



# The Daily Gleaner

**February 2, 2008**

## **Greening the ECMAs**

In the past few decades the universal language of music has helped raise awareness of global issues - turning knowledge into action. George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh in the early 1970's helped raise awareness of issues in that country. The eighties saw Bob Geldof and Live Aid raise millions of dollars for Africa, and last summer Live Earth helped raise awareness of the climate crisis.

It is now time for East Coast musicians to have a role in raising awareness of global warming, right here in Fredericton. During the East Coast Music Awards (ECMAs), from February 7 to 10, those who participate in the events will notice a range of green initiatives in action - all designed to lower the environmental impact of the event while also raising the public's environmental consciousness.

The City of Fredericton is providing an efficient event-wide bus system free to all delegates and volunteers during the four-day event, which will help keep hundreds of cars off the road and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) associated with transportation to, from, and between ECMA venues. The buses used will be those in the City's transit fleet that run with a bio-diesel additive to reduce emissions.

Other green initiatives include: delegate bags made from 100% certified organic cotton with vegetable-based ink; biodegradable plastic drinking cups in major venues; ECMA publications printed on paper with a high content of post-consumer recycled materials and printed with vegetable-based inks.

Steven Page of Barenaked Ladies is the event host this year and will also be a keynote speaker on the 'greening of the music industry'. As you may have heard, Barenaked Ladies strive to make their shows carbon neutral, and the group raises awareness about climate change through their organization called Barenaked Planet ([www.reverbrock.org/barenakedplanet](http://www.reverbrock.org/barenakedplanet)).

The ECMAs will also be offsetting the greenhouse gas emissions from this year's event in some innovative ways. The ECMA Green Team did the math and calculated that the ECMA's will be responsible for approximately 35 tonnes of GHGs from the energy used at all venues during the four-day event.

Several initiatives are being undertaken to reduce the environmental impact of these emissions. E9 Group Inc. ([www.e9group.com](http://www.e9group.com)) donated \$500 to Farmers Helping Farmers, a PEI based non-profit group that helps install energy efficient cookers in schools and homes in Kenya. It has been calculated that a tonne of GHG emissions can be eliminated in Kenya for about \$15. Prior to receiving these cookers, families and schools had to burn trees to get the heat needed to cook their food. Trees absorb carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) but when the trees are cut down for the sole purpose of cooking food, the carbon dioxide absorption is gone. The use of efficient cookers helps to dramatically reduce the amount of wood (trees) needed to cook. The other benefit is the reduction of smoke in schools and homes, improving indoor air

quality significantly. Many Kenyan women live with irritated eyes and lungs due to the smoke generated from cooking. This donation will help offset some of the environmental impact of the ECMAs here in Fredericton while improving the quality of life of some families in Kenya.

The other emissions offset tool will come in the form of 3,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) that will be distributed to ECMA attendees. These CFLs are provided by the City of Fredericton and TD Friends of the Environment as part of Fredericton's Green Matters campaign. The CFLs will reduce emissions by 30 tonnes over a year (if they all replace 60W incandescent bulbs that would normally be turned on for one hour per day).

Music is a universal language, and increasingly, so is global warming. A tonne of emissions saved in Fredericton is the same as a tonne of emissions in Kenya – they all affect our planet equally. Enjoy the music next week, and know that the environmental impact of the event is being reduced in some very innovative ways, with both environmental and social benefits in mind.

*Peter Corbyn is owner of E9 Group Inc (which includes Earth Institute). He is part of a creative group of ECMA volunteers who are committed to greening the event in Fredericton.*