

Greenletter

November 2009 Vol 1 Issue 2
Service Wing

"Life is the best Teacher, Nature is the best Preacher" -Baba



When we heal the earth we heal ourselves.

Reducing Waste, Recycling and Reusing

For many years, Sathya Sai Organisation volunteers in Melbourne have given service at 'Recycling at the Mews' (Women of the University Fund).

WUF began in 1939 and has continued to work for the welfare of children specifically, but families may also be helped to survive some shattering crisis. Nothing is wasted by WUF if it can be recycled. Some of the items used for recycling are:

- Stamps (with envelope cut in half)
- Wool, Aluminium Cans, Clean Aluminium Foil, Greeting Cards, Books, Bric-a-Brac, etc.

Last year, members of the Sai Family in Ballarat and in Taylors Lakes in Victoria sorted and paired hundreds of single, new, 'seconds' socks and carefully packed them for distribution to the needy. This activity meant that the socks were used instead of discarded and thrown away.

For several years, a lady in Geelong (who heard about the Sai Organisation's Meals for the Needy Service activities in Melbourne on Thursday evenings and in Footscray on Monday evenings), has been knitting

warm woollen beanies for distribution, by Sai Organisation members, to the needy in the cold Winter months. The lady sources the wool for the beanies from op shops and discount stores and is also given some wool by friends. She knits the beanies with love and also collects, washes and irons donated good quality clothing and sleeping bags, etc., which can also be distributed, as required. The lady does not specifically know about Sathya Sai Baba. However, she lives His Message of Selfless Love.

Tips for Reducing Waste of Energy

We can choose to live our lives more consciously, practising 'Conscious Integrated Awareness' (CIA).



This practice will enable us to become more mindful and aware of what we do and how we do it.

For example, we can:

- become more mindful in relation to how we light, heat and cool our homes and seek energy sources or fittings and

equipment which are more energy efficient;

- choose to only light and heat the rooms we are using and switch off the light and heat sources in those rooms which are not used;

- install and use curtains, shade cloth or blinds on the windows, particularly on the sides of the house which get hot in Summer;

- build a pergola which permits the winter sun to enter the room/s and provides shade in summer;

- install double glazing on the windows of our house;

- consider 'downsizing' to a smaller house;

- consider alternative forms of heating and cooling which may be more energy efficient;

- plant hardy deciduous or native plants to provide shelter from the cold wind and/or shade in summer (and food and habitat for native fauna);

- install insulation in the roof;

- install solar heating;



- use a system of layered clothing indoors, which will enable us to regulate our body temperature without having to resort to over use of heating

systems or electric fans and cooling systems.

- consider how we are using energy for cooking and washing and find ways of reducing waste of energy;
- begin to regulate our rising and sleeping patterns with the natural rhythms of nature, rising with the rising Sun and reducing the lighting in the home and preparing to rest and sleep when it is dark;
- turn off electrical appliances at the power switch when not in use;
- reduce the number of television sets, CD players and computers in the house, only keeping what is really needed;
- turn off the television in the evening and read or dim the lights/ light a candle and meditate before retiring.



Sai Green Activities in W.A.

1) All centres invited to hold an earth meditation (1st week of March). This beautiful meditation was composed from Swami's teachings on nature. We accompanied the meditation with altar offerings on a mother earth theme. It is hoped to be able to offer this meditation CD to other environmental groups in the community.



2) The **1-in-3 Challenge** was launched with the invitation to members who were going to make monetary savings from practising ceiling on desires, to direct a portion of monetary savings to Sathya Sai School in Murwillumbah, NSW. All centre service coordinators used themselves as an example, where each of us picked a "habit" (e.g less coffee per week, less DVD hire etc) , made quantified cutback's (e.g a few dollars per week placed into a jar) and converted that into redirection of the savings to the Sai school. We felt it good to make a cutback on our desires.

3) *Study circles on Swami's teachings* on nature held at centres.

4) *SSE camp over four days* on theme "Nature is Us" - this was held over the Easter long-weekend and covered a range of environmental topics and activities for the children e.g recycle, re-use, reduce, worm farming, vegetarian, composting etc.

5) *Vegetarian month* - in April all centres invited to hold a month focusing on vegetarianism, including poster displays on the environmental benefits of being veg. Environmental posters were shared across the centres.

6) *Easwaramma Day* - in WA for our usual State lunch, attention was paid to plastic disposable cutlery used. 100% recyclable and compostable non fossil fuel cutlery was used instead of usual plastic disposables which have been previously used.

7) *200 metal forks and spoons* have been donated by members to use instead of disposable cutlery. Also non-disposable

drinking tumblers have been donated by members for use instead of disposable cups.

8) *Sai Perth centre equipped a new shelter for the homeless which serves only vegetarian organic food with its start-up bedding.*

The shelter is owned by the People and Animal Welfare Society and has a small vegetarian organic market. It is in the process of locating communal gardens for organic cultivation to involve homeless in the whole picture -from organic cultivation and harvesting to actual preparation of vegetarian meals. Once the gardens are set up, it is proposed to have Sai members assisting in the cultivation, as a service activity.

9) *Akhanda bhajan*: it is proposed that one disposable item be selected and replaced with non-disposable item. 2009 bhajan we have selected disposable cups. Previously styrofoam cups have been used, so for this year a plan as been set to use only non-disposables for this year, overseen by service coordinators. The aim is that as bhajans over the 24 hours will be purifying the atmosphere through the collective vibrational wave which is generated, so this will be supported at the physical level by ensuring minimum waste products are used.

Reducing Waste of Food

"Ceiling on Desires is a must for leading a peaceful and meaningful life. You must curb the desire to seek more and more wealth and turn your effort to realise the Divinity within. In pursuing this effort, you must avoid waste of food, money, time, energy and knowledge as all these are forms of God." (Sanathana Sarathi, August 1994, p213)

In 2004, Australians threw away an estimated \$5.3 billion on all

forms of food. Figures from 'Wasteful Consumption in Australia', a report published by The Australian Institute in 2005, indicated this food waste comprised:

- \$2.9 billion worth of fresh food
- \$630 million worth of uneaten take-away food
- \$876 million in leftovers
- \$596 million of unfinished drinks
- \$241 million of frozen food.



Throwing food away costs more than just the money you paid for it, you're also wasting all the water, energy and other resources that went into producing the food in the first place.

Think about what you need and use what's in the fridge, freezer and pantry before you eat out or get take away." Ref: *The Australian Conservation Foundation GreenHome Guide*
<http://www.acfonline.org.au/greenhome>

"The shortage of food grains is mainly due to bad and wasteful eating habits; it can be set right, and people can live longer and more healthily, if only they eat the minimum, rather than fill themselves with the maximum." (SSS Vol 7 Ch. 22 p.110)

"Hence, to waste food is to waste God. Do not waste food. Eat only what you need and be sure that what you eat is sathwic. Give any surplus food to those in need." (*Vision of Sai, Rita Bruce, p.233*)

GREEN TIPS FOR TRANSPORT

• *On yer bike!* If every vehicle owner in NSW reduced their travel by as little as 1 kilometre a day, 375,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas would be saved each year. And with every litre of petrol saved, greenhouse pollution is reduced by 2.5 kilograms (that's 325,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas saved!)

• *10,000 Steps:* This initiative started in Queensland in 2001. The project has successfully motivated local communities, workplaces and individuals to increase their physical activity levels across the country. The 10,000 Steps website has loads of helpful tips and downloadable record sheets to get you on your way: www.10000steps.org.au

• *Bicycle User Groups (BUGs):* Members are ordinary people, at all levels of physical fitness, who ride a variety of bicycles for transport, recreation, exercise and fun. The aim of BUGs is to promote the safe use of bicycles, promote road safety and education and advocate better outcomes for bicyclists in our local area. Bicycle User Groups are affiliated to Bicycle NSW.

• *Take the train, get on the bus*

• *Car pool with friends and colleagues:* you can also start a walking school bus to reduce the many short trips ferrying children around schools each day.

• *Avoid Needless Air Travel* aeroplanes are major contributors to the greenhouse effect, and in particular, they emit high levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and water vapour. NO_x emissions from aircraft are responsible for ozone depletion in the stratosphere and also contribute to smog build-up in our cities. Avoiding one return Sydney to Melbourne air trip saves 390kg of CO₂. That's about three times

more greenhouse gases than a train or a bus.

• *Drive Efficiently:* When you absolutely have to drive, make a conscious effort to be an efficient driver and keep your car in excellent working order. By simply adjusting some of your driving methods you can improve the fuel efficiency of your car and reduce its emissions:

- By avoiding stop and start traffic and driving smoothly you can save up to 30% greenhouse pollution.

- Keeping the engine of your car tuned will reduce emissions by 5-15%.

- You can save up to 100kg of greenhouse pollution each year by ensuring your tires are kept at the maximum recommended pressure.

- Reducing the amount of unnecessary weight in the car will improve its fuel efficiency.

- Use the air-conditioning sparingly

- Switching the engine off rather than letting it idle (for anything longer than 10 seconds) saves more fuel than is used when you restart.

ENVIROMENTALLY FRIENDLY CLEANING PRODUCTS

BACK TO BASICS : As hot water is said to be the best germ killer, we recommend its use where appropriate. A sponge or cloth wrung out in hot water will increase the efficiency of any cleaning product and minimise product use.

Heavily soiled areas, stove tops, etc.: Try 1 drop of Multi Purpose Liquid on a damp cloth. If stains are heavily baked on, use a small amount of Bicarbonate of Soda with the Multi Purpose Liquid.

Range Hood Filters: Small filters are easily cleaned by mixing equal parts of Multi Purpose Liquid and Spirits of Orange with

enough hot water to cover them. Swish filter through the water until grease melts. Remove and rinse in clean hot water. For filters too large for a suitable container, spray Degreaser onto the surface and wait a few moments, then rinse under the hot water tap. Very effective and will not darken the aluminium coil.

Oven Cleaner: Mix Bicarb to a paste with Multi Purpose Liquid for medium soil. For heavy soil, add a few drops of Spirits of Orange to the mix. Apply to a warm oven and, if possible, leave overnight. Remove with a sponge or cloth dipped in hot water for best results.

Stainless Steel: Will clean and shine easily with Hard Surface Cleaner. We do not use Pumice which will scratch the surface. Also great for marble type surfaces due to its gentle action.

Antiseptic Toilet Cleaner: To make up yourself - mix 100ml Multi Purpose Liquid with 5ml Tea Tree. Add water to make 1 litre (or use Vinegar instead of water for heavy duty cleaning needs.)

Floor Cleaner: 30ml Multi Purpose Liquid and 30ml Spirits of Orange added to a full bucket of water will clean floors and leave a pleasant citrus fragrance.

Furniture Polish: Melt 60gm Beeswax with 50ml Spirits of Orange in a double boiler. Remove when melted and stir well. Add enough olive oil for a smooth consistency. This should be stored in a screw top jar, and kept out of reach from children. Not a good idea to use peanut butter jars because of the similar colour.

Cream Cleanser: Add enough Spirits of Orange to Bicarb to make a stiff paste. Store in glass. For a more liquid effect, add Multi Purpose Liquid to required texture.

Iron Cleaner: Cover piece of Beeswax with a cotton cloth and wipe over warm iron (then rub with a clean cloth). Keeps your iron smooth and clean.

Wool Wash: Excellent for washing all clothes, especially for jumpers, baby clothes, blankets and other clothing items need special care.

Spray and Wipe: To make 1 litre of Spray-N-Wipe, combine 80ml Spirits of Orange and 80ml Multi Purpose Liquid. Top up with Water or Vinegar. For all surfaces.

Spirits of Orange: This is the oil extracted from the peel of the orange (our heavy duty cleaner). It is safe on skin, silk, wool, etc., but will eat its way through plastic. See, we said it was friendly...

- Spirits of Orange will remove grease, crayon, wax, chewing gum, floor adhesive, lipstick, blood and tar.

- Spirits of Orange is an excellent substitute for Turps. Will clean oil-based paints from brushes and clothes and is more pleasant to use.

- Spirits of Orange is great to wash massage towels. Add ½ cup Spirits of Orange to the wash cycle which will help remove oil and leave a pleasant smell.

Other Uses for Bicarb (Bicarbonate of Soda):

- In dishwashers to replace normal dishwashing powder. Or mix 50/50 for economy.

- In shoes, on carpets, on pets favourite spot to deodorize. Also in fridge to absorb smells.

- As a toothpaste replacement.

- To unblock drains.

- 1 handful Bicarb in hot water to soak nappies.

(This material taken from www.back-to-basics.com.au with permission).

Kids Korner - Cygnets on the Lake



There has been enough rain for the black swans to make nests out in the lake this year. They make their nests out in the water where the young Cygnets will be safe from foxes (and dogs and cats). When they are old enough, the swans bring their signets closer to shore, to where there is plenty of shelter and food amongst the rushes. When there are dry or drought conditions, with little rainfall, we always pray that the water in the lake, and food, will last until the young Cygnets, ducklings, and other water birds, are old enough to fly and make their way to other lakes and water catchments. We always look forward to Spring, when we can watch the miracle of new life unfold.

Kids Korner - Alice the Fairy Penguin



I found Alice the Fairy Penguin when I was walking along a beach in north-east Tasmania one Summer morning. A lot of penguins had been caught in a big storm, when they were out at sea, and many of them had been washed ashore.

Alice was lying on the sand in the hot sun and was very weak. She

would probably have died pretty quickly, so I picked her up and carried her back to our house.

I managed to first gently put my windcheater over her and avoid her very sharp beak which was being used to peck hard. Even though she was close to death, Alice was determined to survive being attacked by any predators.

I then took Alice home and called Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife to ask where I could take her. I was advised to take her to the local vet first and then, if she survived, to contact a wildlife rescue lady who lived south of Hobart. The vet told us that Alice was very sick and probably wouldn't survive, but it was worth trying to help her anyway. He gave her rehydration solution because she was very dehydrated and an antibiotic injection and told me how to feed her slivers of fresh fish, and give her time in water to keep blood circulating in her legs and help her float. The wildlife rescue lady asked me to see if Alice survived and then I could arrange to deliver her for further care and eventual release back into the sea.

By the second morning, Alice had realised we were not going to harm her and stopped trying to peck our hands. She even started to 'coo' at us when she wanted food. We looked after Alice for about 10 days or so. During that time, we had to find fresh fish for her from local fish shops and also learn how to gradually reintroduce her to water, and then sea water, so her body's oils could be redistributed and feathers could be reconditioned and she could regain her ability to float on water without becoming cold and water logged and end up drowning. (As a vegetarian, cutting up fresh fish was quite a challenge!)

We learned such a lot. For example, we were told that when young penguins first leave the

burrow and make their way to the sea, they somehow 'code' the location of their burrow into their system and that enables them to return to that location whenever they need to return to mate. They come back even from thousands of kilometres away. Whilst we initially thought Alice was a very young bird, it turned out that she was a mature fairy penguin. That meant it was even more remarkable that she had adjusted to being handled and fed by us so quickly.

Alice showed us how quickly wild creatures respond to loving care. She became a very special member of our family for the short time she was with us. The wildlife carer later told us that it was better not to make a pet of wild creatures as it could interfere with preparing them for release back out into the wild. It was a good lesson in not getting too attached!

When Alice was strong enough to make the journey, she was delivered to the wild life carer who undertook to prepare her for eventual release back to the sea.

Organic Foods

The August issue of Choice Magazine for 2009 carried an article and links to organic food websites. The point of the article was that at the moment anyone can use the word **organic** in food labelling. Choice Magazine did an investigation and we offer you two links from this article. There is one producer who operates a certification service; Australian Certified Organic (a division of Biological Farmers of Australia). Their website is <http://www.australianorganic.com.au>

Tasmania Organic

The Tasmanian Organic-Dynamic Producers website, while meant for organic

producers, has a lot of information on organic foods and focuses on safety, nutrition, taste, storage, ecology and social responsibility aspects of organic food. Worth a read.

<http://www.tasorganiddynamic.com.au/>

Baba Speaks



“Human life is not being depleted even though millions die and, in addition, there is a constant transition from humanity to the Divine. Instead of depletion, the human population is growing, and this new supply comes from the rock, the insect, the animal. Even science testifies that the rock decomposes and becomes the tree; the vegetation is eaten and becomes the animal; and the animal in its various aspects is consumed and becomes the human. It is a constant process of passing from one grade to another. The human birth is the final birth and, dependent on the virtue of the life, it ends in the Divine, or is reborn again. (‘My Baba and I’, John Hislop, p 188)

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