has happened since last writing at the end of December.

Making training available for core group members from each locale has been my primary focus since the beginning of the year. Finn MacKessie, Daniel Nepia and Rachael Trotman, all highly skilled and effective trainers and facilitators have generously offered to work together to create a training event. By the end of March it is my hope that we will be able to roll out a programme that offers skills and knowledge to help people involved in Transition initiatives be as effective as they can be. We are looking to create a training which does this while honourably embracing the unique bi-cultural strengths of the peoples of this land.

My vision is for regional training events to be held as soon as is practicable with one being in the central North Island and one in the central South Island. The purpose being to hone the skills of the core group, network, share resources and experiences, and of course have fun building the team of the Transition Towns community in NZ.

A big thank you to Lisa who took time out in her busy schedule - one of her roles is secretary for Permaculture in New Zealand - to offer a day's help to the Transition Network, out of which came this newsletter - cheers!

James Samuel

The News

Transition Handbook

Rob Hopkins (Co-founder of the Transition Towns Initiative) has developed a fabulous resource to assist communities in their own transitions to relocalised and low energy living. The book is currently at the printers and James is working with the local distributor to get a bulk discount.

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***"The Transition concept is one of the big ideas of our time. Peak oil and climate change can so often leave one feeling depressed and disempowered. What I love about the Transition approach is that it is inspirational, harnessing hope instead of guilt, and optimism instead of fear. The Transition Handbook will come to be seen as one of the seminal books which emerged at the end of the Oil Age and which offered a gentle helping hand in the transition to a more local, more human and ultimately more nourishing future." * – Patrick Holden, director of the Soil Association

List of Towns

The following 22 towns are using the Transition Towns process and are sharing information about their activities online on www.transitiontowns.org.nz: Carterton, Coromandel, Feilding, Hawkes Bay, Inglewood, Kapiti, Kaiwaka, Opotiki Coast, *Orewa*, Thames, *Waiheke Island*, Waitati, Whanganui, Wellington: Brooklyn, Hutt Valley, Karori, Wellington Central, Wellington South, Whakatane (Towns in bold have formalised their adoption of the model.)

Some of these towns have expressed interest in the Transition Towns model, but as yet we don't have contact and information page on the Transition Towns Wiki: Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Golden Bay, Grey Lynn, Greymouth, Hamilton, Hampden, Manurewa, Mt Eden, Napier, Oamaru, Palmerston North, Puhoi, Raglan (coming very soon to the wiki), Rotorua, Waipawa, Waitakere City

*Waiheke - First NZ community to get official 'transition status' - *In mid January Transition Waiheke received the fantastic news that they had achieved 'transition status' acknowledging the tremendous work being done by

the core group here on Waiheke as we set about networking with others in the community to find out where people's passion is. The question: "What, if you make it so, would you want to see in place in your region, town or suburb?" This line of questioning has already highlighted a number of people interested in seeing more planting of fruit and other food trees in public spaces - a meeting has been called next week.

Orewa - Close on the heels of Waiheke, Orewa were the second NZ community to get official 'transition status'. They are doing great work, and are most famous for their video support of the Transition process and knowledge sharing (www.deepgreen.co.nz). They are working with their local Civil Defence, who are interested in planning now to avoid peak oil induced civil emergencies that could spread over weeks and months as opposed to days. This is very exciting work indeed.

Whanganui - Trevor and Sara Smith who have been actively researching Peak Oil for the last few years have put together a fantastic draft 'Energy Descent Action Plan' for Whanganui. A core group is being formed and people from the community are stepping up to take on researching, editing and updating specific areas of the draft plan.

Legal Structure

Two NZ Baristers Simon Harvey from Waiheke, and Julie Heath from Hawkes Bay have been working on a legal structure for Transition Towns Aotearoa. Modelled on the NZ Forest and Bird structure where the national organisation has charitable status and the regional branches are able to come under the umbrella of the national organisation without having to recreate the wheel in each community. Organising the structure this way also allows for effective administration and systems support for new and existing groups. The main role of the national hub is to inspire, network, support, encourage and train the core transition town groups that grow out of any regional catchment. If you would like a copy of the draft rules, let me know - I would be very happy if others wanted to check it out and offer comment.

Funding

James has been helped enormously by Rachael Trotman who has made links for Transition Towns Aotearoa, with several funding organisations who are expressing a desire to assist the work of Transition Towns. Another concept that is being explored is finding ways to access funding from within the local regions to support the activities of their communities. Do you have any great funding ideas? Share your local funding initiatives so that others can explore the same avenues in their own locations.

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Getting Transition Ideas Out There*

Transition Towns workshops have been held at a number of fantastic events and festivals over summer. The Prana festival in Coromandel, Organic River Festival in the Horowhenua, The Parihaka International Peace Festival in Taranaki, SoundSplash Eco-Reggae Festival in Raglan have all made space and time available on site for Transition Towns workshops to be held. This weekend James is off to The Good Life Expo at the Hamilton Gardens to speak

and workshop on TTs.

The first steps to embarking on your transition journey

To begin with, it is important to note that although the term "Transition Town" has stuck, what we are talking about are Transition Cities, Transition Islands, Transition Hamlets, Transition Valleys, Transition Anywhere-You-Find-People. If you are thinking about supporting a local Transition Initiative, the first five steps are the ones you will be expected to lead and support. As you will see, step 5 is about allowing the natural process or principle of succession to be enacted. It is then that your role will be replaced with people from the sub groups.

#1. Set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset: This stage puts a core team in place to drive the project forward during the initial phases. We recommend that you form your Steering Group with the aim of getting through stages 2 – 5, and agree that once a minimum of four sub-groups (see #5) are formed, the Steering Group disbands and reforms with a person from each of those groups. This requires a degree of humility, but is very important in order to put the success of the project above the individuals involved. Ultimately your Steering Group should become made up of 1 representative from each sub-group.

***#2. Awareness raising: ***This stage will identify your key allies, build crucial networks and prepare the community in general for the launch of your Transition initiative. For an effective Energy Descent Action plan to evolve, its participants have to understand the potential effects of both Peak Oil and Climate Change – the former demanding a drive to increase community resilience, the later a reduction in carbon footprint. Screenings of key movies (Inconvenient Truth, End of Suburbia, Crude Awakening, Power of Community) along with panels of "experts" to answer questions at the end of each, are very effective. (See next section for the lowdown on all the movies – where to get them, trailers, what the licencing regulations are, doomster rating vs solution rating) Talks by experts in their field of climate change, peak oil and community solutions can be very inspiring. Articles in local papers, interviews on local radio, presentations to existing groups, including schools, are also part of the toolkit to get people aware of the issues and ready to start thinking of solutions.

***#3. Lay the foundations: ***This stage is about networking with existing groups and activists, making clear to them that the Transition Town initiative is designed to incorporate their previous efforts and future inputs by looking at the future in a new way. Acknowledge and honour the work they do, and stress that they have a vital role to play. Give them a concise and accessible overview of peak oil, what it means, how it relates to climate change, how it might affect the community in question, and the key challenges it presents. Set out your thinking about how a Transition Town process might be able to act as a catalyst for getting the community to explore solutions and to begin thinking about grassroots mitigation strategies.

#4. Organise a Great Unleashing: This stage creates a memorable milestone to mark the project's "coming of age", moves it right into the community at large, builds a momentum to propel your initiative forward for the next period of its work and celebrates your community's desire to take action. In terms of timing, we estimate that 6 months to a year after your first "awareness raising" movie screening is about right. The Official Unleashing of Transition Town Totnes was held in September 2006, preceded by about 10 months of talks, film screenings and events. Regarding contents, it'll need to bring people up to speed on Peak Oil and Climate Change, but in a spirit of "we can do something about this" rather than doom and gloom. One item of content that we've seen work very well is a presentation on the practical and psychological barriers to personal change – after all, this is all about what we do as individuals. It needn't be just talks, it could include music, food, opera, break dancing, whatever you feel best reflects your community's intention to embark on this collective adventure.

#5. Form sub groups: Part of the process of developing an Energy Descent Action Plan is tapping into the collective genius of the community. Crucial for this is to set up a number of smaller groups to focus on specific aspects of the process. Each of these groups will develop their own ways of working and their own activities, but will all fall under the umbrella of the project as a whole. Ideally, sub groups are needed for all aspects of life that are required by your community to sustain itself and thrive. Examples of these are: food, waste, energy, education, youth, economics, transport, water, local government. Each of these sub groups is looking at their area and trying to determine the best ways of building community resilience and reducing the carbon footprint. Their solutions will form the backbone of the Energy Descent Action Plan.

www.transitiontowns.org.nz

www.yesterdaysfuture.net

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**If you do not wish to receive future messages -
send a reply with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line.**

ATLA (the Appropriate Technology for Living Association) was set up in 1992 specifically to learn about technologies for sustainable living and pass this information on to the public at large.

ATLA holds public talks on the fourth Monday of each month on a relevant subject. Past topics have included NZ Wind Generation, Earth Building, House Insulation, Energy Efficient House Building, Efficient Transport Systems, a series of environmental lectures on the Race to Save the Planet, Organic Gardening, the Oil Problem, Environmental Problem Solving here and overseas, Healthy Paints and household chemicals, Electric Cars etc.

Appropriate Technology for Living Association

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