

# The Tanager

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**Burroughs Audubon Nature Club**

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## **President's Annual Report**

*By Marigrace Piazza*

This has been a year of many changes for BANC. The first change is that I am writing this report as your president. Another change is that our indoor meetings in 2018 have been held at a new location, the Clover Center, instead of at St. John's Meadows. Also this year Jerry Jenkins has stepped down from his longstanding post as editor of the Tanager. A new editor, John Shaw, has taken his place. John Shaw is also the new treasurer for the club since John Gordon retired from this position last year.

In spite of some significant changes in the Council personnel for 2018, we have managed to get many things done. The Council has worked very hard this year and we have several new initiatives in place. We are working on renovating and updating our website, we have started summer work parties in order to support the work of Dean Clayton and the Building and Grounds committee, and we are in the process of creating new signage for the trails.

In the spring, we hired an engineering firm to do an inspection of the Clubhouse. Using the engineers' recommendations, the Council wrote an action plan in order to target immediate and long-term maintenance and repair needs of the Clubhouse. This action plan has helped to inform our budget planning for 2019 and the future. We have already carried out many of the tasks on the action plan and will continue to do so in 2019. Boardwalk maintenance and repair is a target of focus for next year.

The Council took a trip to the Slater Sanctuary in July to become familiar with this special but rarely used preserve.

We have developed new membership initiatives as we seek to increase our visibility in the community

and encourage families with children to become members. We started a sponsorship of a Navigators' chapter in order to connect children with the flora and fauna of our special Sanctuary as well as connecting them with our knowledgeable and talented members.

We have had a very robust and varied program of potlucks, open houses, field trips and indoor programs this year. Many of our events were geared towards children as well as adults in 2018.

In October, BANC successfully co-hosted the annual New York State Ornithological Association conference. This is a once every ten year responsibility for our club.

On a personal note, serving you as president has been quite a learning experience for me. My knowledge of the nuts and bolts of how this club operates was very limited before I was elected to this position. I have been overwhelmed by the spirit of volunteerism that keeps BANC running and the devotion that so many members show for our 105-year-old nature club.

*(Continued on page 2)*

*President's report continued from page 1*

I would like to thank the Council for guiding me through the year and for serving the Club faithfully. There are so many individuals that I would like to thank, but there is not enough space in this column to mention all of them. It has been such a pleasure to get to know so many more members this year and such a pleasure to learn those nuts and bolts from so many of you.

There are a few people that I must recognize:

Julie Clayton and Shirley Shaw, who were always my go-to people when I had questions about leadership

Also, Shirley for putting in so much time planning the NYSOA conference

Jerry Jenkins for his guidance about club maintenance and for all his years working on the Tanager

John Shaw for taking on two big jobs for the club this year, editor and treasurer

Dean Clayton, who does so much important work behind the scenes for the upkeep of the clubhouse and sanctuary, as well as handling technology issues

Jon Dombroski for all his time and expertise drafting the Budget

Richard Ashworth for his professional photographic documentation of many of our events.

There are three amazing people who really stepped up this year to help carry out the work that is needed to keep BANC thriving: Ellen Prill, Rachel Hutchins, and Becky Olson.

Ellen personally took care of many of the items on our action plan list herself and has initiated many new ideas to increase the number of BANC members. Although she was new to the Council, she took on the job of Recording Secretary. Rachel Hutchins has served as Navigators' chapter leader and is working on redesigning our website. She also stepped up to be our Program chairperson this year and is the editor of the 2019 Handbook. Becky Olson, whom most of us know as publicity person and librarian, organized the work parties and did a lot of the projects herself with the help of her partner Joe Laskowski, including staining the porch.

Speaking of amazing people, I would like to thank Julie Clayton again. She will be leaving the Council this year after many, many years of wonderful service to our club.

I am looking forward to another great year for BANC in 2019 full of interesting programs and opportunities to make connections with people and nature.

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**Photos of the NYSOA meeting by Richard Ashworth**



**Julie Clayton at the BANC exhibit**



**Marigrace Piazza receiving a certificate of appreciation to host club BANC from NYSOA President Mike DeSha**



**Charlie Woodruff enjoying hors d'oeuvres at the welcome reception**

## NYSOA 2018 ANNUAL MEETING

*Shirley Shaw*

In 1948, a group from across the state gathered in Rochester for the first annual meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs that had been organized the previous year under the leadership of Rochester's Dr. Gordon Meade. A photo of this well-dressed group was on display at this year's check-in table to remind everyone of what is now the New York State Ornithological Association's (NYSOA's) founding. Every 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting since, the years ending in 8, has been held in Rochester.

This year's host clubs were Burroughs Audubon Nature Club and the Rochester Birding Association. The meeting was held at the RIT Inn and Conference Center in Henrietta and was attended by 187 registrants, including many BANC members.

The traditional Friday afternoon to Sunday morning schedule provided field trips, a welcome reception, two dinners, workshops, the delegates' meeting, a papers session, and a Saturday evening program with Big Year birder Greg Miller as featured speaker. Greg's 1998 Big Year quest was featured in a book by Mark Obmascik and a movie, both entitled *The Big Year*. His talk was funny, informative, and inspirational. In addition to an often hilarious account of his work as a consultant to the movie, he spoke humbly of how he had become well-known based on a contest he didn't win and a book he didn't write. He has been able to put the hobby of birding, taught to him by his father, into a career of giving talks, guiding trips, and writing a yet-to-be-published book themed on how to determine where to go birding to maximize species to be found in limited time. He

inspired all of us with the story of how *The Big Year* changed his life.

Rainy weather did not dampen the spirits of field trip participants. 121 species were sighted at the various local inland and lakeshore locations, highlighted by Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Hudsonian Godwit, Wilson's phalarope, and Common Raven.

Many BANC members are responsible for the resounding success of this meeting: Richard Ashworth, Dean Clayton, Julie Clayton, Mary Gordon, Chita McKinney, Carolyn Ragan, John Shaw, Shirley Shaw, and Karen Wolf served on the organizing committee. Other club members—Jane and Harold Stock, Carol Klinger, Marigrace Piazza, and Lucretia Grosshans—assisted at the meeting venue. Charlie Woodruff and Jayne Dean led field trips, and Steve Melcher hosted a field trip at his property, the Odonata Sanctuary. BANC provided a monetary advance to the organizers and will receive half of the substantial meeting profits.

The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held in Kingston, NY, September 13-15, 2019. Because BANC is a voting member club of NYSOA, a delegate who will have a vote at the business delegates' meeting will be our official representative at that meeting. However, anyone is welcome to register to attend the many educational, social, and fun activities that take place during the weekend.

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### Time to renew your membership

A renewal form is on the next to the last page to allow you to renew your membership for 2019.



**Sue Robertson at a field trip**

*Photo by Richard Ashworth*



## What's Cooking?

By Carol Hinkelman

At holiday time we like to bake some special treats, but over the years the ingredients we use have changed. In the early 1900's people used butter and lard for baking and cooking. Then came World War II shortages and the substitution of margarine and shortening made from hydrogenated vegetable oils such as corn or soy. Today if you read the labels of margarine and shortening, you will see that most of them contain palm oil.

Palm oil is made from the fruits of the oil palm tree which is native to Western Africa but grows well anywhere that is hot and has plentiful rainfall. Today 85% of the world's palm oil comes from Indonesia and Malaysia where huge tracts of tropical forest have been cleared for palm plantations by bulldozing and burning.

Palm oil is a highly saturated vegetable fat that is semisolid at room temperature, works well in baked goods and processed foods and is low cost. Globally humans in 2015 consumed an average of 17 pounds of palm oil per person. Palm oil is often used as a replacement for trans fats, but it is not a healthy substitute. It increases blood levels of LDL cholesterol and causes increased risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Palm oil is found in half of all supermarket products including body creams, soaps, makeup, candles, toothpaste, and cleaning products as well as foods. It is a hugely profitable commodity for multinational corporations. In the U.S. we have mandated the addition of ethanol, made from corn, to our gasoline, but in Europe, half the imported palm oil is made into biodiesel for cars and trucks where it generates three times the carbon emissions as using fossil fuel.

Large-scale cultivation of palm oil has other serious environmental effects. The deforestation of millions of acres in the tropics for rapidly expanding palm oil cultivation has caused the loss of habitat and bio-

diversity. Orangutans have lost 90% of their habitat in Borneo and Sumatra and become critically endangered along with Sumatran tigers and many other mammal species. Over 50,000 orangutans have died as the result of deforestation in the last 20 years. Access roads built into forests for workers and equipment to get to palm plantations also make it easier for poachers and wildlife smugglers to get to the animals.

An area the size of three football fields is cleared for palm oil cultivation each hour. Burning of timber and undergrowth in the deforestation process emits huge quantities of smoke into the atmosphere where it acts as a greenhouse gas contributing to climate change. 10% of the land in Indonesia is peat bogs which store carbon and soak up water. When they are drained and burned so they can be used to grow oil palms, they release the carbon into the atmosphere in toxic smoke instead of storing it. Indonesia is the third highest greenhouse gas emitter in the world.

Indigenous people who lived in and protected the forests for generations are also affected. They are driven off their land and lose their only source of livelihood. Then they usually have no choice for survival but to do difficult work on the palm oil plantations for very low wages. There have been major human rights violations such as the prevalent use of child labor.

*(Continued on page 5)*



### Forest area being cleared for a palm oil plantation

Photo by Ian Singleton, from  
<https://climate.nasa.gov/blog/1144>

(What's Cooking? continued from page 4)

There has been a growing movement to produce certified sustainable palm oil that does not cause deforestation or harm people, but it costs more. So far that has not worked well because of competition with cheaper sources of palm oil, but it has potential. It is hard for the consumer to know what the real source of the oil is and some environmental organizations think that certification is just 'greenwashing' by corporations. Public pressure and increased awareness of the problems can help push companies to stop using palm oil. Be informed and inform others. For more information see [www.saynotopalmoil.com](http://www.saynotopalmoil.com) and [www.rainforest-rescue.org](http://www.rainforest-rescue.org).

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### New Members

Susan & Michael Knolls, Pittsford  
Joseph Laskowski, Canandaigua  
Wendy Stevenson, Springwater  
Chera Van Burg, Rochester  
Diane Pike & Dan Glover, Pittsford  
Rosemary Reilly, Pittsford  
Mark & Melissa Whitford, Pittsford  
Carmel Merrill & Richard Lunt, Rochester

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**Clean-Up Day at the Sanctuary**

*Photo by Jane Stock*

### Thank you to Present and Future Volunteers

*By Marigrace Piazza*

On November 3, over twenty brave BANC members weathered the damp and cold to rake leaves on Fall Clean-Up Day at the Sanctuary. The leaves were wet and heavy and we were fortunate to have the teens from the Victor High School Key Club doing a lot of the heavy lifting for us. Many Burroughs folks walked the trails picking up sticks and trimming branches. The workers were rewarded with a hot and delicious assortment of soup and chili. Thank you to Becky Olson for arranging the luncheon.

Many thanks go to Dean Clayton, who did the mowing and blowing before we arrived on that Saturday. Dean returned later in the month to make sure that the Clubhouse was safe and winterized until April.

Also, behind the scenes, a big thank you goes to Jutta Dudley, who did most of the clean up of the kitchen and bathroom later in the week.

It takes many devoted people to keep the Clubhouse and Grounds safe, functioning and lovely. We are always looking for new volunteers to help with important projects around the Sanctuary and building throughout the year. The future of the Club depends on having a consistent group of volunteers who can keep the property in good shape.

If you would like to help on any projects, please call Marigrace Piazza, 314-8462.



**Key Club Volunteers**

*Photo by Julie Clayton*

## MEET A MEMBER - Marie Heerkens

*By Richard Ashworth*

Artist. Mycologist. Illustrator. Birder. Hiker. Camper. Sounds like a Renaissance woman? This is Marie Heerkens.

Marie spent her childhood in an old farmhouse on Turk Hill Road, with barns, woods and a cornfield out back. She grew up an outdoor girl, loving hiking and camping out with the family, fishing and skating on local ponds in the winter. Later the family moved to Fishers, where Marie remembers a hike with Sheldon Fisher exploring local history.

At an early age she started drawing – a vocation that has lasted all her life. After studying art at Nazareth College and SUNY Geneseo, Marie intended to work in scientific illustration with a leaning toward archeology. However, her career took a diversion for a while: after an internship in 1986 in computer graphics, she spent some time creating CGI for a business.

For many years Marie's primary job was in picture framing at local businesses, but with the advent of cheap standard frames and changing tastes in décor, this trade has all but disappeared in recent years. Now she divides her time between Ontario Mall Antiques and the Red Bird market in Fairport. She undertakes commissioned fine artwork and has painted large murals in private homes.

Marie's father enjoyed birdwatching, and she recalls a wonderful experience of a warbler fallout at Thousand Acre Swamp in Penfield. However, her major passion in nature is mushrooms. She started by photographing them and, wanting to identify and learn more about them, she joined the Rochester Area Mycological Association. She attended meetings and forays and learned from Bob Cooper and Steven Daniel among others. Marie delights in discovering the variety of fungus species in local woodlands; some of her favorite destinations are Powder Mills Park, the Auburn Trail, and Bentley Woods, where she has led hikes and served as a site monitor.

Participation in regional and national gatherings has taken her to many different locations in search of mushrooms, including Maine, California and Washington State, where she conducted workshops for Puget Sound Mycological Society, one of the largest associations in the country.

Over the years Marie has created an impressive collection of mushroom illustrations, which have been sought after for diverse publications. In 2003 she provided all the photographs and drawings for the new edition of "The Field Guide to Mushrooms" by William S. Thomas, a classic guide which (although now out of print) is still available as used copies.

Marie's particular and unique contribution to mycology art is the application of pyrography (wood

burning) techniques to the depiction of mushrooms and other nature subjects on dried shelf fungus. You can see examples of this glorious artwork, as well as some of her drawings and photographs, on the web at [www.americanmushrooms.com/heerkens](http://www.americanmushrooms.com/heerkens). One of her pyrography creations is on the lower left of her photograph here, which also features a T-shirt she designed.

Marie first joined BANC back in 1994. She has led field trips for the Club and has been visiting the Sanctuary, where she recently found Shaggy Mane fungi, although the habitat there is not conducive to the more spectacular mushrooms, like Marie's favorite morels.



*Photo by Richard Ashworth*



## Annual Picnic

By Julie Clayton

On Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, we held our Annual Picnic. Julie Clayton chaired the picnic, and Jutta Dudley and Linda Smith hosted the event. As always, we had some excellent dishes that were made by members.

President Marigrace Piazza organized the Fourth Annual Photo Exhibit. The exhibit was not as robust as in the past, but the photos were excellent! We would like to thank Richard Ashworth and Marilyn Schindler for displaying their amazing works.

Richard Ashworth led a hike of children and adults through the Sanctuary. All seemed to enjoy their outing through the trails!

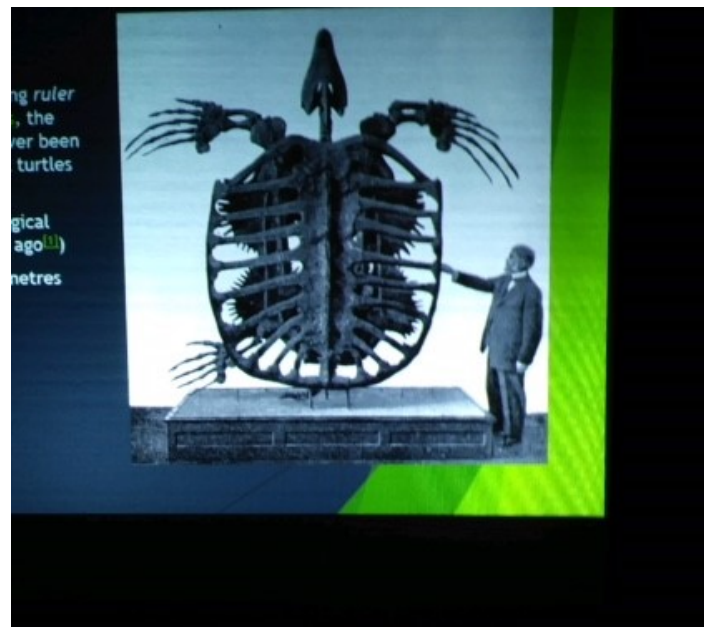
Our guest presenter was avocational turtle expert, Tina Crandall-Gommel. Tina is very excited about turtles and dedicated to the cause of turtles and tortoises. In the afternoon, the kids were quite excited about the wondrous creatures. Tina had brought two turtles, and the tortoise was lent for the day by Rachel Hutchins' mother. They are such intriguing animals! The children and adults discovered that tortoises are not slow at all but are able to disappear from sight in a short amount of time! Just like little children, they have to be watched closely! Member Janet Miles made sure that the tortoise did not run away! Janet practiced some of her teacher training on the tortoise and made sure that the tortoise stayed safe.

In the evening, after dinner, Tina presented to a large audience about the turtles and tortoises. I never knew that the word "terrapin" is the Algonquin term for "turtle". Tina's presentation was very interesting. She showed a photo of the very large skeleton of a prehistoric turtle that is now at the Museum of Natural History in New York City. The members learned a lot and we were really fortunate to have Tina Crandall-Gommel present. It was, indeed, a successful event!



**Tina Crandall-Gommel and turtle**

*Photo by Julie Clayton*



**Photo of large prehistoric turtle skeleton**

*Photo of slide by Julie Clayton*

## Coming Events

**Friday, January 11, 7:30 PM**

**Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality**

### **GORILLAS OF RWANDA**

Join Dr. Gary Paige from the University of Rochester Medical Center as he takes us on a photographic journey to meet the Silver Back Gorillas of Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda. Gary and his wife Myrna spent time not only photographing the gorillas, but getting to observe their intricate social behavior in a way few people are lucky enough to experience. This is a truly special presentation. Light refreshments will be served.

Hosts: Bill O'Neill & Martha Zettel, 298-8516, and Marigrace Piazza, 314-8462.

**Friday, February 8, 7:30 PM**

**Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality**

### **PENGUINS**

Dr. Greg Cunningham, Associate Professor of Biology at St. John Fisher College is interested in how birds use smell to find food and identify each other. He was one of the first researchers who studied the

sense of smell in African penguins and their detection of food-related odors. Dr. Cunningham also worked with King Penguins on the sub-Antarctic island of Kerguelen where he lived among 100,000 penguins, testing how they responded to a variety of scents. He will give us a fascinating look at living on an isolated island doing research on these charismatic birds.

Hosts: Lura Kelley, Carol Klinger and Jane Stock, 425-7293

**Friday, March 8, 7:30 PM**

**Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality**

### **TRILLIUMS**

Find out about these fascinating, showy wildflowers from naturalists and BANC members Carol and David Southby. The United States is the main country in the world where Trilliums occur in the wild, and most are in the eastern U.S. We can find three species of Trillium near Rochester and many more grow in the area around the Great Smoky Mountains. On their travels around New York State, the Carolinas, Georgia and in the Smokies, Carol and David have photographed some of the rarest Trilliums, and others that grow in vast carpets. They also grow five different species of Trillium in their yard.

Hosts: Chita McKinney and Julie Clayton, 249-9489



### **Banquet at NYSOA meeting**

In the center of the audience listening to featured speaker Greg Miller are Shirley Shaw, Julie and Dean Clayton, Carol Klinger, Al Robertson, Jane and Harold Stock

*Photo by Richard Ashworth*



**BURROUGHS AUDUBON NATURE CLUB 2019 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Age(s) (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

How do you prefer to receive our *Handbook of Information and Activities*? Email  Hard copy by mail

Would you like to have your photo and a few words about you published in our newsletter? Yes  No

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	DUES	AMOUNT PAID
Individual	\$20/year	\$
Couple	\$30/year	\$
Family, including children to 18	\$35/year	\$
Supporting Membership	\$50/year	\$
Add for Tanager hardcopy	\$5/year	\$
Add for outside bathroom key	\$2.50	\$
Extra Donations are appreciated		\$
		Total \$

Memberships run from January 1 through December 31. Please send your check, payable to Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, along with this form to:

BANC  
 % John Shaw, Treasurer  
 374 Cromwell Drive  
 Rochester, NY 14610

# **The Tanager**

**Burroughs Audubon  
Nature Club  
c/o John Shaw  
374 Cromwell Dr.  
Rochester, NY 14610**

**TO**

**If you haven't renewed  
your membership,  
please do it now.**

## **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Friday, January 11, 7:30 PM**  
Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality  
**GORILLAS OF RWANDA**

**Friday, February 8, 7:30 PM**  
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