

Fresh Air



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The Quarterly Newsletter of the Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group

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

OUTGOING CHAIR'S CORNER

by Bibi Sandstrom

Fare well, Sierra!

We sadly say farewell to hardworking excom members Bob Whelan, Jonathan Ridgeway, and Lynne Ridgeway, who has long been my virtuous vice chair and great moral support. We're also losing our award-winning Issues Chair Debra Hall, who still has many issues to deal with at the Hopewell Precision Superfund Site. At the risk of making this a mass exodus, I'm also stepping down as chair. At least I do leave Mid-Hudson Sierra in very healthy financial straits, thanks in large part to our members - like William Wolz, who donated recently.

We've also fared well with parties, picnics, and political endorsements, and, most excitingly to me, we've catapulted Ron Khosla's "Certified Naturally Grown" (see spring 2009 chapter newsletter) alternative to the USDA so-called organic program to international attention and acclaim. Thanks to Mid-Hudson Sierra's endorsement, Ron even went on to be flown overseas by the UN to consult on sustainable farming. Not only that, on Inauguration Day, President Obama included 120 jars of Certified Naturally Grown peach jelly from a Colorado farmer in the inaugural gift baskets given out to VIPs! (Given how the USDA, under Bush, had overnighted a very nasty cease and desist order for Certified Naturally Grown threatening HUGE fines, this indicates a tremendous victory for Ron - and highlights what I think of as my best accomplishment as chair).

I'll still wear one hat of the many I've worn in the last 8 to 11 years - I'll help with membership in 2010 and I'll host one more **New Member Party**. So, please come, new or old, to New Paltz on **Saturday March 20** (snow date **Friday Mar 26**). At the village hall on Plattekill Avenue (adjacent to the courthouse/firehouse) come enjoy **free pizza/snacks/desserts, music, and camaraderie between 7-10pm!** And whether you wear a party hat or a volunteer hat (Programs?? Issues?? Finding & coordinating volunteers??), please help Sierra fare well! Farewell!

INCOMING CHAIR'S CORNER

by Joanne Steele

Sierrans, I am very pleased to have been chosen by our Executive Committee to be your new Mid-Hudson Sierra Chair. As such, you might want to know a little about me. Well, of course I'm a nature lover. I grew up on a New England apple farm, and have been a feminist and political activist for decades. I hold a Masters Degree in Chemistry and have been recycling architecture as a Realtor for over 20 years.

Have you noticed, the issues we actually work on are local for us? That's why we get involved, but the issues often have wider ramifications. Some of the environmental issues I have chosen in the past have originated in Ulster County. They were Save Our Forest Action Coalition, Friends of SEQRA, and Environmental TV (public access). I became involved with Sierra Club over the struggle against Marriott for possession of Minnewaska in the 1980's and became a member in 1986. I've been an Executive Committee member since 2003.

In none of the environmental and social justice issues that I have worked on, have I worked alone, rather working together with other concerned citizens to achieve a goal beneficial to the entirety. That's how I view my future work with you as your Chair.

Your Executive Committee knows that you are concerned about our environment, and that you want to make a difference. We need to know the issues you're concerned about, what skills you may want to use to further our mutual goals, what you might like to work on with us. You won't work alone.

Make a difference with us. Fill out our short questionnaire. Please do that. And please, don't feel limited by the questionnaire: add your own comments. Begin now to continue the good work of preserving this gorgeous Earth. With us.

Thank you to Roger Roloff, Starbucks, and Huguenot Street Farm for recent raffle prize donations, and to David Friedman for coming on board and for his past help with fundraising and speaker socials!

THANKS TO THE STALWART TAG SALE VOLUNTEERS

Despite the chaos of having to change venues at the last minute, our cadre of stalwart volunteers managed, once again, to pull off a successful tag sale on September 26, raising about \$900 for our Group. We learned only three days before the sale that, due to an unexpected funeral, the church could not accommodate us. But thanks to the generosity of Mulligan's Irish House, who allowed us to go back to our old site on their adjacent property, great weather, and tons of drive-by traffic on Vassar Road, the sale was a success!

This could not have happened without the heroic efforts of about 25 volunteers, many of whom helped out in multiple ways: special thanks to Bill Collier, who mowed the grass at Mulligan's and cleaned up the area even BEFORE they had given us permission to use the site, and who put up the great road signs made by Joanne Steele; to Lucy Johnson, who borrowed a truck and helped transport our goods; to all three of them who, along with Kevin McKenzie and Janet Sabatino, were at the site at the break of dawn on Sat. moving tables and sorting the items. Special thanks is due to those who stood at the church door on Fri. to intercept people bringing donations to the sale: Joann Hartwig, Karen (Minervini) and Bob Whalen, both of whom also worked Sat., with Bob acting as treasurer for the day; and Janet Sabatino, who not only did church duty Fri. evening but, with help from various family members, worked all day Sat. as our on-site manager.

Thanks also to Jeanne Henderson, Beth Cashara, Group Chair Bibi Sandstrom, and Webmaster Kevin McKenzie for doing publicity. Others who helped to plan and organize the sale included Lynne Ridgeway, our past tag sale chair Carol Jarvis, and the indispensable Gerald Davison, who transported goods and supplies, set up signs, got the insurance certificate, and took charge of cleaning up the site and disposing of the leftovers. And finally, many thanks to all the others who contributed sale items, and performed the myriad tasks of organizing and pricing them early on, selling them throughout the day, and finding new homes for those that were left.

Although this was not an experience I would care to repeat, I was really gratified to see how well our Group worked together to pull us out of this near catastrophe and carry on our most treasured tradition—the annual tag sale!

Marie Caruso, Tag Sale Volunteer Coordinator

IT'S CRUNCH TIME FOR WILLIAMS LAKE!!

Word has it that the draft environmental impact statement for the development planned by Hudson River Valley Resort at Williams Lake in Rosendale is expected to be released very shortly—perhaps by the time you receive this newsletter.

That means that thousands of dollars will be needed to obtain legal help and present expert witnesses during the upcoming SEQRA hearings. Although the process is supposedly designed to ensure that the public interest is fairly represented, in reality, it takes considerable money to present an objective scientific analysis of all the ways a development of this magnitude is likely to harm the environment and character of a community.

In short, without considerable public support, one of Ulster County's most extraordinary natural and cultural resources will be lost forever—to a development that doesn't appear to be either economically or environmentally sustainable. Mid-Hudson Sierra, with some help from the Atlantic Chapter, has contributed a substantial amount of money to help support studies done by the well-known hydrologist Paul Rubin, on how this development is likely to impact the area's extremely complex karst aquifer system, as well as its fragile lakes, wetlands, and endangered species. But thousands more dollars will be needed in order to present a comprehensive case to the DEC.

Because the local group known as Save the Lakes has undertaken the principal responsibility for defending the area, we are asking that our members support this effort by sending donations directly to that group. To qualify for a tax deduction, make your check payable to Friends of the Shawangunks, and mail it to Save the Lakes, P.O. Box 153, Rosendale, NY 12472.

Although the negative impacts of this development are far too numerous to list here, a truly comprehensive analysis and all relevant documents can be found on the website www.savethelakes.us.

Marie Caruso

Mid-Hudson Group Sierra Club Member Survey

We would appreciate your completing this new survey: we need to understand *your* interests. Be sure to include your email address -if you have one- as we will need to rely more on this method of communication in the future. Your input is needed even if you have completed an earlier version of this survey.

Date _____ Name _____ Address _____
Zipcode _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Please specify any skills, specialized knowledge, or experience you have that would be of help, for example computer, writing, teaching, lobbying, event planning, accounting, etc.

I would like to help in the following areas:

Conservation _____	Political Action _____	Politician Monitoring _____
Membership _____	Outings _____	Volunteers _____
Fund Raising _____	Programs _____	Bookkeeping _____
Publicity _____	Tag Sale _____	Other _____

Comments, Other, Issues, I am concerned about, etc., _____

Thank you for your participation! Please return completed survey to:
Mid-Hudson Sierra Club,
PO Box 1012, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602 OR to ralphpollard@Verizon.net

Executive Committee Meetings

Our Executive Committee meetings are usually held on the 1st Wednesday of the month at New Paltz Village hall, 25 Plattekill Ave. To verify please call Chair at 845-338-0300. However, the Feb ExCom meeting will be held on Feb 10, 6:30PM, at the Elting Library, 93 Main Street, New Paltz. Feel free to come by and bring your survey and/or ballot to this meeting.

BALLOT for Mid-Hudson Sierra executive committee:

Please vote for up to 4 below:

Marie Caruso (Incumbent)	_____
Ralph Pollard (Incumbent)	_____
David Friedman	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The top 3 vote-getters get 3 year terms ending 12/31/2012. Send ballots to arrive at Mid-Hudson Sierra Club
PO Box 1012
Poughkeepsie NY 12602
by Feb 10th.

Your membership will be verified with your address label: these will all be removed prior to viewing any of the ballots.

My New Year's Enviro-Resolutions

by Joanne Steele

These are some of the commitments I have made, most of them already in process, some of them for many years already. For us North Americans, there are hundreds, even thousands of steps that we actually could take to ease up on our consumption of our planet's goods. I think we all know that it's 'crunch time.' I hope that some of my New Year's Enviro-Resolutions are also yours, too. Here are some of mine.

- To eat vegetarian more and more.
- To buy nothing that has UN-recyclable packaging or that is itself un-recyclable and to inform myself of what is and what is not recyclable packaging.
- To de-consume: buy very little new except food.
- To drive less and pool my driving whenever possible. For some trips, I would bicycle if I thought I could do so safely, as I live only three or four miles from "town"
- To do everything in a non-caffeinated way.
- To turn off the water tap (or shower head) unless I am or my hands are actually under it using it.
- To use a dishpan to wash my dishes, conserving soap and water.
- To use a washing machine only for full loads (acknowledging that I could wash clothes by hand using a plunger and a tub).
- To use the "breeze dryer" (clothesline) instead of a machine whenever possible.
- To turn off the lights unless I am in the room using them.
- To install low wattage lights for dark and night times to light frequently used paths in my home.
- To use task lighting so I don't have to (pay to) light the whole room.
- To turn my home thermostat down to 66 degrees or lower (I have an oil-fired boiler with 4 inch water pipes in my Victorian's basement) and wear sweatshirts, etc. and light-weight caps.
- To put sized pieces of shiny one inch foam (2 inch if it fits) behind each big, old radiator to radiate/mirror the heat into the room instead of outside through the wall behind the radiator.
- To shop yard-sales, antique shops, etc. in order to give only re-cycled, appropriate special occasion gifts and to otherwise give not stuff, but eatable or service or favor gifts.
- To renew now my commitment to being part of the solution and to stop being part of the problem.

**Mid-Hudson Group
Sierra Club
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