

Friends of the Outlet, Inc.

Winter 2018

Special Interest Articles

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Celebrating the Poetry of Ralph Seager

He was a musician, sailor, postal clerk, teacher, traveler, and family man. But to all of us in Yates County – Ralph Seager was our poet! He said he never really expected to become a creative writer. It was just one of life's surprising turns. He wrote about 850 poems and published 13 books – mostly poetry.

Ralph grew up in the Guyanoga Valley and it is here that he honed his keen ability to see the creativity, engineering, orderliness, and beauty around him and translate that into poetic form. He mingled with masters of poetry at universities around the country and toured nationally as a creative writing lecturer. He was assistant professor of English at Keuka College for 20 years and, despite having no degree, was given the designation of Professor Emeritus. He encouraged his students to

discover the unfamiliar, recognize the beauty in the ordinary, and know that things unseen may have extraordinary power and meaning.

Ralph immersed himself in the community, writing poetry for special occasions – the Windmill dedication in 1987, the Lions Bandstand in 1988, the Star Shine Celebration in 1988, and the dedication of the County Complex time capsule in 2003. Countless poems were inspired by scenes from around the Finger Lakes and none more poignant than his tribute to the Keuka Outlet Trail.

Ralph Seager's poetry was recently enjoyed at the High Tea and Poetry event held in October on the Trail. Recitations performed by Stephanie Olsen brought Ralph's poetry vividly to life. Deb Clancy shared personal stories of Ralph and inspirations for the writing of the poems

recited. The poems were not only enjoyed by those in attendance but also by those biking or strolling by.

Someone once asked Ralph why he didn't use a word processor. He said it was just too fast. "The words have to start in my head, travel to my heart, go down my arm and then onto paper."



Looking Ahead: Improving Cascade Mills

The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Outlet has initiated an all out effort to make significant improvements to the Cascade Mills site, just east of the intersection of Ridge

Road and Outlet Road.

Work to transform the site into a multi-purpose event space and recreational venue includes the painting of buildings, restoring electric service to the Visitor's Center building, installing a security system and lighting, replacing windows and doors (including security shutters), installing multiple picnic tables and garbage cans, landscaping and

signage, installing restroom facilities, replacing and repairing roofing, building a gazebo style bandstand, and removing former structural elements that might be hazardous.

If you can help with donations or funding, volunteers, or the donation of heavy equipment, please contact Gwen Chamberlain at 607-745-4790 or gchamberlain@keukaoutlettrail.org.



Upcoming Events . . .

January 17, 2018

Quarterly Meeting
7:00 PM
Lyons National Bank

The meeting is open to anyone interested in the Keuka Outlet Trail and the Friends of the Outlet.

February 21, 2018

Board of Directors
Meeting
7:00 PM
Lyons National Bank

February 28, 2018

Hot Chocolate and
Cool History
5:30 PM
L. Caroline Underwood
Museum

Join us as the history of Jemima Wilkinson and the Hopeton settlement comes alive!

Hot Chocolate and Cool History

Are you interested in being right in the middle of history?

Travel back in time to enjoy the sights, sounds, artifacts, and people as the "Lost Village of Hopeton" comes alive!

Join the Friends of the Outlet, in partnership with the Yates County History Center, for **Hot Chocolate and Cool History** on February 28, 2018, at 5:30 PM in the L. Caroline Underwood Museum.

Spend an hour with the Dearly Departed Players listening to and interacting with the stories of Jemima Wilkinson and other early Hopeton settlers. Learn about the Hopeton settlement, the importance of the Keuka Outlet, and the settlers' way of life.

Examine historical artifacts, ask questions, and enjoy hot chocolate and cookies on this **magical winter evening**.

Mark your calendars as this

is sure to be a **fun-filled event for the entire family!**

Donations to either organization are welcome.

To attend, RSVP to community@keukaoutlettrail.org.

Seats are limited to forty participants...so don't delay!



Don't Forget to Renew!

It's that time of year again...the time to renew your FOTO membership!

Last year, your generous donations helped fund a number of efforts toward improving the Keuka Outlet Trail, including: bench seating, informational kiosks and signage, an improved and widened trail surface, free Trail events, an enhanced Web presence, and numerous safety and cleanup initiatives.

This year we hope to accomplish even more. However, we couldn't do it without the generous contributions of members just like you! Help us become a catalyst for change with improvements to the Cascade Mills site.

Please join the Friends of the Outlet for another successful year by renewing your membership.

Membership letters will be mailed in January OR

alternatively, you can submit your application and payment on our member portal by clicking on:
www.keukaoutlettrail.org/membership.

As always, the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Outlet thanks you for your continued dedication to our Trail. We look forward to serving you for another year!

"Best Friends" of the Trail

FOTO is adding an additional membership category for 2018.

If you renew your membership and enjoy the Trail with your pet, your pet can also support FOTO.

In addition to your

membership, a pet membership entitles your pet to receive a FOTO branded waste bag dispenser, and free entry for "Best Friends" of Friends of the Outlet contests to win pet related prizes.

All proceeds for pet

memberships will benefit pet related projects on the Trail.
Honorary Pet Memberships are \$10.00.



Winter Tracks: Identifying Animals by Their Signs

There is something thrilling about taking a walk on a cold winter morning when a dusting of snow has coated the world, and you see criss-crossed over the ground the tracks of animals whom only hours before had gone about their nightly rituals.

Looking over these fragile signs makes you wonder what animal was here and what was it doing? Did it stop to listen for danger, or was it stalking prey? And why did the tracks suddenly disappear?

Deciphering the mystery of animal tracks is a fascinating task that offers us a respite from our fast-paced world. Discovering the story behind those tracks opens our eyes to the natural world, giving us a glimpse into the life of that wild creature.

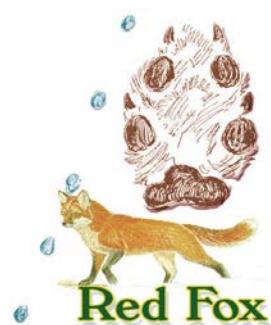
In order to really read and understand animal signs, we must first slow down so we don't miss something important. Are those marks to the side from the same creature, or has another species entered the scene?

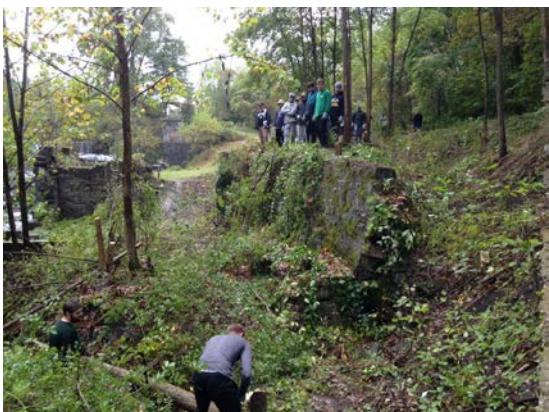
Be sure to really look around for all the clues and take in the whole story written in snow. Keep in mind when studying winter tracks that snow conditions make a difference in a track's appearance. Wet snow captures a paw print well, whereas dry powdery snow captures a less-defined print pattern.

As you learn more about the animals that share our world, you develop a respect and admiration for their ability to survive the everyday adversities they face in their natural world.

Identifying animals by their tracks and signs helps educate us about the important role each species has in the balance of nature, and provides us with knowledge that can be used for determining the best way to manage and protect our wildlife populations.

As you hike the Trail this winter be on the lookout for the signs of the animals in residence.





Keuka College Volunteers

In 1884, the Seneca Paper Mill was constructed using stone taken from the locks of the abandoned Crooked Lake Canal. In 1889, the mill began producing electricity for Yates Electric Light and Power to power Penn Yan. Today, the ruins of this mill can be seen surrounding Seneca Mills Falls on the Keuka Outlet Trail.

On Saturday, September 30th, the **Keuka College Men's Lacrosse team** braved cold, wet weather to help preserve and reveal parts of these ruins that had long been forgotten and reclaimed by nature in what felt like an archeological dig at times.

Many of the 40 or so volunteers had been involved in the Keuka College Wolf Week project on the Trail this August and were eager to come back and help out some more. It's inspiring to see a group of volunteers have such an impact in such a short period of time, and the Friends of the Outlet are thankful that they chose to help with a project that is so much a part of the identity of our community.

The Keuka Outlet Trail is beloved for both its history and beautiful scenery, and **thanks to the service of these men**, there is a brand new view of both.

New Trail Kiosks



The Friends of the Outlet would like to thank Bill Donk of WLD Construction for building five new trail kiosks in which to provide and display information about the Trail and Trail events.

The kiosks placed at the Dresden Trailhead, Hopeton parking area, Seneca Mills Falls parking area, Ridge Road parking area, and Fox's Mill provide both a great outdoor experience and a little knowledge.

Information offered includes the history of the Trail and Trail attractions and amenities.

The kiosks became a reality with the help of Tom Hohman, John Warner, Gwen Chamberlain, and Carol Worth to site and install, Trail information and postings provided by Kristi Hoag, funding from the Dan Spence Foundation, cement from **Knapp and Schlappi** and labor for building the frames for the doors from **Marbles**.

Take time to check the kiosks as you hike the Trail and remember that they stand at the entrance of adventure.

Hike, Bike, and Be Counted!

The Genesee Regional Transportation Council set up traffic counters at three locations on the Trail.

Two of the counters will collect foot traffic data and one will track bicycles

and other metal objects (snowmobiles).

The installation of the counters is a pilot project of the GRT Council at no cost to FOTO.

Data insights on trail visitation levels and use patterns will provide a more comprehensive picture of visitor access and circulation and guide long-range planning of new

programs and facilities to meet visitor needs. Data will also guide the management of natural resources to avoid overuse and degradation as well as to quantify the public health and physical benefits to visitors.

Walk for Water Walk-a-Thon a Success!

A beautiful autumn day brought over ninety walkers, donning bright yellow Walk-a-Thon shirts, to the Trail in support of three non-profit organizations - HTS Congo, Friends of the Outlet, and Penn Yan Rotary. Thank you to the groups of friends, families, and community members that came out in support!

Thank you also to the volunteers that made the day run smoothly and safely for all participants - the Rotarians, Penn Yan Academy students, and Keuka College girls' soccer team.

Over \$1600 was raised for each organization all while enjoying an outing on the Trail!



*"Giving is
not just
about
making a
donation,*

*It's about
making a
difference."*

- Kathy Calvin

Sip and Savor Event Raises Funds for FOTO

A **"very big thank you"** to everyone who came and contributed to support the Friends of the Outlet on November 6th at the one-of-a-kind Sip and Savor event.

Ray and Sandi Spencer, of **Water Street Wine and Spirits**, generously donated a collection of large format vintage wines from New York, California, and Europe. Forty people were in attendance to sample this extraordinary collection of tastes.

The event was held at the Water Street Wine Bar thanks to the contribution of MaryAnn and Stefan

Lewandowski. Kristin and Tim Burch donated their time to attend to the event guests.

Savory tastes were provided by the **Flour Shop Café**, the **Keuka Candy Emporium**, **Morgan's Grocery**, and the **Water Street Wine Bar**.

Lisa Brasier, featured local artist, showcased "A Closer Look at the Outlet Trail" collection of photographs and note cards.

The two-thousand dollars raised will benefit Trail improvements.

FOTO President, Gwen

Chamberlain, adds, "We value our donors and members and the positive impact their contributions make toward the betterment of the Keuka Outlet Trail."



"An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day."

- Thoreau

FOTO Receives TAC Grant

The FOTO Board of Directors was notified in early October of the successful grant application for \$10,000 from the Yates County Tourism Advisory Council. The funds come from the nearly \$300,000 2017 occupancy tax revenues that the Yates County Legislature will distribute in early 2018.

The grant funds will be utilized to promote the Keuka Outlet Trail as well as

support multi-generational events on the Trail. The promotions and events are geared toward increasing tourism spending in Yates County and to cultivate knowledge of and appreciation for the history, geology, flora, and fauna of the Keuka Outlet Trail.

"The Friends of the Outlet are pleased to see the support from the Tourism Advisory Committee and the Yates County

Legislature in the form of this grant", said Board President Gwen Chamberlain, adding, "This demonstrates the legislatures commitment to helping make the Trail an attraction to bring visitors to the area and keep them in Yates County a little longer. And just as importantly, it shows that the county leadership agrees that the Trail is a valuable asset that should be maintained for all Yates County residents to enjoy and take pride in."

"The Outlet Trail" Poster for Sale

Ralph Seager's poem, "The Outlet Trail", beautifully captures the natural and historical significance of the Keuka Outlet Trail.

Reprinted through a generous donation, from FOTO member Deb Clancy, pictured right, the 11" x 18" poster of the poem is available for sale for

\$10, unframed.

This poster makes a perfect gift or decorative for the home and serves as a reminder of the remarkable Trail that exists in our backyard.

All proceeds benefit the Keuka Outlet Trail.



To purchase a poster, visit
www.keukaoutlettrail.org/store



St. Michael's Students Feed the Birds

Winter is not only the best time to feed birds—it is the most necessary time. It is then that insects, seeds, and berries are hard to find.

St. Michael's second and third grade students, along with their teacher, Kristin Burch and FOTO Board Member Phillip Rahr, spent a sunny November morning on the Trail making pinecone bird feeders.

The students used pinecones, found locally,

that had been dried and opened. A mixture of shortening and oatmeal were spread onto each pinecone and then students rolled and pressed birdseed onto each pinecone until well covered. String was tied around the pinecones and the feeders were hung in trees along the Trail.

The students enjoyed the creative process especially knowing they would be serving up a tasty treat for

the birds that inhabit the Trail.



Winter Birds on the Trail.....

There are many species of birds that do not migrate to warmer or more temperate climates, but remain to take advantage of available local food sources.

For some of these smaller birds, specifically chickadees, spending the winters here in the frigid Northeast is possible due to a short-term hibernation state called torpor. During this period, energy expenditure is

reduced due to exposure to extreme cold, food shortages, or severe droughts. Throughout this process of thermoregulation (maintenance or regulation of internal body temperature), metabolism, body temperature and heart rate are decreased in order to help conserve energy and maintain body heat during the harsh winter months.

All of our fine feathered friends depend on specific habitats to obtain food and provide a safe place to nest and nurture their young. By protecting and conserving a wide range of habitats, we are ensuring the health and viability of New York State's resident bird populations.

Look for these perching song birds on your next winter Trail hike:

Black-capped Chickadee:



Habitat: Common to mixed wooded areas.

Diet: Mostly seeds, insects, spiders, berries and small fruit.

Auditory recognition:

Chickadee dee dee dee.

Identifying characteristics:

Small and fluffy with distinguishing black cap and throat, and white cheeks.

Northern Cardinal:



Habitat: Commonly found in brushy areas next to the edges of woods.

Diet: Seeds, fruit and insect larvae.

Auditory recognition:

Teeooo, teeooo, whoit whoit whoit.

Identifying characteristics:

Both have large triangular shaped bills. Male cardinals have bright red plumage with a black face and red bill. Females have reddish-brown plumage and red-orange bill.

American Tree Sparrow:



Habitat: Brushy or weedy areas in proximity to trees, open fields, woodland edges, marshes, and suburban areas.

Diet: Seeds from grasses and plants, few insects and berries.

Auditory recognition: A series of high-pitched sweet whistles and trills. Swee swee ti

sidi see zidi zidi zew.

Identifying characteristics:

Bicolored bill, white bands on wings and a dark spot on center of chest area.

*"What good
is the warmth
of summer,
without the
cold of
winter to give
it sweetness."*

-John Steinbeck



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42.680N, -76.958W

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Step Out Smartly: Tips for Winter Hiking

Hiking in the winter can be a beautiful experience.

Walking on top a blanket of snow, seeing the animal tracks ahead of you, and viewing the frozen creek and waterfalls all present memorable experiences.

Winter hiking also presents its own set of challenges. Before you head out on the Trail, be sure to think ahead and prepare for unexpected conditions. We've rounded up some tips to help you stay safe on the Trail.

1. Never go out alone and make sure someone knows where you are going.

Let a family member or friend know when you'll be out on the

Trail and when you expect to return. Also give them your planned route.

2. Beware of reduced visibility.

Visibility can be reduced during winter due to shorter daylight hours as well as blowing snow. Be sure to take a light, such as a headlamp. Always carry a map and navigation tools. Not only is the Trail often covered in snow, blazes might be covered too.

3. Carry the essentials.

The essentials are a must for every season. Remember that hiking through snow and ice can take considerably longer than usual and plan accordingly. Carry a backpack with a map and compass, water, energy snacks, safety items (fire, light, and whistle), first-aid kit, multi-purpose tool, sun screen and sunglasses, and rain gear and extra clothing.

4. Wear proper footwear.

Be sure to wear proper waterproof footwear with good tread. Wear snowshoes if the snow is deep. Invest in some extra traction devices for your feet when the Trail is icy.

5. Beware of hypothermia.

The best remedy is dressing in layers and having extra dry, warm clothes in your backpack. Sweating from exertion and getting wet is a danger in cold temperatures.

6. Stay hydrated

When you're cold, it's tempting to not drink as much, or only drink coffee and hot chocolate. But you're still sweating under all those layers, and your body still needs water and electrolytes. Be sure to take sips of water when you stop. Prevent your water from freezing by carrying it close to your body, mixing it with a bit of sports drink, or putting your bottle inside a wool sock.



We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.keukaoutletrail.org