



Mohonk Consultations

“Let’s talk it over at Mohonk.”
A TRADITION OF CONNECTING
PEOPLE THROUGH DIALOGUE

2024

Shifting Views and Strengthening Community



Dear Friends,

Our programs this past year have been diverse, stimulating, and, as always, focused on improving our relationship to Earth and to each other. I’m proud of how each program set the stage for conversations, reflection, and action that will work to propel humanity forward in a more conscious direction.

Jenny O’Dell’s *Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond Productivity Culture* (Random House, 2023), has been an inspiration to me this year. O’Dell explores in a deep manner our human relationship with time, and the ways that our lives and well-being are dictated by that relationship. In the introduction to the book, she briefly discusses that the Ancient Greeks had two different words for time, *chronos* and *kairos*:

Chronos, which appears as part of words like chronology, is the realm of linear time, a steady plodding march of events into the future. Kairos means something more like ‘crisis’ but it is also related to what many of us may think of as opportune timing, or ‘seizing the time’.

O’Dell invites us to understand that looking at time in a linear, deterministic way may bring feelings of dread, as though one’s actions don’t matter. Things become steadily worse as time wears on. In contrast, if time is understood as moment by moment, the opportunity exists to change the outcome. Our actions have unpredictable effects on the outcome of “what is.” As Hanna Arendt put it “The smallest act in the most limited circumstances bears the seed of the same boundlessness, because one deed, and sometimes one word, suffices to change every constellation.”

It is in this spirit that I invite you to join us this year. It is in the dialectic (the art of investigating or discussing the truth of opinions) that we can better understand what we think, as well as give rise to new understanding and ideas. Here, rubbing elbows with each other at Mohonk, we can all contribute to seeing and acting differently in order to affect positive change in the world.

Thank you all for being a part of the conversation!

– **Louisa Finn**

Chair, Mohonk Consultations Board of Directors

Year in Review: Conversations that Inform and Inspire

In the past year, Mohonk Consultations presented a total of six programs that were attended by nearly 700 people. In addition to our usual spring forum, summer award event and fall conference, we also hosted a number of smaller programs, including a film screening, a book launch and a special guided tour of Mohonk focused on the Indigenous heritage of the land.

NOVEMBER 2023

ROOM ENOUGH FOR BOTH: Building Affordable Housing and Preserving Open Space in the Hudson Valley

Our sold-out fall conference was grounded by the ideal that healthy communities need abundant, affordable housing, and protected land that supports clean water, food production, climate resilience, and outdoor access.

Working in collaboration with the **Hudson Valley Affordable Housing & Conservation Strategy (HVAHCS)**, Mohonk Consultations assembled a diverse group of experts and advocates to explore the relationship between the urgent need in the Hudson Valley for affordable housing and the continuing importance of conserving undeveloped land for agriculture, environmental quality, recreation, and health. Over the course of a full day of presentations, panel discussions and audience participation, conference attendees had a chance to review the detailed data about the nature of the housing crisis in our region and learn about a range of collaborative approaches underway in the Hudson Valley focused on providing equitable, stable housing options while protecting critical lands that meet community needs.



Louisa Finn with Tom Smiley

APRIL 2024

SHIFTING VIEWS: Exploring Indigenous Holocentric Consciousness

Our spring “Peace with Nature” forum featured interactive presentations and dialogue about how humanity must shift from living on Earth to living with Earth, led by the authors of the forthcoming book *Earth Mind*.

The program featured Tiokasin Ghosthorse, a member of the Cheyenne River Lakota Nation of South Dakota, and John Briggs, author and Distinguished Professor at Connecticut State University, exploring and translating the concepts of Indigenous Consciousness for a wide audience.

Building on their deep and experiential knowledge of Indigenous consciousness, the speakers shared and encouraged an understanding of the holistic mode of consciousness, long obscured by the human-centered, anthropocentric consciousness of the modern, object oriented, mainstream culture. Through presentations and group discussions, the diverse audience of well over 100 participants were encouraged to think differently about how to awaken holistic consciousness, and live with a renewed awareness of our relationship with

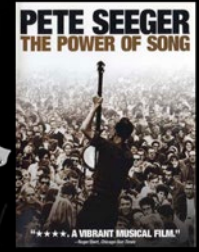
Earth—seeing humanity as an essential part of nature, and acting accordingly, for the benefit of the whole.

Prior to the forum, Mohonk Consultations led groups of students from the New School for Social Research on a walk and brief exploration of Mohonk land and its connection to Native American history.



MAY 2024

PETE SEEGER: The Power of Song



Mohonk Consultations collaborated with Mohonk Mountain House to present an afternoon of film and live music as part of Mohonk's annual "Getting Close to Nature" program.

Our screening of the Emmy Award-winning documentary "Pete Seeger: The Power of Song" was followed by a concert and singalong with folk musicians David Lutken and Andy Teirstein that highlighted Seeger's powerful and timeless music.



130 people gathered in Mohonk's outdoor pavilion to celebrate and honor The Vanaver Caravan for its more than 50 years of promoting peace, celebrating our shared humanity, and transforming young lives through the magic of music and dance.

This year's Distinguished Achievement Award event was a joyous celebration. The Vanaver Caravan Dance and Music Company, established in 1972 by musician/composer Bill Vanaver and dancer/choreographer Livia Drapkin Vanaver, is dedicated to using the dance and music of world culture and tradition to inspire harmonious existence and celebrate humanity. Guest speakers at the event—including Maria Guralnik, Chris Silva, Julian Lines, and Kevin Cahill—shared moving stories of the many ways that the Vanavers have united and inspired people of all ages and from all regions of the world.



Following these tributes, the audience was treated to a classic Vanaver performance featuring live music and individual and group dances from all over the world. As the program closed, a double rainbow appeared in the sky, inspiring everyone to rush outside and look up with a feeling of awe, communion, and joy.

JULY 2024

Connecting Lenape Visitors with their Ancestral Lands



Mohonk Consultations collaborated with Wild Hudson Valley to lead a visiting group of Lenape people on a tour of the Mohonk property. The group found great meaning in hiking to Sky Top as part of their work to regain a connection to their ancestral homeland for the purpose of healing and reinvigorating their culture.

Lenni Lenapexkweyok (meaning “The Lenape Women”), is organized by women elders from their displaced communities in Ontario, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma. In addition to several adults and elders, the visitors to Mohonk included teenagers and young children. The tour was facilitated by Justin Wexler and Anna Plattner of Wild Hudson Valley as part of their work to support efforts by Indigenous people to visit their ancestral land and to represent themselves, their culture and their history.

Mohonk Consultations was grateful to be a part of the group’s spiritual homecoming, and is looking forward to other ways to support their mission.

OCTOBER 2024

HOLDING EVERYTHING TOGETHER: Wisdom, Healing, and Courage of Indigenous Women Elders



We welcomed nearly 200 people to the Mohonk Conference center for a conversation and book release event featuring Indigenous women elder leaders talking about ancestral wisdom, transformation and healing.

In conjunction with the national release of *Worlds within Us: Wisdom and Resilience of Indigenous Women Elders* from Spirit Aligned Leadership and Guaní Press, we presented a special program featuring distinguished Native elders sharing honest and uplifting personal narratives about their lives and the worlds they encompass.

Loretta Afraid of Bear (Oglala Lakota, Pine Ridge, South Dakota), Wakérakats:te Louise Herne (Bear Clan, Akwesasne Mohawk Nation, New York), and editor Tekatsi:tsia’ kwa Katsi Cook (Wolf Clan, Akwesasne Mohawk Nation, New York) told engaging and inspiring stories about lives that are rich with a sense of purpose and commitment to their communities, to their cultures and to helping others.



Feedback from some of the nearly 700 people who participated in our programs this year

“ We must continue being in the present moment, with channels and hearts open. This will have a ripple effect.

“ I find it painful to live within one dominant culture’s worldview when there are so many others. I valued learning and feeling a worldview that includes me and all beings.

“ To live with nature rather than in it and with Earth rather than on it requires changing focus from actions to benefit humanity (i.e., dominance) to living to benefit earth.

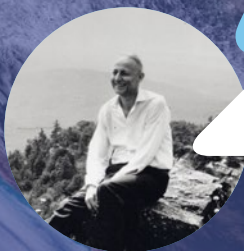
“ The speakers, the sound, the performance, the food and wine—and the double rainbow!! It was all great. You can’t plan for that kind of spirit but sometimes it happens.

“ We can combine efforts of environmental stewardship and vibrancy in our economy, through a focus on providing housing that is affordable. These goals do not have to be conflicting.

“ Today’s forum inspired me to learn more about how communities form in different cultures—especially native ones—and focus on the Earth and those around me.

“ Hearing the many ways intuition is valued, essential and necessary was deeply meaningful and affirming for me. My intuition feels supported, loved, more intact, and available.

“ The personal experiences, humor, the telling of rites of passages, symbols, and history of what was lost and why that’s being nurtured and restored—that is SO important now.”



“ I have been a leader. I have learned that it is not necessary to lead at the front of a group. I have learned to express in walking the deepest desires of the group. If you would be a leader, learn to lead from behind, by means of awareness more than by command.

— Keith Smiley, Founder of Mohonk Consultations

2024 FALL CONFERENCE

THRIVING TOGETHER: Strengthening Community in a Time of Rapid Change



In these times of sweeping social and environmental change, America feels more divided than ever. For our fall conference, we are highlighting the efforts of individuals and organizations that are working to reunite our fractured communities and move us toward a resilient and sustainable future.

Join us in the Mohonk Conference Center on Monday, November 11, for conversations with neighbors and local changemakers sharing stories of how places and communities throughout our region are building resilience and bringing people together.

Here are some of the extraordinary people who will share details of the wide-ranging projects that are connecting people in positive and joyful ways to deliver important services and create welcoming places and hopeful visions for an inclusive and peaceful future:

Corey J. Allen

*Habitat for Humanity of
Greater Newburgh*

Becky Collins Brooks

Hilltop Farm

Erica Brown

Radio Kingston

Elka Gotfryd

*Hudson Valley Pattern for
Progress*

Chris Hewitt

Tilda's Kitchen & Market

Phoenix Kawamoto

Town of New Paltz

Joe Concra and Lindsey

Wolkowicz
O+ Festival

Brian Mahoney

Chronogram

Duane Martinez

Scenic Hudson

Colleen McMurray

Pine Hill Community Center

Victoria Messner

*Coalition of Forward-Facing
Ellenville*

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Mid-Hudson Library System

We hope you and members of your community will come, learn and begin new conversations with others working to draw people out of social isolation and strengthen the social fabric of our communities.

Monday, November 11, 2024, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Mohonk Mountain House Conference Center

Tickets: \$55 general, \$20 students (includes luncheon)

Advance purchase required: mohonk-consultations.org/thrivingtogether →

PLEASE NOTE: In order to bring as many voices into this conversation as possible, subsidized tickets are available for people who cannot afford the full ticket price. Email info@mohonk-consultations.org for details.



Thanks to our donors and partner organizations!

We are deeply grateful for the generous donations that have supported our mission and made our programs possible.



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In memory of Lee Amigh, Ruth and Keith Smiley
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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 Earth's resources, including humans, and support the development of practical means to do so.

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2025 PROGRAM UPDATES

for the latest information about upcoming programs, join our email list at: mohonk-consultations.org/subscribe

Mohonk Consultations acknowledges, with respect and gratitude, that we are living in and sustained by Lenapehoking, homeland of the Lenape peoples. The first peoples who lived here were the Esopus and Minisink peoples of the Lenni Lenape nations. Wars and Indian Removal policies forced most of the Lenape westward. Many of their descendants continue to live here; others live throughout North America. We honor all Indigenous communities—past, present, and future—as we seek to create a safe space for all.