

# DIONONDEHOWA

## Wildlife Sanctuary & School

ISSUE 8

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2010

### DWS&S

*Incorporating Purposes*

#### The Wildlife Sanctuary:

- \* Provides a recharge area for wildlife on the Sanctuary and in the region
- \* Contributes to the corridor that provides migration routes for large animals
- \* Provides habitat for native plants and animals in an ever-dwindling natural landscape
- \* Provides riparian and landscape beauty for recreational users of the Battenkill
- \* Contributes land to existing forever-wild areas

#### Dionondehowa School:

- \* Focuses on Nature studies, the Healing Arts, and the Expressive Arts in a beautiful natural setting
- \* Encourages the free exchange of ideas
- \* Makes Expressive Arts, Healing Arts, and Nature programs available to individuals of diverse backgrounds and interests
- \* Engenders a sense of social and environmental responsibility
- \* Offers skills for implementing social and environmental responsibility

#### DWS&S Board of Directors

Peter Andrea  
Judy Bannon  
Stanley Dorn  
Bonnie Hoag  
Geoffrey Ovington  
Kristi Plunkett  
Ron Sloan

### Welcome!

If you haven't visited Dionondehowa - and would like to! - we hope this will be the year that you do! And if you've visited often over the years we hope you will return! Consider joining one of the workshops or events or make a date with the Sanctuary to enjoy its raucous quiet.

It is true, however, that our relationship with the Sanctuary, with the Land, with Nature has changed since 2003. Sometimes we feel under siege from the ticks who live here, who can carry Lyme Disease. We can't pretend they are not here. We have to be cautious, slather ourselves with repellents and then make sure, when we're finished, that everyone promises to shower and to get a thorough tick check when they get home. We joke that "We don't want anyone leaving here with any of our littlest wildlife!" but we are painfully aware that tick-borne diseases can be debilitating, chronic and even cause death. For everyone's safety we sometimes postpone classes or change the venue from outdoors to indoors. Indoors at Dionondehowa is pretty nice, too. The Muse Room, Helen's, and the porches offer comfortable, pleasant surroundings and - always - the long, breath-giving view across the valley.

As is true for many of you, we've been forced by Lyme Disease to reconsider our relationship with Nature. It's important to acknowledge the sense of loss that the prevalence of tick-borne disease has brought. When Geoffrey and I were inspired many years ago to offer people a place to connect with the natural world, our inspiration did not include ticks. Part of our Wild Dream was to help restore the sense of well-being that Nature can provide. And we wanted to remind humans that our very lives depend on Nature - on natural resources.

As with every siege we are optimistic that this wave of sickness will pass, in time, and we can all resume joyful endeavors on the Land. And maybe, it's not too hard on the Sanctuary to have fewer of us tramping on it, up and down. Maybe there is some restoration that our absence provides. We do know that we humans deeply miss the restoration we have felt from the Woods, the Creeks, the Meadows. We feel especially the loss of that sense of freedom and adventure, solace and companionship. We look forward to a time when we can leap again across the fields with joyful exuberance and lie down in the grass to watch the stars.

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The land trust was initiated in 1996 by the donation of 175 acres from the co-founders Geoffrey Ovington and Bonnie Hoag. Their Wild Dream was to "give the land back to itself." In 2004 the Board received an easement on a second, 42-acre parcel. The easement was donated by neighbors who received tax benefit in advance of selling the parcel to Dionondehowa. Then began a two-year fundraising project - to which many of you contributed - raising \$50,000 for purchase of the land. At our ten-year celebration, in 2006, the deed was conveyed to Dionondehowa to be wild in perpetuity! No logging, no mining, no building, and only minimal management of trails and stream banks. We do continue to have the fields mowed by a local farmer once a year, after nesting season, to support our Long-grass Nesting Project.

#### Our Dionondehowa Projects:

Wetland Restoration  
Creek Restoration, including Invasive Species Eradication  
Streambank Restoration  
Long-grass Nesting  
Reforestation

In 2010 the DWS&S Board of Directors will consider formally adding:  
American Chestnut Restoration and Old Varieties Apple Orchard Restoration

### *SKY UPDATE* an excerpt from "Goodbye Blue Sky"

In 2009 the Dionondehowa newsletter focused on what NASA calls Persistent Jet Contrails - PJCs. Our concerns continue to prosper. While we were working to heighten public awareness about these pluming trails which combine to haze the Sky and dim the Sun, geoengineering scientists were busy in their labs, worldwide, hatching a new acronym SRM: Solar Radiation Management.

SRM is a geoengineering technique which "aims to offset the warming caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by reducing the amount of solar energy absorbed by the Earth." (from the testimony of Lee Lane *Researching Solar Radiation as a Climate Policy Option* given Nov. 5, 2009 before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science & Technology).

One of the SRM techniques described in testimony by geoengineering scientists is administered by military jets, high in the stratosphere, laying down particles of Sulfur Dioxide which haze the Sky, reflect sunlight away from the Earth and effectively dim the Sun. Other particles being considered include Hydrogen Sulfide, soot, Aluminum Oxide dust and even designer self-levitating aerosols.

In his 11/5/09 testimony, Professor Alan Robock of Rutgers University lists potential risks of the SRM Aerosol Program. Among them is the loss of direct sunlight, which raises profound concern for fundamental life processes such as photosynthesis.

As a Sanctuary & School, Dionondehowa has a formal obligation to protect the environment and to inform the public. To that end we have hundreds of documents available, including *Goodbye Blue Sky*, which describe how our atmosphere has become an experimental laboratory.



## The Sky Belongs to All of Us

### *Annual Bird Walk* May 8 9:00am - Noon with Bird Enthusiast Nat Parke

Three things you might not already know about birds:

1) Birds don't actually "live" in their nests. The nests are made for the rearing of the young and usually are made fresh each spring. Among the species, which will sometimes reuse a nest, are the Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Bald Eagle. On the other extreme, the male House Wren makes many more nests than it will use. In this species the nests are a mating rite: males try to lure females by making four to sometimes ten nests to increase their chance of being chosen.

2) Owls are thought to be nocturnal but they are not always so. Barred owls, our most common large owl, can often be seen alert and active in daylight. However, the owls' hunting chances are better in the dark due to their extraordinary directional hearing. Unsuspecting rodents are easy targets for owls whose silent flight takes the victim by surprise.

3) Some "accidental" birds show up in our region simply because they are off course. But the European Starling and "English Sparrow" were introduced to America (specifically Central Park in NYC) in the late 1800s, early 1900s because they were among a group of species deliberately brought to this country to replicate the species named in Shakespeare's plays. This misguided effort in the cause of art has brought many problems for native species: the "English Sparrow" (really a Weaver Finch) and the Starling compete for nesting sites with native cavity-nesters such as the Bluebird. GO

**Come learn more on May 8th!**

### *A Sketch for a Portrait*

DWS&S Board Member Stanley Dorn

Stanley Dorn teaches theory and ear training at Mannes College of Music in New York City. He plays classical guitar and is also an amateur photographer who feels that studying Nature is essential to understanding our own nature.

Stan has had a long association with the Sanctuary and its programs. In our early days he helped plant hundreds of willow whips along the Battenkill as part of the Streambank Restoration Project. And he has pulled out his share of multiflora rose, with the scars to prove it.

Of all the Sanctuary projects Stanley particularly loves the wetland and its success in transforming and restoring the landscape - and the many native plants & animals who now thrive there.

As for his contributions to the DWS&S Board of Directors, he brings a steady and thoughtful presence to the deliberations as we shape the programs, in keeping with Dionondehowa's Mission and Vision statements and long-term responsibilities.

### *Dionondehowa receives Glens Falls National Grant*

In Spring 2009 Glens Falls National Bank and Trust Company donated \$100 to the DWS&S Acquisitions Fund. This fund was initiated as a dedicated account which receives donations made specifically for the purchase of acreage and easements or for the attendant costs of enlarging and maintaining the land trust.

## Dionondehowa Wildlife Sanctuary & School Calendar of Events 2010

- Ongoing *Weekly Writers' Group* Tuesdays, 5:00 - 7:00pm \$15
- May 1 *Creek Restoration* with holistic ecologist David Hunt 9:30am - 4:30pm
- May 8 *Bird Walk* with bird enthusiast Nat Parke 9:00am - Noon *Donation*
- May 16 *Union College Environmental Club* returns to help out on the Sanctuary
- June 21 *Summer Solstice Celebration* 6:00 - 9:00pm \$20
- July 17 & 18 *Writers' Retreat Weekend* 10:00am - 4:00pm *Phone for details*
- August 8 *Manchester Music Festival Young Artists Concert* in the Muse Room 3:00pm \$15
- September 18 *The Tree Tour* with DWS&S co-founder (and tree enthusiast) Geoffrey Ovington 1:00 - 3:00pm \$10

### *Would you like to offer a workshop?*

The DWS&S calendar has room this year for others to offer workshops. If you have been looking for a place that is dedicated to Nature Studies and to the Healing & Expressive Arts, and to the free exchange of ideas, has a breath-giving view across the river valley and indoor facilities for small groups, please contact us at 518-854-7764 or [dionondehowa@yahoo.com](mailto:dionondehowa@yahoo.com). *We'd love to hear your ideas!*

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## Gratitude is Abundance

### *Ongoing Writers' Group*

A Brief Interview with Writer Bill Belickis

Bill is a regular member of Dionondehowa's weekly Writers' Group which meets every Tuesday from 5 - 7 pm.

When asked what originally brought him to the group, Bill said, "I'd been stuck, wanting to get moving along, looking for structure and a group for feedback to help me through the blocks. I wanted the responsibility to produce something. I wanted to bounce my writing off others and share ideas, to help me think about how to put my project together."

Has it worked out that way for you? "Yes. I've been spot-on satisfied with what I've gained. I've gotten motivation, ideas - like rails to ride on, to move me along, to get me away from the convenience of not being productive. There's something about being on the rails rather than meandering along a trail. I like the rhythm of once a week having to get something done, presenting it and sharing feedback. I also like the discussion of problems which seem to be unique to the creative form of the written word."

We hope that Bill's experience with the Ongoing Writers' Group will encourage you to join us, too, if you've been wrangling with writing and want the support of others who are actively writing. You don't have to be writing a novel, either, as Bill is. You're welcome to join with a poem, a story, even a pesky fragment or a new form that is evolving as you write.

### *Sixth Annual Writers' Retreat July 17 & 18 10:00am - 4:00pm*

Whether you are:

- new to the medium of words
- a technical writer longing to let loose the poet in you
- a confident and experienced writer
- or just yearning to doodle in the margins...

the Writers' Retreat weekend may just offer the time, the quiet, and the camaraderie you've been wishing for!

During the playful writing exercises of the 2009 Retreat, writer and teacher Irene Baldwin wrote: *Oh my. And to think I almost didn't come here today - something about feeling queasy, upset, unmotivated - having too much to do. Ahhhhh -- -all lies.*

Thank you, Irene, for that wonderful sentiment which expresses how many of us feel before we give ourselves the freedom to play.

We hope to receive a grant from Poets & Writers, Inc. to help underwrite the cost of the weekend.



### ***Tick Update - Lyme Disease or Plum Island Disease?***

We continue to regularly promote the documentary film *Under Our Skin*, crediting filmmaker Andy Abrahams Wilson for making clear the suffering caused by chronic Lyme, and for exposing the conflicts of interest and intrigues of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, insurance & pharmaceutical companies, and the patenting of various aspects of the disease.

It is now becoming more broadly accepted that Lyme Disease - at least the epidemic in the northeast U.S. - may have "escaped" from the biological research compound on Plum Island, off the tip of Long Island. Given that the disease was first identified in the 1970s among children near Lyme, Connecticut, and on Long Island, these sites triangulate neatly with Plum Island. The restricted research center is considered to have a high bio-hazard rating - meaning that stringent containment procedures should be followed. It came under the jurisdiction of Homeland Security after September 11, 2001. Prior to that it had been under the U.S. Agriculture Department, investigating diseases including hoof-and-mouth.

The concern that insects have long been a part of military arsenals would be less plausible if the history were not published. After WWI the 1925 Geneva Protocol banned both chemical and biological weapons. And, again, in the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. And yet, in 1964, *Tomorrow's Weapons* by Brig. Gen. J.H. Rothschild, USA (ret.), defended the military use of toxic agents for chemical and biological warfare. Insects are one of the preferred means of distributing biological weapons. Diseases listed in 1964 included: Brucellosis, Cholera, Dengue Fever, Encephalitis (3 strains), Encephalomyelitis (3 strains), Plague, Psittacosis, Rift Valley fever, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Salmonella gastroenteritis, Tularemia, Typhoid fever, Typhus (3 strains), and Yellow fever.

The variety of bacteria and viruses which can be found in the gut of an individual infected tick raises concerns that this is the result of bioengineering. There is the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi* but many people suffer from undiagnosed coinfections with diseases such as Babesia, Ehrlichia, Bartonella and others. Coinfections complicate the symptoms, the diagnosis, and the protocol for treatment. It is challenging enough to endure the symptoms of Lyme Disease without having to consider that it might more accurately be named Plum-Island Disease.

If you would like to see *Under Our Skin* please contact Dionondehowa at 518-854-7764.

**Good to remember: Ignorance does not often protect us.**



October 2009 - Bonnie with Sari, Rachel, Laura & Emily

### ***Union College Environmental Club***

Union College students return on Sunday, May 16, to put in a day's work on the Sanctuary. The Spring workday is organized by Union junior Rachel Guralnick. Trail work will be followed by a shared meal, lively conversation and - if the day goes as usual - good fun! And, of course, attention to ticks!

### ***American Rivers Visits Dionondehowa***

In late Spring, 2009, Dionondehowa welcomed *American Rivers'* Wilke Nelson for a visit on the Sanctuary. As Deputy Vice President of Development, out of the Washington, DC office, he was on a statewide tour meeting people who are committed to working to the benefit of rivers. He commended DWS&S for bringing a third of a mile of Battenkill river frontage into the Sanctuary's forever-wild land trust and for the efforts we've made - thanks to David Hunt's Creek Restoration Project - to upgrade the Creek (DEC feeder stream T28), contributing significantly to the recovery of the Battenkill, into which it flows.



### ***Manchester Music Festival Young Artists Chamber Concert August 8 3pm***

This much anticipated Sunday concert marks our 8th annual joint fundraiser with the Manchester Music Festival. Young professional musicians, on full scholarship through the MMF, bring their vitality and virtuosity to Dionondehowa's performance space - The Muse Room - in the renovated barn.



### **Our Skidmore College Volunteer**

A Brief Interview with Eric Strebel

#### **Eric, what brought you to Dionondehowa?**

I was in my Introductory Environmental Studies course at Skidmore and, the first day, a senior came in to talk about her environmental experience in the community. At the same time I was trying to get my parents to let me keep my car at school and I thought they'd be more likely to let me if I was using my car to volunteer or intern for work experience. On Skidmore's home page for the Environmental Studies major I found several possibilities and contacted a few, including Dionondehowa. Bonnie was only one who responded promptly with an invitation.

I didn't know what to expect, I thought there might be a school with desks, an institutional setting. And then I got cold feet as I was settling in to my routine and began considering the driving distance [about 45 minutes]. But I gave it a try and I'm glad I did. It was October, last year, and the beauty of the drive over was stunning.

On my first visit I walked the land with Geoffrey and had a great time. I was impressed with his connection to nature and, in general, with his knowledge - particularly about the birds and the trees. It was a great conversation, learning about aspects of nature I hadn't ever really thought about before. The names of the trees. What makes them grow and act in certain ways.

I returned to school in such a great mood, feeling elevated and reminded of the initial joy I experienced when I first discovered nature in my junior year in high school, a turbulent time in my life. I remember walking alone on trails near my house [in NJ] and feeling overwhelmed by the sights and sounds, the emotion that the place elicited.

#### **What has been some of the work you've done as a volunteer?**

Hammering "No Hunting" signs into the Sanctuary fields and checking signs along the woodland boundaries. Removing invasive species, most notably Russian olives and Japanese honeysuckles, which can really be a pain. It's hard work. They don't want to leave. I've "adopted" one of the American Chestnut trees, the one by the upper crossing. We've built protective fencing around it to ward off hungry animals. I've enjoyed the Sanctuary's diversity. Every project I've helped with has informed me.

It's great to get off campus, to break free of the Skidmore bubble and to forge new friendships with people who are old enough to be my grandparents but are clearly kindred spirits.

## Dionondehowa - Where Science and Spirit Communicate

### **Quantum Measurement and Shamanic Perception**

In Spring, 2010, Union College Physics Professor Seyffie Maleki brought to Dionondehowa School members of his freshman Scholars' Research Seminar. They are studying quantum physics. Recent discussion of quantum measurement, led to questions about our human perceptions of what we call "real."

After a brief introduction to the Sanctuary we spent a delightfully stimulating afternoon exploring: our concepts of consciousness, the malleability of Time & Space, and the possibility that Reality is multidimensional - perhaps layered, perhaps accessible.

We shared bread and ash (awsh), a deliciously comforting Iranian vegetable soup, provided by Seyffie. After lunch, Bonnie introduced her own experience with shamanic perception. This includes dreamtime journeying and stepping outside of Time & Space as we are taught to know them. After quieting into a "guided visualization" and traveling through the vast regions inside each one of us, we returned to the room where anyone, who wished to, spoke about his or her experience during the guided visualization.

Thanks to the openness of the students and to Professor Maleki's own insights & generosity, *Science & Spirit* once again found common ground at Dionondehowa.

### **Ongoing Creek Restoration May 1, 9:30am - 4:30pm**

with Holistic Ecologist David Hunt

Once again we need volunteers! for the continued restoration of the exquisite creek which crosses the Sanctuary. For seven years David has dedicated and donated countless hours to this project. For Saturday, May 1, David writes, "As part of an ongoing series to clean up the major human disturbances along the corridor of Batten Kill tributary stream T28 (DEC) on the Sanctuary, we hope to focus our 8th year's efforts on continuing removal of hundreds of individuals of invasive exotic (non-native) plant species found along the stream bank, especially multiflora rose but also including Russian olive, Japanese barberry, rock cress, European buckthorn, and Asiatic bittersweet. In addition to simply removing the plants, we also hope to combine spirit with science by ceremonializing the event, probably with stories related to the stream, the specific invasive plants, invasive species in general, or the ecological fallout from globalization via which these species arrived in New York state. Please call 518-854-7764 to volunteer. DH

Lunch is provided!

*Ecological Intuition & Medicine, as David calls his work, is a low-consumption, low income, low-tech, non-profit, intentionally unincorporated venture promoting healing of Nature and Western Culture through encouragement of intuitive solutions towards long-term ecological sustainability. Contact him at 518-279-4124.*

Come to your senses at Dionondehowa!



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## Come to Your Senses at Dionondehowa!

Since 1991, entries have been made in the *Dionondehowa Diaries*. Sometimes they are pure observations. Sometimes passionate. Sometimes philosophical.

We are seeking a volunteer who will help transcribe the *Diaries* - from their handwritten, notebook format to one which we can eventually publish, to further the work (and play) of This Wild Dream. If you would like to help with this project please let us know! Here are a few quick entries:

September 7, 2000 - *Geoffrey watched a sharp-shinned hawk take out a little bird this morning, probably a chickadee. Hard to watch. Yesterday, to my horror and amazement, I found a little brown bat, stuck in a burdock bush, wings fully extended and caught at each tip. I was relieved to find it dead. I don't know what I could have done if it were not. Reminds me of the madly flapping living bat I struggled to cut down last summer - the one dangling over the river, with a hook through its tail and the fishing line tangled in tree.*

October 18, 2008 - *A glorious glaze of frost. But not a glaze as much as a dull ghosting of the grass. Now, at 8:30am, where the sun begins to sing to the fields, they melt to green again.*

August 10, 2009 - *Last night the full moon was fishing in the river.*

Dionondehowa Wildlife Sanctuary & School, Inc. is a non-profit land trust located on 217 acres bordering the Battenkill (Dionondehowa before the Dutch came) in southern Washington County, New York State. While the Sanctuary serves as a refuge and recharge area, the School is dedicated to Nature Studies and to the Healing and Expressive Arts, using them to engender social and environmental responsibility, in an atmosphere both contemplative and joyful. The name Dionondehowa, pronounced Dye-on-on-duh-how-uh, was first recorded in 1709 and is listed in Beauchamp's *Aboriginal Place Names of New York State*. It means "She Opens the Door for Them" and may have referred to the Eastern Door of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Special Thanks! to all of you who support Dionondehowa: with your time, energy, dollars, far-sighted wisdom and expertise. We couldn't do it without Y☸U!