



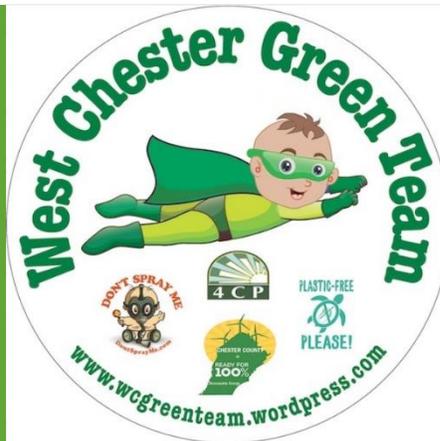
WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

February 2022

Mission: The West Chester Green Team is a civic organization in West Chester, PA, that works to educate the local public and to establish and nourish green initiatives in the community in harmony with nature and each other, promoting the health of all living things and of planet Earth.

Inside:

Little Free Library, Electric Vehicles, Clarification on the Plastic Bag Ban, Climate Crossroads, and a Book Review!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events



When – What – Where.

February 10: Porchfest Committee, 7 pm, virtual. For more information contact mhudgings@gmail.com

February 10: WCGT Meet up at Taco Mar, 122 E. Gay St., 6 pm, hosted by Gillian Alicea. Meet like-minded people and learn about Green Team's latest projects. Contact gillianwc6@gmail.com

February 16: Living Landscapes Committee 7 pm, virtual. RSVP to Courtney Finnaren at courtney.marm@gmail.com

February 24: WCGT Board Meeting, 7 pm, virtual. Contact Nathanielbsmith@earthlink.net

Events of interest hosted by other organizations:

February 24: "The Dirty Little Secret of Lawn Care" with "You Bet Your Garden" host Mike McGrath, 7 pm, virtual, hosted by West Pikeland Township Environmental Advisory Council Speaker Series, the Environmental Advisory Committees of Northern Chester County and other local groups.

Lawns, an American cultural phenomenon, are capable of absorbing storm water (if the turf is not too closely knitted), producing oxygen and sequestering carbon (though less so than many other plantings), and offering a pleasant green backdrop for trees, vegetable gardens, and flower beds.

But beware! Americans have gotten in the habit of applying huge amounts of unnecessary chemicals to their lawns. Artificial fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides pose dangers to people, pets, birds, and other species, including organisms that live in the soil and that actually help grass and the back yard environment to be healthy. Join on Zoom here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8946098082>

Be sure to visit our Web site at <https://wcgreenteam.com/> and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WCGTeam/> (all are welcome to post environment- and sustainability-related items there). If you wish to support our work, please donate here: <https://wcgreenteam.com/contact-2/>

NOTE: Deadline for the March issue is February 26! We welcome contributions and suggestions from our readers for possible inclusion in a future issue. E-mail your ideas to Dianne Walsh at LDwalsh318@gmail.com.

Little Free Library at the Melton Center

By Peggy Pillard

Eleanor Roosevelt was a strong supporter of the Depression-era WPA Pack Horse Librarians. These were women who traveled on horseback carrying saddlebags full of books and magazines. They made deliveries to schools and homes. When books became worn, they recycled them by clipping out the pictures and adding them to scrapbooks along with recipes and quilting patterns. They were on a mission.



When I was asked to be steward of the Little Library at the Melton Center, my first thought was that at least I would not have to spend 8 hours a day riding horseback into the hills! Another advantage was that I could put out the word for book donations with a simple notice on Next Door. It wasn't long before a dozen boxes of books had arrived.

I stop at the Little Library at least twice a week. I try to keep a variety of books available for young children, middle school, high school and adults. I have noticed that others are dropping off books as well. There have also been bookmarks left there several times.

We are fortunate to have our school and public libraries, but I believe that the Little Library fills a need. There is something very special about having your own book.

If you have books that you would like to donate, we would welcome some for children, middle school and high school. Please no oversize books. More paperback mysteries and thrillers have been requested. These can be placed in a box and left on the porch at 409 W. Union Street or contact me at readalot8@hotmail.com and I will be happy to pick them up.

Thank you! Eleanor would be so proud.

Peggy Pillard is a retired WCASD reading specialist who has tutored new immigrants, mainly children, in English. She has been a borough resident for more than 40 years.



Don't Forget Porchfest! More Porches Needed!



Visit westchesterporchfest.com to sign up to perform or to host performers on your front porch.

Special thanks to Mayor DeBaptiste for co-sponsoring this event with the WCGT, to Miggy Mason for taking on leadership for this event in so many ways, and to Beth Quarfot, Noel Hedgecock and Marie Paxson for hosting on their front porches and providing performers, too. Thanks also to Dianne Herrin and Jon Long for contributing photos of borough front porches, to Chester County Art Association for offering a children's art activity, and to Pastor Robbie Schmidtberger for opening Iron Works Church to the community for this event.

The Future We Choose

The Stubborn Optimist's Guide to the Climate Crisis

By Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac

(Leaders of the negotiations for the United Nations during the historic Paris Agreement of 2015)

What will you choose? This book lays out your choices for the future: The world continuing to warm resulting in human misery and decimated landscapes, OR a world limiting an increase in temperatures in which nature and humans will survive and thrive.

The first choice, if we do not change our ways, is described in Chapter 2. The air is so polluted we all must wear masks when outdoors. There will be few forests left, as most have been consumed by wildfires. We've already damaged our coral reefs and lost many fish. Arctic ice will disappear causing rising seawaters and loss of coastal communities. Moist air and warmer temperatures will bring more extreme tornadoes and hurricanes, resulting in flooding and the loss of life and infrastructures. Contaminated water supplies would make disease more prevalent, and the changed climate would cause more malaria, dengue fever, cholera, respiratory illnesses, starvation and malnutrition. Food production won't keep up with the needs of an ever-increasing population, and food will become more scarce and expensive. There is even more to this case scenario in the book, if you dare to read it!

The second choice, in Chapter 3, is what will happen if we continue to halve our greenhouse gas emissions EVERY decade from 2020 on getting us and keeping us at net zero emissions. The world will still be different than it is today. Air will be cleaner than it has been since the 1850s. Trees will be everywhere. There will be electric cars, and fewer on the streets due to more ride sharing and working from home. Electric railways will connect cities across the country and be a preferred choice for travel. Big ag is gone, and smaller family farms have shady groves of nut trees and rotate their free-range grazing animals from field to field, allowing consumers to have healthier food resources. Electricity will all come from renewable resources, decentralizing the electric grid. Roofs will be painted white to reflect the sun and most will be covered with solar panels allowing owners to produce and store their own electricity. Every windy area will have wind turbines.

Read Chapter 3 to learn about anticipated tech improvements that will help us. See the future, with stronger communities growing vegetables, composting, and collecting rainwater together – and processing their own clean water. The author envisions a lot more!

What choice will you make? If it is scenario two for future generations, *The Future You Choose* goes on to give you the mindsets of stubborn optimism, endless abundance, and radical regeneration in chapters 5-7.

The second half of the book offers Ten Actions for you to embrace to get us to our new future, and a final action plan for what you can do right now, today, this week, this month, this year, and by 2030 and before 2050. It gives specific actions to take starting NOW. It gave me hope. It also made me see this truth: Our goal is not to save the planet, but our species, and many others. The Earth will regenerate and go on as a planet in our solar system. This is about saving the lives of our children and grandchildren and future generations. In the authors' words, "Let it be a story of great adventure, against overwhelming odds. A story of survival, and of a thriving existence."

Reviewed By Nora Ziegler

Need Clarification on West Chester's Plastic Bag Ban? Here it Is!

By Nathaniel Smith

As explained in our [January 2022 newsletter](#), after a 2.5-year delay due to state interference, West Chester's ordinance banning most retail usages of single-use plastic bags and straws finally went into effect at the beginning of this year.

With or without an ordinance, or course, we want to shop with our own reusable bags whenever possible. If we forget our bag, we can put some items in a pocket; or in an old plastic bag carried for emergencies.



What exactly should shoppers expect in the Borough? As the Borough [web site](#) explains, "The ordinance bans the distribution by commercial establishments of plastic bags and drinking straws within the Borough. Paper bags are permitted as an alternative, but must consist of recycled content and be either recyclable or compostable, and establishments are required to charge and disclose a 10 cent fee on each bag provided to customers, to encourage customers to bring their own bag and avoid using unnecessary ones. The ordinance does not apply to product packaging or bags, without handles, used to wrap raw food products such as meat and fish, which would otherwise represent a health hazard."

Dry cleaning bags fall in the same category. And here are two notable [exceptions to the paper bag fee](#):

"The fee for a compliant paper bag does not apply to delivery orders, as customers do not have an opportunity to BYO bag. Similarly, because of the difficulty in anticipating bag usage, the fee will not be enforced for take-out orders ordered and/or paid outside the physical location of the establishment (e.g., phone, third party app, etc.)."

West Chester's Sustainability Advisory Committee handles any requests for individual exceptions, which must demonstrate a "unique challenge" and a lack of viable alternatives. If granted, an exception is good for one year.

So what happens if, despite your efforts, your purchases are put in an ordinary plastic bag or you are given a paper bag without being asked to pay the 10-cent fee?

1) Run through the above special cases in your mind. If none apply:

Clarification, con't.

- 2) Ask politely if the store has received an exception to the ordinance. If not, consider:
- 3) Remarking to the employee that the store seems to be in violation and asking what they plan to do about it. And/or:
- 4) Sending a note about the circumstances to the Borough at sustainability@west-chester.com. Then a Borough employee will have a friendly chat with the management and, presumably, secure their voluntary compliance in the future.

At this point, no one wants to be confrontational, and businesses are not yet actually being fined. Education is always best, and if we get into a conversation, it's an opportunity to explain the harm done by fossil-fuel-derived throwaway plastic products—and, of course, to compliment the stores that are in compliance.

Electric Vehicles vs. Gas Cars: What's Cheaper to Own?

by Bill Haaf

As you know, owning an electric vehicle (EV) results in significantly less greenhouse emissions (from electricity) versus burning gasoline or diesel fuel in an engine. Upfront costs may be higher for EVs, but they are also much cheaper to operate and maintain—and the savings can add up.



Over the life of your car, by buying electric you will often spend less, most notably from fuel costs. Owners who drive 15,000 miles a year in their electric car spend roughly \$546 on power, versus \$1,255 in a gas-powered car, AAA found. Electric car owners spent around \$0.03 per mile to get their car moving, which is \$0.04 less than small sedan owners and \$0.05 less than people with small SUVs.

Your personal savings would vary based partly on how much gas and electricity cost where you live. According to a U.S. Department of Energy study, the savings for going electric in Washington State are particularly significant. Over the course of 15 years of car ownership, the electricity needed to run a battery-powered EV could cost upwards of \$14,480 less than what you'd pay for gas in a similar vehicle.

EV owners also save on maintenance costs because they don't have to worry about oil changes or new air filters. That amounts to savings of about \$330 each year.

On the other hand, auto insurance costs are often similar (and sometimes higher) for EVs. On average, you'll spend \$1,227 per year on full-coverage insurance for an electric vehicle, according to AAA. That's compared to \$1,087 per year for a small SUV and \$1,342 for a

Electronic Vehicles, con't.

small sedan. Keep in mind that higher-priced cars (including expensive EVs) generally cost a lot more to insure. [Car and Driver](#) estimates that insurance for a Tesla can often run more than \$4,000 per year.

Overall, AAA estimates you'll spend \$9,119 on an electric vehicle driving 15,000 miles a year. That figure includes costs related to power (electricity) and maintenance, as well as financing, registration, fees, insurance and depreciation, and it's based on fairly inexpensive EVs—specifically, BMW i3, Chevrolet Bolt, Hyundai Kona Electric, Nissan Leaf, and Tesla Model 3. For the sake of comparison, the total cost per year for a minivan that gets the same use is \$10,101, while a small SUV would cost you \$8,362 and a half-ton pickup would run over \$11,000.

Costs can vary widely based on individual circumstances. To run the numbers yourself based on the make and model you're interested in, check out an online tool like the calculator at [Edmunds.com](#), which will estimate how much you'll really spend on insurance, fuel, repairs, loan interest, depreciation and such.

For more info:

"Electric vs. Gas Cars: Which One is Better for You?" [Compare.com](#)

"Electric Vehicles vs. Gas Cars: What's Cheaper to Own?" [msn.com](#)

2022: Are We at the Climate Crossroad?

by Paula Kline, Ready For 100 and West Chester Green Team

Many of us in the West Chester area have come a long way in the last year in our understanding of climate change. The extreme weather in June of 2021 and the devastating flooding from Hurricane Ida this past September gave us all a warning that climate disruption is too close for comfort. This fall was a pivotal moment for clarifying what we are all facing and what we, in West Chester, can do.



Climate change is now clearly occurring, this change is accurately predicted by the climate models, significant further climate change is already baked in, and to stay within the guard rail of 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming, we need to drastically reduce our emissions and dramatically increase access to renewable energy. This is a “code red for humanity.”

To learn more about this issue and find out what you can do to help, read Paula's excellent article on our website at www.wcgreenteam.com/2022/01/30/2022-are-we-at-the-climate-crossroad/

FYI: Comments from Green Team advisor John Jackson on the sad state of Chester County's waterways can be found at <https://vista.today/2022/01/chester-county-polluted-waterways/>