

SSAFE Newsletter

Senior Stewards Acting for the Environment



In This Issue

Keeping Warm This Winter—Sustainably!



COP28 Unveiled

What really happened behind the scenes?

You Are What You Wear

How to choose fabrics that make a difference.

Interested in learning more?

Visit [SSAFE.org](https://ssafe.org) online or email us at info@ssafe.org

SSAFE newsletters can always be found at [SSAFE.org/newsletter](https://ssafe.org/newsletter)



Kendal at Longwood resident Barb Smith with friends Marianne Kraft and Sister Patrice Owens at the march.

Tens of Thousands Marched to End Fossil Fuels—3 of Them Were Kendal Residents

Ted Wolner, Kendal at Oberlin; Elizabeth Ungar, Kendal on Hudson; and Barb Smith, Kendal at Longwood

In early November, the newsletter editors interviewed three Kendal residents and asked them about their experiences at the September 17th March to End Fossil Fuels in New York City. Here is what they told us.

What was the purpose of the march?

Ted: Protestors asked President Biden to stop approving new drilling leases for fossil fuels.

cont'd p.2

Activism (cont'd)

The march was the first large-scale street demonstration post-pandemic and was an opportunity to pressure global leaders before UN meetings later in the week. There were hundreds of climate organizations backing this march, including People vs. Fossil Fuels, which is itself a coalition of over 1,200 climate organizations—Indigenous, Black, Latino, environmental justice, youth, faith, and more—collaborating to reach a common goal of ending the era of fossil fuels.

What made you go to this march?

Ted: It's important to keep the climate crisis in the forefront of people's minds.

Betsy: Showing up makes you feel like you're doing something.

Barb: I felt it was time to put my body where my words were, and I could, I was able to march. The protest was a reminder that I'm not alone in the struggle, and that it's critical to keep at it. It's also important to support the young people who are carrying the weight of the climate crisis.



Ted Wolner helped carry an inflatable “pipeline monster” through the streets of New York City.

What was the event like?

Betsy: There was music, rhythmic chanting, people in costumes, people giving out water, oranges, tangerines, apples. Someone handed me a protest sign. I met a new friend and we exchanged phone numbers. I felt the camaraderie of us all being there with the same common purpose.

Barb: There was an inspiring ecumenical service with incredible speakers—an indigenous activist, and noted philosopher and author Dr. Cornel West, to cite a few—to kick off the march.

Ted: I'd say the march was festive and invigorating. The sound of drumming on empty plastic buckets reverberated against the buildings. I helped other activists carry an inflatable “pipeline monster” that was dozens of rows of protestors long.

Did other seniors march?

Betsy: There were a lot of senior groups there, including Bill McKibben and Third



Many faiths, including the Quakers, were represented at the march.

cont'd p.3

Activism (cont'd)

Act. I saw people in wheelchairs with their aides, as well as seniors who brought their own collapsible chairs.

Ted: Elders Action Network was there too. The march organizers knew it was important to accommodate seniors and those with disabilities (<https://www.endfossilfuels.us/faq>).

Barb: You could take breaks whenever you needed, and the march moved very slowly.

What was it like getting there?

Ted and Betsy: Train and subway. Some groups were bused in.

Barb: It was a little harder for me. I drove an hour into Philadelphia and then took the Megabus to the city and a series of subways to get to the march. I did have to watch my energy, since I was making this a day trip and had to be able to make my way home after standing for 4 or 5 hours.

Any additional thoughts or advice?

Ted: Bring water, trail mix, a light rain jacket.

Betsy: People thanked me for going because they couldn't go themselves.

Barb: Don't forget, there are many things you can do without having to march. A tip if you do go: try to start the march closer to the end point so you don't have to walk too far and yet you'll still get to benefit from the final rally. If you're intimidated by going to a big city, go with someone who knows that city.

What was the culmination of the rally?

Ted: Marchers gathered a few blocks from the U.N. where there was a jumbo screen



One of the protesters caught the eye of Barb Smith who took this iconic photo during the march.

mounted above the street showing a series of rousing speeches. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez made the final impassioned plea urging continued demonstrations: "We must be too big and too radical to ignore."

Follow the SSAFE Advocacy Team to find out about future climate marches.

In Memoriam

Mike Burke was with SSAFE from the inception of the organization in 2020. He served as a SSAFE Board Member representing Collington, a Kendal affiliate, and Co-Chair of the SSAFE Advocacy Project Team. His leadership and experience from his days as a Congressional staffer were instrumental in the success of the SSAFE Advocacy Team. He is sorely missed. Mike passed away on October 11th, 2023.

FIVE WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AND STAY WARM AT HOME

By Warren Gifford, Kendal-Crosslands Communities

In the Mid-Atlantic region, annual home heating represents the largest single use of energy—about 22% of all residential energy. In the winter, however, it shoots up to about half of total residential energy use. Even a modest change can have a big impact, and fortunately, heating is under our direct control.

Did you know that setting your thermostat 1°F lower in the winter could save 2% of your energy? And if you use electricity for heating, these savings are tripled because the electricity generation and distribution system wastes about 65% of the energy. The US Department of Energy recommends a setting of 68°F. Turning your thermostat back from its normal setting an additional 7°–10°F for 8 hours a day (say when you are sleeping) can save as much as 10% a year.

Here are some other ways to save energy and improve comfort as well.

Aim to heat the person, not the space. Rely first on “passive” measures to conserve warmth already there. Clothing such as hats, gloves, and blankets help retain body heat. They can be viewed as free heat sources, allowing you to reduce your need for external energy. Choosing appropriate clothing can allow you to set the thermostat lower in winter, significantly reducing your energy needs.

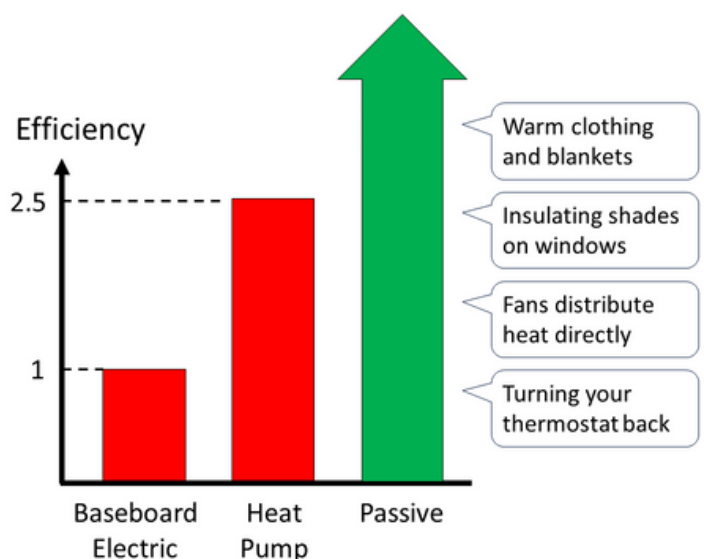
Consider insulated window shades as well. Closing them at night helps keep cold air out, and opening them to the sunshine can

add heat, creating comfort and cheer as well as more savings.

Ceiling fans move heat from the ceiling down toward the floor in the winter, making it more comfortable at lower thermostat settings.

Heat pumps are about 2½ times more efficient than electric baseboard heaters. Typical baseboard thermostats are often not accurate and may be using much more energy than you think based on your temperature setting. Thus, if you have the choice, use your heat pump thermostat, and just turn off the baseboard heaters—unless you need to heat a small area for a short time, such as while taking a shower.

Finally, local solar panels can save not only the direct electric energy, but also the energy wasted by the electric grid. With these practices in place—plus a little help from the sun—we can all conserve energy this winter.



PUMP UP YOUR ENERGY SAVINGS WITH A VENTLESS DRYER

By Spencer Gates, Cartmel at Kendal-Crosslands Communities

Our 25-year-old dryer worked perfectly well, so we did not consider ourselves in the market for a change. However, when it finally gave up the ghost, we decided to look at more energy-efficient options. At the top of the list was a heat pump dryer.

First of all, heat pump dryers are ventless. They're not the only ventless dryers—there are also ventless condenser dryers, mostly sold in Europe. The heat pump ventless dryer uses about half the electricity of a condenser dryer, which in turn uses less energy than a standard vented dryer. In fact, heat pump technology tops the ENERGY STAR® electric dryer efficiency ratings.

Rather than letting the hot air out into the atmosphere, heat pump dryers recycle it by sending it through an evaporator which extracts the moisture from the clothes without losing too much heat. The water collected then drains through a tube.

Before buying our own heat pump dryer, we researched its pros and cons. Most people online agreed that they are more efficient and cheaper to run; more convenient, because they do not need to be placed next to a vent; and gentler on clothes, because they have multiple features to detect moisture. In addition, after using the dryer for several months, we have found that our dry clothes do not have the stiffness that developed with our former dryer.

The cons list has to include the price, since a good heat pump dryer will cost approximately twice as much as a vented dryer.



Spencer Gates standing with his heat pump dryer.

While a heat pump dryer offers significant energy savings—and may be eligible for rebates from local utility providers—it might be hard to swallow the initial purchase price. Some people online have said that heat pump dryers take longer than regular dryers to dry the clothes, although we have found the reverse to be true. It is also more important to clean out the various filters than with a vented dryer. Finally, the heat pump dryers with the best reputation tend to be more compact.

We are delighted with our new dryer. We did buy a new front-load ENERGY STAR certified washer at the same time because it removes more water from the clothes during the final spin cycle, meaning the dryer will have to do that much less work.

For more information about ventless dryers see:

<https://reviewed.usatoday.com/laundry/features/everything-you-need-to-know-about-ventless-dryers>

COP28—OPTIMISTIC OUTRAGE

By Larry Daloz, Kendal at Hanover

In the hottest year ever for humans, our latest best hope to curb fossil fuel—COP28—was off to a bad start. The Conference President, Sultan Al Jaber, who also heads the United Arab Emirates’ national oil and gas company, had previously announced that there was “no science” showing that fossil fuels must be limited. Moreover, the conference swarmed with more oil company lobbyists than ever, while many of the several thousand observers and participants from poorer nations were housed in former workers’ quarters and bused long, hot distances to the palatial conference site. Already skeptical, Al Gore declared that fossil fuel interests had taken over the process, and England’s King Charles III asked, “how dangerous are we prepared to make our world?” Greta simply snapped, “completely ridiculous.”

"How dangerous
are we prepared
to make our world?"

—King Charles III of England

But by the end, a jubilant Al Jaber, who had successfully opposed efforts to “phase out” fossil fuels, had acceded to a declaration to “transition away” from them “in a just, orderly, and equitable manner.” And so the headlines blared: “The Beginning of the End for Fossil Fuels,” even as fossil fuel companies were barging ahead with plans to increase production. Still, tighter controls on methane had been established, and rich nations had upped their (largely



Closing plenary ceremony at COP28 with President Sultan Al Jaber. Photo source: Christopher Pike.

unmet) pledges to help poor nations. Conventional opinion applauded politely while eyes rolled at the announcement that COP29 would be in Azerbaijan, another petrostate, closely allied with oil-rich Russia.

“The U.N. has largely lost the confidence of youth,” laments climatologist Michael Mann. And who can blame them? Still, this marks a significant [Titanic?] move to shift the international discourse. Global climate leader Christiana Figueres has argued that substantial structural changes will be necessary to break the hold the petrostates currently have over the process. “We must be both outraged,” she says, “and optimistic.”

Meanwhile, the world continues to heat up, and Al Jaber makes plans to produce enough energy from fossil fuels to meet demand. Is this what progress looks like?

For more on COP28:
<https://unfccc.int/cop28>

BIG SAVINGS FROM LITTLE CHANGES: LED BULBS AND THERMOSTATS

*Conversations with Marcel Frenkel, Linda Crane, and Brit Vipham, Director of Project Management
The Admiral at the Lake*

How does \$65,000 in labor and materials free of charge for installation of LED light bulbs sound? And how about \$45,000 in free smart thermostats? That's not even counting the value of the energy savings themselves that will be realized over time! Who's footing the bill, you ask? The local power company at The Admiral at The Lake—ComEd—through their Multi-Family Energy Savings Incentive Program.

It was almost 5 years ago that resident Marcel Frenkel moved into The Admiral and noticed that the residential areas were lit by incandescent light bulbs, the common areas by fluorescent bulbs. Little did he know then that he was about to embark on a years-long journey involving multiple parties to effect major energy savings at the campus.

The first step was a fortuitous discovery that the local power company, ComEd, was initiating an energy savings program to compensate for past regulatory violations. This was a great start, but it was only a start. Marcel still needed to convince many levels of staff from senior administration to members of the Facilities Management Liaison Committee (FMLC) to enroll in the program. Staff came and went, and other initiatives were prioritized above this work. Marcel found the process filled with challenges and missed opportunities, but with help from resident Linda Crane, head of the FMLC,



Martin Khoshaba, Lead Maintenance Technician, and colleague Jerry Vazquez install one of the new smart thermostats.

and secretary Bob Hutchins, momentum began to build.

Then another fortuitous event occurred. Brit Vipham, a passionate and enthusiastic Director of Project Management, joined The Admiral and kick-started the whole process of working with ComEd to get the program off the ground. Their energy was able to drive the negotiations with ComEd to a successful conclusion. The end result was free ENERGY STAR® certified light bulbs, not only in residential areas but also in common areas, corridors, offices, mechanical/electrical closets, stairwells, and the parking garage. In addition, ComEd provided over 300 free smart thermostats for all independent-living homes. Residents can program the thermostats to create energy-efficient schedules and control heating and cooling from anywhere.

Brit attributes this great win for the community both to the FMLC for

cont'd p.8

Big Savings (cont'd)

prioritizing this project and to CEO Nadia Geigler, who encourages exploring innovative ideas like these and, most importantly, provides autonomy to the leadership team to achieve them.

The FMLC also took the initiative to encourage Facilities staff to explore cost-efficient LED light bulb options for fixtures that were not included in the free ComEd program. These LED lights improve lighting levels throughout the community, lower energy bills, and reduce the impact on the environment for future generations to come.

Two indispensable men—Frank Ramirez, Facilities Manager, and Martin Khoshaba, Lead Maintenance Technician—have helped oversee both programs and played a critical role in communication to residents regarding installation. They have provided training on how to use thermostats, including workshops and user manuals, as well as offered "train-the-trainer" lessons to a group of resident volunteers who assisted those new to smart thermostats.

None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of Marcel, Linda, and members of the FMLC urging action on these fronts to reduce energy. The Admiral benefits, of course, but so does our environment as we work to end waste.



More From The Admiral: Be the Solution, not the Pollution

By Homer Johnson, The Admiral at the Lake



*A laundry sheet from Clean People,
www.getcleanpeople.com.*

Do you often sit in your home pondering what you can do, right now, by yourself, to help save the environment?

First, stop lugging around those heavy jugs of laundry detergent. Those plastic jugs are not recyclable, and the detergent contains toxins.

Instead, use disposable, eco-friendly laundry detergent sheets. They provide a nice clean wash and dissolve in the process. The sheets are available in several fragrances or fragrance-free. Several brands are available online, including Clean People, which sells 23 washes for \$12. Pretty inexpensive, huh?

Second, if you need something to soften your clothes or to get the cling out, try Clean People eco-friendly dryer sheets—or organic wool dryer balls, which can be used over and over again.

Do whatever you can, but don't forget to stop and pat yourself on the back!

THE ENERGY TOLL OF USING SPACE HEATERS

By Bob Gettings, Kendal at Lexington

During these chilly winter months, some residents may be tempted to boost the indoor temperature by using portable space heaters. Unfortunately, space heaters are a highly inefficient heat source and notoriously expensive to run.

A typical 1,500-watt electric space heater draws 12.5 amps of electricity at 120 volts. This converts into a consumption of 12 kilowatt hours (kWh) with typical usage and costs about \$2 a day, or \$245 a year. In comparison, a 73-watt television uses a little over \$17 worth of electricity annually, and a laptop computer \$12. A standard heat pump can produce about 36,000 BTUs of energy in an hour while consuming 3 kWh of electricity. In the same hour, two standard space heaters can produce only 10,300 BTUs of thermal energy. In other words, these little energy hogs gobble up a disproportionate share of electricity.

Running dozens of space heaters when heating systems are operating at full capacity on cold winter days can result in a new, higher demand ratchet, which in turn would lead to higher peak-use demand surcharges on electric bills. A better solution is to adjust the thermostat. Optimum energy efficiency can be achieved by setting a programmable thermostat to adjust automatically to your daily schedule.

This year for the first time, Kendal at Lexington launched a peak-use reduction initiative aimed at trimming electricity



consumption during hot summer days. To conserve energy during late afternoon hours when the temperature typically peaks, residents were asked to turn off or adjust their A/C units. They were notified in advance on peak alert days, and reminder signs were posted in prominent locations on campus.

Local area weather forecasts were used to determine when a peak alert day was probable. Afterwards, utilization data was downloaded from the power company's website, and a consumption trendline was graphed. Three peak alert days were declared, and the results were clear: the trendline dipped during the 3½ hours conservation measures were in effect. It did not dip on non-peak alert days measured for comparison.

The decline in usage during peak hours averaged about 125 kilowatts and, importantly, helped to avoid setting a new peak-use demand ratchet for the year. It would be a shame if this successful summer peak-use reduction initiative were undermined in the winter months ahead by the widespread use of space heaters.

ARE YOU MAKING SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING CHOICES?

By Elizabeth Ungar, Kendal on Hudson



Remember when all you had to worry about when shopping for clothes was how much they cost, how well they fit, and how they made you look? Today, those concerns have expanded to include the garment's impact on the environment, its makers, and the animals providing the fur, fleece, wool, or leather.

Take cotton. Conventional farming of cotton requires heavy water use, exhausts and contaminates the soil, and endangers the health of farm workers and local communities. Moreover, many varieties are genetically modified—a controversial practice with its own set of environmental issues.

Organically raised cotton mostly sidesteps those problems. In addition, because fewer chemicals are used in its production, it is hypoallergenic and longer lasting.

Even conventional cotton looks good, however, when compared with the synthetic alternatives. Polyester, acrylic, rayon, and nylon dominate the clothing industry now, especially “fast fashion.” First and foremost, most synthetics are

derived from petroleum—a fossil fuel. Moreover, they don't absorb dyes well, so manufacturers use synthetic dyes, which find their way into water and soil with toxic effects. And when laundered, synthetic clothing sheds microplastics that end up in the ocean. Finally, synthetics are not biodegradable, so they break down in the landfill into products that contaminate the ground and groundwater.

Is clothing made from natural fibers like bamboo, hemp, and flax better? As with cotton, a lot depends on the farming and production methods. If grown organically, the plants are easy on the earth and stingy with water use. But industrial production can cause deforestation and chemical pollution. Similarly, transforming the fibers into cloth can be done organically with little environment harm, but it is commonly done using toxic chemicals.

So clearly, ethical clothes shopping requires label reading. Look for certifications like Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and Fair Trade USA. That way, you have a chance of buying something whose production involved the proper treatment of the environment and the workers.



cont'd p.11

Clothing (cont'd)

And do your research. You can find out a lot about clothing retailers and manufacturers online. The companies themselves may try to greenwash their business model, so check other sites, like Treehugger. I particularly like PACT, which boasts the GOTS and Fair Trade USA certifications. Even better, the company encourages you to send it clothing you no longer want (regardless of where you bought it) using a free pre-addressed shipping label. I've also found Fair Indigo, Groceries Apparel, and Maggie's Organics to be good sources.



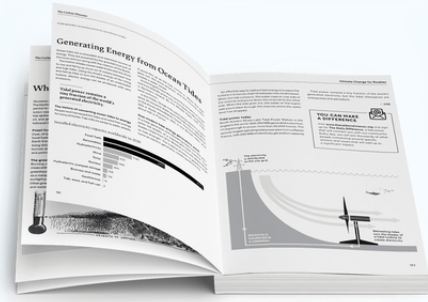
All that said, the most sustainable clothing choices are preowned. Your options are dictated by the tastes and size of the clothing donors, but it's a thrill when you do find something that suits your measurements and personality—and, of course, your principles.

For more information:

www.treehugger.com/do-you-know-which-fabrics-are-most-sustainable-4858778

www.goodonyou.eco/bamboo-fabric-sustainable/

It's Not Too Late!



If you're looking for a single volume that gives you everything you need to know about climate change, *The Carbon Almanac* is for you. Of the dozens of climate books available, this one provides the best overview, hands down. The size of an inch-thick magazine, it's loaded with engaging charts, maps, diagrams, photos, and cartoons (!), all easy to absorb and vital to know, whether you want to explain "global warming" to a child, counter the arguments of a family denier, or just educate yourself so you can better work to slow it down.

More than 300 participants from over 40 countries have contributed over 200 topics ranging from "What is Net Zero?" to "Low Carbon Concrete." Most are covered on a single page and clustered under headings like "Climate Change for Rookies."

This is a book you can dip into to answer a gnawing question or curl up with in a cozy chair. It makes a great late holiday gift for your kids or grandkids—or even an early Earth Day present. But be sure to pick up one for yourself. It's a steal for less than \$20.

The Carbon Almanac: It's Not Too Late. Seth Godin, Ed. New York: Portfolio Penguin, 2022.

Wrapping Up

Put the Climate on Display

This is a wonderful way to educate your community—or to kick off Earth Day!



Kendal at Hanover climate change book display.



Pivotal climate books on display in the Crosslands library.

Donate Today!

It's tax-deductible!

And it's easy. Just send a check—made out to SSAFE:

Scot Drysdale
32 Penn Road, Apt. 419
Hanover, NH 03755

SSAFE uses these funds to support efforts such as guiding senior living campuses to net-zero emissions, climate advocacy, and climate education. Senior Stewards Acting for the Environment (SSAFE) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. EIN: 87-1229514.

Seven Ways to Share the Newsletter

1. Talk it up!
2. Email it.
3. Print it.
4. Share it.
5. Order it online.
6. Post it to a bulletin board.
7. Place a copy in your library.

SSAFE newsletters can always be found at SSAFE.org/newsletter.

SSAFE Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of SSAFE, a non-profit organization started by residents from Kendal senior living communities. SSAFE has no official affiliation with the Kendal Corporation.

Editor – Ruth Crawford
Contributing Editor – Larry Daloz
Layout/Design – Michelle Goodwin
Issue Contributors - Ted Wolner, Elizabeth Ungar, Barbara Smith, Marcel Frenkel, Linda Crane, Brit Vipham, Homer Johnson, Warren Gifford, Spencer Gates, Bob Gettings, Larry Daloz.



Submissions & Comments

We want your feedback! We're always looking for good stories to provide inspiration to other senior living community residents. Send us your articles, ideas, questions, or comments!

We'd love to hear from you—drop us an email at info@SSAFE.org