



Rice Creek Associates Newsletter

Spring 2020

President's Comments

As I sit down to write this, I am perplexed about what to actually write. There were several things I thought I was going to write about, but two rounds of influenza changed all that. Then the world was swept into the Coronavirus. After overdosing on news conferences today, I took a break and spent time in the yard picking up sticks and trimming away dead stalks from my Jefferson Heirloom Seeds flower garden. As I walked around I found a beautiful clump of crocuses. And I realized that nature will carry on, no matter what else is happening. Just have to go outside for fresh air and beauty will appear.



Spring is always an adventure in Oswego, 65 degrees one day, snowing the next. But as time passes April showers arrive. And then, before the May flowers bloom, comes mud. Now mud is thought of as being dirty and something you do not want to drag into your homes. But really, mud is quite wonderful. It means the ground is getting the moisture it needs, so spring plant growth can occur. Ground water is being stored up. If you have a good pair of rain boots it is an interesting time to take a trail walk. Just try to disrupt the path as little as possible so as to not damage the roots underneath the mud. It is also a great time to go out looking for animal tracks.

Spring is always a time of excitement, kind of like nature's renaissance; there is rebirth everywhere in nature. Since the field station is closed for the time being, I have provided a copy of **John Weeks'** spring painting. You can look for the signs of spring in the picture, in the trees, the plants, and the various animals. Once we are past the pandemic, I strongly recommend coming into the station and viewing the paintings for all four seasons. Each season is showing the same area so comparisons can be observed. I used these as a teaching tool for years as an activity for my class field trips. **John** has created some other wonderful paintings as well that are on display in the foyer and hallway. Sometime when you visit for a trail walk, go inside and take a look.



Thank you to everyone who commented on the last newsletter. I heard from many people and I will do my best to deliver something meaningful each newsletter. Your encouragement is most humbly received and appreciated. It forces me to implement the writing skills I taught for many years. **Mike Holy** assembles the newsletter and does a great job of collecting a variety of entries, as well as submitting pieces of his own.

I will close with a few favorite quotes and a little poem, Mud. I made a little dance to this poem years ago in college in a Teaching Children's Dance class with **Dr. JoAnn Huff**. I have loved it ever since. Hopefully life will get back to normal, maybe a new normal, soon. In the meantime, we all need get outside and let nature help us heal.

“In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours.” **Mark Twain**

“Spring is when you feel like whistling, even with a shoe full of slush.” **Doug Larson**

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.” **Margaret Atwood**

“The flowers of late winter and early spring occupy places in our hearts well out of proportion to their size.” **Gertrude S. Wister**

Mud

Mud is very nice to feel
All squishy-squash between the toes!
I'd rather wade in wiggly mud
Than smell a yellow rose.

Nobody else but the rosebush knows
How nice mud feels
Between the toes.

~ **Polly Chase Boyden**

This poem is in the public domain.

- **Laurel Artz**

Director's Report

Reflection on Small Grants Program

Research, academic teaching & public education are the foundations of Rice Creek Field Station. The small grants program has helped move the balance between these foundational goals toward a more equal footing as it was intended to be since its inception in 1996. We are gratified that this transition has been successful. With a new round of Rice Creek Associates Small Grants in progress, I would like to reflect on our 20 plus years of experience with the program. The small grants are supported by RCA, and SUNY Oswego Provost' and Dean' Offices.

On average, RCA annually supported between 3-7 research projects in various academic areas including biology, geology, forensic bioarcheology, and art initiatives intersecting with biology. These projects increased our knowledge of the local area we live in. In addition, we successfully produced Field Guides specifically tailored to our area, which are user friendly and helped increase awareness of the biology of surrounding areas. Small grants also shaped collaborations between SUNY Oswego

faculty and students from different departments. Providing opportunities to train students in the sciences is part of our educational mission.

In recent years, our students and faculty gave over 60 presentations based on RCA grants, **18 of which won awards for best presentations**. These presentations were given at local, national, and international scientific meetings including the International Symposium on Microbial Ecology, Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, The 2018 Lepidopterists' Society Annual Meeting in Ottawa, Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Annual Meetings, Developmental Biology Annual Meetings, Society of Developmental Biology North Eastern Regional Meetings, Rochester Academy of Sciences Fall Paper Session, Northeast Microbiologists Physiology, Ecology and Taxonomy Meetings, Northeastern Regional Research Conference, Northeast Natural History Conference, Sigma Xi Poster Sessions (held in various cities in U.S.), Annual Fall Scientific Paper Session (held at various colleges in U.S.), and SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference.

Likewise, our students and faculty presented top-notch research, which has been published in peer-reviewed Journals. The followings are examples of our faculty and students peer-reviewed publications. * denote undergraduate mentee author.

Gibbons J*, P. Geetha-Loganathan. (2019). Processing Embryo, Eggshell and Fungal Culture for Scanning Electron Microscopy. *Journal of Visualized Experiments*. (150), e60018, doi:10.3791/60018.

Gibbons J*, S. Nimmagadda, P. Geetha-Loganathan. (2020). The Ultrastructure of *Chrysemys picta* Eggshell and Shell Membrane. *American Journal of Zoology*. Vol. 3, No. 1, 2020, pp. 10-16. doi: 10.11648/j.ajz.20200301.13.

Nelson, M*. & M. Sagot. (2018). Effects of temperature and day length on daily movements and home range of the southern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys volans*) in the northeastern United States. *Northeastern Naturalist*. 25:383-390

Olori, J.C., R. Netzband*, N. McKean*, J. Lowery*, K. Parsons, and S.T. Windstam. (2018). Multi-year dynamics of ranavirus, chytridiomycosis, and co-infections in a temperate host assemblage of amphibians. *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms* 130(3):187-197.

Razik. I* & M. Sagot. (2019). Effects of beavers (*Castor canadensis*) on vertebrate species richness in artificial ponds. *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management*. In review.

Solomon, G.M*, H.* Dodangoda, T.* McCarthy-Walker, R.* Ntim-Gyakari, and P.D. Newell. (2019). The Microbiota of *Drosophila suzukii* Influences the Larval Development of *Drosophila melanogaster*. *Journal of Life and Environmental Sciences* 7: e8097 <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.8097>

Tkachuk, K. A. and D. Dunn, (2020), Analysis of Sea Lamprey Environmental DNA during Lampricide Treatment in a Tributary of Lake Ontario. *Knowledge and Management of Aquatic Ecosystems*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2007.00777.x>

Windstam, S.T. and J.C. Olori. (2014). Prevalence of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, causal agent of amphibian chytridiomycosis, in Oswego County in 2012. *Northeastern Naturalist* 21: NENHC-25- NENHC-34. [as proceedings of the *Northeastern Natural History Conference*]

-Kamal Mohamed

RSVP of Oswego County welcomes SUNY Oswego's Rice Creek as new volunteer station

[February 5, 2020 Contributor](#)



RSVP of Oswego County welcomes SUNY Oswego's Rice Creek as a volunteer station. From left: Erin Palmitese, RSVP Project Director; Dr. Kamal Mohamed, Director of Rice Creek; Dr. Kristen Haynes, Assistant Director of Rice Creek.

OSWEGO TOWN – The Oswego County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), a division of SUNY Oswego's Office of Business and Community Relations, welcomes SUNY Oswego's Rice Creek Field Station as a new volunteer station. RSVP volunteer recruitment for the station is now underway.

Current RSVP volunteers or individuals, aged 55 and older, who are interested in becoming a volunteer at the station should contact RSVP of Oswego County at 315-312-2317 or email rsvp@oswego.edu.

Volunteer job positions for Rice Creek include:

- Canal Forest Restoration Project Volunteer
- Front Desk Volunteer
- Gardening Volunteer
- Outreach Assistant Volunteer

SUNY Oswego Rice Creek Assistant Director **Dr. Kristen Haynes** said, "Rice Creek Field

Station is thrilled to be joining the RSVP program as a volunteer station. We have a small staff and rely on volunteers to help us meet our mission and serve the community. Currently, we work with volunteers from SUNY Oswego service learning (GST) courses, the Oswego County Youth Works Conservation Corps, Rice Creek Associates, and local scout troops. RSVP volunteers will be a welcome addition to our team and we look forward to working with them." Rice Creek is located at 193 Thompson Road in Oswego Town, about one mile south of SUNY Oswego.

The grounds contain the Field Station building, an herb garden, as well as 300 acres of fields, forests, ponds and streams.

The facility is open year round and the four walking trails located on the grounds are open to the public.

Rice Creek's mission is to be a living laboratory to advance knowledge for ecological research and provide education for both the community and SUNY Oswego students.

Additionally, Rice Creek works with schools, homeschool families, scouts, and other organizations to offer custom educational and service-related programs.

For more information about becoming a volunteer, please contact Oswego County RSVP at rsvp@oswego.edu or call 315-312-2317. For more information about Rice Creek, please contact the Field Station at 315-312-6677 or rcfs@oswego.edu.

RSVP of Oswego County is federally sponsored by the Corporation for National & Community Service and locally sponsored by the NYS Office for the Aging, SUNY Oswego and the United Way of Greater Oswego County.

2020 Small Grants proposals deadline extended

As a result of the cancellation of classes on campus, the deadline for submission of Small Grants proposals for 2020 has been extended from March 20 to April 20.

Assistant Director's update

Winter 2020 proved to be quite a successful season for our public programs. Despite an impending blizzard, we had over 50 attendees and numerous volunteers at our winter festival "Celebrate Snow." Children enjoyed making clay animal tracks, observing snowflakes and birds, creating mixed-media snow monsters, reading *Snowflake Bentley*, and getting face painting and henna tattoos. Adults enjoyed two science talks and various outreach displays. Our thanks to **RCA, Oswego Team RWB, Leanna's Art Room, Natural Henna Tattoo, the Children's Museum of Oswego, At the Art Studio, and Murdock's Bicycles and Sports** for joining us at the event.



"Celebrate Snow" photos by Mary Woods

In addition, our February and March Full Moon Owl Prowls drew over 50 participants who enjoyed getting to hear a few calls and even seeing a probable Barred Owl fly to a nearby tree. Our Valentine's Day Story Hour was also a big success, drawing several families who enjoyed a story and then made pinecone bird feeders.

Registration is now open for Exploring Nature, our summer program for children ages 5 to 16. Children can enroll in one or two weeks: July 6–10 and/or 13–17. The program runs from 9 am until 2 pm each day, with optional daycare from 2 to 5 pm. Rice Creek Associates members receive a discount on registration. Additional details and registration links can be found on our website, www.oswego.edu/exploringnature.

At this time, we have made the difficult but necessary decision to close the field station building and suspend our public programming until it is deemed safe to resume. We will be providing updates on our website. Station staff members are still reachable by phone and email. During this time, you can also stay in touch by following us on Facebook and Instagram, @ozricecreek (if you type this into the search bar of Facebook or Instagram, you will find us!). Our interns have also added Facebook and Instagram pages related to the Canal Forest Restoration Project, @canalforestrc. Finally, I have started a new weekly e-newsletter that contains photos and public events updates. To join the e-newsletter mailing list, click the link off of Rice Creek's homepage (www.oswego.edu/ricecreek).

This spring has turned out to be more challenging for many of us than we expected. Studies show that spending time outside in nature boosts immune health, reduces stress, improves sleep, and makes us happier. While our building is closed, we encourage you to enjoy our trails and find hope in signs of returning spring. On behalf of the field station staff, we wish you good health and happy rambles outdoors. We hope to see you again in person soon!

-Kristen Haynes

Early springtime butterflies at Rice Creek

Admittedly, I am not a particular fan of winter. Snow, cold temperatures and shortened daylight are just not appealing to me. Perhaps my distaste for these characteristics of the winter season is due to my fondness of insects. Yes, the occasional stinkbug and ladybird beetle may appear during that time in my home. That is little consolation for the abundance and variety that can be observed in the remaining three seasons.

The arrival of spring is an exciting time. Vegetation grows and flowers blossom. Temperatures warm. Birds return north. Spring peepers give life to vernal ponds. Daylight lengthens every day.

Depending on weather patterns, butterflies begin to appear as soon as late March and early April (Some hibernators are known to become briefly active on abnormally warmer winter days and may be seen flying over snow on the ground.).

At least a half dozen butterfly species can be observed on the trails, fields and woods at Rice Creek from that time into early May. I will briefly describe each. Unless otherwise noted, the photos were taken on Rice Creek grounds.

The **Cabbage White Butterfly (*Pieris rapae*)** is usually the first butterfly people notice. It is quite common throughout the United States. Spring specimens tend to have diminished or nearly absent black spots on its forewings; the spots are more apparent in later broods. Cabbage Whites overwinter as pupae.



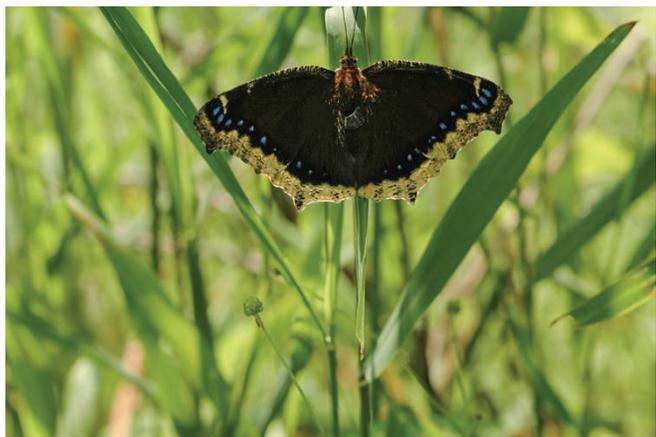
Cabbage White 2May2008

The **Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*)** is a hibernator. Its dark wings with yellow borders make its identification easy. They are more likely to be first seen in April. Spring specimens are often observed flying in bright wooded areas where the canopy has not yet shaded the ground.

As the season progresses into summer they tend to appear more along sunlit trails and open areas.



Mourning Cloak 31 July 2005 ventral view



**Mourning Cloak 9 July 2006 dorsal view
El Dorado Preserve, Jefferson Co.**

Spring Azures (*Celastrina ladon*) typically appear on field station grounds in early May. Azures tend to be a rather confusing group of butterflies, consisting of a number of seasonal forms, subspecies and closely related species.

At Rice Creek we have two “species,” the Spring Azure and the Summer Azure. The Spring Azure is single-brooded. Male dorsal wings have an azure blue hue while females have a black border along the forewings in addition to the blue color; ventral wings of both sexes are lighter with dark spots throughout. Males frequently can be observed at mud puddles and moist soil; females

are nectar feeders. Any Azure found here in April or May (possibly early June) is a Spring Azure.



Spring Azure 7 May 2012

The **Eastern Comma (*Polygonia comma*)** is another hibernator. It is so named due to a silver comma marking on each ventral hind wing. Eastern Commas have both a summer and a winter form. The winter form is seen in late summer, early fall and spring. Its dorsal hind wings are lighter in color than the summer form. Although Eastern Commas feed at many flowers, they also appear on tree sap, moist ground and mammal droppings.



Eastern Comma 27 Aug 2008, Winter form



Eastern Comma 10July2015 Summer form

The **Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)** is a migrant in spring and a resident through the fall. In years of mild winters in the eastern U.S. large migrations can be observed in April and May. The last such migration even made the local news in Syracuse as people were calling the stations asking questions about their abundant presence. In the span of a full traffic light rotation at the corner of Route 57 and Soule Rd. in Liverpool, I counted 54 Red Admirals flying across the street!



Red Admiral 7May2012

Male Red Admirals are territorial. They chase other males away and “attack” other butterflies, insects and even people! That said, they are also “curious.” The photo below shows a Red Admiral on my boot as I walked along its territory along the Blue Trail one May day.



Red Admiral 17May2010

Red Admirals can be seen throughout the field station grounds. They visit tree sap, flowers and can occasionally be seen on wet ground. Spring specimens show the wear and tear of long distance travel. Summer specimens are very brightly colored. Hind wings display a multitude of rich color- pink, blue, black, brown, grayish purple and white.



Red Admiral ventral view 14May2012

Canadian Tiger Swallowtails (*Papilio canandensis*) are the first emerging Swallowtails in our area. They are very similar in appearance to the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*). Canadian Swallowtails fly from early May through mid June and are generally smaller in size than Eastern Tiger Swallowtails. Other differences include outer yellow markings on the forewing undersides and the black stripe width of

the last cell on the underside hindwing. Usually a good close up observation confirms the species.

Confusing? You better believe it! The best advice for most is to consider the date a Tiger Swallowtail is observed: mid June or earlier-Canadian, late June throughout the season-Eastern.

Canadian Tiger Swallowtails are often observed flying above the young spring canopy along woodland trails, sipping moisture from the soil or taking nectar from spring flowers such as Lilac or Dame's Rocket.



**Canadian Tiger Swallowtail 17May2013
Happy Valley Wildlife Management Area
Oswego Co.**

As late May approaches and June arrives the number of butterfly species at the field station increases. Through early to mid July they hit their peak, which may extend into early August, again

depending on weather conditions. Until those time periods I find discovering any of these six species in early spring a delight as well as an indicator of the warmer days to come.

-Mike Holy

Milkweed seeds available

The last three years have seen increasing numbers of Monarchs, not only at the Field Station but also the central New York area.

I have grown milkweed in my gardens for a number of years. I now have an overabundance of milkweed seeds. If anyone is interested in growing milkweed I am willing to share what I have. There is no cost. Just send me an email typing "milkweed seeds" in the subject area and I will make arrangements for you to receive some. Send your request to fordlep@yahoo.com or call the field station and leave me a message.

Monarchs can always use our help!

-Mike

Volunteers needed

Rice Creek Associates is looking for members or other volunteers to play an active role in maintaining the **Ruth Sachidanadan Herb Garden** at the field station. Herb Garden maintenance will take place from May to October and will occur on the first Friday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Also, please bring a lunch and beverage. Any one interested should contact the field station at 315-312-6677. Thank you!

Memorable moments at Rice Creek



Eight-spotted Forester (Photo: M. Holy)

Sometimes when I take a photo I don't realize all that I've captured until viewing it later.

This particular cropped photo was taken on May 29, 2015. It is of an **Eight-Spotted Forester Moth (*Alypia octomaculata*)**. It's an interesting enough picture of the moth, but upon closer observation there is a fly on the top left wing partially covering one of the eight white wing spots. I judge the insect a fly because upon zooming in on the picture there appears to be one pair of true wings. Bees have two pairs. Many flies resemble bees, as does this individual.

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

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 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:



Membership renewal reminder

Our yearly membership runs from March 1 to February 28 to prevent renewals from coinciding with the Christmas season. Renewal category rates have not changed, despite our ever-increasing costs. If you have any questions concerning your current RCA membership, contact **Mike** at fordlep@yahoo.com or 315-622-1774 (leave message).

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

Please notify us of any changes to your address, email, phone or name. We strive to send our newsletter and event notifications to you in a timely manner. Contact Mike at fordlep@yahoo.com to update your contact information.

The RCA Board wishes to thank the following individuals for their 2020 membership renewals and donations:

**Wendy and Michael Fragale
Michael Holy
James and Lynne Keefer
Kamal Mohamed
Susan Ansara and Nancy Chanover
Eric Banville
Barbara Bartholomew
Mary Bennett
Helen Breitbeck
Joseph Brown
Marian Chermack
Phil and Sandy Clift
Kenneth and Rosalie Costello
Pat and Becky Devendorf
Lisa Drake
John and Patricia Familo
Sharon and John Gramlich
Debbie and Russ Haynes
Kristen Haynes and Samuel Beguin
Amy Hueber
George and Heike Koenig
Betsy McTiernan and Hall Sussman
Sheri and Mark Morey
Anne and Robert Morgan
Emily Oaks
Betsy and Gerome Oberst
Richard Roberts
Barbara Robinson
Karen Sime and Mike McDonald
Dr. and Mrs. Steven Skubis
Mark and Patricia Springston
Mary Vanouse
James and Maryclaire Zampogna**

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

If you have not yet renewed from now through Feb 2021, please do so at your earliest convenience.

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

Current RCA Board Members

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Sheri Morey, Co-Vice President

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Michael Holy, Secretary, Newsletter Editor

Maria Sagot, Small Grants Chair

Paul Knittel

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Alexandra Corsini

Matthew Gorman

Rice Creek Field Station Staff

Kamal Mohamed, Director

Kristen Haynes, Assistant Director

Wendy Fragale, Secretary

Alan Harris, Groundskeeper

Spring scenes at Rice Creek

A walk on the Rice Creek trails at a casual pace will reveal many natural wonders. On the next page are some sample "discoveries" that are just waiting to be enjoyed.

I have intentionally omitted names, descriptions and dates on these photos I have taken and am sharing with you. My point here is that it is not absolutely necessary that you know the name of everything you notice along the trails. Just get out and enjoy the beauty and serenity that these strolls have to offer!

-Mike





Upcoming 2020 Reflection topics

Please detach and place this list in a convenient location for future referral for these events. All take place on Saturdays. **We will notify you if events are cancelled or delayed due to coronavirus concerns.**



Wetland Plants, Invasive Species, and Native Plants

Jim Seago
April 25, 2020 2PM

Canal Forest Restoration

George and Jane Pauk
June 20, 2020 2PM

The Herb Garden

Kamal Mohamed
August 22, 2020 2PM

Fall Gardening

Fernando Araya
September 19, 2020 2PM

Presentation of Small Grants Research Projects

Rice Creek Associates
November 7, 2020 2PM

rivers end bookstore nature selections

November 14, 2020 2PM



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

To: