



Western Environment Centre

Western Newfoundland's Environmental Education Organization

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Newsletter Fall 2011

From the Editor's Desk

Greetings again!

When one thinks of the autumn, images of beautiful colours and bountiful harvests of course come quickly to mind. That is true for the recent activities of the Western Environment Centre. This issue of our newsletter describes some of the wonderful things going on at the community garden. Not only have the plots



been highly successful, but we have just finished building a new greenhouse on the site of the Blow-Me-Down Ski Park (near the chalet), thanks to funding from the Walmart-Evergreen Green Grants Program. The Farmers' Market is also gaining momentum, offering an ever brighter array of produce. Carolyn Wheeler highlights some recent developments in this regard.

Be sure to read the organic gardening tips from Katie Temple, who is truly developing an expertise in this area. Also, as the holiday season approaches, from Halloween to Christmas, you might find helpful the green tips outlined on page five. Read as well about the new City Hall of Corner Brook, a model of environmental responsibility and intelligent city planning.

WEC partners with many different organizations through its projects. In each newsletter we try to highlight these organizations. WEC is grateful for the continued support and fruitful collaboration with the First United of Corner Brook. In this issue, I interviewed Rev. Myles Vardy from the Church concerning his views on Christianity and the environment.

As well, included in this issue is a review of a recent book on the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill along with some information about the Public Advisory Committee that is working with the mill on environmental stewardship (a Committee to which WEC belongs).

The reality with moving forward on environmental concerns and initiatives is that some of the issues are so complex as to defy easy generalizations and solutions. Yet the first step to reaching a productive consensus is to engage in the discussion. The committee that drafted this newsletter hopes that you will find this issue instructive and thought-provoking. Enjoy!

Edwin Bezzina



The Woody Point Lighthouse



Simon Jansen, WEC Board Chair, stands outside the newly constructed greenhouse



The tomatoes at the community garden are a-ripening!

The West Coast Farmers' Market: Fall is here and it is harvest time!

At the Majestic Lawn in Corner Brook until Saturday, October 29th

The West Coast Farmers Market is the place to find delicious, fresh produce from a number of local producers: Lomond Farm, The Greenhouse and Garden Store, and Full Tilt Creative Arts Centre and Organic Farm. Come to the Farmers' Market for an impressive selection of produce, located right in the centre of Corner Brook.



We have a new service at the Market: pre-ordered veggie baskets prepared by The Greenhouse. To order a basket, call Kim Thistle at The Greenhouse ([709] 634-5757) and then pick it up the following Saturday at the Farmers' Market. Many Corner Brook residents are already enjoying this wonderful convenience.

With the change of season you will find that many of the root crops are now ready. Beets are always a great seller as more people become interested in bottling and canning. Carrots and potatoes sit beside fresh cucumber, tomatoes, turnip greens, corn, peas, beans, garlic, and zucchini. Lomond is supplying gourds and will also have pumpkins ready in October. The fall colours of this produce are a beautiful sight!

From week to week you may also find local honey and berries, fudge, baked goods, teas and fair trade coffee. And, don't forget our local crafts and preserves people and their eye-catching products, from crochet and knit wear to woodwork to natural soaps and preserves.

Carolyn Wheeler

Vendor Profile: Lomond Farms Ltd. – locally owned and operated

Established in 1989, Lomond Farms Limited has been in operation for 22 years. Owners Paul and Shirley Lomond began farming because of their shared enjoyment and enthusiasm as hobby farmers. Such a love of farming has grown into a thriving business.

The farm is located in Steady Brook and they also have U-Pick berry fields in Pasadena. With the harvest season upon us, a wide variety of produce is available. The selection includes beans, berries (frozen and fresh), beets, cabbage, carrots, corn, cucumber, potatoes, and zucchini.

Fresh, local produce from Lomond is available at the Market starting in mid-September while supplies last!!



Photo courtesy Kam's World <http://cornerbrooker.com/2010/10/>



The Provincial Election October 11, 2011

The provincial election is upon us. Be sure to vote, but also remember to keep environmental issues and policies on your radar screen when evaluating the candidates. Here is the question that WEC posed to the candidates:

Food security is a challenge in Newfoundland and Labrador. We currently do not produce enough food to feed our population and we are losing important knowledge and skills related to food. Our province also has some of the highest obesity rates and food bank usage across the country. Considering these challenges, how would your party work to support community-based solutions to food security? (For more information, see <http://www.nlen.ca/wp-content/uploads/Environmental-Policy-Questionnaire-August-29-2011.pdf>)

Image: <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/facts3.html>

WEC welcomes comments and questions!

Feel free to write to the editorial board (info@wecnl.ca). We'd love to hear from you.



Outreach and Communications Committee

Carolyn Wheeler.....Project Coordinator/
Committee facilitator
Edwin Bezzina.....Newsletter Editor
Danielle Fequet.....Assistant Editor
Erin Kelly.....Assistant Editor
Laura Simms.....member

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Organic Gardening Tips by Katie Temple

Late summer is a fantastic time to be a gardener. The fruits of your labour are finally starting to appear, and you can really begin to plan your meals around all those delicious vegetables that you so proudly grew yourself. To follow up on my article in the last WEC newsletter, I am offering a few more tidbits of advice:



1) *How to deal with garden pests.* The cabbage butterfly affects veggies like broccoli, kale, arugula, cabbage, and cauliflower. The butterflies lay eggs in the spring, and when the caterpillars emerge they munch right into all those beautiful leafy greens, leaving sad, patchy strands in their place. To prevent the butterflies from laying their eggs, try covering your plants with floating row cover (frost blanket) in the spring or early summer. Otherwise you could be stuck picking them off one by one, as I had to! If your situation is quite bad, you can invest in some *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT), which is an organic bacterial insect control.

Slugs are extremely common in Newfoundland and can overwhelm gardens. One great way of dealing with them is to put small bowls of beer around your garden. The slugs are attracted by the smell and then crawl in, intoxicate themselves, and drown (not too terrible a death, I suppose?). You can also put ground-up eggshells, diatomaceous earth (available in garden stores), and unraveled copper scrub pads around the garden beds, which are all hazardous to squishy little bugs.

2) *Growing vegetables in containers.* Although they require a great deal of attention, container plants are well worth the time and effort because you can almost completely control the conditions of the plant. You can decide how big the container will be, what to add in, and how much water to use. Containers also sometimes provide protection from pests and are very easy to weed. Container gardening can also mean that you have fresh herbs, peppers, or some other warmth-loving vegetables year round because you can keep them in your house.

To cut down on the work and improve the quality of the vegetables, try self-watering containers. They are like regular pots, but they have a section at the bottom where the water pools. Once you have your container, you need to figure out what to put in it. For my container plants, I started with a professional potting soil that I bought from the garden store. Because it's sterile, the soil won't have any diseases or pests. The soil is dried and compressed, however, and so I added water to re-hydrate it until it was moist and crumbly (but not soaking wet). One of the minor disadvantages of the professional mix is that you have to add nutrients yourself, but this also gives you more control over what you add in to the mix. My strategy was to add some high quality compost at about a 1:3 or 1:4 compost to soil ratio. I then 'fluffed' it all up to ensure it was good and aerated and then went ahead and planted my veggie transplants.

I am now happily harvesting zucchini, tomatoes, basil, snow peas, broccoli, lettuce, kale, and garlic. If you want to check out the full details, visit my column at cornerbrooker.com, which is a fabulous local blog focusing on all things Corner Brook!

Six great ways to get involved in WEC

1. Join one of the subcommittees (Outreach and Communications, Farmers' Market, Community Garden)
2. Join the Facebook group and invite others to do the same
3. Attend WEC events
4. Become a WEC volunteer
5. Visit the Farmers' Market
6. Participate in the WEC community garden

Do you have an eye for photography?



WEC is looking for a volunteer who would like to serve as official photographer at WEC events and activities. If you're that person and you have a good camera, please contact us.

We're on Facebook!



You can find us by searching "Western Environment Centre"

We're also on Twitter

(twitter.com/wecnl)



The Western Environment Centre is developing a **wonderful new website** which will be launched in the near future. Stay tuned! (In the meantime, please use the current website www.wecnl.ca)

How to become a WEC member

(and how to encourage a friend to become a member):

Please fill out the membership form on p. 8 and then send it by post to our surface address or by scanned copy to our e-mail address. Becoming a member is a fabulous first step to becoming environmentally involved in your local community!

Everything's Green and Growing at the Community Garden

Greenhouse building plans at the Blow-Me-Down Community Garden have come to fruition. The garden now hosts an 8 x 24 foot greenhouse that was constructed in August by dedicated volunteer and Board Chair Simon Jansen, his brother, and Katie Flynn. The greenhouse will allow gardeners to get a head start on Newfoundland's short growing season by starting transplants and seedlings within the temperate environs of the greenhouse. As the little plants become hearty enough to be planted in garden beds, hopefully, Mother Nature will work on the outdoor conditions.



Expansion of the garden itself also has been progressing nicely. In addition to the eight plots that were added in time for new gardeners to try their hand at organic gardening this season, a whole new section has been added for use next year. 120 students from the Canadian Student Leadership Conference (held in Corner Brook) built eight more plots, removed the rocks, turned the soil, weeded around most of the other 25 beds, and fixed some of the compost bins. They learned the importance of how food connects social, health and environmental sectors alike. Several avid gardeners were even able to prepare their plots in the new section and get their gardens underway. The majority of the expansion section is still a work-in-progress, however, and getting the plots ready will involve working the ground, removing rocks, and generally getting dirty!☺ Even better, the harvest season is gaining momentum and more produce is anticipated in the coming weeks. The gardeners are happy and their gardens are green and healthy.

Photo K. Temple

Danielle Fequet

The City Hall: A Wonderful Statement of Environmental Stewardship

Over the years, there have been many fruitful partnerships between WEC and the City of Corner Brook and WEC is very thankful for the City's support. It is thus with enthusiasm that WEC applauds the construction and inauguration of the new City Hall. The building is in line with LEED Standard (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) and is applying for the highly rigorous silver certification. If it is granted, then the City Hall will be the first LEED-certified building of this kind in the province and a model for others to follow. Rhea Hutchings, the city's Supervisor of Sustainable Development, kindly provided a tour. Here is a sampling of just some of the building's most noteworthy environmental features:

- Geothermal heating: To reduce energy consumption the building is heated using a Geothermal Heating System
- The Green Roof: The green roof not only has 18,000 plants, but it also provides insulation, reduces storm water runoff, and can collect and store in its tanks over 3,000 gallons of rainwater to use around the building
- Water conservation: All plumbing fixtures are equipped with ingenious low-flow mechanisms
- Lighting: the building is equipped with an intelligent lighting system with special sensors that adjust the lighting according to usage; there are solar-powered lights as well
- Encouraging smarter transit: the city added two hybrid vehicles to its fleet while the building itself has bike racks and designated parking spaces for employees who carpool

For more information on the real impact of the new City Hall on fighting climate change, see the informative The Windows on the World (or WOW) in the foyer. It explains energy consumption in the building and provides wonderfully interactive touch-screen information on sustainability and energy conservation. The new City Hall is a bold statement of the city's commitment to environmental stewardship. These environmental features not only will conserve energy but they will save the city a great deal of money in lowered energy costs. Bravo!

Edwin Bezzina



The Mill and Environmental Responsibility

The Public Advisory Committee is part of the mill's genuine interest in environmental responsibility and sustainability. Here are some details.

What is the PAC? The Public Advisory Committee (PAC) was first initiated in 2003. At this time Corner Brook Pulp and Paper (CBPP) was applying for the certification to the Sustainable Forest Management Standard CSA-Z809, having realized that European markets especially were demanding higher environmental and social accountability from pulp and paper producers. The certification required that the company regularly consults with stakeholders from the community to develop standards for their operations. The PAC has about thirty-five members. As part of their Sustainable Management Plan (SFM), they have collectively defined goals as well as indicators that would represent those goals, methods to measure those indicators, and acceptable variances to those measurements. Every year, those indicators and their measurements are then published in the annual Indicator Report, which is accessible on their website (<http://www.cbpp.com>) under Sustainable Forest Management.

Who is on the PAC? The PAC consists of community organizations, business sectors, municipalities, regional economic development boards as well as federal and provincial government representatives. CPBB provides information through representation from their planning, administration, and operations departments. The Western Environment Centre is part of the PAC.

Who is making sure that all the talk translates into action? An independent third party auditor (QMI – SMI Global) re-certifies the mill every three years and checks on them annually. Two of their auditors usually come in for 3-4 days visits. They randomly select areas of operations to spot-check in order to ensure that CBPP is adhering to the indicators that the PAC helped to develop. The PAC also has the opportunity to speak directly to the auditors without any mill employees present to address concerns and criticism.

Can anyone join the PAC? Yes. There are several members on the PAC representing the general public. You could be one of them.

How can I find out more? Visit the CBPP website (www.cbpp.com), or email us at info@wecnl.ca or contact Faron Knott at the Mill ([709] 637-3155).

Helping WEC as you recycle

Here is a creative way to donate to the WEC financially. The WEC now has an account at Scotia Recycling on 55 Maple Valley Rd ([709] 634-2025). When dropping off your recyclables, donate by telling the people at the desk that you wish to give the proceeds to WEC. Visit their website:

<http://scotiarecyclinggroup.com/services-by-location>. For

information on recycling on Corner Brook, visit

<http://www.cornerbrook.com/default.asp?mn=1.24.100> or phone their recycling line at (709) 637-1630

Green Tips for the Holiday Seasons!

The holiday season is fast approaching, and it's a time of celebration and merriment. To make your holiday that much more festive, why not try and green it up a bit?

Feasting: For your big family dinners on Thanksgiving and Christmas, try going vegetarian, or just try to reduce the focus on meat.



Halloween

Costumes. Rather than buying a costume or party dress, try a thrift store first or cobble together pieces from your closet and your friends' closets.

Treats. If you're giving out candies, try organic, fair-trade chocolate, or instead a non-edible item such as crayons or sidewalk chalk. If you're the trick-or-treater, you can trick-or-treat for UNICEF and raise money for kids in need.



Christmas

Trees. Try to avoid buying a fake Christmas tree; they're made of dangerous polyvinyl chloride chemicals (PVC). Make your own tree out of recycled materials and some imagination. Or take the family on an outdoor excursion to use a real tree that can be used for wreaths and firewood later on.

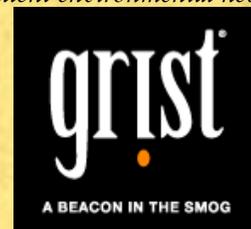
Gift-wrapping. Don't go for the typical chlorine-bleached paper. Try gift-wrap made of hemp or cotton fibre or even old comics (or perhaps a scarf for that special friend).

Christmas lights. Buy LED lights, which use less electricity than traditional Christmas lights. LED lights cost more, but they'll save you a bundle on your electricity bill.

Gifts. Green gifts don't have to be boring—check out recycled goods on greenwithenvy.com; get kids' toys and adults' books and games from the Salvation Army; or give homemade treats. Even better, consider making donations in your friends' and family members' names.

Erin Kelly

These suggestions were adapted from various articles on grist.org, an excellent environmental news magazine.



Book Review

Global Game, Local Arena: Restructuring in Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

By Glen Norcliffe, 2005. St John's, NL: ISER books.

The forest industry and in fact all natural resource industries have gone through enormous changes around the world with far-reaching implications for local communities. In this book, Glen Norcliffe of Memorial University of Newfoundland uses Corner Brook as a case study to examine forest industry restructuring, focusing particularly on its impact on local governance, employment, and family life.

The book contains not only meticulously detailed economic and employment data but also accessible and important themes. Norcliffe begins by studying bits of Corner Brook's history, particularly its establishment as a mill town and the construction of Townsite. That leads to the main themes of the book: the effects of globalization on a locality. Norcliffe focuses on the arrival of Kruger Corporation (which took over the mill from Bowater in 1984) and its struggles to both modernize the mill and restructure local employment.

First, Norcliffe traces the mill's introduction of "lean production," a global phenomenon that was introduced to CBBP after years of economic instability and diminishing returns. Kruger purchased the mill with heavy government subsidies with the understanding that Kruger would return the mill to fiscal solvency. To do so, it had to dramatically cut employment through outsourcing and technology upgrades. This increased worker insecurity and resulted in far fewer people within the forest industry, both at the mill and in the woods, transforming the once timber-dependent economy of Corner Brook.

Interestingly, Norcliffe does not examine many of the effects of this transition away from timber dependence, such as a diminished base of support for mill activities as fewer people depended on it, as well as new social expectations regarding the appropriate use of forests as more people came to associate forests with recreation and conservation. We have seen this impact of this public interest recently with the vocal opposition to the use of Tire-Derived Fuel at the mill, and with more public scrutiny regarding harvesting and road-building.

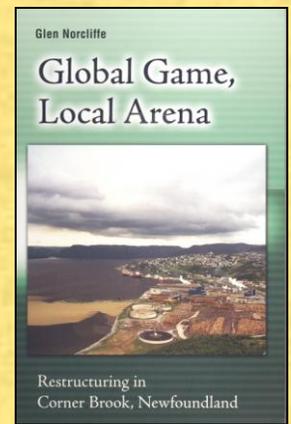
Second, Norcliffe interviewed CBBP employees to uncover how changing employment at the mill affected their daily lives, including their family lives. For example, he points to the domestic stress resulting from the creation of casual labour lists. Once on these lists, workers were essentially always on call and would stay by their phones for extended periods, often forgoing vacations and other family activities in order to cobble together enough work to make a living. The part-time segment of this labour force was especially vulnerable to new rounds of modernization and lay-offs.

Third, Norcliffe highlights the shrinking role of the mill within the community at large, as it went from paternal company town overseer to distant corporate employer. In order to remain globally competitive, Kruger had to gain concessions and subsidies from the unions and government, and it used its considerable leverage as a large-scale employer to do so. For example, Norcliffe documents the frequent threats of imminent closure from Kruger, which generated concessions from unions and government desperate to keep the mill running.

Though Kruger's efforts brought difficulties for some local residents, it is important to note that without Kruger the mill would have closed in 1984. The fact that the mill is still operating today, providing employment, and funding for local educational and civic programs is testament to its success.

While Norcliffe's descriptions of employment at the mill and social impacts on the community are exhaustive, he does not explore many of the environmental consequences of restructuring. But, much of Norcliffe's research is indirectly relevant to the mill's environmental impact on Corner Brook and its surroundings, if only because we cannot understand the timber industry without examining the broader context of globalization and its effects on local communities. Overall, as a backdrop for understanding the largest industrial employer in town, and the one with the greatest environmental effects, this book is an excellent introduction.

Dr. Erin Clover Kelly, Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Environmental Policy Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Grenfell Campus.



Christianity and the Environment: An Interview with Rev. Myles W. Vardy

One of the greatest challenges in confronting something like climate change is not just encouraging government action; it also involves building critical mass and support among the broader population. Christianity continues to be an influential force among the North American population. Can Christianity help the environmental movement? This raises questions about the relationship between environmental stewardship and Christianity, as a religion and as a body of individuals who follow it. Edwin Bezzina interviewed Rev. Myles Vardy of the First United Church in Corner Brook on the connection between Christianity and the environment. What follows are some paraphrased notes on the conversation between them.

Over the past few years, there have been many partnerships between WEC and the First United Church (Earth Hour, city cleanups, Environment Week, etc.); in what ways has this helped members of your congregation?

We appreciate the ways in which environmental stewardship and action are a tangible response to issues in our community. For Christians, such action provides a concrete reality for following Christ's precepts. Being a Christian is not just about going to church on Sunday, saying your prayers before sleeping, thanking God for everything that you have. Christianity, like any religion, must orient the believer towards helping others. That can take the form of environmental stewardship.

What role do you think that Christianity can play in something like fighting climate change?

The magazine of the United Church of Canada, *The Observer*, publishes many articles on environmental stewardship. In fact, UCC journalists followed closely the U.N. Climate Change Conference (Copenhagen, 2009). Congregants should read and learn from the articles. The UCC also has developed a campaign against the use of bottled water, which is linked to climate change in terms of the energy wasted in bottling water, a public resource. Christians can also express their environmental stewardship in their consumer choices and by writing letters to companies and elected officials.

In some places in the Bible, one finds references to the idea that Creation was given to humans to use and subdue (e.g. Genesis 1: 26-29; 9: 1-4). These passages don't exactly inspire environmental responsibility and stewardship. Admittedly, in biblical times people perhaps could not conceive of resources as being finite or of the ability of humans to drastically alter and seriously damage global ecosystems. Maybe for that reason the Bible does not have direct guiding statements on environmental stewardship, but it speaks to the issue in a broader sense. In your mind, how does the Bible act as a moral guide for environmental activism, stewardship, and the idea of interdependence between humans and the environment?

The principle "love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:39) can be applied to the idea of environmental stewardship. Your neighbour is not just the person who lives next door, but also the family who struggles against desertification in Africa; your neighbour is also your future descendants who must inherit the world that you have left them. Also, there is the parable of the good steward that is relevant as well (Luke 12). Moreover, many passages in the Bible tell us to beware of materialism. Perhaps that is something to remember because environmental stewardship requires a change in Western consumption patterns. We have to learn to live with less and be less wasteful.

True, some Christians accentuate the quest for salvation and one's personal relationship with Christ. That is not a bad thing in itself, but if taken to extremes it can lead one away from thoughts about saving this world. The world is not just a temporary existence for us before we pass on to the next life, a kind of test; the world is something that our descendants have to live on and survive on. We hold and use it in trust. Our actions in this life will affect future generations.

Maybe interdependence between human beings and Creation is something that we can learn from aboriginal spirituality. To ask a delicate question, do you believe that Christians in general have been supportive of environmental initiatives and willing to embrace changes in their lives in order to save the planet?

I will not single out a particular Christian denomination, because there are different perspectives within each denomination, not just between the denominations. Certainly, many Christians could be much more supportive of the environmental movement.

Some of them harbour a suspicion of scientific data and science in general. That's part of an age-old conflict between science and religion. Science and scientific research certainly have their limitations; even scientists admit that overall we know so little about the world and the universe. But, if science and religion had stayed on the same path, then we would be further ahead as a spiritual people.

From a Christian perspective, God does not merely reveal himself through the Bible, which is a challenging text because there are so many different versions of it. God can be seen just as much and perhaps just as clearly in Creation. The sacred and the secular cannot be separated so easily; God reveals himself in what He has created. We must learn to embrace the Book of Nature as something that works just as much as the Bible to guide our actions and to incite us to protecting the environment.



Photo courtesy Robert Young
Celebrity Photo Studio



Climate change peaceful vigil
at the First United Church (Dec. 2007)



Western Environment Centre

Annual Membership Form

Type of Membership: New Renewal Lapsed

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number (with area code): (_____) _____

E-mail address: _____

Would you like to be added to our e-mail list? Yes No

What environmental issues interest you the most?

Coastal habitat Wildlife Energy

Urban Planning Community Garden Forestry

Climate Change Farmers' Market Transportation

Other: _____

Would you be willing to help out with WEC events? _____

Would you be interested in sitting on any of the following WEC committees or working groups:

Events Fundraising Farmers' Market

Outreach and Communications Community Garden

Are you interested in becoming a Board Member? Yes No

How did you hear about WEC? _____

Do you have any additional information for WEC?

Benefits of Membership

- Receive updates on WEC events and activities
- Receive our newsletter
- Access to WEC resources
- Become part of a growing organization that is committed to protecting the environment in Western Newfoundland and elsewhere

Office Use Only

Date: _____

Origin (e.g. walk-in):

Payment method:

Cash Cheque

Memberships are tax deductible.
Memberships expire after 1 year.

Please return form & payment to:

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Corner Brook, NL, A2H 2Z3
E: info@wecnl.ca
T: (709) 634-9470

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