

Earth Festival Seminar Series focuses on renewable energy, natural gas

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Building on the success of its January renewable energy workshop, and in response to the growing public interest in alternative energy, the Otsego County Conservation Association has teamed with Wildlife Learning Company to offer an Earth Festival Seminar Series next month on topics ranging from energy audits and retrofits to natural gas drilling to zero waste.

On Saturday, April 10 in the Milford Central School auditorium, industry professionals will give presentations on geothermal and solar thermal energy and Finnish wood stoves. The importance of energy audits will be discussed, as will both residential and commercial energy retrofitting. With the information and materials provided, home and business owners will be better able to assess renewable energy options and evaluate the compatibility of these energy sources with their individual sites and lifestyles.

The seminar series will also explore various aspects of natural gas drilling, as four speakers take the stage to share their perspectives and concerns. Representatives from the environmental, oil and gas, and legal communities will discuss drilling currently underway in Otsego County by Gastem, an oil and gas exploration and development company; flaws in the pro-

Earth Festival 2010 includes the Milford Central School Education Foundation's "Go Green" Fashion Show, featuring "recycled" fashions (by ticket only: call 607-286-7721, ext. 8408) as well as an eco-friendly car wash, Cooperstown Farmers' Market vendors, Styrofoam collection and document shredding service, a bird walk in the Robert V. Riddell State Park, and local beef burgers, quiche, and soup served up by CADE. Pre-registration is preferred for the Seminar Series, but walk-ins can also pay at the door.

posed New York State regulations on horizontal drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing; how to recognize and report possible violation of environmental laws and regulations; and legal considerations for individuals and towns.

The Earth Festival Seminar Series will run from 8:30 a.m. (registration) to 3 p.m. Pre-registration is preferred by April 2 at www.occainfo.org (click the "Seminar Series" link) or by phoning 607-547- 4488

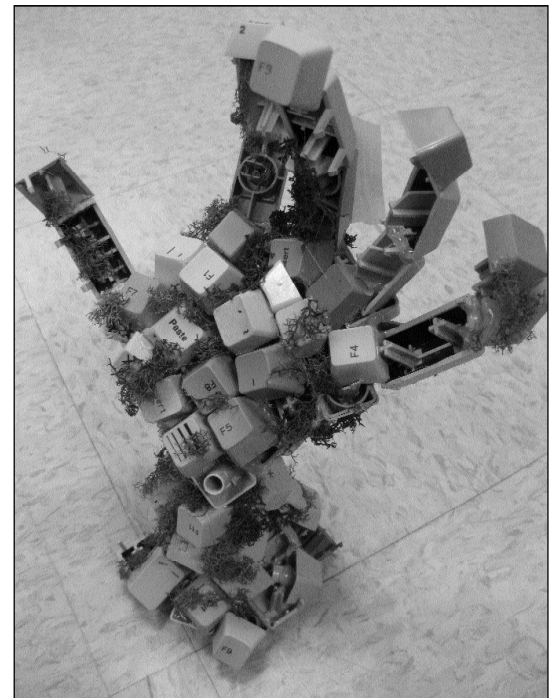


Photo provided

Milford Central School students are preparing a wide array of eco-art for viewing at Earth Festival, including this model hand sculpture by Dante Thompson.

or 607-547-4020. The fee of \$10 covers attendance at any or all of the presentations and refreshments, and includes admittance to the traditional Earth Festival activities

held concurrently in both gymnasiums. Payment should be received by OCCA before April 9. The registration fee will be waived for students, and scholarships are available for those who would otherwise be unable to attend.

Seminar topics and presenters include:

- energy audits/retrofits and solar thermal heat – Equity Energy
- energy issues with new/retrofit commer-

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French, Vargha join OCCA Board

by Richard deRosa

OCCA welcomes two new Board members who offer a wealth of experience and a long standing commitment to the county's most pressing conservation and environmental challenges.

Marybeth Vargha, who moved to this area 15 years ago, is the former Otsego County resource geographer. As coordinator of the county's geographic information systems, she gained an extensive working familiarity with the county's landscape, water resources, farms, and businesses. Prior to taking on that position, she was the county's solid waste coordinator and, as a result, worked closely with OCCA on many of its significant projects: hazardous waste collection, the burn barrel issue, and recycling. She is joining the Board of Directors because she wishes "to become more directly involved with some of the conservation programs and initiatives sponsored by OCCA."

Vargha lives with her family on their organic farm and, in addition to helping out on the farm when she can, she volunteers with her daughter's 4-H club. She is especially interested in working with farmers in cooperative efforts in conservation and sustainable development. According to Vargha, "there are many farmers who are actively making a difference in preserving the environment and offering alternative methods of growing our food." One of her goals is to ensure that their voices are heard. She is particularly committed to working with young people and hopes that as an OCCA Board member she can encourage the creation of OCCA initiatives aimed at getting young people throughout the county more involved in environmental projects. Finally, she looks forward to working on OCCA's natural resource

inventory project, the aim of which is to document the county's extensive and uniquely diverse ecology.

As it evolves, OCCA looks to expand its involvement throughout the county, especially with respect to land use issues and sustainable and environmentally sound agricultural practices. Vargha brings a wealth of experience to the Board, especially with respect to these issues.

Tier French, a longtime Cooperstown resident, environmental advocate, and OCCA member, joins the Board because of her fervent commitment to the county's environmental health and to the preservation of its natural resources. She has admired OCCA for doing more than paying lip service to conservation issues. As she puts it, OCCA "leads by example." As a committed nature lover, French is especially concerned that the county's natural resources be preserved so that its flora and fauna thrive in as natural an environment as possible.

While French admits that over time places do change, she would like to do whatever she can to preserve as much of the county's natural resources as possible: lakes, rivers and landscape. As she works at reducing her own carbon footprint, she looks forward to working with OCCA to encourage others to do the same. French believes that "educating children about conservation will make them great stewards of the earth." She believes that since it is harder to convince adults of the grave environmental threat we confront, our hopes for the future rest with our children.

In addition to serving on the OCCA Board, French is a member of the Hyde Hall board, the Lake & Valley Garden Club, and is the chair of the Food Committee for "Relay for Life."

President's Message

Belated thanks

OCCA lost two veteran Board members this year. Jim Bernegger has taken a new job in Florida, while Bill Ralston is busy renovating the former book store across from the Hartwick



MARTHA CLARVOE

Commons, to which his fine wood-working business will relocate soon.

Jim joined the Board of Directors in 1995 and filled the role of strategic planner and visionary for the organization. He encouraged others to look past the short term to the big picture: "Where is OCCA going to be in 10 years?" and "What is the real issue here?" were questions we heard often from Jim.

In the 1990s, Jim was active in the Glimmerglass Coalition, which resulted in environmental protections for Otsego Lake from a public boat launch. Jim was also a consistent volunteer at the county's Household Hazardous Waste Day collection, often bringing along his sons, Wesley and Quinn. In his last year here, Jim worked diligently as chair of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Bill Ralston began his service on the OCCA Board in 1997. He participated in MOSA Watch, a group formed to monitor recycling efforts when the Montgomery Otsego Schoharie Solid Waste Authority was still conducting a recycling program, and was also a member of the county's Environmental Management Council until its dissolution in 1996.

Bill was OCCA treasurer from 2002-2004 and again in 2009. He has a fine organizational memory and I will miss picking his brain. Probably our most reliable and consistent volunteer, Bill assures me he will still be around to assist with Household Hazardous Waste Day (12 years of service), Cooperstown July 4th Book Recycling (nine years), Garage Sale set-up (seven years), and various odd jobs we need done around the office, whether it's building table tops or installing hanging clothes racks. We have come to rely on Bill's dedication to OCCA over the years, and I'm delighted we can continue to do so.

Thank you, Jim and Bill. You will be much missed!

OCCA president to receive award from EPA

OCCA Board President Martha Clarvoe and Mary Ashwood of the Otsego County Burn Barrel Education Committee have been selected to receive a 2010 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Quality Award on Friday, April 23 in Manhattan. The EQA is the highest recognition presented to the public by EPA, with recipients from all community sectors, including nonprofit, environmental, and community groups, businesses, individual citizens, and environmental educators. Clarvoe and Ashwood are being lauded for their efforts toward educating the public about the threats posed by open burning. Effective last fall, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation passed legislation making burning of household trash in burn barrels or piles illegal.

DISH, Texas mayor shares gas drilling experiences

On Tuesday evening, February 16, Mayor Calvin Tillman of DISH, Texas spoke to a crowd of about 120 people at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta regarding the experiences of his township with the natural gas industry. Tillman's Oneonta appearance – part of a series of public meetings and private sessions with public officials in Broome, Delaware, Otsego and Susquehanna (PA) counties – was sponsored by the UUSO Gas Drilling Task Force and made possible in large part by James Herman.

According to Tillman, DISH is two square miles in size, with approximately 180 residents. It is located at the center of the Barnett shale, currently the most active natural gas shale in the U.S., and was described by Tillman as the “Grand Central Station” of the Barnett shale, with 11 high pressure natural gas pipelines, 11 gas compressors, four metering stations and a treatment facility all located within the township. There are 18 natural gas wells inside the corporate limits, with another 50 wells located just outside the municipal boundaries, he said.

The Barnett shale natural gas boom has added \$8-10 billion annually to the Texas economy and 100,000 jobs, Tillman said. His speaking tour here in the Marcellus shale region was prompted by his desire to share environmental and health concerns associated with natural gas drilling and to ensure that the conditions in DISH not be repeated as drilling increases nationwide. “We’ve taken one for the team in DISH,” Tillman said.

In response to numerous complaints – first about noxious odors and later about deteriorating health among DISH residents – two studies were conducted. Almost 15 percent of the town's \$70,000 annual budget was spent on an ambient air study by Wolf Eagle Environmental in August 2009 which found high concentrations of carcinogenic and neurotoxin compounds in ambient air near and/or on residential properties. “The compounds in the air indicate quantities in excess of what would normally be anticipated in ambient air in an urban residential or rural residential area,” the report reads. Further air testing by Wolf Eagle Environmental in December 2009 continued to confirm the presence of “multiple recognized and suspected human carcinogens in the fugitive air

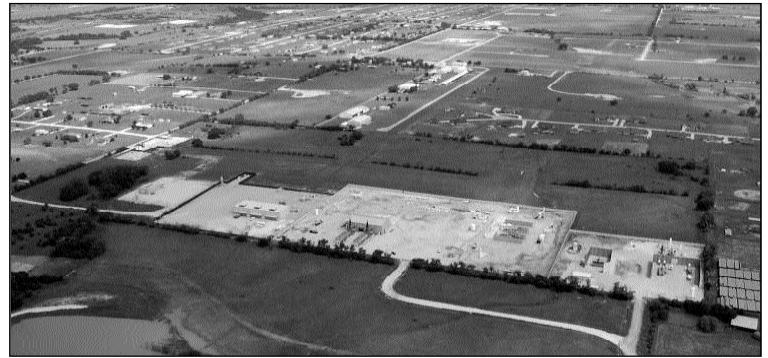


Photo provided

Eleven high pressure natural gas pipelines, 11 gas compressors, four metering stations and a treatment facility are located within the township of DISH.

emissions present on several locations tested in the Town of Dish,” exceeding short-term and/or long-term screening levels set by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Subsequent to the August air study, Earthworks’ Oil & Gas Accountability Project commissioned Wilma Subra to compile the results of a health survey of current and former DISH residents. Subra, a microbiologist/chemist and president of a Louisiana-based chemistry lab and environmental consulting firm, assessed 31 questionnaires submitted and found that 61 percent of the health effects reported are known to be associated with the toxins detected in the air study.

Tillman contends that green technology is available to the natural gas drilling industry that can mitigate air and health impacts such as those being investigated in DISH. Drilling can be accomplished using “green completions,” he said, which include a gathering line in place prior to drilling, no flaring and no pits for drilling waste. Vapor recovery on condensate tanks and other emission sources, zero emission dehydrators, and pneumatic valves were other forms of green technology advocated by Tillman.

Tillman recommends that New York State immediately

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OCCA member steps in to direct garage sale fundraiser

In answer to an appeal issued last spring by the Otsego County Conservation Association, Fly Creek resident Elizabeth Susman has signed on to spearhead this year's garage sale fundraiser. OCCA's Board of Directors had considered discontinuing the garage sale after 2009, due to the extensive drain on staff time and energy, unless volunteers could be recruited to take over event organization.

Susman, an OCCA member, will assume the bulk of the hands-on direction of the garage sale in 2010, with guidance and administrative support from the OCCA Board and staff. This year's sale will take place on Saturday, April 24 and Sunday, April 25 in the Cooperstown Farmers' Market building.

“We need OCCA to continue to educate people as to what could happen in our lovely area when outside developers come in – they do not care what happens to our environment, but we must,” Susman said. “So by assisting with the running of this garage sale, I feel I am helping in a small way by freeing up OCCA staff to concentrate their efforts on education and the more pressing environmental issues.”

Susman is a graduate of Russell Sage College and a native of Cooperstown. A practicing nurse who enjoys her calling, she is an avid garage sale shopper and antiques aficionado.

OCCA's garage sale is more than just an annual fundraiser, said Board President Martha Clarvoe.

“The brainchild of former executive director Teresa Winchester, the garage sale began as a fundraiser” explained Clarvoe, “but it fits well with our mission. We really love the fact that these items are finding a new home, staying out of the landfill, and reducing the purchase of brand new items. Reuse is a mainstay of good environmental stewardship.”

The official collection dates for the OCCA garage sale will be April 17-23. All donations are tax deductible: OCCA will provide a donation voucher as requested. Those interested in dropping off materials sooner, or who would like more information about volunteering to assist with the event, should call 607-547-4488 or e-mail admin@occainfo.org for further details.

Composting should be part of county's solid waste plan

Since it may be a real possibility that Otsego County will sever its relationship with MOSA, the county now has an opportunity to establish a more sustainable and environmentally viable system for dealing with its municipal waste stream (MWS). According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in 2008 25.9 percent of the nation's waste stream consisted of compostable material: 12.7 percent food scraps and 13.2 percent yard trimmings. The amount of food waste generated in the United States is huge, the EPA reports. That 12.7 percent represents 32 million tons of food scraps, only three percent of which was recovered and recycled. The rest – 31 million tons – was thrown away into landfills or incinerators.

The county's recently completed report, "Otsego County Long Term Solid Waste Management Plan," considers several options, among them the establishment of an organic waste composting facility and a less costly system that would initially be in concert with perhaps a local university, hospital or school. While the aim here would be to compost the entire organic waste stream (yard trimmings, food scraps, wood waste, and paper and paperboard products), the focus would be on food waste generated from large dining facilities. The most cost effective approach would be the windrow composting method – compost piles 50-150 feet long by 10-20 feet wide – used by many municipalities around the nation.

In light of the fact that Otsego County officials are now engaged in the process of deciding just how to handle the waste stream, it behooves all citizens of the

Since approximately 50 percent of the waste stream is organic matter, composting can play an important role in the integrated waste management plans of any community.

county to contact their representatives to both ask questions and encourage the eventual implementation of a cost-effective system of dealing with waste, both organic and inorganic, in as environmentally responsible a way as possible. Citizens should urge their representatives to learn as much as they can about eco-

logically healthy waste management systems. Examples abound around the state and in neighboring counties. For instance, Delaware County has had a composting facility in operation for a number of years now and there is no reason why Otsego County cannot study and learn from their example. Herkimer County also has an efficient organic waste and recycling system in place.

In the interim, there are plenty of ways that Otsego County residents can

Composting has the potential to manage all of the organic material in the waste stream which cannot otherwise be recycled.

contribute substantially to a reduction of organic waste. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of individuals to take stock of their consumption habits and to make every effort to reduce the amount of trash they produce. The fact that we have elected officials tasked with managing the county's affairs does not absolve individuals from doing their fair share. Government only works when the individual and society work in concert with one another. For instance, people living in lower Manhattan do their share by collecting and freezing food scraps and then taking them to a centrally located composting facility. Those of us living in rural areas or small villages do not need to freeze our compostable matter. Few back yards are so small that they cannot accommodate a small, enclosed area for compost collection and cooking.

Back yard composting is easy and need not be a complex enterprise. Essentially, all one needs to do is erect some sort of structure that will hold the food waste (everything but meat scraps) and is easily accessible for turning the contents once in a while. Basic guidance in home composting is available from a plethora of online resources. A good place to start is the Cornell Cooperative Extension website, www.cce.cornell.edu. Cornell's Waste Management Institute also provides a wealth of information, as well as useful links (cwmi.css.cornell.edu/compost-brochure.pdf). An excellent back yard composting guide can be found at www.garbee.com/compost.htm.

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Composting Q & A

Is composting compatible with other waste management systems?

Yes. Composting should be part of a comprehensive waste management system that emphasizes source reduction, reuse, composting and recycling, and proper disposal of any residual material. Some materials (such as paper products) can be recycled or composted. While paper can be composted, clean paper is generally more valuable when recycled. Soiled paper or paper that cannot be recycled economically can be composted.

What are the benefits of a successful composting program?

In addition to diverting a large proportion of the waste stream away from disposal, an effective composting program can produce a high quality soil amendment with a variety of end uses. Diverting organic wastes from landfill sites helps to conserve landfill space and to reduce the production of leachate and methane gas (both of which add to the cost of operating a landfill).

What different types of composting systems have municipalities implemented?

Municipal composting programs can include a combination of backyard, on-site and centralized management approaches for all or a portion of a municipality's waste stream. The major differences between these approaches are:

- **Back yard composting**
Many municipalities encourage "home" or "back yard" composting, where individual households compost at home.
- **On-Site composting**
The industrial, commercial and institutional sectors can take advantage of larger scale on-site systems to manage their organic wastes and avoid disposal costs.

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OCCA 2009 Annual Fund Drive: Thank you for your continuing support!

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WQCC explores carbon sequestration, ag carbon trading

Addressing a crowd of almost two dozen farmers, landowners and water quality professionals at the February 24 Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, Phil Metzger of USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services said he would not currently recommend ag carbon trading to small rural farmers and landowners for its income potential. He did, however, advise that they implement the associated carbon sequestration strategies whenever possible for their environmental benefits.

Metzger was invited by the WQCC to explain the basic principles behind a cap-and-trade system, describe how agricultural practices fit into such a system, and to outline how rural farmers and landowners might participate in and benefit from such a program. He said the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative – a 10-state cooperative effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric power plants – has imposed restrictions on the electric industry to limit such emissions. The industry has a cap, Metzger said, and must lower its carbon dioxide emissions, resulting in opportunities for the agriculture and forestry sectors to sequester carbon and sell the credits.

As outlined by Metzger, cap-and-trade is a regulatory program that caps harmful emissions by limiting them through a permitting system and distributing the emissions permitted to different stakeholders. These are called allowances, permits or

credits. Stakeholders can buy and sell the rights to the permitted emissions or “credits” after their initial distribution. Carbon trading is a strategy for mitigating the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses through such a cap-and-trade system, the goal of which is to prevent further increases in net emissions.

Cap-and-trade, Metzger continued, allows one power plant to reduce emissions well below its cap and sell the resulting “carbon credits” to another power plant that cannot easily modify operations to meet the cap limit. In the same way, agricultural offsets can be purchased by power plants from farms to meet a small fraction of their cap, Metzger explained.

Agriculture offsets include carbon sequestration (storing carbon in forests and soils), fossil fuel displacement (alternative energy or energy efficiency) and greenhouse gas destruction (combustion of methane to reduce its global warming potential). The U.S. Department of Energy describes carbon sequestration as one of the most promising ways for reducing the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Metzger said ag carbon trading is an evolving, rapidly changing market, with little opportunity at the present time for small farmers and landowners to profit, unless they are able to co-op their carbon credits. However, he still urges that conservation tillage and permanent grass planting, carbon sequestration in forests

(afforestation, sustainable forest management and long lived forest products) and manure methane destruction practices be employed based on the merit of their environmental benefits:

Other topics in Metzger's talk included the carbon cycle and climate change, sources of agricultural greenhouse gases, carbon registries, and steps to selling carbon credits. For complete details on agricultural carbon trading, including fact sheets and presentations, visit agcarbontrading.org. To read this article in its entirety, visit www.occainfo.org.

Compost Q & A

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- **Centralized composting**
Many organic waste generators will not be able to compost all of their wastes on site and therefore rely on programs to collect and compost their wastes at a centralized facility. Many municipalities have implemented programs to collect and compost leaf and yard wastes in conjunction with home composting programs. Combined programs for the collection of organics and recyclables, known as “wet/dry” programs have been tested in municipalities in Canada and the U.S.

The Compost Council of Canada provides an overview of the composting process, the economics and siting of a municipal composting facility, compost quality, and the end uses for compost.

Earth Festival

continued from page 1

cial construction – NYSERDA

- Finnish wood furnaces and ovens – German Mike's

Masonry

- geothermal – Great Brook Enterprises

- Low Carbon Diet – OCCA

• natural gas drilling – Lou Allstadt, former Mobil executive; Orville Cole, Gastem; Erik Miller, OCCA; and Mary Jo Long, attorney

- Zero Waste – Chris Burger

Now in its fifth year, Earth Festival is a free environmentally focused, interactive event featuring exhibits, workshops, vendors, food and entertainment, all with a fun, earth-friendly twist. Students from Milford Central School will be leading children's activity stations throughout the day, and are currently preparing a wide array of eco-art for public viewing. The Milford Education Foundation will end Earth Festival with a special "recycled fashion" show (by ticket only).

Earth Festival activities will kick off with a free Family Movie Night, including a special eco-art/fashion preview, at the school on Friday, April 9 beginning at 6:30 p.m. with the movie "WALL•E."

Earth Festival 2010 is sponsored by OCCA and Wildlife Learning Company, and is funded in part by the Bezos Family Foundation. Those interested in exhibiting or making a financial contribution should call OCCA at (607) 547-4488 or e-mail admin@occainfo.org.

The Seminar Series agenda is as follows:

8:30-9:00am – Registration

9:00-9:15am – Energy Audits, Bennett Sandler, Equity Energy

9:15-9:30am – Energy Retrofits, Bennett Sandler, Equity Energy

9:30-9:40am – Q & A

9:40-9:50am – Break

9:50-10:10am – Geothermal, Dave Austin, Great Brook Enterprises

10:10-10:30am – Solar Thermal, Norm Farwell, Equity Energy

10:30-10:40am – Q & A

10:40-10:50am – Break

10:50-11:10am – Erik Miller, Otsego County Conservation

Association, on how to document/record important observation information and who to call in the event of environmental harm or public safety issues

11:10-11:30am – Lou Allstadt, former Mobil executive, on his concerns regarding the NYS DEC's draft SGEIS

11:30-11:50am – Orville Cole, Gastem, on drilling currently underway in Otsego County

11:50-12:10pm - Mary Jo Long, attorney and Afton Board member, on legal considerations for individuals and towns

12:10-12:30pm – Q & A

12:30-1:00pm – Break

1:00-1:20pm – Energy Issues with New and Retrofit Commercial Construction, Jack Christmann, NYSERDA

1:20-1:30pm – Q & A

1:30-1:50pm – Zero Waste, Chris Burger, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Solid Waste Committee

1:50-2:00pm – Q & A

2:00-2:10pm – Break

2:10-2:25pm – Low Carbon Diet, Martha Clarvoe, Otsego County Conservation Association

2:25-2:45pm – Finnish wood furnaces and ovens, Mike Lorenz, German Mike's Masonry

2:45-3:00pm – Q & A and Wrap-up

Join us in celebrating one man's
service to the environment ...

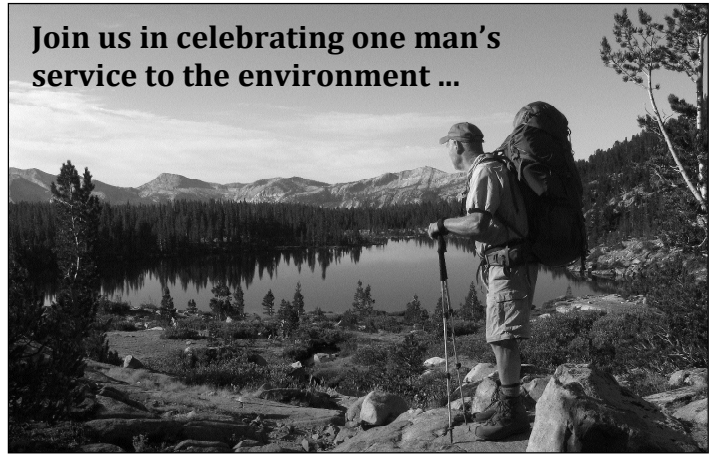


Photo provided

Save the Date:

OCCA will host a dinner in honor of Dr. Willard N. Harman, OCCA vice-president and director of the SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station, on July 16 at The Otesaga. This event is being held to recognize Harman's service to the environment and Otsego Lake, and to support OCCA-sponsored BFS interns. Call 607-547-4488 to learn more.

Municipal composting

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There are many ways of building composting structures. We now build them with square hay bales. Organic hay is cheap (we paid 30 cents a bale last spring). Come spring the hay, which has decomposed a bit over the winter, is added to the pile when it gets its first spring turning. In the past we have also used discarded wood pallets, wire mesh cages and just plain piles. It really does not matter – and it need not be a costly process. There are quite a few manufactured compost tumblers and the like, but we tend to favor homemade systems that cost little – or nothing. It just requires a bit of homespun ingenuity.

A viable compost pile is composed essentially of brown (leaves, sawdust, shredded paper, straw, and wood shavings) and green (grass clippings, fruit wastes, manure, weeds, and vegetable wastes) stuff. Toss it all in together, mix it up, perhaps turn it every few weeks and, if you are not in a hurry, it will turn into an odorless, rich brown humus that can be reintegrated into the garden. If you do not have a garden, you can give your finished compost to a friend who does. Neighbors can also get together and pool their compostable waste by creating a central location for the neighborhood and share their collective bounty in that way.

The "Otsego County Long Term Solid Waste Management Plan" indicates that the county will eventually have some sort of county managed organic waste composting system. Put pressure on your representatives, but also put some pressure on yourself to reduce your contribution to the waste stream. Composting is a great way to do that. It is fun, feels good, and gives you a wonderful opportunity to live a more ecologically responsible, self-sufficient life.

Dick deRosa is a retired English teacher and essayist who, with his wife Sandy, gardens organically on their 10-acre hillside just five miles outside the Village of Cooperstown. DeRosa is an OCCA member, former Board member and is an active environmentalist.



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PO Box 931
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Gas drilling concerns

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impose a severance tax on minerals. There are only three states with active drilling that don't have a severance tax, and 30 that do, he said. He also urged that a group separate from the Department of Environmental Conservation be developed to perform the permitting function. "More regulators are needed instead of 'stovepipe' regulation," Tillman said. In addition to regulations requiring green completions, Tillman emphasized that the latest green technology should be required in all aspects of natural gas drilling production.

A firm believer in more local control of the gas drilling industry, Tillman advised local governments to develop ordinances related to oil and gas exploration prior to permitting any wells. Local ordinances should require road use agreements and green completions, he said. "Local officials need to be the ones making decisions like this," Tillman added, "and there are some places – school playgrounds and front yards – that should be off limits for drilling. We should recognize that there need to be setbacks from residences."

With its tiny geographic size and huge concentration of natural gas pipelines, compressors and wells, DISH, Texas provides experiences with the natural gas drilling industry from which Tillman believes New York State can learn a lot. In addition to environmental and health concerns, he also discussed split estate situations – where the surface rights and subsurface rights for a piece of land are owned by different parties – emergency services, and political and social tensions. "I don't know if it can be done safely," Tillman said of natural gas drilling, "but I know it can be done a heck of a lot better than in Texas."

We try to conserve precious resources at OCCA by printing on recycled paper and using soy-based inks when feasible. If you would like to help us do even better, consider being put on our electronic distribution list and receive future newsletters and general correspondence via e-mail.