

10 RABBIT TRAIL ROAD, POUGHKEEPSIE, NY 12603  
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March 20, 2008

Jon J. Wagner, Supervisor  
Gary E. Beck, Councilperson  
Dale Borchert, Councilperson  
Stephen O'Hare, Councilperson  
Joseph J. Luna, Councilperson

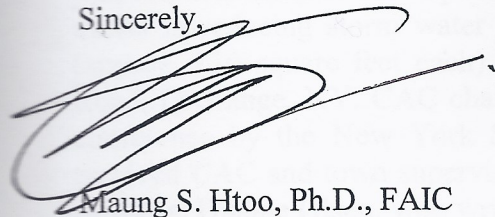
Attached are the 2007 accomplishments and 2008 plans for the Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council (CAC). We volunteered 198 hours on monthly CAC meetings and approx. 600 hours on a variety of Environmental and Conservation Related Activities in 2007. Highlights of our accomplishments for 2007 are (a) participation at the LaGrange Community Day (b) planting of two CAC demonstration rain gardens in front of town hall (c) response to Mile-a-Minute vine infestation and (d) successful completion of the student environmental display conservation pillars.

More than 200 people visited the CAC exhibit area. It continued to be an excellent venue to hand out environmental information materials and the magnetic fishing game was a big draw for the children. Rain gardens are useful in reducing storm water pollution in addition to being beautiful. The two rain gardens were planted in June and they are the first CAC rain gardens in Dutchess county. Mile-a-Minute vine infestation in LaGrange was an unplanned CAC activity and we responded immediately in working together with Fishkill Creek Watershed Committee and DEC for pulling of the vines. The student environmental conservation pillars were unique and effective in promoting recycling and environmental awareness for earth day 2007.

We (LaGrange CAC) received the 2007 Action Award from the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions and I received the 2007 Margery Sachs Service Award for Lifelong Environmental Concern and Service..

Thank you for your continued strong support of our CAC activities.

Sincerely,



Maung S. Htoo, Ph.D., FAIC

Chairperson

Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council

cc: Alan Bell, Planning Board Chairman

Peter D. Huff, Parks & Recreation Director

Tracy Johnson, Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman

Michael Kelly, Highway Superintendent

Wanda Livigni, Administrator of Public Works

Christine O'Reilly-Rao, Town Clerk

CAC Members



**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC)  
TOWN OF LAGRANGE**

**2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**I. CAC MEMBERSHIP**

The town board filled two vacancies in 2007 by promptly appointing qualified and enthusiastic members upon the recommendation the CAC chairman. They are Dr. Paul P. Horstmann, a director at IBM and Ms. Judith Wolf, an active Master Gardener.

**II. MONTHLY CAC REVIEWS OF PLANNING BOARD APPLICATIONS**

Completed review of almost all of the planning board applications submitted prior to our monthly meetings despite the CAC computer internet connectivity problem (hardware) which occurred in November and December.

**III. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

Continued our active role in the dissemination of educational materials in an outreach effort to inform the community (examples are: Preventing Storm water Pollution, Mile-a-Minute Vine and Blandings's Turtle).

**IV. PARTICIPATION AT LAGRANGE COMMUNITY DAY**

Operated a CAC exhibit (two tables) and handed out environmental information materials at the LaGrange Community Day on June 9, 2007. Two Earth Day Environmental Conservation pillars made by Overlook Elementary School students were on display. A magnetic fishing game which was introduced two years ago continued to be popular with the children and their families (see appendix C ). CAC members Mary Gomez and Linda McPhee planned and organized the event. More than 200 people visited the CAC booth.

**V. RAIN GARDEN**

Design, site selection, and planting of the CAC demonstration rain gardens was completed as planned. It is the first CAC sponsored rain garden project in Dutchess County. Rain gardens are useful in reducing storm water pollution in addition to being beautiful. The two rain gardens (approx. 110 square feet each) are located in front of the LaGrange town hall on Stringham Road, LaGrange, NY. CAC chair, Maung Htoo learned about rain gardens when he attended a conference by the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions in 2006 and received CAC and town supervisor, Jon Wagner's strong support to implement it. Former CAC member, Dianne Olsen, who writes a weekly column on "Valley Gardener" in the Poughkeepsie Journal, designed the garden and supervised the planting. Several members in the community in addition to CAC members Maung Htoo, Rolf Nijhuis, Nancy Swanson and Mary Gomez participated in the planting on June 3, 2007. ( see appendix D ). The new plants required many days of watering during the hot and relatively dry summer months. New CAC member, Judy Wolf, who is a Master Gardener, prepared the gardens for the fall and winter. She also started collecting information to put together a brochure for the rain gardens.



## **VI. MILE-A-MINUTE (MAM) VINE**

This was an unplanned activity during the summer of 2007. MAM vine infestation along Jackson Creek near the Ball Field Park in the Town of LaGrange was reported to Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) by a local resident in June. It covers more than seven acres most of which is privately owned. LaGrange CAC responded rapidly to this problem by working closely with Fishkill Creek Watershed Committee and DEC to pull the vines by the roots in the sparsely infested areas and put them in large plastic bags to be burned at a later date (see Appendix E). Forty four volunteers from many organizations and local citizens spent more than 300 volunteer hours from July 17 to August 19 in this endeavor and pulled more than 210 large trash bags of MAM vine. They were burned by Rick Oestrike, Fishkill Creek Watershed Committee, who co-chaired the effort with Htoo and spent many hours in pulling the vines. CAC members Maung Htoo, Judy Wolf, Rolf Nijhuis, Paul Horstman and Mary Gomez participated. CAC also distributed DEC pamphlets on Mile-A-Minute vine to town highway and recreational dept. employees, had pamphlets available at town hall for the public and made site visits to local citizen's homes to confirm that the vine in their property was not MAM vine. Peter Huff, LaGrange Recreation Director, was very helpful and provided valuable support. The problem received wide publicity in the local newspapers, radio and TV news. This was a significant accomplishment and most of the vines from the sparsely infested areas have been pulled with cost for only the trash bags (donated by Maung Htoo and Rick Oestrike). However, other methods including DEC approved herbicide application would be required to eradicate MAM vines from the heavily infested areas and it is beyond the means of CAC to continue this effort. Maung Htoo submitted a final report to the town supervisor on August 29 in addition to weekly progress reports.

## **VII. EARTH DAY STUDENT CONSERVATION PILLARS**

This unique environmental display project using recycled Sonno tubes was suggested by Mrs. Carol DiPalo, art teacher at the Overlook Elementary School, to CAC member Mary Gomez who co-ordinated the project, purchased the materials and provided transportation. Fourteen classes of grades 1 to 2 students provided the artistic content under the supervision of Mrs. DiPalo and completed 14 conservation pillars for Earth Day, 2007. The project was an outstanding success. The students learned about material conservation, clean air, water and wildlife and expressed themselves in their art work. The Superintendent of Arlington School District, Frank Pepe, was so impressed with the conservation pillars when he first saw them that he wanted two for display at the School District Office. The pillars were also exhibited at area businesses and the LaGrange Community Day in order to create environmental awareness in the community. Four pillars are on display at the LaGrange town hall. ( See appendix F ).

## **VIII. WAPPINGER CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL TREE IDENTIFICATION**

CAC member, Rolf Nijhuis, has completed purchasing tree signs for the 22 tree species identified in Fall 2006 by Vassar College tree identification class taught by Professor Mark Schlessman.



#### **IX. TRAIL BRIDGE SUPPORT AND STREAM BANK RESTORATION**

CAC member, Rolf Nijhuis, discovered severe erosion damage (more than 50 feet) to the supporting banks of the trail bridge due to the floods in April and initiated an action plan for stabilizing both banks and the bridge. This involved contacting DEC Stream Co-ordinator, Jack Isaacs, site visits with the town highway superintendent, Mike Kelly, to work out a technically feasible plan, obtaining the property owner's permission to work on the property and filling out a "non-minor" DEC permit application. CAC member Mary Gomez is helping Rolf with this project.

#### **X. WAPPINGER CREEK WATERSHED INTERMUNICIPAL COUNCIL (WIC)**

Maung Htoo attended the WIC Sub-Group meetings on February 21 and March 29, 2007 at the request of town supervisor, Jon Wagner. The purpose of these meetings was to update the WIC By-laws which were initially drafted in 2001. LaGrange councilman, Joe Luna, was also at these meetings.

#### **XI. FISHKILL CREEK WATERSHED COMMITTEE**

Maung Htoo worked closely with Rick Oestrike of the Fishkill Watershed Committee as co-leaders in MAM vine pulling project this summer.

#### **XII. WAPPINGER CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL EXTENSION**

CAC member, Rolf Nijhuis, has been actively involved in this project. Extending the existing trail in the town of LaGrange was not feasible due to objections from one out of three landowners involved. Therefore, feasibility of a new trail in the nearby town owned property is being explored.

#### **XIII. GIS TUTORIAL FOR TOWN BOARD MEMBERS**

Rolf Nijhuis gave tutorials on the use of ArcExplorer2 to John Wagner (town supervisor), Alan Bell (planning board chairman), Robert Straub (planning board vice-chairman) and Wanda Livigni, Administrator of Public Works.

#### **XIV. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION RELATED MEETINGS**

CAC members attended many useful environmental and conservation related meetings during the year (see appendix B).

#### **XV. CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

Maung Htoo was an invited speaker at the "2007 Conference on the Environment" sponsored by the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions in Schenectady, NY on October 19-21, 2007. He gave a power point presentation on "Mile-a-Minute Vine Infestation Response Project".



**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC)  
TOWN OF LAGRANGE**

**2007 AWARDS AND PUBLICITY**

**A. AWARDS**

1. LaGrange CAC received the 2007 Action Award from the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC) for the "Mile-a-Minute Vine Infestation Response Project" at the 2007 Conference on the Environment in Schenectady, NY on October 20, 2007. This award was one of only two action awards presented by NYSACC in 2007. LaGrange CAC is the first CAC in New York state to win action awards for three consecutive years. (2005, 2006 and 2007).

2. At this same conference, Maung Htoo received the prestigious 2007 Margery Sachs Service Award presented annually to an individual for "Lifelong Environmental Concern and Service" (see Appendix G). He was also reappointed to the board of directors of NYSACC for another year.

3. CAC members Paul Horstmann, Maung Htoo, Mary Gomez, Rolf Nijhuis and Judy Wolf received certificates of appreciation for their contributions in pulling MAM vines this summer from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The certificates were presented at a special ceremony at the Dutchess County Legislature meeting on December 17, 2007.

**B. PUBLICITY**

1. Poughkeepsie Journal- June 15 (Diane Olsen's column on town of LaGrange rain gardens and Maung Htoo's contributions).
2. Voice Ledger- July 26 (Front page article on MAM vine infestation)
3. Poughkeepsie Journal, July 22, July 25, July 29 and August 12  
(Front page article on MAM vine- August 12)
4. Cablevision- July 18 and 25 (MAM vine infestation)
5. WAMC Public Radio - August 7 (MAM Vine Infestation)
6. Voice Ledger- November 1 (Margery Sachs Service Award )
7. Poughkeepsie Journal- November 9 (Margery Sachs Service Award)
8. NYSACC News- Fall 2007 (Margery Sachs Service Award )



**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC)  
TOWN OF LAGRANGE**

**2008 PLANS**

**I. MONTHLY CAC REVIEWS OF PLANNING BOARD APPLICATIONS**

Continue to improve the efficiency of the CAC review process by acquiring up-to-date information and assuring that all CAC members receive the required training.

**II. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

Continue public education and outreach programs on Preventing Stormwater Pollution, Mile-A-Minute Vine and Blanding's Turtle.

**III. PARTICIPATION AT LAGRANGE COMMUNITY DAY**

Participate at the LaGrange Community Day on June 14, 2008.

**IV. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION RELATED MEETINGS**

Continue attendance at pertinent environmental and conservation related meetings.

**V. WAPPINGER CREEK WATERSHED INTERMUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

Continue CAC participation.

**VI. FISHKILL CREEK WATERSHED COMMITTEE**

Continue CAC participation.

**VII. WAPPINGER CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL TREE IDENTIFICATION**

Attach tree identification signs to the 22 tree species in the trail for public awareness and learning.

**VIII. TRAIL BRIDGE SUPPORT AND STREAM BANK RESTORATION**

Continue an active and leading role for completion of this project in 2008.

**IX. EARTH DAY STUDENT CONSERVATION PILLARS**

Sponsor an environmental conservation pillar display project by students in Titusville Intermediate School students for Earth Day 2008.

**X. RAIN GARDEN**

Prepare a brochure on the CAC demonstration rain garden including benefits of rain gardens and put up signs for the rain garden.

**XI. MILE-A-MINUTE VINE**

Disseminate information and assume an advisory role in eradicating Mile-a-Minute vine.

**XII. ENHANCE CAC EXPOSURE ON TOWN WEB SITE**

Update and expand CAC related information on the town web site.



**XIII. WAPPINGER CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL EXTENSION**

Continue to explore feasibility of extending the trail in another part of the Town of LaGange owned property and beyond to Pleasant Valley.

**XIV. CAC GIS DATA EXPANSION**

Expand the CAC GIS data base to include blanding's turtle habitat (input from Hudsonia) and environmental related data gathered by the Open Space Committee.

1. GARY FISHER

2. MARY GOMEZ

3. PAUL HORSTMANN

4. EDWIN JOBA/JUDY WOLF

5. ROBERT KIRKADE

6. LINDA MCPHEE

7. ROLF NIEBIS

8. NANCY SWANSON



**APPENDIX A**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS  
TOWN OF LAGRANGE (2007)**

**1. MAUNG HTOO (CHAIRPERSON)**

**2. GARY FISHER**

**3. MARY GOMEZ**

**4. PAUL HORSTMANN**

**5. EDWIN JOBA/ JUDY WOLF**

**6. ROBERT KINKADE**

**7. LINDA MCPHEE**

**8. ROLF NIJHUIS**

**9. NANCY SWANSON**



## APPENDIX B

### ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION RELATED MEETINGS ATTENDED BY LAGRANGE CAC MEMBERS IN 2007

\*Number of meetings attended shown in brackets

- LaGrange Town Board Meetings
  - Linda McPhee (1), Maung Htoo (1), Rolf Nijhuis (1), Nancy Swanson
- LaGrange Town Planning Board meetings
  - Rolf Nijhuis (1)
- Wappinger Creek Watershed Intermunicipal Council meetings
  - Maung Htoo (2), Ed Joba (1)
- Cornell Extension Geographic Information System (GIS) Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings
  - Rolf Nijhuis (8)
- Dutchess County Environmental Management Council Meetings
  - Maung Htoo (1)
- Dutchess County Legislature Meetings Related to Environmental Issues
  - Nancy Swanson (2), Paul Horstmann (1)
- All day meeting on "Designing and Landscaping Public Places with a Conservation Focus"  
sponsored by Cornell Co-operative Extension-Putnam County- February 7, 2007
  - Maung Htoo
- Dutchess County CAC/EMC Roundtable Meeting- February 28, 2007
  - Maung Htoo
- All day "Woodland Pool Steward Training Course" sponsored by Cornell Cooperative  
extension-Dutchess County- March 31, 2007
  - Maung Htoo
- LaGrange Rotary Club luncheon meeting on April 10, 2007
  - Maung Htoo made a presentation on "Rain Gardens".
- Two lectures on Gardener's Day at Cornell Cooperative Extension on April 21, 2007
  - Nancy Swanson
- Development Principles for Protection of Natural Resources- April 25, 2007
  - Ed Joba
- Student presentations on "Local Wetland Laws", "Local Ground Water Threats" and  
"Conservation Advisory Councils" at Arlington High School Science Night- May 31, 2007
  - Maung Htoo
- Chloride Study meeting sponsored by Fishkill Creek Watershed Committee-May 31, 2007
  - Linda McPhee
- IEEE Lecture on Using Solar Energy for Residential Use in New York- June, 2007
  - Mary Gomez
  - Bob Kinkade
- Spring Board of Directors Meeting-New York State Association of Conservation Commissions-  
Schenectady, NY- June 10, 2007
  - Maung Htoo
- Annual Update of DEC Activity at DEC Headquarters in Albany- June 12, 2007
  - Maung Htoo



- Lecture on Ferns at Institute of Ecosystem Studies- June 12, 2007  
Nancy Swanson
- Workshop on Weed Identification at Farm and Home Center- July 11, 2007  
-Nancy Swanson
- Open Space Preservation and SEQR Process-FDR Wallace Center, Hyde Park- July 12, 2007  
-Nancy Swanson
- Stream Workshop sponsored by Cornell Co-operative Extension - July 13, 2007  
-Nancy Swanson
- Video Conference Seminar on "Forests as CO2 sinks" by Dr William S Schlesinger, President of Institute of Ecosystem Studies-Farm and Home Center-September 7, 2007  
-Maung Htoo
- 2007 Conference on the Environment" sponsored by New York State Association of Conservation commissions - Schenectady,NY -October 19-21, 2007  
-Maung Htoo



Appendix C: CAC Participation at LaGrange Community Day- June 9, 2007



Linda McPhee, Maung Htoo and Mary Gomez



Environment literature on table



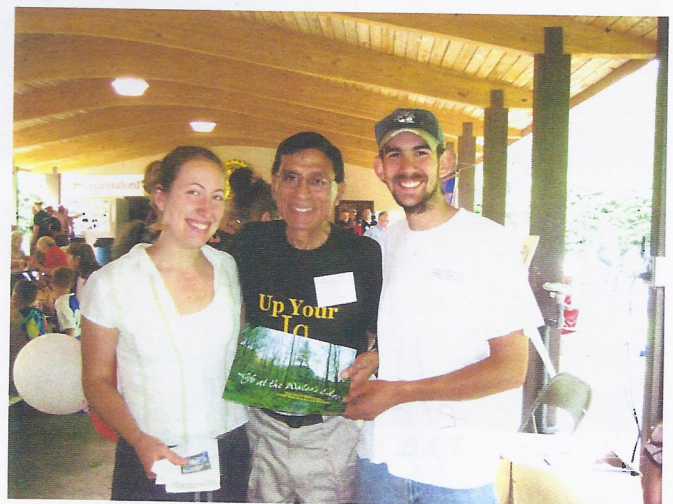
Mary Gomez with magnetic fishing game



Children lured to magnetic fishing game



Adults follow to pick up brochures



Htoo with happy visitors



## Appendix D: LaGrange CAC Demonstration Rain Gardens



**Dianne Olsen, Dianne Ferris- June 3, 2007**



**Kevin Ferris (Htoo's neighbor)**



**Olsen, Htoo, Kevin & Dianne, Rolf Nijhuis;  
Nancy Swanson, Mary Gomez (kneeling)**



**Htoo and Nancy - June 3, 2007**



**Rain Garden- Summer, 2007**



**Rain Garden- Fall 2007**



# Appendix E: Mile-A-Minute (MAM) Vine

**THE VOICE LEDGER**  
Formerly the LaGrange Ledger and The Voice, Official newspaper of Pleasant Valley, LaGrange, Union Vale and Clinton  
Thursday, July 26 - August 1, 2007  
Single Copy: 75 cents  
To subscribe call 423-2727

## Invasive vine spotted in LaGrange

By Aaron Kowitz  
Staff Reporter

LAGRANGE Jack-o'-lantern vines, which run behind the LaGrange Park ballfields, may look pretty and tranquil. The vines are clear and the banks are flanked by lush greenery. But, unfortunately, much of that greenery, supposed to be the mile-a-minute vine, an invasive species of plant, which over-takes and kills surrounding plants.

As the name suggests, the mile-a-minute grows at an astounding rate up to six inches a day and up to 20 feet long in one year.

To help combat this highly aggressive, non-native plant, Managing Director, the town of LaGrange conservation advisory council chairman has been working hard to eliminate the plant. Rick Oberly, of the Franklin Watercraft Company, has also been on the job.

The problem is that the plant spreads so fast and leaves little to climb over and block its way from getting to the top of the hill.

Chris Johnson, an avid gardener, spent an hour in the field to get the look at the plant. Fortunately, the mile-a-minute's leaves are readily recognizable. They are in the shape of a triangle, or arrowhead, and are one to three inches across, and its fruits look similar to blackberries.

While riding an infested area of the vine elsewhere is difficult, the fruits present an even more dangerous problem.

"The seeds are gone for five years and are spread by birds and mice, so it is easy for the plant to expand into other areas," said Oberly.

The vine has also been sighted in Dover Plains. The plant has also been spotted up and down the Hudson River and on Long Island.

With the help of Peter Haff, LaGrange Parks and Recreation Director, who moved around the vine and berries to be burned. Oberly and Oberly's surfaces they can push the vine back at LaGrange Park.

But the work will continue beyond the vine.

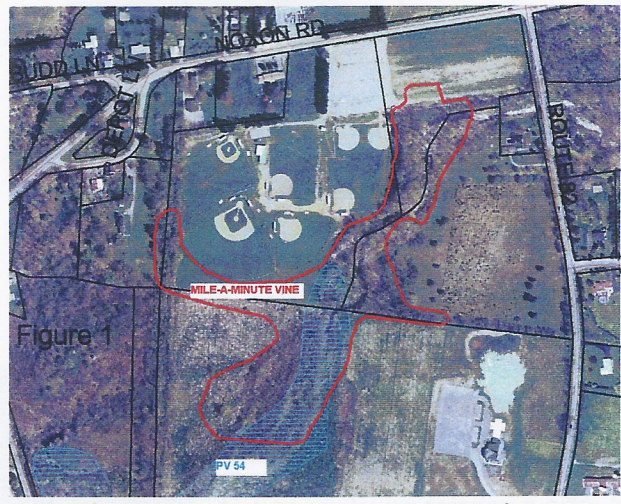
"This is a very intensive process. We started on June 18 and will do this again next year," said Haff.

The two men will want to make sure the mile-a-minute never returns to the vine the way in Dutchess County. They encourage anyone who sees the vine to both control local authorities and pull the vine immediately. Because the vine can grow the same amount pulling should wear protective gloves, pants and long sleeves.

According to Oberly, if no fruits are present on the vine, the plant can be left on the ground.

**CREEPY CRAWLERS** moving from the town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council chairman, poses with the invasive. The mile-a-minute leaf is shaped like a triangle, or arrow head. Always wear protective gloves and clothing while handling the mile-a-minute vine. (Photos by Aaron Kowitz)

**Figure 1**



Aerial view of MAM infested area in July 2007



Htoo with MAM vine volunteers



Htoo with climbing MAM vines



Htoo bagging MAM vines



Laura Weyeneth (DEC) pulling MAM vines



Appendix F: Conservation Pillars.



In process work at Overlook School.



A class works on painting a pillar at Overlook Primary School, as art teacher, Carol DiPalo helps.



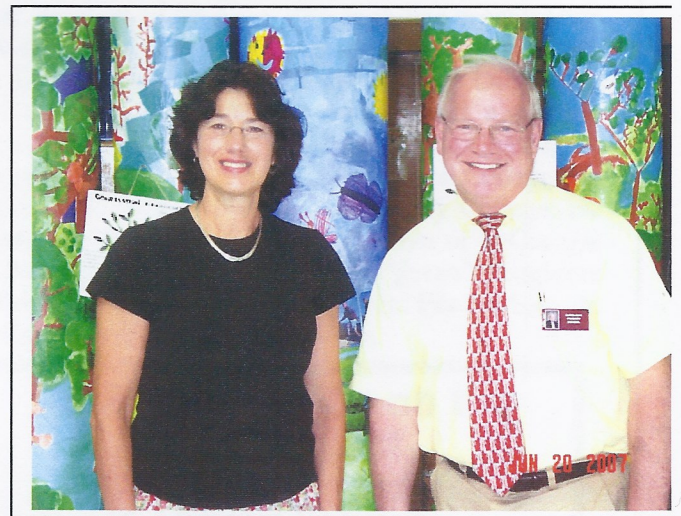
Display at Ocean's Best Seafood, one of the local area businesses to host the pillars.



Display at Hannaford's grocery store, one of the local area businesses to host the pillars.

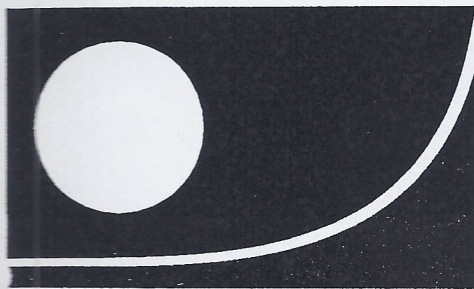


Setting up two pillars at Adams Market, one of the local area businesses to host the pillars



Overlook Primary School Art Educator and Project Coordinator, Carol DiPalo along with principal, Dr. Brad Fister in front of completed pillars.





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

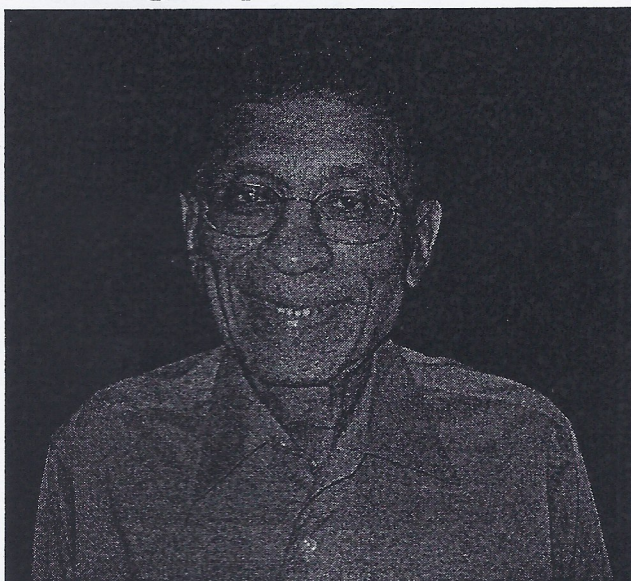
The twelfth annual Margery Sachs Service Award was presented to Dr. Maung Htoo, Chairman of the Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council and member of the Board of Directors of New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC). The award was presented on October 20th at the 2007 New 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 (CO3)-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