



Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light NEWS

September 2008

Dear MIP&L members and friends,

Ice in summer? You better hope so! Learn why in this report from MIP&L's former intern, then find the bell you want to ring!

How I Spent My Summer, or "learning the facts of climate change" by Andrew Siliski, former MIP&L intern

This past summer I participated in the Juneau Icefield Research Program, which studies the climactic effect of global warming on temperate glacier systems. Founded in 1946, JIRP is the longest running program of its kind. It has produced the largest amount of data for glaciers and climate change in North America. Research for the 2008 season included glacier mass balance, surveying, crevasse exploration, ice cave mapping, pH and conductivity analysis for micro climates.



Research was conducted out of camps built on mountain tops next to the glacier surface. The camps consist of multiple buildings with a kitchen/cook shack, lecture hall, generator shed, and housing. These are all 17-22 miles away from each other consisting of a full day's cross country ski, with 8 to 12 hours of traveling. Food, scientific supplies, and professors were flown in by helicopter to the camps. Since helicopters are very expensive, we carried our gear in frame packs throughout the entire 9 week trip. I had one of the lightest packs out of all of the students weighing 55 lbs.



The bulk of my research was with the mass balance team digging mass balance pits. These pits are approximately 5m long by 4m wide with varying depths of 3m to 6.5m deep. The pit is dug to the last year's ablation layer, when snow began to fall the previous Fall. Ice layers are marked and core sample densities are recorded. The rate of ablation - or the rate at which the glacier surface melts - is calculated in a different process with ablation stakes. By converting the snow and ice into water equivalency and taking into account the ablation data, it is possible to measure the rate at which the glacier is growing or shrinking. It generally takes six people eight hours to complete a pit start to finish.

Monitoring glacier mass balance fluctuations is essential for providing a large dataset for analysis. Though glacier systems are more complicated than 'the glacier will retreat if the temperature warms', the relationship between climate change and glacier retreat in North America has been well documented. Results are clear that almost all of the temperate glaciers in the world are both retreating and ablating (reducing in mass) at a faster rate than ever recorded.

Loss of glacier ice is important for many reasons. As these melt and disappear, so will the rivers (water sources) feeding major sources of fresh water for millions of people and animals. As glaciers melt, they uncover rock and debris thus lowering the area's albedo and raising the temperature even more. This is a positive feedback mechanism. The great polar icecaps hold enough ice to raise global water levels by many feet. Downtown Boston, one foot above sea level, would be under water if these melted. Lastly, glaciers are among the most beautiful natural landscapes in the world. To lose them due to anthropogenic climate change would be a shame and an incredible lose of stewardship.



Climate Action Challenge: Ring It Out!

Jim Antal (Conference Minister) has issued a challenge to the 400 United Church of Christ congregations in the state, asking that 350 of them ring their bells 350 times by the 350th day of the year to signal the desire for real steps towards solving the global warming crisis. In his call to the congregations, Rev. Antal said:

"The prophet Ezekiel reminds us that we are God's sentinel's for the communities we lead. When a moral challenge confronts our nation, all together God expects us to blow the trumpet Ezekiel 33:3). We did so in the hope that we could rid our land of slavery. We did so in the hope that civil rights and voting rights could be guaranteed for all.

Today I invite us to "blow the trumpet" - actually to ring your church bell - in the hope that our love of God's creation can inspire our communities to make the necessary changes in our behavior so that our grandchildren will enjoy the Eden into which we were born.

This invitation - this challenge - is a simple one: Between now and December 15, 2008, pick a date when you will ring your church bell 350 times.

Why 350?

350 parts per million (ppm) is the amount of carbon in the atmosphere that is sustainable on a long term basis. Currently, our atmosphere holds 385ppm, and we're headed towards 450ppm (see below for additional information on 350.) 450ppm will be the target for Bill McKibben (who was in Hancock Church UCC, Lexington) has launched a world-wide movement to make the number 350 the most recognized number on the planet.

For more information on Ring 350, go to www.350.org



St. Francis St Francis Day, October 4

St. Francis wrote a Canticle of the Creatures, saying "All praise to you, Oh Lord, for all these brother and sister creatures." Many houses of worship have a Blessing of Animals Service.

For more information, check out <http://www.nccecojustice.org/animalblessing.html>

**Peace and blessings,
Your friends at MIP&L**



ANDOVER NEWS



MEMORIAL HALL LIBRARY

GO GREEN

at the Library this October, every Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm (see schedule below), a Greener Living Fair, and recycling projects.

Tuesday October 7

Green Transportation

John F. Paul, AAA's Car Doctor

Tuesday October 14

Climate Change in New England

Tina Woolston, Project Manager for Sustainability, Earthwatch Institute

Tuesday October 7

How to Live a Greener Lifestyle

Dan Ruben, Executive Director, Boston Green Tourism

Tuesday October 7

Stirring It Up

author Gary Hirsberg, CEO Stonyfield Farm. (Books available for purchase and signing!)

Everything you ever wanted to know (and more) on recycling and stormwater management for Andover -- go to www.andoverma.gov.



zipcar.

ZipCar promoted a "car-free" month. Learn about the resulting healthier environment and lifestyle. Participants reported increasing their miles walked by 85% and their miles biked by 136%. Get inspired at www.zipcar.com/lowcardiet



lowcardiet

See how 300 people are changing the world

Clean Energy Choice



This year...and every year...MIPL is promoting Clean Energy Choice.

We have a variety of resources that we can provide to your congregation.

These include:

The film RENEWAL —

Witness the inspiration of religious ideas in practice for the healing of the Earth in this moving film, portraying the efforts of 8 faith traditions in demanding circumstances for environmental stewardship throughout the US.

Global Warming Cafe:

Through this power point presentation and facilitated discussion you will learn ways to reduce your carbon footprint, and the importance of renewable energy to our earth and our economy.

Guest preachers and adult education forums.

MIPL will provide a guest preacher to speak about the Theology of Ecology, or design an adult education workshop to meet the needs of your congregation.

The words of the covenant that God commands Moses to make with the Israelites includes these: "I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH TO WITNESS AGAINST YOU TODAY THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSINGS AND CURSES. CHOOSE LIFE SO THAT YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS MAY LIVE...." (Deut 30:19).

Choose life! Choose renewable energy!

Contact MIP&L to help your... Vince Maraventano, JD, M Div., Clean Energy Coordinator at maraventano@MIPandL.org