



Friends of the Burchfield Nature & Art Center
2016 Annual Report
October 2015 – September 2016

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 popularity of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center has continued to grow with visitors and tour groups coming from many communities in Western New York as well as other states and Canada. Visitors enjoy the parkland with its natural beauty and rich history. The gallery has gained popularity as people become more aware of the changing exhibits and variety of local talent on display. The uniqueness of the facility has led many out of town visitors to comment “I wish we had something like this where I live.”

Art

Art is an active component of the BNAC. A new sign on the front of the building, clearly defines the location of the art gallery. New lighting fixtures and the expanded hanging system allow for the better display of art works. The BNAC gallery exhibits from October 2015 through September 2016 included local painters, carvers, photographers, Native American art and fiber artists.

Volunteers are gathering information, pictures, and memorabilia for a new permanent exhibit “A Tribute to Charles E Burchfield”. Acquisition of materials is on-going and the exhibit will be on display for the public to enrich their knowledge of the legacy of Charles E Burchfield. A trip to the Burchfield Penney Art Center in October 2015 sponsored by Supervisor Meegan helped volunteers gain a better perspective on the man and his art.

Artist Frank O'Connor continues his work on a creative sculpture in the park. Visitors look forward to seeing him incorporate nature and art. The West Seneca Art Society holds monthly meetings and demonstrations in the classroom and sponsors two gallery exhibits a year. Artistic creativity is encouraged through BNAC sponsored children's activities like Wonderful Wednesdays on the patio in the summer and Wonder Camps during school breaks. Classes and presentations on woodcarving, floral design, basket making, photography and art techniques were popular.



Events

The BNAC invites the public to enjoy a variety of events. Simple pleasures of the season were enjoyed at The Holiday Open House. Earth Day brought many groups of people into the Park for Spring Clean-Up. An overflow crowd gathered for the Annual Seneca Nation Treaty Commemoration ceremony. The community looks forward to the family friendly Sunday in the Park and Enchanted Forest events. Tuesday evening Summer Concert were well attended. Concert sponsorship and grants enabled the addition of one more Tuesday evening performance and a Sunday afternoon performance. The Americana Music Festival was this year's new event. Local musicians contributed their talents including the first public appearance of the NEW West Seneca Town Band.

Community

Community outreach and participation has evolved. The website (Burchfieldnac.org) and Facebook page provide more information that draws people to the facility. The Facebook page now has over 1600 followers. Local TV stations and newspapers continue to cover events and have featured the parklands. The Buffalo Spree named the Burchfield Nature and Art Center as one of the best family-friendly hiking areas. Our Website is now followed by prominent websites such as IloveNY.com

At the BNAC, interest in art, history, and nature is fostered by the many groups that share the facility: Burchfield Woodcarvers, the South Towns and Amana Garden Clubs, the West Seneca Art Society, the Crosstown Quilters, the Common Threads yarn spinners and the West Seneca Environmental Commission. The

West Seneca Woman's Club, West Seneca Rotary, West Seneca Chamber of Commerce, scout troops, Transit Road Day Habilitation program, school students and many local businesses contribute to the success of our efforts. The groups share their knowledge, talent and energy.

Parklands

The nature trails and gardens provide never-ending opportunities and challenges. Thanks to Eagle Scout projects, we were able to make improvements in the pergola area including a brick paver inlay. Another scout project leveled all the concrete benches. After years of deterioration and vandalism, the gazebo was repaired by the scouts. They also landscaped the Union Road side of the Metz house, giving this historic home the respect it deserves.

Volunteers and community service workers made garden improvements as we move slowly toward gardens that are less labor intensive and more beautiful. School groups joined the effort by mulching and clearing gardens in the early spring. Earth Day, in cooperation with the Riverkeepers, cleaned the park and cleared limbs. The Mormon Elders played a vital role in helping to control the wild grapevines that can strangle trees. Maintaining healthy woodlands is vital to support the new tree growth that will eventually replace the dying ash trees. The volunteers purchased tree seedlings that were planted and nurtured by town summer workers.



Pokemon Go brought new people to the park dramatically increasing the litter. Town employees and volunteers spent hours cleaning up. We were grateful when our regular park visitors stepped up and led by example – picking up litter as they enjoyed their daily walk. This is truly a community park.

Education

Brochures and leaflets relevant to Charles Burchfield, the history of Gardenville, park trees, birds in the park, and the Burchfield placards in the park have been updated and are now available to visitors. Many of the brochures, the park map, the facility brochure and the area history are also available on the BNAC website. School children, garden clubs and adult groups have enjoyed tours of the facility provided by volunteers. Having volunteers available in the gallery gives visitors a resource for gaining information.



Volunteers

The events, classes, and grounds improvements that make the BNAC a popular destination are the result of the efforts and dedication of the BNAC volunteers. This year the volunteers spent over 5,878 hours planning, organizing, and implementing activities that allow people to enjoy the wonders of art and nature. By engaging people from all ages, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, we continue to meet the mission of our organization.

Thanks

The Friends of the BNAC appreciate the support and encouragement received from Town of West Seneca. Town officials have provided guidance in managing this thriving facility. The Highway Department and Buildings and Grounds staff have accommodated many of our suggested changes and improvements.

We would also like to thank the BNAC members for their on-going support. Grants from the Arts Services Initiative of WNY and the New York State Council on the Arts and the Music Performance Trust Fund helped to fund the concert series as did donations from: WNY Federal Credit Union, West Seneca Woman's Club, Dolores Mendolia, West Seneca Rotary, Gene Hart and DMD Builders. Thanks also to the Guitar Factory for their support for the Americana Music Festival.

