



Peligrum

October
2021



Oh, look, who should stealthily appear! © Juanita N. Baker, Ph.D.

On the cover

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*

by Juanita N. Baker, Ph.D.

What penetrating eyes we see! This immature Cooper's Hawk blends in with the Live Oak tree and waits, keeping watch in all directions, for any ready prey. When we built our house amongst these unique twisting oak trees on the St. Sebastian River, we did not know we were essentially building a bird blind. We tried to take as little land as possible so built our house on top of the garage which means we live on the second floor. Climbing stairs is our exercise for the day. We put up feeders at the edge of the open back porch along with pots of varied native plants and kitchen herbs. These bring in the little birds. If my eye catches movement as I look up from my computer while sitting at our dining room table, I might see a unique visitor. I move slowly to pick up my camera or binoculars, always at hand, to catch a photo from inside our house.

One July day this visiting immature predator, likely the most common backyard hawk in America, appeared. Unlike its smaller look-alike cousin, the Sharp-shinned Hawk that breeds up north and are not in Florida for the summer, the Cooper's Hawk breeds in Florida. This youngster flew in and landed on a branch just 40 feet away. Characteristic features of both immature Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are the penetrating yellow eyes (slightly larger in Cooper's), the rufous-tipped brown back and secondary feathers of the wings that make progressively varied size and curving artistic patterns, and highlights of irregular white spots on their wings. Both have alternating dark- and gray-striped long tails, better to maneuver in tight forest spaces to quickly capture prey (mainly birds: doves, cardinals, and jays, but pesty rodents too). Both have tails ending with a white band. However, the Cooper's is usually wider than a Sharpie's but here shows it's feather white band is worn down to a thin band. Another distinguishing mark is the Cooper's rounded tail's end due to graduated lengths of tail feathers. However, the Sharpie's similarly long, banded tail has feathers of the same length, so appears squarer-looking when perched. A Cooper's head is larger, appears flattened and slopes down to its beak, and its crow size distinguishes it from the smaller Sharp-shinned Hawk (grackle-sized with smaller head) with a rounded forehead making it look cuter, baby-like. When identifying any bird, remember to look for the key features and varied behaviors each species exhibits!

REFERENCE: Rosenfield, R. N., K. K. Madden, J. Bielefeldt, and O. E. Curtis (2019). Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), version 3.0. In *The Birds of North America* (P. G. Rodewald, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bna.cooahaw.03>

Submit your photos to the Birds Need Plants Photo Contest

Visit PelicanIslandAudubon.org for all the details.

Morning Nature Walks

Go on a early "Morning Nature Walks" to local town parks & nature areas of interest. Get your morning walk, explore habitats, and let's see what's there! Details at PelicanIslandAudubon.org. Want to lead a group to your favorite spot? Let Pelican Island Audubon Society know! Email us at piaudubon@yahoo.com

Our Mission: To preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities, and the land and water on which they depend in Indian River County through education, advocacy, and public awareness.

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M - F | 9AM - 1PM

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E-Mail: piaudubon@yahoo.com

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The Insanity of our infatuation with our turfgrass lawns - We have a choice: Seagrass or Turfgrass?

We pay at least 6 different times for our grass lawns! Here is what we are paying for in the US:

1st \$\$ to clearcut land to take down native trees, then replace them with expensive, non-native turfgrass.

2nd \$\$ wasted on precious, limited pure drinking water of which 64-88% is used to irrigate our turf in Florida. Most irrigated crop in the U.S. Three times more turfgrass is planted than corn, and we can't even eat it!

3rd \$45 billion on lawn care to apply 100 million lbs. pernicious lawn chemicals and fertilizers that make their way into the rivers, canals, and lagoon, killing our seagrasses and wildlife.

4th \$\$ for 800 million gallons of gas and lawn-care equipment that spreads 41 billion lbs. of CO₂ & 13 billion lbs. of toxic and carcinogenic air-pollutant gases that contribute to global warming and result in human health issues by breathing in pollutants and eating contaminated animals and plants.

5th \$\$ paid in taxes for our cities, county, state and federal governments to spray herbicides to kill the aquatic weeds (fed by those applied lawn fertilizers) growing in our canals, ponds, and lakes.

6th Now more \$\$ to replant the killed seagrasses in the lagoon & remove cyanobacteria and its toxins, algae, and excess nitrogen and phosphorus produced from the herbicide-killed weeds and fertilizers. All of these kill our fishes, manatees, and birds.

Over 900 manatees have succumbed since January 2021 along with many fish because of the lack of seagrasses and the presence of algae, toxic chemicals, and sewage. Even Cylindrospermopsin, a toxin produced by cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), was detected in May in the drinking water from West Palm Beach City's Water Treatment Plant. Lake Okeechobee has 500 sq. miles of cyanobacteria present this year which is deadly to humans and causal for ALS, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Human development has lost 70% of our plants, and 70% of our birds are gone.

Everyone! Let's dig up our lawns and plant native trees and plants. PIAS is growing them for you!

For a list of available native plants and trees, see our website <https://pelicanislandaudubon.org/home-page/trees-for-life-plants-for-birds/> or contract our office, 772-567-3520. We are giving away Live Oak trees free while selling 13 other native trees and 40 native plants for \$5 for a one-gallon pot. So far, we have distributed over 8450 trees and plants at locations mapped on our website.

We are excited about planting an Education and Demonstration Native Plant Garden at the entrance to the Indian River County Commission Building A and at three Elementary Schools¹. We

would love to have your help getting rid of the turfgrass and planting of natives. Call our office if you can help us with your time and donations.

If we revise our city and county landscape and tree ordinances to incorporate these ideas, we can protect our seagrasses and wildlife.

We must convince our politicians to pass rules to prohibit clear cutting and reduce our turfgrass to only 10-15% of the lawn. Native-plant gardens can beautify your property while fostering birds and pollinators. Most lawns are wildlife deserts!

This is a monumental time in our history if we want to survive along with our native biodiversity. We and our landscapers can change how we and they manage our lawns. Landscapers can learn to retain our native plants and trees while maintaining our native yards in a beautiful condition to save our planet and our money!

Let's work together to stop this expensive madness that is destroying our environment, and save this planet from horrific storms, fires, floods. cyanobacteria in our drinking water, lakes, ponds, and Lagoon. Let's take the steps necessary to stop killing our seagrasses because of our insane infatuation with lawns.

We live on a beautiful planet, indeed the only one that can support us. Nature has allowed us to expand across the earth but at the cost of polluting the whole earth, including the oceans, yet we occupy only 10% of the Earth. We are badly contaminating and altering the whole planet. Our North and South Poles are melting. Our oceans have risen 8" since 1880. With Greenland and glaciers melting rapidly, and permafrost releasing methane, we will sink Florida. Let's reconnect to nature and have a sustainable future. We must protect our water quality and quantity immediately. We have a choice: Seagrass or Turfgrass.



Food bank for Manatees. Photo: Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.





Take Part in World Migratory Bird Day October Big Day October 9, 2021

Everyone! Get out to find and record on eBird, birds you find in our county, and at least your backyard on Saturday, Oct 9, 2021! Let's see who's here at this time!

“Sing, Fly, Soar – Like a Bird!”

Wherever you are on October 9, 2021, take a few minutes to join the world of birding on October Big Day to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day. Be a part of the global team and help set a new record for birding. Enter the birds you see on ebird.org. You can bird from home and collect data for scientists to use to better understand birds. It's free. Birders, let's try to cover our county! Choose your hotspot to cover: Sign up on the website where and when you'll go birding on Oct. 9th. View a list of hotspots to bird at PelicanIslandAudubon.org



The Big Sit! is a free, annual, international birding event open to anyone, anywhere in the world. David Simpson has generously offered to do his first Indian River County Big Sit! The Big Sit! in David's mind is competitive—to see the most birds from one 17' circle on one day 24 hours, but it is meant to be fun. Some people have called it “a tailgate party for birders.”

Please join David's Big Sit! takes place on Sunday, October 10, at the Fellsmere Conservation Recreation Area parking lot where he will stay inside a 17' circle while he's birding. David will be there before dawn to catch the nocturnal flight calls of species normally missed. Participants can come and go whenever they wish. David will keep hourly bird lists and a master species and numbers list for the entire sit.

It's fun, a challenge, and a tradition for birders hanging out with old and new friends and finding birds. David has generously allowed PIAS to have The Big Sit! be a fundraiser, with donors pledging any amount they wish per species. You can pledge a lump sum or by the birds seen— 10 cents/bird or more. If David identifies 20 birds, then you would donate \$2.00 to PIAS. Many birds can be seen or heard from this spot so he's likely to see over 40-50. Let's support him with your pledge and see how many he and friends find!

If you attend is person, PIAS will have a tent and tables in the Parking lot for you to sign in as you come help David spot the birds.

Go to www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org for more information and to pledge online.

Visit

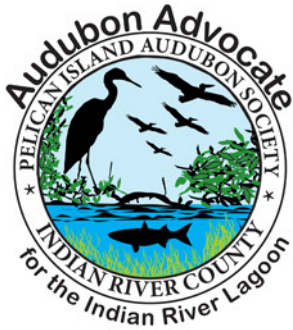
PelicanIslandAudubon.org to view the list of volunteer positions. Fill out the form online and let us know what you are interested in.

Working together we can do great things for the environment!

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Office help, Newsletter: fold, stuff envelopes
- Pullers: Join the potato pullers: (invasive species)
- Audubon House Maintenance- classroom, bathrooms, breezeway
- Landscaping, Nursery, Trees for Life Project, repotting plants
- Field Trip Leader
- Fundraising, Grant Writing
- Publicity
- Trail Maintenance

A big thanks to everyone who makes it all work!



Pelican Island Audubon Society
Audubon Advocate Update

Students With A Voice | October 2021

Email: piaudubon@yahoo.com | Phone: 772-567-3520

Welcome Back!

by Meghan Carpenter, Environmental Educator

We are excited to welcome our selected 5th grade students back to the Audubon House for our fall 2021 Audubon Advocate lessons! This semester we started with an introduction to Advocacy, students defined what advocacy meant to them and created group rules we will follow for our semester. Students also had a chance to practice their observations skills during a nature hike on our nature trails. The following week the advocates worked with Donna Halleran and Susan Lovelace to learn about photography and photojournalism. Donna taught the students how to use our Cannon cameras to photograph the world around them and Susan taught the students how to use their photography to tell a story. The following week we went seining in the Indian River Lagoon with help from Ramon Martin from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Students sampled in the Indian River Lagoon catching a variety of fish including, silver mojarra, hogchokers, glass minnows, and shrimp. Students also learned about the importance of the Indian River Lagoon and what they can do to help protect the incredible ecosystems found in their own back yard. And after the week of being in the lagoon, students had a chance to be on the lagoon. Students paddled their way around Round Island Riverside Park in our kayaks. We saw ospreys, great blue herons, anhinga, pelicans, mullets and even a manatee! This semester we also will discuss the importance of bloodsuckers and reptiles, go birding, hiking and learn about stormwater runoff. Most importantly we are encouraging our students to share their experiences and what they learned with everyone around them. We want our students to embrace the power in their voices and use what they learn to better take care of our world.





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Pelican Island Refuge Highlight

National Wildlife Refuge | Florida

by Eddie Perri (Refuge Ranger)



Thynnid Wasp (*Myzinum sp.*) on Beggar-ticks (*Bidens sp.*)

Palpada hoverfly (*Palpada sp.*) and honey bee (*Apis sp.*) on Beggar-ticks (*Bidens sp.*)



Leafcutter bee (*Megachile sp.*) on Beggar-ticks (*Bidens sp.*)



Fiery skipper (*Hylephila sp.*) on Beggar-ticks (*Bidens sp.*)

Photos by Sandy Peterson



Drier weather in the early summer left us wishing for rain and the plant growth and insect activity that follows it but recent rains have caused a boom here at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. While the diversity of the plant life that emerges after rain is important for our wildlife communities, some individuals are essential to the growth and development of our Refuge habitat. One of these mainstays, considered by many to be a pesky weed, is prolific and its seeds stick to any surface they come in contact with like exposed clothing. Whether you call it Spanish needle, monkey's lice, romerillo, its scientific name *Bidens sp.*, or its most common name, beggar-ticks, this Florida native wildflower is one of the most reliable sources of nectar for pollinators in the state. With around 250 species in the genus *Bidens* occurring in the tropical and warm temperate regions of the world and 8 growing in Florida alone, when it starts to bloom here at the Refuge we know that all types of wildlife activity is not far behind. These flowers have the ability to turn a silent and still area of the Refuge into a bustling and buzzing flurry of activity. Not only do they attract wasps, ants, grass skippers, and bees galore but the beggar-ticks in Florida are the larval host plant for the dainty (dwarf) sulfur butterfly (*Nathalis iole*) and a favorite nectar source for a myriad of other butterfly species. They also serve as the third most common source of nectar for honey production! A good place to see the flurry of activity and recent beggar-ticks blooming is here at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge's Butterfly Garden. Whether you love bees, butterflies, and all pollinators alike and have seen the blooming beggar-ticks or just spent hours plucking their "hitchhiker" seeds off your clothes after a hike you will learn to love these native wildflowers; their resilient nature helps form the backbone of our beautiful local ecosystem.

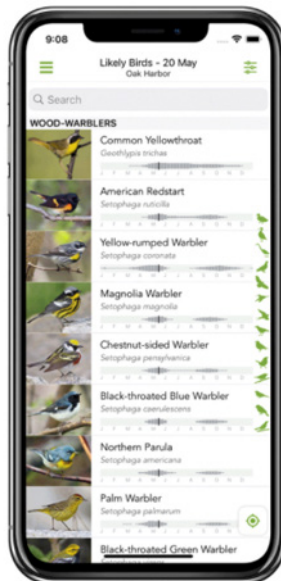
Did You Hear That?

by Linda Chancellor

Not everyone has an ear for identifying bird songs and calls. I know I don't. This past summer a friend had sent me an article titled "Name that Songbird in One Click" written by Margaret Renki for the New York Times. She described her experience in using Merlin's new Sound ID app. I already had the app on my phone so I was anxious to try it. But first I had to change my phone settings to allow Merlin to have microphone and location access. I opened the Merlin app, chose Sound ID, and installed the Southeastern USA bird pack which included 354 birds. Since I was in Heathsville, Virginia I chose Explore Birds to find 186 birds listed that might be found at my location. I tapped the record button and waited. I heard a faint sound. Merlin heard it also and identified the sound as a White breasted Nuthatch and included a picture! Then a noisy call and Merlin identified it as a Carolina Wren. A Cardinal and a Hairy Woodpecker were identified next. When Merlin heard a sound it became visible as varying lines on the scrolling screen that was also keeping track of the duration of my

recording. The recommended time to record was two minutes so I recorded for a minute and a half. When Merlin heard a call of an already identified bird the name of the bird would flicker.

I saved that recording to play back and listen to the birds again. Sometimes multiple bird sounds were recorded at the same time. I separated the call of a single bird by selecting it and replaying the recording. Under each identified bird I could also chose to hear other prerecorded calls and songs. This would really help me in learning to recognize the multiple calls of a single bird. I had the option to save my recordings with Merlin or my Ebird account but for now I planned to just capture bird sounds with the Sound ID program. This could be habit forming!



FYI: The Merlin app can be downloaded for free from merlin.allaboutbirds.org The sound-identification technology was developed by Merlin's lead researcher Grant Van Horn. The program converts sound from a waveform to a spectrogram so one can see the amplitude (volume), frequency (pitch), and duration of the sound.

Tina Marchese retires from PIAS Board



Tina's very steady and dedicated leadership and work on our PIAS library have been phenomenal moving the library at least twice from the 14th St rental to the FMEL library, to our new Audubon House. Graduating from Catholic University with a Masters in Library Science in 1975, she catalogued all the books, and they are listed on our website <https://cloud.collectorz.com/audubon/books>. Some of them are ancient and precious historical volumes for any scholar, others have lovely artwork, worthy of appreciation and study.

Tina has been there for our chapter over many years and a major factor in our successful education, advocacy, and public awareness activities.

We also appreciated her lovely homemade cookies at our meetings, working our table at events, and getting the beautiful quilt hanging in our classroom. So many comments about it when they see it.

Thank you Tina. We are looking forward to your continue effort in promoting and working in our library.



Pelican Island Audubon Quilt by the Sunbonnet Sue Quilters Guild

Congratulations to Ricky Ray, PIAS board member, on receiving the "Very Vero" Award from Main Street Vero Beach at "Coffee with the Mayor" meeting.



We appreciate his dedication to Pelican Island Audubon and devotion to our community. At the Coffee with the Mayor meetings, Ricky brings our native plants for their auction.

Ricky Ray has been a great enthusiast for birds for most of his life. At the age of 12 in a Miami High School, he was president of the Ecology Club, and joined the Tropical Audubon Society, one of our largest Audubon Florida chapters.

Moving to Vero, Ricky has been essential with our project to plant 100,000 native trees and plants under our Trees for Life/Plants for Birds project. 8450 trees and plants distributed. He also leads our great Audubon morning nature walks and field trips and takes our Audubon Advocates kayaking in the Lagoon.

You also may know him for his strong guitar playing and singing old time & classic Rock-n-Roll, country and beach music sung at parties for all occasions and at the Tiki Bar and elsewhere.

Thanks to Main Street Vero Beach for recognizing Ricky Ray for this award.

Citrus Elementary School's 9-11 Day of Caring! *by Richard Baker, Ph.D.*

On September 11, 2021, Citrus Elementary School, one of the four elementary schools that participates in our Pelican Island Audubon Advocate program for 5th graders planted one of our live oak trees in a prominent courtyard garden in honor of the fateful day September 11, 2001 along with 16 different native plants from our nursery in their Educational and Demonstration Native Plant Garden. To kill the turfgrass, cardboard was put down and then over 3 inches of pine straw mulch. They also weeded and planted other gardens. Many thanks to Board Member Bonnie Swanson, Principal Kimberly Garcia, Vice Principal Kimberly Rahal, and Citrus staff putting this together. Besides Pelican Island Audubon, they had tremendous support from our Savior Lutheran Church, Home Depot, Rock City Gardens, Eastwood Tuff Turf and, Scout Troop 595.



LEFT: Students planting native plants in the new the Education and Demonstration Native Garden and other gardens.

RIGHT: Vice Principal Kimberly Rahal planting a live oak tree in honor of September 11, 2011.



"I'm out of here with those crazy people"

Northern Gannet
Morus bassanus

Article & photos by Kay Gibson

At this time of year, we start to notice the arrival of snowbirds who cause no end of annoying problems in our stores and restaurants and on our roadways. What few people are privileged to see is another type of snowbird that at times causes no end of problems for offshore fishermen.

The Northern Gannet, length 34-39" with a wingspan of about 70" and weighing up to eight pounds, is one of our largest sea birds. Over the course of the five years which it takes to mature, immature Northern Gannets share resemblance with a variety of sea birds, among them the adult Masked Booby and the white-morph Red-footed Booby. Mature Northern Gannets are white with brown-black wing tips. Their head is "washed" in soft yellow tones. Their eye has a distinctive blue outer ring highlighting its artistic facial pattern.

In 2009 my late husband and I were privileged to have the opportunity to visit Bonaventure Island off the coast of the Province of Quebec in eastern Canada. The island is home to the largest Northern Gannet rookery in North America. The estimate that year was that the rookery held 60,000 pair of Gannets and their chicks. A pathway along the edge of one of the nesting areas enables visitors to the island the opportunity to get up very close to the birds. As you can see from the photo, "in your face" close using a long-distance lens. The noise was deafening. While undoubtedly some chicks and parents get separated, considering the noise and the crowding, most parents flying back with food to the island's cliffs and rookery manage to locate their single chick and raise them successfully. Populations of Northern Gannets in Canada and Europe are increasing.

By late September chicks from Bonaventure Island's rookery have matured sufficiently that they are able to follow their parents on their first migration which takes them south to the waters off of the east coast of Florida where small bait fish are plentiful. They frequent the Sebastian Inlet when fish school and can be seen diving from over 100 feet high diving at 60 mph after fish as deep as 70 feet.

We had a very close encounter several years ago while trolling out of Fort Pierce, perhaps a mile from the shore. We were using a very shiny lure which an unlucky Northern Gannet mistook for lunch. As soon as we realized we were involved with a Gannet, Dana reversed the boat while I reeled in the line bringing the bird up to the side of the boat where Dana could grab the bird and bring it up onto the boat's wide railing. It initially appeared that the hook was in the bird's left wing. When Dana reached for a knife so he could cut the feathers and free the bird, hoping the hook was not imbedded in the wing, the bird had other ideas. It came to life and bit Dana's hand.

We went into action with Plan B. While the bird sat warily on the deck watching Dana, I managed to get behind the bird and completely cover it with a large towel. Once its eyes were covered, it was more tolerant of our attempts to free it which proved to be an easy task of freeing the wing that had been entangled in the monofilament fishing line. Thankfully, the hook had not been involved at all. With the towel still in place, Dana picked up the bird and carefully placed it back on the water. The moment we removed the towel, the bird said, "I'm out of here with those crazy people." Off it went.

Human fishers often hook birds (Royal Terns, Pelicans too) as birds have fished in the waters for millions of years and go after schools of fish. So, fishers, do not rip out a hook or cut the line and leave the hook embedded, but use a towel to quell the natural response of birds and gently remove your hook. (See PIAS pamphlet, https://fl.audubon.org/sites/default/files/static_pages/attachments/audubon_hookedpelican_brochure.pdf)

Sadly, many Northern Gannets have not had such happy endings. But for us it was a happy memory never to be forgotten.



October 18, 2021 7:00 PM General Meeting on Zoom: The Language of Birds with Nathan Pieplow



The Pelican Island Audubon October 18, 2021 general meeting on Zoom starting at 7PM features a presentation on *The Language of Birds* with Nathan Pieplow. All around us, all the time, the birds are telling us who they are and what they are doing. In this talk, Nathan Pieplow unlocks the secrets of their language. You'll listen in on the pillow talk of a pair of Red-winged Blackbirds, and learn the secret signals that

Cliff Swallows use when they have found food. You'll learn how one bird sound can have many meanings, and how one meaning can have many sounds—and how, sometimes, the meaning isn't in the sounds at all. This talk from the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds is an accessible, entertaining introduction to a fascinating topic.

Register at www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Egret Marsh Beginner Bird Walks

Do you want to learn more about how to go birding? Basics like binocular use, what to look for when you see a new bird, where to look, and what to expect in different places?

Egret Marsh beginner bird walks are planned again this year led by Terry Greene and Alexis Peralta, Indian River County Stormwater Educator. Masks may be required where social distancing is not possible. Walks are subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions. Entry to the marsh is restricted. Walks are an easy 3/4 mile stroll from 8:30am – 10:30am. (End time is approximate.). Each session is limited to 10 people and will have 3 walks at Egret Marsh. We have loaner binoculars available for all who need them. Any new birder planning to take the Intensive Beginner Birding Class in February will find this a good introduction.

Sign up online: <https://pelicanislandaudubon.org/2021/08/16/egret-marsh-beginner-birding-walks-in-october-november-2021/> for I. Sessions: 2021 October 13th, 20th, and 27th OR II. Sessions: November 3rd, 10th, and 17th, 2021

Pelican Island Audubon receives beautiful pastel bird painting



Barry Shapiro generously donated this beautiful pastel painting of a Double-crested Cormorant to Pelican Island Audubon. Studying with renowned artists, he graduated from Pratt Institute, with a BFA in painting and printmaking. In Manhattan, he regularly contributed to New York Magazine, the New York Times and Travel and Leisure with a second career in film and video, winning numerous awards, including an Emmy and a Clio.

He continues his dual passions of both film and fine art in his studio in Vero Beach. He is the author of a screenplay about the French artist Suzanne Valadon. Barry teaches classes in painting, drawing and creative thinking as well as elementary school art. He has two murals in Vero Beach.

His portraits and landscapes are to be found in private collections around the country. Recent exhibitions include The Nathan B. Rosen Museum Gallery (Boca Raton, FL), Gallery Pelar (Greenport, NY), Landmark Gallery (Kingston, NY), Galerie Nouvelle (New York, NY), The Center for Spiritual Care, The Community Church narthex, Lighthouse Gallery and The Emerson Center (Vero Beach, FL) and the Brownstone Art Gallery (Brooklyn, NY).

Go Green!

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E-MAIL	Please mail this completed form with a check made out to:
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