

April 14, 2007

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### **Shop 'n' save the Earth**

*SARAH MAUET, ARIZONA DAILY STAR*

Before celebrating **Earth** Day April 22, we asked Star readers to share a favorite environmentally sound purchase; their responses indicate they're willing to spend more up front to **save** resources

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Paper towels have been outlawed - at least in Mindy Jones' home. **The** ban, put into effect last year, is only part of her aim to protect **the** planet.

In place of **the** disposable kind, she bought 20 kitchen towels, which she throws in with **the** weekly wash. While it's secondary to saving **the** planet, she realized that she's also saving money.

"We used to use about two rolls of good paper towels per week at a cost of \$3 or more," she said. "**The** towels and hooks I bought came to \$30 at **the** most, while we **save** \$156 per year by not buying paper towels."

Her issue is not just paper towels - Jones, 44, is pretty serious about fulfilling what she considers her duty as a human. Every six months or so she tackles a new **Earth**-friendly project.

"I add one thing at a time so I don't get overwhelmed," she said. "Everything I do is easy."

Each week for **the** past six months she has kept about three gallons of waste out of **the** dump by asking her co-workers to place coffee grounds and fruit and veggie scraps into a bucket kept in **the** office freezer. When **the** \$5 bucket is full, Jones takes it home and adds **the** contents to **the** compost pile she's had for about three years.

In December she ordered 10 "GreenBags," each of which can hold as much as two plastic grocery bags, from ecobags.com for about \$30.

"Our family of four uses about 10 bags per week, so I think we have kept about 240 plastic bags out of **the** landfill in a three-month period," she said.

Her newest project cost \$15 for a pound of red wiggler worms (*Eisenia foetida*) and \$10 for two plastic bins. **The** goal for 2007: transform 182 pounds of kitchen scraps into worm castings to feed to her garden and container plants.

Jones, like many readers who responded to our request to share a favorite environmentally sound purchase, is willing to spend a little up front to **save** - be it money or pollution, waste and natural resources - in **the** long run.

While consumerism is often considered at odds with **the** spirit and mission of **Earth** Day, which is April 22 this year, readers found plenty of ways to **shop** and **save** at **the** same time.

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### **HYBRID PURCHASE SAVES ENERGY**

Last fall I bought a red 2006 Toyota Prius hybrid vehicle, which I absolutely love! I don't put many miles on a car since I work out of my house, but I wanted a vehicle that **saves** gas and greatly reduces emissions (**the** Prius offers 89 percent fewer emissions than **the** average car). I'm currently averaging about 46 miles to **the** gallon, and that's all been city driving. Compared to **the** most fuel-efficient small cars out there (getting about 30mpg),

so far I've saved about 30 gallons of gas and 333 kilograms of CO2-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions.

- Kate Holder

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#### CLOTHESLINE PROVIDES EXERCISE

I just love my clothesline. I feel so sorry for people who only have clothes dryers. My clothesline takes me outside when my hectic schedule might otherwise keep me indoors. It keeps me in touch with **the** seasons (there's honeysuckle and jasmine planted all around it, so spring is especially fragrant). And I love **the** invigorating scratchy texture of sun-dried towels! Putting **the** clothes out is an opportunity to take a break and just be mindful of **the** air and **the** sounds and smells of outdoors, a sensory treat. Oh, I almost forgot: It contributes nothing to greenhouse gases!

- Janet K. Miller

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#### PET AS EXTERMINATOR

Our home has been cockroach- and spider-free ever since Lil Dude, our indoor cat, joined us. Therefore we no longer need noxious sprays, traps and granules.

- D. Kamilli

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#### DENIM MAKES GREAT INSULATION

Recently, while doing a major addition on our home, we had **the** opportunity to explore many green products and compare and contrast. We selected many green products in our construction process. **The** most interesting was **the** insulation, which was made of recycled remnants of denim jeans. This exciting, innovative product provides a great reuse of a material that would otherwise be discarded. We even were able to get it from a local provider!

- Thomas Fisher

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#### SUNSHINE MAKES A GREAT DRYER

I did purchase two compact fluorescent light bulbs, but it is what I did not buy: a dryer. I have lived in Tucson for 36 years and I do not own a dryer. My income is such that I could buy a dryer, but why should I when **the** sun shines about 355 days a year in Tucson? I raised twins and did not miss **the** convenience of a dryer. I had a diaper service for **the** first year and hung **the** diapers on **the** line for **the** next 14 months. Think of all **the** exercise I got over **the** years bending and reaching while hanging clothes. Oh, I forgot - I purchased new clothespins in 2005.

- Laurie Fransway

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#### TRYING NEW FURNACE/AC UNIT

I purchased a new energy-efficient furnace/air conditioner guaranteed to **save** at least 30 percent - hopefully more. I have fluorescent light bulbs on hand and am gradually replacing all my light bulbs inside and out with fluorescent.

- Char Neilander

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#### PLENTY OF GRAY WATER SOURCES

I bought a five-gallon bucket at a garage sale for 50 cents and put it in **the** shower stall.

Between **the** two of us, my husband and I fill that bucket every day. **The** gray water then goes to nourish **the** plants in our yard. That's a savings of 35 gallons a week or 1,820 gallons a year! I also put a large pitcher on **the** kitchen counter that collects small amounts of water throughout **the** day that would have gone down **the** drain otherwise. This goes to **the** houseplants. It's just a small contribution to our water problems here in **the** desert, but it sure beats doing nothing.

- Jeanie Hays

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#### REMODEL WITH RECYCLED ITEMS

After purchasing my 1970s town home, **the** original 1976 kitchen just had to go. My friend in Phoenix told me about a store in Tucson, Originate, and about its recycled glass counters. One trip to **the** showroom and I was hooked. **The** recycled glass countertops (IceStone) were not only environmentally a good choice; they are very different and look fabulous.

- Toni Matison

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#### NEITHER PAPER NOR PLASTIC

I still use a cotton shopping bag I purchased around 1990. I wonder how many paper and plastic bags I have saved since then by using cloth bags! I wish everyone would bring their own bags to **the** grocery store. It is so easy.

- Elizabeth Lawrence

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#### GUTTER A GOOD INVESTMENT

I recently bought a rain gutter and attached it to **the** side of our outdoor patio roof. Last summer we noticed how much rainwater ran off **the** whole side of **the** patio and decided to harvest it in a large trough. After **the** March rains, **the** container was filled. It cost about \$30 and it took two of us about 30 minutes to put it up.

- Jonathan Landeen

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#### WRAP YOUR WATER HEATER

We bought water heater wrap insulation for both our water heaters. It is a cinch to install, there is nothing to it. These wraps allow our water heaters to use much less energy. It is easy, reduces your energy bill, is eco-friendly, and there are no disadvantages, so why not do it?

- Norma Garcia

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#### WHOLESOME PRODUCTS

In remodeling our house, we spent a lot of time at Originate. They have awesome products such as bamboo flooring without **the** nasty adhesives, paint made from milk protein and other substances that don't off-gas, and our favorite: wheat board. It's equivalent to MDF (medium-density fiberboard), but made from wheat and stuck together without all **the** nasty volatile compounds. Best of all, it smells a little like wheat and reminds me of home, eastern Washington.

- Lynn Crew

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#### SAVE TREES WHEN YOU REMODEL

When I renovated my historic Sam Hughes home, I tried to use wood that was from a farm (oak, cherry), and not from a rain forest. I used granite that came from **the** U.S., with its strong environmental regulations, not from Brazil or Madagascar. I used solid wood cabinets, not ones made from fiberboard, which contains formaldehyde. I also scavenged antique stores and salvage companies and found used building supplies -terra cota roofing tiles, wood trim, antique mahogany doors, Victorian stained glass, and used them instead of new products. Not sure I saved money, but I saved trees, rain forest, wildlife habitat, and left a smaller impact on **the Earth**.

- Lisa Harris

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#### **SAVE WATER AND ENERGY, TOO**

I purchased and installed a Watts Instant Hot Water Recirculating System and one additional sensor valve. **The** total cost was under \$300. Water at **the** farthest distance from my water heater is instantly hot, resulting in saving two to three gallons each time hot water is desired. Water in **the** kitchen is also instantly hot, and similar water savings result numerous times per day. I estimate we will **save** a minimum of 756 cubic feet per year.

- Jon Engvall

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#### **ALTERNATIVE FUEL, HIGH MPG**

Late last year I purchased a Volkswagen Jetta TDI and have been using both regular diesel and biodiesel. As a part of my profession I drive a lot and so felt extraordinarily guilty that my gas-guzzling SUV was so wasteful since much of **the** time it was just me in my car. So, after much contemplation and research, I settled on purchasing **the** sporty and smart VW TDI. I'm thrilled with it and it makes perfect sense.

- Nicole Brulé-Fisher

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