

Summer Newsletter, 2006 from Don't Be Fueled! Mothers for Clean and Safe Vehicles

Dear Friends of Don't Be Fueled!,

We hope you are enjoying a happy summer. Those of us who live in the San Francisco Bay Area have been dealing recently with abnormally hot weather for this area. It has felt like a very personal nudge about the effects of global warming.

Global warming does seem to be something about which the public is slowly but surely becoming more aware. We have had mainstream media taking notice. *Time* and *Vanity Fair* for example were just two of the magazines which devoted whole publications to green issues. Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth* and the book of the same name have been seen and read widely. The movie, *Who Killed the Electric Car?* has received great interest and support. We are seeing more book titles and more newspaper articles and more discussion about these issues.

It is easy to think that our actions make little difference, although of course they do. We are all part of the ecological system, linked to everything else on this planet. Sometimes it's hard to realize that being uncaring with resources eventually makes a negative difference to something somewhere in the world. When we all begin to see that link and hold that link, our world can change for the better in every sphere.

We wish for you all this summer a chance to be in the Great Outdoors when, away from our regular lives, it is often easier to feel that connectedness to all there is. We hope you are able to drive less and walk or bicycle more and have precious time to just sit still.

On a practical level we have some suggestions via the Sierra Club of things you can do right now to make positive changes around your own homes. Remember the Three R's – Repair, Reuse and Recycle.

Tip #1 -- Replace Incandescent Bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Lights. If every household in the U.S. replaced one light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL), it would prevent enough pollution to equal the removal of one million cars from the road.

Tip #2 -- Replace Outdoor Lighting with a Motion-Detector Equipped Bulb or Fixture. Outdoor lights that are left on all night can waste energy and disturb wildlife.

Tip #3 -- Lower Your Hot Water Heater to 120 Degrees and Drain Any Sediment. More than 10 percent of your energy bill goes to heating water for your dishwasher, shower, and faucets.

Tip #4 -- Add Insulation to Older Hot-Water Heaters

Tip #5 -- Install a Low-Flow Shower Head

Tip #6 -- Check For and Seal Cracks or Gaps. Taking steps to weatherize your home can make maintaining a comfortable temperature easier and cheaper. Tiny gaps and cracks in an older home are roughly equivalent to a one-foot square hole punched in your wall.

Tip #7 -- Tighten Windows and Loosen Your Budget. If all windows were as efficient as the best products now widely available in the marketplace, the average household would save \$150 a year and reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by about 4,300 pounds per year.

Tip # 8 -- Replace Old Appliances. Look for the Energy Star label as a minimum; some models can be even more efficient. Although buying a new appliance is a major investment, many states and utility companies offer substantial credits or other incentives to replace an outdated appliance with a more efficient one.

Tip # 9 -- Defrost Your Freezer.

Tip # 10 -- Dirty Clothes, Cold Water, Clean Planet. Modern washing machines and detergents can clean clothes effectively in cold water.

Go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/insider/insider2006-07-12.asp> for more energy tips.

Then when it comes to your vehicle, how you maintain, drive and even load your car can affect your gas mileage. Drive gently, dump the trunk junk and check those tires. Find out more at

http://www.businessweek.com/autos/content/jul2006/bw20060726_667830.htm?chan=search

An interesting question we can ask ourselves is “what is the mileage of our calories”? See <http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/200605/decoder.asp> for some details on the mileage cost of transporting food and the reason why buying locally is a fuel saving option.

Is this the summer your teen driver will be acquiring a car? The following article emphasizes that small or midsize cars are a better bet for both safety and fuel economy.

http://money.cnn.com/2006/06/08/Autos/carreviews/cr_best_teen_cars/index.htm

Need to Rent a Car this summer?

EV Rentals specializes in hybrid cars. They are based in Los Angeles and have 425 cars at eight locations. Here's your chance to try out a hybrid.

<http://www.evrental.com/index.php>

Petitions from Don't Be Fueled! Mothers for clean and safe vehicles

If you have not checked our website recently you may have missed the important news that on June 30 our petition signatures, almost one thousand of them, together with those from *New American Dream* were delivered to the Ford company in Detroit. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard on this campaign. Details will follow soon concerning our new petition.

<http://www.dontbefueled.org/>

We have already strongly recommended that everyone sees *An Inconvenient Truth*, the record breaking documentary about global warming but here is a review of another movie which is proving very popular and has been a surprise hit, enjoying a longer run at mainstream theatres than was at first anticipated.

Who Killed The Electric Car

An electric car would seem a great answer to a lot of our troubles: It's quiet, fun to drive uses no gasoline and produces no emissions. And until very recently, people were driving them. What happened? This earnest film goes through the usual suspects - a depressing but not surprising combination of car manufacturers, oil companies and politicians, all profiting from the internal-combustion engine. But the movie has heroes, too, in the electric car owners who complained, protested and investigated when General Motors not only stopped making electric cars but took them back from customers and sent them to be destroyed. If you're not angry by the time this ends, you will be when you walk out of the theater into pollution-fueled smog.

Christy Karrus, Salt Lake Tribune, July 27, 2006

Hybrids Incentives & How They Are Calculated

Federal Incentives Help Fuel a Run on Hybrids

L.A. Times, July 23, 2006

A motorist who is thinking about buying a hybrid vehicle this summer can factor a tax credit of as much as \$3,400 into the purchase decision. However, the brisk pace of hybrid sales could limit how long the tax breaks are available.

The energy law that authorized the breaks includes a trigger that says that once a particular hybrid model has sold more than 60,000 units, the tax break on that model will start to diminish. Three months after the sale of the 60,000th vehicle, buyers will be able to claim just half of the tax credit that's currently available on that car. Six months later, the credit amount will drop to one-quarter of today's level, and then it disappears completely.

Many hybrid models, such as the Honda Insight, don't sell enough to flirt with the limitation anytime soon, but the ever-popular Toyota Prius is already on the cusp. So far this year, 48,156 Prius' have been sold, according to the national dealers association. At today's sales pace, Prius buyers could lose the full tax credit by this fall. That isn't the only complication for buyers. For example, each type of hybrid qualifies for a different level of tax break

Here's how they work:

Each hybrid vehicle actually qualifies for two different tax credits. The first credit is based on how many more miles the hybrid gets per gallon than a similar standard-fuel vehicle.

It's not always easy to calculate. When a manufacturer produces a model with hybrid - and gasoline-engine variants, the assessment is fairly easy. When there's no identical model, government officials work with the manufacturer to make a judgment call.

For more information go to <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-perfin23jul23,1,255223.column>

Some Good News and some Bad News

First, the good:-

End of the Hummer

The 2006 model year will be the last for the Hummer H1 which attracted celebrities and off-road enthusiasts but drew the wrath of environmentalists. The H1 gets about ten miles to the gallon but H1 buyers are often seen typically to be less sensitive about gas prices than most other drivers. Hummers seemed to be attractive to well-heeled drivers looking for military-style vehicles with an intimidating stance.

In 2005, GM sold 374 H1s, down 16% from 447 in 2004.

AM General, which builds H1, H2, Humvee, doesn't plan to cut any jobs as a result.

Click Here for Source Article:

http://www.automotivedigest.com/view_art.asp?articlesID=19116

UPS goes Green

UPS Leading Commercial Fleets in Clean and Alternative Fuel Vehicles

UPS is currently operating hydrogen fuel cell, LNG, CNG, electric, propane-powered trucks and using them in the US, Canada, Mexico, France, Germany and Brazil.

UPS is the first commercial fleet in the US to deploy hydrogen fuel cell technology.

Robert Hall, fleet environmental manager, UPS says

"UPS customers benefit from our ability to carefully manage and conserve fuel throughout the business. But our commitment to these technologies goes beyond just saving fuel. We want to reduce emissions and our impact on the environment and operate in a sustainable manner"

Read more at http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news-detail.asp?news_id=56828&news_category_id=20

<http://www.ups.com/>

AAA buys hybrids

The Automobile Association announced in the July/August edition of Via magazine that it had bought a fleet of 250 hybrid vehicles. AAA is actively trying to rev up its members about cutting exhaust emissions and fuel consumption. Their Greenlight Initiative proposes to keep members informed about alternative fuels and vehicles. Check it out at aaa.com/greenlight.

Clean Energy Cities

Denver has replaced 20,000 traffic signals with energy-saving bulbs, one of the largest such projects in the country; and **Scottsdale, Arizona**, is the first city in the nation to require that all new public buildings and renovation projects meet one of the U.S. Green Building Council's highest standards for energy efficiency and sustainability.

230 Cool Cities

Austin mayor Will Wynn (D) is one of 230 mayors nationwide (the mayor of San Francisco is another) who have pledged to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by investing in renewable energy, adding biodiesel vehicles to their city fleets, and adopting energy-efficient technologies to light streets and power buildings. You can help get your city on board--or spur it to further action--by signing up with the "Cool Cities" campaign at

sierraclub.org/coolcities. For more information, call (202) 547-1141 or e-mail global.warming@sierraclub.org.

Now the Not So Good:-

School buses and harmful diesel fumes

Aging school buses spew harmful diesel fumes across the United States, according to a report based on federal and state data. The report released by the Union of Concerned Scientists found the nation's 505,000 school buses are some of the oldest and dirtiest vehicles on the road. More than a third have been in use for more than a decade, and a single bus can produce between twice and 10 times as much diesel soot as a big rig.

While school buses have become safer to ride because of safety belts or other improvements, the authors and other experts said related studies were showing large amounts of soot can accumulate inside the buses from open crankshafts.

About 95 percent of the nation's school bus fleet is powered by diesel, and high levels of diesel exhaust and soot expose children to higher risk of asthma, cancer and other significant health problems..

"Even if you have a very good (cleanup) program, kids are still riding on very high polluting buses," said lead author Patricia Monahan, a former air pollution and toxics scientist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Fifteen states received B grades. The worst polluter was South Carolina, closely followed by South Dakota. Both earned D grades, as did 11 other states.

Several states are using alternative-fuel buses, replacing older buses with cleaner-burning models or retrofitting buses with devices that trap emissions. A considerably more low-tech method also can reduce children's exposure to bus pollution, especially as they wait in the parking lot for a ride home.

"We're recommending you just turn the engines off whenever you can," said Dwight Sinila, transportation director of Michigan's education department.

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060525/AUTO01/605250418/1148>

Americans Still Opt for Power and Speed Over Fuel Efficiency

The Wall Street Journal; Washington Post, July 18, 2006;

As Gas prices again approach (and overtake) \$3/gal, US consumers are buying new vehicles that are faster and heavier than ever and ones that are less fuel efficient than 20 years ago, according to an EPA report.

Over 55% of new-vehicle purchases in 2005 were minivans, pickup trucks, SUVs; 52.5% so far in 2006. Although some consumers feeling the gas price pinch are shifting to smaller SUVs called crossovers.

"People ask about mileage and say they are worried about it. But in the end, they still want an SUV." -- Marc Schwartz, sales manager, Major Chevrolet, Long Island City, NY

China Market Boom Brings Gas, Smog, Traffic Concerns

Sourced From: Wall Street Journal, June 13, 2006

Exhaust from an estimated 2.5M vehicles make Beijing, China's most polluted city as China's car population is now at 25 per 1K persons, the second largest auto market nation.

China's gas is high in sulfur, which exacerbates pollution and is costly to refine out of fuel. Although China adopted European emissions standards in 2000, there is still only spotty testing. However, the first fuel-efficiency standards adopted last year, will someday be higher than in the US.

China is considering a ban on the use of private cars during the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB115016484857578577.html>

NEWS FROM THE INDUSTRY:-

Senators rip Big 3's failure to improve fuel economy: Detroit's automakers should raise gas mileage requirements by 40 percent or face extinction, a key U.S. senator said Tuesday in a tongue-lashing of the industry for its failure to embrace fuel efficiency in the past... *"You know the automotive industry fought seat belts, if you can believe it," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat. "If the industry doesn't respond, doesn't mutate, it'll go just the same way the dinosaur went."*

Detroit News, June 23, 2006

Ford to produce 'green' buses

Less than three weeks after abandoning its promise to build 250,000 hybrid vehicles for the North American market by 2010, Ford Motor Co. said Monday it will invest more than \$1.8 billion to develop hybrids and other fuel-efficient vehicles in Britain.

Meanwhile, closer to home, the automaker said it has begun producing engines in Dearborn Heights to power a new line of hydrogen-fueled shuttle buses.

Ford's investment in Britain, which represents a doubling of the company's engineering spending on environmental programs in the United Kingdom, will fund unprecedented collaboration among Ford of Europe, Land Rover, Jaguar and Volvo. Ford will use an array of technologies, from lightweight materials to bio-fuel engines. The automaker is also developing cleaner, more efficient gasoline and diesel engines, as well as diesel-electric hybrids to meet the needs of European drivers.

Spurred by Chairman and CEO Bill Ford Jr., the automaker has tried to cast itself as an environmental leader, but the company has missed many of the marks it has set and remains a target for environmentalists.

"Mr. Ford is on our air waves right now fooling America by telling us that he is committed to breaking our dependence on oil while he breaks his promise to build more hybrids and his company produces one of the most oil-addicted fleets in America," said Jennifer Krill, Zero Emissions Campaign Director for the Rainforest Action Network in San Francisco. Detroit News, July 18, 2006

We end this Summer Newsletter with some thoughts from Sheira Kahn, the Acting Chairperson of *Don't Be Fueled! Mothers for clean and safe vehicles*. If you live near San Rafael, California you may see her around town in her Prius with DNTBFLD on the license plate.

Sheira begins, By day, I'm a psychotherapist. I see in my work that a period of despair almost always precedes the most profound changes. While the despair may be harsh, it brings information and clarity. Then a new future is possible.

This summer, we have scary temperatures and a drilling sun that drove crowds of people into malls and to the beach for escape. Many of us are thinking, "We knew global climate change might happen, but not so fast." But this summer, Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* is a box office hit and middle-of-the road publications in America are featuring the environment and global warming on the cover: *Time's* green issue was in March; *Newsweek's* was July 17; and the *San Francisco Chronicle Parade Magazine* (which is syndicated) featured global warming on June 25. America now has clarity.

What will be the new future that comes from this clarity? Will thousands drop out of society in protest like people did in the 60's? I think this time, society itself is going to change. Modern America was built around the car by people who engineered it that way. People can also re-engineer it in a way that works better. The clarity we have now will help us do that.

If you're reading this, you probably want to do all you can. Sometimes I feel like there's so much to do in order to save this planet. But I also know from my work as a therapist that everything we do, no matter how small, makes a difference. The point is to start, and keep going.

One of the quickest ways to do something big is to decline an airplane trip. You'll save many gallons of gas in one fell swoop. Why not shake things up and have a little fun as well? Especially if you're like me and need an antidote to feeling sad about the earth from time to time. Try these fun activities:

- 1) Instead of a bottle of wine, bring a pack of energy-saving bulbs to dinner with friends this summer. Light up their life!
- 2) Join me in a campaign to change how we think of cars and roads. My fellow Americans, the freeway is not free. Don't Be Fueled! It's a huge cost to taxpayers and the environment. Join me in referring to it as "the costway"!
- 3) Add to this list of alternative names of SUVs, composed on the roads of Los Angeles .

Toyota Land Cruiser	Toyota Land Bruiser
Ford Explorer	Ford Exploiter
GMC Yukon	GMC Konyu
Range Rover	De-range Rover
The Hummer	The Bummer
Chevy Suburban	Chevy Subhuman
Isuzu Trooper	Isuzu Pooper
Lincoln Navigator	Lincoln Annihilator
Nissan X-Terra	Nissan Ex-Terra

4) Make a summer donation to Don't Be Fueled! on our website. Donating is always fun.

Thank you for your continuing support and interest, and please contact us with your ideas and comments.

Sincerely,

Sheira and Betsy, Cindy, Denise, Eva, Janie, Lauren, Lynn, Sandy and the rest of our Don't Be Fueled Team.