



Solar Washington Newsletter

SPRING EQUINOX 2005

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Conservation improves the value of your house

Every dollar that homeowners save on their annual utility bills adds \$20 to the market value of their home.

(Union of Concerned Scientists)

Car emissions weighty

The average American car emits its own weight in carbon dioxide every 10,000 miles.

(Numbers, David Boyle)

Coal haze hurts China

Haze from coal plants is reducing crop yields in many parts of China by 5 to 30 percent and could increase health costs by \$400 billion a year by 2020, or 13 percent of China's GDP.

(Michael Totten, Center for Environmental Leadership in Business)

Octogenarians flex their solar power

After the generator for his RV died and a beefy mechanic shoved a hefty repair estimate in his face, Corbin figured there had to be a



better way. And it didn't take long for this crafty old ex-logger to figure out that the buzz about solar power made a whole lot more sense than the buzz and clatter of his old generator.

Pure, clean solar power without the noise and fumes and hassle of a gasoline-

powered generator – what's not to love? Read how Corbin and Iris became true believers in solar power. See

www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0503/corbin&iris.A01.pdf

The complete skinny on LED lights

Some of you out there are still not believers. Well, this time we lay out the proof: LED lights are so efficient and so bright they easily outshine incandescent bulbs and use almost no electricity in the process. Plus, they last forever. What could be better? See

www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0503/LEDsROCK.A02.pdf

OK, there's a downside. Some LEDs are expensive, and some are not well designed. Not to worry. LED guru and retired electrical engineer Al Getz tells you

everything you need to know to build your own. You geeks are going to love this stuff. See

www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0503/LEDdesign.A03.pdf



Jonathan's call to conservation arms

Our energy use is growing 1.4 percent annually, so no big deal, right? Wrong. At that rate, energy consumption will double in 50 years. Two New Yorks, two Chicagos, twice the Hummers, etc. Jonathan Clemens says it's time to walk the walk. You can help. See

www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0503/RallyCall.A04.pdf

PV supplies getting tight

PV modules are getting scarce, and prices are rising fast due to shortages and the industry's 30-percent annual growth rate. Silicon prices are up 50 percent, and the price/supply squeeze could last another 5 years.

(Paul Maycock, Photovoltaic Energy Systems, Inc.)

Nukes are back

Big utilities spent \$42.6 million on lobbying and contributions to politicians last year and have lined up support of federal and municipal governments to build 5 new reactors in the next 10 years and 50 by mid-century.

(Forbes, Jan. 31, 2005)

Solar beats ANWR

PV is capable of generating 8 to 15 times more energy than ANWR oil over the expected 70-year life of the ANWR oil fields.

(Donald E. Osborn, ASES)

We're Solar Washington

Solar Washington is a chapter of the American Solar Energy Society. We're a private, not-for-profit association for people and organizations interested in solar power, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

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Next meeting: Our April meeting will be held at the [Franklin County RE Fair](#). Please watch our website for details. We hope to see you there.

Our president's column

Big legislation and solar tour planned

Hot stuff going on in Olympia, and lots planned for the 2005 Solar Tour coming up in October. Pam lays out SW's involvement in Olympia. Also see next story and link below for more information.

Hey, this solar thing could be taking off! For Pam's take, see www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0503/President.B05.pdf

Big RE incentives in the works

Two bills that are getting strong bipartisan support in Olympia could give a huge boost to Washington's renewable-energy industry. The first bill would give homeowners of RE systems between 15 and 54 cents per kilowatt-hour produced by solar and other RE systems – up to \$2,000 per year.

The second bill would give tax breaks to RE businesses in Washington. For the full story, see

<http://www.renewableenergyaccess.com/rea/news/story?id=23763>

No moss grows on our website

George Meyer is SW's webmaster, which means that he is the guy most responsible for keeping the website up-to-date and the guy most responsible for all of the technical issues behind the newsletter.

With this issue, George starts a column that will highlight some of the best new stories on our SW website. See

www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0503/webmaster.B07.pdf

The last word

This issue contains a lot of optimism. I especially like the item in George's column about college students making a commitment to clean energy at Western in Bellingham and Evergreen in Olympia.

This issue has the typical gloomy news, too. The nuke industry is poised to build one new nuclear power plant a year for the next half century. And our energy consumption is wildly extravagant.

There's lots of easy fixes for consumption (see the LED story); but the best news potentially, I think, is the shortage of solar panels. This shortage is caused by demand. Solar is growing at close to 35 percent a year, which means that the demand for solar panels doubles about every two years.

Such powerful growth attracts investment in new plants and R&D for better products. As we build more panels, prices will drop and demand will rise some more and prices will drop yet again and more R&D will be spent on better products.

And these panels will be producing solar for a long time. The first solar cells invented at Bell Labs in the '40s and '50s are still working today.

As always, if you want to make your voice heard in this newsletter, contact us at newsletter@solarwashington.org.

– Josey Paul, editor