



LWV Forum Shows Ways to Shrink Carbon Big Foot

Posted By [Elisabeth Radow](#) On April 24, 2009 @ 2:18 am In [News](#) |

With this year's [Green Week](#) focus on reducing the carbon footprint, the Larchmont-Mamaroneck League of Women Voters' forum called "Big Foot, Carbon and You" gave new focus to a now familiar topic. On a planet whose population is targeted to increase to 7 billion by 2012, creative approaches to preserving natural resources and reducing carbon emissions becomes an ongoing priority. The Big Foot forum focused on worldwide networks and upbeat local solutions to reducing the carbon footprint.

The evening began with Maddie Cook and Irene Dambrunas, co-presidents of Mamaroneck High School's Environmental Coalition, reporting on bringing recycling to the school and heightening awareness through a variety of programs about the benefits of "going green." Rye Neck High School Junior Carissa Rose DeVito reported on the sustainable practices at her school fostered by a partnership among parents, students and administrators. These include Walk to School Wednesdays and "Waste less day 09," introduced for Green Week to put the spotlight on recycling.

[Cool Cities](#) representative Catherine Hiller, a Mamaroneck novelist and editor, brought the focus to this worldwide network aimed at addressing the climate crisis on a local level, one city at a time. Cool Cities is currently working with businesses in Mamaroneck Village to qualify for membership in the Mamaroneck Green Network (MAGNET) aimed at promoting sustainable business practices. Ms Hiller will speak about MAGNET at 11:00 on Saturday, April 25th at the St. Thomas Episcopal Church's Farmer's Market. Continuing the theme of reaching the largest number of people to effect positive change, Ms. Hiller also spoke about [350.org](#), the worldwide youth organization devoted to addressing the climate crisis.

Lug Your Water From the Tap

With water the number one beverage of choice for Americans, shifting how we consume it can turn things around. Mamaroneck resident and [Tappingen](#) co-founder Eric Yaverbaum, a public relations leader, inspired the audience with his story of how one person can make a difference. According to Mr. Yaverbaum, Americans purchase 28 billion bottles of water annually and \$7 billion is spent to clean up the discarded bottles. Inspired by his daughter's environmental concern, Mr. Yaverbaum co-founded Tappingen to educate people about the myths associated with bottled water: what's in the bottle is often just filtered tap water and a one-person annual supply can cost \$1,400, versus \$.49 for its tap water counterpart. Tappingen produces user-safe reusable water bottles to help people switch to tap water.

Drink Your Coffee in the Shade

Coal, coffee, chestnut trees and migrating birds were all part of the story told by Marshal Case, president emeritus of the [American Chestnut Foundation](#) and president of the [Trust for Wildlife](#). He described his efforts as a career conservationist to return habitats to ever shrinking populations of neo-tropical birds who winter in Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean and migrate each spring to 7 states in Appalachia. In Appalachia, the reclamation-reforestation of over 1 million acres of strip mined land are available to be planted with American Chestnut along with other hardwood species.

With the coal companies facing stiffer regulatory oversight if these migrating birds are added to the endangered species list, there are new initiatives underway to enlist coal company support to preserve bird and wildlife habitat in rainforests and elsewhere through expansion of shade grown coffee agriculture and minimization of coffee grown in open sun. Coffee, the second most traded commodity and Americans' second favorite beverage, represents a \$4 billion industry in the U.S. and a \$60 billion industry worldwide.

What can we do? The audience was encouraged to shift their daily coffee selection away from open grown coffee that deforests and heats the land to shade grown varieties that produce a pesticide free drink while preserving a cool habitat for birds and wildlife. Larchmont-Mamaroneck coffee sellers such as Avenue Bagels, Bradley's, Kearn's Deli, Starbuck's and Trader Joe's have shade grown coffee on hand for people to try.

Elisabeth Radow is the chair of the League of Women Voters' Environmental Committee and the organizer of the forum.

Article printed from Larchmont Gazette: <http://www.larchmontgazette.com>

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