

PCBs and You

As the decades-long struggle to determine the fate of the PCB-contaminated Hudson River headed for a crucial milestone last December – the release of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) sediment cleanup plan – one thing became clear: The Hudson River Superfund site would easily set a record for money spent by a polluter to erect roadblocks to the recovery. Nobody knows exactly how much General Electric invested on public relations, lobbying, and legal work trying to duck its responsibility, but the company has clearly spent tens of millions of dollars. This unprecedented attempt to skew the federal Superfund process left several residual effects behind; among them, confusion about PCBs and hostility toward the cleanup of contamination in the upriver communities most affected by the pollution.

One important question that lingers from GE's ad campaign is: "Just how dangerous are PCBs?" To help clear away many misconceptions about the public health implications of PCB contamination, several groups have come together to present a Hudson River Community Health Conference on Saturday, October 13th, 2001. Among the sponsoring organizations are: Friends of a Clean Hudson (a coalition of environmental groups that includes Environmental Advocates, Scenic Hudson, Clearwater, NYPIRG and the Sierra Club), the NY Healthy Schools Network, Kids Against Pollution and HudsonCARE (Citizens Along the River's Edge) a newly formed group started by residents of the towns in the northern section of the river (see www.hudsonCARE.org). The conference will include discussions of the chemical class known as PCBs, their exposure routes, and their health effects, both cancer and non-cancer. There will be special emphasis on the risks to women and children and the methods for protecting families. Speakers will be: Dr. David Carpenter of the SUNY School of Public Health; Deborah Rice, Ph.D., a PCB expert from the EPA; Judith S. Schreiber, Ph.D., a health specialist with the state Attorney General's Office; and Sandra Steingraber, PhD., a highly regarded expert on women's health and author of *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment*. The Conference will be held from 9:00AM to 12:00PM and then again from 1:30PM to 4:30PM at the Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls.

Admission is free. For more information call Michael LaPan at 518-812-0756. ★

On the Alert

■**Fail Safe:** The recent terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center have heightened concerns about the safety of US nuclear power plants, as well as security within the plants. Nuclear facilities repeatedly fail mock terrorist assaults performed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the federal agency that oversees the nuclear industry. The Nuclear Control Institute has called on the Bush Administration to immediately activate an existing emergency plan to protect nuclear power plants against terrorist attack. Write President Bush and your Congressional representatives. Urge them to upgrade security at all existing nuclear plants and to abandon any plans to build new reactors as part of the nation's energy plan. Visit www.nci.org for more information.

■**Collateral Damage:** Concerned for the health of workers engaged in rescue and security operations at the World Trade Center site, as well as those who live and work in lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, the New York Environmental Law and Justice Project (NYELJP) is sampling dust in and around the disaster. Some rescue workers are having trouble breathing, and many are suffering severe eye irritation and headaches. The public faces similar hazards, especially individuals who are sensitive to smoke, such as heart patients, asthmatics and children. Initial test results for hazards such as fiberglass and asbestos indicate that they could be significant threats. NYELJP is urging the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and federal, state and local health agencies to release their own data on these substances and provide workers and the public with the information needed to make informed decisions about the health risks of the dust and smoke. For information on government tests, call the EPA (732-321-6655) and the NYC Health Department (212-788-7600). The New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health has also posted information on some of the potential hazards and ways to minimize risks. Visit www.nycosh.org. Contact NYELJP at 917-414-1983 for more information.

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to oppose threats to the
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resources and human health, and
to fight for high drinking water
and air quality standards.

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■**Mine Gone:** Residents of Saugerties are facing the prospect of a 28-year mining operation that would remove 2.8 million tons of stone. Shott Rock Inc. currently has a proposal before the Planning Board to mine in the residential hamlets of Veteran and Blue Mountain. Citizens concerned about air and water quality, reduced property values, noise, truck traffic and other potential impacts have formed CARES (Citizens Action for Residential Environments in Saugerties). A public hearing on a proposed zoning amendment to eliminate mining as a permitted use will take place on Oct. 11th at 6:30PM at Saugerties High School. Write Town Supervisor Greg Helsmoortel, 2778 Route 32 Saugerties, NY 12477. For more information, call 845-246-9189 or visit www.stophemine.com.

■**Green Grocers:** Many groups around the country are choosing October 30th as National Labeling Day – a day to visit grocery stores and peacefully protest the lack of labeling on genetically engineered food. If you would like to stage a peaceful protest or nonviolent direct action on that day in your area, contact Jim Thomas at jim.thomas@diab.greenpeace.org for help and support.

The Month Ahead

October

2-3: *NYS Waterfront Rediscovery Conference: Quality Coasts, Quality Communities*, sponsored by the NY Department of State. Empire State Plaza Convention Center, Albany. Fees vary. Call Nancy Kunz at 518-474-6000.

4: Linda T. Zidell Memorial Lecture in Environmental Pediatrics, featuring Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D. Sponsored by the Children's Center for Environmental Health and NYC Health Care Without Harm. NY Academy of Medicine, 1216 Fifth Avenue. 2:30PM. Call Colleen Keegan at 212-241-7854.

5: 8th Annual NYS Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Conference, sponsored by the NYS Department of Health and the Montefiore Medical Center Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. SUNY Purchase. Call Nancy Redkey at 718-920-5016.

10-13: *Learning Sustainability Forum: Achieving Environmental, Social, and Economic Well-Being*, sponsored by the University at Buffalo Environment and Society Institute and others. Address by Dr. Jane Goodall. Most events at Buffalo Convention Center. Email Iscampaign@aol.com.

13: *Hudson River Community Health Conference: Understanding the Health Effects of PCBs*. Sponsored by HudsonCARE (Citizen's Along the River's Edge), Friends of a Clean Hudson, Environmental Advocates and others. 9:00AM-4:30PM. Crandall Public Library, 251 Glen Street, Glens Falls, NY. (See *Lead Story*).

15: *Beyond West Nile*, sponsored by Southern Westchester Greens. Speakers Laurie Evans, SAFE, and Chris Walbrook, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, discuss lessons from West Nile, next steps, role of food coops, and organic farming. WESPAC, 255 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, White Plains. 7:30PM. Call 914-682-0488.

16: *Environmental Justice & Alternative Fuels Summit*, hosted by the University Transportation Research Center, City College. Discuss alternative fuel transportation strategies and solutions for the long-term improvement of air quality in the NYC Metropolitan Area. City College. Call Megan Maguire at 303-275-4321 or email megan_maguire@nrel.gov.

20: *Take Back the Power: Student Organizing Conference*, sponsored by Campus Action (see *Activists' Corner*). Friends Meeting House, 727 Madison Ave., Albany. 9:30AM-5:00PM. \$5. Call David Easter at 518-434-3856.

20: UNCAGED's (United Neighbors Concerned About GE and Dewey Loeffel) 1st Anniversary Party. VWF Post (corner of Lyons Lake Rd. and Rt. 20), Nassau. 7:00PM. Email Kelly Travers-Main at ktm@berk.com

20: Volunteers needed for Pre-Halloween Cleanup, sponsored by Prospect Park Alliance. Lookout Hill, Prospect Park, Brooklyn. 10:00AM-2:00PM. Call 718-965-8960.

25-26: NYS Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling's Annual Seminar/Membership Meeting, and Northeast Recycling Council Electronics Recycling Workshop. Ramada Inn, Schenectady. \$50 for either day, \$80 for both. Call Robin Kane at 518-736-5501.

27: *Living Under a Toxic Cloud: A Teach-In on Kodak, Pollution, & Your Health*, sponsored by Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC) and the Kandid Coalition. SUNY Geneseo. 9:30AM-3:00PM. Contact CEC's Western NY office at 716-885-6848 or at cecwny@buffnet.net.

27: Jamaica Bay Sunset Cruise, sponsored by the American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area. Guided tour of the 9,000 acre Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. 4:00PM-7:00PM. \$35. Call Don Riepe at 718-634-6467.

November

12: The 2001 *Advocate Awards*, Environmental Advocates' annual gala. (See *FYI*.) ✨

For Your Information

Party On: Environmental Advocates will host the *2001 Advocate Awards* on Monday, November 12 at Laura Belle in New York City. This year's *Advocate Award* recipients are Ashok Gupta, Cara Lee and James T.B. Tripp. Ashok Gupta is director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's Air and Energy Program. Cara Lee is a long-time Hudson River advocate and currently directs The Nature Conservancy's Shawangunk Ridge Conservation Initiative. James T.B. Tripp is general counsel of Environmental Defense. For ticket information, contact Deb Sgambelluri at 518-462-5526 ext. 230.

In Gardens We Trust: *New York's Community Gardens - A Resource at Risk*, a new publication by the Trust for Public Land, presents a case for the ongoing support and protection of community gardens. The report argues that attractive residential neighborhoods that encompass open space close to home are essential to economic success, that the city can support and needs successful gardens as well as new homes, and that the preservation of community gardens should be a focus of public policy. Visit www.tpl.org or call the NYC Program at 212-677-7171 for a copy of the report.

Digging Up The Dirt: *Fateful Harvest: The True Story of a Small Town, a Global Industry, and a Toxic Secret* is an exposé developed from the series of articles for the *Seattle Times* that made author Duff Wilson a Pulitzer Prize finalist. *Fateful Harvest* tells the story of a small town mayor and farmers who suspected there was toxic waste in fertilizer, and the revelations that followed. Published by HarperCollins Publishers; hardcover; 304 pages; \$26; ISBN: 0060193697. Visit www.fatefulharvest.com for more information.

Thinking Globally: The National Wildlife Federation, along with the Center for Environment and Population, will be conducting town hall meetings this fall to highlight the release of the United Nations Population State of the World Report entitled *Fund Footprints and Milestones: Population and Environmental Change* and the release of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science Atlas of Population and Environment*. The NY meeting, cosponsored by Environmental Advocates, Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood and Campus Action, will be held in December at the University at Albany. For more information, email ldibetta@eany.org or visit www.nwf.org/population.

Activists' Corner

Feel the Power: Campus Action, founded in 1992, is a multi-racial organization working to build a vital movement to fight against environmental degradation, racism, sexism, economic oppression and homophobia; and for peace, labor rights and academic freedom. Campus Action works with students, faculty and staff on ten campuses in the Capital District area (Albany, Schenectady, Troy and Saratoga Springs).

Campus Action will be sponsoring a student organizing conference on Oct. 20 in Albany featuring skills-building workshops and inter-campus network meetings, including the first meeting of the environmental network. The group's new website, www.campusaction.net, provides resources for campus and community activists, including action ideas, organizing tips, and links to campus and community groups pressing for positive social change.

For more information on Campus Action, contact David Easter at 518-434-3856 or info@campusaction.net. Send mail to 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210.



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