

OUR HEALTH IS AT STAKE

IF ONLY WE HAD A SENSE OF URGENCY TODAY,
GREAT OPPORTUNITY AND BENEFIT COULD PREVAIL



April 22, 2014, Earth Day - San Francisco, CA.

We now know that our numbers and our planet's capacity to support human life is threatened and the reason is us. We've reached this point by acting uncivilized, reckless, irresponsible and out right selfishly at times. This statement is harsh but unfortunately true. Yes, there was a time when we were ignorant of our place and circumstance, but today we can no longer claim ignorance. TODAY we must address our situation head-on with the greatest of urgency. Our health and life depend upon it. So what should we do?

There is plenty more we can do TODAY within our lives, within our families and especially within our communities that will begin making a significant difference, producing significant community benefits today. We need to begin cutting our excessive consumption of stuff, especially cheap stuff and stuff that is made in sweatshops and/or contains stuff that is known to be harmful to people and planet. There's also excessive travel by car and air (plane) that needs cut as well.

Many will argue this approach but this is to be expected. Anytime cuts are suggested many will cry about loss of economy and jobs. But on a local level it will have the opposite results, more jobs and a more expanded local economy. We should also expect some disruption as the old way gives way to new and takes hold. It's a natural occurrence.

There will also be some who will say this approach is unpractical, even stupid. (Bill Callahan asks) What's so smart and practical about a planet of intelligent beings who are now consuming more than their planet's annual biological capacity (roughly 1.5 earths). Current trends indicate we will need nearly 3 planets by 2050. Today consumption by the richest people is upwards of 5 earths and more.

This dilemma we find ourselves in TODAY will definitely not be solved with a trip to the mall, to shop for more stuff.

As noted previously, there's a special need to invest significantly more in our communities since a sustainable planet can only be achieved through a global effort with a majority of communities having a sustainable economy. More specifically each of us who can, need to invest more of our time and money in our local communities: its people, its locally owned and managed businesses, its social benefit organizations, its educational institutions and its social fabric, as well making the patronization of locally owned and managed businesses a priority, especially those who grow or make sustainable living products using locally sourced materials.

This dilemma we find ourselves in TODAY could be solved in part by avoiding products and services offered by multi-national corporations.

We have been taught that when stuff gets old, sometimes dirty, faded or broken it's worthless and is quickly trashed. Some stuff does get recycled, which is good, but much is not, even worse, a great volume of stuff is prematurely recycled, burned or buried when it still possesses great value and potential as is or with some modest added value.

We need to create a new awareness and appreciation for much of the stuff we call waste, since much is not waste at all, and much has significant economic and health benefits for people, community and planet. To create this new understanding and appreciation of waste it will of course need to make sense, especially economic sense. This can be accomplished quite simply by collecting it, all of it, identifying its true potential and value, making it accessible and readily available. A good example is new and used building debris, as well as the wood from our urban forests. There is a significant amount of new opportunity and money in the reuse of these high quality debris. By obtaining the true value and potential of these materials new jobs will be created for those who seek work and new business opportunities will be created for local businesses of all types and sizes. There's also two significant bonuses and they are huge. There's the carbon which is sequestered when we harvest the wood from our local trees, and salvage wood debris from new construction and deconstruction, when put to work in new products and projects in our communities. And there's significant energy savings, and new economic value when debris, especially metal debris are put to work again rather than recycling, which requires considerable more energy to remelt, make and transport. It's also important to note that this one example is quite significant in that it also has all the elements important to a highly functional and self-sustaining circular (local) economy: the energy savings noted above, the use of local materials and people, and fulfillment of local needs (products and services) of customers and businesses.

Many will wonder why we've not seen this obvious opportunity and moved on it sooner. This is not to say that no one is doing this, as there are many people, organizations and communities doing this in one form or another around the world. What's missing is a universal effort and sense of great urgency, our lives depend upon it. Again many around our world are already working diligently to make our communities the very best they can be for the benefit of all people, not just some. Give them the help they need and our communities and planet will be a healthier and better place for all.

So goes Mothers health so go her children. Let us not deny our children and future generations good health and well-being.

OHIAS - Mission: To end waste as we know it today, by putting it to work (not in the ground, or in the waters or in the air), putting people to work, putting communities to work, putting our planet to work for the benefit of all people and planet.

www.ohias.org

OHIAS's first community project is the creation of a community benefit cooperative where so called waste (natural resources) and people seeking opportunity will be put to work for the benefit of the community and planet and will be called the, Marin (county) Community Benefit Cooperative.

OHIAS is also seeking knowledgeable people who are experienced in transforming used building materials and urban trees into high quality materials and products who can serve on our board and/or fill vital positions.

Bill Callahan is founder of OHIAS and is serving as its interim director. Bill is also founder and owner of Tamalpais NatureWorks - creators and designers of the world's most empowering and sustainable furniture and kits, called Evermore™, for building one's very own lifelong furniture.

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