



RI Chapter Kicks Off 2008 Smart Energy Solutions Campaign

By Beth Perry, Chapter Conservation Co-Chair, Chris Wilhite, Chapter Director, and Dick Graefe, Volunteer

At the beginning of every year, the Conservation Committee of the Rhode Island Chapter of the Sierra Club meets to study the state's conservation issues and to select the issue that will focus our community outreach campaign for the following 12 months. This year it didn't take us very long to agree: we want to maintain efforts to reduce global warming with our Smart Energy Solutions campaign.

Our goals:

1. Protect our fresh ocean air and the legacy of our beaches and coastlines by reducing global warming pollution to sustainable levels (80% by 2050);
2. Broaden the prosperity of Rhode Island communities with affordable commutes and green jobs, and;
3. Reduce our dependence on dirty, imported oil.

The way we see it, Rhode Island is in a race to re-energize its economy.

Rhode Island's dependence on gasoline and automobiles is choking our economy, health and environment. We believe that by expanding the state's public transit system we can transform our car-driven transportation culture into one that offers clean, affordable transportation alternatives. At the same time, we can significantly reduce our dependence on imported oil and reduce traffic, a major contributor to global warming in our state.

At the turn of the 20th Century, Rhode Island was once the epicenter of the American Industrial Revolution. After years of decline, we now have an opportunity to be the epicenter of a new energy economy. If we act now, Rhode Island can generate thousands of jobs in the energy By making our homes, businesses and institutions more efficient, Rhode Island can save a lot of money. For

continued on page 3

A Walk in the Park

Rhode Island Chapter Holds Annual Retreat

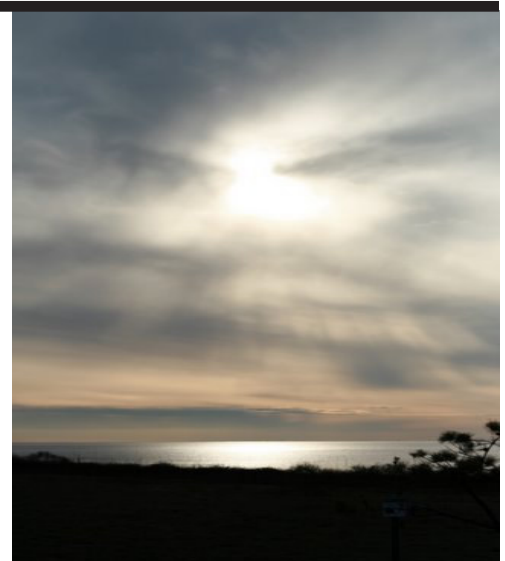
by Maggie McCormick

Ok, so it's the Sachuest Point National Wildlife *Refuge*. Nonetheless, the RI Chapter's annual retreat began with a walk along the shore on a brisk January morning, the setting reminding us why we are part of the Chapter and why grass-roots activism is so critical.

Once back inside, we enjoyed hot soup and conversation before getting down to business. We convened in three groups: a Political Committee, a Fundraising Committee and a Member Engagement Committee. Attendees chose a group based on their interest and expertise. Each group determined

goals for the year and outlined a plan to realize those goals. The resources and energy brought to the retreat have already increased the Chapter's momentum. As Chapter Chair, I found it particularly gratifying that the Chapter was able to engage so many people who had not previously participated in Club activities.

There is still plenty of room for you—yes you—on any of the committees and plenty of time for your voice to be counted among the Chapter's call for clean, renewable energy and improved mass transit. Join us!



Sunlight streams through the clouds at Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, site of the 2008 RI Chapter Sierra Club Retreat. Photo by Alison Buckser.



RI Chapter Executive Committee 2007

Maggie McCormick
Chapter Chair, Newsletter Editor

Catherine Diedrich
Treasurer

Barrett Hazeltine
Secretary

Danny Musher
Student Liaison

Alison Buckser
Political Chair, National Delegate

Beth Perry
Conservation Co-Chair

Other Chapter Leaders

Bill Horn
Conservation Co-Chair

Barry Shiller
Transportation

Mike Condor
Outings

Rhode Island Staff

Chris Wilhite
Chapter Director

Sierra Club RI Chapter
17 Gordon Avenue
Suite 208
Providence, RI 02905

(t) 401.521.4734

(f) 401.521.4001

www.ri.sierraclub.org

From the Chair

By Alison Buckser

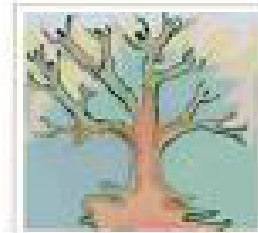
After three years of writing “From the Chair,” this is my final submission under that title. I am delighted to turn the reins over to the Chapter’s new Chair, Maggie McCormick. Maggie is an exceptional leader who has done wonderful things for the Chapter in both Membership and Communications. Being Chapter Chair takes a great deal of time and energy, and I am deeply grateful to Maggie for taking on this responsibility. I am not leaving the Chapter. I will remain Political Committee Chair and a member of the ExCom.

My term as Chapter Chair began in January 2005. I didn’t think of myself as an environmental leader at the time, but I felt that I could make a difference by working on the Chapter’s infrastructure. While there have been definite challenges—staff changes, office moves, ExCom turnover—I think we have moved forward in this area. Today we have a superb Chapter Director (Chris Wilhite), a strong Treasurer (Catherine Diedrich), resurgent Conservation and Political Committees, committed ExCom members, regular quarterly membership meetings, an ambitious fundraising plan, numerous membership opportunities, and many other important components of a strong Chapter.

In addition to internal challenges and achievements, we have also seen astonishing changes on the environmental front in the past three years. In January 2005, George W. Bush had just been elected—or re-elected, depending on your point of view. The US House and Senate were still firmly in Republican hands. We had some strong environmental leaders, such as Senators Chafee and Reed, but it was an incredibly bleak time for the environment. Today, global warming is a fact accepted by virtually everyone, and everyone is talking about how to address it. Hybrid cars have replaced SUVs as the hot cars. Businesses are looking for ways to be green, or at least market themselves that way. Environmental conscientiousness has been embraced by the mainstream.

Danny Musher, a sophomore at Brown University and leader in the Empower Committee there, is acting as our Chapter Student Liaison while Tess Hart is abroad this semester. Seeta Sistla stepped down from the ExCom in order to continue her studies in New York. The Chapter is grateful to her for her work as National Delegate. Finally, I’d like to say a special thank you to Will Space for his hard work and commitment during his two terms of service on the ExCom and for always being fair-minded, good-humored, and thoroughly reliable.

The RI Chapter of the Sierra Club extends our sincere thanks to Alison for her leadership over the past three years and her ongoing commitment to the Chapter.



Thank you!

2008 Sierra Club National Board of Directors Election

The Board of Directors of the Sierra Club is elected to serve the membership in deciding policy, conducting governance, and keeping the Club effective in pursuing our key mission to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Earth. The Board is the highest governing body in the Club. It consists of 15 members, of whom five stand for election every year. An online candidate forum has

been developed to help members get to know the candidates and make informed choices among them.

Eligible Club voters (members who have renewed once or life members) will receive election materials in the mail in the month of March (or will receive an email notice in early March, if you opted-in for it, of how to access the election materials on the

Internet). If you have not received your mailed ballot by early April, you may request a new one by calling 415.977.5500, or at membership.services@sierraclub.org.

More information about the elections and the candidates can be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/bod/2008election/>.

2008 Smart Energy Solutions Campaign

continued from page 1

efficiency and renewable energy industries such as community wind projects, large scale wind farms, and a wind turbine manufacturing facility at Quonset Point. Smart energy “industries” would generate many new union jobs and help move Rhode Island toward energy independence at the same time. Rhode Island could, for the first time, create a lucrative energy export.

On January 17, we met in Newport with Sierra Club members and interested citizens from around the State to kick-off our 2008 Smart Energy Solutions campaign. There are a number of things we want to accomplish this year, including:

- Establish commuter reduction plans for large employers.
- Establish a community-wide energy efficiency initiative modeled after the Cambridge project in Massachusetts.
- Implement the short-term energy efficiency recommendations of the Newport Goes Green Task Force.
- Ensure that RIPTA meets the current demand in ridership and makes usage more convenient with better public information.
- Organize existing and potential bus riders to advocate for an expanded public transit system.
- Engage local municipalities and businesses in facilitating the use of public transit through their organizational policies.
- Identify key funding mechanisms to build Rhode Island Public Transit Authority’s (RIPTA) operating budget to improve and expand transit services in Rhode Island.

How do we plan to accomplish these things? Through old fashioned, tried-and-true grassroots activism, a staple of Sierra Club organizing. We believe in the power of people to change the status quo, and in our conversations with members and Rhode Islanders across the state, we know that global warming is an important issue. This year we’ve planned community walks, community presentations, social gatherings, house parties, rallies and special events to engage Rhode Islanders in advocating for smart energy solutions to solve the problem of global working in our state.

DON'T FORGET!

In March we sent out an appeal to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter’s budget. When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club’s work in our own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able - and remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.

Mail your contribution to

Sierra Club RI Chapter

17 Gordon Ave, Suite 208

Providence, RI 02905

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

At the State House: The Rhode Island Chapter's 2008 Legislative Agenda

What makes the Sierra Club so effective at changing state and federal policies to protect the environment is our ability to advocate for good environmental standards through legislation. The Rhode Island Chapter Political Committee has begun to set the Chapter's state legislative agenda for the 2008 session. Support for environmental bills is forged from the Chapter's vision to reduce Rhode Island's dependence on dirty, imported oil, broadening the prosperity of communities with affordable communes and green jobs, and protecting our fresh ocean air and the legacy of our beaches and coastlines.

In order to choose which legislation to take the lead on supporting, the Political Committee agreed on a set of criteria as follows:

1. The proposed legislation must meet the mission of the Rhode Island Chapter;
2. There must be a staff member or a volunteer dedicated to seeing the proposed legislation through the entire process;
3. There must be an ability to reach out to members on the issues surrounding the proposed legislation; and,
4. The proposed legislation must add to the credibility of the Chapter.

The Chapter may play a supporting role on other proposed legislation that does not meet these four criteria.

The Political Committee will be working hard to pass the following legislation:

- The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008 (S 2629 – Sosnowski; H 7884 – Handy). This is our top priority this year. This bill would adopt rules, regulations, and programs at the state and local level that will reduce global warming pollution 80% by 2050—a doable 2% a year—through increased efficiency in energy use among the transportation and electricity sector. Once this bill is passed, there will be a public process set up to identify strategies for short and long-term reductions of global warming pollution, including the need to reduce automobile traffic. This is a coalition bill, with many partners taking the lead on different aspects. The Sierra Club Rhode Island Chapter is the lead for the transportation and green jobs portion of the bill.

continued on page 6

**SIGN UP FOR RHODE ISLAND
LEGISLATIVE ALERT E-MAILS!**



All Club members interested in Rhode Island environmental legislation are invited to join an e-mail list that will send out legislative alerts, (not too many!), including information on bills filed, hearings, lobby days and floor action. We will definitely be involved

with legislation involving energy and transportation, but there always are unexpected developments in a variety of environmental issues that may require a quick response. As a “grass-roots” organization, it is important that members have a chance to hear about what is going on and respond by coming to the legislature, making calls, sending messages, or even giving advice. Remember, members set the Club's policies! Rhode Island's small size makes state government very accessible, and despite some frustrating times, it is fun to be involved. If you would like to be on the e-list, or even better, be involved in determining our legislative positions, please contact our Political Committee Chair, Alison Buckser, at dalisonb@yahoo.com or call the Chapter office at (401) 521-4734.

Rhode Island Student Climate Coalition

In November 2007, 6,000 students from across the country traveled down to Washington, D.C. for the first national youth climate change conference, Power Shift 2007. At this



summit, the Rhode Island students joined together to form the Rhode Island Student Climate Coalition (RISCC). Back in Rhode Island, RISCC is working with the Rhode Island Climate Coalition (RICC), other universities, and high school students to push an 80% carbon emission reduction by 2050 bill through the Rhode Island state legislature. Comprised of students from Brown University, University of Rhode Island, Providence College, and Roger Williams University, RISCC representatives met with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse to voice their support for energy legislation that will improve efficiency. RISCC representatives are also working with administrators on their campuses to reduce campus greenhouse gas emissions. For more about the Rhode Island Climate Coalition, visit <http://www.newenglandclimate.org/rhodeisland.htm>.

Coastlines, Sierra Club RI Newsletter, Spring 2008

What's Going On?

Cool Calls Action Nights

Thursdays through the Spring, 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Sierra Club Rhode Island Chapter Office
17 Gordon Ave., Suite 208, Providence

Join us every Thursday to help mobilize Sierra Club members and environmental supporters to RId e the Wave to Energy Independence! Volunteers will help make phone calls to educate members and enlist their support for Sierra Club campaigns for clean, renewable energy, improved public transit and energy-efficiency in our municipalities. Come socialize, help update our database, and stamp and label mailings over FREE food and beverages. For further details, contact Chris Wilhite, chris.wilhite@sierraclub.org, or call (401) 521-4734.

Conservation Cocktail

Thursday, March 27, 2008, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Sierra Club Rhode Island Chapter Office
17 Gordon Ave., Suite 208, Providence

Please join the Conservation Committee on Thursday, March 27th, for our first ever Conservation Cocktail party. We will discuss ways club members can become involved, such as the Community Walks on April 12th and the Tour de Solutions on April 26th. Details about the RI Chapter of the Sierra Club and directions to the office are located on our website: www.ri.sierraclub.org/. We look forward to meeting all those interested in becoming involved! Questions can be sent to Linda Lamont at llamont@gmail.com.

The Bikers Have It!

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

Providence Bicycle
725 Branch Ave., Providence

In advance of National Bike to Work Week, May 12-16, 2008, the RI Chapter of the Sierra Club presents a workshop on how to effectively use your bicycle as transportation to and from work, school, or errands. From outfitting yourself and your bicycle, to safe riding practices and route planning, the evening promises to deliver timely and useful information. Contact Maggie McCormick, dwyht@verizon.net, (401) 855-2103, for more info.

National Bike to Work Day

Friday, May 20, 2008

Check www.ri.sierraclub.org/calendar for local events.

Community Walks for Energy Independence

Saturday, April 12, 2008, 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Providence and Newport

Invite Your Neighbors to RId e the Wave to Energy Independence! On April 12, the Sierra Club is walking door-to-door to invite Rhode Islanders to the April 26 Tour de Solutions, a club-sponsored tour of smart energy solutions in action. During our community walk we'll give away energy-efficient light bulbs while we spread the news about how Rhode Islanders can be part of the movement to create a vibrant, clean-energy economy. The Newport Walk begins at the Newport Public Library. The Providence Walk begins at the Sierra Club office. Call Chris Wilhite for more details at (401) 521-4734 or e-mail chris.wilhite@sierraclub.org.

Earth Day Lobby Day

Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

RI State House, Providence

The Environment Council of Rhode Island is hosting the annual Earth Day Lobby Day. Join Sierra Club Political Committee leaders in lobbying our legislators to pass laws that cut global warming pollution and grow our public transit system. Contact Chris Wilhite, chris.wilhite@sierraclub.org or at (401) 521-4734.

Tour de Solutions

Saturday, April 26, 2008

Time and start location TBD.

Refer to the web calendar at www.ri.sierraclub.org/ calendar for more details.

What do biodiesel, wind turbines, straw houses, green buildings and bike paths have in common? They all help solve global warming. And they're right here--in Rhode Island--right now. Come see!

May Flowers (and Vegetables!)

Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Channing Memorial Church
135 Pelham St., Newport

For thousands of years, humans brought forth produce from the earth without post-industrial revolution chemicals. Join Master Gardener Rosanne Sherry for a discussion on gardening without chemicals and compounds. RSVP by May 1st appreciated by Maggie McCormick, dwyht@verizon.net, (401) 855-2103.

The Rhode Island Chapter's 2008 Legislative Agenda

continued from page 4

- Advance Bus Rapid Transit (S 2077 – Connors; H 7264 – Pacheco): This bill would help speed up bus trips by giving RIPTA the authority to use the technology to extend green lights and by mandating that motorists yield to RIPTA buses as they re-enter the roadway from a bus stop.
- UPass (S 2158 – Miller; H 7857 – Handy): This bill would encourage more use of public transit by allowing students of all state colleges to use their student IDs as bus passes.
- State Employee Commuter Reduction Act (H 7377 – Segal): This bill would set up a process whereby the state would identify alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commuting among state employees. The legislation mandates that at least one of the strategies include the option for employees to cash out on subsidized parking in lieu of transportation alternatives.
- Commuter Trip Reduction (S 2155 – Connors; H 7960 – Handy): This bill would mandate that all urban areas in the state would have to provide plans to reduce the number of commuter trips within their borders through public transportation, car pooling, bicycling, etc. It would apply to all businesses with over 100 employees. A statewide task force would

oversee the process. Sponsors: Senator Connors and Representative Handy.

The Political Committee will also support efforts to add \$3.5 million to RIPTA's budget to reduce overcrowding on the buses.

Action Plan

In order to ensure that the State of Rhode Island passes good laws that create strong standards for reducing global warming pollution, the Sierra Club will work with members and other constituents to build people power. The Political Committee will be organizing a series of lobby days for Sierra Club members to meet their legislators and let them know how dangerous global warming is to the Ocean State and how solutions will boost our economy by creating new jobs and bringing us closer to energy independence. We'll also be writing letters to the editor and meeting with important "influencers" who can help us have an even greater impact. Find out more about our lobby day events on our website, www.ri.sierraclub.org/politics. If you'd like to take part in any of these activities or join the Political Committee, contact Alison Buckser at abuckser@aya.yale.edu. Visit www.ri.sierraclub.org/calendar to find out about the next Lobby Day.

Sierra Club RI Chapter Second Annual Rome Point Seal Watch



Above: Seal watchers gaze out to the rocks to view the seals. Below: A view of Bissel Cove, the inland side of Rome Point.

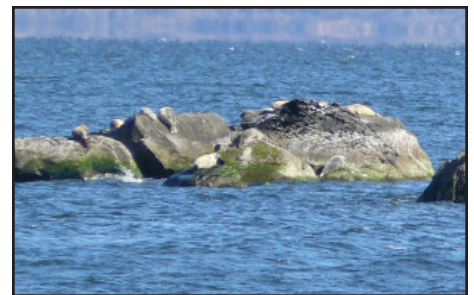


Under the able guidance of Outings Leader Mike Condor, Chapter members and friends met at the Chafee Nature Preserve in North Kingstown on February 16. As the pictures show, it was a perfect crisp and clear New England winter day.

Following the walk, the group reconvened at the bayside home of Conservation Committee member Dick Graefe for conversation, hot beverages, pizza and an amazing assortment of home-baked cookies, courtesy of Susan Graefe.

Many thanks to Mike, Dick and Susan for hosting such a fun event and a giving us an excuse to break hibernation. We look forward to next year!

All photos Maggie McCormick



Above: The seals on the rocks. Can you see them? Below: Walking south along the beach on the Bay side of Rome Point.



Did you know . . . ? Useful Tidbits from Here and There

The Sierra Club has a feature called *The Green Life*.

Available as a daily e-mail subscription or at <http://sierraclub.typepad.com/greenlife/>, *The Green Life* is full of useful ways to be more green every day. Tips are organized by categories such as Entertainment, Food and Drink, Health, Recycling, Transportation and Fashion, to name just a few. Following is a sample of what you'll find when you start exploring *The Green Life*.

From Entertainment

Look for "Movie Friday," which features a short synopsis/review of an environmental-themed movie, often written by a *Green Life* reader. Some titles included in Movie Friday are *Stolen Childhoods*, a film by Len Morris; *Hurricane on the Bayou*, a film by Greg MacGillivray; and *War/Dance*; a film by Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine.

From Food and Drink

Bordeaux by Boat. Tesco, Britain's largest retailer, is working to develop a system of carbon labels for each of their 70,000 products. You might assume that you can easily calculate the carbon footprint of your favorite item by analyzing how far it might have traveled to land in your basket, but to really determine the carbon footprint you need to go further. For example, if you live in New York, it would create less carbon emissions to drink Bordeaux instead of Californian wine. Although your Bordeaux is traveling from a further distance, it comes by boat, which creates less carbon output than the California wine which travels overland by truck.

From Health

Recycled Runners. Are you a sports enthusiast and an environmentalist? RecycledRunners.com helps runners

around the world find an alternative solution to tossing your old running shoes in the trash.

If your running shoes are "gently" used, RecycledRunners helps you find locations throughout the country where you can donate them to people in need. If you just finished the marathon and your shoes have seen better days, they can still be recycled and turned into new sports surfaces at playgrounds and basketball courts.

Check 'em out here: <http://www.recycledrunners.com/>.

From Recycling

What to Do When Your Energizer's on Empty. Batteries are one of those little things that really add up. With about 3 billion dumped each year, the lead, cadmium, mercury, and other heavy metals in household batteries can be a bummer for our soil and water quality. To take just one example, more cadmium in landfills comes from batteries than any other source. The solution? Recycling, of course. Here's how:

Rechargeable batteries (e.g. nickel-cadmium and lithium-ion) can get their juice rejuvenated hundreds of times, but eventually they too wear out. Click over to the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation or call their hotline at 1-800-8-BATTERY to find out where you can drop rechargeables off for recycling.

Standard household (e.g. alkaline and zinc-carbon) batteries are recyclable too, although they can be harder to find a home for. My local hardware store takes them, and yours may, too. Check earth911.org or call 1-800-CLEANUP for a location near you. If you go through a lot of batteries, it might be worth enlisting a company like Battery Solutions or the Big Green Box that will recycle them for a fee.

Friday, May 20, 2008 is Nat'l Bike to Work Day

Use this opportunity to ride your bicycle to work and inspire your coworkers to join you in the healthiest, cleanest way to get to work. Bicycle commuting contributes ZERO global warming. Check the Sierra Club RI chapter calendar, <http://www.ri.sierraclub.org/calendar/index.html>, for listings of Bike to Work events near you.

American Public Media™ Talks Sustainability

What would the world look like if everyone lived like me? Find out at American Public Media website, <http://sustainability.publicradio.org/consumerconsequences/>.

Consumer Consequences is an interactive game designed to illustrate the impact of our lifestyles on the Earth. It's part of American Public Media's™ special series, "Consumed," which explores whether the modern American lifestyle is sustainable in the long run. Consumer Consequences will ask you a series of questions about your lifestyle, and as you play, it will show you how many "Earths" of natural resources it would take to sustain all 6.6 billion humans... if everyone lived like you.

Background graphics of your in-game world reflect the waste you produce, the infrastructure you require, the energy you consume and how your lifestyle impinges on forests and other undeveloped land. Your impact is calculated using an "ecological footprint" model created by research partner, [Redefining Progress](http://RedefiningProgress.com).

Consumer Consequences lets you compare your lifestyle with other players and gives you a chance to modify your choices and reduce your footprint on the planet.



Sierra Club/Rhode Island Chapter
17 Gordon Avenue
Suite 208
Providence, RI 02905

Protecting America's Environment
For Our Families, For Our Future

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Providence, RI
Permit 1230

What's Inside

2008 Smart Energy Campaign	page 1
From the Chair	page 2
National Board Elections	page 3
Lateral Recycling	page 3
2008 Legislative Agenda	page 4
Student Climate Coalition	page 4
What's Going On	page 5
Annual Seal Watch	page 6
Tidbits from Here and There	page 7

Upcoming Chapter Events

Conservation Cocktail

Thursday, March 27, 2008, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Bike Commuting Workshop

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Community Walks for Energy Independence

Saturday, April 12, 2008, 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Earth Day Lobby Day

Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Tour de Solutions

Saturday, April 26, 2008

May Flowers (and Vegetables!)

Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

National Bike to Work Day

Friday, May 20, 2008

Details for all events on page 5.