



***DON'T BE FUELED!* NEWSLETTER**

Winter 2006

The latest edition of our Newsletter comes to you as we begin to celebrate our various Festivals of the Lights. As we go into the winter months in this hemisphere, it is a time for to hibernate, reflect and stay close to home. If we are truly following the pattern of the seasons, it is a time for honing down, concentrating on essentials and laying the groundwork for the abundance of the seasons which will follow. We wish you time to enjoy some quiet reflection and to nourish yourselves and those around you, and we wish you a season of joy and hope and optimism.

We have plenty of good things on which to reflect here at *Don't Be Fueled!* Green seems to be the new color of choice and we are seeing more evidence that gradually the world is waking up to the fact that we must, and can, do more to treat our beautiful planet with care.

For instance, two years ago Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), chair of the Environment and Public Works committee, called global warming “the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people.” After much public outcry and a change of hands in Congress, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) will chair this committee beginning in January. A long-time leader on environmental issues, Senator Boxer has made it clear that under her leadership, the committee will make solving global warming one of its top priorities. Incidentally, Senator Boxer is the first of our featured green drivers. See her on the Home page of our website <http://www.dontbefueled.org>.

Real changes may be coming in Detroit. Last month, the heads of the Big Three automakers arrived at the White House in two hybrid cars and a sedan, which averaged more than 30 miles per gallon on the highway. A company spokesman said this signaled their awareness that Washington's attitude toward fuel economy was changing.

Ford announced a new design philosophy: “Bolder Miles, Greener Miles and Safer Miles” which points to a new emphasis on edgy design, a new focus on fuel economy and a new commitment to make all of Ford's products the safest in their class. In practice this will mean a broader rollout of existing safety technologies and the introduction of new ones. It will also mean more hybrids and more flex-fuel vehicles capable of running on either gasoline or ethanol. We hope Ford follows through on these promises. A few years ago, Ford's “Cleaner, Safer, Sooner” campaign and promise of a big increase in fuel efficiency was scrapped amid pressure to build and sell more big SUV's.

Honda has been running print ads on the theme of “thinking in action,” promoting Honda as the most fuel-efficient company in America. Learn more at environmentology.honda.com. Honda has also launched and is promoting significant new safety initiatives, such as front design changes that protect pedestrians in collisions. Go Honda!

A Prince Goes Green. Even the British monarchy is changing. It has just been announced that Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, is making sweeping changes in his various households to make them greener. These changes include converting his official Jaguar cars to biodiesel!

Don't Be Fueled! Launches a New Hybrid Minivan Petition Campaign. We are launching a new petition campaign and urge you to sign up on our website. We plan to ask automakers to make a fuel-efficient hybrid minivan. Sign up and encourage your family and friends to do the same. Together we can bring about green change. <http://www.dontbefueled.org/petition.shtml>

US Flunks GHG Emissions Ranking. Although Sweden, Britain and Denmark are doing the most to protect against climate change, their efforts are not nearly enough, according to a report released last month by environmental groups. The United States — the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases — ranked 53rd, with only China, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia doing worse. The index ranks 56 countries that were part of a 1992 climate treaty or that contribute at least 1 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. The countries produce 90 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions.

The calculations by the environmental group Germanwatch took into account emissions levels, emissions trends and climate policy. About one-quarter of the energy consumed in Sweden in 2003 came from renewable sources, more than four times as much as the European Union average of six percent. In Stockholm, one-quarter of city buses run on ethanol or biogas. The country with the worst ranking was Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter. Britain produces two percent of the world's greenhouse gases, but it has been one of the loudest voices on global warming and has established some of the world's most punitive taxes on carbon emissions. It already has met its Kyoto emissions reductions targets, but most European nations are trying to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases by 8 percent by 2012.

Another New Year's Resolution for Your List: Stop Junk Mail to Help Mother Earth.

If you want to play your part in the Three (or Four) R's — reducing, re-using, repairing and recycling — here is some useful information. Want to get off those mailing lists? It is estimated that 17 billion catalogs, requiring more than 3.5 million tons of paper, are sent to Americans each year. Making all that pulp takes about 60 million trees, some of them from endangered forests. If you're already on a company's mailing list, contact it directly by going to its website or calling customer service. To prevent new companies from harassing you, get on the “do not mail” list by writing to Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 282, Carmel, NY 10512, or registering online at dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist. We need to prod the catalog industry to use more recycled paper and sustainably harvested timber. Find out about the ForestEthics' campaign to do just that at victoriasdirtysecret.net. They can now be congratulated on a victorious campaign. We also suggest that you take a look at <http://www.greendimes.com>. Greendimes will remove your details from mailing lists and also plant a tree in your name and all for a dime a day.

Cell Phone Recycling. If you live in the U.S., you are probably one of the 200 million mobile phone users. Most phones are changed approximately every 18 months and that adds up to about 130 million surplus cell phones per year, weighing about 65,000 tons. If you've got one of this country's 600 million currently retired cell phones sitting in a drawer, you can recycle it at any Staples store in the U.S. You'll be helping to protect the environment and supporting the Sierra Club at the same time (a portion of the proceeds from recycling the mobile electronics devices will be donated to the Club). You can also recycle rechargeable batteries, PDAs and pagers.

Optimists Take On Scientists and Congress. Many of you may have seen the recent posting on DBF's website's Home page featuring Federal Assistance to Student Car Buyers. FASCB is an organization that is attempting to secure passage of legislation granting a one-time, 20% federal subsidy to college/vocational school students, and those newly graduated from these institutions, to purchase fuel-efficient cars.

Don't Be Fueled!'s Acting Chairperson Sheira Kahn met FASCB's Executive Director Max Stephenson, a 16-year-old New Jersey high school student, when she was in New York over the Thanksgiving holiday. Max reported that FASCB is gaining traction on several fronts. Formed in April 2006, FASCB has formed allegiances with 10 environmental organizations, acquired more than 8,500 signatures calling for Congress to pass the FASCB bill, and is in discussion with some key influencers on Capital Hill (including Nancy Pelosi's office, which he admits has slowed a bit since November 7). Next steps, he says, are to "make all students and parents aware of the need for fuel-efficient cars, reach out to every hybrid car manufacturer, garner additional support from environmental organizations and move the bill through Congress."

"Partnering with *Don't Be Fueled!*: Mothers for Clean and Safe Vehicles is our first major stepping stone. The commonality of purpose is astonishing. If two negatives make a positive, then two positives make for victory," says Stephenson. "I'm an optimist, not a scientist," he admits. Check out this great organization and have everyone you know sign the petition: <http://www.FASCB.org> "*Next Generation Cars for the Next Generation.*"

Top Cars for College Students: CarMax and Driver's Edge Recommend Best Vehicles for Safety and Reliability. CarMax, Inc., the nation's largest retailer of used cars, and Driver's Edge, a national nonprofit organization providing youth driver education, have teamed up to recommend the top cars for college students. The top cars recommended for college students that fulfill both parents' safety and reliability demands and young drivers' requirements for looks and performance include (in alphabetical order by manufacturer):

- * Audi A4
- * Ford Five Hundred
- * Honda Civic
- * Hyundai Sonata
- * Scion tC
- * Subaru Impreza (except WRX models)
- * Toyota Corolla (models with ABS)
- * Volkswagen Jetta
- * Volkswagen Passat
- * Volvo S40

For more information and to learn how these cars were chosen for the list, visit the CarMax website at <http://www.carmax.com>. Driver's Edge is a Nevada nonprofit organization that offers a free educational program for young drivers aged 15 to 21, teaching real life emergency avoidance and response techniques and overall driver safety. This innovative program is taught on an ongoing basis in Las Vegas, with annual national tours visiting multiple U.S. cities each year. The program is funded entirely by corporate sponsorship, public grants, and charitable donations. Visit <http://www.driversedge.org> to learn more.

Student Drivers and Texting Don't Mix: Teen drivers say they are most distracted by exchanging text messages. In the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety study, 37 % of teens said text messaging was extremely or very distracting. Another 20 % said they were distracted because of their emotional state, while 19 % blamed friends in the car. While teens texting and driving may worry parents, the teens aren't doing anything illegal. Nearly 50 countries restrict or ban cell phone use while driving, but the United States isn't one of them. Three states have imposed bans, while 13 others outline restrictions on their use. In general, cell phone users are seen to react more slowly while driving regardless of their age. Studies show no significant safety differences between hands-free and handheld phones either. Read more at <http://www.aiada.org/newsroom/newsDetails.aspx?id=57213>.

Child safety: Car seats and Booster Seats Must Be Installed Correctly. If you are at a different stage in your family life and dealing with safety seats for infants and booster seats for older children, please read the manufacturer's instructions. A recent research study found that as many as 90 percent of car seats are installed incorrectly. A big problem, of course, is that the methods of installation are different for each car. You can check out some information about child safety seats at this website, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/CSSRating/Index.cfm>.

Thinking of Buying a New Car? Help is on the Web. Although not frequently updated, the Hybridblog from the Union of Concerned Scientists has very useful information. Recent entries address inquiries about "clean" diesels, the fate of old hybrid batteries, and whether it's better for the environment to hang on to an old gas guzzler or trade it in for a newer more fuel-efficient hybrid. Visit <http://www.Hybridblog.org>.

And More Car-Buying Websites . . . This site can help you find some details about a car you might be considering: <http://www.40mpg.org/comm/modelinfo.cfm>. This is a new organization, lobbying on behalf of hybrid owners: <http://www.hybridownersofamerica.org>. The Sierra Club's MPG Calculator is an easy way for you to find out how much money you would save if you switched to a more fuel-efficient car: <http://www.sierraclub.org/mpg>. This federal government site can also be a useful source of information for car buyers: <http://www.fueleconomy.gov>. We recently heard of a great information web site aimed primarily at woman drivers. It is informative and it is fun to use: <http://www.askpatty.com>. This site also has good information about buying green: http://autos.yahoo.com/green_center.

Movies, Books, Readers and Tea Parties. As many of you are no doubt aware, the DVD *An Inconvenient Truth* is now available for purchase at <http://www.climatecrisis.net>. Consider buying an extra copy to donate to your local library or school.

Recently Al Gore and the producers of *An Inconvenient Truth* offered to give the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) 50,000 DVDs for free. The NSTA's response: thanks, but no thanks. Apparently they "didn't want to offer 'political' endorsement of the film; and they saw 'little, if any, benefit to NSTA or its members' in accepting the free DVDs. We would give the NSTA an F grade for Fail here or a D grade for Dunce. It seems though that they have given themselves an O grade for Oil as they have received \$6 million since 1996 from ExxonMobil.

A reader wrote to tell us about a new book, *Plug-in Hybrids — The Cars That Will Recharge America*, by Sherry Boschert. He says he has no direct connection with her effort but would like to see it gain a larger audience. She can be contacted via her website <http://www.sherryboschert.com>.

One of our readers in England wrote about the joys of driving diesel. He says that both his cars are diesels and he gets about 38 mpg from a 6-seat Fiat MPV whilst commuting (average speed about 16mph!). Fully laden with a roof box on the 500-mile haul across to Germany, he gets 40 to the gallon running at 70 mph.

It is always wonderful to hear from our readers and each month some of you take the time to do this. We have recently changed our method of contact on our website. Now you will be asked to write your message directly into a box there and it will be forwarded to A Real Human Being and she will respond to you from a private screen name. The words Don't Be Fueled will be in the subject line of the response. We have had to do this as our e-mail address had been trawled by the spammers and the volume of junk mail had become huge.

Please write us with tips, suggestions and stories you would like to share. We would prefer not to hear about more investment opportunities, body enhancements, prescription drugs and lottery wins (unless the latter is really, really true).

The DBF Community. Our *Don't Be Fueled!* community is dispersed around the world and visitors to our website come from North and South America, the UK, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Asia and Africa. Our Newsletter subscribers number over 900 and while we have the attention of all of you, we would like to suggest that you . . .

Infuse Yourself in Green



Don't be Fueled! Holds First Annual Virtual Tea Party. We are holding a "Virtual Tea Party" during the month of December and you are invited. You don't have to go anywhere, you can save the gas and the time. We are asking you to sit and drink a restful cup of tea at 4 pm on one of the days in December. You will be joined in spirit by many of our group.

We need to keep our website in operation, so we are asking you to send us the funds you would have spent on a few days' worth of tea or coffee. We suggest \$10 or \$15 (or more if you prefer), all tax-deductible. You can use the Donate Now button on the left side of each page of our website, <http://www.dontbefueled.org/> to reach our completely secure donation page or send a check to our mailing address:

Don't Be Fueled! mothers for clean and safe vehicles
The Presidio of San Francisco
PO Box 29138
San Francisco, CA 94129-0138

You will receive a wonderful, premium organic tea bag as a special thank you from us! The tea has been donated by DBF friends Jill Portman and Gary Shinner, the owners of [Mighty Leaf Tea](#), our very favorite tea company, and is a real treat.

We will of course be happy to accept donations at any time and even if you don't care for tea (though say that softly around our English-born Director). Please think of *Don't Be Fueled!* when you write your end-of-year donation checks.

We wish you a wonderful season. We wish you light in your life and light in the World — green, of course.

Best Wishes from the DBF Team,

Betsy, Cindy, Denise, Eva, Janie, Lauren, Lynn, Sandy and Sheira.