

Wild Onion

The Newsletter of the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club

Fourth Quarter 2007

Cool Cities Need Cool Burbs

by Jack Gilroy, Chicago Group Air/Energy Committee

Think the Sierra Club's Cool Cities campaign to fight global warming is aimed only at big cities? Think again.

The Air and Energy Committee of the Sierra Club Chicago chapter will soon be e-mailing its suburban members to encourage them to take an active role in getting their towns to join the campaign.

Cool Cities is a program by which the Sierra Club facilitates adoption of the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and commitment to reduce carbon dioxide pollution to levels targeted by the Kyoto Protocol Global Warming Treaty. At present, there are 666 cities and towns in the U.S. that have made that commitment, including Chicago and 21 others in Illinois.

The goal of the local Committee initiative is to make the Chicago metropolitan area one of the first in the U.S. to have the vast majority of its suburbs as well as its core city as partners in the fight against global warming.

To achieve that goal requires the active involvement of Sierra Club members in the suburbs who can marshal community support for the adoption of the Cool Cities program where they live and monitor the program's progress to ensure that it reaches its environmental benchmarks. Any Sierrans who want to be leaders or participants in their suburb are welcome to join in this effort.

Activists and municipal participants working on Cool Cities initiatives now have the advantage of a new, user-friendly website (<http://coolcities.us>) that provides global warming information, campaign fact sheets and access to the action plans of previous joiners of the program. Free software from the International Commission of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) can also be downloaded from the website by any municipality to measure its current and future levels of CO₂ and other green house gases.



Chicago Group Air/Energy Committee member, Rose Gomez, asks movie goers to sign Illinois Clean Cars postcards before the August 21 Grant Park Screening of An Inconvenient Truth. Credit: Cynthia Linton.

Concerns about global warming have grown dramatically in recent years and Sierra Club members who help persuade the mayors or city council of their home towns to join the Cool Cities response will be playing a vital role in the preservation of our planet.

The way to start is by responding to the soon-to-be-received e-mail from the Air and Energy Committee of the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club or, if you can't wait or aren't on the e-mail list, by contacting Jack Gilroy at jdgilroy@rcn.com to volunteer as a "city-lead" or group volunteer to make Cool Burbs a Chicagoland reality.

Baseball Fundraiser a Great Success: Chicago Group and Cubs both are Winners!

by Christine Williamson, Group Chair

The Chicago Group of the Sierra Club reserved a block of 40 seats at the Aug. 28 Cubs home game against the Milwaukee Brewers.

Little did Take' Yamamoto know way back in April when he reserved the tickets that the Cubs would be locked in a close battle for first place with the Brewers.

On a warm, perfect-baseball weather night, 40 Sierrans watched an exciting game from high above the field on the first base line. Outfielder Jacque Jones, hit a two-run double to tie the game and scored the tie-breaker on an error by Brewers pitcher, Scott Linebrink, to lift the Cubs to a 5-3 victory.

As the next-day game report on cubs.com stated: "How big (was) this series? Not only was Wrigley Field packed with 40,884 sweaty fans, but every rooftop surrounding the ballpark was full. Cub fans clearly outnumbered folks from Wisconsin. Brewers broadcaster Bob Uecker was booed as he tried to lead the crowd in the seventh-inning stretch. Fans in the upper deck then did a better version "a capella."

The Cubs took the lead in the super-exciting bottom of the seventh inning. Then Cubs reliever, Bobby Howry, took the mound in the top of the eighth inning. He faced Brewers pinch-hitter, Gabe Gross. With two Milwaukee players on base with two outs, Howry got Gross up to a 3-2 count, and then Gross proceeded to hit fouls on the next six pitches.



Sierrans Bob Coon, Cory Jones, Chris Williamson and Jennifer Byrd enjoy an evening at Wrigley Field. Photo credit: Bill Bianchi

Howry described his tactic on the 12th pitch to cubs.com as follows: "For eight pitches, you've got the crowd, 40,000 people screaming as loud as they can, and it's a rush. The final pitch was a split, I hung it. I hung it bad enough and it was a big enough change of speed that he got himself out on that one. It wasn't a good enough pitch for me to say I got him out."

Needless to say, the Sierrans in the crowd were screaming their heads off to support the Cubbies! Everyone left the game well-pleased that the Cubs retained their first-place position in the National League's central division.

Late Fall Field Trip: Chicago Household Waste Recycling Facility November 3, 9:30 a.m., 1150 N. North Branch Street, on Goose Island

Back by popular demand, Chicago Group will once again tour the City of Chicago's fabulous (yes, fabulous!) Household Waste Recycling Facility.

Just in time for the holidays, make a clean sweep of your kitchen, basement, home office, garage and garden shed and gather up hazardous household wastes, electronics and cell phones for drop-off. It's great to participate in a "group drop" of our collective clutter to see how big the pile gets to be.

Learn more about why safe disposal of dangerous materials and electronics is essential to safeguarding the environment and see how truly green and energy efficient this year-old facility is.

There also is a "swap" room for useable paint, cleansers, silver polish — almost any product that

comes in a bottle, can or pot that you can think of might end up in the room. Your unused paint might be just the color another person is looking for to brighten up their home.

Brunch at Goose Island will follow for those interested.

The facility accepts the following for recycling or safe disposal: antifreeze, used motor oil, old gasoline, oil-based paints, paint thinners, aerosol paints, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, lawn chemicals, solvents, drain cleaners, cleaning products, pool chemicals, hobby chemicals, mercury, fluorescent lamps and bulbs, computers and cell phones.

Please R.S.V.P. for the tour and/or lunch after October 10 to event leader, Christine Williamson, birdchris@aol.com or evenings 773-935-8439. Limit: 25.

Sustainability Field Trips

November 9-11 and December 8

North Park Village Nature Center

5801 N. Pulaski, Chicago

Chicago Group of the Sierra Club members are invited to a "field trip" of a series of workshops about sustainable urban living.

The workshops are being held across the weekend of November 9-11 at North Park Village Nature Center on Chicago's northwest side and will focus on the idea of eco villages. Eco villages support ways of living that enhance both community and sustainability. Their multiple forms range from intentional communities and co-housing, to friends and neighbors deciding to share more, while green-

ing-up their environment and way of life.

On December 8, Sierrans are invited to learn more about permaculture in an afternoon workshop at the nature center.

Membership chair Bill Bianchi can provide more information about the learning events, where Sierrans can meet to discuss the issues raised, as well as more general information about the Chicago Group's wide range of activities from conservation and habitat restoration to beach clean-ups, political advocacy and social events. Call Bill at 773-935-3346.

Holiday Party and Fundraiser

Wednesday, December 12, 6:30 p.m.

Ethnic Dining — Thailand at P.S. Bangkok 2

2521 N. Halsted, Chicago

The Chicago Group of the Sierra Club has been exploring the cuisines of the world all year long and will end our culinary journey at a Thai restaurant for a fun holiday-season evening.

Our final destination is P. S. Bangkok 2 on Chicago's north side, where a family-style dinner with five entrees and three appetizers will be served. Vegetarians will be accommodated. P.S. Bangkok 2 is BYOB, so feel free to bring along something to enjoy with your meal. Riesling works well with most Thai dishes, as does beer.

Not only will you get to meet fellow Sierrans during the most festive time of the year, but a portion of the fee for the dinner will benefit Chicago Group's conservation programs.

There is a limit of 30 people, so make your reservations early. The reservation deadline is December 5. To R.S.V.P., please send a check for \$17 made payable to Sierra Club to: Take' Yamamoto, 555 W. Cornelia Ave., Apt. 301, Chicago, IL 60657.

If you have any questions, you can contact Take' at 773-528-7812 or ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org

Subscribe to Chicago Group e-News

Chicago Group has a better way to keep members up-to-date with news and events: Chicago Group e-News.

Through e-News, subscribers are kept informed monthly about programs, socials, outings and environmental events in our neighborhoods.

This listserv is for members only; you must have a Sierra Club membership number to sign up. Check the

address label on *Sierra* magazine to find your number.

Take a minute to subscribe online to receive the next issue at <http://Illinois.SierraClub.org/Chicago/e-News>.

For information about Chicago Group's social outings, subscribe to the e-newsletter at: http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/socials/social_listserv.html and check the web at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/outings/>.

Gas Station Boycotts: Use Your Head When You Fill Up

by Cory Jones, Political Chair

As a consumer you can vote every day with your dollar, supporting companies with pro-environment initiatives and avoiding companies that are openly hostile or indifferent to keeping the planet and people safe and healthy.

For the following reasons, we suggest a boycott of these gas stations:

Exxon/Mobil

- ExxonMobil contributes to global warming. ExxonMobil's operations and burning of its products have released an estimated 20.3 billion tons of carbon into the Earth's atmosphere — and that analysis was notated in a report done five years ago.
- ExxonMobil denies that global warming exists. In 2004, ExxonMobil gave \$1.9 million to 26 organizations specifically to challenge the scientific consensus on global warming.
- ExxonMobil refuses to pay court ordered punitive damages from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill. ExxonMobil is still appealing the more than four billion dollars in punitive damages the court ordered it to pay for damages incurred to over 10,000 square miles of water in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska and to the fishermen and Alaskan natives who depended on that ecosystem for their livelihoods.

2) BP/British Petroleum

- Right now, today, BP legally dumps over 1,000

pounds of ammonia and over 3,600 pounds of sludge into Lake Michigan each and every day.

- Although BP has recently promised not to increase its daily dumping of pollution into Lake Michigan, this is just a public statement, not a legally binding agreement.
- BP still holds Indiana EPA permits to legally increase their daily dumping of ammonia by 54 percent and to increase their daily sludge discharge into Lake Michigan by 35 percent.
- Furthermore, BP has not announced any plans to reduce their already high levels of pollution discharging into Lake Michigan.

Shell

- The Bush administration has approved Shell Oil's plan to drill off the coast of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge despite knowing full well that an oil spill in these icy waters could never be cleaned up.
- Shell's plans for drilling makes the Arctic Refuge vulnerable to a catastrophic oil spill that could despoil the shores of our greatest wildlife sanctuary for generations to come.
- According to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.: "It would take just one oil spill on the icebound Beaufort Sea that borders the Arctic Refuge to create a long-term toxic waste site — because the oil industry has no proven method for cleaning up oil in icy water."

Oak Park Environmental Book Club Started

By the time you read this, the new Oak Park Environmental Book club will be in full swing. The club meets every other month starting in September.

Read the books and join the discussion about environ-

mental issues that really matter. Everyone is welcome.

For details on the date and location of the next Oak Park Environmental Book Club, contact Take' Yamamoto at ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org or 773-528-7812.

Chicago Group Information

For information about the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club, check the web site often: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago>. Contact details for group leaders who can answer questions about activities and how you can get more involved can be found on the home page. You may also subscribe to e-News for e-mail delivery of a monthly calendar of activities. To subscribe, click on the Chicago Group e-News box in the right column on the home page.

Chicago Group's newsletter, *Wild Onion*, is a quarterly publication with in-depth news and discussion of local issues. *Wild Onion* — traditionally available in print — now can be sent electronically, saving printing expenses and paper. To receive *Wild Onion* by e-mail, send your name, Sierra Club membership number and e-mail address to editor@illinois.sierraclub.org.
