



THE KESTREL

Onondaga Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon

Serving Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Counties and other areas of Central and Northern New York for 61 years.

The National Audubon Chapter of Central New York and the Eastern Lake Ontario Basin

New Series Volume 43 - Number 4

November / December / January 2012-13

PROGRAMS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE NOTE: *Speakers and venues are subject to change. Please check www.onondagaaudubon.com for the most current information. All programs last 60 to 90 minutes.*

NOVEMBER 2012 PROGRAM MEETING

Wednesday, November 14, 7:00 PM

Fayetteville Free Library

300 Orchard St. Fayetteville, NY 13066

Alison Kocek, Masters student at SUNY-ESF, will talk about her research on swamp sparrows in urban area wetlands.

Look for more OAS programs come warmer weather in the Spring of 2013!

Immediate Need for O.A.S. Treasurer!

Please contact Gene Huggins at 696-8065 or through his e-mail, gwren70@aol.com for more information.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR LOCAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP!!

Local membership monies go directly toward local Audubon activities, including but not limited to, Programs, the Bird Festival, and *The Kestrel* newsletter.

The membership form may be found on the OAS website at <http://onondagaaudubondotcom.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/webmembershipform1.pdf> Thanks!



CONSERVATION

LOCAL CONSERVATION ACTION & THE LATEST ABOUT FRACKING

by Maryanne Adams, Conservation Chair

Our chapter has been quite busy this summer. On August 1st, a letter was sent to the DEC on behalf of Onondaga Audubon. In it, our opposition to the granting of a permit which allowed certain structures to be built within the boundaries of a highly rated wetland on Oneida Lake was clearly stated. Because some of the requests had already been illegally initiated prior to entering the permitting process, the actions of the party requesting the permit could be viewed as a blatant attempt to avoid the appropriate process. This matter has not yet been resolved.

On August 11th, sixty volunteers of all ages participated in a program designed to provide them with the "opportunity to participate in habitat restoration, citizen science monitoring, and stewardship activities that will enhance the sustainability of Onondaga Lake" (workbook from Onondaga Lake Conservation Corps – Honeywell, Montezuma Audubon Center, Onondaga Audubon Society, Parsons). Frank Moses, Jonathan Kresge, and I took participants on bird walks in the vicinity of Nine Mile Creek.



*Photo of protestors at the fair.
Taken from http://centralny.ynn.com/content/top_stories/596431/hydrofracking-opponents-meet-governor-at-the-fair/*

Conservation continues on page 3

THE KESTREL

Vol. 43 - No. 4

Nov / Dec / Jan 2012-13

Editor Julie Covey

Officers, Chairs & Directors - 2012-2013

President	Gene Huggins
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DHBO Donor Secretary	David G. Muir
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Invasives	George Spak
Field Trips	Paul Richardson
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Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc. is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Meetings will be held at various sites primarily within Onondaga County on different dates during different months from September to May, excluding January and February. Please check *The Kestrel* and/or <http://www.onondagaaudubon.com> for details on each monthly meeting's date and time. Meetings usually run approximately two hours long. Field trips are held year round to observe birds and other interesting aspects of nature. All programs and field trips are free and open to the public.

OAS owns and operates two sanctuaries on Lake Ontario: Derby Hill Bird Observatory and Richard A. Noyes Sanctuary. Derby Hill is an important site for spring hawk migration. Noyes Sanctuary provides a variety of scenic and birding opportunities in all seasons. Both sanctuaries have maintained trails and are free and open to the public, dawn to dusk.

Chapter only members receive *The Kestrel* newsletter. Joint members with National Audubon receive *The Kestrel* plus Audubon Magazine. Onondaga Audubon encourages membership in both National Audubon and the local chapter. Members are encouraged to actively participate as volunteers in all functions of Onondaga Audubon.

Problems with subscriptions should be referred to the membership chair.

Letters to the Editor may be sent to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620, Syracuse, NY 13201
Phone 315-696-8065
<http://www.onondagaaudubon.com>

The mission of the Onondaga Audubon Society is to engender in the people of the Central New York Community a greater appreciation of wildlife, land, water, and other natural resources. The members of Onondaga Audubon believe this will lead to the wiser use of these resources and encourage this result through our programs, field trips, sanctuary management and environmental education.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

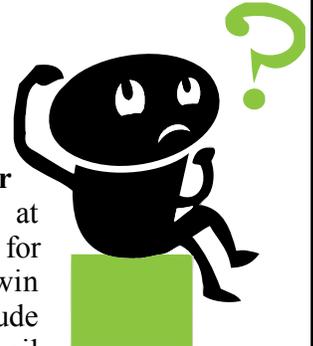
*Deadline for submissions for the next issue is
January 1, 2013.*

ATTENTION SNOW BIRDS!!!!

Would you be interested in receiving the Kestrel online? We don't want you to miss the winter issues while you are enjoying the sun somewhere warm. Please send your email address to whitstrivia@yahoo.com so we can ensure that you are kept up-to-date.

Whit's Trivia

Rules: Email your answers to whitstrivia@yahoo.com by **December 15**. Two winners will be chosen at random from all correct answers (one for each question). The winners will win a bird related prize! Be sure to include your name and address in your email. Winners and answers will be announced in the next Kestrel (first names and last initials only).



Previous Answers:

Question 1: Galliformes are chicken like birds including peafowl, grouse, and pheasants. Winner: J. Ryan

Question 2: The bufflehead breed near fresh water in cavities excavated by Northern Flickers. Winner: M. Mullin

This Edition's Questions:

Question 1: How old was the last individual Passenger Pigeon when it died?

Question 2: What bird family shares the same common name as the Chupacabra?

Onondaga Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application

For information on National Audubon Society membership please visit the OAS website:
<http://www.onondagaaudubon.com>.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN:

To enroll as a member of the Onondaga Audubon Society chapter only please send your name, address, and a check for \$15, made payable to the Onondaga Audubon Society, to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620
Syracuse, NY 13201

You will receive The Kestrel newsletter several times per year.

**Onondaga Audubon Society Chapter Code:
RO5
7XCH**

CONSERVATION from pg 1

The Onondaga Audubon Society has also become part of The Otisco Lake Watershed Advisory Committee. We met in Syracuse on August 15th to discuss the results of a survey that had been sent to stakeholders in this watershed and to develop a plan of action. Kim Farrell will continue to work with this group as they develop a management plan to address the concerns highlighted by the survey (nutrients in the lake and loss of open space, for example) and to promote the involvement of town boards.

On Thursday, August 23rd, three OAS members participated in an event at the New York State Fair designed to call Governor Andrew Cuomo's attention to concerns about opening New York State to hydraulic fracturing. Many groups who wonder about the negative impact hydraulic fracturing might have in New York, especially on agriculture and related industry (Chobani Yogurt), were represented. David and Janet Muir were on hand bright and early to hold a banner and to share their concerns. In the afternoon, I held up one end of a sign, handed out information, and answered questions. During the four hours I was there, I was surprised to find that many fairgoers had heard the term "hydrofracking," but had no idea what it meant.

HYDROFRACKING UPDATE

As most of you already know, there are new developments with regard to the course of action that the governor is taking with regard to fracking. All summer long, New Yorkers have been wondering if the Southern Tier would be opened to unconventional gas exploration. A little over a week ago, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo announced that he will decide whether to allow high-volume hydraulic fracturing in New York only after a review of the health impacts of shale gas drilling is completed. Many of the 80,000 comments submitted to the DEC regarding their environmental impact statement expressed concerns about the effects of fracking on human health. DEC Commissioner Joe Martens has put Health Commissioner Nirav Shah in charge of this task. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/21/new-york-fracking-health_n_1903893.html).

In addition, state officials say that the DEC will repeat some steps in the regulatory approval process, including a public hearing and another call for comments. This would push the time frame for making a decision on fracking into next year. The title of a related New York Times article says it all: "Shift by Cuomo on Gas Drilling Prompt Both Anger and Praise." In spite of intense pressure from the gas industry and from

landowners anxious for drilling to start, Governor Cuomo has not given in. He has not ignored the 20,000 anti-frack activists who have continued to speak out. He has consulted his advisory panel on fracking and followed research that examines how often concrete well casings fail and what happens when they do. He has also discussed (with the panel) a study from the Colorado School of Public Health (March 2012) that found a correlation between living near a fracking site and exposure to air pollutants like benzene and toluene. Cuomo says "Let's get some facts and data and some science, and we'll make the decision on the science, which is what should be done here" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/01/nyregion/with-new-delays-a-growing-sense-that-gov-andrew-cuomo-will-not-approve-gas-drilling.html?pagewanted=all>).

Some are calling Governor Cuomo's latest approach to fracking "foot dragging." Others are simply catching their breaths and hoping for the best. But no matter how you look at it, putting our water, land and health first makes sense. The cautious approach rings true if you look at it while using the following excerpt from the New York State Constitution as a critical lens:

"The policy of the state shall be to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products. The legislature, in implementing this policy, shall include adequate provision for the abatement of air and water pollution and of excessive and unnecessary noise, the protection of agricultural lands, wetlands and shorelines, and the development and regulation of water resources" (Article 14, Section 4, NYS Constitution; <http://www.dos.ny.gov/info/constitution.htm>).

Please check out <http://onondagaaudubon.com/conservation/> for more information. 

KESTREL ONLINE? YES!

Help Onondaga Audubon Society save money by taking your *Kestrel* online. Those taking the *Kestrel* online receive an email with the link to the latest *Kestrel* when it becomes available.

An added bonus is that all the pictures in the electronic, online version are in full color!

Please contact our membership chair, Whitney Smith at whitstrivia@yahoo.com for more information. In the email, please include your postal mailing address, so we may be certain of whom we are taking off the postal mailing list. **THANKS!** 

BIRDATHON 2012



GRAND TOTAL: \$5192.50

The Region 5 Birdathon, held on Saturday, May 19, 2012, raised a total of \$5192.50 with 19 teams taking part in the fundraising effort. This was below last year's great results of \$7051, but in line with results over the last several years. This is the third year in a row that the group has exceeded the \$5000 level.

This year, our top two teams surpassed the \$1000 mark, with Dave and Jeanne Ryan's *Marsh Madness* edging out Janet McGraw and Jane Needham's *Blackburnians* by a modest margin. Both teams had increases from last year. *Marsh Madness* achieved a new personal best of \$1136, and the *Blackburnians* had one their better years at \$1035.

The Big Dippers (Ken & Rose Burdick, Dave Graham) finished in third place with similar tally to last year, while *Old-gray Gnatcatcher* (Paul Richardson) advanced into fourth. Also, a special mention goes to Nancy Bridges and Tom Meier who stepped up to take the helm for their respective teams, carrying on their fund raising traditions.

We are enormously grateful to all of the people who contributed to this year's effort in raising money and are looking forward to next year, with teams both new and old taking part. So, don't forget to join us on May 18th for another unique day of birding on Birdathon 2013.

--- Ken and Rose Burdick, OAS Birdathon Coordinators



Birdathon Fundraising Results		
Region 5 BIRDATHON, May 19, 2012 ---Team & Members---	Funds Raised	
The Big Dippers (Ken & Rose Burdick, Dave Graham)	\$594	3rd Place Fundraising Team
Bird Fool on the Hill (Gerry Smith)	\$100	
The Blackburnians (Janet Needham McGraw, Jane Needham)	\$1,035	2nd Place Fundraising Team
Bluebirds (John Rogers, Sue Rogers, Pat Burns)	\$95	
Crazy Celts (Gene Huggins, Michele Neligan, Rose DeNeve)	\$93.50	
Hooded Warbler (Marge Rusk)	\$9	
Johnny Timberdoodle and the Bog Sucking Mudbats (Tom Meier, Becky Lynch, "Nature Bob" Williams, Jonathan Kresge)	\$272	
King David's Heron (Nancy Bridges)	\$288	
Lookin'4Hooters (Dr. Stephen Schwab, Christopher Stanger)	\$200	
Loonatics (Deb & Emma Rahalski)	\$150	
Mad Cowbirds (John H. Moore, Dave Baldrini, Peter Moore, Katalin Moore, John P. Moore)	\$100	
Marsh Madness (Dave & Jeanne Ryan, Sarah Stuart)	\$1,136	Top Fundraising Team
Old-gray Gnatcatcher (Paul Richardson)	\$300	4th Place Fundraising Team
Osprey Can You See (Dave Nash)	\$150	
Southern Highlanders (Natalia Garcia, Virginia Debenedictis)	\$95	
Sun-bit bitterns (Tom McKay, Jim Stacey)	\$155	
Two Jays Not Blue (Judy Wright, Judy Thurber)	\$239	
Whooters (Jenifer Maycock & Rich Colvin)	\$81	
Woodcocks (Kevin McGann, Bill Purcell, Chris Spagnoli)	\$100	
Grand Total	\$5,192.50	

SANCTUARY

The quote, "Autumn is a season followed immediately by looking forward to Spring." (Anonymous), may sum up how some people think about Derby Hill Bird Observatory. That it is mainly about the thrill of the spring hawk migration, then perhaps, a stroll along a trail on a lazy summer day, a very short visit to catch fall migrants, followed very quickly with thoughts of hawk watching next spring. However, I think autumn is more traditionally a time of reflection upon things both far into the future and the past. So let us look in both directions with a view that Derby Hill has an endless season.

Looking back, David Muir's involvement and leadership as Sanctuary Chairperson including operations at DHBO has changed. This year Dr. Muir "played a more limited role" at Derby Hill, but will continue on, with our gratitude, as Membership Secretary and participate in trail maintenance at Derby Hill and Noyes Sanctuary. To accommodate the change, the OAS Board of Directors asked me this past spring to chair a newly formed Derby Hill Operations Committee, and I accepted. I will be working with others to evaluate operations and programs at the Observatory, and make recommendations for implementation to the Board.

Other activities of note in the recent past are the well received First Bird Festival, an amazing hawk count season, the summer wedding of Ms. Kelsey Wiley on the Derby Hill bluff, and the receipt of two donations made directly to the Observatory. Mr. John C. Farnum of Nathalie, Virginia donated \$500.00 for the future maintenance and repairs of the sanctuary headquarters. Another donation of \$100.00, by Ms. Anne Scheider of Syracuse, New York, was given in memory of her brother, Dr. Francis "Fritz" G. Scheider. The funds are to be dedicated for the maintenance of "The Scheider Nature Trail" at Derby Hill. I am pleased to offer our many thanks to both of these, and all of our donors.

Looking to the near future, as of my writing, two planned projects at the Observatory will start in the second week of October. First, in a continuing effort to manage the variety of habitats at DHBO (i.e. emergent marsh, open fields, shrubby hedgerows, and mature woodland) for the most benefit to birds and other wildlife, we will be implementing the Observatory's Upland Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Plan. As part of the integrated management plan, we will be mowing the open fields to enhance and maintain

habitat for grassland type species. In addition to fall mowing, maintenance by trimming will occur in the "lookout" field to ensure a clear view of migrating raptors. The restoration project is a joint effort of the DHBO and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York Field Office. The second project is the insulation of the first floor, replacement of structural trim, and painting the front porch of the sanctuary headquarters before winter arrives.

Looking still further into the future, the OAS Board and I will continue working throughout the year on ways to improve operations at the Observatory, with the goal of improving our members' and visitors' experience, and expanding our educational and scientific programs. To reach our goals, we ask for the continued support by our members and visitors, not just in the spring, but also throughout our endless season.

Thank you. See you at the Hill.

Ken Karwowski - DHBO Operations Chair



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

FOR 2013 BIRD FESTIVAL AT DERBY HILL, MAY 11, 2013

The 2012 festival was a great success and 2013 will be even better! We need volunteers to help with:

- the graphic design of our event poster and flyer
- finding sponsors
- finding vendors
- making contacts for educational exhibits
- obtaining raffle/silent auction donations
- working at Derby Hill on May 11 (help with setting up, parking, shuttling visitors, staffing booths)
- leading field trips/bird walks

If you'd like the opportunity to help with this event, please contact us by e-mail at oabirdfest@gmail.com

OR by US mail at:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620
Syracuse, NY 13201

OR by phone at: 315-474-3778

Looking forward to hearing from you!
All help is welcome.

2013 OAS Bird Festival Committee



Amazing Autumn Programs!

To register or for more information about the Montezuma Audubon Center or its programs please call 315-365-3588 or e-mail montezuma@audubon.org.

Space is limited. Registration is required.

The Center is open Tuesday-Saturday 10 AM - 4 PM.

Selected programs are listed below. Please check <http://ny.audubon.org/montezuma.htm> for more information.

*50% Discount for Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex applies to programs with an asterisk.

11/1 8 - 11 AM - Montezuma Birding Van Tour

Hop in our van to tour Montezuma's birding hotspots in search of dozens of waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. Participants are encouraged to bring their camera and binoculars. Expect to walk short distances. Fee: \$7.50/child; \$12.50/adult.

11/3 9 AM - Noon - Nature Merit Badge Program

All Boy Scouts are welcome to attend this program to earn the Nature Merit Badge. Plants, animals, soils and habitats will be explored during this interactive indoor/outdoor program. Pre-requisites are required. Fee: \$7/Scout.

11/10 2 - 3:30 PM - A Big Year Presentation: In Search of Birds and the Meaning of Life

In 2011, Matt Stenger left on a journey that sent him crisscrossing the continent in search of birds and a fresh understanding of the world around him. During his Big Year, he slogged through marshes, climbed mountains and traversed valleys, seeking a sense of inner peace and balance, and of course, BIRDS! Join us as Matt tells the story of how searching for birds helped him rediscover himself. An optional hike with Matt will follow. Fee: \$5/child, \$7.50/adult, \$20/family.

11/17 2 - 3:30 PM - Project FeederWatch

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of common feeder birds throughout North America. The data collected is used by scientists to look at long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. Take part in this valuable program and enjoy your bird feeders a little more! Fee*: \$3/child; \$5/adult; \$15/family.

11/29, 11/30, 12/20 & 12/21 Home School Nature Series

Will include a session to identify raptors with LIVE BIRDS, beak adaptation and much more. Please check

<http://ny.audubon.org/montezuma.htm> or call 315-365-3588 for more details and times. Fee: \$7/child.

12/1 1 - 2:30 PM - Nature of Montezuma Lecture: Using Technology to Study Backyard Birds

Americans spend billions of dollars on bird feeding supplies but little research has been conducted to understand how birds use the food we provide, and how that food influences the survival and behavior of birds. Join David Bonter, Project FeederWatch Program Leader, for a presentation that will reveal how we use technology to study feeding behavior, and will explore the movements, survival, and daily and annual activity patterns of our favorite feeder birds. An optional hike will follow. Fee: \$3/child, \$5/adult; \$15/family, Free for Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex.

12/6 8 - 11:00 AM - Montezuma Birding Van Tour

Birders can find a plethora of gifts at the Montezuma Wetlands Complex if they know where to go! Hop in our van to tour Montezuma's birding hotspots in search of Bald Eagles, Tundra Swans, Rough-legged Hawks and more! Participants are encouraged to bring their camera and binoculars. Expect to walk short distances. Fee: \$7.50/child; \$12.50/adult.

12/15 10 AM - Noon - Webelos Naturalist Badge

Webelos are invited to complete the requirements for the Naturalist Activity Badge. Montezuma's Wetlands and Forests provide the perfect classroom for nature study. Scouts are welcome to come individually or leaders can register their entire den. Fee: \$7/scout.



A photo of a Rufous Hummingbird, spotted in Phoenix, NY. Photo by Ken Hodgson.

This lovely adult male Rufous Hummingbird first appeared at a feeder in Phoenix, NY on Sunday, September 16. The property owner graciously allowed the news to be posted and welcomed many birders to her yard. We thank her for this opportunity. The last positive report of the bird was made on 9/29/12.

ONONDAGA AUDUBON ANNUAL APPEAL

Please help us to continue Onondaga Audubon's mission "To engender in the people of the Central and Northern New York community a greater appreciation of wildlife, land, water, and other natural resources. The members of Onondaga Audubon believe this will lead to the wiser use of these resources and encourage this result through our programs, field trips, sanctuary management, and environmental education."

Please accept my contribution of:

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City _____ Email _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____



OAS Kestrel
2012-13

Please make checks payable to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620
Syracuse, NY 13201

Onondaga Audubon is a chapter of the National Audubon Society.
Contributions to Onondaga Audubon are fully tax deductible.

Thank you for supporting our mission!

What does the money contributed to Onondaga Audubon go toward?

Insurance

The Kestrel

Hawkcounter

Utilities (At Derby Hill)

Derby Hill & Noyes maintenance

Education

Many other basic operating needs also demand attention. Your contributions help OAS to continue its bird-related mission of education and conservation.

***Please help your Onondaga Audubon Society
achieve success in its mission!***

Onondaga Audubon Society
P.O. Box 620, Syracuse NY 13201

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THE KESTREL



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FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are free and open to the public. Novice birders (and non-birders too!) are welcome. If you are planning to join us on a field trip, you should notify the leader whose telephone number is listed with the trip details. Please call at a reasonable hour as most birders turn in early. Carpooling from the meeting place is encouraged. If your schedule allows you to join the carpool, do remember to offer to help the driver with the cost of gas.

Occasionally changes in published field trips and/or additional trips are announced on the OAS website <http://www.onondagaaudubon.com>.

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FAIR HAVEN BEACH STATE PARK, LITTLE SODUS BAY & BARRIER BAR

Saturday November 17th 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Gene Huggins 696-8065

Gene will be leading his traditional field trip to look for Purple Sandpipers. Please bring a lunch and dress very warmly. Aside from the Purple Sandpiper, Gene will also be looking for migrating waterfowl, Snow Buntings, and a possible Snowy Owl. Please contact Gene for details and meeting place. Easy walking.

WATERFOWL AND GULLS

Saturday, 1/12, 5-6 hours
Bill Purcell 315-382-2871 wpurcell@twcny.rr.com
Join Bill on a field trip to look for waterfowl and gulls. The trip will start in Baldwinsville and go to Phoenix, Fulton and Oswego. If weather is bad on the 12th the trip may be rescheduled to Sunday Jan 13. Please contact Bill for more details.

NORTHWESTERN JEFFERSON COUNTY

Saturday, January 19 315-771-6902
Gerry Smith
Gerry will lead a trip to Northwestern Jefferson County for early winter hawks, open country birds and waterfowl. Short-eared Owl and Snowy Owl are possible with other northern species likely. This trip will be primarily by car, and is weather dependent. For anyone interested, an extension to dusk to seek Short-eared Owls leaving their daytime roost may be offered. Please contact Gerry for details.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS!! 12/14/12-1/5/13

There are many Christmas Bird Counts found in our area. Listed below is contact information for two of them. Please check <http://birds.audubon.org/get-involved-christmas-bird-count> for information on more, starting in mid-November!

Watertown CBC: Saturday 12/15.
David Prosser 315-782-8078 dwprosser@aol.com
Oswego-Fulton CBC: Sunday 12/16.
Bill Purcell 315-382-2871 wpurcell@twcny.rr.com