

Network News

It takes a Network to protect a watershed.



New York State Fracking Update

by Hilary Lambert, steward

Fracking is a shorthand term for high-volume hydraulic hydrofracturing, a large-scale industrial process for extracting natural gas from deep-lying shale beds by pressurized injection of millions of gallons of water mixed with proprietary (secret) chemicals and other materials deep underground, the drilled shaft angled to widen the area reached by each “frac” or fracturing event.

Following each frac, natural gas is captured for distribution and sale via pipelines, compressor stations, storage areas such as that proposed for brine-filled salt caverns at the southern end of Seneca Lake, support roads and buildings, rail lines, and other infrastructure.

Much of the water used in each frac returns to the surface along with the collected gas. Permanently contaminated by chemicals, brines and natural occurring radiation from the depths, this water is stored in excavated ponds adjacent to frac pads, for re-use in subsequent fracs or allowed to evaporate.

Each step of this process is fraught with opportunities for spills and contamination of land, creeks, streams and lakes, and for degradation of human and natural communities. A gas well may be fracked ten times over a period of 40 years. (Environmental and health concerns are supported by peer-reviewed science, as are viable alternatives to fossil fuel use; see Physicians Scientists and Engineers for Healthy Energy, link provided below).

As readers are aware, a preliminary proposal to allow fracking in New York State by the NY Department of Conservation (DEC) in 2008 was met by a firestorm of opposition that shows no sign of abating in 2014. In 2011 the Network's Board of Directors issued a position statement on fracking, citing a phrase from our mission statement, that HVHF is a “key threat to our watershed.” The statement is available at our website, under the Resources heading. Many other groups statewide have taken similar steps.

Presently, a de facto moratorium is in place statewide while



The sign says it all. By Dryden residents and DRAC members John and Jen Burger and Linda Lavine.

New York's Department of Health and DEC research the health environmental impacts. In the summer of 2012, several towns in Tompkins County and nearby took additional action to protect themselves by voting in bans on gas drilling industrialization land-uses, thanks to the town ordinance template developed by attorneys Helen and David Slottje of the Ithaca-based Community Environmental Defense Council.

Two NY towns, Dryden and Middletown, were sued soon after their bans were in place by pro-fracking interests, who maintain that town governments do not have the legal right to pass local laws banning gas drilling and fracking. East of Ithaca in Tompkins County, Dryden is steward to Fall and Virgil creeks. Headwaters of Cascadilla and Six Mile creeks flow to Cayuga Lake from Dryden's highlands; Fall and Six Mile creeks provide Cornell University and the City of Ithaca with drinking water. With

their clean water, waterfalls and gorges, these creeks provide many beneficial uses. A coalition of more than 50 New York towns supports Dryden in its court case. Many other towns statewide have since passed bans or moratoria (link to map at FrackTracker provided below).

Two lower NY state courts have since ruled that towns do in fact have the right to ban this unwanted land use via local law. The case is now before the state's highest, the NY State Court of Appeals in Albany. According to Deborah Goldberg of Earthjustice, who is lead attorney in the Dryden case, oral arguments will take place in May or June 2014, and a decision is

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Cold weather will NOT slow spread for long Volunteers Assess HWA Along Six Mile Creek

by Hilary Lambert, Steward

In our 2013 year-end newsletter issue, we shared information that Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) was found along the City of Ithaca's creekside Six Mile Creek trail during a November field trip led by Cornell expert Mark C. Whitmore. First found in the area in 2008, this invasive shows up as tiny white cottony balls on the underside of a hemlock tree's needles and branches. Over several years time—if untreated—HWA kills the tree. On February 22 2014, a group of volunteers met at Ithaca's Mulholland Wildflower Garden parking area and divided into five groups to inspect and map hemlock trees along Six Mile Creek—and found HWA in numerous locations.

HWA is a threat to water quality in our creeks and lake. Hemlocks hold our steep shale slopes in place; without them, the shale and mud cliffs would crumble into the water, adding to the sediment load. Without the hemlock shade, creek waters would warm, altering habitat for healthy stream organisms. Because Six Mile Creek is the source of the City of Ithaca's water supply, it is vitally important to protect the creek and its watershed from degradation.

Moving steadily northward with recent milder winters, once established, HWA cannot be killed off by a few cold months, as Cornell's expert Mark C. Whitmore states in his February 2014 article about HWA and the Emerald Ash Borer, "Will this cold winter cause the demise of invasive forest pests?" Whitmore reports: "A recent laboratory study demonstrated that HWA



Just off the main Six Mile Creek trail, Roxy Johnston surveys a big hemlock for HWA.

from the Berkshire Mountains suffered 97% mortality at -22°F (-30°C) and none survived -31°F (-35°C). These lowest temperatures are not common in most of New York ... but lab studies don't always tell the whole story when you get out in the woods.

"To get an idea what is going on outside the lab I recently sampled two sites that have been harboring HWA for a few years. At Taughannock State Park near Cayuga Lake, according to my instruments the temperature never got below -8°F (-22°C) yet we found HWA mortality to be about 88%. On the other hand, at Mine Kill State Park in the northern Catskills temperatures got to -24°F (-31°C) and we found only about 72% mortality. Wait a minute, there is more mortality where it is warmer?

"There are two things going on here: 1) HWA reproduce asexually and have a very high reproductive rate so all you need is a few to survive the cold and the population is off and growing; and 2) perhaps more troubling is that research indicates cold tolerance is a genetically linked trait so progeny of the survivors will also be cold tolerant. The Mine Kill SP data suggests HWA populations in colder areas are indeed becoming more cold tolerant than those in

warmer locations like Taughannock SP.

"However, getting a high percentage kill will knock back the HWA population in an area for a couple years but they will

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The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network thanks Freshwater Future Inc for their support of our climate change work; and Leigh Dezellan of Dezellan Design and Pioneer Printing of Lodi for newsletter production excellence.

Smart Steps for Clean Water: Household Chemicals

by Michael Duttweiler

The complexity of watershed protection issues can make it seem that individual actions hardly make a difference. Quite the contrary! There are many straightforward steps that contribute to protecting our exceptional water resources. In this series of articles, we replay and expand upon suggestions that were presented in our 2006 publication "Smart Steps for Clean Water" available in full at: <http://www.cayugalake.org/files/all/smrtstps06.pdf>

While high profile chemical spills such as the recent release of industrial compounds in the Elk River in West Virginia get all the attention, the cumulative effects of individual use of household chemicals can be important determinants of local water quality. How big is this issue? The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation estimates that more than 100,000 pounds of household hazardous wastes are dumped in trash cans annually. Fortunately, there are many practical steps for reducing the types and amounts of pollutants you contribute.

General Rules for Household Chemical Use

1. Use the least toxic option.
2. Use the minimum amount needed to do the job.
3. Store all chemicals safely.
4. Dispose of chemicals properly.

Specific Steps

- **Be aware that many chemicals commonly used around the home are toxic.** Select less-toxic alternatives. Use non-toxic substitutes wherever possible.
- **Buy chemicals only in the amount you expect to use and apply them only as directed.** More is not better.
- **Seek out cleaning products that are non-toxic.** Read the product label or make your own effective cleaners, which frequently cost less. One particularly comprehensive list of home recipes is available at: <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Environment/HazardousWaste/Residents/Documents/HealthyHouseholdGuide.pdf>
- **Use low-phosphate or phosphate-free** detergents and cleaning products.
- **Use water-based products** whenever possible.
- **Choose unscented products** when they are available.
- **Decrease the frequency of oven cleaning.** Bake food in appropriate containers, or put a cookie sheet on the lower rack to catch spills.
- **Reduce the need for pesticides in and around your home.** Create physical barriers by plugging holes and closing screens. Clean regularly with a small amount of nontoxic cleaner. This discourages vermin such as ants (by disrupting their scent trails), and gets rid of food odors attractive to mice and moisture that lures cockroaches. Wiping up spills immediately has the added benefit of reducing staining.
- **Dispose of household pesticides properly.** Do not indiscriminately spray pesticides, either indoors or outdoors, where a pest problem has not been identified. Dispose of excess pesticides at hazardous-waste collection centers.
- **Keep surfaces dry to reduce the need for disinfectants.** Bacteria, mildew, and mold cannot live without moisture.

- **Detour rodents.** Keep bird-feeding areas clean. Elevate compost piles or enclose them with ½ inch wire mesh. Feed pets at regular times and remove uneaten food. Store pet food, bird seed and trash in secure metal, ceramic, glass or heavy-duty plastic containers. Remove possible nesting sites by clearing clutter, especially cardboard boxes, from inside and outside. Move stored items such as firewood and garbage cans away from the house.
- **Recycle household materials properly,** including consumer electronics which can release heavy metals and other chemicals into the environment.
- **Dispose of household waste responsibly.** Toxic chemicals should never be flushed down the toilet or sink, or poured on the ground or down a storm drain. Pouring chemicals down the drain could disrupt your septic system or contaminate treatment plant sludge. Never pour unwanted chemicals on the ground. Soil cannot purify many chemicals and they could eventually contaminate runoff. Read the label for instructions on how to safely dispose of toxic products and their containers once empty. Call your landfill or recycling center to learn about Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Days where you can leave your toxic products.
- **Dispose of pharmaceuticals and personal care products properly.** Never flush them down the toilet. The best way to dispose of these items is through "take-back" programs where drugs are returned to a facility that can dispose of them properly. Contact your local landfill or recycling center to learn about pharmaceutical take back programs. ➤

Sources:

- Cayuga Lake Watershed Network "Smart Steps for Clean Water" <http://www.cayugalake.org/files/all/smrtstps06.pdf>
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation "Managing and Disposing of Household Hazardous Waste" http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/hhwma.pdf
- US Environmental Protection Agency "Managing Nonpoint Source Pollution from Households" <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/outreach/point10.cfm>
- US Environmental Protection Agency "Do's and Don'ts Around the Home" <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/dosdont.cfm>



“Freezin’ for a Reason”

Bell Station Public Access Event a Big Success!

The morning of Saturday, February 8, dawned several degrees below zero—and was calm, clear and beautiful. A small group of paddleboarders and kayakers launched onto the still, transparent waters of Cayuga Lake, just south of the Cayuga Power Plant in Lansing. They paddled—carefully—north to the natural, undeveloped shoreline of the Bell Station property, where they landed and met the 30 people who had taken a van ride and hiked down to the lakefront.

The goal of both the hikers and the hand-picked cadre of expert winter kayakers was to demonstrate the value of having public access to 3/5 miles of Cayuga Lake shoreline available in its natural undeveloped state, and to the beautiful wooded 500 acres, with two small gorges and waterfalls on steep slopes above the shore.

Bell Station Forest is off Nut Ridge Road along the Cayuga Lake shoreline in North Lansing.

This special day was organized to encourage public enjoyment of the beautiful undeveloped lakeside property, with guided hikes for all ages and warming refreshments. Shuttle rides were provided by Lansing’s Paddle-N-More van, from the town schools parking lot. Following this hearty but very cold outdoor event, many participants headed to the nearby Crossroads Grill, saying that they were “Swarming for a Warming”!

The first annual “Freezin’ for a Reason” was organized by the Friends of Bell Station Forest, a group of Lansing residents and supporters who want to provide opportunities for local residents to visit this beautiful land in its natural state. As a State Forest, the land could accommodate many recreational activities—right in Lansing—for birders, hikers, walkers, boaters, hunters and fishermen.

Background to this event

Presently owned by NY State Electric &

Gas (NYSEG), the historic Bell Station property could become a valuable community asset for Lansing as a State Forest or Wildlife Management Area. As a first step in this direction, the Lansing Town Board voted on November 20, 2013, to support transfer of the property from NYSEG to NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The NYS DEC would work with the community, other organizations and area

stakeholders to establish the property as a State Forest or Wildlife Management Area.

The NYS DEC has indicated a desire to continue leasing the agricultural portion of the land to a local farmer. The white oak-hickory escarpment forest is quite diverse, including trees such as sugar maple, tulip poplar, black cherry, and hop-hornbeam. Forest native plants include Canada lily, white trillium, trout



Hiker Bill Hecht took this photo of the North Falls, on the Bell Station land.

Hiker Bob Duckett took this photo of hikers meeting up with paddlers on the icy shoreline of the beautiful Bell Station property.



lily, and pink lady-slipper. The Cayuga Lake Railroad ran along the property shoreline from 1871 to 1950. The old railbed would make a superb hiking trail along the lake.

Just to the south of the present Bell Station parcel, in 1968 NYSEG excavated 15 million cubic feet of shale for the construction of the Bell Station Nuclear Power Plant. Local concerns about pollution of the lake resulted in NYSEG moving their project to Lake Ontario. In 2011 the Network honored Citizens Committee to Save Cayuga Lake, the local group that fought successfully to prevent the nuclear power plant being sited here, with the David A. Morehouse Award.

The Friends of Bell Station group hopes to hold additional public access events at the property during 2014, in cooperation with the Town of Lansing, NYSEG and DEC. More information



about Bell Station, with photos of the “Freezin” event, are available at the Network’s website under the Issues heading: <http://www.cayugalake.org/bell-station-lansing.html> . ➤

Paddleboarder Paul Weich captures the frigid beauty of a very cold day on Cayuga Lake with, from left, Paul Closs, Jennifer Wells Miller, Julie Palmer Carmalt, Jenna DiMento and Paul. The Cayuga/AES power plant is in the background.

This is a map-image of the Bell Station land, on the east shore of Cayuga Lake, north side of Lansing. The lines show where visitors have hiked.



Please donate to support our work in 2014!

Your active participation in volunteer efforts such as fracking meetings and hearings, stream clean ups, and monitoring aquatic weed threats to Cayuga Lake demonstrates the love we share for our lake and creeks.

MAIL: Fill out the information below, select a donation level, and mail the form with your check to Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, P.O. Box 348, Aurora, NY 13026

PAYPAL: Join or donate via your PayPal/credit card online at www.cayugalake.org.

AS A MEMBER, you’ll receive regular issues of *Network News*, information about upcoming events, trainings and volunteer opportunities, and the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting a local organization that is making a real difference.

- ☐ I am joining the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network with the enclosed contribution.
- ☐ I am renewing my membership with the enclosed contribution.
- ☐ Please accept the enclosed donation to support lake and watershed protection.

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Your Contributions to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network are Tax Deductible.



Cold weather will NOT slow spread for long Volunteers Assess HWA Along Six Mile Creek *continued from page 2*

rebound rapidly. Reduced density of HWA means there is less competition and the food quality of hemlock twigs will be degraded more slowly, basically giving the surviving HWA a fertile field for reproduction, and they can do that rapidly.” Whitmore’s full article is online at the New York State Invasive Species Clearinghouse website: http://www.nyis.info/?action=news_detail&event_id=469

Steward Lambert can personally attest that, even after many weeks of cold weather, on February 22, 2014 she and her team found HWA looking healthy and hearty in many trees along Six Mile Creek.

What can be done

Whitmore and others have devised treatment methods to keep infested trees alive, a much-needed option now that, locally, HWA has spread north along the Cayuga Lake shoreline, into the hemlock woods of our state parks, the Cornell Plantations – and now along Six Mile Creek.

Volunteers sought!

Leaders of the Six Mile Creek HWA assessment effort are Joe McMahon and Jeanne Grace (respectively Chair, City of Ithaca’s Natural Areas Commission and Urban Forester), and Anna Stalter from Cornell University’s L.H. Bailey Hortorium. Mapped data from the February field trip is being processed, and more trips will follow, so that a plan of treatment can be devised. Chemicals cannot be used safely near the creek, so long-term protection will require ingenuity. *If you would like to help spot and report HWA along Six Mile Creek and other places, please contact Hilary Lambert steward@cayugalake.org.* 🐾



Judith Pierpont draws in a hard-to-reach creekside hemlock bough to examine for HWA.

On a cold but thankfully sunny Saturday, HWA volunteers get instructions from Jeanne Grace, Joe McMahon and Anna Stalter, at the Mulholland Wildflower Garden on Six Mile Creek in Ithaca.



Resources

- To learn more about the terrible loss to our southeastern forests, read Will Blozan’s 2011 article in American Forests, “The Last of the Giants”: <http://www.americanforests.org/magazine/article/the-last-of-the-giants/>
- To learn more about the HWA locally, go to the Cornell Plantations website: <http://www.cornellplantations.org/our-gardens/natural-areas/invasive/hemlock-woolly-adelgid>
- Mark C. Whitmore’s February 2014 report: http://www.nyis.info/?action=news_detail&event_id=469

New York State Fracking Update *continued from cover*

expected in late summer/early fall.

According to an Earth Justice press statement, “If the ban is upheld, [the decision] would cement the rights of the more than 170 towns in New York that have passed bans or moratoria on fracking and could give encouragement to the increasing number of communities across the country opting to place limits on the controversial practice.”

So far, there are no HVHF frack pads or wells on New York state soil – although many associated industrial activities are taking root, and need to be controlled via county and town government actions supported by effective, informed citizen groups. Following is a brief list of information resources. 🐾

Additional Information

- **Cayuga Lake Watershed Network:** www.cayugalake.org > resources > hydraulic fracturing and gas drilling.
- **Community Environmental Defense Council:** www.cedclaw.org
- **Cortland County:** Gas Drilling Awareness for Cortland County: www.gdacc.org/
- **Dryden Resource Awareness Coalition (DRAC):** www.draconline.wordpress.com
- **Earth Justice:** www.earthjustice.org > our work > cases > fracking court fight in Dryden NY.
- **FLEASED:** Gas leases and landowner rights: www.fleased.org
- **FrackTracker ban map, updates:** www.fracktracker.org > New York > Bans and Moratoria map.
- **James Northrup:** Geopolitical/ industry-savvy blog: www.scribd.com/northrup49
- **Josh Fox and Gasland:** www.gaslandthemovie.com

[gaslandthemovie.com](http://www.gaslandthemovie.com) includes global map of fracking areas.

- **Marcellus Accountability Project for Tompkins County:** Map of leased properties in Tompkins County and comprehensive information links: www.tcgasmap.org/
- **Physicians Scientists and Engineers for Healthy Energy:** www.psehealthyenergy.org/
- **Rachel Treichler:** Finger Lakes attorney’s New York Water Law blog: www.nywaterlaw.com
- **Seneca Lake: Gas Free Seneca:** www.gasfreeseneca.com/
- **Shaleshock Action Alliance:** Central NY hub www.shaleshock.org with links to Tompkins County and statewide citizen groups, media, information, more.
- **Town of Dryden:** www.dryden.ny.us > “Gas drilling information.”

Seeking 2014 hunters and heroes Help stop hydrilla early!



by Hilary Lambert, steward

Last August, heavy storm runoff tore loose a *Hydrilla verticillata* (hydrilla) infestation in Fall Creek and sent it into the south end of Cayuga Lake. Pieces were found offshore by researcher Bob Johnson and crew. Other pieces may have drifted, to root and grow during 2014, or were carried by boats along the lake—even to other lakes, if boats were transported without being cleaned.

The hydrilla infestation in Cayuga Inlet is under control thanks to the Hydrilla Task Force, and the small infestation in Fall Creek will be dealt with in 2014.

We are seeking local residents in each lakeside municipality to coordinate and lead public education in 2014. Your lakeside neighbors need to know what hydrilla looks like and where to report possible sightings (www.StopHydrilla.org). We must prevent hydrilla from sneaking in and taking over.

Once established, hydrilla is difficult and expensive to remove. Let's get it early before it smothers the shoreline with

a choking mat 30 feet deep. When that happens, swimming, paddle boating and fishing stop. Propellers jam, and lanes have to be mowed for limited access. That's the story where it has taken over. Say goodbye to dollars, businesses and recreation.

Stop it early: Divers under expert supervision removed three plants growing at the southeast corner of Cayuga Lake in August 2013. Surrounded by black plastic barriers, they dug into the lake bottom to remove tubers, then covered the area with pegged-down benthic mats to smother regrowth. A lot less costly than trying to remove thick green masses extending over many acres along lakeside properties, marinas and launches, beaches and parks.

Hydrilla is good at survival and conquest. We do not want it in Cayuga Lake (or anywhere else). Read about hydrilla heroes Dave Heck and John Abel, and contact us if you can help during 2014: steward@cayugalake.org. ➤

Hydrilla Heroes Needed Around the Lake This Summer

Dave and Joyce Heck live in a quiet neighborhood on the southeast shore of Cayuga Lake, in the Town of Lansing. Across the lake, John Abel's Town of Ithaca home overlooks Cayuga from the steep western shore. In 2012-3, Dave and John placed hydrilla awareness and i.d. training at the center of their interactions with lakeshore neighbors. John focused on members of the West Shore Homeowners Association, via email and meetings; Dave went door to door, mailed packets to residences up and down the Lansing shore, and spent much of his summertime talking to boaters at the local marinas.

These two are Hydrilla Heroes, willing to cover the waterfront in their communities, to educate residents and visitors in how to identify hydrilla and where to report possible sightings. For 2014, we are seeking Heroes in towns further north along the east and west shores of Cayuga Lake.

Tasks for one, or a group, include:
Alerting your lakeside community about

hydrilla; keeping up public outreach during the summer months; and staying focused into August and beyond, because that is when hydrilla shows up at the surface, revealing where it has

John has a brief report form for folks willing to patrol their waterfronts and report presence or absence of this pest. We can provide training, support, identification materials, local publicity, and help at local lakeside events with a table display.

We are also seeking ways to inform participants at sports fishing tournaments, so they will know to check their boats for hydrilla and other aquatic invasives. Can you help? Would you be willing to take on a regular shallow waters patrol along a lakeshore section? Maybe you do this already, and could add in keeping an eye out for hydrilla. Our goal for 2014 is to develop hydrilla outreach volunteer coordinators—Heroes—for several new Cayuga lakeshore towns, in Cayuga and Seneca counties. Please get in

touch! Contact steward@cayugalake.org to find out more, or to say YES! Thank you. ➤



Taken on a cold winter day, here is Dave Heck with his easel for display of hydrilla information and handouts at his local marina in Lansing. Could you do this in your town in 2014?

taken root, is flourishing, and can be removed quickly at least cost by experts.

Dave has developed templates for keeping track of who has been contacted, letters to mail or distribute;

The mission...

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network identifies key threats to Cayuga Lake and its watershed, and it advocates for solutions that support a healthy environment and vibrant communities.



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Upcoming Events

EMBRACE THE LAKE—via cleanups and annual campaign:

4-5/14: Spring cleanups: Is your group interested in doing a two-hour lakeshore cleanup, or a creek cleanup on one of the 35 major creeks that drain to Cayuga Lake, or along one of the many hundreds of smaller creeklets and streams that give their waters to Cayuga Lake? We can help with trash bags, gloves, signs, and more! Free of charge. If you would like to organize a spring cleanup or take part in one, contact us at steward@cayugalake.org

6-9/14: Annual Campaign theme: Embrace the Lake!

We are aiming to raise \$20,000 this year for our annual campaign, from June to September 2014. Help us reach that goal, in support of our lake and creeks protective programs. Watch for details. Our separate 2014 member renewal drive will run from October to year's end.

Year-Round: Hydrilla & Hemlock Woolly Adelgid hunters needed year-round! Help us protect our creeks from Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and our lake from Hydrilla! Contact steward@cayugalake.org to volunteer for hydrilla information tabling at public events around the lake, trainings, and inventorying HWA in our water-side hemlock trees.

8/20: Annual Meeting & Picnic at Lansing's Myers Park, 5-9 pm.

Join us for our 2014 Annual Meeting and August monthly meeting. Accompanied by a delicious picnic and cookout. Free of charge. You do not have to be a member to attend—learn about what the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network does and how you can help us protect our lake and creeks.

9/6: CanYou Canoe Cayuga? Of course you can!

Registration opens July 1 for the third annual CYCC four-stop paddle event down the lake's west shore with party at Ithaca's Cass Park. Rain date 9/7. Details and printable registration packet at www.cayugalake.org—watch for a big article in our next, mid-year newsletter.

Caption correction, Network News 2013 issue

3-4 page 9: "Sunset Dinner Committee": From left, Gunilla Anderson, Sally Ezra, Arlene Chase, Laurie Hultberg, Joey Valez, Sally Harwood, and Sally Harwood's mom Louise Stephens. Suzanne Logue was unable to attend. Committee member Ed Harwood took the photo. Our deep gratitude to all for ensuring that "Sunset" was a success for the Network and everyone who attended.

