



# The TRAILBLAZER

October 2003

Niagara Group of the Sierra Club

Vol. XXXV, No.3

## 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.

### Niagara Group Endorsements for Candidates for the Town Boards of Amherst and Porter

by Marilyn Reeves

In most election cycles, the Niagara Group prepares questions related to environmental issues in towns where there are members active in the group. Based on answers to these questions, we make decisions on Sierra Club endorsement. This year we prepared questions for candidates in the Towns of Porter and Amherst. We hope that in the future we will have active Sierra Club members from other towns so that candidates for office in those communities can be included.

Questions in the Town of Amherst covered candidates' general environmental concerns as well as specific concerns such as: wetlands, sinking homes, Nature View Park, pesticide notification, sprawl, traffic calming, trails, public transit, and neighborhood connectivity.

The Sierra Club endorses Bill Kindell, Debra Bucki, and Suzie Solender. Based upon answers to a questionnaire they are recommended as persons who will work for environmental protection as members of the Amherst Town Board.

Questions in the Town of Porter focused on what a candidate considered the greatest environmental challenge as well as specific concerns such as: expansion of Chemical Waste Management, disposal of PCBs from the Hudson River at CWM, need for health studies re toxic chemicals, Ontario Ordnance Works contamination, closing a section of the Robert Moses Parkway for park land restoration, farmland development, and development within Old Fort Niagara State Park and at Joseph Davis State Park.

The Sierra Club endorses David Brooks, Democrat, for election to the Porter Town Council.

Mr. Brooks served in the past as Environmental Services Director for the City of Niagara Falls, and spearheaded the effort to deny CECOS a permit to expand their land fill. In answering questions about CWM expansion, bringing PCBs from the Hudson

River here, a possible fast ferry, etc., his answers were strong and positive. We believe he would work vigorously to protect our environment.

He currently teaches World History and Social Studies at Niagara Falls High School. In his younger days he worked with the Peace Corps in North Africa.

The Sierra Club believes that the voters and citizens of Niagara County and the Town of Porter will be well served if they elect these two persons to positions of leadership.

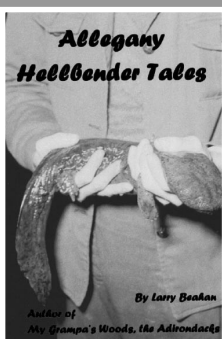
See our website also at [www.newyork.sierraclub.org/niagara](http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/niagara) for more information.

### Ken Baer to Visit Niagara Group

Ken Baer, president of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, is visiting each group and plans to be with us at the Niagara Group on December 15th. Time and place are not firmly determined, but probably will be at 6:30 for dinner at the Eagle House in Williamsville. Check the list-serve or phone one of the members of the executive committee for full details as the time draws closer. We are honored to have this leading environmentalist come to speak to us

### Beautiful Picture to be Auctioned

Genevieve Robins is offering a beautiful oil painting to be raffled to raise money for the Sierra Club. You may view the painting by going to the Niagara Group website at [www.newyork.sierraclub.org/niagara](http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/niagara). Chances are \$1.00 each; mail your check, for as many chances as you want, together with your name, address, and phone number, to our treasurer, Steve Burns, at 25 S. Lincoln Ave., #307, Orchard Park, NY 14127. When Atlantic Chapter President Ken Baer visits us at our December meeting, we will have a drawing and determine who won this beautiful oil painting!



Allegany Hellbender Tales, Larry Beahan's new book about Allegany State Park, is now available in bookstores, on Amazon.com, or from Larry at 716-839-3112, [mailto:lalarry\\_beahan@adelphia.net](mailto:lalarry_beahan@adelphia.net)

The book is a collection of stories from the Park. Larry's family has been going there since 1927. He is a member of the Park Historical Society where he has gleaned lore of Park concessionaires, foresters, fire tower preservationists, one-room schoolhouse students, campers and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Larry describes a prehistoric mountaintop fortress and George Heron, past President of the Seneca Nation, telling of ghosts. Larry deals with much of the history of the defense of the forest by the Adirondack Mountain Club and Sierra Club against exploitation for timber, natural gas and, at times, even too much recreation.

The book costs \$14.95, is 240 pages long, has 100 black and white photos, is paperbacked and its cover bears a photo from the Buffalo Museum of Science archive of a two-and-a-half-foot-long Allegany Hellbender, a salamander that once was common in waters near the Park and may return someday.

- Thanks, Larry Beahan

# Time for Sierrans to vote for 2004 Executive Committee Members

*Please read the following biographies of the candidates.*

## Charles Lamb

As I approach the end of my first term on the Executive Committee I find myself more enthusiastic about this work than before, and eager to continue.

I became co-editor of The Trailblazer and feel that is a good service for me to do. I've been able to get a number of our environmental activists to write columns on various environmental issues for publication. After the mailing of the Trailblazer I pick up extras to distribute to people in an attempt to enlist them in work to save our environment.

I am also chair now of our Toxics Committee, and on the Executive Board of Residents for Responsible Government, which is an environmental organization in Niagara County. We have been able to work cooperatively in opposing the expansion of Chemical Waste Management and the bringing of more toxics to our area. I helped obtain a grant from the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club for this work.

In August I was accepted to attend the Sierra Club's national training event for environmental activists in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

Of course I continue to try to influence churches and religious leaders to see the protection of the environment as part of their mission, defending God's earth and working for justice for people. Although I am a retired clergyman I have not retired from these efforts; in fact, I have more time for them now.

I hope to have the honor of continuing to serve as member of the Executive Committee of the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club.

- Charles Lamb

## Raymond Gang

For 28 years I worked at a garden center. I learned that many people who bought pesticides did not know the consequences of their use. Each year the amount of pesticides we use goes up and the residues end up in the air, water, land, and us. The ground water in every state is polluted. There is a dead zone at the mouth of the Mississippi the size of the state of Delaware and growing mostly from agricultural residues going down the Mississippi.

We love big SUVs that require more and more oil at great environmental cost in its extraction and use. We love Big Macs and so we have 1.1 billion cattle on earth. The Amazon rain forest is coming down in part to support cattle. Third world farmers cannot afford to eat the cattle they raise and are deprived of land on which to grow food for themselves. The Judeo-Christian Scriptures say "the earth suffers for the sins of its people," and God placed man on the earth to "care for" it. Jesus said man's most important duty is to love God and to love one's neighbor as one's self.

The decoding of the human genome shows man and mouse are made of the same building blocks and all living things are interdependent. I would like to show to Jews, followers of Jesus, and anyone of good will the consequences of our love of big SUVs and Big Macs in order that we may care for the earth for our benefit and for those who follow us. I have written to public officials about protecting our forests, wildlife, water, and air. I have a BA from Catholic University, served as a priest for 14 years and have taught high school students in Philadelphia, Detroit, and Niagara Falls.

- Raymond Gang

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## Richard J. Lippes

Previous Positions Held: Niagara Group Member of Executive Comm for 31 years; Former Chair (four terms), Vice-Chair, Secretary, Legal Chair Atlantic Chapter - Chair, 1978-1982, currently member Chapter Executive Comm and Board of Governance, Chair; Many Chapter Comm's, Sierra Club New York State Legal Counsel, 30 years National-Founder of National Sierra Club Hazardous Materials Comm, Member of National Chapter Relations Comm; Regional Vice-President of National Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club has been the main environmental watchdog in Western New York since its inception. It is the most effective organization working to assure a clean and healthful environment that is run by its volunteers. In these difficult financial times in Western New York, and with an anti-environmental President in the White House, the need for Sierra Club vigilance is as great as it has ever been. If reelected, I will continue to attempt to assure that environmental issues remain on the local and national agendas and not ignored due to financial constraints, homeland security or natural resource needs.

- Richard J. Lippes

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## Mike Stroh

When I'm not staring at a computer monitor, I can usually be found exploring one of Western New York's many natural wonders. I am very grateful to live in an area that has such diverse and plentiful outdoor escapes. Preservation of these places is exceedingly important for too many reasons to list here.

In addition to conservation, I'm especially interested in alternative energy and sustainable development. The knowledge and technology exists to curb our over-consumption of the earth's precious resources, the challenge now lies in lobbying the decision makers to do what's right. I enjoy being an active member of the Sierra Club, maintaining the Niagara Group's website, and attending the monthly meetings. I hope to enhance my contribution by becoming part of the Executive Committee.

-Mike Stroh

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## Jim Hufnagel

Presently I will be finishing my second term on your Executive Committee, to which I seek re-election.

Last year I was tapped by the national Club to serve a six-year term on the GPEPC, the Sierra Club Global Population and Environment Program Committee. As a member, I recently participated in the Sierra Club Strategic Planning Retreat at Airley, Virginia, and Capital Hills Days at Washington, DC where, along with fellow Niagara Sierran Frank Mendel, we lobbied our Congress members on vital population issues. I was proud to represent the 2200 members of Niagara Group at both of these national Sierra Club events.

I presently serve on our Atlantic Chapter Political Committee, and the Global Population Committee. I am very grateful to mentors who have repeatedly boosted me on my Sierra Club career, most notably past Niagara Group Chairs Mike Kukla and Richard Lippes, and attempt at every opportunity to follow their example by advancing the interests of Niagara Group members.

Besides trying to confront the ongoing challenge presented to the environment by unsustainable population growth, I have been deeply involved in the attempt to remove the Robert Moses Parkway, pursuant to the Niagara Group resolution on our web site, and restore the Niagara Group to a wild state.

I respectfully ask for your vote.

- Jim Hufnagel

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## Jane Jontz

I have been a member of the Sierra Club for the past twelve years. I find working on environmental issues very rewarding. I like it because having clean air, water, healthy wilderness and wildlife keeps us healthy and makes our world a nicer place. I have been active with Sierra in Austin, Texas, Chicago, Illinois and here in Buffalo. I have also participated in two National Service Trips. At present I am serving as the Niagara Group Chairperson. I look forward to continuing to work on environmental issues.

- Jane Jontz

## The Robert Moses Expressway Must Go!

Submitted by Charles Lamb, co-editor, for Fall 2003 Sierra Atlantic

In cooperation with the Niagara Heritage Partnership, the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club continues to press for the removal of 5.5 miles of the Robert Moses Parkway Expressway. This expressway runs along the Niagara Gorge rim between Niagara Falls, NY and Lewiston, NY on a shoreline designated a Significant Bird Area by Audubon and others.

Instead of the natural beauty of a park along this remarkable and unique site, there exists a 4-lane expressway that keeps people away from the gorge and waterfront. The Niagara Group has been working for the removal of the parkway, the restoration of the natural habitat, and establishment of hiking and biking trails.

At its July meeting the Niagara Group unanimously passed a resolution calling for the removal of the Parkway. This reaffirmed a similar resolution passed in 2,000.

Please add your name to the online petition at [www.niagaraheritage.org](http://www.niagaraheritage.org) and pass this opportunity along to friends and family members.

## Trees in Zoar Valley Must Be Preserved

Letter to Honorable Erin Crotty, Commissioner, New York Department of Environmental Conservation from Jane Jontz

Dear Commissioner Crotty,

Zoar Valley is very important to western New Yorkers and particularly to Sierra Club members who hike there and value its ancient forest. The unique quality of that forest has gained recognition outside our immediate area. Please take a look at the enclosed Buffalo News article.

Sierra Club is concerned that New York State and its Department of Environmental Conservation has not made a clear statement of policy on the preservation of this forest. We have received mixed signals from the DEC sometimes suggesting a protective attitude other times praising the dollar value of the timber if it were harvested.

We would like a clear written statement from DEC recognizing the ecological and cultural importance of the forest in the Zoar Multiple Use Area and the intention to preserve it in the depth of the gorge, up its walls and at least 600 feet back from the lip of the gorge.

The courtesy of a direct response would be appreciated.

## Update on Hamburg Park #17

People for Parks in Hamburg is continuing the struggle to save Park #17 and stop it from being developed. They have held a successful fund raiser and they continue to believe they have a convincing case that the land has been dedicated as parkland. Joe Hayden has written thanking us for our continued support.

You can reach him for updates at [joeshonah@adelphia.net](mailto:joeshonah@adelphia.net).

## Atlantic Chapter Assists Niagara Group in Toxic Struggle

Our Niagara Group appealed to the Atlantic Chapter for help in funding the struggle against Chemical Waste Management expansion, and also to educate the public about the danger of that expansion. The Atlantic Chapter approved a \$300 grant for us. The Niagara Group is adding another \$100 as we work in cooperation with Residents for Responsible Government in the fight to protect our environment.

This gives us a great boost of morale, as well as additional funds, in our struggle for a safer environment.

## Shade Grown Coffee

A number of environmental groups have been encouraging us to buy "shade grown coffee." This term refers to coffee that is grown under the shade of larger trees in the rain forest rather than clear cutting these trees so as to plant smaller coffee trees. The farmers who raise shade grown coffee protect the rain forest and still are able to get a crop of coffee beans.

It has been difficult, however, to find sources from which to buy shade grown coffee. One that we now have discovered is Green Mountain Coffee. Some of their products are labeled as "Fair Trade Organic Coffees." They assure me that these are the shade grown coffees.

You can contact Green Mountain Coffee at 1-800-223-6766 on Mondays and Fridays from 7:30 to 6:30 or on Saturdays from 9 to 1.

Another source for this type of coffee is provided through the Rainforest Alliance. They suggest contacting them at [www.goodcoffeeonline.com](http://www.goodcoffeeonline.com). or [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org).

## NIAGARA GROUP OFFICIAL BALLOTS

**IMPORTANT:** Single memberships, use one ballot.

Joint memberships, use both ballots.

Ballots must be received by December 31, 2003.

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

- Raymond Gang
- Jim Hufnagel
- Jane Jontz
- Charles Lamb
- Richard Lippes
- Mike Stroh

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

- Raymond Gang
- Jim Hufnagel
- Jane Jontz
- Charles Lamb
- Richard Lippes
- Mike Stroh

### 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. 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

**\*BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE 12/31/03\***

**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.**

## Bill to Limit Toxic Shipments Introduced

Senator George Maziarz and Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte have introduced legislation that would prohibit the depositing and storing of contaminated sediment from the Hudson River here. However, the bill failed to pass this year.

The Town of Porter has received more than its share of toxic wastes in past years, and despite a State Supreme Court ruling ordering the Department of Environmental Conservation to find other sites for a more equitable distribution of waste materials, no other site has been identified. This law should have the effect of pushing for alternatives to CWM for toxic disposal.

Unfortunately, a group called Environmental Advocates is fighting the bill. They state that the counties nearest to the Hudson River have already been excluded from receiving the PCBs from the Hudson. They admit that the Towns of Porter and Lewiston have shouldered a disproportionate burden of toxics and related environmental and human health impacts. Nevertheless, they oppose the bill.

From the viewpoint of the Trailblazer editor, they seem to be saying it is ok for carcinogens to come here just as long as they don't stay there! Our position is that alternative and safe methods of disposal need to be found, but that shipping them from one area to another that is just as unsafe for storage as the Hudson is irresponsible.

Please write your State Senator and Assemblyperson and urge them to continue their efforts to stop these shipments across the state to Niagara County.



## The Perfect Thanksgiving Gift is a Sierra Club Membership



Give the gift of Sierra Club Membership. It's a wonderful way to let someone know you care, about them and the environment. Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Member's Weekender Bag.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Recipient's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed made payable to Sierra Club

Mastercard  Visa  American Express

Exp date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_


Cardholder name \_\_\_\_\_

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
<b>INTRODUCTORY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Mail to:  **Sierra Club**  
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO  
80322-2968  
F94Q [W0808]

If you have information you wish to share or copy for use in the Trailblazer, please send it to Charles Lamb at 335 Walnut Lane, Youngstown, NY 14174 or clamb0@prodigy.net or at 716-745-7037. Deadlines for the year are as follows: February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15.

The Niagara Group of the Sierra Club meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. We will meet at the United Methodist Church of Williamsville, 5681 Main Street, until future notice. All Sierrans are invited!

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