

## Go Glen Ridge Green!

In response to growing environmental awareness and concern, cities and towns throughout the country are "going green"; Glen Ridge is no exception. Last spring, council-member-colleagues Elizabeth Brewster and Elizabeth Baker joined forces to prompt the formation of an Environmental Advisory Committee with the broad mandate of researching and recommending initiatives to improve the environmental well being of the borough.



Exclusive of one organizational meeting in June, the committee actually began pursuing its objectives in the fall, and results were almost immediate. Under the impetus of this group, cardboard recycling was

made mandatory. The committee also spearheaded the addition of a drop-off recycling day on the second Saturday of each month. An insert page of this newsletter, prepared by committee member Jen Weissman, comprehensively collates all aspects – old and new – of the town's recycling program.

In addition to initiatives regarding canvas bags and the upcoming Eco-Fair, which are detailed in companion articles on this page, committee members are also hard at work exploring the possibilities of introducing energy-saving technologies, including solar, to the borough; providing safer biking and walking routes to schools; instituting "green cleaning" and pesticide-free policies where feasible; weighing in on the future of the eco-friendly jitney program; and last but not least, designing the town's very own "green," Web site.

## It's in the Bag!

Places such as Ireland and San Francisco have banned plastic bags; yet upwards of 380 billion of them are used worldwide each year – 27,000 of them every 5 seconds in the US alone. The reason their use is such an issue is that plastic does not biodegrade in landfills and much of it ends up in oceans. In fact, scientists estimate that there are already 6 pounds of plastic for every pound of fish in the world's oceans and that it kills upwards of 100,000 marine animals yearly.

At last, residents can be part of the solution rather than the problem by purchasing "Go Glen Ridge Green" canvas shopping bags at a nominal price of \$2.00 per bag. These bags have been carefully selected for their strength and size. Made of heavy duty (and non-odiferous!) canvas,

they have rectangular, reinforced bottoms, and are large enough to fit a paper grocery bag inside. They also sport the town's flashy new environmental logo. These bags can be purchased in the Train Station or the Municipal Building, or on the town's Web site. Free home delivery will be provided for every order of 10 or more bags.

## Eco-Fair Meets Arts Festival

The annual Arts Festival has been a cultural fixture of the Glen Ridge scene for the past 29 years. This year's festival will once again display the works of a stunning array of artists and crafters, along with that of Glen Ridge students, for the worthy cause of raising art scholarship monies. But this year, the Festival will be partnered with an Eco-Fair, which is being planned by the town's new Environmental Advisory Committee and generously sponsored by the Glen Ridge Women's Club.

"We are very excited about how the Eco-Fair is coming together," enthused one committee member. "Like the Arts' Festival, we hope to offer something for everyone." Children will be able to make box gardens for their mothers, using natural compost and native plants. Or they can make origami projects using recycled paper. In addition, the County environmentalist will be there to give out butterfly kits. Not only will a bee hive be on display, but a beekeeper will explain how to create suitable bee habitats in backyards.

Homeowners can inform themselves about a spate of energy-saving programs and projects that not only save the environment, but also money. In addition, they can learn about green cleaning, recycled insulation, organic foods, organic lawn care and gardening, composting, safe pest control, water gardens, and the importance of growing native plants to attract birds, butterflies and bees. There will be vendors who provide specific eco-friendly products and services, along with representatives from such groups as NJ Clean Energy Action, the Sierra Club and NJ Environmental Federation/Clean Water Action. Members of the town's Environmental Advisory Committee will also be on hand to distribute information and to sell the borough's newly-designed canvas grocery bags as well as compact fluorescent light bulbs at cost.

Despite the serious intent of the event, organizers want it to be festive and celebratory. To that end, local musical talent, including members of the Gas Lamp Players and Porch Daddies, will provide lively entertainment.

Weather permitting, it is hoped that the Eco-fair can be held in the lower Glen, near the gazebo, where participants can admire the newly lighted bridge and walkway. But rain or shine, the fair will be held on May 10<sup>th</sup>, from 11 am until 3 pm, and will be an occasion not to be missed!