



The TRAILBLAZER

October 2005

Niagara Group of the Sierra Club

Vol. XXXVII, 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.

Sierra Club Launches an ExxposeExxon campaign.

The Campaign: ExxposeExxon will reveal the truth about the world's largest and most profitable oil company's actions, including actively lobbying Congress to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling, trying to avoid paying all the damages due to those harmed by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, and funding organizations that work to discredit the science behind global warming.

"For years, ExxonMobil has intentionally put its own profits above a clean environment and the health of America's families. As a result, we are asking all Americans not to accept a new job at ExxonMobil, invest in the company, or to buy ExxonMobil's gas and products," stated the ExxposeExxon coalition in a letter sent today to ExxonMobil CEO Lee Raymond.

- ExxonMobil is the only oil company remaining in Arctic Power, the single-issue group lobbying to open the Arctic Refuge to drilling.

- Between 1998 and 2004, ExxonMobil gave more than \$15 million to organizations working to hide the facts about global warming.

- As increased demand for dwindling world oil and gas supplies earned ExxonMobil a record-breaking \$25.3 billion in net income in 2004, company executives dismissed suggestions that they invest in renewable energy, calling it "uneconomic."

- While ExxonMobil has pledged \$100 million over 10 years for research at Stanford University into new energy technologies, such as burying carbon dioxide emissions, the company's commitment is just two days worth of its 2004 profits and is dwarfed by its spending on oil and gas exploration in 2004 alone - more than \$1 billion. In addition, the Stanford project has no goals and no guarantee that ExxonMobil will apply any of the technology it helps develop.

The ExxposeExxon campaign is reaching out to the American public, calling on ExxonMobil to:

- Protect, instead of drill, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and drop out of Arctic Power.

- Support mandatory caps on global warming pollution and stop funding junk science to cloud the debate on global warming.

- Save consumers money at the pump and ease our oil dependence by investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency and supporting fuel efficiency.

- Pay all of the punitive damages awarded to fishermen and others harmed by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

For more information, please visit www.sierraclub.org/exxposeexxon/

News from the Summit *by Mike Stroh*

In early September I represented the Niagara Group at the first ever Sierra Summit in San Francisco. 700 delegates from across the country turned out for this historic event. The main purpose was to set the direction of our club for the next five years. We would do this, in the words of executive director Carl Pope, by "bringing our diversity together in unity."

The four day event was divided into several deliberative sessions that followed a pre-set direction setting process. The sessions were broken up by exciting speakers such as Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Arianna Huffington. We even had a surprise visit from Al Gore, who urged us to make Global Warming our top priority - which we later did, under the vision "Build a new energy future".

Throughout the weekend there was also a tradeshow in the convention center showcasing green products and services. The highlight was getting to sit in a million dollar fuel cell vehicle.

While the emphasis of the Summit was on the direction setting process, the real story was the people. I met passionate and dedicated volunteers from all over the country and learned about issues ranging from mountaintop removal in West Virginia to commercial logging on public lands in Oregon. They listened intently as I spoke about our campaigns, including protecting wetlands, curbing sprawl, defending the Great Lakes and the people in this region from toxics, and challenging a new coal burning power plant. There was an incredible sense of community amongst us and it's clear that the blunders of the Bush Administration are not dampening spirits, but rather fueling a fire.

I was honored to represent the Niagara Group at this event and I'm more proud than ever to call myself a Sierran.

Training Session in Utica, New York

by Bob Ciesielski

Chairperson Jane Jontz, Paul Maine, Larry Beahan, Steve Burns and Bob Ciesielski represented the Niagara Group at a training session sponsored by the Atlantic Chapter, August 26-28, 2005. Sierra Club staff members Annie Leary of Philadelphia and Megan Lewis of Washington D.C. lectured and ran workshops for 30 participants representing seven groups from across New York.

Topics of discussion included recruiting volunteers among our membership, participation of volunteers in environmental projects and how to plan campaign agendas. Excellent in-depth coverage of event planning, phone-banking, door-to-door outreach and media skills was provided. Atlantic Chapter representative John Stouffer was instrumental in organizing the program.

A Hike in the Smokies *by Charles Lamb*

During August I was able to go, with family, to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. One day I set out on a hike alone, since other members of the group were not that ambitious. My wife told me it wasn't a good idea to go alone, which is true, but I was sure there would be other people on the trail. Besides that, I'm in the final 3 stages of life, and I thought I'd better enjoy this stage. Someone told me that after 70 the remaining stages are "GO, SLOW, and NO" so I decided to GO!

I chose a destination I had never visited before, Ramsay Cascade." The hiking book I have, "Hiking in the Great Smokies by Carson Brewer," said it was an 8 mile round trip and "moderately difficult, steep and stony." That was accurate except for the "moderately" part. Well, it could also have added "muddy." The book read, "You gain about 2140 feet in altitude. This is equivalent to climbing the tallest building in the world (the Sears Tower in Chicago, 1454 feet and 110 stories) plus the tallest in Tennessee (the Third National Finance Center, in Nashville, 490 feet and 30 stories), plus an additional 196 feet."

Now comes the part that made it all worthwhile: "You'll soon be walking in the largest section of virgin forest in the great Smokies – and very likely the largest in the Eastern U.S. You'll see large tulip trees, hemlocks, and some big black cherries." Many, many trees were over 100 feet tall. And, right on the trail, was a big tulip tree which the book says is "...one of the half-dozen largest known trees in the Park." It wasn't a redwood, but three men holding hands could not have begun to surround it.

Ramsay Cascade itself was a "high and mighty splash of white water down a craggy-faced ledge which is nearly vertical and about 90 feet high. It hits a dozen rocky noses and chins on the way down and pauses at none of them." There is a large ledge which makes a good spot to sit or lie down and enjoy the beauty before taking the hike back down.

I had made the hike early in the morning, and was able to be there, on the ledge, alone for quite a while. I loved that! On the way back down later about 20 people passed me but for awhile I had the privilege of solitude in the midst of beauty. I let the awe steel over me and found myself praising God for the glory of nature.

I stand amazed that as I walked back down the mountain I saw only about 20 people making the trip, when hundreds and thousands were at the tourist traps in Gatlinburg. That's the same issue as when people who go to the Casino but never take time to see Niagara Falls. Let's remember what is important!

The downward trail was just as difficult for me as going up. It took me about 2 1/2 hours each way, but lots of people make it faster than that. Let them go; I'll take my time, be safe, and stop to enjoy the beauty.

Now, you may be wondering why I'm writing about the Smokies since this isn't the newsletter of a Sierra Group in Tennessee or North Carolina! Well, of course part of the reason is just because I had such a good time and felt like talking about it. (A privilege of age and being co-editor of this paper!) I hope I can legitimately add a few other reasons for this article.

Visibility in the Smokies is far less than when I was a child. Some days the ozone level is so bad that warnings are posted for hikers, stating that it may be dangerous due to pollution. I think that is not only wrong, but a sin! We know how to curtail the amount of pollution from the smokestacks and yet our companies and even the Tennessee Valley Authority resists making the improvements

con't on pg. 8

Time for Sierrans to vote for 2004

Please read the following

Joe Gardella

Joe Gardella is a Chemistry professor at UB involved with community based environmental collaborations across Western New York. His work has involved Hickory Woods, Seneca Babcock, Cheektowaga, Lewiston Porter, E. Ferry (Buffalo). He has nearly 30 years experience in environmental chemical analysis and works closely with communities on right to know and right to participate. He was born and educated through college in the Detroit, MI area, did his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh, with additional experience at the University of Utah before coming to WNY in 1982. He and his family live in North Buffalo. He is also active in the Buffalo Public Schools.

Jane Jontz

I have been a member of the Sierra Club for the past fourteen years. It is very rewarding to be able to contribute to improving our water and air quality, as well as helping to preserve our wilderness areas. These issues are at the core of our ability to live a healthy life and for all the creatures who depend upon us to be good stewards. 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 in my third year serving as the Niagara Group Chairperson.

Liz Kaszubski

Liz Kaszubski is currently the chair of the NYS Sierra Club Wetlands subcommittee, a member of Sierra Club's national Clean Water committee, and a member of the Niagara group Ex Com. Liz is also a board member of Buffalo Audubon Society and is the manager of their North Tonawanda Audubon Nature Preserve. Liz was appointed by the Niagara County Legislature as their representative to the NYS Open Space Committee and also serves on the City of North Tonawanda Environmental Committee.

Charles Lamb

I am a clergyman and convinced that concern for the environment is a necessary and intrinsic part of any religious commitment.

I've been involved in conservation since my youth, since I grew up near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and often hiked or camped there.

Since coming to western New York in 1961, I

Executive Committee Members

biographies of the candidates.

(Charles Lamb con't)

have been involved as a member of the Ecumenical Task Force on the Love Canal, and as an member of the Executive Committee of Residents for Responsible Government, which fights against bringing toxic wastes to our area.

I am currently a member of the Executive Committee of the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club and co-editor of the Trailblazer newsletter.

Richard Lippes

Previous Positions Held: Niagara Group -Member of Executive Committee for 34 years, from 1971. Former chair (four terms), vice chair, secretary, legal chair. Atlantic Chapter- Chair, 1978-1982, member Chapter Executive Committee and Board of Governance 1976-1892, 2000-2005. Many Chapter committees, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Legal Counsel for past 35 years. National Founder and first chairperson of National Sierra Club Hazardous Substances Committee, Member of National Chapter Relations Committee, formerly 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 even been. If re-elected, 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.

Mike Stroh

I was recently appointed Outings Chair for the Niagara Group. I led my first 'official' hike this summer and I'm excited about revamping our outings program.

I'm active at the chapter level as a member of the Global Warming Committee. I also maintain both the group and chapter websites.

This election marks the end of my first term on the Executive Committee. I've learned a lot over the last two years from fellow members and I'm continually inspired by their dedication. I look forward to continuing to work with them to protect the environment in Western New York.

NIAGARA GROUP OFFICIAL BALLOTS

IMPORTANT: Single memberships, use one ballot.

Joint memberships, use both ballots.

Ballots must be received by December 1, 2005.

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

- Joe Gardella
- Jane Jontz
- Liz Kaszubski
- Charles Lamb
- Richard Lippes
- Mike Stroh

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

- Joe Gardella
- Jane Jontz
- Liz Kaszubski
- 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 pages 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 mail your ballot(s) in an 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:

2004 Niagara Group Elections Committee

c/o Steve Burns

25 S. Lincoln

Orchard Park, New York 14127

***BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE**

12/01/05*

Hudson PCB Project Update

by Chris Ballantyne

Sierra Club Senior Northeast Regional Representative

Two items of note on the long awaited Hudson River PCB cleanup. The EPA recently announced that the start of Phase 1 dredging would be pushed back to Late Spring 2007.

On the brighter side, and of particular interest to members living in western NY, GE spokesman Mark Behan said that the PCB wastes will be "transported out of state". This marks the first positive indication that the contaminated sediment will not be transported to western NY for disposal.

EPA Gets An Education

(taken from the July 13, 2005 Niagara Gazette)

The Environmental Protection Agency recently held a meeting in western New York and planned a tour of Chemical Waste Management while in the area.

Amy Wityrol from Lewiston secured permission to ride on the bus with them, and talked to them about the problems at CWM and in the surrounding area. She persuaded 15 or so of the EPA persons to get off the bus, at the gates of CWM, and talk with about a dozen people from RRG. RRG members had gathered at the gate in a protest demonstration.

One EPA official, who did not want to be identified, used to work for the EPA and was a state level environmental official in Indiana. She said she was impressed. Some of the conference attendees were rethinking whether or not to take the tour of CWM.

Vince Agnello, president of Residents for Responsible Government, said, "We still have a lot of work to do, but at least this opens the door for more action."

Good News in Niagara County

(Information from Niagara Gazette, 7/13/05)

Governor Pataki has signed into law a measure that says distribution of hazardous waste must be equalized across the state.

Residents for Responsible Government, and the Sierra Club, have been supporting this important legislation.

Vince Agnello, president of RRG, said, "(Governor Pataki) is putting environmental justice back on the forefront in the state. This is a major victory for us."

The law calls for the Department of Environmental Conservation to complete a guide guaranteeing fairness in state-wide disposal of all hazardous wastes. Currently Chemical Waste Management, in Niagara County, is the only hazardous waste facility in the northeast.

In all future permitting for hazardous waste sites, the DEC must adhere to a yet-to-be-completed set of guidelines for waste disposal.

Report Details Environmental Harm to Fetuses *(from the Washington Post)*

Unborn babies in the United States are soaking in a stew of chemicals, including mercury, gasoline byproducts and pesticides, according to a report released yesterday.

Although the effects on the fetuses are not clear, the survey prompted several members of Congress to press for legislation that would strengthen controls on chemicals in the environment.

The report, by the Environmental Working Group, is based on tests of 10 samples of umbilical-cord blood taken by the American Red Cross. They found an average of 287 contaminants in the blood, including mercury, fire retardants, pesticides and the Teflon chemical PFOA.

"These 10 newborn babies . . . were born polluted," said Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-N.Y.), who spoke at a news conference about the findings yesterday.

"If ever we had proof that our nation's pollution laws aren't working, it's reading the list of industrial chemicals in the bodies of babies who have not yet lived outside the womb," Slaughter said.

Sierra Club Response to Supreme Court Nominee

Following is a statement by Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director.

"Last night President Bush nominated federal appeals court judge John G. Roberts, Jr., to the Supreme Court to replace retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. The Sierra Club is reviewing Judge Roberts' record on the environment, and while we have some initial concerns, we intend to do a thorough review of his history both on the bench and as an attorney.

"The Senate has a proud tradition of fully evaluating the nominee's credentials and qualifications. We encourage the Senate to uphold that tradition as Americans deserve a thorough and fair hearing process. We also look to Judge Roberts himself to provide evidence to the American people that he is a solid choice for the nation's highest court.

"Never before has the role of the courts in protecting the environment been more important. In the next few years, the Supreme Court could decide whether citizens even have the right to weigh in on clean air, drinking water, wild lands or wildlife; and the fundamental question of whether Congress has the power to protect these natural resources.

"Any Justice confirmed by the Senate should be committed to upholding the current law of the land to protect our air, water, and natural heritage. Our analysis of Judge Roberts' record will focus on whether he has a demonstrated commitment to upholding these fundamental laws to protect our environment.

"Upon initial review, we are particularly concerned about his decisions in the following cases: his opinion in *Rancho Viejo LLC v. Norton*, 343 F.3d 1158 (D.C. Cir. 2003) where he strongly implied that Congress does not have the Constitutional authority to protect certain species under the Endangered Species Act, and *Sierra Club v. EPA*, 353 F.3d 976 (D.C. Cir. 2004), where he upheld a decision by the Bush administration to ignore the public health impacts of toxic pollution from copper smelters."

Contributions Needed

Our Niagara Group is short on cash, with under \$400 in our treasury. In order to go forward with our worthwhile projects, including publication of this newsletter, contributions would be most gratefully received. If you can send a gift to the Niagara Group, Sierra Club, please do so, c/o Steve Burns, treasurer, 25 S. Lincoln Ave., Orchard Park, NY 14127. Thank you!

Visit Our Website

More articles and issues of importance appear on our website; check them out!

You can access them at
newyork.sierraclub.org/niagara/

Resolutions from Great Lakes United's 23rd Annual General Meeting

by Jennifer Nalbene, *Habitat and Biodiversity Coordinator*, Great Lakes United

The Great Lakes United coalition met for its annual meeting in conjunction with the International Joint Commission biennial in Kingston, Ontario. Three resolutions promoting a healthy Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem were passed by the coalition membership. Complete resolutions have been posted at: www.glu.org

The resolution regarding Zero Discharge of Biological Pollution:

- Urges the United States Congress to immediately adopt aquatic invasive species legislation at least as stringent as the provisions of S. 770, the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act.

- Urges the governments of the United States and Canada to set the goal of completely eliminating releases of invasive species into the Great Lakes from ballast water by 2011.

- Stresses that all options to achieve this goal should be immediately investigated, in case legislation, standards and on-board treatments fail to meet the Great Lakes zero discharge goal by 2011. Alternatives could include closing the seaway to ocean-going vessels while keeping the Great Lakes region open to commerce and trade through the development of transshipment facilities or other strategies.

- Supports efforts to regulate ballast water discharge through the United States Clean Water Act and by state and provincial action until adequately protective federal or binational programs are in place.

- Urges that foreign vessels should be required to demonstrate that they carry liability insurance.

Resolution to Protect Great Lakes Recharge Areas:

- Calls on the Province of Ontario to defend the promise of the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, starting with actions to defend easements on the lands in the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Reserve, and

- Calls on the Federal Government of Canada and its elected representatives, as parties to Canada Ontario Agreement to make its concerns known to the Province of Ontario with re-

spect to the pressures on the lands in the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

The resolution on Chemical Policy:

Urges the United States and Canadian governments to adopt the key principles outlined in the Louisville Charter as an important step for chemicals policy in North America to protect the health of our communities and the environment.

The Louisville Charter Platform for a Safer and Healthier Environment through Innovation can be found at:

www.louisvillecharter.org

New Film Focuses on Great Lakes Surfing

From the Biodiversity Project: Yes, you really can surf the Great Lakes. A new documentary about the sport reaches theaters and televisions this summer. The film, by director, surfer, and Michigan native Vince Deur, is called "Unsalted: A Great Lakes Experience." It documents the quest of a group of landlocked fresh water surfers and a few invited pro surfers as they conquer extreme icy winter conditions in order to satisfy their passion for surfing. Director and surfer Deur takes audiences on a road trip around the five great lakes to meet the surfers who have made surfing these stormy waters a way of life for over 40 years. The film is as much about the quirky crowd that surfs the lakes as the lakes themselves.

The Biodiversity Project's Great Lakes Forever site features an exclusive interview with Vince Deur about his film, along with links to a video preview, photo gallery and more. Unsalted: A Great Lakes Experience is playing in several theatres around the Great Lakes this summer.

Bush Agrees That Global Warming Occurs; So Why Doesn't He Act Accordingly?

(Information from a variety of sources, including TIME magazine, July 11, 2005 issue)

Bush said in Denmark that "the surface of the Earth is warmer and that an increase in greenhouse gases caused by humans is contributing to the problem." However, he made plain that mandatory targets are off the table.

Eileen Claussen Comments on Global Warming

Eileen Claussen is a former assistant secretary of State and a former EPA official. Recently, when asked if there was now any doubt at all that global warming exists, she replied that there are still a few determined skeptics who don't accept it, but that a huge majority of scientists do. The National Academy of Sciences reports that the Earth is warming, and that this is induced by human activity, and it will get worse.

All other nations among those attending the G8 Summit are concerned about this and want strong action, except the United States. Over a hundred nations have signed onto the

Kyoto Protocol, but we have not. Even staunch ally Tony Blair of England keeps pushing for mandatory targets for reduction of carbon dioxide, but we resist. Ms. Claussen says it is irresponsible if we do not act.

The good news is that some states are acting to set limits on auto emissions without waiting for federal action. Nineteen states plus the District of Columbia have requirements for more power from renewable energy.

Global warming needs to be a major concern for us and we need to do more educating of the public to understand the huge effects of even a small rise in average global temperatures. The results of global warming already visible in Alaska are alarming, with glaciers melting, roads buckling, and polar bears facing possible extinction.

Sierrans need to take the lead in informing and convincing people that we have an emergency on our hands.

Wetland Policy Thoughts by Art "Happy" Klein

"And with water we have made all living things."
- Quran, Sura XXI:30

Wetlands Discovered. America, 1960, oily, scum covered waterways everywhere, the Cuyahoga and Buffalo Rivers soon to be called fire hazards and floating pods of chemicals in our dying opaque lakes. We realized our own human folly was poisoning our precious water.

Our favorite cartoonist of that era Walt Kelly articulated the horror with Pogo the Possum's, "We is met the enemy and he is us." Appropriately, Pogo lived in the Okefenokee Swamp.

Protection Begins. By 1970, battle was earnest and a worried and enraged public demanded and got protective legislation in New York State and the Clean Water Act (CWA) enacted by the Federal Government. Restoration of all the nations water to drinking water was intended but a strong lobbying effort by industry soon altered this goal. As it turns out thirty some year's later, if you can swim in Lake Erie three out of any five days without encountering sewage remnants, it is a triumph.

Also and nearly too late we discovered wetlands have a particular special role in our water. In earlier times, wetlands were mostly considered obstacles to progress. We quickly learned how wetlands help prevent flooding through water storage, cleanse the water as it passes through them, and form a particular natural habitat, often with more varied vegetation, bird, and animal life than adjacent areas.

But this was just the beginning of our education. As we became more aware of their importance and a classification system developed, Wetlands suddenly were a science not branches of wild-life or botany. The science revealed that successful wetland areas

were the basis for all water quality. Wetlands as the source of the abundance of all aquatic life were realized. Wetlands added acidity, provided the original life forms for the waters of the world.

We also realized to our horror that we had already destroyed most of the wetland areas that could cleanse our water and we quickly determined to lose no more. I saw one scientific appraisal of the value of wetlands of that era that postulated that in some primordial, wetland the spark of lightening that created the first protein struck. In any case wetland preservation and restoration obviously was the American High Priority.

What Shall We Do? From the beginning, wetland protection was left to the State and Federal programs. Although local elected and professional officials were also expected to learn about and realize the value of these areas they generally fail in this. It could get in the way of development.

But we, the citizens who rely on clean water, must also insist on reliable policies for this protection. We must ensure our local government is aware of the value of wetlands and will follow the established and structured process of reviewing all new development. We Sierra Club members because of our vision, collective wisdom and strength must be especially active.

The science and regulatory community acknowledges that national and state wetland maps probably register less than a fifth of all wetlands. Wetland protection need not be an adversarial situation of local government challenging higher authority but one of a community protecting its own important assets. We must ensure that they do.

We, the Niagara Group, must re-double our efforts to make the wetland issues and the monitoring of local officials' assent or denial

con't on pg. 8



photo/Kevin Walsh

It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

**Add your voice to protect the planet.
Join the Sierra Club today.**



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a FREE Sierra Club
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Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club
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Card Number _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<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/LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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.

Enclose check and mail to: **Sierra Club,**
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968

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Plutonium and Playgrounds Don't Mix

Taken from a Press Release by Residents for Responsible Government

Porter – “Plutonium and playgrounds don't mix,” stated Vince Agnello, parent of two students at Lewport School just a mile away from the Chemical Waste Management (CWM) site where plutonium was unearthed. Agnello is also president of the Residents for Responsible Government, Inc. a group of residents concerned with school safety and the radiological and chemical contamination from CWM's toxic landfill operation. RRG recently (7/12) held a press conference at CWM to remind a bus load of EPA staff and conference participants of the continuing radiological and safety concerns plaguing CWM's facility.

“EPA (Federal Environmental Protection Agency) funds much of New York State's toxic waste program,” explained Agnello, “yet we can't get any Federal oversight to test for radiological leakage or establish a monitoring and evacuation plan for the 2500 students and 700 faculty and staff a mile down wind.” “CWM generates millions of dollars from this site yet is unwilling to provide state-of-the-art warning systems to protect our children or even their own employees,” according to Judith Mokhiber, cochair of the RRG Health & School Safety Committee.

Lack of public trust in CWM's ability, to “be a responsible corporate citizen” in Agnello's words, continues to overshadow this operation. Agnello cited a recent report that CWM has leaked PCBs into streams over the past four years even after they agreed to a Consent Order in 2001 to stop. Adding to CWM's bad corporate image, the Albany-based Citizens Environmental Coalition just recognized them as one of the state's “Dirty Dozen” polluters, and Agnello showed a black golf ball to be presented to CWM.

With EPA's Buffalo conference and tour of CWM, RRG used the opportunity to remind EPA that their guidelines are not being followed by New York State, even though the state gets substantial EPA funding. EPA's “Environmental Justice” rules require that the siting of hazardous waste sites not unfairly burden any one community. That was mandated by a 1987 New York State law, and continues to be the policy of the EPA today. “After 62 years of radiological and chemical contamination, and with CWM – the only toxic waste landfill in the entire northeast – still taking about 250,000 tons of toxic trash from 30 states and Canada, there is no Environmental Justice!” exclaimed Agnello. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has yet to comply with the 1987 Law and a 1994 Court Order requiring the DEC to equitably distribute the hazardous waste burden.

“Radioactive and chemical materials are affecting our health,” said Mokhiber, “just look at the NYS Department of Health web site maps.” Agnello closed by emphasizing, “it's time for the Federal government to take responsibility for the problems that they have perpetuated on this area.”

RRG is a non-partisan organization which formed three years ago to help inform residents on the hazards of toxic waste in the region, especially the chemical and radiological materials in and around CWM which sits in the middle of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, a major WW II munitions production and radioactive handling and disposal site. More details are on the RRG web site: rrg-wny.org.

NEW MEETING LOCATION

We will now be meeting in room 306 OF THE NATURAL SCIENCES COMPLEX of the State University of New York from 7pm to 9pm on 4th Tuesdays. We are grateful to the Methodist Church of Williamsville for providing us space in the past. The Natural Sciences Complex is near the Governors complex, just off of Sweethome at the Rensch entrance. This is just north of Maple. For a map, go to <http://www.buffalo.edu/buildings/building?id=nsc> Members and non-members are invited. Come learn about environmental issues and the importance of conserving our environment.

DIRECTIONS: To reach the north campus, I suggest finding the intersection of Maple Road and Sweet Home Rd, and heading north to the Rensch entrance to UB. Turn east into the Rensch entrance, and you'll find yourself at the points on the map. Take the Rensch entrance past one light, to a stop sign, turn left at the stop sign and continue to the next stop sign, turn right and then turn right again into the parking lot. Look for the booths (they will be empty after 3pm, and go into the paid parking lot (which is free after 3pm) to get as close to the NSC as possible. NSC is a brown/tan building 8 stories) with exhaust pipes that look like a pipe organ from the top.

Elevators are at east and west ends of the building. 306 NSC is at the southeast corner on the third floor.

To get to Maple Road and Sweet Home, Sweet Home is east of Niagara Falls Blvd and West of Miller-sport Highway. Maple is one mile north of Sheridan.

If you would like more specific directions, just email me at gardella@buffalo.edu. - Joe Gardella

Sierra Club Outing - October 22

Jane Jontz will be leading a hike to help us explore and learn to appreciate our natural resources on October 22. We will be walking on the beautiful Osgood Trail in Alleghany State Park. The fall colors should be lovely. It is a four mile distance and will be carrying our lunches and a snack. We will gather at the Chestnut Ridge Park Casino at 9:30am and carpool down to Alleghany. If you would like to join this hike please call Jane by October 19 at 628-6934 or email her at jontzja@hotmail.com.

Owl Prowl Set for October 29th

The Owl Prowl will be held Saturday, October 29, 2005 at 7:00 pm. This event is sponsored by Citizens for a Green North Tonawanda and Buffalo Audubon Society. If you are interested, meet at the North Tonawanda Audubon Nature Preserve entrance located at Meadow Drive and Kinkead Avenue (across the street from North Tonawanda High School). The preserve is part of the Klydel Wetland.

"A Hike" con't from pg. 2

that would help clear the air. And our Government does not make such controls mandatory. All of this leads me to think that we must educate people not only to go see the mountains and the trees but to preserve them.

I also believe that through the Sierra Club and in other ways we need to get people into natural settings. I hope, for church going types like me, we can have outings that do not fall on Sundays. I saw one father with a daughter who was about 9, I would judge, hiking the trail. She will grow up continuing her love of the outdoors I'm sure.

Then, as we experience the awe that comes to us when we are in unspoiled natural beauty, I think we will come to value life and nature and want to preserve it far more than if we just read about these things in papers like this one.

Was it Joyce Kilmer who wrote, "Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree."? Well I would say, "Articles like this one are written by fools like me, but you too will love nature if you just go and see!" That's not in the league with the famous poem, but it makes the point I hope!

Thanks for letting this tired but happy hiker ramble on a bit!

Many Environmental Bills Died in the State Assembly

Evidently we all need to do more to educate our elected representatives concerning the importance of protecting the environment. And we need to educate the public, not only to care, but to take action by contacting their representatives to present the reasons for environmental actions.

Several bills died in the State Senate, including the Bigger Better Bottle Bill. Republican Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno kept that bill and others from coming to the floor for a vote.

That brought a disappointing close to a lot of efforts to expand the bottle bill, and to require deposits on more types of bottles and to cause unclaimed deposits to go to the state for environmental purposes.

So we'll try again next year!

"Wetland" con't from pg. 6

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: March 10, June 10, September 10, and December 10. The Niagara Group of the Sierra Club meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7p.m. at The Natural Sciences Complex at UB's North (Amherst) Campus, room 306. This is near the Govenors complex off of Sweethome Road at the Rensch entrance, north of Maple. All Sierrans are invited!

1	◆ Sierra Club Launches an ExxposeBxxon Campaign
◆	News from the Summit
◆	Training Session in Utica
2	◆ Election biographies
◆	A Hike in the Smokies
3	◆ Election ballot
◆	Hudson PCB Project Update
4	◆ EPA Gets An Education
◆	Good News in Niagara County
◆	Report Details Environmental Harm to Fetuses
◆	Sierra Club Response to Supreme Court Nominee
◆	Contributions Needed
5	◆ Resolutions from Great Lakes United's
◆	23rd Annual General Meeting
◆	New Film Focuses on Great Lakes Surfing
◆	Bush Agrees That Global Warming Occurs;
◆	So Why Doesn't He Act Accordingly?
6	◆ Wetland Policy Thoughts
7	◆ Plutonium and Playgrounds Don't Mix
◆	New Meeting Location
◆	Sierra Club Outings

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