

# Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



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Our website:  
[newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson](http://newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson)

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## Chair's Corner

Joanne Steele

**B**ill McKibben wrote that our attendance at the 9/21 **People's Climate March** (PCM) in NYC, about 400,000 of us, was responsible for President Obama's subsequent meeting and agreement with China's Premier Xi Jinping, to do something about their country's pollution, even if it wasn't much. See <http://goo.gl/2pz7e1>

Thanks to all of you who took the time and bore the expense to attend the historic and world's largest demonstration for our Earth. I saw three twenty-year-olds, Not Sierrans, looking somewhat alienated and out of place, standing on the stone parapet separating our street from the Park, one of whom carried a sign reading "My other sign is a brick". The other with another sign and pointing to Wall Street, was probably referring awkwardly to the action planned for the next morning, "Flood Wall Street" (a large scale act of creative civil disobedience planned for lower Manhattan's Financial District). The centerpiece of that action was a massive sit-in intended to radicalize the politics of the march. (see [www.NationofChange.org](http://www.NationofChange.org)). Back at the PCM, I saw a group of bicycling advocates with a 20-foot-long bicycle-powered float bearing a very large and tall dinosaur made out of oil containers of differing sizes and colors; a large contingent of vegans wearing stark black T-shirts with "VEGAN" in white block print. They had a really large cow (Holstein) balloon and much smaller methane balloon "molecules" that a little blond boy was bouncing around on the street. I saw the New York Communist Party tabling with lots of red t-shirts that I had never seen at any demonstration to date. And another one, a group of older women behind a large sign that read "Older Lesbians Organizing for Change". And thousands upon thousands others of all sizes, colors and ages. Wow, so I guess that we were ALL there! You can see footage of the March by checking out these five videos at: <http://goo.gl/dEMkHZ>

Your Atlantic chapter has selected a few carry-on activities for us: seek out the brochure, "Switch to Renewable Energy" to hand out or place appropriately around, and

look into "The Transition Talks" (a series presented by Hal Bauer and others) to utilize, which should be found somewhere on the sites: <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/energy/energy.html> and <http://atlantic2.sierraclub.org/conservation/energy-climate> We are also directed to participation in national initiatives now that the everlasting national Elections are over. (see Political Corner below)

Two of your ExCom members and I, along with four or five hundred others (including some of you too I'm sure), attended the Omega Center for Sustainable Living's annual weekend conference, "Where Do We Go From Here". I walked into the theater to hear "oil trains, fracking, power lines, and Cooper Lake" mentioned in a row as issues that illustrate threats to the Hudson Valley commons. World-class speakers including among their number, Jeremy Rifkin, Vandana Shiva, Bill McKibben, Winona LaDuke, and David Bollier, discussed many topics including the zero marginal cost society, the survival value of seed diversity, the desperate state of planet earth (and what you can do), the concept of cyclical thinking, and corporate attempts to privatize the commons. I highly recommend two new books by the presenters: Jeremy Rifkin's *The Zero Marginal Cost Society* (subtitled "The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism") and David Bollier's *Think Like a Commoner* (subtitled "A Short Introduction to the Life of the Commons"). Read Bollinger's book first. May your public Library be gifted with these important two works!

Thanks to those of you who sent contributions to us this quarter and to the ExCom members who very ably and generously support the work of caring for our gorgeous Earth. Like the NSA does, we need you to spy for us, to be our eyes and ears in the six counties of our bailiwick. Nine people cannot possibly see what you 1,900 can see. We'll help you. C'mon! You're counting on us and we're counting on you.

## Political Corner

Andi Weiss Bartczak

**O**ur endorsed candidates Frank Skartados and Kevin Cahill won. Endorsed candidate Didi Barrett is in a close race. Terry Gipson and Sean Eldridge lost their races.

If you would like to get involved in environmental action on the political front, please contact: *Andi Weiss Bartczak*, [andiwbartczak@yahoo.com](mailto:andiwbartczak@yahoo.com), (845) 255-4371

**This is our election issue. PLEASE VOTE NOW! See the ballot inside.**

Your ExCom formed a subcommittee of the Conservation Committee, Cooper Lake/Niagara, with Dr. Andi Weiss-Bartzak, an environmental toxicologist as chair. The new subcommittee is concerned by the attempts of Niagara Bottling Company to privatize the commons, a portion of Cooper Lake's water, located in the Town of Woodstock, which is the City of Kingston's and Town of Ulster's water source, as well as the source of emergency water for the Town of Woodstock and the Town of Esopus' settlement of Port Ewen. The Town of Ulster has taken Lead Agency status (which the NYS Department of Environmental Protection has blessed despite the public's and the City of Kingston's pleas that *the DEC* be Lead Agency) and has denied the City of Kingston and the Town of Woodstock requests for "involved party status". Ulster has, however, posted a Positive Declaration which invokes a full SEQRA review and additionally determined to require a full public scoping process of the proposed action. Kingston Citizens.org states "That ensures that the public and all interested and affected parties, communities and agencies have the opportunity to contribute to the scope of the EIS. *This is not required to do under SEQRA regs, this is a big win for the public and a direct result of the full-*

*court press by the public, grass-roots community groups, elected officials and affiliated organizations.* The applicant amending the proposed action once to include a much wider geographic scope and add additional Interested and Involved Agencies including NYC DEP and the Mink Hollow brook and Beaverkill, as well as the Cooper Lake Reservoir and KWD supply and distribution system. NYS DEC pledging to play a proactive role in the SEQRA process. NYS DEC informing the TOU (Town of Ulster) that it must require the applicant to expand the scope of action to include the Whole Action, and avoid Segmentation per SEQRA, with multiple additional items that must be analyzed. NYC DEP adding specific items that the Town of Ulster must require the applicant to address." Further, The Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources stated, "We strongly believe that both Cooper Lake and the location of the proposed Niagara plant are potential Level One archeological sites." Events on the Cooper Lake/Niagara situation are happening very quickly. Excellent coverage of events can be found on [www.kingstoncitizens.org](http://www.kingstoncitizens.org). *The Daily Freeman* has given good coverage also. Now is the time to get involved. Join this subcommittee. Comment. Remember, it's just us, together, that will make the difference!

**Professional Help Needed to Assist with Cooper Lake/Niagara Proposal**

Please volunteer your scientific knowledge, wholly if possible or partly if needed. We need help to evaluate the lake and stream capacities, geotechnical issues, climate change consequences, effects on our environment of building connecting pipelines, population issues, traffic issues, etc. We also need someone with legal expertise to study the documents/contracts associated with this proposal and someone else to research Niagara's past behavior in other communities. Please contact Joanne Steele at [sierraclubjoanne@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubjoanne@gmail.com) or 845-338-0300 as soon as possible.

**Our Wild America**

By Shelley Bance

Have you always yearned to explore the wilderness areas here in the U.S., or perhaps as far afield as New Zealand or Nepal, but hesitate to do it alone, instead preferring the camaraderie of a group? Well, sign onto one of the Sierra Club's unforgettable trips along with other enthusiastic members, and let Sierra Club volunteer leaders coordinate and lead the excursion into places you've always yearned to explore and will never forget.

Our gorgeous planet can be experienced in any number of ways: hiking, wilderness backpacking, kayaking, canoeing, supported trekking, skiing, snowshoeing, and more! Your accommodations will be in lodges or base camps, and the trips may include people of all ages and ability levels, from beginners, teens, and families to seniors (50+), grandparents/grandkids, and volunteers. These safe, exciting excursions are developed by Sierra Club volunteers and vary widely from modestly-priced, service-based trips to higher-priced journeys with luxurious meals and accommodations.

You can choose from hundreds of trips each year, which explore rugged mountain tops, raging rivers, spectacular canyons, and national parks. They range in difficulty from easy walks to, remote wilderness backpacking — something for everyone!

They usually last a week, or sometimes two, and allow plenty of

time to relax and soak up local culture. Escape winter by relaxing on sun-drenched islands in Florida, exploring secluded waterfalls in Costa Rica, or snorkeling in the U.S. Virgin Islands—or embrace winter by cross-country skiing beneath Denali in Alaska.

If you are interested in helping to maintain and preserve our wilderness areas, Sierra Club service trips are a great way to participate. They range from helping with research projects at whale calving grounds in Maui to assisting with archaeological site restoration in New Mexico. Usually, service trip participants team up with forest service rangers or park service personnel to restore wilderness areas, maintain trails, clean up trash and campsites, and remove non-native plants.

Each trip leader will help you sort out all the details you need to know to sign up, prepare and participate in a Sierra Club trip. With our long legacy of protecting America's wild lands, we have a responsibility to provide opportunities for you to sample the great outdoors with a mind-blowing, memorable trip!

As a member, you'll get a free gift when signing up for your first outing: a reusable water bottle or classic Sierra Club hiker T-shirt.

Check out these amazing trips in Sierra Club magazine or log on to: <http://content.sierraclub.org/outings> *Happy travels!*

**Hydraulic Fracturing Is Everyone's Concern**

While we wait for Governor Cuomo's decision on hydrofracking here is just one of many reasons that hydrofracking is not safe. Fracking chemicals are extremely dangerous. Most natural gas drilling companies will not disclose the chemicals they use in the drilling process. Theo Colborn, PhD, founder and president of The Endocrine Disruption Exchange, (<http://endocrinedisruption.org>) set out to figure out what's in the chemical cocktails used to drill wells and frack. She and her team found 649 different chemicals, more than half of which are known to disrupt the endocrine system. Exposure to these types of chemicals has been linked to certain cancers, diabetes, obesity, and metabolic syndrome (the name for a group of risk factors that occur together and increase the risk for heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes). Fifty-five percent of the chemicals cause brain and nervous system damage, and many are linked to cancer and organ damage.



For millions around the world currently using expensive candles or sickening kerosene for light, there's now a \$5 alternative: a lamp powered by sand and gravity. See: <http://goo.gl/4Bau44>

**Volunteers Needed**

**Public Programs:** JoyAnn - [sunchipseac@yahoo.com](mailto:sunchipseac@yahoo.com)

**Political Issues:** Andi - [andiwbartczak@yahoo.com](mailto:andiwbartczak@yahoo.com)

**Outings:** Andy Moss ([andy@hvi.net](mailto:andy@hvi.net)) | **Secretary:** This is an open position.

Contact Marie for more information - [mariehv@verizon.net](mailto:mariehv@verizon.net)

*Outings are posted at: [meetup.com/sierraclubny](http://meetup.com/sierraclubny). To participate please join the website to receive email announcements. If you are interested in becoming an outing leader, please contact me: Andy Moss, Outings Chair, (845) 336-5446 or [andy@hvi.net](mailto:andy@hvi.net).*

On October 25th I was joined by two intrepid hikers at Minnewaska State Park for a day of trail maintenance. As the maintainer of the Gertrude's Nose Trail (in conjunction with the New York New Jersey Trail Conference, [nynjtc.org](http://nynjtc.org)) from the Millbrook Carriageway to the "nose", I like to visit the trail twice a year to make sure it is in good shape. Our work consisted of cutting back plants that continue to encroach on the trail as well as touching up the red trail blazes as needed. On this trip we also cut down three small, long dead trees on the edge of the trail. We were pleased by the many "thank you's" that passing hikers offered. It felt good to know that they appreciated our efforts. I am very grateful for the help that was given and I hope others will join me next year on this magnificent trail.



I am pleased to announce that next year I am leading/co-leading three national trips for the Sierra Club. These trips will be posted under the lodge category of trips on the Sierra Club's website [SierraClub.org](http://SierraClub.org), as well as in the December issue of Sierra Club magazine.

- 1. Hiking the High Sierras and the Pacific Crest Trail.** I led this trip this past July and we had a wonderful time. We spent 5 days hiking at elevations between 7,500' and 9,000' and returned to comfortable lodgings at the end of the day. If you like sweeping vistas, beautiful weather, pristine mountain lakes, and groves of giant Sequoias, then you would love this trip.
- 2. High Peaks and Huts of the White Mountains, New Hampshire.** This trip is close to home but very spectacular. We will stay in high elevation huts for dinner and breakfast and hike during the day over the ridges that cross from one mountain summit to the next, mostly above tree line with great views. We will claim our prize of hiking up Mount Washington at over 6,000' during the trip.
- 3. Autumn Hikes in the Colorful Catskills.** If you missed this trip in September, there is always next year. We hiked some of the best trails in the Catskills, enjoyed great summit views while surrounded by fall foliage. In addition, we cruised the Hudson River and visited the unforgettable Kaaterskill Falls. Each day we returned to our comfortable lodge for conversation and relaxation.

## BALLOT for Mid-Hudson Group Executive Committee

*Candidates' statements:*

**Irwin Sperber** - Beginning in the 1970s, Irwin Sperber has been engaged in such activities as organizing community opposition to the Marriott Corporation's proposal to build a hotel and casino at Lake Minnewaska; working with community groups to pressure General Electric into dredging PCBs from the Hudson River; and confronting commercial developers and land conservancies responsible for forest fragmentation and habitat disruption in the Catskills. He teaches in the Sociology Department at SUNY New Paltz with a special interest in environmental policy and public health. He is an associate editor for *Capitalism Nature Socialism* (an international journal devoted to radical ecology), and serves on the Executive Committee of Sierra Club's Mid-Hudson Group.

**Shelley Bance** - As a member of the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations for almost 20 years, I take seriously the threats to our precious environment and strive to turn the tide in its favor. My efforts have ranged from lobbying as a fractivist in Albany to marching against the Keystone XL office, and attending sustainability conferences. As a follower of issues for Native Americans, I value their deep concern for Mother Earth and the path we must adopt to sustain a healthy planet. Following a career as a travel editor, I'm currently Publicity Chair for the Mid-Hudson Sierra Club and I look forward to continued service for this thriving organization.

**Gerald A. Davison** - One of my interests is forests. Here is a brief report of observations: In our geographic area the availability of summer rainfall is a limiting factor on tree growth and health. In the 1950s, '60s, '70s, and early 1980s we had severe droughts every few years. But since the early 1980s, summer droughts (in my memory) have been mild or absent. Yes, 2005 and 2014 were very dry at the end of summer, but that came too late in the season to harm trees. After 30 years without drought I'm seeing Striped Maple (a drought-intolerant species) now forming a dense under-story canopy within a (formerly open) forest of mature oaks. The oaks themselves seem to be healthier now too. Is 30 years without drought a sign of climate change? Probably. Will this continue, or will more CO<sup>2</sup> take us to a new "plateau" and a return to droughts? (845)-339-4509

*This year we have three Executive Committee members up for election.*

*Note: Only Sierra Club members may run for Executive Committee positions.*

*You are invited to attend our monthly ExCom meetings which are open to all members. Meetings are normally held at the New Paltz Village Hall. Call our Chair, Joanne Steele at 845-338-0300 to confirm time and place.*

**Each member can vote and/or write-in below for up to 4 candidates. (2nd space is for joint memberships.)  
The top 3 vote-getters get 3 year terms ending 12/31/17.**

Irwin Sperber	_____	_____
Shelley Bance	_____	_____
Gerald Davison	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Send your ballot by February 1 to:  
Mid-Hudson Sierra Club  
PO Box 1012  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602**

Your membership will be verified with your address label. Labels will be removed prior to counting the ballot.  
**PLEASE MAIL THIS ENTIRE PAGE.**

*Note: If you read your newsletters online, please print and mail this page along with your name, address, and signature on a separate page.*

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## Scenes from the People's Climate March



*Marcher with a Sierra Club sign.*



*Sierra Club speakers and entertainers before the march begins.*



*Your Outings Chair, Andy Moss waits for the march to begin.*



*One of the many banners displayed.*