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September 2019

News



Critical Curriculum

by D.E.Bentley

Increasingly, our sense of place, of places, is being defined not by the positive and enjoyable experiences and memories, but rather by the brief moments of mass shootings that shatter lives and create a wave of grief extending well beyond the initially impacted communities into the hearts and minds of all. July 9-10, 2019, a month before the “Dayton shooting,” I traveled to Dayton, Ohio. I was there to participate in a workshop, part of the annual Deliberative Democracy Exchange (DDEX) sponsored by the Kettering Foundation (founded in 1927) and the National Issues Forums Institute. The workshop, “Making Deliberative Decisions Relevant to Other Organizations,” offered the chance to hear stories of people, everyday people, making a difference by bringing individuals together to talk and plan for improved community connections and, ultimately, improved communities.

During a break in the workshop schedule, I walked to a nearby park. It turned out to be a special place, quite fitting for the topic of the workshop.

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- using the Public Achievement Model (PA)

by Lisa Strahley and Tracy D'Arpino

What does it take for democracy to work as it should?

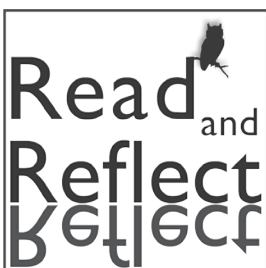
One might generate many responses to this question because democracy requires a dynamic array of political, social, civic, and economic practices woven together for a society to thrive. At the Douglas C. Garnar Center for Civic Engagement we believe that one of the most important practices – necessary for democracy to work as it should – is citizen engagement. Participation in civic life was built into the fabric of our country, but simply having opportunities to participate does not ensure citizen engagement. Therefore, we strive to help citizens develop civic

knowledge and skills that foster a deep understanding of issues that affect our quality of life. We value principles such as open and honest dialogue so that diverse perspectives are heard and sound decisions can be made.

Our commitment to civic agency motivates us to consider how and when citizens should develop these skills. Our conclusion is that although it is never too late, early positive experiences in civic life are most beneficial. Our youth are capable and eager to develop civic agency and therefore, we discovered a way to support them. At Augsburg University, under the leadership of Dr. Harry Boyte, Public Achievement (PA) a youth civic engagement model was developed. Public Achievement brings school-aged children, guided by coaches, together to identify and address real life community issues that are relevant to them.

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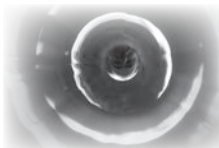
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At home with the Owl Light

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Owl Light Contributors



T. Touris ~ The Light Lens - 5

T. Touris is a wanna-be-retired-computer-programmer. He spends his free time designing and working in wood, while dreaming up the next Light Lens.

Doug Garnar ~ Pathways...Democracy - 5

Doug Garnar works with the Kettering Foundation and NIFI (National Issues Forums Institute) to help citizens find "pathways to democracy." He has taught since 1971 at SUNY Broome Community College. He lives in Binghamton, NY. E-mail: garnardc@sunybroome.edu.



Sam Hall ~ Bee Lines - 6 (Back in October)



Sam Hall is a Western NY beekeeper who first worked bees as a child growing up on a "dirt farm" in Allegany County, NY. He has kept bees for most of his adult life and believes that his mistakes "far outnumber his successes."

Dee Sharples ~ The Night Sky - 7

Dee Sharples is an amateur astronomer who enjoys observing planets, star clusters and the Moon through her telescope. She is a member of ASRAS (Astronomy Section of the Rochester Academy of Science) and records "Dee's Sky This Month," describing what can be seen in the sky on the ASRAS website, rochesterastronomy.org.



Derrick Gentry ~ Homestead Gardener - 8

Derrick Gentry lives in Canadice with his wife and son, and numerous furred and feathered friends. He teaches in the Humanities Department at Finger Lakes Community College. E-mail: Derrick.Gentry@fllc.edu.



Steve Melcher ~ Dragonfly Tales - 9

Steve Melcher is the primary caretaker, hoof trimmer & poop scooper at Odonata Sanctuary, Mendon. His studies at Harvard and University of Delaware included using members of the Order "Odonata," as bioindicators of freshwater ecosystems. He has written/coauthored in journals, magazines, and books re: environmental literacy and ecological issues. Steve now works with environmental and educational organizations whose goal is to have "no child left inside". Learn more: fb Odonata Sanctuary.



Mary Drake ~ Monthly Review - 15

Mary Drake is a novelist and freelance writer living in western New York. Visit her online at marydrake.org to learn more about her books.

Barbara Stahl ~ Making Lemonade! - 15

Barbara is a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, retired school library media specialist, and a western New York/Finger Lakes area lover who did a previous column for *Canandaigua Daily Messenger*. She loves her family, circle of friends, reading, writing, history, music, theater, and Tarzan the cat who critiques her articles.



The Conscious Crow - 16 ~Reminding you to grow! (She's Back!)



Sky Trombly ~ Simple Sustainability - 17

Sky has been something of a sustainability nerd for most of her life. Sky Trombly's goal is to empower herself and others to live in a way that is congruent with personal values - and intimately linked to the Earth. You can join her in her wanderings through the quagmire of sustainable living in every issue of *Owl Light News*, and on her blog - talkwalking.org.



Joy Lewis ~ Richmond History - 19

Joy Lewis has served as Town of Richmond, Historian since 2013. She offers reflections on the history of Richmond, NY in every other issue of *Owl Light News*. (Back in October)



Brooke Cheyne - NEW!

~ NY's Outdoor Sports - Back page

Brooke Cheyne has been the managing director and editor of The Keuka Boardroom - www.thekeukaboardroom.com/ - for two years. She is currently a senior at Ithaca College majoring in Cinema Production.



Sally Gardner - NEW! ~ Cartoon - 10

Sally Gardner is a graphic designer and illustrator living in the Finger Lakes. <https://sallygardner.com/>

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and Laurie Phillips (Naples, Cheshire).

*We reserve the right to edit or refuse any submitted content or advertising.

Guest Contributors

Len Geller ~ Social Media Conspiracy Theories (Essay) - 4

Len Geller is a free-lance writer who has a keen interest in New York politics. He has contributed in the past on articles related to the Safe Act, Gun laws in NYS, and the proposed Romulus, NY trash incinerator. He lives in Seneca County.

Pathways to Democracy ~ Fostering Civic Engagement - Front

Lisa Strahley ~ Coordinator of the Civic Engagement Center, strahleyla@sunybroome.edu

Tracy D'Arpino ~ Assistant Principal Johnson City Schools, tdarpino@jcschools.stier.org

Bill Mohr ~ Methods and Materials (Conversation) - 11

Bill Mohr is the author of *The Headwaters of Nirvana / Los Manantiales del Nirvana*, a bilingual collection of poetry from What Books/Glass Table Collective, 2019. An internationally recognized poet whose work has been translated into Croatian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish, Bill authored *Hold Outs*, *The Los Angeles Poetry Renaissance, 1948-1992* (University of Iowa Press, 2011). He holds a Ph.D. in Literature from the University of California, San Diego and is a professor at California State University, Long Beach. Editor and publisher of Momentum Press, 1974-1988, his work has appeared in dozens of magazines and anthologies including *Stand Up Poetry*, *Grand Passion*, *Wide Awake* and *Coiled Serpent*. His volumes of poetry include *Hidden Proofs* (1982); *Penetralia* (1984); *Bittersweet Kaleidoscope* (2006) and a bilingual volume published in Mexico, *Pruebas Oculatas* (Bonobos Editores, 2015).

Lynn McGee ~ Methods and Materials (Conversation) - 11

Lynn McGee is the author of the poetry collections *Tracks* (Broadstone Books, 2019); *Sober Cooking* (Spuyten Duyvil Press, 2016), and two award-winning poetry chapbooks: *Heirloom Bulldog* (Bright Hill Press, 2015) and *Bonanza* (Slapering Hol Press, 1997). Her poems are forthcoming or appeared recently in *The Tampa Review*, *Lavender Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Potomac Review*, *The American Poetry Review* and *Southern Poetry Review*. Lynn earned an MFA in Poetry at Columbia University, taught writing at private and public colleges and led poetry workshops in NYC public schools. A 2015 Nominee for the Best of the Net award, Lynn received a Recognition Award from the NYC Literacy Center, and Heart of the Center Award from the NYC LGBT Center. Today she is a communications manager at Borough of Manhattan Community College, The City University of New York.

Gary Catt ~ Patch Goes to CVS (non-fiction) - 19

Gary Catt is a retired journalist and corporate communications counselor who lives in Honeoye. He can be found wandering the trails in the area with his canine companions - most recently Patches.

Wendy Schreiner ~ Autumn's begun (poetry) - 19

Wendy Schreiner resides in Warsaw with husband Dave and their two shih tzus Daisy Mae and Paisley Rae. She studied English at Daemen College and loves writing when not at her day job at Wyoming County Dept. of Social Services. She also facilitates "Write Connection" at the Warsaw Public Library.

On the cover: A group of young people negotiate and enjoy the hedge maze at Cox Arboretum / MetroPark in Dayton, Ohio. Photo D.E. Bentley. Holding a walk for peace in the local town park was one way that the Johnson City School District students learned from and applied the PA model to citizen engagement in their community. Photo Tracy D'Arpino

Human complex

Life on earth is becoming increasingly complex, a complexity driven by human ingenuity and global change. With each new and amazing innovation, there often follows corresponding, if not correlating, dilemmas that require greater levels of critical thought, moral reflection, and human intervention. Across time and space, we find endless evolutionary markers that offer reflections on the gains accomplished and travesties we've endured. Some of the changes and catastrophes that have befuddled humans are inherent in our planetary system, and remain outside of our sphere of control.

The role humans assume in planetary change has increased dramatically, necessitating greater problem-solving initiatives. Global warming has become a poster child for what growing numbers of geologists now consider 'The Age of Humans.' "Age of Humans," *The Anthropocene, was first mentioned by Nobel Prize-winning, atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen and renowned biologist Eugene Stoermer. The concept explores the impact of humanity on planet earth, and the idea that we have entered an historic era where a primary agent responsible for planetary change is the human species. How best to address the warming of our planet includes everything from strictly limiting gasses that contribute most significantly to the green house effect to getting the hell out of Dodge – a prospect not quite as easy as a giddy-up.

Once mere bystanders to the whims and fancies of climate, available resources, and DNA, we, as the "dominant" – or at least ruling – species are now causing more problems than we seem to be able to solve. With an earthly population of 7.7 billion people, we have unimaginable potential for prolonging our species' longevity, beyond the life of our current celestial home. We also have greater potential for contributing to a doomsday scenario linked to an accelerated extinction. Despite the miniscule contributions of any of us, our greatest potential lies in the commons. That is, the understanding that our futures are co-dependent, and our earthly resources, along with the challenges that befuddle us, need to be shared equally by all.

As Tom Seeley offers in his book, *Honey Bee Democracy*, finding the best solution, including the home that offers the best chances for survival, requires a collective, although not necessarily unanimous, decision-making process among individual with shared interests and mutual respect, with little interference from the leaders.

By operating without a leader the scout bees of a swarm neatly avoid one of the greatest threats to good decision making by groups: a domineering leader. Such an individual reduces a group's collective power to uncover a diverse set of possible solutions to a problem, to critically appraise these possibilities, and to winnow out all but the best one.

~Thomas D. Seeley, *Honeybee Democracy*

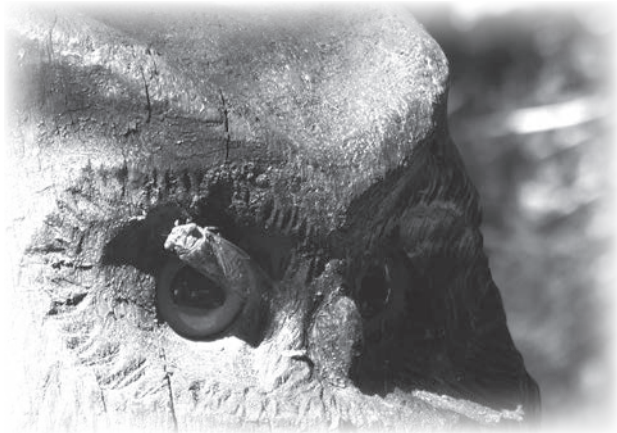
When scout bees go out and find a prospective new home for their overcrowded colony, they return to the hive and dance to show where the site is, and to summon up as much support as possible for their choice. Often, the bee that dances the fastest and finest gets the support, and, amazingly, often has indeed found the home that offers safety and space – that is, the best chance for survival of all. Performing the fanciest dance, as we are well aware, does not always mean that the dancer has the answer. Still, there is something to be said for carefully evaluating and exploring many options before acting, and for taking the time to listen to even the smallest of voices.

D.E. Bentley
Editor, *Owl Light News*

*Learn and explore more at - www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/where-world-anthropocene-180960241/

Cicada Story

The cicadas near the *Owl Light* office are molting, and one decided to use our carved owl as a resting place. This was one of a number of resident Swamp Cicadas (Neotibicen tibicen), that we have seen recently, as they completed their yearly transformation from egg, to nymph stages, to adult.



One discarded exoskeleton was still twitching, after the adult had crawled out, leaving their past behind.



They rested on mulberry wood.



Then walked onto my outstretched hand.

Photos by D.E. Bentley

Letters from *Owl Light* Readers

We would love to hear from readers - particularly educators and politicians - about what you perceive to be "Critical Curriculum." Should practice in deliberation be mandatory in public schools?

School Gun Prohibition Laws signed

- S.101A/A.1715 Limits Educational Institutions' Ability to Authorize the Possession of a Weapon on School Grounds
- S.2449/A.2685 Directs State Police to Establish Statewide Regulations for the Safe Removal of Illegal, Unsecured, Abandoned or Unwanted Firearms

On July 31, 2019, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed legislation limiting an educational institution's ability to authorize any person who is not primarily employed as a school resource officer, law enforcement officer or security guard to carry a firearm on school grounds (S.101/A.1715), and directing State Police to establish statewide regulations aimed at strengthening existing gun buyback programs and create new programs for the safe removal of illegal, unsecured, abandoned or unwanted firearms (S.2449/A.2685). This legislation, which builds on New York's strongest in the nation gun laws, includes: the Red Flag Bill, signed in February, that prevents individuals who show signs of being a threat to themselves or others from purchasing or possessing a firearm; legislation Governor Cuomo signed July 29 extending the background check waiting period and banning bump stocks; and the legislation signed July 31st, banning undetectable guns and expanding firearm safe storage laws to protection children.

Governor Cuomo: "The answer to the gun violence epidemic plaguing this country has never been and never will be more guns, and we're expanding New York's nation-leading gun safety laws to further protect our children. These measures will help slow the proliferation of guns by keeping unneeded firearms out of school zones and helping to ensure unwanted or illegal guns don't fall into dangerous hands."

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Become part of the *Owl Light* conversation. Submissions to editor@canadicepress.com

Letters should be less than 300 words, although longer, well written opinion pieces will be considered. All published commentary must be signed (or sent via personal e-mail) and include a street address. Please focus on sound arguments, respect opposing views and avoid direct attacks. We reserve the right to edit or refuse any submitted editorial content. Opinions and letters published in *Owl Light News* are not necessarily the views of the Editor, Publisher, contributors or advertisers.

The submission deadline for *Owl Light News* is the Third Thursday each month, for the following month's issue. Sooner is better!



Social media conspiracy theories by Len Geller

In view of the fake news epidemic on social media and the larger debate surrounding fake news in our democratic society, it is important that citizens protect themselves against this corrosive influence. Since we live in an open society with free speech protection, citizens cannot rely on the government or social media to restrict and censor fake news. Instead we must follow the dictum “caveat emptor” and rely on our own critical thinking skills for protection.

Social media conspiracy theories have become one of the most influential and dangerous forms of fake news, and we need to know how to combat them. Please keep in mind that not all conspiracy theories are fake news. The Watergate break-in, the Iran-Contra scandal, the 9-11 attacks, and Russian attempts to destabilize and influence the 2016 election involved real conspiracies that were uncovered and documented. Since some conspiracy theories may be true or have some kernel of truth, they cannot be dismissed out of hand; however, when it comes to conspiracy theories on social media and the rest of the internet, most if not all are fake news with a clear political ax to grind. In what follows we will look at two debunked high-profile conspiracy theories that have received a lot of traction on the internet and social media. Since these cases bring into stark relief the lack of any critical thinking, they will help us understand how to combat this kind of fake news in the future.

PizzaGate Conspiracy

The PizzaGate conspiracy began in late October and early November of 2016, just days before the election, when 4chan trolls were looking for dirt in the Russian-hacked emails of Hillary Clinton and John Podesta, her campaign manager. Finding some references to Comet Ping Pong, a pizza shop that had been used occasionally for Democratic National Committee (DNC) fundraising and whose owner James Alefantis had prominent Democratic friends, the trolls noticed the mention of “cheese pizza” in several of Podesta’s emails that sent alarm bells ringing. Since “cheese pizza” was a code phrase for child pornography on 4chan, the trolls concluded that Podesta, Clinton, and Alefantis were major players in a clandestine pedophile ring operating out of the basement of Comet Ping Pong. Once the conspiracy theory got a foothold on 4chan, it spread quickly to Reddit and then began trending on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

As the theory went viral on social media and the internet, Alex Jones, the alt-right guru of conspiracy theories, lent his support to PizzaGate on InfoWars by suggesting that since it may be true, readers ought to investigate for themselves, never imagining that someone might take this suggestion literally. But that’s exactly what Edgar Welch did on December 4, 2016. Driving 350 miles from his home in North Carolina to see for himself if the pedophile ring allegations were true, and if they were, to rescue any children involved, Welch, the father of two and with no criminal history, burst into Comet Ping Pong and started shooting up the place with an AR-15 assault rifle. When he didn’t find any children or pedophile ring, he surrendered to police, not realizing that PizzaGate was a hoax. Even though no one was shot or injured, Welch pleaded guilty to two weapons charges and was sentenced to a four-year prison sentence and three years of supervised release. He was also ordered to reimburse Comet Ping Pong \$5,744 for the property damage.

Before the advent of the Internet and social media, conspiracy theories did not gain much traction in the U.S. because they were confined to very small media outlets on the far-right and far-left and never reached many people. But with the arrival of the internet and social media, those restrictions have vanished, and conspiracy theories now emerge in much greater numbers, spread and evolve faster, and reach far more people and gather far more followers than ever before.

This is what happened with PizzaGate, and what needs to be explained is why, despite its bizarre and fantastic claims, the conspiracy gained such traction and influence on social media and the rest of the internet. There are a number of factors that probably played a role in its viral spread. One is certainly the widespread distrust and dislike of establishment politicians like Hillary Clinton, especially in light of her private email scandal. Another is the shocking revelations over the last twenty years concerning the widespread sexual abuse of children by the Catholic Church and other institutions like the Boy Scouts. If a trusted authority like a priest or scout leader can be a clandestine pedophile, then so can Hillary Clinton whose public reputation is far less sacrosanct. Another factor is the herd instinct or the phenomenon of groupthink: the strong human tendency to conform to the beliefs of your peer group, or in this case, to accept your online community’s version of truth.

There may be other psychological factors involved as well. One of the appeals of conspiracy theories, apart from any political consideration, is that it attracts individuals who see themselves as rebels and heroes fighting for truth and justice against a corrupt and evil establishment. Another psychological appeal of such theories is that they make a person feel special and increase his or her self-worth by being part of something important that is known only to a select few. The last and possibly most important factor is an obvious political one: a strong desire by the far-right to discredit Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party and bring white nationalism to power. Many on the far-right who supported and spread the theory did so not out of a concern for the truth but to further their political agenda. This is not to say that there was a far-right conspiracy to discredit Hillary Clinton. All you need for a meme to spread on the internet and social media is a virtual community of hundreds if not thousands of anonymous individuals with similar values, psychological makeup, and political leanings who have little to lose and much to gain in spreading the theory.

Seth Rich Murder Conspiracy

Another equally vile conspiracy theory directed against Hillary Clinton involved the murder of Seth Rich in Washington D.C. on July 10, 2016. Rich, a staff member of the DNC, was walking home late at night after spending the evening at a local sports pub when he was accosted by an assailant who shot and killed him when he apparently resisted the attack. The police concluded that it was likely an attempted robbery gone bad, since there had been seven documented armed robberies in the same neighborhood in the prior six weeks. Several days after the killing, an article appeared on the website whatdoesitmean.com, whose source was “Russian intelligence,” alleging that Seth Rich was murdered by a contract killer hired by Hillary Clinton because he was about to talk to the FBI about corruption involving Hillary Clinton. Like PizzaGate, the Seth Rich Conspiracy Theory (SRCT) started in the shadows of the internet and moved quickly to far-right virtual

communities on 4chat and 8chat, then to far-right websites liked Breitbart and InfoWars, and finally to the more mainstream but conservative Fox News where it was embellished further by reports created and fueled by Russian trolls that Seth Rich was responsible for leaking the DNC emails to Wikileaks and had been in email contact with WikiLeaks just the day before he was murdered. Sean Hannity and others at Fox News took this to mean that Seth Rich was probably murdered because of these leaked emails. In one of his broadcasts, Hannity accused Hillary Clinton and her co-conspirators of a systematic cover-up, calling it “the single biggest fraud, lies, perpetrated on the American people by the media and the Democrats in our history.”

The real purpose of these new revelations was not to disclose the truth but to absolve the Russians of any interference in our election. The argument was simple: If the plundered DNC emails were really the work of Seth Rich and not the Russians, then the Russians did not interfere in the 2016 election, and the repeated statements by Putin and Trump denying such interference were true. But there was one problem: none of this speculation was true. Not only was there no evidence showing that Seth Rich leaked DNC emails to WikiLeaks or emailed WikiLeaks just prior to his death, but there was overwhelming evidence gathered by the FBI and intelligence community that Russian hackers were responsible for the stolen emails. Strictly speaking, the DNC emails were hacked not leaked. Within days of these reports about leaked emails and Rich’s alleged contact with WikiLeaks, Fox News retracted both stories and removed them from their website, admitting that it had not done an adequate job in identifying and confirming the source of its information. For an item by item refutation and debunking of the SRCT, the reader should go to RationalWiki.org, a site committed to critical thinking and the pursuit of truth.

In July of this year, Michael Isikoff, an investigative reporter for Yahoo News, dropped a bombshell on the SRCT investigation by providing compelling evidence that Russia was both the source of the conspiracy and a major actor in championing the theory on social media well beyond the 2016 election. On the same day that the alleged conspiracy appeared on whatdoesitmean.com, Russia’s foreign intelligence service (SVR) had circulated the conspiracy in a phony intelligence report. The timing was not a coincidence. Once whatdoesitmean.com got hold of it from Russian intelligence, the theory acquired an internet foothold, and rest is history.

Isikoff’s report shows that Russia used the SRCT as a weapon not only in its 2016 disinformation operation to influence the presidential election against Hillary Clinton and in favor of Donald Trump, but in 2017 and beyond to vindicate itself from the charge of election interference. According to Isikoff, the SRCT was broadcast repeatedly on Russian government-owned radio and TV stations (like RT), while the Internet Research Agency, the Russian troll farm responsible for attacking social media during the 2016 election, tweeted about Seth Rich more than 2,000 times on Twitter. Not only was the SRCT being pushed by both alt-right and Russian trolls, but the American supporters of the conspiracy had been duped and used by Russian intelligence. The irony is obvious. When it came to a real conspiracy, the conspiracy-mongers and their supporters on the far-right were unable or unwilling to see one right in front of their eyes. For more details on Russian involvement in the SRCT, please go to news@yahoo.com and Google “Seth Rich conspiracy theory.”

Before critically examining any particular conspiracy theory, we should always assume that the burden of proof is on the supporters and not the doubters of the theory. The default position should always be one of skepticism until proven otherwise.

Strategies for recognizing potential Conspiracy Theories

We have focused on these two conspiracy theories not because they were directed at Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party, but because they give us valuable insights into how fake news of this kind originates and spreads online. As critical thinkers, how can we recognize and avoid believing in fake news?

Before critically examining any particular conspiracy theory, we should always assume that the burden of proof is on the supporters and not the doubters of the theory. The default position should always be one of skepticism until proven otherwise. The reason for this is obvious. Since most conspiracy theories contradict the apparent or official version of events and turn out to be false, the onus is always on the defenders of a particular theory to provide compelling or at least reasonable evidence to overcome this initial skepticism.

In assessing the theory, we should always ask the following questions and be on guard for certain red flags that should only deepen our skepticism. The first question is: What is the source of the conspiracy theory? If the source is Russia or any other hostile foreign power, or any website or online community with strong political and ideological leanings and a political ax to grind, then it is almost certain that the alleged conspiracy is fabricated and untrue. Another red flag concerns the content of the theory. If the alleged conspiracy has a clear political bias, especially if it attacks a political figure or group, this is a clear warning that it is probably a hit job and fake news. Both PizzaGate and the SRCT are prime examples of this kind of political weaponizing. We need to constantly remind ourselves that the creators and purveyors of most online conspiracies are concerned not with truth but with power and influence.

The third question to ask is really the most important: what is the evidence for the theory? Most conspiracy theories begin not with hard evidence or a smoking gun but with circumstantial evidence that has probably been cherry-picked. Of course, a false theory will never provide that smoking gun. And this is where it becomes messy and difficult. How should we assess the circumstantial evidence? Again, there are certain red flags to look for. One of the major strategies of conspiracy theorists is to try and punch holes in the official version of events. Supporters of the SRCT used the fact that nothing was stolen from the victim in an armed robbery gone bad to cast doubt on the police version, failing to mention that it is not uncommon for a perp to panic and flee prematurely when an armed robbery goes bad. Similar strategies have been used in high-profile conspiracy theories involving the JFK assassination in 1963 and the 9-11 attacks in 2001. When such a strategy is employed, we need to ask two questions. First, is there a problem with the official version of events? And if there is, can the anomaly be explained by factors other than a secret conspiracy? What we will usually find is that the anomaly can be explained

Continued page 6



by T. Touris

The Light Lens

The Magic Queendom

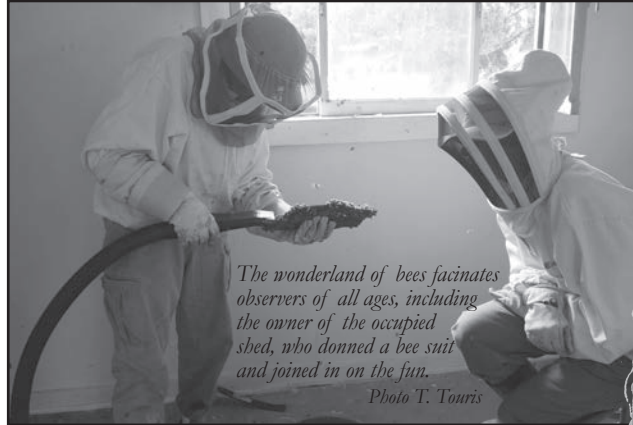
Some of the colony of bees found behind the sheetrock wall.
Photo T. Touris

Apparently the latest infectious viral meme going around the interwebs is a complaint about adults going to Disney World sans children. Parents are staging their righteous Facebook revolts in order to ensure their kids' exposure to *Cinderella* and *Snow White* is not demonorailed by some childless twenty-something wearing cutoff shorts.

Meanwhile, back in reality world, another magical royal story was unfolding. This was the extraction of a honeybee colony from an old outbuilding in Naples, New York. Donning our bee outfits, we sweated more than a Mickey Mouse performer on a 95-degree Florida afternoon, as we carefully removed drywall to expose a large colony. Seeing the bees blanketing the wall of exposed comb was an awesome sight. The excitement and wonder the property owner showed as she gazed at the colony, rivaled that of any child meeting their favorite Disney character for the first time.

After a sweaty, sticky afternoon of vacuuming bees and removing comb, we loaded up the truck and drove the colony to their new home. More exhausted than parents who just spent the day pushing a stroller through a swarming hive of humanity, we quickly showered and fell into bed.

So, whether you're a twenty-something in cutoffs looking to recapture childhood memories or a parent looking to put a smile on your child's face, consider the magic of a bee colony - a glorious, messy immersion in a mysterious and wonderful reality.



The wonderland of bees fascinates observers of all ages, including the owner of the occupied shed, who donned a bee suit and joined in on the fun.
Photo T. Touris

Critical from Front

Carillon Historical Park contains the largest carillon in Ohio, which is surrounded by grounds landscaped by the Olmsted Brothers (who also designed Central Park in New York City). Built at the request of Colonel and Mrs. Edward Deeds to commemorate the Deeds family, each of the bells in the tower is inscribed with the name of a Deeds family member. There were originally 23 bells; now there are 57, with a total weight of 37,331 pounds. Deeds Carillon was completed in 1942. For war buffs - which I am not, although my attentions have been turning that way as I look at our world of today - the battle for the city of Stalingrad in late 1942 served as a turning point for WWII, as Germany went on the defensive and headed west. This retreat ended three years later with Nazi Germany's surrender, in May 1945. The impressive structure that houses the bells, designed by Reinhard & Hofmeister, who also designed Rockefeller Center in New York City, is constructed of Indiana limestone with a granite base. It towers 183 feet and seven inches skyward from its foundation. There are decorative metal windows and an open grate door that is made of lines from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, *Christmas Bells*.

As a side note, before returning to my discussion of the workshop, a carillon is a musical instrument that consists of a set of at least 23 bells that have been precisely tuned to produce the notes of a western scale. There are, I later learned, seven carillons in New York State. The two closest to the Finger Lakes are the Hopeman Memorial Chime at the University of Rochester, given in memory of Arendt W. Hopeman, the general contractor to the River Campus from 1927-30, and the Davis Memorial Carillon at Alfred University. The Davis Memorial Carillon was erected in 1937 as a living memorial to Dr. Boothe Colwell Davis, who was Alfred University president from 1895 to 1933, and his wife, Estelle Hoffman Davis. Dr. Davis died in 1942. That was also the year that the Carillon in Dayton was first played - what a somber and beautiful event that must have been.

As my two days at the Deliberative Democracy Exchange got underway, all around me there was a sense of hope, and a desire to learn from past mistakes and seek solutions. National Issues Forums can be a way for people to deliberate around current issues by exploring together the costs and benefits of several possible options for action on an issue. Any individual or organization can organize forums and provide the space for citizens to deliberate. NIFI provides research, support, and frameworks for deliberation, so that communities can move past controversy and work toward change. Their Issue Guides offer frameworks for discussing national and regional issues. A new online site Common Ground for Action (<https://www.nifi.org/en/common-ground-action>) provides an online forum. They have also published two Historic Issue Guides, *A New Land* and *1776*, which revisit the decision-making process and possible outcomes of historic decisions.

My introduction to the work of the National Issues Forum Institute was Doug Garnar, who works with the Kettering Foundation and NIFI (National Issues Forums Institute). Working to find solutions to today's social ills is important to me, as it is to Dr. Garnar, and I was thrilled when he contacted Candice Press in 2018 about a possible collaboration. In addition to his continuing work with NIFI, Garnar, a long time civics professor at SUNY Broome Community College in Binghamton, NY, actively fosters civic engagement at home by encouraging people to be a part of the political process, as voters and elected officials. He is involved in community initiatives to raise awareness around issues such as homelessness and addiction, and conducts deliberative democracy forums to encourage dialog around controversial issues.

After introductions, Bill Muse, NIFI's President and the workshop facilitator, asked Garnar and the eighteen other participants to share their experiences using one of NIFI's Deliberative Democracy frameworks, *A House Divided: What Would We Have to Give Up to Get the Political System We Want?* Garnar has been sharing summaries of some of these frameworks in recent issues of *Owl Light News*. "A House Divided" was not one I was familiar with. As with all of the NIFI guides, the framework offers several options for consideration.

In the case of "A House Divided," the options presented were:

- Option 1: Reduce dangerous, toxic talk.

The problem is that the way we talk is poisoning public life. The "outrage industry" rewards people for saying and doing the most extreme things.

- Option 2: Make fairer rules for politics and follow them.

The problem is that wealthy, powerful special interests game the political system, making it impossible to find compromise.

- Option 3: Take control and make decisions closer to home.

The problem is that our most important decisions are being made too far away from home.

Continued on page 10

(PA) from Front

The civic problem-solving model follows these steps:

1. Identify an issue,
2. Explore the issue,
3. Determine what solutions are already in place,
4. Develop an action to address the issue,
5. Take action,
6. Reflect, and
7. Celebrate.

For several years our center partnered with the Johnson City School District to engage young students in this civic work. This experience was aimed at helping children develop a stronger sense of themselves as civic problems solvers and change agents in their community. One of the most important and exciting first steps was to create an atmosphere of positive relationships and fun for the children. In that way, ground rules were created to help facilitate productive conversations and respect for others. During these initiatives, the children self-selected issues that were most meaningful to their current circumstances. Various issues included: reducing school bullying, eliminating petty crime in the neighborhood, increasing recycling, autism awareness, and repairing the district's football field that had been damaged in a flood. Using the PA model, the children explored the issues through actions such as talking to the town mayor, designing questions for school personnel, interviewing the police chief, and administering student questionnaires.

As students gained a sense of the complexity of the issues, they began to brainstorm ways that could have a positive impact. From there, they used a democratic approach to determine which solutions they would put into action. Projects included hosting a community-wide autism awareness fair, holding a walk for peace in the local town park, and organizing a family event focused on creative ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle common household items. Although we were proud of the solutions the PA teams employed, the larger reward was the civic mindset and skills these children developed. We saw students begin to ask meaningful questions, listen to their peers with interest and curiosity, and see themselves as problem solvers and change agents. The children learned that they are not merely recipients of the world around them but rather influencers.

Ewing Forum opens with commentators Bill Moyers, Michael Winship

As the 2016 presidential campaign season reached its peak, award-winning journalist and commentator Bill Moyers and political columnist Michael Winship spoke before a sold-out crowd in the Student Center Auditorium at Finger Lakes Community College.

The October 2016 event - part of the George M. Ewing Canandaigua Forum - was largely focused on the surge in Donald Trump's popularity.

Now, three years later, Moyers and Winship will return to open the 2019-20 George M. Ewing Canandaigua Forum speaker series. Evan Dawson, host of WXXI's "Connections" talk show, will serve as the moderator for the event scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 22.

While the conversation will surely touch on the presidency and upcoming election, Moyers and Winship plan to broaden their scope, having titled their event: "The State of our Union and its Peoples."

Winship joined longtime friend Moyers at Bill Moyers Journal on PBS until Moyers' retirement in 2015. They share an Emmy and three Writers Guild Awards for writing excellence.

All events begin at 4 p.m. in the Student Center Auditorium at the FLCC main campus, 3325 Marvin Sands Drive, Canandaigua.

Launched in 2011, the speaker series is named for the late George M. Ewing Sr., the longtime editor and publisher of the *Daily Messenger*, later to become *Messenger Post Media*. The forum is funded in part with an endowment from the Ewing family as well as support from Canandaigua National Bank & Trust, Wegmans and FLCC.

The speakers will be joined by moderators who pose questions in the style of a TV talk show. Audience members will have an opportunity to submit questions.

Season tickets are \$80 for general admission for all four events. Single-event tickets are \$25 each or free at the door with a current student ID.

Tickets can be ordered by phone at (585) 398-0239 or purchased online at gmeforum.org. Forum organizers always welcome sponsors. Donors receive tickets, admission to receptions and other benefits. For more information on sponsorship opportunities, contact Paul Bringewatt at (585) 396-0759.

Conspiracy from page 4

without resorting to a fantasy-prone conspiracy theory. If it can't be explained, leaping to a conspiracy explanation based on one or two anomalous events is simply not warranted when weighed against the preponderance of evidence supporting the official theory.

Another common strategy used by conspiracy theorists is to allege that the conspirators are using code words or phrases or real-world hints and clues to communicate with one another. This is a huge red flag because the alleged code words and clues are always open to multiple interpretations and can never be confirmed or disconfirmed. Again, PizzaGate is a prime example. Another example is the far-right pro-Trump conspiracy theory known as QAnon, but with an unusual twist. In QAnon the alleged code words, hints, and leads come not from the conspirators but from an anonymous "leaker" named "QAnon," allegedly someone inside the government with a national security clearance, who is trying to expose the efforts of the Trump administration to "clean the swamp" and root out the "deep state." As QAnon's posts have moved from specific leaks, claims, and predictions, many of which have been falsified and none of which have been verified, to vague hints and esoteric clues that allow more room for interpretation and speculation, QAnon's followers and virtual communities have expanded the conspiracy theory to once again include Hillary Clinton and the Democratic party as part of a world-wide pedophilia ring. PizzaGate just won't go away. For more information on the different and evolving versions of this conspiracy theory, please check out QAnon on Wikipedia.org and RationalWiki.org.

Another huge red flag surrounding conspiracy theories is why, if so many people are involved in the conspiracy and cover-up, no one has come forward as an anonymous leaker, and why the mainstream media with its many resources for investigative reporting has not been able to expose the conspiracy. A common reply from conspiracy supporters, especially alt-right believers in the "deep state," is that the reason the mainstream media has not exposed the conspiracy is because they are part of it. By expanding the conspiracy to include the mainstream media, this paranoid view adds even more unsubstantiated and false claims to those at the core of the theory, making it even more implausible.

In the months leading up to the 2020 election, it is a sure bet that far-right and Russian trolls and websites will be pushing QAnon and other conspiracy theories in an effort to demonize the Democratic Party and its nominee and ensure that Trump is re-elected. In fact, they've already started with Jeffrey Epstein's suicide. It will be our job to resist their influence, and if your common sense and this article aren't enough to persuade you that these theories are not just false but deranged, then please check out the following websites committed to critical thinking and the debunking of false conspiracy theories: RationalWiki.org, Salon.com, Snopes.com, Politifact.com, Quackwatch.org, and Skeptoid.com.

I leave you with the following questions: Who thinks that conspiracy theories are basically harmless? Who thinks that the Russians didn't interfere in our 2016 elections and will not try to do the same in 2020? Who thinks that the "deep state" conspiracy pushed by Trump and his alt-right supporters is true? Who thinks that the mainstream media is part of this conspiracy and a constant purveyor of fake news?

It ain't me.

New York State Office for New Americans issues tips on what to do if encountered by ICE/CBP

Governor Cuomo's Office for New Americans has issued the following tips and guidelines so that residents know their rights if they are confronted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and/or Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The tips ensure immigrants fully understand their legal rights if they are confronted and/or intimidated by ICE/CBP agents.

"Immigrants across New York have clearly defined rights – despite what the Trump Administration and other anti-immigrant forces may want them to believe," said Secretary of State Rossana Rosado, who oversees the Office for New Americans and the Liberty Defense Project. "We urge all New Yorkers to know their rights so if they are targeted or intimidated by law enforcement, they know the legal system is there to provide necessary protections."

The Office for New Americans and the Liberty Defense Project advise individuals if they are confronted by federal immigration enforcement officers from ICE/CBP:

Stay calm. Do not run, argue, resist or obstruct the police.

Ask if you are free to leave. If ICE/CBP answers yes, tell ICE/CBP that you do not want to answer their questions and calmly and silently walk away. If you are under arrest, ask why. You have the right to know the reason for your arrest.

If ICE/CBP tells you that you are not free to leave, you have the right to remain silent and not answer questions from ICE/CBP. Tell ICE/CBP, "I am using my right to remain silent and I want to speak to a lawyer." Your right to remain silent starts from the moment ICE/CBP confronts you.

Do NOT consent to a search of your belongings or your pockets. ICE/CBP may "pat down" your clothing if they suspect a weapon. Do NOT physically resist. If ICE/CBP agents begin to search your person, say out loud, "I do not consent to a search."

Do NOT give false information if you choose to answer questions. Do NOT show any expired or false immigration documents to ICE/CBP.

You do NOT have to share any information about where you were born, where you live, where you work, where you go to school, any information about your family, what your immigration status is, or your criminal record.

You have the right to seek legal assistance and may ask to speak to a lawyer instead of answering questions. If you do not have an attorney, call the New Americans Hotline at 1-800-566-7636.

You have the right to contact your consulate, or to have ICE/CBP inform the consulate if you are being detained.

You do NOT have to sign anything.

Make sure that someone you trust knows where you are at all times and that you know how to reach them in case of an emergency (if you have been detained).

In general, it is a good idea to keep a copy of your important papers (birth certificate, any immigration papers, etc.) at the home of a friend or relative whom you trust and can call in case you are detained.

If ICE/CBP comes to an individual's home:

If an officer knocks on your door, do NOT open it. Ask the officer through the closed door to show their identification and if they have a warrant.

If the officer says "yes," to the warrant, still do not open the door but ask the officer to show you the warrant by slipping it under the door.

A warrant issued by ICE is NOT a valid warrant. Only a warrant signed by a court or judge is valid. When examining the warrant, look for your name, your address, and a signature. A valid warrant will have the name of a court at the top of the page, and a section on the top left-hand corner that says, "United States of America v. (name of person to be arrested)."

If ICE presents a valid warrant, you should let them into the house. Do NOT provide any false information to ICE. See above.

If the warrant looks like it was issued by ICE but not a court or judge, you have the right to NOT let the ICE enter your house. Immediately call your attorney or the New Americans Hotline (1-800-566-7636) to report that ICE is at your door.

If ICE/CBP comes to an individual's place of work:

Immigration officers are NOT allowed to enter your workplace without the approval of the owner or manager.

If the owner or manager grants ICE/CBP permission to enter, the officer is free to ask you questions about your immigration status. See above.

Any immigrant that needs free legal assistance is urged to call the New Americans Hotline at 1-800-566-7636. All call information is confidential. Assistance is available in over 200 languages.

Para reportar un encuentro con ICE/CPB o si usted o alguno de sus conocidos sabe de alguien que necesita de un abogado de inmigración gratuito, llame a la línea de apoyo gratuita y multilingüe de la Oficina para Nuevos Americanos al: 1-800-566-7636



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Only YOU Can Secure your RX!
Help us prevent addiction, accidental poisoning & protect the environment!

MONITOR - count your medication regularly
SECURE - lock up any medication you do not want anyone else to access
DISPOSE - drop off any unwanted/unused and expired medication to your local disposal site



Medication Drop Box Locations:

Bristol:

Town Hall

Canandaigua:

FLCC (Keuka Wing)
The Medicine Shoppe
Ontario County DMV Office
Canandaigua Police Dept.
Thompson Hospital (lobby)
Mental Health Clinic (County Complex)

Geneva:

Police Station
North Street Pharmacy

Richmond:

Town Hall
CVS Pharmacy

Farmington:

State Troopers

Clifton Springs:

Hospital (Lobby)

East Bloomfield:

Town Hall

Naples:

Village Hall

Phelps:

Community Center

Rushville:

Village Hall

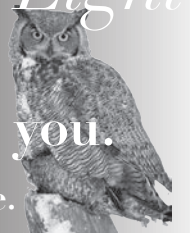
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Meade Square Pharmacy

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Out & about in the Owl Light
Pages 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19,
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The Night Sky ~ September

Clear September nights offer earlier viewing

Cygnus the Swan - Saturn & Jupiter *upclose* - Sagittarius



by Dee Sharples

Clear September nights are my favorite time of year for observing the night sky. Darkness arrives earlier and the temperatures are still comfortably pleasant.

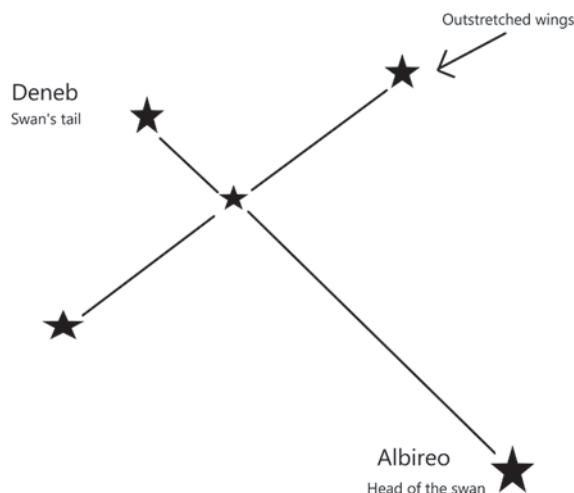
The constellation Cygnus the Swan soars overhead at 10:00 p.m. on September 1st and, by the middle of the month, one hour earlier at 9:00 p.m.

At the same time, look due south to see the planet Saturn looking like a fairly bright yellowish star at magnitude 0.4, about 30 degrees up from the horizon. However, its true beauty only reveals itself through a telescope. Mark your calendars to visit Strasenburgh Planetarium any clear Saturday night in September to view Saturn through one of the two large telescopes while it's still on display in our sky. Its magnificent rings, which are now tilted at an angle of 25 degrees toward Earth, are a sight that will fill you with awe.

A short distance to the right of Saturn in the south-southwest, slightly closer to the horizon, you'll find the planet Jupiter brilliantly shining like a magnitude -2.1 star. Jupiter, too, is an extraordinary sight to see through a telescope with its turbulent bands of clouds, Great Red Spot (a 300-year-old storm almost twice the size of the Earth), and its four bright moons Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto, discovered by Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei in 1610.

Each moon has its own unique characteristics. Io, the moon closest to Jupiter, is rocky with hundreds of active volcanoes - more than any other body in the solar system.

Cygnus the Swan



Illus. Dee Sharples

The Autumnal Equinox occurs at 3:50 a.m. on September 23rd announcing the official start of fall in the Northern Hemisphere.

The moon Europa has an ice shell, which scientists believe is up to 15 miles thick, floating atop an ocean of water or slushy ice 40 to 100 miles deep. Europa's vast, deep ocean is thought to be a very promising place to search for other life in the solar system.

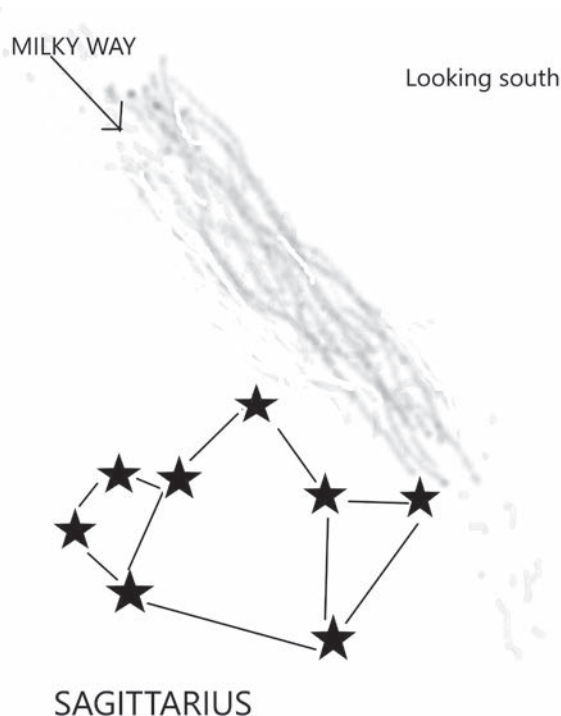
Ganymede is Jupiter's largest moon and the largest moon in our entire solar system. It has a core of metallic iron, a shell of rock around the core, and then a very thick shell of ice and rocks almost 500 miles thick. The Hubble Telescope even found evidence of a thin oxygen atmosphere, although it would be far too thin to support life as we know it.

Callisto is Jupiter's 2nd largest moon and is almost the size of the planet Mercury. Callisto has a rocky, icy surface which is the oldest and most heavily cratered in our solar system. Its surface has been pummeled by asteroids and comets for 4 billion years and has had little or no volcanic or tectonic activity to repair its scars.

Missions to Jupiter or flybys by various spacecraft have discovered many more moons revolving around the planet. Jupiter has a grand total of 79 moons, many of them very small and some still awaiting names.

Look for the constellation Sagittarius almost due South on September 1st at 10:00 p.m. and a little earlier each night until the end of the month when you'll be able to spot it at 8:00 p.m. Because it lies so low on the horizon and is not a super bright constellation, you may need to find an observing spot with a clear view to the south away from obstacles and light pollution. Its stars form the shape of a teapot with its handle on the left and its spout on the right. The Milky Way, a diffuse glow from countless stars in one of the arms of our spiral galaxy, forms a faint path across the sky starting in the Northeast, to overhead, then down toward Sagittarius looking very much like steam rising from its spout.

The Autumnal Equinox occurs at 3:50 a.m. on September 23rd, announcing the official start of fall in the Northern Hemisphere.



SAGITTARIUS

Magnitude

Magnitude measures the apparent brightness of a celestial object and is expressed by a decimal. An object with a negative number like our Sun is brighter.

- Sun: -26.7
- Full Moon: -12.6
- Jupiter: -2.1
- Bright star: 0.0
- Saturn: 0.4
- Deneb: 1.2
- Albireo: 3.1
- Dimmest star visible with the unaided eye: 6.0

How to measure degrees in the sky

A simple "ruler" is to hold your arm straight out and make a fist. The area of the sky covered by your fist measures about 10°. Start at the horizon and by moving your fist up and counting how many "fist widths" it takes to reach an object in the sky, you'll have an approximation of its height. To measure 1°, hold your little finger out at arm's length. The area of the sky covered by your finger is about 1°.

Strasenburgh Planetarium in September

Every clear Saturday night in September, Strasenburgh Planetarium offers the public an opportunity to observe the night sky through two large telescopes. Volunteers from the Astronomy Section of the Rochester Academy of Science will operate the telescopes from dusk to about 10:30 p.m. You will need to climb 60 stairs to the telescope observation deck at the back of the planetarium. Call the planetarium after 7:30 p.m. at 585-697-1945, or coordinator Jim Seidewand at 585-703-9876, to confirm this event will take place. If cloudy, it will be canceled. Observing and parking are free.

Send comments and questions Re: The Night Sky to: Editor@canadicepress.com.

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The Homestead Gardener

by Derrick Gentry



Seeing Eye to Eye when talking potatoes

“So you grow your own potatoes, do you?” I may be overly sensitive, but I sometimes detect a certain tone in the response of people when they find out I am among the tribe of DIY potato-growers. Relatively few home gardens devote space to potatoes, whereas growing herbs and vine-ripe tomatoes and other above-ground seasonal goodies are common and accepted practices. The reasons for prioritizing the latter are fairly clear. Tomatoes require minimal effort; you can grow them on your patio; and we all know they taste much better than the ersatz tomatoes that are shipped in from elsewhere and ripen in transit. That’s why homegrown tomatoes have become a staple of our culture, so to speak.

But potatoes? The difference in taste is not nearly as dramatic, the rationale for growing them at home a little less clear. In fact, there is something decidedly squirrel-like in the decision to grow one’s own potatoes for long-term storage as a genuine staple crop. It’s not that there is anything “wrong” with the practice. But it does strike many in our world today as a quaint and gratuitous opt-out gesture – something like using a scythe rather than a brush hog or a riding mower, or (at one time) like the decision not to participate in social media. And because potatoes do store well for long periods and are one of those few garden crops that you could theoretically live on if you had to, growing them in the squirrel mode – in large quantities, enough to put away for the winter – can begin to seem like the anti-social hobby of a survivalist who is anxiously prepping for something.

In this day and age, moreover, there is no real need to grow them yourself. Yes, we all know that it matters how our potatoes are grown and what harmful chemical residues might be on them and leached into the environment where they were grown. But the reasonable thing to do – according to standard wisdom – is simply pay a little extra at the store and buy organic potatoes, which are readily available today at Wegmans or at any farmers market.

It’s interesting how often Wegmans serves as the frame of reference in our thinking and our conversations about food more generally. I have a friend who grows some of her own vegetables in a small garden plot at home, and she will grow only those varieties of peppers and tomatoes that are not already available for purchase at Wegmans. A neighbor of mine, who maintains a partly edible landscape and still shops at Wegmans, likes to characterize home gardening as a self-evidently dicey proposition, an epic of spraying and fussing and worrying over, an ultimately futile battle against birds and insects and the elements. “It must be hard work” for someone like me who chooses to remain in the battle (this almost always presented as a statement, not a question). Our casual conversations sometimes close with a final benediction, a sentiment I am expected to share: “Thank god for Wegmans!”

I am not sure what to make of this outpouring of emotion channeled within the narrow frame of small-talk. Perhaps it is a reminder that hobbies are hobbies, and we should not get too carried away with our delusions of self-reliance. At least my neighbors are looking out for me; and I do try to express my gratitude for that concern by giving the gift of surplus potatoes. In the half dozen years I have been growing potatoes on the squirrel model – that is to say, in large quantities for gifting and eating and long-term storage – the only real stress I have experienced is figuring out what to do with all the extras that we do not have the space to store.

It is good to have choices and back-up plans, and there are obviously good reasons for choosing organic potatoes if that is the choice. Thank god for Wegmans, I suppose. But it seems to me that far too much self-generated anxiety has come to be associated with this innocent root crop. We do have one other option, one that is both practical and has a lot going for it in terms of meaning and satisfaction. I think it is high time to change the subject, to shake up a conversation that is narrowly focused on dangers to avoid and on choices that are based on fears and concerns. I want to go “beyond organic,” so to speak, and talk instead about some of the spiritual pleasures, and some of the plain old earthly pleasures, that are deeply rooted in the practice of growing nearly a whole year’s worth of potatoes in a modest-sized plot of ground near your home.

Before we ponder the pleasures, the first task is to relieve some of the common anxieties regarding the alleged perils and hardship involved in growing your own. (Next month’s Homestead Gardener will move on to consider the more deeply rooted question of pleasure and meaning...).



Anxiety #1:

"I do not have good soil or a reliable source of fertility..."

Well, the short and simple answer is that potatoes are not at all demanding in terms of soil tilth or fertility. Potatoes will grow in some pretty rough, newly converted ground. Like all root crops, they would love a sandy loam in which to spread out. But unlike carrots, potatoes can also deal with less optimal conditions: heavy clay, rocky soil, even grass

turf that has recently been turned over. In fact, potatoes are a perfect pioneer crop if you want to convert a stretch of lawn into a rough draft of a garden bed. (Planting winter rye or winter wheat after Fall harvest builds soil and improves tilth for the following year.)

Nor are potatoes very demanding in terms of fertility. The one nutrient they really do need is potassium (and the potatoes we eat, by the way, are particularly high in potassium, along with many other nutrients). How do we get potassium in the soil and to the plant? One traditional method was to sprinkle some potassium-rich wood ash along with the seed potato when planting. The problem, however, is that potatoes prefer slightly acidic soil. Ash turns the soil alkaline, which creates the ideal conditions for the bacteria that causes what is known as potato scab – a minor problem, but one that you can easily avoid.

In my experience, the best and most convenient source of potassium for potatoes are the leaves of the perennial comfrey plant (*Symphytum officinale*). Comfrey deserves an entire column to itself; it is easy to establish and maintain and has a wide range of functions in the homestead garden. One of its earliest uses comes when it is time to plant potatoes in the Spring.

The potassium-rich leaves emerge in April/May just in time for potato planting (around mid-May in Zone 5). I pick some of the giant leaves of comfrey, allow them to dry out a few days in the sun, and I then swaddle each seed potato in a single dry leaf. Make sure the leaves are dry to prevent rotting of the seed potato. Comfrey continues to play a role once the plant tops emerge. I let a handful of comfrey leaves ferment in a bucket of water for two weeks or so and make a batch of "comfrey tea" that can be used as a foliar spray -- a potent fertilizer for the plants in their early and middle growth stages.

If you have a row of comfrey planted along a garden bed border, then you have all the fertility you need for your potatoes (and comfrey also makes a wonderful rhizome barrier for the surrounding grass). There is no need to haul in organic matter or manure or make loads of compost; a few comfrey plants, some leaves and grass clippings for mulch, and a bag of cover crop seed are all you need to keep the show going year to year.



Anxiety #2: "What about the Colorado potato beetle?"

Well, before we get to the notorious beetle from out west, let's talk about an even earlier visitor: the flea beetle. Flea beetles are tiny but visible, and they are of most concern when the potato tops begin to emerge from the ground and have little foliage. You can sprinkle diatomaceous earth to control flea beetles, but I have found that the best way to deal with these tiny nibblers is to promote rapid growth of the plant foliage with a weekly spray of comfrey tea (or, if you prefer, a foliar spray of liquid kelp meal diluted in water).

And now for the much-discussed and (on the whole) irrationally feared potato beetle from Colorado (home to Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, as well as the altitude-induced high commemorated by John Denver). I am afraid the potato beetle is something that every potato grower must live with. But that is no reason to be afraid. The beetles and their larvae are pretty easy to control by hand, so long as you make your regular rounds in the garden to pick off any visitors you happen to see and crush any of the eggs they lay on the undersides of the leaves.

There are the pretty striped beetles, and then there are ... well, the not so pretty larvae that are their offspring. You will always miss some of the bright orange eggs laid upon the leaves, and they will soon hatch into the plump, orange-red larvae that munch on the leaves of your plants. They are as easy to spot as their beetle parents, and the other good news is that their devouring project proceeds slowly. This gives you plenty of time to contemplate how much you really, really do not want to perform what must be acknowledged as the one truly unpleasant chore of potato growing: pulling these ugly little munchers off and squishing them between your fingers.

I think it is worth mentioning that the manual form of pest control that I have just described is feasible only at the garden scale, according to the principles of what many now call the “attention economy.” Larger growing operations must rely on chemicals, either organic or conventional. Apart from recruiting beneficial insects as predators, the most ecologically sensible form of pest control involves a pair of eyes and a pair of hands. For the least exploitative form of labor, make use of your own eyes and your own hands. These are advantages of the small-scale garden model that are well worth pondering the next time you read about the many fateful compromises that define the project of large-scale agriculture.



Anxiety #3:

“What about the threat of late blight, particularly in our region?”

Another common myth is that potatoes are hopelessly prone to disease and potato-growing is therefore no game for the amateur home gardener. The most notorious of these diseases, the fungal disease known as late blight, is one that strikes us in the Finger Lakes about every other season. Late blight was the cause of the Irish Potato Famine, which is lodged deeply in our cultural memory. Thank god for Wegmans, right?

Like many disasters, the Irish Potato Famine was due to a complex set of factors; the potato does not deserve a bad reputation on account of it, and late blight should no longer be thought of as a dire existential threat. There are many more blight-resistant varieties available today than there were in the mid 1800s. In my experience, most potato varieties commonly grown in the Finger Lakes have at least some measure of resistance to blight (some of them are surprisingly resistant).

Regional Farm and Garden Markets

Goods and products harvested, crafted and sold locally...

by the people who produce them.

Penn Yan

The Penn Yan Farmers' Market is held Saturday mornings 7:30 to noon in downtown Penn Yan, on the Main Street sidewalk between Elm & Jacob Streets.

Interested vendors, or customers with questions, should contact the market president, Rivka Davis, 607-243-5234, rivkaroadsend@frontiernet.net; or the market manager, Howard Hoover, 315-536-3192.

Dansville

There are two markets in Dansville for 2019. On Fridays, the Dansville Farmers' Market will take place on Maple Street from 11am - 4:30pm through October 4th.

Downtown Dansville's Saturday Farmers Market is from 10am-2pm, June 22-October 19 on Ossian Street. Parking in municipal lots, entered from Elizabeth St.

Out & about in the Owl Light Pages 10, 11, 12, 13 & more...

Continued page 16



Dragonfly Tales

by Steve Melcher

The importance of habitat diversity

The greatest threat to organisms and biodiversity is habitat loss.

S.A. Melcher 1989

Habitat Diversity

Odonata Sanctuary is home to over 100 acres of diverse habitats. One of our main missions at the sanctuary is to maintain and create habitats for specific species. The habitats are as diverse as anywhere in New York state.

Grassland birds

We have 30 acres of grassland habitat that we mow every other year, specifically for ground nesting birds. Grassland habitats are disappearing on a national scale at an alarming rate. Bobolinks and Meadowlarks have successfully reared their young here in our grassland sanctuary. These birds, along with Dicksissels, are disappearing because of grassland habitat loss. Farmers today may mow their fields for hay two or three times in a season. Unfortunately, many times they're mowing right over prime nesting sites or the nests themselves. These are the very insectivorous birds that farmers encouraged before chemical companies convinced most of them that they needed to use insecticides to control insect pests. We time our mowing to occur early in the season before the birds arrive and later in the summer when we are sure the birds have fledged. We selectively mow our fields to remove the invasives like Autumn Olive and multiflora-rose and encourage patches of important pollinating and food source plants like the 'food for kings,' the milkweed. I encourage all of you to start a milkweed patch. No matter how small, you'll be spreading seeds for the plant that is necessary for the Monarch Butterfly's survival. The unmown meadows provide habitat for other beneficial native insects as well. The Virginia Ctenucha (*Ctenucha virginica*) caterpillars and other species of butterflies and moths feed on the grasses and the adults are prolific pollinators.

Cavity nesters

Half of all birds nest in tree cavities. Cavity nesters are birds that nest in holes. Some, like the bluebird, depend on woodpeckers to do the house construction for them. When the juices are flowing, woodpeckers may create five or six holes and only use one. Cavity nesters, like our state bird, the Eastern Bluebird, were disappearing until a concerted effort of concerned citizens started building nest boxes to replace the lost nesting habitat. The bluebird's decline can directly be correlated to a loss of nesting habitat found in older apple orchards. We've lost many of our apple orchards in upstate New York and the bluebirds along with them. Pesticides kill insects indiscriminately. Those insects are a food source for the woodpecker house builder. Fewer woodpeckers, fewer holes. Fewer holes, fewer nest sites. Fewer nest sites.. Our bluebird trail currently has over sixty nest boxes successfully fledging bluebirds, tree swallows, chickadees and house wrens. Our plan is to have 100 nest boxes on our trail that will be monitored by locals scouts and young naturalists.

Planting for Pollinators

In addition to providing habitat for medicinal plants through United Plant Savers, we participate in the National Pollinator and New York State Pollinator Awareness programs. We have encouraged existing native pollinating plants and plant those missing that were once here. We're 'reintroducing' plants that once grew here. Many have multiple benefits. Besides being a food source for butterflies, spicebush, for instance, is used as a "blood purifier" and for sweating, colds, rheumatism and anemia. Settlers used a twig tea to treat colds, fevers, worms, gas and colic and bark tea to expel worms, for typhoid fevers and a diaphoretic. We've created a Spicebush trail along which the scent of *Lindera benzoin* adds to the festival of butterflies and birds that benefit from this native plant.

Willow Pond

The jewel of the sanctuary is a three-acre, self-sustaining, spring-fed pond, dug to a depth of 50 feet. The pond has a story all of its own reminiscent of the movie 'Cocoon'. Once stocked with over 100 trout every year, Willow's Pond, was used by the former owners, the Taylors for 'fly fishing fun' for over 20 years. The pond contains small and largemouth bass, several species of bluegill and catfish, Weyward the Water Wizard, many amphibians and of course several species of our namesake: dragonflies. I'll write more about Taylor Pond LTD in the future.

"Habitat loss is probably the greatest threat to the variety of life on this planet today."

~ World Wildlife Fund

Wetland

Although extinction is a natural phenomenon, it occurs at a natural "background" rate of about one to five species per year. Scientists estimate we're now losing species at up to 1,000 times the background rate, with literally dozens going extinct every day. The current amphibian extinction rate may range from 25,039 to 45,474 times the background extinction rate. Frogs, toads, and salamanders are disappearing primarily because of habitat loss. Wetlands have experienced the greatest loss in acreage over the past 100 years. We plan to install permanent shallow ponds in our 'Lower Loop' just below 'Cedar Cliff'. This will provide habitat for birds and amphibians as well as migrating waterfowl. There are other vernal ponds as well. Vernal or Ephemeral ponds are short lived ponds providing a habitat for certain species of dragonflies and an abundance of amphibians. These are the ponds that are filled with the delightful cacophony of spring peepers, wood frogs and so many other creatures who depend on this special habitat. There are several streams that run the length of the property. One leads to Irondequoit Creek which eventually flows into Lake Ontario through the bay. One year we found a Chinook salmon washed up on the bank. Imagine salmon seeking fertile grounds, travelling miles upstream through so many obstacles to lay their eggs.

There is about a thirty-acre section that was formerly drained by the use of clay drainage tiles during a time when wetland habitats weren't as well understood and farmers were encouraged to drain the wetland and plant land from 'edge to edge'. Today, we know more about the importance of wetlands as nursery grounds for fish and fowl alike, sponges for storm waters and export factories of food for other habitats. We are crushing those tiles where celery, subsidized corn and soybeans once grew, in hopes that the land will again become the former glory of a wetland habitat. Oceanography was my original field of study, but I switched to freshwater ecology in graduate school, the former field being flooded with folks finding work only for big oil. The wetlands of Odonata Sanctuary are probably the most precious to me. The sedges with their edges and the rushes that are round...and the willows, found where water abounds. At Odonata Sanctuary there is a swamp as well as a freshwater marsh. Most folks use the terms interchangeably. I'll leave you with a way to remember the simple difference. 'A marsh has grass and a swamp has trees, if you walk through either, you'll get wet up to your knees'. Or, 'A swamp has trees and a marsh has grass, if you walk through either you'll get wet up to your...knees.'

Farmland and Rescued Critters

We still have an area reserved for farming where we hope to replace our sorely missed CSA farmer, James of 'Buzz's Garden' fame. We currently grow several kinds of currants and berries. Fifteen acres is being groomed for future hemp growth with seeds provided by and encouragement from the state of NY. We grow mushrooms in one area and there is of course the medicinal herbs we grow as part of our membership in the United Plant Savers. The farmland of old provided habitat not just for the crops, but for many species of wildlife as well. Insect-eating birds, like the bluebirds and meadowlarks, were beneficial to the farmer. Today's monoculture has created an environment flush with harmful chemicals. The unharvested and subsidized corn and soybean monocultures have also encouraged a deer population explosion.

We're fortunate to live in an area that supports and encourages local farmers to hold onto their land through tax relief policies and conservation easements. Houses are the last thing a farmer can grow on his land. We're seeing more and more housing developments and McMansions because the newest generation of the family farm isn't interested or can't afford the hard work of farming life. Many of us moved to the country to be closer to the land; a land with a rich diversity of habitats. In the words of Will Rogers and Mark Twain 'Land...they're not making any more of it.' Please support your local farmers and encourage them to maintain a healthy diversity of habitats. Buy local when you can and support the farmer who maintains a healthy diversity of natural habitats on his precious land.

Odonata Sanctuary:

Odonata Sanctuary is a nature preserve, active farm and sanctuary where abandoned farm animals find a home to spend the rest of their days and Eastern Bluebirds, Meadowlarks, Bobolinks and Monarch Butterflies find suitable habitat to thrive.

<http://odonatafarm sanctuary.blogspot.com/>

"Habitat, Habitat...Have to have a Habitat."

~ from: 'Bill Oliver - environmental troubadour'

*The song - available on YouTube - is a great tool for teaching about habitats:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVPyjukPxFA>*

Hawthorn Orchard

I have aerial photos from the 40's showing the land mostly in hay and hamburgers. Many acres were sectioned off with barbed wire to contain cows. An interesting and ecologically beneficial remnant of those grazing grass eaters is our 15-acre Hawthorn Orchard. A Hawthorn Orchard is the result of the selective eating habits of the cows. Over several decades, if the pastures are unmowed and only grazed by bovines, hawthorn trees can grow to 30-40 feet. The spines on the hawthorns and locusts deter the cows from grazing the plants to the ground. As the hawthorns grow taller, the undergrowth gets eaten by the cows and the trees provide shade. However, if the overhead canopy closes to a point where there is complete shade, the chances for the succession of other plant species is reduced. On our land, cow chattel were abandoned in the 60's. The ecological benefit is a lower carbon footprint for the land and the hawthorns trees are providing an excellent source of nectar for pollinators. The pollinating insects, attracted to the fragrant blossoms, provide an excellent source of food for warblers! When the hawthorns are in bloom in the spring, neotropical migrants move in for a fruit fly feeding frenzy. If you stand on the trail that runs through the hawthorn orchard when the aroma of blooming buds abounds and there is an audible hum of insect industriousness, you may find yourself promoted to colonel, as I was this year, by having one of many species of warblers poop on your shoulder. This spring we were visited by Tennessee Warblers, Bay-breasted, Wilson's, Cape Mays and many other species without the onset of 'warbleneck' caused by looking high into the canopy through heavy binoculars.

Hardwoods

In addition to the Hawthorn Orchard, the land is fortunate to have climax forests consisting of Oak/Hickory and Maple/Beech. In the 40 acres of the 'Woodpecker Woods', we have left the old trees standing to provide homes for the prodigious Pileated and other woodpeckers. The hickory nuts are a favorite food of the wild turkeys in the area.

A word about Invasives

We have made a concerted effort to rid the land of invasives and have done a very good job of keeping Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) at bay. Others, like multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) are proving to be more difficult. Keep in mind, like the glyphosate promoted for use by farmers today, most of these invasives were imported to initially serve as natural fences and food sources for wildlife. But like the kudzu of the south, which was imported as a miracle food source and cover crop, we're finding these plants a threat to native habitats.

Critical from Front

As with all the frameworks, these are options, meant to generate meaningful discussion. What was amazing about the process of reviewing this framework was the frankness of the participants in sharing their experiences, and the willingness of Bill Muse to use the feedback to explore changes in the framework – much as our court system works, to actively re-evaluate and modify the US Constitution to reflect social changes and better serve our democratic objectives. There was also a collaborative desire to use what was learned in facilitating the framework to highlight and build on the important community-based projects the participants were involved in.

The applications of “A House Divided” by the workshop participants included: Classroom applications for encouraging dialog within diverse racial and ethnic student populations on college campuses; work with individuals in prison systems; work in communities with mixed populations of documented and undocumented residents; exploring land use options; and building trust and safe learning environments within public school settings impacted by traumatic events. Some commonalities around discussion of the use of “A House Divided” included the need to focus in on the personal experiences of all those involved in the deliberation (storytelling); a sense of hopelessness shared by some participants, around the ability of individuals to impact political change; and the benefits of using arts, such a theatre and community murals, as a conduit for positive deliberation and shared action.

Even in critiquing the effectiveness of this particular framework, the focus remained on finding solutions, such as added guidance for facilitators, increasing the number of facilitators and the use of different forum modes (some felt that the on-line forum worked better than face-to-face for the “House Divided” framework, as it offered more time for reflection and evaluation.). There was added discussion around how to effectively continue the deliberation process beyond the initial deliberative forum, to inspire collaborations toward change.

This focus on finding ways of working with others was evident not only in the workshop, but with all of my Ddex interactions – during plenary sessions and shared community meals.

The weeklong event included representatives from 36 different countries. During an initial plenary session, a group of women from Israel offered an overview of their work toward helping to strengthen community connections between Jews and Arabs, amidst underlying fears that contributed to distrust. In one case, a woman who was convinced to join a convention to learn more confessed to the organizers that she had hid a knife under her skirt – uncertain as to what she might encounter. People, the presenters shared, “are good,” and will work toward “something they believe in” once we “plant the seed.” “Despite these initial challenges, people are already starting to move forward toward initiatives.” The speakers stressed that this is a sporadic process rather than a linear one; lasting change takes time. For these women, and for so many of those I met, storytelling, encouraging people from diverse perspectives to share their experiences while developing a shared vocabulary around issues, helps reshape views and facilitates positive change.

By the end of the workshop, I felt that I had made connections through the many stories I heard. I also found myself balancing between my role as a reporter and my earlier life experiences as an educator – in juvenile prisons and alternative school settings.

**"We must learn how to fail intelligently,
for failing is one of the greatest arts in the world."
Charles F. Kettering**

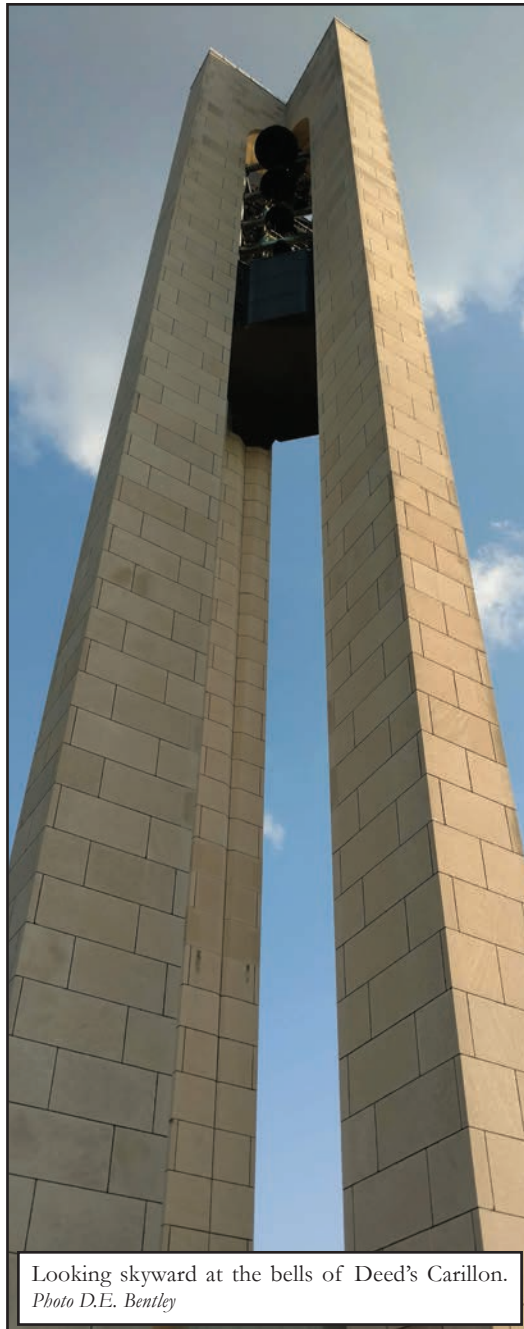
Education seemed so much a part of all of the shared experiences, and it remains important to me to find ways of integrating these dual roles as I continue to explore increased involvement. In listening to those assembled, I was reminded, again, of the importance of local action and involvement.

Many of those present have found ways of creating and using existing deliberative frameworks to focus in on a specific community's needs. Reverend Gregg Kaufman Th.M. was part of a faith-based initiative in the “Cathedral District” of Jacksonville, Florida that led to the creation of a more pedestrian-friendly and community-oriented infrastructure around five historic churches – all of which are still active congregations.

Leslie Garvin, who serves as the Executive Director of the North Carolina Campus Compact, which supports thirty-eight college campuses as they work to foster civic and community engagement in higher education, was working on creating an issues guide for facilitating dialog around Confederate statues. I saw immediate relevance to this and the dialog initiated and carried out by concerned residents and the City of Rochester around the racist images on the Dentzel Carousel at Ontario Beach Park.

Bill Muse, in wrapping up the workshop, stressed the importance of finding bipartisan agencies to partner with to build critical thinking, communication, and collaborative skills in the next generation of citizens. Getting to know so many people in such a short amount of time together is impossible. Nonetheless, I was touched in some way by each and every one of the stories shared during our time together. Many of the participants have spent their lives working toward change, as educators, activists, and citizens, work they continue in their roles with the Kettering Foundation and NIFI. All agreed that there are significant challenges involved in increasing civic deliberations and meaningful dialog, including getting all the parties into the same room together and making sure that all stories are shared and listened to. There was also a shared commitment and belief that slow change at the community level is possible.

As so often happens, I encountered a more personal connection in my travels to Dayton, Ohio. An image of the first playing of the Deeds Carillon bells, on April 5, 1942 by Mrs. Edward Deeds, was published in the April 1942 edition of the National Cash Register (NCR) Factory News. The parent company of NCR was founded in Dayton, Ohio. Charles F. Kettering, the inspiration for the Kettering Foundation's continuing work, including its annual Deliberative Democracy Exchange (DDEX), worked at the National Cash Register Company in Dayton, Ohio, where he helped develop the first cash register with an electric opening drawer. Edward A. Deeds was a former CEO (1931–1957). They later formed Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company (DELCO), and developed a key-operated electric self-starting ignition system, which was introduced on Cadillac vehicles in 1912, and replaced iron hand cranks. My grandmother, Alice, had retired from NCR in Ithaca, NY. Like so many others of the time, I am sure she marveled at the image of Deeds Carillon and the crowd that gathered to hear the bells, as the fight for a more democratic world, the war *after* the war to end all wars, continued.



Looking skyward at the bells of Deed's Carillon.
Photo D.E. Bentley



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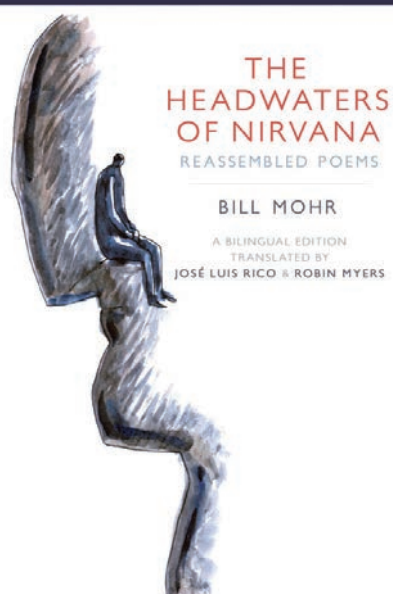
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Methods and Materials: The Sojourns of Affinities

In an extended "Q&A," Lynn McGee (*Tracks*, Broadstone Books, 2019) and Bill Mohr (*The Headwaters of Nirvana: Reassembled Poems*, A bilingual edition translated by José Luis Rico and Robin Myers, What Books Press, 2019) discuss their recently published volumes of poetry. Both poets draw upon the lyric as a way to frame the exterior world, and go about the process of assembling materials and arranging themes in ways that illuminate their affinities for each other's work. This exchange took place in the late spring and summer of 2019.

Lynn McGee: When I opened the padded envelope with *The Headwaters of Nirvana: Reassembled Poems*, I stood at the kitchen counter reading almost the entire book. I'm thinking now of the pivots and line breaks in "Vallejo," the precise unfolding of images in "Eye Chart for an Orbiting Space Station." Of course, I recognize many of the poems, like "Rules for Building a Labyrinth," which you set into a letterpress pamphlet in the nineties. I also noticed some familiar poems aren't in this new book, like the one about a roommate who leaves broken glass on the kitchen floor. I know your editors selected the poems for this collection. Did their choices surprise you? What are your thoughts on how to assemble a collection of poetry?

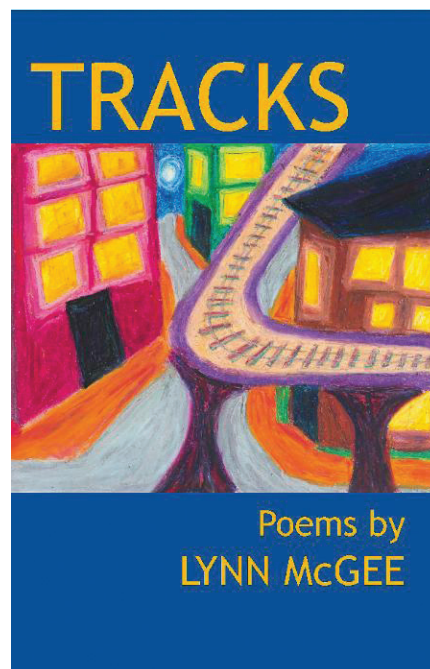


Bill Mohr: The choices that Jose Rico and Robin Myers made delighted me, if only because they left out the poem you mention about the roommate, "Waiting in Line in Pancho's Tacos." If I never see that poem anthologized again, it will be fine with me. That poem is largely regarded as one of the signature poems of the "Stand Up" school of poetry, but that kind of poetry does not particularly appeal to poets in Mexico.

What mattered the most to me is that my work would be of interest to poets writing in Spanish. I was especially pleased that they chose "The Trolley Problem." It's a reflection of their ability to choose my best work that I could easily give several different kinds of readings using just the poems in *Headwaters*.

As for assembling a manuscript, I think that's the easy part. Finding a publisher willing to accommodate your preferences is the

challenge. The standard advice is to make the first poem and the last poem in the manuscript be exceptionally strong. One of them doesn't necessarily have to be the title poem, though as I remember Richard Kostelanetz once saying in a talk in New York City, the mark of an important collection of poems is that it has two or three memorable poems in addition to the title poem. For myself, I prefer to organize the poems so that there is a through-line of imagery and rhythms that help shape the tonal trajectory of the book's primary argument.



Lynn, I'd like to talk about the title of your new collection. While the cover art reinforces the image of public transportation, the word "tracks" also has the common association of physical footprints. In your poem, "Sign," the opening image is of your perilous trudge through snow and ice, "feet deep in the prints of those who gone / before me." On a literary level, one could think of any poet's work as walking in a similar manner. Are there any particular poets who influenced this project?

Lynn McGee: I can't speak to poets who influenced the manuscript, as much as events. As I was writing and revising the manuscript, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton won the nomination for their parties. Anton Sterling was shot by a police officer while lying on the ground, Philando Castile was shot by a cop as he was sitting in the passenger seat of his girlfriend's car, and then five police officers were killed by a sniper at a Black Lives Matter rally in Dallas. It was a summer that kicked off public outcry, white people's awareness had begun to rise, and I was getting used to a much longer subway commute, determined not to be numbed by the experience.

In other words, I wanted to stay alert; not in the "high alert" kind of way we talked about after 9/11, but in the sense that I wanted to stay connected to my fellow New Yorkers, to protect whatever humanity we could have together, riding the train. The presidential election of November 2017 loomed as I got out my laptop on the train each morning and grounded myself in observations that became *Tracks*.

At some point I added to the manuscript, a group of poems about my sister who died of a brain aneurism while driving back to work from the alternative high school where she tutored kids on her lunch hour. I was surprised to see how well those poems fit into the book, at least on the surface, with their train and car themes. They made the manuscript have an arc for me — the grief seemed to underscore the importance of not losing touch with what is best in us.

Bill, you also include in your new book, poems of people you've loved and who have passed on. "One Miracle," about the poet and performance artist Bob Flanagan, who died in 1996, brings to mind for me the flamboyant and loving event celebrating his life that I attended with you at Beyond Baroque — and now more than 20 years have passed. Can you characterize or talk about how your poetry has changed over the decades?

Bill Mohr: My earliest poems are outgrowths of Donald Allen's anthology and Naked Poetry, after which I found myself an antagonist of Daniel Halpern's anthology of MFA program. My own anthologies reflect a growing interest in the long poem. By the mid-1980s, I was once again oscillating between two anthologies, but this time the split became more radical.

In 1985, three anthologies were published, and two of them really add a major rupture in American poetry. The best known of these was *In the American Tree*, in which Ron Silliman cites in a long list of fellow travelers. Indeed, due to the work of poets I began meeting in the very early 1980s, such as Kit Robinson and Barrett Watten, I began work on two long poems.

In 1985, three anthologies were published, and two of them really add a major rupture in American poetry. The best known of these was *In the American Tree*, in which Ron Silliman cites in a long list of fellow travelers. Indeed, due to the work of poets I began meeting in the very early 1980s, such as Kit Robinson and Barrett Watten, I began work on two long poems.

Continued page 14

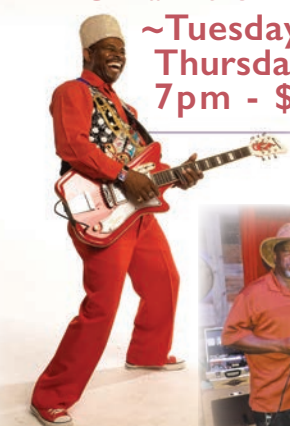
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"We're Books ... and More"



"Wizard of Oz" items from Barb's Kennerson's collection will be on display at the library in September.



September's 2nd Saturday Movie Madness Matinee features *The Wizard of Oz*. Admission and popcorn are free!

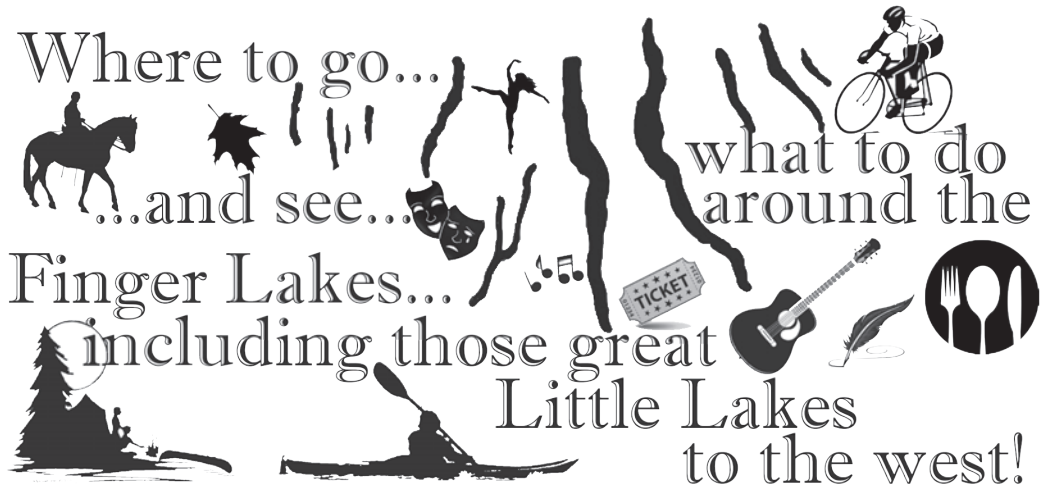
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Wednesday, September 25, 5:30 pm
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Where to go...
 ...and see...
 Finger Lakes...
 including those great
 Little Lakes
 to the west!



Call for Art - October 2019

We have been greatly impressed with all of the wonderful barns in New York, and have decided to organize our October exhibit around this theme.

~All artists in the region are invited to submit one piece of art that is about a Barn. All mediums accepted with a size limit of 36" in any direction. The exhibit will begin with an opening reception on Friday, October 4 from 5-8pm and end on Sunday, October 27 at 4pm. at The Village Gallery, 3119 Main Street, Caledonia, NY 14423.

Work can be delivered any time before October 1 during gallery hours (Friday, Saturday, Sunday 11-4) or by making an appointment at 585-294-3009.



Geva's 47th Season begins with *La Cage Aux Folles*

'The Best of Times is Now' as the ESL Federal Credit Union 2019-2020 Season kicks off with one of musical theatre's biggest all-time hits.

La Cage aux Folles is the first musical to win Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical twice and was the inspiration for the 1996 hit film, *The Birdcage*. To celebrate his 25th Anniversary as Artistic Director, Mark Cuddy will star as nightclub owner Georges.

Geva Theatre Center presents *La Cage Aux Folles*, with book by Harvey Fierstein, music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, based on the play by Jean Poiret, directed by Melissa Rain Anderson, with musical direction by Don Kot, and choreography by Sam Hay in the Elaine P. Wilson Stage from September 3 through October 6.

In sunny St. Tropez, Georges and Albin run a glamorous nightclub with fabulous drag performers. Their blissful existence is turned upside down when Georges' son announces that he is getting married...to the daughter of one of France's most conservative politicians. Georges and Albin do their best to ensure that the marriage goes off without a hitch, with hilarious results. One of musical theatre's biggest all-time hits, *La Cage aux Folles* features an exuberant score by Jerry Herman (Mame; Hello, Dolly!). Winner of six Tony Awards including "Best Musical" when it premiered in 1983, both the 2004 and 2010 Broadway revivals won the Tony Award for "Best Revival of a Musical." *La Cage aux Folles* was the inspiration for the 1996 hit film *The Birdcage*.

Based on the 1978 film of the same name, which was, in turn, based on a 1973 play by Jean Poiret, *La Cage aux Folles* opened on Broadway at the Palace Theatre in August 1983. This production received eight Tony Award nominations, winning six including Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book. It also won two Drama Desk Awards. The show ran for four years and 1,761 performances. It was revived on Broadway in 2004 and won the Tony Award for Best Revival. The 2008 London revival won the Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival. The production transferred to Broadway in 2010 and was nominated for eleven Tony Awards, winning for Best Revival of a Musical. *La Cage aux Folles* is the first musical in Broadway history to win the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical twice and it has been awarded a "Best Musical" or "Best Revival of a Musical" Tony Award for each of its Broadway productions.

Going city-way?
 Check this out!



Kelly's Saloon ~ Tuesdays, 8:30 pm 'til 2 am!
 Hosted by Tim Bucci... and Buzzo!
 71 Main Street, Geneseo ~ fb Kelly's Saloon

Idle Hour ~ Mondays, 8:30!
 Hosted by Tim Bucci, and Emily
 5 Center St, Geneseo, NY. ~ fb The Idle Hour

*Peacemaker Brewing Company ~ Wednesdays 6-9 pm
 ~Hosted by Old World Warblers ~
 *20 Pleasant St, Canandaigua

CB Craft Brewers - every Thursday, 6-9 pm.
 Acoustic Open Mic Hosted by Steve West
 ~ *All ages and talent levels are welcome ~
 www.cbcraftbrewers.com - Honeoye Falls
 *Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The Lobby Craft Eatery - every Thursday, 6-9 pm.
 With rotating hosts.
 3530 E Lake Rd, Canandaigua ~ www.lobbycrafteatery.com

The Dalai Java Cafe - First Thursday, 7-9 pm.
 157 Main St Canandaigua, NY
 Co-hosted by Steve Lewandowski & Scott Williams.
 Rotating guests plus open slots each month.

Brew and Brats at Arbor Hill ~ Fridays, 6 pm!
 6461 BB State Route 64, Naples, NY - info@brewandbrats.com

Dansville ArtWorks
 4th Fridays: February ~ November, 6:30 pm
 153 Main Street - Dansville ~ www.DansvilleArtWorks.com

Fanatics Pub and Grill

Voice,
 Music,
 Poetry,
 Stories

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September 21 & 22, 2019

Hemlock Fairgrounds - Hemlock, NY



Saturday 10am-5pm • Sunday 10am-4pm
 Adults \$7 • 12 and under free
tax included

www.gvhg.org/fiber-fest

Ionia Fall Festival September 21, 2019 All Day!

22nd Annual Ionia Fall Festival, Saturday, September 21, all day long, on the Ionia United Methodist Church grounds, 2120 Elton Rd., just off Rt 64 & north of Rts 5 & 20. Our Tractor Parade, now in its 16th year, will have tractors from all over western NY & is one of the largest in western NY! The parade begins at 1 PM, but you can look at the tractor & implement displays behind the church all day long. Begin your day with a delicious Pancake Breakfast 7:30-10AM; then later a Chicken BBQ 11:30AM til sold out; and the Chow Hut serves hot dogs, burgers and more 10:00-4:30 All day long; cake & dessert wheel; coin toss; Sheriff's K-9 unit, historical & other displays & demonstrations; games; hayrides to the Wolk Observatory; Scout demonstrations; & much, much more. More information is on our website: www.ioniaumc.org Come for a fun fall day in the country!

Out & about in the Owl Light

Shining light on arts and innovation in the less traveled byways of the Finger Lakes

Add your events at
owllightnews.com/events/community/add

www.owllightnews.com/events

September 2019 Events

15th annual Oak Tree Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk
Sunday, September 1, 2019, 8am-12pm
Geneseo Central School - <https://www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/>

The Honeoye-Richmond Historical Society presents:
"Hop Growing and Beer Production in the Genesee Country in the 19th Century," by Jane Oakes, History Researcher and Educator
Thursday, September 5, 2019, 7pm, Richmond Town Hall
All are welcome!



Finger Lakes Museum Open House
Saturday, September 7, 10am-2pm
3369 Guyanoga Road, Branchport, NY
Have you been wondering what is happening at the Finger Lakes Museum? Join Museum staff, volunteers, and trustees to find out!

Rochester Folk Art Guild Luncheon
Saturday, September 7, 2019, 12-2pm
Reservations are requested via email: folkartguild@gmail.com

Mystical Gathering
Friday, September 20, 7-9pm, \$10
Little Lakes Community Center, Hemlock, NY

Word Soup ~ Readings - Details page 14.
Sunday, September 22, 1:30-3:30 pm
Wood Library, Canandaigua, NY
See additional information on Page 14

Third Annual Barn Fest - See back page.
Saturday, September 28 9am to 3pm
Little Lakes Community Center, Hemlock, NY
Music All Day: Bands include "Country Rain" (Ritchie Taromino, Cherie Comstock) and "Bobby and the Einsteins"
Family-Friendly Activities - Wacky Bounce House, Balloon Mania, Games and Crafts A variety of local crafts and food vendors.
"Special Touch Bakery" pie sale.

Comfort Food Sunday with Jaime Wrobel
Sunday, September 29 1-3pm,
Little Lakes Community Center, Hemlock, NY
\$10.00 (\$5 supplies; \$5 to be shared with LLCA)
Quick and Easy Chicken Noodle Soup
Fresh Bread with Dipping Sauce

Open Mic Performing Arts Series ~ George Hochbrueckner
Friday, September 27 - 6:30 - 8:30pm - See ad top right
~ ArtsWorks, 153 Main St. - Dansville
Featuring ... George Hochbrueckner offers The Diversity of Guitar - experience diverse styles and musical ideas. Free & open to the public. Open Mic participants welcome with family-friendly performances; please arrive by 6:15pm to sign up.

Native American Meditation and Drumming Circle
Friday, September 27 7-8:30 pm, \$10
Little Lakes Community Center, Hemlock, NY
If you have your own drum please bring it (not necessary for participation).



OPEN MIC Performing Arts Series

George Hochbrueckner

The Diversity of Guitar.

Friday, Sept. 27 - 6:30 pm

Free and open to the public

This project was made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a re-grant program of the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the NYS Legislature and administered by the Genesee Valley Council on the Arts.



Dansville ArtWorks

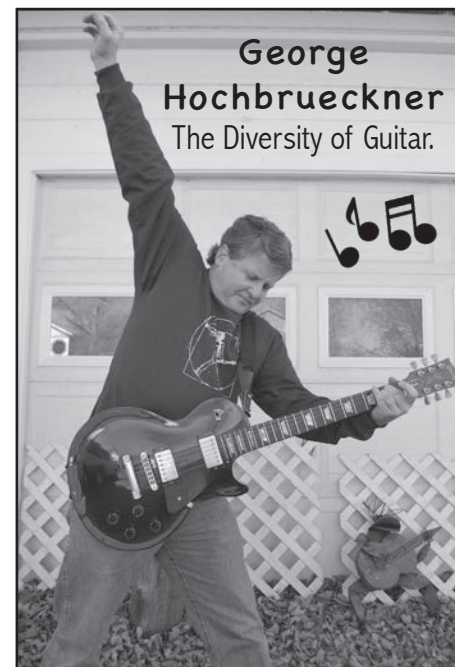
Arts Center & Gift Shop

153 Main Street - Dansville

585-335-4746

www.DansvilleArtWorks.com

Thurs 12-6 | Fri 12-6 | Sat 10-2



George Hochbrueckner
The Diversity of Guitar.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming will hold its annual 5K Run/Walk in memory of Ramon Rocha on Saturday, September 7th. The Arc 5K is a 3.1 mile race through the scenic Village of Geneseo, with trophies awarded to overall winners, and medals by age group.

The course is certified for accuracy by USA Track & Field. Participants can register in advance at discounted prices by visiting lwarc.org or calling (585) 658-2828 ext. 128: \$20 per individual participant, or \$17 per person for teams of four or more people. On race day, those registration fees will be \$25 per person. The first 150 registrants will receive commemorative t-shirts.

All money raised will benefit The Arc of Livingston -Wyoming Foundation, a private, not-for-profit organization committed to enhancing the lives of individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in our local communities. The event is held in memory of Ramon Rocha, a SUNY Geneseo professor and board member at The Arc. A growing list of sponsors includes Summit Family Dental, MVP, Genesee Valley Federal Credit Union, Dansville Mini Storage, Seating Inc., and Once Again Nut Butter. The race will be timed by WNY Finish Line & Timing Services. The Arc 5K Run/Walk is part of the Geneseo Trio partnership of road races that also includes the Oak Tree 5K/Half Marathon (September 1) and Friday Knight 5K (September 20).



Saturday, September 7, 2019
St. Mary's Church
4 Avon Road, Geneseo
Registration at 9am
Race: 10am

Get Out and about in
the Owl Light
owllightnews.com/events/community/add



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VALLEY
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Are you an Artist,
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Are you interested in a grant to fund your next great project?

Grants are available to Individual Artists, Community Arts Programs and Arts Education Programs. Eligible applicants include individual artists, non-profits, and local government entities located in Monroe and Livingston Counties.

For more information, please visit our website, <http://grants.gvartscouncil.org/>. Assistance in developing a program and writing your grant is available by contacting the Grant Coordinator - Phone (585) 243-6785 / Email: melissa@gvartscouncil.org.

org.



Council on
the Arts

Livingston Arts

The Decentralization Regrant Program is made possible by New York State Council on the Arts with support from Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Looking for ongoing events?
See Page 12 (left) for Open Mics;
Page 14 for Literary/Visual Arts;
and Page 18 for Community.

We love providing the online and print calendars. The calendars are for one time events (we offer some free promotion on our pages for ongoing events - see above). Our goal is to help promote accessible-to-all arts and innovations of all kinds, as well as events that foster environmental well being, community sustainability and social justice.

Guidelines: Add your events at www.owllightnews.com/events/community/add or by following the link at OwlLightNews.com. Fill in all parts and add a short description with the basics, then additional details - if you wish. If you are a venue that supports arts and community that hosts many events regularly, please contact us regarding advertising placement. This will better highlight what you do, and leaves the free space for artists and smaller community organizations without advertising budgets. Please, keep doing what you do; every small contribution makes this one world a better place.

Methods and Materials from II

The other mid-1980s anthology that gives a direct context for my work is Poetry Loves Poetry, which I did a great job editing, but a horrible job on the production end. Nevertheless, that anthology does a far better job than my first one (*The Streets Inside*, 1978) of showing both how politics and humor were infiltrating the previous decade's more personal tropes. Since then, the overwhelming number of anthologies I've appeared in have been either published in Los Angeles or edited by other poets working in Southern California. From the mid-1980s on, I wouldn't say that it's my poetry that has changed, but rather the scenes in this city that it's embedded in.

My critical writing is what has changed the most the past two decades; at the age of 50, I had to train myself to write prose. I've become an academic, not as a poet, but as a literary historian who also writes articles for academic journals. In a certain way, I am more proud of that work because it took an immense effort to learn how to do that.

Lynn, having known your poetry since we were friends in Los Angeles in the early eighties, I've been impressed by the ways your work has evolved. I was surprised at how much I was moved — and continued to feel moved — as I read "Sudden Walking Choir in Transfer Tunnel" in *Tracks*, a poem that centers on the events of 9/11 and references lyrics of the Paul McCartney song, Yesterday: "... a song beloved by tourists / and drunks."

The differences between song lyric and poetry are becoming more debated than ever in the academic canon, but in this case, I would observe that it took a poet to reveal the flexibility of a song lyric. McCartney's song shifts from being a song of personal love to one of a group's love for a city. It's a remarkable poem, and I can easily imagine it in an anthology of poems about New York City or 9/11, but I would also hazard to guess that it would find itself left out of various anthologies of "schools" of poets based in New York City. Do you think of yourself as belonging in any way to any of those "schools"?

The unprecedented and immediate access poets have to each other today is making schools of poetry less geographically based, and more about communities of people who relate to each other's aesthetic or content.

~ Lynn McGee

Lynn McGee: The unprecedented and immediate access poets have to each other today is making schools of poetry less geographically based, and more about communities of people who relate to each other's aesthetic or content.

Poets reach out to each other from a distance, for example, when they're published in the same journals. That's how I met Joseph Zaccardi, who lives in Northern California, and sent me a note when we were both published in the Potomac Review. We still haven't met in person, but he generously wrote one of the blurbs for *Tracks*, as did a wonderful poet in Santa Barbara, Pamela Davis. Pam, it turns out, has my late sister's first and last name, and when Facebook first began pushing her profile photo at me, in its suggested array of people to "friend," I was at first alarmed, then curious. I checked out her profile, and realized she is a poet, a wonderful poet. We became friends, eventually meeting in New York.

This is how poets connect now, and in doing so, begin to populate 'schools'.

I have to ask you the same question, Bill. What school do you see yourself in? Or do schools still exist, in your opinion?

Bill Mohr: "The Affinity School"! I was mulling over your question — thinking about the debate in Los Angeles over the past half-century about whether there is "a school" of Los Angeles poetry — when your comment about "affinity" suddenly seemed to snap the question into focus.

I'd say that I, too, tend to work at any given moment out of a sense of "affinity." I have been working on a piece the past week about predicates as the empathic force in the gravitational turbulence of the sentence. Accompanying my meditations on these projects are Paul Vangelisti and Gertrude Stein ("How to Write").

Maybe the question should be, "Will schools exist in the next decade, and the decades after that?" Assuming, of course, that human beings don't engage in a form of mass auto-genocide.

Schools, I suppose, represent a visible form of risk assessment. Committing oneself to poetry as one's major form of cultural work does not require the same degree of risk as it did a half-century ago, let alone 60 or 70 years ago. When young poets today such as Ocean Vuong and Major Jackson are getting near 2050, I wonder what the century since the Beats emerged will look like to them. Maybe "school" will be an archaic notion by then, and some other term will be used to describe the impetus of increments.

The fact remains that even people who have known about my poetry for years have trouble adjusting to its variety. I proceed on a case-by-case confluence of the ideas that might inhere in any given set of emotions generated by an image's rate of diurnal spin. The registers of light and darkness also influence a poem's arrangement as much as the rhythmic argument.

That said, I always try to keep in mind the cautionary advice of Thomas Parkinson, a critic whose deserves more attention. In particular, his commentary on the popularity of "organic poetry" in his essay, "Current Assumptions About Poetry" (1981) is still acutely pertinent.

If we're going to talk about categories, Lynn, and strategies for composing poems, I'll mention that some of my interest in your writing comes from our mutual commitment to make use of the found material of daily life, which includes other people's lives just as much as our own.

I'm also thinking of emblematic poems that relate to what we are referring to as 'schools'. All too often the poem I feel is most representative of what I am trying to do, goes unmentioned in discussions of my work. Do you have a secret favorite in *Tracks*, and why do you have affection for that poem?

Lynn McGee: I think "Scent" is my favorite. My father pulled the apple out of my sister's book bag as we went through her things, the day she went into the hospital. He remarked that she didn't even get to eat her apple that day — and the meaning of life seared me. Writing poems helps me process those moments.

• You can learn more about Lynn McGee at www.lynnmcgee.com, and find information about her most recent title at http://broadstonebooks.com/Lynn_McGee.html.

• You can learn more about Bill Mohr at www.billmohrpoet.com, and find information about his most recent title at www.whatbookspress.com/the-headwaters-of-nirvana.html.

Word Soup

Sunday, September 22, 2019,

1:30-3:30 pm

Wood Library,
Canandaigua, NY



Featured poets ~

Paige Melin (Buffalo),

Howard Nelson (Auburn)

and Helen Ruggieri (Olean).

Refreshments and 7 slots for 5 minute open mic readers.

Hosted by Scott Williams and Victoria Hunter.

Paige Melin is a poet, editor, and freelance writer from Buffalo, NY. She is the author of the book of poetry *Puddles of an Open* (BlazeVOX, 2016) and the microchapbook *MTL./BFL./ÉTÉ./QUINZE* (Buffalo Ochre Papers, 2016). Her writing has been published in *Peach Mag*, *Ghost City Review*, *Step Out Buffalo*, and *Rain Taxi Review of Books*, among others. She has served as Editorial Assistant for the National Poetry Foundation, Editorial Advisor for the anthology *My Next Heart: New Buffalo Poetry* (BlazeVOX, 2017), and the Summer 2019 Ghost City Press Summer Microchap Series. Paige will be moving to Senegal, West Africa in early October 2019 as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant.

Howard Nelson, Professor Emeritus at Cayuga Community College has published several books of poems, including *That Was Really Something*, *Gorilla Blessing*, *The Nap By The Waterfall*, and *All The Earthly Lovers: Poems New & Selected*. He also writes essays, and edited *Earth, My Likeness: Nature Poetry Of Walt Whitman*. His work has been read on Garrison Keillor's "Writer's Almanac."

Helen Ruggieri taught in the Writing Program at the University of Pittsburgh, Bradford, PA. She spent several months in Japan at Yokohama College of Commerce was awarded a Sasakawa Fellowship to study Japanese culture. She has taught at the African American Center for Cultural Development in Olean. Helen's books include *Butterflies Under a Japanese Moon*; *The Kingdom Where Everybody Sings Off Key*; *The Kingdom Where No One Keeps Time*; *Glimmer Girls*; and most recently *Camping In The Galaxy and Other Writings About the Natural* (Woodthrush Books). Her poetry has appeared in *Poems of Francis and Clare*; *Common Wealth*; *20 Years of Uncommon Nature Writing*; *Rough Places Plain: Poems of the Mountains*; *St. Peter's B-List*; and *Nasty Women Poets*.

Dalai Java Open Mic ~ Free

Thursday, September 5, 7-9pm

A monthly literary venue co-hosted by Steve Lewandowski and Scott Williams to be held the first Thursday of each month. There is to be one featured reader. To participate in the open mic, you must sign up BEFORE 7, before the program starts. Venue time: First Thursdays 7pm to 9pm.

Venue location: The Dalai Java Cafe 157 Main St Canandaigua.

September featured reader
Bill Pruitt

Writing Groups

Warsaw's Write Connection

2nd Tuesday, 6:45 PM ~ Warsaw Public Library

Meetings resume in September.

For more information, contact Wendy at (585) 786-5290

Canadice Lake Writers' Group

2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 6-7:30 pm. ~ Honeoye Public Library

Info Darlene at 585-313-7590

Wayne Writers Group, Macedon

2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7-9 pm. ~ At Books ETC., by Post 494.

Goal: To Intensify Creativity

Lakeville, NY ~ Poets' & Writers' Group

1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30-12pm

~ Chip Holt Ctr., Vitale Park.

The Canandaigua Writers' Group

1st Friday of the month from 10 am to 12:30 pm.

~ Ewing Family Community Room, Wood Library ~

Naples Writing Group

Third Thursday, 6-7pm ~ Naples Library

Info: 585-374-2757.

Reading Groups

Honeoye Public Library Book Talk Group

4th Wednesday, 5:30pm, library conference room.

See ad page II for upcoming titles: or 585-229-5020

New Age Book Study

Wednesdays at 4 pm ~ Warsaw Public Library

Hosted by Trinity Episcopal Church.

Find book details @ trinitywarsaw.org.

Art Groups and...?



The Monthly Read by Mary Drake

Out of this world art - A review of *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* by Hank Green

An Absolutely Remarkable Thing
by Hank Green 352pp
Dutton, NY (2018)

Some books just take you by storm. You know, the kind you stay up reading late into the night. *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* is that type of novel. But it is more than just fascinating; it is also humorous, topical, and quirky.

It's a novel about aliens from outer space who come to Earth. Now you might be saying, Oh, come on! That topic has been done to death. True, in 1938 radio broadcaster Orson Welles warned listeners about the "strange beings" that had just landed on Earth and were supposedly "the vanguard of an invading army from the planet Mars." But in *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing*, author Hank Green has a new take on aliens. They look like "a ten-foot-tall Transformer wearing a suit of samurai armor. . . ." But a Transformer that is "full of energy and power" and "looked like it might, at any moment, turn and fix that empty, regal stare on me." The "me" being the protagonist who finds this unique sculpture on a Manhattan sidewalk at 2:45 in the morning. She's a vivacious, energetic, smart graphic designer named April May who is just going home from a boring job that stifles her creativity. She comments that the sculpture is "stunningly done" but almost passes it by, before going back to make a YouTube video about her find.

The next morning she wakes to find that her one-minute video has gone viral and she's become instantly famous as the person who had "First Contact" with "Carl," as she has offhandedly named him. It's not just that the sculpture is made of a material that doesn't exist on Earth, but also that 64 of them, looking exactly the same, have appeared simultaneously in every major city on Earth. The only possible explanation is that they have come from outer space.

Now, again, before you start rolling your eyes, the author Hank Green has described all this very convincingly. The woman who determines that the sculptures are made of an unearthly element is a materials scientist from UC Berkeley. She tells April May that Carl's "thermal properties make no sense. He's showing zero-percent thermal conductivity. . . . He's like an aerogel but more dense than uranium."

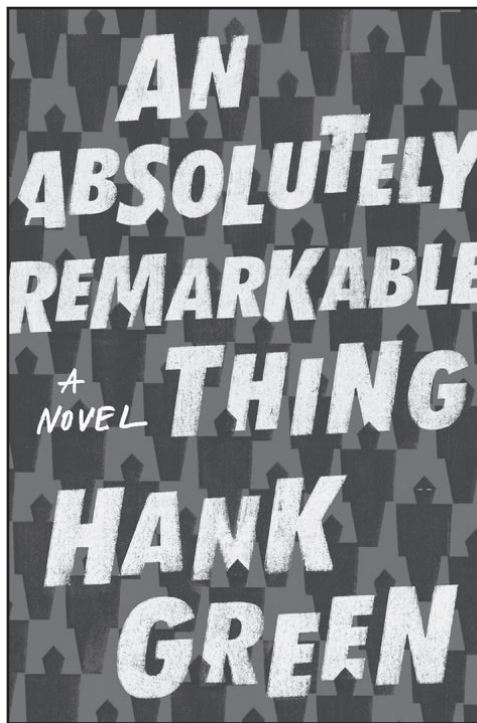


Image: Dutton Books

Soon April May has become such a celebrity that she's on every television channel and she turns into an instant Twitter sensation accruing millions of followers. Overnight she becomes wealthy and quits her day job.

Soon April May has become such a celebrity that she's on every television channel and she turns into an instant Twitter sensation accruing millions of followers. Overnight she becomes wealthy and quits her day job. She gets an agent as well as a personal assistant to schedule her appearances and manage her publicity. This is not to say that her life necessarily improves. For a while it seems that way, but all the travel and interviews soon cut into her personal life, and she becomes estranged from her partner. To herself she admits that she has become a fame junkie: "I liked getting stopped for photos in the airport, I liked getting paid, I liked the attention, and I was worried about it ending. . . . That one day, the

most interesting and important thing about me would be a thing I did a long time ago."

Then, as the saying goes, the s*** hit the fan. In book speak, this is called the inciting incident, the moment when the struggle that is at the center of the novel begins. One day, April May is on a news show participating in a panel discussion between herself and someone named Peter Petrawicki, the author of the Amazon number-one-ranked book called *Invaded*. Maybe you can see where this is going; April May is completely blindsided when Petrawicki says that the Carls must be considered "a far more powerful force. . . . that has not just invaded our cities but now our minds." He's referring to the fact that members of the general population have begun having similar, recurring dreams in which everyone plays games and solves riddles. Petrawicki thinks the aliens are invading our minds and says that Earthlings might be up against an unknown and perhaps more powerful civilization, but "This is America. We have never been scared away from a fight."

After this confrontation, the pro-Carl side, which assumes the sculptures are benign and perhaps even helpful, is spearheaded by April May. Conversely, an organization called the Defenders, who assume that the Carls harbor hostile intentions, is led by Peter Petrawicki, and the two factions begin to clash more and more. A deep divide occurs within the country that one can't help but feel it is reminiscent of what's happening now. At one point,

April May muses that Petrawicki's ideology "made perfect sense . . . to people who were more afraid of otherness." Isn't that what it always comes down to—us versus them? The world seems naturally dichotomous: male/female, rich/poor, conservative/liberal (or is it progressive?), Republican/Democrat. It seems to be in the nature of things.

But what is this "absolutely remarkable thing" that the title refers to? Is it just the appearance of the Carls, which is certainly a remarkable in and of itself? Or is it what happens as a result of the Carls? Yes, there is certainly divisiveness with harsh rhetoric on both sides, and in the end some unfortunate violence occurs. But also, the Carls have enabled people to solve problems by working things out together. During the dreams everyone is having, more than 500 puzzles have been completed; we're told that the dreams are a "shared experience" in which the dreamers work to solve difficult puzzles that ultimately reveal something about human civilization. "All the more complicated clues require collaboration," and among those interested in solving the puzzles a Dreamer community forms that is comprised of people from "all over the world with different ideas and worldviews, all working together toward a common goal." As one character says, "it's a pretty beautiful thing." And pretty remarkable.

Author Hank Green's first novel is a quirky, insightful, and compulsively readable fantasy. He's obviously good at imagining things, especially on-line programs like the ones he has created called Crash Course and SciShow which benefit teachers, students and children. You might say that creativity runs in the family, since his brother John Green is also the author of fantasies, his 2012 *The Fault in Our Stars* being a NYT's bestseller. Both brothers are very active on YouTube, which, by the way, is what started the whole Carl adventure. I guess you never know what you might find in the next video.



Making Lemonade! by Barbara Stahl

"It takes a village" to raise a grandmother!



"It takes a village" to raise a grandmother! That was a recent revelation to me when I used a word I had used many times before (I certainly hope I didn't include it in any writing assignments!) and my adult grandchildren were horrified! They pleaded with me not to use that word ever, as it has a significant sexual connotation. I argued with them, and told them in no uncertain terms what that word used to mean in kinder, gentler times. Then when I got home and consulted an OLD 1990's paper dictionary as well as a thesaurus in book form, I was horrified to find out they were correct. If you absolutely want to know what the word is ask me via the e-mail address. I actually would be curious if my readers have used it innocently for years as well. If so, and one continues to use it, my advice is to only say it to older people.

Another way my grandchildren have to "raise me" is with technological help. They can take my smartphone and fix whatever I ask them to — zip / zop and it's done. Do I have any idea whatsoever what they just did to accomplish that? Absolutely not, and a clear, satisfactory explanation can rarely be given by them.

Another way my grandchildren have to "raise me" is with technological help. They can take my smartphone and fix whatever I ask them to — zip / zop and it's done. Do I have any idea whatsoever what they just did to accomplish that? Absolutely not, and a clear, satisfactory explanation can rarely be given by them.

Alexa was a gift from one of my older grandsons. He brought me into the new technological world where I can talk to a robotic voice residing in a box and accomplish things.

He gave me a couple of lessons before he had to return to his home and job. For the longest time I tiptoed around Alexa and would refer to her when talking to others as the "one who shall not be named." I find out from her five minutes after a package has arrived on my front porch

from Amazon that it had arrived. I tell her, "I know that and am unpacking it." She has no answer to that. She will play Elvis, Gordon, and Lionel music for me.

A little while ago I had her sing "Happy Birthday" to me, which she completed with "and many more."

Having her make my grocery list somehow seems wrong, as I still think paper and pencil works for me. I'm not tiptoeing around her quite as much anymore. When my youngest grandson was recently here he had her play some music to show me what he's been learning on his brand new guitar.

Just a few minutes ago for a crossword puzzle I asked her what "abstruse" means and sure enough she quickly supplied "esoteric," which fit perfectly. No, I know what you are thinking; I haven't asked her about that word that I shocked my adult grandchildren with.yet.



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Reminding you to grow!

The Conscious Crow Mirror Reflections

Mirror reflections are all we see in varying degrees. The people we meet, the circumstances we encounter, the moments we embark upon are all a reflection of who we currently are and how we see ourselves. What we

see in others is either what we knowingly honor within ourselves, or unconsciously need to recognize. Each individual is a physical representation guiding our awareness back to our innate identity. Our mission is to actualize Self in other, dissolving this deep illusion of separation that feeds into our mind and clouds our eye and perception.

There is no separation between who we are and the world that surrounds us. Life is not something that happens to us it is something that happens from us. We are life actualizing itself in One expansive mirage. We see what we intend to see, meet who we need to meet, and perceive existence based on what we feed it and how we continue to feel. The environment that sprouts then is a result and response to what we have already decided to identify with on an internal level. A silent agreement that speaks itself into matter. Essentially, how we identify with ourselves is how the world is presented to us. What we reject in another is a simultaneous element of rejection within ourselves that we cannot yet see or

understand, and when we admire an individual, we reveal the reflective, yet hidden aspect of our Self that we inherently carry and haven't quite developed into our repertoire. As Marianne Williamson so wisely phrases in her book *A Return To Love*, "...any darkness we let blind us to another's perfection also blinds us to our own."

We mirror one another, constantly co-creating whatever dream we choose to project.

Every one of us is a teacher. We learn more about each other on the deepest, most intimate levels of our Being and truly begin noticing how intricately connected we all are when we honestly relate with one another. Marianne sheds light on this idea that we are woven as One unit, "...we're like the spokes on a wheel, all radiating out from the same center." Again, whatever energy we infuse into our interactions will be the type of frequency we all therefore feel in return, since there is no difference between giver and receiver, us and them. Every action and intention carries like a wave; splashing upon our existence in a conscious and unconscious manner, within our specific frame of reference. What we give out is what comes back to us; widened and narrowed "us." That first line in what the iconic, ageless Beatles point to is "I am he as you are he as you are me, and we are all together." Let's remember and notice how our actions continue to weave and plant seeds within ourselves, on the me and he, and we, on every level and scale, and wave reverberating.

Eye to Eye from 8

Even if your potatoes are struck with late blight, the experience is quite different than it is with tomatoes, which are in the same nightshade family and have long been more vulnerable to blight. (We'll talk more about tomatoes and blight on another occasion.) You are not a fully mature gardener until you have weathered the emotional trauma of a complete and sudden loss of your tomato crop due to late blight. With potatoes, however, you have a bit of time to control the damage and cut your losses. It is not a zero-sum game; you can ride it out in the final weeks of the growing season when the potatoes are probably close to maturity anyway.

At one time, I responded to the first signs of late blight by removing the affected leaves by hand and promptly spraying the unaffected foliage with a spray of diluted copper – after more than a century, still the most commonly used organic fungicide. I no longer take such measures. Once blight spores are in the area, there is little that can be done other than to delay its spread (this is also true of powdery mildew, a common mode of slow-mo senescence for winter squash).

The good news about late blight and potatoes is that the spores affect the top foliage, but if you cut and carefully remove the affected top growth all the way to ground, especially before there is a heavy rain, the spores will rarely make their way down to the potatoes in the soil. When you dig up the potatoes a few weeks later, simply take the precaution of curing and storing them in discrete batches so as to minimize risk of any remaining blight spores spreading. Your harvest of potatoes may be less than what it would have been, depending on how far along they were, but I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

I am not a fatalist about late blight, nor do I fear it. A common disease like blight teaches one (has taught me, at least) how to manage and, even more important, how to live with "disease pressure." I would go further and say that living with pests and disease and uncertainty are all a part of resilient gardening, not antithetical to it. There is wisdom here that extends beyond the perimeter of the home garden.



Anxiety #4: Isn't it dangerous to save seed potato?
(And doesn't that make me dependent upon suppliers of certified disease-free seed?)

Of course, the question of how easy or how difficult it is to do something is not the same as the question of whether it is worth doing. In next month's *Homestead Gardener*, I'd like to talk more about potato-growing and the "attention economy," ponder the attractions of voluntary simplicity, and explore why harvesting potatoes -- by hand, in the company of others -- is such a meaningful and pleasurable end-of-season ritual.

I believe the answer to the second question is yes, and that dependency is a serious problem for me and for most anyone who aspires to resilience and self-reliance, and who would like to get into the exciting game of selectively breeding potato varieties that are well-adapted to the

location (and are pest and disease resistant).

We save seed for so many other crops, so why are we so often advised not to save our own seed in the case of potatoes? It is true that potatoes serve as a conduit for a variety of diseases in ways that other seeds generally are not. Fusarium wilt, a soil-borne fungal disease that can remain in the soil for years once it gets there, is one of the most concerning on the list. But that does not mean you should not save some of your potato for seed; in fact, there are very good reasons for doing

Entire books have been written on the art of saving seed at the garden-scale, and the practice has broader significance that ought to come up more often in conversations among neighbors and policy makers and average citizens. (I am still waiting for a presidential candidate who is eager to debate the issue of biodiversity...) I am more of an average citizen than an expert on seed saving. All I can do here is tell you that saving and selecting seed potato in the home garden, while it does involve some risk, is entirely worth doing as long as you adopt certain precautions in selecting and storing and open yourself to a self-training process that involves time and practice (something required with any art).

Speaking of books and other resources, let me mention a few that address at length some of what I do not have space to consider within the narrow scope of a single column. If you want to learn more about specific varieties of potato, and about growing potatoes at home, mainepotatolady.com is a popular go-to resource (also a small business that sells seed potato). On saving seed potato, I recommend the relevant chapters in Carol Deppe's book *The Resilient Gardener*. There are even a number of fascinating books on the social history of potato growing that I would recommend. The classic one is Redcliffe Salaman's magisterial *The History and Social Influence of the Potato from 1949*, a book that is no longer in print, but well worth ordering through your local library. Salaman traces the history of potato growing to those DIY pioneers who were the first to cultivate potatoes and saved seed in their modest plots in the Peruvian Andes somewhere between 7,000 and 10,000 B.C.E. Thank god for those curious and self-reliant indigenous peoples.



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Simple Sustainability by Sky Trombly

Affluenza: An “epidemic” to take notice of

The term “Affluenza” came into popular use around 1996 when a PBS special was released with this title. A few years later, in 2001, a book followed, *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*.

Both these works use a metaphor of affluence as a disease to illustrate the negative personal, societal, and environmental consequences of our consumerist culture.

While the technology and hairstyles depicted in the film seem dated, the argument remains as relevant today as it was when released.

Consumption used to be another term for tuberculosis. At the time that this disease was rampant, people also saw thrift as an important value. It is interesting that today we no longer remember the connection between consumption and tuberculosis and celebrate ourselves as “consumers”.

Diagnosing Affluenza

Symptoms of Affluenza are many and varied. They include:

- Financial - greater debt, fewer savings, and living paycheck to paycheck
- Residential - stuffed and disorganized homes, which cause relationship strife, lost paperwork or possessions, unhygienic or unsafe living conditions
- Personal – accumulation over introspection means we attempt to meet our non-material needs via material gain and thus miss the mark
- Social – shopping more often than playing with each other, treating relationships as disposable, the erosion of a sharing culture and community involvement
- Environmental – “islands” of plastic waste, wildlife choking on shopping bags, bursting landfills, high toxic exposures, deforestation, habitat loss, species extinction

Curing Affluenza

The good news is that there are cures available for Affluenza and you can take them without a doctor's prescription. Side effects vary, but include: financial stability, tidier homes, greater satisfaction with life, happier families, and a healthier planet.

Cure 1: Setting Limits

I tell this story often, but it was a key realization of my early days of minimalist journey.

The morning before I came across the idea of capsule wardrobes and Project 333 (a specific set of guidelines wherein your wardrobe consists of 33 items for 3 months), I was bemoaning the number of jeans I had. They just seemed too sparse and some of them didn't even fit quite right. I clearly needed more, right?

Later that same day, I was developing my first iteration of a capsule wardrobe and 6 pairs of jeans suddenly would be more than a 5th (more than 20%) of my wardrobe! If I wanted to wear anything else, including shirts, skirts, work pants, shoes, jackets, I needed to pare down those 6 jeans. I left behind the ones that didn't fit and didn't look back.

I learned that, yes 33 is an arbitrary limit, but placing limits on our possessions is a powerful weapon against clutter. It also sets a limit on our wants. If I decide I only need 2 mugs per person in our household and I already have more than that, my desire for more coffee mugs immediately drops to nothing.

Cure 2: Redefining Enough

Our desires can be insatiable. We can forever be in a state of wanting. Striving for something better. Dissatisfied with what we have. Honestly, this seems like a foolish choice. Why should we choose to want when we can choose contentment? Easier said than done, right?

Actually, there have been a few easy techniques that I've found useful:

- Keep a gratitude journal for 30 days. Every day write 3 things you're grateful for. I tend to write about the nice things people did for me and the material wealth that surrounds me. You'll find that this practice allows for a mental shift, this is very helpful if you've been thinking negatively.

- Make shopping the occasion and not the rule. Don't use shopping as entertainment. For example, you might go buy clothes and accessories once at the beginning of the new season. Or whenever something breaks. This saves you from spending your valuable time and energy thinking about the next purchase.

- Choose your media carefully. Television has a way of over-valuing material culture. Whether it is the swanky apartments and trendy clothes of your favorite actors or the commercial breaks, seeing these images has an impact. Remember: Affluenza is highly contagious! I am not saying that you shouldn't watch TV, but I think it is important to make sure you consciously adopt some role models living true to your ideals. There are a lot of YouTube video influencers, for example, who can highlight the benefits of home-steading, tiny house living, minimalist living, and really this list could be endless.

Cure 3: Getting in Touch with Ourselves

Journaling doesn't have to be a summation of the day. We can journal about our values, our interests, our needs and our goals. Do you know what you'd like for your life? Where do you want to be in 5 years? If you want to be a globe trotter living out of your backpack, why are you saving money for a couch? Probably you have a different vision in mind, but the question is, are your purchases in line with that vision?

One of the powerful benefits of minimalism is that it leads to embracing more of the things that move you and ditching those things that just aren't really important.

Cure 4: Quality Over Quantity

\$3.00 for a T-Shirt?! I'll buy 5!

This is the age of disposable clothing. For much of human material culture, the manufacture of the materials and the process of spinning, dying, weaving, and sewing clothes were so labor intensive that most people did not own more than 3 tops at any one time. Even in the first half of the 20th century, women's clothing typically numbered within the range of 30 pieces.

The manufacture of clothing is still intensive. The materials and labor needed to create garments are often invisible to the average consumer. And so the impacts of our consumption becomes an intellectual exercise. We use machines typically to weave our clothes and outsource the labor of sewing garments together to disenfranchised women and children. We cut corners, limit their safety and pay to provide the lowest possible prices to consumers (but not to CEOs). After purchase, we find that these cheaper garments fall apart or they outlast the latest fashion too quickly. We then have to deal with the consequences of an unsustainable system: the pesticides in cotton, the chemical bleaching, the transport costs, and the sheer volume of waste in our landfills.

Alternatively, we can think about buying fewer items that typically will last much longer. We invest in an economy that produces real value and isn't afraid of paying employees. Or, we can buy used items that have stood the test of time and keep good products out of the landfill.

Though I have used the example of clothing, anything we consume can be a chance to vote with our dollar. We can choose to create a market for organic vegetables, non-toxic toothpaste and cleaners or whatever we might be buying.

Bringing it Home

The relative ease of life for many of us in this age is remarkable! I certainly don't mean to be all doom and gloom. I, for one, am happy to avoid tuberculosis. But in the face of this age of affluence, I would prefer to side step disease-level consumption in favor of some good, old-fashioned thrift.

Until next time, live lightly!

Capsule Planning Worksheet by Sky Trombly

A capsule wardrobe is a set of clothes and accessories that is concise (weeded down), curated (only things you like and wear), and combinable (able to be paired with multiple elements of your wardrobe to maximize the number of looks you can create). To be successful, planning for a capsule wardrobe is essential and I've included a few tools to help you zero in on your ideal look.

Put these levels of dress in order. 1 being the most commonly worn – 10 rarely or never worn.

- _____ lounge wear / workout (going to the gym)
- _____ casual (playing with the kids)
- _____ business casual (less formal work places)
- _____ nice, conservative (church, synagogue)
- _____ nice (date night, out on the town)
- _____ business traditional (suits, pencil skirts, blazers)
- _____ formal (weddings, opera, fancy dinners)

Use 3 words to label your style: _____, _____ and _____

Where do you want your pattern?

- _____ on bottoms (pants, shorts, skirts)
- _____ accessories (shoes, scarves, bags, etc.)
- _____ base layer tops (t-shirts, button-downs, blouses, not layering pieces)

What are your favorite patterns?

Pick your metal (for jewelry or hardware): yellow gold _____ rose gold _____ silver (high shine) _____ silver (antiqued) _____ copper/bronze _____ other: _____

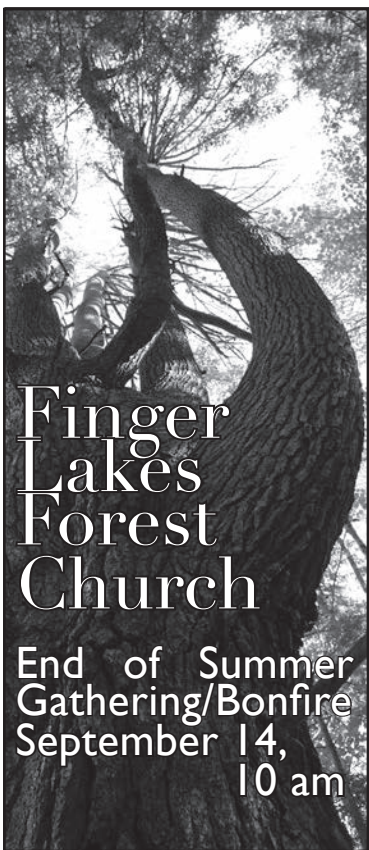
Choosing your color pallet:

For row 1, choose your statement colors. These might be tops, layering pieces, occasionally bottoms. Ideally they should be able to be paired with each other and with each of the other rows. Example: My three statement colors are: royal/cobalt blue, kelly/apple green, and yellow.

For row 2, choose your “near neutral”, a color that you'd typically wear on the top. These can complement and expand on your statement colors. Example: I use white.

For row 3, choose another “near neutral”, a color you'd typically wear for bottoms. These can complement and expand on your neutrals. Example: I use dark wash denim.

For row 4, choose your neutrals. These will most likely be your base layers. They might vary from season to season. Example: In warmer months, I tend to choose navy and for the cooler months, black.



Finger Lakes Forest Church

End of Summer Gathering/Bonfire
September 14,
10 am

Our gathering will open with a Ritual of Loss and Hope to honor and share our feelings of mourning and possibility for the natural world. We will then move into a drumming and singing circle.

Location: 9058 Luckebach Hill Rd, Canadice, NY. Luckebach can be accessed either via County Road 37 or Canadice Hill Road/Ross Rd. Note: GPS will not take you to the correct location. Look for the red ribbon on the mailbox on Luckebach.

For more information, contact FLForestChurch@gmail.com or check out Finger Lakes Forest Church on Facebook. For directions to any of our events, call 585-354-1885 or 585-370-3570.

Jennifer Marshall Hubble,
May 5, 1980 - September 19, 2016

It's been three long years since God called you home, Jen. Not a day goes by that we don't think of you - tears - wonderful memories. Miss & Love you.

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Community notices courtesy of our advertisers!

Community Meals

Honeoye UCC Spaghetti
1st Wednesdays, 5-7pm -
8758 Main Street, Honeoye, NY
(except July and November)
A portion of the profits donated
to a different charity monthly.

Community Closets

The Open Closet
Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11-2
Harwood Lane - basement of the
Village Offices. Offers people in Naples
School District quality clothes etc.

Community Meetings

Little Lakes
Community Center
Open Community Meeting
The first Monday evening-6:30-8:30pm-
each month is dedicated to community
input. All are welcome to join in, to learn
about the organization and to ask ques-
tions and make suggestions.

Grief Share ~ Mondays, 5 pm
Wayland Free Library,
101 W Naples St, Wayland
Encouragement after the death of a
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Food Pantries

All welcome community
contributions and volunteers.

Naples Open Cupboard
Every Wednesdays from 11-2
Harwood Lane - basement of the
Village Offices. Serves people in
Naples School District.

Geneseo/Groveland
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Wednesdays 4-6:30 pm
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*Serves Springwater Canadice &
Webster's Crossing area, but no one in
need will be turned away!

Honeoye Community
Food Pantry
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UCC church on 8758 Main St., Honeoye
Info: honeyefoodpantry@gmail.com

Sent by Ravens
Saturdays 9-11 am
40 Spring Street, Livonia, NY

Seniors

Community Coffee Hour
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Postings for free community ongoing meetings or service can be sent to editor@CanadicePress.com



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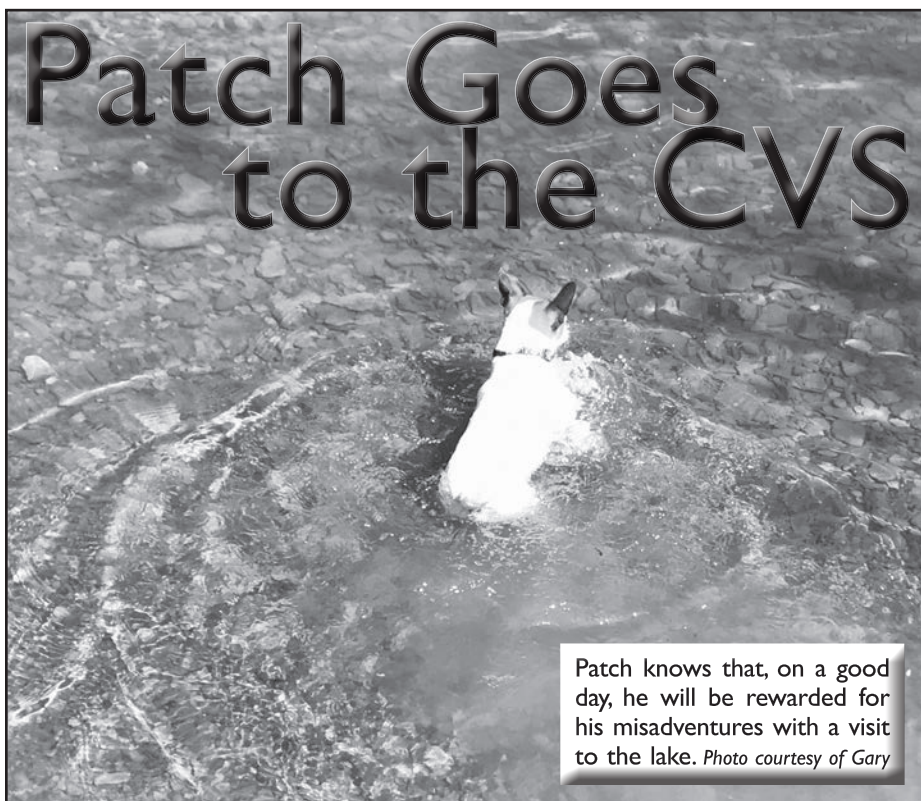
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Patch knows that, on a good day, he will be rewarded for his misadventures with a visit to the lake. Photo courtesy of Gary

by Gary Catt

The automatic doors to the CVS pharmacy slid open and closed but no one came in, to the bewilderment of store clerks.

I was in the store attempting to wring hard dollar cash from the little money robot belonging to a bank I never heard of so, I was fully occupied.

As I tucked my two twenties into my pocket, I sensed I wasn't alone. Sitting on the floor next to me was Patch, the dog formerly known as Trevor, who now fills the role of constant companion.

He was giving me that "Hey hold my beer and watch this!" Jack Russell look you get right before he does his dance of disorder, involving leaps and break-neck laps of the room. I scooped him up, quickly. He was happy. I was embarrassed.

When last seen he was secured in the cargo hold of my Volvo station wagon, which of course was properly vented on this sunny 70-degree day lest some overly aggressive do-gooder smash my car windows.

The clerk was amused as I apologized, Patch tucked under my arm. "We couldn't figure why the door was opening and closing and no one came in."

Here's a tip, if you ever need to sneak into a CVS, crawl. The clerks can't see you from their elevated perch near the front door. Patch was apparently unfazed by the two doors sliding open and closed like a guillotine on his approach. He barged right in and located me quickly, in a scene curiously minus the havoc he typically creates in other new places by peeing on something like a chair leg, assaulting the family cat or taking a sexual interest in the hostess.

Let's review how I secured the car before going into CVS. The sunroof was raised a crack, not open. The front and rear door windows were dropped about 6 inches each to allow plenty of ventilation.

Now, let's review what I found when I returned with the escapee in tow. Everything was pretty much how I left it except for the passenger side. The door was now locked but the window was open about 10 inches, not fully open, however. It bore some telltale wisps of white dog hair.

It was evident that he managed to operate the window controls with the vehicle turned off. Volvo says he can't but I say he can because I tested it. In my driveway, I started the car, turned it off and reached across the passenger seat. Yes! The window went up and down.

Patch must have slapped at the controls, locking the door, but opening the side window. Out he went to check on what I was up to. He crossed the parking lot, went boldly through the automatic doors, made a left turn...and found me, thankfully not showing his usual enthusiasm for new and exciting places.

In terms of owner experience, however, this escapade ranks right up there with my humbling lesson delivered by Patch at the bottle return shop after I foolishly left my keys in the ignition.

When I returned to the car after only several minutes, Patch was laying stretched out on the dashboard and all the doors including the rear deck were locked. He seemed so happy, stretched out on the dashboard, pressed against the windshield, tongue out, tail wagging... He seemed to enjoy histrionics, wailing, pounding on the roof etc...

Fortunately, this occurred in Honeoye. A casual inquiry of the teenager in the bottle store bore immediate resolution. "Sure. I have some stuff in my trunk." Let me add here there are probably few places in this world where this would occur. The front door was dexterously unlocked in minutes. There was a well-earned donation of \$20. You got to believe there's multiple career paths ahead for such a kid.

The \$20 was a cheap price to pay to learn forever never to leave my car keys in the ignition. Given this dog's checkered past, I'm starting to wonder if he was less of a rescue than he was an escape.

Patch? He's still learning. Take the other day. After he emptied my dirty clothes hamper to make a nest, he learned that Sunday's letter of the day, "U," had three friends "S", "O" and "B".



See a previous piece on the misadventures of Patch at: www.owlighnews.com/travis-secret-agent-dog/

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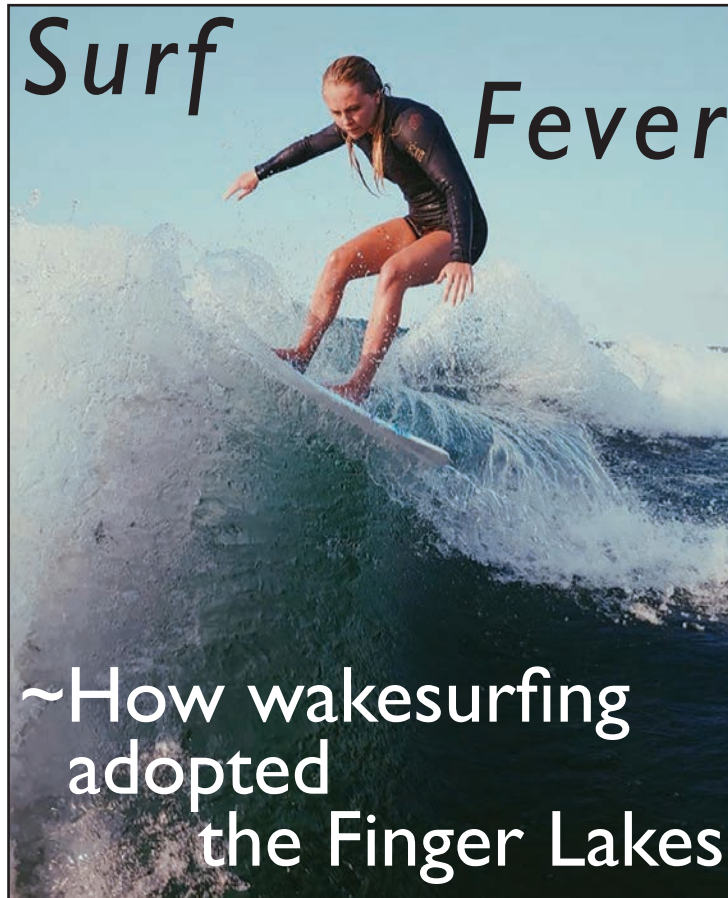
by Brooke Cheyne

Those frequenting the shorelines of the Finger Lakes have undoubtedly noticed a new wave barreling towards the beaches. Take a closer look, and you may observe what looks like a scene from the coast of Southern California playing out on the surface of the lake. Surf culture has taken Upstate New York by storm over the past decade – thanks to new technology and the unique community that the Finger Lakes provide – and this new sport is quickly transforming the way we play on the water.

Wakesurfing is the sport of riding a board behind a watercraft while being pushed by a boat-generated wave. Throughout the past decade, boat companies have been working tirelessly to develop bigger, sportier watercrafts with the capability to hold heavy ballast – therefore displacing more water and generating a deeper, longer wake. Like an ocean wave, this wake can push a board and a surfer of almost any size; but unlike a natural wave, this freshwater alternative allows for longer surfs and infinite sets.

A wakesurf board (also known as a wakesurfer) is generally shorter and thinner than a classical surfboard, and most feature traction pads on top for grip. A rider gets up in much the same fashion as a wakeboarder: they position their feet on the board while in the water, signal the driver, and are pulled up by a towrope.

The major difference, of course, is that wakesurfing allows riders to pull themselves forward into the wave and throw the rope. The feeling of being pushed by a wave rather than pulled by a tow is unique to surfing, and it is the sensation many riders describe as being, “worth obsessing over.”



Keuka Lake surfer Emma Galusha rides a wave. Photo courtesy of Brooke Cheyne

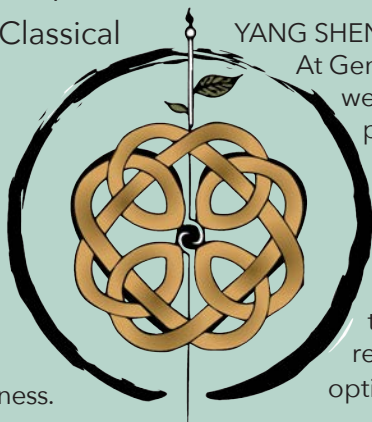
Wakesurfing has become a recognized sport internationally, with events like the World Wake Surf Championships that award the best of the best from every corner of the globe. In the Finger Lakes, however, there is a unique sense of “surf fever” that seems to be encroaching ever more as the years go on. Shops like FULLSEND Ski & Outdoor in Canandaigua and Neon Wave in Rochester have popped up to cater to the unique sense of style that surf culture allows, while also providing an outlet for gear and boards. FLX Charters was established this year as a Nautique rental service that offers instruction in surfing, and custom manufacturers like Parker Surfcraft and Artisan Surf have established a local presence. Still, it is the surfers themselves that seem to be changing the social atmosphere around the lakes. Having worked among the watersports community for two years, I’ve come to understand that the surfers of the Finger Lakes maintain a distinctive sense of family and acceptance. They’ll give anyone the shirt off their backs, they love outsiders, and can recommend the best local joints. I’ve never seen a surfer whose face didn’t light up at the opportunity to teach a rookie their sport. Maybe it’s the shaka spirit, the presence of aloha that comes with walking on water. Maybe it’s the shared, inherent compassion for environmentalism and respect for the lakes. Maybe there’s just something in the water.

As the summer winds down, keep an eye out for the board-toting populace around your lake. They’re part of a growing sport, and members of a growing sub-culture in the Finger Lake. I’d encourage anyone to get in on the ground floor.

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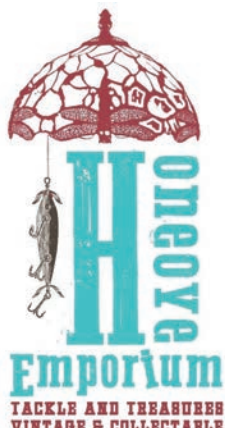
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Springwater, NY 14560

You can also find us at Reed Homestead and Hemlock Hills Alpaca Farm.



Got swarms??!!
Text/Msg.
585-313-7590

beesandland@gmail.com