

The Tanager



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Burroughs Audubon Nature Club

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President's Column

By Marigrace Piazza

Thank you for reading the first edition of the Tanager for 2019. I hope that you find it interesting and informative. The Tanager comes to you four times a year through the work of many people. Like all things at BANC, volunteers spend countless hours in order to produce a professional publication for your reading pleasure. I would like to thank John Shaw, editor of the Tanager, and his committee for their efforts in producing such a quality newsletter. We are always interested in receiving articles for each edition. Please feel free to contact John or me with article ideas.

If you are interested in keeping up to date with all things related to our club between Tanager editions, I strongly encourage you to check out our new website. The address is the same, bancny.org, but the site has gotten a brand new look. The new website was designed by Rachel Hutchins, who volunteered countless hours of her time and expertise to update the site for us. Our Facebook page is always a pleasure to visit as well. Thank you to Becky Olson for keeping it current and full of lovely photos related to our activities.

It is now mid-March and we are all waiting for spring. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at Clean-Up Day on April 13. This is a day of hard but fun work as we prepare the grounds and clubhouse for another busy BANC season.

Another important event to add to your calendar is the annual banquet. It will be on April 25 at Glendoveers. Please check out the information in this newsletter and do not forget to reserve your spot. Thank you to Julie Clayton for chairing this event.

For those of you with or without families, consider spending the weekend of May 31 to June 2 at the Allegany Nature Pilgrimage. BANC has organized this event along with four other nature groups in the western New York area for many years. There is more information at www.alleganynaturepilgrimage.com

I am writing this article on a day when schools are closed due to high winds. When you are reading this in mid-March, the weather report could very likely be the same. We are hardy folk here in the Rochester area. We tolerate the long winters because we know how lovely it is once summer arrives.

Perhaps the following quote by John Burroughs will motivate us to find some joy in the last weeks of winter:

“He who marvels at the beauty of the world in summer will find equal cause for wonder and admiration in winter.”

Here's to finding all the wonders of winter while we look forward to spring.

2019 Allegany Nature Pilgrimage

By Lura Kelley

Mark your calendars for the annual Allegany Nature Pilgrimage, coming up this spring from Friday, May 31 through Sunday, June 2. This weekend of nature-oriented activities offers something for everyone, from the seasoned naturalist to the inquisitive beginner. For just \$25 for Audubon members (\$35 for non-Audubon members, free for children under 12, \$5 for children younger than 18), you will be able to choose from a wide variety of hikes and workshops. The cost to register increases to \$45 if received after April 24th.

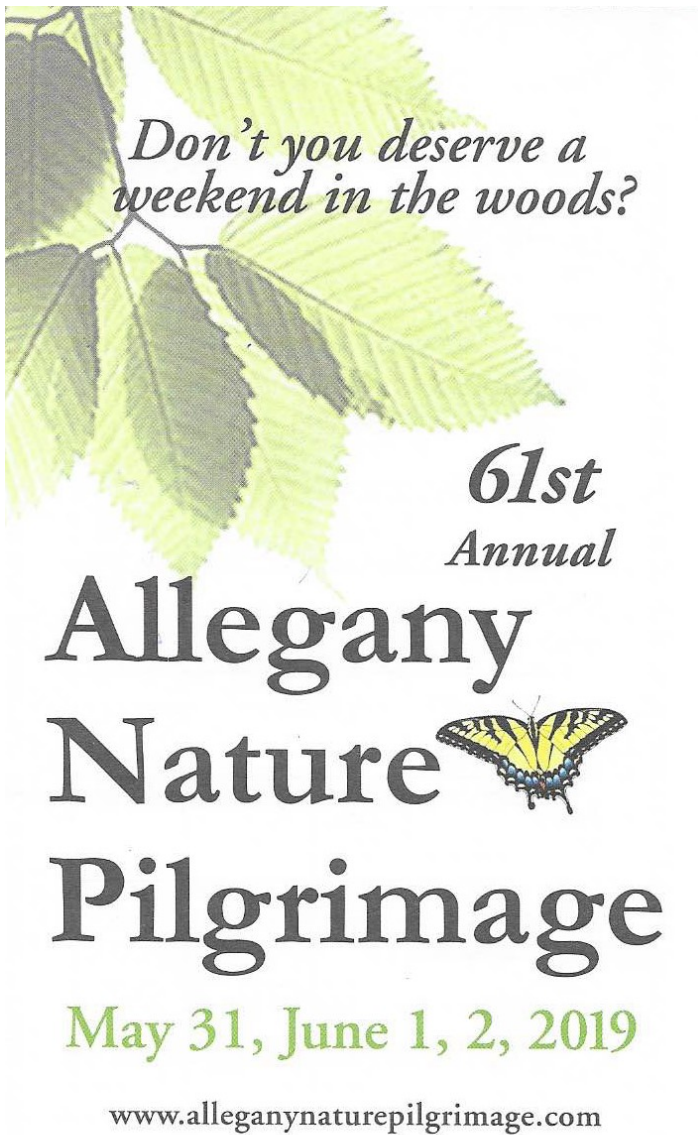
Jarod Miller, the TV host of *Animal Explorations*, will be the keynote speaker Friday evening in the big tent. Be ready to join him for an animal adventure from around the world. On Saturday he will bring live animals from his WNY sanctuary.

Relax with folksinger Nan Hoffman at 5:30 pm Saturday after a day full of hikes, workshops, and activities of your choosing. (I usually get up with the birds for the bird banding demonstration, join one of the many hikes to explore local plants, animals, or geological formations mid-morning, and finish up with a workshop or two. There are more than 80 to choose from!)

Saturday evening Hazel Stark and Joe Horn from the Maine Outdoor School will take us on a journey through phenology using beautiful stories and photography from Downeast Maine.

Exploring beautiful Allegany State Park in the company of fellow nature lovers and learning from experts eager to share their knowledge and passion makes the Allegany Nature Pilgrimage an experience to treasure! Go to

www.alleganynaturepilgrimage.com for information, to register or online payments. The email address is alleganynaturepilgrimage@gmail.com. I hope you are able to join us this year!



Don't you deserve a weekend in the woods?

61st Annual
Allegany Nature Pilgrimage

May 31, June 1, 2, 2019

www.alleganynaturepilgrimage.com



Meet a Member - Steve Melcher

By Richard Ashworth

My guest this time will be known to many long-time BANC members but is probably less familiar to newer folks.

Steve Melcher is the consummate broad-spectrum naturalist and ecologist. His interests and practical experience range from farming to oceanography, from donkeys to damselflies, from geothermal units to veganism.

Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Steve majored in music and biology at Millersville University, both callings that have consumed his life since. As a jazz keyboard artist he played with Buddy Rich and other bands on tour and did studio work in addition to participation in local groups. He recorded for the Cape Rosier label and was awarded for Best New Age Album for Piano. Today he plays for pleasure and also at local benefit events, including for Genesee Land Trust. He has a collection of pianos, some of which he would like to site outdoors for visitors' use.

Steve lived in eight states before settling in this area. He has a degree in oceanography from the University of Delaware. He worked for NASA and Massachusetts Audubon and did graduate work in environmental ethics at Harvard and U. Mass. While teaching at Dover Airforce Base, he took a leave of absence and taught for a year in India. In 2008 he lived and taught in Costa Rica, drawn by a damselfly with a 7-inch wingspan and taking his four children along.

Steve has been active in the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the American Nature Study Society, where he served as President.

Today, Steve and his wife Cheryl live in Honeoye Falls on a 117-acre estate, the Odonata Sanctuary, which they bought from Joe Taylor. Here they engage in three important enterprises:

- An active farm growing soybeans, corn and – soon, maybe – hemp, and supplying a 40-member CSA.
- An animal sanctuary, currently caring for donkeys, sheep, goats, pot-bellied pigs and peacocks.
- A nature preserve, including 30 acres managed for grassland birds, a bluebird trail with 64 boxes, and areas devoted to milkweed, butterflies and dragonflies.



Steve is passionate about opening the preserve to students and research. Girl Scouts have built, installed and monitored bluebird boxes; Brockport students have worked on goldenrod; Genesee students have studied glacial geology; and the house and barn have been the subject of RIT renewable energy research. (The house is tied to the grid and the barn is entirely off the grid, with both solar and geothermal units.)

Steve believes that an important ecological contribution we can all make is to adopt a plant-based diet. He is active in the Rochester Area Vegan Society (RAVS) and directly involved in initiatives to convert dairy farm equipment to produce soy or almond milk.

Soon after moving to Rochester, Steve joined BANC and became a Life Member. He served as President in 2007, his term being curtailed by his move to Costa Rica. Some of you may remember Steve and

(See Steve Melcher on page 4)

New York Breeding Bird Atlas III Update

By Kathryn Schneider, Co-chair, NY BBA III Steering Committee

The Steering Committee for New York's third Breeding Bird Atlas has been meeting since 2015 to fund, organize, and plan our next bird atlas. This project will provide a five-year snapshot of the distribution and abundance of breeding birds in New York State.

With field work set to begin in 2020, the committee is excited to announce that Julie Hart has been hired to fill the position of Atlas Project Coordinator. Julie beat out an outstanding field of nearly 80 applicants who sought this position. She impressed the Search Committee with her combination of scientific training, field work, large-scale citizen science, and project management experience.

Some New York birders will remember Julie from the years she spent in New York working on the Important Bird Areas program with Audubon New York. During this time, she was based at the Cornell Lab where she had the opportunity to work on eBird during its development.

From 2007 to 2009 Julie was a Conservation Biologist for the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. In this position she recruited, trained, and organized more than 150 volunteers for Mountain Birdwatch, a project that monitors high-elevation birds in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Julie has participated in bird atlases in Vermont and Connecticut, and she has trained volunteers to use eBird. Her most recent position as a Database Manager for Yale's Map of Life project involved managing large datasets not unlike those generated by a bird atlas.

Julie hit the ground running and attended her first Steering Committee meeting after only four days on the job. She will work in DEC offices in Albany as a part of the staff of the New York Natural Heritage Program and she will be officially supervised by Matt Schlesinger, Co-chair of the NY BBA III Steering Committee.

Everyone on our committee is delighted to have an individual on the team whose sole responsibility is the management and coordination of the atlas project, but we all know that the success of a project as large, complex, collaborative, and long term as our state atlas depends first and foremost on large numbers of skilled volunteers to gather the data. In the coming year we will be asking birders to commit to field surveys using atlas methodology. We are relying on you to get involved! We will want you to go places that you've never been before, and we will need you to watch and document the birds you see in new and different ways. Are you up to the challenge?

From the Membership Chair

By Ellen Prill

The second Friday of each month come join us for the nature presentation AND for birthdays celebrated that month at The Clover Center for the Arts, 1101 Clover Street at 7:30pm.

Nonmembers are invited too. For more details go to our new website at www.bancny.org

Soon you will be able to join BANC on-line via PayPal or credit card.

(Steve Melcher - Continued from page 3)

Cheryl's four children being mentored by BANC members many years ago. Forest is now applying to law schools to pursue environmental law; Sage is a senior at Pace University and currently performing in 'My Very Own British Invasion' at the Paper Mill Theater; River Quinn is a fine arts student at the Cooper Union School in NYC; and Rowan is in a 4+4 program, where he will attend SUNY Geneseo and then Syracuse Upstate Medical School.

The Green New Deal

By Carol Hinkelman

Most people believe that climate change is real, but they aren't very concerned about it. It seems to be a slow process mostly affecting the people on the coasts, and there is plenty of time to figure out what to do about it. Not so says David Wallace-Wells, author of the new book *The Uninhabitable Earth*. He says that it is much, much worse than you think.

Scientists have known about the greenhouse effect for a long time, but until the last few decades effects on the planet from adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere weren't obvious. Most people didn't know anything about climate change until Al Gore began to write and speak about it in the 1990's. Now we have only a very few years to avert the devastation that will happen if we don't meet the Paris Agreement's goal of preventing the world from warming no more than 2.7 degrees by 2100. Meeting this ambitious goal could skirt the worst climate effects, such as massive floods, prolonged droughts, and irreversible sea level rise, but to actually reach this target, the world must reduce its carbon pollution immediately, and cut it in half by 2030.

More than half of the carbon dioxide that has been emitted into the atmosphere by the burning of fossil fuels has been emitted in the last three decades. That means that a previously stable planet has been brought to the brink of catastrophe in our lifetimes. We have done more damage to the environment since we learned about climate change than we did in our ignorance in all the years before that. In 2016 when the Paris agreement was signed, the carbon concentration in our atmosphere was already 400 parts per million, the red line that scientists said we should not cross or the changes would be irreversible. Two years later it was 411 ppm. If we don't change course on fossil fuels now, much of the planet will be uninhabitable by the end of the century.



Melting Glacier

Photo by NASA (climate.nasa.gov/evidence/)

Even if everybody reduces their carbon footprint as much as they can, it won't be enough. Only government has the ability to make changes on the scale that it would take to reach this goal. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was a massive government program to pull the U.S. out of the Great Depression by historic spending on infrastructure, and it worked. Now we need a similar massive mobilization of people and resources like the U.S. involvement in World War II, the Marshall Plan, or the Apollo moon missions, but even bigger. We must transform our energy system to completely replace fossil fuels with renewable energy and smart grids and restore our crumbling infrastructure. It will require the investment of trillions of dollars, but it will create millions of living-wage jobs and save millions of dollars in health care costs.

The idea of a Green New Deal arose here and in Europe during the recession around 2007. Economist Thomas Friedman proposed that we end fossil fuel subsidies, tax carbon dioxide emissions, and create lasting incentives for wind and solar energy in a Green New Deal. Some of Friedman's ideas were adopted, but they mostly died out in the U.S. as the economy improved. An updated version of a Green New Deal was introduced into Congress this January. This version is not a bill but a resolution and set of ambitious goals to address both climate change and economic inequality.

(See Green New Deal on page 6)



New benefit for Burroughs members!

Now Burroughs members can get **10% off** seed and suet, and **5% off** anything else in the store. Just say you're a Burroughs member when you check out. For those members who aren't familiar with The Bird House, the store is located at 3035 Monroe Avenue. It has a large variety of bird seed mixtures, feeders, houses, binoculars and nature related gifts. Its website is www.thebirdhouseny.com.

(Green New Deal - continued from page 5)

We need a critical mass of politicians prepared to take the threat of climate change seriously and unleash the federal government's enormous power to save the planet. The most important thing that we as individuals can do is to encourage government at every level to make the drastic changes we need. It will be very expensive, but if we don't take action soon, it will be even more expensive. Climate change will cause billions of dollars of damage to homes, communities, and infrastructure each year and large areas of the planet will become unlivable. Washington Governor Jay Inslee says, "We are the first generation to feel the sting of climate change, but we are the last generation who can do something about it."

New Members

Marie Heerkens, Fairport
 Mary F. Moore, Pittsford
 Pamela Mortensen, Rochester
 Barbara McCutcheon, Pittsford
 Narayana Kocherlakoda , Pittsford
 Kathy Palumbos, Rochester
 Ellen Sanna, Pittsford
 Lon & Becky Meyers, West Chester, PA
 Diane Pike & Dan Glover, Pittsford
 Rosemary Reilly, Pittsford
 Cheryl & Robert Tuite, Pittsford
 Jerry R. Van Wei, Rochester
 Nancy & Al Fisher, Rochester

2019 Dues

If you haven't already renewed your membership, please send your dues check.

\$20 - Individual membership

\$30 - Couples membership

\$35 - Family membership

Add \$5 for the Tanager hardcopy by mail

Add \$2.50 for keys to the outside restroom

Send check to:

BANC

c/o John Shaw

374 Cromwell Drive

Fellow Designation to Julie Clayton

By Marigrace Piazza

At the February Members' Meeting, Julie Clayton was named a Fellow of BANC and she received a certificate in recognition of this honor. According to the bylaws a Fellow is "any member who has been so designated by action of the Executive Council because of outstanding, long and valued service to this organization. A Fellow shall have all the rights, privileges, and duties of a member but shall not be liable for further dues."

At the Annual Meeting and Experience Night in November, Marigrace Piazza led a Call and Response in honor of Julie. Have fun reading it out loud at home. It illustrates the "outstanding, long and valued service" that Julie has provided for BANC.

Call and Response for Julie Clayton from the November 2018 Meeting

CALL: Who is the only person (as far as I know) who has served three terms as BANC President?

RESPONSE: JULIE

CALL: Who has chaired the picnic and banquet committees this year and for the last several years?

RESPONSE: Julie

CALL: Who served on the Allegany Nature Pilgrimage and NYSOA planning committees this year?

RESPONSE: Julie

CALL: Who did the research to find our new meeting place, the Clover Center?

RESPONSE: Julie

CALL: Who found those great kids from Victor High School who help us on clean-up days?

RESPONSE: Julie

CALL: Who is listed as being part of the most committees in the Handbook?

RESPONSE: Julie

CALL: Who sings on the porch during Family Nature Night?

RESPONSE: Julie

CALL: Who makes everyone feel at home and welcome at BANC?

RESPONSE: Julie

CALL: Who is stepping down from the Council, but not stepping down from being BANC member extraordinaire?

RESPONSE: JULIE

Feel free to email Julie with your congratulations and any additions to this Call and Response. I am sure the list could go on for many more pages!



Julie Clayton

Photos by Richard Ashworth

Gorillas of Rwanda The January Meeting Presentation

By Bill O'Neill

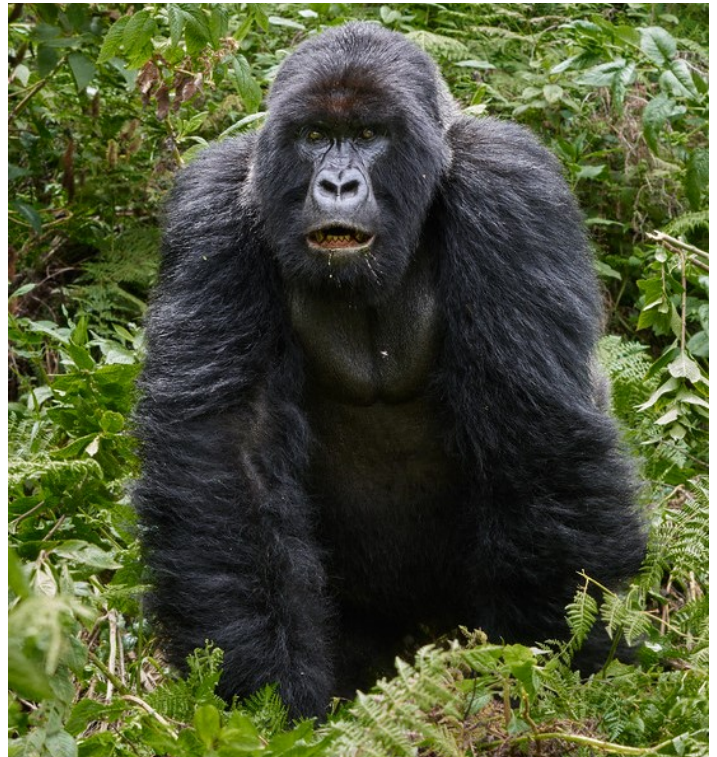
On the very cold Friday evening of January 11, a capacity crowd of hardy souls gathered at the Clover Center for BANC's first invited talk of 2019, *Gorillas of Rwanda*, by Dr. Gary Paige of the University of Rochester. Gary and his wife Myrna are avid "semi-pro" photographers, and over the last few years have undertaken photographic expeditions to a variety of exotic locales around the world.

In 2017, Gary and Myrna ventured to Africa to photograph wildlife and urban culture in the East African countries of Rwanda and Uganda. As most of you know, the big attraction in Rwanda is the chance to see Mountain Gorillas, a species threatened by loss of habitat and poaching. Rwanda created a preserve in the Virunga Mountains to protect the gorilla population after the death of naturalist Diane Fossey (of "Gorillas in the Mist" fame) at the hands of gorilla poachers in 1988. Visits to the preserve are highly regulated, with rangers taking small groups of 10 to 12 visitors to spend no more than an hour at a time around the animals to avoid disrupting the gorillas' daily routines.

Gary and Myrna's photographs of these remarkable creatures are truly stunning. Despite their intimidating size and demeanor, gorillas are normally gentle, quiet and nonaggressive. Gary and Myrna always take great care to be respectful and non-threatening around their photographic subjects, frequently leading to some amazing personal encounters. In the short time they had access, they captured wonderful candid closeups of gorillas eating, playing, grooming, and lounging about. Both Gary and Myrna have an uncanny ability to frame a shot and push the shutter at just the right time to capture a dramatic moment in exquisite detail. Doleful stares from imposing Silverback males, sublime mothers with their babies, an outstretched hand from a gorilla in supine repose. For me, one of the most amazing shots in the presentation was taken by Myrna, showing a curious, and rather bold, young gorilla gently reaching out and touching Gary, as if wanted to say "Hi, nice to meet you". Truly a special photograph of a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

Gary fleshed out the hour with photos of other primates (chimpanzees, colobus, golden- and red-tailed monkeys, baboons) and other African wildlife (birds, hippos, big cats) taken in Uganda and other African countries from previous trips.

Not unexpectedly, my words just don't do justice to the pictures. Luckily, Gary and Myrna provide access to a collection of their photos on their excellent website: www.frontpaige-photography.com. And if you act fast, you can see a selection of large format photos from their most recent trip to the island of Madagascar on display at the *Image City Photo Gallery* (722 University Ave.) through March 17.



Silverback Gorilla

Photo by Gary and Myrna Paige

BANC's Annual Banquet

Thursday, April 25

At Glendoveers -- 2328 Old Browncroft Rd.

6:00 Cash Bar and Hors d'oeuvres

7:00 Delicious Buffet Dinner

8:00 Remarks by President, Marigrace Piazza

8:10 Presentation **Hannah George: The Landscapes of the Finger Lakes: Where they've been and where they're going!**

Enjoy a fabulous buffet dinner with your BANC friends to be followed by a presentation by Conservation Easement Steward, Hannah George from the Finger Lakes Land Trust.



Tickets are \$30 per person. Please mail your checks to: Julie Clayton
230 Klink Rd.
Rochester, NY 14625

Please make checks payable to: BANC. Deadline is April 19th.

Names of attendees: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Any questions – Call Julie Clayton 249-9489 or Chita McKinney 482-3588.

The Tanager

Burroughs Audubon
Nature Club
c/o John Shaw
374 Cromwell Dr.
Rochester, NY 14610

TO

If you haven't renewed
your membership,
please do it now.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 16, 6:30 PM

Field Trip to Wild Wings

NIGHT OWL HIKE

Sunday, April 7, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

BANC Sanctuary

NAVIGATOR BRANCH AND TWIG CLEAN-UP

Saturday, April 13, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

BANC Sanctuary

SPRING CLEAN-UP

Thursday, April 25, 6:00 PM

Glendoveers

(2328 Old Browncroft Road)

BANC Annual Banquet

LANDSCAPES OF THE FINGERLAKES

Sunday, May 5, 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Open House at BANC Sanctuary

WHAT'S BLOOMING AT BANC

Friday, May 17, 6:00 PM

Potluck at BANC Sanctuary

COMPOSTING AND WORM FARMING

Saturday, May 18, 7:30 AM

Joint Field Trip to Powder Mills Park and BANC Sanctuary
with RBA

FINDING MIGRANTS AND NESTERS

Friday, May 31 - Sunday, June 2

Allegany State Park

ALLEGANY NATURE PILGRIMAGE

Saturday, June 8, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

BANC Exhibit at Mendon Ponds Park

ADK OUTDOOR EXPO

Friday, June 14, 6:00 PM

Potluck at BANC Sanctuary

VERN LINDBERG, FOLK MUSICIAN (GUITAR)

Wednesday, June 19, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Field Trip to Green Lakes State Park

JUNE FLOWERS AND TREES

Wednesday, June 26, 6:00 - 8:30 PM

Open House at BANC Sanctuary

FAMILY NATURE NIGHT