



May 2008

## Green Building Institute Newsletter

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### Dear Lynn,

It's been a busy month with many conferences, shows and activities to celebrate earth day and raise awareness of environmental issues. Thank you so much to everyone who helped out. We continue to be invited to participate in more events throughout the region. Those who staff the booth have an opportunity to walk around and view the other displays at the event they are attending. While we currently have a small core group that go to the events and help with the booth, we'd like to expand that list. So if you are interested, please, send us an email or call us, and we will put you in touch with Abi who coordinates all the events.

Lyn Rowell  
Board Secretary

Somewhere on this planet, someone has a solution to each of the world's problems.  
It might be one of us.  
With your help, we can build a more hopeful world.

Marianne Larned

### Interview with Ren Bartges, of Chesapeake Solar

At the Green Building Institute, we've become quite used to people noticing the solar panels on our building and coming in to find out more information. So we asked Ren Bartges of Chesapeake Solar, a GBI member, to answer a few questions about solar energy systems.

**What is driving the homeowner interest in solar energy?** Most people who contact us are concerned about rising energy costs, but this is usually coupled with concern about global climate change, and limited resources.

**What are the qualifications for installing solar panels on a home?** Ideally, your home must have a southern or near southern orientation with at least six to eight hours of sun exposure. This means little to no shading. The roof needs to be non slate and in good condition.

**What if someone isn't sure their home is suitable?** We are happy to help assess the solar potential of a home or business, and can design ground mounted systems or tilted racking for solar arrays to optimize a site where the building orientation isn't ideal.

**Can solar energy provide all the power that my home or business needs?** This depends on the energy demands and the size of the system installed. System size is often limited by either the amount of usable roof space or budget. Most of our clients install systems that contribute a portion of their total energy. Combining a solar energy system with other energy efficiency measures, like energy star appliances, better insulation, sealing air leaks or using a programmable thermostat, can greatly increase the percentage of utility energy offset by solar energy and substantially reduce the carbon footprint of the home or business.

**What are the environmental benefits of solar energy?** Solar is a clean, renewable energy resource that produces no byproducts, no carbon emissions, no sound pollution, and does not consume finite resources. It reduces the

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demand on our public utility grid and provides an alternative to building new fossil fuel powered electrical facilities.

***Are newer and more efficient solar energy technologies coming out in the near future?*** The solar technologies available for consumer applications have not changed substantially for several decades. We don't have a crystal ball to show us a definitive future, but we can report on the trends we've observed over the years and there aren't any major changes that are expected to be market ready any time soon. Crystalline panel efficiencies do improve from year to year, but only in minor increments.

***Installation of a solar system is quite an investment. Are prices likely to drop anytime soon?*** The costs of solar components have fluctuated slightly over the years, but have not yet seen dramatic reductions. One way that clients can experience significant savings on a solar system now, is through state grants and the federal tax credit. Appropriations for renewable energy are a hot political topic and some key incentives are either in danger of expiring or suffer from insufficient funding. We encourage people to contact their elected officials to encourage continued government support for solar energy.

***What should someone do if they want more information?*** Please feel free to contact us at 443-733-1221 (fax 443-733-1222) or [info@chesapeake solar.net](mailto:info@chesapeake solar.net) to sign up for our informational seminar on May 15<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm - 7:30pm.

**Thanks Ren!**

### **Grand Opening of the Herring Run Watershed Center**

May 30-31  
3545 Belair Rd  
Baltimore

The Herring Run Watershed Association announces the grand opening of the new green facility located in Baltimore. The new LEED Silver rated Center will host educational programs as well as provide the Association with office space. It is hoped this facility will be an inspirational example to both homeowners and builders in the area. For further information contact the Association at 410-254-1577.

## **GreenEWit FEST**

**Saturday, July 19, 2008**

**7.19.2008**  **NOON-5pm**

**Eco Friendly Party In the Park!**

1st Annual **greenEWitFEST**  
Eco-Friendly Party-in-the-Park

Live Music by KB Drive  
Food and Drink

Location:  
Alpha Ridge Park Pavilion  
11699 Old Frederick Road  
Howard County, Maryland

**Entrance Ticket Price:** \$ 10 per person (\$11 if purchased on line)

**For more information or to register**

## **Green Building Institute Class Update**

**How To Be Green**

**June 7, 2008 , 8:30am - 4:30pm**

This class covers efficient and healthy buildings, solar hot water and electric for your home and rainwater collection for garden use.

**Registration:**

\$50 for Dues Paying Green Building Institute Member  
\$75 for Non-members (before 5/15/08)  
\$80 for Non-members (after 5/15/08)  
\$85 Individual Membership and "How to be Green" seminar Package

**Students (High School & Undergrad Students)**

\$35 Dues Paying Student Member  
\$40 Student Non Member  
\$45 Student Membership & "How to be Green"

[For more information](#)

**Composting At Home****Tuesday July 22, 2008 6:30pm - 9pm**

Learn why you should compost, how to build a compost bin and how to use your compost. Learn how to make a raised bed for gardening.

**Registration:**

\$25 - Dues Paying Green Building Institute Member  
\$30 - Non-member  
\$65 - Individual Membership & class

**Students (High School & Undergrad Students)**

\$15 - Student Member  
\$20 - Student Non Member  
\$35 - Student Membership & seminar (package)

[For more information](#)

**Introduction to Renewable Energies****Wednesday July 30, 2008 7pm -9pm**

This class provides a broad overview of the major renewable technologies, including solar, wind, wave, geothermal, general bio fuels and hydro-power.

**Registration:**

\$30 Dues Paying Green Building Institute Member  
\$42 Non-member (before May 15, 2008)  
\$47 Non-member (after May 15, 2008)  
\$72 Individual Membership & Class

**Students: (High School & Undergrad)**

\$20 Dues Paying Student Member  
\$25 Student Non Member  
\$40 Student Membership & class

[For more information](#)

The Green Building Institute, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, educates the public, building and design professionals about sustainable building practices and technologies.



**GREENBUILDING**  
**INSTITUTE**

Lyn Rowell  
Green Building Institute  
Board Secretary