

## The Education of a Stay-At-Home Mom

by Dina Stein

We've all heard it before, "either your part of the solution or your part of the problem." The reality however, is that sometimes we're stuck in the middle. This is how I feel about the need for me to keep my children healthy and the relationship with a neighbor that I have gotten along with since we moved into our new house a year ago. I really don't know how it will end up, but I do know my children's needs come first.

It happened on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. That day my 2 year old, 4 year old and I were going outside to play in our backyard. That was when I noticed a man in my neighbor's yard wearing boots and gloves with a hose that he was dragging into their back yard. I immediately knew that it was a lawn care company that was about to spray something, and I knew by the boots and gloves that it probably wasn't going to be good for my children. The problem that I originally had was that I thought I was going to get 48 hour notice because of the "48 hour Neighbor Notification law" that Monroe County opted into last year. I thought that I was going to get a letter that was mailed or a notice on my door or something along those lines. What I supposedly got according to the lawn care employee

was a flag in the corner of my yard a month earlier. The problem is that neither my husband nor I ever saw this flag. My guess is that some kids pulled it out of the ground before we even saw it. So I asked the employee not to spray that day which he agreed to. I was offered Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and handed a new flag that notified me of the new spray date. These "flags" looked just like the little flags that utility companies use.

I have since found out that the Attorney General wrote the law with the intent to give people written notice that would actually get into their hands, i.e. a letter or an information packet on their door. What the DEC has done is to write a regulation that allows a tiny little flag to be considered notification. I wondered about the implications of this kind of written notice. Can you imagine the IRS issuing audits via a flag in your front yard? Makes you wonder a little about the people in charge of pesticide regulations. My only hope for this is that the Attorney General, who I filed a complaint with, will work with the DEC to straighten this out. We will see.

Thus the education of an ordinary stay-at-home mom began. The main ingredient of one of the

pesticides was Dimethylamine Salt of 2,4-Dichloro-phenoxyacetic acid, more commonly known as 2,4-D. According to the Beyond Pesticides website (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticides/factsheets/2,4-D.pdf>). "2,4-D has been linked to Cancer, Endocrine Disruption, Reproductive Toxicity, Neurotoxicity, Kidney/Liver Damage & Toxicity to Dogs, Fish, Birds, Earthworms, and Beneficial Insects."

So the real trick to this whole dilemma as I see it is to not to use any pesticides at all. A few suggestions I have for people in my shoes is to search the web under "Pesticide free gardening tips" or "pesticide free lawn tips" or just "pesticide free." All these searches pulled up an enormous amount of information. Another option is to call your local Cornell Cooperative Extension. Their website is <http://www.cce.cornell.edu>

Never have the words "Education is everything" come crashing down on me so hard. So my hope is that you will join me as I educate myself and hopefully a few Eco-logue readers. Till then, stay away from lawns with pesticides on them!

## Help Needed: Political Steering Committee

by Frank J. Regan

6:30 PM, June 8<sup>th</sup>  
Main Conference Room,  
(next to the magazine racks)  
Brighton Town Library,  
2300 Elmwood Avenue,  
Rochester, NY 14618

One of the most important aspects of belonging to the Sierra Club is garnering political clout for the environment. Part of your membership dues are busy vetting and then endorsing political candidates friendly to our environment. We are an advocacy group, and that is why you do not get a tax write-off for your Sierra Club membership. We are doing a pretty good job of finding and endorsing candidates on a federal level.

However, at the local level we need your help. Already this year several candidates have asked for our endorsements but we have not had the resources to do so.

Being the largest and arguably the most influential environmental group in the country, an endorsement from the Sierra Club is valuable to a candidate, as most voters really do care about what keeps them alive and their children's future bright.

We need your help to identify the best candidates for our local environment so we can get them elected. We do this by going through an endorsement process, which includes tailoring questionnaires and compiling the results. This all takes a bit of education, some reading, sorting,

mailing, tabulating, and deciding.

So, please come to our political steering committee meeting, roll up your sleeves, and help us endorse the best candidates for our environment this important election year. We will have materials and get right to work. Here is a schedule that will take about an hour to complete:

- An overview of local elections and the issues
- A general outline of the process by which the Sierra Club endorses candidates fairly
- Review materials that can be tailored to individual campaigns
- Pull together volunteers and materials to create a working political committee

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## Chapter Approves Two Important Rochester Initiatives

by Hugh Mitchell, Rochester Group delegate to Atlantic Chapter ExCom

In April the Atlantic Chapter Executive Committee debated and approved **two** local Rochester initiatives, both of which have regional significance. The Chapter now stands behind the Rochester Group's "No Trophy Hunting" resolution and our "Save Hemlock/Canadice Lakes" resolution. The Atlantic Chapter Hemlock resolution reads as follows:

***Resolve** that the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club recognizes that the 'Upland Watershed' of the Hemlock/Canadice Finger Lakes, currently owned by the City of Rochester as the source of drinking water, is a rare and unique natural environment which must be preserved from all future development*

***And further**, as part of the Open Space/Sprawl Committee actions, the Atlantic Chapter shall approach the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the legislature, and the governor to move with all deliberate speed to acquire or otherwise secure the preservation of these open space watershed lands.*

The importance of this resolution is that it throws Chapter resources behind our efforts to preserve the rare, natural open space owned by the City, and it defines a long term goal of working with New York State toward the creation of a **Finger Lakes State Park** based on these lands. The good news is that the initial lands for a future park are already in place with 3,500 acres preserved near Honeoye Lake and 7,100 acres currently in Rochester City Hemlock/Canadice watershed lands. But, there is no guarantee that the City will hold on to the Upland Watershed in the future as there have been discussions on selling the entire City water system to the Monroe County Water Authority. Readers of the Eco-logue know that the MCWA has been a major utility supporting the growth of sprawl, not only in this county but in the whole region. So we worry about the possible effects of MCWA using Hemlock to "water sprawl" development in the area. If you want to work on long term preservation for these rare areas call me

at 244-2625.

### Chapter Votes to Oppose Trophy Hunting Contests

In a second important action the Atlantic Chapter resolved that, although we do not oppose hunting, the Chapter "...opposes all Trophy Hunting Contests in which wild animals are killed for cash or other prize rewards." This resolution grew from the efforts of Frank Regan and Hal Bauer to oppose Dick Kraft's hunting club contest which offered a \$2,000 trophy for killing the largest coyote. Frank organized the well-attended fall program educating the public on the value and uniqueness of coyotes. Hal has been elected head of the Chapter Wilderness & Wildlife Committee concerned with preservation of wild animals, including coyotes.

Eco-logue is published five times a year by the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club, PO Box 39516, Rochester, NY 14604-9516. Subscriptions are free to Sierra Club members living in the Rochester Region, and available at \$10 per year to others.

## Environmental Forum a success

by Bob Siegel

The Rochester Regional Group held its annual environmental forum on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The forum, as always, featured a number of local environmental groups that had set up tables around the perimeter of the Unitarian Church auditorium where they were available to hand out information, sign up new members, and get to meet the public at large. This “browsing session” lasted until 7PM when the formal program began. The group was very lucky to have two outstanding outside speakers, both from the business community and both heavily involved in the area of alternative or renewable energy.

The program was entitled “Global Warming Solutions that Work.” After some brief introductions, the program began with an overview of global warming given by our state conservation chair, Hugh Mitchell. Hugh assured us that the crisis is real.

The first guest speaker was Bob Bechtold, President of Harbec Plastics, a local injection molding company that has done outstanding work in reducing energy usage and creating a high-intensity business that is very sustainable. Bob pointed out that one acre of trees will absorb roughly three tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. Among the initiatives Harbec has undertaken to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> output are a 250kW

Fuhrlander wind turbine which provides a significant portion of Harbec’s electrical needs, about 350,000 kWh per year. Next, Harbec purchases 1,800,000 kWh of renewable (wind) energy per year. Harbec also uses Capstone micro-turbines to produce 1,030,000 kWh of combined heat and power (CHP) which produces either space heat or air conditioning as a by-product of electric generation. On top of that, Harbec has a 100% green vehicle fleet, meaning all of their vehicles are either gas-electric hybrids or are totally electric vehicles. Finally, Harbec selected all-electric molding machines over the less-efficient hydraulic type. All told they are saving 3600 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually compared to a more conventional competitor producing the same volume of material. This would be equivalent to planting 1200 acres of trees.

The Forum’s keynote speaker was Roger Saillant, President and CEO of Plug Power, a major fuel cell manufacturer located outside of Albany and another company seriously dedicated to sustainability. A former VP, Roger is considered a visionary in this area. Roger said that the question of energy was inextricably linked with those of food and water. Then he displayed a system model that showed the progression of unrestrained human

activity through the emergence of environmental problems and into despair, but emerging, hopefully, to a new level of human activity with limits which some people have come to call sustainability. He went on to talk about the emergence of China and India putting increased pressure on both oil prices and global warming. He said that long term petroleum-free solutions such as fuel cell powered vehicles are still fifty years away. But there is still reason for hope because:

- ❖ Global sales of green energy doubled in 2005 to \$39.9 billion.
- ❖ Insurance companies, not Greenpeace, may spark widespread corporate policy changes dealing with climate change.
- ❖ U.S. cities, states and the local governments, not the federal government, are leading the way on the reduction of greenhouse gases.
- ❖ Using green power will help to heal an ailing economy.
- ❖ We’re getting smarter about alternative energy.
- ❖ Efficient cars have become cool.
- ❖ While no one was watching, green buildings became cool (and cost effective).
- ❖ Corporations are buying green power and
- ❖ **You’re still reading this!**



## Backyard Habitat Tip

by Sara Rubin

Would you like to make your yard more inviting to birds and other neighborhood creatures this summer? Perhaps the very easiest thing you can do to make your yard come alive with wildlife activity is to introduce a water source. A very simple way to do this is to take a garbage can lid or other shallow-pan type of container, invert it and add a few flat rocks to provide different depths for various species. Cradle it somewhere in the yard where it is fairly level, and fill it with water. Birds will usually notice this new water source very quickly, and will be lining up to drink or bathe.

Mosquitoes will not be a problem as long as you change the water every 5 days or so, since mosquito larvae take a week or longer to develop. And changing the water is actually fun! Just go out with the hose, tip the water out, and blast the lid and stones clean with water. Tip the lid back in place, refill it, and you are ready for another for another week.

Birds are said to be most comfortable with water that is at ground level, and people have reported more activity with low water containers than with raised birdbaths. Many species of birds use this kind of small water feature, as well as mammals such as chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, and insects such as butterflies and wasps, and even amphibians like frogs and toads.

In the parching heat of summer a little water source like this can be a local oasis. At our home we have lots of water, a small backyard pond and wetland. But one day a mother robin showed up at the garbage can lid with her three babies to show them how to use the facility.

With just a simple flat container you can provide a real necessity for animals in your area. You will be privy to a bird's eye view of life from another perspective and, at the least, a steady barrage of fights and squabbles over avian water rights will hold your interest all summer long!

## E.T....Phone Your Senator!

Your local Sierra Club is looking for a few good people to help get the word out.

Occasionally we receive an urgent message from the National or Regional office to call our members and ask them to contact their representatives about vital legislation. Unfortunately, we do not have enough volunteers to help make these calls.

If you would be able to help a few times a year, it would help make a real difference. Being a member of our phone bank involves taking an hour or two to get the phone and call the members on your list. All you need to do is give them a few details about the issue, and remind them of their representative's contact information. Sounds easy, right? It is!

Don't worry if you're not up-to-date on the issue. If your contact has more questions, you can refer him to one of our members actively working on the issue. All you really need is to be able to talk on the phone (or TTY) and read a script.

Of course, most of us don't like

receiving calls which smack of "telemarketing," and that can make it hard to want to make those calls. However, when you consider that you're helping a good cause, it makes it a lot easier. You're not selling anything – you're helping save the planet!

Personally, I've always found telemarketing distasteful. It was a surprise to me, then, when I found myself one of the top salespersons for a local public TV station a few years ago. It was a cause I believed in, so I didn't have to pressure people to help out. The cause itself did most of the work!

Please let us know that you can help by filling out the form below. We'll contact you based on the frequency you suggest. Thanks!

If you have questions, contact me at 585-329-9834 or SierraRochTix@hotmail.com.

— David Rueckberg

Please mail the following form to our mailbox, (Sierra Club, P.O. box 39516, Rochester, NY 14604) or E-mail the information to David (address above).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please check your preferred method of contact

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to help out at the following intervals (circle one)

Per year:    1    2    4    6    As often as needed

## Sierra Club Book Study Group: Plan B

by David Ruekberg

Global warming. Overpopulation. Food shortages. Increasing poverty. If you're paying attention at all, the declining stability of the world probably has you worried. But is it too late to do something about it?

It is late, and our children and their children are going to know a different world than we have known. But, according to Lester Brown's book Lester Brown's Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble, there is something that can be done. That's why we've chosen Brown's book for our current study group.

For example, did you know that the World Bank believes that \$12 billion would provide primary schooling for the many countries not able to achieve this on their own by the World Bank's goal of 2015? What does school have to do with global warming? With a basic education, especially for women, health improves, population declines, and

environmentally destructive practices decrease.

Of course, since Americans consume 20% of the world's resources, many of the solutions have to take place in this country, and Brown addresses that obvious problem as well.

The study group will hold its second meeting on May 30 to discuss the first half of Brown's book (Chapters 1-7). The first six chapters present details about the crisis, supported by extensive research.

The second half of the book, which proposes solutions, will be discussed at a following meeting. (Check our web page or E-mail David at SierraRochTix@hotmail.com for the date.) The book Plan B is available through your favorite bookseller; a free download is available at <http://www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB2/Contents.htm>.

### E-mail List Up and Running

Our unofficial Rochester Regional Group's E-mail list is now active. It is easy to subscribe and unsubscribe. We will only contact you for our Group's meetings, programs, and actions. Just add your E-mail to the Google Groups box at <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/index.html>

### Volunteer Database

Join our Volunteer Database [[http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/helping\\_out.htm](http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/helping_out.htm)]. You can sign up for specific projects or help on one of our Committees. Just send an E-mail to: FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com or call our Sierra Club Voice Box at 585-234-1056, or print out the online form and send it to: Rochester Regional Group P.O. Box 39516, Rochester, NY 14604-9516.

## Sierra Club Outings

Date & Leader	Event	Rendezvous
August 12th Howard Camp	<b>Seth Green Island</b> Seth Green was an early Rochester environmentalist, an expert on the Genesee River ecosystem, and one of the inventors of fish farming. We'll visit an island named for him (his childhood playground), as well as the site of an early Seneca Village in Rochester.	9:30 am at First Unitarian Church parking lot
September 9th Howard Camp	<b>Tryon Village</b> Visit the site of the first European settlement in the Rochester area, now a little-known protected urban forest. The same area was also the site of an important pre-Columbus Native American trade route.	9:30 am at First Unitarian Church parking lot
October 7th Howard Camp	<b>Oatka Creek Park</b> Explore the forest-hidden remains of early American gypsum mines and a mill, as well as viewing one of the premier trout streams in our region.	9:30 am at First Unitarian Church parking lot
November 11 <sup>th</sup> Howard Camp	<b>The Wild Side of Letchworth</b> The lesser-known east side of Letchworth park provides undeveloped wilderness, relics of an ancient and ingenious canal system, as well as trail access to the banks of the Genesee River itself.	9:30 am at First Unitarian Church parking lot

Call Howard Camp at 473-1410 for further information



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 OF THE SIERRA CLUB  
 P.O. Box 39516  
 ROCHESTER, NY 14604-9516

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## CALENDAR

May 30	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Book Study Group (see Page 5)	Brighton Library <sup>2</sup>
June 8	Thursday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting <sup>1</sup>	Brighton Library <sup>2</sup>
June 20	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Alternative Energy Committee	149 Dartmouth St., Apt. D <sup>4</sup>
June 22	Thursday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton <sup>3</sup>
June 27	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee meeting	Brighton Library <sup>2</sup>
July 18	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Alternative Energy Committee	149 Dartmouth St., Apt. D <sup>4</sup>
July 25	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee meeting	Brighton Library <sup>2</sup>
July 27	Thursday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton <sup>3</sup>
Aug. 10	Thursday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting <sup>1</sup>	Brighton Library <sup>2</sup>
<b>Aug. 12</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>Seth Green Island Outing (see page 5) --- meet at Unitarian Church for car pooling<sup>5</sup></b>	
Aug. 13	Sunday		eco-logue deadline	
Aug. 22	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee meeting	Brighton Library <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Open to members. Call 234-1056

<sup>2</sup>2300 Elmwood Ave.

<sup>3</sup>Call Sara at 442-6890 or Mike at 414-6511 to confirm

<sup>4</sup>Call Bob at 576-8144 to confirm

<sup>5</sup>220 Winton Rd. South

Visit our web site at <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester>

Also worth a visit: <http://rochesterenvironment.com>

To add your name to our E-mail list send your address to [FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com](mailto:FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com) and put "subscribe SC Mailing List" in the subject line.  
 Call 585-234-1056 for Sierra Club voice mail.