

THE FUTURE STARTS NOW!

Annual Gathering Focuses on Green Cities, Green Jobs

Members endorse green jobs pipeline and move to Beacon at Annual Gathering

By Steve Densmore



Drizzly weather didn't dampen the spirits of nearly 300 Clearwater supporters and members who ventured down to the former University Settlement Camp in Beacon for Hudson River Sloop Clearwater's Annual Gathering this year.

Executive Director Jeff Rumpf unveiled plans for Clearwater's Center for Environmental Leadership and Justice, which were unanimously endorsed by those in attendance. The Center will further develop and advance the organization's legacy of environmental activism at a time of critical need. In particular, the center will create a green jobs pipeline for valley youth and build upon Clearwater's recent successes in mounting a legal challenge to the re-licensing of the Indian Point Nuclear Plant.

As part of the morning program, Beacon Mayor Steve Gold spoke on the need to fully develop the potential for "Green Cities" in the Hudson Valley. He supports initiatives that will encourage alternative technologies and adaptive re-use of the

Valley's urban infrastructure and pointed out that the City of Beacon is already a green cities model thanks to the Beacon Institute, Scenic Hudson's Long Dock project, the Beacon Sloop Club and Hudson River Sloop Clearwater.

Good food, good people, good fun

After a delicious potluck lunch, some members stayed to tour Clearwater's future campus while others ventured into the city for Spirit of Beacon festivities. Staff and family members represented Clearwater in the community parade, riding down Main Street in a miniature replica of the sloop!

The day's festivities ended back at the camp with the rousing tunes of the Muddy Bottom Stompers and a touching moment of silence to honor the memory of Vic Schwarz, who co-founded Clearwater with Peter Seeger almost 40 years ago.

summer for an old-fashioned "barn raising" at the new Clearwater compound.

Rodale Press' Director of Employee Health and Fitness Bud Coates was actually online earlier this year searching for a grassroots environmental organization—one their New York City-based employees could take under their collective wing and help out in some way—and Clearwater filled the bill perfectly. "Clearwater's doing the right thing and we want to support it," says Coates. Teams from Rodale's magazine division pitched in to help renovate the White House, revitalizing the facility's large institutional kitchen, restoring the fallow Victory Garden and creating a new organic garden that will someday grow food for Clearwater's crew and serve as a living classroom for sustainable agriculture. Rodale added a \$10,000 donation to help pay for supplies and materials.

Clearwater's pending move and several changes in the valley are leading to fruitful new partnerships for the organization, says Rumpf, pointing to Rodale Press and the recently-launched *Clearwater Moment* collaboration with public radio's WAMC of Albany. "The impact of this project is attracting a lot of funders that weren't interested previously," says Rumpf. "People are coming out of the woodwork to join us. They know that society needs to change and they recognize that lasting change will only come from the youth. And let's face it, nobody does hands-on environmental education better than Clearwater."

Clearwater's deserved reputation for sparking young minds and environmental activism wasn't lost on the City of Beacon's Mayor Steve Gold, who has worked tirelessly to bring Clearwater into his city since taking office on January 1 of this year. In fact, Mayor Gold describes bringing Clearwater into Beacon as one of his administration's top two priorities, believing it to be an

essential element in building Beacon's brand as "a city known for environmental education." Clearwater will join the Beacon Institute, Scenic Hudson's Long Dock development, and the Beacon Sloop Club in making the city an epicenter of environmental research, education and action.

And that, he says, will also be good for the city economically. "Along with the branding of Beacon as a city for environmental education, tourists, students, educators, and environmental devotees will come to sail on the *Clearwater* or visit its new campus and, along the way, they will be entering Beacon and contributing to our Main Street economic base," Gold points out.

Move completes circle for Clearwater and the Seegers

If all goes well, the organization could be fully ensconced in its spacious new home by early next year. And that sits well with Pete Seeger, who will turn 90 next year and wouldn't mind seeing the organization he launched in Beacon 40 years ago return to its roots in his backyard. In fact, back in the '50s, Pete and his wife, Toshi, lived at the University Settlement Camp and raised their children there, while Toshi's parents served as caretakers for the facility.

Many old time Clearwater folk say the move completes a circle, that it represents a homecoming at a time when the organization is ripe for transition. Pete just thinks it makes good sense. "It's wonderful. I think with more room lots of things can be done during the year that can't be done in the overcrowded Fite House. There can be gatherings there," he says. "I'm looking forward to Clearwater using the big house and the Beacon Sloop Club using the other building to store some of their stuff... they can't use our house forever!"