

The Tanager

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President's Message

2016 has been a very interesting year for BANC. Our programs here at St. John's Meadows featured The Iroquois Confederacy, damselflies, Ward's Science Center and the Seneca Park Zoo. In early June, BANC helped sponsor the 58th Annual Allegany Nature Pilgrimage. We are one of four upstate New York clubs to make this event possible. Later in June, several members participated in the ADK Expo at Mendon Ponds Park.

In the spring we held a Family Nature Night at the Sanctuary. Many families attended and learned about many aspects of nature --rocks, minerals and fossils, fungi and plants, insects and arachnids, and Cecropia moths. We also had a bird photo scavenger hunt. We hosted several Open Houses featuring flower arranging, tea, ice cream and books! We also held our 4th Annual John Burroughs Appreciation Day to learn more about the naturalist writer after whom our club is named.

We held several potlucks with learned nature presenters. At our Annual Picnic, Mitzi Collins and Friends played traditional British and American music. This year our field trips brought members and others to the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, Durand Eastman Park arboretum, Chimney Bluffs on Lake Ontario, Gosnell Big Woods in Webster, Macedon Erie Canal Park, and our own Slater Sanctuary in Dansville. We also held two Clean-Up Days at the Sanctuary. Many members came out to help. At both events, we were fortunate to have the help of many high-spirited and helpful teens from the Key Club of Victor High. We sent a representative to NYSOA (New York State Ornithological Association) in September.

2016 has also been a very challenging one for the BANC Council. Council member and our dear friend, Art Trimble, passed away on July 5th. He had been very active and left some pretty big shoes to fill. We voted to continue to hold meetings here at The Meadows and we welcomed Meadows resident, Dave Reynolds, as a new Council member.

We decided that it was time to amend the By-Laws and so it was accomplished by a hard-working committee. They were approved at our Annual Meeting. It was presented to the Council that some Council members thought it imperative that we have D&O Insurance – that is, Directors and Officers Liability Insurance. Some members said that many non-profit organizations carry such insurance to protect volunteer council members and felt that it was very important. We debated this issue for several meetings and finally voted on approving the motion. We will be carrying this insurance for the upcoming year. In August, Council member, Sue Robertson resigned and member, Chris Benard, will be moving to North Carolina. We will miss them both. In September, due to budget needs, the Council voted to increase individual, couple and family dues by \$5.00. Thanks to generous donations in memory of a neighbor, Christie McVicker, we have many new trees native to the area that have been planted by the Invasive Species Committee at the Sanctuary along Audubon Lane. They are coming along nicely, despite the drought that hit us this summer. Volunteers have been faithfully watering and tenderly caring for these new trees.

As you can see, many things happen at BANC. Besides the events and field trips, the Sanctuary building and grounds are well-maintained, the birdbath garden has been replanted, we have a quarterly newsletter, our events are publicized in the newspapers, we have a website and a FACEBOOK page, we present refreshments at our meetings, we put on an Annual Banquet and Annual Picnic, we have bird-feeding boxes, a library, and beautiful butterfly gardens. Somehow, all these things get done – and it is no secret.

BANC is a totally-volunteer organization. Many thanks to all of our members who have worked so hard this year! I hope that more people will become involved with helping out. Don't be shy! There is much to do and it is very rewarding! Hope to see you at January's meeting on the 13th.

Julie Clayton

NEW YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING

By Shirley Shaw and Lucretia Grosshans

This year's Birders' Conference and Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association was hosted by the Chemung Valley Audubon Society in Elmira. Rochester was well represented at this meeting. Shirley Shaw was the delegate from Burroughs Audubon and Lucretia Grosshans was the Rochester Birding Association's delegate. In addition, several local birders are active NYSOA participants: Kevin Griffith is going off the board this year but Greg Lawrence, Bob Spahn, and Shirley Shaw will serve as board members.

This year's meeting followed the group's familiar format with Friday buffet followed by workshops; Saturday's business meeting, field trips, paper session, and banquet with keynote address; and Sunday morning field trips. Brian "Fox" Ellis—an internationally renowned storyteller, author, and naturalist—impersonated John James Audubon, entertaining us with information he had gleaned from researching Audubon's journals, essays, and letters—not to mention Fox's own knowledge of birds. A workshop about being a regional editor for the *Kingbird* and a sound recording workshop followed. Saturday's paper sessions included a talk about the dubious claim that Elmira had the last sighting of the extinct Labrador Duck, Greg Lawrence's study of grassland breeding birds in the St. Lawrence River Corridor, John Confer's study of merlins nesting in the Ithaca region, Bill Ostrander's site review process for development or preservation, and a tribute to the late Max Wheat, whose poetry readings were the traditional conclusion for the paper sessions for many years. Dr. Richard Bierregaard's keynote address on his research on ospreys was both informative and entertaining.

Delegates attend to NYSOA's business at the annual meeting held Saturday morning. We elected officers, the nominating committee, and the auditing committee and heard reports from the various NYSOA committees, NYSOA officers, and the DEC.

Of special concern for our future is the NYSOA-sponsored Young Birders Club. This very active organization is supported by several clubs across the state. NYSOA board member Greg Lawrence is an alumnus of that group. One request from the Young Birders: *The group has a used book exchange to give these young people books about birds, so if you have any books you could donate, please contact either Lucretia or Shirley at 385-3907.*

In addition to the need for support for Young Birders, NYSOA would like someone from the western part of the state to help with the organization's conservation committee. NYSOA welcomes suggestions from members about areas of conservation concern where NYSOA might help.

NYSOA'S importance to the state's birding community is reflected in several initiatives. It publishes the *Kingbird*, a

journal documenting birds in the state, and a newsletter *New York Birders*. It will have a new state checklist out by the end of the year that has been revised to reflect recent taxonomic changes. It is creating a grants program for ornithological research that will be supplemental funding for items like transportation and supplies. NYSOA is represented on the steering committee that will organize the NY Breeding Bird Atlas project for 2020, and its Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) is responsible for the accurate documentation of birds that have been found in the state.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's report is one that should really interest us. We learned the status of many of the DEC's programs: Breeding Bird Atlas III to begin in 2020, Bald Eagle Conservation, Lead and Raptors, Cormorant Control, Spruce Grouse Reintroductions, Piping Plovers on Lake Ontario, Grassland Birds Conservation Strategy, and a Young Forest Initiative with plans in our area for High Tor and Rattlesnake Hill.

In the fall of 2018, NYSOA will be meeting in Rochester. A planning committee, co-chaired by Bob Spahn and Shirley Shaw, is in place, and a dedicated group of people from RBA and BANC are working with them. More volunteers will be needed when the meeting takes place to lead field trips, keep an eye on exhibits, handle check-in of attendees, welcome out-of-towners and provide them answers to their questions about getting around town, sell raffle tickets for our fund raising efforts, and more. Please plan to attend the conference and consider volunteering.



**Don't forget to register for the Allegany Nature Pilgrimage at www.alleganynaturepilgrimage.com
To reserve a tent site or cabin at the park, call 1-800
456-CAMP**

Or go to www.reserveamerica.com

A BIG THANK YOU

Thanks to Jane Stock & Ruth Morrill for their hard work and leaving the Sanctuary spotless on Cleanup Day. We continue to need more volunteers for Cleanups. The next one will be on Saturday, April 8 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

Ginny Wilterdink

Annual Picnic



Mitzie Collins and Friends

On Saturday, September 17th, thirty-five folks enjoyed our Annual Picnic at the Sanctuary. The weather was a bit "iffy", but in the afternoon, member and budding naturalist, Kathy Henrie, led many children and adults through the trails looking and listening for signs of nature. Some children also had fun on the porch with arts and crafts.

BANC held an exciting photo contest/display that Marigrace Piazza organized. Because of the threat of rain, the photos were hung up on the porch and were very pleasant to behold! All who attended the picnic were welcome to vote for their favorites. Twenty-two photos were submitted and all were quite impressive. Richard Ashworth's photo taken of The Powder Mill Park forest received the most votes. Photographers Becky Olson and Marilyn Schindler also were photo contest winners. Congratulations to Richard, Becky and Marilyn!

We had a delicious and varied potluck which is par for the course. (Thank you, members!) Following dinner, we had the opportunity to have local folk artist Mitzie Collins and her friends perform for us. Her friends were Mary Hyder on the hammered dulcimer, Andy Hanson playing the accordion and percussion and Iris Ren (all the way from Beijing) on the fiddle. Iris is a student at the U. of R. Mitzie gave us much background regarding the traditional songs and instruments. Members and guests truly enjoyed the evening!

Many thanks to Kathy Henrie and Marigrace Piazza! Also, thank you to Linda Smith and Julie Clayton for hosting the event.

Julie Clayton

Thoughts On The Coming Of Winter

I enjoy reading John Burroughs. He so thoughtfully puts into words what's on the edge of consciousness. With winter and snow and cold walks down the road approaching, I thought this apropos:

"In what bold relief stand out the lives of all walkers of the snow. The snow is a great tell-tale, and blabs as effectually as it obliterates. I go into the woods, and know all that has happened. I cross the fields, and if only a mouse has visited his neighbor, the fact is chronicled."

Enjoy your walk.

Way off on another tangent, I happened upon Survival Instructor Creek Stewart's *Willow Haven Outdoor* website a few nights ago and the feature article was "Five Make-Shift Urban Survival Lights When The Electricity Goes Down."

For hundreds of years people have used a natural fiber wick soaked in oil or rendered fat for light (think blubber melted into whale oil). One of his novel ideas combines nutrition with a light source that will last for hours. After eating a can of protein-rich sardines, Creek Stewart takes a cotton string from a mop head, soaks it in the leftover sardine oil till it's saturated. He then suggests laying the soaked mop fiber slightly over the edge of the container and lighting the end. Voila! Light!

If you have no sardines in the house, this technique can be used with fatty pieces of bacon jammed into a jar or even a can of Crisco. Jab a hole in a can of Crisco then force your cotton mop string down into the hole, dab the tip with a bit of Crisco and you are in the lighting business. Urban legend has it a three pound can of Crisco will emit light for over 30 days.

Although this info is shared with an air of levity, don't try these unless you absolutely have to. Such candles are dangerous and should be used only as a last resort.

And who is this guy who thinks this up? Creek Stewart was raised in rural Indiana and went to college to become a pharmacist. Realizing he wanted to spend his life outdoors he pursued his dream. He's in his 30's now, and after much dedication to his goal, has opened a survival school and in 2014 became host of the series *Fat Guys In The Woods*.

<http://willowhavenoutdoor.com>

Chris Benard

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD



Atlantic Salmon

Most of us are eating more seafood today because we know it is good for our health with all those Omega 3's that reduce heart attack risk, but how do we decide which seafood to buy? Do make a decision based on flavor, what has the fewest pollutants, by cost, or a combination of factors?

Sustainable seafood is seafood that is either caught or farmed in ways that consider the long-term vitality of harvested species and the well being of the oceans, as well as the livelihood of fisheries-dependent communities. Over the centuries as fishing equipment became more sophisticated, fishermen were able to be more successful, but because of that increasing success, 29% of commercial fish species have collapsed since the 1950's. The cod industry in Nova Scotia is gone and Bluefin tuna and marlin are almost extinct. Overfishing has caused the industry to switch to catching other species especially smaller fish that are farther down in the food web, but those fish are also the food of larger fish, marine animals, and birds, so those species are affected too, by our overfishing.

Industrial scale fishing creates other problems too. It has a lot of bycatch, non-target species that get caught in the nets and usually die, including endangered sea turtles, dolphins, sea birds and even whales although some fishermen use safer fishing equipment that excludes bycatch. Bottom trawling can destroy delicate habitats that provide shelter, food and breeding grounds for fish and other species. One fifth of all the seafood harvested is caught illegally.

Aquaculture or farming of fish would seem to be the answer to the declining wild fish stocks and the high cost of wild seafood. Half of all seafood sold today comes from farms and some farmed fish are very sustainable, economical, and healthy to eat. Catfish and tilapia are raised sustainably in farm ponds in the U.S., but farmed seafood imported from other countries is often raised in high-density fish farms that are overcrowded and unsanitary. They may use drugs and antibiotics that have been banned in the

U.S. to fight disease and infection and only 2% of imported seafood is inspected here.

Atlantic salmon sold in stores year-round all comes from farms. It is no longer available from the wild because those stocks have collapsed. Salmon are carnivorous fish so they are fed food pellets made from other types of fish and it takes 3 pounds of fish to raise one pound of salmon. That causes the pollutants such as PCB's, DDT, dioxins, pesticides, mercury and carcinogens to be concentrated in the salmon's flesh. Often raised in net pens out in the ocean, many farmed salmon escape and disrupt the feeding and spawning of wild salmon and spread disease and parasites to them. Excreted waste from the fish in the net pens and their uneaten food pellets can pollute the water and smother plants and animals on the sea floor. Pesticides and antibiotics used to control diseases and parasites can be discharged into the environment.

Pacific salmon, on the other hand, are doing fairly well, especially in Alaska where they carefully manage their fisheries, but wild-caught Pacific salmon are only available May through October and cost 2 to 3 times as much as farmed Atlantic salmon.

People are eating many more shrimp than they did years ago because of the availability of inexpensive farmed shrimp. A major problem with shrimp farming is the destruction of coastal mangrove forests which provide habitat for a diverse array of marine organisms, protect the coast against storms, and improve water quality by acting as a filter. Many of these mangrove forests have been cut down and replaced with ponds for shrimp farming. After a few years the accumulation of waste products and chemicals causes shrimp farmers to move on and cut a new section of mangroves, thus impacting local ecosystems. Aquaculture of shrimp can be sustainable using closed systems that filter the water and compost the wastes, but that method is more expensive.

Deciding which seafood to buy can be very complicated, but there is some help available. The Monterey Bay Aquarium has the most trusted buying guide for seafood. It is available at: www.seafoodwatch.org. Become an informed seafood shopper for your own health and the health of our oceans.

Carol Kinkelman

MEET A MEMBER SABRINA COMMISSO



One of the new Trustees elected to the BANC Executive Council at the Annual Meeting in November was Sabrina Commisso.

Sabrina is a local native, born and brought up in Greece. Like her elder sister, who now lives in Germany, she attended Greece Arcadia High School. Through the Air Force ROTC program Sabrina went to Cornell University to study civil engineering. After graduating, instead of joining the Air Force, she moved to Baltimore and served with the National Guard; she also worked for the Navy in Washington DC.

Sabrina decided to return to college for an advanced degree. Her graduate work was in geological oceanography and she conducted her field research in Jamaica. After finishing her MS in oceanography, she completed environmental impact studies for various resorts and businesses, and then was largely a “beach bum”, spending time painting and diving. It was here that her interest in birds was stimulated by assisting in the rescue and rehabilitation of illegally held parrots.

Having returned first to South Carolina and then

to Rochester, Sabrina met her husband, Robert, and agreed to live here -- if he would guarantee her an annual apportionment of beach time. They lived for a time in the city, where she fed the birds, and she worked at DEC until a serious car accident ended her full-time employment.

Robert and Sabrina now live in Pittsford with their two daughters, aged 15 and 13. Sabrina continues to enjoy finding and watching birds around the area, in her backyard and even in her home, where she has a collection of exquisite carvings by a local artist (see the photo). She works part-time at the Bird House on Monroe Avenue.

She often passed the Sanctuary on Railroad Mills Road and wondered what lay behind the small sign. Eventually she investigated and joined BANC in 2007. She has participated in field trips with Steve Daniel, but mainly enjoys the experience of quietly walking and running on the Sanctuary trails. Her interest extends beyond birds to include butterflies, among other creatures, and her future plans include joining one of the Southbys’ butterfly walks.

This will be Sabrina’s second stint on the BANC Executive Council, as she also served as a Trustee from 2013 through 2015.

Richard Ashworth

“The carpet of the newly fallen leaves looks so clean and delicate when it first covers the paths and the highways that one almost hesitates to walk upon it. Was it the gallant Raleigh who threw down his cloak for Queen Elizabeth to walk upon? See what a robe the maples have thrown down for you and me to walk upon! How one hesitates to soil it!

John Burroughs

It’s the end of the year. Don’t forget that BANC is a tax-exempt organization.

Donations to Burroughs Audubon Nature Club are always appreciated!

BANC's Other Sanctuary (Part one)

Many BANC members may not realize that our club has another nature sanctuary in addition to the 30 acres on Railroad Mills Road in Victor NY.

BANC's Elizabeth Slater Nature Sanctuary is located in the big hills south of Dansville. It is a steep quiet 90 acres of woods and gullies that the Slaters treasured as their own sanctuary, and eventually donated it to BANC to preserve as such. Elizabeth was president of BANC from 1953 to 1956. She and her husband Floyd planted hundreds of trees throughout the property.

In the several decades since those times, now left in wild abandon, the various tree plantations have matured and become a giant woods and nursery, a jumble of oaks, hemlocks, maples, hickories, larches, pines, spruce, cherries, locust, hawthorns, sumac and more.

The only trails are deer trails that criss-cross the woods and gullies. The deer trails, tree plantations and gullies give a sense of direction to any happy wanderer with strong legs and a sense of adventure.

A giant cottonwood tree stands above a small gully to the west, and a lovely grove of shagbark hickories stands above a rocky side gully. Tall stands of pine are soft underfoot from years of accumulated pine straw. The few small clearings are slowly being overtaken by vegetation.

In autumn, the whole area is a riot of color, and the larches stand out in yellow splendor before shedding their needles.

Past field trips have found blue gentians, great blue lobelia, small yellow sundrops, fringed polygala, ladies' tresses, pink azalea and yellow fern-leaved foxglove. Shrubs, both wild and cultivated, include witch hazel, elderberry, five-leaved aralia, forsythia, wild rose and daphne plus ferns, mushrooms and British soldiers lichen have also been found.

Birds seen include ruffed grouse, hawks, turkeys, woodpeckers, chickadees, bluejays, titmice, nuthatches and warblers. Along with deer and raccoons, an occasional bear and flying squirrels have been reported.

The Slaters built a little cabin alongside the main gully, and a quaint tiny glass cabin built from recycled glass windows. This overlooks the steep rocky sides of the small stream. After decades of disuse, however, the only occupants are mice and chipmunks.

The Slater Sanctuary is posted and is uphill on the north side of Kiefer Hollow Road, a few miles southeast of Dansville. The access lane is about midway along the property, through a very narrow entrance, over a culvert and through dense greenery along the east side of the stream of the main gully. It ascends to a rough turnaround in an overgrown fork. Here, the left fork continues over a dirt track, up a few hundred yards to dead end at the cabin. The non-drivable right fork is a power company right-of-way up to the large east-west power line through the area. It offers a grand view. From there, BANC's sanctuary continues even more steeply uphill and contains a very deeply cut section of the main gully.

A BANC field trip is usually held annually. Able-bodied members are always welcome to help re-post signs and keep the lane accessible. Note, no hunting, no dogs and no collecting is allowed on the Slater Nature Sanctuary. Wear safety orange in hunting season.

Hopefully, BANC's Slater Nature Sanctuary can remain forever wild, quietly facing the seasons and offering peace.

Joanne Altre



Milbert's Tortoiseshell - Photo by David Southby



Field Trip 10-5-16

Photo by John Gordon

BANC's Other Sanctuary (Part two)

In part one of "BANC's Other Sanctuary" Joanne Altre wrote about BANC's Slater Nature Sanctuary, near Dansville. Here is some more information about that beautiful property.

On October 5, 2016, Paul Brach and Dean Clayton led a field trip to the Slater property. It was a beautiful sunny fall day. BANC members Joanne Altre and Carol Hinkelman talked about how they met in 1986 on a field trip to the area, on an outing called the Gentian Convention, led by (now deceased) Bonnie Glickman for the Rochester Academy of Science. Joanne talked about a small wetland on the Slater property with blue lobelia and a giant cottonwood tree. She also described the beautiful ridges and stream gullies she has traversed while exploring the property.

We all walked along one of these and up to an area with a power line. This area was open and sunny with several butterflies, including an Eastern Comma, two Sulphurs and the highlight of the day, a Milbert's Tortoiseshell, spotted by Dave Southby. This is a butterfly with a more northern range and we rarely see them in our area. They had been found in several locations during 2016 and it is always a treat to find this showy butterfly. We also found pussy toes growing among the low vegetation on the open ridge and saw a deer.

Other stories were told about all the trees (15,000) that were planted by the Slaters to convert areas of open land into the beautiful forest we have there today. The list of wildflowers that the Slaters originally found at the property suggests that there were also established woodlands, because many of the flowers mentioned grow only in woodlands that have had little or no logging.

The following information is taken directly from an undated document written by the Slaters as part of an invitation for BANC members at the time to visit "Slater Acres."

"When we acquired these parcels in 1958 and 1962 we found such natives as trailing arbutus, pinkster azalea, fringed polygala, candy-root (Editor's note, this is a type of milkwort) gerardia, penstemon, lupine, shinleaf, partridge berries, wintergreens, grape and sweet-ferns, leather-leaf, British soldiers, sphagnum, lycopodium, Shadberries, dogwood, Mountain maple, moosewoods (Editor's note, a type of maple) and tupelo.

We have planted about 15,000 trees (mostly conifers), shrubs, vines, ferns, nuts and wildflowers -- and have whip-grafted hundreds of improved scions on wild crabs, apples and pears which bear fruit for man and beast.

Each spring brings bluebirds and tree swallows to our birdhouses. Red-tailed hawks nest in pine trees back on the hill high above the brook -- look and listen for them and for the pileateds. Suet feeders bring downies, chickadees, nuthatches and bluejays the year 'round.

We wonder if you have ever seen as many lush patches of fringed gentians flowering in September and October. We spend many hours each autumn dispersing their seeds in fresh moist areas where it seems likely that they may germinate and be happy."

Carol Southby

Note for the record from Joanne Altre 11/8/2016: One stone survey monument is in the woods on the upper edge of the right-of-way where the property crosses at an angle. Another survey monument is at the ultimate height of land at the edge of a farmer's field. Also, one pipe marker is at the east end of the property, several feet up from Kiefer Hollow Road. A survey had been done by a son of (now deceased) member Ione Dutton.



Slater buildings with members relaxing Photo by John Gordon

The Tanager

**Burroughs Audubon
Nature Club
c/o John E. Gordon
126 Ayrault Rd.
Fairport, NY 14450**

TO:

**If you haven't renewed
Your membership,
Please do it now**

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, January 13, 7:30 PM
St. John's Meadows
NATURAL NEW ZEALAND
Presenters: Carol & David Southby**

**Friday, February 10, 7:30 PM
St. John's Meadows
SOUTH AFRICAN BIRDS AND ANIMALS
Presenter: Dr. Victor Poleshuck**

**Wednesday, March 8, 9:00 AM
Irondequoit Bay Outlet
LATE WINTER DUCKS
Leader: Janet Miles, 787-0507**

**Friday, March 10, 7:30 PM
St. John's Meadows
WARNER CASTLE REINVENTED
Presenter: Milli Piccione**