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

SIERRAN

INSIDE:

Volume 9 • Number 2

Summer 2003

- 4 **Putting the Lid on CO₂**
Second in a continuing series on energy and the environment.
- 5 **The JP Cohousing Story**
The nuts and bolts of developing an energy-efficient residence.
- 6 **Reinventing Government in Massachusetts**
Despite some promising reforms, Governor Romney's proposal to streamline government disappoints.
- 7 **A Short History of the MDC**
Can you guess what well-known parks agency used to be in charge of Boston's sewage system? Gil Woolley tells the story.
- 8 **Saving Women's Lives**
Thoraya Obaid on women and world population.
- 9 **Carl Pope Takes On the Skeptical Environmentalist**
Sierra Club's executive director scores a few points for the environmental movement.
- 11 **How to Get Rid of Noisy Airplanes**
Book Review by Diana Muir.
- 12 **Bottle Bill Expansion**
- 13 **Preserving Our Roadways**
- 14 **Call for Nominations**
- 15 **Chapter and Group Meetings**

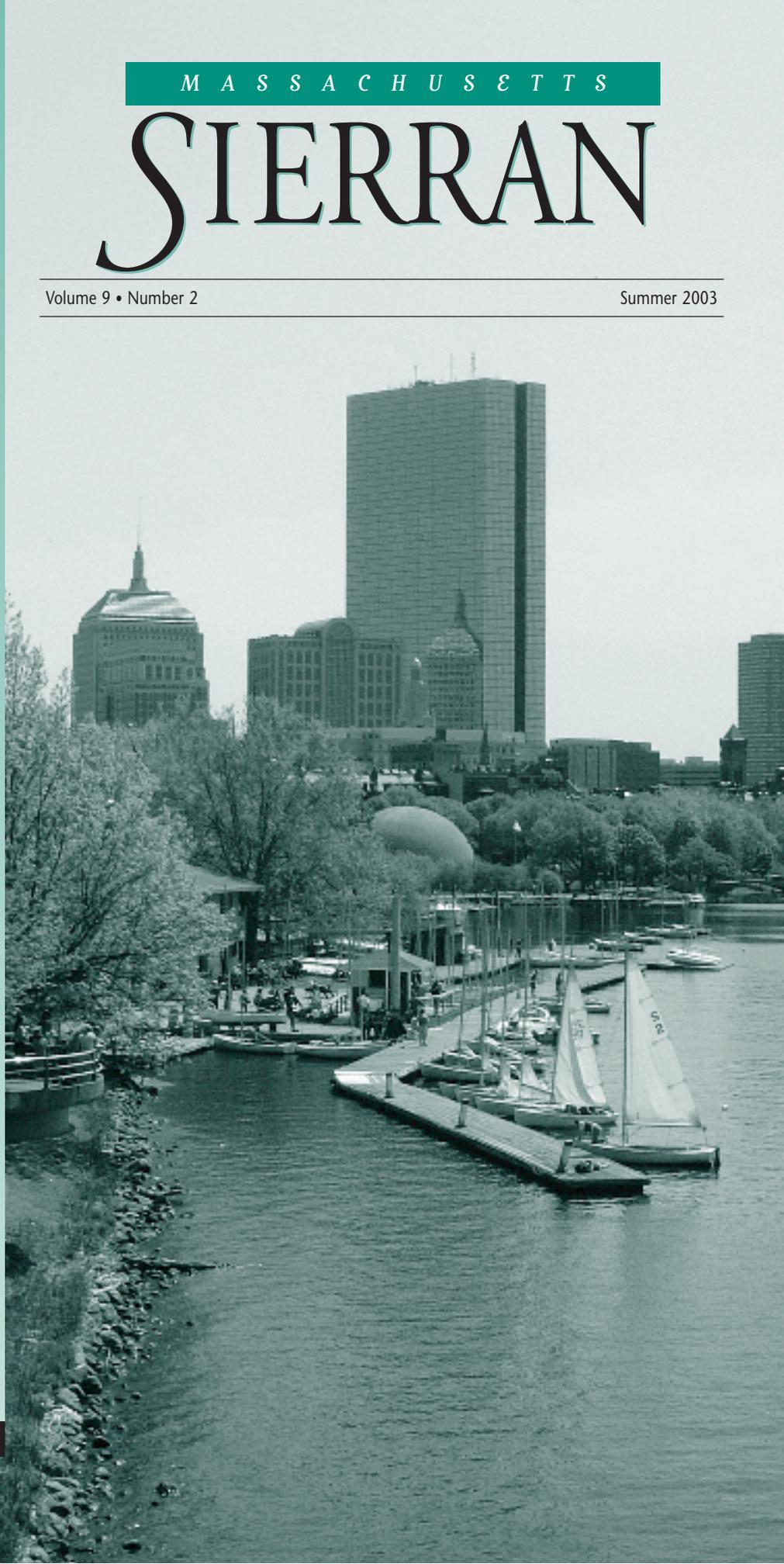
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Massachusetts Sierra Club

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NEWS BRIEFS

Jeremy Marin, conservation organizer, shares sign with Massachusetts chapter chair, Mary Ann Nelson.



Photograph by Charles Mason

EarthFest, April 26th

The Massachusetts chapter of the Sierra Club kicked off its Earth Day activities in monsoon-like rain on Saturday, April 26, on the Boston Esplanade. More than a dozen volunteers braved rain, mud, and cold wind to staff the Sierra Club tables filled with signs, postcards, and information on three major chapter initiatives: the North/South Rail Link, the Freedom Option Package, and the Inner City Outings Program.

By day's end, concert-goers and visitors had signed hundreds of post cards to Governor Romney supporting the creation of a link between North and South Station. Many others wrote postcards to Bill Ford of Ford Motor Company and to local Ford dealers, asking Ford to give consumers the option of adding fuel-saving technologies to their cars. Still others picked up information about the chapter's highly successful program, Inner City Outings, which organizes outdoor excursions for underprivileged inner-city youth.

On the cover: View of the MDC-managed Esplanade and Hatch Shell on the Charles River, Boston (see story page 7). Photograph by James McCaffrey

MASSACHUSETTS

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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.

Thank you...

The Massachusetts chapter of the Sierra Club thanks the following legislators for joining Representative Paulsen in her letter of March 13, 2003, asking Governor Romney to support the next phase of the North/South Rail Link:

Representative Anne M. Paulsen (D-Belmont)
Representative Alice K. Wolf (D-Cambridge)
Representative Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)
Representative Byron Rushing (D-Boston)
Representative Christine E. Canavan (D-Brockton)
Representative Douglas Petersen (D-Marblehead)
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Representative Joyce A. Spiliotis (D-Peabody)
Representative Kay Khan (D-Newton)
Representative Martin J. Walsh (D-Boston)
Representative Mary E. Grant (D-Beverly)
Representative Michael E. Festa (D-Melrose)
Representative Patricia D. Jehlen (D-Somerville)
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Representative Ruth B. Balsler (D-Newton)
Representative Timothy J. Toomey (D-Cambridge)
Representative William Pignatelli (D-Lenox)
Senator Bruce E. Tarr (R-Gloucester)
Senator Cynthia Stone Creem (D-Newton)
Senator Frederick E. Berry (D-Peabody)
Senator Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)
Senator John A. Hart (D-South Boston)
Senator Pamela P. Resor (D-Acton)
Senator Steven A. Tolman (D-Brighton)
Senator Susan C. Fargo (D-Lincoln)

Connecting the existing north and south rail systems in Massachusetts will

- create better access to jobs;
- promote tourism;
- remove 55,000 daily trips from the road *every day*;
- reduce vehicle miles traveled by more than 1 million *every day*;
- prevent the emission of 583 tons of the global warming gas carbon dioxide *every day*; and
- attract 85,000 additional daily trips to the Massachusetts rail system.

CAPE COD GROUP ELECTION RESULTS

Cape Cod Group Executive Committee:
David Dow / Pam Polloni



Photograph by James McCaffrey

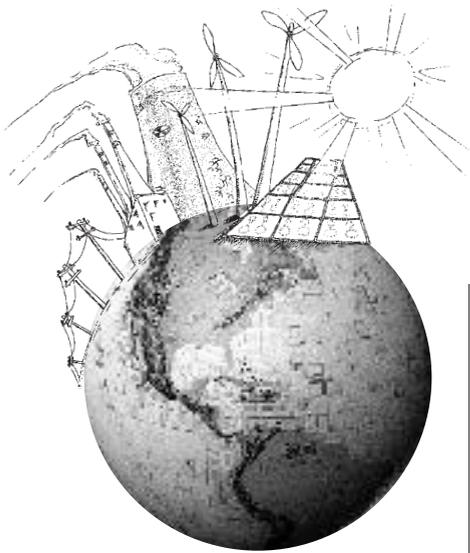
Representative Anne Paulsen (D-Belmont) poses with her bike at the MBTA Alewife station. Paulsen, a long-time resident of Belmont who represents Belmont and several precincts in Cambridge and Arlington, is dedicated to creating an efficient public transportation system, a better rail system, and better bicycle and pedestrian access. Before she was elected to the House of Representatives in 1992, Paulsen was the first woman to be elected to Belmont's three-member Board of Selectmen, where she served for six years. She also chaired the Belmont School Committee.

"Bicycles are a legitimate form of transportation in most of the western world," says Paulsen, "and we need to arrange our street system so bicyclists and pedestrians can also use them. Bike paths, dedicated lanes and (at the very least) signage all can help." Paulsen has filed several bills including the Bicyclist's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and the Safe Routes to School Initiative.

Bikes can reduce our reliance on automobiles, Paulsen believes. "We have to take responsibility under the Clean Air Act and reduce automobile use," she says. "Most automobile trips are short ones to the library, or to get a loaf of bread. But all those trips by car put a tremendous demand on parking and roads. If we could provide sound safety measures on our streets for our bikes and pedestrians, there's no doubt in my mind that people would take advantage of those transportation modes."

Paulsen also leads the North/South Rail Link (NSRL) Legislative Caucus and is a member of the NSRL Citizens Advisory Committee, which is overseeing the preparation of the draft environmental impact report, environmental impact statement, and major investment study for the project. "Once North Station and South Station are connected," says Paulsen, "commuters won't have to change to another mode of travel to travel between the two stations. They will be able to get on a train in Portland, Maine, and go all the way to New York City and Washington, DC."

The NSRL "is not a Massachusetts project, it is a regional project," says Paulsen. "That's why we need the support of the other New England states to help make this a reality." ❖



Second in a continuing series of articles about energy and the environment.

Drawing by Kimberley C. Blozie

Putting the Lid on CO₂: Can it Be Done?

by Ethan Hoag

Many scientists believe that climate change is closely related to the vast quantities of carbon dioxide (CO₂) we dump into the earth's atmosphere when we burn fossil fuels. To decrease the amount of CO₂ released into the atmosphere, groups like the Sierra Club encourage conservation and switching to renewable energy sources. Some have suggested another option, called carbon sequestration.

Carbon sequestration is when CO₂ is separated out of the exhaust from fossil fuel combustion and safely stored instead of vented into the atmosphere.

There are several ways to sequester CO₂ so that it cannot leak into the

atmosphere, all of which are problematic in one way or another.

- Biological fixing, as in forests by photosynthesis. In this process, sunlight splits off two oxygen atoms from the CO₂, returning them to the atmosphere as oxygen and depositing the carbon in organic substances such as cellulose (wood). This method does not require prior separation, but, unfortunately, is much too slow to keep up with the present rate of CO₂ deposition.
- Liquefying CO₂ with high pressure and injecting it into terrestrial formations deep in the Earth or in oceans. This method is fraught with many uncertainties and may have

Energy: a Primer, Revisited

A number of readers have written to thank us for our series on energy, and a few have taken issue with some aspects of the first article in the series, published in the Winter 2002 issue. Here, Gil Woolley responds.

Several readers have correctly pointed out that my comments on hydrogen as an alternative fuel could be misleading. While it is true that hydrogen is an environmentally ideal fuel, I should have made it clearer that there is no real possibility of changing over to a hydrogen economy because the energy required to separate hydrogen from water (electrolysis) is equal to the energy released when the hydrogen recombines with oxygen in a fuel cell. And, as with all processes, there will be losses.

Even if cost were no object, it is questionable whether we can generate sufficient electricity from renewable sources like wind, bio-mass, solar, and hydro to produce enough hydrogen to replace a substantial part of the enormous amount of oil and natural gas used in this country. Some talk of a hydrogen economy is really an excuse for not adopting immediately, easily implemented measures that do not require new technology, like better motor vehicle efficiency, higher insulation requirements in building codes, replacing highway traffic with rail, and instituting a carbon tax on fossil fuels, with the proceeds going to general revenue to replace other taxes.

Another problem is cost—hydrogen-based energy would be very expensive. In several parts of the world the “wellhead cost” of oil is less than \$10 a barrel, and even at \$30 a barrel, oil is cheap compared to other energy sources. At some time in the future, when oil supplies are depleted and oil is much more expensive, there may be a role for hydrogen.

Hydrogen can also be stripped from natural gas, but this releases carbon dioxide (CO₂), a greenhouse gas. Sequestration of CO₂ may be soon be practical on a small scale as a supplement for batteries to power computers and telephones.

Today, the best ways to reduce CO₂ are to

- increase use of renewable energy sources, including solar and wind,
- use more efficient vehicles,
- use better insulation in buildings, reset thermostats, and
- use energy-efficient industrial processes.

An achievable goal is to reduce the use of fossil fuels. And we can all start today, to help to save the environment and to save money! You can't get a better deal than! ❖

How One Boston Residential Development Plans to Save Energy and Combat Sprawl:

The JP Cohousing Story

by David Heimann



Elevation of new JPC development
Courtesy David Heimann

unintended consequences over the long term. For CO₂ produced by most existing power plants, prior separation is required, a process that tends to be quite complicated and expensive owing to the many components in the exhaust.

- Mineral sequestration. Changing naturally occurring minerals, like magnesium silicate to magnesium carbonate, a compound that is thermodynamically very stable over the long term.

This last is the most promising, since it means we could use fossil fuel without the emission of any CO₂. Coal producers are showing considerable interest in this idea. A consortium of energy companies collaborating with the US Department of Energy is now studying a new type of electric-power-generating facility that processes coal at high pressures, which makes it less expensive to separate out CO₂ and other pollutants.

In one version, coal is processed along with water and serpentine, a plentiful mineral, to produce hydrogen; the hydrogen is then used to power a fuel cell that generates the electric energy. Instead of CO₂, the chief byproduct is solid magnesium carbonate; other byproducts include mercury and sulfur, which can be sold commercially. No nitrogen oxides are produced. Because it is a solid, magnesium carbonate is much easier to sequester than CO₂.

The down side of this process is that you need to mine eleven tons of magnesium silicate and dispose of six tons of magnesium carbonate for every ton of coal you consume! The US consumes 5 billion tons of coal every year.

For more information and links to related discussions, go to www.zeca.org. ❖

Ethan Hoag is a retired electrical engineer living in Boston.

Most of us live in individual houses scattered in suburban and rural areas or in individual apartments in urban areas. Between heating, hot water, cooling, lighting, and ventilation, our residences account for 20 percent of the nation's total energy use, while our houses and apartment buildings take up more and more of our open space.

Jamaica Plain Cohousing (JPC), a 30-unit building now under development in one of Boston's popular neighborhoods, is dedicated to reducing residential energy requirements and combating sprawl. The developers, who intend to live in the units, are members of the Jamaica Plain Cohousing Limited Liability Corporation (JPLLC). Construction is scheduled to begin in August of this year.

To save energy, JPLLC hired a consultant to recommend ways to reduce the development's energy consumption. Many of these measures will result in lower costs, which will pay for the development costs within a few years. JPLLC won a development grant from Keyspan Corporation for its energy-saving plan.

To reduce sprawl, JPLLC chose to locate the condos on an urban brown-field rather than developing open space. JPLLC plans to clean up and restore the property.

What is cohousing?

First started in Denmark more than 20 years ago, cohousing communities are condominiums developed and operated by the residents. Cohousing projects typically include a lot of common facilities, designed to foster interaction among residents.

Cohousing has made its way to the US; today there are over 58 cohousing communities throughout the country. The greater Boston area already has three such communities, with two more, one of which is JPC, under development.

Steps to reduce energy consumption

JPLLC is incorporating a number of energy-saving strategies in their project. Residents of the future development expect to use only 30 percent of the energy used in a conventional development.

Air leakage control: Tight weatherizing with mechanical ventilation will bring in fresh air and ensure a healthy environment. Heat recovery in the ventilation will recapture the warmth in the outgoing air. A design that promotes natural ventilation and reduces direct sun in summer will eliminate the need for air conditioning.

High insulation in the walls, roof, and foundation.

continued on page 10

Reinventing Government in Massachusetts

by James McCaffrey

Mitt Romney campaigned on a promise to “clean up the mess on Beacon Hill” by eliminating waste and patronage in government and reducing layers of bureaucracy and inefficiency. That message resonated with voters, handing Romney a decisive win last November. Now, Governor Romney has followed through with a sweeping new proposal to reorganize state government. The proposed reorganization has broad implications for environmental protection in Massachusetts.

Despite the governor’s commendable efforts to protect the environment while planning for economic growth, the Sierra Club opposes the reorganization because it is linked to the creation of a new super agency with jurisdiction over all other environmental agencies and grants unprecedented statutory authority to a single non-elected official who oversees potentially conflicting mandates. Sadly, many good elements within the governor’s proposal, particularly a new and unified parks system and a better coordinated intermodal transportation agency, will be lost if the legislature rejects the proposal.

A new super agency with super powers

The most controversial proposal is to create a new layer of bureaucracy at a time when voters have called for streamlining in government. The new Executive Office of Commonwealth Development (EOCD) would house and oversee the often competing agencies of environment, housing, transportation, and energy, by creating separate divisions for each but requiring that they coordinate their responsibilities.

Bringing all these interests together at one table to simultaneously plan for economic growth while protecting the environment is a laudable goal. But consolidating agency structure does not mean that agencies will actually integrate their existing services and functions. The challenges our state faces relating to transportation infrastructure, housing and commercial development, and energy use create a political climate in which environmental protection will frequently be overlooked, particularly if one appointed individual has sole authority over these competing interests.

The governor’s plan would require the Executive Office of Environmental

Affairs to be “subject to the direction, control, and supervision” of the secretary of EOCD, demoting the environmental secretary’s current role as an autonomous and objective voice with direct access to the governor. Technically, only the governor can overrule the decisions of the environmental secretary.

Under the governor’s new proposal, the EOCD secretary would have power and authority that approaches that of the governor. At a Senate hearing in April, Senator Diane Wilkerson, chair of the State Administration Committee, commented that the proposal “appears to grant Article 87 constitutional authority directly to the [governor’s office].” Under the governor’s plan, the new EOCD secretary could create, merge, or abolish many state agencies at will. Currently, even the governor must file legislation to substantially alter state agency structure.

What’s next?

The governor’s proposed reorganization offers some opportunities to improve upon the existing structure and includes elements the Sierra Club supports:

- A unified forests and parks agency that merges the existing Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) into a new agency, the Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- A distinct region within the DCR that represents the current MDC system, retaining the parkways as part of the park system, not the state highway system
- A citizen-based stewardship council to oversee the DCR that would provide the necessary transparency and oversight currently lacking in our forests and parks system

View of Spot Pond from the MDC Middlesex Fells Reservation.



Photograph by Roberta Tovey

- A unified transportation department that establishes a new Freight and Passenger Rail Office to promote the unique role that rail can play in minimizing sprawl and improving air and water quality

Article 87 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires the plan be accepted or rejected in its entirety. The governor could have broken his reorganization proposal into categories, allowing the legislature to accept some portions while rejecting others. Regrettably, and despite urging from the legislature, Governor Romney chose to file the package as a single unit, except for education. The administration's strategy for introducing the reorganization has put the reforms, both good and bad, at risk.

While the administration responded to many of the Sierra Club's concerns on the draft proposal, it is insufficient to override our concern about the consolidation of power within a single cabinet office. The call for reform should not overwhelm the system of checks and balances in state government. Like the legislature, the Sierra Club must also oppose the package in its entirety if it contains elements that we find untenable. Nevertheless, we commend the governor for an inclusive and open process as the administration drafted the reorganization plans.

Meanwhile, the legislature is moving forward with a reorganization plan of its own. This plan contains some language the Sierra Club supports, including performance standards for the agencies and required management planning for all forests and parks. But the House proposal also creates more layers of bureaucracy with duplicative functions and ambiguous responsibilities. This is not what the voters asked for. ❖

James McCaffrey is director of the Massachusetts Sierra Club.

A Short History of the MDC

by Gil Woolley

As we go to press, the fate of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) is undecided. Whatever the outcome, conservationists should be aware of the very important role this agency has played during the past 80 years in creating and protecting open space and recreation areas in greater Boston.

Readers may have forgotten that until 1984, in addition to managing our parks, the MDC provided Boston and many other cities and towns in the metro area with water and sewer services. The Commission was established in 1919 to take over the responsibilities of an existing Metropolitan Parks Commission and a Metropolitan Sewerage Board. In 1984 the latter services were spun off to the newly created Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA).

Parks and sewers sound like an odd combination, but because of the fragmentation of local government in eastern Massachusetts, we needed an agency that could cross town lines and manage things that don't conform to town lines—like major parks, parkways and water and sewer lines. In most other major metropolitan areas, an elected body is responsible for services in the entire area. For greater Boston, the MDC was all there was.

MDC parks and parkways

Today, MDC parks include the land on both sides of the Charles River, the Middlesex Fells, Blue Hills, Beaver Brook, Hammond Pond, Breakheart, Stony Brook and Foul Meadow Reservations, and some of the Harbor Islands. The agency is best known for urban facilities like the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade and for its golf courses, tennis courts, skating rinks, swimming pools, playgrounds, and biking and hiking trails.

The 13 MDC parkways include Memorial Drive, Storrow Drive, Jamaica Way, the Fellsway, Fresh Pond Parkway, VFW Parkway, Mystic Valley Parkway, and Hammond Pond Parkway. The MDC is also responsible for the maintenance of some highway bridges and manages the areas around the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs.

With the advent of the streetcar and the automobile, the activities of the MDC became oriented towards recreational facilities and parkways. Some of these parkways, like Storrow Drive, Memorial Drive, and VFW parkway, became major commuter highways, but because they were still under MDC control they were not always provided with breakdown lanes, grade separated intersections, or guard rails.

MDC achievements and problems

The MDC put in paved trails along the banks of the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset rivers, which, though incomplete, are already heavily used and provide welcome open space for the towns along the rivers. It is arguable that no other government agency would have even attempted to patiently piece together rights of way through these many different towns. The MDC also has a much better record of preserving open space from development than most cities and towns. Even when land has been donated specifically as open space, there are regrettably too many instances where local governments have put the land to other uses.

The MDC has sometimes suffered from lack of focus and failure of constituent parts to work together. The agency has almost always been hampered by an inadequate operating budget. In some cases, new facilities were added, but less money was allocated for their management. Although there are many dedicated people working on programs, the MDC has a reputation for being a haven for patronage.

The most notable failure of the MDC was its management of the metropolitan sewerage system. The treatment plant at Deer Island was responsible for most of the pollution that once caused Boston Harbor to be called the dirtiest harbor in the nation. The Massachusetts Sierra Club Greater Boston Group took the lead in drawing attention to this problem and in supporting Judge Garrity's injunction to clean up the harbor, which resulted in the creation of the MWRA in 1984. ❖

Gil Woolley is chair of the Conservation Committee.



United Nations Undersecretary
Thoraya Ahmed Obaid

Saving Women's Lives

by Alexandra Dawson

On March 26, a large and enthusiastic audience came to hear United Nations Undersecretary Thoraya Ahmed Obaid lecture at Smith College, in an event sponsored by the Population Environment Program of the Massachusetts chapter of the Sierra Club. Obaid is the first Saudi Arabian woman to win a governmental scholarship to study at a US university, where she earned a Ph.D. in English literature and cultural anthropology. She has developed many programs to help women since the 1970s. As the executive director of the UN Population Fund, she introduced a special focus on culture and religion in the fund's development work.

Obaid emanates a quality of calmness and competence. Instead of presenting the usual litany of population increase, unfettered US consumption trends, and the obdurate refusal of our government to fund any form of family planning because of anti-abortionist fears, she talked simply about saving women's lives. She had two central messages: that women's services constitute justice for women and that family planning and reproductive health should be part of health care everywhere in the world. The subtext

of her lecture was the terrible inequity between the genders, especially (but not only) in the third world.

Obaid spoke eloquently about the lamentable death rate of pregnant women in the third world—estimated at a half million a year, most preventable. The UN Population Fund is currently conducting several campaigns, but its effectiveness is hindered by the US refusal to come up with a promised \$34 million. Obaid's hope is that 34 million people will each contribute a dollar to make up for this dearth. (The Sierra Club is participating in the 34 Million Friends campaign, which has raised nearly one million dollars to date.)

Obaid also talked about the impact of AIDS, which will cause 278 million deaths in this century. Originally a man's disease, AIDS now affects more women than men: 52 percent of AIDS victims are women.

Obaid did repeat some familiar statistics—one quarter to one third of births are unwanted; third-world maternal death rates are up to 600 times as high as maternal death rates in the US; in the last 50 years the average family size has decreased from six to three children; and wealthy countries' consumption of natural

resources has continued to increase, with the US leading the way.

The Sierra Club's Global Population Stabilization Program goals are two fold: to increase US funding for international and domestic family planning and reproductive health programs, and to stabilize population and reduce consumption by pursuing "equity and empowerment of women." Broad as that goal is, the Obaid agenda goes far beyond it to a commitment to saving the lives of women everywhere.

This presentation was the latest of a number of lectures organized over the last ten years by the Massachusetts Chapter Population Program chair, Anita King, who has persuaded a number of high-level speakers from government and the nonprofits to come to Northampton.

What you can do

The Massachusetts Chapter Population Program is looking for volunteers. Please contact Anita King if you are interested in working on this issue: 413-268-9212. ❖

Alexandra Dawson is a member of the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee.

ACTION ALERT

TEA-3 and a Whole Lot of Crumpets

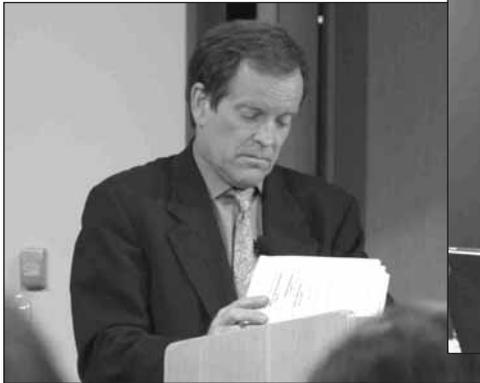
In 2003, Congress will reauthorize the federal transportation spending bill. Authorized every six years, the bill determines how federal transportation money can be spent. The original Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was passed in 1991 and reauthorized in 1998. TEA-3, as the new bill is being called, should build on the progress made in the past two bills.

By most estimates, TEA-3 will appropriate well over \$250 billion. How this large amount of money is spent will be instrumental in determining whether our nation focuses on smart growth, or whether we will continue to promote suburban sprawl, pollute our air and water, and degrade the natural environment. ❖

Check out the Sierra Club's TEA-3 Reform Policy Guide at <http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/tea3>

Sierra Club's Carl Pope Takes On the Skeptical Environmentalist

by Roberta Tovey



Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope



Author Bjørn Lomborg

When Bjørn Lomborg published his book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, (Cambridge University Press, 2001), many reputable publications, from the *New York Times* to the *Wall Street Journal*, hailed the book as a welcome response to the typical doom-and-gloom forecasts of the environmental movement. But it wasn't long before leading scientists around the world, including a panel of scientists from Lomborg's native Denmark, denounced the book's shoddy scholarship and misleading use of data.

Yet Lomborg and his book continue to attract attention, as shown by the overflow crowd at the debate between the Danish author and Sierra Club's Executive Director Carl Pope at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School Forum on March 13. True to his iconoclastic persona, Lomborg emerged in a short-sleeved sweater and casual trousers. (Pope was more conventionally dressed in suit and tie.)

In his introduction, former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman characterized Lomborg's position as "contrary to accepted scientific opinion. Everyone says it is wrong. Everyone says Lomborg is being dishonest," said Glickman.

Don't worry, be happy

Despite this unpropitious introduction, Lomborg came out swinging. "Green organizations aren't the only

purveyors of truth," said Lomborg, who likes to remind people that he was once a member of Greenpeace. "The global environment is not faced with imminent deterioration," he said, "so we can stop acting in desperation." In fact, says Lomborg, "things are getting better. We have more leisure time, greater security, fewer accidents, more education, more amenities, higher incomes, fewer starving, more food, and a healthier and longer life."

Lomborg noted that caloric intake has increased from starvation levels in the past to 2,650 per person per day. Air pollution is getting better, not worse, at least in the developing world. Lomborg pointed to air pollution levels in London, which steadily worsened from 1585 to 1890, but today are substantially improved.

Lomborg agreed that global warming "is happening and is a serious

problem," but he argued that dealing with it may not be "the best use of our resources." For example, the Kyoto agreement will not stop global warming, Lomborg said; it will only postpone its effects for six years, and at a very high cost. "We could give clean water and sanitation to everyone on earth for what it would cost to pay for Kyoto for one year," Lomborg said.

The skeptical rebuttal

Pope began by comparing Lomborg's argument to that of Voltaire's famous optimist, Pangloss, who "measured the state of the world and found it to be the best of all possible worlds." That kind of thinking led Pangloss to conclude that were it not for syphilis, "we should have had neither chocolate nor cochineal," and has led Lomborg to equally erroneous conclusions. "This book is a fiction," said Pope, one that "could lead us to damage our own life-support system."

Pope pointed out, for example, that Lomborg's upbeat assessment of our fishing industry—that because fish farming is increasing, we don't have to worry about the decline in fish stock—is an example of how he uses statistics to gloss over unpleasant facts. "Thirty-five percent of our fish today is from stock with declining yields," Pope said. "Because of overfishing, 100,000 fishing families have lost jobs in the last five years." These families matter too, Pope said.

Pope also took issue with Lomborg's assertion that increasing prosperity will automatically take care of environmental problems. In the US, water has gotten cleaner, said Pope, but it is

continued on page 10

Participants, from left: Bjørn Lomborg, Dan Glickman, and Carl Pope.



Photographs by John Lewis

JP Cohousing

(Continued from page 5)

High-efficiency heating system and controls: Boiler/baseboard heating with highly efficient gas furnace, boiler reset controls, and programmable thermostats.

Glazing: High-solar-glare reflection on east and west faces will reduce heat in summer; low-solar-glare reflection on south face will increase heat in winter.

Passive solar: Maximize solar heating with south-facing walls and windows, including a two-story solar atrium in the common house.

Active solar: Solar panels will provide at least 50 percent of hot water.

Energy-efficient lighting: Maximum day-lighting with many well-located windows, as well as full-spectrum, fluorescent lights in all units and common areas.

Appliances: Energy Star appliances in units and common house, and commercial, highly efficient stoves, refrigerators, washers, and dryers in common areas.

In addition to saving energy, these measures will save \$35,000, or \$1167 per residence, on annual utility bills. With these savings, residents can expect to recoup the cost of the energy conservation measures in less than four years.

What you can do

For further information on JPC's energy and environmental measures, contact info@jpc cohousing.org, or 617-524-6614. Or visit their Web site at www.jpc cohousing.org. ❖

David Heimann is vice-chair of the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee and chair of the Energy Committee.

Environmentalist

(Continued from page 9)

because of the work of "the doom-and-gloom crowd."

"What has increased in the US is the political will to clean up the environment," said Pope. "We cleaned up, not prosperity."

And our water is far from safe even today, Pope warned. "You can't eat fish from 28 percent of lakes in the US because of dangerous mercury levels—and there are no safe lakes in Minnesota." Elsewhere, Pope pointed to high arsenic levels in water in West Bengal and high numbers of children with lead poisoning in China. "It would have been better," Pope said, "if we'd never have put the lead in gas in the first place. We need to be skeptical about experiments like that."

Q and A

In the question-answer session that followed the debate, audience members unanimously echoed Pope's skepticism; all of the questioners were critical of Lomborg's arguments. Yet in the less rarified world outside Harvard, Lomborg still has a following.

Why? The cynical answer is that it is cheaper and easier (in the short run) for companies and governments to believe that they do not have to stop polluting and do not have to pay to clean up after themselves. But another reason may be that people are sick of hearing how bad everything is. Lomborg's message is so attractive because it is simple and reassuring: things are actually getting better, we don't have to panic.

Perhaps there is a lesson here for the environmental movement, Pope said in a separate interview. "We have to be willing to understand that people need to learn how environmental destruction occurs, and what solutions exist to prevent it, rather than being inundated with bad news about how awful the consequences might be. We have spent so much time sounding the fire alarm that we have forgotten to teach anyone how to use a hose."

Maybe it's time for a lesson on using that hose. ❖

Roberta Tovey is the Sierran editor.

Charles River ad
1/3 page

BOOK REVIEW:

How to Get Rid of Noisy Airplanes and Still Get There on Time

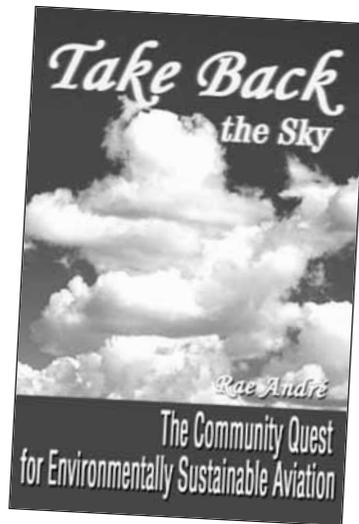
Review by Diana Muir

Take Back the Sky:

The Community Quest for Environmentally Sustainable Aviation

by Rae André

Universe, 174 pp., \$14.95



Take Back the Sky is a powerful polemic hampered by a bad case of “not in my back yard” (NIMBY) narrowness. Rae André lives in Lexington, Massachusetts, near Hanscom Field, a small airport MassPort would like to turn into a large, commercial facility.

If you doubt the depth of anger that commercial jets can arouse in neighbors forced to endure the roar of takeoffs and landings, consider the reaction of Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago. Daley lives near Meigs Field, a very small, private-planes-only facility that no one is attempting to expand but that the neighbors would very much like to close. Wearing by years of legal efforts to close Meigs Field, Mayor Daley took the direct route in early April 2003: he sent bulldozers at midnight to tear the runways up.

How loud is loud?

It is the roar of jet engines that makes neighbors hate airports, and to call this a “noise problem” is to make a mole hill out of a mountain. Your neighbor’s lawnmower is a noise problem. Living or working under a commercial runway is something else again. Children who attend schools near runways learn less and develop anxiety disorders. People who live near runways do even worse. Sleep deprivation and the assault of jet engine noise results in lowered performance at work, higher blood pressure, depression, and anxiety. The simple cure is to follow Mayor Daley’s example and bulldoze the runways.

Rae André notes that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has colluded with the airline industry to redefine noise. If airport noise was measured according to how loud it really is, neighbors could block airport expansions under federal noise pollution rules. Legally, however, the roar of a jet taking off is averaged in with all of the quiet minutes of the day when a jet was not taking off.

André attributes the drive for airport expansion to a “powerful industry” which threatens our “democratic processes and values” in many ways of which the rigging of noise pollution rules is only one. She asserts that the people oppose airport expansion, which only a greedy industry desires. Actually, the constituency for airport expansion is broader than André allows. We Americans love cheap and easy air travel. We love the ability to fly to Washington for a one-day meeting, the three-day weekends in London that have replaced the two-week vacation, and the cheap vacation flights to Aruba. In the matter of demand for air travel and the consequent need for airport expansion, we have met the enemy and they are us.

How fast is fast?

I am writing this review on the Acela. It is comfortable, I can plug in my laptop, and the views of Long Island Sound are charming. But it is too slow. Door to door from my Newton home to my Manhattan hotel room takes five hours.

The train trip from Tokyo to Osaka takes only 2½ hours with a spectacular view of Mt. Fuji thrown in gratis. Osaka is almost as far from Tokyo as Boston is from Washington.

Why does the Acela take 3¾ hours to get from Boston to New York when trains exist that could make the same run in about an hour? Largely because citizens groups in Eastern Connecticut cried NIMBY when Amtrak proposed straightening the tracks to allow the trains to go faster. Really fast trains on the Boston to Washington corridor will require not only track straightening, but expansion of the Boston to Washington main line, already near capacity with commuter, freight, and long-distance trains. Most transportation visionaries would like to use highway medians to build monorails that can handle speeds of 300 km/hr. It’s only 634 km from Boston to Washington.

NIMBY at its worst

André brings us back to earth with her concerns about pollution: not the pollution of jet engines, but the pollution spewed by all of the cars that would bring passengers to Hanscom if it became a commercial airport. She would like to use the impact of this air pollution on Lexington to block MassPort’s expansion plans.

This is NIMBY at its worst. After all, all of those cars are going to take their passengers and the pollution that they generate to some airport or other. Unless, of course, a collapse of the Saudi monarchy sends oil prices so high that demand for air travel shrivels.

If, instead of crying NIMBY, the people in Lexington who don’t want jets taking off in their back yards got together with the frequent flyers who dread waiting hours on the tarmac at LaGuardia for thunderstorms to clear, and with everyone who would prefer to breathe the cleaner air that results when inter-city travel goes by high-speed rail, we might persuade Congress to shift some of the massive subsidies that now go to build airports and highways toward building efficient high-speed rail links between cities. That would be the most effective way to begin to take back the skies. ❖

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

Romney Proposes Bottle Bill Expansion

Environmental groups support measure

by Phillip Sego

In his 2003-2004 budget, Governor Mitt Romney proposes a substantial expansion of the Massachusetts Bottle Bill, adding fruit juices, iced teas, wines, liquors, non-carbonated beverages, and spring water to the list of containers that should be redeemable.

Environmental groups, including the Massachusetts Sierra Club, welcome the governor's proposal. While part of the motivation for the expansion is undoubtedly economic (the state gets unclaimed deposits and increased recycling will lessen the amount spent to collect litter), the resulting increase in recycling and decrease in litter can only help the environment.

Except for increasing the handling fee for recycling centers, the Massachusetts Bottle Bill has not been updated since its creation in 1982. Lobbyists for the bottlers and grocers have opposed any expansion, and their pressure has succeeded in scuttling any legislation. In 1997, the last major push for expanding the bottle bill failed despite overwhelming public support. According to Massachusetts Chapter Director James McCaffrey, placing this measure in the budget gives Governor Romney "the greatest chance for success."

Reasons to expand bottle bill coverage

In 1982, when the original bill was passed, Massachusetts residents did not consume many bottles of juice and spring water. Because our beverage habits have changed, an increasing number of containers are finding their way to landfills: one estimate is over 69,000 tons per year. A revised bill could double the number of recyclable containers from 2 billion to 4 billion, and keep these containers out of landfills.

An overwhelming 84 percent of Massachusetts residents support the expansion of the bottle bill. In the late '80s, a study commissioned by the

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection concluded that expansion was both economically and environmentally advantageous.

Opponents argue that expansion will cost jobs and destroy small merchant sales. But a study by New Jersey PIRG showed that bottle bills create jobs, and small merchants report no significant change in sales. Opponents have also argued that an increase in curbside recycling programs makes the bottle bill obsolete. However, since most people are reluctant to cart around empty beverage containers for recycling, curbside recycling works only for beverages consumed at home. Beverages consumed on the go are frequently disposed of in transit, either as litter or in trash receptacles. Either way, they typically end up in landfills, not in curbside recycling bins.

What you can do

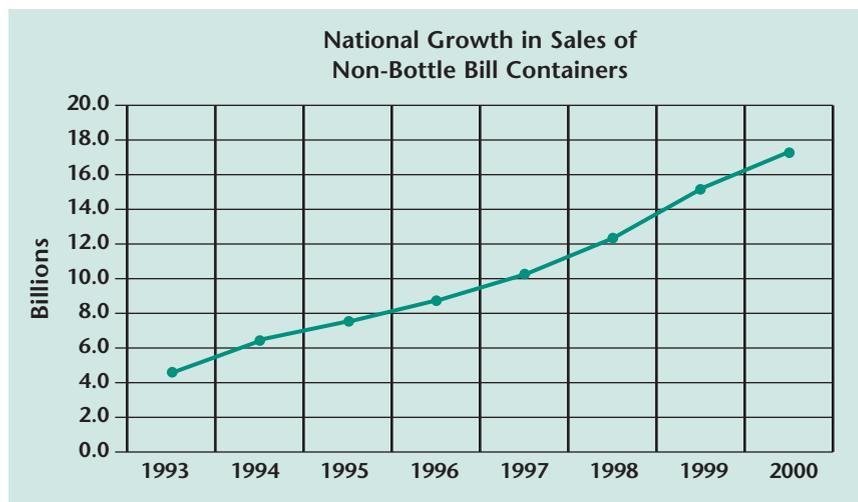
- Contact your legislators today and ask them to support a bottle bill update. (To find your legislators' contact information, visit www.wheredoivotema.com.)



Municipal trash container with discarded juice and water bottles.

- Give your beverage merchant a copy of this article.
- Write a letter to your community newspaper supporting the expanded bottle bill.
- Urge event promoters to install receptacles for recyclables.
- Ask for receptacles for recyclables in your workplace.
- Recycle all drink containers. ❖

Phillip Sego has been working with the Coalition to Update the Bottle Bill on behalf of the Massachusetts Sierra Club.



Photograph and graph by Phillip Sego

Preserving Our Roadways

by Alexandra Dawson

Here's a piece of good news for western Massachusetts towns. The Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) has launched a Community Roads Program (CRP) allowing the use of state road money to fix up roads without all the widening, straightening, and removal of trees now required by the Highway Design Manual.

After a great deal of complaining from all over the state about inappropriate road improvements, former MHD Commissioner Matthew J. Amorello set up a committee representing the interests of planners, highway superintendents, bikers, walkers, historical preservationists, and environmentalists to meet for two years with MHD personnel under the chairmanship of Louisa Paiewonsky, now deputy commissioner of MHD. After two years of discussion, the committee, rather to the astonishment of the members, was able to agree on guidelines for the CRP.

If this approach works out, it should reduce the ferocious arguments about highway design that can hold up needed projects for years. Amherst Road in Pelham, Shutesbury Road in Shutesbury Center, and Greenfield Road in Montague are examples of roads in my area that do need work but do not, in residents' opinions, need the kind of work the design standards require, such as widening to 30 feet or more and removing many mature trees. I know there are many, many others statewide.

Eligible work includes pavement overlay and rehabilitation within the existing footprint, as well as drainage improvements, pavement markings, guardrails, landscaping, and even traffic signal upgrades.

The CRP is in addition to Chapter 90 funds for local roads; it applies to "collectors" and "arterials"—any roads eligible for state funding that are not on the National Highway System (that means interstates and parts of highways like Route 9 and Route 5). Qualifica-

tions are most generous. The road must be a village main street or a designated scenic road, or it must contain historic assets, or it must pass through or next to public lands, wetlands, water bodies, large trees, or important agricultural lands. It is hard to imagine any road in our region worthy of preservation that would not fit into at least one of these categories. The road must be in good enough con-

dition so that it will last at least ten more years after the work is done. And it cannot contain documented high-hazard areas (such as a spot where a fatality happened) or greater-than-average crash rates at intersections.

“After two years of discussion, the committee, rather to the astonishment of the members, was able to agree on guidelines for the CRP.”

dition so that it will last at least ten more years after the work is done. And it cannot contain documented high-hazard areas (such as a spot where a fatality happened) or greater-than-average crash rates at intersections.

These projects will be processed in pretty much the same way as all other state-funded highway projects: application by the community to the Highway District director and the local regional planning agency (RPA), followed by submission to the MHD Project Review Committee. They would then go on the RPA's list of eligible projects (called the TIP). Because those lists are currently very backed up, due to shortage of state money, the best bets will initially be projects already

on the TIP but stalled by disputes. It is my belief, as the chair of the committee that reviews TIP choices for the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, that CRP projects may have a great chance to move up on the list, because the design work will be easier to complete and the cost should go down significantly. After a few expensive projects are selected off the list, there is often just enough money left over

for something neat, cheap, and ready to go. MHD intends to review the program carefully after its first year. It is essential that at least 15 CRP projects be nominated this year statewide, so that the state can see the program is popular. The Franklin RPA has already nominated Shutesbury Road. Who knows? If this program succeeds, maybe the state engineers may feel moved to revisit their overall design standards. ❖

Alexandra Dawson is a member of the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee.

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Many thanks to architect Andrew J. Dean of Margulies & Associates, Boston, for his generous donation of time and effort in the redesign of the Sierra Club office. Mr. Dean contributed three designs to the project, sat through a number of meetings, and oversaw the project from start to finish. His design makes room for new staff and volunteers.

Call for Nominations

All Massachusetts Sierra Club members are invited to submit their names for nomination to the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) and the Executive Committees of their groups (Greater Boston, Cape Cod, Pioneer Valley, Essex, and Blackstone Valley). The ExCom of each group serves as its board of directors, establishing group priorities, goals, strategies, and policies. To submit your name to the nominating committee, please contact the chapter chair: chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org; 617-442-0123. Or contact the chapter office (617-423-5775) or Web site (www.sierraclubmass.org) for copies of petition forms.

The dates for the 2003 elections are:

Appointing Nominating and Election Committees . . . July 19, 2003
 Receipt of names for Nominating Committee consideration and of ballot issue petitions. August 22, 2003
 Qualification of ballot issue September 2, 2003
 Nominating Committee report of names of nominees September 4, 2003
 Certification of ballot issue September 19, 2003
 Receipt of candidate petitions September 25, 2003
 Qualification of candidate petitions September 30, 2003
 Production of eligible voter list November 14, 2003
 Printing and mailing of ballots in *Massachusetts Sierran* by December 1, 2003
 Receipt of ballots deadline January 6, 2004
 Count of ballots at the Sierra Club chapter office. January 6, 2004

Correction—In the Spring 2003 issue, we misspelled the name of one Essex County Group Executive Committee member. The correct name is Joan Longwell. Our apologies for the error.

PHILIP SAUNDERS ASSOCIATES

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

The deadlines are as follows:

Editorial: July 1, 2003.

Advertising: July 18, 2003

Announcements: August 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.

YES! I want to save America's wild lands and wildlife before our chance to do so disappears forever!

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SIERRA CLUB
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Massachusetts Chapter and Group Meetings

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

July 19

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Place: Sierra Club office

September 13

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Place: Sierra Club office

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

CAPE COD GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

July 17

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Place: Falmouth Unitarian Meeting House,

840 Sandwich Rd., 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. The meetinghouse is well marked, about two miles on the right.

September 18

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Place: Eldrege Library,

549 Main St., Chatham

From Route 6, take exit 11. Go south on Route 137 until it ends at Route 28. Go east on Route 28 toward the center of Chatham. Stay on Route 28 until you come to a rotary. The library is just past the rotary at the west end of the town center.

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

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE WANTS MEMBERS

Would you like to help support key environmental issues? The chapter's new Legislative Committee is looking for members to help plan and implement the Sierra Club's legislative priorities in the State House.

To join the committee, contact Leslie Doyle at lesliedoyle@attbi.com or 508-435-0275.

SEEKING INTERESTED MEMBERS

for Marine and Coastal Habitat and Wildlife Committee. Please contact Mary Ann Nelson, chapter chair, at chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org or 617-442-0123.

Special Events and Outings

NERCC ENERGY CONFERENCE

June 21

Time: 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Place: The George School
Intersection of Routes 332 and 413, near Newton, PA

The theme of the workshop is "Getting to That Sustainable Regional Energy Economy We All Want for the Northeastern United States and Eastern Canada," with focus on electric energy production and distribution.

Contact: Steven Crowley at scrowley@winooski.k12.vt.us, or call the Northeast Regional office: 518-583-9062.

SIERRA CLUB TRAINING ACADEMY

July 11-13

Place: Verizon Learning Center, Marlboro, MA

Learn how to take action! Join fellow Sierra Club members and other environmental activists at an upcoming training. The goal of the academy is to provide you with the knowledge and support you need to organize in your community to protect and preserve the environment.

The program begins Friday evening and continues until Sunday afternoon.

Room and board is paid by the Sierra Club. Participants will hear from respected Sierra Club organizers from around the country as well as join in interactive strategy planning to reinforce concepts.

For more information on how to apply to attend this training program, contact Liz Pallatto at 415-977-5674 or by e-mail at liz.pallatto@sierraclub.org.

The application deadline is Monday, June 16.

OUTINGS:

PROVINCE LANDS TRAIL (FERRY AND BIKE)

June 15

We'll take the fast ferry from Long Wharf to Provincetown, 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.

DOGTOWN HIKE: MORE THAN A WALK IN THE WOODS

July 19

Discover the history and geology of this 1700s village known as Dogtown and find out what's so special about the erratics that are strewn throughout.

Please e-mail outings leader Deborah Holt at holtdj@verizon.net for information or to sign up for an outing.

Sierra Club Merchandise

Canvas Backpack \$15.00
100% cotton "Sierra Club Member" Cap. \$ 8.00
Canvas Tote / Grocery Bag \$ 3.00

Shipping charges: \$5.00 shipping for first item,
\$1.00 each additional item.

All sales: Deduct 10 percent member discount (include member number), include 5 percent MA sales tax, plus shipping and handling noted above unless rush orders or multiple heavy items (contact the office for information). We apologize that we cannot accept credit card payments.

Please mail to:

Sierra Club Merchandise • 100 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116



SIERRA CLUB
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Conservation and Issue Committee Meetings

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

June 21

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Place: Sierra Club office

October 18

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Place: Sierra Club office

NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK COMMITTEE

July 15

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

June 12

Time: 6:30 PM
Place: Sierra Club office

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

June 4

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 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).

SIERRA CLUB ACTIVIST NETWORK

Would you like to stay up to date on news and legislative alerts from the Massachusetts Sierra Club? Sign up today for the Sierra Club Activist Network! To join, send a blank message to scan@sierraclubmass.org. Make the subject of your message "subscribe." SCAN is an "announce only" list with very low traffic (usually less than two messages per month). We will never share your name or e-mail address with any outside entity.



Create an Environmental Legacy.

Bequests have played a key role in the Sierra Club's environmental successes over the years.

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San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5639 or e-mail:
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MASSACHUSETTS

SIERRAN

*Reaching More Than
26,000 Sierra Club Members
in Massachusetts*

Massachusetts Chapter Sierra Club

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office@sierraclubmass.org
www.sierraclubmass.org

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