



Save the Pine Bush

March/April Newsletter

Mar/Apr 14 No. 119 • 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210 • email pinebush@mac.com • phone 518-462-0891 • web <http://www.savethepinebush.org> • Circ. 1000

Vegetarian/Vegan Lasagna Dinner

Thursday March 20, 6:00 p.m.

Chris Amato

*an Attorney
will speak about*

Oil-by-Rail in Albany

Chris Amato is a graduate of Albany Law School and spent most of his career at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and was a Deputy Commissioner before leaving DEC about three years ago. Now working for Earthjustice and representing the Sierra Club on this issue, Mr. Amato will speak about oil-by-rail, environmental justice, and the impact of so much oil being shipped by rail through the City of Albany.

At the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 85 Chestnut Street, Albany, NY (people with cars can park in the lot near the door). All-the-vegetarian-and-vegan-lasagna-you-can-eat, garden salad, garlic bread and homemade pies. Only \$12 for adults, \$6 for students, and \$2 for children. People who make reservations are served first. For reservations, please leave a message for Rezsina Adams at 462-0891 or email pinebush@mac.com.

Get It While It's Hot! From now on, we will start serving dinner promptly at 6:00. Of course, we will be delighted to serve you whenever you get here as we always have. We greatly appreciate your attendance whenever you arrive.

Interested people are welcomed to attend the program beginning at 7:00 for which there is no charge.

Save The Pine Bush is in need of more hike leaders!

For the last few years the Save the Pine Bush outing leaders have been Andy Arthur, Claire Nolan and John Wolcott. Our outing events are once a month on a Saturday and usually the third or fourth Saturday. We are appealing for more volunteer leaders.

With more leaders we can hopefully have hikes lead by persons with more time and less competing obligations for any given hike date. I and Andy are generally available for going over data about various Pine Bush area and routes. Please e-mail the Newsletter at pinebush@mac.com or call John Wolcott at 465-8930 if you are interested in volunteering for this. Hope to see you out on the trail!

www.savethepinebush.org

Don Reeb Speaks to Save the Pine Bush

by Tom Ellis

ALBANY, NY: After a rousing introduction by Carol Waterman, Don Reeb spoke at the February 19 SPB dinner about "Cities and the Environment."

Don, now 80 years young, is a retired University at Albany economics professor, was co-leader of the Stop Crossgates mall campaign, and has been President of the McKownville Improvement Association for many years.

He said he can remember the Depression well. He is one of 11 children; the family lived in a three-room apartment, shared one toilet; three siblings died young and two have polio.

Don began saying, "I think we are killing ourselves with our misuse of the environment." He said cities (and surrounding built-up areas) are increasingly the place where people live. In the

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The Trans Pacific Partnership Explained by Sue DuBois

by Tom Ellis

ALBANY, NY: I do not know any local people who better understand the relationships between trade policy, jobs, immigration, the environment, and poverty than Susan DuBois and Mark Schaeffer. Thus I was very pleased when Sue agreed to speak about the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) at the January 15 Save the Pine Bush dinner and Mark attended.

Sue said she first got involved in trade issues in the late 1980s. She said TPP, now being secretly negotiated between the US and eight other Pacific rim nations, is far more than a trade agreement, and may be established as a "docking agreement" that other nations can later join.

Sue said corporate executives have considerable insider knowledge and input to TPP negotiations while members of Congress must gain permission to read the text, are forbidden to take any notes or make photocopies, and must

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western world, 80 percent of the people live in cities; in the rest of the world it is 50 percent with projections of 70 percent in coming decades.

He described efforts going back to the 1790s to provide Manhattan with a safe and adequate water supply, a goal finally reached in 1881. In Washington, DC, during the Kennedy administration, the south east part of the city still lacked sewers and residents used outhouses. His point was that it took many cities a long time to get safe water supplies and much of the world today has inadequate, polluted water.

In the ancient city of Rome, only a few houses had running water and wastewater was flushed out into the open sewers on the streets. Rome and Alexandria had sewers and running water, but not for everyone. "The idea for a quality environment for all city dwellers," he said, "is still unmet, unimagined in many places...I think they tell you to wash your hands often for good reasons."

He said auto exhaust is the second most important air pollution source in the US. Two public housing projects in Troy were closed due to concerns about auto exhaust coming in through the windows.

Mr. Reeb proposed a plan to reduce the number of miles being driven. He said that since the average driver uses 500 gallons of gasoline per year, if each person was given coupons to purchase 250 gallons tax free each year and the tax was doubled on gallons bought above 250, many drivers would find ways to reduce their miles driven to less than 250. The benefits would go to the drivers and non-drivers, and not the large corporations, as with cap and trade schemes. He called cap and trade "rationing with a price." He said similar tax plans (to his gasoline proposal) could be established to reduce electricity use. Summing up this point he said, "We have not implemented a mechanism for people to get the benefits of conservation."

Regarding city size and quality of life, he said there are about 300,000 cities in the world today, with 23 having more than 20 million residents; two - NYC and LA - are in the US; Europe has none. He said middle sized cities are seeing the most growth today. Compared to the rest of the world, US cities are less dense; even NYC is less dense than any other similar population city in the world. He said Boston and Portland, OR are the least dense cities of their populations in the world. However, reduced density increases pollution.

One way to reduce the pollution is to make property taxes progressive, as is done in Singapore, but not in the US. With a progressive property tax, a homeowner might pay 4 percent on the

first \$100,000 of assessed value, 5 percent on the second \$100,000, six percent on the third, etc. People would buy smaller homes. He said, "We can affect the size of cities with tax policies."

A proven method to restore cities, he said, is to invest in people first and then they will construct buildings. A way for cities to save money is to require municipal bonds be sold by the Federal Reserve System; this would avoid the high costs of using bond attorneys such as Richard Nixon, John Mitchell and George Pataki.

Don then shifted the lecture to discussing cities and people of color. He said it is difficult for whites to bring the poor and people of color into these discussions, and this limits our ability to force through our proposals. He said slavery in the US was worse than in Brazil and many other places because in the US, enslaved people had no rights at all. Don said he is supportive of President Obama, would vote for him a third time if he could, and Obama faces enormous obstacles from his adversaries due to his race.

Hatred of minorities in the US is still enormous. For example, Albany has few black firefighters, Guilderland has no blacks working in town hall, and considerable segregation remains today. He insisted, "We must focus more attention to improving the quality of life of for all residents, but especially the minorities."

When asked about Detroit, he responded saying Detroit is 87 percent black. "If Detroit were in Yonkers, [Senators] Schumer and Gillibrand would be demonstrating every day in front of the capital, outraged at the injustices." He mentioned schools in Philadelphia without cafeterias, no teacher aides, no libraries.

He said that from 1800-1840, by agreement, representatives and senators did not discuss slavery on the floor of Congress because the issue was so divisive. He said, "We can't seem to face the horrible treatments [some] populations face, own up to it, and stop it." Tim Truscott jumped in saying, "We have gone backwards in the last thirty years. We are more sophisticated in our segregation."

Don said in 1901 San Francisco, whites blamed a cholera epidemic on the Chinese, evicted them and burned their buildings; when whites continued dying of cholera, family members hid the bodies to avoid eviction.

Nearing the end of his presentation and responding to occasional questions and comments, he said "China can not continue on its present course. They must create a middle class but have no intention of doing so."

Regarding the shrinking middle class here in the US, he said, "I have great faith it can't last but I do not know how it [the restoration] will

occur. I can't see how the Tea Party can last but nor how they can be thrown out...I am a terrible optimist."

He spoke about college student loan debt, saying he believes some colleges use the loan program to hike costs. He said he retired in 1999. Today, he said, most undergraduates at U Albany are taught by adjuncts and graduate students. "This was inconceivable years earlier." He mentioned numerous programs the University at Albany discontinued in the 1970s when Lou Ismay lost his job including nursing, political economy, and astronomy.

Lynne Jackson asked him about the struggle to block construction of Crossgates. He said the campaign lasted seven years, was won locally, but the DEC commissioner overruled and reversed the victory, letting it be built.

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promise to not discuss details.

Of its 29 chapters, only five deal with trade issues. TPP would be "an incredibly broad agreement," with sections on 15-20 other non-trade topics. The Obama Administration is applying considerable pressure on other nations to finalize the negotiations.

President Obama is asking Congress to "fast-track" TPP. With fast track, Congress would agree before seeing the agreement, to limit debate to 20 hours, allow no amendments, and vote either yes or no to the agreement as proposed within 90 days after receiving it.

Fast-track authority is not currently in effect in the US. Many analysts believe TPP can not be enacted in the US unless fast-track authority is first obtained. If TPP is open to careful debate and analysis, and subject to proposed amendments and public hearings, it would never make it through Congress because once the nation learns TPP details, they will force Congress to reject TPP.

Sue twice visited the US-Mexico border with delegations from the NYS Labor-Religion Coalition to examine the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on immigration, labor rights, and working conditions. Sue is a long time member and treasurer of the Solidarity Committee of the Capital District and a retired NY state worker.

Sue compared NAFTA and TPP. NAFTA -- a "trade" agreement between the US, Mexico, and Canada -- was approved in 1993 and took effect on the first day of 1994, the same day the Zapista uprising was launched. NAFTA is an example of classic neoliberalism: an economic

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Albany County Executive Dan McCoy, Styrofoam Ban and Protection of the Pine Bush

by Tom Ellis

On December 12, when Albany County Executive Dan McCoy signed legislation passed by the county legislature a month earlier that bans chain restaurants and eateries from using polystyrene (Styrofoam) take-out food containers, he credited his three children, especially Egan, a senior at Albany High School, for pressuring and reminding him to be more environmentally conscious.

Mr. McCoy may have had other reasons for signing the legislation. It was passed by a two-to-one margin and thus the legislature may have been able to override a veto. The chemical and Styrofoam industry lobbyists failed to make a convincing case for rejection while proponents made a strong case for passage at the September, October, and November county legislature meetings and a December 2 public hearing he held on the bill. The issue received considerable news coverage and a veto would have angered many constituents who might have made an effort to replace Mr. McCoy, should he seek re-election next year. The county executive may have desired some good press following several months of re-

ports about Mr. McCoy getting a speeding ticket, his 2012 hiring of two investigators whose job duties and authority are unclear, and the arrest of the deputy county executive on a felony drug charge. Regardless of his motives, SPB is pleased with the enactment of this law which also requires disposable food service items to be biodegradable or compostable. Hopefully Mr. McCoy will become a green county executive.

Late in 2013, Mr. McCoy announced other initiatives. He said he would appoint a commission to find a viable option for long-term, environmentally sound, and economical waste disposal. The commission will begin its work by reviewing the county's Regional Solid Waste Authority Study of 2011 -- a draft report undertaken by his predecessor.

SPB has long opposed the creation of any local or regional solid waste authority due to their undemocratic structure and tendencies to try siting giant-sized, unneeded, costly, and dangerous disposal technologies, particularly trash incinerators. Many Albany residents remember the ANSWERS trash incinerator that spewed

poisons over Arbor Hill and downtown Albany from 1982-1994.

In a January 16 *Altamont Enterprise* letter, Mr. McCoy elaborated on his thoughts reported on in a December 13 Albany Times Union news article. He wrote, "My office is currently working to complete the transfer of two parcels of land adjacent to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission that would add 23 acres to the preserve. There is a possibility that the acreage will need environmental remediation. There are other parcel transfers either in process or complete that I look forward to working with the community to meet my goal of conserving more than 3500 acres. This benefits everyone as we work to keep our community scenic, healthy, and green."

He wrote that his administration had already "been able to donate more than 372 acres for conservation, environmental remediation, or agriculture." His desire to set aside an additional 3000+ acres is an opportunity for SPB to have the Pine Bush Preserve greatly enlarged and dumps in the Pine Bush cleaned.

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ideology that involves privatizing government services, massive deregulation, cuts in health and education spending, etc.

Sue said NAFTA was a huge success for large corporations. NAFTA concerned far more than trade. NAFTA provisions allow corporations to bring grievances before secretive arbitration tribunals for resolution. In the USA in 1993, organized labor had mixed opinions on the NAFTA proposal with some opposing it and others willing to support some form of free trade agreement but "not this NAFTA." Sue described several cases where corporations, using NAFTA, successfully sued Mexico and Canada, winning payments. Investors have won \$400 million in their 13 winning cases.

Sue said NAFTA devastated farming in Mexico and land ownership patterns; Maquiladoras (low wage factories in Mexico adjacent to the US border) "exploded" after NAFTA. NAFTA led to vastly increased Mexican immigration to the US and contributed to US wage stagnation. A million jobs were lost in the USA within ten years despite predictions from NAFTA proponents that it would lead to an increase of 170,000 new US jobs per year. Some 845,000 US workers have been certified by the US government as having lost jobs as a result of NAFTA. Sue said the so-called NAFTA side agreement of labor was "toothless."

Sue said that subsequent to NAFTA, two trade agreements were blocked by citizen opposition: the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the Multilateral Agreement on Investments.

During his five years in the White House, President Obama has enacted three free trade agreements: with Panama, Colombia, and South Korea.

TPP is controversial in many nations for differing reasons and TPP is mostly unreported by the US news media. Opposition gained momentum in the USA in November when Wiki Leaks leaked the draft TPP language on intellectual property rights. Almost simultaneously, three letters from groups of US representatives were sent to Obama opposing fast-track: one from 151 Democrats including Tonko and Owens, another from 21 Tea Party Republicans, and a third from 6 more-moderate Republicans including Rep. Gibson.

Legislation to enact fast track approval was introduced in Congress on January 9. However, President Obama was unable to obtain a House Democrat sponsor.

Sue said Occupy Albany and the Solidarity Committee of the Capital District are both active in opposing TPP. Sue said four independently produced anti-TPP flyers were distributed at Governor Cuomo's January 8 State of the State speech in Albany.

Sue said Public Citizen has good TPP information, as does the Citizens Trade Campaign. Mark Schaeffer agreed. He said 600 corporate lawyers serve as "advisers," there are no rules for conflict of interest, TPP has been negotiated for four years; TPP is "not a trade agreement but a corporate wish list" of many items they could not get enacted without fast-track.

Sue said TPP has many important environmental implications: its terms could limit an individual US state's ability to ban fracking, transportation of oil, or siting liquefied natural gas terminals.

Mark continued; he said fast-track, if enacted, would apply for five years to all trade agreements. He said, "Neoliberalism is the opposite of American liberalism." Sue said TPP enactment would amount to a "corporate coup." She said the increasing commodification of water is now a huge trade controversy. Mark said TPP opponents should consider holding teach-ins on TPP and our positive-vision alternatives.

Sue concluded saying opposition to TPP is far more public, widespread, and advanced in many other nations than the US. She urged attendees to call US Rep. Owens and urge him to oppose fast-track authorization, said the Albany County Legislature may consider a resolution opposing TPP, and urged stepped-up cross-border organizing.

I have a few tires at home. How can I recycle them?

You may be able to return surplus tires to either a tire retailer or a local recycling facility that accepts tires. Be sure to confirm that the facility accepts tires for recycling and check for quantity and size limitations. Some local municipalities will also periodically conduct "tire amnesty days" when any local citizen can bring a limited number of tires to a drop-off site free of charge. For more information, or if you have large numbers of scrap tires, contact your local solid waste management agency.

material can absorb much of the impact from falls providing added safety to children. This material can also be used as a mulch replacement in medians or decorative areas. Athletic and recreational applications are a fast growing market for ground rubber. An estimated 80 million pounds of scrap tire rubber were used in 2001 for athletic/field turf applications (50 million pounds)—above or below the ground—and as loose cover (30 million pounds).

Railroad Ties – Highly durable, rubber-

California and Arizona use the most asphalt rubber in highway construction (over 80% of asphalt rubber utilized). Florida is the next largest user.

Ground tire rubber can be blended with asphalt to beneficially modify the properties of the asphalt in highway construction. Size-reduced scrap tire rubber can be used either as part of the asphalt rubber binder (also known as, asphalt rubber), seal coat, cap seal spray or joint and crack sealant, or as an aggregate substitution (rubber modified asphalt concrete).

Benefits of using asphalt rubber include:

Longer lasting road surfaces; Reduced road maintenance; Cost effectiveness over the long term; Lower road noise; and Shorter breaking distances. Asphalt rubber is being used in greater amounts by state Departments of Transportation. Arizona and Florida have been leaders in asphalt rubber utilization. Texas and Nebraska are currently using greater amounts of asphalt rubber. South Carolina is also pursuing utilization of asphalt rubber in county and state roads. Other states that have studied and/or used rubberized asphalt include New York and New Mexico.

What is the current status of tire recycling and disposal in the US*?

Number of scrap tires generated annually:	290 million
Percentage of total solid waste generated:	2.0 percent
Number of scrap tires going to a market:	233 million
Number of scrap tires used for fuel:	130 million
Number of scrap tires used in civil engineering projects:	56 million
Number of scrap tires used in ground rubber applications:	28 million
Number of scrap tires punched/stamped into new products:	7 million
Number of tires exported:	9 million
Number of tires in stockpiles:	265 million

**2003 statistics, Rubber Manufacturers Association*

Tire-Derived Aggregate in Civil Engineering Applications

Highway Sound Barriers – Many states are turning to absorptive sound barriers—structures that soak up sound—to reduce highway noise. The "Whisper Wall" used in Northern Virginia, starts as a mixture of concrete aggregate, cement, water, and small pieces of shredded rubber from scrap tires. The wall deflects sound waves among its nooks and crannies until they lose energy.

Athletic and Recreational Applications – Several brands of resilient playground rubber surfacing material are being made from recycled tires and sold at major retailers across the US. The

encased railroad ties are being produced using scrap tires. These railroad ties have a steel-beam core filled with concrete that is then encased in 80 pounds of ground-up scrap tires and discarded plastic bottles, held together with a special binder or glue. These railroad ties are over 200% stronger than creosote-soaked wooden ties, enabling railroads to use fewer ties per mile. Moreover, rubber-encased railroad ties could last 60 to 90 years versus 5 to 30 years for wood.

Asphalt Rubber

Asphalt rubber is the largest single market for ground rubber, consuming an estimated 220 million pounds, or approximately 12 million tires.

Next Dinner Dates

Thursday, March 20

Wednesday, April 16

Wednesday, May 21

Westminster Presbyterian Church,
85 Chestnut Street, Albany, NY

Save the Pine Bush History

SPB is compiling a history. Do you have a memory or observation you would like to share? Email your memories to lynnejackson@mac.com

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