

# green news

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEN DECADE COALITION / NEWTON



VOL.15 - NO. 4

JULY/AUGUST 2005

## Speaker Series : "Newton's State of the Environment"

Mayor David Cohen and Public Works Commissioner Robert Rooney joined a panel of local environmentalists at a recent Environmental Speaker Series event to discuss "Newton's State of the Environment." The Mayor highlighted two major initiatives: the Newton Solar Schools Campaign (NSSC), and a campaign to increase the amount of paper recycled in the City. Residents currently recycle about 40 percent of their paper waste. If the amount were increased to 60 percent, the city would save money by reducing its trash collecting costs, and increase the amount of money that it receives from its paper recycling program. The goal of NSSC is to promote the use of solar energy in all 23 Newton public schools, where the solar technology will serve the dual purpose of supplying clean energy and providing an

educational opportunity. (See article this issue)

Department of Public Works Commissioner Robert Rooney followed the Mayor's presentation with a description of some of the lesser known environmental efforts in the City. Highlights, in five broad categories, include:

- Fleet maintenance: the City's fleet includes hybrid vehicles, and two electric vehicles, and the City is looking into the use of low emission CNG (compressed natural gas) vehicles and biodiesel. A policy to reduce vehicle idling, which creates emissions and wastes fuel, is also under investigation.

- Highways: an "adopt-a-space" program is in place to enable groups to replace concrete with green space and plantings; and a "Walkable Newton" program will give

*(continued on page 2)*

## New Head for Kyoto Project



Photo by Margaret Ford

Katherine Gekas, Green Decade Coalition/ Newton Energy Committee Chair welcomes new Kyoto Project coordinator, Michele Davis.

A new administrator, Michele Davis, has been hired for Green Decade's Kyoto project. Michele has a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and a master's degree in Urban Planning. She worked in City Planning for ten years for city and county governments in California. After receiving a certificate in solid waste management, she added the duties of Recycling Coordinator to her position. Since moving to Massachusetts, she has chaired the Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Commit-

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"Our vision for the project is to try to coordinate City residents and employees, energy companies, state agencies and contractors into one interconnected, non-repetitive energy conservation program,"

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tee and has been the Chair of Newton's Recycling Committee for 4 years. "Our vision for the project is to try to coordinate City residents and employees, energy companies, state agencies and contractors into one interconnected, non-repetitive energy conservation program," says Davis. "We are hoping to outreach to all businesses and residences in Newton and to attract property owners who would not otherwise initiate implementing energy conservation measures." The Kyoto Project was started by members of the Green Decade Coalition's Energy Committee as a grassroots response to human-induced climate change.

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## Speaker Series : "Newton's State of the Environment"



Photo by Margaret Ford

Guest panelists at "Newton's State of the Environment": (L-R) Front row: GDC President Beverly Droz and Environmental Speaker Series Coordinator Barbara Herson. Back row: Kevin Dutt, Ira Krepchin, Katherine Gekas, David Del Porto, Eric Reenstierna, Doug Dickson and Deb Crossley

(continued from page 1)

sidewalks priority over curb-work in the maintenance program. Another program will recycle/reuse old asphalt as streets are repaired.

- Engineering: an experimental lighting program is underway to look at the feasibility of more environmen-

tally friendly street lighting technologies.

- Water/sewer: the City is monitoring cracks in the water delivery systems to reduce leaks. Rooney also reported that a new plant uses ozone to purify water, minimizing the use of hazardous chlorine treatment.
- Environmental affairs: household hazardous waste and recycling efforts continue to be strong.

The event concluded with a number of Newton citizens speaking about their environmental efforts. Speakers included: Deb Crossley on the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee; Katherine Gekas on the Newton Citizens' Energy Commission; Bev Droz on the Green Decade Coalition; Kevin Dutt on the High Performance Buildings Coalition; Doug Dickson on Integrated Pest Management; Eric Reenstierna on the Newton Conservators; Ira Krepchin on the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Renewable Resources; and David Del Porto on the Sustainable Newton Committee.

The event was organized by Green Decade's Speaker Series coordinator Barbara Herson. "It was exciting to hear the wide scope of environmental activities going on in Newton, and the many talented people involved," says Herson.

The Environmental Speaker Series is cosponsored by the Green Decade and the Newton Free Library.

by Ira Krepchin

## Highland's Award to GDC's Maeve Ward

Green Decade's Maeve Ward was honored at the Newton Highlands Village Day for her work to embrace a sustainable, safe, and healthy lifestyle. As chair of GreenCAP, Maeve staffs a Green Decade resource table Tuesdays at the Newton Farmers Market. Maeve has co-produced two videos, the award winning "Newton Goes Green: Say No to Pesticides" and "Naturally Great Gardens & Landscapes: A Guide to Organic Lawn Care" - both available for sale via [info@greendecade.org](mailto:info@greendecade.org).

Maeve's efforts have helped the Parish of St. Paul develop a comprehensive environmental stewardship program that serves as a model for organizations nationwide. Maeve worked with MassPIRG supporting the Family and Children's Protection Act, designed to protect children from pesticides in schools. She is a member of many environmental organizations and is an active letter writer to state and national legislative bodies.

Maeve was also a leader in the efforts to stop the community pesticide spraying for West Nile Virus and a leader in the adoption of an alternatives to pesticides resolution by the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of MA (later nationally) that calls for parishes and the Diocese to reduce the use of pesticides and toxic

chemicals in the care of buildings and grounds. She has authored numerous articles on the hazards of pesticides, and on organic solutions, especially for gardens.

Maeve's influence is everywhere. It can be seen in the organic Meditation Garden at St. Paul's, which is open to people of all faiths for reflection. It can be felt at St. Paul's and around Newton in environmentally friendly land care, and statewide in the air quality of our schools and public places.

### Thanks ! and . . . next deadline

For the next newsletter, please send submissions or requests by e-mail to Ira Krepchin, [irapk@alum.mit.edu](mailto:irapk@alum.mit.edu) by Friday, July 22, 2005.

Thanks for making this newsletter possible go to Managing Editor Ira Krepchin, Co-editors Peter Smith and 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 & Dean Bandes, Hope Dauwalter, Jacqui Gross, Rustin Mcintosh, Francine Vidockler, Brian Washburn, and Lisa Wilson.

## Solar Schools Launched

**M**ayor David Cohen has launched a new campaign to promote the use of solar energy in all 23 Newton public schools, with the help of residents and local businesses. Elements of the program include:

- **Matching grants.** Under the Clean Energy Choice (CEC) program offered by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, purchase of CEC certificates by businesses and residents will be matched by MTC grants for solar energy projects. CEC purchases are fully tax-deductible for residents and businesses.
- **Parent participation.** Information sessions and fund-raising events (organized by teachers and children) will be held in all schools to raise money for the systems. Parents who make CEC purchases can earmark the funds for the public school of their choice.
- **Business participation.** Businesses will also be asked to make CEC purchases and to designate the schools for which the MTC matching grants will be used.
- **Education.** Kiosks, designed to educate students on the benefits of solar energy, will be set up in each school to report data from its PV system.

Newton's Solar Energy Coordinator, Kumar Nochur, will work with the Green Decade and Newton schools and businesses to ensure the success of the program.

## 2005 Plant Sale: Best Ever!

**B**etsy Leavitt's house was a virtual bee-hive of spring gardening enthusiasts on May 14, with shoppers of all ages eager to buy their selections! In addition to a wide variety of plants donated by GDC members and other gardeners, free gardening/landscaping advice was provided by Betsy, a professional organic gardener and landscape designer, and other plant-knowledgeable volunteers including Françoise LaMonica and Mary-Ann Greene.

This was GDC's most successful plant sale to date, raising nearly \$1600 for upcoming GDC activities! Our sincere appreciation to the numerous volunteers who donated their plants, time and spirit of community. Volunteers worked Thursday and Friday to price, label, arrange, pot and "color code" plants so it was easy for Saturday buyers to see how much they were purchasing. Many thanks, as always, to plant sale coordinators Rohna Shoul, Margaret Ford and especially to Betsy Leavitt, for hosting this annual event at her home again this year.

*by Margaret Ford*



*A young gardener*

Photo by Margaret Ford

## Media reminder

**R**emember to read the Environment Page in the TAB, which runs on the first Wednesday of each month. Articles relating to local environmental issues, or article ideas are most welcome--submit to Françoise LaMonica at [franswas@juno.com](mailto:franswas@juno.com). The page began running in the fall of 2000 thanks to a coalition of local environmental groups that called themselves the Environment Media Coalition. Founding members include Green Decade, the Newton Conservators, the League of Woman Voters, the Charles River Watershed Association, and the Newton Public Works Department.

And don't forget to tune in to The Environmental Show on the Blue Channel on NewTV. The show is a partnership between the Newton Conservators and the Green Decade. The Conservators' show, which focuses on open spaces, parks, passive recreation and is shot on location, airs on even numbered months. The GD's show, in a studio talk show format, airs during odd numbered months.

The new, expanded broadcasting schedule is: Saturdays at 10:00am; Mondays at 3:00pm; Tuesdays at 1:30am and 11:30pm; Wednesdays at 11:30am; Thursdays at 12:00pm, 4:00pm, and 7:30pm.

*by Françoise LaMonica*

## Roll out the Barrel...

...And we'll have a barrel of rain. Rain barrels are a great way to conserve water and earlier this year they were offered to City residents at a special discount. The water you collect in these barrels can be used for gardening and lawn care. During a typical moderate storm, more than 700 gallons of water will run off the average 1200 sq ft roof. From April to August that same roof will shed over 4,000 gallons of water—your plants will love it.

If enough residents use these barrels it will also reduce the load on the City's sewer system. To help residents achieve these benefits, the City will probably be offering the barrels at a discount again next spring. Meanwhile, you may have the opportunity to get barrels from other local communities who don't always sell their quota.

Call the New England Rain Barrel Company at 1-877-977-3135 for more information, or visit [www.nerainbarrel.com](http://www.nerainbarrel.com). Barrels are also available from the Boston Building Materials Coop (BBMC) in Roxbury—for information, call 617-442-2262. Discounts are available to BBMC members.

*by Ira Krepchin and Barbara Herson*

## 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.*

## CALENDAR

<b>July 5</b> Tues thru the summer	<b>Green Decade table @ Farmers' Market</b> contact <b>Maeve Ward</b> : 617 527-5331 e-mail: maevew@comcast.net, see box this issue
<b>July 12-15</b> Tues-Fri	<b>"EPA's 2005 Community Involvement Conf &amp; Training</b> , Buffalo, NY. E-mail: ciconference@emsus.com
<b>July 22-24</b> Fri-Sun	<b>"Building the Movement to Stop Global Warming" summer workshop</b> , Green House Network & Clean Air-Cool Planet, See article this page.

Send environmental events to *Green News* email to Ira Krepchin by Friday, July 22, 2005 irapk@alum.mit.edu. We will list as space permits.

## Good news!

balancing jobs & nature

*"Oregon's Siuslaw national Forest is a model for the way timber companies, environmentalists, and local communities can cooperate to manage forests. One of the few national forests in the state exceeding U.S. Forest Service logging goals, it's also the site of substantial ecological restoration, with streams boasting seven times the levels of coho salmon as those in surrounding areas. Money from timber sales is put back into communities hurt by the sharp decline in federal logging of the past two decades. Logging goals are met without any clear-cutting or harvesting of old-growth trees; instead, the majority of timber comes from thinning previously planted, fast-growing plantations, opening them up to wildlife use."*

*"Blips on the Timeline: Green Headquarters." Page 21, TIMELINE, a bimonthly publication of the Foundation for Global Community, January/February, 2005.*

Printed with soy-based ink on 100% post-consumer waste unbleached recycled paper that is made without a chemical separation process.

## Stop Global Warming: 7/22

**G**reen House Network and Clean Air-Cool Planet, in partnership with the Massachusetts Climate Action Network, invite you to their fourth annual Building the Movement to Stop Global Warming summer workshop. Green Decade board member Amelia Ravin is helping to organize the event on July 22-24 in Boston.

The conference will have a dual focus: speaking and community action. Sessions will cover a number of topics including: the political scene; an update on global warming science with the Northeast Indicators of Climate Change 2005 report; discussions of advocacy and action; and a discussion of global warming as a moral issue. Panel discussions will cover: renewable energy purchasing campaigns; community biodiesel use; wind power development; and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

The conference and workshops will be held at the Outward Bound Conference Center on Thompson Island in Boston Harbor. Transportation to the Island is by ferry – on which registrants will depart from downtown Boston on the afternoon of Friday, July 22nd, stay in dorms or tents and return mid-day on Sunday, July 24.

For more info e-mail: jschroeder@cleanair-coolplanet.org

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# Annual environmental leadership awards to an individual and a non-profit organization and business *(continued on other side of this page)*

## Community Group

Friends of Hemlock Gorge Reservation received the 2005 Environmental Leadership award for the activities the organization has done to preserve and improve the 23-acre reservation along the Charles River. Hemlock Gorge is a jewel of the Eastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Parks System conceived by Charles Eliot in 1892.

The group has worked tirelessly to keep this beautiful reservation in good health and repair. They successfully advocated for state funding for lady bugs to fight the wooley adelgids attacking the hemlocks and assisted in their release. They obtained vacant City land for a parking lot to provide access to the park for visitors, convinced the city to pave it, paid for half of landscaping materials and helped install them. They persuaded the MWRA to restore the echo platform under Echo Bridge which is a focal point of the park. With the MDC and Army Corps of Engineers, they are working to preserve an old Stone Building near Route 9 and secured a National Trust for Historic Preservation grant to plan re-use of the building.

The group arranged for Ken Newcomb, a long time advocate for appreciating and maintaining Hemlock Gorge and author of a book on the history of Newton Upper Falls, to speak at the Newton History Room of the Newton Free Library and placed his book on their newly established website. They also arranged for Ken to receive an honor from the City before his death and paid for a stone memorial to Ken at Motif Number Two, a point at the end of Turtle Island facing Echo Bridge.

The Friends of Hemlock Gorge have organized fall and spring cleanups for more than a decade and organized summer picnics at the park. They have won establishment of an MDC (now DCR) unit managing the Reservation.

## Individual

Peter J. Barrer was given the 2005 Environmental Leadership Award for his work in an informal role as a Newton citizen insuring the sustainability of the renovation of Newton South High School. He monitored the developing design of the High School renovation and addition project, pointing out to the design team opportunities to improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of the building. When the nearly completed design did not conform to many of the "green" goals nominally accepted by the design team, he prepared a letter cataloguing the deficiencies, and obtained city official support to engage the architect in a last minute process of improving the specifications. Mr. Barrer was subsequently appointed by Newton Aldermen to serve on the city's Design Review Committee. The completed building is now an example of early efforts at sustainable school construction in Massachusetts. Mr. Barrer is a Professional Engineer; in 1989 he founded Demand Management Institute, Inc. to consult to building owners, architects, and utilities on cost effective ways to improve the energy efficiency of buildings in New England.

## An impressive legacy

Green Decade has been so fortunate to have had Beverly Droz as its President and Treasurer for the past five years. In that span of time she has used her excellent organizing skills to double the membership, stay abreast of the many activities and committees, reach out to the community of Newton to work in partnership with other organizations, and bring to the functioning of the Green Decade a professionalism that includes warmth, friendship, and humor.

In her own words, Bev writes, "For the past 5 years I have volunteered an average of 20 hours a week to GDC in my role as president and treasurer. But I feel I have received more than I have given: I've made friends with a large community of like-minded activists; I've witnessed the progress we've made on these issues we care about; and I have a sense of accomplishment of helping to build this non-profit into a well-functioning and highly-respected organization. We've been a great team, and I am appreciative!"

Bev is stepping down from those roles to take on a full time job at City Hall where she has been working four days a week as Director of Volunteers. Her responsibilities there will be greatly expanded and we know the residents of Newton will gain from her presence there. But we look forward to her continued involvement in the Green Decade, which she has promised us. Thank you for everything, Bev!

*by Louise Bruyn*



Winter scene at Hemlock Gorge Reservation looking at Echo Bridge

Autumn scene at Hemlock Gorge Reservation looking at Echo Bridge

## Environmentally friendly coffee!

Coffee tastes good to a lot of us, but it is often produced in a way that is harmful to our environment, according to a recent article on the Seventh Generation web site. Coffee plantations destroy native habitats for migratory birds and other species and harm indigenous cultures that depend on these places for their subsistence. Most coffee growers are also heavy users of toxic pesticides, and many contribute to third world poverty by refusing to pay workers a livable wage.

Coffee grown in a socially and environmentally responsible way is available from Dean Cycon, founder of "Dean's Beans", an Orange, Massachusetts purveyor of fair trade, organic coffees. According to the article, "Dean's Beans" whole bean organic coffees come from importers committed to fair trade policies that work to improve economic and living conditions in coffee growing regions. In addition to providing their growers and harvesters with a decent standard of living, all "Dean's Beans" are grown without chemicals. And they're shade grown, too, which means they come from farms in which coffee plants coexist with native trees and vegetation in order to preserve vital habitats and wildlife.

In addition to promoting local empowerment and self-reliance through their Fair Trade purchases and working with grassroots development and human rights groups, Dean's Beans also sponsors projects on the home front to help disenfranchised groups like Native Americans, the homeless and disabled, and others trying to improve their lives and their communities. To learn more about Dean's Beans visit [www.deansbeans.com](http://www.deansbeans.com).

Equal Exchange Coffees is another brand of fair traded sustainably grown coffees sold in the Greater Boston area.

[Note, this article was adapted from "Better Business Bureau: The Buzz on a Cooler Cup of Hot Coffee, Seventh Generation, [www.seventhgeneration.com/site/pp.asp?c=colHKTMHF&b=687689&#5](http://www.seventhgeneration.com/site/pp.asp?c=colHKTMHF&b=687689&#5)]

### ! We need you:

**One hour** to help staff the Green Decade information table at the Farmers' Market, Tuesdays starting July 5 until a week into September. **Help us tell people about our work!** Hours are from 1:30-6:30. We would like a presence there all that time but failing that even a total time of three hours or so is good public relations. We ask people to work for an hour, unless they want to do more. Please contact **Maeve Ward**: 617 527-5331 e-mail: [maeview@comcast.net](mailto:maeview@comcast.net)

## Environmental awards

(continued from other side of this page)

### Business

The Green Decade awarded the 2005 Environmental Leadership Award to a business to Whole Foods Market. The Whole Foods Market supports sustainable and organic agriculture and wise environmental practices, such as choosing green building techniques, use of alternative energy sources (solar and wind), and recycling business equipment. They carry hundreds of environmentally friendly products in their stores including organic fruits and vegetables, chemical-free cleaners and recycled paper products. Both Newton stores operate an in-house recycling program. In addition to glass, paper, and plastic in the stores, they recycle unusable computer equipment, cell phones, light bulbs, and batteries. Reusable equipment is donated to not-for-profit organizations. The Newtonville store participates in a composting program which turns organic material, such as vegetable trimmings and outdated produce, into compost.

Because of the partnership with Green Decade, WFM became aware of an opportunity to purchase "solar shares" and in 2005 purchased a total of \$1000 in shares with the Mass. Technology Collaborative.

They have donated thousands of dollars to the Food Project, in support of sustainable agriculture and hunger relief, to the Newton Conservators in support of land conservation, and, with other store locations, to the Charles River Watershed Association in support of protecting the Charles River and its surrounding area.

The stores donated a total of \$7000 towards the installation of a solar roof at the Newton Community Service Centers (25% of the total cost of the project). They have helped Green Decade with funds for an alternative to pesticides video and other actions to educate the public about the health effects of toxins. They have hosted a Green Decade outreach table in the stores, promoting the use of alternative energy, provided free lunches to Solar Homes Tour participants, snacks for the Speaker Series and other events, and raised money for Green Decade through their 5% days.

The Whole Foods Market in Newtonville is currently investigating the possibility of installing solar panels.

### JOIN THE GREEN DECADE

Enclosed is:  New member  Renewal

(\$20.00 suggested annual individual donation)

(additional donation)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please send your tax deductible check to:

GDC/N, P.O. Box 590242, Newton, MA 02459 July/Aug 2005