

Clean Energy Now!

The Ant and the Grasshopper, Together Forever

by Diantha Thorpe

Aesop's fable of the grasshopper and the ant always occurs painfully to me at this time of year. For those who remember, all summer long Grasshopper played while Ant scurried about, collecting grains to store up for winter. When the cold arrived, Ant was snug in her nest and Grasshopper left starving in the snow. Aesop's moral is about preparing for the uncertainty of the future, of course. You can call it long-range planning for known needs.

Why is it, then, that we tend not to? I don't know why, but I have observed that it is part of the American psyche. As a people we seem to feel that we can fix anything that might break at the very last minute. We're inventive and entrepreneurial, individual and flexible, daring and energetic. Yet at the same time, we put things off. Right now we are letting slide past our fixed attention the single largest problem—or set of problems—the human-dominated world has yet encountered. These are problems of our species' making, and they come down to a change in climate that threatens every aspect of the planet's life.

Even if we don't care about polar bears drowning or more violent and more frequent storms, what about the things that will affect our children in the most direct way? More and more disease borne by insects and microbes, water shortages, refugee problems as land floods or dries up, agricultural dustbowls. With global warming it's the road to Apocalypse, and it is happening now. Unfortunately in the fable we are writing the Ant will suffer along with the Grasshopper, willy-nilly. We'll all be out in the cold (or heat) if we don't pull together.

I am a member of the North Haven Clean Energy Task Force, a volunteer organization that tries to enlist residents of this town to pay a little extra money for clean energy (wind, solar, hydro), in order to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that dirty energy (coal) pumps into our air along with particulate matter. These are the gases that cause global warming. My opinions above about human behavior do not reflect those of this task force; they are my own. And yet I can't figure out how, in a relatively affluent town (2007 median income: \$78,866) of 8,829 households, only 2.25% have signed up for clean energy? These 200 or so households have, by signing, brought more clean energy onto the grid. And, they earned for North Haven three solar panels to be put on our public buildings, thereby decreasing the amount the town pays for energy.

We want to earn more solar panels; we want to encourage new sign ups; we're trying hard to get people to pay attention to clean energy if not for themselves, then

for future generations. We thank those who have committed to this cause and hope that more people will realize that this is a real way they can help to mitigate a gigantic problem at very little sacrifice.

So I ask you: Don't let thinking about global warming slip by. Don't let DOING SOMETHING about it slip by. Go to the town website and follow the menu trail below and sign up to support clean energy. All you need is right here.

www.town.north-haven.ct.us

Government

Boards and Commissions

Clean Energy Task Force

Thank you!

Energy-saving strategy: You wouldn't start your car without the kids buckled up, right? So when leaving the house, make a game of having your kids turn off the lights and appliances. Don't start the car until that's done.