

green news

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEN DECADE COALITION / NEWTON



VOL.17 - NO. 1

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

Environmental Speaker Series

Cosponsored with the Newton Free Library at the library Mondays, 7pm

Jan. 22: Cynthia Rosenzweig, NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies "Climate Change in Our Back Yard"



Cynthia Rosenzweig is a research agronomist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City and leader of its Climate Impacts Group. Her assessment of the impact of climate change on the 31-county New York metropolitan area (2000) identified a number of "heat islands" — industrial areas like Camden, N.J., and Long Island City that are far hotter than other areas.

Lately, she has been exploring one possible way of mitigating the heat island effect — by literally turning rooftops green. She recently led an international, interdisciplinary project to study the potential impacts of climate change on world food supply, trade, and risk of hunger.

Dr. Rosenzweig received her Ph.D. in Plant, Soil, and Environmental Sciences from the University of Massachusetts in 1991.

Feb. 26: John Warner, U Mass Lowell Center for Green Chemistry "Green Chemistry: Necessary Steps to a Sustainable Future"



Imagine a world where all segments of society demanded environmentally benign products! Imagine if all consumers, all retailers and all manufacturers insisted on buying and selling only non-toxic materials! Green Chemistry is a philosophy that seeks to reduce or eliminate the use of hazardous materials at the design stage of a materials process. This

presentation will describe the history and background of Green Chemistry and discuss the opportunities for the next generation of materials designers to create a safer future.

John Warner is Director of the Center for Green Chemistry at UMASS Lowell, where he started the world's first doctoral program in green chemistry. He is considered among the founders of the green chemistry movement and is co-author of the book *Green Chemistry: Theory and Practice*.

Save Mar.26, Apr.23, & May 21 for next speakers !

A course to help you 'recycle, restore, renovate'

If you own a home in Newton, you might want to sign up for a four-part class: *Recycle, Restore, Renovate: A Newton Homeowner's Guide to Design, Preservation & Sustainability*. The class will take place over four Sunday afternoons in March 2007 at The Newton History Museum. In the first part, called "The City of Newton and Your Home," which takes place Sunday, March 4, 3-5 pm, you will meet representatives of the City commissions and agencies that have the most impact on home restoration & renovation projects. Topics will include planning, zoning and variances, building and demolition permits, historic districts, plans and incentives for historic preservation, energy conservation and sustainability, and more.

The second part, "Creative Design for Historic Homes & Neighborhoods," on Sunday, March 11, 3-5 pm, will feature architects and other professionals sharing stories of three successful Newton projects that: (1) adapted an older home to meet new needs, without expansion; (2) added new space to an older home; (3) created a new home that enhanced an established neighborhood.

In the third installment, "Sustainable Design & Materials," on Sunday, March 18, 3-5 pm, a panel of architects and other experts will help you evaluate the overall environmental impact of both materials and design choices for residential construction and restoration projects.

The finale, "Preventing Leaks, Smells, Drafts, & Peeling Paint," Sunday, March 25, 3-5 pm, is an introduction to residential building science for the homeowner. Participants will learn what contractors should be doing both during new construction and in restoration projects to head off problems with leaks, smells, drafts, and chronically peeling paint. Pre-registration is required—fee is \$20 per session (or \$60 for all four) for members of Green Decade and Newton History Museum; \$25 per/\$70 for four - for others. Call 617-796-1450, or register online at www.greendecade.org.

by Margaret Ford

Our Mission

The Green Decade Coalition/Newton is conducting a campaign to make a significant improvement in resource use by businesses, institutions, and residences in Newton. We establish goals and seek to achieve measurable results in energy and water use, waste disposal practices, and pollution prevention through research, education, and action. Our goal is to make Newton a model of ecological and environmental integrity in a sustainable world community.

Healthy cosmetics spa and seminar

Stay beautiful and healthy. In this fun-filled evening, you'll learn to select (and create) cosmetics that are safe for both you and the environment. Erika Keller Rogoff of Bethel Botanicals will teach you how to develop your own cosmetics made from nature's bounty, while Leise Jones of Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow shows you how to find safe alternatives to products with dangerous

ingredients. You'll also learn about a Web-based tool that helps consumers make conscientious decisions. This is indulgence with a difference, pampering that you can feel good about. The seminar will be held on Thursday, January 30 from 7:30-9pm. The location will be provided upon registration. \$15 per person. Register at 617-965-1995 or www.greendecade.org/events *by Margaret Ford*

Join the January membership appeal party!

This is your chance to join the party – Green Decade's mailing party of our Annual Membership Appeal! Volunteers are needed to help with the 3000 membership packets, days and early evenings: Thu., Jan. 18, 6:30-9 pm; Fri., Jan. 19, 10am-6pm; Sat. Jan. 20, 10am-6pm.

Come for an hour or two and have a great time with other GDC members – bring a friend! Contact Marcia Cooper, Membership Chair, at 617-964-8567 or membership@greendecade.org.

Thanks ! and . . . next deadline

For the next newsletter, please send submissions or requests by email to Ira Krepchin, irapk@alum.mit.edu by Friday, January 12, 2007.

Thanks for making this newsletter possible to Managing Editor Ira Krepchin, Co-editors Peter Smith/ Louise Bruyn, and those who wrote articles. Many thanks to our Newsletter Collator Chairs Marcia Cooper and Frank Propp, and their team for the last issue: Arlene and Dean Bandes, Pat Rand, Lynn Scheller, and Edie Propp.

What I learned at the 'Urban Ark'

"A higher quality of life at a lower cost of living— what could be better?" David Del Porto and his wife, Elva, have spent 25 years turning this vision into a reality. I finally got to attend the "Urban Ark" seminar, described by a fellow attendee as "the chance to see someone living more in harmony with nature, with less dependence on fossil fuels." The prospect of putting their five children through college prompted the quest for alternative sources, and David reveals how they've integrated space heat, food production, air purification, and wastewater treatment within an amazing two-story greenhouse.

In addition, he shows you how to invest your time and money to get the most benefit from the least effort as they guide you through the greenhouse and washwater gardens. Elva happily shows off her greenhouse oranges which will be ready to eat in March. Ken Mallory attended the Dec. 2 seminar because he is interested in solar energy for heating his home and water, as well as hydroponic gardening. He enjoyed David's "enthusiasm for solar engineering" as well as the valuable information on "use of grey water" and "the bamboo, different fruit trees and the [green] lacewing since we do hydroponics."

Another person said, "I took away the knowledge that I should definitely get an energy audit, and also that my home could perhaps have a similar greenhouse." And new GDC member Jean Bartholomew "was struck by the simplicity of it – passive solar and how efficient it is: comfortable, warm and efficient. It spurred me on to consider alternative forms of energy." As for me – well, I'm hoping David Del Porto will come build a greenhouse at my home so I can improve the quality of my life and lower the cost of living!



An enthusiastic group enjoyed an 'Urban Ark' Seminar and Tour. This passive solar greenhouse was added to a 6,000 square foot Newton house and heats the house most of the heating season with the help of a fan powered by a photovoltaic solar panel that distributes the warm air through connecting second story windows and doors. Money is saved using waste water for irrigation.

2006 was the highest attendance ever for the Urban Ark, according to coordinator Fran Seasholes, with 71 people attending, thanks in part to our partnership with Newton Community Education. 615 people have attended since the seminars started in 1991. Find out more about this seminar on the GDC website: www.greendecade.org/UrbanArk. If you haven't been to the Urban Ark, sign up now for the next seminars on Feb. 3 and 4 – you can't afford not to go.

by Margaret Ford

Eco-activities with Newton's sister city in Nicaragua

Some of you may not know it, but Newton has a sister city, San Juan Del Sur, in Nicaragua. Volunteers frequently visit our municipal sibling to provide useful services, such as giving public health talks in the countryside, helping out with art therapy sessions for traumatized children, and working in public health clinics. One of the highlights of this year's efforts was the development of the Newton Workshop for Appropriate Technology. With funding from the Union Church in Waban, and the help of 30 volunteers from Newton, a facility was constructed for the production of two environmentally friendly products. One is a BioSand Filter that

purifies contaminated well water without the use of chemicals. The other is an EcoStove, which is a simple cooking box with a chimney. The stove replaces the open-fire cooking practices in the community, which have contributed to asthma and emphysema among women and children in Nicaragua. As of this December, 350 EcoStoves and 170 BioSand Filters have been installed throughout the township by Fidel Pavon, who is now a salaried employee of Newton, with responsibilities that include manufacture, installation, maintenance, public education, and reporting (to us) about these "appropriate technologies."

Funding for some of this production came from the First Unitarian Society of Newton, the Lempert Foundation, the Pietro Mar technical high school Cagliari, Sardinia, and a group of volunteers from Boston College. The BC students helped in the construction of the facility and then returned to college and raised more than \$2,000 for the project.

Environmental projects in the past have included the installation of composting toilets, and innovative water purification systems for remote villages. Their next project is to combine installation of BioSand Filters with intensive domestic hygiene education, plus distribution of anti-parasite medicines to four rural communities where parasite infection runs as high as 80% of the population. The filters eliminate 100% of the parasites from drinking water; the hygiene program helps folks avoid reinfection; and the pills cure them of the parasite they currently carry around in their bodies. A pilot version of this project has already started up in the community of Papaturreo.

Congratulations to the Newton/San Juan Del Sur Sister City Project! For more information about the sister-city efforts, visit www.newtonsanjuan.org. *by Ira Krepchin*

(Note: information for this article came from the Newton/San Juan Del Sur Sister City Project Newsletter: Summer 2006 and from David Gullette.)

Thanks for donations go to:



PATRON: Ann & Don Berwick

DONORS: Anonymous, Marcia Cooper, Bill Holland, Lee Levins

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BUSINESS FRIEND: Needham Garden Center



JOIN THE GREEN DECADE

Enclosed is: New member Renewal

(\$20.00 suggested annual individual donation) (additional donation) **TOTAL**

NAME: _____
(For address labels)

ADDRESS: _____

ZIP _____ PHONE: _____

E-MAIL _____
(Please print clearly !)

Yes! I am joining/renewing for calendar 2007!

Most of our budget comes from memberships. Membership and contributor lists are not given out. You get the bi-monthly GREEN NEWS, discounts at selected local businesses, and more!

Amount	Person/Family	Business	Please circle your category
\$ 20	Basic	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	
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500	Benefactor	Patron	
1000	Really Green	Benefactor	

Thank you! Please send your tax deductible check payable to: GDC/N, P.O. Box 590242, Newton, MA 02459 Jan/Feb 2007

New for 2007: multi-year membership offer !

Now you can join the Green Decade Coalition for one, two or three years ! Join or renew for up to three years with a discount on the two and three year plans, plus the advantage of not having to write that check or remember to renew each year. This first-time plan will be offered until March 15, 2007, after which the standard one-year memberships will be featured as before.

All one-year memberships include the same rates as the previous year. The Basic Individual/Family plan is \$20 for one year, \$35 for two years and \$50 for three. Business Basic is \$50 for one year, \$90 for two, and \$125 for three years. Please see enclosed membership slip for details of higher levels; as always, extra contributions are welcome!

Don't miss this great opportunity – join or renew before Jan. 5 to help us conserve paper and postage during the January 2007 Annual Membership Appeal. Subscribe online at greendecade.org/membership and pay by credit

Urgent deadline: Every Green Decade member should take this action !

You can help earn a 2kW solar array for Newton worth \$20,000 with your New England Wind donation. We need 150 people to enroll at \$5 per month, or make a one time donation of \$100 by March 31, 2007. You can call (weekdays 9-5pm) 617 524-3950, or donate online: www.NewEnglandWind.org. 30 of us have signed up. There are 300+ Green Decade members. We only need 120 more by March 31. So sign up today! *by Peter Smith*



You can offset your CO2 emissions with tax-deductible New England Wind Fund donation. Call Eric Olson at 617 558-6866 to get your donation matched twice!

By popular request Green Decade presents:
2nd showing of the Al Gore film:

An Inconvenient Truth

introduced by Mayor Cohen !

Saturday, Feb. 3rd at 1 pm

followed by discussion led by Eric Olson, Chairperson of Green Decade Coalition Energy Committee

Free Admission Druker Auditorium
Newton Free Library

card or fill out the membership form included in this issue and mail with your check made out to GDC/N, to PO Box 590242, Newton, MA 02459.

CALENDAR

- Jan 22 (Mon)** 7pm **"Climate Change in Our Back Yard"** Cynthia Rosenzweig, NASA, Environmental Speakers Series, Newton Free Library, See box page 1 - FREE
- Jan 30 (Thur)** 7:30-9pm **"Healthy Cosmetics Spa"** \$15, Erika Keller Rogoff & Leise Jones, Register 617 965-1995 or www.greendecade.org/events
- Feb 3 (Sat)** 10am-noon **"Urban Ark' Seminar & Tour,** \$20; GD members, seniors, students-\$15. Register 617 969--5927. See article p. 2
- Feb 3 (Sat)** 1pm **"An Inconvenient Truth" film w/Al Gore** Newton Free Library, See box this p -FREE
- Feb 10 (Sat)** 1-4pm **Workshop: Insulating Your Older Home** Jackson Homestead, Register 617 965-1995
- Feb 26 (Mon)** 7pm **"Green Chemistry: Necessary Steps to a Sustainable Future"** John Warner, Environmental Speakers Series, Newton Free Library, See box page 1 - FREE

Send environmental events to *GREEN NEWS*. email to Ira Krepchin by Friday, Jan. 12, 2007 irapk@alum.mit.edu. We will list as space permits.

"Denmark is a net exporter of energy. Nearly 20% of Danish energy comes from wind turbines, about 80% of which are owned by small cooperatives or individuals. Wind energy employs 20,000 people and brings in \$3.4 billion a year." Local Energy, Local Power (*YES! a journal of positive futures*, p. 26 Winter 2007.)

green decade
COALITION/NEWTON

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Newton's new green energy web site

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Renewable Resources, in an effort spear-headed by Laura Katleman-Prue, has launched a new web site to encourage and help Newton residents to combat global warming. The site, funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of Energy, offers information geared to Newton residents, as well as links to more resources. It includes a message from Mayor David Cohen about the importance of our efforts to stop global warming; a link to realtime information about energy gathered by the solar energy plant at Newton South High School; a link to energy savings tips; and a page aimed at educating kids about energy efficiency and renewable energy. There is also a link to the Green Decade's Kyoto Project, which provides guidance on how residents can take action now. Another part of the site discusses the state program called Clean Energy Choice. For residents of Newton, the option to support renewable energy and receive matching funds is by contributing to: NewEnglandWind.org or call Mass Energy at 617-524-3950. The program currently offers a double matching grant -- for every donation to the program, an equivalent amount will go to renewable energy projects on Newton public schools and for energy efficiency projects that benefit the state's low income residents. See also an even better one time opportunity in "Urgent Deadline" article on page four ! And there's more. Check it out at www.greenenergynewton.org *by Ira Krepchin*

GDC, Stand For Children work for efficient schools

The Green Decade is working with the Newton chapter of the national organization Stand for Children to encourage the City to adopt performance contracting as a means of paying for energy efficiency measures in the schools. The two groups co-sponsored a public education forum on December 5 at the Newton Free Library. The goal is to improve the learning environment in Newton's public schools by ensuring that the city prioritizes long-term energy efficiency. As Stand For Children points out, energy costs are one of the fastest-rising parts of the school budget, and inefficient systems lead to a less than optimal learning environment. Kids have had to wear coats, hats and gloves in chilly classrooms while at the same time in the same building others were opening windows to relieve the heat.

To implement the energy measures the groups advocate the hiring of an energy services company (ESCO) to implement long-term energy efficiency measures that would improve the classroom environment, save energy, and save money that can be used for further building improvements. An ESCO is a company that contracts with government and private entities to assess energy use, and propose, implement and manage energy efficiency plans.

Volunteers needed for battery recycling project

Help the Green Decade earn \$500 while keeping heavy metals and other toxic materials out of the waste stream. Wheelabrator, which operates the trash-to-energy facility where Newton's trash is burned, is offering \$100/lb of button batteries, up to a maximum of \$500, for batteries that are collected and turned in during 2007. The materials from the batteries are either reclaimed or recycled, but most importantly, they don't get burned up and their toxic contents are not released into the atmosphere. To help us earn this bonus, volunteers are needed to take official collection boxes to sites where batteries can be collected. Boxes are currently set up at the Recycling Depot, the library, and at City Hall, but more sites are needed, especially retail outlets. If you have a favorite location that you frequently visit, you can help. All you have to do is talk to the store manager, bring in a box, and collect the batteries occasionally. To volunteer, call Barbara Herson at 617-964-7463, or Margaret Ford 617-964-0606. Let's not lose this opportunity; please call by January 8, 2007.

For rechargeable, nicad batteries, buy them when you can, but remember, they eventually die out. These also should not be burned. Under a separate program, these are collected at the same three city locations. Most of the other batteries that we commonly use have been converted to alkaline, which are currently considered safe for disposal with regular trash. *by Barbara Herson and Ira Krepchin*

When a city contracts with an ESCO, the ESCO guarantees a certain amount of energy use reduction; if it fails to meet its guarantee, the ESCO pays for the extra energy usage. The ESCO is paid through private third-party tax-exempt leases for the energy-conservation equipment, with future energy cost savings providing the cash needed to pay the leases. Typical measures that an ESCO might install include: more efficient light bulbs and lighting systems, automated lighting and electrical controls, new and more efficient HVAC equipment, water conservation systems, insulation, windows and automated temperature, ventilation and humidity control systems. *by Ira Krepchin*

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Free: back issues

- The Ecologist - Solar Industry Journal
- Northeast Sun - Worldwatch Magazine
- Solar Today - E The Environmental Magazine
- 1990s through 2003. Some wonderful articles, graphs, illustrations, photographs. Great for helping high school students make reports.
- Call Louise Bruyn, 617-332-1764.

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The environmental show

In January, host Beverly Droz welcomes back Leise Jones of Clean Water Action. The topic of discussion this time is household cleaning products. Surprisingly no government regulatory agency is charged with monitoring these chemicals, nor are manufacturers required to list their ingredients. Recent scientific studies have revealed health problems associated with their use, especially for children and asthma sufferers, and traces of their component chemicals are found in house dust. Since people spend 80 percent of their time indoors, this constitutes practically constant exposure.

In light of this, it is nice to know that Newton is participating in a State purchasing program for least toxic cleaning products, products used in all city buildings including schools. Clean Water Action and the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow (of which the Green Decade is a member) are introducing legislation to curb the use of some of these toxic chemicals. People are encouraged to visit our web site to get informed on and to keep track of the two proposed bills.

Ms. Jones strongly recommends using non-toxic products such as baking soda and vinegar, or very low toxicity borax. A number of safe cleaning products are also now widely available and their price is getting very competitive with their conventional counterparts.

The first show will air on December 30, 2006 and the last broadcast will be on February 1, 2007. Newton's public access is NewTV Blue channel, number 10 on Comcast and 15 on RCN. The weekly schedule is the following:

Mondays: 3:00 p.m.

Tuesdays: 1:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m.

Thursdays: 12:00, 4:00, and 7:30 p.m.

Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. *by Francoise LaMonica*

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Celebrating the Rachel Carson Centennial 2007

During 2007, Green Decade's GreenCAP will be celebrating Rachel Carson's Centennial by joining organizations around the world who are promoting Rachel Carson's legacy and her book, *Silent Spring*, to a new generation. In 1962, *Silent Spring* was a call to action from a scientist who catalyzed a wave of such political urgency that it generated a powerful "environmental movement." To a public dazzled by chemical industry marketing and government complicity, Carson exposed the extensive harm caused by the reckless use of synthetic chemicals.

Carson, one of the twentieth century's most important figures, is known as a Woman of Courage for her deep reverence for life and the sense of responsibility that compelled her to speak out during a period of widespread pesticide abuse. Her message was "Prevention is the Imperative." Within a few years, in spite of a chemical industry's orchestrated campaign to discredit her work, an enlightened public and their elected leaders created the US EPA, the ban on DDT, and environment regulations such as the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. Because these laws are being systematically undermined today, *Silent Spring* is more relevant today than ever. *Ellie Goldberg*



Workshop on insulating your older home

Insulating your home properly is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to minimize your energy waste and maximize your energy dollars. And despite what you may have heard, it is possible to weatherize your older home without compromising its historical character. This workshop will include hands-on demonstration of various energy-saving tools, such as blower doors and infrared cameras.

We'll also take an objective look at the different products and techniques for increasing energy efficiency. Learn how you can stay warm this winter, save money, and reduce your ecological footprint at the same time.

The workshop will be held at The Jackson Homestead (527 Washington St., Newton); Paul Eldrenkamp, Instructor; Saturday, February 10, 1:00 - 4:00 PM; \$30; \$15 for Newton Historical Society members; proceeds benefit the Green Decade Coalition and the Newton Historical Society. Register at 617-965-1995 or www.greendecade.org/events.

by Margaret Ford