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Guest column: Local programs to teach about sustainability

Published: Friday, February 03, 2012

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By Peg Barker

Maple Shade has joined 354 other New Jersey communities as a registered member of Sustainable Jersey.

"Sustainability" is more than just recycling; it involves personal and civic activities which aim to reduce waste, foster efficiency, and leave resources available for future generations. Becoming a sustainable community means that Maple Shade and its residents will take purposeful steps to create a better quality of life by incorporating thoughtful practices into everyday living.

Activities that qualify as sustainable range from buying goods from local businesses to historic preservation to reducing waste in our schools. A comprehensive sustainability program links certification with strong state and private financial incentives, and a fully-resourced program of technical support and training.

Maple Shade hopes to create a Green Team to implement these goals and earn certification as a Sustainable Community. A presentation on the process by a representative of Sustainable Cherry Hill, a leader in the movement, is tentatively scheduled for the council meeting on Thursday, March 2, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

This will be the same night as the township budget hearing, a happy coincidence since achieving certification brings with it additional opportunities for grant funding and recognition by local and state entities. Your support will encourage council to proceed.

Both portions of the meeting are open to the public, and all residents, educators and businesses are encouraged to attend. The team will be looking for individuals and groups who have an interest in fostering sustainability in Maple Shade and who wish to get involved to make sure it happens.

Since this is the last issue of the Progress, please contact me to be placed on an email alert list for further information and updates. You may also indicate your desired level of participation — join the Green Team, volunteer for local projects, and/or receive notices of regional educational opportunities (such as an upcoming Rain Barrel Workshop). If you cannot make the Maple Shade presentation, you

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are welcome to visit the Sustainable Moorestown "Open House," tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 8, at 7:30 p.m., at the William Allen Middle School Auditorium, Moorestown. There will be handouts at both presentations.

Thank you for your interest.

And thank you to the Progress for its continued support for a better Maple Shade.

Peg Barker, the Turtle Lady, is a resident of Maple Shade. Contact her at 856- 667-7627 or by email at turtle1@ix.netcom.com.

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