By Eric 12th Moon, Council President

When GreenStar recently upgraded the lighting and ceiling tiles at the West-End Store those involved took into account the opportunity to make a difference and implement savings at the same time.

Walk into the store and look up. There are now 35 fixtures for lighting that each use 32 watts of electricity whereas there were 52 fixtures at 60 watts each. That is a savings of 2000 watts, almost 2/3 of our electric use for lighting. The ceiling was also dropped several feet and the Co-op now heats and cools 6,796 less cubic feet of air space.

It was an important change and one that put us that much more in harmony with nature and with the needs of our planet. After all, humankind evolved over countless centuries in nature, in relationship with nature. We shifted with the weather, the seasonal crops and wildlife. We lived in nature, surrounded by the colors of nature, greens, browns, reds and the colors of the flowers. We had a personal relationship with our environment, our food and our neighbors.

Then, some few hundred years ago, we started to honor the intellectual, the mind more than the rest of our senses. We started the sciences and major city planning; we built rows of similar square houses. We started to move away from nature. Our relationship with nature became resource extraction and high yield industrialized farming. While at the same time that we moved to control nature, we expected peace and tranquility in our centrally heated and cooled square places. Through our glorious intelligence and distance from nature we allowed ourselves to pollute and foul our environment, our den, our home.

Twenty years ago, it was just that weird guy Al Gore talking about climate change: a result of human activities having a negative effect on our environments and ourselves. But now it is becoming mainstream, with governments and the media acknowledging the need for action now to stem the tide of abuse and pollution, to stop destroying the worlds that sustain and nourish us. I remember in the early  $\square$  90s a stand up routine I saw of George Carlin  $\square$  s. Carlin

said \( \Bigcup \) What is this save the earth \( \bull \) bulls\*\*\*?\( \Bigcup \) (He was immediately booed.) He responded, \( \Bigcup \) The earth \( \text{will do fine without us, it} \) s our butts we need to save and our \( \text{grandchildren} \Bigcup \) s.\( \Bigcup \)

I think what has happened is that the public awareness of the negative consequences of our past actions has brought people s conscious attention back to nature. I think that people are starting to turn their attention and conscious hearing back to our roots in the planet and the first thing we are hearing is a scream for help. Scary. But this is actually a very positive thing; it means that we are starting to listen again, starting to honor our relationship with the planet, each other, our food, our environment and our inter-relationships. We do not relate stagnantly, but inter-relate with all as we are a part of all.

Let s admit it, it is stressful to try to correct centuries of abuse and neglect, and now we are addressing that. What I keep hearing in the media is how technology (our intellect, our mind again) will save us by developing new solar panels that are even more efficient and new cars and new, new, new. But that will take time to develop. What can we do now to alleviate our angst? Conserve!

Conserve. Yes, go home and un-plug something. That I is it. It is that simple. We can start to conserve immediately, and we can continue to conserve in our future choices. If you un-plug those things which draw electricity even when you are not using them, you can save energy and money. How many clocks are telling the same (approximate) time in your house right now? Do you need that transformer adjusting electricity to your answering machine, radio, computer etc. right now? If not, un-plug it. These are all things that we can do right now that will have an immediate impact on the larger situation as well as on our electric bill.

You want to make a bigger impact? Look to the future decisions that you will make about replacing equipment and future buying decisions. Renovations, upgrading your environment/home is a great place to make some major changes. New refrigerators are much better than what was available some years ago, and very efficient ones are now even more affordable.

Don t go nuts. Just do what you can do and do it now.