



Alumni Profile: Keeping the Upper Valley COVERed

Suzanne Spencer '93

Nancy Bloomfield '99 remembers her first community service home repair project, when simply standing on a roof was a big accomplishment. Now, as a co-founder of White River Junction, VT, based COVER (Corps of Volunteers Effecting Repair), she hardly thinks twice about it. In addition to trying to "think like a drop of water," in fixing people's roofs to prevent water damage, she spends many hours each week on projects like replacing rotten floorboards and installing sheetrock for low income, elderly and disabled residents of the Upper Valley.

Before Bloomfield arrived at Dartmouth College, she had been doing volunteer repair work. So in the beginning of her freshman year she joined Operation Insulation, a volunteer weatherization organization for low-income Upper Valley residents run through the College's Tucker Foundation. "It appealed to me because it would balance my academic work with physical and community work." It also appealed to her because "there was a lot of room for me to contribute."

By her junior year, Bloomfield and fellow Operation Insulation volunteer Simon Dennis were writing grants to expand their mission into COVER. They received funding, and in 1998 the organization started out of Dennis' house, with volunteers riding to and from work sites in his car. Four years later, with grants and private donations, and a steady stream of donated building materials, COVER now has its own headquarters in White River Junction, a 15-seat van, and dozens of projects each year.

COVER projects include roof repair and construction, wheelchair ramp construction, weatherization, window, cabinet and door installation, and floor repair. COVER uses salvaged materials on 75% of their projects. COVER receives referrals for projects from social service organization in the area, as well as directly from clients. As it has become more well-known, Bloomfield says COVER has been receiving more and more calls from individuals needing help. Their guideline for eligibility is that a client's income can't exceed 180% of the federal poverty guideline.

Though their accomplishments have been many, the organization is young, and Bloomfield hopes that COVER will soon be able to run work crews at multiple locations in the future. Also, she would like to expand their "store" of salvaged items they don't need for projects to sell to local home owners and contractors. This would reduce their dependence on grants for funding. Right now, their advertising is simply word of mouth, but in January 2002, they grossed \$1000 in sales.

Bloomfield would like to have a full-time employee for a more steady stream of sales and become more well-known in the community for receiving donations and selling recycled goods. This is similar to Recycle North in Burlington, VT, and the Lebanon, NH, LISTEN Center, which uses sales of second-hand clothing donations to fund its administration. "It's exciting to process things that people in the community don't want to throw away, but without another outlet, will," Bloomfield said.

To date, COVER has completed 128 projects at 105 local homes. The group has organized workdays on most Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, staffed by



Bloomfield '99 on the COVER job-site. "I wanted to get my hands dirty," she said. In the beginning of her freshman she joined Operation Insulation, a volunteer weatherization organization for low-income Upper Valley residents.

Bloomfield and Dennis, with volunteers from Dartmouth College and its graduate schools, high schools, community members and clients. To learn more, visit their website at www.coverhomerepair.org.



Beyond the Green

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Newsletter of the Dartmouth Environmental Network

www.dartmouth.edu/~den Better Communication = Better Network

DEN's website is now up and running! Completed this fall by Council Member Michael Hay '98, the site will serve as a valuable communication tool for members, faculty and students.

Through the web, DEN has worked diligently to recruit the next generation of eco-minded alums. By contacting young alumni and current students, DEN has increased its membership by 25%. With this new influx of energy, the network is now stronger than ever before.

DEN will continue to grow through its website, which now has a searchable directory. This will provide greater opportunities for professional connections, develop young leaders, and encourage Dartmouth alumni and students to strive for meaningful environmental change.

Membership "BLITZ"

Until summer of 2001, DEN recruited new members through word of mouth and "Snail mail." Comparing this to the term "Blitzmail," the on-campus term for e-mail, DEN quickly realized it must get a technological upgrade.

Using alumni e-mail accounts, e-mail bulletins, alumni newsletters, and on-campus environmental networks DEN began contacting young alumni and students. Over a period of just a few months, the network grew by nearly 100.

DEN On-Line: News, Events, and Finally - a Searchable Directory

The website will host current news and events, membership information, and archived newsletters. In addition, DEN's greatest resource, the directory, is now on-line. Searchable by name, interest and member location, it is far less expensive than

paper-based versions, not to mention being the environmentally preferable choice. Bookmark it today!

The Coming Year

With momentum from these achievements, here are our goals for the coming year:

- 1) Facilitate greater regional networking. In May, we plan to have our first round of "DEN Happy Hours" in Hanover, Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Organizers are needed for these and other regions.
- 2) Facilitate mentoring. For environmental initiatives to succeed, young people need access to opportunities and resources; and those with experience need enthusiastic helpers. Informal mentoring encourages these partnerships.
- 3) Increase on-campus action. As the "Campus Briefs" show, the student body is becoming ever greener and more active. With alumni support, DEN can further on-campus initiatives.

What You Can Do

First: Get on-line! You'll be able to update your contact information, request an electronic version of the newsletter and volunteer for the network.

Second: Organize a Happy Hour this spring (e-mail below), offer to be a mentor, or list your organization in the directory for internships for students or young alumni.

Third: If you haven't paid your dues, please "due."

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In Memoriam - George Skillman '54

For a decade, George faithfully served DEN in nearly every office. His dedication and unabashed honesty were a large part of how DEN endured difficult times, and why it prospers today. As long time editor of *Beyond the Green*, he showed an uncommon balance of integrity, ambition, and humility. On October 8, 2001 George succumbed to liver cancer, five years after a prognosis gave him only three months to live. We were fortunate to have his persistent support, even in his final months, and through his example we continue to find inspiration to further nurture DEN, its mission and its membership.

Campus Briefs

DEN launched its new website: www.dartmouth.edu/~den. It includes campus news, an on-line directory, and a newsletter archive. At the annual meeting in November, Erik Assadourian '00 and Suzanne Spencer '93 were elected to the council, and outgoing President Bill Mansfield '54 passed the baton to Dan LeBlanc '93. This fall's career panel was a success and drew nearly 40 students. While the symposium was cancelled this year due to 9/11, planning is underway for a symposium on campus sustainability for 2002.

RWG (Resource Working Group) is the College's committee on environmental issues. This fall they sent out a letter to students regarding the importance of energy conservation. They are also encouraging departments to buy eco-friendly products, by moving to web-based ordering with defaults set to green products.

At the **ORGANIC FARM** students are reviving a proposal for a Sustainable Living Center, to be put forward to the administration in the spring. The effort will include a new website to draw the attention of the community and alumni to the project.

In the dorms, greek houses, and academic departments, **ECO** (Env'l Conservation Org.) "reps" continue to increase conservation awareness by working directly with other students and staff. Using new software to eliminate printing waste, Green Printing will save more than one million sheets of paper a year. ECO's Purchasing Advisory Committee is helping the College to switch to recycled office paper and to compostable take-out dishes in the dining halls.

DOGA (Dartmouth Org. for Global Awareness) will continue its effort to open Dartmouth's non-disclosure policy on revealing the corporations that the \$4 billion endowment supports. Many universities now publish this information, but Dartmouth has yet to do so.

ESD (Env'l Studies Div.) of DOC is focusing on environmental outreach with area schools, reviving cooperation with the regional Sierra Student Coalition, and continuing campus advocacy and activism.

The **GREENING OF THE IVES** Conference, on February 15-17, 2002 in Hanover was a success. Speakers included RWG's Larry Litton, DEN President Dan LeBlanc, and a short appearance by NH Senator Bob Smith.