



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## COMING ACTIVITIES

### MAY

5/8: Field Trip: Oneonta  
Susquehanna Greenway,  
8am; Leaders: Charlie  
Schein and Sandy Bright.

5/9: Trip to Milford State  
Forest, 8am. Leader:  
Dave Kiehm.

5/18: Board Meeting, 7pm,  
Home of Nancy Cannon.

5/21: Program: Valerie  
Freer: "Songbirds on the  
Move" (see below right).

5/22: May Big Day Count.

5/27: Wildflower walk at  
Gilbert Lake State Park,  
10am; Leader: Jean Miller.

### JUNE

6/18: Program: Reptiles,  
Amphibians, Oh My...,  
7:30pm, Elm Park Methodist  
Church, Oneonta.

6/19: Birds of Prey, Live  
with Jeff O'Handley,  
10:30am, DOAS Sanctuary,  
Franklin Mountain.

SEE Pg. 4-5 FOR DETAILS

## DOAS Develops Family Outreach Program

*By Barbara Marsala and Eleanor Moriarty*

After one of our Audubon programs this winter, Ann Kiehm, Eleanor Moriarty and Barbara Marsala were talking about how the audience consisted mostly of middle aged to older adults. More young people were wanted. Did younger adults and young families have an interest in birding and the environment? Was it lack of time or hadn't they ever had the

opportunity to learn about birds and birding? If not, maybe DOAS should offer that opportunity. We decided to meet again to discuss ideas and Eileen Kline joined the group at the first meeting.

Many ideas were raised in that brainstorming session. Over many emails and a few more meetings, a family outreach plan took shape. For planned

*(Continued on Page 5)*

### DOAS APRIL PROGRAM: SONGBIRDS ON THE MOVE

On Friday, May 21st Valerie Freer will present "Songbirds on the Move", detailing her 40-year study of songbirds. Valerie began studying songbirds in 1970 and has banded over 19,000 birds. During 2008-09 she began research and study of Saw-whet Owls, and banded 89 in her own yard. Her goal for 2010 is to chart the Saw-whet Owl's entire migration path.

Valerie Freer has a PhD in Ecology from SUNY Binghamton. She is a past



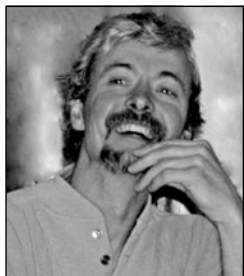
*Blue-winged Warbler, by Dave Kiehm*

president of the New York State Ornithological Association and currently serves as President of Sullivan County Audubon.

The program will begin at 7:30pm at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

Refreshments will be served. For further information contact Program Director Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054, email: [ellie2@directv.net](mailto:ellie2@directv.net).

All DOAS Programs are free and open to the public.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**THE NEW YORK STATE AUDUBON COUNCIL  
SPRING MEETING***Tom Salo*

Eleanor Moriarty and I recently attended a meeting of the New York State Audubon Council. The council assembles twice a year. Representatives of local Audubon Chapters attend workshops and help guide the policies and priorities of Audubon's New York State entity – Audubon New York. The weekend meetings included updates from Audubon staff on research and legislative activities. There were numerous opportunities to network with other Audubon leaders on field trips or over a glass of wine before dinner.

The council votes each year on policy resolutions which become the guiding documents for influencing decision makers. This spring the council considered two policy resolutions that were of particular interest to DOAS. The first is titled "Protecting Natural Resources From Expanded Natural Gas Drilling in the Marcellus and Utica Shale Fields". It addresses the issue in a comprehensive way covering such issues as priority wildlife habitats, forest fragmentation, waste water storage, cumulative impacts, the protection of surface and drinking water, mitigation, and the need for adequate DEC staff to regulate the gas exploration and extraction.

The other policy resolution was brought to the council by DOAS. It addresses lead from slugs and bullets being consumed by humans and wildlife. Lead is the primary material in most hunting ammunition. It is a toxic substance with serious health effects including neurological damage, retarded growth and cognitive development, sensory loss, and behavioral impacts. In severe cases, death can result.

If you have looked at any of the photos from last winter's camera trap project (now on our website under Golden Eagle research), it is obvious that a carcass presents a valuable source of energy and protein. It is an unfortunate fact that some deer are shot by hunters and not recovered. Other species are shot as varmints or furbearers and not consumed. These carcasses are all likely to contain lead that could be eaten by an eagle, raven or vulture. Lead shot was banned years ago for waterfowl hunting. More recently, it has been banned in California Condor range because it is killing these endangered birds. Venison prepared for human consumption can also contain lead.

We worked with Audubon staff to call for a phase-out of lead ammunition for use in hunting only. This is a reasonable approach. There are increased costs to lead-free ammunition. It costs me about \$3 more per year to hunt with non-toxic bullets. These additional costs would not burden those who shoot targets. The new rules would only affect those products for which alternatives are readily available, specifically bullets and slugs used in muzzleloading rifles, centerfire rifles, and shotguns. .22 caliber rimfire would not be affected because there is currently no lead-free alternative for that caliber.

The National Rifle Association has been portraying the advocacy of non-toxic ammunition as being an anti-gun effort. It is difficult to understand such a leap. I'm a hunter and gun owner. This is not the first time the NRA has left me scratching my head. Ultimately we would like to see this become law.

Tom Salo  
607-965-8232  
[tomsalo@localnet.com](mailto:tomsalo@localnet.com)

**THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO  
AUDUBON SOCIETY  
FOUNDED 1968****NEWSLETTER EDITOR:**

GERIANNE CARILLO

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**PLEASE ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:**

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WEB ADDRESS: [WWW.DOAS.US](http://WWW.DOAS.US)

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THE BELTED KINGFISHER PLEASE SEND TO  
"KINGFISHER EDITOR" AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS,  
OR EMAIL [EDITOR@DOAS.US](mailto:EDITOR@DOAS.US)

COVER ARTWORK BY DAVE KIEHM

## CONSERVATION AND LEGISLATION

BY ANDY MASON

### GAS DRILLING - PROTECTION NEEDED

The NY State Department of Environmental Conservation has not yet released a final version of its updated environmental impact statement (EIS) for natural gas drilling in the state. This document should identify the effects the new and expanded horizontal hydrofracturing drilling will have on the environment, and what mitigating measures the state will require.

Judging from the regulations envisioned in last year's draft version of the EIS, it is unlikely DEC will enact the needed protections. In its position statement ([http://doas.us/documents/position\\_on\\_gas\\_drilling.pdf](http://doas.us/documents/position_on_gas_drilling.pdf)), DOAS identifies a number of concerns from gas drilling, including:

- Potential ground and surface water contamination from the many toxic chemicals used in hydrofracking the gas-bearing shale.
- Storage and disposal of above ground production fluids, such as in open lagoons, or into nearby streams, or trucked to an unprepared wastewater treatment plant.
- Impacts to wildlife and their habitats, including high-volume water withdrawals.
- Damage to roads and other surface features such as forests, agricultural area and waterways.
- Noise and air pollution.
- Immediate and adequate response to any accidents or spills.
- Cumulative social impacts of pipelines and wells (scenic beauty, rural character, tourism, taxes, property values, sports, agriculture)

The DOAS statement calls for a ban on drilling, saying, "Even with the most stringent controls and oversight, this activity is an unacceptable danger to our planet, with no

environmental benefits."

Anticipating a weak DEC response to the dangers of drilling, NY State Assembly Conservation Committee Chair Robert Sweeney has introduced several bills to address some of the most severe threats from drilling:

A10088 would prohibit on-site storage of drilling flowback fluids in open pits, requiring they be contained in steel tanks. These open pits pose a particular hazard to waterbirds and other wildlife that may be attracted to them.

A10091 would require disclosure of all substances used in hydrofracking fluids, and ban the use of substances that pose a threat to human health.

A10092 would require an environmental impact statement for any gas well that uses hydrofracking fluids.

In addition, the federal Environmental Protection Agency has undertaken a study of the risks of hydrofracking, particularly on drinking water. This effort is anticipated to take until 2012 to complete, and many organizations and environmentalists are calling on the state to hold off finalizing its regulations until the study is done.

**What you can do:** Assemblyman Sweeney's bills are worthy of our support, and would override DEC's regulations. In particular, storage of hydrofracking fluids in open pits is a threat that DEC does not take seriously.

Contact your state Assemblymembers and Senators and ask them to support legislation to protect our environment from hydrofracking.

Contact DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis, and Gov. David Patterson and urge that DEC wait until the EPA study is completed and reviewed, before finalizing the drilling regulations.

#### Addresses

##### NY State

Gov. David Paterson  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224  
(518) 474-8390  
fax: (518) 474-1513  
[www.ny.gov/governor](http://www.ny.gov/governor)  
  
Commissioner Pete Grannis  
NY State Department of  
Environmental Conservation  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233

##### State Senate

State Sens. James Seward/  
John Bonacic  
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Bonacic—(518) 455-3181  
[bonacic@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:bonacic@senate.state.ny.us)

##### State Assembly

Assemblymembers William Magee/  
Clifford Crouch/Peter Lopez  
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Albany, NY 12248  
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Crouch—(518) 455-5741  
[crouhc@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:crouhc@assembly.state.ny.us)  
Lopez—(518) 455-5363  
[lopezp@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:lopezp@assembly.state.ny.us)



## GILBERT LAKE STATE PARK WILDFLOWER WALK

Join us on a wildflower walk on Thursday, May 27th at Gilbert Lake State Park.

Bring your field guides, sharp eyes, and a camera, if you choose. Gilbert Lake is a beautiful lake. We will go rain or shine. Meet at the visitor center at the north (far) end of the lake, at 10 a.m. Parking is in the large lot above the lake at the far end. We will take about two hours to walk around the lake; we walk slowly so we can all see the flowers from one end to the other, on both sides. If you wish, you may stop half way around at the south end by the pavilion, and go to the closer parking lot.

Call me at 432-5767 with questions.

Jean Miller

*(Editor's note: see the favorite places article on page 7 for a complete overview of this site and the wildflowers that have been seen there.)*

## MILFORD STATE FOREST WALK

We will meet at 8:00am on Sunday, May 9th in the front parking lot at Milford High School for a guided walk through the Milford State Forest. Be prepared for a dew-wet morning. The trails are all slightly inclined but clear. Early May should offer a wide variety of Neotropics as well as flycatchers, sparrow and ducks. Any questions contact Dave Kiehm at 607-286-9222 or [dave@deadriftstudio.com](mailto:dave@deadriftstudio.com).

## GO COUNT BIRDS!

"Neither rain nor sleet nor..." Nothing gets in the way of the DOAS Big Day Count. I may not be the world's best birder, and my life list isn't enormous, but on count day I head out at daybreak. The dawn chorus is breathtaking in any weather. After that, I pick up my birding partner and we're off for a day of prowling the riverbanks and visiting fields and forests.



*Indigo Bunting, by Dave Kiehm*

My first bird count was with Jo Tuttle, who was one of DOAS' early members. She showed me her "route": where to find the cliff and rough-winged swallows, which fields host bobolinks, meadowlarks and kildeer, and what woodlands usually have a variety of thrushes. Now that she is gone I continue her route with a few added stops of my own. I have learned well the frustration of the chirping bush and the little bird that vanishes before you get it in focus. But then there are the eagles that soar over your head and the wonder of the indigo bunting that lands in front of you.

If you've never been on a bird count before I encourage you to try it. If you are experienced, join us. In either case contact Bob Miller at 607-432-5767 and he will put you in touch with a group in your area.

Julia Gregory



*Photo by John Davis*

## LAKE OTSEGO WATERFOWL TRIP

March 28th was a chilly but beautiful day for the 19 participants who showed up for the annual DOAS-sponsored trip around Lake Otsego and its tributaries. Led by Matt Albright, Bob Donnelly and John Davis, there was plenty of expert input from other experienced birders in the group. Highlights included a Pied-billed Grebe, American Widgeon, Green-winged Teal and Bufflehead among waterfowl species, and great views of two adult and one immature Bald Eagles, several American Kestrels and a Northern Harrier among other terrestrial species. Next spring's trip is already pencilled into the calendar.

John Davis

**Please Note:** DOAS field trips are open to the public. Participants should meet at the stated time and location -- please be prompt. We encourage carpooling: please help with expenses if you are in someone else's vehicle. Most trips include a moderate amount of easy walking; leaders will note any strenuous hiking. Please expect to provide your own food and drink unless a food stop is indicated. In case of bad weather, check with the leader about cancellation.

## FAMILY OUTREACH PROGRAM, *continued from page 1*

activities, we chose the Friday and Saturday of Mother's Day and Father's Day weekends because the dates would be easy to remember, it was a good time to be outside looking for birds and a good way for children, parents, grandparents and other adults to get together around a healthy and fun activity.

The family outreach program is DOAS' effort to support the new NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE ACT. This year, for the very first time, President Obama has included "environmental literacy" in the U.S. Department of Education budget. It is hoped that both environmental education in the classroom and getting kids outside to learn about the natural world around them will help build more interest in science and math. Our children's future is a smart investment and will translate to the future of our planet.

The plan is to learn some basic skills about how to find birds and how to identify birds during an indoor Friday evening session. Then to practice these new skills in the field on the following Saturday morning. Everything starts

this Mother's Day weekend. On Friday evening, May 7, 2010, we will meet at 7:30 at the Elm Park United Methodist Church (where we hold the regular DOAS programs). DOAS board member Andy Mason will lead the beginner session about how to watch birds. At 8:00 Saturday morning, we will join Sandy Bright for bird walk on the Oneonta Greenway to practice learned techniques as we search for returning spring migrants.

On Friday evening, June 18, 2010, we will meet again at 7:30 at the Elm Park United Methodist Church. And at 10:00 on Saturday morning, June 19, we will gather at the DOAS sanctuary where Jeff O'Handley will give a session on birds of prey.

All are welcome to attend any one or all sessions offered. For more information about any of these events, call Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054, email: [ellie2@directv.net](mailto:ellie2@directv.net). If you have ideas about projects or events young people would enjoy, or if you would like to join the DOAS Education Committee, contact Barbara Marsala by email at [barbaramars@stny.rr.com](mailto:barbaramars@stny.rr.com).



want  
to learn  
about  
BIRDS?

For more information contact  
Eleanor Moriarty at  
**607 435-2054**

Mother's Day  
Weekend!

Join us **May 7th**, for an  
information program:  
**Introducing Birding.**  
Then on a birding expedition,  
**May 8th**, at the **Greenway**  
in **Oneonta**.

BRING YOUR  
MOM!

Events Outline:

Mother's Day Weekend:

Friday, May 7, 2010:

Beginning Birding, with Andy Mason  
7:30pm, Elm Park Methodist Church,  
Oneonta.

Saturday, May 8, 2010:

Beginning Bird Walk, with Sandy Bright  
8:00-9:30am, Oneonta-Susquehanna  
Greenway.

Father's Day Weekend:

Friday, June 18, 2010:

Reptiles, Amphibians, Oh My..., 7:30pm,  
Elm Park Methodist Church, Oneonta.

Saturday, June 19, 2010:

Birds of Prey, Live with Jeff O'Handley  
10:30am -12:00pm, DOAS Sanctuary,  
Franklin Mountain.

### MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Please check your address on this newsletter for your membership expiration date. This date is shown by four numbers—the first two digits indicate the year and the second two digits indicate the month, i.e., '1006' is June, 2010.

Renewal information is found elsewhere in this issue—please renew and continue your support of DOAS and our programs.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION AT MAY ANNUAL MEETING

The DOAS Nominating Committee consisted of two non-board members, Connie Tedesco and Linda Melchionne and two board members, John Davis and Barbara Marsala, who served as chair. The committee contacted the six current board members whose terms were due to expire and all six expressed a

desire to serve another term. Therefore, the Nominating Committee recommends the following slate of candidates for election to the DOAS Board of Directors for the 2010-2012 term of office: Nancy Cannon, Julia Gregory, Barbara Marsala, Andy Mason, Jean Miller and Tom Salo. The election

will take place at the May Annual Meeting. DOAS members present may nominate other candidates from the floor that evening.

Many thanks to the committee members and the candidates who have agreed to serve.

Barbara Marsala

### CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

Visit [www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us) for all the latest activity of your local chapter, including:

- our up-to-date calendar of events;
- field trip reports (including photos);
- a page dedicated to Golden Eagles, including photos of the winter camera traps;
- a local bird checklist;
- our educational activities page;
- a volunteer opportunities list,
- position statements and other areas of involvement on local and regional levels.

Your chapter is very active! Check back frequently, as the site is updated regularly.

### PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

DOAS keeps a master hardcopy file of all printed editions of "The Belted Kingfisher". We are currently missing the September 2007 edition. If anyone has this edition in hardcopy and is willing to donate it for the master file, please send it to DOAS at the address found on page 2.

Thank you!

### WINGS OF SPRING

*The detailed paintings of local artist and DOAS Board member David Kiehm will be on display at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, NY from April 22 through July 22, 2010*

*"A lifetime of living closely with nature has inspired me to capture some of the ever-changing images that flourish around us everyday. All of us see fleeting glimpses of extraordinary natural events like a hawk tucked tight in a dive, or a brilliantly colored warbler flitting from branch to branch. I try to express my love of these wild things through my painting, and if I can capture the essence of my subjects, hopefully the viewer can also experience the passion I feel and even coax a memory of a similar experience they may have had."*

After graduating with honors from the School of Visual Arts in New York City with a BFA in illustration, Dave worked as a freelance illustrator and designer specializing in wildlife subjects. His work has appeared in many publications as well as regional and national exhibitions. He presently works in his studio in Milford NY, painting, designing, and sculpting wildlife. For questions contact David Kiehm at 607-547-9222 or [dave@deadriftstudio.com](mailto:dave@deadriftstudio.com).



### wings of spring • recent works by david kiehm

April 22 – July 22, 2010 • 10 A.M. – 4 P.M. daily  
11 A.M. – 4 P.M. Sundays

for more info

[www.deadriftstudio.com](http://www.deadriftstudio.com)

Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
159 Sapsucker Woods Road • Ithaca • New York

The Cornell Lab  
of Ornithology





## AUDUBON RECEIVES MATCHING GRANT FOR PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

In April, DOAS received word that the A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation had approved a matching grant request for purchase of a computer projector, screen and related equipment for use at our monthly programs and other presentations. Most speakers now use computer projectors rather than slides in their programs, and these items are sorely needed by the organization.

In order to meet the match required under the grant, we need to raise \$520 as DOAS' share. We are appealing to our members for contributions toward this goal—in any amount. Please forward donations to DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820, and note "projector donation" on your check.

**The sooner we raise these funds, the sooner we can put the new and improved equipment to work. Please consider helping!**

Andy Mason

## FAVORITE PLACES SERIES: GILBERT LAKE STATE PARK

The level trail around Gilbert Lake is about one mile in length and is a very good place to find numerous wildflowers in spring. Habitats vary from open sun to shaded, and from deciduous to coniferous. A slow walk takes about two hours, if one is really searching out all the flowers.

There are pink ladyslippers just off the trail on the west side of the lake in late May. Sometimes in full flower and sometimes still in bud at this time, the pink ladyslipper is found in protected areas. It is one of the most special wildflowers of the season, and it's always a delight to hunt it down!



*Pink Ladyslipper, by Aaron Gill*

With global warming upsetting the flowering times of wildflowers, it is sometimes a guessing game whether one will see the lovely jack-in-the-pulpits and trilliums along the path, and whether the little foam flower and star flowers will be open. There are three colors of violets around the lake, and red trilliums, Canada lily of the valley, false solomon seal, the dear little bluet, and many other species, including sarsaparilla, clintonia, cinquefoil, foamflower, white baneberry, jack-in-the pulpits, azalea, many ferns and ground pines.

Birds can always be seen and heard along the way. It is a beautiful lake, and there is a pavilion at the north end for a rest stop, if desired. Parking areas can be found at both ends of the lake.

Feel free to contact me at 432-5767 for further information.

Jean Miller

## DOAS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society includes 9 issues of our newsletter, The Belted Kingfisher. Cost is \$15 annually or \$25 for two years. Please make your check payable to "DOAS" and mail payment with this form to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544.

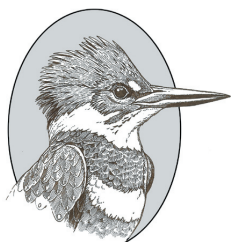
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*Lemon Lilies, by Jean Miller*

## MARCH-APRIL BIRD SIGHTINGS

Spring is finally here. The snow is gone and we've had some incredibly warm days for this time of the year. An Eastern Phoebe is busily making a well crafted moss-lined nest above an outside light fixture of my sunroom. She's hunkered down in her cozy abode. Hope we don't have a freak snowstorm.

On 3/18 Germaine Connolly saw Cedar Waxwings and heard a singing House Wren in Springfield. In addition Common Grackles visited Sandy Bright's feeder in Oneonta and Jessie Ravage reported a Killdeer in Cooperstown. 3/19 was a boon birding day. Jo Ann Salo heard a calling Saw-whet Owl and also saw a Barred Owl in W. Burlington. Singing Song Sparrows and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker greeted Dorian Huneke in Treadwell. John Birkett eyed soaring Turkey Vultures in Sidney. Gerianne Carillo had her first of the season Song Sparrow singing heartily on that sunny day in Milford. Kathy Mario heard a Winter Wren in Delhi. On 3/20 two American Woodcocks were doing their balletic display near Bob Donnelly's driveway in Roseboom. Both Eleanor Moriarty in Davenport Center and Tom Salo in W. Burlington spied Fox Sparrows under their feeders on 3/22. An Eastern Phoebe appeared in Jefferson according to Trina Bassoff on 3/24. A first of the season Tree Swallow and a Rufous-sided Towhee were seen by Tom Salo in W. Burlington and Sandy Bright had a singing Brown Creeper in Oneonta on

3/25. The next day a Green-winged Teal was swimming on a small pond in the valley below John Davis' house in Cooperstown. Tom Salo noticed a Golden Eagle perched on a ridge line in W. Burlington on 3/27. Dorian Huneke saw a Northern Flicker in Treadwell on 3/30.

On 4/1 Bob Donnelly heard a thumping Ruffed Grouse in Roseboom. Tom Salo witnessed Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers engaged in territorial squabbles and an American Kestrel checking out a nesting box in W. Burlington on 4/2. The next day a Brown Thrasher was singing and feeding under his birdfeeders. Dorian Huneke saw a Cooper's Hawk rapidly swoop down toward her feeder scattering scolding chickadees and juncos on 4/4. It was an unlucky day without success for the hawk. On 4/7 Tom Salo saw multiple singing Field Sparrows in W. Burlington. Andy Mason had his first of the season Ruby-crowned Kinglet in his yard in Jefferson on 4/8. On 4/9 Becky Gretton saw her first of the season Osprey in Springfield. On the 11th she reported a Louisiana Waterthrush, also a first of the season bird for her.

If you have bird sightings to report, please contact me [dbenko@frontiernet.net](mailto:dbenko@frontiernet.net), 6815 Co. Hwy. 16, Delhi, NY 13753, 607 829-5218 by May 16, 2010 for the next issue of *The Belted Kingfisher*.

~ Dianne Benko