

The Joys of Sustainable Living



With Udgar Parsons, Owner & Founder of Growing Spaces LLC

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

There are many changes facing us as a species at this time. Among these are overpopulation, resource depletion, climate change, aquifer contamination and depletion, species extinction, deforestation. The list is much longer, but I am going to focus on three: climate change, resource depletion and control of our political system by corporate and financial interests.

GLOBAL WARMING

Scientist James Hansen was one of the first to publicly announce the danger of manmade global warming via the increase in greenhouse gases due to increase in CO2 levels in the atmosphere. Despite a huge PR effort by the climate change deniers, the public is gradually accepting that global warming is a fact, not a debate.

Melting of the two polar ice caps, the huge retreat of the worlds' glaciers, acidification and warming of the ocean, loss of species, noticeable changes in temperature records, and increase in El Niño events, droughts and floods have all been predicted and are occurring.

The fossil fuel companies have a huge responsibility to shoulder, as their continued efforts to deny and influence legislation continue to lead us down a path that has significant and terrible consequences for humanity and all of life on our planet.

RESOURCES

- *Game Over for the Climate: The science of the situation is clear — it's time for the politics to follow* by [James Hansen](#)

<https://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/05/10-2>

Dr. James Hansen is director of [NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies](#) and adjunct professor in the department of earth and environmental sciences at Columbia University. He was the first scientist to warn the US Congress of the dangers of climate change and writes here as a private citizen. Hansen is the author of "[Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity.](#)"

- *Also a vital website to study, by Bill McKibben <http://350.org>*
 - *See Video: "Six Degrees" by National Geographic.*
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RESOURCE DEPLETION

Many people have studied the decline in many of our critical resources over many years, the most significant of which is peak oil. We are in the time of maximum production of our most important resource - oil. Within the next 30 years, oil will get less plentiful, more difficult to extract and thus much more expensive. Our current socio- economic structure is firmly based on plentiful, cheap, fossil fuel energy which includes oil, coal and natural gas. As these continue to dwindle, we as addicts will have to detox from our favorite drug - cheaply available energy. The path will not be easy as the oil companies and their cohorts are basking in the luxury of a multi-billion dollar bonanza which they are trying to prolong as best they are able. Renewable energy, the obvious solution, is on the increase, but it will take a concerted, creative and determined effort to meet our energy needs in a timely manner.

RESOURCES

Chris Martensen is an expert in the field of resource depletion, and has also studied many other resources: common and precious metals, clean water etc and his results are fascinating and I highly recommend taking time to study his online website:

The Crash Course <http://www.chrismartenson.com/page/crash-course-one-year-anniversary>

From Chris Martensen: “The [Crash Course video seminar](#) is my attempt to synthesize—in a coherent, rigorously factual, and easily digestible form—the information that I gathered over a period of five years revealing the interdependence of our economy, environment, and energy systems. My goal is to shed light on the limits of our present economic model of infinite growth as we increasingly face the realities of a planet with finite resources. I seek to lay out possible paths for our future and to provide people with tools and information so that they will be better able to make informed choices.”

FINANCIAL CONTROL

The ruthless suppression of so called “free energy” devices led Foster Gamble (heir to Proctor and Gamble) to an investigation of other types of behind the scenes control and domination of many aspects of our society. What he found was sobering, but important.

Banks, corporations, pharmaceuticals, health care, the media, and agriculture are essentially controlled and heavily influenced by a few extremely wealthy families. The ramifications are quite disturbing but important enough for us to educate ourselves and take appropriate action. I heartily recommend you view the movie “Thrive” if you have not yet done so.

RESOURCES

- [“THRIVE - WHAT ON EARTH WILL IT TAKE?”](#) is an unconventional documentary that lifts the veil on what's REALLY going on in our world by following the money upstream – uncovering the global consolidation of power in nearly every aspect of our lives. Weaving together breakthroughs in science, consciousness and activism, THRIVE offers real solutions, empowering us with unprecedented and bold strategies for reclaiming our lives and our future.

More info available at www.thrivemovement.com. The film is available in 9 languages and the website is packed with tools for engagement to inspire and support a new global conversation, finally offering solutions that are a match for the challenges we face.

- Also a very wonderful essay, just published: *Epistle to the Ecotopians - Last Words to an America in Decline* by [Ernest Callenbach](#)

[This document was found on the computer of [Ecotopia](#) by author Ernest Callenbach (1929-2012) after his death.]

Excerpt From Ecotopia: “To all brothers and sisters who hold the dream in their hearts of a future world in which humans and all other beings live in harmony and mutual support - a world of sustainability, stability, and confidence. A world something like the one I described, so long ago, in [Ecotopia](#) and [Ecotopia Emerging](#). Read the full article at: <https://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/05/07-0>”

WHAT TO DO

All this sobering information may put us in a place of denial, despair, paralysis, anger, outrage and determination to survive. The solutions are many and multi-faceted, but in order for us as a species to not only survive but thrive, we must take the path of recovery.

The first step is to become fully aware of the issues facing us, educate ourselves, and then take appropriate action in the areas we feel drawn to. The other just as important course of action is to share this knowledge with others. We need to realize that we make steps towards a new future with every lifestyle choice that we make.

Some of us will be drawn to do our best in whatever ways we can to influence our legislators to begin the journey of waking up and take a stand and change to a course that takes us on a different path from where we are currently headed.

Blessings on the journey!

WAYS TO GET STARTED

From <http://www.chrismartenson.com/page/what-should-i-do>

The most common question by far we get on this website is “What should I do?” Once people watch [The Crash Course](#) and are awakened to the very real threats posed by Peak Oil and reckless monetary policy, they understandably want to know how to position themselves intelligently.

Our recommendation: start building resilience into your life today. Ensure that you, your family, and your community are as prepared and sustainably situated as possible so that you can enjoy a high quality of life regardless of how the future plays out.

Click on each step below to read the full post:

[Step 1: Getting Started](#)

Learn the 6 concepts of preparation & take your first step towards personal resilience

[Step 2: Water](#)

Recommendations for [storage](#), [filters](#), [purifiers](#)

[Step 3: Storing Food](#)

Start a deep pantry and build up your [long-term stores](#)

[Step 4: Growing & Preserving Food](#)

Locate sources of [local food](#), start a [garden](#), and learn about [dehydrating](#) & [canning](#)

[Step 5: Health & First Aid](#)

The [kits](#), key [supplies](#), [training](#), and [books](#) you'll need to provide treatment

[Step 6: Heat, Power & Communications](#)

Ensure you can [cook](#), [warm yourself](#), [see](#), and [stay informed](#) in an electrical outage

[Step 7: Protecting Wealth](#)

Strategies for taking control of your finances

[Step 8: Community](#)

[Build connections](#) and invest in relationships with those on whom you will depend

[Step 9: Your Next Steps](#)

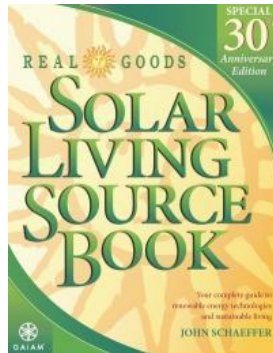
Invest in your ongoing education and help others new to preparing

[From Thrive: Our Recommended Top 10 Actions](#)

These are some of the most highly leveraged actions you can take.

- 1. Get Informed, Speak Up & Connect with Others*
 - 2. Bank Locally*
 - 3. Buy and Invest Responsibly*
 - 4. Join the Movement to Audit and End the Federal Reserve*
 - 5. Keep the Internet Fair & Open*
 - 6. Support Independent Media*
 - 7. Support Organic, Non-GMO Farming*
 - 8. Require Election & Campaign Finance Reform*
 - 9. Advocate for Renewable and Free Energy*
 - 10. Take Part in Critical Mass Actions*
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RECOMMENDED READING



[Real Goods Solar Living Sourcebook - Special 30th Anniversary Edition](#)

The Complete Guide to Renewable Energy Technologies and Sustainable Living
by [John Schaeffer](#)

Concerns over dwindling resources and environmental degradation are driving many to seek alternatives to our wasteful, polluting lifestyle. Clean technologies such as solar power, wind power and biodiesel fuel are soaring in popularity.

The Real Goods Solar Living Sourcebook - Special 30th Anniversary Edition is the ultimate guide to renewable energy, sustainable living, green building, homesteading, off-the-grid living, and alternative transportation, written by experts with decades of experience and a passion for sharing their knowledge. This fully-updated edition includes brand new sections on Peak Oil, Climate Change, Relocalization, Natural Burial, Biodynamics and Permaculture. It also boasts the latest product listings and completely rewritten and expanded chapters on:

- *Land & Shelter*
- *Natural Building*
- *Passive Solar*
- *Biofuels*
- *Sustainable Transportation*
- *Grid-tied Photovoltaics*
- *Solar Hot Water Systems*

-- plus over 150 pages of maps, wiring diagrams, formulae, charts, solar sizing worksheets and much more. Whether you're a layperson or a professional, novice or longtime aficionado, the new Sourcebook puts the latest research and products at your fingertips -- all the information you need to make sustainable living a reality

About the Author: John Schaeffer is the President and founder of Real Goods -- the oldest and largest catalog company devoted to the sale and service of renewable energy products. Now merged with Gaiam, Real Goods has converted over 60,000 homes to solar energy since 1978 when it sold the very first photovoltaic module in America. Real

Goods is a co-sponsor of the annual SolFest at the Solar Living Institute headquarters in Hopland, California.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Off the grid Living <http://www.offthegridnews.com/>
- The most Affordable solar panels <http://www.solarblvd.com/>
- Solar hot water (amazingly comprehensive information) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_water_heating
- Grey water systems
 - <http://www.greywater-systems.com/>
 - <http://greywateraction.org/greywater-recycling>
 - <http://www.oasisdesign.net/greywater/law/index.htm#colorado>

GROWING DOME GREENHOUSE



And finally, my personal offering over the last 23 years to help the current situation: Grow your own food in a Growing Dome - Year round gardening in four-season climates

<http://www.growingspaces.com/>