



Save the Pine Bush

February/March Newsletter

Feb/Mar No. 144 • 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210 • email pinebush@mac.com • phone 518-462-0891 • web www.savethepinebush.org • Circ. 625

Vegetarian/Vegan Lasagna Dinner Wednesday, February 20, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

Ward Stone

Former NYS Wildlife Pathologist

Keith Schue

will speak about

Health Effects of the ANSWERS Plant Pollution and The Proposed Sheridan Hollow Gas-Fired Power Power Plant

In this time of significant climate change, it seems incredible that the Governor would suggest building a fossil-fuel plant in Sheridan Hollow to power the Empire State Plaza. Ward Stone will discuss the serious health and environmental impacts of the pollution from the ANSWERS garbage incinerator that were never cleaned up. This includes lead and other toxic substances that spewed out from the old Albany ANSWERS garbage incinerator in Arbor Hill. Now, the Governor wants to install two new gas turbines to power the Empire State Plaza in the same location. Keith Schue will outline the gas microgrid proposal and the renewable alternatives we are advocating

At the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 85 Chestnut Street (people with cars can park in the lot near the door). All-you-can-eat lasagna dinner, with vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options, salad, garlic bread and delicious desserts. 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 Rezsins Adams at 462-0891 or email pinebush@mac.com.

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

Save the Pine Bush February Ski/Hike

Saturday, February 23, 2019 at 9:30 AM

Meet at: Pine Bush Discovery Center parking lot, east side of Route 155, opposite Old State Road.
For GPS - 195 New Karner Road, Albany NY 12205

Leader: Andy Arthur • For More Information: (518) 281-9873

We will carpool over to the Kiakout Kill Ravine Trailhead, and hike back past the upper Kiakout Ravine, then around the Blueberry Hill loop. Please dress for the weather – if it is above freezing, take precautions for ticks.

The hike is free and open to the public. Bring your friends!

The Rapp Road Historical Association

Shabuta Mississippi to the Albany Pine Bush

by Tom Ellis

ALBANY, NY: Save the Pine Bush had a superb panel to mark the 90th birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Those who attended the January 16 dinner will not forget the great presentation made by Anne Pope, Rev. Clarence Samuel Johnson, and Stephanie Woodward about life in Shubuta, Mississippi and Albany.

Ms. Pope began jokingly saying, “My name is Annie Mae Pope but don’t you tell anyone.” She said she grew up in Shubuta, Mississippi, population 600.

Often on Saturdays, she said, black residents would get dressed up and go downtown. She said Shubuta had the best artesian well in the world but blacks could not get caught drinking on the front side of it which was for whites only. Nor could blacks play or walk on the tennis court.

“I grew up in a shotgun house,” she said. “It had no running water, no electricity, and no central heating.” If you stepped on a particular plank on the porch, the front door would open.

She said she attended segregated schools, could not attend the white school, was bused twelve miles each way to a nearby town for junior

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Legislation to Protect Pollinators

by Grace Nichols

ALBANY, NY: Save the Pine Bush supports a move by Albany County Legislator Doug Bullcock and Save the Pine Bush’s Grace Nichols to introduce to the Legislature a Pollinator-Friendly County Resolution. It would be the first time that the County stood with a class of organisms undergoing rapid extinctions globally. We, at Save the Pine Bush, hope the County of Albany passes the resolution as our small part to address a biological crisis, and also as an example to other counties and municipalities across New York State.

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and senior high school. She said her school never had new books but got the hand-me-downs from the white schools who got the new books. "We had great teachers," she said, "and learned how to make things happen...Our teachers had high expectations for us."

She is one of thirteen children. She said "If you did not do well, your parents found out and you felt it." "We did not try to act up," she said. "That was not a part of us. Our parents made sure we behaved and did well." She said if anyone ever did act up, their mom would give them "the eye" and "we got the message."

Her mom did domestic work for a white family. "She cooked, cleaned, took care of the kids, and was the psychologist and sociologist for the white family." Paid one dollar a day, she could not enter through the front door, and had to drink from her own glass. She could not use the inside bathroom and used an outdoor toilet. Anne's mom had Sundays off and thus earned six dollars a week. If she took a day off, she lost a dollar of pay.

"We grew up in a close-knit community, most of whom were members of "our church." At the movie theater, they purchased tickets at the colored window, sat in the balcony, and threw popcorn on the whites down below. Blacks had to enter stores from the back door and wait for all the whites to be served first.

After an elderly black woman did not move fast enough out of the way of a white woman, the white man accompanying the white woman slapped the black woman shocking her into urinating on herself.

Regarding lynchings, two black boys were hanged and castrated at the "hanging bridge" after a 15-year-old white girl said they had whistled at her under a bridge. The boys had to be buried out of town. She thinks two pregnant black women were also lynched in Shubuta.

"We were mistreated," she said, but "we held out. We are here today because we are strong, our parents were strong." Ms. Pope said we must support and protect our children today "like my grandfather did." Finishing up she said, "I have no love for Shubuta. I am not angry." She occasionally returns for visits.

Rev. Clarence Samuel Johnson spoke next. He is an ordained minister and 78 years old. His dad, Jack Johnson, was born in Shubuta and came to Rapp Road in Albany in 1931.

His dad's dad owned 150 acres and lived to 95. Several family members lived to be 100.

Samuel said Jack Johnson was known as the "modern day Harriet Tubman." Jack was a "churchman, family man, and knew how to

work." His dad owned 18 houses in Albany. Jack did domestic work, construction, painted houses, and bought houses. He bought, repaired, and rented houses to people he brought up from Mississippi in his cars. One one trip he took nine including all their luggage. Speaking of his dad, Samuel Johnson said, "he wanted his people to have a place to live."

Jack Johnson began his trips to Mississippi on Election Day. Jack would arrive in Shubuta at midnight, honk the horn and wait three minutes. Anyone wanting to move north knew when he would arrive. "You had to be ready." Samuel said his dad brought more than 100 families to Albany.

On one trip, Sam got himself into trouble before he knew it; he walked into a Hagerstown, MD store through the front door and sat at the counter, as he would in the North. His dad may have saved his life when he firmly told him to leave immediately and re-enter through the back door, which he did.

Samuel said his dad had perseverance. His dad always had twenty-dollar-bills because his tenants paid rent in cash. Samuel said his dad had a third grade education and "his mom was the reader" in the family.

Samuel said he took an FBI employment examination, scored 100, but would not be hired. He worked for NYS government, then for Greyhound, and later returned to state government in the transportation department where he investigated vehicle collisions. He was the first black Greyhound terminal manager in Albany in the 1960's.

Once in the 1980's while employed at Greyhound, his wife refused to move from a seat near the front of a Greyhound bus in Tennessee. She persuaded Greyhound officials to call Albany and remained in her seat.

When he and his dad were/are asked, "Did anything good come out of Mississippi?" they said/say, "Look at me."

Stephanie Woodward, a trustee with the Rapp Road Historical Association (RRHA), was the third speaker. She described herself as a third-generation migrant from Shubuta.

Many, she said, who migrated from Shubuta, did not return. They want respect. Many moved into Albany's South End, then a mostly Italian-American neighborhood.

She said Louis Parsons bought many acres in the Pine Bush and sold them to families Jack Johnson had brought to Albany. Contrary to myth, Albany Mayor Erastus Corning did not give land to blacks on Rapp Road.

"It is important to keep Rapp Road as it is," she said, "to preserve it." She said Beverly Bard-

quez's Aunt Emma, began working with Save the Pine Bush. Emma used to say, "If a family of Karner Blue Butterflies can live in the Pine Bush, so can black families from Mississippi."

Stephanie said RRHA tries to prevent Rapp Road houses from being sold to those who would demolish them. She said, "If you had the skill, you helped other people build a house in Albany or Shubuta.

When visiting Shubuta, Stephanie said, there were no street lights; so children we could play outdoors until dark and "eat whatever we wanted because everyone had farms." Black Shubuta families did not have connections to the water main until Albany family members helped install them.

Finishing up, she said there is so much history and so much to preserve "of the most precious land in the city of Albany."

During the questions and comments, Samuel said people had to leave Mississippi or they might be killed, and Jack had to often change his pick-up times in Shubuta because "Mister Charley" was angry that black farm workers they needed had suddenly disappeared, and they wanted to stop Jack Johnson from taking them away. Samuel said the newly-opened National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama contains information about the Shubuta lynchings.

After Anne and Stephanie said there is not much in Shubuta anymore, a man who had lived in Mississippi said, "I got tired of Mississippi and moved back to the United States. People don't realize that when you go to Mississippi, there is a time change. You go back fifty years." Stephanie said some Shubuta residents did not realize they could vote even after the 1965 Voting Rights Act was enacted.

Dinner Schedule — Third Wednesday of every month in 2019 (no dinner in July)

at the Westminster Presbyterian Church,
85 Chestnut Street, Albany, NY

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

No dinner in July

Wednesday, August 21, 2019

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Pollinator-Friendly County Resolution:

Albany County has a history of protecting rare and endangered invertebrates such as the Frosted Elfin Butterfly, the Barrens Buckmoth and the Karner Blue Butterfly, which has been brought back to a healthy population from the brink of extinction.

The recent, swift and dramatic global declines in insect populations reminds us of our utter dependence on pollinators in our gardens, crops, food chain and ecosystems. With this in mind, we thank our insects and continue our commitment to their protection.

Whereas, there are now eight endangered species of bees in the United States (one of which, the Rusty Patched Bumblebee, was native to this region);

Whereas, research data has recorded dramatic insect declines globally. Per Scientific American "Worldwide, a 2014 summary of global declines in biodiversity and abundance estimated a 45 percent drop in the abundance of invertebrates, most of which are insects."

Whereas, neonicotinoid pesticides remain in the pollen and nectar of plants for 36 months, having neurotoxic effects on visiting insects; and whereas the Pollinator Network at Cornell University writes, "Overall, neonicotinoids are emerging as being more toxic than other pesticides to bees. For instance, Sanchez-Bayo and Goka assessed the risk of 92 individual compounds (insecticides, fungicides, miticides, herbicides) and 3 neonicotinoids comprised the top five chemicals that are considered the highest risk to honey bees and bumblebees."

Whereas, declines of insectivorous birds have been documented; for example in the 2016 State of Birds report published by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, a coalition that includes the National Audubon Society, temperate grassland and aerial-insectivorous birds on this continent have declined 33 percent since the 1970s—the most rapid drop of any bird group.

Whereas, Albany County is known for agriculture, wildlife and conservation;

Therefore, be it resolved: Albany will be a Pollinator Friendly County and carry out the following provisions:

Albany County will publish a guide to organic farms and CSAs, greenhouses which are neonicotinoid free, and local sellers of untreated organic seeds to encourage consumers and gardeners to support pollinator-friendly practices.

The County will also publish a guide to pollinator host and nectar plants for this region for gardeners to refer to.

Albany County will plant host plants and nectar plant species for local pollinators -- butterflies, moths, bee species and other flying insect species along county roads when doing repaving or reconstruction and in parks when performing maintenance.

Albany County will encourage the adoption by municipalities of conservation easement ordinances which will allow landholders to reduce their tax payments by agreeing to conservation easements on their properties, as an open space measure.

Albany County will encourage teachers to teach about host and nectar plants, and encourage pollinator gardens in the schools and the community;

Albany County will encourage businesses and county buildings to incorporate pollinator gardens; Albany County will encourage the planting of native plants in multi-use spaces, such as around solar farms, organic farms, and in the place of lawns.

Sources:

Yale 250, Three Decade Study shows Drastic Decline in Insect Populations. <https://e360.yale.edu/digest/three-decade-survey-shows-dramatic-decline-in-insect-populations>

Pollinator Conservation Resources, NE Region. <https://xerces.org/pollinators-northeast-region/> (Above: This is a wonderful guide to what plants to plant in this region to help pollinators.)

<https://xerces.org/monarch-nectar-plants/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/europe-bird-population-countryside-reduced-pesticides-france-wildlife-cnrs-a8267246.html>

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2017/the-same-pesticides-linked-bee-declines-might>

<https://www.sciencealert.com/seven-species-of-bees-have-been-added-to-the-endangered-species-list>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/26/opinion/sunday/insects-bugs-naturalists-scientists.html> Op-Ed in New York Times by Dr. Curt Stager, professor of Natural Sciences at Paul Smith College regarding insect declines.

<https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/doomsday-for-insects-the-alarming-decline-of-insect-populations-around-the-world-2161-0983-1000e130-99176.html#30>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/as-insect-populations-decline-scientists-are-trying-to-understand-why/>

<https://www.pnas.org/content/115/44/E10397> (Insect Declines in Puerto Rico)

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2017/the-same-pesticides-linked-bee-declines-might>

<https://pollinator.cals.cornell.edu/threats-wild-and-managed-bees/pesticides/neonicotinoids/>

Coeymans Clean Air continued from page 4

community Room 451 Delaware Ave Delmar, NY.

RSVP: christineprimomo2@gmail.com, or cell: (518)258-5554

We'll be asking for donations to cover the cost of the cards and mailing - 35 cents for postage and 25 cents for each card = 60 cents per card.

You can also write to the Town Board members directly. Their email addresses are on the Town's website. The Town Supervisor is Phil Crandall.

Save the Pine Bush Dinners Now Available on iTunes!

THE INTERNET: Can't make it to the Save the Pine Bush dinner? Missed the excellent talk in February on the Rapp Road Historical Society?

Now, you will be able to listen to the Save the Pine Bush dinner speakers on iTunes!

Subscribe to "Dinner with Save the Pine Bush." Or listen on your computer at: http://www.savethepinebush.org/Podcasts/Podcast_Index.html

Bethlehem Tomorrow Presents Community Choice Aggregation; A Step Towards a Sustainable Energy Future for Bethlehem

Speaker: Bill Reinhardt

Date: Monday, 2/25. Doors open at 6:30 PM, talk starts promptly at 7.

Place: Bethlehem Public Library, Community Room, 451 Delaware Ave., Delmar 12054

Bethlehem and other municipalities in new York have an opportunity to choose a renewable energy electricity supply option for its residential customers. This option will save money for residents, reduce air and water pollution and represent an important step towards a sustainable energy future for Bethlehem as well as for other Capital District communities. This presentation will explain how Community Choice Aggregation works and how it can save money for residents and how a regional CCA, based on locally produce, renewable energy, can create jobs and build a healthier future. Please join as Bethlehem Tomorrow (add your group name here?) kicks off a push for our town to have a CCA program.

Brief History of the Draft Coeymans Clean Air Law – Vote expected in February 2019

by Barbara Heinzen

COEYMANS, NY: In December, 2017, Mike Ewall, of the Energy Justice Network, alerted Albany County and the Town of Coeymans that Connecticut was considering a proposal to ship municipal trash to the LaFarge/Holcim Cement Plant in Ravenna. In response, Albany County and the Town of Coeymans organized a packed press conference two days after Christmas where former EPA Administrator, Judith Enck, spoke against Connecticut's proposal. On December 31, 2017, Connecticut decided to keep its trash to itself.

Afterwards, the Coeymans Town Board asked Mike Ewall to help them draft a Clean Air Law. The law limits the quantity of waste that can be incinerated in the Town and requires the company to monitor and publish the amount of 19 hazardous air emissions that could be produced if waste incineration takes place. The law had its public hearing in August 2018. No one from Lafarge/Holcim spoke, but the company held discussions with the Town of Coeymans, hoping to amend the draft law. Eventually, the Town Board decided to pass the law by the end of December 2018 without any changes. Learning of this, Mr. Dave Fletcher, Lafarge's operations manager, asked to give a public presentation to the board on December 27, 2018.

In his comments, Mr. Fletcher said that the plant had no intention of burning municipal waste, but argued in favor of burning used tires, an established practice that has kept old tires out of landfill. In reply, Mike Ewall noted that Lafarge's cement kiln in Whitehall, Pennsylvania burns tires and accounts for nearly half the industrial air pollution in Lehigh County. They are the number one emitter of eight toxins, including mercury and hydrochloric acid.

The Coeymans Town Board postponed their vote on the draft Clean Air Law until the 10th of January, when once again both supporters of the Town and of Lafarge came to speak. After listening to all the public comments, the five members of the Town Board were clearly skeptical of the company's arguments. "We are not anti-Lafarge", said one board member, but simply want to protect the health of people in Coeymans. The Board then voted to send the draft Clean Air Law to Albany County for review in order to avoid any possibility that the law could be challenged on procedural grounds. The Town expects to vote on the law by the end of February, 2019.

If passed, as expected, the Coeymans Clean Air Law will be the toughest local law in the USA limiting toxic emissions from the incineration of waste, including tires. For that reason, a number of people and organizations up and down the Hudson Valley are supporting this law as their towns are also being asked to approve waste incineration in cement plants and other industrial sites. Riverkeeper, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Sierra Club, and others are all urging the Town to Pass the Clean Air Law.

Many organizations added their names to a letter supporting the law from the Mohawk-Hudson River Watershed Protectors, an informal coalition. Their letter was submitted to the Town of Coeymans on 10 January, but if you want to add your name, please send an email to Barbara Heinzen (barbara@barbaraheinzen.com) or Grace Nichols (mtnsbluegreen@gmail.com).

There will also be a postcard writing party at the Bethlehem Public Library on Monday 28 January.

WHEN: Mon 1/28, 6:00pm-8:00pm

WHERE: Bethlehem Public Library Com-

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DEC's Top Brass Must Suffer from Anosmia

Update on the Dunn Landfill

by Tom Ellis

RENSELAEER, NY: While participating in a ninety-minute January 16 meeting with four top NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officials at their Albany office to discuss worsening problems with the Dunn Landfill at the east end of Partition Street in Rensselaer, I concluded some of DEC's top brass must suffer from anosmia, an inability to smell.

Residents from across Rensselaer and parts of East Greenbush described in excruciating detail the dump odors, that, over the past eighteen months, have become frequent, persistent, widespread, and often intense and unbearable. Three residents, including a mom and her sixth-grader son, told DEC the dump odors frequently permeate the Rensselaer public school building located next to the dump. The boy no longer plays on the school's ball fields; he and his mom said many students are frequently ill, probably from the dump.

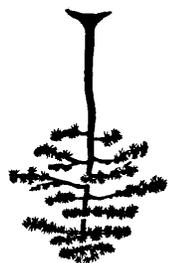
The DEC men declined to answer the mom's question about how can she protect her son from the odors which she, herself, has noticed both inside and outside the school building. Nor did they respond to my question: Is it safe for children to attend the school 180 days a year, year after year?

The odors may come from gypsum board disposed of at the construction and demolition debris dump. One DEC official told us DEC has received an increasing number of complaints about odors in recent months. When they receive one, they send someone to investigate, but noticed the odors only once.

It is disturbing but not surprising that DEC allowed a dump to be sited next to a large public school. Either DEC or Governor Cuomo must close the dump. The time is now.

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A Project of the Social Justice Center
33 Central Avenue
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