

Find Your Inner Green

by Julia Hillegass

Earth Day is April 22. Cities and counties throughout the region will commemorate the anniversary with celebrations and special recycling events. For a few days before and after, there's a heightened sense of awareness about the effect of our actions on the environment. That's a good thing. But really, shouldn't every day be Earth Day?

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Chesapeake Bay—and west to our rural communities, the Hampton Roads region is blessed with beautiful waterways, scenic landscapes, and vibrant neighborhoods. Municipalities are diligent about maintaining our public works and spaces, but when it comes to our homes, yards, and work places, it's up to us to do our fair share.

Doing the right thing is really easy. Here are simple tasks we can practice every day.

AT HOME

- Reach for the tap, not bottled water.
- Use the dishwasher only when it's full (and don't pre-rinse your dishes).
- Turn off the faucet while you're brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Fill and put your curbside recycling container out for pick-up on your neighborhood recycling day. If you don't have curbside recycling, fill a box with your household recyclables and take them to the drop-off center nearest you.
- Practice "pre-cycling" by avoiding paper serving products. Instead use real plates, cloth napkins, thermos bottles, and other reusable items.
- Pour used cooking grease into an empty, heat-safe container, such as a soup can, and store it in the freezer. Once solidified, toss the can into the garbage.

WHEN YOU SHOP

- Reuse—or refuse—shopping bags; bring your own reusable totes instead!
- Think before you buy—and buy only what you need. Consider purchasing quality goods that will last.
- Avoid over-packaged products and disposable goods.
- Maintain and repair items before buying new ones.
- Rent, instead of buying, tools and equipment you won't use that often.
- Read labels carefully and choose items with non-toxic ingredients.
- Look for and buy recycled products and materials.

IN YOUR YARD

- Plan your landscape for the most efficient water use, and choose native plants that have lower water requirements.
- Water your lawn only during the growing season and preferably in the early morning; a deep soaking once a week is sufficient.
- Add a rain barrel beneath a gutter spout, to catch and re-use rain water.
- Let your grass grow a little taller to reduce evaporation. When you do mow, leave the clippings on the yard.
- Replace turf grass areas with mulched beds, and use organic materials such as compost to aid in water efficiency.
- Test your soil before adding fertilizers to

determine how much to apply. Soil-testing kits are available through your local Virginia Cooperative Extension agent.

- Pick up and properly dispose of all animal waste

ON THE JOB

- Share information electronically.
- Make two-sided copies.
- Establish a recycling center in a central location to collect paper, corrugated cardboard, and recyclable drink containers.
- In your office kitchen, use ceramic mugs or glasses instead of disposable cups.
- Ask your suppliers to eliminate unnecessary packaging.
- Take used business electronics to a community recycling center for proper disposal.
- If you are in the restaurant business, consider switching to reusable serving items, instead of paper/plastic. Select the minimum appropriate packing for takeout food.
- Collect and send used grease to a renderer. ■

Need more tips? Visit www.HRGreenblog.com. Sponsored by 16 Hampton Roads cities and counties, working together with the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, the online journal features news, ideas, trends, and simple ways to make Hampton Roads living easy on the environment. It also carries news of HR Green—an exciting regional awareness campaign set to launch in the summer 2011. Log on now and discover your inner green!

Julia Hillegass is the public information and community affairs administrator with the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission.

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Learn, Give Back & Get Active With JFS!

Tuesday, May 3, 2011, 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM

The Power of Functional Foods:
A Panel Discussion

Featured panelists include:

Glen Arluk, MD, Gastroenterology, Ltd.

Shaye Arluk, MS, RD, HFI, Healthy Habits

Bonnie Sophia-Maria Rose, ND, Master Herbalist

Exhibitor fair from 10:00 am - 11:00 am and following panel.

Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Giving Back Day &

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Donate gently worn shoes, cell phones, eye glasses & hearing aids and help JFS support the entire community!

Thursday, May 5, 2011, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Laugh For the Health of It

Featured speaker:

Cea Cohen Elliott, MA, Ceaspeaks

Sunday, May 8, 2011

Celebrate Mother's Day at the
7th Annual Run, Roll or Stroll!

5K Run, Walk & Team Competition

1 Mile Run/Walk

Neptune's Park at 31st Street

Sponsored by Lori & Michael Glasser Family

Register online at: www.tidewaterstriders.com

Pre-register by April 27 and join us from 8 am - 4 pm, Friday, May 6, 2011 at our Pre-registration Race Packet Pick-up & Expo!



Jewish Family Service of Tidewater

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All weekday events are FREE, require registration and will be held at the Reba & Sam Sandler Family Campus of the Tidewater Jewish Community 5000 Corporate Woods Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Call 321-2222 to register or register online at: www.jfshamptonroads.org