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In Remembrance Marilyn Skolnick

The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club recently lost one of our most productive and influential members. Marilyn Skolnick died on December 10, 2016: a month shy of her 92nd birthday.

For Marilyn, environmental issues were the central issues in her life, and in her various activities she served as a valuable critic and contributor. Marilyn made very significant contributions to the Sierra Club, both to the Allegheny Group and to the Pennsylvania Chapter. In the Allegheny Group, she sat on the Executive Committee and was chair from 1986-1988. She was also air quality chair, co-conservation chair, and transportation committee chair. For the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club, Marilyn was land use and transportation co-chair and sat on the Chapter’s Executive Committee starting in 1986. She was also a leadership member of GASP (Group Against Smog and Pollution). In addition, Marilyn hosted a local cable television program, with very useful discussions of environmental issues.



Public transportation was a major focus for Marilyn. She was on the Board of Directors for the Port Authority of Allegheny County from 1982-1995; president of the Allegheny County Transit Council from 1997-1999; and its vice president in 1999-2000; and a member of the Pennsylvania Transportation Advisory Committee starting in 1983. For the Transportation Research Board, she was also chair of its Citizen Participation Committee. From 1992-2007, she was a member of the Pennsylvania Small Business Compliance Advisory Committee; and from 2004-2006 a member of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Mobility Plan for Pennsylvania.

Another of Marilyn’s major areas of focus was air pollution: she was a member of the Allegheny County Health Department’s Air Pollution

“Marilyn” Continued on Page 2

The Sierra Club is now the nation’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization - with more than two million members and supporters. *The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club* was organized in the early 1970s. It is one of 10 groups comprising the Pennsylvania Chapter.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

“Marilyn” Continued from Page 1

Central Advisory Committee from 1985 through 2009, and she was the chair of its Pollution Prevention Committee from 2004-2009. She served on subcommittees of the Allegheny County Health Department and the county’s Emergency Management Council. Marilyn was also a member of the Pennsylvania Small Business Compliance Advisory Committee (part of the Pennsylvania DEP’s Bureau of Air Quality) from 1992-2007.

Because she so clearly understood the importance of planning for environmental issues, Marilyn was also a member of the Allegheny County Local Emergency Planning Committee from its inception in 1988; and of the Public Participation Team of the Allegheny County Comprehensive Planning Committee starting in 2008. From 1983-1985 Marilyn was the Chair of the Monroeville City Planning Commission (which “holds public hearings to receive proposals as well as environmental impact statements prior to action on land subdivision or other likely environmental disturbances, including but not limited to the use of public facilities, drainage systems, traffic flow, public safety, schools, and recreation,” per their website).

Marilyn received her bachelor’s degree in anthropology from the Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, her master’s degree in geology from the University of Oklahoma, and did postgraduate work at the State University of Iowa. She was a member of the National Academy of Sciences from 1987 through 1994. Her husband Herbert Skolnick was a geologist for Gulf Oil Company for many years. They were married for more than six decades, and Marilyn accompanied him to the locations in which he was stationed, including Texas, California, Nigeria, and the Canary Islands.

Marilyn’s contributions to the environment – in Allegheny County, in Pennsylvania – would be hard to over-state. **We miss her a very great deal.**

RESISTANCE

In the week after Donald Trump was elected president, I participated in a street demonstration and march which assembled on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh. At least a thousand people turned out, most of them young and most of them students. In fact, the demonstration had been organized, on short notice, by a group of Pitt students. As we marched, there were chants of “Black lives matter!” and in support of immigrant rights, reproductive rights, LGBT rights and in favor of taking strong action to combat climate change. As we marched that evening, plans were already being made by various groups to travel to Washington, DC, on January 20 to protest Mr.

Trump’s inauguration and by women’s activists to march the following day in support of women’s rights.

Tens of thousands of protesters

thousands nationwide have protested Trump’s attempt to ban immigrants and refugees from seven predominantly Muslim nations.

In a word, millions of people in



arrived in Washington on Inauguration Day and at least a half-million women marched there on January 21. More recently, hundreds of

the United States and around the world have hit the streets to express anger and outrage over Mr. “Resistance” Continued on Page 3

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Trump’s obvious disregard for truth and fact, his penchant for bullying, his erratic behavior which has many questioning his psychological stability, and, with the exception of Dr. Ben Carson, his all white and wealthy cabinet picks. These include Betsy DeVos for the Department of Education, with no experience in public education (confirmed); and Rick Perry for the Department of Energy who in 2011 proposed scrapping the Energy Department while he was seeking the Republican nomination for president. He has also nominated Scott Pruitt to head the Environmental Protection Agency – a man who criticized federal environmental regulations, emphasizing a states-based approach (confirmed). Trump himself believes that climate change is a “hoax” perpetrated by the Chinese to undermine U.S. industry.

This outpouring of dissent against the ugly words and outrageous actions of the Trump administration and the depredations of the Republican Congress has a name. It is being called The Resistance.

It is important to emphasize that The Resistance is not just about Donald Trump. In fact, all too often Mr. Trump’s antics and tweeting create the media chaos that provides cover for the real harm the Republican-controlled Congress is inflicting upon the nation.

For example, recently the Republican Congress, both House and Senate, voted to repeal the Interior Department’s “Stream Protection Rule” designed, according to the New York Times, to “protect 6,000 miles of streams and 52,000 acres of forests by keeping coal mining debris away from nearby

waters” (<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/02/02/us/politics/02reuters-usa-congress-coal.htm>). Such debris is primarily a product of surface mining and mountaintop removal. The Rule also mandated that companies restore mined areas to their original physical state and would have, again according to the Times, “effectively made mountaintop removal uneconomical [according to] experts.” Now the Rule is gone. And as of this writing the Republican-controlled House has voted to repeal an Interior Department rule designed to phase in cutbacks of methane flaring on public lands. “Methane flaring” is a process by which oil and gas drillers deal with unwanted pockets of methane by burning it off instead of trying to contain it. Methane is a far more potent climate-changing greenhouse gas than is carbon dioxide.

I expect this repeal will easily pass in the Senate.

The Sierra Club Allegheny Group is proud to be a part of The Resistance. We affirm our solidarity with all who stand to be hurt by the new regime in Washington. We stand with Black Lives Matter, with women, with the LGBT community, with workers and the Fight for Fifteen. We stand with the undocumented immigrants and we say No! to Trump’s delusional wall on the Mexican border. We stand against religious discrimination and especially against the hatred directed at our Muslim sisters and brothers. And we stand with the Water Protectors and the Earth Protectors amongst the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies in North Dakota. We say to President Trump No! to DAPL and No! to a revival of Keystone XL.

“Resistance” Continued on Page 4



But as environmentalists we must acknowledge the fact that the ecological legacy of the Trump regime, with its fealty to the fossil fuel industry and its apparent intent to return to those thrilling days of yesteryear when smokestacks belched dirt into our skies and factory drainpipes poured poisons into our rivers and streams, will, unless met with the fiercest resistance, be nothing short of disastrous. Not only has Trump appointed the former CEO of Exxon-Mobil, Rex Tillerson, as Secretary of State: his designate to head the EPA, former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, is a man who, according to the former head of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, “has advocated and stood up for the profits of business, be it the poultry companies or the energy industry and other polluters, at the expense of people who have to drink the water or breathe the air.” Meanwhile in Congress, Rep. Lamar Smith (R., Texas), a staunch climate denier and chair of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, has vowed to “Make the EPA Great Again” which, of course, means just the opposite.

This necessitates that within The Resistance we must bring forth a Green Resistance by committing ourselves to stopping these pillagers of our planet by all non-violent means necessary: through the courts and at the ballot box when we can and in the streets when we must.

Let us commit to making American Green Again, because Green is truly Great.

Mike Pastorkovich

Chair, Sierra Club Allegheny Group

Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing

Meeting hosted by Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ) Jemez, New Mexico, December 1996.

Activists meet on Globalization

On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the “Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade.” The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering out common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations. The following “Jemez Principles” for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants.

#1 Be Inclusive:

If we hope to achieve just so-

cieties that include all people in decision-making and assure that all people have an equitable share of the wealth and the work of this world, then we must work to build that kind of inclusiveness into our own movement in order to develop alternative policies and institutions to the treaties policies under neo-liberalism.

This requires more than tokenism, it cannot be achieved without diversity at the planning table, in staffing, and in coordination. It may delay achievement of other important goals, it will require discussion, hard work, patience, and advance planning. It may involve conflict, but through this conflict, we can learn better ways of working together. It’s about building alternative institutions, movement building, and not compromising out in order to be accepted into the anti-globalization club.

#2 Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing:

To succeed, it is important to reach out into new constituencies, and to reach within all levels of leadership and membership base of the organizations that are already involved in our networks. We must be continually building and strengthening a base which provides our credibility, our strategies, mobilizations, leadership development, and the energy for the work we must do daily.

#3 Let People Speak for Themselves

We must be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard. Ways must be provided for spokespersons to represent and be responsible to the affected constituencies. It is important for organizations to clarify their roles, and who they represent, and to assure accountability within our structures.

“Jemez” Continued on Page 5

#4 Work Together In Solidarity and Mutuality

Groups working on similar issues with compatible visions should consciously act in solidarity, mutuality and support each other’s work. In the long run, a more significant step is to incorporate the goals and values of other groups with your own work, in order to build strong relationships. For instance, in the long run, it is more important that labor unions and community economic development projects include the issue of environmental sustainability in their own strategies, rather than just lending support to the environmental organizations. So communications, strategies and resource sharing is critical, to help us see our connections and build on these.

#5 Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves

We need to treat each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level, in this country and across borders. Defining and developing “just relationships” will be a process that won’t happen overnight. It must include clarity about decision-making, sharing strategies, and resource distribution. There are clearly many skills necessary to succeed, and we need to determine the ways for those with different skills to coordinate and be accountable to one another.

#6 Commitment to Self-Transformation

As we change societies, we must change from operating on the mode of individualism to community-centeredness. We must “walk our talk.” We must be the values that we say we’re struggling for and we must be justice, be peace, be community.

Thank You

Thank you for allowing me to be the Chair of the Allegheny Group (ALG) of the Sierra Club these past five years. In January I stepped down as Chair and am delighted to transfer that leadership into the VERY capable hands of Mike Pastorkovich. Since 2004, I’ve had the privilege of being involved in ALG activities. During those years I learned a great deal about the Sierra Club in general and the amazing history of this particular Group from many other wonderful leaders and volunteers.

During the past five years, I’ve written in the Notes from the Chair about our victories and our challenges. I’m very enthusiastic about the fact that over these years, the National Sierra Club and our local Group expanded their mission from being focused only on Environmental Issues to including Environmental & Social

Justice Issues. Poor air quality, toxic waste dumps, poor water quality tend to reside disproportionately in low income communities. The impact on the health and economic vitality of such communities has been significant. Expanding our efforts is the right thing to do.

You will note by the listing at the end of this newsletter that many new, energetic, knowledgeable, and committed people have taken on Leadership roles in our Group, which will keep our work sustainable and effective. I will continue to be an active volunteer with the ALG as a member of the Executive Committee, co-chair of the Political Committee, a liaison to Pittsburgh United, and our delegate to the PA Chapter Executive Committee. I thoroughly enjoy working with this wonderful group of leaders and making a difference.

The results of the Presidential election last November have motivated

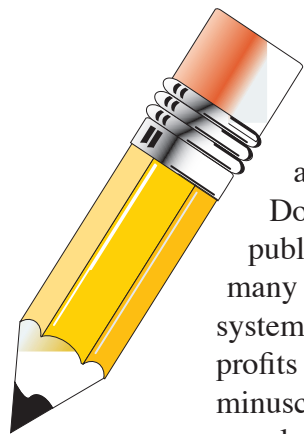


many others, locally and nationally, to become active when they had not been before. We are thrilled to see that happen. Now more than ever we need to continue our fight for the viability of this planet as a home for future generations.

Barb Grover

Notes from the Chair:

Making a Difference



Assuming the Chair of the Sierra Club Allegheny Group at the dawn of Donald Trump presidency might seem to some to be analogous to getting a job on the Titanic just before she took off on her maiden voyage. And I would like to say to our outgoing Chair Barbara Grover, whose outstanding stewardship over the last five years has set a standard difficult to match and impossible to surpass: your timing in deciding to step down in the months before you-know-who and you-know-what hit the fan was such a stroke of good luck for you that you should consider playing the lottery despite the abysmal odds!

However, I believe that the Trump presidency along with the Republican control of Congress presents a unique opportunity not just to "hold the line" until we can elect a Democrat four years down the road, but an opportunity to "break

the fever" of climate denial, if you will, and to expose, once and for all, the insidious system that Donald Trump and the Republicans and, yes, even all too many Democrats front for: the system which places corporate profits and the resulting wealth of a minuscule fragment of the human population ahead of everything else including the continuation of life on our mutual home, the earth.

Let us face the fact that the comportment of the Trump administration toward the environmental movement is almost certain to be of open hostility and aggressive political warfare. In the past, even presidents like Ronald Reagan, who was no friend of the environment, at least gave lip service to the concept of protecting it, while in Donald Trump we have a president who openly espouses the idea that global warming is a hoax invented by the Chinese to cripple American industry and who has appointed men to head the EPA and the Energy Department who believe that those departments should not even exist. In a word, these aren't your father's right-wing nuts. These guys live in a whole other dimension of space and time and mind that those of us of a certain age know as the "Twilight Zone."

Furthermore, Trump and the GOP are not just declaring war on the environment. They are preparing for war against the sick by repealing Obamacare; against the elderly by "reforming" Medicare and Social Security; and against Mexican immigrants, Muslims, women's rights and the rights of the LGBT community. And the "dog-whistle" racism of Mr. Trump's campaign

as well as its embrace by the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-nazis of the so-called "alt-right" bodes especially ill for African-Americans and the Black Lives Matter movement. Clearly, as Ben Franklin said, we must indeed all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.

The upside of having a regime in Washington so openly hostile to the things and causes we hold dear is that there is no room for equivocation and no excuse for sitting on the fence. Sides are being drawn. Environmentalists and progressives in general are more motivated than they have been for eight years. When Democrats are in charge of one or more branches of the government, many liberals decide it is time to take a well-deserved "vacation" and let the Dems take care of business. But, unfortunately, all too often for Democrats as well as for Republicans, "taking care of business" means taking care of the needs and desires of business at the expense of we the people and of the planet which is our common home.

Yes, progress has been made on many fronts during the Obama era, but not as much as we could have hoped. The much ballyhooed COP21 agreement merely commits the signee nations to meet voluntary goals for cutting emissions of greenhouse gases, and even if all those goals are met, which is unlikely, it will still be far from sufficient for keeping global temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has still not been declared a National Monument, and the fate of Standing Rock is still up in the air. While

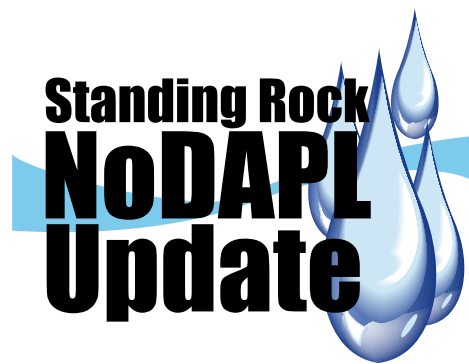
"Notes" Continued on Page 7

President Obama was taking steps to cut greenhouse gas emissions here at home, his state department was helping the coal industry sell its wares in place like China and India. And for those still mourning the electoral loss of Hillary Clinton, it might be comforting to remember that Secretary Clinton was ready to rubber stamp approval for the Keystone XL pipeline in 2009 on the basis of an environmental impact study performed by the very company that was building the pipeline, and that it was only after the environmental movement raised rowdy hell that the EPA blocked the project until further study was done. My point here is that even if Hillary Clinton had been elected, we would have still have had our work cut out for us.

Still, there is no denying that in the Era of Trump we are likely to face challenges and dangers unprecedented in our history. Donald Trump's quest for the presidency was grounded upon arousing anger, hatred and resentment against some of the most vulnerable members of our society. In tandem with an all-out assault on the environment, and whether or not President Trump keeps his promises to deport millions of undocumented immigrants or to register Muslims, we can be certain that many of the uglier elements in our society will, rightly or wrongly, feel empowered by the Trump victory to act out their aggressions against those who cannot claim membership in the white, straight majority. Indeed, a rash of hate-crimes by whites against minorities has been reported since the day after the November elections. I believe it is our duty to unambiguously stand with the victims of such aggressions, whether perpetrated officially by the incoming administration or unofficially by bigots and haters who believe, rightly or wrongly, that such behavior is sanctioned by that administration.

Nearly 50 years ago, on April 4, 1967, a year to the day before his assassination, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered a sermon at the Riverside Church in New York City that has been titled "Beyond Vietnam." In that sermon, Dr. King states that "our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism," and he urges us to "rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world." In accepting the Chair of the Sierra Club Allegheny Group in the Era of Trump, I accept Dr. King's challenge and I make the commitment to work toward building that new and better world to the best of my ability.

Mike Pastorkovich, Chair, Sierra Club Allegheny Group



As with many social justice movements, the situation of the struggle for justice is continuously changing. In the last three months what has happened on the ground at Standing Rock has been an ebb and flow of change ranging from intense police violence, to beautiful victories, to the change in seasons, and a change in White House power.

For a brief overview: since April 2016 the Standing Rock Sioux Nation has been in resistance to the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) that is proposed to span from North Dakota to Illinois. The pipeline would carry fracked crude oil through Indigenous land and across many bodies of water. Water Protectors have been fighting for Indigenous sovereignty and the protection of sacred water, centering the Indigenous women, prayer, and action.

Below is a brief timeline (from mid-November until now) of the actions at Standing Rock. While the continued resistance of the Water Protectors is always present at Standing Rock, solidarity actions are building throughout the

country and the world. In Western Pennsylvania we have held solidarity protests, mindfulness walks, and fundraisers. On November 21, 2016, six women, some from Pittsburgh, were arrested protesting TD Bank's investments within the DAPL project.

November 20, 2016: Extreme human rights abuses – police violently attack peaceful Water Protectors with water cannons in subzero temperatures, and use teargas, concussion grenades, and other chemical less-lethal weapons. Over 300 folks were treated for hyperthermia due to the use of water cannons.

December 4, 2016: The Army Corps of Engineers announces

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it will not grant the easement that Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) needs to cross the Missouri River, and requires ETP to do an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This is a huge victory for those who have been fighting day-in-and-day-out, but while celebrations happened all kept their sights on the long haul, knowing that the fight was far from over.

December 2-5, 2016: Over 2,000 veterans came to Standing Rock to support the Water Protectors.

December 2016: All of the camps at Standing Rock continue in prayer to resist the continued construction by the DAPL; although the Army Corps of Engineers denied the easement, construction workers continue work.

January 1, 2017: ETP’s contracts are up and must be renegotiated.

January 2017: State sanctioned violence continues unjustly onto Water Protectors; the police continue to use tear gas, pepper spray, concussion grenades, and other less-lethal weapons.

January 24, 2017: President Trump signs an executive order to fast-track both the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL Pipeline.

January-February 2017: ETP work crews have never left the pipeline route since the December 4th Army Corps decision; Water Protectors and media have since documented work activity of drilling under the river.

The fight is long and hard and it is far from over. The Water Protectors

are working to protect Indigenous sovereignty, the land, and our water day-in and day-out. In Pennsylvania there’s a lot we can do to stand in solidarity with those on the frontlines fighting the DAPL:

Move your money! Move your money out of the banks that are bankrolling the DAPL- find a list here: <http://bit.ly/2ktdeIf>.



Organize resistance locally; most recently the “ask” from the Water Protectors at Standing Rock is to organize and escalate locally. Show Trump that everywhere across the country we resist the continued genocide of Indigenous peoples, water, and land.

Donate to the Water Protectors:

Standing Rock Medic and Healer Council: <https://medichealercouncil.com/donate/>

Oceti Sakowin Camp: <http://www.ocetisakowincamp.org/donate>

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe: <http://standwithstandingrock.net/donate/>

Sacred Stone Camp: <http://sacredstonecamp.org/faq/#howtohelp>

Call the Morton County Sheriff’s Department and demand that they stop using chemical weapons and excessive force on peaceful Water

Protectors (701-667-3330), and demand that Chief Kyle Kirchmeier be removed immediately.

Know that the situation at Standing Rock is changing consistently: make sure to check trusted social media and media sources for updates. Below are a few trusted sources:

Democracy Now! has had excel-

lent coverage of the struggle at Standing Rock for months (democracynow.org);

Yes! Magazine has been following the story (<http://www.yesmagazine.org/>);

Also, the best way to get up-to-date coverage from folks on the ground is to follow these people on Facebook and Twitter:

Unicorn Riot Media (<https://www.facebook.com/unicornriot.ninja/?fref=ts>);

Kandi Mossett (<https://www.facebook.com/kandi.mossett?fref=ts>);

Dallas Goldtooth (<https://www.facebook.com/dallasgoldtooth>);

Standing Rock Medic and Healer Council (<https://www.facebook.com/MedicHealerCouncil/?fref=ts>)

Eva Westheimer

The Shell CRACKER Plant

As many are aware, Shell has been seeking approval from the Potter Township Supervisors and the DEP to build a petrochemical plant in Potter Township. Per the January 19, 2017, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (PowerSource), article concerning Potter Township, PA: “Potter supervisors approved a permit Wednesday for Shell Chemical Appalachia to build a sprawling petrochemical complex within its borders, capping more than a month of tension among people who live near the plant site in Beaver County. The supervisors voted unanimously to approve a conditional use permit for the company during a standing-room-only meeting that saw both supporters and opponents speaking their minds in one-minute increments before the vote.”

The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club, a partner in the Air Quality Collaborative, a group that includes Allegheny County Clean Air Now, the Clean Air Council, and others concerned about environmental issues, has consistently objected to the building of this petrochemical complex. The Sierra Club is most concerned about the impact on the health of citizens living in this community and on the environment. Monaca is currently designated as in nonattainment for ground level ozone. This petrochemical plant will make that bad air worse. It will be a major source of Hazardous Air pollution --vola-

tile organic compounds, nitrogen oxide, benzene. These pollutants are carcinogens. They place additional health risks to the DEP’s constituents. The DEP has a responsibility to be transparent about the information their constituents receive that will be factors in their deliberations about the Conditional Use Permit. The DEP has not done this. The public has had to resort to the Freedom of Information Act to obtain such information. The Sierra Club finds it difficult to understand why the DEP would not make records of their meetings about this issue available to the public when this petrochemical plant significantly impacts their lives. As public servants, that is part of DEP’s duties.

Although we have not been successful, thus far, in preventing approval of some of the permits Shell requested, we continue our efforts to minimize the health hazards this plant will cause, should it be built.

On December 25, 2016, with the support of the Executive Committee of the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club, Barbara Grover (then Chair) sent the following letter to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, PA DEP Southwest Regional Office, as a Public Comment for the PA DEP Public Comment NPDES permit Shell Chemical, PA 0002208, Amendment No. 1.

Ryan C. Decker, P.E.
Environmental Engineer
Clean Water Program
PA DEP SW Regional Office

rydecker@pa.gov

As chair of the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club, I am writing to you on behalf of its more than 5000 members here in southwestern Pennsylvania. These comments refer to the Draft NPDES Permit – Industrial Waste, Shell Chemical Appalachia Petrochemicals Complex, Permit No. PA 0002208, Amendment No. 1, Authorization ID No. 10996515. The Sierra Club strongly urges the DEP to reject Shell’s application. In fact, we would prefer that this facility not be built at all. The hazards it will produce to the health (i.e., air and water pollution) of residents in the region along with reduction of quality of life (e.g., noise pollution, light pollution, and increased traffic) are so substantial that you are negating your responsibility to protect the health and well-being of PA residents as well as the environment.

However, this process is moving forward and the Sierra Club has the following concerns:

First, the Shell facility is clearly a NEW facility. You have admitted that fact throughout this process. The Horsehead facility was demolished before Shell took on this project. The DEP should require Shell to submit a NEW discharge permit application. This NEW facility must be subject to all the stronger water pollution limits that apply to NEW discharges.

Second, to approve NO LIMITS on the Total Dissolved Solids,

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which would be the case if you allow Shell to argue its discharges are “existing,” is a complete disregard for your responsibilities to protect the environment. This petrochemical plant will discharge entirely different toxic wastewater than a zinc smelter. It is unclear how you could possibly consider that this facility does not require a NEW PERMIT.

Third, Shell readily admits that its toxic discharges will go into the Ohio River. Millions of residents rely on the Ohio River as their drinking water source. These discharges put the health of these residents and of the environment at serious risk. Human beings require safe drinking water to survive. Your responsibility is to ensure that safe drinking water is available to all residents. You cannot allow this highly significant risk to occur.

Fourth, long-term monitoring for each pollutant already known to be discharged from this site is essential. The DEP never required this site to be “cleaned up” from the toxic chemicals that the Horsehead zinc smelter deposited on this site. Consequently, toxic chemicals such as arsenic and lead require significant, ongoing monitoring. Without monitoring, the public and DEP have no way of knowing the extent to which such toxins are being released into the Ohio River, the drinking water source for millions of residents.

Fifth, Pennsylvania taxpayers are providing Shell with a \$1.6 BILLION tax break, which is ludicrous. The company is extremely profitable and can afford to comply with the new stronger regulations for water discharges. With the approval of this permit, you are making taxpayers pay with their health as well as with their pocket books. That is simply wrong and a negation of your responsibilities. You are expected to protect our drinking water sources.

Your job is to PROTECT the environment in which residents of Pennsylvania live. We strongly urge you to reject Shell’s NPDES application.

*Barbara Grover, Chair
Allegheny Group Sierra Club*

Lawsuit Launched Over Fracking in Wayne National Forest: *Feds Fail to Address Danger to Wildlife Habitat, Streams*

ATHENS, Ohio

Conservation groups today (January 26, 2017) filed a notice of intent to sue the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over invalid and outdated Endangered Species Act approvals of oil and gas leasing plans for the Wayne National Forest (*see <https://heartwood.org/> or <http://www.sierraclub.org/ohio/blog/2016/06/ban-sought-new-fossil-fuel-leasing-ohio-s-wayne-national-forest>*). The Center for Biological Diversity, Ohio Environmental Council, Heartwood, and Sierra Club are challenging the approvals for failing to consider the effects of fracking, white-nose syndrome and climate change on the endangered Indiana bat and other

protected species threatened with extinction.

In December 2016 the BLM auctioned 719 acres of public land in the Wayne National Forest’s

**The Indiana bat
is already
over-stressed
by white-nose
syndrome
and climate
change.**

Marietta Unit in southeast Ohio, opening up the forest to large-scale, high-volume fracking of the Marcellus and Utica shales for the first time. The groups’ legal challenge

aims to void this auction and halt fracking in the Wayne to protect the forest’s wildlife and water.

The groups assert that fracking would industrialize Ohio’s only national forest, increase climate pollution, destroy the Indiana bat’s habitat, and risk contamination of water supplies that support endangered mussels and local communities.

“The Indiana bat is already over-stressed by white-nose syndrome and climate change. Summer bat detection rates in Ohio have declined by more than 50 percent since 2011,” said Wendy Park, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. “But instead of protecting this fragile species, the BLM and Forest Service are

“Lawsuit” Continued on Page 11

allowing the razing and pollution of important bat habitat in the Wayne for harmful fracking.”

Pipelines, well pads, and wastewater pits destroy habitat and harm people and wildlife,” said Nathan Johnson, an attorney with the Ohio Environmental Council. “These impacts are real. In 2014, a frack pad fire and chemical spill near the Wayne forced the evacuation of

local residents and killed tens of thousands of fish and mussels.” The 2014 Monroe County well pad fire resulted in the contamination of a creek near the national forest. Wastewater and fracking chemicals spilled into Opossum Creek — an Ohio River tributary — killing 70,000 fish over a five-mile stretch.

“Fracking the Wayne National Forest in Ohio is like kicking someone when they’re down,” said Tabitha Tripp of Heartwood. “This land has been overworked for the last 200 years. Are we not rich and wise enough now to let a tiny percentage go wild? Declining species need that. We need that. Instead, we are witness to the betrayal of the public trust and we have no recourse but to sue.”

The groups have also filed an appeal with the Secretary of the Interior to challenge the December 2016 lease sale.

As of 2016, private fracking operators had nominated 18,000 acres of the Wayne National Forest’s Marietta Unit for leasing, setting up this land to be auctioned off in upcoming lease sales that BLM conducts quarterly. Another lease auction is scheduled for March 23. The BLM is accepting formal “protests” from the public for this proposal to auction over 1,100 acres of the forest until Feb. 13.

“There has been statewide opposition to leasing our only national forest for hydraulic fracturing. Ohio ranks 47th per capita in providing public lands to our state citizens. People do not want to hike near frack pads, smell diesel fuel in a forest, or fear that streams and rivers are contaminated,” said Loraine McCosker, southeast Ohio resident and co-chair of the Forests and Public Lands Committee of the Sierra Club Ohio Chapter. “Along with the impact to citizens who depend on our forest to provide clean air and water and recreational lands, this habitat is critical for many endangered and declining species challenged by climate change and other threats. In addition, Ohio is currently receiving great quantities of fracking waste from within Ohio and adjacent states which is then injected into class 2 injection wells. This proposed extraction will increase the waste created thereby increasing this burden.”

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.2 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.



In the months since Donald Trump’s election, there has been a lot of soul searching among Sierra Club members about how we got here as a nation, what we need to do over the next four years. Much of the Allegheny Group territory is a focal point of this discussion. Let’s face it: except for the City of Pittsburgh

and some immediate suburbs, this is Trump Country. My hometown of Johnstown was even the site of a major network’s election night coverage, and was also profiled in a national post-election piece by Politico (“Uprising in the Rust Belt”).

For those not familiar with Johnstown today, it resembles in many

ways a mini-Pittsburgh. There is a confluence of two (much smaller) rivers downtown and a Point Park. Its economy depended on coal and steel for a century until the late seventies. But unlike Pittsburgh, we have yet to find that formula for an economic renaissance. As a result, the population in the city proper has declined from a high of nearly 70,000 in the 1920’s to around 20,000 today. That steady decline has led to a vicious cycle of blighted neighborhoods, crime, drugs and poverty, and we are now by one

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measure the poorest city in Pennsylvania. Many in this once prosperous town are feeling hopeless, and it is the same story in small towns throughout Appalachia, as well as other rust-belt states, to which the economic growth of the digital and information age has not yet trickled down.

I believe an important part of the response to this has to be focused at the local level, addressing community problems with tailored solutions, all with an eye toward ensuring that no one gets left behind. Clean energy and clean tech jobs can be the framework in which to make this happen. It is projected that if Pennsylvania were to transition to 100% clean renewable energy by 2050, about 400,000 forty-year jobs would be created. Compare this to less than 40,000 people employed in the coal and natural gas industries combined in 2015, and you can see that there is clearly the potential to create an economic boom while cleaning up air and water and stabilizing our climate. However, it would be a huge mistake to assume that the benefits of this transition would be spread equitably across the Commonwealth, or that people who need jobs the most would get them. We have to be deliberate about it, and that is what we are trying to do in Johnstown.

In September 2015, then-Secretary of the DEP John Quigley came to Johnstown on a listening tour of the Commonwealth to get input on how we should implement the Clean Power Plan. Prior to the event, I reached out to Alan Cashaw, the President of the local NAACP unit, and had coffee with

him to discuss what the policy would mean for us locally. We are surrounded by coal plants (seven in Cambria and Indiana Counties) so there was the potential for regional job losses if any of them closed due to carbon pollution limits, but at the same time, our metro area has been ranked as having the highest mortality in the nation attributable to pollution from coal plants, and we have six state-designated environmental justice communities in and around Johnstown. But Alan recognized that this is not simply a question of jobs and prosperity versus health and climate, and that

It is projected that if Pennsylvania were to transition to 100% clean renewable energy by 2050, about 400,000 forty-year jobs would be created.

solar power and efficiency could be a pathway to both. We agreed to continue the discussion, and along the way he convinced me serve as a volunteer on the NAACP Johnstown Board.

What has emerged is an NAACP-sponsored and Sierra Club-supported project called Re-Energize Johnstown. It is organized under and receives support from a planning project called Vision 2025, which empowers volunteers to organize around self-identified projects to make Johnstown better in a variety of ways. The vision of Re-Energize Johnstown is to create a significant economic boost for the community by encouraging

and facilitating major investments in energy efficiency and solar energy, targeted at low-income households, small businesses, and public institutions such as schools and government buildings. This program aims to create jobs in the clean energy sector, ensuring local job-seekers have access to those jobs, and helping low-income residents, government agencies, and schools (and by extension, local taxpayers) save money on their utility bills. This will have multiple co-benefits, including making our aging housing stock safer and healthier, and helping to clean up our air and water.

There are already some programs to provide energy efficiency services to low-income customers, but these are not always well coordinated, and many eligible households are not even aware they exist. In any event, current funding levels do not come close to meeting the need, nor do they create enough projects to drive the creation of businesses and hiring. We want to bring this investment to scale. We also want to find ways to make solar investments more accessible to people of modest means, and to attract solar businesses to locate and hire in the area by creating lots of demand (unless things change quickly, I will have to hire an out-of-town company to install my solar array later this year). The potential is here to create jobs for people with a range of skill sets and education levels, and change the assumption that you have to leave Johnstown to get a job in a growing industry.

Of course, this is all easier said than done, and we are in the very early stages, but we have a good

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deal of local interest and are starting with manageable steps. In mid-November we held a stakeholders meeting of about twenty people, including representatives from the City of Johnstown, the public school district, the community college, solar installation companies, the utility, and several neighborhoods. We identified no-cost opportunities to increase awareness of and participation in existing efficiency programs. We are working to coordinate the City’s low-income home rehab program, which completes up to 30 projects per year with HUD money that cannot be used for energy efficiency, and the utility’s WARM program that can only fund efficiency. We have interest from several area job training programs to add certifications in solar and building efficiency to their offerings. And later this year we will approach a regional foundation for funding to start a low-interest revolving loan fund to expand access to efficiency and solar projects.

This project is already generating a lot of local interest, helping us to make new community connections, and changing some local perceptions about Sierra Club. As we complete initial projects we can begin to build awareness of the possibilities, attract more funding and talent, and build on our success. In the long run, this will raise up the standard of living for people who need it most, provide solid careers and hope for a region that desperately needs it, and help us move beyond the divisive and partisan rhetoric that defines current energy policy to an earnest discussion of what works best.

Tom Schuster



A Call for a New American Dream

The proposed Shell Chemical Appalachia Plant to produce polyethylene plastic pellets from Marcellus and Utica shale gas in Potter Township, Beaver County PA, highlights two of the most important issues of our time: human-induced climate change and global pollution from man-made chemicals. In our lifetime, these existential crises threaten the survival of life, as we know it. But even as the data indicate ever more serious manifestations of these two challenges, the United States is retrenching around fossil-based industries. Each decision we make about how we use and develop resources reaches far into the future with implications

for hundreds of years beyond our own time. The direction a society takes rarely changes with a single decision. Rather, an accumulation of decisions taken at the local, state and national levels creates a body of accumulated positions embedded in law and precedent. Changing direction in the face of such a policy construct requires a new vision and a deliberate revision of the policy infrastructure.

Scientists and observers worldwide document increasingly dire events, with accompanying predictions of inevitable disaster from climate change and global pollution:

- Average global temperatures rising and average carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reaching 400 parts per million;
- Collapse of the Antarctic ice sheets;
- Shrinking of the arctic polar sea ice;
- Inundation of sea level islands and coastal communities;

- Widespread bleaching of sea corals and coral reef communities;
- Erratic and severe weather patterns producing extreme storm events;
- Prolonged droughts and advance of deserts;
- Slowing of the ocean currents;
- Loss of biodiversity and increasing rates of extinction of species worldwide.

These documented facts describe the increasingly unhealthy condition of the living planet Earth. The complexity of living systems, refined over millions of years of evolution, complicate the process of making rapid, effective policy responses even in the face of such dire facts.

The socio-political processes themselves have a complexity vested in laws that run counter to the laws of chemistry, physics and biology that operate living ecosystems. To examine how these intersecting processes can be changed, it is instructive to look at decisions

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made around a specific project, the Shell Appalachian Petrochemical Project. The underpinnings of the modern petrochemical/energy industry trace all the way back to the initial colonization and development of America. Federal lands granted for mining, logging and ranching grounded the American continental dominance from coast to coast. Many of the entitlements and land use practices established in the laws of the 1800s remain in effect as \$20.5 billion annual fossil industry subsidies today.

The advance of hydraulic fracturing to develop and extract fossil methane and associated liquids from deep in the Earth has attracted chemical industry interest as a relatively inexpensive domestic feedstock. The abatement by the National Energy Act of 2005 of seven federal environmental and public health protections (the Halliburton Loophole) to expedite hydraulic fracturing for fossil gas and oil bears fruit in a new petrochemical industry in 39 states, including western Pennsylvania. The shale gas supply development has been shifting investment in refineries and production facilities away from traditional locations on the coasts – Galveston and Houston Texas; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Patterson, New Jersey. All of these locations have centered their chemical industries on petroleum refining from domestic and imported feedstock. They are characterized by the flares and emission plumes of noxious materials, with environmental and health consequences that affect the surrounding communities. The \$377 billion valued industry does not count the expense of health

problems of workers and communities or degraded environmental conditions among the costs. The profits accrue to the industry; the costs, estimated at \$238 million annually, fall on the people, communities and taxpayers. This industry advance was the direct result of the Halliburton Loophole, engineered into the National Energy Act of 2005



by Vice President Cheney, former CEO of Halliburton, the manufacturer of chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing. This is evidence of what happens when high powered government officials are vested in private corporate interests. The public interest was swept aside. Attracted by proximity to relatively inexpensive domestic wet gas feed stocks from Marcellus and Utica Shale deposits, augmented by \$1.65 Billion in subsidies and incentives from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Royal Dutch Shell bought the former Horsehead Zinc facility and is planning to build a new petrochemical processing complex to make polypropylene. The facility will consist of an ethylene manufacturing process, three polyethylene manufacturing lines, three natural gas-fired combustion

turbines, and various auxiliary and support equipment. The Shell Appalachian Plant in Potter Township will emit 2,248,293 tons per year of carbon dioxide and produce 1.6 million metric tons of polyethylene per year. Shell claims 2,000 construction jobs and about 600 permanent jobs associated with the plant. Their permit applications

are carefully crafted to ride within the allowable provisions of complex regulatory requirements, trading future emissions against past permits of closed plants. Concerns about climate change, community health and environmental degradation fall “outside the scope of these proceedings.” This plant may be within the law, but it is ethically and morally wrong.

The socio-political system of laws and regulations is not constructed to consider existential challenges! This plant will come into full production capacity in 2020, when targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to control global warming and climate change call for steep reductions in CO2 from industrial operations. In addition, polyethylene is a precursor for the

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manufacture of plastic disposable containers, products like plastic dishware, plastic bags and other single-use commodities. Over 90% of this material will end up in landfill or in the oceans. In effect, fossil deposits of methane from deep underground are extracted, under

The justification is “JOBS!” In a region afflicted with loss of traditional industries, there has been no re-investment policy, no social safety net to help communities adjust, rebuild and regenerate around more sustainable pursuits to support the economy. Beginning

agement of the nation’s resources have shrunk in the face of the onslaught by corporate dominance of government. The Citizens United ruling granting the rights of “persons” to corporations accelerated the trend toward governance for the sake of corporate interests. It



may have once been true that what was good for business was good for America, but in modern times of multinational corporate dominance, what is good for companies like ExxonMobil may certainly harm the average citizen. Citizens and Corporate Persons are not a congruent population. Corporations do not feel hunger, sorrow, or pain. They do not breathe or bleed. A government dominated by corporate interests has no soul. Rulings from such a body will focus on the immediate economic gains, even if they sacrifice the work-

ers, the community and the future. A policy direction that fully embraces the serious global issues we face as Americans and as the human race can reaffirm essential social and environmental protections without sacrificing a sound economy. Policies and the infrastructure of laws and regulations to shift direction to a socially equitable and environmentally sustainable society can recapture the full greatness of America. The window of time for action is narrow and closing. But with determination and a shared vision of success, a

an exemption from seven federal environmental and worker protections, to be heated and cracked into elements to make plastics manufactured into single-use materials that will end up discarded into landfills or washed into the ocean. In any but strict short-term economic criteria, this is a losing value proposition. This process causes degradation to the environment, quality of life and health of surrounding communities, and poses a threat to the well-being of children, elderly, and sensitive populations across a broad region. The effects of this action will manifest over hundreds of years adding to the cumulative destruction of the living Earth.

with the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the press toward a single metric for evaluating the effect of government has driven policies more and more toward eliminating environmental protections and social services, defined as “wasteful” or harmful to business. The concept of the role of government being limited to defense and keeping the peace while leaving business to run at will has taken over the value system of America. The result has been a widening division in society with wealth concentrated in a shrinking top tier and the middle class shrinking into debt and despair.

The American values of social equity and public trust for the man-

agement of the nation’s resources have shrunk in the face of the onslaught by corporate dominance of government. The Citizens United ruling granting the rights of “persons” to corporations accelerated the trend toward governance for the sake of corporate interests. It may have once been true that what was good for business was good for America, but in modern times of multinational corporate dominance, what is good for companies like ExxonMobil may certainly harm the average citizen. Citizens and Corporate Persons are not a congruent population. Corporations do not feel hunger, sorrow, or pain. They do not breathe or bleed. A government dominated by corporate interests has no soul. Rulings from such a body will focus on the immediate economic gains, even if they sacrifice the work-

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shift to a society based on renewable energy systems, regenerative agriculture and green chemistry production in a circular materials management system can flourish. This is the New American Dream.

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Live in harmony with nature

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**Ocean Levels
are rising**



Hearthwood is a regional network that protects forests and supports community activism in the eastern United States through education, advocacy, and citizen empowerment. The Heartwood organization was founded in 1991, when concerned citizens from several mid-western states, each defending their national forest from logging, mining, roads and ruin, met and began to work together to protect the heartland hardwood forest.

Heartwood hosts two main events each year: the Forest Council in the spring and the Heartwood Reunion in the fall (<https://heartwood.org/>). This year's 27th Annual Forest Council, "Strong Roots," will be held at Camp Spring Creek, deep in the mountains of North Carolina, the heart of the Katuah Bioregion, about an hour's drive uphill from Asheville NC, Knoxville TN, and Atlanta GA. Mark your calendars for Memorial Day 2017, May 26-28th weekend!

Every year since the spring of 1991, the Forest Council has been held over the federal Memorial Day holiday weekend in late May. Each year a different Member Group hosts this event in their home bioregion, and the format and agenda of the weekend are designed to bring the attention and support of the Heartwood community to bear on locally significant issues.

The first Heartwood Reunion was held in the fall of 1995, and it has been held every year since at the Lazy Black Bear Lodge, a privately owned farm surrounded by the Hoosier National Forest in southern Indiana where Heartwood first began as a discussion around a dinner table one winter night. This weekend gathering is held every year on the federal holiday weekend formerly known as Columbus Day, now officially celebrated by many states and municipalities in the US as Indigenous People's Day.

In addition to these annual Gatherings, our member groups are hosting many events across our region. Heartwood events are open to all and we welcome new guests as friends! We are committed to creating Safer Spaces in accordance with the Jemez Principles (<http://www.h-o-m-e.org/cultural-awareness/jemez-principles.html>, also included in this edition of the Allegheny Group newsletter).

"We are people helping people protect the places they love" (see <https://heartwood.org/about/>).

Matt Peters

Western Pennsylvania Hiking Guides

Allegheny National Forest Hiking Guide

The 800-square-mile Allegheny National Forest contains over 250 miles of foot trails for hiking, back-packing, and ski-touring. Edition 4 of this guide describes hiking and ski-touring opportunities and points of scenic interest. 192 pages – \$9.95

The Laurel Highlands: A Hiking Guide

This guide to the foot trails of Chestnut Ridge, Laurel Ridge, and Allegheny Front covers 446 miles of foot trails, mainly in state forests and state parks. Features: directions to trail-heads; ski-touring and backpacking information; difficulty ratings; and more. Does not cover Laurel Highlands Trail (see separate guide). 288 pages – \$8.95

Hiker's Guide to Laurel Highlands Trail

The 6th edition of this guide to the 70-mile Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail features: the geology, climate, vegetation, and wildlife of Laurel Hill; tree identification; elevation profile; directions to the trailheads; back-packing information and shelter reservations; a list of hiking organizations in the area; and more! 128 pages – \$7.00

These trail guides and other items can be ordered online at www.alleghenysc.org using a credit card. They can also be ordered by mail: make checks payable to Allegheny Group, Sierra Club; send check and order form to: *Claudia Kirkpatrick, 3763 Orpwood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 (kirkclaudia@gmail.com)*.

<i>Cost</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Total</i>
Allegheny National Forest Hiking Guide	\$9.95	_____
Laurel Highlands: A Hiking Guide	\$8.95	_____
Hiker's Guide to Laurel Highlands Trail	\$7.00	_____

For shipping: add \$3.50 for one guide plus \$0.50 for each additional guide. Ship to:

Name: _____

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Allegheny Sierran Spring 2017

The Allegheny Sierran is the newsletter of the Allegheny Group and is intended to keep the membership posted on the activities of the Group. Opinions expressed in the Allegheny Sierran are those of the authors, and should not be taken as Sierra Club policy unless specifically so stated.

All parties are encouraged to respond to any of the articles we publish and submit any material they feel may be appropriate. Submissions and questions regarding newsletter content should be addressed to the editor, Claudia Kirkpatrick (kirkclaudia@gmail.com).

Founded by legendary conservationist John Muir in 1892, the Sierra Club is now the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization -- with more than two million members and supporters. Our successes range from protecting millions of acres of wilderness to helping pass the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act. More recently, we've made history by leading the charge to move away from the dirty fossil fuels that cause climate disruption and toward a clean energy economy.

The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club was organized in the early 1970s. It is one of 10 groups comprising the Pennsylvania Chapter.

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