



Mohonk Consultations

NUMBER 19 • 2009

LET'S TALK IT OVER AT MOHONK: A TRADITION OF CONNECTING PEOPLE THROUGH DIALOGUE

CONNECTING PEOPLE, FOOD AND THE LAND

Photo by K. Barnes, courtesy of Phillis Bridge Farm Project



Cultivating at Phillis Bridge Farm Project, a CSA in New Paltz

“As long as we still have poverty and war, we will not be very successful in protecting our environment,” commented Mohonk Preserve ranger Bob Larsen after receiving our 2008 Environmental Distinguished Achievement Award. Consultations’ founder Keith Smiley also felt strongly about including humans in our discussions of environment.

You may not think that giving people food is a “sustainable practice,” yet a community where everyone is provided for promotes diversity, resourcefulness and hope. These self-sustaining qualities help create a world in which we’d all like to live.

Although acres of farm land have been shrinking, our valley remains rich in local farms and CSAs. With any luck, the current trends and thinking will only increase this wealth.

**Join us for these events in the Mohonk Mountain House Parlor.
Reservations are required.
Call 845/256-2726.**

**SUN, APRIL 19TH FORUM: 3 - 5:30 pm
Hunger in the Hudson Valley:
How Can We Help?**

**WED, JUNE 10
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD CEREMONY:
5 - 8 pm Presentation and Dinner
Honoring Larry Hauptman,
Humanitarian, Historian, and Scholar**

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100% recycled paper.*

Think of how the local growing and distribution of food can provide a solution to many current dilemmas: food security, health concerns, climate change, loss of community, fragile economies and poverty.

Many of you reading this may have some association with a local farm, and count it one of the reasons you love living here. And yet, more and more people are hungry right here in our valley. What’s missing that connects the locally grown food to the people who live nearby?

Consultation’s mission is to “support the interrelationships of all life on Earth, and, through dialogue, to promote practical means for sustainability.”

This year, we invite you to explore your relationships to others in your community. In what small way might you help to make our valley one in which people are cared for, natural resources are cared for and our local abundance is shared?

- Louisa Finn, Chair



Photo by K. Barnes

CONNECTING PEOPLE, FOOD...

Reflections...

We are responsible not only for what we do, but also for what we could have prevented.

- Peter Singer, *Writings on an Ethical Life*

Whatever a man has in super abundance is owed, of natural right, to the poor for their sustenance.

- Thomas Aquinas

Nature is not only found "out there," it is also found "in here" in the apple and the potato, in the kitchen, in the garden....

When we can find nature in these sorts of places as readily as we now find it in the wild, we'll have traveled a considerable distance toward understanding our place in the world in the fullness of its complexity and ambiguity.

- Michael Pollan, *Botany of Desire*

Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.

- Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food*

Photo by Patty Matteson



Does It Matter

Where Food Comes From?

Where food comes from, how it's grown, and by whom is important because it determines the kind of food system and economic system we are investing in for ourselves and our descendants...We can begin, as hundreds of groups around the region are doing, to develop component parts of regional food systems that will increase access to good food, good jobs and control over the regional economy and environment.

- Kathy Lawrence, excerpted from an article in *Why* magazine 1996

Money Can't Make Food

Wes Jackson and Wendell Berry's Op-Ed column "A 50-Year Farm Bill" in the *NY Times* on January 4th, 2009 had crucial ideas to spread.

Current industrialized American farming methods are not healthy for farm land, soil fertility and soil renewal. In actual fact, such methods ultimately devastate our ability to grow food.

So, although we have taken the health and life of our food sources for granted since WWII, if we continue using these methods, in the future we will no longer be able to rely on the same quality and quantities of most foods we now know. People will go hungry because there won't be enough food to go around, regardless of economic wealth.

What's needed is a new environmentally-sustainable government policy that ends the reign of industrialized spoilage of air, water, soils and those people's lives who grow food for the rest of us - even though many individual Americans are now changing the ways they grow and sell food. See www.nytimes.com/2009/01/05/opinion/05berry.html

MC Launches Web Site!

<http://mohonk-consultations.org>

Visit our new website where we showcase our dynamic programs, mission, the 28-year history of our founding, and our relationships with Mohonk Mountain House and Mohonk Preserve. We hope that the text, photos and quotes will inspire you to become even more involved with our work.



We especially want to thank the generosity of Mohonk Mountain House Archivist, Joan LaChance; Shanan Smiley and Paul C. Huth of Mohonk Preserve's Daniel Smiley Research Center archives, and Mohonk Consultations' archivist, Sandra Smiley, for sharing historic photos that document our stories. Finally our gratitude to web designer Patrick Fortino of www.writtenowdesign.com for his flexibility and patience.

You can now access our annual newsletter in PDF format on the web site.

- Patty Matteson, *Webkeeper*

AND THE LAND

Global Hunger and the Potato

The target of the UN Millennium Development Goal #1 is to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty by 2015 and according to the UN 2008 MDG report, this target is achievable. However, because of natural disasters, high energy costs, regional conflicts and other factors, in 2008 food costs rose dramatically, plunging more people into chronic hunger and starvation. Today, one sixth of the world's population is still living on less than \$1 per day.



According to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the number of people going hungry today has risen to over 963 million. However, the FAO is looking at this food crisis as an opportunity to invigorate smallholder agriculture in the developing world and states, "with appropriate incentives, farming households could see immediate gains, while other rural households could benefit in the longer run" (*State of Food Insecurity in the World 2008* report).

Among other designated themes for the year, the UN declared 2008 the International Year of the Potato, a high sounding title for the humble and common tuber. The essential message is, "the potato is a vital part of the global food system, and will play an ever greater role in strengthening world food security and alleviating poverty." Already, potato production is increasing in India, China and other normally rice-producing areas, providing the extreme poor with a stable and highly nutritious food source more adaptable and sturdy than rice and one with far less environmental impact.

- Barbara Valocore

2008 Award Winner Bob Larsen

In June 2008, a packed Mountain House parlor heard Bob Larsen's life history that included active and sometimes dangerous work promoting both human and environmental rights. As he received the award, Bob called himself "a mere foot soldier," pointing to others like the Smiley family of Mohonk for preserving the Shawangunk Ridge.



For discovering many species of birds new to the area, Bob received a new field guide that included several absurd entries:

EASTERN SPIDER SPITTER - *Salivatus ptuii*

Named for its feeding habits, this species spits small, spherical, sticky, stinging spit-salvos at speckled spiders. Often, Spider Spitters splatter spewed spent spit, spreading spongy spray spots....

- Adapted from *A Field Guide to Little-Known & Seldom-Seen Birds of North America*, by Ben, Cathryn and John Sill, Peachtree Pub. 1988

Larry Hauptman to Receive 2009 Environmental Distinguished Award

Mohonk Consultations will honor Larry Hauptman, a State University of New York Distinguished Professor and scholar, a remarkable humanitarian and notable activist citizen, with this year's Environmental Distinguished Award. Larry's work and spirit personify the environmental, philosophical and dialoguing mission of Mohonk Consultations. He is known as one of the leading American historians writing Native American history and giving voice and tribute to many Native Americans through his extensive research and publications.

"Larry is a statesman with extraordinary generosity of spirit," said Dr. Heriberto Dixon of the Saponi/Tutelo Nation and MC Board member. Larry has taught Native American history, New York State history and Civil War history at New Paltz for the past 38 years.

Larry teamed up with MC founder, Keith Smiley, to design each of twelve Eastern Regional Conferences on the Native American, held 1972-1984. The 1983 conference was held at Mohonk to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Mohonk Conferences of Friends of the Indian.

While he frequently publishes articles and book reviews, he has also published 13 books and co-written or co-edited nine more



Photo by Marlis Momber

on the history of Native Americans, in particular the Lenape and the Iroquois of New York State and the Oneidas of Wisconsin. He is editor of a series of Native American books at Syracuse University Press.

Larry introduces a wide range of people to each other and teaches respect for people and the earth. Last November, he brought Onondaga Oren R. Lyons, a renowned Peacekeeper of the Iroquois Confederacy to speak to an audience of more than 400 people at SUNY New Paltz. The talk focused on relearning our relationship to and respect for the environment in these challenging times of global climate change.

Please join us in celebrating Larry's accomplishments:

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

5 - 8 pm

Mohonk Mountain House

Call 845/256-2726 for reservations

or email mohonkconsultations@hvi.net.

MEETING THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Taking Action in the Hudson Valley

November 21, 2008 Conference

Co-sponsored by Mohonk Consultations and the Hudson River Watershed Alliance (HRWA)

Photo by Brian Mohan



Timothy Hall of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies

Will New York State's climate resemble that of today's North Carolina or Georgia by the end of this century? What we do over the next several years can significantly affect the outcome.

This was the eye-opening message from Dr. Timothy Hall of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies at

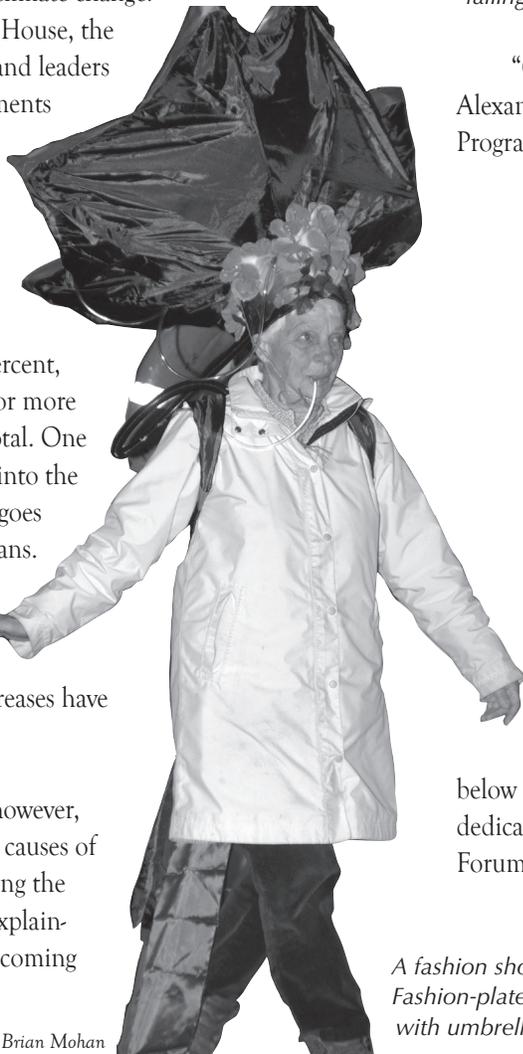
the day-long conference on climate change.

Held at Mohonk Mountain House, the event attracted 175 citizens and leaders from local and state governments and businesses.

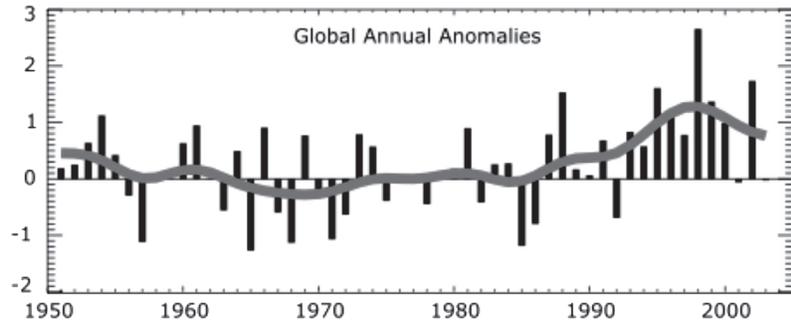
Hall went on to declare, "We emit megatons of carbon into the air annually. Some 20 percent of this is emitted by the United States. Of that 20 percent, use of fossil fuels accounts for more than three quarters of the total. One half of the gases emitted go into the atmosphere. The other half goes into buffers, such as the oceans. These buffers are getting saturated. Since the industrial revolution started, the temperature increases have risen to 0.8 C. per annum."

The conference focus, however, was not so much on seeking causes of climate change as on accepting the current scientific data and explaining how we can manage the coming changes.

Photo by Brian Mohan



A fashion show featured future clothing trends for climate change. Fashion-plate, Anne Finn, models a raincatching outfit, complete with umbrella hat, storage-tank back pack and drinking tubes.



As the climate warms, precipitation is expected to occur in less frequent but more intense events. Hall noted that such change "... is not good for agriculture, which prefers frequent drizzle over infrequent torrents." The plot above shows changes in the percent of annual global precipitation falling on the wettest days, a trend similar in the US Northeast.

"Can we do better than looking into a crystal ball?" asked Alexandra Dapolito Dunn, Assistant Dean of Environmental Law Programs at Pace University. Her answer was to articulate:

What we already know:

- ✓ Historic hydrologic patterns are changing.
- ✓ Impacts and vulnerability vary by region.
- ✓ Water and waste water managers and customers play a significant role in reducing greenhouse gases.

Based on that, what we must do:

- ✓ Better understand the connection between climate change, water resources and environment.
- ✓ Improve flood protection, drought preparedness and emergency responses.
- ✓ Implement an array of adaptive water management strategies

Dunn also suggested several targets for the President-elect, including lowering greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050; re-engaging the UN framework dedicated to climate change; and creating a new Global Energy Forum including the G-8 members and five other countries.

Photo by Brian Mohan

Dr. Stephen Breyman of the state Office of Climate Change, and David VanLuven from the Nature Conservancy, also urged attendees to prepare their communities for climate changes, and individually lower their carbon footprint.

A four-member afternoon panel engaged participants in a wide-ranging discussion on effective local responses to adapt to climate change. Betsy Blair of the state's Hudson River National Estuarine Research agency moderated the panel.

Ajax Greene of Sustainable Business Xchange/The Regional BALLE Network suggested we support locally owned small, independent businesses. Lois Barber of Earth Action talked about policies that can be initiated at country, state, county and city levels. She called for utility companies to provide access to

the electrical grid for all renewable energy produced and at a stable price. These changes would result in payments and creation of jobs and also provide incentives for more people to produce renewable energy.

David Church from the Orange County Planning Dept./Orange County Water Authority stressed local government perspectives. "Some areas," he said, "are having 100-year floods as often as 2 or 3 times in two years. We need to develop ground water sources and re-use waste water."

Pasquale Strocchia, owner of Integral Building & Design, Inc. in New Paltz, stated the need to work

toward energy efficient buildings. He then emphasized, **"In spite of our problems and our carbon footprints now, the good news is that we have the technology and the opportunity to do something if we act now."**

For more information on the conference and HRWA, contact Katy Dunlap: katy@hudsonwatershed.org or www.hudsonwatershed.org.



Andrew C. Revkin, Environmental Reporter for the NY Times Science section, supplied the keynote address and introduced his new climate-oriented blog Dot Earth: <http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com>.



Photo by Patty Matteson

CAFÉ-STYLE FORUM on Climate Change, April 2008

MC's annual springtime public forums not only highlight the pressing topics of our time, but also give the public an opportunity to experience dynamic methods of collective discussion and problem-solving. Last April's forum "Climate Change in the Hudson Valley" was an inspiring example.

Participants sat in small groups at round tables that were draped with brown paper. Conference leaders asked each group to brainstorm with each other, and to collect their ideas by writing or drawing their fears about climate change on the paper with colored pens. People quickly scribbled concerns such as flooding of major travel routes, fighting the growth of new pests and diseases, and the northern migration of New York City's population. The groups were then asked to disperse to other tables and repeat the process. On subsequent movements, each group was invited to write down their hopes about meeting the challenges of climate change. Optimism about growing local food, community-building, and alternative energy resources abounded.

At the end of this articulation and networking process, all the ideas were synthesized on large flip-pads for everyone to see. The commonality of concerns became evident, as well as the depth of ideas and optimism for adaptation in our Hudson Valley. This approach left everyone involved feeling a sense of unity, having spoken and been listened to: these are essentials for consensus building.

Kristin Marcell and Chris Bowser of the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program and Melissa Everett of the Municipal Climate Action Partnership and Sustainable Hudson Valley provided excellent leadership for this hopeful public forum dialogue.

Good Reading

The End of Food (2008) by Paul Roberts

Read this book if you want to be able to argue that First World countries are fast-approaching the end of a long phase of unsustainable food production methods and security. Author Paul Roberts likes to explain the BIG PICTURE in his books (see also *The End of Oil*), but he details the labyrinth of our current industrialized food system with a more than convincing weight of data, narratives, and documentation.

Criticizing our love affair with the seemingly unstoppable “bigger is better” ideal, Roberts challenges a myriad of modern industrialized practices of food production and delivery. Ultimately, he says this path may lead to “catastrophe” in terms of starvation and economic breakdown.

Fortunately, Roberts offers structural solutions to these complex problems: one crucial suggestion would be to move meat out of center stage, especially in the United States, which is, as he notes, still a model for the world. Roberts’ style is to hit readers over the head with a landslide of evidence. This book is not one to read cover to cover; it is to be digested slowly with many tastings.

- Patty Matteson



YES! Magazine

Yes! is my all-time favorite. Published quarterly in Bainbridge Island, Washington, each issue has a theme ranging from “Food for Life,” “Can We Live Without Oil?,” “Whose Water?,” and “Climate Change.” Their mission is “to support people worldwide in building a just, sustainable, and compassionate world.” The articles tell stories of and by real people who face a variety of challenging situations, from a perspective that allows a feeling of hopefulness to emerge. There is a refreshing mix of local and global contributors.

At a time when the bottom is falling out of so many areas of our lives, the current “Sustainable Happiness” issue encourages us to look at some of the

reasons we’ve gotten to this place and the ways we might change our behaviors to foster change. I give subscriptions of YES to my friends. Learn more at www.yesmagazine.org.

- Sandra Smiley

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With no annual dues or use of fund-raising consultants, we are dependent on voluntary donations. We are delighted to list our 2008 supporters below. Thank you so very much on behalf of our community audience and the lives they touch.

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Photo of Lost City, Shawangunk Ridge by Patty Matteson

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

Help us raise \$8,000 to complete our \$100,000 endowment fund.

Contributions are tax deductible under the IRS code.

- I would like to contribute to the Endowment Fund (Marketable securities are also accepted.) \$ _____
- I would like to contribute to current programs \$ _____
- I am unable to contribute at this time but would like to receive the newsletter and information about Mohonk Consultations programs.
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Hunger in the Hudson Valley: How Can We Help? Connecting People, Food, and the Land

A public forum on Sunday, April 19th 3:00 – 5:30 pm
At Lake Mohonk Mountain House

Reservations Required, Call 845/256-2726

Suggested donation: \$10; Seniors & Students \$5

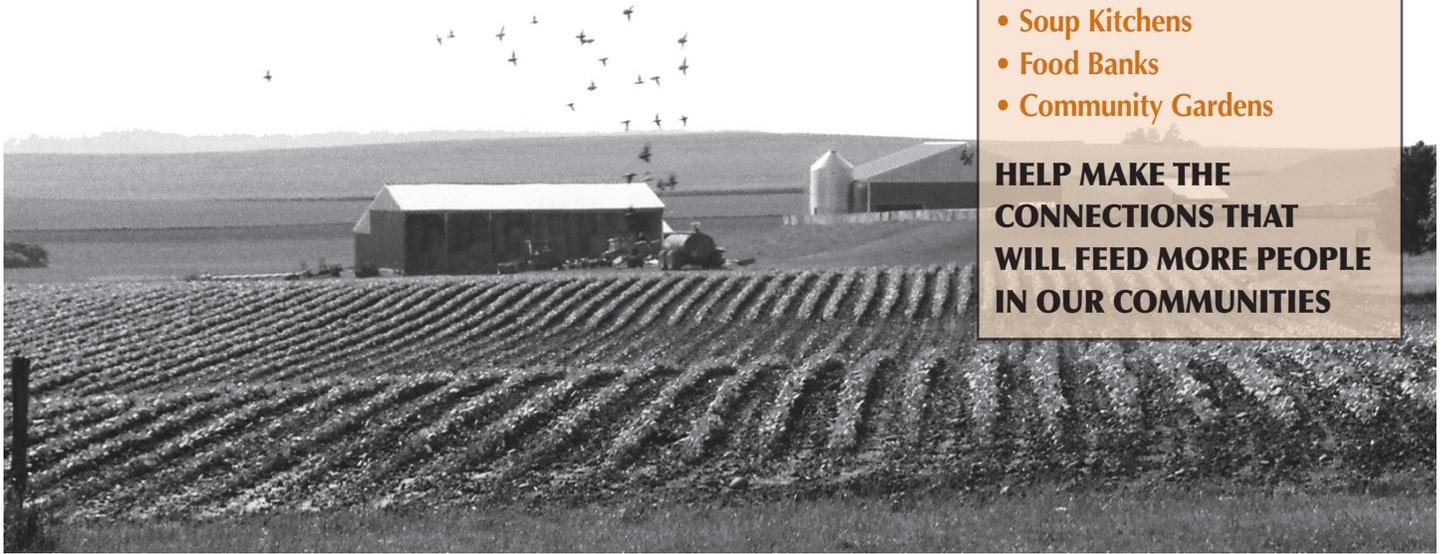


Photo by Celia Roberts

Join us for an in-depth
exchange with local
workers from

- Farms
- Food Pantries
- Soup Kitchens
- Food Banks
- Community Gardens

**HELP MAKE THE
CONNECTIONS THAT
WILL FEED MORE PEOPLE
IN OUR COMMUNITIES**



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