

The Trailblazer

The Niagara Group of The Sierra Club • <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/niagara/> • Vol. 48 No. 4 Oct 2013

2013 WNY Earth Day Family Expo at the Buffalo Zoo: A Huge Success!

By Vicki Southall & Angela Knisley

Area teachers and students led the way in highlighting the benefits of Environmental Education at the 2013 WNY Earth Day Family Expo Buffalo Zoo's "Party for the Planet" on Saturday, June 22nd. Students' Earth Day projects included the topics of climate change, natural habitats, invasive species, renewable energy, and recycling and were showcased in an Environmental Education Science Fair. This Fair was sponsored by the Sierra Club/Niagara Group and Daemen College Center for Sustainable Communities and Civic Engagement.

Alexander Central School in Genesee County submitted posters and projects highlighting their Outdoor Classroom. Alexander School is building the first certified Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom in WNY - where nature will be connected to curriculum. It is a school and community supported effort.

Solar Presentation Alert

Coming later this Fall the Niagara Group will sponsor a program to answer questions on installation of solar panels at your home or business. Please check the Niagara Group website in a few weeks for further information as to the exact date and place, www.niagarasierraclub.wordpress.com. Members who receive Niagara Group emails will have the information included in the future "mailings". The program is open to Sierra Club members and the public. If interested, please leave a message at sierraclubangela@gmail.com or at Bob Ciesielski's office, 716-895-3367.

This outdoor classroom provides outdoor experiences that encourage the children to appreciate the environment. Children will be able to participate in such activities as building, balancing, adding, subtracting, sorting and classifying using materials from nature like pinecones, sticks, plants, etc. Various stations will facilitate nature observation and art, poetry, journaling, music, drama and physical activities.

Batavia Central School District, Genesee County, entered three projects from their Jackson Primary School. First Graders at Jackson Primary School enjoyed their studies of diverse habitats. Students in Aimee Nelson, and Heather Landers' First Grade classes submitted projects on the Rainforest which combined science and art. Each student published a research report focusing on a particular animal in the Rainforest. They also submitted 3D projects depicting the four layers of the Rain Forest. Jessica Torrey's class studied the Temperate Deciduous Forests. Detailed artwork and individually written reports highlighted each student's understanding of the interconnectedness of life in the forest.

From the Orchard Park Central School District, Nancy Buck, a fourth grade teacher at Windom Elementary in Orchard Park, and several of her students were present at the Party for the Planet. They taught visitors to the Fair about the impact of non-native plants and animals on our local environment. With the support of Sea Grant New York and Jim Clark who is Windom's Library Media Specialist, Ms. Buck's students researched invasive plant and animal species located in and around Lake Erie and created presentations of their findings. Their project was enhanced by the exhibition of samples

of the invasive species they had studied.

Richmond Memorial Library in Batavia submitted their Gardeners and Scientist project which Kelly March, a librarian in the children's library, is organizing. The submission is from the Great Sunflower Project which is one of the many programs offered at the library's "Dig into Reading" summer reading club. Activities for Great Sunflower Project include the study of pollination and pollinators, growing sunflowers as well as taking part in the national "Backyard Bee Count" - the world's largest citizen science project focused on pollinator conservation.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst's Religious Education Class, which is under the direction of Victoria Crago, sent an Earth Day Activity consisting of artwork and writing. The children explored and explained what they can do to help the earth on a day-to-day basis at home and within the community. Environmentalism is embraced in the UU Church's 7th principle "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are part".

The Environmental Education Science Fair was a wonderful addition to the Buffalo Zoo's Party. The projects attracted the interest from children, as well as adults, and provided an opportunity for parents and children to discuss what they have been doing at their own schools. The Fair also served as somewhat of a springboard - with people jotting some ideas for future school and troop projects.

The Zoo's Earth Day Committee wishes to thank the teachers and students for the time and effort put into these wonderful submissions. Each of the participants will be receiving special legislative recognition for their work.

Sierra Club Niagara Group
601 West Ferry Street
Buffalo, NY 14222



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and upcoming events, visit...
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SEE IMPORTANT ELECTION BIOS AND BALLOTS ON PAGE 2!

RECYCLING CORNER - *Disposing of HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE*

By Ron Missel

In previous issues, this column has focused on conventional recycling. But what about items where there is no traditional recycle option? Of particular concern are household hazardous waste items (e.g. oil-based paints, solvents, cleaners, batteries, herbicides, mercury thermometers, motor oil) that clutter up our basements and the back end of the garage. For most of us, they are in our homes because we don't know what to do with them. Dumping these items into a home or storm drain, or tossing them into the trash is not an option. Most of these items are toxic and harmful to both the environment and area residents. So what can we do?

Some towns and villages have drop-off programs. The larger entities like cities and counties tend to have more established programs. In this writing, I will focus on what's available from the City of Buffalo, Erie County, and Niagara County. In all cases, check your municipality web-sites for information and dates, or call them directly. I've also provided information on Hazman, a private business. (NOTE: The following activities are historical guidelines. Funding and other factors can impact the frequency of these events and the time of year they occur.)

BUFFALO:

There is typically a "drop-off" event each spring. This year, it was held in June in the Honeywell parking lot off Peabody Street with expectations that it will continue at that location. Approximately 7000 pounds of waste was collected. The event is advertised in various ways, but once scheduled, always posted on the front page of the city website, www.city-buffalo.com.

ERIE COUNTY:

Two events are hosted each year; one in May co-sponsored by the Town of Amherst at the ECC North Campus, and the 2nd in June at ECC South co-sponsored by NE South Town's Solid Waste Management Board. Specific dates are typically posted a few months in advance on the Erie County web-site, <http://www2.erie.gov/>. In addition, county residents can call the "household hazardous waste" hotline at 858-6800 for additional information on material disposal. Leave a message and someone will call you back.

NIAGARA COUNTY:

Niagara County has a more comprehensive program, including the option of scheduling an appointment. Check the following Niagara County website for

general information on household hazardous waste and/or to make a disposal appointment. <http://www.rethinkyourwaste.com/hhw.html>

HAZMAN: Hazman is a NYSDEC permitted HHW facility in Tonawanda. They accept a wide-variety of items, although they charge a fee for disposal. From my personal experience, the fee is very reasonable. As of this writing, they are open Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, making it a more convenient option for many individuals. Review their web-site for additional information, or call them direct at 998-8073. Pick-up options are also available but should be discussed personally with the company staff. www.hazmanusa.com.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Latex paint is NOT a hazardous waste. One need only open the container and mix the paint with kitty litter. When thoroughly dry, it can be thrown into the everyday trash.
- It is illegal to throw rechargeable batteries into the trash. However, there are many businesses and retail outlets that will accept them. For drop off locations, check the website at www.earth911.com.
- New York State law dictates that any "oil change" retail outlet must accept up to 5 gallons of motor oil at no charge.

Niagara Group Election Biographies *Please read the following biographies of the candidates.*

LARRY SNIDER

Over the last decade, it has become increasingly clearer to me that the earth needs some good advocates. In my opinion, protecting the earth is really a life issue and I wanted to make a difference in the world. The Sierra Club is one of the best environmental organizations that is knowledgeable on how to protect and advocate for the environment on a real and practical level.

Before becoming involved with the Sierra Club, I also participated in my local Church's Diocesan wide (regional) committee called the Buffalo Diocese Care for Creation Committee. This committee is focused on environmental education and advocacy, and I was directly involved in creating and producing a weekly bulletin called "God's Green Earth".

I have been active in the environmental movement for more than 5 years, and with the Sierra Club for approximately 3 years. As a licensed CPA in NYS, I am proud to have served as the Treasurer for the Niagara Group over this past two-year term. As a previous employee with 21 years of experience for the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance, I have the knowledge and experience to present new ideas and methods for financing programs and logistical needs of the Niagara Group.

My current environmental interest is the development of clean energy systems. After recently becoming involved with a new clean energy start-up company in the process of creating a new commercialized wind turbine, the efficiency of this new system per preliminary power curve studies has demonstrated many more times efficient than the currently available three-bladed wind turbine. I believe that the creation of more efficient, localized, and distributed clean energy systems is one of the most relevant and practical ideas that can be done today in addressing our climate and energy issues.

LYNDA SCHNEEKLOTH

I grew up on the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River near Washington, DC. One of five children, I spent hours and hours at the creek and learned its wiles and dangers. One year, the Army Corp of Engineers came to 'fix' the creek's flooding, and destroyed the woods and shoreline. An environmentalist was born of the grief of a young girl who watched her world being destroyed.

As an adult, I studied landscape architecture because it combined my interest in the world of humans with the love of the earth. Much of my work as a Professor at the UB School of Architecture and Planning focused on environmental matters, including issues around waste and water. But it wasn't until after my children grew up that I actively began work as an environmental activist in Buffalo. In 1989, I was one of the founders and officers of Friends of the Buffalo River, who eventually became the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. Within this organization, I served as one of the negotiators for the Niagara River Greenway in the relicensing of the Niagara Power Project. Currently a Board Member Emeritus, I continue to work on water issues in the region. I also actively participate in the Western New York Environmental Alliance, the UB Regional Institute, and although retired, continue my academic work of writing and publishing.

When I first joined the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club Niagara Group, I faced a steep learning curve -- this group had taken on so many critical issues from early involvement in Love Canal to wilderness protection. About two years ago, the issue of climate change became so critical that we established a special Energy Committee to address renewable energy. What has become clear is that if we don't get stop the use of fossil fuels now, not 25 years from now, that all of the other critical environmental issues may be unresolvable. So it has been in this arena -- ramping up renewables, stopping fossil fuels such as fracking and nuclear energy -- that I have focused my attention.

I have been honored to serve as the Chair of the Niagara Group for the last two years and have found it an intense learning experience, challenging and rewarding. I hope to continue my participation on the ExCom.

SARA SCHULTZ

My background is as a Music Therapist, Chaplain, Yoga teacher and Hebrew Teacher. I have been concerned about the environment for many years and decided taking action with a well-respected organization would give me an opportunity to contribute to its protection. There is a strong connection for me in caring for the earth and trying to bring Holiness into the world and into my life. Realizing the importance of environmental sustainability, I have made personal efforts to adapt my lifestyle toward that goal.

My community environmental activism started about 3 years ago. Over that time, I have made three trips to Albany to lobby for campaign finance reform and to rally against hydro-fracking in NYS. In Western New York, I have participated in rallies and press opportunities with the Niagara Group, and with W.N.Y. Drilling Defense. Other activities include tabling for "Party for the Planet" and the

Galleria Mall, as well as organizing tabling for the Glen Park Eco-Festival. The Buffalo News has also published my editorials refuting pro-Keystone XL Pipeline, served on the Green Team at my Synagogue and at Weinberg Campus. I hope to continue serving as Ex Com member for the next two years, working toward a greener future and making a difference in the lives of generations to come.

RICHARD LIPPES

My background and accomplishments may be summarized by the following description: As an Environmental Lawyer, I have handled many noteworthy cases, including Love Canal and as special environmental counsel for the plaintiffs in Three Mile Island disaster. As a member of Niagara Group Excom for the last 42 years, I have served twice as the Excom Chair over an 8 year period, as well as a member of Atlantic Chapter Excom at various times, and Chairperson of Chapter Excom 1978-1982. In addition, I was formerly the Northeast Region Vice President of the Sierra Club, Founder of National Club Hazardous Materials Committee, and have been retained as the Sierra Club Chapter legal advisor for the past 40 years.

Other ongoing activities include retention as general counsel for many local environmental organizations, including Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, and Atlantic States Legal Foundation. I am co-founder of the American Clean Water project and currently dealing with many legal cases of people whose water has been contaminated by hydro-fracking. As an active member of the anti-fracking crusade, I am compelled to continue legal action against the consequential results of hydro-fracking well into the future.

ROGER COOK

My interest in the environmental movement began with the Love Canal relocation effort where I helped organize the religious community (Ecumenical Task Force) toward advocating for relocation of the residents. Subsequently, the Ecumenical Task Force helped form the NYS Labor-Environmental Network, a coalition of labor unions and grassroots environmental groups based in communities around NYS impacted by toxic waste dumps. Also, at this time, I became director of the Western New York Council on Occupational Safety & Health (WNY-COSH) where we were able to engage workers in the fight for safer workplaces and communities. In the early 1980s, we joined the national OSHA-Environmental Network (co-chaired by the AFL-CIO and the Sierra Club); locally

WNYCOSH worked with the local Sierra Club in part of the national effort to implement the Clean Air Act, which was under assault by the Reagan Administration.

My years of environmental and workplace safety & health activism has spanned from 1978 to the present 2013. My main interest is in building coalitions among labor/environmental/community activists to protect the environment, including the workplace environment. When workers are successful in eliminating unsafe chemicals in the workplace, the environment and community benefit. Today, climate change has become a key issue for our society; workers are very interested in the "green economy" because it can bring jobs in the manufacturing and installation of renewable energy, and the retrofitting of homes. Having served on Excom of the Niagara Group. I would like to continue my partnership work between labor, environmental, and community activism, forming systemic alliances that will ultimately strengthen our ability to achieve our common goals.

PAMELA HUGHES

Watching the world unfold in front of my eyes early on in my life with hikes through the woods, climbing trees, and wading through creeks, I certainly was a nature girl. All my life, my passion for protecting the environment has been rooted in memories of the many losses of animal species, habitats, and pristine waters, transforming what once were unspoiled territories into leveled forests, smog and acid rain, polluted waterways, human encroachment into nature preserves, and an exponentially growing extinction/endangered species list.

I joined the Sierra Club Niagara Group in 2010. My interest in planting trees and issues of forest clear-cutting prompted my later nomination as Forestry Chair. There, I became directly involved with Niagara County Community College's plans for a roadway through the old-growth forest bordering their property. We successfully negotiated a plan to minimize the impact on the existing forest. I was then nominated to Ex Com in 2011 and later served as the Western New York Environmental Alliance Delegate, Newsletter Editor in 2012 to present, and finally in 2013, nominated as Vice-Chair. It has been my privilege to serve side by side the caliber of knowledgeable and compassionate people in this group. My ongoing interest in protecting the environment in a range of roles and capacities remains strong and I hope that my efforts will make a difference in my corner of the world.

Nominees for 2014-15 term on Niagara Group Executive Committee

IMPORTANT: *Single Membership - Use one ballot.
Joint Membership - Use both ballots.*

Ballots must be received by December 1, 2013

NIAGARA GROUP official ballots

BALLOT 1

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE
AT-LARGE DELEGATES
CHOOSE UP TO 6 BOARD MEMBERS

- Larry Snider
- Linda Schneekloth
- Sara Schultz
- Richard Lippes
- Roger Cook
- Pamela Hughes

BALLOT 2

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE
AT-LARGE DELEGATES
CHOOSE UP TO 6 BOARD MEMBERS

- Larry Snider
- Linda Schneekloth
- Sara Schultz
- Richard Lippes
- Roger Cook
- Pamela Hughes

Election Instructions:

To be eligible to vote, you must be a member in good standing with the Niagara Group as verified by a member's mailing label. Please read all of the candidates' statements on Page 2. Indicate your choices by checking the box next to the candidates' names on the ballot. Each member may complete one ballot. Joint members may complete two ballots. Please detach this page and mail your ballot(s) to the address below in an ordinary letter-size envelope with proper postage. Send your ballots to:

2013 Niagara Group Elections Committee

Robert M. Ciesielski • Sierra Club Niagara Group • 2511 Harlem Rd. • Cheektowaga, NY 14225

Ballots must be received on or before 12/01/2013