

We are, once again, elated with the Winter Coat Exchange that took place this year. What made it all worthwhile was being able to give coats away to folks from all socio-economic levels. Well off folks took coats, driving home the concept of reusing; Families with children that had been referred to us by a local social agency came and took coats. Men, young and old, dressed in very thin, practically sleeveless, clothes came looking for warm clothing. Folks couldn't believe that the coats were free. The looks on their faces were priceless. When we explained the coat exchange to people, they went home and brought back more.

A man who was facing eviction from his home picked out a coat and profusely thanked us and stayed around to chat for awhile. An older man exchanged his somewhat worn jacket for a warmer jacket. Another man did the same.

Folks who donated appeared with arm loads of coats and sweaters with smiles on their faces. Some stayed and participated and others dropped off their donations as part of their errand-running for the day.

The smiles were priceless. The looks of content as folks walked away with warm clothing were "warming" in themselves.

No media appeared to cover our event this year. Last year we were in a popular shopping zone (which is all boarded up this year). I'm guessing that since we were at the library and not close to a mall, the media didn't want to come cover us.

We got the coverage with the continual playing of our PSA and my interview on our local community radio station during the event. We were listed on multiple community calendars.

The left over coats are being taken to Crossroads Urban Center Thrift Store next week.

Thanks to all who participated in any way with this - from donating and coming down to hang out, to printing out flyers and posting and publicizing to all your friends, co-workers, and clients. Special thanks to Scott Fife for providing live entertainment.

### **Start saving your coats - Next year this will be even bigger!**

We are already starting to plan for next year. We are thinking of expanding to two locations – staying at the library since it was so successful and also at the local coffee shop that supported our event this year which is close to a popular shopping area in downtown Salt Lake City.

A special thanks to the Green Party of Rhode Island for the inspiration to do this, which received this coverage of their 11<sup>th</sup> Buy Nothing Day Winter Coat Exchange:

The Providence Journal:  
**Free coat exchange continues tradition**

*01:00 AM EST on Saturday, November 24, 2007*

By Scott MacKay

Journal Staff Writer



Faith Polion, 7, of Pawtucket, finds a coat during yesterday's Buy Nothing Day Coat Exchange at the Visitors Center, in Pawtucket. The program, once confined to the south lawn of the State House in Providence, has grown to include sites in Pawtucket, Wakefield and Newport.

The Providence Journal / Gretchen Ertl

PROVIDENCE — It has become a Rhode Island tradition: On the day after Thanksgiving, one of the busiest shopping days of the year, hundreds gather on the south lawn of the State House to donate winter coats that the poor are free to take.

Yesterday on the 11th annual Buy Nothing Day Coat Exchange, volunteers distributed more than 1,000 coats to men, women and children in need. The event took place in its traditional spot, at the State House in the shadow of the Providence Place mall, the state's totem to shopping glitz.

"We have had a great response this year," said Greg Gerritt, an environmental activist and cofounder of the coat exchange. "It is the same simple notion as always: People who have extra coats bring coats and people who need coats take coats. No questions are asked."

The program, once confined to Providence, has grown to include sites in Pawtucket, Wakefield and Newport, Gerritt said.

Sunny skies prevailed, but a winter wind whipped cold across the State House lawn, a harbinger of chillier times to come over the next few months.

Used coats are set on racks, much like they would be in a store. As is the case in stores, there were well-known brands, including L.L. Bean, Woolrich, Lands' End, London Fog, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Robert Stock, Ralph Lauren and even a chesterfield coat from Hillhouse Ltd., a long-closed Thayer Street clothier than was once one of Providence's finest men's shops. There were wool coats, down parkas and vests, denim jackets, wool blazers and every style of rainwear.

Buy Nothing Day is recognized by community and activist groups around the world. The Rhode Island Green Party and other environmental activists sponsored the first observance in Rhode Island.

"Thank God for places like this," said Heather Vieira, who is unemployed and said she is living in an East Providence shelter. She has two children, ages 5 and 3, and said she was able to find coats for both.

Diana Llanos, of Providence, has two daughters ages 12 and 18. "It is a real help for my girls. They grow out of clothes so fast at their age. I'm hoping what I got will fit."

More than 60 community groups, churches, businesses and other organizations, including the Rhode Island State Police, contribute coats and the volunteers that help sort and distribute the clothes. A group of students from La Salle Academy also helped out yesterday.

The coat exchange lasted from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Some lined up as early as 8:45 to look over the coats. Coats that were left over after the 2 p.m. close were taken to St. Joseph's Hospital, which distributes warm clothing to poor patients.

Environmental activists also cheer the recycling mission of the coat exchange. "This is a great message," said Phil Edmonds, another co-founder of the event. "We are using up too much of our natural resources. This recycles the coats from those who don't need them to those who do without ... sending them off to the landfill."

This year, some volunteers brought other winter clothes, such as long johns underwear and woolen scarves, which were much appreciated. Employees of the new Renaissance Hotel nearby contributed coats. Old Navy in Providence Place mall chipped in when hangers were needed.

Motorists reached out auto windows to drop off coats. Others who brought coats stuck around to help sort them, and put them on hangers and racks. Lucy Perluck and her daughter, Sandy Connor, both of Barrington, brought three coats and stayed around to volunteer.

"Everybody gets a little crazy this time of year shopping and getting gifts for people who don't need really need anything," Perluck said. "This gets coats into the hands of people who need them."

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The Providence Journal (2<sup>nd</sup> article)

## Give a coat or get a coat on Nov. 23

*01:00 AM EST on Sunday, November 11, 2007*



Steve Lamarre, a volunteer from Warwick, carries coats to racks set up outside the State House for last year's coat exchange. This year's exchange will be on Friday, Nov. 23.

The Providence Journal / Bill Murphy

Volunteers and people with coats to donate are being sought for the 11th annual Buy Nothing Day Winter Coat Exchange, scheduled for Friday, Nov. 23, the day after Thanksgiving, on the State House lawn.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. people may drop off or pick up coats at the exchange.

The Friday after Thanksgiving is the unofficial beginning of the Christmas shopping season.

Activists around the world have also declared it a good day to buy nothing as an attempt to escape from intense marketing and the "frantic consumer binge" that marks the holiday season. Others use it to bring out the environmental and ethical consequences of over-consumption.

If there is bad weather on Friday, the coats will be distributed from St. Patrick's School at 244 Smith St., in Providence, and the Visitors Center, 175 Main St., Pawtucket.

Coats may be dropped off at St. Paul's Church, 12 West Marlborough St., in Newport, and at St. Francis Church, 114 High St., in Wakefield.

For more information, contact, Greg Gerritt at (401) 331-0529 or [gerritt@mindspring.com](mailto:gerritt@mindspring.com), Phil Edmonds at (401) 273-4650 or [philwhistle@juno.com](mailto:philwhistle@juno.com), or Arthur Plitt at (401) 724-8915 or at [kingarthur02940@yahoo.com](mailto:kingarthur02940@yahoo.com).

Rhode Island ranks high on green list

Several communities, businesses and groups have been recognized recently for their environmental efforts. Those honored include:

- The State of Rhode Island, which was ranked the country's eighth greenest state by Forbes magazine. Vermont, not surprisingly, came in first, followed by Oregon and Washington. The last three were Alabama, Indiana and West Virginia. The rankings were based on each state's carbon footprint, policies to promote energy efficiency and air quality. For more information, go to [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com) and search for "green states."
- The Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, which renewed its commitment to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Environmental Performance Track program by voluntarily committing to exceptional environmental practices. It is one of just four program members in Rhode Island. The other three are John Crane Inc. in Cranston, Stanley Fastening Systems in East Greenwich, and the U.S. Postal Service Vehicle Maintenance Facility in Providence. For more information, go to: [www.epa.gov/performancetrack](http://www.epa.gov/performancetrack).
- The Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust, which received a 2007 Preserve Rhode Island Merit Award recently for its efforts in preserving the town's landscape.
- RPI, a commercial printing company in Fall River, was accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council, for using only FSC-certified paper and recycling 100 percent of its waste paper, cardboard and aluminum printing plates.

Planning pays for local organizations

The Statewide Planning Program recently announced 10 grants totaling \$359,250 to communities and organizations to finance new, local planning projects. The grants, selected from 22 proposals totaling \$1.1 million, include:

A total of \$65,000 to Grow Smart Rhode Island to continue its local land-use training workshops; \$54,540 to Tiverton to develop digital parcel-level land-use data; and \$50,000 to the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center to prepare an inventory of the state's ports and commercial harbors with the goal of resolving traffic congestion, solid waste management and economic development.

Also: \$40,000 to the City of Providence to identify "an appropriate mix of land uses and densities along the Providence bayfront to support multi-modal transportation"; \$39,750 to the Providence Foundation to study the feasibility of providing rail service from Woonsocket to Warwick; \$30,000 to North Smithfield to study more concentrated

development in Branch Village; and \$30,000 to Westerly to take a first step in developing a townwide geographic information system.

Also, \$25,000 to South Kingstown to study growth opportunities in the Wakefield and Peace Dale villages; \$15,000 to North Kingstown to support the Post Road Corridor Plan and the Wastewater Facility Plan to include Wickford; and \$10,000 to Jamestown to develop computer images of future build-out options.

Another court win for paint companies

Several of the nation's paint companies won yet another lead-paint lawsuit last week in Wisconsin. This one was filed by the family of a 17-year-old that claimed he suffered brain damage after ingesting lead-based paint in his house.

The Atlantic Richfield Co., Millennium Holdings LLC, NL Industries and The Sherwin-Williams Co. were found not guilty by a jury.

"Today, a Milwaukee jury unanimously concluded that former manufacturers of lead pigment used decades ago to make paint are not responsible for the harm claimed by this plaintiff. The jury unanimously found that the plaintiff was not harmed by lead pigment in paint," said Bonnie J. Campbell, a spokeswoman for the companies. "Under Wisconsin law, property owners are legally responsible for keeping their properties free from lead paint hazards."

But the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported last week that the battle is far from over. It quoted Peter Earle, the lawyer who brought the lawsuit, as vowing to appeal the verdict and to proceed to trial with more than 30 other local cases he has filed.

The industry's sole loss so far in dozens of cases has been in the lawsuit tried last year by the State of Rhode Island. That decision is being appealed to the state Supreme Court.

Audubon schedules seabird caravan

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island has scheduled its annual winter waterfowl and seabird caravan for 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 24, beginning in Galilee.

Mary Jo Murray and Scott Tsagarakis will lead the caravan to birding hot spots along the South County shore, including Point Judith, Sand Hill Cove, Cards Pond, Moonstone Beach and Trustom Pond.

There is a fee of \$8 for Audubon members and \$12 for nonmembers. Lower fees are charged for children. Registration is recommended. Call (401) 949-5454 or send an e-mail to [programs@asri.org](mailto:programs@asri.org).

A plan for warming on Cape Cod coast

How will Cape Cod fare as climate change brings rising sea levels?

The Civil Society Institute, a nonprofit based in Newton, Mass., has created a Web site that shows the expected extent of flooding on the Cape as well as on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

The Web site is at [www.CapeCodFlooding.org](http://www.CapeCodFlooding.org).

The institute is the parent organization of several groups working to save energy.

The Environmental Journal is a listing of brief news items about the actions of individuals, organizations and businesses that affect the air we breathe, the water we drink and the landscape that surrounds us. If you have comments or suggestions, please contact environment reporter Peter B. Lord at (401) 277-8036, or by e-mail at [plord@projo.com](mailto:plord@projo.com) or by writing him, care of The Providence Journal, 75 Fountain St., Providence, RI 02902.