



Energy Symposium: Raising Energy Awareness in the Bay Area

By Allison Kuhn and Anno Davis
with Sir Francis Drake High School's Academy X and
Erin Howes with Sir Francis Drake High School's Sea-Disc Academy

Experiencing rolling black outs? California has been mired in a major energy crisis for several months. Some allege it is the result of poor choices made in energy policy over the past 15 years, while others believe it is due to the success of our booming economy and the rapidly increasing demand for energy. Either way, demand for energy exceeds supply in the state and it's greatly increasing the cost of energy. The rates Californians pay for energy is now two to three times the national average. Sustainable Marin County, a local non-profit, has taken the current situation as an opportunity to inform and educate the public.



Anno Davis interviewing Marie Kerpan from Sustainable Marin County

Last month some of the most knowledgeable local experts came together at an Energy Symposium. Sustainable Marin and Whole Foods Market co-sponsored the event, which took place at the Marin Theatre Company on March 21, 2001 from 7 to 9 pm. The public was invited to learn more about the energy crisis from a panel of experts. A question and answer session with fellow community members followed the panelists' presentations.

The panel included Kirk Brown of the Center for Resource Solutions, Jason Wilkinson of Van Der Ryn Architects, and Graham Brownstein of The Utility Reform Network (TURN). Marie Kerpan is the program coordinator for Sustainable Marin County who organized the Energy Symposium.

For a two-minute audio overview of the event, visit:
www.scienceinterchange.org/media/acax_anno_energysymposium.ram

Outward Bound policy is to have each person step outside the boundaries of that with which they are comfortable. With each step a new fear arises, but also old fears disappear. Outward Bound began 35 years ago. Its mission is to challenge teenagers, as well as adults, to perform tasks that go beyond perceived physical, mental and emotional limits so as to enhance their belief in themselves and their capabilities.

The evening began with a guest appearance from Assemblyman Joe Nation. Nation is proposing a solution to the energy crisis to his colleagues in Sacramento. At the symposium, Nation focused on his bill (# ABX1 32), which is currently in discussion in Congress. By mandating a 3-5 time increase in the cost of energy for high users, Nation predicts that the demand for energy will decrease. Nation said there would likely be a 35 to 40 percent increase in energy costs for larger energy consumers such as businesses. Joe Nation is not the only one in Sacramento worried about the energy crisis. So far, approximately 80 other bills have been introduced. Governor Gray Davis is proposing a "tiered-rate system". Assemblyman Nation's bill, however, is the only one that focuses on demand, as opposed to supply. Visit

www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=abx1_32&sess=CUR&house=B&author=nation

for the text and a summary of bill #ABX1 32.

The Panelists:



*Kirk Brown
Center for Resource Solutions*

Kirk Brown is the assistant director of Center for Resource Solutions, a non-profit organization in San Francisco. The Center for Resource Solutions strives to promote the use of renewable energy while promoting energy-efficiency. Kirk tells us a little more about the current energy California crisis and what we as consumers can do to both help and benefit from it.

To hear what Kirk Brown had to say (2 minutes) go to:
www.scienceinterchange.org/media/acax_allison_kirkbrown.ram

Visit Center for Resource Solutions' Green-e Renewable Electricity Program: www.green-e.org



*Graham Brownstein
The Utility Reform Network
(TURN)*

Graham Brownstein represented The Utility Reform Network (TURN) in his position as Community Organizer. TURN is California's leading utility consumer advocacy organization. Graham talked about the importance of being active in your community to influence public policy and decisions made in government.

To hear what Graham Brownstein had to say (2 minutes) go to:
www.scienceinterchange.org/media/acax_anno_grahambrownstein.ram

Visit The Utility Reform Network: www.turn.org/



*Erin Howes interviewing Jason Wilkinson
from Van Der Ryn Architects*

Jason Wilkinson, a graduate of the University of Oregon, is now interning with Van Der Ryn Architects. Van Der Ryn Architects is a green architecture company that is working to solve the energy crisis by promoting sustainable architecture. As the representative for Van Der Ryn Architects, Jason Wilkinson proposed the many ideas and methods that his firm has worked to accomplish. "My main goal and interest is to bring green architecture to as many people as I can," says Wilkinson.

Visit Van Der Ryn Architects: www.vanderryn.com/

To hear what Jason Wilkinson had to say (2 minutes) go to:
www.scienceinterchange.org/media/seadisc_erin_jasonwilkinson.ram

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