

C H A U T A U Q U A



BIRD
TREE
&
GARDEN
CLUB



Beach

Buddy

Meet Buddy the Harris Hawk!

Buddy spent a few hours at Heinz Beach yesterday keeping a sharp eye out for unwelcome Canada Geese hoping to summer here.

The gloved hand in the photo above belongs to Falconer Jonathan Clarkson, owner of [American Hawkeye](#), who was hired by Chautauqua Institution to persuade the ubiquitous Canada Geese to gather and poop elsewhere this season.

Using biological methods to control nuisance populations is a laudable way to tackle the problem. We are pleased that Chautauqua chose to hire Jonathan Clarkson, a local falconer well-respected in his field. We hope his work with the hawks will reduce the goose population at the lakeshore and on the golf course.

We were also grateful to have been given a head-up by Chautauqua Institution staff that Jonathan and Buddy would be working the lakeshore on Friday so that we could send Senior Reporter and Photographer Beth Brockman Miller to observe and cover the story for the BTG. Many thanks to Chautauqua for our valued partnership and to Beth for volunteering her time!

The Harris Hawk is a smart and social bird, good with humans and popular among falconers. You can read more about Harris Hawks on Cornell's [All About Birds](#) website.

If you find yourself excited by the hawk but feeling conflicted about the geese, please read on for a thoughtful article by Twan Leenders on the subject.

~ Leslie Renjilian, BTG President

~ Photos by Beth Brockman Miller @chq4u



Too much of a good thing...

by Twan Leenders

If you are reading this, I'm guessing that you enjoy watching birds. In previous columns I've highlighted some of the bird-related excitement that is happening outside, but in general that excitement focuses on native species.

As you likely know, we have a few non-native, invasive species of birds in our area that have become naturalized. They are "non-native" because people transported them here from other parts of the world. They are "naturalized" because they were able to establish themselves here a long time ago and readily reproduce to sustain a viable population. And, they are "invasive" because their existence here in some way negatively impacts native species or because they cause economic damages.

The most obvious examples of such birds are House Sparrows (also known as English Sparrows), Rock Pigeons, and European Starlings. All admirable species in terms of their ability to colonize much of our planet and adapt to the severely altered habitats that we humans create.

In spite of their biological resilience, their presence in an ecosystem often hurts the livelihood of native birds – for example Starlings and House Sparrows will readily outcompete Eastern Bluebirds or Purple Martins (both species with steeply declining population trends) when we put out artificial nest boxes to help these struggling birds. Note though that the impacts of these less desirable bird species is felt far less in more natural habitats; House Sparrows, Starlings, and Rock Pigeons thrive in close proximity to humans, but don't do well in forested settings.

In some cases, adaptable native species can act much in the way invasive species do, causing similar ecological or economic stress. Most native bird species avoid areas that are heavily impacted by human activities, but some (think Canada Geese, Crows, or Gulls) adapt well to such conditions and sometimes even prefer them. Crows and Gulls are smart and quickly learn where we discard our food scraps – you can't really fault them for trying to get access to some 'fast food' without having to put much effort into it.

Canada Geese love lawns – that beautifully maintained, fresh turf of golf courses and city parks is just perfect for them. The shallow-rooting lawn grass pulls up easily, it hardly ever gets tough, tall, and chewy because we keep mowing it to encourage fresh growth, and the open urban setting keeps most of their predators away and gives them a chance to see any fox or coyote coming from a mile away. Perfect! Because we are dealing with native species that belong here, they are not considered invasive. Nonetheless, their populations certainly can reach nuisance levels.

In the end, we only have ourselves to blame for creating conditions that are just too good to pass up for these adaptable species. Unless we change that (e.g. lock up our garbage, stop mowing areas that don't need mowing – geese really dislike tall grass..., feeding the pigeons) we can't blame them for taking advantage of these gifts from humanity. However, in some cases nuisance level bird gatherings cannot be discouraged by simply changing how we manage the landscape and other options should be considered.

Unlike non-native, invasive species, all our native birds enjoy legal protection and harassing or killing native birds violates state and sometimes federal laws. Permits are needed for such actions, and often outside contractors are brought in to carry out permitted nuisance bird mitigation. Noise makers, flashing lights, the use of dogs to flush birds, all kinds of methods can be used to discourage large gatherings of birds from taking over an area.

One of the more natural ways to encourage nuisance birds to go elsewhere is to introduce their natural predators in a controlled fashion. Since it is not feasible to train foxes or coyotes that way, avian predators are the next best bet. In this age of technology, the ancient art of falconry turns out to be a surprisingly effective tool. Falconers can use a variety of hawks, eagles, falcons, and even owls to fly them over areas where undesired birds gather and spook them. Repeated exposure to such potential threats can convince these nuisance birds to relocate elsewhere.

Note that the trained raptors don't kill any of the nuisance birds, but their presence triggers an innate, instinctual flight response that is enough to make birds want to vacate the premises. Flying the right type of raptor – one that is perceived by the nuisance bird species as a real danger – is key here and a variety of different birds may be needed to achieve the desired result.

Many larger airports deploy falconers to discourage geese and other large birds from entering restricted airspace and other areas where these birds can cause real damage.

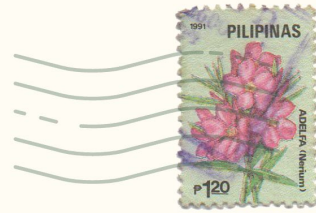
Chautauqua Institution has recently joined several other entities in Chautauqua County to try and do the same.

As much as we all love birds, sometimes we get too much of a good thing. At least by using falconers in the area, we now have even more exiting bird action to look forward to!

Twan Leenders's impressive bio is longer than his article, so please follow [this link](#) to read all about him. You will also have several chances to hear him speak at Chautauqua this summer - at a Lake Walk, at several Bird Walks and at a special Life Member Event in August. More details in future editions of this newsletter.



Save the Date



JULY 14, 2023 - 11:45 AM ● ATHENAEUM HOTEL PARLOR

Chautauqua Bird, Tree & Garden Club Life Member Luncheon

FEATURING GUEST SPEAKER HOLLY SHIMIZU-
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HORTICULTURIST, CONSULTANT, AND
EDUCATOR.



~ Click for More on Holly Shimizu ~

Tickets will go on sale for the July 14 Annual Lunch in early summer.
Details in the May newsletter.

Please note:

The Annual Lunch is little earlier in the season this year than last year. We hope that will allow members who have missed it in the past to attend this year.

And in a break from tradition (yikes!), we will hold our **Annual Membership Meeting** in Smith Wilkes Hall on **Tuesday, June 27 at 2pm**, following the Week One Brown Bag lecture.

In the past, the Membership Meeting has been held at the Annual Lunch, following the speaker. Separating the two events will offer several benefits:

- more time at the July 14 luncheon for our speaker, Holly Shimizu
- allow the June 27 Membership Meeting to be a "Preview of the Season" rather than a "Recap of the Season"
- provide a chance for Life Members and friends to sign up for field trips, events and volunteer activities Week One
- and finally, since the Luncheon always sells out, moving the Membership Meeting to Smith Wilkes Hall will allow more members the opportunity to attend the meeting

So we will use this as a trial year. If it flops, we will go back to the old ways. As my favorite grumpy friend used to say: *All change is bad; some change is worse.* I loved Luther, but we didn't always see eye to eye. However, if he's right about *this* change being bad or worse, we will revert to the old ways for 2025.

In the meantime - this summer - I hope you can join us for **both** dates!

Leslie Renjilian, Dangerous Instigator of Change



Walk with Us

The 2023 Chautauqua season is almost here. We hope you will join us on for a few Nature Walks this summer. Here's what you can look forward to:

Mondays are Lake Walks

Mondays at 4:15pm. Meet at Shoreline Garden by the Pier Building

Join us to hear a fascinating array of speakers on Monday afternoons who will walk the Chautauqua grounds to help us understand and explore everything from the design and development of Chautauqua's rain gardens to the edible and medicinal plants living on the shoreline to the birds of the lakeshore's buffer zones. Walks will also feature the process and equipment utilized to harvest lake weed, the harmful and helpful algae that breed in our lake, and the

important research being conducted by our partnership with The Jefferson Project. Learners of all ages are invited! Each walk promises to share a unique aspect of the Chautauqua grounds and our lake.

Tuesdays are Garden Walks

Tuesdays at 4:15pm. Meet at Smith Wilkes Hall Lakeside

Each week, **Horticulturist Joe McMaster** will lead us on a tour of different Chautauqua Gardens, identifying flora and provide in-depth descriptions, history and gardening tips we see along the route.

Wednesdays are Tree Walks

Wednesday at 4:15pm. Meet at Smith Wilkes Hall Lakeside

Enjoy Chautauqua's remarkable tree canopy and discover the exceptional diversity of our trees with **BTG Naturalist Jack Gulvin**. With over a hundred species of trees on the grounds, you may be introduced for the first time to the Japanese Umbrella Pine, the Dawn Redwood, or an old American Elm. Jack has three different walks so you can come successive weeks and never hear a repeat. Think how much you'll learn!

Thursdays are Bird Walks

Thursdays at 7:30am - Bird Walks. Meet at Smith Wilkes Hall Entrance

Join us for an early morning walk in search of birds throughout the grounds led by experts such as **Ruth Lundin**, retired President of the Audubon Community Nature Center or **Twan Leenders**, Director of Conservation at the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy. Bring your binoculars or borrow ours.

and...

at Thursdays at 4:15pm - Purple Martin Chat (weeks 1-4) Sports Club Greenspace

For a peek and hands-on experience with the Purple Martins of Chautauqua, join nationally-renowned expert **Jack Gulvin**. He will lower a birdhouse, pull out a nest and pass it around, all the while sharing his knowledge on the migration, feeding, and behavioral patterns of these birds.

* Weeks 1- 4 only. After week 4, the martins have begun their migration south.

Fridays are Nature Walks and Garden Walks

Fridays at 9:00am - Nature Walk. Meet at Smith Wilkes Hall Lakeside

Explore the natural world of the Institution. BTG **Naturalist Jack Gulvin** will delight you with a story about a wild flower, poison ivy, or day lily. You will learn biological and scientific facts as you walk along the woodland areas and gardens on the grounds. His depth of knowledge as a naturalist is always astounding and his humor a crowd pleaser.

and...

Fridays at 12:30pm - Garden Walks. Meet at a different garden each week.

Interested in exploring Chautauqua's floral gardens, rain gardens, or the Arboretum? **Supervisor of Gardens and Landscapes Betsy Burgeson** will identify flora and provide in-depth descriptions and gardening tips of the annuals, perennials, and trees. You will also learn about the design and

implementation of innovative ecologically and economically sound landscapes for new gardens and facilities or hear about renovation efforts to return historical gardens to their original plan.

Details will be published weekly in this newsletter, in the Chautauquan Daily and [on our website](#).

~ Photo above by Angela James of Jack Gulvin talking about the different kinds of ferns at Smith Wilkes Hall and which of the fiddleheads are tastiest and safest to eat.



Tree of the Month

The Serviceberry aka Juneberry aka Sarvisberry aka Shadblow aka Shadbush aka Saskatoon aka Downy Serviceberry aka Chuckly Pear aka Sugarplum
oka (officially known as):

Amelanchier

Beth Brockman Miller sent me these photos of three Juneberries in bloom

around Chautauqua last week.

She took the top photo at the Arboretum and the photos below at Miller Cottage and the Shoreline Wetland Garden by the Pier Building.

Often overlooked in summer, the native serviceberry is **one of the most important small trees in our landscape** and was an important sign of spring to our ancestors.

Perhaps one reason we overlook the small tree is that the **birds and animals notice its ripe berries the very day they ripen** and often denude the plant before we even get a chance to see the fruit. But if you can beat them to the berries, a juneberry pie is said to be better than a blueberry pie. I've never had one, but Jack Gulvin has and he reports that the little seed gives the pie a nutty flavor, like almonds. He stopped short of calling it the best pie he's ever had, but Jack is not really one for superlatives.

The **bark of the trunk is often striped** - in fact, I find the bark to be one of the best ways to identify the amelanchier, which is for some reason often hard to identify.

Its **early fall color** ranges from yellow to orange to deep red and is **one of the finest of our native trees for fall color**.

As a general rule, using common names causes confusion because the same plant can go by wildly different names (see the absurd string of aka's in the title above). But one *nice* thing about common names is that they often hint at very interesting stories. This is certainly true for the Amelanchier.

The Amelanchier is called a **serviceberry** in New England because in the days before the modern backhoe, the timing of the spring flower signaled to mourners that the **ground was now thawed enough to bury their dead** - it was time for "services."

Another name is **sarviceberry**. Sarvis is an alternative pronunciation of service, common in the Appalachian Mountains. I thought this pronunciation had probably died out but then I heard it this spring from a prominent plantsman near Grandfather Mountain.

The name Juneberry is self-explanatory and seems to be the preferred common name in Western New York.

Our little tree was called **shadblow** or **shadbush** by some who noticed that the Shad (a northern fish) ran in rivers at the same time this shrub or small tree was in fruit. I'm not sure how much that one is still in use.

I don't know about Sugarplum or Saskatoon or Chuckly Pear either, but it's more fun to collect real stories than to google. If you know, please write in!

The BTG is installing tree markers on many of the Amelanchier that are large enough to support a marker. Keep an eye out this summer for this charming little winner of the April Tree of the Month Award.

~ Leslie Renjilian







Manhattan Urban Park Ranger Ginny Renjilian

Elsewhere in New York

While the BTG is usually all about nature within the gates, we are in fact allowed outside. Here's a little sampling of some events happening around the state in May:

If you live in **Chautauqua County**, you may be interested in visiting the **new Bluebird Trail at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute (RTPI)** in Jamestown. RTPI is offering free tours at 9am every Wednesday through June 14. Tours are led by Craig D. Thompson, who served for 33 years as an Environmental Educator for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Tours are free but registration is requested. [Click here](#) for more info and to reserve your spot.

Also in **Chautauqua County**, the **Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy** is partnering with **Westfield Nursery** for a **Native Plant Event** on Saturday, May 13 - 10am - noon. [More info here.](#)

If you live in the **Buffalo area**, you may be interested in an upcoming series of events on **May 11 and 12** sponsored by **Greycliff** called **Orchestrating the Landscape: Ellen Shipman's Western New York Gardens**. Working with

Mina Miller Edison in the 1920s, Landscape Architect Ellen Biddle Shipman designed the gardens at Miller Cottage. As part of this event, Thursday night speaker Rebecca Allan plans to discuss the renovation of the Shipman Garden at Miller Cottage. [Click here](#) for more information and to buy tickets.

If you live in the **New York City area** and would like to gather with some fellow BTG folk, please join me for a Nature Tour led by my daughter, Ranger Ginny Renjilian (photo above). Ginny is a Manhattan Urban Park Ranger. One interesting fact I learned on a recent tour with Ginny is that while the use of cigarettes has gone down in recent years (more vaping), the Rangers are seeing an increase in cigarette butts in bird's nesting materials. That's because the tobacco in the butts provides protection from parasitic mites. I've booked a private tour for up to 30 adults led by Ranger Ginny on **May 8 at 1pm in Central Park**. Your participation will be my treat. [Email me](#) if you'd like to join us!

Ginny will also be leading a Lake Walk this summer at Chautauqua (although not in her official capacity as an Urban Park Ranger). Her topic in Chautauqua will be "Becoming a Naturalist," so plan to bring your aspiring Naturalists to hear about her path from Children's School to Ranger School.

- Leslie Renjilian, Proud Mama

p.s. Read more about the cigarette butt study [here](#).



**Three -
Ninety
FORE!**

What's Happening across 394 at the Chautauqua Golf Club

Thanks to Dan McEvoy, President of the Chautauqua Golf Club for sharing this news with us:

In March, member Darryl Anderson and a couple friends installed some Mallard duck nest platforms on three of our ponds in an effort to promote nesting at Chautauqua Golf Club. We much prefer the Mallards over the Canada Geese that will try to make Chautauqua their home in the next few weeks.

Note: American Hawkeye has also been bringing their Harris Hawks to the golf course to discourage Canada Geese.



Reconnecting with Nature



All the uglinesses of the world can best be forgotten in
the beauty of nature. -Mehmet Murat ildan

Photos by Jack Voelker, BTG Life Member, Director (Retired) of Recreation and Youth, Chautauqua Institution, Aspiring Harmonica Player, Former Hop Farmer





Historical Tidbit

The Bird Logo:
How "It" Came About!

by Janine Obee, BTG Historian

As you may remember from last month's Historical Tidbit, the first emblem to represent the Bird and Tree Club soon after it was founded in 1913 was a painting of a robin done by Louis Fuertes, a well-known American bird artist.

In addition to painting birds, Mr. Fuertes also did bird imitations. At an outdoor meeting hosted by Henrietta Jones, several birds responded to his bird calls and serenaded the club members!

The emblem evolved over the years, which brings us to the 1980's when the club was seeking to streamline the emblem and create a "logo"!

So what are the characteristics of a "Good Logo"?
According to the US Chamber of Commerce a good logo is:

- simple
- relevant
- memorable
- versatile
- appealing

We believe our little bird is all of the above!

However, the logo which has since represented the BTG for the last 40+ years was not originally designed with us in mind!

Graphic artist Bob Ivers, long-time Chautauquan created the symbol for a summer theater festival in Ithaca, NY which never opened its curtains!

Mr. Ivers was able to maintain control of the symbol which made it eligible to represent another organization.

Perhaps it was divine intervention as Mr Ivers' wife, Mary Ellen was the Chaplain for the Bird, Tree and Garden Club in the 1980's. Or maybe a wife's persuasion, but Mr Ivers granted the BTG permission to use his symbol because he felt it communicated the "spirit of the club." His simple design represents our mission to this day.

below: Bob and Mary Ellen Ivers



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