



A Better Way to Heat and Cool Your Home!

By Abigail McHugh-Grifa, Ph.D.

ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP—Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

SIERRA CLUB ECOLOGUE

I recently had a conversation with an employee of a local environmental organization, who was excitedly telling me about the high-efficiency on-demand hot water heater she had just purchased for her home. She was thrilled with her investment, because she believed (incorrectly) that she was now producing hot water in the most eco-friendly manner possible. Though I hated to burst her bubble, I felt compelled to inform her that there actually is a better option: a heat pump hot water heater. As someone who cares deeply about protecting our climate, she was distressed to hear that her brand new hot water heater was less than ideal. I could relate to her pain, because just a few years before, I had bought a high-efficiency gas furnace and on-demand hot water heater, both of which I now regret.

She and I chose systems that burn natural gas, simply because we didn't know that a viable alternative existed. And that's a problem! If people don't know what heat pumps are, they can't make the best choice when it's time to replace their current home heating systems. Fortunately, the City of Rochester, Pathstone, and Rochester People's Climate Coalition are teaming up to educate the public about clean heating and cooling technologies (e.g., air-source heat pumps, ground-source heat pumps, and heat pump hot water heaters), and in February, the Sierra Club is hosting an event for its members and the general public, as part of that campaign! See our website for details soon: www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/rochester

Why are heat pumps the best option? Mainly because they run on electricity, which can be generated from 100% renewable sources. Heat pump home heating systems are very efficient and inexpensive to operate, and they improve indoor air quality and provide air-conditioning in the summer. Most other heating systems burn fossil fuels, which produce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. For those who currently heat with oil, propane,

or baseboard electric, heat pumps are especially cost-effective.

In most cases, it makes sense to insulate and air-seal your home before installing a new heating system, but every home is different, so you'll want to work with a qualified professional to assess your options. If you enroll (for free) in the Sustainable Homes Rochester Clean Heating & Cooling (CH&C) campaign, you will be matched with a vetted contractor who will come to your home to perform an energy audit (also for free). After your assessment, you may choose to have a discussion with your contractor about what type of energy efficiency and CH&C technology installation is right for your home, but there is no obligation to purchase or install anything.

Attending the free event in February will help you begin to identify the best approach to improving the efficiency and comfort of your home, while also giving you a comprehensive understanding of what heat pump technologies are and why you might want one. For more information about the campaign, visit www.cityofrochester.gov/shr, or join us in February!

Abigail McHugh-Grifa, Ph.D.

Rochester People's Climate Coalition, Interim Executive Director

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FROM THE CHAIR: What's in Store for 2019?

By Jessica Slaybaugh

I know that it's a bit cliché to say this, but I truly can't believe that it's almost 2019. I'm once again at that point in the year where I feel like I've barely accomplished any of the things I'd laid out for myself in January. Some of the "hoped I'd do" items are related to the Sierra Club, but I'm confident that the Rochester Regional Group will accomplish all of those items and more in the coming year.

So what does 2019 look like for the Rochester Regional Group? Here are some of the things we're planning:

Annual Environmental Forum: Our annual forum will return in 2019! As I discussed in the June-August issue of the *Ecologue*, when we host these events, we want to do them right and that takes a significant time investment from many people, and we were a small group with a lot on our plate. However, a few months ago it occurred to us that we don't have to take this on all on our own, and that we needed to get better at joining forces with other local organizations. That's why for 2019, we've partnered with Rochester People's Climate Coalition (RPCC) to host our forum. We're excited about this joint venture and are currently working on identifying and reaching out to potential speakers. We'll share more info on the forum as it becomes available.

Local Issues: We will continue our work on local issues such as the Coalition for Cobbs Hill Park case against the City of Rochester (see p. X for more on this), opposing the state's project to clear cut trees along the banks of the Erie Canal, and ensuring that the City of Rochester performs a Track 2 cleanup of the brownfield at the Vacuum Oil site. As other issues arise, we will do what we can to address them, either by becoming actively involved in them or acting as consultants for groups/individuals tackling an issue. If there are any local issues that you believe we should be aware of and/or that you need assistance with, please feel free to reach out to any member of the executive committee (email addresses are listed on the back page of the *Ecologue*) or contact us

on Facebook (search for Sierra Club Rochester Regional Group).

Events: We hope to offer a number of small-scale events and workshops in 2019. Many of them will be spearheaded by our Climate Change Committee, which has a list of events they'd like to offer to our community. In the spirit of continuing efforts to join forces, we'll likely host some events in partnership with other local organizations. I'm also hoping that we'll be able to get our all-members meetings off the ground in 2019, something that we haven't had the bandwidth for yet. These meetings will require quite a bit more effort than small-scale events, but we might target some of our small-scale event ideas and try to turn them into an all-members meeting. These meetings would involve devoting part of our time to the speaker, workshop, etc., and part of our time to directly interacting with our members, providing updates, discussing local issues, sharing ideas, and more. If you have suggestions for events or workshops you'd like us to host, and/or if you're interested in helping us with our events, please reach out to a member of the executive committee.

I'm looking forward to a successful year for the Rochester Regional Group. We know that now more than ever, it's important that we ensure we're as active as possible in our community. As I said a few times above, if you're interested in helping us with any of these efforts, please reach out to a member of our executive committee. The more hands on deck we have, the more we can accomplish.

Thank you all for the support you've provided to our organization throughout the year, and many wishes for a happy, successful 2019 for all of us!

Jessica Slaybaugh

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NATURALIST'S CORNER

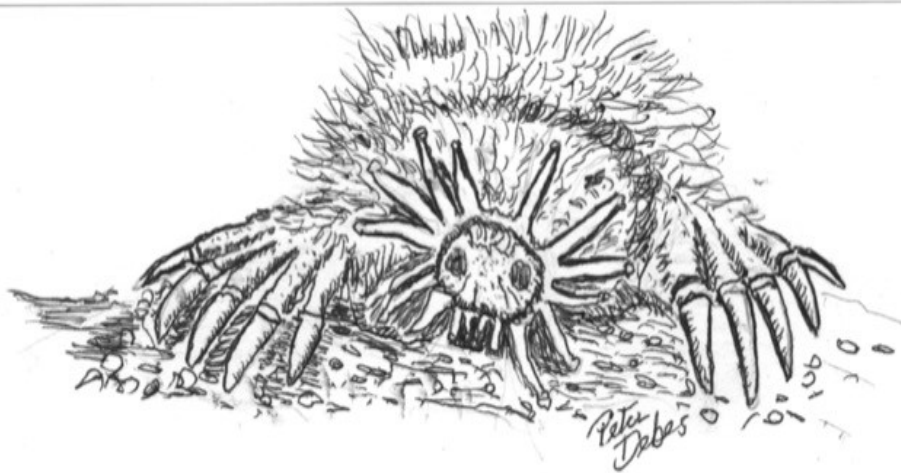
By Peter Debes

WHAT IS IT? You are face to face with the **star-nosed mole!**

Only 8 in. long, it tunnels rapidly just below the surface of wet, grassy areas.

It eats worms, insect larvae, ants...which it senses with that strange "star."

The star is really the mole's eye. It "sees" by touch, and has incredibly sensitive appendages on its nose, holding more than 25000 sensory organs. It moves so rapidly, it is a blur to our eyes. In fact, it can find, identify and eat 5 separate prey items in one second! Holy Moley.



COBBS HILL VILLAGE HISTORY

By Hugh Mitchell

1904: Cobbs Hill Park begun with purchase of the top of Cobbs Hill for use as a second city water reservoir, named after Edna Cobb, the previous landowner.

1905 or 1908: (documents vary as to the date), George Eastman donated an additional 15 acres of land. Donation came with caveat that City of Rochester acquire adjoining Eastern Widewaters tract that had once been part of Erie Canal. Public donations (\$35,625.00), City of Rochester (\$5,625.00), and other donations of small parcels of land combined to make up current total of 61.5 acres for reservoir and park. Cobbs Hill Village is situated on land that had been owned by Edna Cobb and the Rochester Rod & Gun Club.

1911: Open Air School for Rochester students "for children with incipient tuberculosis" opened on the site in remodeled Rod & Gun Club building. Closed in 1941. Magnificent building later torn down.

February 1942: Rochester City Council offered use the City Open Air School space and surroundings to the Army for the duration of the war for a cost of \$1.00. "The army was granted permission to alter the existing structures provided that the setting would be restored at the end of the hostilities." (Lehr, 1994, p. 5.) Barracks erected on the land initially hosted Italian prisoners of war brought to work on farms, and later German prisoners. After the war, barracks repurposed to house returning veterans or new barracks constructed on old foundations. Barracks and surrounding barbed wire fences later demolished.

1953: First tenants moved into first of 27 one story apartments for the "aged" erected on the site. Buildings later raised.

1956: State Legislature authorized alienation of the site as parkland to serve as public housing.

January 1957: The City of Rochester sold the 9.18-acre parcel of land to Senior Citizen Housing, Inc., a predecessor of Rochester Management Inc. with, among others, the following conditions:

- Company was to construct not more than 110 dwellings for rental exclusively within the policy and purposes of the Limited-Profit Housing Law;
- That when company fully discharged its mortgage and loan to the State of New York, the title to premises, all buildings, fixtures, personal property, to revert to City of Rochester;
- Buildings to be for rental only to "aged persons" residing in City of Rochester.

October 1957: First new Cobbs Hill Village unit officially opened, solely for those 65 and older.

1959: The Mitchell-Lama backed mortgage signed by Senior Citizen Housing.

1967?: City Council rejected RMI's proposal to erect 10-story building on Cobbs Hill Village site.

1990-2000 (years unknown): Pitched roof installed, attic insulated. Steam heat converted to hot water heat with new boilers. Casement windows replaced with double-hung windows.

2009: Mortgage fully paid. Cobbs Hill Village ownership transferred to Plymouth Gardens Inc.

2009: City Council agreed to extension of ownership to 2041 so that mortgage can be obtained for extensive rehabilitation of Plymouth Gardens, Seneca Towers and Cobbs Hill Village. None of funds from remortgage used for Cobbs Hill Village.

2012+ (year unknown): New heating control system installed.

References

Deed signed 19th February, 1957.

Democrat & Chronicle, Wednesday, July 4, 1956.

Democrat & Chronicle, Wednesday, Nov 7, 1956

Democrat & Chronicle, Thursday, October 31, 1957.

Lehr, T. (1994). "Not in Our Back Yard," in *Rochester History* vol. LVI, no 3. Summer 1994. Rochester, NY: Rochester Public Library.

O'Donnell & Wilson (1994.) *Communications Center & Signal Tower Cobbs Hill Park, Rochester, NY: Cultural Landscape Preservation Assessment*. Westport, CT: Landscapes.

Rochester City Council Minutes, 2009, Ordinance No 2009-04

Rochester Herald, February 19, 1911

Weidrich, J. (December 2, 2017). Letter to RMI Inc. re: Preliminary Site Plan Findings. Bureau of Buildings and Zoning.

The Rochester Regional Group wants to thank all those who purchased our calendars this year! This is our biggest fundraiser and it was very successful. Enjoy in good health!



Beekeeping Dilemma in Perinton

By Elizabeth Agte

We all are taking a greater responsibility for our environment. Whether it's contributions to Sierra Club, planting pesticide-free tomatoes, or leaving dandelions in our yards, people are making conscious choices about things that didn't used to show up on their radar.

One important change has been the boom in backyard beekeeping as a hobby. A Facebook search reveals a never-ending list of beekeeping groups such as Women in Beekeeping, Beekeeping Basics, Treatment Free Beekeeping, Preservation Beekeeping... you get the idea. People around the world are taking this one matter of huge global importance into their own hands.



Like any movement, citizens are often ahead of the municipalities in which they live. Backyard beekeeping has taken hold with or without the sanctions of towns and cities. In some places, beekeeping isn't prohibited, simply because it isn't mentioned in the language of the codes. In others it's allowed with careful guidelines.

This fall in Perinton the code was a gray area that created a stir. After five years of beekeeping, I received a letter from the town saying my bees were in violation. It's not obvious from reading the code that this is true. Their bottom line was I needed to dispose of my bees. As a devoted backyard beekeeper without a single

complaint this was heartbreaking news.

It's easy to feel helpless, or angry, but I knew that I needed to advocate for not only my bees, but for the other beekeepers in the town. As I told the Democrat & Chronicle reporter, we never hid what we do, because none of us thought it was a violation. I contacted everyone I thought might be able to help and did research. I posted on Facebook constantly, and any offers of support or help, I took. I asked my neighbors to write letters of support. I focused my positive energy on paintings I called bee prayers.

I filed for a zoning appeal, presenting twelve copies of notes, pictures, letters of support and documentation. A week later the town attorney contacted me and said that the town wanted to work with me to craft new code in January to allow backyard bees albeit with careful regulations.

The last two months have been an emotional roller coaster. Often all I could do was stagger up to my hives and sit in the middle of their humming activity and let them sooth me.

Having established a respectful working relationship with my town through my work with STOP the CANAL CLEAR CUT helped enormously. I know that

already having a presence at local town board meetings mattered. If I wasn't already plugged into my local government in many small ways, I would have felt out of my league trying to change the culture.

At the last town board meeting I formally thanked the board for looking forward instead of being mired in old ways. We need to protect our bees and one of the best ways right now is to keep them out of heavily sprayed agricultural areas.

Elizabeth R. Agte
elizabethbeekeeper.wordpress.com

MONEY, so like opium...
Too little, and there is great suffering
Too much, and we become addicted,
To the point where our mad, insatiable desire for it
Supersedes all other considerations...
Family, friends, community, nation...
Even food, air, water...even
Survival.

The only cure I know for this insanity is sunlight
Filtering through forest canopy,
Bouncing off laughing, gurgling streams happily
tumbling down hillsides and
Mountains
To the music of wind rustling the leaves and branches
of towering
Oaks, beeches and conifers,
Or roaring through canyons and glens,
Frisky and wild as joy itself.

Most of us are orphaned at birth, snatched away from
our Mother Earth, nearly immediately by civilization...
Never to see our real mother again
As she truly is,
In all her magnificent, radiant loveliness...
Never to be held in the tender, loving arms of this nearly unbearable beauty,
Never to understand
That we do not live ON the earth,
But that we are a part of it...
That we ARE this beauty.



Maybe someone should do something about this tragedy.... Maybe that someone is you, because, God, do we need the help.

Please...contact someone on the email list on the masthead of this news letter or come to a board meeting held the first Tuesday of every month, 6th floor, Harro East building, 400 Andrews Street, 6:30 to 8:30pm. Just give one of us a heads up.

FATE OF COBBS HILL PARK RESTS WITH THE COURT

by Hugh Mitchell

For 2½ years Sierra Club has been campaigning to preserve 60 very low rent senior apartments and save Cobbs Hill Park from a proposal by Rochester Management Inc to build a very large new apartment complex entirely within the park boundaries. Last summer, even after extensive lobbying, we lost a narrow 5-4 vote in City Council, some of whom who responded to the Mayor's arm twisting. But our Sierra Club Group is not willing to give up on this rare urban park space. We secured the national Sierra Club approval to join the legal case that was filed by the Coalition for Cobbs Hill Park. The defendants (Rochester Management Inc and the City) reacted strongly against having the national Sierra Club join the lawsuit. They successfully persuaded the Court to reject our effort. We appealed that decision and we've now turned to fund raising efforts to support the Coalition case.

I'm happy to say, **Thank You!** Our fund-raising effort was very successful. There's been an outpouring of generous support from national, state and local members. All told we were able to raise over \$6,000, including \$1,000 from a direct appeal to our Group members. This is the first time we've engaged in such a special fund-raising effort and it demonstrates the wonderful support our members are willing to give to preserve the environment. Unfortunately, it does not mean we can guarantee the Coalition will be able to win the case to preserve the elder apartments and the park.

The Coalition's case was heard in the NYS Supreme Court in front of Judge Taylor in early November and a decision is expected by the end of the month. It's hard to predict what the verdict will be, but it seems likely that the Coalition will win at least one of the eight main complaints. We maintain the City Planning & Zoning Department hadn't been granted the authority to make themselves the lead agency, but they went ahead anyway and made an "arbitrary, capricious and illegal" decision to issue a Negative Declaration on the project in violation of NYS environmental law. A so called 'Neg Dec'... "is a determination by the lead agency that an action will not result in significant adverse environmental impact". The City claimed no Environmental Impact Study was needed on the property or the project's effect on the park. Although its hard to believe that constructing six large multi-story apartment buildings totally within the park would have no impact, it'll be up to the Judge to determine whether a full environmental impact study is needed.

Unique Wind Turbines from Kohilo

By Elsbette Grove

Have you ever noticed, as I have, that you feel more energetic and alive on windy days? And have you also noticed that we have an abundance of this wind energy in our Great Lake City of Rochester, New York? As I sit here in my fourth floor apartment, I feel a steady breeze coming in my west facing window. I ask myself, why aren't we using this treasure to produce our energy here? Recently, there has been a lot of controversy in Rochester and the surrounding areas over the installation of the large tall horizontal wind turbines off shore in the lake because of the danger to birds in their migratory paths. But wait, there is another feasible and safe alternative to these tall horizontal turbines.

"KOHILLO WIND" is a company that is producing vertical wind turbines in nearby Skaneateles Falls, NY. International distributor agreements as well as domestic partnerships have enabled them to provide energy across the globe from the Philippines to South America. "KOHILLO wind turbines are unique in that they condition the wind through a diffuser system not used in traditional turbines, which in turn harnesses the energy more efficiently and increases power production. This elevates the potential for wind turbines drastically, making a clean energy source a reality even in urban environments. The nucleus of KOHILLO is its unparalleled technology that has 'stayed home' in Central New York." *

*(<http://kohilowind.com/kohilo-wind-vortex-tech/>)

Some of the complaints regarding the horizontal turbines are not present in these turbines. Their movement is quite silent and they are not tall enough to be a threat to migrating birds. They are capable of turning at speeds as low as 1 mph, and under harsh wind conditions at speeds up to 127 mph. They are an efficient way to harness the wind in cities where high velocity air crosses low velocity air. They are very versatile as they can be installed on rooftops, and at ground levels in many places such as.... schools, libraries, street lamps, colleges, churches, apartment buildings, backyards, and beaches.

Bill McKibben has reported that we are no longer dealing with Climate Change but with Climate Crises! During the summer week in Rochester when I wrote this, every day was over 90 degrees. It is becoming more imperative that we convert to renewable energy. It is timely that we are turning back to the Sun and the Wind as our sources of energy and abandoning the use of fossil fuels. Derek Grassman, the inventor, founder/CEO of KOHILLO and a nature enthusiast has used his mechanical engineering skill to come up with a design that is economical, efficient and environmentally friendly. He is keeping its main base in Skaneateles Falls where it is a beacon of hope when it comes to jobs and the future of energy in Central New York. "KOHILLO's goal is to preserve the environment and empower people towards change by offering affordable green energy solutions that are built to last for generations". *

Elsbette Grove, bibibodhi@gmail.com

*For purchasing information go to.....

Purchasing Process (<http://kohilowind.com/purchasing-process/>)

*****Photo is only one of their smaller designs**



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BALLOT for Sierra RRG

Each year the Nominating Committee recommends candidates to serve a term of 2 years on the Executive Committee. Please cut out this ballot and mail by December 26th. Ballots will be counted at the first ExCom meeting in 2019.

Mail ballots to:

Elections

Sierra Club RRG, P.O. Box 10518, Rochester, NY 14610-0518

Please vote for up to 6 candidates for the term 2019-2020. Members may vote for those nominated and/or write in (a) candidate(s).

_____ Jessica Slaybaugh

_____ Elizabeth Agte

_____ Joe Grinnan

_____ Peter Debes

_____ Frank Regan

-----CUT HERE -----

Check out our new Climate Change committee

By Frank Regan, chairperson of the Climate Change Committee

We are living at an extraordinary time when the window of opportunity to address Climate Change on a scale and timeframe that will matter is quickly closing. No doubt you have read or read about this recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):

Global Warming of 1.5 °C “A1. Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, with a likely range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate (high confidence).” Headline Statements (October 8, 2018) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

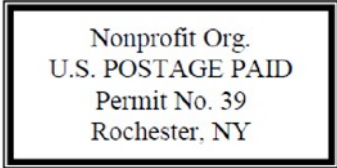
The urgency of addressing Climate Change requires that we work together for solutions. Having been working on environmental issues locally for twenty years, I’ve seen two major developments. The first is that Climate Change is truly becoming the lens from which we must address all environmental issues. With other groups, we have been working on brownfield cleanups, trees, parks, energy (Community Choice Aggregations ((CCA), transportation, Climate Action Plans, and more—all are now related to addressing Climate Change.

The second is that although environmental groups in the Rochester region have worked together in the past, they are doing so in a much more coordinated way than ever before. An example of this is the Sierra Club working with other groups to create an Earth Day forum. In many other ways, we are doing what we can to amplifying the efforts of our other local groups working on Climate Change. The Sierra Club, one of the largest and oldest environmental organizations in our country, brings a lot of abilities to the table.

Our group’s new Climate Change Committee is about a year old. We meet once a month, but we also have a Google Group online where we can achieve some our goals even when were not in the same room.

Getting concerned about Climate Change and what can be done locally? **Check out our Climate Change Committee each 3rd Thursday of the month, 6-7PM in the Community Room @ Abundance Food Co-op, 571 South Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620.** More at our web page: <https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/rochester/climate-change-committee>.

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 www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/rochester; Find us on **Facebook** and **LinkedIn!**



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Winter 2018-19 Calendar SIERRA CLUB and other environmental events				
DATE	DAY	TIME	MEETING/EVENT	LOCATION
12/20, 1/17, 2/21	3rd Thurs.	6 - 7 pm	Climate Change Committee meetings	Abundance Coop meeting room 571 South Ave. 14620
December 4	Tuesday	6:30-8:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Suite 600
Nov.30, Dec.1st	Fri.-Sat.	Friday 5-9 pm Saturday 10-4 pm	Alternative Fair; local & Fair Trade gifts	1st Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Road, Rochester Suggested donation \$3 for ages 12 and over
January 8, 2019	Tuesday	6:30—8:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Suite 600
February TBA	TBA	TBD	A Better Way to Heat & Cool Your Home	To be determined, see our website for details
February 5, '19	Tuesday	6:30—8:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Suite 600
Nov. 25-May '2019	Sundays	1-4 pm	Brighton WINTER Farmers Market	Brighton Brookside Center, 220 Idlewood Road., Rochester (off Westfall Road)
All year	Every day	M-F 8am-9pm Sat-Sun 9am-8pm	Abundance Coop Food Market: local, organic, sustainable food, open to public	571 South Ave., Rochester, NY in South Wedge (585) 454-2667 www.Abundance.coop

*****Watch our Facebook page and website for information on upcoming community meetings & other activities*****

All Committees are local volunteer groups of the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club.

Follow us on Facebook to keep up-to-date on new events throughout the year—www.facebook.com/SierraROC

Executive Committee meetings are open to Sierra Club members. All other meetings are open to everyone.

The Eco-Logue is printed on 100% recycled paper with green plant-based toner, by EASTERN PRINTING.

