

Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

## The Inconvenience of Bottles

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If you missed the July 31 Sustainability Symposium, it's running on CityCable 5 during September. Featuring John Kaufmann, Post Carbon Institute, and Dr. Robert Quinn, EWU.

The show times are:

- Saturday, Sept. 6, 9:00 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 11, 9:00 p.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 13, 4:00 p.m., and
- Sunday, Sept. 21, 11:00 a.m.

[GreenSpokane.org](http://GreenSpokane.org)

What beverage is colorless and tasteless and costs you from 500 times more than necessary? We buy about 28 billion bottles of it each year. The answer: bottled water.

Until just this year, bottled water was the fastest growing and had become the largest beverage market in the world. It came out ahead of alcohol, juices and soft drinks, but criticism of the trend has hit the industry in recent months.

Concerns range from waste to actual health benefits. Out of the many billions of bottles sold each year, about 80% wind up in landfills – just like other bottled beverages. It turns out that “Glacier,” “Spring,” or “Mountain” bottled water often doesn't come from those sources at all. At least 40 percent of bottled water is tap water anyway. Even though America's tap water is safe and strictly monitored by the EPA (our aquifer is among the best), Many communities in many countries, and even some in the US are losing water rights to companies that resell their drinking water la-

beled with natural sounding names.

One problem is the plastic bottle itself. The usual plastic is #1 PET (polyethylene terephthalate), which

leach chemicals that are known to be carcinogenic. Particularly when the bottles are reused or stored in warm or hot temperatures. Besides, plastic is made from oil and this is not the time to be wasting fossil fuel. Approximately 1.5 million barrels of oil goes into bottle production annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 cars for a year. And then there's the water required for the plastic: at least 2 litres of water was used to create each 1 litre bottle.

Drinking the recommended daily amount of water using bottled water can cost an average of \$1,400 per year; drinking the same amount from the tap costs around 49 cents for the year. In some cases bottled water can cost 10,000 times more than tap water. The following tips will help you



Example of recycled plastic from [daylife.com](http://daylife.com).

reduce plastic bottles in more creative ways.

- Have multiple **reusable bottles** available. Keep a few filled in the fridge to grab on the go. Have one in your backpack, on your bike, or in the car— wherever would make the most sense for you. Look in the [Conscious Consumer Marketplace](#) for suggestions on where to get nontoxic reusable bottles.
- **Encourage your local city officials** to create a policy to limit municipal spending (i.e., your hard-earned tax dollars) on bottled water to emergency needs only.
- **Talk to your office manager** about the water situation at your workplace. *Continued P.2*

## Redefining "Weeds"

Of 103.9 million households with lawns, more than half (58 million) use insecticides; 40 million use herbicides; 14 million use fungicides.

*Safelawns.org*



Do you remember white clover in your lawn when you were young? Or maybe you remember stepping on honey bees as they cruised the clover flowers for nectar. You can still find it throughout Spokane in the older neighborhoods but many now consider it a weed. Clover is actually good for your lawn. It greatly reduces or eliminates the need for fertilizers, chokes out weeds, and reduces water quality problems associated with runoff from lawns.

In the 40's and 50's White Dutch clover (sometimes called Irish clover or shamrock) was a common addition to lawn grass seed mixes. It is a legume like peas, vetch and beans, and it can take nitrogen from the air and "fix" it into the soil for other plants to use. Nitrogen is vital for healthy plant growth; it's the "N" on your fertilizer bag. But with the advent of chemical fertilizers and the pro-

liferation of herbicides to attack lawn weeds, people began thinking of clover as a weed. We were lead by the chemical companies to believe that a beautiful lawn must be a monoculture of grass - a field of perfect green. Now, to maintain our perfect lawns, without thinking we buy "weed and feed" products to kill weeds and feed the grass at the same time. Unfortunately these products will kill clover too.

The good news is White Dutch clover in lawns is making a come back. Many people are rediscovering its many benefits:

- it grows about four to eight inches high
- it tolerates low mowing well
- spreads to fill in empty spaces
- stays green through dry periods of summer
- provides nitrogen (up to 2 pounds of n/1000



**Clover adds nitrogen to lawns, a main ingredient of commercial fertilizers.**

square feet

- and it looks good especially if it is blended evenly throughout the lawn.

So let's loosen up our ideas about "Lawn Order" and plant some White Dutch clover in our yards. Maybe it will even help bring some honey bees back.

White Dutch clover seed can be found locally at Northwest Seed and Pet and is available from many sites online.

## Bottles, cont'd...



- **Spread the word** to friends and family about the environmental problems and the cost of bottled water. Even though bottled water has really only been popular in the U.S. for about a decade, many people seem to think they couldn't live without it. Remind them that it is entirely possible and

that the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer is ideal for drinking water.

*From the New American Dream's campaign to Break the Water Bottle Habit. See [newdream.org](http://newdream.org) for more information.*

**Visit these links to shop for reusable bottles.**

The popular Nalgene bottle company is phasing out the chemical BPA and has a line of BPA-free products. [REI](#) and [Nubius Organics](#) (online store) carry a variety of products as well.

[Klean Kanteen](#)

[SIGG](#)

[Wellness Filter](#)

[Nalgene](#)

## New Car Powered By... Air!



### News Flash!

On August 15th President Bush signed a **ban on six toxic phthalates**, chemicals used to soften plastics, bringing Americans one step closer to toxin-free toys. This legislative victory comes at a time of growing public concern about unsafe chemicals in consumer products - a movement spearheaded by parents and public health advocates.

### Get rid of Plastic Bags



If you have too many, you can donate them to SNAP's food banks. Please drop them off at the East Central—500 S. Stone, or the North East center—4001 N Cook.

Since 1991 France-based Motor Development International (MDI) has been designing a small commuter car that runs on compressed air. The air cars have been produced in prototypes called the MiniCat (Compressed Air Technology) for in-town driving and the CityCat with a longer driving range. The CityCat can reach 68 mph and has a range of 128 miles, both of these numbers are better than small electric cars.

These cars are producing a lot of interest. The Mexican government has already placed an order with MDI for 40,000 vehicles to replace taxis in highly polluted Mexico City. A U.S. company has purchased the right to build the cars and plans to have them for sale by late 2009 or early 2010. Tata Motors, the largest supplier of cars in India, plans to start building the cars this year.

How do air cars work? Compressed air is stored in very strong and light carbon fiber air tanks at a pressure of over 4,000 pounds per square inch and is slowly released to power a small piston engine. The MiniCat just uses the compressed air while the CityCat preheats the air using a small amount of fuel (gasoline, biofuel, ethanol or other fuels) which expands the air to give it more power and a longer range.

Of course energy isn't free and it takes a lot of energy to store air at such high pressures. MDI claims that service stations with high pressure air pumps could refill the car in 3 minutes. At home, a built in compressor could fill the tanks in about four hours using household electricity. Here in the Northwest, hydropower would produce the electricity to run the air pumps but in most other areas of the

country, coal would produce the electricity. Even with electricity from coal, air cars would be far less polluting than gas powered vehicles.

Air cars are lighter than electric since they don't carry heavy batteries. Since they lack batteries, they reduce the concern of soil and water contamination in junk yards and landfills. They are also more efficient, having a longer range (about one hundred miles) than most of the currently available small electric cars. For example, the three wheeled Zap electric car has a top speed of 40 mph and a range of only 25 mile per charge.

Click here for [another article in Popular Mechanics](#).



## 2nd Annual Spokane Bioneers Conference

For nineteen years, the annual Bioneers Conference in San Rafael, CA has helped to galvanize many writers, biologists, educators, architects, farmers, economists, public servants, scientists, business people, artists, and activists whose work spans many fields and cultures. Together, they offer a dynamic vision for restoring the Earth, combining ecological approaches with social, spiri-

tual and political strategies.

Patty Gates, one of the key organizers of the conference in Spokane said, "The Spokane Bioneers conference offers the opportunity to tap the richness of our region's diversity, inviting people to come together as a learning community to explore new ways of liv-

ing, acting and thinking that will ensure our sustainability."

Spokane will host a satellite conference at Spokane Falls Community College **October 17- 19, 2008**. For information and registration, visit [Sustain-spokane.org](http://Sustain-spokane.org)



# Upcoming Events

**9/4 Feast with Friends** at Arbor Crest Wine Cellars with local food and wine to support Futurewise. Info and tickets at [Futurewise.org](http://Futurewise.org).

**9/6 Spokane Community Gardens Tour** 2nd Annual tour of local community gardens, call Pat Munts 477-2173, see map at [Spokanegardens.com](http://Spokanegardens.com).

**9/7 SpokeFest** Bike ride to Riverside State Park. Pancake feed in Riverfront at 7am, 21 mile loop at 9am, family friendly loop at 10. [Spokefest.org](http://Spokefest.org).

**9/13 Community Building Street Fair** On Main between Brown and Division.

From 12:00-8:00 enjoy music, food, people, and fun.

**9/20 Valley Fest** Weekend long festival with parade, bike ride, car show, logging competition and more! See us at the community resource event on Saturday at Mirabeau Point Park. [Valleyfest.org](http://Valleyfest.org)

**9/20 Persian Comedy Hour** with reception and silent auction for a Spokane Peace Delegation to Iran. Magic Lantern Theater; 7pm. Buy tickets at Merlyn's, 19 W Main.

**9/25-27 Eat With Your Eyes** a sustainable food film festival. Contact Paul Haeder at 879-9337, [paulha@spokanefalls.edu](mailto:paulha@spokanefalls.edu)

**10/4 Spokane River Clean-Up** in High Bridge Park, 9am

**10/17-19 Bioneers** visit [SustainSpokane.org](http://SustainSpokane.org) to see list of local and national speakers and to register.

**10/18 Fall Leaf Festival** in Finch Arboretum,

The **WSU Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners** are offering 4 classes. \$10 per class or \$35 for the series. Call 477-2048, or fill out [online form](#).

**9/20 Water Wise Watering**

**9/27 Xeriscaping Class**

**10/4 Landscaping with Native Plants**

**10/11 Rain Gardens**



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Living Green  
Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs  
212 W 2nd, ste 100  
Spokane, WA 99201

Phone: 509-744-3370  
Fax: 509-744-3374  
E-mail: [livinggreen@snapwa.org](mailto:livinggreen@snapwa.org)

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