



**SIERRA
CLUB**
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Hudson/Mohawk Group



Sept./Oct 2005 Vol. 29 No 5

“*Aspens*” by Ansel Adams in *This is the American Earth*

Annual Awards Dinner

Our Annual Awards Dinner will take place Friday, October 28th, 2005 at 6PM at the Woodlawn Reformed Church, 1858 State Street (Route 5) in Schenectady. There will be a one hour walk prior to the dinner through the Woodlawn Preserve in memory of Clarence Gregory, a dedicated Sierran, who recently passed away.

Our speaker for the evening will be The Honorable Paul Tonko, well-known Assemblyman and Chairman of the Assembly Energy Committee, speaking on New York State Energy Policy and Global Warming. There will be an awards presentation and a memorial to Clarence Gregory.

Dinner begins at 6:30pm. A charge of 30 dollars per adult, 10 dollars per child under the age of 14 includes dinner and soda, beer or wine. Join your fellow Sierrans for a great time and an energetic presentation by Mr. Tonko. For more details, you may contact Susan at 489-5721 or John at 370-4932. For reservations, please send a check, at least 2 weeks in advance, to Hudson-Mohawk Group, PO Box 8447, Albany, New York 12208-0447. Contact John at 370-4932 for information on the walk just prior to the dinner.

See you there!

Bioblitz Postponed

Due to unfinished work at the Woodlawn School and other logistical problems we have had to postpone the Woodlawn Bioblitz to Spring of 2006. We are currently planning for early June and will keep you informed of the exact dates in the next newsletter.

Greenhouse Gasses - Environmental WMDs

by John VanDeloo

The most recent Sierra Atlantic, the quarterly newsletter put out by the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, will focus its entire issue on the topic of Global Warming. Many other publications as well are including articles on this topic, painting a grim picture of our future as a result of changes to our environment that are no longer so difficult to imagine - all due to global warming. In spite of a mounting body of evidence that these changes have already begun, there are still many elected officials who refuse to accept that we are the cause of a potential climate change that could alter the earth in ways that will profoundly change our daily lives. For example, a recently completed report on Arctic Climate Impact Assessment entitled *Impacts of a Warming Arctic* explores these impacts in depth and concludes that changes were largely driven by carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans. Alaska's lone congressman, (R) Don Young, immediately dismissed the report. "I don't believe it is our fault" he stated, adding that his opinion is "as sound as any scientist's." Many politicians, especially those with ties to the oil industry, seem to agree.

Climate scientists agree on the most basic key points while they continue to refine such questions as the magnitude and rate of climate change. The National Academy of Sciences, the American Geophysical Union, The American Meteorological Society, The American Association for the Advancement of Science, The Union of Concerned Scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) all have issued statements affirming that climate change is underway, the impacts are significant, and that human activities are the cause of the warming. Science magazine reported, in December of 2004, that a database search of 928 peer-reviewed papers on climate change over the past decade found not a single paper disputing this consensus. How, then, do we overcome the complexity of building the political will to face this enormous, longterm challenge? How do we change denial into action?

You can reduce your personal contribution to global warming by using less gasoline, natural gas, oil, and electricity in your daily life. Your choices about energy and transportation are especially crucial. Cars are one place we can start, demanding more energy efficient vehicles, using hybrid technology, car pooling, and using public transportation. Purchase energy efficient appliances with the Energy Star, awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency. Replace conventional light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs. Ask your utility company to perform an energy audit on your house and put the recommendations into practice. Monitor your local newspaper's coverage of the global warming issue and write in response to any stories or letters that dismiss global warming.

Many of these and other solutions are available to us now. But as our federal government remains in denial, we have to act locally within our community to fight sprawl and educate our local governments to adopt a 'green' approach to future development. We can all hope that technology will come to the rescue; however we need to adopt as many energy saving and greenhouse gas reducing actions as possible, or face the real danger of climate changes that will profoundly affect our future on Earth.

Hudson-Mohawk Group

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* Executive Committee Members

The Hudson-Mohawk Group Executive Committee meets the first Monday of every month. Members are encouraged to attend! Please call Susan Lawrence to confirm.

This newsletter is published 5-6 times per year (or more) by the Hudson-Mohawk Group of the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter. Submit all letters, including name and phone number, to the editor to: Hudson-Mohawk Group, PO Box 8447, Albany, NY 12208-8447. We reserve the right to edit and keep all articles. Views expressed by the contributors may or may not be those of the Sierra Club or the Hudson-Mohawk Group. The subscription rate is \$5/5 issues; subscriptions for members are free.

Outings

Saturday, October 1, 2005 - We will follow the trail around Split Rock Mountain, about 5.5.miles, which offers views of the Adirondack Mountains, Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains of Vermont. We will learn some of the natural history and human history of this corner of the Adirondack Park and enjoy the fall colors. Call John at 370-4932 for information. **H,E**

Saturday, September 24th - Cascade Lakes Project Join us for our semi-annual service project along the highway, and then a hike. For details and registration, contact Ralph and Doreen at 346-2818. **H,T**

Sunday, October 16th - Woodlawn Preserve This will be our final fall clean-up of this unique area, which contains greater botanical diversity than the entire County of Montgomery. Join us as we discuss the past, present and future of this area of western Pine Bush. Call John at 370-4932 for details.**H,E,T**

**Key - H: Hiking E: Education
C:Conservation T: Trail Work**

Important Note: All outing members will sign an "Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability" sheet prior to participation in the outings.

For Leadership opportunities in Outings contact Bill Koebbeman 399-5027



The Calendars Are Coming!

It's almost that time again, when the Hudson-Mohawk Group offers the beautiful and ever popular wall calendars, engagement calendars, and Holiday greeting cards. Help us distribute them this year and you'll be eligible for gifts, and of course, our gratitude. Contact Janet at 346-5439 or

jgiven@nycap.rr.com.

FYI - Inuit hunters, threatened by a melting of the Arctic ice, plan to file a petition before a U.N. meeting in Montreal in December accusing Washington of violating their human rights by fueling global warming.

The Inuit total about 155,000 people in Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Russia. The Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the globe because water or bare earth, once uncovered, soak up more heat than ice or snow.

Key Volunteer Needs

We are especially seeking a few volunteers who are interested in special training and working with volunteers to develop public awareness and actions on environmental issues (contact Susan Lawrence). We also need volunteers to help with our many conservation projects (contact John VanDeloo, Pete Sheehan or Susan Lawrence), help with fundraising (contact Janet Given-Chen), or volunteer with public education 'tabling' at events such as fairs (contact Lucinda Schoenbeck at 434-47479 or lunaclair@yahoo.com). Finally, to have some impact on important local elections this fall, please contact our Political Chair, Steve Redler.

(See box this page for contact info).

Global Warming Censorship: The Full Story

In early June The New York Times reported on how a former oil-industry lobbyist, Philip Cooney, had been censoring climate research reports by government scientists in his role on the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Readers of Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope's weblog "Taking the Initiative", however, got a more complete picture of how a lawyer like Cooney came to be rewriting scientific reports. ('Will The Circle Be Unbroken?' Wednesday, June 15th, 2005; www.sierraclub.org/carlpope/).

And watch for Carl's article on the same topic in an upcoming issue of Sierra Magazine, detailing how Phil Cooney, the (now former) chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, made the mistake of sanitizing scientific documents on global warming in ink. Two days after The New York Times story appeared Cooney suddenly resigned to go to work for ExxonMobil.

John Bolton, Bush's choice (like it or not) for ambassador to the U.N. also has some editorial skills under his belt. In the recent past Bolton edited the long-agreed-upon draft of the U.N.'s Millennium Summit scheduled for September, in which he edited the section on global warming, nixing talk about undertaking 'concerted global action' to do anything about it. (There is a link to this document in Carl's latest blog 'Global Warming's Red Pencils' Monday, August 29th, 2005; www.sierraclub.org/carlpope/).

You can subscribe to Carl's weblog at the web address mentioned above. For more reading on this and other environmental issues affected by our friend W. get a copy of *Strategic Ignorance: Why the Bush Administration is Recklessly Destroying a Century of Environmental Progress* written by Carl Pope and Paul Rauber. Just don't read it before trying to go to sleep.





photo: Kevin Walsh

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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,**
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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.**



ESTABLISHED 1892

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

In Memory of Clarence Gregory

3/14/30 - 8/15/05

Clarence Gregory, a member of the Hudson-Mohawk Group's Executive Committee before any of the current members and for longer than any of us can remember, died on August 15th, after a long and, typical for Clarence, self-possessed battle with cancer. Clarence was such a quiet man, one who never trumpeted his own work or achievements. We are only beginning to learn the full extent of Clarence's many years of contributions to the Sierra Club, and to the protection of our shared environment.

The Group will conduct a tribute to Clarence at our annual dinner on October 28th. We would very much appreciate receiving reminiscences about Clarence from any Sierra Club members who knew him, to add to our tribute. Please send them to Roger Gray RTG50@aol.com (or call 434-8681).

Here are a few reminiscences of Clarence from some long-time Club members:

** Clarence joined the Sierra Club well before it was fashionable to do so. He first became a member in 1969, demonstrating his keen commitment to environmental protection. He was active in many capacities, but perhaps best known for his comitment to the administrative side of things. A tireless advocate, he served as group membership chair, chapter membership chair, and delegate to the Atlantic Chapter Board of Governance. He attended numerous meetings and helped table at scores of group events. He also played a major role in helping to monitor and oversee the Chapter's Financial affairs. To those of us who knew him well, Clarence went above and beyond the cause. His compassion, commitment and love of the Sierra Club will be sadly missed. *-Chris Ballantyne, Regional Representative, Sierra Club Northeast Regional Office*

**Clarence will always be remembered for his common sense approach to environmental issues and his unique ability to view issues from all angles, including understanding and accepting those who did not agree with us. His scientific background combined with his deeply held convictions for protecting our environment were hallmarks of his membership on the Group's Executive Committee. Clarence fulfilled this role in addition to that of Membership Chair and Treasurer, while also chairing the Chapter's financial committee. He did all this without a hint of complaint or being overburdened. We were proud to know such a dignified team player and will miss his presence. *-Pete Sheehan, Past Chair, Hudson-Mohawk Group*

**Clarence was the first and only chair of the Atlantic Chapter Financial Affairs Committee. When the Financial Affairs Committee was first established in the mid 80's, as Chapter Treasurer I was dreading the thought of having to deal with yet another committee and another set of meetings that would, as best I could tell, serve only to consume alot of valuable time. I soon learned that Clarence had an entirely different vision for the committee; and he proceeded to mold it - for nearly 20 years - into a real resource for me and for our chapter. And always the 'historian', he kept a beautifully written and meticulous record of our deliberations and recommendations on those familiar yellow note pads that were present at every committee meeting. Throughout the years and under his quiet, unassuming leadership, he helped establish an effective, collegial and informed corps of volunteers who have contributed a great deal to the Atlantic Chapter. He always understood that the Chapter's conservation work could not succeed in the long run unless the chapter achieved and maintained long-term financial stability and developed adequate financial resources to support its key priorities. We will miss Clarence and his tenacity and unassuming diligence that accomplished so much over so many years with so little fanfare. For a job extremely well done, we thank you Clarence. *-Steve Kulick, Treasurer, Atlantic Chapter*

**Clarence was not only the key financial backbone and economic wizard of the organization, he was also our heart. He kept the necessary financial resources flowing to all of our environmental activist endeavors. Equally important, Clarence was an M.I.T engineering graduate, retired from the General Electric Corporation, who had the honest vision, education, and professional training to see that no corporation should trade off environmental protection for profits. Clarence also had the compassion and strategic eye for cultivating, mentoring, and supporting new activists. Clarence saw in me the possibilities of my potential contributions to the Sierra Club as an environmental activist. He was always at hand to give his advice, support, and encouragement. I am proud to call him my friend and to honor him as a brother in the struggle for environmental protection. My friend Clarence, your work will always live in all of our actions. *-Aaron Mair, Past Chair, Atlantic Chapter*

In Memory of Clarence Gregory

**In the decade I had the pleasure to work with Clarence; his honest, steady, unique and unassuming manner, despite any sort of controversy buzzing around him, often seemed like the only steadying force in the Chapter. Anyone on the Chapter Financial Affairs Committee cannot forget his carefully prepared agenda for meetings, his fastidious minutes, and his gentle presentation of often difficult financial matters. Somehow he gave us a sense that no matter what, the finances of the Chapter were in good hands. Several years ago he telephoned to say he was retiring. In dread, I thought he meant as Chair of the Financial Affairs Committee. But then he added, "So now I will have more time to spend on Chapter Finances". It was his 'real job' from which he was retiring! Despite his failing health these last couple of years, Clarence insisted on pulling together all of his strength to come to and run the meetings. It is hard to believe that he will not be there to keep us on track, organize our thoughts and keep us afloat. I hope he realized over the years how much we appreciated him. *-Rhea Jezer, Past Chair, Atlantic Chapter*

** The passing of Clarence Gregory will mean a great loss for the Sierra Club. My husband Kevin and I remembered his gracious hospitality on a particularly beautiful day when he hosted a Club gathering at his lake house almost 30 years ago. His devotion to the Club extended far beyond the dedicated membership management position he held for so many years. He was a stalwart environmentalist whose many contributions and Club activities made him a pillar of the Sierra community. His Sierra friends will be hard pressed to find another such dedicated worker for the cause.

-Lisa Barron, Life Member, Activist



**Clarence Gregory. What a rare and wonderful person. He cared not about personal glory but cared very much about the mission of the Sierra Club and devoted his life to making that organization run more effectively. He was the first person I met when I joined the Club circa 1980 and he guided me, and many others, into positions of responsibility. As new waves of volunteers joined the Group and older ones retired from service, Clarence was always there helping the newcomers to become more effective volunteers. I was privileged to serve on the Financial Affairs Committee which he chaired so skillfully. He did his work without fanfare and without regard for his personal comforts. A more modest and dutiful person I have never known. He was always honest, open and fair. Oh, Clarence, how we will miss you.

- Bob Kerr

This good and tough mountain-climbing flesh is not my final home, and I'll creep out of it and fly free and grow! (John Muir, 1872)

Clarence, on the right, received the Hudson-Mohawk Group's "Lifetime Achievement Award" at the October 2003 Annual Awards Dinner. Presenting the award is Pete Sheehan.

Upcoming Calendar of Events

- September 21, Wednesday - Conservation Committee Meeting
- October 3, Monday - ExCom Meeting
- October 15th, Saturday - Deadline for newsletter submission (November/December issue)
- October 19th, Wednesday - Conservation Committee Meeting
- November 7th, Monday - ExCom Meeting
- November 16th, Wednesday - Conservation Committee Meeting

Meetings are usually held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 21 Hackett Blvd., Albany, NY. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact Susan Lawrence if you plan to attend in case of change of venue.

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ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

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