

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK E-NEWS

Monthly Prayer

Water flows from the mountains. Water runs deep in the Earth. Miraculously, water comes to us, and sustains all life.- Thich Nhat Hanh

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The Environment Network monthly e-news endeavours to share events, stories and tips for caring for creation. Photos and stories welcome. If you would like to contribute to future issues of E-News or have an event to share please contact us at:
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What's Happening in the Parish of Blandford?

A Green Parish: Continuing our journey toward our goal of being one of the greenest parishes in the diocese, our tiny communities in our Parish have become known for their environment projects. **Earth Day Events.** For seven years we held a planting night in the community sponsored by the parish, the rec group, the community centre's board of Directors and a local business association (HABA). This year we are taking planting to the community by making planting kits. The kits themselves use the ideals of repurposing, reusing, and reducing. Work nights are loosely planned. The kits will go to the seniors, the 4H and the Guiding groups so far. If all goes well a second set of kits will be made to give away on compost day, where a local company gives away compost each year.

Community Gardens. In the back of the community are a set of boxes for community gardens. The Parish gets first pick and then the community, to have a spot to grow.

Pens, Markers and Highlighters Project has been steadily growing. The Municipal Office first reported that a gentleman from Hubbards had passed in 1656 used pens he had saved for 49 years. They estimate another 200 are in their boxes. Our box is half full so I can brag we kept well over 2000 writing instruments out of the landfill. We now have eight collection spots in Hubbards, Chester and Blandford.

Bottlecaps Project. Although these have been collected over a year with a few members passing them in as they fill a bag, our first deposit was January 10, 2019. Matt's Bottle Return in Eastern Passage is perhaps the only recycler in Nova Scotia to collect



Upcoming Events

- **May 2-5, 2019 Kairos Atlantic Gathering Streams of Justice**
Mount Allison University
- **April 27, 2019 Day retreat,**
Spiritual Movement for Ecological Justice, at St. Paul's Church in Charlottetown, PEI. For more information contact The Rev Marian Lucas-Jefferies
marian.lucas.jefferies@gmail.com
- **April 2, 2019 2pm-4:30pm Climate Emergency Preparedness**
Hosted by Transition Bay
Tantallon Public Library
Tickets at EventBrite
- **April 13, 2019 12pm-3pm Point Pleasant Park Beach Clean Up**
Hosted by Sea Shepherd Halifax
Help our ocean and ocean wildlife and clean up the shoreline.
Garbage collection items will be available or bring your own.
- **May 23-25 - Check out the Diocese EN display at the upcoming Synod**
- **April 11- Heading for Extinction and What to do about it-** Halifax Central Library 2-3:30pm
- **April 15, 2019 - XR International Climate Rebellion-** Kjiipuktuk/Halifax, meet at St. James' Church 2668 Joseph Howe Dr. 10am.

them. Although it is great that we collect bottle caps, my proudest moment is not quite finalized: where we assist a large organization set up to collect and then take their bottle caps to Matt. Encouraging others is more important than doing it yourself.

Workshops: One workshop for the future is making a toy solar car from cardboard, water bottle wheels, a piece of wire going through a straw for an axle and using store bought solar panel, DC motor and plastic gear wheel to make it go. The panels and motors arrived so hopefully the first of May.

Other ideas are just that, ideas, at this point. They include workshops for a pop bottle rocket and a rocket stove, and an experiment with wind power, if interest exists.

Although the marches, the protesting, or the debates with government are so important, I feel that teaching people how to do things, working with as many groups as possible is the answer to our climate problems. The one thing more attitude goes a long way.

Claudia Zinck, Environment Representative, Parish of Blandford.

One Thing More

“Grandma thought and wondered, what more can I do?
The planet needs our help, there must be something new”

Almost a decade ago, a Grandma of eight, approached Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies with an idea to teach the children to plant at one of their Messy Church sessions. They made newspaper pots and planted in egg cartons and all manner of recycled material. Just a small event with maybe a dozen kids, but there started the environment projects for the Parish of Blandford. The kids went home that night with their boxes of plants but before they went out the door, Grandma asked them to think of one thing more that they could do even just one time, to help the planet. Just think on that this week. It ended that Grandma had to come back to hear about that. Since she was at that meeting, she may as well get one more green craft ready for that night and so on for four or five years.

One more thing became sort of a motto

You don't promise to do a dozen things this week, but just one thing, and maybe only do it once. Many will ask how that can do any good so here is a story.

About six months ago, Grandma wrote a letter to the Municipality asking if she could put a collection box there for used pens and markers. That one action resulted in an answer of yes and that they needed two boxes, one for each building. That resulted in one lady offering to take the pens to Bridgewater (our closest Staples store where they accept them for recycling) when her kids are in events each week (saves gasoline footprint). An article was written in the Municipal Insight about the project. A gentleman in Hubbards reads the article and took his 49-year collection of pens, a total of 1656 units of pens, to the Municipal office as a donation.

We now have eight collection spots for pens and markers. Each one represents one letter or call or visit one week. I still work full time so have little time to spend on my glorified hobby. One thing this week has a bottle cap project growing.

One thing this week made up the garden plots and made a poster to put up around the community for the community gardens.

One thing this week made the template for seed envelopes I can cut out while watching TV, to be used in the planting kits for Earth day.

What one thing can you do this week to help the environment. It doesn't have to take hours or change lives, but one thing will make you think about the environment and be part of saving our planet.

Claudia Zinck, Enviro Rep, Parish of Blandford. www.grandmasgoinggreen.com



Ecology Action Centre: An Inspirational “Green” Renovation

Photo Credit: Solterre Architect & Acorn Art Photography



Welcoming, warm and bright describe the 100-hundred-year-old salt box home that Ecology Action Centre’s newly renovated to become one of the “greenest” office spaces in the country. On a cold February morning, I arrive at the EAC office for my tour and I am amazed by the natural light flooding into the space as I enter the main doors. A welcoming smile from a volunteer greets me at the door and I am introduced to the Volunteer and Events Coordinator, Joanna Bull. The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) is a member-based environmental charity in Nova Scotia taking a lead on critical environmental issues facing the province ranging from

climate change, environmental justice and biodiversity. The EAC first opened their doors in 1971 and has grown to over 5000 members in 2019. In 2005, the Centre moved to their location on Fern Lane in the North End of Halifax, Nova Scotia. At this time, Joanna Bull explains, they embarked on a ten-month renovation to create an eco-friendly office space. By 2015, the organization doubled the number of employees and volunteers and they recognized they had outgrown their space. While selling the building or tearing it down to rebuild were options, the EAC leadership recognized they had been presented with a unique opportunity for an eco-conscious retrofit. “We saw this as an opportunity to be a demonstration for EAC values; to see what is possible. How far could we push the envelope in energy efficiency?” explains Joanna. Investing in the community and demonstrating that character homes that are part of the history of the city could be energy efficient were on the radar for the renovation project. I see they achieved these goals and more as I let my gaze wander around the space, taking in the abundance of natural light, and original wood.



Photo Credit: Katie Nakaska

“We saw this as an opportunity to be a demonstration for EAC values; to see what is possible. How far could we push the envelope in energy efficiency?”

Joanna Bull

The Vision

In 2005, the century old home was draughty with a packed earth basement. The earth basement served as a community root cellar for a period, however the building had an energy rating of 17 according to Joanna. This was not good at all she explained. After the first renovation in 2005, they brought the energy rating up to a 56 which was very good since the average for a century old house would be around 36 (see EnerGuide info here: <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/products/energguide/12523>). As the organization grew in membership, projects and consequently staff they recognized the for expansion. Once the decision was made to retrofit this space, the year-long project commenced. The second renovation began in 2015 with the goal of an enlarged, energy efficient, and accessible space. Joanna stresses the importance of diverting waste and reusing materials during the project as well.

The Project

Joanna leads me into the main floor meeting space where I see an amazing mural from Nocturne (a Halifax Art Event held at night). Above this is a beautiful wooden tiled wall which she explains is repurposed floorboards from the house. I take notice of this in several rooms as we move along our tour. Joanna explains that they were able to increase their space by 50% and decrease their energy use by 80%. Additionally, the building uses 15% of the kWh per square metre per year as compared to the average Canadian office building. That is amazing I remark. I wonder how they were able to accomplish this goal? As we walk, Joanna shares the innovative renovation spanning a year and over 1400 volunteer hours that would cumulate in an Earth Day, 2016 grand opening of one of the most energy efficient office buildings in Canada.



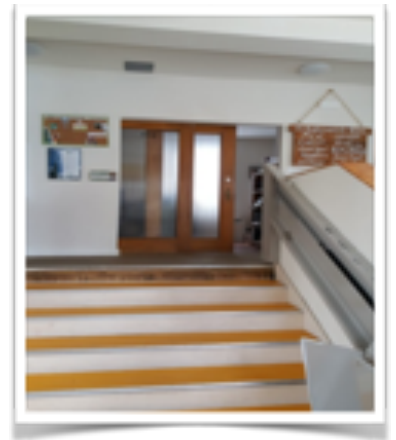
A renovation of this magnitude was a significant project involving a collaboration among EAC, Solterre, the architect group, and Tekton Design and Build. First, they knew they needed more space so they had two choices; they could either lift the building up and add a floor or add a third floor to the roof. The foundation was structurally sound (requiring some patch work), so they added a floor to the roof.



Solterre Architect & Acorn Art Photography

Second, they changed the structure of the first floor which allowed for a beautiful meeting space and accessibility in the form of a wheel chair lift. There is also an outside ramp to the second floor. As for energy efficiency, Joanna points out there are two key points: insulation and an air sealing (see link at the end for more information). If you have an older building, this is a helpful tip. They made the walls thicker and insulated them. The metal from steel slab cut outs (400 of them actually) were used to insulate the packed earth basement followed by a poured cement slab. The steel cut outs, which were diverted from the landfill, were donated by Kohler Windows and Entrance Systems. Additionally, the walls were made thicker by wrapping the house with another layer, adding a vapour barrier and attaching ROXUL Insulation behind the siding. This helped address the insulation and air sealing issue.

We head up the stairs which now has a wheel chair lift and Joanna points out a few interesting features as we make our way down to the kitchen. A repurposed bus shelter window that had been cut to the wrong size allows daylighting into the hall. Daylighting is technique where clear interior windows allow outside light to enter the interior spaces reducing the need for electric lighting. All three floors have interesting touches that add to the efficiency of the eco-friendly building. I visited on a grey winter day and the building was a bright inside all from natural light.



Interesting features of the newly renovated space:

- ✦ In floor radiant heating: Air to water heat pump heats the floor.
- ✦ Interior windows provide daylighting
- ✦ Sliding doors are salvaged doors from the renovated Roy Building downtown Halifax
- ✦ Repurposed Chemistry lab cabinets from Dalhousie University make great kitchen cabinets
- ✦ The kitchen table and other tables are repurposed doors from Dalhousie University
- ✦ Bike handles make great coat racks! A new muffler pipe creatively becomes a hand rail
- ✦ Nu-air air exchanger

- ◆ Paint: Eco-friendly mixture of clay, chalk, water and wheat flour (From the Ground Up: Natural Clay Plasters and Finishes)
- ◆ The beams of the roof are the base for the third floor
- ◆ They were able to preserve one room with some original wallpaper that looks to be from the 1930's



Solterre Architect & Acorn Art Photography

Joanna notes “By reusing materials, we diverted waste. Building materials often wind up in the landfill. Companies like Renovators Resource and Restore: Habitat for Humanity offer materials for reuse and repurposing. It is a nice blend of old and new.” See the EAC website for more features and explanation of the renovation (see link below).

The complete retrofit took about 12 months from start to finish and the result is a preserved piece of the North End’s architecture with the undeniable character and charm of the last century that is a showcase for a sustainable future.

A special thanks to the Ecology Action Centre and Joanna Bull for taking the time to meet with me and share this inspirational story.

For more information on EAC projects, initiatives and campaigns see ecologyaction.ca For more information on their ‘Green’ building, materials used, partner companies, R values, insulation, air sealing, day lighting and more go to: https://ecologyaction.ca/sites/ecologyaction.ca/files/images-documents/issue_areas/EAC%20Renovation%20Encyclopedia%20Final.pdf

Suzanne McConnell

KAIROS ATLANTIC GATHERING

Mount Allison University Registration ends April 15.

Tickets available at www.kairoscanada.org



Join us for a diverse, inter-generational gathering at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B. on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. 'Streams of Justice' is a gathering where those from all walks of life can delve deeper into current and ongoing social justice issues that are close to our hearts.