

New York Is Lagging as Seas And Risks Rise, Critics Warn

520-Mile Coast and Subways Seen as Vulnerable

By MIREYA NAVARRO

With a 520-mile-long coast lined largely by teeming roads and fragile infrastructure, New York City is gingerly facing up to the intertwined threats posed by rising seas and ever-more-severe storm flooding.

Only a year ago, they point out, the city shut down the subway system and ordered the evacuation of 370,000 people as Hurricane Irene barreled up the Atlantic coast. Ultimately, the hurricane weakened to a tropical

So Bloomberg exhausted a long list of ministrations, including lands, in some proportion out of the city. But the high awareness is moving the project could cripple districts, hundreds from the

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and a bank account that pays 2 percent interest — “almost nothing,” they say — even though the consumer price index rose an average of 2.5 percent

ments say they have good reason to keep their own borrowing costs as low as they possibly can. Just last week, the government's

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TEACHERS' STRIKE IN CHICAGO TESTS MAYOR AND UNION

NO SCHOOL FOR 350,000

Complaints Over Pay, Benefits, Class Size

By JEFFREY M. HESTER

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here, suggesting that the fight in Chicago was merely one glimpse at a mounting national struggle over unionized teachers' pay.

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Marathon Ends Drought for Murray and Britain

By GREG BISHOP

Late Monday night at the United States Open, Sean Connery danced and Kevin Spacey clapped and the capacity crowd at Arthur Ashe Stadium stood in unison. Andy Murray, Scotland's perennial tennis bridesmaid, covered his mouth with both hands, suspended in disbelief.

The crowd cheered for Murray, for Britain, for the tennis history it witnessed for nearly five hours. When the match ended, after Novak Djokovic's service return sailed long, Murray had become the first British man to capture a Grand Slam singles championship since Fred Perry in 1936.

The final score was 7-6 (10), 7-5, 2-6, 3-6, 6-2. All of Britain, or so it seemed, heaved a sigh of relief. Its men's singles drought, which started when Perry was just a tennis champion and not a name



— even in major cities with strong pro-union traditions, like Los Angeles and Philadelphia — teachers' unions have faced a push for concessions, whether it

that are anathema to union leaders and their members. At the same time, with many teachers and their unions already viewed unfavorably by many Americans,

on their heels in recent years. If the famously feisty Mr. Emanuel wins this confrontation, he could set the table for a major

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ELECTION 2012

A Boost for Obama

President Obama raised more money in August than Mitt Romney did, outpacing him for the first time since the spring and adding to a sense in both parties that Mr. Obama is entering the post-convention sprint to Election Day in a slightly stronger position. Mr. Romney's campaign called the post-convention polling gain a “sugar high” that would not last.

BY JIM FETTERBERG AND JEFF ZELENY. PAGE A5

Senate Control Uncertain

This fight for the Senate has split

Communist Leader's Absence Sets Off Rumor Mills in China

By IAN JOHNSON

BEIJING — The strange disappearance from public view of China's presumptive new leader is turning a year that was supposed to showcase the Communist Party's stability into something of an annus horribilis.

Over the past week, the new leader, Xi Jinping, has missed at least three scheduled meetings with foreign dignitaries, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton last Wednesday and the prime minister of Do-

auto accident when a military official tried to injure or kill him in a revenge plot. A well-connected political analyst in Beijing said in an interview that Mr. Xi might have had a mild heart attack.

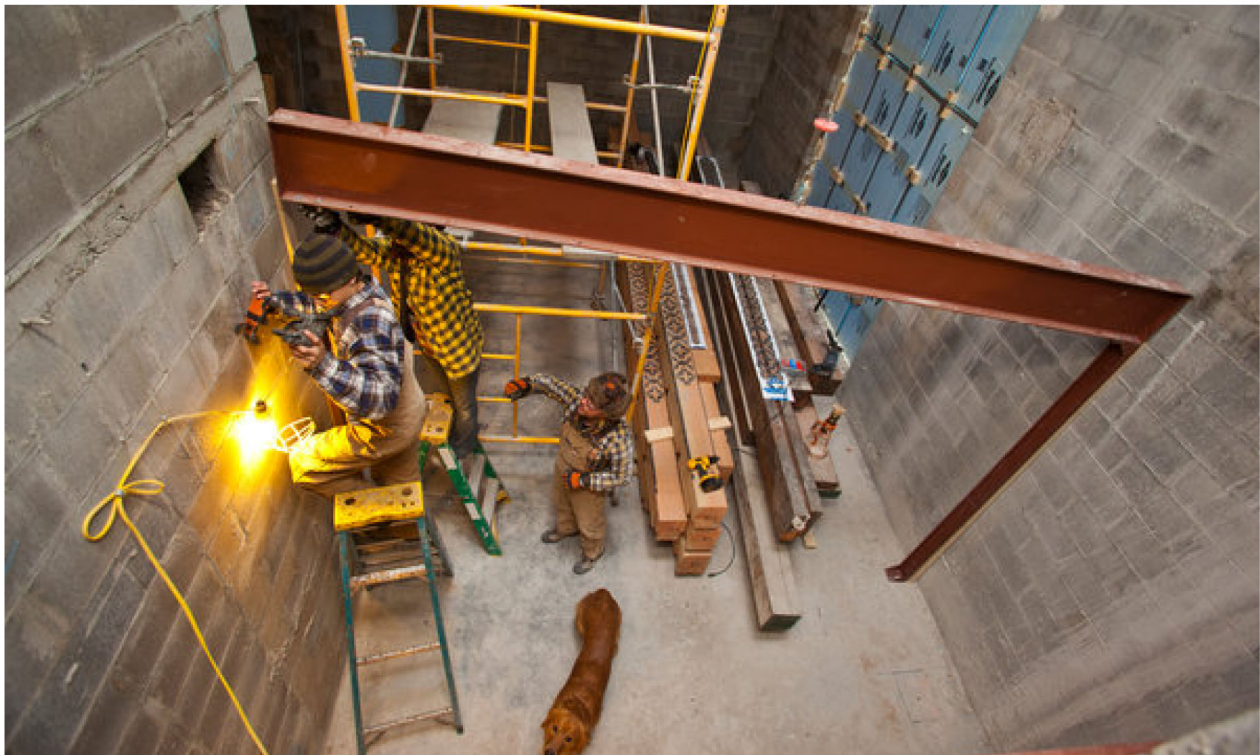
Whatever the actual reason, Mr. Xi's unexplained absences are conspicuous on the eve of what is supposed to be China's 100th anniversary



N.Y. / Region

ADIRONDACKS JOURNAL

Stumbling Upon a Castle in the Forest and Deciding to Finish It



Members of the Ramsgard family positioning a steel beam inside their medieval-style castle in Tupper Lake, N.Y.
NANCIE BATTAGLIA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

By LIZ LEYDEN
NOVEMBER 25, 2011

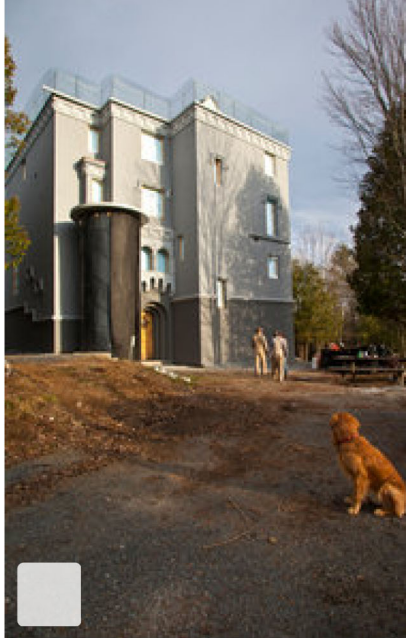
TUPPER LAKE, N.Y. — Moving through his unfinished mountain home, Andy Ramsgard carries a leatherbound book full of sketches.

The sketches, when viewed in the open rooms of exposed concrete and scattered tools, conjure a sense of what will be: the floating balcony to the great room, the stone fireplace to gather around, the crenelated parapet rimming the rooftop — “So we can rain arrows down on unwanted intruders below,” he explained.

Up a winding road in this Adirondack town, past small houses stacked with

firewood and marked by snowmobile trails, a castle rises in the forest.

Four stories of thick concrete, a spiral staircase and a turret stand amid white pines and cedar. The rooftop tower is yet to come, but it is in the sketches, as well as secret passageways and a spy hole hidden in a painting.



Tosh, the family's golden retriever, outside of the castle.

NANCIE BATTAGLIA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Oh, and there will be a drawbridge.

“When people think of castles, it’s mostly Cinderella stories,” Mr. Ramsgard, an architect, said. “My goal is to be halfway between Robin Hood and Monty Python.”

Like a knight on a quest, Mr. Ramsgard, 46, is trying to finish a project a quarter of a century in the making.

Two years ago, his wife, Sherie, read about some unusual property for sale in Tupper Lake, a small northern town of about 6,000 people: 20 acres, including an unfinished castle.



“I had to decide whether or not to tell him about it,” she said with a laugh. “I knew what might happen.”

It was completely impractical for the Ramsgards, who lived more than three hours away in Skaneateles, with their children, Ruby, 10, and Rex, 13.

But Mr. Ramsgard was intrigued, and one weekend, he made the long drive to Tupper Lake.

“I walked up and had to take a deep breath,” he said. The windows were boarded up, and the inside was pitch black. A flashlight revealed what his feet already felt: puddles.

“It was literally raining inside,” he said. “Think dungeon: dark, damp and dank.”

The castle had belonged to Edward Leary, a Tupper Lake resident with a passion for medieval history. Mr. Leary, who had moved to the area to teach high school Latin, traveled widely to study castle designs. He went to [Boldt Castle](#) in the Thousand Islands region and to the famed [Biltmore Estate](#) in North Carolina. He jotted ideas on envelopes, napkins and scraps of paper, until, in 1986, at age 40, he bought his land.

“Ed loved the Adirondacks,” his sister Karen Watson said. “There are a lot of eccentric people there, and that spirit of doing things your own way lent itself to what Ed wanted to do.”

For years, Mr. Leary savored the work, doing most of it with help from a friend who was a mason. He petitioned the [Adirondack Park Agency](#) for permission to build a stone tower — 20 feet higher than the park allowed — atop his kingly retreat.

The tower, he wrote, would “lend a definite aura of neo-Gothic enchantment to the surrounding area.” The agency granted his request, but in 2009, before he reached the roof, Mr. Leary, 62, died from a staph infection.

His story, and his passion, struck a chord in Mr. Ramsgard.

“He really went out and did it,” he said. “People dream about a lot of things, but life gets in the way sometimes.”

In 2008, Sherie Ramsgard learned she had breast cancer. Within months, Mr. Ramsgard punctured a lung in a biking accident. As he recovered, she endured a double mastectomy. In a way, Mrs. Ramsgard said, those hardships led them to the castle door.

“It made us rethink our life and what we wanted to do with it,” she said. “We realized we just wanted to be with our family.”

They said yes to the castle. They conquered heights, installing lofty ceiling beams, and performed feats of strength, dragging nearly 100 bags of concrete mix, each one 80 pounds, up the spiral staircase to complete what Mr. Leary had begun.

“Buns and thighs, baby,” Mrs. Ramsgard said.

“The castle workout,” he laughed.

Their weekends revolve around the castle, whether they are cutting windows, hanging hand-stenciled arches or scouring junk shops for shields and swords for the armory.

There will be six bedrooms, all with a subtle theme from a classic medieval game: chess. One of the six and a half bathrooms will be accessible through a secret door in a library bookcase.

The Ramsgards have exhausted two cement mixers and eaten countless takeout picnics outside among the trees, but lately they have begun to see their own story imprinted within its walls: at the machine where Ruby spent hours cutting steel bars to support concrete; in the rooftop chimney hole, where Mrs. Ramsgard found Rex napping in the sun.

Thomas Shaheen, a neighbor and a retiree, marveled at the family’s work.

“I’ve watched that go up since the first block and can’t believe where it is now,” he said. “It was a real labor of love. Ed would be so happy to see that somebody wanted to keep it going.”

The family has grown its own castle dreams: a suit of armor for Rex, an archery course for Ruby, a wine cellar doubling as a screening room for movies like “A Knight’s Tale.”

And while there is much work to be done, Mr. Ramsgard is already sketching out the ultimate castle-warming party: Dec. 12, 2012.

“We didn’t get to write the beginning of this story, but we get to write the middle, and that’s good enough,” Mr. Ramsgard said. “This castle will live on long past us, but we get to be a part of it. For now, we’re appreciating the moment.”