

# Delaware Sierra News

A Newsletter about Environmental Matters Important to Delaware \* January / February 2002

## ◀ What is left in Delaware? Campaign Announced to Inventory Delaware's remaining Wild Places

(see pages 6 and 7)



Gordon's Pond photo by Peter McLean



Indian River Inlet with Dr. John Craft photo by Steve Callanen



From the Indian River Inlet and the Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts in Wilmington, to the Delaware Main Channel Subaqueous Lands Permit hearing, Sierra Club members have been out advocating, exploring and having fun!



State Subaqueous Land Hearing photo by Debbie Heaton



Wild Places, Cool Spaces evening with Jonathan Blair

# Notes from the Membership Chair

by Al Denio

*Membership* – The most recent data (Nov. 10) from our national headquarters lists 1,717 members. Of this total, 1,331 are in New Castle County while the Southern Delaware Group has 386. Why are we so small? Perhaps because we do not educate the citizens of this state that there are many serious environmental problems that need to be solved and the Sierra Club needs their help.

As Chair of the Membership Committee in New Castle County, I ask you to consider joining our group in the effort to double our membership. If you are in the Southern Delaware Group, you can join with Lauren Ide.

*What do we do?* In the past we have set up recruiting tables at public events such as Newark Night, July 4th Celebrations, Nanticoke River Festival, The Harvest Moon Festival and Coast Day. If we had more members we could appear at about twenty such events per year. We also need to develop other ways to recruit.

How can you help? Call me at 455-0389 and make an offer! We can accomplish a lot more with 3,434 Sierra Club members in Del.

*Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge* – What is it? This is about a 200 acre site of a marsh/wetland area on the Wilmington waterfront. It is being developed as a wildlife refuge to honor former Governor Peterson who passed the Delaware Coastal Zone legislation during his term in office.

Chair Jim Steffens asked me to represent the Club on the Refuge Advisory Committee about two years ago. In October we finally saw the architect's plan for the educational center and the connecting trails, ponds, observation huts, etc. We were greatly impressed by the plan.

The estimated cost was about \$22 million. However, in view of the present economy, a scaled back version is being developed before fund raising can begin.

The educational opportunities that will be provided for Del. citizens in this urban wildlife refuge will be magnificent. Stay tuned! I shall continue with progress reports as we proceed.

*The Desecration of Delaware Continues* – DuPont was in the news on Dec. 14 (*The News Journal*) regarding the waste pile covering 22.7 acres along the Delaware River and Shellpot Creek. This solid waste, estimated at 500,000 tons, is from their Edge Moor plant that has made

titanium dioxide pigment for many years. Now it is found that this waste is contaminated with dioxin compounds, considered to be among the most toxic known. DuPont claims that the presence of the dioxins was only recently discovered. They have been trying to sell this waste as a soil substitute called "Iron Rich."

DuPont has agreed to cover the waste piles to prevent further leakage of dioxins into the air and water. It is not reported if this cover is a temporary or long term solution.

The consent order signed by DuPont also mandates that they close four acid and chemical sludge lagoons and survey the Edge Moor plant for other environmental problems. This is all disturbing to a former employee who has always felt that DuPont operated in an ethical and responsible manner. Perhaps I have been naïve to think that protecting the company's reputation for integrity was important.

Motiva continues to amaze us with ongoing emissions from its huge refinery near Delaware City. Now DNREC charges that the company has polluted twelve times between March and December. Five of these events have been since the plant disaster in July when the largest leak of sulfuric acid ever in the U.S. resulted from the rupture of a neglected storage tank. One worker died and several were injured. How would you like to work in a plant like that?

Gov. Minner is promoting her "Livable Delaware" plan which we applaud. I only hope that she has the courage to clean up our Coastal Zone – a task which will not be easy. My wish is that our Sierra Club will grow and join the fight to make this state a safe and healthy place to live. *Happy New Year!*

The **Delaware Sierra News** is published five times a year by the Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club. This publication is written and produced entirely by volunteers.

If you would like to help with its publication, please contact the editor (302-378-8501). The deadline for materials for the next issue is **February 1, 2002**. We reserve the right to edit materials submitted for publication. Materials and Letters to the Editor can be sent to: debbie.heaton@sierraclub.org.

Ideas expressed in the *Delaware Sierra News* are those of the columnists and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Sierra Club. While effort is made to check for accuracy, time constraints and limited all-volunteer staff do not allow for complete data corroboration.

Editors: Debbie Heaton and Mike Casale.

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## Delaware Chapter and Southern Delaware Group Leaders

**Chapter Office 1304 N. Rodney St. Wilmington, DE 19806**  
Shiray Shipley 302-425-4911  
hours: Tue-Thurs 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

### Chapter Executive Committee

Rich Anthony	645-1732
Dick Bewick	736-1670
Jay Cooperson	571-0660
Debbie Heaton	378-8501
Chris McEvilly	656-8858
Terri Tipping, <i>treas.</i>	368-1452
Matt Urban	661-2050
Boyd White	335-1323

### Chapter Appointed Officers

<i>Cons.</i> Debbie Heaton	378-8501
<i>Land Use</i> Jim Steffens	239-9601
<i>Litigation</i> Carl Solberg	492-1225
<i>Membership</i> Al Denio	455-0389
<i>Outings</i> Dan Soeder	284-2613
<i>Pol.</i> Shamba Donovan	368-0174
<i>Recycle</i> Marsha Holler	735-9687
<i>Trans.</i> Bob Bennett	731-4524

### Southern Delaware Group Excom

Sallie Callanen	539-0635
Pete Okie	856-2728
Rich Anthony	645-1732
Yuki Usuki	436-4042
Til Purnell	945-1317

### SDG Appointed Officers

<i>Cons.</i> Terri Usuki	436-4042
<i>Land use.</i> Rich Anthony	645-1732
<i>Legal.</i> Mike Lamb	539-1008
<i>Mem.</i> Lauren Ide	539-0967

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[www.delaware.sierraclub.org](http://www.delaware.sierraclub.org)

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## Sierra Club Participates in State Hearing on Delaware Deepening

By Jim Steffens

On December 4 and 5, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control convened a public hearing to hear public testimony on the application of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's proposal to deepen the main shipping channel in the Delaware River to a depth of 45 feet. As DNREC informed the Corps as early as 1992, the Corps is compelled to file for a state permit under the terms of Delaware's Subaqueous Lands Act.

The Delaware Chapter is an active participant in the Alliance to Dump the Delaware Deepening, a coalition of over 25 environmental and civic groups from Del., N.J. and Pa. Most recently two groups based in Washington, D.C., the National Wildlife Federation and Taxpayers for Common Sense, have been strong allies as well. They have helped to garner Congressional support for a study of the project by the General Accounting Office (due in late spring, 2002), by gaining access to key documents from federal agencies, and in coordinating an independent economic assessment of the project.

Dennis Rochford, President of the Philadelphia Maritime Exchange and recent Republican candidate for Lieutenant Governor, appeared at the hearing as chief cheerleader for the proponents of the project. His "build-it-and-they-will come" argument—that shipping companies are just dying to bring larger and deeper vessels to Philadelphia—is belied by the fact that the ports of Philadelphia and Camden lie 100 miles up a river, and are thus more expensive to get to than harbors already at (Norfolk) or soon to be at (New York) 50 feet. The port of Baltimore, already at 50 feet and with 20 container cargo cranes to Wilmington's two, does only twice as much business as Wilmington at 40 feet, and has never lived up to the rosy projections made by the Corps to justify that project.

The environmental community presented several new pieces of information at the hearing:

1. The Office and Management and Budget (OMB), the investigative arm of the Executive branch of the Federal Government, reviewed the Corps' plan to replenish the beach at Port Mahon. OMB reasoned that Port Mahon lies at a section of the Delaware River that experiences the most severe erosion. The beach will likely have to be

rebuilt seven times during the 50-year history of the project, and the project will not result in the improvement of wetland habitat. They concluded that the project was not worth the expenditure of federal tax dollars and should not be funded.

2. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has only recently learned of the Corps' plans to replenish beaches at Port Mahon and Broadkill Beach and to build a barrier beach to protect the dredge disposal site proposed for Kelly Island. They concluded that one year's data on horseshoe crab populations at these sites were insufficient, that the populations at Port Mahon and Kelly Island were already quite large, and that impacts of the beach restoration on horseshoe crabs were not adequately assessed. They also asked the Corps for additional data.

3. We pointed out at the hearing that the Corps has completely overlooked colonies and reefs of *Sabellaria vulgaris*, a tube-forming colonial worm that builds coral-like structures in the tidal zone. "Nourishing" these beaches would destroy this habitat.

4. The Corps has long maintained that the dredge spoils scheduled for disposal sites are completely nontoxic and of no concern to humans or wildlife. We presented a report commissioned by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration that, using new protocols to measure chronic toxicity, demonstrated river sediments to be toxic. The EPA has subsequently adopted this methodology for assessing the toxicity of all dredge sediments. We demanded that all dredge sediments scheduled for Delaware lands should be tested by these methods.

Another issue that is important to Delaware is the party responsible for liability if environmental damage occurs as the result of the project. The Corps has long claimed "sovereign immunity" from any liability as the result of its projects, but we argue that Delaware should not be left to clean up the Corps' mistakes. As an example, when the Corps dug the C & D canal, they cut through existing aquifers that resulted in people's wells going dry, but the Corps has never accepted responsibility for their actions.

Following release of the public testimony, the Corps has 45 days to respond. Following that, the public has 30 days to rebut the Corps' response. The hearing officer will then issue a report with recommendations, and from that the Secretary of DNREC will make a decision on the Corps' permit application. *Stay tuned!*

# Sussex County Plan Update

By Mike Lambe

“The Coastal Communities Group, including representatives of the Sierra Club Southern Delaware Group, will monitor and participate in the process of updating Sussex County’s 1997 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. State law requires that the plan be updated every five years. The county has begun the process with a series of public meetings – one at each of five locations throughout the County – ending with the December 20th meeting in Millsboro at the library.

Members of the Club’s Southern Delaware Group have consistently raised concerns about new development projects in areas where transportation is already at an unsatisfactory level of service and in environmentally sensitive areas that support fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation. Despite these concerns, the County has approved thousands of new dwelling units, principally in the Eastern Development District that was established in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan.

The update process offers an opportunity to redirect growth in the county to existing towns rather than in new developments outside of towns which create sprawl. This opportunity is heightened by the designation of the area around the Inland Bays as ‘Environmentally Sensitive’ by the Cabinet Committee on State Planning in December 1999.

At the public meeting December 12, the Coastal Communities Group served notice that the following issues, among others, are important and must be addressed in the updated Comprehensive Plan:

- *Transfer of Development Rights.* This is a new concept that should be addressed by the State

legislature. If adopted, the process must assure that land designated to receive development rights (and thus increase development density) must be appropriate for the increased density, in terms of existing transportation, water quality, forest growth, drainage, open space, and other amenities.

- *Amendments to the Development District, Both Location and Size.* Much of the Eastern Development District is within areas of environmental concern, where future development should be undertaken, if at all, under rules that give more weight to protecting wildlife habitat and water quality.
- *Future Mobility Potential.* Roads in the coastal area often cannot handle the 5.5 million seasonal visitors, and service must not be further degraded.
- *Air and Water Quality.* The updated plan should contribute to meeting state and county goals under the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.
- *Conservation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat.* The updated plan should provide the basis for protective ordinances for essential habitat, including riparian corridors.

Following the public meetings, the county will prepare a draft of an updated Comprehensive Plan. This draft will be presented at formal public hearings before the county Planning and Zoning Commission and the County Council. The Southern Delaware Group will join other concerned citizens in presenting detailed recommendations at these upcoming hearings in 2002.”

*Thanks to the supporters of our Wild Places, Cool Spaces evening at the Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts... You helped to make it special!*

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*A very special thanks to the following individuals for their valuable assistance with this event and/or with our fundraising activity throughout the year - Jonathan Blair, Jerry DuPhily, Debbie Heaton, Rob Mayer, Jim Miller, Dan Soeder*

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## Parkinson's Disease Possibly Linked to Pesticide Exposure

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Recent research into the causes of Parkinson's disease suggests that inheritance, age and environmental exposures may all be important factors. In particular, numerous studies conducted over the past two years have shown that there may be a link between pesticide exposure and loss of neurological functions associated with Parkinson's.

Only about 10% of Parkinson's cases are genetic, with the remainder resulting from unknown factors such as environmental exposure or some interaction between genetic susceptibility and the environment.

Researchers believe that chemical exposures, particularly to pesticides, play a role in some cases of Parkinson's. Three lines of evidence suggest this finding. First, people who live in farming areas, especially those who drink well water, and have a history of exposure to pesticides are more likely to contract Parkinson's. Second, several studies have shown that those who die of Parkinson's disease have higher levels of organochlorine pesticides in their brains than the general population. Finally, in the early 1980s, a group of young people developed Parkinson's symptoms after taking an illegal drug called MPTP whose structure is similar to meperidine or Demerol. The structure of its metabolite is similar to the herbicide paraquat.

Although previous investigations only established an association between workplace pesticide exposure and Parkinson's, a study conducted last year at Stanford University showed that exposure to pesticides in homes and gardens may also increase the risk of developing the disease. The researchers interviewed 1038 people, including 496 who had recently developed Parkinson's, about their lifestyle habits and whether or not they had used or been exposed to insecticides, herbicides or fungicides in homes or gardens.

The study revealed that individuals who were exposed to pesticides in the home or garden were 70% more likely to develop Parkinson's than those who were not exposed. "In-home insecticide exposure showed the strongest association, but herbicide exposure in the garden was also associated with an increased risk of [Parkinson's disease]," concluded the researchers.

Although the mechanism by which Parkinson's is induced by pesticides—if they do cause the disease in humans—is not yet well

understood, and the cause-effect relationship between pesticides and Parkinson's is still unclear, many studies on rats and mice have shown links between pesticide exposure and the development of Parkinson's-like symptoms.

One study at the University of California, Santa Cruz, showed that tiny concentrations of the pesticides rotenone, dieldrin, DDT, 2,4-D and paraquat cause reactions in the brains of mice that may accelerate the development of Parkinson's. Mixtures of metals and pesticides may have a synergistic effect in causing these reactions, the studies suggest.

Other studies have shown that rotenone causes the degeneration of nerve cells in the brain in rats. Rotenone is a natural compound derived from the roots of tropical plants. Generally considered relatively harmless to mammals, it is used to kill nuisance fish in lakes, insects in gardens, and fleas and ticks in pets. While some foresters bathe in it after working in the woods, people would most frequently be exposed to rotenone by ingesting residue in food or by handling it.

Another study at the Univ. of Rochester showed that the combined exposure of the herbicide paraquat and the fungicide maneb—applied to millions of acres of farmland each year—are known to affect the neuro-transmitter network in mice and produce a pattern of brain disorders that are very similar to those found in humans with Parkinson's.

Lead researcher Deborah Cory-Slechta said that the findings could be a warning signal that current environmental investigations on the health effects of pesticides do not cover enough ground. She added that the findings would hopefully prompt the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to investigate the potential hazards of exposure to combined pesticides.

Sources: Hileman, Bette, "The Environment and Parkinson's," Chemical & Engineering News, September 17, 2001; Higgins, Margot, "Pesticides linked to Parkinson's disease," Environmental News Network (ENN), January 11, 2001; Associated Press, "Study links pesticides, Parkinson's," November 6, 2000; Chubb, Lucy, "Pesticide exposure linked to Parkinson's disease," May 6, 2000, ENN.

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### Quote of the Day:

"Anyone who doesn't understand the connection between the economy and the environment is on the wrong side of the future."

— Nancy Pelosi 12/5/01  
House floor during a speech opposing Fast Track

Editor's Note: PANUPS is a weekly email news service providing resource guides and reporting on pesticide issues that don't always get coverage by the mainstream media. To comment, send a message to: [panna@panna.org](mailto:panna@panna.org)  
To subscribe, send a blank message to: [panups-subscribe@igc.topica.com](mailto:panups-subscribe@igc.topica.com)

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## Wild Natural Places... What's Left in Delaware?

### Project WILD Committee members:

Dick Bewick  
Peter McLean  
Katherine O'Connor  
Debbie Heaton

### Advisors:

Rich Anthony  
Matt Urban  
Carl Solberg

**If you would like to join this committee please drop a note to Debbie at 302-378-8501 or Dick Bewick 302-736-1670.**

The Delaware Chapter and Southern Delaware Group has identified and been working on two of the Sierra Club's priority Campaigns: Sprawl and Water. In pursuing these issues, members have participated in local land use hearings, legislative committee hearings, TMDL draft plans and federal permitting processes. While doing this we often find ourselves working in a defensive position as we try to approach particular situations.

Although Delaware is a small state we face several challenges. One such challenge is that in spite of our small size we often find that we know surprisingly little about many of our nooks and crannies. In the absence of a comprehensive database identifying our wild areas and their individual resources, we find that many times we need to familiarize ourselves with the area and its resources before we can establish a plan for action.

Many of Delaware's wild areas have already fallen prey and either disappeared or been irrevocably compromised while others are continually threatened by development and pollution. State and local entities are slowly beginning to realize the situation and are developing plans to save the highest quality natural resources (an administra-

tive process through the County Comprehensive Land Use Plan process). But these plans are limited in scope, based upon subjective criteria, offer no assurance of meaningful/productive governmental inter-cooperation, will be delayed by bureaucracy, are not required to be completed until 2007 and, consequently, expose the state's remaining natural areas to the threat of potential compromise and/or ruination during the six year span between analysis and full implementation.

Our goal is to create a database of these remaining wild and natural places and provide both Sierra and allied activists the knowledge and familiarity necessary to be advocates. We call it Project WILD - Wilderness in Livable Delaware.

Through Project WILD we are giving Chapter members and other nature lovers an opportunity to help us collect information about our remaining natural and wild resources. Clip out the form on page 7 and fill it in with details about an area near you. Send us pictures, anecdotes, historical stories, whatever details you can share. We will use this info to compile a reference (both printed and electronic) which we can use to educate others and assist in protecting Delaware's special places. *Stay tuned as more Project WILD details become finalized!*

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## Outings for January/February 2002

☞ **Please contact the trip leader listed to RSVP for the event.**

☞ For cold weather outings, please dress properly and be certain to stay with the group at all times.

☞ **The committee is seeking curious people who are interested in getting out and helping to decide where the committee will explore in the future. Contact Dan Soeder to find out more**

**Logan House Socials:** January 17, and February 21, 6-9 p.m., Kelly's Logan House, Trolley Square, Wilmington. Join the outings committee for drink and food specials, and meet new members, old members and potential members. Contact Matt Urban for information (302-661-2050, e-mail Matt@mobiusnm.com)

Saturday, January 12, 2002, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: **Conowingo Dam Hike** (joint outing with Appalachian Mountain Club). AMC Leader: Cliff Hence (215-247-3560, e-mail cwhenceiii@aol.com); Sierra Leader: Dan Soeder (302-284-2613, e-mail Djsoder54@cs.com). Join us for a 10-mile, class 1 hike in the Susquehanna River valley below Conowingo Dam in Maryland. This is a nesting area for bald eagles and wintering waterfowl. Dress for winter hiking; bring lunch/snacks/water. Contact Dan for details of meeting location and possible car-pooling from Wilm./Newark. Optional dinner/warm-up stop afterward at Iron Hill Brewery.

Sierra Club Information Meeting: **"The Last Great Wilderness Slide Tour."** Thursday, February 7, 2002, in the Bacchus Theater in the lower level of

Perkins Student Center University of Delaware. Leader: Dan Soeder (302-284-2613, e-mail Djsoder54@cs.com). Join Emily Ferry of the Alaska Coalition (Emily@alaskacoalition.org) and Jeff Barrie of the Alaska Wilderness League for a slide show and discussion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Learn about the unique plants and animals living there, the threats posed by proposed oil drilling on this fragile land, and what can be done to protect the Arctic Refuge here in Delaware. Arctic native Adeline Raboff will also be speaking about her experiences growing up as an Athebascan Gwich'in and the impacts that oil development in the Arctic Refuge could have on her culture.

February 27, 2002, 6-9 p.m.: Sierra Club Information Meeting: **"So, what are you drinking?"** Newark United Methodist Church, Main Street, Newark. Leader: Dan Soeder (302-284-2613, e-mail Djsoder54@cs.com). Dan will discuss the issue of "emerging contaminants," chemicals that have been recently recognized at low levels in drinking water. These include MTBE, antibiotics, disinfection byproducts, endocrine disruptors and others. Join us for this informative meeting and discussion.



The Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club is seeking to identify and inventory the wild and natural places of Delaware. *We need your help!* Do you know of a natural area that you think is special? If so, please fill out the form below and tell us what you know about it. We will work with the info. you provide, fill in the blanks, and include it in our inventory of these special places throughout Delaware. If you have any questions please contact the Project WILD Committee at 302-378-8501.



**To be completed by submitter: (optional)**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to be reached:  phone  email  U.S. Mail

Phone/e-mail info \_\_\_\_\_

**Special spot to be nominated (please fill out as much as possible)**

Name of area \_\_\_\_\_

County location  New Castle  Kent  Sussex

Street Address (if available) \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this place special to you? \_\_\_\_\_

scenic  habitat  recreation  fond childhood memories

Can you attach a photo or email a photo?  yes  no

*Please email photos to [debbie.heaton@sierraclub.org](mailto:debbie.heaton@sierraclub.org). TIFF or JPEG formats are preferred.*

**Additional information (not necessary but helpful)**

Exact location of special place, including boundaries \_\_\_\_\_

How is land owned:  privately  publically

How is it zoned? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the land/water area \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have additional information on any of the following: (vegetation type, habitat type, wildlife in the area, human populations nearby, is the area changing?) *Please attach a sheet if you need additional room.*

Please send completed form and any photos to Project WILD, c/o The Heatons, 226 Jeffrey Drive, Middletown, DE 19709-9249

**Chapter Executive Comm. Meeting**

January 15, at 7:00 p.m. USGS meeting room, McD Drive, Dover. Excom election and budget presentation are on the agenda. Contact Jim Steffens (302) 239-9601 to put an item on the agenda or for information.

**Chapter Conservation Committee Meeting**

February 20, at 7:00 p.m. USGS meeting room, McD Drive, Dover. Contact Debbie at 302-378-8501 to put an item on the agenda or for information.

**SPECIAL EVENT**

**The Music Never Stopped**

*An evening of collaborative musical improvisation and fundraising.*


**Thursday, January 17, 2002**

At Kelly's Logan House, Wilmington, DE Starting at approximately 9:30 p.m.

You are invited to attend and/or participate in "The Music Never Stopped," a 3+ hour long collaborative musical excursion featuring multiple bands and musicians. It will be an evening filled with improvisation, excellent musicianship, and surprising results.

For more information or to sign up for participation, please contact:

Matt Urban: matt@mobiusnm.com or Tom Dougherty: H: 410-398-0017, Email: tdough@dol.net



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Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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**So, what are you drinking?**

Join us February 27, to find out... see page 6 for details.

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