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From the front lines: People's Climate March, NYC

Carol Nix

More than 400,000 people marched through the concrete canyons of New York City on Sept. 21 in support of real political solutions to our climate crisis.

Approximately 25,000 Sierra Club activists joined the march, constituting the largest gathering of the club's members ever recorded.

They joined food activists, labor leaders, scientists, moms, Hurricane Sandy victims, divestment advocates, political reformers and others from more than 1,000 different organizations — all calling for meaningful change in worldwide energy policy ahead of the United Nations Climate Summit, which also convened in New York.

The peaceful march stretched for miles through



Carol Nix at the Climate March in New York City.

Manhattan and all along Central Park as far as 87th Street, and the wave of cheering that travelled the length of the island at the start, demonstrated the enormity of the gathering.

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, as well as former Vice President Al Gore, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, our own Mary Anne Hitt and many other notables led the march that tied up traffic in the city for hours.

Marchers carried signs that read, "To Change Everything, We Need Everyone," which encapsulated the message that really described the day. Hand-lettered signs were in abundance as well, some quite clever. Some of my favorites:

- Renewable is doable.
- Capitalism destroying your environment? Try more capitalism.
- North pole or no pole?
- We won't need jobs if we don't have a planet.
- Big oil liars — climate change deniers
- Butterflies against the end of the world
- Bye buy
- I (heart) evidence
- Unf*** the planet!

The *New York Times* featured the march on its front page with the headline "Taking a Call for Climate Change to the Streets." The paper called the event "a spectacle even for a city known for doing things big."

The international community was in evidence too; Canadians opposed to tar sands development, islanders from Mauritius, Britains opposing fracking and Australians carrying a blindfolded puppet of their prime minister.

While New York's was the biggest protest, sympathizers in other countries around the world also turned out, and a big screen on Times Square showed clips from Paris, Buenos Aires and, notably, London's 40,000 protestors to cheering, tired marchers.

Now, it's up to us to keep the momentum going, to speak up when we hear denials, to pester our representatives, to cut consumption and engineer solutions to build the better world we know is possible.



One of several solar bikes in the March.

Fraud and collusion poison coal self-reporting

Lab field supervisor pleads guilty to faking test results of discharges

Jim Sconyers

A field supervisor for Appalachian Laboratories in Beckley pleaded guilty to faking favorable test results of coal mine discharges over his five-year career at Appalachian Laboratories.

According to the *Charleston Gazette*, John W. Shelton, of Daniels, Raleigh County, entered his plea Oct. 9 in U.S. District Court before Judge Irene Berger. He remains free on \$10,000 bail, but faces up to five years in prison and as much as \$250,000 in fines.

Any facility that discharges material into West Virginia streams must have a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to do so. The WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which is the agency responsible for enforcing the national Clean Water Act in our state, issues those permits.

An NPDES sets specific discharge limits for any given pollutant from a mine outfall, coal ash pond outlet or other source. The permit holder must then submit periodic Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) to the DEP. Their review is supposed to identify permit violations and to act accordingly to require remediation.

At Appalachian, the supervisor and others routinely falsified test results, often substituting clean water for the supposed mine discharge. Such cozy relationships can save mine companies the expense of correcting their violations while ingratiating the lab to the polluters whose dirty discharges the lab made magically clean.

Each time clean water was substituted for dirty mine discharge with the fake test results submitted to DEP, there was a consequence: Excessive toxic pollutants were allowed to flow unchecked into our streams.

There is a sad history to these DMRs. In 2008, the DEP

admitted it had not even looked at the reports for five years. Since they are the primary defense against industrial pollution of our streams, it's anybody's guess how many violations went undetected.

The West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club has a stake in honest DMRs. In 2013, we conducted two coal ash-monitoring workshops for our volunteers, training them to read and understand DMRs submitted for the coal ash ponds at all of the power plants in the state for that year and, in some cases, for previous years. Those ponds discharge into our streams, and therefore have permits that require DMRs to be submitted. We found a few violations, and, of course, we now speculate whether this or similar fraud could be the reason we didn't find more.

A lab colluding to provide fake reports, the DEP ignoring those reports for years at a time and our streams being polluted as a grim result all cast in doubt whether industry self-reporting in West Virginia actually works.

This story broke in the *Gazette* in mid-October. Expect more developments when and if it continues to unfold.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Reasons abound for scrapping ACP project

Beth Little

There are big reasons why the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) should not be built — in addition to the inevitable environmental damage during construction and the massive intrusion on private property.

Natural gas is a fossil fuel. Investing \$5 billion in major infrastructure for burning more fossil fuel is not the direction we should be going. There is already an extensive network of gas pipelines (see Distribution map below. For those who understand the nasty companion to pipelines, see the Compressor map, below right).

Dominion says there are only three compressor stations planned for the ACP. With the passage of time, though, when the capacity of the pipeline needs to be increased, more such stations will be added.

It is true that burning coal produces more carbon dioxide than burning natural gas, but it is also true that methane

(natural gas) is more than 20 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, and the emissions from natural gas facilities, including pipeline leaks, means that substituting gas for coal as an energy source results in more, rather than less, global warming for many decades, according to the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Instead, we should pursue energy efficiency and renewable power.

Aside from the cost of solar energy coming down, there are ever more programs to help people go solar with energy credits, loans and community projects. David W. Mohler, senior vice president and chief technology officer for Duke Energy, the primary partner with Dominion in the ACP, has his North Carolina home equipped with solar panels and a storage battery. Duke Energy's commercial power and international businesses operate diverse power generation assets in North America

and Latin America, including a growing renewable energy portfolio.

The great thing about energy efficiency is that it saves money. I am completely baffled by people who get angry about using new light bulbs. My conservative father would roll over in his grave if he heard that I was refusing to save money on light bulbs because I didn't want to change my lifestyle.

We learned decades ago that adding more insulation to our homes will limit heat loss and allow us to be just as comfortable without using more electricity. So investing in better building construction becomes another electricity resource, just like electricity generation. Energy efficiency investments produce business and residential improvements, and eliminate the need for more electrical generation from any source, renewable or fossil fuel. Countless studies have demonstrated that energy-efficiency program investments

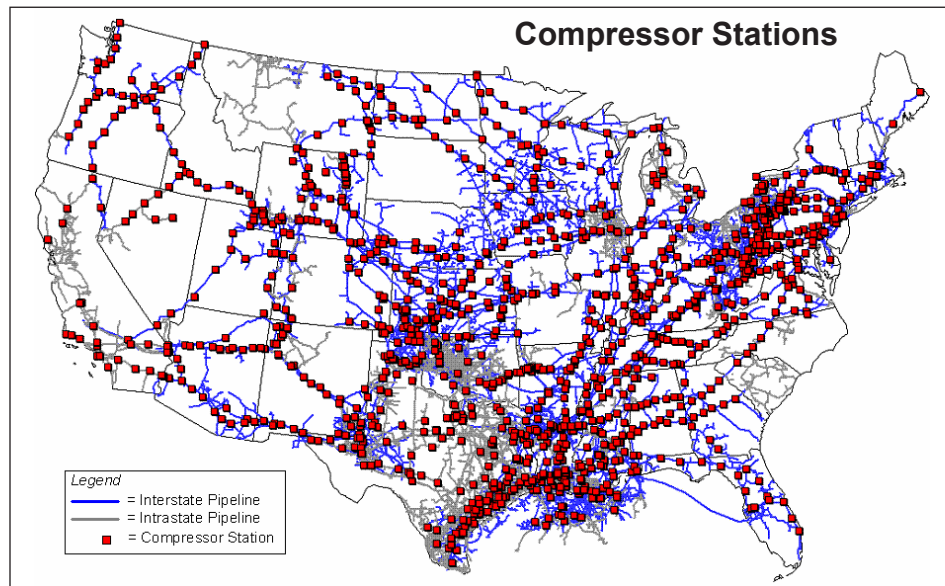
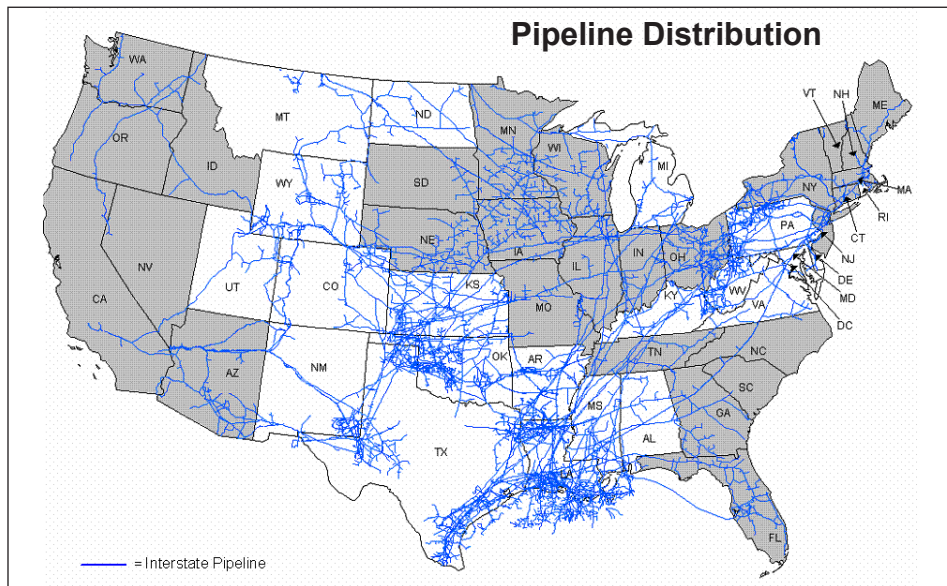
by utilities yield higher returns than do investments in new power plants.

Even with subsidies, tax credits and environmental exemptions for fossil fuels, renewables and energy efficiency are growing exponentially, creating more jobs and reducing the risks to workers. (Two-thirds of the miners killed in the Upper Big Branch mine disaster had black lung.)

Solar power made up more than half of new generating capacity in the second quarter of 2014 (GTM Research). According to the Georgetown Climate Center, 10 states have reduced their carbon emissions by at least 30 percent since 2005 with no decline in economic activity.

There are lots more examples showing that by employing energy efficiency and switching to renewables, we can lower emissions, create jobs and save money — a win, win, win.

And we don't have to tear up our mountains and national forests to do it.



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Book Review

'Tribulation' by Thomas A. Lewis, a dark novel of the near future

Review by Joe Lee, Hardy County

Sometimes, fiction writing can have a bigger, more meaningful impact on people's actions than a boatload of raw data.

Most of us have heard endless scientific testimony on climate change but have struggled to translate it into just how it could alter our every day lives. Tribulation, by Thomas A. Lewis, tells the terrifying story in a way most people will not forget. This is a book of great importance, especially to college age kids who will face the brunt of our misuse of earth. In short, it exposes the piggish behavior we have adopted and the shameful price our children and grandchildren will pay.

Most of the story happens right here in West Virginia, in Hampshire County, where

a group of survivors eke out a primitive lifestyle on a rural farm.

They have had a head start because the main characters, a retired politician and his newspaper reporter son, have seen it coming and are somewhat prepared. Those who are not are met with a grisly variety of scenarios that would scare any reader.

A motorcycle trip through Wardensville, Hardy County, is especially eerie.

To be sure this is a calamity that encases our entire nation and a good bit of the World. But it is oddly reassuring to rural West Virginians that this is the place to be when we no longer have food delivery, electricity or any communications outside of our own voices.


The breakdown of civility and order dooms most city dwellers. On a struggling

farm an experienced planter is of far more use than an Ivy League-educated lawyer.

What is most striking about the novel is that nothing in it is farfetched. Lewis has done a great deal of research and knows what he is talking about.

Through this compelling fiction, we can truly understand the consequences of trading our children's future for today's bloated conveniences. Every politician in the nation should be forced to read this book, especially those in West Virginia. It would be satisfying if Tribulation became required reading for all college freshman. This is a sobering novel that makes it all too clear that we are running out of time.

(Tribulation can be ordered on Amazon.)



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Make a quick and easy donation from the Chapter's home page: westvirginia.sierraclub.org

If you're pro-life, then you're anti-coal

Guest Editorial, *Frank Grant, Charleston*

Recently, I was walking by a shop in another state that was selling old LP records. I passed a box of free odds and ends and turned back. Something caught my eye. It was a Bob Dylan album cover from 1974 — Planet Waves — with no record inside. I tucked it under my arm.

Planet Waves, I thought. Our planet is making waves of climate warming.

Not warming, exactly, but climate chaos. Droughts, torrential rains, floods, famines, earthquakes, mudslides, avalanches, fires, hurricanes, polluted oceans, dying coral reefs and expanding species extinction — all of these are rife on our crowded and polluted home.

Our planet is waving goodbye to us.

Just open your newspapers and you'll see how weather chaos, mostly influenced by carbon/coal burning, is affecting us all. It's no longer moral to proclaim that coal keeps the lights on; wind and solar power can do that in a pro-life way — if we let it.

Why blame carbon? Carbon is not the only element causing climate chaos (as those who are pro-coal are quick to point out), but it is the most prominent one. The dirty burning of carbon is clouding the earth's atmosphere, trapping heat and causing increasing chaotic weather events. Carbon burning via coal-fired power plants is the world's major polluter. Clean coal technology? It is expensive, unproven and possibly dangerous — a questionable idea.

Who are pro-coal? The most influential seem to be coal lobbyists, people who are paid millions to proffer incorrect science, or no science at all — just emotional hysteria. Next are coal-influenced politicians, unfortunately including candidates in both major political parties. Alas, they are so disconnected from fact and feeling that they are no longer rational about the major cause of earth's changing climate.

Think that's not so? Ask them to describe their views on climate chaos and carbon burning. Likely, you will be met with silence, equivocation, even denial.

The pro-coal camp includes sloganeers who thought up the misleading "Obama's War on Coal." A changing economy and demand — not our president — are reducing reliance on coal. The industry started its decline in West Virginia long before Obama was

elected to the Senate, much less the presidency; in fact, more than 30 years ago! Who thinks of saying "The Gas Company's War on Coal" or "Solar Power's War on Coal"? How have coal companies responded to the miners they supposedly revere? They fire them rather than dramatically rethink their industry. Our president and the EPA have become scapegoats. Don't want to take responsibility for your action (or inaction)? Blame someone else: Obama, China, the devil — anyone. It is easy. It is anti-life.

Someone who is pro-coal spends lots of money touting the fear of lost coal jobs without any concrete idea on how to segue from coal burning to other industries that would be friendlier to our lungs, air, water, mountains, pets and plants.

It is true that coal still supports much of the devastated coalfield economy, yet miners generally remain poor or unemployed in these parts of the country, and the towns where they live are poor and dying.

Yet coal companies are rich. Why? ... Why not? When there is only one job opportunity, winner takes all. Who suffers? Miners and their families, for sure, but the rest of us suffer, too. Our living planet suffers. Air and water quality suffer. The beautiful mountains of West Virginia suffer. A polluted atmosphere affects every living thing. Even pro-coal backers are affected.

Pro-coal is anti-life. Pro-life is anti-coal pollution.

If coal burning is the problem, is there a solution? Climate scientists tend to believe that the solution has passed us by. In 1974, when Dylan's album came out, it would have been a good time to move toward climate sustainability. Now, nothing will stop our planet from the chaos of a warming climate.

However, we can do things to mitigate or slow the chaos. For us, in an election year, the most effective thing pro-lifers can do is not support any candidate who is pro-coal — and let them know it.

In time, candidates will get the message that pro-lifers want a cleaner planet for themselves and their children. Elect "cleaner" candidates. Tell them to support miners and their families by fighting for pro-life industries, not against EPA regulations that are meant to help them despite themselves.

It may not be enough, but it is a start to a more moral and ethical way of living.

Climate tipping points catastrophic Part 4 in an educational series on climate change

John Bird

In previous articles, I've discussed why increasing CO₂ must cause an increase in the temperature of the Earth, why CO₂ is the main culprit, and how melting ice around the world proves the earth is warming. We hope that reducing the amount of fossil fuels that are burned will return the earth to its previous temperature and all will be well.

But wait, there's a problem. In 200 years we have put a huge amount of CO₂ into the atmosphere quickly, while the Earth removes CO₂ at a much slower rate. Weathering of rocks and absorption into the oceans removes CO₂ from the atmosphere slowly and the excess CO₂ will not disperse for a thousand or more years. Because global warming will linger so long, higher temperatures might push the earth over a tipping point.

A climate tipping point is an ill-defined point when global climate changes from one stable state to another. Here is a tipping point example that illustrates the basic idea: Consider a broken glass. The glass stays intact until it is dropped. It then changes from one stable state to a new one (many sharp pieces). In its new stable state, the glass has become dangerous; it can cut someone's foot. There is no way to return the glass to its intact state.

The Earth's climate remained stable for thousands of years — in its "state" of about 280 parts per million of CO₂. About 200 years ago humans started to burn fossil fuels. Now the CO₂ is 42 percent higher, close to 400 ppm. This causes global warming. The CO₂-induced warming might cause other environmental changes that will, in turn, become tipping points, causing additional global warming.

If these new sources of global warming generate high enough temperatures, they will continue warming the earth even if we stop burning fossil fuels. We will have lost control. The new sources will continue to warm the Earth until a new stable state is reached where warming stops. That may be at a much higher temperature than desirable and will likely change the climate for the worse.

For example, permafrost contains methane hydrates — methane trapped in ice. As the increase in CO₂ warms the Earth, the higher temperature will start melting the permafrost, releasing the methane. When enough methane, a very potent greenhouse gas, escapes, it will trigger a tipping point. The methane will continue warming the earth even if we stop CO₂ emissions. We do not know where this tipping point might be.

Other possible tipping points include boreal forest dieback, Amazon rainforest dieback, loss of polar ice packs and disruption to Indian and West African monsoons, among others.

We need to start reducing the use of fossil fuels immediately. Crossing a tipping point could be catastrophic.

View from the Chair: Why we fight — Jim Sconyers Marcellus foibles: You ain't seen nothin' yet

Do you remember Old MacDonald and his famous farm? Sure you do.

Well, we're experiencing a new twist on the old nursery rhyme in West Virginia. Here it is. You can sing along — if you have the stomach for it:

"With a pipeline here, and a pipeline there, here a pipeline, there a pipeline, everywhere a pipeline pipeline...."

The Marcellus gas developers seem to propose a new pipeline every time you turn around. There's all this gas coming out of the ground, and they want to market it — especially where they can sell it for top dollar.

The so-called Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is the current poster child for these projects, and for everything that's wrong with them. It's a gigantic 42-inch diameter pipeline that would run for hundreds of miles from the

West Virginia gas fields, through Virginia and into North Carolina, with a spur to ports in Virginia.

Beth Little laments "the environmental damage during construction and the massive intrusion on private property" in a recent *Charleston Gazette* op-ed (reprinted here on page 2). The pipeline would contribute to massive erosion to many of our pristine mountain streams during construction and fragment our forest ecosystems. It would create unacceptable damage to homes and farms that it passed through.

But let's take one step back and look at the bigger picture. In the words of the gas companies themselves, this pipeline alone would induce a huge new boom in fracking in the West Virginia counties that are the epicenter of our runaway gas boom. Just talk to the folks in those counties who have suffered for years from that boom —

ruined homes and farms, poisoned water, accidents and injuries, health effects so bad some residents have had to leave their homes.

The ACP promises to make today's suffering in our gasfield communities look like a Sunday School picnic. They face a quantum leap in the scale of drilling and fracking, with a whole new generation of gas pads and their attendant industrialization in backyards and in the hills and hollers of rural West Virginia. This is "progress"?

Progress is if we, and our "leaders," wake up and embrace a future of clean energy, meeting our energy needs through clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency while creating thousands of clean green jobs right here in West Virginia — jobs that can't be sent off shore to China and that don't need thousands of out-of-state transient workers to make them happen.



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Reminiscences on our early years & SierraFest

Kathy Gregg

When I moved to West Virginia in the fall of 1976, the West Virginia Group of Potomac Chapter of the Sierra Club had just folded. Since I had been active for several years in both the North and South Carolina chapters, particularly enjoying the outings program, I immediately got in touch with folks in the Potomac Chapter about reorganizing in West Virginia.

Joined by a number of very special people — John Ostrowski, Jan Tyler, Doug and Diane Gnepp, Jim and Judy Sconyers, David and Ann Warner, Chris DeChristopher, Pat Stanley, Susan Brown, Mary Wimmer, Mary Davis, Lee Petsonk, Paul Turner and others — we resurrected the West Virginia Group in the late 1970s. Don Goldbloom and Walter Wells from Potomac Chapter were our inspiration and constant supporters as we made our decision to apply for Chapter status with the national Sierra Club.

A lot of work went into our application, which was more than an inch thick. We already had a strong record of outings and conservation work, including a fact-filled acid rain workshop organized by Chris and attended by a representative from the Canadian Embassy in Washington. By the summer of 1984, the Board of Directors approved our application and we officially became the West Virginia Chapter of Sierra Club, with all the benefits and responsibilities thereof. We held our organizational meeting in October that same year at West Virginia Wesleyan College, with two national leaders present, along with West Virginia singer/songwriter Kate Long, who wrote several songs for the occasion.

With a planning retreat held at the Catholic Conference Center near Huttonsville that November, we were off to a running start with a slate full of outings and conservation activities. Three major projects over the next few years were:

- An 83-page evaluation of the Monongahela National Forest Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan, which resulted in significantly increased acreage of roadless and wilderness candidate areas;
- The Mon Forest Recovery Project for which we rebuilt miles of trails that were almost obliterated by the 1985 flood; and
- The struggle to prevent the Davis Power Project from being built in Canaan Valley, a battle eventually won with the establishment of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

These projects were our beginning.

I wish there were room to write about all our accomplishments over the past 30 years, but for now, let's just celebrate those years and look forward to 30 more as our new friends and our children and grandchildren continue our stewardship here in West Virginia.

One way we celebrate is with annual SierraFests, or Galas, as they used to be called. This year's fest was held in beautiful Blackwater Falls State Park just as the leaves were beginning to turn and the cotton grass and nodding ladies tresses were at their peak. A number of us stayed in beautiful new cabins, while others stayed in the main lodge, where we held an ambitious training and workshop program — evidence of our continuing service to the recreation and conservation communities of West Virginia.

Breakfast for cabiners was held each morning in Cabin 29, where Harriet Nelson and Sally Wilts organized coffee, bagels, fruit and juice, while our honored guest, Chris DeChristopher, scrambled the eggs. According to Chris, Sally and Harriet claimed they didn't "do eggs." Personally, I think Chris must have a secret yen to be a short-order cook. All of us who love scrambled eggs done right say, "Thanks, Chris!"

Thanks also to Sally and Harriet who organized a terrific Saturday lunch at Cabin 29, where we enjoyed grilled hamburgers and delicious homemade dishes brought by a number of folks. And thanks to Regina Hendrix who put together the silent auction, and to everyone who participated, whether by donating items or purchasing them.

Friday evening we were treated to the video "Bidder 70" about Jeff and Chris DeChristopher's son, Tim, along with some delicious Colorado beer and wines the DeChristophers brought to help us celebrate our first 30 years.

Saturday evening found us back at the Lodge for the



Harriett Nelson and Sally Wilts in the kitchen.



30th Anniversary cake



Kathy Gregg and Mary Wimmer on outing to Lindy Point overlook near Blackwater Falls State Park.



Jeff DeChristopher, Ed Zahniser, Gary Nelson, Jim Sconyers and Jim Kotcon enjoy breakfast at Cabin 29.

More Now & Then



Jim Kotcon
now (left) and in 1993



Helen Lang
now (left) and in 1993



annual awards ceremony and official birthday party. Mary Wimmer, Chris DeChristopher and I were pleased to present brief talks about the early days of our Chapter's history.

A highlight of the awards ceremony was just after Russ Flowers had been honored with the Mountain Laurel Award, when Mary Wimmer got up and said she had something to give him. (See Russ's *Perspectives on Outings* column, page 7, for his account of this incident.)

Birthday cake followed. Yes, it was mighty delicious. We finished the evening over at Cabin 29, where we were entertained by singer/songwriter Stephen Louis Edwards while sipping more fine wine.

Sunday morning brought additional meaty presentations on current conservation issues followed by a couple of outings for folks who wanted to extend their stay and enjoy a beautiful fall day. I chose the outing to Lindy Point, where the view over the valley was breathtaking. For me it was a perfect ending for a wonderful weekend of renewing old friendships and making new friends.

Photos on these pages and on the website are courtesy of Kathy Gregg, Jody Mohr, Russ Flowers and Mary Wimmer.

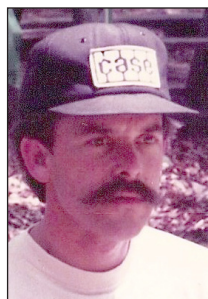
Visit westvirginia.sierraclub.org to view this newsletter in color and to see many more bonus photos from SierraFest 2014.

Celebrating 30 Years

Now & Then



Jim Sconyers
now (left) and in 1983



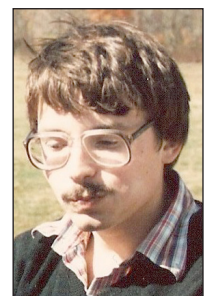
Mary Wimmer
now (left) and in 1984



Kathy Gregg
now (left) and in 1988



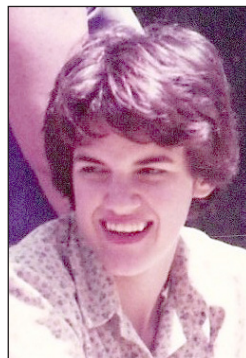
Paul Turner
now (left) and in 1984



Beth Little
now (left) and in 1993



Chris DeChristopher
now (left) and in 1983.



Thank you for your work on behalf of West Virginians

Christine DeChristopher, First WV Chapter Chair

What an energizing weekend at SierraFest 2014! I am so grateful for the invitation to attend the 30th anniversary of the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Although it has been 25 years since I moved from West Virginia following a job, it has always been a special place where I came into adulthood, started my career and family and fell in love with the rejuvenating power of wilderness. I also had the honor of working with some of the most dynamic, intelligent, hard working and joyful playing people that I have ever met — active members of the Sierra Club.

It was inspiring to see so many of those people still active in the West Virginia Chapter. The commitment and experience of people such as Jim Kotcon, Jamie Shumway, Beth Little, Mary Wimmer, Kathy Gregg and Jim Sconyers is a benefit to everyone who lives in West Virginia, whether they are appreciated or not.

The enthusiasm and knowledge of the members documenting the hazards and threats from modern fracking methods is encouraging. If everyone could see their pictures and hear their stories, then perhaps we could wake up the masses to these hazards, the way Rachel Carson enlightened the nation about pesticides, before we have destroyed regions of the country.

Many people assume that wilderness is recognized as a valuable resource for all people and wildlife, but the attacks on wilderness grow stronger every year out in the West. West Virginia has many special places worth protecting so future generations of urban dwellers will have a place of solitude and beauty to spend time and quiet their soul. My family learned to backpack in the serenity of Otter Creek Wilderness, and we are very grateful it was there for us. Since then, we have backpacked throughout the wilderness areas and national parks of the United States, always grateful those areas had been saved from the bulldozer.

As always the threats to our environment seem unending. It is only through the tireless efforts of concerned citizens that those threats are contained. Congratulations to all those who attended SierraFest, you are all heroes.

Thank you

We raised more than \$1,500 for the WV Chapter, thanks to the many contributors to the silent (and live) auctions. Becky Young was superb as auctioneer for the donated trips and a few of the bigger items, and Gary and Harriet Nelson did a fine job of merchandising the items at the main cabin.

The following businesses contributed major items. Please give them your patronage if you are shopping or have a trip in mind. You may also support our contributors by going to their Facebook pages and “liking” them, or leave reviews at Trip Advisor, Yelp, Google Places and Four Square.

Laurel Lodge in Harpers Ferry — A unique and beautiful B&B on Ridge Street, high above the Potomac River. Enjoy the gourmet breakfast and linger on their porch overlooking the river. Thank you Chris and Ed for your longtime support of the WV Chapter. Info: laurellodge.com

Adventure Center in Harpers Ferry — Whitewater rafting, whitewater and flatwater tubing, zip line tour, team building, fishing, events and more. Info: harpersferryadventurecenter.com

River Riders in Harpers Ferry — Rafting/kayaking, tubing, zip line canopy tour and overnight accommodations. Info: riverriders.com

River & Trail Outfitters in Harpers Ferry — Whitewater rafting and river tubing, canoe and kayak rentals, bike rentals, climbing wall and team building. Info: rivertrail.com

Blackwater Outdoor Adventures in Parsons — Whitewater canoeing, flatwater trips and camping. Info: blackwateroutdoors.com

Twin Spruce Marina in Morgantown — Kayaking and canoeing trips on the Mon River. Guided trips by Peggy Pings. Info: twinsprucemarina.com

Padlz at Bruceton Mills — Canoe and kayak rentals at Big Bear Lake. Info: padlz.com

Tenfold Fair Trade in Harpers Ferry — Thank you, Martha Ehlman, for the beautiful basketful of fair-trade items for our auction. Info: tenfoldfairtrade.com

Grapes & Grains in Shepherdstown — Thanks for the wine contributions. Info: grapesandgrainsgourmet.com

Green Heron Gardens in Salem — Thank you, Anne Romance and Chuck Lothes. Check out their herbal products, classes and plants. Info: 304-783-5271

Martins and Walmart in Charles Town — Thanks for the gift card contributions.

Thanks also to generous friends and relatives who contributed to our successful fundraiser: Joan Fisher, Doreen Wootton, Wendy Moseley, Lynn Shuff, John Clayton, Marie Tyler-McGraw, Mercey Spradling and Kathryn Stone

Last but not least, thanks to the Chapter members who brought items for our auction and the ones who coordinated the good food, supervised the kitchen and kept track of our reservations.

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GrapesandGrainsGourmet.com

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Natasha Baihly
President

river@rivertrail.com

river riders

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www.riverriders.com
800-326-7238

VENUE:
Blackwater Falls State Park



WV Chapter Founders: Mary Wimmer (left), Paul Turner, Kathy Gregg, Chris DeChristopher, and Jim Sconyers (right)



September 19-21



**FOOD &
 FELLOWSHIP**

Photographs by:
 Kathy Gregg
 Jody Mohr
 Mary Wimmer
 Russ & Sue Flowers



Chris DeChristopher in the kitchen, making breakfast for the crowd.



Sally Wilts (left) Mirijana Beram, Ed Zahniser, Helen Lang, Beth Little, Regina Hendrix and Mary Wimmer enjoy the breakfast made by Chris.



Bill Hughes, his wife, Mary Ann, and their grandsons, Simon and Spencer.



Mary Ann Hughes, Frank Young, Delia Delgado, Paul Wilson and Karen Yarnell help themselves to the picnic spread.



Everyone enjoys a cookout lunch outside the cabins.

SierraFest 2014 — BONUS PHOTOS



Chad Bishop teaches Basic First Aid and CPR to outings leaders, behind the Blackwater State Park Lodge.



Ben Stout discussed water issues and the inability to treat fracking wastewater



Danny Chiotos and Amanda Gardner spoke on the Chapter's Energy Efficiency Campaign



Representatives from the US Forest Service talk about "50 Years of Wilderness."

WORKSHOPS & OUTINGS



Outing to Lindy Point (left to right), Liz Wiles, Helen Lang, Russ Flowers, Mary Wimmer, Karen Yarnell, Kathy Gregg and Kelly Sykora.



Outing to Elakala Trail (left to right), Kelly Sykora, Karen Yarnell, Liz Wiles, Russ Flowers, Amanda Gardner and Alex Wyshyvanuk.

AWARDS



Jim Kotcon (left) presents David Sturm with the Mountain Laurel Award for his work as Marcellus Committee chair and ExCom member for both the Chapter and the Mon Group.



Russ Flowers, Chapter Outings chair (left), receives the Mountain Laurel Award from former Outings chair Mary Wimmer. Mary also had some long-forgotten outings fees to pass along.



Jody Mohr (left) presents the Founders Award to Bill Hughes, of the Wetzel County Action Group, for his work furthering the Chapter's goals of getting industry to respect the environment and people's health, among other things.

The Mountain Laurel Award is given to a volunteer Chapter member who has contributed to the Chapter's success.

Speakers address clean water issues at Charleston conference

Chuck Wyrstok

Concerned citizens from four states, who gathered in Charleston in early October for the third annual Wellness and Water Conference, addressed one crucial question: "What is the future for our drinking water?"

The question took on new importance this past January when 300,000 Charleston area residents and state lawmakers, who had just arrived at the capitol for the opening of the legislative session, got a rude awakening. A toxic chemical used in cleaning coal had leaked into the Elk River and contaminated the tap water supply for much of Kanawha County.

The contamination validated years of warnings from environmentalists that there were serious water pollution dangers throughout West Virginia.

City residents became aware of how people living in coal-bearing regions of the state face threats to their drinking water and their health every day from mountaintop removal and coal prep plants. They began to see how Marcellus shale drilling and waste disposal activities affect the lives of so many rural residents.

The effect rippled across the nation. How could this have happened? How can we prevent it from happening again?

The conference, which was intended to answer these questions, kicked off Friday, Oct. 3, with a reception and concert featuring fine music by Colleen Anderson and George Castelle. Then Andrew McKnight from Virginia took to the

stage with old-time Appalachian tunes and contemporary folk and blues songs.

On Saturday, participants got down to business. In a day loaded with learning and sharing, plenary speakers, panels with scientists and affected residents, plus informational tables from a host of environmental organizations, there was plenty for attendees to learn.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Rahul Gupta, executive director of the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, has been a central figure in the wake of the MCHM chemical spill. He stressed that the area's water problems are far from over and encouraged continued vigilance and improved regulations.

Helen Slottje, a 2014 Goldman Prize Winner, spoke about her efforts to help towns across New York defend themselves against oil and gas companies by passing local bans on fracking. Maria Gunnoe, a 2009 Goldman Prize Winner and OVEC staffer, described her extensive work in the coalfields of West Virginia for clean water there. Bill Hughes, of Wetzel County Action Group and OVEC, took part in the panel discussion.

The event was co-sponsored by WV Sierra Club, OVEC (Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition), WV Highlands Conservancy, WV Citizens Action Group, WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization, Doddridge County Watershed Association, People Concerned About Chemical Safety, WV FREE (Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality), and WV Sustainable Business Association.



photos ©Chuck Wyrstok

Chuck Wyrstok (right), of WV Sierra Club, hands out information to an attendee of the Wellness and Water Conference, in Charleston.

2014 Wellness and Water Conference Speakers



Dr. Rahul Gupta



Helen Slottje



Maria Gunnoe



Bill Hughes

In Memorium Jamie Shumway

On Oct. 10, 2014, at the age of 66, Jamie Shumway shuffled off his mortal coil, after a determined battle of more than six years with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Jamie was one of the organizing members of the West Virginia Chapter of Sierra Club as it got its start 30 years ago. He became the first Chair of the Monongahela Group, and because of his enthusiasm for the outdoors and passion for protecting the wild places in our state, he helped inspire many lifelong environmental activists.

He was also a founding member of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, the first statewide river advocacy group east of the Rockies. He took the lead in building relationships with environmental organizations and leaders in the state so that the rivers he loved to paddle would be protected for posterity.

His influence in saving much of West Virginia's environment has been great. He will be missed by many.

WV Chapter ExCom

plans to meet

Saturday, Nov. 8, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
West End Cafe, West Union
(Doddridge County).

All members are welcome to attend.

Agenda & info: Jim Sconyers,
304-698-9628, jimscon@gmail.com

Directions: westendfamilycafe.com

Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates. Contributions to the newsletter may be sent to the Editor at:

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Morgantown, WV 26508

**Deadline for
January/February issue**

December 4

Opinions expressed in the *Mountain State Sierran* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sierra Club. This newsletter is published bimonthly by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members.

WV Sierra Club Political Committee Endorsements 2014 General Election

Endorsements are based on candidate voting records, responses to our Candidate Questionnaire, and input from members. Please work to support these candidates and be sure to take this list with you as you go to the polls.

WV State Senate
Robin Wilson, 3rd
Don Cookman 15th

WV House of Delegates
Don Purdue, 19th
Margaret Stagers, 32nd
Barbara Hatfield, 35th
Larry Rowe, 36th
Danny Wells, 36th
Mike Puskin, 37th
Mike Manypenny, 49th
Barbara Fleischauer, 51st
Brenda Hutchinson, 58th
Daniel Lutz, 66th
Steve Skinner, 67th

Other Outings Groups

West Virginia Chapter Outings

For updated listings of outings sponsored by the West Virginia Chapter, check our Chapter website at

westvirginia.sierraclub.org

Maryland Chapter Outings

Our neighboring chapter to the east has an active outings program, with many trips coming into West Virginia or western Maryland. These outings, by highly experienced leaders, range from easy to strenuous, and are open to everyone. Join an outing by checking out their calendar at

maryland.sierraclub.org

Allegheny Group Outings

Sierra Club members in the Pittsburgh area belong to the Allegheny Group. They have a moderately active outings program as well as links to other local outdoor activities. Visit their website for an outings calendar and more details at

alleghenysc.org

Potomac Region Outings (PRO)

This is an activity section of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter, with an extensive outings program run by leaders who live in and around the Washington, D.C., area. A calendar of activities, information and updates can be found on their website at

www.sierrapotomac.org

SierraFest 2014: Looking Back & Planning Ahead

Although Sierra Fest was a few weeks ago, I wanted to reflect on the gathering — from an outings leader point of view.

Outings Leader Training (OLT) 101 was offered on Saturday morning as one of the options on the schedule. As I set up for the training in the Davis Room at the Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge, the prospective OLs started filing in. I was pleasantly surprised to find among the trainees six college students (five from WVU and one from Shepherd). They were awesome participants. Along with the others, they generated plenty of questions and lively discussion. They also provided great feedback and proposed useful suggestions to enhance the program.

One such suggestion was to have a Facebook page dedicated to outings. This page could be linked to the club's main Facebook page. Coupled with postings on the website, and our newsletter, this could improve the way our outings are advertised and, in turn, reach more people.

The group also proposed more overnight advanced training sessions such as OLT 201 be offered.

After OLT 101, the participants attended a presentation about the Birthplace of Rivers (BOR) National Monument. Since the session proved informative, I will make it a goal to have more outings to this area of the state, increasing BOR's exposure and touting its significance.

In the afternoon, we held our Basic First Aid/CPR training. We were fortunate to have a local certified instructor to teach us.

All together, there were 11 outings leaders present. We started in the Davis Room, but it was such a beautiful day that Chad, the instructor, moved the class outside, behind the lodge. With the Blackwater Canyon as a backdrop, we covered all aspects of basic first aid and CPR.

Saturday was a celebration of our chapter's birthday, with awards, slide shows from our "Founding Mothers," stories of the chapter's beginnings and, of course, cake. It was inspiring and motivating to hear from our "founding mothers." To my surprise, one of them, Mary Wimmer, called me to the podium during her talk. She had come across an old folder from her early days as outings leader chair. Back then, they used to collect a dollar from each outing participant. As Mary flipped through the folder, she found several one-dollar and five-dollar bills tucked in its pages. The pile of money slowly grew until it exceeded \$50! Sally Wilts, our treasurer, will add the cash to the chapter's account.

The weekend concluded Sunday with outings in the park. Ten members trekked to Lindy Point and Elakala Falls. The overlook at Lindy Point offered spectacular views of the Blackwater Canyon. It was a bit windy, but the short hike yielded great returns in vistas.

Elakala Falls Trail winds past the series of falls that eventually run into the Blackwater River. Yellow birch trees, hemlocks and red spruce made for a beautiful canopy, and participants saw the tea-colored waters that gave the

Blackwater its name.

Unfortunately, thunderstorms rolled in, bringing a quick end to the outings and SierraFest 2014. The old and the new acquaintances/friends gathered in the lodge parking lot to say their goodbyes and exchange emails and numbers. The glow of that weekend still surrounds the memories of a truly wonderful weekend.

Moving forward, I challenge all members, and myself, to improve and enhance our outings program. And for those who were fortunate enough to attend SierraFest this year, never

forget the chapter's strong roots and humble beginnings. Our chapter's story originated with fascinating people whose contributions laid the historical groundwork to preserve all the beauty and splendor that we enjoy when we explore West Virginia's great outdoors.

As always, feel free to contact me if you are interested in our outings program or are interested in becoming an outings leader. My contact info is in the Chapter Directory on the back page, under Outings.

Take to the Outdoors!

Chapter Outings

Sat, Nov 8

Coopers Resort SP Day-Hike

rated strenuous — This seven-mile hike is rated strenuous as it involves a 1,200-foot elevation gain. Sections of the trail are steep, rocky and slippery when wet. Allow 3 ½ hours for the hike. We will meet at the lodge in the park. To register contact trip leader.

Leader: Pam Peitz, 240-818-655, pspeitz@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Berkeley Springs, WV

Web info: cacaponresort.com

Sat, Nov 8

Mammals & Terrestrial Habitats Workshop

not rated — Join WV master naturalists for this fun, interactive, hands-on, two-part workshop on mammals and terrestrial habitats at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The workshops are free of charge and open to members and nonmembers. Please pre-register with the leader, seating is limited. Bring bag lunch (refrigerator and microwave available). Workshops are from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Meet at refuge headquarters in Williamstown at 8:30 a.m. Contact the outing leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Russ Flowers, 304-482-7919, russwvu@gmail.com

Nearest town: Williamstown, WV

Web info: fws.gov/northeast/ohioriverislands

Sat, Nov 15

Valley Falls SP Day-Hike

rated moderate — Join us for a moderate hike at Valley Falls State Park. We will do an out-and-back hike on the Rhododendron Tail. We'll see the "hidden" waterfall at the end of the trail. This is a short hike of about four miles, with some steep sections. Bring your camera, as there are some great photographic opportunities. Also bring water. Sturdy footwear and trekking poles are highly recommended. Contact the outing leader to register and for directions to the rendezvous point.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Fairmont, WV.

Web info: valleyfallsstatepark.com

Sat, Nov 15

Coopers Rock Autumn Adopt-a-Trail Service Outing

rated easy (hiking) to moderate (work intensity) — Join the fun with the fall trail maintenance for Sierra Club's adopted Intermediate Cross-Country Ski Trail at Coopers Rock South. Fall clean-up emphasizes clearing fallen leaves, drainage restoration and trail clearing along a 1.25-mile loop. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots and carry work gloves, water and snacks. Useful tools to bring are long-handled pruners, rakes and pointed shovels.

Adults and adolescents are invited to help; those under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Volunteers will be required to sign a standard Sierra Club Liability Waiver and a DNR Volunteer Work Program Agreement. Please pre-register with the leader.

Leader: Ann Devine-King, 304-594-2636, atdtking@gmail.com

Nearest City: Morgantown, WV

Web info: coopersrockstateforest.com; coopersrock.org

Fri-Sun, Nov 21-23

Holly River SP Camping & Hiking

rated strenuous — This outing will expose people to the numerous trails and waterfalls at Holly River State Park. This two-day hiking trip will be based from the same campground. Day 1 will include an easy 15-mile hike to Tenskwatawa Falls and back. Day 2 will include a strenuous 15-mile hike up to Potato Knob and back. Plan to camp out Friday night, hike Saturday, camp Saturday night, hike Sunday, and be home by Sunday evening. For questions and to register contact trip leaders.

Leader: Brian Bellew, 304-261-2461, bbellew@mix.wvu.edu

Leader: Erica Staats, 304-834-2026, estaats@mix.wvu.edu

Nearest town: Hacker Valley, WV

Web Info: hollyriver.com

Sat, Dec 13

Gambrill SP Day-Hike

rated moderate — This six-mile hike will explore one of the few places that does not allow hunting this time of year. Allow about 2 ½ hours for the trek. We will meet at the trailhead in the park. To register contact trip leader.

Leader: Pam Peitz, 240-818-655, pspeitz@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Frederick, MD

Web info: dnr2maryland.gov

Sierra Club Liability Policies For Chapter Outings

Sierra Club outings are open to everyone, members and non-members alike. Each outing is intended to be a wholesome, safe, and enjoyable experience in the outdoors. Participants must have suitable clothing, gear, and stamina, and are encouraged to select activities that match their individual abilities for outdoor adventures.

The Club offers a variety of outings from "easy" to "moderate" to "strenuous" that suit all activity levels. The difficulty of each outing is clearly designated in the announcement. Reservations are generally not required unless noted, but the outing leader may be contacted in advance for questions about the terrain, the difficulty and recommended gear.

Activities are normally held "rain or shine," but may be postponed at the leader's discretion for safety reasons in the event of inclement weather. Participants are reminded that all out-door activities carry a degree of risk, and some take place in locations where professional emergency medical aid may be two or more hours away. People with health concerns should consult a physician to determine the advisability of participating in these or similar activities. The leader is responsible for the safety of all participants, and has the final authority to decide whether or not an individual may participate on a specific outing. Sierra Club safety policy requires that helmets be worn on bicycling outings, and a personal flotation device (PFD) be worn when using personal watercraft such as kay-aks or canoes.

Unless noted in the announcement, Club outings are intended for adults. Children and

dogs are not normally permitted, unless an out- ing is so designated. Minors (under 18 years of age) must be accompanied by a parent or a legal guardian, or they must have both 1) a signed permission slip, and 2) the leader's prior consent to participate in the Club outing. Sierra Club outings officially begin and end at the trailhead.

Travel to the official starting point and back, even from an advertised meeting place, is the sole responsibility of each participant. While the Club encourages car-pooling, such arrangements are strictly between the riders and the drivers, and are not a part of the outing. Participants assume full responsibility and liability for all risks associated with such travel.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver, which can be viewed on the web at www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms or by calling 415-977-5630.

The Sierra Club does not charge for chapter outings, although payment of park entrance fees, a share of campsite rental costs, permit fees, equipment rental charges, etc. may be re- quired from the participants. The Sierra Club practices "leave-no-trace" trail techniques, in- cluding hiking and camping on durable surfaces, minimizing campfire impacts, packing out all trash, respecting wildlife, being considerate of other visitors, and leaving the environment as it was found.

The Sierra Club's California Seller of Travel identification number is CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.



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West Virginia Chapter
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email: governor@wvgov.org

To Contact STATE LEGISLATORS

email to WV Legislature:
cglagola@mail.wvnet.edu
(Put name of recipient under subject)

Messages for legislators can be left at:
1-877-565-3447 or 304-347-4836

Mail address:

Member, WV Senate or
House of Delegates
Bldg 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

website: www.legis.state.wv.us
has contact information for all state legislators.

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For planned giving in West Virginia, contact Paul Wilson at 304-725-4360

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