



IROQUOIS

MESSENGER

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

SERVING ON THE CUOMO TRANSITION TEAM

By Rhea Jezer, Iroquois Group Political Chair

When I was asked to serve on Governor Andrew Cuomo's transition team, I enthusiastically said yes. I have known Andrew Cuomo for many years and want to help him succeed as Governor. I was asked by Attorney General Elect Eric Schneiderman to co-chair his transition team. Since I had been heavily involved in the writing of his environmental policy papers I could not refuse. As I have been working with the Environmental Bureau for the past few years, I promised him during the campaign that I would be there for him.

I did not realize how much work each of the transition teams would entail. The committees took many trips to New York City (there is no reimbursement). Since I was the only person from Central and Western New York, I felt compelled to be there to give our region a voice.

For the Governor's transition team, I was on the environment and energy committee, which was charged with interviewing and helping to choose the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner. The DEC and its responsibilities

have grown immensely and its mission is much more complicated than it was when established in 1970. Its original mission has not been revisited since its inception. Because of severe budget cuts, over 800 jobs were cut in the last few months. The agency is in true distress. A new

commissioner will have to severely tighten the working of the agency. After reading hundreds of resumes, our committee narrowed our search to a few candidates whom we interviewed. I am very pleased with the choice made, Joe Martens, whom I know well and trust to do a great job. He is skilled and knowledgeable. I hope we will all support him and work with him.

For the Attorney General, my co-chair and I interviewed candidates for the position of Deputy Attorney General for Social Justice, which oversees several bureaus, the largest being the Environmental Bureau. That is the bureau which handles all environmental litigation for the state. We recommended a truly superb woman, Janet Sabel, who was recently hired. We are now interviewing for the head of the Environmental Bureau.

It was indeed exciting and an honor to be on these committees even though the work I needed to put in as well as the expense of travel and taking away from my "real job" put me back quite a bit. It is now the job of each of us to support the new Governor and Attorney General as well as monitor their roles in keeping our environmental agenda in the forefront. ■

Seventh Annual Symposium on Energy in the 21st Century: *Reducing Our Carbon Footprint — Choosing The Right Path*

April 8, 2011, 7:30am -2pm, "The Links" in East Syracuse

Introductions: Rhea Jezer, Chair; Joanie Mahoney, Onondaga County Executive; Frank Murray, President & CEO, NYSERDA; Tom DiNapoli, New York State Comptroller

Plenary:

Individual actions add up: Peter Lehner, Executive Director, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

How are businesses leading as a positive role: Kenneth Adams, President of New York State Business Council

Carbon footprint and climate change: Eileen Claussen, President of the Pew Center on Global Climate Change

How our State Government plans to be pro-active: Joe Martens, Commissioner, DEC (invited)

Green buildings - new standards: Rick Fedrizzi, President & Founding Chair, U.S. Green Building Council

Sustainable agriculture & rural development — how does this relate to our carbon footprint?: Jill Harvey, State Director USDA Rural Development

Panel discussion with morning panelists: Kit Kennedy, Counsel to Air & Energy Program, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Moderator (*All plenary speakers will be on panel.*)

Breakfast & buffet lunch included.

Adult \$40 Student/limited income \$20

Register now: www.energy21symposium.org

IROQUOIS GROUP CONTACT INFO

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IROQUOIS MESSENGER IS PUBLISHED

SPRING, SUMMER, FALL & WINTER

SUBMIT ARTICLES TO: JENNAMAYOTTE@GMAIL.COM

Know of an interesting Central New York walking trail? Have an idea for a program?

We welcome suggestions for either!

Please email:

Tasha Cooper, tasha.cooper@gmail.com, or
Jenna Mayotte, jennamayotte@gmail.com.

FROM THE CONSERVATION CHAIR

by Linda A. DeStefano

As Chair of the Biodiversity/Vegetarian Outreach Committee of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, I “tabled” at the “Bridging Education for Sustainability” gathering at the Syracuse Center of Excellence on Nov. 13, about environmental problems caused by animal agriculture and the benefits of plant-based eating.

- On Nov. 13 the Gandee Gallery in Fabius hosted “Preserving A Sense of Place,” a conversation about the importance of conservation and the impact of energy choices in Central New York. Martha Loew and Jack Ramsden of the Gas Drilling Task Force of the Atlantic Chapter talked about the history of natural gas drilling in New York State and the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing for gas.
- I wrote an article about hydrofracking for the newsletter of *Beavers: Wetlands and Wildlife*, which has a mailing list of people throughout the U.S. and internationally. Fracking will harm beavers and other wildlife as habitat is destroyed and water polluted.
- Iroquois member Derrick Tingley's Nov. 28 letter in the Syracuse Post-Standard questioned the claim by some that fracking will be a financial boon for NY. He concluded: “Maybe we should be developing truly sustainable energy sources that create truly sustainable jobs.” On the same day, my letter cited a paper by Susan Christopherson, professor at Cornell University, about the boom and bust cycle of economic activity from gas drilling. I also cited Robert

Howarth, another professor at Cornell, who calculates that natural gas produces as much, if not more, greenhouse gas emissions as coal over a 20-year-period (largely due to leaks of methane, a greenhouse gas more powerful than CO₂).

- I am representing the Iroquois Group in conference calls of representatives from organizations concerned about New York government's draft plan on climate, which includes a recommendation for four new nuclear energy facilities in NYS. The Sierra Club is opposed to nuclear energy. There is no safe storage for radioactive waste, some of which is dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years. West Valley, NY, is the site of a nuclear waste dump, and toxic material is slowly moving toward the Great Lakes. Nuclear facilities require uranium mining, a very destructive process. The day-to-day operation of nuclear plants releases radioactivity. Storage of spent fuel rods on-site is a target for terrorists. Wall Street does not consider nuclear energy a profitable investment so our taxes continue to subsidize the nuclear industry. That tax money put instead into safe sources of energy, energy efficiency and conservation would yield tangible benefits, including “green” jobs.

If you want more information or handouts about any of the issues above or want to become involved, please contact me (see contact info at left). ■

Congratulations to Iroquois Group Chair Martha Loew on her election as an at-large Atlantic Chapter delegate. We appreciate Martha's efforts locally and state-wide.



FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Tree huggers,

For many years now, Bernie Marcus has been cheerfully and efficiently "doing" Sierra calendar sales. This includes ordering, taking orders and getting them to you, whether by mail or dogsled (sometimes needed on his snowy Pompey hill). He developed this into a fine skill and we almost never had any left over (a good thing!) Now having reached the peak, he is moving on to perfecting his geothermal home and training the sled dogs. **Thank you Bernie, for a job so well done.**

Our calendars serve 2 purposes, making money and providing beautiful Sierra publicity as they hang on

walls or sit on desks.

The good news is that Rocki Malamud has volunteered to "calendar." So thanks again Bernie, and welcome Rocki.

My yard is snowy and quiet, must be too deep for the deer. The skunk and woodchucks are asleep. So only a few squirrels. Lots of very hungry birds of all kinds and, as every year, top attendees are, of course, chickadees and cardinals. More than the usual numbers of red-bellied woodpeckers.

Sadly, the usually successful revival technique on the kamikaze cardinals failed last week, and the scene is missing one beautiful red cardinal, cutting the count down to 15. I have every device I know of on that window but it seems to be a



fatal attraction. Even two cats sitting and looking out does not do the trick.

This has certainly been a cold and snowy winter, hope you all have stayed warm and enjoyed our great Central New York both in and out.

For the Earth and all its Critters,
Martha Loew

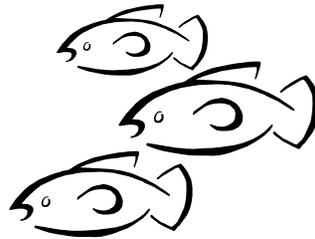
LAKE VIEWS

By Richard Slingerland, *Water Issues Reporter*

September 2010

Thanks to all those who helped clean Southwick Beach and Lakeview Marsh in May. It seems our efforts are making progress. The beach is the cleanest I have ever seen it. We had help from a public service worker who cleaned for two weeks in July. He did a great job.

Hundreds of dead fish washed up in the past, but that has stopped. It appears the VHS (Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia) epidemic has run its course and the fish have developed immunity. The only downside was an algae bloom after the 4th, which fouled the shore north of Sandy Creek inlet for two weeks. It was pretty nasty. This was the worst algae growth I've ever seen there.



The use by beach goers of the wild beach seems to have diminished, which is puzzling considering the excellent conditions and the weather.

January 2011

In the winter, access to the beach is by skis or snowshoes. The road into the park is plowed to the toll booth. Visitors can park there and use the trail or road to ski in, or go to the boat launch, which is plowed for ice fishermen. One can ski across the pond or take the trail around it.

In the early spring one is able to view massive ice jams which line the beach. ■

SATURDAY, MAY 21, 10:30 A.M. ANNUAL BEACH CLEANUP

Join up with other groups to make the shores of Lake Ontario proud. This is an annual event and to be greener we will organize ride shares. If you are a willing driver or looking for a ride, please contact mloew@twcny.rr.com. To make it easier we will meet at a downtown location near route 81.

Bring a lunch, a drink and long arms to pick up. Think of it as an archeological dig—you would be amazed at what is someone else's trash.

We will meet at Southwick Beach at 10:30. Leaders will be Rich Slingerland and a Park Ranger. Bags are furnished and picked up by truck—so no heavy lugging. Lunch on the beach with a great view.

No park fees for volunteers.



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SEASONAL EVENTS

Sierra Club Indoor and Outdoor events encourage us to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet. They are free and open to everybody. Parks may charge entry fees.

ExCom meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Jamesville train station. Sierra Iroquois members only, for business and strategy sessions.

INDOOR EVENTS

Indoor programs are held the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m., at University United Methodist Church (UUMC), 1085 E. Gene-see St. Park and enter on University Ave. and look for Sierra Club signs.

Updates, cancellations and information at newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois or 492-4745.

FEBRUARY 23: SAVE THE RAIN

A report on the ambitious County public campaign to remove 250 millions gallons of rain water from the sewer system. From rain barrels, to green roofs, to wetlands—we all are part of this effort.

MARCH 23: A LITTER ROUNDTABLE

Please join us for a roundtable discussion with city and community representatives on the topic of litter.

Ideas and suggestions from all will be welcome.

APRIL 27: THE CASE FOR REDISTRICTING (CO-SPONSORED WITH LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS)

The decennial census is complete, and now it's time for legislative and congressional redistricting. Much of our work involves reaching out to our representatives for legislative issues so this is an important opportunity that comes only once every 10 years.

MAY 25, 7:00–9:30 P.M.: HYDROFRACKING NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

A presentation by speakers providing an update on the economics, safety, and health issues of this process. Economists, researchers and doctors will present the latest in facts and figures from Southern Tier and Pennsylvania. Check for details on our website by April 15.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Unless otherwise noted outdoor programs are on Sundays at 2 p.m. at various interesting locations. **No RSVP necessary.**

MARCH 6: CLARK RESERVATION STATE PARK, JAMESVILLE NY

There will be a guided Trees in Winter Identification Walk led by Gordon Heisler of the Council of Park Friends, and for those who prefer just to walk with company, a Trail T romp on one of the Clark trails. Trails will be selected for late winter accessibility. Meet in the main parking lot and look for the Sierra sign.

APRIL 3: HIKE IN CAMILLUS FOREST UNIQUE AREA

The “crown jewel” of this DEC-owned property is a 40-acre forest located in its southwest corner. It is a magnificent old sugar maple and American beech forest that is nearly two centuries old and is one of the finest examples of a mature northern hardwood forest in Central New York. This hike is gentle, some hills, for about a 2.5 mile loop, but as usual, hikers can chose to make it shorter. Meet in the main parking lot and look for the Sierra sign.

SATURDAY, MAY 21, 10:30 A.M.: ANNUAL BEACH CLEANUP

See Page 3 for details. ■