

The Trailblazer

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People's Climate March and the Sierra Club *By Lynda Schneekloth*

The Buffalo Herd of 168 folks rolled into New York City at 7 am on Sunday, September 21, 2014 for the People's Climate March. We were some of the first people to arrive and were greeted by folks who gave us an overview of the day and orientation. The Sierra Club was lining up on West Central Park Avenue around 75th Street and we met SC members from all over the nation. There were amazing signs and slogans demonstrating great creativity; good humor abounded, including our wonderful 100 orange buffalos. The WWF had a panda bear saying, "Save the Humans!" We had a rally at 75th with singing along with a talk by Michael Brune, Executive Director of Sierra Club. This was only one small 'gathering' of people lining Central Park West from

Columbus Circle all the way back to 96th Street. They had expected 100,000 people from all over the nation, and over 400,000 people attended!

We were still waiting to begin the march when two minutes of silence was called for at 12:58. It was shockingly quiet when the cacophony of voices and music suddenly stopped for two minutes. All marchers silently stood with their hands in the air as a testament of support for our Earth and her citizens. When two minutes passed, the crowd roared in unison and solidarity for each other and the world.

Our Niagara Group began moving in line after 2:00 pm, although the march at Columbus Circle had astoundingly already started at 11:30 am. Once on the move, the pace really picked up and we headed toward the

end. Many had to drop out before the final party because there was not sufficient space at the end to accommodate

4 times the expected number. The Buffalo Herd boarded and arrived back home around 4:00 am, tired but exhilarated by the power of the people.

This was a powerful beginning and now we have much work to do to honor the vision and energy of this march.



We must work together to reverse climate change

(Republished from The Buffalo News) By Judy Fitzgerald

Sobering! That's my comment after attending the People's Climate March in New York City. The enormity of why we were there was inescapable, at least to those attending. This march may have been motivated by a wish to impress upon the officials meeting at the United Nations this week that we are no longer willing to let them finesse their way out of taking action to protect us from the most enormous threat the world has ever known. The desperate need for each of us to seize the power that we still have came through loud and

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clear. Every day that we do not claim our rights as citizens of a democracy, we become less powerful. Each one of us who can hear and see has the power to begin reversing climate change, but only if we use it.

The United States, self-proclaimed leader of the world, has the responsibility to lead. We can criticize our elected officials for not doing something, not committing us to meaningful action like promoting a carbon tax or getting off of fossil fuels, but that is really passing the buck. They will act only when we demand serious, difficult decisions. Unless we wake up and look at the painful reality that we are in, they also will continue to

avoid the painful decisions that must be made.

Science does not lie; the facts are in, we have no time to waste. The power that we have allowed to slip away can be taken back. The 410,000 people marching in New York and many more from all over the world took a dramatic step toward exercising that power.

The next time you are tempted to criticize our representatives in our democracy, keep in mind that their actions are the results of our abdication of power, like it or not. We cannot be successful unless we remember that we all got in this mess together, and together is the only way we will get out.

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SEE IMPORTANT ELECTION BIOS AND BALLOTS ON PAGE 2!

RECYCLING CORNER - *Used Clothing*

By Ron Missel

Everyone knows that used clothes can be donated locally to organizations like Goodwill, Salvation Army, Amvets, Buffalo City Mission, and Hearts for the Homeless. (All are now grouped loosely under the umbrella of the [WNY Coalition for Donated Goods](http://WNYCoalitionforDonatedGoods.com). You will begin to see more collection activities from this group through recent programs in Niagara Square and the Galleria Mall.) You may have seen yellow Planet Aid drop-off boxes strategically located throughout the area that distribute clothes and shoes outside our region, similar to the local operations.

You probably also know that the local operations have shops to display and sell many of the donated goods. (I think there's a mindset that most of these clothing items are substantially worn and wouldn't fit into a lot of wardrobes. But take this scenario: *Guy gets new job and travels extensively, eats in restaurants with hefty expense account, gains 25 pounds in a few months, and the four pair of \$50, unalterable Dockers purchased just a few months ago don't fit any more. \$200 worth of slightly-used Dockers for \$15. Not bad!*)

Here's what you might not know: 85% of textiles

end up in the trash, consumes 5% of all US landfill space, and the average person throws away 70 pounds of clothes and textiles a year. There's a belief that if clothes are torn, stained or sufficiently worn, they can't be reused and won't be accepted as a donation. This is completely false! A full 95% of donated clothing is repurposed. A good percentage ends up on the display racks in the thrift shops, but some of the clothing is donated to needy individuals locally or shipped to 3rd world countries and disaster relief efforts. (If you don't own a coat, receiving one, even with a tear or stain, is a godsend.) And if clothing is deemed no longer wearable, it is baled and sold to commodity brokers to be used for rags or insulation.

You may also not know that profits from the thrift shops and broker sales fund numerous outreach programs administered by these organizations. The Salvation Army and Goodwill provide addiction programs, traditional senior services, and employment activities, including job placement, workforce readiness and GED completion. Amvets offers a range of services to veterans. City Mission provides meals and shelter for the homeless. Similar social programs administered by the city and county governments are funded by your tax dollars, so donating clothing can

lessen the need for these programs and help reduce the tax burden.

Overall, reusing and recycling keeps items out of landfills, reduces overutilization of our natural resources, and saves energy. Donating clothing has a similar impact. It takes a lot of water and energy to manufacture clothing in the first place, so why not extend the life of clothing that might otherwise end up in a landfill? Further, with the profits generated by the sale of clothing at thrift stores, there is a direct and immediate local benefit as we fund much-needed community programs. And you might discover that you can enhance your wardrobe at a fraction of retail cost. Everyone wins!

Lastly, the aforementioned organizations accept many other items - furniture, small appliances, books, CDs/DVDs and dishes, to name a few. Some items, like mattresses and certain large appliances are NOT accepted, so it makes sense to call first or check the respective websites before hauling a load over to a drop-off location. In addition, some of the organizations will pick-up large items (couches, furniture) at your home at no charge.

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

JOHN RATH ~ With hope of being your selection to serve on the Executive Committee of your club, I would like to explain why I am interested in contributing to your efforts in a leadership role. There are two reasons why I get out of bed every day: Youth health and environmental health. In my opinion, you cannot have one without the other. In 2000, when my son Charlie was born, I decided to make my carbon footprint smaller with renewed emphasis on personal conservation, while also making my environmental footprint bigger by becoming involved in a stronger way with the Dallas Sierra Club. Over the next 4 years, I was honored to be on their Excom, including a year as chair. My first environmental advocacy event was at a George Bush for President rally held at the SMU campus. What an initiation to the activist role! From there it has been a wonderful experience lobbying against nuclear waste, campaigning for environmentally savvy local, national and statewide candidates, fighting hydrofracking and hiking to wonderful places like Colorado's peaks and Big Bends desert. Since moving to my hometown of Lancaster in April 2014, I have been able to get to know my fellow Sierrans at an Amherst town council meeting, promoting our club at the Zoo, and assisting with the Climate March this last September. My passion for the environmental movement has only begun in the WNY Region. If elected, I will continue making a positive impact from the frontlines of Sierra Niagara.

BOB CIESIELSKI ~ My experience serving on the Executive Committee of the Niagara Group dates back to 2004. My past and present roles in the Sierra Club are varied as I previously served as Chair of the Executive Committee for five years. Currently, I am serving as the SC Niagara Group Delegate to the NYS Atlantic Chapter, and was appointed State Atlantic Chapter Energy Chair in January 2012. I have been actively involved in the opposition movement toward hydrofracking and a strong advocate of local and statewide renewable energy development, stressing the economic benefits of a new energy economy. I am requesting your vote in order to continue my advocacy for our natural world, and thank you for your efforts in working with SC Niagara Group to protect the health of our environment, citizens and children.

ANGELA KNISLEY ~ I have been a member of the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club Niagara Group for six years and currently chair the Membership Committee. Much of my time with the Niagara Group has focused on "grassroots" communications activities, as well as helping with publicity and public programs such as tabling and educational events. Our group continues to be incredibly busy working on national, state, and local environmental issues ranging from climate disruption to supporting the full cleanup of radioactive waste at the West Valley nuclear site. Proactively, the Niagara Group is working on programs to jumpstart green jobs and renewable energy in the region. My work as an Occupational Therapist in varied health care and school settings has allowed me to see first-hand how the environment can impact health and wellness such as having clean air to breathe. My volunteer experiences with the Niagara Group has made me aware of the vital importance of Non-Governmental Organizations and the unique role they play in environmental protection. I also realize the value of having hope and a resiliency of spirit as a way to help others and ourselves face and tackle challenging environmental problems. One way to achieve this resiliency is through positive actions; something the Sierra Club has been doing since 1892. I would appreciate your support in this election.

ED MCGREEVY ~ As a retired Social Studies teacher in Niagara Falls, I have been actively involved in a number of organizations concerned about Lake Ontario Ordinance Works, (site of Chemical Waste Management), located in Niagara County, which carries a history dating back to World War II. My efforts to keep informed on a variety of environmental issues include the removal of invasive species at the Joseph Davis State Park, the proposed

acquisition of the meadows at Stella Niagara by the WNY Land Conservancy, and the environmental research area of the Art Park plateau. Inspired by Ron Missel's Trailblazer article on the responsible disposal of unused medicines in Erie County, I've recently been researching the same subject in other areas served by SCNG with the goal of providing members of our community this information. Keeping our waterways free from contaminants of this sort is critical to a clean environment. I would be grateful for your support in the coming election.

LAURENCE T. BEAHAN, MD ~ I would like to continue my service on the Sierra Club Niagara Group Ex-com for many reasons. This moment in time is absolutely crucial to the protection of the Earth's environment and I don't want to miss it. The planet is at a point where we, as occupants of it, must make sharp adjustments. We have used the planet's resources to fuel our technological and population explosions while ignoring the effect of that exploitation on poor Mother Earth's ability to sustain us. Niagara Group has put its focus on Energy in the simple realization that if we don't stop putting CO2 in the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels, the Earth's climate will change beyond the capacity of technology to preserve our way of life. As such, I have joined our Energy Committee. We are working to close coal-burning electric plants, install solar panels on schools, and encourage windmills and energy conservation. We campaigned for Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) and now Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE); two logistically possible economic methods that pay for themselves. Also, as recently appointed 'Habitat Chair', I personally have felt the need to continue supporting traditional Sierra Club values. In that capacity, I represent Sierra on Niagara River Greenway issues, lobby for the end of National Fuel's storage site in Allegany State Park, support an anti-fracking law in Amherst, and act as liaison between Sierra and the Adirondack Mountain Club. Through membership in the WNY Environmental Alliance, am active in the effort to make Buffalo's

Outer Harbor a park and not a high-rise money cow. I am appreciative of your backing in past elections, and ask for your continued support.

DAVID KOWALSKI ~ David Kowalski has been a member of the Sierra Club since 2007. He promotes local environmental events, sustainable living, and renewable energy on Re-ENERGIZE Buffalo (<http://j.mp/ReEnergizeBuffalo>), a blog website he created in 2008. He regularly distributes email updates to local residents, news media and politicians (1500+ circulation). In 2013, David received a conservation award from the Sierra Club Niagara Group for his leadership and effective communication of environmental issues through Re-ENERGIZE Buffalo and his ongoing leadership in the anti-fracking campaign.

David created slide presentations on shale-gas fracking and he has delivered them at communities, colleges, and organizations in six counties in NY State, written opinion articles on fracking that were published in *The Buffalo News* and in the *UB Reporter*, testified at public hearings and submitted comments on the human health risks of fracking. In 2007, David was the lead organizer of 'Step It Up Buffalo', part of a national campaign calling for U.S. leadership to curb global climate change. This event included a rally with speakers as well as a march to draw public attention. David wrote letters to U.S. politicians and visited their offices to emphasize the urgent need to cut carbon pollution. In 2014, David created slide show talks on global warming and climate change. He has presented them to several different groups, most recently the Sierra Club Writers Group, and looks forward doing more. David Kowalski earned a Ph.D. degree for research in biochemistry. He is a retired cancer researcher and a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists. He serves on the Conservation Committee of the Adirondack Mountain Club's Niagara Frontier Chapter and is an avid outdoorsman. As a newly nominated candidate for the Niagara Group Excom, he asks for your vote this coming election.

Nominees for 2015-16 term on Niagara Group Executive Committee

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

Ballots must be received by December 1, 2014

NIAGARA GROUP OFFICIAL BALLOTS

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

- Angela Knisley
- Bob Ciesielski
- John Rath
- Ed McGreevy
- Laurence T. Beahan, M.D.
- David Kowalski

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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:

2014 Niagara Group Elections Committee
Sierra Club Niagara Group • P.O. Box 1127 • Williamsville, NY 14221-1127

Ballots must be received on or before 12/01/2014