

The Sustainable Psychologist

Newsletter of the APS Environmental Interest Group

Volume 1 Number 1

July 2009

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Introducing: Paul Saunders

Paul is a registered Psychologist, Organisational Development Consultant, Performance Coach and Change Management Facilitator who works with organisations, sports teams, and environmental organisations.

Paul is based in Melbourne where he manages a successful performance coaching and leadership development business. He works for Melbourne Business School as a leadership facilitator as well as being a performance coach for several leaders in different organisations as well as environmental leaders.

He is also the President of the Australian Marine Conservation Society, a voluntary role where he is helping the development of the organisation and their programmes to protect our oceans and marine life.

Paul is the Convenor of the Psychologist Environment Interest Group and aims to re-establish the group so that psychologists can work together and take a role in understanding the impact of climate change and other environmental issues on people, our way of life and our social systems.



Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

Chief Seattle, 1855

If each person could be satisfied to fill his belly and clothe his back, to have a house against the weather and beauty about him, then all this strife and unhappiness would be unnecessary.

Horse, in *The Secret of Wootz*, Book II of *The Travels of First Horse*

The Editor's Rave

Hi there!

Two kinds of people live on this planet: conservationists and suicides. Since you are a member of the Interest Group, congratulations, you belong to the sane contingent. The world needs you.

You are also a psychologist: a person highly trained in people's motivations and how to influence them, abilities and how to teach people to improve them, beliefs and how to modify them.

Humanity should be on a war footing in order to create some chance of survival. Since we have the training, skills and ability to influence others, it is our duty to lead them to that realisation.

In this issue, you will find a couple of inspiring approaches to inducing attitude change, in children, business people, humans in general. There is ammunition for convincing others that there is a problem, and that they can personally do something about it.

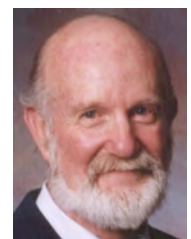
The first step is to encourage other psychologists to join our interest group. Second, in your everyday life, please act in a way that reduces environmental impact, and help others to do so.

The interest group has some remarkable achievements. Thanks to the work and influence of people like Susie Burke, the APS is now an environmentally conscious and active organisation. But there is a lot more to be done.

If you want a future for our kids — or even for us — then you need to be active in changing the culture toward sustainability. Be a sustainable psychologist.

☺

Bob Rich, Ph.D., MAPS



Events

Climate emergency workshop Saturday August 1, 2009, Melbourne

The Climate Emergency Network has been considering how to progress understanding of the meaning and implications of 'emergency mode' within both the Climate Emergency Network and the wider climate action movement within Australia.

Climate Emergency Network Facilitation Committee is hosting a day long workshop to discuss this question at length with a group of both Climate Emergency Network members and national climate activists.

Our aim is to workshop with people who accept that the severity and urgency of the climate crisis demands that we operate in emergency mode to answer the following questions:

- What are the unique 'ways of thinking'/principles/'rules of thumb' that distinguish the climate emergency mode?
- What would being in emergency mode really mean for our work — i.e., how would we operate differently from now?
- What are the implications for:
Priorities, strategies and actions?
- What should our positive program be?
- How do we avoid other people's or organisation's non-emergency agendas sidetracking our work?
- What outcomes do we need to achieve in the next few years for the emergency agenda?
- How best can we communicate our understandings from this workshop to Climate Emergency Network and to the wider climate action community?

We have invited you to participate as one of those in our membership or the wider climate change community who we think could make a valuable contribution to strategic thinking on the issue. The workshop participants will number about 20 to 25, about half of whom are active Climate Emergency Network members and half of whom are active non-Climate Emergency Network members.

We envisage that one of the essential workshop outcomes will be to provide useful resources for the Climate Emergency Network to use in our further work.

The workshop will be held on Saturday August 1 from 10am to 6pm at a studio space at North Fitzroy (details below). This is only a short tram ride from the city centre. We do hope interstate people can attend and will do our best to assist with billeting if needed.

A small cost would be a contribution to lunch expenses.

Regards,

Philip Sutton, Assistant Convenor Climate Emergency Network

Carol Ride, Convenor Climate Emergency Network

RSVP by June 19 if possible, to Philip

Philip Sutton Philip.Sutton@green-innovations.asn.au 0417 07 00 99

Carol Ride caride@bigpond.com 0408 32 00 80

Studio address

418 Rae St North Fitzroy (near the corner of Scotchmer St) Melways 30 A11

Enter through grey door in wall of large corrugated shed.

Public transport

Tram no 96 from Bourke St. Alight in Nicholson St at Pigdon St. (Scotchmer St is on the opposite side of Nicholson St to Pigdon St.) Or Tram no 112 from Collins St. Alight in St Georges Rd at Scotchmer St.

New journal: *Environment, Space, Place*

Published in collaboration with the International Association for the Study of Environment, Space, and Place (IASESP), *Environment, Space, Place* is a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary journal committed to values contributing to our rootedness to the earth and attunement to the environment, space, and place. Interdisciplinary is taken to mean that each discipline is encouraged to share its own particular excellence with the other disciplines in an open exchange. Transdisciplinary is taken to mean that contributors are required to make the "geographical turn." Meant in the etymological sense of "earth inscription" or the spatiality of meaning, the geographical turn frames or makes thematic the spatial aspect of any and all earthly/worldly phenomena.

www.towson.edu/iasesp

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Contents of the first issue:

William Behun, To the Center of the Sky: Heidegger, Polar Symbolism, and Christian Sacred Architecture
Emiliano Trizio, Built-Spaces for World-Making
Mark H. Dixon, The Architecture of Solitude
Michael Wenisch, Peak Oil, Energy Limits, and Resulting Alterations in the Built Space of the United States
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Randy Laist, "The Style of What is to Come": Representations of the World Trade Center in the Novels of Don DeLillo
Roger Paden, Historical Paradigms for Ecotourism
Glen A. Mazis, Touring as Authentically Embodying Place and a New World at a Glance
Shane J. Ralston, The Ebb and Flow of Primary and Secondary Experience: Kayak Touring and John Dewey's Metaphysics of Experience.

Movie Night

The Australian Marine Conservation Society is pleased to invite you to a Melbourne charity screening of a film that is changing life in our oceans. Paul Sanders has told me that this film will be shown later in all the other capital cities.

Join AMCS Melbourne and a special guest speaker for a fundraising screening of *A Sea Change: Imagine a world without fish*.

A Sea Change is the first high profile global documentary about ocean acidification. It follows the journey of retired history teacher Sven Huseby on his quest to discover what is happening to the world's oceans. It considers the human impact on our oceans and what we need to do to save our seas.

A Sea Change is both a personal journey and a scientifically rigorous, sometimes humorous, and unflinchingly honest look at the reality of what's happening beneath the waves.

All funds raised will go towards research, education programs, and campaigns to help protect our precious ocean wildlife.

When: **Monday 20th July, 2009**

Time: 6pm for a 6:15pm start

Where: Hoyts Cinema, Melbourne Central, Swanston St
(cnr Latrobe St) Melbourne

Cost: \$25 ea (no concessions).

Book online www.marineconservation.org.au or call 1800 066 299

"Like 'An Inconvenient Truth', this film is both a love letter to the planet and an urgent plea to its citizens."

San Francisco Chronicle

Seating is limited — be quick!

All proceeds from the night will help protect our precious ocean wildlife.

What we can do

Addressing climate change through responsible business practices

Jo Earl

As a young child I grew up next to a creek on land owned by my grandfather. My brother, sister and I would spend long hours swimming in the water, searching for frogs and catching tadpoles. One day a huge piece of polystyrene found its way into the water. It was big enough to serve as a raft and to hold my brother Mark, aged 7. We wondered how such an enormous piece of rubbish ended up in the creek and we sent him to investigate. Upstream he found that a local Hotel had been throwing its waste into the creek for easy disposal. This raised an interesting question "Whose responsibility was it?" Was it the employee of the Hotel who had been told to dispose of the rubbish? The Hotel Management for not having a plan to deal with its waste? The refrigeration company for not collecting the packaging on delivery? The government for not legislating it all? This to me illustrates the interaction between organisations and the environment. If we assume the findings of the IPCC to be correct and acknowledge the role of human activity, then decision makers in organisations must be held accountable. This is really what Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is all about.

What is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

CSR applies to all aspects of corporate responsibility; community, social, environmental, workplace, governance. CSR practitioners talk about corporate ‘opportunity’ — highlighting the opportunity/risk dimension of responsible business practice. In alignment with the terminology adopted by St James Ethics Centre, CSR is also referred to as ‘responsible business practice’ (RBP). Another commonly used term is ‘sustainability’.

Elements of responsible business practice:

- **Environmental** — the environmental impact, direct or indirect, of an organisation’s operations, products or services including those of its suppliers.
- **Community/Social** — the impact of an organisation’s projects, products, services or investments on the community at a local or global level.
- **Workplace Practices** — including respectful, treatment of employees in matters related to recruitment and selection, diversity and equal opportunity, work/life balance, professional development and progression, managing redundancies and full entitlement to employment rights.
- **Marketplace & Business Conduct** – responsible behaviour in developing, purchasing, selling and marketing products and services.
- **Ethical Governance** — from board level and throughout an organisation: transparency; risk management; due diligence; effective codes of conduct and ethics.

An important part of accountability is measurement. While there are many metrics used by businesses to monitor progress probably the three most widely used include:

UN Global Compact (UNGC) — A commitment to a universal set of *principles* from which to conduct responsible business practice and connect with a global community

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) — The international *framework* in sustainability reporting

Corporate Responsibility Index (CR Index) — Robust management and benchmarking *tool*

Each is linked to an international body, ensuring a global approach to corporate responsibility. By advancing discussions amongst these three key players in the Australian context the reporting burden borne by business (from SME to corporate) can be rationalised/harmonised and further participation encouraged.

More information about the different metrics is available from the St James Ethic Centre (www.thehub.ethics.org.au)

Reference: Earl, J.K., & Sainty, R. (2009, June). Organisational psychologists and corporate social responsibility. *Illuminations*, 12-15.

Peer pressure affects environmental behaviour

People are more likely to enroll in conservation programs if their neighbours do — a tendency that should be exploited when it comes to protecting the environment, according to results of a new study.

The research, to be published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS), is the first to focus on the phenomenon of social norms in the context of China's conservation efforts, said scientist Jianguo “Jack” Liu of Michigan State University.

The study focused on a mammoth government initiative called Grain-to-Green that pays Chinese farmers to convert cropland back to forest.

“Much of the marginal cropland in rural communities has been converted from agriculture to forests through the Grain-to-Green Program, one of the largest ‘payment for ecosystem services’ programs in the world,” said Alan Tessier, program director in the National Science Foundation (NSF)’s Division of Environmental Biology.

“Results of this study show that a community's social norms have substantial impacts on the sustainability of these conservation investments.”

Liu's research was funded through NSF's Coupled Natural and Human Systems (CNH) Program. CNH is co-funded by three NSF Directorates: Biological Sciences; Geosciences; and Social, Economic & Behavioral Sciences.

While money is a key factor in whether people sign up for the voluntary program, peer pressure also plays a surprisingly large role, Liu said.

“That's the power of social norms,” he said. “It's like recycling. If you see your neighbors doing it, you're more likely to do it.”

A representative survey of households in China's Wolong Nature Reserve for giant pandas found that both government payments and social norms had “significant impacts” on citizens' intentions of re-enrolling in the Grain to Green program.

“In other words, people's re-enrollment intentions can be affected by the re-enrollment decisions of their neighbors and tend to conform to the majority,” says Liu.

Xiaodong Chen, a doctoral student at MSU and lead author of the paper, said government officials should leverage these social norms along with economic and demographic trends when deciding how to support conservation programs such as Grain to Green.

“We found that, without considering the social norm factor, conservation payments may not be used efficiently,” Chen said.

“But if the government considers social norms as it decides where to invest money, it could obtain more environmental benefits in communities that are supportive of these programs than in those that aren't.”

Added co-author and MSU scientist Frank Lupi: “Simply by taking account of the social norms, more conservation can be obtained from limited conservation budgets.”

Also contributing to the study was doctoral student Guangming He.

Funding also was provided by NASA, the National Institutes of Health, MSU's Environmental Research Initiative and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090629200802.htm>

Earthkeepers

I live in an intentional community that focuses on conservation, education and cooperation. One of my young friends here manages to combine these three aims with earning money, and helping the future as well. He has become expert at running *Earthkeepers* courses.

What's that?

If you're a kid of about 10 years of age, it's three days of magic. Your class goes to a camp somewhere with an area that to a suburban kid feels like wilderness. A mysterious, unseen character known only as E.M. permeates the *Earthkeepers* program. As the keeper of the keys, E.M. is everyone's dream of the wizard of the woods, a secretive recluse who lives alone but loves to share the marvels and mysteries of the natural world with others in special ways.

Becoming an Earthkeeper like E.M. is an important task, and each learner is rewarded after each step with a special key. These keys open real locks on boxes that contain secret meanings about the true nature of E.M. As the learners earn four keys for their keyrings, they not only discover how life functions ecologically on the earth, they find out how they are both a part of our environmental problems and their solutions.

However, the three day course is only half of the program. Inspired, the kids go home to continue with the work of looking after nature.

The goal of the Earthkeepers program is to turn out youngsters who possess some basic ecological understandings and good feelings about the earth and its life, and will undertake not only to live more lightly themselves, but to share their insights and behaviours with others. Earthkeepers:

- understand how energy and materials tie all life together;
- experience good feelings when they're in touch with nature;
- undertake personal lifestyle changes in order to begin living more in harmony with the natural world;
- help others increase their understanding of, feeling for, and harmony with the earth and its life.

The program is set out in a book: Steve Van Matre & Bruce Johnson, *Earthkeepers: Four Keys For Helping Young People Live In Harmony With The Earth*. Publisher: The Institute for Earth Education ISBN: 0917011015.

You can find out more about it at <http://www.eartheducation.org/resource.asp?sku=bek>.

Transition initiative

Starting with the town of Totnes in Devon, England in 2006, the Transition Initiative has spread like wild-fire across the U.K. (delightfully wriggling its way into *The Archers*, Britain's longest-running and most popular radio soap opera), and on to the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The core purpose of the Transition Initiative is to address, at the community level, the twin issues of climate change and peak oil and the declining availability of “ancient sunlight,” as fossil fuels have been called. The initiative is set up to enable towns or neighbourhoods to plan for, and move toward, a post-oil and low-carbon future: what Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition Initiative, has termed “the great transition of our time, away from fossil fuels.”

Part of the genius of the movement rests in its psychology. It acknowledges the devastating emotional effect of these issues, and it uses insights from the psychology of addiction to address some reasons why it is hard for people to detoxify themselves from an addiction to (or dependence on) oil. It acknowledges that healthy psychological functioning depends on a belief that one's needs will be met in the future; for an entire generation, that belief is now corroded by anxiety over climate change.

Many people feel that individual action on climate change is too trivial to be effective but that they are unable to influence anything at a national, governmental level. They find themselves paralysed between the appar-

ent futility of the small-scale and impotence in the large-scale. The Transition Initiative works right in the middle, at the scale of the community, where actions are significant, visible and effective. “What it takes is a scale at which one can feel a degree of control over the processes of life, at which individuals become neighbours and lovers instead of just acquaintances and ciphers... participants and protagonists instead of just voters and taxpayers. That scale is the human scale,” wrote Kirkpatrick Sale in his 1980 book, *Human Scale*.

Starting with a steering group of a handful of people in one locality, the motivation to become a Transition community spreads, often through many months of preparation, information-giving, and awareness-raising of the issues of climate change and peak oil. In those months, there are talks and film screenings, and a deliberate attempt to encourage a sense of a community’s resilience in the face of stresses. When members of the steering group judge that there is enough support and momentum for the project, it is launched, or “unleashed.”

“The people who see the value of changing the system are ordinary people, doing it for their children,” says Naresh Giangrande, who was involved in setting up the first Transition Town. “The political process is corrupted by money, power, and vested interests. I’m not writing off large corporations and government, but because they have such an investment in this system, they haven’t got an incentive to change. I can only see us getting sustainable societies from the grassroots, bottom-up, and only that way can we get governments to change.” If change doesn’t come from above, it must come from below, and politicians would be unwise to ignore the concern about peak oil and climate change coming from the grassroots.

Read the full article at <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/4792>.

Ammunition

CSIRO: It affects us

At <http://www.csiro.au/csiro/channel/pchbm.html>, you will find a 40-page consultancy report written for the Australian Business Roundtable on Climate Change by CSIRO's Dr Benjamin Preston and Dr Roger Jones. It addresses the impact of climate change on Australia.

Australia is one of the many global regions experiencing significant climate change as a result of global emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from human activities. The average surface air temperature of Australia increased by 0.7 °C over the past century. This apparently small change has had severe effects on rainfall, especially along the east and west coasts. Unfortunately, even if all GHG emissions ceased today, the Earth would still be committed to an additional warming of 0.2–1.0 °C by the end of the century.

Australia’s annual average temperatures are projected to increase 0.4–2.0 °C above 1990 levels by 2030, and 1–6 °C by 2070. We can expect worse droughts and bushfires in the south-east and west, more floods in the north. Meanwhile, Australia’s coastlines will experience erosion and inundation from an increase in global sea level.

Future changes in climate extremes, such as tropical cyclones, heat waves, and extreme rainfall will degrade Australian infrastructure and public health, for example through increased energy demands, maintenance costs for transportation infrastructure, and coastal flooding. A slowing or collapse of the ocean’s thermohaline circulation or the collapse of the ice sheets of West Antarctica or Greenland would also have important long-term implications for Australia’s climate and coastline.

Limiting future increases in atmospheric CO₂ to 550 ppmv would reduce 21st century global warming to an estimated 1.5–2.9 °C, effectively avoiding more extreme climate changes. Lower stabilisation levels, such as 450 ppmv CO₂ would reduce future warming even further, to approximately 1.2–2.3 °C. For Australia, such constraints on global warming would give natural ecosystems and their associated species greater time to adapt to changing environmental conditions, reduce the likelihood of major adverse consequences for agriculture and forestry, help ensure Australia’s public health infrastructure can keep pace with emerging health challenges, and reduce the chance of large-scale singularities. Nevertheless, even with a 350 ppmv stabilisation level, the Earth will continue to warm. Therefore, prudence dictates that both GHG mitigation activities and adaptive responses be carried out.

Several national governments, including the UK and Sweden, have committed to GHG emissions reductions of 60 per cent by 2050, a general benchmark estimate of the effort needed by developed countries.

Report Shows Climate Change Threatens Human Health

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) are calling for a national response to one of the world’s most significant threats: climate change’s effect on human health.

Speaking today at the launch of their joint report, *Climate Change Health Impacts in Australia: Effects of Dramatic CO₂ Emission Reductions*, ACF President Professor Ian Lowe, and AMA President Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, said global warming is already contributing to more frequent and extreme weather conditions.

The report, written by leading world experts on climate change from Australia and New Zealand, exposes the damage already done and paints a picture of what we might expect in the future if no action is taken.

The report says if we continue to allow emissions to increase, by 2100 up to 15,000 Australians could die yearly from heat related illnesses and the dengue transmission zone could reach as far south as Sydney.

In contrast, early and significant action to reduce greenhouse pollution would have major health benefits.

“Projected premature heat-related deaths to 2100 could be halved with strong policy action and, while the zone for potential dengue transmission is likely to move south to Rockhampton or Gympie, it would stay north of more heavily populated south-east Queensland, coastal NSW and metropolitan Sydney,” Dr Haikerwal said.

“Failure to dramatically cut CO₂ emissions will leave the world with serious environmental and health problems. But urgent action to curb climate change could save thousands of lives in Australia and reduce the suffering of millions in the Asia-Pacific region,” Professor Lowe said.

“Our health ultimately depends on having a healthy environment to sustain us. Climate change is one of the biggest environmental and health equity challenges of our time. Coordinated action from governments, business and the community to reduce greenhouse gas and air pollution is essential if we are to protect the health of all Australians and the wider global community,” Dr Haikerwal said.

The report and a six page overview are available at www.acfonline.org.au and www.ama.com.au.

Open letter to PM from Andrew Glikson

A WARNING FROM THE PAST CLIMATE HISTORY OF EARTH

In his letter to you of 27 March, 2008, Professor James Hansen, leading US climate scientist and chief scientist of NASA’s Goddard Institute of Space Research, wrote:

“Global climate is near critical tipping points that could lead to loss of all summer sea ice in the Arctic with detrimental effects on wildlife, initiation of ice sheet disintegration in West Antarctica and Greenland with progressive, unstoppable global sea level rise, shifting of climatic zones with extermination of many animal and plant species, reduction of freshwater supplies for hundreds of millions of people, and a more intense hydrologic cycle with stronger droughts and forest fires, but also heavier rains and floods, and stronger storms driven by latent heat, including tropical storms, tornados and thunderstorms.”

Since this letter was written, new research demonstrates the Earth’s atmosphere is more vulnerable to the rise in trace greenhouse gases, which regulate its temperatures, than we wish to believe, and that such rises in the past resulted in extreme shifts in the state of the atmosphere, oceans and biosphere, triggering mass extinction of species. Examples of some of these papers:

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v451/n7176/full/nature06588.html>

<http://www.agu.org/pubs/crossref/2008/2008EO490001.shtml>

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/1157707v1>

http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TargetCO2_20080407.pdf

The new findings indicate that targets considered in the Garnaut Review, namely 450 ppm or 550 ppm CO₂, can not be sustained. This is because carbon cycle feedbacks, including looming methane emissions, and the dynamics of ice/warming melt water interactions, threaten runaway warming leading toward tipping points, as occurred repeatedly in the past.

Current atmospheric CO₂ levels (387 ppm) are already in the danger zone, while carbon gas emissions proceed at high rates (2.2 ppm in 2007; 1.8 ppm in 2008). It emerges that, unless simultaneous efforts are made to sharply cut carbon emissions and develop the technology for down-draw of atmospheric CO₂, the future of our young and future generations looks grim.

The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets formed under atmospheric conditions at, or below, 450 parts per million, which continued emissions and feedbacks will reach within a couple of decades, leading to temperature increases above 2 degrees C, advanced ice melt and metres-scale sea level rise.

Large mammals can hardly exist on land on an ice-free Earth, nor can human civilization survive such conditions.

In the wake of [your election commitment to evidence-based policies](#), you were given a historic opportunity to lead the world by example in relation to what you have correctly described as [the great moral challenge of our generation](#), through conversion of a coal-intensive highest per-capita carbon-emitting economy into an alternative energy-based system.

This could tilt the scales in an increasingly desperate global effort to avert what has been recently described by John Holdren, Obama’s new chief science advisor, as [the global climate disruption](#).

Less than one year has elapsed since Hansen’s letter was sent, and while isolated weather events are not necessarily related to climate change, a dangerous trend has developed consistent with projections of atmospheric science, relegating southern Australia to droughts and fire and the north to intense cyclones and floods.

Given the gravity of the matter, I suggest you urgently convene a climate summit, where your government can listen to reports of severe climate disruption around the globe and in Australia, and to what the science says regarding future generations your government was entrusted to protect.

Honourable Prime Minister, as [communicated by James Hansen](#), your leadership is required. I hope this will happen in the spirit of [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#).

Yours faithfully,

(Dr) Andrew Glikson Earth and paleo-climate scientist, Australian National University.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

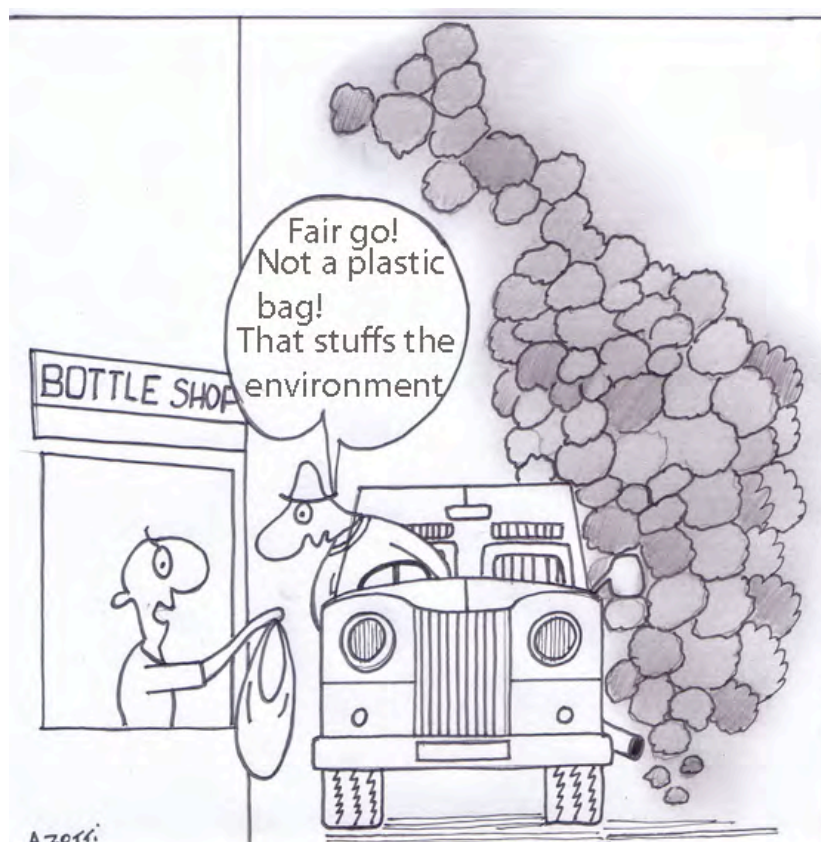
Contributions need to be brief. Ideal is something to fit one page. I have reduced font size, so if it's all text, that's about 800 words. Pictures, tables etc. will reduce the word count. And shorter filler items are invaluable.

Particularly valued are responses to this issue, and to recent issues before it.

Content should be relevant in some way to psychology and the environment, using clear language. Anything inflammatory, discriminatory or libellous will be consigned to the deep.

The next issue is due out in January, 2010. Deadline 12th December, 2009.

Send contributions to bobrich@bobswriting.com.



Contributed by Alfredo Zotti, based on a suggestion from me.

☺

Bob