



SUSTAINABLE  
SPRINGFIELD

# Newsletter

Earth Week 2013

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# PRESIDENT'S NOTE

## from Melody LaMar

Our first newsletter marks one of several milestones for SSI this year. We launched our new website, added a community calendar, introduced our new logo and formed collaborations with other organizations. In the coming year we intend to do much more: increase membership, expand into social media, seek fundraising opportunities, encourage more activism, support our local political process and organize programs that will strengthen and unify our community. Wow, that seems like a lot...and it is. So how will we go about this? Inspiration.

I hear people asking all the time, "What can I do to make a difference?" Certainly individuals can sometimes feel powerless or discouraged when the media constantly reminds us of how we're reaching the tipping point or that the game is over. I totally agree with the severity and causes of climate change that the scientific community warns us of, but I disagree with anyone who implies that it's an inevitable consequence. We the people can make a difference if we proceed down a path of enlightenment fortified with a dose of optimism. This goal is not a free ride and it does require action. People are embracing fundamental lifestyle changes and taking the time to educate themselves about the various issues that affect their health and that of the planet and its inhabitants. Most importantly, I believe, is our obligation to make our voices heard legislatively. SSI's volunteer members have committed to work hard this year to deliver thoughtful messages on important issues and provide the community with the inspiration needed to make a difference.

This is about mindsets and taking ownership. This is about taking comfort in the power of numbers. This is about fighting for the communities and people that mean so much to us. I believe that Springfield has the potential to make a difference and all we need to do is start channeling it more collectively. I have memorized the following message from Margaret Meade. Won't you join me and commit it to your memory too?

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

In Solidarity & Optimism,  
Mel LaMar



# UPCOMING EVENTS

(visit our [website calendar](#) for more updates)

## RAIN GARDEN WORKSHOP

Monday, April 29, 6:00-7:30 pm at the Lincoln Library  
*Dr. Stacy James describes rain gardens and how they are constructed & maintained*

## THE MAKING OF A BIKE FRIENDLY TOWN

Tuesday, May 28, 6:00-8:30 pm at the Lincoln Library  
*Ed Barsotti of the League of Illinois Bicyclists discusses infrastructure and bicycle and pedestrian safety.*

## CLIMATE REFUGEES FILM VIEWING

Tuesday, June 11, 7:00pm – 8:30pm at Capital City Bar & Grill  
*This film captures the human face of climate change -- a must see for anybody interested in our climate future.*

## "GREENEST" OF SPRINGFIELD AWARDS

TBD, Fall of 2013  
*Honoring citizens, businesses & organizations who are advancing the culture of sustainability.*

## FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!



Find us at [Sustainable Springfield, Inc](#)



@[sustainableSI](#)

Remember to check out our website at [sustainable.springfield.org](http://sustainable.springfield.org)

# WHAT THE FRACK?

## THE REAL STORY OF HB 2615

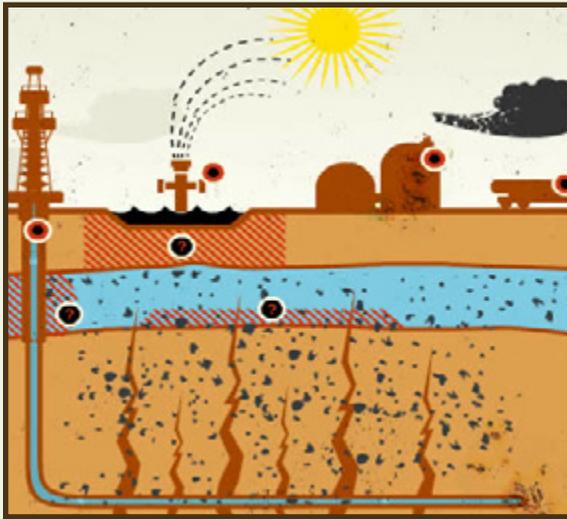
What the frack indeed. The topic of hydraulic fracturing (aka fracking) for natural gas in Illinois is gaining a lot of attention. This topic is very complex and it gets even messier as proponents and those opposing the practice enter into the mix – pun intended. The mix (e.g. fracking fluid) will be described in just a moment, but let's begin with a definition of fracking.

The [Michigan Watershed Council](#) states that the oil and gas industry defines hydraulic fracturing as the actual process of injecting fluids to create underground fractures. Industry does not consider the term to be part of the drilling process, but rather a technique used after drilling the well is complete. However, the public uses the term fracking to encompass all activities associated with oil and gas drilling, including well construction, hydraulic fracturing, and oil and gas production.

Exxon Mobil confirms fracking to be a 2 to 5 day process where the technique is used relatively briefly during the well completion process. They

go on to say that it involves injecting a mixture of 90 percent water, 9.5 percent sand, and 0.5 percent chemicals (that in part prevent bacterial growth and reduce friction) into the well at high pressures to keep the fissures open, which allows the gas to flow.

[Illinois People's Action](#) (IPA) provides more detail highlighting that the practice uses millions of gallons of fracking fluid (usually a mixture of



water, sand, and highly toxic carcinogenic chemicals) and that when the fissures occur, they can extend into the water supply. Another thing to be concerned about is that contamination of aquifers comes not only from the fracking fluid itself, but from what is unleashed from the shale: methane

and other hydrocarbons, salts, heavy metals, and radioactive elements. Presently, the natural gas industry does not have to disclose the chemicals used in the fracking fluid, but scientists have identified volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene and xylene.

The issues raised in opposition to Illinois House Bill 2615, Hydraulic Fracturing Legislation Act, focus on the impact fracking has on our water, land use, air quality, global warming, public health, social impacts and impacts on local communities. The gas and petroleum industry as well as a few environmental groups say it is the strictest fracking regulatory bill in the nation. We urge people not to be swayed by what is touted as a strict regulatory action, but rather demand a safer alternative. Below is a partial list of concerns in HB2615 taken from IPA's analysis.

**SETBACKS.** The right to frack within 301 feet of lakes, 501 feet of water wells (best practice dictates at least a distance of 3,300 feet) and 501 feet of residences, churches, schools, etc.

**WATER USAGE.** The bill requires the industry to identify its water sources but does NOT give local or state governments the authority to limit that usage, not even during a drought.

**HOME RULE.** In addition to denying counties the right to issue permits, it also takes away all kinds of other rights if fracking is allowed in the county. For example, counties will have no say over how much of their water is used in fracking.

**RADIOACTIVITY.** No testing of radioactivity in the produced water (only in flowback where it is unlikely to be present), along with the right to flush radioactivity down Class II injection wells, presently prohibited under Illinois law.

**VENTING OF RAW METHANE.** Contrary to industry assertions, burning frack gas for energy is not cleaner than burning coal. While fracking

emits less carbon dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) it emits CH<sup>4</sup>, a natural gas that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas.

**VERTICAL SETBACKS.** No minimum vertical separation distance, i.e., the distance between groundwater and the top of the shale strata -- which is crucial in the shallow New Albany Formation

**STORAGE.** The bill makes it legal to "temporarily" use open pit ponds to store flowback water. Go to IPA's interactive map called "Fraccidents" to locate where these accidents occurred.

The industry builds the cost of doing business into their balance sheet and part of that is to cover accidents or spills. And those occur all the time. Go to this interactive map to locate where "Fraccidents" have occurred.

The EPA is conducting a nationwide study on the effects of fracking due sometime in 2014. New York has decided to hold off on fracking until the study is complete. As industry, lobbyists and legislators rush to push through this bill, we believe it should be non-negotiable to let the discovery process take its due course.

What is the industry afraid of? That the public will become more educated and aware of the fracking process and its consequences? As industry, lobbyists and legislators rush to push this bill through, we believe the time it takes to complete the discovery process is non-negotiable.

If you're interested in making your voice heard on this issue, visit the [Illinois People Action](#) fracking page or the [Food and Water Watch](#) website.



introducing...

## SSI BOOK CLUB

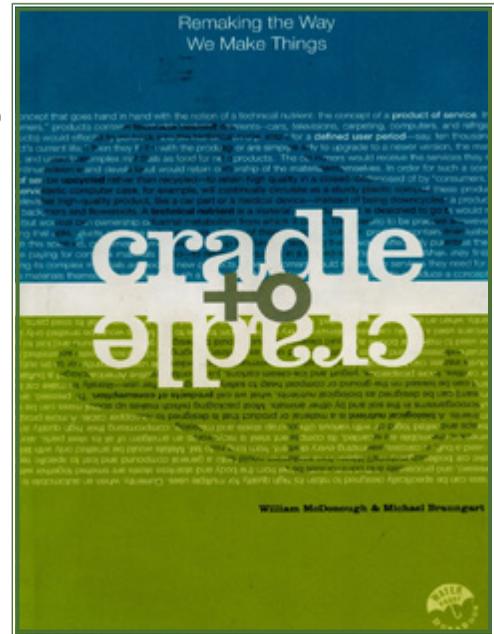
*Love to read and learn more about environmental issues?  
So do we! Join us for our seasonal book club and keep an eye  
out on our listserv for our first book club meeting this summer.*

### CRADLE TO CRADLE

*rethinking the way we make things*

The aim of cradle-to-cradle design is to recreate production systems to better mimic nature's systems by using the surroundings in a mutually beneficial and sustainable way. This book is written by two researchers, an architect and a chemist who hope to change the way the world is viewed and conserved and the way that problems are solved. It addresses some of the problems with the current solutions, for example why being "less bad" is no good. It suggests that the 3 R's are versions of less bad, but that there are other options. They also address other major uses of resources and energy such as the creation of buildings, and suggest new practices to benefit both the earth and humans.

The book itself is not made of paper, or as it is phrased in the book, "this book is not a tree." Instead it is made of plastic resins and inorganic fillers, which are more durable, waterproof and recyclable. It can be considered as a "technical nutrient", it can be broken down and circulated infinitely in industrial cycles.



## SUSTAINABLE SPRINGFIELD MEMBERSHIP FORM

Complete and mail to:  
Sustainable Springfield Inc.  
P.O. Box 9896  
Springfield, IL 62791

Please support us as we promote a culture of sustainability in Springfield!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to serve on a committee.

Yes  No

Please remit check to Sustainable Springfield,  
Inc. for membership dues:

\$25/year General

\$10/year Student

Thank you!!