



IROQUOIS

MESSENGER

EXPLORE, ENJOY & PROTECT THE PLANET

sierraclub.org/atlantic/iroquois

Iroquois Group & Community Partners Plan Earth Day Light Bulb Exchange

We often speak of "low-hanging fruit" in the context of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, whereby relatively simple, painless changes reduce our energy use and carbon emissions without necessitating any behavioral changes or lifestyle sacrifices. Installing better windows, doors and insulation in our homes is a good example. Over time, such changes save homeowners more money via reduced energy bills than the improvements cost in the first place.

But up-front costs can be very difficult for people who are continuously struggling to make ends meet. For most of us, replacing incandescent bulbs in our homes with compact fluorescent (CFL) or LED lamps (bulbs) is easy and inexpensive. For struggling families who continually have to make difficult financial choices, that is often not the case.

Just a few years ago, one could buy a package of two or even four incandescent bulbs for just \$1 at discount stores. By comparison, energy-saving bulbs seem very expensive, often costing \$5 or more each. Indeed, in low-income households, it is now common for some bulbs to go unreplaced for months after their incandescent filaments fail, compromising resident's safety and security. Injuries - from falls, for example - are often associated with inadequate lighting.

With this socioeconomic and environmental issue in mind, the Iroquois Group is planning a very special community project for Earth Day 2017 (Saturday, April 22). Using a grant from the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter Conservation Committee and funds from our own Group treasury, we've partnered with EarthWorks Skaneateles, the Neighborhood Association of West Onondaga Street and VNA Homecare to distribute free LED light bulbs in lower-income neighborhoods west of downtown Syracuse. Residents will be asked to trade in their standard incandescent bulbs, "dead or alive."

Iroquois Group Proposes New "Bring the Bag" Initiative

Last year, as the Iroquois Group considered promoting a Ban the Bag Bill in Upstate New York, we looked to New York City's Ban the Bag proposal for guidance. Unfortunately, that bill was upset by another proposal - the Ban the Ban the Bag Bill - forcing us to regroup.

After considering our options, we propose a Bring the Bag initiative. It's not a new concept, of course, but it's one that needs an extra push. That "push" could involve helping stores provide reusable bags, identifying and endorsing those stores


LED BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

SAVE ON YOUR LIGHTING BILL
LED lighting helps you save money on your energy costs

EFFICIENCY
LED lighting is up to 80% more efficient than traditional lighting

GREEN
LED lighting reduces energy consumption which helps minimise your carbon footprint

LONG LIFE
The lifespan of an LED light is up to 50,000 hours or the equivalent of 17 years running 8 hours a day



After the Iroquois Group's Executive Committee approved this project, we set out in search of support. VNA Homecare, a local home healthcare agency based in Syracuse, very quickly offered their assistance. The organization's Executive Board agreed that the project supported their goal of keeping patients safe and healthy at home. Ken Stack, a VNA Homecare employee and Sierra Club member, helped negotiate the organization's support. VNA Homecare nurses will provide most of the "feet on the street" for the door-to-door light bulb distribution. They will also distribute promotional fliers the week before the event. Sierra Club members are strongly encouraged to participate, as well (contact David Fischer).

- By David Fischer

that already do, or designing reusable bags for distribution at Sierra Club events.

These are all great ideas, but we need your help to translate our intent into action. What would it take to make Bring the Bag common action? Share your thoughts and/or suggestions today. Check out our website for volunteer opportunities, attend an Executive Committee meeting (second Wednesday of each month, 7:00pm, Jamesville Train Station) or send us an email at iro-group@newyork.sierraclub.org.

Sierra Club - Iroquois Group
 PO Box 182
 Jamesville, NY 13078



sierraclub.org/atlantic/iroquois

Iroquois Group Officers

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------|
| Chair | Martha Loew iro-group@newyork.sierraclub.org | 315-492-4745 |
| Vice Chair | David Fischer mycology@aol.com | 315-876-0355 |
| Secretary | Volunteer Needed | |
| Treasurer | David Kapell david.kapell@windstream.net | 315-727-0440 |
| Chapter Delegate | Martha Loew iro-group@newyork.sierraclub.org | 315-492-4745 |
| | David Fischer (Alternate) mycology@aol.com | 315-876-0355 |

Committee Chairs

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------|
| Calendars | ArtRage Gallery info@artragegallery.org | 315-218-5711 |
| Climate/Energy | David Fischer mycology@aol.com | 315-876-0355 |
| Conservation | Linda DeStefano ldestefano3@twcny.rr.com | 315-488-2140 |
| Corp. Challenge | Lisa Daly ldaly@yahoo.com | 315-428-1384 |
| Membership | Laurie Walker laurie.walker001@gmail.com | 315-492-9740 |
| Outings | Michelle Wolfe mjw451@aol.com | 315-451-5091 |
| Political Actions | Lisa Daly ldaly@yahoo.com | 315-428-1384 |
| | Rhea Jezer rjezer@gmail.com | 315-727-0123 |
| Programs | ExCom Committee | |
| Publicity | Volunteer Needed | |
| Sustainability | Debby Shanahan debby@verizon.net | 315-446-1273 |
| Water Issues | Rich Slingerland richardslingerland@yahoo.com | 315-298-3130 |

Support

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------|
| Database Manager | Angela Weiler angelaweiler@gmail.com | |
| Webmaster | Dan Shanahan shanahan@verizon.net | 315-461-7393 |
| Newsletter Editor | Emily Dillon edillon09@gmail.com | 315-440-9690 |

This newsletter is printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper.

New Members are Always Welcome!

Membership is an important piece of the Sierra Club's mission, as it allows us to be a major political force and have the impact we need to create change in our world. Membership starts at just \$15, and you can join online by visiting sierraclub.org/atlantic/iroquois.

From the Chair

Dear Tree Huggers -

When I sat down to write this letter, I had every intention of staying light-hearted. After several failed attempts at optimism, however, I realized I cannot ignore the crisis we face.

Sure, I could bury my head in the sand for four years, or migrate back to Canada with the geese, but running away isn't going to solve the problem.

America elected a wonderful, qualified woman to run our country, but the System gave us a dodo bird, instead. Of course, the problem with that analogy is that our dodo somehow survived extinction and wound up in the Oval Office.

What we must keep in mind is that stressing and complaining will accomplish nothing. We must take action if we hope to make a change. So I urge you, my fellow hawks and raptors, to swoop, rally, march, write, phone, Tweet - whatever it takes to make your voices heard. In the words of Cass van Krah, "It is not enough to have the feathers; you must dare to fly."

For the Earth and our future,

Martha Holly Loew



I'm Elderly. Time to Play?

By Janet Allen

In reading the news of late, one word has leapt off the page: elderly. Many articles matter-of-factly describe as "elderly" people who are *my* age (and sometimes even younger). Me, elderly? Really? Hmmm. Aches and pains that weren't there a decade ago? Check. More than a few strands of gray hair? Check. Learning new skills a bit more slowly? Check. Okay, I admit it. I guess I'm officially "elderly."

Recently, I read an article in the AARP magazine titled, "The Search for the Good Life." The article described what various people consider "a great retirement." One example caught my attention: a description of The Villages in Florida. Billed as "Disneyland for Adults," this retirement community's residents are committed to playing. These 110,000 people have 81 swimming pools, 11 softball fields, 2,500 resident clubs and enough golf courses that they could golf 36 holes a day for 15 days without repeating a hole. As one resident said, "It's like being a kid in a candy store."

True. For one thing, someone has to act like a kid there since they allow people under 19 to visit no more than 30 days a year (Sorry, grandchildren. You'll have to go now, and don't come back too soon. Grandma and Grandpa have to play.) For another, these people seem to be impossibly immature (to say the least).

As football coach Barry Switzer said, "Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple." The world will probably hang together long enough for our generation to finish enjoying it - comforting news indeed for those who believe that they "hit a triple" by their own merit and owe the world nothing.

But, compared to previous generations, even those of us from lower middle-class backgrounds were born on "third base." Of course, some have been - and still are - left out in our society. →

But for most of us, our “elderly” generation has been the beneficiary of affordable but high-quality education, good nutrition and health care, and enriching experiences - something generations before us did not have and upcoming generations seem to be losing. Sure, we worked hard, but what generation hasn't?

So what to do with our “elderly” years? Do we ignore the needs of the world and its people? Do we ignore the threats to all life on the planet? Far from being entitled to a life of playing, I believe we elderly have an obligation to use our skills and our remaining years to do all we can to leave a legacy of a living planet. Now more than ever.

We all have different interests, strengths, and weaknesses, but there's something important out there for every one of us to do. As the writer Frederick Buechner said, “Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world's greatest need.” No age limit.

What might our own “great retirement” look like? Look around and see what you can (still!) do. Swimming pools? Help improve local lakes and streams. Softball fields? Plant native trees, milkweed for monarchs, or a pollinator garden. Clubs? Support an environmental group, protest injustices or join with others to reconnect with nature. Even those who are homebound can participate in citizen science projects.

Match your interests and abilities with the world's many needs and you won't have to waste your life playing 36 holes of golf every day.

Call to Action: Resist the Trump Agenda

By David Fischer



With a climate denialist in the Oval Office, another heading the EPA, and a career fossil-fuel industry executive heading the U.S. Department of State, the need for environmental activism has never been quite so important as it is today. The environmental community can - and will -

mitigate the damage the current Executive Administration and Congress might otherwise commit against the national and global environment, from the ocean depths to the peaks of the highest mountains.

We who serve on the Executive Committee of the Iroquois Group or help with the Group's projects are trying to make a difference. We know our efforts here in Central and Northern New York always help roll the big ball of environmental policy in the right direction; sometimes a little and sometimes a lot, as when the Iroquois Group and the Atlantic Chapter helped to quickly steer the Sierra Club away from supporting fracking as a "bridge fuel" once we came to understand that shale gas is a "bridge" to nowhere.

Only with local Groups and Chapters serving to keep the democratic, "grassroots" approach working is the Sierra Club able to exert a powerful influence on local, state, national,

and global environmental policy. There is plenty of room on the Iroquois Group's Executive Committee and on individual project committees for anyone willing to take a more active role in helping us protect our vital natural resources - our air today, our children's water tomorrow and our grandchildren's Earth after we're gone. There's lots to do. Send us an email at iro-group@newyork.sierraclub.org if you'd like to help.

Conservation Chair Report

By Linda DeStefano

GEOTHERMAL ENERGY - Iroquois Group Climate and Energy Chair David Fischer spoke at a public rally on October 11, 2016 in support of a bill that would grant tax credits for geothermal energy. At the time of publication, we are still awaiting Governor Cuomo's decision on the bill (and hoping he will sign it). Here's David's statement:

Renewable energy systems are vital to overcoming our deadly carbon addiction. Geothermal is especially environmentally benign, even compared to other combustion-free energy systems such as wind and solar. Geologically, New York is well-suited for several kinds of geothermal technology, and our communities need and deserve the thousands of jobs they can bring. We need to level the playing field for all safe, effective forms of renewable energy; let's not leave our tremendous geothermal resource literally untapped right in New Yorkers' own backyards. We need Governor Cuomo to recognize that vetoing this important legislation would be counterproductive to the State's commitment against carbon. Sustainable energy production is one arena in which we really do need an "all of the above" approach to energy, and climate change is too critical an issue for dragging our feet when we have sensible solutions ready and waiting for implementation.

NUCLEAR SUBSIDIES - As part of my new role as Chair of the Nuclear Committee of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, I recently submitted a commentary to the *Albany Times Union*. Printed in the paper's December 8, 2016 edition, the piece outlined my opposition to subsidies for the upstate nuclear facilities. In spite of opposition from the Sierra Club and other environmental and public interest organizations, the Public Service Commission voted on August 1, 2016 to force ratepayers to subsidize the very dangerous, dirty nuclear plants in our own backyard for 12 years to the tune of almost \$8 billion. This will detract from resources put into energy efficiency and renewables. As of this writing, there are two lawsuits challenging this outrage, one from the fossil fuel industry and one from Hudson River Sloop Clearwater and Goshen Green Farms, LLC. There is also an active publicity campaign organized by NYPIRG and Food & Water Watch.

TRUMP RESISTANCE MOVEMENT - Scott Pruitt, a climate change denialist who has repeatedly sued the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been selected by President Donald Trump and the Republican majority in the Senate to be the new director of the EPA. These and other assaults on the environment have given birth to a powerful and widespread resistance movement. For more information on how you can take a stand and help make a change, please see the "Trump Crisis" story at left.



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Iroquois Outings & Events

PROGRAMS - Unless otherwise noted, programs are held at 7:30 p.m. at the University United Methodist Church, 1085 East Genesee Street, Syracuse. Please park and enter on University Avenue. Programs are free and open to all.

Film Screening: "Before the Flood"

Wednesday, March 22 - 6:30 p.m. *(please note time change)*
ArtRage Gallery, 505 Hawley Avenue, Syracuse

National Geographic's "Before the Flood" presents a riveting account of the dramatic changes now occurring around the world due to climate change, as well as the actions we as individuals and as a society can take to prevent catastrophic disruption of life on our planet. The film follows United Nations Messenger of Peace Leonardo DiCaprio as he travels to five continents and the Arctic to witness climate change firsthand. Refreshments and a post discussion led by David Alicia, national Sierra Club staff member, and local Sierra Club leaders will follow.

Film Screening: "A Dangerous Game: Donald Trump Vs. the Environment"

Wednesday, April 26

The 2014 documentary "A Dangerous Game" examines the eco-impact of luxury golf resorts around the world. Featuring exclusive interviews with Alec Baldwin, Robert Kennedy Jr. and Donald Trump, the film takes viewers on a globe-spanning journey to a World Heritage site in Croatia, the extravagant desert city of Dubai, the explosion of new but supposedly illegal courses in China, and back to Scotland, where Trump continues his controversial building.

National Sierra Club President Visits Syracuse

Wednesday, May 24

Join us as we welcome Sierra Club President Aaron Maier to Syracuse. Maier will relate the many faces of the Sierra Club he observed while traveling the country over the past year, share his hopes for the future of the National Environmental Justice and Community Partnerships Program, and discuss the environmental changes we need to be aware of both locally and on a national level. Discussion will follow.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, June 24 - 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Onondaga Lake Visitors Center, 280 Restoration Way, Syracuse

The Iroquois Group will be hosting the Atlantic Chapter's quarterly meeting at Honeywell's Onondaga Lake Visitors Center on Saturday, June 24. All Sierra Club members are welcome to attend. We hope you'll join us for what promises to be an engaging and exciting day!

OUTINGS - We're always looking for interesting places to explore. Have a favorite spot you'd like to share? Interested in leading one of our outings? Email Michelle Wolfe at mjw451@aol.com. For a complete list of all our upcoming outings and events, please visit the Iroquois Group's website (sierraclub.org/atlantic/iroquois), Meetup.com page (meetup.com/Syracuse-Sierra-Club-Meetup-Group) or Facebook page (facebook.com/Sierra-Club-Iroquois-Group). Please note that last-minute announcements and changes are updated first on Meetup.

