



IROQUOIS MESSENGER

IROQUOIS GROUP INFORMATION

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SUBJECT LINE MUST BEGIN WITH IM-

RURAL CHINA

BY MARTHA LOEW

The startling difference between the rural and urban environments in China reflects the life-style of the people.

Cities have grossly polluted air from coal-burning plants, cars and home cooking. People ride bikes or sit in cars in traffic jams. Some wear masks for protection. Some perform Tai Chai in parks or parking lots for exercise. They appear prosperous: even dogs are coddled and dressed for the weather. The water is suspect even in hotels, since all that is offered anywhere is tea, juice or milk. Bottled water sells, but much less than in the States.

Fast-forward via jeep and rugged mountain roads to towns outside Kunming near the Tibetan border. The air is cold and clear and thin in the high elevation. Here is we started our "noodle run," named for a week of noodles for breakfast, noodles for lunch, noodles for dinner, left over dinner noodles for breakfast... We still drank only tea or homemade wine. (French missionaries brought vines to make wine for sacrament in churches converted from Buddhist temples) If you craved a cup of coffee, you might get an instant "Nescafe," really a sweetened, creamed, chocolate/coffee drink.

Most rural life moves by foot power. People walk miles carrying wood, pine needles or produce. Some use pedal carts. The only motorized transport is an occasional old "one-lunger" engine mounted on a bike as a substitute for pedal-power. Cultivating and gathering is done by hand and carried in baskets on the back. No time or need for an exercise program.

The villagers heat and cook with wood scraps from the forest. One pot often serves both purposes. So when finished with cooking and tea, you just move the pot of coals under the table to warm the feet. Rural life style may be friendly to the air, but not the mountains and trees. Villages are located near a source of water where food is produced by clearing acres of forest to create neat terraced vegetable gardens. Much of the forest has been cleared of pine needles and small branches for cooking and pig bedding, depriving the forest of natural replenishment — trees are dry, small and stunted. Used pig bedding becomes fertilizer for gardens.

Village water is usually supplied by one faucet and carried home. Sanitary facilities are open-air versions of outhouses — at best — placed a good walk downwind from the living quarters. *Everything* is used and has a purpose. Dogs must be small and noisy: an effective alarm system.

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ENVIRONMENTAL DIGEST

STATE BUDGET

In his 2006-2007 executive budget released last month, Governor Pataki proposed total environmental funding of \$1.4 billion. This includes boosting the state Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) by 20 percent to \$180 million. The fund is used for environmental programs, the purchase of open space and related spending, and has helped protect 932,000 acres from development since 1955. The EPF is funded by real-estate transfer taxes and is doing well in the hot housing market.

The budget might also include \$135 million for the state Superfund and Brownfields Program to clean up oil spills and hazardous waste sites; \$177.6 million for a low-interest loan program to build and upgrade sewage treatment facilities, and \$63.2 million for clean air programs.

There are 43 new positions proposed at the DEC, including staffers to inspect state-owned dams and large farming operations that generate huge amounts of animal waste. Over the past decade 400-800 positions were cut, depending on who's counting. The meager staff may have been what kept regulators from knowing that there was a massive liquid manure pit in Lowville — until it failed last year.

REDUCING EMISSIONS

New York joined six other northeastern states as their governors unveiled a pioneering bipartisan accord that will cut heat-trapping global warming emissions from the region's power plants and create new investment in cleaner, more efficient energy technology. Along with new pollution limits, the plan will use a market-based strategy that rewards smart companies for outperforming the new pollution limits and lowers overall compliance costs.

NATION ETHANOL

When automakers build "flex-fuel" cars and trucks that can use ethanol, the credits they earn make it easier to meet fuel-economy regulations, enabling to build more gas-guzzlers.

Many customers don't even know they own flex fuel vehicles, because the automakers don't tell them. By ex-

amining their vehicle identification number as described at www.e85fuel.com, consumers in New York can find out.

Only about 400 stations nationwide sell ethanol (E85) — none in the Northeast. Currently, a gallon of E85 sells for \$1.73 — in part because of subsidies — at a station in Akron, Iowa, compared with \$2.19 for a gallon of unleaded regular. That's not a great discount, in real terms, however, because ethanol is less energy dense than gasoline and gets fewer miles to a gallon.

MANURE HAZARD LAW

Animal manure has been used for ages to enrich soil. But in the mind-boggling quantities of factory farms, it is pollution and can cause serious health and environmental problems. Companies should be held accountable. It would be logical to regulate them through the Superfund law, which is designed to protect the public from hazardous waste.

Unfortunately, there is an effort underway in Washington, housed in bill H.R. 4341, to exempt manure from Superfund and thereby remove one of the few tools that communities have to stop the horrible pollution.

Did you know?

The plastics we recycle do not come back as the same product. New plastic has to be made with its resulting toxic emissions.

IROQUOIS EXCOM ELECTION RESULTS

For 2 year terms, Lias Daly, Linda DeStefano, Rhea Jezer, Martha Loew, Adina Mulliken, Richard Slingerland. Remaining on the ExCom for 1 year are: Tasha Cooper, David Kappell, Becky Paul, Martin Sage, Debby Shanahan.

CHINA

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What about trash or litter? Streets, even highways, are swept clean by broom and dustpan. There are many recycle bins. From what I saw, however, it all went into the trash and from there down a steep gully nearby — out of sight, out of mind.

China is huge and beautiful. Its growing population is trying to catch up with the west and has a long way to go. With encouragement and help, it can catch up faster without harming the environment.

Did you know?

Environmental Defense estimates that if the entire US catalog industry switched to just 10 % recycled content, the savings in wood alone would be enough to stretch a six-foot high fence across the US seven times.

RELIABLE VOTING MACHINES

BY LINDA DESTEFANO

A step forward for advocates of paper ballot/optical scanner voting systems — including Sierra Club — took place on January 9, when the Ways and Means Committee of the Onondaga County Legislature watched a presentation by Bo Lipari, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Verified Voting (NYVV).

Lipari explained that touch-screen voting machines (DREs) can be hacked so that votes are lost or miscounted. He pointed out that DREs are more expensive to acquire, store and maintain than optical scanners combined with ballot-marking devices that allow disabled voters to mark their ballot independently. In addition, a survey of states that use paper ballots and optical scanners indicates that the cost per ballot is far lower than the \$1.00 per ballot estimated by Onondaga County Election Commissioners. They will make the final decision and have publicly stated their preference for DREs.

More information: nyvv.org, or Linda A. DeStefano 315-488-2140 or linpar@acmgfvcu.net

SCHEDULE

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ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM — MAY 31

Save the date. Information next issue.

OUTDOORS

Outdoor programs are usually on Sundays at 2 PM at interesting locations in the Iroquois Group area. Information and cancellations: 492-4745.

CHILI & SNOW FEST — FEBRUARY 12

Think **SNOW** and come to our annual outdoor hike and ski event at Song Lake at 2 PM. **Potluck supper** starts at 3, with chili, casseroles, dessert — mostly vegetarian, please — while we share our knowledge and hopes about our Earth. **Bring a dish to pass.** Come meet us! Open to all! Bring a friend! RSVP 492-4745.

Exit 14 off I-81. Follow signs for Song Mountain Ski area. Turn left at parking lot to 7426 Song Lake Road. Park on the road.

PICK A SPOT — MARCH 19

Lead an outing to a special spot. Call 492-4745 and let us know in advance. Otherwise there's no trip

MASON HILL — APRIL 9

Bobbie Earle will lead a hike of the newest Save the County property at 2 PM. **Mason Hill** has hilly terrain, Butternut valley overlook, stream, pond, wooded areas and some open space. We will learn how to identify some early spring plants.

From Jamesville head South on Apulia Rd. about 8 miles. Right on Eager Rd. Third house on the right says "Earle/2886" on mailbox. Park on tennis court, just up from house driveway

From Syracuse head South on 81 to LaFayette exit. Drive East on Rt. 20 for 2 miles, turn left on Apulia Rd. Drive for 2 miles, turn left on Eager Rd. See above.

Did you know?

Allergic? Suspect dust mites that live in bedding, curtains, upholstery. It's their waste not the mites themselves that make you sneeze and drip.

LATE WINTER SCHEDULE

Indoor and Outdoor Sierra Club educational programs encourage us to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet, and are **free and open to the public**.

ExCom meetings are for Sierra members only on second Wednesdays at 7:30 PM, at the Train Station in Jamesville Plaza, corner of Route 173 and Jamesville Road. Come and bring your ideas. 492-4745.

INDOORS

Indoor programs are held the last Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM, **upstairs** at University United Methodist Church (UUMC), 1085 E. Genesee St. Enter on University Ave and park in the lot across the street. Information 492-4745.

ExCom — Wednesday, February 8, 7:30 PM

FRESH WATER — FEBRUARY 9

Sierra joins the University Neighbors Lecture Series with Jack Manno's lecture "Water: Advocacy, Science and Blessings" at the Westcott Community Center on Thursday, February 9.

Jack is the Executive Director of the Great Lakes Research Consortium, 18 New York colleges and universities dedicated to understanding and restoring the Great Lakes, which hold a fifth of the planet's surface fresh water. He will combine his professional and personal interests in water and water bodies and what it will take to leave future generations a thriving world. This informative evening will include water science, commentary, music and poetry.

RAISING CRANE! — FEBRUARY 22

By 1941 there were only 16 Whooping Cranes left in the world. Today there are 476. How did it happen? Are they still endangered? Learn about programs to in-

crease the population. Wildlife Behaviorist, Arielle Shanahan, will present a photo diary of surrogate Momma cranes preparing their young for release.

Also, Fran Lawler of CCE will explain how to become a volunteer Community Tree Steward.

ExCom — Wednesday, March 8, 7:30 PM

CLIMATE CHANGE — MARCH 29

How does public information about climate change brought to light? How does that influence our attitudes? Does it affect people differently? Steven Brechin will share some interesting data about this topic. Steve is professor of sociology with interests in environment, natural resources and complex formal organizations. He is also interested in the social consequences and strategies related to biodiversity conservation.

ExCom — Wednesday, April 12, 7:30 PM

ENERGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY — APRIL 21

For their Second Symposium, Cazenovia College and the Center for Economic and Environmental Partnerships will explore Global Warming from Crisis to Solution: Identifying the Technology and Policy Answers. The all-day Symposium is held at Cazenovia College. Speakers include Dale Bryk - NRDC, Denise Sheehan - DEC, Sen. James Wright - Senate Energy Committee, Con. Sherry Boehlert, Dave Berg - US Dept of Energy, John Cusack - Gifford Park Associates, Peter Smith - NYSERDA, Sen. Davis Valesky. Dan Cummings will moderate a panel discussion.

Information: Rhea Jezer — rjezer@ix.netcom.com

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