



# Save the Pine Bush

## October Activities

10/16 • 33 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210 • email [pinebush@mac.com](mailto:pinebush@mac.com) • phone 518-462-0891 • <http://www.savethepinebush.org>

**Vegetarian/Vegan Dinner**  
**Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 6:00 p.m.**

**Bryon Backenson**

*from the*

**New York State Health Department**

*will speak about*

**Climate Change and Arthropod-borne Diseases**

What effect will climate change have on arthropod-borne diseases and other communicable diseases? Bryon will address these important public health issues, the Zika virus, and mosquitoes. He has done research involving meningitis, lyme disease and West Nile virus, among other things. Bryon is a Research Scientist and Director of Investigations and Vector Surveillance Control, Bureau of Communicable Diseases Control, New York State Health Department, and Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, University at Albany, School of Public Health.

**At the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 85 Chestnut Street** (people with cars can park in the lot near the door). All-you-can-eat dinner, with vegetarian and vegan options, We will be trying out some new menus - email if you have questions. . 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.**

---

## **Hike the Great Dune!**

**Saturday October 22 at 10 AM**

**Meet at terminus of Willow Street, Guilderland**

**For more information, contact Mark Platt at 462-4062 or email [mplaat1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:mplaat1@nycap.rr.com)**

We'll leisurely stroll through the Great Dune section of the Pine Bush. The Fall colors should be spectacular. We may take a side trip to visit the site of the Kailkout Kill ravine clean-up. Bring a snack and drinks. Finish by 2:00 pm.

Note: Please wear appropriate protective clothing for the danger of ticks, bring deet or insect repellent to use before beginning the walk. Wear long pants, long sleeves, high boots or tuck pants in socks. Please stick to middle of paths as much as possible. Special garden gaiters can be worn. Check carefully for ticks right after the walk and again as soon as you get home. We want everyone to be safe as you enjoy the outdoors!

**Free and Open to the Public! Bring your Family and Friends!**

---

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

---

## Excerpted from the *Altamont Enterprise*

### Peter Henner

by *Melissa Hale-Spencer*

Peter Henner, for four years, wrote an award-winning chess column for The Altamont Enterprise.

NEW SCOTLAND — A man of principle and passion, Peter Henner worked for causes he believed in with the same logic and commitment he used when playing chess. He tackled his legal work as he tackled mountains on climbs with his wife — with a sense of adventure.

“He always told everything straight,” said Nancy Lawson, his wife.

Mr. Henner died at his Clarksville home on the evening of Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016. He was 64.

The pages of The Enterprise over the last two decades were filled with news of his work as an attorney: representing Save the Pine Bush as the Rapp Road landfill was set to expand, opposing Albany County redistricting that would have left minority communities underrepresented, successfully fighting to keep the Clarksville

Post Office open, and at the time of his death suing for broadband equity in rural areas like Clarksville where he lived.

Mr. Henner was born and raised in New York City. He was an only child. His father, who had a doctoral degree in history, was a public-school administrator. His mother taught English literature. . . .

Coming of age in the 1960s, Mr. Henner was keenly aware of the way courts had reworked society and promoted change, he told the Enterprise two years ago.

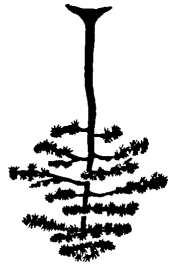
Mr. Henner was active in the anti-war movement as the United States fought in Vietnam. “Society was not living up to the ideals America was founded on,” he said. “We were the bad boy of the world. Law was a way of challenging it.”

So Mr. Henner, who had a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Rutgers’ Livingston College, went to law school at Rutgers University in Newark, which he described as a “hotbed of radical lawyers.”

At law school, he worked on school-finance litigation, suing the state to change how schools were financed, which Henner described as “using the law for social change.” New Jersey has an income tax because of that litigation, he said of the way schools there are funded.

## Address Service Requested

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



PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
ALBANY, NY  
PERMIT #509

Mr. Henner went directly from taking, and passing, the bar exam to working for the New York State Assembly. He went on to work for Council 82 for prison guards. “You don’t think of corrections officers as the vanguard of the labor movement,” he said, but he had a chance to build a legal department representing “good union people,” and working for “morally upright, honorable, really principled, good union leaders.”

At the time of his death, Mr. Henner was writing a novel, giving a fictional account of that time in his life.

In 1984, Mr. Henner launched a solo practice. Learning environmental law on his own, Mr. Henner got involved in looking at monitoring records for companies that were violating discharge limits. “You could force these guys to pay penalties,” he said. Mr. Henner developed a specialty handling State Environmental Quality Review cases.

In 1995, he and his wife, an associate professor in the School of Math and Sciences at The College of Saint Rose, purchased 130 acres in Clarksville, from where he then practiced law.

“As a lawyer, he was almost always on the good guy’s side where he didn’t make a lot of money,” said Dr. Lawson. “When you’re fighting corporations, it’s the corporations that make the money.” . . .

From 2004 on, Mr. Henner represented Save the Pine Bush, a not-for-profit environmental organization, in legal efforts to preserve the Pine Bush habitat, including suits against Pyramid Crossgates, and against Albany’s planned landfill expansion.

### “Soul mates”

Mr. Henner met the woman who would become his wife in 1989 — rock-climbing. “We met at a cliff in Grafton,” she said. “I was climbing with the RPI Outing Club and he showed up.”

That was the first of their many adventures in the 27 years they were together; they married in 1992.

On their honeymoon, they hiked a lot of the Colorado peaks over 14,000 feet.

Later, they climbed in the Grand Tetons in Wyoming, Mount Whitney in California, all of the peaks over 4,000 feet in the Northeast, and a few years ago followed the Chilkoot Trail “where the gold miners went” in Alaska, said Dr. Lawson.

The couple also hiked in places around the globe, trekking in Nepal and following an Inca trail in Peru.

Every Christmas, including last Christmas, the couple climbed at the Joshua Tree National Park in California.

“Outdoor stuff was a big part of his life,” said Dr. Lawson. “We were always

doing some adventure.”

Reflecting on the rock-climbing belay that ropes two climbers together for protection in case one of them falls, Dr. Lawson said, “I was mostly the belay slave. He would lead at first. But then I did some leading.”

She also said, “We were always soul mates. When we went someplace, people thought we were newlyweds, always with our arms around each other.”

In June, when Mr. Henner had thought he was healthy, he was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma.

“He was short of breath going up hills,” his wife recalled. “They found a tumor on his lung...there were tumors all over the place. Nothing could be done. It was very aggressive,” she said of the cancer.

Dr. Lawson said that she and her husband became even closer in recent months. “I was always with him in the hospital,” she said.

“I just asked him last week, ‘Of all of our trips, which did you like best?’ He was starting to not think very well and just grinned. He said, ‘I’m thinking.’ I never got an answer.” . . .

Summing up her husband’s personality, Dr. Lawson said, “He was very bright and very serious about a lot of things. His life was totally an adventure.”

She concluded, “He really, really loved life and he really didn’t want to die. Once he got sick, he appreciated life more...He looked back at his life and saw it was amazing.”

\*\*\*\*

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, Oct. 9, at 2 p.m. at the First Albany Unitarian Universalist Church at 405 Washington Ave. in Albany. Anyone wishing to speak briefly at the service may contact Nancy Lawson at lawsonn@strose.edu.

Arrangements are by Reilly & Son Funeral Home of Voorheesville.

Dr. Lawson wrote that her husband, after being diagnosed with metastatic melanoma three-and-a-half months ago “fought through several nearly fatal episodes before finally succumbing. The doctors and other medical staff at Dana Farber and Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston made a valiant effort to save him.”

Memorial contributions may be made to the Adirondack Mountain Club, (adk.org) or to Dana Farber Cancer Institute (danafarbergiving.org).

**Please note, this is only a brief excerpt from the excellent article *Melissa Hale-Spencer wrote in the Altamont Enterprise.***

Read the entire article at

<https://www.altamontenterprise.com/09302016/peter-henner>

Save the Pine Bush volunteers and members extends our deepest sympathies to the family of Peter Henner.