

# Living Green Quarterly

June 2024



**Sentinel** believes that sustainability – or living “green” – is at the heart of protecting our future. Working together we can find the fun in being Green.

## GREEN vs. GREEN

**Which fun fact will you show off at the next dinner party?**

The richest 20% of people worldwide use 80% of global air travel, of which is a large contributor to carbon emissions.

Source: [New York Times](#)

The Statue of Liberty has a sheet of pure copper around the framework. The natural weathering of the copper surfaces is called patina and gives the statue its green hue. If the statue was cleaned to make it copper again, the copper would eventually deteriorate. Leaving the green patina in place protects the copper underneath.

Source: [New York Times](#)

## Eco-Logical Housing Materials

By Eirene Tsakales



The significance of sustainable housing extends far beyond a fleeting trend. Facing both housing shortages and environmental crises, the push for sustainable housing materials is increasingly important. Such materials aim to lower the carbon footprint of new constructions and provide more cost effective and long lasting options. Below are some of the many examples of sustainable materials currently available.

**Bamboo:** This giant grass plant has risen in popularity in recent years, and for good reason. Though an invasive nuisance to some countries, there are some varieties of clumping bamboo that grows vertically and clumps together, rather than spread rampantly. This allows bamboo farming that can be contained and lessens any unintended consequences. Meanwhile, bamboo has proven to be one of the most sustainable materials to utilize for several reasons, including the fact that bamboo reaches maturity within 4-6 years, whereas trees take anywhere from 20 to 60 years. Bamboo does not die when harvested, being a form of grass, they regenerate, and continue to grow. This means that the base is not decomposing and releasing carbon as trees do, and the roots stay intact which continues to protect the soil from erosion. Bamboo can also be harvested by hand or by small chainsaws, using less fossil fuel than by large machinery required to harvest and load trees. In addition to all the ways bamboo is sustainable, it has also

been proven proven to have superior strength compared to many common hardwoods, surpassing both oak and maple woods.

**Air Cleaning Bricks:** These porous concrete blocks are specifically designed to direct outside air flow through the filtration system and into the building. These bricks are structurally reinforced and attached to a plastic “hopper” at the base to collect the filtered particles. This allows for the pollutants from the outside air to be filtered through the brick before being released into the building without any coarse particles, and up to 30 percent of fine particles removed. Shockingly, these bricks do not need any energy to operate, as they work with pressure and temperature differentials alone. Upon exposure to sunlight, these materials become active and decompose pollutants, including nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds transforming them into less harmful substances like water and carbon dioxide.

**Mycelium:** This one might seem a little out there, but the future of ecological housing materials, just might be fungi. Mycelium, or mushroom roots, grow in abundance throughout the earth, and can be transformed into building bricks using their root-like fibers. These bricks are lightweight, strong and are 100% biodegradable. Though there are some kinks to work out as the brick ages, it is a *cap-tivating* concept and that is the *morel* of this story.

# Sustainability Spotlight

By Karen O'Brien



## Christy Russell

ABQ Uptown Manager

### How do you encourage residents to live an environmentally conscious lifestyle?

We encourage residents to live an environmentally conscious lifestyle by placing recycling bins in areas where they are easily accessible and the residents will see them. At move-in, we explain where the bins are and go over what can be placed in them. We also give out reusable shopping bags and cups as move-in gifts. The neighborhood is very walkable with many stores and entertainment options accessible by foot, so residents don't always need to use their cars.

### How are you engaging your staff in your sustainability efforts?

We do "Community Connect" events through the year, where we run donations for school supplies, children's clothing, canned food and Toys for Tots. Once a quarter, we focus on a sustainability resident function. In the past, we have done resident shredding events, Earth Day planting days, sending out recycling information and accepting electronic and battery recycling items in the main office.

### How do you plan to innovate and offer greener products and services?

We purchase environmentally friendly cleaning products to use in all the common areas. Recently, we switched all of the property lighting to LED which saves money and lasts longer!

### How have you engaged your staff in sustainability efforts?

We have worked diligently to reduce paper waste in the office, utilizing tablets and uploading digital documents instead of printing them.

# 2024's Stellar Solar Spectacle



## A First-Hand Account of the Total Eclipse

By Carrie Sitterley

On April 8, 2024, 15 states in North America experienced one of mother nature's most exciting and infrequent events – a total solar eclipse. Where the moon passes through the sky to align perfectly with the sun, casting its shadow down onto the swath of land directly underneath it at the time. This year's eclipse started in Mexico and glided through 15 states and parts of Canada until the sun and the moon went their separate paths over the Atlantic Ocean. Luckily, some of our Sentinel communities, being directly in the path of totality, were able to celebrate the celestial showing in a fun way.

Leaning into the astral theme, our teams in both Ohio and Indiana provided residents with an array of solar system named treats including Sun Chips, Moon Pies, Starbursts and Eclipse gum, while also providing the proper solar glasses to all who wanted to participate. To our delight, quite a few residents were able to join the festivities at our picnic and lawn areas for the full experience.

Having seen partial coverage in years past, many of us weren't sure what to expect. As the moon started its journey between the sun and earth, it started off the same as it had before. The sun looked as if a bite had been taken out of it through our eclipse glasses. The bite kept getting larger and larger until the sun seemed to be almost

entirely swallowed whole by the moon. Taking it all in when coverage was at about 95%, I noticed that the bright day just minutes prior looked more like dusk. The drop in temperature was evident, as were the sounds being made by both frantic birds and chirping crickets waking up earlier than usual to greet the "setting" sun. There was both a beauty and an eeriness to it, and for the first time I was able to understand why so many ancient civilizations took this beautiful scene to mean something ominous.

At 100% totality, we were able to remove the glasses for a moment to see the "nights sky", with stars and planets illuminating out of seemingly nowhere. The dark disk that resembled a moon, only in plain sight because of the gentle glowing of the sun's outer atmosphere, or the Corona, surrounding the perfect circle in the sky. We were all in awe for what felt like a suspended moment of time. Until the moon started to make its mad dash across, and the sun started to peak out again. I can say without hesitation that this was a truly amazing experience. The next solar eclipse in the United States will be in 2045, and will make its way through California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Mark your calendars now, you won't be disappointed!

## Trivia Questions

**World Rainforest Day is held every June 22nd to raise awareness and encourage actions to protect and preserve rainforests from deforestation and the effects of climate change. Test your knowledge of the biodiverse rainforest with trivia questions below.**

### 1. What are the four layers that make up the structure of most rainforests?

- A) Emergent, canopy, understory and forest floor
- B) Awning, shade, brush, earth
- C) Sky, leaves, trees, crust
- D) Lady fingers, jam, custard, whipped cream

### 2. What is the smallest rainforest in the world?

- A) New Guinea rainforest
- B) Congo Basin
- C) Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve
- D) The Amazon

### 3. Home to half of all the living animals and plant species on the planet, what percentage of the earth's coverage do rainforests make up?

- A) 80% B) 5% C) 8% D) 2%

### 4. There are two types of rainforests: tropical and...?

- A) Mediterranean B) Temperate C) Dry D) Equatorial

### 5. What primate is native to the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra, and are endangered due to deforestation?

- A) Capybara B) Gorilla
- C) Orangutan D) Mouse lemur

# Quick Apartment Energy Savers

By David Rodriguez

During the shift to longer days and warmer temperatures in the summer months, we tend to make the most of our time by enjoying the great outdoors, attending family BBQs, or making brunch plans with friends. With all that time spent outside our apartment homes, you would think we automatically use less energy. Unfortunately, our monthly electric bill tells a different story. But modest changes can make a significant impact to your carbon footprint and the impact on our wallets. Below are easy energy saving pointers to help.



- Health permitting, try to set your thermostat closer to the outside temperature when you are not home. This will help you keep your AC from needlessly running while keeping your home comfortable throughout the day.
- Clear the area around your air conditioner vents to ensure the best ventilation in your home. This also optimizes how efficient your AC unit is at cooling your home.
- Keep curtains, drapes, and blinds closed during the hottest times of the day or when you are not home to ensure that the sun's radiant heat is not heating up your home.
- Use ceiling fans to optimize ventilation in your home. This will help spread the cool air from your AC unit throughout the house and cool all the rooms more efficiently.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room. While it may not seem like much, light bulbs, especially incandescent lights, do emit heat which adds to the overall heat that your AC unit needs to compensate for. And it saves energy.
- The best time of day to do laundry is during low-demand hours. It's usually best to wash your clothes early in the morning during the summer and late at night during the winter.

## Taking a Trip, Sustainably

### *The Thoughtful Travelers*

By Heidi Adams and Skye Randazzo



If you are an experienced traveler, you may have noticed the precipitous growth of tourism in recent decades. Higher incomes, travel rewards, low-cost airline carriers and alternate accommodations to expensive hotels have all helped to shift the mindset we once held about the unattainable vacation. The idea that travel is something you must spend years setting aside money to afford is long gone, and we are now in the era of enjoying both long weekend getaways as well as vacations abroad on a consistent basis. Regrettably, the uptick in wanderlust however beneficial across the board, does contribute to global carbon emissions and can encroach on the local environment and cultures.

Aiming to lessen the negative impact while maximizing its positive effects for communities, cultures, ecosystems and the planet, many travelers are rethinking the status quo of travel by becoming a more “sustainable tourist.” Incorporating some of these green tourism guidelines can help us all to travel responsibly.

**Know the Modes of Transportation:** The travel industry has opened the world to us, but all modes of transportation require energy. Some are more efficient and cleaner than others. A sustainable tourist focuses on eco-friendly transportation including walking, biking, public transportation and ride-shares services. Air travel, driving and cruises tend to be the biggest offenders – so when traveling to closer destinations, traveling by train can cut emissions dramatically. While at your destination consider taking the bus, metro, or riding a bike around town. If a car is a necessity, opt for a smaller car or an electric/hybrid model if possible.

**Appreciate the Landmarks:** Tourist traps are usually tourist traps for a reason. But once they grow in notoriety, most places become a casualty of their own popularity. The large crowds tend to bring with them an overwhelming

amount of food, non-recyclables, paper, cardboard and single use plastic. To avoid littering around some of the most beautiful landmarks, try to bring along reusable flatware, carry your own reusable tumblers, avoid buying food that comes with a lot of excess packaging and look for local restaurants that use metal flatware. Not only does this help conserve a unique attraction, but it also reduces needless waste.

**Slow Down:** There is an appeal to having a packed itinerary while traveling. Afterall, you never know when you will make it back to your destination. But if you are traveling to simply check it off your list, post a picture or two on social media, and move on to the next destination, you are missing the most beneficial aspect of traveling. Not only is it a stressful experience as you are constantly at the airport or in transit, but you cannot fully immerse yourself in the culture. Doing so broadens your horizons, as well as quells the need for multiple plane rides, lowering your carbon footprint while traveling.

**Eco-Lodging:** There are many eco-friendly hotels to stay in that have made important environmental improvements. Most are built with natural or eco-friendly materials, heated and cooled by passive air conditioning, utilize a recycled water system and renewable energy. Do some research and support an environmentally conscious business if you can. While in your temporary abode, you can go above and beyond by simply putting the “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door if possible. This will cut down on chemical cleansing agents as well as electricity used for vacuuming and washing. You can also hang up towels to air dry for multiuse during your stay. Be sure to turn the lights and air conditioning off and close the curtains to help control the environment while you are out.

### Trivia Questions Answers

1:A, 2:C, 3:C, 4:B, 5:C

# Greek Style Spanikopita



## Local and Seasonal Eating

By Skye Randazzo



Today, supermarkets provide a diverse array of food at any time of the year. Unfortunately, sourcing food from all over the world that is neither local nor seasonal can have a negative environmental impact; transportation alone is a large contributor of pollution to our air and waterways and adds to our dependency on fossil fuels.

The food provided has diminished nutritional value because it is picked prematurely and produced with chemicals to survive the long journey from overseas. To help lower our carbon footprint, support your nearest farmers markets that offer fresh, local and seasonal produce. Our Greek Style Spinach Pie recipe showcases a way to create a dish with many ingredients found at your local green market; spinach, green onions, parsley, swiss chard, leeks, feta cheese and eggs are just a portion of summer's amazingly delicious flavor profile.

### Ingredients

4tbs	olive oil, (split in 3 portions)	4oz	Feta cheese (pro tip – use a good block and Greek feta cheese, and crumble yourself)
1lb	fresh Spinach (cooked, cooled, drained then chopped)		
½cup	Green Onions, chopped	1lb	Frozen Zagorisiso phyllo dough (2 packs of 4 pieces) country style, or best phyllo dough option
½cup	Parsley, chopped		
¾ cup	Swiss chard, chopped		
1	large leek, white and tender green parts, sliced thin		• Pepper – to taste
4	eggs		• Salt- to taste (and dependant on saltiness of cheese)loosely packed

### Directions

- 1) Preheat the oven at 350°. Heat 1tbs of olive oil in large pan over medium heat. Add half the spinach to the pan and cook until just wilted. Add the remaining spinach to the pan and cook until wilted down. Before removing from heat, add a sprinkling of salt and pepper to taste. (Again, lighter on the salt if the feta is particularly salty.)
- 2) Let spinach cool, wring out excess water and coarsely chop. While the spinach cools, chop the green onions, parsley, swiss chard and slice the leek and add it all to a large bowl. Crumble the feta inside the bowl with the vegetables. Add the chopped spinach to the bowl.
- 3) Break in eggs and mix everything together, adding a light sprinkling of salt and pepper to the mixture.
- 4) In a cake pan spread 1tbs of olive oil and lay out four layers of the phyllo, one on top of the other. It should hang over the sides of the pan a little bit.
- 5) Empty half the filling and spread evenly, then add 1 layer of phyllo over the vegetables. Empty the rest of the filling over the single layer and spread evenly, then add 3 layers of phyllo dough over the mixture.
- 6) Roll the phyllo that is hanging over the sides of the pan to each side of the spinach pie and lightly crimp to bind the layers of phyllo dough. Cut into serving size pieces, brush 2 tbs of olive oil over the phyllo.
- 7) Bake at 350° until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let cool and Enjoy!

Source: Eirene Tsakales' recipes