

## U.S. Green Building Council - Long Island Chapter



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 New Hyde Park, N.Y.



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# “Green” doesn’t appear in this article...so its OK to read it

### rb Ralph Benzakein



CresaPartners

It’s amazing to me that there are still people out there who believe we are no longer facing a worldwide global warming catastrophe. I know that some of this is because the economy has taken center stage. When the economy goes south, everything else tends to take a back seat, including the war, education, health care and of course, the environment. But, there is so much science avail-

able to confirm that global warming is occurring; that humans are causing it; that glaciers are melting; that sea levels are rising; that CO<sup>2</sup> is the major contributing factor. But let’s say you don’t believe any of that. Can we at least agree on the following?

- Our energy supply is primarily based on burning fossil fuels which have a negative impact on our planet.
- Our dependence on foreign oil puts us at tremendous risk and at the mercy of countries we would rather not depend on for our safety or financial stability.
- There are serious risks in developing new oil fields and that oil companies themselves cannot be trusted to safeguard the environment.

• Clean water and clean air are finite resources and we are not doing nearly enough to protect them.

These aren’t someone else’s problems. Don’t expect this to get fixed without everybody doing their part. And there are so many easy things to do that don’t cost money (in fact some of them save money) and they make life a little more pleasant too.

Next time you are sitting in traffic on the Long Island Expressway, have a look around you at all the cars and huge SUVs that have one passenger in them. I know that we all can’t car pool, but surely some of us can. And do we all really need those huge four-wheel-drive vehicles? How many times a year do you actually need to plow through huge snow drifts on Long Island? Don’t you usually stay home on those days anyway? I’m like an annoying ex-smoker on this one. We used to be a two SUV family and we now find that we are managing just fine with none. I’ve saved thousands of dollars on gas, more than enough money to rent a bigger vehicle occasionally, if needed.

Can’t we print on both sides of the page; drink from reusable containers instead of plastic bottles; shut down a monitor or computer at night; take a walk instead of a drive; turn off a light in your office when you’re not in it? These are easy things to do.

If you were waiting for one giant solution, like everybody switching to solar or wind power, you are going to wait a very long time. It may happen, but big wheels turn slowly. In the meantime, do the little things that make a difference. You can also help by joining an organization that supports your beliefs. Your local USGBC chapter is a great place to start.

**Ralph Benzakein LEED AP, SIOR,**  
 is a vice president at CresaPartners, Melville, N.Y.

### Meet the USGBC Members

George Brennan is president of Telesis Solutions Group, which was formed to meet the need for full service, managed IT outsourcing services and to become a vital consulting resource for increasing efficiency and lowering operating costs. Brennan also chairs the Green Technology committee for the USGBC. He conducts a series of sustainability seminars for the USGBC on “How companies can become leaner, meaner and greener in and outside their operating environments.”



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Sammy Chu currently serves as the director of the town of Babylon’s Long Island Green Homes program. The Long Island Green Homes program, launched in 2008, was the first Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program designed to service energy efficiency needs in the nation. The Green Homes program to date has enrolled over 500 participating homes and has recently expanded into the financing of renewable improvements.



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Picture yourself at the next...



SUSTAINABLE COCKTAILS  
 Tuesday July 27th

USGBC-LI is supported by a network of committees, each is dedicated to a specific area of managing chapter activities or promoting green building in our communities.

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| ADVOCACY               | GREEN SCHOOLS              |
| COMMUNICATIONS         | GREEN TECHNOLOGY           |
| EDUCATION              | HEALTHCARE                 |
| EMERGING PROFESSIONALS | MEMBERSHIP                 |
| FINANCIAL              | PROGRAMS                   |
| GALA                   | RESIDENTIAL GREEN BUILDING |
| GREEN INCENTIVES       | RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT       |

**BECOME A MEMBER...  
 GET INVOLVED...  
 JOIN A COMMITTEE**

CONTACT US AT: [INFO@USGBC-LI.ORG](mailto:INFO@USGBC-LI.ORG)

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FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:  
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**Event  
 Calendar**

**Clam Bake**  
 August 24, 2010  
 6:00pm-10:00pm

**Managing the LEED Job Site  
 Evening Program**  
 October 27, 2010  
 5:30pm-8:30pm