

# Green is the new black

*An uncomplicated guide to 2007's biggest trend: saving the planet.*

By Katharine MacDonald

Unless you've been avoiding all media outlets for the past several years, you, like every other citizen, are all too aware of the environmental issues that society is facing.

While topics like global warming and the ozone layer are not new, the (low-impact, fluorescent) spotlight has been pointed in the environmental direction of late, thanks to celebrity activists such as recent Nobel prize-winner Al Gore and his acclaimed but controversial documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Whether or not you are convinced that global warming is a pressing issue, there is no reason not to do your part to make your home, province, country and planet a better, healthier place to live. No one is asking you to scrap your gas-guzzling vehicle or pimp your laptop with solar panels, but there are some easy switches to consider for the time being.

When you swing by Mickey's at the Student Centre in the morning for that café mocha, bring a mug of your own for the most environmentally friendly practice, or keep the coffee sleeve they give you. I've personally started picking the sleeves off discarded cups for reuse, since it's senselessly wasteful to just toss them.

If you live within city limits and take you or your parents' car to school, give some thought to a bus pass. This isn't meant to be any sort of product placement, but in all seriousness, it's worth it.

Once you have one, you'll be way more inclined to take the bus than the car.

Try buying groceries at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays here and there.

While it is a little more expensive to purchase some produce locally, not everything will vary in price. The food is fresher, probably organic, and you're supporting local economy. Plus, if you live in residence or close to school, you can walk. Everyone wins!

Take a reusable bag when you go shopping, and not just for groceries. You can buy cute canvas bags at Value Village for 49 cents (mine has a mallard on it), and once you get in the habit, you'll begin to notice how many plastic bags you would typically go through in the run of a month.

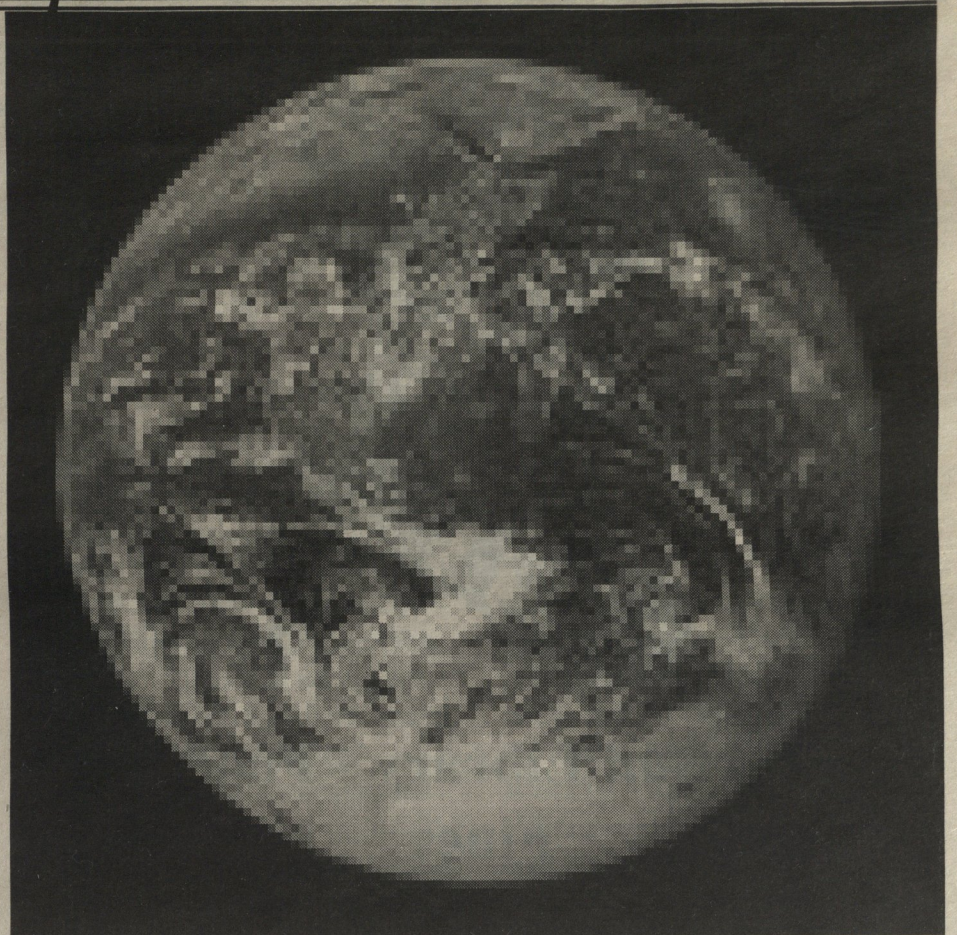
When you finish a magazine, avoid tossing it, and instead check if there are any local clinics or waiting rooms that would welcome new literature.

Turn down the heat one degree Celsius in the winter, and up one in the summer. This small change saves you two per cent on your annual heating bill and a surprising amount of carbon emissions.

Double-side paper you print off. It might take a little extra effort, but hey, you're cutting your paper consumption in half, right?

Buy a couple plants that act as air-purifiers. Besides, if they're big enough, they'll partially hide that pyramid of beer cases you've been meaning to take out to the recycling depot.

Speaking of which, recycling bottles! Now, when the previous government passed the law that canned pop and beer were to be distributed for purchase on the Island, many got excited at the prospect of aluminium cans soon gracing our households. However, even though cans can be recycled, because of their relatively insubstantial nature there's a better likelihood of people just throwing out a can than making sure it's recycled.



Bottles, however, usually make it back a few times; this past spring, then-Opposition leader Robert Ghiz claimed that the average number of times that a bottle on P.E.I. was washed and recycled for use was 17. Seventeen times!

While cans have their novelty, bottles are just the way to go.

Try a clothing swap to tide over your shopping cravings. After all, it's usually just that 'new acquisition' feeling you like.

If you're going to drive, keep your car aerodynamic. If you're warm, and driving at city speeds (less than 50-60 km/h), roll the windows down. If you're driving at highway speeds (60+ km/h), turn on the A/C.

This holiday season, wrap your

gifts in recycled newspaper, and save the bows and ribbons.

This is the easiest time of year to go overboard when spending and consuming, so try to keep the little stuff, like wrapping, in check.

Recycle this and future copies of the Cadre and other newspapers.

While there are lots of ways to limit energy consumption and curb consumerist habits, the best change you can make is in your mentality. While we presently may not suffer the consequences of our age of excess, people will someday (those people are likely your future spawn - think of the children!), and it's best to tackle this sooner than later.

Just don't make me show you the polar bear footage.

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