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exchanging nature for convenience
Cars, sheep, rice, rugs, blankets, TVs, religious artifacts and various other things are placed outside of the home for all to see and compare. Different objects for different people from different countries reflect the values of the families they surround.

One family fills a cul de sac with matching living room sets, bedroom furniture and the latest kitchen conveniences. Another family's possessions include crude tools and the clothes on their backs.

Pictures like these are found in the book “Material World” by Peter Menzel. Menzel and others traveled the world taking photographs of statistically-average families with their possessions in front of their homes. People from places such as Mali, Vietnam, Guatemala, Kuwait and the United States sit among the things that represent not only how they live, but how they consume.

In Ahrama Village, Utter Pradesh, India, a family of six stands outside their home. Their possessions consist of one broken bicycle, one ladder, two beds, several pots, three blankets, three bags of rice, firewood and their most prized possession, two prints of the Hindu gods.

Imagine placing what you own in front of your home. Even as “poor” college students we have immense amounts of stuff: beds, clothes, alarm clocks, TVs, stereos, bikes, computers, cars and other knickknacks that clutter our closets.

Everything we own comes from the Earth. Every book was a tree; every car was mined; every shirt and pizza was grown. The process of getting a product from point A to point B involves extracting, manipulating, processing and — sometimes — poisoning our Earth.

Considering the environmental destruction each possession represents, compare the impact of the family of six in India to your impact by the possessions placed in front of your home. Chances are, you consume far more of the world’s resources.

Americans are among the rich, privileged, consumer class that falls under the title of “developed” countries. As part of this “consuming society” we make more money and consume more products and resources than most of the world.

It also gives us power.

It is hard to connect clear-cuts with our demand for toilet paper, pizza boxes and text books. Or how our choice of perfect-looking produce in supermarkets is linked to pesticides in our air, water, soil and bodies in the form of cancer and disease.

Industries cater to our needs and wants. If they think we’re going to buy it, they will devote enormous amounts of time and money to advertise and promote that product, without regard for the environment. It is our job to look at products for what they are; where they came from; what it took to get them here; and where they are going to end up when we are through with them.

This issue of The Planet considers the huge problem of our all-consuming passion for consumption. It looks at the environmental effects of our everyday habits and offers a choice of alternatives.

We have the power to choose the possessions in front of our homes and, in turn, our impact on the Earth.

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The Psychological Effects of Consumption
by Kristen Clapper

Flazing neon signs cast a surreal orange glow over the shoppers. Families stand around tables without chairs and bars without stools, their mouths plugged with hot dogs and Pepsi straws. A boy in sport team logos and a girl in Disney’s latest impatiently shift their weight between pumpable, Velcro tennis shoes. Their shopping cart is loaded with industrial-sized jars of hair gel and towering boxes of frozen pizza. And they are happy.

Or are they?

Many people seek happiness, comfort and satisfaction through material possessions, even on a subconscious level. Think of all the times you have ducked an irritating, exhausting mood by purchasing a new CD or a pair of jeans. A recent pop phrase that is littering the bumpers of cars and the fronts of T-shirts states “He Who Dies With The Most Toys Wins.” This statement epitomizes the philosophy of mainstream American consumption habits: Those who have the highest income and the most material possessions succeed in the search for personal happiness and fulfillment.

The correlation between affluence and happiness, however, is almost non-existent. Environmental psychology professor George Cvetkovich explains, “if you look at national surveys that have been done over the years [that rate people’s happiness] and look at it against income, you find that it’s not a straight line but a curve, indicating that in one sense it is true that material wealth leads to happiness but once the basic kinds of needs are fulfilled ... [happiness] does not just increment continually after that.”

Economists call this the concept of diminishing returns. Once the basic needs of an individual are met, increased income and buying power beyond that bring less overall satisfaction. The second helping never satisfies as much as the first.

The true sources of happiness are independent of income or material possessions. Author Alan Durning explains in his book “How Much Is Enough?” that studies on happiness have revealed that “the main determinants of happiness in life are not related to consumption at all; prominent among them are satisfaction with family life, especially marriage, followed by satisfaction with work, the leisure to develop talents and friendships.”

If consumption does not provide happiness, then why do Americans race on the treadmill of desire? Cvetkovich believes that consumption habits are, most importantly, habits we participate in without thinking about. “It is very easy,” Cvetkovich said, “to get into traps where you are utilizing resources, consuming things that have no relationship to happiness, but you’re doing them simply because you’ve always done them or because society operates in such a way that leads you down the path where you engage in this kind of habit.”

Family counselor and mediator Barbara Rofkar offers an alternative view. On a cold Bellingham night she speaks from an over-stuffed chair in her downtown office. Children’s drawings line the back wall and a teapot steams on its hot pad. Rofkar speaks of Americans as “walking wounded,” products of the traditional family structure that too often do not provide for individuals’ emotional needs.

“I think more than anything,” she said, “what we want as human beings is to be connected to each other in some sort of meaningful way, that we feel that we’re cared about, that we care about others.”

Good News!

Happiness is not for Sale

Rofkar believes when people are made to feel unappreciated, incompetent or disrespected, "this leaves little places of emptiness, or woundedness." Often, when people feel unfulfilled in their current situation, they reach out to other sources to satisfy their psychological needs. She sees consumption as an addiction; it is the hollow, compulsive pursuit for satisfaction.

The act of consumption simply does not bring people happiness and may negatively affect their emotional state. The desire to buy more can lead to competitive actions among individuals. While competition is arguably a normal facet of human interaction, the pressure to measure up to the buying power of a neighbor, co-worker or family member can be powerful.

"The social comparison process," Cvetkovich said, "not only applies to how well we do things, but to all these symbols that we've come to associate with doing well."

Often, the stockpiling of possessions, and the monetary value associated with those possessions, can lead to increased nervousness and distrust. "American society," Cvetkovich said, "rather than being a society of trust, is a society of mistrust."

A survey of trends in the 1980s published in Reich's "The Work of Nations" concludes, "Americans spent more on private security guards and burglar alarms than they paid through taxes for public police forces." Thus, Americans are becoming increasingly dependent on false securities that may leave them painfully vulnerable.

Most college students today enjoy significantly greater levels of affluence than their grandparents did, but they suffer from dramatic increases in rates of depression.

Social psychologist David G. Meyers writes in "The Pursuit of Happiness" that between the 1960s and 1980s, delinquency rates among young adults doubled, suicide and homicide rates tripled and the birthrate of the unmarried nearly quadrupled.

People consume as a means to fulfill deeper psychological needs, but Cvetkovich said that often backfires. "The hooking of one's hopes and aspirations on the belief that materialistic kinds of things will bring happiness for you and finding out that they don't will lead to those feelings of depression."

Feelings of competition and distrust lead to isolation of the individual from others. This contributes to depression, and can even continue to feed the addiction to consumption.

If Americans are caught in a cycle of false happiness, consumption and isolation, is there a way to break free?

Cvetkovich stresses that first people must understand that it is our connection to others that is most significant in determining happiness. "What is important is relationships," he said. "It's not individuals, but how we are interrelated to everyone else."

"The only way out of this," Cvetkovich continued, "is to begin trying to reestablish that sense of community, which also means a sense of trust that people have. One way of doing that is simply encouraging people to get involved in groups outside of the family. There has to be an extension beyond the family."

Rofkar, who has counseled families for 11 years, had a similar insight. "I think we grieve the loss of the sense of being connected or understanding our purpose," she said. "Maybe you have to believe that there is something more, that you're somehow connected to that something more. Then look inside and start to do some of the work and some of the healing that needs to take place."

Cvetkovich offered a simple lesson: "No one ever on their deathbed was very upset about not having spent more days at work, but were upset about not spending more time with their family."

A similar idea has appeared on a new collection of bumper stickers: "He Who Dies With The Most Toys Still Dies." In a surreal world of distorted human needs, this acknowledgment of reality seems to speak a clear truth.
The Media's Power of Manipulation
by Derek Reiber

A television switches on with a soft, electronic hum. The image on the screen slowly comes into focus: a family sits dejected, swamped by their possessions. “From the day I was born,” says a voice-over, “I collected so much stuff. So we stowed our stuff in stuff from Rubbermaid.” The scene cuts to big plastic boxes of gear lining the walls of a now bare house. “Then we were so unstuffed — Hey! We need more stuff!” The family bolts out the door, happily waving hands in the air en route to the mall.

“Ha, ha, very funny,” we all laugh. But our chuckles are uneasy. There is a sinking feeling this advertisement hits a little too close to home. Does our society truly mimic such mindless purchasing? Do we understand that all of the products we buy eventually end up in a landfill? If our actions fuel the churning engine of consumerism, do we have the power to stop the engine? Do we even want to?

In 1994, the magazine Advertising Age stated that corporations spent a staggering $150 billion on advertising. If we stop and think about it, we cannot begin to fathom how huge a sum of money this is. To comprehend the enormity of $150 billion, I measured the length of a $1 bill. It is six inches long. If each dollar was laid end to end, $150 billion would circle the earth’s equator 570 times. Or go from the earth to the moon and back 59.5 times.

This massive expenditure results in the virtual blanketing of our culture with advertising. Advertising is everywhere and rarely a waking moment passes when we are not exposed to it. The media delivers ads to us via radio, TV, billboards, magazines and virtually any other medium one could dream up. Bars even sport advertisements above bathroom urinals, with slogans like “time for more Coors” or “put Bud here.” Constantly hawking their wares and seeping into our consciousness, they cloud our vision of reality.

We turn to our media-saturated environment for clues of what values and identities to cherish,” said University of California – Berkeley sociology professor Todd Gitlin. The values media portray as most important are primarily those of commerce and business, the actions of buying and selling. He believes we become reduced to constant consumers, exercising our democracy in choosing between a variety of products.

According to Adbusters magazine, we are bombarded by 12 billion display ads, 7.5 million radio commercials and over 300,000 TV commercials. It is no wonder we purchase so much stuff; few of us can withstand such a torrent. Do materialistic, affluent Americans demand all this, or do we let corporate media and advertising shape our culture and its values?

“Human beings like things,” writes Twitchell. “We like to buy things. We like to exchange things. We steal things. We donate things. We live through things. We call these things goods as in goods and services, we do not call them goods.”

Objects, in and of themselves, asserted Twitchell, have no meaning. We attach value and meaning to them, possibly craving not the object itself, but the meaning we associate with it. Advertising gives value to objects, thus it gives value to our lives.

The social ramifications are obvious. “What is carried in and with advertising,” said Twitchell, “is what we know, what we share, what we believe in. It is who we are. It is us.”

Looking through dormitory windows on our campus at a neon Henry Weinhard’s Beer sign or a Shaquille O’Neal Pepsi poster suggests Twitchell is onto something. Walking down the street, it is not unusual to hear a passerby whistling a commercial theme song or discussing a recent ad with a friend. The powerful grip media and advertising hold on all of us is obvious.

We should be entitled to control our mental environment against the always-encroaching advertising industry, but how do we begin to combat this juggernaut? If we believe the expenditure of a mammoth amount of wealth like $150 billion is a waste of resources, what can we do? If we think advertising promotes rampant consumerism causing a massively negative social and environmental cost, how can we act? Should we attempt to tune out and ignore the ad world? Or is a more proactive approach called for?

**The Mark of the Beast**

As Noam Chomsky, professor of linguistics at M.I.T, said, “people need to detect forms of authority and discrimination” before any push for change can occur. Our first task is to uncover the structure and identity of the “culture industry,” its control in all its various forms and the consequences for all of us.

To begin, media in our country is controlled by four major corporations: General Electric, Time Warner/Turner Broadcasting, Disney/Capital Cities and Westinghouse. The major television networks reside here, as well as a vast network of cable channels, magazines, newspapers and local TV affiliates. The public is reduced to subjects of this “national entertainment state,” as Mark Crispin Miller, a professor at John Hopkins University, calls the ever-increasing web, where more and more power is being put into the hands of just a few.

The vast diversification of these conglomerates leads inevitably to conflicts of interest, leaving public information the ultimate loser. Once the structure is exposed, any reasonable person would see how unlikely it would be for Tom Brokaw to deliver a story critical of nuclear power (NBC is owned by GE, which builds parts for nuclear power plants). Or ABC, which is owned by Disney, documenting the “Magic Kingdom’s” poor labor practices, such as the use of underpaid Haitian laborers who earn as little as 28 to 30 cents an hour making Disney trinkets, as reported in the magazine *In These Times*.

This influence surfaces locally in *The Bellingham Herald*, owned by Gannett Corp., a newspaper giant and publisher of USA Today. Tim Pilgrim, a journalism professor at Western, explains the impact of Gannett’s ownership of a local paper like the Herald as “insidious.” “Gannett sets the operating budget and profit projections,” Pilgrim said. “The Herald must then operate within this constraint system.” He said the result is less local investigative reporting and heavier reliance on news wire services. Reporting on issues of local interest, such as possible environmental health hazards from Georgia-Pacific, fall by the wayside, Pilgrim said.

Monopolies in other business sectors were uncovered and dealt with in the past, such as the break-up of the telephone industry. This was accomplished partly through news reporting in the media. But now the means to a solution for dealing with the media monopoly is itself the problem. In other words, do not expect to see investigative reporting on the media’s concentration of power anytime soon, except in outside-the-mainstream media sources.

OK, but so what? What effect will this have on the average person? Most of us are too busy in our lives to worry, much less care, about transnational corporations. However, the danger to each of us exists, and it is insidious and stealthy.

When such power to define reality lies in the grasp of so few, the hazards to us loom large, especially given that the interests of those few do not jibe with those of the masses. Media have the potential to be a valuable information source; however, the primary interest of major media is purely capitalistic and intoned with mantra-like reverence: profit, profit, profit.

The relationship between advertising and the media is symbiotic: each needs the other to survive. Media depend on revenue generated from ads, while companies rely on media to deliver their commercials. The combination of the two industries creates an even bigger threat.

“When the same companies who push consuming control the information we receive,” Pilgrim said, “they’re not
willingly go to provide information which will hurt their other interests."

Norman Lear, a popular television producer, recognizes "there are no villains here. The individuals who wield this unprecedented power have succeeded in the free-enterprise system; they are the winners the culture esteems and most of us wish they could become." Could this be true? Is that the realization of the American dream we are all supposedly striving for?

True, the quest for the almighty dollar remains the hard road many of us travel. Whether it be out of necessity (to pay off huge student loans) or pseudo-necessity (to buy that 4x4 Isuzu Trooper because it is almost ski season), we all need cash. The crux of the problem lies in how it is spent. Of course we need some money to get by, but all too often it ends up in the purchase of frivolous, unnecessary products.

Advertising, in its ubiquitous ways, pressures us to do just that, and we do in dizzying amounts. According to the 1995 "United States Statistical Abstract," Americans spent $304 billion on recreation, consuming distractions such as books, videos and music in vast quantities.

"These multinational see the world as a market, where people everywhere all have the potential to become consumers on our American levels," Pilgrim said. "They're just licking their chops." Imagine the devastating environmental and social problems if everyone worldwide consumed like Americans. And corporations are seeking that exact goal in their relentless pursuit of profits.

"Gigantic entertainment/information complexes exercise a near-seamless and unified private corporate control over what we think and think about," said Herbert Schiller, author of the book "Culture, Inc." "The U.S.'s global industrial pre-eminence may be slipping, but the domestic output and international sale of one of its manufactures is booming - packaged consciousness."

The Time is Now

All of this spending has enormous economic and environmental costs. Looming problems of overpopulation and ecological degradation could spell the demise of the "national entertainment state," where advertising relies on surplus production that could prove extremely costly in our environmentally-dismal future. To work for a sustainable future, we must understand the roots of our present situation, which lie in the formation of our country.

"We are unique as a nation in that we have lots of space and an abundance of resources with relative isolation and protection from outside threats," Pilgrim said. "Our country emerged during the industrial revolution where people were oriented toward exploiting resources. With our favorable conditions, we set up a nation that supported those views."

The resulting driving force of our modern industrial nation has been "individual material gains," said Noam Chomsky in the film "Manufacturing Consent." "It has long been understood that a society based on this principle will destroy itself in time. It can only persist with whatever suffering and injustice it entails as long as it is possible to pretend that the destructive forces humans create are limited, that the world is an infinite resource, [and] is an infinite garbage can."

So what are we to do? What changes can we as individuals begin to make? Stuart Ewen, a professor at the City University of New York, calls for "visual literacy." He insists we must learn to combat the imagery of advertising by recognizing the true costs of over-consumption: the destruction of the earth.

Bill McKibben, author of "The Age of Missing Information," proposes a possible solution through a unique experiment. He watched a full 24-hours worth of programming on his local TV system — all 93 glorious channels, in Fairfax, Virginia. Then he spent a week alone atop an Adirondack mountain. In the process he discovered what the "national entertainment state" was not telling us, vital information about our true place in the world. We spend our daily lives surrounded by the "artifacts of man": TVs, cars, bathtubs, houses, etc. We spend all our time in human society; a consumer society "obsequious in its attentions and promising all happiness." Time in nature, alone in the woods, lets us know our place. Through nature's indifference we find that we are not all-important, but that we belong within nature and have a duty to recognize the world "for how correct and harmonious" it actually is, insists McKibben. Our true importance, as a culture, may lie in protecting the earth rather than exploiting it.

Re-establishing a link with nature may be one small step toward escaping the consumer lifestyle, but other practical measures also exist. We are each responsible for informing ourselves of the truth, Pilgrim said, by searching out alternatives to the mass-produced media. Resisting the tendency to conform in our individual lives by living simply and not buying into the consumer onslaught is another method.

With each small effort we make, a growing collective movement can begin to form. "Change comes slowly," Pilgrim said. "Fringe, dissenting voices are viewed as outsiders to the mainstream, until the voices grow in power to cause a paradigmatic shift, taking over the mainstream."

This change needs to occur now as crises like overwhelming environmental damage and massive resource depletion force our society to re-examine the effects of over-consumption. Our culture stands at a crossroads; a decision with far-reaching implications must be made. We have the ability to foresee the consequences our present path holds, now we must begin to act to change that path.

Noam Chomsky sums up our current dilemma. "At this stage in history, one of two things is possible: Either the general population will take control of its own destiny and will concern itself with community interests guided by values of solidarity and sympathy and concern for others, or alternatively there will be no destiny to control."
APPLY NOW.

Build your own credit hell
Pay huge fees
gain social acceptance

guilt free shopping

I ❤️ credit

Available for ALL full-time college students.
Upon entering a local appliance store my senses are flooded by shelves of electrical gadgets and rows of plug-in appliances waiting to perform a myriad of menial tasks. Salad shooters, electric can-openers, space heaters and foot massagers solicit potential customers with brightly colored packages and promises of life-changing convenience and comfort. The benefits of this electrical gadgetry, however, have hidden consequences.

Everyday we tap into seemingly limitless amounts of energy with the flick of a finger, the push of a button or the turn of a knob with no immediate repercussion other than an electricity bill. But the costs of our push-button world go far beyond monetary measures. They include sacrificing our clean air, clean water and wildlife.

It is almost impossible to cut out the consumption of electricity altogether. Important parts of our lives depend on it. For instance, our schooling requires huge amounts of energy. Last year Western Washington University used an average of 1,867,255 kilowatt hours per month. This would be equivalent to leaving a computer on for more than 3,000 years, drying 373,451 loads of laundry or making over 46 million pieces of toast.

We see many of the benefits of electricity as necessities, but we do not often think about how energy production is detrimental to the environment.

Puget Power supplies most of the electricity to Whatcom County. This electricity is produced in four ways: hydro-electric dams, coal-fired plants, oil burning plants and natural gas-fired plants.

Hydro-electric dams account for 60.5 percent of our electricity. Dams interrupt the natural flow of rivers and kill fish in huge numbers.

Puget Power has two dams on the Baker River, the Upper and Lower Baker dams. Many species of fish live and breed in the Baker River, including: Chinook, Sockeye, Coho, Kokanee and Pink salmon, Steelhead and Trout.

At the time of the dam's construction in 1926, Coho averaged 8,800 and Sockeye 3,000 spawners annually, returning to the Baker River. Despite mitigation efforts to transport fish around the dam, both Coho and Sockeye salmon runs declined to 3-4 percent of their historical size by the 1980s. In 1985, the number of returning adult Sockeye spawners was 99, according to an environmental impact assessment done by Huxley students in 1994.

Dams also slow river flow. Salmon do not return to slow rivers because they seek strong currents to swim against during spawning season.

The decimation of salmon runs is not the only cost of our dependence on electricity. Fossil fuel-burning plants also affect our water and air.

Coal, natural gas and oil-burning plants produce 39.5 per-
cent of the region’s energy. Puget Power operates a coal-burn-
ing plant about five miles outside of Centralia. “It burns about five million tons of coal a year,” said plant spokesman Bob French.

Sulfur and nitrogen make up a small portion of the coal burned in the plant. When coal is burned, the sulfur in the coal and the nitrogen in the air combine with oxygen. Once emitted into the atmosphere sulfur oxide and nitrogen oxide are converted into acidic compounds that result in acid rain.

Acid rain leeches calcium out of the soil and out of creatures that feed off of the soil. By reducing the calcium intake of birds, acid rain weakens their eggs and disrupts their reproductive cycles. It also falls on crops and seeps into the water we drink.

Burning coal also makes carbon dioxide, the most prevalent greenhouse gas. The average Puget Power subscriber in Washington uses about 13,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year. According to Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Authority, “if this energy were produced from a coal-fired plant, about 10 tons of carbon dioxide would be released to the atmosphere.” In Whatcom County, we are lucky; the average household only spews 3.95 tons per year.

Not only are we degrading the earth for our generation, we are creating waste that will be a problem for generations to come.

Whatcom County does not receive much power from nuclear plants, but they contribute to environmental degradation of the planet in a major way. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, about 10,000 cubic meters of highly radioactive wastes are accumulated worldwide each year. Not a single country in the world has managed to implement a long-term plan to store it all.

Storing materials that remain radioactive for tens of thousands of years is a problem when one considers that no civilization throughout history has lasted even close to that long. What happens when governments collapse and storage facilities fall into disrepair?

If we do not find a clean, economical source of renewable energy to power the gadgets we buy and services we use, the planet will pay the price for our dependence.

Not only do current electricity production methods degrade the planet, the methods also utilize finite resources. The earth’s non-renewable fossil fuels, for example, have to run out some time.

Solar energy is the most promising alternative. According to the August 1994 issue of Mechanical Engineering, every year the earth’s surface receives about 10 times as much energy from sunlight as is contained in all the known reserves of coal, oil, natural gas and uranium combined. This equals 15,000 times the world’s annual energy consumption.

This vast supply of energy, which is free, clean and harmless to the environment, is usually harnessed in two different ways. Photovoltaics (solar cells) directly convert sunlight into electricity, and heat engines produce electricity through the process of converting water into steam with energy from direct sunlight.

Solar cells are made of two thin slices of semiconductor materials such as silicon. When the sun shines on the cell, electric currents flow from one side of the cell to the other.

There are no moving parts, they have a lifespan of 20 years and can convert up to 30 percent of the sunlight they receive into electricity. Solar cells even work on an overcast day, making them an option for Washington.

Heat engines extract usable energy from the sun’s rays using parabolic mirrors to focus sunlight onto a water-filled pipes. The water is turned into steam and forced through electricity-producing turbines. These devices convert 10 to 30 percent of sunlight into electricity, but cloudy weather interferes with their efficiency. Heat engines need direct sunlight to convert water into steam and make electricity.

Cost is the biggest obstacle in proliferating the use of solar technology. Initially, the systems are expensive, but it is like buying an option on fuel for 20 years up front. In the long run, they pay for themselves — not only in terms of money, but by keeping the environment intact.

The Solar Thermal Technology Department of Sandia National Laboratories put a monetary value on the damage coal and natural gas plants cause to the planet of $0.05 and $0.02 per kilowatt hour, respectively. They found the cost of energy from solar plants would be lower than either of these two fossil fuels.

Other renewable energy systems have been created to meet our needs. Wind and geothermal are two of the more prevalent renewable systems.

In California, wind turbines produce electricity for about 4.5 cents per kilowatt hour, roughly the same cost of power.
Experimental solar heat engine at Sandia National Laboratories.

from a coal-fired plant. Wind power can co-exist with other land uses as well. A wind farm in Germany uses 98 percent of its land for both power production and growing potatoes. However, there are some problems with wind power. Thousands of birds collide with the blades of wind turbines each year and maintenance costs are high.

Much like wind power, geothermal energy is a promising alternative but has its faults. Energy from the earth’s core is extracted by pumping water through hot fissures deep within the earth. Geothermal energy does not cause acid rain, kill fish and birds or contribute to the greenhouse effect. However, dissolved or suspended toxic chemicals, naturally occurring in the rock, are a by-product.

The almighty dollar is a familiar hurdle in the push for renewable energy systems, and geothermal energy is no exception. The cost of creating a geothermal plant works out to about $3,000 per kilowatt, whereas, a natural-gas plant costs just $824 per kilowatt. The extra expense in building a geothermal plant is due to the extensive drilling involved in reaching super-heated rocks.

Alternative energies are being developed and expanded all the time. Each needs to be evaluated for benefits and harms, as well as compared to present methods. For the present time we continue to depend on very destructive methods of converting energy into electricity.

Until we have a clean, harmless way to make electricity, think about where the energy is coming from to power our society and what it is doing to our planet. How much of the electricity you use is a necessity? How much is used for convenience and comfort? How much is just plain laziness?

When you turn up the heater, flip a light-switch or plug in your new state-of-the art foot massager, think about what is happening on the other side of the outlet. Remember, the money we pay to the electric company is not the only cost to our power-hungry society — the environment pays a price as well.

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**E A S Y  E N E R G Y - S A V I N G  T I P S**

- **Use fluorescent light bulbs.** You get the same light for one quarter the energy of incandescents, and they last ten times as long.
- **Wash clothes on cold cycle.** Heating water uses 90 percent of the energy needed to wash clothes.
- **Recycle.** Making recycled paper uses 30 to 55 percent less energy than making paper from new trees.
- **Recycled glass uses two-thirds the energy needed to manufacture glass from scratch.**
- **Recycling aluminum requires one-tenth the energy required to make the same aluminum from virgin bauxite ore.**
- **Use your microwave.** They use about 50 percent less electricity than conventional ovens.
Did You Really Want This?

Compiled by Richard Navas
Photo by Taylor Talmage

Americans waste over 8 billion hours each year idling in traffic.
This will increase to 13.6 billion hours by 2011.

Annual consumption of paper and paper board in USA, per person: 725 lbs
Each American spends $225 annually on packaging (or 56 billion dollars for the whole country)
Height of hill made of one year's worth of American garbage: 1150 ft

Annual releases of sulfur dioxide in US: 400,000,000,000 pounds (1990)
Height of hill made from annual loss of top soil globally: 4,230 ft

Cost of air pollution damage to Europe's forest: $30 billion per year
Amount spent on air pollution control in Europe: $10 billion per year

Height of hill made annual world coal produced: 3,400 ft
Percentage of old growth forests gone: 90%
Acres covered with blacktop each year: 1.3 million

Years of Resource Remaining:

Oil Reserves at 1989 rate of consumption: 44 years
Oil remaining if estimates of undiscovered reserves are included: 72 years
Typical time to wash ozone destroying chemicals from the air: 65 to 140 years
Natural gas reserves remaining: 60 years
Coal reserves remaining: 320 years (hard coal)
Barrels of oil consumed by average American: 24 barrels per year
Maximum we can use if we want to avoid global warming: 8 barrels per year

Time until we run out of fresh water globally: 20 to 30 years
Time until the tropical forests are gone: 47 years at current rates

We have less than fifty years worth left of the following minerals: copper, lead, mercury, nickel, tin and zinc.

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* Car Trouble, Steve Nadis and James J. Mackenzie, Beacon Press, 1993
All-Consuming Passion, The New Road Map Foundation
King Cotton Meets Mother Earth
ORGANIC COTTON'S RISING FIELD

By: Kania Smith

Nineteen sweaters, twelve pairs of shoes, two dozen different T-shirts, containers heaped with scarves and socks and so many vests, blouses and jackets that I did not dare count. Most of these items lurking in my closet have not been worn within the last year. As I stare into this clothing abyss, I wonder how many other closets had encountered a similar fate.

The media imply that we are defined by our clothes and appearance. I remember as a youth worrying about starting the school year without a new wardrobe; I could not let my friends see me in the same jeans I wore last year! This media bombardment has created the monster of the consumer that blindly goes to the mall and picks out the most current fashions at unreasonable prices, only to be bored with them in a few months. My closet, like many others, overflows with unused and unwanted clothing. Where does it all come from?

Behind the unwanted clothing is a dark past. Cotton, the number one resource for fabric in the United States, is one of the largest abusers of pesticides in the world. Its cultivation requires about 40 million pounds of pesticides for the 13 million acres of cotton planted in the United States. Worldwide, cotton accounts for only one-half of one percent of the total crop land but uses a disproportionate 10 percent of the chemical pesticides globally.

The first question I asked myself was, “why does cotton require this expansive and expensive use of pesticides?” Dr. Richard Mayer, Professor of Environmental Studies at Western, answered my question. “Anytime you have a monoculture, you have created an ideal environment for pests.” Cotton grown on large numbers of acres provides a comfortable feeding and breeding ground for pests. They increase generation after generation because they have everything to meet their needs.

Two of the most common cotton pests are the weevil and the pink bollworm. Weevils develop resistance quickly to the pesticides so new formulations are constantly introduced. The pink bollworm is rampant because the overuse of the pesticides for the weevil kills off the natural predators of the bollworm. This is “a major occurrence,” Mayer said.

Mayer said over the past fifty years of chemical agriculture, the number of pests has actually increased over thirty-fold (see graph). The balance of the system is disrupted by pesticides, herbicides and insecticides as new pests emerge that might have otherwise been controlled naturally.

The nature of pesticides is diverse, but collectively they invade many aspects of our lives. Pesticides are conservatively estimated to be associated with 20,000 fatalities a year and at least 3 million cases of nonfatal poisoning worldwide. These cases come from both workers in the fields applying chemicals and neighboring towns unknowingly subjected to the harmful side effects of pesticides.

Pesticides show up routinely in groundwater and in food residues. As with the case of the bollworm, natural predators are often killed off as well as the targeted species. Pesticides often poison fish and other wildlife directly and indirectly through food or water, sometimes affecting their reproductive capacities. They seep into groundwater, strip soils of needed nutrients and contaminate the air we breathe.

Cotton, the so-called “fabric of our lives,” is contributing heavily to the degradation of our health and environment.

The problems with pesticides are not limited to the application process out in the fields. Pesticides also pose a threat during transportation and production. Methylene isocyanate (MIC) is an ingredient in the cotton pesticide carbaryl. MIC is so toxic that when a leak at a Union Carbide chemical plant in Bhopal, India released MIC vapors into the air, 2,500 people died and 150,000 people were treated in the nearby hospital.

In California, a soil fumigant and fungicide called metam-sodium killed fish for 20 miles after being spilled from a rail car into the Sacramento River.
Pesticides, however, are not the only environmental culprit in cotton production. Chemical defoliants, which assist in the harvesting process, are just as bad. Ninety-nine percent of cotton harvesting is done mechanically, so growers use defoliants to strip the leaves from the plants to make the cotton more accessible to the machines.

Agent Orange, which was heavily contaminated with dioxin, is classified as a defoliant. It was used in Vietnam to clear vast areas of jungle. It caused increased numbers of miscarriages, birth defects and cancer. Its use was banned in 1971 due to public concern about its effects on civilians and military personnel in Vietnam. However, many defoliants used in the cotton industry have not received as much attention and remain legal.

So where do we go from here? Rachel Carson, in her book “Silent Spring,” asked the question, “Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life?” Her question was revolutionary in 1962. Today it is an uncomfortable reality we face. However, solutions are at hand.

Alternatives to pesticides are getting more attention. One is the rebirth of the organic cotton industry. In 1989, certified organic cotton totaled 100 acres; in 1994, this number reached 15,000 acres. Organically-grown cotton is grown without the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers or other man-made products. To be certified as organic, the fields must be free from synthetic pesticide use for three years; no chemical fertilizers may be used; and the ginning and spinning process must also meet the chemical-free standards.

Organic farmers use two persuasive arguments for the reintroduction of organically-grown crops such as cotton. The first is that since the introduction of chemical pesticides fifty years ago, not a single pest has been eliminated. The second argument is that before pesticides, farmers lost about 30 percent of their crops to pests. Today, farmers still lose about 30 percent of their crops to pests. The pesticide industry has given us nothing but increased costs, health risks and environmental degradation. Organic farmers present valid arguments and their numbers are growing as people lean toward purchasing sustainably-produced products.

Many companies are offering consumers products made from organically-grown cotton. One of these is Patagonia, an outdoor clothing company based in Ventura, California.

In a 1996 press release by Lu Setnicka, the public relations coordinator for the company, Patagonia’s decision was based on the “continued toxification of soil, air and groundwater caused by conventional, chemical-intensive cotton.” Setnicka said the reason for switching to the organic cotton was to “reduce pesticides in the world. We will never go back.”

The company has been using 100 percent organic cotton content since spring of this year. While the introduction of organic cotton has increased production expenses and the consumer has had to pick up these costs, paying a few extra dollars for a good quality garment that is easier on our environment is a small price to pay.

Another company offering organic cotton is Real Goods. Based in California, the company focuses on items for the home that help people live more sustainably and healthier. Organically-grown cotton is hypoallergenic. “Our cotton products are for people that have allergies and it gives an opportunity for these people to purchase cotton products,” said Mike Sischo of the product support department.

But what about applying the notion of less-is-better to closets that may contain heaps of unwanted garments. Avoiding needless shopping saves money, time and the environment. If you have an urge — or a real need — to buy clothing, check out local second-hand stores or garage sales first. Often, you can find quality items at low prices and you are not patronizing the over-producing clothing market.

If you have clothes you no longer wear, do not just throw them away or hide them in the back of your closet. Take them to a local homeless shelter, donate them to charity or have a garage sale. Our local Value Village is a good option for those looking to drop off or pick up “new” clothing.

Penny Krick, a manager at Bellingham’s Value Village, said the number of people shopping and donating at the store is increasing. And if you donate clothing that cannot be sold on the floor, it is packed up and delivered to developing nations. That fourth green sweater could be clothing for a young girl that is thankful to have one sweater to keep her warm.

So take a closer look at your closet and what lurks there. Think about the consequences of your clothing purchases: more pesticides and chemical defoliants polluting our environment. Let stores know you would like to see more organic cotton in the items you buy. Shop conservatively and conscientiously. Let people know where your priorities lie by what you wear on your back.
Chubby Winkner had become one with the sofa. His back was sticky with sweat and he dared not move for fear of breaking the seal with the leather. His hands had turned bright orange from his Cheetos® Brand Cheese snacks and the lenses of his glasses reflected the phosphorescent glow of an infomercial.

“So you are telling me this unbelievable product is only $29.95!!!?” Two men were locked in an intense debate about the price of a miracle product and the live studio audience swooned as the drama unfolded.

Chubby Winkner crinkled his cellophane to get more puffs and slowly brought the morsels to his mouth.

“Bob, how many times do I have to tell you, twenty nine, ninety five,” the product spokesperson said in a faux-British accent as he calmly turned to face the audience. “Folks, can you believe it?” Visibly shaken, they erupted into applause. Chubby Winkner, however, was skeptical.

After grabbing another mouthful, he reached for his remote control. Unfortunately, greasy fingers were working against him—the remote fell to the floor and the impact caused the batteries to fall out. Enraged, Chubby wiped the fluorescent grease onto his trousers, got a strong grip on the zapper and hastily reloaded the Copper Top batteries. With two hands and a shooter’s stance, he applied pressure to the trigger. At this very moment the camera zoomed in on the announcer’s face.

“I beg you,” he pleaded.

“Don’t change the channel!!”

Chubby marveled at the man’s incredible timing—he stopped in mid chew and slowly lowered the remote.

The announcer hurriedly placed several products on the table and continued, “Bob, if they order now, they will also get a BONUS GIFT FOR NO EXTRA COST!” The news hit
hard, and knocked the remote out of Chubby's hand. His jaw went slack.  

"So what you are telling me is that they not only get a remarkable cleanser at a remarkable price, they also get this handy tote bag— and for only 29.95?!? ... why that's ... ”

An old man bolted from the studio audience. He began to shout and cheer and others quickly followed his lead. The announcer closed his eyes and accepted the praise of the masses with outstretched arms.

Quick editing followed—a montage of the many uses of miracle cleanser. Bikini-clad, voluptuous women and cute puppies; old people acting young, and young people acting tough; satisfied families joining hands around the product. The free tote bag was shown atop a high Southwestern mesa. A silver image of Madonna was emblazoned on the side and it glinted in an epic sunset like a holy relic.

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Chubby Winkner was quivering—the products seemed to be staring into his soul. It was clear that this cleanser would bring happiness and possible enlightenment. The tote bag, however, threw him. There had to be a catch.

"Twenty-nine, ninety-five!” The Gregorian studio audience began to chant. Inaudibly, Chubby, too, began to mouth the digits. “Twenty-nine ... ninety-five.” It had such a pleasant ring.

Mr. Winkner took a quick glance at his telephone across the room and then returned to the TV. The screen turned blue and a 1-800-number began to flash. A deep, authoritative voice explained how to make payments.

"HURRY, SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED!!” Chubby struggled, but couldn't muster the energy to leave the couch. "ORDER NOW AND RECEIVE YOUR FREE TOTE BAG ... FOR NO EXTRA CHARGE!!” Beads of sweat dripped down his brow and his crumb-caked mouth went dry. Before panic could set in, Chubby drew upon his inner strength.

"Lord grant me the strength to order cleanser in just two easy payments. Grant me the power to cross the vast expanse of yellow carpet to the phone. The oasis: the lifeline to free gifts and a miracle product. LORD! SHOW ME THE WAY!!”

The spokesperson answered Chubby's prayers. With one hand, he held aloft the chalice of baby-blue cleanser. With the other, he held up the tote bag. “Want your chance to own these products?” As if He had to ask!

"Then follow me.” The spokesperson motioned to Chubby and exited stage left to disappear from view.

With heroic effort, Chubby peeled himself from the grasp of the couch and shuffled towards the phone. The booming voice and the blue screen returned. “1-800-268-5683. That's 1-800-BUY-LOVE! (Price does not include shipping and handling.)”

As Chubby Winkner dialed the digits, visions of happiness flooded his mind. Visions of shiny appliances and spotless porcelain toilets. Visions of a Madonna tote bag filled with Cheese-puffs. An uncertain smile etched across his face as the cleanser-operator picked up.

Mr. Winkner took a deep breath and talked to God.
There was a time when I would sit and fester in traffic for at least an hour per day. For lack of a bus line from my home in the suburbs I commuted by car to be a bicycle messenger in Seattle. I would arrive at my hippie job in the city filled with artery-popping stress from traffic jams, only to spend my day pedaling through more of them.

When the Metro line finally came to my neighborhood it was like a crushing burden had lifted from my life. For a mere dollar my bus driver absorbed all the angst and responsibilities of my commute. My time in traffic could be spent on more productive things such as reading the paper, meeting other commuters and, most importantly, sleeping. After a few ugly misses (the last stop was in Renton) I mastered the art of sleeping until I was exactly at my stop every day. Riding the bus improved my daily grind more than any after-work cocktail. And now I could afford more of them.

Even though a born-again commuter, I am not about to abandon my car or motorcycle. The status of my license is testimony to my love and occasional abuse of the open highway. Transportation in the nineties has benefits that cannot be ignored. If you can twist an ignition, you are free to explore anywhere on America’s four million miles of public roads.

If that were not miracle enough, all the virtues of home now come mashed into our driving experience. Heat, air conditioning, stereos, telephones and TVs are installed. Automotive analysts call this accumulation of auto gadgets “carcooning.” If an on-board toilet (perhaps called a “Karlostomy Bag”) is marketed mutant commuters of the future might have no reason to buy homes at all.

Just think, 100 years ago horses dominated our transportation. Today, they are merely another road hazard. Cars deliver us to our individual heavens and hells. A bliss-filled day at Mt. Baker is granted by the same four wheels that drag us to our jobs each day. We can love them or hate them but in America the important thing is to have them.

As the reigning champion of the consumer nations, Americans own more cars per family than anyone else. According to the New Road Map Association, only 8 percent of the world’s 5.3 billion people own cars. But in America 89 percent of households have at least one car. Equating our cars with a quality of life issue, we are amazed and frightened for the car-less American. A confession of having no car in the United States is like saying, “I have string warts”—most people just cannot fathom it. Cars are the core of our all-consumer passion, a massive purchase that simultaneously nurses our egos while broadcasting to the driving public the narrow of our personalities.

“Auto-crats” in the corporate kingdom manipulate our weakness to the point that we feel silly for not piloting a $50,000 Range Rover through our well-groomed asphalt streets. Urban sprawl pollution, traffic jams and the myriad other car-related maladies are lost in the glare of a new paint job and the only surviving issue becomes one of profit or expense. This trend may be music to corporate America’s ears and wallets, but is not sustainable from an environmental viewpoint.

One of the many hidden costs of cars is the nasty habit they have of creating carbon dioxide. Many countries recognize this and try to discourage driving by putting hefty taxes on fuel. Europeans pay 2-3 times more per gallon than we do. As a result, Europeans drive less and gladly utilize mass transit options to save a buck. Statistics from the International Roads Federation show that Americans drive about twice as far per year as Europeans and more than triple the distance of Japanese drivers.

In the United States, low fuel prices are a sacred cow that we refuse to tamper with. President Clinton’s 1993 attempt at an energy tax inspired the largest campaign to kill a bill in U.S. history. The Pace Environmental Law Review traced the millions of opposition dollars back to car manufacturers and oil companies. The wimpy four-cent increase that survived in the bill will hardly finance our next skirmish in the Middle East.

Globally, there are more than 450 million cars nibbling away at the ozone layer, while most of the bile they create hovers around for city folk to enjoy, cars directly account for 13 percent of carbon emissions added to the ozone. However, the compound effects of deforestation for roads, resources to manufacture and oil refining to fuel our cars multiply their ozone-depleting powers. Minor additions to this list have huge impacts when millions of automobiles are considered. For example, the Center for Transportation Research found that chlorofluorocarbons from a car’s air conditioner increases its contribution to climate change by two-thirds.

A rising temperature on Earth means nothing good to its inhabitants. Desertification, rising ocean levels, species extinction and drought are just some of the exciting things scientists are predicting will happen. The topic has been studied exhaustively and the votes are almost unanimous: temperature is rising, humans do affect it.
Lone dissenters in this opinion are groups such as the Global Climate Coalition who are funded by the oil industry, automobile manufacturers and electric companies. Like the last holdouts of the Flat-Earth Society, they say, “the issue remains clouded in controversy, intrigue and misunderstanding.”

Organizations with less suspect motives, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, estimate the global warming trend to be 1.4 to 6.3 degrees by 2100. These small numbers could have a dramatic impact on the environment, much like the impact on the human body when it heats up a few degrees.

Air pollution is the most obvious side effect of our dependence on cars. Since it immediately impacts the quality of our lives we notice it and grumble in alarm at “how bad it is today.” Salt Lake City and Mexico City get hammered by photochemical smog that sits in their valleys and bakes residents. Children play inside during recess, hospitals get flooded with respiratory cases and then, amazingly, it all blows away and is just a bad memory.

Unlike smog, the environmental effects of pavement are more constant and subtle in their impact on the Earth’s health. Pavement can not just blow away or be legislated out of existence.

Every foot of pavement permanently entombs the earth below it. In the United States half of our urban area is committed to pavement so our cars can get around and park. We now have enough asphalt to smother the entire state of Georgia.

According to the American Automobile Association, in 1993 America had over 194 million registered cars for a population of roughly 250 million. By comparison, China has 1.2 billion people but only 1.8 million cars. However, these numbers will soon change as China plans to urbanize the country by building a massive network of freeways to accommodate the population and their newly discovered incomes. Looking for hot new trends, Investor’s World magazine defines this rosy future: “Today, bicycles are the number one mode of transportation in China. Tomorrow, motorcycles and then cars.” Auto manufacturers around the world are delirious with the prospect of this new market and are pumping millions of dollars throughout Asia to help cars gain acceptance.

We often buy things that are useless, but getting folks to buy cars that have no roads to drive on is hard to sell. Like a parasite on its host, cars need roads in order to function. The Worldwatch Institute points out that our 16 million hectares of paved area are encroaching on and destroying our croplands. As crops are no longer responding to fertilizer and pesticide technology and our water reserves are also being depleted at an unsustainable level we are going to need every bit of usable farmland we can get. The Journal of Soil and Water Conservation states that 2.4 million hectares of prime U.S. farmland were lost between 1982 and 1992. Two-thirds of that loss was due to rural and urban expansion. Since 90 million people are added to the world population each year the conflict between feeding ourselves or our cars will certainly become more intense.

It doesn’t take a biologist to determine that roads and sprawl are a negative addition to any natural environment they enter. Urbanization crowds animals who do what they can to get the hell away, but out of frustration they end up mauling poodles and humans until someone shoots or drives over them.

The effects of paving our surroundings impacts our quality of life as well. People in suburbs are forced to drive almost everywhere to get simple things. A densely designed city has the dual advantages of a transportation system and close shopping sources on every block. Even in this age of telecommuting, driving times are steadily increasing as malls and mondo-condos scatter throughout the suburbs. The 1989 research from American Demographics showed that working Americans spend nine hours per week behind the wheel. If multiplied by a 30-year career, those nine hours add up to well over a year of your life spent in a 200-horsepower sofa!

Ironically, the drugs, guns and crime of the city take fewer lives annually than the 250,000 automobile fatalities world-wide. According to Northwest Environment Watch, “traffic accidents are the leading cause of death among Americans aged 10 - 24, and 5 to 15-year-olds are the most likely to be run over while bicycling.”

There are some encouraging signs that we are getting fed up with our dependence on cars. Seattle’s rail transit initiative passed in the November election. The Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) is expanding by 5 percent to give
commuters more choices and they now have bike racks on all routes except the campus express. Bicycles are being produced at three times the rate of cars and the "Big Three" auto makers in Detroit are scrambling to make emissions-free cars to meet California's upcoming clean air requirements.

Western has its own talent pool exporting good ideas on transportation reform. Parking and Transportation reform coordinator Carl Root emphasizes the common sense approach. "One way to discourage people from driving is to improve the access to campus," said Root. "Many of the streets south of campus have no sidewalks or lights so students who might otherwise walk or ride bikes are driving instead."

Students and faculty at Western account for 30 to 40 percent of the WTA ridership. This is a circumstantial symptom of having 13,000 students, but only 3,300 parking spaces. Do we pave over the sports fields so we can drive in traffic to look for a parking space there? Or do we leave our cars at home until Baker opens? This Pass/Fail quiz can be taken daily as part of Commuting 101; what you answer here directly applies to the natural world.

Dr. Michael Seal and the Vehicle Research Institute at Western give us a glimpse at the high-tech alternatives. Seal is guiding a five million Department of Defense contract to design a thermophotovoltaic car that has almost zero emissions. Seal sees natural gas as the answer to attaining greater efficiency. "Anywhere you put a hole in the ground you get natural gas. Raw emissions are lower and, since it is about 130 octane the natural gas engine runs cleaner and lasts longer.

The VRI team has to buy fuel for experimental cars from one of Vancouver, B.C.'s 103 natural gas stations. It is just a matter of time before the U.S. consumer catches on. However, the expense re-tooling factories and creating a nation-wide infrastructure to fuel or recharge environmentally safe cars is what keeps them off the market.

I asked Seal why the U.S. Army would care about an environmentally friendly car. After reminding me that they built the freeways to move troops and tanks he said, "They have to make things that have a civilian application. This car will be very fuel efficient and extremely quiet... it also has a small radar signature for missiles to lock onto." Perhaps the Army has seen the future of American commuting.

Drive carefully.
Aid to Dependent Industries

Subsidies are government grants given to private people or companies to aid or promote enterprises deemed advantageous to the public.

When the government subsidizes a certain industry, it means that we, taxpayers or soon-to-be taxpayers, are helping promote that industry. Here in the Northwest, the government subsidizes industries such as timber, mining, agriculture, electricity and cars. Therefore, we are aiding and promoting industries that exploit and degrade our local environment.

Subsidizing these environmentally damaging industries promotes wasteful consumption of our earth’s resources. As purchasers of these industries’ products, we consume without knowing the true cost to the environment.

The following examples illustrate how your tax dollars subsidize these industries.

**Timber**
- The Tongass National Forest is the largest national forest in the United States covering four-fifths of southeast Alaska. The U.S. Forest Service granted 50-year contracts signed in the 1950s to two pulp mill companies. They guaranteed monopoly access to the timber for as little as $1.48 per thousand board feet; at this rate it would cost about $15 in wood for the average American house. In 1993, $40 million on timber sales was lost from the Tongass.
- With the costs of excavating and grading logging roads, logging of the Northwest national forest cost taxpayers some $91 million in 1993.

**Mining**
- The U.S. Mining Act of 1872 allows miners to “patent” the land where minerals are found for as little as $2.50 an acre. In addition, as long as miners pay an annual fee of $225 (as of 1994) they have the right to sell minerals taken from public lands without paying any royalties to the government.
- In 1994, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt was forced by the mining act to sign over the richest gold deposit in the United States to Toronto-based American Barrick Resources. ABR cut a check for $9,765 and became the proud owners of 1,949 acres in Nevada that could contain as much as $10 billion in gold.
- The mining act could transfer a large bloc of Montana’s federally protected Cabinet Mountains Wilderness Area to Canada’s Noranda Minerals Co. This wilderness area is habitat to the endangered grizzly bear.
- Producing one gram of gold requires digging through, processing and dumping three million grams of earth.

**Electricity**
- The hundreds of millions of dollars annually subsidized to electricity users through Bonneville Power Association and the speed of decline of salmon runs in the heavily dammed Columbia Basin, are among the costliest of anti-environmental handouts in the Pacific Northwest.
- Greenhouse gas-producing aluminum smelters receive power at below cost. These subsides cost the average household about $2 per month.

**Agriculture**
- Farmers in Eastern Washington pay $12,000 annually for hydropower to pump water uphill from the Columbia River for irrigation. At wholesale rates, the power is worth more than $25 million annually.
- The Bureau of Land Management manages a large share of the Northwest’s dry lands. It charges $1.98 per animal-unit-month (the amount a cow and calf eat in a month, equal to 800 pounds of forage) and loses $3 million annually.
- Commodity programs essentially require participation farmers to plant the same crop year after year to receive the benefits of subsidized irrigation and livestock grazing.

**Cars**
- Northwesterners make 90 percent of their trips by car or truck.
- Drivers paid 76 percent of the 3.9 billion spent on Northwest roads. The other 24 percent came from other sources unrelated to driving.
- Since the 1950s the United States has built a 44,000-mile interstate highway system. Two percent of our land is used for roads and automobile repairing, fueling and parking facilities— more land than is used for housing.*
- In 1989 the United States imported 220 million barrels of oil from Iraq and Kuwait — we would have saved the same amount if the U.S. automobile fleet was 3 miles per gallon more efficient.*

Source: Hazardous Handouts: Taxpayer Subsidies to Environmental Degradation, by John C. Ryan

*Source: Car Trouble, by Steve Nadis and James J. MacKenzie
Free Trade is No Free Lunch
By Greg Friedman

GATT and NAFTA. The mere mention of these two acronyms causes eyes to glaze over and minds to wander. But for those who dare to comprehend the convoluted world of international trade, they are anything but dull. If there is any reality behind the idea of a “New World Order,” the blueprints for it lie in the trade rules and regulations embodied in these sleep-inducing terms.

The names are almost friendly; GATT and NAFTA sound more like cartoon characters or transmission lubricants than free trade agreements. GATT is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and is the mother of all trade agreements. It is responsible for regulating trade between 103 countries, administering 90 percent of all international trade. NAFTA is the North American Free Trade Agreement and expands on GATT for regulating trade between Canada, Mexico and the United States.

If the goal of greens is to develop environmentally sustainable ways for humans to live on the planet, the goal of GATT and NAFTA is to take us in the opposite direction. The agreements seek to increase the production, consumption and flow of goods by “liberalizing” trade on a global scale. Liberalizing international trade would make it just as easy for the United States to trade with China, for example, as it is for Seattle to trade with San Francisco.

The means by which GATT and NAFTA seek to increase trade is by “harmonizing” member countries’ trade policies and related domestic laws. Harmonization is the process of standardizing laws so they are consistent from country to country, allowing goods, services and capital — but, significantly, not people — to move easily across borders.

Harmonization would be a positive force if environmental and other laws were harmonized upward to the level of countries with the very highest standards. Unfortunately, the reverse is true. Countries with strong environmental, consumer and health laws — which might interfere with trade by restricting what kinds of products a country imports — are ratcheted down to the level of countries with the very weakest laws.

“There’s really a move towards establishing the lowest common denominator of law, in terms of consumer laws, environmental laws, etc.,” said Chris McGinn, deputy director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch. “What [Public Citizen] is very concerned about is that as a result of harmonization, you’ll have an international law or standard that is lower than the U.S. standard.”

This could result, McGinn said, in a strong U.S. law or standard being harmonized downward to meet the lower international standard. “It’s very difficult in international
trade agreements like GATT and NAFTA to maintain a standard that is tougher than international standards.”

Traditionally, harmonizing different countries’ trade laws involved the elimination of tariffs and import restrictions. A grim twist to liberalizing trade in the 1990s, however, is the corporate-driven push toward eliminating “non-tariff barriers to trade.” A non-tariff barrier to trade is any law or regulation (other than tariffs) that enable one country to restrict or ban the imports of another country.

Unfortunately, what the industry-friendly GATT and NAFTA bureaucrats call non-tariff barriers to trade we might call environmental protection laws, or health and safety laws, or consumer protection laws. Mexico’s 1991 challenge of the United States’ Marine Mammals Protection Act is an ominous example of how one country can undermine another country’s domestic laws merely by crying “non-tariff trade barrier.”

Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act, U.S. tuna fishers are forbidden to use deadly purse seine nets, which not only catch tuna but also drown the dolphins that inexplicably swim over the tuna schools. The law also has provisions for banning the import of tuna caught by foreign fishers using these methods.

The U.S. government, after years of non-enforcement and under intense pressure from environmental groups, finally started enforcing the import ban on tuna caught with dolphin-deadly methods in the late 1980s.

“The Marine Mammals Protection Act was an incredibly successful law,” McGinn said. “It dramatically lowered the amount of dolphins killed each year.”

But Mexico, which was the largest exporter of dolphin-deadly tuna to the United States, charged the act was not intended as a conservation measure at all, but was really a disguised barrier to trade.

Mexico challenged the act under GATT rules, which permit any member country to challenge a law of any other member country if it feels the law is really a disguised barrier to trade. In 1991, a GATT dispute resolution panel ruled the Marine Mammals Protection Act was, in fact, a barrier to trade.

The dispute resolution panel’s members are unelected, the process is undemocratic, yet its word is the final word on any dispute. In effect, GATT exists on a level that is unreachable by even the most powerful governments — even the United States is bound to obey the panel’s rulings.

GATT officials cannot force any country to change its laws, but they can authorize economic sanctions against a violator or require payment of compensation. Of course, the threat of sanctions or paying compensation is enough to make most countries opt instead for changing the offending law.

The outcry over “GATT-zilla vs. Flipper” (as some environmentalists called it) was fierce in the United States. Mexico, worried about the attention it was drawing to its horrendous environmental record and fearful about jeopardizing negotiations over NAFTA, did not pursue its case.

Even though Mexico dropped its complaint against the United States, the fact remained that in a crucial test of how well environmental laws would stand up under a GATT challenge, the environmental law was the loser. Environmentalists took the lesson to heart, which was spelled out by GATT’s secretariat: “A country may not restrict imports of a product solely because it originates in a country whose environmental policies are different from its own.”

This means that a country cannot distinguish between “like” products; if the United States allows tuna to be sold in its markets, it must allow market access to tuna that comes from other countries. The production methods of “like” products cannot be considered. Tuna is tuna, whether it was caught using dolphin-deadly nets or not.

The GATT panel’s ruling in the tuna/dolphin case should be taken as a portent of things to come. Economic sanctions and import restrictions, such as the United States’ tuna ban, are the only tools one country can use against another to enforce compliance with international or domestic environmental standards. GATT has taken away those tools.
Furthermore, when Congress passes a law now there is the ever-present possibility it will be ruled GATT-illegal. The end of the story for a law is no longer its passage — as was made clear by the GATT panel’s ruling in the Marine Mammals Protection Act challenge.

“There was this incredible, long struggle to pass a law to protect dolphins,” McGinn said. “[Environmentalists] got the law passed in Congress, and they thought that was the end of it.”

But, McGinn said, these days no law has that security. “International companies operating outside the United States have a trump card,” McGinn said. “They have an appeal process [in GATT]. They can say a law is a violation of trade rules.”

Aaron Cosbey, senior trade program officer for the International Institute for Sustainable Development said the GATT provision that prohibits discriminating between like goods produced by different production methods is the most troubling aspect of the trade agreement. Cosbey said from a free trade point of view, the method of production is irrelevant.

“However,” Cosbey said, “From an environmental perspective, how a good is produced makes an incredible amount of difference. A computer whose circuit board was cleaned with ozone-depleting CFCs is not the same as a computer whose circuit board was cleaned with soap and water.

“You’ve got this fundamental inconsistency between trade concerns and environmental concerns,” Cosbey continued, “and it will become more and more of an irritant as the gravity of the world’s environmental problems become clearer.”

The implications of GATT’s prohibition against discriminating against like products are awesome. Because GATT trumps all domestic laws, be they federal, state or local (or the equivalent in other countries), any law perceived as a barrier to trade is a potential target.

For example, Canada, Ghana, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Uganda and the United States have all established bans on the export of raw logs under some circumstances. In 1993, the European Union complained that Indonesia’s raw log export ban violated GATT.

There was no formal challenge, but the complaint alone moved Indonesia to abandon the export ban. “The threat of a challenge was certainly there,” Cosbey said, “and was enough to make Indonesia rescind that law.”

Similarly, in 1992 Austria attempted to establish a law that would impose a 70 percent tax on tropical timber. The law would also have required a label informing consumers that the wood they were buying was tropical, and it would have allowed an optional tag indicating whether the wood came from a sustainably managed stand.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose members include countries that export tropical timber, complained the law violated GATT, as it did not apply to timber harvested in temperate regions as well. Austria, faced with the threat of a Southeast Asian embargo, dropped the tax proposal.

The list of environmental protection laws that are being challenged or face the threat of being challenged under GATT goes on and on. In the United States, the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards, elements of the Clean Air Act and a law banning shrimp from countries that do not use “turtle exclusionary devices” are all currently being charged by various countries as barriers to trade.

In the perilous logic of free trade, laws designed to conserve or protect resources are not compatible with the goals of deregulating and increasing trade. In addition, the principle objective of free trade is to encourage greater production and consumption of goods.

“If you liberalize trade,” Cosbey said, “then things are produced in the country that produces them most efficiently, then exported to other countries. The standard economic theory says in the end, everybody’s richer and more stuff gets produced and consumed, at lower prices. That’s a good thing in economics — more is better.

“However,” Cosbey continued, “from an environmental point of view that may not be a good thing at all, especially when we’re bumping up against global environmental limits. One of the big problems is that liberalized trade actually increases consumption. It’s one of the most damning condemnations of free trade, and it’s hardly ever discussed.”

Global trade agreements, such as GATT and NAFTA, have set the world lurching down a dangerous path. Autocratic trade regimes threaten democratically established environmental, health and labor laws; countries are encouraged to maximize depletion of resources, and people to consume more and more; and the trade agreements institutionalize the notion that progress is predicated on economic growth — no matter what the environmental and social consequences.

But international trade agreements are not inherently bad — it all depends on how they are implemented and what their objectives are. In theory, trade agreements could be used to harmonize international trade laws and standards upward instead of downward.

“International trade could be a means to an end, but it’s not necessarily something you want to have for its own sake,” McGinn said. “You want to use it as a tool to get certain things.” Things other than simply unfettered growth, such as environmental protection, economic equity and sustainability.

A greener shade of trade is possible, but enacting change on a global level is a slow and difficult process. In the mean time, remember that free trade is no free lunch if it means trading away the environment.
it took over 16,000 gallons of fuel to deliver this pineapple to you
"The idea that every locality should be...the source of its own food makes several kinds of sense. The locally produced food supply is the most secure, the freshest, and the easiest for local consumers to know about and to influence." — WENDELL BERRY, THE PLEASURES OF EATING

For the past year the Holdin' Brothers Farm has been growing corn, beans, squash, potatoes, and other storage crops (foods that stay fresh over the winter) in Whatcom County. While many farms offer local fresh produce in the summer, the Holdin' Brothers have been working on filling the winter gap that drives conscientious consumers unwillingly to the supermarket.

They are part of a larger movement in the county to create a local, mostly organic, food system. The goal is to maintain an environmentally safe and economically sound Whatcom County by meeting our food needs here and working together.

"We don't want so much to grow food for other people, but to work with other people to grow food together," explained Holdin' Brother Mike Lane. "People are disconnected from where their food comes from. I know a lot of kids who think food comes from the store."

Mike was one of those kids, growing up on chips: Doritos, Tostitos... "all that stuff with nacho cheese all over it," he said. Ironically, chips brought him to farming.

The Tortilla Chip Revolution?
"It's an analogy I like to make about my evolution with food," said Mike. It began with his conversion to organic corn chips during his Colorado ski bum days. "It was unconscious, I think," Mike explained, "but then I started buying chips with pressed oil rather than hydrogenated, which I felt better about."

He began reading on the subject, "I was learning about the three sisters—corn, beans, and squash—and what the natives used for agriculture and how they survived on corn beans and squash."

This appealed to Mike, with corn products already a large part of his diet. He decided to grow it and make tortillas himself.

This year he did just that. "I didn't have any agricultural knowledge other than growing up in Iowa surrounded by corn and soybeans."

Regardless of knowledge, the farm certainly has principles. The Holdin' Brothers grow organically; using no pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizer, or migrant workers other than friends.

"Our big model is to meet the needs of the community by working in the right relation with the land. I mean the land is a member of the community." For Mike, relations are essential. Most of his efforts have involved understanding the
systems that support him, and working towards creating positive relationships.

"I feel what our culture is missing is a relationship with the earth and with other people, and that's what our whole farm's about."

For now he is concentrating on food.

"There are more needs than just food, but I feel food is a good first step. It's common ground for everyone," Mike explained. "Choices that we make on how we eat have a big effect on the environment in the way that it's grown."

For Fairhaven college student and Bellingham resident Jennifer Banowetz, growing a large quantity of food is not an option. Instead she got involved in the creation of a food buying club.

"It's a group looking to fulfill its food needs by contacting local food producers," she said. The club purchases large quantities directly from the producers; gaining a better price and establishing a relationship between the consumer and the business or grower.

"It's a relationship that helps both parties. By buying food that grows here, it keeps our money here; it helps our local economy. It helps our neighbors make a living and put a value on what they have to sell."

Also it allows for heightened consciousness. Creating direct relationships with the local producer gives Jennifer a say in the production process.

"Since money has value, we have a choice, lots of choices. It comes down to what we want to support; what we want to nourish. Everything we nourish grows. If we're buying things in cans, that says we're supporting mining, that we're supporting oil companies."

Jennifer is aware of the consequences of uninformed consumerism. She and other club members have been adjusting their diets, trying not to support the destruction involved in modern industrial food production.

"We're also eating as seasonably as possible; not eating tomatoes in the winter time,..." which must be shipped via petroleum based transport, "and eating more root vegetables and squash storage crops, she pointed out.

By eating seasonably the club emphasizes its relationship to place and people. The Community Dinner is a monthly event, usually held at the Old Town Cafe, for the same reason. Continuing since the fall of '95, it has been an opportunity for people to come together around local "food, fun, and ideas," honoring the efforts of producers already working here. Most of the food is donated by those producers; feeding around 75 people. The dinner is always open to the public.

Both Mike and Jennifer have been
involved with the dinner since its inception. For them, it is a chance to share the vision of local food with the community and show how it is already happening. It is a chance for people in town to eat with people from the county; for the manufacturers to eat with the growers; for the consumers to dine with the producers; for people to see where their food comes from; to have a say in it; and especially to celebrate it.

The Community Dinner is part of the more general organization known as Backyard Abundance - a term they use to describe a local food system. Both Mike and Jennifer are apart of this organization. The group has had an ethereal presence so far, meeting occasionally and holding small info booths during concerts at Fairhaven College. This group focuses on educating the community and working to assist in or create systems to further local food production.

"What Backyard Abundance can do is clearly identify the steps we have to make." Mike feels that we can already eat locally; it's just a matter of knowing what's available, and more importantly, what you want.

Wanting fruit is a common desire. Wanting mangoes, or even oranges, in winter or anytime is a desire that most people living here have had for only the past fifty years. But at what price? Is it worth it?

For instance, grapes. The United Farm Workers of America report that eight million pounds of 150 different types of pesticides are used annually on California grapes. More than 1000 cases of pesticide related illnesses are reported annually in California and an estimated 313,000 US farmworkers suffer from pesticide poisonings yearly. The United Farm Workers are calling for a boycott nationwide, asking consumers not to support these practices. These practices exist, however, because consumers desire grapes in areas and quantities that are not supportive of this nation's ecology. Pesticides and slave-like labor have been the only feasible ways to meet this irrational demand. If industrial agriculture could meet the demand organically, they probably would, it is in fact cheaper. The tragedy of our market economy is not so much the multinational corporations' raping and pillaging of the earth and its people, but the first world consumers asking them to do it. If Whatcom county ate more blackberries, which are free, or apples, pears, strawberries, all of which grow here, they would be saving countless resources and even lives.

It is now that the vision of Backyard Abundance and all those involved with it is becoming more and more vital; before development and other consumer interests destroy what little resources we have left. The industry of agriculture is one of the cornerstones of the current economy that many claim to be so dissatisfied with. Yet even the most rigid environmentalists can be found in the supermarkets or buying processed packaged food. The efforts of those involved with Backyard Abundance have given Whatcom county more than just another grocery choice. They have provided an opportunity to help the world with every meal.

LOCAL ORGANIC FOOD:
AND WHERE YOU CAN GET IT

Restaurants:
- Juice Oasis- rollups, juices on Holly
- Swan Cafe- in Co-op, open all day
- Tony's Coffee- local roaster, serves some local food
- Boundary Bay- purchases some vegetables from local farms
- Old Town Cafe- breakfast and lunch

Manufacturers:
- Fairhaven Cooperative Flour Mill- 734-9947
- Omega Nutrition: cooking oil 384-1238
- Pleasant Valley: cheeses- non organic but local grain, no hormones 366-5398
- Denny's Honey- 733-7/64

Farms:
- Holdin Bros.- 384-0158
- Evergreen Station- 380-4054
- Cedarville Farms- 592-5594
- Happy Valley- 647- 8970
- Growing Gardens- 39 8-7509
Would it bother you to see trees cut down only to be tossed into the nearest incinerator? How about generating tons of petroleum-based 'plastic cling wrap' just to throw out with this week's garbage?

This is reality. Why are we doing this? Virtually all store-bought products are accessorized with paper and/or plastic materials, most of which is excessive and instantly discarded. For example, the largest percentage of plastics in municipal solid waste is packaging materials.

Over-packaging is so common that we no longer see the excess and waste. "Much packaging is purely cosmetic," said Alan Duming in his book *How Much is Enough?* "Tomatoes and green peppers that last a week are sold in foam and plastic that last a century."

Can this packaging be reduced? I hope so. Not only because it makes good economic sense, but also because I will never like the look of a clear cut.

**Out of Our Hands?**

Reducing packaging and reusing paper and plastic decrease demand for virgin materials and weans us of our dependence on landfills and incinerators. "By burning things that could be recycled, incinerators drive the energy-guzzling raw materials industries to higher levels of production ... ," Duming writes.

Moving away from virgin materials eliminates the need for the chlorine bleaching process in pulp and paper mills. This process produces dioxins, which are hazardous substances created by chlorine and bromine use in pulp and paper mills and incineration.

Recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) research determined dioxins are one cause of human cancer, increased cases of diabetes, suppressed immunity and lowered fertility rates.

Dioxins enter the human body primarily through meat ingestion because they bioaccumulate in animal tissue. The concentration multiplies as dioxins move up the food chain.

Chlorine-bleached paper rotting in landfills contaminates water sources by attaching to oil or other chemicals leaching from the landfill. In this way, dioxins are mobilized and go wherever the water sources do and invade the natural food chain. Therefore, dioxins are not strictly associated with point sources of incinerator ash; they are everywhere.

The trash we throw out also comes back to haunt us in the form of air pollution "Whatcom county generates about 200 tons of municipal solid waste per day," said Regina Delahunt, Environmental Health Department supervisor.

Two companies in the county, Recomp and Olivine, operate incinerators with the capacity to burn 100 tons of solid waste every day. Excess solid waste is hauled either to Eastern Washington or Oregon.

Recent changes in Department of Ecology regulations alter Washington's method for incinerator ash disposal. The regulations now require ash to be placed in special ash-only landfills, so dioxins are trapped.

As an alternative to disposal, Olivine is working on an actual use for ash. "Olivine has applied to the Department of Ecology to use incinerator ash to make concrete," Delahunt said. "It is still in the process, but all the testing on the environmental stability of the ash-concrete has been completed."

**Recycling Education**

Education is an important part of combating excess packaging and the resulting waste. In the 1980s, Western claimed the lead in Washington universities' recycling efficiency.

Western's recycling program came from student effort. Creation of the Associated Students Recycling Center gave students, along with Bellingham residents, a recycling program. Today, community recycling businesses continue to spiral from this core; between 1973 and 1996, the number of services grew from one to 22.

"One of the big focuses we have at the Recycling Center is to think about the future," said Carrie Copeland, Western's Recycling Center education coordinator.

"The students live in the residence halls where recycling is easy. If we can educate them about recycling now, they'll take that knowledge with them when they leave the residence halls and do it on their
The goal of all education is to get students to take it a step further. Copeland's goals for recycling education this year are to make the Recycling Center's name more familiar to students by co-sponsoring on-campus movies, sending more direct mailings and strengthening the Recycling Representative Program with residence halls.

Education is common in schools, but it is also becoming a significant part of the community. Bellingham's RESources provides environmental education for schools, businesses and the community. Lisa Friend, a recycling educator at RESources, shared insights on what she feels is effective education. "When you get that one-to-one contact with people, that's what I think has the most impact. People remember you," Friend said. This is especially important for the younger generation; creating awareness at an early age is an effective tool. RESources uses a 'Consumer Activist Kit' and over-packaged item as aids in education.

Points About Plastic

The long wait for plastic recycling is due to the high cost associated with its collection and transportation. Most empty plastic packages take up an enormous amount of space.

Another problem is that the composition of resins varies with each type of container and wrapper. The resins have different chemical structures and do not adhere to each other when reprocessed, so they must be dealt with separately. Anyone who looks on the bottom or side of a plastic container can see acronyms such as PET, HDPE and LDPE that refer to the plastic components in the package.

Plastics are more difficult to recycle because of sterilization requirements. "Whereas glass bottles and metal cans come back into use in the same mode," said Nancy Wolf and Ellen Feldman in Plastic: America's Packaging Dilemma. "Recycled plastics must be made into other products, due to the inability of plastics to be remanufactured and sterilized to meet food-contact standards."

Instead, plastic bottles are reborn into dead-end products such as park benches and liners for jackets and sleeping bags. New uses for recycled plastic grow in relation to the decreasing amount of landfill space.

Where Are We Now?

Unfortunately, the success of Western and Bellingham's community recycling contributes to the excess of recyclables in the market, particularly mixed paper. Each day, the Recycling Center picks up about 20 full barrels of paper. Ten years ago, Northwest Recycling paid the Recycling Center $20 per ton for mixed paper; now the transaction has reversed, and the Recycling Center must pay to have its paper recycled.

What has caused this stagnant phase of recycling? Why do we pay for paper to be taken away? "For a few years there was a recycling coordinator (on a county level)," Friend said. "They helped to start up programs and write the half million dollar grant that bought the bins and started the trucks; helped us go county-wide. There's nobody in that position anymore. The commitment to recycling on a county-wide level is no longer there and I think our program has suffered because of it ... The programs people participate in are not as progressive."

Progressive programs faded away because recycling lost priority status. Money no longer backs existing programs. For example, although the state mandated Western recycle 50 percent of its waste by 1995, Western has not progressed past recycling 33 percent. Also, a decision made last spring to use non-bleached 100 percent recycled paper is simply not enforced throughout the school.

Prioritizing recycling and education programs, such as RESources and the Recycling Center, will go a long way towards softening our impact on the planet. A sober look at society's packaging disorder can propel us toward minimal packaging and greater recycling efforts. Only then can we reduce our consumption of natural resources.

Whatcom County Waste Reduction and Recycling Program, Recycling Hotline:
676-5723 or 384-8040

Suggested Readings:
"How Much Is Enough?" - Alan Durning
"Plastics, America's Packaging Dilemma" - Nancy Wolf
"Packaging and the Environment" - Susan E. M. Selke, Ph.D.
The 10 Commandments of Mass-Consumerism

(1) Thou shalt get thy way, right away, at Burger King now.

(2) Thou shalt seek convenience and heavy packaging in all things.

(3) Seven days shalt thou labor to pay off thy credit card.

(4) Thou shalt not kill thy TV, for whatever thou doeth unto thy TV, thou doeth unto thyself.

(5) Cherish the media, be skinny and eat lots of beef.

(6) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's Ab-Flex workout system.

(7) Thou shalt combat industrial angst with Schmidt and Prozac.

(8) Thou shalt enjoy 6.9% APR financing on a new Grand Cherokee and then sit in gridlock with thy cell phone.

(9) Thou shalt find peace at thy local strip mall.

(10) Thou shalt accept what was lost.