

Coalition for Buzzards Bay issues awards, names board members

April 3, 2008

The Coalition for Buzzards Bay held its 20th annual meeting on April 3 in Bourne, electing two new Board members and presenting this year's Bay Guardian Awards and Volunteer Appreciation Award.

Michael and Margie Baldwin received the award in recognition of their efforts in founding the Marion Institute in 1992 and for their local commitments, such as opening the area's first organic, locally grown market "How on Earth," and donating a permanent conservation restriction to protect waterfront land they own on Sippican Harbor. The Baldwins also plan and coordinate an annual conference called Bioneers by the Bay to discuss new models for environmental restoration. To read more of this article, please visit <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080423/NEWS/804230367>

III. Michael & Margie Baldwin (*Petersen presents*)

Michael and Margie Baldwin have perfected the art of doing good with as few people as possible knowing that they had anything to do with it. Even more impressive is that they are not only doing good, they are the reason good is happening at all.

They are visionaries, they are catalysts, and they are doers.

And they are known for their aversion to recognition. As a result, we're betting that few people in this room know half of what the Baldwins have and continue to do for Buzzards Bay and the global environment. Even in this crowd of eco-minded folks.

While I'm sure nearly everyone here has heard of or knows about the Marion Institute, did you know that it was Michael and Margie that founded it?

Founded in 1992, the Marion Institute works around the world from its small offices in Marion to introduce innovative models for creating positive change and empowering individuals. Simply put, the Baldwins and the Marion Institute they created, believe that when individuals are offered practical and visionary solutions, they become inspired, realize their potential and will act to restore a healthier balance – for themselves and for the planet.

And while the Marion Institute fed their need to take on global issues, the Baldwins continue to act locally to improve their own neighborhood. Examples of their local commitments include the donation of a permanent conservation restriction to protect waterfront land they own on Sippican Harbor as well as Margie's leadership every year as the Chair of the Marion Tree Committee..

But there's more. Even today, they are working harder than ever to bring the innovation discovered through their projects at the Marion Institute home to this region in new, and very concrete ways.

In 2005, the Baldwins launched the idea of bringing an annual gathering of progressive thinkers and doers to the Buzzards Bay watershed. They called it “Bioneers by the Bay” and sought to link our region to the much larger annual “Bioneers” event based in California. While this event continues to spread across the country, the Baldwins are responsible for bringing it to the Bay. In doing so, they now attract not only some of the world’s best minds to discuss new models for environmental restoration, they attract an astounding 800+ people to the conference. This year they are making another important leap with Bioneers by bringing the weekend long event to Downtown New Bedford to highlight the need for green urban investment.

And if you didn’t know all of that, we’re certain that even fewer people know that last year they created ‘How on Earth’ on Route 6 in Mattapoisett. Based on the vision of promoting homegrown resources, “How On Earth” – the area’s first organic, locally-grown market - is supporting two farms, one in Rochester and one in Dartmouth, that are sprouting a variety of organic produce and supporting livestock. Someone needed to bring an organic, locally-grown food option to the Bay watershed, but these things only happen when someone takes the initiative to make them happen. And that’s what the Baldwins have done.

And continue to do, over and over again.

Buzzards Bay and all of us who cherish the environment in this region – both for its own sake and for its place in the complex web of interconnections that link us to the rest of the planet - are fortunate to have Michael and Margie here in our backyard.

For their commitment to thinking globally and acting locally, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay is pleased to honor Michael & Margie Baldwin with the Buzzards Bay Guardian Award.