

Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



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The following article was written by ExCom member Shelley Bance. She attended the climate conference in Paris and writes about her personal experiences and observations.

COP21: On the Ground in Paris

To the sound of wild applause and cheers from delegates and activists, the breakthrough global climate deal to cut greenhouse gas emissions was finally reached at COP21 in Paris on December 12th, after two weeks of complex negotiations. A leaf-shaped gavel came down to seal the historic Paris Agreement, with nearly 200 nations signing on. Signaling the end of the fossil fuel era, it sets forth steps to avoid the most dangerous effects of climate change. While the final day was a cause for celebration, most acknowledged the real work still lies ahead.

As a Sierra Club member, I joined hundreds of other worldwide organizations and environmental activists at the *Espaces Générations Climat* (Climate Generations Areas), the huge public “green zone” at Le Bourget where daily, nonstop programs were attended by an estimated 50,000 people, from the Amazon and Africa to China and the US. Outside the conference center, tall white cylinders painted with flags of each nation graced the entrance to the delegates’ hall, the “blue zone” where they met under tight security. Two large green *arbres à vent* (wind-powered systems in the shapes of trees) operated silently along the passageway to the public space.

Eager throngs filled the conference rooms and exhibitions, film screenings and cultural displays, and experts spoke on wide-ranging climate topics. Programs included an Oceans Day to raise awareness about the links between the ocean and climate and the effects of climate change on coastal populations; lectures on biodiversity and ecosystem restoration, including forests and landscapes; talks about the rights of indigenous peoples and gender and land rights; and a debate about the dharma of climate change.



The Sierra Club’s #ActinParis campaign booth was the base for about 65 members who actively staffed it over several weeks, according to Jim Dougherty, director from the National Board. Executive

Director Michael Brune was also on hand, along with a Sierra Club student delegation in a separate booth.

The Paris Agreement sets the ambitious goal of limiting temperature rises below 2° C, with a goal of 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels. Countries pledged a long-term global goal to cut carbon emissions as soon as possible, reaching net zero emissions between 2050 and 2100. The legal agreement also holds governments accountable for those targets, with procedures to take stock at five-year intervals to ramp up the pledges. It includes a loss-and-damage mechanism for addressing financial losses suffered by vulnerable countries. Despite tense exchanges between oil-producing countries during negotiations, the French hosts used shuttle diplomacy in the final hours to ensure measures averting the worst aspects of climate change.



Indigenous action on the Seine

Despite a heavy police presence due to the recent attacks, it never dampened my enthusiasm in joining impromptu gatherings and actions to keep the heat on conference delegates. With one heart and mind, but many hands, all of us engaged with ongoing mobilizations throughout the city. In central Paris, that involved joining hands and bodies to form a “100% Renewable” plea and the shape of the Eiffel Tower. Along the Seine River, we glimpsed indigenous tribal members paddling canoes to raise awareness about sea-level rise, and later toured *Tara*, a scientific expedition schooner studying climate’s effect on plankton and coral reefs worldwide. Outside the Louvre, we held black umbrellas and chanted to demand the museum end its sponsorship deals with Total and Eni Petrol companies. On the final day of the summit and despite a ban on public assembly, more than 10,000 marchers bore a 100-meter “redline” banner from the Arc de Triomphe to the Eiffel Tower in a massive display of grassroots mobilization.

Though I returned home inspired by the huge accomplishment of the Paris Agreement, it’s still just a beginning. The power

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of our activism prodded world leaders at this critical juncture, committing them to a global escalation of the transition from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy. But the responsibility also lies with all of us and the choices we make in the steady path to a sustainable planet.



"Freedom to Pollute"

Photos: Shelley Bance, Jim Dougherty

COP21: From 30 November to 11 December 2015, Paris chaired and hosted the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21). Since 1995, the COP has been held each year in a different country and attended by the 196 parties (195 states plus the European Union) that have ratified the Convention to review implementation of the Convention and negotiate new commitments.



Demonstrations at the Louvre: top, rejecting oil sponsors; above, climate angels.

Read the Climate Change agreement:

<http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/109r01.pdf>

There are many websites with ideas on what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint and help prevent climate change. Here is one that you might find useful: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/reduce-your-carbon-footprint>

Outings News

Andy Moss

Outings are posted at: meetup.com/SierraClubNY and our group's meetup site: meetup.com/Mid-Hudson-Sierra-Club

I was pleased to be joined by David Friedman on October 17th for a day of trail work at Minnewaska State Park. The day was cool and breezy with mixed sun and clouds as we worked our way along the Gertrude's Nose trail cutting back bushes and limbs. As it was at the height of the fall foliage season the park was filled to capacity with hikers, bikers and casual walkers. We saw many groups, some as large as 20 or more, enjoying the beauty of Minnewaska Park. If you have not been to the park yet, you must go. It is perhaps the most beautiful place in the Hudson Valley. Its unique geology and interesting flora make it a must see.

Note: The Sierra Club has begun posting new national and international trips on its website. Choose a vacation that gets you out into nature. Trips include hiking, backpacking, walking, kayaking, cross country skiing and much more. Visit www.sierraclub.org today before the trips fill up.



GO SOLAR WITH THE SIERRA CLUB

The Sierra Club has partnered with Sungevity for solar panel installations. When you go solar with the Sierra Club, you are joining more than 1,200 who have chosen to move toward a clean-energy future. Feel confident about going solar with Sungevity, a company that is a trusted partner of the Sierra Club. When you go solar, Sungevity sends \$750 back to your local Sierra Club chapter and Group to continue the important on-the-ground work that Chapters and Groups are doing every day to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet. As utility rates continue to rise, solar leasing offers a way to lower your electric bill and help your environment. To find out more visit: <http://content.sierraclub.org/solar/>

READ YOUR NEWSLETTERS ONLINE

You can help our Group save printing and mailing costs by choosing to read your newsletters online. You may do so by contacting Dave Thomas, our Database Administrator: dave@davidalexanderthomas.com. Be sure to include your full name and email address in the body of the email. At the time newsletters are mailed you will receive an email with a link to the PDF version posted on our website. You can read any of our past newsletters by visiting: <http://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/mid-hudson/newsletters>.

**Good Old Days Eco Florist
Recognized by the Green America Foundation**

How exciting for one of our Members! The Green America Foundation selected Lynn Mehl, owner of Good Old Days Eco Florist in New Windsor, NY, as a finalist for their *People & Planet Business Nationwide Award*. Even though she did not win, we congratulate her for the nomination!

Her story started in 2001, after 15 years in business, during an innocent quest for the “no longer” American Beauty rose, she found out that the floral industry had evolved to 70 percent imported flowers (now 90 percent) and almost 100 percent imported gifts and goods with almost nothing U.S.-made, earth-friendly, or biodegradable. As a passionate ecologist, she was ashamed of the industry and devastated at her blind contribution. She knew she had to try to change it...or her career. And she did.

Fourteen years ago she went up against a billion-dollar international industry with overwhelming changes to tackle and expose and it wasn't easy. A sustainable and green florist model had to be both profitable and not disrupt consumer expectation. Lynn looked at every aspect of what a florist does and uses daily, substituting all unsustainable practices with a new method, or discontinuing its use or practice. After locating the few U.S.



flower farms left who could supply her with daily stock, she then resurrected design methods and mechanics of the past, moving away from the toxic foams and plastics.

Then to the business side: from energy offsets to water, to office/cleaning, packaging, recycling, hard goods and giftware. It took over five years of tenacity creating what she coined the first “Eco Florist” to bring awareness and make a real difference. Among other things, she:

- Instituted my “Green Floristry” techniques
- Created a “Recycle Rewards Program”
- Started a “Community Fundraising” initiative
- Designed a “Flowers For A Cause” ecommerce to benefit various foundations

Visit her business website at www.GoodOldDaysFlorist.com and read more about Lynn and her green florist shop.

And, don't forget to visit Lynn and her beautiful dog Willow at the shop in New Windsor at 270 Walsh Avenue!

Become involved in your town's environment...

Almost every town has an Environmental Conservation Board. If you are interested in your town's environment, please join or attend their public meetings usually held once a month. The purpose of this committee is to protect, preserve, properly maintain and require prudent use of the wetlands, bodies of water and watercourses and their associated wildlife within the town. You can usually find information about public meetings within your town's website usually listed under “committees”. Please let us know what they are working on and if we can help.

BALLOT for Mid-Hudson Group Executive Committee

Candidates' statements:

JoyAnn Savino - I became the program chair of the Mid-Hudson group three years ago and have enjoyed every minute of it. I try to bring programs to our members that are fun as well as environmentally educational. I have been a longtime activist working to protect wildlife and their environment. One of my accomplishments was having the Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Natural History, and some of the NYC parks remove their rodenticides and use an alternative nonpoisonous method of ridding their premises of rodents.

David Friedman - I've been a part of the Sierra Club for more than 30 years, with most of that time being a supporter, albeit not active. I joined many years back when I was the nature counselor at a summer camp, and a student at college helping to start the first community recycling center in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I knew then that the club had a proud tradition of environmental support and activism. My involvement has grown to include Vice-Chair and Fundraising Chair of the Mid-Hudson Group. I've been on the ExCom for about six years. I believe that the Mid-Hudson group has the talent and dedicated people to make a positive impact on our environment. I would be honored to be able to continue to serve our local group.

Helga Klessen - I have been an enthusiastic environmentalist and a passive member of the Sierra Club for at least 40 years, but decided to become more actively involved after moving to Ulster County two years ago. I am passionately opposed to pipelines, bomb trains and nuclear plants in densely populated areas, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute my modest talents, including my experience as an attorney at law, toward the preservation of the beauty, health and safety of this spectacular region. Since last summer, I have served as the recording secretary of the Executive Committee of the Club's Mid-Hudson Group.

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 12/31/18.**

JoyAnn Savino	_____	_____
David Friedman	_____	_____
Helga Klessen	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Send your ballot by January 23 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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Sierra Club
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Public Programs

JoyAnn Savino

PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. BRING A FRIEND!

Visit our website: sierraclub.org/atlantic/mid-hudson for more details.

We do not normally offer programs in the winter.

If a program is planned you will be notified by email and it will also be posted on our website.

Our program on November 12th with wildlife rehabilitator Annie Mardiney was very special. We had a large turnout to see her present some of the owls and hawks that she cares for. She explained the threats to these raptors along with information about how she cares for them and what we can do to help her and other volunteer wildlife rehabilitators.



Please RSVP for programs: mhsierraprograms@yahoo.com

Visit our website at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/mid-hudson> | Join our meetup at: <http://www.meetup.com/Mid-Hudson-Sierra-Club>