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Alan Pryor has solved the problem of an exposed south-west wall with a customized shade he devised himself. He puts it up in the summer and takes it down in the winter when he wants the sun's warmth on the building.

How Cool Are We?

By: Lynne Nittler

The CoolCalifornia Challenge has begun. In the next few months, we'll find out just how cool we really are, one household at a time.

"It's a fun competition," says Chris Granger, one of the key Cool Davis organizers. "Every individual or household can sign up online now. Over the next few months they will record their household energy use and transportation practices. It's like taking your temperature. As enough citizens sign up, we'll get a baseline on how we're doing in Davis."

At stake is the City of Davis' chance to earn the coveted title of Coolest California City against the competing cities of Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Pittsburg, Pleasanton, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Tracy, Chula Vista and Gonzalez. Every household that signs up earns points for Davis in the challenge.

Alan Pryor can't wait to sign up. He's done all he can to retrofit his south Davis home and lower his greenhouse gas emissions. Alan will earn points for converting both lawns to fruit trees and an extensive vegetable garden fed by home-made compost. He grows 100% of the household's annual fruits and *Continued on next page...*

vegetables on a timer-controlled drip line system. He went all out on energy conservation with fluorescent and LED lighting, double-paned windows properly covered, a whole house fan and more before he invested in solar panels and a solar hot water system that cover 100% of his electrical and 70% of his hot water needs.

“Once I started, I couldn’t stop,” says Alan modestly, holding up his impressive list of 29 actions in the areas of energy production, energy conservation, toxics and waste reduction, water conservation, food production and transportation energy reduction. But, he says with a grin, “It wasn’t completely altru-



Alan Pryor supplies 100% of his electricity with his PV system. He is careful to shade the patio and south-east windows in the summer to keep the interior of the house cool.

ism. My investments in energy conservation and sustainability were actually the best guaranteed economic investments I could make. My annual savings on the various improvements in our home were almost always greater than 10-20 % per year based on the installed cost of the improvement.” Alan passes the cool test with flying colors.

Maria and Mark Tebbutt have enjoyed examining their lives for ways to conserve, too. Like Alan, they tackled energy conservation first in their early 70’s home by adding ceiling insulation, dual paned windows, a radiant barrier, a gas fireplace insert, a whole house fan, a portable water air conditioner, a shady grapevine wall on the west side, a removable south-facing shade structure and more. They removed the lawn in favor of a veggie garden and 30 fruit trees supplying a substantial part of their food along with fresh eggs from their chickens. Waste

for the landfill is minimal as they buy food bulk at the Co-op, avoid packaged foods, use cloth bags, and compost. They even adopted a mini-pet to reduce impact. The PV system is an added bonus to their energy-efficient household.



Maria and Mark Tebbutt can relax knowing their home is energy efficient thanks to a series of retrofits and their garden provides fruits and vegetables.

Maria claims, “I wouldn’t feel right living any other way. I continue to look for more ways to live sustainably because I want to save resources for my daughter’s generation and those that follow her. Besides, I love the challenge!”

Sharon Hale and Dawn Student share an older home in east Davis, and they’re eager to sign up online to find out how cool they are. Frugality and the need to tread lightly on the earth have motivated them to reduce their impact by replacing older appliances with energy star models, installing a tankless hot water heater with a recirculation pump, turning off all appliances not in use, lowering the thermostat in winter, reducing landfill, composting, adding a whole house fan, a ceiling fan and a solar tube, substituting LED light fixtures and more. In 2007, their annual carbon footprint was 30,532 pounds of carbon. Thanks to their conservation efforts, it dropped to 21,791 pounds of carbon by 2011, compared to the Davis average of 78,000 pounds! Their PG&E bill now averages \$55 per month, down from \$76.

“A low carbon life is our way of life now,” says Sharon, eager to discover her next step.

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Alan insists, “What produced the largest savings

were the easiest, most obvious changes. If everyone in Davis commits to just a few steps, we can make a huge impact.”

“After thoughtful efforts and cost-effective investments over time, these profiles show what is possible once you accept the challenge of reducing your household energy use.

“Moving toward carbon neutrality is a process and the Cool California Challenge is your opportunity to check-in as you are and begin the process of shedding carbon. Join the challenge, begin your own journey, and help Davis become the Coolest California City!” adds Chris.

Please sign up beginning April 1! Every household counts. Visit www.cooldavis.org/challenge for details. Send ideas for future profiles to info@cooldavis.org.

CDI Welcomes New Partner

Cool Davis Initiative welcomes International House of Davis as its newest partner. I-House, an iconic Davis cultural institution, has promoted respect and appreciation for all people and cultures for over three decades.



Volunteer Docent Sherry Hou enjoys her work at I-House where she has the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. Born in China, she came to the U.S. with her parents when she was seven. She is currently a student at UC Davis.

Volunteer Coordinator Starr Garrison explains, “I-House brings together local people with visitors to the area from all over the globe for cultural exchange, education, understanding and friendship. For example, with the help of volunteers, we offer language classes, show foreign films, host story-telling for families,

present art shows and lectures and host a friendship program for women with young children. Our most ambitious recent event has been our first International Festival in October of 2011, which brought about 3000 people to the Vets Memorial for an afternoon of exhibits, music, dance, art and crafts representing cultures from around the world.”

With regard to taking care of the environment, I-House recently hosted the Cool Davis Initiative’s Durban-to-Davis panel on Climate Change and in the past has hosted classes on topics such as: Global Warming, Discovering a Sense of Place, and the Low-Carbon Diet. In addition, I-House has started an “Open Mic” event that the organizers have been careful to make a waste-free event. They use I-House dishes and compost any scraps.

The Cool Davis Initiative Core looks forward to presenting additional educational events in cooperation with I-House as we work together to educate the public on topics of mutual interest.

Cool Davis Initiative Partners include local area groups such as: businesses, non-profits, faith groups, school committees, city committees and others. The initial requirement of Partners is that they support and agree with the mission of CDI: to inspire our community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to a changing climate, and improve the quality of life for all. Beyond the mission requirement, CDI partners are welcome to attend special CDI Partner activities to network and learn from each other. Partner representatives are also welcome to attend CDI Meetings, and propose and/or join project groups. Groups or businesses interested in becoming partners are welcome to contact CDI and ask for an interview.

To subscribe to future editions of the Cool Davis Initiative Newsletter, visit www.cityofdavis.org/email. If you are not currently enrolled to receive email communication from the city, you may create an account at this time. Once complete, or if you are a current user, log in and simply check the box for ‘Cool Davis’ to subscribe.



Davis Audience Takes YERT to Heart

By Kendall Essex and Kerry Loux

The showing of the award-winning and highly entertaining documentary film YERT (Your Environmental Road Trip) at the Veteran's Memorial Theater on March 20 attracted 175 curious viewers. According to Mark Dixon, the YERT filmmaker, Davis produced the largest audience to watch the film since its inaugural screening.

Asha Byrd, recent recipient of the City of Davis Golden Heart award, introduced YERT producer Mark Dixon, who described the journey documented in the film and showed off the year's worth of trash collected. Following a standing ovation, Mark answered enthusiastic questions from the audience about the wild and wonderful environmental innovations that the three 'road warriors' encountered in their year-long journey to all fifty states.

Dixon shared two insights from his travels. The people he met who had a direct physical connection with their environments through their livelihoods, felt deeply satisfied with their lives and could not imagine doing anything else. They possessed a palpable happiness. Mark was so moved that he began a garden himself after the trip ended.

Second, Dixon did not sugar coat the seriousness of climate change and the immediate call to action required. He described the change in attitude from the initial, upbeat interviews in 2007 to his decidedly more deflated follow-up interviews in 2010. The film addressed climate change and the plethora of social and environmental problems that are deeply intertwined with climate

change with humor, compassion, unflinching honesty and hope. It offered creative and unusual solutions.

The hearty discussion following the film reinforced the Cool Davis belief that Davis has the ability to make necessary changes on a grand scale as long as



the majority of us are willing to engage. Now it is up to all of us to get involved. We can no longer wait around for 'other people' that we have been counting on to fix the mess we have all played a role in creating. Seventy folks bought the YERT DVD, which can also be purchased at www.yert.com. What more entertaining way to get involved than to hold or attend a YERT house party.

We would like to thank the City of Davis for providing the Vet's Memorial Theater and students from Davis High School and Holmes Junior High Green Team for helping out. Special appreciation goes to those who donated the delicious refreshments. Local restaurants Rostini and Guadalajara Taqueria provided foccacia and chips with salsa. Our Farmer's Market friends Good Humus Farms, KettlePop, Schelewits Farms and Mi Familia shared their bounty--fruit, produce, popcorn, dried fruits and nuts. Nugget Markets and Safeway donated deserts and other treats.

To sign up for the Cool Davis Challenge or volunteer for the various exciting Cool Davis projects, visit www.cooldavis.org. For information, contact info@cooldavis.org.

Cool Davis Partners



B & L Bike Shop
Blue Thumb Household Water Resources
Caffé Italia
Care for God's Creation
Church & Society Committee of Davis United Methodist Church
Ciocolat
City of Davis
Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)
Davis Bicycles!
Davis Bike Collective
Davis Chapter Society for Conservation Biologists
Davis Dollars
Davis Energy Group
Davis Farmers Market
Davis Farm-to-School
Davis Food Coop
DHS Environmental Club
DJUSD STEM, Green Schools
Davis Media Access
Davis Waste Removal
Dos Coyotes
Emerson JHS Earth Club
Explorit
Good Humus Produce
Green Sanctuary of UU Church of Davis
Holmes Junior high Green Team
International House of Davis
Monticello "Seasonal Cuisine"
Parent to Parent Institute for Infant Brain Development
Pedicab
Putah Creek Council
Sierra Club Yolo Group
Stewards of God's Creation of Davis Community Church
Tree Davis
Tuleyome
Swann Electric Bicycles
UCD Arboretum
Unity Center of Davis
Valley Climate Action Center
Yolo Basin Foundation
Yolo Clean Air
Yolo County Housing
Yolo Federal Credit Union
Yolo Food Bank
Yolo Land Trust
Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District

Submitting articles

If you have a carbon reduction or energy efficiency related announcement or article to share, please let us know. Cool Davis Initiative Partners enjoy special benefits in announcing their special events and activities in our newsletter. The 15th of the month is the deadline for submitting fully edited articles. Send to: Chris Blackman at cblackman@yolofcu.org.