

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

SIERRAN

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Spring 2003

Reaching More Than
26,000 Sierra Club Members
in Massachusetts

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FROM THE EDITOR

New Look for the *Sierran*

This is the premiere issue of the *Massachusetts Sierran's* new design. We hope that you will find it more accessible, readable, and appreciably more decorative on your coffee table. We've been enormously lucky to have the expert guidance and creative talent of graphic artist Barbara Hollingdale, who has worked tirelessly on the new design for many months. Barbara has striven for a simple, uncluttered look that won't get in the way of the stories we tell and the ideas we convey.

To make it easy to see what's in each issue, we've put a table of contents right on the cover. We're using more photographs and artwork—many of which are the work of our own members. A whiter, heavier paper makes photographs sharper and text easier to read. A second color—green, of course!—gives interest to the design and adds depth to the images.

Two things haven't changed: our paper still contains a proportion of recycled material and our ink is still soy-based.

Your comments are welcome. Like the environmental movement of which it is a part, the *Sierran* is constantly evolving. We are a work in progress. And we want our newsletter to keep up with you, our immensely intelligent and vibrant membership.

Roberta Tovey,
Sierran Editor

On the cover: Grounds of the former Middlesex County/Olympus Specialty Hospital, Waltham, MA, in late winter. JPI, a land developer based in Texas, has proposed building a complex of luxury apartments on the site.

Photograph by Deborah Dineen

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Please submit all copy to Roberta Tovey at editor@sierraclubmass.org. Please submit all announcements and meetings information to announce@sierraclubmass.org.

Opinions, unless otherwise stated, are of the author only; positions adopted by the Sierra Club are identified as such.

Circulation of the Massachusetts Sierran is over 26,000 outdoor-minded, environmentally aware readers.

Poll Shows Boston Area Residents Favor North/South Rail Link

by Jeremy Marin

A recent Sierra Club poll shows that people in the Boston area recognize that traffic has gotten worse, that they want to commute more conveniently, and that they think the North/South Rail Link will make commuting easier.

In the Sierra Club poll, conducted by Lou DiNatale of the University of Massachusetts, respondents ranked the environment and traffic the second most important issue facing communities today. A full 21.3 percent of those polled say that the environment and transportation are the most important issues, surpassed only by education/schools (30.9 percent).

For years, studies have shown that the Boston area suffers from some of the worst traffic congestion in the country. Poll results bear that out, as 78.4 percent say that they spend 30

minutes or more in a car each day, while more than 46 percent say they spend in excess of an hour in their car each day. Eighty-three percent of respondents think that traffic is worse than it was five years ago.

The air we breathe is dramatically affected by pollution from cars. Last summer Massachusetts had more "ozone alert" or unhealthy air days than since 1988. But many area residents still do not connect vehicle pollution with the harmful effects we suffer. Only 11 percent of respondents said that a family member has a health issue related to traffic pollution. When respondents were given a list of things that are aggravated by pollution (like asthma, emphysema, and chronic lung disease) that number jumped to 31 percent.

A full 70 percent of respondents said that that they seldom or never

use public transportation. The reason? Overwhelmingly, it's an issue of perceived inconvenience. Of those who work full-time, more than 68 percent say that public transportation does not meet their needs.

The poll shows that once educated about the Rail Link, commuters are enthusiastic about it. According to the MBTA, this one-mile of rail tunnel would make travel much more convenient for commuters in, around or through the Boston area and would reduce the number of car trips by 55,000 each day. More than 65 percent of those polled said that they support the Rail Link because it will be fast and convenient.

The Sierra Club is using the results of the poll to further educate the public and create demand for better transportation choices, so that everyone can travel by public transportation, and breath a little bit easier. ❖

Jeremy Marin is Conservation Organizer for the Boston area .

Congressman Lynch Supports North/South Rail Link

In his January 17 remarks at the opening ceremony for the Big Dig Tunnel, Congressman Stephen Lynch spoke up for the importance of the North/South Rail Link. Lynch said that after the Big Dig, the North/South Rail Link is the next great project that needs federal funding. Lynch will be working closely with Senators Kennedy and Kerry, and Congressman Markey, to advance this project.

What You Can Do

Please contact Congressman Stephen Lynch and thank him for his important support for this project. Boston office, 617-428-2000; DC office, 202-225-8273; or email him at stephen.lynch@mail.house.gov.

Representative Matthew Patrick (D-Falmouth) poses next to his energy efficient silver Honda Insight.

A former Executive Director of the non-profit Cape and Islands Self-Reliance Corporation, Patrick has followed closely the development of fuel-efficient cars for over a decade. "I decided I should set an example for others," he says about the aerodynamically-efficient front-wheel drive automobile he's owned for two years. "The three cylinder engine uses an electric motor for extra acceleration whenever it is needed, and I average about 62 miles a gallon," says Patrick. And the car, he says, has been basically maintenance-free.

Patrick is co-sponsoring several bills in the legislature that could have a major impact on the increased use of fuel-efficient vehicles in the state. These include a bill that would prevent any state agency from purchasing a vehicle that hasn't been approved by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs; a bill co-sponsored by Representative Jim Marzilli (D-Arlington) that will reduce the excise tax on fuel-efficient vehicles and increase the tax on less efficient vehicles; and a bill co-sponsored by Senator Cheryl Jacques (D-Needham) that would provide certain sales tax incentives for purchasing 'ultra-low emission vehicles,' along with other incentives such as unrestricted use of HOV lanes and reduced fares at certain tollbooths.



Photograph by Greg Auger



View of clocktower at summit of Middlesex County/Olympus Specialty Hospital grounds.

Photograph by Roberta Tovey

The Mortaring of Massachusetts

by Audrey Borus

Several years ago while at the Waltham Public Library, I noticed a display describing the open space in the town. Intrigued, I drove by one of the areas, off Trapelo Road. It's a beautiful spot full of trees and open space, undoubtedly home to many animals and a pleasing break from the otherwise overdeveloped and congested street. There's also an antique house, a Georgian-style home erected during the Revolutionary War by William Wellington, a patriot and community leader.

Grounds of Wellington House



Photograph by Roberta Tovey

What looks like a vast expanse of rolling hills is in actuality several parcels of land divided among three towns: Waltham, Lexington, and Belmont. The land encompasses the sites of the former Middlesex County/Olympus Specialty Hospital and the Metropolitan State Hospital. At least 247 acres will be transferred to the Metropolitan District Commission for preservation, including the entire portion in Belmont. A housing developer has plans for

Lexington's share calling for 300 housing units. But plans in Waltham remain unclear.

Unraveling the proposals

The parcel that's most hotly contested in Waltham consists of about 25 acres that were once home to the Middlesex County Hospital. Opened in the 1930s as a tuberculosis sanitarium, the Middlesex County Hospital eventually became a chronic care facility until it fell on hard times in the early '90s. It was sold to Olympus Specialty Health Care and operated as the Olympus Specialty Hospital until 2000. A subsidiary of an Ohio real estate and investment trust, HCRI Holdings, was then the mortgage holder. HCRI foreclosed on the property in 2000 and purchased its own mortgage at public auction.

The 25-acre lot had been zoned for conservation and recreation use. The Wellington House, which sits on this property, is of historical interest. But according to Patrick Golden, who reports for the *Waltham Daily News Tribune*, a state land court decision in the mid-1990s changed the zoning to accommodate single-family homes. Under that zoning status, 50 homes could be built on the lot, many with driveways letting on to an already busy section of Trapelo Road.

Now JPI, a Texas-based land developer, has proposed building 246 luxury apartments and condos for those 55 and older on the site. Rent at the apartments would range from \$1,500 to \$2,200 a month, and the townhouses for those 55 and over would sell for between \$325,000 to \$375,000.

The developer lobbied for and recently won a rezoning, this time to Residence D, a zone that would allow apartments or condominiums. However, the zone change itself does not allow JPI to build the complex it wants; it simply makes the land eligible for apartments and condos. According to City Council member Steve Rourke, JPI must now petition for a special per-

mit and provide a detailed plan of the project. The current understanding is that the developer will build on the footprint of the former Middlesex County/Olympus Hospital site (i.e., nothing new is being dug).

In addition, in November of 2002, JPI tried to sweeten their deal by proposing a conservation restriction on an 8.3-acre portion of the land. This would create a buffer between the land they want to develop and the MDC-controlled conservation area. While JPI would still own the land, the city of Waltham would manage the 8.3 acre buffer.

Behind the Scenes

There is an astonishing shortage of affordable housing in Massachusetts. Chapter 40B housing, the so-called affordable housing or anti-snob law, was enacted in 1969. In effect, the law allows developers to fast track local review and reduces many of the barriers inherent in the local approval process; for example, if less than 10 percent of the local housing stock is affordable, developers may appeal to the state Housing Appeals Committee when their projects are denied or granted with conditions they deem unviable.

Chapter 40B has been getting a lot of press these days, especially since during his campaign, Governor Mitt Romney proclaimed the law too flawed to be workable. In general, affordable housing is the last choice for areas such as the parcel in Waltham because of fears of increased traffic and an increased number of students in the local school population. According to one person I spoke with, a Chapter 40B development pretty much gives the developer carte blanche to build whatever housing he pleases, creating environmental and traffic problems, exactly what residents and politicians fear.

JPI appears to be doing everything it can to look more appealing than a 40B proposal that would let a potential developer ignore zoning altogether. The developer has promised to widen Trapelo Road and create a special turning lane for cars heading east on the road and entering the complex, thus creating a passing lane for those not turning.

But some of Waltham's City Council members aren't convinced that rezoning the land for condos is a good idea either. Many, including Waltham State Rep Tom Stanley, worry that the area cannot "absorb additional daily car trips." According to Bob Vanesse, a traffic consultant for Vanesse Associates, Trapelo Road would bear an extra 1,000 vehicle trips daily if



Photograph by Deborah Dineen

only a 152 unit complex were built. That would translate to roughly a 1 to 2 percent increase in daily traffic.

Councilor-at-large Jeanette McCarthy says she does not think the city needs any more luxury apartments. Betty Castner, the great, great-granddaughter of one of the land's original owners says, "We need recreation fields. We don't need any high-end apartment housing."

Then, there's the issue of sprawl. On one hand, filling these sites with compact development seems less deleterious to the environment than building subdivisions and office parks in the countryside beyond Route 495. On the other hand, neighbors and preservationists view land such as the Middlesex County/Olympus Hospital site as historically important open space and for them, putting up houses and office buildings seems an unsuitable fate for such stately grounds. "There was very much a sense of this almost being public property, even though it was always privately held," says one North Shore town planner.

Summary

Anyone familiar with Waltham knows that of the three towns, it is the most densely populated, and could use more conservation land. In a letter to the *Daily News Tribune*, a Waltham resident writes, "I'm aware of one true conservation area in Waltham—Prospect Hill Park. There is also some wooded land around the Paine Estate. We've lost three farms that provided some pleasant open space. Do we want more building and hardtop smothering the landscape?" Among detractors, this sentiment is common.

However, developing land in an already highly-developed, public-transportation-accessible area like Waltham is something we as environ-

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One of several stately buildings of the former Middlesex County/Olympus Specialty Hospital

Mortaring of Massachusetts

(Continued from page 5)

mentalists favor. And with affordable housing in Massachusetts at an all-time low, shouldn't the state try to increase the supply in well-developed areas? According to Michael Hogan, president of MassDevelopment (the state's economic development authority), "decisions aren't being made on the basis of good land-use policy—they're being made based on 'What does it do to the local budget?'"

The Sierra Club has no formal position on the Waltham land, but, according to Executive Committee Chapter Chair Mary Ann Nelson, the Massachusetts Chapter does look forward to helping form new 40B legislation. "We have a vested interest in keeping open space open and seeing that development occurs in a sustainable manner," says Nelson. While Nelson acknowledges the Sierra Club has an interest in combating sprawl, she also notes that people must get involved

at the local level. That way, decisions can be made that are genuinely for the good of each community.

In an article published in the *Boston Globe* on January 2, 2003, Aaron Gornstein (Citizens Housing and Planning Association) and Jim Gomes (Environmental League of Massachusetts) say "growth can be green." They believe we shouldn't have to choose between being affordable and environmentally friendly. They suggest that the state get serious about reforming zoning and development planning. First, state government must stop subsidizing sprawl. They point out that these subsidies may take the form of highway interchanges or tax breaks for corporations who develop on land accessible only by car. But what the state should promote is economic development in areas with the water, infrastructure and transportation systems already in place.

Second, Gornstein and Gomes urge a serious effort to make Chapter 40B work. Until the state starts holding communities accountable, the goal of

10 percent affordable housing for every Massachusetts city and town may never be reached. Lastly, the pair advocates "smart growth" initiatives for housing, transit and water infrastructure, admonishing the current administration to quickly implement the new program for housing in commercial districts provided for in last year's housing bond bill. As the pair rightly note, protecting Massachusetts's natural resources while providing affordable housing may present considerable and often contradictory demands. But realizing that we should have both and, with decent leadership, we can, is more than half of the battle. ❖

Audrey Borus is a member of the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee and the Sierran copy editor.

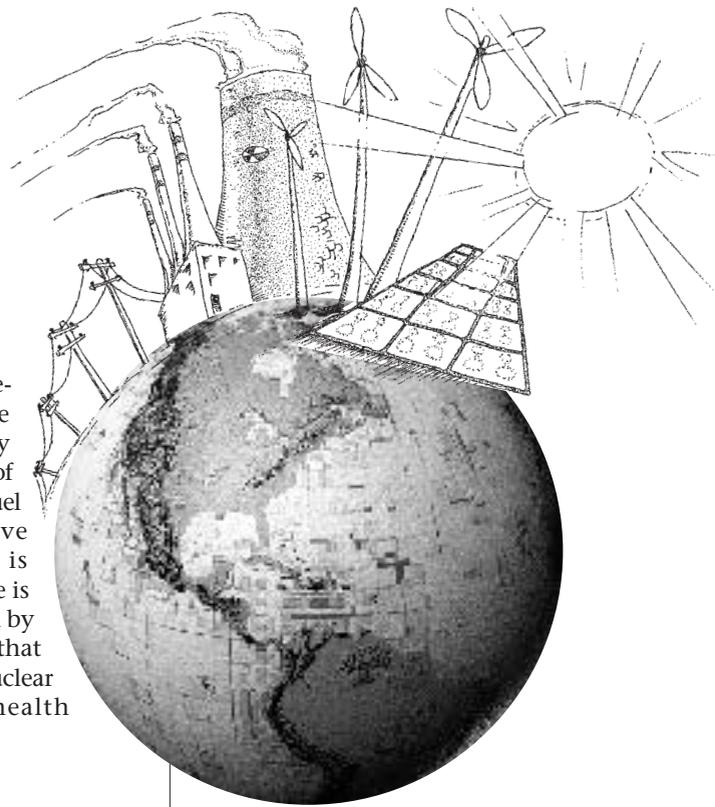


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One of the most important and universal environmental issues facing the US and the world today is the use and conservation of energy. In most parts of the world, energy use is the single largest source of air pollution; it is the major source of CO² in the atmosphere, and hence of global warming. How we get our fuel also poses environmental issues. Large areas of the world have been deforested for fuel, and coal mining and extraction of oil are heavily polluting industries.

In the US today, the only significant source of non-polluting, renewable energy is hydro-electric power. But the dams and the lakes formed behind the dams have a major impact on wildlife, especially fish. In the Northeast, wind power is the only significant potential source of renewable, non-polluting energy.

Improving energy efficiency through legislation has been full of obstacles. Energy providers are lobbyists and major campaign contributors, while energy consumers do not usually have a unified, powerful voice.

Here we present a non-technical summary of energy: where we get it, how we use it, and how we might be able to save it.

Fossil Fuels and Nuclear Power

Most electricity is generated from fossil fuels: coal, oil, and natural gas. In the West and a few other areas, hydro power is significant, but fossil fuels are still heavily used. Even the Tennessee Valley Authority is a major user of fossil fuels. At present, no commercially available technology is capable of taking over a major portion of fossil-fuel-generated power.

Nuclear power is a significant source of electricity in the US and other in-

dustrial countries, especially France, but there has been no satisfactory solution to the problem of what to do with spent fuel rods and of radioactive debris when a plant is decommissioned. There is also the threat of attack by terrorists and evidence that people who live near nuclear power plants suffer health effects.

Hydrogen

Hydrogen is the environmentally perfect fuel for vehicles (and for everything, really!) but at present, the only commercially available technology for generating hydrogen uses electricity to break down water into hydrogen and oxygen. In principal, we could use electricity generated by solar and wind power. But even if it were technically feasible, solar and wind power generated electricity would require a very large capital investment over many years and perhaps a government subsidy.

Chief Uses of Energy

Passenger cars and commercial vehicles are the largest users of energy derived from oil. This sector has the greatest potential for immediately reducing energy use, oil consumption and air pollution—without cost. Few people really need a large, heavy vehicle with low gas mileage. Using electricity to power commuter, inter-city and freight trains, and automobiles can eliminate local air pollution, but, presently, fossil fuels are still used to generate the electricity.

We also use an enormous amount of energy for heating, ventilating and air conditioning our homes and places

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ENERGY: a Primer

by Gil Woolley

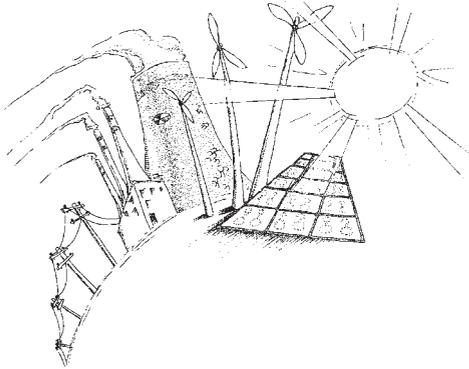
First in a series of articles about the source, use, and conservation of energy.

In this issue, we present an overview of the subject for the non-technical reader.

Drawing by Kimberley C. Blozie

Energy Primer

(Continued from page 7)



of work. We have become accustomed to working and living in the same temperature throughout the year.

Many industrial processes use energy heavily. However, industrial users are aware of costs and are likely to adopt energy and cost-saving technology. Although many energy-intensive industries have moved offshore, they are still contributing to global warming and are often located in countries with less stringent pollution controls than the US.



Turbine generator room at the Hoover Dam.

Photograph by Norm Seifert

Ways to Save Energy

The best, most immediate and least costly way to save energy is not to use it. If we drove less and used smaller, more fuel-efficient cars, set our thermostats lower in winter and higher in summer, we would see a very significant immediate reduction in energy use. Until the price of oil rises substantially, however, we may not feel compelled to reduce our energy use.

Still, there are many ways we can use less energy without giving up our customary way of life. Electric motors with electronic controls are much more efficient than the traditional AC induction motors and can also provide variable speeds, eliminating the need for energy-wasting speed changers. Such motors can be used in washing machines, and to drive fans in heating and ventilating systems. Several high-efficiency light sources are on the market. While they are higher in initial cost, consumers recover this cost through lower electricity bills over the life of the product.

We can also save a great deal of energy by driving fuel-efficient cars. The Sierra Club is currently spearheading a campaign to apply consumer pressure to encourage Ford to use proven technology that provides performance equivalent to that of today's vehicles with around a 50 percent savings in energy. Toyota and Honda already make more fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles.

Whatever the technology, the smaller and lighter the vehicle, the lower the fuel consumption and pollution.

We can reduce the energy we use in cooling and heating our homes and workplaces. Better insulation of buildings saves energy and saves money. The cost/benefit ratio is often skewed because the developer has to pay the additional

cost of insulation, while the tenant pays the fuel bills. Optimum insulation requirements can be incorporated into building codes. ❖

Gil Woolley, a frequent contributor to the Sierran, is a member of the Chapter Executive Committee and chair of the Conservation Committee.

Next issue:

Carbon Sequestration

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The park today (right) and the original property in Everett, Corbett Farm, as it appeared over one hundred years ago (below).

When it applied to the National Park Service for funding to improve Glendale Park in 1979, the city of Everett described the park, appropriately, as the “Crown Jewel” of the city, and the funding was approved. But in 1999, the city decided to take the park as a “free” site for a new high school, since refurbishing the existing school had been considered, but rejected, and land in Everett is in short supply.

Glendale Park is, however, the only significant open space in this densely populated city. It is also adjacent to a large public housing project, where it is the only open space to which many residents have easy access. To them, it is more important than the Grand Canyon or the Arctic Natural Wildlife Refuge.

City Proposes Abandoned Industrial Site for New Park

Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution requires that if government takes open space for any other purpose, “equivalent” open space shall be provided as “compensation.” The city offered an area of seven acres of a heavily polluted abandoned industrial site along the Malden River, acquired from GE—hardly an equivalent. It is preposterous that the city should propose land for a park that has restrictions on the use of food and beverages and prohibits contact with the ground by children. To fix the land demands an expensive and time-consuming cleanup which may well be beyond the fiscal ability of the city.

Furthermore, the proposed site is practically inaccessible to the people who need it the most—the inhabitants of the urban core—and particularly those in the housing project. The proposed site is more than a mile (20 city blocks, including several major thoroughfares) from Glendale Park. To a mother pushing a baby carriage, that is not accessible. It is also further away than parents would want young children to be when playing unsupervised.

Coalition to Save Glendale Park Forms

Citizens of Everett, led by Sierra Club member John Ricci, organized to save the park, forming the Coalition to Save Glendale Park. They were fortunate to find a prominent law firm in Boston, Nutter McClennen & Fish, which agreed to represent the citizens, pro-bono. Nutter attorney



Photograph by John Ricci and Agnes Foye

A Reprieve for Glendale Park

by Gil Woolley

Gary Gill-Austern has worked tirelessly for the Coalition.

John Ricci approached the Sierra Club, and the Massachusetts Chapter has done what it can to support the group. The intervention of a large national entity like the Sierra Club adds a good deal of weight to a citizen group fighting government, and makes it harder to belittle the group’s effort as NIMBY, or “Not In My Backyard.”

The Massachusetts Chapter commented on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), supplementing the thorough legal arguments of Attorney Gill-Austern with more policy arguments, and, when the Secretary of Environmental Affairs granted a certificate against the taking, the Club testified at hearings of the Joint Legislative Committee on Local Affairs.

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Artist unknown; property of the Shute Memorial Library

Glendale Park

(Continued from page 9)

Almost all Article 97 takings bills are passed without much opposition, but in this case, the Joint Committee voted for "further study," which postponed consideration for a year. Then, on the last day of the session, the leadership added the bill as an "outside section" to a budget bill, and it slipped through unnoticed.

Coalition Appeals to National Park Service

At this point, the National Park Service was the only hope to save the park. Having provided funding, the federal agency had a virtual veto power over any attempt to change the park's status. Gill-Austern and the Sierra Club wrote to the responsible officials in Washington and spoke with them on the telephone. Representative Ruth

(CLF) joined the Club in the appeal and the Coalition won.

Glendale Park is Safe—For Now

After so much effort, Glendale Park now has a reprieve. The Park Service has ruled that the EIR did not adequately address all the issues, and is requiring an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act. Perhaps the city of Everett will have second thoughts. Regardless, the Massachusetts Chapter will continue to support the principal of environmental justice: that those of lower socio-economic status should not suffer disproportionately from the damage done to our environment.

The scale of effort required to save Glendale Park has been enormous and underscores the need for the Sierra Club, ELM, CLF and ad hoc local groups. Everett was particularly fortunate to obtain the pro-bono services of a first-class attorney.

Author's Footnote

Was it necessary to build a new high school rather than refurbish the old building? Not really. The effectiveness of a school does not depend primarily on the age of its building. Some of the finest schools in the world are housed in buildings hundreds of years old (consider 200-year-old Ivy League schools in the US, 400-

to-500-year-old universities and prep schools in England, and even older buildings in other countries). High-tech companies in Massachusetts routinely establish themselves in hundred-year-old buildings. A building is a shell. Co-ax and fiber optic cables and air conditioning can be easily installed in any sound building. In fact, many hundred-year-old buildings are more soundly built than newer ones. It is interesting that the city raised safety issues about using the building as a school, yet proposed converting it to elderly housing!

The Sierra Club, the Coalition to Save Glendale Park, and other supporters of the Coalition recognize the vital importance of education, espe-

cially for lower income people and for non-English speaking residents. Public open space is also important and must not be sacrificed, because it can never be replaced.

What You Can Do

Under Federal NEPA, the city of Everett must submit an Environmental Impact Statement. The Massachusetts Chapter will respond to this statement when it is published. Members living in Everett will be encouraged to submit comments. ❖

Gil Woolley is a member of the Chapter Executive Committee and chair of the Conservation Committee.



Photograph by John Ricci and Agnes Foye

The park is the only significant open space for many Everett residents.

Balsler of Newton, a member of the Joint Committee on Local Affairs, also wrote to the Park Service, providing details of the legislative process in Massachusetts.

Then a new hurdle was erected. Attorney Gill-Austern needed copies of some of the documentation related to the alternate site and was told that copies would have to be paid for. The Coalition has little funds and appealed to the Park Service for free copies. For two years, the Sierra Club, along with the Environmental League of Massachusetts (ELM), had been the only established organizations actively supporting the Coalition, but Alternatives for Community and Environment and the Conservation Law Foundation

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02116



BOOK REVIEW:

Strange Bedfellows

Reviewed by Diana Muir

When you ride ALONE you ride with bin Laden

What the Government SHOULD Be Telling Us to Help Fight the War on Terrorism

by Bill Maher

New Millennium Press, 132 pp., \$27.95

“When George Bush says, ‘Global warming—we need more studying,’ that’s a lie bought by an oil company....”

You probably don’t need Politically Incorrect comedian Bill Maher to tell you this. After all, you’re one of those tree-hugging Sierra Club members. You not only understand that global warming is a real threat, you’re probably the kind of radical activist who wants to implement actual policies to do something about it.

Not everyone agrees. Americans, in Maher’s inimitable phrasing, are “hopelessly, romantically in love with... individual high-performance, low-gas-mileage vehicles, exercising our God-given right to drive wherever we want, whenever we want at 0% financing and practically no fuel cost.”

Tell an American that we ought to raise gas prices in order to stop global warming and he’ll tell you where to get off. So in this book Maher takes a fresh tack, arguing for reduced consumption not because it will be good for the planet, but because it will help stop Islamist terrorism. In an edgy, funny text, complemented by the kind of wartime posters that used to admonish Americans that “Food is a weapon—don’t waste it,” Maher makes a case for reducing oil consumption that will appeal to guys who drive pick-ups with “National Rifle Association” and “Thank you, Florida” stickers on the bumpers.

When you ride ALONE you ride with bin Laden takes its title from a WWII poster that showed a gent driving a snazzy convertible with Adolf Hitler in the passenger seat. The point is that

anyone wasting gas was helping Hitler win the war. Maher’s point is that things are not so different today.

“The countries that have the money to offer large cash awards to the families of suicide bombers, or to send little boys to madrasses, the prep schools of hate, are getting that money from people using lots of oil.... If President Bush came out today for exploring alternatives to fossil fuels and for cut-backs in our oil consumption, we Americans might finally grasp the

continued on page 12



Poster, above left, by Rob Fiore.

Poster, above right, by John Pritchett.

Reprinted with permission from *When you ride ALONE you ride with bin Laden*, ©2002 New Millennium Entertainment.

BOOK BRIEF:

Activist Author’s Guide to Enacting Change

Reviewed by Leslie Doyle

Julia Butterfly Hill’s new book, *One Makes a Difference* (Harper San Francisco) demonstrates simple yet inspirational actions that each of us can take to reduce our impact on the environment. Hill is the brave activist who gained worldwide attention for her two-year tree sit to save ancient redwood trees in Humboldt County, California. During this quest, Hill reached out to her opponents, bringing a voice of compassion to the embittered battle. Because of her selfless actions, nearly three acres of ancient redwoods have been saved.

Many activists feel overwhelmed by the problems facing our planet. Hill addresses this concern by celebrating the impact that each of us can make. She shares practical ways to tackle a range of issues, from air pollution to genetically modified foods. She also provides guidance to activists looking to gain support for their cause.

One Makes a Difference has earned praise from the likes of *Utne Reader*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Booklist*.

To order the book or learn more about Julia’s organization, Circle of Life Foundation, visit www.circleoflifefoundation.org.

Leslie Doyle is a freelance writer and environmental activist.

Strange Bedfellows

(continued from page 11)

gravity of the situation. There's still time, but not much."

One on-the-money poster shows a Presidential speech proclaiming that "This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before the decade is out, of being completely independent of foreign oil." But the podium is empty. No president has made that speech.

The unity that America experienced in the wake of 9/11 quickly fractured along the usual fault lines: the right wing is worried about defense while the left continues to worry about the planet. Maher may have found a way to make the two ends meet.

If global warming is the threat, reduced energy use and the rapid development of renewable energy sources are the solution.

If the threat is a militant Islam "that informs the impoverished and the frustrated and the humiliated of their righteous duty to strike out, to kill, to wage jihad in the name of their God," reduced energy use and the rapid development of renewable energy sources are also the solution.

"Question: Where do terrorists get the money to live in their fancy caves? That's right, from rich, oil-producing countries. And where do the oil-producing countries get the money? From us buying oil."

Maher has a point. If we met our energy needs with windmills, hydrogen fuel cells, and neighborhoods designed for walking, the average Saudi might or might not hate America, but Al Qaeda would no longer have the money to run terrorist-training camps and send young men to schools where they study how to steer an airplane, but not how to land one.

Politics do indeed make strange bedfellows. But Maher's idea that people who want to stop Islamist terrorism and people who want to stop global warming could usefully get together on a serious push to switch America from fossil fuel to renewable energy is certainly worth considering. ❖

Diana Muir, a regular contributor to the Sierran, is the author most recently of Bullough's Pond.

Drugs in our Food

by Laurel Hopwood

Care for prescription drugs or industrial chemicals in your corn flakes? If the USDA continues to allow biopharm food crops to be planted in open fields, this may happen.

Horizontal gene transfer has already been shown to occur in fields of genetically engineered (GE) canola resulting in the creation of "superweeds" that have become herbicide-resistant. Now the production of drugs or industrial chemicals in GE plants, called biopharming, poses new alarming concerns.

Biopharm traits can spread through pollen carried by wind or insects, spilled seed, unharvested seed sprouting the next year, and biopharm seed residues carried by farm equipment to conventional fields.

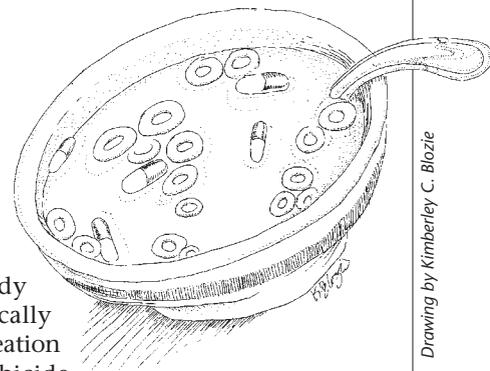
Three hundred open-air field trials have already been conducted in unidentified locations across the country. While most of these substances are kept secret as confidential business information, a few known examples include a contraceptive, potent growth hormones, a blood clotter, blood thinners, industrial enzymes, and vaccines. For more information, visit www.ucsus.org/pharm/pharm_open.html.

The ecological implications of hacked genetic code slipping into our food and forests and multiplying is worse than a bad computer virus!

What You Can Do

Contact your Congressional representatives at the US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; at the Senate, Washington, DC 20510; or online at: <http://www.thecampaign.org/alert-pharmacrops.php>. ❖

Laurel Hopwood is a member of the Sierra Club Genetic Engineering Committee.



Drawing by Kimberley C. Blozie

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Cape Cod Group News

Toast to the Coast

More than 120 people joined the Cape Cod Group of the Sierra Club to “toast the coast” in a festive New Year’s Day parade that circled Eel Pond in Woods Hole and paused at the waterfront park to celebrate the environmental accomplishments of 2002. More than half the participants, including many children, braved the damp weather in costumes with environmental themes, including fish, a giant great blue heron, and a 20-foot eel.

The parade, in its third year, seems to draw more people each year, according to organizer Robert Murphy, who also serves as vice chair of the Cape Cod Group.

“We always use this opportunity to highlight the accomplishments on behalf of the environment of Cape Cod,” said Chris Neill, Cape Cod Group chair. Neill said one of the highlights of the past year was the work of many people who are trying both to save what is left of the Cape’s natural areas and to restore some of those places that have been lost.

“First and foremost, this has been a year of restoration,” Neill said. He highlighted work of community activists to restore the Coonamessett River in Falmouth and to protect pine barrens habitat at the Massachusetts Military Reservation. “These have been priorities for the Sierra Club, and we made great progress in the last year,” Neill said. The group also celebrated the passage of the Massachusetts Environmental Bond bill, which will provide \$700 million for the purchase of open space.

“When we stand here and look out over this water and these islands in the future,” Neill said, “we might be looking at windmills. Figuring out how to get renewable energy from offshore wind and protect coastal resources will be a priority for the Sierra Club and other environmental groups. There are many challenges ahead.” ❖

Nantucket Sound Wind Farm

The Cape Cod Group continues to evaluate the proposal by Cape Wind Associates to build a 170-tower wind farm in Nantucket Sound. The Sierra Club, like most other environmental organizations in Massachusetts, has not taken a stand for or against this project until more information on its possible impact is available. The movement of birds (such as the endangered Roseate Terns and wintering sea ducks) through Horseshoe Shoals are of particular concern.

The Cape Cod Group participated in a series of forums, sponsored in the fall of 2002 by the Massachusetts

Technology Council, that brought together representatives of Cape Wind, a number of local and environmental groups, and government regulators, including the Corps of Engineers, which is drafting the Environmental Impact Report on the Cape Wind project.

Representatives from the Massachusetts Chapter and the Cape Cod Group continue to work with volunteers from the National Sierra Club and other environmental groups to develop a position that promotes wind power yet preserves coastal wildlife and fisheries habitat. ❖



New Year's Day parade: Wendi Buesslerer, of Falmouth, carries her homemade great blue heron marionette, which is the symbol of the local project she leads to restore natural wetlands along the Coonamessett River.

Photograph by Chris Neill

Coonamessett River Restoration

The Cape Cod Group has been working with Falmouth residents to convince the town to restore the Coonamessett River by replacing cranberry agriculture on town-owned lands along the river with native vegetation, protect the town’s largest herring run, reduce the amount of nitrogen runoff to coastal bays, and create a town-owned greenway to connect many municipal conservation lands.

The idea has taken off. The Coonamessett River Park Coalition, supported by the Sierra Club, collected signatures of more than 1000 town residents who support the plan. The Coalition gained support by entering the town’s Christmas parade contest. “We came in second place in the adult walking division and won a wonderfully gaudy trophy with a gold Santa on top of a gold and green pillar,” said Wendi Buesslerer, Coalition organizer. “What a sight we must have been, with our river of iridescent blue taffeta, Old Man River, fish, bird and frog puppets, and wind chimes! The big Japanese wind sock fish were a spectacular sight as they swirled overhead.”

Falmouth owns more than a hundred acres directly adjacent to the river. A long-term lease with a commercial grower ends at the close of 2003. The groups plan to sponsor a resolution at this spring’s town meeting to discontinue the lease and manage the land with conservation, restoration, and recreation as the main objectives. ❖

Cape Cod Group Elections

*Your membership number must appear on the outside of your envelope in order for your ballot to be valid.
(An extra ballot is provided for households with joint memberships.)*

Voting Instructions and Election Procedures

In this issue of the *Sierran* you will find candidate statements and ballots for the Cape Cod Group Executive Committee. You may vote only if you are a member of the Cape Cod Group (see town list, right).

Mail ballots to: Sierra Club Elections, 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston, MA 02116. Ballots must be received at the Chapter office at 100 Boylston Street, Boston, by 5:00 pm March 21, 2003, in order to be counted. Counting of ballots will take place at the Sierra Club Chapter office at 10:00 am on March 22. Vote for no more than two candidates. In order to validate your ballots, your membership number must appear on the *outside* of the envelope used to mail your ballots.

Your membership number is the eight digit number that appears on your *Sierran* mailing label. An extra ballot is provided for households with joint memberships so that each member may vote. Please call the Chapter office at 617-423-5775 if you have questions.

Candidate statements

DAVID DOW is a founding member and current Executive Committee member and treasurer of the Cape Cod Group. He served as a member of the Community Working Group that developed the plan to protect groundwater and wildlife habitat on 15,000 acres of the Massachusetts Military Reservation that was signed into law last year. He has been involved in all aspects of citizen oversight of activities at the MMR, including groundwater plume cleanup activities, development of public water supplies and habitat management. He helped draft the Massachusetts Chapter's Sustainable Fisheries Policy, which served as a template for the national Sierra Club policy.

PAM POLLONI is running for the Cape Cod Group Executive Committee for the first time. She is a biologist who has worked on many projects related to rare species conservation, land protection and land management on Cape Cod. She has been a leader in the Group's advocacy for restoration of the Coonamessett River and grassland habitats on Cape Cod. She is interested in developing a Cape Cod Group issue oriented walks program to highlight the importance of land conservation for plant and wildlife conservation.

List of Towns included in the Cape Cod Group

Barnstable	Hyannis
Barnstable, West	Hyannis Port
Bourne	Hyannisport, West
Brewster	Marstons Mills
Buzzards Bay	Mashpee
Cataumet	Monument Beach
Centerville	Oak Bluffs
Chatham	Onset
Chatham, North	Orleans
Chatham, South	Orleans, East
Chatham, West	Orleans, South
Chilmark	Osterville
Cotuit	Pocasset
Cummaquid	Provincetown
Dennis	Sagamore
Dennis Port	Sagamore Beach
Dennis, South	Sandwich
Dennis, West	Sandwich, East
Eastham	Siasconset
Eastham, North	Teaticket
Edgartown	Tisbury, West
Falmouth	Truro
Falmouth, East	Truro, North
Falmouth, North	Waqoit
Falmouth, West	Wareham, East
Forestdale	Wellfleet
Gosnold	Wellfleet, South
Harwich	Woods Hole
Harwich Port	Yarmouth Port
Harwich, South	Yarmouth, South
Harwich, West	Yarmouth, West

BALLOT

Cape Cod Group Executive Committee Election

*Vote for no more than **two** candidates*

- David Dow**
 Pam Polloni

MAIL TO:

Sierra Club Elections
100 Boylston Street Boston MA 02116

*Your membership number must appear on the **outside** of your envelope.*

Ballots must be received by 5:00 pm March 21, 2003

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 Pam Polloni

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*Your membership number must appear on the **outside** of your envelope.*

Ballots must be received by 5:00 pm March 21, 2003

Special Events and Outings

SAVING WOMEN'S LIVES

March 26

Time: 8:00 PM

Place: Browsing Room,
Neilson Library,
Smith College, Amherst, MA.

Lecture by Thoraya Obaid, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Population Program. Ms. Obaid is the first Saudi national to be appointed head of a UN agency. Helping governments establish programs to empower women has been a central focus of her work.

Contact Anita King: 413-268-9212

NERCC TRANSPORTATION TRAFFIC BUSTER WORKSHOP

June 7, 2003

Time: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Place: Rhode Island American Lung Association
298 West Exchange Terrace,
Providence

Contact: Blossom Hoag
mb.hoag@verizon.net, 617-567-4749
or: <http://www.sierraclub.org/rcc/northeast/transit/hsr/index.htm>

OUTINGS:

NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

April 13

We will take the bus or carpool to New Bedford to visit the museum and have dinner afterwards in a local restaurant.

CAPE ANN WHALE WATCH

May 11

We'll take the train to Gloucester, enjoy a several hour Whale Watch cruise, and eat dinner in a local restaurant before returning to Boston.

PROVINCE LANDS TRAIL (FERRY AND BIKE)

June 15

We'll take the fast ferry from Long Wharf to P-Town, ride the 7.5 mile Province Lands trail and stop at the Visitor's Center. A bike in good mechanical repair and helmet are required.

Please email Outings Leader
Deborah Holt at holdtdj@attglobal.net for information or to sign up for an outing.

Massachusetts Chapter and Group Meetings

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

March 15

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

May 31

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

July 19

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

March 11

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

The Sierra Club Office is located at 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston.

All meeting times may change without notice. Please consult Web site for updates (www.sierraclubmass.org).

ESSEX COUNTY GROUP SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Please send your email address to Heidi Roberts, Membership Chair Heidiroberts@attbi.com if you want to be notified about environmental or conservation issues that the Group is working on. Be sure to include any concerns you have, and indicate whether you would like to become actively involved in the new Essex County Group.

ELECTION RESULTS FOR 2003 COMMITTEES:

Chapter Executive Committee:

John Deacon

David Heimann

Blossom Hoag

John Lewis

Mary Ann Nelson

Greater Boston Group Executive Committee:

Audrey Borus

Craig Kelley

David Margil

Gil Woolley

Essex County Group Executive Committee:

Joseph Antell, Jr.

Mike Dorsey

Marilyn Graves

John Longwell

Deborah Longman-Marien

Daniel Marien

Heidi Roberts

CAPE COD GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

March 13

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: Falmouth Unitarian Meeting House, 840 Sandwich Road, Falmouth

Take Route 6 to Mashpee Rotary. From rotary, take Route 151 west toward Falmouth. After about three miles, turn left at a stop light, onto Sandwich Road. Meetinghouse is well marked, about two miles on the right.

May 15

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: Yarmouth Fire Station,
Route 6A, Yarmouthport

Take Rt. 6 to exit 7 (Willow St.). Go north to intersection with Route 6A. Go east to Yarmouthport. Watch for signs indicating fire station. Station is on the left. Park in back and enter up wooden stairs.

July 17

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: Falmouth Unitarian Meeting House, 840 Sandwich Road, Falmouth

(See directions above)

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Conservation and Issue Committee Meetings

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

April 26

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

June 19

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK COMMITTEE

March 18

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

This committee meets on the third Tuesday of every other month to discuss and strategize progress on the Rail Link, extending the Northeast Corridor national passenger rail service from South Station to North Station, New Hampshire, Maine and beyond, as well as connecting the commuter rail systems from Rhode Island to New Hampshire. All members are welcome to attend, to learn, and to participate.

Contact Louise Lewis, Chair
617-266-5890 or ejlewis@shore.net.

SIERRAN EDITORIAL BOARD

March 6

Time: 6:30 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

OUTINGS COMMITTEE

March 19

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club Office

We have appointed a new Outings Committee Chair and have scheduled some outings for the spring and summer. For more to happen, leaders are needed! If you have a favorite hike or other activity that you would like to lead, please contact Deborah Holt (holdtj@attglobal.net).

ENERGY COMMITTEE

Anyone who would like to work on energy-issue activities and help us out in this area is most welcome! Please contact David Heimann, Energy Chair, for more information: 781-245-2087 or 617-287-7715.

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Anyone who would like to work on political activities and help us out in this area is most welcome! Please contact Mary Ann Nelson, Political Chair, for more information: 617-442-0123.

MARINE AND COASTAL HABITAT AND WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

March 22

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: Sierra Club Office

The next issue of the *Massachusetts Sierran* will be published June 1, 2003.

The deadlines are as follows:

Editorial: April 1, 2003.

Advertising: April 18, 2003

Announcements: May 1, 2003

Please submit all copy to Roberta Tovey, Editor, at editor@sierraclubmass.org.

Please submit all announcements and meetings information to announce@sierraclubmass.org.

The Sierra Club Office is located at 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston.

All meeting times may change without notice.

Please consult Web site for updates (www.sierraclubmass.org).

MASSACHUSETTS

SIERRAN

Reaching More Than
26,000 Sierra Club Members
in Massachusetts

Massachusetts Chapter Sierra Club

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