



Sustain Dane

On Culture, Art and Sustainability

Art Fair Exhibit a Success—Decorated Barrels to be Sold at Auction

Our first-ever exhibit of artist-decorated rain barrels was a big hit at this year's Art Fair on the Square, presented by the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. We displayed six entries from local artists in a variety of media and styles. An overarching theme of all the contributors was to take an object that stands out as "artificial" and connect it to the natural world. These spectacular barrels will be



on display at sites around Madison, and you'll be able to bid on them in an on-line auction. For more information on the barrels and the auction,

please visit www.rainfordane.org.

The goal of the exhibit was to demonstrate that there are



myriad ways to dress up a rain barrel, and that appearance is therefore no reason to put

off installing them on any home. Of course, we were also there to spread the word about the benefits of rain barrels to a lot of people both in and out of Dane County.

Through August 24th, we will be holding an on-line auction of these decorated barrels from the exhibit, and proceeds will help support the sustainability work that's done here at

Sustain Dane. Whether you want to bid on one of the artist-prepared barrels or you use them as inspiration for a design



of your own does not matter—the im-

portant thing is that you conserve water and energy by using rain barrels, and do your part in helping to lead our community down a path to sustainable living.

-By Scott Lynch



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Rural Renaissance: Renewing the Countryside Wisconsin



Renewing the Countryside is a Minnesota-based non-profit that has been promoting and enhancing rural revitalization for almost a decade by focusing on positive happenings in rural communities, such as the work of artisans, innovative small businesses, and sustainable agriculture. Their mission

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"As a whole, the book celebrates Wisconsin's long history of environmental stewardship, championed by Aldo Leopold, Gaylord Nelson, and John Muir. It is only natural that the state has become a leader in green travel and organic agriculture."



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Please support Sustain Dane's work

Make a donation to Sustain Dane and help support the state's leading sustainability organization. Donations can be mailed to Sustain Dane or contribute online at www.sustaindane.org.

Sustain Dane is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization committed to creating communities that deeply enjoy, care for and are sustained by their unique environment.

Letter from the Executive Director

You may have seen a recent community decision about the future use of Garver Feed Mill near Olbrich Gardens. The proposals submitted included a sustainability center and an arts incubator, both worthwhile uses of the space. I have to admit that I was not involved in either concept at the beginning, but I was disappointed that a vision to incorporate both ideas couldn't be achieved.

A great example of the synergistic possibilities of humanities, arts and sustainability was highlighted during a recent presentation that I attended by the founder of Portland's City Repair Project, Mark Lakeman. By giving individuals an opportunity to improve their "design literacy" and express their imagination, the City Repair Project has become a model for sustainable neighborhood development. Not only have Lakeman's efforts helped Portland to become the only city in America to show a decrease in Vehicle Miles Traveled per person, but additional benefits include decreased crime, healthier people, and according to Lakeman have led to "an increase in the number of microbreweries in Portland and happier pets in his neighborhood".



Fortunately, our area has no shortage of creative people. Some use this talent to foster community-building, others to advance social change and yet others find exciting ways to express ideas. This is part of the reason we dedicated this issue to highlighting just some of the local efforts that intersect humanities, arts and sustainability. The other purpose is the prospect that our area is ready to put the economic development opportunity of Richard Florida's "creative class" theory to work by communicating and solving our community's sustainability challenges through innovative and inspiring approaches.

This past month Sustain Dane ventured into the possibilities of artistic thought with our own rain barrel decorating project. The submissions we received from local artists were nothing short of astounding and we hope to repeat this annually. The decorated barrels will be auctioned online and I strongly encourage you to bid as the proceeds will go towards supporting both Sustain Dane and water conservation (more details on page 1).

Sustain Dane Fall Calendar



August

- Urban Horticulture Field Day and RainReserve™ Rain Barrel Distribution, Saturday, August 16, 10:00am - 3:00pm, West Madison Agricultural Research Station

September

- Sustain Dane and Neighborhood Design Center presents Doug Farr on "Sustainable Urbanism" - Wednesday, September 17, 7:00pm, Monona Terrace
- Food for Thought Festival - Saturday, September 20th, 8:00am - 1:30pm, Martin Luther King Blvd. at Capital Square
- World Car-Free Day - Saturday, September 22, 9am-11am, 25 N. Pinckney on the Capitol Square

October

- A Clean Future for the Yahara Lakes: Solutions for Tomorrow, Starting Today - Friday, October 10, Monona Terrace, <http://www.nelson.wisc.edu/outreach/yahara>.

Ongoing:

- Green Tuesdays: Films & Lectures on Sustainability, Monona Public Library, starts at 6:30pm. See <http://www.mononapubliclibrary.org/events/greentuesdays.htm> for film listings.

A Second Life for Old Doors

Madison Environmental Group's office furniture looks brand new. Most of the simple, elegant pieces are made, however, from materials salvaged from deconstruction projects around Madison. Architect Christi Weber designed and now sells the furniture and also consults on other projects with FullCircle Design, a branch of Madison Environmental Group.

It all started when the group consulted on the use of salvaged materials in the deconstruction of a Madison area hospital. The hospital had over a hundred unwanted doors and the group found a practical reuse for the large birch slabs by converting them

into tables, benches, and shelving.

Now other businesses and homeowners looking for a beautiful and green alternative, can buy the furniture, or even



Photo courtesy of Full Circle Design

make it themselves using FullCircle Design's do-it-yourself kit. Weber says that the company is not trying to actively compete in the furniture market, noting the difficulty of

being price competitive when so much furniture is made in China.

Still, FullCircle Design's furniture aesthetics are displayed in the Madison Museum of Contemporary

Art in a recent exhibit, which showcased urban living vignettes that each incorporated a piece from the museum's permanent collection.

FullCircle Design packed as much function into the 12 by 14 foot space as possible to reflect the small footprint of urban living illustrated in artist names' "Impression of Chicago," said Weber.

Sustainability is a growing trend in interior design, ac-

cording to Weber, who noted that the other displays in the exhibit also incorporated green aspects. FullCircle Design's emphasis, however, on using not just recycled, but salvaged materials is unique.

The company motivates others to imagine new possibilities for salvaged materials as well. Weber consults with businesses and homeowners who are looking to remodel or improve their space. People's ability to stay where they are, as opposed to relocating to a suburb, encourages her to help people rethink their space. "I love being able to make something more beautiful, usable, and functional for people," she remarks, "then they're just all around happier in their space."

-By Julia Cechvala

EKRA: Emily Kircher Recycling Artist

Walking through downtown Madison or perusing a crafts exposition, you might see a series of small colorful rugs, jewelry, and cat toys, in a nearby booth. It was in this manner that I encountered Emily Kircher, recycling artist. She explained that she refers to herself as an artist rather than another title due to her preference against constraining herself to a particular method or material. She primarily works in salvaged fabrics, in the form of old clothes, linens, curtains, remnants with which she crochets rugs and purses, and dishes she cuts up into tiles to make mosaics. "I also use bottle caps (plastic and metal), books, old maps, and anything else that is second-hand is fair game for me," she writes.

Kircher's material tends to be donated by private indi-

viduals or found in any one of the plethora of thrift stores throughout Madison.

For her, "a combination of my love of crafting and my

"I think the idea of sustainability comes through in everything I make because I use as close to 100% recycled, second-hand, or salvaged materials as possible. People are amazed when I tell them what I can make with castoffs- a great thing about my business as a crafter is that it gives me an opportunity to educate people on sustainability and recycling."

concern for the environment" is what spawned her idea to use only recycled art in her work. "I think the idea of sustainability comes through in everything I make because I use as close to 100% recycled, second-hand, or salvaged materials as possible. People are amazed when I tell them what I can make with castoffs- a great thing about my business as a crafter is that it gives me an opportunity to educate people on sustainability and recycling." Ms. Kircher is also going to be featured in an upcoming documentary and the book, *Handmade Nation* (<http://indiecraftdocumentary.blogspot.com/>), by Faythe Levine, which will feature twenty-five independent artists.

-By Zaber Karp



Sustain Dane's RainReserve rain barrel system has been awarded two Green Log Home and Lifestyle Awards, the only nominee to win in two categories.

The awards were created to recognize "the most noteworthy and innovative green home living solutions."

Winners were chosen by a combination of on-line polling and input from judges affiliated with Environment News Service, a newswire with a focus on environmental issues.

Sustainable Building Use Takes a Creative Vision

When it comes to living sustainably, keeping a whole building out of the landfill is a great contribution. Artists do just that when they convert older properties into combined living spaces and art studios. Old schools, churches, warehouses, and retail buildings have great appeal to artists seeking flexible space. Where some see a building that no longer serves its purpose, artists see an empty canvas.

"Artists want cubic space, not square footage," Pat

Whyte herself converted a 1-room schoolhouse in Plain, WI, into an art gallery and 2-bedroom residence.

A Madison artist and her husband live right downtown in a former church. The tall windows and high ceilings provide great natural light, and it's a perfect place to entertain.

In the town of Paoli, a mill, creamery, and other buildings now showcase local artists.

A couple in Black Earth converted a barn to a living space and hosted theatre readings and short plays. They cut

art gallery. The space hosts plays, ActCamp for children, and public concerts.

Visionary artists who rescue older buildings contribute to a sustainable and vibrant community!

-By Carol Bracewell



Tomato meets Asparagus, SEED
Celebrating Sustainability through local vendors and artists

Schoolhouse in Plain, WI remodeled by Whyte into a home and art gallery



Whyte says. After 25 years of selling real estate to artists and other creative people, Whyte knows what artists are looking for. "They love storefronts. They want flexible space."

and kilned cherry from the property for the wood floors.

In Osceola, WI, a dairy barn has been transformed into a community art center, including a 180-seat theatre and large

So you still don't have a rain barrel...

If you've been putting off getting a rain barrel (or more than one!) because you could not make time to get to the Sustain Dane office to pick one up, you're in luck! We'll have barrels for sale at the Urban Horticulture Day on Saturday, August 16 at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station. The address is 8502 Mineral Point Road (just outside the beltline). This event will run from 10am to 3pm, and will feature great information about gardening (plus vegetables and salsas to taste) and kids' activities. Complete rain barrel systems start at \$90, which you can purchase on-site with cash, check, Visa/Mastercard, or even pre-order (www.RainForDane.org) and pick up at the event.

The Wisconsin Academy - Bringing Together Culture, Art, and Nature

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, founded in 1870, is an independent non-profit organization that acts as a confluence of knowledge, culture, and nature for the state of Wisconsin. The Academy has four main media routes for integrat-

ing these notions- their Wisconsin People and Ideas magazine, the Academy Evenings public forums, their public policy program Wisconsin Idea, and the James Watrous Gallery located in the Overture Center which features rotating exhibitions of nature-inspired

and other cultural works from local Wisconsin artists. Re-

cently, culture and nature met in the art gallery's Great Lakes paintings exhibition which displayed from June 20-July 27, 2008. Not only is this a free art gallery, though donations are accepted, but such exhibitions often include an artist's discussion open to the public.

Emphasizing their commitment to embracing art, culture, and nature is a piece in the summer edition of Wisconsin People and Ideas which

offers to readers seven "Hidden Gems" of out-of-the-way cultural and natural destination spots perfect for summer road trips. Additionally, Academy Evenings, which are offered both here in Madison and around the state, present on a wide range of cultural topics such as biotechnology, evolution, and immigration. The Wisconsin Idea at the Wisconsin Academy is a

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wisconsin academy
of sciences arts & letters

(WI Academy, Continued from page 4)

collaborative effort for confronting issues facing the Wisconsin population. Through a multiyear study, the current initiative, the Future of Farming and Rural Life, has the driven purpose of providing solid policy recommendations regarding the sustainability and economic viability of agriculture in Wisconsin.

The Academy's presence among the Wisconsin populace, aided by their multiple venues for involving residents, works well to keep both culture and nature blooming in our state. For more information on the Academy, visit www.wisconsinacademy.org.

-By Jessica Janota



Tomato meets Flowers, SEED Celebrating Sustainability through local vendors and artists

Sustain Dane Offers New Discussion Course

Sustain Dane is pleased to announce an addition to our list of reading courses. Its title is "Sustainable Wisconsin: Building the Legacy." The course provides an interesting, in-depth study of our state and fosters a love and appreciation for all that makes Wisconsin unique.

It starts with a collection of short essays on Wisconsin's natural history: its geologic origins, its climate, and its vegetation and agriculture. It moves on to Wisconsin's social and cultural history, from the original Native American tribes, to the waves of 19th-century Euro-American settlers, to the ever-growing diversity of today. Next, the course ponders the profound changes the landscape has undergone over the two centuries since settlement. It looks at the special people who have given Wisconsin its reputation for environmentalism, from John Muir to Frederick Jackson Turner to Aldo Leopold to Gaylord Nelson.

Next the course turns to the importance of protecting our water—our Great Lakes, our wetlands, our groundwater, our rivers. The course takes a close look at our food: our agriculture, our diet, our culinary traditions. Another topic is the issues around development and growth in Wisconsin. The course concludes with a challenging look into the future sustainability of our natural legacy.

This will be our first course prepared by the Wisconsin-based Great Lakes Earth Institute. All of our other courses were produced

by the Northwest Earth Institute in Portland, OR.

If you are interested in starting a group to read "Sustainable Wisconsin: Building the Legacy," contact Sustain Dane at 608-819-0689.

-By Charlotte Meyer



"The course provides an interesting, in-depth study of our state and fosters a love and appreciation for all that makes Wisconsin unique."

(Renewing the Countryside, continued from page 1)

is to bolster rural areas by sharing stories of rural renewal, promoting sustainable endeavors, connecting networks of rural entrepreneurs, and acting

as a conduit between the urban and the rural.

With help from the Midwest Organic and Education Service (MOSES) and other organizations, in 2007 the organization published *Renewing the Countryside Wisconsin*, a book highlighting 39 organizations and businesses that represent a spectrum of rural revitalization, ranging from arts and culture, to sustainable businesses, tourism, education, and community development. Additionally, it covers a

wide spectrum of vibrant rural businesses in order to represent what is occurring across Wisconsin.

One such showcased business is Inn Serendipity, a bed and breakfast/farm powered by 100% renewable energy in Browntown, Wisconsin. The Inn promotes land stewardship, environmentally-friendly design, eco-

preneurship, and sustainable agriculture.

As a whole, the book celebrates Wisconsin's long history of environmental stewardship, championed by Aldo Leopold, Gaylord Nelson, and John Muir. It is only natural that the state has become a leader in green travel and organic agriculture.

-By Stephanie Resnik



Inn Serendipity, photo by John Ivanko



Inn Serendipity's All Electric Citi-Car, Photo by John Ivanko

Interested in sustainability and hospitality? Visit Inn Serendipity on October 4 during their FREE open house as a part of the National Tour of Solar Homes. See www.innserendipity.com for details.



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*Sustain Dane is a 501(c)3
non-profit organization
committed to creating
communities that deeply
enjoy, care for and are
sustained by their
unique environment.*

What's Happening at Sustain Dane

Natural Step Founder visits Madison

In our last newsletter, we focused on the issue of health and sustainability. The timing of this issue purposely coincided with a visit by Dr. Karl Henrik Robèrt, founder of The Natural Step and keynote at the first ever “green medical conference” put on by UW Health. For those not able to attend these events featuring Dr. Robèrt, videos and PowerPoint from the events can be downloaded by visiting the Sustain Dane website homepage.

Sustain Dane Assists Dane County Sustainable Practices Staff Team

Over the past two years, Sustain Dane has been deeply involved in the efforts of the City of Madison to incorporate sustainability into its planning and decision-making processes using the Natural Step. Since this past spring, Sustain Dane has been providing similar support to the Dane County Sustainable Practices Staff Team. Besides delivering training to fifteen heads of departments on The Natural Step sustainability framework, we have completed a report with both an inventory of current practices and detailed recommendations for moving forward with further implementation of sustainable practices using the Natural Step framework.

RainReserve™ Wins National Green Products Award

Sustain Dane's RainReserve™ rain barrel system has been awarded two Green Log Home and Lifestyle Awards, the only nominee to win in two categories. The awards were created to recognize, “the most noteworthy and innovative green home living solutions.” Winners were chosen by a combination of on-line polling and input from judges affiliated with Environment News Service, a newswire with a focus on environmental issues.

Sustain Dane Moves

On May 1st, Sustain Dane opened its new office at 211 South Paterson in Suite 200. The new location provides more space, a better overall working environment and more convenient access to our rain barrel storage location just a block away. Stop by and say HI!