



# Solar Washington Newsletter

FALL EQUINOX 2005

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## Solar vs. uranium

Over its useful life, a pound of silicon in a solar cell will generate as much electricity as a pound of radioactive uranium in a nuclear reactor.

*(Solar Today)*

## EPA mileage misleading

EPA tests misrepresent vehicle gas mileage 90 percent of the time. Most automakers would fail to meet mileage standards if EPA tests were accurate. The average 2005 car and light truck accelerates 24 percent faster, weighs 27 percent more and gets 1.1 fewer miles per gallon than cars and light trucks made in 1987. *(Consumer Reports)*

## Phantom power waste

Phantom power (the electricity wasted by appliances even when they are turned off) consumes 10 percent of electricity used worldwide. Phantom power costs US households \$5 billion a year. *(Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory)*

## 2005 Solar Tour is almost here

More than 100 solar homes and buildings will flex their green power at this year's Solar Tour, October 1 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. See Pam's story for tour highlights and the locations of some of the most incredible solar, green and energy-efficient buildings Washington has to offer. See [\[www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/1SolarTour.pdf\]](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/1SolarTour.pdf)

## Seattle's first five-star green home on tour

Bob Scheulen and Kim Wells started out with no bigger goal than to remodel an old house in a leafy neighborhood of Seattle. Then this over-achieving couple got a little carried away. When the last board was nailed in place, they had a whole new house. And they had the first house in Seattle to win the coveted five-star Built Green rating.



Kim and Bob

What's Built Green? In this case, it's a house that you could heat with a candle, a house that produces most of its own electricity, a house that uses rainwater to flush toilets and water plants and a house that is made with low-toxic and environmentally friendly materials. You have to check this out. See

[\[www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/2GreenHome.pdf\]](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/2GreenHome.pdf)

## Wave energy gears up for coast project

The potential of wave energy is big. We mean really, really big. How big?

Consider this: A sliver of ocean, roughly the size of Lake Washington, could power the entire state. No wonder a worldwide race is shaping up to harness all this power. And our state is in the middle of the action. See [\[www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/3WavePower.pdf\]](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/3WavePower.pdf)



Waves break at Makah Bay near the proposed wave-power project.  
(Photo by Washington Dept. of Ecology)

## Coal's hidden costs

"Externality" costs – the hidden costs of energy production caused by damage to our health and environment – are 16 cents per kilowatt-hour for coal, 9 cents per kwh for nuclear and 1 cent per kwh for solar, according to a hot new doctoral thesis by Thomas Sundqvist. (*Power Generation Choice in the Presence of Environmental Externalities*)

## Fox guards henhouse

The Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States, an industry group, is paying Uncle Sam to approve its own drilling permits. How? The industry pays the salaries of "hosted workers" who work alongside regular US Bureau of Land Management employees to speed approval of natural gas drilling applications. Surprise: BLM approved a record 6,042 drilling permits last year. (*High Country News*)

## We're Solar Washington

Solar Washington is a chapter of the American Solar Energy Society. We're a private, not-for-profit association for people and organizations interested in solar power, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

### Website and email:

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**Next meeting:** Please watch our website for the next meeting. We hope to see you then.

## Our president's column

### Solar congress, Katrina and more

Both the recent Solar World Congress and Hurricane Katrina showed the promise of solar power. And so does the growth in SW's subchapters and the student enthusiasm at WSU for the solar decathlon coming up in Washington, D.C. For details, see Pam's column.

See [[www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/4President.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/4President.pdf)]

### Couple builds green homestead in 'burbs

Solar power (grid-intertied, no less), honey bees, greenhouse, mushroom garden, rainwater/drip irrigation ... Hey, that would be an awesome setup in the country. But Nick and Jeanne Aldrich have built this homestead nirvana smack dab in suburbia. Check out Chris Fate's story to see how they did it.

See [[www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/5Aldrich.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/5Aldrich.pdf)]

### Our website is taking lots of hits

SW Webmaster George Meyer has web surfers coming back for more. Website hits are up sharply this year. George lays out all the numbers. He also links you up to video coverage of the recent solar drag race in Wenatchee. And he unveils the new SW logo.

See [[www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/6Webmaster.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/6Webmaster.pdf)]

### A little fan and a big idea for free energy

Think there's no such thing as a free energy lunch? Haw! We're going to change your thinking. Big industry is already cooking up some amazing schemes to wring wasted electrons out of everyday appliances. Here's one of the more intriguing ideas.

See [[www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/7FreeEnergy.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0509/7FreeEnergy.pdf)]

### The last word

Joel Stronberg, ASES's man in Washington, D.C., nails it when he says, "It is unfortunate that the rising demand for sustainable energy alternatives is the result of the world's woes and not of more enlightened leadership." Pitch perfect.

He's talking about political leaders. Fortunately, politicians are not our sole font of leadership. This issue is about other leaders, better leaders, and the enlightened leadership longed for by Joel. Read about Bob Scheulen and Kim Wells, who built Seattle's first five-star Built Green home. Or Nick and Jeanne Aldrich, who have carved out a green homestead in the suburbs. Or AquaEnergy, which is working on wave energy, a source so large it could replace coal or nuclear or both. Or the engineers working to capture free energy from wood stoves and furnaces. They are all in this issue.

These people are enlightened leaders. They're making the world a better place for all of us. I hope you enjoy reading about them. Also link up to our energy-tip sheet, which as a new item about how you can help out the planet with your spoon and fork. See [[www.solarwashington.org/EnergyTips.htm](http://www.solarwashington.org/EnergyTips.htm)]

As always, if you want to make your voice heard in this newsletter, contact us at [newsletter@solarwashington.org](mailto:newsletter@solarwashington.org).

– Josey Paul, editor