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Hanover's Solar Array - At Last!

By Julia Griffin, Hanover Town Manager

On Thursday, October 14th, the Town of Hanover celebrated the completion of the two adjacent ground-mounted solar farms consisting of 4,560 panels near the Town Water Department on Grasse Road. The 1.72 MW solar arrays will generate over 2 million kWh of clean electricity annually – enough to meet nearly 100% of municipal electricity needs through group net metering. It is the largest single-site municipal array in New Hampshire. The array was installed by Enfield-based ReVision Energy.

According to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), this solar farm will offset 3.2 million pounds of CO₂ emissions per year, equivalent to the carbon sequestration of 1,816 acres of American forests and more than 320 passenger cars driven for one year.

“In battling the impacts of climate change, communities need to be in a leadership role” said Julia Griffin, Hanover’s Town Manager. “One very important component of that is solarizing the heck out of every possible rooftop, and to pursue at the Town level large ground-mounted solar arrays.”

Hanover has long been a state leader in sustainability, as evidenced not just by the latest solar farm but the half-dozen other rooftop solar arrays installed with ReVision Energy on Town buildings. In 2014, Hanover was named the Environmental Protection Agency’s first Green Power Community in New Hampshire, and in 2017, Hanover became the first [“Ready for 100”](#) town in New Hampshire. The [“Ready”](#) program is a Sierra Club initiative that encourages leaders across the country to commit to 100% renewable energy by the year 2050. Hanover went further and set the community-wide goal of transitioning to 100% renewable electricity by 2030 and to running heating and transportation on clean, renewable sources of energy by 2050. The town is also currently running [Solarize Hanover](#), which aims to double the number of solar-powered homes in Hanover by the end of the year.

“All across New Hampshire, cities and towns are stepping forward to combat the climate crisis with clean energy projects, energy efficiency, and beneficial electrification,” said Dan Weeks, an employee-owner and vice president at ReVision Energy. “Although the state still has a

long way to go, with less than 1 percent of electricity coming from solar, we are inspired by how Hanover's leadership of the clean energy transition and honored to partner with them."



School Street Sustainability Park

By Lyn Miller

The Sustaining Landscapes Initiative and Hanover Parks & Recreation are pleased to announce that the School Street Sustainability Park is almost complete! It is truly a place for everyone in our community.

At this park, diverse plantings appeal to birds, butterflies and other creatures great and small; a dry river bed helps manage stormwater runoff from the parking lot behind Gilbert & Town Hall; numerous benches and picnic table invite rest, contemplation and conversation; a ADA compliant path connects School Street with the center of town; and gravel paths offer places for children to run and others to stroll while fencing defines the space and creates privacy. Welcome!

The goal of the park is to provide a gathering place for all members of the Hanover community that demonstrates sustainable landscaping. The only public park in downtown Hanover, it is a place to learn and share ideas about gardening with the earth in mind. The Little Free Gardening Library, built by Ross Farnsworth and Ed Woodbury of Hanover's Buildings Division, provides a place to share

books about sustainable landscaping and gardening practices. If you have an overflowing personal gardening library, please share! Next spring, in addition to more plantings, the committee will install labels that will name the trees, shrubs and perennials throughout the park so that you can explore what might work in your own home garden!

The park is the brainchild of Larry Litten, a longtime proponent of ecological gardening in Hanover. Between 2016 and 2019, when he moved to Maine, Larry not only guided our small committee through the conception, design and the early stages of construction, but he also almost single handedly raised sufficient funds to support the vision for the park. Larry, was especially interested in having a local craftsperson build benches. We are delighted that this past summer, Lee Schuette, a member of the Dartmouth community, installed three hand-crafted Black Locust benches that he designed and built over the past few years. We are also extremely excited that over the course of this winter, Heather Ritchie, a stone carver from Barre, Vermont, will create a 4'x3'x2' Granite Eastern Box Turtle that will sit near the dry river bed.



None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of The Town of Hanover and the Sustainable Hanover Committee as well as the numerous foundations,

organizations and individuals who donated money, time and expertise to make this vision a reality. Thank you to all those who supported this park. We are also grateful to Asa Metcalf, our town's arborist, for helping maintain the park and to John Sherman, Director of Parks & Recreation, for promoting all aspects of this project. We are, like this young girl, jumping for joy.



A community park can only thrive with ongoing support and participation by members of that community. We hope that you will consider not just visiting and enjoying the space, but also helping us sustain it into the future. Many thanks go to Judith Reeve, Susan Edwards, and Lyn Miller. To get involved please contact committee chair, Lyn Miller (evelynrswett@gmail.com).



I Hate to Waste Food

By Nancy Serrell

Rummaging through my refrigerator, I came upon a pear. It was a beautiful yellow-green when I stored in the fridge to eat later. Unfortunately, later never came—or rather, when it did, the pear was a mass of brown pulp. Yuck. I hate to waste food.

But there it was, and here was I, doing the *10-Minute Fridge Reality Check* as part of a “wasted food challenge” I began around this time last year, in the height of Covid lockdown. I popped the mealy pear onto a kitchen scale, recorded the weight in my food-waste log, noted the reason for chucking it (“didn’t see it in the back of the fridge”), and dumped it into the trash with a wave of guilt. Then I proceeded to take everything out of my refrigerator and toss anything that was spoiled, rotten, or far too old, weighing each discard and noting why it died in my fridge. There was a bit of cranberry-pistachio-fig chutney I canned four years ago, a mushy fennel bulb I had intended to use in a salad, half a bunch of limp Swiss chard, and the last sorry dregs of a mango curry I made from leftover Thanksgiving turkey that I could not make myself eat for the fourth night in a row.

I had read about the Environmental Protection Agency’s *Food Too Good to Waste* campaign, a step-by-step strategy to help people cut down on the amount of food they bring home from the market but never eat. I was immediately intrigued, especially because the campaign’s primary goal is decreasing

greenhouse gasses, particularly the methane released from landfills by discarded food. The EPA's argument: even small changes in the way we plan, shop, store and prepare food can help us mitigate climate change—as well as stretching our food budget and extending the life of food we do buy.

To me, this sounded like the perfect lockdown project.

In my first week of the challenge I had to toss out 1.75 pounds of food. How did that stack up to the average American? A paltry C-minus at best. A U.S. Department of Agriculture study found that American consumers waste about one pound of food per person per day.

I soldiered on, entering weights and reasons into my food-waste log. Three weeks in, I was beginning to see patterns: I bought too much. I love arugula, but those giant plastic boxes are too much for one person, as are the large cellophane bags of lettuce or spinach. I also made too much. I love to cook, and a lot of my favorite recipes yield 4-6 servings. Scaling them down to two servings can be tricky, and some foods don't freeze well. Then there was my pear problem: overlooking items that needed to be used soon or not realizing that a carton of yogurt or sour cream was already open. And sometimes I bought foods that duplicated what I already had.

It turns out that these are some of the most common reasons people list when they take the *Food Too Good to Waste* challenge. Fortunately, the challenge offers strategies households can use—and easily tailor to their own situations—to reduce the amount of food they buy but don't eat.

For example, here is one strategy: Before you head out to the grocery store, make a shopping list with specific meals in mind. There are even shopping-list templates online with one column for meals and another for ingredients to buy. That's too much for me. I couldn't imagine myself planning menus for a whole week, though I usually do make a shopping list of

things I need. However, my food-waste log clearly indicated that I need to check my refrigerator and pantry before shopping, and having a specific recipe or two in mind as I draw up my list made sense to me. These two adjustments were easy, and I enjoyed seeing that I often already had several elements of a dish I wanted to make.

Another strategy is to categorize foods in the fridge by putting them in a special section of the refrigerator. There are down-loadable *Eat This First* signs you can use to label the area. But I like the way my fridge is organized. I had some color-coded stick-on dots, so I stuck a green dot on all the things that needed to be used soonest. Bingo! Every time I opened the fridge, I saw an instant inventory status report.

One of the EPA strategies I found most useful is making better use of my freezer. I already owned a silicone ice cube tray that makes big cubes for cocktails. Each section holds about a half-cup. I began freezing extra ingredients, such as cream left over from making caramel sauce or chicken broth left over from recipes that only needed one cup. When a recipe calls for a half cup of onion, I chop the whole thing and freeze the unused portion for next time. Onion tops, carrot peelings, parsley stems, and celery ends go into a freezer bag until I have enough to make broth.

One thing that surprised me was how often my fridge survey inspired me to make a particular dish, largely based on the current inventory. I also found that leftover ingredients seemed to lead me into another recipe. I used three egg yolks in a Key lime pie; the leftover three egg whites became meringue cookies. I made a little too much rice for a curry dish, popped it into the freezer and made rice pudding with it a few weeks later.

I learned some valuable lessons—both practical and personal—from this experiment: that change takes time, that doing something is better than doing nothing, that there's no need to be a perfectionist or to feel guilty. I did

continue my food-waste “reasons” list for most of the 6-week challenge, but I missed several days and eventually stopped weighing scraps altogether. Still, I have cut down on food waste. Yes, the odd pear might rot on my watch, but I’m trying to make food waste the exception, not the rule. I’m not perfect at it, just better.



*Unloading Windows Inserts
Photographer Bryan Dalton*

Volunteers Build Window Inserts

By Yolanda Baumgartner

The Norwich Congregational Church will be buzzing with activity from November 10 to 16 as volunteers gather to build 200 insulating window inserts destined for local homes. By lowering heating bills and reducing CO2 emissions, the inserts will help 28 households achieve a lower carbon footprint while staying more comfortable over the winter.

Project coordinators are excited by the community response to this new building efficiency initiative which is co-sponsored by the Norwich Energy Committee and Sustainable Hanover. Requests for the window inserts have

exceeded the project’s 2021 capacity. A waiting list has been created for 2022.

As important, more than 80 volunteers from Hanover, Norwich and other parts of the Upper Valley have signed up to help in a variety of ways, from assembling the frames, attaching the plastic, and applying foam to ensure a custom-fit, - to donating delicious homemade soups for volunteers to enjoy as a lunch break. Lunch will also include bread and cookies donated daily by King Arthur Flour. Coordinator Judy Payne emphasized that KAF deserves a “BIG, BIG thanks” for its generous donation.

A week before the event a few shifts remained open for a few more volunteers. If interested in volunteering, please check for open shifts [here](#). All volunteers must be COVID vaccinated and masked at the event.

Coordinators are grateful to the Norwich Congregational Church for hosting the project. Households receiving inserts must be located in Hanover or Norwich or located within 30 minutes’ drive and have a family member who works in our two towns. The project is set up by WindowDressers, a Maine non-profit that collaborates with local communities and addresses energy inequality by subsidizing inserts for qualified households. For more information see [Windows Inserts](#) or email sustainablehanovernh@gmail.com



Recycling Update

By Susan Edwards

A Styrofoam collection was held in Lebanon on Saturday morning, Oct 30, organized by Sustainable Lebanon and the Lebanon Rotary Club. It was hugely successful with thousands of

pieces of styrofoam kept out of the landfill. The hundreds of participants seemed thrilled to have found a way to recycle their styrofoam some of which had been in storage for years. Donations of money was requested and received to cover transportation costs to Massachusetts and mailing of certain items to another facility for different types of styrofoam.

Susan Edwards and Joyce Noll (Sustainable Hanover Recycling) were among the many champions of the day, neatly stacking the material in the trailer to maximize the space. The truck was packed to the gills.

We did chat briefly about a post-holiday collection - perhaps a formal collaboration with Sustainable Lebanon could be explored in some indoor, heated space, or we could consider waiting until the next Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) Hazardous Waste Collection in May, suggested by Marc Morgan, Lebanon's Solid Waste Manager. What is clear is that this type of collection is welcomed by our community.



Use Less Stuff Holiday Recycling¹

Did you know that the holiday season generates about 25 percent more trash? The following tips for using less "stuff" during the Holiday season will not only show you how to reduce, reuse but also how to reduce waste in the Upper Valley

- Buy rechargeable batteries for toys and other items that are used frequently.
- When mailing a present, use a brown paper sack to wrap the box.
- For wrapping gifts, use old maps or Sunday comics, or kids' artwork.
- Make a realistic food shopping guide- avoid having too many leftovers.
- Send leftovers home with guests in plastic containers collected from other food purchases
- Buy a tree that can be planted afterwards or buy an artificial tree.
- Decorate the house with natural items from the local Christmas Tree Corner Stand, e.g., branches, pine cones and berries.
- Buy lights that are wired in parallel- if one goes bad, the others still work.
- Put your lights on a timer- it will save energy and money.
- Buy in bulk items you will use a lot of and that have a long storage life.
- When sending holiday cards select cards made from recycled content.
- Cut off the front of old holiday cards and make your own or make them into postcards.
- Make gifts out of items that you already have around the house:
 - Old clothes and jewelry for a dress-up box
 - Tools and gadgets for a young inventor.
 - Make potholders and oven mitts from old ironing board covers.
 - Old clothes, drapes, robes, and tablecloths can be used to make doll clothes.
 - Or give a gift that was purchased or received and that is not being used by you. (It's the thought that counts!)

¹ [Source -Mackenc.gov](http://Source-Mackenc.gov)