Rice Creek Associates Newsletter

Summer 2019

From the Director

The Canal Forest Restoration Program, A New Initiative at Rice Creek Field Station

The objective of this program is to restore some of the native trees that now barely exist in the wild because of over-exploitation in the lumber industry. White oak, swamp white oak, and white pine are highly desired for their woods.

White oak wood being dense, resilient, durable, and impermeable to liquids, is traditionally used to make barrels, ships, boats, and a variety of other items ranging from flooring to fine furniture. White oak is a long-lived tree and has a broad round crown with dense foliage and attractive rose-colored leaves in fall.

Smaller in size, swamp white oak wood has similar features to that of white oak, but leaf lobes are shallower, with the lower surface of leaves being silvery white with star-shaped hairs. Its fall color is yellow mixed with orange.

White pine wood is light and has straight grain and uniform structure. It cuts easily in all directions and is used in framing homes and virtually everything from matches to masts. These trees also are important symbols in the Native American culture. For example, white pine is known as the "Tree of Peace." Beside their seeds and acorns historically being used for food, these trees are also excellent ornamental trees. White pine has beautiful long shiny needles and is among one of our tallest trees, reaching 130 feet.

Last winter, I was contacted by Dr. George Pauk, a retired physician. George and his wife Jane were using a nursery in Newark for the Canal Forest Restoration Project. That nursery closed in summer of 2018 and George expressed his desire of partnership with our Field Station. At the time I was contacted by National Grid asking for permission to cut down some 60 ash trees along Rice Creek power line in anticipation of the inevitable damage expected due to the stem ash borer coming to our area. With that in mind, I immediately realized the potential of this project.

George and Jane spent thousands of dollars of their own money since they started this work in 2016. With the financial support of the Pauks family, Rice Creek provides a 2500 square foot enclosure to raise seedlings and samplings of the three species named above, until they are ready for distribution. Our objective is to raise 1000 trees and double this number next year. This year we got seedlings of the three tree species from the New York State Nursery in Saratoga including

3000 seedlings from seed of white oaks George and Jane has collected last year.

Once the trees reach a reasonable size we will take them to gathering places such as farmers markets and fairs. This will be a wonderful opportunity to give free trees and talk about the importance of restoring these trees and the value of conservation in general.

Kamal I. Mohamed

Memorable moments at Rice Creek

Please share with us a special experience you've had at Rice Creek. A picture is not required. It will appear in a future newsletter. Send it to **me** at fordlep@yahoo.com.

- Mike

The Summer children's program, Exploring Nature at Rice Creek, was a success. **Tim McMonagle**, our weekend naturalist, oversaw designing/running the program for this summer.

The RCA Board has generously provided all families with complimentary membership to RCA through year 2019, allowing families to register at the RCA discounted rate.

Also, from generous RCA donors, five children were able to attend and enjoy this wonderful program as Scholarship payment!

28 children are planned for week one (July 8-12) and 29 were planned for week two (July 15-19).

Thank you to the donors and to our new members, we look forward to a long-lasting relationship!

Rice Creek Reflections

We have recently offered three Rice Creek Reflections at the field station. The following are synopses of the talks.

Lyme Disease Discussed at Early Spring Reflection

Mary Beth Pfeiffer, an investigative journalist and author of a book on the tick-borne illness, gave a presentation at the field station on Saturday, April 6.

In a stereotypical professional manner, Mary Beth began her presentation explaining what Lyme disease is not:

- what doctors have been told
- small (427,000 documented cases)
- under control

Approximately 17,000 to 42,000 cases occur per year. More disconcerting, there has been a 2400% increase in Oswego County since 2012.

Mary Beth considers Lyme disease to be the first epidemic of climate change. She clearly stated that climate change did not cause Lyme disease

but rather helps to facilitate its spread. How so? Birds are vectors for the ticks so they (the ticks) can be easily spread to otherwise unaffected areas. Also, since 1970, New York state has been 4.4 degrees warmer, aiding in ticks' survival through the winter months. A result of these warmer temperatures is that trees leaf out eight days sooner than previously, and bees appear ten days earlier in the season.

White mice typically carry ticks in forest fragments. In Duchess County, New York, it was determined that the smaller the fragments the more ticks were found. In addition to mice, deer are also carriers of ticks (Editor's note: Keep in mind that ticks are not particular on the type of mammal on which they parasitize; they just want a blood source.).

Mary Beth Pfeiffer

This epidemic is both new and global. A new tick species, the Asian long-horned tick, is the first new tick species to enter our country in 50 years.

Unfortunately, Lyme disease is often misdiagnosed. Patients are told they are depressed or anxious, despite protestations that they are still sick, broke from inability to work, and constantly hungry.

Mary Beth enumerated some myths of Lyme disease. These have shaped and limited care of the disease, and need to be dispelled:

1. Lyme disease is overdiagnosed.
2. Lyme disease testing is reliable.
3. Lyme disease is hard to get.
4. Lyme disease is easy to treat, and is not a chronic disease.

Many other facts concerning the disease were presented- too numerous to mention them all. A few in particular are that the nymph tick is the most dangerous stage because, due to its smaller size, it is often undetected on the body. Another important fact is that it normally takes 24 to 48 hours for the infection to occur.

There are some precautions we can all take to lessen our chances of being infected:

- Be vigilant where you go.
- Consider using permthrin on your clothes, which is quite effective against ticks.
- Check yourself thoroughly, especially after being present in areas known to have ticks.
- Avoid tall weeds.
- Cover up. Use light colored clothing. Heat the clothes you wore in a dryer for 15 minutes.

Mary Beth's book: *Lyme- The First Epidemic of Climate Change*, is an excellent resource containing the history of the disease and the story behind the latest developments for treating it. In addition, other tick-borne diseases are also discussed. It can be obtained through *river's end bookstore* in Oswego as well as other book outlets.

RCA would like to thank Mary Beth Pfeiffer for sharing her investigative experiences on Lyme. We intend to keep our membership updated on any further developments on Lyme disease.

- Mike

A Reflection on John Weeks' Reflections

On Saturday May 4, our esteemed area naturalist John Weeks took us on a trip down memory lane.

John Weeks

John was so enthusiastic for this event that he began speaking before his formal introduction, stating that he hoped he wouldn't put anyone to sleep. That's when Board member Peter Rosenbaum stepped in to make the introduction. John then replied, "Good- I'll sit down and you can put ME to sleep!"

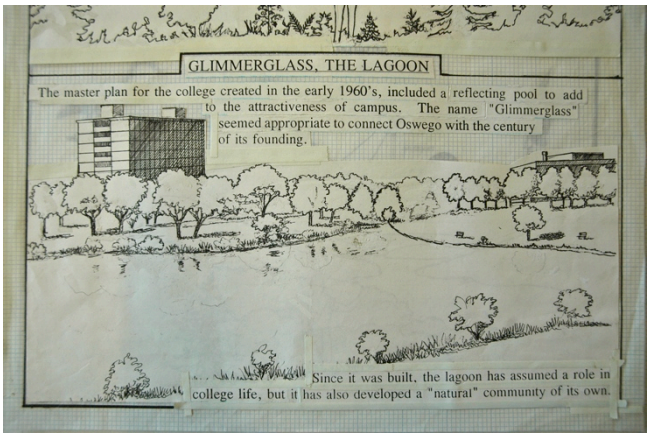
John's talk centered on moments in his life that inspired him to accomplish all that he did.

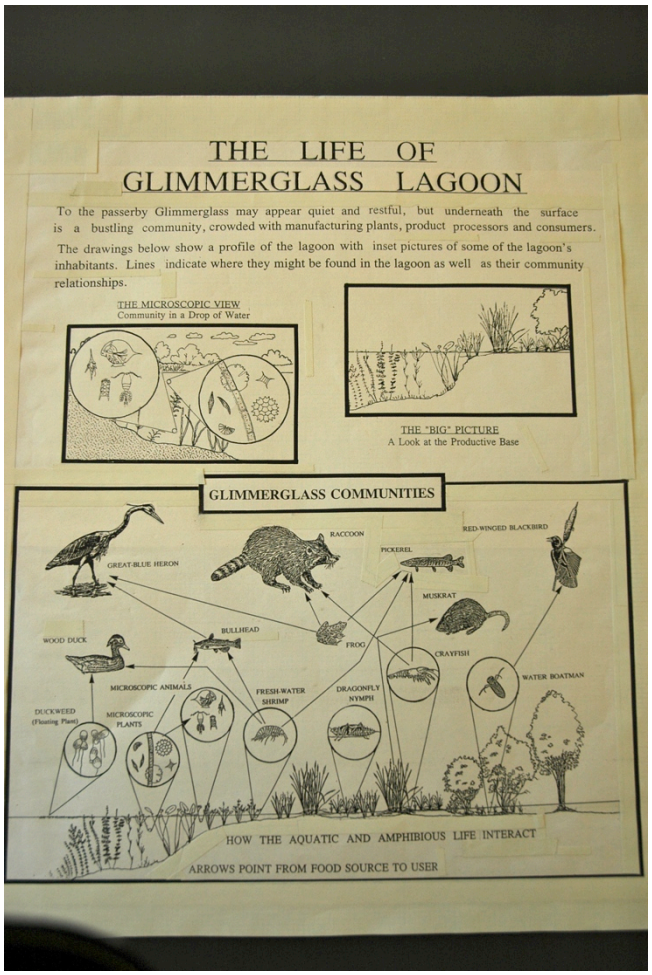
He began by recalling that in 1957 there were only eight science teachers employed at SUNY Oswego when he was hired. He would be the only field biologist at the college. His initiation to the group: a colleague releasing a bowling ball down the hall of a former army barracks (housing the science department at that time) as he was giving a lecture. The noise was quite noticeable in that building.

Other snippets he recalled as inspiring him:

As Scientist: John was instrumental for the creation of Rice Creek Field Station. At the time of his employ, the college administration did not see the need for one. Nevertheless, John discovered a 25-acre farmland situated between two hills that could be flooded to create a pond- known to the local residents as Hilton's pasture, cow-grazing field. A 17-page prospectus was created, sent to the administration for approval, and finally sent to Albany for final approval.
In all, John was responsible for the creation of 80 ponds in New York State, many while working for the Conservation Dept. before coming to Oswego as an instructor, so he had valuable experience to guide him through the Rice Creek adventure.

Glimmerglass lagoon on the college campus was also developed and used to study the local flora and fauna. In fact, one course was specifically aimed at studying Glimmerglass. He got much satisfaction at inspiring students to appreciate the wonders of nature.





Glimmerglass Lagoon, SUNY Oswego campus

As artist: John had applied for a grant from the New York Council for the Arts to do a series of paintings illustrating the seasons at Rice Creek. These four paintings depicted one view of Rice Pond as it changed through the seasons. It is while doing this that John discovered that foxes would only visit the area after 5 p.m. The time reflected the difference of human activity during the day and when field station personnel would depart. The occurrence of daylight saving time would show the active wildlife beginning at 6 p.m., illustrating the scalar quantity that time is. These paintings are permanently displayed at the field station

John also produced four prints, one of which would be given to new members of Rice Creek Associates as the organization was in its early days of forming. These four prints depicted a woodchuck and arrow weed, a kingfisher, a bluebird and maple tree (state bird and tree for New York), and a fallen pear tree with courting flickers with a morning glory wrapping itself around the remaining tree trunk. Some of these prints, produced in limited numbers, are still available for purchase.

All of the prints and illustrations that John posted or shared with us during his talk he graciously donated to the field station.

A sampling of John's work

His interest in art came from his father, a commercial artist for 42 years. John was the youngest of six children. His father encouraged him to sketch while he was a very young boy.

As an art teacher: John taught the drawing of nature to BOCES classes. He stressed that as an illustrator, one creates a picture that must be scientifically accurate, as opposed to an artist,

who puts an interpretation or self into the scene being composed.

As a naturalist / commentator / teacher / philosopher: John produced essays that he read on-air on WRVO titled "The Nature of Things." These weekly segments ran for 24 years. Every week he would end his segment by saying, "Well, that's all I have for today, see you next week, and keep it natural."

First row: John Weeks, Mike Holy, RCA President Robert Foster, RCA Treasurer Wendy Fragale. Second row: Field Station Director Kamal Mohamed, Peter Rosenbaum, Former Station Director Andy Nelson, RCA Co-vice presidents Pat Jones and Sheri Morey

He also wrote a column for the Syracuse Post Standard with the same title used on his radio spots. Emphasis would be placed on what happened to nature and the world we live in, and how nature provides limited resources that, altered by man, can have negatively lasting effects on the living things around us.

From his talk, one could see that at 95, the fire still burns in John. What is mentioned here reflects a very small view of the accomplishments and experiences he has had. Creation of other nature centers, field notes observing birds, insects, wildflowers, mammals and more could not possibly fit into the time we allotted for his presentation. Those of us who have known him for years and those only recently meeting his acquaintance become mesmerized at his straightforward, simple, yet profound views of nature and man's role in it, the good as well as the bad. We are all the richer for it.

- Mike

Field Guides available at Rice Creek

As the spring season approaches, it is the perfect time to purchase our field guides. Although specifically centered on the flora and fauna at Rice Creek, the guides contain useful information on many species that are found outside the field station boundaries.

Guides on Butterflies, Invasive Plants, and Mammals are available. RCA members receive a discount on their purchases. Stop at the field station or call 315-312-6677 for more information.

Program held on raising Monarchs and attracting butterflies at home

On Saturday, June 6, Robert Neiderhoff conducted an RCA Reflection on raising Monarch caterpillars at home.

Butterfly gardens can be inexpensive to cultivate- many native plants can be purchased cheaply or seeds can be collected for free. Common milkweed, the local favorite of Monarchs in our area, can be easily grown from seed collected in the autumn or from young plants transplanted in the spring. Weeds in lawns also attract butterflies and other insects and help in establishing biodiversity in neighborhoods.

Monarchs, when eaten by birds, cause intestinal discomfort and teach them to refrain from future Monarch meals. Similarly colored and patterned butterflies, such as the Viceroy, benefit from

having similar wing colors and patterns and are thus spared from serving as bird food.

It is from a chemical in milkweed that is poisonous that provides this protection. In fact, some 60% of monarch larvae die from it after only two meals of milkweed, according to Robert.

Robert Neiderhoff, Ph.D.

A female Monarch will typically deposit one egg per plant. Approximately five days after being deposited, young larvae appear. They devour the shells from which they hatched and are ready to begin feeding on leaves.

Robert shared his experiences raising the caterpillars:

- He prefers using single leaves rather than a whole plant. This ensures the oozing out of some latex from the stem, reducing the chances of an early poisoning death.
- Obtain Monarch caterpillars and eggs from milkweed in fields. Do not purchase them- purchased larvae interfere with natural cycles.
- Raise your larvae outside. Indoor temperatures can affect larval growth rates and also affect natural cycles.
- Place each larva on a separate leaf. This will guard against the possibility of spreading any diseases.
- By the end of two weeks, the caterpillars will become large. The caterpillars will then molt for the last time and form a chrysalis.
- Over time, the color of the chrysalis will turn from green to clear, with wing colors becoming visible at that time.
- When emerging from the chrysalis, it will take two to three hours for the wings to spread and dry.

Robert then shared his results for the 2018 season.

- He released 149 Monarchs: 72 males and 77 females.
- The first chrysalis formed on June 16; the last butterfly emerged in mid-September.

As he continued his talk, he explained that it is not the Monarch per se that is in danger as is often stated, but rather the **migration** of them that is. Typical summer adults live approximately one month, but migrating adults can live up to six months.

The reasons for the decline of Monarchs are the shrinking of forest habitat in Mexican winter sites, loss of milkweed and wildflowers due to increased herbicide use, widespread use of insecticides on farms and for mosquito control, and climate change.

Herbicide use eliminates milkweed in many habitats, including roadsides and edges of crop fields. Permethrin, an insecticide, is highly toxic to butterflies, bees and all insects. Spraying it over fields to control mosquito populations causes devastating damage to local food chains and webs (Use of premethrin on clothing to prevent mosquito bites IS an acceptable use.).

Climate change affects migration timing, the result of which could bring fewer Monarchs to their overwintering sites. Climate change also increases the frequency of catastrophic weather events, with similar results.

What measures can we take to help Monarchs and other insects to thrive? Any or all of these actions will help:

- Plant milkweed. Though there are approximately 140 species worldwide, grow species that are native to your area of the country. In central New York, common milkweed (Asclepias syriaca) and butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa) are good choices. Swamp milkweed (Asclepias incarnate) is also found in our area, but grows best in wet areas and is not a good choice for local gardens.
- If you are looking for larvae from the field for your garden, concentrate on milkweed growing in partial shade. They are less likely to be found on plants subjected to full sun.
- Any of these plants will attract Monarchs and other insects to your garden:
  Sunflowers (Helianthus sp.)
  Coneflowers (Rudbeckia sp.)
  Beebalm (Monarda sp.)
  New England Aster (Aster)
  Goldenrod (Solidago sp.)
  Cardinal flower (Lobelia sp.)
  Blue vervain (Verbena sp.)
  Phlox (Phlox sp.)
  Robert suggested that individuals refer to ESF Professor Donald Leopold's *Native Plants of the Northeast* for further reference.

For more on Robert's Monarch adventures, go to Facebook groups:
#longlivethemonarchy
#neiderhoffbutterflyranch
#sonsofmonarchy

Robert commented that children today do not experience nature the way they did generations before. A trip though a field or raising milkweed and Monarchs in addition to a butterfly garden using the plants listed here would be an excellent way to give them that natural experience.

Additional references for article:

Donald Cox, 1985, *Common Flowering Plants of the Northeast*, SUNY Oswego

W.K. Chapman, V.A. Chapman, A.E. Bessette, A.R. Bessette, D.R. Pens, 1998, *Wildflowers of New York*, Syracuse University Press

-Mike

Rice Creek Associates

(RCA) is a support group that was formed in 1986 for the purpose of furthering the goals of Rice Creek Field Station (RCFS). It is the intent of RCA to expand the scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities at the station through community involvement. RCA makes it possible to fund improvement projects that benefit the station and the community at large.

We strive to serve our membership as best as possible. Please address all newsletter and RCA membership concerns directly by contacting Mike Holy at 315-622-1774 or email Mike at fordlep @yahoo.com.

Rice Creek Field Station

Rice Creek Field Station is a part of the State University of New York at Oswego. While its primary function is to provide facilities for field-oriented research and courses in the natural sciences taught at the college, facilities are also available for public education and recreation.

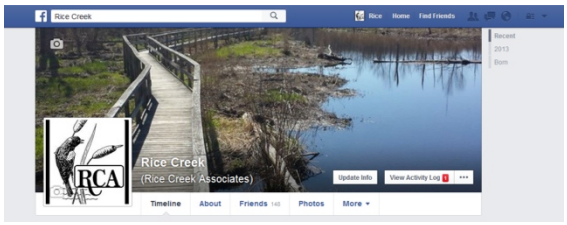
The field station houses superb collections, field equipment, and laboratories. It is surrounded by several hundred acres of forest, fields, trails and wetlands, including Rice Pond. School children visit the field station and many individuals and groups use the area for hiking and cross-country skiing.

Rice Creek welcomes dogs. However, to protect sensitive natural features and as a courtesy to other visitors, dogs should be on a six foot leash. Also, please be kind and clean up after your pet. Thank you.

Directions: To get to Rice Creek Field Station take Route 104, turn south on Thompson Rd., located 100 yards west of the College's main entrance. The field station is 1.4 miles on the right.
Hours:
Monday to Friday 9:00 am -- 4:30 pm
Saturday 9:00 am -- 3:00 pm
Trails are open dawn to dusk daily.
When visiting Rice Creek, please sign in and out at one of the brown registration boxes.

Rice Creek Associates (RCA) is on Facebook

To connect with RCA on Facebook, sign up for Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/ or sign in using your existing account. When linking to RCA as an added friend, search for Rice Creek like you would search for a new friend. You will know you have the right link to add RCA when you see this RCA logo as a profile picture along with a field station photo as its cover page, like so:



Current RCA Board Members

Robert Foster, President
Pat Jones, Co-Vice President
Sheri Morey, Co-Vice President
Wendy Fragale, Treasurer
Michael Holy, Secretary, Newsletter Editor
Maria Sagot, Small Grants Chair
Laurel Artz
Andrew McElwain
Peter Rosenbaum
Matt Gorman, student representative

Rice Creek Field Station Staff

Kamal Mohamed, Director
Wendy Fragale, Secretary
Alan Harris, Groundskeeper

Membership Renewal Reminder

Our yearly membership runs from March 1 to February 28. Last year the RCA Board approved a measure to move renewal from Jan. 1 to prevent renewals from coinciding with the Christmas season. Our renewal category rates have not changed, despite our ever-increasing costs. If you have any questions concerning your current RCA membership, contact **Mike** at the phone/email address listed under **Rice Creek Associates** on the previous page.

Our Board of Directors thanks you for your support and looks forward to bringing you the best that Rice Creek has to offer.

We consider all member information confidential and will not share it with any other groups or businesses.

Join/renew RCA membership

Name _____

Address_____

City_____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Date _____

All memberships are Mar. 1 – Feb. 28

____ New Membership
____ Membership renewal

Level:

___ Student	5.00
___ Individual	10.00
___ Family/Couple	15.00
___ Contributing	25.00
___ Sustaining	50.00
___ Life	250.00
___ Corporate	500.00

I/We would like to make **a tax-deductible contribution in addition to membership fees** to the

___ General Fund
___ Trail improvement
___ Exploring Nature Program for Children

in the amount of $ _____.

Total enclosed (membership + contribution)
$ _____. Date _____

Please make checks payable to:
Oswego College Foundation/RCA
Return to:
Rice Creek Field Station #23
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, New York 13126

June at Rice Creek

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Blue Flag Iris

Rice Creek Associates
RCFS #23
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, New York 13126

To: