



Preserving Our Past  
by Protecting Our Future

## **Green Homes Tour a Success!**



The weather cooperated for our first annual Green Homes Tour on April 8. More than 100 people registered and properties bustled with Marbleheaders interested in improving home energy efficiency.

The 11 open homes were grouped in three areas: the West Shore from Naugus Avenue to Pinecliff Drive; Old Town and the Shipyard District from Norman Street to Central Street; and the Clifton area from Longview Drive to Surf Street.

Visitors learned about varied technologies, including heat pumps, solar panels, induction stoves, tankless hot water heaters and more.

For those looking to offset the costs of home energy efficiency investments, information was available on [rebates and incentives](#) from Mass Save, the federal government and the Marblehead Municipal Light Department.

Please visit the [Green Homes Tour ebook](#), which will remain on our website, for detailed information on the homes and technologies.

Thank you to all the volunteers who made this event a success and stay tuned for the next edition!

[Video of the Green Homes Tour by James Maroney, MHTV](#)

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**Elaine Leahy Chosen as Our New Executive Director**



We are pleased to announce that Elaine Leahy will become our next Executive Director beginning this April. Elaine replaces Louise Bullis Yarmoff, who has held the position since August of 2021. A marketing and communications professional, Elaine has been active in Sustainable Marblehead for several years co-chairing both the Education and Conservation Working Groups.

Most recently working for Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish where she founded their Creation Care Team, Elaine has a wealth of experience in marketing, journalism and event planning in both the corporate and nonprofit sectors. Elaine loves getting involved with the community and volunteers with many local organizations, including the Marblehead Conservancy, SPUR, the Marblehead Little Theater and she also served on the Board for the Marblehead Festival of Arts.

She and her husband and children enjoy spending time in the beautiful coastal spots and green spaces in Marblehead and sailing their Townie.

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## **Dueling Leaf Blower Articles on Town Meeting Warrant**



1 hour leaf blower use

driving 1100 miles  
from LA to Denver

Last year, to address public concerns about the health and environmental effects of gas-powered leaf blowers, Marblehead Town Meeting members voted 254-202 to restrict their use between Memorial Day and Labor Day. This was a compromise measure intended to provide a summertime break from the noise and pollution caused by these machines while still allowing their use during spring and fall yard cleanup times.

A year later, there are two new articles relating to leaf blowers on the May 1 Town Meeting warrant, one (Article 47) which would repeal the bylaw entirely and another (Article 48) which outlines how the bylaw is to be enforced. Under the proposal, it would be the property owner who is responsible for compliance, with a warning given for the first infraction, a \$100 fine imposed for the second infraction, and \$200 fines for each infraction after that. Enforcement would be carried out by the Marblehead Police Department and the Health Department. In the event of an emergency, the Select Board could temporarily waive the bylaw.

Sustainable Marblehead, which supports the existing bylaw and its enforcement, urges concerned residents to attend Town Meeting on May 1 and vote on both articles. Since citizen-sponsored articles appear at the end of the warrant, you should be prepared to stay late or attend a second day if necessary to make sure your voice is heard. We also encourage homeowners to talk with their landscapers



about the issue, including the opportunity to transition to electric-powered lawn equipment as some landscapers have done. Some homeowners also choose to rake their grass clippings or let them mulch their lawns and keep leaves in place over the winter to protect perennial plants, insects and birds.

Currently, more than 200 cities and towns across the U.S. have either restricted or banned gas-powered leaf blowers, and the number continues to increase as residents and policymakers become increasingly aware of the dangerous decibel levels that gas-powered leaf blowers can generate, their environmental impact, and their health impact on humans, pets and wildlife. California has banned the sale of gas blowers beginning on July 1, 2024, after [finding](#) that they represent a surprisingly large source of carbon emissions. One hour of gas-powered leaf blower use, they found, is comparable to driving a new light-duty passenger car about 1100 miles.

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## Changes to Old and Historic Districts Guidelines



Two important changes have been made to the guidelines of Marblehead's Old and Historic Districts Commission (OHDC) that cover heat pumps and solar panels. These changes were needed to meet Marblehead's goal of achieving net zero carbon output by 2040.

The previous HVAC guidelines stated that heat pump line sets were not appropriate for exterior walls if they could be viewed from a public way. Exterior lines are often the most cost-effective way

to run the refrigerant lines to ductless minisplits on upper floors, so this restriction made it difficult for many Old Town residents to install heat pumps.

The newly updated guidelines no longer prohibit line sets that are visible on exterior walls. Instead, the guidelines now state, "Alternatives to interior routing that obscure or disguise exterior line sets will be considered at the discretion of the Commission; however, horizontal sections of line sets are not permitted on the exterior where they would be visible from the Public Way."

Old Town residents seeking guidance on how to best navigate the new heat pump guidelines can check out our [blog](#) on this topic.

Similarly, the previous guidelines for solar panel installation did not allow them if any part of the panels or their components were visible from a public way within the districts. Of all the historic districts in the state, Marblehead had the most restrictive guidelines, which were also at odds with the recommended guidelines for historical districts from the state of Massachusetts. Marblehead's updated guidelines no longer prohibit solar panels outright but allow that "locations with partial and/or obscured visibility will be considered at the discretion of the Commission."

Residents of Old Town who would like to serve on the Commission and see these changes through are encouraged to apply for an open seat with the Marblehead Select Board when one becomes available.

*Mark Adams, Chair, Green Homes and Buildings Group*

*Photo: Rob Kipp*



**GREEN BOATER CONTEST 2023**

## **Green Boater Contest 2023 Announced**

Sustainable Marblehead and Sailors for the Sea are pleased to announce the Green Boater Contest 2023.

The objective is to get as many Marblehead boaters to take the Green Boater pledge [here](#), and pledge to avoid throwaway plastics, use eco-friendly products and advocate for our oceans.



While it's a friendly competition between clubs to sign up the most boaters, you don't need to belong to a yacht club or even own a boat to take the pledge – it's free!

By signing up, you will receive Sailors for the Sea's digital Green Boating Guide that answers questions like which nontoxic cleaning products actually work, how to anchor properly without damaging marine habitat and what you need for spillproof fueling.

By becoming a Green Boater, you'll help protect our passion and our oceans for future generations.



### **Tree Planting Coming Up April 29th!**

Sustainable Marblehead's third annual April street-tree planting with Tree Warden Jon Fobert will take place on Saturday, April 29, starting at 8:30am.

This year, we will be planting 25 bare root trees near the Tower School on Cornell, Colgate and Dartmouth streets. Last year, we completed the planting in the morning. Fobert will dig the holes on Friday. Soil, mulch and Treegator bags will be on hand, as well as two truck-mounted watering tanks.

Come for an hour or the whole morning. Click on this [Signup Genius link](#) to register and let us know your availability in the comments section.

Please bring your garden gloves and a shovel. A few people bringing stiff brooms to clean up the street and walks around the trees is also helpful.

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## Bartlett & Steadman Purchases Two Electric Vans



Longtime Marblehead plumbing and HVAC specialist Bartlett & Steadman, recognizing the importance of responsible environmental practices, last year made the move to electric transportation.

Bartlett & Steadman teaches customers about the advantages of converting their home's HVAC system into one that's more energy-efficient. The company installs heat pump systems, including ductless mini splits, the most efficient system for heating and cooling. Each heat pump system installed lowers Marblehead's carbon emissions – the second-largest source of which is building and residential space heating, according to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA).

EEA also says that vehicles and transportation are the leading generator of emissions. So, when the time came to replace a vehicle in the Bartlett &


Steadman fleet last year, owner Michael Steadman, in the interest of shopping around, responded to a bulletin posted on Craigslist advertising an electric van for sale. After doing some research he thought, “High-efficiency, less energy consumption, lower costs and pollution? Hey, this sounds familiar.”

The company now has two all-electric Ford E-Transit cargo vans for service, and hopes to have a fully electric fleet in the near future. Going electric has not only lowered maintenance costs and maximized employee productivity (they charge vehicles right at the office instead of having to go out of town to fill up the gas tank), but it’s also strengthening the company’s effort to make an impact on the climate crisis.

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## Upcoming Events

**Ask Chip: Your Gardening Questions Answered in Two Sessions**




**Pesticides 101: Wednesday March 29 4:30pm**

**Green Lawncare: Tuesday April 25 4:30pm**



Chip Osborne  
President of Osborne Organics & past Chairman of Marblehead Recreation and Parks Commission



To register, go to [sustainablemarblehead.org/upcoming events](http://sustainablemarblehead.org/upcoming events)

**Green Lawncare Webinar**  
Tuesday, April 25, 4:30 – 5:30pm

Learn how to move turf and landscapes from conventional management practices to a natural approach.

Click [here](#) to register.



**Gardening with Native Pollinators Workshop**  
Sunday, May 7, 2:00 – 4:00pm

Unitarian Church, 28 Mugford St,  
Marblehead

Presented by Colleen Parenteau,  
Tower School Science Teacher

All are welcome to attend a presentation on the importance of gardening with native pollinators, highlighting native plants that are endemic to the Northeastern Coastal Zone (59) and plants critical to native bee and butterfly species.

Be sure to involve the kids in your family, their friends, and also your neighbors to this multi-generational event!

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### Did You Know?

If we put two spaces after a period, which we learned to do in the olden days of actual typewriters, those extra spaces – in a printed book, for example – really add up. Consider all of the books published in the US for a year. With an average of 5,294 extra spaces per book, it results in over a quarter of a billion extra pages, 26,471 trees, and about 163 acres of forest, eaten up just for that extra space between each sentence.

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### What Can You Do?

Resist double-spaces between sentences!

For other useful tips on how to conserve resources during Earth Month in April, visit the [Treehugger Earth Month Challenge: 30 Easy Actions for Every Day of April](#).

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## Support

Sustainable Marblehead is a community organization working to reduce waste and achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. Our work is important, and we can't do it alone. Please join us by donating today.

[Donate Today](#)

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Special thanks to our Community Champion Sponsors



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