

**AFFEW NEWSLETTER**  
**December 1997**  
**ANNUAL CHIPPER ISSUE**

*PAT - I'VE ENCLOSED EXTRA! NEWSLETTERS  
AND A FORM TO GIVE TO PEOPLE WHO  
GET FREE SAMPLES,  
YOU CAN BE A TRASH-PICKER  
MISSIONARY!  
DAVE*



Christmas is raging down on us, along with all its joyous mayhem. Many of us have gone out, gotten our Christmas tree, decorated it and thus helped the economy of the area tree farmers. I have no regrets about chopping a tree that was grown to be chopped; probably there are more trees around because of all those planted for use at Christmas.

Back in the days when I was more of a pagan, I used to have a ceremonial tree burning in late winter after the holiday season. Now, though, I don't like to spread smoke throughout the area, nor do I like the idea of adding even more carbon dioxide to the air by unnecessary burning.

This leads into the ad: the great thing to do is to recycle the tree. Bring it to the recycling area nearest to you, and it will be turned into mulch; some of which will be placed on trails in the State Park, where the occasional glimmer of tinsel on the trails gives remembrance of the winter holiday season. There seems to be little problem with the tinsel disintegrating, probably because it's not buried deeply, so it gets broken down by oxygen and ultraviolet light. After about two years, it's very fragile and falls apart at the lightest touch. Its other use in nature is as armor for worms going into battle with grubs.

## EVENTS

**Tree chipping..** Big VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY. You are needed. First get your neighbors to recycle their trees, then help us chop 'em up. (The trees, not the neighbors)

To **RECYCLE TREES**, please remove the tinsel, PLEASE. Then take them to the collection area at the corner of Loomis and Robert Streets in Ludington up until January 19. Pere Marquette Township will have a curbside pickup on January 6. Ludington's city curbside pickup begins January 5, especially if there's not a big storm. This depends on the DPW people being available.

In Scottville there will be a curbside pickup January 6. Have the tree out on the curb by 6 AM. After that, you can take your trees to the recycling site on the north side of Burl Street, a half block west of Reinberg Street. Trees will be accepted there until January 19.

**CHIPPING** will be done in Ludington starting at 8 AM on January 20. In Scottville it will be done January 12 and 19, beginning at 9 AM. Please volunteer. Please bring brawny help. Even scrawny help will do; we have to remove a whole lot of tinsel.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Sour Gas Forum.** Not long ago, AFFEW sponsored a public forum on the issues of the sour gas pipeline worming its way through the county. This may have been the first time that both sides and the middle of this issue were present in the same room, and for the record. The general feeling that was given to me by those of the audience I interviewed was not entirely satisfactory. First, they felt that nobody changed his or her mind. Second, they felt that some of the speakers ducked the questions, and answered something else.

However, one thing that stood out was the lack of preparedness on the part of the state. If one assumes that the state should be in control of issues like this, then this forum showed vividly just how far behind the state is. Fortunately, public attention to the issue is changing things. The state representatives were telling us what they were doing to get caught up. Public pressure has caused them to start creating some worthwhile policies. If this pressure is maintained, they will continue to work on these difficult problems, and a safer method of gas extraction and transportation may result. We can feel good that we have helped to keep the ball rolling.

I feel that it doesn't matter what I want, petroleum development will take place. Therefore, we should act to keep it as safe as possible for both humans and the environment.

The forum was videotaped, and will be seen on Channel 12 on January 14 and 28 at 7 PM.

## RABBLE ROUSING

Julie has sent along some 800 numbers to call when things get grim.

Michigan Dep't of Environmental Quality	(800) 662-9278		
Michigan Dep't of Natural Resources	(800) 898-MDNR	Poaching	(800) 292-7800
Michigna Pollution Emergency Alert System	(800) 292-4706		
Underground Storage Tank Release	(800) MICHUST		
Environmental Protection Agency	(800) 621-8431, (800) 832-7828		

## THE ENVIRONMENT

You probably heard of the big conference in Kyoto, Japan recently. Lots of nations attended, including the United States. Before the conference, many observers felt that the rest of the world would advocate some fairly strict air pollution regulations, and the U.S. would disagree, thus weakening the agreement. When there were two days left, it looked like this would be the case, but at the last minute, the U.S. went along with many of the other countries, and a good start toward air pollution control was arrived at. Or was it?

One of the big agreements was that the U.S. would reduce its annual carbon dioxide emissions to 7 percent below the level of 1990 by the year 2012 (I think). This is a treaty, and has to be ratified by the senate to be effective. It may be that the negotiations were thinking of national politics when they endorsed the treaty, so things could get interesting in the future.

First, the administration may assume that the Senate won't ratify the treaty because it may mess up our spoiled-kid standard of living. If the senate does refuse to ratify or even consider it, (Jesse Helms is good at not thinking about stuff), the administration can say that the Republicans are soft on environmental issues, and plan to boil all of us alive with global warming.

The Republicans certainly anticipate this argument, and they might ratify the treaty just to save face. After all, if things go sour because of it, they can say it was all a Democratic idea. Also, most of the guys who vote for ratification will probably be retired in 15 years, and won't much care what happens as long as they get their pensions.

Why do I think so poorly of our politicians? I must be cynical, indeed.

Strangely enough, the auto companies didn't complain. They said that they could manufacture cars that would meet the new standards. Maybe they view it as a shot in the arm if everyone has to buy new cars.

The other big generator of greenhouse gases, the power companies, haven't said much. Some people who aren't in the power industry have said that lots of the power plants will be at the end of their useful lives by then, and will need to be replaced anyway, so it will be a good time to build new and better ones. Emphasis may have to be given to hydro, solar, and wind power plants. Not long after he got into office, President Reagan eliminated tax breaks for investments in wind power. This might all reverse, which would be to our long-term benefit.

Whatever happens politically, it is good that people are taking this issue more seriously. Greenhouse gases trap the sun's heat that arrives at the earth and keep it here. Carbon dioxide is one of the most important greenhouse gases. In 1900, there were about 550 million tons of it in the atmosphere. In 1997, there are about 6,930 million tons. Most of this change came from burning fossil fuels.

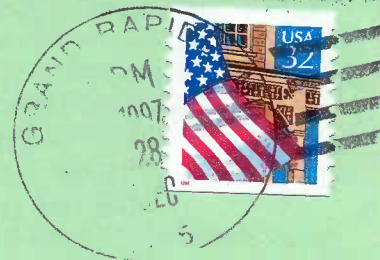
We can reduce carbon dioxide formation by cutting back on fossil fuel use, and we can get rid of some of it by planting trees, which convert it to oxygen. It will probably be best to do both.

And keep after the politicians.

Go hug a tree.

Dave Hall

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wow!

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