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April 2022 Newsletter

Empowering Sustainable Communities

From the Board

A Special Message on Ukraine

We want to share with you that Olga Trushina, our executive director, is understandably preoccupied about what is going on in Ukraine, as she and her husband both have family members living in that country. We, at SEEDS, are trying to help her deal with this by being good listeners, and relieving her of some SEEDS duties.

I think we have all heard about the amazing bravery and creative and innovative ways that the Ukrainian people and volunteers from around

Karaoke!
for Ukraine

Help for refugees

Monday April 4, 2022 ! 6-9pm
Wallenpaupack Brewing Company

the world have come together to help. While we feel it is not appropriate for SEEDS to endorse any particular entities that are sending aid to Ukraine, here are two events you might be interested in:

I STAND WITH UKRAINE

Ticket Sales: \$10
(includes light refreshments)
Call 570-309-7860
for tickets and information

Event runs from 6-9pm. Anyone who sings before 8:30pm is eligible to win prizes, which are announced at 8:30pm.

Sponsorship opportunities- \$100 ! Gift Baskets & 50/50 Raffle. To donate, contact Brian Fulp at 570-309-7860.
Funds to be donated to Rotary International Disaster Response Fund for Ukraine. Rotary and Rotaract clubs have taken swift action and are working with members in and around Ukraine to provide food, water, medical assistance, and shelter for refugees.

PROUD SPONSORS:
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Gastroenterology | Augello Excavating | Brendan Ellis, Esq. | Bill Joseph Blacktopping

Karaoke for Ukraine
Wallenpaupack Brewing Company in
Hawley, PA
Monday April 4, 6 – 9 PM
Tickets are \$10.00.
Call 570-309-7860 for tickets and
information.

Benefit for Ukraine
Hotel Wayne in Honesdale, PA
April 7 from 5 – 7 PM.
Donations of any size welcome.
All funds go to ukrainetrustchain.org

BENEFIT FOR UKRAINE

APRIL 7 FROM 5 PM TO 7 PM AT HOTEL WAYNE
DONATIONS OF ANY SIZE WELCOME

All funds collected will be donated to:
Ukraine 🌻 TrustChain ukrainetrustchain.org

The event has been organized by Dustin Werner-Fazio, and it will be followed by a walk to the Cooperage and a vigil. There will be contributions from Bodhi Tree Art School, Fox Hill Farm, Owen Walsh, Hotel Wayne, Jennifer Kiesendahl, Lisa Glover.

We also include this statement from Olga:

My friends,
I know that many of you already gave to the Ukrainian cause (thank you so much),

but if you haven't because you want to avoid unknown, bureaucratic nonprofits and fees, and you want to have the maximum impact for the most vulnerable still in Ukraine, then this is for you. Friends that I trust created a group: [TrustChain: Ukraine Warzone Volunteer Support Network](#). The mission of this group is to directly reach a network of 100% vetted volunteers in Ukraine who provide the on-the-ground work of procuring and delivering food, medical supplies and evacuations. We work through a system we call TrustChain, which is a social network of trusted connections on both ends. Your contribution is guaranteed to be delivered to people on the ground over our TrustChain network through a sequence of trusted connections. We will be posting regular updates with what the money was able to accomplish each day.



Venmo: Olga_True

PayPal: paypal.me/oyah

If you want to save a life today and see your money go to where it is needed most, then consider donating through me.

O. Trushina

Olga Trushina

Further Reading

If you are interested in the links between sustainability, energy efficiency and its connections to the war in Ukraine, consider these stories:

[This article from The Hill](#) explores the relationship between fossil fuels and the crisis in Ukraine as presented by Congressman Sean Casten, representing Illinois. [This segment from PBS's Amanpour & Company](#) features Bill McKibben, founder of the environmental organization [Third Act](#), discussing how turning toward renewable energy could defeat Putin and prevent climate catastrophe. [This article from the Guardian](#) focuses on the perspective of Ukrainian climate scientists working on the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](#) to the UN, and contextualizes the war in terms of immediate disasters resulting from the burning of fossil fuels. [This BBC article](#) reports on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres's stern caution against short term energy solutions offered by fossil fuel sources as alternatives to Russian production, countering that these are not solutions at all but actually accelerating the climate crisis. And this [lengthier article](#) by [Naomi Klein](#), author of *On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal*, delves into a deep analysis of the connections between conflict in Ukraine and the power structures that rely heavily on the fossil fuel industry.

SEEDS Seeking

As SEEDS Expands Home Energy Assessment Program into Lackawanna County We Need to Expand the Team!

SEEDS energy assessment teams visit homes to help people save energy costs and improve the comfort levels in the home. Detailed reports are given to each home following the assessment. This year's program will center on homes in Lackawanna County.

Our teams are made up of SEEDS adult volunteers and paid local High School students, all trained by a course designed by a certified building analyst professional.

There are four student positions open for Lackawanna County High School Students to join this program for summer 2022. Expect to work for approximately ten to fifteen hours a week for 8 weeks @ \$10.00 per hour, from mid-June through mid-August. [Download the student application here.](#) **Applications must be received by Wednesday, May 4th, 2022.**

We are also looking for 4 to 6 adult volunteers from Lackawanna County to serve on our assessment teams. SEEDS will train you. You will also be supervised by an experienced SEEDS assessment team member. You will be reimbursed for mileage @ 14 cents per mile. Expect to participate for approximately 3 hours one to two days a week from mid-June through mid-August. **Applications due by Wednesday, May 4th, 2022.** [The volunteer application is available here.](#)

A paid Team Coordinator will supervise the program: scheduling, materials preparation, and record-keeping. [Download the full job description here.](#)

All team members will be required to be fully vaccinated for COVID and be willing to wear masks during work hours when requested. Masks will be provided.

Contact executivedirector@seedsgroup.net or call 570-245-1256 if you need further information.

The 2022 program is funded in part by the Scranton Area Community Foundation's Robert H. Spitz Foundation.

Sponsor Spotlight

Nature's Grace Health Foods & Deli Offers Food for Thought on Sustainability Practices

We love our sponsors! Have you been to [Nature's Grace Health Foods & Deli](#) on Main Street in Honesdale, PA? In addition to the selection of products difficult to find elsewhere in the local community and the delectable food prepared at their deli (we're thinking about you, veggie burger in a pita!), owner Jamie Stunkard has implemented an awesome sustainability program for the establishment.

"You know recycling, reusing, repurposing and just plain not usurping isn't that hard," Jamie explains, "Nature's Grace eased into it slowly back 40 years or so when there weren't many resources for recycling. At the time, we were able to recycle our cardboard boxes and newspaper. Wayne Co. Recycling Center was established in 1992 and we were then able to include glass, paper, metal and aluminum as well as scrap metal. It becomes a habit. You have a trash bin and a recycling bin and it's just as easy to throw it where it belongs. After a while, you start to wonder what else you can keep out of that trash bin and your recycling resources expand. We haven't attained zero waste yet. But we're working on it!"



Additionally, Nature's Grace has motion-sensor lights in the back store room, solar panels on the roof of their building, LED lights installed in freezers and coolers, insulated night cover for freezers and coolers, LED ceiling lights, compostable / recyclable paper and plastic food dispensing containers, and more!

If you are a business owner and are interested in upgrading your sustainability program but need help to know where to start, contact us at info@seedsgroup.net for an energy assessment. Members of SEEDS have access to a free energy assessment for homes or businesses.

If your business is interested in becoming a sponsor of SEEDS you can learn more it [here](#).

#SolarDYK

Solar Did You Know with Jack Barnett **Part 3: Production Forecast**

Over the years, many SEEDS members have forwarded to us various solar installation proposals they've received as they have sought to install solar panels to power their homes. As a general rule, SEEDS always recommends getting quotes from multiple certified contractors before selecting one. In this

series I will go over some key points to help you compare and evaluate those proposals.

Last month we looked at the "who" of your solar installation project, which you can read [here](#). This month we are going to look at **Production Forecast**. This refers to the prediction of how much electricity your specific solar installation project will actually produce. Of course, the more electricity the system produces the faster you generate payback, and the better your return on investment. However, a healthy skepticism of the forecast made by an installer is wise because their optimism can too easily be attributed to their sellers' bias--they

want to sell you the installation after all! Further, you should be aware that there is a whole sub-industry that generates revenue by producing software and fancy-looking models with pretty print outs to help them sell you on their solar installation.

But you don't have to rely on the forecast your installer presents to you; instead you can get your own forecast—and quite easily!—by going to this government supported [PV Watts Calculator](#) on the web (PV stands for "Photovoltaic Energy"). Enter your address, confirm the location on the map the site generates, then enter the proposed solar array's "DC capacity," or its size in kilowatts. Make sure you select "fixed roof mount" for array type. You will need to know and enter your roof pitch angle, or the tilt of your roof, as well as the orientation azimuth it will face, or east-west orientation measured in degrees, which is usually the



Jack Barnett is a SEEDS Board member, the Food Circle Rep and a Director and Lead for Project Development at the Clean Energy Co-op. Applying his environmental passion and expertise as a retired engineer, Jack is an enthusiastic and involved supporter of solar energy in the Northeast PA region.

same as your house. Most installers will include these two pieces of information on their quote for the installation project, but if you don't have a quote or proposal yet you can find them yourself with a little bit of work. There are several different free protractor apps you can download



onto your phone or mobile device that can measure the pitch angle by laying your device on the roof so it can

read the horizontal angle, or using a picture you can take or upload. A compass will get you the azimuth orientation, and most compass phone apps adjust for [magnetic declination](#) but it is important to be certain. I often work remotely when a person first asks for a solar assessment, so I use Google Maps to capture an image of the roof, with south certain to be along the bottom of the image, then overlay a line or rectangle on it, and then look at its format details to see its orientation relative to the bottom of the page.

Once you have that information entered, use the default information for everything else. Note that if you are thinking about multiple different array installations on your roof then you would need to do get a separate forecast for each array, entering the information each time.

After you enter the information the next page will present the annual forecast for the array in kilowatt hours produced. You compare this number to the total annual electricity usage on your utility bills -- with full net-metering in PA, the individual months aren't useful for comparison. If you want the forecast to be in dollars, then be sure to use the \$/kWh you're currently paying from your utility bill for the combined

generation transmission charges (not including distribution charges, so not the full billed amount).

It is extremely important to remember that if you have local shading on your roof--and most roofs do!--this model doesn't know that. It bases the forecast on just its placement and historical weather of your location. If you are not planning on removing or cutting back trees and foliage, you would need to deduct production amounts due to this shading. You would need to have an image (or estimate) of your solar window, which SEEDS volunteers can provide SEEDS members as part of a free solar site assessment, as long as we can get up on your roof!

If you are interested in receiving such a solar site assessment, or an energy assessment, contact us at info@seedsgroup.net. Look out next month for our next installment of this Solar Did You Know series which will focus on the price comparison itself, and the little math that is involved. In the meantime if you have your own question about solar energy email us at info@seedsgroup.net-- we will get back to you, and perhaps share your question and our answer with the SEEDS community as well.

#SEEDSRecommends

Applications for the Soil Carbon Initiative Regenerative Agriculture Certification Program due April 5th

Are you a farmer interested in transforming our food system into one that is sustainable, healthy, and beneficial for all? Are you looking for a path away from industrial agriculture practices which are a [leading source of the climate crisis](#)? [Green America](#), in partnership with over 150 farms, companies, NGOs, and soil scientists, launched the first-of-its-kind certification for regenerative agriculture open to all farms and food

companies: [Soil Carbon Initiative](#). Any farmer is encouraged to apply for the program, but [applications](#) are due April 5, so don't delay!



"The Soil Carbon Initiative (SCI) is a world-changing, outcomes-based, commitment and



verification program that empowers and incentivizes farmers, food companies, and the entire food supply chain to transition acreage to regenerative farming," explains Todd Larsen, Executive Co-Director for Consumer & Corporate Engagement for Green America, "The initiative requires demonstrated improvement of soil health and carbon sequestration, which means real benefits for the climate, our soils, and our health. Backed by farmers and other leaders in this space, the standard is designed to be practical, accessible, and both farmer- and business-friendly."

Green America is a nonprofit organization founded in 1982 to "harnesses economic power—the strength of consumers, investors, businesses, and the marketplace—to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society." Learn more about the organization [here](#). Learn more about the Soil Carbon Initiative opportunity [here](#).

Upcoming Event

SEEDS and Nature's Grace to Host Hempcrete Workshop May 12-16

SEEDS and Nature's Grace Health Foods & Deli have partnered to bring an extensive, hands-on workshop on hempcrete, a sustainable, innovative building material.

A seminar will be hosted on Thursday, May 12 at 7pm at the Cooperage Project in Honesdale, followed by an all-day hands-on workshop on Friday, May 13 from 8am to 5pm at 168 Church St. in Prompton. The seminar will be led by hempcrete expert Cameron McIntosh, founder of [Americhanvre Home Building Solutions](#) and the hands-on workshop will continue each day through the weekend and Monday.

Workshop attendees will learn to build a hempcrete structure, including forming the walls and roof, mortar-mixing the hempcrete and details on finishing walls and electrical. The concrete pad has already been placed and the building is framed out and ready for electricity. The hands-on component will continue throughout the weekend, with a goal of finishing the walls and roof by Monday. Lunch will be provided by [Nature's Grace](#).

This educational experience will be of interest to construction contractors as well as potential home builders and do-it-yourselfers. Interested attendees are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the event, or any part of the experience.

Hempcrete is an upcoming material that is quickly gaining attention for many good reasons, including its environmental friendliness. Hempcrete breathes, allowing moisture to evaporate (no mold), does not off-gas, and is avoided by termites. The non-toxic and lightweight properties of hempcrete also ensure it is easy to move



around a job site. Hempcrete does not shrink, maintains a steady temperature, and can also increase in strength over time. In addition, hemp and lime based biocomposite

insulation, known as “hempcrete”, can be produced sustainably from a highly renewable resource that sequesters carbon as it grows. The resulting insulation is carbon negative, yet also has considerable thermal, acoustic and fire resistance properties. This material can be incorporated into walls, floors and even roofs.

More information on the event and registration can be found at [here](#).

Upcoming Event

Pocono Axe Works Celebrates Earth Day with Special Giveback Friday Event

Pocono Axe Works, located in Lakeville, PA is celebrating Earth Day this year with a special event to benefit SEEDS! Participants pay \$10 for 10 throws, with all proceeds for the evening of April 22, from 5pm-9pm donated to SEEDS, or book a lane for one hour for \$30 per person and SEEDS receives half. Participants are also entered to win a prize.

PAW opened in June of 2020, and started their fundraising events in May of 2021. "I started the giveback fundraisers with my uncle, Mark Crouthamel, as a way to do our part in giving back to the community," explains Logan Crouthamel, the operations manager, "We live in such a

beautiful area where there is constant support for anyone & everyone, we just wanted to play our part in giving back the community that always gives so much." Check out [their website](#) for more information on their unique recreation and to learn more about their Giveback events.

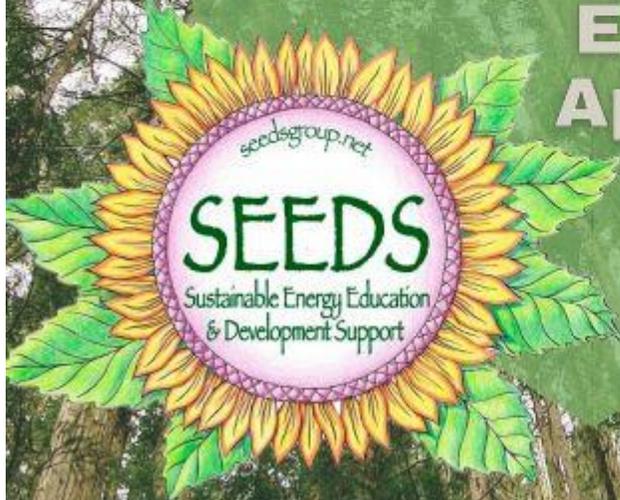
Giveback Friday

At Pocono Axe Works



\$10 for 10+ throws

**Earth Day
April 22nd
5-9pm**



#SEEDSGoodNews

Scientists Find that a Tiny Amount of This Ingredient Can Curb Climate Change

Did you know that the planet's 1.5 billion cows create more greenhouse gas emissions than planes, trains and automobiles combined through the methane they release? But, as [this NPR story reports](#), there is good news! Scientists in Australia found that by adding just a tiny amount of a specific type of seaweed to their diet cut their flatulence by 98%. And this reduction of flatulence is a sign of a healthier cow, the scientist Tim Flannery of the University of Melbourne, explains, because the seaweed in the diet allows cows to absorb the energy they are otherwise releasing through methane gas. This discovery has led to a boon in commercial production of the red seaweed for cow feed, with farms sprouting up all over the world. A discovery made through accidental experiment is leading to a practice change that could have enormous impacts on climate change!



Photo by Jan Koetsier, [pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

#SEEDSGoodNews

Do you have any #SEEDSGoodNews stories to share with the SEEDS community? Send them to us at info@seedsgroup.net or tag us on social media! They can be local stories from your community, or stories from around the

world--anything to celebrate and spread the word about the progress of energy efficiency, renewable energy or sustainable living wherever you hear about it!

If you are not a member of SEEDS, please consider [joining us](#) today!

You can use this link to share our membership page with others:

<https://seedsgroup.net/become-a-member/>



You will continue to receive our newsletters, invitations to our educational forums and other events. Members are eligible for free solar evaluations, have voting rights at our annual meeting, and help shape our programs and initiatives. For more information visit our website at www.seedsgroup.net.

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