THIS YEAR MARKS AN EXCITING CONJUNCTION IN THE HISTORY OF MOHONK CONSULTATIONS:

30TH ANNIVERSARY
Since our founding in 1980, Consultations has made a difference. Thirty years of forums, awards, conferences and other public meetings have led to action on a range of needs in the Hudson Valley. Most recently we hosted regional climate change events and initiated an on-going coalition to end local hunger. This work continues the Mohonk tradition of dialogue begun in 1873 when Albert Smiley said, “Let’s talk it over at Mohonk.”

100TH BIRTHDAY
Born in 1910, our founder, the late Keith Smiley, inspires our work. His 20th century Quaker ideas of how to live sustainably on the earth are increasingly essential to ensure the survival of all life, especially in light of this century’s volatility in economics, climate change and wars.

YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY
Our continuing mission is to support the interrelationships of all forms of life on Earth. We strongly endorse the UN’s International Year of Biodiversity and dedicate our April forum to explore how to sustain biodiversity in our cities, towns and villages.

You are invited to the Mohonk Mountain House Parlor for these key 2010 events. Reservations are required.

SUN. APRIL 25 FORUM: 3 - 6 pm
Planning for Biodiversity: What Have We Got to Lose?
A Dialogue among Developers, Landowners, Planners and Conservationists (see details on back page)

WED. JUNE 9: ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD CEREMONY 5 - 8 pm
Honoring Michael Berg, Community Visionary (see pg. 3)
Reflections

Recently I stumbled on the text of remarks that my father Keith made at his recognition dinner in 1993: his vision for the future of Mohonk Consultations. Happily, 17 years later Consultations seems to be right on track. We use consensus to decide what issues on which to focus. We then collaborate with local organizations to address those issues and find solutions that develop a life of their own.

In the last decade, for example, Consultations has brought people together to develop practical solutions that we hope will serve as models. One effort focused on watershed protection, which resulted in the formation of the Hudson River Watershed Alliance (HRWA). More recently we considered local hunger, which produced an independent coalition to end hunger in the Hudson Valley.

MC’s role as a facilitator for ‘getting things done’ continues. Many thanks to our dedicated board and generous contributors, who assure our future service to the Hudson Valley and beyond.

- Sandra Smiley, Chair of Mohonk Consultations

My father saw clearly that the most critical factor in solving global problems is to promote communication, understanding, and mutual respect among diverse groups of people. Throughout his life, he worked tirelessly to realize this vision by carrying on the tradition of the early conferences at Mohonk Mountain House and ultimately founding Mohonk Consultations, which carries on that mission today.

- Bert Smiley, President of Mohonk Mountain House

Peace Pole

In honor of the 100th anniversary of Keith Smiley’s birth on May 13, 1910, MC is donating a peace pole to Mohonk Mountain House. The wood for the pole was harvested by Jim Clark, Curator of the Mohonk Barn Museum, from a century-old, dead cedar tree on the Mohonk property. A master rustic furniture-maker, Jim will plane the trunk into a four-sided pole. Mohonk sign-maker Bill Brovold will engrave the words “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in the four languages connected with the local area: Lenape, Dutch, French, and English. We will ‘plant’ the Peace Pole on a rock outcrop along the Ruth H. Smiley Memorial Fern & Wildflower Trail in the spring of 2010. Please plan to visit sometime.

Photo by Patty Matteson
BIODIVERSITY: OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT
by Barbara Valocore

Loss of biodiversity affects us all – now and into future generations – and will force us to face unprecedented challenges. It behooves us to learn now what actions we can take as if our lives depended on it, because they do.

Biodiversity is an all encompassing term to describe the variety of all life and natural processes on Earth. Continued loss of biodiversity will result in a rapid decline of the Earth’s natural wealth, the beauty and richness of our natural environment, as well as the very ecological processes on which we depend. There can be no life on Earth without biodiversity. With the view of raising awareness about this critical issue, the United Nations has declared 2010 The International Year of Biodiversity.

Basically, the actions we should take to preserve biodiversity are the same for reversing climate change, such as reducing consumption and buying local. Most of all, talk about the problem to family, friends and elected officials. Then ask them to join you in celebrating the beauty of the natural world. It’s ours to protect, defend and enjoy—it’s the only world we have.


2009 AWARD WINNER
LARRY HAUPTMAN

Over 120 friends and supporters gathered on June 10, 2009 to honor Larry Hauptman, SUNY New Paltz professor. We celebrated Larry’s empathy, kindness and courage in revealing American Indian histories, narratives, and their land claims and rights. He battled and bore witness unceasingly for these, based not simply on his knowledge of historical facts, but also on his decision to – as Quakers say – speak “truth to power,” tying these facts to how they affect people’s lives. Important guests included Mohawks and Oneidas from Wisconsin and Oneida, New York.

Right: Native America talking stick used to facilitate thoughtful dialogue, a gift from Jim Davis of the Delaware nation.

2010 Environmental Award to Michael Berg

Over the years, we have given the Environmental Distinguished Service Award to many individuals whose work focuses on the human environment, as well as the “natural” one. This year’s recipient, Michael Berg, a community visionary who, with his agency Family of Woodstock, has improved the lives of thousands in the Hudson Valley over the past 30 years.

With a master’s degree in Ancient Greek, Michael has a vision from atop his “Acropolis” in Kingston of a society that takes care of its people.

Relying on the motto “bring us any problem under the sun,” he utilizes his astute powers of problem-solving, a remarkable memory, and a passion for those who have fewer opportunities available, to help liberate the recipients. And he never rests on his laurels.

Michael constantly encourages co-workers to “think out-of-the-box,” adding both logic and compassion. “Everybody has their own journey. I’d never tell anyone what it should be.” To that end, he believes that a good way to change the world is at grass roots level.

This past year, Michael has been working with Consultations and others through a coalition to end local hunger [see pp. 4-5]. His inspiration and resourcefulness keep the project moving.

He’s also one to jump into the trenches whenever a need arises, like driving a truck full of produce at 6 am to a soup kitchen. “His energy is boundless,” said a co-worker: “Most people working in human services would be pooped by now. Not Michael. He keeps going like the Energizer Bunny.”

Please join us in celebrating Michael’s vision.

Wednesday, June 9, 2010, 5 - 8 pm at Mohonk Mountain House

Invitations will be sent to those already on our mailing list. If you’d like to receive one, call 845/256-2726 or email mohonkconsultations@hvi.net.
Hunger in the Hudson Valley - connecting people, food and the land – was the focus in 2009 of both our Spring Forum and Fall Symposium. Consultations brought together farmers, gleaners, town supervisors, and representatives from food banks, soup kitchens, social services, and volunteer agencies, along with interested citizens to discuss the disturbing trend of widening hunger in our community.

Lively discussions focused on the needs, resources and plans of action to get the plentiful fresh food grown on Hudson Valley farms to the tables of the neediest year-round. Discussion groups focused on education and outreach - food drives, home gardening, nutrition information; community resources - farms, towns, businesses; volunteers and donations - fund drives, community service organizations; and physical facilities - trucks, storage, freezing and processing.

One result of the meetings was the formation of the Coalition to End Hunger in the Hudson Valley, which is already making a difference in the lives of many people. But there is still much to be done.

Anyone interested in volunteering for this pioneering project should contact ulstercorps@gmail.com.

Soup Kitchens are being overwhelmed by the recent 30 to 35% rise in demand. Some serve three meals a day, seven days a week.

Coordination of the complex management of food storage, transport and distribution is handled by such people as Jan Whitman, Director, Food Bank of the Hudson Valley.
Local farmers and gardeners are gearing up to grow extra crops that volunteers can glean.

Gleaning has become a crucial link in the food supply chain. Volunteer gleaners harvested hundreds of bins of apples and produce from local orchards and farms.

Processing and freezing of food during the growing season is one way to supply locally-grown food during winter months.

Storage depots including freezers, coolers, barns, and trucks must be identified or created in strategic sites around the county.

Transportation and distribution are complex and expensive, with trucks carrying food from farms and storage depots to soup kitchens and pantries. Local supermarkets also donate tons of food every year.

Food Pantries supply groceries for families who, during winter, must choose between fuel and food.
Good Reading

Half the Sky
Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide
by Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn
Reviewed by Sandra Smiley

How is it possible for a book to be both excruciating and uplifting to read? This one is, with painful stories of women in developing countries. Their lives literally do not count. But many rise out of the ruins with assistance from caring ‘angels’ to create positive possibilities for themselves and others to follow.

The husband and wife authors connected personally with many women and their families to hear their stories. They have also met and worked with those who are creating opportunities for change. The result is a sense of hope that with more education and health care options, things can be different.

We have a tendency to take our relatively safe, warm, well-fed lives for granted until hearing how many of our neighbors starve and shiver in fear daily, struggling just to stay alive. The book ends with suggestions for those inclined to help. I cannot imagine how anyone reading this could not feel compelled to assist in facilitating change for women who ‘hold up half the sky.’

Strength in What Remains
by Tracy Kidder
Reviewed by Anne Finn

Deogratias’ life story is a hymn to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of the kindness of strangers. Circumstances drew him into an array of lives, some ugly and painful, others remarkably caring and supportive.

Deo grew up in Burundi where he entered medical school. At age 21, he went on to Dartmouth Medical School, arriving in New York in 1994, speaking only French and having two hundred dollars in his pocket.

After completing his third year there, he returned to the Northern Burundi Hospital to do his internship. Shortly after his arrival, the new Hutu president was murdered, igniting a war between the Hutus and Tutsis. Fleeing to Rwanda through forests and rivers, Deo encountered refugee camps filled with terrified and dying villagers. With these experiences engraved in his memory, he eventually returned to his homeland to set up a clinic on neutral grounds, a place for reconciliation.

Tracy Kidder takes us into Deo’s life with empathy, wisdom and curiosity, and leaves us in the end with hope and open hearts.
We are delighted to list our 2009 supporters below. With no annual dues or use of fund-raising consultants, we are dependent on voluntary donations to enable our programs. Thank you on behalf of our community audience and the lives they touch.

MOHONK CONSULTATIONS
CONTRIBUTIONS 2009

In Honor of the 2009 Environmental Awardee,
Larry Hauptman
Chandler, Alice
Corry, Mary Jane
Dannies, Priscilla & Bob
DeVries, Diane
Engel, Jonathan T.
Georgiou, Heather H.
Holster, Petra
Lange, Arden
Marshall, Steven
Matteson, Rachel B.
Michel, Robert
Robbins, Jim
Schmidt, Bruce
Schnell, Marylou & George
Smiley, Shanan & Tom
Springer, Denise R.
Tiro, Karim
Vukasin, Helen L.

In memory of Ruth & Keith Smiley
Amigh, Lee & Jim
Carson, Elizabeth & John
Feldman, Frieda & Fred

In support of the Hunger Conference
Crump, Craig D.
Key Bank
Smiley, Sandra

Other Contributions
Brand, Ronald & Suzanne
Brown, Kristin & David Smith
Collins, Anne & Arnold Medvene
Cowan, Tom
Cruikshank, Carol C.
Day, Ann – in memory of Alan Day
Dillard, Helene R. – in honor of Ann & Dan Guenther
Dressel, Ethel & Rod
Finn, Anne Carr
Fishman, Ben
Ganter-Toback, Gail S.
Guenther, Ann & Dan
Hauptman, Larry
Holmes, Norma – in memory and in honor of Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen
Kellar, Paul
Matteson, Rachel S. & Patty – in honor of Keith & Sandra Smiley
Meckling, Jane
Rubin, Barbara & Robert Larsen
Salt, Charles F. – in memory of Alice Gretchen Salt
Schneider, Jane & Mitchell Goroski
Smiley, Nina & Bert – in honor of Sandra Smiley and a special gift in honor of Keith Smiley
Valocore, Barbara O.
Vukasin, Helen L. – in honor of Sandra Smiley
Wood, Mr. & Mrs. James
Woods, Lisa

PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION...
to help provide another year of the kinds of outstanding programs you have read about in this newsletter.

A GOAL ACHIEVED  At the end of 2009 we reached our goal of $100,000 in our Endowment Fund. The goal was established a number of years ago to create a source of investment income to help support our programs. Special thanks to those of you whose generous contributions made this possible.

☐ I would like to contribute to current programs (Marketable securities are also accepted.) $ __________
☐ My contribution is in memory (honor) of ________________

☐ I am unable to contribute at this time but would like to receive the newsletter and information about Mohonk Consultations’ programs.

Name _________________________________
Address _______________________________

Phone _________________________________
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Contributions are tax deductible under the IRS code.

Donations should be addressed to:
Mohonk Consultations
1000 Mountain Rest Road, New Paltz NY 12561
For correspondence and requests for information or publications: 845/256-2726 or mohonkconsultations@hvi.net.
SAVE THESE DATES IN 2010
At Mohonk Mountain House
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
Call 845/256-2726 or e-mail mohonkconsultations@hvi.net

SUN. APRIL 25th  3 - 6 pm
FORUM: Planning for Biodiversity:
What Have We Got to Lose?
For Developers, Landowners, Planners
and Conservationists

WED. JUNE 9th 5 - 8 pm
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD CEREMONY
Honoring Michael Berg, Community Visionary

At SUNY New Paltz
THURS, MAR 25th 7 pm
Water Shortages and Food Scarcity
as National Security Issues
Maude Barlow, UN water expert
Sponsor: World Affairs Council, Mid Hudson Valley

PLANNING FOR BIODIVERSITY: WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO LOSE?
A Dialogue among Developers, Landowners, Planners and Conservationists

An important public forum Sunday, April 25th from 3 - 6 pm at Mohonk Mountain House.
Is protecting biodiversity in the human landscape a realistic goal?
Join us in building consensus based on both community and individual
concerns as we
• Identify the important components of local biodiversity
• Create strategies to protect them

Reservations Required:
Call 845/256-2726
Suggested donation: $10
Seniors & Students $5

Photo by Patty Matteson