



Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light NEWS

May 2010

Dear MIP&L members and friends,

LOOKING FOR LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS



As I brushed my teeth with boiled water this morning I reflected on the events of the past six weeks. On a morning when more than 2 million people don't have enough clean water, images were fresh in my mind of people being evacuated from homes in boats, and having to swim out of their cars – not in New Orleans, but in Massachusetts' most expensive natural disaster ever, the floods of this spring. As a giant oil slick approaches the Louisiana shore it feels like "déjà vu all over again" for those of us who remember the Exxon Valdez, and even the Torrey Canyon spills. The causes may have been different but the effects will be the same. Jeff Barz-Snell of MIP&L was supposed to fly to London a few weeks ago. His plane took off from Boston, but instead of landing in London, landed in Iceland, where for 5 days, he witnessed the awesome power of God's creation in the erupting volcano there. He shared with me how it reminded him of how vulnerable we are to the forces of nature.

I asked myself, "was celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day in the midst of all this another example of what I often silently accuse others of – massive denial?" How could we celebrate at a time when we seem to be engulfed by a darkness created at least in part by our own arrogant failure to respect the fragility and the power of creation? Where I asked is the light amidst all this darkness?

And then I remembered. It is in the **wisdom** and **courage** that has led to action by Jeff Steinfeld and the Boston Synagogue community; Hans Hinteregger and the Our Lady's community; Doug Stuart and folks at Eliot Church of Newton; Eric Olson and the First Unitarian Society in Newton; Paula Vyres of St. Demetrios in Weston; Imran Qidwai and the members of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, and yes in Tom Nutt-Powell and the volunteers, staff and board of MA Interfaith Power & Light.

We are richly blessed by the light from our leaders: State Sen. Marc Pacheco, who spoke to our annual meeting, Congressman Ed Markey who spoke at the Environmental League of Massachusetts' annual meeting, later that same day, US Sen. John Kerry, MA Undersecretary of Energy and Environment, Anne Berwick and many others in public service who have fought the good fight for years, often in anonymity.

Light shines forth from people of all faiths and no faith, from public officials and folks in the private sector like Anne Kelly and the businesses that make up Ceres; from members of all political parties and all walks of life. We are reminded by the stunning photo above that captures light from millions of years ago, that the light of God's love can reveal itself in surprising and dramatic ways.

So if you feel like you are groping in the darkness, pause for a moment and remember, **YOU ARE THE LIGHT!** And if you can't see it, see the light in the folks mentioned above. With God, all things are possible. And that is indeed cause for celebration.

Vince Maraventano, Executive Director

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY CELEBRATION & ANNUAL MEETING

The **2010 Annual Meeting** included celebration of the achievements of faith communities and individuals, recognition of Tom Nutt-Powell's service as president and co-founder, of Mass. Interfaith Power & Light, inspirational remarks by Sen. Marc Pacheco and Anne Kelly of Ceres, and practical guidance on making houses of worship sustainable, finding the funds, and engaging the faith community and beyond.



Sen. Pacheco was awarded MIP&L's 2010 **Prophetic Witness to the Commonwealth Award** for his instrumental role in the passage of the Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act and his support of grassroots initiatives like the Commonwealth Challenge. Sen. Pacheco told us that individual and legislative action is necessary not only to protect God's creation, but to ensure a strong economy with clean energy jobs and to make the United States independent of foreign oil. (photo on left: Vince and Sen. Pacheco)

The **Boston Synagogue, Eliot Church of Newton, UCC, and Our Lady Help of Christians in Newton** were awarded the 2010 **Leadership by Example Award** for implementing conservation and energy efficiency measures that have reduced their greenhouse gas emissions and

lowered their energy bills. Boston Synagogue reduced its emissions by 20% and lowered its fuel bills by 27% despite a colder winter. Eliot Church continued a series of improvements by converting from oil to a 92% efficiency gas-fired heating system. Our Lady's replaced hundreds of incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents and had MIP&L complete an Environmental Stewardship Assessment of the Church, the Community Building, Trinity Catholic HS and other buildings.

Also recognized were **Eric Olson** chair of the Newton Citizens Energy Commission and a member of the First Unitarian Society in Newton. Receiving awards although not in attendance were **Sen. John F. Kerry, US Rep. Edward Markey, Anne Berwick, Undersecretary of the Mass. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and Nancy Kaufman of the Jewish Community Leadership Council.**

Most of MIP&L's work is done by volunteers. Awards were given to **Paula Vyres** of St. Demetrios Church in Weston for her dedicated service, and to interns **Russell Foxworthy** of Brandeis University for his work preparing case studies quantifying the benefits to faith communities and to **Andrew Siliski** for his preparation of Everyday Environmental Stewardship briefs and other work.

Anne L. Kelley also received the 2010 **Prophetic Witness Award** for her leadership of the Business Innovation in Climate and Energy Policy program of Ceres, a coalition of businesses and non-profits working for sustainability; and for her years of service to the New England Region of the USEPA and the MA Environmental Crimes Strike Force.



Anne L. Kelley of Ceres addressing meeting

Anne spoke about the importance of a recently issued SEC ruling that will require publicly traded corporations to report the impact of their operations on climate change. As a registered lobbyist working on efforts to produce a Senate bill, she mentioned that there was bipartisan support for provisions that would

offset any increases to consumers in their electricity bills.

Anne reminded us that climate change is an issue that can be dealt with and cautioned against too much emphasis on predictions of doom, saying, "Martin Luther King didn't inspire the nation by saying "I have a nightmare". She also emphasized that because the United States emits 30% of the world's greenhouse gases with less than 5% of its population there is a moral and justice dimension to climate change. She added that faith communities have a role in addressing it by how they care for their facilities, how they teach their children and by becoming engaged in the public process of advocating for legislation.



Peter Metz & Hans Hinteregger of Our Lady Help of Christians, Newton

Tom Nutt-Powell's leadership and selfless dedication to assisting faith communities lower their greenhouse gas emissions and energy use was recognized. Tom was a co-founder of MIP&L in 2001 and has served as its president until this year. He has done over 100 Environmental Stewardship Assessments and given countless hours advising churches synagogues and mosques, educating the public and mentoring others on how faith calls us to care for creation in everyday acts of stewardship.

In recognition of his leadership and service, MIP&L awarded Tom the **Brother Lawrence Award** for finding the sacred in the everyday. Tom will continue working on his true love, Environmental Stewardship Assessments. He is a big baseball fan, so he was given a plaque inducting him into the MIP&L Hall of Fame and recognizing him as the Most Valuable Player-Coach from 2002 to 2009. This is a record for consecutive MVP awards, (in either post or pre-steroid eras). MIP&L also gave him two tickets to a Red Sox Rays game and a package of renewable batteries for use in preparing more Environmental Stewardship Assessments – or to take some pictures at the Red Sox game.



Tom Nutt-Powell



Jeff Steinfeld receiving award for Boston Synagogue

Jim Blackwell of St. Andrew's Wellesley, **Jeff Steinfeld** of Boston Synagogue and **Fran Ludwig** of Sacred Heart, Lexington were elected to the Executive Committee and **James D. Nail** was introduced as the new President.

Jim Blackwell had a twenty-seven year career in the real estate industry that includes ten years as the Director of Modernization, Planning and Rehabilitation for the Boston Housing Authority under Harry Spence. He began as a community organizer working on urban renewal issues in Washington D.C. and was a principal in a private firm specializing in capital needs assessments, prior to his retirement. He earned his BA at Columbia University.

Fran Ludwig is a science teacher who has worked actively to incorporate environmental education into the life of her church and has served as a member of the Lexington Interfaith Environmental Action Team. Catholic, Jewish and Protestant faith communities in Lexington made changes that have reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 162 tons per year, the equivalent of taking 33 cars off the road or planting 160 acres of forest. Fran will be retiring from teaching in June, 2009.

Jeff Steinfeld, professor emeritus of Chemistry at MIT, has been affiliated with MIT's Laboratory for Energy and Environment (LFEE), the MIT Council on the Environment, and the Alliance for Global Sustainability. He has served as Education Program Director at LFEE and Education Coordinator in the AGS. Jeff received the 1999 American Chemical Society Director's Award for Advancing Public Policy in Environment, for work to encourage the use of sound science in global climate change policy.

Jim Nail of St. Dunstan's Dover is MIP&L's new president. As a member of the executive committee he has consulted with faith communities on solar energy initiatives, established a partnership with New Generation Energy, a non-profit that finances energy efficiency and renewable energy projects and conducted a survey to identify MIP&L member priorities. During his 30-year career in marketing and advertising he has specialized in helping people understand and derive maximum benefit from new, complex technologies. Jim bought a Toyota Prius in 2002, installed solar PV in his house in 2005 and solar hot water in 2007. He holds a BA from Williams College.



Jim Nail, Rev. Tony Kill & Doug Stuart of Eliot Church of Newton, UCC

Making Sacred Sustainable Spaces

Three concurrent workshops were held. In one of these, three experts – **Doug Stuart**, **Bob Schudy** and **Tom Nutt-Powell**, presented the session on **Making Sacred Space Sustainable Spaces**. They covered three topics:

- Making the Building Tight:** Thermal Upgrades
- Seeing the Light:** Lighting and Electrical issues
- A Pilgrimage to the Boiler Room:** HVAC & DHW

Doug talked about windows, doors, walls, roofs, attics and steeples, the "holes" in the building. In short, "plug the holes" and the building keeps warm or cool, whichever you are trying to achieve.

Bob noted the need to go for the "lowest hanging fruit", with light bulbs and lighting controls high on his list. Electricity and lighting upgrades are attractive, because the electric company can provide 70% rebates on effective actions. Some, such as the bulbs lighting the space where the annual meeting was held, have HUGE returns, in this case paying for the cost in about 2 months!

Tom also identified some "low hanging fruit", with "smart" programmable thermostats a good example. (See MIP&L's **Everyday Environmental Stewardship** Brief on thermostats, at www.mipandl.org/ees/EES_Thermostats.pdf. He mentioned many of the improvements made by MIP&L members, with reductions in utility use for heating or cooling of 40% or higher. Many of these are available as case studies at www.MIPandL.org.

As a conclusion, some key points to remember are:

- Do Not Be Afraid (As with all faith journeys you have a community ready to help)
- "Take the 1st Step"
- Find the "Low-Hanging Fruit"
- Get Utility Rebates
- Bulk-buy utilities via Power Options (gas & electric) and MassEnergy (bio-fuel)

Please [click here](#) for a PDF of this presentation.

Finding the Funds: How to Finance Energy Efficiency Projects

Jim Nail facilitated the workshop on **Finding the Funds: How to Finance Energy Efficiency Projects**. Money can be a major barrier to projects that, once implemented, often cut a congregation's energy usage from 20% to 40%, especially for heating and lighting upgrades. This session explored **three** sources other than seeking donations from congregation members.

The first source is utility company rebates. **Mark Siegal**, Small Business Programs Manager for National Grid, emphasized the importance of working with the utilities on any major project. "Never purchase a large piece of equipment without checking with your utility – we'll work hard to help you upgrade to the most efficient product available." He also encouraged people to work closely with their contractor and push them to find the most efficient equipment the highest rebate available. Audits are given at no cost and with no obligation to implement the recommendations made. He noted that certain projects qualify for a rebate totaling 70% of the cost, and the remaining 30% can be financed at 0% interest for 2 years. Recently the state has worked with the utilities to streamline the incentive programs and make them consistent statewide. Details of available incentives can be found on www.MassSave.com.

The second speaker was **Chuck Lewin**, director of New Generation Energy (NGE) which offers low-interest loans to non-profit organizations for energy efficiency projects. Banks are often reluctant to lend to houses of worship because they lack a credit rating, but they are an attractive client for New Generation Energy. The typical interest rate is 5% over 5–7 years. NGE raises capital through a unique program called a Renewable Energy Investment Note (REIN), a bond-like instrument that individuals can invest in, earn a modest rate of interest, and know that their money is being used to help charities become more energy-efficient. The money is available for a wide range of projects.

The third speaker was **Walt Henry**, East Coast Representative for Lynch Capital, a "lease broker". Walt explained that a lease broker is analogous to an independent insurance agent, in that they can find the best lease terms for each project from their network of 40 leasing underwriters. Lease terms vary for each project, but typically start with a minimum \$5000, run 5–7 years with an effective interest rate of 6–7%, depending on the credit-worthiness of the house of worship. At the end of the lease period, the house of worship "purchases" the equipment for \$1. Often the energy savings cover a significant amount of the lease payment, and the terms can allow a balloon payment early in the life of the lease to lower the total cost – an important thing to consider if the project qualifies for a utility company rebate which isn't paid until after the equipment is purchased and installed. Leases must be used for a tangible piece of equipment, e.g. a boiler, solar panels, etc. and aren't available for things like new windows or insulation. They can be a valuable component of a large retrofit, allowing houses of worship to use the money they raise for building envelope work.

How to Engage Your Faith Community and Beyond

The third breakout session at the MIP&L Annual Meeting was titled "**How to Engage Your Faith Community and Beyond**". Susan Almono, MIP&L Executive Committee member, gave a brief introduction focusing on the importance of finding and nurturing a group of energized individuals to make sure that caring for creation is incorporated into the life of faith communities; and to ensure that plans for sustainability, efficiency, conservation and renewables are actually carried forward to fruition. Four panels shared their experiences, and gave ideas on best practices they have used to motivate environmental stewardship in their communities.

Mark Sandeen from Hancock UCC and Lexington Interfaith Environmental Team described how his church has formed the Hancock Environmental Action Team that has taken the moral aspect of climate change and turned it into action by making their houses of worship more energy efficient, and connecting with local and global neighbors to expand the impact of their work.

Fran Ludwig from Sacred Heart Catholic Church and the Lexington Interfaith Environmental Team emphasized inspiring environmental stewardship through the worship service by preaching on green themes found in the Bible. Fran provided resources to use in the bulletin.

Rev. Jeff Barz–Snell, Minister, First Church Salem (UUA), and President, SAFE reminded us that the Bible itself is an "outside" book, where all the action takes place outdoors, and that the Bible tells us we are tenants on the earth, not owners of the planet. Jeff told us further of the success of sustainability actions in his faith community through an integrated approach of education, and use of committed volunteers to inform others and complete the work of energy efficiency design and financing plans.

Jay Walter, Co-Chair, Newton EcoTeams Project explained how faith communities have been an excellent starting point for organizing households into groups that work to lower their carbon footprints and energy bills.



The Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center

2009 was a year of growth and transition for MIP&L. Our work is one done mutually with our members. We welcomed fourteen new members this year including Our Lady Help of Christians, and our first Muslim member, the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center. Rev. Dr. Anthony Pappas, Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts, Alan Teperov, Executive Director of the Mass. Synagogue Council, Hon. Byron Rushing of the MA House of Representatives, and Rev. Dr. Peter Weaver, Bishop of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church, among others joined our Advisory Board.

Please let us know how we can help you. We need your financial support to continue our work. Log on to www.MIPandL.org for further information or to make a donation. We look forward to continuing to put our *Faith in Action for Creation* in the year ahead.

Peace and blessings,

Your friends at MIP&L

