



December Newsletter

Preserving Our Past by Protecting Our Future

Net-Zero Gingerbread House



This year, for the first time, Sustainable Marblehead has entered the Gingerbread House Contest sponsored by the Marblehead Family Fund and the Marblehead Museum.

Between two of our families, we created a net-zero house complete with solar panels, recycling bins, carbon-free transport (bikes, electric cars and sailboats), and of course our iconic Marblehead lighthouse.

Like many ideas, this one was good in theory but difficult to carry out in real life. Before we started, a former professional baker told us that it was “HARD” to make a gingerbread house. How hard could it really be, we thought, after watching a YouTube video or two. The deft hands on the videos made it look so easy.

Two full days of gingerbread baking later, we admit, it IS hard. Even with the help of Louise’s son, Eric, standing on a step stool to get added leverage when rolling out the chilly dough, her arms were tired and her hands ached. At one point, when she had to make a second batch for the 3D trees, Eric said he admired her gingerbread stamina.

From the other side of the harbor, where the walls and roof of the house were being raised by Jean and her son, Sander (pictured above), Jean texted, “Now I remember why I stopped making these!!” But that was followed in the next breath by, “Although Sander is so into it, that reminded me why we DID make them for so many years.”

Fighting to preserve our planet is similar. It’s HARD. Your arms will be tired, your hands will ache. But when your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and young neighbors are “into it,” you’ll remember why it is so important to keep up the fight and show your climate change stamina.

So, come see our gingerbread house. We may never make another one. But you can be sure that we’ll keep on fighting climate change until the battle is won.

Gingerbread Festival, Jeremiah Lee Mansion

Friday, December 3, 3-6pm

Saturday, December 4, 10am-4 pm

Sunday, December 5, 11am-3pm (Winners drawn at 2 pm)

Harbor Plan Working Group



Harbor Working Group member Rob Howie will represent Sustainable Marblehead on the town's new Harbor Plan Working Group. The group will participate in a town-wide study led by a consultant and will then update the town's Harbor Plan, a document which "presents the community's goals, objectives, and recommendations for guiding public and private use of the land and water of its harbor areas, and establishes an implementation program to achieve the desired outcomes."

Rob has been a strong advocate for ocean sustainability since serving as Commodore of the Corinthian Yacht Club, which became a model for sustainability locally and regionally. He has published op-eds about the survivability of the endangered North American right whale and testified before Congress on the impact of commercial fishing rules proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

For his leadership, Rob has received Sustainable Marblehead's Conservation Award and the Marblehead Chamber of Commerce's Harbor Award. He serves as Sailors for the Sea's Skipper for Marblehead, where he leads their efforts to promote green boating, clean regattas, and protecting marine habitats within range of

almost 3,000 recreational and commercial boats. He was a principal organizer of Marblehead Ocean Week and the town's HarborFest in 2021.



Marblehead Public Schools Sustainability Committee

After a hiatus due to the pandemic, School Superintendent Dr. John Buckey has reconvened the Marblehead Public Schools' Sustainability Committee. Sustainable Marblehead's Executive Director, Louise Bullis Yarmoff, and Sustainable Marblehead members Elaine Leahy and Lisa Wolf attended the first meeting on November 9. Also in attendance were Meagan Taylor, Vice Chair of the School Committee, School Department Food Services Director Richard Kelleher, Marblehead Public Health Director Andrew Petty, English

teacher Connor Ryan, who advises the Marblehead High School Chapter of the National Green Schools Society (NGSS), and MHS student Alexis Earp, NGSS Chapter President.

The big news this year is that Marblehead Public Schools' lunch program is no longer using products made from polystyrene, known by its brand name, Styrofoam. Styrofoam trays, bowls, plates, platters, coffee cups and food containers previously used in school cafeterias have been replaced with products that are biodegradable or recyclable. As a result of this transition, Alexis reported, the high school's cafeteria has reduced its daily trash from 12 bags to one, with two daily bags of compostable materials. This represents a considerable investment by the schools, as the compostable containers are more expensive than those made from polystyrene.

Composting and recycling are well in place at the high school, and NGSS students are visiting the middle school and elementary schools to help train the younger students.

Solar panels on public school buildings and electric buses were other topics of discussion, to be explored at a later

meeting. The next meeting is set for January 6.



31 Ways to Be Less Wasteful this Holiday Season

We kicked off our effort to help reduce holiday waste with our “Compost, Recycle, Trash?” webinar on November 15. If you missed it, you can find a video of the webinar on our website or by clicking [here](#).

During the month of December, we will be posting one tip a day on Instagram and Facebook on ways to reduce waste and green your holiday season.

We’d like your help.

Please send us your holiday waste reduction ideas, illustrated with photos taken in Marblehead, to sustainablemarblehead@gmail.com. We’ll post as many photos and ideas as we have space for during the month of December. Thanks!



Explorers' Club Outing to Hawthorne Pond

The inaugural Explorers Club outing, organized by Sustainable Marblehead's Education Working Group, took place at Hawthorne Pond in early November.

Education Group co-leader Jennifer Lewis led the walk for Grace and Ben, who live in town, and their aunt and uncle visiting from Pennsylvania. According to Jennifer, "It was so much fun to share this beautiful green space with them!"

Explorers Club outings will be held quarterly. Please join us for our next outing on January 22 at 10am in Steer Swamp. We'll be hiking around this

amazing green space looking for animal tracks. Please check back soon for a sign up genius, including meeting spot.



Net Zero Roadmap Survey

The Green Marblehead Committee and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council are developing a Net Zero Roadmap to chart the course to meet the town's goal of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, and they want to hear from you!

If you missed the Net Zero Workshop on October 6, or you attended and have more ideas to share, please let them know what your climate action priorities are and what you think should be included in the roadmap. Please complete the [survey](#) today.

If you weren't able to join the Net Zero Workshop, you can view the workshop

session [here](#). Or you can view the presentation slides [here](#).

Upcoming Event

Winter Dance

MARION DANE BAUER ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD JONES



Story Stroll

Starting December 4, 2021, and continuing throughout the month
Bird Feeder Craft, December 4, 1:30-2:30pm

We hope you'll stop by the Jeremiah Lee Mansion Gardens during the Christmas Walk to enjoy a Story Stroll sponsored by Sustainable Marblehead and the Abbot Public Library. Enjoy the beauty of nature as you walk the historic grounds and read "Winter Dance" spread on signs throughout the outdoor space. You can view the Story Stroll throughout December during the open hours of the Lee Mansion Gardens from dawn to dusk.

Sustainable Marblehead is also offering simple bird feeder children's crafts from 1:30-2:30pm on December 4 at the Story Stroll. Hope to see you there!



Did You Know?

Using your disposal to get rid of food waste consumes electricity and, more importantly, vast quantities of clean water to transport the waste through the sewage system and then filter out the solid material at the wastewater treatment plant in Salem. Some cities and towns have even banned disposals in the past for fear that the added food waste would overtax their water treatment systems.



What Can You Do?

The research is unambiguous about one point: you should always compost if you can. Sign up for weekly curbside collection by [Black Earth Compost](#) and receive a

free bag of compost in the spring. Food scraps can also be taken to Black Earth's bins at the Transfer Station, which are located in the upper area across from where you bring your leaves and other garden debris.

If you really can't compost, you are better off tossing those potato peelings and other food scraps in the trash. Although food waste creates methane in landfills, the landfill in New Hampshire where Marblehead's trash goes captures that methane and uses it to heat buildings on the University of New Hampshire campus.

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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