

Fresh Air



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group

Spring 2008 Vol.40 Issue 1

Website: <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson>

CHAIR'S CORNER

by Bibi Sandstrom

When I became chair 6 years ago, the editor wrote, "Meet your new chair!" but I demurred taking space to write about myself. I'll finally take a few sentences now to say that my husband and I moved to New Paltz from Indianapolis 15.5 years ago; we purposely don't have children but have 4 extraordinarily beautiful cats (1 "inherited" and 3 fostered through AWAN); Eric is a mechanical engineer; I have a Spanish-German degree and sometimes teach continuing ed, and I work part-time at a library that is undergoing a financial crisis so bad that I'm tempted to ask you all for donations to the library so I can afford to keep being Sierra chair! Sometimes I think maybe I'd do better for MHS if I worked full-time elsewhere (IF I could find a night shift job) and donate half my salary, but we're also always low on volunteers - see below!

Sierra has some good money news: our local allotment of dues is going up from 60 to 72 cents a member a year; thanks to our treasurer for saying something to the chapter chair about this. When I tried saying something last year to him about how we should get at least enough to cover our newsletter expenses (\$1.50 per person a year), he replied, "Have you tried selling calendars?" !! Remember this when you're asked in March to give \$ to the chapter, and perhaps instead send money our way to Mid-Hudson Sierra Club, POB 1012, Poughkeepsie NY 12602 - as did our newest Mid-Hudson hero, **Andrea Guazzo** (thanks!)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:



Volunteer Coordinator

--contact members from surveys and ask them for help with certain events; give info to various chairs.

Festival Coordinator

--this could be handled by the volunteer coordinator, but it'd be great to have someone who could keep a list of volunteers who could help staff tables at different festivals, like the Beacon Festivals, county fairs, environmental fests, etc. and... **Fest volunteers** for the coordinator to contact! Can you sit and give out brochures, sell calendars, etc, at a booth once a year?

Program Chair

--must find us FREE interesting speakers on a variety of subjects for our five Speaker Socials a year; find a FREE location with good parking that is available on Third Wednesdays for FREE that we can advertise year-round; helps to be able to buy author's book, etc if no one else will so author makes at least one sale; helps if you have items speakers can use (I asked for a

slide projector as a gift so Sierra can use it); must plan at least 4 months in advance; must write up description in "educational" way for newsletter but can now get help with other publicity from chair **Filomena Fanelli** (thanks Filomena!)

Newsletter Editor: Urgent!

--The editor of Fresh Air organizes the newsletter 4 x a year based on input from various activists. Nice armchair opportunity to keep the membership informed without even venturing out - doors. Contact Nancy Keenan-Rich at 452-1727 or email www.nkrich@hvc.rr.com or email Bibi at Bibis@juno.com.

Special Earth Day (Night) Dinner Outing at Gadaletto's Seafood Restaurant



Come to Gadaletto's Seafood Restaurant on the evening of Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22 sometime between 4 and 9. Gadaletto's will give Mid-Hudson Sierra 5% of the proceeds for that night! Come join your fellow environmentalists for an easy and tasty way to help Mid-Hudson Sierra! A vegetarian entree will be offered too. They are located on Main Street in Cherry Hill Plaza.

PROGRAM CORNER

Wed, April 16, 7:00pm, "Resorting to Madness" JCC, New Paltz, 30 N. Chestnut (32N)

A powerful film about the impact of ski resort development on the character of rural communities. Sierra Club alone, amongst major environmental groups has stood fast against the massive development proposed in Belleayre. Leaders of the *Catskill Heritage Alliance* and *Save the Mountain* as well as citizen activists will present an overview.

Save the Lakes is spearheading opposition to a massive development being planned at Williams Lake in Rosendale. STL speakers include Dave Porter, Tim Trumpeter, and Paul Rubin. Not to miss! Save the Lakes and save your community!

Wed, May 21, 7:00pm "The Farmer vs. the Naturalist"

Farmer Dan Guenther & Ann Guenther the Naturalist, dynamic duo at Brook Farm in New Paltz, duke it out over how best to use their land. Come learn! Are they weeds or wildflowers? Groundhogs or gremlins? Bad bugs or birdfood? Witness the battle along with beautiful slides. 60 Gatehouse Road (go straight from Rt. 299 past village of New Paltz), New Paltz.

Spring Outings:

Rating System for Hikes:

Class A – Difficult: 1500' climb/more than 8 miles

Class B - Moderate: Less than 1500' climb 6-8 miles

Class C- Easy: well graded trails, less than 6 miles.

Outings Coordinator: Tonda Highley

Contact Tonda at highleyt@newpaltz.edu or at 255-9933 if you would like to lead an outing.



“ The Clearest way into the universe is through a forest wilderness”

John Muir

Mid-Week hikes: Level C/B. Thursdays (1st and 3rd) bi-monthly. On the first and third Thursday of the month, we will lead 3-5 hour hikes to different areas of the Mid-Hudson Valley. Hikes are followed by a stop for refreshment or dinner. Contact Lalita Malik, by Tuesday regarding the hike plan, depending on weather and conditions. Contact: LalitaMalik@aol.com, (845) 592-0204. Joint ADK.

Sun. March 9: Black Creek Forest. An easy 2-3 mile hike, with an optional stop afterward at Stonehedge Restaurant. Explore this favorite haunt of renowned naturalist and author John Burroughs, with its crystal clear waters, diverse plant communities, and splendid views of the Hudson River. Black Creek is also home to many bird species. Meet at 2 pm at the Park & Ride at intersection of Routes 299 & 9W. Joint with ADK. Leader: Marie Caruso, 845-452-9086; or mariehv@verizon.net.

Sat. March 15th. Maple Sugaring at Bowdoin Park. All ages. Come and learn the age old art of maple sugaring. We explore both modern and Native American methods used to create maple syrup. Activities will be both indoors and outside and will include demonstrations on tapping a sugar maple tree, boiling sap with hot rocks and by evaporator and by starting fire by friction. Free event. Syrup made at Bowdoin Park will be for sale. Thanks to Dutchess Co. Dept. of Public Works, Parks Division and Garrick Bryant.

Sat. Mar. 15th. Stissing Mtn + (maybe) Thompson Pond Level B. Hike 1.2 mile up and down Stissing Mountain in Pine Plains. Stissing Mountain is 1,403 feet high and features a 90-foot high renovated fire tower with observation deck. Views extend as far as Hunter Mountain. Hike to tower is about one hour. The New York Walk Book calls this "an ideal short hike, with an easygoing, rapid ascent, rewarding views, and a geologically interesting setting." Depending on conditions, time, and interest, we may also visit nearby Thompson Pond, a Nature Conservancy site. Hike around pond is 3-4 level miles. Contact Leader Georgette Weir for details: 462-0142.



Sat. April 19th. Moderate hike or snowshoe depending on weather. Some rock scrambling if conditions permit. 7 mile loop hike to explore rock formations in "GUNKS". Meet at Spring Farm Trailhead at 10AM. Leader: Tonda Highley 845-255-9933.

April 22 - Earth Day wine and dine while helping to raise funds. See details on page 1

Sat. April 26, (rain date Sun. April 27) at Locust Grove, the Samuel Morse Historic Site. During this fairly easy 3-mile hike, we'll learn how the various families reshaped the landscape, explore the garden's early blooms, look for the diverse wildlife that inhabit the woods and ponds, and enjoy panoramic views of the Hudson River. Meet at 10 am in the Locust Grove parking lot on Route 9 in Poughkeepsie, 2 miles South of the Mid-Hudson Bridge. Leader: Marie Caruso, 845-452-9086; or email mariehv@verizon.net.

Sun. April 27th. Minnewaska State Park. Easy to moderate hike along carriage roads while taking note of the geology of the region. We will head to Awosting Lake and the Blueberry Run Trail and back to the upper parking lot. Rain cancels. Parking fee required. Meet the leader in the upper parking lot at 9:30. Leader: Arlene 246-2069

Sat. May 17, D&H Canal Museum, 11:00am. 5 Locks Walk and local luncheon. We will visit the D&H Canal Museum and then hike the remains of the canal passing by 5 locks. We will then have lunch at a local restaurant. Meet at museum. Take Rt. 32 north out of New Paltz to Rt. 213 West and then go left on Rt. 6A in High Falls, the museum is 1/10 of mile up on the left. Easy level stroll. For details call Mike Boyajian and Jeri Wagner at 845- 897-2487.

Sat. May 31st, The Stone Church in Dover. Short hike with some rough terrain to view this natural cave carved over time by the rushing water of Stone Church Creek. Explore and study this unique geological wonder; wear sturdy shoes; water shoes of high water and bring water to drink. Meet the leader in the parking lot of the Dutchess Co. Cooperative Extension on Rte. 44 at 10:00 or in the Dover school parking lot on Rte. 22 (near School St.) in Dover at 10:45. Contact Leader: Nancy Keenan-Rich, 452-1727 or nkrich@hvc.rr.com.

Lead a Hike! Contact Tonda Highley at 255-9933 to help out.

Good News For and From the Hudson River Watershed Alliance by Phil Ehrensaft

Nature coordinates the hydrological flows from the 13,400 square miles of land in five states that drain into the 315 mile stretch of the Hudson River, from Lake Tear of the Clouds through New York Harbor. Or, more precisely, tries to, in the face of the great big footprint that our human species imposes on the river and its watershed.

Dozens of organizations, ranging from senior non-profits to local governments to grassroots citizens' groups, have worked hard to alter this plodding footprint and create a sustainable water resource for our region. In the process they have developed initiatives and made the Hudson Valley one of the hotbeds of American environmentalism. Each of these initiatives has focused on part of the problem, which is necessary, but insufficient to tackle the challenges at hand.

If the rapidly expanding human footprint on the Hudson River watershed is going to move towards sustainable use of water resources, new practices must be created and coordinated up and down and across all of its 13,400 miles. Four years ago, in order to catalyze this coordination, staff at Clearwater organized a brainstorming session involving representative water resource stakeholders. In November, 2004, a public visioning meeting to discuss the necessity and possible shape of an alliance of stakeholders was held at Mohonk Mountain House. The result was the formation of the Hudson River Watershed Alliance (HRWA). The Park Foundation provided a grant to kick start development of the alliance, and Clearwater offered to house and provide some staff support during HRWA's initial phase.

That November gathering has led to an annual conference at the Mohonk Mountain House which focuses on forming links between scientists and engineers who are making advances in sustainable water use specific to our eco-region, local and state officials who are charged with applying new policies and technologies, and the citizens' groups that work hard to make sustainable water use a political priority. Parallel meetings have been held for sub-regions of the Hudson River watershed. Of late, we have had waiting lists of people wanting to join in. Of utmost importance is getting representatives from these organizations and sub-regions of the watershed into one room to get to know each other as they address watershed issues and solutions.

Building that alliance is what HRWA is about. The steering committee is like a matrix. On one axis, there are individual organizations including senior nonprofits, senior government agencies, research institutes and universities as well as local elected officials, civil servants, grassroots citizen's groups, and individuals who are movers and shakers in the water resource world. On the other axis, there are three broad sub-regions: the lower, mid, and upper Hudson respectively.

I represent the Mid-Hudson Sierra Club on the Mid-Hudson/Citizen's Group cell of the matrix. My work with HRWA is threefold. Due to my background in research on the new demography and economy of the Hudson Valley, I'll be

helping cracker-jack GIS expert John Mickelson build a user friendly, open internet resource which will make geographically specific water resource information available to grass roots groups and local officials. Second, I hope to put into practice my background in the sociology of organizations in the process of moving to the next phase of HRWA's organization development.

Third, and most important, as someone who cut his political teeth in the civil rights movement, I will try to make sure that organizations at the grassroots level don't get neglected while we do the necessary and time-intensive technical and administrative groundwork.

Moving HRWA to the next phase necessitated new funding to replace the Park Foundation grant. One week before Christmas, to be very precise, our very able coordinator, Katy Dunlap, received notice that the DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program was responding positively to HRWA's request for support, to the tune of \$80,000 for two years.

These are two very crucial years: 2009 marks the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson sailing up the river (fjord really) that eventually bore his name. This will bring the river and its watershed front and center and HRWA will work hard to ensure that sustainable water resource issues are stressed.

Our region may enjoy an abundance of water relative to the severe shortages in the southwest, but its quality is in question if our human footprint continues to be plodding and careless.

Phil Ehrensaft can be reached at 845-744-3575 or metro845@gmail.com



Vapor Intrusion

Members of the new Vapor Intrusion Alliance, including its founder Debra Hall of East Fishkill, met with legislators and administration officials in Albany to urge approval of legislation that would strengthen regulations against such intrusions.

Hall was pleased with the membership turnout of this new group. "We all come from communities that are impacted with vapor intrusion and we all just want to make sure that this issue is dealt with quickly and it's done right," she said. Hall is among those whose homes were contaminated with air and water pollution.

The new alliance is pushing for a landlord notification bill and a private well testing law.

THINK ABOUT POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS

by Marie Caruso, Political Chair

This year, we hope to get more input from our members about local races which may have a significant impact in our communities. The Mid-Hudson Group covers a very large area (Dutchess, Ulster, and parts of Columbia, Greene, and Delaware Counties), and we on the Executive Committee don't always know the issues or local candidates who are most likely to further the environmental agenda in our various communities. So, if you're involved with an important local issue, or know of a candidate with strong environmental credentials, please LET US KNOW! We don't plan, at this point, to get involved in any primary races, but once the major parties have selected their candidates for the NYS Assembly and other offices within our jurisdiction, we will need help from our members to make informed decisions about this most important process. You can contact me at (845) 452-9086 or mariehv@verizon.net.

Save the Date: Tag Sale September 20th

New Location: New Hackensack Reformed Church
on Route 376 in Wappinger Falls

Start gathering your treasures now!

Wanted: Earth Shelter builder, who attended new member meeting in the past, for possible program. If you know who it is or if it's you please let Bibi know! (Also, owners of Ulster B&B)

This ad is paid for by Darfur Matters
Poughkeepsie, NY

DARFUR ASSISTANCE

Tee shirt and cap drive! Refugees in Darfur need clothing. If you have lightly used or new tee shirts and caps you can donate, contact Nancy at 452-1727 or nkrich@hvc.rr.com.

Speaker Socials! Any bright ideas about where we can hold our Speaker Socials in the **Fall??** Free space is needed since we won't be able to meet at JCC any longer. But thank you JCC for past support!



Contact Bibi at bibis@juno.com

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