

Environment

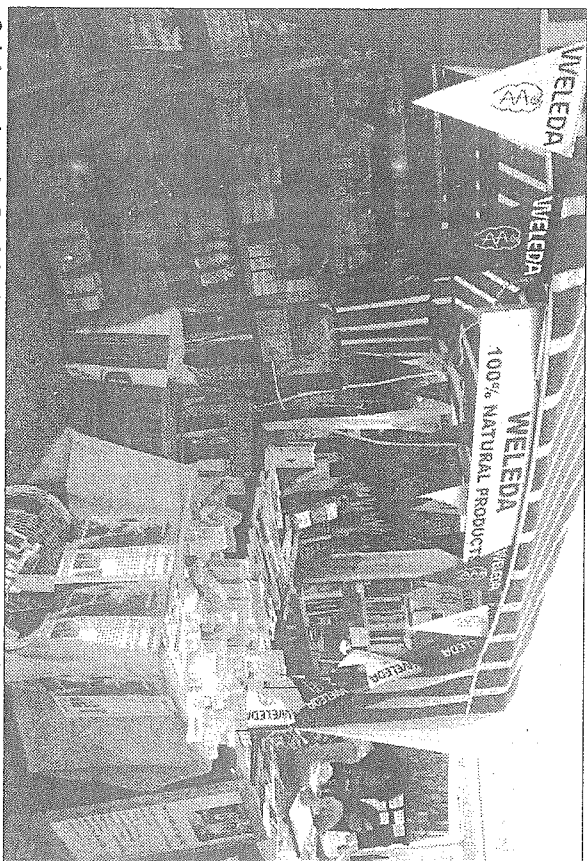
ETHICAL SHOPPING Buying for a better world



WARREN BUGEJA

ITH each and every purchasing decision, from a tube of toothpaste to a Rolls Royce, we are making choices that affect the environmental and social reality of the world we live in. Take a bite of a hamburger and you might be taking a bite out of the world's rain forests, contributing to global warming, waste build-up and the supporting of cruelty in intensive animal husbandry. Two-fifths of the deforestation in Brazil was caused by the clearance of forests for cattle ranching which supplies much of the beef destined for fast food outlets.

Spray furniture with polish from certain aerosols and not only are you paving the way for respiratory ailments but helping to destroy the earth's atmosphere increasing everyone's chances of contracting skin cancer. Fancy a coral or shark's tooth pendant? That shark might be on the list of endangered species and necessary to preserving the delicate balance of the food chain. You may also be lending a hand in wiping out a whole eco-



Galafest, photo by Daniela Agius

become informed, to surf the net and find out more about the companies and distributors behind the products and what goes into them.

Finally it is the consumer's prerogative to switch brands or even more worryingly for manufacturers and retailers, to boycott a particular product altogether.

Exercise your purchasing power. Become an active green consumer and avoid products

losing most of its nutritional value.

Is that tuna dolphin friendly? Has it been fish farmed? Buy fish-farmed fish and you are polluting your body and the seas with the antibiotics fed to these fish to prevent disease from being cooped up in crowded pens. Become vegetarian or ensure that the meat you do buy comes from animals that have been well cared for, have been killed humanely and have not been

tries are destroying Mediterranean agro-biodiversity and endangering the agricultural viability of the entire region.

Make sure the coffee, cocoa and tea you are drinking is fair-trade. Besides providing a fair price for economically disadvantaged producers, fair-trade improves the working environment for workers.

Do not contribute towards tropical deforestation by buying furniture made from tropical hardwoods such as mahogany or teak. Buy recycled stationary and toilet paper where possible. Substitute harsh chlorine and optical (whitening) bleaches, petroleum and phosphate based detergents with biodegradable, eco-friendly cleaning products which do not pollute our lakes and seas.

Buy low energy consumption washing machines, freezers

prepared to look after it. Do not support the trade in exotic pets. Most die being shipped and in addition to being a threat towards the local eco-system they might not adapt to.

Ban items from your household derived from protected species such as sea turtles, which are turned into shells, soup, oil, combs or jewellery. Boycott products imported from countries that are still actively whaling.

You should be able to eat what you put on your face. Scrutinise labels. Ensure that the perfumes, cosmetic, hair and body products you use, do not contain harmful allergenic and carcinogenic chemicals and have not been tested on animals. Look out for brands and concerns that do not use a lot of packaging, support recycling or have a bottle re-fill service. Blitz your wardrobe. Buy natural fibres such as cotton and hemp which detoxifies the land it is grown on.

For those armchair shoppers, mail order catalogues by Green Peace, WWF and Friends of the Earth, to name a few, offer plenty of alternative green gift ideas, products and services.

servicing the delicate balance of the food chain.

You may also be lending a hand in wiping out a whole ecosystem dependent on that coral reef. Apart from the appalling safety records of gold mining in South Africa, the production of gold in turn carries an invisible environmental price tag. The sulphides burnt off in gold processing produce sulphur dioxide which causes acid rain that kills trees and aquatic life. Additionally, child labour may have been employed in fashioning that third-world trinket.

There is often an inconspicuous health hazard, environmental and social cost for each of the items in your shopping basket. Ethical shopping is about shopping with a conscience and being aware of the repercussions of your purchases.

In a market economy, the consumer is king. It is the consumer's ethical responsibility to

together.

Exercise your Purchasing power. Become an active green consumer and avoid products which are:

- likely to cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal
- consume a disproportionate amount of energy
- use materials derived from threatened species or environments
- cause unnecessary waste because of over-packaging or an unduly short useful life
- involve cruelty to animals
- exploit employees and in sweat shops
- endanger public health

Think Global but eat local. Support your community's farmers and your corner grocery store providing fresh local produce which hasn't been transported thousands of kilometres to get to your table, thereby

from animals that have been well cared for, have been killed humanely and have not been fed or injected with antibiotics and growth hormones. Buy

GM/O free foodstuffs, organic fruit, vegetables and wine.

Find out where you can buy free-range eggs to help reduce the suffering of hens in batteries. Switch to organic fertilizers, pesticides and fungicides in the garden. Plant endemic and indigenous plants, shrubs and trees, which are hardy and drought resistant, thereby ensuring they do not become extinct.

The cultivation of imported hybrid crops and animal breeds, due to their poor acclimatisation, consumes more chemical fertilizers, antibiotics, hormones, water and energy, rapidly destroying soil fertility. Simultaneously these hybrids, by replacing local va-

and seas.

Buy low energy consumption washing machines, freezers and dishwashers. Put the kettle back on the gas stove and stock up on energy efficient light bulbs.

Car pool, use public transport, walk, or bike it to reduce hydrocarbon, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and lead pollution. Decrease the number of cars on the road and you reduce the amount of chemical smog in the air, acid rain, breathing distress and global warming.

Buy catalytic converters for your car engine to clean up car exhaust emissions. Invest in fuel efficient cars. If you cannot afford an electric car, use biodiesel. Fit radial tyres on your car which cut tyre drag, providing a 6-8% fuel saving. Check your tyre pressure regularly to reduce fuel consumption.

Do not buy a dog or cat unless you have the time for it, and are

the earth, to name a few, offer plenty of alternative green gift ideas, products and services.

Ditch the remote control and log on.

Visit Gaiafest, the festival of holistic living being held at Ghain Tuffieha from the 7th to the 10th of June. Amidst workshops and talks on a plethora of holistic themes, martial arts demonstrations, dance, arts and crafts and set to the tune of live bands you may find stalls selling a wide variety of free trade products, organic vegetables and food, natural body products, and complementary health services. You may also purchase a plant or tree, one of 40 endemic and indigenous species propagated at Gaia's 'Elysium Nursery' and thereby help to ensure that our native flora does not become extinct.

For more info log on to www.gaiafest.org. Doors open at 5.30pm each day.

Westinghouse Retrolux - Energy Saving Lighting Solutions

LOCAL Westinghouse Lighting Systems distributors, Frank Borda Ltd., have successfully introduced the Retrolux T5 Neon Lighting Solution that produces energy saving programs up to 50% of the current consumption.

This unique product patented by Westinghouse has been introduced across the EU over the last two years including such substantial customers as Malpensa Airport, Tesco in the UK, MacDonald's Europe, and the German Railway System whereby their total neon lighting

costs have been reduced by up to 50%.

Locally Frank Borda Ltd. has been responsible for the conversion of a wide variety of clients including Government and private industry, such as Emenatta Corporation, Nylon Knitting, ST Micro Electronics, Intercontinental, Silema Car Park, Ministry of the Environment and Rural Affairs, Park Tower Supermarket Ltd., and many others.

The product provides for the introduction of T5 neon tube technology into existing T8

neon tube fittings by means of conversion rather than the entire replacement of the fittings.

The savings that are generated result from both direct consumption reductions as well as reduced maintenance and the elimination of the starter. The advantages of T5 technology include reduced heat output and a doubling of the life of the tube which in addition maintains a much higher lux level throughout its life cycle.

Frank Borda Ltd. are able to provide an immediate replacement cost package which will

identify the payback period which in many cases is as low as 6 months as well as indicating the environmental advantages in terms of CO2 and carbon emissions that result directly from each location converted.

To date the client base in Malta using these energy saving products is providing for an annual reduction in CO2 emissions of 3,284 metric tons. This reduction in emissions volume is progressively increasing as more clients opt to install these energy saving and environmentally friendly products that are easily

installed in existing lighting fittings.

In addition Frank Borda Ltd. is also distributing Westlux T5 HiBay solutions again providing up to 50% savings when replacing HID lamps such as metal halide and high pressure sodium lamps which are typically found in warehouses, factories, large retail stores and sports facilities. Again these Westlux HiBay fluorescent fittings feature in addition to the energy efficiency much lower lumen depreciation rates and longer service intervals.