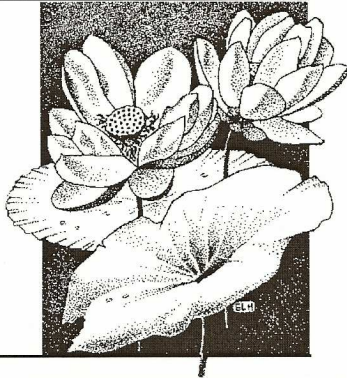


Lotus

NEWSLETTER
of the
NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



February 2008

Meeting Notes:

December 2007 Meeting

On December 16, the upstairs rooms at the Blue Elephant were taken over by the NFN for a "Dinner and a Movie Night".

The door prize, a copy of "Trees of the Carolinian Forest" by Gerry Waldron, was won by Jim Harlow.

Those present enjoyed a delicious variety of Thai/Canadian foods at the buffet and then watched Al Gore's Academy Award-winning film "An Inconvenient Truth", sub-titled "A Global Warning". It was a persuasive film and the points made were well illustrated and explained. I highly recommend it to anyone who has not yet seen it.

Ed Note: Last October, the Toronto Star ran an article about British High Court Judge Michael Burton who was asked to rule on the film by someone who did not want the film shown to students. He ruled that it could be shown, provided Gore's views were not promoted uncritically and specifically mentioned nine scientific errors or omissions. His judgements included statements that melting ice could rise up to 6.1 metres only over thousands of years; that although there is general scientific agreement that the rise in temperatures reflects the rise in CO2, the graphs shown do not establish what Gore asserts;

Norfolk County Forest Capital of Canada - 2008



At 5pm on Tues., Jan. 8, the Council Chamber gallery was filled with visitors to hear Dave McKee, the town Crier, read the Lieutenant-Governor's Proclamation making Norfolk County the Forest Capital of Canada for 2008.

Dolf Wynia acted as Master of Ceremonies and introduced the speakers. Dave Lemkay, manager of the Canadian Forestry Association in Ottawa, was instrumental in designating Norfolk the forest capital and brought the proclamation from Ottawa. John McNeil, Forester for Oakville (the forest capital in 2007) presented a carving made from a red pine log recovered from the bottom of the Ottawa River, which will remain in Norfolk for 2008 and then be passed on to the 2009 and future capitals.

Diane Finley, MP, and Toby Barrett, MPP, extended congratulations. At the close of the ceremonies, a replica of the logo, mounted on a council chamber podium, was unveiled.

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that the disappearance of Kilimanjaro's snows cannot be definitely attributed to human-induced climate change and that separating the impacts of stresses due to climate change from other stresses such as overfishing and pollution was difficult. The article did not state his qualifications to make these assertions in spite of the findings of recent scientific conferences. (I couldn't help wondering whether he was positioning himself to apply for the job as Stephen Harper's Science Advisor ????)

December Sightings: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bohemian Waxwing, three Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Shrike, Golden Eagle, Northern Hawk-Owl at Stoney Creek and the Black-throated Gray and Yellow-throated Warbler rarities at Port Burwell were mentioned.

January 2007 Meeting

Announcements:

Sightings: With the spring-like temperatures, toads are being seen. A flock of 6 Northern Flicker, Belted Kingfisher, and Hoary Redpoll were reported. George Pond mentioned that Port Burwell initiated a Christmas count in 2007 and its first records included the Black-throated Gray Warbler and Yellow-throated Warbler rarities which are being found in close proximity to each other. What a first count!

Christmas Bird Counts: David Okines reported that the CBCs this year were greatly affected by the heavy storms we experienced. Woodhouse encountered heavy snow, Fisherville - heavy rain, and Long Point's might well be the highest Ontario count in 2007 because it was held the day before the worst storm, while other high count areas such as Kingston experienced the storm on their count days.

Arthur Langford Nature Reserve: Al Robinson, reporting for Peter Carson, reminded members of the location of the new reserve - on Road 23, 5 km north of Road 60 - and said that all but \$61,000 has been received. The reserve will become a reality on January 31, 2008.

New NFN Web Site: The web site is under construction and the new address will be published in Lotus when it is ready. It will be carrying the information about the upcoming events now only found in the brochure and newsletter.

St. Williams Conservation Reserve: Ruth Loughton announced that the St. Williams Forestry Station has now become the St. Williams Conservation Reserve and will be operated by the MNR and a Community Council. In the reserve, natural heritage will take priority over everything, but, previous activities on the property will be permitted to continue, e.g. hunting, fishing, ATV's, etc. The council is discussing designating areas for ATV's and questions regarding the logging of pines on the reserve. Signs have been erected along bordering roads but none will appear on Highway 24 as that portion is owned by ForestCare (to the south bank of the pond). The relevant documents can be found in Environmental Bill of Rights. Type "St. Williams Conservation Reserve" into the search bar on page <http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/> Click on the links in the various folders; they lead to supporting documents.

Pathways for People: Ruth Loughton also outlined a "heart help" program being planned to get people out to walk and to increase the number of trails. A booklet will be distributed across Norfolk in March showing existing trails. Cross-county representation is being sought for the program planning.

Reducing Our Footprint: Tom Campbell explained that, 20 years ago, recycling was introduced as the first step in "reducing our footprint". Conservation Council of Ontario has developed a 5-year plan outlining the next steps that should be taken. These require individuals and local groups to organize and campaign for further footprint reduction. Their objective is that all in the province be aware of the the program by the end of 2008. *(Ed Note: See Tom's article on page 6 of this issue. He is looking for people to help with this program and will need a lot of help to communicate the goals of the program to everyone in Norfolk within 2008 and persuade them to participate by the end of 2009.)*

Book about St. Williams Forestry Station: Harry Barrett has been instrumental in preparing a book about the forestry station that will be released at a Forest Capital of Canada event celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding. Based on a motion (moved by Anne Wynia and seconded by Alex Langdon), the members unanimously agreed they wished to support the publication of the book, along with other groups. The details of the amount and the arrangements are to be determined by the Board.

January Speakers

The January speakers were Dave Reid from the MNR who serves on the Norfolk Land Stewardship Council as Stewardship Co-ordinator for Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) and Bryan Gilvesy, who owns the Y-U Ranch south of Tillsonburg, a Norfolk pilot project for ALUS.

Dave Reid explained that the original idea for ALUS, originated in Manitoba, has been adapted for the Norfolk proposal.



Canada is a long way behind other countries such as The USA, Australia, Costa Rica, etc., who began providing incentives to reward farmers "to do the right thing" in the 1980's and now have protected water sources and made other environmental improvements.

ALUS, a new concept for Canada developed at Univ. of Guelph, is needed because responsibility for the environment is shared between the public and farmers on private land for resources such as air, water, soil, trees, wildlife, etc. This sharing of responsibility for resources on private land forms the basis for ALUS. Funding for ALUS is obtained from a multitude of nature, environmental and government sources.

ALUS recognizes and provides incentives to participating farmers who practise good land stewardship to help protect the environment for all of us. This is a grass-roots (rather than a government top-down) approach, which offers annual payments, tax reductions, expertise and sharing of start-up costs with farmers who join the program. An average of \$150/acre per year is paid for land converted to agricultural conservation. It is totally voluntary, flexible, and can be applied to up to 20% of farmed land.

A pilot project was carried out to protect Delhi's drinking water by buffering the banks of South Creek between Courtland and Delhi. Thirty sites needed buffering and ALUS offered annual payments rather than a lump sum. Within a year, 26 of the 30 sites were buffered, an excellent example of the kinds of Alternative Land Use Services that can be provided by farmers.

Bryan Gilvesy, a former tobacco farmer, talked about what he had done on his demo farm where 100 head of Texas Longhorn cattle are now raised. He mentioned how farms used to have windbreaks and treelines which are now being taken out to get big equipment in to fields. One of his approaches is to create windbreaks with switchgrass, which also creates bird and wildlife connector corridors between woodlots. Bryan particularly liked the fact that ALUS is locally driven and undertaken by farmers working with farmers (rather than by government intervention) and offers incentives to farmers.



One of his major undertakings was to eliminate a creek crossing that the cattle used. Access to the crossing and a pond was fenced, a solar panel was installed to pump water to a cattle trough and a dam was converted to bottom draw. All this results in cleaner creek water, less CO2 and better fish habitat, particularly because the cattle no longer access the creek. He also put up 30 bluebird boxes to help control insects naturally without chemicals.

An 8-acre vacant field was sown in prairie grass, which, 4 months later, gave an alternative source of food for the cattle. It was left untouched until after mid-July to permit birds to nest in it undisturbed. Below ground, massive root systems store carbon and filter water. Not only does this planting clean carbons from the atmosphere, it provides a source of feed that survives drought and offers wildlife habitat. Bryan thought his cattle would not like it as the stems were tall and coarse; to his surprise, he saw them leave the field to get water and walk back though the alfalfa (which he thought they would prefer) to eat the prairie grass. They eat it top down, taking the big blue-stem first, then the Indian and switch grasses.

Bryan operates wagon tours of his demo site and has received Local Food Plus Certification for his beef, which is a step beyond organic farming. Local consumers benefit from knowing their purchases support the local economy, improve land sustainability and meet high social and environmental standards.

Questions asked of Bryan included how much the bottom-draw improved the water temperature (now down to 22C in summer) and initiated discussion of

the recent article in the Toronto Star that talked about Bryan's planting legumes to create a food supply for wild bees, whose numbers are diminishing. He also has found a Goshawk feeding on wild grouse, now making a comeback on the farm.

Questions were asked of Dave about the receptiveness of farmers to ALUS. For example, why was not 100% of South Creek buffered and why would farmers want more wildlife when deer and coons now eat their crops? There is still skepticism about the project but the farmer-to-farmer approach is working. It will take some time but ALUS is not encountering the defensiveness it might if the program were being introduced bureaucratically. Dave noted that transition to organic farming requires a 3-year protection of the soil but the natural plantings encouraged by ALUS can begin at once. There are now 4 farms in the program and other farmers applying to enroll.

Ontario Nature's Youth Writing Contest

From Ontario Nature Network News - Jan. 15/08

Sponsored by Waste Management, this annual writing contest is open to Ontario grade 7 and 8 students. It can be an essay, a story, or a piece of creative writing, with a maximum count of 700 words, typed and double-spaced. This year's topic is: [How is Climate Change Affecting You and Your Community?](#)

The top three entries will be published in ON Nature magazine, receive cool prizes and be honoured for their achievement at Ontario Nature's Annual General Meeting in Kirkfield on June 7th, 2008.

Send your child's or grandchild's original entry by March 3, 2008 to:

Youth Writing Contest
Ontario Nature
366 Adelaide Street West
Suite 201
Toronto, ON
M5V 1R9

Make sure you have a title page showing the child's name, address, phone number, email address, parent's or guardian's name, the grade (7 or 8) and the name of the writer's school.

For complete contest rules or to learn more about Ontario Nature visit their website at <http://www.ontarionature.org/events/challenge.html>

Great Backyard Bird Count February 15 - 18, 2008

From Birdsource / gbbc

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.



Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Count web site <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery.

In 2007, participants reported a record-breaking 11 million birds of 616 species. They submitted more than 80,000 checklists, an all-time record for the ten years of the count.

It's as easy as **1, 2, 3!**

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes during February 15–18, 2008. Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like—just keep a separate list of counts for each day and / or location.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time, and write it down. (You can get regional bird checklists at the web site.)

3. Enter your results through the web page.

Try it yourself or with your kids or grandkids.



New Members

Look for our newest members at meetings and say "hello" to them. We welcome:

Claudia Jaspert & Shawn Gibbon

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas

Anne Davidson

On Sunday, February 10, 2008, a number of us who contributed to the new edition of the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario (2001-2005) will be heading to Toronto for the publication launch celebration being held at the Royal Ontario Museum (the ROM).



The original volume contained the results of the 5-year data collection period from 1981 through 1985. It published accounts of each species along with detailed maps showing possible, probable or confirmed breeding locations of the species in each 10km square mapped out for Ontario.

The new volume, built on the earlier work, now shows changes from the previous study. For each tiny grid, it identifies, not only whether species were found in the 2001-2005 study, but locations where species were found for the first time in this study, or, alternatively, where they were not found breeding this time but were found in the previous study. We are all anxious to obtain our pre-ordered copies at the launch to have a good look at these comparisons.

As an added bonus, we are pleased to have the opportunity to visit the new crystal at the ROM, where part of the celebration will be held, and get together again with other birders we worked with to obtain the data for the new edition.

In Memorium - Donald H. Baldwin

Don Baldwin, a member of NFN, passed away on December 22, 2007, in his 74th year. Don was one of the founding pioneers of Long Point Bird Observatory in 1960, whose early vision developed into what we see today. A few years ago Don and his wife Maureen returned to Port Rowan and Don could often be found at LPBO's Old Cut field station watching birds, observing banding, or reminiscing about the early years of LPBO. He will be fondly remembered and missed by those who knew him.

IMBY (In My Back Yard) - Animal Tracking

Ontario Nature network news - Jan 15 2008

For family outings, adding a tracking element to the journey is a great idea. For youngsters, the additional opportunity for discovery and the use of their imagination will keep them interested and occupied.

People leave evidence of their travels ... footprints, crumbs on the table, a bed left unmade. Animals do the same. If we are observant enough we can even learn to tell the story from clues that are left behind. As we learn about animal 'signs', we soon learn to tell who the visitor was. It may even be possible to infer a bit about the purpose of its journey.

What is tracking? It refers to the study of animal tracks (marks left behind by moving animals), their prints and gait patterns, animal sign (could be scratch marks left by a bear on a tree) and scat identification (droppings). Even on the coldest of mid-winter days, with or without snow, if we look closely, we will see signs of animal activity. This is our opportunity to get out on those snowshoes and cross-country skis.

What do we need? We only need our eyes, ears and an ability to walk softly and slowly. A tracking guidebook, maybe a magnifying glass, a digital camera and a few ziplock bags will also come in handy. Really all we need is the willingness to look carefully.



Developing animal tracking 'skills' and the ability to actually follow signs and locate an animal can take a long time, and include many hours of silent observation. The wonderful thing, however, is that the enjoyment and excitement starts on day one as you spot that first indication of an unknown (yet to be discovered) guest. Information regarding the specifics of track size, gait, etc. can be widely found on the internet. There are also some very good tracking guides available.

So slow down next time you are outside. Rather than craning your binoculars only on the skies and treetops, take a moment to look down and focus on the little things, the broken twigs, and the tiny depressions in the snow.

These are today's clues that could lead to tomorrow's first hand discoveries.

We Conserve

Tom Campbell

We Conserve is a five-year program developed by the Conservation Council of Ontario. The goal is to change Ontario into a conservator society in order to reduce our ecological footprint.

This program builds on improvements we have made to date and takes us further along the path to achieving true sustainability.

As a geographer and teacher I have been a sustainability since the mid 1960's, but did not use the term until the late 1990's. It is a comprehensive term appropriate for a generalist, describing an advocate of sustainability; a person with interdisciplinary interests/skills who studies the interrelationships linking society, the economy and the environment.

Involved with sustainability since 1987, I have lobbied and/or supported local and provincial governments in several areas. With the 1987-90 Waste Watchers committee of NFN, I helped market the idea of recycling in our region. NFN helped the H-N Region launch one of Ontario's most successful recycling programs.

Between 1992-95, I organized the Haldimand-Norfolk Round Table on Environment and Economy, and was chair until 1995 when the Ontario Round Table was disbanded by the Provincial Government. In 1993-4, we prepared the first Constitution for a Local Round Table in Canada, worked with local government to produce the booklet "Towards Zero Waste" for our region, lobbied for ecotourism and conservation. The Round Table successfully lobbied local and provincial government for permission to display marine artifacts from the SS Atlantic. These artifacts are now displayed at the Port Dover Marine Museum.

In 1994 I served as a member of provincial committee which planned a 3 day workshop on a Healthy, Sustainable Ontario. I also wrote a brief and lobbied successfully with others to save St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton.

From 1998-2007, I helped to form and then chaired SPAN (Smoke-free Places Action Network), lobbied government and the public for smoke-free public places in Haldimand and Norfolk and helped design a Second-hand Smoke Prescription Form for doctors.

Between 1998-2007, I worked on my personal ecological footprint. I no longer eat meat, try to waste less, consume less, keep my home and garden toxic free, and drive less. But, my footprint is still too large. I am now focussing my attention on the next things we need to do to reduce our personal, county and provincial footprint.

We Conserve's five-year plan establishes goals for each year from 2008-2012. The campaign requires a strong network of local communities with local action networks including schools, faith, cultural and other membership groups, all working to achieve the yearly goals.

In 2008 the goal is to inform everyone and get them involved by working in three directions. We will use social marketing to reach individuals to persuade them to make a personal commitment to conserve. In the retail sector, we will work to obtain commitment from stores, restaurants, leading companies and business associations. In the municipal sector, we will support municipal leadership in conservation efforts.

In 2009 the goal is to have everyone in and committed to the plan - individuals, families, business and government.

In 2010 the goal is to have community programs organized - community networks, fundraising programs, support services for marketing - that will lead to..... **the 2012 goal**, that of having effected a noticeable change, a transition toward a conserver society and a smaller ecological footprint for Ontario.

The vision for Norfolk County is to make Norfolk a conserver society with a high standard of living achievable through a sustainable economy. The immediate goal is to start setting up a community action network in Norfolk County to reduce our ecological footprint.

The ten priorities to reduce Norfolk County's ecological footprint (adapted from provincial guidelines) are to:

- 1. Save Energy:**
Change light bulbs, audit energy use, retrofit buildings, turn off unneeded power.
- 2. Use Green Power:**
Prepare a list of wind and solar power options for homes and businesses.
- 3. Help Nature:**
Naturalize gardens and neighbourhood landscapes; plant trees, reduce pesticide.

4. **Save Water:**
Convert homes / businesses to low-flow technology, collect rainwater in barrels.
5. **Drive Less:**
Reduce Norfolk County's carbon footprint. Lobby for local bus service. Car pool. Reduce higher speeds to save fuel.
6. **Live Local:**
Lobby for more compact, liveable communities and neighbourhoods.
7. **Eat Local:**
Increase the amount of local and organic food we eat. Move towards relocalization of agriculture and food processing which will also support local farmers.
8. **Buy Green:**
Food, clothing, shelter, travel, entertainment.
9. **Waste Less:**
Improve Recycling, Reduce use of plastic bags, excessive packaging) and Reuse.
10. **Prevent Pollution:**
Reduce the use of hazardous materials in homes and improve their safe disposal (e.g. Compact fluorescent bulbs).

This project is a logical follow-up to the 2006 "Building a Sustainable Norfolk" workshop and the public is more aware than ever of global and local sustainability problems (e.g., economic, climate change, peak oil, etc.). The Conservation Council of Ontario has guidelines for the program at: <http://www.weconserve.ca/are you in.pdf>

I believe the first thing we should do is form an ad hoc committee of Norfolk residents to get things started and then hold a public meeting in late February or early March to organize a community action network of various groups (i.e., Agriculture, faith groups, business, education, service clubs, municipal representative, news media and other organizations such as NFN and LPWBR).

I see 2008 as a year of publicity and organizing, with articles and speaking engagements being needed to make people aware of the program.

I will be looking for a lot of help this year to get things started. Please contact me if you are interested in helping with this program.

My telephone number is **519-426-3387**

My email address is **tomcamp@simcom.on.ca**

Earth Hour - March 29, 2008

8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Let's Join In!

On January 19, the Toronto Star featured a movement to increase, around the world, heightened awareness of the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gases and pollution by turning lights off for one hour to demonstrate how much we can do by being more aware of the effects of using energy.

The idea was initiated in Sydney, Australia last year, in a country heavily reliant on coal for electric power. Nearly 2.3 million Australians joined in and, during their 2007 Earth Hour, kept 25,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. According to the organizers of the 2008 Global Earth Hour, one of which is the World Wildlife Fund, this reduction was the equivalent of taking 48,000 cars off the road for an hour.

For Earth Hour, each participating location sets its own goals for reduced energy demand and Toronto has established a target of 5% which would be a reduction of 170 megawatts, the equivalent of 1.7 million 100-watt lightbulbs. To reach the goal, companies and residents are being encouraged to turn off lights, shut down and unplug (to eliminate standby power consumption) PCs, cell phone chargers, stereos, TVs, etc. For safety reasons, cities will not turn off traffic lights or affect essential service to hospitals, transportation and water treatment plants but will power down in civic centres.

This year, Australian participation will be continent-wide and cities around the world have committed to the program. All cities are encouraging individual participation in addition to soliciting corporate participation.

Earth Hour is not trying to solve the climate change problem. It is celebrating what has been done so far and trying to show what a great impact individuals can make if they consciously reduce their energy demands.

March Meeting

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Energy Transport and Vernal Pools
Dr. Bill McIlveen, Environmental Consultant

April Meeting

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Butterflies of Ontario
Richard Tanner, Avid Lepidopterist

Upcoming NFN and Other Outings

Fri. Feb. 15 / 08 to
Mon. Feb 18 / 08
Great Backyard Bird Count
See article - page 4.

Sat. Feb. 23 /08
1:00 p.m.
Winter Tree Identification
Workshop & Hike
Backus 519-586-2201 or
Dolf Wynia 519-875-3350

NFN at the
WildLife Festival
Norfolk Fairgrounds- the Aud
A March Break Event
Family-friendly
Entrance Fee

Sat. Apr. 5 /08
9:30 a.m.
Early Spring Birding
At Long Point
Audrey Heagy 519-586-9464

Wed. Apr. 16 /08
6:00 p.m.
Amazing Amphibians
Backus 519-586-2201
Family-friendly.
Fee: \$2/person

Sun. Apr. 27 /08
1:30 p.m.
Wildflower Walk at
Rowanwood Sanctuary
Matt Brock 519-586-3283
Family-friendly

See brochure for details

NFN Meetings

Norfolk Field Naturalist meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to May. The election of Directors takes place at the September meeting.

Meetings take place at the Simcoe Seniors Centre on Pond Street. They are free and visitors are always welcome. Doors open at 7:15pm; program begins at 7:30pm.

About the NFN

Norfolk Field Naturalist members participate in meetings and frequent field outings, many of which are family-friendly.

Membership fees, due in September, are \$20- Individual and \$30- Family; donations are eligible for income tax credits; Charitable Registration #0620070-52-14.

Guest speakers present programs on interesting and relevant natural history and conservation topics.

Club members receive the Lotus newsletter with articles on local natural history and club activities. It is published bi-monthly from October to June by volunteer club members. Copies of the Lotus are available at meetings but will be mailed (free of charge) to members if not picked up. Articles published in the Lotus reflect the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NFN.

The NFN website is being revamped. Watch for news of the new site soon.

Next issue of Lotus:

April 2008

Input cutoff date:

Fri. March 21, 2008

Club Mailing Address

Norfolk Field Naturalists
PO Box 995, Simcoe, ON
N3Y 5B3

2007 - 2008 NFN Directors with Contact and Project Information all 519-

President + Field Outings	Audrey Heagy	586-9464	x243	ahagy@bsc-eoc.org
Past Pres. + Natural Areas	Peter Carson	586-3985		gartcar@kwic.com
Vice-President	Tara Crewe	586-3531	x232	tcrewe@bsc-eoc.org
Treasurer	Lynda Kosalle	res 426-0826		kosalle@amtelecom.net
		bus 586-7773		
Secretary + Causeway	Vivienne Heydorn	586-9528		heydorn@amtelecom.net
Membership	Diane Salter	586-7775		dianesalter@execulink.com
Speaker Program	Bernt (Bernie) Solymar	426-7124		solymar@nornet.on.ca
Publicity	Nina Cameron	586-8785		ninac@execulink.com
Sanctuary	Matt Brock	586-3283		greenheron99@hotmail.com
Environment	Colleen Dale	586-9726		cdale22@yahoo.ca
Dir. + Lakeshore 2ndary Pln	Peter Black	426-5036		peterblack@kwic.com
Director -at-large	David Okines	586-9464		davidokines@aol.com
Director -at-large	Shirley Rothery	586-9535		shirleyrothery@hotmail.com
Honorary President:	Al Robinson			
Honorary Directors:	Harry Barrett, Jim Harlow			
Butterfly Counts	Doug Timpf	586-9964		timpf@nornet.on.ca
Lotus Editor	Anne Davidson	446-3589		anne.davidson@sympatico.ca