

in the news: environment

Festival puts lens on energy issues

Weeklong event features variety of films

By DICK CONKLIN
Keys Sunday contributor

Intense hurricane seasons. Rising ocean waters. A growing dependence on foreign oil.

Pretty scary stuff, particularly for Keys residents. Most of us have at least heard of global warming and some of the doomsday scenarios that scientists have predicted. Some merely dismiss it out of hand, while others prefer to avoid thinking about it.

On the other hand, how about a more positive outlook? Sustainable power sources harnessing wind and solar energy? Reducing our dependence on oil? Local communities making a difference?

Regardless of how you personally feel about this 21st century topic, most will agree that education is an important first step. School children are learning about energy conservation in the classroom, and sometimes put us to shame with their insight into this important issue.

If you are interested in getting up to speed on the topic of energy conservation and alternative sources, here's your chance. Mark your calendar: March 16–22 will be the Keys' Sierra Club Energy Film Festival at Key West's Tropic Cinema. A series of free films will be featured at the weeklong event, and the schedule allows almost everyone to catch the topics of most interest to them. It's an opportunity to be entertained, educated and motivated — all at the same time.

For example, the 40-minute film "Hurricanes on the Brink," a documentary about the possible link between global warming, the increase in sea surface temperatures and hurricane intensity, will be shown on three different days and times. "Treasured Places" talks about vulnerable coastlines from North Carolina to the Keys. "Rising Waters" puts a human face on the climate change debate in the Pacific. "Wind Over Water" and "The Vineyard Energy Project" show how communities have adopted wind and solar energy solutions.

The film festival is the brainchild of Jody Smith Williams,



Photo illustration by DICK CONKLIN

Jody Smith Williams is organizing a weeklong film festival on energy conservation at Key West's Tropic Cinema.

who has been working for several months on the event, which will present 20 topics in formats ranging from 90-minute documentaries to 1-minute shorts in the brand new, state-of-the-art George Theater at the Tropic Cinema.

She is also planning a panel discussion on energy issues for the last day, inviting national and regional experts to participate. Beyond that, she also plans a fol-

low-up Energy Summit comprised of local leaders in a position to establish new energy habits and policies for the Florida Keys.

The event runs from the opening reception on Friday, March 16, through the panel discussion and Q&A on Thursday, March 22. All screenings are at 4, 6 or 8 p.m.

Can one person make a difference dealing with such mind-

boggling challenges? Williams gives an emphatic, "Yes!" This one-woman environmental committee is trying to open eyes and turn heads, while encouraging citizens and leaders to push for energy conservation and practical alternatives to many of the wasteful practices currently in use.

"The people at the Tropic are very community oriented," she says. "They already have two

theaters and are adding a third — to be called The George. We are going to be their inaugural event."

Can a film festival motivate enough people to make a difference? "I felt, this is something that I can do. I can start some momentum — get some action going. I want to enlist

If you go

- ◆ What: Sierra Club Energy Film Festival
- ◆ When: Friday, March 16, to Thursday, March 22
- ◆ Where: Tropic Cinema, 416 Eaton St., Key West
- ◆ Film schedule: Visit keywestfilm.org/films2007/sierra_club.html for an up-to-date schedule of films.
- ◆ Contact: Jody Smith Williams, kwjody@yahoo.com

Festival highlights

- ◆ Opening reception: 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 16, Tropic Cinema
- ◆ Panel discussion: 7 p.m. Thursday, March 22, Tropic Cinema
- ◆ 'An Inconvenient Truth' slideshow: 6 p.m. Friday, March 23, Eco Discovery Center, Truman Waterfront

On the Web

- ◆ Festival Web site: keywestfilm.org/films2007/sierra_club.html
- ◆ Cool Cities program: coolcities.us
- ◆ Southern Alliance for Clean Energy: cleanenergy.org
- ◆ Energy-saving information — kilowattours.com

Related events

The second Green Living & Energy Expo is set for 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 31 at Stanley Switlik Elementary School, 3400 Overseas Highway, Marathon.

Subjects addressed at the Expo will include organic gardening, clean boating, alternative fuels and solar energy. Visit keysglee.com/html/2007expo.htm and keep an eye on *Keys Sunday* in the coming weeks for more coverage.

green solutions

Key West High hosts one forum

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individuals, businesses, and policy leaders. I can show them what other communities have done, what people can do. I'm not an environmentalist, I'm just a person who cares about these issues.

"Climate experts agree — sea levels are rising and storms are intensifying. The warming effect is already happening faster in the polar regions. As the ice melts, there is more brown land and blue seas exposed to the sun's rays. There is less ice to reflect them. The warming cycle melts more ice and produces more water, which is warmer and higher than before."

But she says the films also carry a message of hope. "We can still get our act together. We can learn how we got to this point and what we need to do to reverse the trend. We now have

technologies and tools to help us do the right thing."

Williams says the film "The Vineyard Energy Project" resonated with her. "Martha's Vineyard is a self-contained island community much like ours. In tight-knit communities it is possible to do this, to harness solar energy. I'd like to get school kids involved too — they are our future."

Williams feels that the March 22 panel discussion (which will be held in the Tropic's larger, 150-seat theater) is an important wrap-up to the festival, to be followed on the next day by an Energy Summit, as she calls it. "I'd like to get representatives from the city and county governments, Florida Keys Electric [Cooperative], and Keys Energy involved."

"Europe is way ahead of us in reducing fossil fuel emissions and the greenhouse effect," says Williams. "Many of our own cities are joining the Cool Cities

campaign. Salt Lake City has replaced their old carbon filament light bulbs with energy efficient LED lighting. Many cities are purchasing gas-electric hybrid cars. We can build buildings and schools that are more energy efficient."

As a bonus, Williams has acquired Steve Smith for a special presentation. Smith is the executive director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, and will present a slide show based on former vice president Al Gore's Oscar-winning film "An Inconvenient Truth." Smith received training from Gore as a presenter of the slide show. He will speak at Key West High School on Thursday, March 22, and his presentation will be open to the entire student body. On Friday, March 23, at 6 pm, he will present it again at Nancy Foster's Eco Discovery Center at the Truman Waterfront. This show is also free on a first-come, first-served basis.

SIERRA CLUB ENERGY FILM FESTIVAL, March 16-22

| | FRI 3/16 | SAT 3/17 | SUN 3/18 | MON 3/19 | TUES 3/20 | WED 3/21 | THURS 3/22 |
|------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 4:00 | •Native Wind (1) •Homeland (88) | •True Cost of Food (15) •Wind Over Water (15) •Out of Balance (60) | •Kilowatt Ours (38) •Storm in the Gulf (28) •Treasured Places: Everglades (10) •Treasured Places: Outer Banks (8) | •Hurricanes on the Brink (40) •Power Shift (26) •French Fries to Go (15) | •Earth to America! (90) •Sundance Summit (8) | •Rising Waters (57) •Nobility (18) •Vineyard Energy Project (16) | •Too Hot Not to Handle (90) •SUV City (8) |
| 6:00 | •Kilowatt Ours (38) •Power of Community (50) | •Earth to America! (90) •Sundance Summit (8) | •Hurricanes on the Brink (40) •Power Shift (26) •French Fries to Go (15) | •Too Hot Not to Handle (90) •SUV City (8) | •Rising Waters (57) •Nobility (18) •Vineyard Energy Project (16) | •True Cost of Food (15) •Wind Over Water (15) •Out of Balance (60) | 6:00 Power of Community (50) |
| | 7:30 – 8:30 OPENING RECEPTION | | | | | | |
| 8:00 | •Earth to America! (90) •Sundance Summit (8) | •Too Hot Not to Handle (90) •SUV City (8) | •Rising Waters (57) •Nobility (18) •Vineyard Energy Project (16) | •Storm in the Gulf (28) •Treasured Places: Everglades (10) •Treasured Places: Outer Banks (8) •Kilowatt Ours (38) | •Native Wind (1) •Homeland (88) | •Power of Community (50) •Hurricanes on the Brink (40) | 7:00 Kilowatt Ours (38) + PANEL DISCUSSION/ Q&A (Carper Theater) |

Note: Film durations are shown in parentheses, in minutes. All shows are in The George Theater, Tropic Cinema, 416 Eaton St., Key West.

Sanctuary council has openings

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is seeking applicants for 10 seats on its Sanctuary Advisory Council, which provides public participation in sanctuary management and advice to the sanctuary superintendent, a position now held by Dave Score.

The sanctuary is accepting applications for primary seats representing boating, recreational fishing and charter fishing; and one citizen-at-large position from the Upper Keys.

Also available are the following alternate seats: diving, citi-

zen-at-large (Middle Keys), conservation and environment, research and monitoring, elected official, and commercial fishing (marine/tropical). Alternates attend meetings when members are not available and assume the seat if a member resigns.

Representatives of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the state select council members based on their expertise and experience in relation to the seat for which they are applying.

Terms typically run for three years. Members serve without

pay.

The council usually meets during the business day the third Tuesday of alternate months.

Current seat holders may reapply. Application packages may be obtained by calling Karla Mendez at 809-4700, Ext. 268; by writing to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, 33 East Quay Road, Key West, FL 33040; or by visiting floridakeys.noaa.gov. Applications should be mailed to the same address and be received by March 30.

Solar-powered boats

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toxic substances that pollute water ecosystems. In the air, they help form smog, which causes a host of health problems and disrupts visibility everywhere from our cities to our national parks.

Those looking to buy a boat today should choose one with a four-stroke or direct fuel injection (DFI) two-stroke engine. These pollute about 75 percent less than their traditional two-stroke predecessors and use as much as 50 percent less gas and oil. They cost more than traditional two-stroke engines, but owners soon make up the difference in fuel and oil savings. They are also easier to start and maintain, and are quieter.

New generations of electric boat motors are also coming on line, and promise to significantly cut pollution if adopted widely. Wooden, sport and leisure boats are now all available with electric engines that are quite comparable to traditional engines in performance and looks. They are also non-polluting, quiet and can cruise where gas motors are not permitted. Some leading makers include Beckman, Budsin, Cobalt Marine, Electric Launch, Duffy, Electracraft, Griffin Leisure, Pender Harbour and Spincraft.

The only catch is that the energy that powers the batteries for electric boats most like-

ly comes from a coal-burning power plant that spews mercury, carbon dioxide and other pollutants into the skies and waterways. A handful of manufacturers—such as Australia's Solar Sailor and Canada's Tamarack Lake—now make solar-powered or solar-assisted electric boats to help overcome this environmental hurdle.

Of course, the ultimate energy source for any recreational activity is elbow grease. But for those who need more than a canoe or kayak to get around, Nauticraft hybrid boats employ human pedal power to augment a small electric motor.

To learn more

◆ EPA: Shipshape Shores and Waters: A Handbook for Marina Operators and Recreational Boaters, www.epa.gov/owow/nps/marinashdbk2003.pdf.

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