

Fresh Air



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group Winter 2006 Vol. 38 Issue # 4

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

Chair's Corner

Bibi Sandstrom

Hey - Finally found a way to save hours in getting email notes (like reminders of our events) out to a bunch of you at once! Now we just need your addresses! The Internet is great; with my weird sleep schedule, it's allowed me to "meet" some of you that way. If we could afford a larger newsletter, perhaps we could spotlight members like Lynda, who creates original teddy bears @ www.LyndaKeyes.com or Regis, who creates green buildings @ www.ramccann.com.

HoweverBills Bills Bills! In order to afford our 4 yearly newsletters we need to ask for \$\$\$\$\$. Send what you can to Mid-Hudson Sierra Club, POB 1012, Poughkeepsie NY 12602.

Other ways to raise funds:

Buy a calendar from me (\$10 for either the 2007 wall or desk Sierra calendar), or **buy a CD** from www.jameskrueger.com (put Mid-Hudson Sierra in the comments field).

Buy a Passport discount card from Our Hudson Valley Network, and we'll get a percentage from the sale! (See write-up).

Help us wrap it up. On **Saturday December 16** at the Poughkeepsie **Barnes & Noble** we'll once again **gift wrap** books and take in donations. Please contact me immediately if you can do a shift sometime between 9am-11pm that day.

Write National Sierra and/or the state (chapter) level, and ask them to give more money to the local groups; 48 cents a year does not go very far. Thankfully, we made more than usual at our Tag Sale this year, thanks to the hard work of **Carol Jarvis** and her crew.

Think Local: Attend the first board meeting of the year on Wednesday, January 31st in New Paltz, especially if you can help with environmental or fundraising projects, or programs. **And stay tuned** for a dance fundraiser in the early spring, along with the return of Speaker Socials. In the meantime, Happy Holidays/New Year/winter!

Bibi Sandstrom, 255-5528, bibis@juno.com

Thank you One and All !

I would like to thank the volunteers who gave of their time...and donations...to help make this year's tag sale a big success! Once again we had a sunny day, lots of merchandise and a raffle tent featuring donated items from the Elaine Pritzger Gallery, EMS Poughkeepsie, Suruchi's in New Paltz, Paul Rich & Black Creek Photo. At the end of the long day, volunteers met for dinner to relax and unwind...knowing they helped to add \$ to the coffers. A good time was had by all!

Carol Jarvis

Passport Program....Supporting the Community and the Sierra Club!!!!

Our Hudson Valley's Passport program is a discount card entitling holders to discounts at over 300 locally-owned, independent businesses, including stores like the Golden Notebook, KENCO, Inquiring Mind Bookstore, Le Canard Enchaine, Hickory Barbeque, the Phantom Gardener, and many more.

The Passport is a service of Our Hudson Valley Network, an organization committed to building community and supporting independent businesses. A year's subscription to the Passport costs \$19.95.

Subscribers get ongoing discounts at all Business Network members, as well as larger one-time discounts with selected members. The more you use it, the more you save!

Our Hudson Valley Network has entered into a fundraising partnership with the Sierra Club. Subscribe to the Passport and 50% of your first year subscription fee, about \$10, will be donated to the Sierra Club.

SubscribeOnline: at www.ourhudsonvalley.net and email support@ourhudsonvalley.net requesting half the fee be donated to Mid-Hudson Sierra Club.

Or write Our Community Networks, 27 Crown St. Kingston, 12401.



Winter Outings

Tonda Highley

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.

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



“I never saw a discontented tree”

John Muir

Outings Schedule

Saturday, January 13; level B, cross-country ski (or hike) at Fahnestock State Park. Rain date, Sun., Jan. 14 (the following day). We'll ski about 5 miles on easy to intermediate groomed trails. If snow is scarce, we'll do an easy hike instead. Check out signs of the early settlers who eked out a hardscrabble existence here hundreds of years ago. Also look for birds and various wildlife that overwinter here. For meeting time and place, call leader, Marie Caruso, at 845-452-9086 (no e-mail at present).

Saturday, January 20; level B+/A---hike or snowshoe to be determined by weather conditions at the time. Mt. Tremper in the Catskill Mountains. Explore the geological history and climb one of the remaining fire towers. 8 miles loop. Start time 9:30 AM. Call leader for directions Tonda Highley 845-255-9933 or email highleyt@newpaltz.edu.

Saturday, January 27. B+/A rated outing—hike or snowshoe to be determined by weather conditions at the time. We'll hope for sufficient snow within an hour or so of Poughkeepsie, and plan accordingly. Leaders: Georgette Weir and Jean-Claude Fouere, geweir@optonline.net or 462-0142 (before 9:30 p.m.). Joint with ADK.

Sunday, February 4. Sledding/Tubing at the Mills Mansion in Staatsburgh for kids and adults. (No hard sleds or tobogans allowed). An adult sized tube will be available. Bring a warm beverage... brrrr! Meet leader at the top of the hill behind the mansion at 10 or call Nancy Keenan-Rich at 452-1727 for information. No snow? Then an easy woods walk and we'll check out river ice floes.

Sierra Kids Coordinator

Clara Buitrago has offered to plan outings for kids and their families. A former administrator for human services, she is a nature and animal lover and has recently worked as an environmental educator at Tolland State Forest, MA. In 2005 she did an internship with the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (DEC) and has done education programs on bald eagles. Currently, she works per diem as an environmental educator for Columbia Land Conservancy. Contact her at cebui@yahoo.com Look for upcoming events.

Winter Ideas: Clara suggests the book “Winter World” by Bernd Heinrich (pub. Harper Collins) which is a good source of activities for family winter fun.

In the meantime look for animal tracks in the snow and identify them. Collect pinecones while you are out and make holiday wreaths. Serve hot cocoa and voila! Fun.

Sunday February 25. B/C⁺. Walk through geological times in New York City. Joint with Mid-Hudson ADK. Join in this 3rd “walk through geological times” hike. As we ride Metro North from Poughkeepsie to Grand Central station, we will look at some formidable geological features: Storm King Mountain, Bear Mountain, the Palisades. While walking in the City we will look at some of the oldest rock of the Manhattan prong in Central Park and search for clues of the last glaciations, will look at some of the traditional materials quarried and hauled from other regions of the State to build its most magnificent city, and talk about the complex and rich geology of the City. Contact Jean-Claude (JCFouere@optonline.net; tel. 462 0142 before 9:00 pm) for exact meeting place and time.



Rail Trails in Southern Dutchess

There is much talk of late in the Beacon-Fishkill area of a rail trail along a little used MTA spur. This trail would provide a cost effective greenway running from Beacon on the Hudson River through Fishkill and east out to Hopewell Junction. This trail would link with another rail trail in Hopewell Junction that runs north up to the proposed Hudson River walkway in Poughkeepsie. Eventually another trail will lead from this point out to New Paltz.

Mayor Clara Lou Gould of Beacon likes the idea of a light rail line along the tracks with a trail along side it. Fishkill Town Supervisor Joan Pagonis is studying the matter and is reaching out to the MTA to ascertain their plans for the line. The Village of Fishkill has requested information on the plan by **Michael Boyajian**

What is the definition of stupid? Doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different result!

Since the last Sierra Club newsletter I sat in on a few Dutchess legislature committee meetings. During the last committee meeting I attended, 3 legislators introduced a new, watered down private well testing bill. Who are these three legislators? One is a gas station owner. Another is a builder. And the other has been publicly against a mandatory bill since the beginning.

This new horrible bill is called target testing. They want to test a few homes in an area and conclude that if those wells test clean, therefore the water in the entire neighborhood is clean. I want to tell you a true story. Back in 1994 the Department of Environmental Conservation de-listed the Hopewell Precision contamination site because they concluded we did not have a problem. The reason why they concluded this was they tested 3 monitoring wells and 3 homes and all had good water. This is like the target testing nonsense.

Of course we were found to be contaminated but only after the EPA tested 75 homes right next to each other and of those only 5 were contaminated. What if the EPA only chose to test a few homes again? What if they chose homes with good water?

Why are some legislators deciding that it is alright to do for other neighborhoods what the DEC did in 1994 to the Hopewell Precision residents? Mary Swartz, the legislator representing residents at the Hopewell Precision Site, should be ashamed that she is proposing this.

In the last 25 or so years there have been approximately 6500 chemical spills in Dutchess County. These include gas, oil, cancer causing chemicals and "unknown materials". This amount does not include the spills that were never reported. This amount does not include just recently named superfund sites like Shenandoah and Hopewell Precision. Those spills took place in the mid 70's. Do you still feel safe?

This target program will miss contaminated homes. It will not be effective. Tell your legislators that they must support mandatory testing, not target testing. If you e-mail a short letter to countylegislature@co.dutchess.ny.us, all Dutchess legislators will read your letter.

Now enjoy your day..... and drink a tall glass of tap water!

Debra Hall

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Debra Hall
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In My Backyard



Conservation

While Sierra Club members care for the great outdoors with majestic vistas, wide open space, and free-roaming large wildlife, the majority of us live in an urban or a suburban environment with smaller scale scenic features and more constrained wildlife. As members of the Sierra Club we contribute to the protection of the great outdoors by supporting the very valuable national and international programs spearheaded and managed by the Sierra Club. Beside this support, each one of us can become more directly involved in the protection and preservation of the local and regional environment where we spend most of our lives.

Many of the villages or towns where we live have established formal Conservation Advisory Committees (CAC) to advise their villages and town planning boards on conservation matters that are of concern and of interest to the community. By being a member of a village or town advisory committee, usually an appointed position, one can become involved with meaningful local conservation projects and contribute directly to the well being of one's community.

Typical conservation projects are many and diverse. They can range from space and biodiversity surveys, to open land preservation, ground water protection, master plan review, and development site review, etc. In my own experience there is no better way to learn about local conservation issues and to assist in resolving them — making a difference, on the small but essential local scale. Interested individuals need to apply!

Jean-Claude (J-C) FOUERE
Member of the Town of Poughkeepsie CAC

*PS. The Town of Poughkeepsie CAC is looking for a couple of motivated members who are interested in actively participating. Feel free to contact me for information:
jcfouere@optonline.net.*

Sierra Club Ballot

An election is being held to fill 3 vacancies on the Mid-Hudson Sierra Club Executive Committee. **The three candidates are listed below along with their statements.**

Election Rules are as follows:

1. Only MHSC members may vote
2. Write-in candidates are allowed in addition to the candidates listed

Write In Candidate:

3. Vote for up to 3 candidates (including write-in) by making a check mark next to the appropriate names.

4. **Place ballot in an envelope and mail to:**

**Mid-Hudson Sierra Club
POB 1012
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601**

5. **Sign the envelope in the upper left hand corner.**
Two signatures for two members on same ballot. The envelope will be separated from the ballot before counting takes place.

_____ **Marie Caruso**

Other than occasionally leading an outing and helping with the tag sale, I have not been extremely active with the Sierra Club in recent years. However, the Mid-Hudson Group has been an important influence in my life since 1979. I would hope to utilize my long-ago experiences as Group Chair and Minnewaska Issues Chair to help the Group realize its full potential as a strong voice for environmental activism in the region.

_____ **Misha Fredericks**

I have been an environmental activist since I was a child. It started simply by picking up trash along the side of the road. As I learned about science throughout middle and high school years, I started writing letters to newspapers and legislators demanding species and habitat protection. As an adult, I am engaged in those activities as well as bird research projects with NYS DEC and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I welcome any opportunity whereby I can make a positive difference in this world.

_____ **Ralph Pollard**

I have been a Sierra Club member for over 30 years. For most of those years I have worked on Sierra committees – and for a few have also held Mid-Hudson Ex-Comm positions. I am currently Mid-Hudson Group Treasurer and a member of the Ex-Comm. I am also a member of the Atlantic Chapter Finance Committee. I would like to continue on the Mid-Hudson Ex-Comm – and support the Club in its efforts to influence creation of alternate energy sources and in protecting our remaining New York wilderness areas. If you have any questions about me or about Mid-Hudson Group activities, please contact me at (845) 462-3389 or RalphPollard@verizon.net.

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