



THE NEXT STEP Toward a Healthier Future

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEBASTOPOL TOXICS EDUCATION PROGRAM



Movie Night

The next time you want to see a movie, either by yourself or with others, consider looking beyond the predictable mainstream formulas and celebrities to explore the wonderful world of documentaries.

Here you'll find a wide variety of engaging and creative films that illuminate today's vital issues (including toxics and alternatives). The movie format brings topics alive by allowing us to visit the places, meet the people, hear the stories, and experience the essential solutions. What a great way to expand our lives and relieve boredom!

Here are some movie suggestions to get you started. Note: Some of these I've seen; others were recommended to me. Also, read each movie's full description to confirm its appropriateness for your audience.

■ **Earth**, a beautiful Disney film, inspires reverence for our earthly home. <http://disneydvd.disney.go.com/disney-nature-earth.html>

■ **Chemical** follows a family seeking to switch to less-toxic cleaning and personal care products. The movie's website calls it humorous, informative, and useful. www.chemicalnation.com/content/watch

■ **Vanishing of the Bees** explores how large-scale declines in bee populations are currently threatening our food supply, landscapes, and economies. Various causes and remedies are explored, including solutions from organic beekeepers. www.vanishingbees.com

■ **Food, Inc.**, a best-selling Oscar-nominated documentary that was featured on Oprah, reveals the dark side of today's industrial food system. It contrasts this with the inspiring beauty of small-scale, earth-centered, nontoxic farming, which it encourages us to support. This message is especially appropriate here in ag country, where our local farms offer us fresh delicious food, open space, and local income. "You'll never look at dinner the same way." www.foodincmovie.com

■ **Plastic Planet** examines the environmental and health problems of plastic, via animation, vintage footage, and "an intelligent investigative style." www.d-word.com/documentary/197-Plastic-Planet

■ **The End of the Line** shows how overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices have pushed a quarter of the world's fish stocks to the brink of extinction. Hopefully, this encourages us to change our direction! www.endoftheline.com

For more movie ideas, see:

■ **Local documentary filmmaker Carolyn Scott's "10 must-see documentary films."** <http://tinyurl.com/2exe258>. More of her picks and

The TNS Online Index makes it easy for you to look up past newsletters by topic. You can quickly discover what's toxic, and the effective alternatives, in everything from landscaping to pest control to pet care.

Tips that might be useful this time of year include: setting up your nontoxic garden, healthier housecleaning, eco-lightbulbs, the toxics-health connection, and buying local organics to avoid toxics and nurture your well-being. www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html

projects are at www.reelcommunityaction.org/film_reviews.

■ **The Sierra Club's "Movie Review Friday."** Sign up to get weekly suggestions, and review past selections, at www.sierraclub.typepad.com/greenlife/entertainment.

■ **The Sundance Film Festival's selections.** www.sundance.org/festival

■ **The Top Documentary Films website.** Peruse descriptions, reviews, and links to over 1500+ films, including free options, at www.topdocumentaryfilms.com.

■ **Your local video store and online search engines,** to find films that match your interests.

It's also fun to attend public movie events, to view the group's favorites and connect with others who also care about community issues. Here are two local options:

■ **The Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival.** Its films this year include *Vanishing of the Bees*. *March 18-20*, www.sebastopolfilmfestival.org, (707) 829-4797

■ **Transition Sebastopol's movie night,** offered free the last Wednesday of each month. Donations are appreciated. www.transitionsebastopol.org/event

"I read your newsletter each time we get the water bill, and really, really enjoy it. Lots of good information in an easy digestible size.... Thanks again for your efforts, they are much appreciated."

~ Tasha, Sebastopol



Detoxing Cookware

In response to our *TNS XI/1* article "Chemical Trespass & Body Burden," a reader asks how to avoid the perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) being found in most of our bodies and used to make nonstick pans. "What are our options?", she wonders. "Those nonstick pans are so useful!"

What a great question! So I did some research and discovered that **PFCs are not just in our pans but also in carpets, clothes, food bags, and more**, going under well-known brand names such as Teflon®, Scotchgard™, Stainmaster®, and GoreTex®. They're also used in making everything from airplanes to computers to cosmetics.

Unfortunately, the usefulness of PFCs come at a serious cost. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) says that PFCs are "highly-toxic, extraordinarily-persistent chemicals

that pervasively contaminate human blood and wildlife the world over." Health impacts include increased cancer and stroke risk, elevated cholesterol, birth defects, lower birth weights, weaker immune systems, and disrupted thyroid hormones.

The EPA has persuaded eight manufacturers to phase out one PFC, PFOA, by 2015. However, there are many other harmful materials in this category and companies are still calling them "safe."

So what's a consumer to do?

■ **Avoid nonstick pans as much as possible.** That's because any materials coming off the pan will go straight into your body. You can meet most cooking needs with stainless steel, glass, and ceramic pans.

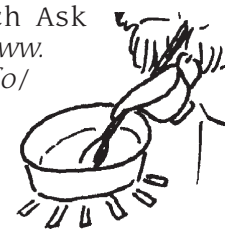
■ **If you use nonstick pans, choose quality not cheap ones.** I've fried my eggs for years using a quality anodized nonstick skillet, which I like. I chose this pan because the bonding process is said to create

a tough nonreactive scratch-resistant coating. I've been looking at the new "green" nonsticks, but haven't found one yet offering "no PFCs" and good reviews for its nonstick ability. (Let me know if you find one!)

■ **Be sure everyone cooking with your nonstick pans takes proper care of them**, including avoiding high heat, metal tools, and abrasives. Read and possibly post the instructions. If you have a degraded pan, toss it. And don't cook with them near pet birds. Really!

■ **Identify and reduce your exposure to PFCs in other products.** Get good suggestions at www.ewg.org/news/nine-ways-avoid-household-toxins. It's also vital that we insist on stronger government action to protect us from exposure.

Find out more about this topic in my March Ask EcoGirl column at www.patriciadines.info/EcoGirl4h.html.



Community Protection

■ **Our voices are needed to effectively implement the Green Chemistry Initiative.** In *TNS XI/1*, we reported that the proposed regulations for California's pioneering Green Chemistry Initiative (GCI) were so far off track that community groups, periodicals, and even the original authors had called for them to be withdrawn. (Green chemistry seeks to encourage safe chemical design from the start, instead of the much costlier approach of dealing with toxic materials after they're dispersed into our bodies and world.)

So I'm delighted to report that one of Governor Schwarzenegger's last official acts was to withdraw these proposed regulations. Thus, GCI's implementation is now on Governor Jerry Brown's plate. He did support it in his campaign platform, as part of protecting children and reducing the toxic hazards in consumer products. However, many state programs have already fallen under the budget axe so nothing is certain.

Therefore, **I encourage you to write Governor Brown** and ask

that he implement the Initiative per the original legislation and commitments. His contact information is at http://gov.ca.gov/m_contact.php. You might mention that reducing toxic exposure is vital for maintaining our health, cutting medical costs, and ensuring our businesses' competitiveness. It's important that we remember the big picture!

■ **The EPA finally plans to limit rocket fuel in our water and food.** We've previously talked about perchlorate, a component of rocket fuel, fireworks, and explosives. It's prevalent in our water supplies, and through that our food supplies, including infant formula. Studies find it in just about everyone's bodies, which puts at risk thyroid health, children's brain development, and more. It's estimated that between 13 and 30 million Americans have a thyroid disorder, often undiagnosed. (For more on this, see *TNS IX/1*.)

Fortunately, California has established decent standards for this chemical in our water. However, the federal government has for years ignored expert scientists' recommendations to set such limits.

So, I was glad to hear recently that the current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reversing the federal position on perchlorate and will finally regulate it, as well as up to 15 other toxic chemicals in drinking water. EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson has made cleaning up drinking water a top priority, she says, to meet both "the health and economic needs of communities across the country." For more information, see <http://tinyurl.com/EPAPERchlorate>.

ABOUT STEP

The Next STEP (TNS) is published six times a year by the **Sebastopol Toxics Education Program (STEP)**. **STEP is a project of the City of Sebastopol**, implemented by local citizen volunteers. **STEP's mission** is to support city residents in reducing their toxic use and exposure, creating a healthier and safer Sebastopol for everyone.

Newsletter Editor, Lead Writer & Layout: Patricia Dines, Email STEP@healthyworld.org

Newsletter Editorial Team: Patricia Dines and Jim Gleaves

Newsletter Design Concept & Logo Design: Lyn Dillin (née Bouguereau)

STEP Founders: Michael Black, Patricia Dines, Rebecca Dwan, Jeff Edelheit, Nan Fuchs, Craig Litwin, and Larry Robinson.

STEP, P. O. Box 1776, Sebastopol CA 95473 www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us