

Celebrating 20 Years of Advocacy

By Kathy Curtis, Executive Director

Citizens' Environmental Coalition held the Albany Twentieth Anniversary Celebration on October 24, 2003 at the Trinity United Methodist Church. The evening raised thousands of dollars for CEC's work.

Paul Connett, PhD, Master of Ceremonies, regaled the audience with humorous anecdotes of his longstanding work protecting the environment. Honorable Maurice Hinchey, Member of Congress, delivered an excellent, inspiring keynote speech. Congressman Michael McNulty was also in attendance, along with many other local dignitaries.

CEC's 20th Anniversary Environmental Awards were presented by environmental leaders: Judith Enck, Senior Policy Advisor, Environmental Protection Bureau of the Office of the Attorney General; Kelly Travers Main of United Neighbors Concerned About GE/Dewey Loeffel Landfill (UNCAGED); CEC Associate Director Bobbi Chase; Anne Rabe of Center for Health, Environment and Justice and founding CEC Director; CEC Executive

Director Kathy Curtis; and Tania Knight of Citizens Halting Risks of Norlite's Industrial Contaminants (CHRONIC).

Winners included: Reszin Adams of Save the Pine Bush; David Carpenter, Professor of Environmental Health and Toxicology at University at Albany School of Public Health; the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation; Honorable Alexander "Pete" Grannis, member of Assembly; Kelly Travers Main of UNCAGED, and the Public Employees Federation of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Wayne Bayer, Executive Committee member for PEF/encon, accepted the award.

Congressman Maurice Hinchey extended a special thanks to Richard Morse, both for his excellent work in the past as a key staff member when Hinchey was the Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee in the NY Assembly, and in his current vital role as Executive Director of the New York State Assembly Legislative Commission on Toxic and Hazardous Wastes.

Kudos to Albany staff and volunteers Jennifer Barnes, Mike Purcell, Jonathan Gould, Robert Zajkowski, Jim Curtis, Dave Philips, Jennifer Warren, Jaimie Radisi, Sue and Dick Chase, Amber Curtis, Jes Constantine, Ben Jerome and Lisa Domanski for their hard work on a wonderful evening. Local environmental leaders were able to network and celebrate with their peers, and we were all able to congratulate and reward ourselves for our hard-won successes over the last 20 years.

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Next Newsletter Deadline: June 2004
Please send us your news & cartoons!

CEC Mission Statement

Citizens' Environmental Coalition is a statewide grassroots environmental organization working to eliminate pollution in New York State through our Community Assistance Program, Publication Clearinghouse and Statewide Advocacy Campaigns. Our mission is to:

- ❖ Create safe, healthy communities, schools and workplaces through pollution prevention;
- ❖ Empower, educate and assist people concerned about environmental problems;
- ❖ Strengthen the connection from the grassroots to the statehouse and build effective coalitions;
- ❖ Promote democratic, grassroots advocacy to restore New York's environment; and
- ❖ Promote corporate accountability and non-violent social justice values.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.
 - Margaret Mead -



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CEC Activities

Planning for CEC's Future

(Because The Unexamined Life is Not Worth Living)

By Kathy Curtis, Executive Director

They say "charity begins at home," and it is with that spirit in mind that CEC has embarked upon a two-year internal strategic planning process. We kicked off this transformative opportunity with a three-day strategic planning retreat at beautiful Blue Mountain Center on Eagle Lake in the Adirondack Mountains. The Center exists to provide a peaceful and comfortable environment in which guests are able to work, free from the distractions and demands of normal daily life. And work we did. Seven board and eight staff members rolled up their sleeves and explored aspects of CEC we could improve to be even more effective in the coming years. Topics included issue priorities and organizational priorities for 2004, stabilizing and diversifying income, workload and staffing needs, and how to increase diversity among CEC board, staff, members and volunteers. But the work didn't end there. It was merely the beginning of an ongoing process with regular check-ins to benchmark our implementation of the plan. We wish to thank the Blue Mountain Center for selecting CEC and enabling us to do important self-reflection in such a beautiful, reinvigorating setting.

After completing our strategic visioning, CEC was one of six groups around the country selected to participate in Environmental Support Center's (ESC) Leadership and Enhanced Assistance Program (LEAP) CEC selected Tom Ellis, CEC Co-Chair, Kathy Curtis, Executive Director, and Mike Schade, Western New York Director, as their LEAP team. ESC gathered all six participating group teams in Atlanta, GA in February to jump-start the LEAP process, which picks up where our Strategic Planning event leaves off, by providing CEC with the know-how and resources to obtain the necessary leadership training we require to move forward in the areas we've identified as most crucial to our effectiveness and success.



CEC, Members of other participating Grassroots groups, facilitators and trainers at the LEAP workshop.

We have already begun to put in place some aspects of our plan. We'll keep you posted as we improve our capacity to protect New York's environment and serve our members.



Retreating to Blue Mountain Lake. Left to right, back row: Ellen Connett, Suzanne Mattei, Bobbi Chase, Jonathan Gould, Mike Purcell, Tom Ellis, Zac Moore. Middle row: Jennifer Barnes, Bridget Surber, Kathy Curtis, Christine Shahin, Rev. Lynne West and Mike Schade. Front: Kelly Travers-Main.

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Simply send a blank email to:
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Grassroots Updates

Article 78 Lawsuit over Waste Management Landfill Heard in Court

CEC and Stop Polluting Orleans County (SPOC) appeared in court recently over their article 78 lawsuit filed against the DEC, concerning the proposed Waste Management Landfill in Albion. CEC and SPOC are particularly concerned over the DEC's decision to allow Waste Management to hire their own monitor, as opposed to using an independent DEC monitor, which is standard procedure with all other on-site monitors across the state.

Bucket Brigade Sample Reveals High Level of Hydrogen Sulfide in Cheektowaga

In late February, the **Cheektowaga Citizens Coalition (CCC)** took their first Bucket Brigade air sample, which found high levels of Hydrogen Sulfide in the ambient air well above state and federal guidelines. The gas came from the Buffalo Crushed Stone Quarry in the "Cheektowaga Toxic Triangle". Neighborhood residents smelled the "rotten egg" stench one evening, and got together to take a sample. CEC and the CCC held a Bucket Brigade training for community residents in February at the Resurrection School. The CCC held a press conference with CEC in March to release the results of the sample.



Over 1,000 People Comment on Farmersville Dump Proposal

The **Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County** were successful in mobilizing incredible community support for preventing the proposed mega-dump in Farmersville. Because over 1,000 comments were submitted to the DEC, the comment period has been extended and the DEC will hold two public hearings on March 30th and 31st. CEC submitted 6 pages of comments on the proposed landfill.

Hickory Woods Residents Demand More Funding for Relocation

While Assemblyman Brian Higgins has been able to appropriate \$500,000 for Hickory Woods relocation, members of the **Hickory Woods Residents for a Clean Environment** continue to fight for additional funding so they can be relocated from their contaminated community. CEC and residents attended a recent HUD community meeting in Buffalo, and asked Buffalo Mayor Masiello why no HUD funding has been used to help Hickory Woods families, despite the fact that HUD funding was used to create the neighborhood.



Above: Cheektowaga Citizens Coalition's (CCC) billboard advertising their Bucket Brigade air monitoring work. CEC provided them with a mini-grant to purchase the billboard space.

Diaz Considered for Federal Superfund Cleanup Funding

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed to list the Diaz Chemical Plant in Holley, NY as part of the federal Superfund program. According to the EPA, "Diaz was not operating with appropriate safeguards to protect its employees and the surrounding residential community." Local community residents are pleased that funding may be available to cleanup the site, which is currently listed as a State Superfund site.

Fight Heats Up Over Chemical Waste Management Hazardous Waste Landfill

Residents for Responsible Government have done a great job of staying in the news lately in their fight to stop the expansion of the Chemical Waste Management hazardous waste landfill in Niagara County. The group's efforts were recently featured in a lengthy article in the New York Times. The group has been organizing residents and activists across the state to attend statewide public hearings and comment on the DEC's seriously flawed Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Plan. The DEC is still accepting comments until April 19th. Call CEC for more information about how to comment and why it's important.

Middleport Residents Sue FMC for Two Billion Dollars over Arsenic Contamination

A dozen Middleport residents who live across the street from pesticide manufacturer FMC Corp. are suing the company for two billion dollars for failing to honor a 13-

year agreement to decontaminate the area. The residents are concerned about the presence of arsenic, lead and DDT in the soil and groundwater, as well as the many health problems experienced by neighbors of FMC. The company said in 1991 it would clean up chemicals in the soil and groundwater both on and off plant property after signing an agreement with the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Tonawanda Residents Learn How to Monitor Their Air



Recently, members of the **Toxic Tonawanda Coalition** learned how to start a Bucket Brigade in their community. Neighborhood residents are extremely concerned about pollution from 3M and other chemical plants in their community. Odors from these plants are impacting the quality of life for area residents, and the group will use the Bucket Brigade as a means to push for more monitoring and pollution reductions.

Nuclear Workers Fight for Just Compensation

Members of **For a Clean Tonawanda Site, Bethlehem Steel Radiation Victims and Survivors**, and prominent labor organizations such as the **Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health** have been working with federal legislators like Senator Clinton and Congresswoman Slaughter to appropriate funding for worked exposed to radiation from the Manhattan Project. A group of 25 former Bethlehem Steel Workers recently traveled to Cleveland and staged an informational picket at the Northeast Regional Headquarters of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program.

Groups, Local Officials Call for a better cleanup at BASF

Coalition Against Riverfront Pollution, a broad coalition of environmental and community groups, denounced the DEC's limited cleanup plans, which are apparently based solely on cost-effectiveness and are in violation of New York's State Superfund law, which requires responsible parties like BASF to fully remediate toxic sites. Coalition members, including CEC, stood in front of DEC headquarters in Albany on February 25th to appeal to DEC Commissioner Erin Crotty to override her Department's decisions and order a complete cleanup. The BASF Superfund sites located on the Hudson River in the City of Rensselaer are heavily contaminated with volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds such as benzene chlorobenzene, xylenes, chrysene and phenols, and metals such as arsenic, chromium, lead, and mercury. Rejecting a remedial plan that would remove 200,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil at the BASF Manufacturing Plant site, DEC instead recommended the "pave

and wave" approach: burying the contaminated soil under a four-inch asphalt cap, fencing off the site, and imposing deed restrictions that would limit the land's use to industrial only. Regarding the BASF South Forty site, DEC's cleanup plan allows up to 500 parts per million (ppm) of arsenic to remain, despite their own Recommended Soil Cleanup Objective of 7.5 ppm. This site would also have to remain forever fenced off from the public, with deed restrictions limiting the land's use to industrial only. DEC has remained secretive about its plans for the third BASF State Superfund site, a capped landfill that may be leaching into the Hudson River.

Dutchess County EMC Critiques St. Lawrence Cement

The **St. Lawrence Cement Task Force of the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council** made the following recommendations to the Dutchess County Legislature after 8 months of review of St. Lawrence Cement's Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

DEC Commissioner Erin Crotty not allow the use of Albany meteorological data and instead require collection of on-site data at Hudson/Greenport be used in all pollution dispersion modeling for SLC's project. Air monitoring using Greenport data is necessary for an accurate estimate of the amount of air pollution that would reach Dutchess County from this facility.

Dutchess County support adjudication on a variety of air pollution issues including:

- Limiting emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to the lowest amount possible, as these ozone-causing pollutants will further degrade the Hudson Valley's already dismal air quality; and
- Determining whether SLC used suitable air modeling and background air quality data in order to make an accurate assessment and mitigation of health impacts on the regional population from PM 2.5 emissions.

Norlite's Nonsense: Not Enough Notice

On February 27, 2004, just 2 days before tests began, **CHRONIC (Citizens Halting Risks of Norlite's Industrial Contaminants)** members were notified by Norlite Corp. via DEC's facilities list, that Norlite would perform a Comprehensive Performance Test (CPT) from March 1-5, 2004. Although those on the facilities list thought they would be notified by mail, some were uncomfortable when they found the letters hand delivered by Norlite employees at their front doors.

CHRONIC is awaiting the results to see what effect they will have on Norlite's Hazardous Waste and Title V permits. CHRONIC is also waiting for word from ATSDR in hopes that they will be doing a much needed health assessment in the communities surrounding Norlite.

CEC URGES OFFICIALS: "NO PVC ON BUFFALO'S WATERFRONT!"

By Amy Liberatore, WNY Office Manager/Program Associate

When Governor Pataki came to Buffalo in October to break ground for a proposed CertainTeed PVC fabrication plant, he didn't plan on seeing activists with signs proclaiming: PVC = DIOXIN = DEATH. Although many in the environmental community are aware of the health risks posed by Polyvinyl Chloride, also called PVC or vinyl (a staple of everything from siding, water pipes, and flooring to toys, shower curtains, and even sandals), the general public has very little knowledge of PVC's dangers.

Throughout its lifecycle, PVC requires hazardous materials for production, releases harmful additives and creates toxic waste upon disposal. Mercury, lead, phthalates, organotins and dioxin are all associated with PVC.

PVC is a leading source of dioxin. When its entire lifecycle is considered, vinyl may be associated with more dioxin formation than any other single product. Dioxin is the most potent synthetic carcinogen ever tested in laboratory animals. It damages development, reproduction, and the immune and endocrine systems at infinitesimally low doses. The dioxin exposure of the average American already poses a risk of cancer thousands of times greater than the EPA standard for acceptable risk.

Vinyl is a serious health risk in fires. Lethal hydrochloric acid gas is formed when it is burned, making building fires much more dangerous to firefighters and residents. Accidental fires also release the metals contained in vinyl and can create a considerable amount of dioxin, leaving a toxic waste problem at the site.

Vinyl is unfriendly to recycling because each vinyl product contains a distinct mix of additives. A single PVC bottle can contaminate a bundle of 10,000 bottles of a recycling-friendly plastic such as polyethylene. Currently less than 1 percent of vinyl is recycled.

CertainTeed decided to relocate from the Buffalo suburb of Cheektowaga right on to the waterfront, maintaining over 150 jobs that might have moved to Kansas - a potential blow to Buffalo's already fragile local economy. Stopping the siting of an environmentally hostile business without losing precious local jobs is admittedly a challenging task, but with outside-the-box thinking and dedicated coalition building, CEC has come up with a campaign that may save jobs and change the way CertainTeed chooses to do business.

Recognizing that city and state government are generally unaware of the hazards of PVC, CEC is forming a vibrant coalition of concerned statewide and national organizations to take action.

Such actions include:
ENGAGE policymakers in a dialog about the dangers of PVC and safe alternatives.

SCREEN the award-winning documentary "Blue Vinyl" for policymakers and the public.

EDUCATE the public about the dangers of PVC through our outreach programs and the media.

BUILD COALITION. At press time, our coalition (still in formation) includes: Citizen Action of NY, Healthy Building Network, Greenpeace USA, NYPIRG, Righteous Babe Records, and 30 other local, statewide, and national groups.

TALK TO CERTAINTEED. Urge the corporation to embrace "green" building alternatives, both in the facility they build and the materials they produce.

RECIPROCAL VISITS. A delegation will visit Mossville, LA, the hometown of vinyl production.

Environmental Racism in CertainTeed's Hometown

CertainTeed's vinyl is produced in Mossville, Louisiana - a low-income African American community that is overburdened with toxic pollution. Residents of Mossville are a living testimony to PVC's hazardous effects. The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) reported that Mossville residents have three times more dioxin in their bodies on average than the U.S. population. In some samples of Mossville residents' blood, ATSDR detected high levels of the worst dioxins.

"In Mossville, when those plants were first built, the land was rich and productive. Now, we can't raise cows or chickens; we can't plant gardens.

Our soil, water, and air are all polluted."

Edgar Mouton, President

Mossville Environmental Action Now

CEC hosted a recent series of phone conferences with Mossville activists, and will take a delegation to Mossville to meet Mr. Mouton and his fellow activists face to face, to see first hand CertainTeed's impact on the community and advance strategies on furthering safer alternatives. CEC's coalition has banded together to change the way New York State looks at PVC. Our work could convince

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COMMUNITIES OF COLOR UNFAIRLY BURDENED WITH NY'S POLLUTING FACILITIES

By Roberta Chase, Associate Director

On March 11th, Citizens' Environmental Coalition, along with Campus Action, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, Social Justice Center, Syracuse United Neighbors, Toxic Waste/Lupus Coalition, and West Side Asthma Project, released a new report: *Environmental Racism in New York State*. The report reveals that environmental racism is still very much a problem. There is disproportionate siting of air pollution, hazardous material and water pollution sites. For example, communities in New York which have 90–100% people of color living in them contain over 30 times the number of air pollution facilities one would expect if siting did not fall along color lines.

Environmental Racism in New York State compiled data from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Census Bureau into easily understood charts, graphs, and maps. This report provides clear evidence of the unjustly frequent siting of polluting facilities within communities with high ratios of people of color.

The report found that communities with 70% or greater people of color take up just 0.5% of the landmass in the State. Yet these same communities have 18.23% of the air pollution facilities (35 times above what would be equitable), 4.72% of the hazardous materials facilities (nearly 23 times what would be equitable), and 1.42% of the water pollution sites (nearly 3 times what would be equitable).

The goal of environmental justice is to create a healthy, livable, equitable society and to end the inequitable burden of industrial pollution on communities of color and low-income communities. "This report shows in clear terms what EJ advocates have known for some time. It shows the high level at which environmental burdens are placed in communities of color," stated Christina Hemphill of New York City Environmental Justice Alliance.

Since the early 1990's, the concept of environmental justice has been added to certain State and Federal policies. In New York, the DEC has an Environmental Justice Policy, released in 2003. It defines environmental justice narrowly as increased participation in proposed siting decisions, rather than as broader efforts to protect overburdened or disenfranchised populations from environmental pollution while creating a healthy, sustainable society for all.

The DEC's Environmental Justice Policy lacks the proactive prevention of harm called for in the Principles of Environmental Justice, drafted at the 1991 First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (see www.ejrc.cau.edu/princej.html for the full Principles). The DEC policy also lacks provisions for communities already overburdened by polluting facilities to hold the DEC accountable for future siting decisions, and does not work to address past siting inequities.

Our report calls on the DEC to improve its policies by including the following:

- Require consideration of the cumulative impact of existing pollution when siting decisions are made, to ensure that communities already facing potential health risks are not further overburdened by new pollution sources.
- Provide accountability measures for the DEC to which communities can hold them. As the policy stands, the Department could still allow the siting of new facilities in communities that already bear a greater burden, despite strong public opposition.
- For communities that already bear a greater burden of pollution, the Department should create offsets in the form of greater open space or other environmental benefits.

Copies of the report are available for download in .pdf format at www.ecoTHREATNY.org. Thanks to the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation for their generous support of this work.



Amy Liberatore, CEC, and Assemblyman Sam Hoyt check out a map of industrial sites in the state. Photo by Dennis C. Enser, Buffalo News

From Albany to Buffalo, CEC's 20th Anniversary in Pictures



Jesse Day, former CEC staffer and the Executive Director of the NYS Bike Coalition, Mark Dunlea Associate Director of Hunger Action Network and Judith Enck at the Albany event.



Board Members Tom Ellis and Jack Ossont listen to speakers at the Albany event.



Executive Director Kathy Curtis welcomes the Albany attendees.



Judith Enck, Policy Advisor for NYS Attorney General and former CEC Board Members Barbara Warren, Valerie Gardner and Charlotte Hartman reunite in Albany.



Assm. David Koon gives his address in WNY.



Former CEC WNY Director Diane Heminway enjoys dinner with former Congressman John LaFalce.



Mike Lenane, Legislative Aide for Assm. "Pete" Grannis, accepts the "Exemplary State Legislator" Award for the Assemblymember from founding CEC Director Anne Rabe.

CEC WNY's 20th Anniversary Celebration

By Amy Liberatore, WNY Office Manager/Program Associate

Citizens' Environmental Coalition held the Western New York Twentieth Anniversary Celebration on November 1, 2003 at the Buffalo Convention Center.

Guests from around the area hobnobbed with Executive Director Kathy Curtis, Associate Director Bobbi Chase, and Western New York staff and volunteers. The evening raised thousands of dollars for CEC's work. Keynote speakers were Assemblymember David Koon and Congressman John LaFalce; other dignitaries included Assemblymember Sam Hoyt and Rev. Darius Pridgen, pastor of True Bethel Baptist Church, an historic Black church near a notorious State Superfund site.

There were testimonials about CEC's 20th Anniversary Environmental Award winners: Professor Joseph A. Gardella (University of Buffalo Society and Environment Institute); Toxic Waste Lupus Coalition; Diane Heminway (United Steelworkers); CEC Board members Valerie Gardner and Jack Ossont (National Sludge Alliance); Roger Cook (WNYCOSH); Congressman John LaFalce; and the Hahn Family Foundation.

Diane Heminway, former CEC Western New York Director, played a dual role as award winner and presenter; her speech honoring Congressman LaFalce was a highlight. Mary Taber recounted her experiences with first-time activism on the Clinton-Bailey "Trash Train" situation (a fight they won, "thanks to a lot of help from CEC," said Mary) as she presented an award to Charlie Hahn, grandson of the Hahn Family Foundation's founder.

On the lighter side, Emcee Valerie Gardner offered song parodies and was joined by Kandid Coalition's Sue Mihalyi and CEC's Amy Liberatore for "Kodachrome" with lyrics spoofing Kodak's pollution.

Kudos to WNY staff and volunteers Mike Schade, Amy Liberatore, Bridget Surber, Rachel Switala, Mary Canfield, Dick Collins, Lex Liberatore, Jill Hitchcock, Emily Ng, Eileen Reardon, and Chantale and Chaz Onesi-Gonzales for their hard work on a wonderful evening. Activists caught up with busy comrades, and new members made friends and formed working relationships in the environmental community. That's what CEC is all about!



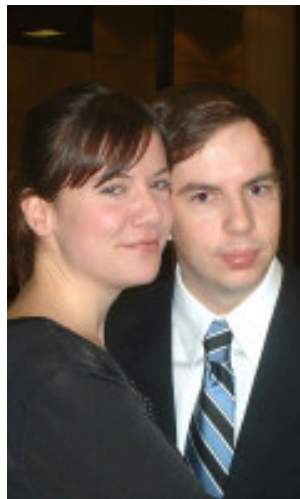
Alison Howe, University of Buffalo (UB) graduate student, and Dr. Peggy Brooks-Bertram, UB Professor and Derek Byrd from the Toxic Waste/Lupus Coalition who all work to address pollution problems in Buffalo enjoy dinner together.



Diane Radder, Jinny Ammerman, and Rick Ammerman from Hickory Woods Residents for a Clean Environment in WNY.



Associate Director Bobbi Chase with Congressman Maurice Hinchey in Albany.



Mike Schade, WNY Director, and his girlfriend Jill Hitchcock get a quiet moment at the WNY event.



Kathleen Bates, Kim Remley, and Concetta Pieri of Stop Polluting Orleans County (SPOC) attend the WNY celebration.

Healthy Building Update

By Kathy Curtis, Executive Director

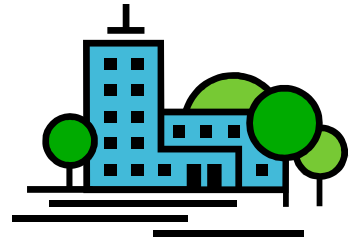
This past November, CEC presented NY Attorney General Elliot Spitzer the Healthy Building Network's annual Green Building Award at the United States Green Building Council's annual convention in Pittsburgh, PA. Assistant Attorney General John Sipos accepted the award, "Accelerating the Transition to Cleaner, Safer Building Materials," in recognition of the Environmental Protection Bureau's thorough and impassioned legal defense of New York's Green Building Tax Credit's exclusion of vinyl flooring as an eligible material, due to vinyl's role in dioxin production and the ready availability of safer alternatives. The exclusion was under attack by the vinyl flooring industry, which dropped its lawsuit earlier this year in what constituted a momentous victory for the growing movement of environmentalists, local governments, and companies working to avoid the use of hazardous vinyl plastic. Sipos was the lead attorney defending New York in the suit.

"Although Attorney General Spitzer would consider his Environmental Protection Bureau's preparation of the excellent case against vinyl as merely having done their job," stated Kathy Curtis as she presented the award, "He still deserves recognition for choosing such a dedicated team of experts committed to protecting the public health by standing up to a powerful adversary's self serving attempt to undermine democratically enacted standards."

New York State is not alone in taking action to discourage vinyl plastic, particularly in building construction, which accounts for 75% of all vinyl use. Local governments and industries across the nation are rejecting vinyl in favor of




Right to left: Craig Kneeland, Sr. Project Manager of Energy Efficiency Services Dept. of the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority; CEC Director Kathy Curtis; and John Sipos, Assistant Attorney General Environmental Protection Bureau at the USGBC Conference in Pittsburgh PA.



safer materials.

"The vinyl industry routinely employs bullying tactics such as legal threats to intimidate policy makers and green building professionals favoring environmentally preferable alternatives to vinyl," said Paul Bogart, National Project Coordinator of Healthy Building Network. "Not only will this legal case give the vinyl industry pause before they consider employing such tactics elsewhere, we now have access to an excellently prepared case implicating vinyl as a highly toxic product" Bogart added.

The Green Building battle against toxic vinyl plastic is far from over. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation will revisit New York's Green Building Tax regulations as early as this June, at which time both environmentalists and vinyl makers will work to influence NY's Green Building Tax Credit Law. Also, the current tax credit will only last until 2009. It will need to be reauthorized by the State Legislature and approved by the Governor in order to provide further financial incentive to transition toward cleaner, safer building materials. CEC will release its guide, *Building Green Without Going in the Red: A Household Guide to Affordable, Sustainable Building Materials*. Thanks to all of our members who completed the Green Building Survey in the last newsletter.



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Bucket Brigade Finds Toxics Near Kodak

By Mike Schade, Western New York Director

On January 15th, CEC and the Kandid Coalition released the results of their Bucket Brigade air monitoring testing, which show high levels of toxic chemicals in the neighborhoods bordering Kodak Park, including acrylonitrile at 1,000 times above the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) annual ambient air guideline. These results confirm Kodak neighbors' worst fears – high levels of toxic chemicals are crossing the fence line of Kodak Park and are entering the surrounding community.

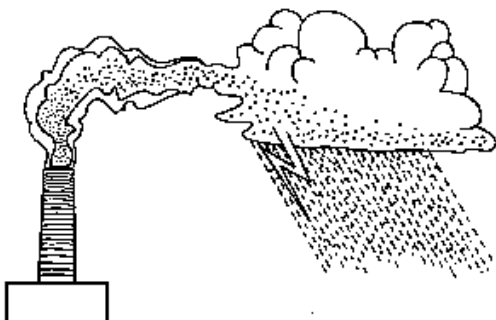
"It's both a quality-of-life issue and a health issue."

- Mary Jo Newcomb, a nurse and mother of three, who joined the Rochester Bucket Brigade because of the strong odors that invade her neighborhood.

Building Buckets and Community Power

CEC, the Kandid Coalition, and Rochester residents formed a "Bucket Brigade" in December 2002 to monitor ambient air levels of toxic chemicals in the neighborhoods surrounding Eastman Kodak's Kodak Park facility in Rochester, New York. Since then, the group has taken five air samples in the neighborhoods surrounding Kodak. The "Bucket Brigade" is named for an EPA-approved, easy-to-use air sampling device housed inside a 5-gallon plastic bucket.

Using specially designed buckets, people can measure everyday pollution levels or respond to accidental releases at a chemical facility. The Bucket Brigade has empowered community residents to monitor the air for themselves, because neighbors have a right to know what they are breathing, especially when they live near polluters like Eastman Kodak. The Bucket Brigade has expanded the membership, visibility, and political power of the Kandid Coalition, whose air-monitoring efforts were recently featured in an editorial and in-depth front page story in the Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester's daily newspaper.



"Citizen concerns in neighborhoods around Kodak Park should be respected."

- The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle (January 19, 2004)



Comprehensive Air Monitoring Needed in the Community

The Bucket Brigade is concerned about the high levels of chemicals in the neighborhoods and is requesting Kodak and the DEC to install a comprehensive air-monitoring system that would monitor the air 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Kodak has an ambient air monitoring program for methylene chloride, but only once every six days for a 24 hour average. There is no ambient air monitoring program for acrylonitrile and the hundreds of other hazardous chemicals used and released at Kodak Park. This limited monitoring is not sufficient to ensure compliance with Kodak's air permits. This is of great concern considering thousands of people live or work next to Kodak Park; the facility borders sensitive populations

including households, businesses, and schools. Real time data collection near Kodak is necessary to know what is being released minute to minute – not averages that hide actual peak exposures. The Bucket Brigade's air monitoring efforts have uncovered a reporting violation for acrylonitrile in

"I have prostate cancer and I am told it may have been caused by a lousy diet and bad genes. Now I am told that the water underneath my house is dirty and the air I am breathing is lousy too. I can't see the water under the house, I can't see the cancer in my body, but I can smell the air and it stinks."

- Charlie Roemer, who joined the Bucket Brigade because of strong odors in his neighborhood.

Kodak's Clean Air Act Air Permit. Who knows what other violations are occurring?

Bucket Brigades Spreading Across NY State

Since the first Rochester Bucket Brigade training, CEC and Denny Larson of Global Community Monitor have worked with community residents to start Bucket Brigades all across New York State, in Cheektowaga, Cohoes, and Tonawanda. There is also another Bucket Brigade active in Brooklyn. CEC is working with community residents in these communities to monitor the air at major polluters such as 3M, Norlite Corp, and Buffalo Crushed Stone. A recent air sample taken in Cheektowaga found high levels of hydrogen sulfide well above state and federal air guidelines.

To learn more about the Bucket Brigade, log onto www.bucketbrigade.net or contact CEC.

Home Environment

Nontoxic Cleaning Alternatives

By Jennifer Achtyl, Environmental Intern

Concerned about the chemicals in household cleaning products? There is a simple solution. By using baking soda, vinegar, and lemon juice anyone can easily create nontoxic cleaning alternatives.



The Beauty of Baking Soda

Baking soda can be an effective remover of grease and dirt, and a good abrasive powder. Yet unlike chemical cleaners, baking soda is completely safe to use around children or pets. It can be used all over the house; the kitchen, bathroom, laundry room and even on your teeth. Here are just a few of baking soda's many uses to get you started:

- To remove blood or sweat stains, mix baking soda with water to make a paste and rub into the stain. Rinse and repeat. Stubborn stains may need to sit for a while.
- Baking soda has deodorizing properties. You can put an open box in the back of your fridge, sprinkle some on your carpet before you vacuum, sprinkle some in smelly gym shoes, or sprinkle the bottom of the garbage can or litter box.
- To clean mildew stains or stains on marble or wood counter tops, make a baking soda paste with water and scrub.

The Valiant Vinegar

Vinegar is a wonderful alternative to cleaners that

promise to "cut through grease" or "remove odors". In fact, with a little know-how, vinegar can do both of these and more:

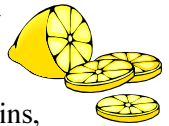
- To take out grass stains, mix 1/3 cup vinegar and 2/3 cups water, apply to the stain and blot. Repeat and wash. (Don't mix vinegar and bleach.)
- To clean windows, use a solution of 1 part vinegar and 1 part water.
- To clean metal, use a combination of hot white vinegar and salt.
- To remove car odors, soak a piece of bread in vinegar and leave in car overnight.



Making the House Luminous with Lemon Juice

Lemon juice is a great alternative to using highly toxic metal cleaners, and a simple way to remove food stains. In addition, it leaves a fresh scent, without chemical additives.

- To remove grease or food stains, fill a spray bottle with half vinegar and half water, then spray.
- To remove lime scale, hard water stains, and soap scum, rub half a lemon over the area.
- To clean brass, mix lemon juice and baking soda to the consistency of toothpaste and rub with a soft cloth. Then rinse and dry.



These are just a few examples of what you can do with common household products. To get more ideas for nontoxic cleaning, visit: www.colszoo.org/new/products.html.

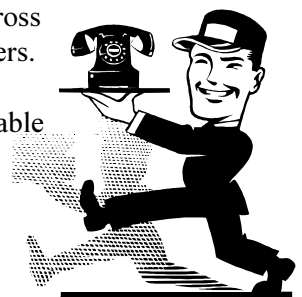
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Introducing CEC's Phone Outreach Program!

By Bridget Surber, Outreach Director

Each year, CEC field representatives visit community members throughout New York State, street by street, home by home. Our door outreach program affords CEC an amazing opportunity to meet supporters face to face, to provide urgent updates concerning environmental issues in our communities and to hear the concerns of folks across the state. Despite our best efforts, however, it is impossible for us to visit every one of our members.

A phone outreach program began operating from our Western New York office to help CEC contact all the members we may have missed throughout the year. Since October, we have been able to share updates with and receive valuable insight from over 600 members! It is always a delight to visit with CEC members, whether in person or by phone. Thank you to those folks we spoke with through our phone outreach this year. Your support and enthusiasm are the heart of our program.



Do you own Kodak stock?

You can VOTE for an Environmental Shareholder Resolution!

On May 12th, Kodak shareholders will be voting on an important shareholder resolution that could go a long way in protecting New York's air and water. The shareholder resolution, "Adopt a Non-Toxic Chemicals Policy" calls on Kodak to phase out the use of extremely toxic chemicals.

If you are a shareholder, please consider voting in support of this important resolution, and attend

Kodak's annual meeting on May 12, 2004 at 10:00 am at the Theater on the Ridge in Rochester. Last year, shareholders owning over 10.5 million shares voted in favor of this resolution. If you don't own stock, consider attending a media event outside the meeting in support of the resolution and demonstrate a need for cleaner air from Eastman Kodak.



This policy makes business sense because preventing pollution is cost effective in the short term and avoids costly long-term liabilities related to toxic chemical exposures. We feel that the resolution will improve Kodak's image because it would require Kodak to go beyond its existing policy to minimize pollution and joins the new efforts for virtual elimination of toxic bioaccumulative pollutants. This builds upon existing Kodak efforts to implement non-toxic production strategies.

You can read the resolution:

www.kandidcoalition.org/Shareholder%20Resolution%202002.htm. For more information, call CEC at 716-885-6848.

PVC continued from page 6

CertainTeed to change their impact from Poisonous Purveyor of Plastic, to helping America's economy by being better corporate neighbors. "Green" construction is a burgeoning industry; the possibility of CertainTeed embracing green alternatives, while keeping operations in Erie County, would make this a "win-win" situation for everyone involved.

To learn more about taking action on PVC and CertainTeed, call the WNY office, 716-885-6848 or email cecmike@choiceonemail.com.

Urgent Action Alert!

After March 10th's Assembly hearing on open burning of solid waste in burn barrels and its subsequent coverage by dozens of media outlets, the NYS Senate finally appears to be ready to act upon this serious environmental and public health issue. Unfortunately, they are poised to pass an ineffectual education bill (S. 2428A, sponsored by Senator Wright), which will do nothing to reduce environmental and public health hazards of backyard burning of garbage. The Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Health, Office of the Attorney General, and US Environmental Protection Agency already have created and are promoting educational materials about the hazards of burning household garbage in backyard burn barrels. This educational effort has not reduced this harmful practice.

The time has come for the Senate to take decisive action. Current state law only prevents the burning of household garbage in 9% of the state by area. **Call Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno TODAY at 518-455-3191 and urge him to instead pass S. 3340 (sponsored by Sen. Maziarz), to ban the open burning of solid waste in the remaining 91% of the state.**

GRASSROOTS SUCCESS STORIES

Victory! 3M to Clean Up Brockport Site

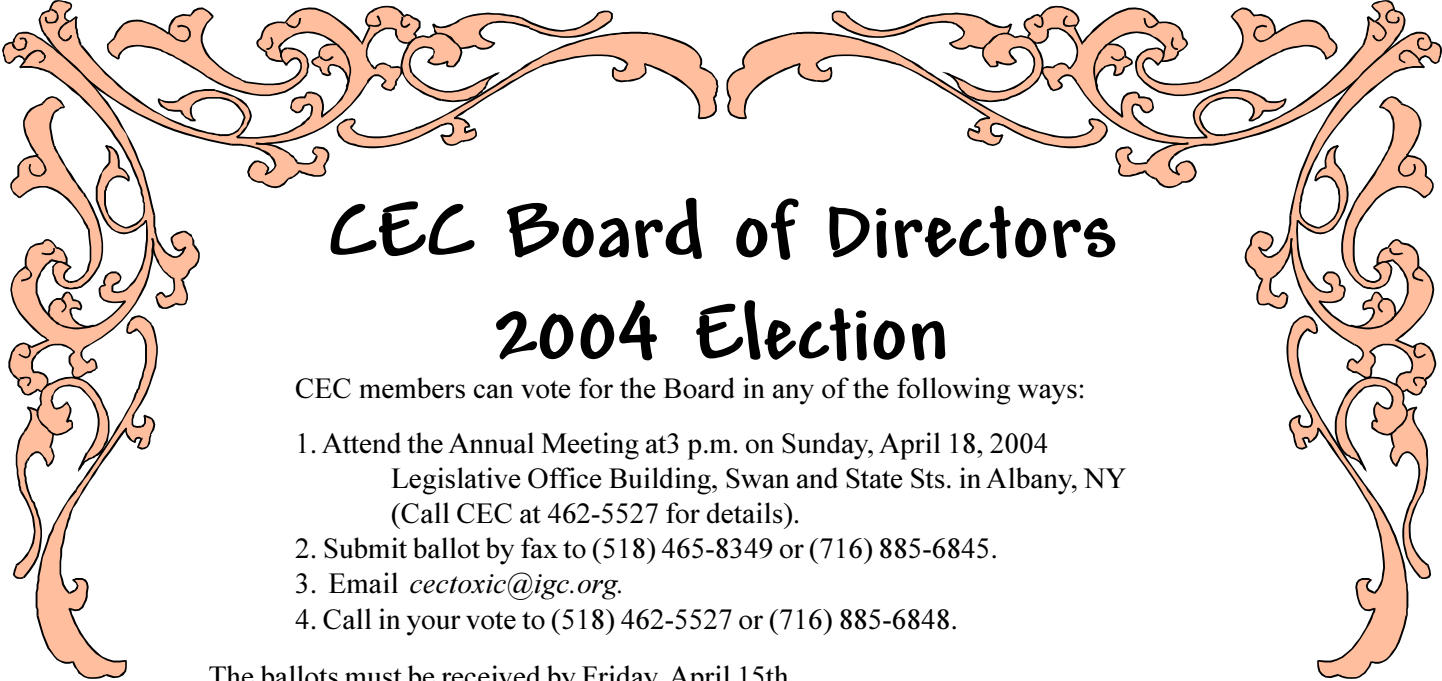
3M and the DEC are planning to clean up the former 3M properties in Brockport. The DEC has proposed to clean up the site through a process called enhanced reductive dechlorination (ERD) which includes injection of a food-grade carbohydrate agent into the ground. The DEC held a public meeting in March in Brockport, which was well attended by members of **Residents Environmentally Acting for Change (REACH)**.



Victory! Cheektowaga Restores Recycling

CEC is proud to announce that the town of Cheektowaga has voted to restore their recycling program, after canceling the program in January of 2003. The town board came under heavy pressure from CEC and the **Cheektowaga Citizens Coalition**. Together, we circulated hundreds of petitions, attended and spoke at town board meetings, sent letters to the town, and organized media events such as last year's successful Dirty Dozen Awards. CEC commends the Cheektowaga Town Board for doing the right thing and restoring the recycling program.





CEC Board of Directors 2004 Election

CEC members can vote for the Board in any of the following ways:

1. Attend the Annual Meeting at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 18, 2004
Legislative Office Building, Swan and State Sts. in Albany, NY
(Call CEC at 462-5527 for details).
2. Submit ballot by fax to (518) 465-8349 or (716) 885-6845.
3. Email cectoxic@igc.org.
4. Call in your vote to (518) 462-5527 or (716) 885-6848.

The ballots must be received by Friday, April 15th.

Downstate New York: Division 1

- Suzanne Mattei, Esq.** is the NYC Executive with Sierra Club, and is active on solid and toxic waste issues.
- Reverend Lynne West** is with the Presbytery of New York City and works on pollution prevention and environmental justice.

Capital District/Adirondacks: Division 2

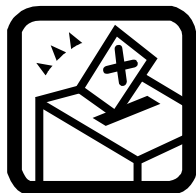
- Tom Ellis** is with the Coalition Against Riverfront Pollution and active with many groups working on toxic waste, nuclear and other problems.
- Kelly Travers-Main** is a co-founder of United Neighbors Concerned About General Electric and Dewey Loeffel Landfill (UNCAGED).
- Steve Breyman, PhD**, is a Professor in the department of Science and Technology Studies at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and active with the Rensselaer County Greens.
- Tania Knight** is co-founder of Citizens Halting Risks of Norlite's Industrial Contaminants (CHRONIC), fighting hazardous waste incineration and dust pollution.
- Candace Lيدر** is with the Troy Area Labor Council, and works on labor and environmental concerns.

Central New York: Division 3

- Ellen Connett** is editor of *Waste Not*, a national newspaper on incineration, and is active on many environmental health issues in St. Lawrence County.
- Zac Moore** is a Syracuse activist working to prevent siting of a sludge processing plant in a predominantly African American community.
- Linda Ochs** works on toxic and solid waste problems as a leader of the Finger Lakes Citizens for the Environment in Waterloo, NY.
- Christine Shahin** is the Director of Kids Against Pollution, and is active on solid and toxic waste.

Western New York: Division 4

- Judith Anderson** is the coordinator of the Toxic Waste/Lupus Coalition - concerned about a local toxic waste site, and the high rate of lupus in the community.
- Mary Canfield** is an environmental activist who's volunteered for CEC for the past few years as well as many other Buffalo area groups.
- Joann Hale** is active with environmental and religious groups, including the Interfaith Center for Environmental Stewardship.
- Victoria McLaughlin** is with the West Side Community Asthma Project which works with the University of Buffalo regarding this health issue.



Group affiliations are for identification purposes only.



20th Anniversary Honorary Committee



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 * Glenn Baer * Claire Barnett * Ronal Bassham * Robert Bates * Wayne Bayer * Larry
 Beahan * Laura Becker * Myron Blumenfeld * Judy Braiman * Joan Broderick *

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 Restaurant * Tom Ellis * Tompkins County Bill of Rights Defense Committee * Toxic Waste/Lupus Coalition *

Troy Area Labor Council * United Auto Workers Community Action Program * United Neigh-
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INSIDE: 2004 Board of Directors Election ♦ PVC Phaseout Campaigns ♦ Environmental Injustice

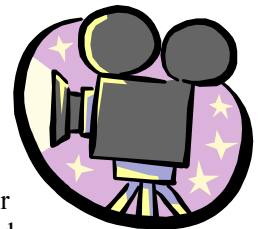
Attention Buffalo Members

Come to a free screening of the award-winning film

AND MEET THE DIRECTOR - JUDITH HELFAND

BLUE VINYL

A toxic comedy for the whole family



With humor, chutzpah, and a piece of vinyl siding firmly in hand, Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Judith Helfand and co-director Daniel B. Gold travel to America's vinyl manufacturing capital and beyond in search of the truth about vinyl (a.k.a. PVC plastic).

Learn how Americans' reliance on vinyl could be costing workers, children, our health and the environment. CertainTeed is attempting to site a PVC fabrication plant on the Buffalo waterfront. CertainTeed's PVC is produced in Mossville, Louisiana, the low-income African American community featured in Blue Vinyl.

Friday April 16TH @ 7:00pm
UB Center for the Arts Screening Room

The film and talk are co-sponsored by: UB Green Office, UB Environmental Network, Citizens' Environmental Coalition, Great Lakes United, Learning Sustainability Campaign, and the New York Public Interest Research Group. For more info, contact the UB Green Office at 716-829-3535 or Citizens' Environmental Coalition at 716-885-6848.