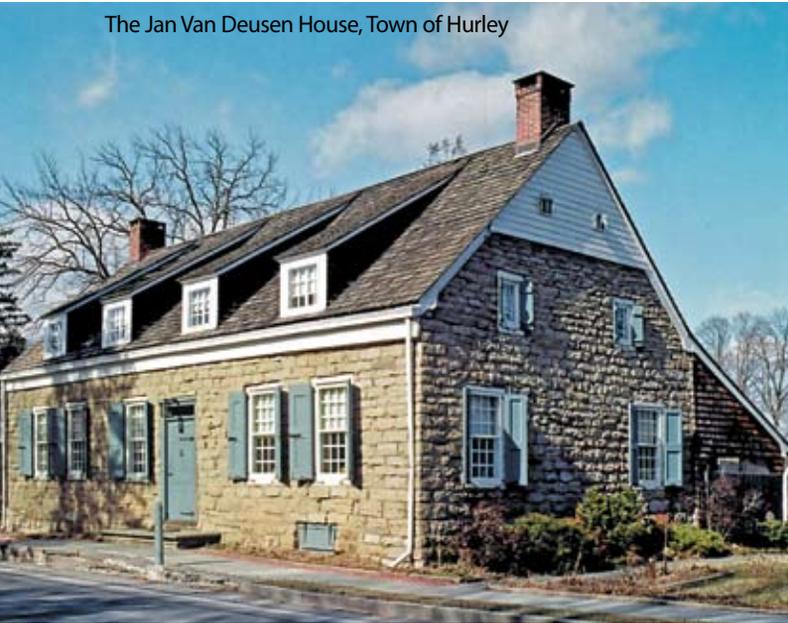




The Jan Van Deusen House, Town of Hurley



Hal Hauck, stonehouseday.org

Dutch Settler

I have been a subscriber since 1957, and really enjoyed the August issue which focused on the discovery and settlement of the Hudson River Valley. You and your readers might be interested to learn that today there remain 10 stone houses of Dutch origin in Hurley, New York. One, the Van Deusen House, was a temporary capitol of New York during the War for Independence.

Phil Van Deusen
East Haven, Connecticut

Thanks for sharing your story. It's great to hear from a descendant of one of the original Dutch settlers of the Hudson Valley.

—Jenna Kerwin, Staff Writer

Where the Heart Is

I just wish to complement you and your staff on the August issue. From the artwork of Mr. Tantillo to the Sanderson *Mannahatta* article, it was superb. My father was born in Manhattan, so it was wonderful to see what that magnificent island looked like when Hudson sailed up the river. I was born and raised in Saratoga Springs, where part of my family has been resident for 150 years. Although I have lived in Maryland for 45 years, my heart is still in New York and the Hudson Valley.

Benjamin Straus
Bowie, Maryland

We thank everyone who wrote or called to tell us how much they liked the special commemorative August Quadricentennial issue. We're always happy to hear from our readers, especially when they have something nice to say.

—the *Conservationist* staff

More of the West

I noticed your August issue was entirely focused on the Champlain-Hudson corridor. I would like to see more articles about western New York in the magazine.

Disgruntled Westerner

Hailing from western New York myself (northern Chautauqua County, to be exact), I agree. See Whither it May Flow and A Teacher's Legacy in the October issue.

—Dave Nelson, Editor

Conquering Mountains

I enjoyed the fire towers article in the October issue. As a matter of fact, my friends and I have visited several New York fire towers, inspired by the Fire Tower Challenge, created by the Glens Falls-Saratoga Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club (www.adk-gfs.org/fire_tower_challenge.html). To date, between us we have hiked all five of the Catskill towers and eighteen of the Adirondack summits.

Carol Wierzbowski
Schenectady

Congratulations! Thanks for sharing your photos and story. You and your friends are quite the fire tower aficionados.

—Dave Nelson, Editor

Overlooked Towers

I would like to thank the *Conservationist* for publishing the article on the centennial of New York's fire towers. As pointed out, fire towers continue to serve the people of New York nearly twenty years after their official closing.

However, I am disappointed that the fire towers outside of the two forest preserves (on Long Island, and in the lower Hudson Valley, the Hudson Highlands, the Southern Tier, and the Taconic Mountains) were omitted from this article. Presently, eleven fire towers outside of the Adirondacks and Catskills are under various stages of restoration, or waiting to begin restoration work. Furthermore, an effort to re-erect a fire tower on Long Island has been moving forward in a positive direction.

These fire towers are visited by thousands of people annually... (and we should) acknowledge these other towers and the volunteer restoration workers.

Bill Starr, State Director, Forest Fire Lookout Association, Scotia, Schenectady County

Red Hill Fire Tower, Catskills



✉ LETTERS

You're absolutely right. There are many towers outside the "blue line" worthy of visitation. One of my childhood favorites is the Summit Fire Tower in Allegany State Park.

—Dave Nelson, Editor

Swing and a Miss?

I was walking in the snow at DEC's Rogers Environmental Education Center and came across these odd tracks. They measured about 20" long and 3" wide, maximum. Can you tell me what could have made them?

Christina Shubert
Sherburne



Though it's difficult to judge what could've made these strange tracks, one possibility may be a "swing and a miss." A bird of prey may have been in the midst of a swoop attack, but (fortunately for its possible meal) the critter in the snow got away. The resulting tracks may be from the bird's wing tips.

—Gordon Batcheller, DEC Wildlife Biologist

📖 REVIEW by Shannon Brescher Shea

Farewell, My Subaru

By Doug Fine

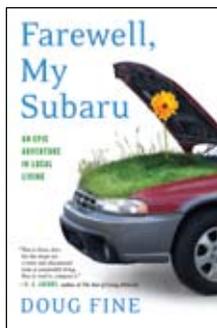
224 pages; soft cover \$15.00

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Farewell, My Subaru is subtitled, "An Epic Adventure in Local Living," and certainly earns that moniker. Although "local living" can imply lackadaisical browsing at the farmer's market, Doug Fine throws his commitment to sustainability into drive and never hits the brakes. Once a war correspondent, Fine writes about his attempts to maintain his modern lifestyle—including ice cream and stereo subwoofers—in the face of his desire to reduce his dependency on fossil fuels. To achieve his green dream, he tackles four major projects at his New Mexico ranch: raising livestock, installing solar panels, converting his vehicle to run on restaurant grease, and growing a large garden.

Despite the apparent simplicity of these goals, Fine manages to turn his pursuit into hilarious misadventures. His very first task is adopting a pair of nanny goats to ensure a steady supply of homemade ice cream. But shortly after picking them up from his local breeder, the desert sky cast down thunder, lightning



Deadly Pursuit

I thought you might be interested in some pictures my 17-year-old daughter took in our backyard in Glenville. An ermine was hunting a squirrel.

Lindy Sue Czubernat
Schenectady

Thanks for sharing the photos. Not many people get to witness, let alone photograph, this kind of National Geographic event. Members of the weasel family—which includes mink, fisher, skunks, otters and wolverines—ermine (or short-tailed weasels) are ferocious hunters, and will kill animals that are several times their size. The squirrel provided much needed food to help this ermine survive the winter.

—Eileen Stegemann, Assistant Editor



Write to us

Conservationist Letters
NYSDEC, 625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4502

or e-mail us at: magazine@gw.dec.state.ny.us

and lots of rain. The resulting deluge—the worst August flood in history—forced him to ford two different rivers separating his new ranch from the city. While he struggled to keep wayward fish out of his car, his infant goats butted the windshield with their tiny horns.

Although most people will never battle predatory coyotes or scald themselves with solar-heated water, even the least green of us can learn a lesson or two from Fine. He is honest and funny when describing his experiments, sharing both his failures and accomplishments. He includes some political commentary, but his candor should be refreshing to even the most apolitical reader.

Overall, Fine's experience shows us that even when it isn't easy to change your lifestyle, it can be incredibly rewarding. To assist us in our own endeavors, he recommends five major steps people can take towards sustainability. Even though they aren't as painful as most of his escapades, these suggestions—from eating locally to supporting smart growth—can provide a new perspective. For anyone who is interested in living "off the grid" or just likes to laugh, *Farewell, My Subaru* illustrates how the road to sustainability can lead to hilarity and wisdom in equal degree.

Former *Conservationist* staff writer **Shannon Brescher Shea** currently works for the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C.