



Friends of the Burchfield Nature & Art Center
2017 Annual Report
October 2016– September 2017

Friends of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center mission statement:
*Serve community interests in art, recreation, music, history and nature
by providing a welcoming and educational facility.*

The Volunteers of Burchfield Nature and Art Center continued their mission over the past year by focusing attention on the parklands and using the grounds to their greatest potential. This assured that the BNAC remained a prominent Western New York destination. The number of visitors to the park continued to grow. Aside from the local people who walk to the park, there is usually a full parking lot from dawn to dusk. Many of those visitors have inquired about the building. The BNAC Gallery was a significant part of the facility's attraction until January 2017 when the building's structural problems made it imperative that it be closed.

With or without the building, volunteers are at the heart of each year's accomplishments.

This year volunteers donated over 3,100 hours.

Art:

The West Seneca Art Society 2016 Fall Exhibit in October attracted many artists and visitors. The Annual Photography Contest in November brought in 113 entries. Photographers and guests shared techniques and thoughts about the images. During the nicer weather, artistic activities continued in the park. Artist Frank O'Connor continued work on his Painted Wood Sculpture with the help of visitors. Painted Rock projects also had people sharing their work throughout the park.

With the gallery closed, artists and visitors lost the opportunity to gather and share common interests in the gallery setting. This year we were not able to stage previously planned exhibits for the Burchfield Woodcarvers (February), Crosstown Quilters Needle Art (March), West Seneca Art Society (April and October), Native American Art (May), Viewfinders Photography Gallery (June) and Paper Cuts (August). The Gallery had been booked into 2019 and all exhibits had to be cancelled.



Events and Activities:

The BNAC is unique in its ability to pull people together to enjoy the wonders of art, nature and history. These activities contribute to a sense of community. A Wood Carving Seminar was held in October. In December David McQuay gave a slide presentation on Ice Volcanoes on Lake Erie. Guests wrote notes and signed greeting cards that were delivered to the Veterans Hospital. Food and commodities were collected for the West Seneca Food Pantry. In December a Holiday Open House drew about 100 people to enjoy activities and refreshments in the festive atmosphere of the building. In May the annual Seneca Nation Treaty Commemoration Ceremony brought home the importance of local history and cultural awareness. In July people enjoyed the annual Enchanted Forest event. Families gathered to make butterfly wishes, build fairy houses, listen to stories, dance to the music and to create magical crafts. Wonderful Wednesdays entertained the children with crafts and games in July and August. The Summer Concert Series brought music to the park throughout July and into August. Concerts were sponsored through the generous support of the West Seneca Rotary, Town Councilman Gene Hart, the West Seneca Woman's Club, DMD Builders, the West Seneca Federal Credit Union, Dolores Mendolia, and M&T Bank. We were also fortunate to receive a generous grant from the Arts Service Initiative of WNY which helped make the concerts possible. Visitors from across Western New York and beyond came to enjoy all that the BNAC offers.

Some events were lost with the building closure. We could not support the Seneca Nation Luncheon, the BNAC Tea Party, Discovery Camps, Sunday in the Park (fundraising event), various classes and meetings and the Native Artists Vendor Day.

Gardens and Grounds:

In November 2016 the West Seneca Environmental Commission arranged for the BNAC to receive fourteen new trees to replace the ash trees lost to Emerald Ash Borer. With additional donations, 20 trees in all were planted this year. The April Earth Day event, in conjunction with Riverkeepers, had a spectacular turnout of volunteers cleaning up the park. The Eagle Scouts built a Sharing Library, levelled the garbage containers, repaired doggie bag holders and made improvements to historical signs. A Rest Room sign was placed on the Comfort Station. Efforts in the woodlands continued to promote growth of young trees. Renovations were completed on two gardens. Plans are underway to make the gardens more self-sustaining, pollinator friendly and historically appropriate. The beauty of the park attracted twelve weddings this year. Volunteers helped people schedule private events such as weddings and group gatherings. This prevents conflicts and eases the use of the park facilities. It allows us to make people aware of restrictions and responsibilities.



Public Relations:

Having lost the opportunity to interact and share information with visitors to the gallery, we have had to rely on our Facebook page, Web site and the media for promotion. The *BurchfieldNAC* Facebook page now has over 1,770 friends. Local TV stations and newspapers have covered activities and did special features about the building. Public radio WBFO produced a ten minute segment about Charles Burchfield which featured the BNAC and included interviews with volunteers. We reached out to the community with promotions at Villa Maria College, the West Seneca Farmer's Market, and Night Out. Volunteers take every opportunity to promote the facilities. We also work with other community service and cultural groups to form a network of support that serves everyone involved. This year we were fortunate to work with the Arts Service Initiative, the West Seneca Rotary, Scouts, the Key Club, West Seneca YES, the West Seneca Woman's Club, the Amana Garden Club, the Transit Road Day Habilitation Program, the Historical Society, the West Seneca Police, the West Seneca Art Society, the West Seneca Senior Center, the Seneca Nation and the Buffalo Niagara River Keepers.

THE FRIENDS OF THE BNAC WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE TOWN OF WEST SENECA FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT. THE STAFF FROM HIGHWAYS AND BUILDINGS & GROUNDS TAKE PRIDE IN THE FACILITY AND ASSURE THAT THE PARKLANDS ARE WELL-KEPT. THEY ALSO PATIENTLY WORKED WITH THE VOLUNTEERS AS WE PACKED AND MOVED MATERIALS AND SET UP TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE AT THE METZ HOUSE. THE WEST SENECA SENIOR CENTER HAS BEEN GRACIOUS IN ACCOMMODATING VOLUNTEER MEETINGS AND EXHIBITS. THE WEST SENECA POLICE DEPARTMENT'S INVOLVEMENT AND OVERSIGHT HAVE KEPT THE PARK SAFE FOR VISITORS. WE HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT OUR TOWN BOARD IS WORKING TOWARD THE RESOLUTION OF THE BNAC BUILDING PROBLEMS AND LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING THE COMMUNITY FROM THAT LOCATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

