

GWEC

Tri-Weekly

VOL. 1

NUMBER 1

WHAT IS



GWEC ?

INDEX

COVER STORY.....1

EDITORIALS.....2

GWEC NEWS.....2

*Turn the
page!*

What is

GWEC?

The George Washington Energy Commission (GWEC) is an organization that was set up over the summer months of 1977 at the urging of mathematics instructor Dr. Irwin Hoffman, a small group of inspired students and the danger of an impending crisis that few, if any of us, know much about.

The energy problem is surrounded by countless confusions and conflicting reports. Depending on your source, we are either living in a society of abundance where life as it is can go on for decades, even centuries; or we are doomed-and soon.

The only certainty seems to be that whatever the crisis, or lack thereof, much is certainly being said and done about it. Startling new breakthroughs are being made almost daily in the field of energy related technology. Everywhere projects and organizations are cropping up and making headlines; with solar houses, new inventions, wind technology, nuclear theory, opinions problems, programs and an overwhelming amount of political brew-hah-ha.

With Germany selling breeder reactors to Brazil, France developing its own nuclear energy, wave power off the coast of Scotland, and our own government wrestling with itself over such problems as the price of natural gas; the question of energy, and all that that question implies, would appear to have world wide scope.

"So", you may ask-and rightly so, "what can one small group of people in one of nine high schools in an average size city that lies in one of fifty states that make up one country among many-get done? Just what, precisely, can we do and what

GWEC?

impact will it have?"

The only possible answer is that we individuals can do anything we care to do; which includes doing nothing or everything, and the impact we have can be piddling or profound, accordingly.

The same mass media techniques that influence you and me to vote Democratic or Republican, or lure us into buying this brand over that brand (when we really need not buy at all), or influence Congresspeople to vote pro or con, can be used by us to alter or stimulate public opinion, action and reaction.

Through the writing of letters, and encouraging others to do the same, we can influence our lawmakers to vote in a way that reflects the desires and needs of people, rather than the lobbyists who have to keep the vested interests of their backers in mind.

Through seminars, lectures, the publishing of an energy newspaper, the formation of a computer stored and indexed energy source/fact book, the addressing of our leaders and lawmakers, the investigation and pestering of big business and the simple 'raising of dust' we intend to break the barrier of apathy which so plagues our nation and which is the greatest obstruction to any social cause.

Thus our essential purpose is two fold:

1. To learn, through unbiased research, the actual state of the world as regards its energy resources and also the implications of our situation once it is determined.

2. To herald to our local and world community not only our

GWEC NEWS

Untapped Sources
of Hydropower.

source: New York Times

own discoveries, but the events of the world as well and thus truly affect our civilization; for our own growth and its betterment.

We are small characters in a vast story but what we do here will affect the steel industry in Japan, the wheat crop in Russia and the direction of mankind in the years to come.

In other words: The lives of our friends and children's children, even the nature of our own adulthoods depend on our action now: What we do, you and I.

The GWEC is a dedicated, mature organization that desperately needs people who care enough to write, make speeches, conduct research-do any of countless other tasks that need doing and share in our goals-in order to achieve them.

All interested students are requested to please ask Dr. Hoffman in room 319 for further information.

Becker S. Smith

EDITORIALS

A SUBJECTIVE REPORT ON
THE VIRTUES OF
HYDROELECTRIC POWER

In recent years the world has started looking for better and more efficient methods of electrical energy. It seems that our present method is using up our resources, and, in effect, is consuming itself. But then, it wasn't a very good method anyhow. It costs alot of money to mine the fossil fuels to run our engines to turn our generators to produce our electricity; and then we have to ship the fuel and burning it is pretty inefficient, besides it is polluting our air.

(cont.)

Tucked away in one page of the 28 page fact sheet issued last month by the White House on Pres. Carter's national energy program is this intriguing statement:

"The President has*the Corps of Engineers to report within three months on the potential for additional hydro-power installations at existing dams throughtout the country-especially at small sites."

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries thousands of dams were built with a variety of purposes on millstreams and throughtout the country, paticularly in New England and New York.

They powered gristmills, sawmills, papermills, and eventually some were fitted out with installations for local generation of electric power, which ultimately fell into disuse or were removed altogether when large-scale power plants and distribution systems began to absorb the market.

It is these sites-plus many untapped navigation and flood control dams in the mid-West- that afford a valuable and available source of easily, quickly and cheaply developed hydroelectric power.

An official of the Federal Power Commission estimates that if only 10% of the existing 50,000 dams in the U.S. were developed to an average capacity of 5,000 kilowatts-which is very small indeed-the resultant hydroelectric production could save the equivalent of 180 million barrels of oil a year, about 6% of present oil imports. This would increase the

(cont.)

Thus it becomes necessary to find an alternative source: We turn to nuclear energy. The government has spent billions in research and development; so let's make it pay off. And now it seems we don't want to use it because it may be hazardous. In the mean time we look for another alternative. Wind power is too dependant on the weather; as is solar power, (ie., a few cloudy days and we have a few dark nights.) Geothermal energy is too hard to control, at this point. Slave labor is definitely out.

And now we come to my subject. Hydroelectric power is the most efficient way to power this planet. The cost of a dam is dirt cheap compared to that of building a nuclear facility. The dam would not only provide energy but would also store extra water in times of need. If built correctly a dam is completely safe. And instead of upsetting the environment it simply forces nature to readjust a little. The generators can be run so that the water is not fouled in any way and the amount of energy they could produce is almost unlimited.

We can make dams now, with our present technology; they are already tried and true.

We need them now.

In the next issue I will explain how, precisely how all this could be done. I will show that water runoff is the best source of energy in the country.

Fritz Neufeld

Rebuttals are welcome.
(Editor)

present supply of hydroelectric power in the U.S. by more than one third

The only real problem is overcoming the inertia of old patterns of thought and the hostility of old vested interests, especially of the power companies.

As President Carter says, this is a time for innovation-and the irony is that, in this case, innovation means going back to the first beginnings with modern technology now waiting to be used.

The GWEC welcomes your editorials, newsletters and ideas, as well as your support in the form of writing, drawing, computer work, research and/or whatever you think you can and should do to help.

Watch for the next issue which will include energy saving tips, cartoons featuring the "energy Miser", info. concerning GWEC activities and of course more news, editorials and feature articles.

May the force be with you.