

Summary for Medfield Green Meeting, Thursday October 15, 2009 at Zullo Gallery

Topic: Safer Personal Care Products and Cosmetics

Guest Speaker: Susan Garramone of Sisterra Essential Products in Hopedale, MA

Sponsor: New 'N Towne

Meeting Favor (bar soap and lip balm) sponsored by: Manor Hall Soap Company in Springfield, MA

Our guest speaker, Susan, spoke about the most important and pervasive chemicals to avoid in personal care products and why we should avoid them. There is a power point presentation with this information explained in detail available at [www.medfieldgreen.org](http://www.medfieldgreen.org) under the "Green Info" page. She and her sister have founded her company based on safe botanical blends for skin and hair. Please visit their website at [www.sisterraproducts.com](http://www.sisterraproducts.com).

Find out what's in your products and find safer alternatives at Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Database [www.cosmeticsdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com).

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics is a coalition of public health, educational, faith, labor, women's, environmental justice, environmental & consumer groups. The campaign is working hard to promote awareness of the problems created by the toxins in our products as well as change the lack of regulation in the cosmetics/personal care industry. "What else can we do? Safer products and smarter laws will protect our health, the health of future generations and the health of the environment." To learn more, please visit the website [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org). There is a petition that we can all sign that asks congress to empower the FDA to regulate this industry.

Website Resources include:

[www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com) which rates companies and products from 0-10 (worst to best) based on a wide array of considerations, including products contents, but, also a company's environmental footprint.

[www.preserveproducts.com](http://www.preserveproducts.com) is the website for a local company working hard to use recycled plastic for toothbrushes and other products. It is part of the company Recycline and is located in Waltham, MA. They were very generous to send us coupons to hand out at the meeting for a variety of their products.

[www.manorhallsoapcompany.com](http://www.manorhallsoapcompany.com) is also local in Springfield, MA. The company makes all natural soap and skin care products without harsh sulfates, alcohol, or parabens. The company made up our gift bag favor for the evening. There is a coupon for 20% off website orders by using the code: GREEN20 at checkout. The coupon is valid through Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> of 2009.

Our own Medfield CVS was nice enough to supply our meeting attendees with a sample of organic cotton balls that they sell in the CVS stores.

The book from which I read an excerpt is Healing the Feminine by Lesley Irene Shore, Ph.D. - our own Medfield Green member and Harmony Farm resident!

Decoding product labeling is the wise consumer's best defense against unwanted and possibly harmful ingredients in personal care products that we use every day. The following books can help us make more informed choices:

Not Just a Pretty Face The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry

*By Stacy Malkan*

Gorgeously Green 8 Simple Steps to an Earth Friendly Life

by Sophie Uliano

Dying to Look Good

by Dr. Christine H. Farlow, D.C.

There are many resources in book form or on the internet for homemade facial/body care with simple, inexpensive ingredients from your kitchen. One favorite is an oatmeal, honey and almond scrub. Blend ingredients together in a food processor to desired consistency and use as a facial scrub. Keep refrigerated in between uses. This simple recipe comes from Robin McGraw (Dr Phil's wife) and you can find it on the website [www.theglamorouslife.com](http://www.theglamorouslife.com). Consider having fun with homemade treatments, which are so inexpensive and nutritious for our skin!

In closing, isn't it wonderful that we are able to continue to learn more and attempt to use that knowledge to improve the quality of life of those we love and our world environment. I know I sometimes can become a victim of feeling guilty about my previous poor, misinformed choices, and get a bit stuck...wondering ,if it is too late to make a change. I just want to confirm what we all already know, it is never too late to make a difference. Take it slow and be kind to yourself. The following tips are meant to guide you, but, do whatever feel s right to you.

- Consider using fewer personal care products for yourself and your family and environment.
- Our children and babies are most vulnerable to toxins-let's make some positive changes there first!
- Take out one ingredient at a time. Maybe start with parabens!
- When considering which products to start with, try improving the quality of products that you "leave on" your skin, hair, body.

-Cheryl Patry and I have had a head start over the last few years with overhauling our personal care products-email or reach out if you need a little help getting started.

-Before heading out to shop for a new personal care item or cosmetic, consider looking on [www.cosmeticsdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com) for a low toxicity rating that you can feel good about.

-Don't be afraid to ask questions about the products we buy-call companies and demand to know the resources for ingredients. You would be surprised how willing good companies are to disclose, with great pride, the quality and source for their ingredients. A perfect example is [www.larenim.com](http://www.larenim.com) from whom I buy mineral cosmetics. Upon learning that minerals can be tainted with lead and other toxins, I wanted to know if they had clean minerals for their make-up. The owner confirmed that they have a meticulous 3<sup>rd</sup> party testing for their minerals. Makes you feel good to know, there are some people (and therefore companies!) doing the right thing.

We hope to tape a segment for Medfield Cable 8 that will help inform a wider audience with this information. Stay tuned!

Thank you to all our sponsors, our speaker, Susan , and all of the people who attended the meeting.