

# Save the Pine Bush

## August Activities

10/15 • 33 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210 • email [pinebush@mac.com](mailto:pinebush@mac.com) • phone 518-462-0891 • <http://www.savethepinebush.org>

**Vegetarian/Vegan Lasagna Dinner**  
**Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 6:00 p.m.**

**Sue DuBois and**  
**Carol Waterman**

will speak about:

# Flush the TPP

(Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement)

Sue DuBois is a long-time activist against so-called “free” trade agreements including NAFTA and the secretly negotiated TPP. The TPP will adversely affect the environment, access to generic drugs, internet freedom, human rights, labor and many causes that activists here have worked on. Carol Waterman will also be speaking and will be showing a short film by John Oliver.

Time is running out to stop this corporate coup. Learn what others are doing and what you can do to help flush it.

**At the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 85 Chestnut Street** (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 Rezsine Adams at 462-0891 or email [pinebush@mac.com](mailto:pinebush@mac.com).

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

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## Bird Walk in October

**Saturday, October 24 at 8:00 AM**

**Meet At:** Pine Bush Discovery Center Parking Lot; East side of Route. 155,  
opposite “T” with Old State Road, 195 New Karner Road, Albany NY 12205

**Leader: Neil Reilly • For More Information: 518-465-8930**

There will be mostly resident birds to watch this time of year but possibly a few migratory ones. Neil is a history teacher and an ornithologist by avocation and a very expert one. He points out that serious birders prefer to head out early — Early birders see their birds!

Please wear appropriate protective clothing for to prevent tick bites. Bring deet or insect repellent to spray on you before beginning the walk. Check carefully for ticks right after the walk and again as soon as you get home. Wear medium height to full height boots, or pull up socks over your pants legs and secure them with rubber bands. Wear long sleeved shirts. Wear all light-colored socks and clothes preferably white or light tan.

**The bird walk is free and open to everyone!**

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**<http://www.savethepinebush.org>**

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# What Do Americans Think About Economic Inequality?

By Larry Wittner

Are Americans disturbed about growing economic inequality in the United States?

Numerous opinion surveys in recent years indicate that substantial majorities of Americans not only recognize that the gap between the wealthy and everyone else has grown, but favor greater economic equality. A Gallup poll conducted in April 2015 found that 63 percent of respondents believed that wealth in the United States should be distributed more evenly. Similarly, a New York Times/CBS News poll conducted in late May 2015 revealed that 66 percent of Americans favored the redistribution of “the money and wealth in this country” along more egalitarian lines.

A key reason for Americans’ desire to share the wealth more equally is that many of them think that riches are amassed unfairly. A Pew Research Center survey in January 2014 found that 60 percent of respondents believed

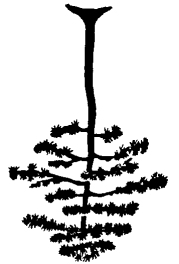
that “the economic system in this country unfairly favors the wealthy.” Asked about why someone was wealthy, 51 percent said: “Because he or she had more advantages.” The New York Times/CBS News poll reported that 61 percent of respondents believed that “just a few people at the top have a chance to get ahead.”

Furthermore, despite the many billions of dollars U.S. corporations lavish on advertising and other forms of public relations to give themselves a positive image, Americans are remarkably wary of these giant economic enterprises. According to a Gallup poll of June 2014, only 21 percent of Americans had a great deal of confidence in big business. By contrast, 40 percent of respondents said they had very little or no confidence in it. A year later, another Gallup survey found that Americans’ confidence in big busi-

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### *What Do Americans Think, continued from above:*

ness remained stuck at 21 percent -- below historic norms. A survey done by the public relations industry in 2014 reported that, although Americans valued corporate products, 47 percent of the public said that, when it came to ethics, they had little or no trust in major corporations. Health insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, banks, and energy companies were viewed as the least trustworthy.

By contrast, Americans have a more sympathetic attitude toward considerably less wealthy groups that challenge corporate dominance. The June 2015 Gallup survey found a higher rate of public confidence in unions and, especially, in small businesses. In August 2014, another Gallup survey found that Americans approved of unions by 53 to 38 percent. That was up from five years before, when 48 percent approved and 45 percent disapproved of them. Questioned in the New York Times/CBS News survey, 74 percent of respondents said that large corporations had “too much influence” in “American life and politics today.” When it came to unions, however, only 37 percent said they had “too much influence,” while 54 percent said they had “too little influence” or “about the right amount of influence.”

In an apparent attempt to downplay these signs of public dismay with the economic playing field, the American Enterprise Institute -- a leading champion of the wealthy and corporations -- argued recently that “inequality does not appear to be a top-tier concern” for Americans. This big business think tank also trumpeted the claim that 70 percent of Americans “believe that most people are better off in a free market economy even though some people are rich and some are poor.”

Nevertheless, this dismissive appraisal of public concern is called into question by the widespread demand for government action to counter economic inequality. The Pew Research Center’s January 2014 opinion poll found that 82 percent of American respondents favored government action to reduce poverty and 69 percent supported government action “to reduce the gap between the rich and everyone else.” In May of this year, the New York Times/CBS News survey reported that, by 57 to 39 percent, Americans favored using government to “reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in this country.”

Furthermore, most Americans back specific government programs along these lines. The New York Times/CBS News survey found broad public support for the following programs: raising the minimum wage (71 percent); increasing taxes on the rich (68 percent); and requiring employers to provide paid family leave (80 percent). Even the more unusual approach of limiting the pay of top corporate executives received the backing of 50 percent. Other recent polls reveal similar priorities: between 71 percent (CNN/ORC) and 73 percent (Pew) of Americans favor raising the federal minimum wage; 52 percent favor “heavy taxes on the rich” (Gallup); and 54 percent support raising taxes on the wealthy and the corporations (Pew).

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that a relatively unknown figure like U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, long a sharp critic of the economic divide in American life, is surging in the polls and drawing large, enthusiastic crowds in his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. Nor is it any wonder that Hillary Clinton, in her own campaign for that nomination, has started to emphasize economic unfairness. Indeed, even some Republican aspirants for the presidency have begun to adopt a populist rhetoric -- although the specific policies they advocate continue to advance the narrow economic interests of the wealthy and the corporations.

Even so, when the electioneering is over, will the U.S. government really take action to promote greater economic equality? That’s anyone’s guess. But it’s clearly what most Americans want.

**Next Dinner Dates**  
Wednesday, October 21, 2015  
Wednesday, November 18, 2015  
6:00 PM  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
85 Chestnut Street, Albany, NY