



The Environmental Advocate

www.conserversociety.ca

A New Model of Human Settlement (Part 3 of a 3 Part Series)

This is part 3 of a three part series about dealing with the unsustainability of human settlements. Previous parts looked at the unsustainability of modern human settlements, and the Transition Initiative.

An alternative approach is to turn to a historically more sustainable form of human settlement – the village.

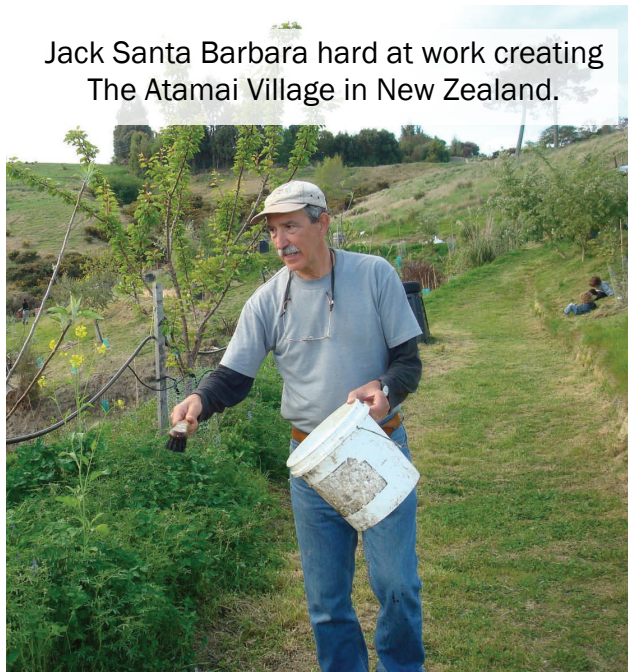
The Atamai Village project (www.atamai.co.nz) is one example of doing just that. The basic idea is to develop a sustainable village that can serve as a model settlement of self reliance. The idea is to design and construct a small village where people can live well sustainably by harvesting, and where possible, enhancing, the energy flows from the land itself. Meeting essential human needs requires water, energy, food, shelter, employment, and social supports.

Setting a goal of ensuring basic needs might appear primitive but we feel that providing for these needs sustainably is something our current society is not doing; we also believe it will become increasingly difficult to ensure these basic needs are met as the unsustain-

able practices of our current society continue. Climate change and energy descent, for example, are two of the major challenges specifically addressed in the design of the village. We prefer to be prepared as best we can, and if possible, provide useful information and examples for others.

The 100 ha project site is currently not highly productive land, having been previously used for grazing and plantation forestry. The project design involves enhancing the productivity of the land with the application of permaculture principles and sustainable forestry.

Jack Santa Barbara hard at work creating The Atamai Village in New Zealand.



November 2010

**Conservers
Society
of
Hamilton
and
District**

Inside this issue:

St Joseph's Villa Update	3
Dave Robinson	4
Recognizing John Struger	5
Traffic Group at Crossroads	6
Knowing How to Intervene	7
Expanding the Green-belt	8
Climate Change Action	9

**We need your
membership
more than ever,
please join the
Conserver
Society of
Hamilton &
District today!**

What are the features of Atamai Village that we hope will make it sustainable? First of all, a long term view – the intent is to design and build the physical infrastructure not only with the smallest footprint possible, but also in a way to minimize maintenance and increase durability.

All homes, for example, will be constructed largely of local resources (straw bale, compressed brick from local materials, etc). All homes will have a passive solar orientation and design to minimize the need for heating and cooling resources. Buildings will be designed to last for centuries rather than decades.

Domestic water will be supplied from rooftop collection. Water use will be minimized with the use of composting toilets, and grey water will be used in orchard areas. The land also contains a stream and potential well sites. Several ponds have been constructed for irrigation and recreational purposes, and more are planned.

Aspects of traditional village designs are being incorporated, based on the fact that traditional villages have proven to be the most sustainable forms of human settlements in the widest range of settings for the longest periods of human history. The plan is to provide employment within the village as well as dwellings, minimizing the need for commuting, and making the village as self reliant as possible.

Atamai also plans to be car free, and carbon neutral. Other details of the experiment are available on the website. (www.atamai.co.nz) Suggestions, critiques and inquiries are welcomed.

Jack Santa Barbara has been a member of the Conserver Society for a number of years before moving to NZ to become involved in designing and developing a sustainable village – the project described in Part 3 of this three part series. He and his wife, Joanna, are also involved in the Transition Towns Initiative described in Part 2 of this series.

Join the Conserver Society Today!

The Conservers plays an important role in our community. As one of only a few registered environmental charities Hamilton, many other groups rely on our sponsorship to access funding for their beneficial programming and activities.

We need your membership more than ever—please consider joining the Conserver Society today.

Please use the membership form at the end of this newsletter.

St. Joseph's Villa OMB Hearing Update

St. Joseph's Villa has put forward a plan to build two 10 storey towers, one at the corner of Governor's road and Ogilvie street and the other on the edge of the ravine and conservation area, further south on the property at 56 Governor's Road.

The City of Hamilton rejected the proposal by St. Joseph's Villa, which would require an amendment to the Official plan for the City of Hamilton, as well as a new exception to the Official Plan of the Town of Dundas. St. Joseph's Villa has appealed this decision to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Twenty six residents, the Conserver Society and the Hamilton Naturalists' Club have requested and been granted participant status at the OMB hearing. As of today, the new date for the start of the hearing is Thursday February 3, 2011. It will be held at the Old Court House, OMB Hearing Room #6, 50 Main Street East, Hamilton, starting at 10 a.m. It is sched-

uled to last for 12 days.

The Conserver Society has opposed the proposed development for the following reasons:

- Heritage Significance
- ESA Area
- Threatened Species
- Greenspace
- Planning exception
- Over intensification



Please come out and support the Conserver Society and the residents of Dundas who oppose this development plan. Your support and presence at the hearing will help to show the hearing officers that the citizens of Hamilton are against bad planning and development.

Ed Smee Funding

The Conservers are happy to announce that the Ed Smee Funding Committee is again active and has recently completed reviewing proposals for 2010.

After careful consideration, the committee recommended to the Hamilton Community Foundation (keepers of the fund) that the Hamilton Naturalist Club be funded for their Monarchs & Milkweed program. More information on to come in 2011.

Another funding round is planned for 2011 with a target to award funding for January 2012. If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please contact us for more information (contact@conserversociety.ca).

***A big thanks from the Board to the Ed Smee Committee members:
Susan G, Barbara T, and Catherine B—thank you!***

Thanks Dave!

The Board of the Conserver Society would like to send a personal thank you out to Dave Robinson, for his many years of dedicated service to the Conserver Society and the Board.

Dave is a retired teacher who has dedicated a good part of his working and retired time to environmental causes. Dave was one of the guiding forces behind Greenville Against Serious Pollution (GASP) and their successful battle to halt the use of the quarry as a dump.

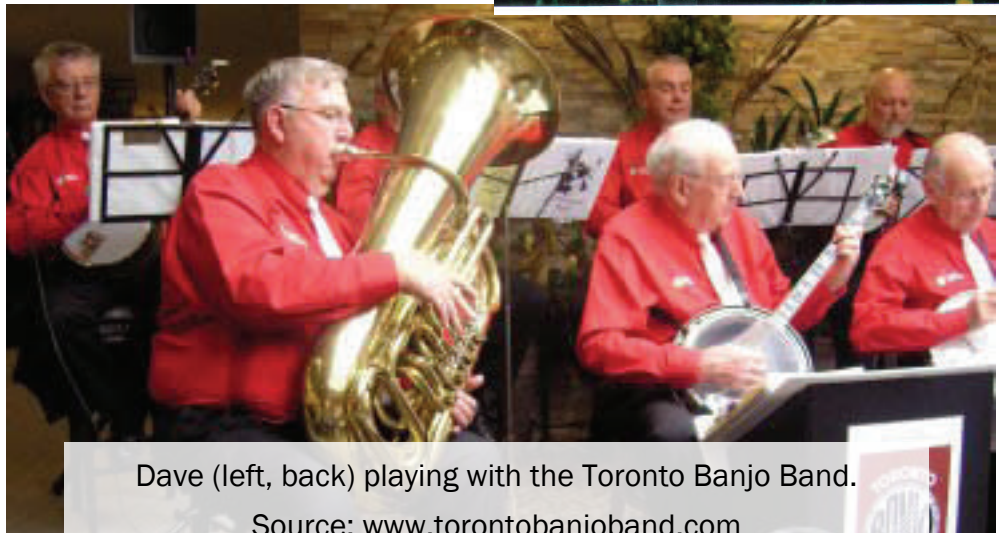
He has participated in many environmental committees over the years and cites one of his greatest achievements as being involved in the campaign with Lynda Lukasik and Mark Muldoon to press for a full environmental hearing of the SWARU incinerator in the late 1990's. This ultimately led to the closure of this facility.

Dave is an outdoor enthusiast, photographer and a banjo player in a Dixieland Jazz band. He and his wife currently divide their time between Dundas and Halifax, where their son, a re-

searcher with Fisheries and Oceans, lives.



Dave Robinson



Dave (left, back) playing with the Toronto Banjo Band.

Source: www.torontobanjoband.com

Recognizing John Struger

The 2010 Betty Blashill Environmental Prize was awarded to John Struger. The annual \$500 prize recognizes exemplary behind-the-scenes efforts to advance environmental and social justice in Hamilton. It also acknowledges efforts to minimize personal ecological footprints in the spirit of Gandhi's admonition to "live simply so that others may simply live".

There were multiple reasons for the selection of John Struger. For more than two decades, he has been the central organizer of the annual Environmentalist of the Year Awards. While many others have participated over the years in the awards committee, John has been its heart and soul. The annual awards process includes a call for nominations, personal efforts to encourage submission of nominations, selection of and guidance to a judging panel, and organization of an annual awards dinner that regularly brings together over 150 local environmental activists.

In the 1980s, and continuing for more than 15 years, John was the organizer of the annual Red Hill Valley litter cleanups. He sat on the advisory committee for the biological inventory of the valley, as well as the steering committee responsible for the initial development of the trail system.

John is a research scientist with Environment Canada, focusing on the impacts of pesticides, and has made an important contribution to the regulation and banning of many of these chemical agents. In that role, he has been an invaluable

advisor and educator for citizens – both individuals and organizations – working to protect public health and safety and ensure appropriate controls on these toxic materials.

The Betty Blashill Environmental Prize recognizes otherwise unacknowledged volunteer work by a Hamilton resident over a number of years in support of environmental and social justice objectives. It is especially intended to encourage and reward the efforts of individuals who ensure the resilience and basic functioning of



community organizations. Leaders are usually well-known, but successful organizations also require hard slogging by individuals whose efforts are essential to the functioning of the group but often unsung. The cash prize that accompanies this award may be used to advance the recipient's environmental efforts and knowledge or to minimize his/her ecological footprint.

Nomination forms can be requested by contacting Environment Hamilton via email at contactus@environmenthamilton.org or by calling 905-549-0900. Nominations must be postmarked by April 1, 2010. Nominations may be submitted at any time. The award is handed out on the first Wednesday in June at the Environmentalist of the Year awards dinner.

2009-2010

Board of Directors

Chair

Pete Wobschall

Vice-Chair

Vacant

Treasurer

Warren Beacham

Secretary

Christine Brown

Membership

Director

Laurel Harrison

Newsletter Editor

Pete Wobschall

Member-at-Large

Don McLean

Transit Group at a Crossroads

By Peter Hutton Co-coordinator

Despite a disappointing response last fall, the survey project by the Transit Users Group (TUG) sponsored by the Conserver Society continues to have impacts that are moving slowly through the city decision making process.

In the recent municipal election, TUG collaborated with other economic and social justice groups to raise transit issues. Despite a myriad of qualifiers, many of the newly elected or re-elected councillors did sign on to a pledge for a fare freeze. It is an indication of a greater willingness to take on the many issues facing transit and the HSR/DARTs. Even if it doesn't really mean that fares will be frozen by the new council.

Most promising is the HSR response to last year's operational review. While they didn't react at the time, the HSR finally screwed up the courage to tell council that new investment in transit is just not necessary; it is overdue and essential if we are to avoid a looming crisis. To back that up, council approved a report and referred the idea of reallocating almost \$4 million in federal gas tax to service improvements as a down payment on what is needed to meet the stated goals of doubling the ridership. This money will help alleviate some of the most difficult overcrowding issues in the core and fill in gaps in service particularly on Satur-

days in the more suburban areas.

Both items will contribute to a discussion of transit and how central it will be in the city's budget priorities.

Add to this, the report of the Citizen's forum on Area rating, and the introduction of the Presto Fare Payment system, the opening of the new downtown bus mall, and you have almost too many issues for one small group to absorb and handle. Yet this is the challenge that the TUG is committed to accepting because the next year or two will really determine the future of transit locally for the next decade and more.

A small amount of money has been reserved from last year's survey project to continue the work. It's one resource. People is another. As it becomes increasingly clear that the economy is going to be used to justify delays in LRT investment, now is a great time to get involved in other public transit issues..

Keep in touch by signing up to be a supporter of TUG at our web site hamiltontug.com. Or call Peter Hutton at (905) 628-3157 email huttonp@web.ca



Knowing How to Intervene Helps Residents

Effective action has solved a significant pollution problem in the Keith Neighbourhood. As part of the Moving Is Not an Option project co-sponsored by the Conserver Society, staff at Environment Hamilton have responded successfully to resident concerns about emissions and noise coming from a furniture factory on Hillyard Street.

Baresa Kitchens manufactures and finishes custom kitchens using a variety of smelly solvents and paints. But some homes are less than 8 metres from the building and have been suffering since the facility opened two years ago. They contacted EH staff for help who worked with them to file an Environmental Bill of Rights appeal of the company's operating certificate of approval.

That move quickly got the attention of the Ministry of the Environment whose staff had issued the certificate of approval. They invited EH staff, residents and the company to meet and review the community concerns. That took place in August and provided an extremely useful opportunity for residents living near the plant to meet company representatives and to tell them about the impacts they've been living with. It was also a great opportunity for the MOE staff engineer who prepared the air permit to actually see the facility first hand, something she admitted she had not had the opportunity to do.

The meeting produced an offer of a plant tour for residents, and a string of changes to the certificate of approval that satisfied neighbours and EH staff. The changes restrict company operat-

ing hours to 7 am to 7 pm – a huge win because the company had been operating at all hours of the day and night. The MOE also ordered the company to take appropriate measures to reduce noise and emissions from all sources including a requirement that doors and windows of the factory remain closed during operations.

The company has also instituted a complaints reporting procedure, posting a phone number on the door of the facility and on its website. And there are detailed requirements in the air permit outlining how the company must record and respond to public complaints.

The amended permit is a legally enforceable document, and EH staff have provided copies to residents and explained to them that they don't have to put up with the problems they've experienced in the past.

The *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR) makes it possible for the public to participate in government decision-making on matters that could affect the environment. The EBR applies to prescribed ministries, such as the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and prescribed legislation, such as the *Planning Act* and sections of the *Building Code Act* (related to septic systems) prescribed as of April 27, 2001.

Source: www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page317.aspx

Expanding the Greenbelt in Hamilton

This year the Ontario Greenbelt is celebrating its fifth birthday, and efforts are underway across the province to expand the 1.8-million-acre protected area. In Hamilton, a grant from the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance to the Conservers and Environment Hamilton is sup-

porting an effort to have an area along Spring Creek in Dundas added to the Greenbelt.

Staff from both the Hamilton Conservation Authority and the city of Hamilton are cooperating with the effort. The Conservation Authority board passed a



Source: www.democraticspace.com/blog/category/urban-planning/page/2/

resolution in September in support of the process, and Environment Hamilton representative Julia Kollek made a formal presentation to city councillors on September 21 that was well received. City staff told councillors that they are working on a report that will be brought forward to the new council.

Spring Creek borders the Dundas Rail Trail and is already recognized by Hamilton as an environmentally significant area. It borders existing Greenbelt land

and is owned primarily by the Conservation Authority, with a small portion in city hands. While it already has some protected status, adding it to the Greenbelt will enhance that.

The Greenbelt has recently been extended along the Humber and Don River valleys in Toronto. Expansion efforts are also happening in Markham, Mississauga, Prince Edward County and the Town of Oakville.



Climate Change Action

On October 10, Hamiltonians joined 7347 other locations in 188 countries in the largest day ever of global climate change action. The Hamilton 350 Committee, which includes the Conserver Society and some of our members, focused public attention on the links between food security and climate change, and held a protest against the loss of foodlands to the aerropolis.

The group used two giant carrot costumes to alert Hamiltonians to the “danger to Thanksgiving” posed by both the aerropolis and a string of extreme weather events that caused the global price of wheat to spike by 70 percent this past summer. There was flooding in wheat growing areas in Saskatchewan and China, and continuing severe drought in Australia, but the worst climatic disasters took place in Russia and Pakistan – two major grain producers. The Moscow area was clobbered by weeks of extreme heat that caused fires and devastated food production; while Pakistan suffered catastrophic flooding of one-fifth of the country that may mean this sixth most populous country in the world may never again be

able to feed itself.

Hamiltonians were asked to focus family discussions on climate change and food security on October 10, Thanksgiving Sunday, and to make sure their concerns get to politicians at all levels of government. They were also asked to plant garlic in their gardens, and join a protest planting of garlic on the fertile lands near the airport that have now been designated by the city for industrial uses – mainly warehousing and trucking. Garlic in Hamilton supermarkets is now nearly all coming from China, but it used to be supplied by Ontario farmers.

The protest planting on fallow fields opposite Mount Hope airport attracted 50 participants, despite the holiday timing (set by US organizers of the global 10/10/10 action). They planted 350 cloves of garlic in a 3-5-0 shape to remind us that 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the maximum safe level, and that we must get back there from the current 390 ppm.



**Conserver Society of Hamilton
and District**

P.O. Box 89002,
991 King St. W.
Hamilton, ON L8S 4R5

Phone: 905.540.8787 ext 17.
E-mail: contact@conserverociety.ca
Website: www.conserverociety.ca

***Conserving the environment for
over 22 years in Hamilton.***

The Environmental Advocate
is published 2 or more times
a year by the **Conserver
Society of Hamilton and
District Inc.**, a non-profit, non-
partisan citizen organization
concerned with the
environment in the region at
the western end of Lake
Ontario.

Editor: Pete Wobschall

Submissions for the
Newsletter are invited and
should be sent to the mailing
address or to the editor at
contact@conserverociety.ca
(Email submissions
preferred, please)

The **Conserver Society of Hamilton & District Inc** is a registered Charitable Organization. Tax receipts are available.

Basic membership fees are \$20 for an individual, \$30 for a family, (half price for low-income) and \$40 for an organization.

We welcome donations in addition to the basic membership fee.

Call for Nominations

The Conserver Society Board is seeking
Board of Directors members.

If you are interested and able
to contribute, please contact
Alison Healing, Nomination
Committee at
contact@conserverociety.ca.

Being a board member in-
volves spending between 5-6
hours a month to prepare for
and attend meetings in the Hamil-
ton area and contribute to projects
that the Society plans and implements.



**Board
Members
Wanted!**



**Conserver Society
of Hamilton & District**

Conservar Society of Hamilton & District 2011 Membership Application or Renewal Form

Your membership fee enables us to be an effective voice for a healthy, sustainable environment in Hamilton and the surrounding area. As a member in good standing, you will be entitled to receive the Environmental Advocate (our newsletter), participate in projects and activities of the Society and its chapters and vote at our Annual General Meeting.

The Conservar Society is a non-partisan, registered charitable organization. We gratefully accept donations above the basic membership fee. You will receive a tax receipt for the amount of your membership fee and any donations you choose to make.

Please print this form, fill it out and return it with your cheque to:

Membership Director

Conservar Society of Hamilton & District

Box 89002, 991 King St. West

Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4R5

Yearly (2011) Membership Fee Individual ____ \$20 Family ____ \$30 Organization ____ \$40

(Individuals or families on low incomes are entitled to request a 50% reduction in fees.)

I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of \$ ____

I am submitting a total of: \$ ____

Cheques should be made payable to Conservar Society of Hamilton & District.

Member Information

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Date: _____ Check here if this is a membership renewal: ____

Please direct the chapter portion of my membership fee to the following chapter:

____ Ancaster ____ Dundas ____ Hamilton

If you do not specify a chapter, your entire fee will be directed to the parent body and allocated to Conservar Society activities as needed.

Thank you!