The People’s Climate March

Sierra Club and local unions provided broad support of The People’s Climate March in New York City on September 21, 2014. Over 400,000 people attended! Locally, several unions contributed to the cause including SEIU 1199, Buffalo Teachers Federation and PEF. A special thanks to the United Healthcare Workers East, SEIU 1199, for their generous contribution of $2500 to provide bus transportation and scholarship stipends for students for the round trip between Buffalo and NYC. Above, SEIU Vice President Todd Hobler (center) is presenting the check to Larry Snider, Treasurer of the Sierra Club Niagara Group with Chair Lynda Schneekloth. THANK YOU 1199!!

Executive Committee 2015 Election Results

We would like to officially welcome our newly elected excom members:

John Rath
David Kowalski
Robert Ciesielski

Angela Kinsley
Edward McGreery
Laurence Beahan

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New York Bans High Volume Horizontal Drilling For Gas

By Robert Ciesielski

On Wednesday, December 17, 2014 the Administration of Governor Andrew Cuomo agreed to ban the practice of high volume horizontal fracking (HVHF) for gas in New York State. The basis of the decision was the Governor’s acceptance of the Department of Health’s two-year study of HVHF that was released by acting Commissioner of Health Howard Zucker at a Cabinet meeting where the ban was announced.

The history of the banning of high volume horizontal fracking in New York State is a long one. Good luck, a solid regulatory environmental review process in New York, the efforts of thousands of State residents, technological advances, and the Blessings of Providence have marked its course.

The high volume horizontal drilling fracking industry was ready to descend upon New York in 2008. HVHF drilling had already begun in Pennsylvania. The fracking industry claimed that their new industrial practice was safe, utilizing only water, sand, and some benign lubricants to extract methane from shale gas lying deep in the Marcellus shale.

At that time several private citizens reminded Governor Paterson that before a new industry could

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RECYCLING CORNER - METALS:
From scrap metal to washing machines...and everything in between!

By Ron Mixsel

Let’s begin with the obvious. Common food cans go into your weekly recycle bin – soup, beans, tomato products, etc. And if you’re willing to forego the 5-cent deposit, aluminum beer and soda cans may be placed there as well. Other cans, like oil-based paints, solvents, cleaners, and aerosols are considered Hazardous Waste and need to be disposed of accordingly. Some municipal recyclers will take the cans if they’re completely devoid of the original liquid and thoroughly dry, but its best to check first. Otherwise, look for town, city and county Hazardous Waste “drop off” days generally scheduled a few times annually.

Recycling of many other common items is a little less obvious. Coat hangers? Many municipal recycle programs accept them, but some don’t as the old hanger shape can jam the recycle sorting equipment. Check your municipal website recycle rules & regulations. Better yet, many dry cleaners will take the hangers back and re-use them, and charitable organizations that accept and sell used clothing will take hangers to display the clothes on racks. (Reusing is always preferred to recycling.)

How about scrap metal? By definition, it’s “discarded metal for reprocessing”, but, unlike waste, it has value - always to the recycler and sometimes to the consumer. Scrap metal has larger construction and industrial implications, but the average consumer frequently accumulates unwanted metal such as old gutters and trim, plumbing pipes, cords and cables, and aging pots & pans.

Scrap metal can be broken into two categories – ferrous and non-ferrous. Ferrous metals, typically iron and steel, can easily be identified by their attraction to a magnet. However, they have little or no value to the homeowner as scrap yards typically only pay on quantities exceeding 1000 lbs. They will, however, accept these materials in smaller quantities from homeowners. Conversely, non-ferrous metal like copper, stainless steel, lead and brass have some value. Aluminum does as well, but only in very large quantities.

Copper is the most valuable and can bring $2.50/lb. for tubing and bare wire, and $1.50/lb. if wire is still encased in the sheath. Sheathed copper wire includes computer cables, patch cords and data, telephone and electric wiring. Soft lead is closer to $0.50/lb. (Making and using lead fishing sinkers is now outlawed in New York. There’s a lot of it around!) Check with the scrap yards for their prevailing rates on all non-ferrous metals.

Obviously, you will need to separate metal if it’s going to be weighed for cash. A friend who runs estate sales (and occasionally rummages through curb-side garbage), collects, separates and stores scrap metal, then cashes in a few times a year. There are numerous places in WNY to recycle metal. Type in “scrap metal, your county” in your internet browser, check the telephone book, or go to www.earth911.com (upper left corner, click on Recycle Search, type in “scrap metal” and your zip code).

Large appliances like washers and dryers are another matter. If they’re still working, consider selling them or donating to a charity for free distribution or resale. If you are buying a new item, the retailer you purchased from may haul away the old appliance for a small fee. Most municipal trash haulers will pick them up as well, but call first as you may have to schedule a date and time.

Lastly, most scrap metal places will take appliances, but you have to find a way get them there. Be sure to ask how the company manages appliances to ensure it’s handled responsibly.

As with all materials and goods you accumulate but no longer need, keep the environment in mind. Reuse when you can, recycle if you can’t, and dispose of properly if neither are an option. Strive to keep as much as you can out of the waste stream. You might even earn a little extra cash in the process!
Across the globe, the people are stirring, moving, resisting and creating. Whether the issue is climate change or gun violence or civil rights, immigration or gay rights or clean water, food security or nuclear disarmament or war, or reproductive rights—the people are rising up. The shift in human awareness has awakened as Isaiah foretold, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” Only the light has come from within each heart as there is no leader of this uprising. Rather it is the collective rejection of the false promises of an industrialized society based on the belief of human superiority, technological salvation, and an extensive economy that benefits a few at the expense of the many and of the earth itself. It is the deep acknowledgement of what the Occupy Movement articulated – we are the “99%..we are here..and we are now”. We watch as the mythic structure of modern society of man-made and man-nature好事 the earth screaming under our assault. The people have had enough. We will not be pawns; we will not stand quiet at the bottom of the ‘trickle’ as we know there is abundance to be shared. We will not let one person decry another’s right to Earth on Earth Day to deny the dignity of each human life. “Black lives Matter!” as do the lives of all humans, as well as our four-legged, winged, green, and invisible kin. And so we take to the streets, to the courtrooms, to chambers of government, to the pulpits, to the coffee shops, to the village centers and urban squares in Ecuador, Mumbai, the Congo, New York, Durban, and all over the world. This is the largest movement in human history, all over in homes and thousands of leaders. As Paul Hawkins says, “What I see are ordinary and some not-so-ordinary individuals will- ing to confront despair, power and incalculable odds in an attempt to create a world of justice and beauty to this world.” Systems researcher, Professor Brad Werner of the University of California San Diego, demonstrated it is only through ‘friction’ in the form of a mass social move- ment against our industrial society that there is hope for the future. This is a movement to change every- thing as Naomi Klein named it, a movement to rein- stitute democracy, to restore a deep connection to the earth, and to take step down from the imaginary pedestal back to our roots, to the soil from whence we came. Come one, come all. Join us in the Great Turning, from a death-centric to a life regenerating vision for the 21st century. We’ve not much time and we need EVERY one.

The People Are Stirring...

By Lynda Schnelkloth, Chair