

Save the Pine Bush

January/February Newsletter

Jan/Feb 09 No. 96 • 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210 • email pinebush@mac.com • phone 434-1954 • fax 434-6659 • web <http://www.savethepinebush.org> • Circ. 1000

Vegetarian/Vegan Lasagna Dinner
Wednesday, January 21 2009, 6:00 p.m.

Katherine Nadeau

from Environmental Advocates

will speak about

Changing SEQRA: Why Standing Matters

Save the Pine Bush lost our case against the Town of Clifton Park over the issue of standing—who had the right to bring a case to court. Since the Plastics case of 1992, courts have increasingly restricted standing to the point that it now affects every court case Save the Pine Bush brings. Join us and hear Katherine explain to how we lobby the State Legislature to fix SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act) law.

At the First Presbyterian Church, (State and Willett Sts, Albany, please enter from State St.). All-the-vegetarian-and-vegan-lasagna-you-can-eat, garden salad, garlic bread and homemade pies. Only \$10 for adults, \$5 for students, and \$2 for children. People who make reservations are served first. For reservations, please leave a message for Rezsins Adams at 462-0891 or Lynne Jackson at 434-1954 or email pinebush@mac.com. Interested people are welcomed to attend the program beginning at 7:00 for which there is no charge

Save the Pine Bush

January Dune Hike and Skating Vrolic*
At the Opening Astronomical Observance of The Half Moon in 2009
Saturday January, 17 (Check your almanac)

Meet: at 10: 00 A.M.

At: SUNYA Bus Stop, Collins Circle 1400 Washington Avenue , Albany

Leader: Claire Nolan ; Our popular outdoor sports leader, and good skate, back by popular demand.

For more info: Call John Wolcott at 465-8930

Join us in enjoying a favorite old Dutch winter sport in the Pine Bush.

***Note :** The Dutch made a sort of community party of skating, and they called most any party a “ vrolic “ Spelled with a V but pronounce at though beginning with an F . Check our some of their famed genre paintings of skating scenes.

Marriott Hotel Poised to Destroy only Known Upstate Colony of Rare Worm Snake

by Lynne Jackson

ALBANY: As we go to press, the Albany Common Council may have taken the final step to allow a Marriott Hotel to destroy the only known upstate colony of the rare worm snake by approving a re-zoning for the proposed hotel site.

After Save the Pine Bush sued the City over its approval of the hotel, the judge ruled in our favor and sent the developer back to find other rare and threatened species on the site. The developer’s scientist, of course, found nothing, but DEC scientists found the rare worm snake on the site last August and September.

Now, to mitigate the find of the rare worm snake on the Marriott site, the developer has proposed removing the snakes prior to construction and building a fence to keep the snakes out.

Since that time, Save the Pine Bush has discovered some fascinating facts about worms

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DEC’s Dump Hearing December 3, 2008

ALBANY: The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation held the one and only hearing on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed landfill expansion of the City of Albany’s Rapp Road landfill in the Pine Bush on December 3, 2008. The room was nearly packed, with over 300 people attending. Of course, making sure that everything was democratically run on an equal playing field, the DEC official who chaired the meeting asked the public officials present to speak first, and gave them no time limit. Members of the public were allowed speak afterwards, and were limited to five minutes to speak about this complex topic, with a written application of over 5,000 pages.

Albany City Mayor Jerry Jennings flashed in to give his speech, and made sure he left before he needed to listen to any of the citizens. The high

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Hotel, continued from page 1

snakes. SPB attorney, Steve Downs, wrote to the City:

“For snakes to survive in this region, including the Hognose Snake and the Worm Snake, it is necessary for the snakes to go into hibernation during the winter in a den below the frost level where they will not freeze. (Properly referred to as a “hibernaculum”) Prolonged freezing will kill snakes. All hibernating snakes, including Worm Snakes and Hognose Snakes, tend to leave their hibernaculum in the spring, migrate out into their home territory, and then return in the autumn to the same hibernaculum which they left in the spring. These snakes tend to be quite territorial and refuse to move far from their natural winter hibernaculum. When snakes are removed from the area around their natural wintering area, they tend to return, and if they are prevented from returning, they experience a high mortality rate.

”The fact that Worm Snakes have been repeatedly found on or near the Hotel site, and that they have been documented here for over 21 years, indicates that they must have one or more hibernacula in the immediate area. Relocating the Worm Snakes from the Hotel site, (as proposed by the developer), and bulldozing or otherwise destroying their hibernaculum in the course of construction would devastate the Worm Snake population since the Snakes would normally try to return and on returning would find their hibernaculum destroyed. . .

“In addition it should be noted that Worm Snakes spend much of their time underground and are often very difficult to find. It is unrealistic to suppose that a significant number of Worm Snakes can be located when they emerge from their hibernaculum in the spring and removed to some other area. Many Worm Snakes will be missed in the “roundup”, and may well be killed during construction. Thus if the Common Council approves this project as presented, it will indicate that the Common Council is prepared to accept the extirpation of the Worm Snake from the Pine Bush. . .

According to the DEC letters, this is the only colony of Worm Snakes to have been found in this area or apparently in Upstate New York for many years. . . It would be irresponsible to destroy this unique, and long existing colony of Worm Snakes under any circumstance, but especially since the colony is located on the edge of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve – a preserve that was created deliberately to protect all of the rare species of the Pine Bush including the Worm Snake. Does it make any sense to create the Albany Pine Bush Preserve to protect rare animals such as Worm Snakes, and then when the only upstate colony of Worm Snakes is discovered in the Pine Bush Page 2

to approve a development project that potentially will destroy the snakes? Obviously not.

”Worm Snakes are an attractive animal, harmless to humans, but beneficial to their ecosystem. Because they spend so much of their time underground they are hard to study and so little is known about them. Here is a golden opportunity presented to the Albany Community. Study the Worm Snakes. The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission (APBPC) is right next door. Snakes are in decline all over the country and their role in maintaining the balance in nature is badly misunderstood. The APBPC should use this colony of Worm Snakes to help scientists and the public understand reptiles and their role in the environment. Worm Snakes are classified as a species of Special Concern meaning that they are at risk of becoming “threatened”, or “endangered”, but in the present context, where they are the only colony existing anywhere in the Upstate area, and are apparently a feature of the Pine Bush ecology, their status takes on a much greater significance. . .

Dump, continued from page 1

points of his speech included how this \$41 million expansion will handle six-and-a-half years of waste disposal, that the City will work on updating the SWMP - Solid Waste Management Plan (last updated in the 1980s) and that the gas from the landfill will be captured. Mayor Jennings emphasized that the expansion proposal includes a plan to restore the 250 acres of landfill to Pine Bush ecosystem; he said this would be the largest single investment ever in the Pine Bush.

Steven Apfelbaum, of Applied Ecological Services Inc., spoke about the fabulous restoration of 250 acres of the Pine Bush included in the expansion proposal. Wetlands and streams, the former trailer park and different habitat types will be restored [editor’s note: no mention was made of the amount of money Mr. Apfelbaum’s company would make if they conduct the restoration].

Colonie Town Supervisor, Paula Mahon, spoke about her concerns about the affect of this expansion on the residents in the Village of Colonie and of the implications for people’s health.

Village of Colonie Mayor Frank Leak noted that this was the first meeting about the landfill that Mayor Jennings had attended [editor’s note: Mayor Jennings was long gone at this point]. Mayor Leak emphasized that it was his municipality that is most affected by this proposed expansion. His office receives dozens of calls from residents complaining of the odor and said that the City does not care about the little Village of Colonie. He said if you sit a garbage can in the sun for a few days, think of the smell. Now

multiply that by a hundred times and that is what residents of the Village live with. Many people clapped in support when Mayor Leak described all of the time, effort, and money from State, Town, and Federal governments that it took to improve Cook Park, and now this beautiful, loved park is afflicted by the smell from the landfill.

The Honorable Dominick Calsolaro, who represents the First Ward in the City of Albany spoke passionately about his opposition to the proposed landfill expansion. He supports creating a resource recovery park, where organic materials are removed from the waste stream, usable items are reused, and the remaining items are recycled. Instead of spending \$42 million on expanding the landfill in the Pine Bush, the City can construct a green resource recovery park. Mr. Calsolaro noted that the City is using the same old excuses to expand this landfill as they have used with all the past expansions.

The Honorable Michael O’Brien, Common Council member representing the 12th Ward of the City of Albany explained the history of landfills and how the City is between a rock and a hard place.

Chris Hawver, Executive Director of the Pine Bush Preserve Commission noted that expanding the landfill will impact the Discovery Center because of the visual impact, noise, and odors.

Peter Henner, Save the Pine Bush attorney, denounced the proposed expansion. He asked that the time period to submit written comments be extended, because DEC experts had more than a year to review this huge application, and Save the Pine Bush only had a few weeks. He mentioned the issue that it is illegal to site a landfill over an aquifer, the situation we have here. And he closed by noting we only have one Pine Bush.

Many members of the public spoke and gave excellent comments on the proposed expansion. Because of the time limit, people often could not finish their comments. And, of course, people with jobs and family obligations could not stay late. DEC was successful in limiting comments by the public of the proposed expansion. Much more public discussion of this dump expansion and management of solid waste is needed, but, unfortunately, the public is unlikely to get any.

Save the Pine Bush Landfill Committee Meeting

Want to get involved? Want to see a sustainable solution to the solid waste problem? Join the Save the Pine Bush Landfill Committee! Next meeting:
Wednesday, January 14 at 7:00 PM
Email pinebush@mac.com for the location

Looking For Trader's Hill

A Sand Hill Lost and

Forgotten in a Sea of Sand Hills

by John Wolcott

Considering the major economic engine of early and later frontier North America; Trader's Hill is anything but a unique name. Trader's Hills, Bays, Coves, Points, Inlets, Islands, etc. abound here and there and all around. Usually referring to the fur trade. Doubtless too, by now; there is a Trader's Hill line of East Asian made men's clothing trying, typically, to sound American or Canadian. I first encountered the Pine Bush's own Trader's Hill some years back. This was in a report that deemed it's precise location indeterminate save for being; "somewhere near Albany." Not too bad a clue, if a few other puzzle pieces can be found and added.

The fur trade was the basis of Beverwyck/Albany coming into being. It's main source of ongoing prosperity, and accumulating wealth for many years. Right from it's official founding as Beverwyck in 1652, Albany enacted local ordinances to control the fur trade. Albany additionally lobbied successfully for Provincial laws restricting all fur trading in the northern part of the Province to itself. This was during both the Dutch and English administrations. Except for highly controlled exceptions at Irondequoit Bay and Oswego, all furs had, legally, to be brought to Albany by the Indians themselves. European goods for the Indian trade could not legally be brought past Albany. before being sold there. This lasted till 1727 when a Schenectady smuggler won a case in New York Supreme Court that finally finished the Albany monopoly. The main objectors to, and violators of this Albany trade monopoly were the Schenectady smugglers. Schenectady was founded in 1662 amidst stormy disputes over the Indian trade. But Schenectady smugglers could also prosper if they were not caught too often. So many houses of Colonial Schenectady were searched so many times before 1727 that the place should have been called "Search City." I think the sheriff forgot to look in all those village hayricks Schenectady was known for, for concealed storage bins. This then gives some background for two names, among three, of Trader's Hill in the Pine Bush, as we shall shortly see.

Pieces of a Puzzle and Related Stories

The first and likeliest location in the Pine Bush to consider as qualifying for Trader's Hill turned out to be a sand hill named by the local Dutch colonists; "Margriets Bergh." This bergh or hill, was named for Margriet Bradt, nee Van Slyck. She was one of those Schenectady clandestine traders defying the Albany Monopoly. Her

story is partly recounted in an essay published first in 1836 is a set of local history vignettes entitled "Olden Time Reminiscences." I own an 1857 reprint of these from which I here quote relevant excerpts. This tale is set in the Pine Bush:

"YE - Noonda - IT - SHUT - CHERA is the aboriginal name given to a hill situated about three miles northwest the city of Albany. This name may be translated, "the hill of oil" - The Dutch called this hill "Maragrietje's berg" or Margaret's hill in honor of Margaret Bradt, the widow of Andries Arentsen Bradt. This enterprising lady resided at Schenectady where she traded largely with the Indians in furs. . . The Albanians wished the Indians to bring all their furs to that city, that they thus might monopolize the fur trade . . . Processes were issued against several persons in Schenectady, and among the rest, against Mrs. Bradt. When the sheriff came to apprehend her, she gave him a horsewhipping . . . A great though short story but no direct identification with Trader's Hill, or an exact location yet. Note : Noonda, Nonda, or Nunda are Mohawk and generally Iroquois words for "Hill." "

Margriet Bradt's Edge on the Indian Trade

From the lead given in the above essay, and from there to genealogical sources and certain Indian deeds; it is revealed that Margriet Bradt's maiden name was Margriet Van Slyck. Very significant for Mohawk Indian relations. Margriet's grandfather, Cornelis Antonissen Van Slyck, was the earliest known Dutch resident of the Mohawk Valley well before the settlement of Schenectady. Not at a Dutch settlement but at the Canajoharie Mohawk Castle where he resided with his Mohawk wife. Cornelis was apparently adopted into the Tribe. He was known as "Broer Cornelis" or Brother Cornelis. All of his children, including Jacques or Aukus, Margriet's father, her uncle Marten, and her two aunts Leah and Hillelje were born at Canajoharie and partly brought up there as Indians. They then moved to Schenectady to learn Dutch and Dutch ways. This gave them advantages in becoming professional paid translators. Margriet's father, Jacques, and her aunts, Leah and Hillelje, were all good translators, highly regarded, and trusted by all parties. Margriet's uncle, Marten Van Slyck, signed as a witness to the 1661 Mohawk deed to Schenectady and was apparently the translator for that occasion, and may have been a negotiator as well. Margriet's father was the co-patentee of Van Slyck Island, for which the very first Patent at Schenectady was issued in 1662. The Mohawks were given to acknowledging the Van Slyck's relationship to their tribe down to, at least, Margriet's generation, and considered her

and her siblings as "cousins" to the tribe.

For example: When Margriet's father Jacques received a confirmatory patent for the First Flat at Schenectady, it was described, in part, as; "situated bestetween two creeks . . . It . . . came to him in right of his mother who was a Mohawk woman." Again, when Margriet's brother, Harmen, was deeded 2,000 acres by the Mohawks at Canajoharie in 1714, their deed of gift to him read, in part: "Ye love, goodwill and affection which we have and do bear towards our loving cozen and friend Capt. Harmen Van Slyck of Schenectady, whose grandmother was a right Mohaugs squaw and his father born with us in the above said Kanajoree . . ." Another interesting fact is that Margriet's sister Lydia married Isaac Van Valkenburgh and in 1719 they became among the earliest settlers at the Verbergh in the Pine Bush, only three about three miles from Margriet's smugglers hideout at Trader's Hill. This Verbergh (Far Hill) settlement, by the way, was right by the Pine Bush Dump, and part of it's area is now threatened by the Dump expansion plan. Another sister, Susanna, married Margriet's brother-in-law Samuel Bradt who owned a large lot in Schenectady that included the site of that curious stone building at 9 Front Street. Margriet's kinship ties with the Mohawk People, likely greatly favored her trading activities. The more so if anything at all akin to the Great Lakes Indian social and kinship aspects of trade then obtained in the Mohawk Valley. There is no mention though, of Trader's Hill in all of this.

Another Piece of the Puzzle

What about real proof that Margriets Bergh is the same as Trader's Hill? This proof is there in another puzzle piece. This piece was furnished by that most notable son of Guilderland and Pine Bush poet: Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. Henry, together with his highly accomplished Ojibway wife and teacher, Sound of Stars Rushing in Sky, pioneered North American ethnology studies. In the course of continuing so doing Henry Rowe Schoolcraft upon returning to New York for a time, produced a report on "Aboriginal Names of the State of New York." This was published in 1845, and on page 42 of the report in "Part I-Valley of the Hudson" is the following entry: "A considerable hill about three miles northwest of Albany in the Plains, formerly a place of Indian trade, was called by the Mohawks Itsutchera, or by using it's common prefix- Yonondis- Itsutchera. The meaning is the Hill of Oil. It is not now known how this name originated. It was called till within late years, Traders Hill." No mention here of Margriets Bergh, but by fitting this with the other piece, the identification is positively established. Now it remains to find the real trans-

lation of the Mohawk name, and the location of this bergh. I cannot accept "Hill of Oil." This will be done in the next issue with additional puzzle pieces and stories. A fun participatory plotting of the precise location of Trader's Hill AKA Margriets Bergh, AKA Ye Noonda - It- Shut - Chera will also happen. In the meantime, those of you interested in participating in plotting this place should get a copy of the 1980 USGS 7 and 1/2' Albany Quadrangle. Some other good map, will also do, but I found this best for the purpose, a ruler and perhaps a protractor will help.

To be continued in the next issue . . .

Sally's Recycling Corner:

Trash Talkin'

January is one of the busiest times for cell phone recycling, because so many are replaced or upgraded during the holidays. Since your trusty cell contains not-so-nice materials like arsenic, lead and zinc, keeping it out of a landfill is a must. Even if you think one phone is too small to do much environmental harm, its power comes in volume - over 1.1 billion phones were sold in 2007 alone.

Do Some Good

A majority of cell phone "recycling" is actually "reuse." Often, old phones are refurbished to be sold in other countries, where the demand for the latest-and-greatest isn't as high. Or, phones are reused here in the U.S. to help out victims of domestic violence or support charitable organizations through their resale. Even if there isn't a collection spot near you, mail-back programs mean you can help out right from home.

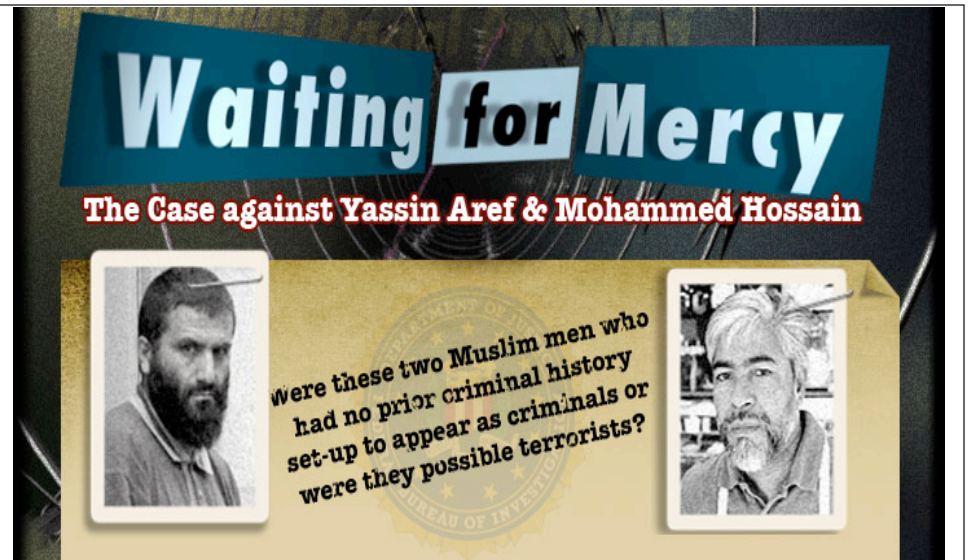
Excerpt from article found on earth911.com. Type in "cell phones" to find complete article.



Save the Pine Bush

A Project of the Social Justice Center
33 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12210

Return Service Requested



**The documentary WAITING FOR MERCY
will be showing at:**

**The Madison Theater
1036 Madison Avenue**

from

Friday, January 16th

to

Thursday, January 22nd

Evening show times: 7 and 9:30 p.m.

GRAND OPENING/PREMIERE

Saturday, January 17th, 7 p.m.

For additional information:

518-438-0040

Movie to Premiere in January

ALBANY: Last May, Save the Pine Bush sponsored a book signing for Yassin Aref's newly published *Son of Mountains*. Come see this new, powerful documentary which tells the story of the fabricated FBI sting operation in Albany that made international headlines in the "war on terror". *Waiting for Mercy* opens by asking viewers a direct question: were Yassin Aref, and Mohammed Mosharref Hossain, really terrorists, or were they set up? Using some of the actual material recorded over many months by the FBI informant (a Pakistani criminal), *Waiting for Mercy* explores issues raised by the case, including warrantless wiretapping, secret evidence, entrapment, and the targeting of Muslims.

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