

green news

NEWSLETTER OF GREEN DECADE / NEWTON
Over 20 Years of Environmental Leadership 1990 - 2011



VOL.21 - NO. 6

NOV/DEC 2011

Sustainable painting workshop Is "green" a historic paint color?

Nov. 19 (Sat) 1-4pm, at the Jackson Homestead and Museum, 527 Washington St. Newton 02458.

Thinking about painting your historic home? Come to this hands-on workshop that will combine information about getting paint to stick to older homes and how to paint with historic colors while using "green" products. Nigel Costoloe of Catchlight Painting and Sally Zimmerman of Historic New England will lead the workshop and answer questions. Co-sponsored by Green Decade/Newton and Historic Newton. \$30 per person (\$15 for Green Decade members). Register at Green Decade 617-965-1995 or visit www.greendecade.org

Protect the Clean Air Act

The Clean Air Act is our nation's landmark law for protecting us from dangerous air pollution. It is an effective legislation that saves lives and prevents illness, but it is at risk right now. Republicans and coal state Democrats have mounted attacks to block or weaken the EPA's ability to regulate air pollution and greenhouse gases. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor has explicitly stated that the GOP's main agenda is to kill EPA regulations. We need to convince Congress to support the EPA's public health protections. Senator Scott Brown has twice voted to roll back the EPA's ability to limit CO2 pollution. Please call Senator Brown (202) 224-4543 and tell him to support clean air and our health, not the agenda of big polluters in the coal industry. *by MacKenzie Clark, Environment Massachusetts*

Pay-as-you-throw trash collection

The Board of Green Decade Newton supports instituting a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) program for our community's trash collection system. We see it as a fair approach for residents to pay only for the amount of trash they generate. It would create an incentive for increased recycling, composting and waste reduction. It is an effective way to improve environmental quality by diverting unnecessary waste from the disposal stream. The City of Newton ought to be added to the long list that includes 134 other Massachusetts communities that have adopted PAYT. And of course, some of the \$6.5 million in our City's trash budget can surely be put to better use. Please contact City leaders to ask them to

institute Pay-As-You-Throw for Newton's trash collection system. For information see: www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/payfact.htm
by Marcia Cooper

Sign up: no-cost NSTAR home energy audit

Call 866-867-8729 and mention **Newton Eco-teams**. You may be eligible for insulation rebates, as well as a 0% loan offer. The Newton Eco-team project promotes conservation to reduce the carbon footprint of our households by 25%. Groups of 5-8 people meet only 3 times to learn ways to save energy and money. For more info, call Jay Walter at 617-527-8383.

Green Solutions EXPO 2011 photos



Photographer Marcia Cooper

Having fun at Green Solutions EXPO at the big white tents: Left, Alison Leary, Marisa Antonlino & Jena Greaser; Center, EXPO guys, Eric Packer, Progressive Asset Management; Kevin Ruddy, PTC, Bob Halpin, Pres. Chamber, Peter Smith, Chair Chamber Env. Committee, Right,, EXPO kids Olivia and Emma Mooradian.

“Keystone XL” oil pipeline

One of the key environmental challenges that we face as a nation is a dangerous plan to build a long pipeline to transport oil from tar sands across the center of our country. Extraction and refining of tar sands makes them the most carbon polluting form of petroleum. Climate scientist James Hansen refers to the proposal to use these sands and pipe them to the gulf coast and refine them as the biggest carbon threat to global climate. He calls it a “carbon bomb” and says this course of action will mean “game over” for the climate that our civilization has developed in and for which our cities and infrastructure are designed. Please visit 350.org to find out how you can help to stop this disaster—getting involved in issues beyond your own personal “greening” efforts is one way to increase your impact and help future generations.

by Greg Caplan



Photographer Marcia Cooper



Top left to right: Wong, Master Water Barreler; Ava Fantasia, Whole Foods; Jeff Rosenberg, Green Decade/Newton; getting ready to start the Rain Barrel Workshop.

Bottom l-r: Ronda Jacobson helps Master Water Barreler Wah tighten the spigot during the “hands on” rainbarrel workshop.

Thank you Whole Foods!

It is with much appreciation to Whole Foods on Walnut St. that we thank you for all of your hospitality and generosity for hosting a 3rd Rain Barrel Workshop in September with all proceeds going to Green Decade.

Thanks ! and next newsletter deadline

For the next newsletter, please send submissions by e-mail to Ira Krepchin, irapk@alum.mit.edu, by Mon, Nov. 21, 2011.

Thanks for making this newsletter possible to Managing Editor Ira Krepchin, Editor Peter Smith, Copy Editor Susan Tornheim and article authors. Many thanks to our newsletter mailing chairs Marcia Cooper and Frank Propp, and their team for the last issue: Shirlee Isenberg, Polly Kalman.

“Buy Local” for Thanksgiving

A couple of years ago my son said “lets see if we can only buy local food for Thanksgiving”. And so we have—we have bought our turkey from Owens Poultry farm in Needham; purchased all our vegetables from local farmers markets that are open right up to Thanksgiving; apples and apple cider came from a local orchard; and whatever wasn’t baked at home was purchased from a local bakery. I even had my knives sharpened at Stoddards in Nonantum. I was shocked at how much we were able to reduce the carbon footprint of our dinner so late in the season

I wonder how much Newton citizens could lower the carbon footprint of the Thanksgiving holiday if we all “shopped local” for the holiday. This website <http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/map.htm> is an interactive map showing the locations and dates for all the markets. I’ve used the market at Copley Square because I can hop on the T and pick up food during lunch hour, but there are many locations open right up to the day before Thanksgiving. What a great way to give thanks by supporting our local farmers and shops and helping the environment at the same time. Our family sends a challenge to all Newton families. Let me know how this worked out for you. by Susan Albright, Alderman-at-Large Ward 2

Reduce radon levels in your home

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in the general population. The Surgeon General and EPA recommend testing for radon and reducing radon in homes that have high levels. Fix your home if your radon level is confirmed to be 4 picocuries per liter, pCi/L, or higher. Radon levels less than 4 pCi/L still pose a risk, and in many cases may be reduced. If you smoke and your home has high radon levels, your risk of lung cancer is especially high. Short-term tests remain in your home for 2- 90 days, depending on the device. “Charcoal canisters,” “alpha track,” “electret ion chamber,” “continuous monitors,” and “charcoal liquid scintillation” detectors are most commonly used for short-term testing. Because radon levels tend to vary from day to day and season to season, a short-term test is less likely than a long-term test to tell you your year round average radon level. A short-term test followed by a second shortterm test may be used to decide whether to fix your home. Test kits are available at most local hardware stores. EPA recommends that you use a certified or qualified radon mitigation www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html contractor trained to fix radon problems.

A Take-Home Tip

Now that many of us we are in the habit of bringing cloth bags to stores, it’s time to take the next step—bringing reusable containers to restaurants. I like the rectangular ones because they stack well and don’t leak. No more flagging down the waiter to take your leftovers home!

These containers last forever and don’t take up much space in your car or bike!

by Michele Davis



Photographer Charles Geis

Oak Hill Middle School solar array

Solar Panels on Schools Update

Changes in the Bigelow Middle Schools renewable energy curriculum has led Engineering Technology teacher Mike Whitman, with my assistance as a parent volunteer, to push for the completion and installation of solar panels at Bigelow. First the good news: the City of Newton has completed one of two solar panel installations on Newton's Middle Schools—a 14-module 2.37 kW solar panel array is up and running at Oak Hill Middle School. The installation was made possible with funding raised via the New England Wind Fund by Green Decade activists encouraged and advised by Public Buildings Dept staff.

The system, completed by the firm Solar City, feeds power directly into the local energy grid, and was completed over the summer months. Heliotronics Inc. was hired to provide components and software that allow classrooms to track the power output of the array and of the weather. Monitoring and measuring is a crucial piece of the educational value of solar energy according to Jenny Craddock, Newton's K through 8 Science Coordinator. Like the solar panels installed at Newton North and South High Schools the panels both produce power and serve as educational tools. More information is available at the Newton Green Energy website: www.greenenergynewton.org/.

The proposed installation at Bigelow Middle School was put on hold because of structural issues in the roof of the proposed location, but there are alternatives. "If the roof is really not able to hold even this small array of panels, perhaps they could be installed as car ports" said Eric Olson, Chair of the Newton Energy Commission. "That might even be better, as they would be more visible to students" added Olson. Whitman agreed that it would be beneficial if the panels were in plain view of the students. "Anything we can do to get our students familiar with the challenges and opportunities of renewable energy systems is beneficial at this point" remarked Whitman. So let us celebrate the solar array installed this summer on Oak Hill and at the same time urge the City not to let the funds collected for solar on Bigelow languish too much longer!

by Charles Geis

Herbicide Alerts

Green Decade believes that residents have a right to know where and when herbicides are sprayed near homes, yards, gardens and children's play areas, public parkways, roads, sidewalks, paths and trails. Though notification is no defense against exposure or protection from herbicide drift and run off, it alerts us to the State's use of pesticides.

This past summer, GDN collected signatures to inform Newton residents about plans for herbicide spraying by the MBTA, the Turnpike, the Highway Dept., DCR Urban Parks and CSX Railway. According to the Vegetation Management Plans (www.mass.gov/agr/pesticides/rightofway/index.htm) chemical products used are Roundup-Pro or Razor-Pro alone or in combination with Arsenal, Escort XP, Oust Extra or Oust XP. In August we learned that the DCR and MBTA did not spray as planned. However, I - 90 in Newton was sprayed on 7/28 and 8/3.

To stay informed on herbicide spraying and the science and politics of pesticides read: Don't Spray 'em. Outsmart 'em. online at <http://safefrompesticides.blogspot.com/>

To be on GDN's notification list, send your name and email to info@greendecade.org by Ellie Goldberg, 617-965-9637

Solar power at home



David Miller points out features of a sample solar panel in front of his Waban home with the entire roof covered with a solar array.

We wanted to take advantage of our south-facing roof to produce all the electricity for our new LEED Platinum home, so we used Independent Power Systems to put in high-efficiency SunPower photovoltaic panels. Because of the Massachusetts net-metering regulations, we earn credit whenever electricity production exceeds our home's energy use; and use conventional utility power when production falls short of consumption. "Net-zero" occurs when the annually produced solar electricity equals or exceeds the home's annual energy needs.

With current Massachusetts and federal incentives for solar power, solar electricity is not expensive. Our 9.45 kW system, composed of 42 SunPower 225 Watt panels, will power the entire home – heating and cooling included - with a payback as short as four years. We save money and generate additional income by selling excess power back to the utility. Our family can look forward to no electric bills for 30 plus years and a cash annuity for an additional 5-6 years. It's an investment that's good for your budget, the environment, the local economy, and the value of your home. by Karen & David Miller

Thanks for donations:

(for contributions received in Sept./Oct.)

FRIENDS: Lauren Berman, Debra Frankel & Bill Moriarty, Robert & Phyllis Yawitt





Photographer Maxwell Hamilton

Top: Green Decade/Newton leadership at Farmers Market tent: Left to right, Michelle Davis, Program Coordinator; Marcia Cooper, President; Lois Levin, BIKE NEWTON Founder; Jay Walter, EcoTeam Program Administrator and Sustainable Waste Management Collaborative.

Bottom: riding the "Magic Energy Bike" the Maxwell girls feel the big difference between incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs.

Wrapping up the Farmers' Market

The caterpillars are in their cocoons and the 2011 Newton Farmers Market is now in our photo album, thanks to Newton South senior Maxwell Hamilton who captured some of our favorite moments seen here. Our volunteers had kids and adults pedaling the Magic Energy Bike to find out more about energy conservation, learning about caterpillars, moths, butterflies and other insects, and bringing in over 1400 corks for the cork recycling project in partnership with Whole Foods and the nonprofit and Rainforest Alliance-endorsed Cork ReHarvest. Visiting dogs lapped at our special fish-ice enhanced water bowls and sniffed the corks, enjoying the friendly atmosphere of the market and the farmers who bring their locally-grown produce each week. Thanks go to volunteers — from age 7 on up – listed below and especially to Judy Dore, Farmers Market Manager and Mary Flynn, Assistant Manager.

*Lucrecia Aguilar, *Roz Aronow, Sarah Barnett, *Hilary Brumberg, Marcia Cooper, Mary Ann Donaldson, Lucia and *Dorothea Dolan and Venus the Wonder Dog, *Malini Gandhi, *Eliaana Gevelber, Ellie Goldberg, Jena Greaser, *Emmett Greenberg, *Maren Gunning & Chris Kjellson, *Maxwell Hamilton, Fran Johnson, *Mehdi Khalfallah, Alison Leary, *Olivia and *Peter Mooradian and Sammi the Friendly Dog, *Albert Lee, *Adela Miller, *Sophie Magidson, Eric Olson, Naomi Osher, Rohna Shoul, *Melissa Sullivan, and Maeve Ward. (* student volunteers) *by Margaret Ford*

Volunteer Opportunity

Green Decade is planning a special celebration in 2012. If you are interested helping out in any way, even if your time is limited, please contact marciacooper@greendecade.org

Join Green Decade for 2012

Join or renew your membership to Green Decade / Newton!

- Member discounts at GD/N events and participating merchants
- The bimonthly Green News in your mailbox or by e-mail

JOIN THE GREEN DECADE

Enclosed is: New member Renewal

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

NAME: _____ (For address labels)

ADDRESS: _____

ZIP _____ PHONE: _____

E-MAIL _____ (Please print clearly !)

Yes! I am joining/renewing for calendar 2012!

Most of our budget comes from memberships. Membership and contributor lists are not given out.

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

Amount	Person/Family	Business
\$ 25	Basic	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
50	Friend	<input type="checkbox"/> Basic
100	Donor	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend
250	Patron	<input type="checkbox"/> Donor
500	Benefactor	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron
1000	Really Green	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor
\$10	Student at _____	

Please circle your category

For Friend or higher contribution, we acknowledge your donation in green news unless you check here

Thank you! Please send your tax deductible check payable to: GDC/N, P.O. Box 590242, Newton, MA 02459 Nov/Dec 2011

Farmers Market Photos



Photographer Maxwell Hamilton

Students for a Greener World at Green Decade/Newton Farmers Market tent- Left to right: Sophie Magidson, SGW Coordinator Margaret Ford, Roz Aronow and Maren Gunning.



EcoBasket, the perfect holiday gift!

If you are looking for a “green” holiday gift, Green Decade has the best offer in town! Swartz Hardware, owned by Michael Swartz, generously donates all proceeds from the sales of GDN’s EcoBaskets assembled by adults with developmental disabilities at the Barry Price Center in Newton. EcoBaskets (\$50) are available at Swartz, 353 Watertown St. Newton or call 617-965-1995.

The baskets contain:

- 3 Energy efficient light bulbs that last 10 times longer and use 25% less energy than incandescent bulbs
- 1 32 oz. all purpose cleaner with baking soda– from Global Balance, a local eco-friendly company whose products are 100% biodegradable
- 1 32 oz laundry liquid (fragrance free) for 16 loads
- 1 16 oz. liquid moisturizing hand & body soap – from Global Balance
- 2 reusable grocery bags made from recycled plastic
- 1 Surge Protector
- 1 Polar “Save the Planet” reusable water bottle.
- 2 Outlet Gasket insulator packages that prevent cold air from entering through outlets
- 2 packages of herbal tea
- 1 energy saver booklet
- a complimentary GDN membership - \$25 value with discounts from local vendors



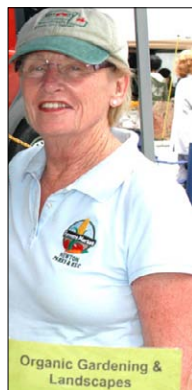
Left to right, Lois Hurwitz, Mitchel Lumin, Marcia Cooper, Susan Lumin



Above, Spicebush Harry -- one of our star caterpillars and (right) Caterpillar Club member Luke, with drawing.



Maxwell Hamilton, photographer and Judy Dore, Farmers Market Mgr.



The cellophane wrapping is made of biodegradable cellulose and the basket is reusable.

Swartz also gives discount offers to shoppers, who show their membership cards at the time of purchase (not applicable for gift baskets.)
by Marcia Cooper

Our mission is to create an environment in better balance with the natural world by making significant, measurable improvements in the way we use resources.

- Goals include helping households, businesses and institutions to:
- Increase energy efficiency & seek alternatives to fossil/nuclear fuels;
 - Use IPM and organic alternatives to pesticides;
 - Promote high performance (green) building measures;
 - Prevent pollution through source reduction and reduced consumption;
 - Promote reuse and recycling practices;
 - Improve waste disposal practices;
 - Conserve water and other resources.

Our programs are designed to build awareness, promote opportunities for public dialogue and educate and empower citizens to take personal and civic action.



Photographer Maxwell Hamilton

Newton Cultural Center Open House "Kids Go Green" event on Sept. 25: Back row: Shanie Magidson, Roz Aronow, Maren Gunning, Margaret Ford, Jena Greaser, Emmett Greenberg, Maxwell Hamilton, Eric Olson Front row: Annalisa Flynn, Eliana Gevelber, Sophie Magidson

Newton's future transportation

Tuesday, November 29 - 7 PM, League of Women Voters Newton will host a forum at the Newton Library entitled: The Future of Transportation in Newton: how to ensure that it will be viable, sustainable and affordable. Transportation accounts for a third of our carbon footprint. In annual census reports, Newton residents repeatedly say that improving bicycling facilities and public transit are the two most critical transportation issues facing the city, and local leaders ought to take action to reduce our dependence on automobiles (Cambridge passed a Vehicle Trip Reduction ordinance in 1992).

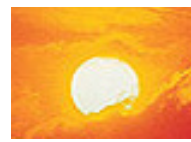
Candace Havens, Director of Planning & Development for Newton, and Newton's representative to the MAPC, will introduce forum participants and Priscilla Leith of LWVN will moderate the Forum. Participants include: Stephanie Pollack, Chair of Newton's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Assoc. Dir. of Research for the Dukakis Center at Northeastern U. She will talk about the Newton TAC's findings and how government finances relate to Newton transportation.

Eric Bourassa, Transportation Manager for the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), will address regional development and its expected effects on transportation in Newton. He will discuss alternatives such as the MBTA, Commuter Rail and plans for a transit "Urban Ring."

Jackie Douglas, Exec. Dir. of LivableStreets, an advocacy group seeking to balance the needs of drivers with pedestrians, bicyclists and mass transit users. She will explore possibilities for Newton's streets and intersections.

Green Decade is a co-sponsor, along with: Newton Library, NewTV, Newton TAB, Newton Conservators, BIKE NEWTON, Newton Bicycle/Pedestrian Task Force, Newton Senior Center, Newton Villages, Newton Energy Commission, Newton Safe Routes to School, Newton Economic Development Commission, Newton Disabilities Commission, Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce, and the Weston LWV. Newton's Transportation objectives have remained remarkably consistent over time, but there has been more talk than action. This will be an opportunity to hear experts address the most current information related to transportation infrastructure and policy to help better understand our current transportation needs and the many transportation challenges facing the City as growth continues.

by Lois Levin



Please renew 2012!

Join online: www.greendecade.org

Green Decade is proud of its 21 year history and our organization's efforts to help residences, businesses and public facilities become more sustainable. You may also send a \$25 payment for a basic membership to Green Decade/Newton, P.O. Box 590242, Newton, MA 02459

Save, save, save !

You can **save money** and **save energy** through The Mass Save Home Energy Services Program which provides eligible Massachusetts residents:

- **No-cost** Home Energy Assessment, by Next Step Living, to identify energy savings improvements
- **No-cost** compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) to help start saving energy immediately
- **75% up to \$2000** towards the installation of approved insulation improvements
- **Generous rebates** for high efficiency heating and hot water equipment
- **0% financing** offered through the HEAT Loan Program on eligible energy efficiency improvements

Please mention Newton Eco-Teams when you call Lyndsay Rose from Next Step Living at **413-281-3056** or email lyndsay.rose@nextsteplivinginc.com . Or schedule your appointment online at Next Step Living's NewtonEcoTEams page: <http://nextsteplivinginc.com/newton-eco-team-project/?program=Newton>

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