

# green news

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEN DECADE COALITION / NEWTON



VOL.18 - NO. 5

SEPT/OCT 2008

## Congested and contested ! Movie offers traffic solutions

**M**onday, October 6, at 7pm Bike Newton will show a movie at the Newton Free Library that will open our eyes about how European cities have solved the problem of streets clogged with cars and improved the environment for people.

"Contested Streets" explores the history and culture of New York City streets from pre-automobile times to the present. This examination allows for an understanding of how the city—though the most well served by mass transit in the United States—has slowly relinquished what was a rich, multi-dimensional conception of the street as public space to a mindset that prioritizes the rapid movement of cars and trucks over all other functions.

Central to the story is a comparison of New York to what is experienced in London, Paris and Copenhagen. Interviews and footage shot in these cities showcase how limiting automobile use in recent years has improved air quality, minimized noise pollution and enriched commercial, recreational and community interaction. London's congestion pricing scheme, Paris' BRT (bus rapid transit) and Copenhagen's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are all examined in depth. New York City, though to many the most vibrant and dynamic city on Earth, still has lessons to learn from Old Europe.

Jeff Rosenblum, Livable Streets Alliance, has been invited to speak about the film. *by Peter Smith*

Environmental  
Film

Cosponsored with the Newton Free  
Library at the library Monday, 7pm  
**FREE**

### Monday, Oct. 6: "Contested Streets"

*Interviews and footage shot in London, Paris and Copenhagen showcase how limiting automobile use in recent years has improved air quality, minimized noise pollution and enriched commercial, recreational and community interaction. Jeff Rosenblum, Livable Streets Alliance will speak and answer questions about the film.*

**Presented by Bike Newton cosponsored by the  
Green Decade Transportation Committee**

## Green Decade Schools Outreach Committee needs you!

**T**he Schools Outreach Committee is working to share project and campaign ideas about energy, conservation and environmental concern, with each school community in the City. The committee's goal is to enlist at least one liaison at each school by early fall. Contacts have been established at a number of elementary and middle schools, but are still needed at the following: Bowen, Franklin, Horace Mann, Memorial-Spaulling, Pierce, Underwood, Ward, Williams and Oak Hill Middle School.

The first meeting of the school year is set for Thursday, September 11, 7:00 p.m. at 53 Gay Street, Newtonville, (617) 795-0028 (RSVP).

*by Bob Warren and Meg Wilcox,  
Green Decade Schools Outreach Committee Chairs*

## New option for supporting wind power

**A** new option is now available if you want to switch the source of your electricity supply from conventional fuels (coal, oil, gas and nuclear) to wind power! No more greenhouse gases, completely renewable! As of July 1st, your energy company, NStar, has been licensed by the Mass. Dept. of Public Utilities for a 10-year contract with the Maple Ridge Wind Farm in upper New York State ([www.mapleridgewind.com](http://www.mapleridgewind.com)). By choosing NStar Green, you can designate 50% or 100% of your electricity to come from this wind farm.

By switching to wind power, you will be helping wind farms succeed and expand, which will eventually lead to lower prices. Right now wind power is slightly more expensive than conventional fuels, so switching to 100% wind power will add 6.2% to your electricity bill. If your average bill is \$50, it will go to \$53; if it's \$80, it will go to \$85. If you're not completely happy, you can switch back at any time.

For more information and to enroll go to NSTAR Green [www.nstar.com/residential/customer\\_information/nstar\\_green/nstar\\_green.asp](http://www.nstar.com/residential/customer_information/nstar_green/nstar_green.asp) and follow the directions.

*by Lynn Holbein*

[Editor's Note: Newton residents can also support wind power through the New England Wind Fund of the Mass Energy Consumers Alliance. Visit <http://www.newenglandwind.org/wind/home.php> for more information.]

## Leading by example:

# What if every community had a Green Decade?

**A**t least one other city in Massachusetts is following the example set by a group of friends who gathered in 1989 to educate and advocate for the environment on a local level. As the group gathered together nearly two decades ago, one of the first questions raised was "What shall the group be called?" After considering a variety of options, it was decided to base the name on a concept, originated by the author Jeremy Rifkin, about the last decade of the millennium being our great chance to slow down global warming.

Hence, the name Green Decade Coalition/Newton came to represent a volunteer group with an original focus to make changes within the context of a decade. However, that small environmentally concerned group grew steadily over eighteen years to represent over five hundred members with a new focus to make an environmental difference... decade by decade.

Members of Green Decade dream green ideas and set out to make things happen, one step at a time, on every level of community life. Imagine if other communities had Green Decade's wealth of ideas and volunteers to implement both energy and money saving ideas in homes, businesses and public buildings. The concept of improving home energy efficiency is one such idea for a Green Decade committee that recruits experts to conduct numerous home insulation workshops and home energy audits. Another committee organizes groups of neighbors and friends into household EcoTeams to help individuals or families to reduce garbage and consumption of energy, water, and toxic products. Small EcoTeams meet a half dozen times in order to lower each individual's environmental impact through adopting more resource efficient lifestyle practices. Many have also found it helpful to incorporate energy and money saving home improvements by going on a Green Decade tour of a highly energy efficient home known as "The Urban Ark."

There's also Green Decade's environmental speaker series at the public library, a local TV show and a newsletter, as well as articles printed in local newspapers to keep people informed on environmental topics. There are programs to give students a voice to help them develop their own environmental strategies and opportunities for students to feel empowered, so that they feel less threatened by the impact of global climate change. They are often inspired to ask questions such as... "Can our community do better to provide safety standards for bike riders?" and "What can schools do more to become energy efficient?"

Businesses are also encouraged to improve their energy efficiency. A Green Business Solutions Expo sponsored by the Newton/Needham Chamber of Commerce and Green Decade in June 2008 gave local businesses the opportunity

to learn more about the environmental and economic advantages of improved energy efficiency.

Funds have been raised to install solar panels on schools and the Newton Community Service Center. Steps have been taken to encourage organic gardening and advocate for safe alternatives to pesticides. The City of Newton has employed numerous strategies to save energy and taxpayer money by employing Green Decade's recommendations to improve on energy efficiency in all public venues. The list goes on.

Residents of Cambridge, Massachusetts took notice of all that is being accomplished in Newton and established Green Decade/Cambridge. Individuals in other communities have also become inspired by Newton's Green Decade to organize their own small groups of friends to make a difference decade by decade in their cities and towns on behalf of the environment. To quote Margaret Mead... "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed people can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

by Marcia Cooper



Our newest caterpillar wranglers from a farmer's market! These three decided that if Tommy the Tomato Hornworm wasn't eating the tomato, maybe he would like some cake, so they tried that—with better results than the tomato! (L-R) Jocelyn & Julia Beecher (twins) and Madeleine Babcock (holding Tommy's green box — and hoping he doesn't crawl out again).



Tommy agreed to a close-up, too.

## Buying and selling

**G**reen Decade now has "very cool" slim fitting organic Tee Shirts (emblazoned with our name and earth logo surrounded by "Respect your mother") for sale for only \$15. If you would like one please email Marcia Cooper at [MarciaC@aol.com](mailto:MarciaC@aol.com).

Two more merchants are offering discounts to GDC members. Show your membership card and receive a 10% discount at: The Finer Consigner, Women's Fashions, 53 Langley Rd, N Centre Old Friends Farm: Farmer's Market Newton (Tuesday), Copley Square (Friday), & Amherst.

by Marcia Cooper

## Green Decade office data manager needed

If you're a detail-oriented environmentalist, GDC could use your help. Douglas Leith, our data manager since 2000, would like to retire from the position in 2008 or 2009. The volunteer position takes about 4 hours per week (more in Spring), and primarily involves maintaining the membership database, which is currently on FileMaker Pro, a fairly user-friendly data base program. The data manager should be a member of GDC and attend some board meetings. We are seeking someone interested in a long-term commitment to the GDC and to handling its database. Training and "hand-holding" will be provided.

Tasks include keying in or copy-pasting membership data, creating mailing for the newsletter and other mailings, producing membership cards, and producing various reports on request that analyze and tabulate membership information. Pickup of incoming postal mail and delivery of printed reports and mailing labels, etc., can be done by the data manager or arranged with someone else. Related duties include producing a few annual tax-related reports sent to a tax-preparer, and annual state-required reports on board membership, as well as helping ensure proper post office fee payments. Some computer interest and skills, and familiarity with MS Excel and Word are helpful, as is the ability to scan and process images and PDF formats. Backup capability (USB "stick") and e-mail is a must. Contact Marcia Cooper (marciac@aol.com) for general information or Douglas Leith (jdleith@comcast.net) for more details on what's needed.

by Douglas Leith

## An environmental welcome to Newton

Welcoming newcomers to a city is an old tradition, and now there's a new twist—a welcome basket full of eco-goodies. The brainchild of Kathy Krongel, a Hammond Real Estate sales associate, the concept has become reality with the help of Green Decade volunteers. The baskets are filled with energy-efficient light bulbs, outlet insulators, reusable grocery bags, and other products. As reported in the TAB, Krongel says that the baskets will streamline the gift-giving tradition for busy real estate brokers and help them get involved with the green movement.

The practice of welcoming newcomers to Newton with baskets goes back many years. In the 1920s, Welcome Wagon hostesses would knock on the doors of new families and present them with a basket of small gifts and coupons from local businesses. These home visits continued through the early 1980s, but as more women entered the workforce, and no one was at home during the day to answer the door when the Welcome Wagon came a knockin', the tradition soon died out.

Another item in the basket is a free, one-hour consultation from Allison Krongel, the owner of Whitney Interiors, for new homeowners to talk about re-using their existing furniture, buying vintage or used furniture and using paint that is less toxic. Other contents include an energy-saver book, a low-flow showerhead and an aerator. For more details, see <http://www.greendecade.org/welcomeWagon.html>.

by Ira Krepchin via Newton TAB

## Thanks for donations go to:

**DONORS:** Eva and James Glanville Chittenden, Alan & Liz Cody, Michael Cuccurullo, Sunwoo Kahng, Laura Katleman-Prue.

**FRIENDS:** Marcia Gittes & Dan Funk, Elsa & Tom Lawrence, Beth/David Perloff Silverman, Jennifer Stone.

**BUSINESS DONOR:** Daphne B. Petri.

**BUSINESS FRIEND:** Brandeis University (for Urban Ark special), Newton Lower Falls Improvement Association (Kate McLeod)

## Volunteers needed: gauging interest in gas mileage

A special Green Decade event is happening at J & S Mobil gas station, 1094 Beacon Street on Saturday, September 13 from 10-2. Volunteers with signs will be waving motorists in to:

- Check their tire pressure and make sure they are filled to the optimal level to improve gas mileage.
- Offer Green Decade literature and membership information and asking people to join.

Volunteers are needed, especially middle, high school and college students. We will have a sign-making pizza party noon Saturday, Sept. 6. If you want to help, email Laura at [bosbrownie@yahoo.com](mailto:bosbrownie@yahoo.com).

by Laura Katleman-Prue

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**"On my bike I estimate that I get easily seven miles per potato."**

—Lester Brown, *Plan B 3.0, Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, Earth Policy Institute.

## Your choice: e-mail or print

**G**reen Decade members have chosen to save paper and postage by receiving the Green News on line, instead of by snail mail. An additional advantage is that you get to see the pictures in vibrant Technicolor and you can send it on to your friends with a click of your mouse! Please let us know at [contact@greendecade.org](mailto:contact@greendecade.org) if you would like to have your name added to the Green News email list, and be sure to include your name and e-mail, along with Green News Online in the subject line. Congratulations to our paper-savers! We have just received our 100th online subscriber to the Green News! Thank you!

by Marcia Cooper

## Green homes tour October 4

**T**he Green Decade Coalition/Newton is offering its 8th annual fall tour of select Newton energy-smart homes and buildings. Called the Solar Homes Tour in years past, we have changed the name in recognition of a new diversity of high performance homes in Newton. Stops will include two of our "regulars," to learn from owners of solar hot water and photovoltaic systems. New this year, we will visit a house with an innovative space heating system that generates electric power as well as heat, and a new super efficient home—so energy miserly that it won "LEED" certification. If you are not sure what that means (and especially if you already know) this tour is for you.

This is a guided tour departing from the Newton Community Service Center (NCSC) in West Newton. Pre-registration is encouraged to allow tour organizers to train and organize sufficient numbers of guides. Fees (per person) are \$12 in advance or \$15 on the day of the tour, and cover a reading packet, refreshments (cider or lemonade, apples, cookies) plus a donation in support of maintenance work on the NCSC solar array. Please arrive at the NCSC at 9:30 AM to finalize your registration and pick up your information packet; once registered you can read through your packet while we form car pools and assign you to a guide. We should depart the NCSC shortly after 10:00 AM and will return by 2 PM.

For printable directions to the NCSC, registration instructions, and current information please visit the Green Decade webpage ([www.greendecade.org](http://www.greendecade.org)). by Eric Olson



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

**green decade**  
COALITION/NEWTON

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## CALENDAR

Sep/Oct (Tue) 1:30-6pm	<b>Farmers' Market</b> , Green Decade resource tent - volunteers needed all ages, you don't have to be an expert. Cold Springs Park, Beacon St. Also on Fridays at Post 440, California St., Nonantum. Contact Margaret, <a href="mailto:margford@yahoo.com">margford@yahoo.com</a> or 617 964-0606.
Sep/Oct (Fri) 1:30-6pm	
Sept 6 (Sat)	<b>"Tire gauge sign-making party"</b> e-mail Laura: <a href="mailto:bosbrownie@yahoo.com">bosbrownie@yahoo.com</a> . See article this issue page 3.
Sept 7 (Sun) 2-5pm	<b>"Swiss beach day at the Charles"</b> Free — Weeks Footbridge. See article on page 4. Games, music, snacks. Exhibition and Drawing—win a trip to Switzerland!
Sept 13 (Sat) 10-2pm	<b>"Tire gauge check"</b> at J&S Mobil gas, 1094 Beacon Street. Volunteers needed. See article this issue on page 3.
Sept 14 (Sun) 1:30-5pm	<b>Newton organic garden &amp; landscape tour</b> Limited to 25 people, call 617 965-1995. See article this issue on page 5.
Oct 4 (Sat) 10am-2pm	<b>"Green homes tour"</b> Newton energy-smart homes and buildings, refreshments. \$12 in advance or \$15 on the day of 10/4. For registration please visit Green Decade webpage ( <a href="http://www.greendecade.org">www.greendecade.org</a> ). Also see article this page.
Oct 6 (Mon) 7pm	<b>"Contested Streets"</b> (film) See how Europe cities have made their streets more humane and environmentally clean. Environmental film cosponsored with Newton Free Library. See box page 1 - FREE

Send environmental events to *GREEN NEWS*. email to Ira Krepchin by Friday, Sept. 18, 2008 [irapk@alum.mit.edu](mailto:irapk@alum.mit.edu). We will list as space permits.

## Equal time for . . . transportation

**M**any of us drive hybrid (or other low mileage) vehicles; a few perhaps drive motor scooters, as I did in my reckless youth. We walk when we can, and utilize public transportation. Bicycle use is increasing all the time. But virtually everyone rides in gasoline-powered cars frequently, (and, in addition, many of us fly in commercial aircraft regularly, but I am not going to discuss air travel here). Few of us are willing to turn our backs on automobiles. Our suburban lives would be too complicated without them, and some ordinary tasks would be unacceptably time-consuming.

We are mindful that fuel for transportation is a major component of our carbon footprint, even when we have been focused on saving energy in our homes. We are becoming localvores, avoiding buying vegetables shipped thousands of miles when we can grow them ourselves or buy them from local farmers. We never let up finding ways to reduce, reuse and recycle, in order to save energy and natural resources. So how do we reconcile our frequent use of gas-guzzling automobiles with our environmental ethic?

In fact, incremental changes gradually add up to significant energy savings. Buying CFLs for lighting fixtures in our homes, adding weather-stripping to a leaky door or windows, replacing an old refrigerator, lowering the temperature of the hot water tank slightly, installing solar panels, buying wind certificates—the beneficial effects of these actions are cumulative. Similarly, we can take steps to reduce the number of miles we travel by automobile without turning our lives upside down.

Every time we combine errands, carpool, tweak a schedule to avoid rush hour, take the T to a concert or sports event instead of driving, we make a difference. The documentary movie “Contested Streets”, to be shown at the Newton Library on Monday October 6 at 7pm (save the date!) has a segment showing an urban dedicated bus lane; a commentator notes that the bus in the background holds perhaps 100 people and points out that 90 cars have been taken off the road. That’s a lot of cars; indeed, removing 90 cars from one stretch of a city street may transform gridlock into rapid transit.

Transportation has taken a back seat for too long in Newton. A local senior bus program (Nexus) ran into funding problems. Hopes that a city bicycle and pedestrian task force would help to promote alternative transportation have fallen short. It is time to pay more attention to this elephant in the room. People in this suburban city are well situated in the metropolitan area, and we have good public transportation for commuters. But we are still extremely reliant on private automobiles, and most car trips are single occupancy. There are more than 77,000 cars registered in this city of 83,000 human beings. That’s a lot of cars. Only 13% of Newton’s children walk or bike to school. There are a large number of cars lined up at all our schools twice a day to drop off and pick up children who live within

walking or biking distance of school.

Today, bicycle accommodations are being expanded rapidly in many cities, large and small. Newton has a grassroots group, Bike Newton, <http://bikenewton.org>, dedicated to making the city bicycle friendly. In this time of fiscal restraint, we need to focus on creating changes that do not require expensive infrastructure and which promote mass transit. Bicycling is a serious transportation issue, not just a form of exercise; if we work to improve bicycle safety, we can dramatically decrease the number of short trips taken by automobiles in this city and greatly reduce our consumption of fossil fuels.

Green Decade now has a Transportation Committee. The committee will attempt to address the gamut of transportation issues in Newton and eventually make recommendations about specific policy positions related to: public transit, the transportation component of the various housing and commercial development projects being considered in the city (mainly to ensure that they are transit-oriented, as well as bicycle and pedestrian friendly), the many ongoing traffic and parking concerns in all the villages, promoting the use of alternative energy vehicles by residents and by the city itself, encouraging companies such as Zipcar to see the merit of expanding their Newton locations, reviving and expanding the Nexus bus (and make it two-ways) and more. I am hoping to get a few energetic people to join me in evaluating all of these issues over time, initially more as a study group, I suppose. The issues have been outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, and we can use that document as a starting point for our discussions going forward. Call Lois Levin 617 527-1237 if you want to get involved.

*by Lois A Levin*

## Help the energy smackdown come to town

**T**he Green Decade is looking for help so that Newton can participate in the Energy Smackdown—a series of community building challenges created by the BrainShift Foundation to help households and institutions reduce their carbon footprints. Phase One of the Smackdown was carried out last year in three households in each of the following cities: Medford, Cambridge, and Arlington.

BrainShift will pick 10 Cities to participate in 2009. In order for Newton to be selected this coming year, we need to create a leadership committee comprised of at least five people to be formed by September 30 to coordinate four challenges that will take place in the course of the year. We will also need to find 20 households willing to participate and be televised. The work of the leadership committee would not begin until early this winter. If you would like to be on the leadership committee or for more information, email Laura at [bosbrownie@yahoo.com](mailto:bosbrownie@yahoo.com) and/or check out [www.energysmackdown.org](http://www.energysmackdown.org).

*by Laura Katleman-Prue*

# Make electricity in the basement while you heat your home

**H**ave you finished air sealing and insulating your home and are now wondering what more you can do to reduce your home's carbon footprint? Do you have an old gas heater and are thinking about upgrading to a more efficient one? Or an old oil heating system and are thinking about switching to natural gas heating? Have you invested in energy-efficient appliances but still can't get your electricity use down below 800 kWh/month?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be ready to consider investing in a residential combined heat and power (CHP) system. A combined heat and power system increases the efficiency of using your natural gas for heating by making electricity with it and using the waste heat to heat your home (or hot water). The efficiency savings results from using the fuel twice—something most of our power plants currently do not do.

In North America there are two being marketed: Ecopower by Marathon Engine at 4.7 kW and Freewatt by Climate Energy at 1.2 kW. For a home or small business up to 4,000 square feet, the Freewatt can satisfy the electrical and heating demands of a home and has communications software for customer support.

At a net marginal investment \$8,000 to \$9,000 (installed cost) over a conventional heating system, the Freewatt makes electricity for your home while heating it. In fact, the hydronic version can heat your hot water all year-round. It is available for natural gas warm-air heating and forced hot water. It will be available for propane in the spring of 2009 with backup power and additional electric generation capacity (in the case of a grid outage).

So are you wondering how much your carbon footprint

gets reduced? Wondering how much money you save on electricity? Well, at today's electricity rates, you would be saving about \$800 to \$1000 a year on your bills if your system is running at full capacity, for example: 4000 hours a year. As for your carbon footprint, that depends. If you're switching from oil heat or upgrading from an old or newer heating system, for example, you can expect about 2 to 2.5 tons of carbon dioxide reduction on average. That's the equivalent of taking a car off the road for a year. The great thing about reducing your own personal carbon footprint is that you can measure it yourself, meaning you don't have to worry if the offsets you purchased are real because you are the offsetter! Your own web page (provided by the company) measures all your data.

Combined heat and power (CHP) has been around for a long time on a larger scale, but just in the last five or so years it has emerged as viable on this residential scale. Currently, there are more than 50,000 residential units operating in Japan and 60 in Massachusetts, including four already installed and one about to be installed in Newton! Freewatt will go national this year. The units are monitored remotely and serviced annually, and installers are being trained quickly.

As the world wakes up to climate change and higher energy prices, these units will start to become more common. For more information on the Freewatt, go to [www.freewatt.com](http://www.freewatt.com). For a presentation to a community group in Newton, contact Katherine Gekas at 617 795-2081 or [katherine@neighborhoodpower.com](mailto:katherine@neighborhoodpower.com), an advisor to Climate Energy for Newton. *by Katherine Gekas, former Chair of the Energy Committee and former GDC board member*

## Did you know that your tire pressure affects your gas mileage? (See what you can do —article on page 3)

### JOIN THE GREEN DECADE

Enclosed is:  New member  Renewal

(\$25.00 suggested annual individual donation)      (additional donation)      **TOTAL**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ (For address labels)

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### Yes! I am joining/renewing for calendar 2009!

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!

Send me Green News on-line instead of by mail  (in color and save paper)

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**Thank you!** Please send your tax deductible check payable to: GDC/N, P.O. Box 590242, Newton, MA 02459 Sept/Oct 2008

**Book Review:****Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization by Lester Brown**

I didn't want to read this book by myself. It is so full of information about what we can do to save civilization that I wanted to be with others to talk about what those ideas are and what we can do in Newton, and at the state and national levels. As a result of sharing that desire with others, a group of ten of us formed and met for three sessions.

In the first session we focused on Section I: "A Civilization in Trouble"—all the bad stuff we know a lot about. Lester Brown lays it out in spades: Deteriorating Oil and Food Security; Rising Temperatures and Rising Seas; Emerging Water Shortages; Natural Systems Under Stress; Early Signs of Decline.

It was heavy-duty global data, hard to take (especially if one reads it alone), but very accessible to the reader. In the group we talked not only about what we found that was new or worse than we had thought, but about denial and grief because of what we now know. And we were eager to get on to the next section: Section II. "The Response—Plan B," which covers Eradicating Poverty; Stabilizing Population; Restoring the Earth; Feeding Eight Billion Well; Designing Cities for People; and Raising Energy Efficiency.

We actually didn't try to cover all of this section in the second meeting, but took a large chunk of it. It is so much more hopeful than the first. Certainly, one of the points Brown makes right at the beginning is the need to address population and poverty. These issues are thoroughly entwined with environmental degradation. And he gives examples of how some of these issues are presently being addressed in different parts of the globe—basic education especially of girls and women, family planning, health care (with some amazing successes) and reduction of farm subsidies and debt.

Each of the chapters listed above contains incredibly rich information. "Restoring the Earth" gives examples from around the world of what people are doing about forests, soil, fisheries and carbon sequestration. "Feeding Eight Billion Well" highlights water use, more efficient production of protein, and multicropping.

By the third session, we finished reading the remainder of the book. The last part, Section III, "An Exciting New

Option," contains information on the kinds of actions we can take. Though many ideas are presented, the most powerful to me was the idea of shifting taxes and subsidies. To do so would take an enormous increase in the understanding of those economic policies in order to build a groundswell of grassroots support that could move Congress to do the necessary shifting. To understand that part of the plan, read Brown's book. It is a real option. If taken, it would enable us to act "with wartime speed," which Lester Brown calls for us to do. America did just that when war was declared on us by both Japan and Germany in 1941. This country met that challenge by shifting production from automobiles to tanks, planes, and ships in a matter of months; other civilian-goods industries changed their products to meet the military needs of the time.

This is such a time. We're not talking of winning a war. We're talking about saving civilization. Surely that is a priority for this time in history. And given the information in Brown's book, and from the findings of many scientists and industrialists, we can do it. By shifting economic policies, we could shift production away from fossil and nuclear fuels to windmills, tidal power, solar thermal and solar electric power. We have the know-how; we just need the political will.

*by Louise Bruyn*

*P.S. Our group was so fired up by the end of the three sessions, that we decided to meet a fourth time, this time for each of us to select Brown's most powerful examples of positive action now happening around the world, with each person focusing on a different chapter. Given that "what has already been done is possible to do," we will put together a list of these examples to pass on to others. We also will try to meet with each of our state and federal legislators to encourage their working toward... yes... the saving of civilization. Finally, we'll try to get others to read this book. Anyone want to start a reading group?*

**Swiss Beach Day at Charles**

Sept. 7 at 2 – 5 pm, Weeks Footbridge Cambridge.

Celebrate the unveiling of an outdoor exhibit with a Swiss Beach Day at the Charles and enjoy music, games, snacks and drinks. Win a trip to Switzerland sponsored by Swiss International Air Lines and Switzerland Tourism, taste Swiss sweetness by Lindt Chocolate and receive your free ThinkSwiss give-aways. RSVP for more information about the exhibit visit [www.thinkswiss.org/thinkswim.html](http://www.thinkswiss.org/thinkswim.html)

**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.*

**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, Sept 18, 2008.

Thanks for making this newsletter possible to Managing Editor Ira Krepchin, Coeditors Peter Smith and Louise Bruyn, and those who wrote articles. Many thanks to our Newsletter Collator Chairs Marcia Cooper and Frank Propp, with their team for the last issue: Marcia Cooper, Hope Dauwalter, Jacqui Gross, Nancy Lester and Frank & Edie Propp.

## CFLs: a new recycling option

The use of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) saves lots of energy compared to using conventional incandescent bulbs. However, CFLs do contain small amounts of mercury (about 5 milligrams, or about the size of the period at the end of this sentence, and far less mercury than is found in old thermometers and thermostats) so it is important to recycle them when they burn out. Thanks to Home Depot, recycling is now easier—the company has announced that all of its stores will take old CFLs for recycling. The Home Depot program will accept any maker's bulbs, and will bring relatively convenient recycling within reach of most households—there are several stores close to Newton—and should help improve on the national recycling rate—now estimated to be only about 2 percent.

Experts also point out that replacing incandescent lamps with CFLs reduces the amount of mercury emitted by the coal-fired power plants that provide more than half of the nation's electricity. The avoided mercury emissions are greater than the mercury contained in the CFLs.

*by Ira Krepchin via the New York Times*

## Farmers' Market Green Decade needs volunteers

If you'd like to volunteer for an hour or two with other volunteers on either Tuesday or Friday afternoons at the Green Decade Farmers' Market resource tent, please contact Margaret Ford, Green Decade Coordinator at [margford@yahoo.com](mailto:margford@yahoo.com) or 617-964-0606.

### Newton organic garden & landscape tour

Sunday, September 14, 2008 1-5 pm

Sponsored by the Green Decade Coalition/Newton  
\$20 per person, \$15 for Green Decade members

Join us for an afternoon guided tour of 4-5 homes with organic gardens featuring flowers, vegetables and even an organically maintained lawn or two! Each site will highlight a specific aspect of organic gardening, such as composting, watering techniques or plant selection. Learn more about organic gardening and tips for making your garden (or lawn) grow, with alternatives to invasive species and without chemical pesticides! The tour is limited to 25 people; we will meet at City Hall at 1:30 pm and car-pool to the gardens.

For advance ticket purchase, more information & "sneak peeks" of the gardens: call 617-965-1995 or go to: [www.greendecade.org/organicgardentour](http://www.greendecade.org/organicgardentour)

## If you have to drive: Cars available today for those concerned about global warming

For those of you who may be considering what your alternatives are for cars that provide exceptional mileage there are currently some good choices, and the next few years will bring even more.

First and foremost, the car that gets the best gas mileage now is the Toyota Prius. With an average EPA rating of 45 mpg this car is one of the few "dedicated hybrids" available, which means that it was designed as a hybrid from the beginning as opposed to just having a hybrid system added to an existing model. The Prius ranges in price from about \$23000 to \$28000 depending on the options.

Next is the Honda Civic hybrid which is probably second with an average EPA rating of about 38 mpg. The hybrid version of the Civic adds about \$3000 to the price of a regular Civic. Expect to pay between \$22000 and \$25000.

For those who want very generous space and great mileage there is the Toyota Camry Hybrid. Ranging in price from \$24000 to \$29000 the hybrid version gets about 28 mpg overall. Similar in size, price and slightly worse gas mileage is the Nissan Altima Hybrid.

All of these models (with the exception of the Nissan) will get better than 40 mpg on the highway and the Civic and the Prius will get near 50. If you want to buy an inexpensive small car with good gas mileage, go for the Honda Fit, the Toyota Yaris or the Nissan Versa. All are four door cars, easy to park, with mpg estimates well into the 30's.

**Coming soon:** The next generation Prius and the new dedicated hybrid Honda will be introduced next year. The new Honda is as of yet unnamed but will feature the same body as the company's fuel cell prototype (the FCX Clarity) and will reportedly start at around \$20,000.

Many companies are also working feverishly on new lithium-ion batteries that will allow future hybrid models to get closer to 80 mpg and will feature "plug-in" capability. This will allow the owner to charge the car overnight and travel up to 40 miles on electric power alone. For extended trips a small gasoline engine will operate primarily to charge the engine. This is the technology being utilized for the Chevrolet Volt, due to be introduced in 2010.

*by Jim Nemetz*

## Surfing: tips from the web

Got an old cell phone lying around? Reluctant to release it into the waste stream? Then this website is for you—Flipswap makes it easy for you to get something for your old cell phone. Options include instant store credit, cash online, donate to charity or recycle. Check it out at: <http://www.flipswap.com>.

Project Laundry List, presents a positive approach to change: <http://www.laundrylist.org/>. An entertaining resource website of art, education and advocacy for making air-drying laundry acceptable and desirable as a simple and effective way to save energy. Subscribe to the online newsletter, "Hanging Out."

*by Ellie Goldberg*