

The Tanager



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Burroughs Audubon Nature Club

c/o John Shaw

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September 2019

President's Column

By Marigrace Piazza

What's trending at BANC right now? That is a question I have been asking myself lately. The Program Committee has been meeting regularly to plan programs for 2020. What has been popular so far this year? How many members and non-members have attended events? Are events more popular on weekends, weekdays, or in the evenings? Are more children showing up? In what direction should we head in 2020 in order to meet the needs of our diverse but growing membership?

Unfortunately, we have not developed an algorithm to plug in the data in order to answer these questions scientifically. We do have a sign-in sheet for all events though!

So basically, I am going by my crude analysis of events I have attended and feedback from events I have not.

Here are my takeaways:

The indoor programs in the fall and winter have been very well attended. The Clover Center location has attracted many members and non-members to our excellent presentations.

The Potluck attendance is down. Maybe it just depends on the weather. Maybe the older folks are having trouble getting there. Maybe the younger folks want to hang out at home on a Friday or go out for a fish fry. Maybe the topics are not attracting as many people.

The Plein Air Potluck on August 9 was a novel event that did attract a good number of members. It was quite a thrill seeing painters with their easels spread out along our trails. It was also great to hear the effu-

sive praise of our Sanctuary as an artistic inspiration from the five visiting painters. The musical Potlucks continue to be popular.

The Field Trips are a hit! Members and Non-Members want to get out and explore. We have so many experts in our very own Club who lead such unforgettable trips.

The most recent one that I attended was to Green Lakes State Park led by Carol and Dave Southby. This trip was also jointly attended by members of the Rochester Butterfly Club. The joint trips seem to be a guarantee of success. I know that I enjoyed meeting a new group of nature lovers as well as spending the day with BANC members.

Besides Potlucks, we have hosted several other events at the Sanctuary so far this year. We have had two events designed to attract families and they were very well attended: the May Open House and Family Nature Night. Many of these attendees were non-members or newly joined members. They seemed to find these events an inviting way to get to know our

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Club and property. And...there were many curious children in attendance!

One of the most unique events that I have ever attended at BANC took place on July 18. This was the Forest Therapy Walk led by Deb Denome of Finger Lakes Forest Therapy. There were about 15 people in attendance; 5 were BANC members. At the end of the walk I felt completely relaxed and I had a new respect for our Sanctuary and its relevance in today's world. The lucky people in attendance were invited to sense the surroundings by "bathing" in the sensory experiences that our Sanctuary provided. It was a gift for me to hear the many comments about the beauty and therapeutic bounty of our property from the attendees.

The Program Committee is just about done with the schedule for 2020. We have done our best to include some oldies but goodies programs and some new ones that will keep us relevant in 2020. As far as best days and times to offer events, my unscientific analysis says that this is hard to predict.

We are still in the full swing of programs for 2019. In September we will have the opportunity to go Fossil hunting on September 15 and Fungi foraging on September 22. The Annual Picnic on September 28 will bring Mark Carra back to BANC, this time acting in the role of Charles Darwin. In October, you will have two opportunities to see fall foliage during one field trip to our very own Slater Sanctuary and one trip to Mt. Hope Cemetery with a walk led by Frank Crombe.

Please circle October 6 on your calendar now. This will be our first annual Habitat Restoration Day. We will need your help to remove privet from the property on that day. For more information please read the flyer related to this important event in this issue of the Tanager.

In closing, I would like to give a shout out to our BANC Life Members. Recently, Council members had the opportunity to talk to some of you while trying to update our membership records. Thank you for all your positive feedback about our Club and our initiatives. We appreciate your support and hope to see you at more events as we continue through the fall and into 2020.



Victor Campers

Photo by Marigrace Piazza



Plein Air Painting at the Sanctuary

Photo by Marigrace Piazza

Banning Plastic Bags

By Carol Hinkelman

Plastic in the environment has become a major problem and we need to do something to remedy it. Many plastic items, such as the lightweight plastic bags used at stores, are made for a single use and then discarded. They can be recycled, but most of them never are. Plastic bags litter the landscape, get caught in trees and shrubs, clog drains, and often end up in the ocean where they are swallowed by wildlife like dolphins and whales. There is a national movement to get rid of them with more than 240 cities and counties passing laws that ban or tax them since 2007.

New York State recently passed a law banning most single use plastic bags starting next March. That will substantially decrease how many single use plastic bags are being used in the state and help to keep our environment clean, but many laws have unintended consequences. Remember how we were debating a few years ago whether it was better to use plastic or paper grocery bags? It was hard to get a clear-cut answer to that question because there are so many factors that go into that calculation. We have to consider the resources used and the energy and water that go into the manufacturing of the bags, the pollution caused in the process, and the greenhouse gases emitted, as well as how we dispose of them after use.

Some studies have been done in the cities where single use plastic bags were banned. People in those cities did use fewer of the bags and there was less litter and fewer going into the landfill, so the ban did work. However, some of the people had been reusing those bags for lining their wastebaskets or picking up dog poop and they still needed bags, so they went out and bought small plastic trash bags. Sales of these

much heavier plastic bags went way up and they use a lot more resources to produce than the very thin single use bags.

Another result of the bans was that people switched to paper bags for their groceries. Charging a fee for paper bags motivates shoppers to bring reusable bags. The New York law allows counties to impose a 5-cent fee on paper bags, but many counties, including Monroe County, have already said they will not impose a fee, so the use of paper bags is probably going to go way up in those counties.

Paper is biodegradable, but lots of water, toxic chemicals, fuel, and heavy machinery are used to cut the trees, transport them to the paper mill, and make the paper. Papermaking is also very polluting to the air and water and increases greenhouse gas emissions. Another downside is that the trees that were cut down for paper had been producing oxygen for us to breathe and were taking in carbon dioxide, helping to slow climate change, so we lost those ben-



Plastic Bags

Picture from EPA.gov

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efits as well as the habitat they had been providing for wildlife.

A possible alternative to banning single use plastic bags is charging a fee for both plastic and paper bags and encouraging their reuse. Then most people would switch to reusable bags and not just swap one kind of single use bag for another. People who really need the bags could still get them and not have to buy heavier plastic bags.

There is an environmental cost even to reusable bags. Cotton is one of the most water intensive crops and its processing and manufacturing into cloth also uses a lot of resources, but it is biodegradable. According to the studies, you would have to use your cotton tote bag 131 times before it was better for the environment than those single use plastic bags. Studies show that the best reusable bags for the environment are those made of polyester or polypropylene.

We want to protect our environment, but figuring out the best ways to do that is not always simple. All the factors need to be considered when trying to solve these problems and laws need to be well thought out to avoid unintended consequences. Meantime we should bring reusable bags when we shop and use them many times.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to Burroughs:

Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Fairport
 Jo Emerson, Pittsford
 Pinak Hubbard, Stanley
 Wendy Sacks, Pittsford
 Bob Kremens, Pittsford
 Dawn M. Novak, Rochester
 Laura Ouimette, Canandaigua
 Bill & Nancy Brackmann, Pittsford
 Patrick McCaffrey, Webster

2019 Dues

If you haven't already renewed your membership, please send your dues check or renew by credit card on line at <http://bancny.org/membership.html>

\$20 - Individual membership

\$30 - Couples membership

\$35 - Family membership

Add \$5 for the Tanager hardcopy by mail.

Add \$2.50 for keys to the outside restroom.

To renew on-line, go to <http://bancny.org/membership.html>, fill out the on-line form, click "submit", and enter your credit card and information on the Paypal page which comes up.

If renewing by check, please send check and the form in this issue to:

BANC

c/o John Shaw

374 Cromwell Drive

Rochester, NY 14610



BANC Group touring fish hatchery

Photo by Richard Ashworth

BANC's Archives

By Shirley Shaw

BANC's records and memorabilia hold a historical significance for our area. With a club house that is not climate-controlled and resulting deterioration of the condition of this treasure trove, several years ago at the suggestion of Steve Daniel and the late Art Trimble the Executive Council began to discuss the value of our documents to the broader community. Steve and a committee undertook reviewing some of the oldest documents we had, and after discussion and research, recommended that Local History at the Rundel Library downtown was the best resource for preservation. A collection of items was deeded to Local History in 2016.

The current Archive Committee—Joanne Altre, Carol Hinkelman, Carol Klinger, and Shirley Shaw—reviewed and inventoried another batch of materials, which were turned over to Local History this summer. Going through these old documents provided a fascinating glimpse of what it was like to be a BANC member decades ago. John Burroughs' daughter Elizabeth Kelley was a member, and there was a photo of her. There was correspondence from some of the earliest members, reminiscences and recollections about the club's history by several people, and information about the fire that destroyed the original club house, including a list of the contents of the house that were lost, and the insurance settlement.

Times have certainly changed. Past president Reg Hartwell was well known for his limericks, and a mouse infestation led a member to write a light-hearted poem about the problem. Song lyrics to familiar tunes chronicled happenings. There were picnics and other events at individual members' homes, some of them fundraisers for the club. And citizen science was important. Wildflower checklists and surveys, a 1939 report about summer eco-study, and a book describing various nature trails show that the early members not only observed nature but recorded their observations as a resource for others.

Much remains for the Archive Committee to do. Carol Klinger is currently typing handwritten minutes that are decades old. Once these have been proofread, the originals will be turned over to Local History. The Council must discuss a process for digitizing, organizing, and electronic storage of all past minutes and treasurer's reports. Additional historic documents need to be reviewed and inventoried before a decision about their disposition can be made. Look for updates about BANC's archive project in future years.



Flower from BANC Sanctuary

Photo by Laurie Dirks



Come to our Annual Picnic!!!

Saturday, September 28th

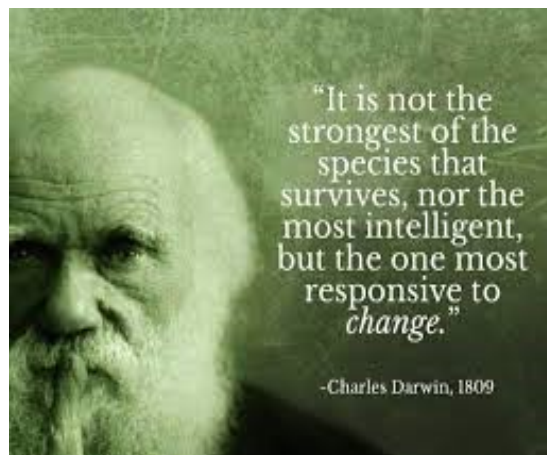
Bring the kids – children, grandchildren!

3:30 Activities will begin.

There will be a guided hike and games for the kids.

Naturalist and one of our favorite people, **Mark Carra** from the Beaver Meadow Audubon Society, will bring fossils and small creatures and discuss them with children of all ages!

5:30 Potluck Supper Please bring a dish to pass with **local ingredients**, preferably, for lower carbon footprint. Bring your own table settings, lawn chairs, card table (if possible).



7:00 Guest Speaker Our special guest will be Mr. Charles Darwin – the reserved English country gentleman who changed the course of modern science. He will discuss his ideas in an intimate conversation with us! You won't want to miss him!

Any questions? Call Linda at 924-3871 or Julie at 704-5588.

Mothing at BANC

by Laurel M. Dodge

The green leuconycta moth (*Leuconycta diptheroides*) may not be much bigger than a thumbnail, but its stunning green, black, and white wings still put on a monumental display. On a beautiful June night, some of the Rochester Butterfly Club and BANC members got to meet this tiny denizen of the sanctuary. We had our timing just right as this moth flies primarily in May and June. At other times of year, the Green Leuconycta is either hanging out in its egg, enclosed in a cocoon, or is feeding on goldenrod and aster in the guise of a green and white-striped caterpillar.

The Green Leuconycta may have been one of the first visitors to the white sheets we hung from a tree and illuminated with UV, fluorescent, and mercury vapor lamps, but it was not the last. Thirteen identifiable species were drawn in by the lights during moth night. There were a few more individuals that dashed in and dashed out without pausing for a photograph or for us to crack open *Peterson's Guide to Moths of Northeastern North America*, but the thirteen that stuck around included some fascinating species.

One uncommon moth that was lured in was the Sleeping Bailey (*Baileya dormitans*) with lovely mixed grays along its wings. Sleeping Bailey caterpillars form long thin cocoons incorporating small pieces of leaves.

A female Ambiguous Moth (*Lascoria ambigualis*) joined us at the sheet. These moths have an eye-catching angular shape. The males and females are dimorphic with the males having a notch at the edge of the wing with a black spot at the top of the notch. The female's wings curve outward in the center around the same place where the male's are notched. Their color pattern differs too. Our female had lovely



thin wavy lines below a thick, straight line. The male is sectioned into three shades of brownish-gray.

The Unicorn Prominent (*Schizura unicornis*) has a name that promises more than the moth can deliver.

No unicorn horn here, but like many other prominents, there is a ruff of scales behind the head. The gray, brown, and green moth does have a large patch of very light tan at the end of the wings. As it rests with its wings curled toward its body, it is possible to mistake the white patch for the interior coloration of a broken twig, making

for excellent camouflage.

Then a moth flew in that everyone is familiar with in its caterpillar form, but few recognize as an adult.

The Isabella Tiger Moth (*Pyrrharctia isabella*) has a lovely pale orange cast to its wings overlain by a very pale network of lines. Underneath the wings the abdomen is orange with black spots. But this moth is better known by its other name, the woolly bear caterpillar.

We also had a visitor from overseas settle on our sheets. It was a Small Clouded Brindle (*Apamea*

(Nothing at BANC continued from page 7)

unanimis) introduced from Europe. As a caterpillar, this moth prefers grasses.

An Oak Beauty (*Phaeoura quernaria*) was drawn in by the mercury vapor light trap.

Oak Beauties are geometers that like to rest with their wings spread out like butterflies. The wings have a broad stripe of charcoal gray with mottled patches of gray and white toward the edges. The Oak Beauty that visited us really liked the mercury vapor lamp! Their caterpillars are excellent twig mimics and their host plants include basswood, birch, elm, oak, and poplar.

We also observed a Little White Lichen Moth (*Clemensia albata*), a cute little arrowhead-shaped moth. The mottled green and white caterpillar camouflages well on lichen, its host.

Hickory Tussock Moths (*Lophocampa caryae*) like the one we saw at our sheets have very lovely golden brown wings interspersed with lines of translucent white spots. Like the woolly bear, the hickory tussock moth caterpillar, fuzzy white with black “hair pencils,” is familiar for its wandering ways in the fall, often spotted when crossing roads. One out of a hundred people have an allergic skin reaction to its hairs and their secretions; and if a small child puts the caterpillar in his or her mouth, they should get medical attention; but the generalized panic about this caterpillar in the news is overblown.

Scalloped *Metarranthis* Complex Moths (*Metarranthis* spp.) have beautiful scalloped edges on their wings. Individuals are difficult to identify to species in the field; thus similar species are grouped

together as a “complex.” Scalloped *Metarranthis* caterpillars feast happily upon apple, blueberry, cherry, persimmon, and sassafras.

Distinctive with its wings held up over its back, a tiny White Spring Moth (*Lomographa vestaliata*) visited our moth sheet. As a caterpillar the White Spring Moth relies on host plants and trees such as apple, beech, cherry, hawthorn, maple, and strawberry.

The Blackberry Looper (*Chloroehlamys chloroleucaria*) is one of the Emerald Moths. An individual joined us briefly toward the end of the evening. The caterpillars like blackberry, strawberry, and petals of composite flowers.

One of the litter moths, the Grayish Fan-Foot (*Zanclogratha pedipilalis*) ended the moth night parade. The caterpillars rely on dead leaves from deciduous trees.

Much fun was had on the BANC/Butterfly Club moth night and more fun can be had nothing on your own property. From as simple a setup as your porch light against your siding to a sheet strung up in the back yard lit with fluorescent and/or UV lights, moths will be attracted to your lights. Be aware that some of the most spectacular moths are very small. That is why they are so often overlooked. A camera and software that allows you to crop and enlarge the images will help you make identifications. The Peterson’s guide mentioned above is an excellent resource for identification. There is a lovely how-to guide to nothing by John Himmelman, *Discovering Moths: Nighttime Jewels in Your Own Backyard*. It is out of print but worth picking up used.

HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Burroughs Audubon Nature Club
301 Railroad Mills Road, Pittsford, NY 14534
Sunday, October 6, 2019
1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.



Your help is greatly needed to remove privet and other invasive species from this beautiful nature sanctuary on the banks of Irondequoit Creek.

Equipment, training, and refreshments provided. Please bring your own work gloves.

RSVP: BANCrsvp@gmail.com



www.bancny.org

Habitat Restoration Day

By Shirley Shaw

BANC's Habitat Restoration Day on October 6, 1:00-5:00 p.m. will offer training in recognizing invasive species that need removal and important native plants that must not be damaged or destroyed while pulling out the invasives. Then you can use the equipment provided plus your own muscle power to remove privet and other undesirable plants. Many of you joined us a couple of years ago to help with our invasive species removal project and the planting of native trees generously donated to BANC. We hope you found that experience worthwhile and fun and will join us this year and in years to come. If you were not available to help us in the past, please consider coming out this year. It is not necessary to spend the entire afternoon working. If you can't spare four hours, we'll appreciate the amount of time you can volunteer.

Joe Laskowski Demonstrates Privet Removal

Photos by Richard Ashworth



BURROUGHS AUDUBON NATURE CLUB (BANC) MEMBERSHIP FORM

Memberships run from January 1st through December 31st. (If you join after October 1st, your membership continues through the next year.) Please send your check, payable to Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, along with this form to:

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

Name(s) _____

Children's Age/s (Optional) _____

Street Address _____

City/Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Date _____

How did you learn of us? _____ Birth Month _____

How do you prefer to receive our *Handbook of Activities and Information*?

Please check one: Email _____ or Hardcopy by mail _____

As a new member, would you like to have your photo and a few words about you published in our newsletter? Please check one: Yes _____ No _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	DUES	AMOUNT PAID
Individual	\$20/year	\$
Couple	\$30/year	\$
Family, including children to 18	\$35/year	\$
Supporting Membership	\$50/year	\$
Life Membership	\$500/person	\$
Add \$5 for <i>Tanager</i> hardcopy	\$5/year	\$
Outdoor restroom key	\$2.50	\$
Extra donations are appreciated.		\$
		Total \$

Atlas Corner: Breeding Codes Part 1

By Julie Hart, Atlas Project Coordinator

In the last issue I introduced the idea of breeding codes used by bird atlases to document the breeding status of birds. In summer the birds are well into their breeding cycle, which means that you have the opportunity to practice using these codes.

What are the different categories of breeding evidence?

The atlas breeding codes fall into four categories or levels: Observed, Possible, Probable, and Confirmed. As you can tell by their names, they range from weak to strong evidence for breeding. Observed and Possible codes indicate that a bird is present, but we don't have enough evidence to say that they are attempting to breed.

The Probable and Confirmed codes give a stronger indication that the birds are breeding or are at least attempting to breed. The atlas is not trying to determine if the breeding birds are successful and the young birds fledge and go on to become reproducing adults. We are more interested in the species that are trying to breed and where they are choosing to do so.

Confirmed Breeding – The Holy Grail

The Confirmed codes are the *holy grail* of atlasing. They also tend to be some of the easier codes to apply to your observations because they are so conclusive. If you observe a nest with eggs (**NE**) or young (**NY**), it's obvious how to record these observations. The same goes if you see a bird carrying a fecal sac (**FS**), a small white gelatinous mass of baby bird excrement that the adults remove from the nest to prevent predators from coming and eating the young.

Carrying food (**CF**) or nesting material (**CN**) are also pretty good indications of breeding. In my experience, these are two of the most commonly used codes in atlasing. Birds collect and fly off with food and nesting material a short distance from their nest site, so we can learn that a bird is breeding without going through the extra effort of discovering where their nest is located. But if we do see a bird building its nest (**NB**), we can be pretty sure that it's going to breed in that location.

There are two things we need to be careful of with these codes. Nest building should not be used for wrens or woodpeckers because wrens build multiple nests and woodpeckers may be excavating a roosting cavity instead of a nesting site. For these species we have a different code, Woodpecker/Wren Nest Building (**B**), which falls in the Probable category. We also have to be careful not to use the **CF** code for species that use food as part of their courtship (terns), for caching (corvids), or those that carry food to another location to eat (raptors).



**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher,
nest building (NB) at Vischer
Ferry in May.**

Photo © Daniel Schlaepfer.

If you are lucky enough to encounter a bird sitting on its nest, this counts as an occupied nest (**ON**).

This code can also be used for species that nest high up on a cliff or in the top of a tree, and for birds that nest in cavities or dense shrubs. If you observe a bird entering one of these nest sites and it stays for a long time or you see the mate fly out soon afterwards indicating a change in incubation

duties, that's a good indication that they have eggs or nestlings. Even a used nest (**UN**) can be used to confirm nesting as long as it is a recent nest and you know for sure what species built it.

A distraction display (**DD**) is used by some species to draw threats away from nests and young. If a Killdeer, Ruffed Grouse, or Common Yellowthroat flops around wildly making all sorts of un-birdlike noises, you can be pretty sure that they have a nest or young nearby.

A similarly straightforward code is physiological evidence (**PE**). Banding stations are encouraged to use this code to document breeding when they observe a full brood patch, a protruding cloaca, or an egg in the oviduct.

Perhaps the trickiest of the Confirmed codes are recently fledged young (**FL**) and feeding young (**FY**). You might think that if you see a young bird or an adult feeding a juvenile bird, that would be super strong evidence of breeding. But remember that we want to know not only what species are breeding, but where they are breeding. Some birds move their young far from the nest site soon after hatching or fledging, so it's possible that the birds you are watching did not breed nearby. There are a couple of clues to help you apply these codes correctly. If the birds are still in the nest, there is obviously no need to worry, just use the appropriate code. If the birds are precocial, meaning they are able to swim, walk, or run soon after hatching, you need to be sure that the birds haven't wandered too far. If the bird is incapable of sustained flight, you are probably safe. If it's a tern or gull chick still in the vicinity of the breeding colony, you are also probably safe. But if, for example, you see a fledged Red-tailed Hawk

or Common Tern away from their nest site still being fed by the parents, you shouldn't use this code because it's quite possible the birds have moved miles from where they nested. In fact, terns will stay with and feed their young well into fall migration!

Using the Confirmed Codes

You can start using the confirmed breeding codes today! They are available in eBird all the time all over the world. The code definitions are the same no matter where you are, so I always enter a confirmed breeding code wherever and whenever I observe such a behavior (provided I know enough about their natural history to properly categorize it). Whether you use eBird web or mobile (see the Tutorials page to get started), you simply click on the breeding and behavior codes section by the species name and use the drop-down menu to select the appropriate code. You can tell which codes are in the Confirmed category because they all have two-letter codes.

Simple, right? You will undoubtedly have questions and want clarifications, and for that we are making lists of examples of how to use the codes. We're also holding training workshops around the state and reviewing some of the common issues; contact me (julie.hart@dec.ny.gov) to book a workshop. If you want answers to your questions now, please post them to our FaceBook Discussion Group. We've already had some discussion of how to use some of the trickier Probable codes, which we'll dive into next time. In the meantime, enjoy observing and reporting your local breeding birds!

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Plein Air Painting

Photo by Marigrace Piazza



Fish at Hatchery

Photo by Richard Ashworth

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, September 22, 2:00 PM
Oatka Creek Park
Finding Fall Fungi

Saturday, September 28, 3:30 PM
Annual Picnic at BANC Sanctuary
CHARLES DARWIN LIVES!

Saturday, October 5, 10:00 AM
Slater Sanctuary, Dansville, NY
FALL FOLIAGE WALK

Sunday, October 6, 1:00 - 5:00 PM
BANC Sanctuary
Habit Restoration Day

Friday, October 11, 7:30 PM
Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality
Birding New England with author Randi Minetor

Saturday, October 19, 10:00 AM
Field Trip to Mount Hope Cemetery
FALL FOLIAGE AT MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

Sunday, October 27, 6:00 PM
BANC Sanctuary
**NAVIGATOR TWIG AND BRANCH CLEANUP
AND TRICK OR TREAT MYSTERY NIGHT**

Saturday, November 2, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
BANC Sanctuary
FALL CLEAN-UP

Friday, November 8, 7:30 PM
Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality
ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPERIENCE NIGHT