

President's Message ... from new President, Bill Grabin

Welcome to autumn, a season of change. The leaves are turning and will be falling, even those of the oaks in our yard that hold on to their leaves far too long. Time for cutting and stacking firewood. Time for catching the last of the birds heading south, and, soon, the first of the ones who think of Maine as their winter destination. The Harlequins (our newsletter's namesake), Long-tailed Ducks, Scoters, Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Purple Sandpipers, Snow Buntings and Redpolls, to name a few, will be welcome return visitors. With a little luck, some Snowy Owls and a King Eider will be added to the mix.

One change related topic that we've been contemplating is how best to stay in touch with our members in York County - and many beyond its borders as well. This newsletter has for many years been our main outreach vehicle. But as you know, many new forms of communication have rapidly gained prominence, all made possible by the advent of the internet.

Historically, our first line of internet communication has been our website: www.yorkcountyaudubon.org. We hope you've visited it and even check it regularly. It's the definitive resource for information on our upcoming programs and field trips. When you click on the events listed on the right side of the website's pages, you'll jump to a complete description of each. The event listing is probably the main reason that people visit the site, but there's more waiting if you explore a little further.

The **Home** page features descriptions of recent trips and other YCAS news. The headings at the top of the page reveal drop-down menus leading to other pages. The second heading, **Birds & Birding**, leads to:

- The York County Birding Trail currently featuring descriptions of seven top local birding spots
- YCAS trip reports – a quick way to access prior reports
- The Quest for 300 gives a running tally of species of birds sighted in York County year to date. The tallies go back to 2010. Last year, we topped 300 for the first time. Will we set a new mark this year? Perhaps, with your help, we will.
- Christmas Bird Counts - a source of information about the counts we do each December.

The third heading, **Community Involvement**, describes our Birding Challenge that takes place each May, the annual Hog Island scholarship, and the Audubon Adventures kits that go to schools. The fourth, **About YCAS**, lists contact numbers for our Officers and

Directors, as well as Volunteering Opportunities. **Join Audubon** outlines how to join or renew your membership.

So there's quite a bit waiting for you on our website. But there's even more on our Facebook page! If you have a Facebook account, type in York County Audubon and check us out. You'll find the latest photos, more links to items of interest, more short and timely notes on trips and events, etc. If you "Like" the YCAS page, the items posted there will also appear in your Facebook "news feed."

I know, so much to check out, so little time! And we certainly don't want you browsing the internet when you could be out exploring the "real world." But these web pages can be a great resource to help you make the most of your real world explorations.

This leads me back to this newsletter, the one you're holding in your hand. Are you a regular Harlequin reader? Is this the main way you find out about our activities and events? We've been publishing four issues each year - is that the right number? Do you check our website or Facebook page, or might this write-up trigger your interest in doing so? Have our website and Facebook page replaced the Harlequin as your primary sources of YCAS information?

We'd love to hear from you on these or any other topics. Please feel free to contact us in whatever way is easiest for you. Email us at ycas@yorkcountyaudubon.org, leave a comment on our website or post one on our Facebook page. Or call us using the phone numbers under the About YCAS section of our website. We welcome your comments, ideas or requests. And we'd love to know any suggestions you might have for improving anything we do. Thanks.

And a postscript and a bit of self-introduction: When Paul Wells stepped down from the YCAS President's post this summer, I stepped in. Our thanks again go to Paul for his contributions. Like Paul, I'm not a native Mainer, having moved here with my family in 1981. While I grew up in urban and suburban environments, I spent one of my college summers on a cross country trip with many national park stops. I've been an avid supporter of the great outdoors ever since. I spent many years on the Kennebunk Land Trust board, and am currently active with the Mousam and Kennebunk Rivers Alliance. My wife Monica and I joined Maine Audubon in the 80's, and more recently, became active with the York County chapter. I look forward to working with the YCAS Board and membership to keep a good thing going while striving to make it even better.