



## **JP Green House Blog Proposal**

Andrée Zaleska & Ken Ward  
March 15, 2009

**Story #1. There was no model.** We are a blended family with 3 boys between us (Andrée's kids, Simon, 7 and Kuba, 10, and Ken's son Eli, 8) who decided to purchase a home and went looking for demonstrations of high energy efficiency and sustainable living with an eye to making our new home "zero carbon." We didn't find any in Boston, then we couldn't find any in New England, and when we looked, we discovered that there are essentially no useful models of sustainability in the US - quite a contrast to the UK, where most municipalities have several. How, we wondered, were Americans supposed to learn about energy saving without local models to visit? Equally important, how can inaccurate public perceptions of super efficient structures and renewable energies, viewed by many as cold, dark houses, be corrected without living examples?

So we and the boys decided to create a home, using these simple criteria: it should be open to visitors throughout planning, construction and after we move in; it should be constructed on, or close to, our low/middle income budget; we should aim for the highest available standard, which we found is zero carbon (net) for the structure and arbitrarily set < 75% of US average for our household; we should try more than one method and keep experimenting; we should see how much food we can supply for ourselves; we should include climate action among our responsibilities, in the broadest sense, encompassing our children's education, strengthening our community, and concerning ourselves with local, state and federal environmental and climate policy.

We bought an abandoned, 100 year old neighborhood store held in receivership and have brought it down to studs. On April 1st, we begin rehab construction, aiming to win certification by the City of Boston and move in by November 1st. Our web site and blog will tell the story of this experience, in our own words and through the posts of our kids and the collection of experts, advisers, friends, family and neighbors who are already engaged in the project.

**Story #2. When the money runs out.** The week after we settled on the property we discovered that the sill in half the structure was completely destroyed by termites, which threw off our budget and construction schedule. In the nine months since we purchased the building, costs have nearly doubled, with our current estimate being \$220,000 to take the building from bare studs to livable, this number does not include such "extras" as pv solar panels, interior walls, finish work or painting. In those same 9 months, like many Americans, about half our savings vanished, leaving us with about \$100,000. In other words, we will run out of money by about mid-summer and be stuck with a house we cannot live in.

However, in those same months, President Obama and Congress have made climate change an urgent national priority and have sent the first wave (in the stimulus package) of federal money to the states to support precisely the type of project we have launched and in Massachusetts, Governor Patrick has chosen to focus the Commonwealth's efforts on super-insulating buildings.

The question is, can we secure support before we run out of money, and will it be enough?

**Story #3. Love in a time of Cataclysm.** Ken has been a senior environmental campaigner, serving as Executive Director for state Public Interest Research Groups and Deputy Director of Greenpeace US, for 25 years. When he took a leave from full time work to become a stay-at-home dad, it was with the intention of returning to full time environmental staff work within three years. When Eli began attending nursery school, Ken took several months to read up on the latest climate science before beginning a job search. He reluctantly came to realize that climate scientists were starting to report climate impacts far larger and more swift than even the most precautionary projections, and a picture of global catastrophe was beginning to emerge far more worse than anything environmentalists seemed aware of.

At the same time, Andrée, working at the time as a parent, religious educator, and writer, was paying increasing attention to news reports about climate change, which she understood to be warning that events of biblical proportions may well occur within her children's lifetime. Like a few individuals, in accepting this information it was immediately clear to Andrée that we must undertake urgent and significant action in order to forestall this terrifying future.

Both Ken and Andrée found that most people we're interested, but not very deeply, and their own sense of terrible urgency was perceived by most others, including their friends and family, as peculiar at best. The disconnect some individuals experience, of living in what appears to be the last days before the planet reaches tipping points for major global systems that cannot be reversed, surrounded by people who do not seem to notice, produces a profound existential crises, which individuals handle in different ways. Some become climate ascetics, nagging others to reduce their carbon footprints. Some put more energy into activism or sustainable projects. Many, however, perhaps most, feel that the crisis is so great and the reaction of the world is so slow and so small, that nothing is possible, and they begin to think in terms of where to move when things begin to collapse.

Both Andrée and Ken left marriages, in part over differences with our partners on how to understand what is going on in the world and how best to provide for our children.

We are not the only ones assailed with sudden waves of anger, anxiety and fear, yet these are not emotions which are acknowledged, nor are there avenues for addressing the very concrete questions we ask ourselves. Environmentalists, by and large, do not acknowledge the danger we are in, for political messaging reasons and because of cognitive dissonance. Scientists are required to address climate only in professional and technical terms. President Obama's handling of climate, which came as a great relief to many after the Bush years, is profoundly worrisome to those fully keyed in to climate, because the President and his administration consider climate to be a second ranked issue, and that's not good enough.

Our story - which we will communicate through personal letters to each other, as well as through the activities we engage and the people we address - is about how to live purposefully, happily and effectively in the shadow of global cataclysm.

**Story #4. Launching a national network of "green houses."** We intend the JP Green House to be a replicable project - a model for models. The extraordinary response from our neighborhood and Jamaica Plain generally indicates to us that the idea has hit a responsive chord. The interest, surprising to us, is not around practical questions or information (excepting contractors, construction trades and designers who are very interested in learning about passivhaus design). Most of our supporters actually know a great deal about sustainable living and are attracted to the JP Green House as an ideal, for the very tangible nature of the project, and as a means, which we are quickly trying to afford, of communicating what they know and connecting with each other.

We believe the "Green House" concept could mushroom into a national network fairly quickly. The unique approach of matching private home owners, governmental funding and non-profit support and training services makes for a cost-effective approach that would establish a new, authentic, stable grassroots climate action network.

**Content.** Ideally, we will post 3 significant pieces per week, but that depends on raising funds to free up some of our time to write and prepare. Our content will cover a variety of interests, topics and challenges, falling roughly, by percentages, into these broad thematic areas:

**50% Sustainable living**

25% building rehab/passivhaus

25% garden, beekeeping, handiwork, transportation, water and so on

**25% "Love in a Time of Cataclysm,"** a conversation about the pragmatic questions, spiritual conflict and moral challenges of living in the shadow of cataclysm and the balm of green living expressed in community, music, dance art, cooking, religious & spiritual life, handiwork, teaching kids and more...

**25% Climate action.** A quarter of our time and energy (and a corresponding percentage of blogging and post topics), will be devoted to climate action in our role as a 350.org "hub."


**Contact information.**





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On the following pages are presented topics, posts, individuals and campaigns we are engaged in and expect to present, in posts, video, artwork, photography, music and other media on the JP Green House blog.



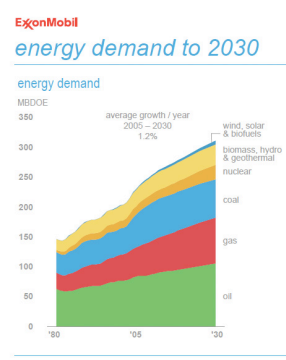
	idea/title	subject	
1	Introductory pieces	<p>In several posts and pieces, we will introduce ourselves, the JP Green House, our advisers, our design build team at PlaceTailor, our urban farmer and beekeepers.</p> <p>see: <a href="http://sitebuilder.yola.com/sites/D19b/D1b4/Da31/D182/U8a4986c81f2722a0011f28113a4b1b91/8a49866a1f2722b1011f2811e2e20df7/about-us.php">http://sitebuilder.yola.com/sites/D19b/D1b4/Da31/D182/U8a4986c81f2722a0011f28113a4b1b91/8a49866a1f2722b1011f2811e2e20df7/about-us.php</a></p> <p>Andrée is a community organizer with the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), where she coordinates two relevant national programs – the “Common Security Clubs” and the Unitarian Universalist Forum project. She was formerly Director of Religious Education, and editor and Czech language translator.</p> <p>Ken is a carpenter and climate campaigner, author of the “bright lines” series published on Grist, former Executive Director for New Jersey PIRG and Deputy Director with Greenpeace USA. He cofounded a number of major organizations, including Green Corps, U.S.PIRG, the Fund for Public Interest Research and National Environmental Law Center.</p>	






	idea/title	subject	
2	New models of climate campaigning	<p>The JP Green House has been designated a climate campaign hub for Bill McKibben's 350.org. Ken is helping coordinate 350.org activities in New England which are serving as models for 350.org elsewhere (particularly in Massachusetts, where a strong coalition led by Massachusetts Council of Churches and Mass PowerShift has taken off.</p> <p><i>"Andrée and Ken's JP Green House is a creative demonstration of urban sustainable living.. They are aim high; to meet tough exacting passivhaus super-low energy standards, celebrate and engage the Jamaica Plain community, and spearhead critically needed climate action as a "hub" for 350.org."</i> Bill McKibben</p>	
3	Leading lights, interesting discussion	<p>We are regularly engaged, and often in debate, with many of the key figures and organizations struggling to avert climate cataclysm. Ken works closely with Bill McKibben, Ross Gelbspan, Phil Radford, the new Director of Greenpeace USA, who he trained at Green Corps (along with Ruben Marks, new ED of MoveOn.org and Ted Nordhaus, co-author of "Death of Environmentalism, among others), Jim Hansen and a host of other principle players, many of whom will make guest appearances.</p>	
2	10 Best Ideas	<p>Summary of our "best 9 out of 10 ideas" and announcement of competition to fill last slot. The 10 Ideas are meant to be effective, underutilize, cheap and/or new energy saving or sustainable approaches. One idea will be presented, in detail, each month, beginning with: the <i>Milpas</i> (high yield &amp; sustainable native American farming technique combining maize, squash and beans); <i>residential revolving door</i>, <i>kid-powered generator for computer games</i>; and <i>high insulation shutters</i>.</p> <p>see: <a href="http://sitebuilder.yola.com/sites/D19b/D1b4/Da31/D182/U8a4986c81f2722a0011f28113a4b1b91/8a49866a1f2722b1011f2811e2e20df7/10-best-ideas.php">http://sitebuilder.yola.com/sites/D19b/D1b4/Da31/D182/U8a4986c81f2722a0011f28113a4b1b91/8a49866a1f2722b1011f2811e2e20df7/10-best-ideas.php</a></p>	
3	350.org climate campaign hub	<p>The JP Green House will serve as a regional gathering place, networking center, and locus of campaigning for 350.org activists and supporters. Our 6 month construction schedule and initial launch window are nicely framed by a kick-off event for New England activists planned for April 13 with Bill McKibben, and organizing through the summer for the Boston contribution to 350.org's October 24 international event, aimed shifting the ground underneath the Copenhagen negotiations.</p>	







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4	2009 Donor's Guide to US Environmental Groups	We'll be conducting a survey of roughly 40 major US and international organizations, collecting information from each group's website and assigning points based on criteria set by a prestigious advisory panel, which we hope will be chaired by Ross Gelbspan.	
5	The Hillside Strangler: Battling the Dog Strangling Vine	"Dog strangling vine" is a very damaging invasive species, the northern equivalent of kudzu, which has been given relatively little attention. Our yard was overgrown by the plant pest, particularly the north side slope where we plan to place our berry patch - shown covered in fabric to the right, our first line of attack. We will discuss issue of invasive weeds with experts and report on progress to eradicate our own in Bourne.	
6	Construction Challenges in Passivhaus Rehab	<p>Our design/build team at Placetaylor and Ken (serving as general contractor) will post regular reports on construction challenges and progress. A web cam will transmit exterior snapshots to our site and regular slide shows and videos will be posted focusing on construction miles stones. Topics to be covered include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carbon asceticism vs. American tastes</li> <li>2. Passivhaus challenges in rehabbing older buildings</li> </ol>	
7	A Week With the West Virginia Coal Protesters	Ken plans to spend a week with Mike Roselle and other coal activists campaigning in West Virginia.	

	idea/title	subject		
8	Love in a Time of Cataclysm	The “Dear Ken/Dear Andrée” series. We intend to post slightly (but not much) edited versions of our regular letters to each other, in which we grapple with the tradeoffs between organizing, construction and domestic chores, consider our kids situations and discuss their education and upbringing, and talk about how family and friends are dealing with the global emergency.		
		<p>Dear Ken,</p> <p>I am sorry for the dead air between us these last few days. It was triggered by what I feel is an ongoing issue with the amount of housework, shopping and cooking that you do. It brings up a question: whether you are really suited to domestic or whether your real task at hand is to do something drastic and attention getting. You would be a great one to write letters from prison. I think the times may demand drastic action, and you certainly have the temperament for it. I would be supportive. But if we choose to go on with our merged domestic life, then some adjustments have to be made... I love you, Andrée</p>	<p>Dear Andrée,</p> <p>I cannot argue with your main point - where are the results? - but it's a pretty hard-nosed, corporate line. You are saying, in effect, I don't care how hard you work, or how good the effort. Only the bottom-line matters. But you cannot motivate me to work harder or better by increasing my fear and anxiety alternate between manic activity, driven by the desperate sense of needing to make things right for Eli, Simon, Kuba, Lucas and all the kids, and plateaus of despair where it is difficult to get up at all - but these are the extremes I think family must help moderate....</p> <p>Love, Ken</p>	
9	Earth Day 2009	We have several events scheduled for Earth Day. Andrée will deliver the sermon at 1st Church Jamaica Plain, after which the Congregation will take turns in ceremonially ringing the church bell a total of 350 times as a contribution to publicizing 350 ppm. That evening, Ken's JP Family Songfest brings popular folk musician Dean Stevens to guest-lead a special Earth Day concert and singalong which we will video and broadcast.		
10	Jamaica Plain Free School	<a href="http://www.neighborsforneighbors.org/group/jpfreeschool">http://www.neighborsforneighbors.org/group/jpfreeschool</a>  We are part of a group founding the J.P. Free School, and are enthusiastically discussing the possibility of housing the school in the JP Green House community space.		









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11	Wooden Boats: #1. Rebuilding the Funky Dory #2 Fat Cat, the Biloxi Catboat who came home...	<p>Funky Dory. We acquired a legendary local boat, the “Funky Dory” from the nephew of its former owner who, along with other denizens of Doyle’s Pub were known to go “fishing” in the Boston harbor with a case or two of Guinness in hand. Ken, who has trained at the Wooden Boat School in Brooklin, Maine has begun, and will continue restoration on the Funky Dory, doing at least one “how-to” and perhaps a piece on history of the dory.</p> <p>Fat Cat. This is an amazing story. I bought a catboat built in Biloxi Mississippi in 1957 from a guy on the eastern shore of Maryland who found it moldering in a marsh in S. Carolina and brought it to Hull, MA for a rehab. When I moved from Hull back to JP, I had to get rid of my boats and I decide to donate “Fat Cat” named on its original brass tag, to the Biloxi Maritime Museum, which had been wiped out by Hurricane Katrina. A month latter Captain Boudreaux and crew arrived, their way paid for by a generous donor, and took “Fat Cat” back to Biloxi. The donor had learned to sail in these boats and was on hand when “Fat Cat” arrived and was overwhelmed to see that it was his old boat, one he has been searching for for thirty years.</p>	 																																
12	The Numbers	The JP Green House is committed to full transparency in budget and energy use numbers. We will periodically post updates on costs, revisions to the budget and funding strategies.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>A</th><th>B</th><th>C</th></tr> <tr> <th>1</th><th>Category</th><th>Budget</th><th>Subtotal</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td><td>1. Carpentry</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>2. Plumber</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>3. Electrician</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>6</td><td>4. Farmer</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>7</td><td>5. Roofer</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>8</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		A	B	C	1	Category	Budget	Subtotal	3	1. Carpentry			4	2. Plumber			5	3. Electrician			6	4. Farmer			7	5. Roofer			8			
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13	Coal & Oil Watchdog	Followup to an analysis Ken conducted in 2005 and 2007, summarizing annual report to stockholder information for Exxon-Mobil, BP, Peabody Coal, China Coal and Gazprom.																																	

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14	Painting the JP Green House	Rising Boston artist and Massachusetts College of Art lecturer Steve Locke will create an iconic image of the JP Green House and a web cam in Steve's studio will record his painting in progress.	
15	Calculating the JP Green House Footprint	We plan to develop the first methodology for calculating per capita carbon emissions that captures a variety of sources not usually included, such as individual's share of the federal government.	
16	The Urban Farm	Our urban Farmer, Gabriel Erde-Cohen and Andrée will present our plan to turn a fallow backyard into a thriving urban farm, meeting needs for vegetables, fruit and nuts. We will consider organic pest management, advancing gardening techniques, canning, pickling and root cellar construction, and establish the milpas.	
17	Cambridge Energy Retrofit Barn-raising	We are volunteers with this group, which conducts home energy efficiency "barn-raising" events for low income residents of Cambridge, and will post on the next event.	
18	Green Corps Training	Ken is a senior trainer with Green Corps, the field school for environmental organizers, which he co-founded and teaches a lively workshop each August	



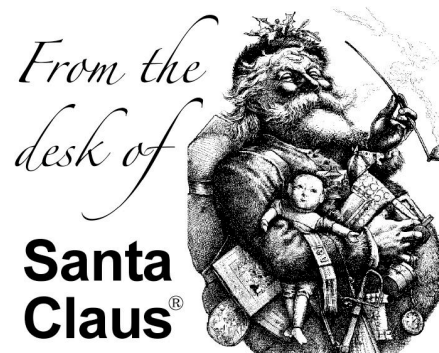
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19	National Coal Action/ Reports from the road	Andrée attended the recent National Coal Action in DC and posted her report at the Institute for Policy Studies site. We expect to report on a number of actions we organize and attend.	
20	Kid's Saturday Morning Bash & Build	Simon, Eli & Kuba and their friends and cousins gather for 2 hours each week to build things, make art, work on their JP Green House projects (Eli will assist our beekeepers, Kuba is constructing our chicken coop and Simon is still thinking about it), as well as deconstructing items pulled from the trash. The spring schedule includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Three stage pump hydro-powered rocket.</li> <li>2. Bow &amp; arrows.</li> <li>3. Constructing the zip line.</li> <li>4. Dipped candles.</li> <li>5. Silkscreening the scooters &amp; skateboards.</li> </ol>	
21	Coal Head Goes Down. a JP Green House comic	Ken's cousin Fred Van Lente, the author of a number of highly regarded comic books and graphic novels, including Spider-Man and The Fantastic 4 for Marvel Comics, will assist us in producing a JP Green House comic that explains what we are doing, climate change and carbon emissions in the story of 3 superhero kids who take on a collection of supervillains led by the evil genius Coal-Head.	
22	Kids Blogs	Kuba (10) an avid ice-hockey player, a kid who is always in motion, who thinks deep thoughts and asks complicated questions, will give us his thoughts on species extinction, and how wrong it is that humans act like they own the earth. Also maybe some tips on skateboarding. Simon (7), mystical and cryptic, will create a largely visual record of his pen&ink wanderings through imaginary lands, and his giant collage figures. And Eli (9) a bouncy, Tiggerish fellow with a precocious vocabulary, will relate his love of monsters and computer games.	



	idea/title	subject	
23	A New Iconography for Climate:  with Platform 2	On Sunday, May 10, Platform 2, organized by Mass College of Art professor Jane Marsching, will sponsor a digital silkscreen production to consider a new Iconography for Climate Change. The workshop will use digital media and silkscreen techniques to critically analyze, deconstruct and revision lame and stale icons, such as polar bears. The event is co-sponsored by JP Green House and results will be posted.	
24	Spoofs & parody	<div><div>Last year we joined other members of Y.A.W.N. (Yachters Against Windmills Now!) to protest against the Cape Wind proposal at hearings in Boston, for which Ken wrote a Y.A.W.N. theme song, <a href="http://kenward.synthasite.com/yawn">http://kenward.synthasite.com/yawn</a>. We regularly write and perform parody songs, such as this, and will post performance video and mp3 files of the <b>JP House Band</b> performing each new one, beginning with the release of "The David B." (lyrics below) an environmentalists' anthem for the times in time for Earth Day.</div><div><div><b>We Sailed on the David B.</b> traditional, new words by Ken Ward assisted by the Green Corps class of 2003  We sailed on the David B. Afire with ecology And around Berkeley town we did roam Raised a lot of cash And recycled some trash, yeah, yeah Why do I feel so broke up Just wanta go home  CHORUS  So hoist up the old earth flag Call for Hunter and McTaggart and send for the spirits of Rachel, Aldo and John I wanta go home, just let me go home This is the worst trip, I've ever been on</div><div>Lots lobby for trade and cap Some argue for a carbon tax To the guys in the Dallas suites we're all of us fools They're planning to drill and mine where they will, yeah, yeah And keep advertising that coal is a very clean fuel  CHORUS  Oh the polar bears have too far to swim And the penguins prospects are grim And the under Santa's shop it's getting quite thin Oh I wanta go home Just let me go home, yeah, yeah It's the very worst movie I've ever been in  CHORUS</div></div></div> <div><p>clockwise from bottom: David McTaggart, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carlson, John Muir, Bob Hunter and David Brower</p></div>	

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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– NEWS RELEASE – NEWS RELEASE – NEWS  
RELEASE –

**SANTA CLAUS ENDORSES NASA's HANSEN CALL FOR 350 ppm BRIGHT LINE**  
**PUTS NORTH POLE RESOURCES BEHIND AUTHOR BILL MCKIBBEN's 350.org**  
**ISSUES CALL FOR "CHRISTMAS IN JULY" HOUSE PARTIES**

DATELINE: Iqaluit Canada, 6/15/09 – Santa Claus, spokesperson, CEO and Board Chair for the global toy conglomerate North Pole, LLC, today endorsed a call by NASA scientist Jim Hansen for a global standard of 300-350 ppm carbon equivalent to avert worst case climate change impacts. At a hastily called press conference in an elementary school cafeteria in Iqaluit, capital of Nunavut and the northernmost region of Canada, Santa Claus made an unusual personal appearance flanked by Hansen and author Bill McKibben, founder of the group 350.org.

The press conference was disrupted just as Claus began to speak by representatives of the American organization "Clean Coal is a Really Good Idea," who disrupted the gathering for several minutes with chants of "Ho Ho, Santa's got to go!" and waved signs with the words "Coal if everyone's stocking!" before being removed from the scene by Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Santa read briefly from a prepared statement, before departing from the text to say, "Look, the damned ice is melting out from under our workshops! What else do you people need to know to get your asses in gear, eh?" before storming from the stage.

A spokesperson for North Pole discussed Santa's support for the northern hemisphere "Christmas in July" gatherings, first proposed by USA college students as part of Massachusetts Climate Summer, "Santa wants people to pull their decorations out of the attic and see what it's going to be like to celebrate Christmas without pine trees, presents or the nip of winter in the air." Claus called for participants to "discuss ways to put some fire under Copenhagen" as well as raise funds for local 350.org campaigning aimed at the international day of action on Oct. 24, 2009.

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