



The TRAILBLAZER

October 2002

Niagara Group of the Sierra Club

Vol. XXXIV, No.4

SPECIAL ELECTION ISSUE

All members are urged to vote for members of our Niagara Group Executive Committee. Biographical sketches of the candidates and a ballot are to be found in this issue. Be sure to vote, tear the ballot from the paper as indicated, and mail it to Steve Burns.

We Endorse Some Candidates

The Niagara Group is proud to endorse the following candidates for public office. The individuals below have all distinguished themselves in their commitment to public policies which protect the environment. Of course there are many more political contests and candidates both locally and statewide; but unfortunately, to evaluate all races and provide an endorsement for any but a select few would be impossible. The Niagara Group Executive Committee discussed potential endorsees at a number of its monthly meetings, and ultimately selected those below, based upon the interests of individual Ex-Comm members and their familiarity with the races and candidates. Subsequently, and in accordance with Sierra Club by-laws, the names of our statewide endorsees were then forwarded to the Atlantic Chapter political committee for its review and approval.

Niagara Group Endorses for the State Assembly

Sam Hoyt, Dem., 144th District, Incumbent

Hoyt has always been a strong supporter of the environment. He is very accessible. He sponsored a smart growth bill a few years ago and is a proponent of renewable energy sources and alternative fuel/low emissions vehicles. He has won awards both from Audubon and LCV. He is a champion of re-invigorating our urban cores--which is one antidote to suburban sprawl

Francine Delmonte, Dem., 138th District, Incumbent

Has been a very strong supporter of local efforts to 1) close the state's largest toxic waste landfill (which is located in her district, has been in operation for decades, and is now seeking to expand) and 2) ensure that in the future, the disposal of toxic wastes in the state is done more equitably since many residents of her district (and many of our members) feel that the Western New York area has been disproportionately burdened by the landfilling here of toxic wastes generated elsewhere. Delmonte also CO-SPONSORED the recyclable bottle bill in the Assembly this term, greatly expanding the kinds of cans and bottles that require deposits in NYS. And she voted YES on the Women's Health and Wellness to require contraceptive coverage in health insurance plans. She is also very accessible.

Dan Ward, Dem., 142th District, Challenger

Ward has been a town councilman in the the Town of Amherst for many years and has consistently opposed over-development in the town. He has been a great supporter of

Atlantic Chapter Met in Buffalo; Praises Buffalo Group's Hosting of the Event

As many of you know, but some may not, The Niagara Group is part of the Statewide Atlantic Chapter. Like our local group, the statewide chapter is directed by an elected Executive Committee ("Ex-Comm"). The chapter Ex-Comm meets quarterly and on various occasions it meets outside of the Albany area in other parts of the state. The most recent meeting of the Chapter Ex-Comm was in Buffalo in the last week of June. Niagara Group Chair Mike Kukla and Group Chapter Delegate Richard Lippes did most of the organizing of this meeting, which was held on the campus of the State University of the New York at Buffalo. The first of this two day meeting was occupied with chapter business while the second day consisted of a tour of notable sights in the Western New York area--including both architectural and natural site of interests as well as environmentally troubled areas such as Hickory Woods and Love Canal. This meeting was put together on comparatively short notice. Nonetheless, most of those attending commented that it was a productive meeting. Hopefully one result of the meeting will be enhanced rapport with our fellow chapter members throughout the state.

an effort to save a 1200 acre wetland from further development and to convert it into a nature preserve. His opponent, Jim Hayes, has been at best indifferent to environmental issues.

Diane Vitello for Niagara Falls City Court Judge

Active member of Niagara Heritage Partnership campaign to remove the Robert Moses Parkway and restore natural surroundings to the Falls and Niagara Gorge. Member Niagara Waterfront Revitalization Task Force and the Niagara Falls Park Advisory Panel.

Shelley A Truex for Niagara County Family Court Judge

Experienced Family Court attorney for a decade. Excellent on family issues including women's health, and well-being of children. Running against incumbent of six months who was formerly one of the most conservative members of the NYS Assembly with an extremely poor environment record over his career.

Coke signing up Camp Allegheny Cancelled

The plans for the Coca Cola Foundation to use the facilities at Camp Allegheny for leadership development have been withdrawn. According to Commissioner Bernadette Castro on July 22, 2002, Coca Cola withdrew its proposal.

Coca Cola's earlier request to use Camp Allegheny had been considered by the State without public input. Since the camp had been used in past years by the Buffalo Museum of Science and other groups, Larry Beahan from our Sierra Niagara Group had written protesting this. Larry had asked if the camp would now be known as "Camp Cokeaghany!"

Maziarz and DelMonte Sponsor Bills to Limit Hudson River PCBs Here

Residents for Responsible Government reports that the "Niagara County Environmental Justice Act" recognizes that the county is one of the most environmentally burdened in the state and calls for the fair and equitable enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies related to PCB contaminated Hudson River sludge. An estimate of over 2.65 million cubic yards of toxic material must be hauled from that area. That is more than 175,000 truck loads which will pass through someone's neighborhood.

State Senator Maziarz and Assemblywoman DelMonte have introduced legislation to prohibit the PCBs from the Hudson river from coming to Niagara County. Towns and Villages between western New York and the Hudson are being contacted and asked to join in the effort to get this legislation passed.

Tim Henderson of ROLE writes that in 1994, Supreme Court Justice Joseph Mintz ruled in a suit brought by ROLE (Residents Organized for Lewiston's and Porter's Environment) against the state Department of Environmental Conservation that there was an inequity in handling hazardous waste in New York (namely, 100 per cent comes to the Town of Porter) and that for the sake of environmental justice, other sites should be found geographically closer to the source of waste, with "all deliberate speed." Today, almost a decade later, Chemical Waste Management in Porter remains the number one hazardous waste treatment facility in the Northeast, because they're the only one!

Lois Gibbs, Executive Director of the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice, speaking at the Environmental Summit of Western New York on June 22, called for increasing pressure on politicians to join in this effort. Earlier in her career Gibbs had led efforts to expose the Love Canal crisis. More and more communities and individuals are joining the struggle to prohibit the shipment of the Hudson PCBs to Niagara County.

Suit to Block CWM Expansion Dismissed

In a surprise development, State Supreme Court Justice Amy J. Fricano dismissed the case brought by Porter residents to stop CWM's plans to expand. Residents for Responsible Government thought they had a strong case that the rezoning was illegal. Whether to appeal or not has not been decided.

Executive Committee, 2002 Elections for At-Large Delegates

Please read the following biographies of the candidates.

I have been involved with the Niagara Group for more than 4 years now. I have been chairman of the Niagara group for the past two years. Before that I was the group newsletter editor and web master. I have also served on the Atlantic Chapter publications committee and last year on the Election committee. I also recently helped to organize the the Atlantic Chapter Executive Committee meeting held here in Buffalo in June of this year. I have been of necessity been involved in many conservation issues in one way or another. As one example, I might mention that early this year I and another Sierran meet Jack Quinn to discuss the woefully inadequate response of the Congress and the Administration to the threat of global warming.

- Mike Kukla

Sierra: Twelve of us are elected by the Niagara Frontier Group to vote and hold office as members of the Executive Committee at our fourth-Tuesday-of-the-month meetings. I'd like to be one of those and I'd appreciate your vote. But if I don't get elected I will continue to attend the meetings and I would urge you to attend as well. You don't have to be elected to come to these meetings and take an active part in the groups efforts. Be there.

Meanwhile this year among other campaigns, I have been part of keeping Coca Cola from ousting the Buffalo Museum of Science from the best group camp in Allegany State Park. I also helped persuade Parks Commissioner Castro not to run busses on the section of Robert Moses Parkway which we previously talked her into closing in anticipation of its removal and the reuniting of the City of Niagara Falls with the gorge of the Niagara.

- Larry Beahan

Born and raised to a French horticulturist family. I was immersed and steeped in the importance of respecting all forms of life and their place in the eco-system.

As a young freshly graduated registered nurse, the woman for whom I was doing private duty was the Mother of the current treasurer of our local Sierra Club. Through him I became an avid member, twenty five years ago, and have been active ever since.

At present I hold the position of Membership Chair along with two other active members, Mr. Steve Burns, and Mr. Paul Maine. We are happy to report over 100 new members each month.

- Genevieve Robins

After a childhood spent in heavily/heavenly forested northern Wisconsin and then in rural NYS, then completion of a B.A. in liberal arts, then years in Germany studying musicology and art history, there followed completion of an MSW and work as a social work supervisor in Buffalo, participation in the Preservation Coalition from the time of its founding and much work on restoring two old houses on the West Side. After joining Sierra Club in 1985, I dropped out in 1992 in protest against its glossy magazine, then rejoined in 1997 in recognition of its important public advocacy work.

VIEWPOINTS: 1. Environmentalism is not alone a matter of spiritual regeneration. More than that, it is a matter of survivala itself. Thus, it is not in conflict with economic interests, but, rather, supports them, in an extremely important way. This point

needs more emphasis in Sierra's message to the world. 2. We need to reach out to religious organizations, so that they may more abundantly receive and disseminate environmental enlightenment. 3. The most urgent environmental problem right now is overpopulation. 4. The Niagara Group needs to seek even more ways to activate its large and potentially powerful membership.

- Paul Maine

I have been a member and supporter of this and other environmental advocacy groups for most of my life, although it is only recently that I have become an active member of the Niagara Group. I have very much enjoyed attending the monthly meetings and other Sierra activities over the last year or so, and I would love to have the chance to continue as a member of the Executive Committee. I have been filling in as meeting secretary, helping with newsletter mailings, and writing action letters to elected and appointed officials in direct appeal for wilderness protection. A great benefit of participating in meetings and joining the listserve, is the chance to get to know and other groups around Buffalo and joining those outings and campaigns, such as the old growth forest inventory, and Audubon Club.

My background as an environmental scientist in the consulting world allows me a "real world" perspective on environmental problems and keeps me intimately involved in local and regional planning issues. I particularly have a professional interest in wetland issues including protection and enhancement, and I serve on the Board of Governors of the New York State Wetlands Forum.

Regardless of the outcome of the Ex Com election, I will continue to campaign for the issues closest to my heart, mostly related directly to wilderness protection and preservation, but also for control of population growth, urban sprawl, and pollution discharge, as well as environmental justice.

- Ginger Ursitti

I am convinced that the tenets of John Muir and the Sierra are needed to slow the slide of modern man into environmental catastrophe.

My environmental and conservation involvement include the Sierra and League of Woman Voter's Sprawl Committee; I am past chairman of the Conservation Committee of the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, and served for 5 years as Chairman of the Bicycle Sub-Committee of the GBN-RTC. I was a Waterways Inspector and Investigator for over twenty years with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

I have much interest and involvement with the Unit Management Plans for the Adirondacks and other state parks; I advocate and track open space conservation measures and Park Policies. I comment and track Wetland Regulation and policies I am a long time bicycle and pedestrian advocate and active in outdoor recreation for over forty years.

I currently work with the League of Woman Voters on urban sprawl. My hobbies are Shakespeare, Lincoln and current events. I like to hike, cross-country ski, canoe, and for fitness I swim and do calisthenics. I conducted cross-country skiing lessons for the Buffalo Nordic Ski Club and the ADK. I enjoy an active outdoor life in Western New York, and I am installing a bird sanctuary at my home. I write at least one letter a week to a newspaper or legislator on conservation, parks or just everyday environmental issues.

- Art Klein

NIAGARA GROUP OFFICIAL BALLOTS

IMPORTANT: Single memberships, use one ballot.
Joint memberships, use both ballots.
Ballots must be received by December 31, 2002.

BALLOT 1 BOARD OF GOVERNANCE AT-LARGE DELEGATE CHOOSE UP TO 6

- Mike Kukla
- Larry Beahan
- Genevieve Robins
- Art Klein
- Ginger Ursitti
- Paul Maine

BALLOT 2 BOARD OF GOVERNANCE AT-LARGE DELEGATE CHOOSE UP TO 6

- Mike Kukla
- Larry Beahan
- Genevieve Robins
- Art Klein
- Ginger Ursitti
- Paul Maine

ELECTION INSTRUCTIONS

To be eligible to vote in this election, you must have been a member in good standing of the Niagara Group as verified by a members mailing label.

Please read all the candidate statements on page 2 and 3. Indicate your choices by checking the boxes next to the candidates names on the ballot. Each member may fill out only one ballot. Joint members use both ballots.

Please detach this page and fold and secure as indicated in the directions below (tape please, no staples!). Make sure your mailing label is facing out and your ballot is sealed inside the fold. Please mail your ballot(s) in a ordinary letter size envelope, provided with the proper postage.

****Please note that this year, the Elections Committee requires the use of an envelope for returning your ballot.**** This will greatly decrease the chances of your ballot being damaged in the mail and will help ensure its secrecy.

Send your ballot(s) to:

2002 Niagara Group Elections Committee
c/o Steve Burns • 25 S. Lincoln • Orchard Park 14127

FOLDING STEP 1: Fold TOP edge down to this line. ↑

FOLDING STEP 2: Fold BOTTOM edge up so your mailing label faces outward. Tape lightly if you wish, but do NOT staple.

****BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED ON
OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2002.****

ANNETTE SOUDER COMING TO BUFFALO

Annette Souder, who is the staff person for the Sierra Club's national population committee, will be in our area October 1-5. On October 2nd at 7pm at the Eagle House Restaurant, (5578 Main St. in Williamsville), she will speak informally about the Population and Environment Program & what local SC members can do to support this program. For a description of the program, see the SC website (www.sierraclub.org/population/). Information will also be put on List-Serve. Save the date, and check back for details.

Environmental Activist Julia Butterfly Hill to Visit Buffalo!

For 738 days Julia Butterfly Hill lived in the canopy of an ancient redwood tree, called Luna, to help make the world aware of the plight of ancient forests which are now, as then, threatened by the logging industry. This amazing woman survived hurricane winds, winter's worst storms, and harassment from loggers, perched high above California's Headwaters Forest. When she descended, Julia realized the importance of sharing her message with the world. She and other forest activists founded the Circle of Life Foundation, the purpose of which is to "activate people through education, inspiration and connection to live in a way that honors the diversity and interdependence of all life". Julia Butterfly Hill will give a FREE lecture at 7:30 PM on Thursday, October 3, 2002 in Slee Hall on the University at Buffalo's North Campus. Please join us for this inspirational lecture, "One Makes the Difference". Feel free to come early. From 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. there will be an environmental information fair and refreshments. For more information and directions contact the UB Green Office at ecala@facilities.buffalo.edu, 716-829-3535 or online at <http://wings.buffalo.edu/ubgreen>.

Special Donation to Planned Parenthood

Our member Jim Hufnagel and his sister made a major donation to Planned Parenthood, but have decided to recognize us, rather than themselves, on a plaque to be installed on the new Planned Parenthood building. The gift will be recognized as from Sierra Club, Niagara Group. What a generous gift! The Sierra Club recognizes the unity of limited population growth and protection of the environment, and it is indeed an honor to have our group mentioned on the plaque.

\$97,000 Received from State to Purchase Klydel Land

The Klydel land preserve will be added to the Audubon Nature Preserve, and is being purchased by the Western New York Land Conservancy. A grant of \$97,000, enabling this purchase, was received from the State.

DEC had ruled, 2-1, that the land was not to be protected as wetlands, but that is irrelevant now that the land has been purchased.

Maxine Spierer dissented, commenting that the Sierra Club had presented sufficient evidence and that the ruling was "...arbitrary and capricious." She added, "The public can not be expected to rely on procedures that are unfairly or arbitrarily applied."

WHAT'S INSIDE . . .

- 1 ♦ Edorsement of Candidates
 - ♦ Atlantic Chapter Met In Buffalo
- 2 ♦ Coke signing up Camp Allegheny Cancelled
 - ♦ Maziarz and DelMonte Sponsor Bills to Limit Hudson River PCBs Here
 - ♦ Suit to Block CWM Expansion Dismissed
 - ♦ Executive Committee Election Candidates
- 3 ♦ 2002 Election for At-Large Delegates - Voting Instruction and Ballots
 - ♦ Annette Souder to Speak October 2, 2002
- 4 ♦ Environmental Activist Julia Butterfly Hill to Visit Buffalo!
 - ♦ Special Donation to Planned Parenthood
 - ♦ \$97,000 Received from State to Purchase Klydel Land



Sierra Club
Niagara Group
791 Parkside Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14216

Non-profit org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #868
Buffalo, NY