

# THE GREEN PAGES

## 'Green Drinks' helps get people talking about sustainability



By **RUTH HEIL**  
Business Journal Columnist

In this age of non-stop electronic communication, it's common to forget how important a relaxed, face-to-face conversation can be. Meaningful connections are made when you put yourself in the presence of others who understand your passion and intentions. The social

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mixer is where conversations turn to brainstorm that turn into scribbles on napkins that become the next great invention or partnership or achievement. I'd known about such an event, called Green Drinks Lehigh Valley (GDLV), for a year, but like many busy Americans, I was reluctant to break free of my routine and attend it. However, on Jan. 11 — the second Wednesday of the month — I grabbed my car keys and

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— Diane Teti, owner  
Allentown Art Works

left my computer to get out and talk to people the old fashioned way: face-to-face. The experience was productive and invigorating.

According to the event's page at [www.thebrewworks.com](http://www.thebrewworks.com), "Green Drinks is an informal monthly mixer that brings together folks who are interested in sustainable business, policy and living." I drove to Allentown Brew Works at 812 West Hamilton St. to see for myself. I entered the microbrewery's lively restaurant and was directed downstairs to the Silk Lounge, a separate bar room with lots of stools and a few comfy couches. A sign-in table held a collection of local announcements and green resources. I felt right at home.

I immediately met a GIS mapmaker named Ray and fell easily into a conversation with him. He showed me where I could create my nametag and then introduced me to a few other people.

A heightened sense of eco-consciousness filled the room without pretense. It seemed as if everyone could be a benefi-

cial contact, whether it be for personal or business reasons. Many were first-timers like me while others were obvious regulars.

Soon the evening's 20-minute presentation began. Jaime Karpovich, a writer and cook at Save the Kales!, a vegan food service, and Cathy Frankenberg, Mid-Atlantic policy associate at the Appalachian Mountain Club and all-round activist, spoke about their grassroots effort to bring a cooperative grocery store to Downtown Bethlehem. A crowd of more than 30 listened with interest as the two explained the goals, status and overwhelming public reception to the idea of a local food co-op. A tablet was passed around to collect the names of anyone interested in offering expertise to help get the co-op off the ground.

The mingling resumed after the presentation ended. I never did see a green-colored drink, but I noticed a few people had ordered just water while others had plates of food and martinis or locally brewed beer. I learned that connections made at past Green Drinks mixers had helped the Brew Works' owners implement green strategies such as a lighting upgrade, the addition of local organic food to their menus and a diversion of waste from landfill to compost heap. I met a contractor, a marketing consultant and an investment advisor, all of whom offered environment-focused services.

The Green Drinks concept dates back to 1989 when a few eco-conscious colleagues ran into each other at a pub in North London. Their encounter has since grown into a global movement, spreading to 816 cities worldwide.

One of those colleagues — Edwin Datschefschi — wrote the Green Drinks Code to be freely distributed via [www.greendrinks.org](http://www.greendrinks.org). The doctrine of sorts states the mission and asks that the mixers remain open, informal, local, self-organizing and free.

In 2009, Diane Teti, owner of the Allentown Art Works, and a few partners began the Lehigh Valley chapter. When I asked her who generally attends, she said, "It is very diverse! We probably have an equal number of for-profit, nonprofit and personal interest. Each month's speakers tends to draw their own crowd. We definitely have a core crowd, and we often get those who are new to the area and are looking for a way to connect."

Two days later, I received Teti's follow-up email. "I try to include every green event I find and have several times had people send me a note thanking me for pulling the list together. I'm hoping there are people getting involved in

events all over the valley. We have over 300 on our email list and close to 500 on the Facebook page," said Teti.

"I want Green Drinks to be a networking opportunity whether for job seekers, people looking for more information on a particular topic or just to meet like-minded people who care about our environment and will probably share other similar interests," said Teti.

If you go, be sure to bring plenty of

business cards and be prepared to state your environmental interest but also remain open to the unplanned possibilities. Green Drinks Lehigh Valley may not yet be the place where everybody knows your name, but they — and the environment — will be glad you came.

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## Solar dish gets test drive on roof of Bethlehem Flat Iron building

By **STACY WESCOE**  
Business Journal Staff

The Flat Iron building in Bethlehem has become home to a prototype of a new solar technology that a Lehigh Valley firm is developing.

CEWA Technologies Inc., which is located in the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania's Tech Ventures building in Bethlehem, has created a solar dish that aims to revolutionize the solar industry.

CEWA designs and manufactures point concentrator solar dishes. By using existing materials in new ways and employing a unique design, CEWA's toroid solar collector prototype can provide 30 kilowatts of energy with far greater efficiency than existing solar collectors, it said.

What makes the solar dish different from other solar technologies, such as solar panels, is the cost and efficiency, said J. Paul Eisenhuth, CEO of CEWA.

"It's significantly more economical by concentrating the sun's rays. It's fairly comparable to the cost of fossil fuel," he said.

As Eisenhuth described it, the solar dish collects and concentrates sunlight onto a receiver that heats fluid inside and can be used to heat a building or to create steam for industrial processes.

He said the dish is much more inexpensive to build than traditional solar units and should save money per watt based on the amount of energy produced.

The Stone House Group, which owns the Flat Iron building, agreed to be the site for the solar dish's first commercial application because of its decision to be a greener firm.

"The CEWA project is the first visible step in the development of The Stone House Group's Zero Carbon Neighborhood initiative," said Larry Eighmy,



Picture courtesy of Daniel Lugo Photography  
Crews install a solar dish on the roof of the Flat Iron building in Bethlehem.

principal of the group.

According to Eisenhuth, the Stone House Group paid for the installation of the solar dish. The dish itself was paid for through a variety of grants and other investments from the Technology Partners and the Keystone Innovation Zone.

Ultimately, Eisenhuth said he believes about \$250,000 was spent on the development of the prototype.

The goal, however, is to manufacture the solar dishes so that they are inexpensive enough that they can be bought and installed without relying on government subsidies.

When CEWA goes to market with its solar dish, Eisenhuth said he expects the units to sell for between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

For its role in testing out the prototype unit, Stone House will keep the dish when the studies are complete.

The solar dish was erected on the building Jan. 14.