



Mohonk Consultations

NUMBER 22 • 2012



Courtesy of MMH Architects

Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, 1902. When the first Hague Conference convened in 1899, telegrams were exchanged between “the House in the woods” in Holland and the House in the woods at Mohonk.

“Let’s talk it over at Mohonk”, A Tradition of Connecting People through Dialogue . . . DRAWING ON OUR COLLECTIVE GENIUS

At Mohonk Mountain House, Albert and Eliza Smiley began an influential practice of bringing diverse people face-to-face to talk about solving critical social problems. Examples of the conferences they sponsored include the yearly Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the American Indian, 1883-1916, and 1930, when they invited leaders of religion, education, philanthropy, government, Indians and reform groups to address the plight of the Indians.

A second set of Mohonk conferences on international arbitration was held from 1895 to 1916. These produced the far-reaching idea of the first Permanent Court of Arbitration that became a reality at the Hague, Netherlands.

Since 1980, Consultations has continued this powerful legacy, inspired by our founder, the late Keith Smiley. Last November we hosted more than 90 Ulster County activists to discuss building more resilient communities to face the current challenges of energy, the economy, and climate change. They took the ideas and enthusiasm home with them. All around Ulster County and the Hudson Valley, deeper Transition work is now in motion. Consultations applauds the collective genius of the attendees. [See page 4]

SAVE THE DATES – You are invited to the Mohonk Mountain House for these 2012 events. Reservations are required.

2012 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD CEREMONY

Thursday, June 14th - 5 to 8 pm
Honor Rik Flynn of UlsterCorps, Meeting Community Needs with Volunteer Help

2012 FALL CONFERENCE

Alternative Energy: Local Opportunities.

Exploring exciting innovations in sustainable energy to assist small businesses, municipalities, individuals & farmers.

Monday, Nov 12th, 9-4 pm in the Mohonk Mountain House Conference Center.

Please stay tuned to

www.mohonk-consultations.org/programs/events for updates on the program & speakers.

Rik Flynn: 2012 Distinguished Environmental Award Winner

As President and co-founder of UlsterCorps, Rik Flynn's skills, passion and achievements inspired us to honor him this year for his leadership in making Ulster County more habitable, healthy and inclusive - for all.

The organization is countywide, non-partisan and not-for-profit.

Since 2008 UlsterCorps has worked on myriad levels, from enlisting volunteers to spearheading fresh collaborative initiatives that generate real solutions to the challenges facing our communities. Volunteers help provide food, clothing, shelter, emergency services, literacy training, child and elder care, and animal welfare, among many other needs. Initiatives so far have resulted in the creation of such new programs as the *Mid-Hudson Coalition to End Hunger*, the *Ulster County BOCES New Visions* program for high school seniors, and *Arts for Ulster*.

Rik's work experiences combined to point him toward this unique enterprise. "Before retiring as a teacher from Ulster County BOCES," he explains, they "permitted me to initiate a school-to-work program. I enjoyed it immensely." It was because of the explosive combination of his supportive contacts across non-profit and for profit agencies, he said,

"I became even more cognizant of what a particularly generous community we live in. I was then, and remain today, amazed at how many folks in this area are willing to lend a hand, to sacrifice their time and resources on behalf of others, if they perceive that it is going to better someone else and/or the community as a whole. This latter trait of our region is both why UlsterCorps exists and why it has achieved the level of success it enjoys."

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr's axiom always stays with him: "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

Rik adds, "only when we can escape those 'narrow confines', do we find the source of real happiness. . . . The closer we can get to being selfless in our actions on behalf of others [the closer] it brings us to our own self-fulfillment."

With the growing challenges to our region, we are fortunate to have such a winning combination found in the commitment and leadership of Rik Flynn and UlsterCorps. See their website, ulstercorps.org, which received 34,356 visits in 2011.



Volunteers of all ages glean to support food pantries.



MOHONK CONSULTATIONS

The purpose of Mohonk Consultations is to bring about a clearer understanding of the interrelationships of all life on earth, emphasize the need for sustainable use of all the earth's resources, including humans, and support the development of practical means to do so.

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To receive notice of our events, please email us at mohonkconsultations@hvi.net Or call us at 845/256-2726 to get on our mailing list.

We invite you to learn more about us at mohonk-consultations.org where our annual newsletters are available in .pdf format.

Announcing Autumn 2012 Conference: Alternative Energy: Local Opportunities

Exploring exciting innovations in sustainable energy to assist small businesses, municipalities, individuals & farmers

Mohonk Consultations will present a Conference on Monday, November 12th, 9 - 4 pm in the Mohonk Mountain House Conference Center.

Our 2011 forum and conference events explored the topic of resilient communities moving toward a greater degree of self-sufficiency on a localized basis. Building on this topic's timeliness and the interest expressed, we plan to present information in greater depth on the use of alternative energy sources for small businesses, municipalities, individuals & farmers, as this concept continues to grow.

Please stay tuned to www.mohonk-consultations.org/programs/events for updates on the program & speakers.

2011 Spring Forum on Local Community Strengths

On April 10, 2011, Mohonk Consultations hosted 85 local people in a public Forum, "Communities in Transition; Local Strengths, Local Resilience." We explored the issues of peak oil, climate change and how - together and locally - we can create a sustainable and resilient



future. Guest speakers, a TED Video starring Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement, and

various round-table, brain-storming exercises fueled excitement and hope.

One attendee noted that the best part of the event was "being with others who are all inspired to make changes." Many called for more information and practical steps to bring to their communities, which has inspired the upcoming Consultations' fall conference. (See Announcement above.)



Photo by Putty Matteson

UN International Year of Sustainable Energy for All

by Barbara Valocore

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All and the International Year of Cooperatives. International Years are declared by the United Nations to draw attention to and encourage action on major issues, and these two themes are uniquely relevant to the global situation today.

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES is intended to raise public awareness of the invaluable contributions of cooperative enterprises to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration. It will also highlight the strengths of the cooperative business model as an alternative means of doing business and furthering socioeconomic development. Additionally, the Year seeks to encourage the growth and establishment of cooperatives all over the world while encouraging individuals, communities and governments to recognize the agency of cooperatives in helping to achieve internationally agreed upon milestones, such as the Millennium Development Goals.



THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL is particularly important as people all over the world grapple with how to use and develop clean and renewable sources of energy, thereby avoiding the devastating environmental consequences of mineral extraction, fossil fuel burning and refinement. Energy is central to nearly every major challenge be it jobs, security, climate change, food production or increasing incomes, and access to sustainable energy for all is essential for strengthening economies, protecting ecosystems and achieving equity.



More than 1.4 billion people worldwide have no access to electricity, and 1 billion more only have intermittent access.

Some 2.5 billion people rely on traditional biomass for cooking and heating.

This initiative, a priority for Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, will call for private sector and national commitments and attract global attention to the importance of energy for development and poverty alleviation. The goal is to meet three objectives by 2030:

- Ensuring universal access to modern energy services.
- Doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency.
- Doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

Sources: <http://social.un.org/coopsyear> and <http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org>

COLLECTIVE GENIUS AT WORK: 2011 Conference on Community Resilience

Nearly 100 people filed through the doors of the historic, high-vaulted parlor at Mohonk Mountain House last November. Each arrived with unique ideas and expectations for creating more robust communities in the Hudson Valley. Magically, each one left the parlor community group, ready with a blueprint of next steps for enlarging participation in their communities.



Tina Clarke

How this process occurred can be attributed to the idea of “collective genius” – and to facilitator, Tina Clarke, a pioneer in the Transition movement in the Northeast. The outcome was not just ideals, but practical steps that each community could take. One participant liked best, “The awareness developed about real things that can be done.” The group first identified those values necessary for a sustainable future for all. These included building bridges to encompass more diverse participation in the process, including all stages of life, along with an emphasis on positive thinking, conserving resources, stronger economics, play, spirituality and the role of arts and culture.

Later, participants reorganized according to their specific areas of interest - from food production, education, energy sources, housing and health, to transportation, technology and local businesses. Unique mergers of ideas, concrete plans, and lists of individuals and organizations were recorded.

Culminating the day’s events, participants re-grouped by their own towns or small regions to outline their next steps and reach out to include a broader and deeper spectrum of their communities.

The conference was true to our mission to not only generate productive ideas but practical solutions. As participants left the parlor, many expressed their enthusiasm for what they liked: “the commonality that arises from different perspectives”, “the feeling that I can make a difference to make a better world,” and “the spirit of joy and hope.”

See transitionmarbletown.org for our closest “official” Transition town, the 108th designated in the US.

Molly & Jay’s Music

Our conference on community resilience began and ended with traditional Thanksgiving music that lifted the assembled group to a place of optimism and cohesion. Molly Mason and Jay Unger, with guitar and fiddle, are renowned in the Hudson Valley and beyond for their lively, authentic and deeply moving tunes.

They can be heard on their monthly radio show *Dancing On the Air – Live At The Linda*.



Courtesy of Jay Unger and Molly Mason



COLLECTIVE

The power of the 2011 Conference was due in part to the participation of elected & appointed municipal officials, spiritual leaders, indigenous leaders, social workers, business owners, professors, volunteer coordinators, social workers, activists

“MAKING DO” – MOHONK’S L



Courtesy of MMH Archives

Mohonk’s 1929 Ford Model A station wagon pulling hay wagons, 1933

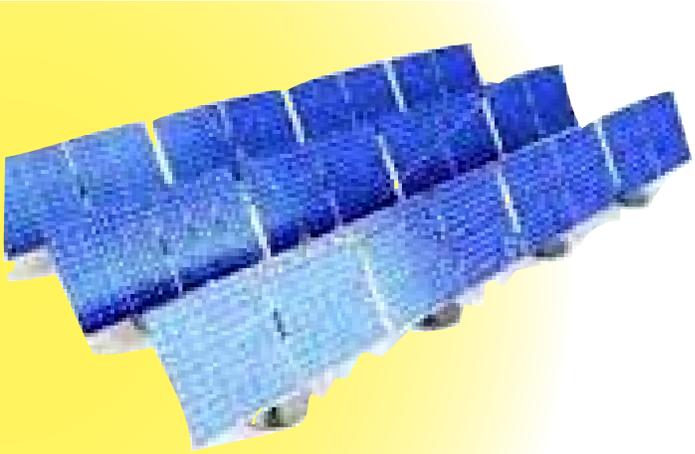
Since the establishment of Mohonk Mountain House in 1869, the Smiley family founders, heirs and staff strove not only to save money and be efficient, but also to be good “stewards” of the earth’s resources. The United

Nations recognized their efforts by presenting Keith Smiley, Mohonk Consultations’ founder, and family with a 1994 award for environmental stewardship.

In 1988, Keith’s brother Daniel Smiley wrote a pertinent report: ‘*Making Do: Living within an Ecosystem at Mohonk, 1870-1930*. It details 45 of those earthwise, recycling efforts as “an approach to living with the environment. Some saved money, some made money, and some were done because Grandfather, with his Maine farm background, thought that it was right to do them. No practical reason given.”

Dan ended his report with a quote from Calvin Coolidge:

**“Use it up, Wear it out,
Make do, Go without.”**



WE GENIUS

part to the synergy of our participants: educators, al leaders, college students, farmers, journalists, rs, energy experts, life coaches, organizers, profes- ts, artists, musicians, planners, elders and youth.

LEGACY OF SUSTAINABILITY

- A sampling of Mohonk's practices in that period included:
- Empty wooden vinegar barrels plugged & used to float the boat wharf
 - Grease stored then sent out for soap-making
 - Fresh horse manure and compost, still hot, placed around fire hydrants & outdoor valve pits to prevent freezing.

Today Mohonk's state-of-the-art compost facility produces high quality compost for their flower gardens and local farm fields. Mohonk Mountain

House opened a new spa and fitness center in 2004 with all heating and cooling provided by geothermal heat pumps. Studies show that approximately 70 percent of the energy used in a geothermal heat pump system is renewable energy from the ground. The earth's constant temperature is what makes geothermal heat pumps one of the most efficient, comfortable, and quiet heating and cooling technologies available.

Scott Bender, Chief Engineer at Mohonk, displays the MMH Spa building's geothermal heating and cooling



Gerow Smiley testing Mohonk compost temperature, Aug 1997

Courtesy of MMH Archives

Gardiner Farmers offer "Fodder for the Future"

Last winter we visited Polly and Jay Armour at their organic Four Winds Farm in Gardiner, New York, one of the area's first Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms run since 1988.

On arrival we watch pastured beef cattle grazing contentedly. Jay leads us into the warmth of the straw-bale barn that incorporates their socially, environmentally and economically sustainable approach to farming.

Stepping down from the high-vaulted main section, we enter the attached greenhouse where rows of kale and other greens bask in the sun's warmth and light. The block wall along one side is painted brick red, to absorb maximum



Jay Armour testing temperature of his compost pile

Photo by Ellen Brady



heat and reflect the best wavelength for plants to absorb. A trough of compost and manure adds to the heat. The long side faces south to maximize solar input in winter, while in summer, the west winds cool it. Jay points out his barrel of filtered vegetable oil from local restaurants, which helps fuel his tractor and car.

We walk outside to their modest, two-story house whose roof is covered with solar panels that both supply the Armours' needs and send many watts back into the grid. Resting her hand on the outdoor clothesline, Polly muses that their clothes have never seen a dryer.

She then explains the challenges for future farming: Present-day farmers need to help the next generation. But, she adds, "We can't use the old models - they won't work anymore."

Jay also makes clear that young farmers must acquire land that they can own: "Farmers need autonomy, and if they don't have it, they don't stay."

Can we meet these future challenges? "I'm totally optimistic we'll make the transition!" Polly declares. For more information on their farm practices see <http://users.bestweb.net/~fourwind/> or a Youtube video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNV65xetK7w



Photo by Ellen Brady

Photo by Patty Matteson

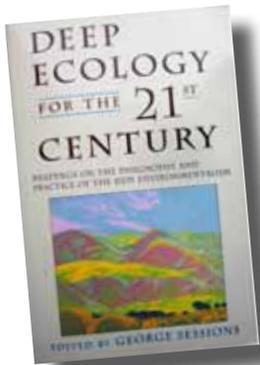
Good Reading

ALL THINGS SHINING, Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age

Authors Hubert Dreyfus & Sean Kelly suggest that rereading our culture's classics draws us toward wonder and gratitude. *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey* or books like *Moby Dick*, can raise fundamental questions about religion, ethics, creativity, intuition and inspiration. Recognizing such shining things in our mundane world lends grace and depth to our lives.



DEEP ECOLOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, Readings on the Philosophy and Practice of the New Environmentalism



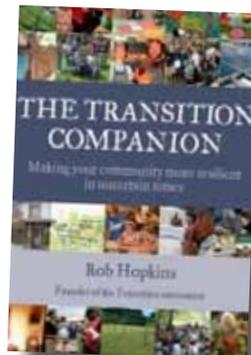
This collection of essays edited by George Sessions is a valuable resource for anyone wishing to obtain a thorough understanding of this important movement. The focus is on the difference between an environmental policy that puts human beings at the center (anthropomorphism) and one that values all of life and its intrinsic right to exist.

THE TRANSITION COMPANION Making Your Community More Resilient in Uncertain Times

by Rob Hopkins

This new 2011 book "offers an extraordinarily rich yet highly accessible model for drawing together the people around you, and describes the tools needed to start an economic and social renaissance in the place you live."

— Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, from the foreword



Mohonk Consultations prints its newsletter on 100% recycled paper. Although more expensive, it reduces our footprint on the planet.

Gratitude for Teamwork

This 2012 annual newsletter is created by a great many individuals and grounded in our hope for the future. The articles address the critical juncture of our time – whether together, farm by house and housing development, and town by city, person by person, we all can choose to live within our means and resources on earth. This as more people around the world question the justification for our information era's lifestyle that diminishes the health of all life on our planet. The notions of working together, of using our collective energies and intellects, to choose the increasingly available earth-friendly paths ~ that also build healthier and stronger communities around us ~ are what this newsletter is about.

Thanks to those "who walk the talk" and whose diverse work is featured.

Sincerely,

Patty Matteson, editor

Laura Heady's 2011 Award Celebration

Over 120 people packed the Mohonk Mountain House Parlor on June 15th to celebrate Laura Heady, Outreach Coordinator for the DEC Estuary Program. She received Consultations' 2011 Distinguished Environmental Award for her biodiversity protection work.

Willie Janeway, director of the NY DEC Region 3 in New Paltz, formally honored Heady, saying, "I can't think of anyone more worthy and appropriate to receive this award. Laura has that rare quality of deep, scientific knowledge, as well as the inter-personal skills that are so critical." Laura thanked her family for the support to spend so much of her childhood exploring nature, and her teachers for encouraging her career in biology.

For more on Laura's work, please visit:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html>.



Front (L-R): Cathy Law, Laura Heady, Kitty Brown. Back: Brad Berg and Willie Janeway

Photo by Lauren Thomas

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS.

Your voluntary contributions support our programs and make a positive impact on people's lives in the Hudson Valley & beyond.

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Photo by Patty Matteson

WE ARE DOING CRITICAL WORK - AT A CRITICAL TIME.

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Honoring Rik Flynn, Meeting Community
Needs with Volunteer Help

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