

## Dr. Maung Htoo Wins The 2007 Margery Sachs Service Award

The twelfth annual Margery Sachs Service Award was presented to Dr. Maung Htoo, Chairman of the Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council and member of the Board of Directors of New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC). The award was presented on October 20th at the 2007 New York State Conference on the Environment which was held in Schenectady, NY.

This Award is given in memory of Margery Sachs, one of NYSACC's original directors, and is presented to an individual for "Life-long Environmental Concern and Service".

Dr. Htoo has first hand knowledge of environmental issues not only in the Town of LaGrange but also in his native country of Burma (Myanmar) and in several other countries he has recently visited, such as South Africa, Australia, Thailand, India, Nepal, Mauritius, Peru and the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador.

Dr. Htoo went on a Rotary Club mission in 2005 to South India to donate fishing nets to a small fishing village which was destroyed by a tsunami and received the Outstanding International Rotarian Award from the Mayiladuthurai Rotary Club in India.

He has been chairman of the Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) since 2003. He is responsible for revitalizing the CAC after it had been dormant for several years by relentlessly recruiting qualified new members and improving the working relationship between the Town Board and the CAC. Several new projects have been implemented under his leadership and the Town of LaGrange CAC has made significant contributions to



the preservation of the natural environment in the town.

For these achievements, the CAC received the Greenway Award from Dutchess County in 2005 and three consecutive NYSACC Action Awards in 2005, 2006 and 2007. This is well earned and unprecedented.

Dr. Htoo feels that the secret of success for any CAC is the chemical formula (CO<sub>3</sub>)-Commitment, Cooperation and Communication amongst all members and between the town board and CAC. He is

well liked for his friendly demeanor, enthusiasm and hard work. He received a certificate of appreciation from the Town Board for his leadership of the LaGrange CAC in December 2005.

In addition to this work, Dr. Htoo serves as President of Vassar Brothers Institute, a 1000 member organization dedicated to the promotion of useful knowledge in Science, Literature and Art in the community: Director of Dutchess County Regional Science Fair: and a member and past president of the Arlington Rotary Club. He is an Adjunct Professor in Chemistry at Marist College and Physical Science at Dutchess Community College. He resides with his wife, Anne, in the town of LaGrange. Dr. Htoo has four beautiful, loving "green" daughters and three "eco-friendly" grandchildren. His hobbies are traveling, biking and physical fitness.

### 2008 Conference on the Environment

October 17 - 19, 2008  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton, New York

## The NYSACC Awards

Every year NYSACC honors those CACs that have found creative ways to enhance the quality of their environment. Presenting these awards provides NYSACC with an opportunity to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of member organizations and to show the kinds of projects that improve environmental awareness and contribute to the quality of life in our communities. These projects can be replicated by contacting the chair of the CAC.

Next year's award winning projects are happening right now. Don't forget to nominate your CAC when you do deserving work. An awards application is available at the NYSACC website [www.nysaccny.org](http://www.nysaccny.org). Applications may be submitted any time during the year.

### Amherst Conservation Advisory Council Dann Lake Park 2007 Action Award

Dann Lake Park is a 172-acre park containing a 22-acre lake, several ponds, wetlands and woods. It is a favorite fishing and hiking spot for residents. In August 2007, the Amherst Town Board approved the Comprehensive Master Plan for Dann Lake Park prepared by the Amherst Conservation Advisory Council (ACAC). This is a major milestone that is over 13 years in the making by the ACAC.

In the early 1990s a major housing development centered around the lake was proposed. The ACAC voiced strong concerns about this project in regards to potential impacts it would have on the lake, wetlands and floodway areas. Over the following years several versions of the project were proposed trying to address these concerns.

In the early 2000s the ACAC worked with the developer to have 172 acres donated to the Town, with the remaining 90 acres being developed.



Pete Warn of the Amherst CAC with his NYSACC award and NYSAEMC's Ramona Barton Award.

In 2003 the property was donated to the Town, and Dann Lake Town Park was formed. Annual garbage clean-ups and tree planting projects with Boy and Girl Scouts have been coordinated by the ACAC and a Comprehensive Master Plan has been developed. Currently the ACAC is working with the Town in getting a new parking lot constructed, and a handicapped accessible trail from the lot to the lake.

For further information contact Peter Warn, Amherst CAC, 225 Lehn Springs Drive, Amherst, NY 14221, e-mail at [Petewarn@aol.com](mailto:Petewarn@aol.com)

### Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council Mile-A-Minute Vine Response Project 2007 Action Award

Mile-a-Minute vine is a non-native invasive plant that can reach over 20 feet long in one year adversely impacting the ecosystem. A local resident spotted Mile-a-Minute (MAM) vine in the Town of LaGrange in mid-July, 2007. The infestation covered about seven acres. If unchecked, it could have threatened the native vegetation downstream on the Fishkill Creek (a Hudson River estuary).



Dr. Maung Htoo, LaGrange CAC Chairman and NYSACC Director, accepts the award from Joy Squires, NYSACC President.

The LaGrange CAC worked with Fishkill Creek Watershed Committee and DEC to pull the vines by the roots and put them in large plastic bags to be burned at a later date. The activity was publicized in two local newspapers, one local TV station and Public Radio in Albany for public awareness and to solicit volunteers. The Town Recreation Department provided bathroom facilities, burning permit, necessary equipment and volunteers. Several other organizations, including Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, Nature Conservancy Summer Interns and many local citizens volunteered in this effort, despite the heat, tick infestation in the area, and summer vacation season. Forty-four volunteers spent more than 300 volunteer hours from July 17 to August 19 in this endeavor and pulled most of the MAM vines from the sparsely infested areas.

The CAC recommended NYSDEC approved herbicide application to eradicate MAM vines in densely infested areas where hand pulling was unsuccessful. The Council distributed literature to the Town's Highway and Recreation Departments and the Town Hall for early detection and prevention. The Council also responded to calls from local residents reporting MAM vines on their property.

While the eradication of MAM vines in the densely infested areas remains to be acted upon, the project illustrates what Conservation Advisory Councils can do when confronted with an unexpected environmental problem. It also demonstrates the successful collaboration of the media, NYSDEC, the Town and volunteer organizations and local individual volunteers in alleviating the MAM infestation without incurring any significant cost.

For further information contact Dr. Maung Htoo, CAC Chairman, at 10 Rabbit Trail Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603, e-mail at [mhtoo@verizon.net](mailto:mhtoo@verizon.net)



**Bedford Conservation Board  
Bedford Rain Garden  
2007 Special Project Award**



Simon Skolnik, Bedford CB Chair and NYSACC Vice President, receiving the award from Joy Squires, NYSACC President.

Rain Gardens are recognized by the NYS DEC as important contributors to a complete storm water management system. They get their name from the fact that rain falling on impervious surfaces, such as roofs, parking lots, driveways, etc., can, without detention, end up in local streams, lakes and drinking water reservoirs having

accumulated toxins gathered during their run-off journey. Gardens, designed to capture this rain (can also be snow melt) prior to going into these water resources, can instead direct the water down into the ground, where biological actions of specially selected plants suited for partial short term immersion remove these toxins and recharge groundwater with clean water.

The Bedford Conservation Board became interested in building a rain garden in late 2005, after a member read an article about a similar project in Rhode Island. After much research, the hiring of a designer for the garden, and trips to numerous nurseries to reserve the plants, construction was started in mid-October of last year and finished two weeks later. Because the garden was on a slope, the construction of a retaining wall at one end was needed in order to build the depression needed to hold the excess water captured by the garden. Since Bedford also has an individual who acts as an unpaid consultant on stone wall construction, the two ideas were married into one project: building a demonstration stone wall and a demonstration rain garden, both open to the public to help in their construction.

"Until we were informed of the rain garden project in Rhode Island, our board had never heard of rain gardens. Now, it's quite common to hear of a rain garden being built in our town, because of our work installing a garden in front of the town hall. Not only is our garden beautiful, it's very visible. This project has been a tremendous success," Bedford CB Chair Simon Skolnik said.

As noted in environmental studies, rain gardens allow 30 percent more water to soak into the ground when it rains, compared to a patch of lawn.

For further information contact Simon Skolnik, Bedford Conservation Board, 321 Bedford Road, Bedford Hills, NY 10507, e-mail at [simon@lasbergconstruction.com](mailto:simon@lasbergconstruction.com)

**Town of North Castle Conservation Board  
Conservation Board Publications  
2007 Education Award**

Providing relevant and specific environmental information to the residents of the Town of North Castle has been an activity that is uppermost with the Work Program of the Conservation Board since 1975 with Betsy Sluder, the Board's first chair.

During the past three years the North Castle Conservation Board has developed, and distributed town-wide, several newsletters and informational brochures with the goal of educating those who live in the Town of North Castle. The newsletters consist of "Messages" from the Conservation Board for the years 2004 and 2005. The brochures are on the subjects of Septic Systems and Lawn Care & Pesticides.

The collection of information, writing, and general organization of the publications were provided by members of the North Castle Conservation Board. Professional layout and printing were provided by contract, with a portion of the overall cost reduced as a donation. The total cost of printing 5500 copies of the newsletters and brochures and the cost of mailing was \$10,187 over the three year period.

All of the publications were sent to each resident household with a town-wide mailing. In addition, copies of the brochures are included in a welcome package given to all new residents of the Town of North Castle by the Tax Assessors Office.

John Fava, Town of North Castle Conservation Board Chair, expressed his regrets at not being able to attend the conference to accept the award.

For further information concerning this award-winning project contact John Fava, North Castle Conservation Board, 15 Bedford Road, Armonk, NY 10504, e-mail at [ffjj50@aol.com](mailto:ffjj50@aol.com)

## NYSACC News

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NYSACC News is published three times a year. CACs are encouraged to submit press releases, articles, artwork or photography to the editor.

For additional copies of NYSACC News and address changes, contact the Newsletter office.

## The 2007 Conference Scholarship Recipients

It has become a tradition for NYSACC to award scholarships to the yearly Conference on the Environment. These scholarships are awarded to students who have exhibited a concern for the environment and an interest in working to preserve it. The scholarships cover the cost of food and lodging. Attendance fees are waived. It is hoped that through facilitating their attendance at the Conference, NYSACC is recruiting its leaders of the future.

Three scholarships were awarded to the 2007 Conference.



Scholarship recipients Abbie Webb, Peter Rizzo and Robert Pape.

**Abbie Webb** is pursuing a Masters in Environmental Planning at Cornell University. She did her undergraduate work in environmental geography at Colgate University. Abbie is interested in land use planning, Smart Growth and biomass energy systems. She is writing her Masters thesis on community / regional biomass methane recovery systems.

When asked what she hoped to gain from attending the Conference, Abbie said, "In school we learn a lot about environmental programs on the West Coast and abroad. I am always eager to learn more about what is happening locally. As a New York native, I think it's important to meet environmental practitioners elsewhere in the State to help develop the networks we'll need to make significant progress."

**Peter Rizzo** has served on the Town of Tonawanda Conservation Advisory Council for the past six years. He is a NYSACC Director. Pete has helped spearhead numerous projects dealing with beautification issues, energy conservation, and land use planning with respect to the natural and man-made environment. He intends to follow a career path in the field of city and regional planning, which will allow him to contribute to urban development and redevelopment processes, as well as generate equitable economic development and land use plans, while at the same time identifying and addressing the environmental implications of such initiatives.

When asked what he hoped to gain from attending the Conference, Pete said, "My goal in attending the 2007 NYS Conference on the Environment is to gain exposure to the environmental practices of municipal and county governments across the State, while sharing information stemming from projects initiated in my own community."

**Robert Pape** is taking both journalism and environmental courses at the University at Buffalo. He is interested in how society and environment impact each other. This specifically entails the Buffalo area, where the city is working to overhaul the waterfront/canal district and implement a plan for the Niagara River Greenway. After college, Robert intends to be a working journalist.

When asked what he hoped to gain from attending the Conference, Robert said, "This Conference is a chance for me to increase my knowledge of regional issues and case studies that I hope to hold on to as a base of knowledge for my reporting and understanding. In addition to my journalistic experience (I have formerly held the position of Editor in Chief at The Spectrum, the University at Buffalo's student newspaper), I would love to be able to take this new wealth of information back with me to share with the members of student environmental clubs I help oversee, as well as to the UB community at large."

## Websites of Note

In this, and the next several issues, our websites will come from the Energy Conservation Web Log compiled by the Bedford Energy Advisory Panel. This issue's websites are concerned with municipal energy plans. The entire web log can be found at NYSACC's website under Links & Resources.



- [www.slcgreen.com](http://www.slcgreen.com)  
Salt Lake City, Utah
- [www.ci.seattle.wa.us/climate/docs/ClimateActionHandbook.pdf](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/climate/docs/ClimateActionHandbook.pdf)  
[www.ci.seattle.wa.us/climate/docs/SeaCAP\\_plan.pdf](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/climate/docs/SeaCAP_plan.pdf)  
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- [www.ci.somerville.ma.us/CoS\\_Content/documents/SomervilleActionPlan.pdf](http://www.ci.somerville.ma.us/CoS_Content/documents/SomervilleActionPlan.pdf)  
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Greenburgh, NY
- [www.msnbc.msn.com/id21278682/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id21278682/)  
Voxjo, Sweden



## A Message from Paul D. Tonko, President, NYSERDA

I could not be more pleased that the focus of discussion during your recent Conference on the Environment in Schenectady was on what county and local governments can do to become energy efficient and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This focus is both timely and extremely important.

Our challenges are large and many. This requires us to take a holistic approach to energy, economic development, the environment and the critical fourth “e”—education. We must significantly improve energy efficiency while building a supply base which shifts away from fossil based fuels and toward renewables, and do this with a socially and environmentally responsible strategy. To that end, New York, NYSERDA and partners like those in local government, NYSACC and NYSAEMC must forge forward with a multi-faceted and balanced approach.

Under the leadership of Governor Eliot Spitzer, New York has embarked on a much needed energy revolution which will transform how we use energy, bolster our economy and clean our air. Governor Spitzer has launched his noble 15 by 15 plan. The main highlight is to reduce statewide electricity use by 15% from forecasted levels for the year 2015 primarily through the use of new energy efficiency. Simultaneously, this plan will reduce energy costs, curb pollution and address global climate change. This plan represents a dramatic acceleration of New York’s energy efficiency commitment.

Through the renewable portfolio standard program administered by NYSERDA, we are working to increase the sources of renewable energy to 25% by 2013. Lieutenant Governor Paterson’s renewable energy task force, in which NYSERDA is participating, is formulating a strategy to increase renewable sources potentially beyond the 2% benchmark. New York State has joined and is leading the way on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative which seeks to reduce carbon emissions by electric generation. These initiatives complement the 15 by 15 measure.

The goal, quite simply, is to save energy, save money, build the economy and save the environment. All of us play a critical role in meeting these challenges.

Using energy more efficiently is clearly the easiest and most cost-effective means to reduce emissions of GHGs in any of the major energy-consuming sectors. For example, implementing energy efficiency measures such as improved lighting and cooling can reduce annual energy use in a typical commercial building by about 25%. Similarly, increasing the miles per gallon of an automobile by 25% (for example, increasing from 20 to 25 miles per gallon) would reduce GHG emissions by 25%. Or, as Governor Spitzer has noted, the cheapest and cleanest power plant is the power plant we never have to build.

Think of the variety of ways to mine efficiency in our municipal infrastructure and what the results could be to budgets, economies and our environment.



Green buildings increase the efficient use of energy and environmental, and human resources. NYSERDA can provide technical and financial assistance for green building.

Municipal water and wastewater infrastructure offers much energy efficiency promise. NYSERDA has worked with over 100 facilities to date through our municipal and wastewater initiative. These projects are expected to save municipalities in excess of 73,000 mwh of electricity and \$8.7 million annually for the participating municipalities.

In the transportation sector, utilizing alternative fuel vehicles or retrofitting older fleets with emissions reducing measures can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. NYSERDA is working to increase the availability of alternative fuels for local NYS governments through technical assistance, direct grants for purchases of alternative fuel vehicles and working with fuel suppliers to increase access to alternative fuels such as biodiesel and ethanol. We also provide funding assistance for various fleets for the installation of diesel emission reduction technologies.

These are but a few of the numerous opportunities for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction in the municipal sector.

Looking forward, NYSERDA is seeking to grow its municipal partnerships and expand efficiencies in this sector. We have established a sector focus outreach effort for local governments seeking assistance in developing sustainability resolutions, setting targets for carbon footprint and energy use reductions, creating local action plans and implementation strategies, and monitoring progress toward their goals. We are bringing several technical and financial assistance programs to bear on this focus.

Additionally, future research and development initiatives at NYSERDA are anticipated to further assist municipalities in addressing climate change challenges related to: electricity and transportation infrastructure, sewage collection, water and wastewater treatment, and our natural resources.

Each individual response that uses energy wisely and cleanly, whether by a business, consumer, household or industry, is beneficial. It answers the challenge before us. Subliminally, it inspires the synergy of community by producing a “we” response to greening up, and revolutionizing our energy use. For far too long a disconnect among people has grown more prominent. By working together in collaboratives that share common goals and common needs we strengthen the “we” possibilities—motivating neighbors, residents and fellow citizens. “We” then build our community, and inspire a community-wide, government and global response. The “we” in us comes alive! The individual response of a county or local government is very powerful. Our local communities, New York State, our nation and our shared global community need your smart energy use response if we are to successfully and cleanly “Plug into Tomorrow”. Onward!

## President's Message

Conservation commissions are constantly forming relationships to the advantage of our municipalities. Within our towns and villages our most important alliance is with the town board, followed in no special order by the planning board, the zoning board, parks and recreation and energy boards. Outside of our municipality, we reach out to other organizations.



We have always had an association with the Department of Environmental Conservation. In fact our enabling legislation was written by NYSDEC. This contact will always continue. However, we have a responsibility to our municipalities to acquire and share information. Recent circumstances bring to us the opportunity to work with two additional organizations.

The 2007 Conference on the Environment had several representatives from NYSERDA (NYS Energy Research & Development Authority) presenting workshops, and as a keynote speaker Paul Tonko, President of NYSERDA, who presented challenges to Conference attendees. Because these challenges are so significant, comments from Mr. Tonko are included in this newsletter. Stressing that energy efficiency is clearly the easiest and most cost effective means to reduce emissions of green house gasses, he stated that future research and development initiatives at NYSERDA are anticipated to further assist municipalities in addressing climate change challenge needs.

Mr. Tonko encouraged everyone to reach out to NYSERDA to work on energy transformation possibilities. His conclusion is that local communities, NYS, our nation and shared global community must have a smart energy use response if we are to successfully and cleanly "plug into tomorrow".

I strongly urge you to look at NYSERDA's website [www.nyserda.org](http://www.nyserda.org) especially "Where Can I Find?" and "Incentives For" in the "Municipal" section which includes significant applicable information. This site is included on our website in Links and Resources. On this topic, also look at the Town of Bedford's Energy Advisory Panel's Case Study of a Town's Start on the Road To Carbon Neutrality also found on NYSACC's website.

The next alliance is with Parks and Trails New York. We carry the link to this organization on our website because I have long been impressed by their newsletter and website [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org). In October, I attended their biennial conference for the first time. This is an impressive organization. The Rochester conference offered four field trips applicable to municipalities. There were excellent keynote talks by the Erie Canal Corporation Director Carmella Mantello and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Carol Ash. Workshops included such varied subjects as creating trail networks, designing, constructing and funding trails, quantifying the benefits of trails and ensuring the long term viability of trails and trail organizations.

Their awards clearly provided idea opportunities for CACs. Look on their website for the Wegman's Supermarket/Town of Penfield's Corporate Partnership award for a Family Wellness Program. The Town of Clifton Park, a NYSACC member, received the Healthy Trails, Healthy People Award for incorporating a vision of a comprehensive trails network in its plans for town development. There is an application for help with your trail development with a deadline of January 11, 2008.

Conferences are energizing. The best thing is to discover new direction, or some new ideas for your CAC. Here's to new alliances, associations, relationships!

Joy Squires

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