

Hurricane man blows into town

By Lois Levin/ Special To The Tab
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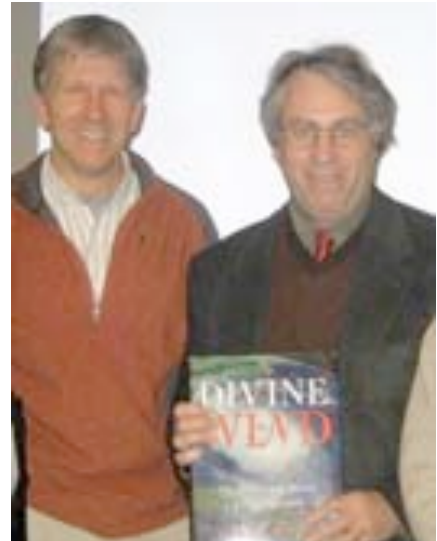
Those who braved the cold on Feb. 27 to hear MIT Professor Kerry Emanuel's Environmental Speaker Series lecture at the Newton Library were captivated by his clear presentation of complex scientific data from his climate modeling research.

Dr Emanuel's data shows that the intensity of hurricanes in the Atlantic has grown dramatically - doubled - in the past 30 years. This is due largely to human activity. We have released enormous amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by burning oil and coal to create energy to power factories, heat our homes and run our automobiles. We have warmed the oceans, including the areas where powerful storms are formed, and this translates directly into more powerful hurricanes, with serious consequences for coastal areas.

New England is highly vulnerable to hurricanes, which have occurred at a remarkably steady rate for centuries, averaging one every five years. As these storms continue to grow more intense, they place us at increasingly greater risk. Therefore, while we work to address global warming, we must also empower public agencies to plan for and cope with these storms, which expose us to great physical danger and financial risk. Insurance companies are already refusing to provide coverage for storm damage in many coastal areas.

The lecture, sponsored by the Green Decade Coalition, will be aired on NewTV later this spring.

This article is archived at www.greendecade.org/tabarchive.asp.



Dr. Kerry Emanuel, MIT professor and author of "Devine Wind", a new book about hurricanes, with R. Eric Olson, Chairman of the energy Committee of the Green Decade coalition, at the Newton Library on Feb. 27.