



ECOS NEWS



ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse
Celebrating Our 44th Year in Environmental Education

Vol. XLV

Number 4

March 2017

You're invited!!
ECOS Annual All Member Meeting

Monday, March 6
Board meeting 6:00-7:00pm
Light refreshments 7:00
Guest speaker 7:15

Please Note Location Change:
Niskayuna Recreation Center
2682 Aqueduct Road

Guest Speaker Tom Swyers

Tom Swyers is an attorney, a judge with New York State and has studied at the New York State Summer Writers Institute at Skidmore College. His debut novel, *Saving Babe Ruth* was the recipient of two Benjamin Franklin Book Awards in 2015. His second novel *The Killdeer Connection*, scheduled to come out in the coming weeks, was inspired by Justin Mikulka the 2015 ECOS Rachel Carson Celebration speaker. This legal thriller, set partly in the Capital District and partly in North Dakota, is focused on the fracking industry. Tom will discuss his novel, the research behind it, and his strategy to fight fracking through fiction. Attendees will receive information on how they can obtain a free copy and how to use the book to help raise awareness of the issues surrounding fracking.

Remembering Chet Harvey



Chet Harvey, Kathie Armstrong's husband, died Friday, February 10th at age 94. Many of you knew him as friend, fellow skier, nature hiker, canoeist, and author, with Kathie, of the *Adirondack Mountain Club Canoe and Kayak Guide, East-central New York*.

There will be a memorial service on Saturday, February 25th at the Schenectady Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady at 11 am, followed by lunch. Donations may be made to ECOS in Chet's name.

Save the Date
ECOS Annual Dinner
Tuesday, April 25
Schenectady County Community College
Guest Speaker Aaron Mair

See next issue for registration information.

ECOS NEWS

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ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc.

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ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is a non-political, not-for-profit organization. Our mission is to provide environmental information and educational opportunities that enhance appreciation of the natural world, to build a community that is aware and knowledgeable about environmental issues, and to advocate informed action to preserve our natural resources. ECOS is funded through the support of our members and the community.

JOIN THE LOCAL FOOD REVOLUTION

We are building a new, full-time cooperative market featuring local, organic and sustainably produced natural foods in downtown Schenectady.



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Contact: Kat Wolfram
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eBay Giving Works

Did you receive a holiday gift you don't want or need? Sell it on eBay and support ECOS. eBay Giving Works is the dedicated program for charity listings where you can buy or sell items to support non-profit organizations. This program enables you to list items on eBay and donate part or all of the final sale price to your favorite nonprofit organizations. Since 2000, more than \$81 million has been raised for charity from listings sold on eBay worldwide. To learn how the program works visit ebay.com and click on Giving Works. ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is participating in this program.

iGive.com

Shopping online this Holiday Season? If you are then you can support your favorite charity, AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOU, by visiting www.iGive.com. Over 800 of you favorite stores and catalogs participate in this program in which the retailer donates a portion of your purchase to your favorite charity. In addition, there are special discounts and sales available through iGive.com. ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse has raised over \$200 through this program so far.

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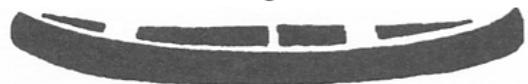
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ECOS Spring Talk Series
ECOS 2682 Aqueduct Road, Niskayuna

If you're interested in food, farming, or both, you'll want to attend a spring series of talks sponsored by ECOS.

Wednesday, March 15 7pm The first talk will be given by Julie Suarez, Assistant Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. Previously, Julie served as public liaison for the New York State Farm Bureau and as a staff member for the state Senate's Agriculture Committee. She will provide an overview of the state of agriculture in New York, including such issues as food safety, organic farming, environmental impacts and cropland loss.

Wednesday, March 29 7pm The second talk will be given by John Mishanec. A former Peace Corps volunteer, John spent the better part of his career working for Cornell Cooperative Extension, where he became an expert on potatoes and Integrated Pest Management (a broad-based approach that uses biological controls and other common-sense practices to grow healthy crops and minimize the use of pesticides). Now retired, John is president of the Schenectady Greenmarket, which will be the subject of his talk, as well as farmers markets in general.

Other upcoming talks will be on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) --- whether they are good, bad, safe or dangerous; and dairy and apple farming. Look for more information about these in the next newsletter. **Bonus activity:** Learn about the fast-growing craft beer industry. Join us for a tour, talk and tall one at Wolf Hollow Brewery on Route 5 in Glenville, Saturday, March 18 at 2:30 p.m. You'll find not only good beer, but good food, including barbecue, in a family-friendly atmosphere.

Budget Information

ECOS has suffered significant revenue shortfalls over the last two years, and we are expecting another shortfall this year of up to \$13,000. Like many small not for profit organizations, we have experienced a declining membership.

Our initial draft budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2017 resulted in a deficit of approximately \$13,000. Projected revenues totaled \$43,000, while expenses were expected to be \$56,000. Continuing deficits imperil ECOS' existence. We have funds to meet all of our expenses in the next year.

Our mission of environmental education remains as important now as when ECOS was founded in the 1970s. To carry out our mission we need to cut back on expenses and to focus on revenue-generating programs.

Given that payroll expenses represent approximately \$39,000 (70% of our budget), the only realistic way to reduce expenses is to cut back on payroll. One option being discussed by the Board is to reduce the hours of the Executive Director. The Board could make this change in the near future, or several months from now if conditions warrant it. This is a choice first suggested by him a few months ago. A final budget will be adopted at our annual meeting on March 6.

We are also exploring events and programs that have a high probability of producing significant revenue, and we are confident that ECOS will weather this temporary budget situation and emerge even stronger in the years ahead. The board can adjust to circumstances as they become clearer throughout the year

Thank you for your membership and your support.

Will Seyse, President

ECOS Membership

ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc.
P.O. Box 9118, Niskayuna, NY 12309 (518) 370-4125

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President's Letter

“The Power of Off”, written by Nancy Colier, warns of excess use of our electronic devices such as smart phones, tablets, and computers. She chronicles the gross amounts of time people stay connected and their habitual need to recheck for incoming email or Face Book updates, when nothing of importance is really expected. She writes of the contradictions where these devices are “connecting us” and where we spend more time alone rather than with our fellow man.

I am intrigued by the book’s premise and am fairly guilty of spending too much time with my I phone myself. I could have written and submitted this on the phone but alas, I’m trying to be old fashioned and use a computer.

By chance I stumbled across a rebroadcast of an old “Leave it to Beaver” show this week and was amused that the theme had Ward (the show’s father) insisting to his sons (Wally and the Beaver) that they had to take time away from their friends, their movies, and all the time wasted in their rooms reading comic books! He was going to take them camping where he had gone as a boy, to enjoy the out doors and nature first hand. It turned out the boys enjoyed the woods and the fishing as their father had years before, but also discovered a nearby community where they could buy more comic books.

We are told that we are more connected by these devices, but we often feel more removed. Restaurants, theaters, meetings, and work environments are all changed by the ubiquitous use of smart phones. We talk and listen to each other less, and we are more removed from nature and the out doors that ECOS tries to remind us about. I am as guilty as many for using the phone so much, but I seek out the hiking and skiing trails too.

ECOS wants to reach the young and introduce them to the outdoors, and we don’t want to suggest an “App” for that. We want the real thing with all the elements that go with it. We can study the plants, the waters, the geography, geology, insects, mammals and more. The power of off is where we need to remember how to get back to the real world.

Will Seyse

**Private Property or Public Access?
The Debate over Navigability**

**Thursday, March 16 5:30 pm
Union College Old Chapel**

Phil Brown, Adirondack Explorer, and Ross Whaley, senior adviser to the Adirondack Landowner’s Association

In the mid-nineteenth century, the rivers of the state were declared public highways to allow their use for transportation of logs to market, regardless of whether they ran over public or private land. This principle was “forgotten” beginning late in the century. In the late 20th century, recreational paddlers testing the public use concept have been arrested for trespass. Join us for an exposition of both sides of the question and probe that age-old question of how a Park composed of public and private land should be managed. <https://muse.union.edu/adirondack>

A light reception for guests will begin at 5:00 pm.

Free Workshop on Tree Planting, Pruning & Care

Life is better for both us and trees when we give our plants some help. ReTree Schenectady and ECOS have teamed up to provide a free and informal public workshop on how to care for your trees. Participants can meet up at 10 am, Saturday, March 18, starting at Union Street and Erie Boulevard, at the entrance to the Stockade. The rain date is Sunday, March 19 at 2 pm. No pre-registration is necessary. Serving as guide will be Clarence "Rennie" Fountain, an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist with over 35 years caring for trees as a professional and passionate Regenerative Plant Care advocate. He will focus on many aspects of a tree’s life, including how to plant, prune, and manage your trees.

ReTree Schenectady is a not-for-profit, all volunteer organization dedicated to the planting, care, and conservation of Schenectady’s trees. In the past 25 years, ReTree Schenectady has helped to plant over 3,500 trees in Schenectady, thanks to funding from the City of Schenectady, National Grid, New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation, and private donations. For more information, see www.retreeschenectady.org.

ECOS is a non-profit, non-political association of people dedicated to understanding and preserving our natural environment. It is supported by membership contributions, donations, grants, and volunteers. The mission is to provide environmental information and education to enhance appreciation of the natural world, build a community that is aware and knowledgeable about environmental issues, and advocate informed action to

9th Mohawk Watershed Symposium

Friday, March 17

**College Park Hall, Union College
Schenectady, New York**

Registration now open

<http://minerva.union.edu/garverj/mws/2017/symposium.html>



A PLACE FOR FOLK 2017
 Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady
 1221 Wendell Avenue, Schenectady 12308
www.aplaceforfolk.org

KYLE CAREY
 Friday, March 17th at 7:30 pm
 Opening will be **Stories Told**
 (Alice Jenkins & Gary Moon)

The ingredients of Kyle Carey’s music include the songs of the American Folk Anthology, the traditional music of Cape Breton, Ireland and Scotland, and the Appalachian poetry of Louise McNeill. A fluent Scottish Gaelic speaker, Kyle has released two albums – both critically acclaimed, and both a direct and compelling expression of her unique Gaelic Americana sound.

Executive Director's Report

It snowed. Though this wasn't the best ski and snowshoe season for ECOS it was far better than last year's. Thank you to our volunteer leaders for leading the trips this year.

And welcome to our annual Union College Environmental Policy intern. Our intern for this winter is Mead Binhammer. He will be writing articles for the newsletter and putting together powerpoints for school presentations while he is with us. You will see his first article on sea turtles in this issue of ECOS News.

Also, thank you to everyone who volunteered to fill Nancy Peterson's position as co-walk coordinator. Tricia Shaw will now be assisting Sheila Daniels in planning our walk schedules.

Spring is rapidly approaching which means it's almost time for our annual All Member Meeting and Annual Dinner. Details for the meeting are in this issue and dinner details will be in the new issue of ECOS News. Please be sure to mark your calendars and save the dates.

And finally we must say goodbye to long time ECOS member and volunteer Chet Harvey. His energy and inspiration on our outings will be greatly missed. I'd like to thank Kathie Armstrong for choosing ECOS as one of the charities for people to make donations to in memory of Chet.

Patrick Clear

Sea Turtle Conservation: A Perspective From Costa Rica

Parismina, Costa Rica, a town of about 400 people located on the Caribbean Coast in Limón Province, is a location that will always have a place in my heart and memories. Within the small township exists a sea turtle conservation project titled AS-TOP, or Asociación Salvemos las Tortugas de Parismina. I was fortunate enough to spend three months as a volunteer intern on this sea turtle conservation project following my freshman year of college. The new perspectives I gained during my time working for ASTOP have helped to develop and shape my opinions regarding animal conservation, land protection and culture.

ASTOP, a community based organization established by residents of Parismina and the Costa Rican Coast Guard, seeks to protect nesting sea turtles from poaching and predation. Leatherback, green and loggerhead sea turtles can be found frequenting the beaches of Parismina, though greens and leatherbacks are most prevalent. Individual female sea turtles often visit the beach two to three times per season to nest, and will typically lay between 60-100 eggs per visit. Green turtle adults are subject to poaching due to their desirable meat, whilst the eggs of all three species of turtle are threatened because of their supposed aphrodisiac powers. Turtle meat and eggs can easily be found in markets in San Jose and Siquierres, although it is federally illegal to sell the poached meat and eggs. Before the project began in Parismina, 98% of all turtles nesting on the beaches were subject to poaching or predation. Since the inception of efforts by the community and volunteers from abroad, this rate has precipitously declined to 30% or less.

The organization relies on volunteers, both Costa Rican and international, to assist in beach patrols, nest protection and education in the community. The conservation efforts focus on beach patrols that take place every night throughout the nesting season. The patrols, which are conducted in the dark of night, typically between 8pm and 4am, seek out nesting sea turtles in efforts to protect them and their eggs. This includes monitoring, measuring and tagging the female sea turtle, while also collecting the eggs laid and transporting them to a hatchery or “vivero” so that they can be monitored 24/7 until the turtles are hatched. Once hatched, the “tortugitas” or juvenile turtles are protected from predators until they can scramble to the safety of the waves. All of this protection is warranted for the threatened sea turtles, as only one individual will survive to reproductive age in every 1,000-10,000 hatchlings.

As an intern for this project, I had the opportunity to spend three intimate months living in this small community and facilitate the flow of fellow international volunteers through Parismina. My duties primarily included guiding volunteers on turtle patrols at night while also translating the guides’ Spanish for international visitors. When turtles were discovered on the beach, this included tagging, measuring and monitoring adult individuals while also collecting and re-burying nests. During the day, I would participate and organize community service projects such as repainting the school building, repairing the hatchery and

playing soccer at recess with elementary school kids. My time in Parismina was an extremely unique experience. Not only was I able to have the quintessential, exuberant moment of holding a one-ton leatherback sea turtle while it laid its eggs, but I also was able to forge connections within a small, conservation-minded community. The three months I spent in Parismina rewarded me with new experiences, perspectives and ideas that I treasure and will carry with me forever.



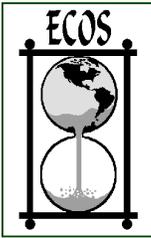
The hatchery constructed to protect the sea turtle nests from predation and poaching.



A female leatherback turtle who atypically has come onto the beach to nest during daylight, giving a rare photographic opportunity.

In Memory

ECOS regrets to report that on February 5th Jim Sankowski, owner of Ballston Lake Pottery, passed away suddenly at home. He was an accomplished and artistic craftsman of pottery whose work was exhibited at the Smithsonian Institute. Jim was humble, kind, loved being outdoors and generously donated pieces of his pottery to ECOS for the Rachel Carson Auction.



ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse
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**ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is located in the Niskayuna Community Center,
2682 Aqueduct Road, Niskayuna, NY.**

ECOS Recycling Committee News:

Your ECOS Recycling Committee (formerly ECOS: Schenectady Recycles!) wants to have your thoughts on recycling and related sustainability topics. Is there an issue you would like to research or in which you have interest, or ways you can volunteer at this time? As an ECOS member, share your thoughts on how ECOS might rally people around recycling! New members of both ECOS and of this committee are always welcome.

See our recent blog post on an ECOS-sponsored tour of the County Waste single-stream operations center. Near top right of our home page, click on “blog.” Related resources are posted, also, and excellent posts on trails, walks, bike rides, and paddles, etc.!

Contact the ECOS office if you would like to go on a County Waste tour, and weekday mornings that you can be available, and we’ll schedule it.

If you live in the Stockade or in the downtown area, you are quite convenient to our new monthly meeting place. It’s on a bus line. Meetings are 1st Thursday of the month.

Our 2nd meeting at the SEAT Center (Social Enterprise and Training), 131 State Street, Schenectady, is on March 2nd from

6:30—8:00 pm. Please bring any unneeded (extra) shopping bags for us to distribute to those who need them. They should be new or almost new. Thank you! If we know you’re interested, we will send you an agenda.

There’s a well-lit parking lot behind the building, off Liberty, and on the side of the building accessed from State. Note the Youth Builds sign. Ring bell at *back door* and Lesley Cutting of both SEAT and the ECOS Recycling Committee will greet you! Hope to see you or hear from you soon. rfarrell5@nycap.rr.com
Enjoy the snow!

ECOS Currently Seeking New Board Members and Board Officers

Of particular interest are potential Board Members who are working in environmental advocacy, environmental oversight, or public education; or who possess grant writing skills. Members who live outside of Schenectady County are also encouraged to become involved as Board Members. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Bruce Bonacquist at brucebonacquist@yahoo.com.

If you have expertise in any of the aforementioned areas, and wish to serve on an ECOS committee rather than as a Board Member, please contact Patrick Clear at info@ecosny.org.