

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

SIERRAN

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Winter 2004-05

Reaching More Than
26,000 Sierra Club Members
in Massachusetts

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Massachusetts Sierra Club

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Annual dues in the Sierra Club are \$39, of which \$1 is for a subscription to the Massachusetts Sierran.

NEWS BRIEFS

Changing of the Guard

Vaughn Elizabeth Bell, who has done an outstanding job as administrative assistant for the chapter, resigned this fall in order to join her fiancé in Seattle. We thank Vaughn for her expert managerial skills and her dedication to the chapter, and we are very sorry to see her go. Vaughn has taken a new position as administrative assistant in the Advancement Department of the national Sierra Club.

Our new administrative assistant, Yi Ching Fedkenheuer, has made a smooth transition into the job and we are delighted to have her. Yi Ching has been volunteering part-time in the office since early spring. A professional violinist, Yi Ching performs regularly with several groups, including the Brockton Symphony, the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra and the Boston Ballet Orchestra. She also has her own string quartet. Of course we did not hire Yi Ching to play music in the chapter office, (although we wouldn't mind if she did!). Yi Ching has extensive experience working in non-profit organizations in an administrative capacity. She has already made her mark by giving us a much-needed wall clock in the conference room. You can e-mail Yi Ching at yiching@sierraclubmass.org. Please introduce yourself the next time you are at the office.

On the cover: Winter at Rock House Reservation, West Brookfield, Massachusetts. © Eric Endlich (www.endlichphoto.com)

MASSACHUSETTS

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NEWS BRIEFS

Breast Cancer and the Environment

On October 26, the Massachusetts Sierra Club presented the first speaker in its new Boston Speaker Series. Julia Brody, executive director of the Silent Spring Institute, spoke to an attentive group of club members and non-members about the impact of environmental contaminants on the development of breast cancer.

While many women may understand that some chemicals can act as carcinogens and endocrine disruptors that increase the chance of developing breast cancer, what they may not know—and what will surprise them—is just how ubiquitous these carcinogens are and how few of them they are aware of.

How many women know, for instance, that perchloroethylene, a commonly used dry cleaning solvent, and polybrominated diphenyl ether (PDBE), a flame-retardant found in carpets, draperies, televisions, and computers, can increase the risk of developing breast cancer? Even most of the plastic wrap that we all use to store and microwave food contains plasticenes, a carcinogenic that leaches into food, especially when food is heated.

“Once a tumor begins, estrogen mimics—from pesticides, detergents, plastics, cosmetics, and other sources—make human breast cancer cells grow,” Brody explained.

Environmental contaminants and public health has long been an important issue for the Sierra Club’s Cape Cod group (see “Protecting Public Health on Cape Cod,” in the fall 2004 *Sierran*, p. 10). According to studies done by the Silent Spring Institute, the longer a woman has lived on Cape Cod the greater her risk for breast cancer. In fact, the incidence of breast cancer on the Cape is 20 percent higher than in the rest of Massachusetts.

Sierra Club volunteer Melissa McDonald organized the evening’s talk.



Photograph by Yi Ching Fedkenheuer

Silent Spring Institute Executive Director Julia Brody (right) takes a question from Massachusetts Chapter Chair Mary Ann Nelson.

Chapter Endorses Sweep State Elections

While we’ve suffered a setback on the national level, our efforts in state legislative races were overwhelmingly successful. Of the 63 candidates we endorsed, 57 were elected—a 90 percent victory for the environment. We hope this victory will help us pursue our legislative priorities in the coming months.

One key race was the re-election of State Senator Pam Resor, which was targeted by Governor Romney. We telephoned, did mailings, held events, sent press releases, and did whatever we could to support the senator’s re-election bid. Despite huge amounts of money poured into her opponent’s campaign, Senator Resor won.

In another major victory, Cleon Turner captured an open seat in Dennis. With Cape Cod under serious environmental pressure, we’re confident that Representative-elect Turner will be a strong ally in protecting the lower Cape’s fragile environment.

For a complete list of winning Sierra Club endorsees, visit www.sierraclubmass.org.

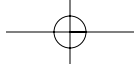
Cape Cod Acting Chair Receives Recognition

David Dow, acting chair of the Sierra Club’s Cape Cod group, received recognition on September 8, 2004 for his participation as an honorary member of the Plume Containment Team, a citizen advisory group that provides advice on the Superfund cleanup at the Massachusetts Military Reservation’s Installation Restoration Program. The recognition came jointly from the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence, the MMR, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence and the MMR are responsible for the Superfund cleanup, while the EPA and the Massachusetts DEP share the regulatory lead.

Dr. Dow works as an oceanographer at the fisheries lab in Woods Hole. He was one of the co-founders of the Cape Cod group in 1988. In 1992, the national Sierra Club recognized him as an environmental hero for his work at the MMR. The environmental cleanup at the MMR is a conservation priority for the Cape Cod group.



Photograph by Pam Pollani



A Breath of Fresh Air: Outings 2004



Photograph by Deborah Holt

Track and sign outing, Cape Cod: dunes at Sandy Neck.

by Deborah Holt

In case you haven't noticed, Massachusetts chapter and group outings are making a come-back.

The effort to rebuild the program has been going on for several years. The first challenge, to attract, support, and retain leaders, has met with steady success; we started the year with

one qualified local leader and are finishing with six or more. A second, equally daunting, challenge has been to find our outings niche. The competition in outdoors recreation is fierce in this state, and a Sierra Club outings program founded here once before. If

we want an outings program to survive in Massachusetts, we must capitalize on our differences. We need to leverage our strengths as an issue-driven, activist organization by using our outings to advocate for the environment—with a breath of fresh air.

The first outing of 2004 was a walk through Belmont Uplands on a crisp sunny day in February. The Greater Boston group, which has supported the preservation of this 15-acre parcel of privately-owned land, co-sponsored

Hikers at Dogtown reservation in Gloucester



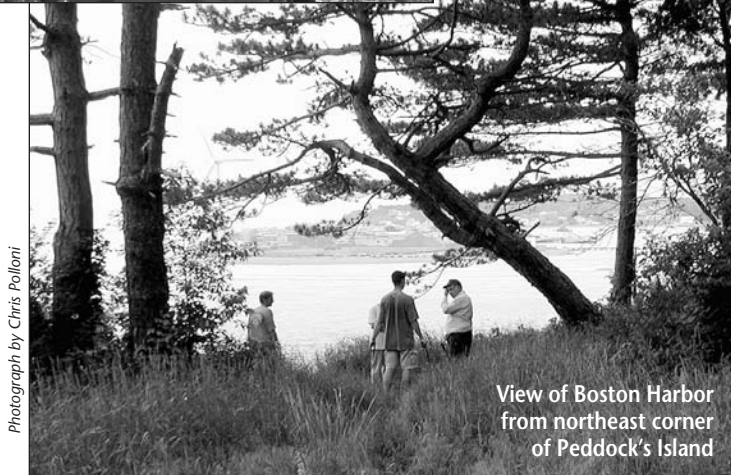
Photograph by Blossom Hoag

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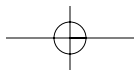
Photograph by Deborah Holt

Diane Boretos explains the art of animal tracking.



Photograph by Chris Polloni

View of Boston Harbor from northeast corner of Peddock's Island



Inner City Outings Fall Apple Picking Trip, October 24

A group of kids from ZUMIX, a music and arts community center in East Boston, pick apples at an orchard in Harvard, Massachusetts. Glen Monnelly, ICO volunteer, led the outing.



▲ Who got the biggest apple?

The Sierra Club Inner City Outings is a community outreach program run by trained volunteer members of the club. Its goal is to take children from Boston urban areas to experience mountains, lakes, woods—the world outside the city.

◀ Jennifer Vasques considers a freshly-picked apple.

Photographs by Glen Monnelly

the walk with the Friends of Alewife Reservation. Audubon author Peter Alden, a knowledgeable and witty guide, led the walk, which was so successful that another one was planned for October.

In March and April, the Cape Cod group coordinated two popular track-and-sign walks led by Diane Boretos, a wetlands biologist and skilled tracker.

Hikes at the Dogtown reservation, Gloucester, in April, July, October, and November offered the perfect ingredients for successful outings: public transportation from Boston, interesting history and geology, and a good work-out. Essex group member Heidi Roberts lead the two fall hikes.

Long-time Pioneer Valley group leader Elisa Campbell lead several outings this year, including hikes in Mt. Holyoke Range and Quabbin Reservation.

The first service outing of the year was a city-sponsored Charles River clean-up on Earth Day, April 24. In June, in an outing co-sponsored with the Friends of Boston Harbor Islands, participants raked and removed debris from a trail on



Peddock's Island. We hope to schedule additional Boston Harbor service outings in 2005.

In August, 35 aspiring outings leaders attended a national Sierra Club-

sponsored workshop in Massachusetts. Attendees said that the two-day training, which is a requirement for prospective outings leaders, was time well-spent and even inspirational. Several of the 12 Massachusetts participants expressed enthusiasm about getting involved at the local level.

With more leaders, we will be able to offer more and more varied outings. Over the next few years, we need to increase the number of qualified leaders, stay tuned to chapter and group interests and concerns, and establish service relationships with environmental stakeholders. If we follow through on these initiatives, outings will follow, naturally. ❖

Deborah Holt is Outings chair of the chapter and serves on the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee.

Marsh landscape and pond in Dogtown reservation



Photograph by Blossom Hoag

Saving the Parkways (Again)

By James McCaffrey

Massachusetts is graced with a unique, historic parkways system. Begun in 1894, it is the nation's first region-wide parkway network. Anyone who has ever traveled on the parkways knows they are different from other roadways, because state laws prohibit certain types of vehicles, signage, and usage. Like the world-famous Memorial and Storrow Drives along the scenic Charles River in Boston, many Massachusetts parkways wind through acres of parkland. They are an integral part of the character of state-protected green space. As activists say, "a parkway is not a road, but a park with a road in it."

But for the last 15 years, the legislature has tried to transfer the parkways to the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD), a move that will radically transform the roads. Proponents of the transfer say that it is redundant and expensive to have the Department of Conservation and Recreation—a parks agency—take care of a roadway. A highway agency could do it better

and save money. The catch is, no one has ever demonstrated that transferring a parkway to MHD would save any money. Furthermore, it is very likely that the transfer would adversely affect the character and integrity of these roadways.

The Roadways and Boulevard Act created the parkway system in 1894. It protects some, but not all, parkways in Massachusetts. And while legislative approval is necessary to transfer ownership or care of some the parkways, environmentalists worry that the act does not protect all parkways statewide.

This year, Governor Romney and the state senate proposed the transfer as part of their budget. Both proposals were defeated by an intensive lobbying effort of a coalition of park

and environmental advocates. Also influential was Senator Marian Walsh's amendment that created several safeguards for the parkways if the transfer occurred. When the idea returned as part of a transportation reform package in June, the Sierra Club and others again convinced the legislature that there is too little information about the benefits or consequences to go forward with the transfer.

In late summer, the legislature authorized \$100,000 to complete the Historic Parkway Initiative, a program started in 2001 to inventory the state parkways system and establish guidelines to preserve the historic and cultural integrity of the system. The governor has yet to release the money to complete the study.

Transferring the jurisdiction and maintenance of parkways to MHD seems to be an idea that just won't die. The Sierra Club calls upon the legislature and the governor to complete the Historic Parkway Initiative before any changes are made in usage, ownership, or care of the parkways. ❖

James McCaffrey is director of the Massachusetts Sierra Club.



Charles River Esplanade with view of the Hatch Shell

Photograph by James McCaffrey

Chapter Seeks Your Opinion in Club Direction

We need your input.

The Sierra Club has never faced tougher anti-environmentalist opposition than it faces today. Now more than ever, we must make difficult decisions about allocating our resources. We must decide what our priorities are.

We are asking all members to complete a short survey to provide feedback about the Massachusetts Chapter. You can complete the survey on line by going to www.sierraclubmass.org/survey.html. If you do not have computer access, contact the office at 617-423-5775 and we will be happy to assist you.

The survey is being conducted by NAVSTAR Advisors, an independent research firm.

Massachusetts Chapter and 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

You elect the Sierra Club leadership each year. In the next three pages, you will find candidate statements and ballots for two Sierra Club executive committee elections: the Massachusetts Chapter and the Greater Boston group. All Massachusetts Sierra Club members may vote for the chapter executive committee. You may also vote for the executive committee of the Greater Boston group, if you are a member of the group. Please contact the chapter office at 617-423-5775 if you have a question about your group membership.

Mail ballots to: Sierra Club Elections, 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston, Massachusetts, 02116. Ballots must be received by 5:00 PM, Thursday, January 6, 2005, in order to be counted. Vote for no more than the number of candidates indicated on each ballot.

In order to validate your ballots, please write your membership number on the upper left hand corner of your envelope. Your eight-digit membership number appears on the mailing label of the *Massachusetts Sierran*. A second ballot is provided for those households with joint memberships so that each member can vote. If you have any questions, please call the chapter office at 617-423-5775.

BALLOT

Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee Election

Vote for no more than **five** candidates.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> John Deacon | <input type="checkbox"/> John Lewis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blossom Hoag | <input type="checkbox"/> Mary Ann Nelson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethan Hoag | <input type="checkbox"/> Phillip Sego |

MAIL TO: Sierra Club Elections
100 Boylston Street, Suite 760 Boston MA 02116

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Vote for no more than **five** candidates.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> John Deacon | <input type="checkbox"/> John Lewis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blossom Hoag | <input type="checkbox"/> Mary Ann Nelson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethan Hoag | <input type="checkbox"/> Phillip Sego |

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of your envelope in order for your ballot to be valid.

**Ballots must be received by 5:00 pm January 6, 2005
in order to be counted.**

BALLOT

Greater Boston Group Executive Committee Election

Vote for up to **five** candidates.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> R. Philip Dowds | <input type="checkbox"/> Craig Kelley |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blossom Hoag | <input type="checkbox"/> John Lewis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethan Hoag | |

MAIL TO: Sierra Club Elections
100 Boylston Street, Suite 760 Boston MA 02116

Your membership number must appear on the **outside**
of your envelope in order for your ballot to be valid.

**Ballots must be received by 5:00 pm January 6, 2005
in order to be counted.**

BALLOT

Greater Boston Group Executive Committee Election

Vote for up to **five** candidates.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> R. Philip Dowds | <input type="checkbox"/> Craig Kelley |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blossom Hoag | <input type="checkbox"/> John Lewis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethan Hoag | |

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Massachusetts Chapter and Group Elections

Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee Candidate Statements *(Ballots are on page 7)*

JOHN DEACON—John Deacon has been active in the Massachusetts Chapter and the Greater Boston group for many years and has served as transportation chair. He has significant professional experience in the transportation field and has used his expertise to advocate for an equal or better level of transportation service for economically disadvantaged and minority areas. He believes that transportation is a key element in more efficient land use—“smart growth”—and reduction of sprawl. A vote for John is to recognize the critical importance of transportation in the Boston metropolitan area.

BLOSSOM HOAG—I am seeking your vote for the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee. I have been a member since 1982 and have held various positions at the group, chapter, regional, and national levels. I am currently secretary of the chapter and vice-chair of the Regional Conservation Committee. The Sierra Club’s growth and health are of primary concern to me. I enjoy many of the administrative duties that help the chapter expand and be effective. I encourage new member participation while I try to lend a historical perspective to the chapter.

My primary conservation concern is global warming and the fact that we are running out of fossil fuel. I help educate the public about the health effects of airplane pollution. To address this problem I support rail expansion first, with the construction of the North/South Rail Link in Boston as well as expansion of the entire Northeast corridor with double tracking to handle freight as well as passengers and better connections to Canada. I try to live what I preach and have installed PV cells on my roof so I now am a electric producer of green energy; I own a Prius and use compact florescent lights wherever possible. Feel free to contact me with questions, concerns, or to become involved.

ETHAN HOAG—The global demand for energy and how it is to be generated permeates every policy decision the Sierra Club makes. At the present time, global energy demands are being met by methods that are wreaking serious havoc to our planet. Time is growing short. If this situation is allowed to continue much beyond this decade or the next, irreversible changes in the dynamics of our planet’s systems are likely to occur. With my background in the science and engineering of energy production and my knowledge of the workings of the club, gained over 20 years of membership, including three years as chapter treasurer and my present service on the Mass Energy green energy steering committee, I stand ready to serve on the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee.

JOHN LEWIS—In the last two years my major interests in the Massachusetts Sierra Club have been in transportation issues: in particular, the North/South Rail Link and the

Washington Street–Airport Silver Line, both in Boston, both issues having much to do with health, energy use, and the way we live. Also the continuing saga of the very slow transformation of Spectacle Island from Big Dig dirt dump to a part of the National Park in Boston Harbor. I continue to be a commissioner on the Boston Conservation Commission dealing with some of the same issues. There are some important wetlands regulation issues, in particular, wetlands credits or banking that will be part of the chapter agenda soon. I ask for your vote for a seat on the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee in order to continue to work on these issues, and many others.

MARY ANN NELSON—I ask that you vote for me for the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee. During my past three years as chapter chair, the chapter has become stronger: we have increased the number of volunteers working to protect our environment; we’ve established an exciting new outings program; with each election, we’ve expanded our political program; we have revitalized our legislative program; and we’ve increased the staff in our office. With two more years, I would see the chapter complete its strategic plan (please complete the survey at www.sierraclubmass.org/survey.html); further develop our fundraising capability; work closer with young people in the state; and create more local activity. I volunteer with the Sierra Club because it empowers us as activists to speak out for the environment. As our state faces many environmental challenges, our chapter has to provide more opportunities for everyone to speak up. With your vote, I will work to achieve it.

PHILLIP SEGO—In his decade of activism in the Sierra Club, Phillip Segó was the founder of the chapter website, maintaining it for the first four years. He created and still manages the chapter’s SCAN listserv, and also serves on the chapter Legislative Action Committee. On behalf of the Sierra Club, Phil chaired the 2003–2004 statewide Coalition to Update the Bottle Bill, working with over 20 other environmental groups. Phil also volunteered to assist with New Hampshire Sierra’s (EVEC) presidential campaign, creating its listserv and email bulletins.

Phil currently serves as chair of the chapter Political Committee. This year, the committee had its busiest year of endorsements in recent history: all 160 house, 40 senate, and 10 congressional seats were reviewed, 63 endorsements were made (more than double previous years).

Phil’s goal on the executive committee is to further the club’s activism and volunteer involvement. He is a strong environmentalist, focusing on air quality, energy use, and open space protection.

Massachusetts Chapter and Group Elections

Greater Boston Group Executive Committee Candidate Statements *(Ballots are on page 7)*

R. PHILIP DOWDS—I'm a Sierra Club Life Member living in Cambridge, where in the '90s I was active in planning and development issues and litigation. For the past year, I've served as a member of the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee (GBG Excom), and as the Massachusetts Chapter's political activity compliance officer. As a practicing architect, one of my interests is that of sustainable or "green" design and construction. Although the federal government and the private sector continue to lag, state and local governments are moving forward with green design and local climate protection plans. I believe these are worthwhile endeavors for urban groups to promote, and could also be a great outreach and organizing focus for building club membership and activity. If re-elected to the GBG Excom, I would be interested in helping mobilize new efforts with a local political and urban emphasis.

BLOSSOM HOAG—I am seeking your vote for the Greater Boston Group (GBG) Executive Committee of the Sierra Club. I have been a member since 1982 and have held various positions at the group, chapter, regional and national levels, including chairing the GBG for six years. I am currently the secretary for the chapter, and the vice-chair of the Regional Conservation Committee. I look forward to encouraging new member activism and an expansion of the group's activities. I would work toward more general membership meetings discussing such issues as energy conservation, the future of fossil fuels, and the part liquid natural gas plays in the equation. I also work for the expansion of green space and protection of parkland, and I support expanded, well-planned rapid transit. Please contact me with your concerns, comments, questions or to get involved and thank you in advance for your vote.

ETHAN HOAG—The global demand for energy and how it is to be generated permeates every policy decision the Sierra Club makes. At the present time, global energy demands are being met by methods that are wreaking serious havoc to our planet. Time is growing short. If this situation is allowed to continue much beyond this decade or the next, irreversible changes in the dynamics of our planet's systems are likely to occur. With my background in the science and engineering of energy production and my knowledge of the workings of the club, gained over 20 years of membership, including three years as chapter treasurer and my present service on the Mass Energy green energy steering committee, I stand ready to serve on the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee.

CRAIG KELLEY—A 42-year-old father of two, I have been a member of the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee (GBG Excom) for several years and have helped grow the GBG's Inner City Outings to the program that it is now, taking hundreds of Boston's youth to visit otherwise inaccessible natural areas. As a GBG ExCom member, I would like to see the GBG grow both its overall membership and its community of active members. I hope to use the MBTA's ill-advised plan for an inner-city bus highway (the Urban Ring) to get Boston-area residents and neighborhoods more active within the GBG, starting with issues of transportation equity. I work as an environmental consultant and have co-authored a book on environmental compliance and written an environmental novel. I live in Cambridge where I am active in local issues, focusing on schools, traffic safety and development. You may learn more about me at www.CraigKelley.org.

JOHN LEWIS—I would like to effectively advocate environmentally sound solutions to the many diverse challenges to the ecosystem that we are residents within. Considering the results of the presidential and congressional elections, we are in interesting times. However, there will also be some opportunities and I would like to advocate within the Sierra Club for environmentally sound solutions for projects with environmental effects. I have a major interest in transportation planning and marine ecosystems. I have been a resident of Boston for 50 years and a conservation commissioner of the city (unpaid volunteer) for a good part of that time. I would appreciate your vote.

Create an Environmental Legacy.

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

Planning now may make your gift more meaningful and reduce taxes on your estate. We have many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter. For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

John Calaway
Director, Gift Planning
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor,
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5639 or e-mail:
planned.giving@sierraclub.org

Any way you spin it, the Silver Line is a bust

by John Kyper

“Chinatown. Change for the Silver Line.” I hear this announcement every time I take the subway from Roxbury to downtown.

Two years after it was inaugurated with both much fanfare and public protest, the MBTA Silver Line spin machine is still working overtime. Those of us who remember the original promise of a light rail line going into the subway as the replacement for the old Orange Line elevated above Washington Street are invited to

The bus tunnel is a boondoggle and the FTA has serious doubts that [the MBTA] could even operate the system.

imagine that a silver-painted bus that sits in traffic is really a rapid transit line—as if pretending long and hard enough will finally make it so.

In the mid-1990s the MBTA decided to link Washington Street with the bus transit-way now under construction between South Station and the South Boston seaport district. The MBTA advocates the \$900 million connection, citing consumer demand that does not exist. Do Roxbury residents really want easier access to Logan airport? No—they want to get downtown and connect to the rest of the subway system. Do people at the new South Boston Convention Center want to go to Roxbury? No—they want to get to the Back Bay hotels and attractions. The MBTA’s plan would make everyone unhappy, forcing riders into a long detour, crossing each other’s paths going up and down stairs at Boylston station to make an awkward transfer to get anyplace else.

To connect the Washington Street bus service to the subway, the MBTA wants to build a tunnel and use Eliot Norton Park as a bus portal. The plan, which has angered the adjacent Bay Village neighborhood, would tear up parts of Tremont and Charles Streets for years.

In the end, the proposal to link Roxbury with the airport seems disin-

genuous. The MBTA claims that the plan will benefit a disadvantaged community, but the Washington Street Corridor Coalition (WSCC) charges it is a bogus justification to obtain federal aid for the South Station-Boylston connection. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) didn’t buy the rationale either, and last year flunked the plan with a “Not Recommended” rating. The current Silver Line bus between downtown and the Dudley station in Roxbury is not working, and a \$1 billion-plus extension can only aggravate matters, squandering scarce public resources for another ineffective scheme.

Any way it is presented, the bus tunnel is a boondoggle and the FTA has serious doubts that an agency whose debt service now comprises a third of its operating budget could even operate the system if the link was built. The Sierra Club, together with the WSCC and other local organizations, has long argued that building a light rail line from Dudley to downtown, via the abandoned light rail tunnel underneath Tremont Street, would take Roxbury riders where they want to go without spending hundreds of millions of dollars for a bus tunnel to nowhere.

Officials in Beacon Hill and Washington finally seem to be getting the message. Several years ago, the FTA ignored a WSCC complaint that the Silver Line was not the replacement service that had been promised. Now that it is becoming clear that standing in a crowded silver bus stuck in traffic is really not much of an improvement over the belching number 49 diesel bus that plied this route for 15 years, the realization is dawning that maybe light rail was the best option for Washington Street all along.

What you can do

To join the Washington Street Corridor Coalition’s campaign for light rail on Washington Street, please

write: WSCC, c/o Cooper Community Center, 1891 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02118; or call 617-445-1999. ❖

John Kyper is a long-time member of the Washington Street Corridor Coalition and served on the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee.

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

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Contributions or gifts to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. Annual dues include subscription to *Sierra* (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1), and other member-only benefits.

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Grounded Plan Attempt Take-Off:

The sad tale of the New Bedford Airport expansion

by Alexandra Dawson

In the largest wetlands destruction project ever proposed in the Commonwealth, the city of New Bedford wants to revive a ten-year-old plan to expand the main runway of its small regional airport. The city plans to complete its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and its Environmental Impact Report (EIR) early next year.

Here is some background and an update on recent events.

The New Bedford airport was constructed during World War II in the Apponagansett Swamp, a 750-acre wetland. The swamp is a floodplain for the Paskamanset River, which flows down the middle to the town of Dartmouth, whose wells are along the river. The river rises from the adjacent Achushnet Cedar Swamp, which has been declared a National Natural Landmark, and it supports an anadromous fish run (fish that go upriver from the sea to spawn). The swamp is home to at least one state-listed endangered species, the spotted turtle. A study of the spotted turtles in this habitat has shown that the turtles are an active colony (most spotted turtle sites in the state are relict), and the turtles live and work right around the present end of the runway.

Expansion plans date back to 1996. The current runway is 5000 feet long. Early plans to extend it to 8000 feet have been scaled back to 6700, plus 500 feet of fill for a grassed safety area at the end. Wetland loss has been estimated to be up to 37 acres, plus four times that amount of tree clearing, slicing the swamp in two and changing it to a shrub swamp. Mitigation would have to be offsite. Compensatory storage for 60 acres of lost flood storage has not been found. The effect on Dartmouth's wells has not been studied. The impact on the residential neighborhood has been ignored.

Saddest of all, this appears to be a trophy project advanced by the city because the federal and state governments will pay the full cost of construc-



New Bedford hopes that expanding its airport will attract regional jets like this one flying over Logan Airport.

Photograph by Paul Leach

tion. The state Mass Aeronautics Commission is an enthusiastic supporter. The original goal of the expansion was to encourage cargo flights. However, no carrier has shown any interest, and a survey by the city's own consultant estimated that there would be only one flight a day over the next 20 years.

The latest justification is to allow access to small regional jets, including corporate jets. While these planes are indeed increasingly popular, why would they start or terminate in New Bedford? Proponents of the plan claim to have identified a large area of potential customers. But much of this area is already better served by the expanded airports at Green, Hanscom, and Logan airports.

Massachusetts Chapter Director James McCaffrey has faithfully attended all the meetings on this project

over the years, inevitably held in New Bedford, together with representatives of Mass Audubon and the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions. "We continue to ask the project proponents to provide data supporting their claim that the air travel industry needs to expand this regional airport," says McCaffrey, "but they refuse to answer the tough questions."

What you can do

The draft EIS/EIR is scheduled to be released in February of 2005. The Sierra Club will need help in analyzing the documents. If you can help, please contact Alexandra Dawson (adawson@sierraclubmass.org). ❖

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

Tips for Green Living

The chapter web site has just added a new page devoted to information on how to live in a more environmentally conscious way. You will learn about recycling and reusing various household items, and how to have an environmentally friendly lawn and garden. You will also find valuable information about food, household cleaning, and many other items. To access the green living page, go to <http://www.sierraclubmass.org/greenliving>.



Energy and Environmental Justice

by Robert F. Murphy

It could be a very long, very cold, and very expensive winter on Cape Cod. Sierra Club members concerned about environmental justice are developing some unusual strategies to support elderly and low-income families during the cold weather season.

The price of oil passed \$50 per barrel at the end of September. The price for home-heating oil in the Boston area is expected to top \$2 a gallon before the winter solstice in December. On Cape Cod, prices are expected to be a bit higher. During a typical New England winter, the average homeowner who depends on oil uses about 800 gallons.

The Sierra Club's Cape Cod group responded to the new energy crisis by reactivating Barnstable County's Energy Equity program. Developed last winter by local environmental and community groups, this outreach program educates families about fuel assistance and energy conservation

programs. Last year, volunteers distributed hundreds of flyers through senior centers, food pantries, town halls, medical care facilities, and community organizations. Churches and other religious organizations provided Energy Equity information to their members and to visitors.

At the start of October this year, Sierra Club volunteers on Cape Cod helped update and distribute Energy Equity flyers. Literature will be circulated during the winter months.

The Energy Equity program is unusual because it provides information on both fuel assistance and energy conservation. In the past, the two have often been divided. Social service agencies have tried to educate the public about fuel assistance programs without mentioning the need for energy conservation. Environmentalists who have called for energy conservation have been accused of being insensitive to the needs of the poor.

The Cape Cod group recognizes that all human beings need an adequate, affordable, and safe source of energy in order to survive. Home heating costs place a major burden on fixed-income and low-income families. Many elders are forced to choose between paying for home heating and paying for food and prescription medications. Social workers describe households in Massachusetts where senior citizens wrap themselves with extra blankets, hoping to save a few dollars on home heating, even when their health is endangered. Advocates for environmental justice ask for a new understanding of America's energy needs.

What you can do

For additional information about the Energy Equity program on Cape Cod, please contact Rev. Robert F. Murphy at the Unitarian Universalist church in Falmouth: 508-457-0449. ❖

Robert Murphy is vice-chair of the Sierra Club's Cape Cod group.

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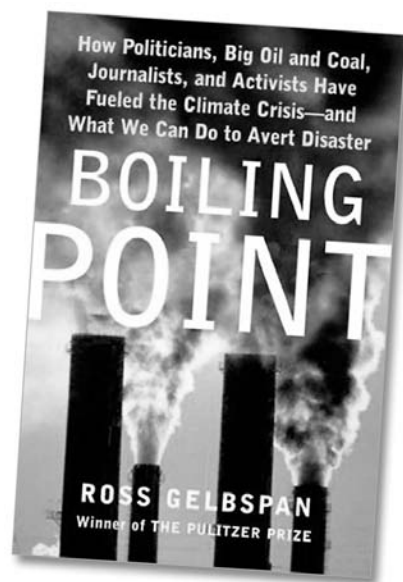
BOOK REVIEW:

Hot Enough for Us?

Reviewed by Gil Woolley

Boiling Point: How Politicians, Big Oil and Coal, Journalists, and Activists Have Fueled the Climate Crisis—and What We Can Do to Avert Disaster

By Ross Gelbspan
Basic Books, 254 pp.,
\$22.00



Ross Gelbspan's book is a must-read for anyone seriously concerned about global warming—and everyone else. Clearly and forcefully written, *Boiling Point* should help to focus public attention on a world-threatening process that gets far too little media time—even on public radio and television and in publications that cater to people who want more depth than the popular press provides.

Gelbspan argues that global warming should concern everyone, not only environmentalists. The effects of global warming include rising sea levels, which will flood low-lying areas around the world; reduced crop yields; the spread of tropical diseases to what are now temperate regions; and large-scale human migration. A less obvious effect would be the diversion of ocean currents like the Gulf Stream, whose moderating influence on the climate of northern Europe allows a large population to flourish.

Gelbspan presents convincing data to show that global warming is already here and that drastic measures are needed to prevent catastrophe. In order to halt and reverse global warming, we must permanently reduce the burning of fossil fuel by 50 to 70 percent as soon as possible, starting the process now.

According to Gelbspan, the coal and oil industries are “criminals against humanity” who have put profits before the interests of the inhabitants of the earth; they have mounted “an extremely successful campaign of deception and disinformation” to convince the world that global warming has no solid scientific base, and have applied heavy pressure on the media to portray global warming as only a theory. The media are also to blame; they have failed to inform the American people of the extent of the problem and of the urgency of taking effective action now.

Gelbspan even berates mainstream environmental organizations for being too timid to advocate measures members might consider controversial. Driving a Prius and filling the washing machine will help, but these conservation efforts alone will not sufficiently reduce CO₂ emissions to turn back global warming.

While Gelbspan's exposition of the problem is convincing, his prescription for corrective action is seriously inadequate. All his recommendations require our government to take unpopular action, even though we know that the government rarely takes unpopular action until faced with an immediate and obvious crisis

(and not always then). Gelbspan tells environmental groups to work together and enlist the aid of other groups with different agendas. This is a good idea, but will it be enough?

A 60 to 70 percent reduction in the use of fossil fuels will require radical changes in the American way of life. First of all, we will have to drive and fly much less. We will also need to find an alternative to fossil fuels. Gelbspan fails to identify a single non-polluting, plentiful, portable, and inexpensive fuel for vehicles and aircraft. He does posit hydrogen as an alternative. Unfortunately, on Planet Earth, hydrogen is found only in compounds, most commonly in water. The energy required to release the H₂ from the H₂O is exactly equal to the energy released when hydrogen recombines with oxygen to provide the power to drive a vehicle.

Another problem is that the US is not likely to be among the first to take action. Right now, several small island-nations are threatened by the moderate rise in sea level, while the densely populated areas of Bangladesh and the Pearl River delta of China will soon be in trouble. But the US is in no immediate danger. Only strong leadership from a president might persuade a majority of the American people to tolerate the drastic measures necessary to significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels. Instead, the US is the only industrial country whose government has not recognized global warming as a serious threat. It is hard to believe that such leadership will come from President Bush, and we haven't heard much about this subject from legislators of either party.

Gelbspan is right when he says that environmental organizations must warn their members and the general public about this threat and rally support to limit CO₂ emissions now. When the waves are breaking over Florida and Cape Cod, it will be too late. ♦

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

Weaver's Cove is No Place for an LNG Terminal!

by Gil Woolley

The Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal proposed for Weaver's Cove in Fall River shares the very same problems as the existing facility in Everett, Massachusetts. It is close to populated areas. The channel the tankers must take to reach the terminal passes close to very heavily populated areas, goes under several heavily-used bridges, and requires heavy dredging. The site would never even be considered if the Department of Transportation (DOT) had created conservative siting regulations for LNG facilities when so instructed by the US Congress in 1979.

The Mayor of Fall River, Edward Lambert, joined by the attorneys



LNG tanker in Boston Inner Harbor

Photograph by Blossom Hoag

general of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, has petitioned the DOT to write such regulations. He has also petitioned the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to delay consideration of the proposal until regulations have been promulgated.

In its liquefied state, natural gas has a temperature of minus 270 degrees F. But in contact with water or with land and structures it heats up and vapor-

izes, becoming highly flammable. In the worst case, a radius of up to one mile from the leak could be enveloped in a pool of fire. For this reason, locating an LNG terminal close to populated areas is an unacceptable risk. In the US and abroad, there have been serious accidents at LNG facilities, involving loss of life and property damage. While the likelihood is not high, the potential damage from an accident or terrorist attack is enormous.

If such locations were the only ones available, it might be argued that the commercial and environmental advantages of natural gas were sufficient to justify this risk, but this is not the case. An LNG terminal can be built on a platform (similar to an oil drilling platform) far enough from shore that gas from even a massive leak would be so diluted by the time it reached the shore that it would no longer be flammable.

So why are terminals proposed and built in places like Everett and Fall River? Take a guess! Money. It is cheaper to build a terminal in an existing port close to an existing natural gas line than to build an offshore platform.

Locating an LNG terminal and approach channel close to populated areas is like playing Russian roulette with the lives of thousands of people. The mayor of Fall River is right. We must have rules for siting LNG terminals—and they must be conservative. ❖

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

Massachusetts Chapter Outings

QUABBIN RESERVATION HIKE OR SNOWSHOE

Sunday, December 19
10:00 AM; 3–4 hours

Quabbin restricts the size of groups, so don't wait until the last day to sign up. Wear good boots; dress for the weather; bring lunch or snacks and water. Depending on the conditions, you may need snowshoes with crampon-like grippers underneath or instep crampons; hiking or cross-country ski poles. The leader will ask you to describe your gear and will determine if it is adequate.

To sign up, contact leader Elisa Campbell at (413) 256-4247 or at campbell@oit.umass.edu no later than December 13 with your name, contact information, and how many people will be in your group. This outing is sponsored by the Pioneer Valley group.

LYNN WOODS HIKE OR SNOWSHOE

Sunday, January 2, 2005
10:00 AM–1:00 PM

Ring in the new year with an early winter hike in the Lynn Woods in Lynn, MA. The route is easy to moderate with some climbs and descents. Weather permitting, snowshoes with crampons or grippers and poles are required. Please bring water and lunch. Limit 20. For more information and to sign up, contact leader Jackie Slivko by December 31 at 617-407-8796 or by e-mail at jsslivko@yahoo.com.

CROSS-COUNTRY BACKWOODS SKIING AT BARRE FALLS DAM

Saturday, January 29, 2005

Barre Falls Dam is an Army Corps flood control facility in Hubbardston, Massachusetts, within 25,000 acres of metro Boston's water supply land. Upstream of the dam lies a large meadow that is perfect for cross-country skiing.

For details about the outing and to sign up, contact leader Matt Hopkinson at 978-928-5964 or by e-mail at Hopkinson34@charter.net.

MOUNT HOLYOKE SNOWSHOE

Saturday, February 5, 2005
10:00 AM; 3–4 hours

The Pioneer Valley group is sponsoring a three-mile snowshoe in Mount Holyoke. Moderate pace and difficulty with some steep climbs and descents. Snowshoes with crampons or grippers, poles, and water are required. Please bring a lunch.

For more information and to sign up, contact leader Elisa Campbell at 413-256-4247 or by e-mail at campbell@oit.umass.edu.

MOUNT TOBY SNOWSHOE

Saturday, February 12, 2005
10:00 AM; 4–5 hours

Join us for a six-and-a-half mile, four-to-five hour snowshoe at Mount Toby, sponsored by the Pioneer Valley group. Moderate level of difficulty with some steep climbs and descents. Snowshoes with crampons or grippers, poles, and water are required. Please bring a lunch.

For more information and to sign up, contact leader Elisa Campbell at 413-256-4247 or by e-mail at campbell@oit.umass.edu.

Other Chapter Events

CHAPTER HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, December 15
4:00 PM–7:00 PM
Sierra Club office

All members are welcome! Sierra Club calendars, note cards, and shade-grown coffee will be for sale. They make great holiday gifts! Please RSVP to office@sierraclubmass.org or 617-423-5775 by December 14.

PIONEER VALLEY GROUP ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Sunday, December 12
6:00 PM–8 :00 PM

The Pioneer Valley group annual holiday party and potluck dinner will take place at the home of Alexandra Dawson, 2 West St., Hadley. Please bring a main dish, salad or dessert to share, plus something to drink. Utensils and tea will be provided. Kathy Meyer will show slides of a trip to Africa to see the wildlife.

SIERRA SUMMIT 2005

September 8–11, 2005
San Francisco

Save the date! The Sierra Club will hold its first national environmental convention and exposition in September of 2005 in San Francisco, the city in which it was founded over a century ago. The summit will bring together thousands of club members and supporters and will feature three days of inspiration, networking, top-flight keynote speakers, workshops packed with visionary ideas and practical how-to's, star-studded entertainment, and an exhibition hall of cutting-edge products and ideas to help us live on the planet while protecting our environment. The summit will also give club grassroots activists and leaders a chance to deliberate about the club's future.

Greg Casini and Lisa Renstrom, who chair the summit steering committee, are asking Sierra Club members to get involved in planning the convention by suggesting speakers, topics for discussion, and by volunteering. If you're interested, go to www.sierraclub.org/sierrasummit/

NERCC ENERGY CAMPAIGN TRAINING ACADEMY

February 4–6, 2005
Alton Jones Center, Rhode Island

The Sierra Club's Northeast Regional Conservation Committee (NERCC), in cooperation with the club's Global Warming and Energy Team and the Campaign Training Academy, will sponsor a weekend training academy focused on energy issues. Gain skills in analyzing energy policy, learn how to run a successful campaign—and have fun doing it.

For more information, go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/rcc/northeast/>

SIERRA CLUB ACTIVIST NETWORK

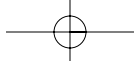
Would you like to stay up-to-date on environmental legislation that impacts Massachusetts? Sign up today for the Sierra Club Activist Network.

To join, send a BLANK message to scan-request@sierraclubmass.org. Make the subject of your message SUBSCRIBE.

SCAN is an announce-only list with very low traffic, usually less than two messages a month. We will never share your name or e-mail address with any outside entity.



The Sierra Club office will be closed from December 24 to January 3.



Massachusetts Chapter and Group Meetings

GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

December 14

7:00 PM
Sierra Club office

Upcoming meeting dates:
January 11, February 8, March 8

ESSEX GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

December 14

7:00 PM
Newburyport Public Library,
the Director Room,
State Street, Newburyport

NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK COMMITTEE

January 18, March 15

7:00 PM
Sierra Club office

This committee meets on the third
Tuesday of every other month.

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

January 22

10:00 AM-3:00 PM
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).*

Submission deadlines for the March 2005 issue of the Massachusetts Sierran are:

Editorial.....January 7, 2005
Advertising.....January 15, 2005
Announcements.....February 1, 2005

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

Please submit all announcements
to announce@sierraclubmass.org.

HELP US GROW OUR CHAPTER!

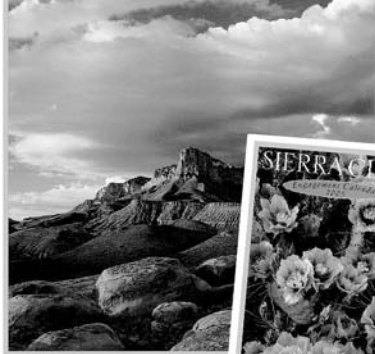
The fundraising and membership committee needs volunteers to help the chapter increase membership and member donations in 2005. If you would like to work on chapter fundraising and membership programs, please contact Ann Ballantine at 978-371-2652 or by e-mail at aballantine@tools-for-business.com.

AD SALES OPPORTUNITY

The Massachusetts Sierran is looking for a self-starter to sell advertising for this high-demographic, 26,000-circulation quarterly. Generous commission structure. Work from home. Send resume to James McCaffrey at jobs@sierraclubmass.org or by regular mail at the chapter office. No phone calls please.

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*The Sierra Club office will be closed
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Massachusetts Chapter Sierra Club

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617-423-5775

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