

Fresh Air



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group

Summer 2005 Vol. 37 Issue 2

Chair's Corner by Bibi Sandstrom:

Laurie Treacy has stepped down as editor due to family matters; we thank Laurie for two years of the most beautiful newsletters ever! We thank Nancy Keenan-Rich for stepping in for the spring issue and for offering to continue as editor! Producing the newsletter takes up the bulk of our energy and our money. Please send submissions to nkrich@hvc.rr.com, and any donations for the newsletter (and group!)'s continued existence to Mid-Hudson Sierra Club, POB 1012, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602.

Thanks also to Ronnie Brown, Ralph Pollard, and Eric Kollenberg for their work in marking up newsletters for educational/non-admin. content in order to get back part of our own money (see Summer 2004 Fresh Air on our website <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson>).

June Program:

Wednesday, June 15, at the Jewish Community Center, North Chestnut (Rt. 32N) in New Paltz, 730pm.

For our only speaker social of the summer we are pleased to welcome back **JEFFREY PERLS**, a former MHSC Chair, who will discuss his newest book, "The Shawangunks Trail Companion: a Guide to Hiking, Biking, and Cross Country Skiing". Learn how people and nature have shaped the ridge as we know it. Geology, climate, environment, and human history will be discussed in this slide/lecture. Jeff also wrote "Paths along the Hudson" which he discussed at a previous MHSC program meeting.

Community Matters:

Learn about recycling, plus take advantage of your new membership benefit (\$10 off a Hudson Valley Materials Exchange membership), by volunteering to staff the "reuse-a-bus" at upcoming HVME events. Contact Jill Gruber at hvme@hvc.rr.com or check www.hvmaterialsexchange.com

MHSC Want Ads:

- *Volunteer Coordinator
- *Assistant to Conservation Chair
- *Executive Board member – run for the board beginning December 05. ..or fill in until then on a trial basis.
- *Assistant to Outings Chair

Ride share:

SC member needs ride share from the LaGrangeville vicinity for meetings/ outings. Will pay expenses for tolls, etc. Contact Gaye-Darlene at GDBMuseoart@aol.com. Ride share needed in New Paltz (See Outings)

Summer Fun Sierra-Style!

On SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, come to our now-Annual Summer Picnic at Fred Schaeffer's in Pleasant Valley, beginning at 2pm Location. 31 Quaker Hill Rd. at the intersection of Main St. (Rt. 44) and Quaker Hill in the hamlet of Pleasant Valley. It is 8 miles east on Rt. 44 from the Mid-Hudson Bridge or 4 miles west on Rt. 44 from the Taconic Parkway.

Fred Schaeffer's "Potash Building" has bathrooms available; if it rains, this unique building has many books and photos of interest inside. People can fish from the bank or adjacent bridge. No on-site parking, but plenty west of the building on Main St. or at the nearby shopping center parking lot. Food available but feel free to bring some too.

Call Fred at 454-1190 (w) or 635-3479 (h).

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ TAG SALE \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Start thinking of our Annual fundraiser, our Tag Sale. Gather your goodies now. Can you be a "collection point" during the summer, and take items to the site September 24? If you have items to donate, would you stick prices on them (your guesses are as good as ours) before you drop them off? Can anyone think of a pricing (and storing) place the night before? For other ideas or offers to help, please contact Carol Jarvis at cajarvis@vassar.edu or 473-5620.

Belleayre Beware!

The Crossroads Ventures/Belleayre project is approaching a critical juncture, with a decision from the DEC Administrative Law Judge expected soon. The recent flooding demonstrates in abundance the folly of clearing & building on steep slopes. No matter what the judge decides, we will have a fight. There will be appeals, and ultimately it will be a political decision. Our leaders must be convinced and stay convinced. More info from Jim Mays at 845-657-2013 or jmays@hvaccess.com

A Special Invitation

You are invited to a memorial event for Robert Joseph, former chair of MHSC and environmental activist, on Saturday, June 4th from 12-3:00, in the Hudson Room of the West Point Club. We will share remembrances, have a light repast and enjoy a folk concert with Betty and the Baby Boomers. For admission to West Point every adult over 18 must have a photo ID and (it is advised) an updated copy of your vehicle registration. For more information call MarieCaruso at 845-452-9086 or e-mail: mclagr@aol.com

Summer Outings:

Rating System:

Class A – Difficult: 1500' climb/more than 8 miles

Class B - Moderate: Less than 1500' climb 6-8 miles

Class C- Easy: well graded trails, less than 6 miles.

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine into trees” John Muir

New Outings Coordinator:

As of the Fall 2005, Elizabeth Aldworth will be the outings coordinator. Help her out! Add your name to the leaders list! Co-lead or try an easy outing to get your feet wet. Also, a co-coordinator is needed to assist Elizabeth. Two heads are better than one. E-mail is thoth93@earthlink.net or call her at 845-430-3229. Elizabeth lives in New Paltz; she and her guide dog would appreciate a lift for meetings and outings.

Impromptu Flatwater Paddles with Joanne Steele.

Mid-week/Short Notice: The four local flatwater venues are Hudson, Rondout, Wallkill and Esopus Rivers. The last three have rapids/falls sections which we don't do. A chance to identify wildlife and wildflowers as you paddle. Call Joanne all paddle season to schedule. We will paddle for your ability. Bring your boat, PFD, water and snack. Joanne Steele 845-339-7526

Sat., June 18, Schunemunk Mtn., Level A, 8 miles and 1400ft. elevation, Joint with ADK.

If our timing is right we'll enjoy a wonderland of laurel on this hike along the Jessup Trail, Long Path, and Sweet Clover Trails. Along the way we'll study the geology of the pink and white conglomerate underfoot and enjoy wonderful views in every direction from the two ridgelines. Bring lunch, beverage. Possible stop at Weir's Ice Cream afterwards. Rain Cancels. Call Georgette Weir and Jean-Claude Fouere for meeting place and time: 845- 462-0142

Sun., June 26, Shaupeneake Ridge (town of Esopus, Ulster Co), Level B.

The trail circles Louisa Pond and meanders about on the ridge; some views of the Hudson from on high. Bring lunch and beverage. Heavy rain cancels. Contact leader to confirm and for meeting place. Time: 10:00 AM. Leader: Jim Mays: 845-657-2013 or jmays@hvaccess.com.

Sun., July 10, Slide Mtn., (Catskills, Ulster Co), Level B+, 5.4 miles.

Slide Mountain is the highest peak in the Catskills (4,180 feet). Rock ledges near top offer views of the Ashokan Reservoir. We'll have a short discussion about John Burroughs (1837-1921), naturalist, the first to make a recorded ascent. Heavy rain/thunderstorm activity cancels. Rocky terrain but not so steep. Bring lunch and beverage and raingear just in case. Meet in parking area at 10 am. Directions: NYS Thruway traffic circle at Exit 19 (Kingston), take Rt. 28 approx. 30 miles Turn left onto Rt. 47 in Big Indian, continue for 9.2 miles. Parking area on left. Leaders: Nick Alba and James Krueger. Contact Nick at webnick@hvc.rr.com.

Sat., July 16, Poet's Walk (Rhinebeck, Dutchess Co), Level C. Joint with ADK.

Easy terrain with trails which meander through the woods, along meadows where we can identify wildflowers. There are expansive views of the Hudson with the Catskills in the distance. Rain cancels. Bring lunch/beverage to be enjoyed in the gazebo. And bring a poem. Meet the leaders in the Poet's Walk parking lot at 10am. Leaders: Nancy Keenan-Rich and Roberta Clements. Contact Nancy at 845-452-1727.

Sun., July 31, Hike & Swim in LaGrange, Level C. Joint with ADK.

An easy 4-mile hike at James Baird State Park, followed by a picnic & swim (weather permitting) at Freedom Lake in LaGrange. Picnic lunch can be left in a cooler in the car, if desired. Please call by Thurs., July 28, if you wish to swim; access to Freedom Lake is limited. Any rain more than a drizzle cancels. Meet 10 am at McDonald's on Route 55 in LaGrange. Leaders: Marie Caruso, 845-452-9086 (mclagr@aol.com), & Carol Gray (outdoorCarol@aol.com).

Sat., Aug. 6, Raindate Aug.7th, Tymore Pk. (Unionvale, Dutchess Co.), Level C. "Got Kids??"

Easy walk on trails with some elevated hills. Waterfalls, streams, and a lake. Kids can enjoy identifying wildflowers and searching for animal tracks. Bring food and beverage for a lunch/picnic break. Meet at main gate at 11am. Rain cancels. Leader: Laura Wilhelm (845) 897-5117.

Sun. Aug. 21, Annual Sierra Club Picnic (refer to write-up on page 1).

Sat., September 17, Black Rock Forest, Orange County, Level B -, Joint with ADK.

Meander trails and dirt roads exploring ponds and reservoirs and learn about an area of both natural and historical significance. Views of the Hudson. Bring lunch/beverage. Rain cancels. Meet the leader at the Bed and Bath parking lot (Newburgh Mall-Union Ave. (Rt.300) at 9:30. Leader: Arlene Canonico, (845) 246-2069

Spring has sprung! Oops, not quite yet, it's a little chilly out there! I can't remember if this is normal spring weather or not. Seems like typical weather patterns are a thing of the past. I know for sure that the 70 degree days we had in February several years back were not normal. And I don't remember repeated winter temperatures in the negative 20's, but there they are. And we all just roll along, turn up the heat, and our amazing bodies adjust to the temperatures. The capacity of human beings to adapt and survive is what makes us special. Our intelligence, and the opposable thumb, separate us from all other species.

Or is it our egos? It seems to me that our "intelligence" has gotten us into some mess. We don't like mosquitoes so we slather the planet with pesticides; we don't like to pay a lot for food so we buy fruit that is imported from halfway around the world; we don't like to be cramped so we buy huge cars to make us feel safe and successful. The result of our need for a better life has literally resulted in our destroying the capacity for life on this planet. We hate bugs yet if there were no bugs on this planet the earth would not be habitable for humans. We have labor laws to protect children in our country but we buy all our products from other countries because they are cheaper (often due to child labor). Well, chicken little is writing the column this week and the sky IS falling; it is called the Ozone. The Bystander Law was passed because people would just stand there while a crime was being committed or while somebody was dying and do nothing about it. So yes, there is over-regulation in this country but what type of people are we that we need a Bystander Law? Don't just stand there, DO SOMETHING! Do you need a law to tell you what's right or wrong? You know already, listen to that inner voice that is telling you something is terribly wrong and take your stand.

I recently had a discussion with a man twice my age. He believed that we needed to educate the public and tell only the facts. I argued that we needed to reach peoples hearts with passionate arguments. He looked at me like I was the devil incarnate! I don't feel like the devil; I feel like a person who gets funny looks when I start talking about issues intelligently. If I meet someone and start spouting facts about various issues their eyes glaze over and I can see them thinking "Oh, she's one of *those*". The general public thinks environmentalists are crazy. The general public does not want to be educated. The general public knows that I am no smarter than they are and am not going to "teach" them a better way to live. They know how to live; they have been doing it their whole lives.

One of the failures of the environmental movement is that we believe that education will solve the problem. Just fill people up with fact sheets and brochures. If they really knew they'd jump right on board. I believe we are the ones who are fooling ourselves. By now, Everybody knows something is wrong, they just don't really care. The way to make them care is to show them how it affects them personally. That is not done with facts, that is done with feelings. Proposing a "Clear Skies" initiative or "No Child Left Behind" makes people feel better, even the politicians admit that they don't read the bills. If people really felt that we were on the verge of environmental collapse in our own lifetimes, that those science fiction movies are not so far off base, there would be rioting in the streets, panic in New York. Just recall that smoking went unrestricted in hospitals and schools not so very long ago. Now, somebody might even call the cops. In 35 years we'll be looking back thinking how prehistoric society was; meanwhile, the cancer rate still rises. Well, I've got to go; I have two jobs so I can go buy all the things I want to get.

Why Isn't Everybody Dying to Move to Atlantic City?

Ulster County, New York

Who – Out of State Real Estate Developers in conjunction with out of state American Indian Tribes
What – Casinos
When – Right Now
Where – Saugerties, New Paltz, Kingston, Wawarsing, Mamakating, Thompson
How – Unchecked greed and tunnel vision.
Why – Because Things can always get worse.

There are people who have strong arguments in favor of casinos here. I would like to describe some reasons why they should not be supported. Although the recent 5-Casino proposal from Governor Pataki was removed the issue remains hot. The most recent proposal, a casino complex in Saugerties, NY (Thruway exit 20) at the site of the '94 Woodstock Festival. It's as if gambling was like a drug!

The primary argument for casinos is that they will provide economic stimulus to the community. This is a fallacy. Research shows that casinos show a short-term economic stimulus (2-4 years) communities in which they locate, but in the long term, will actually deplete these communities. The construction jobs created are often filled by contract or union workers from out of town as are the actual gaming jobs. These people often come to the community specifically to work in the casinos and not because they chose that particular community to make their home. The jobs are the same low paying, dead end jobs already available without casinos. The higher paying jobs with room for advancement are usually given to others already within the corporation and/or from out of town.

The social effects of a casino are similar to those of a prison. The community gets an increase in the transient residents, an increase in crime, and an increase in drug use. The subsequent drain on social services is a burden to the town and the county as such problems result in more rehabilitation programs, unemployment claims, and learning problems in school, as well as a drain on the school system, hospitals, police, and other publicly funded services. Taxes would likely increase as a result of an increased transient population that may not be property owners.

Multiple negative environmental effects from casinos include: Tapping out the water and sewer systems, increased traffic and air pollution, and littering. A casino may involve extensive landscaping, which would pollute the water table with heavy pesticide use, and introduction of non-native species into the environment. Casinos cause an increase in sprawl, already a serious concern in every town.

Casinos are most often marketed as resorts where people come to have every need taken care of. Oftentimes visitors do not leave the casino resort they are attending and do not spend money in the towns, except at the gas station and convenience stores. Our towns are so much more than pit stops to some non-descript resort that has no connection to the culture, community, or history of the Hudson Valley.

Please support a bill in the State Assembly that would mandate paper ballot/optical scan for NYS (vs. unreliable and inaccurate electronic voting machines). Assemblywomen Sandy Galef and Barbara Lifton introduced the bill (A.06503) and Assemblywoman Joan Christensen is one of the co-sponsors.

“Down on the borders they are felling trees – good trees. And there are wastes of stump and bramble where once there were singing groves. I have been idle. I have let things slip. It must stop!”

Treebeard from “Lord of the Rings” by Tolkien

**Mid-Hudson Group
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 1012
Poughkeepsie, NY**

**Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602
Permit No. 59**