



# Riverlovers Currents

Volume 25, Number 1, January 2012

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## Message From The President

Starting in January, we are going to screen some hour-long shows from PBS, such as Power Surge, American Eagle, Earth the Operators Manual, and the movie Gasland, so stay tuned and watch for further details. On January 20<sup>th</sup>, we will be viewing "American Eagle," the documentary on the comeback saga of the Bald Eagle.

Mark your calendars for the very popular EagleFest at Croton Point Park on Saturday, February 4, (inclement weather date Sunday, February 5). Once again Riverlovers will serve soup and bread at the Nature Center for the vendors and volunteers. We will have an outreach table at this popular venue to encourage new membership, in the big tent.

Thanks to Bill Flank for distributing our *Riverlovers Currents* at the November and December Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouses. This is a well-attended event of like-minded people sharing our thoughts for a better environment.

The next Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse is on January 14<sup>th</sup> and features Cathie Ryan. Please make sure to post the flyers to help spread the word about some really great entertainment that everyone can enjoy, and at the same time help our "mother ship" Clearwater.

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## We Saved The Nature Centers!

by Cynthia Andersen

It is a cold, rainy Tuesday night, December 7<sup>th</sup> and Gunnar and I are racing down I-684 to get to the Westchester County Center in White Plains to have our say before the county officials. We are two in hundreds; a cross section of community residents who have come to sound off on County Executive Rob Astorino's painful 2012 budget. Kirsten Andersen, Gunnar's sister, having arrived earlier, added Gunnar's name to the list of speakers. Gunnar is 125<sup>th</sup> on the list, she tells us laughingly, as we are ushered into the flow-off area to view on a large screen the proceedings in the Little Theater, where more than 300 people are seated as they watch our county legislators seated on a stage.

Scott Williamson, the recent caretaker of Croton Point Nature Center, our home base, who was so important to Riverlovers' events, comes over and thanks us for attending. His job is at stake and he is very worried.

The hearing begins with the issue of Astorino's proposal that would reduce spending for parks and recreation by 5 percent, to \$48 million, and that is the main issue we are there for. Riverlovers would not only lose their meeting

place where we have spent the last 20 years learning about the important environmental issues of our county, but also jobs like Scott's would be lost.

Some of the most moving testimony comes from young children, ages 6 through late teens. They recount how growing up in Westchester and participating in activities in parks like Cranberry Lake, Lenoir, Croton Point Park, to name a few, enriched their lives and taught them to love nature through their exposure to plants, animals, birds, insects and the like. One child, held in his mother's arms while he speaks, brings tears to my eyes when he whispers: "Please don't take away my park; it makes me so happy."

Other issues of great importance are also on the table. It's a great learning experience about the major concerns of our neighbors. Residents speak of the work of Cornell Cooperative Extension and the information it provides about pesticides and new labeling laws; residents from the DSS and CSEA unions are fighting to keep their jobs; health care centers like Ossining's OPEN DOOR are thanking the legislators for keeping their doors open to poor and sick children.

Just before Gunnar's turn to speak, the legislators announce they have decided to vote to keep the Nature Centers open. Loud applause ... Gunnar is beaming! Kirsten is beaming! I am beaming! We saved the Nature Centers!

In the end, Astorino says, "We talked. We listened. We compromised." The Board approved a \$1.69 billion budget and a \$548.4 million tax levy. The final budget kept property tax level, restored 184 jobs, including probation officers and engineers, and included funding for the six Nature Centers, neighborhood health centers, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, ArtsWestchester, children's programs and others. Well, I think there will be an EagleFest again this year; soup's on!

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## EagleFest Coming Soon!

It's on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 4pm, and Riverlovers will once more be serving home-cooked and donated soups and baked breads at the Nature Center for volunteers and vendors from 11am to 2pm.

We need volunteers to bring soups and breads, and to help serve. We also need volunteers for the Outreach Table from 9am to 4pm. Riverlovers can get lots of exposure, since big crowds are expected. Call Warren at 739-9028 if you can help out at the Outreach Table or call Gunnar at 432-3112 if you can help with soups at the Nature Center.

## Fracking Ain't What It Seems—II

The shale gas industry's campaign against *The New York Times* illustrates the difficulty in getting solid information upon which to base a regulatory framework. *The Times* is doing an unusually rigorous job at covering this extremely important and complex issue. The paper's ongoing series on natural gas drilling is one of the strongest pieces of investigative journalism this year from any news venue. *The Times* is covering this extremely important topic with rigor and balance, but it is also going the extra mile in the level of documentation it provides to bolster its stories, thus raising the bar on public service journalism.

In an era when few papers or news outlets are still willing to take on very powerful interests, *The Times* has pursued very difficult questions about one of our country's richest and most aggressive industries. At a time when accessing documents through open records requests faces an obstacle course of roadblocks, *The Times'* series has spent nearly a year using these tools to collect and publish an extraordinary trove of original documentation. Archives published by *The Times* include thousands of pages obtained through leaks and/or public records requests.

Among the revelations uncovered by *The Times'* admirable reporting:

- Sewage treatment plants in the Marcellus region have been accepting millions of gallons of natural gas industry wastewater that carry significant levels of radioactive elements and other pollutants that they are incapable of treating.

- An EPA study published by *The Times* shows that receiving rivers and streams, into which these plants discharge, are unable to consistently and safely dilute this kind of highly toxic effluent.

- Most of the state's drinking water intakes, streams and rivers have not been tested for radioactivity for years—since long before the drilling boom began.

- Industry is routinely making inflated claims about how much of its wastewater it is actually recycling.

- EPA, caving in to industry lobbyists and high-level political interference, has narrowed the scope of its national study on hydrofracking despite vocal protests from agency scientists. The EPA had, for example, planned to study in detail the effect on rivers of sending radioactive wastewater through sewage plants, but dropped these plans.

- Similar studies in the past had been narrowed by industry pressure, leading to widespread exemptions for the oil and gas industry from environmental laws.

- *The Times* revealed an ongoing debate within the EPA about whether the agency should force Pennsylvania to handle its drilling waste more carefully and strengthen that state's notoriously lax regulations and anemic enforcement.

- *The Times* investigation also explodes the industry's decade-old mantra that "there is not a single documented case of drinking water being contaminated by fracking." Their investigation of EPA archives exposes this claim as demonstrably false.

A second round of *New York Times* stories showed that within the natural gas industry and among federal energy officials, there were serious and disturbing reservations about the economic prospects of shale gas:

- Many industry experts have reservations over whether the wells produce as much gas as industry is claiming and whether companies may be misleading investors, landowners, and the public about the true costs of shale gas.

- Shale gas wells often dry up faster than companies expected—sometimes several decades faster than had been initially predicted.

- Companies downplay how much it costs to keep these wells flowing and overstate how much profit companies can make from these wells.

- Only a small percentage of the land in each shale gas field turns out to be highly productive, even at the start. Nevertheless, companies routinely pretend that all of their acreage will be equally promising.

- *The Times* found that the Environmental Impact Assessment was heavily reliant on data provided by companies with shale-gas industry ties.

We can thank *The New York Times* for helping local environmental organizations spread the truth about the devil's bargain that gas fracking represents. We can profit from the bad experiences those in other parts of the country have had, and stop the damage before it overwhelms us. Our voices need to be heard.

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## How Green Are Halogen Bulbs?

Contrary to urban legend (and to some manufacturers' claims that halogen lighting is green), halogen lamps are nowhere near as energy-efficient as fluorescents. Even the best new halogens require about three times as much power as fluorescents. They do, however, consume around 25% less than the old-fashioned incandescents. Although halogens last two to four times longer than old incandescents, their life expectancy still is a lot shorter than fluorescent lamps. The only other lights that come near fluorescents' efficiency are LEDs, but they are currently quite expensive.

The easiest way to rate any lamp's efficiency is to calculate the amount of light you get per watt of energy you burn. You take the number of lumens (light units) and divide it by the number of watts (hey, it's just like computing miles per gallon for your car).

You can now find the ratings printed on bulb packages in a little chart headed "Lighting Facts." If, for example, it says a lamp emits 820 lumens and uses 60 watts, then you're getting  $820/60 = 13.7$  lumens per watt. If it says the lamp produces 870 lumens and needs 13 watts, then you're getting  $870/13 = 66.9$  lumens per watt, or about four times as much light per watt—which is the difference between a fluorescent and an incandescent.

This is neither rocket science nor brain surgery, but it allows you to use a little common sense, and make the obvious choice for the environment and your wallet.

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## Did You Know?

According to the EPA, if every American home replaced just one light bulb with a light bulb that's earned the ENERGY STAR rating, we would save enough energy to light 3 million homes for a year, save about \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent 9 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions per year, equivalent to what would be emitted from about 800,000 cars.



# What's Happening When

Sundays at the Beacon Sloop Club, **Farmers' Market** 10am-4pm. Local cheeses, eggs, pasta, bread, lamb, mushroom spring rolls, fruits and vegetables.

Dec 21, Wed, the 1<sup>st</sup> of the eight days of **Hanukkah**.

Dec 25, Sun, **Merry Christmas** to all people of good will throughout the world.

Dec 26, Mon, **Kwanzaa** celebration begins.

Jan 1, Sun, **Happy New Year**, with wishes for peace, health and happiness for all humanity, and recommitment to the things Riverlovers stands for.

Jan 14, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring Cathie Ryan**. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Advance tickets [www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602) (\$17.50), or at door (\$20). Open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free parking. Sing with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus at its informal Teachabout starting at 6:45 pm. Info: call 914-946-1625 or [www.WalkaboutClearwater.org](http://www.WalkaboutClearwater.org).

Jan 20, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers First-of-the-New-Year Potluck**, at Croton Point Nature Center. Info: [www.Riverlovers.org](http://www.Riverlovers.org).

Feb 4, Sat, 9am-4pm, **Hudson River EagleFest 2012, at Croton Point Park**. Riverlovers will again be serving soup and bread to EagleFest volunteers and vendors at the Nature Center from 11am to 2pm. Help is needed to bring and serve the soups. Volunteers for the Outreach Table from 9am to 4pm are also needed. See story on page 1 for more details.

Feb 11, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring The Ebony Hillbillies**. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Advance tickets [www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602) (\$17.50), or at door (\$20). See Jan 14 above for more info.

## That Was How It Was Back Then

Remember when people got married first, and then lived together. Every family had a father and a mother. Until you were 25 you called every man older than you "Sir," and every woman "Ma'am." After you turned 25, you still called policemen and every man with a title, "Sir."

This was before gay rights, civil rights, computer-dating, dual careers, daycare centers, and group therapy. We were taught the difference between right and wrong, and to stand up and take responsibility for our actions. We were drafted to serve our country and thought that was a privilege; and living in this country was a bigger privilege. We cared about something other than ourselves and about money (which most of us didn't have much of).

We thought "fast food" was what people ate during Lent. Having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with your cousins. Time-sharing meant time the family

spent together at dinner and in the evenings and weekends—not purchasing condominiums in remote places.

The world was simpler then. Part of the reason was that there weren't so many of us. We banded together as a nation, rather than walling off our space. It's a different world we've created. It's got a lot of benefits, but it's too bad we've forgotten some of the things we've lost in the process. We need to start paying attention to not only sustaining what we have, but to retrieving some of what we've lost.

### *Here's how to join Riverlovers...*

*(the local Clearwater Sloop Club in the Northern Westchester-Putnam County area)*

### **Application for Riverlovers Membership**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \_\_\_ New \_\_\_ Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check (\$25 individual, \$35 family) for 2012 to: Riverlovers, P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

I want to have *Riverlovers Currents* delivered electronically.

Send to this e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### **Yes! I Also Want To Join Clearwater**

Please sign me up in the following membership category:

- |                                   |       |                                      |        |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| <input type="radio"/> Individual  | \$40  | <input type="radio"/> Mariner        | \$500  |
| <input type="radio"/> Family      | \$55  | <input type="radio"/> Sailing-Master | \$1000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Contributor | \$100 | <input type="radio"/> Benefactor     | \$5000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Sponsor     | \$200 | <input type="radio"/> Student        | \$10   |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please include check payable to Clearwater, or charge by credit card

- Visa       MC       Discover       Amex

Account No. \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: Clearwater, Inc.  
112 Little Market Street  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Your Clearwater membership gets you the *Navigator* and other benefits, along with being part of Riverlovers' "parent" organization representing individuals and Sloop Clubs up and down the Hudson Valley "working for the River."

## Riverlovers - Who We Are

Riverlovers, Inc. is a chartered Sloop Club of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., an environmental non-profit membership organization whose most visible symbol is its member-owned and operated 106-ft. sloop "Clearwater." As a local affiliate, Riverlovers' purposes are:

- Maintaining an active Sloop Club in the Northern Westchester-Putnam County area;
- Meeting the needs and interests of individuals through a variety of interest groups, including monthly Potluck dinner meetings with varied programs, environmental education and awareness, boats and sailing, concerts and festivals;
- Organizing trips and recreational activities, seminars and workshops, learn-to-sail programs and Clearwater visits;
- Research, education and action to protect our rivers and our environment;
- Working for access and effective land use along the Hudson River and its tributaries;
- Boating projects on the Hudson River, to reach out to the surrounding community for educational and recreational purposes.

We invite you to join us. Contact our interest group coordinators, or write to Riverlovers, Inc., P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520. Together we can do a lot!

### Riverlovers Officers

President:	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
Vice Pres. (programs):	Robin Fox	271-6088
Secretary:	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Treasurer:	Daria Gregg	944-8396
President-Emeriti	Eric Marshall	827-3696
	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112



## Interest Group Coordinators

Interest Group	Coordinator	Phone
Envir. Education	Bill Flank	238-8240
Membership	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112
Newsletter	Bill Flank	238-8240
Newsletter Distribution	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Outreach		
Photographer/Archivist	Beverly Dyckman	739-5057
Potluck	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
Publicity		
ShadFest	Robin Fox	271-6088

Web Page: [www.riverlovers.org](http://www.riverlovers.org)

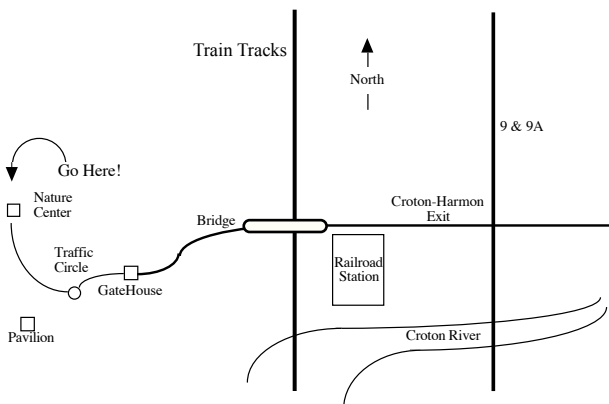
### Newsletter Submissions

Please send news articles and other items of interest to Riverlovers Currents, P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520. Include your name, address, and phone number. Names can be omitted on request.

Newsletter Committee: Editor, Bill Flank; Associate Editor, Mel Fitting

January Newsletter Contributors: Cynthia Andersen, Warren Lindholm

## Riverlovers Monthly Potluck and Showing of "American Eagle"



**Riverlovers, Inc.**

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

**Friday, January 20, 2012**  
**6:30pm**  
**Croton Point Nature Center**